Dufay. Most of these men worked at one time or another in Italy, but one Northerner, Johannes Ciconia, is so clearly associated with Italian music that we shall take him up in that connection.

Interrelations, Mass Pairs, and Mass Cycles

In the past few years scholars have directed considerable attention to the early history of the cyclic Mass and to parody techniques. Leo Schrade pointed out that the relatationship between the Sanctus Iv No. 79 and the Sanctus in Bes (Sorb), which is very close, still shows so many differences that one may hardly speak of "variants," but is led into the realm of parody technique.[1] R. Jackson later showed that the Agnus of CaC (ff. 5-6) is also related to these two, and decided that they were written in the order: CaC - Iv - Bes.[2] He further demonstrates connections between the Kyrie Iv No. 27, the Patrem Iv No. 52, and the Sanctus Apt No. 27, seemingly written in that order, as well as the relationship of the tenor of Kyrie Iv No. 77 to the Kyrie of Bes. Particularly interesting is the discovery of interrelationships within the Bes Mass

[1] A fourteenth century Parody Mass," Acta, XXVII (1955), 27ff. It is interesting that one Mass piece was derived from another of the same liturgical category, thereby ruling out any possibility of the intent to unify cycles.

[2] "Musical interrelations between fourteenth century Mass movements (A preliminary study)," Acta, XXIX (1957), 54ff.

cycle itself: Part I of the Sanctus is related to Agnus I, and the outer

voices of the Kyrie (III?) to Agnus III. This is among the earliest

examples yet brought to light of what is apparently a conscious attempt

to unify parts of a complete cycle by related musical material. Many

other examples of similar procedures will doubtless turn up in the French

repertory of the period after further investigation. One must agree with

Jackson, however, that Schrade's attempts to show connections between the

Toul Ite missa est and the Et in terra Iv No. 50, as well as between the

Et in terra in Bes and the Patrem Iv No. 48 are unconvincing.

This technique is not confined to French music of the fourteenth

century, for even the conservative school of Worcester provides an example

of a Sanctus-Agnus pair which is musically related (Nos. 83 and 84).

They appear on the same page,[1] and neither the text nor a title is given

for the Sanctus. Both use the cantus firmus in the middle voice; the

Sanctus is a version (beginning and end only) of GR XI (Sarum No. 4),[2]

and the Agnus of GR XV (Sarum No. 9), both transposed. These two chants

have closely resembling final phrases — "in excelsis" of the Hosanna

(both times) with "[mi-]serere nobis"/ "nobis pacem" of the Agnus (all

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[1] Fragment XXIXb1 of Worcester Add. MS 68.

[2] The Sarum numbers refer to the order in which the chants are
found in Graduale Sarisburiense, ed. W.H. Frere (London, 1894). Chants
for the Sanctus are on pp. 15* ff., for the Agnus on pp. 17*ff.

three times) —, and the composer has emphasized this by relating the

other voices at these places, although there is no other attempt to

establish connections between the two pieces:

Ex. 5.   Ends of a) Sanctus, Worcester No. 83, and
         b) Agnus, Worcester No. 84 (after Dittmer,
         Worcester Fragments, pp. 158f.)

We have here the key to the problem of the beginning of the
musically unified polyphonic Mass, which has been so much discussed
recently. The origin lay in the plainchant Ordinary rather than in
polyphony. Dom Dominique Catta has shown that (not necessarily music-
ally related) Kyrie-Gloria pairs and, especially, Sanctus-Agnus pairs
date from the twelfth century, and that complete cycles of Kyrie-Gloria-
Sanctus-Agnus are found in manuscripts from the middle of the thirteenth
century.[1] The particular groupings of pairs and cycles vary from one
source to another, and only occasionally is there a musical connection
between movements. A relationship is present most frequently between the
Sanctus and Agnus, which is understandable from a liturgical point of
view; some of these musically-connected pairs are preserved in the modern

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[1] "Aux origines du Kyriale," Revue grégorienne, No. 34 (1955),
pp. 175ff. Schrade had arrived at similar conclusions in "The Mass
of Toulouse" (RBM, VIII [1954], 84ff.) and "News on the chant cycle
of the Ordinarium Missae" (Abstract in JAMS, VII [1955], 66ff.), but
the only evidence he offers, the chant cycles in Toul, is from too
late a date to support his arguments. See also: M.J. Burns, Mass
cycles in early Graduals: A study of the Ordinary of the Mass cycles
found in medieval and Renaissance Graduals in libraries in the United
States (Dissertation: New York University, School of Education, 1956)
[University Microfilms, No. 17, 638]. It will be remembered that the
Calixtinus codex from the first half of the twelfth century contains
an isolated case of a complete plainchant Mass. See above, pp. 3ff.

Roman Gradual.[1] Liturgical considerations, however, would seem to have played no part in the derivation of the Ite missa est from the Kyrie, a feature which is found in the great majority of the modern cycles. The question whether this has medieval authority as a standard procedure[2] may be answered in the affirmative: Harrison states that British medieval Ordinals direct that on days when the Kyrie is troped (the tropes are indicated in the Ordinals) the Ite is sung to the music of the first Christe of the Kyrie.[3]

Bukofzer has stated well the primary significance of grouping together and musically unifying the separate parts of the Mass Ordinary:[4]

> This idea . . . betrays the weakening of purely liturgical considerations and the strengthening of essentially aesthetic concepts. The "absolute" work of art begins to encroach on liturgical function.

He continues with a broad historical interpretation of this primary significance which is more open to question, raising, as it does, certain difficult problems of Kulturgeist:

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[1] E.g., GR I, VIII, IX and, especially, XVII.

[2] See Apel, Gregorian chant, pp. 420f.

[3] Music in medieval Britain, p. 57. The context does not make clear which books are referred to (or the exact period), but presumably they are from the fourteenth century.

[4] Studies in medieval and Renaissance music (New York, 1950), p. 218.

> We discover here the typical Renaissance
> attitude — and it is indeed the Renaissance
> philosophy of art that furnishes the spiritual
> background to the cyclic Mass. The beginnings
> of the Mass cycle coincide with the beginnings
> of the musical Renaissance.

This is obviously not the place to enter into a discussion of
Bukofzer's interesting interpretation, but we may point out that the
few exceptional examples of interrelated parts of the Mass Ordinary in
monophonic (and polyphonic) cycles of the earlier centuries do not
necessarily invalidate his general conclusion.

As in the case of the chant, musically related movements within
polyphonic cycles are the exception rather than the rule until the fif-
teenth century. Many cycles are collections of pieces written by dif-
ferent composers, sometimes even in different styles. Some new
discoveries have recently been added to those known previously, so that
the present total of Mass cycles before ca. 1400 now stands at six: Tour,
Bes, the Machaut Mass, Toul, Barc C all French; and P, the single
Italian example.[1]

One wonders why the four movements in Barc B, long known to his-
torians, have not also been considered a cycle. This small fascicle
from ca. 1400, a quabernio, contains only the four Mass items, all in
cantilena style except No. 2, which is textless. Fols. 1 and 5v to 8v

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[1]This does not include Tu B, which may be somewhat later
than 1400.

remain with staves but no music, and there is a note on fol. 8v:

"Johannes Andree civis Bononiensis":

No. 1 (f. 1v-3): Et in terra . . . Splendor patris a 3
No. 2 (f. 3): Agnus Dei   a 2
No. 3 (f. 3v-5): Patrem   a 3 (Apt 44: "Tailhandier")
No. 4 (f. 5): Kyrie summe clementissime   a 3 "Johannes Graneti"

It is true that the sequence of movements is not correct, but this is the case also in Toul, where the polyphonic Mass is scattered about the plainchant manuscript in any available space,[1] and even Tour, although in correct sequence, has two single Mass pieces inserted within the cycle.[2] It would seem that the copyists of Barc B originally wrote the Gloria and Credo, beginning each of these long movements on the verso as was customary, and then added the shorter movements in the spaces left free; but the cycle was not completed with the Sanctus, for some unknown reason. (There is space for it on the lowest three staves of ff. 4v and 5; the economy of the layout indicates that several more

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[1] See Schrade, Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, I, Commentary, 135ff.

[2] Ibid., 123ff.

pieces had been intended.)[1] It will be remembered that Toul omits the

Gloria, Tu B the Agnus, and P the Kyrie,[2] so completeness can hardly be

maintained as an essential criterion of a cycle.

Also (while we are at it), we might as well include the sequence

of four movements found in the second gathering of Apt:[3]

No. 11 (f. 9v): Kyrie, Jesu dulcissime a 4 "De Fronciaco"
No. 12 (f. 10-11): Et in terra a 3 "Depansis"
No. 13 (f. 11-11v): Sanctus a 3 "Fleurie"
No. 14 (f. 12): Agnus Dei a 3

In spite of the recent discoveries, the Mass of Tournai[4] retains

the honor of being the earliest cycle known. Although compiled in the

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[1]Barc B was written by two copyists: the first, an experienced, neat hand, wrote all the music on folio 1v except the last staff; the second, crude and amateurish, continued with the remainder of the music. The lack of professionalism is revealed also by the misplacement of the "Qud tollis" section in the two lower voices at the end of f. 2, whereas the corresponding section in the cantus does not appear until the top of f. 2v. Besseler (AfMW, VII [1925], 205f.) states that two hands are found in both Nos. 1 and 3, but I am able to distinguish different hands only in No. 1. He further states that No. 2 is a later addition, but it appears to be by the same hand as most of the rest of the music. He classifies No. 2 as "BM" (= cantilena-style), but it is, in fact, without text in a very simple, near-homorhythmic counterpoint. It carries only the markings "Agnus" and "tenor Agnus" for each of the three sections. The marking "Quinta" which is used for the contratenors of Nos. 1 and 3, and which Schrade found puzzling (Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, I, Commentary, 147), is used several times in Apt, as well as "Octava" for the highest voice (sometimes given as "V." and "VIII."). The terms undoubtedly derive from improvised discant practice.

[2]The lack of a Patrem in Bes is doubtless due to a missing double-folio. See Chailley, op. cit., 93ff., and Schrade, Acta, XXVII (1955) 15ff.

[3]Gastoué (op. cit., p. 42 and elsewhere) mistakenly assigns the composer "Fleurie" to Agnus No. 14 rather than to Sanctus No. 13. Pirro (op. cit., p. 10) has suggested that he is the Martin Florie who was one of the chaplains of the Ste-Chapelle in Paris in 1385.

[4]Description and inventory of Tour in Schrade, Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, I, Commentary, 123 ff.; the music is edited in I, 110ff.

early fourteen century, the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus could well have
been written in the thirteenth century, since they employ the old modal
rhythm. All movements are in conductus style and in near-homorhythmic
counterpoint with the exception of the Et in terra, the Amen of the
Patrem, and the Ite missa est - motet. The movements exemplify another
feature which becomes important for fourteenth century Mass composition:
they do not employ a plainsong cantus firmus — again excepting the Ite.[1]
Schrade has declared that the similarity of the tenors in the Kyrie,
Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus is so close that the Mass could almost be
taken as a cycle unified by the tenors were it not for dissimilarity of
the tenors of the Credo and Ite.[2] This is misleading; the similarity is
one of a certain (rather limited) style such as could be found in any
piece of the same character. Not a single phrase recurs in any of the
movements under consideration.[3]

The Kyrie is the simplest of all the movements. It consists of
four sections (Kyrie VI being set separately), each of exactly seven

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[1]The tenor melody of the Ite has not been identified with cer-
tainty. Harrison (op. cit., p. 227) states that it is a slightly varied
form of the Ite No. 4 of the Graduale Sarisburiense, p. 18*. Rudolf
Ficker's attempts ("Die Kolorierungstechnik der Trienter Messen," SzMW,
VII [1920], pp. 22 and 40ff.) to show that the Credo is based on GR
Credo I and the Gloria on GR Gloria VI are unconvincing. (See below
p. 100, note 2.

[2]Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, I, Commentary, 126.

[3]Notwithstanding Schrade's claim that the tenor of the Gloria
resembles that of the Kyrie "even to the point of identity in some
phrases," (Ibid., p. 125.)

double-longs in duration and cadencing on G. With very few exceptions
(each only two notes against one) the piece is in homorhythmic style,
beginning in the fourth mode, but soon dissolving into a mixture of
third and fourth. As a matter of fact, the variety achieved in the dis-
tribution of the tonal and rhythmic weight within the four sections is
wholly admirable. Contrapuntally, the principle of contrary motion is
carried through to such an extent by the tenor and motetus that the lat-
ter is almost an exact inversion of the former (dropping or rising a
third here and there between ligatures: the ligatures correspond exactly
in the two lower parts except for the final one; in the first two sec-
tions, all the ligatures are exact melodic inversions). The triplum is
added to the lower voices as a harmonic filler. All three of the voices
are remarkably uninteresting from a melodic point of view, and one is
forced to the conclusion that the composer conceived of his composition
primarily in terms of harmony and rhythm.

The Sanctus and Agnus are closely akin to the Kyrie, but show
more variety. At three places in the former and once in the latter there
are melismas in which the tenor has the reiterated rhythmic patterns typ-
ical of the thirteenth century motet while the upper voices break into
hocket. The formal organization is also freer than the four phrases of
equal duration in the Kyrie, e.g. (counting double-longs):

Agnus	I:	5 + 10 = 15
	II:	4 + 3 = 7
	III:	5 + 8 = 13

In spite of this, the rhythm of the Agnus shows an almost regular third mode throughout.

The Et in terra and Patrem show the development of this near-homorhythmic style in the characteristic meter of the Ars Nova (imperfect mode and time, major prolation, although the prolation plays a wholly insignificant role in the Patrem). In order to gain coherence, the long succession of phrases is organized by grouping them into three large sections plus the Amen. The phrases, averaging ten to twelve longs in duration, cadence predominantly on the main tone of the movement (they all do so without exception in the Et in terra), followed by a rest of one long in one voice while the other two have a textless connecting-passage. The large sections end with more substantial cadences marked by double bars. Within the phrases, there is a variety of from one to three intermediate cadences, mostly on adjacent tonal degrees and ending with a long in all three parts. The constant effect of stop-and-go, particularly noticeable in the Gloria (with its numerous short notes), is curious to our ears, but it must have held some charm for musicians of the fourteenth century, as it is a regular feature of the Ars Nova style. (After all, the exploitation of the contrast between long and short notes was an important element of modernity; it was a technique unavailable to the older thirteenth century masters.) The Patrem is very nearly in strict homorhythm, with the breves and semibreves in almost equal proportion carrying the syllables of the text. The Amen section shows more rhythmic independence, with two phrases of unequal length in three voices.

The Gloria is more elegant. An essentially homorhythmic foundation is enlivened by a considerable use of ornamental figures employing minims, and the rests at the ends of the phrases are not all in the top voice as in the Patrem, but are carefully shifted from one voice to another. The Amen section, which is extremely long, has passages of ornamental figuration which are somewhat more extended, a faster moving tenor (except for two phrases which have several longs in succession, which is not found in the main part of the composition), the tenor ending with a pedal point on the penultimate tone, and passages of hocket. Again, the (many) phrases of the three voices do not coincide in the Amen. The organization of phrases is interesting:

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   I Et in terra    11 + 11      + 11                 = 33
  II Domine Deus    13 + 11      + 15 1/2 + 11 1/2 = 51
 III Qui sedes      10 + 12 1/2  + 9                  = 31 1/2

     Amen           (varying)                         85 1/2
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We see that the standard phrase is of eleven longs, the first and third section are almost equal in length and shorter than the second, and that the extraordinarily long Amen is equal almost exactly to the first two sections combined.[1] There is no justification for the claim that the tenor employs some sort of special variation technique.[2] Indeed, it would be difficult to find a melody of this length, restricted for the

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[1] Note the similar proportions of the Patrem (except for the Amen): 55 1/2 - 68 1/2 - 54 1/2. Amen 18.

[2] "A melodic phrase recurs in continually varied form, like a motif in variation as it were, hence with the approach of a 'basso ostinato' (particularly clear in the Amen)." (Schrade, ibid, p. 125.)

most part to the range of a perfect fifth between f and c' and moving overwhelmingly in stepwise fashion, which would make _less_ use of recurring patterns.

The Ite-motet has an isorhythmic tenor[1] a Latin _motetus_ and a French love song in the _triplum_. Such mixtures were specifically condemned in the famous Bull, "Docta sanctorum," of Pope John XXII in 1324/25, but this apparently had little effect, because the same motet (as well as other practices which are forbidden in the Bull) recurs in _Iv_. Secular texts in the vernacular never occur in the liturgical music of the period except in Ite-motets, and it may be that it was condoned at the time because the Ite is not, strictly speaking, a part of the Mass, but a sequel to it.[2]

The Mass of Tournai has been judged rather harshly by some critics,[3] and unjustly, it would seem. The discarding of the cantus firmus and the achievement of a coherent over-all formal organization by skilfully grouping the phrases into large sections in the long movements sets an important precedent for fourteenth century Mass composition.

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[1] See p. 60, note 1.

[2] _Cf_. Apel, _Gregorian chant_, p. 25.

[3] J. Chailley (_Histoire musicale du moyen-âge_ [Paris, 1950], p. 200) finds it a work of mediocre craftsmanship, and van den Borren states that it "paraît monotone, vocailleuse, un tant soi peu barbare; et, là-même où des mélismes viennent la vivifier, les clichés qui proviennent de l'application mécanique de la _prolatio major_ semblent l'emporter sur la libre fantaisie de l'inspiration." (_XVe siècle musicale_, pp. 84f.)

We have already mentioned the most important fact about the Mass

of Besançon: the musical connections between the Kyrie and Agnus and

between the Sanctus and Agnus. Since the Mass probably dates from the

middle or second half of the fourteenth century,[1] long before the musi-

cally unified masses of the second quarter of the fifteenth century, this

is a feature of great significance. Also, we may note the presence of

both a Gloria and a Benedicamus. The latter is in only two voices in a

very conservative style: longs and breves exclusively in strict homo-

rhythm. Interestingly, the cantus firmus (GR II) is in the upper voice.[2]

Contemporary or a bit later than Bes is the famous Mass by

Machaut,[3] which was not written for the coronation of Charles V.[4] The

best analysis of this large and impressive work is by Otto Gombosi,[5] who

shows that theGloria and Credo are divided into sections and stanzas with

recurring cadential patterns, a kind of elastic strophic structure which

might best be termed a "variation" form. This is clearly a refinement and

elaboration of the simpler forms found in Tour and in Iv. Although they

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[1] Cf. Chailley, Annales Musicologiques, II (1954), 93ff.; Schrade, Acta, XXVII (1955), 33; idem, "The chronology of the Ars Nova in France," loc. cit., p. 57.

[2] Schrade, Acta, XXVII (1955), 18.

[3] There are several modern editions, one of the most recent being Schrade, Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, III, 37ff.

[4] See Machabey, Machaut, II, 113ff. See also above, p. 16, note 1.

[5] "Machaut's 'Messe Notre-Dame'," MQ, XXXVI (1950), 204ff.

go far beyond any other compositions, Machaut's strophic constructions
are not unique in the Ordinary of the Mass in the fourteenth and fif-
teenth centuries, as Gombosi believed.[1] For example, the Credo by
Pellisson (Apt No. 47) has a cadential figure which is similar for all
but four out of twenty-two phrases, the phrases arranged according to
this scheme:

	cadences			breves		
[Patrem		g			8]	
Factorem	g	g(+g)	a	12 +	8(+6) + 20	= 46
Genitum	g	g	a	18 +	14 + 21	= 53
Crucifixus	g	g	a	17 +	11 + 10	= 38
Et iterum	g (a+)	g	a	8 + (9+) 6	+ 19	= 42
Qui cum Patre	g	g	a	10 +	12 + 14	= 36
Confiteor	a	g	g	14 +	13 + 9	= 37
[Amen		c			5]	

The Amen of Machaut's Credo and, to a certain extent, that of the
Gloria, as well as all the other movements, are isorhythmic. It is per-
haps worth noting that the tenors of the Sanctus and Agnus employ the
plainsongs of GR Mass XVII, which form the most closely interconnected
Sanctus-Agnus pair in the modern Kyriale. We may mention one other point
about Machaut's Mass because it concerns a feature which is taken up and
used to such an extent by the French and Netherlandish composers of the
early fifteenth century that it becomes virtually a hallmark of French

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[1]Ibid., p. 224.

style: the setting off of certain important words by long, sustained chords. Machaut does this in the Gloria at the words "Jesu Christe" both times they appear, and in the Credo at the words "Ex Mariae Virgine." Later composers often mark a series of such chords with fermata signs.[1]

The Mass of Toulouse, like Tour, seems to be a collection of movements written at different times. The Credo is found in Iv and is from the first half of the fourteenth century, whereas the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus seem stylistically closer to the end of the century. The widely dissiminated Credo by Sortes has been discussed earlier.[2] To these remarks, we may add that it uses a cadential figure which is the same as that used in the plainchant Credo GR I, but the polyphonic piece does not seem to be an elaboration of the chant. There is a head-motive, a descending scale from c" to g', which is often used at the beginnings of the phrases (verses). The generally descending lines of the phrases draw into greater prominence the octave ascents at "Et resurrexit" and "Et ascendit," as Harder points out.[3]

Only the highest voice is provided with texts in all the movements of Toul, although the musical textures vary from a simple cantilena style

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[1] See below p. 125, note 1.

[2] See pp. 38 and 42.

[3] MD, VII (1953), 113.

to duet and motet styles. In the Kyrie the top part at times gives the impression of being nothing more than a figuration of the tenor.[1] This, combined with the melodic construction of the tenor, has led Harder to the conclusion that the piece might be based on a cantus prius factus, although not a liturgical chant.[2] There are small imitations between the upper parts, a rarity for French Mass compositions of this period, and certain motives often recur in the melodic lines, including, in the top part, the motive that some observers have regarded as a "thematic cell" in Machaut's Mass.[3]

This motive, as well as other stylistic features of the Kyrie, is found also in the Sanctus, which, moreover, organizes the form by thematic means: the beginning of the "Dominus" section is exactly the same as the beginning of the first "Sanctus," and the beginning of the second "Sanctus" is related to the first "Hosanna." The use of only a few motives in this piece (and in the Kyrie) make several suggested correspondences.

The Agnus has tropes replacing "qui tollis peccata mundi" in all three verses. Was the liturgical text simply omitted? (In this connection, we may remember the Agnus No. 21 of Huelgas, which has "Agnus dei"

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[1] But see the discussion of the Sanctus by Lorenzo Masi; below, pp. 100ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 110.

[3] E.g., A. Machabey; see "La musique religieuse française au XIVe siècle," Revue musicale, No. 222 (1953-54), pp. 38ff. The motive is that given below in Ex. 80, p. 230.

a 2, "qui tollis . . . miserere nobis" a 1, followed by tropes a 2.)

Each of the three Agnus sections in Toul is divided into five short

phrases of equal rhythmic construction separated by rests in all parts

simultaneously.[1]

The Question of Performance

One of the most difficult problems encountered in the study of

the Ordinary of the Mass in the Middle Ages has to do with how these

polyphonic compositions were performed. Most scholars today agree that

those parts of the compositions which are left in the manuscripts without

words under the notes (except brief cues) were intended for the vielle,

the lute, the portative organ, the slide trumpet, or some other of the

instruments which were then in use. But, what about the parts with com-

plete texts — were they sung by soloists or by a chorus?

One view, stated almost consistently by Handschin, is that the

performance of polyphony follows the practice of plainchant; i.e., those

chants which are assigned to the chorus will also be sung by the chorus

if they are set polyphonically, and similarly with chants for soloists.[2]

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[1]Many other comments about Toul may be found in the interesting
article by Harder (MD, VII [1953], 105ff.), to which the reader is
referred. Her remarks about the Ite (pp. 112f.) should be disregarded,
however, since they are based upon an erroneous transcription. (The
one in Schrade, Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century, I, 138, is
correct.)

[2]See his Musikgeschichte, pp. 149f., 182, 190, 209, and else-
where; also The Journal of Theological Studies, XXXVII (1936), 163ff.

Thus, compositions of the Ordinary of the Mass were sung by the chorus, but tropes to the Ordinary were sung by soloists. This solution leads to difficulty right away. We have seen that the earliest source if polyphony for the Ordinary, the Winchester Troper, contained eight tropes to the Gloria and four Kyrie tropes, and also eight settings of the Kyrie without tropes. It is unreasonable to assume that these Kyrie organa, side by side in the same manuscript, could have been intended partly for soloists and partly for chorus. Indeed, the manuscript itself shows that it is not a choir-book; it is a _Troper_; hence, a book for a soloist. Handschin himself stated that it was probably the Succentor's book.[1]

But, one may protest, perhaps this is an exceptional case; virtually all the settings of the Ordinary before the fourteenth century were tropes. True, but we are then faced with a new problem. One of the favorite and characteristic types of Mass composition in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries is the cantilena-Mass. Since the secular "model" was obviously for one singer with instruments, and since the cantilena-Mass piece is so close to it stylistically, it seems wholly unlikely that these compositions would have been sung by a chorus.[2] This objection would not apply, however, to the simpler of the conductus-pieces.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 172.

[2] The duet style is really only an extension of the cantilena with two singers instead of one, and the motet-Mass, like the motet proper, was also soloist music.

Another view has been forcefully put forward by Bukofzer, who
declares that there is no evidence before the early fifteenth century
for choral polyphony. He cites, contra Handschin, the use of the mark-
ing "chorus" only in the monophonic sections and not in the polyphonic
sections of antiphons in sources of the fifteenth century.[1] In his
opinion an ensemble of soloists is, as it were, half way between a
soloist and a chorus. It has in part the character of both; hence, it
could substitute equally well for either. (This would apply also to
mixed ensembles of voices and instruments or instruments alone; poly-
phony in general could substitute for either soloist or chorus.)

Bukofzer finds the first examples of choral polyphony in the
Italian manuscripts of the fifteenth century such as $\underline{H}_4$. We have men-
tioned earlier that certain compositions alternate between vocal duets
and sections in three or four parts. In the sources the former sections
are usually marked "unus," "duo," "dui," or "versus" and the latter
"chorus." The "duo" sections are almost invariably vocal, but the
"chorus" sections are most often in one or two vocal parts with an
accompaniment of one or two instrumental parts. Very rarely, the
"chorus" sections will have texts in all the parts. Bukofzer, with his
fondness for systematic evolution, was led to the conclusion that the
medieval chorus, accustomed to singing only monophonic chant, could at

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[1] "Discantus," MGG, III, col. 570.

first participate conveniently in polyphonic music by continuing to sing

in unison, the other parts being played on instruments. The next stage

of development was two choral parts with instruments; then, finally,

three choral parts alone. Thus, he arrives at the first known piece of

choral polyphony, the Credo by Guillaume Legrant (O No. 245), dated 1426.[1]

One difficulty with this theory is mentioned by Bukofzer himself:

there is no significant stylistic differentiation between the sections

marked "duo" and the sections marked "chorus." If anything, the "duo"

parts are simpler and easier to sing than the others. (He also mentions

the fact that the Gloria in RB, p. 1 [= f. 223], has places where one of

the melodies in the "D." [= "Duo"] sections divides into two parts.)

Actually, an investigation of the music shows nothing whatever in the

style or notation of these "chorus" sections that would lead one to

believe that they were performed differently from the many other pieces

in the same style (without duo sections) which do not carry these special

markings.

As a matter of fact, there is some evidence for the practice of

choral polyphony in an earlier period. Harrison reports that the

Westminster Abbey Customary, written during the abbacy of Richard de Ware

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[1]Bukofzer's arguments are presented in the chapter, "The beginnings of choral polyphony," in Studies in medieval and Renaissance music, pp. 176ff. Besseler ("Johannes Ciconia, Begründer der Chorpolyphonie," Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Musica Sacra, 1950 [Tournai, 1952], p. 281) finds the first datable piece in a motet by H. de Salinis on the election of Martin V as pope (1417). He arrived independently at the same general conclusions as Bukofzer regarding the introduction of choral polyphony, but attributes its invention to Ciconia.

(1259-83), gives detailed instructions to the Precentor about the per-
formance of the hymn Aeterna Christi munera which was sung in three
parts (sollemniter in triplum) by both sides of the choir together (not,
apparently, alternatim) on the two feasts of St. Peter and on the feast
of Relics. Also, the Norwich Customary (ca. 1260) says the verse
"Vidit beatus Stephanus" of the respond Ecce jam coram for the proces-
sion to St. Stephen's altar after Vespers on Christmas Day should be
sung in three parts by the whole choir (triplici cantu ab omnibus.)[1]
Thus, the concept of choral polyphony was by no means foreign to medieval
musicions, although it would seem to have been an exceptional rather than
a general practice.

One must not forget that even in plainchant the "solo" sections
could be sung by one, two, or even four singers (depending upon the solem-
nity of the Mass and the size of the chorus), so we may assume that there
was a certain amount of flexibility in this matter. In all likelihood
many of the fourteenth century Mass compositions were performed differ-
ently upon different occasions, perhaps usually with one singer to a
part, at other times with two or three (not to speak of the possibility
of instruments only playing parts provided with words in the manuscripts,
which must have been of frequent occurrence). To be sure, this hardly

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[1]Music in medieval Britain, pp. 113f. It is strange that after
giving these facts Harrison should later repeat Bukofzer's claim:
"Polyphonic music in the early Middle Ages, and until the late fourteenth
century, was sung by solo voices." (p. 156)

could be called a "chorus" in the usual sense, but it makes the dividing-line hard to draw. Just how many singers on a part must we have before we may call it a "chorus," or how many vocal parts?

A judicious point of view would be that more than one singer to a part in polyphonic music of the Middle Ages, although not the most general practice, was still of sufficient occurrence not to be consid-ered abnormal, and that the gradual increase in the number of singers to a part throughout the fifteenth century was a natural and easy process, accomplished smoothly without attracting any particular attention.[1] Indeed, if choral singing was such a new and novel practice in the early fifteenth century, why is it that not a single writer on music from this period so much as mentions this innovation?

However, we may agree with Bukofzer to the extent that fourteenth century Mass pieces were primarily intended for solo singers. Most of the repertory gives the impression that it is on a small scale, and leads us to think of chamber music. It may well be that this style was evolved

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[1] In 1415 John the Fearless paid the seven singers, N. Grenon, Th. Hoppinel, P. de Fontaines, G. Ruby, C. de Bellengues, J. Doré, and J. Bourgeois, and the same list again with the exception of Ruby in 1418. (A. Pirro, La musique à Paris..., p. 20). Since most of these men are known as composers of polyphonic music, we may assume that they were singers of polyphony primarily. The papal chapel had nine singers for polyphonic music in 1436. It increased irregularly to twelve, sixteen, and finally twenty-four in the second half of the century. (R. Haas, Aufführungspraxis der Musik [Potsdam, 1931], p. 108.) Of course, one must guard against the impression that all of these singers sang all of the time.

for use in the small private chapels of noblemen and church dignitaries,
leaving the chorus to sing the traditional plainchant in the large,
"public" chapels and churches. If this is true -- that fourteenth cen-
tury Masses were primarily for soloists -- the typical cantilena Mass
would have been performed exactly like a ballade or rondeau of the period:
one singer and three instruments, with ohe instrument doubling the voice.

The presence of brief connecting-passages without words in much
of fourteenth and early fifteenth century music strongly suggests instru-
mental participation in the vocal lines. In the Mass, it is found as
early as the Mass of Tournai. It is contrary to common sense to suppose
that the instruments played only these connecting-passages and nothing
else, for that would mean that the instrumentalist would wait for long
stretches and then come in with only a brief snatch of melody, sometimes
of only two or three notes. Obviously, the instrumentalist played the
entire melody, and it was the singer who occasionally had a brief pause.
This would mean that in standard performance each of the parts of a com-
position would always be played on an instrument, and one or more of the
parts would also be sung. Instrumental playing of all the parts of a
composition was probably as ubiquitous in this period as was the basso
continuo in the eighteenth century.

And now to return to the question of the "duo" and "chorus": the
"chorus" sections are indistinguishable stylistically from the standard
Mass pieces of the time, but the "duo" sections are written in a very
smooth, consonant texture, almost invariably for two voices of equal
range with the lines moving for the most part in thirds. It would seem

that what we have here is a vocal duet with one singer on a part, _unaccompanied_ and, probably, _not doubled_ by instruments. (Note the indications in _HL_: "unus.") By contrast, "chorus" would not mean a group of singers in the modern sense, but rather, "tutti," _i.e.,_ _with all the parts_ and _with the instruments_. The importance of these markings in the fifteenth century sources does not lie in their supposed indication of choral polyphony for the first time, but rather that they reveal a new style of contrasting sound-masses, and a taste for unaccompanied, purely vocal polyphonic singing.