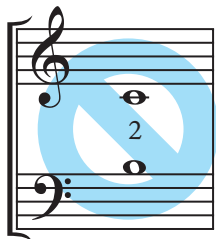


# Species Counterpoint: Species I

"FIRST SPECIES" COUNTERPOINT IS THE MOST RHYTHMICALLY SIMPLE TYPE OF COUNTERPOINT: BOTH VOICES HAVE THE EXACT SAME RHYTHM. AS A RESULT, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE INTERVALS!

AND THAT TAKES US TO THE **FIRST RULE**:  
ONLY USE **CONSONANT INTERVALS**.



NO SECONDS!



NO SEVENTHS!

AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT TO THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY EAR, THE PERFECT FOURTH WAS ALSO DISSONANT!



NO FOURTHS!



SEE HOW THE NUMBER OF THE INTERVAL IS WRITTEN IN BETWEEN THE TWO VOICES? YOU SHOULD DO THAT TOO.

IT'S HOW ROCK STARS DO IT!

NEXT RULE: VOICES CAN'T **CROSS OR OVERLAP**.



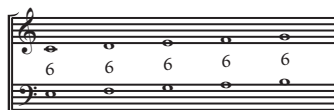
VOICE CROSSING:  
TOP NOTE IS LOWER  
THAN BOTTOM NOTE

VOICE OVERLAP:  
TOP NOTE IS LOWER  
THAN THE PREVIOUS  
BOTTOM NOTE



AND THEN: **THIRDS AND SIXTHS** ARE FINE, BUT NO MORE THAN **THREE IN A ROW**.

TOO MUCH **CONSONANCE**, AND THE NATIVES GET **RESTLESS**.

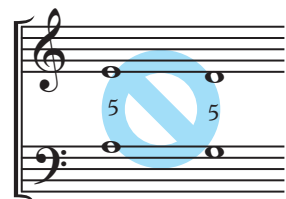


WOOOOOO

THE NEXT RULES HAVE TO DO WITH **PERFECT INTERVALS** (P1, P5, AND P8... REMEMBER, P4 IS **DISSONANT!**), WHICH PLAY **IMPORTANT ROLES** AND REQUIRE SOME **SPECIAL TREATMENT**.

BECAUSE THEY ARE SUCH A **STRONG SONORITY** WHICH CAN **STOP** THE COUNTERPOINT IN ITS TRACKS, **UNISONS** CAN ONLY BE USED ON THE **FIRST OR LAST NOTES** OF AN EXERCISE.

ALL PERFECT INTERVALS MUST BE APPROACHED WITH CARE IN ORDER TO PRESERVE VOICE INDEPENDENCE. FIRST OF ALL, **NEVER REPEAT A PERFECT INTERVAL!**

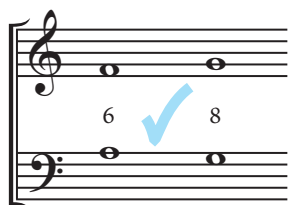
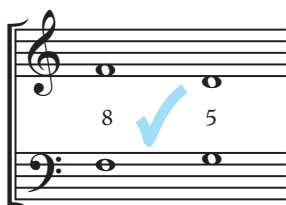


THESE ARE CALLED **PARALLEL FIFTHS...**  
AND THEY'RE **JUST AWFUL!**

IN FACT, APPROACHING PERFECT INTERVALS WITH **BOTH VOICES** MOVING IN THE **SAME DIRECTION** IS **BAD**, EVEN IF IT'S FROM AN **IMPERFECT INTERVAL**.

PLUS, IT'S **ALSO** NOT OKAY TO APPROACH A PERFECT INTERVAL WITH **LEAPS** IN **BOTH VOICES!**

SO IT'S **EASIEST** TO REMEMBER WHAT YOU **CAN** DO:  
APPROACH PERFECT INTERVALS USING **CONTRARY MOTION**,  
WITH AT LEAST **ONE VOICE** MOVING **BY STEP**.



FIRST NOTE:  
**NO PROBLEM**

IN THE MIDDLE:  
**NO WAY**

IN FACT, EACH EXERCISE MUST **BEGIN** AND **END** WITH A **PERFECT INTERVAL** WITH THE **TONIC** IN THE LOWER VOICE.

**WAIT... WHY IS THAT LAST BIT IMPORTANT?**

FOR THESE EXERCISES, YOU'LL BE WRITING A MELODY ABOVE OR BELOW AN **ALREADY-WRITTEN** MELODY, CALLED A **CANTUS FIRMUS**.

THE CANTUS FIRMUS WILL ALWAYS **START** AND **END** ON THE **TONIC NOTE...**  
SO IF YOU ARE WRITING COUNTERPOINT **BELOW** THE CANTUS FIRMUS, YOU CAN'T START WITH A **PERFECT FIFTH**, BECAUSE YOUR LOWER VOICE WON'T BE THE **TONIC**. YOU'LL HAVE TO START WITH A **UNISON** OR **OCTAVE** INSTEAD!