

Canonic Procedure by Dr. Josh Levine

Five steps to writing a simple two-part canon consisting of a *Dux* ("leader"), or leading voice, and a *Comes* ("companion"), or following voice. Principle: the *dux* presents melodic material and the *comes* strictly imitates it according to the canon ("rule") which specifies (at least) the temporal distance between them and the pitch interval at which the following voice enters. Canons are "concluded" (Albrechtsberger) if the chain of imitation is eventually broken to make a cadence; otherwise they are "perpetual."

Step 1:

- a) compose your *dux*
 - b) decide on the rule for the canon ("rule") (here. e.g., one measure and at the unison)
- OR
- a) decide on the rule for the canon
 - b) compose your *dux*

Dux (leading voice)

Step 2:

Copy the *dux* into the following voice at the proper transposition, where it becomes the *comes*

Comes (following voice)

Step 3:

In the leading voice, write free counterpoint against the *comes*. *N.B.* the first harmonic interval may be any consonance (i.e., it is not limited to P1, P8, or P5). It can also be a dissonance if it enters against a suspended tone in the *dux*.

free counterpoint

Step 4:

Copy this new material into the following voice.

Step 5:

Keep repeating Steps 3 and 4 until you decide to break the chain of imitation in preparation for a cadence.

free counterpoint

et cetera

et voilà...!

The imitation is broken in preparation for the cadence