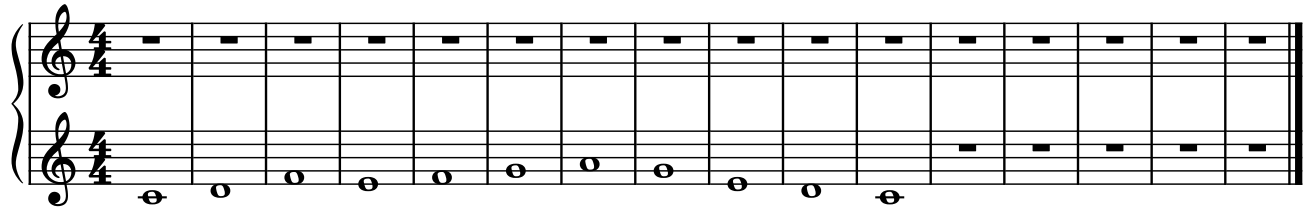


Composing a Cantus Firmus



The following characteristics are typical of all well formed cantus firmi:
source:

1. length of about 8–16 notes
2. arhythmic (all **whole notes**; no long or short notes)
3. begin and end on **do (I)**
4. **approach final tonic by step** (usually **re-do**, sometimes **ti-do**)
5. all note-to-note progressions are melodic consonances
6. **range** (interval between lowest and highest notes) of **no more than a tenth**,
usually less than an octave
7. **a single climax** (high point) that appears only once in the melody
8. clear logical connection and smooth shape from beginning to climax to ending
9. **mostly stepwise motion**, but with **some leaps (mostly small leaps)**
10. **no repetition of “motives”** or “licks”
11. any **large leaps (fourth or larger)** are **followed by step** in **opposite direction**
12. **no more than two leaps in a row**; **no** consecutive leaps **in the same direction**
(Fux’s F-major cantus is an exception, where the back-to-back descending leaps outline a consonant triad.)
13. the leading tone progresses to the tonic
14. **in minor**, the **leading tone** only appears in the penultimate (voorlaatste) bar; the raised **submediant (VI)** is only used **when progressing to** that leading tone

source:

Dr. Guy Shkolnik Composer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gqL_WDeiI0

Here are of rules for writing the initial melody (the Cantus Firmus):

- 1) Diatonic only - no chromatic notes, whole tones only (max 15 note long)
- 2) Stepwise motion with a **maximum of 4 skips**.
- 3) After a skip of 4th or larger - stepwise compensation in the opposite direction
- 4) Begin and end on the tonic note
- 5) The **approach to the final tone is in stepwise motion** (i.e., the note D before the final C note)
- 6) One climax note played only once.
- 7) **No immediate repetition** (F-F, E-E, etc.)
- 8) **No recurrences of motifs** (E-D-C, F-E-D, G-F-E)