

§ii – Option c) String Quartet

In the examination you will be given an extract of approximately 8-12 bars from a string quartet in the style of Haydn or Mozart. The opening bars will be given complete; a subsequent section of approximately four bars will consist of either the 1st violin part or the cello part, and you will be asked to complete the missing parts.

[Link to practice exercises](#)

Study and preparation

You should study the opening bars carefully, as they will help you with the bars you are to complete. Patterns and figurations occurring in the opening bars will usually form the basis of the subsequent writing, either repeated exactly, or (more likely) adapted in some way.

The guidelines given in option a) for two-part counterpoint will be useful, particularly the information on harmony, string writing, and rhythmic devices. However, with Classical string quartet writing, the accompanying texture is more often predominantly homophonic (chordal) rather than polyphonic (melodic). Melodic imitation is unlikely to occur in this style.

Examples 1-8 below are given for study purposes. The last three of these include short sections for you to practise completing, before proceeding to the more extended practice exercises which follow.

A good basic strategy for working is as follows:

1. Study the given opening. Note the harmonies, the rate of harmonic change and the principal patterns and figurations used.
2. Look at the subsequent part (1st violin or cello). Work out the implied harmony, and determine which notes are 'harmony' notes and which are 'unessential' notes.
3. What are the implied modulations or cadences?
4. Sketch in a harmonic framework.
5. Finally, complete a fully-worked solution, using appropriate melodic and rhythmic patterns and figurations derived from the opening.

It is essential that you assimilate the style by listening to the early string quartets of Haydn and Mozart. Follow the score as you listen.

Example 1

Haydn Op.20 No.6

Violin I
mezzo voce

Violin II
mezzo voce

Viola
mezzo voce

Cello
mezzo voce

Outline:

I Ib Vc7 V7 I Ib Vc7 V7

Note that the rate of harmonic change is 2 chords per bar; both bars have the same harmony.

The viola crosses the 2nd violin at * – this is quite common in string writing, although it is rare that the cello crosses the 1st violin.

Note that the cello is staccato, and the chord pattern is broken into quavers throughout.

Example 2

Mozart K.157

Violin I
p

Violin II
p

Viola
p

Cello

Outline:

i i dim 7th ib

This example is in C minor; the opening is in 3 parts with the cello resting.

Note how the 'rocking' semiquaver pattern in the 2nd violin is derived from the basic harmony.

The harmony is again simple – one chord per bar.

Example 3

Allegro

Haydn Op.76 No.2

Violin I *f*

Violin II *f*

Viola *f*

Cello *f*

Outline:

i i ii°d7 Vc7 ib

Again, simple harmony is used, with repeated quaver notes producing an offbeat rhythmic pattern in the lower three instruments, which accompanies the 1st violin melody.

In bar 2, ii°d7 moves to Vc7. (Sevenths may resolve into each other.) Vc7 then moves to ib – here the 7th may rise in parallel 3rds with the bass. NB. The symbol ° indicates a diminished chord.

Example 4

Haydn Op.64 No.1

Allegretto ma non troppo

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Outline:

V I I Vb dim 7th I dim 7th I
 C major A minor A minor G major G major
 with Tierce de Picardie

Note that for nine beats the 1st and 2nd violins move in octaves. In the harmonic outline crosses indicate appoggiaturas and asterisks indicate suspensions in all three upper parts.

The use of diminished 7ths to 'colour' the harmony is quite common, as is the use of appoggiaturas and suspensions.

The harmony used is simple, but is more involved in the approach to the cadence.

Example 5

Mozart K.465

Allegretto

Here is another example of a simple harmonic scheme using one chord per bar. The quaver figures in the 2nd violin and viola use the notes of the harmony.

Below is the ending of the extract, which is treated as a prolonged 6/4 – 5/3 cadence in the relative major (Ic – V7 – I). x is a chromatic passing note.

The parts can be completed by using the opening quaver figure:

The musical score for Example 6 consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violin I and II parts feature melodic lines with slurs and some accidentals. The Viola and Cello parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some rhythmic patterns. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 5 and continuing to measure 10.

Interesting figures occur in bar 3, and later in bars 8-9, in the form of broken chords. The repeated Ds in bars 4-7 indicate an inverted pedal, and the last bars (from bar 10) suggest a simple harmonic pattern based on V Ic | V Ic | V Ic | iib Ic V7 | I .

Example 6A outlines in short score the possibility of using the quaver figure from bar 3 and bars 8-9.

Example 6B outlines in short score the simple pedal harmony with an amended form of the opening theme in the 2nd violin part.

Example 6A and 6B are short score excerpts. Example 6A shows a quaver figure in the upper voice and a corresponding bass line. Example 6B shows a simple pedal harmony in the bass line and an amended opening theme in the upper voice. Both examples include harmonic analysis labels below the staves.

Example 6A harmonic analysis: I, V, (V7), I

Example 6B harmonic analysis: V, Ic, V7, Ic, V, Ic, iib, Ic, V7, I

You may find it useful to complete the working of Example 6 following the ideas above.

Example 7

Menuetto: Moderato

Mozart K.458

Violin I *f* *tr* *sf* *sf*

Violin II *f* *sf* *sf*

Viola *f* *sf* *sf*

Cello *f* *sf* *sf*

I Vc7 Ib Vc7 I Vb V Vb I Ib Vb in G minor

Here the basic harmonic rhythm is minim – crotchet.

The extract ends with a long held note in the 1st violin, and presents the opportunity to use the opening figure in the lower three parts. x is a chromatic passing note.

5 *p* *cresc.* *f* x

Complete the extract, using the suggested rhythmic pattern (derived from bars 3-4) for the viola.

Violin I *p* *cresc.* *f*

Violin II *p* *tr*

Viola

Cello *p* *cresc.* *f* Ic V7 I

Example 8

Haydn Op.6 No.5

Allegro

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

f I Ib IV iib7 V7 I

Violin I

5 + * *p*

9 *f* *

13 * * * *

Complete the above passage using the suggestions given below:

- i. Look at the rate of harmonic change in the opening bars.
- ii. This extract contains many appoggiaturas and suspensions (marked *) – these notes will not form part of the harmony.
- iii. Notes marked + are lower auxiliary notes, and will not form part of the harmony.
- iv. Bars 7-8 could be V7 | I. The G 7th in the 1st violin in bar 7 resolves ornamentally to F# (3rd of I) in bar 8.
- v. Bars 9-11 contain an inverted pedal note in the 1st violin. The opening theme in the 1st violin could appear below in either the 2nd violin or cello, beginning on the last beat of bar 8.

e.g. Cello

- vi. Bars 14-16 could be harmonised thus: Ic | V7 | I

Practice exercises

Complete the following string quartet extracts, taking care to retain the given texture and harmonic idiom.

1.

Haydn Op.51

Grave e cantabile

Violin I
p

Violin II
p

Viola
p

Cello
p

5

- Haydn maintains the staccato crotchets in the viola and cello parts.
- Take care that the suspension in the 2nd violin part (bars 4-5) is correctly resolved.
- There is an interrupted cadence in bar 6.

2.

Adagio ma non troppo

Haydn Op.64 No.2

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

p

5

etc.

- Maintain the 2nd violin quaver pattern in bars 5-6, taking care with the implied harmony in bar 6.
- The first chord of bar 7 is a raised supertonic in F# major.
- In bar 7 the quaver motive passes into the viola, and in bar 8 into the cello part (linking into the B major chord in bar 9).

3.

Haydn Op.17 No.5

Presto

Violin I *p*

Violin II *p*

Viola *p*

Cello *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the first four measures of a musical extract. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Presto'. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano) for all instruments. The Violin I and II parts play a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs. The Viola part has rests in measures 1 and 2, followed by eighth-note patterns in measures 3 and 4. The Cello part has a continuous eighth-note pedal point throughout all four measures.

5

Detailed description: This block contains measures 5 through 8 of the musical extract. It features the same four staves as the previous block. The key signature and time signature remain the same. The dynamics are not explicitly marked in this section. The Violin I and II parts continue their melodic patterns. The Viola part has rests in measures 5 and 6, followed by eighth-note patterns in measures 7 and 8. The Cello part maintains its eighth-note pedal point throughout all four measures.

- The cello pedal point is maintained throughout the extract.
- The 2nd violin and viola also maintain their patterns.

4.

Haydn Op.20 No.5

Menuetto

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

f

f

f

f

p

p

p

6

- The cello is silent from bar 5 to bar 9.
- The 2nd violin and viola move together in thirds from bar 5, and have the same bowing.

5.

Haydn Op.76 No.3

Poco adagio; cantabile

Violin I
p dolce

Violin II
p dolce

Viola
p dolce

Cello
p dolce

5 A

10 B

fz

fz

- There are two sections to complete: A and B.
- Note the Gavotte style of this extract.

6.

Haydn Op.74 No.3

Largo assai

Violin I
mezza voce *ten.* *ten.*

Violin II
mezza voce *ten.*

Viola
mezza voce *ten.*

Cello
mezza voce *ten.*

6
cresc. *ff* *ff* *p*

ff *p*

ff *p*

ff *p*

- Maintain the chordal texture.
- Note the augmented 6th chord in bar 8 and its resolution.
- The decorated cadence and, especially, the bowing of the semiquavers in the 1st violin part, should also be noted.

7.

Mozart K.465

Menuetto

Violin I *p* *f*

Violin II *p* *f*

Viola *p* *f*

Cello *p* *f*

p *p*

f *f* *sf* *sf* *f* *sf* *sf*

- The quaver motive in the 1st violin in bar 8 is used again in the 2nd violin in bar 9, in the viola in bar 10, and the cello in bar 11.

8.

Mozart K.421

Allegretto ma non troppo

Violin I *p* *tr*

Violin II *p*

Viola *p*

Cello *p*

5

- Note the Siciliano rhythm and the chiefly chordal texture.
- The 1st violin motive in bars 3-4 will come back to haunt the closing bars of the extract.

9.

Mozart K.428

Menuetto

Violin I *p*

Violin II *p*

Viola *p*

Cello *p*

5

- Maintain the chordal texture in bars 5-6.
- Maintain the 1st violin quaver pattern in bar 8.

10.

Mozart K.590

Andante

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

p

This block contains the first four measures of a musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The first measure of each part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Violin I and II parts play a melody of eighth notes, while the Viola and Cello parts play a supporting accompaniment of eighth notes. The score is written in a four-staff format.

5

This block contains measures 5 through 8 of the musical score. Measure 5 is marked with a '5' above the staff. The Violin I part continues with a melodic line, while the other instruments provide accompaniment. The score is written in a four-staff format.

- Note the homophonic texture and sequential writing.

11.

Mozart K.464

Menuetto

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

f *f* *f* *f* *f*

- Note the texture and the use of motives.
- The 2nd violin and viola provide sustained harmony in bars 5-8.

12.

Mozart K.458

Allegro vivace assai

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 1-4. The score is in G minor, 3/8 time, and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violin I part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Violin II part provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The Viola and Cello parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 5-8. The Violin I part continues its melodic line. The Violin II part has rests in measures 5 and 6, then resumes. The Viola and Cello parts continue their accompaniment with rests in measures 5 and 6.

- The opening texture is re-used, with subtle differences.