

Music 231

1st through 5th Species Assignment Requirements

Write ONE counterpoint exercise:

- It must be in a minor key (Aeolian or Dorian mode)
- It can be either a lower (bass clef), or upper (treble clef) exercise
- You may ONLY use the cantus firmi from the list of "approved" examples
- Don't make up your own cantus (or change the notes of one of the above)
- YOU MUST LIST WHICH CANTUS YOU ARE USING
- For an upper counterpoint exercise, there will be an upper climax
- A lower counterpoint exercise may have an upper and/or lower climax
- Because it is a minor key exercise, you will need to raise the 7th scale degree (and the 6th scale degree if you are approaching the 7th by step from below) at the end just before concluding on the tonic
- Check out the *Species How To* page for more details

Allowances for "Melodic Imperfections"

In our studies, we have encountered many examples of species exercises that have their share of melodic errors or "imperfections". These might include unprepared or unresolved leaps, dissonant melodic outlines or misplaced climaxes. While some are easier to explain and therefore forgive, other so-called errors require, at the least, a very informed understanding of voice-leading to even possibly begin a reasonable explanation. Without that understanding, however, it is still possible to say that such examples at least "sound good" or that they are "singable".

Because even at the textbook level, these so-called errors make their way into examples, it seems only fair that homework exercises may have similar errors (on a limited basis) and still be considered worthy of full credit.

The allowance for imperfections in species assignments will be this:

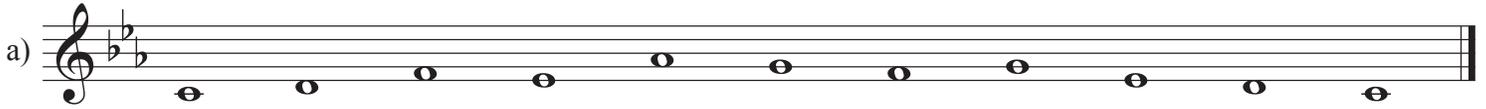
- The imperfections will be limited to one per exercise.
- These must be limited to melodic procedures, and further limited to:
 - unprepared leaps
 - dissonant outlines (where one of the notes must be on a weak beat, which excludes 1st species)
 - a climax on the first note of an upper counterpoint exercise (4th or 5th species--but it must start on the 12th)
 - other melodic errors that do NOT involve a dissonance
 - While this is subjective, the exercise should still sound good and be singable

FURTHERMORE:

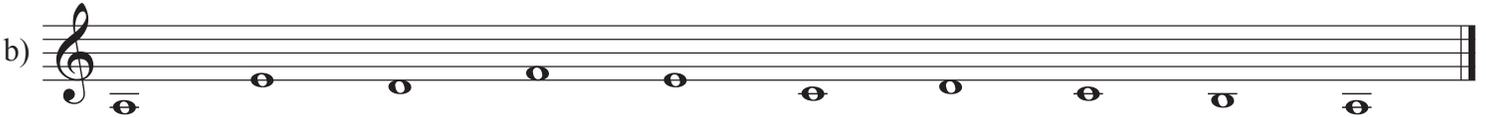
You must label the imperfection and briefly say why you could not avoid it. We will not "take away" one error from the pointing process if you do not label it properly.

"Approved" cantus firmi for use with counterpoint exercises

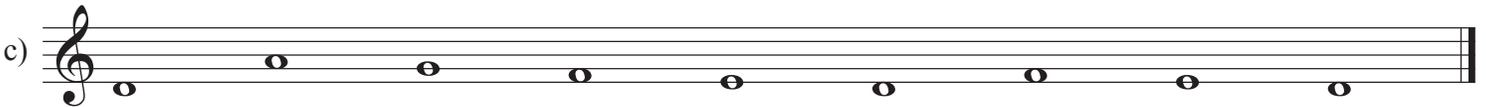
c minor - aeolian



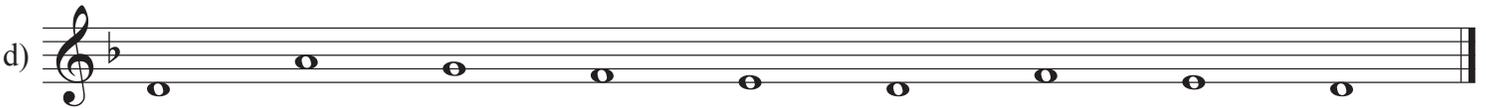
a minor - aeolian



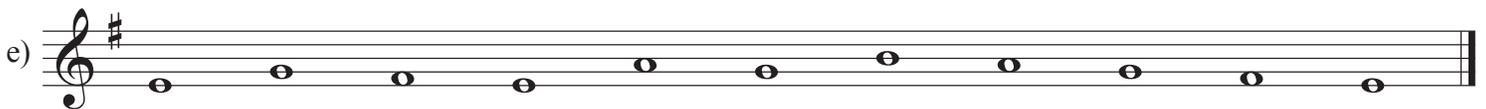
d minor - dorian



d minor - aeolian



e minor - aeolian



g minor - dorian (best suited for an upper counterpoint exercise)



How To Write A Species Counterpoint Assignment

- Species exercises should be done on staff paper in pencil.
- The staff paper should not have any pre-printed bar lines or clefs on it.
- Only use cantus firmi from the list of "approved" examples that are either in the Aeolian or Dorian mode
- Put the cantus in the treble clef for a lower counterpoint exercise; put the cantus in the bass clef for an upper counterpoint exercise.
- List which cantus you are using.
- Doing an "upper counterpoint" means that you will write a species counterpoint line (in treble clef) above a chosen cantus firmus.
- Doing a "lower counterpoint" means that you will write a species counterpoint line (bass clef) below a chosen cantus firmus.
- Write in the vertical intervals between all counterpoint and cantus notes (just the numbers, not the quality of the interval).
 - Write them IN BETWEEN the two parts.
- Notate everything very clearly! Give yourself PLENTY of room in each EVENLY-SPACED measure to fit all your counterpoint notes.
- If you have any misgivings about how to set up your staves, bar lines, key signatures, etc., refer to the textbook, which has many examples of upper and lower exercises.

Species Assignment Checklist

Use this as a checklist/guide for all species assignments

Formatting/Notation

- Name and assignment title on top
- Bar lines: double-bar at end; left-side bar line; lines run all the way through
- Clef design: tall treble clef
- Note alignment (cantus note does NOT go in middle of measure, it goes on downbeat)
- Analyze intervals
- General neatness

Line/Melody

- Begin
 - Upper: tonic (*8ve), dominant (*5th, maybe 12th)
 - Lower: tonic (*unison or 8ve)
- End
 - Upper: tonic (*8ve)
 - Lower: tonic (*unison or 8ve – same as beginning)
 - Penultimate note: **LEADING TONE (raised in minor keys)**
- Avoid too much disjunct (leaps/skips) motion
- Check leap preparation and especially resolution
- Shape/climax
- Check for dissonant outlines
- Avoid leaping in the same direction after significant conjunct motion
- Check for “imperfections” and label
- Melodic dissonances (leaps & outlines): 7ths, 9ths, anything augmented/diminished

Intervals (harmonic) and Counterpoint

- No dissonances on downbeats (except 4th species)
- Weak beat dissonances must be
 - Passing tones
 - Neighbor Tones
 - Part of a figure (double neighbor, cambiata)
- Perfect intervals (5ths/8ves) on downbeats
 - Check for parallels (avoid)
 - Check for similar motion approach (avoid)
- Avoid voice crossing and overlaps
- Harmonic dissonances include: 2nds, 4ths, 7ths, 9ths, 11ths, anything augmented/diminished

* The above Begin/End *melodic* items mention some things related to *harmonic* intervals

HOW TO FORMAT A SPECIES ASSIGNMENT

class & assignment title

Music 231 1st species

your name

Joe Fux

leave some space here for comments

cantus labeled
C.F.X

carefully draw clefs & key signature if necessary

climaxes marked

intervals labeled (numbers only)

key labeled

leading tone only at end (must be "raised" in minor keys)

- straight bar lines throughout
- double bar at end
- single, left-side bar at beginning
- evenly-spaced measures
- staff paper without pre-printed clefs or bar lines
- written in pencil so ~~mistakes~~ mistakes can be erased instead of crossed out