Timothy R. McKinney

Point/counterpoint: Vicentino's musical rebuttal to Lusitano

THE famous debate between Nicola Vicentino and Vicente Lusitano concerned the issue of whether contemporary music was written in the diatonic genus, as Lusitano asserted, or whether it represented a mixture of the genera, as Vicentino argued. The disagreement began after a musical performance in a private residence in Rome in 1551, and escalated so far that the disputants wagered a pair of gold scudi and agreed to elect two judges to hear a formal debate and declare a winner. The judges selected were Bartolomé de Escobedo and Ghiselin Danckerts, both singers in the papal chapel of Julius III.¹ As the drama unfolded, the debate played out in several episodes and involved both oral arguments and written summaries. The judges ruled against Vicentino, who duly paid his wager, but the matter was not laid to rest. Skirmishes in written discourse between proponents of one side or the other began shortly after the judgment and continued beyond the lifetimes of the debaters. Lusitano's Introduttione facilissima et novissima di canto fermo, figurato, contraponto semplice et in concerto of 1553 concludes with a brief explanation of the genera that seems tacked on to what otherwise is the advertised simple introduction to chant and contrapuntal theory, and adds little to the polemic.² He was attacked nonetheless by Vicentino, whose resentment over the verdict in the debate poured forth in his L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica of 1555.3 In addition to a full exposition of his views on the genera, Vicentino included a description of the debate and its immediate aftermath designed to place himself in the best light, and Lusitano and the judges in the worst. He also

included in this publication the written depositions that he and Lusitano had submitted during the dispute, as well as a copy of the sentence against him. We have no record of a response from Lusitano, yet Danckerts takes up his cause in the unpublished treatise *Sopra una differentia musicale sententiata nella detta capella*..., begun soon after the dispute in 1551 and substantially revised and expanded in order to rebut Vicentino's attacks on the judges in his treatise.⁴

The circumstances of the debate and the continued controversy stemming from it have been well documented by modern scholars, and interested parties are directed to their work for more information.5 What has not been recognized, however, is the agenda behind the contrapuntal structure of Vicentino's polyphonic exemplar of the diatonic genus in the treatise (illus.1). He asserts that great harshness is felt in this music in comparison to contemporary practice. I shall show that Vicentino intended his exemplar to sound harsh and uncouth, and to that end infused it with harmonic and contrapuntal devices that he learned were appropriate for expressing harshness from his teacher, Adrian Willaert. I suggest that by making the exemplar especially harsh through these devices and others, Vicentino hoped to distance the diatonic genus from contemporary practice, especially for the cognoscenti, thus bolstering his stance in the debate.

For our purposes, the original argument boils down to one basic issue: just which intervals can be used in each genus. Vicentino takes the very restrictive view that each genus divides into species according to the intervals formed between contiguous notes

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Effempio del Soprano Diatonico.



1 Polyphonic exemplar of the diatonic genus from Nicola Vicentino, *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (Rome, 1555; R/Kassel, 1959) (Reprinted by permission)

Diatonic	Chromatic	Enharmonic
B C D E	B C C# E	BBCE
S T T	S S m3	DDM3

Figure 1 The genera and their indigenous species according to Vicentino.

of that genus's tetrachord. Thus the species of the diatonic genus include a semitone and two tones spanning a perfect 4th, and only these species, as shown in fig.1. One is not allowed to skip over an individual pitch and thereby form a minor or major 3rd; in the terminology of the debate, these intervals are *incomposite* (spanning adjacent notes in the genus) rather than *composite* (spanning non-adjacent notes in the genus). The minor and major 3rds belong only to the chromatic and enharmonic genera, respectively, as also shown in the figure above.⁶ This strict interpretation of the genera leads Vicentino to observe:

Nissuno ne gli canti figurati et ne gli fermi, ha composto un canto che osserui l'ordine del Genere Diatonico, perche in quelli si ritruoua non solamente gradi del Diatonico Genere, che sono i Toni, & semitoni naturali, ma anchor i gradi delle Terze minori, che in prattica dicemo mi. sol. & re. fa. & il salto del Dittono, che in prattica dicemo, ut. mi. & fa. la. senza poi che nelli canti figurati i Toni si tagliano; & di un Tono si fà semitono. & di semitono, si fà tono. . . . & per tal ragione la musica che è stata usata et che si usa hoggi nel mondo, si dè domandare musica participata, & mista de certe spetie de tutti tre i Generi, e non è musica Diatonica, per le tante ragioni di sopra intese.⁷

No one has written either in polyphonic music or in plainchant a melody that observes the order of the diatonic genus. For in these melodies there occur not only the steps of the diatonic genus—that is, whole tones and natural semitones but also steps of a minor 3rd which in practice we call mi-sol and re-fa, and leaps of a ditone, which in practice we call mi-sol ut-mi and fa-la, not to mention that in polyphonic music two whole tones are cut, making a semitone out of a whole tone or a whole tone out of a semitone.... For this reason, music of the past and of today ought to be called tempered music, mixed with certain species from all three genera.

In the treatise, however, Vicentino does not restrict diatonic melodic motion only to tones and semitones, indicating instead that larger intervals such as the 4th, 5th and 6th were common to all of the genera.⁸ Or, in other words, since they do not define any particular genus, as do the 3rds (in Vicentino's view), they may be used in any of them. Furthermore, although he will not allow 3rds in diatonic melody, 3rds are allowed between voices in diatonic polyphony.

Vicentino does not have a great deal to say about his polyphonic exemplar of the pure diatonic genus:

Acciò ch'il Lettore non stia dubbioso, ho uoluto sotto porre un essempio tutto Diatonico à quattro uoci, che quando canterà il Scolare, si farà più certo della Musica Diatonica; et la si potrà comporre à quante uoci uerrà in proposito al Compositore; & si sentirà in questa Musica una asprezza grande, à rispetto di quella che è participata & mista. Et il Compositore auuertirà che un sospiro torrà uia il grado di Terza maggiore, & di minore; & questa compositione seruirà al cantare & al sonare.⁹

Lest readers remain in doubt, I wish to offer a completely diatonic example for four voices such that, when a student sings it, he will be more certain about diatonic music. Such music may be composed for as many voices as suits the composer's purpose. However, great harshness is felt in this music, compared to that which is tempered and mixed. Composers are advised that the insertion of a rest nullifies the interval [grado] of a major or minor 3rd. This composition is apt for both singing and playing.

Most interesting in Vicentino's discussion of the exemplar is the level of harshness he attributes to the diatonic genus. Although Boethius, the primary transmitter of Greek theory to the Middle Ages and Renaissance, whom Vicentino frequently cites, also refers to harshness in the diatonic genus, he does so in much milder terms, describing it as somewhat more harsh and natural in relation to the other genera: 'Et diatonum quidem aliquanto durius et naturalius, chroma vero iam quasi ab illa naturali intentione discedens et in mollius decidens, enarmonium vero optime atque apte coniunctum'.¹⁰ In L'antica musica, book 1, chapter 6, Vicentino quotes Boethius's description of the diatonic genus, rendering Boethius's 'aliquanto durius' as 'alquanto più duro' in Italian: 'Il Diatonico Genere è alquanto più duro, & più naturale degli altri: & il Cromatico, & l'Enarmonico sono arteficiosi...'¹¹ Vicentino's description of the harshness of the diatonic genus (quoted above) in his discussion of his polyphonic exemplar goes far beyond this. Rather than Boethius's 'aliquanto durius', he now refers to 'una asprezza grande' ('a great harshness'). He does not explain why in this passage; however, the factors that make this particular example especially harsh in Vicentino's view can be culled from remarks scattered elsewhere in the treatise and from compositions by Vicentino and his teacher Willaert.

Vicentino's rigid stand on the genera explains in large part the melodic structure of the exemplar, transcribed here as ex.1. Each melodic line moves by whole- or half-step most of the time. Most leaps are perfect 4ths and perfect 5ths. Exceptions are rare but sometimes striking, such as the diminished 5th in the alto in bar 6 and the adjacent octave leaps in the alto in bars 10–11.¹² As he suggests in his commentary, melodic 3rds appear only with an intervening rest. He employs this convenience no fewer than eight times.

Although Vicentino is quite strict about the species allowed in the diatonic genus, he takes a more broadminded view of how these species may be arranged within the tetrachord. He defines three species of 4th for the diatonic genus, distinguished by the placement of the semitone above, below, or in between the two whole tones.¹³ The melodic lines in his exemplar

Ex.1 Vicentino's polyphonic exemplar of the diatonic genus, *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (1555), f.52. Figured bass shows suspensions and major or minor harmonic 6ths; brackets show parallel major 3rds above the lowest-sounding voice

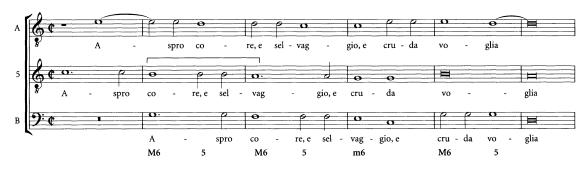


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seamlessly weave different tetrachords together, and no particular emphasis on tetrachordal melodic cells is apparent; in fact, the first voice to enter tellingly outlines the 'hard' hexachord (*hexachordum durum*). For Vicentino the diatonic tetrachord is not so much the issue as is ensuring that no minor or major 3rds appear in the melody; as he argued unsuccessfully in the debate, the appearance of a melodic 3rd would introduce the chromatic or enharmonic genera.

By invoking the term 'aspro' in relation to the diatonic genus, Vicentino triggers an affective association cultivated by the school of composition centred around his teacher Adrian Willaert and best codified by fellow pupil Gioseffo Zarlino in his Le istitutioni harmoniche of 1558.14 A detailed investigation into this influence falls beyond the scope of the present study,¹⁵ yet brief consideration of the opening of Willaert's famous madrigal Aspro core e selvaggio e cruda voglia will serve to make the connection (see ex.2). As Claude Palisca and others have noted, in his Fronimo dialogo of 1568 Vincenzo Galilei wrote approvingly of Willaert's use of motions from a major 6th to a 5th (as between altus and bassus in bar 2) and from one major 3rd conjunctly to another (as between quintus and bassus in bars 2-3) in order to express the harshness of the first verse of the poem.¹⁶ These motions violate the contrapuntal guideline requiring an imperfect consonance to move to the nearest perfect consonance. The conjunct major 3rds also run foul of the guideline stating that two imperfect consonances of the same size should not follow one another. This latter guideline does not appear before the 1540s and 50s, and then primarily in treatises from theorists under Willaert's influence.17 According to Vicentino and Zarlino, the guideline serves to ensure variety, and Zarlino further expresses concern about the harsh false relation that parallel major 3rds engender (as between the *quintus* B and *bassus* F in bars 2–3 of ex.2).¹⁸

Comparison of Vicentino's exemplar with Willaert's madrigal shows that similar contrapuntal devices are used, yet moving in the opposite direction. Willaert begins with tight imitation of a stepwise descending motive placed so that harmonic major 6ths are formed frequently. Vicentino's imitated motive exhibits an ascending contour, so that Willaert's 6-5 suspensions become 5-6 motions, yet still placed within the gamut in such a way that major 6ths are emphasized (and utilizing the same basic mode and initial notes). The ascending contour would give the exemplar a more agitated sound according to Vicentino's description of the quality of melodic intervals: the ascending natural whole tone he describes as 'incitato' (which Maniates translates as 'tense'), while the descending natural whole tone is 'molle' (slack).¹⁹ However, elsewhere in the treatise he describes the whole tone as rough and harsh without regard for its direction ('i gradi del tono, che è duro & aspro, come con l'esperienza si sente').20 Vicentino describes the harmonic major 6th as partaking more of dissonance than consonance ('la Sesta maggiore participa più, di dissonanza che di consonanza'), and indicates that when it moves to the perfect 5th rather than the octave, it is good for harshness ('& la sesta maggiore, sarà buona per usar una asprezza, appresso alla quinta').21 Three of the first four 6ths in bars 2-3 of the exemplar are major, and each moves to a perfect 5th. A similar string of major 6ths appears in



Ex.2 Willaert, *Aspro core e selvaggio e cruda voglia*, bars 1–6, showing harmonic major 6ths (6–5) and parallel major 3rds with 'aspro'; from *Musica nova* (written by c.1540; pub. 1559)

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bars 9–10, where again three major 6ths are heard, two of which move to perfect 5ths. A final 5–6 chain occurs in bars 14–15, as in the opening bars leading off with a pair of major 6ths that move to perfect 5ths.

While Vicentino's insistence on emphasizing melodic movements indigenous to the genus naturally suggests that stepwise motion would be frequent in his exemplar, stepwise motion does not require the emphasis of harmonic major 6ths, nor that they resolve to perfect 5ths rather than octaves; only two of the ten major 6ths in this brief work resolve to octaves. That the major 6th does not need to be a suspension in order to express harshness in Willaert's circle is shown by the passage from Willaert's *Giunto m'ha Amor* given in ex.3, where Willaert uses the 5–6 motion with major 6ths at the text 'e rompr' ogn' aspro scoglio' ('and break each harsh rock'). As in *Aspro core*, parallel major 3rds (here 10ths) accompany the harsh text.

The parallel major 3rds in ex.2 represent one of only 12 instances moving by whole-step that I have located in the 25 madrigals of Willaert's *Musica nova* collection. Fully half of these 12 instances occur with texts containing the 'harsh' keywords 'aspro'

Ex.3 Willaert, *Giunto m'ha Amor*, bars 51–8, showing major 6ths (5–6) and parallel major 3rds with 'aspro'; from *Musica nova*



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or 'duro', the very words Vicentino uses to describe the diatonic genus. By way of comparison, parallel major 3rds above the lowest voice occur well over 100 times in the 61 compositions published in Arcadelt's first book of four-voice madrigals without any consistent ties to harsh texts. Vicentino, following Willaert's lead, was quite careful to avoid parallel major 3rds in his first madrigal book, whose title-page proclaims that the works were written in the manner of his celebrated teacher.²² Only three passages containing parallel major 3rds occur in this collection, the most striking of which appears in ex.4. While Vicentino discouraged the use of parallel imperfect consonances of the same size for the sake of variety, he frequently reiterates that any bad consonance or progression may be used if it is appropriate to expressing the words being set or to expressing other ideas.²³ As I have discussed elsewhere, the forbidden parallel major 3rds in ex.4 are used with clear rhetorical intent, accompanying the text 'O grand'errore' ('O great error').24 Although appearing in only three passages in the 19 compositions of his first madrigal book, parallel major 3rds also appear three times in the 28-bar diatonic exemplar: between bass and tenor in bars 9-10, between alto and soprano in bars 10-11 (the alto is the lowest-sounding voice in this instance),

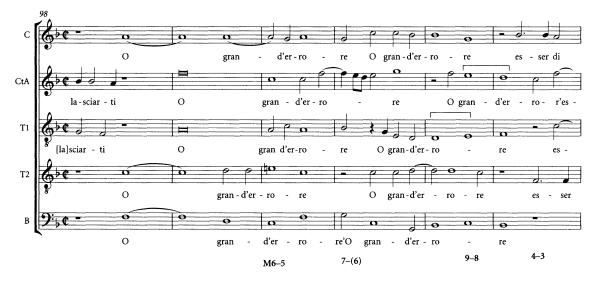
and in bar 14 between the bass and tenor. Parallel minor 3rds also are relatively rare in the first madrigal book, occurring in less than a dozen passages, yet they happen six times in the diatonic exemplar.

Although 6–5 and 5–6 motions employing major 6ths and parallel major 3rds appear frequently in conjunction with harsh texts in the compositional circle around Willaert, Vicentino speaks disparagingly of using chains of 6–5 and 5–6 motions to improvise a counterpoint to a stepwise plainchant, a practice that Lusitano condones in his *Introdutione facilissima*.²⁵ Vicentino's comments and even the opening hexachordal motive of his diatonic exemplar can be seen as swipes at Lusitano (who illustrates the 5–6 motion with just such an ascending hexachord):

alcuni cantano, à due uoci, & come ritruouano una ascendenza, à discendenza di quattro, à cinque uoci, fuggano per sesta & per quinta, così all'in su come all'in giu, per grado, che fà brutto sentire, perche il bel procedere del contrapunto, è di dare piu consonanze, che si puo sopra una nota, & quel modo di fugare per sesta & quinta non hà varietà alcuna, ne di consonanze, ne di gradi; perche il cantante ripresenta all'oditore sempre le medesime consonanze antedette con quelli gradi medesimi, & tal modo non si dè usare, si per la ragioni sopradette, come che è tanto commune à ogniuno, & non è moderno...

Some sing in two voices, and having invented an ascent or descent of four or five pitches, they make fugue by 6th and by 5th up and down by step. This is crude to hear because refined

Ex.4 Vicentino, Fin che m'amast'a mai arsi, bars 98–103, showing parallel major 3rds; from Madrigali a cinque voci . . .: Libro primo (1546)



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contrapuntal procedure consists of presenting as many consonances as possible on one note. But this technique of making fugue by 6th and 5th has no variety whatsoever, whether of consonances or steps, for singers always present the same consonances and the same steps to the audience. Therefore, this technique should be avoided, not only because of the reasons already given but also because it is so common. Besides, it is not modern.²⁶

Despite his dim view of this procedure, in the opening duo of his diatonic exemplar Vicentino employs just such a chain of 5–6 motions. Once again I suggest he intentionally utilizes a 'crude' device as a means of lending the exemplar an unsophisticated air.

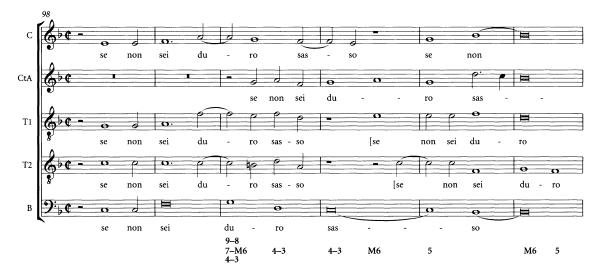
A further device Vicentino introduces frequently in the diatonic exemplar is the 4–3 suspension, which occurs eleven times in only 28 bars. In each case except the first and last, Vicentino crafts the melodic line containing the suspension in such a way that there would be little danger of a singer adding *musica ficta*, even though it is clearly his position that in purely diatonic music such additions should not be made under any circumstances. While Vicentino does not specifically tie the 4–3 to harshness in his treatise,²⁷ fellow Willaert pupil Zarlino certainly does in his famous description of how to accommodate music to the words, which also classifies the major 6th as harsh:

volendo esprimere li primi effetti [asprezza, durezza, crudeltà, amaritudine, & altre cose simili], quando vsarà di porre le parti della cantilena, che procedino per alcuni mouimenti senza il Semituono, come sono quelli del Tuono, & quelli del Ditono, facendo vdire la Sesta, ouero la Terzadecima maggiore, che per loro natura sono alquanto aspre, sopra la chorda più graue del concento; accompagnandole anco con la sincopa di Quarta, o con quella della Vndecima sopra tal parte, con mouimenti alquanto tardi, tra i quali si potrà vsare etiandio la sincopa della Settima.

When a composer wishes to express [harshness, hardness, cruelty, bitterness, and other similar things], he will do best to arrange the parts of the composition so that they proceed with movements that are without the semitone, such as those of the whole tone and major 3rd. He should allow the major 6th and major 13th, which by nature are somewhat harsh, to be heard above the lowest note of the *concento*, and should use the suspension of the 4th or the 11th above the lowest part, along with somewhat slow movements, among which the suspension of the 7th may also be used.²⁸

Another factor suggesting that the frequent 4–3 suspensions were meant to intensify the harshness of the exemplar is Vicentino's use of suspended 4ths in conjunction with harsh words in his first madrigal book. While clusters of 4–3 suspensions are not unusual in this collection, and while they are not always associated with texts of strong emotional content, at times the association is unmistakable.²⁹ A case in point appears in ex.5 at the text 'se non sei duro sasso' ('if thou art not hard rock'). The initial appearance of 'duro' garners a triple suspension, followed by additional 4–3 suspensions on the next

Ex.5 Vicentino, *Inudita pietà*, bars 98–103, showing suspensions and harmonic major 6ths at 'duro'; from *Madrigali a cinque voci . . .: Libro primo* (1546)



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two strong beats and long-held neighbouring major 6ths in the contralto and second tenor in bars 101–3.³⁰ In this example Vicentino uses each of the affective harmonic devices recommended for harshness by Zarlino in the passage just cited.

Another contrapuntal device intended to represent harshness in the diatonic exemplar is the resolution of the minor 6th to an octave in bars 15, 19, and 27. In book 2, chapter 19 ('On the minor 6th going to the octave, with examples') Vicentino refers to the effect of this motion in somewhat surprising terms, given his assertion in the preceding chapter that the minor 6th has a sad affect:

Molte uolte occorre nelle compositioni che la Sesta minore anderà all'ottaua, con il grado \diamond con il salto: \diamond quando andarà col grado ascendente di tono, farà effetto malenconico, \diamond stracco, \diamond duro: \diamond si farà nella compositione Diatonica...³¹

Quite often the minor 6th goes to the octave by step or by leap in compositions. When it moves by the ascending step of the whole tone, the minor 6th makes a gloomy, listless and harsh effect. This procedure occurs in diatonic composition. The words Maniates translates as 'gloomy', 'listless' and 'harsh' are 'malenconico', 'stracco' and 'duro', respectively. While the first two terms are in keeping with Vicentino's description of the minor 6th as sad, 'duro' is not, being much more appropriate for the major 6th, as we have seen. In this passage Vicentino tells us indirectly that cadential motions in the diatonic genus may sound like solecisms in relation to normal cadential grammar because one cannot add the accidental leading note without departing from the genus, thus contributing to its harshness. Vicentino does not indicate that the same harshness accrues in other motions of the minor 6th to the octave (by various combinations of steps and leaps), only that motion which emulates the stepwise expansion of the cadence. The importance Vicentino placed on this particular point can be gauged from the fact that he devoted a chapter to the subject.

To support my contention that Vicentino intentionally enhanced the harshness of the polyphonic diatonic exemplar, I offer two other examples of the



2 Vicentino's *Musica prisca caput* from *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (Rome, 1555; R/Kassel, 1959). Reprinted by permission.

DELLA PRATTICA MVSICALE.





pure diatonic genus written by principal players in the controversy surrounding the 1551 debate. The first is the other purely diatonic polyphonic music that Vicentino presented in his treatise, the first part of Musica prisca caput, a four-voice setting of a Latin ode written in honour of his patron, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este (illus.2). Musica prisca caput is written in all three genera successively, beginning with the pure diatonic, and then progressing through the chromatic to the enharmonic. The diatonic portion of Musica prisca caput is shown in ex.6. Despite being written with the same restrictions as Vicentino's diatonic exemplar, the resulting composition is quite different. Vicentino again begins with imitation of a motive that ascends by step, yet now he positions it so that minor 6ths are more frequent in the counterpoint, and he does not resolve the opening major 6th to a perfect 5th. The 4-3 suspension appears only three times, and only in a cadential or pre-cadential role. Perhaps most telling, there are no parallel major 3rds above the lowest-sounding voice; parallel minor 3rds are used only once. There is no leap of a diminished 5th, octave leaps appear only in

the bass, and the melodic lines are composed more gracefully. The *cantus mollis* signature is used rather than *cantus durus*. Of the two suspension cadences in the diatonic portion, the one concluding the diatonic section in bar 15 is placed so that it may use one of the natural semitones and thus sounds more pleasant than the ending of the diatonic exemplar. None of the minor 6ths use the harsh motion of stepwise expansion to an octave that happened three times in the diatonic exemplar. Finally, in his brief explanation of the piece, Vicentino does not refer to the great harshness of the diatonic genus; in fact, he makes no reference to harshness at all.

The other purely diatonic example mentioned above appears in Danckerts's *Sopra una differentia musicale sententiata nella detta capella*...(1551–60) (illus.3). The treatise survives in several manuscript versions, of which the second, the one believed to be begun in 1555 in response to the appearance of Vicentino's treatise, contains his polyphonic exemplar of the diatonic genus (ex.7). Danckerts presents the exemplar with only a caption identifying it as an example for four equal voices written with the

Ex.6 Vicentino, *Musica prisca caput*, bars 1–16, showing diatonic section and beginning of chromatic section; from *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (1555), ff. 69v–70v



intervals of the tetrachords of the diatonic genus alone ('Essempio della Harmonia a 4 voci pari per intervalli de i tetrachordi del solo genere DIATONICO'), yet his purpose is revealed by his earlier sarcastic discussion of Vicentino's 'ill-considered' law insisting that only the steps of the given genus could be used in a composition, and by the exemplar's contrasts to Vicentino's. First and most obviously, Danckerts employs a perpetual canon, a relatively sophisticated compositional technique, albeit inherently redundant. He takes care to notate each voice rather than providing a rubric by which to realize the canon. The melodic structure of his canon is a paragon of diatonic virtue, moving entirely by step and opening with clear emphasis on the Greek diatonic tetrachord (here E–F–G–A); the interval of a 4th between



MVSICO FT CAN NELLA DETTA Capella Nella quale D il Venerabile Don nicola Vicentine si obligate di è roure, Che niun Musico compositore Genere lia la musica Sa - che esso istesso compone - on una dichiaratione facilissima. Sopra i tre eneridella Musica DIATONICO CHRÓMATICO + ENARMÓNICO. Con alcuni essempi a quattro poci m ciascun aguesti tre generi, separatamente l'un dall'altro, et ancho mili, di tutti tre i generi milieme : et molte altre cose degne dintendere.

Oltre accio us sono 16. Cantilene a più voci in diversi idiony Dal medesimo Ghimmo nel solo genere Diatomico Composte.

3 Title-page and polyphonic exemplar of the diatonic genus from Ghiselin Danckerts, Sopra una differentia musicale sententiata nella detta capella (Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana)



Ex.7 Ghiselin Danckerts, Sopra una differentia musicale sententiata nella detta capella..., Rome Bibl. Vallicelliana Ms.r56, f. 401v

the boundary notes of a tetrachord occurs only with an intervening rest.³² Danckerts's exemplar is thus more 'diatonic' by his understanding of Vicentino's interpretation of the genus than is Vicentino's own exemplar, which includes skips of 4ths and larger intervals without an intervening rest. Danckerts suggests that Vicentino would banish such larger intervals from composition:

Hor se questa legge del detto Don Nicola sì mal considerata se havesse da osservare senza eccettione alcuna, in tutti tre i generi; e gli fosse domandato in qual genere di Musica havrebbono da intervenire gli intervalli incompositi del Diatessaron, Diapente, Hexachordon, Heptachordon, Diapason, e molti altri con i quali si procede continuamente ne i canti predetti; Non so se essa ci sapesse respondere, poi che così inconsideratamente gli ha sbanditi con questa sua legge da tutti tre i detti generi e non si trovando nella Musica Instromentale altri generi, che i tre sopradetti, questi tali intervalli secondo lui non si dovrebbono usare mai...³³

Now if one had to observe this ill-considered law of said Don Nicola without any exception in all three genera; and if it were

demanded of him in which genus of music the incomposite intervals of the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, octave and many others with which the aforementioned songs proceed continuously, should be used; I do not know if he could respond, because with his law he rashly has dispersed them from all three said genera, and not finding in instrumental music genera other than the three mentioned above, such intervals, according to him, should never be used . . .

Immediately before this passage Danckerts refers specifically to the written deposition Vicentino provided in the course of the debate, in which Vicentino states that the diatonic genus must never have steps other than the tone and semitone.³⁴ Yet, as noted above, in his treatise Vicentino does mention that the larger intervals can occur in any genus, and he clearly was not concerned that their use would contaminate the diatonic purity of his exemplar or the diatonic portion of *Musica prisca caput*. Danckerts's exemplar, on the other hand, adheres to the strictest interpretation of Vicentino's position.

Other differences between the two exemplars abound, some of which are quite subtle yet nonetheless significant. In conjunction with the opening E-F-G-A tetrachord, Danckerts uses the Phrygian mode, thus achieving a softer, minor-dominated harmony than the major sound of Vicentino's Mixolydian.³⁵ Danckerts's first duo features parallel 3rds between voices rather than the parallel 6ths of Vicentino's exemplar. Harmonic 6ths appear only after the third voice enters, and major 6ths receive no special emphasis. Although parallel major 3rds do appear above F and G in bars 3-4, each instance involves at least one semiminim, unlike the breves and minims of Vicentino's and Willaert's usage.³⁶ Furthermore, there is no apparent reason to assume that Danckerts in 1555 would be aware of nor subscribe to the Willaertian stance on the harshness of parallel major 3rds. Although he knew Vicentino's treatise, that work does not specifically identify parallel major 3rds as harsh (it is Zarlino who does so, yet not in print until 1558), and while Danckerts refers to the 'profonda et espertissima scientia del detto M. Adriano', the specific works by Willaert that he lists as exemplars include none from Musica nova (the locus classicus for affective use of parallel major 3rds).³⁷ Finally, Danckerts's use of the Phrygian mode also alleviates the clumsy solecistic cadences that Vicentino brandished so boldly, with

textbook Phrygian cadences sounding again and again in the circular canon.

Each of these three purely diatonic compositions therefore reflects the specific extramusical agenda prompting its creation. Although Vicentino operated under the same compositional restrictions in the diatonic portion of Musica prisca caput as he did in his exemplar of the diatonic genus, the result differs widely because his purpose was different. When writing music to honour his patron, he desires to please, not to offend, and strives to prove his prowess at composing in all three genera and to demonstrate that he alone truly has adapted ancient music to modern practice. In the polyphonic exemplar of the diatonic genus, conversely, he seeks to show how uncouth and unlike current practice the pure diatonic genus would be in his view. To bolster his argument he enhances the exemplar's natural harshness by inserting contrapuntal and harmonic devices he associates with harshness, most of which he learned from his teacher Willaert. By so doing, he seeks to rebut Lusitano's claim that the music of their day was diatonic and to provide further proof that his own stance in the debate is correct, underscoring his point through counterpoint. Danckerts, on the other hand, seeks to show how restrictive Vicentino's 'ill-considered law' as originally argued in the debate would be, and thereby allows each voice to move only by intervals contained within the tetrachord of the given genus or connecting two such tetrachords (and overlooking or ignoring the fact that Vicentino does not apply this law strictly in L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica). Yet he also structures his exemplar so that it resembles contemporary practice in order to justify his ruling in favour of Lusitano's claim that contemporary practice is diatonic, and employs canon in order to display his own technical prowess. Neither Vicentino's nor Danckerts's diatonic exemplar is great music, and neither truly reflects contemporary practice. Ultimately they prove that neither side in the debate could be entirely correct, because the pitch system of contemporary practice was not based on the Greek genera, yet as texts richly textured by subtext, they provide fascinating insight into that contemporary practice.

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1 Later a third judge, Giulio da Reggio, about whom very little is known, was added in case a tie needed to be broken.

2 Vincenzo Lusitano, Introduttione facilissima et novissima di canto fermo, figurato, contraponto semplice et in concerto (Venice, 1553; R/Lucca, 1989).

3 Nicola Vicentino, L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica (Rome: 1555; R/Kassel, 1959); trans. M. R. Maniates as Ancient music adapted to modern practice (New Haven, 1996). Citations will be in the format book.chapter, folio (page number(s) of Maniates's translation). The English translations have been emended slightly in some cases for consistency with the present article.

4 Three variants of the treatise appear in Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Ms.R56 (hereafter Ms.R56); all references are to this manuscript. For details on the treatise, its versions, and its contents, see J. de Bruijn, 'Ghisilinus Danckerts, kapelaan-zanger van de Pauselijke kapel van 1538 tot 1565. —Zijn leven, werken en onuitgegeven tractaat', Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, xv (1946), pp.217-52; xvii (1949), pp.128-57; K. Berger, Theories of chromatic and enharmonic music in late 16th century Italy (Ann Arbor, 1980), pp.5–6, 17, 41; P. A. L. Boncella, 'Denying ancient music's power: Ghiselin Danckerts' essays in the "Generi inusitati" ', *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor* Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis, xxxviii (1988), pp.59-80; and S. Campagnolo,

"Guastatori e stroppiatori della divina scientia della musica": Ghiselin Danckerts ed i compositori della "nuova maniera", *Musicam in subtilitate* scrutando: contributi alla storia della teoria musicale, ed. M. T. Rosa-Barezzani, D. Sabaino and R. Tibaldi (Lucca, 1994), pp.193–242. 5 See primarily H. Kaufmann, The life and works of Nicola Vicentino (American Institute of Musicology, 1966); M. A. Alves Barbosa, Vicentius Lusitanus: Ein Portugiesischer Komponist und Musiktheoretiker des 16. Jahrhunderts (Lisbon, 1977); Berger, Theories of chromatic and enharmonic music; A. E. Moyer, Musica scientia: musical scholarship in the Italian Renaissance (Ithaca, 1992); and particularly the introduction to Vicentino, Ancient music adapted to modern practice, trans. Maniates; further bibliography in these sources. See also G. Gialdroni, introduction to Vincenzo Lusitano, Introduttione facilissima.

6 Vicentino's tetrachords are based on a different tuning system from those transmitted by Boethius, for which he gives the following explanation (L'antica musica, 1.6, ff.13v-14r [45]): 'The difference between our practice and the one discussed by Boethius is this: Ancient musicians used the genera individually in their practice and consequently the minor semitone with two sesquioctaval whole tones was satisfactory for the genera. But in our times, both the sound of practical music and the tuning of instruments are unlike those of ancient musicians, for we use the genera and the species together and with more consonances than they had—namely, 3rds and 6ths. To be able to have more consonances as well as to make many steps, we do not find it inconvenient to blunt a 5th and enlarge a 4th, as I said. . . . Practitioners of this tuning describe such 5ths and 4ths as tempered. For this reason, the music we practise is called tempered music mixed with the larger parts of the three genera and some chromatic species.' ('la differentia della nostra prattica da quella che scriue Boetio è questa; che li Musici antichi usauano nella sua

prattica i Generi appartati uno da l'altro, & à quelli ueniua il semitono minore, con i due toni sesquiottaui: che à nostri tempi la prattica Musicale si suona, et s'accordano li stormenti d'altra maniera, che non faceuano gl'antichi Musici: perche noi usiamo li Generi & le spetie d'essi insieme, con consonanze di più di loro, cioè le Terze & le Seste, & per poter hauere molte consonanze, come per pratticare molti gradi, Non habbiamo per inconueniente spontar una quinta, & allungare una quarta, come ho già detto . . . li prattici di tal accordo hanno detto à quelle quinte et quarte participate. Adunque la Musica, che noi pratticamo, si domanderà Musica participata, & mista delle parti più lunghe delli tre generi, & di alcune spetie Cromatiche[.]') Vicentino's diatonic genus includes a 9/8 tone, a 10/9 tone, and a major semitone, while that of Boethius uses two 9/8 tones and a minor semitone.

7 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 3.14, f.48*r* (151).

8 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 3.25, f.52*r* (163–4).

9 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 3.26, f.52*r* (164–5).

10 Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *De institutione musica*, ed. G. Friedlein (Frankfurt, 1966), pp.212–13. As Calvin Bower notes in his translation of Boethius's *De institutione musica*, the Latin terms *mollis* and *durus* in ancient theory refer generally to music that is soft, tender and effeminate or firm, austere and masculine, respectively, or more specifically to intervals that are small and compact versus those that are broader and more expansive; *Fundamentals of music* (New Haven, 1989), p.3, n.7.

11 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 1.6, f.14*r* (46). In book 3, chap.36, he presents

the traditional explanation of the difference between diatonic and chromatic based on the size of the intervals: 'The chromatic 4th has all its steps placed differently and contrary to the sound of the diatonic steps. For the diatonic steps produce a harsh sound, whereas the chromatic restore a gentle sound to the ear. The latter are called different on account of the differences between the juxtaposed big and small steps, in keeping with their genera.' ('Hora la quarta Cromatica haurà tutti i suoi gradi posti differenti, & contrarij di suono da i Diatonici, perche i Diatonici fanno un udir aspro, & i gradi Cromatici rendeno à gl'orecchi il suono soaue, & si domandano differenti per le differenze, che sono fra i gradi corti, & lungi contra posti uno al' altro de i lor generi'); L'antica musica, 3.36, f.59r (186). Here Vicentino uses the word 'aspro' rather than 'duro', yet without particular emphasis on harshness beyond that found in Boethius.

12 When speaking of harmonic intervals, Vicentino calls the diminished 5th a species of the tritone, and describes the nature of the tritone as 'aspra', indicating that it is used only when the words being set call for it; L'antica musica, 2.8–9, f.31v (100–101). However, the melodic diminished 5th he describes as 'molle' in ascent and both 'incitato' and 'molle' in descent: 1.37, f.24r (78). In addition to his general goal of rendering the example harsh, the specific point he tries to make by including the diminished 5th leap in bar 6, I believe, is that the accidentals normally used in contemporary practice to remedy such problems would be sorely missed in truly diatonic music (thus supporting his position that contemporary practice is not diatonic).

13 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 3.2, f.43*r* (137).

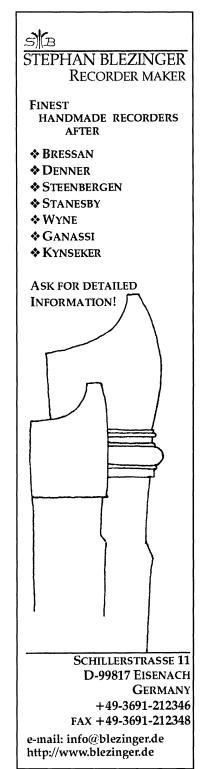
14 Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice, 1558; R/New York, 1965): book 3, trans. G. Marco and C. Palisca as *The art of counterpoint* (New Haven, 1968); book 4, trans. V. Cohen as *On the modes* (New Haven, 1983).

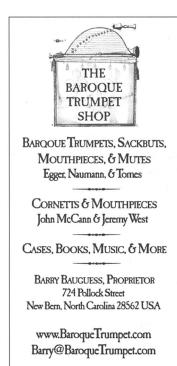
15 See, among others, M. Feldman, *City culture and the madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, 1995); T. R. McKinney, 'Hearing in the sixth sense', *Musical quarterly*, lxxxii (1998), pp.517–36; and my forthcoming study 'Adrian Willaert and the theory of interval affect'.

16 His opinion may have changed by the time of his *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* of 1581. See C. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance musical thought* (New Haven, 1985), pp.357, 365.

17 The first appearance of the rule that I have been able to track down occurs in Jerome Cardan's De musica of c.1546, which explicitly attributes the guideline to 'Adrianus'; trans. C. Miller in Writings on music, Musicological Studies and Documents, xxxii (American Institute of Musicology, 1973), 3.16, p.42. See also K. Berger, Musica ficta: theories of accidental inflections in vocal polyphony from Marchetto da Padova to Gioseffo Zarlino (Cambridge, 1987), p.112. The rule is also mentioned in Juan Bermudo's Declaracion de instrumentos musicales (Osuna, 1555; R/Kassel, 1957), published in the same year as Vicentino's treatise. Bermudo's source for the rule is uncertain at this time, yet his treatise reveals him to be very widely read.

18 Zarlino, Le istitutioni harmoniche, 3.29, p.177 (62). Zarlino (3.78, p.287 (281)), not having the same agenda as Vicentino, attributes the harshness of the diatonic genus to the false relations inherent in it: 'Through the aid of chromatic steps we may achieve good, sonorous harmonies and escape poor relationships in the diatonic, such as the tritone, semidiapente, and similar intervals that result from simultaneous singing, as I have shown already. Without the chromatic steps, many harsh harmonies and awkward lines would be heard. Although the poor relationships could be avoided with only the diatonic steps, it would be rather more difficult to do so, particularly while seeking, as one should, to vary the harmony. It follows that the use of the steps mentioned will render the modes sweeter and smoother.' ('percioche con l'aiuto di vna chorda chromatica potemo peruenire all'vso delle buone, & sonore harmonie, & schiuare nel genere Diatonico alcune discommode relationi di Tritoni,





Semidiapenti, & di altri simili interualli, che fanno le parti cantando insieme; come altroue hò mostrato; senza l'aiuto della quale, molte volte si potrebbe vdire non solamente assai durezze; ma anco alcune disconze modulationi. Et quantunque tutti questi inconuenienti si potessero schiuare, vsando solamente le chorde diatoniche; tutta uia ciò si farebbe alquanto più difficilmente; massimamente volendo (come porta il douere) cercare di variar l'harmonia; La onde auiene, che per l'vso di tal chorda li Modi si fanno più dolci, & più soaui.')

19 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 1.22, f.20*r*(66).

20 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 3.44, f. 62ν (198). Vicentino makes this statement in the context of explaining that many leaps appear in his chromatic examples in order to avoid the whole tone (a diatonic interval).

21 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 2.20, f.35v (115); 4.21, f.82r (255).

22 Del unico Adrian Willaerth discipulo: Don Nicola Vicentino:



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23 The phrase 'to the subject of the words or to other ideas' ('al suggietto delle parole, ouero ad altre fantasie') occurs in several variants and contexts in Vicentino's treatise; for a list of citations, see Vicentino, Ancient music adapted to modern practice, trans. Maniates, p.86, n.2. Maniates indicates that by 'to other ideas' Vicentino means 'abstract musical subjects or themes-that is, to instrumental ideas not tied to words.' Vicentino's desire to express harshness in his diatonic exemplar provides an excellent illustration of another sort of 'other idea'.

24 T. R. McKinney, 'Rhetorical functions of harmony and counterpoint in the theory and practice of Nicola Vicentino', *Théorie et analyse musicales: 1450–1650*, ed. A.-E. Ceulemans and B. J. Blackburn (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2001), pp.293–322. 25 See Vicentino, Ancient music adapted to modern practice, trans. Maniates, pp.258–63, where Maniates places Lusitano's examples within Vicentino's text and thereby renders the source of Vicentino's comments unmistakable. Vicentino does not acknowledge Lusitano at this point, though he does mention the treatise in his discussion of the debate and its aftermath.

26 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 4.23, f.83*r*, incorrectly marked 80 (258).

27 Vicentino indicates that the parallel 4ths between the upper voices in fauxbourdon passages should not be used except with harsh words or an otherwise provocative mode of speech, yet for the sake of variety rather than any harshness attributed to the 4th.

28 Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche*, 4.32, p.339 (95). The translation is drawn from Cohen with slight emendations to maintain consistency in terminology in the present context.

29 A similar observation about Vicentino's use of dissonance is made in Kaufmann, *Life and works*, p.66.

30 This example is discussed further in McKinney, 'Rhetorical functions'.

31 Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 2.19, f.35*v* (113).

32 Danckerts's polyphonic exemplars of the individual genera each begin with a melodic statement of the appropriate tetrachord in a single voice, which then serves as a headmotive for imitation (including inversion in some instances); Ms.R56, ff.401v-402v.

33 Danckerts, Ms.R56, f.398r. Vicentino's and Lusitano's depositions of their respective positions written following the initial adjudicated dispute for the absent Danckerts, and subsequently reproduced in both Vicentino's and Danckerts's treatises (with some discrepancy in wording), do not specifically mention intervals larger than the 3rds; Vicentino's deposition merely states that steps other than the tone and semitones should not appear in the diatonic genus, and the presence of minor or major 3rds indicates the presence of the chromatic or enharmonic genus, respectively, while Lusitano's disputes

this position. Danckerts, after Lusitano, maintained that the chromatic or enharmonic genera could not be said to be present without the appearance of the major semitone or diesis, respectively, and that without these characteristic intervals being present, major and minor 3rds should be understood as belonging to the diatonic genus; see, for example, Ms.R56, f.396r. For translations of the documents relating to the debate, see Vicentino, L'antica musica, 4.43, and Vicentino, Ancient music adapted to modern practice, trans. Maniates, introduction, pp.xvii-xxii, and appendix 4, pp.448–50, containing a document that survives in Danckerts's treatise only (Ms.R56, f.388*r*-389*r*).

34 Danckerts, Ms.R56, f.398*r*. Three other versions of this statement appear in Ms.R56 on ff.366*v*, 420*v*, 584*r*, all of which retain the charge that Vicentino would not allow intervals other than those formed between adjacent tones within a tetrachord.

35 Zarlino and Vicentino, under the influence of their teacher Willaert, associated minor harmony with sadness or sweetness and major harmony with happiness or harshness, and each classified at least some of the modes as either cheerful or sad, based on the quality of the 3rd above the final. See Vicentino, *L'antica musica*, 3.19–20 and 4.21, and Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche*, 3.10 and 4.32.

36 It is evident from the examples in Zarlino's treatise that the rule 'avoid parallel major 3rds' does not apply to passages in semiminims; see, for example, *On the modes*, p.57, bar 29 of ex.13.

37 Danckerts, Ms.R56, f.376r. Danckerts cites Messa di Menta tota (thought to be Willaert's earliest Mass), four other sacred works (Pater noster, probably the famous four-voice setting, Enixa est puerpera, O salutaris hostia and Beata viscera), and three chansons (Petite camusette, Faulte d'argent and Sonnez mi don), and refers to 'infinite altre opere Musicali della simile maniera da lui in diversi idiomi' (infinite other musical works of similar manner by him in diverse languages). De Bruijn believed that Danckerts did not know *Musica nova* during the time the various versions of his treatise were written ('Ghisilinus Danckerts', xvii, p.146).

