Music 1

Stylistic Techniques

Cover image: © Carla Rees

Contents

Before you start

Welcome to *Music 1: Stylistic Techniques.* Your OCA Student handbook should be able to answer most questions about this and all other OCA courses, so keep it to hand as you work through this course.

Course aims
- This unit explores the development of musical style through the history of Western Art Music.
- An understanding of analysis, harmony, form and other musical properties will be developed through the study of repertoire by established composers from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century, and through practical exercises, creative responses and personal research.
- Score-based and written work is accompanied by listening to a range of works from each era, developing your own opinions, preferences and responses to the music.

The exercises and assignments are designed to develop your skills in score reading, notation, harmony, and your understanding of compositional style and structure. You will also gain practical experience of creating music in imitation of the style of different composers.

Learning Outcomes
When you've completed the course, you should be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of harmony and conventions of notation.
- Recognise and describe musical organisation and style in music from different historical eras.
- Analyse written scores and understand their methods of construction.
- Demonstrate: an ability to read the work of established composers in written form; enhanced listening skills; an ability to reflect upon your own learning experience.

Your tutor

Your tutor is your main point of contact with OCA. Before you start work, make sure that you're clear about your tuition arrangements. The OCA system is explained in some detail in your Student handbook.

If you haven't already done so, please write a paragraph or two about your experience to date. Add background information about anything that you think may be relevant for your tutor to know about you (your profile) – for example your experience of music so far, your reasons for starting this course and what you hope to achieve from it. Email or post your profile to your tutor as soon as possible. This will help your tutor to understand how best to support you during the course.

Arrange with your tutor how you'll deal with any queries that arise between assignments. This will usually be by email or phone. It will be helpful for your tutor to see some of the work that you produce in between assignments. For example, you could scan or photograph the relevant pages of your listening log (see below) and email them to your tutor. Or you could post your listening log as an online blog on the OCA website so that your tutor can see how your work is developing between assignments. It's particularly important that your tutor sees regular evidence of your development if you're planning to have your work on this course formally assessed.

Make sure that you label any work that you send to your tutor with your name, student number and the assignment number. Your tutor will get back to you as soon as possible after receiving your assignment but this may take a little time. Continue with the course while you're waiting.

Formal assessment

Read the section on assessment in your Student handbook at an early stage in the course. Your Assessment and how to get qualified study guide gives more detailed information about assessment and accreditation.

For assessment you'll need to submit a cross-section of the work you've done on the course:
• All five assignments of the course
• The five tutor reports on your assignments
• Your listening log or blog url.

Please be aware that you should only submit work you have prepared during the course to your tutor for formal assessment – you cannot submit work that you may have done before you started the course.

Keeping a learning and listening log

Your learning and listening log is an integral part of this and every other OCA course. If you're new to OCA courses, read your Keeping sketchbooks and Introducing learning logs study guide for further information, all study guides can be found on the OCA student website. It's vitally important for a deep understanding of western art music to have a solid experience of music through its major developments.

There is much that may be learnt from listening to music and when possible following a copy of the musical score. Reading widely about music and the development of musical style will deepen your appreciation of the techniques covered in this course and many others besides. Make use of the listening list in the appendix and use the recommended reading list to develop your understanding. Bear in mind that the suggested listening is only a small selection of the huge range available to explore on the internet and in libraries.

Listening to a wide range of music

We recommend that you listen to a wide range of music to supplement and enhance your studies. The easiest way of doing this is to register for an online source such as Spotify. This is a free music streaming service available to Microsoft and Mac users, providing a huge range of music by arrangement with leading world record labels. You first need to download the free software from the Spotify website, then you can search for the suggested listening pieces and either listen to the whole piece or short extracts.

Almost all the suggested listening pieces are available on Spotify. If you come across a piece that isn't (it's not possible to predict how availability may change over time) you may be able to access it from an alternative website such as Grooveshark. Other possibilities are the Naxos Library (fee involved) or a local music library. Or you can choose an alternative piece from the suggested listening in the appendix.

Your listening should include both recorded music and live performances, and you should actively seek out music that's unfamiliar to you – whether or not the experience results in your liking what you hear!

The purpose is to know what's out there and to broaden and deepen your experience so that you can critically appreciate any piece of music and its stylistic traits on several levels.

Make detailed comments as you're listening because you may well forget your initial reactions. When later you come to the same piece again you may discover your responses are quite changed. Your commentaries on heard experiences will help you and your tutor see how you are progressing with your learning.

Read other people's commentaries as well – performance programme notes, broadsheet music critics, commentaries you find on the internet and those in your wider reading. Some will give you new insight, others you may disagree with. All this can be recorded in your listening log.

After any session of listening or reading, or a concert visit, make a note of page numbers or index words that you may want to use for future reference. Always read articles and books with a note pad available so you can jot useful ideas as you go. It's often hard to go back to find a

choice phrase, comment or paragraph if you don't note it down at the time.

Keep your listening log up to date and in good order. You'll need to send extracts from your log to your tutor as part of your course work. If you choose formal assessment, bear in mind that your listening log will be reviewed as part of the total mark.

Use your listening log to record your progress through the course. Your log should contain:
• A record of the music you listen to for each project, as well as research notes and exercise notes
• Your reactions to the listening and reading you do and the research you carry out
• Your ideas and observations on what you are learning as you work through the course
• Your tutor's reports on assignments and your responses to these.

Consider whether you want to post your listening log as an online blog on the OCA website.

Planning Ahead

This level 1 course represents 400 hours of learning time.
Allow around 20% of this time for reflection and listening log development. The course should take about a year to complete if you spend around 8 hours each week on it. You don't need any prior knowledge of music theory.

As with all OCA courses, these course materials are intended to be used flexibly but keep your tutor fully informed about your progress. You'll need to allow extra time if you decide to have your work formally assessed.

Music 1: Stylistic Techniques is divided into five parts, corresponding to the five course assignments. Your first assignment is a diagnostic assignment which will help your tutor get to know you and your work and decide how best to support you.

Each part of the course addresses a musical era and is separated into projects designed to tackle the topic in bite-sized chunks.

As well as containing information and discussions, each project offers a range of exercises and research points for you to undertake. These feed into the assignments that you'll send to your tutor.

There are also reminders and tips to freshen your memory or offer brief technical advice to aid with your learning and assignments.

If you don't yet have a clear idea of where you want to go with your exploration of music, this modular way of working is designed to give you experience of a wide range of styles, genres and composers.

If you already have particular musical interests you want to pursue, you may want to use the exercises, research points and assignments in ways that will allow you to develop your own areas of interest within the course structure. Don't skip tasks that don't seem relevant to your personal goals. They'll develop your musical awareness, stretch your skills and challenge your ideas.

Managing Your Time

Each part of the course should take about 80 hours to complete. You'll need to decide how to divide this time in a way that works effectively for you.

The time you spend on each part of the course will depend on how quickly you work, the time available to you, how easy or hard you find each exercise and research point, and how quickly you want to complete the course. Don't worry if you take more or less time than suggested provided that you're not getting too bogged down in a particular part of the course and that your tutor is happy with the work you're producing. If it helps, draft a rough study plan and revisit this at the end of each part. The course structure is intended to be flexible, but it's always useful to bear deadlines in mind.

Listening to music

The pieces in the suggested listening appendix listed are simply suggestions. It's not essential to listen to every single piece, or to complete works. However, if you can, choose a range of works that you will listen to in their entirety. Most of the time composers view their work as complete packages, so it helps to hear the full composition to fully appreciate them.
As well as listening to recordings, you'll find it helpful to your musical understanding if you can also gain experience of different genres of live performance - chamber music, orchestral concert, opera, choral works - performed in different settings - concert halls, theatres, churches or private houses. Often these are surprisingly affordable, especially with a student ID. You can check the What's On pages of concert halls and arts centres to easily discover performances happening close to you.

Look out for the listening icon and note the details of each piece you listen to in your listening log.

For examples of other students' listening notes/logs, please log into the student site and go to the 'Blogs (learning logs) page within 'Coursemates' (http://oca-student.com/tutors/course-mates/blogs). From here you can select from OCA's music courses in the drop-down menu to only display listening logs by students on specific music courses. There are also helpful notes on features to listen out for with most of the suggested listening pieces in this course guide. As you work through the course and gain confidence, this process may become second nature.

Music Theory

You don't need a grounding in music theory to do this course but to get the most out of the descriptions of it you'll need a basic understanding of the building blocks of music. If you're new to music theory, you'll find it helpful to use an introductory book on music theory such as *The AB Guide to Music Theory, Part 1* by Eric Taylor (ABRSM, 1990) and this particularly well written book which relates theory to practice in an accessible way: *Harmony, Melody and Composition* by Paul Sturman (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

A basic grasp of the elements below will enable you to understand the techniques discussed in the course and deepen your listening appreciation:

- **Notation** – pitch, octave, scales, intervals
- **Rhythm** – tempo, meter, time or meter signatures
- **Melody**
- **Key** – tonic, dominant, key signatures, major, minor harmony – chords, triads, consonance, dissonance
- **Texture** – counterpoint, polyphony
- **Timbre** – tone colour, dynamics, marks of expression.

As you go through the course make a note of new terms and their meaning in your learning log. If you can, access a music dictionary from the library or the internet to help you do this.

Other resources you may find helpful are:

- A piano or keyboard, or a piano app if you have a smart phone, so you may try out things for yourself.
- Video clips on the internet. There are many illustrations of music theory and musical techniques on YouTube and other video streaming resources.

Reading and music sources

You'll find suggested listening and reading lists for this course at the end of this course book. In addition, on the student website, there is a reading list along with a list of useful websites and online resources for listening to music and following music scores. Please check the OCA website as the reading and resources list is updated periodically.

Referencing your reading and listening

Whenever you read something that you might want to refer to in your projects and assignments, get into the habit of taking down the full reference to the book, article or website straight away. You will also need to reference the compositions that you study, whether they are recordings, live performances or published scores. You must use the Harvard system of referencing – there is a guide to this on the OCA website.

Getting down the full reference at the time will save you the frustration of having to hunt for the details of a half-remembered reference long after the event – and will ensure that you don't inadvertently plagiarise someone else's work.

Music 1: Stylistic Techniques

Part one
Renaissance period

John Wilbye, *The Lady Oriana*, in the hand of Thomas Edmund Warren [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Use the table below to keep track of your progress thoughout Part One.

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Introduction

In this chapter you will learn about two renaissance composers and their work in two genres typical of the period.

You will encounter species counterpoint - a centuries old training method for composers - and try exercises.

You will experiment with writing imitative vocal textures and consider the role that rules play in creating music.

Project 1: Gesualdo and Madrigals

Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613) was an Italian prince and composer. He led a remarkable life, becoming notorious for murdering his wife and her lover, but also for his extraordinary compositions which to this day can surprise and shock. He wrote sacred and instrumental works as well as his more famous six books of madrigals, works for voices setting non-religious texts. Madrigals were particularly popular in the 16th century though they have roots two hundred years earlier.

While Gesualdo's musical technique essentially fitted with the conventions of the time he would often use technical devices in unexpected ways and push the limits of the language. This produces quite extraordinary sounds which often have more in common with music written three hundred years hence, than with his peers.

Monument to Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613), Italian prince and composer

The madrigal, *Beltà poi che t'assenti* from Gesualdo's 6th book of madrigals (1611) is a good demonstration of what we're talking about.

Exercise 1.0

- Listen to the madrigal *Beltà poi che t'assenti* by Gesualdo.
- With reference to a score, identify the chords in the first four bars. The answer is given at the end of the chapter.
- Does this chord progression call to mind any music you know from later eras?
- How would you describe the music in bb. 9-20 and the texture at bb. 40-42?
- What does the word 'dolore' mean at b. 55?
- In your own words, describe the kind of harmony, melody and texture that Gesualdo has employed to carry its meaning.

Characteristics of Gesulado's style include:
- Unusual and shocking harmony - at times densely chromatic or juxtaposing far-related keys or chords.
- Quick changes of texture often to support word painting of a text, each phrase being characterised differently. This is typical of his madrigals.
- Layering of compositional techniques to create extraordinary sounds.

Tip: Musical textures

What we call the 'texture' in music is, in basic terms, what the instrumental and/or vocal parts are actually doing when they are playing together.

There are some standard terms used to describe general kinds of textures which are worth reminding ourselves of, such as:

- **homophonic** - the parts move together
- **contrapuntal** - the parts move independently, in a coordinated way
- **polyphonic** - similar to contrapuntal, several parts moving independently
- **heterophonic** - several independent parts varying or embellishing a common melody
- **polyrhythmic** - the effect of there being several discernible rhythmic layers.

## Research point 1.0: Renaissance madrigals

Listen to these five madrigals composed around the turn of the Seventeenth Century.

- Andrea Gabrieli - *Caro dolce ben mio, perche fuggire*
- Orlando di Lasso - *Matona, mia cara*
- Claudio Monteverdi - *Ah, Dolente Partita*
- Thomas Morley - *Now is the month of maying*
- John Wilbye - *Sweet honey-sucking bees*

Choose two to compare and contrast. Write around 200 words about your chosen composers in your learning log. With reference to the scores, write a further two hundred words comparing the styles and features of the compositions you choose.

Project 2 Palestrina and the Mass

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525 - 1594) commonly known simply as Palestrina has become generally regarded as the Italian composer who most clearly and consistently employed the techniques of renaissance polyphony to create music which was supremely self-consistent and which so completely projected the needs of the Catholic doctrine at the time. Nowadays his work is oftentimes referred to when learning about Renaissance music due to the clarity of the compositional style.
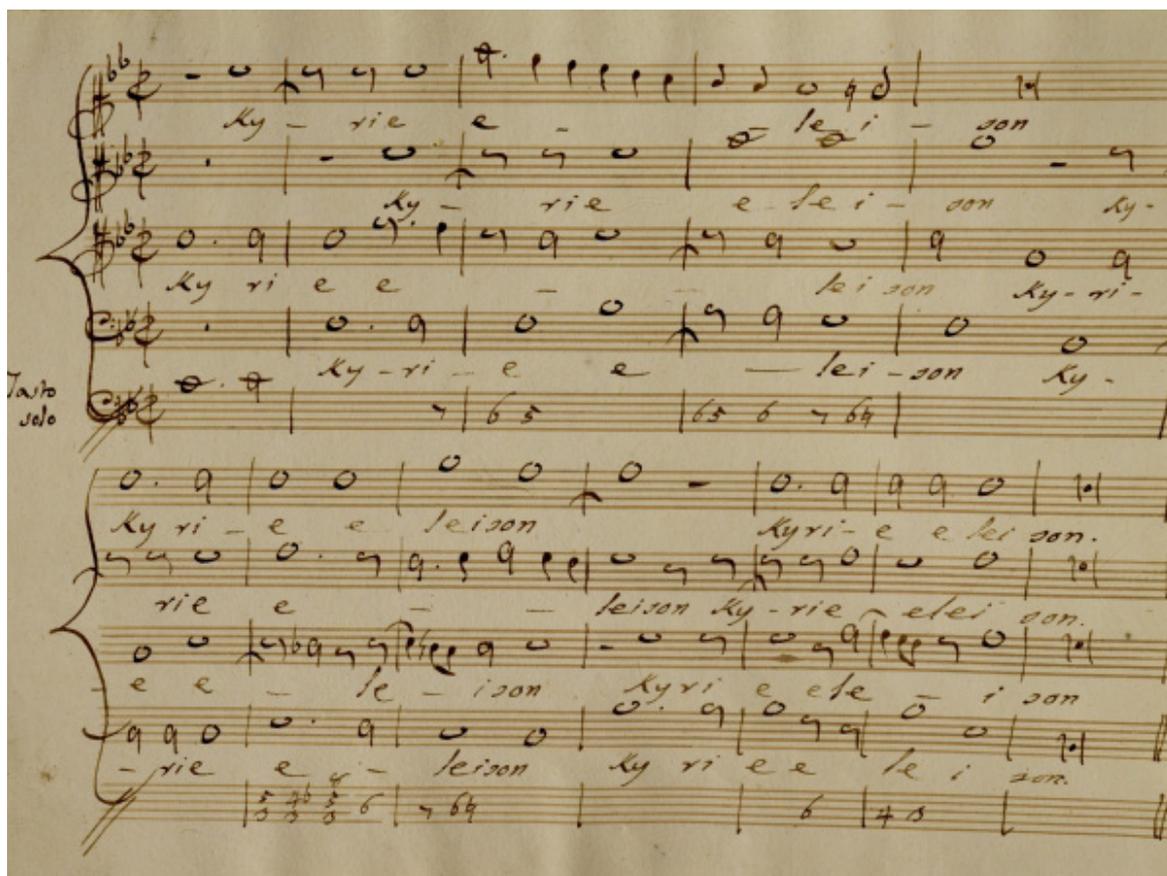
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, score of the *Kyrie Eleison* from the 'Messa a quattro voci'
© Bridgeman Images

Exercise 1.1

Listen to a recording of the *Kyrie* from Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* and follow with a score. Read the following comments about features of the music, and note an instance where each occurs in the score. You may find it to be most effective if you mark each occurrence onto a print out of the score or annotate a pdf of it electronically. Keep your annotations for reference later.

- The entry of each vocal part is in imitation.
- The texture is polyphonic - consisting of several independently moving, though coordinated, vocal parts.
- The melody lines themselves move smoothly - mainly flowing by step with occasional leaps but then often turning back and returning to where they came from, or nearby.
- Each part rises and falls, helping to create a sense of direction but with no single part assuming dominance over the others.
- The ranges of the individual voice parts lie mainly within an octave and there is a general sense of balance to the individual melodic lines. They rise and fall in about equal measure, exploring the full range of the voice evenly.
- The words are repeated and are clearly audible. The words overlap, each part at times following, at times leading, to create the musical texture.

Research point 1.1: The Mass

Religious music has long been a highly active area for composers and has prompted some of their highest achievements. Due to its importance in the Catholic church the Mass has been one of the most prolific of religious musical forms, inspiring choral music from the Fourteenth Century to the present day.

Find out about the ongoing history of the musical Mass, its form and structure, the texts which appear in it and how the music fits with the religious service, among other things. Listen to Masses from different points in history. You may use this list as a starting point: Machaut, DuFay, Byrd, Victoria, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Bruckner, Stravinsky, James MacMillan, Karl Jenkins.

Write a brief article of around 500 words in your listening log about the connection of music with religion. Mix in your personal views with what you have discovered through research.

Project 3 Introduction to Species Counterpoint

Now for a chance for you to try out composing some renaissance style music.

In 1725, Johann Joseph Fux, a composer and imperial director of music at the Viennese court, published *Gradus ad Parnassum*. This compositional guidebook distilled the techniques of contrapuntal composition and presented them to the student composer as five essential ways of writing counterpoint, sometimes called the five 'species'. *Gradus ad Parnassum* was very influential on composers of later generations such as Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Learning species counterpoint has been the cornerstone of much musical training for centuries and there are numerous books which go into detail on its intricacies and possibilities, some of which are included in the reading list for this course.

The species method involved composing melodic parts to interact with a pre-existent melody in long notes - called the cantus firmus. The cantus firmus was perhaps part of a plainchant (the kind of unaccompanied melodies sung by monks), a secular melody, a melody taken from vocal parts of a polyphonic work, or was freely invented. The use of a cantus firmus to structure a composition occurred at the very beginning of polyphonic composition in the Ninth Century, becoming gradually superseded by the imitative writing of later renaissance polyphony. The structural technique of a melody forming the foundation of a composition made a prominent return in later music such as the ground bass technique of the Baroque era. In more recent times, the French composer and organist Olivier Messaien (1908-1992) frequently employed plainchant melodies and cantus firmus techniques as may be heard in his many orchestral pieces.

The five species of counterpoint are:
1. note against note
2. two notes against each note in the cantus firmus (in triple time, three against one)
3. four notes against each note in the cantus firmus
4. equal-length notes consistently syncopated
5. a florid line against the cantus firmus, consisting of a combination of the other species with occasional use of notes of smaller value.

The species approach may be applied to learning how to write contrapuntally with any number of voice parts. We'll be focusing on two part writing here.

As species counterpoint is a deep training method the following tips are intended to get you started in writing counterpoint in a manner similar to species. These are intended as a guide, and you may discover deviations in repertoire or other handbooks. That's fine - if you do, evaluate for yourself the effect of the differences. If you really enjoy the process and want to delve deeper, refer to the handbooks mentioned in the reading list.

Broadly speaking there are a small number of basic principles behind species counterpoint with regards to creating smoothly flowing lines and predominantly what we today might call 'warm' sonorities of thirds and sixths. As we progress up the species ladder and the musical writing becomes more and more intricate the way of achieving the desired sound becomes more complicated - when put into words. Therefore if the technique appears foreboding

remember the essential musical impulse behind the dos and don'ts and this should put the 'rules' into perspective. Species counterpoint has served as an effective training for some of the finest composers the world has ever seen, so, yes, it is rigorous but it is not meant to snuff the enjoyment out of creating music. The fun is there for you to find. We'll spend some time thinking about the need, or not, of rules in music later on, but for now let's learn more about the essentials of species counterpoint.

First species tips:
- There is a general flow and smoothness of melodic line.
- Contrary motion between parts sounds great and is a good way of asserting the independence of each line.
- Melodically speaking, most intervals are available except augmented or diminished intervals and sevenths.
- Intervals between the upper parts and the bottom part may only be: third, sixth, fifth or octave/unison. Thirds and sixths are mostly preferred from bar two up to the penultimate bar, because their sound is deemed more delightfully sonorous than the barer sounding fifths and octaves which generally begin and end the music. Unisons are the least preferred interval.
- 'Consecutive' fifths or octaves, that is when there are two intervals of a fifth (or two of an octave) next to each other, are prohibited.
- 'Exposed' fifths or octaves are also prohibited. This means you may not arrive at a fifth or octave by a leap in the top part allied with similar motion in the bottom part.
- It's good to end on an octave. At the very end, if the cantus rises from the leading note to the tonic, then the free part falls from the second degree to the octave. Similarly, If the cantus falls from the second degree to the octave, the free part should rise from the leading note to the octave.
- Parts may not cross at the moment of being sung. For example, if the cantus is the lower part, the free part may not be below it at the point of singing. Parts also may not overlap i.e. consecutive notes in different parts may not dip above or below one another. Ranges of melodies should be no more than a tenth and are usually within an octave.
- There is a single climax point in the melody.
- Leaps over a fourth are followed by a step in the opposite direction.
- Make no more than two leaps in a row!
- If the cantus is in the bottom part, start with an octave or a fifth. If the cantus is in the top part and begins on the first degree of the scale (which it normally will) then, to avoid blurring the modality, the lower part must also begin on the first degree of the scale.

Even in this simplified summary, there are a lot of demands aren't there? Have a go at the following exercises, and when writing your parts refer to the above bullet points frequently to check how you are doing.

Species Exercises

First species counterpoint
Consider the cantus firmus below:

CANTUS

Analyse its basic properties such as its start and end notes; its range; its point of climax; and how many notes there are. Make a note of any other properties that make this melody unique. Now study the sample solution to writing a voice part to go with this cantus firmus shown below. Remember this is a possible solution - not a definitive answer. Go through each of the bullet points above about making good first species melodies and mark where, or if, they occur. As you search for the points, begin to develop a sense of how the features they refer to interconnect.
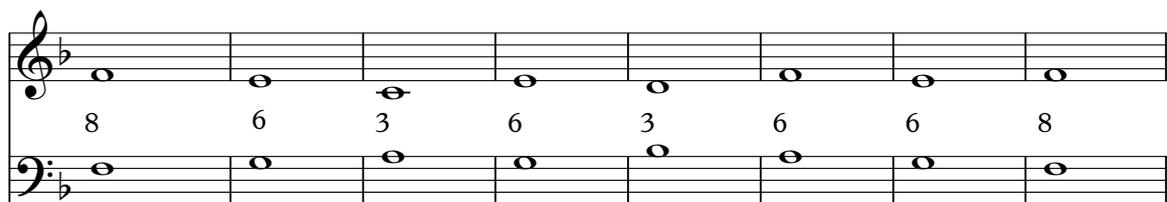
CANTUS

(The numbers refer to the interval between the voices.)

If good melodies were a matter of checking lists who knows where we'd be musically now! Nevertheless, this kind of inspection can reveal how melodies conform to, or diverge from, a broad convention, which is interesting in itself, as well as being helpful for us here. Very often of course, it is the moments that the conventions are contravened that make music special. Now look at the next example.

CANTUS

Here the cantus firmus appears in the upper part and the lower part is designed to fit with it. Listen to how different it sounds to when the cantus was in the lower part. Why do you think this is?

Go through the list of bullet points with respect to this new completion and consider how or if they apply. This time it's your turn to note down the intervals between the parts.

Exercise 1.2: First species: Now it's your go

In light of the points and examples above, compose a part to go with this cantus firmus. It is helpful to work backwards from the final note, for the last two or three bars. The final bars tend to conform to the convention of ending on an octave or unison for example and being approached in the way described above, so it makes sense to take care of these first so that the more freely composed arrival to these moments is more readily achieved.

CANTUS

A sample solution is given at the end of the chapter.

Second Species

In second species we compose two notes to the one of the cantus firmus - i.e. minims. Second species tips:

- This is two notes against one, written as 2 minims.
- The first minim of the bar, the downbeat, is a 'strong beat'. The second, 'weak'.
- The 'strong beat', the first minim in the bar, is a consonance, with preferred intervals as in first species.
- The second minim, 'weak beat', may be a harmony note, a passing note, or an auxiliary note. A passing note links two harmony notes a third apart. An auxiliary note moves away from a harmony note and back to it. The permission to use passing notes and auxiliary notes sees the introduction of dissonance to the music. Dissonance brings variety and is controlled carefully.
- Stepwise motion becomes more possible due to the increased choice of notes. This allows you to make your melodies even smoother.
- Aim for a melody line which still has purpose, especially with the increased number of notes available. Write lines which flow to specific points along their path.
- We often begin with a rest to establish the pulse.
- When both parts move, i.e. across a barline, parallel 5ths and octaves are not allowed, as in first species.
- Downbeats in consecutive bars should not make parallel 5ths or octaves either.
- The melodic line formed by downbeats should also conform to the general principles of first species. E.g. no augmented or diminished intervals between consecutive downbeats.
- Exposed fifths and octaves between downbeats are fine as the effect is softened by the intervening weak beat.

Here is an example of second species counterpoint.

CANTUS

How does this compare with the tips above? Analyse the example, beginning with marking in the intervals between the parts, highlighting instances of some of the tips. Not all tips will be found.

Have a look at this next example, and carry out a similar kind of analysis.

CANTUS

Exercise 1.3

Now it's your turn. Write a counterpoint to the following cantus firmus basing it on the tips given above.

CANTUS

There is a sample solution at the end of the chapter.

Third Species

In third species we introduce more movement in the counterpoint - four crotchets per bar.

Add these points to the principles of second species to understand third species:

- The four beats in the bar are designated strong, weak, medium strong, weak.
- Strong beats are always consonant.
- Keep the melodic line smooth by having leaps within a bar rather than across a barline.
- If you have a fifth or octave on the downbeat it can be the only one in the bar.
- Dissonances such as passing notes or neighbour notes may occur on any of the beats other than the downbeat. They are generally approached and quitted by step.
- There are some new dissonances allowed:
  - Double neighbour - this embellishes a harmony note and may occur when the first crotchet and the last crotchet in a bar are the same note. This means the second and third crotchet can be neighbour notes above and below the harmony note. As we're aiming for a smooth melody overall we may use the double neighbour pattern when downbeats move by step. The double neighbour pattern responds to the direction of that step - if it's a step up then the pattern is up-down; and vice versa.

double neighbour notes

- The *nota cambiata* is another dissonant pattern that may also be used when downbeats move by step. The shape of the pattern also responds to the direction of that step. If the step is up then the pattern follows: up a step - up a third - down a step - down a step; and vice versa.

nota cambiata pattern

- With the increased level of dissonance and the patterns of double neighbour and nota cambiata be careful to avoid consecutive octaves and fifths, especially across the barline.

Here are two examples of third species counterpoint. Once again annotate your own copy of each, marking instances where the tips above occur. As a way of starting you may wish to work through the list of tips in turn to see if you can find an instance of them. See if you can incorporate more general observations from the tips for the earlier species as well because although the technical procedures are becoming more involved, the spirit behind the music is the same.

CANTUS

and:

CANTUS

Fourth Species

We're back to minim movement here, but with a difference. It is syncopated movement designed to make a harmonic treat possible - the use of suspensions!

Suspensions may occur on the downbeat of a bar and may be used either when you're composing above a cantus, or when you're composing below.

Suspensions conform to a set pattern as show in the example below.

The pattern has three parts:
- **Preparation** - a harmony note on the weak beat of the bar, tied into the next bar
- **Dissonance** - the cantus moves, and a dissonance is created
- **Resolution** - the composed part resolves downwards to make a harmony note with the cantus on the weak beat again.

The pattern is shown in the example below:

Notice how the dissonance on the strong beat creates a sense of rhythmic weight on that beat and that a feeling of the tension being relaxed occurs when the resolution is made.

When writing suspensions take care that consecutives are not made between the preparation and resolution. The same principles from first and second species apply in terms of the soundworld we're creating.

Exercise 1.4

It's your turn again. Complete the following passages of music using suspensions. Mark on your score the preparation, dissonance and resolution each time, and the intervals created between the cantus and the composed part. The exercises below are in fact not strictly fourth species as that would involve more consistent syncopation. Instead they are intended to show how suspensions may be employed in a more general musical context.

Suggested solutions are shown at the end of the chapter.

Fifth species style is the closest the training method comes to free composition. It involves the creative employment of the techniques of the previous species with increased use of decoration. It's time for us to leave species here and move to an exercise based on musical examples taken from actual repertoire.

Tip: Typing lyrics using Sibelius

To add words to a vocal part in Sibelius, select the note where the word starts and press CMD (or CTRL)+L. Begin to type the word.

If the word's syllables occur on different notes (called a syllabic setting) then separate them using the minus (-) sign.

If a single syllable is spread over several notes (called a melisma) press the space bar to move the cursor along until you reach the end of the word. If another word follows start typing again.
If a word is followed by a rest simply press the SPACE bar to take you to the next note, if there is one, and resume typing.

Generally words are separated by the SPACE bar.

Exercise 1.5

Imitative counterpoint.

From listening to choral music of the Renaissance period you will have noticed that, in many of the textures, when the voices enter they do so in more or less strict imitation. Here is your chance to try some imitative writing of your own.

Try completing the two examples of imitative textures below. They have been chosen and adapted such that if you complete the blank parts in exact imitation of the first voice to enter, the harmony and texture should fall into place perfectly. This should hopefully be very satisfying, and remember this is not a test - the solutions are given at the end of the chapter.

Once you have tried these exercises you can always go on to delve deeper into imitative counterpoint by the likes of Palestrina and carry out similar practice of your own.

Here is the first example for you to copy into Sibelius and fill in the blank voice:

Palestrina, Missa Brevis, Sanctus, excerpt adapted.

And here is the second example:

Palestrina, Missa Brevis, Benedictus, excerpt adapted.

Tip

In the original examples and assignment in this chapter, when the tenor voice is used, the part is written at sounding pitch, for ease of reading. However, generally, the tenor part is written an octave higher than it sounds, and either a special clef is used to indicate this - a treble clef with a small 8 underneath, as shown here, or the standard treble clef is used with the understanding that the part sounds an octave lower.

Assignment 1

The assignment is in two parts - some musical exercises similar to those above and a written essay.

Part 1

Q1: Complete the following counterpoint to the cantus firmus basing your answer on the First Species principles covered in this chapter.

Complete in First Species

Q2: Complete the following counterpoint to the cantus firmus basing your answer on the Second Species principles covered in this chapter.

Complete in Second Species

Q3: Complete the following counterpoint to the cantus firmus basing your answer on the Third Species principles covered in this chapter.

Complete in Third Species

nota cambiata pattern

double neighbour pattern

Q4: Complete the following counterpoint to the cantus firmus basing your answer on the Fourth Species principles covered in this chapter.

Complete in Fourth Species

Q5: Complete the following extract in three parts in 16th Century imitative style, using the suggested note values.

Credo, adapted from Byrd's Mass for 3 voices.

Complete in imitative style

Part 2

The 20th Century composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), who himself was a connoisseur of music from previous periods, gave this quote as part of a series of lectures he gave at Harvard University in 1939:

The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one's self…

Drawing on your own thoughts and experience, and clearly referring to the four points below as well as developing ideas of your own, write 500 words discussing Stravinsky's phrase from the point of view of rules in music. Try to explore your ideas as far as you can - especially the ones that are particularly important to you.

- Did you find strategies to cope with the rules outlined in this chapter?
- What steps could you take to learn writing 16th Century counterpoint?
- What qualities do you think the strictness of 16th Century compositional technique brings to the music?
- Discuss the value of rules in composing and performing music.

Answers to exercises

Answers to exercise on Gesualdo's madrigal *Beltà poi che t'assenti*:
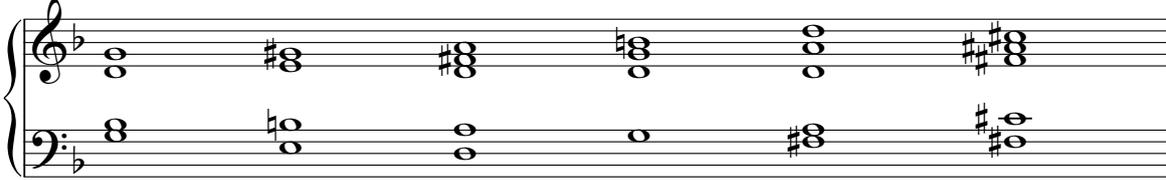
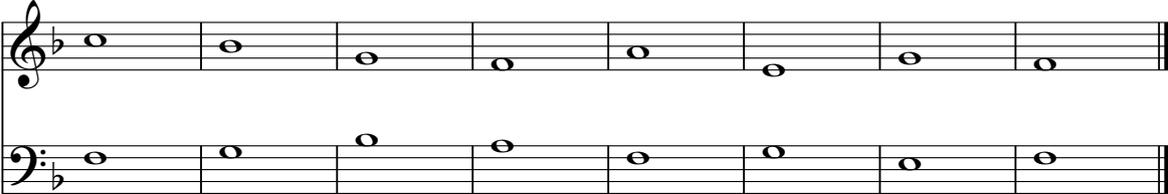G minor   E minor   D major   G major   D major   F♯ major

bb. 9-20: 'chromatic and imitative'
bb. 40-42 'homophonic'
'dolore' means 'pain' or 'sorrow'

First species
Sample solution to Exercise 1.2

CANTUS

Second species
Sample solution to Exercise 1.3

CANTUS

Fourth Species
Sample solution to Exercise 1.4, first exercise

Preparation Dissonance Resolution

Preparation Dissonance Resolution

5   4   3   6   7   6

CANTUS

Fourth species
Sample solution to Exercise 1.4, second exercise

P   D   R/P   D   R/P   D   R/P

6   7   6   4   3   4   3

CANTUS

7   D   R/P   D   R   P   D   R

4   3   4   3   8   7   6

Exercise 1.5, example 1

Palestrina, Missa Brevis, Sanctus, excerpt adapted.

SOPRANO

San - - - ctus, San - - - - - - - -

ALTO

San - - - ctus, San - - - - - - - ctus,

Exercise 1.5, example 2

Palestrina, Missa Brevis, Benedictus, excerpt adapted.