

CHAPTER TWO

SECOND SPECIES (2:1)

In Second Species, one part changes pitch twice for every single change of pitch in the other part. If one part is given in quarter tones, for instance, the part to be added will be written in continuous eighth notes. It is here that we introduce chord tone skips along with nonharmonic tones. Occasionally, pieces written in a typical keyboard style will feature a counterpoint that consists only of chord tones; many such examples are seen in the keyboard works of Bach. Below is a short demonstration of Second Species using only chord tones:

Key of F

3 5 3 °5 3 8 6 8 3 8 3 °5 6 3 3 8 6 3 3 5 8

I V⁵₇ (vii^o) I IV₆ V V₆ V₆/vi vi V₆ V I

But what makes solid counterpoint is a blend of chord tone skips and nonharmonic tones, which brings us to the need for a quick review of nonharmonic tones (NHTs)—also referred to as non chord tones (NCTs). For a more thorough review see Chapter Six of the author's *Harmony and Theory, Part 1 - Diatonic* (Hal Leonard). The NCTs we will use in Second Species are: passing tone, neighbor tone, escape tone, appoggiatura, reaching tone¹, and anticipation. [The changing tone figure, though possible here, will be added in Third Species.]

PASSING TONE: occurs weak or strong, diatonic or chromatic² ; approached by step and left by step in the same direction.

¹ A newer term for a weak-beat appoggiatura.

² Fills in the interval of a Major 2nd, and occasionally a Minor 3rd.

NEIGHBOR TONE: occurs weak or strong, diatonic or chromatic; approached by step and left by step in the opposite direction.

ESCAPE TONE: occurs on weak beat, usually but not always diatonic; approached by step up and resolved by the drop of a 3rd.³

APPOGGIATURA: occurs on strong portion of the beat; approached by a leap of a 3rd or more and resolved by step. Most often approached by a leap up and resolved by a step down, but any combination of directions is usable.

REACHING TONE: Same as appoggiatura except it occurs on weak portion of the beat.

ANTICIPATION: occurs on weak portion of the beat: approached usually – but not always – by step and resolved by repetition. Here we have our first use of the repeated tone in our discipline. Caution: don't overuse the Anticipation.

By far the most-used NCT is the passing tone. Try to bring in some strong-beat passing tones into your work. Most students avoid them like the plague and restrict their use to weak-beat passing tones, resulting in work that lacks impact. Dissonances in music are wonderful when brought in nicely, and the strong-beat dissonances are heard much more prominently and have more expressive effect.

³ 99% of all escape tones are handled in this way. You should do likewise!

PASSING TONES (P)

Key of C I I₆ I IV I₆ vi⁶ IV V₆

NEIGHBOR TONES (N)

I vi V₆/vi vi₆ IV IV V₆/ii ii ii₆

ESCAPE TONES (E)

APPOGGIATURAS (APP)

I V₆ vi V₆ I₆ ii₆ vi Key of dm i I₆ ii₆

REACHING TONES (R)

ANTICIPATION (ANT)

Key of G I IV V₆ Key of F vi ii₆ I IV₆ ii₆ V I

The move to 2:1 will require more Guidelines for you to absorb. These are laid out below, followed by examples which clarify them:

GUIDELINES FOR SECOND SPECIES COUNTERPOINT (2:1)

1. The faster-moving part may move to chord tones on both strong or weak beats.
2. Passing tones and other NCTs do not eliminate parallel 5ths or octaves.
3. Chord tone perfect 4ths (as harmonic intervals) may be used only on weak portions of beats. (How to use the P4 is dealt with immediately following these Guidelines.)
4. Minor 7ths and Major 2nds (as harmonic intervals) may be used to express the dominant 7th chord, but only if the V chord has been heard on the previous beat.
5. Strive for a good mixture of conjunct (stepwise) and disjunct (skips) motion.
6. You may use the octave leap from time to time, but for now avoid repeated tones (except as an Anticipation).
7. Fifths and octaves on successive strong beats are to be avoided, but fifths and octaves on successive weak beats are O.K. as long as the strong beat between them consists only of chord tones.
8. Be careful not to create parallel fifths or octaves where they did not exist previously as 1:1 counterpoint. [One way to write 2:1 is to expand a previous 1:1 Counterpoint.]
9. Examine your work melodically! Watch for awkward melodic intervals; two or more skips in the same direction must make up chord tones of a triad (or V7 or ii 7 or iiØ7 chord).
10. For the time being the slower part consists only of chord tones (no NCTs!).

TREATMENT OF THE PERFECT 4th IN SECOND SPECIES

As a harmonic interval, the perfect 4th must be handled with care. In 2 part counterpoint, a perfect 4th that is a chord tone placed on a main beat of the measure is considered dissonant and should be avoided. The following examples clarify this principle:

THESE ARE ALL INCORRECT

Key of C

(V₄) (ii₄) (V₄) (IV₄)

Furthermore, chord tone perfect 4ths on main beats are actually 6/4 chords, which are all too often mistreated by students. [Review the chapter on the Six-Four Chord in *Harmony and Theory, Part 1*]. There several good ways to employ the perfect 4th as a harmonic interval: 1) as a weak beat chord tone and 2) as any kind of properly handled nonharmonic tone. Study the following examples thoroughly:

THESE ARE ALL CORRECT

I₆ ii₆ I V₆ I vi₆ I V₆ I V₆

Occasionally you will find a perfect 4th on a strong beat in a cadential 6/4 chord situation, as seen in example A. But the preferred procedure is to use a 6th on the strong beat, as seen in Example B:

(A) POSSIBLE (B) PREFERRED

I₆ I₄

PARALLEL FIFTHS AND OCTAVES

In two-part counterpoint there are more considerations regarding parallels than we have had in the study of four-part harmony. The most important rule to follow is this: If a chord tone perfect 5th falls on any principal beat of the measure, there must be no perfect 5th anywhere in the previous beat. The same holds true for octaves. Example A below demonstrates:

(A) THESE ARE ALL INCORRECT

The musical notation for Example A consists of four measures of two-part counterpoint. The first measure is in 2/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff. The second measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff. The third measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff. The fourth measure is in 2/4 time and shows a perfect octave (8) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff.

If a perfect 5th or octave falls on the weak portion of a beat, then the previous beat may have a perfect 5th or octave anywhere in the beat. Example B demonstrates:

(B) THESE ARE ALL CORRECT

The musical notation for Example B consists of four measures of two-part counterpoint. The first measure is in 2/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the second beat of the treble staff and the second beat of the bass staff. The second measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the second beat of the treble staff and the second beat of the bass staff. The third measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect octave (8) on the second beat of the treble staff and the second beat of the bass staff. The fourth measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect octave (8) on the second beat of the treble staff and the second beat of the bass staff.

It should be borne in mind that nonharmonic tones do NOT remove the effect of parallels, nor do chord tone skips:

(C) THESE ARE ALL INCORRECT

The musical notation for Example C consists of four measures of two-part counterpoint. The first measure is in 2/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff. The second measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff. The third measure is in 4/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff. The fourth measure is in 2/4 time and shows a perfect fifth (5) on the first beat of the treble staff and the first beat of the bass staff.

An error frequently committed by students who believe they are following the rules for avoiding parallel octaves involves accented passing tones or some other kind of nonharmonic tones. The following examples are all incorrect because each of the nonharmonic tones displaces a tone that normally belongs on the principal beat. The effect is virtually parallel octaves, and you will readily agree if you listen to the effect.

THESE ARE ALL INCORRECT

Key of C

As is true for 1:1 counterpoint, there is an unequal 5th situation that must be avoided. The movement of a diminished 5th to a perfect 5th is to be avoided if the P5 falls on a strong (principal) beat. If the P5 is on a weak beat, there should be no problem. The examples below demonstrate:

INCORRECT GOOD

Key of C

Judicious use of nonharmonic tones and well-chosen additional chord tones are what will make for convincing counterpoint. Remember, in this species (2:1) we will not be using any tied tones, any suspensions or retardations, pedal tones or repeated tones except the occasional leap of an octave (up or down, weak or strong). Consistent octave leaps would ruin the character of second species and revert back to first (1:1).

Successive principal beat 3rds and 6ths may be used more freely now, especially if they are broken by the occasional contrary motion approach to these intervals. The practice of employing contrary motion 3rds and 6ths to break up an otherwise objectionable series of parallel 3rds or 6ths has already been discussed regarding First Species.

The intervals of a minor 7th and major 2nd may be used as chord tones of V7 on weak beats at any time. And they can also be used on strong beats if these chords have been used on the previous beat. The examples below demonstrate:

The musical example is in G major and consists of 12 measures. It is divided into three sections: 'GOOD' (measures 1-2), 'AVOID' (measures 3-4), and 'GOOD' (measures 5-6). The first section shows a 7th interval in measure 1 and a 2nd interval in measure 2. The second section shows a 7th interval in measure 3 and a 9th interval in measure 4. The third section shows a 7th interval in measure 5 and a 9th interval in measure 6. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

Key of G V I V₂⁴ I₆ I V₇ I V₂⁴ V₆ V₇ V I V₂⁴

The occasional octave leap is very effective, but don't overuse it, otherwise you will be defeating the concept of 2nd Species work and find yourself back in 1st Species.

The musical example is in C major and consists of 6 measures. The first measure shows a piano (P) dynamic marking. The second measure shows an octave leap in the melody. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature is no sharps or flats.

Key of C

Some examples, analyzed in terms of harmony and NCTs, follow. You should always be fully aware of every harmonic and melodic interval you write. Hereafter, however, it won't be necessary to write in each harmonic interval (as in 1:1). Study all of these examples thoroughly before doing the exercises for Chapter Two. These first two chapters are, in some ways, more difficult than what awaits you in the next chapter (Third Species). If you apply yourself diligently to mastering the techniques of 1:1 and 2:1 you will have a far more enjoyable time as you move ahead.

EXAMPLES FOR STUDY

(A)

Key of C I IV₆ IV V₆ V₆/ii V₅[♯]/ii ii ii₆ I₆ V I

(B)

Key of am i vii₆[♭] i₆ V₂[♯] i₆ i IV vii₆[♭] V₆ i

(C)

Key of em i V₆ i i₆ iv vii₆[♭]/iv iv₆ ii₆[♭] V V₅[♯] I

(D)

Key of F I V₆ vi vi₆ ii ii₆ I₄[♯] vi ii₆ V (♯) I₆

(E)

Key of G I ii₆ V V₂[♯] I₆ V₇/IV IV V₆/ii ii ii₆ V V₇ I

You may begin one of the parts with a short rest, but avoid rests for the remainder of the passage. See Examples B, C and D on the previous page. Further use of rests will be examined later.

When the faster voice – the one you have to add – is in the lower part, your work becomes a bit more difficult, since the harmony is not as clearly suggested when the given line is in the upper part. It is clear that the upper part in Example A, for instance, might be harmonized quite differently from the version shown.

Beat 2 of Example B could be analyzed differently by considering the B in the bass as a slow-moving passing tone, and the harmony of the entire measure would be tonic only. But for now, let us avoid involving the slow-moving passing tone.

Notice the two successive passing tones in measure 1, a weak beat PT followed by a strong beat PT. Such formations are common in music; feel free to use them. In measure 3, notice the use of Major IV instead of minor iv. This should be followed by V or vii^o6, as is done here.

In Example C, measure 5, the leap of a diminished 7th is good. The example ends with a Picardy 3rd. Chromatic passing tones are a feature of Example D. The next-to-last note of the example (Bb) is a passing 7th, forming a momentary V 4/2 chord, and ending the example on the I6 chord.

Example E shows two instances of a minor 7th (of a dominant 7th chord) appearing on the beat. In both instances, this is justified by the V7 chord being preceded by the dominant chord in the previous beat. Successive passing tones are seen in measure 4.

Be sure to do all of the assigned Exercises for Chapter Two before proceeding with the material on Third Species.