

6.3 Second Species

Whereas only three arrangements of a three-voice exercise are possible in first species, no fewer than six arrangements are possible in the remaining species.

This is because just one of the added voices is written in shorter note values than the cantus firmus, while the other added voice is written in semibreves.

Second-species exercises can therefore be arranged as follows:

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
♪ ♪	♩	♪ ♪	♩	c. f.	c. f.
♩	♪ ♪	c. f.	c. f.	♪ ♪	♩
c. f.	c. f.	♩	♪ ♪	♩	♪ ♪

Third-, fourth- and fifth-species exercises are similarly arranged, mutatis mutandis.

All the two-part rules for second species are still binding, except that the progression | 5 3 | 5 may now be used **once** in an exercise (or perhaps in two isolated instances within the same exercise), and perfect consonances may be approached in similar motion **provided** three or four of the conditions described in §6.1 are satisfied.

In the first and last bars, as in three-part first species, perfect consonance is obligatory and imperfect consonance is optional. As many of the internal bars as possible should begin with a triad, a Sixth-chord (where appropriate), or a dyad.

On minim 1 of the internal bars, at least one of the added voices **must** sound an imperfect consonance (or possibly, at the cadence, a suspension) against the cantus firmus (compare the fifth and sixth bars of the first example below).

On minim 2 of the internal bars, there is no need for an imperfect consonance in either of the added voices (see the fourth-last and fifth-last bars of the second example below).

Minim 2 **may**, therefore, be a passing note, a perfect consonance, or another imperfect consonance.

1 3 5 3 3 6 3 1 6 5 3 4 6 3 6 -3 3 4 4

1 6 5 8 6 3 4 8 6 3 1 6 8 6 8 6 5 3

A common mistake in three-part second species is to write two mutually incompatible consonances. In the first of the following two examples, the triad sounding on minim 1 of the second bar is rendered dissonant by the Sixth on minim 2; in the second example, the Sixth-chord sounding on minim 1 of the second bar is rendered dissonant by the Fifth on minim 2. Though each upper voice taken on its own appears to agree with the lowest voice, in combination the upper voices produce dissonances that are unacceptable simply because they are approached by leap.

The first example shows a three-part setting in 3/4 time. The first bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The second bar has notes A4, B4, and D5. The third bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The labels above the notes are 3, 6, 6, 2, 6. The labels below the notes are 5, 8, 10, 6, 8. The label 'NB incorrect' is placed above the second bar.

The second example shows a three-part setting in 3/4 time. The first bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The second bar has notes A4, B4, and D5. The third bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The labels above the notes are 3, 5, 11, 9, 10. The labels below the notes are 5, 13, 12. The label 'NB incorrect' is placed above the second bar.

This kind of mistake will be safely avoided through the correct use of triads, Sixth-chords and dyads. In that context, you should bear in mind that reference to an inappropriate Sixth-chord on minim 2 is extremely poor style unless the minim in question can be construed as a passing note. (In the first of the following two examples, minim 2 of the first bar might simply be amended to e'.)

The 'feeble' example shows a three-part setting in 3/4 time. The first bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The second bar has notes A4, B4, and D5. The third bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The labels above the notes are 3, 4, 6, 6, 5, 3. The labels below the notes are 5, 6, 10, 10, 5. The label 'feeble' is placed below the first bar.

The 'cogent' example shows a three-part setting in 3/4 time. The first bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The second bar has notes A4, B4, and D5. The third bar has notes G4, B4, and D5. The labels above the notes are 6, 5, 3. The labels below the notes are 5, 6, 3. The label 'cogent' is placed below the second bar.

Task 6.3.1—Write exercises in arrangements (a) and (b) on each of the [cantus firmi](#) from Set Eight. 

Considerable flexibility is required for the construction of cadences under arrangements (c), (d), (e) and (f). More often than not, your only option—as in second-species invertible counterpoint at the Octave—is to resort to fourth-species.

As usual, cadences on 'E' are exceptional:

<p>(c) -3 6 6 3 3</p>	<p>(d) 6 3 3</p>
<p>(e) 3 5 6 3 4</p>	<p>(f) 10 6 6</p>

Under arrangements (c) and (e), you should form cadences on scale degrees other than 'E' by placing a clausula basizans in the lowest voice and inserting a |₋4 3 | or |₋11 10 | suspension in the third voice:

<p>(c) 3 8 7 6 8</p>	<p>(e) 6 3 2 3 1</p>
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With cantus firmi whose third-last note is scale-step 3 (and **only** with such cantus firmi), a special kind of fourth-species cadence is allowed, known as the **consonant Fourth**. Provided that the lowest voice remains on scale-step 5 (the dominant) throughout the third-last and second-last bars, the suspension may be prepared as a dissonance thus:

6 5 3 2 3 6 7 6 8

15 14 12 11 8 11 11 10 15

10 10 6 5 8

NB

6 8 6 4 4 3 2 3 1

10 8 6 5 8

5 3 3 5 3 4 4 3 8

NB

Under arrangement (f), you can sometimes write a cadence without a suspension by causing the lowest voice to leap an Octave in the second-last bar:

(f) 6 3 1

8 7 5 12 8

3 2 3 10 8

At other times under arrangement (f), and invariably under arrangement (d), you must resort to a suspension in the lowest voice. To do so unavoidably results in the progression perfect Fourth→diminished Fifth→major Third—a progression usually prohibited, but (as in invertible counterpoint at the Tenth) exceptionally permitted in this context:

(d) 6 3 3

10 8 4 5 3

5 3 2 3 1

NB

Second-species counterpoint for three voices is severely restrictive, especially when the lowest voice proceeds in minims. Do not therefore expect your parts to flow quite as smoothly as they might in a two-voice exercise. Be sure to utilize all permitted melodic leaps—especially the Octave and the ascending minor Sixth.

Task 6.3.2—Write exercises in arrangements (c), (d), (e) and (f) on each of the [cantus firmi](#) from Set Eight. 

Task 6.3.3—Write one second-species exercise in each of the six arrangements, each on a different [cantus firmus](#) from Set One. 