

Counterpoint

Counterpoint is the art of writing two or more melodies which sound good when played together. Often one melody is chosen first and then symmetry tricks are used to make the second melody to go with the first.

Write your own counterpoint

Write your own counterpoint (that is, second part) to the melody. Play what you wrote while a partner plays the original melody. Here are some symmetry tricks you can use:

1. Write the melody backwards and play it with the original melody.

2. Write the melody upside-down and play it with the original. Choose C or G for your starting note, and whenever the melody goes up make your part go down the same distance, and vice versa.

3. Play the melody as a round.

4. Write the melody twice as fast--use eighth notes wherever there are quarters and quarters wherever there are halves.

The math is in the symmetry. The art is in choosing the best option for your melody. If you tried more than one second part, which one did you like best?