

Analysis in terms of counterpoint: More complex cases

1) Shifting the cantus firmus to the melody

In a reductional analysis, the counterpoint can switch species midway through, just as in fifth species. It is also possible for the role of the cantus firmus to be traded off between voices.

This happens especially when the bass becomes more active than the upper voice, when there are multiple notes in the lower voice of the reduction below a single note in the upper voice. Rather than using ties in the upper voice, the tied whole notes can be reduced to single whole note in an upper-voice cantus firmus, while the lower voice moves in faster values in a species other than first.

This usually occurs briefly, in the midst of a passage being analyzed, so that the cantus firmus starts as the upper voice, switches at some point for a measure or two, and then switches back. In such cases no one voice will have whole notes the whole way through. But it is important that one of the voices has a whole note in each measure, so that some voice is always taking the role of the cantus firmus.

While this option may be exercised any time that the upper line in the reduction remains stationary while the lower voice moves, it is particularly effective for showing passing tones in second or third species, and these passing tones are particular good to include when they are also chord tones – that is, when they are sevenths that are introduced as passing tones. This means that the progression V – V⁴/₂ – I⁶ will often lead to shifting the cantus firmus to the upper voice, at least when the underlying upper voice can be understood to hold a single tone as V moves to V⁴/₂.

2) Dealing with leapy melodies

In a first species reduction, all of the notes retained must be chord tones (this is because consonance in species exercises is translated into chord membership in reductional analysis).

Sometimes the presence of multiple melodic chord tones per chord (or of contraputally-significant non-harmonic tones) may point to a reduction in terms of second or third species.

But you will often encounter passages in which retaining multiple melodic chord tones per chord would lead to a very leapy melody in the reduction (including non-

harmonic tones in the reduction will not by itself lead to leapiness, as non-harmonic tones generally resolve by step). These cases may be broken down as follows:

1) Sometimes (as in the slow movement of Beethoven's op. 31, no. 1) some of the chord tones may simply be omitted; this will be the solution when the "extra" chord tones don't participate in larger patterns.

2) Sometimes a shift to a different register represents an octave displacement of a simpler underlying line. For example, a leap up by a seventh may end up being represented by a descending second in the reduction. Leaps of this sort may or may not be filled in with passing tones. A simple example is the tendency for soloists to turn the final descent from scale-degree two to scale-degree one in the national anthem into an ascending seventh. This alteration doesn't change the underlying counterpoint, which still descends by step just like the notated melody. This is discussed in Salzer and Schachter on pp. 123-124, and it is illustrated in examples 6-13, 6-14, and 6-28.

3) Sometimes, especially when there is a regular alternation between two registers, the leapiness may point to the melody being a compound melody, that is, a melody made up of two (or occasionally more) underlying voices. As we saw in Mozart's K. 397, these voices can be detected even when they occupy adjacent portions of the same register, if the resolution (or apparent delay of resolution) of tendency tones or sevenths suggests an underlying stepwise continuity that is disrupted on the musical surface.

When you encounter a compound melody, you will have to decide whether it makes most sense to analyze the entire passage in three voices, or whether it is best to have the alto voice present for only some of the measures. Bear in mind that in some cases one of the voices may be absent from the melody but still get represented in the reduction, because its note is so clearly implied by the melody.

4) Sometimes the upper voice of the underlying counterpoint is not represented by a note in the actual melody, but its presence may be inferred from context. An example is the final cadence from Donna Elvira's aria "Ah! chi mi dice mai" from Don Giovanni, shown below with its reduction. Each move to a V chord creates direct octaves, and the final resolution creates consecutive octaves. These apparent problems are solved by understanding the scale-degree 2's from the preceding ii chords to continue as the real upper line of the melody. The scale-degree 5's in the vocal part both serve the registral expansion and act as intensifying decorations of this line.

This can be brought out effectively in performance, not by deemphasizing the scale-degree 5's, but by hearing the continuation of the scale-degree 2's, and

by approaching the scale-degree 5's as new elements, coming from outside the basic outer-voice framework.

This kind of cadence is found fairly often, especially in vocal music by Mozart and Schubert. As we shall see, this explanation is not simply driven by a refusal to believe that parallel fifths and octaves could be found in music by great composers. If there is a general principle at work regarding parallels, it would seem to be that obvious parallel fifths and octaves that are clear on the surface are often not real parallel fifths and octaves, while those that lurk beneath the surface often are.

The image displays a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal part (E) is in the soprano clef, and the piano accompaniment (G) is in the grand staff. The lyrics are: "vo' cavar il cor, ca - - var il re - - love can ne'er re - turn, can ne'er re - -". The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte), and performance instructions like *cresc.* (crescendo). A detailed analysis of the piano accompaniment is provided below the main score, showing the fingering for the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) across six measures. The RH fingering is 8 10, 6 5, 10, 10, 6 5, 8. The LH part consists of a simple bass line with notes corresponding to the RH fingering.

cor, gli
turn, his

vo' cavar il cor, ca - - var il re - -
love can ne'er re - turn, can ne'er re - -

p

cresc.

f

E:
G:
cor!
turn!

p

p

8	10	6	5	10	10	6	5	8
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