Chapter 5
The Genres of Renaissance Music:
1420-1520
Sacred Vocal Music

- principal genres: Mass and motet
- cantus firmus technique supplanted isorhythm as chief structural device in large-scale vocal works
- primary organizational techniques are: cantus firmus, canon, parody, & paraphrase
Sacred Vocal Music

The Mass

• emergence of the cyclic Mass - a cycle of all movements of the Mass Ordinary integrated by common *cantus firmus* or other musical device
Sacred Vocal Music

Du Fay Missa Se la face

• Guillaume Du Fay credited with six complete settings of the Mass - *Missa Se la face ay pale* written c. 1450

• first mass by any composer based on a *cantus firmus* from a secular source

• one of the first masses in which tenor (line carrying *cantus firmus*) is not the lowest
Sacred Vocal Music
Du Fay Missa Se la face

- Based on Du Fay’s chanson Se la face
- tenor uses a cantus firmus based on the chanson (see mm. 19, 125, & 165)
- see Bonds p. 122, example 5-1
  compare with the tenor in the Mass Gloria
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The Mass: Ockeghem

- Johannes Ockeghem’s Missa prolationum
- almost every movement has each voice with its own mensuration
- beginning of Kyrie I and Kyrie II, all four basic mensurations “prolations” are present, hence the name of the Mass
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Ockeghem’s *Missa prolationum*

- see Bonds p. 125 for manuscript
- prolationum refers to something like beat-subdivision
  - mensuration signs, see Bonds p. 76
- the interval of the canon changes during the piece (see Bonds p. 124)
Missa prolationum: Kyrie
(last quarter of 15th century)
Johannes Ockeghem (ca. 1420–1496)

Kyrie eleison I

CD2, Track 12
Book p. 124

creates a one measure delay for the canon

Now double canon at one measure delay.
Kyrie eleison II
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The Mass: Josquin des Prez and His Contemporaries

• Josquin’s Masses defined by one of four structural techniques:
  - cantus firmus
  - canon
  - imitation (or parody)
  - paraphrase
Josquin’s Masses

• *Missa Fortuna desperata*
  - imitation (or parody) mass
  - based on the chanson *Fortuna desperata* likely by Antoine Busnois
    (see picture on Bonds p. 130)
  - incorporates all three voices from the chanson in the opening of the Kyrie
  - parody mass differs from *cantus firmus* mass in that more of the original music is borrowed
Josquin’s Masses

- Missa Pange lingua
  - paraphrase technique
  - Josquin bases the melodic material of each of the 4 voices on the plainchant hymn *Pange lingua* (see Anth. Vol. I/4)
  - see Bonds p. 131 for manuscript picture
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The Motet

- prayer text set to music
- written to fulfill one of three principal functions (see Bonds p. 132):
  - Liturgical
  - Devotional
  - Occasional
Motet
Josquin Absalon, fili mi

- may have been written by Pierre de la Rue
- note the different key signature in each voice part (not clear why)
- *musica ficta* is an issue in this piece
  - m. 58 - Db in tenor makes the superius’ A become Ab; which makes the Altus’ A also Ab
  - m. 59 - the A in altus really is A as it cadences to Bb
  - Bonds p. 135 describes the “rules” for *musica ficta*
*musica ficta* in Josquin’s *Absalon, fili mi*
Secular Vocal Music

- Much of it not written down
- much pop music today is recorded, but not necessarily written down on sheet music
Secular Vocal Music

*Chanson*

- showed move from layered to more homogeneous texture
- showed rhythmic equalization of parts
- showed increasing use of pervading imitation as principal structural device
- these changes occur over time
Evolution of the 15th century chanson

- Du Fay Adieu ces bons vins de Lannoys (1426)
  - only top line is texted
  - tenor and contraténor likely played on instruments but may have been sung
  - 3 voices move with roughly the same rhythm throughout; little syncopation
Evolution of the 15th century chanson

- Hayne van Ghizeghem *De tous biens plaine* (ca. 1470)
  - performance options still range from 3 vocalists to 3 instruments on a blend of voices and instruments
  - melody lines are longer and more fluid with a greater sense of rhythmic interplay (Bonds p. 137)
Evolution of the 15th century chanson

- Heinrich Isaac *Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen* (ca. 1490)
  - Isaac internationally known; brought Franco-Flemish style to various courts
  - Isaac set this melody twice
    1) once as a “Tenorlied”
    2) the other setting (a *Lied*) with the melody in the soprano; in the Italian manner (Bonds p. 139)
Secular Vocal Music

Frottola

- In the 1480s, native Italian composers set texts in their own language (vernacular) once again.
- Texts included freely structured poems.
- Poetry tended to be lighthearted and often sarcastic or ironic.
Secular Vocal Music

Frottola

• typical frottola rhythms: (see Bonds p. 140)

• frequent use of syncopation and hemiola (brief passage of duple-meter rhythm within triple-meter context)

• lively dance-like rhythm

• chordal texture
Secular Vocal Music

Frottola

- Simple harmonic progressions (e.g., I-IV-V-I)
- performed various ways
  - all vocal
  - all instruments
  - a blend of voices and instruments
  - see Bonds p. 142 for picture of performance
Secular Vocal Music

*Frottola*

- Marchetto Cara *Hor venduto bo la speranza*
  - *Frottola*
  - published by Petrucci in 1504 in a four-voice version and later for solo voice and lute (1509)
  - See Bonds p. 141 for original score
The instrument as a voice.

The illustration shows two singers and three recorder players reading from part books. This kind of ensemble was typical in its day: instruments routinely substituted for or doubled voices.
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*Frottola*

- Josquin *El grillo*
  - frottola
  - mostly chordal texture (not imitative)
  - some antiphonal sections (mm. 11-14)
  - two recordings show various ways it may have been performed
Instrumental Music

• performers routinely played from memory and often improvised

• notated vocal works easily adapted on variety of instruments
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments

- musicians inherited and expanded the rich variety of instruments used during the medieval era
Renaissance forerunners of the bassoon.
Sordun (lengthwise across bottom),
Curtal (no. 2-7), and Rackets (no. 8-9)
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Keyboard

- organ expanded steadily in size, range of pitches, number of pipes and variety of timbres
- smaller portative (portable) organ popular for use in homes
- larger instruments, known as positive organs, rested on the floor or a table
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Keyboard

- portable, quiet clavichord evolved out of monochord in early 15th century
- typical Renaissance harpsichord is single-manual (single-keyboard) instrument of four octaves with double strings
- virginal and spinet were generally limited to single set of strings and jacks and single keyboard
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Strings

- **Lute** was most common plucked stringed instrument

- Related instruments to the lute include: vihuela, guitar, cittern, bandore (pandora), and orpharion
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Strings

- *viol* and *violin* families emerged in late 15th century

- viols distinguishable from violins by sloped shoulders, flat backs, fretted fingerboards and six strings
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Strings

• in general, **viols** softer because of no sound bar (or sound post) and underhand bowing reduced force of bow on string

• **violin, viola, and cello** were bowed overhand and strings exerted more pressure on bridge producing greater volume with more penetrating attack
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Winds and Percussion

- **recorders** evolved from earlier pipe instruments with addition of thumbhole on upper back of instrument

- **shawm** and **crumhorn** remained the principal double-reed instruments
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Winds and Percussion

- most brass instruments limited to natural harmonics of a single note - determined by the shape of player’s lips (embouchure)

- straight trumpet - a single, long instrument-began to be doubled back on itself (bent)
Instrumental Music

Renaissance Instruments: Winds and Percussion

- percussion instruments included drums, cymbals, tambourines, triangles, wooden xylophones
- psaltery (hammered dulcimer) also a favorite domestic instrument
Instrumental Music

Instrumental Ensembles

- great deal of instrumental music originally written for voice (range used to determine instrumentation)
- small ensembles of matched instruments (consorts) were often used
- e.g., a set of four recorders, crumhorns or viols
Instrumental Music

Dance Music

• dance music was rarely committed to writing

• performers typically worked from memory by embellishing new lines above standard bass patterns