

## 29. First-Species Counterpoint for Three Parts

The traditional manner of approaching Species counterpoint is to construct it part by part. First, a voice is added to the *cantus firmus* in the

two-part style, called the *dupulum*. Then a second line is added, called the *tripulum*. This technique is demonstrated below.

### Example 78 First-Species with Fux *CF*

Realization 2 with added Tenor

The score shows three staves: 1 (Soprano), 2 (Alto), and 1 (Tenor). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part starts on a high D and descends. The Alto part starts on a high A and descends. The Tenor part starts on a low D and descends. The score ends with a cadence marked '1 Cad'.

Example 78 is based on the second two-part realization of the Fux *cf* from Example 18. In this case, the *tripulum* is a Tenor part, added beneath the original Treble and Alto voices. The end was done first. Since it was to be the lowest voice, it required a leaping bass line moving into the cadence. Knowing the penultimate note had to be A, it was possible to construct the cadence. The final low D was necessary since D an octave higher would have formed an ascending direct octave between the outer parts. It was then possible to work backwards from that point. The first choice for the first note in measure 5 was A. That would have created the 6/4-to-5/3 cadence pattern. However, the skip to D in the soprano would have created a skip into that cadential dissonance. Of the other possible notes, D or F, a choice could not yet be made. So it's off to the beginning of this little piece.

The first note had to be D, for the necessary opening perfect consonance, and the first choice was the high D. That way, the added Tenor part could gradually descend over an octave to the final low D. The octave range of the entire line would offer good contrast to the limited ranges of

the other two parts. A better local choice was to begin with the low D, to counteract the descending fifth in the Soprano. The next note choice was simple. A coupled descending third was created against the upward skip in the Soprano. The descending coupled thirds could then continue quite easily under the ascending step in the upper voice.

In measure three, it then became possible to exchange the coupling from the Alto to the Treble for the next three sonorities. The pattern began first by countering the leap in the Alto and then its descending step. The resulting 6/3 was fortuitous after the succession of three incomplete imperfects. The following note exchange between the original Alto and the new Tenor was the only possible choice, as was the following contrary motion against the coupled upper voices.

Now, the choice of the first note of measure 5 was easy. F would have created parallel octaves, so D remained the only choice. Additionally, it generated good contrary motion for the final cadence. Other than the sequence in measures three and four of the Tenor (more a style point than a rule) everything else works properly.

## Activities

63. Transcription: First-Species three-part counterpoint.