# Singing Ut-Re-Mi with Palestrina: How Solmization Shapes Counterpoint

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This file includes the abstract, keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, "Singing Ut-Re-Mi with Palestrina: How Solmization Shapes Counterpoint" by Megan Kaes Long. This video-essay may be found at https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv126long

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## Abstract for
## Singing Ut-Re-Mi with Palestrina: How Solmization Shapes Counterpoint

### by Megan Kaes Long, *SMT-V* 12.6

In the sixteenth century, young musicians were trained to sight-read and think about music in much the same way that music students learn today: using *solmization*, the precursor to our modern *do–re–mi* system. The version of solmization that was developed in the Middle Ages and Renaissance differed in some key ways from modern solmization, but had many of the same advantages for developing musicians: it taught them how to read staff notation, how to sing intervals correctly, and how to understand the relationship of the notes they were singing to some overarching tonal organization. In contemporary moveable-do solmization—the version that most Anglophone musicians know—solmization syllables teach musicians how each note in the scale relates back to the tonic of a major or minor key. In the Renaissance, solmization taught musicians a different set of relationships. This video-essay introduces viewers to Renaissance solmization and uses examples from Palestrina's best-known works to explore the kinds of contrapuntal and tonal relationships that Renaissance solmization made its practitioners attentive to. It shows how hexachordal solmization helps us understand the tonal implications of Palestrina's motivic transpositions, and trains us to listen for softening (moving flatter) and hardening (moving sharper) in sixteenth-century points of imitation.

### Short Keyword List

hexachord, solmization, Guido of Arezzo, Palestrina, modality, tonality, notation

### Extensive Keyword List

hexachord, solmization, solfège, Guido of Arezzo, Palestrina, modality, tonality, diatonicism, musica ficta, Missa Papae Marcelli, Canticum canticorum, history of music theory, music pedagogy, Ut queant laxis

## About the Author

Megan Kaes Long is Associate Professor of Music Theory at Oberlin Conservatory. She received her Ph.D. from Yale University. Her research focuses on sixteenth-century vocal music and the discursive context that surrounds it. In her work, she combines music analysis, close reading of sixteenth-century writing about music, and corpus-based research methods to study the history of pitch and pitch structures, broadly construed. Her articles have appeared in *Music Theory Spectrum,* the *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Online*, and *Open Access Musicology*, and her research has been supported by grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Her book, *Hearing Homophony: Tonal Expectation at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century* (2020, Oxford University Press) won the Society for Music Theory's Wallace Berry Award in 2021.

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