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Contents

Editorial

In this issue we continue our series of *Leading questions* as Sarah Roberts talks to Bill Hunt, one of the founder members of the internationally acclaimed viol consort Fretwork. His comments on the instruments used by the ensemble and such matters as tuning, pitch and instrumentation (including the use of organ and lute with viol ensemble) will be of interest not only to viol players but also to other instrumentaliksts. This issue of *Leading Notes* incorporates William Byrd's setting of Sir Philip Sidney's poem *O Lord how vain*, a Fretwork edition. In the series *Guide to the Repertory*, Frank Dobbins gives a compact introduction to one of the most accessible of all early music repertories, the French chanson of the sixteenth century. This number is completed by two contributions from regular writers for *Leading Notes*, Bruno Turner and Clifford Bartlett. Bruno Turner presents a fascinating piece of detective work on the Toledo Feast of the Descen t and its musical implications, while Clifford Bartlett takes up the ever-contentious question of performing pitch in vocal music of the Renaissance.

Tess Knighton, editor of the irst two issues of *Leading Notes*, has decided to relinquish the editorship of NEMA's journal due to the pressures of a new job at Cambridge. Taking up the position of editor, I wish her well and look forward to the coming issues.

Ann Lewis

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were out of doors. It's a theatrical piece.

SR The other side of the spectrum is performing an In Nomine which is so introverted. How do you approach the performance of this kind of repertoire?

BH In Nomines are amongst the most difficult pieces to bring off successfully in a concert because the audience has to come with you all the way. Everything has to be balanced so perfectly that you can call people into the sound.

SR You've also been exploring the lesser-known repertoire such as Locke, which is quite quirky at times.

BH Yes, quirky and angular, and very English in its rough edges and strong melodic ideas. The four-part consorts are very successful in concert because they follow the strict fantasia writing with lighter dances. It's a great combination, as well as being in sheer length a more substantial kind of composition; it gives a bit more time for an audience getting used to the sound of viols to get on the wavelength. We hope that our recording of the Locke four-part consorts will be coming out in the near future.

SR Consorts songs are also part of your repertoire.

BH We've recently done a recording of consort songs mostly associated with the stage. The record is called *A Play of Passion*, and consists of songs from around the 1550s and 1560s as well as works by Byrd and Orlando Gibbons. We used a boy treble for this, which was a great experience and a unique sound.

SR Is there any particular repertoire which Fretwork will be exploring in the near future?

BH We've just finished recording the Lawes five- and six-part consort sets which is a milestone in recording the English repertoire. It's certainly amongst the most impressive music. Lawes is absolutely wonderful to perform. There's nothing like it – it's one of the greatest experiences I've ever had in performing chamber music. It's been said that if Lawes hadn't been killed in action in 1645, the whole course of music in Europe might have been different. One feels a hugely original force behind it all the time, striving to break out of the already quite archaic medium he was writing for. He turns the viol consort into a sort of symphony orchestra. He so often seems to be striving to break out of the form into something bigger, whereas there are many other composers who write exquisite music but seem rather to be honing it into something finer. Other major repertoire we will be looking at will be that of Jenkins, whose anniversary it is next year.

On a different side of viol music, there is a possibility which has arisen through George Benjamin's composition for use of a consort song for soprano and five viols. This has interested several other contemporary composers in writing for the medium, which is most exciting. We hope in 1995 to be able to première quite a number of pieces which will be connected with our performance of all the Purcell Fantasies. There seems to be considerable interest in writing a sort of large-scale homage to Purcell and if that were to be the case, the viol consort could enjoy a new lease of life which would be unprecedented.

SR Will you be recording the Purcell Fantasies?

BH The Purcell is in a way what we are heading towards and have been from the start. We're really anxious not to record it until we feel ready. It would be quite wrong to try and record it without understanding as much as we can of the earlier repertoire. Purcell's fantasias are such an extraordinarily complete essay on and summing up of everything that has gone before. The more we've played from the sixteenth-century repertoire, the more Purcell seems to contain echoes of even that. Purcell really understood the whole tradition and put his seal upon it.

SR How did the Fretwork editions begin?

BH That evolved by degrees. It began when we did the Armada recording and tried playing some transcriptions of Cabezon. We were very enthusiastic about these but since viol consorts didn't have access to this repertory through traditional publishing houses, we thought it would be a nice idea to make it available to other people to see what fun it was to play. I had become interested in the possibilities of using a computer to do music typesetting and had used this equipment to produce parts for Fretwork when we wanted to play music which was available only in score. Stewart McCoy and I thought that it would be a good exercise to pick the most important source of some of the Byrd consort songs and make a new edition which includes both score and parts. But, although the editions use the Fretwork name and include a certain amount of the music that Fretwork has done, they are not the publishing arm of Fretwork!

SR Do you feel that the public's attitude has changed towards the viol consort?

BH I hope that it has, yes. We've certainly had people coming up to us after concerts saying 'That was fantastic! I didn't realise that this music even existed'. Or they say things like 'I didn't think you could play it in concerts'. The success that we've had with the recordings has certainly contributed. But I don't think there will be a really significant expansion in viol consort playing until more contemporary music is written for the medium, or until the viol gets into schools.

SR Do you feel that the viol consort style of playing has changed over the years?

BH For as long as people have been playing viol consorts there have been different styles; for example Wenzinger's consort in Basle and their style of playing – as far as one can describe it – is quite different from the Jaye Consort or the English Consort of Viols. Then there is Jordi Savall, whose ensemble style is very different again. Perhaps more

people are being encouraged to think that it is not just music for the players and perhaps a few listeners in a small room, but that there is a great deal of the consort repertoire which can be put across successfully in a concert hall. To achieve that our approach to it has to be vividly characterised. The viol is an instrument which is pretty restricted in the louder end of its expressive possibilities; you always have to find ways of exaggerating the contrasts between loud and soft if what you wish to express is to carry over a substantial distance. It is important in this complicated music for four, five or six voices that we all play equally strongly to maintain the tension of the dialogue between the parts. And if there is maximum contrast of expression taking place in each of the voices then the piece can carry across to quite a large audience.

SR What is the most important consideration when forming a consort such as Fretwork?

BH I think it is essential to have real rapport with each other. It is a feature of fantasia music that no one voice is ever simply accompanying the others. Everybody is always speaking on equal terms. If we hadn't been five people who hit it off on all levels, then we couldn't have achieved what we have. So no one person has made Fretwork what it is.

Introduction to the repertory: the sixteenth-century chanson

Frank Dobbins

Frank Dobbins is a Lecturer in Music at Goldsmith's College, University of London.

> ...To banish our troubles and cares
> You would find some book of music
> And we three would sing till midnight...
>
> Eustorg de Beaulieu, *Divers Rapportz* (1537)

This letter from a poet–musician addressed to a friend in Bordeaux characterises the essentially intimate and domestic nature of the three- and four-voice chansons copied or printed in great quantity during the sixteenth century. Citizens who had acquired wealth through commercial or professional activities not only sought further power and privilege through literature and learning, but also made increasing demands on sophisticated art forms which had hitherto remained largely the preserve of an aristocratic or clerical élite. Their musical requirements were largely satisfied by other businessmen in the cities of Venice, Paris, Lyons and Antwerp who developed the technology and economy of printing, and who prevailed upon the musicians in the great courts and cathedrals to present their art in a form which would appeal to this wider public.

This background helps to explain the nature of the musical repertoire which survives. For, while the leading composers remained employees in the great households or ecclesiastical establishments, their most virtuosic exploits and their grandest occasional productions are rarely represented. Physical limitations and convenience of format (small part-books) favoured the chanson, madrigal or dance band, while tablature systems permitted the dissemination of solo instrumental music and lute song. Thus, Francophone publishers like Attaingnant, Moderne, Susato, Phalèse, Du Chemin, Le Roy and Ballard privilege the chanson in the same way that their Italian counterparts like Petrucci, Gardane and Scotto promote the frottola, villanella or madrigal. Some 10,000 pieces for three, four, five or six voices appeared between 1500 and 1600.

Obviously, within such a vast production there is considerable variety of content and quality. French repertoire copied or published in Italy during the first quarter of the century includes conventional courtly verse in fixed forms with artificial melody or simple rustic strophes with popular tunes, both set in complex melismatic polyphony by composers like Josquin, Févin and La Rue. Since Petrucci's chanson publications (1501–4), and many contemporary Italian manuscript sources, include only the first words of each song and since the melodic lines are sometimes disjunct or difficult to fit to the surviving verse (which is frequently found only in literary collections), instrumental performances of pieces by Josquin, Agricola and other contemporaries is sometimes appropriate. Petrucci's *Odhecaton* (1501) and *Canti B* (1502) have been published in scholarly modern editions by Helen Hewitt in 1942 and 1967, with many of the texts supplied along with considerable scholarly apparatus. Most of Josquin's fully texted chansons were printed posthumously and some (particularly those for five and six voices) are of doubtful authenticity. Most are available in a complete edition launched by Albert Smijers in 1921. The Corpus Mensurabilis Musicæ (CMM) series published by the American Institute of Musicology includes scholarly editions of Alexander Agricola (ed. E.R. Lerner, CMM 22/v, 1970), Antoine Brumel (ed. B. Hudson, CMM 5/vi, 1972) and Loyset Compère (ed. L. Finscher, CMM 15/iv, 1972). Pierre de la Rue is well represented in Martin Picker's *The Chanson Albums of Marguerite of Austria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965), while some pieces by Antoine de Févin, Jean Mouton and others are in Howard Mayer Brown's *Theatrical Chansons of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, which accompanies his penetrating study of *Music in the French Secular Theatre* (Harvard, 1963).

The second quarter of the sixteenth century was dominated by the publications of Attaingnant in Paris and Moderne in Lyons. The former gives pride of place to the unpretentious epigrams and strophic chansons of Clément Marot and his poetic colleagues at the Court of Francis I, set in simple and delightful four-voice homophony by Claudin de Sermisy, Pierre Sandrin, Pierre Certon and other singers or instrumentalists active in the royal chapel or metropolitan churches. Sermisy, Sandrin, as well as Arcadelt, Mittantier, Passereau and Vassall are represented in CMM editions by Albert Seay and others; Seay has also published inexpensive editions of Attaingnant's and Moderne's original collections (Colorado College Music Press, 1979–82) while Bernard Thomas for London Pro Musica Editions has produced very good value performing editions of small selections by Sermisy, Crecquillon, Manchicourt, Willaert and Lassus. Unencumbered by variant sources and scholarly apparatus, these offer sound translations and useful suggestions on performance. Certon's prolific chanson output is partly available in an edition by Henry Expert and Aimé Agnel (3 vols, Paris: Heugel, 1967–8).

This music is eminently vocal, with lyrical melody sensitively matched to the verse, harmonically and structurally lucid, and easy to perform, which no doubt accounted for its great popularity with amateurs of the time. More rhythmically demanding are the songs of the provincial composer Clément Janequin (6 vols, ed. A.T. Merritt and F. Lesure, Monaco, 1965–8), whose descriptive portrayals of birds and battles are as vibrant and exciting as his scurrilous anecdotes of cuckolds and wayward

clerics. The lively counterpoint of these charming miniatures is often matched by other provincial composers like P. de Villiers, Henry Fresneau and Didier Lupi, whose work was published in Lyons.

A heavier and more consistent imitative technique is found in the motet-like chansons of Nicolas Gombert, Clemens non Papa, Crecquillon and Pierre de Manchicourt, who worked in the imperial Habsburg orbit and published their music with Susato in Antwerp. This repertoire is well represented in modern editions in the CMM series and by facsimile editions issued in the Corpus of Early Music series (Brussels, 1969–72). Susato himself, like Gardane in Venice, Gervaise and others in Paris and elsewhere, wrote two- and three-voice chansons of a particularly didactic kind, adding one or two free contrapuntal voices to an existent melody or part. As intended, such pieces are more valuable in teaching counterpoint or instrumental and vocal practice, than as concert pieces.

The transfer of melodic interest from the middle voice to the top part corresponded with the emergence of more harmonic bass lines in the popular strophic *voix de ville* by composers like Arcadelt, Certon and Mornable. This more harmonic approach permitted greater clarity of textual declamation and appealed to Ronsard and the new poets of the Pléiade more than the complex counterpoint of the earlier generations; although in re-creating the union of verse and music through the Pindaric ode and Petrarchan sonnet in French the new poets lamented the absence of a truly lyrical tradition of instrumentally accompanied monody. Ronsard's verse captivated musicians for the next thirty years, inspiring the graceful three-voice odes of Pierre Clereau and the sensitive four-voice sonnets of Costeley, Lassus, Bertrand and Boni. Although rarely willing to abandon the firm foundation of clear structure and metrical propriety, these composers show increasing concern for expressive word-painting through greater contrast in rhythm and texture and by chromatic melody and harmony. While editions of Lassus, Costeley and Bertrand have long been available, thanks to the monumental series of Henri Expert (*Les Maitres Musicians de la Renaissance française* and *Les Monuments de la musique Française de la Renaissance*), the exquisite sonnets of Boni (the most reprinted French music of their age) have only recently re-emerged (Paris: Salabert, 1987) while Clereau still awaits modern republication.

The last decades of the century greeted the *musique mesurée* of Claude le Jeune, Jacques Mauduit, Eustache du Caurroy and others, composed to match the classically inspired quantitative verse of Jean Antoine de Baïf. Some of this music is available through editions by H. Expert and D.P. Walker. The ancient rhythms offer new vitality, while the delight in contrasting vocal groups for different strophes and refrains adds an extra colourful dimension. By this time such strophic pieces are called 'airs' and although instrumental accompaniment is clearly appropriate, French sources continued to prefer the conventional part-book publication.

The best survey in English of the repertoire remains François Lesure's *Musicians and Poets of the French Renaissance* (New York, 1955), which followed the valuable selection offered in the *Anthologie de la Chanson Parisienne*, ed. F. Lesure and others (Monaco, 1953). But since that time many more modern editions of the music are available, as well as detailed studies on individual composers and sources. A reasoned guide to a selection of thirty-five chansons is provided in Jane Berstein's *French Chansons of the Sixteenth Century* (Pennsylvania State University, 1988). A less costly and more broadly representative selection of eighty-four pieces, including many previously neglected gems as well as a number of famous 'lollipops', is offered in *The Oxford Book of Chansons* (Oxford, 1987), which includes translations and notes on each piece. Few facsimile editions of part-books are yet available, although Alamire (Flemish Centre of Early Music, B.3990 Peer, Belgium) have issued some and Scolar Press are planning more. For those who cannot cope with reading parts without bar lines, clear text underlay or specified accidentals, the modern editions mostly agree in the solutions offered to problems of mensuration and *musica ficta*, although text underlay remains more variable.

If performance in single voices remains the ideal medium for most of this repertoire, reflecting contemporary descriptions and representations, as well as publishing conventions, most pieces are quite effective if performed by small choirs of well-matched voices. While trios come in all sorts of combinations (SSA, ATT, ATB, TTB), the four-part pieces favour ATTB or SATB and the five-voice SSATB or SATTB. Most of the editions mentioned above avoid transposition, which often creates more problems than it solves.

Although performance in modern French may be a safer, more consistent and satisfactory option for singers today, some ideas gleaned from regional dialects and sixteenth-century orthographic manuals are offered in *Bele buche e bele parleure* (London, 1976), by A. Alton and B. Jeffery. The texts, often by great poets, are preoccupied with love, usually platonic and unrequited but sometimes erotic and humourous.

The polyphonic chanson, like the English madrigal, provides infinite delight for the performers with its fine balance of harmony and counterpoint, its subtle interaction of phrases (often in contrasted dialogue), its rhythmic verve and its formal clarity. Although its variety of style and idiom has proved successful in concerts and recordings (The King's Singers and The Ensemble Clément Janequin have effectively exploited some of the more virtuosic pieces), it remains essentially music for the amateur.

The Descent to Toledo
or how the Blessed Virgin came to reward St Ildephonsus in the year AD 66 and how Alonso Lobo celebrated it around 1600

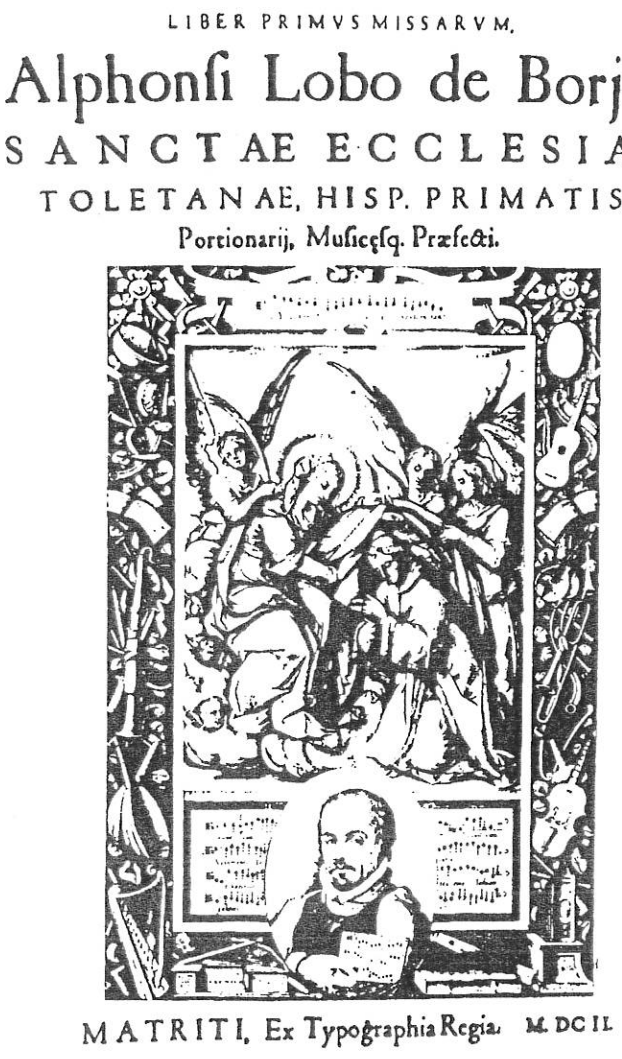
Bruno Turner

Bruno Turner is well known as an editor, writer and broadcaster as well as for his performances and recordings as director of Pro Cantione Antiqua.

I would like to think that some of our readers will sit down with magnifying glass in hand and sing from the parts reproduced here.

When I first knew Alonso Lobo's First Book of Masses (Madrid, 1602), I was puzzled by the superscription 'In Descensione B. Mariæ' heading the motet 'Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui'. The Virgin had paid a visit to Spain soon after her Assumption in the first century, and where she stood has been celebrated as El Pilar at Zaragoza ever since. But the Andalucian Alonso Lobo had served only at Osuna, Seville and Toledo. And the text was unique. The first sentence was from the Song of Songs, customarily used for honouring Mary, but then it continued: 'Therefore rejoicing, Mary, mother of God, we shall go into thy dwelling and worship in the place where thy feet have stood'.

Several different things observed by chance (and others by design) combined recently to explain the interesting background to what is, thank heaven, a very fine piece of music (how I hate long articles about interesting backgrounds to dull fragments of no intrinsic value!).


LIBER PRIMVS MISSARVM.

Alphonſi Lobo de Borja,

SANCTAE ECCLESIAE

TOLETANAE, HISP. PRIMATIS,

Portionarij, Muſicęſq. Præfecti.

MATRITI, Ex Typographia Regia. M. DC II.

In Toledo Cathedral, to this day, there is a great stone kept behind two sets of bars; beside it a ceramic plaque tells the visitor that when the Queen of Heaven put her feet on the ground she placed them on this stone. It goes on to ask that you should 'kiss it for your consolation. Touch it and say with devotion: We venerate this place where the most holy Virgin put her feet'.

Now look at the title page of Lobo's book. This frontispiece is full of interesting details: a portrait of Lobo himself, three different musical canons and cascades of contemporary instruments. In pride of place is the Blessed Virgin bestowing her gift, a chasuble, upon the shoulders of Saint Ildephonsus, patron saint of Toledo. The monk Cixila (ninth century) told the story. Ildephonsus had written his seventh set of new Marian prayers, celebrating, this time, the Annunciation. He was processing with the clergy to the church to celebrate the liturgy when suddenly the doors opened and all were surrounded by a heavenly splendour. The clergy fled, but Ildephonsus remained. Then he saw the Queen of Heaven sitting on his own bishop's throne of ivory, and she said to him: '...receive from my hand a gift...you may wear this vestment only on my feast days'.

Of course, I checked through my various microfilms of Toledan liturgical books and found that 23 and 24 January in the Toledo Calendar more or less completed the picture. The first of these days is the Feast of S Ildefonso and the next day is (or was) S Maria de Pace (of Peace), frequently called 'In descensione Beatæ Mariæ'. Indeed, the Feast of the Descent continued as a local Toledo Feast until the end of last century. The liturgy of Toledo and other churches of that primatial See observed the celebration of S Ildefonso (Spanish and Latin spellings are used indiscriminately) and of the Descent with due solemnity (both are feasts of six copes and nine lessons – liturgical experts will know what I mean). The prayers and lessons recount the works of the saint, the apparition and the miracle.

Alonso Lobo published just one printed collection of his works: six masses and seven motets. His other music is scattered in a variety of surviving manuscripts. Lobo was Guerrero's assistant for a while at Seville, then from 1593 to 1604 he was *maestro de capilla* at Toledo. He returned to Seville to be full maestro until his death in 1617.

I do think his music is extraordinarily beautiful. The 'Versa est in luctum' is gaining many admirers; it is a grave and moving funeral motet upon the death of Philip II of Spain in 1598. The special setting of 'Quam pulchri sunt' is less famous but deserves the same attention, far beyond its

curiosity value. The present brief article, the reproduction of Lobo's Toledan tribute to the local saint and miracle, and my own enthusiasm for Lobo's works, are my humble gift to celebrate the Hispanic year of 1992.

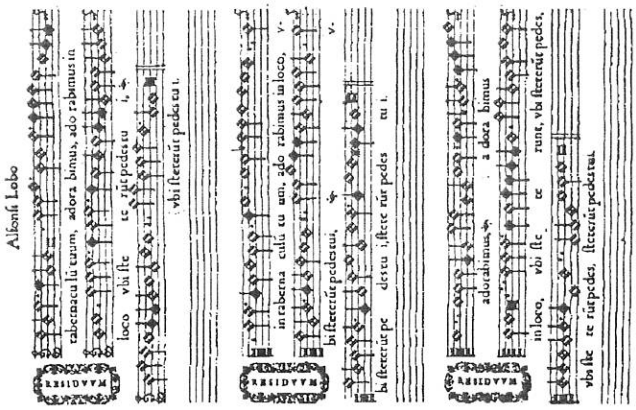
Text

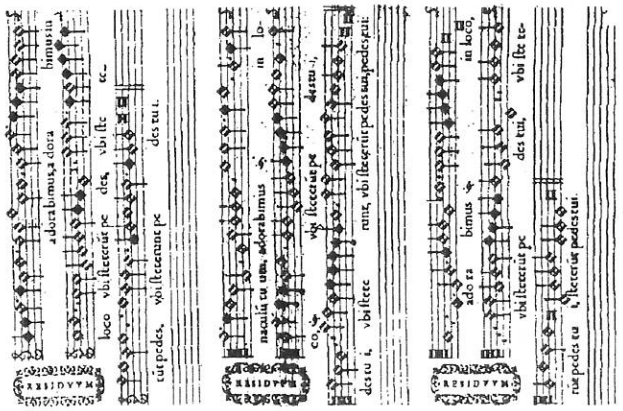
Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui in calceamentis, filia principis, Maria mater Dei, ideo gaudentes introibimus in tabernaculum tuum, adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes tui.

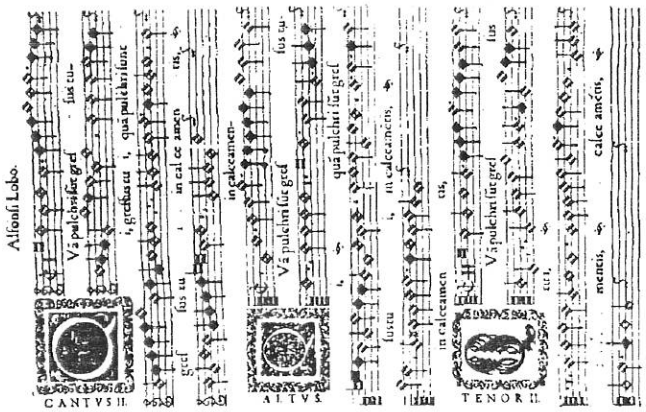
Translation

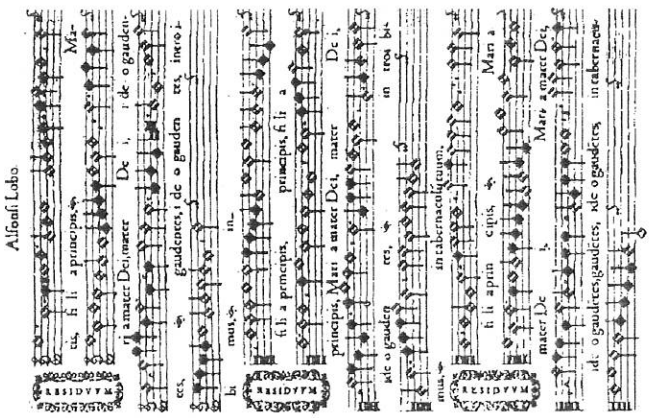
How beautiful are thy sandalled feet, daughter of the prince: therefore rejoicing, O Mary mother of God, we shall go into thy dwelling, and we shall worship in the place where thy feet have stood.

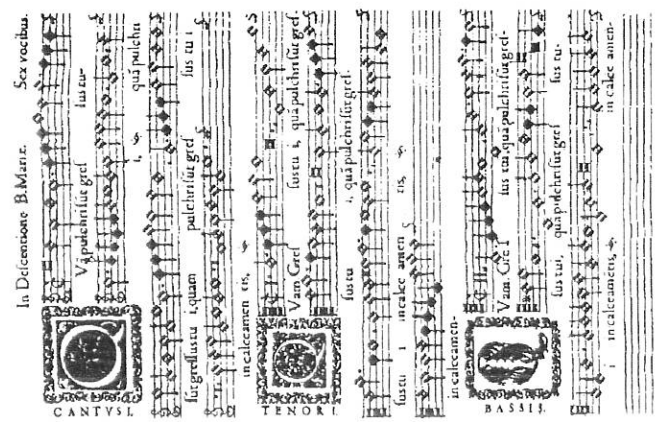
A modern edited score of this motet is published by Mapa Mundi, London.

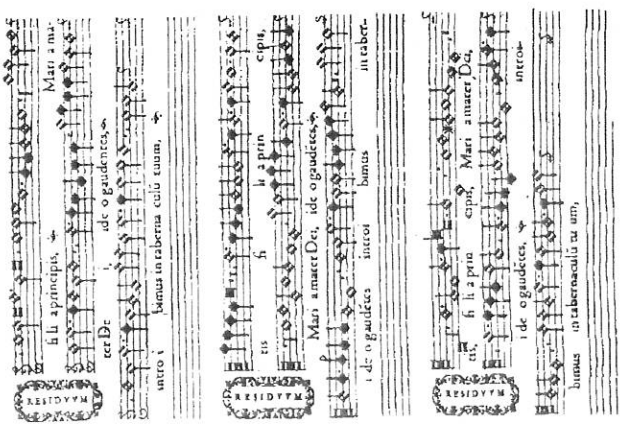




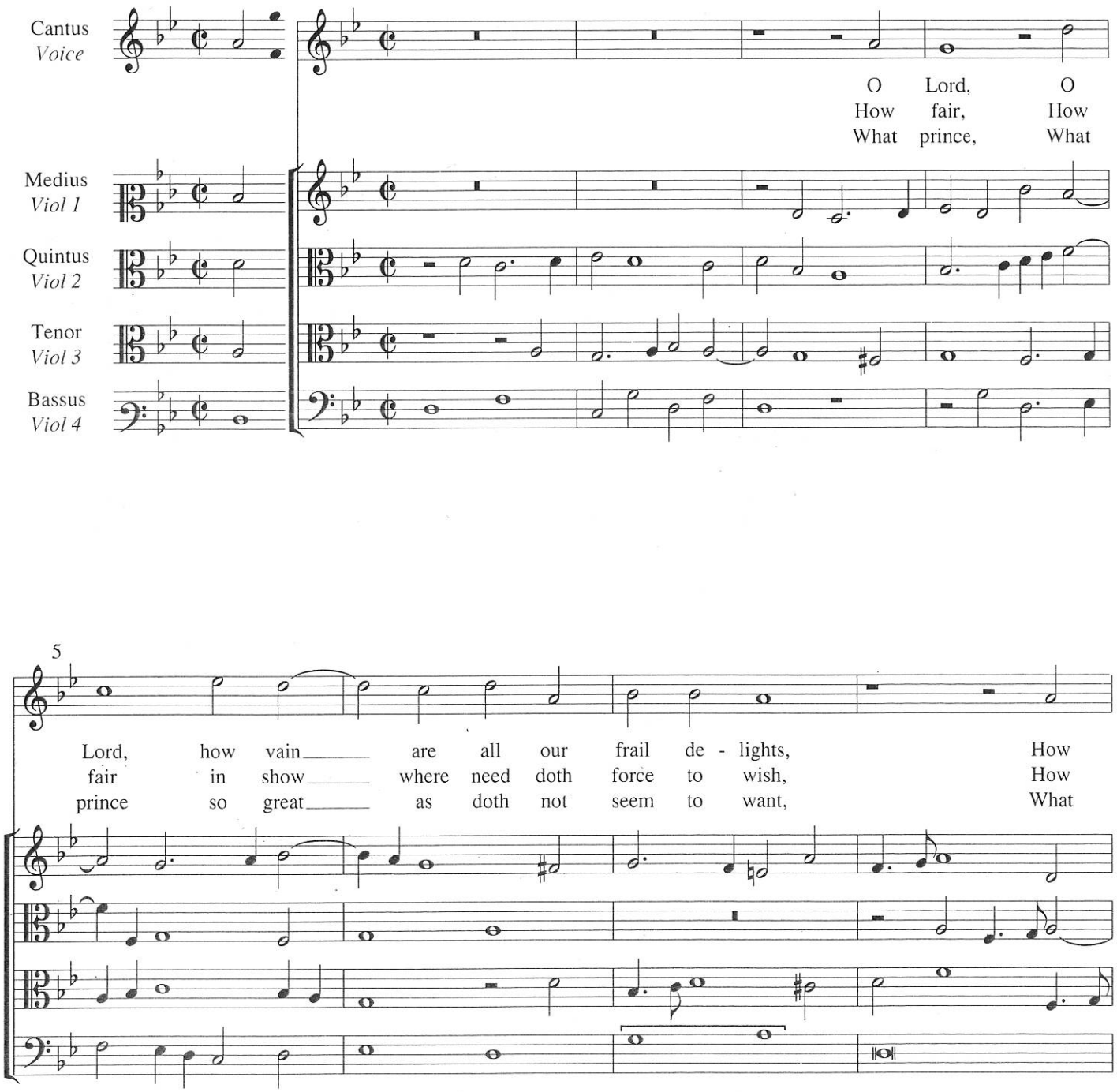




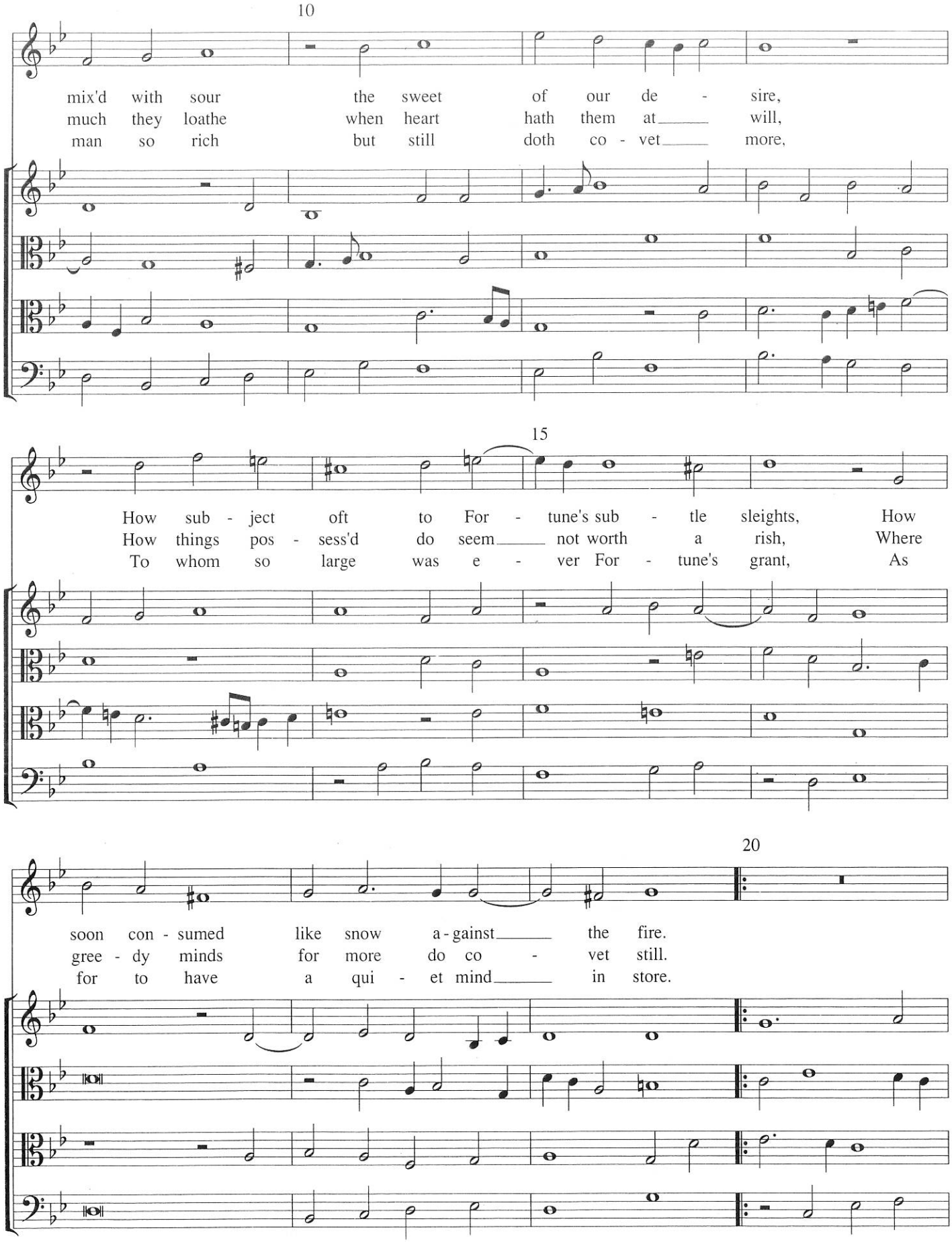




O Lord, how vain



 FE3 Consort Songs by William Byrd



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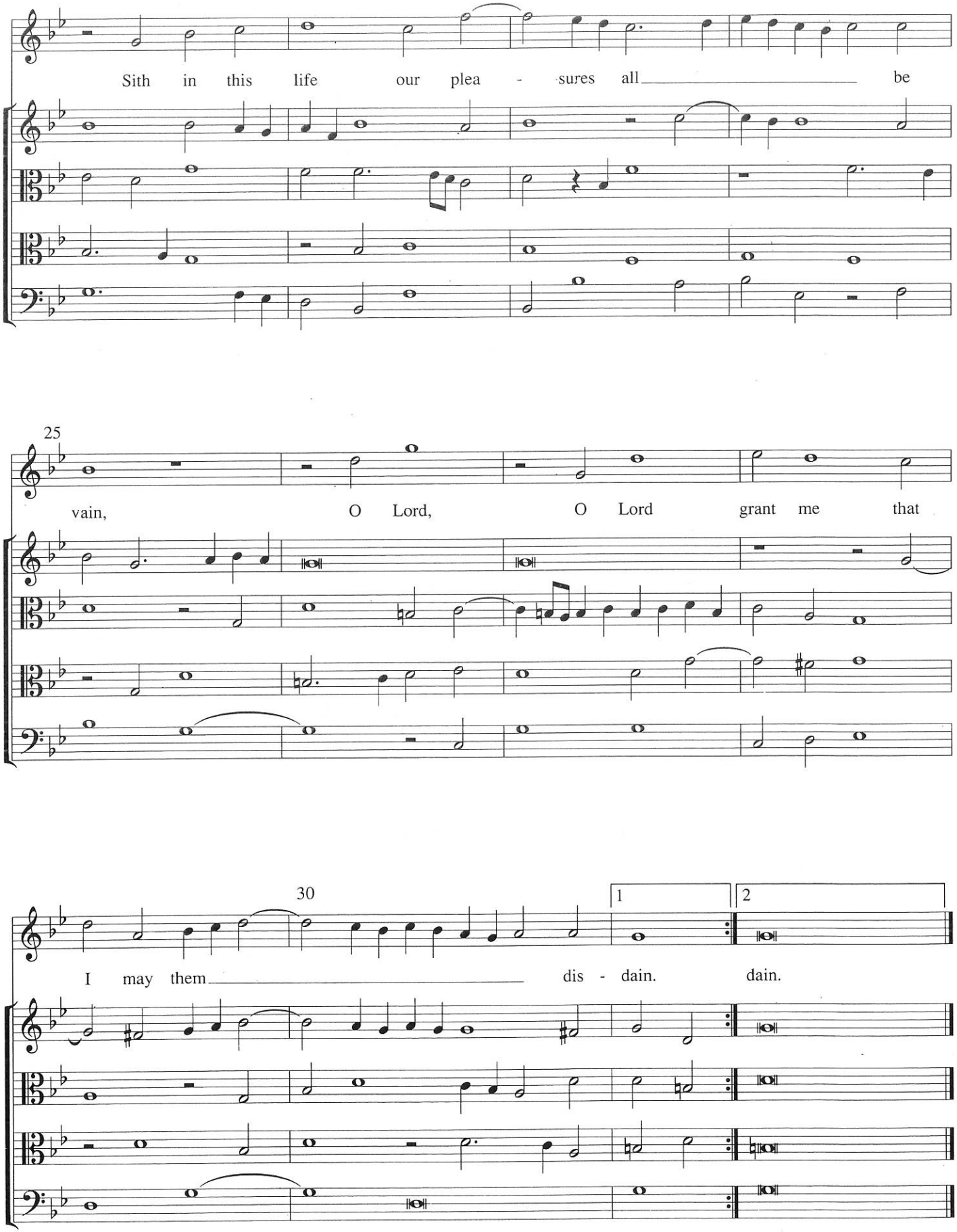
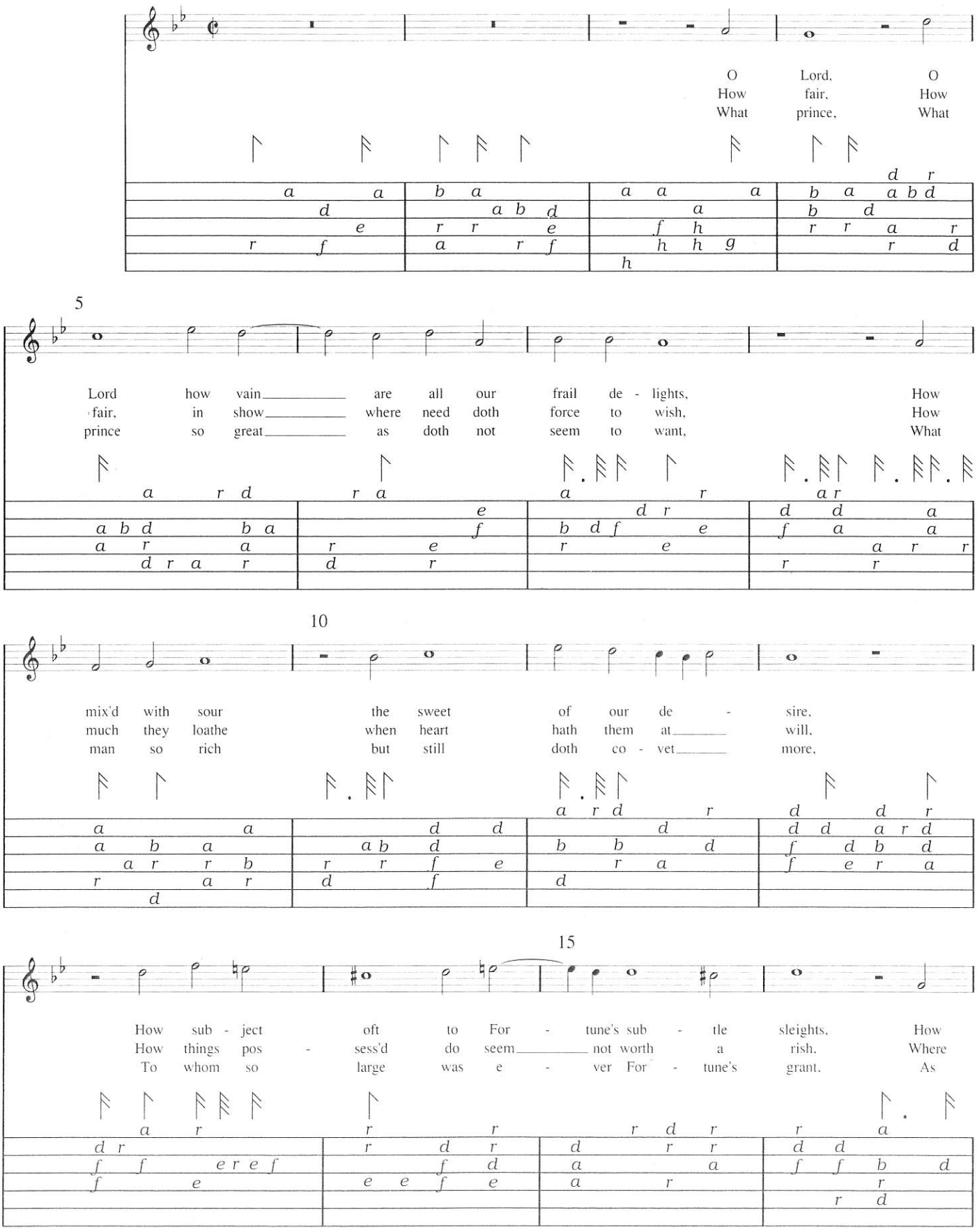


 FE3 Consort Songs by William Byrd

O Lord, how vain



 FE3 Consort Songs by William Byrd

 FE3 Consort Songs by William Byrd

Transposing Choral Music

Clifford Bartlett

Clifford Bartlett, music publisher, editor and reviewer, discusses some of the difficulties in preparing editions of early music.

Probably the most difficult decision anyone who edits Renaissance vocal music for performance has to make is the proper pitch level. Computer technology can help to some extent: most music programmes will transpose automatically. But the cost of origination is a comparatively small part of a music publisher's cost; even with the cottage-industry approach of firms like Joed or my own, there is considerable additional expense in producing a transposed version and keeping several versions of a piece in stock. Copies can be run-off to order. But such bespoke service demands prices that most customers are unwilling to pay. So the problem has not gone away.

The editor has three basic options:

1. to suit the edition to a standard modern choir
2. to reproduce the pitch at which the music originally sounded
3. to present the original notation and leave the performer to adjust the pitch.

Option 3 sounds like a cop-out, but has many advantages. It removes the edition from the vagaries of musicological fashion (and in any case the original pitch is not always known) and it keeps the music within the appropriate tradition: cantus firmi, for instance, are at the pitch of their source, modality is more visible, *musica ficta* is easier to assess. If the preferred pitch by options 1 and 2 is less than a tone away from the original notation, I believe that it is generally better to leave transposition to the performers and not change the notation. Most singers are happy to transpose within that limit, and with the common use of A 440 and A 415, even singers with perfect pitch have had to accept widely variable standards.

Many editions suffer by confusing options 1 and 2. I have no objection to option 1, provided that the editor makes it clear what he is doing. There are today a large number of excellent female sopranos and altos who enjoy singing Renaissance choral music. The fashion for single-sex social groups (apart from cathedral choirs and glee clubs) is dead, and many chamber choirs would sound far less impressive if the men were not covered by a clear soprano tone. But introducing women is not just a matter of changing the voice colour: it affects the balance and the classification of the voice parts. W.S. Gilbert's division of mankind into Liberals and Conservatives, so obvious a century ago, is now a quaint archaism: similarly, the division of voices into sopranos, altos, tenors and basses is not a law of nature.

Most Renaissance music is written in four different clefs, with two particular patterns predominating: C1, C3, C4 and F4 is the norm, with G2, C2, C3 and F3 or C4 slightly less common. (G denotes a G clef, C a C clef, F an F clef; the number indicates the line on the staff, counting up from the bottom; the normal modern bass clef is F4, the treble clef is G2.) The clef names of the first group are soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and the part-books in which the music was published generally used those as descriptive names: additional voices (usually duplicating the same four clefs rather than filling the gaps) were labelled numerically – quintus, sextus, etc. Much later, music written for these clefs fitted the modern voices named thus, but it should not be assumed that this applied in the Renaissance.

There is a growing agreement that the two types of clef notation were used for reasons other than to show different ranges: music in the 'high clefs' was transposed down so that the tessitura was roughly that of music in the 'low clefs'. Discussion of this has been focused on Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*, where some still find the idea of transposition controversial; but for English church music, even those who disagree on the absolute pitch level agree on this principle. (Morley's objection in *A Plain & Easy Introduction...*, ed. Harman, p.275 is a curious exception.) If we look at music written in the low clefs at its apparent pitch, without transposition, we find that, in terms of modern voices, the top part is usually mezzo-ish; it is almost invariably within the range of the male falsetto voice and is a more comfortable part for that voice than parts in alto clef. The soprano parts lie low for modern choirboys, but they are now trained to sing high, and with a different training boys can sing a lower range equally well. The second part, in alto clef, is generally too low for contraltos or countertenors, but fits those genuine tenors who are comfortable up to G and occasionally A. The third part, in tenor clef, fits the normal male voice, the baritone, while the bass part (with F as its bottom note) is suitable for proper basses. On the face of it, there would seem to be no reason to assume that such music was intended to be sung at a pitch more than a semitone or so away from A 440.

The situation is confused, however, by some evidence that suggests that English choir pitch was a minor third higher. This depends primarily on two descriptions of the pitch of Worcester Cathedral organ in the 1660s. Most scholars accept this as conclusive and have assumed that the whole of Tudor church music must be sung exactly a minor third higher on the strength of it. I would prefer to balance such specific but isolated evidence against what the music itself tells us.

In my regular *Early Music News* reviews I have been forced to treat rather briefly some publications which raise the pitch question. In his preface to the recent series *Renaissance Masters* from Chester, Peter Philips, the general editor, claims 'I have printed the music at the pitch at

which I believe the composer heard it sung, from where modern performers should transpose it, if necessary, up or down to suit their members' [*sic* – what are the members of performers?]. In fact, if he had claimed to adopt my option 1, I would have had few complaints, apart from the unnecessary complication of B-flat minor in the opening piece (if you expect performers to transpose anyway, why use B-flat minor when A minor is so much easier to read?). He has in fact done his best to make the music fit a modern SATB amateur choir. The difficulties show chiefly in the alto part. The average countertenor who has not extended his voice upward to sing higher castrato parts has a range going up a ninth from middle c, and down (by 'changing gear' into a soft tenor) to about the F a fifth below middle C, but with the lower notes considerably less clear than the upper ones. But consistently the top alto note in the *English Anthems* volume of this series is a B-flat', and the comfortable and effective top notes of the voice are avoided. Further transposition, however, makes the bass and tenor parts uncomfortable. Internal evidence of the vocal compass supports the use of tenors, baritones and basses for the lower three parts at the notated pitch rather than the alto, tenor and bass suggested here. The publication is in fact more widely useful with the transpositions, but I would be cautious in claiming them as historically correct. (The issue is not essentially affected by some of the pieces being for male voices only.)

The other two issues of the first batch of the series are less contentious. Byrd's Easter Propers are not written within the normal conventions and Ivan Moody sensibly puts them up a tone so that they just fit SSATB, though the tenor and bass parts are a bit high. (Those who saw the excellent Channel 4 film on the *Gradualia* will be aware that, though in one sense highly functional religious music, it was written for unusual domestic circumstances.) It is a fairly basic rule that music in high clefs works quite well for SATB and notationally does not look too anachronistic if transposed down a tone, so that was the natural choice for Palestrina's *Missa 'Dies sanctificatus'*.

My main disagreement with these Chester editions is not the degree of transposition but the claim that it represents the original pitch level. Many scholars have taken the minor-third proposal as gospel and let it override their common sense. I felt thus about Lionel Pike's edition of solo motets by Peter Philips. The error here derives from the misunderstanding of the nature of the original publication. This is not in any sense related to the English church music tradition. Philips was a Catholic, and had been working on the Continent from 1582 until his death in 1628, the year the motets were published. Even if the minor-third transposition was universal in England, there is no reason to assume the same pitch in Belgium. The music is in the soprano clef (C1) and is labelled 'Cantus vel Tenor': here the part names are being used to describe voices. The music has quite a narrow tessitura. As transposed by Pike, it lies chiefly in the fifth from an octave above middle C to top G. This is a feasible range for the Covey-Crump style of tenor, but I know of no early vocal music whose pitch can be pinned down which uses so narrow a compass that is so high in the vocal register. It must be exhausting to sing. There is a modern type of choirboy training which forces voices up to this tessitura; but while I can imagine a composer writing for a restricted range in the middle of the voice, it seems very impractical to write so many pieces for a compass that is both narrow and high. My suspicions are confirmed by the presence in the collection of some *alternatim* psalms, where the solo sections alternate with chant. No one with even a minimal experience of singing plainsong would set the reciting note for a psalm at high E-flat, as the editor has been forced to do for the two psalms here. It would need more than the pitch of an organ in another country used for a different liturgy to convince me that there is any justification in such a transposition.

Pitch is a difficult subject. A glance through early issues of *The Organ Yearbook* will show how difficult it is to interpret the words of writers like Schlick and Praetorius, who are trying to be precise: most of the evidence is much more circumstantial. Performers must be cautious. Music may sound convincing in high-pitch performances by the Clerkes of Oxenford or the Tallis Scholars, and if you have a choir that includes high sopranos and no low basses, high pitch may be best for you and enable you to present the music better than by adopting a pitch that is historically correct. But there is considerable evidence that Renaissance taste favoured low rather than high sounds. The normal ecclesiastical instruments were sackbuts and cornetts, and now that we have heard the exciting sounds that low sackbuts can make when played sensitively and in tune, we may reconsider our attitude to what might have seemed to be rather muddy low vocal parts.

So how should an editor decide what pitch to adopt? My inclinations are that, for low-clef music, the original pitch is likely to have been near enough A 440 for transposition of the notation to be unnecessary; so if the edition is intended for those wishing to attempt to reconstruct the original sound, I would leave the pitch unchanged, but would transpose high-clef music down a fourth. In both cases, alto-clef parts should normally be notated in the modern octave-treble clef. If the market is the modern SATB choir, I would normally put low-clef pieces up a tone, high-clef pieces down a tone. This generally produces keys that are not too outrageously anachronistic and is 'authentic' in that there is plenty of evidence for transposition by a tone or a fourth in the sixteenth century but not for transposition by a minor third. Singers can adjust by a semitone or so if necessary. Ideally, the publisher should offer both alternatives. If I were producing a scholarly 'complete edition' I would not transpose at all: changing the original pitch-notation conceals the tradition in which the music stands, and if performers want to pick out pieces to photocopy and sing, those intending to perform low can choose the low-clef pieces while most high-clef pieces can be sung by mixed choirs from the notated pitch, transposing down a semitone or a tone.

We should be cautious of dogma, we should be suspicious of arguments which involve extrapolating large theories from small pieces of evidence, and we should question the assumptions of modern practice and continually relate all theories to the music itself.

Postscript

After writing this, the Summer 1991 issue of *The Journal of Musicology* arrived, with an article by Frank Carey on 'Equal voices' which quotes a passage from Pietro A(a)ron's *Libri tres de institutione harmonica* (Bologna, 1516). He is writing about what Morley calls 'compositions for men only to sing' (the two writers agree on the total compass of such music, a fifteenth possibly extending to a seventeenth). In such pieces, the top part 'may not be able to be sung by a boy's voice or a falsetto voice; rather, it is sung by a manly voice, that is by those who customarily sing alto or bass'. Morley places the top part in the alto clef with the G above middle C as the top note; Aron gives the A a tone above for music in the first or second modes (with no comment on other modes): near enough to imply agreement considering the distance of time and space between them. The implication is clearly that falsettists and boys sing parts higher than this, but that normal male voices (Aron calls them *voces mutatæ*) sing alto parts.

Renaissance Masters contains three series – the first of each is mentioned here. *English Anthems 1: Anthems by Tallis, Sheppard and their Contemporaries. Masses 1: Palestrina, Missa 'Dies Sanctificatus'. Motets 1: Byrd, The Easter Propers.* Chester Music, 1990, £3.95 each. *Peter Philips: Fifteen Motets for solo voice and continuo,* edited by Lionel Pike, is published by Antico Edition (series AB1), £8.00.

Events

'The Marriage of Music and Dance': Conference Report

The marriage was celebrated on this occasion with a feast set forth somewhat in the Chinese manner: a wide variety of intriguing fare presented in digestible portions to be sampled according to taste. In the three days, eighteen papers were given on subjects ranging from fifteenth-century Basse danse accompaniments to nineteenth-century step vocabulary, taking in Whirling Dervishes, Jesuit theatre and French metronomic devices along the way. A broadly chronological approach was adopted, enabling delegates to attend as suited their main interest, and opportunities for Round Table discussions were built into the timetable, which was most capably implemented by each day's chairman, respectively **Christopher Page**, **Brian Trowell** and **Madeleine Inglehearn**.

In the first two papers on the fifteenth century, **Simon Hill** and **Ian Gatiss** discussed possible methods of realising the music given for Burgundian basse danse and in the Italian dance manuals. Then **Véronique Daniels** presented her interpretation of the proportional relationship between the four *misure* of the quattrocento ballo and **Barbara Sparti** expounded on the execution of three contrapassi in two tempos of quaternaria – thus were illumined some of the rhythmic subtleties to be discovered in these dances, not only in the music and in the choreography but also in the skilled intricacies of the interplay between them. The rhythmic structure of Estampies was the subject of **Joan Rimmer**'s paper, and the first day closed with **Vladimir Ivanoff**'s tantalising glimpse of exotic ritual dances of the Ottoman Empire as seen through the eyes of European travellers.

Julia Sutton began the next round with a talk on the forms of the musical and choreographic variations in the sixteenth-century Italian manuals and a showing of the instructional video she has directed, which provides a demonstration of steps and dances from the treatises of Caroso and Negri. **Jeremy Barlow** addressed the question of when dance music might constitute music for dancing and illustrated his remarks by playing examples of the increasingly fancy divisions and cadential flourishes of galliard pieces through the century. The next three speakers, **Irene Alm**, **Yvonne Kendall** and **Anne Daye**, focused on the delicate task of retrieving the central but ephemeral dance element in theatrical spectacles, namely Cavalli's Venetian operas, Negri's royal entertainments and the Stuart Masque. A note of discord in the polite world of London's dancing-masters was sounded in the last paper of the day, jointly presented by **Moira Goff** and **Jennifer Thorp**: their bibliographic study introduced the question of who was attempting to corner the market in the burgeoning field of Feuillet-notated dance publications in the early eighteenth century! The third morning's contributions continued the theme of theatrical dance, with **Régine Astier**'s consideration of Beauchamp's ballet scores, notably for the spectacular productions presented in the courtyard of the Jesuit Clérmont College, and Sarah McCleave's assessment of the influence of Sallé on Handel's use of dance in his operas. Jennifer and Moira demonstrated the application of extant pendulum markings to different Baroque dance forms, the subject of **Rebecca Harris-Warrick**'s talk, and **Christine Bayle** herself illustrated her reflections on the vital importance of the interdependence of music and choreography in realising a properly expressive interpretation. There followed an opportunity to consider three different presentations of the same dance, Mr Isaac's 'Pastoral' of 1713. This was shown by **Maria Angad Gaur**'s dancers **Cathy van Seventen** and **Jan Wind**, **Ann Jacoby** as a solo, and Jennifer and Moira, the former being accompanied on the harpsichord by **Helen Rogers** and the latter by **David Gordon**. The ensuing discussion centred on the dancers' treatment of the relationship between the two sections of the dance, Louré and Hornpipe, and the musical ramifications of performance decisions. Finally, **Sandra Hammond** showed how earlier step vocabulary lived on in the exercise sequences of the nineteenth-century dancing school.

Thus the Conference presented a wealth of stimulating material and an opportunity, all too rare in this country, for the dissemination of current work of scholarship and excellence, knowledge essential to all working in the field whether as dancers or musicians, performers or teachers. So please – may we have some more?

Jennifer Kiek

Papers from the Conference are available from NEMA, price £8.