

## Fourth-Species Counterpoint Grading Guidelines

### 3-point mistakes:

- parallel and “antiparallel” (also known as “contrary” or “consecutive”) fifths, both on the note-to-note level and on successive strong beats
- parallel and “antiparallel” (also known as “contrary” or “consecutive”) octaves, both on the note-to-note level and on successive strong beats
- parallel octaves and fifths that are offset by inadvisable suspensions (for instance, 9-8 9-8 in the upper voice or 4-5 4-5 in the bass)

### 2-point mistakes:

- use of a harmonic dissonance that does not resemble a suspension (e.g., there is a leap to or from the dissonant note); a passing tone is acceptable (although not generally advisable) if it is necessary to “break the species” and use second-species counterpoint very briefly
- direct fifth or octave (i.e., similar motion into P5 or P8) if the upper voice leaps

### 1-point mistakes:

- failed suspension (a harmonic dissonance that resembles a suspension but something is wrong — e.g., the attempted suspension steps down to another dissonance)
- missing suspension at the beginning of the exercise (i.e., simultaneous with the second *cantus firmus* note)
- missing suspension at the end of the exercise (i.e., simultaneous with the penultimate *cantus firmus* note)
- more than three identical suspension types in a row (e.g., 4-3, 4-3, 4-3)
- illegal melodic leap (e.g., 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, anything augmented or diminished except for  $\hat{3}$  down to  $\hat{1}$  in a minor key, etc.)
- consecutive leaps not involving  $\hat{1}$ ,  $\hat{3}$ , and  $\hat{5}$ : two leaps = -1, three leaps = -2, etc.
- simultaneous leaps (with the exception of a voice exchange, or the exclusive use of  $\hat{1}$ ,  $\hat{3}$ , and  $\hat{5}$ )
- upper voice leap into harmonic P8 or P5 (exception: oblique motion)
- voice crossing
- overlap
- unresolved leading tone
- poor use of  $\hat{6}$  and/or  $\hat{7}$  in a minor key
- ending on something other than  $\hat{1}$  or  $\hat{3}$  in the upper voice
- ending on something other than  $\hat{1}$  in the lower voice
- inappropriate approach to final note
- immediately repeated note over the same *cantus firmus* note
- more than two perfect consonances in a row: three = -1, four = -2, etc.
- inappropriate or missing accidental
- unbalanced leap
- range of more than an octave
- ending in the wrong register (i.e., more than a fifth from the starting note)
- pretty much anything else that isn't a good idea

### Possible global deductions (1 to 3 points, depending on severity):

- insufficient suspensions
- overuse of perfect intervals
- very boring melody