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An Introduction to Renaissance Music

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Renaissance Music
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Introduction

Music historians generally place the beginning of the Renaissance around 1400, well after the onset of the Renaissance in art and literature. Musical, philosophical, and cultural changes distinguish this new era in music from the preceding centuries. Most apparent to modern ears is a change in harmonic language, a result of new ideas towards tuning intervals. In the Middle Ages, intervals were tuned according to the Pythagorean ratios: 2:1 (octave), 3:2 (fifth), 4:3 (fourth). These were considered the only acceptable consonances. Minor thirds (32:27), major thirds (81:64), minor sixths (128:81), and major sixths (27:16) were dissonant (notice the large difference between the two numbers of each ratio) and had to resolve to fourths, fifths, and octaves. Around 1300, English theorist Walter Odington (fl. 1298–1316) offered an alternative to these mathematically derived ratios, advocating an empirical approach of slightly adjusting or "tempering" them. He proposed tweaking the ratio of a major third, 81:64, to 80:64 or 5:4, bringing that interval into consonance, and did the same with the others.[1]

These intervals could now be the basis of vertical sonorities, the foundation of triadic harmony. Odington's solution, beyond merely pragmatic, relied on human experience and empiricism—a stance that would characterize Renaissance thought—over the mathematical rigor typical of medieval scholasticism. This new approach to tuning infused English music of the 1300s with sweet-sounding thirds and sixths, and this way of writing eventually spread to the continent when English forces occupied French territory during the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453).

At the same time, new ideas were migrating from the south, specifically Italy, where the Humanist movement was in full swing. What began as a revival of ancient Latin in the style of Cicero and Quintilian, among others, expanded to become a wholesale revival of ancient Greek and Roman culture with a new emphasis on understanding the world based on human observation and experience. But whereas Renaissance artists, architects, and writers could directly examine ancient sculptures, buildings, and poetry, musicians had only the theoretical and philosophical writings about music to consult. Based on this indirect knowledge, Renaissance

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[1] The other ratios were modified as follows:

Minor Third: 32:27 x 2= 64:56→ 66:55 (6:5)
Minor Sixth: 128:81 → 128:80 (8:5)
Major Sixth: 27:16 →27:15 (9:5)

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musicians endeavored to reconstruct what they understood ancient Greek music to sound like. Among the qualities of Greek music that they sought to emulate were music's perceived power to incite the emotions and evoke a response from the listener and a chromatic musical language akin to the ancient Greek chromatic tetrachord.[2]

Genres of music well established in the Middle Ages, notably French *formes fixes* chansons and isorhythmic Latin motets, remained current in the fifteenth century, but changes were underway. The new genre of the Mass Ordinary cycle became the primary vehicle for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century composers to display their compositional prowess, and a new kind of motet emerged. In all genres, composers innovated ways of writing that no longer required a pre-composed tenor as the foundation, and all the voices became more and more equal in rhythmic and melodic content. Rich imitative counterpoint, in which a melodic motive systematically moves from voice to voice, and crystalline homophony with speech-like declamatory rhythms emerged as the most common textures; some kinds of compositions consisted entirely of counterpoint or homophony, while others juxtaposed the two textures. The number of voices in a composition also grew: the three-voice texture common in the Middle Ages continued well into the fifteenth century, particularly in the genre of the chanson, but by the end of the century, four voices was the norm. During the sixteenth century, works for five and six voices were as common as ones for four, and stunning sacred works for eight or even twelve voices were not unusual.

Upheavals in society also transformed the musical world, especially in the sixteenth century. With the advent of the printing press, perhaps the most significant invention in history until the personal computer, came enormous shifts in musical culture. In 1501, pioneer music printer Ottaviano Petrucci issued the *Odhecaton*, the first printed collection of polyphonic music. Petrucci's method, multiple impression printing, produced visually stunning results but required extreme precision and was thus time consuming and expensive. Music printers quickly developed single-impression printing, a faster, easier, cheaper method, and with that came a growth in music literacy among the middle class. New genres of secular songs in regional languages of German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and English, in addition to French songs in a new lighter style, increased the accessibility of music; the availability of instruments and instrumental repertory provided another outlet for domestic music-making.

This same printing press was also a catalyst for the greatest destabilization of the Church's authority since the Great Schism and through modern times. In posting his Ninety-five Theses on the abuses of the Church on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, Martin Luther (1483–1546) challenged the Church's fundamental notions about the nature of Christ's mercy, salvation, the sacraments, the role of priests, and even the authority of the pope, setting off the Protestant

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[2] Ancient Greek theorists describe three types or genera of tetrachord: the diatonic (e.g., E–F–G–A), chromatic (e.g., E–F–G-flat–A), and enharmonic (involves quarter-tones).

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reformation. Harnessing the power of the printing press, Luther was able to spread his ideas both in word and song to the growing literate population. Placing priority on congregational singing in the local language during worship and using music in domestic settings to spread his message, Lutheran reformers developed a repertory of chorale tunes set polyphonically and easy-to-sing settings of Psalms, all available in print. Not long after Luther's posting of the Ninety-five Theses, King Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547) broke with the papal authority in Rome for political, rather than doctrinal, reasons to establish the Church of England. During the reign of his daughter Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) in the second half of the sixteenth century, English became the required language of worship in the Anglican Church, triggering a demand for new sacred repertories of English anthems and other service music.

Main Features
The main features of Renaissance music are discussed in the sections that follow:
- New Harmonies and Textures
- Words and Music
- Musical Borrowing
- Instrumental Music Comes of Age

New Harmonies and Textures
The new harmonic language of consonant thirds and sixths that developed in England in the fourteenth century infused the three main genres of fifteenth-century music: Mass, motet, and chanson. John Dunstable's (c. 1390–1453) *Quam pulchra es* illustrates both this new harmonic basis and new trends in the motet beginning in the fifteenth century. No longer isorhythmic, the motet that emerges in the fifteenth century and remains in place throughout the sixteenth century generally presents a single Latin text (usually drawn from the Bible, sacred poetry, or liturgical texts), is on a small scale, can employ myriad structural techniques, and provides each textual phrase with its own treatment. The text of *Quam pulchra es* is biblical, from the Song of Songs. Frequently the sonorities (chords) are dyads, consisting of a "root" and a third above it (e.g., C–E) or its inversion, or triads (e.g., C–E–G), sometimes in "first inversion" (e.g., D–B-flat–F). Infused with tertian sonorities on F, C, D, and G, the work sounds consonant, though not entirely tonal. Seconds, sevenths, and tritones are the only dissonances; these are used very sparingly as passing tones or for pre-cadential emphasis. This new harmonic language, with the possibility of building tertian dyads and triads on every degree of the scale, endured throughout the sixteenth century and would become the foundation of common practice tonality that would emerge in the seventeenth century.

By the mid-sixteenth century composers were experimenting with ways to vary the diatonic triadic harmony. Previously, notes that lay outside the diatonic gamut (*musica ficta*) served almost exclusively to enhance cadences (e.g., by raising the leading tone) or to avoid melodic or vertical tritones (e.g., by lowering B to B-flat to avoid a tritone with F). Increasingly, the

harmonic palette became enriched with chromaticism, that is, pitches outside the diatonic scale. At first, chromaticism was used sparingly: a surprise note would call attention to itself. In the example below, from Jacques Arcadelt's (?1507–1568) madrigal *Il bianco e dolce cigno*, the E-flat in m. 6 seems like a perfectly "normal" pitch to modern ears, creating a C-minor triad.

Example 1. Excerpt from Arcadelt's *Il bianco e dolce cigno*. The entire piece is in the A-R Online Music Anthology: http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=392

However, the composition is based on the diatonic scale on F, with B-flat in the signature (Lydian mode). While consonant with the other tones in the chord, E-flat lies outside the diatonic scale and calls attention to itself, lending a poignancy, appropriately, to the setting of the word *piangendo* (weeping).[3] Composers continued to experiment in more extreme ways with chromaticism, as in Orlando di Lasso's (1530 or 1532–1594) *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* (Prologue). This motet, though not a sacred one, incorporates chromaticism in almost every sonority, the strange (to the sixteenth-century ear) harmonic vocabulary suggesting the other-worldliness of the Sibyls, women of ancient Greece who prophesied the coming of Christ. The sonorities are consonant, but the motion, for example, from a C major triad to an E major triad (m. 10) or an E minor triad to an F-sharp major one (mm. 13–14) would have sounded as foreign to sixteenth-century ears as it does to our own.

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[3] One can make an apt analogy to colors (chroma=color): with the diatonic system, it is as if composers had seven basic colors to paint with (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, black); chromaticism is like adding a splash of fuchsia, chartreuse, or aquamarine to the painting.

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Music of the Renaissance is also marked by a variety of textures. Just as fabric has a texture (burlap is rough with wide spaces between the warp and weave; silk is soft and fine) we can think of music as having a texture: how the voices coordinate and interact with each other, both melodically (horizontally) and rhythmically (vertically). In Renaissance music, textures aggregate around imitative counterpoint, non-imitative counterpoint, and homophony (either as homorhythmic/chordal writing or as an accompanied melody), with various gradations between these. As in the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance the tenor voice retained its primary function as the "backbone" of the composition; the superius coordinated with the tenor to create a structural pair, and a contratenor filled out the harmonies and enlivened the rhythms. This foundation continued to serve music throughout the Renaissance, even as the number of voices in a composition increased from three to four in the fifteenth century, to five, eight, and even more in the sixteenth century. With the increase in the number of voices, composers enjoyed greater flexibility in how to use them and how to relate each voice to the others. Though the underlying superius-tenor structural pair remained in place, all the voices took on a more equal role, with each voice presenting material essential to the contrapuntal fabric.

This equality of voices is most evident in the use of imitation: with this technique, one voice introduces a melody, which then passes to another voice. The voices can present the melody in turn, or the melodies can overlap (that is, the second voice begins the melody before the first has completed it). Jean Ockeghem's (c. 1410–1497) rondeau *Fors seulement* demonstrates numerous imitative relationships: In the first phrase the tenor presents a lengthy melody with supportive counterpoint in the contratenor. In m. 10, the superius imitates that melody, now with new supportive counterpoint in the tenor. In the next phrase (m. 20) the tenor and superius engage in close imitation as the tenor ascends stepwise from A to e and the superius begins its climb one measure later and an octave higher. Beginning in m. 47, the superius and tenor again imitate each other, now at the distance of two measures.

Josquin des Prez's (c. 1450 or 1455–1521) motet *Ave Maria … virgo serena* is a study in textural possibilities, with a variety of imitative and homophonic textures articulating each stanza. The opening measures set Gabriel's angelic salutation to Mary using a technique that would become known as pervasive imitation: each voice systematically presents the melody, saturating the texture with it. In the first full stanza (m. 31) the superius and altus present a duo that is homophonic and homorhythmic; the tenor and bassus then *imitate* the entire duo four measures later, enriched by counterpoint in the altus. In the next stanza (m. 54) the superius and altus offer an *imitative duo*; the tenor and bassus imitate this duo five measures later. The fourth stanza (m. 94) uses true canon, a more rigorous imitative technique: not only does the tenor imitate the superius a fifth below and delayed by one beat, this relationship remains true for the *entire* section. If Josquin had desired he could have provided only the superius, altus, and bassus parts, and instructed the tenor to sing the same notes as the superius, delayed by one beat and sounding a fifth below. This is true canon: when a second melodic line can be derived in its entirety from

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one notated melody.[4] Finally, *Ave Maria* concludes with closing prayer set to chordal homophony (m. 143). This extreme contrast of texture with everything that had previously ensued provides a calming and humble supplication to close the work. Followers of Josquin used pervasive imitation to an even greater degree, infusing almost every phrase with relentless imitation, as in Gombert's *Super fluminis Babylonis*.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/26–1594) excelled at a deft blending of imitative polyphony and homophony, sometimes in rapid succession. The six-voice motet *Dum complerentur* frequently features two groups of three voices antiphonally presenting a homophonic phrase. The voices then join forces with a contrasting jubilant imitative setting of "Alleluia." This procedure takes on additional meaning at the beginning of the *secunda pars*, where the two "choirs" sing in alternation, but then come together homophonically, appropriately representing the text "Congregatio discipulis" (the disciples were gathered together).

Composers cultivated imitative and non-imitative counterpoint primarily in sacred music, Mass and motet, lending the compositions seriousness, weight, and heft; in contrast, secular genres of the sixteenth century often featured a lighter, homophonic style. The Italian frottola (e.g., Marchetto Cara [c. 1465–1525], *Ala absentia*) tends to offer a primary melody in the superius, supported by accompanimental homophony in the lower three voices; these lower three voices could even be played by a single person on a lute. French chansons of the mid-sixteenth century (e.g., Claudin de Sermisy [c. 1490–1562], *Tant que vivray*) are likewise predominantly homophonic, lending the songs an attractive ease and clarity in the declamation of the text. The Italian balletto (e.g., Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi [c. 1554–1609], *A lieta vita*) and its English derivative, the ballett (e.g., Thomas Morley [1557/58–1602], *Sing we and chant it*), likewise feature appealingly clear homophonic textures that are easy for amateurs to understand and perform.

Words and Music

In almost every era in the history of western music, composers have sought to achieve ever closer relationships between music and words. During the Renaissance composers explored myriad ways to accomplish this, some very obvious and direct, while others subtler, which become apparent as we develop our understanding of Renaissance musical language. These music-text relationships manifest in different ways in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and depending on the genre. While French chansons of the fifteenth century relate the alternation of highly melismatic musical phrases to the poetic form (rhymes and refrains), those of the early- to mid-sixteenth century emphasize syllabic, declamatory delivery of the text. Italian madrigals feature alignment of musical gestures with the meanings of words and phrases, imagery, overall mood, and poetic voice. So strong was the influence of the madrigal as a genre that these characteristics infiltrated chansons and motets of the second half of the sixteenth century.

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[4] Ockeghem's *Missa Prolationum*, a double mensuration canon, takes this device to the extreme.

Throughout the fifteenth century, composers continued to write chansons in the *formes fixes* established in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The diagram below represents the rondeau, the most common of the *formes fixes* in the fifteenth century (e.g., Guillaume Du Fay's [1397–1474] *Adieu m'amour, adieu ma joye*). It maps a rondeau quatrain (the stanza consists of four lines), elucidating the relationship between rhymes, refrains, and the corresponding alternation of musical sections.[5]

Table 1. Structure of the Rondeau

TEXT	RHYME SCHEME/ REFRAIN	LARGE-SCALE POETIC FORM	MUSICAL SECTION
Rondeaux can be confusing:	A	A	A
Should I sing A or B?	B		
How will I remember the order	C	B	B
Without a mnemonic to remind me?	B		
My mind I think I am **losing**,	a	a	a
In a moment you will **see**.	b		
Rondeaux can be confusing:	A	A	A
Should I sing A or B?	B		
Which form should I be choosing?	a	a	a
Please tell me the melody.	b		
Perhaps a tape recorder	c	b	b
Will help me possibly.	b		
Rondeaux can be confusing:	A	A	A
Should I sing A or B?	B		
How will I remember the order	C	B	B
Without a mnemonic to remind me?	B		

In the diagram, each letter represents a group of lines of poetry ending with a particular rhyme (or a pattern of rhymes if there is a group of lines). The same letter indicates the same rhyme sound; capital letters indicate that the entire line of text, and not just the rhyme sound, repeats, creating a refrain (matching colors and boldface reinforce this). Composers mirror the changing and repeating rhymes and lines of text by writing a section of music for each letter: when a rhyme or entire line of text repeats, it is set to the same music; thus musical phrases align precisely with textual rhymes and refrains. Secular songs in other languages from ca. 1500,

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[5] The spellings and phonetics of original French texts might obscure the rhymes. The relationships are more apparent when using an invented English text; this is also a fun exercise to reinforce the *formes fixes*.

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particularly the Spanish villancico (for example, Juan del Encina's *Todos los bienes del mundo*) and the Italian frottola (for example, Cara's *Ala absentia*) also have standard poetic-musical forms.

Beginning around 1520, composers, especially those associated with the French court of Francis I (r. 1515–1547), pursued chanson composition with a different kind of focus on music-text relationships, one that favored clear declamation of text with simple, often treble-dominated textures and short phrases. Rhyme schemes likewise became more simplified and spontaneous than the contrived *formes fixes*, and composers would often incorporate musical repetition to align with the poetic scheme. Sermisy's *Tant que vivray*, which sets a text offering a light and optimistic description of love, illustrates all of these characteristic. The opening dactylic rhythm (long-short-short) corresponds to the natural accentuation of the text (strong-weak-weak) and the phrase lengths are regular (notice how the second half of the song unfolds as a series of short phrases, corresponding to the shorter five-syllable lines). The first four lines of the poem have the rhyme scheme ab-ab; Sermisy sets both pairs of lines to the same music. Clément Janequin (c. 1485–after 1588), another French composer though not associated with Francis I's court, achieved fame especially through his special brand of onomatopoetic writing. In *Voulez ouyr les cris de Paris*, as well as numerous other songs, he recreates the very sounds of the scenes he is describing. Ludwig Senfl (between 1489 and 1491–1543), a contemporary of Janequin active in Germany, mimics this signature approach in *Das G'laut zu Speyer*; here the voices imitate the cacophony of church bells [G'laut] on a festive day while the bell ringers goad each other.

Around 1530, a new genre emerged in Italy, the madrigal, which was characterized first and foremost by the alliance of music with the meanings of the words of the Italian poetry it set. Described with phrases such as "text painting," "text depiction" "iconic writing" and "madrigalisms," this approach involves directly matching localized musical gestures with the denotations of individual words or phrases. For example, in Arcadelt's *Il bianco et dolce cigno*, the poem ends with the phrase "die a thousand deaths." Here each of the four voices enters with a point of imitation (the first time imitation occurs in the composition), and the motif repeats numerous times. While the phrase does not sound literally 1000 times, the effect is that of many, many times, musically conveying the sense of the text.

Beyond thinking carefully about the immediate meaning of individual words and phrases, composers read the poetry closely, observing the poetic line-breaks, perceiving the overall mood, and discerning dramatic personae. All these aspects of the poetry could guide the composer in designing melodic gestures, shaping phrases, changing texture, and incorporating chromaticism. In *Dalle belle contrade d'oriente* Cipriano de Rore (1515/16–1565) uses two different musical languages to represent the two characters, a man and a woman, in a miniature dramatic scene of lovers parting at dawn. The male character's words sound in conventional diatonic counterpoint, while the distressed female responds with sudden chromatic shifts from the sharp to the flat side of the circle of fifths (though the circle of fifths did not yet exist as a theoretical concept) and

unexpected pauses to suggest her anguish as her companion departs. She cries out "Ahi" as if enacting the scene on stage.

Later in the century, the use of chromaticism and madrigalisms both become more extravagant. Chromaticism and dissonance were favorite devices of late sixteenth-century madrigalists such as Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613), who represented extremes of emotional distress with cross relations and chains of unresolved dissonances, easily observed in *Moro, lasso, al mio duolo*. Huge leaps and sudden shifts from very long note values to rapid sixteenth notes contribute to the sense of anguish. Luca Marenzio (1553/54–1599), regarded as a master of iconic writing, invented creative ways to depict directionality, activity, rest, dancing, pensiveness, etc. In his *Scaldav'il sol* almost every image, from the arch of the lion's back to the bushes with rustling leaves, the sleeping shepherd, and the lone cicada, prompts a kaleidoscope of musical gestures. English composers of the late sixteenth century embraced this kind of madrigal writing associated particularly with Marenzio. With Thomas Weelkes's (1567–1623) *As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending* (and without the barrier of a foreign language), it is possible to perceive the delightfulness of these musical devices.

The goal of musically representing words, ideas, and emotions of the text spread from the madrigal to other genres in the second half of the sixteenth century. Lasso, an accomplished composer in all genres including the madrigal, aptly expresses the text of *La nuict froide et sombre*, a French chanson that contrasts night and day. A low range, chromaticism, and slow rhythms in the first part of the chanson suggest the dark, still, and mysterious night, while a descending figure cascading through all the voices madrigalistically sets "falls from the sky" (mm 13–14). When day breaks (mm. 18ff.), the overall range gets higher, the harmony more diatonic, and the rhythms livelier as the sun rises and the earth's inhabitants become active. Even sacred music became infused with text expressive devices, from the trumpet fanfare at "blow the trumpet" in William Byrd's (c. 1540–1623) anthem *Sing joyfully unto God* (mm. 31ff.) to the circular melodic figure in imitation in Lasso's motet *Tristis est anima mea* at "[the crowd] surrounds me": the circular figure C–B–C–D–E-flat–D (mm 35ff.) suggests the crowd circulating around and surrounding the speaker.

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Musical Borrowing

From Gregorian chants to monophonic popular songs, polyphonic songs, and motets, Renaissance composers constantly created new works by borrowing aspects of existing compositions. With cantus firmus, paraphrase, parody, and *si placet* techniques, as well as less easily categorized methods of reworking, composers engaged with the works of their contemporaries and venerated past masters. This was not new in the Renaissance; indeed, Notre Dame organum and motets from the Ars Antiqua and Ars Nova periods take chant and occasionally popular songs as their foundation, and this continues in the Renaissance (e.g., Du Fay's *Nuper rosarum flores*, based on a chant associated with the liturgy for consecrating a new church). Numerous other methods emerged in the Renaissance.

Paraphrasing is one way in which Renaissance composers adapted the monophonic chant repertory. Just as verbal paraphrases of a text restate the content in a different way while retaining the most essential elements, composers paraphrased chants and other well-known melodies by retaining the essential melodic contours while adding or removing embellishments such as passing tones, or continuing the borrowed phrase in a different way to suit the new polyphonic context. Composers might place the paraphrased melody in a single voice part, as in Du Fay's *Conditor alme siderum*, where the chant melody, paraphrased in the top voice (pitches corresponding to the original chant are indicated with asterisks [*]), is harmonized with parallel thirds and sixths, a method known as fauxbourdon.

The imitative writing that developed in the late fifteenth century and continued throughout the sixteenth century offered composers even more possibilities for paraphrasing. Heinrich Isaac's (c. 1450 or 1455–1517) *Quis dabit capiti* meam, a lament on the death of Florentine leader Lorenzo de' Medici (1469–1492), symbolically incorporates a chant melody sung at Compline (just before going to bed).[6] In the first part of the motet, the paraphrased melody (A–A–A–A–A–G–F–G–A–F–E) moves from voice to voice at different pitch levels, in different rhythmic guises, and with different ornamentation as the phrase approaches the cadence. Indeed, the melody is present in nearly every measure. A fragment of the melody, the final phrase that sets the text "Et requiescamus in pace" (And let us rest in peace) serves as an ostinato in the *secunda pars*, and the complete melody returns again in very long note values in the *tertia pars*. The idea of paraphrasing a melody, fragmenting it while retaining its most distinctive features, and "splattering" it throughout the equal-voice polyphonic texture is likewise the defining feature of Josquin's *Missa Pange lingua*.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, composers turned their attention towards composing music for the Ordinary texts of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei: texts that are sung

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[6] Allan W. Atlas, "A Note on Isaac's *Quis dabit capiti meo aquam,*" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 27, no. 1 (1974): 103–110; and Martin Staehelin, "Communications," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 28, no. 1 (1975): 160.

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at every Mass, in contrast to Proper texts, such as Graduals, which change). Composers sought to musically unify the settings of the individual movements into cycles most commonly by using an existing composition as the basis of all five movements. Especially in the sixteenth century Mass cycles represented a large proportion of many composers' output. In the fifteenth century cantus-firmus technique dominated. Here an existing melody, such as a chant, a monophonic song, or a single voice extracted from a composition (usually the tenor) serves as the tenor voice of all five Mass movements, and sounds in very long note values. The composer surrounds this long-note tenor melody in polyphony. In *Missa Se la face ay pale* Du Fay extracts the tenor of his own song *Se la face ay pale* to serve as the foundation of all five movements of the Mass. A twist on the technique is Josquin's *Missa Fortuna desperata*. Here the tenor of the polyphonic song *Fortuna desperata* serves as the tenor of the Kyrie and Gloria. Defying expectations, however, the superius of the song serves as the superius of the Credo, the original bassus becomes the altus in the Sanctus, the original superius serves as the bassus in Agnus I, and the original tenor becomes the bassus in Agnus II. These choices have symbolic motivations.[7]

It can be easy to confuse cantus-firmus technique and paraphrase technique: in cantus-firmus technique, the borrowed melody customarily appears in only one voice, most commonly the tenor, and is usually in long note values; the melodic content of the cantus firmus remains the same through the duration of the composition. In paraphrase technique, composers take more liberties with the borrowed melody: its rhythmic values often match the surrounding polyphony and the melodic material can move from voice to voice; though the composer may add or remove notes, the original tune remains recognizable. In practice, the line between cantus-firmus technique and paraphrase can sometimes become fuzzy, because composers were not bound by "rules" (our need to categorize compositions and techniques is greater than theirs was). Indeed, at the end of the Gloria of Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale*, the cantus firmus loses its rhythmic distinction, moving at the same pace as the surrounding polyphony and becoming absorbed into the overall texture. In *Missa Fortuna desperata* the cantus firmus moves to different voices in different movements. This is all part of the play and "pushing the envelope" in which composers of any period engage.

In the sixteenth century, composers began to borrow entire polyphonic models, including motets, chansons, and madrigals, to generate Mass Ordinary cycles; these are called imitation or parody Masses. Though cantus-firmus or paraphrase technique did not vanish, composers began to use parody technique more than any other method. The terminology may be a bit confusing here. "Imitation" is not used in the sense of contrapuntal imitation of a melody; rather it means "based on a polyphonic model." Likewise, "parody" is not used in the sense of mockery: it is the Greek

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[7] M. Jennifer Bloxam, "Masses Based on Polyphonic Songs and Canonic Masses," in *The Josquin Companion*, edited by Richard Sherr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 165–72.

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translation of "imitation." Modern scholars use the terms interchangeably.[8] Parodies are not slavish adaptations, though some can be rather literal (e.g., Kyrie I of Tomàs Luis Victoria's [1548–1611] *Missa O magnum mysterium*, based on his own motet *O magnum mysterium*). Parody technique provides an opportunity for composers to explore the full potential of the counterpoint of the original work. Modeling his *Missa Queramus cum pastoribus* Kyrie on Jean Mouton's (before 1459–1522) motet, Cristóbal de Morales (c. 1500–1553), in the opening measures, adds a fifth voice to the original four, rearranges the order of imitative entries, changes the temporal distance between entries, transforms consecutive points of imitation into a texture in which the original second subject becomes a countersubject to the first point, and interrupts the borrowing from the model to insert newly composed material. It is as if Morales has disassembled Mouton's motet and reassembled it in his own way.

Instrumental Music Comes of Age

Instruments such as recorders, flutes, viols, lutes, shawms (forerunners of modern double-reed instruments), sackbuts (forerunners of the modern trombone), organs, clavichords, and harpsichords were among the many instruments that filled the Renaissance soundscape. In the second half of the fifteenth century, composers began to write music conceived specifically for instruments. Rather than "songs without words," these sectional compositions feature long phrases, block chords, streams of parallel thirds or tenths, and wide ranges: qualities particularly well suited for instruments but less natural for singing. Further separating these instrumental works from other contemporaneous genres is the absence of any pre-conceived forms or patterns of repetition. Some works carry fanciful titles while others incorporate the composer's name, such as Johannes Martini's (c. 1430 or 1440–1497) *La Martinella*, or the name of the composer's patron, as in Johannes Ghiselin's (fl. 1491–1507) *La Alfonsina,* named after Alfonso II, King of Naples (1448–1495). In the fifteenth century, instrumental music was largely confined to court circles, and much of the repertory is preserved in manuscripts prepared for wind bands (*piffari*) that were popular in Italian courts.

As music literacy spread and the new music printing industry brought repertory beyond the courts and into upper-middle class households, musical instruments became more easily accessible and the market for instrumental music blossomed. Instrumentalists could certainly play vocal music, and many music printers increased the salability of their song books by touting the suitability of the repertory for performance on instruments on the title pages. Dance music, previously transmitted orally, was printed in large quantities by the Antwerp printer Tylman Susato (ca. 1510 or 1515–1570), and Parisian printers Pierre Attaingnant (1513/14–1551/52) and Claude Gervaise (fl. 1540–1560), among others. These collections contain many works attributed to the printers but it is unclear if the printers wrote the compositions anew or provided

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[8] Though "imitation" is the more historically accurate term (Masses are commonly labeled "missa ad imitationem [model]" in the sources), I prefer "parody" to avoid confusion with contrapuntal imitation.

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arrangements of existing tunes. Dance music consists of a number of "subgenres" or dance types, each with a different meter and tempo. For example, a pavane is a slow dance in duple meter, while a galliard is a quick dance in triple meter to accompany dance steps that include some leaps. The printers commonly grouped dances in pairs (pavane and galliard is a common combination) and sometimes the pairs are motivically related. This is evident in Gervaise's *Pavanne d'Angleterre and Galliard*. Dance music required regular meter and four- or eight-bar phrases to provide dancers with a clear beat. The relatively simple notated music offered instrumentalists the opportunity to improvise ornamentation, sometimes quite virtuosically. Practitioners published instruction books directed towards the amateur audiences on how to ornament various melodic intervals and cadences, such as Sylvestro di Ganassi's *Opera intitulata Fontegara* (Venice, 1535) for recorder and Diego Ortiz's *Trattado de glosas* (Rome, 1553) for viola da gamba.

New genres of music conceived expressly for instruments also became widespread. One such genre is the canzona, originally modeled after the French chanson. Canzonas quickly took on a life of their own, distinguished by sections contrasting material, with some sections returning as modified refrains. Giovanni Gabrieli's (c. 1554 or 1557–1612) *Canzona septimi toni a8* is a large-scale example of a canzona, both in its number of voices and its length. The varied repetition of the material in triple meter contrasts with the imitative sections in duple to provide a sense of structure and form. Revealing its origins in the French chanson, canzonas generally retain the opening dactylic rhythm (long-short-short) characteristic of that repertory.

Amateurs and professionals alike played numerous solo instruments, notably the lute, the vihuela (a guitar-like instrument), and the spinet or virginal (a small keyboard instrument played especially by young women in English households), and vast repertories exist for these instruments. The Spanish vihuela repertory is rife with variation sets on well-known tunes, such as Luis de Narváez's (fl. 1526–1549) *Cuatro diferencias sobre Guárdame las vacas*, as is much of the English virginal repertory (e.g., Byrd's *Browning my dear*). Arrangements of popular chansons and madrigals were ubiquitous. Improvisatory-sounding pieces, such as fantasias and toccatas provided a vehicle for performers to "explore" their instrument—its tuning, its touch—before commencing a "true" performance. Music for lutes and vihuelas was notated using a method called tablature, which shows where to place the finger on which string, rather than actual pitches (like modern "guitar tabs"). For this reason, compositions for lute or vihuela, whether newly composed or arranged from popular vocal polyphony, are often referred to as "intabulations" ("intavolatura" in Italian).

Conclusion

During the Renaissance Western Europe witnessed enormous changes in musical styles, genres, techniques, and modes of dissemination, all of which would profoundly impact music of the following centuries and even our musical expectations today. Rigid musical forms of the fifteenth century, such as the *formes fixes* and isorhythm, gave way to more fluid forms in which composers could respond to the immediate needs of the text or explore the intrinsic musical qualities of a given model. No longer limited to the wealthy courts and institutions as it was in the fifteenth century and before, composed music infused the soundscape of other socio-economic classes beginning in the sixteenth century. Domestic music-making, both vocal and instrumental, flourished with the advent of music printing and the commodification of music. Songs in easy-to-sing styles and familiar languages, as well as method books available to the aspiring virtuoso instrumentalists, made music accessible to those with basic music literacy.

The university system of the Middle Ages categorized learning into the seven liberal arts. The mathematical arts (the quadrivium) included arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music; the poetic arts (the trivium) comprised grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Odington's experiments with tuning intervals, the mensural system, and the expression of proportions in isorhythmic technique elucidate mathematical aspects of music. During the Renaissance, music's position within the seven liberal arts began to shift. In the fifteenth century, composers were considered craftsmen, contrapuntists, and the occupation we call "composer" did not even exist. The concepts that music could convey ideas and emotions and that a composer could develop his or her own unique compositional style first emerge in the sixteenth century. Composers came to be regarded as creative artists with recognizable individual styles, rather than mere craftsmen.[9] Recognizing the shift of music's place within the seven liberal arts, in 1533 German theorist Nicolaus Listenius described music as *ars poetica* in his treatise *Rudimenta Musicae Planae* (Wittenberg: 1533). Infused with ancient Greek attitudes about its potential to express and effect emotions, musical composition was regarded as akin to poetry. That music should somehow express the text and achieve an emotional climax are such common conceptions today that it is difficult to imagine a musical language that did not rely on such an aesthetic. Renaissance Europe witnessed remarkable expansions of thought, artistry, human invention, discovery, and exploration; so too did Renaissance music.

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[9] Heinrich Isaac was the first musician to receive the title of "composer" when Emperor Maximilian I called him *Hofkomponist* (court composer).

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