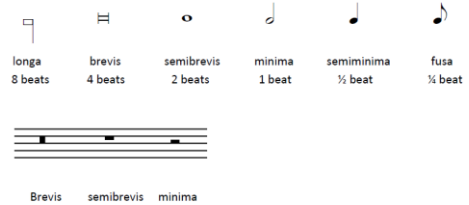


Late Renaissance Style

Rhythm, Melody, Mode, *Ficta*, Cadences, and Form

Rhythm

- ▶ The half note is typically used as the beat value in this style
- ▶ Only the following durations and rests could be used:



- ▶ (Dots can be also added to the whole and half notes)

Rhythm

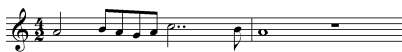
- ▶ **Restricted use of rhythmic values**
 - ▶ Longer notes such as the double whole note (or *brevis*) occur mostly at the beginning or the end
 - ▶ The whole note (or *semibrevis*), the half note (or *minima*), and the quarter note (or *semiminima*) are the most commonly used
 - ▶ The eighth note (or *fusa*) is used in a very restrictive way—typically in stepwise pairs and never occurring on a strong beat. Eighths are often ornamental, such as the decorative resolution of a suspension or as a pair of passing tones
 - ▶ Shorter values than the eighth note are never encountered (and were often viewed with suspicion!)

Rhythm

- ▶ **Other observations**
 - ▶ Rhythmic patterns are varied; they are rarely repetitive
 - ▶ Each phrase tends to start slowly, to gradually accelerate through the use of shorter notes, and to slow down at the cadence
 - ▶ A series of quarter notes rarely exceeds eight or nine notes and most often moves in a stepwise direction
 - ▶ Rests and ties on strong beats are common (ties always occur in a 2:1 or a 1:1 ratio)
 - ▶ Dotted halves and wholes must begin on a strong beat

Rhythm

- ▶ **What's wrong with these rhythms?**



Melody

- ▶ **Leaps**
 - ▶ Melodic lines are primarily conjunct (stepwise)
 - ▶ Small, controlled leaps are more common than large ones
 - ▶ Leaps are most often approached and left by motion in the opposite direction (particularly ascending leaps, which almost always resolve down)
 - ▶ Larger leaps tend to occur with slower notes; faster notes tend to be stepwise (leaps from quarters are less common and leaps from eighth notes are never found)
 - ▶ Octave leaps are rare; 7th and major 6th leaps are not found

Melody

▶ Other observations

- ▶ Successive leaps in the same direction are usually triadic
- ▶ Successive leaps in opposite directions are possible; but do not overuse these—and no successive leaps in quarters!
- ▶ Each line should have a clear contour, rising gradually and descending gradually
- ▶ One common contour is the arch, with the high point located around the middle of the phrase rather than at the end
- ▶ Extensive note repetition is avoided in melodic lines
- ▶ Voices tend to stay in the middle range, avoiding extremes
- ▶ Melodic sequences are not common



Melody

▶ What's wrong with these melodies?



Modes

- ▶ Late Renaissance polyphony was written in *modes* rather than in major and minor keys
- ▶ The six modes that they used were: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Ionian (see handout)
- ▶ A mode is more than just a scale—each mode emphasizes certain tones and features certain melodic gestures
- ▶ The final (or tonic) and the dominant notes are emphasized melodically and reinforced in cadences, but you can cadence on other degrees of the mode as well
- ▶ The mode is expressed clearly at the end of a work, but not always at the beginning
- ▶ Modes can be transposed (up a fourth) by adding a flat to the key signature



Modes

▶ What modes are these?



Accidentals (*musica ficta*)

- ▶ By the end of the sixteenth century, the modes had begun to merge into our modern major and minor scales because of the use of *musica ficta* (accidentals added by the singers in performance that changed the modes into major or minor)
- ▶ The only accidentals allowed initially were B \flat , E \flat , F \sharp , C \sharp and G \sharp
- ▶ These were used to raise the leading tone in cadences, to avoid dissonant intervals like tritones and augmented seconds, and to raise the third in the last chord (creating a Picardy third)
- ▶ Chromaticism (consecutive half-steps) is not common in the style of Palestrina or Lasso
- ▶ Cross-relations should be avoided (the close proximity of a note in its natural form to the same note altered) whether in the same voice or between voices



Accidentals (*musica ficta*)

▶ What's wrong here?



Cadences

- ▶ The cadence formulas of the late-sixteenth century were highly standardized (see handout)
 - ▶ In an authentic cadence (*clausula vera*), the final is typically approached by step both from above and below, forming the successive intervals major sixth to perfect octave or minor third to perfect unison
 - ▶ To form these intervals, the leading tone needs to be raised in Aeolian, Dorian, and Mixolydian modes
 - ▶ Cadences are very frequently preceded by suspension figures, often decorated by lower neighbors
 - ▶ One of the voices might drop out at the cadence to avoid too conclusive of an ending—these are called *evaded cadences*
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Formal organization

- ▶ Late Renaissance works are typically organized by *points of imitation*, each beginning the next section of text
 - ▶ Each phrase tends to begin imitatively (although the imitation does not typically continue for long) and end with the voices together at a cadence
 - ▶ Within each point of imitation there may be *medial cadences* (less conclusive cadences), with a more conclusive cadence typically occurring before the beginning of the next point of imitation
 - ▶ The final point of imitation often has the most rhythmic activity, features the most melismatic setting of the text, and sounds the most climactic
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