Comparing the counterpoint books by Jeppesen and Schoenberg

F.G.J. Absil

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Abstract

This document lists the essential differences between the books by Arnold Schoenberg and Knud Jeppesen about counterpoint. These differences represent the style characteristics of the late Renaissance and the Baroque period.

1 Introduction

Studying counterpoint may be based on a number of sources. There are two books that are most useful, because they present fairly consistent rules for writing counterpoint and they present numerous examples with increasing complexity: the book by Knud Jeppesen [6] is based on the Palestrina (late Renaissance) counterpoint, wheras the book by Arnold Schoenberg [3] is based on the Fux style (Baroque).

Both discuss the rules for writing a good *cantus firmus* (CF), and then present the various *species* (from 1st to 5th species) for 2-part until 4-part counterpoint phrases. However, these rules yield a number characteristic differences between the sources, that have to do with the musical period that they are based on. Below, these characteristic differences will be listed.

2 Essential differences

Table 1 and 2 (on the following pages) present essential style differences between the two books. In these tables the symbols c and d stand for consonant, and dissonant interval, respectively. Numbers (5) indicate the value of the interval, in this case a fifth.

3 Further reading

There are various other sources for studying counterpoint, covering the different styles and periods:

- for late Renaissance and Baroque period counterpoint, see [8].

- for Classical and Romantic period counterpoint, see [9, 1, 10, 7].

- for contemporary counterpoint writing, see [2, 4, 5, 11].

References

[1] Diether de la Motte. *Kontrapunkt: ein Lese- und Arbeitsbuch*. Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel, Germany, 1981. (in German).

[2] Gordon Delamont. *Modern Contrapuntal Technique*. Modern Arranging and Composing. Kendor Music Inc., Delevan, NY, 1969.

[3] Arnold Schoenberg (edited by Leonard Stein. *Preliminary Exercises in Counterpoint*. Faber & Faber, London, Boston, second (revised) edition, 1970.

[4] Paul Hindemith. *Übungsbuch für den zweistimmigen Satz*, volume II. Edition Schott, Mainz, 1939. (in German).

[5] Paul Hindemith. *Übungsbuch für den dreistimmigen Satz*, volume III. Edition Schott, Mainz, 1970. (in German).

[6] Knud Jeppesen. *Kontrapunkt*. Number Bestellnummer 520 094 6. VEB Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag, Leipzig, 5th edition, 1979. (in German).

[7] Kent Wheeler Kennan. *Counterpoint: Based on Eighteenth-Century Practice*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 2nd edition, 1972.

[8] Erik Lotichius and Lourens Stuifbergen. *Leerboek voor omkeerbaar contrapunt, canon en fuga*. De Muziekerije, Edition Heuwekemeijer, Wieringerwaard, the Netherlands, 1986. (in Dutch).

[9] Alfred Mann. *The Study of Fugue*. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1987.

[10] Walter Piston. *Contrapunt*. Strengholt, Naarden, the Netherlands, 1977. (in Dutch).

[11] Joseph Schillinger. *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition*, volume I and II of *Da Capo Press Music Reprint Series*. Da Capo Press, New York, fourth edition, 1946.

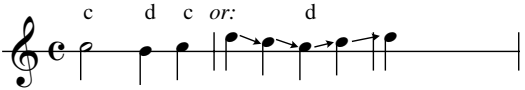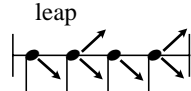Table 1: Essential style differences between the Jeppesen and Schoenberg books about counterpoint
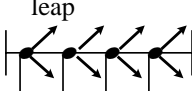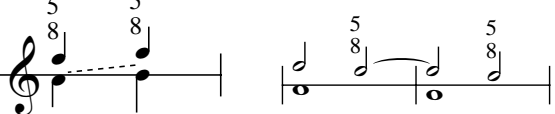
Jeppesen (Palestrina style)	Schoenberg (Fux style)
▷ Modal (Dor, Phryg, Mixolyd, Aeol, Ion) Two keys: $C, F(\flat)$ Only major endings; some leading tones: from 1 flat $\flat$ to 3 sharps $\sharp\sharp\sharp$.	▷ Tonal (major, minor) All keys "Turning points" and neutralisation: careful voice leading in minor.
▷ Downward *cambiata* only: $c \searrow [c,d] \searrow [c,d] \nearrow [c,d] \nearrow c.$	▷ Upward and downward *cambiata*: $c \nearrow [c,d] \nearrow [c,d] \searrow [c,d] \searrow c$ and $c \searrow [c,d] \searrow [c,d] \nearrow [c,d] \nearrow c.$
▷ No dissonance on strong beat, except in 5th species.	▷ Dissonance allowed on strong beat, if surrounded by 2 consonances that through stepwise motion lead to a third (3rd species).

▷ No upward leap ($\nearrow$) from strong beat.	▷ Upward leap ($\nearrow$) from strong beat allowed.

▷ Combinations on 3rd beat in 3-part, 3rd species: these have to be consonant with the CF (see the notes marked with arrows in the example).	▷ All combinations are possible, but if CP_1 or CP_2 is dissonant with CF (which is the case if CP_1 is a cambiata or a sequence of 4 quarter notes with consonances on the 2nd and 4th beat, or if CP_2 is a passing note), then the interval between CP_1 and CP_2 may be dissonant.

▷ Allowed suspensions in 4th species (mainly for 2-part). Requirement: the resolution has to lead to an imperfect consonance (third or sixth, 3 or 6).	▷ Allowed suspensions (in 2-part). Requirement: the resolution has to lead to any consonant (perfect or imperfect).

If suspension is in upper voice, then $7-6, 4-3$ (imperfect consonance) but also $2-1, 9-8, 11-10$ (perfect consonance) are allowed. If suspension is in lower voice then $2-3, 4-5, 9-10$ and $11-12$ are allowed.

Table 2: Essential style differences between the Jeppesen and Schoenberg books about counterpoint (continued)

Jeppesen (Palestrina style)	Schoenberg (Fux style)
▷ 3-Part: passing notes in CP_1 and CP_2 are determined in relation to the CF (purely melodic approach). Example:	▷ 3-Part: the passing notes are determined by finding the harmonic structure (the chord) on the 1st beat of the measure and comparing the rest of the measure with this chord (a more harmony-oriented approach). Example in C with 3 non-harmonic passing notes:

▷ Not too much concerned with (consecutive) intermittent octaves (8) and fifths (5) after suspensions or cambiata.

▷ Very careful with intermittent octaves and fifths.

▷ Hidden fifths (5) and octaves (8):
▷ Hidden fifths (5) and octaves (8):
– allowed in 3- and 4-part in the inner voices and between
inner and outer voices (in general, not between outer voices).

– allowed in 3-part between outer voices, if stepwise motion in upper voice occurs. Hidden 8s allowed in 4-part (again, for stepward moving upper voice).

– both hidden 5s and 8s allowed between outer voices in 3-part, but preferably with stepwise motion in upper voice.

▷ Leaps: downward leaps up to a fifth (↘ 5), upward leap up to a minor sixth (↗ ♭6).

▷ No leaps > 5.

▷ Changing notes: lower (dissonant) changing note allowed in 3rd species, upper changing note allowed in 5th species.

▷ No dissonant changing tones allowed.

▷ Arpeggio chords: in the melody (upper voice) 2 consecutive leaps of each a third (3) are allowed.

▷ No arpeggio chords allowed in any voice.