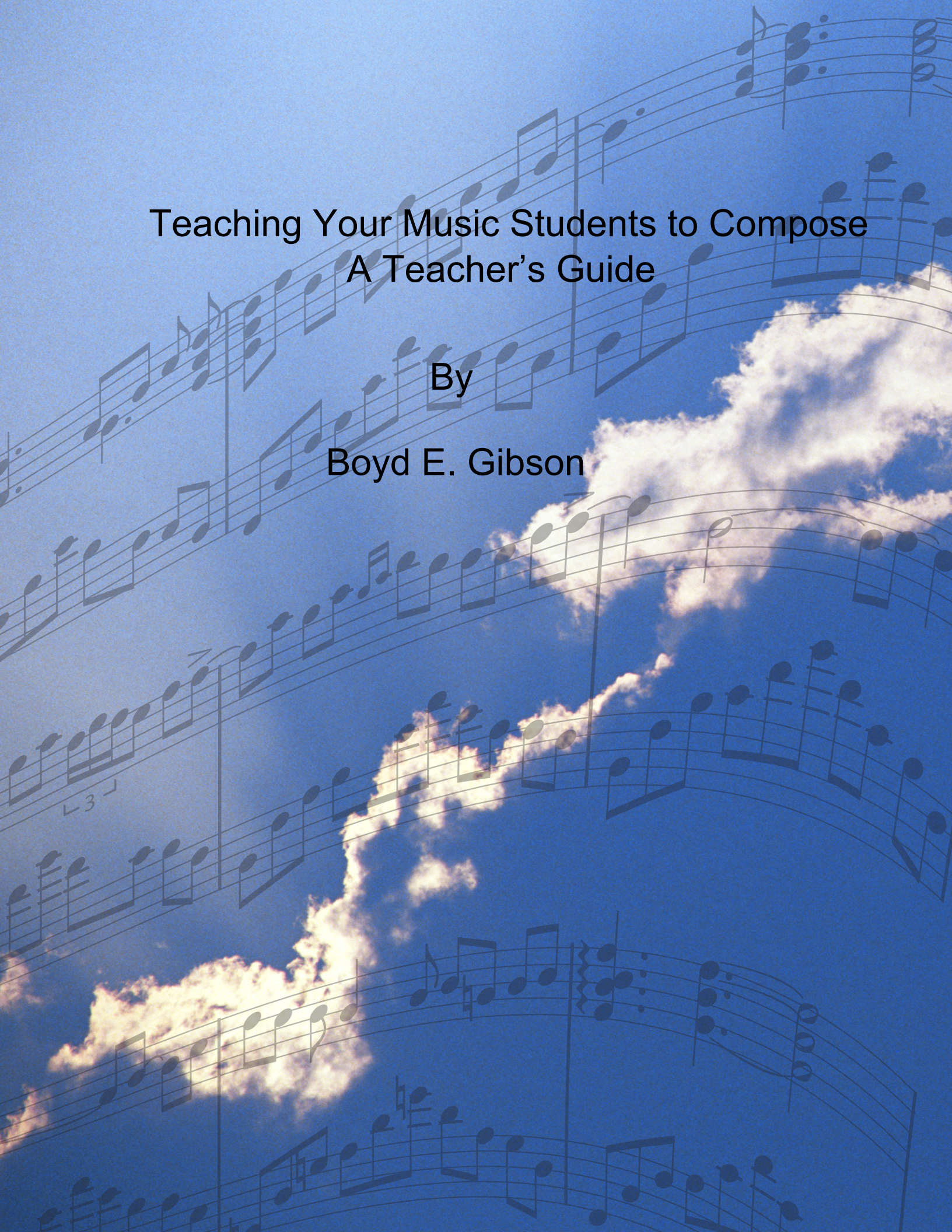

Teaching Your Music Students to Compose
A Teacher's Guide

By

Boyd E. Gibson

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Table Of Contents

Introduction

The study of composition is a very complex activity, it involves combining the elements of music, melody, rhythm, harmony, texture and timbre into meaningful patterns, and yet the final product is a very subjective and personal one. Which is perhaps one of the reasons that many music teachers who are great at every other aspect of teaching music find it difficult to teach composition as part of their music classes, since they do not consider themselves composers.

This guide is not designed as a textbook but it will aid you in a systematic approach to teaching your music students the art of composition. It will start with a look at intervals and chords. It will be up to you as to how deep you will go here at the start before getting into the study of writing. Next we will look at what makes a melody work and then move to writing for two voices first. Writing for two voices has the distinct advantage of allowing the student to write meaningful compositions without having to be concern with four part harmony. This way the student can concentrate on what makes a melody work and how to make that melody work with another melodic line in various types of textures, forms and styles.

After some practice of composing for two voices we will move to writing for four parts. We will take a systematic approach to how to harmonize a melody and how to use this with the skills that were studied in writing for two voices. We will also take a look at setting text to music since many of your students will be very interested in writing songs. For choral and vocal teachers this section can be studied first,especially if they want to start with writing songs.

I would like to thank the string orchestra students at Riverside High School in Durham North Carolina and their director, Sara Moore for their feedback in the development of this guide. Their feedback was very useful in helping to make this guide teacher and student friendly.

Since this guide is available in a digital format it is easy to make corrections, changes and additions. If you have any suggestions on how to improve this guide for your students please do not hesitate to contact me. It is my hope that you and your students will find this guide very useful and that they will begin to enjoy the rewards of composing their own music. All the best as you lead your students on this musical journey.

Boyd E. Gibson
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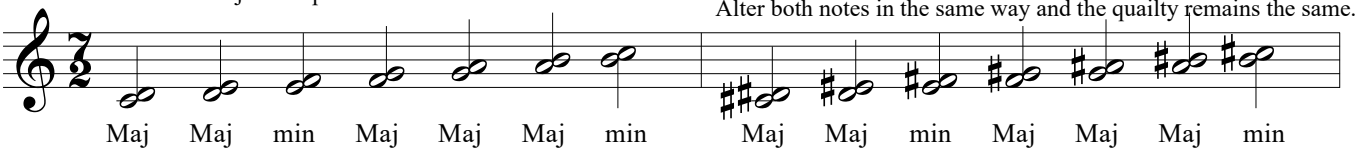
Interval Study Guide

Most of your students would not have had a chance to have an in-depth study of music theory. Yet there is some basic music theory that they will need to know as they study composition. The interval and chord study guides are provided for your convenience. Use them as you see fit. I would, however suggest that you do not try to cover everything at once but use the guides to teach the information as you need it in the progression of learning.

Seconds

min. 2nd= 1 1/2 step, maj. 2nd=2 1/2 steps, Aug.2nd= 3 1/2 steps(enharmonic min. 3rd) dim. 2nd=0 1/2 steps (enharmonic unison)

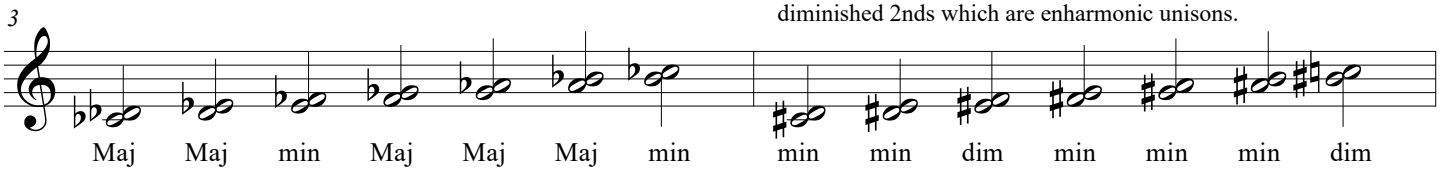
All diatonic 2nds are major except e-f and b-c



Alter both notes in the same way and the quailty remains the same.

Alter both notes in the same way and the quailty remains the same.

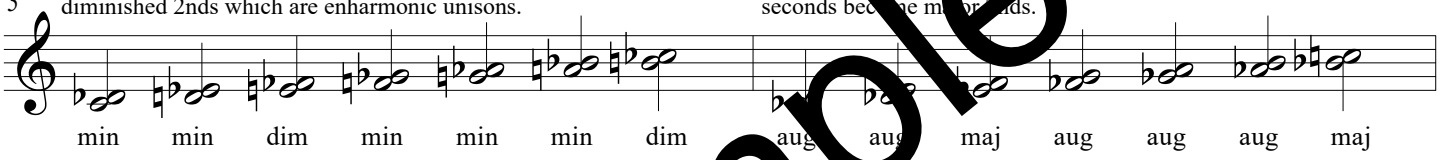
3



Alter the bottom note by raising 1/2 step and major seconds become minor seconds and the minor seconds become diminished 2nds which are enharmonic unisons.

Alter the top note by lowering 1/2 step and major seconds become minor seconds and the minor seconds become diminished 2nds which are enharmonic unisons.

5



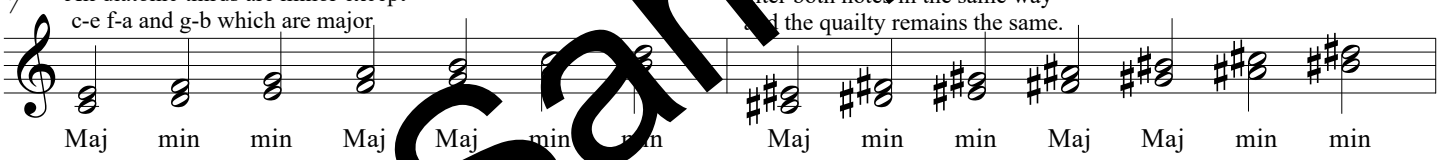
Alter the bottom note by lowering 1/2 step and major seconds become augmented seconds (enharmonic to minor 3rds) and the minor seconds become major 3rds.

3rds

min. 3rd=3 1/2 steps maj. 3rd =4 1/2 steps aug. 3rd=4 1/2 steps(enharmonic perfect 4th)

All diatonic thirds are minor except c-e f-a and g-b which are major

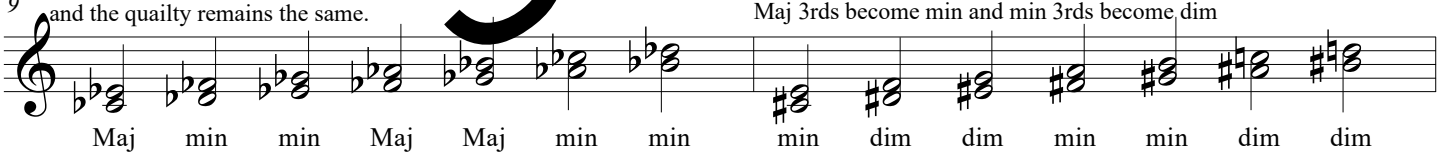
7



Alter both notes in the same way and the quailty remains the same.

Alter both notes in the same way and the quailty remains the same.

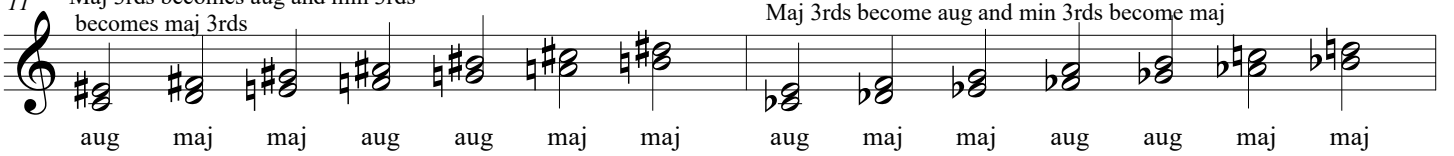
9



Alter the bottom note by raising a 1/2 step Maj 3rds become min and min 3rds become dim

Alter the top note by raising a 1/2 step Maj 3rds becomes aug and min 3rds becomes maj 3rds

11



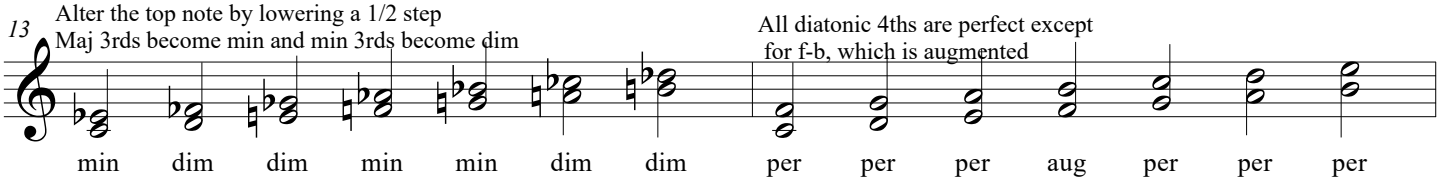
Alter the bottom note by lowering a 1/2 step Maj 3rds become aug and min 3rds become maj

4ths

per 4ths=5 1/2 steps aug 4ths=6 1/2 steps

Alter the top note by lowering a 1/2 step Maj 3rds become min and min 3rds become dim

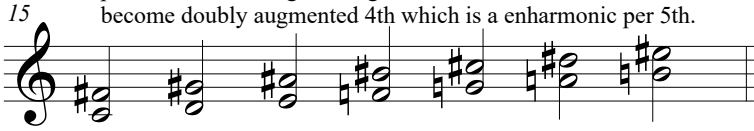
13



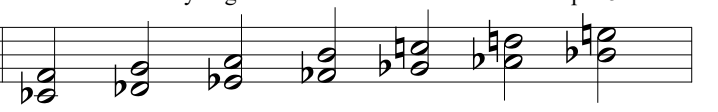
All diatonic 4ths are perfect except for f-b, which is augmented

15

Raise the top note 1/2 step and
per 4ths become aug and aug 4ths
become doubly augmented 4th which is a enharmonic per 5th.



Lower the bottom note 1/2 step and
per 4ths become aug and aug 4ths
become doubly augmented 4th which is a enharmonic per 5th.

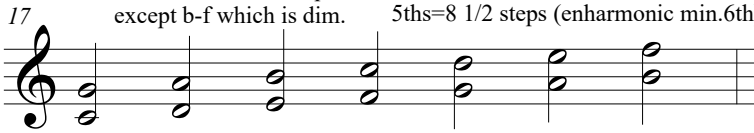


5ths

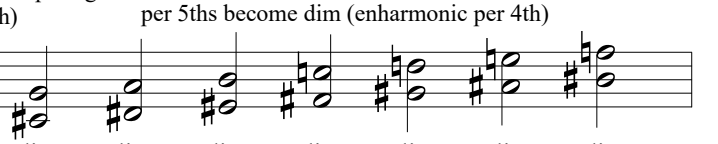
17

All diatonic 5ths are perfect
except b-f which is dim.

per. 5ths=7 1/2 steps dim. 5ths=6 1/2 steps aug.
5ths=8 1/2 steps (enharmonic min.6th)

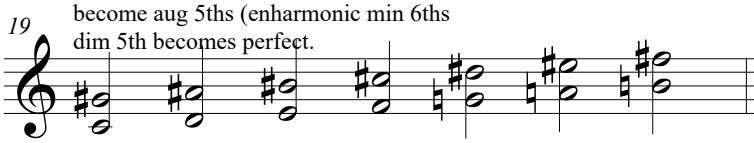


Raise the lower note 1/2 step and
per 5ths become dim (enharmonic per 4th)

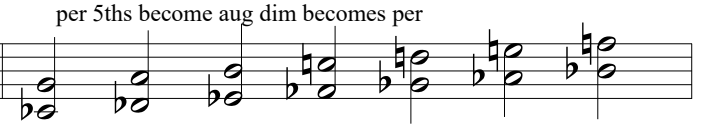


19

Raise the top note 1/2 step per 5ths
become aug 5ths (enharmonic min 6ths
dim 5th becomes perfect.

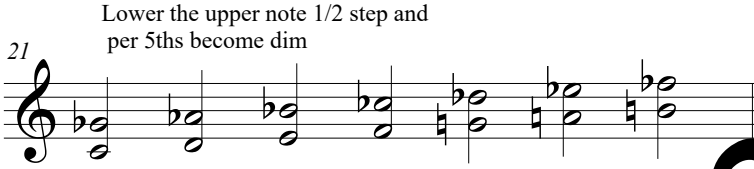


Lower the lower note 1/2 step and
per 5ths become aug dim becomes per



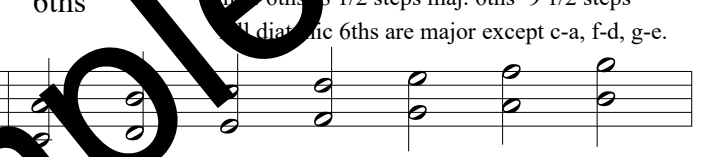
21

Lower the upper note 1/2 step and
per 5ths become dim



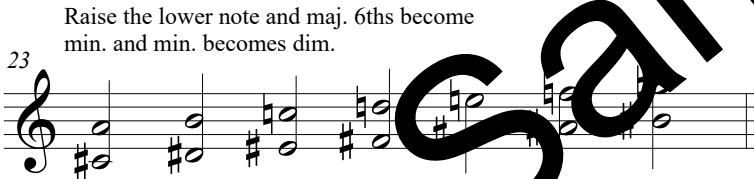
6ths

min. 6ths=8 1/2 steps maj. 6ths=9 1/2 steps
All diatonic 6ths are major except c-a, f-d, g-e.

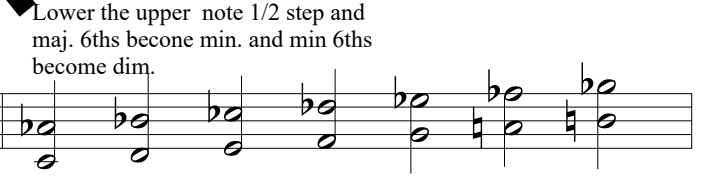


23

Raise the lower note and maj. 6ths become
min. and min. becomes dim.



Lower the upper note 1/2 step and
maj. 6ths becone min. and min 6ths
become dim.

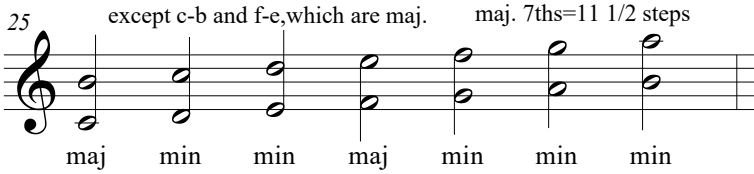


7ths

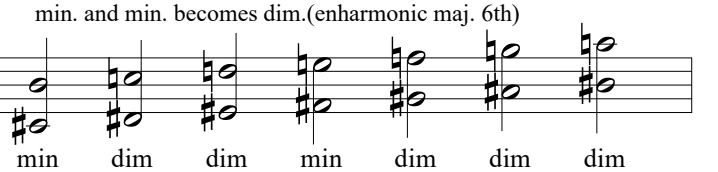
25

All diatonic 7ths are minor
except c-b and f-e,which are maj.

min. 7ths=10 1/2 steps
maj. 7ths=11 1/2 steps

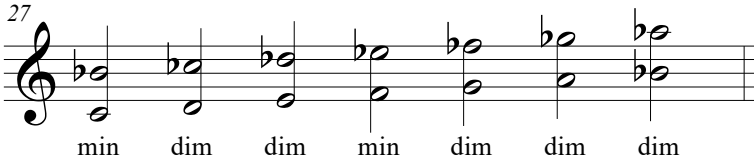


Raise the lower notes and maj becomes
min. and min. becomes dim.(enharmonic maj. 6th)

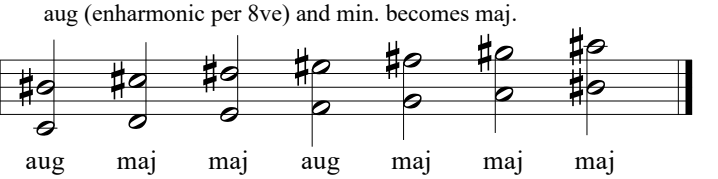


27

Lower the upper notes and maj. becomes
min. and min. becomes dim.

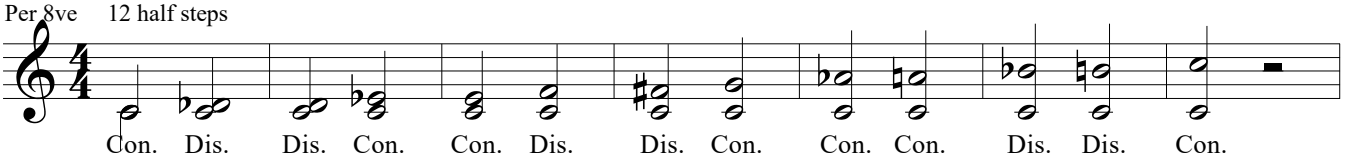


Raise the upper notes and maj becomes
aug (enharmonic per 8ve) and min. becomes maj.

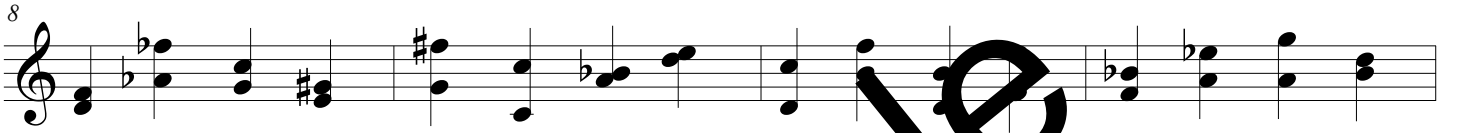


Consonant and Dissonant Intervals

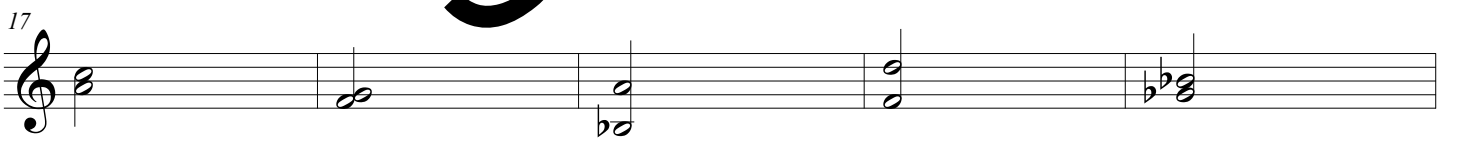
Interval Quality Guide
Min 2nd 1 half step
Maj 2nd 2 half steps
Min 3rd 3 half steps
Maj 3rd 4 half steps
Per 4th 5 half steps
Tritone Aug 4th or Dim 5th 6 half steps
Per 5th 7 half steps
Min 6th 8 half steps
Maj 6th 9 half steps
Min 7th 10 half steps
Maj 7th 11 half steps
Per 8ve 12 half steps

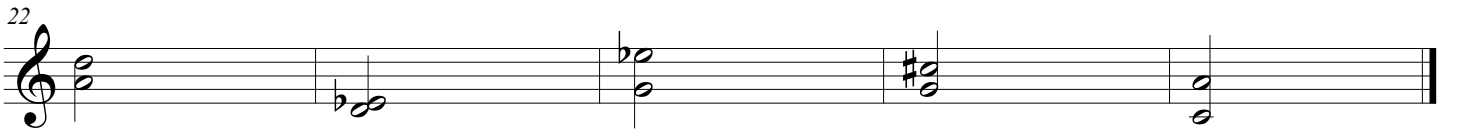


Identify the following intervals by quantity and quality and whether it is consonant or dissonant.

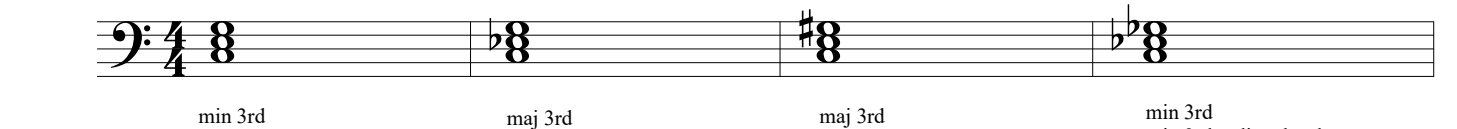


Identify the given interval then invert that interval and name the inversion





Chord Study Guide

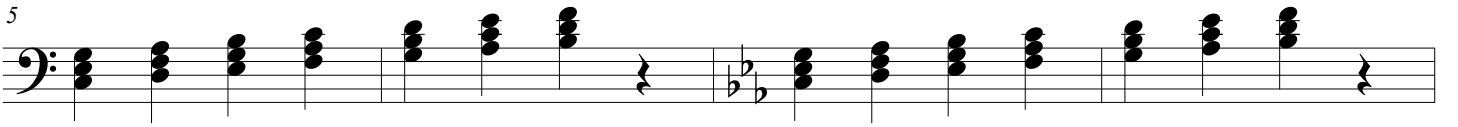


min 3rd
maj 3rd = maj chord

maj 3rd
min 3rd = min chord

maj 3rd
maj 3rd = aug chord

min 3rd
min 3rd = dim chord

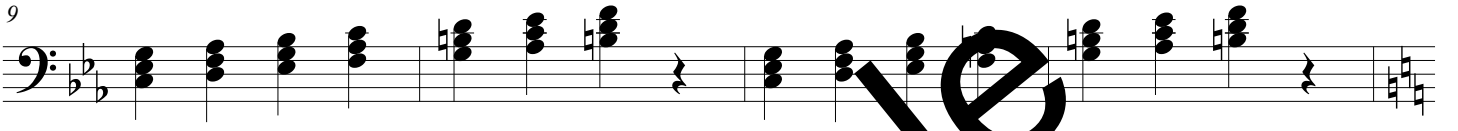


I ii iii IV V vi viio

Chords in a major scale

i iio III iv v VI VII

Chords in a natural minor scale



i iio III iv V VI viio

Chords in a harmonic minor scale

i ii III IV V VI viio

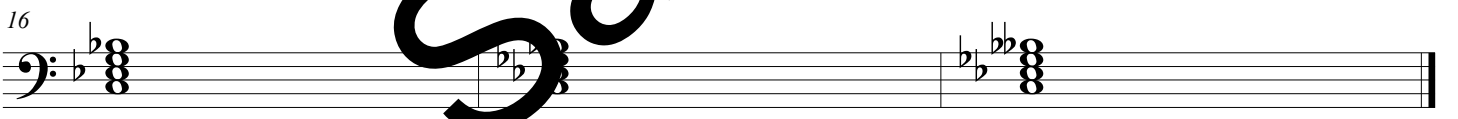
Chords in a melodic ascending minor scale (descending same as natural)

7th Chords

maj chord with maj 7th

maj chord with min 7th
used as V chord

min chord with maj 7th



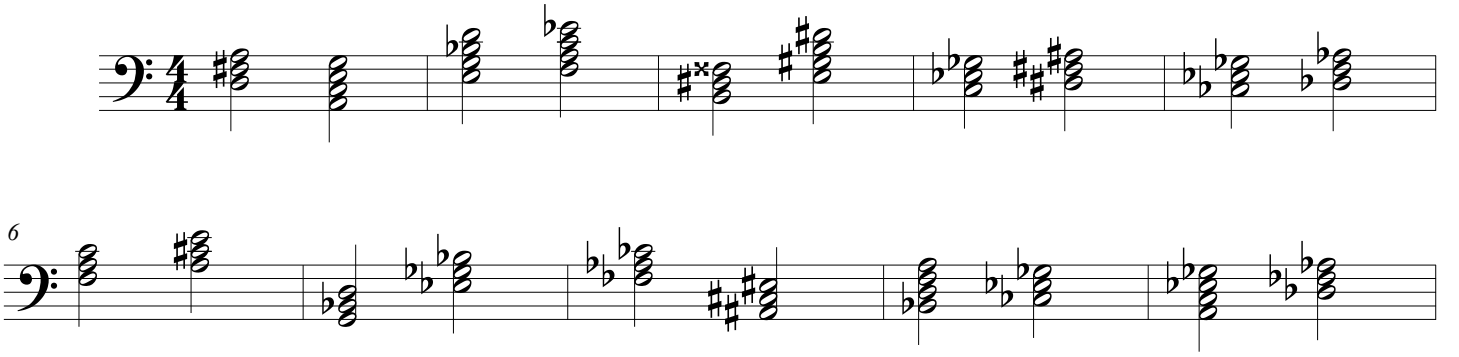
min chord with min 7th

dim chord with min 7th
half diminished

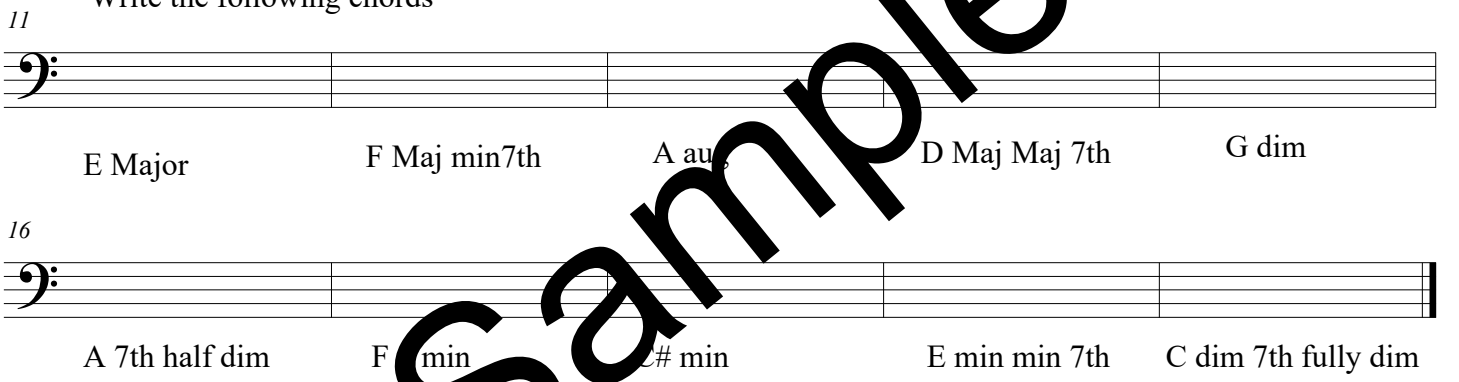
dim chord with dim 7th
fully diminished

Chord Worksheet

Identify the following chords



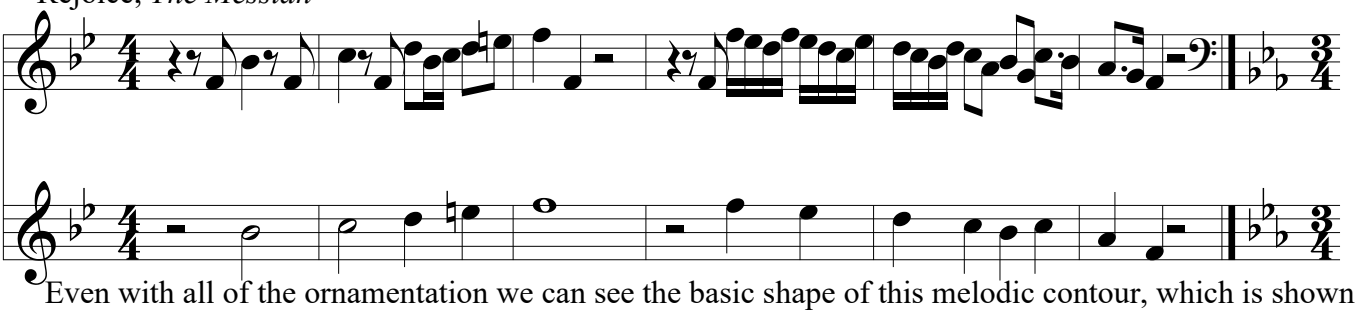
Write the following chords



Melodic Condsiderations

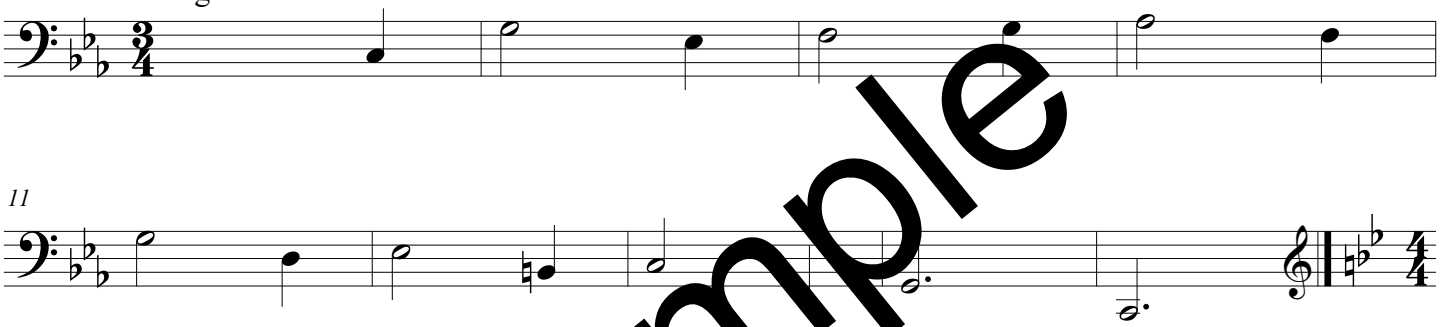
Examine the following melodies and determine the shape of each. Keep these basic shapes in mind as you begin to compose your own melodies.

Rejoice, *The Messiah* — George F. Handel



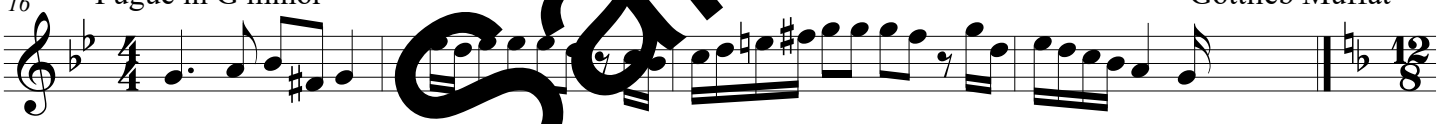
Even with all of the ornamentation we can see the basic shape of this melodic contour, which is shown on the bottom staff.

7 Passacaglia in C minor — J. S. Bach

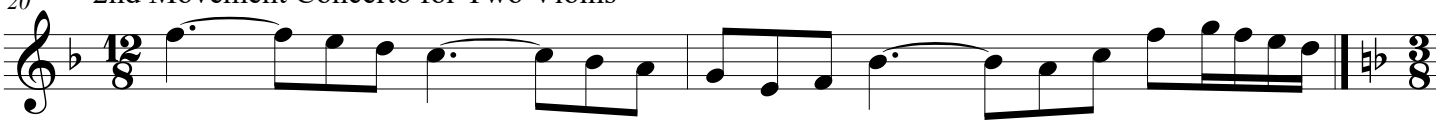


11

16 Fugue in G minor — Gottlieb Muffat



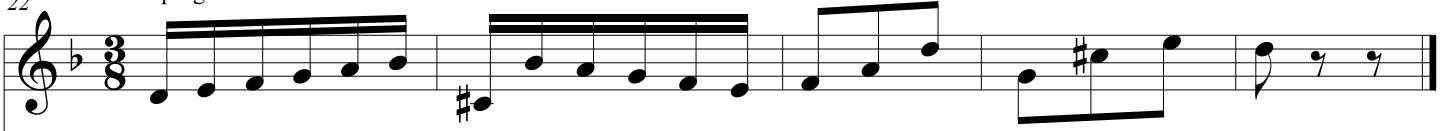
20 2nd Movement Concerto for Two Vioins — J. S. Bach



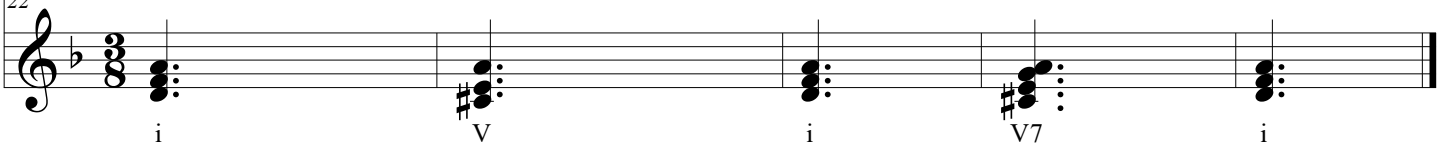
Harmonic Considerations

This melody is closely tied to the harmonic progression shown in the bottom staff. Your melodies should also follow some type of harmonic progressions.

22 — J. S. Bach



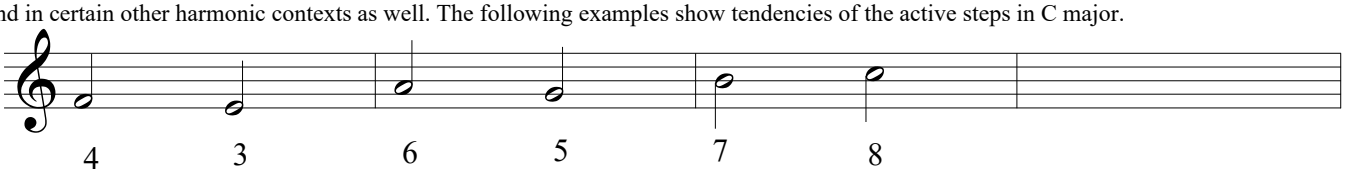
22



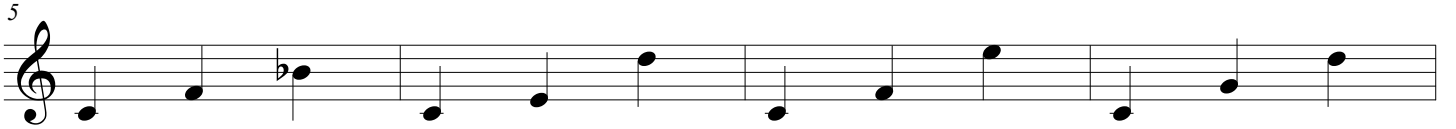
i V i V7 i

Melodic Considerations
Active steps, leaps and rhythmic motion

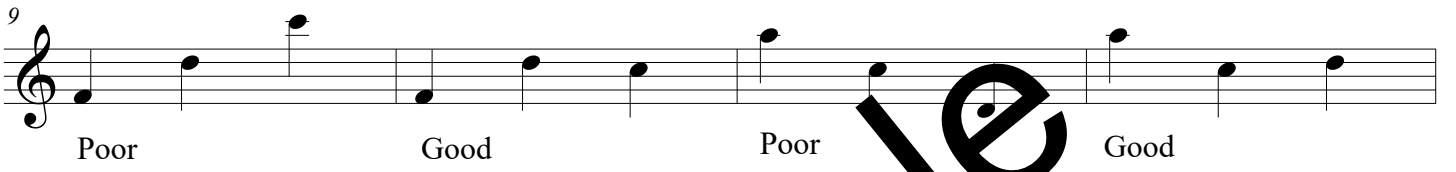
The 4th, 6th, and 7th scale degrees(sometimes called "active steps") have particular directional tendencies in relation to the tonic harmony and in certain other harmonic contexts as well. The following examples show tendencies of the active steps in C major.



When two or more leaps are made in the same direction, the ear interprets all notes as belonging to the same harmony, assuming that none of them is clearly nonharmonic. Therefore, consecutive leaps should involve only notes which form a harmony acceptable in the style being used.



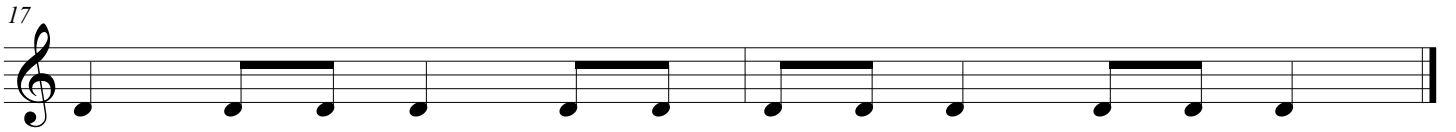
Even when they fit into the same implied harmony, two large leaps(say of a 6th or more) in the same direction should be avoided, since they would tend to take the line too far in one direction too suddenly, and would bring about a lack of melodic balance. After a large leap it is usually best to have the melody turn in the opposite direction.



As a general rule, a leap followed by stepwise motion is preferable to stepwise motion followed by a leap.

There should be some corroboration of musical elements, melodic, rhythmic or both. Melodic corroboration may be achieved by the actual repetition of an element, anything from a small figure to an entire phrase or section. The repetition may occur successively or after intervening material. Sequence, in which a melodic element recurs on another scale step, is much more frequent than literal repetition, and is an extremely common and important device in contrapuntal music of the tonal period.

Abrupt halts in rhythmic motion are to be avoided. Where the choice between motion on a strong beat and motion on a weak beat, the latter arrangement is generally preferable, so that there will be a sense of propulsion into the stronger beat, and so the length of the note and strength of the beat will be mutually supportive.



But this principle must not be taken too literally, for exceptions are frequently brought about by special considerations in the musical pattern. Nor does it apply when there is another voice that can maintain the rhythmic flow at points where the first voice pauses.

Two-part counterpoint rules: First Species (Guidelines adapted from http://hum.uchicago.edu/classes/zbikowski/species.html by Lawerence M. Zbikowski)

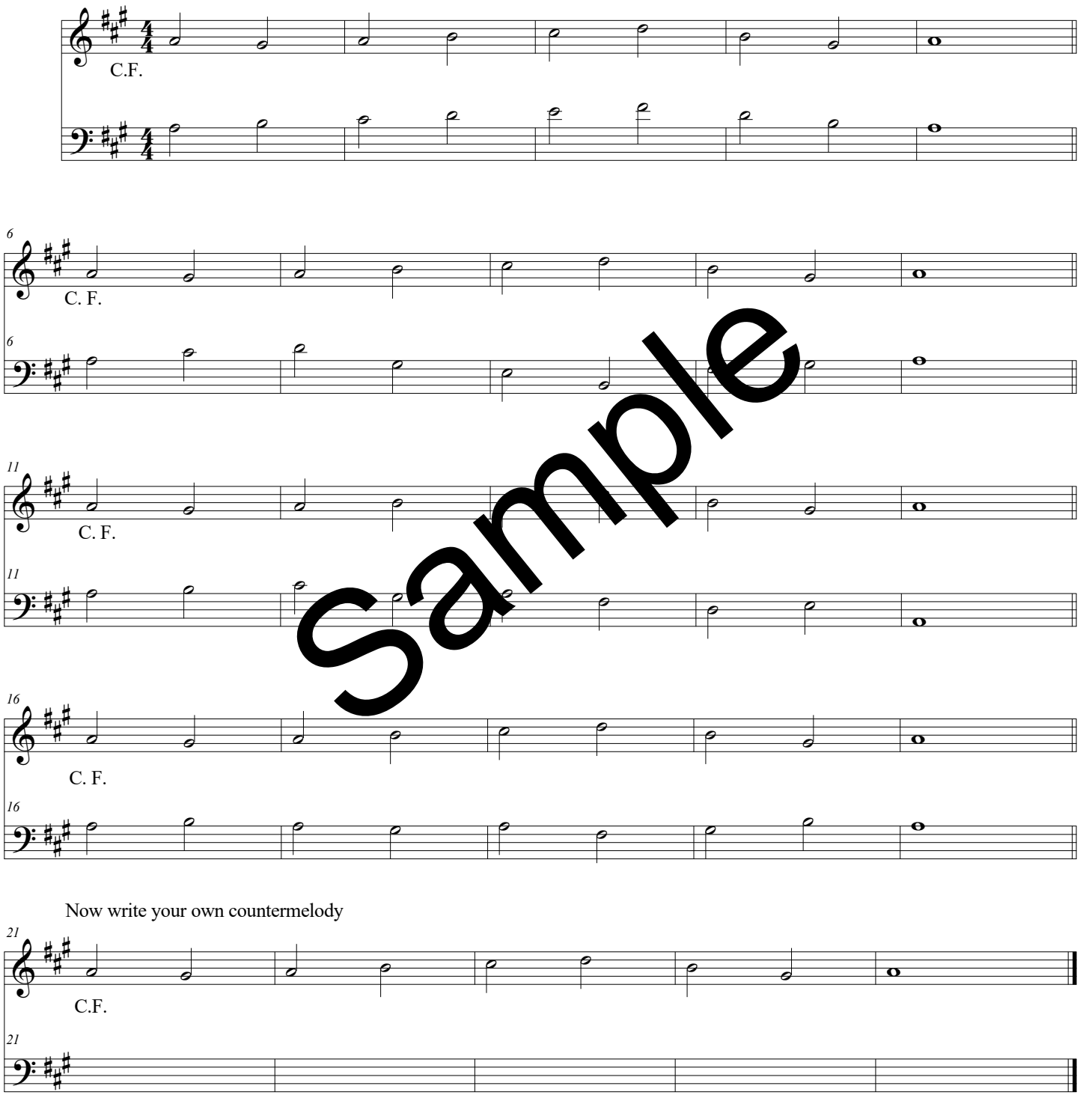
1. **Procedure**
2. Countermelodies above a cantus firmus begin at the unison, octave, or fifth; countermelodies below, begin at the unison or octave. Endings are always at the unison or octave.
3. The penultimate simultaneity must be an imperfect consonance (i. e., a third or a sixth). In most cases the penultimate note of the counterpoint will be the leading tone, which must be raised in minor. (Phrygian is the one exception. Even though it is a minor mode, because there is only a half-step between the first and second steps of the scale, the seventh step of the scale is never raised.)
4. **Intervals**
5. First species counterpoint is completely consonant note-against-note counterpoint. Intervals permitted between the counterpoint and cantus firmus are major and minor thirds, sixths, and tenths, and perfect unisons, octaves, and fifths. Fourths are not allowed as harmonic intervals.
6. The unison may be used only at the beginning and end of an exercise.
7. Thirds and sixths predominate in exercises, with fifths and octaves thoughtfully deployed for variety.
8. Parallel and "anti-parallel" perfect intervals are not permitted.
9. Perfect intervals approached by similar motion ("hidden") must be avoided; they are especially prominent if both voices move by leap.
10. Chains of more than three consecutive thirds or three consecutive sixths should be avoided.
11. Avoid a cross relation against the leading tone in minor.
12. **Part-writing**
13. To promote independence of voices, contrary motion is preferred over similar motion or parallel motion, and similar motion is preferred over parallel motion. Oblique motion is acceptable, but introduces a static element into the exercise. No one type of motion should persist to the point of monotony.
14. It is conducive to independence when the climax of the counterpoint does not coincide with that of the cantus.
15. Simultaneous leaps in cantus and counterpoint should be avoided.
16. Voice crossing and/or overlapping must be avoided.

First Species

When writing for two voices remember;

Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

Identify the following intervals and determine what may be wrong with the following examples and write your own countermelody to the Cantus firmus.



Now write your own countermelody

First Species

Answers

When writing for two voices remember;

Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

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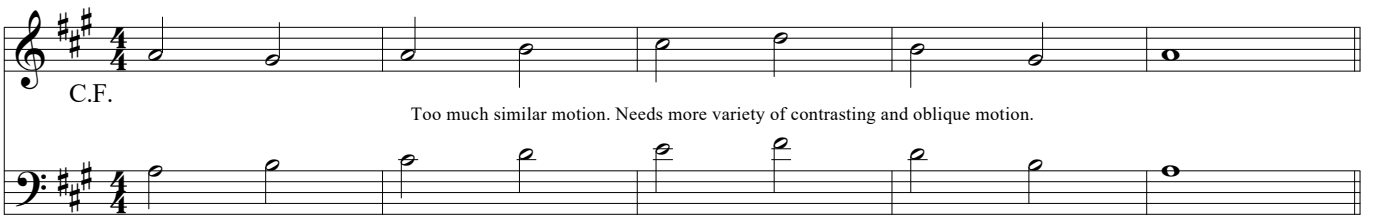
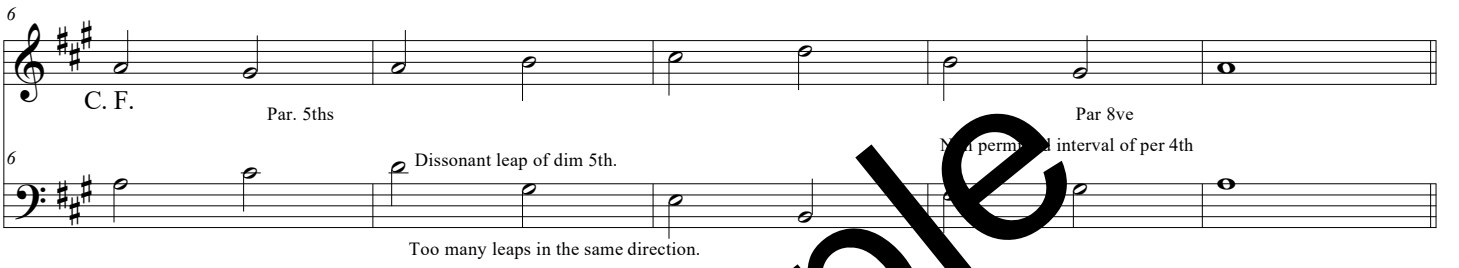
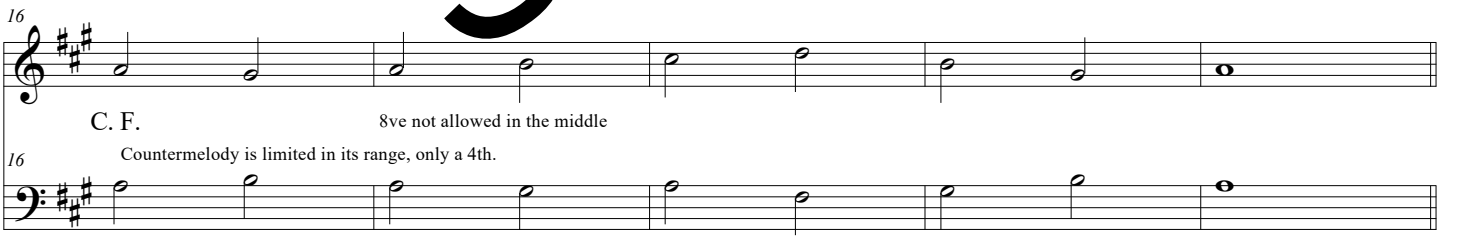


Too much similar motion. Needs more variety of contrasting and oblique motion.

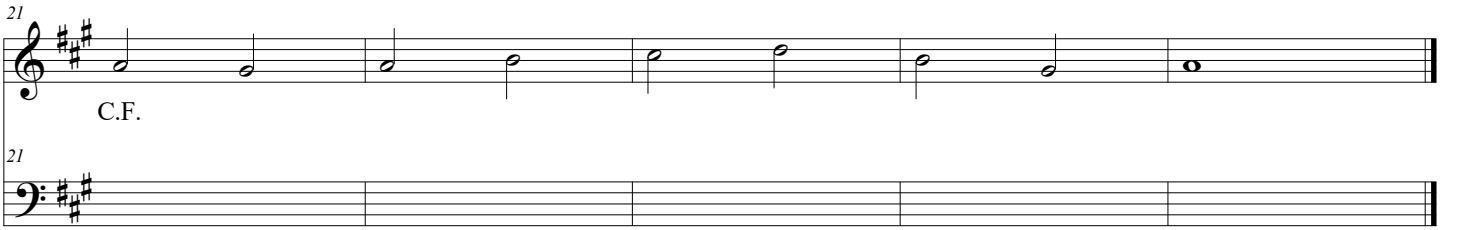


Too many leaps in the same direction.



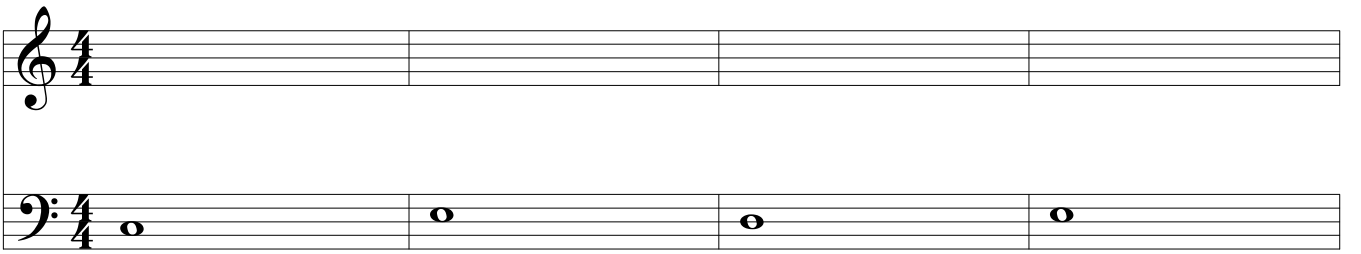
Countermelody is limited in its range, only a 4th.

Now write your own countermelody

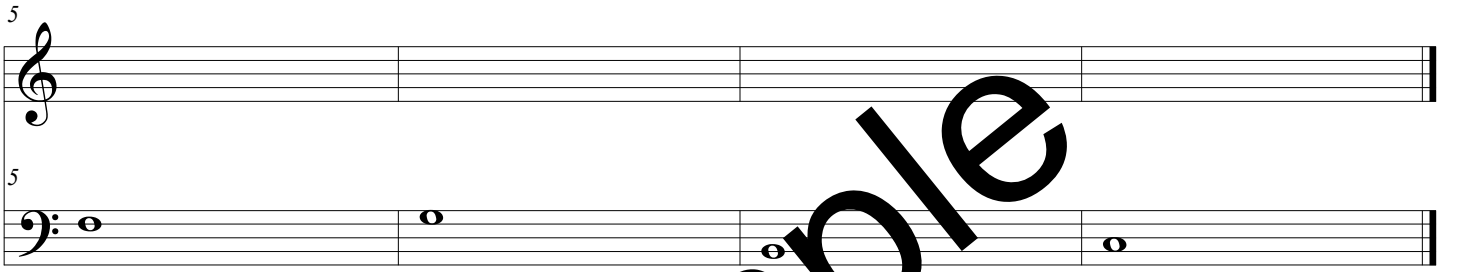


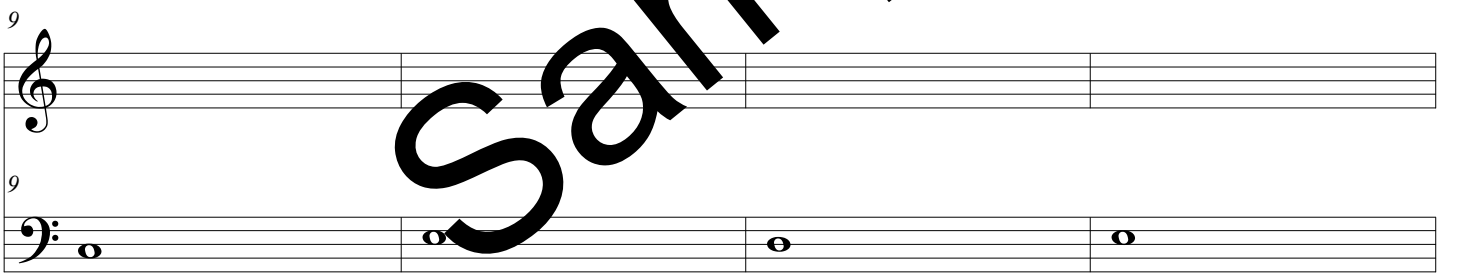
First Species Counterpoint

Write your own countermelodies

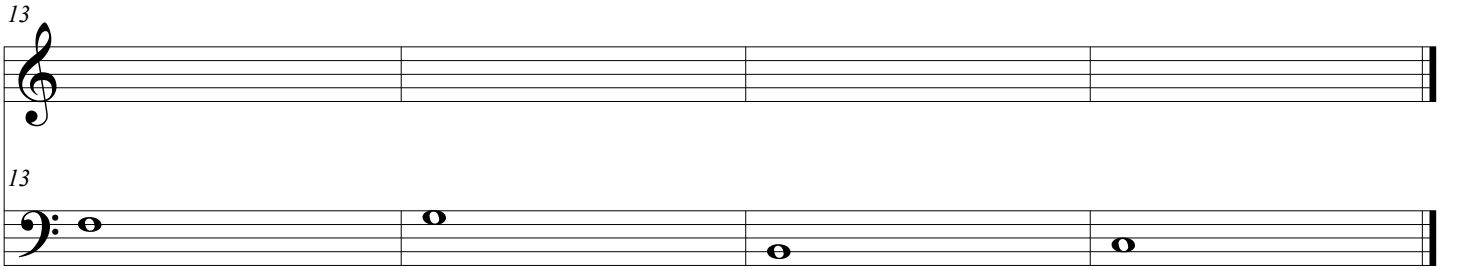


C. F.





C.F.



Two-part counterpoint rules: Second Species

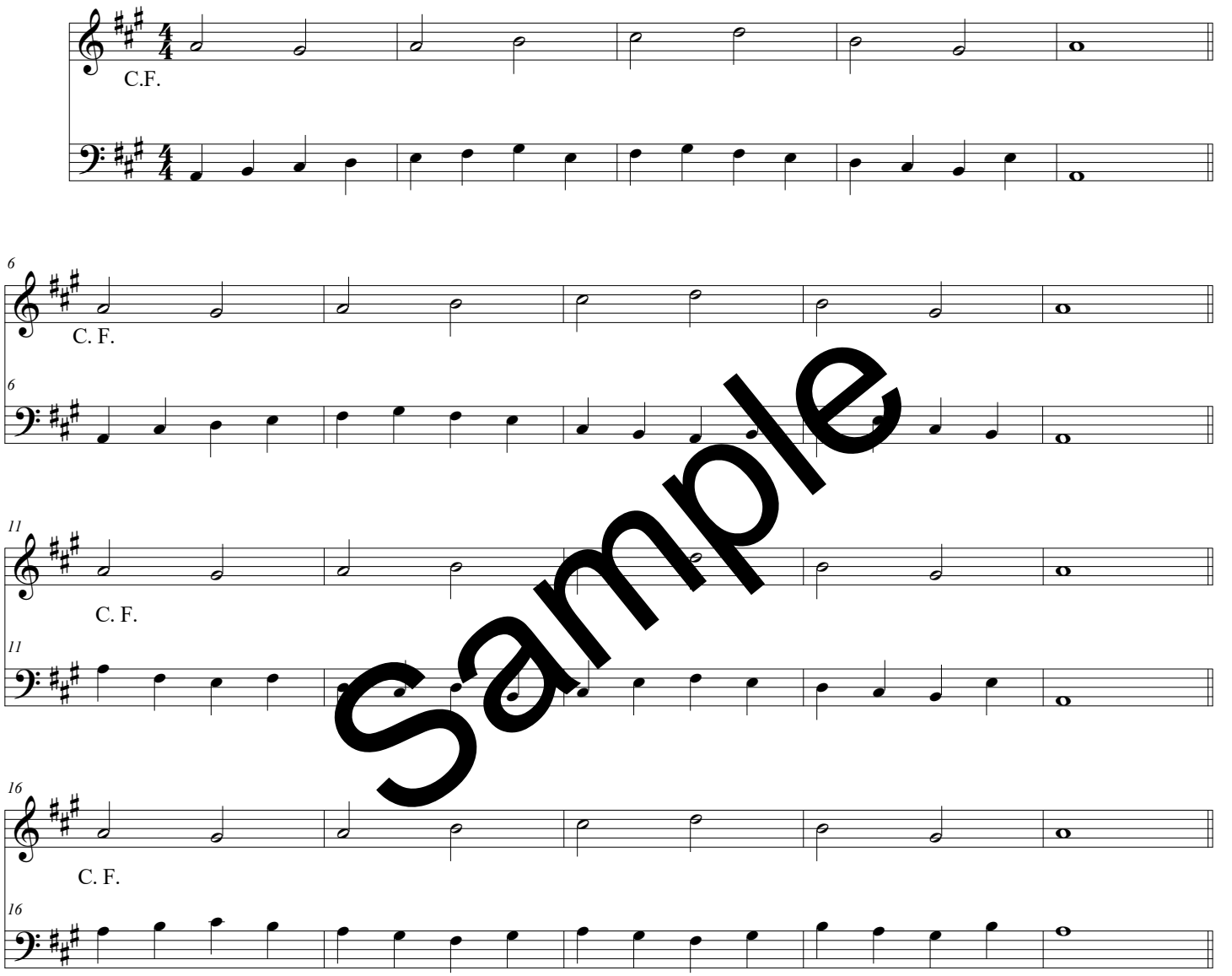
1. **Procedure**
2. In second species there are two notes to each note of the c.f. (however, see #3 and #4 below). The coincidence of notes of the counterpoint and c.f. creates beats that are strong in comparison to the single notes that occur in the counterpoint, heard as weak beats. The counterpoint will of course be notated in half notes or quarter notes if the c.f. Is notated in half notes.
3. The opening and closing intervals are the same as those in first species.
4. The counterpoint can begin on the beat or off the beat (after a rest).
5. The counterpoint ends with a whole note (as does the c.f.); the penultimate measure of the counterpoint can be a whole note as well, if desired.
6. No ties or repeated notes are permitted in the counterpoint.
7. **Intervals**
8. Dissonant intervals are allowed on the second half note of the measure if approached and left by step. According to the rules we are using, both dissonant passing tones and dissonant neighbors are allowed. Beware, however, of the stasis the latter can lead to.
9. Avoid a leap into an octave from the weak beat of the preceding measure (this can lead to what is called *ottava battuta*).
10. Unisons are permitted (sparingly) on the weak beat of the measure.
11. A distance of a thirteenth is permitted between voices—as always, use discretion.
12. **Voice-leading**
13. From a strong beat to a weak beat only one voice moves (the counterpoint)—this voice is governed by overall melodic writing rules and #6 above.
14. From a weak beat to a strong beat both voices move—motion is then governed by first species rules.
15. In general, strong beats should still adhere to first species rules.
16. It is better to leap within the measure than across the bar line. Indeed, stepping across the bar line is a highly effective way of generating a sense of melodic fluency, especially when it occurs as part of a passing motion (with either a consonant or a dissonant passing note).
17. Consonant neighbor motions are permitted, but they should be used with care since they can tend to stall the forward movement of the melodic line.

Second Species

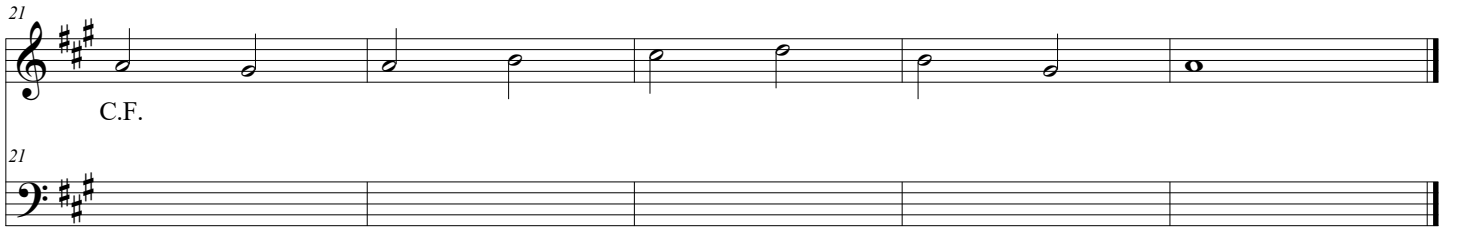
When writing for two voices remember;

Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

Identify the following intervals and determine what may be wrong with the following examples and write your own countermelody to the Cantus firmus.



Now write your own countermelody

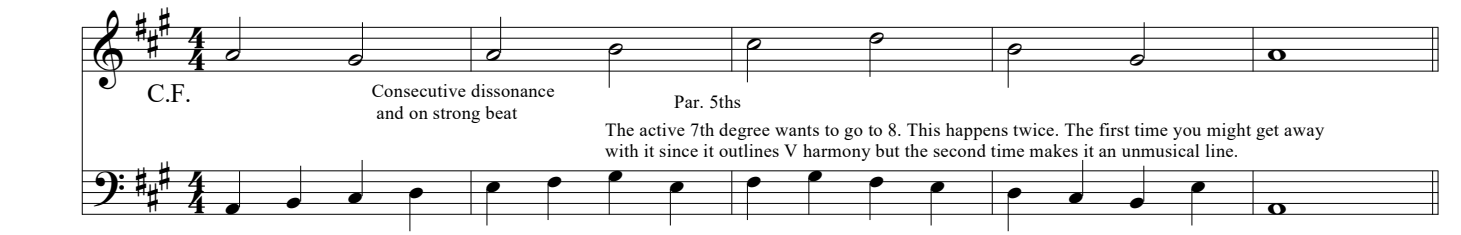


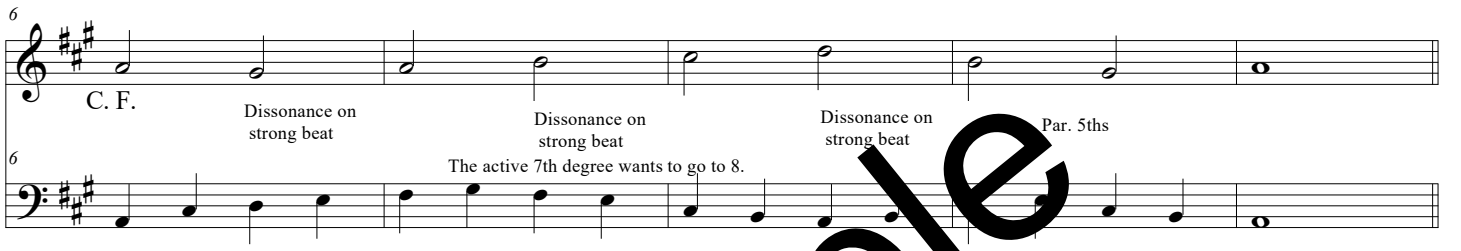
Second Species
Answers

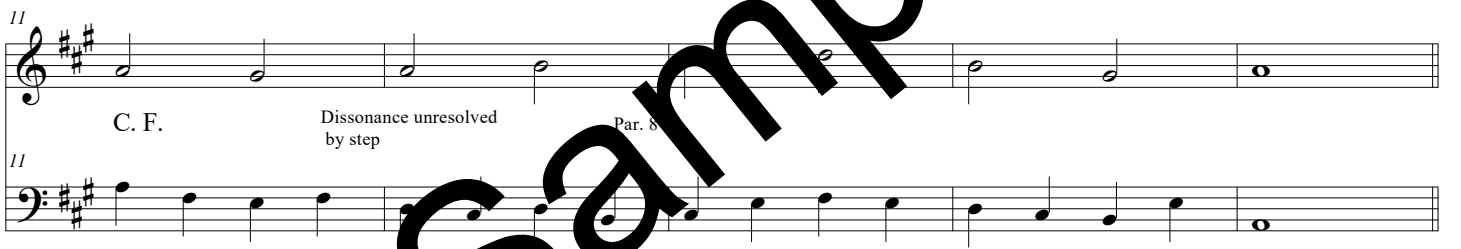
When writing for two voices remember;

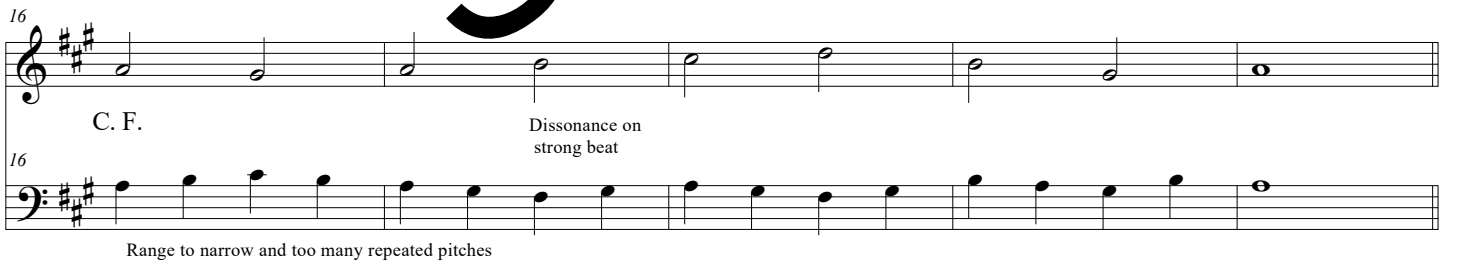
Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

Identify the following intervals and determine what may be wrong with the following examples and write your own countermelody to the Cantus firmus.

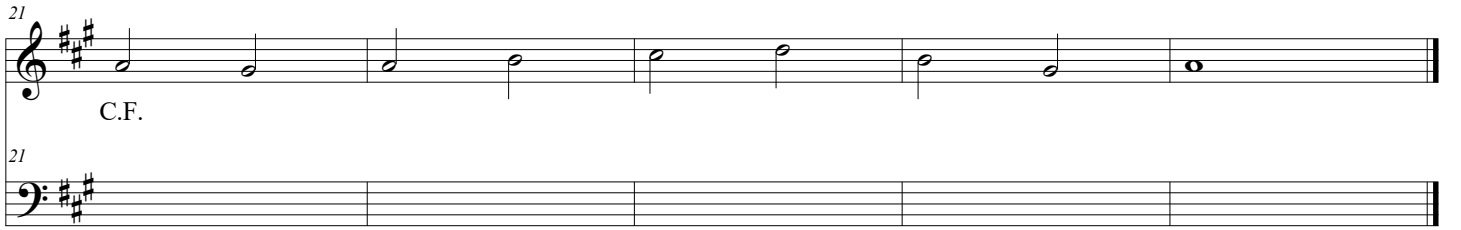




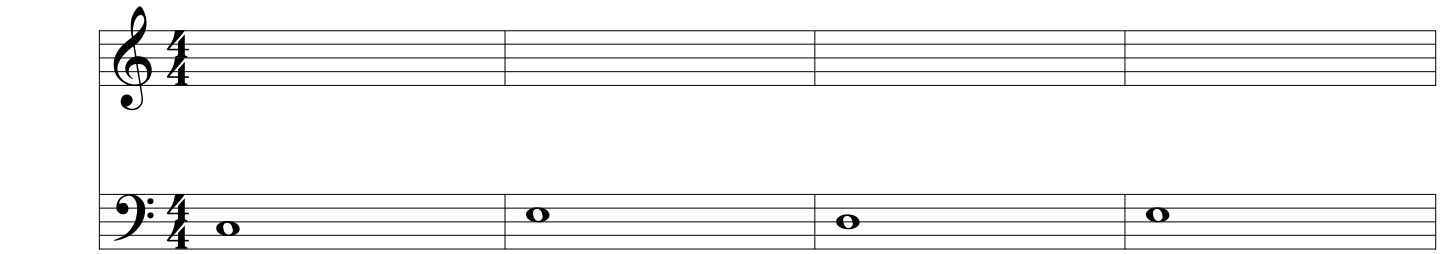




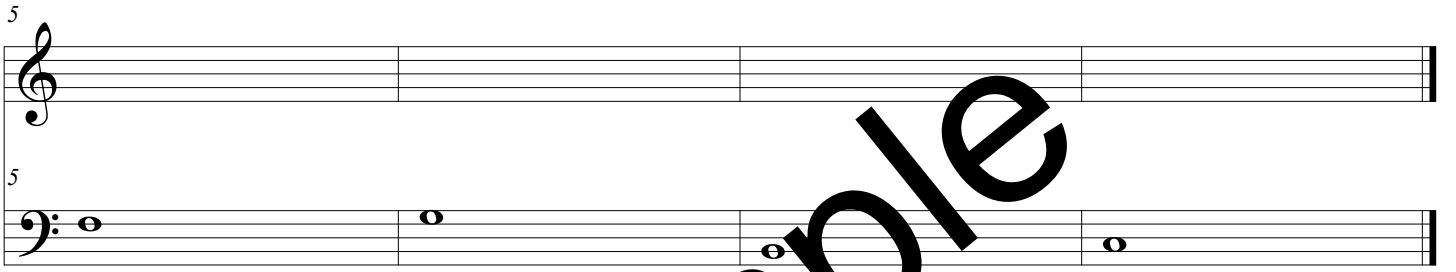
Now write your own countermelody

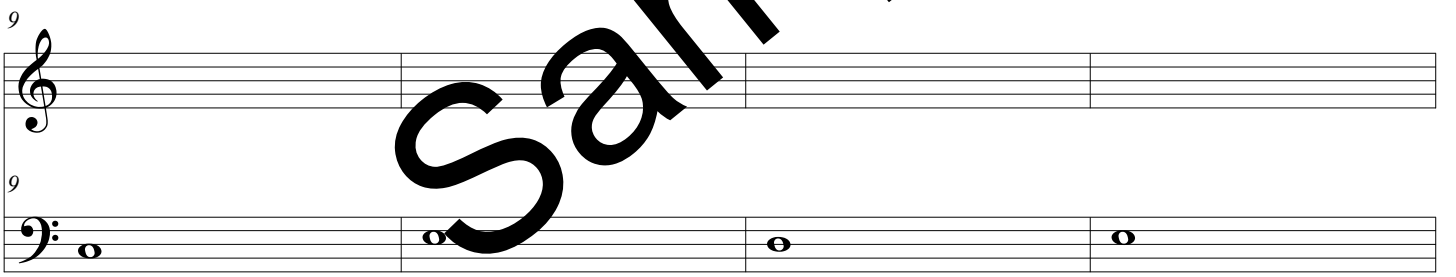


Write your own countermelodies

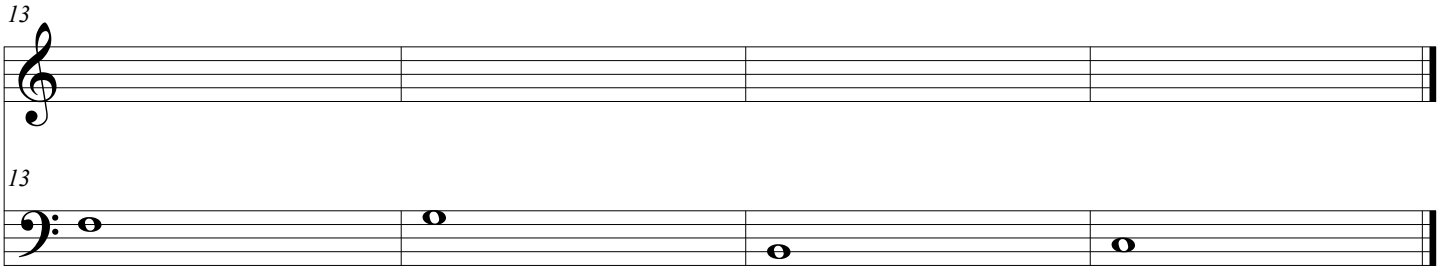


C. F.

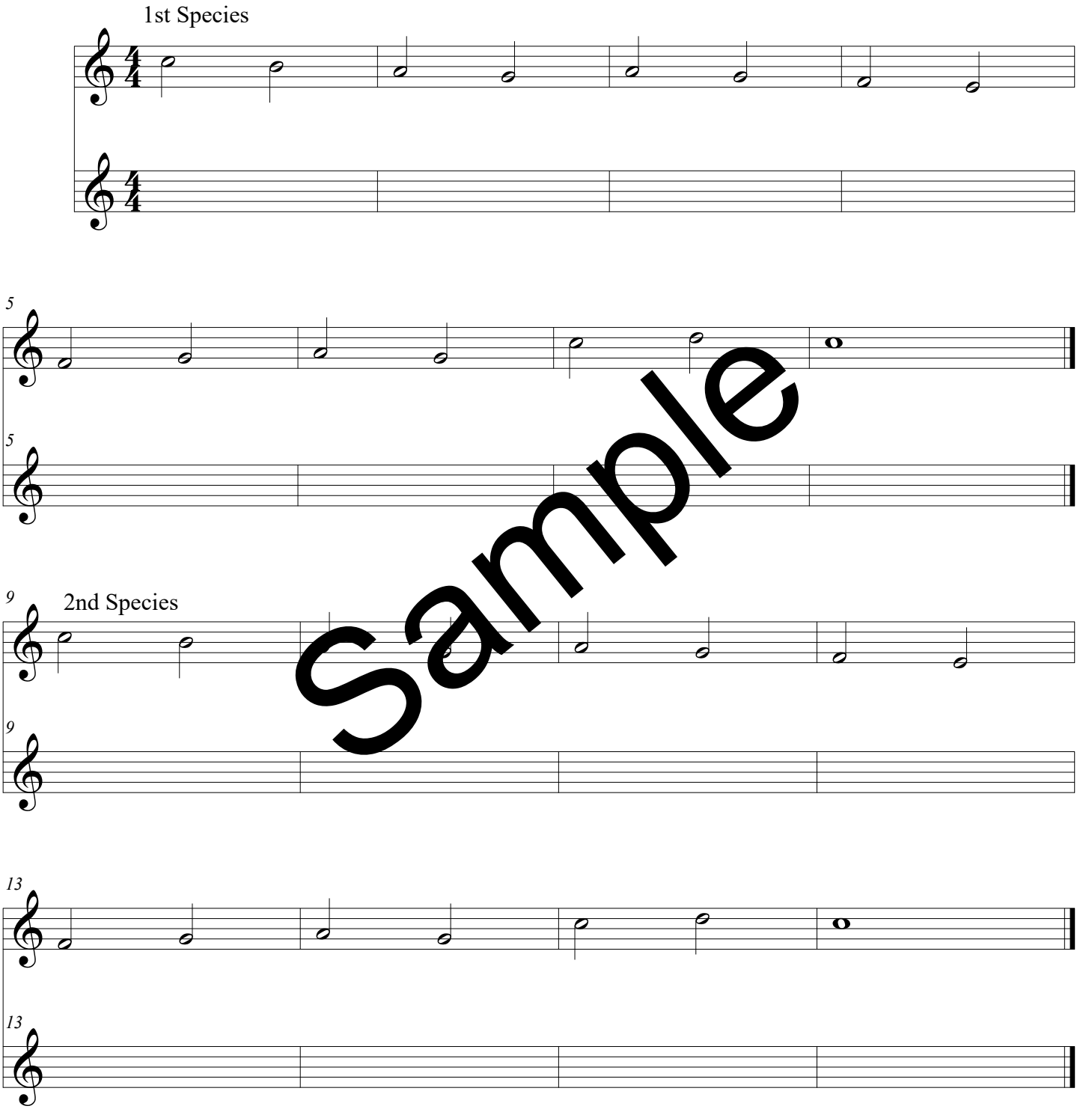




C.F.



1st and 2nd Species Counterpoint Exercise



Two-part counterpoint rules: Third Species

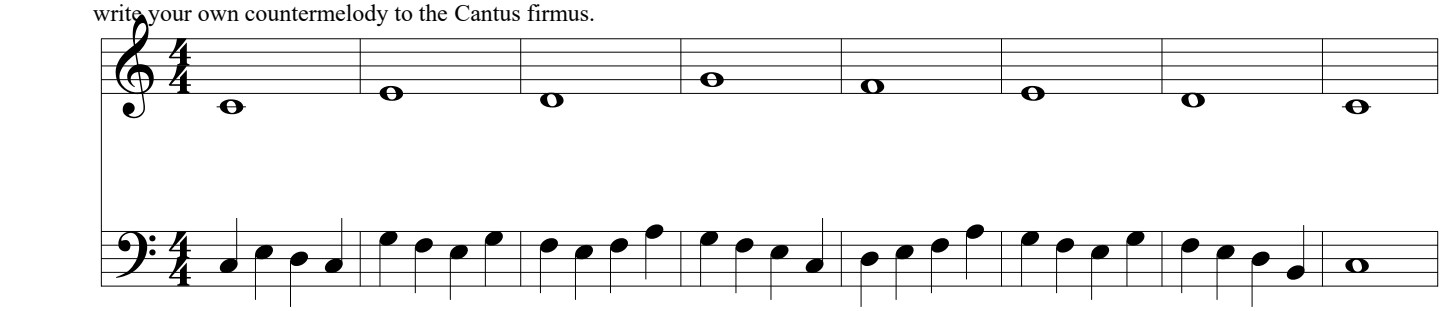
1. **Procedure**
2. In third species there are four notes to each note of the c.f. (however, see #3 and #4 below). As in second species, the coincidence of notes of the counterpoint and c.f. creates strong beats, now on the first quarter note of each measure.
3. The opening and closing intervals are the same as those in first species, and the counterpoint will contain no ties and no repeated notes.
4. The counterpoint may begin on the beat or after a quarter rest (which asserts the independence of the voices).
5. The counterpoint ends with a whole note; the penultimate measure of the counterpoint will have four quarter notes, the last of which will be scale degree 2 or 7. See example 3-40, p. 68 of Salzer and Schachter, *Counterpoint in Composition* for sample cadential endings.
6. **Intervals**
7. All first beats are consonant.
8. Dissonance, strictly controlled as always, is permitted on the remaining quarter notes of the measure. All dissonant notes will be connected stepwise on both sides to other notes of the counterpoint with the exception of the stylized figures covered in #7. Both passing and neighboring motions will result.
9. Two exceptions to dissonance treatment are
    1. the double neighbor figure
    2. the *nota cambiata*
10. Neighbor motions are essentially static; their use should be limited.
11. Remember, the resolution of a dissonance creates motion in the direction of the resolution; it is always best to follow this direction.
12. Unisons are permitted on any beat other than the first; use at most one unison per measure.
13. **Voice-leading**
14. Within the measure only one voice moves; this voice is governed by overall melodic writing rules and #6 & #7 above.
15. From beat 4 to beat 1 both voices move; motion is then governed by first species rules.
16. Parallel perfect intervals from strong beat to strong beat are possible if treated correctly.
17. It is better to leap within the measure than across the bar line.

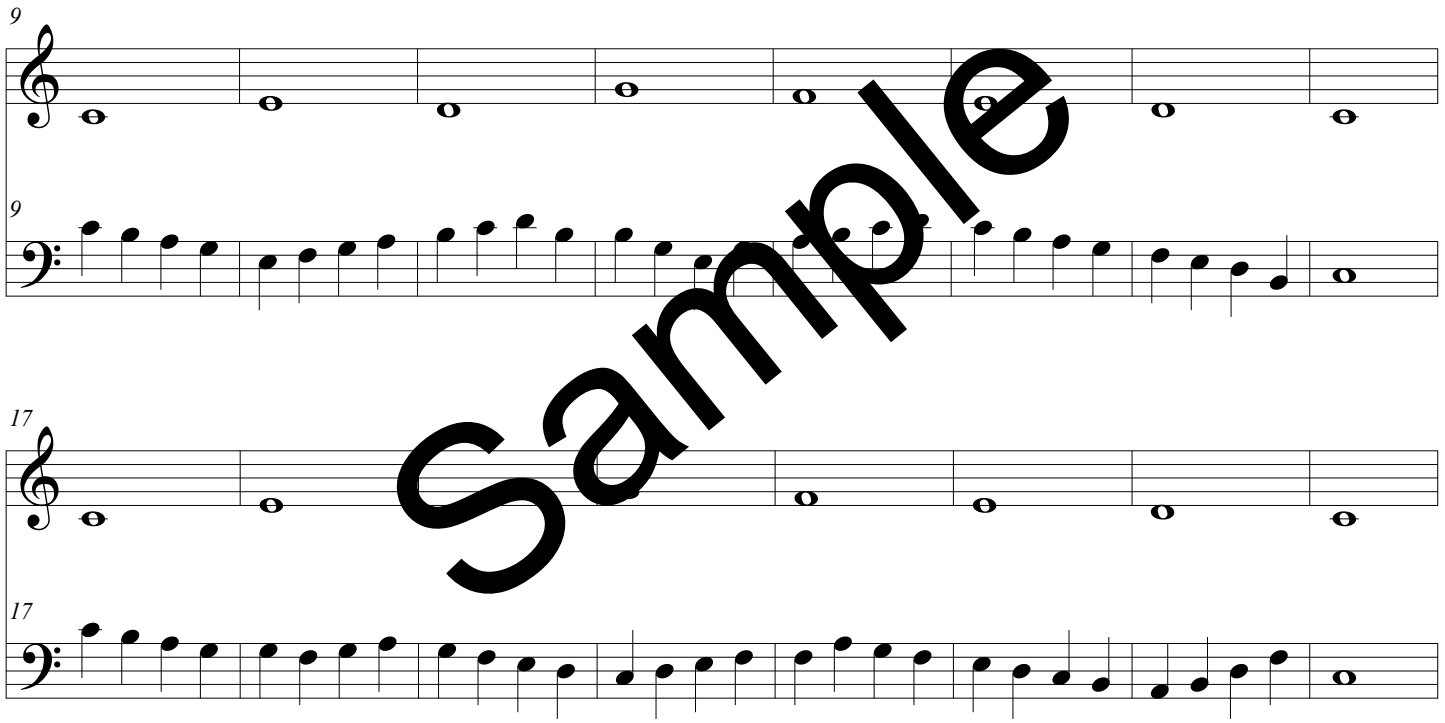
Third Species Examples

When writing for two voices remember;

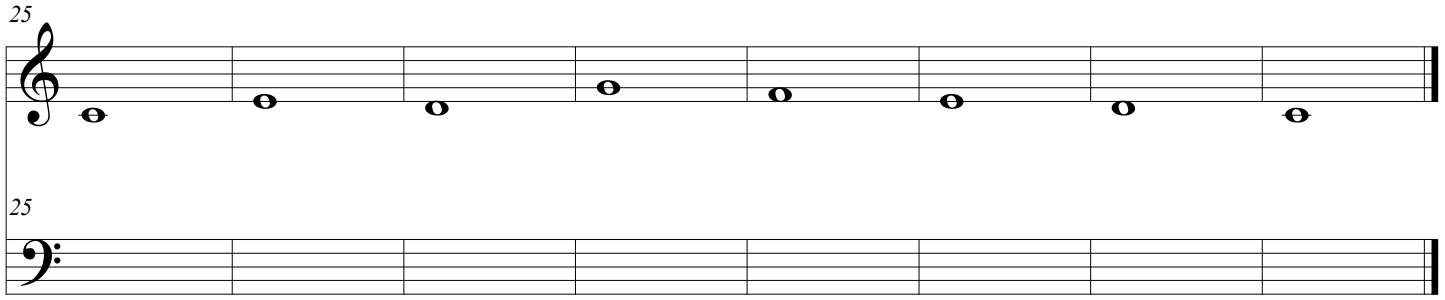
Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

Identify the following intervals and determine what may be wrong with the following examples and write your own countermelody to the Cantus firmus.





Now write your own countermelody



Third Species Examples

When writing for two voices remember; Answers

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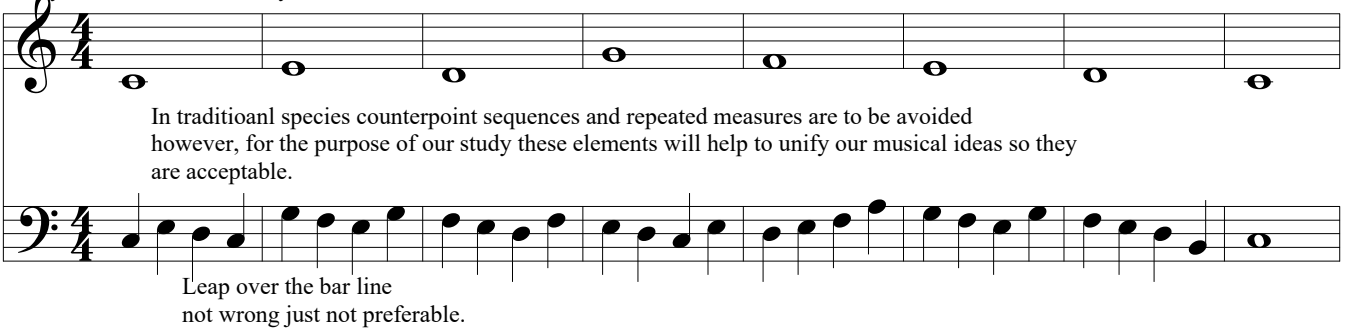

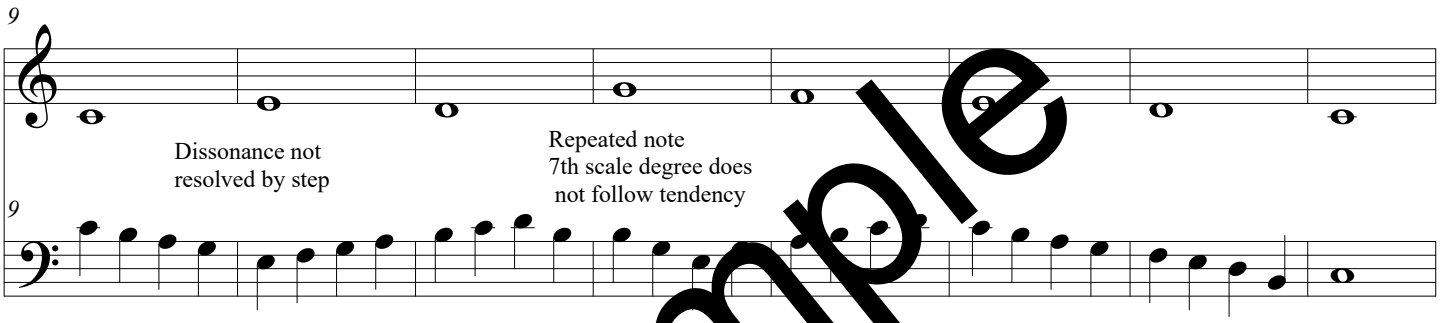

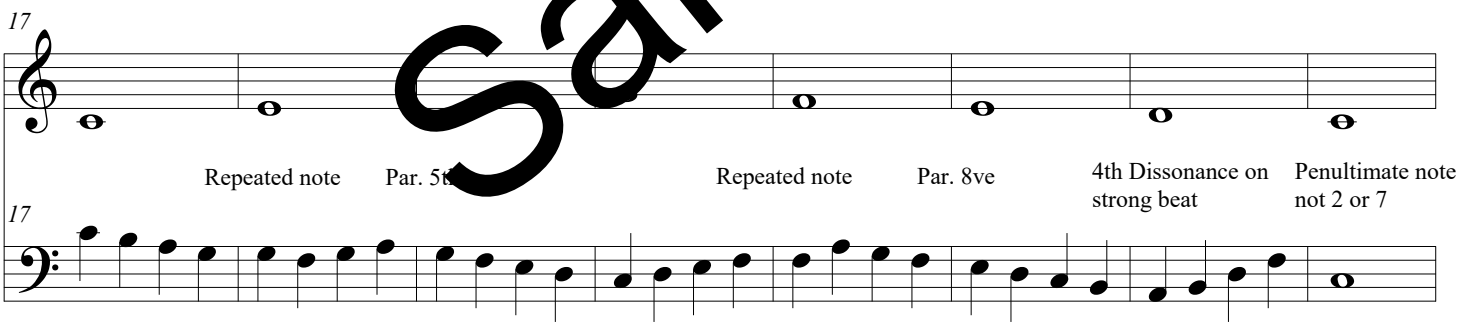

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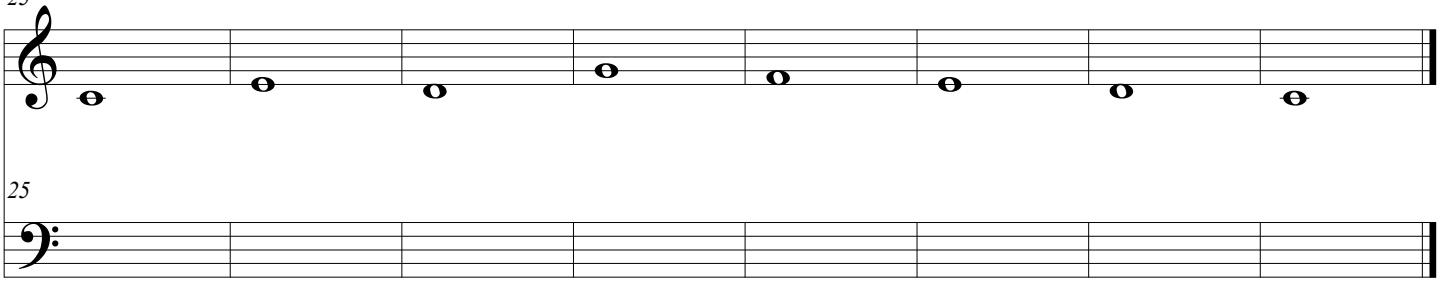


Two-part counterpoint rules: Fourth Species

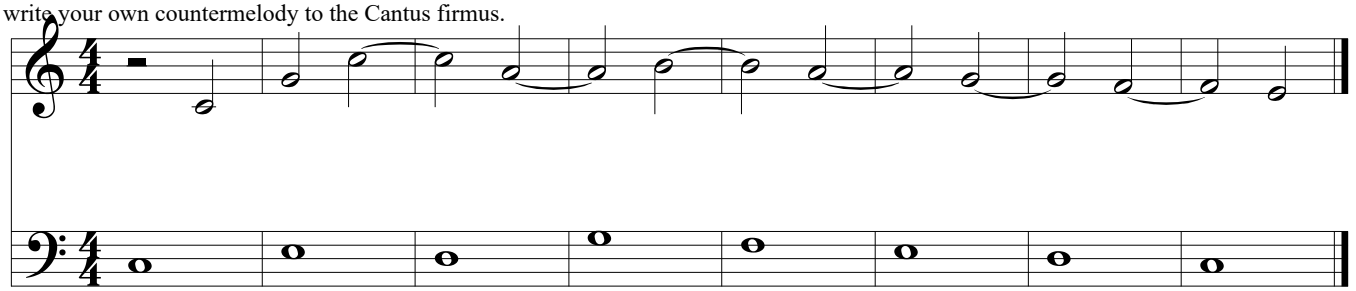
1. **Procedure**
2. The purpose of fourth species counterpoint is to learn to control suspensions (or what were called syncopes in the period). It is thus written in half notes, with as many second beats tied over to first beats as possible; however, see #4 below.
3. The counterpoint always begins after a half measure of rest (to promote independence of the voices), and ends on a whole note (or breve).
4. The opening and closing intervals are the same as always.
5. It is possible to break the succession of tied notes occasionally in order to improve voice leading. The counterpoint then follows second species rules.
6. **Intervals: Suspension Figures**
7. The first note of a tied pair (or syncope) is always consonant.
    1. If the second note (on the strong beat) is consonant, the counterpoint is then governed by second species rules; this is a consonant syncope.
    2. If the second note (on the strong beat) is dissonant, the dissonance must be resolved *downward in stepwise motion;* this is a dissonant syncope, which we conventionally call a suspension. A syncopated dissonance that resolves upward is called a retardation. This figure was not used in the conservative style associated with species, although there is no particularly good reason why it couldn't be used—it just wasn't.
8. With counterpoint above the c.f.
    1. 7-6 and 4-3 suspensions may be used liberally; when a series of the same type of suspension is used in succession, this is called a chain of suspensions
    2. 9-8 suspensions can lead to parallel octaves—these may be used only singly (they cannot be used in chains of suspensions)
    3. 2-1 suspensions should be used only in emergencies.
9. With counterpoint below the c.f.
    1. 2-3 and 9-10 suspensions may be used liberally (they can be used in chains of suspensions)
    2. 4-5 suspensions can lead to parallel fifths—these may be used only singly (they cannot be used in chains of suspensions)
    3. 7-8 suspensions are generally excluded
10. Avoid repeating the same type of suspension more than three times (break the chain of suspensions after the third instance of a particular type).
11. **Voice-leading**
12. If two unisons, fifths or octaves occur in adjacent measures with only a dissonant suspension in between, the voice leading will be unacceptable. Thus, 9-8 and 4-5 suspensions will not occur in series. On the other hand, 6-5 and 5-6 in series are good, especially the 5-6.

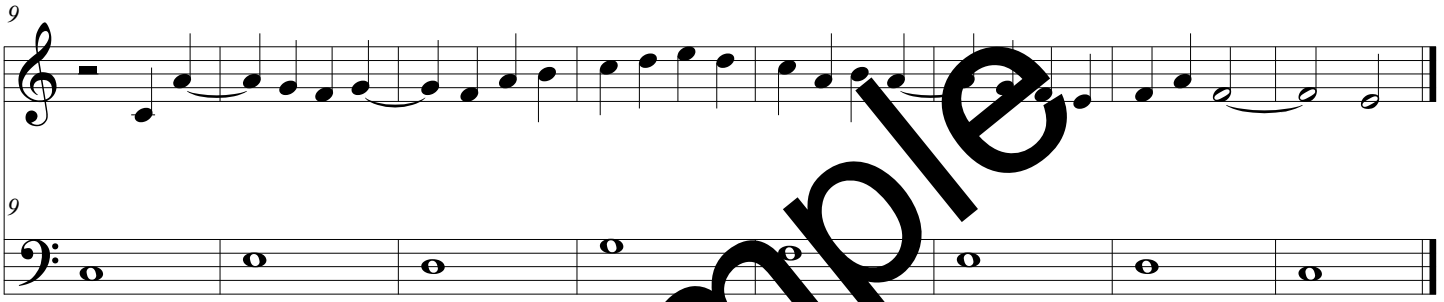
Fourth Species Examples

When writing for two voices remember;

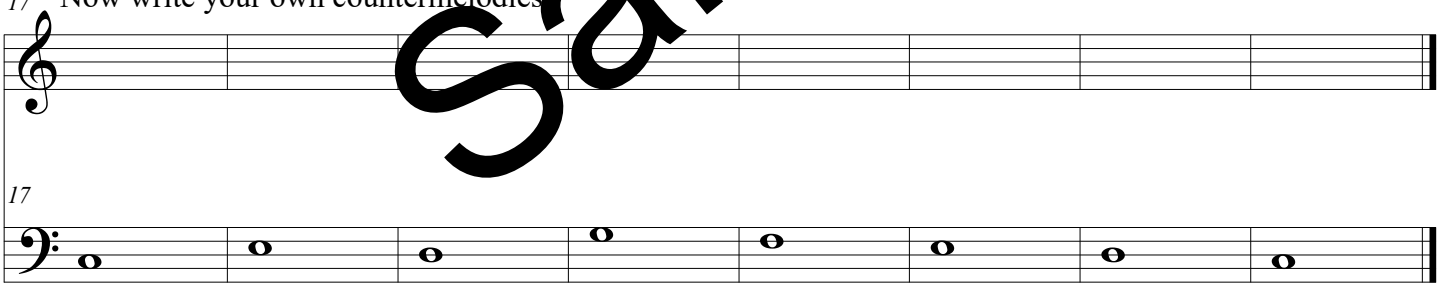
Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

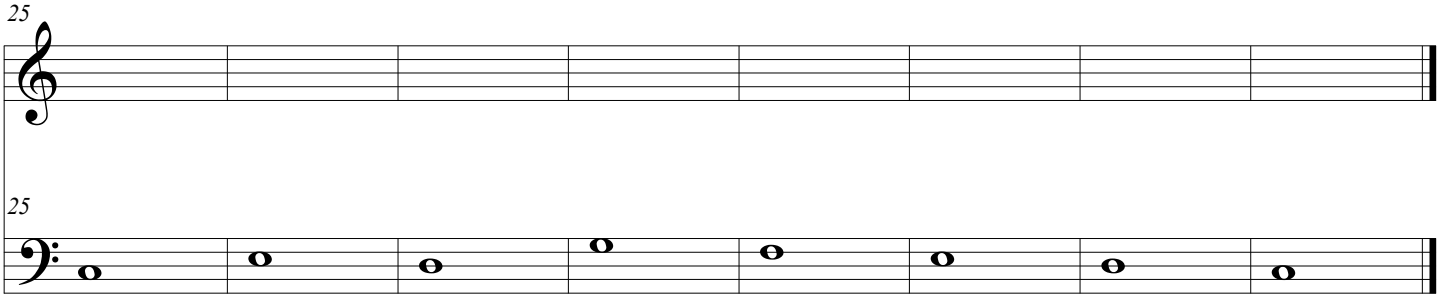
Identify the following intervals and determine what may be wrong with the following examples and write your own countermelody to the Cantus firmus.





17 Now write your own countermelodies





Fourth Species Examples
Answers

When writing for two voices remember;

Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

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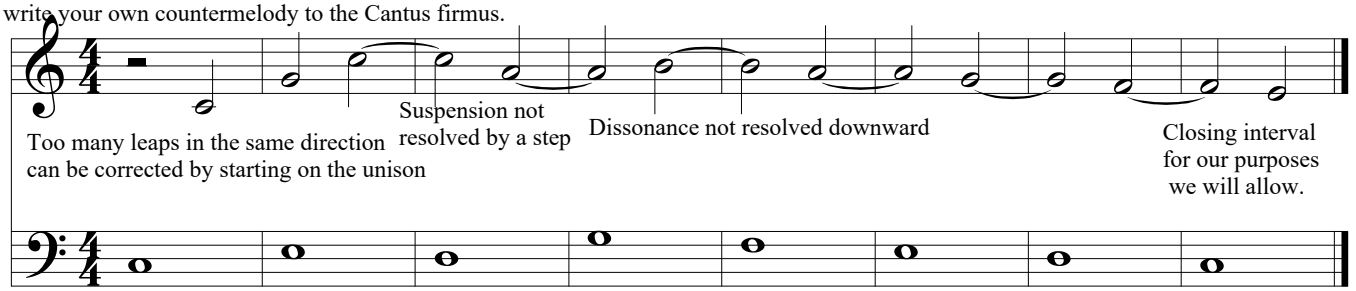
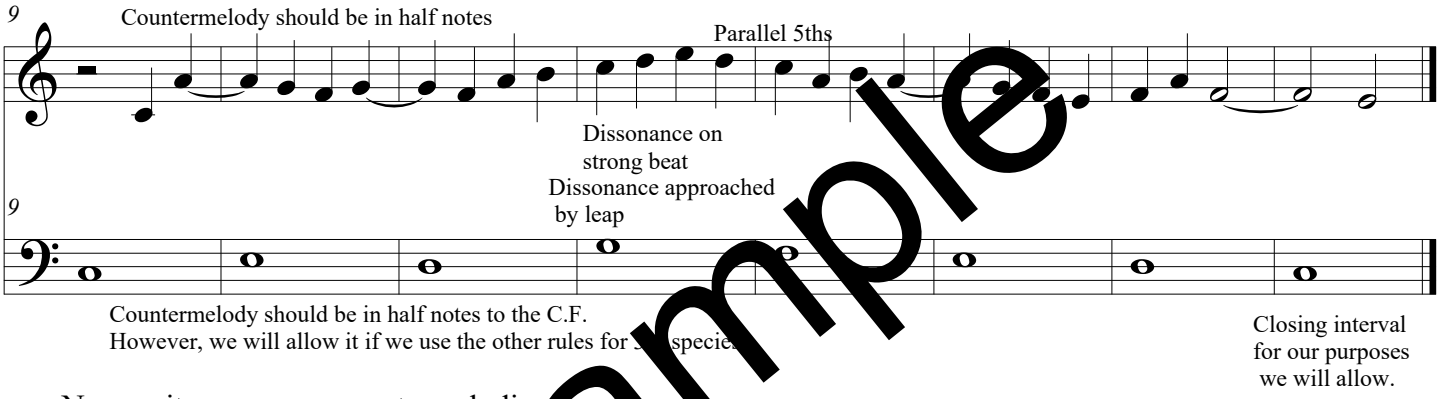
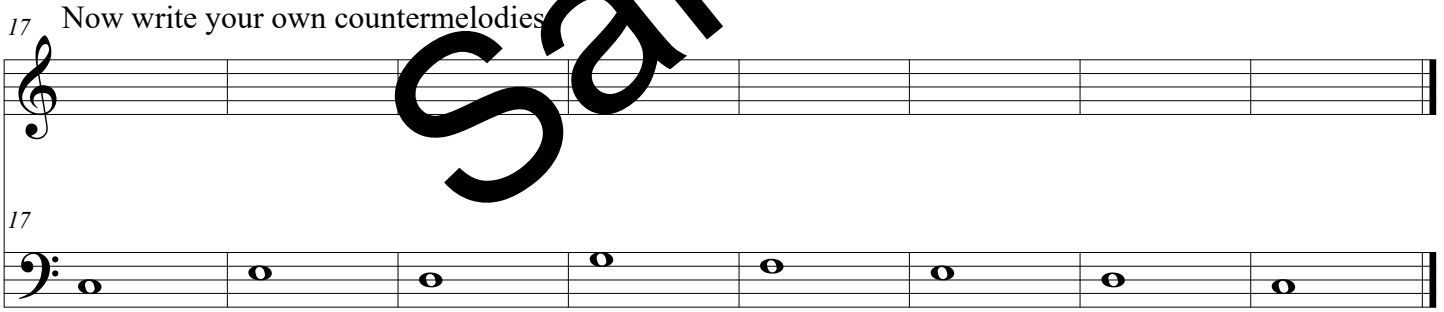
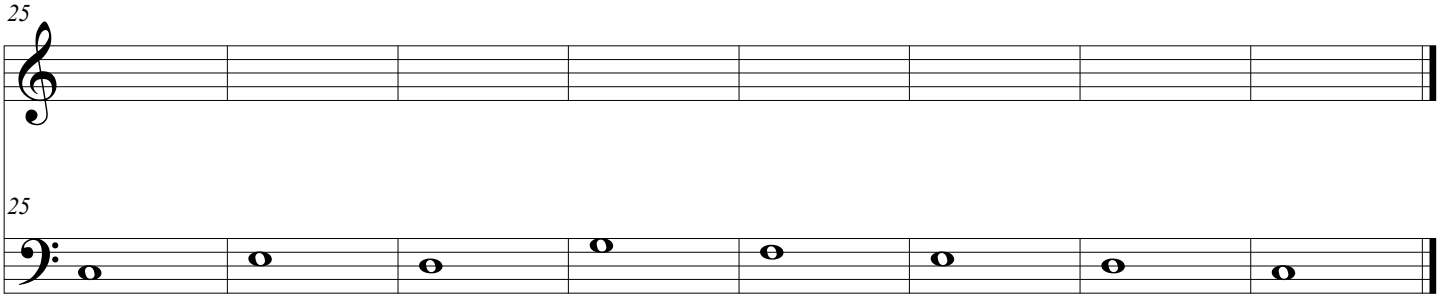








Two-part counterpoint rules: Fifth Species

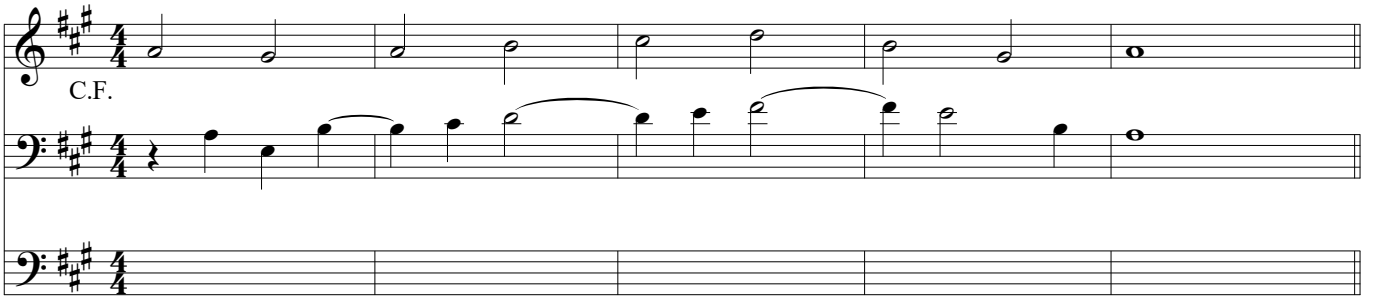
Fifth species is also known as florid counterpoint. It is a combination of the first four species. This is not the same thing as free counterpoint, since the florid part is still confined to just one accompaniment voice. If three or more voices are being used then all additional parts remain in first species.

Fifth Species

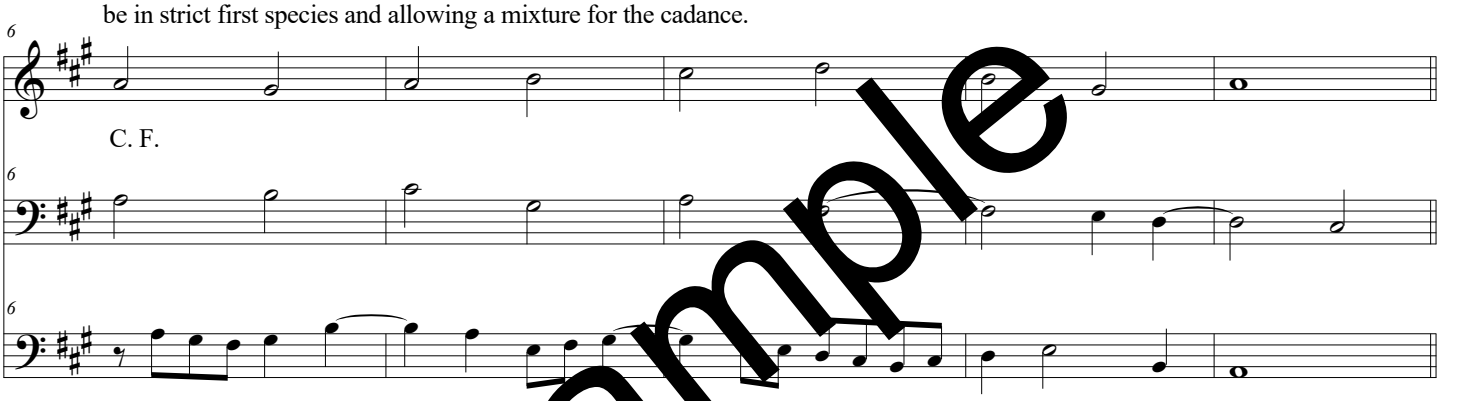
When writing for two voices remember;

Each line must be able to stand on its own.
There must be sufficient independence between the voices in terms of direction and rhythmic motion.
On the other hand, they must have enough in common, stylistically and otherwise, so that they will fuse into a convincing whole when combined.
The lines must imply a good harmonic succession. At any given point, the ear hears not only the horizontal lines but the vertical results of combining them; these vertical sounds must represent a satisfactory harmonic progression.

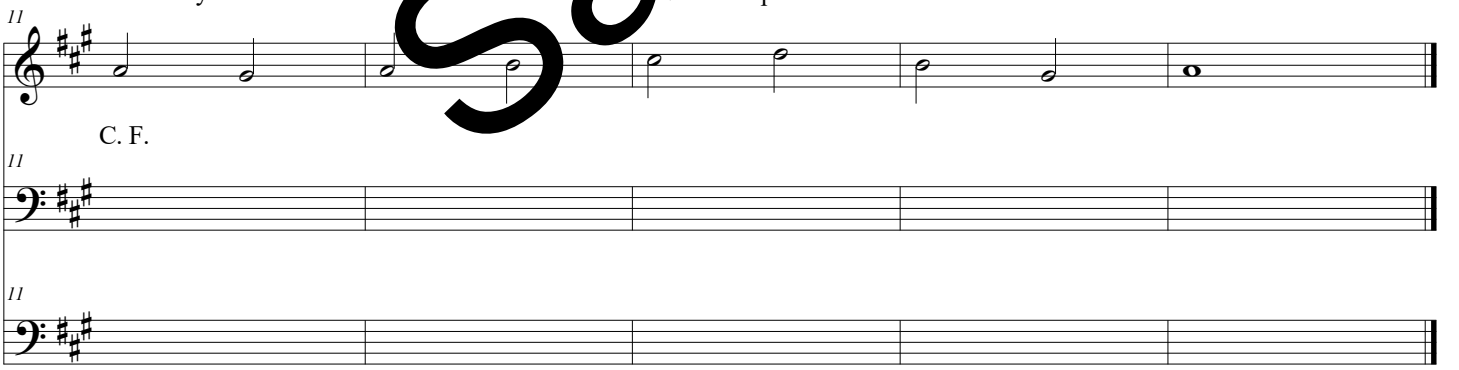
Sing through and study the following examples and
write your own countermelodies to the Cantus firmus.



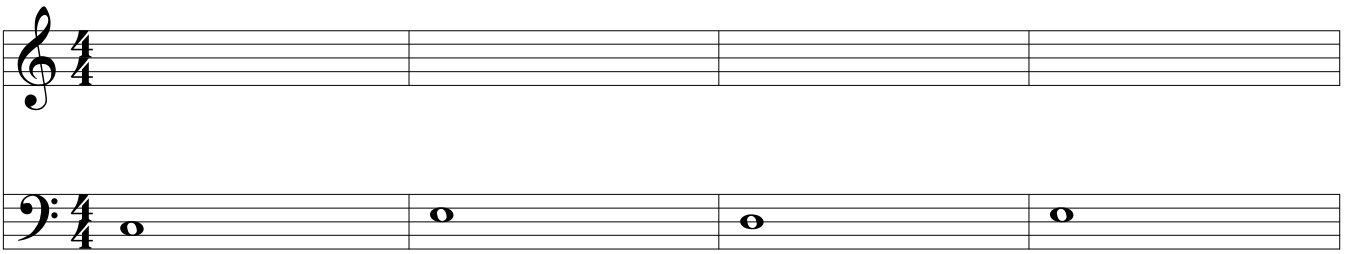
Once again for the sake of musical interest we are relaxing the rule that if you are writing for 3 voices that one voice must be in strict first species and allowing a mixture for the cadance.



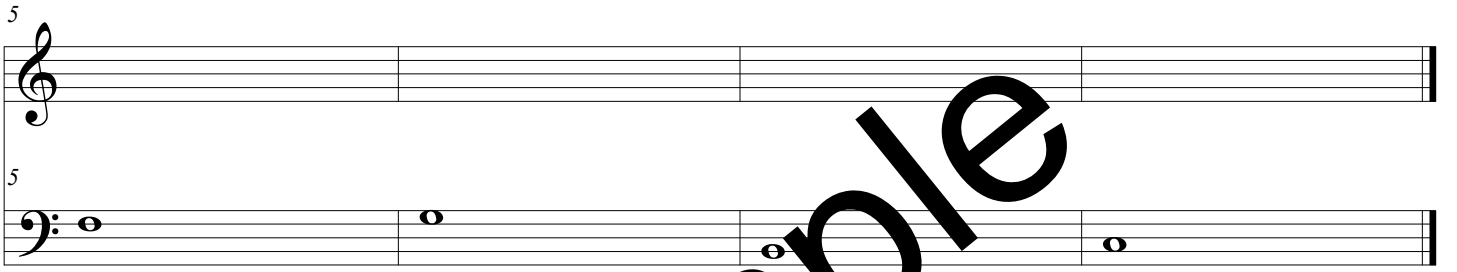
Now write your own countermelodies. One voice must be in first species 1:1.

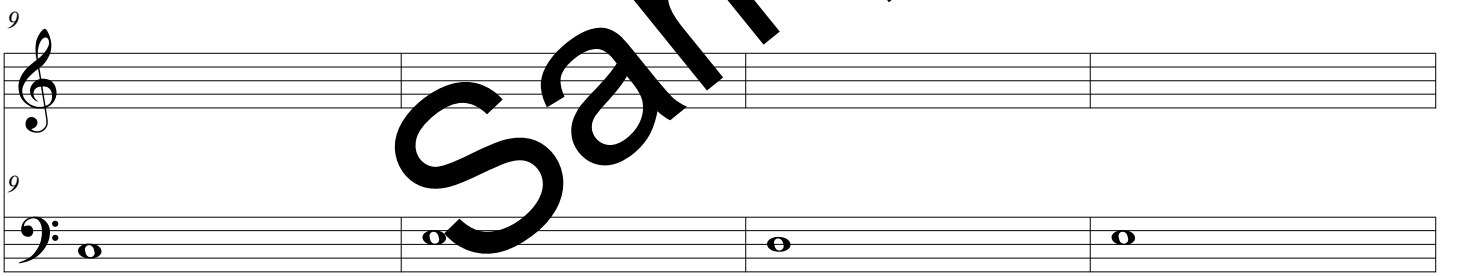


Write your own countermelodies

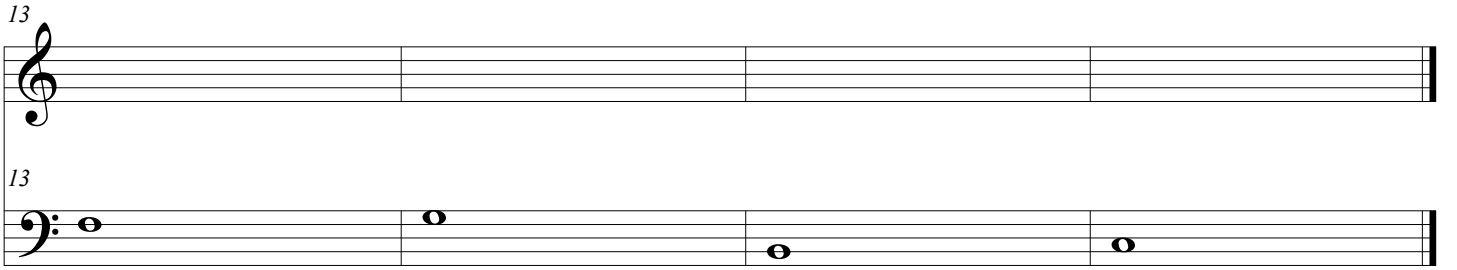


C. F.





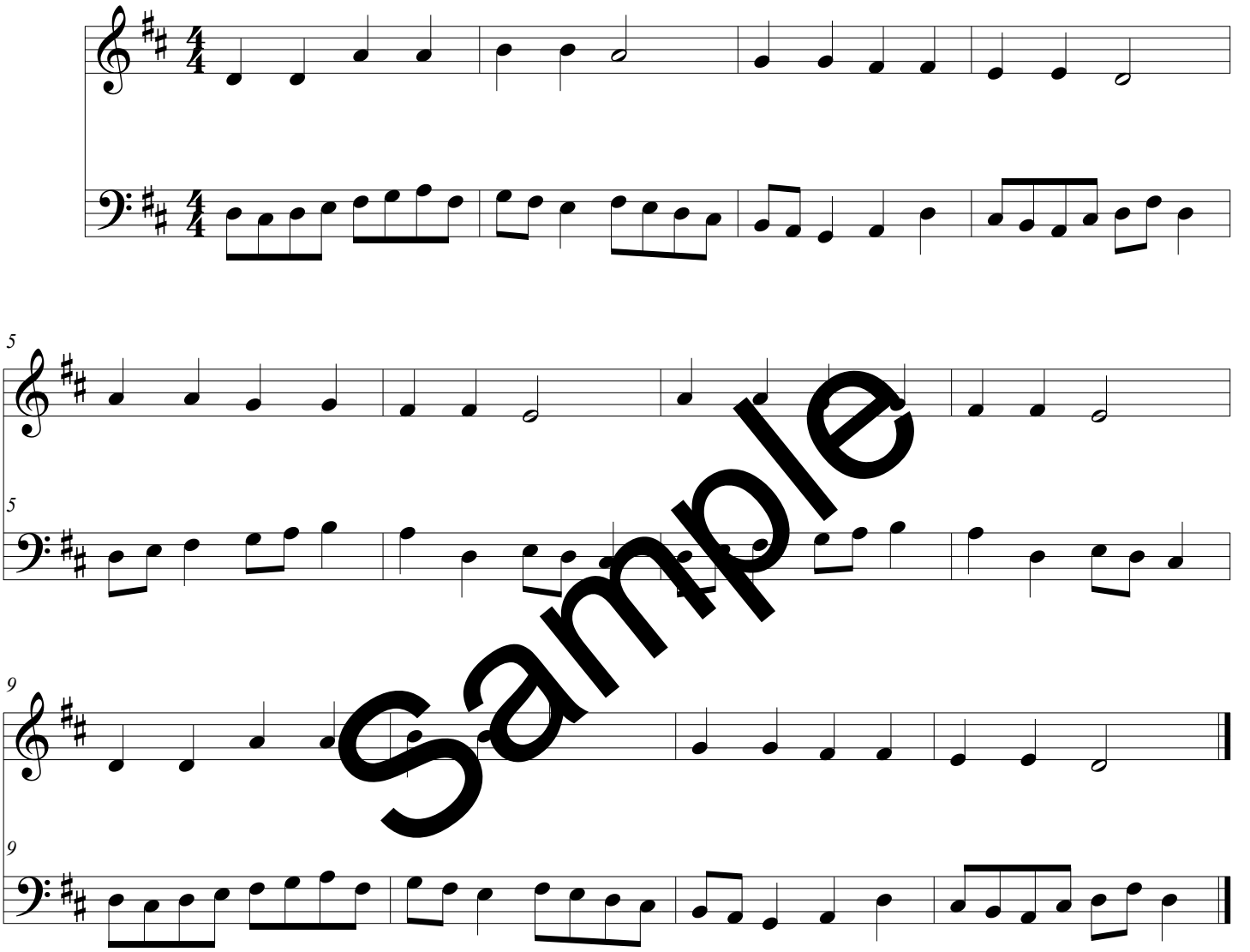
C.F.



Write a countermelody to Twinkle Twinkle using a mixture of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Species Counterpoint.

Writing Duets
Possible Solution

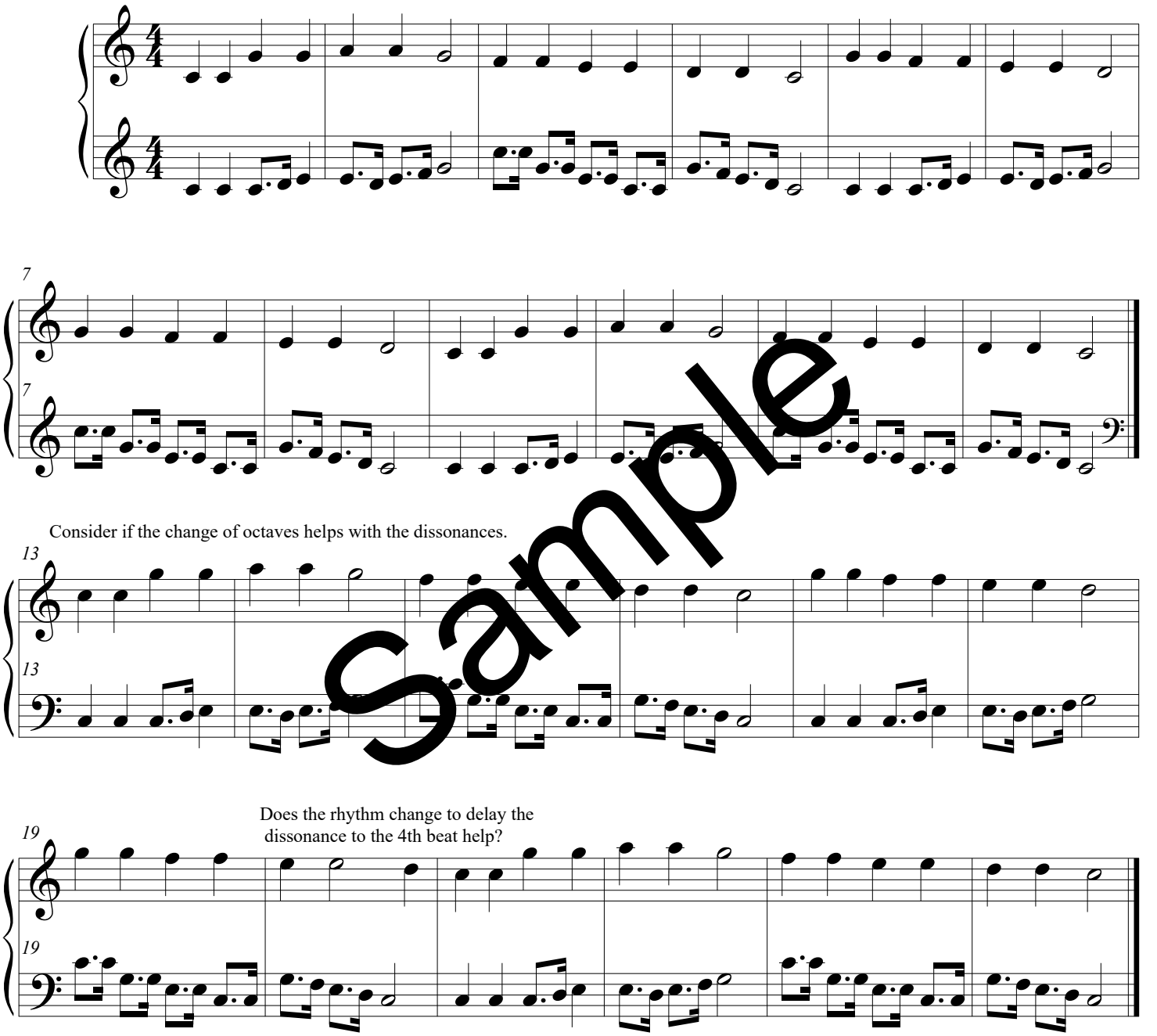
Write a countermelody to Twinkle Twinkle using a mixture of 1st, 2nd , 3rd Species Counterpoint.



Combining Two Melodies

Twinkle Twinkle and Row Row Row Your Boat

Decide if the combining of these two melodies work even with the dissonances that are created.



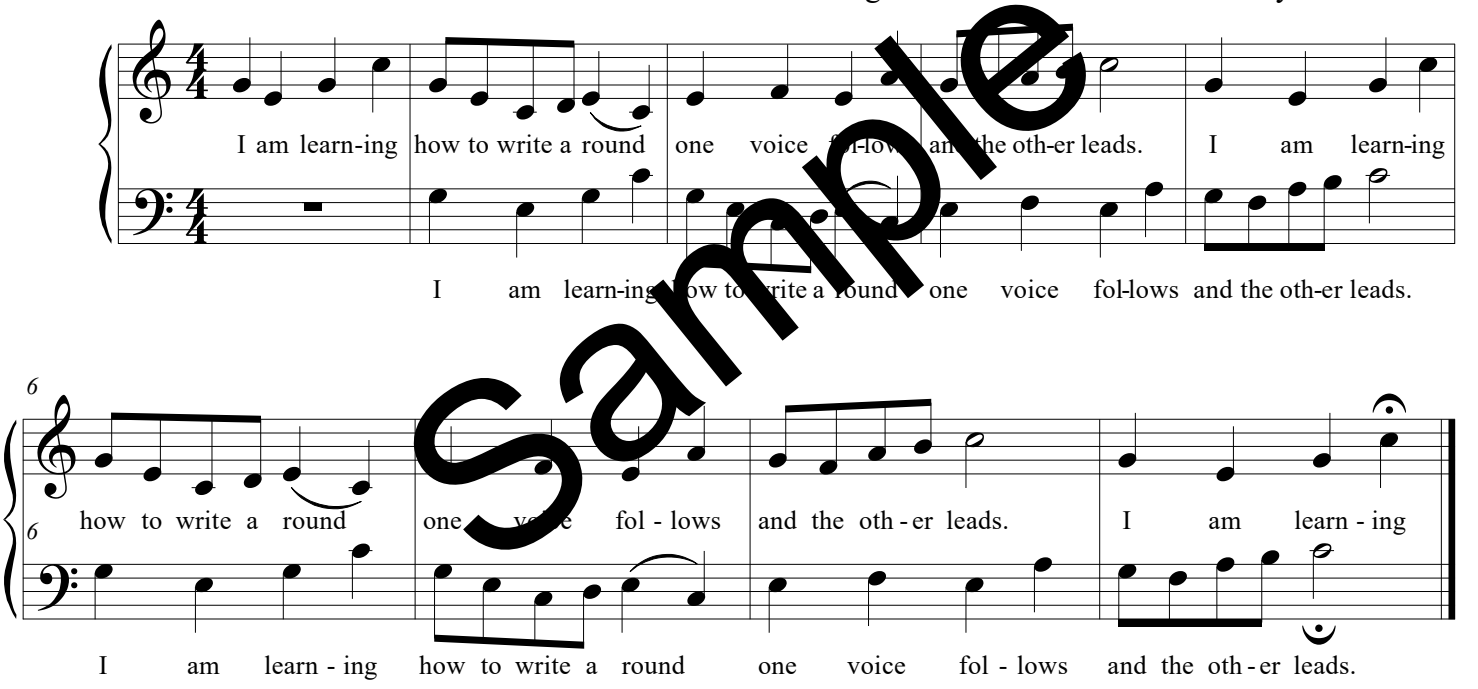
Find your own melodies that you can combine to make into musically satisfying duets.

Writing Rounds and Canons

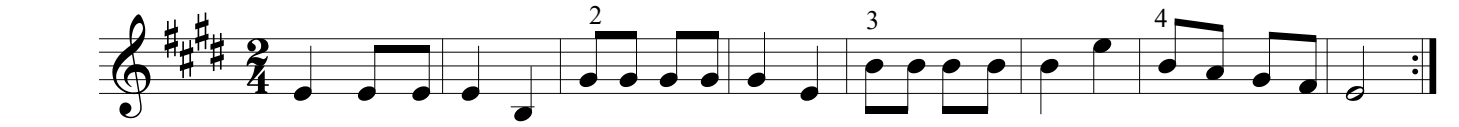
The writing of rounds and canons can be some of the most rewarding work for the novice to the most experience composer. They can range from simple children rounds like Row, Row, Row, Your Boat and O How Lovely is the Evening to the sophisticated rounds of J.S. Bach to David Diamond. They can be two, three, four or even more voices involved. They can have a single melody or be based on two or more melodies at the same time. We will focus on rounds and canons that use one melody and that melody as it continues creates the harmony with the other voices as they enter. These rounds can have points of imitation from one to as many as eight measures before the next voice enters. In starting to write rounds you will not want to compose the entire melody and then see if it works as a round but write it in sections so that when the next voice enters with the beginning of the melody you can make sure the second part of the melody works well with the first part and so on. Not only should you study the rounds in this guide but find others and study them too. Then begin to have fun writing your own.

Analyze the following round using everything that you have learned so far about melodic shape, phrasing, use of dissonance, harmonic implications and the combining of two voices (counterpoint).

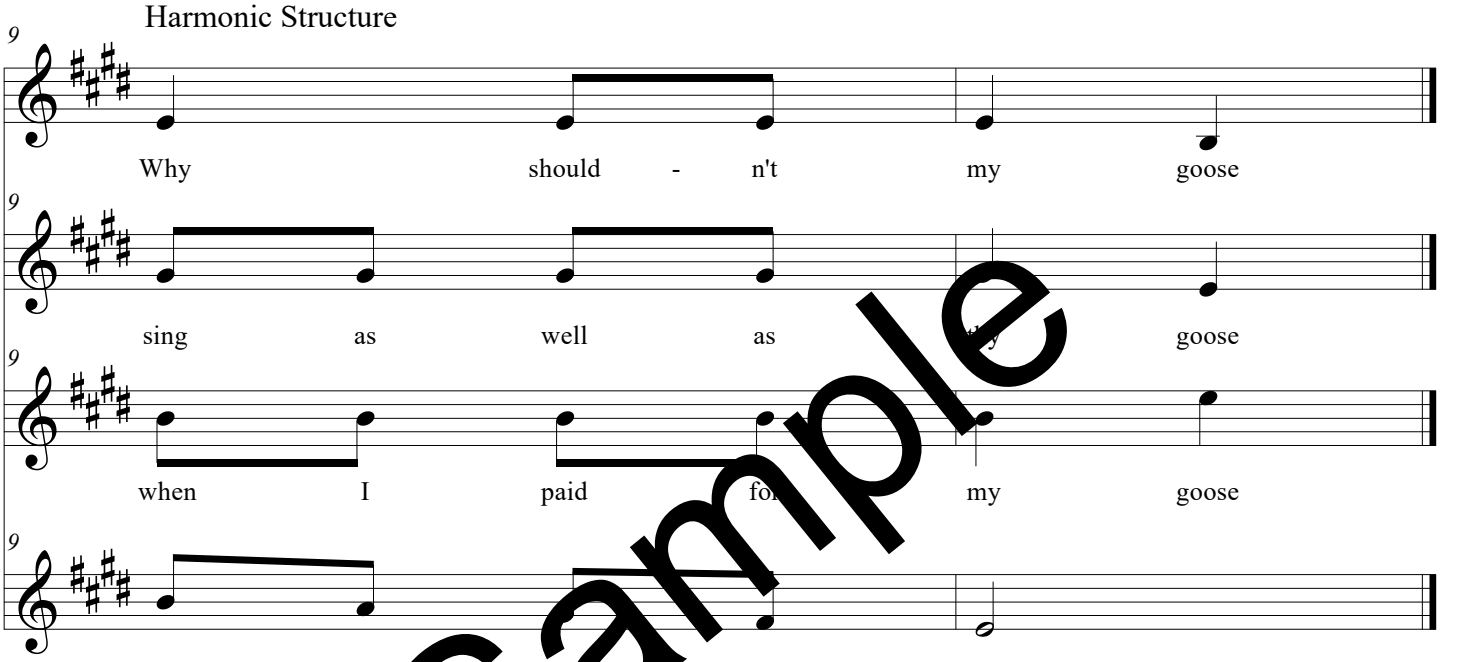
I am Learning — Boyd E. Gibson



Round: Why Shouldn't My Goose

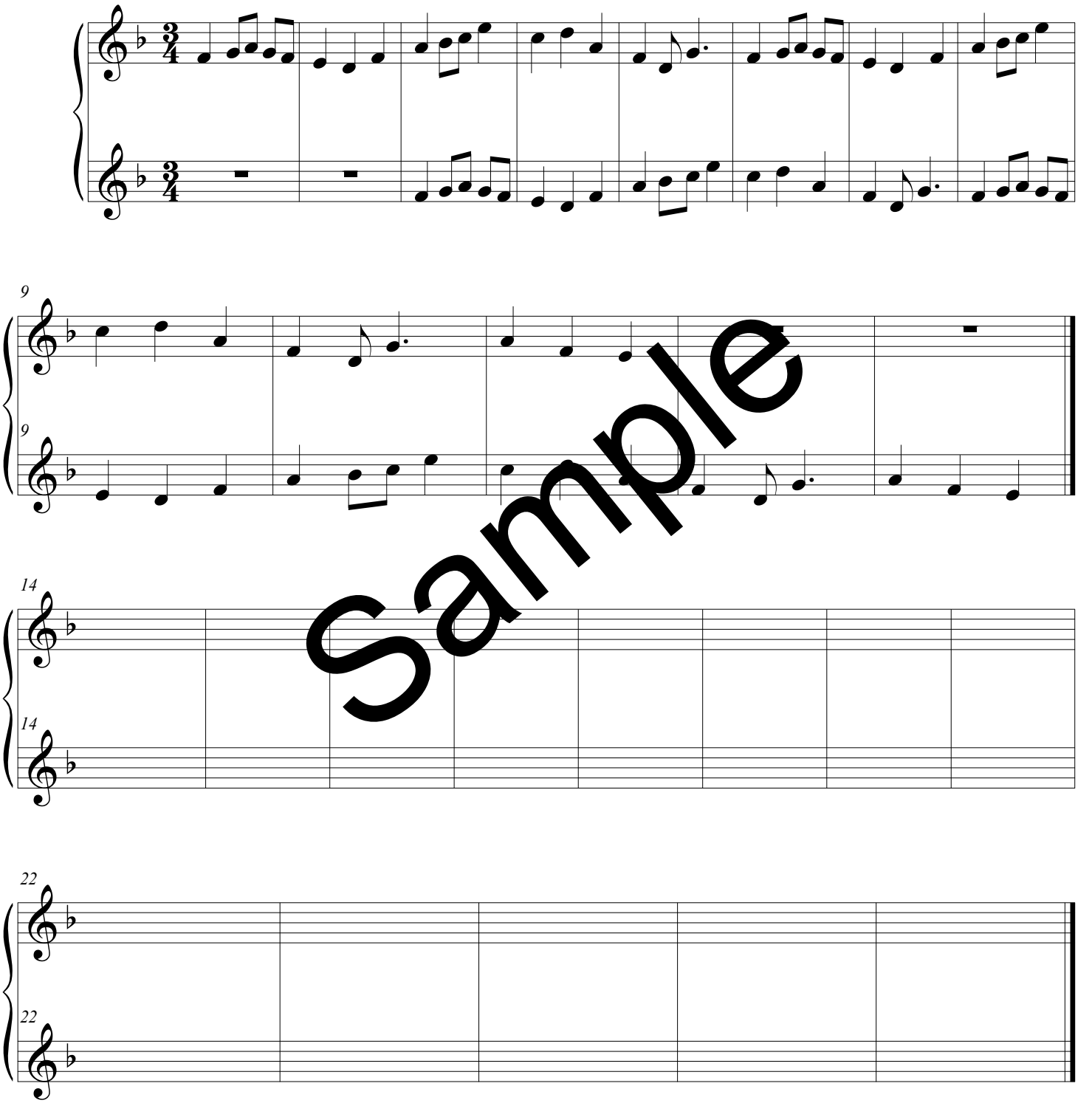


Harmonic Structure



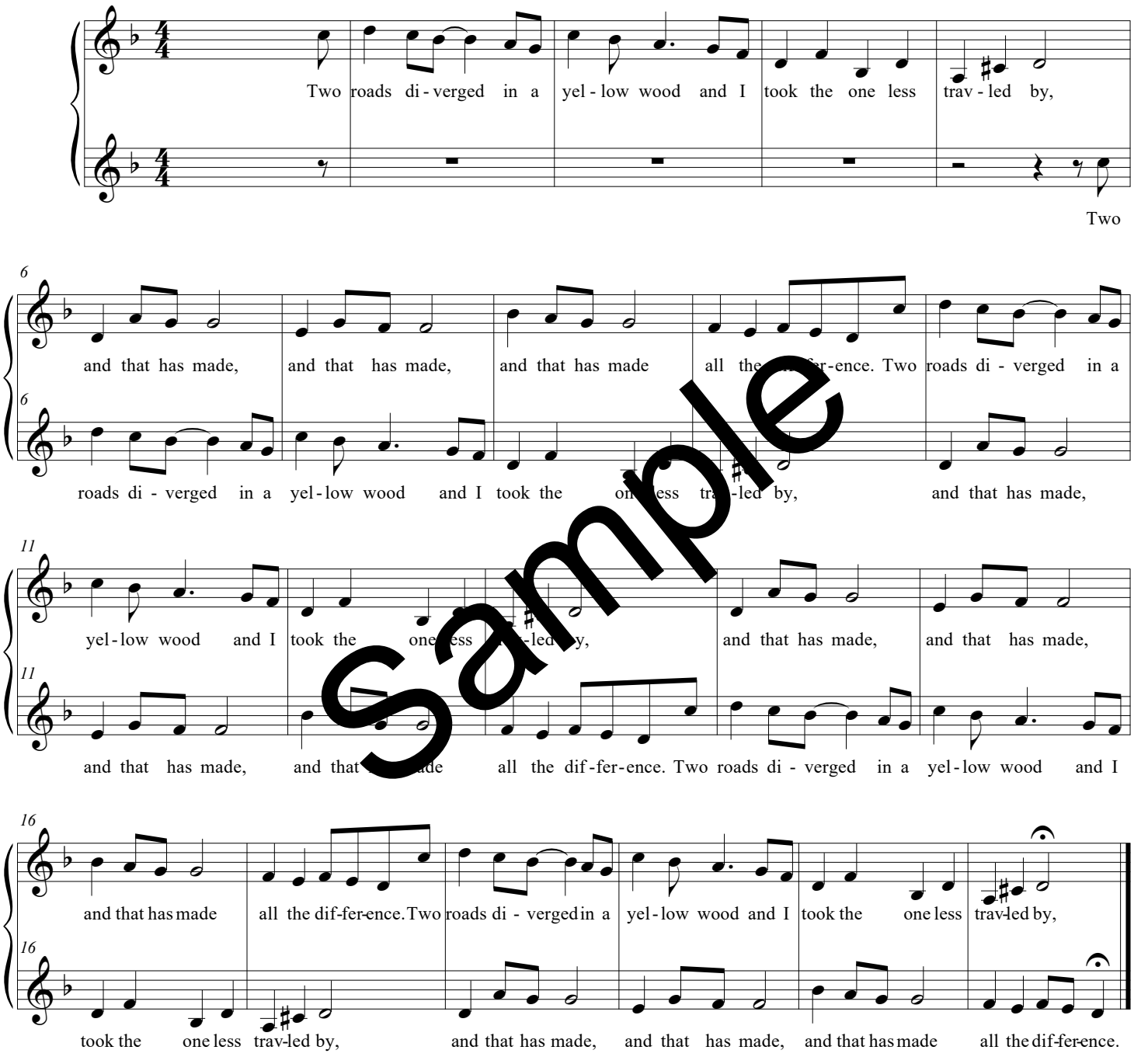
Student Round

This was a first draft of a round written by a student. Analyze the following round using everything that you have learned so far about melodic shape, phrasing,use of dissonance, harmonic implications and the combining of two voices (counterpoint).
Then make corrections to improve this round.



Two Roads Diverged in a Yellow Wood

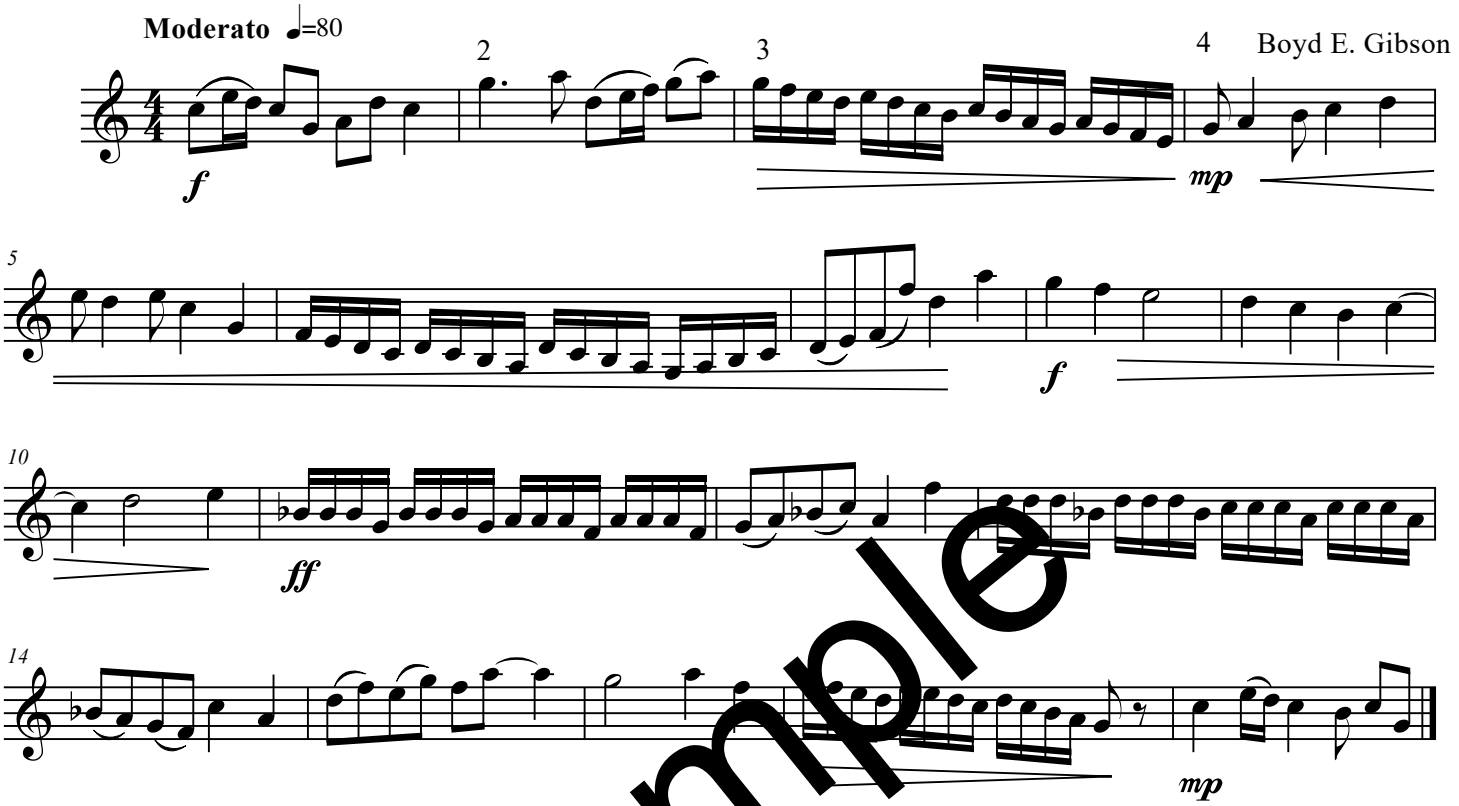
Jacob Reed



Jacob Reed was a composition student at Durham School of the Arts and wrote this round as his round assignment. He has since gone on and completed a Masters of Music Education at Florida State University and is now a music teacher.

An Extendend Round

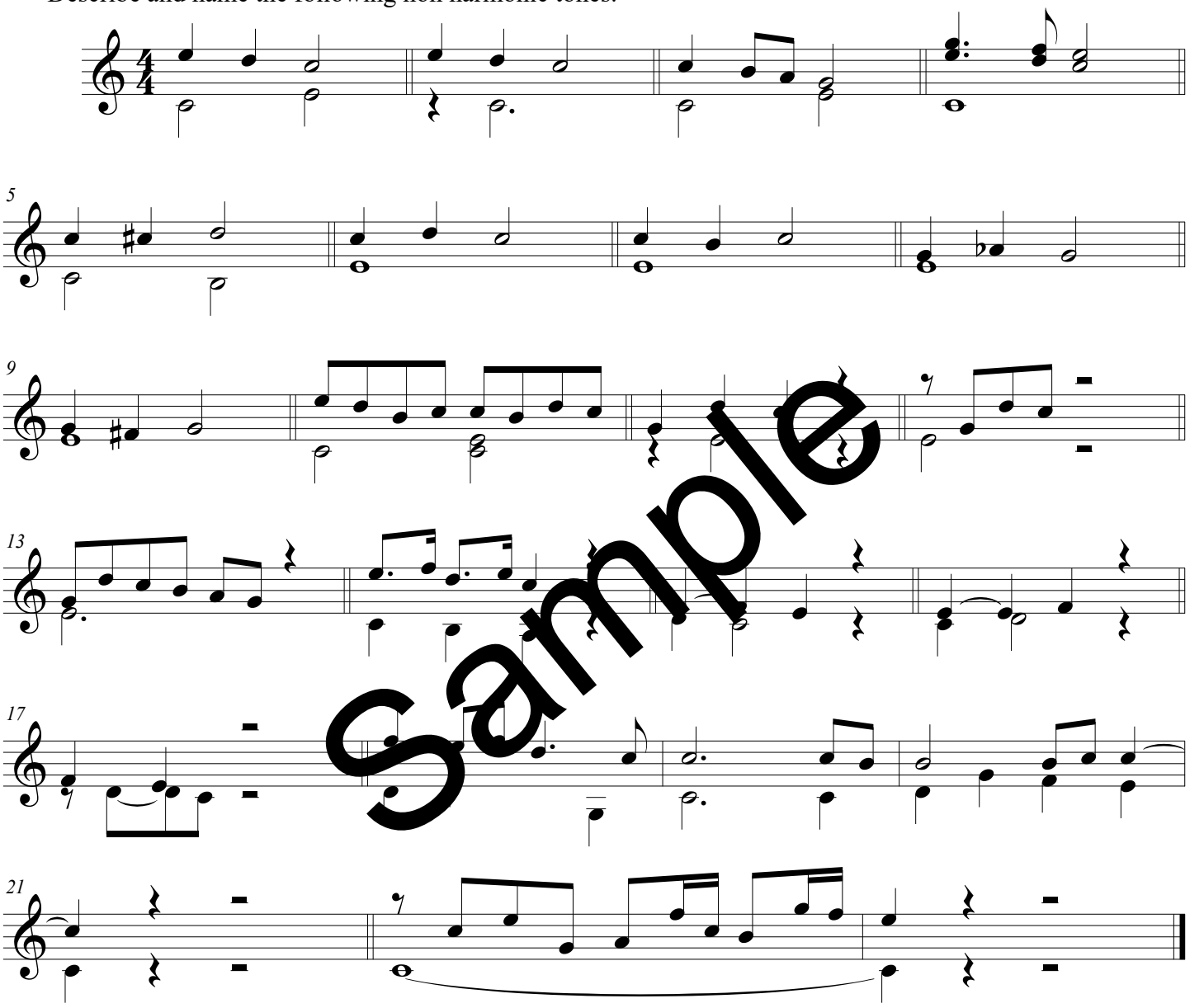
Basic round from my first movement of String Rounds. The entire orchestra first plays the round in unison then in two then three and finally four parts with a one measure point of imitaion much like Benjamin Britten does with his 3 part round in This Little Babe from Ceremony of Carols and then ends with a coda like ending to bring the movement to an end. It may prove to be useful to play through this portion in unison then with the various parts. An mp3 of this movement can be heard at https://www.apexmusiccompanydurham.com/teacher-guide the complete score and other movements can be found at https://www.jwpepper.com/String-Rounds/10683245.item#.WocBNedG3H4



Non Harmonic Tones

Within the context of tonal music, any pitch that is not heard as a member of the prevailing harmony (chord) is considered a nonharmonic (nonchord) tone.

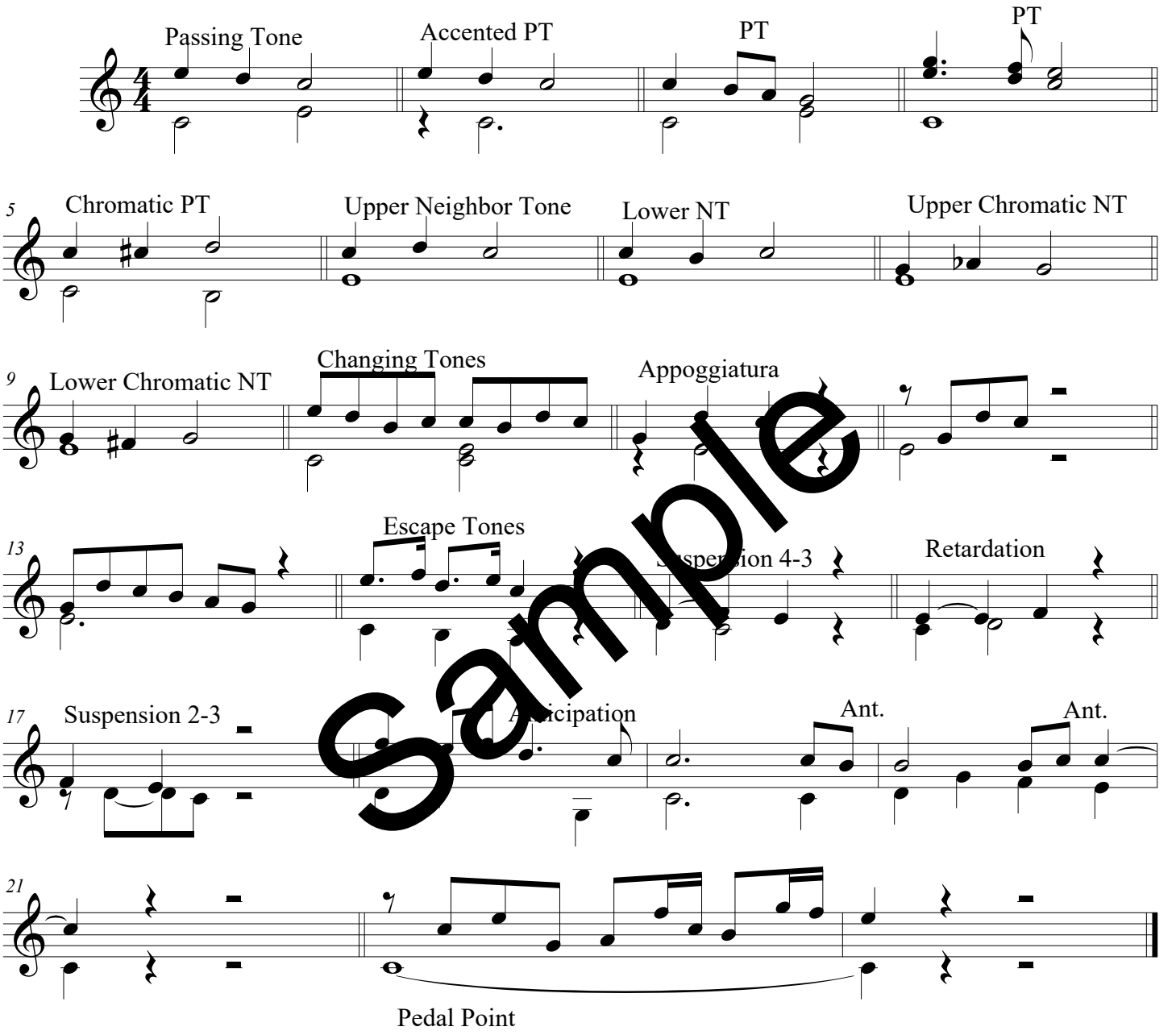
Describe and name the following non harmonic tones.



Non Harmonic Tones

The Answers

Describe and name the following non harmonic tones.



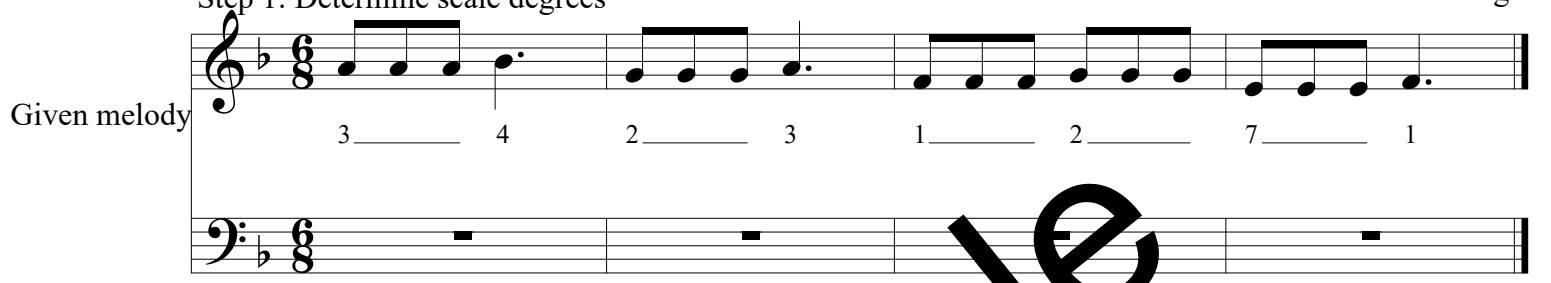
Steps to Harmonizing a Melody

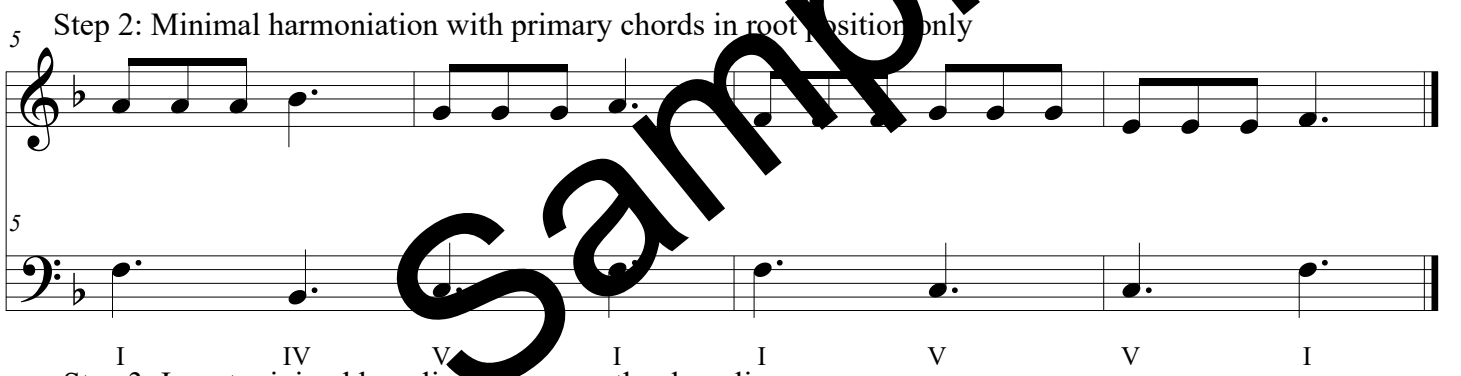
The following steps will ensure that your harmoination will make musical sense instead of using the trial by error method.

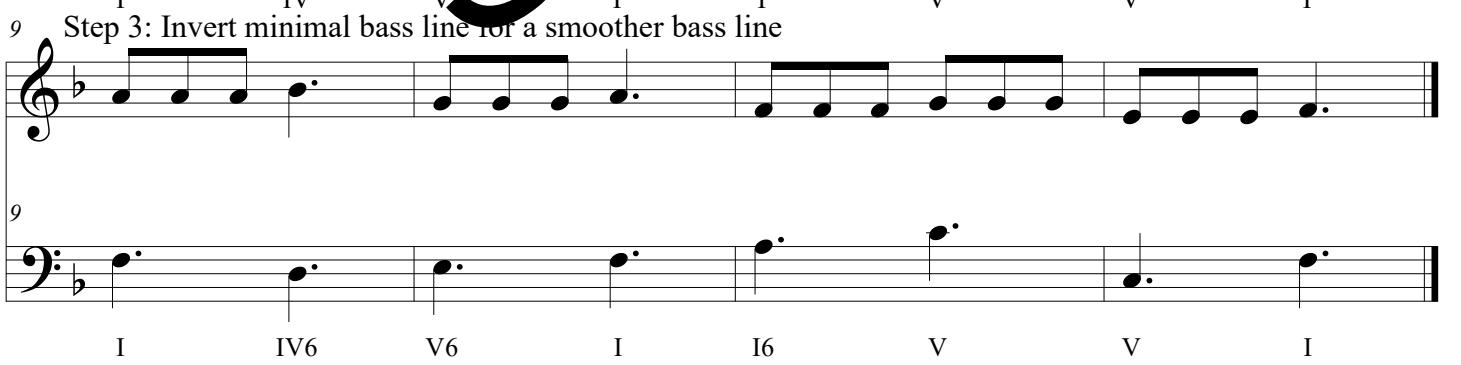
The following scale degrees should use the following primary chords for the minimal harmonization
1 I or IV
2 V
3 I
4 IV
5 V or I
6 IV
7 V

Step 1: Determine scale degrees

Austrian Folk Song



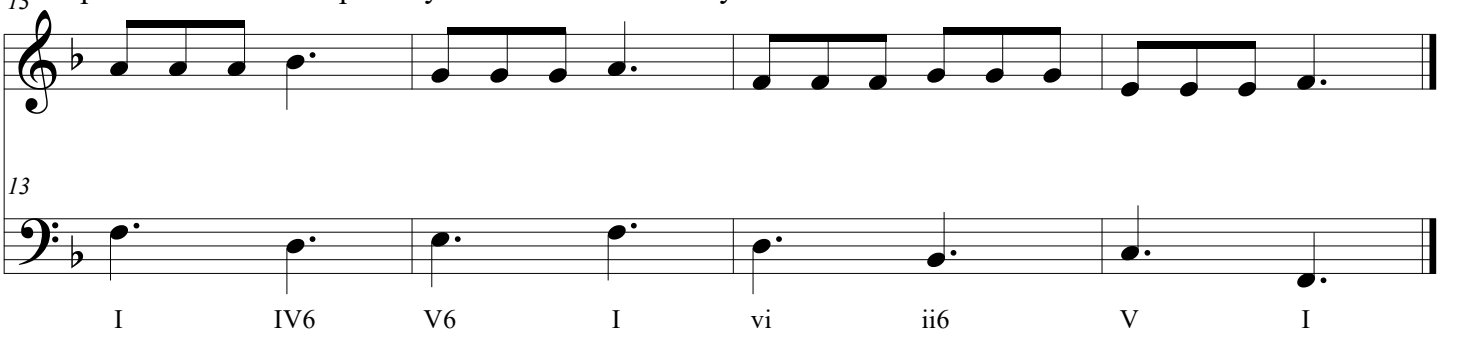




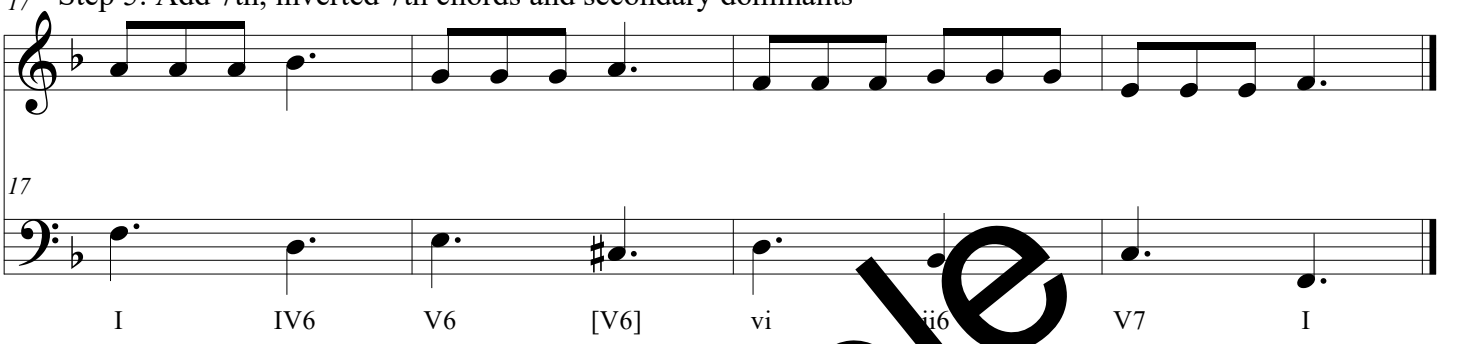
Steps to Harmonizing a Melody

Continued

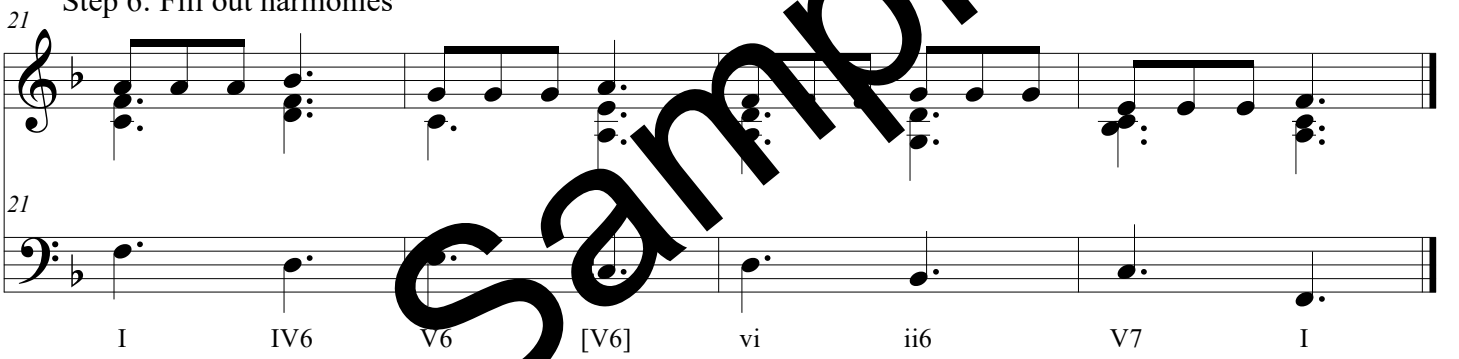
13 Step 4: Substitue some primary chords with secondary chords for an even better bass line



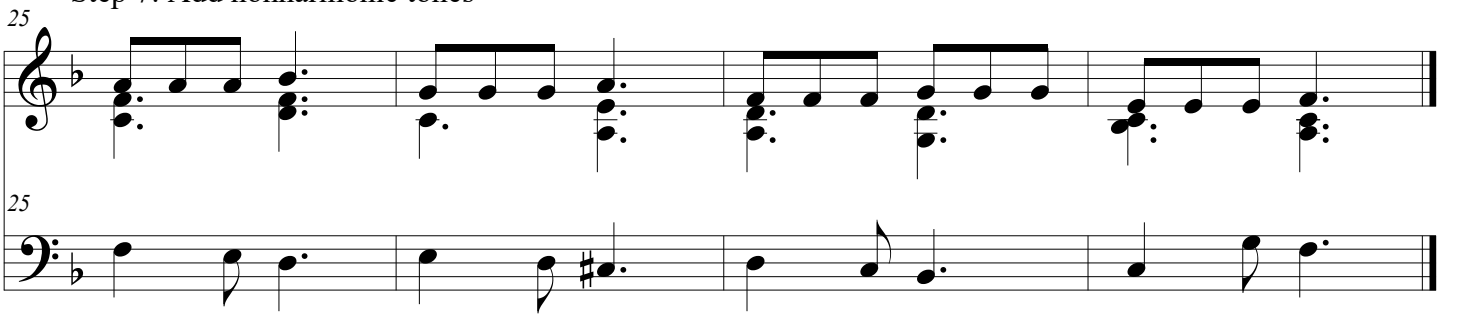
17 Step 5: Add 7th, inverted 7th chords and secondary dominants



Step 6: Fill out harmonies



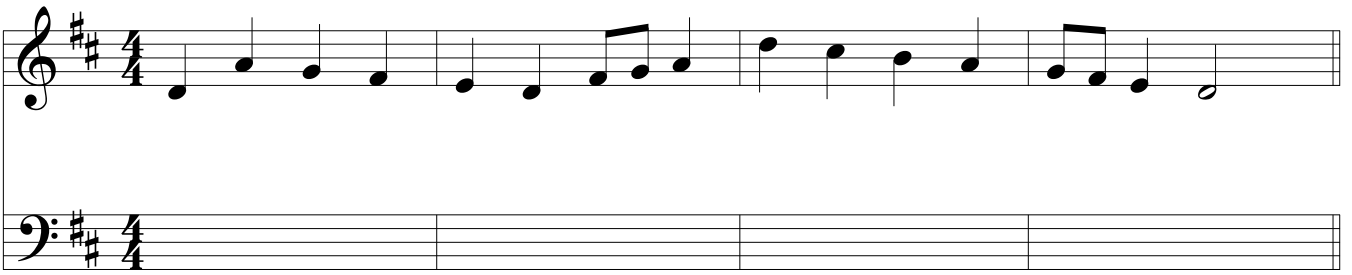
Step 7: Add nonharmonic tones



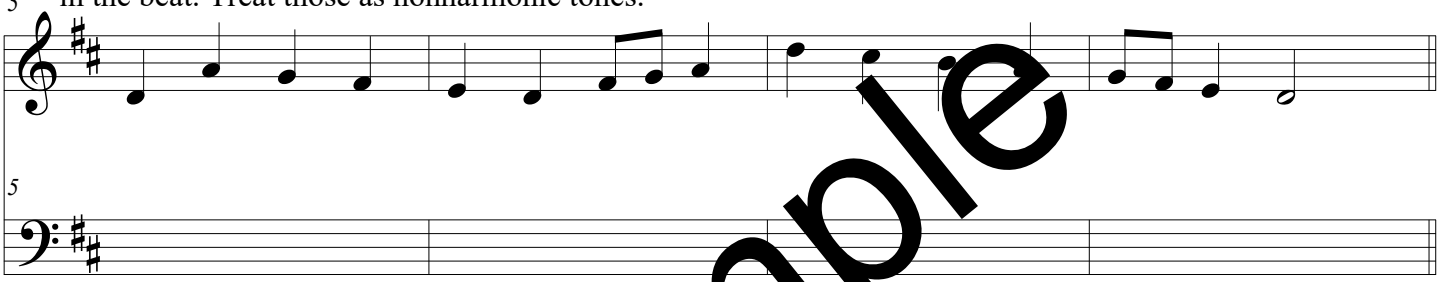
Steps to Harmonizing a Melody

Follow each of the following steps and harmonize the following melody.

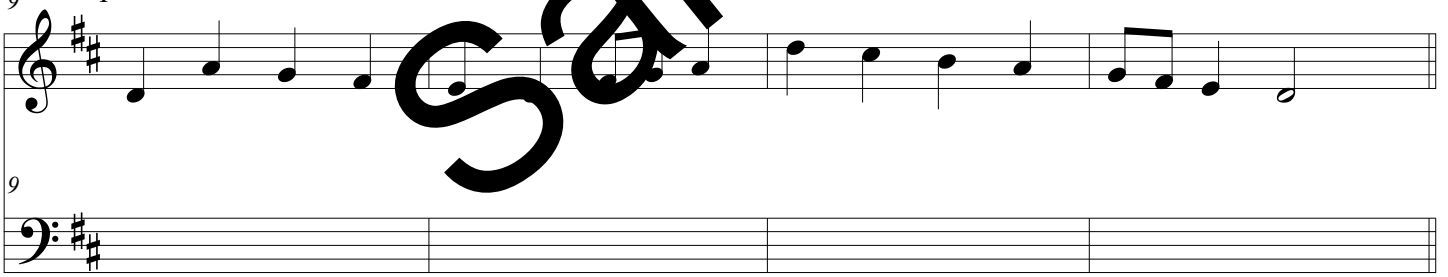
Given melody Step 1: Determine scale degrees



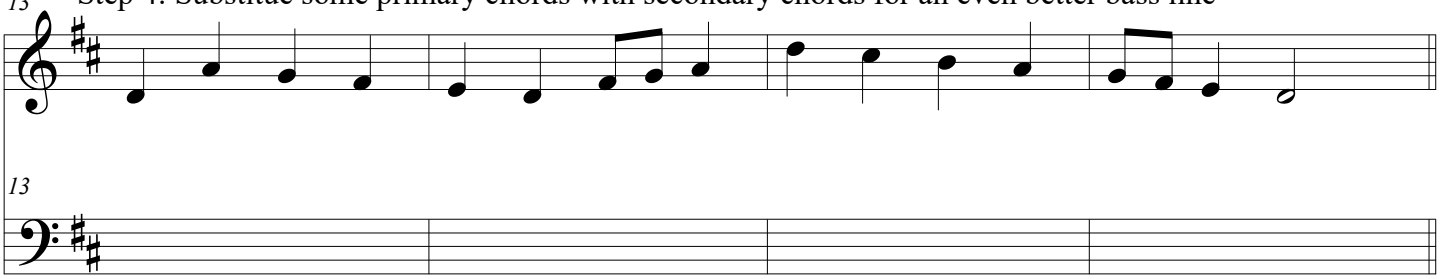
Step 2: Minimal harmoniation with primary chords in root position only. Do not harmonize the 2nd eight note in the beat. Treat those as nonharmonic tones.



Step 3: Invert minimal bass line for a smoother bass line



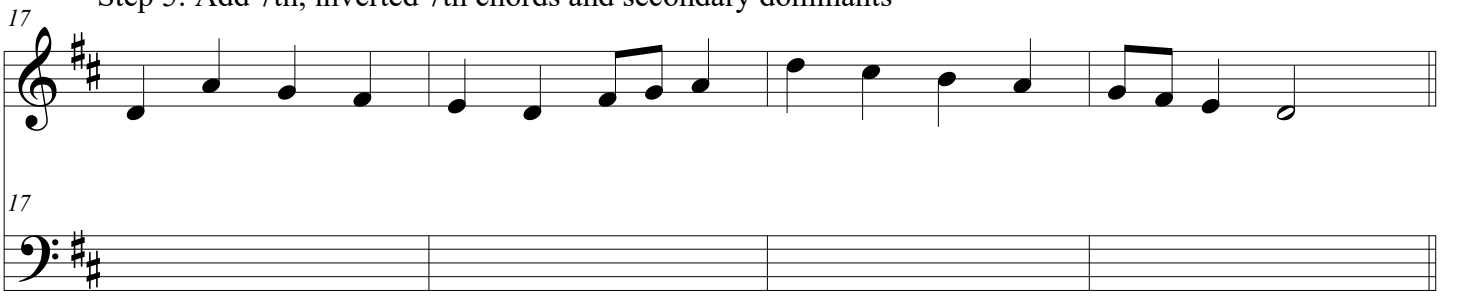
Step 4: Substitue some primary chords with secondary chords for an even better bass line



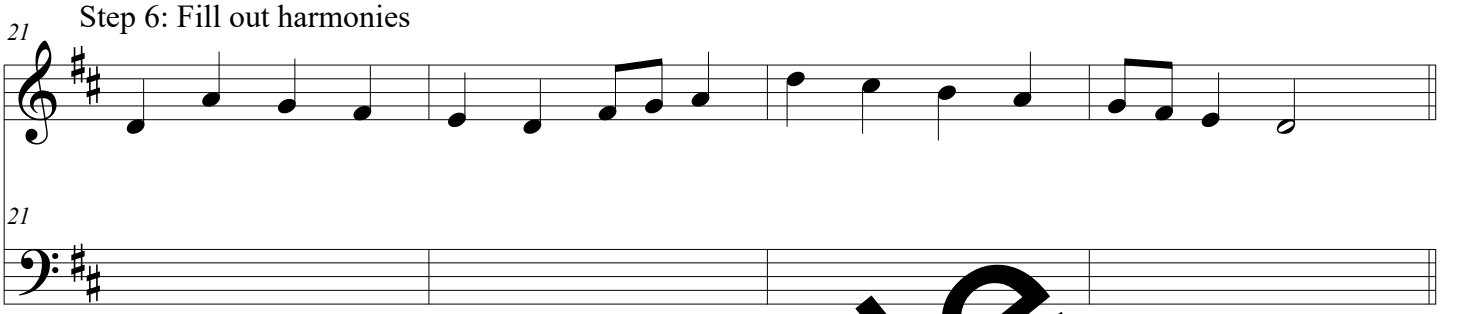
Steps to Harmonizing a Melody

Continued

Step 5: Add 7th, inverted 7th chords and secondary dominants



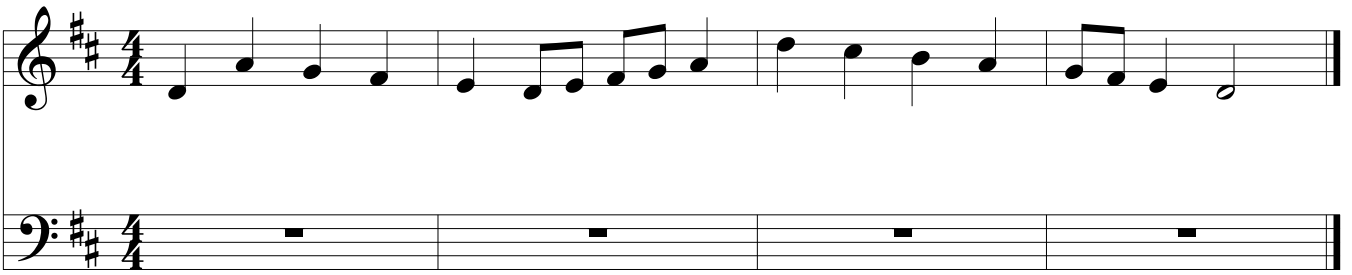
Step 6: Fill out harmonies



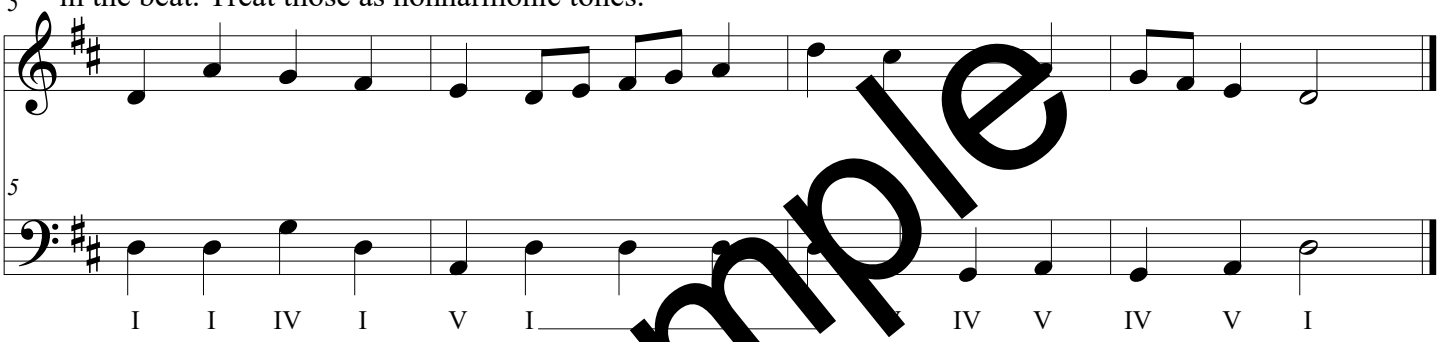
Step 7: Add nonharmonic tones

Steps to Harmonizing a Melody
Possible Solution

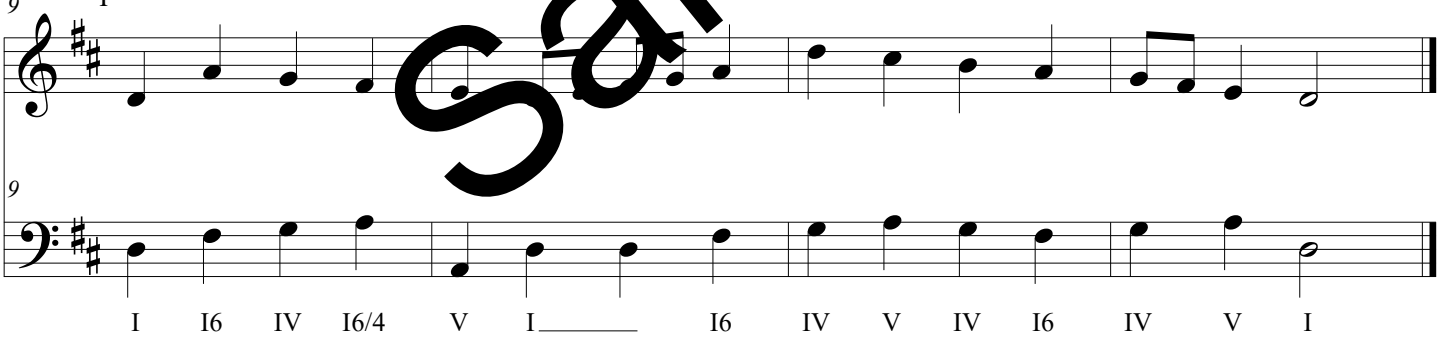
Given melody Step 1: Determine scale degrees



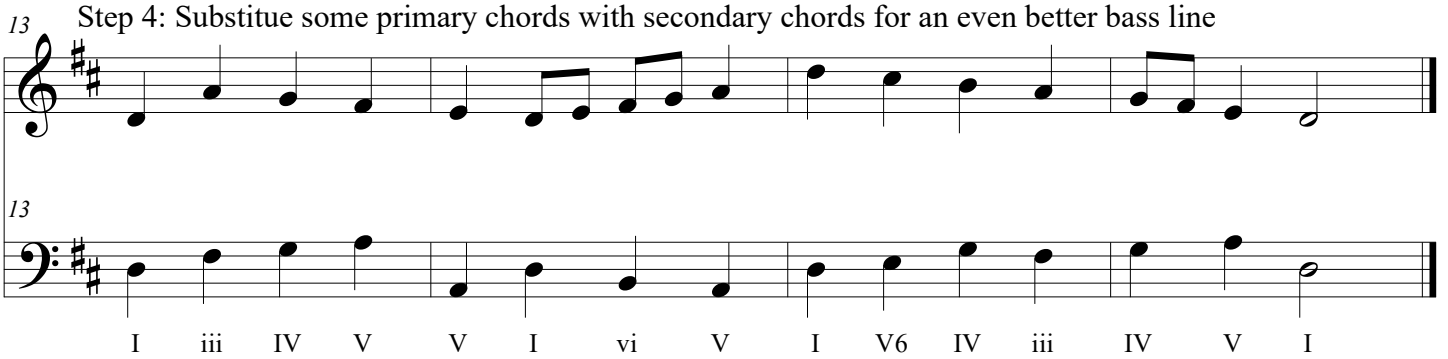
Step 2: Minimal harmoniation with primary chords in root position only. Do not harmonize the 2nd eight note in the beat. Treat those as nonharmonic tones.



Step 3: Invert minimal bass line for a smoother bass line



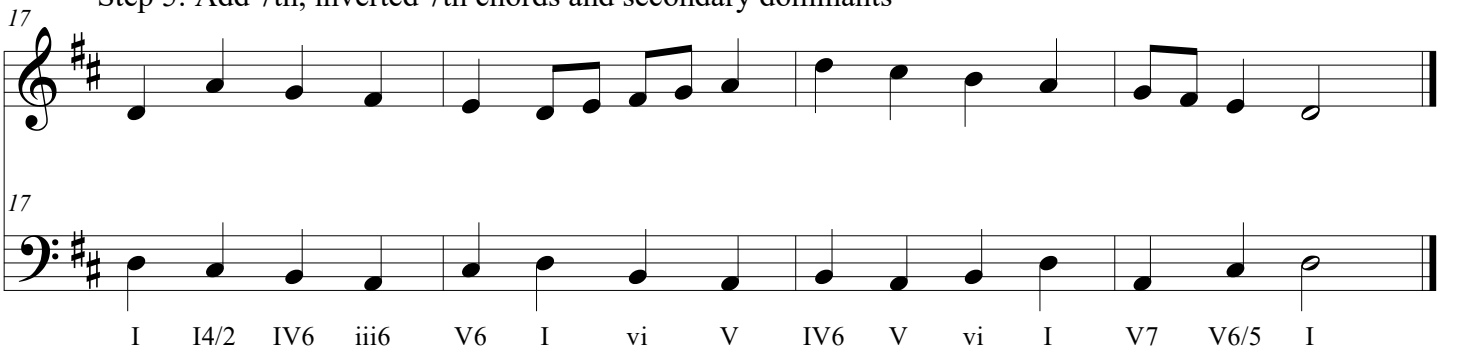
Step 4: Substitue some primary chords with secondary chords for an even better bass line



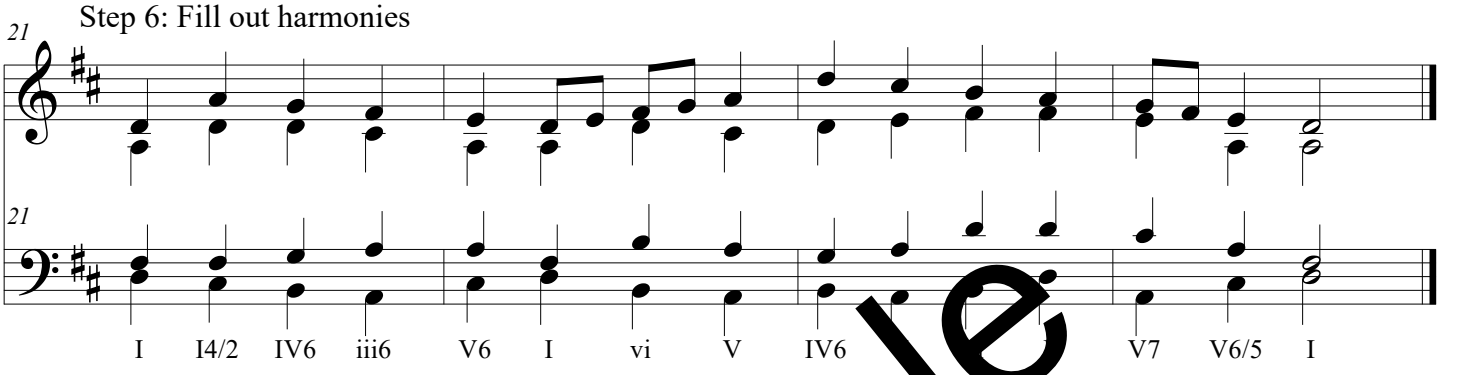
Steps to Harmonizing a Melody

Continued

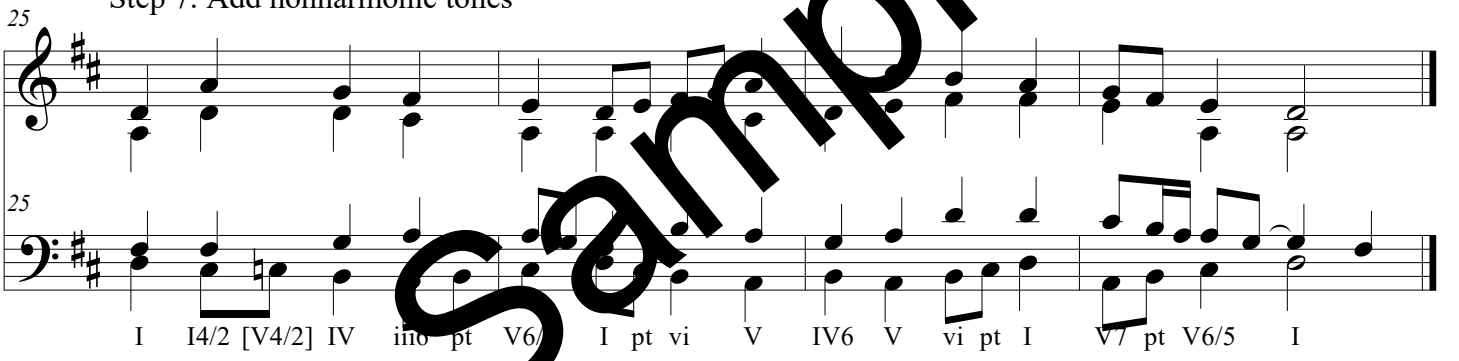
Step 5: Add 7th, inverted 7th chords and secondary dominants



Step 6: Fill out harmonies



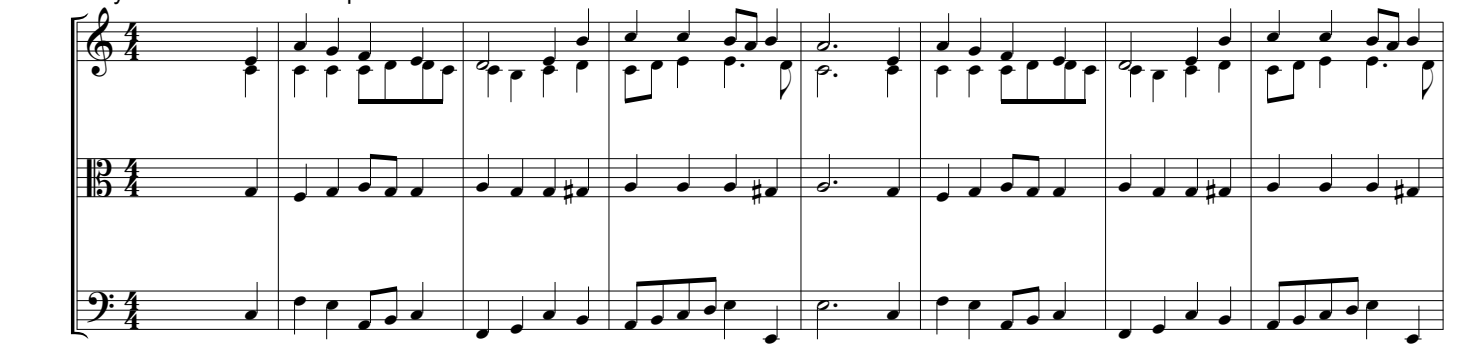
Step 7: Add nonharmonic tones

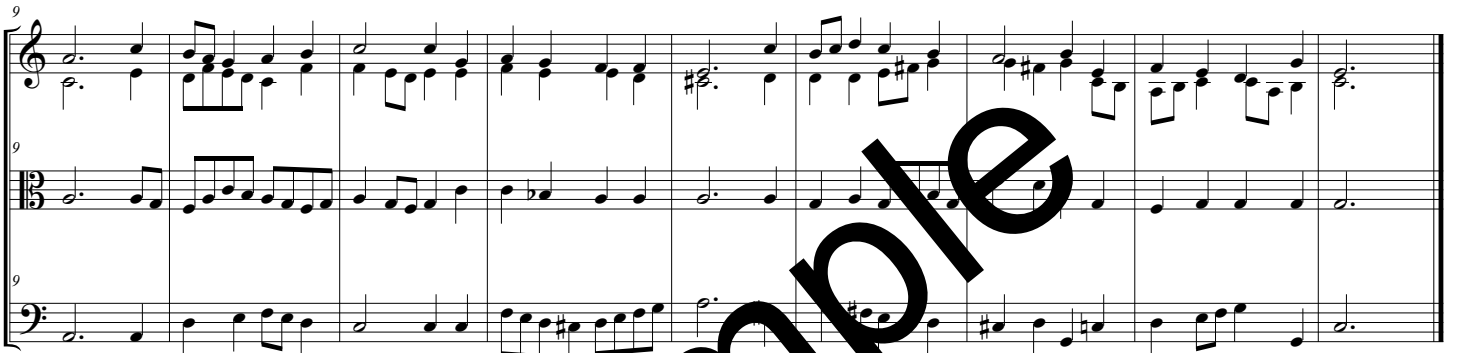


Passion Chorale

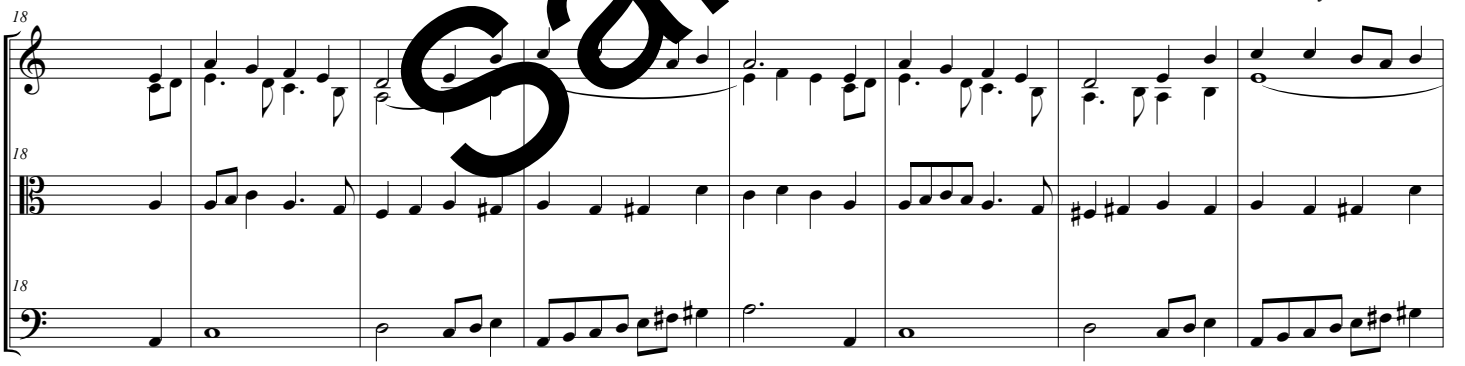
Analyze the following chorale for chords and non harmonic tones and compare the differences then find your own tunes to reharmonize using the same steps as how to harmonize a melody. Try to be as creative as possible.

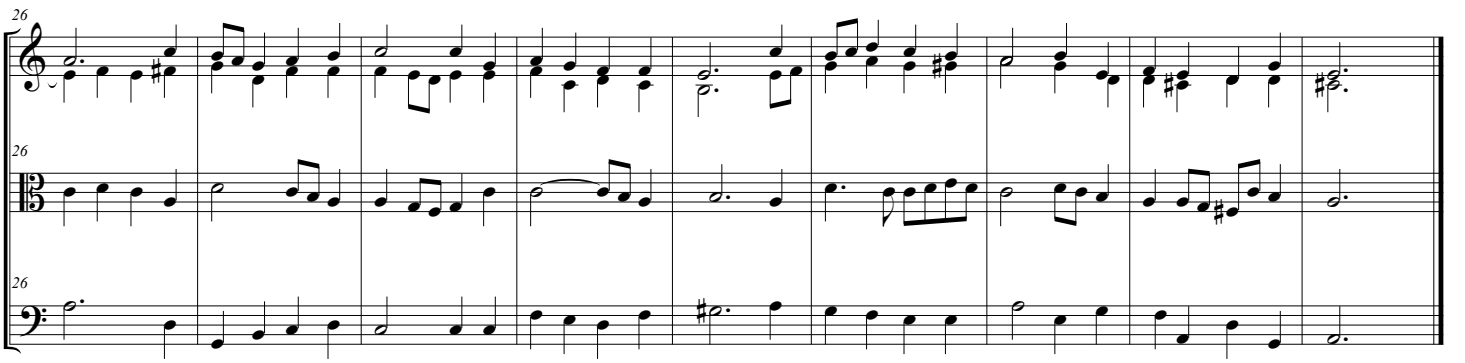
Harmony J. S. Bach





Alt Har Boyd E. Gibson



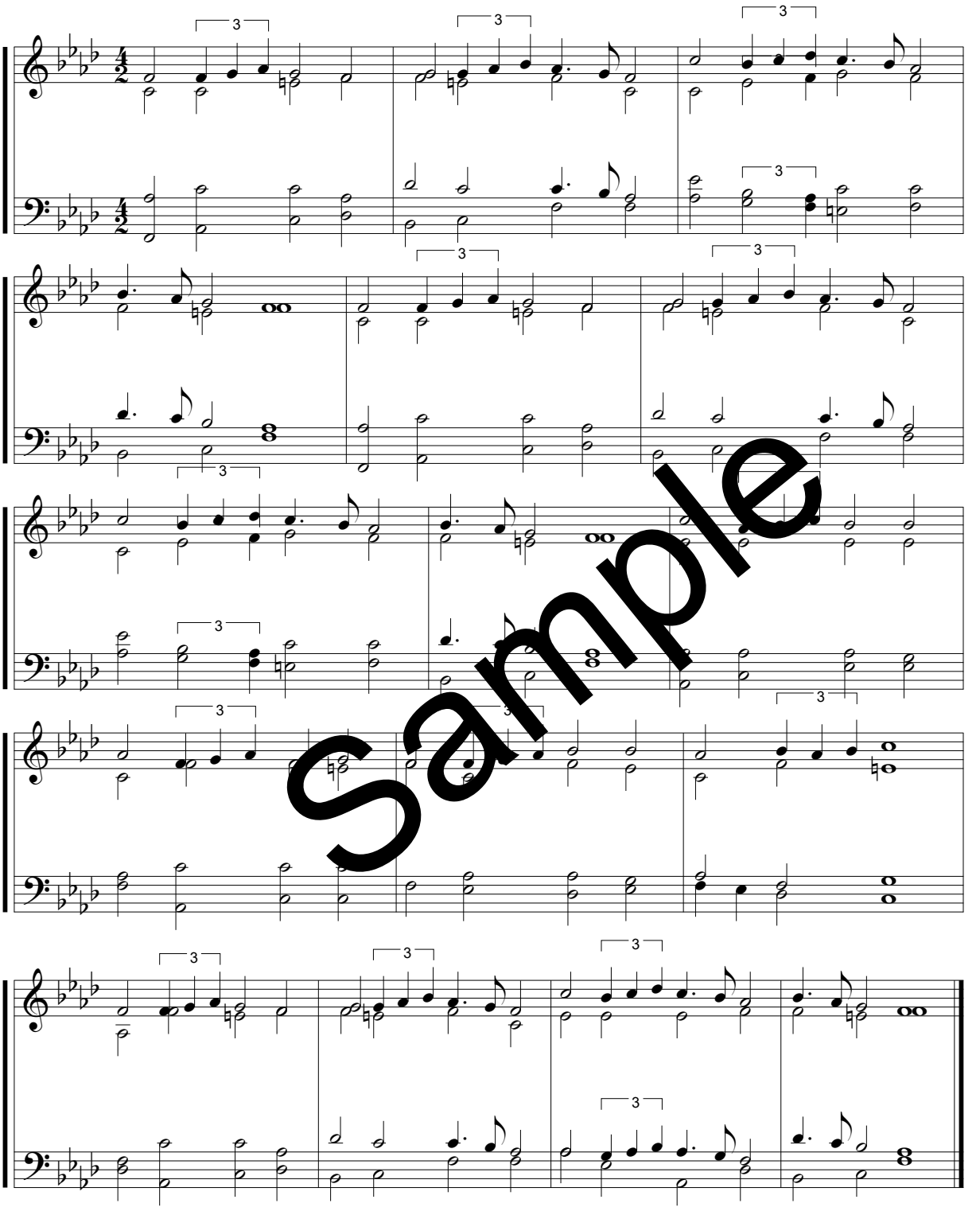


Reharmonizing a Hymn Tune Challenge

Ton-y-Botel 8.7.8.7 D

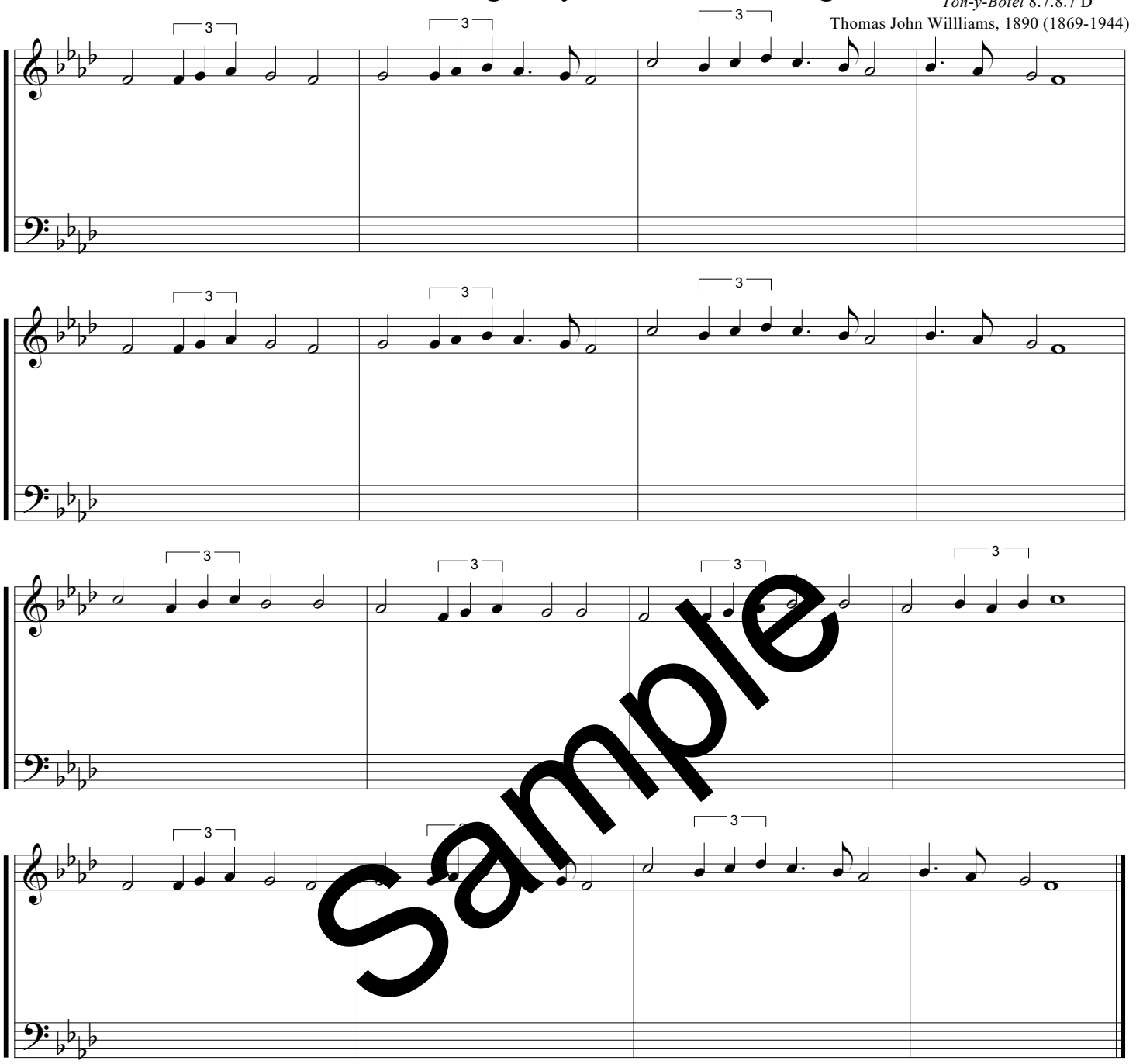
Original Harmonization

Thomas John Willliams, 1890 (1869-1944)



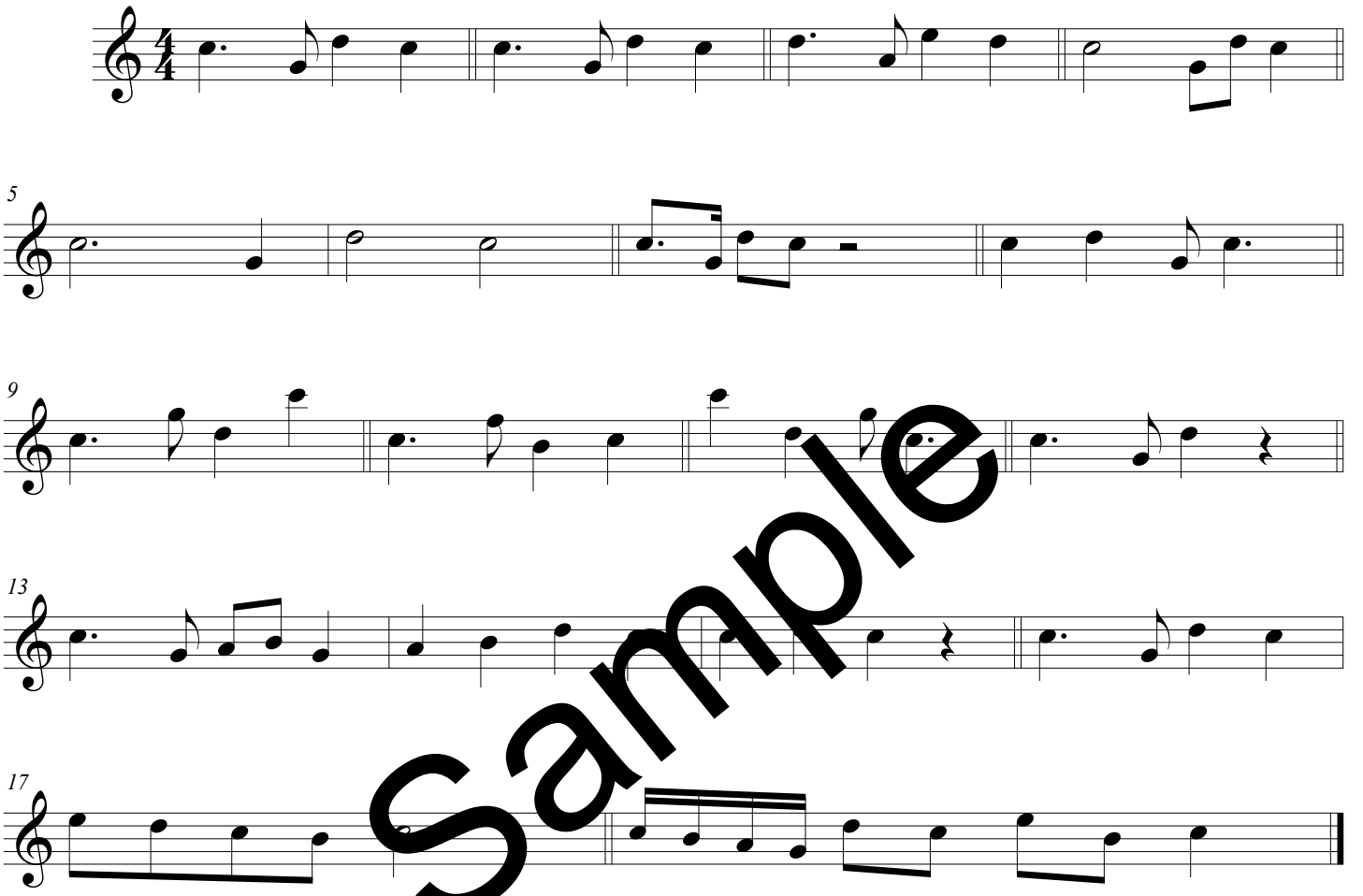
Reharmonizing a Hymn Tune Challenge

Ton-y-Botel 8.7.8.7 D
Thomas John Willliams, 1890 (1869-1944)



Motivic Developmental Device Worksheet

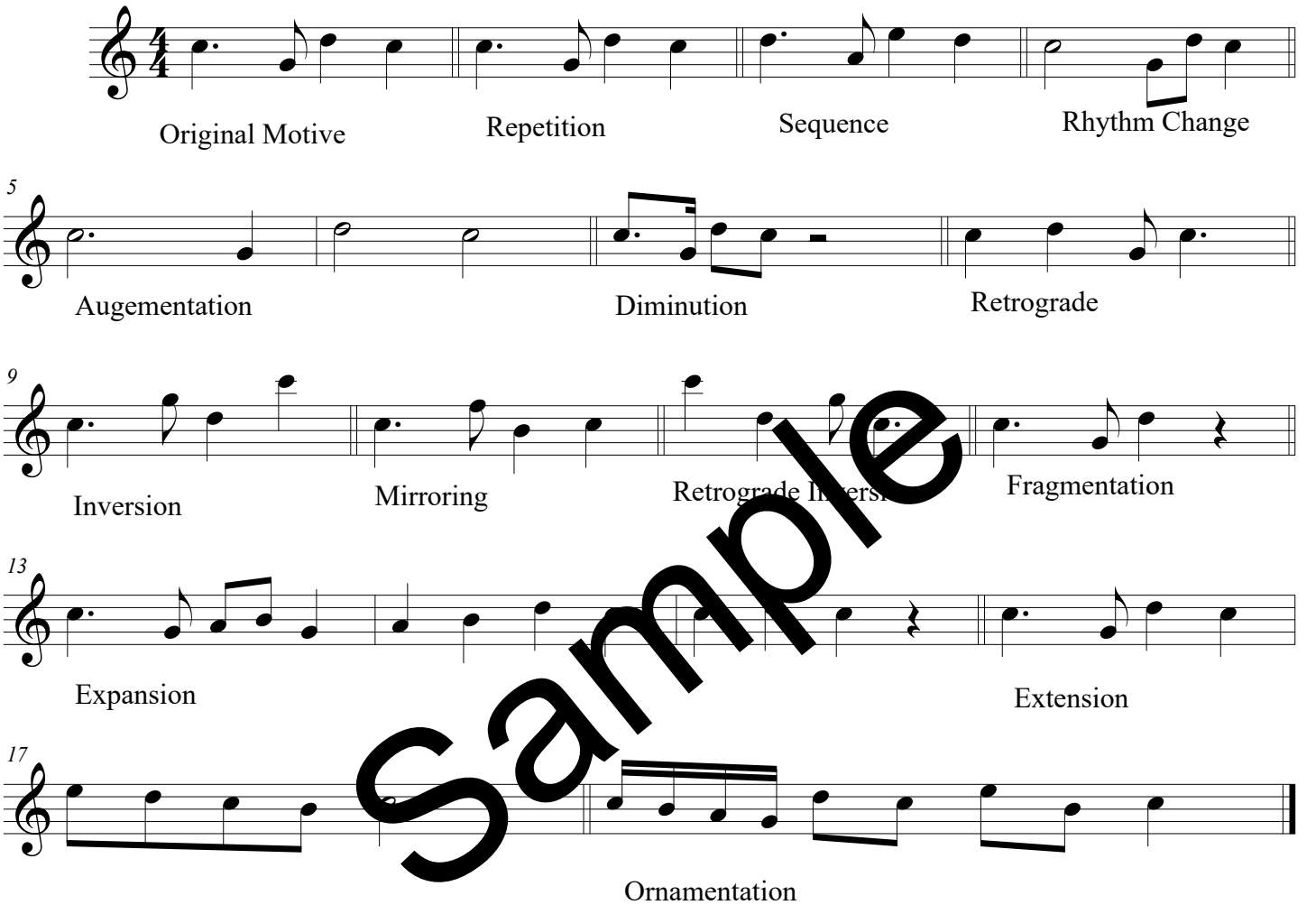
Describe and name the developmental device.



Motivic Developmental Device Worksheet

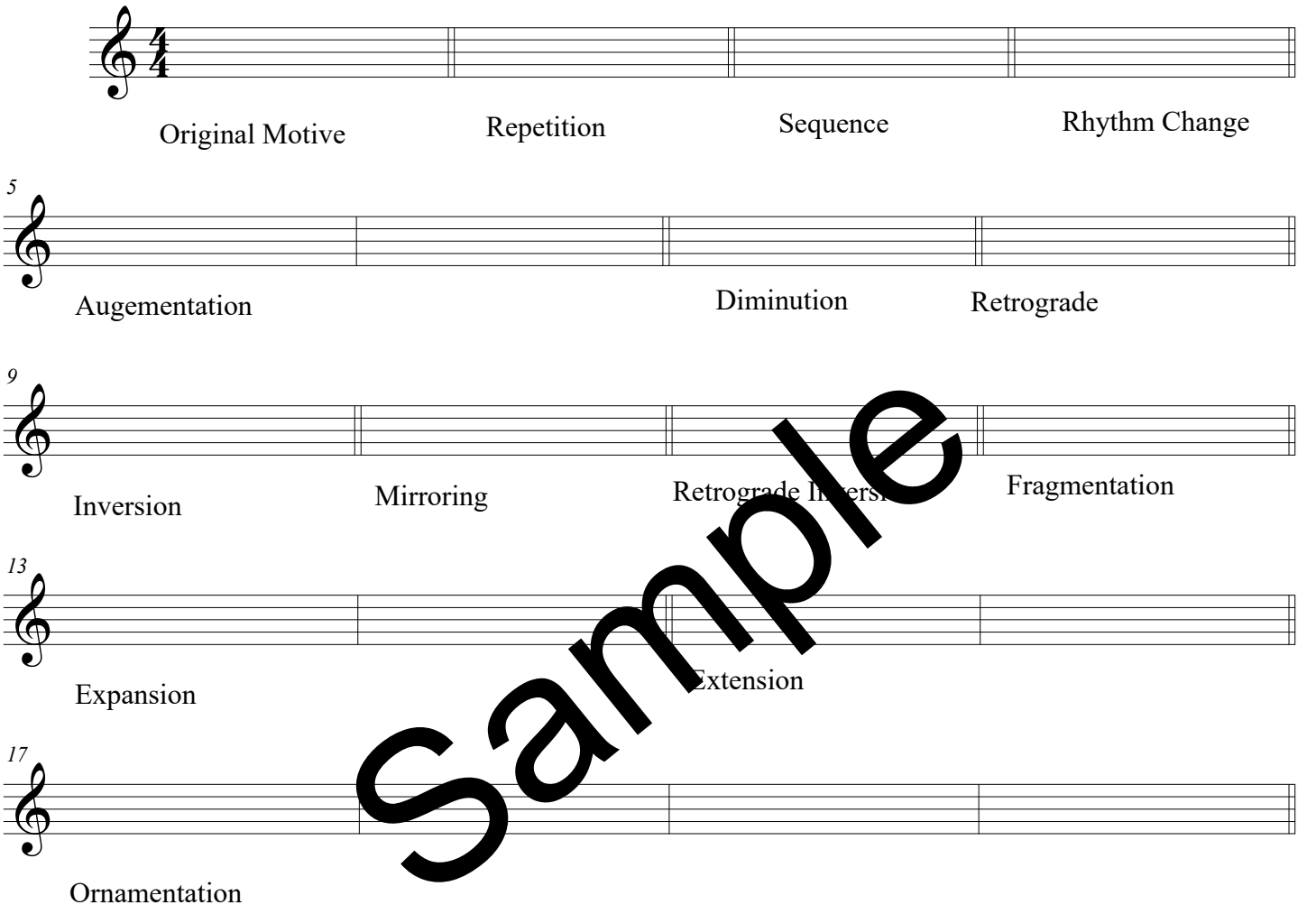
The Answers

Describe and name the developmental device.



Motivic Developmental Device Worksheet

Write your own motive and each device.



Setting words to music

A large portion of music is devoted to songs. A composer must be able to find ways to make the music and the words to be congruent. Yet there is not a set of rules that one can apply to make this an easy task. A careful study of how composers set music and text together throughout the centuries will verify this. The setting of the ordinary of the mass is just one example.

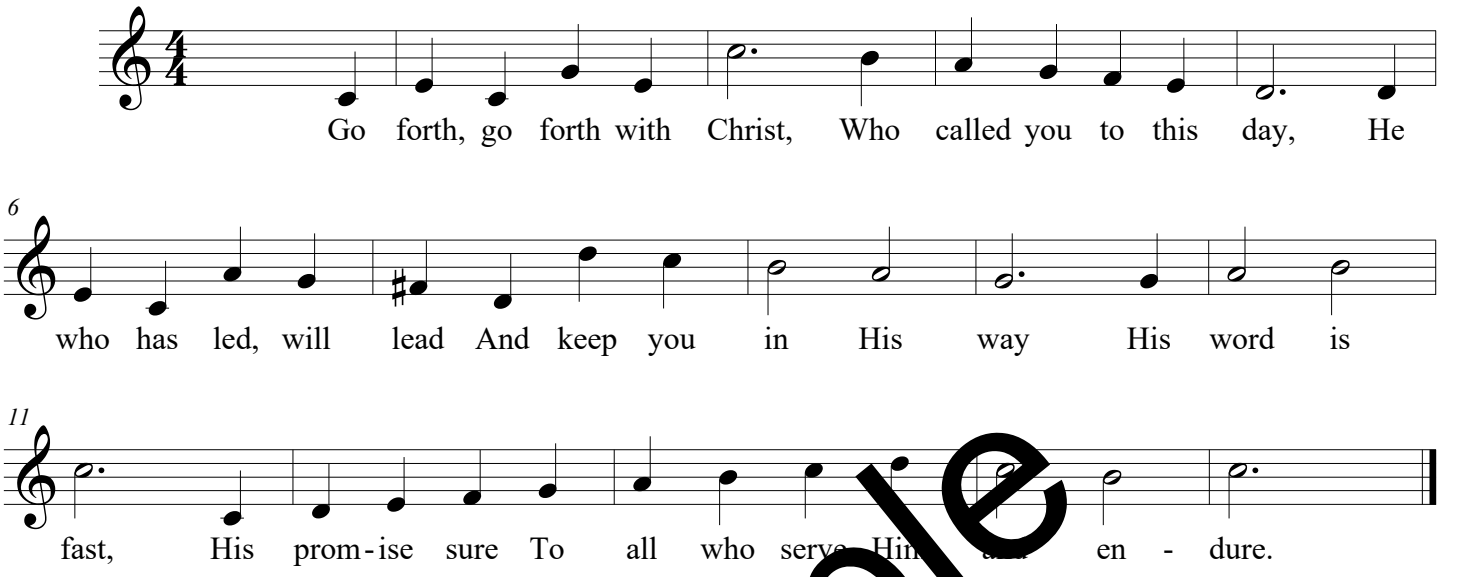
For our purpose here we will look at hymn texts and hopefully this will give you the foundation that you will need to build on. We will use hymns since there is a variety of hymns where the words have been used by different composers in different ages that can help us in our study. In addition to the hymns that I use in this guide you should do your own study of various hymnals to see how the same text is set by different composers. Then you can try your hand at doing the same. This exercise can be especially rewarding if you have already covered how to harmonize a melody. However, if you are starting with this topic because you are singers and are just writing melodies to start you can return to harmonizing your hymn melodies after you cover the writing for two voices and how to harmonize a melody.

Most hymns texts are poetry set in some type of poetic meter. This meter will have an influence on the rhythm that you choose for your melody. However, you should not confuse poetic meter with musical meter or the time signature that you will use. Most hymnals have a metrical index. Look at an index and find a hymn that have at least two settings for the same hymn and compare how the composers' settings are different. You can also find hymns with the same metrical index and interchange the music for the different text. For example Amazing Grace(New Britain) is in Common Meter and could be sung to any other hymn that the metrical index has listed as Common Meter such as Antioch (Joy to the World), Azmon (O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing) or any other hymn that fits.In addition to the hymn examples included in this guide you should do an in-depth study of various hymns. This will give you a foundation in which you will need to be able to set your text to the music you want to compose.

Go forth, go forth with Christ

George. B. Timms (1910-1997)
From *English Praise* Oxford University Press

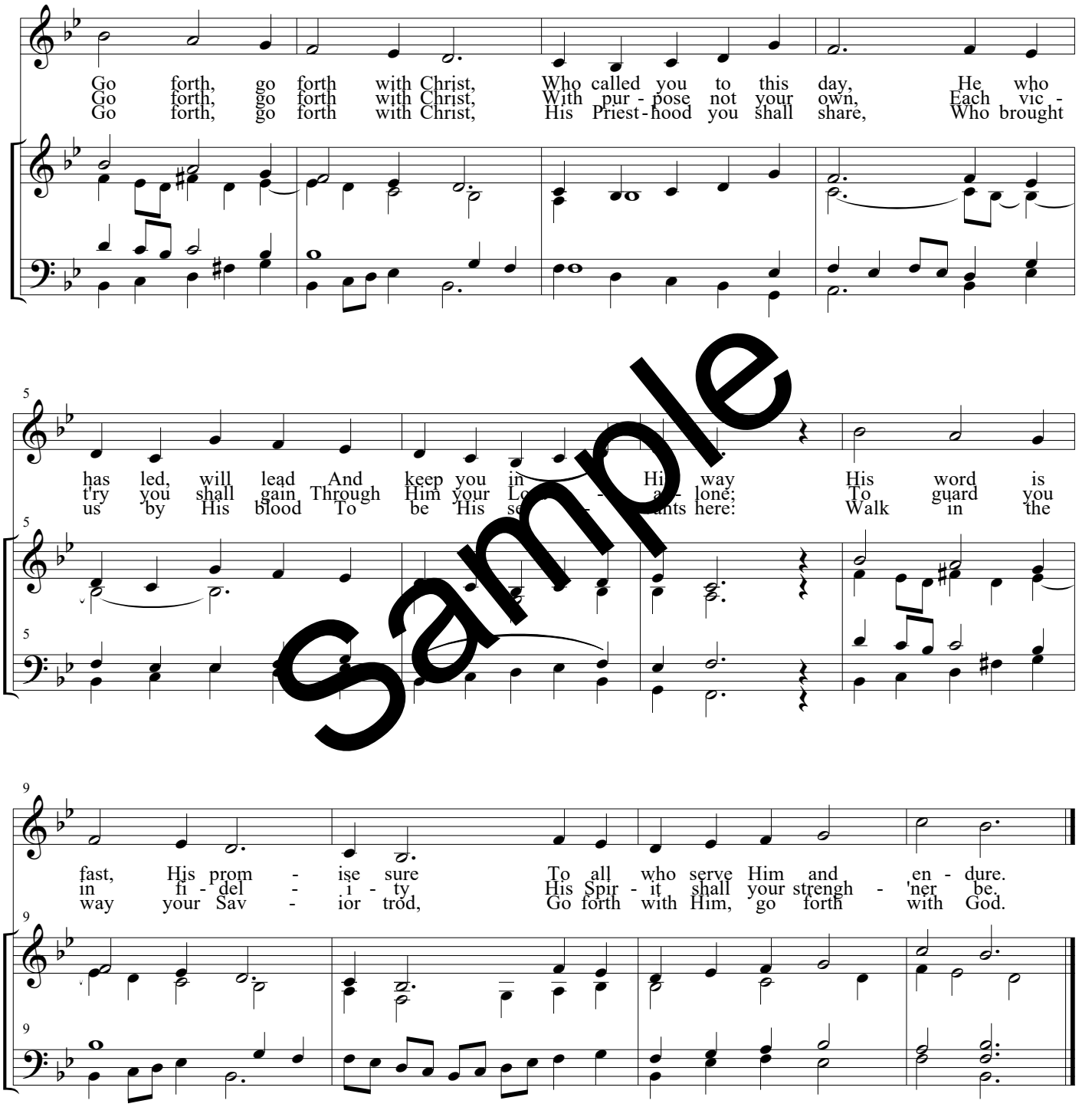
Darwall's 148th
John Darwall (1731-1789)



Go forth, go forth with Christ

George. B. Timms (1910-1997)
From *English Praise* Oxford University Press

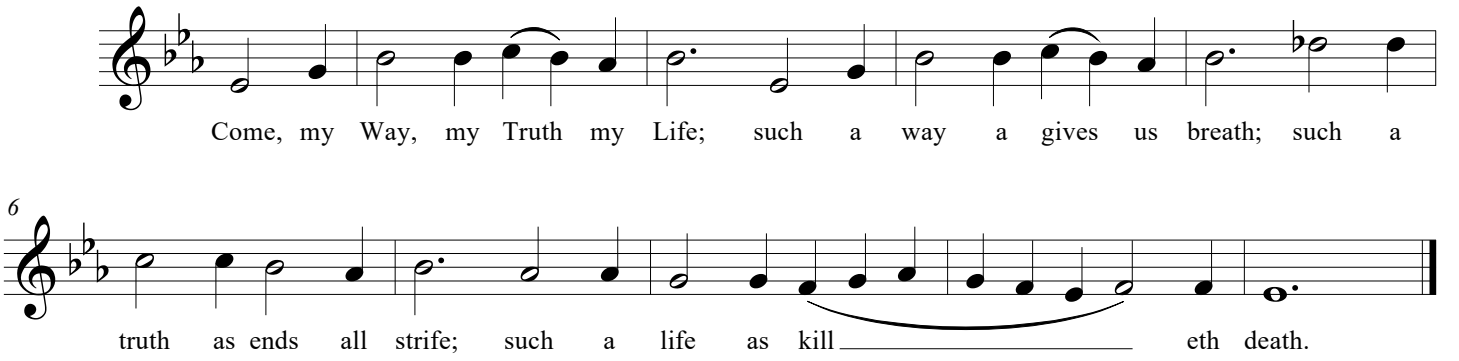
French 6.6.6.6.8.8
Boyd E. Gibson 1952- (2011)



Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life

Words: George Herbert (1593-1633)

The Call
Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872-1958

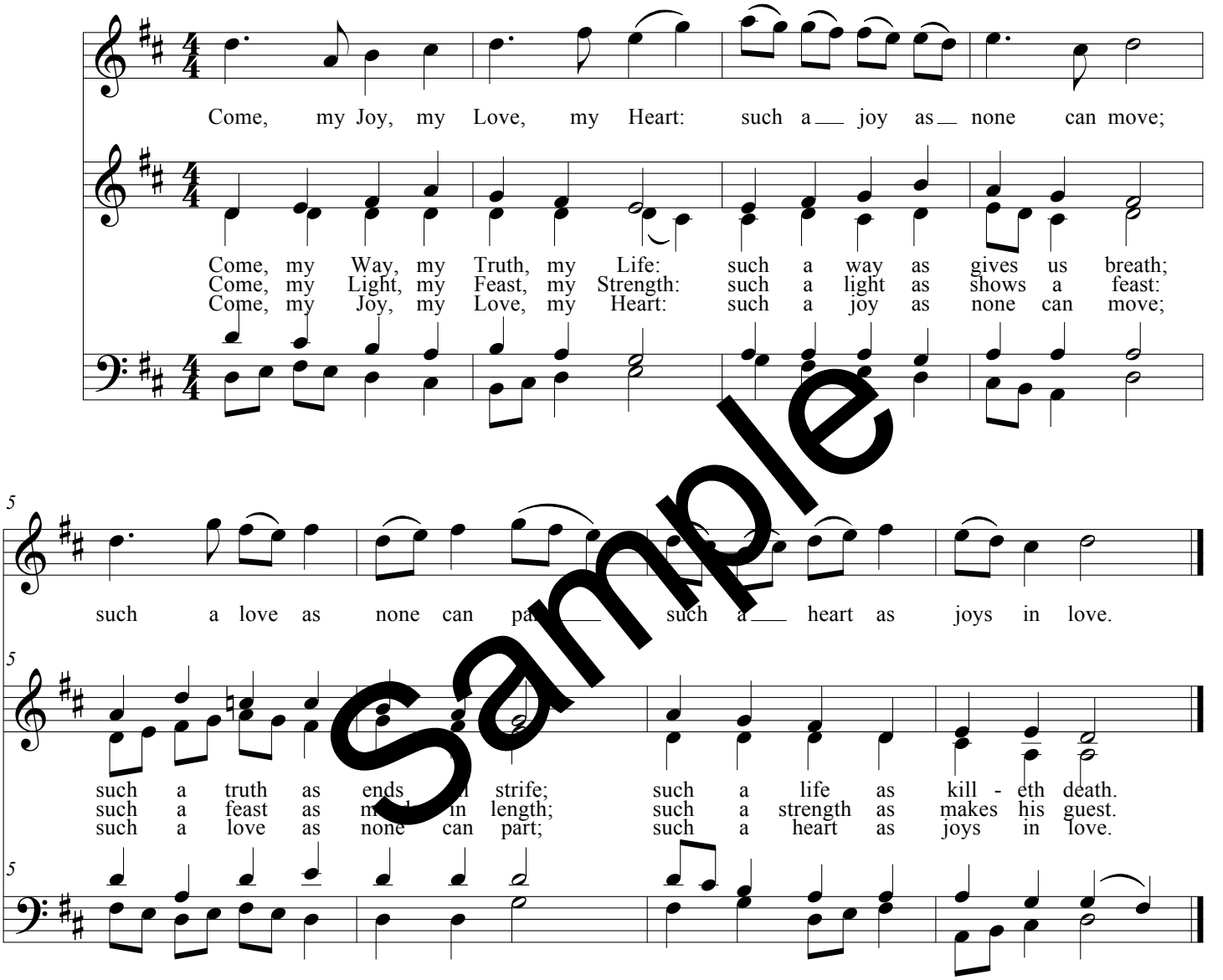


Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life

Pleading

Words: George Herbert (1593-1633)

Music: Boyd E. Gibson (1952-)

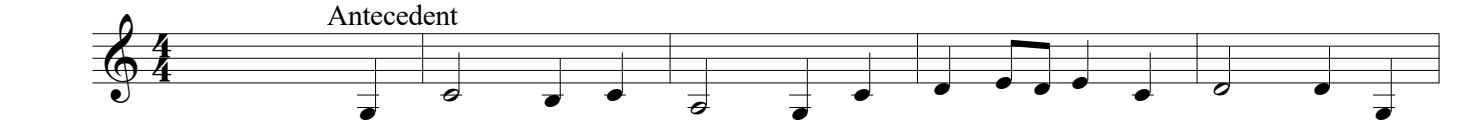


Parallel and Contrasting Periods

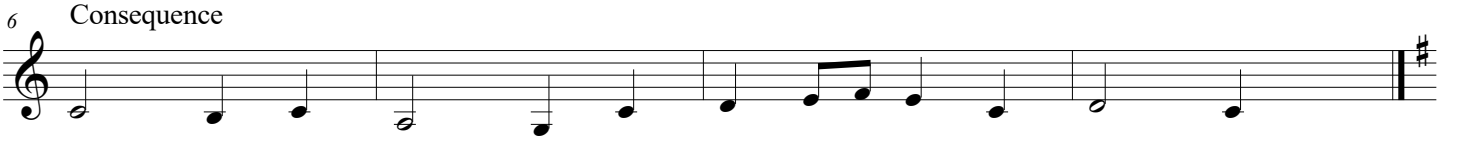
Analyze the following phrases and then determine if selection is a parallel or contrasting period.

J. Brahms Symphony No. 1 Finale

Antecedent

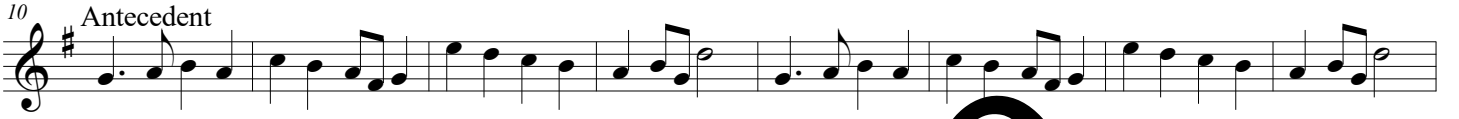


6 Consequence

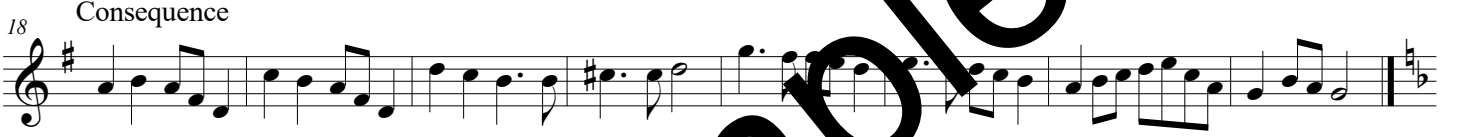


Austria F. J. Haydn

10 Antecedent



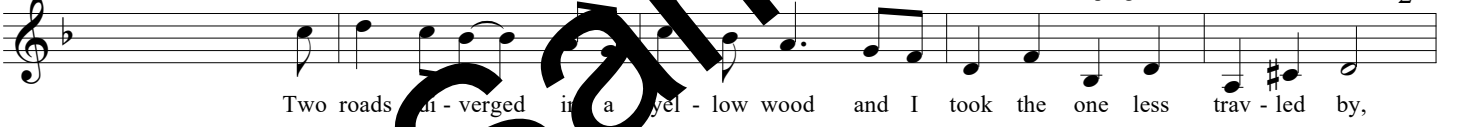
18 Consequence



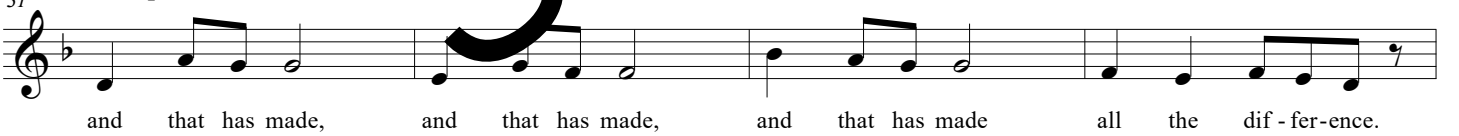
Two Roads Diverged Jacob Reed

26 Antecedent

While most antecendent pharses will not end on the tonic this example does since it is a round and its harmonic progression is circular.

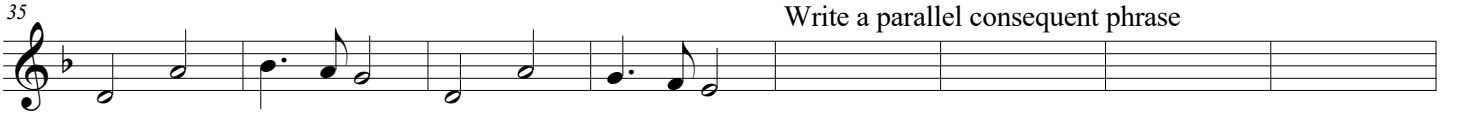


31 Consequence



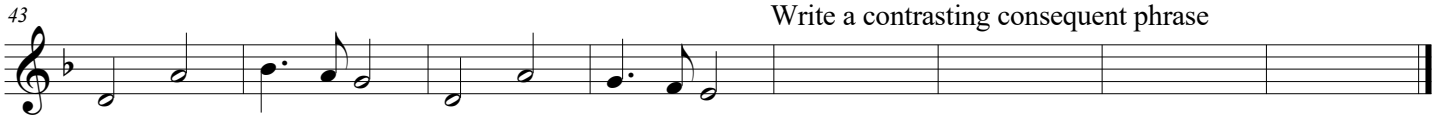
35

Write a parallel consequent phrase



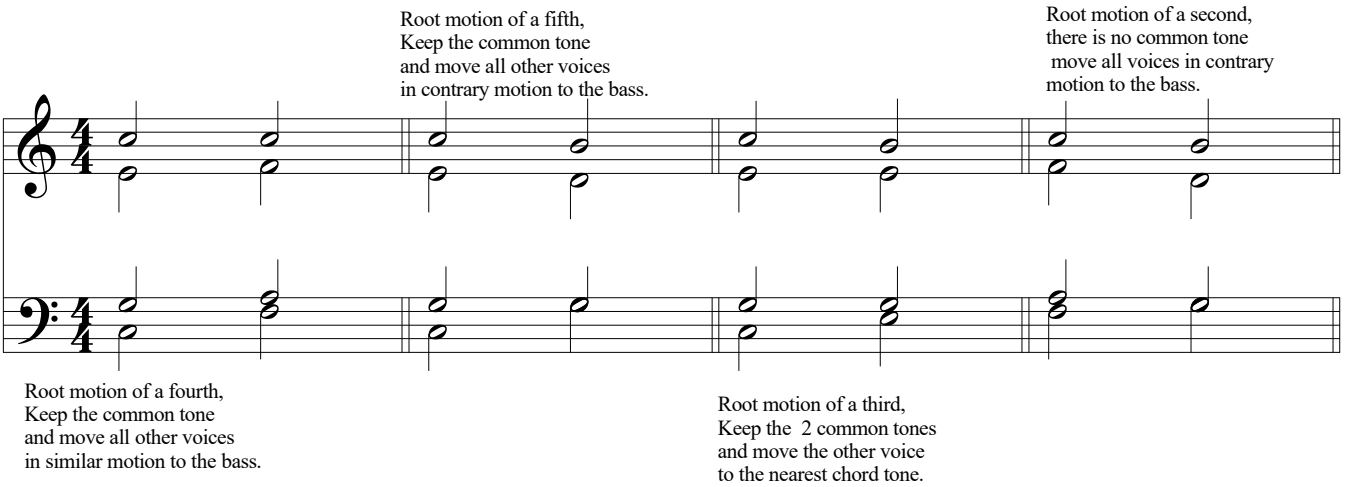
43

Write a contrasting consequent phrase



For more information on different types of phrases go to: http://core.ecu.edu/music/jacobse/classes/analysis/PHRASES.HTM

Voice Leading for 4 Part Harmony in Root Position

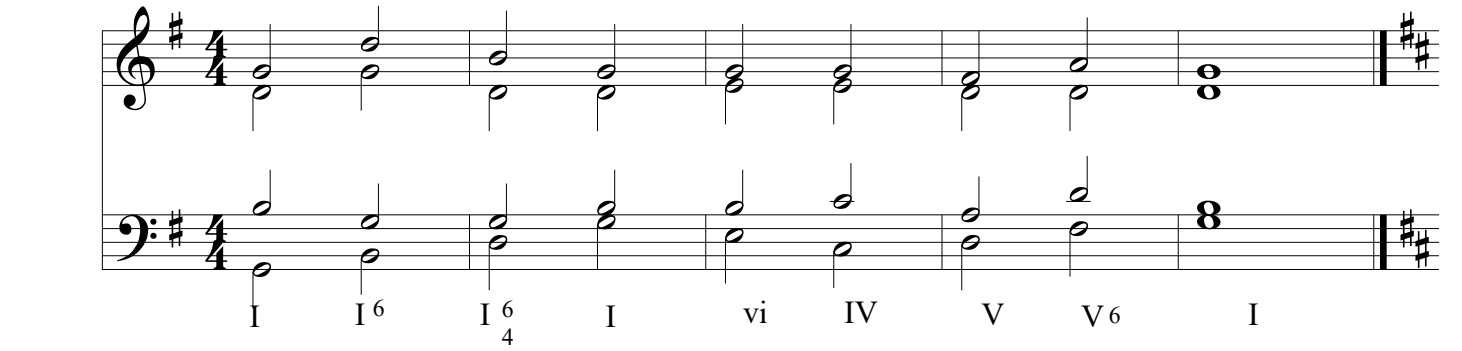


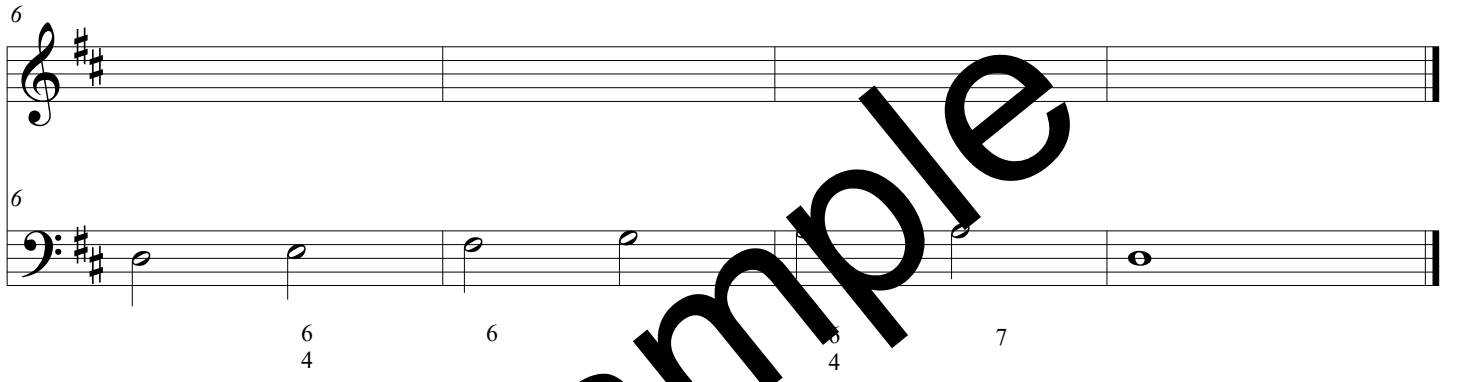
Following the above guidelines harmonize this bass line.

Other considerations are there should be no more than an octave interval between soprano and alto and the alto and tenor. The voices should not cross. The root and the fifth can be doubled in primary chords I IV and V and the root and the third can be doubled in the ii iii vi and only the third and fifth in the leading tone vii since this would lead to double leading tones and parallel octaves.

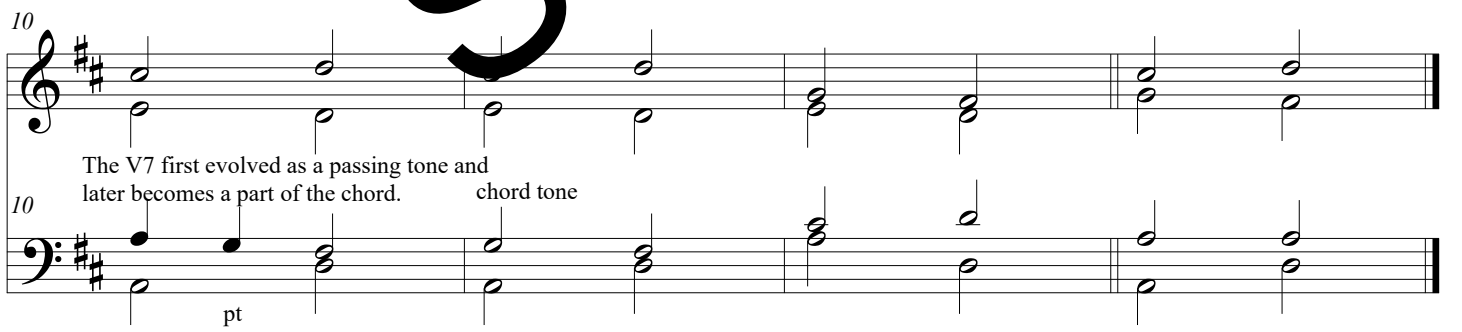
Using Inversion in 4 Part Voice Leading

There is a lot more freedom in choosing the voice leading when using inversions. However, you still want to make sure your choices are musical and be aware when root motion occurs so that you will avoid parallel fifths and octaves. Study the following example then harmonize the given bass line.





Resolution of the V7



The 3rd of the V7 resolves to the root of the tonic.
The 7th of the V7 resolves to the 3rd of the tonic.
The 5th of the V7 resolves to the root of the tonic.
If the root of the V7 is double the one voice will resolve to the the root of the tonic the other will remain to become the 5th of the tonic.
Therefore complete V7 resolves to incomplete tonics and incomplete V7 resolves to complete tonics.

Possible Lesson Plans

I have included possible lesson plans for your use. These plans are designed that even though you are the teacher, your role is not to lecture but to create an environment in where the students are making discoveries as to how music works. The noted music theorist John D. White writes, “If the teacher had simply presented the concepts as pre-established principles, they would not have remembered them, if indeed they even understand them. The teacher’s role is not to present concepts but to create the right environment for the student to come to grips with the problems out of which the concepts will emerge.”(John D. White *Guidelines for College Teaching of Music Theory*)

You are free to choose the sequence of your lessons. Some lessons may be better served if they are not covered all at once. For example, nonharmonic tones may be introduced throughout the course as a need to know basis. As already stated if your emphasis is on song writing you may want to introduce the section on setting text to music and parallel and contrasting periods early in your sequence.

You are also encouraged to pick your own music literature for the students to analyze. The examples that I give in this guide are only a starting point. I cannot overemphasize the importance of musical analysis in learning to be a good composer.

Single Melody

Review and Focus

Students will review the basic fundamentals for music notation which will include clefs, meters, rhythmic values and standard notational practices.

Objectives;

Students will be able to analyze the basic shape and contours of existing melodies.

Students will be able to write write their own melodies in various meters, keys, shapes and contours.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will discuss different melodic considerations.

Guided Practice:

Students will examine existing melodies and see what makes them work.

Students and teacher will write on the board their own melodies within the guidelines just studied.

Independent Practice:

Students will compose five “traditional” melodies about four to eight measures in length. These should demonstrate various type of melodic curves. They should be in various modes, meters and tempos.

Closure:

These melodies will be performed for the class for feedback and possible revisions.

Consonant and Dissonant Intervals

Review and Focus:

Students will review the concept of consonance and dissonance.

Objective:

Students will be able to recognize and identify all simple intervals and determine if they are consonant or dissonant.

Teacher Input:

The teacher will lead the students in discovering how intervals work and how to identify them.

Guided Practice:

Students will analyze two part music and identify the size, quality and type of interval.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to demonstrate that they have mastered identifying intervals.

Chord Study Guide

Review and Focus:

Students will review the concept of chord quality, major, minor, diminished and augmented.

Objective:

Students will be able to recognize and identify all types of chord qualities.

Teacher Input:

The teacher will lead the students in discovering how chords work and how to identify them.

Guided Practice:

Students will analyze chords and identify the type of chord.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to demonstrate that they have mastered identifying chords.

Two Voices: An Introduction to 1st Species Counterpoint

Review and Focus:

Students will review what makes a single melody work.

Objective:

Student will learn to write two melodies that move with the same rhythmic pattern.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will outline the guidelines for writing first species counterpoint.

Guided Practice:

Students will analyze and compose counterpoint exercises.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered first species counterpoint. It would also be useful to play or sing through the works.

Nonharmonic Tones*

Review and Focus:

Students will review consonant and dissonant intervals.

Objectives:

Students will be able to recognize and identify the various nonharmonic tones.

Students will be able to use these nonharmonic tones in their writing.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will guide the students through recognizing and identifying the various types of nonharmonic tones.

Guided Practice:

Students will continue to analyze existing music to identify the different type of nonharmonic tones.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered identifying nonharmonic tones.

*You may wish to only teach the nonharmonic tones that are needed for a particular lesson instead of teaching all of them at once, for example only passing tones and neighbor tones are allowed in 2nd species.

An Introduction to Second Species Counterpoint

Review and Focus:

Students will review the nonharmonic tones that are permissible in second species counterpoint.

Objective:

Students will learn to write a countermelody that moves at the rate of two notes against one in the cantus firmus.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will outline the guidelines for writing second species counterpoint.

Guided Practice:

Students will continue to analyze and compose third species counterpoint exercises.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered second species counterpoint. It would also be useful to play or sing through the works.

An Introduction to Third Species Counterpoint

Review and Focus:

Students will review the nonharmonic tones that are permissible in third species counterpoint.

Objective:

Students will learn to write a countermelody that moves at the rate of four notes against one in the cantus firmus.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will outline the guidelines for writing Third species counterpoint.

Guided Practice:

Students will continue to analyze and compose 3rd species counterpoint exercises.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered third species counterpoint. It would also be useful to play or sing through the works.

An Introduction to Fourth Species Counterpoint

Review and Focus:

Students will review the nonharmonic tones that are permissible in fourth species counterpoint especially the suspension.

Objective:

Students will learn to write a countermelody that uses suspensions and syncopation.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will outline the guidelines for writing fourth species counterpoint.

Guided Practice:

Students will continue to analyze and compose fourth species counterpoint exercises.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered fourth species counterpoint. It would also be useful to play or sing through the works.

An Introduction to Fifth Species Counterpoint

Review and Focus:

Students will review the nonharmonic tones that are permissible in fifth species counterpoint.

Objective:

Students will learn to write a countermelody that employs a mixture of the first through fourth species counterpoint.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will outline the guidelines for writing fifth species counterpoint.

Guided Practice:

Students will continue to analyze and compose fifth species counterpoint exercises.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered fifth species counterpoint. It would also be useful to play or sing through the works.

Composing Rounds

Review and Focus:

Student will review the different types of textures that are possible in two part writing, homophonic, non-imitative and imitative polyphony.

Objectives:

Students will learn how to analyze various types of imitative polyphony.

Students will learn to write rounds.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will introduce rounds by having the class sing and analyze them.

Some suggested rounds:
Frère Jaques
O How Lovely is the Evening
Why Shouldn't My Goose

Guided Practice:

Students will write several rounds as a class with the teacher's help.

The class will analyze the rounds included in this guide.

The students will compose their own rounds and sing and analyze them as a class.

Independent Practice:

Students will write several types of rounds in various meters and keys.

Closure:

Students will write one well polished round to be performed as a class or at a composer's recital.

Motivic Developmental Devices

Review and Focus
Students will review how composers write musical phrases and how they are unified with some type of collaboration of musical elements.

Objectives:

Students will be able to recognize, identify and write musical motives.

Students will be able to create their own motives and develop them using these devices.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will guide the students in analyzing motives and the devices that composers use.

Guided Practice:

Students will compose their own motives and take each motive through the various devices.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will take a quiz to show that they have mastered identifying and using development devices.

Setting Words to Music

Review and Focus

Objectives:

Students will understand the difference between poetic meter and musical meter.

Students will be able to set music to the texts of their choice.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will guide the students in setting music to their chosen texts.

Guided Practice:

Students will analyze various settings of hymn tunes to gain an understanding of composers set music to texts.

Students will choose their own texts and set them to music.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will compose several songs in various meters and keys and have them performed at a composer's recital.

Parallel and Contrasting Phrases

Review and Focus

Review various types of musical phrases and how they are put together.

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify and compose phrases that are parallel and contrasting periods.

Teacher Input:

Teacher will guide the students in analyzing and composing parallel and contrasting periods.

Guided Practice:

Students will analyze various periods to determine if they are parallel or contrasting periods.

Independent Practice:

More of the same as homework for additional practice.

Closure:

Students will compose several periods in various meters and keys.