
Renaissance Performance Practice

1500-1620

Brief Review of Renaissance History

- ❖ 1400-1620
- ❖ Started in Italy then quickly spread throughout Europe
- ❖ Humanism
 - ❖ Greek and Roman Ideals
 - ❖ Focus on physical, human world rather than purely spiritual and supernatural
 - ❖ In the Middle Ages the present world was merely a preparation for the next, spiritual world
 - ❖ Shift toward rational, scientific philosophy rather than purely religious
 - ❖ Shift away from philosophical and religious monopoly of the Catholic Church
- ❖ International exploration, economy, philosophy, and artistic styles

Factors that led to the Renaissance

- ❖ Poetry of Petrarch (1304-74)
 - ❖ *Secretum meum* - secular achievements not necessarily in conflict with religious faith
 - ❖ One of first authors to have recorded traveling, etc. just for the pleasure of it
 - ❖ Compiled a large library of Ancient Greek and Roman writings
- ❖ Crusades and other wars
 - ❖ Moors occupied Iberian Peninsula (711-1492)
 - ❖ Hundred Years War (1337-1453)
 - ❖ Fall of Constantinople in 1453
 - ❖ Mobilization of large armies led to rise of kings and nations and death of feudal system
- ❖ International trade (merchants) & printing
 - ❖ Johannes Gutenberg first European to use moveable type (1439)
 - ❖ Ottaviano Petrucci employed technique to part music (1501)
 - ❖ Pierre Attaignant published first book of chansons with staff lines, notes and text in single pass (1528)
- ❖ Power of Church as evidenced in monasteries and Gothic cathedrals
- ❖ Plague

Important Renaissance People (non-musicians)

Explorers

- ❖ Christopher Columbus
- ❖ Ferdinand Magellan
- ❖ Vasco da Gama
- ❖ Sir Walter Raleigh
- ❖ Jacques Cartier

Scientists

- ❖ Galileo Galilei
- ❖ Copernicus
- ❖ Johannes Kepler

Painters / Sculptors

- ❖ Leonardo da Vinci
- ❖ Michelangelo
- ❖ Botticelli
- ❖ Raphael
- ❖ El Greco

Writers / Poets / Philosopher

- ❖ William Shakespeare
- ❖ Machiavelli
- ❖ Thomas Moore
- ❖ Cervantes
- ❖ John Donne
- ❖ Sir Francis Bacon
- ❖ Desiderius Erasmus

Characteristics of Medieval Music

- ❖ Notation system
- ❖ Melodic and rhythmic material
- ❖ Harmonic style
- ❖ Themes and texts
- ❖ Compositional techniques
 - ❖ Formes fixes
 - ❖ Rondeau - ABaAabAB; Ballade - aabC; virelai - AbbaA
 - ❖ A (a) and B (b) represent repeated musical phrases; capital letters indicate repetition of text in a refrain, while lowercase letters indicate new text
 - ❖ Isorhythmic motets
 - ❖ Talea - repeated rhythmic pattern; color - repeated pitch pattern (usually in tenor, but also found in other voices as well)
 - ❖ Polytextual motets
 - ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=bZxAqWV7a0A>

Early Renaissance Genres

❖ Mass

- ❖ Ordinary
- ❖ Proper
- ❖ a4 - 6 usually in imitative polyphony
- ❖ Parody Technique - Victoria
Missa O Magnum Mysterium
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=zjSXwYR7b9Q&feature=kp>
- ❖ Paraphrase Technique - Josquin
Missa Pange lingua <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3SH3drDXE8M>

- ❖ Cantus firmus & cyclic masses -
Josquin, *Missa L'Homme Armé sexti toni* <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=KMrzjWoYMHA>

❖ Motet

- ❖ Various texts not included in the Ordinary or Proper of the Mass
- ❖ Tend to be more emotional, dramatic, and filled with pictorial imagery
- ❖ Imitative polyphony with dense counterpoint

Development of the Renaissance Motet

❖ Phase I (1400-1470)

- ❖ Transition period from MA
- ❖ Guillaume Dufay
- ❖ John Dunstable
- ❖ Lionel Power

❖ Phase II (1470-1520)

- ❖ Developed into imitative polyphonic style
- ❖ a4 - a6 most common
- ❖ Johannes Ockegham
- ❖ Josquin Desprèz
- ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=LUAgAF4Khmg>
- ❖ Heinrich Isaac

❖ Phase III (1520-1560)

- ❖ Expanded imitative polyphony into more complexity and antiphonal style
- ❖ Nicolas Gombert
- ❖ Adrian Willaert
- ❖ Andrea Gabrieli
- ❖ Giovanni Gabrieli - 1548 organist at St. Mark's in Venice
- ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=NCRm2t2tpB0>

❖ Phase IV (1560-1600)

- ❖ Council of Trent 1545-1563
- ❖ Palestrina
- ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=0yd5EE0hAB8&feature=kp>
- ❖ Tomás Luis de Victoria
- ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=9xPh-fXYAc4>
- ❖ Orlando di Lasso

Musical Influences of the Council of Trent

1. Intrusion of secularism in services
 - Parody masses based on secular themes and secular tunes used as cantus firmus
2. Extensive multi-voiced imitative polyphony made text and meaning incomprehensible to listeners
3. Too many texts and Sequences from the troping technique of the MA
4. Widespread use of instruments used in services
 - Consorts of instruments accompanied or even replaced vocalists when needed
5. Irreverent attitude, carelessness, and bad habits of singers

Protestant Music

- ❖ English Anthem

- ❖ Full anthem - William Byrd, Sing Joyfully <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=s2K0wJABgdk>

- ❖ Verse anthem - William Byrd, Christ rising <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=OThYaW1Sh48> & <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3GSoEhDCBX4>.

- ❖ Anglican service music

- ❖ Lutheran Chorale

- ❖ Calvinist Psalms

Secular Genres

- ❖ Franco-Flemish chansons

- ❖ Parisian chansons - a4, mostly chordal based on light, lyrical poems of sentimental or humorous themes
 - ❖ Guillaume Costeley "Allons, gay bergères" & Josquin "Mille regrets"
- ❖ Programmatic chansons Clément Janequin "La Guerre" & "Chant des Oyseaux"
 - ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pAp4d2xzGn4>
 - ❖ <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=JY2rLfhJLmY>

- ❖ Italian madrigals

- ❖ Arcadelt, *Il bianco e dolce cigno* <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XITlmDJ9-Hk>
- ❖ Monteverdi, *Ecco mormorar l'onde* <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YUgIJ212IVg>

- ❖ English madrigals

- ❖ Farmer, *Fair Phyllis* http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cE_7aqtgquo
- ❖ Morley, *Sing We and Chant it* <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ciIvhB-zTfc>

- ❖ German Tenorlied

Meter and Notation

- ❖ Various attempts to notate Renaissance meter since 1950s
 - ❖ Performers read from individual part books
 - ❖ Often written in breve notation or with compound meters with complex subdivisions
- ❖ Changing between duple and triple meter
- ❖ Syncopation created with ties over modern bar lines or due to syllabic text emphasis
- ❖ Hemiolas created with syllabic emphasis offset over multiple consecutive measures
- ❖ Imitation does not always align with modern meter
- ❖ Tempo or macro-meter shifts between two & four or one & three that are part of performance practice but not notated
- ❖ Tempo often difficult to determine
 - ❖ Approaching final and internal cadences

Melody and Harmony

- ❖ Modal system vs. Major / minor
- ❖ Musica Ficta
- ❖ Soprano usually sung by boys, alto by falsettists or castrati
- ❖ All parts composed linearly with cadential alignment
 - ❖ Aligned vs dove-tailed cadences
- ❖ Repeated short notes, especially in melismas
 - ❖ Sixteenth note ornaments
- ❖ Text painting and "madrigalisms"
- ❖ Thick texture created with four or more independent parts
- ❖ Imitation (direct and harmonic) leads to blended rather than contrasting parts, often with only slight variations