

Josquin des Prez: Beethoven (?) of the Renaissance



Objectives

- Josquin as free agent
- motets in the Renaissance
 - Ave Maria
- new Mass type!
 - Missa pange lingua
- *Mille regretz*
 - un-fixed form

Edward Lowinsky on Renaissance music (1954):

- One can view the evolution of vocal music in the Renaissance as one great process of emancipation: emancipation from the Gregorian chant, from the *cantus firmus*, from the technique of successive composition, from pre-existing patterns of form and rhythm.”
(1954)

Musician as Free Agent

- benefices
- Gian de Artiganova, W/T 26

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“[Heinrich Isaac] seemed to me far more suitable to serve Your Highness than Josquin, since he is more sociable with his colleagues and composes new things more quickly. It is true that Josquin is the better composer, but he writes only when he pleases, not when he is requested to, and has demanded 200 ducats in salary, while Isaac is content with 120. Your Highness can now choose between them at pleasure.”

Musician as Free Agent

- benefices
- Gian de Artiganova, W/T 26
 - role of the agent
 - “only composes when he pleases”

Josquin style

- natural text setting
 - proper accentuation
- text expression
- variety
- simultaneous vs. sequential composition

text expression example: Guillaume
Du Fay, *Ave regina caelorum*, vv. 5-6

- Rejoice glorious one,
beautiful beyond measure

*(Gaude gloriosa super omnes
speciosa.)*

- Have mercy on thy
supplicant Du Fay.

(Miserere supplicant Du Fay.)

Josquin style

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Ave Maria . . . virgo serena, NAWM 44

- sacred motet
- form generated from text
- variety of textures
- points of imitation
- frequent cadences
 - emphasizing C
- homorhythm



Missa pange lingua, NAWM 45

- Feast of Corpus Christi
- Mass type: paraphrase Mass
- borrowed material: Hymn: *Pange lingua*
- Kyrie
 - hymn paraphrased in all voices
 - voices treated equally
 - drive to the cadence
- Credo
 - homorhythm for “Incarnatus est”
 - emphasizes the purpose of the feast

Hymn: Pange lingua, v. 1

- *Pange lingua gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
Quem in mundi pretium
Fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit gentium.*
- Sing, tongue, of the glorious
body's mystery
and of the precious blood,
ransom of the world, that the
fruit of the generous womb,
the king of all peoples,
poured forth.

Chanson: *Mille regretz*, NAWM 43

- no fixed form
 - no refrain structure
- cadences w/3rds
- dramatization of text
- Cristóbal de Morales, *Missa mille regrets*