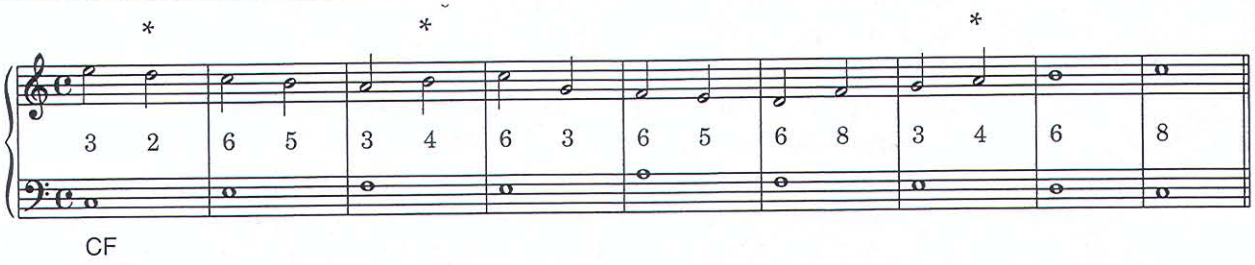
EXAMPLE 4.13 Consonant and Dissonant Passing Tones

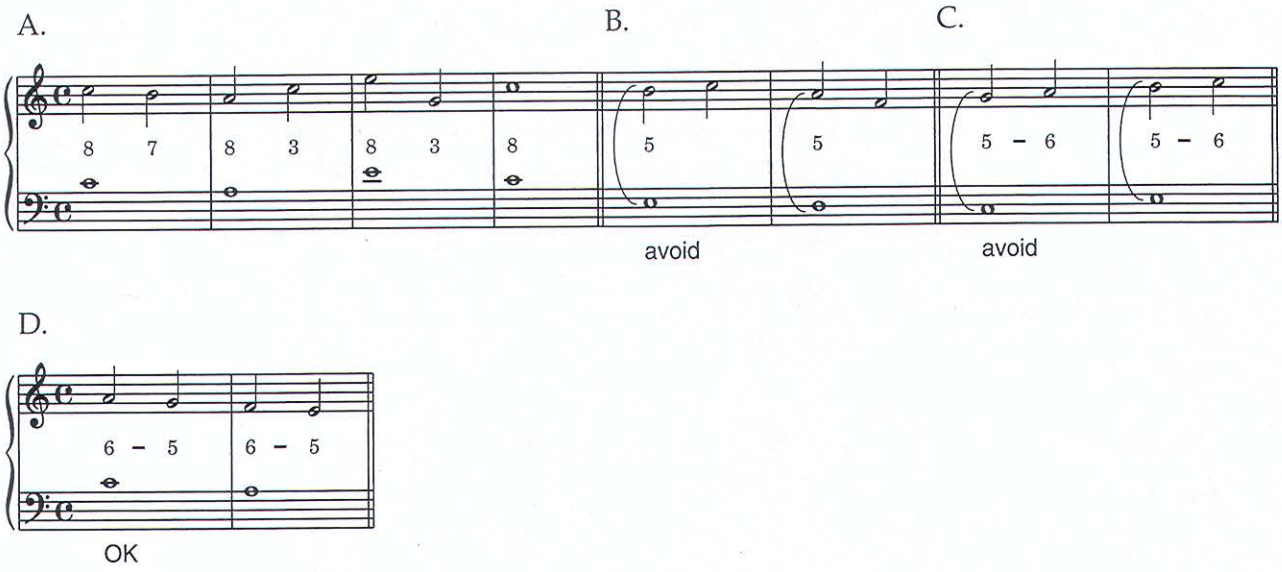


The 2:1 counterpoint in Example 4.13 contains both dissonant and consonant passing tones. Dissonant passing tones are marked with asterisks. Consonant passing tones are not marked, but you can spot them by their telltale intervallic labels "6 5" or "5 6." The first dissonant PT occurs in m. 1. The pitch D fills the third between E and C and creates a strong major-second dissonance that is discharged by the following sixth (m. 2). The next measure contains a consonant passing tone; B fills the third between C and A. Study the rest of the example, noting how both consonant and dissonant passing tones are used. The goal in second-species counterpoint is to include as many passing tones as possible.

More on Perfect Consonances

In second-species counterpoint, you must be especially vigilant to avoid writing parallel and direct perfect consonances. For example, you might be tempted to think that the intervening weak-beat interval reduces the effects of the strong-beat parallels, but this is not the case, as demonstrated in Example 4.14.

EXAMPLE 4.14



Example 4.14A contains four strong-beat octaves, none of which is obscured by the weak-beat pitch. In the first measure, the dissonant PT B is unable to conceal the octave motion between C and A on the downbeats of mm. 1 and 2. Note that a dissonance can never mediate poor voice leading. Nor is the consonant skip in m. 2 able to obviate the octaves A to E between mm. 2