§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.

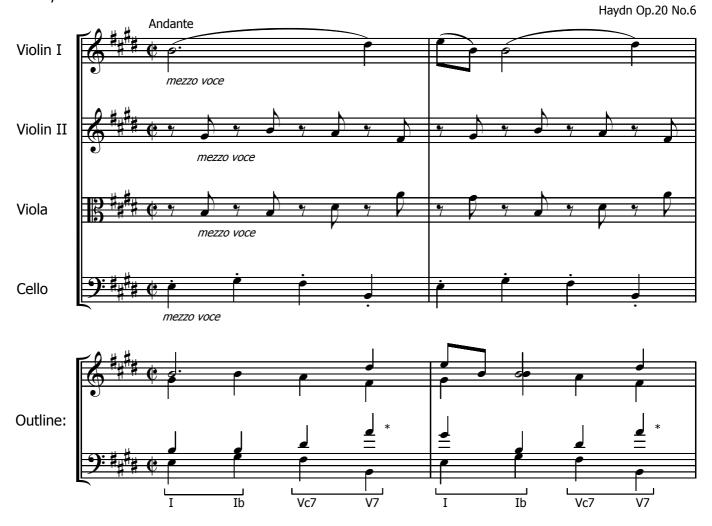
Examples 1-8 below are given for study purposes. The last three of these include short sections for you to practise completing, before proceeding to the more extended practice exercises which follow.

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

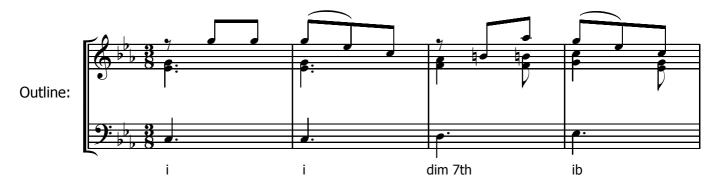


Note that the rate of harmonic change is 2 chords per bar; both bars have the same harmony.

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.





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

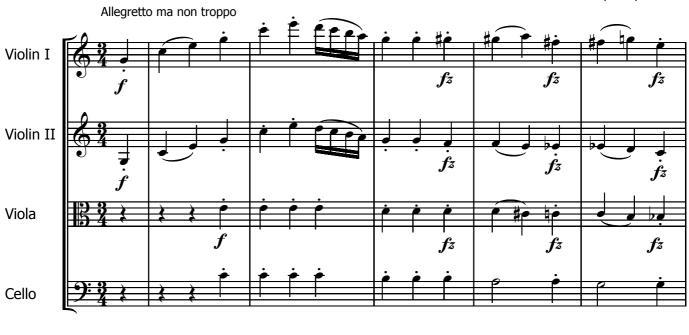
Note how the 'rocking' semiquaver pattern in the 2nd violin is derived from the basic harmony.

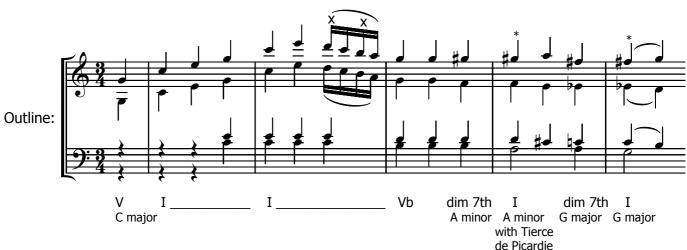
The harmony is again simple – one chord per bar.



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, $ii^{\circ}d^{7}$ 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 $^{\circ}$ indicates a diminished chord.



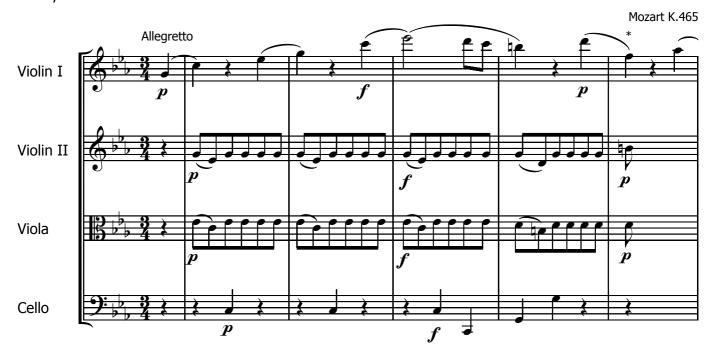


Note that for nine beats the 1st and 2nd violins move in octaves. In the harmonic outline crosses indicate appoggiaturas and asterisks indicate suspensions in all three upper parts.

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



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:



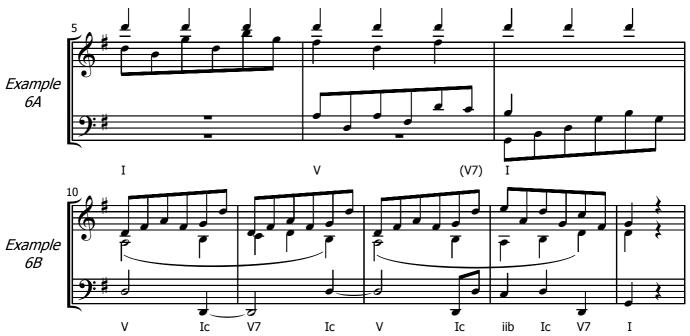
Example 6 Haydn Op.74 No.3



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 \mid V Ic \mid V Ic \mid iib Ic V7 \mid I .

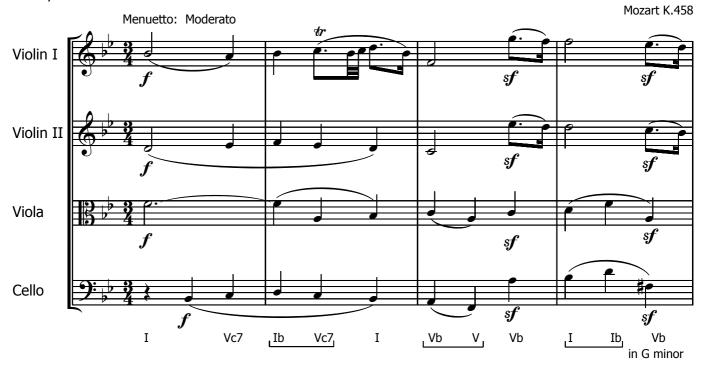
Example 6A outlines in short score the possibility of using the quaver figure from bar 3 and bars 8-9.

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



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

Example 7

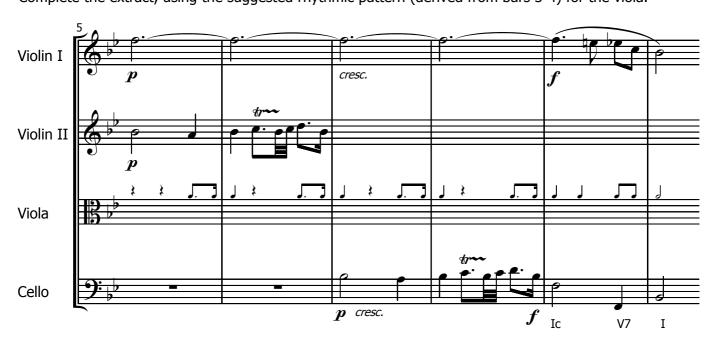


Here the basic harmonic rhythm is minim – crotchet.

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.



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



Example 8 Haydn Op.6 No.5



Complete the above passage using the suggestions given below:

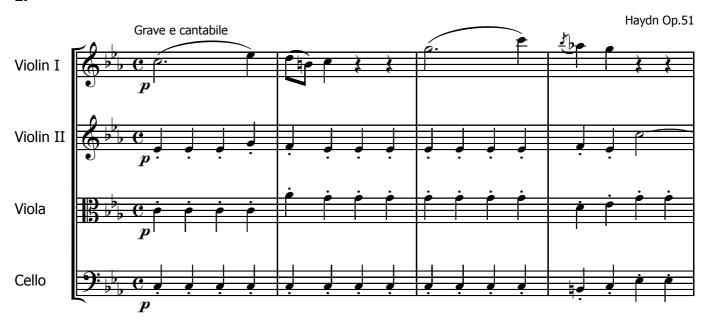
- i. Look at the rate of harmonic change in the opening bars.
- ii. This extract contains many appoggiaturas and suspensions (marked *) these notes will not form part of the harmony.
- iii. Notes marked + are lower auxiliary notes, and will not form part of the harmony.
- iv. Bars 7-8 could be V7 | I. 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.

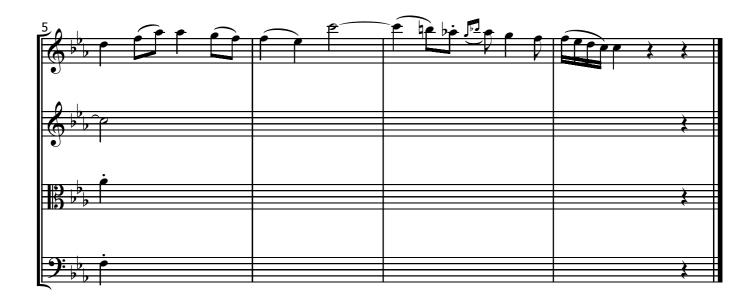


vi. Bars 14-16 could be harmonised thus: Ic | V7 | I

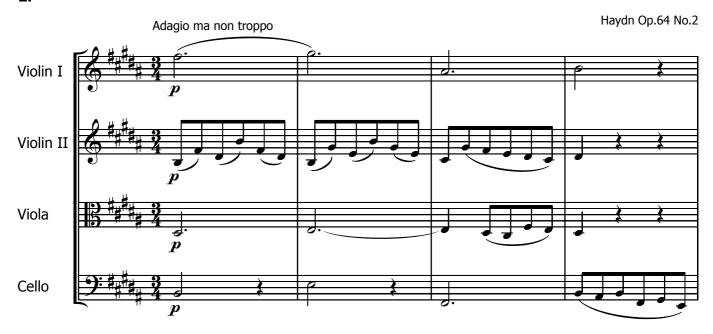
Practice exercises

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





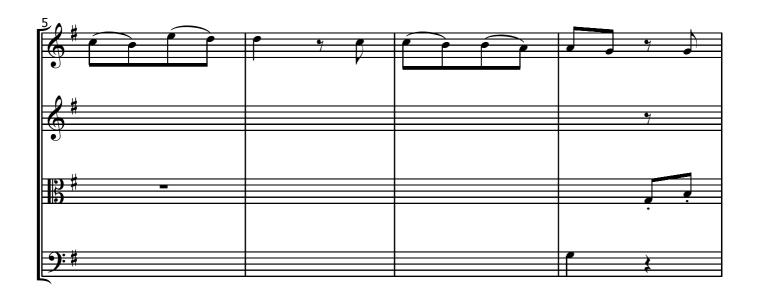
- Haydn maintains the staccato crotchets in the viola and cello parts.
- Take care that the suspension in the 2nd violin part (bars 4-5) is correctly resolved.
- There is an interrupted cadence in bar 6.





- 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).

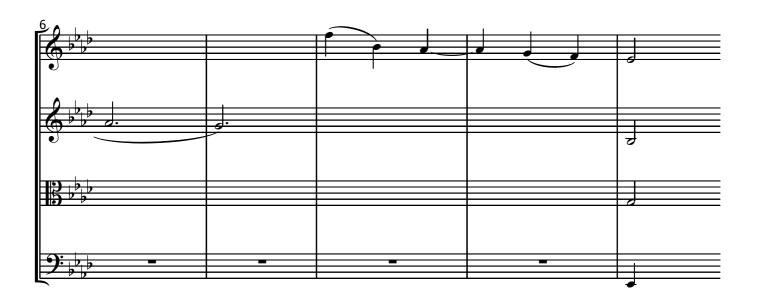




- The cello pedal point is maintained throughout the extract.
- The 2nd violin and viola also maintain their patterns.

Haydn Op.20 No.5



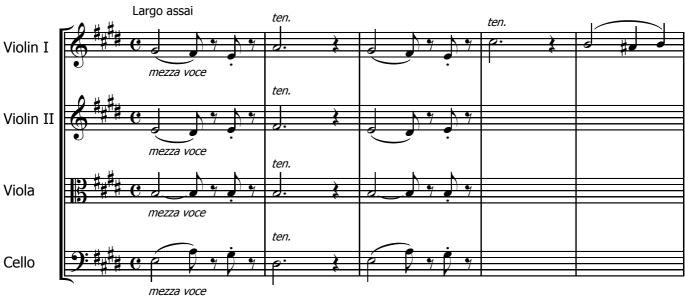


- The cello is silent from bar 5 to bar 9.
- The 2nd violin and viola move together in thirds from bar 5, and have the same bowing.



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

Haydn Op.74 No.3





- 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.





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.





- 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.

Mozart K.428





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

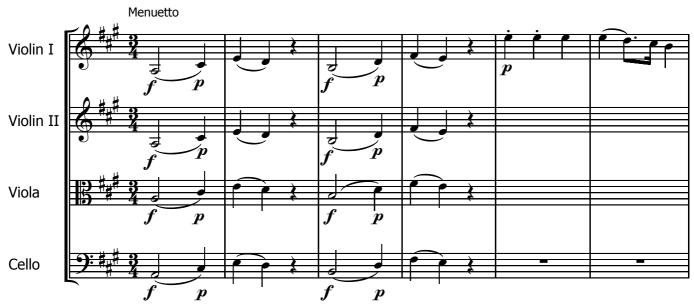
Mozart K.590





Note the homophonic texture and sequential writing.

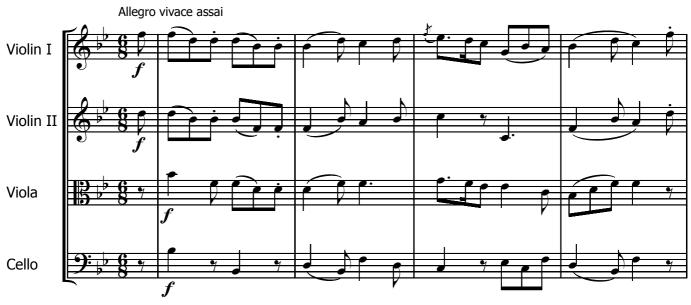
Mozart K.464





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







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