

## Three part counterpoint in Franck's Andantino

Andantino is one of the notable pieces from César Franck's *L'Organiste*, Volume 1, composed in 1891. This collection of short works for harmonium or organ demonstrates Franck's ability to combine lyrical expression with structural simplicity, resulting in music that is both approachable and artistically refined. Andantino's flowing phrasing, subtle chromatic touches, and gentle dynamic shifts make it a fine example of Romantic music for the harmonium.

Written in C major, Andantino is structured in binary form (A-A'), a common design in shorter Romantic-era compositions:

- A (measures 1-14): moves from the tonic (I) to the dominant (V) in C major, passing through Eb major.
- A' (measures 15-28): starts in and returns to the tonic (I) via the dominant (G major).

From a technical perspective, Andantino serves as an excellent example of three-part counterpoint: the three voices (upper, middle, and lower) interact intricately, creating a rich tapestry of sound. Analyzing each voice individually reveals a coherent sequence of main tones, shaped by linear progressions and neighbourtone figures. An easy melodic design.

### Analysis upper voice

The upper voice notation shows two sections: A (measures 1-14) and A' (measures 15-28). The key signature is C major. The melody starts on C4, moves to G4 at measure 6, and then to C5 at measure 15. The A' section returns to C4 at measure 15 and ends on C4 at measure 28.

### Analysis lower voice

The lower voice notation shows two sections: A (measures 1-14) and A' (measures 15-28). The key signature is C major. The melody starts on C3, moves to G3 at measure 6, and then to C4 at measure 15. The A' section returns to C3 at measure 15 and ends on C3 at measure 28.

### Analysis middle voice

The middle voice notation shows two sections: A (measures 1-14) and A' (measures 15-28). The key signature is C major. The melody starts on C4, moves to G4 at measure 6, and then to C5 at measure 15. The A' section returns to C4 at measure 15 and ends on C4 at measure 28.

The appendices show annotated scores, that should clarify the above analysis.

Counterpoint is typically defined as the art of combining two or more quasi-independent melodies, each characterized by its own rhythm and melodic contour. However, there is more to it: melody moves from point to point. Therefore, counterpoint can also be understood as the rhythmic and melodic creativity applied to a structural framework of anchor points. In other words, it is a method of filling and elaborating musical space. To delve deeper, let us first identify that musical space, i.e. the beginning and end of musical sections.

C:I C:V    C:I C:V C:I

In fact, the musical space can be defined as framework is defined by the tonic and dominant in C major. The connection between these harmonic pillars is completed through stepwise motion in the outer voices, which maintain a third interval relationship:

C:I (Eb) C:V    C:I    C:V    C:I

The third interval relationship between outer voices often forms the foundation of simple counterpoint. This relationship ensures harmonic stability while allowing melodic independence, making it a fundamental concept in creating smooth and cohesive contrapuntal lines.

The essence of counterpoint? Moving seamlessly and understandably from one harmonic anchor to the next while preserving a sense of balance and coherence. Here, this counterpoint adds depth to the composition and it makes Franck's Andantino a rewarding study for both performers and music scholars alike.

# Analysis upper voice

**Andantino**  
*p sostenuto*

6  
*poco più f*

10  
*dim.* *p* *dim.*

14  
*pp*

19  
*f* *dim.* *p*

24  
*dim.* *rall.*

Detailed description: This is a piano score for the upper voice, consisting of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The music is in common time (C) and features a variety of dynamics and articulations. Red circles highlight specific notes in the upper voice across all systems. The first system is marked 'Andantino' and 'p sostenuto'. The second system is marked 'poco più f'. The third system has 'dim.' markings in both staves and a 'p' marking in the bass staff. The fourth system is marked 'pp'. The fifth system has 'f' in the treble staff, 'dim.' in the bass staff, and 'p' in the treble staff. The sixth system has 'dim.' in the treble staff and 'rall.' in the bass staff. The score concludes with a double bar line.

# Analysis middle voice

This musical score is for a middle voice part, spanning measures 2 to 24. It is written in common time (C) and consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked "Andantino".

**Measure 2:** The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *p sostenuto*. A blue circle highlights the first note (G4) in the treble staff, and a blue line connects it to the next measure.

**Measure 6:** The second system starts with a dynamic marking of *poco più f*. A blue circle highlights the first note (G4) in the treble staff, and a blue line connects it to the next measure.

**Measure 10:** The third system begins with a dynamic marking of *dim.*. A blue circle highlights the first note (G4) in the treble staff, and a blue arrow points from it to the next measure, where a *p* dynamic marking is present. Another blue circle highlights the note in the next measure, with a *dim.* marking.

**Measure 14:** The fourth system starts with a dynamic marking of *pp*. A blue circle highlights the first note (G4) in the treble staff, and a blue arrow points from it to the next measure, where a *p* dynamic marking is present.

**Measure 19:** The fifth system begins with a dynamic marking of *f*. A blue circle highlights the first note (G4) in the treble staff. A blue arrow points from this note to the next measure, where a *dim.* marking is present. Another blue circle highlights the note in the next measure, with a *p* dynamic marking.

**Measure 24:** The sixth system starts with a dynamic marking of *dim.*. A blue circle highlights the first note (G4) in the treble staff. A blue arrow points from this note to the next measure, where a *p* dynamic marking is present. The system concludes with a *rall.* marking.

# Analysis lower voice

**Andantino**

*p sostenuto*

6

*poco più f*

10

*dim.* *p* *dim.*

14

*pp*

19

*f* *dim.* *p*

24

*dim.* *rall.*

# Analysis harmonic pillars

Andantino

*p sostenuto*

6

*poco più f*

10

*dim.* *p* *dim.*

14

*pp*

19

*f* *dim.* *p*

24

*dim.* *rall.*

Detailed description: This image shows a piano score with six systems of music. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. Red vertical bars highlight specific chords or notes across the systems. The tempo is marked 'Andantino'. Dynamics include *p sostenuto*, *poco più f*, *dim.*, *p*, *pp*, *f*, and *rall.*. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 24.