

Early Music

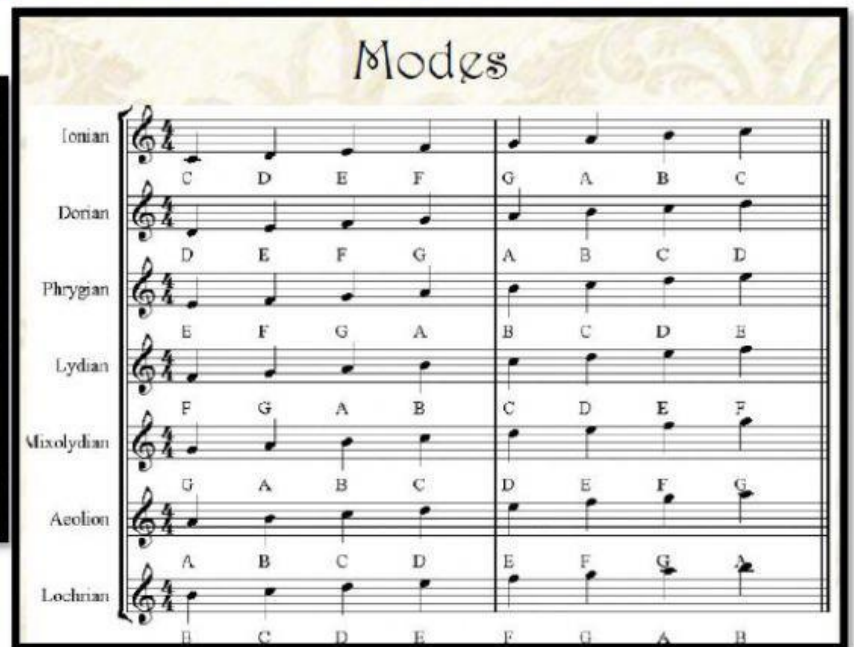
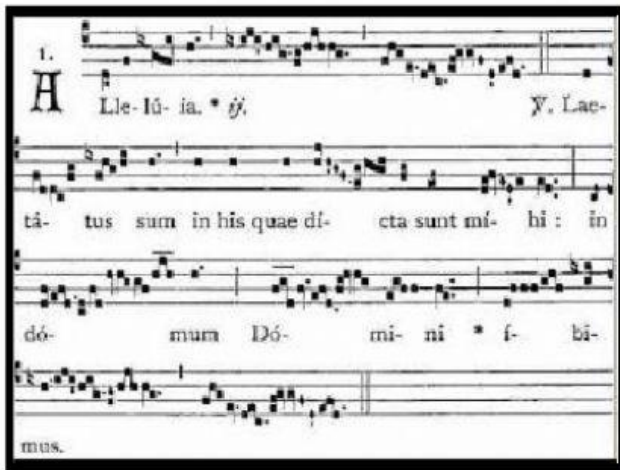
Plainchant

The earliest music that we know, both sacred and secular, consists of a single line melody. This is a monophonic texture.

Examples of this can be found in early church music, in the form of **plainchant** (also known as **plainsong** or **Gregorian chant**). Plainchant melodies were generally flowing, often moving by **step** rather than by **leap**, and would be sung in an **a cappella** style (i.e. **unaccompanied**).

The rhythm would be irregular and very free, following the natural rhythms and stresses of the Latin words.

Plainchant melodies were based on special types of scaled called **modes**. **Modes** can be found by playing any notes within an octave, but keeping to the white notes only.



Listen to an example of plainchant:

Mainly Syllabic	Major	Modal	A cappella
Mainly melismatic	Polyphonic	Triplets	Unison

Choose 4 relevant concepts from the box above and write them in the correct categories on the table below.

Melody	Harmony	Texture	Timbre

Sacred Music in the Renaissance period

Composers throughout history have written sacred music. In the Renaissance period sacred music was generally sung in Latin and performed **a cappella** (without instrumental accompaniment). It often contained some of the following features:

Melodic	Harmonic	Rhythmic	Texture	Timbre	Style
Melisma Syllabic Conjunct/stepwise Limited range	Modal/Mode Suspension Dissonance Passing notes Cadences (often <u>plagal</u> at end)	Time changes Free rhythm	Polyphonic Homophonic Imitation Antiphonal	A cappella	Plainchant Mass Motet Anthem

Mass

The **Mass** is the chief service of the Catholic Church. The Latin setting of the Mass divides into five main sections, or "items":

<i>Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison</i>	Lord have mercy, Christ Have mercy
<i>Gloria in excelsis Deo</i>	Glory to God in the highest
<i>Credo in unum deum</i>	I believe in one God
<i>Sanctus; Osanna; Benedictus</i>	Holy, holy, holy; Hosanna; Blessed is he....
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	Lamb of God

Listen to *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* from Byrd *Mass for 5 Voices*:

Now listen to some of Palestrina's ***Missa Papae Marcelli***

The Kyrie is in 3 distinct sections – *Kyrie eleison-Christe eleison-Kyrie eleison*. See if you can spot all 4 cadences in the first Kyrie eleison section.

- Perfect Interrupted
- Imperfect Plagal

NB Gloria and Credo start on the second line of the text (ie Et in terra pax and Patrem omnipotentem.

To see the full text for each of the sections of the Mass, see here:

http://www.kitbraz.com/tchr/hist/med/mass_ordinary_text.html

Fill in any features that you notice.

Style	Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/Tempo	Texture/Structure/Form	Timbre

WHAT IS A SUSPENSION IN MUSIC?

A suspension in music is where a note from a chord is held whilst the other notes of the chord change to a new harmony.

The held note is **discordant** and clashes with the new chord and this tension is only **resolved** when the note moves down a degree to a note belonging to the new chord.

Suspensions feature heavily in Renaissance music, creating tension and release between the vocal lines

There are 3 stages involved in a musical suspension:

- 1.Preparation
- 2.Suspension
- 3.Resolution

In the **preparation**, the note played is a harmony note and can be found in any part.

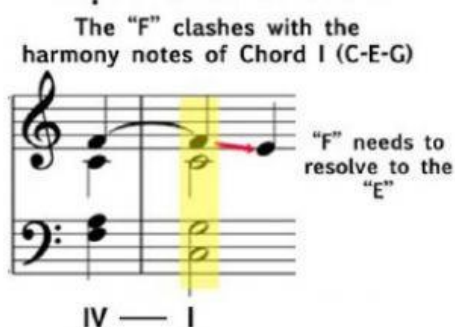
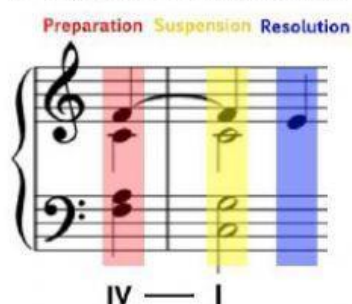
In our example above, the F in the soprano part is the note selected.

In the **suspension**, the prepared note is held as the other parts change chord.

This creates a **dissonance between the held note and the new chord**.

The **resolution** is the point at which the **suspended note falls by a degree** to a harmony note in the new chord.

3 Stages of Suspensions



The musical score shows a vocal line with a suspension. The lyrics are: qua - rum si - cut cer - vus de - si - de - rat ad fon - tes. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The vocal line starts with a half note G, followed by a half note A, then a half note B, and finally a half note G. The suspension occurs on the word 'cut', where the note B is held over the bar line. The resolution occurs on the word 'cer', where the note B moves down to A. The score is labeled with 'Prepared dissonance' and 'Dissonance' above the suspension, and 'Resolution' below the resolution. The bass staff shows the chords: G (I), Am (iib), G (Ib), and G (I).

Motet

The **Motet** is a short sacred choral work, usually contrapuntal in style, with a Latin text. Here are some examples of texts used for motets:

<i>Veni Sancte Spiritus</i>	Come, Holy Spirit
<i>Haec Dies</i>	This is the day
<i>Ave Maria</i>	Hail Mary
<i>Jubilate Deo</i>	Be Joyful in the Lord
<i>O quam gloriosam est regnum</i>	O How Glorious is the Kingdom
<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	Hail, True Body
<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>	O Great and Mighty Wonder

Listen to Gabrieli's O Magnum Mysetrium, written for antiphonal double choir

Listen to Gabrieli's '(1554-1612) *In Ecclesia*. This is a motet written for 4 groups and continuo/organ.

Group 1: Solo singers with fluid and virtuosic part writing

Group 2: Mainly homo[phonic] chorus

Group 3 :Instruments (cornetts)

Group 4: Instruments (viols and sackbuts)



Style	Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/Tempo	Texture/Structure/Form	Timbre
Motet Renaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modal – basically Am but no G#s make it Aeolian in tonality • Suspensions – and other dissonances create tension • Many phrases end on a tierce de picardie • Plagal cadences • Sequence 	Time changes Dotted rhythms	Antiphonal Homophonic Polyphonic Imitation Pedal point Rondo like structure with Alleluia chorus acting like a rondo in between each section	Polychoral Cornett Sackbut Viol continuo