

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

Notes on Exercises

The rules in this handout are the ones we will follow. Rules in italics will not be strictly enforced. The discussion in the textbook (ch. 9 & 10) is very good and will be useful reading, but the rules there differ in some details from ours.

For each species you will be graded by the 4-5 best exercises you turn in. Schedule and deadlines will be given in class and posted on the website. The deadlines for the first unit are at the bottom of this page.

Any exercise turned in past the unit deadline for that species will be marked down a point (10%) for every calendar day late. I will usually grade your exercises and email scans back to you within 24 hours so that you can benefit from my feedback before completing your next attempts.

NOTA BENE: Leave one or two blank staves after each exercise for my commentary and corrections.

Continual production is key. Turn in the required minimum number of exercises at each announced deadline. You may always turn in more.

Use the *canti firmi* in the handout.

Hand in only one exercise for any single CF in each species.

Be sure to try exercises in all the modes.

Make your exercises fairly balanced between counterpoints “above” the CF (i.e. that cadence an octave above) and counterpoints “below” the CF (cadencing at the unison or lower octave).

There is no requirement to use C-clefs. However, these simple, two-voice exercises provide an excellent opportunity for you to familiarize yourself with the alto and tenor clefs. If your tune has lots of ledger lines above or below the treble or bass staff, at least **copy it over** into an appropriate C-clef before turning it in. Sing along, note by note, as you copy (using letter-names to underscore your clef-reading) and sing over the whole line once you have copied it.

Test your 2-voice exercises by singing one part while playing the other; then switch. This is excellent ear-training, and will help you remember that these are compositions of **two lines**, not successions of “2-note chords”. This practice will also help you catch most of the grosser errors (for example, a vertical diminished 5th where you intended a consonance).

Deadlines for 1st-species unit:

Monday, 9/9:

Read ch. 9 in the textbook.

Turn in at least two completed, neatly handwritten first-species exercises.

Wednesday, 9/11:

Turn in at least two more completed, neatly handwritten first-species exercises.

Friday, 9/13:

Turn in at least three more completed, neatly handwritten first-sp. exercises.

Monday, 9/16:

Deadline for all first-species exercises.