A-R Online Music Anthology

www.armusicanthology.com

Workbook
The Renaissance, Part 1: The Roots of Renaissance Music in the Fifteenth Century

At Oklahoma State University, Professor Scott teaches undergraduate music history courses, Introduction to Research in Music, and the graduate music history seminars. He received the Ph.D. in historical musicology from Florida State University and the M.M. in musicology from the University of Alabama.

by Allen Scott
Oklahoma State University

Assigned Readings
    Core Survey
    Analytical Commentaries
    Composer Biographies

Summary List
    Genres to Understand
    Musical Terms to Understand
    Names and Works to Remember
    Main Concepts

Assigned Scores and Recordings

Exercises

Workbook
The Renaissance, Part 1:
The Roots of Renaissance Music in the Fifteenth Century
Allen Scott

Assigned Readings
Core Survey
- Stephanie P. Schlagel, "An Introduction to the Renaissance"
  - Focus on discussions of fifteenth-century characteristics
- Allen Scott, "Renaissance Genres and Forms"
  - Focus on the following sections:
    - "Introduction"
    - "Sacred Music"

Analytical Perspectives
- Seth Coluzzi, "Music Theory of the Renaissance"
  - Focus on the following sections:
    - "Introduction"
    - "Hexachords and Solmization"
    - "The Contrapuntal Cadence"
    - "Mode"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *Quam pulchra es*"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *De plus en plus*"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *Christe redemptor omnium*"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *Se la face ay pale*"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *Missa Se la face ay pale*"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *Missa prolationum: Kyrie*"
- Emily Laurance, et al, "Commentary on *Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen*"

Composer Biographies
- Karen M. Cook, "John Dunstaple"

Summary List

Genres to understand

- Hymn
- Cantilena
- Motet
- Mass

- Cantus firmus/Tenor Mass
- Chanson
- Lied

Musical terms to understand

- Polyphonic texture
- Homorhythmic texture/Familiar style
- Contenance angloise
- Faburden
- Fauxbourdon

- Alternatim performance
- Cantus firmus
- Canon
- Mensuration canon

Names and works to remember

- John Dunstaple
  - *Quam pulchra es*
- Gilles de Bins [Binchois]
  - *De plus en plus*
- Guillaume Du Fay
  - *Nuper rosarum flores*
  - *Se la face ay pale*
  - *Missa Se la face ay pale*

- Johannes Ockeghem
  - *Missa prolationum*
- Henricus Isaac
  - *Quis dabit capiti meo aquam*
  - *Choralis constantinus*
  - *Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen*

Main Concepts

- You will understand how many fifteenth-century works gradually lost their medieval characteristics and adopted Renaissance characteristics. You will be able to identify and describe the medieval and Renaissance characteristics in works that exhibit both.
- You will understand how mathematical structures, such as isorhythm and mensuration canons, gave way to using the text as the organizing principle in musical compositions.
- You will be able to identify and describe fifteenth-century examples of phrase-by-phrase musical structure based on the phrase structure of the text.
- You will understand how the concept of harmony changed from the medieval preference for perfect consonances (perfect fourths, fifths, and octaves) to the Renaissance taste for imperfect consonances (thirds and sixths).
- You will understand the concept of paraphrase.

Assigned Scores and Recordings

Chansons and Lieder
- Gilles de Bins [Binchois], *De plus en plus*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)
- Guillaume Du Fay, *Se la face ay pale*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)
- Henricus Isaac, *Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)

Mass settings
- Guillaume Du Fay, *Missa se la face ay pale*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)
- Johannes Ockeghem, *Missa prolationum*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)

Motets
- John Dunstable, *Quam pulchra es* (motet/cantilena)
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)
- Henricus Isaac, *Quis dabit capiti meo aquam*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)
- Guillaume Du Fay, *Nuper rosarum flores*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#)

Hymns
- Guillaume Du Fay, *Christe redemptor omnium*
  o [Score](#)
  o [Recording](#) [The hymn begins at 00:44]

Exercises (click here for key)

1. Examine Dunstable's "Quam pulchra es." Why does it have the "contenance angloise"?
2. Examine Dufay's "Nuper rosarum flores." What are the medieval characteristics? What are the Renaissance characteristics? Make a two-column chart listing the medieval characteristics in the left column and the Renaissance characteristics in the right column.
3. Examine Dufay's "Se la face ay pale" and "Missa Se la face ay pale" excerpts. That it is a cantus firmus mass is obvious. However, Dufay also used a mathematical technique involving the cantus firmus in the mass. What is it?
4. Examine Dufay's setting of "Christe redemptor omnium." Dufay gave the Gregorian chant melody rhythm and decorated it with passing tones, short runs, and other extra notes. This technique is called paraphrase. Print a copy of the hymn and place an "x" over the notes of the paraphrased melody that are in the original chant melody. Describe the various techniques that Dufay used to alter the chant: note prominent rhythmic alterations, leaps that are filled in with short scales, and upper and lower neighbors.
5. As you have seen, Ockeghem's "Missa Prolationum" is a double mensuration canon. In other words, it is based on mathematical principles common to medieval music. Why, then, does it sound more Renaissance than medieval in style?
6. In "Renaissance Genres and Forms," read the second full paragraph on page 3 (beginning with "Here is a brief explanation …") on the structure of motets based on the grammatical structure of the text. Also read the section on texture. Examine the *prima pars* of Isaac's motet "Quis dabit capiti meo aquam." Note the text phrases; they are separated by punctuation marks such as commas or periods. How does the musical structure align with the grammatical structure of the text?

Key to Exercises

1. **Examine Dunstable's *Quam pulchra es*. Why does it have the "contenance angloise"?**

   The most prominent feature of *Quam pulchra* es is the extensive use of harmonic thirds and sixths (imperfect consonances). For example, in m. 1 the first two beats are in harmonic octaves, but the top voice's move to the E creates an imperfect consonance that almost immediately indicates that more imperfect consonances are to come. Some text phrases, such as "et ubera" in mm. 15–17 and "ubera mea" in mm. 51–2, are set with what today we would call a series of triads. In some cases, individual voices outline triads, such as the middle voice in mm. 9–10. And some passages are written in faburden style, as in m. 8 and the first beat of m. 9.

2. **Examine Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*. What are the medieval characteristics? What are the Renaissance characteristics? Make a two-column chart listing some medieval characteristics in the left column and some Renaissance characteristics in the right column.**

Medieval Characteristics	Renaissance Characteristics
• Isorhythm • Slow moving tenors and faster moving motetus and triplum • Rhythmic independence of the motetus and triplum • Many phrases begin and end with perfect intervals. • Landini cadences • Long melismas	• The fourth voice is the contratenor (tenor II), not the highest voice (quadruplum). • Imperfect consonances are used within phrases, especially in the sections with the two tenors. • The final sonority begins with a minor third in the tenor II part before it leaps to the fifth. • Homorhythm for textual emphasis (mm. 46–8)

3. **Examine Dufay's *Se la face ay pale* and *Missa Se la face ay pale*: Gloria excerpts. That it is a cantus firmus mass is obvious. However, Dufay also used a mathematical technique involving the cantus firmus in the mass. What is it?**

   In the Gloria there are three statements of the cantus firmus: three times its original length in measures 19–118 ("Gloria"), twice its original length in measures 137–236 ("Qui tollis"), and at its original length in mm. 243–76 ("Cum sancto spiritu").

4. **Examine Du Fay's setting of *Christe redemptor omnium*. Du Fay gave the Gregorian chant melody rhythm and decorated it with passing tones, short runs, and other extra notes. This technique is called paraphrase. Print a copy of the hymn and place an "x" over the notes of the paraphrased melody that are in the original chant**

melody. Describe the various techniques that Dufay used to alter the chant: note prominent rhythmic alterations, cadences decorated with short melismas, and upper and lower neighbors.

- Rhythmic alterations: mm. 5, 10, 11, 17, 19, 22, 23
- Melismas: mm. 5, 10-11, 22-23
- Neighbors: mm. 2, 7, 9, 14, 19

5. **As you have seen, Ockeghem's *Missa prolationum* is a double mensuration canon. In other words, it is based on mathematical principles common to medieval music. Why, then, does it sound more Renaissance than medieval in style?**

The melodies are composed using intervals that either outline what we today call triads or that emphasize pitches located a third apart. When they are performed polyphonically according to the mensuration signs, the overall sound is consonant even though the melodies are moving at different speeds with different rhythms. For example, in the beginning of the first Kyrie, the first four notes in the upper two voices are F-C-F-A and the first four notes of the lower two parts are F-A-F-C. Even though each part has a different rhythm, the total sonority of the first few measures sounds like today's F-major triad.

6. **In "Renaissance Genres and Forms," read the second full paragraph on page 3 (beginning with "Here is a brief explanation . . .") on the structure of motets based on the grammatical structure of the text. Also read the section on texture. Examine the *prima pars* of Isaac's motet *Quis dabit capiti meo aquam*. Note the text phrases; they are separated by punctuation marks such as commas or periods. How does the musical structure align with the grammatical structure of the text?**

The first line of the text ("Who will give water to my head?") is one complete thought. Isaac set it simply, with no textual repetition. The texture is homorhythmic until "meo aquam," when it briefly becomes polyphonic. The method of text setting is syllabic until the first syllable of "aquam." All voices then cadence together under a fermata. The next sentence of the text contains three phrases separated by commas ("Who will fill the fount of tears for my eyes, that I may weep by night, that I may weep by day?"). Musically, the sentence begins with the lower three voices singing homorhythmically for the first two measures. In measure three, the soprano voice enters and all of the voices begin to sing independently, including cadencing at different times. However, in every voice part, a rest follows a comma in the text. At the end of the sentence, all voices cadence, but notice that there is no third in the chord. This is text depiction or text painting illustrating that the poet is empty, with no more tears left to shed. A double bar separates the second and third sentences. The third sentence contains three phrases separated by commas ("Thus the widowed turtle dove, thus the dying swan, thus the nightingale mourns"). All but the last word of each phrase is set homorhythmically, with the voices united in grief. The musical setting of the final text phrase ("Alas, wretched, o grief!") has a staggered entry; the bass and tenor voices begin in m. 52, the alto voice begins in m. 53, and the soprano

voice begins in the pickup to m. 56. Part one concludes with all of the voices cadencing and repeating "dolor!" in the low part of their vocal ranges.