

Intro to White Mensural Notation

Jadwiga Krzyzanowska
Prepared for KWDMS 2013

Clefs



C Clef
The line through the clef is Middle C



G Clef
The line the clef curls around is G above Middle C







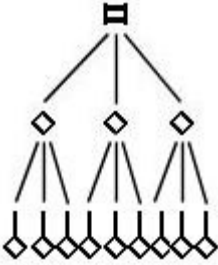
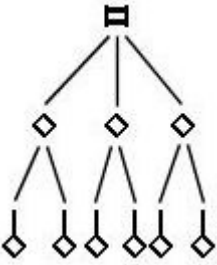
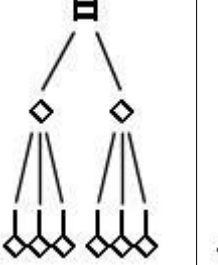



F Clef
The line through the clef is F below Middle C

Mensurations

Note	Name	More (or Less) Modern Equivalent	Rest
	Longa	 Modus Perfectus Modus Imperfectus	 Perfect Imperfect
	Breve	 Tempus Perfectum Tempus Imperfectum	 Perfect Imperfect
	Semibreve	 Prolatio Major Prolatio Minor	 Perfect Imperfect
	Minim	 Minim Minim	 Perfect Imperfect
	Seminim (Crotchet)	 Semiminim Semiminim	 Perfect Imperfect
	Fusa	 Fusa Fusa	 Perfect Imperfect

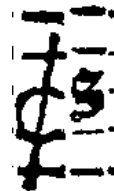
Mensuration Signs

Symbol	 	 	 	
Tempus	Perfectum	Perfectum	ImPerfectum	ImPerfectum
Prolatio	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Divisions				
Recommened Modern Time Signature	$\frac{9}{2}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{9}{4}$	$\frac{3}{1}$ $\frac{9}{2}$ $\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{6}{2}$ $\frac{6}{4}$	$\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{4}{2}$

Special Mensuration Signs

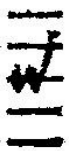


Line through Mensuration Sign Called
Alla Breve
Italian for "At the Breve"
Same Mensuration, but twice as fast.

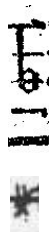


Alla Breve
Still ImPerfectum Minor
3 Indicates Minims are in groups of 3

Other Stuff to Know



Custos
Occurs at the end of a line.
Tells what the pitch of the note on the next line is.



Flat



Sharp


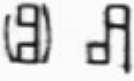

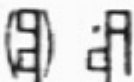

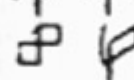

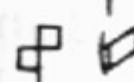
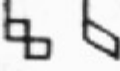
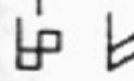


Repeat Sign
Sometimes one like this is at the end of a piece....



Signum Congruentiae
Cadence Point (All voices come together) or
Sign for where to start or end a canon.

Ligatures

Symbol	Form		Value
	desc.	asc.	
<i>cum-cum</i>			<i>B L</i>
<i>sine-cum</i>			<i>L L</i>
<i>cum-sine</i>			<i>B B</i>
<i>sine-sine</i>			<i>L B</i>
<i>c.o.p.</i>			<i>S S</i>

Apel, Willi (1961). *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600*

Rule of Thumb: Don't change syllables on a ligature.

L = Long

B = Breve

S = Semibreve

Punctis Augmentationis



Only in Imperfect Mensurations

Dots act like in Modern Notation:
Adds one half the length of the note

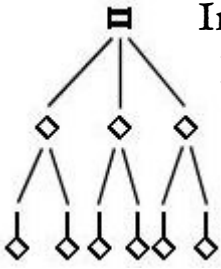
If Imperfect Mensuration, this would
have the value of $\frac{3}{2}$ Crotchets

Imperfection

In Tempus Perfectum, Breves are by default worth 3 Semibreves

In Tempus Perfectum, Breves are Sometimes worth 2 Semibreves

In the following examples, the modern notation has been halved for clarity.

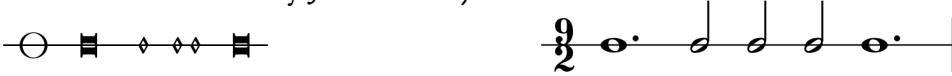


Tempus Perfectum Prolatio Minor

If a Breve is followed by a note or rest that has a length of a Breve or greater, the Breve is Perfect- worth 3 Semibreves.



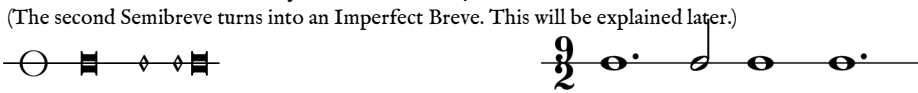
If a Breve is followed by 3 Semibreves, the Breve is Perfect.



If a Breve is followed by a group of smaller notes that equal 3 Semibreves, the Breve is Perfect.



If a Breve is followed by 2 Semibreves, the Breve is Perfect.



(The second Semibreve turns into an Imperfect Breve. This will be explained later.)

If a Breve is followed by 1 Semibreve, the Breve is Imperfect- worth 2 Semibreves



If a Breve is followed by 1 Semibreve worth of notes, the Breve is Imperfect- worth 2 Semibreves



If a Breve is followed by more than three Semibreves, the Breve is Imperfect.



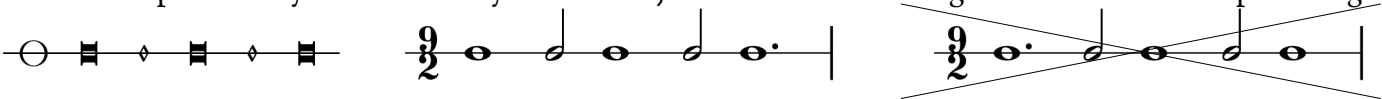
If a Breve is preceded by 1 Semibreve, the Breve is Imperfect



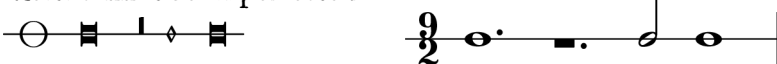
If a Breve is preceded by more than three Semibreves, the Breve is Imperfect.



If a Breve is preceded by and followed by a Semibreve, the Semibreve following the Breve does the Imperfecting.



Rests cannot be Imperfected.



Rests can Imperfect Breves.



These are Guidelines.
They are not hard and fast rules.

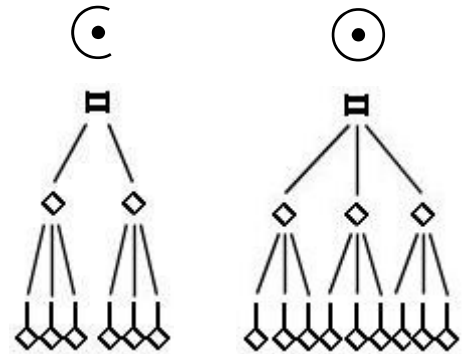
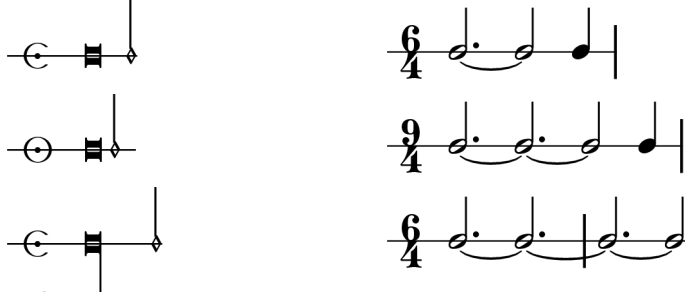
Imperfection

Tempus Perfectus Prolatio Major Tempus Imperfectum Prolatio Major

Minims can Imperfect Semibreves.



Minims can Imperfect Breves and Longas. This is called Partial Imperfection.



General Assumption: 2 Breves to a Longa.

This leads to weird combinations, especially in Tempus Perfectus Prolatio Major. For example, you can get recursive Imperfection



The weird stuff doesn't happen often in actual music, but it's written about at length in music treatises.

Alteration

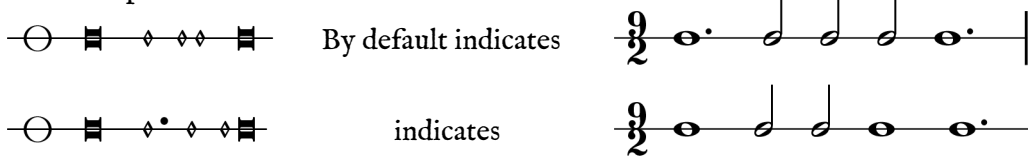
Alteration occurs when there are two Semibreves following a Breve. The second Semibreve turns into an Imperfected Breve.



Punctis Divisionis

In Perfect Mensurations (Everything Except Tempus Imperfectus Prolatio Minor), a dot after a note can indicate that the rules of imperfection are to done differently than expected.

For Example:



The Dot indicates that the Semibreve before the dot Imperfects the Breve before the dot. The two Semibreves form the alteration discussed above, thus the second Semibreve becomes an Imperfect Breve.

What's Not Covered In This Handout

- Coloration** Sometimes in music written in white notation some of the notes are colored black or red. This is a way of changing the meter mid-piece. To find out more, check the Recommended Reading.
- Proportions** Sometimes there will be numbers or fractions written in the music. This is another way to alter the meter mid-piece. To find out more, check the Recommended Reading.
- Musica Ficta** Often there will be notes in the music that need to be altered even though no accidentals are written in the music. A general rule of thumb is if there's a tritone between the cantus firmus (usually bottom line with lots of long notes) and an upper line, alter the upper line note to fix it. OK alterations: B - B \flat ; F - F \sharp ; E - E \flat ; C - C \sharp . There's a bit more to it than this, but this will get you pretty far.

Where to Find Facsimiles

- ◆ http://imslp.org/wiki/Category:15th-century_facsimiles
 - ◆ Laborde Chansonnier
 - ◆ Chansonnier Cordiforme
- ◆ http://imslp.org/wiki/Category:16th-century_facsimiles
- ◆ Early English Books Online <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>
 - ◆ You may have access through your University
 - ◆ Lots of English Madrigals
- ◆ Digital Archive of Medieval Music <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/>
 - ◆ GB-Lbl Add. 31922
<http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=1238>

Recommended Reading

- ◆ The Notation of Polyphonic Music 900 - 1600 by Willi Apel
 - ◆ The book that all of the other sources quote. You Should probably own it if you want to do transcription. Available on Amazon new for under \$30 at the time of this writing.
- ◆ <http://stdionysius.lochac.sca.org/collegeprojects/twmnlt.html>
 - ◆ Was originally going to use this as the "textbook" for the class.
- ◆ <http://ieee.uwaterloo.ca/praetzel/mp3-cd/info/raybro/index1.html>
- ◆ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensural_notation
- ◆ http://anaigeon.free.fr/e_mensur_intro.html
- ◆ The Notation of Western Music by Richard Rastall
 - ◆ Discusses these topics. If you have to pick one book, I recommend Apel's book.

Tools Used for Handout

- ◆ LibreOffice Impress
- ◆ Lilypond
- ◆ OooLilypond Plugin

Galliarde 29 from Claude Gervaise's Fourth Book of Dances

Superius

Galliarde ij

Contratenor

Galliarde

Tenor

Galliarde

Bassus

Galliarde

Upper Part from Ave Regina Caelorum ~ Dufay

◇ ◇ = alteration ◇ □
□ ◇ = imperfection □ = ◇ ◇

Quintus Decimus 8

A De regina cele riu sue domina angelorum salve radix pincta ex qua mundo lux

est orta gaudet gloriosa sup omnes speciosa vale ualde decora et prouolubis semp
 cristum exora. Alle luya

A De regina celorum sue domina angelorum salve radix pincta ex qua mundo lux

est orta gaudet gloriosa sup omnes speciosa vale ualde decora et prouolubis semp
 cristum exora. Alle luya

A De regina celorum sue domina angelorum salve radix pincta ex qua mundo lux

est orta gaudet gloriosa sup omnes speciosa vale ualde decora et prouolubis semp
 cristum exora. Alle luya

Superius
Gaillarde ij

Contratenor
Gaillarde

Tenor
Gaillarde

Bassus
Gaillarde

29 Galliarde

From Pierre Attaignant's Fourth Book of Dances

Claude Gervaise

Quintus Ductus 2^o

Ve regina celo rum me domina angelorum salve radix sancta ex qua mundo lux
 est orta gaudet gloriose sup omnes speciosa vale ualde decora et prouidens semp
 eternum exora. Alle luja

Ve regina celorum me domina angelorum salve radix sancta ex qua mundo lux
 est orta gaudet gloriose sup omnes speciosa vale ualde decora et prouidens semp
 eternum exora. Alle luja *

Ve regina celorum me domina angelorum salve radix sancta ex qua mundo lux
 est orta gaudet gloriose sup omnes speciosa vale ualde decora et prouidens semp
 eternum exora. Alle luja

Ave regina celorum

MS Oxford, Bodleian Library

Guillaume Dufay (1397 - 1474)

Canonici misc. 213 (ca. 1450)

f. 62

[Superius] A - - - - - ve re - gi - na ce -

[Contratenor] A - - - - - ve re - gi - na ce -

[Tenor] A - - - - - ve re - gi - na ce -

6
[S.] lo - - - rum, A - ve do - mi - na an - ge - lo -

6
[C.T.] lo - - - rum, A - ve do - mi - na an - ge - lo -

6
[T.] lo - - - rum, A - ve do - mi - na an - ge - lo -

12
[S.] rum, Sal - - ve ra - dix sanc - ta, Ex qua mun -

12
[C.T.] rum, Sal - - ve ra - dix sanc - ta, Ex qua mun -

12
[T.] rum, Sal - - ve ra - dix sanc - ta, Ex qua mun -

18
[S.] do lux est or - ta. Gau - - - de glo - ri - o -

18
[C.T.] do lux est or - ta. Gau - - - de glo - ri - o -

18
[T.] do lux est or - ta. Gau - - - de glo - ri - o -

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Ave regina celorum

24

[S.] sa, Su - per om - nes spe - ci - o - sa. Va - le,

[C.T.] sa, Su - per om - nes spe - ci - o - sa. Va - le,

[T.] sa, Su - per om - nes spe - ci - o - sa. Va - le,

30

[S.] val - de de - co - ra, Et pro no - bis sem - per

[C.T.] val - de de - co - ra, Et pro no - bis sem - per

[T.] val - de de - co - ra, Et pro no - bis sem - per

36

[S.] Chri - - - stum ex - o - - - ra. Al - - - le - -

[C.T.] Chri - - - stum ex - o - - - ra. Al - - - le - -

[T.] Chri - - - stum ex - o - - - ra. Al - - - le - -

42

[S.] lu - - - ya.

[C.T.] lu - - - ya.

[T.] lu - - - ya.