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Leading to Tonality

WESTERN MUSIC’S TRANSITION FROM MODALITY TO TONALITY
Understanding Pitch Relationships

- Each note has an aural relationship to all other notes:
  - Overtone Series
  - Consonant or Dissonant

- Pythagoras of Samos
  - Sixth century BCE Greek philosopher
  - Experiment with tones produced by a string
    - $1/2 = \text{Perfect 8}^{\text{th}}$
    - $2/3 = \text{Perfect 5}^{\text{th}}$
    - $3/4 = \text{Perfect 4}^{\text{th}}$
    - Less simple ratios
      - Imperfect Consonances: Major/Minor 3\text{rd} and 6\text{th}
      - Dissonances: Major/Minor 2\text{nd} and 7\text{th}, Tritone
Understanding Modality vs. Tonality

- **Modality**
  - Medieval (5\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th} century) and Renaissance (1300-1600) eras
    - 8 church modes
    - Hierarchy of notes within the mode
    - Melody using modes
    - Harmony based on rules of counterpoint

- **Tonality**
  - Baroque (1600-1750) Development
    - Major and minor scales
    - Hierarchy of chords within the scale
    - Melody using scales
    - Harmony based on chord structures
Understanding the Leading Tone

- A note that implies the note a semitone above it.
  - Creates a gravity or drive towards the cadence
- In Modality: Less prevalent
  - Chromatic manipulation
  - Modes 5 and 6: Lydian and Hypolydian modes.
    - Final on F, with E natural as leading tone.
- In Tonality: More prevalent
  - Major and Harmonic Minor Scales
    - Scale degree 7
  - Chromatic manipulation
    - Imply new key or emphasize a scale degree other than 1
Understanding the Cadence

- End of a phrase or piece.
  - A moment of repose in music.
- Dissonance to Consonance
  - Often uses the leading tone to provide stability and finality.
“Within the intellectual framework thus established, music seems to make itself up out of rational principles that exist independent of human invention.” Susan McClary
My Question:

- How is the Cadence and Leading Tone used in Medieval and Renaissance Modal music as opposed to Baroque Tonal music?
  - Is there a correlation?
Medieval Music
Modality
Most Gregorian Chants do not utilize leading tone to the final.

- Gradual: *Viderunt Omnes*, from the Mass for Christmas Day
  - Mode 5
  - Leading tone used to emphasize final
  - Not used in cadences

Source: Burkholder, *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. Vol 1. Pg. 15
Similar trends found in Adam de la Halle and other anonymous compositions of this era.

Leoninus’s Version
- 12th Century

Perotinus’s Version
- Circa 1198
Guillaume de Machaut: 14th Century
La Messe de Nostre Dame: Gloria

- Cadences
  - Weak ends on imperfect consonance
    - No leading tone
  - Strong ends on perfect consonances
    - Double leading tone
  - Use of chromatic manipulation

Source: Burkholder, *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. Vol I. Pg. 138 and 142
Renaissance Music
Modality with Increased Chromaticism
Josquin Desprez (circa 1450-1521)

*Faulte d’argent*

- Increased Chromaticism
- Constant switch between 2 finals: G and D
  - F sharp and C sharp inserted to lead to these finals
- Obvious knowledge of the leading tone phenomenon
- Final Cadence on D

Similar trends found in other pieces by Josquin Desprez, Tomás Luis de Victoria’s sacred motet from circa 1570, *O Magnum Mysterium*, Orlande de Lassus’s 1579 motet, *Cum Essem Parvulus* and other pieces from this time period.

Source: Burkholder, *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. Vol 1. Pg. 224 and 228
Italian Madrigals

- Jaques Arcadelt’s *Il Bianco e Dolce Cigno* from 1538 and Cipriano de Rore’s *De La Belle Contrade d’Oriente* from 1560-65.
  - Final on F: Leading tone of E
  - Occasional Chromatic manipulation to create leading tones
    - F sharp to G, B natural to C
Became increasingly chromatic over time.

Luca Marenzio’s *Solo e Pensoso*: 1590s

- Top voice sings chromatic scale
  - Creates leading tones to next sonority
- Use of chord like structures, foreshadowing tonality

The trend of increased chromaticism and stronger uses of the leading tone continues all the way to the Baroque period.

Baroque Music
Tonality Begins
The Baroque Period and Tonality

- Major and Minor Scales and Keys
  - Easily change keys through chromatically inserted leading tone
    - Example: Key of C—Add F sharp—cadence on new key in G

- Strong Cadences with longer anticipation for resolution
  - Dominant 7 chord
    - Contains leading tone as 3rd of the chord reinforced with a tritone relationship to the 7th of the chord forcing dissonance to consonance.
    - Commonly used in cadences.

- Chord Structures
  - Hierarchy of chords in the scale
Claudio Monteverdi: 1567-1643

- Often considered first composer to utilize tonality.
- *Cruda Amarilli*: late 1590s
  - unprepared dominant seven chord
    - 7th approached by downward leap
    - Sudden insertion of leading tone in other voice
      - Completes dominant 7 chord
      - Creates sudden need for resolution

His later works such as *L’Orfeo* from 1607, *and L’incoronazione di Poppea* from 1642, show further development of tonal harmony. The composers who followed him continued to compose tonally.

Source: Burkholder, *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. Vol 1. Pg. 431
Johann Sebastian Bach: 1685-1750
Culmination of Baroque Period

- Well Tempered Clavier
  - All 24 major and minor keys
  - Utilizes chromatic insertion of leading tone to change keys
- Large body of other works utilizing tonal principles
Conclusion

- The leading tone was used in all three eras.
- As time passed, more chromatic insertions of the leading tone were used.
- Perhaps the leading tone is one of the main contributors to the discovery of tonal music theory and the transition out of modality.
Questions?