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NATIONAL EARLY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

ANONYMOUS REVEAL'D

The members of Anonymous 4 talk to Poppy Holden

The interview takes place in a small Georgian coaching-inn which has been miraculously preserved behind Selfridges in London. We sip coffee under the attentive gaze of their minders from Harmonia Mundi, the recording company which produces Anonymous 4's discs so handsomely. They're working on a new CD at Boxgrove Priory, and have been trying to record all day, but not actually managing to tape useful tracks until dead of night, when twentieth-century noises grow fewer (and the ghosts of plainsongs past can be felt, flitting by). The four women have travelled from New York, but they overcame their jet lag on the way here, stopping in Royaumont, near Senlis, to give a concert, and sounded fresh as daisies in St John's, Smith Square, a few days ago.

The name of the group is derived from a thirteenth-century English writer on music, perhaps a monk of Bury St Edmund's, dubbed by modern scholars 'Anonymous 4' (as opposed to his equally famous relatives, Anonymous 1, 2 and 3) because, if you fancy the full reason, his treatise is the fourth anonymous work in Volume I of E. de Coussemaker's monumental *Scriptorum de musica medii ævi*. These four women sing music from that period and had the usual problems finding a name for their ensemble, so, inevitably, they borrowed that one. To me, the name is also reminiscent of Enid Blyton's heroes (like the Famous Five), but that's probably obvious only to the British, and not intended.

I ask why they think it is that their discs are selling like hot cakes: *An English Ladymass* has sold over 100,000 copies. The group's musicologist, and their spokeswoman today, Susan Hellauer, tells me they seem to be attracting a new audience. She's been told that many people who don't usually listen to classical music are using these discs as an aid to relaxation – a fan told her she played their disc all through one night. 'Betty Lunchbox from Wisconsin will come to concerts because she heard the records on the radio, and she's surprised to find she likes medieval music. Maybe it's because we have a new approach, which isn't hard-edged, or an artificially "archaic" sound.'

They went through a full educational process in America, having, between the four of them, eight first and second degrees in music. When they discovered a mutual interest in medieval chant and wanted to perform it, they found that most of the medieval ensembles in New York employed men only; maybe with luck one woman might insinuate herself into a group. They all wanted to have a crack at it, and so they decided to form their own ensemble, performing the music at a suitable pitch, higher than the men's groups used. Their first concert, in 1986, consisted mainly of chant, plus some polyphony. They rehearsed it for several months until they were satisfied they could improve it no more.

Care and attention to detail have become their habit, which shows in their unanimity of approach. For example, in the duet, 'Jesu Cristes milde moder', performed by Marsha Genensky and Susan Hellauer in the Smith Square concert, and also on their *English Ladymass* recording, the subtleties of phrasing are so similar in the two voices that both parts could have been double-tracked by one woman. Hellauer describes the piece as being 'one melody line with bumps on it': the individual lines are melodically senseless apart from one other, and can live only together. In a few pieces, including this one, the singers employ subtle little folky slurs, which they say grow naturally out of their increasing familiarity with the works. Genensky's degrees were in Music and Folklore, so no doubt this trait comes from her direction. When the group prepares new pieces of music, they try each voice on every part to get the best blend, although, having the lowest voice, Hellauer usually ends up singing the bottom line.

The general vocal approach of Anonymous 4 is deceptively simple: they seem to use no more air-pressure than if they were singing lullabies. And yet their tone is always sufficient to support the ebb and flow of a line. Both on record and in their Smith Square concert, the sound is free and uncontrived, relying for audibility on good architectural acoustics rather than on sinewy diaphragms. They almost croon, bathing themselves in a bright halo of high harmonics which encourage reviewers to use epithets like 'angelic' in describing them. The freedom and beauty of their combined sound must owe a good deal to the enormous amount of time they give to preparing each performance. I asked who originally sang the music which they perform – men, or women? Hellauer tells me that plainchant has no inherent male or female bias. It's hard to say whether a specific piece was written for women, or for men. The Codex de las Huelgas, from Burgos, originated in a convent (although some would argue that this collection of thirteenth-century repertory was for the use of the male chaplains only in this important, royal foundation). Many antiphoners, noted missals and breviaries survive from convents: perhaps they aren't so sumptuous as the ones in their

brother monasteries down the road, but they stand as evidence that medieval nuns performed the chant; it would be amazing if they did not, since the obligation to sing 'the work of God', the *opus Dei*, lay upon all those who had taken monastic vows. There is also plenty of iconographical proof that women participated in secular music all over Europe. They can be seen singing, and playing instruments, in hundreds of tapestries and paintings.

The vocal experience of men and women is probably quite similar today to that of the Middle Ages. Then, as now, boy singers were trained by the Church, in cathedrals, and women learned music at home. No doubt the same benefits and qualifications applied too: on the one hand, the boys get a more intense musical and liturgical education, on the other, the women's approach is often more individual. With girls being allowed places in cathedral choirs at last, this difference may be removed.

Anonymous 4 is not a feminist group that will only perform medieval music if it was written specifically for women; they will perform any of the medieval repertory, simply transposing it from the 'pitch' indicated in the modern edition (medieval notation reveals nothing about frequency) to fit their voices. Hellauer says that many commentators, including scholars of medieval music, have reported that, at this pitch, they can hear the polyphonic lines better. She believes that

a contemporary reference to the beauty of 'voices flying like birds' could refer to a performance at a higher pitch than usual possibly by women when the melodies would carry well through the acoustic.

I mentioned, by way of contrast, the famous performance by Andrew Parrot's Taverner Choir, in York Minster and elsewhere, of Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame* down a fourth, which produced a spectacular effect by its sonorous lowness of pitch, fairly rattling the stones. They agreed that if the music is good enough, a change of pitch or instrumentation is often pleasurable.

When they are rehearsing, Anonymous 4 find that a piece will gradually settle into a comfortable key. Then comes the task of arranging a programme, fitting it around combinations of keys: this can be difficult when one piece has gravitated towards the key of C sharp, but this problem is not insoluble. The really insuperable difficulty is that of positioning pieces on the CDs, since the owner of a CD player can reprogramme the tracks to play in any order.

They say that their style is based on the early Solesmes school. After much experimentation they do not subscribe to Equalism, where every note of the chant has to be of equal duration and emphasis. They lean more towards the Accentualists who give a rhythmic impulse to certain notes. They find that a long, wordless melisma will group itself naturally into threes and fours, and they feel that the later Solesmes school with heavily marked-up music is really attempting to prescribe what comes of itself after a certain amount of rehearsal. The meaning and accent of the words affects and propels the musical line.

Their recordings so far have covered thirteenth- and fourteenth-century chant and polyphony in honour of the Virgin Mary (*An English Ladymass*), medieval carols and motets (*On Yoolis Night*), and music from the thirteenth-century Montpellier Codex (*Love's Illusion*). What new repertory will they explore?

Well, now is the time for them to plan something a bit different: they're moving into Eastern European music. One day in the library Susan found some Hungarian polyphony on the shelf next to the work she was consulting, and her interest in the Hungarian repertory quickly grew. 'It's a lot of polyphonic settings of the same thing, a reconstruction of something which had a hole in it – actually all that's left, in this case, is the hole. Their chant is very interesting, and the polyphony's very scary.'

Anonymous 4 find the Hungarian chant is very chromatic, and it often crosses from one mode to another, though in a style which is still obviously grafted on to the basic language of Western chant. They regard the difference between the two styles as essentially decorative: where the English would decorate a line with an interval of a second, the Hungarians use minor or major thirds.

In rehearsal, during lengthy experimentation, they found they had had to make changes to the speed at which they sang the melodic lines, as a speech-related speed did not work. They find it difficult to work in an unfamiliar language, so they get plenty of help from local scholars. After the chant and polyphony of Hungary, they'd like to explore the music of the rest of Eastern Europe, exploring one country's music after another, though they think they'd baulk at Lebanese chant, finding that really too foreign to manage. Who knows, though, how they might feel after traversing Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria? From there it's not so much further to go to Turkey, then Syria and the Lebanon. Watch out, Sister Marie Keyrouz, Anonymous 4 is coming your way. ❖

FROM HORWOOD TO THE GREENWOOD: A ROUND AND ITS ORIGIN IN RONDELLUS

Geert Jan van Gelder

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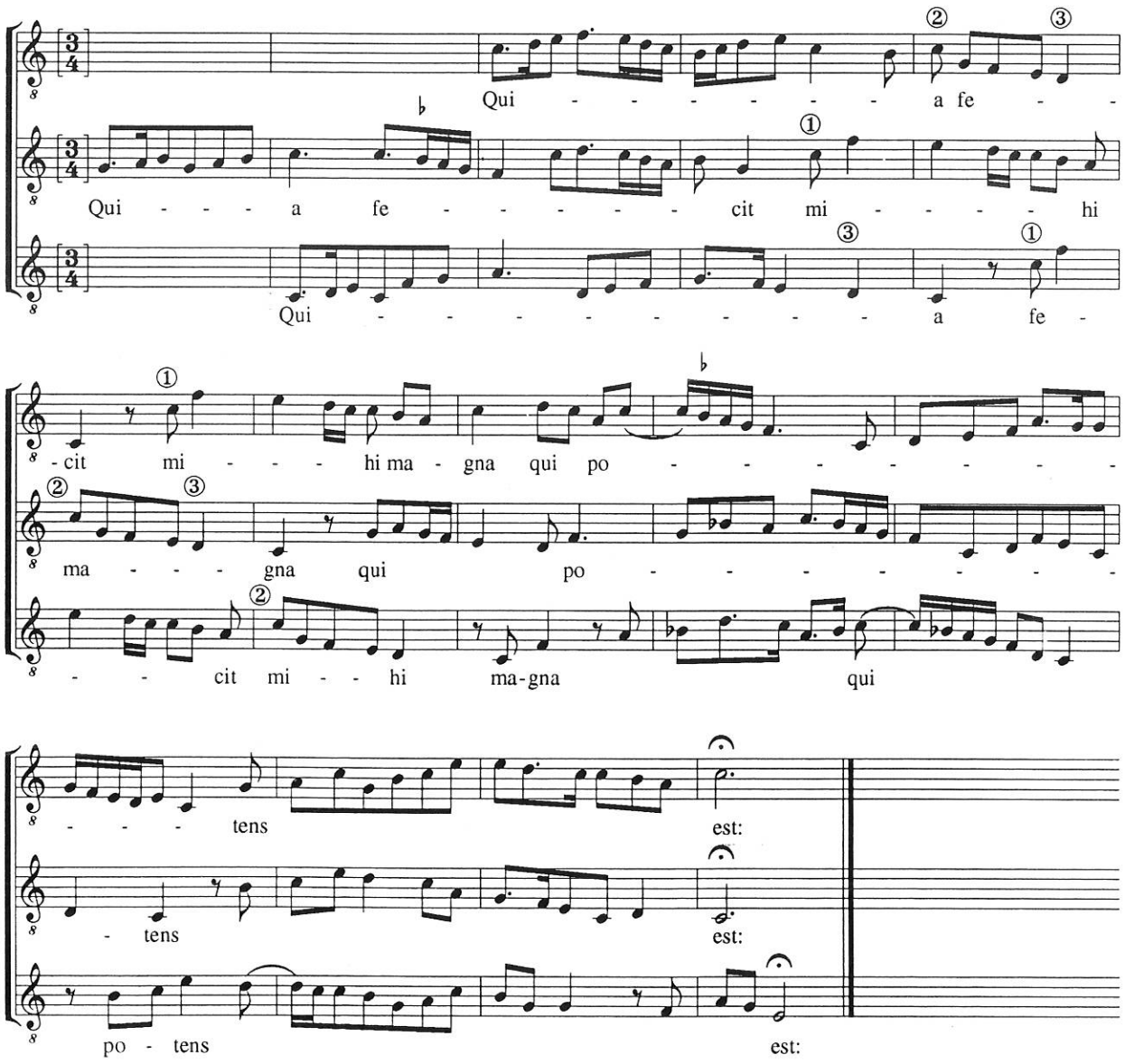
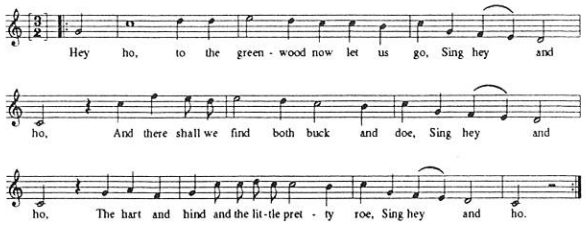
William Horwood, who died around 1484, is one of the composers represented in the Eton Choirbook. His music is seldom, if ever, performed; yet there is a fragment still popular, even though it is not connected with his name. In the first volume of the *Oxford History of English Music*, John Caldwell quotes a passage from Horwood's *Magnificat*,[1] in order to illustrate the contrapuntal technique of phrase-exchange called *rondellus* (see below).

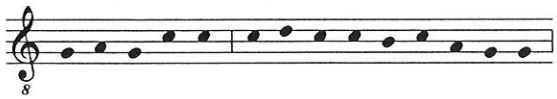
The phrases marked 1, 2 and 3 by Caldwell have a familiar ring to those acquainted with the well-known round, 'Hey ho, to the greenwood now let us go', once, but no longer, attributed to William Byrd.[2] Thomas Ravenscroft published it in his collection of rounds called *Pammelia* of 1609; three years later it was also incorporated in David Melvill's *Booke of Roundels* (1612). It has been praised as 'as gay and pretty an example as could be found',[3] and 'a real gem, beautiful in melody and technically perfect'.[4] Here is



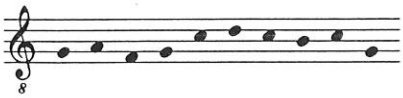
Melvill's version as given in *An Elizabethan Song Book* edited by Greenberg *et al.*:[5]



The parallel is obvious and unmistakable, the only difference between the melody of the round (at the words 'and there shall we find both buck and doe, Sing hey and ho') and Horwood's corresponding notes being the elimination of the 'Landini' sixth at the first close on the tonic, no longer fashionable in the late sixteenth century. It remains an open question whether the other phrases of the round were freely composed to fit the Horwood extract or also derive from a model; Horwood's *Magnificat*, at any rate, offers no further parallels, although the Gregorian melody



itself may have provided some inspiration, not only for the leap of a fourth at the beginning of the round, but particularly for its third phrase:



In one, rather late, source the round is entitled 'O Lord, I will praise thee',[6] which might indicate that the religious origin was still remembered, even though the *Magnificat* was confused with some other text, it seems. Thus 'Hey ho, to the greenwood' provides an illustration of the transition from the religious to the secular, and shows the close affinity, not merely etymological, between the rondellus and the round (or 'roundel' as in Melvill's collection, or 'roundelay' as in Ravenscroft). Finally, it shows how catchy snatches of nearly forgotten music may live on in evergreens: from Horwood (which very probably means 'grey wood') to the Greenwood. ❖

Footnotes

1 John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*. I: *From the Beginnings to c.1715* (Oxford, 1991), 192. Horwood's *Magnificat* (à 5) has been published in *The Eton Choirbook: III* (Musica Britannica, vol. 12), transcribed and edited by Frank Ll. Harrison (London, 1961), 69–77 (see 70–1 for the passage under consideration). The Eton Choirbook contains three other pieces by Horwood: *Salve Regina, Gaude Flore Virginali* and *Gaude Virgo Mater Christi*, all à 5.

2 See Philip Brett in William Byrd, *Madrigals, Songs and Canons* (The Byrd Edition, vol. 16) (London, 1976), introduction, viii, where it is pointed out that the round 'is included in almost every sizeable publication of catches after its first reprinting in *The Catch Club, or Merry Companions*, 1762, and in many manuscripts besides; but the ascription to Byrd is not found until the very end of the century'.

3 Edmund H. Fellows, *William Byrd*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1948), 177.

4 H. K. Andrews, *The Technique of Byrd's Vocal Polyphony* (London, 1960), 252.

5 *An Elizabethan Song Book: Lute Songs, Madrigals and Rounds*, music ed. Noah Greenberg, text ed. W. H. Auden and Chester Kallmann (London, 1972; first publ. 1957), 220. Instead of 'Sing hey and ho' in Melvill, Ravenscroft's text has 'Sing heave and ho'. See for the text also E. H. Fellows, *English Madrigal Verse, 1588–1632*, rev. and enl. Frederick W. Sternfeld and David Greer, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1967), 201.

6 Brett (see n. 2), viii.

THE ETON CHOIRBOOK: AN INTRODUCTION

CATHERINE HOCKING

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The Eton Choirbook is one of England's finest musical treasures and survives as England's only choirbook containing music from the last quarter of the fifteenth century. A magnificent (and heavy!) manuscript measuring 595 × 425 mm, it continues to be housed in Eton College Library, only a short distance from the Chapel in which some of its music was heard at one time.

A few technical details to begin with. During the sixteenth century a substantial portion of the manuscript was lost and the surviving leaves were re-bound in its present binding. The surviving 126 parchment leaves are bound in leather, with pages from an eleventh-century Bible used as flyleaves. The leather-covered boards are imprinted with portcullis, fleurs-de-lis, Tudor roses and the initials 'HR', the stamp of the binder. With the exception of Wylkynson's nine-voice *Salve regina* and Apostles' Creed, the copying is thought to have been the work of one scribe. The notation is mostly full-black with red-full or void notation used for coloration.

Open the manuscript and you will find that it looks very good indeed. Decoration of initial letters is beautifully executed throughout. One of the most frequently encountered decorations is the so-called cabbage-head motif (acanthus) framed by a border in gold, but there are many animals also shown, including lacertines, goblin-like creatures, griffins and wolves. The initial to Banester's *O Maria et Elizabeth* charmingly shows the two babies referred to in the text linking hands and feet to form the initial O.

The Eton Choirbook originally contained ninety-three compositions, but only sixty-five survive in complete or fragmentary form. The music is mostly devotional in nature, featuring large-scale settings of antiphons and rhymed sequence texts in honour of the Virgin Mary, and the variety is remarkable, compositions being scored for between four and thirteen voices, with the majority written for five-voice scoring comprising triplex, medius, contratenor, tenor and bassus. There are (or there were) some celebrated pieces here. Although lost from the Eton Choirbook, the inclusion of the famous 'Regali' *Magnificat* by Fayrfax is confirmed by the annotation 'regale' which appears next to the Fayrfax *Magnificat* entry in the index, while a fragmentary Passion according to St Matthew by Richard Davy is one of the few polyphonic settings of a Passion from the fifteenth century.

The Choirbook is remarkable for its inclusion of two indices which are contemporary with the Choirbook's compilation, *c.* 1505. One of these appears on the final leaf below Wylkynson's setting of the Apostles' Creed and is evidently an intermediary index, omitting all the *Magnificat* settings. A later index appears as the first recto leaf and lists text incipits alphabetically and according to the number of parts. Every entry includes a text incipit, attribution, the number of parts the piece is scored for and a contemporary foliation reference. The entries in these indices are quite revealing.

Two compositions which are presently in the Choirbook are not included in either index and therefore seem to have been added at a later stage. Wylkynson's sublime nine-voice *Salve regina* and his setting of the Apostles' Creed. This *Salve regina*, although a later addition, presently appears as the first of the fifteen *Salve regina* settings in the book. This may suggest that Wylkynson was involved with the final compilation of the manuscript and included two of his own compositions at a late stage, after the index had been completed. Furthermore, these two compositions are written in different hands from that of the principal scribe and a signature, possibly Wylkynson's autograph, is written at the end of the Apostles' Creed.

The names of twenty-five composers appear in the later index. Few biographical details are known for the majority of these, although the movements of some of the more familiar names, including Fayrfax, Cornysh, Davy and Turges, have been traced. However, several others – Mychelson, Sygar, Baldwyn, Holyngborne, for example – are composers of whom nothing is known; their existence is recorded only by this index. Surprising, perhaps, is that few composers have any documented association with Eton College. John Sutton was elected a Fellow in 1477 but does not appear in records after 1479. Robert Wylkynson was *informator choristarum* from 1499/1500 and William Brygeman was a clerk at Eton in 1503–4. A number of those composers not associated directly with Eton who are represented in the book can be placed in the great English cathedrals and chapels of the time: Horwood at Lincoln, Hygons at Wells, Lambe at Windsor, Cornysh at the Chapel Royal.[1]

As with the Lambeth and Caius Choirbooks, the immense size of the Eton volume immediately conjures to mind choristers singing around a large lectern in the College Chapel. Surprisingly few markings appear on the manuscript to suggest that it was used in rehearsals, however. Oblique lines drawn between text and notes above clarify text placement occasionally, while in some compositions by the younger composers Browne, Cornysh and Fawkyner accidental sharps have been

added in a different hand from that of the scribe.

The texts of several compositions appear to allude to contemporary events. The composition of Lambe's *Stella caeli* may well date from 1479 during an outbreak of plague.[2] In view of the many references to the motherhood of the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth in the text, Banester may have written *O Maria et Elizabeth* to commemorate the pregnancy of Elizabeth Wydeville with Edward V, the future Prince of Wales who was born on 2 November 1470. Banester, one of the earliest composers represented, is named as the king's servant in 1471 and surfaces in court records as a gentleman of the Chapel Royal from 1474. He was appointed Master of Choristers in 1478, retaining the post until his death in 1487.

Browne's six-part *Stabat iuxta Christi crucem* uses a section of *From stormy windes*, a carol by Edmund Turges, a composer who was associated with the Chapel Royal. This secular *cantus firmus* refers to Prince Arthur and his tragic drowning in 1502. Prince Arthur, who celebrated his marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1501, was drowned *en route* to Spain in 1502. Browne's integration of the carol *From stormy windes* in *Stabat iuxta Christi crucem* may assume an allegorical function, the Virgin Mary's sorrow over the death of Christ her Son serving as a parallel for the grief of Elizabeth the Queen on the death of the heir to the throne, Prince Arthur.

In company with the *Magnificat* settings, the Eton Choirbook is the source of the largest collection of pre-Reformation English polyphonic settings of *Salve regina*. Although the singing of *Salve regina* is recorded throughout the year for some institutions, the Eton College statutes of 1444 specify that *Salve regina* 'with its verses' was to be sung during Lent. Fourteen settings survive complete, with that by Brygeman now existing only in a fragmentary form. (A further setting on a related text, *Salve regina vas mundicie*, by Fawkyner, is now lost.) All the Eton settings use the troped version of *Salve regina*, and the majority incorporate the three trope verses which were first associated with *Salve regina* in monophonic sources 'Virgo, mater ecclesiae', 'Virgo clemens, virgo pia' and 'Funde preces tuo nato' in preference to the five- or six-verse versions of the *Salve regina* text which appear in contemporaneous processionals and devotional collections.

Wylkynson's nine-voice *Salve regina* incorporates symbolical representation of the Nine Orders of Angels derived from pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy* and very frequently represented in contemporaneous English art. The names of each of the Nine Orders of Angels is inscribed below pictures of angels beside each staff: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Archangels, Angels. These decorations are not of the same high quality as those in the rest of the manuscript and are paste-downs evidently added at a later stage. The nine voices are named in the initial letters from approximately highest to lowest according to the order of the angels from highest to lowest order. Verse annotations below the second leaf make the connections between the Celestial Hierarchy and this setting of *Salve regina* explicit. Representation of the number 9 is suggested by the relatively narrow range of a ninth from *c* to *d'* in the tenor, the voice that predominantly states the *cantus firmus*, *Assumpta est Maria*. Another aspect of the symbolism inherent in this setting may be seen in the appearance three times of the name 'Wylkynson' in the margins of the setting, including the phrase 'Robertus Wylkynson cuius anime propicietur Deus' ('Robert Wylkynson, to whose soul may God be propitious').

The feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary was celebrated as one of the most important liturgical occasions of the year at Eton College. Not only was the Chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but, according to the statutes, special provision was made for the granting of plenary indulgences in the Eton College Chapel on this day.[3] Browne's celebratory eight-voice *O Maria salvatoris mater*, the first composition in the Choirbook, was evidently written to commemorate the Assumption of the Virgin. Likewise, the nine-voice setting of *Salve regina* by Wylkynson which uses the antiphon, *Assumpta est Maria*, as its *cantus firmus* was also probably composed for the celebration of this feast in the College Chapel.

Why did the Eton Choirbook survive the ravages of the Reformation, during which time a presumably complementary book of Masses used at Eton College was destroyed? At present, the answer remains a mystery, yet the extant music provides us with a glimpse of the musical riches sung by the most accomplished English choirs at the turn of the fifteenth century. ❖

Footnotes

1 See F. Ll. Harrison, 'The Eton Choirbook: Its Background and Contents (Eton College Library MS 178)' *Annales Musicologiques*, 1 (1953), 165 and Preface to Musica Britannica 10–12 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1956–61; rev. 1967–73).

2 John Milsom, Preface to *The Pillars of Eternity: Music from the Eton Choirbook, Vol. III*; The Sixteen, dir. Harry Christophers (HarperCollins, CD 13422, 1992), 4.

3 Statute 31: J. Heywood and T. Wright, *The Ancient Laws of the Fifteenth Century for King's College Cambridge, and for the Public School of Eton College* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1850), 557.

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Discography

Browne: Stabat mater; Cornyshe: Ave Maria mater Dei; Fawkyner: Gaude rosa sine spina; Lambe: Nesciens mater; Nesbett: Magnificat; Wylkyson: Salve regina. Boys of All Saints, Margaret St.; Purcell Consort of Voices; dir. Grayston Burgess; ARGO 2RG 557

Davy: St Matthew Passion; Boys of All Saints, Margaret St.; Purcell Consort of Voices; dir. Grayston Burgess; Ian Partridge (tenor), Christopher Keyte (bass); ARGO 2RG 558

Browne: O mater venerabilis. Prague Madrigal Singers; dir. Miroslav Venhoda. Musica Antiqua Vienna; dir. Rene Clemencic; SUPRAPHON SUAST 50714

Wylkynson: Salve regina (9v). Tallis Scholars; dir. Peter Phillips; CADENZA UACL 10005

Music for All Seasons. Cornyshe: Ave Maria, mater Dei. London Early Music Group; dir. James Tyler; RCA 25159 (2)

The Rose and the Ostrich Feather: Music from the Eton Choirbook I. The Sixteen; dir. Harry Christophers (HarperCollins, 1991) CD 13142

The Crown of Thorns: Music from the Eton Choirbook II. The Sixteen; dir. Harry Christophers (HarperCollins, 1990) CD 13162

The Pillars of Eternity: Music from the Eton Choirbook III. The Sixteen; dir. Harry Christophers (HarperCollins, 1992) CD 13422

The Flower of All Virginity: Music from the Eton Choirbook IV. The Sixteen; dir. Harry Christophers (HarperCollins, 1993) CD 13952

BYRD AND TOMKINS: THE GREAT SERVICE REVISITED

Turbet responds to Pike

Richard Turbet is music librarian at the University of Aberdeen.

When the late Eric Treacy was preaching his farewell sermon as Bishop of Wakefield not too long after the publication of the *Alternative Service Book* – a volume he did not welcome – he preceded a quotation from the Book of Common Prayer with the assertion '...and there's only one Prayer Book!' Having digested Lionel Pike's observations on the *Great Service*[1] I am happy to emulate the Railway bishop in repeating the gist of my original article and its postscript:[2] there's only one *Great Service*.

It is excellent that someone of Pike's standing entered the discussion. In my research and information guide to Tudor music[3] I included several of his writings about Peter Philips who, like Tomkins, was a pupil of Byrd. My approach to this question of the relatively recent invention of an alleged category of 'great' Services has been that of a librarian endeavouring to establish accurate titles and definitions. A particularly welcome aspect of Pike's observations was its extending the discussion into the area of musical analysis. Nevertheless there is nothing in his article that contradicts my assertion that Byrd's is the only *Great Service*, and that Tomkins's *Third* and Hooper's *Full* Services were mistitled 'Great' by early scribes. Notwithstanding the prevailing tone of Pike's article, from its content it could have concluded with an endorsement of my own opinion.

The analysis is most interesting but does not prove the existence of a category or style of 'great' Services, and this is the nub of the matter: fully to understand any early music we must try to perceive it as its contemporaries perceived it, not, as in this instance, follow the likes of Fellowes in misguidedly imposing a style or category on it.[4] For instance, it is only circumstantially that we can refer (as Pike does) to a 'Short Service style' since, although many pieces survive entitled *Short Service*, there is no contemporary list headed 'Short Services', there are no contemporary references to such a style or category, and many such pieces were given one or more alternative titles.[5] It was only Fellowes's creative musicology that gave birth to a mythical genre of 'great' Services as recently

as 1919, at a time when researchers were still searching for certainties and definitions amongst much early music. Nowadays it seems old-fashioned, sentimental almost, to perpetuate such falsehoods.

Tomkins's biographer Stevens[6] ignores the designation 'Great' applied to Tomkins's *Third Service* except to mention it baldly in a 'remarks' column within the list of works. As to its magnitude, Stevens is rather downbeat.[7] In my original article, anticipating Pike, I suggested the work might be a homage to Byrd and it is as such, rather than as a 'great' Service, that we are better regarding it.

Pike fails to cite those musicians and musicologists who have not overlooked the similarities between Byrd's *Great* and Tomkins's *Third* Services and whom he – wrongly – assumes I had in turn overlooked myself. Furthermore, at the end of his fifth footnote he should have cited the article in which I drew attention to an apparent repertory of Tudor verse Services based on the opening of Byrd's *Second Service*.[8] This is the way we should look at such works as Tomkins's *Third*, Weelkes's *Ninth* and possibly Hooper's *Full* Services:[9] as part of a certain repertory composed in response to a specific inspirational circumstance or *donne*, rather than as part of another repertory composed pragmatically in response to contemporary liturgical requirements which were taken for granted and only appear to become a category in retrospect. No composer wrote, or presumed to write, a 'great' Service. As I demonstrated in my original article it was a qualitative designation not a quantitative one, to be applied by contemporaries or posterity as a mark of admiration. Tomkins did not compose 'a' 'great' Service because there was no such style. He paid homage to a piece by Byrd that soon came to be known as 'the' *Great Service*.

It is a shame that Watkins Shaw has not expanded his scepticism about 'great' Services.[10] To avoid repeating my own final sentence for the third article running, I quote from a letter dated 4 December 1989 from Oliver Neighbour to myself which contained a not uncritical resonse to an early draft of my original article: 'I quite agree with your conclusion that the Great Service as a recognized category never existed. Scribes needed a distinguishing title and seized on any that was handy – long, great or whatever. In Byrd's case "great" stuck.' And in the cases of Tomkins and Hooper, that title was a scribal error. ❖

Footnotes

1 'The Great Service: Some Observations on Byrd and Tomkins', *Musical Times*, 133 (1992), 421–2.

2 'The Great Service: Byrd, Tomkins and their Contemporaries, and the Meaning of "Great" ', *Musical Times*, 131 (1990), 275–7, and 'The Great Service: A Postscript', *Musical Times*, 133 (1992), 206.

3 *Tudor Music: A Research and Information Guide* (New York, 1994).

4 E. H. Fellowes, *William Byrd: A Short Account* (Oxford, 1923), 65.

5 R. Daniel and P. le Huray, *The Sources of English Church Music 1549–1660* (London, 1972), pt. 2.

6 *Thomas Tomkins 1572–1656* (New York, 1967), 179.

7 *Ibid.*, 78. With reference to Anthony Milner's review of the Tallis Scholars' recent disc of Tomkins's *Third Service* (*Musical Times*, 133 (1992), 301) it is only the first *complete* recording: the evening Canticles are on an earlier disc of Tomkins's music sung by the choir of St George's Chapel, Windsor (Hyperion CDA66345). A further complete recording is on CRD 3467 by the Choir of New College, Oxford. I was amused to be told that the Service is deliberately marketed by Gimell under its more glamorous misnomer, even though it is known to be inaccurate.

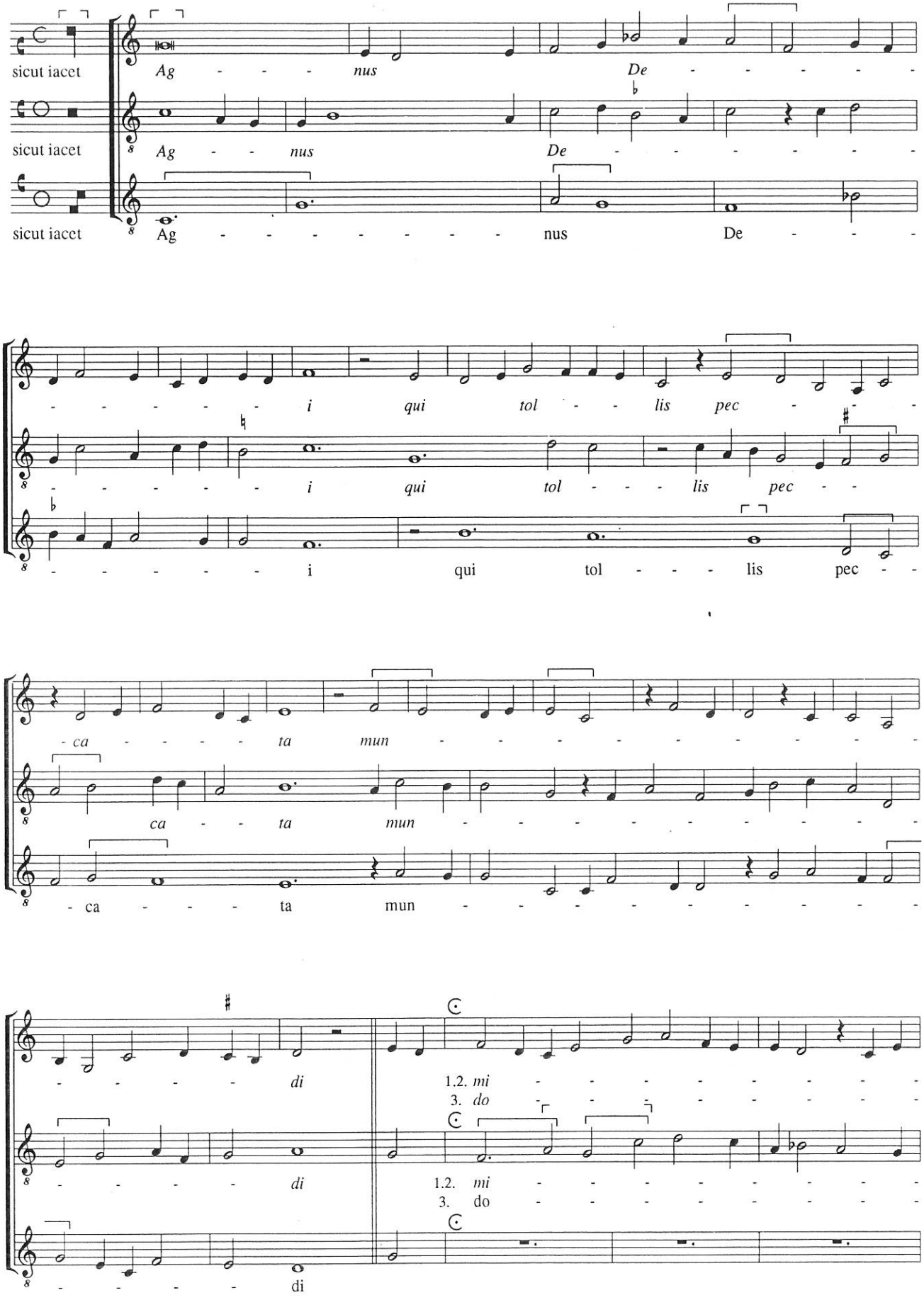
8 'Homage to Byrd in Tudor Verse Services', *Musical Times*, 129 (1988), 485–90.

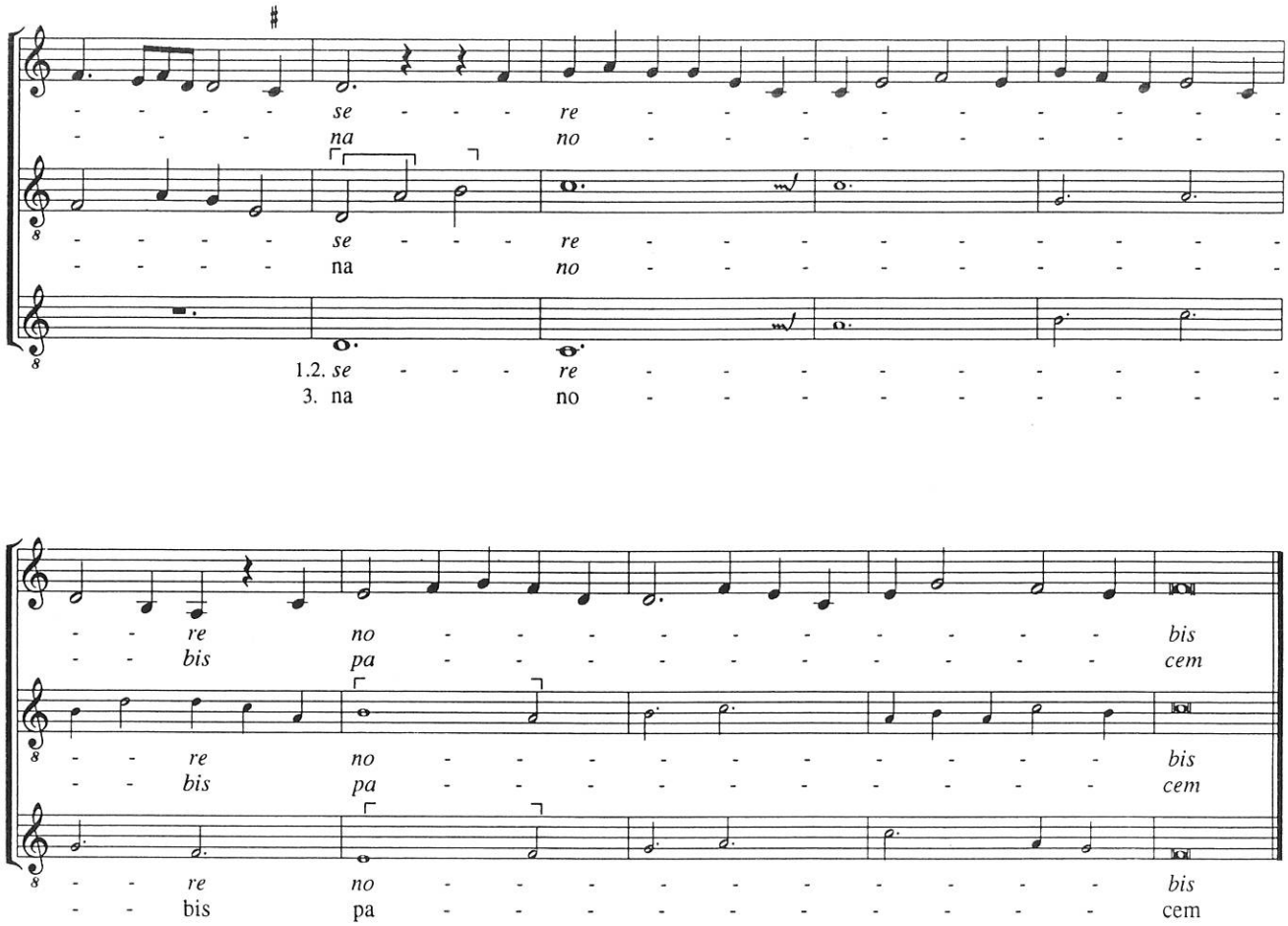
9 The correspondence, mentioned by Pike in his note 3, between Tomkins's *Third Service* and Weelkes's *Eighth*, not a candidate for greatness in the present sense, seems to argue against his case for a category of 'great' Services. Perhaps Peter Phillips will develop his ideas about Hooper's debt, in his *Full Service*, to Byrd's *Great Service* (see *English Sacred Music 1549–1649* (Oxford, 1991), 433): I can see not the faintest resemblance between the two pieces.

10 In F. Blume, *Protestant Church Music* (New York, 1974), 703.

Agnus Dei

GB-Ob Don b. 31





The unique source of this anonymous piece is the dispersed royal English choirbook known as H6, probably copied around 1430. This choirbook has close links with the major source of early fifteenth-century English music, the slightly earlier Old Hall manuscript: the size, materials and copying practices are similar, and there are five concordances. The later book's present state is extremely fragmentary, leaves and parts of leaves having turned up in half a dozen collections from Cambridge to Canberra. For those who want to know more, Margaret Bent's article 'The Progeny of Old Hall: More Leaves from a Royal English Choirbook', in *Gordon Athol Anderson In Memoriam*, Musicological Studies 39 (Henryville, Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1984), 1–54, provides a description, inventory and facsimiles of all the leaves then known.

The *Agnus Dei* setting given here is a performing version of the music on the recto of the Bodleian Library's manuscript Don b. 31 (facsimile on page 49 of Bent's article). This fragment, which is the top half of a leaf, only preserves the setting of the third section of the text (*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi dona nobis pacem*). For the present version I have therefore taken the liberty of applying the first and second sections (*Agnus Dei...miserere nobis*) to the surviving music: the resultant threefold musical structure is by no means unknown in *Agnus* settings of the period, although a marking in Don b. 31 indicates that it was not the original form of this one. The source also lacks the last seven bars of the two lower voices.

Although written in the score notation normally associated with relatively simple, homophonic textures, the piece is rhythmically complex, combining C and O mensurations in the first section and then changing to Ȼ. As in so much English music of this period, much of the harmony is richly triadic.

—Jonathan King,
Wadham College, Oxford

THOMAS TOMKINS: SOME REFLECTIONS ON HIS PERSONALITY

Richard Newsholme

Formerly organ scholar at St Peter's College, Oxford, the author is now a General Practitioner in Droitwich. This is the first of a two-part investigation of Tomkins's life and music.

Civitas Fidelis ('a faithful city') and *Deo et Rege* ('for God and King') were the signs on the drawbridge at Worcester during the Civil Wars; but on 23 July 1646, after a two-month seige, the Royalist garrison yielded to Major General Rainsborough and the parliamentarians took control of the city. Thomas Tomkins continued to live near the Cathedral, although most of his neighbours were ousted and replaced by puritan preachers. His interest turned to keyboard music, composing perhaps in his garret study high above College Green, and cramming new pieces into a rapidly-filling manuscript book. Outside his window the Cathedral was silent, its heraldic glass smashed by the troops; the Dallam organ was dismantled, the choir disbanded and the services finished. It was a melancholy end, at the age of seventy-four, to a long and distinguished career.

It is frustrating how little we know of the great men of Tudor and Stuart times; often the simplest biographical data are missing and only the barest impression of their personality is possible. Tomkins's family hoped, and expected, that his music would survive (see John Tomkins's words on page 18) but this was not an age for biographies, and even when Nathaniel edited *Musica Deo Sacra* he missed the opportunity to write an informative introduction. No portrait of Thomas Tomkins is known to have survived, and for a glimpse of his personality other than through his music itself we have to look to his autograph music manuscripts and various official archives.

Tomkins's generosity to the poor has been mentoned by his biographers,[1] and the response by the Dean and Chapter to a petition by the City to Parliament[2] defends the actions of Thomas's son Nathaniel with these words:

> Mr [Nathaniel] Tomkins knows not wherein he hath offended any of the city in word or deed. His father hath been very charitable to their poor, and soe hath he.

The nature of this charity is found in a volume in the City archives:[3]

> Thomas Tomkins Organist of the Cathedrall Church of Christ and the blessed Mary the virgin of Worcester out of his zeale and pious disposicion and to the glory of Allmightie god hath Given and delivered unto the Maior, Aldermen and Cittizens of the Cytty of Worcester, the some of fifty pownds to bee lent unto two younge Trades men of the said Cytty That are yong beginners in their trades, whereof Clothiers before others are to bee preferred, And the said Two yonge men Are from tyme to tyme for ever by the Chamber and Common Councell of the said Cytty to bee elected And to have the said fiftie pownds by equall porcions, vizt Twenty and five pownds apeece for one Two or three years as yt shall please the Chamber and Common Councell aforesaid, The said Two yonge men severally giveinge good securitie unto the said Corporation for the repayment of the said severall somes of Twenty and five pownds, and Allsoe each of them Twenty shillings yearely uppon the day before the feast of All Saints unto the Corporacion, which said fourty shillings the said Thomas Tomkins hath appointed shall bee given equally To four aged honest and devout people, such as are most observed to frequent the divine service of god by hearing of the praiers of the Church and word of god reade out of the holy Bible and booke of Common praier. The said four poore to bee Chosen by the Maior and Aldermen of the said Cytty for the tyme beeinge or the greatest parte of them, And the distribucion of the said fourty shillings to bee alwaies uppon the day before the feast of All Saints.

Those members of the corporation with puritan sympathies may have baulked at the mention of the Prayer Book, but they issued a polite acknowledgement at a meeting on 16 December 1636:[4]

> Att this chamber yt is likewise agreed that the guift of Thomas Tompkins, gent. organist of the cathedrall church of Worcester, beeing the some of fiftie pownds in such manner and forme as hee hath proposed the same to this house, shall bee accepted of and that the citie shall acknowledge the receipt thereof under the common seale.

The chamber went on to allocate the money to Samuel Kings and John Wild, both of whom were to become well-known clothiers in the city.

Loan funds were a common form of charity in seventeenth-century England and this one was to help new freemen, having served their seven-year apprenticeship, to set up in business. Twenty shillings a year represented an interest rate of 4% compared with the more normal usurer's rate of 8%. For the broad plan of the gift Tomkins seems to follow a similar presentation of the previous year by Maurice Hillier, also a parishioner of St Michael in Bedwardine, who allowed the same capital sum, the same interest and also specified two young clothiers; but perhaps his thoughts went back to the deathbed of a young colleague, Henry Goldsborough, over twenty years before. Goldsborough had dictated the details of a similar charity gift[5] in Tomkins's pres-

ence; although his bequest was to benefit poor scholars at the City Free School. At the age of twenty-three his death must have been a tragic one. His father had been a Canon of Worcester and Bishop of Gloucester, and Henry himself had studied at Oxford and acted as Cathedral Manciple. The will was dictated in the presence of various Cathedral dignitaries and relatives, and he added codicils with Thomas Tomkins and others acting as witnesses as the day wore on.

Goldsborough's gift has fared better than Tomkins's and survived to modern times. Tomkins's can only be traced as far as 1642 and at some date after this the fund was not repaid to the Corporation and so was lost.

There are hints in the Worcester archives and elsewhere that as well as being generous to those worse off than himself, Tomkins was careful and business-like with his own financial affairs. One music manuscript[6] contains a detailed list of debts from 1651 when times were lean, and a Cathedral Treasurer's book[7] has evidence of a willingness to chase the Dean and Chapter for outstanding debts:

> Item payde to Mr Tompkins for 3 hundred of wood & 3 quarters behind of the 5 hundred which he challenged for due; after 5s the hundred } 18s 9d

Occasionally he was accused of rather sharper practice in financial matters. In 1638 the Dean and Chapter had resolved that a 'lease of the tythe pulse of Cleeve [Prior]...be made for 21 years to Humphrey Withey and John Biddle for and to the use of the ten lay clerks and of the choristers if it be grantable'. The tythe was usually either received in kind or sold back to the tenant. In fact the lease was made to Thomas Tomkins with no mention of the intention to benefit the choir. After Tomkins's death it passed to his nephew John Tomkins, to the chagrin of the members of the choir who petitioned the Dean and Chapter claiming that

> it was intended and so ordered that the same should go to the use of the choir according to a former act in that behalf made...which said lease was accordingly made to...Mr Thomas Tomkins and enjoyed by him...although your petitioners do not know of any account thereof made or benefit accruing to members of the said choir as was intended.

The Dean and Chapter made no comment on the implied criticism of Thomas Tomkins but agreed to grant the tythe for the benefit of the choir when the current lease expired.[8]

Another disagreement arose over the new house Tomkins had built near the Cathedral. In 1627 he and his wife Alice were granted a lease of 'ruinous buildings' on the south of the College Green on condition that

> the same be converted to some good and necessarie uses at their proper coste & charge within three yeares next following the date hereof.

Two houses were built and the one in which Tomkins lived survives, much altered, as 9 College

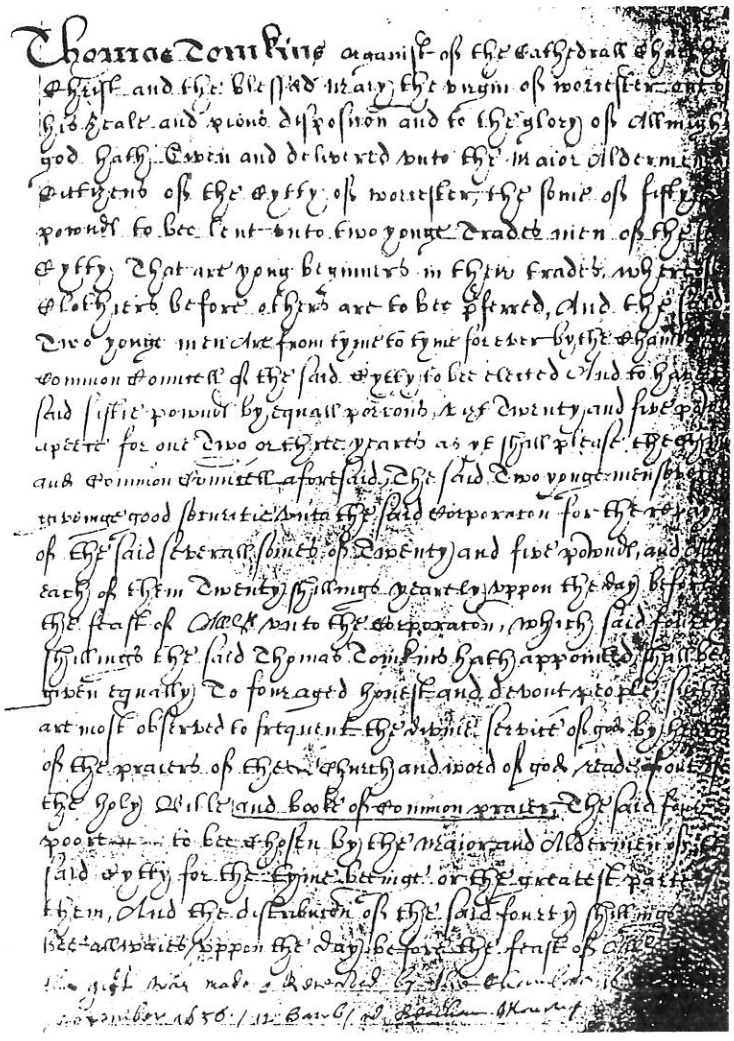
Green. The other adjoined it on the east and was leased by the College brewer, Thomas Chyles. When the Parliament surveyed the possessions of the Dean and Chapter in June 1649 they mentioned a dispute between the two neighbours:

> And we are credibly informed that the said Mr Tomkins was trusted by the said Thomas Chyles to purchase the same [i.e. the 'soyle and ground' adjacent to the site for his own dwelling] for him, but contrary to that trust the said Mr Tomkins did take it in his own name after such time that the said Thos. Chiles had built thereon to his great costs and charges, and therefore humbly craves he may be admitted to purchase the Inheritance thereof.

Chyles died a few years after the Restoration of the Monarchy and his widow gave her version of events in a petition to the Dean and Chapter:

> ...there being an old and ruinous building which lay near ye brewhouse...Mr Thomas Tomkins purchased of Dr Helmes ye same ground for 20^{li}. Thomas Chiles bought of Mr Tomkins one bay [out of four and a half] of this old building for 5^{li} and built ye present house which cost him at least nine score pounds and paid ye rent wich was 5s p. ann. for 20 years both for Mr Tomkins his house and his own...The rebels making sale of Dean & Chapters lands Mr Thomas Tomkins, father to ye now prebend amongst other things purchased ye present house of your petitioner, at which time she had in it 20 years and upwards, and forced ye said Thomas Chiles and your petitioner to buy it again of ye said Mr Thomas Tomkins for which your petitioners husband paid him 8^{li}...

Below: Record of Benefactors of Worcester Charities, 1627, f.15^{r}, City of Worcester Archives, Shelf A16. The entry regarding Tomkins's charitable gift in a parchment volume of the Worcester City Corporation.



Margaret Chyles went on to ask for a lease of her dwelling from the Dean and Chapter in the face of Nathaniel Tomkins's endeavours to secure such a lease for himself 'over her head'. In fact there is nothing in the Cathedral records to suggest that the Dean and Chapter regarded Thomas and Mary Chyles as anything but Tomkins's undertenants. The dwellings are frequently mentioned in the Receiver General's accounts, court books and leases, and only Tomkins himself is recorded paying the 5s rent or holding the lease. It stayed in his family until after 1700, and not until 1707 were the east and west parts leased separately. The conflict seems to illustrate a good business sense on the part of Tomkins rather than dishonesty as the Parliamentary surveyors imply.[9]

The parliamentarian mayor and aldermen of 1650 were able to certify to the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents, in London, that Tomkins was 'Always reputed an honest, quiet peaceable man'. The mention of his 'pious disposition' in the charity endowment also comes from the Corporation, and the description is borne out by occasional notes in his own manuscripts. 'God keep all honest men in thy feare & service' heads one page, and 'laus Deo' at the tail of many pieces is a postscript that Tomkins had made peculiarly his own. In another book he has written in Latin a list of books, possibly his own, and as with many contemporary libraries, devotional works predominate: glosses on nearly all the books of sacred scripture, Paul's epistles with an anonymous commentary, works of St Augustine, homilies of St John Chrysostom, and Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* are amongst them.[10]

Another thread running through this manuscript, not unexpectedly for a church musician, is a dislike of puritans. A number of unascribed verses are copied in Tomkins's own handwriting, for example:

> A learned Bishop of this land
> thinking to make Religion stand
> in Equall poise on every side
> to make a mixture this he tryd:
> An ownce of protestant he singles
> & with a dram of papist mingles
> An scruple ads of puritan
> And workes them all in his Brayne pan:
> nowe when hee thinkes they should digest
> The Scruple Troubles all the Rest.

This is a satirical skit on the same subject:

If lyes if slanders if debate
if privat malice perfect hate
If contumacy; then Bold Checkmate
to goverment of church & state
Characters bee of Sanctity
the puritan A saynt must bee:

It continues in the same vein for nine verses. Other writings suggest an interest in the political turmoil of the time, such as a page entitled 'The English Lords Answer to the proposition of the Scotts Lordes' which must refer to the Prayer Book controversy of the mid-1630s, and this allegorical verse:

The game at Chess

The pawnes make all the play
Have all they say
The Rookes looke on
& yet they make no play:

The knights dare not Remove
The Bishops Bee
Some fast . some Chased
From place to place wee see:

let thother too looke to't,
Er't be to late.
They have had sufficient check
Beware the mate:

None of the verses is dated but there are other clues that they may have been written in the late 1620s or 1630s. Close to them in the manuscript are a poem by Richard Corbett originating from shortly before his preferment to the See of Oxford in July 1628, and a rather weak epitaph for the Duke of Buckingham who was assassinated in August 1628.[11]

In the same manuscript Tomkins has copied a madrigal of John Farmer's: 'Take Tyme while tyme doth last'. The tenor part is a rising and falling *cantus-firmus* scale of six notes which gave some problems in fitting it to the other parts. The annotations between the staves and along the bottom of the page give a hint of another Tomkins characteristic, a wry sense of humour:

This Tenor part is made purposely only to Fright & dismaye the Singer. By driveing od Chrotchets through semibrifes brifes & longs...This hard Tenor part Being the playnsong.

He goes on to give 'The Solution How to Sing it' at some length.[12]

Thomas Tomkins seems to have been generally respected by his contemporaries at Worcester. Unlike certain predecessors, and some singing-men, he does not have repeated monitions from the Chapter or presentations at the episcopal visitations. His son Nathaniel was more controversial. Although exerting for many years a powerful influence upon Chapter meetings, with a zeal for Arminian reform and a particular interest in the Cathedral archives, Nathaniel found it difficult to compromise. Bishop Thornborough called him 'the only incendiary between the bishop and the church' when he tried to convert the bishop's hay loft into a school room; the city corporation was 'highly offended' with him after a series of squabbles with the Dean and Chapter, and Dean Warmestry found him 'scandalously and intolerably contumacious' for refusing to keep residence and other offences. In a letter from Nathaniel to Samuel Fell, then a Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, written in his rather pedantic style, he is careful not to offend his father when speaking of ousting a country clergyman from one of his beneficies:

Dr Benson is somewhat too confident of ye strength of his advowson...& I see not how we can in equity deny a presentacion to any member of our church that shal recover it to us. but because of good friendship between my father & Dr Benson I will not be ye man that shal wrest it from him.

The respect seems to have been mutual and Thomas has a high regard for Nathaniel's opinion, particularly in musical matters. A note in the holograph manuscript now at Paris, after wishing that his half-brother John's book 'should be Fayre & Carefully Prict', and having given various instructions, says[13]

my Sonnes Judgement maye give Better directions then these weake Expressions: But this By the waye:

John Tomkins himself had written about Thomas in a dedicatory poem in 1622:[14]

Yet thou wert mortall: now begin to live
And end with onely Time. Thy Muses give
What Nature hath deny'd Eternitie.

The words must have seemed hollow in 1646 with the royalist struggle failing, and the parliamentarians and puritans gaining the upper hand. He could hardly have known that 350 years later his church music would be more widely known and sung than it ever was in his own time, and we can only guess whether he would have been flattered, amused or just mystified to find posterity interested in details of his life and character. ❖

Footnotes

1 Ivor Atkins, *The Early Occupants of the Office of Organist and Master of the Choristers of the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Worcs. Hist. Soc., 1918); Denis Stevens, *Thomas Tomkins 1572–1656* (London, 1957; 2nd edn 1967).
2 Worcester Cathedral Library (WCL) D132.
3 Record of Benefactors of Worcester Charities 1627 f.15^{r}, City of Worcester Archives Shelf A16.
4 *The Chamber Order Book of Worcester 1602–1650*, ed. Shelagh Bond (Worc. Hist. Soc., 1974), p. 311.
5 Hereford & Worcester Record Office (HWRO) Worcs. probate 1613: 74.
6 *F-Pn* Res 1122. Other music MSS known to contain Tomkins autograph are *GB-Lbm* Add. 29996, *GB-Ob* Mus Sch C93 and *GB-Och* MS 67. In addition, Stevens (see n. 1) xiv, mentions partbooks at York Minster which may contain his hand, and the DNB says 'At St John's College, Oxford is a choir-book partly written by him, partly by Michael Este', although this cannot now be traced.
7 HWRO 1607–8 Treasurer's Book, BA 1442, ref 705: 240.
8 WCL: Ch. Act Bk. A75 f.136; lease, B202b (1640/1); petition, Ch. Act Bk. A76 f.187^{r} (1671); Ch. Act Bk. A74a f.107^{r} (1671).
9 WCL, A7 (x) f.123v (1627); Parliamentary Survey, HWRO BA 5402, ref b009:1; petition, WCL D43; later leases, WCL B972 (1666), B3390 (1684), B3466 and B3468 (1721). A bay is the space between the principal vertical posts in a timber-framed building, a fairly standard measurement in any given part of the country.
10 Public Record Office (PRO) State Papers 23/124/273; *F-Pn* Res 1122, p. 188; *GB-Lbm* Add. 29996, f.219^{r}.
11 *GB-Lbm* Add. 29996 f.183^{v}, f.152^{v}, f.184^{r}.
12 *Ibid.*, f.146^{v} and f.147^{r}.
13 PRO, State Papers, Jan 1636/7, Letter from Bish. Thornborough to Archbish. Laud; John Noake, *The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester* (London, 1866), 560; WCL D222; HWRO BA 9951/31, ref 705.753; *F-Pn* Res 1122 p. 186.
14 *Thomas Tomkins: Songs of 3, 4, 5 and 6. parts* (1622).

LETTER

Dear Madam:

Without wishing in any way to detract from the achievements of the Haslemere Festival and of Arnold Dolmetsch (in fact I am surprised that Dr Carl Dolmetsch does not mention his father's enormously influential book *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII & XVIII Centuries*, a work which, with its too often lost companion booklet of musical examples, is still of great use today), I think perhaps that he has forgotten the Music Loan Exhibition of the Worshipful Company of Musicians at the Fishmonger's Hall in 1904, and with it that seminal publication *English Music*, the little red book which is on the shelves of so many of us.

This book is the text of the lectures given at that exhibition which really did establish the cause of early music in this country, for they attracted a wide audience long before Dolmetsch was able to establish his Festival. What is important in this context is that each of those lectures was accompanied by a recital of the appropriate music on the appropriate instruments, and the programmes of, and participants in, those concerts are recorded in the book. Indeed the Catalogue of the exhibition includes a photograph of one of these ensembles, the members looking somewhat self-conscious in their Elizabethan costumes.

Incidentally, it may be of interest to your readers to know that Arnold Dolmetsch's first clavichord, which, as his son says in his letter, is where the revival of that instrument began, is now in the Bate Collection in Oxford, through the kindness of Dr George Gordon; it was made in 1894 as a copy of an instrument by Hass, similar to that which stands beside it, and purchased new by J. A. Fuller-Maitland, from whom it passed to the artists McKnight Kauffer and Marion Dorn after the Fuller-Maitland sale in 1937, and thence to our donor's godfather, E. C. Gregory. It now stands opposite an anonymous but original instrument of 1810–20, and it is fascinating how short the gap is between the last of the originals and the first of the reproductions.

Yours truly,

Jeremy Montagu

READING RENAISSANCE FACSIMILIES

Duane Lakin-Thomas offers some practice in developing your skills of performing from facsimilies.

Being able to perform from facsimilies has several advantages: it is more 'authentic'; it can reveal aspects of a piece which are obscured by modern notation; it allows access to music which has not yet been transcribed into modern notation; and it is an intellectual challenge which can be quite enjoyable. There is a considerable number of facsimilies available.

In this issue of *Leading Notes* we present a simple four-part dance piece from the mid-sixteenth century, in three versions: modern full score, partbooks in modern notation, and partbooks in pseudo-facsimile notation. If this last version (shown below) is too daunting, then try this:

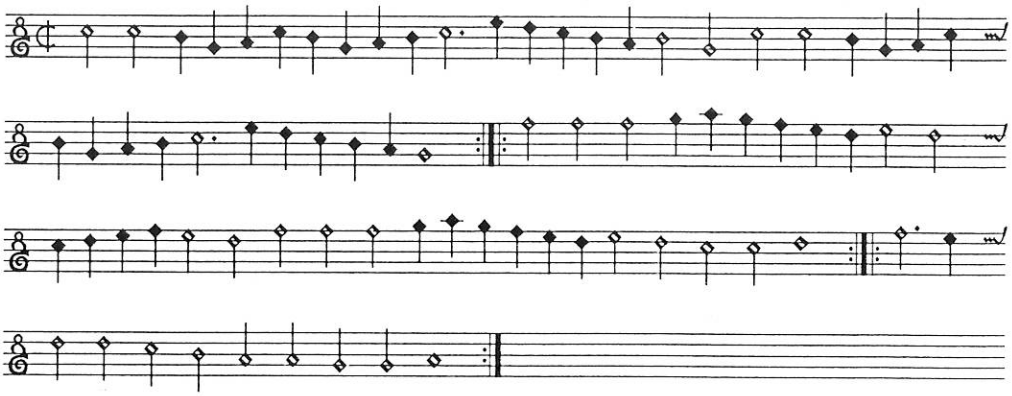
- use the modern score (page 24) to learn the piece; it is suitable for a wide range of instruments, SATB or SAAB
- move on to the separate parts in modern notation (pages 22–3), and work through the piece a couple of times, until you are comfortable without the 'cheat' of a full score
- finally, try the pseudo-facsimile on this spread, which presents the music in the original clefs.

Performing from original notation can have a substantial impact on the way you perceive and play the music. A friend of mine, who is very experienced in both early music and the music of India and Bali, was once practising the recorder, playing the same piece but trading between facsimile and modern edition. An Indian musician happened to be listening to the playing, and after a few minutes came into the room and asked why the music was being played in two different ways – the subtle differences in phrasing which resulted from the two different notations had been quite clear to him.

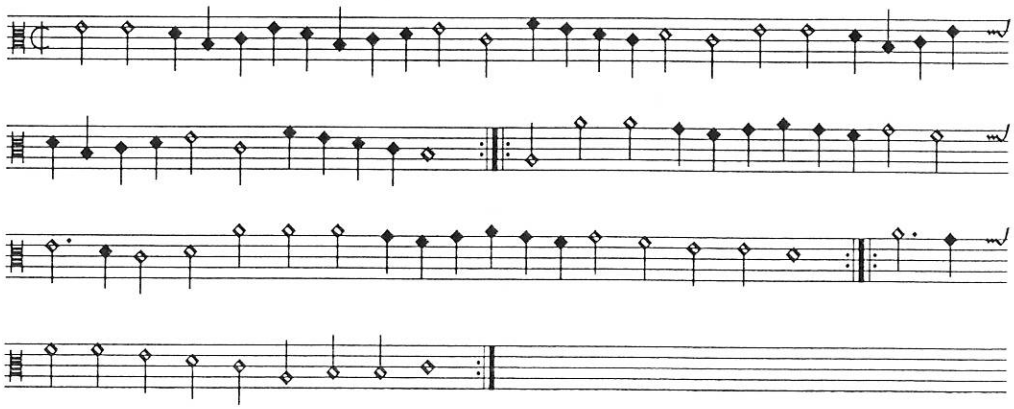
Let us know if you find this exercise of value; we could produce further examples if there is interest. There seems little need of producing Baroque music in this way, as it is largely a matter of getting used to the differences in typography; but Renaissance and Medieval examples could be included. ❖

Source: Claude Gervaise, *Six Livres de Danseries*, Minkoff Reprint, Geneva, 1977, introduction by François Lesure (*Second livre*, fol. 23^{v}–24^{r}).

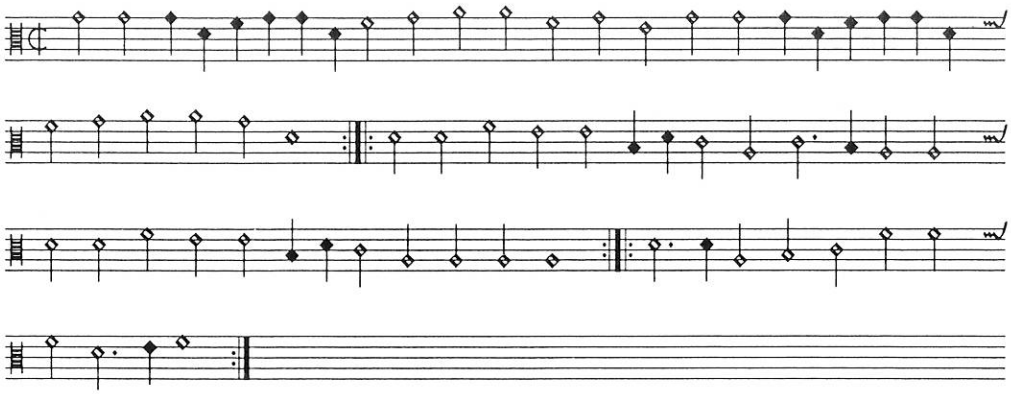
Superius



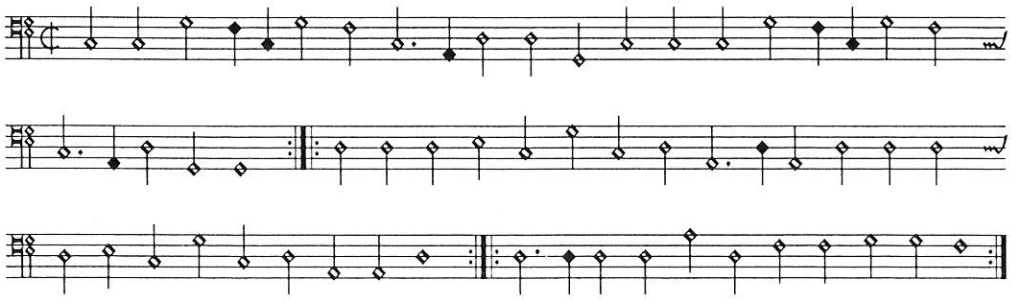
Tenor



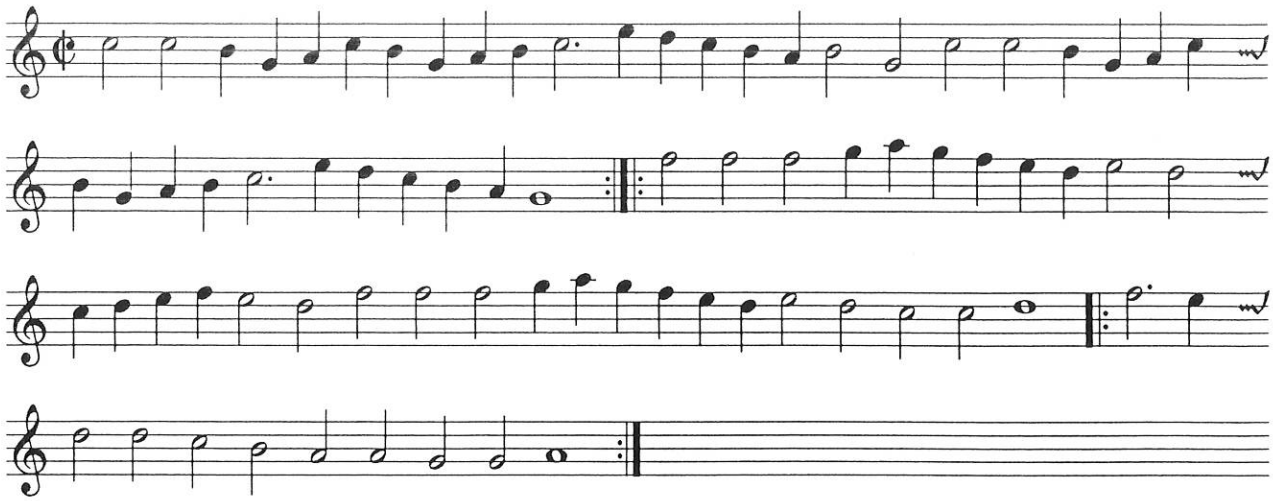
Contratenor



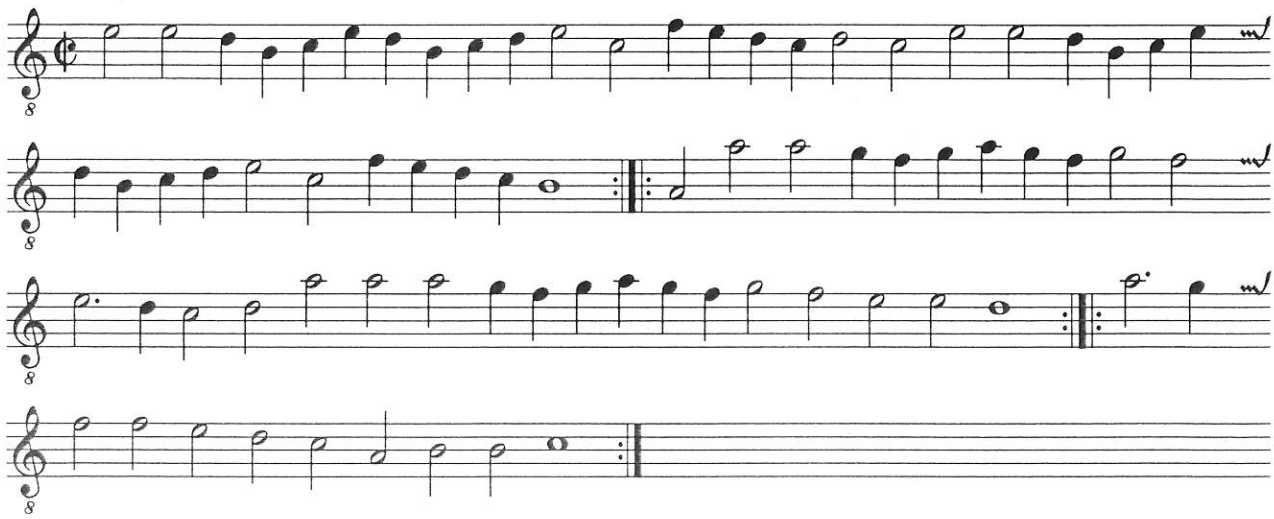
Bassus



Superius



Tenor



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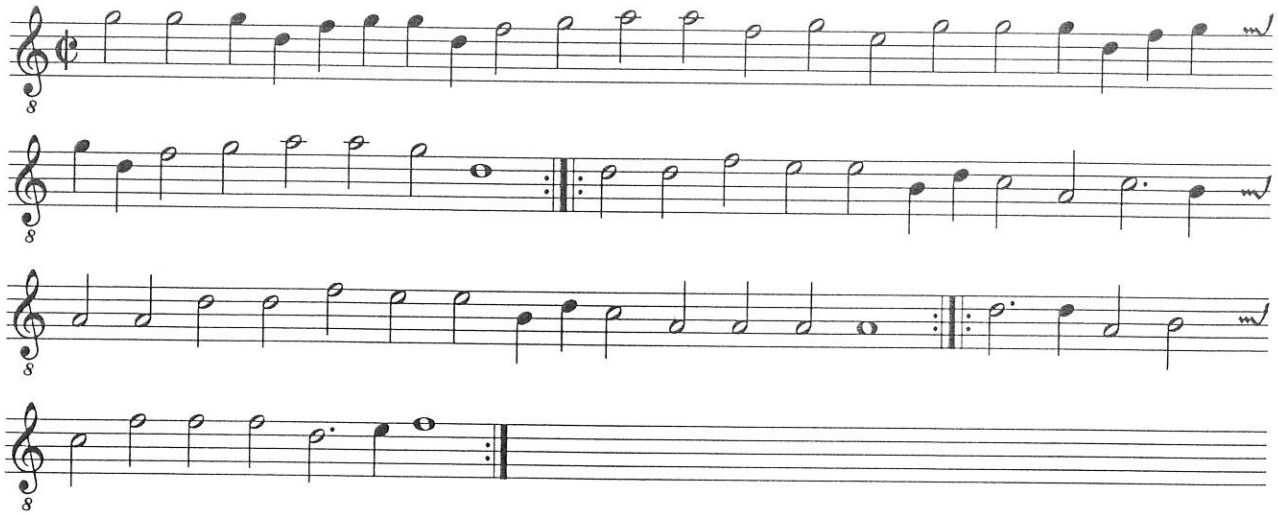

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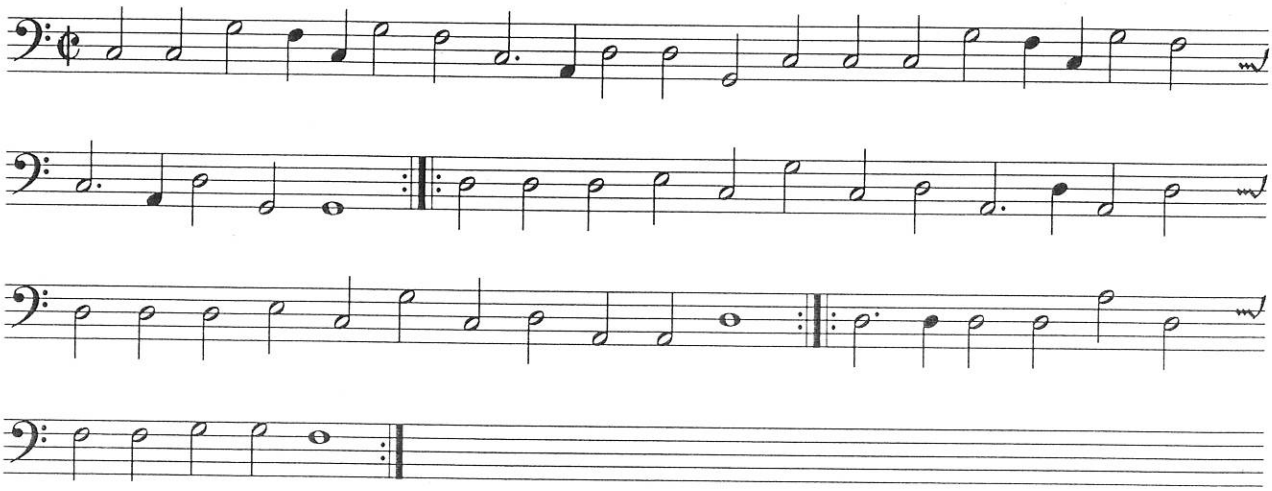

Branle

Claude Gervaise