

The 28 Commandments of 1st Species Counterpoint

General considerations

1. Begin and end on tonic (counterpoints above cantus firmus may begin on dominant)
2. Approach final note by step in contrasting motion to cantus firmus
3. Approach penultimate note (next to last) by step or **small** leap (no larger than a third)
4. Unique climax (high point must occur only once in melody)
5. Climax should not come at the beginning or end of the line
6. Range must fit within vocal range (generally no more than a 10th)

Linear

7. Stepwise (conjunct) motion should predominate
8. Avoid chromatic half-steps
9. Avoid repetitions (once per melody is acceptable)
10. Change directions several times
11. Avoid more than five consecutive notes in the same direction

Leaps

12. Avoid leaps larger than an octave
13. Avoid dissonant leaps (7ths, all augmented and diminished intervals)
14. Avoid outlining dissonant intervals (boundaries of motion in same direction)
15. Leaps larger than a third should be followed by stepwise motion in the opposite direction
16. Consecutive leaps should be used rarely and should outline a major or minor triad

Intervals

17. Only consonances are allowed (PP, m3, M3, P5, m6, M6, P8, m10, M10)
18. Begin counterpoints above with a PP, P5 or P8; below with a P8
19. End counterpoints above with P8 (occasionally P1); below with a P8
20. Unisons may only occur at the beginning and end of piece
21. Imperfect consonances (3rds, 6ths, 10ths) should predominate (except at beginning and end, which must be perfect intervals)

Motion

22. Contrary motion should predominate, but variety is important
23. No consecutive (two in a row) unisons, 5ths, or octaves via any motion type
24. No more than three parallel 3rds, 6ths, or 10ths in direct succession
25. Avoid simultaneous leaps (if one voice leaps, the other should move stepwise)
26. The climaxes of the two lines should not occur simultaneously
27. No "overlapping" (note in lower voice is higher than previous note in upper voice--or vice versa)
28. Do not cross voices (for now)