

## 4<sup>th</sup> Species Worksheet

### Overview – Basic principles

Main idea: motion in suspensions, with notes starting on the weak, second half-note beats and then tied into the strong, first half-note beats.

### Suspensions

#### Dissonant suspension

Suspension begins with *preparation*, a consonance on the second half-note beat.

This note is tied over into the first beat, producing dissonance. (In fourth species, dissonance occurs only on the strong beat, not on the weak beat.) This is the *suspension* proper.

It then moves on to the *resolution* in the second half of the measure – downward by step to a consonance. (Always downward, whether writing lower or upper CTP)

The image shows a musical staff with two systems of notation. The first system is in treble clef and shows a sequence of notes: a half note G (labeled '5'), a half note A (labeled '6'), a half note B (labeled '7' in a circle), and a half note A (labeled '6'). Above the staff, the labels 'prep.', 'susp.', and 'res.' are placed over the first, second, and third notes respectively. The second system is in bass clef and shows a sequence of notes: a half note G (labeled '8'), a half note A (labeled '10'), a half note G (labeled '9' in a circle), and a half note F (labeled '10'). Below the staff, the labels 'prep.', 'susp.', and 'res.' are placed over the first, second, and third notes respectively. The notes are connected by a slur across the first two notes of each system.

#### Dissonant suspensions in the upper counterpoint

Three allowed suspensions: 7-6, 4-3, 9-8.

First two are best; use 9-8 sparingly, never chained (creates parallel octaves).

(The book mentions a 2-1, to be used only “for emergencies.” We’ll simplify things by leaving it out.)

#### Dissonant suspensions in the lower counterpoint

Three allowed suspensions: 2-3, 9-10, (4-5)

First two are best; use 4-5 very sparingly, never chained (creates parallel fifths).

## Consonant Suspension

Consonant suspensions occur when the preparation and the suspension are both consonant. Because the suspension proper is consonant (that is, the note on the strong beat), any continuation is possible – upward or downward, step or leap.

Sometimes consonant suspensions mimic dissonant suspensions by continuing on by step. This happens most frequently with 5-6 suspensions (in either voice). Avoid the 6-5 suspension in series (or chains); as we will see below, they create parallel fifths.

Consonant suspensions should not predominate – fourth species exercises should consist mainly of dissonant suspensions.

## Suspensions in series

Maximum of three in a row for chained suspensions of the same type (7-6, 2-3, etc.).

## **Voice-Leading Rules – Dealing with perfect consonance**

### Fifths and octaves

In fourth species the ear often connects consecutive *weak* beats.

No fifths, octaves, or unisons on consecutive weak beats if a dissonance occurs on the strong beat.

OK if a consonance is in between, but don't chain them, with same perfect consonance on three consecutive weak beats.

When fourth species breaks into second, rules apply as in second species.

### The Unison (not actually about voice-leading, just about the interval's use)

Can't be the resolution of a dissonant suspension, but otherwise may occur freely on the weak beat.

## **Breaking Species**

Sometimes instead of tying over the consonant second beat, you move to a new (consonant) note on the first beat. This is called breaking the species; you break out into second species (briefly!), and the rules for second species apply. Do this as little as possible.

Reasons to do this: break out of suspension chain after three; melodic variety; avoiding errors.

## **Melodic Construction**

Because dissonant suspensions predominate, and because they all resolve down by step, fourth species lines will mainly go down. Within that constraint, do as much as possible to create variety and a large shape. Especially use consonant strong beats strategically, because they allow free continuation (often an upward leap, or a note that sets up an upward leap to the preparation of a dissonant suspension on the next weak beat).

Tied, repeated notes across the barline are a main feature of fourth species; repeated notes with a measure are never used.

As in other species, avoid writing a climax in the CTP in the same measure as the climax in the c.f. The climax should be a tied note; breaking species should be unobtrusive, so don't write a climax in second species. For avoiding simultaneous climaxes, count the *start* of this tied note, not the end.

## **Range and Spacing**

The range of the melody and the spacing between the voices should be at most an octave and a sixth.

## **Beginning and Ending**

Always start with half rest, always tie the first note across the barline (never start by breaking species).

In the next to last measure, use scale degree one on a strong beat as a dissonant suspension (prepared in the previous measure), resolving to the leading tone. Note that this ending is the most prescribed of any species, as two and a half measures are entirely given. The only choice to be made is whether to end with a unison or an octave when writing lower counterpoint.