Development of
Renaissance Counterpoint:
Senseless Stipulations or Scientific Study
Why Music?

- Music is universal
- Music is powerful
- Music is creative
- Music is ordered
Renaissance Era

- Literally means “rebirth”
- Affected all areas of life
- Rediscovery of Greco-Roman philosophy
- Look toward natural world rather than trusting in the supernatural.
Renaissance Music

- Mature two-part harmonies
- Differing types of voice leading
- No standard in part writing
- Led to inception of counterpoint
Counterpoint

- *Punctus contra Punctum*
- Starts with existing *Cantus Firmus*
- Adds a complimentary line above or below it
Two Part Counterpoint
Intervallic Relationships

- Perfect and Imperfect Consonances
- Avoided Dissonance when possible
Two Part Counterpoint

Florid Counterpoint

- Different species counterpoint allowed different musical techniques.
- Using species to correct voice leading errors.
- Mixing of species to create coherent, engaging music.
Three Part Counterpoint
Florid Counterpoint

- Development of vertical, chordal structures
- Tries to have entire triad in a chord
- Leads to chord progressions

Figure 157. pg 105 Fux
Four Part Counterpoint

Florid Counterpoint

- Mixed Species in four parts to create intricate textures and mature sound

Figure 204. pg 137. Fux
Johann Joseph Fux
The Man who Standardized Counterpoint

- Previous music theorists
- The Study of Counterpoint: Gradus Ad Parnassum
- Legacy
Counterpoint and Today

Does Counterpoint Influence Today’s Music?

- Would later Baroque, Classical, and Romantic music have been as beautiful and poignant?
- We still adhere to many of voice leading rules developed in the Renaissance
- Many pop songs use counterpoint from Simon and Garfunkel’s “Scarborough Fair/Canticle” to the Beatle’s “She’s Leaving Home
Last Thoughts
Questions