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From the Editor

Re-emergence

Mark Nabholz

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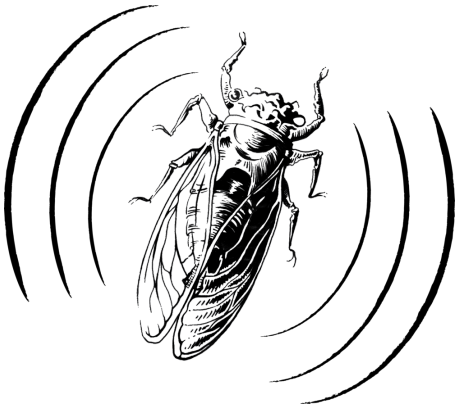
In the deep south where my family and I live, it is time for the cicadas to return. These unusual, hard-shelled, winged bugs live underground nourished by tree sap, emerging every seventeen years to mate. In the process they create a racket—their mating call can reach 80 to 100 decibels, approaching the volume of a rock concert.



The last time the cicadas emerged Mark Zuckerberg was launching Facebook from his college dorm room, Luciano Pavarotti turned in his last *Tosca* at the Met, and the final episode of *Frasier* aired on NBC. George W. Bush was the U.S. president, Tony Blair was prime minister of the United Kingdom and, per usual, Vladimir Putin held sway in Russia.

That's a long time underground!

For choral musicians, the COVID-19 shutdown feels like a very long time underground. We've survived by a variety of means, happily none of which involves tree sap. And, as thankful as we all are for Zoom and other technologies, the privilege of singing in person has never been more appreciated—even treasured—than it now is. Proving once again, I suppose, that we don't appreciate what we have until it's gone.

Upon emerging from this pandemic underground I, for one, will strive never again to see rehearsals as "exhausting" or, worse yet, "drudgery." I will find renewed joy in the never-ending search for great repertoire. I will look for new ways to view my art and the tools of the craft. To borrow and reapply Bernstein's famous quote, I will "make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before."

What are your post-COVID commitments?

For music,

TCS ACR

William Grant Still's …*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*: A Performance and Reception History

Harlan Zackery, Jr.

Abstract

William Grant Still's lynching drama *…And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, which premiered in 1940, has spent many years as a neglected work with fewer than thirty documented performances between 1940 and 2015. With the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement and the focus on addressing systemic racism, Still's work has increasing relevance in our society. In light of recent scholarship on the work, the number of performances has nearly doubled in six years. A detailed study of the performance record, performance practice and reception history equips the choral/orchestral director with tools to mount a compelling performance built on the successes and learning experiences of previous performers of the work.

photo credit: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Carl Van Vechten Collection

For much of its existence, William Grant Still's *…And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has been underperformed and underappreciated. However, with growing scrutiny of systemic racism in the American justice system, the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement, and heighted awareness of and scholarship on the piece, performances of it have markedly increased. This article offers a glimpse into the performance and reception history of the piece and gives choral directors accounts of performance preparations undertaken by previous conductors of the work, with the hope that it will aid anyone contemplating a future production of the piece.

The Composer

Born in Woodville, Mississippi in 1895, William Grant Still was no stranger to the pains of racism in America. The Civil War having ended just thirty years before his birth, lynchings were common.[1] Still composed with the intent of bringing light to the social issues and injustices of early twentieth-century America. He sought to use American and African American folk material in his "serious" music. By the time Still was approached in 1938 to compose a work on the topic of lynching, his catalog of works had already established his reputation as a nationalistic composer focused on the plight of the African American: *Three Negro Songs* (1922), *Darker America* (1924), *Afro American Symphony* (1930), and *Ebony Chronicle* (1933).

[1] Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909–1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 6.

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The Poet

Katherine Garrison Chapin, who was married to Francis Biddle, the Solicitor General of the United States, wrote the text of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Chapin, through influential friends Alain Locke and Charlotte "Godmother" Mason, approached Still in 1939 with the prospect of setting her poem to music.[2] Alain Locke, considered to be the Father of the Harlem Renaissance, was a well-known philosopher and professor at Howard University. Charlotte Mason was an important benefactor of several Harlem Renaissance artists, including Zora Neal Hurston and Langston Hughes. Still and Chapin corresponded through telephone and mail, after which Still agreed to set the text to music.

Musical Forces and Premiere Performance

...And They Lynched Him on a Tree is written for narrator, soloist, "White" choir, "Negro" choir, and orchestra. The white choir portrays the townspeople who lynched the Black man, and the Black choir represents the family and friends of the victim. There is also a narrator whose race is not specified, and a Black contralto soloist who portrays the victim's mother. The narrator acts as an impartial commentator for the events following the lynching. After a statement from the white choir followed by one from the Black choir, both in character, the two choirs merge and sing united, functioning as a Greek chorus, commenting on what has taken place.

The 1940 premiere is well documented in Wayne Shirley's 1994 article, "William Grant Still's Choral Ballad *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*."[3] Receiving overwhelmingly positive reviews in the major press the piece received several subsequent regional premieres, including one in Mexico, during the 1940s.[4]

The performance reviews are few; however, those that exist are essential to a documentation of the public reception of the work across varying regions of the United States and in different periods of time. For example, reviews exist from 1967 in Los Angeles, 1995 in Greensboro, North Carolina, 1999 in Boston, Massachusetts, 2000 in Raleigh, North Carolina, and 2011 in Boulder, Colorado, as well as a 1996 recording by Philip Brunelle. Although there is a large gap between 1967 and 1995, the reviews span forty-six years and are representative of the West Coast, East Coast, North Eastern and West North Central States.

It should be noted that while the quality of performance is crucial to a positive reception of a work, the assessment of quality is easily swayed by critics' opinions, biases, and emotions. Thus, the focus here will be on the portions of the review that evaluate the piece itself.

The majority of the reviews are positive assessments of both the work and Still's talent as a composer. The first performance review of the period spanning 1950 through 2015 is of the Los Angeles Jubilee Singers' 1967 performance. Donald Vail Allen, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, remarked that "William Grant Still's 'O Sorrow!' (an excerpt from the composer's *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*) and *Psalm for the Living* are pleasant pieces. Mr. Still, who was in the audience, is not the most daring of contemporary composers."[5] Although this

[2] Wayne D. Shirley, "William Grant Still's Choral Ballad *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*," *American Music* 12 (Winter 1994): 425.

[3] Ibid., 425–461.

[4] An exhaustive list of documented performances, including those discussed by Wayne Shirley, accompanies this article. This discussion focuses on the performances from 1952 through 2020.

[5] Donald Vail Allen, "Jubilee Singers Perform," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1967.

critique indicates that only an excerpt of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was performed, it offers insight into the perception of Still as a composer.

While the focus of this article is on the full performances of the work it is worth noting that the mother's lament, referenced above as "O Sorrow," has occasionally been excerpted for performance, notably on three occasions. The first documented occurrence is a recital performance on March 11, 1956 at the Pasadena Playhouse, Pasadena, CA. This recital featured Georgia Laster, soprano, and Still's wife, Verna Arvey Still, pianist. Included on the concert program was the contralto solo "O Sorrow," listed on the program under "operatic arias." William Grant Still was in attendance and also spoke on the program in a speech entitled "Sharing the Nation's Cultural Life."[6] The second performance is documented above and the third solo vocal performance occurred on April 18, 1995 with Beth E. Strittmatter performing, accompanied by pianist Adam Tyler.[7]

The 1995 performances of the work by the Greensboro Symphony received two separate reviews, both of which were positive. Henry Black Ingram of the *Greensboro News and Record* remarked, "[t]he text focuses on the racial injustices in our nation during the early decades of this century, and the work makes a rather powerful and effective statement with its dramatic juxtaposition of musical and textural elements."[8] Tim Lindeman of *Triad Style* called the piece "powerful and provocative…a solidly conceived and dramatic work."[9] Likewise, the 1999 performance in Boston received a positive review which appeared in *The Boston Globe*. Susan Larson reported:

> …It is called '*And They Lynched Him on a Tree,'* and it turns an unflinching gaze on race-hatred and violence. Here is an American Stabat Mater touching on such terrible shame and sorrow that the participants, both Coro Allegro and their guests, the New Haven Heritage Chorale, John Q. Berryman, director, must have lived through some shattering times together just trying to perform it.[10]

Although Donald Vail Allen criticized Still for his lack of daring as a composer, the available performance reviews reflect positively on the piece. This fact has assisted in promoting the work, particularly in major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and Boston.

Perhaps more important are the reviews of the two commercial recordings of the work which serve as permanent records of past performance. The oldest recording of the piece, available for purchase through William Grant Still Music, dates from 1942, conducted by Leopold Stokowski.[11] The second recording is the 1996 VocalEssence performance, conducted by Philip Brunelle.

The VocalEssence recording is partially responsible for the increase in performance activity that occurred between 1999 and 2016. Thirteen performances of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*,

[6] Concert program of the Pasadena Playhouse, March 11, 1956, MC 1125, Box 8, *William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers*, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

[7] Concert program of Northern Arizona University, April 18, 1995, MC 1125, Volume 94, Part 1, *William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers*, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

[8] Henry Black Ingram, "Concert Piece Focuses on Early Racial Injustices/*And They Lynched Him on a Tree," Greensboro News and Record*, January 14, 1995.

[9] Tim Lindeman, "Two Great Performances This Week," *Triad Style*, January 17, 1995.

[10] Susan Larson, "Coro Allegro concert tugs at heart, conscience," *Boston Globe*, February 23, 1999.

[11] This recording, until recently, was only available as a complimentary supplement to a purchase of vocal scores or conductor parts. It is now available for purchase through William Grant Still music.

spanning the fifty-six years from its 1940 premiere to its 1996 commercial recording, have been documented. However, in the twenty-five years following the 1996 recording, there have been thirty documented performances: a significant increase over time. Of the compact disc, Wilfred Mellers, seemingly unimpressed with the piece, states that,

> The biggest piece on this CD is in fact called *And they lynched him on a tree...* .The verses, if not distinguished, carry a high emotive charge in recounting events that ought to be still blush-making to whites. Musically, Still handles double choir and orchestra with some expertise, though the intrusion of the speaking voice seems, as usual, otiose. The musical idiom is somewhere between 'American' Dvořák and White-Negro Gershwin; though the music hasn't potent individuality, it holds the attention as well as much, though not all, American music composed around 1940.[12]

Mellers compares Still's talent to that of his European counterparts and finds Still "holding on to an academically nineteenth century idiom into the mid 20th century."[13] In spite of his generally lukewarm review, the comparison of the piece to others from the late 1930s and early 1940s lends credibility to the work.

Positioning the piece more positively is a review by Eric Salzman in *Stereo Review*. Although Salzman gives the CD an overall rating of "okay,"[14] he praises Still's work as a composer.

> *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, a cantata or oratorio for double chorus, mezzo-soprano, narrator, and orchestra, is as powerful a piece of work as you will find in American classical music. The strength is partly in the peculiarly American subject, but it is also in the music, which is a strong, dark, and dramatic expression of the horrific scene conjured up by the words. Still's use of traditional material, once thought to be dated, now seems fresh and relevant again, and the power of the material is as biblical as that of any Bach Passion.[15]

Michael Fleming reviews the piece in a similar fashion but is less complimentary of the choral element, describing it as "underpowered and unfocused."[16]

The Brunelle recording of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is the second of four discs in a series entitled *WITNESS*. Brian Burns reviewed the entire series in the May 2007 issue of the *Choral Journal*. He states, "although compelling and hauntingly beautiful in many places, this is a difficult piece to listen to. Here is art that confronts the listener and forces him or her to acknowledge and consider the tragedies of our recent past."[17] Ten years prior, in the same publication, Weyburn Wasson described the piece: "[A] powerful dramatic cantata…[a] chilling work, when taken in its historical context of a still militantly segregated nation in 1941, is a bold and foreboding work. Musically it is one of Still's greatest but, alas, not well-known works."[18]

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[12] Wilfred Mellers, "New World Oldies," *Musical Times*, 137, no. 1838 (April 1996): 20.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Eric Salzman, "Still: *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*; Wailing Woman/ Miss Sally's Party; other works," *Stereo Review*, Vol. 61, no. 8 (August 1996): 97.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Michael Fleming, "Plymouth Music Series: Philip Brunelle, conductor, 'Witness Vol. II: William Grant Still,' (Collins Classics)," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, March 31, 1996, accessed September 15, 2015.

[17] Brian Burns, "The WITNESS Collection," *Choral Journal* 47 [May 2007]: 75.

[18] Weyburn Wasson, "Witness, Volume II," *Choral Journal* 37 [April 1997]: 60.

A more recent video recording of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* by the Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra is available on their YouTube channel. The video documents a performance which includes the Brooklyn Ecumenical Choir and an ad hoc chorus performing as the Lynch Mob. Although this performance is not reviewed, it merits mention because it provides an example of performance practice decisions for the work.[19]

Conductor Interviews

There are no documented performances of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* between 1944 and 1952. The 1952, 1967 and 1974 performances occurred in California. This is logical when considering that, from 1934 until his death, Still lived in California.[20] Albert McNeil, a native Californian, conducted each of the California performances. Between the performances of 1952 and 1967 was a 1957 performance in New York by the Westminster Interracial Fellowship Chorus, owing most likely to the premiere performances of the 1940s in New York.

It is interesting to note that although William Grant Still died in 1978, an event which for other composers has led to memorial performances of their work, there are no documented performances of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* between 1974 and 1993. Between 1993 and 2015, the decision to perform the piece has been informed by two factors: Judith Anne Still, the composer's daughter and tireless champion of his music, and knowledge of previous performances. However, in 2016 doctoral dissertations were written on the piece by Harlan Zackery, Jr.[21] and Brandon Williams.[22]

Many of the conductors were introduced to the piece through conversations with Judith Anne Still or promotional mailings from William Grant Still Music Company. Most of the conductors interviewed commented on Judith Anne Still's zeal for her father's music and willingness to educate the public about his compositional output. Her work has been the source of inspiration for the 1994, 1995, 2001 performances, a cancelled performance of the piece in 2007, and the undated performance in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Conversely, Alan Harler, conductor emeritus of The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, and his performance of the work with the same group, inspired performances at Westminster Choir College (which subsequently led to a performance in Raleigh, North Carolina), Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Boston, Massachusetts. The 2009 performance in Hattiesburg was inspired in part by knowledge of the planned 2007 performance by the Mississippi Symphony. An undated performance in Ann Arbor gave inspiration for the 2011 performances in Boulder, Colorado.

Through the process of documenting each performance, a progression appears with such prevalence that it can reasonably be expected to present itself in subsequent productions. Initially there is resistance to the idea of performing the piece, primarily fueled by stigmas associated with the title of the work, the request for a white

[19] Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra. "From Song Came Symphony: William Grant Still's *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*," Dec. 29, 2019, video, 18:08. https://youtu.be/3ccUZxlWIr4.

[20] Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime*, (Fayetteville, The University of Arkansas Press, 1984), 115–117.

[21] The Zackery dissertation explores the performance and reception history of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* through an examination of academic texts, published reviews and conductor/chorus master interviews, leading to recommendations to tackle the work's inherent performance practice concerns.

[22] Dr. Williams' document and subsequent *Choral Journal* article present compelling performance and programming recommendations, and explore the work's origin and initial reception and classification.

choir and a Black choir, internal struggle with the subject matter, and/or fears of a backlash from the public including the possibility of creating racial tension. Following this initial stage comes a deeper examination of the text and an acceptance, in most cases, of the subject matter. For example, in the 2009 Mississippi Symphony Orchestra performance, the conductor and President of the Orchestra had high hopes for a planned performance but were met with resistance. Crafton Beck, conductor of the Mississippi Symphony recounts:

> All I know is that we proposed it.... A number of weeks...passed by, and when it came back, it was a very strong response. It was not just from the music departments; mainly...it was as much from the administration of the school[s] as it was from the music departments. It wasn't at all that this isn't a topic that should be talked about...It was simpler than that. It was just "we don't want to go there right now."[23]

The "there" of which Beck speaks is the subject of race, a theme which saturates the discussion of the performance, which was eventually cancelled. Judith Anne Still, who consulted with the coordinators, stated:

> That's because, I think it was the head of the department, or the head of something, he was a racist, and he claimed to me on the phone, in a bombastic voice, that, "the Black people didn't want them to do it. They didn't want to bring it up." I said, "hmmm, I know that's wrong." So they cancelled the performance. You know, Mississippi is going to be the last bastion of hatred for a long time...He didn't want to do it for racial reasons and he wanted to make it appear that the Black people had killed the performance.[24]

Mrs. Still could not recall the name of the man of whom she speaks, or his capacity in the project.

It is possible that, as messages were relayed from person to person, that factors of race began to play a perceived role which was larger or different than reality. Richard Waters, then Director of Choral Activities at Delta State University, remembers a milder, though no less serious, discussion which centered on his students, mainly those of color:

> As I recall, it wasn't so much an objection from the Bologna Center as it was from students and the music department chair, David Schubert. The semester before the program (spring 2007 I believe), I described the piece and read the text of the first movement to my choral conducting class. One of my students (an African American) said, "Dr. Waters, my momma would kill me if I sing that! I respect you and all, but I'll take the F." Other students expressed similar sentiments. After discussing it further with the music chair, we asked the [Mississippi Symphony Orchestra] if another piece would be considered instead. I had mixed feelings about it, but ultimately felt that my students' voices deserved to be heard and respected.[25]

Don Trott, choral director at The University of Mississippi, spoke on behalf of his institution. While the decision to choose another piece was shared with Delta State University, the reasons were different:

[23] Crafton Beck, interview with author, Jackson MS, August 1, 2015.

[24] Judith Anne Still, interview with author, telephone, September 8, 2015.

[25] Richard Waters, email message to author, August 3, 2015.

> …I do remember that it simply was the title that caused the administration to not desire to program this work in the Ford Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Mississippi. In prior years, the university had celebrated the fortieth anniversary of James Meredith's entrance into the university. Diversity was and is an important focus of the university. It was deemed better to not take a chance on such a title creating an issue with the forward momentum of the continued efforts toward civility and diversity.[26]

The feelings were not unanimous from one university to the next. At the opposite end of the state is William Carey University. Carey choral director Mark Malone was the Mississippi Arts Commission liaison for this project and was instrumental in selecting repertoire for the series of concerts. Malone recounts that,

> The opportunity to present a work by Mississippi native son, William Grant Still, was quite wonderful given a [National Endowment of the Arts] grant to share the choral works of this renowned composer born in the Magnolia State. Shockingly, administrations of both The University of Mississippi and Delta State University were reticent to perform the controversial work, *And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and forced a decision to be made that eliminated the piece from the concert program… [William Carey University] students were much in favor of performing the piece, which continued the position of past administrators who led WCU to be the first private institution in MS to admit African American students.[27]

Two years later at the University of Southern Mississippi the same worries were present. As the Southern Chorale was preparing for a performance of the piece there was tremendous concern about the support of the singers. The Director of Choral Activities shared those concerns, and exercised caution by securing the approval of both the Dean of the College and the Chair of the School of Music. Fortunately, no serious issues arose.

Considering the racial history of the southern United States it is easy to assume that this initial resistance is unique to the South. However, conductors from other locales also experienced difficulty in convincing their respective organizations to perform the piece. Alan Harler, then conductor of the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, remembers initial resistance from the ensemble's board of directors. "They were so alarmed by the title that they wondered whether or not we should do it. But then when they understood the overall meaning of …the fact that there was an African American chorus or a Black chorus and a [W]hite chorus and that they played a part of what was really a drama, a scene, a terrible scene…,"[28] they agreed to allow the performance. Lawrence Speakman of the Concert Singers of Cary, North Carolina recounts vivid memories of his encounter with the board of directors:

> When I brought this up, they looked at me like I'd lost my mind. And the executive director said to me, "How am I supposed to market this? How do we publicize attendance for this program?" …So I explained my motivations and said… "Well, if you feel this is too hot to handle, I understand that. If you think it's too risky I understand that. But I want you to know that if you decided that we shouldn't do this program, I'm

[26] Don Trott, electronic survey response to author, August 1, 2015.

[27] Mark Malone, electronic survey response to author, July 31, 2015.

[28] Alan Harler, interview with author, telephone, August 29, 2015.

> going to do this program on my own. I would produce it myself apart from the chorus."[29]

Speakman was able to convince the board of directors to allow the performance, which was received positively.

The performance preparations for this piece often involve a process of catharsis for those involved and, in many instances, a healing process or starting point for conversation on the topic of race. The New Haven, Connecticut performance of 1999 is most indicative of the latter. The initial preparations for the performance received coverage on National Public Radio's Morning Edition.[30] Elizabeth Blair interviewed members of both the Black choir and the white choir. Members of both ensembles expressed the difficulty they experienced in dealing with the emotional weight of the texts and the portrayals of the Black and white communities. The broadcast also excerpts portions of the ensembles' rehearsals. Of particular importance in the radio broadcast is the discussion of the privilege of Yale University in contrast to the poor economic conditions of the larger New Haven Community. Jonathan Berryman, Director of The Heritage Chorale of New Haven, an African American choir, spoke to the relationship between Yale and the community. "This is first time in the five years that I have been here that there will have been any significant African American presence on the concert stage in Woolsey Hall performing any type of music. It just has not been done in this community."[31] Meanwhile, New Haven Chorale member Charlotte Holloman states, "It's face to face in an age where we have very little contact with each other. We tend to not see each other. We don't have the opportunity to talk to each other. So this brings us together in a musical venue which makes it perhaps easier to talk about this."[32] For the performance, Paul Mueller recounts that the hall was full, with more African American audience members than white. He believes that for many of the African Americans in attendance it was their first time in that venue. Both local and state politicians were in attendance. Mueller also received many letters and emails from audience members who were moved by the performance, including a letter from a relative of Katherine Garrison Chapin who attended the performance. Many of the choristers continue to speak fondly of the performance to Mueller, sixteen years later.[33]

Jonathan Berryman recalls, "…I have never yet seen Woolsey Hall that full for a musical performance. When I say never, I mean never. There are two balconies. The first balcony goes all the way around. And then, the second balcony is just in the back of the hall. Full! All the way around. Full!"[34] Berryman's ensemble, which continues to exist, was formed because of the need for a Black choir for the New Haven performance of the piece.

Donald Dumpson, who conducted the work with the Westminster Jubilee Singers and has prepared the Celestial Choir of Bright Hope Baptist Church for performance with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, recounted a rehearsal process at Westminster in which the white choir and Black choir were not allowed to interact. This choice was made to create a sense of segregation and intensity similar to those present during the work's creation. Of that process he stated,

[29] Lawrence Speakman, interview with author, telephone, August 4, 2015.

[30] *Morning Edition*, "Play Evokes Strong Emotions," featuring Elizabeth Blair, aired January 29, 1999, on National Public Radio, recorded broadcast in private collection.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Paul Mueller, interview with author, telephone, August 6, 2015.

[34] Jonathan Berryman, interview with author, telephone, August 16, 2015.

> "[it] was very emotional… I really, if you think about phenomenology, wanted it to be a real lived experience for them. So, we really, really created a sense of segregation and really worked pretty intense[ly] about allowing those feelings to be real. They would journal about it."[35]

Lawrence Speakman, who consulted Dumpson prior to his own performance of the piece with the Concert Singers of Cary, also created a physical separation of the choirs (rehearsing in separate locations) during rehearsals. Speakman's approach to the piece encouraged dialogue about race and injustice in the rehearsal process.[36]

Coro Allegro, directed by David Hodgkins, experienced trouble in initial preparations for their performance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. The ensemble originally contacted a Boston-area church choir to sing the role of the Black community in the performance. As David Hodgkins discussed,

> "about a month or two before the performance, [the church choir] discovered that Coro Allegro was a gay chorus and they decided to back out; which is kind of weird because the piece is about oppression and racism and overcoming our differences to unite. So there was a whole other layer to this. So, we were without a chorus."[37]

Meg Oakes, Coro Allegro singer and Past President of the organization, gave further details:

> As it was explained to us, some members of that church choir were not comfortable singing about such a painful, difficult, and sometimes personal subject as the lynching of blacks, did not have enough time to prepare the music, and were not willing to perform in collaboration with lesbians and gay men. Our reactions to this news were as varied as we are, but many of us felt rejected, angry, or worried. We spent part of a late January rehearsal discussing how we felt. We spoke about the guilt, sadness, and anger we feel when we sing the part of the white chorus; about our unrealistic and unfair expectations of the original black chorus; and about our desire to educate ourselves and our audience, coupled with our obligation to not hurt our collaborators, our audience, or our members. We also spoke about the excitement and pride we feel as we present such important and moving music by an underperformed composer… As lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and supporters, and as a predominantly white group, we hope, through this performance, to reach out into the black community to form connections, and together create art that, in itself, seeks to challenge racist assumptions by forging a connection between disparate communities….The program is powerful. It has changed many of our lives, reminding us of the reality of racism and of homophobia, challenging us to open up to one another, enabling us to see other gaps we would like to bridge, and especially, reiterating the importance of breaking silence.[38]

[35] Donald Dumpson, interview with author, telephone, August 7, 2015.

[36] Speakman.

[37] David Hodgkins, interview with author, telephone, August 23, 2015.

[38] Concert program of Coro Allegro, February 21, 1999, MC 1125, Volume 98, *William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers*, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

Outcomes

A reward of the rehearsal process has been the overwhelming success that *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has experienced with audiences in every documented performance. A violinist with the Albany Symphony Orchestra who also performed the piece recounts that, "the performance…was very well received by the audience. It is, of course, a profoundly moving and disturbing piece and I think the audience was deeply affected by it."[39]

Paul Anthony McRae of the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra recalls that the audience "responded really well. I have to tell you that it was very well received."[40]

Of the audience reaction at the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia performance, Alan Harler remembers, "… the audience was stunned, you know. It's so vivid and Marietta [Simpson]'s aria was so incredibly beautiful that I think the audience was holding their breath by the end of the piece. And so I think it was a very favorable response, not that the people were left feeling great about it, but I think they had been moved and changed by both the text and the music."[41]

Of the Concert Singers of Cary performance, Lawrence Speakman recalls:

> [they] found it to be a wonderful experience for us, one of the most artistically meaningful things. I mean, to this day, people just talked about that; 'Wow, we did that! What a wonderful work that was, and what a revealing work that was!' The postscript to this, and I found this interesting as well, is because it was so well received, we got a request… to perform it again locally. [42]

Although The Concert Singers of Cary were invited to perform the piece a second time, the members were reticent to do so, fearful that subsequent performances would diminish the value of the initial shared experience. In fact, Speakman recounts that the experience was "transformative… . And since [they] did do this with people who knew each other, the relationships deepened after that, and it was really, really wonderful to see."[43]

On March 21, 2001, Scott Youngs, Director of Music at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Phoenix, Arizona conducted the work. Youngs recounts that the performance was well received and the "singers loved the work, and putting it together with an entirely different tradition made it even more interesting."[44]

Fred Peterbark, formerly of the University of Colorado Boulder, conducted a performance on February 12, 2011, a collaboration with dance professor Onye Ozuzu, that differed greatly from other documented performances.

> …[I]t was presented almost as if it was a ballet where you have your musicians typically in the pit and then you have the staged ballet above it. This was all on one floor in a black box theatre. So, the musicians and myself, we were in simply a corner of the room and you had the stage area…where the dancing

[39] Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, email message to author, August 6, 2015.

[40] Paul Anthony McRae, interview with author, telephone, August 15, 2015.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Speakman.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Scott Youngs, electronic survey response to author, August 9, 2015.

was taking place… And it was just very, very special and unique because…the entire time that I was conducting I was not looking at the dancers. I was only looking at my musicians.

…There was one [performance installation] that I specifically remember of a woman and I think it was a story of someone giving birth but the baby was, essentially, already being lynched. And she had this red rope that went up her dress from the bottom and came out from up the opening above her breast and the rope just continued to come out. She had to deal with this rope—this red rope that—as it was being used for lynching purposes…

And that was one of the most significant things that I remember prior to the performance of *…And They Lynched Him*. The fascinating impact of what Onye decided to create within *…And They Lynched Him* was a conclusion, shall we say, to these because the piece doesn't end with a period. It ends with a deceptive or half cadence. It's unfinished almost. And at the end of that there was this African drumming that happened. And there were two gentlemen that were suspended the entire time in this hanging silk as if they were in a cocoon. And there was this woman that would come out almost as if she was—her face was painted white and it was almost as if she was a witch doctor—but I think she was supposed to represent the mother. And she actually released these two individuals from their cocoons—from their places of captivity.[45]

While *…And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has a record of positive experiences in performance, performance frequency has been limited. In eighty years the piece has had fifty documented performances, the equivalent of one performance every 1.6 years. Most performances have occurred in the northern states of New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, with the majority of those performances occurring in New York. Over the past few years there have been increasing numbers of assumed premiere performances in the southern states such as Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida and Alabama, the states experiencing more racially motivated violence since the Reconstruction Era. However, with the publication of two dissertations and a recent *Choral Journal* article[46] dedicated to the work, the frequency of new performances has increased dramatically over the past five years. From 2018 to 2020, there have been fifteen documented performances.

Conclusion

…And They Lynched Him on a Tree deserves a place in the canon of choral literature. From our vantage point early in a new millennium we can reflect and learn from the atrocities of the nation's not-too-distant past, and face the realities of current social and racial unrest. We find ourselves grasping the ramifications of systemic inequities and forms of "lynching" on different types of "roadside trees," as the Black Lives Matter Movement and pleas for meaningful change grow louder and stronger. As choral professionals searching to give voice to this movement, William Grant Still and Katherine Garrison Chapin long ago provided us a vehicle to speak to and effect change in our own communities. It is my hope that this article will provide the reader with a measure of confidence and informed decision-making when considering a possible performance of *…And They Lynched Him on a Tree.*

[45] Fred Peterbark, interview with author, telephone, August 19, 2015.

[46] Brandon Williams, "The Shadow Still Lingers: A Conductor's Guide for William Grant Still's *…And They Lynched Him on a Tree,*" *Choral Journal* 58 No. 8 (March 2018): 6–19.

Documented Performances

June 25, 1940, New York, NY
Artur Rodzinski, Conductor
Abner Dorsey, Narrator
Louise Burge, Contralto
Schola Cantorum/Wen Talbot Negro Choir
New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra

December 1940, Howard University, Washington, DC.
Exact date and performance details not known

June 23, 1941, New York, NY
Hugh Ross, Conductor
Abner Dorsey and George Headley, Narrators
Louise Burge, Contralto
Schola Cantorum/Eva Jessye Choir
New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra

April 14, 1942, New York, NY
Leopold Stokowski, Conductor
Lawrence Whisonant, Narrator
Louise Burge, contralto
Collegiate Choir/Eva Jessye Choir
NBC Symphony Orchestra

1944, Mexico City, Mexico
Carlos Chavez, Conductor
Exact date and performance details not known

1952, Los Angeles, CA
Albert McNeil, Conductor
Exact date and performance details not known

February 23, 1957, New York, NY
David Katz, Conducto
David Allen, Narrator
Carol Brice, Contralto
Westminster Interracial Fellowship Chorus
Jonathan Brice, Piano

March 25, 1967, Beverly Hills, CA
Albert J. McNeil, Conductor
Other performance details not known

April 28, 1974, Los Angeles, CA
Albert J. McNeil, Conductor
Elmer Bush, Narrator
Virginia White, Contralto
East Los Angeles College Concert Choir/
Los Angeles Jubilee Singers
Pianist not known

February 12/13, 1993, Albany, NY
David Alan Miller, Conductor
Robert C. Lamar, Narrator
Marietta Simpson, Contralto
Albany Pro Musica
Albany Symphony Orchestra

February 5/6, 1994, Princeton, NJ
Frances Slade, Conductor
Princeton Pro Musica
Other performance details not known

January 14/16, 1995, Greensboro, NC
Paul Anthony McRae, Conductor
Howard Allen Chubbs, Narrator
Elvira Green, Contralto
The Bel Canto Company/Bennett College
Choir and The North Carolina A & T State
University Choir
Greensboro Symphony Orchestra

May 6, 1995, Philadelphia, PA
Alan Harler, Conductor
Charles Walker, Narrator
Marietta Simpson, Contralto
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia/Bright Hope
Baptist Church Celestial Choir
Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia and John
French, Organ

January 23, 1996, Collins Classics
Philip Brunelle, Conductor
William Warfield, Narrator
Hilda Harris, Contralto
Plymouth Music Singers/Leigh Morris Chorale
Plymouth Music Players

January 30, 1999, New Haven, CT
Paul Mueller, Conductor
Ben Harney, Narrator
Kishna Davis, Contralto
The New Haven Chorale/The Heritage Chorale
For-Hire Orchestra

February 21, 1999, Boston, MA
David Hodgkins, Conductor
Paul Parks, Jr., Narrator
Marietta Simpson, Contralto
Coro Allegro/The Heritage Chorale
Darryl Hollister, Piano

May 21, 2000, Raleigh, NC
Lawrence J. Speakman, Conductor
William Henry Curry, Narrator
Sharyn Stith, Contralto
Concert Singers of Cary/Additional Singers from the Community
Jodi Adams, Piano

January 15, 2001, Hilton Head Island, SC
Mary Woodmansee Green, Conductor
William Warfield, Narrator
Marietta Simpson, Contralto
Hilton Head Orchestra

March 11, 2001, Cincinnati, OH
Paul Zappa, Conductor
Edwin Rigaud, Narrator
Mary Henderson-Stucky, Contralto
St. Ursula Academy Freshmen Chorus, St. Xavier High School Men's Chorus and Ursuline Academy Select Choir
Orchestra not known

March 21, 2001, Phoenix, AZ
Scott Youngs, Conductor
All Saints' Episcopal Church Choir/First Institutional Baptist Church Choir
Other performance details not known

April 4/5, 2008, Bloomington, IN
Mark Brennan Doerries, Conductor
Other performance details not known

April 14/24, 2009, Hattiesburg, MS
Harlan Zackery, Jr., Conductor
Chris Jennings, Narrator
Ashley N. Henry, Contralto
The Southern Chorale
Mary Chung, Piano

February 11/12, 2011, Boulder, CO
Fred Peterbark, Conductor
Other performance details not known

January 19, 2015, Putney, VT
Cailin Marcel Manson, Conductor
The Putney School Madrigals/Germantown Concert Chorus Putney Community Orchestra
Other performance details not known

October 10, 2015, East Lansing, MA
Brandon Williams, Conductor
Kevin McBeth, Narrator
Rosetta Sellers-Varela, Contralto
Selected music students of Michigan State University
For-Hire Orchestra

April 2016, Carlisle, PA
Dickinson College Choir
Exact date and performance details not known

April 20/21, 2018, Atlanta, GA/Marietta, GA
Timothy Verville, Conductor
Georgia Spiritual Ensemble/Georgia Symphony Orchestra Chorus/Morehouse College Glee Club/Spelman College Glee Club/Uzee Brown Society of Choraliers
Georgia Symphony Orchestra
Other performance details not known

April 21/22, 2018, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL
John Sinclair, Conductor
Kevin Deas, Narrator
Krysty Swann, Mezzo Soprano
Bach Festival Society Choir of Winter Park Bethune-Cookman
University Concert Choral
Bach Festival Society Orchestra of Winter Park

March 1/3, 2019, St. Ann and the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Brooklyn, NY
Malcolm J. Merriweather, Conductor
Brooklyn College Symphonic Choir and Conservatory Singers/Grace Chorale of Brooklyn
The String Orchestra of Brooklyn
Other performance details not known

March 24, 2019, Boston, MA
David Hodgkins, Conductor
Ron Williams, Narrator
Sylvia V. C. Twine, Soloist
Coro Allegro/Heritage Chorale of New Haven
Freelance Orchestra
Other performance details not known

May 8, 2019, New York, NY
Thomas Cunningham, Conductor
Lawrence Craig, Narrator
Lucia Bradford, Contralto
Ad Hoc Chorus/Brooklyn Ecumenical Choir
Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra

July 4-6, 2019, Atlanta, GA/Montgomery, AL/ Birmingham, AL
The Congressional Chorus of Washington, DC/ Grace Chorale of Brooklyn
Other performance details not known

February 22/23, 2020, La Jolla, CA/National City, CA
David Chase, Conductor
Michael L. Henderson, Narrator
Judith Malone, Soloist
Bodhi Tree Concerts Chorus/Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Choir
Accompaniment not known

March 5, 2020, Little Rock, AR
Prairie View A&M University Concert Chorale University Singers of the University of Missouri
Other performance details not known

March 8, 2020, Duluth, MN
Jean Perrault, Conductor
Ad Hoc Chorus and Orchestra
Other performance details not known

Date Unknown, Grand Rapids, MI
Conductor, not known
East Congregational United Church of Christ Choir
West Wind Quintet
Other performance details not known

Date unknown, Ann Arbor, MI
Marietta Simpson, Contralto
Other performance details not known

Date unknown, Princeton, NJ
Donald Dumpson, Conductor
Samar Newsome, Narrator
Kimberley King Harley, Contralto
Westminster Jubilee Singers
Pianist, not known

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Overcoming Inertia:
Using Energetics as a Fresh Approach for Conducting and Conducting Pedagogy

Dominique Petite

Abstract

Outside of the field of music theory, energetics is an analytical tool that is not widely known or utilized. Employing energetics in the field of choral conducting encourages natural, embodied movement that is compatible with principles of Dalcroze and Lában and encourages students to use innate mind-body connections when interpreting a score. Performers and teachers of performers can use energetics as a lens to discover fresh interpretations of familiar pieces, uncover meaning in new scores, and encourage critical thinking in students.

At some point in every conductor's career, certain pieces are encountered often enough to convince us that we know how they should be performed. Acute familiarity makes it all but impossible to experiment with or discover unexplored ideas. Sometimes, however, viewing a well-known piece through a different lens brings to light ideas previously unimagined. Energetics is just such a unique lens: an analytical tool allowing performers to reimagine the music they know and love, and one which offers perspectives on newly encountered scores as well. As teachers of performers we can incorporate energetics in our pedagogy to encourage critical thinking and enhance the interpretive skills of students.

The term "energetics" was coined in 1934 by Rudolf Schäfke, an historian of aesthetics, to characterize the work of music theorists such as Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935), August Halm (1869–1929), and Ernst Kurth (1886–1946). Schäfke found common characteristics between these theorists, including "thematization of force" and "musical logic." Speaking in metaphor, Schenker discussed a "biology of tones," Halm described a "drama of forces," and Kurth explored the potential and kinetic energies in music. These energeticists described music as proceeding logically as a series of events transpiring due to properties of the tones themselves, without the influence of extramusical factors, such as text or program.[1] While energetics is known and widely accepted by music theorists, it is largely unknown—and therefore not utilized—by performers and teachers of performers.

[1] Lee Rothfarb, "Energetics," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, edited by Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 927–928.

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Energeticists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries described musical events based on their empirical knowledge, but scholars working later in the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century, such as Fred Lerdahl (b. 1943), Carol Krumhansl, and Steve Larson (1955–2011) have combined modern understanding of psychology with computer models to test the energetic properties of music. Steve Larson's theories were influenced by the Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization and the work of the cognitive linguists, George Lakoff (b. 1941) and Mark Johnson (b. 1949), who explain that human understanding is achieved through metaphor as a result of cross-domain mapping, whereby a less familiar or more abstract idea is grasped in terms of a more familiar or more concrete idea.[2]

Metaphor

In his book, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, Johnson explains that people understand the world in terms of how their bodies experience it: through movement, orientation in time and space, and interactions with objects.[3] This orientation, he argues, is literally built into the fabric of language; it is not something merely added to grammar or syntax, but how our language works. Lakoff and Johnson argue that to a significant degree people construct language to reflect their physical embodiment in the real world. For instance, the sense of the relationship of up-down reflects one's physical experience of vertical orientation, evidenced in metaphorical language, such as using the phrase *higher* salary to mean increased income—also referred to as a "raise."[4] A price is not higher, in terms of elevation, but people map their understanding of quantity (more liquid in a glass is higher) to conceptualize amounts of money. The mercury in a thermometer may rise when temperatures increase, but the temperature itself is not "climbing." "Mood elevating" drugs treat depression when people are feeling "down," but human emotions do not change in vertical space. *More is Up* is a metaphor not only used to describe prices, temperature, and emotional states, but it is a way of translating one's physical experience in the world into an intellectual means of measuring and orienting.[5]

People talk about music as if it moves, such as: the *passage* is *ascending*; the tenor line *leaps* to a dissonance. The notes, however, are not moving; each pitch is replaced by a succession of different tones. It is the listeners who *interpret* the succession as motion. Because people experience the world through their own sense of physical motion, they often think about music using the metaphor *Musical Succession is Physical Motion*. It is the "analogous physical motions—and the forces that shape those physical motions" that help listeners interpret musical movement.[6] For instance, melodic lines often include longer note values after leaps. This is especially true when the disjunct motion results in a dissonance. For singers, the lengthened note helps stabilize the pitch of the dissonant sonority. An analogous physical motion would be if a person leapt to an unstable rock and needed a few moments to regain balance before continuing along the path.

Musical Forces

Steve Larson's major contribution to energetics was defining three specific musical forces: "musical gravity," "musical magnetism," and

[2] Steve Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, ed. Robert Hatten (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 328.

[3] Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), xix.

[4] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 14.

[5] Ibid., 17–19.

[6] Larson, 10.

"musical inertia."[7] In his book *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, Larson states his central idea: "our experience of physical motion shapes our experience of musical motion in specific and quantifiable ways—so that we not only *speak* about music as if it were shaped by musical analogs of physical gravity, magnetism, and inertia, but we also *experience* it in terms of 'musical forces.'"[8] Larson's musical forces are metaphorical, reflecting the "tendencies that our minds attribute to the sounds we hear."[9] As Larson asserts, our experiences cause us to infer "that motion requires an *object* that moves… motion will take place along a *path*…motion will have a *manner*."[10] This is evident in the way people speak about music, as in this sample analytical statement: The melody *crosses below* the countermelody as it *leaps* to the dominant.

Figure 1. Definition of Principal Terms as Defined in Steve Larson's Musical Forces [11]

Musical Forces: metaphorical tendencies we attribute to music. Although we may be unaware of these attributions, they contribute to the meanings given to the music by our minds. (p.329)

Melodic Gravity: the tendency of notes above a reference platform to descend. (p.328)

Melodic Magnetism: the tendency of unstable notes to move to the closest stable pitch, a tendency that grows stronger as the goal pitch is closer. (p.328)

Musical Inertia: the tendency of pitches or durations, or both, to continue in the pattern perceived. (p.329)

Rhythmic Gravity: that quality we attribute to a rhythm, when we map its flow onto a physical *Gesture*, that reflects the impact physical gravity has on that physical *Gesture*. (p. 332)

Metric Magnetism: the pull of a note on a metrically unstable attack point to a subsequent and more metrically stable attack point, a pull that grows stronger as the attracting attack point grows closer. (p.328)

Gesture: Robert Hatten defines musical gesture as meaningful and expressive "significant energetic shaping through time." Hatten's theory of gesture draws on the theory of musical forces to describe what he calls the "virtual environmental forces" that contribute to the shape and meaning of musical gestures.[12] (p. 326)

[7] Rothfarb, 949.

[8] Steve Larson, 1–2.

[9] Ibid., 22.

[10] Larson, 68.

[11] Steve Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, ed. Robert Hatten (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012).

[12] Robert Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 95.

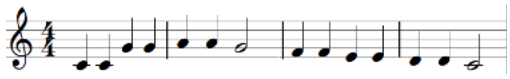
The tendency of many cultures' music to follow an ascending leap with a "tumbling" melody of descending steps reflects melodic gravity. This return to a neutral range is a reduction in tension that listeners have "come to associate with a giving in to musical gravity."[13] In example 1 the tonic note (C4) is the referential platform from which the melody departs and is pulled down to rejoin.

Melodic magnetism is evident when leading tones resolve up to tonic, when chordal sevenths resolve down, and when passing tones resolve their dissonance by stepping to a chord tone (see the circled notes of ex. 2).

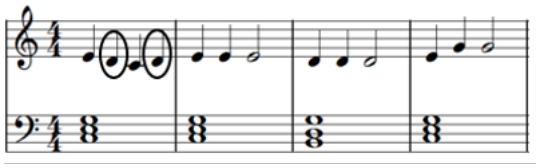
While not technically considered a force in physics, Larson includes inertia in his list of musical forces. Inertia is a "property of a body," whereby the body opposes any attempt to change its state, whether it is at rest or moving.[14] One expects ascending lines to continue ascending, descending lines to continue descending, and musical patterns to continue repeating, like the *lamento* bass line of "Dido's Lament" (see ex. 3). The effects of musical inertia are experienced when a musician fails to execute a change of direction while sight-reading.

Rhythmic gravity is felt when marching, with one's foot striking the ground on the pulse, or the common conductor's gesture of a descending motion on the downbeat. Metric magnetism is the pull toward a strong beat experienced during moments of syncopation, as one experiences when listening to Scott Joplin's "Pine Apple Rag" (see ex. 4).

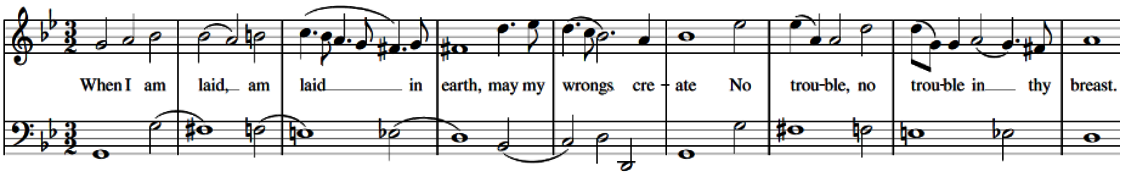
Example 1. Melodic Gravity in "Twinkle Little Star," mm. 1–4.



Example 2. Melodic Magnetism in "Mary Had a Little Lamb," mm. 1–4.



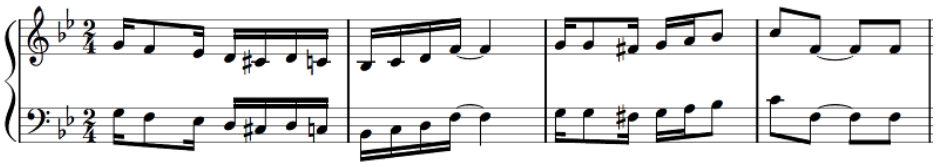
Example 3. Musical Inertia in Purcell's, Dido and Aeneas*, "Dido's Lament," mm. 6–14.*



[13] Ibid., 86.

[14] "Inertia," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified November 30, 2015, accessed January 7, 2020, https://www.britannica.com/science/inertia.

Example 4. Metric Magnetism in Scott Joplin's "Pine Apple Rag," mm. 1–4.



Like physical forces, musical forces can act simultaneously, reinforcing each other or working against one another.[15] In "Dido's Lament" (ex. 3), the *lamento* bass is affected by inertia, but also by gravity, as it sinks lower. The pull between the notes that are a semitone apart in both the bass and vocal line demonstrates musical magnetism. While text painting could be a factor influencing composers, Larson includes musical examples that are purely instrumental, ruling out the possibility of this compositional device as the sole explanation of musical events.

Drawing from Leonard Meyer's theory that people have an emotional response when music departs from their expectations, Larson aims to identify how music "moves" the listener. Larson asserts people's preconceptual experiences with gravity, magnetism, and inertia—not their intellectual understanding of physics—cause such expectations (seeing a ball fall to the ground when released, running faster the closer one gets to home base, running past the base due to one's continued momentum).

Since music is a diverse and complex art, one cannot rely on only one metaphor to understand it. Larson lists several other metaphors used to think about and think in (Larson's term for audiating) music, including *Music as Moving Force* to describe how music affects people emotionally (see fig. 2). "Based on this generic metaphor for causation, music is conceived as a force acting on listeners to move them from one state-location to another along some path of metaphorical motion. You can actually feel yourself being…*moved* by the music."[16]

Figure 2. Music as Moving Force *Metaphor (adapted)*[17]

Source (Physical Motion) ⟶ Target (Musical Experience)
Locations ⟶ Emotional States
Movement (from Place to Place) ⟶ Change of Emotional State
Intensity of Force ⟶ Intensity of Musical Impact

[15] Larson, 7.

[16] Ibid., 75.

[17] Adapted from Larson, 75.

Larson does not claim that gravity, magnetism, and inertia are the only forces that shape musical expectation, nor does he assert that the musical forces are universal or follow the natural laws as physical forces. In fact, he warns against the "single-mechanism fallacy," because associations between musical material and musical meaning are too complex to be determined by one force.[18] He acknowledges that rote learning of conventions and statistical learning (i.e., frequency of experiences) can be additional factors influencing how a listener creates meaning since one expects an outcome based on how many times one has heard music follow a specific pattern.[19]

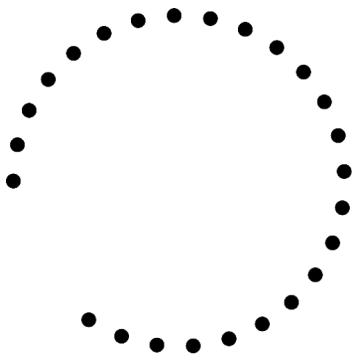
Patterns

Steve Larson defines meaning as "something that our minds create when they group things into patterned relations."[20] He draws on Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization and discusses pattern recognition in visual and auditory modalities. Figure 3 shows an example of the Gestalt Law of Closure. Most people create meaning out of the dots and perceive a circle, even though the pattern is incomplete and not a circle, as it is a series of discrete dots, rather than a continuous shape.[21]

Human brains seem conditioned for pattern recognition. This is discernable in language and in visual and auditory stimuli. Larson posits that common melodic patterns show the influence of musical forces.[22] To test his theories, he created algorithms used in computer models to evaluate the interaction of musical forces and also to compose "completions" for the beginnings of phrases. He then asked experienced listeners to create completions for the phrases. After comparing the results of the computer models with those of the psychological experiments, Larson found "strong support" for the theory that the forces of gravity, magnetism, and inertia influence melodic expectations.[23]

Given how people process patterns visually and aurally, how they use metaphor to relate to the world, how they have an *embodied* understanding of physics, and how music often mimics the way physical objects move in space, it is logical to use energetics as a lens through which to study a musical work. As Larson says, "music study might be one of the best ways to understand that it is the fusion of our minds, bodies, and souls that allows us to make sense of what is important to us."[24]

Figure 3. Law of Closure



[18] Ibid., 7.

[19] Ibid., 6 and 9.

[20] Ibid., 328.

[21] Ibid., 34.

[22] Ibid., 156.

[23] Ibid., 113.

[24] Ibid., 321.

Energetics in Practice

While many choral conductors perform harmonic and structural analyses as part of the score study process, the information gleaned from such practices is limited by the nature of the exercises. An energetics approach to score study reveals greater richness in the piece, expanding interpretive possibilities and pedagogical considerations. New ideas can be uncovered in a piece that is familiar to us, such as Rosephanye Powell's "The Word Was God."[25]

Powell sets the different lines of text motivically and layers the motives between the different voices during the A sections. She indicates staccato and accented articulation, and employs staggered entrances, creating a polyphonic texture. The B section is legato and more homophonic. The additive construction of the vocal entrances and growing dynamics create a sense of forward movement, so the piece seems propelled within and between the sections.

The submetrical pattering notes of the opening motive contribute to the sense of forward motion (see ex. 5). Powell creates an agogic accent with the tied note, but the inertia is so strong, this momentary syncopation does not overpower the pull of rhythmic gravity to the next downbeat. It does, however, create a *feeling* of stretch as it slows the patter rhythm. The common technique of asking choirs to walk as they sing, their steps aligning with the pulse will help singers connect to the rhythmic gravity pulling toward the downbeat of measures 2 and 4. Conductors can also use metaphor to maximize the effect of the agogic accent by describing the music in terms of motion, asking students to imagine a roller coaster completing a loop. The top of the loop has a feeling of suspension before continuing along the path, the energy gaining momentum as the loop completes and returns to a horizontal plane. The top of the metaphorical loop is the tied note (see fig. 5).

Figure 4. Sectional divisions in Rosephanye Powell's "The Word Was God."[26]

"The Word Was God" by Rosephanye Powell (Gentry Publications) SSAATTBB *a cappella* Text: John 1:1-3 A minor; Duple meter; Ternary		
A mm. 1-28	B mm. 29-44	A^1 mm. 45-78
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.	By Him, all things were made that have been made. Nothing was made, He has not made.	All things were made by Him. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[25] For the purposes of this article, the composer's original SSAATTBB *a cappella* score will be referenced.

[26] Rosephanye Powell, "The Word Was God," SSAATTBB (Gentry Publications, 1996).

Such imagery helps the choir understand how the music creates text stress, bringing us to, and thereby emphasizing "Word." Feeling the tied note as the suspension before the "plunge" will add excitement to the performance, instead of merely "holding this note longer." Singers will have a bodily connection to this imagery if they move their hands in the shape of the loop as they rehearse (those familiar with Dalcroze Eurhythmics may see the potential in this activity for students to "learn, know, feel, and express music through meaningful movement activities").[27] Rather than using a 2-pattern, incorporating the loop into one's conducting gesture is a more accurate depiction of what the music is doing melodically, as it shows the effects of melodic gravity that are present in the descending line. Conductors can use the loop gesture for each of the motives' entrances as a visual cue to remind the ensemble of their work on this motive.

Example 5. Opening motive of Powell's "The Word Was God," mm. 1–4.

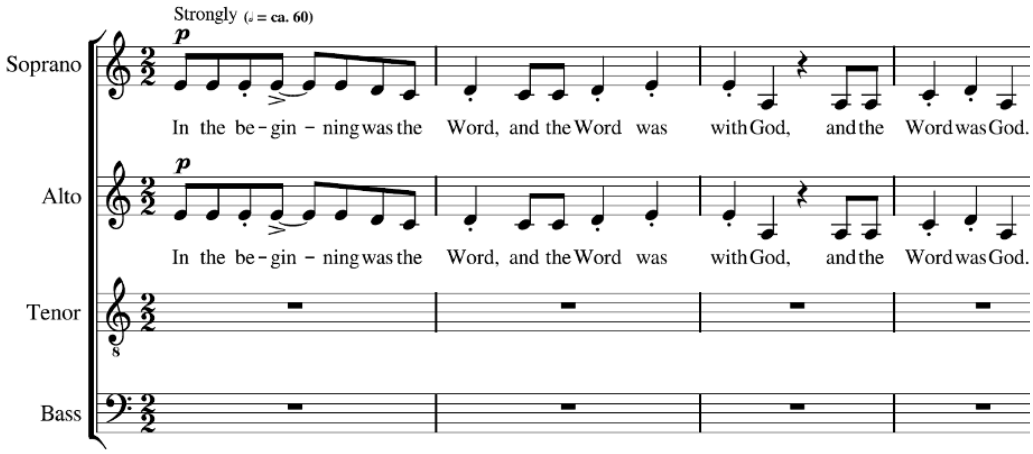
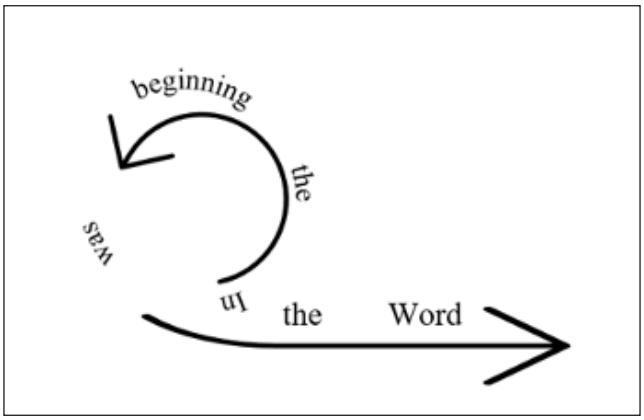


Figure 5. Loop Metaphor with text.

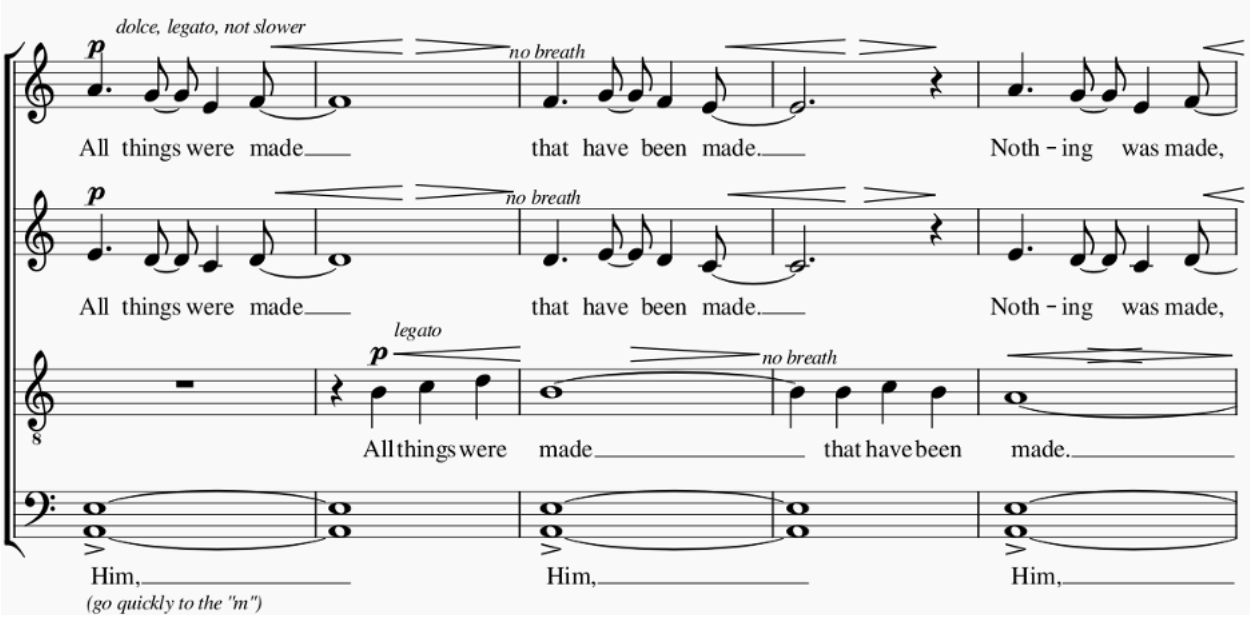


[27] "What is Dalcroze?" Dalcroze Society of America, last modified December 18, 2020, accessed December 21, 2020, https://dalcrozeusa.org/about-dalcroze/what-is-dalcroze.

The B section features a dichotomy between the soprano and alto lines and the tenor response (see ex. 6). Powell highlights the duality through dynamic markings, allowing voices to swell and recede back into the texture in a continuous ebb and flow. The upper voices obscure the meter through pervasive syncopation, while the tenor line acts as an anacrusis figure, emphasizing beat one. If unaware of their part's function, the tenors could turn their line into a bland exercise. They are not merely echoing the text of the upper voices. The tenors bring metric stability to the B section, but their tonal function is to create harmonic dissonance, often forming the root of a half-diminished seventh chord (see ex. 6, m. 31). The pull to the consonant resolution is the result of melodic magnetism as the tenors' B3 in measure 31 is drawn to the A3 in measure 33. This tonal instability does not allow the music to rest. Instead, the tenors move the music forward, working against the metric stability of their rhythmic function.

The extended rhythmic dissonance in the upper voices opposes the force of metric magnetism, which naturally attracts emphasis on the metrically strong beats. This conflict can interfere with the internal pulse of the singers. A conductor's steady two-pattern can help the ensemble maintain the pulse but may not encourage the tenors to perform their function of continuing the forward momentum of the piece. A separate gesture with the non-dominant hand can show the tenors' drive to beat one. While changing pattern size to show dynamic contrast is a common technique, in a section that is built on rhythmic dissonance, changing pattern size, and therefore speed of the gesture may be counterproductive to the steady tempo one is trying to maintain. Changing gestural density—as if the arm/hand is moving through air, water, molasses, etc.) can achieve the desired results without altering the speed of one's gesture and has the added benefit of mimicking the adjustment of air flow through engagement of the core muscles the singers are activating to produce dynamic changes (those familiar with Lában philosophy as applied to conducting may think in terms of changing the effort levels of *flow* and *weight*).

Example 6. B section of Powell's "The Word Was God," mm. 29–33.

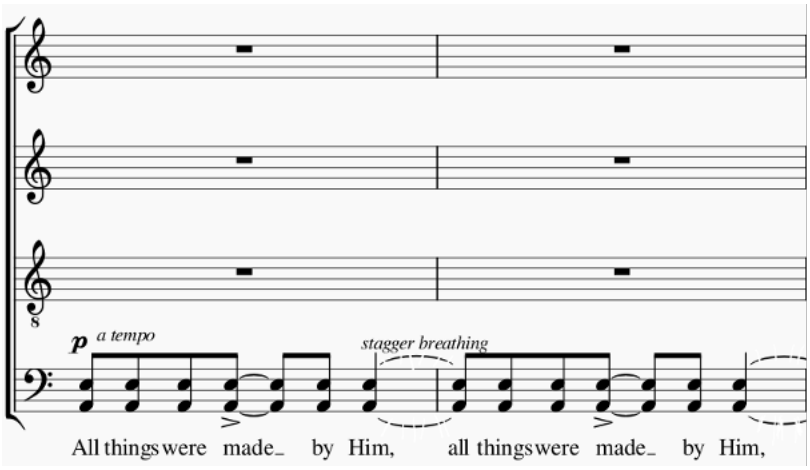


When the A section returns at measure 45, the basses sing the initial rhythmic motive, but incorporate the open fifth drone from the B section, instead of the melodic material that accompanied the motive in the original statement (see ex. 7). Instead of the melodic gravity that is observable in the initial motivic statement, the bass line shows the effects of inertia. They continue droning until the weight of the full divisi is present, breaking apart the texture into subsets of the ensemble. Depending on interpretation, the lack of melodic contour in the bass line might influence the conductor to avoid the "Loop" gesture until the tenors enter with the opening melodic material in measure 47.

Teaching with Energetics

Training in physics is not a prerequisite for teaching with energetics. The musical forces at work in a piece can be identified without using Larson's energetics terminology. If students are not yet familiar with energetics, they can discover the concepts on their own. Through discussion, they might intuitively use the terms gravity, magnetism, or inertia! A conductor may lead students to these ideas by asking questions such as: "In the A section, how does the tied note affect the motion of the line?" Singers might mention that it slows down the line before returning to the eighth note rhythm, or that it creates syncopation, which works against the metric pattern. Appealing to the more visually oriented students, conductors may reference a well-known painting: "Many people say they experience movement in the swirling brush strokes of 'Starry Night.' Can you follow the motion with your finger, as Van Gogh takes us from one side of the painting to the other? If we focus on the circular motion of Van Gogh's stars, we are also mimicking the way a roller coaster loops. What happens to our speed at the top of the loop?" Singers may respond that it slows down, or that the momentum changes, which can then be related to how the tie momentarily slows the eighth note rhythm. Using the gesture of Van Gogh's swirling stars or a looping roller coaster while singing Powell's opening motive will aid students in their cross-domain mapping—experiencing the concept kinesthetically, visually, and cognitively—which will map on to their auditory experience, helping them sing with understanding.

Example 7. A1 section of Powell's "The Word Was God," mm. 45–46.



Continuing with the discussion of the A section, students may be asked where the music is going next. Students may say "with" because it occurs on the downbeat, or "God," because that is an important word and integral to the meaning of the text. The music's forward movement toward "God" can be shown with a sweeping motion, showing the direction laterally without a downward motion for beat one, to avoid emphasizing "with" (see fig. 6). Throughout the discussion, ensembles can be asked to perform the motions, which will later become the conductor's gestures. These activities foster critical thinking and will prime the students to analyze the B section, possibly planning their own gestures to evoke the musical forces at work in this contrasting section.

Figure 6. Sweeping motion to deemphasize the "down beat."

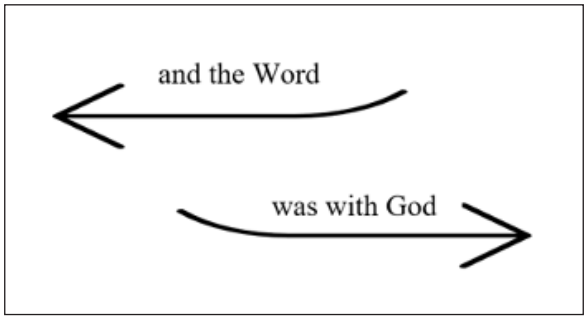
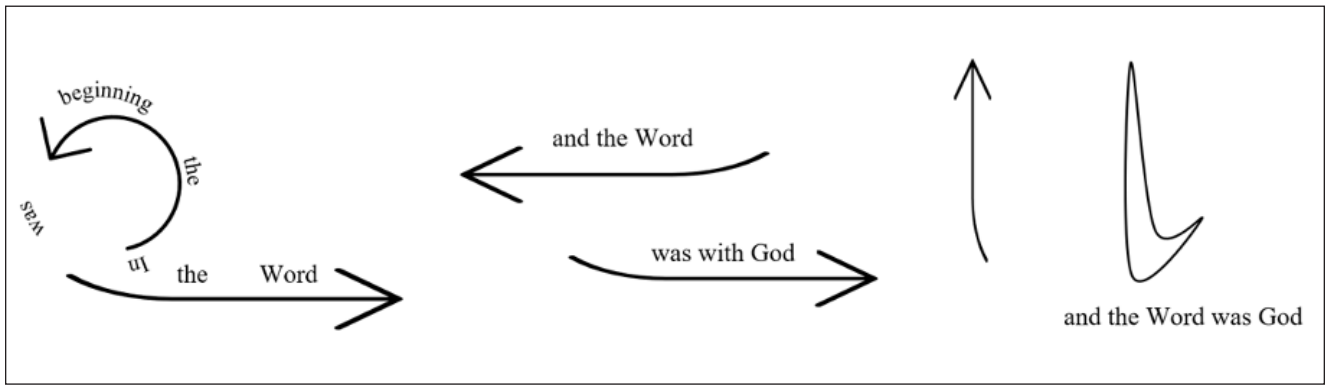


Figure 7. Possible right-hand gestures for the opening motive of Powell's "The Word Was God."



Conclusion

Given how music often mimics the way physical objects move in space, energetics offers an immediate, intuitive way to understand musical events and help our ensembles make unique connections with their repertoire. It encourages natural, embodied movement that is compatible with the principles of Dalcroze and Lában and encourages singers to use their innate mind-body connections when studying music. As conductors, we are the physical embodiment of the sound we want produced. As such, our gesture should be congruent with our aural ideal. Incorporating movement that evokes the musical forces at work empowers ensembles to perform the ideas inherent in the score and allows them to bring the music's meaning to life.

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Madalena Casulana:
Her Life and Works

Hannah Wunsch Ryan

Abstract

This article examines the life and works of Madalena (Maddalena) Casulana (1540–1590), who composed and performed in the public sphere at a time when women were discouraged from both activities. In 1568 Casulana published her own volume of madrigals, *Il primo libro di madrigali a quattro voce* (RISM A/I C 1516), under her own name. This publication appears to be the first printed work in the history of European music that was fully composed by and attributed to a woman. This article explores two madrigals by Casulana—*Ridon or per le piaggie* and *Io d'odorate fronde*—and examines Casulana's use of text, madrigalisms, and chromaticisms in her compositions.

Madalena Casulana[1] (1540–1590) lived in northern Italy during a significant period of the Renaissance when the role of women in music was contentious and changing. While a few women gradually began to participate in music in the public sphere, Casulana was an anomaly, performing and composing at a time when women were discouraged from either. During her lifetime, she was respected by prominent composers of the period, including Orlando di Lasso. Casulana managed to do what no woman before her is known to have done: notate and publish a volume of her own musical compositions under her own name while also rising to a reputation of esteem and respect with other composers of the period.

According to historian Joan Kelly-Gadol, the Renaissance did not generally include women's participation in the flourishing arts and music, especially women of higher social status,[2] who were expected to focus on motherhood and domestic duties, with a devotion to religion and humility.[3] Social mores demanded reticent females whose quieted voices reflected their chastity.[4] However, women's role in society during the 1500s became a topic of contention, especially in France and Italy. By the middle of the

[1] Scholars differ as to the spelling of Casulana's name, either as "Maddalena" or "Madalena." Because she herself signed her dedications with the spelling "Madalena," that spelling will be used throughout the paper. Any direct quotations that spell the name differently will be copied *sic* for accuracy.

[2] Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 140.

[3] Ellen D. Lerner, "Madalena Casulana," in *Women Composers: Music through the Ages* Vol. 1, ed. Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996), 99.

[4] Bonnie Gordon. *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 2.

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sixteenth century, noble families were expected to give young girls a proper education, including the study of Latin and music.[5] While upper-class ladies of this period were able to acquire musical knowledge precisely because they grew up in wealthy families, they were not trained or encouraged to devote themselves seriously and over a long period of time to developing those skills.[6] Further, outside of private tutors, educational opportunities were scarce.[7] Indeed, many families didn't see the reason to provide an education, especially in music, for women who would not use it. Overall, females experienced a limiting of social and personal options that men of their classes did not.[8] The usual areas of patronage and employment in music—the church and the court—were essentially off-limits to females. Music in sixteenth-century Italy existed in somewhat of a dichotomy, juxtaposed between those who considered it an appropriate skill for a lady and those who considered it a dangerous gateway to impropriety. Females did begin singing in public spheres, but during Casulana's lifetime the connection of women and music remained a delicate one. While it became more acceptable for women to perform as singers during the late 1500s in Italy, few women made their careers in music. According to Casulana scholar Thomasin LaMay, Madalena Casulana "resisted and often defied the boundaries peculiar to women in her social environment, even those somewhat looser structures allowed to women who performed."[9] In spite of these restrictions set upon her gender, Casulana's music rose to prominence and renown in sixteenth-century European society.

Madalena Casulana's known biography is brief, and is best presented by Beatrice Pescerelli in *I Madrigali di Madalena Casulana*. Casulana is thought to have been born circa 1540, but her place of birth is uncertain. Pescerelli makes a strong case that Casulana was born in Casola d'Esla, or Casula, a small village near Siena; this led to Madalena's surname of Casulana, according to the custom of the time in which people were associated with the town of their birth.[10] Other contemporaries of Madalena were also given the designation Casulana, as a reference to their hometown. In addition to the well-known painter Alessandro Casolano, the musician Leonardo Morelli appears in the print of his work as "Leonardus Casulanus." This man, another native of Casole d'Elsa, was active in the cathedral of Volterra from 1586 to 1604.[11] These examples support Pescerelli's argument that Casulana was a geographical reference, rather than Madalena's actual surname.

Born into modest means, Casulana existed in the middle of the social classes: high enough that her family could afford her an education, but not so high that she was forced into a socially advantageous marriage. Pescerelli proposes that Madalena was educated in Florence, and, although little is known of Casulana's education, this education in both composing and notation would define Casulana's life and career.[12]

Although Casulana eventually gained acclaim as a composer, she began her career as a singer and lutenist, which was considered more appropriate

[5] Kelly-Gadol, 140.

[6] Jane Bowers, "The Emergence of Women Composers in Italy, 1566-1700," in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950*, ed Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 133.

[7] Ibid.

[8] While men of the nobility did experience some constriction of social and personal opportunities, men of the bourgeoisie experienced instead a widening of opportunities. (From Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?", in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 140.

[9] Thomasin LaMay. "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows of Unheard of Songs!" in *Gender, Sexuality, and Early Music*, ed Todd M. Borgerding (New York: Routledge, 2002) 42.

[10] Beatrice Pescerelli, "Maddalena Casulana," in *New Historical Anthology of Music by Women*, ed James R. Briscoe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) 44.

[11] Ibid., 45.

[12] Beatrice Pescerelli, *I madrigali di Maddalena Casulana* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1979), 5.

for a woman of the period.[13] In order to bypass the obstacles in Italian culture surrounding female composition, Casulana began her career by entering the salons and academies in and around Venice, one of the more liberal areas of Italy.[14] By singing and composing for the male musicians and patrons in the area, she earned the respect of these members, who in turn helped promote her published works.[15]

Madalena Casulana's music was first published in the anthology *Il Desiderio I* in 1566, which featured four of her madrigals. A year later, another madrigal appeared in *Il Desiderio II*. These publications apparently caught the attention of Orlando di Lasso, who would become a lifelong supporter of Casulana.[16] Although he was employed in Munich in the court of Duke Albrecht V starting in 1566, in 1567 di Lasso was in Venice to oversee the publication of his *Libro Quatro* for five voices (composed for the Ferrarese Duke Alfonso's newly formed *concerto delle donne*), and it was probably during this visit that Casulana and di Lasso became acquainted.[17] These were the first records of a connection between Casulana and Orlando di Lasso, which would continue throughout her life. He was apparently impressed by her compositions, as he, in 1568, commissioned and performed Casulana's madrigal *Nil mage incundum* in Munich at the wedding of Archduke Wilhelm V of Bavaria. While the music itself has not survived, the Latin text is included in a review of the piece by Massimo Troiano.[18]

In that same year, Antonio Molino (c. 1495–1571), a prominent Venetian actor in the c*ommedia dell'arte* published his own volume of madrigals, dedicated to Madalena Casulana, whom he called his teacher. While his music differs from that of Casulana, it may have been Casulana who taught Molino how to notate his music, as it was tradition in *commedia dell'arte* to improvise. This connection to a prominent member of Italian artistic society gave Casulana legitimacy in the Venetian culture and helped give her music respect in the eyes of Italian culture.

In 1568, Madalena Casulana published her own volume of madrigals, *Il primo libro di madrigali a quattro voce*, under her own name. This publication appears to be the first printed work in the history of European music that was fully composed by and attributed to a woman.[19] Casulana's dedication of this volume drew wide interest. Dedicated to Isabella de Medici Orsina, Casulana showed clear self-awareness of her uncommon status as a female composer. In the dedication, Casulana calls the madrigals her "first fruits," in her aim to "show the world... the futile error of men who believe themselves patrons of the high gifts of intellect, which according to them cannot also be held in the same way by women."

Her *Primo Libro* contained twenty-one madrigals, five of which were previously published in *Il Desiderio I* and *II*. The dedication was signed from Venice, and it was likely she was in the city at that time. After 1568, Casulana's publications indicated she travelled to northern Italy. Her *Secondo Libro di Madrigali a Quattro Voce* was published in 1570, and was dedicated to Antonio Londonio, president of the Milanese ministry of finance (of all her known madrigals, this set alone survives intact).[20] This, in combination with musician Nicolo Tagliaferro's report of his encounter with Casulana in Milan

[13] Ellen D. Lerner, "Madalena Casulana," Women Composers: Music through the Ages, ed. Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996), 99.

[14] LaMay, "Composing from the Throat," 371.

[15] Lerner, 99.

[16] LaMay, "Composing from the Throat," 372.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 374.

[19] Pescerelli, *I madrigali di Maddalena Casulana*, 16.

[20] Ibid.

confirms her presence in that city.[21] In Tagliaferro's *Esercisi Filosofici*, he describes one of Casulana's performances, along with two other singers, Vittoria Moschella and Sudetta Fumia. In his document, Tagliaferro writes that Madalena, instead of dedicating herself to the art of singing, prefers to devote herself to the art of composition in which "she delighted a lot, even more than that of a professional woman of the Conviensi."[22]

By 1583, Madalena Casulana published her *Il Primo Libro di Madrigali a Quinto Voce*, dedicated to Count Mario Bevilacqua.[23] In this work, Casulana signed her name as "Madalena Mezari detta Casulana Vicentina," and Gardano of Monte's dedication to Madalena in his first book of madrigals for three voices (also in 1583) named her as "Signora Madalena Casulana di Mezarii."[24] Although Pescerelli and other sources suggested that Madalena may have married sometime after 1570 and settled down in Vicenza (*Vicentina*), LaMay proposed that Casulana, after having finally achieved recognition as a composer and musician, either took a new surname or finally became known by her original surname.[25] In any case, her connection to Vicenza was clear, as she was confirmed as a participant in one of the musical gatherings of the Accademia Olimpica of Vicenza in 1583.[26]

Casulana's Madrigals

In her madrigals, Madalena Casulana used unexpected harmonies and chromaticism to create madrigals in a popular style. She chose the poetry she set with care, and brought the lyrics to life through contrasts of register and dissonance, word-painting, and expressive vocal lines.[27] Her part-writing was less-strong, often featuring errors, but her unique compositional style created an expressive and personal style.[28] Like many of her contemporaries, Madalena Casulana often selected texts by Petrarch for her madrigals, including

- *L'aver l'aurora (*from *Il primo libro di Madrigali a quatro voce)*
- *Amore per qual cagion (*from *Secondo libro di Madrigali)*
- *Io d'odorate (*from *Secondo libro di Madrigali)*
- *Ahi possanza d'amor (*from *Secondo libro di Madrigali)*
- *Datemi pace (*from *Il Primo Libro di Madrigali a Cinque Voce)*
- *Perch'al viso d'amor (*from *Il Primo Libro di Madrigali a Cinque Voce)*

In addition to Petrarch, Casulana set texts written by other respected poets, including Jacopo Sannazaro, Luigi Tansillo, Serafino Aquilano,[29] Bernard Tasso, Annibale Caro, Guilio Strozzi, and Vincenzo Quirino, also popular with established madrigal composers of the period.[30] Sannazaro, whom Casulana set extensively throughout her career, was also a favorite of Jacques Arcadelt (1504–1568) (*Se per colpa del vostro fiero sdegno*), Orlando di Lasso (*Per pianto la mia carne*), and Claudio Monteverdi (*La pastorella*).

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[21] Pescerelli, *I madrigali di Maddalena Casulana*, 16.

[22] LaMay. "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows of Unheard of Songs!" 52.

[23] Pescerelli, *I madrigali di Maddalena Casulana*, 17–18.

[24] Ibid., 16–17.

[25] LaMay. "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows of Unheard of Songs!" 48.

[26] Pescerelli, *I madrigali di Maddalena Casulana*, 19.

[27] Thomas Bridges. "Casulana [Mezari], Maddalena." *Grove Music Online,* 2001, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005155.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Serafino Aquilano's family name was Cimini, of the Cimini family in Italy. Similarly to how Madalena was designated "Casulana" in reference to her place of birth, Serafino was called Aquilano or dell'Aquilano in reference to Aquila, where he was born in 1466.

[30] Lerner, 102.

In addition to the care with which Casulana chose poets, she also selected unique texts that were either gender-neutral or written from the male perspective (a *he* speaking to or about a *she*).[31] This was highly unusual with creative female contemporaries of the time.[32] Gaspara Stampa's *Rime* were all written from her own "I" voice or a separate "she" voice, often longing for an absent lover named "he."[33] Courtesan Tullia d'Aragona specifically named men in her volumes of poetry, whom she addressed in her own voice. In her volume of letters, Veronica Franco wrote from her own perspective, keeping the gaze completely on herself while also controlling that gaze.[34] Alleotti and Ricci, the madrigal composers who followed Casulana, usually composed from the female perspective. Casulana selected texts that spoke of women from the male perspective, and who were often depicted as unattainable, cold objects. LaMay suggested that Casulana chose to speak from the male perspective so that she could control how the female was viewed.[35] Casulana was "not willing to move the female out of critical positioning in the story… she wanted to hold up the beautiful woman, but control who was looking at her."[36] Perhaps this was part of Casulana's motivation, but perhaps the true motivation behind which texts Casulana chose was more simple and direct. While this did provide Casulana with control of how to treat the subject, she stated her goal herself in the dedication of her first book:

> I know truly, most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lady, that these first fruits of mine cannot, because of their weakness, produce the effect that I would like, which would be, other than to give Your Excellence some proof of my devotion, to show also to the world (as much as is allowed me in this musical profession) the conceited error of men. They believe so strongly to be the masters of the high gifts of the intellect that, in their opinion, these gifts cannot likewise be shared by Women.
>
> —Dedication from Maddalena Casulana's first publication, *Il primo libro de madrigali a quattro voci*, Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1568.

Casulana aimed to prove to men that they were not the only ones capable of fine composing. By maintaining the male or gender-neutral perspective, Casulana was, in effect, able to create a direct comparison of her compositions to those by male madrigalists.

In Madalena Casulana's dedication of her first book of four-voice madrigals, she hoped her compositions would prove that men were not the only possessors of intellect. By choosing an established idiom and mastering its style, Madalena Casulana created a direct correlation that could not be ignored and was published alongside other renowned composers of the time. Through her text selection from established poets and themes, as well as her use of madrigalisms, text painting, and rhythmic complexity, Casulana created compositions that followed the traditions and also achieved success in all standards of criteria for the period. By carefully selecting texts and displaying her compositional ability through madrigalisms, tonal shifts, and text painting, Casulana created madrigals that were unique and respected, gaining popularity and publication in spite of the obstacles surrounding a female composer in sixteenth-century Italy.

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[31] LaMay, "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows Unheard Of Songs!" 57.

[32] There were no contemporary female composers that scholars can directly compare, but female poets of the time used the opportunity to write from the female perspective.

[33] LaMay, "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows Unheard Of Songs!" 57.

[34] Ibid., 58.

[35] LaMay, "Composing from the Throat," 366.

[36] Ibid.

Poetry, Madrigalisms, and Word Painting in Ridon or Per le Piaggie

Although madrigals in the first half of the sixteenth century were based around the use of thick and continuous counterpoint, by the 1550s, madrigal composers were beginning to favor polyphony, including imitation, canonic techniques, word painting, chromaticism, and changes in texture. From even her earliest pieces, Casulana used these techniques to display her skill. She exemplified the use of madrigalisms, chromaticism, and text painting in one of her very first compositions: *Ridon or* [hor] *per le piaggie*.[37]

The text of *Ridon or per le piaggie* is part of the larger sestain *La ver l'aurora*. The longer poem, *La ver' l'aurora*, was written in sestain form, consisting of six stanzas of six lines each, normally followed by a three-line envoi. The words that end each line of the first stanza are used as line endings in each of the following stanzas, rotated in a set pattern.

The sestain, from the perspective of the poet, describes awaking in the dawn to a gentle breeze, which makes the poet think of his beloved, Laura. Petrarch often used wordplay to reference his love, Laura, and the breeze, *l'aura* in Italian. He likened obtaining his love to catching the breeze in a net. The speaker's love was unrequited, as was always the case when Petrarch was describing his love for Laura. For her madrigal *Ridon or per le piagge*, Casulana set the final stanza of the sestain in *La ver l'aurora*, before the final three-line envoi (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Translation of Ridon or per le piaggie

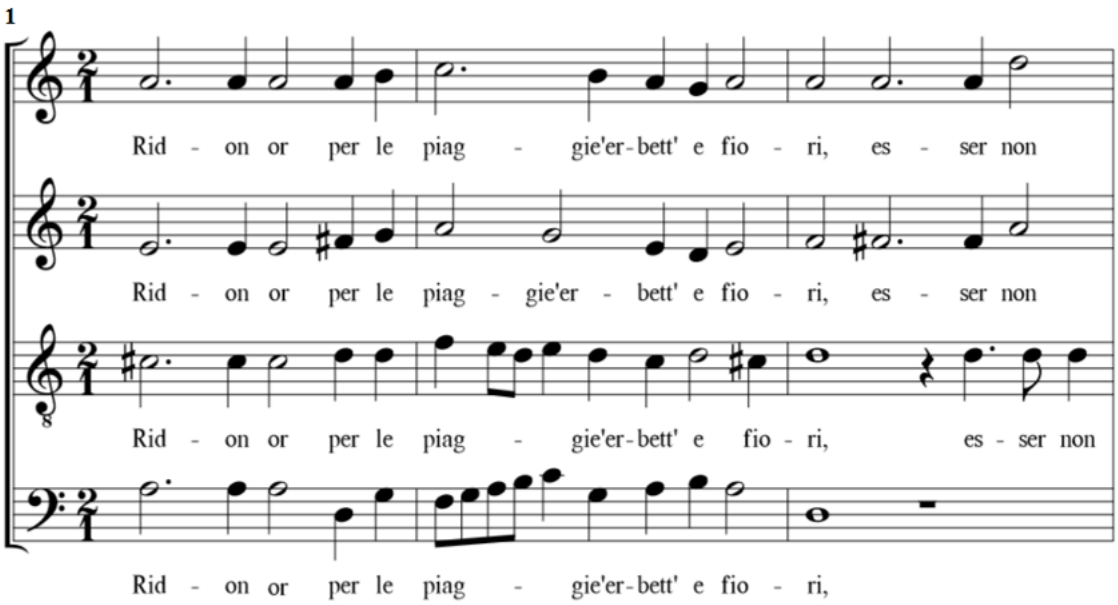
Ridon or per le piagge herbette et fiori:	Now the meadows smile with grass and flowers,
esser non pò che quella angelica alma	it cannot be that her angelic soul
non senta il suon de l'amorose note.	does not hear the sound of loving music.
Se nostra ria fortuna è di piú forza,	But if my cruel fate has the greater power,
lagrimando et cantando i nostri versi	sing and weep together will be our song,
et col bue zoppo andrem cacciando l'aura.	and with a lame ox go to catch the breeze.

[37] The modern spelling of "or" would today be "hor" in Italian. For the rest of this paper, however, Casulana's original spelling of "or" will be used.

Casulana composed melodic vocal lines that expressed the emotion inherent in this respected text, with appearances of word painting and sudden chromatic shifts. Casulana began the madrigal with the expected musical setting of the word "ridon" (laughter). However, Casulana didn't simply set "ridon" in rapid eighth or sixteenth notes, as was the obvious text setting for words denoting joy; rather, the word "piaggie"[38] (meadows) was set with running eighth notes in the bass voice. This created an image of "laughing meadows" within the first line (see Example 1). The use of quickly-moving notes was an established madrigalism for words of laughing or joy, and Madalena took the traditional idiom and created an aural picture.

Madalena captured the contrasting emotion of the next line, "esser non pò che quella angelica alma non senta il suon de l'amorose note," (it cannot be that her angelic soul does not hear the sound of loving music), by creating imitative protests in the voices, repeating "esser non pò" (it cannot be) first in the alto and canto voices, then the alto, tenor, and bass voices, and finally echoed again by the canto voice, the music imitated the disbelief of the words "esser non puo" (see Example 2). Next, Casulana calmed the voices for the words "quella angelica alma" (that her angelic soul), leading to a brief cadence on a D major chord (see Example 2). Through the contrasting setting of the two phrases, "esser non puo" and "quella angelica alma," Casulana juxtaposed the difference of the two phrases "it cannot be" and "her angelic soul." This sudden change in texture exemplified another traditional compositional technique in the late 1500s.

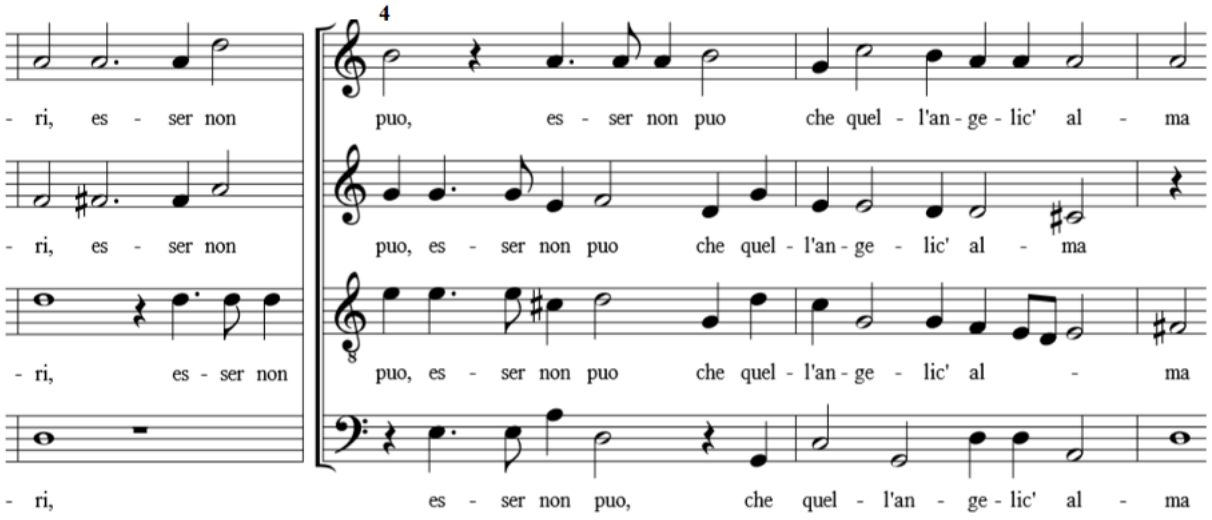
Example 1. "Laughing meadows" Ridon or per le piaggie



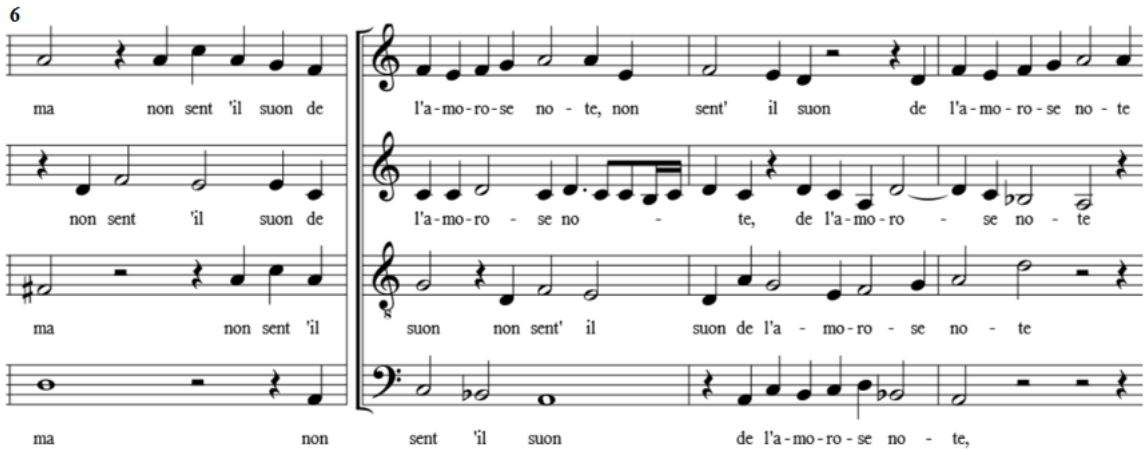
[38] Spelled "piagge" in modern Italian.

In *Ridon or per le piaggie*, Casulana created a brilliant musical setting for the words "non sent'il" (cannot hear). Whereas the composition up to this point is mostly homophonic, with slight imitative entrances that still allowed the words to be understood, at this point Casulana created an almost contrapuntal texture. The alto introduces the text, followed by the cantus, tenor, and bass voices (See Example 3). The listener is unable to discern the text or differentiate the voices. Following "non sent'il," Casulana composed music that illustrates a deep and low sonority for the text "de l'amorose note" (the loving music), bringing in descending lines in the alto and bass voices, while also setting "note" (notes) in half notes. Casulana also moved the music toward A phrygian, lowering the B♮s in the bass voice to B♭, then doing the same in the alto voice (see Example 3). Casulana displayed her compositional ability through setting each phrase in music that reflected the textual meaning.

Example 2. "Esser non puo" Ridon or per le piaggie



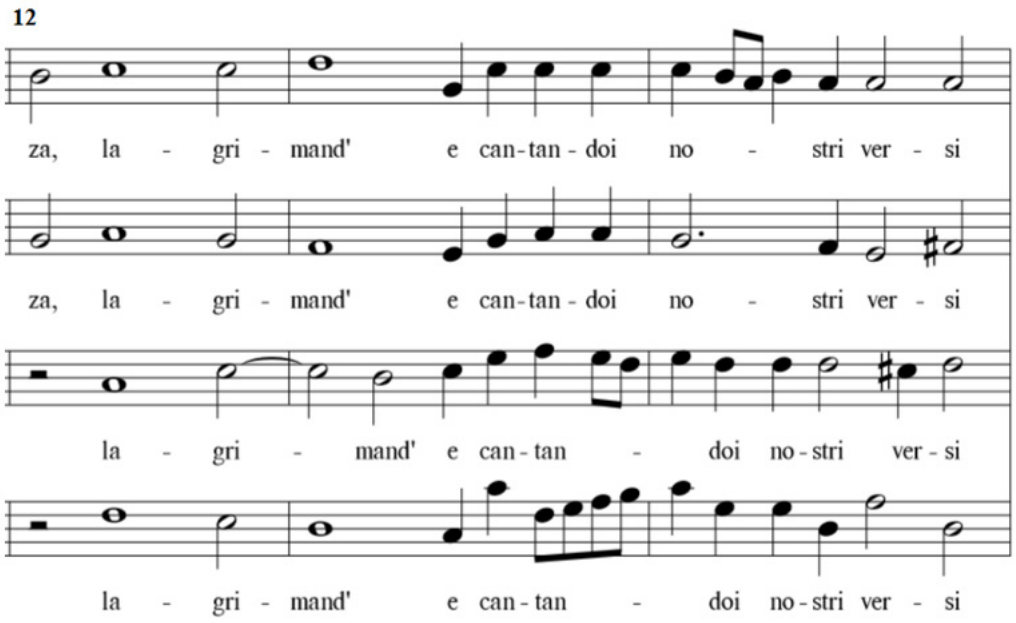
Example 3. "Non sent'il suon" Ridon or per le piaggie



While the texture was mostly energetic until this point in the piece, the next line of text "lagrimando et cantando i nostri versi" (sing and weep together will be our song) is set with evident text painting. The word "lagrimando" (weeping) is set with long note values: whole and half notes (see Example 4). Casulana also created a weeping motive through the suspensions in the tenor line. This weeping motive is even more dramatic as it contrasts the next word, "cantando" (singing). Casulana set "cantando" in swiftly moving quarter and eighth notes in each voice, bringing out their flexibility and range (see Example 4). Like Casulana's use of the madrigalism for "laughing," her use of the established compositional techniques for "weeping" and "singing" displayed her mastery of the madrigal idiom.[39]

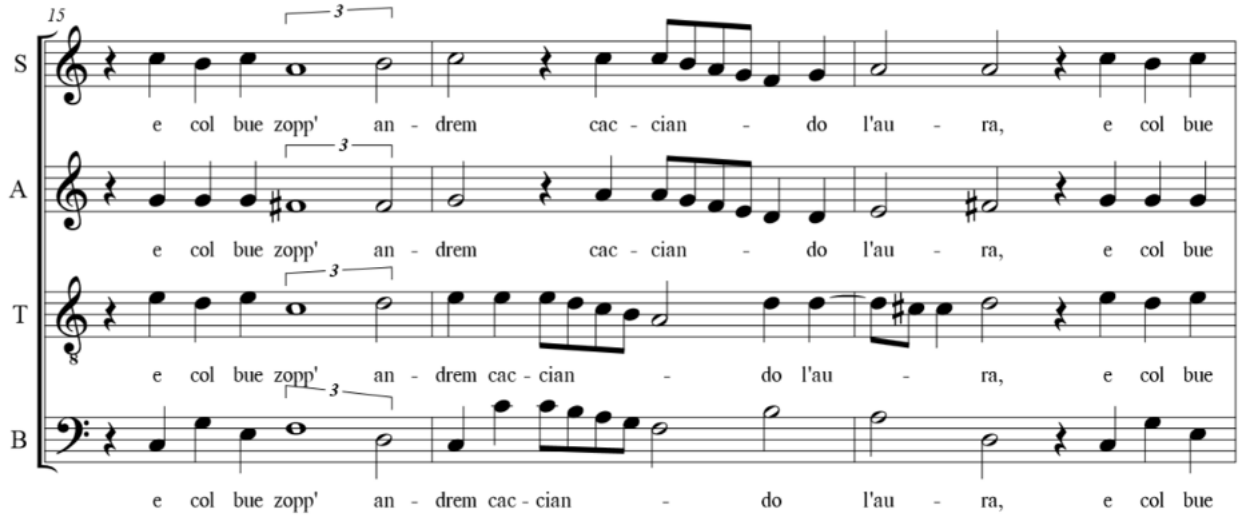
Finally, Casulana seemed to impart some humor with the text "ol bue zoppo" (the lame ox). In the original engraving, she moved from common time to triple meter, as though the singer is suddenly tripping (denoted here with a triplum bracket) (see Example 5). Then, she immediately created the feeling of "cacciando" (chasing) with imitative running eighth notes, first in the tenor and bass voices, and then in the alto and canto voices. Casulana echoed this motive for the final phrase, repeating the text "ol bue zoppo" with the tripping triple motive, then the running eighth note motives for "cacciando" before finally cadencing on a D major chord for the words "l'aura" (the breeze).

Example 4. "Lagrimand'ed cantandoi" Ridon or per le piaggie



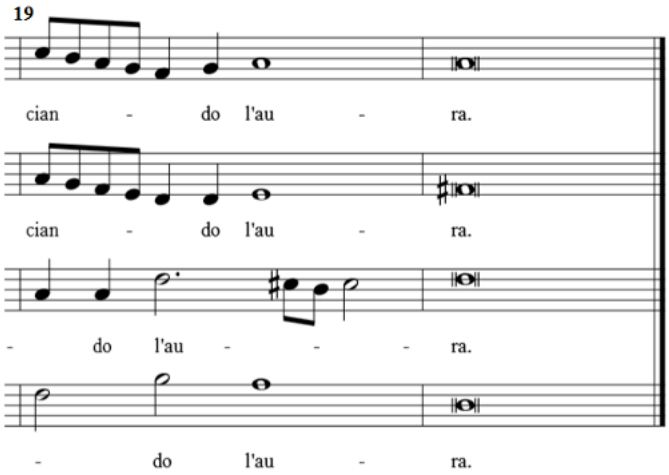
[39] LaMay, "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows Unheard Of Songs!" 45.

Example 5. "e col bue zopp'andrem" Ridon or per le piagge



Petrarch often used the breeze (*l'aura* in Italian) as a subtle way to refer to his unrequited lover, Laura. Casulana skillfully invoked this double meaning by using the same D Ionian chord used for the cadence on "angelic' alma" (angelic soul) that Petrarch calls Laura earlier in the stanza, that she does for the cadence for "l'aura." The "angelic soul" is both "the wind" and "Laura" (see Example 6).

Example 6. "L'aura" Ridon or per le piaggie



Throughout *Ridon or per le piaggie*, Casulana used the respected and well-known text of Petrarch as a canvas on which she displayed her mastery of the madrigal idioms. Even from her earliest compositions, her mastery of idioms of the sixteenth-century madrigals was on full display.

Poetry, Madrigalisms, and Chromaticism in Io d'Odorate Fronde

Throughout Casulana's career, she continued to develop her madrigal compositional methods. While *Ridon or per le piaggie* exemplified the skill with which Casulana composed her very first publications, in *Io d'odorate fronde*, published in her *Secondo Libro de Madrigali a Quattro Voce*, she developed her skill even further. The text of *Io d'odorate*, one of the popular Chloris stories,[40] describes the experience of smelling flowers in the night; the narrator can't see them, but knows they are there through their scent (see Figure 2).

With this emotive text, Casulana quickly created a relationship between the text and the music. From the very beginning of the piece, she set the poetry with music that reflected and enhanced its meaning. First, the tenors introduce the "felice Arrabia" (happy Arabian) with eighth notes that are then imitated by the other three voices (see Example 7).[41]

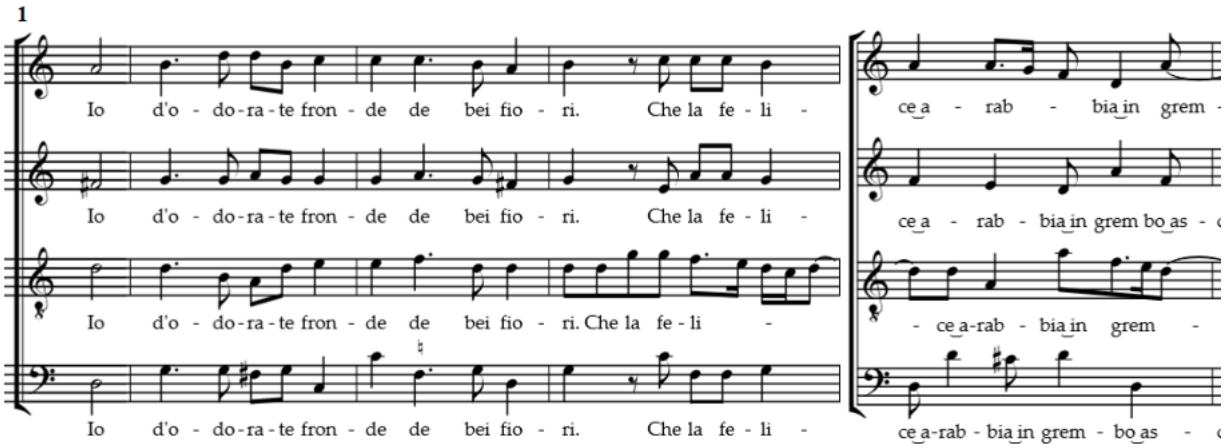
Figure 2. Translation of Io d'dodorate fronde *texts*

Io d'odorate fronde de bei fiori Che la felice arabbia in grembo asconde Te sacra un gran altar tra verde alhori Che arda mai sempre qui vicin al onde.	I, with the scents of leaves of the beautiful flowers that the happy Arabbia (Arabian) in her lap hides dedicate to you a great altar of greens that at all hours will burn forever near the waves.
E de le nimphe de la nobil ciori Meco la piu leggiadro in queste sponde Cantera, cantera le due lodi ad una Fin che col sol il ciel tutto si in bruna.	And, of the nymphs of the noble Chloris with me the prettiest on this shore will sing, will sing the two praises until the end when (at which time), with the sun, the heavens all themselves will become dark. (until the end of time)

[40] Popular poetry and music of the Renaissance often focused on Greek and Roman myths. Chloris was a nymph in one such myth, who was raped by the Zephyrus. After the encounter, Zephyrus renames Chloris "Flora," and makes her the goddess of flowers.

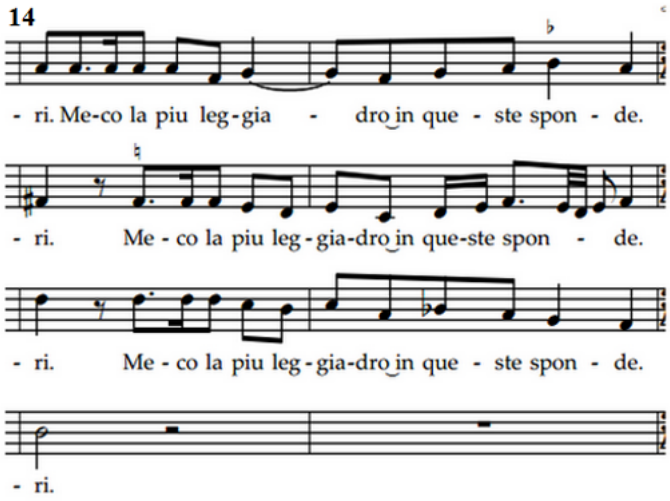
[41] Lamay, "Madalena Casulana, By Body Knows Unheard of Songs!" 59. In Greek and Roman literature, the Arabian peninsula was divided into three regions, the Arabia Deserta (Arabian Desert), Arabia Petraea (area around the city of Petra) and Felix Arabia (Fertile Arabia). In this case, the poetry makes a play on words with the "felice" making a sound similar to "Felix," denoting both the happiness of the narrator as well as the fertility of the nymph Chloris and Arrabia's "lap."

Example 7. "Io d'odorate fronde e bei fiori" Io d'odorate fronde



This text painting continues throughout the piece; when the text speaks of "Meco la piu leggia" (the prettiest [nymphs]), the three upper voices sing the text with swift and graceful eighth notes, while the bass voice rests (see Example 8). Without the lowest voiced present, the upper three voices can represent the lithe, feminine nymphs.

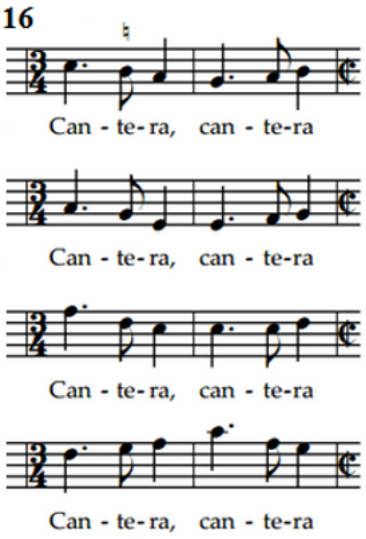
Example 8. "Meco la piu leggia" Io d'odorate fronde



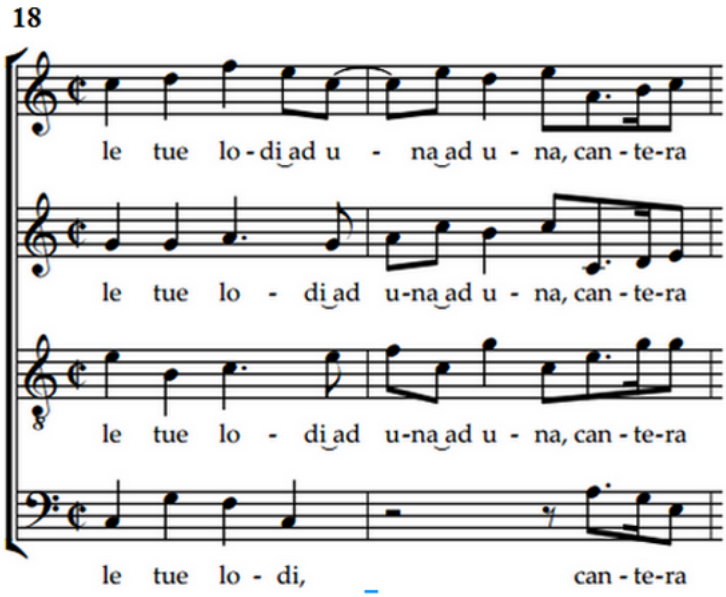
Next, Casulana set the phrase describing how the nymph will sing (*cantera*) with a lilting dotted rhythm in triple meter (see Example 9).

Although the music reverts to duple meter with text "le due lodi" (the two praises), upon the returning "Cantera," Casulana maintained the dotted rhythm (see Example 10).

Example 9. "Cantera, cantera" Io d'odorate fronde



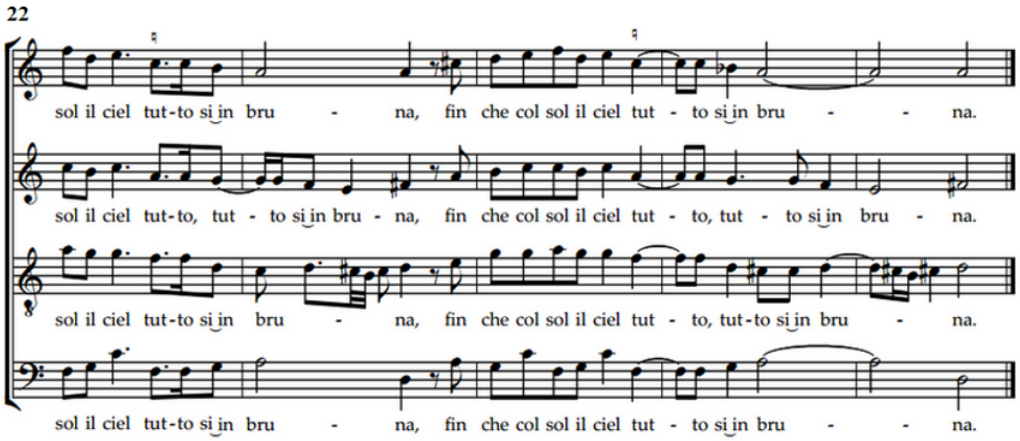
Example 10. "una, cantera" Io d'odorate fronde



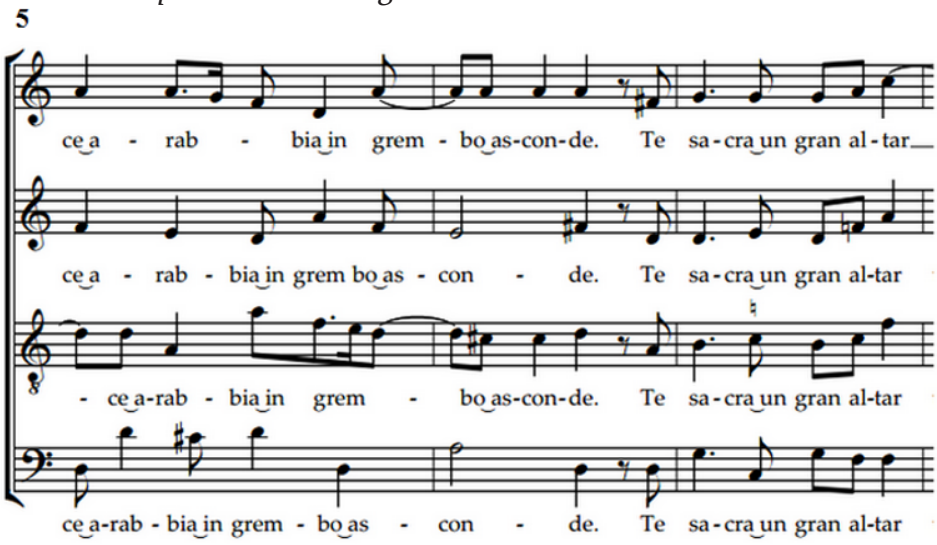
Finally, as the text proclaims that the narrator's joy will continue until the sky turns dark ("sol il ciel tutto si in bruna"), the outer three voices slow to longer values, and all three voices return to a lower range (see Example 11). As the text describes the darkening sky, Casulana created darkness through the lower ranges of the voices. Casulana stated in the preface of her *Primo Libro* that she aimed to prove that not only men were capable of intelligence. Her artistic setting of this text proved that a woman could create a composition through the techniques of the period.

This text painting is paired throughout with modal shifts. For instance, as "arabbia in grembo asconde" (happy Arrabia hides [the flowers] in her green womb), Casulana shifted the tonal center from D to G, through the sudden appearance of chromaticism (specifically the F#) (see Example 12). One of the first madrigalists to use this chromaticism was Adrian Willaert, who associated certain intervals with relating emotions.[42] Willaert correlated major thirds and sixths with harshness, while minor intervals were related to sweetness or grief.[43] In this section, Casulana focuses on sweetness (perhaps melancholy), using the minor third from D to F natural in the alto line (see Example 12).

Example 11. "sol il ciel tutto si in bruna" Io d'odorate fronde



Example 12. "arabia in grembo asconde" Io d'odorate fronde

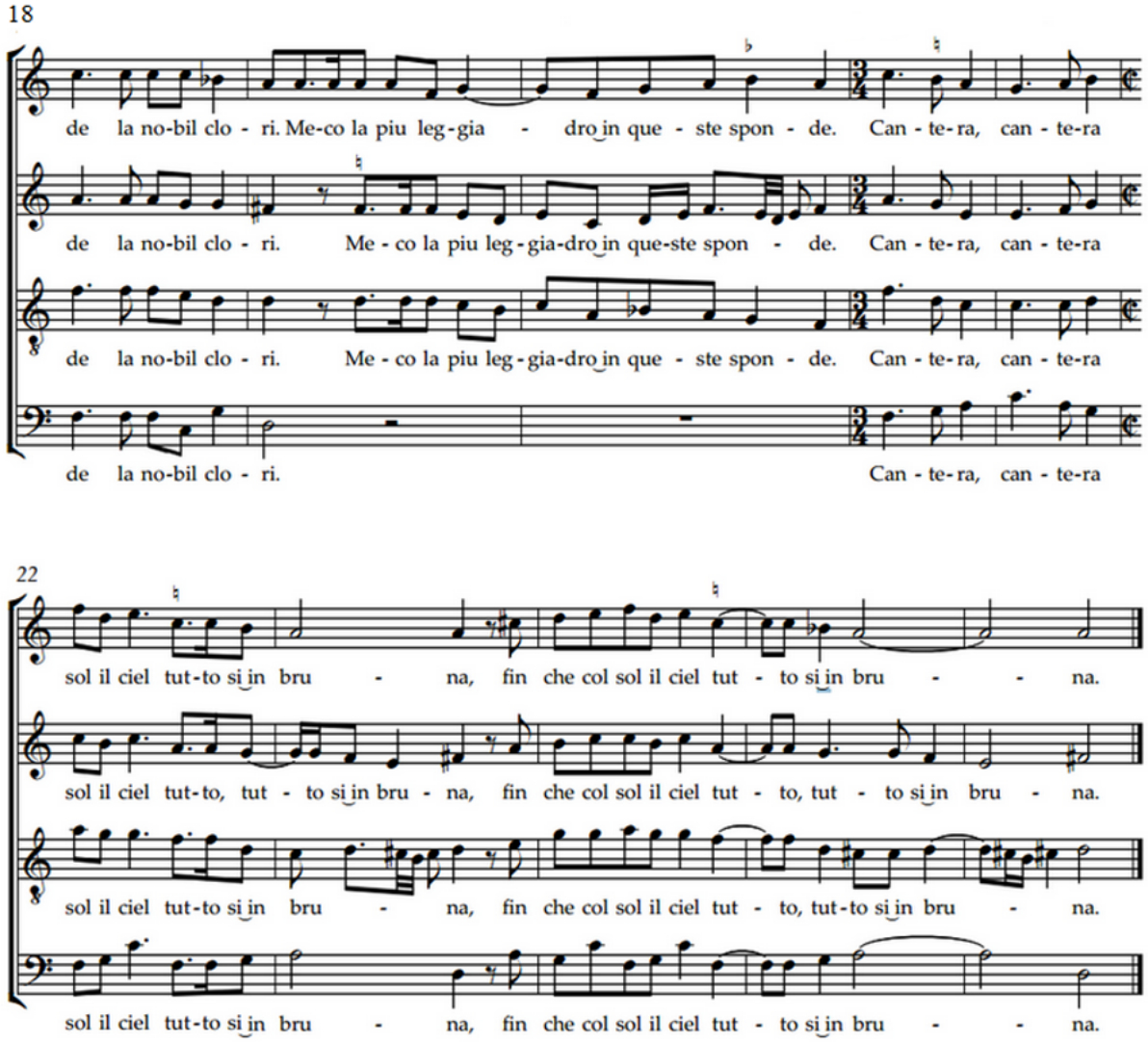


[42] Roche, 9.

[43] Ibid.

As the text exclaims “Cantera” (sing), Casulana employs a sudden shift to B♮ from the measure prior, and continues to move between C♮ and C♯, as well as B♮ and B♭, for the rest of the piece (see Example 13). The chromaticism creates color, emphasizing the text painting that Madalena displayed throughout the madrigal. This chromaticism also proved that Casulana was not only the master of madrigalisms and text-painting, but could also employ chromatic shifts to achieve artistic expression. In *Io d’odorate fronde*, Casulana expanded her musical expression through chromaticism and tonal shifts. Casulana used established and accepted madrigal composition techniques in her works, which helped her compositions gain admiration and renown.

Example 13. Chromaticism in Io d’odorate fronde



The last documentation pertaining to Madalena Casulana is found in the 1591 publication from Venetian publisher Giacomo Vincenti. This music catalogue lists two volumes of *madrigali spirituali a 4* by Casulana. Unfortunately, the music for these pieces is no longer extant.[44] Bowers noted that these volumes were previously printed by Girolamo Scotto, and that the term *spirituali* was not in fact referencing Casulana's compositions. Instead, LaMay suggested that it was her first two books of madrigals reprinted in the volume.[45] This would seem to indicate that Casulana's compositional output slackened in the 1580s. Those who believe she married after 1570 (hence the name change), say she was pushed into an early "retirement" from composing in favor of marriage and domestic responsibilities.[46] Others maintain that the evidence she married is slim, and she maintained independence throughout her life.[47]

Madalena Casulana is certainly notable as being the first woman with an extant volume of published music, and her ability and insistence on notating her music set her apart from all other female participants in music, theater, and creations. In the 1600s in Italy, the act of singing was directly connected with courtesans, who were chiefly found in Venice.[48] Courtesans of the era were expected to entertain their guests with witty conversation and lively music. The courtesans, especially in liberal cities such as Venice, were even able to achieve some amount of independence; courtesan Tullia d'Aragona, for instance, headed an intellectual salon in Venice. Veronica Franco (d. 1591) was also a renowned courtesan, who was an accomplished singer and poet.[49] However, Casulana's composing and ability to write down her compositions set her apart from courtesans.[50] Courtesans thrived on improvisatory song, while Casulana was able to record her music in notation and publication. Written composition differed completely from the courtesan tradition, and that of the traditional female role. For Casulana to publish "distanced her significantly from the women singers of her time—courtesan and otherwise—who gained public space but never clamored for professional legitimacy."[51] Courtesans improvised their music, or at least memorized it; it was never written down. The music was a product of the moment, and in their reviews of Casulana, men made sure to mention her notation of music and her virtue; both of these set her apart from the courtesans.[52] Casulana's ability and insistence to notate and publish her music may have made her the focus of criticism, but it may also have saved her reputation.

Women in sixteenth-century Italy also began participating in the *commedia dell'arte* troupes that had emerged during the period. Players were expected to sing and dance, but only through improvisation. In fact, some scholars suggest *commedia dell'arte* took shape when courtesans introduced their virtuoso musical and poetic gifts to the bawdy, sexually explicit, all-male comedy

[44] Lerner, 99.

[45] LaMay. "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows of Unheard of Songs!" 50.

[46] Bowers, 107–108.

[47] LaMay, "Madalena Casulana: My Body Knows of Unheard of Songs!" 43.

[48] LaMay, "Composing from the Throat," 369.

[49] Meredith Ray explores Veronica Franco's creative output in her volume "Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance." Franco published a volume of fictional letters in 1580, in part to defend herself against criticism from the emerging movement against courtesans. Unlike a noble woman, Franco was a public figure, and therefore she could, at least in theory, express herself freely in print. This is another instance of a woman both claiming independent voice, while also working within a common writing method of men of the period. However, Franco's publication did inevitably meet with resentment from some. By publishing her own letters, Franco was determined to compete with men "in their own territory and with their own literary instruments" (Ray 135).

[50] Not only does Madalena's composing differ from the courtesan's skills, but there is a lack of any evidence connecting Casulana with any group of courtesans, or even a *concerto della donne*.

[51] LaMay, "Composing from the Throat," 370.

[52] Ibid.

of Pantalone.[53] Even the *concerto della donne* of Ferrara specialized in improvisation. Singers were famous for their music decorated with numerous *passaggi*, trills, and cadenzas; however, the singers probably "improvised these in rehearsal, and then committed them to memory."[54] Notation was the domain of composers, not performers.

Throughout her life, Madalena Casulana did not fit the traditional female role of sixteenth-century Italian society. She gained acclaim through her compositions and performances, and developed relationships with prominent male composers and artists of the period who supported her compositional career. Further, her notation of her music set her apart from other women of the period, who mainly performed through improvisation and memorization. In total, 66 of her madrigals survive today. Madalena Casulana was respected by her peers and contemporaries, so another question remains: why is her work relatively unknown today? Few performance editions are available to purchase or find online, and even fewer are frequently performed. However, Casulana's works exist in one of the first extant publications dedicated to a woman, and her music stands alongside de Rore's and di Lasso's work as highly artistic examples of the Italian madrigal form. Hopefully, through research and editions, modern musicians and choirs can be introduced to Madalena Casulana's name and work.

Selected works of Madalena Casulana available in modern editions

Il primo libro de madrigali, 4vv (Venice, 1568)

- *Morir non può il mio cuore*
- *Sculpio ne l'am' Amore*
- *Se sciôr si ved'il laccio a cui dianz'io*
- *Vedesti Amor giamai*

Il secondo libro de madrigali, 4 voice (SATB) (Venice, 1570) (modern transcriptions available on IMSLP or CPDL)

- *Ridon hor per le piaggie*
- *Amor per qual cagion*
- *Io d'odorate fronde*
- *Ahi possanza d'amor*
- *O notte o ciel o mar*
- *Morte che voi*
- *Ben venga il pastor mio*
- *Adio Lidia mia bella.*
- *Cinta di fior un giorno.*
- *Gli ochi lucenti e belli.*
- *La dea che nel mar nacque.*
- *Io felice pastore.*
- *Per lei pos'in oblio.*
- *Monti selve fontane*
- *Vaghi amorosi augelli*
- *S'alcun vi mira*
- *Come fra verdi erbette*
- *Vivo ardor viva fiamma*
- *Il vostro dipartir*
- *Gran miracol d'amore*
- *Tra verdi frondi* (misattributed, actually composed by Leandro Mira)

Stavisi Il Mio Bel Sol (SSA) Il Gaudio (1586) (available on CPDL or IMSLP).

Additional madrigal editions can be found in B. Pescerelli: *I madrigali di Maddalena Casulana* (Florence, 1979) Pescerelli.

[53] LaMay, "Composing from the Throat," 373.

[54] Pendle, 82.

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The Composer's Inner Ear:
A Guide to Expressive Performance[1]

Jameson Marvin

Abstract

There is little debate regarding music's capacity to inspire, uplift, and rejuvenate the human spirit. From the very earliest times, group singing has expressed feelings and emotions that are inherently and uniquely human. How should the conductor look beyond the explicit information contained in the notated symbols of pitch and time to discern the inherent expressive vocabulary? This essay explores potential avenues to the unwritten expressive nuances a composer may have had in mind, by which choirs are enabled to project the music's deeper emotional meaning.

Emotions and their expression are at the very center of human life. In fact, "emotional expression is more central to music than to language."[2] From the very earliest times to the present, centuries before the development of notation, group singing has been a response to feelings and emotions.

Spontaneous singing initiated by internal emotions is inherently human. When we experience music we "gain an impression of tension and resolution, of anticipation, growth and decay."[3]

Language and music are combined when we sing. Composers accurately write words under symbols of pitch and time. The challenge is finding unseen expressive nuances heard by the composer's *inner ear*. Once we understand the implied rhetoric, we may better acquire the insight of the composer, imagining what emotion the composer felt.

Imagination—it is a characteristic human quality not unknown to choral directors! Studying a composer's notational craftsmanship is fundamental; however, more importantly, we must try to understand the composer's innter ear that is reflected by the symbolic notation of it. We must imagine the expressive gestures they represent. Often, we see only the surface and too often we follow the symbolic instructions too literally, not burrowing more deeply to consider the question of *why*.

[1] Throughout this essay I have borrowed extensively from my book, *Emotion in Choral Singing: Reading between the Notes*. GIA Publications, Inc., 2019.

[2] Mithen, Steven J. *The Singing Neanderthals: the Origins of Music, Language, Mind, and Body* (U.K.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 24.

[3] Ibid.

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How do we best answer this question? Through understanding change, attitude, and implication: how the text-music relationships may relate, to some degree or another, at any given moment, to the composer's chosen tempo, meter, texture, speed of harmonic rhythm, and how that will affect our choice of implied expressive nuances: dynamics, phrasing, articulation, linear direction, rubato. Once we understand the expressive gestures that lie behind the symbolic notation, we can tell our students, "this is why the composer did that, and *that* is why we are taking the piece this way!" This is powerful and inspiring.

Western choral art is entirely wrapped up with intervals, which innately project sound qualities and emotions (*affetti*). Man *sang*, recent research reveals, before he *spoke*. Earliest group singing was in response to personal, cultural, spiritual stimuli, spontaneously and audibly expressing emotion. The intrinsic fundamental of "chorus singing" offers us a window of insight into how we might view a score: the gesture behind the symbolic notation reveals the composer's mind's ear, the intended *emotion* to be experienced through bringing the notation alive in sound.

The Expressive Power of Intervals: An Historical Overview

The earliest chant notation reminded singers of the melodies and of the inherent expressive nuances that had developed over eight centuries of aural tradition. The melodies were meant to adorn the sacred texts. The early symbols placed above the texts were related entirely to expressive nuances that would project feelings. The history of western choral music is based upon the intertwining relationships of intervals, creating a palate of sound-colors, a mosaic of *affetti* filled with emotional undercurrents.

The theme of this essay can be summed up in two words: emotional connection. Both vertical and horizontal intervals possess a rich vocabulary of meanings. Chords and melodies create ever-changing expressive meanings, suggestions, expectations, questions, confirmations. Intervals are the aural channels through which expressive nuances are projected. Conductors and performers may fail to recognize the emotional connections of varied patterns of harmonic and melodic intervals.

Mithin, quoting the work of psychologists Hella Oelman and Bruno Loeng presented at the 5th Triennial ESCOM Conference in 2003, reveals that the connection between particular emotions and particular musical intervals seem "to be relevant for the emotional experiences of musical intervals of humans across cultures and time, and thus might be universal.[4]

There is a common spirit in choral music of the Renaissance, derived from Chant and medieval music. Composed melodies reflect varied ranges and intervallic relationships in the four modes, each with an associated plagal mode starting a fourth lower. Renaissance composers intentionally portrayed textual mood through the choice of modes. Dorian (D-d) is a mixed mode and sounds both serious and happy; Phrygian (E-e) sounds sad, sometimes exotic, vehement; Lydian (F-f) passionate, strong, quasi erotic; Mixolydian (G-g) sounds happy, playful, serene. We can feel these moods by playing scales both ascending and descending a number of times on the white notes of a piano. Why? because of the whole and half step sequences. Modal melodies frequently occur throughout the history of choral music.

We all remember melodies we sang during childhood years. From the popular songs of the Beatles to Christmas carols, folk ballads, patriotic

[4] Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals*, 91.

songs, and church hymns, they stick with us, creating feelings and moods. We experience meaningful nostalgia when we sing or hear them.

Melodies vary enormously: linear scales, melodic leaps, ascending, descending, short, long, and combinations of multiple relationships. Playing melodies of varied types is an exploration worth experiencing. Each elicits an emotion. Go to a piano and play varied short-note melodies (three to five motes) and see how they affect you. Do the same with longer melodies. The experience will elicit feelings inherent in the innumerable combinations and sequences of note patterns that you might play.

Vertical-Harmonic Intervals Then and Now

From earliest times, expressions of mood and emotion were related to intervallic symbols of perfection and imperfection. Reinforced by reverberant cathedrals, perfect intervals corresponded to the natural overtone series. In medieval vocal polyphony pure intervallic ratios were related to theology: unison 1:1 (God); octave 2:1 (God/Father); and fifth 3:2 (God, Father, Son). These mathematical ratios were the vertical intervals used at cadences.

By the middle of the Renaissance (c. 1520) the interval of the major 3rd (5:4) was found in compositions, though rarely at final cadences. The pure overtone major third (for example E produced by the fundamental C), is out of tune and irreconcilable with the E produced by a series of four pure perfect fifths (C-G-D-A-E). The difference between the two is easily heard; it is not subtle. The lovely sound of a pure major third was especially favored in English 15th century sacred music. By the mid-16th century, composers included major thirds in final cadences. This change in compositional attitude necessitated a new tuning system. Meantone (or Just Intonation) produces "natural pure major 3rds that are low compared to equal (piano) temperament. Minor thirds were rarely allowed at cadences.

Natural pure intervals infiltrated Renaissance compositions and created the nomenclature of perfect and imperfect intervals. Unisons/ octaves, fifths/fourths are "perfect"; major thirds /minor sixths are "perfect"—they sound "at rest" in the overtone series, and there is no natural tension. Other intervals sound "imperfect" and call for resolution. We hear them as dissonant: minor and major seconds, major and minor sevenths; augmented and diminished fourths and fifths. Minor thirds and major sixths are also considered imperfect. They have tension and require resolution. Composers signaled a cadence by using the imperfect minor third to contract to a perfect unison, the major sixth to expand to a perfect octave. To express extreme emotions such as pain, loss, passion, bitterness, or sadness, the exquisite dissonant major seventh or minor second was used and demanded resolution.

Chord progressions have intrinsic expressive qualities that can meaningfully be highlighted through the use of dynamics, ranging from obvious to subtle. For example, play these progressions and be aware of their affect, their mood; feel the emotion: I ii IV I implies *diminuendo* to ii, *crescendo* to IV, and *diminuendo* to I. In many examples that one can play, a major chord followed by a minor chord suggests *diminuendo*; a minor chord followed by a major chord suggests *crescendo*. There are variants; some progressions seem "equal" and may not suggest any particular dynamic change. I urge you to intentionally experience this by playing varied short/long chord progression on the piano. See how they feel. Try matching logical dynamics with the progressions you invent.

At cadences in particular, be aware of how the chord is "spelled." The bass: the root in the bass sounds final and has a sense of permanence. The third in the bass feels impermanent, somewhat ongoing; the fifth in the bass is not stable; it suggests ongoing eternity. The soprano: the root suggests the end, and final resolve; the third feels like the emotion is not resolved; the fifth seems almost to confirm ongoing, ever- present, a truth.

Mood. What could be more human than mood, especially the sensitivity to changes of mood? When we sing we feel moods and we project moods. In fact, mood sensitivity may be the most important window through which conductors gain insight. In preparing for a performance, choirs imagine how their sound can change and inspire their listeners' state of mind. The capacity to bring notational symbols to meaningful, aural life boils down to comprehending the composer's emotional communication, the humanity in their music.

The history of notation reveals notes written on graphs with symbols, but no expression. While by the nineteenth century composers wrote expressive nuances into the score, the implied expressive gestures may remain hidden; they do not appear on the graphs. Expressive nuances are implied *between the notes*. They are, primarily:

1. the direction and design of the melodic lines;
2. the juxtaposition of harmonic progressions;
3. the note values—spacing and sizes;
4. choices of voicing, especially soprano and bass voicings of root, third, and fifth, in final chords; the placement of hemiolas;
5. the inherent expressivity of major and minor chords, and the dissonant chords of varied levels.

Catalyst for Change: Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives, Pronouns, Adverbs

We frequently use two words to describe the relationship between the visual and aural arts that relate to how a composer sets the text: *word painting*. To represent sound images, composers employ harmony (consonance, dissonance), melody (shape, direction), rhythm (fast, slow), and texture (polyphonic, homophonic). Throughout my years of studying scores and preparing rehearsals, it occurred to me that there are a number of common predispositions that drew composers toward word painting. Highlighting words *via* expressive musical vocabulary was the result of their desire to aurally represent parts of speech. Verbs seem especially enticing, for they express both motion and emotion, qualities abundant in both sacred and secular texts.

Notational portrayal of feelings and moods appeared in the early sixteenth century, sparked first in the motets of Josquin des Prez. By the middle of that century, word painting in madrigals became the catalyst for the *seconda practica*, especially in the hands of Cipriano de Rore and Giaches de Wert, these two brilliant students of Claudio Monteverdi. Concurrent with the development of the madrigal, "eventually performers applied expressive nuances not included in the notation, such as dynamics and tempos. In response to the emotion of the text, mid-16th century performers are described as singing fast, slow, loud, soft".[5] While very few expression marks were written by composers during the seventeenth century, the emotional quality of verbs, nouns, adjectives, personal pronouns and conjunctions became subject to amplification by the composer from Medieval music to today.

[5] Hudson, Richard. *Stolen Time: The History of Tempo Rubato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 6.

In sum, from 1350 to 1700 there was no need for composers to write expression marks into choral score because contemporaries understood how the notation reflected the intended inherent expression. In this context, an important question to ask is, "what part of speech is the composer emphasizing, today or centuries ago; what emotion is s/he trying to highlight and by what element of music—harmony, melody, rhythm, texture or a combination?"

Because choral compositions reflect to some degree or another a word-music relationship, it is important to consider the word "reflect." In that context, two questions arise: "how does the composer reflect the text?" and why and how did they directly reflect their prioritization of *feelings* that drew them to a specific word or a phrase?

Connecting a composer's reflections to a specific part of speech is key. Verbs, for example, signal motion and emotion. Composers highlight verbs of motion primarily with movement: fast notes, direction of notes, tempo changes. They occur especially in polyphonic or fugal textures. Composers highlight verbs of emotion with harmony: fear, sadness, disappointment, loss, and anxiety, with dissonance, chromaticism, minor chords, cross-relations, closed textures, and unresolved progressions; happiness, joy, exuberance, love, freedom, and contentment with major keys, major chords, modal progressions, harmonic motion, open textures, and high or clear textures.

Emotional expression is made relevant only when choirs can meaningfully project it aurally. In rehearsals, conductors can teach singers how to project emotional expression by analyzing a composer's notational vocabulary of feelings, often intertwined with the expressive power of intervals. Intervals, both vertical and horizontal, convey moods, interact with parts of speech, and enhance emotional flavors. In considering the many stimuli that trigger a composer's written vocabulary of expressive nuances, I offer interpretive ideas in compositions of three well-known composers: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Heinrich Schütz, and Benjamin Britten. In doing so the primary purpose will be to activate our insight by asking, "why did the composer do that; what emotion might the composer feel when he set the music that way?! What was the composer's mind's ear—the internal expressive emotional feelings that s/he hoped the conductor would comprehend and be able to teach a choir to aurally project?

G. P. Palestrina—*Sicut cervus desiderat*

(a score is provided on page 66)

Published in 1584, Palestrina divides *Sicut cervus desiderat* into two parts. For this essay I discuss part one focusing attention on many expressive nuances that will bring audible clarity to Palestrina's "word painting": tempo, tuning, balance, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, linear direction, and rubato. Based on Psalm 42:1, Palestrina divides his composition into three overlapping sections: 1) *Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum* (As the deer desires running waters, mm. 1–25; 2) *ita desiderat* (so longs for, mm. 23–44; and 3) *anima mea, ad te Deus* (my soul for you, God, mm. 40-58). Palestrina's central theme is the verb *desiderat* (longs for, desires). Although "desires" appears only twice in the Psalm text, Palestrina amplifies the emotional meaning by repeating *desiderat* twenty-four times.

Word-Music Relationship Related to Structure

The verb *desiderat* has three complementary meanings: to desire, to long for, to yearn. Palestrina makes clear this thematic message in mm. 1–25 with short rhythmic ascending notes

contrasting with the long flowing lines ("running waters"), and in mm. 23–44, with imitative polyphonic lines on only two words, *ita desiderat. Anima mea*, (my soul) the object of *desiderat*, in mm. 40–58 begins with a motif of seven imitative descending notes, each enhanced with an appoggiatura, a longing gesture. The sopranos first sing the motive on the highest note of the motet. The three words, *ad te, Deus* are extended with ornamental lines that highlight the noun *Deus*.[6]

Palestrina describes running water with continuous overlapping polyphonic lines, interrupted by two structural cadences (mm. 22–23 and 54–55) and two inconsequential passing cadences (mm. 13 and 17). Therefore, the specific word "desiderat," set in quarter notes, dotted quarters, and eighth notes, gain increasing urgency. The subtle poignancy of Palestrina's conception for *urgency* is manifested by the fact there are no structural cadences in two-thirds of the motet (mm. 23–55), reinforcing Palestrina's conception "my soul *urgently* desires God." Passing dissonances (major seconds or minor sevenths) are common. Palestrina paints nouns (water, deer, fountain) with major 7th dissonances, highlighted in my edition with vertical slanting lines. The dissonances appear on two momentary Phrygian cadences (mm. 10 and 37), reflecting emotions of pain and sadness related to yearning and longing.

Given these insights into Palestrina's score, how can we best make clear these compositional emotional gestures? One of the basic principles to best aurally amplify the expressive meaning of this motet is to balance contrapuntal lines and tune dissonances and principal cadences.[7] The emotional meaning of parts of speech (nouns, verbs, *etc*.) can be treated with dynamics, phrasing, articulation, linear direction, and rubato.

Dynamics

When performing *Sicut cervus*, dynamics can be employed on many levels:

1. In sections one and two, to clarify long and short notes of the head-motifs and subsequent quick notes on *desiderat*, add modest crescendos and diminuendos. Be aware of overbalancing the eighth notes when singing *aquarum*.

2. As each vocal part ascends, to allow listeners to perceive points of arrival, create an initial forward crescendo with slight motion.

3. At the end of the first section, the bass entrance overlaps the structural cadence with the head motif, *ita desiderat* mm. 23–43. This 24–bar section magnifies the word "desires" with ever-flowing, overlapping, quick imploring polyphonic lines. By employing subtle dynamics with forward motion, there will be an increased feeling of urgency telegraphed by the continuous motion. Take care to balance quicker notes with longer cadential notes by allowing the long notes to recede into the background. Provide quick notes with subtle articulation.

[6] Note that the tenor melodic line on Deus (God), mm 47–49, reflects the soprano melodic line on *aquarum* (water) mm 19–23, almost note-for-note. In this way, near the conclusion of the motet, Palestrina reminds us that the "hart [deer that] desires springs of [flowing] water," (mm 19–23 of the soprano) is the precise parallel affect (via the melodic tenor, mm 47–49) of "so longs my soul for thee, O God."

[7] Major seventh dissonances are exquisite if in tune; an example in m. 10: allow the B of the soprano to be low enough not to sound like an out-of-tune octave. Cadences, especially the final cadence, m. 58, tune to the overtone series; let the tenor B be low to the *piano* third. It is easy to hear the octave, third, and fifth overtones in the air by playing strongly a low bass G (for example) on an in-tune piano. Note the major third is quite low to the piano (tempered) third.

Palestrina signals each structural (and passing) cadence with suspensions–a structural announcement. To clarify the signal, balance and tune the two-note suspensions. In the third section, *anima mea*, Palestrina also consistently announces the head-motive with a suspension, enhancing the emotional quality of "my soul" (possessive adjective, noun), the object of "desiring." The suspensions feel "imploring." In this context, that emotion is best served by adding a brief crescendo on "*a*" with excellent tuning when balancing the two notes of the appoggiatura.

It is interesting to observe, with the exception of the tenor, bars 47–48 on *Deus*, "magnifying God," that the last third of the motet contains fewer eighth notes. This pattern seems to suggest a quality of contemplation ("my soul for thee, God"). Nearing the final cadence a slight diminuendo may highlight this emotion. The final cadence occurs before the last four bars, a typical trait of many Palestrina motets. The motet concludes with a deliberate feeling of winding down, enhanced by the final plagal cadence that can be served appropriately by an expressive diminuendo.

Phrasing

In this edition, micro phrase-groups are indicated with brackets placed above three-note groups. The purpose of these marks is to visualize the melodic and rhythmic asymmetric groupings in each vocal line. Normal two-note groupings of motives relate to the natural half-note pulse signaled by the *alla breve* 𝔠 sign. The bracket placed above three-note groupings reveals asymmetry and highlights the melodic-rhythmic nuances of each independent vocal part, *one of the primary sources of expression in singing Renaissance polyphony*. To highlight and contrast asymmetric polyphonic phrase-groups add very subtle brief forward rubato motion (beat 1, 2'3 1,) with a very subtle dynamic-rhythmic fluctuation: *cresc 1 to 2', 3 to 1*, to discreetly "catch up" after the 'mark.

Motion and Rubato

As Don Campbell writes in *Music: Physician for Times to Come*, "Music moves. Not only emotionally, but bodily: music dances inwardly and incites to gesture, to dance, outwardly. Song and gesture both contain movement generated by the musical thought and form.… Even thinking music, without sound, involves the experience of movement in imagination… the movement of music thought is not mere movement: it is expressive movement."[8]

Notation is a graph that visually indicates pitch and time. When a choir sings, motion occurs naturally; music-making and motion are thus allied. Shifts from two-note to three-note groupings commonly occur in polyphonic textures and in hemiolas and phrases that mirror the strong-weak syllabification of words. These shifts offer modest opportunities for illumination with rubato and dynamics, creating subtle linear expressivity.

Quick-moving notes reflect verbs of motion, or emotion. Forward motion (rubato) will aid in this emotional affect. As the phrase ends, relaxation will occur. Melodic lines that arrive at a momentary destination, as demonstrated in the opening motive, rise and fall according to the syllabic stress of the words: Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum. Cadences indicate how the composer organizes the textual structure. Modest motion of tempo can articulate the beginning or end of these musical structures. To highlight cadences, add rubato to unwind the inherent forward motion (mm. 22–23, 54–55), and especially at the final plagal cadence. As

[8] Campbell, Don. *Music: Physician for Times to Come* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2014), 124.

Richard Hudson says in *Stolen Time: The History of Tempo Rubato*, "The idea of retarding at cadences seems to have been transmitted also to polyphonic music.... Late in the sixteenth century the cadence could be emphasized, even in types of music otherwise in strict rhythm by extending the penultimate note or chord."[9]

On page 66, please look at my edition of Palestrina's *Sicut cervus desiderat*. The original pitch was F; I transposed it up a whole tone to G.[10] The original note values are halved. Brackets above notes indicate three-note groups in the context of duple meter. Cadences and dissonances are projected by vertical and slanted dotted lines. The alto has a low range, one "high" A; the lowest note is G. This is a comfortable range for a high tenor. Consider using some tenors and/or baritones in falsetto for frequently balancing the four vocal parts.

Heinrich Schütz: *Selig sind die Toten*

(a score is provided on page 70)

It is our task as conductors to teach our ensembles how to understand the structural, stylistic, and expressive elements' relationship to word meanings. Singers learn how the composition reflects the meaning of the texts both broadly and in detail. With in-depth analyses, insightful conductors realize how a composer illuminates the meaning of a word, creates the mood of a verse, or expresses the emotion of a line of a text. These insights must also reveal an understanding of the implicit gestures not notated in the score. The importance of a conductor's insight into the implicit gestures will inspire the choir in rehearsals when they explain the meaning of the emotional contours of each phrase of music. Heinrich Schütz's *Selig sind die Toten* offers an excellent example of his rich vocabulary of implicit expression, not evident in the score notation.

Selig sind die Toten is one of the twelve motets for six-part choir in Schütz's *Geistliche Chor-Music* of 1648, the year in which the Peace of Westphalia concluded the Thirty Years War which had devastated the court and church music establishments. Schütz spent much of his life employed in Dresden as well as traveling throughout Europe, including studying with Monteverdi at St. Mark's in Venice. By 1630 he came back to Dresden to resume compositional duties for court ceremonies, and by 1650 Dresden employed nineteen musicians including normally three singers per part.

Most interestingly, the motets contain no basso-continuo parts. During the seventeenth century, pitch standards were primarily related to the inclusion of instruments for court ceremonies or concerted works; if performed only in church, it was the organ that set the pitch. During this time church-pitch for choirs varied considerably and choirs would have performed these motets on many pitch standards. Collected works editions write *Geistliche Chor-Music* almost entirely on G; the original pitch was on F. We do not know the pitch of the Dresden organ in the mid-to-late-seventeenth century, though some scholars believe that it may have been approximately a whole tone above the original written pitch. That the motets were written primarily on F and that modern editions have transcribed them on G has often suggested to me the decision to perform many Schütz motets on F-sharp, a key that stays far better in tune than F or G.

[9] Hudson, Richard. *Stolen Time: the History of Tempo Rubato*, 7.

[10] The pitch of the organ of Cappella Giulia was a half-step low to A=440. The sound of Palestrina's *Sicut cervus* was therefore pitched on F-sharp, a "key" that corresponds easily to falsetto or high tenor ranges as well as tenors, baritones, basses. The Harvard Glee Club performed *Sicut cervus* on F-sharp many times and this "key" created a beautiful and natural sound.

Analysis for Performance

These words are from Revelation 14:13, from Schütz's Lutheran Bible.

> *Selig sind die Toten*
> Blessed are the dead
>
> *Die in dem Herren sterben*
> who die in the Lord.
>
> *Nun, ja der Geist spricht*
> Now, yea the Spirit speaks;
>
> *Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit*
> they rest from their labors;
>
> *Und ihrer Werke folgen ihnen nacht*
> their works do follow them.

In translating Schütz's mind's-ear to the choir there are innumerable expressive nuances that can be considered. From the written notation we see many opportunities to improve clarity of tuning, balance, and texture, and there is a range of expressive components that we can use to project aural clarity of Schütz's emotional intentions: dynamics (dynamic/motion), phrasing, articulation, linear direction (dynamic/motion), and rubato (dynamic motion).

Words and Music—Tuning, Balance, Linear Direction, Dynamics, Motion

The first twelve measures present varied musical implications for the words *Selig sind die Toten* (Blessed are the Dead). Measures 1-7 create a unity of spirit with a rich sonorous homophonic texture; these majestic measures represent the universality of the adjective *blessed(ness)*. To achieve this unity of spirit, the six vocal parts must be in tune and well balanced to meaningfully project aurally the inherent beauty of the "oneness" in this gesture; singing a modest crescendo from the opening *Selig* to the "known-object" *Toten* will highlight this gesture. Tune well the final G major chord.[11]

For the next phrase, *die in dem Herren sterben* (who die in the Lord,) Schütz provides an immediate contrast of texture; the brief overlapping imitative polyphonic lines project the independence of all persons, and humanity's outcome: to die (verb, *sterben*) leading to the direct object, *Herren*. Singing the quarter notes of each of the ascending lines with a modest crescendo with forward motion that leads to *Herren* will meaningfully highlight the individuality and the inevitability of humanity. A D-sharp appears in the alto on *sterben*; in German "sharp" also means "cross."[12] The final chord of this phrase is pitched on B major, a harmony symbolically distant from the opening G major (*Selig*). Tune and balance carefully these two major chords. Let the descending completion of the phrase on m. 12 relax with a modest diminuendo, confirming the inherent nuance of an "Amen" plagal (IV-I) cadence.

Beginning m. 13, Schütz offers a joyful setting of *selig sind*. Each part overlaps and imitates each other in dance-like triple groups of three quarter-notes; the bass projects the triple motion in augmentation, as all parts approach a brief cadence at *Toten* on E, symbolically containing two sharps. A degree of forward motion with each *selig*, reflecting the strong/weak syllabification, will reveal Schütz's enthusiastic setting of this compelling, brief sequence.

In mm. 19–36, the imitative polyphonic ascending patterns first heard for the text "who die in the

[11] As mentioned before, listen to the overtones created by the low G. Tune especially the third to match the B of the overtone.

[12] The sharp sign # relates to two words in German: "sharp" and "cross." The cross symbolizes the crucifixion and is commonly used by German composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most noteworthy in Bach's Passions and many cantatas.

Lord" are elongated; this setting meaningfully enhances the emotion of *selig*: "happiness, blessedness, longing." The length of the phrase seems to magnify humanity's hopeful and joyful anticipation of inevitable death. These eighteen measures seem to confirm a reaffirmation of faith, within which brief cadences contemplatively occur.

At m. 37 there is a strikingly strong major seventh dissonance on the downbeat that alerts us to a new text: *Nun, ja der Geist spricht* (Now, yea the Spirit speaks); it is a phrygian cadence that expresses an emotion of sorrow on die *Toten*, (the dead) and with *selig*, resolution. A single tenor voice announces, "Yea. The Spirit speaks"—a strong gesture that projects the Spirit's individuality. We can complement the emotional content of this phrase that Schütz intends by carefully tuning and balancing the major seventh dissonance, allowing a subtle ritard and diminuendo at the cadence, and employing individualistic strong dynamics for the solo tenor who interrupts the phrase.

Schütz's setting of "Yea, the Spirit speaks" (mm. 40–45) has a joyfully dramatic expression; he repeats *der Geist sprichts* four times with quick overlapping voices, as if to say, "Listen, listen, listen—the Lord, Lord, Lord, speaks!" The long notes are a cry for strength and the repetitive gestures reinforce the feeling of urgency. Tune and balance the series of chords on the verb *spricht*, with pure unisons, octaves, and fifths, and especially the major third that is in tune with the overtone series, a pitch that is low to piano equal temperament.

The brief, powerful setting of "the Spirit speaks" (mm. 45–49) is given a poignant resolution by Schütz's beautiful contemplative setting of *sie ruhen* (they rest). Rest is portrayed with long, slow notes as if time is suspended, on a series of plagal cadences enhancing moods of tranquility and resolution. The affect of these moods can be projected with a calm diminuendo, and a subtle tempo relationship from *ru-* to *-hen* each time this gesture occurs.

Immediately following is Schütz's expressive setting of *von ihrer Arbeit* (from their labor). It could not be more vivid! We hear an extended series of dissonant passing half-note chords. Measures 49-55 contain vertical tone-clusters: D, E, F-sharp, G and A, that are initiated by the bass and overlapped by the tenor I, tenor II, alto, and soprano voices. When contrasted with the tranquility of the slow, restful IV–I cadences, humanity's labors will be made especially dramatic by tuning and balancing the dissonances, thereby clarifying these note clusters. Technically, to receive expressive clarity, the whole steps (D-E-F-sharp, and G-A) must be tuned slightly wide to tempered tuning, each chord balanced as they pass in time. The half-steps with the crossing tenor parts in mm. 50–51 will be made clear through balancing them and singing a wide enough interval to confirm the half-step crossings are not out of tune unisons.

Between mm. 55–64, Schütz returns to the tranquility of rest followed by the anxiety of "your labors." This time, Schütz highlights the pronoun *ihrer* (your) with many compositional techniques:

a. chromaticism: two diminished fourths (mm. 61 and 63),

b. high-ranged dissonances between the two soprano parts,

c. a striking series of three suspensions, and

d. in m. 63, the vivid diminished fourth (soprano I, tenor I) with the half-step dissonance (soprano I and alto) that resolves immediately to a half-step dissonance between the alto and tenor I.

In this manner, Schütz increases the emotional intensity of *ihrer*, (your [labor]), giving this pronoun ownership. Throughout the beautiful consonances of rest and the many forms of dissonance and vocal suspensions, the conductor must carefully balance and tune the individual vocal parts to allow these intervals to reflect the expressive sensitivity Schütz intends.

Beginning in m. 65, Schütz sets the final phrase of the text, *und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach* (and their works do follow them), by employing a very different affect. His festive, imitative, quick-note textures in close canonic imitation highlight the verb "to follow" in an eight-measure "eagerly anticipated" style. This heart-felt celebration of "for those who die—their works will be remembered" amplifies the sentiment. The rewards of life's struggles are made even more vivid by Schütz's imagination when he repeats *sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit* in the highest range of the entire motet with a full six-part texture (mm. 82–84). The rich sonority of the six vocal parts highlight the meaning Schütz seems to intend for the celebration of all generations whose works will be remembered (mm. 85–91). This is made all the more poignant by the long, lyric vocal lines peppered with chromaticism and dissonance.

In mm. 65–90, Schütz emphasizes the emotional expressions of resting, laboring, and remembering, by contrasting these moods with the same powerful images:

a. slow notes on IV-I cadences for "rest,"

b. excruciating dissonances for "your labors," and

c. joyful imitative, rhythmic, and quasi dance-like motives for "shall be remembered."

Schütz's final seven measures provide a summary of faith, and conclude with two high sopranos imitatively echoing "your works will follow after you." The final G major chord contains D as the highest note. Schütz's choice of the fifth of the chord as the highest note reflects the emotional quality of sound he intends concluding with "your works will follow after you," "forever," "on-going."

Benjamin Britten: The Evening Primrose (Five Flower Songs, Op. 47 No. 4)

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) composed Five Flower Songs in 1950, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, founders of the Dartington Hall project in progressive education and rural reconstruction. *The Evening Primrose*, on a poem by John Clare, is the slow movement of Britten's set of five songs with poems on the subject of flowers.

It was in the fall of 1959 that I was introduced to this wonderful music when singing with the Chamber Singers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, under the direction of Dorothy Westra. Professor Westra introduced the Chambers Singers to the many newly composed works by, among others, Britten, Vaughan Williams, Irving Fine, and Aaron Copland, and the rich repertoire of the Renaissance. Little did I know as an undergraduate how deeply influenced I would be by her choices of repertoire. *The Evening Primrose* was my favorite of Britten's *Five Flower Songs*, and it still is. More than fifty years later I continue to turn to choral music by these British and American composers, and the rich range of polyphonic choral music of the Renaissance.

Part I: Text and Music: Britten's Setting of John Clare's The Evening Primrose[13]

The poem by John Clare provides an atmospheric setting of the primrose, a pale rose that blooms only at night. Clare sets his description of the evening primrose with a series of seven rhymed couplets. The poignant description John Clare provides offers a series of events; it is a personalization of the life of the primrose and is portrayed with remarkable detail by Benjamin Britten. The first two couplets depict sunset and the atmosphere of dusk sensed by the primrose. Britten offers a general atmosphere of *Andante tranquillo* ("Walking along, quietly). The author has performed this piece many times and suggests a tempo of quarter note = c. 58. Below is a discussion of the word/music relationships within each of the seven couplets.

Couplets

First: "When once the sun sinks in the west" begins on a B6 chord followed by Britten's projection of the word "sink" with a colorful B7 chord; the bass line sinks from D to G#. The destination of the "sun sinking in the west" is the A major chord on "west," that is harmonically removed from the B major origin. These chords project the atmosphere of dusk descending, that is sensed by the primrose. Bar three, "and dewdrops pearl the evening's breast," begins on B major; the words, "and dewdrops pearl," portray a new scene filled with colorful harmonic motion. Britten highlights "pearl" with a beautiful A6 chord with an added major second B in the soprano. In bar four the bass continues to descend to a final stunningly beautiful F-sharp major chord on "breast" highlighting the object of the pearling dewdrops.

Second: On the text "almost as pale as moon beams are, or its companionable star," Britten writes a soprano/alto duet with triple groupings that highlight the natural syllabic word stress. The melody of the alto is the same as the soprano, upside down, and its text projects the inuendo that "its companionable star" is "almost as pale as moonbeams are." Britten's dynamic markings mirror the parallel affects of these complementary texts.

Third: The words, "the evening primrose opes a new; its delicate blossoms to the dew," portray the primrose blossoms responding to the dew. In bar eight the birth of the primrose is symbolized by Britten's poignant modal progression from F-sharp major to D-sharp (E-flat) major on the word "primrose." The words "opes a new" project a new, not yet heard B7 chord that highlights the blossoming. At "its blossoms," the SAB voices harmonically maintain the B7 chord, marked *ppp*, a dream-like affirmation of "anew." The tenor voice sings "its delicate blossoms to the dew" on a subtle, gentle melody of triple groupings; Britten's independent tenor statement seems to magnify the singularity of the primrose, delicately blossoming.

Fourth: The core of the unfolding primrose is couplet four: "And, hermitlike, shunning the light, wastes its fair bloom upon the night." Britten's vivid picture is strongly projected by the dissonant harmonic, melodic, and chromatic description, set under the dynamic *pp*. Given the colorful text, this dynamic seems ironically subdued, though it beautifully simulates the idea of "hermitlike." Britten reflects the emotions of the words "wastes

[13] Part I offers an in-depth exploration of the manner in which Britten highlights the word/music relationships throughout his composition. Because this essay is able to include only a few score examples due to copyright restrictions, the author hopes that the above study of the text/music relationships will be an incentive for conductors to obtain a copy of Britten's score. Part II below provides this author's interpretive ideas of phrasing, articulation, linear direction, and rubato coupled with dynamics, with considerable attention to specific measures that will require excellent intonation and balance.

its fair bloom upon the night" with rich harmonies. He first projects the word "wastes" on a beautiful A-sharp 6/4 (B-flat 6/4) chord. The beauty of this chord amplifies the irony that only in the night can the primrose blossom, and on "bloom" Britten chooses a sadly beautiful E minor chord. From bar 14 to 15, the soprano chromatically ascends from E to A, projecting the idea of "blooming." This adjective is amplified by Britten's crescendo markings that arrive at the apex of the activity, "night," with a pure, relieved D major chord. Britten connects the object of "wastes its fair bloom upon the night" by extending the ATB parts over the barline to the word sung by the soprano: "Who," the primrose. The subtle diminuendo above the chord on "night" pictures a tender image of this subtle connection.

Couplets five and six are the core of the story: the unfolding primrose and her continued night blooming that will anticipate an awareness that soon her gaze will encounter the sun.

Fifth: Couplet five describes how the night (and most humanity) is blindfolded to the primrose's caresses. This imitative two-part polyphonic texture of the soprano and alto contrasts and complements the previous densely-formed refuge the primrose had taken, "shunning, hermit like, the sun's light." The phrase begins *pp* and concludes the duet with a diminuendo to *ppp* at the end of the final syllables of "caresses," suggesting "to nothing." The bass at first imitates the soprano but then continues the minor-third pattern and descends to a low G-sharp that confirms the sun "knows not the beauty he possesses." Irony is again reinforced by Britten's *pp*, and then an immediate crescendo on 'knows not the beauty," followed by an immediate diminuendo on the words, "he possesses." The crescendo the composer employs magnifies the concept that the sun has no knowledge of the "beauty." The diminuendo reflects a sadness that the sun never witnesses the beauty of the primrose. The lack of a tenor line represents that the sun can never view the primrose.

Sixth: "Thus it blooms on while night is by; when day looks out with open eye." Throughout the first four measures, Britten offers a new dynamic range that highlights the blooming primrose at its prime, followed by an inkling that day begins to appear with it's still-opened blossom. In mm. 20–23, the composer writes five dynamic marks and two accents. These expressive dynamics, ranging from a crescendo to f and a decrescendo to *ppp*, seem to represent what a witness might feel in observing the primrose blooming throughout night, followed by the peeking dawn. Accents occur above the word "day" and the syllable "o"(-pen), creating a sense of alarm that anticipates "day looks out with open eyes." Note also on the words, "When day" the octave leap of the bass and the soprano leap to the F-sharp on "day," the highest note so far in this composition. The "sorrowful" diminuendos above "looks out with open eye" highlight the day dawning, observed and feared by the primrose.

The whole joyous nightlife of the primrose is magnificently projected by these dynamics including the atmospheric, sad turning point that will occur at the primrose's end.

Seventh: "Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun, it faints and withers and is gone," tells us that the sun has begun to appear, embarrassing the primrose, and her blossoms faint, wither, and over time, are gone. Britten seems to take "bashed" not as a sudden terrible event, but that occurs over time as a quality of emotional acceptance during the sunrise. The low texture with *p* diminuendo at mm. 24–25 almost suggests a quality of humility, especially in contrast with Britten's dramatic setting of couplet six. Britten also punctuates the emotions of "cannot shun" with the bass A/B

cluster against the soprano C-sharp, and then the bass G-sharp that creates a diminished fifth with the soprano D. These vertical chromatic sonorities are followed by the A-sharp of the tenor, the third of a beautiful F-major chord, that stands out ironically in relief. Britten writes a diminuendo on the word "shun" that applies especially to the ATB parts, tied to the downbeat of m. 26. In this way Britten poignantly and subtly connects the meaning of the inability of the primrose to shun the sun to the resulting in "it faints and withers."

The lovely polyphonic setting of "it faints and withers and is gone" begins with the soprano and tenor in canon an octave apart, followed by the same melody sung upside-down by the bass and alto. These overlapping strictly canonic melodies are marked *pp* and repeated twice, projecting the idea that over time primroses rise and slowly wilt as they do in nature, with the repetitions of "faints, withers, and is gone." [Note that the canonic soprano and tenor and upside-down bass, and also "it faints and withers and is gone" are an exact duplication of the canonic melody of the soprano and the upside melody of the alto (mm. 5–6) on the words "Almost as pale as moon beams are." This imitation reminds us of the beginning of the primroses nightly story.]

As this lovely piece concludes, the penultimate measure includes a diminuendo placed poignantly over the word "and" in the soprano, reaching to *ppp* on the soprano high F-sharp, highlighting the emotional conjunction "and." The soprano, alto, and bass note values slow down, while the melody of the tenor on "it faints and is" employs a syllabic triplet melodic contour reminiscent of the whole final scene. The final bar on "gone" is on a unison bass and tenor F-sharp with an open fifth between the alto and soprano that produces no precise tonality, just a reminder of F-sharp major, the dominant of the original B major tonic. The *ppp* diminuendo to the end of the bar sums up the sense of finality for the dying primrose.

Britten's Word/Music Relationships and Suggested Interpretive Ideas[14]

How might a choral conductor approach performing this gem of a part-song? The primary catalyst for the conductor's interpretation of Britten's setting is to ask the question, "what compositional ingredients does Britten use to aurally present the subtle story of a night in the life of the primrose? How can I aurally create the passing poetic emotions of *The Evening Primrose*? A brief summary of Britten's compositional mastery that reflects John Clare's moods, feelings, and emotions are create by:

a. the general atmosphere,

b. the primrose unfolding,

c. the night blooming, unseen,

d. the primrose's beauty, hidden by night,

e. night blooming,

f. then the bashing of the primrose by the beginning of daylight, followed by

g. the blooms that wither, faint, and are gone.

Britten's compositional technique reflects each mood offered by the textual imagery. Each mood is created through change in texture, melody, and rhythm. At the outset Britten states a mood, *Andante tranquillo*, suggesting "walking quietly and peacefully." His range of dynamics—*ppp* to f, indications of crescendo and diminuendo, and stress on specific words and/or syllables—masterfully projects many moods. Our interpretive ideas will relate to highlighting change, the implementation of dynamics, phrasing,

[14] The text/music relationships of the seven rhymed couplets have been explored above. In section II the author suggests many expressive nuances: dynamics, phrasing, articulation, linear direction, and rubato, with considerable attention to balance and intonation.

articulation, linear direction, and rubato, with significant attention to intonation and balance. The coupling of dynamics with rubato are important in projecting Britten's imaginative setting of Clare's poetry.

Part II: Interpretive Suggestions Based on Britten's Text/Music Relationships

When once the sun sinks in the west
and dewdrops pearl the evening's breast

The opening B6 chord on "When once the" provides a quality of gentleness that anticipates the "sun sinks in the west" that is reinforced by Britten's *pp*. Here we see again the emotional *affetti* and instability of chords built on the first inversion. Projecting these words as a complete phrase with no breath over the bar line and with a little forward motion on "sun sinks," followed by a little relaxation "in the west" communicates the intended mood. Within this phrase Britten portrays "sinks" on a colorful B7 chord, followed by the inevitable sinking "in the west" on a harmonically distant A-major chord. In both this phrase and the next, carefully balance and tune these homophonic chords.

"And dewdrops pearl the evening's breast" begins on B major; "and dewdrops" begins a new scene with colorful harmonic motion to "pearl," highlighted by a beautiful A6 chord with an added B in the soprano. The B is an octave above the tenor A and the bass C#. Each vocal part should be provided with excellent ear-voice coordination to allow this poignant chord to ring with clarity. The bass continues to descend leading to a final stunningly beautiful F-sharp major chord on "breast," highlighting the object of the pearling dew drops. Throughout these opening four measures Britten sets the text with an undulating strong/weak syllabic emphasis against the quarter-note meter. Triple note groups coincide with the natural word stress: "When once, the sun," and "dew drops pearl." Project the triple by way of subtle rubato leading to the modest emphases on "once," "sun," "dew," and "pearl." In measures two and four, tune the major thirds on "west" and "breast" (C-sharp and A-sharp) slightly low to tempered tuning in order to highlight their beauty. Make sure the bass F-sharp balances the full chord. Full attention to balance and intonation here will create a warm, restful quality to complete this lovely couplet.

Almost as pale as moon beams are,
or its companionable star

The soprano/alto duet mirrors the triple groupings that we observed in the first couplet. The melody of the alto mirrors the soprano melody, upside down. Highlight these beautiful triple-note groupings with forward motion to "pale" and "-pan," followed by a relaxation to "beams are" and "-a-ble star." Attention to rhythmic precision in mm. 6–7 will clarify the composite duple-triple nuances.

The evening primrose opes anew,
its delicate blossoms to the dew

The "birth" of the primrose is symbolized by Britten's poignant modal-progression from F-sharp major to D-sharp (E-flat) major on "primrose; "anew" contains a "new" (not yet heard) B7 chord. Make sure B/A-sharp on "anew" do not sound like an out-of-tune octave, by allowing the A# to be very slightly low to tempered pitch.[15]

At the words, "its blossoms," the soprano, alto, and bass voices maintain the B7 chord while the tenor, alone, subtly magnifies the primrose's

[15] All comparative pitch references of "sing high" or "sing low" (i.e. A vs G-sharp) refer to the tempered pitch of a well-tuned piano.

"delicate blossoms to the dew." Note that Britten writes *ppp* for the SAB parts allowing the tenor to have preference. The melodic contour of the tenor projects the inherent syllabic stresses with triple groupings.

And, hermitlike, shunning the light,
wastes its fair bloom upon the night

Britten's notation projects insightful word-painting for the opening two bars with the closed, dense, harmonically dissonant texture. In bars twelve and thirteen two major-seventh dissonances A#/B occur on "And" and "shun." These two notes can sound like an out-of-tune octave unless the bass B is sung very slightly high. There are three F-sharp/E-sharp dissonances that alternate between soprano/bass and bass/soprano. Careful attention to this dense alternation on "her-mit-like" and "-ning the light" is well worth the time; this pitch alternation can easily morph into an out-of-tune octave.

In mm. 13–15 Britten contrasts the dense "hermit" texture with beautiful harmonies on "wastes its fair bloom on the night." "Wastes its" is set on an inherently unstable A-sharp (B-flat) 6/4 chord, which promptly moves to a functionally unrelated E-minor chord on "bloom." The syllable "-on" has a momentary 6/4 A-major chord progressing to a passing, color-filled D7 chord, arriving at a stable D-major triad on "night." This sequence requires close attention to vertical clarity and good intonation. From "wastes" to the final chord on "night," the homophonic texture should crescendo through the apex of the phrase on "the," then diminuendo to "night."

It is interesting to observe that the *pp* in mm. 12–13 seem to suggest a squarely rhythmic observance of syllabic stress. This quality suddenly "awakes" to a harmonically beautiful open texture with Britten's dynamic markings from "wastes" to "night," which suggests *forward motion* of the entire phrase up to the diminuendo mark between "the" and "night." Given this context, the diminuendo suggests a quasi-ritard on the word "night." This two-bar phrase coupled with Britten's purposeful dynamics, will directly support the emotional quality of the transition words, "Wastes its fair bloom upon the night." Furthermore, note how the composer connects the word "night" to the soprano downbeat on "Who," signifying that "who," is the sun that wastes the primroses fair bloom.

Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,
knows not the beauty he possesses

Britten sets "Who, blindfold to its fond caresses" *pp* with imitative soprano and alto lines, contrasting the prior homophony. This text represents the beauty of blossoms that the sun will never be privileged to see. Perhaps the absence of the tenor part symbolizes the sun's loss. The bass adds that the sun "knows not the beauty he [the primrose] possesses," while the upper two voices repeat "caresses," drawing attention to the poetic irony. Take care to observe the dynamics above the soprano and alto parts while the bass swells downward from A to G-sharp with greater intensity. The emotional affect of the words sung by the soprano and alto can be slightly amplified by singing both parts with very subtle forward motion on "Who, blindfold to its fond," overlapping with a relaxing motion from "its fond caresses." Given Britten's dynamics, consider amplifying the bass "Knows not the beauty, with forward motion on "not the beauty," and then a relaxing quality from "-ty through "he." The drama of the bass part in mm. 17-18, the melodic gesture and dynamics "possesses" suggests a slight ritard.

Thus it blooms on while night is by;
When day looks out with open eye,

In this brief passage Britten heightens the dramatic scene of the story with seven dynamics and two

accents. The drama is portrayed by the accents placed on the word "day" and syllable "o," (of "open"), and the seven dynamics marks that include the only *forte* in the piece. On the words, "Thus it blooms on while night is by," the first crescendo amplifies the verb "blooms," and the second amplifies "night.' The diminuendos in the final two bars seem to suggest daybreak, as observed by the primrose. Note the octave leap in the bass to a major second against the tenor on "day," and the leap of a fifth in the soprano, combining the highest pitch and the loudest dynamic in the composition. Britten's detailed expressive gestures, strictly observed, vividly portray the emotional message of these four bars.

'Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
it faints and withers and is gone...

Britten's dynamic p on "bashed" contradicts the "strength" connotation of this word. In the context of the life of a primrose it seems to signify it is a natural event, especially amplified by the diminuendo marking of the whole phrase. The diminuendo over "shun" may be seen to suggest the wilting of the primrose; however, the alto, tenor, and bass on the word "shun" are held into the next downbeat beginning on the two words, *it faints*, that connects these two phrases. These are very subtle dynamics Britten uses. Allow them to express the emotions of the words. Maintaining their subtlety calls for intentional vocal focus within this phrase. Note the complex harmony that sets the word "cannot" with an F-sharp minor triad with an added B against the A in the bass and C-sharp in the soprano; this is followed by the B minor triad with an added G-sharp in the bass that forms a diminished fifth with the soprano.

The lovely overlapping canonic melodies of the soprano and tenor on "it faints and withers and is gone" are followed by bass and alto that imitate their canon upside-down. Repeated twice, the whole may create a jumble of words. Throughout these canonic phrases, clear intonation and diction with excellent vertical precision must be maintained. The feeling that Britten seems to be portraying is that each primrose is separately, individually fainting, withering, and dying, while the quasi-dense melodic/harmonic/textual "sameness" create an atmosphere that all primroses, by nature, do the same thing when the sun sets.

Britten's diminuendo in mm. 29–30 stretches the word "and" to *ppp* on a soprano F-sharp, which must be placed high. Also consider the import of the slowing note values in the soprano, alto, and bass, against the tenor on "it faints and is," creating a reminder of the whole scene. The final "gone" has no precise tonality, neither hinting at F-sharp major or minor, just an empty, open "gone."

Concluding Thoughts

In this essay I have considered the word/music relationships as seen through the work of composers from three different eras. Each composer weds his composition to ongoing change in harmony, melody, rhythm, and texture which, properly considered, reveals some of the composer's mind's ear. I have hopefully revealed the mental-aural image, thereby suggesting expressive nuances that can be placed between notes or over phrases: dynamics, phrasing, articulation, linear direction, and rubato. We saw that, in *The Evening Primrose*, Britten employs nearly all of these categories of expression.

Finally, in studying these compositions for performance, I urge choral conductors to remember these three choral fundamentals: balance, vowels, and tuning. Consider how each melodic line and each chord can project beauty and meaning, through careful attention to sonorous balance, uniformity of vowels, and excellent intonation.

Sicut cervus desiderat

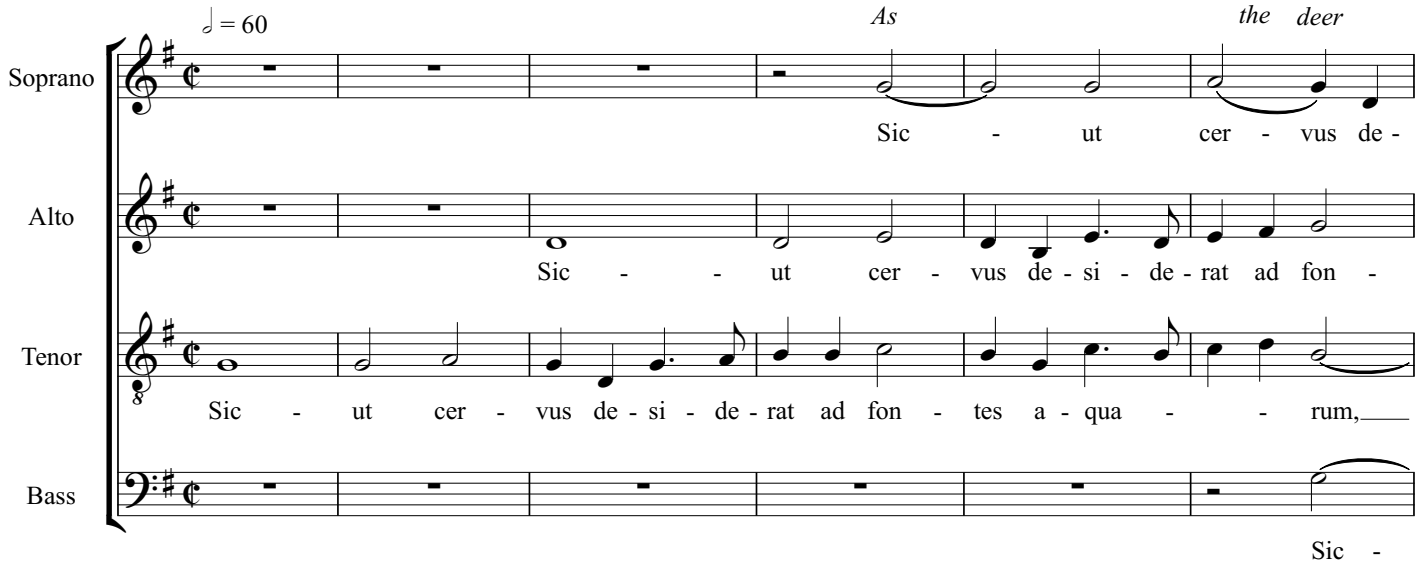
Prima pars

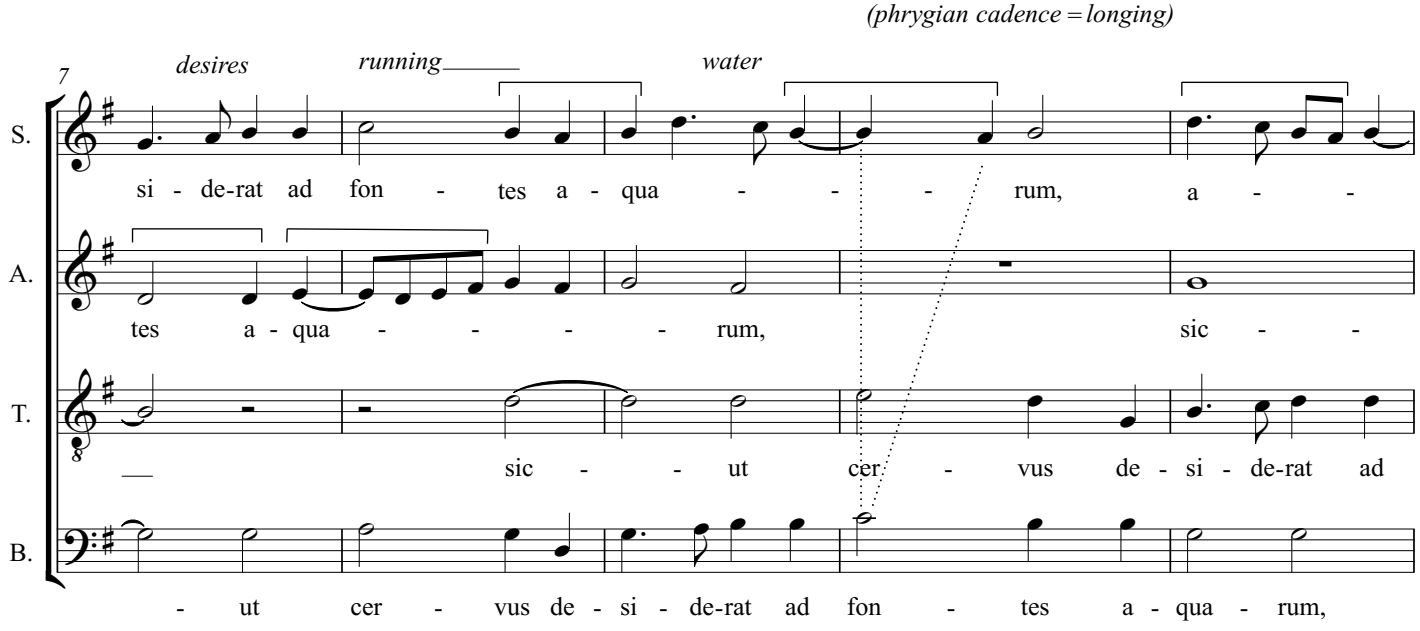
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
(c.1525-1594)

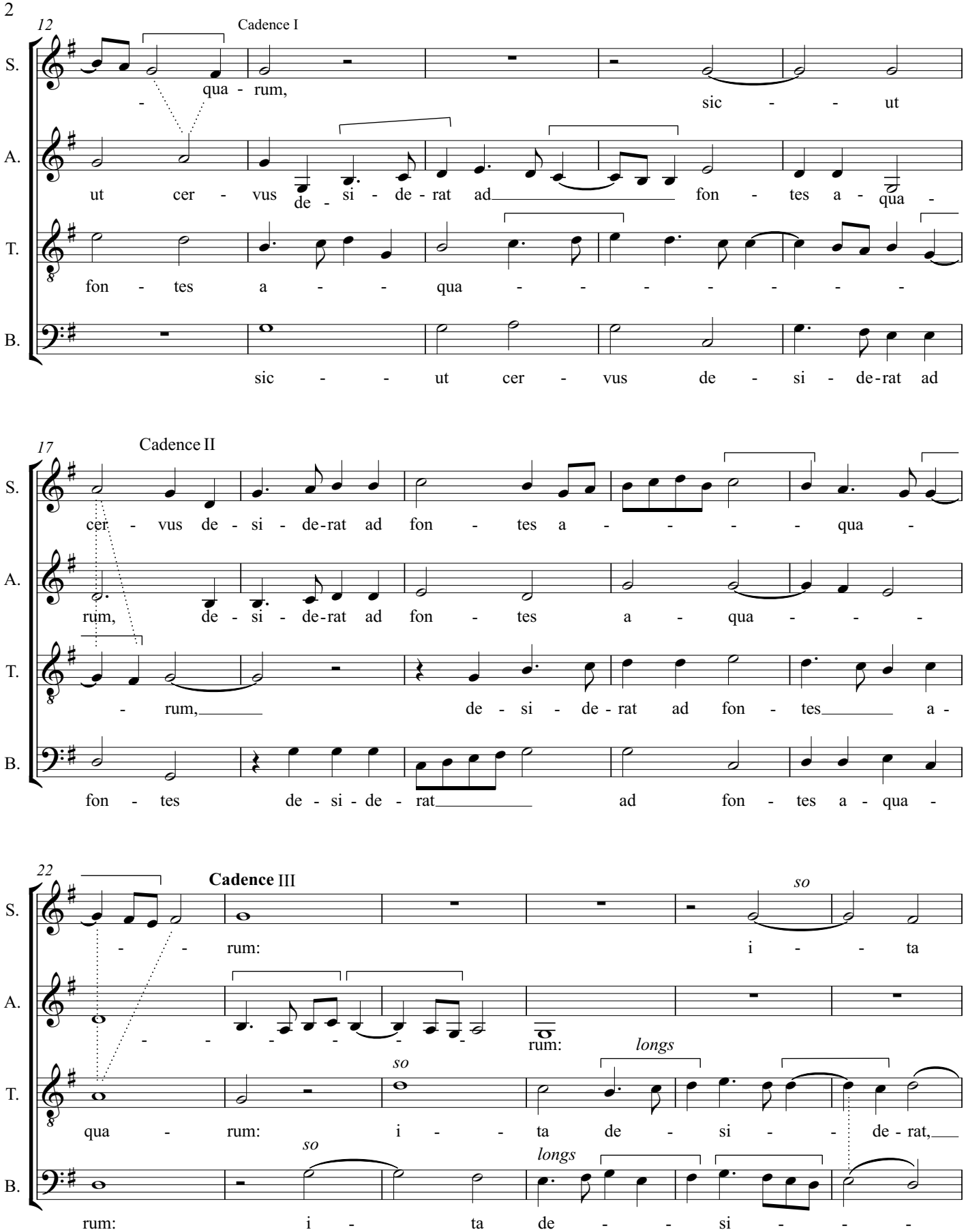
Edited for the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum by Jameson Marvin

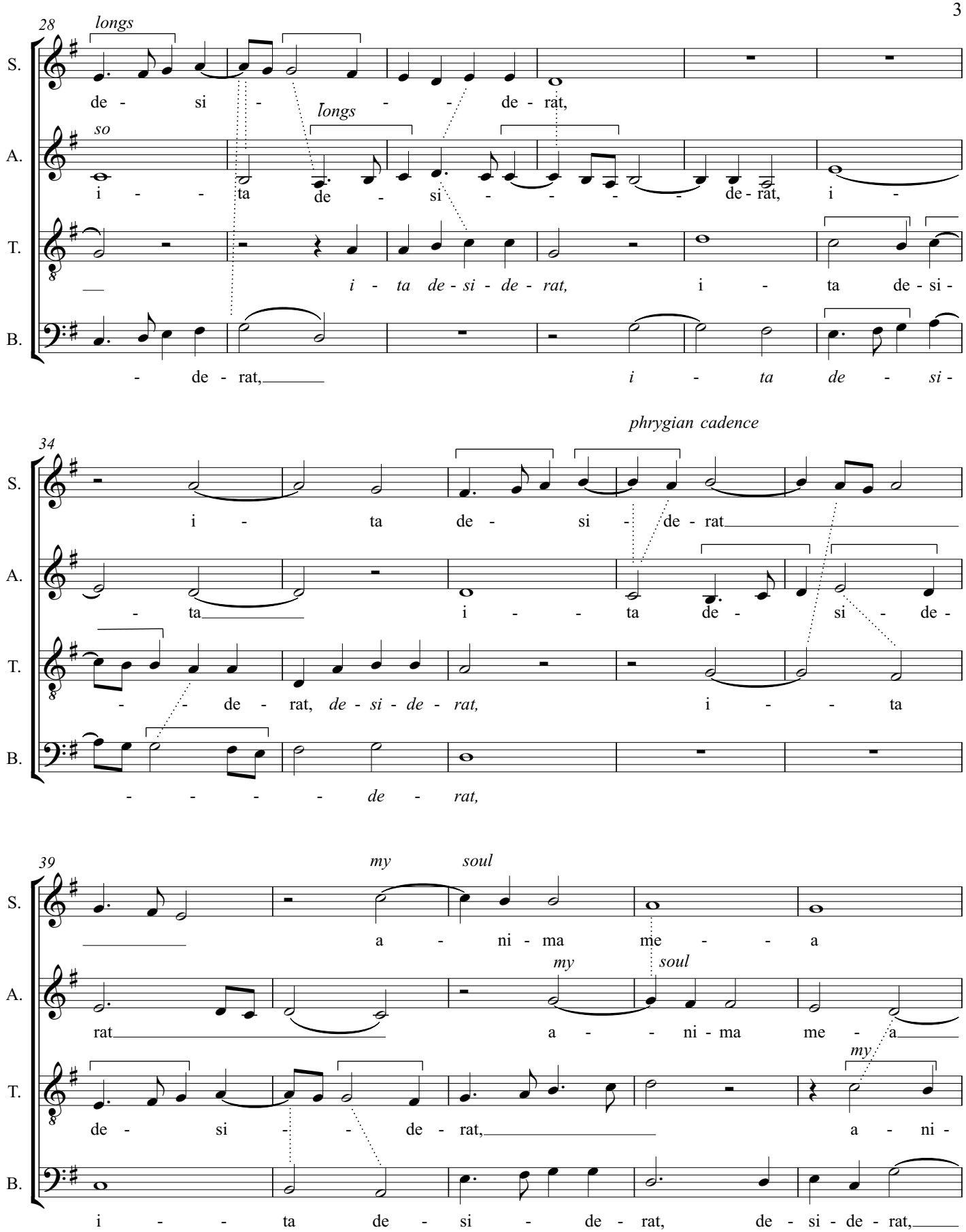
Psalm 42:1 *As the hart desires springs of water, so longs my soul for thee, O God.*

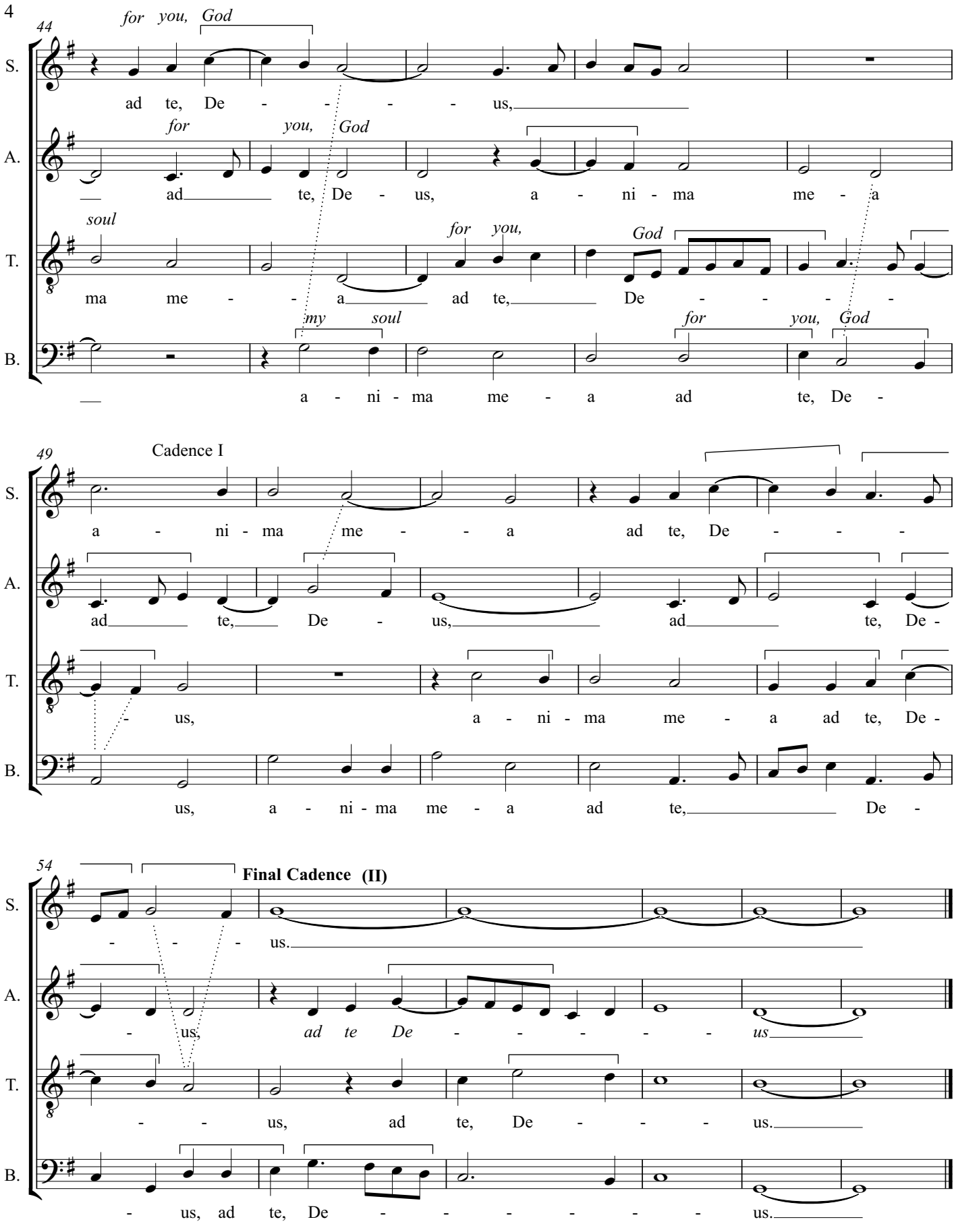
The notation is halved; the original pitch was on F. S*icut cervus* appears in Gardano's second book of four-voice motets of 1604. Palestrina composed *Sicut cervus* for the Cappella Giuglia in Rome 1571-1594. The organ pitch of A was 410-413 in the 1470s and 80s (i.e. *Sicut* sounded on E). The verb, *desiderat* (yearns, desires, longs for) appears twice in the Biblical corpus. Palestrina repeats this verb 24 times in *Sicut cervus.* Thus, *yearning* is the core emotion for this motet.





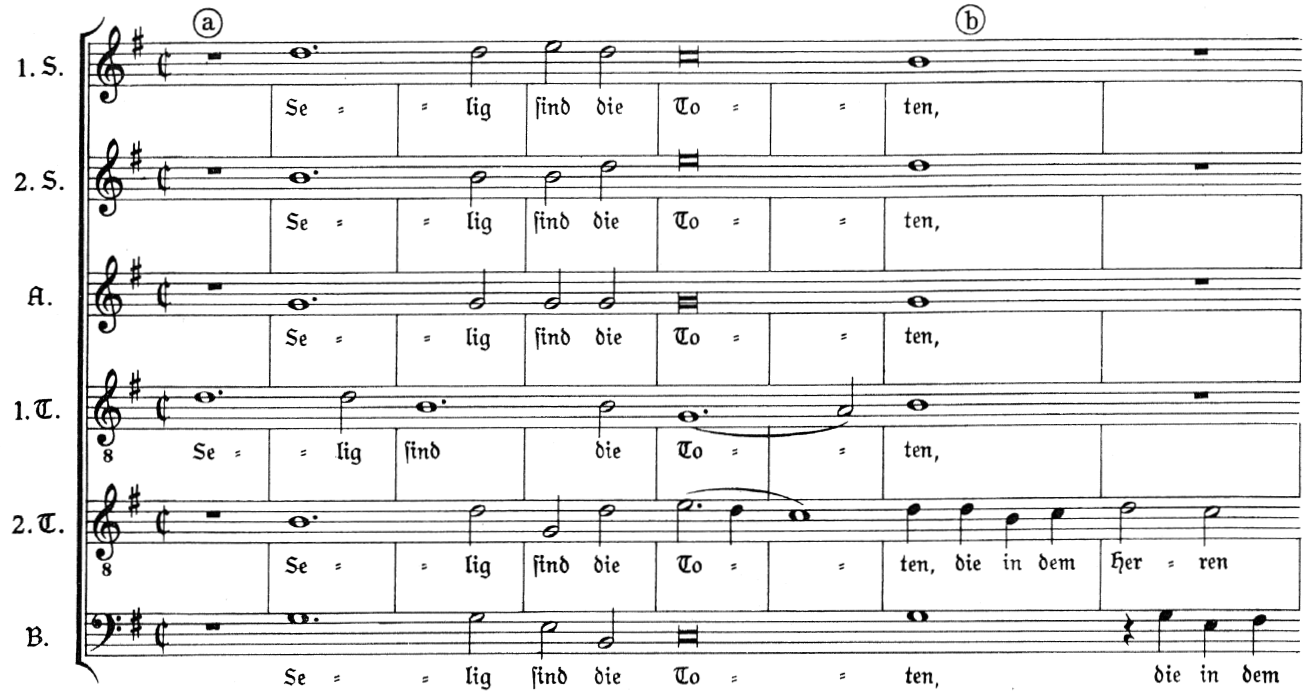

12
Cadence I
S.
A.
T.
B.
- qua - rum,
sic - - ut
ut cer - vus de - si - de - rat ad fon - tes a - qua -
fon - tes a - - qua - - - - - - -
sic - - ut cer - vus de - si - de-rat ad
17
Cadence II
cer - vus de - si - de-rat ad fon - tes a - - - - qua -
rum, de - si - de-rat ad fon - tes a - qua - - -
- rum, de - si - de - rat ad fon - tes a -
fon - tes de - si - de - rat ad fon - tes a - qua -
22
Cadence III
so
- - rum: i - - ta
- - - - - - - rum:
longs
so
qua - rum: i - - ta de - si - - de - rat,
so
longs
rum: i - ta de - - si - - -

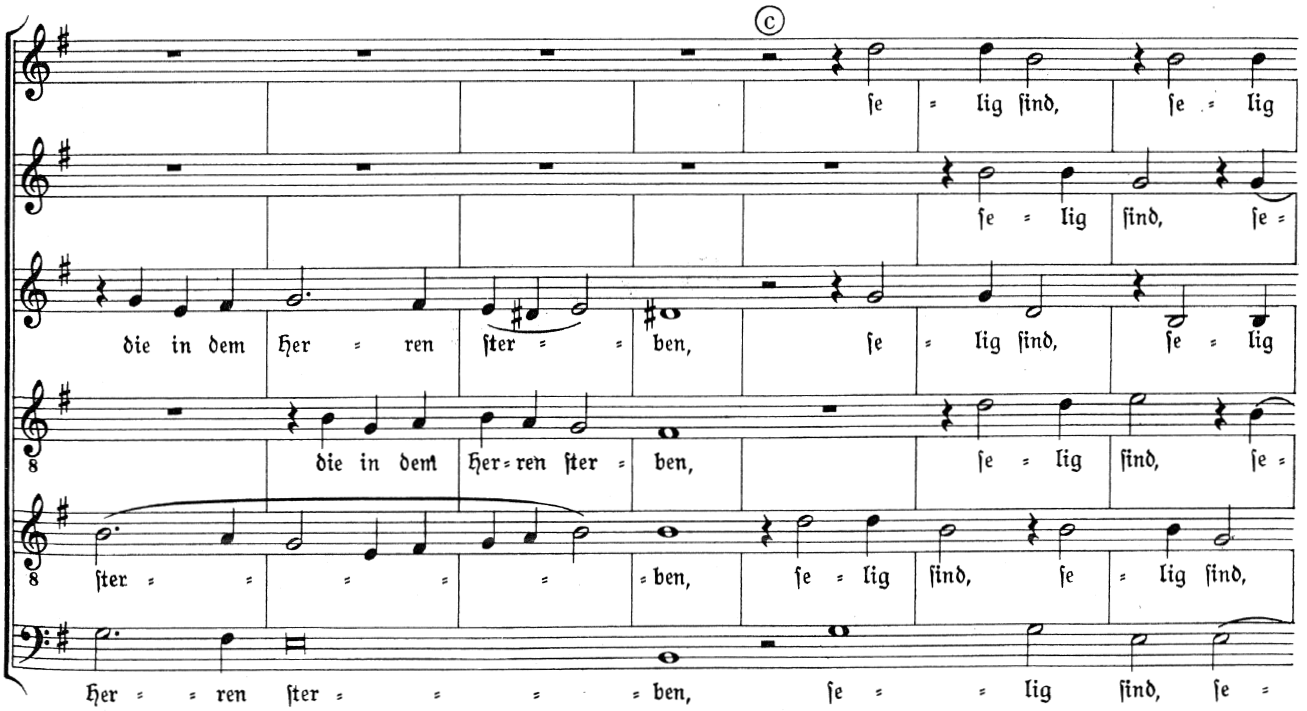

28
longs
S.
de - si - - - de - rat,
longs
so
A.
i - - - ta de - si - - - - de - rat, i -
T.
i - ta de - si - de - rat, i - ta de - si -
B.
- de - rat, i - ta de - si -
34
phrygian cadence
S.
i - ta de - si - de - rat
A.
- ta i - - ta de - si - de -
T.
- - de - rat, de - si - de - rat, i - - ta
B.
- - - - de - rat,
39
my soul
S.
a - ni - ma me - - a
my soul
A.
rat a - - ni - ma me - a
my
T.
de - si - - de - rat, a - ni -
B.
i - - ta de - si - de - rat, de - si - de - rat,

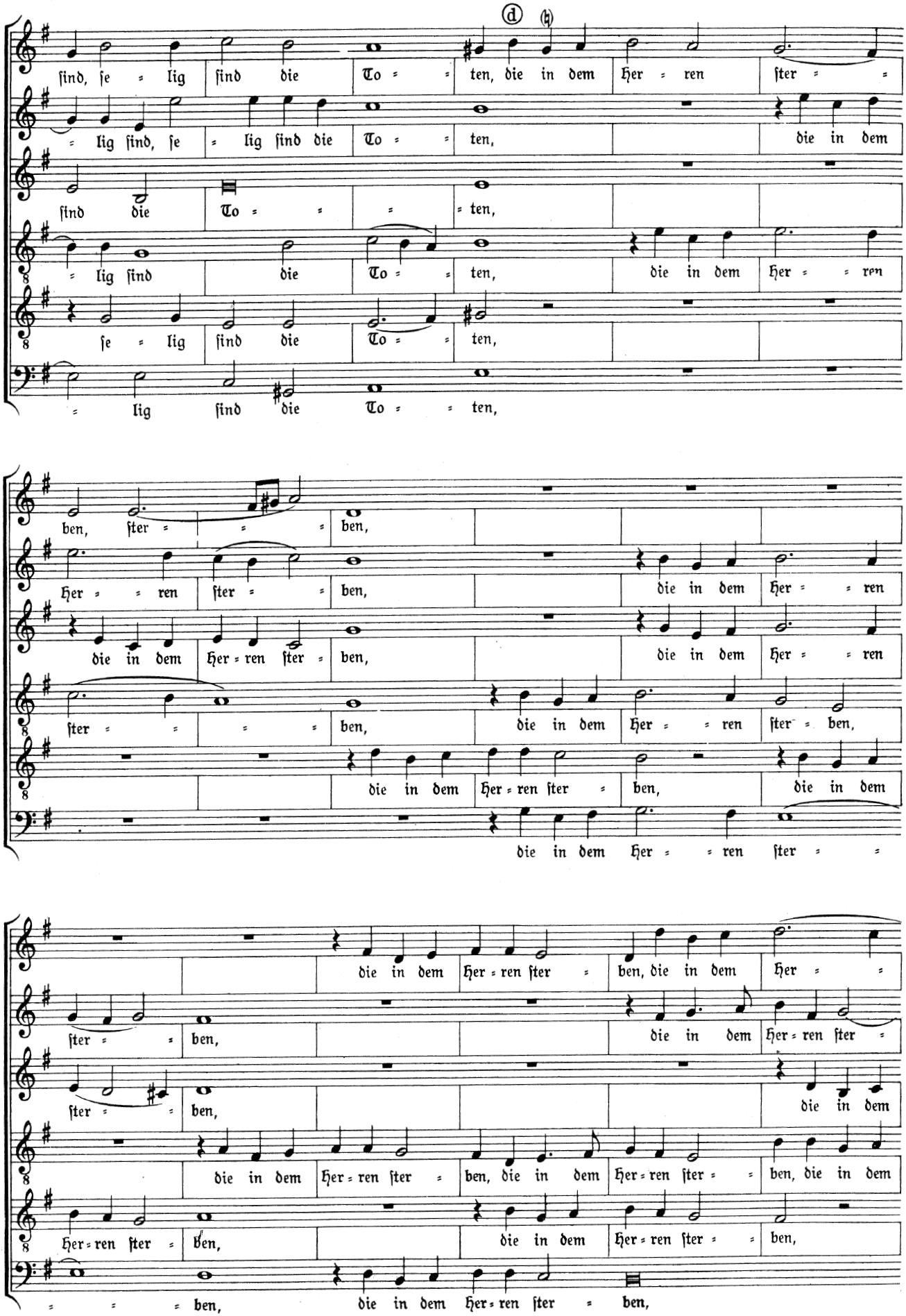

44
for you, God
S.
ad te, De - - - - us,
A.
for you, God
ad te, De - us, a - ni - ma me - a
T.
soul
for you, God
ma me - - a ad te, De - - - -
B.
my soul
for you, God
a - ni - ma me - a ad te, De -
49
Cadence I
S.
a - ni - ma me - - a ad te, De - - -
A.
ad te, De - us, ad te, De -
T.
us, a - ni - ma me - a ad te, De -
B.
us, a - ni - ma me - a ad te, De -
54
Final Cadence (II)
S.
- - - us.
A.
- us, ad te De - - - - - us
T.
- - us, ad te, De - - - - us.
B.
- us, ad te, De - - - - - - us.

23. Selig sind die Toten

Motette aus der „Geistlichen Chormusik“ von Heinrich Schütz
Gesamtausgabe in Einzelheften. Herausgegeben von Wilhelm Kamlah



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ster = = ben, die in dem Her = ren ster =
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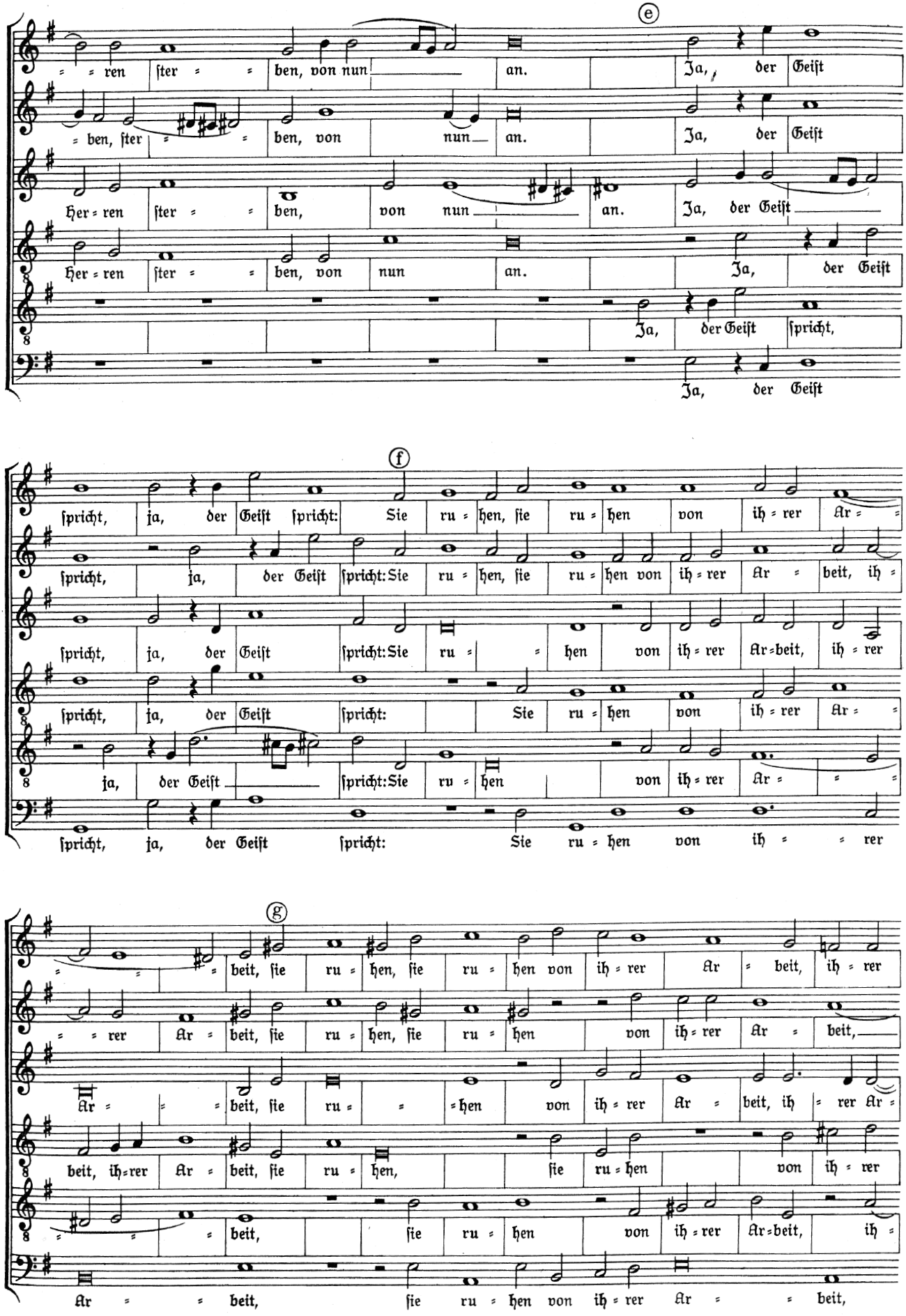
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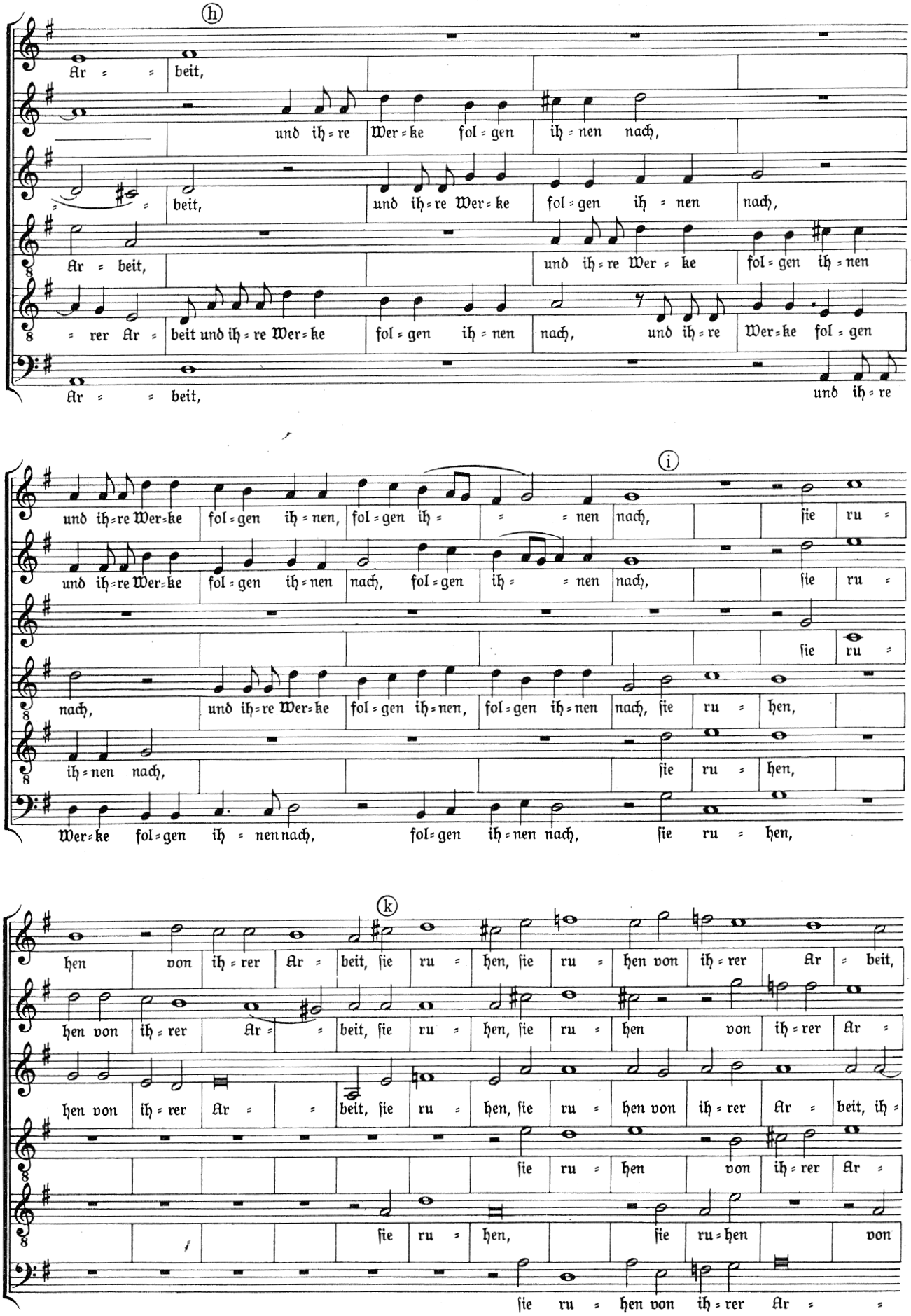
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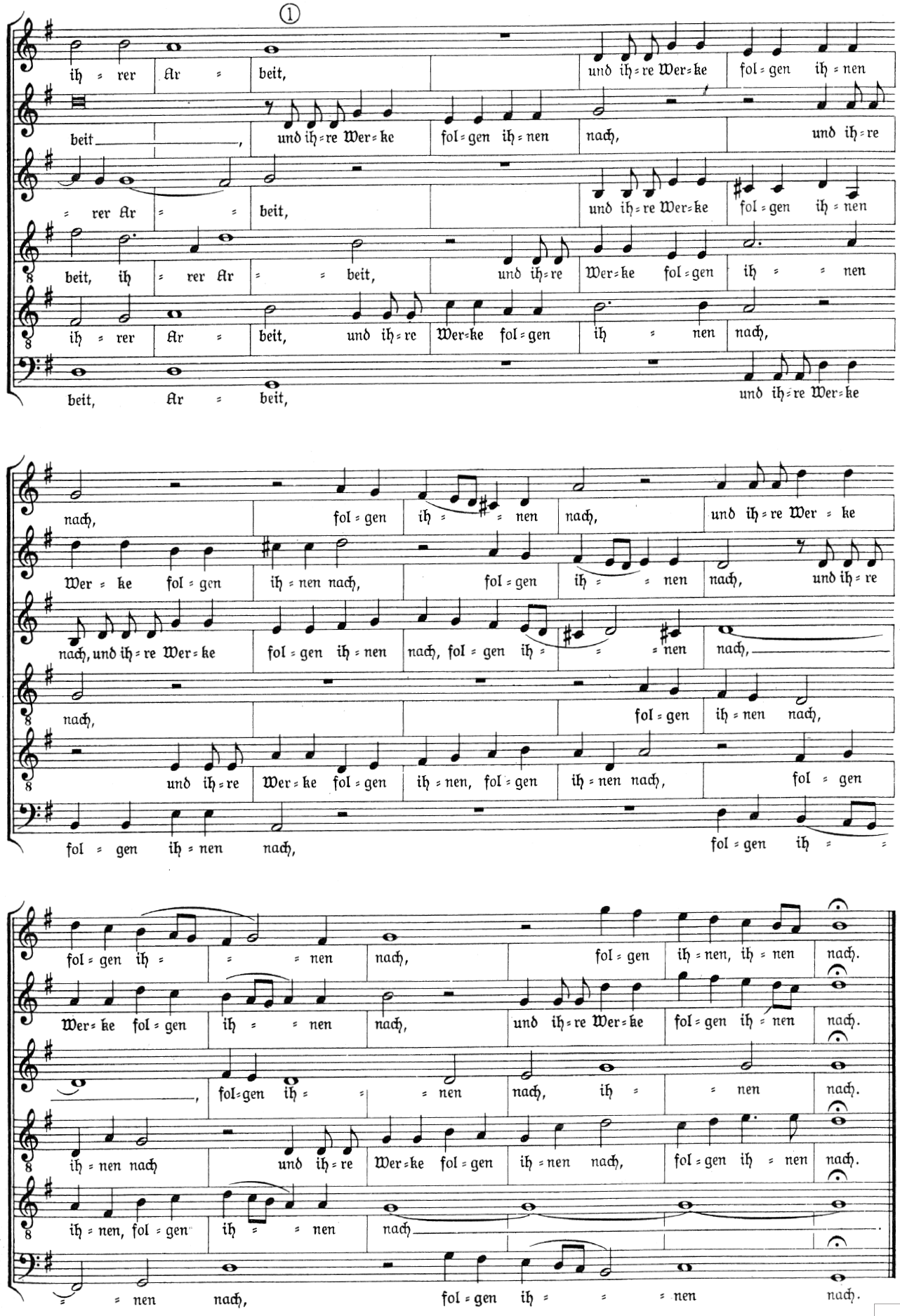
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Retention of College Students and Freshman-Year Music Ensemble Participation

Don R. Crowe

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of music ensemble participation during the freshman fall semester on the ongoing retention of college students. Retention of college students is a concern across the nation. The research question for the study was, "Is there a correlation between participation in music ensembles during college students' freshman fall semester and the retention of students for the sophomore, junior, senior, and (where applicable) fifth years?" The study compares the retention of students who enrolled in such ensembles at a midwestern university over a four-year subsequent period with that of students who did not enroll. Data from Fall 2005 through Fall 2011 were collected and examined. Each freshman in each cohort (class) was assigned to one of two groups: those who enrolled in a music ensemble their first semester and those who did not. Enrollment data for each group for the following four years was analyzed to determine the incidence of retention for the sophomore, junior, senior, and fifth years (as applicable) for each cohort and for class standing across cohorts. The data show that those who enrolled in music ensembles returned for the subsequent three years at a significantly greater rate than those who did not, and that the difference in retention increased in each of these years.

Retention of college students, also referred to in the literature as persistence, has been a subject of research for a number of years. Investigators have sought to identify the characteristics and attitudes of students, faculty, and institutions that affect student persistence, as well as what formal programs, informal experiences, and other factors can help retain students.

Astin's (1983/1999) Theory of Involvement states that students learn more the more they are involved in both the academic and social aspects of the collegiate experience. He characterized the involved student as someone who "devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students." (Astin, 518) One of the three predictors of student non-persistence identified by Tinto (1993) was failure to be involved with their institution's intellectual and social life both formally and informally. In both constructs the focus is on the student's involvement on two

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planes: the academic and the social. Institutions have developed many disparate programs in an attempt to increase such involvement.

According to Kuk & Banning (2010), "campus student organizations serve as significant social networks for students on college campuses and serve as important links for students to campus life and to the institution." (p. 354) A number of studies have investigated retention of college students (or persistence), examining factors such as social connections and relationships (Simmons, 2013), participation in student organizations (Simmons, 2013), participation in Greek life (Debard & Sacks, 2012), gospel choir participation (Sablo, 2008), social awareness and skills (Cerezo & McWhirter, 2012), motivation and sense of belonging (Morrow & Ackermann, 2012), involvement and effort (Jones, 1988), living/learning programs (Simmons, 2013: Felver, 1983), and others, as well as on retention of students in music programs or ensembles. A recent study also investigated correlations between high school music participation and grade-point average, graduation rate, ACT scores, attendance, and discipline referrals among high school students (Johnson & Eason, 2013). However, no study has investigated the effects of enrollment in music ensembles during the freshman fall semester on college student retention.

Literature Review

Simmons (2013) investigated factors related to persistence reported by two African American men who participated in a program entitled Project Empowerment. He found four themes that the students reported as factors in their persistence: college preparedness, high aspirations and goals, social connections and relationships (which included living/learning communities and leadership experiences), and growth through student organizational commitment (to Project Empowerment). Both participants saw relationships with peers and faculty as "critical to their persistence and future success." (p. 69)

Debard and Sacks (2012) compared the GPA, hours earned, and retention to the sophomore year of three groups of freshman students across 17 institutions: those who joined a Greek letter organization in the fall of their freshman year, those who joined in the spring of their freshman year, and those who did not join during their freshman year. Their data indicated that those students who participated in Greek life during their freshman year were retained at a significantly higher rate than those who did not, and that those who joined in their spring semester were retained at the highest rate of the three groups.

Sablo (2008) investigated the effects of gospel choir participation on African American students' persistence at a predominantly white university. He concluded that such participation increased feelings of social integration and decreased feelings of marginalization, and suggested that gospel choirs should be considered as an additional resource for institutions seeking to increase African Americans' persistence.

The primary focus of a study by Cerezo and McWhirter (2012) was to determine the effects of peer support, modeling, and a program "to help students increase consciousness of and respond to the unique cultural and political forces impacting Latinos in college." (p. 868) One aspect of this program, the Latino Educational Equity Project (LEEP), was "building community," that is, building a network for mutual support. There was a statistically significant difference in social adjustment to college between those who participated in the program and a control group who did not. The investigators concluded that "the building community component of the LEEP intervention appears to have worked directly toward improving participants' social adjustment to college." (p. 875)

Morrow and Ackermann (2012) investigated motivation and "sense of belonging" (or sense of community) as predictors of students' intention to persist in college and of retention to their second year. They surveyed 960 students during their first year summer (156 respondents). In their model, sense of belonging included peer support, faculty support, and classroom comfort, with perceived isolation as a negative indicator. They found that perceived peer support was a significant predictor of retention. The more highly a student rated perceived peer support, the more likely that student was to return for their second year.

Jones (1988) compared the typologies of 595 college students with their "quality-of-effort." Her study found significant differences among typologies on six of 14 scales, one of which was "Art, Music, and Theatre." On that scale, the Artist was significantly different from all other typologies.

Felver (1983) studied the effects on grade-point average, on-campus residency, retention (in the academic area of interest), and graduation of freshman-year participation in a living/learning program as compared with on-campus non-participants and off-campus students. The programs investigated were in Business, Foreign Language, Music, Pre-Law/Political Science/Public Affairs, and Honors. He found significant differences in junior year on-campus residency for each of the five except Foreign Language. Also, Honors participants remained in their academic area and graduated at a significantly higher rate than did the other two Honors groups. He also noted that all five living/learning groups had the largest percentage of junior year on-campus residents, and that all except Music had the highest percentage of graduates and of those who remained in their original academic area of interest.

Johnson & Eason (2013) used both quantitative and qualitative data to compare graduating seniors in a metropolitan school district who had no high school music participation, up to one year of participation, and more than one year of participation on five variables: grade-point average, graduation rate, ACT scores, attendance, and discipline referrals. They used fourth-grade basic skills test scores as a covariate so as to account for any initial differences in the population studied, and found statistically significant differences between all three groups on all measures. That is, those with up to one year of high school music participation scored significantly higher on every measure than those with no participation, and those with more than one year of participation scored significantly higher than those with one year or less. They concluded that "*any* level of music participation is associated with higher engagement and achievement, and that *more* music participation associates with even better outcomes." (p. 7)

This study investigates the effects of ensemble participation during the freshman fall semester on the ongoing retention of college students. The research question for the project was, "Is there a correlation between participation in music ensembles during college students' freshman fall semester and the retention of students for the sophomore, junior, senior, and (where applicable) fifth years?" The project compared the retention of students who enrolled in such ensembles at a public, state-affiliated mid-western university over a four-year subsequent period with that of students who did not enroll.

Methods and Analysis of Data

Data on ensemble enrollment of freshmen and enrollment at the institution in subsequent years from Fall 2005 through Fall 2011 were collected

and examined. Each freshman in each cohort (class) was assigned to one of two groups: those who enrolled in a music ensemble their first semester and those who did not. Enrollment data for each group for the following four years was analyzed to determine the incidence of retention at the university for the sophomore, junior, senior, and fifth years (as applicable) for each cohort and for class standing across cohorts.

The results of the analysis of data indicated that freshmen who enrolled in music ensemble courses during their fall semester returned to the university for the subsequent three years at a significantly higher rate than those who did not. The difference was 10.27% Freshman-to-Sophomore, 10.88% Freshman-to-Junior, 11.00% Freshman-to-Senior, and 3.14% Freshman-to-Fifth Year (see Tables 1 through 4, below). That is, the difference in retention between those who enrolled in ensembles their freshman fall semester and those who did not increased each year until the fifth.

The data were submitted to chi-square analysis, and each year's difference was significant at the 95% level with a probability < .0001 except that for the fifth year ($p = .1685$). A risk estimates analysis was also applied. The results of these analyses appear in Table 5.

Table 1. Freshman to Sophomore Year, 5 cohorts

	Enrolled	Retained	Percentage
Total	11,393	8727	76.60
Ensemble	951	818	86.01
Non-ensemble	10,442	7909	75.74
Difference			10.27%

Table 2. Freshman to Junior Year, 4 cohorts

	Enrolled	Retained	Percentage
Total	9,282	6,318	68.07
Ensemble	809	631	78.00
Non-ensemble	8,473	5,687	67.12
Difference			10.88%

Table 3. Freshman to Senior Year, 3 cohorts

	Enrolled	Retained	Percentage
Total	7,293	4,658	63.87
Ensemble	662	489	73.87
Non-ensemble	6,631	4,169	62.87
Difference			11.00%

Table 4. Freshman to Fifth Year, 2 cohorts

	Enrolled	Retained	Percentage
Total	5,363	2,063	38.47
Ensemble	501	207	41.32
Non-ensemble	4,862	1,856	38.17
Difference			3.15%

Table 5. Chi-Square results

Year	Chi-Square
Freshman to Sophomore	$x^2(1, N=11,393) = 51.31, p < .0001$
Freshman to Junior	$x^2(1, N=9,282) = 40.21, p < .0001$
Freshman to Senior	$x^2(1, N=7293) = 31.54, p < .0001$
Freshman to Fifth	$x2(1, N=5363) = 1.90, p = .1685$

Discussion

The analysis results showed that those who enrolled in music ensembles during the fall of their Freshman year returned for the subsequent three years at a significantly greater rate than those who did not, and that the difference in retention increased in each year with the exception of the fifth year. This indicates a long-term effect.

The drop in retention difference in the fifth year could be due to a number of factors. While overall retention rates dropped steadily each year, with 8.53% of the population studied leaving the institution between their sophomore and junior years and another 4.2% leaving between their junior and senior years, the 25.4% who left after their senior year is comparatively high. The simplest explanation for this large drop in retention is graduation after four years.

There are several points to be made here. First, music ensembles are both academic and social in nature. That is, they are a part of the curriculum and can be used to satisfy (at the institution in question) one of the institutional requirements for graduation for all majors as well as an integral part of the music majors' course of study, while at the same time serving as a peer group that meets regularly, performs, and on occasion travels together. They serve both as learning and as shared experience, and thus help students become involved as Astin (ibid.) defines involvement.

Second, that involvement occurs in both formal and informal settings, that is, in regular rehearsals and in public performances both on and off-campus. This, as noted above, is one of the three predictors of persistence identified by Tinto (ibid.). The most obvious example of public performance as social event is marching band, but other ensembles provide the same types of experience.

Third, the registered students were predominantly non-music majors. From 2007–2013 (data were not available for 2005 and 2006) the average number of students in first semester freshman theory was 45: using this number, less than 24% of the enrolled freshmen in ensembles in this study were music majors. This indicates that the retention data is valid across majors.

Fourth, these groups bring together students who share an interest in musical study and performance, but who also represent a cross-section of the university in terms of majors and class years. These students have the experience of participation in high school ensembles in common as well, and this shared experience provides more common ground on which to build relationships. The diversity of participants provides ensemble members with a broad view of the university and their place in it, as well as a reservoir of experience to draw on as they navigate their way through their new environment.

Finally, through these ensembles students can bring some continuity to that new environment. The routines and expectations of ensemble participation provide a familiar experience in an unfamiliar environment, as well as opportunities for success and thus more positive outlooks and self-images.

Summary and Suggestions for Further Research

In this study, data analysis indicated that first-semester freshman enrollment in music ensembles had a significantly positive correlation to retention of students for their sophomore, junior, and senior years. Moreover, this correlation strengthened for each subsequent year except the fifth. The results of the study suggest that institutions should encourage students who have an interest in such ensembles to participate in them in their first semester, regardless of their major, as a means of improving retention.

This research is based on data from only one state-affiliated university. A study involving a number of institutions, both public and private, would be a logical next step. An analysis of retention related to ongoing participation in ensembles, and of participation in more than one ensemble, would also be of interest, as would a comparative analysis of grade point average and credit hours earned between freshman ensemble members and non-members.

Finally, this study did not investigate the academic characteristics of incoming freshmen. Given the results reported by Johnson & Eason (ibid.) from their study of correlations between music participation in high school and seniors' grade-point average, graduation rate, ACT scores, attendance, and discipline referrals, a study which analyzes the comparative readiness for college of those who enroll in ensembles during their first semester and those who do not would be valuable.

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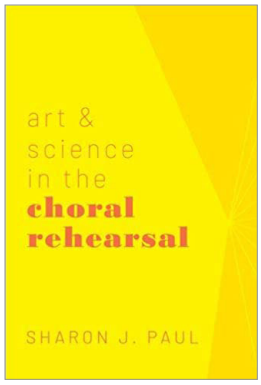
Book Reviews

Andrew Crow, editor



Art & Science in the Choral Rehearsal

Sharon J. Paul

Oxford University Press, 2020

240 pages, $99.00 hardcover; $24.95 softcover

ISBN: 978-0190863777

With one cautionary phrase, Dr. Sharon J. Paul sums up the impetus for her book: "It is easy for any of us to have moments in our rehearsals where we teach counter to our brain's natural instincts for learning" (150). *Art & Science in the Choral Rehearsal* condenses a plethora of research on educational pedagogy and cognition into a digestible and highly applicable form for the choral conductor. Paul draws on her experience as former artistic director of the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and on her extensive collegiate teaching in the classroom and ensemble, to demonstrate how her work has evolved to embrace this science.

Each chapter begins with a conversational summary of relevant research, as well as some (usually wry) anecdotes illustrating how it has applied in her life. The remaining pages provide examples of tested rehearsal techniques that embrace this cognition-driven approach. In the book, Paul strongly advocates for a flipped classroom approach and she questions the model where "the all-knowing conductor stands on the podium, imparting their great musical insights to the ignorant choristers"(xiii). Paul centers the students' learning, rather than the conductor's ego, and provides creative activities to foster deeper musical connection and growth. Her ideas are simple, practical, fun, and manageable by choirs of any age or experience level. They frequently involve extra-musical activities such as writing, conversation, or acting, but never supplant the place of singing during rehearsals. For the early-career conductor, particularly one from a performance background, these recommendations are welcome information.

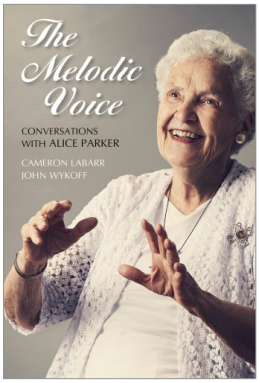
The greatest success of Dr. Paul's book is to take many of our traditional rehearsal practices and examine them through a scientific lens. Some of her recommendations require simple adjustments, such as "wait[ing] ten seconds after we pose a question before we fill in the answer"(20) (all the more apropos during an era when many lead classes in a remote format). Other changes seem more radical. For example, Paul examines the oft-heard practice habit, to play a passage correctly ten times before moving on. Instead of aiming for perfect repetition, she advocates for a rehearsal technique called *Interleaving*, where practice is intentionally varied. Paul cites research on batting practice for professional baseball players, which showed that "hitting random pitches in no pre-determined order (for example fastball, curveball,

fastball, changeup, another changeup, etc.) yields superior results to blocked-practice hitting" (43). This research convinced her to restructure rehearsals, where she now alternates between different pieces to keep the brain active.

In line with Paul's ensemble-driven rehearsals, her discussion of score study frequently involves the choir. Traditionally, score study is viewed as a pre-rehearsal process of learning, interpreting, and preparing to teach the music, so Paul's recommendation is a new take on that idea. While the chapter's content may not be best suited for pre-rehearsal preparation, it does reimagine the role of the ensemble in score study and could be reframed as 'Involving Your Ensemble in Score Study.' I was also surprised that Dr. Paul requires her choirs to sing from memory, but was disappointed to find that the book does not provide any examples of research about memory or memorization. I would have liked to know more about her memorization process and in a second edition, an expansion on this topic would be welcome.

Dr. Paul should be applauded for her combination of scientific insight and choral art. This book is ideal for early-career conductors and choral educators, but also for seasoned professionals who have been teaching for several years and want to challenge their assumptions. The application of cognition research to best-practices for choir rehearsal both affirms strategies that conductors may already be using, and questions ones that we have taken for granted. In addition to the excellent research in the book, Dr. Paul's candid description of her own professional growth affirms for all—experienced conductor and novice alike—that the pursuit of self-betterment requires mistakes, persistence, and openness to change. Her refreshing ideas and honesty provide just that motivation.

—Matthew Abernathy



The Melodic Voice: Conversations with Alice Parker

Cameron LaBarr and John Wykof

GIA Publications, 2019

243 pages; $29.95 hardcover

ISBN: 978-1622773572

Alice Parker is perhaps one of the most influential American choral composers arrangers. Although she claims to be retired, she is still at work with her organization Melodious Accord and composing at age 95. Despite a prolific career with significant contributions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we have few resources to illuminate her life and career beyond a smattering of dissertations and her own writings available in books and blogs. *The Melodic Voice: Conversations with Alice Parker*, though not exactly a biography, helps fill that void with a detailed look into the life and career of this remarkable composer, educator, and conductor.

The book contains a series of interviews that the authors, Cameron LaBarr and John Wykoff, conducted with Alice Parker in her home in Hawley, Massachusetts, over the span of three days in March, 2016. Each of the twenty-five chapters organizes Parker's responses to interview questions that relate to a particular theme or time in Parker's life. The subject matter spans the gamut, from her early childhood memories, to her academic studies, to her professional career, to her personal life, to her compositional process.

Authors LaBarr and Wykoff write in the Prelude that anyone who is acquainted with Parker's teachings will find many common threads through

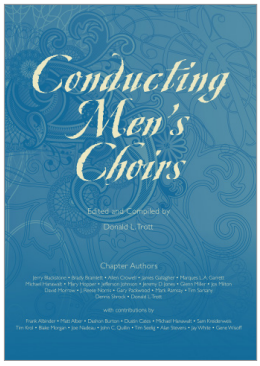
the book's pages. For instance, certainly anyone familiar with Parker's own books on composition (*The Anatomy of a Melody* and *The Answering Voice*) will recognize many of Parker's positions, beliefs, and practices when it comes to the art of composition. If you have had the pleasure of attending her workshops through Melodious Accord, reading portions of this book will drop you right back in the middle of her Hawley studio with reminders of her quiet, commanding voice as she preaches the gospel of melody and exposits on the marriage of text and tune. Many of the chapters focus on her compositional style, methods of score study, and educational philosophies. Those who have read Parker's books or any of the dissertations written about Parker's compositions or career will recognize common themes. It certainly reiterates that which is most important to the composer and establishes that her long-held beliefs hold firm even today.

However, the authors boldly claim that this book offers new insight and information from Parker herself that cannot be found elsewhere. I found their assessment to be mostly true. The most significant, revelatory material in this book is found in Parker's stories from her childhood and early career. Parker talks about her experience as an undergraduate student in composition and details the factors that led her switch to conducting in her graduate studies at Julliard. She tells stories of her work with Julius Herford, Vincent Persichetti, and, of course, Robert Shaw. The chapter "Life and Death in New York City," I found particularly compelling. Parker talks about her life with her husband and then his untimely death. As an academic, so much of what we are interested in is the process of the artist in creating their art, but such stories of love, family, and sorrow make the artists human and relatable.

Formatted like a collection of short stories, each chapter is relatively brief and easy to read, yet full of story and sentiment from Parker. With such self-contained chapters, one could easily pick it up and put it down at one's convenience. A reader can easily skip around, finding chapters that most interest them at the moment and coming back to other chapters later. Of special note: purchasing the book includes access to over three hours of video interviews with Alice Parker.

Readers seeking an extensive biography of Alice Parker will not find it in *The Melodic Voice*. However, those looking for an enjoyable introduction with short, insightful chapters on a variety of topics ranging from personal to professional on the life and career of American treasure, Alice Parker, will surely find satisfaction. In the Postlude, Parker shares her thoughts as she read over the book and her life depicted therein. She concludes, "I am the result of all the notes I have ever heard, plus all my life experiences. And I shall enjoy this countrified coda for as long as it is given me" (236).

— *Sally Kelley*



Conducting Men's Choirs
Donald L. Trott, editor
GIA Publications, 2020
448 pages, $45.95, hardcover
ISBN: 978-1622774005

Inspired by *Conducting Women's Choirs* (2012) by Debra Spurgeon, Donald L. Trott has published a companion book, *Conducting Men's Choirs*. In three major sections, the book consists of eighteen chapters, each written by an experienced choral musician.

The first section, comprised of five chapters, presents essays on various types of male choirs in the United States. Among the most informative are Jeremy D. Jones's comprehensive overview of the history of Glee Clubs and the development of collegiate men's choirs; Jos Milton's interview with seven former and current members of *Chanticleer* and *Cantus* about their unique experiences; and the emeritus director of the U. S. Army Chorus, Major Allen Crowell's story of his career and the development of that chorus. These chapters provide insightful information about distinctive career paths in the field of choral music.

The second section, with seven chapters, offers practical advice from experienced conductors about successful leadership of male choirs. Particularly resourceful are J. Reese Norris's chapter about management of middle school boy choirs; Jerry Blackstone's chapter sharing teaching techniques to create beautiful sound; and Jefferson Johnson's pedagogical chapter introducing ideas for intonation, formations, and warm-ups. Norris shares effective rehearsal techniques including classroom management and recruiting tips, especially beneficial for novice teachers of any choir. Blackstone's advice from his rich experience underlines the use of breath, falsetto, vowels, and rehearsal techniques and points out a fundamental element of great conductors, "those with the greatest imagination" (188). Jefferson Johnson shares his pedagogy to build a good male choir sound. In particular, Johnson's passages about intonation include crucial knowledge about tenor/bass (TB) voices, and examples easily applied in rehearsals. Another interesting chapter by Marques L. A. Garrett shares basic principles for arranging and composing for TTBB voicing. Garrett affirms that "many of the same guidelines for choral composition apply to those for men's choir" (251), but his effective tips for re-voicing are particularly useful for those who have limited experience in arranging.

The last section, comprised of six chapters, provides repertoire suggestions for men's choir. The section starts with a chapter by Dennis Shrock, who shares an extensive list of repertoire for men's voices from the Renaissance era, covering about thirty-eight composers and their works. Other resourceful chapters include Mark Ramsay's introduction to repertoire from Canadian composers, James Gallagher's selected repertoire for high school and collegiate male choirs, and Donald Trott's extended repertoire list. In addition to the useful information about contemporary Canadian composers, Mark Ramsay provides a helpful list of websites for Canadian choral music.

While the lists and instructions provide significant value, what makes this book unique is the inclusion of personal experiences from conductors and choral singers with diverse backgrounds. David Morrow shares his story and highlights the legacy of the Morehouse College Glee Club, one of the historic African-American male collegiate choirs. Glenn Miller, a world-class octavist, shares his vocal maturation process and a selected list of repertoire for the voice type. Brady Bramlett, a professional baseball player for the Boston Red Sox, shares his singing experiences and the influence of choral singing on his athletic career and life. Mary Hopper's thoughtful chapter reflects on hurdles and myths that women conductors may face, and provides wisdom from her experiences.

A few chapters, however, could have been more informative or balanced within the rest of the book. Gary Packwood's chapter "From Entertainment to Social Justice: Examining Men's Community Choruses in America" shares interviews with seven conductors. Despite the title, we find few specifics about the reflection of social justice in men's ensembles. Some directors mention the inclusion of LGBTQ members in ensembles. However, considering potential readers of the book, it would have been more helpful to

learn how each ensemble reflects social justice issues in programming and performances. In the third section of repertoire suggestions, Tim Sarsany and Michael Hanawalt share detailed analyses on a limited number of works: Robert Schumann's part-songs and Veljo Tormis's works, respectively. Although informative, these offerings seem oddly specific when set among the rest of the chapters, which introduce broader groups of composers and works.

Overall, *Conducting Men's Choirs* is an excellent and informative resource for any choral music library. It is highly recommended for young conductors or anyone who would like to learn about the nature of men's choirs, fundamental teaching techniques for tenor/bass voices, and repertoire for male choirs.

— Minji Kim

Focus: Choral Music in Global Perspective

André de Quadros

Routledge, 2019

256 pages; $160 hardcover, $49.95 softcover

ISBN: 978-0415896542 hardcover, 978-0415896559 softcover

Choral conductors approaching André de Quadros's *Focus: Choral Music in Global Perspective* should be aware that it is first and foremost an ethnomusicology text, published as part of Routledge's *Focus on World Music* series. De Quadros argues that the contemporary global choral phenomenon is primarily a product of European colonialism, and he profiles choral organizations around the world that are actively grappling with this legacy and shaping what he terms the "New Normal" of choral practice: organizations that "deploy the choral instrument to give voice to oppression and marginalization, to build community in diverse contexts, to envision new models for power-sharing and collaboration in rehearsal and performance, and to construct multiple manifestations of exceptionality" (4).

The book comprises three large sections. In Part One, "The Chorus: Traditions, Evolutions, and a New Perspective," de Quadros offers an historical and theoretical account of the choir as a social institution (Chapter 2), followed by a rapid-fire survey of choral organizations that exemplify different facets of the "New Normal" (Chapter 3). Part 2, "Choirs in Context," features ethnographic portraits of selected choruses in Indonesia (Chapter 4), the Arab World and Israel (Chapter 5), colleges in the United States (Chapter 6), and prisons in Thailand, Germany, Argentina, the United States, and Indonesia (Chapter 7), highlighting these choruses' public missions, performance practices, and principal repertoire. Part 3, "Focusing in on Choruses," is methodologically identical to the preceding part, although each chapter now takes a thematic focus including choral touring activities (Chapter 8), gender and sexual identity in the chorus (Chapter 9), women's leadership of choral organizations (Chapter 10), and youth and children's choirs (Chapter 11).

As an ethnomusicological study, de Quadros primarily emphasizes the social activity of choral singing, the meanings that conductors and singers ascribe to their work, and the ways by which those meanings emerge through artistic choices in performance. De Quadros includes only minimal analytical discussions of repertoire, although he references many pieces of music throughout that the discerning reader could pursue. Most chapters

begin with an overview of cultural or theoretical scholarship that contextualizes the case studies that follow—for example, the political history of Israel in Chapter 5, or gender performativity and queer studies in Chapter 9. One wishes occasionally for greater connection between the theoretical and empirical portions of de Quadros's writing, as his case studies of individual choirs are frequently more descriptive than analytical.

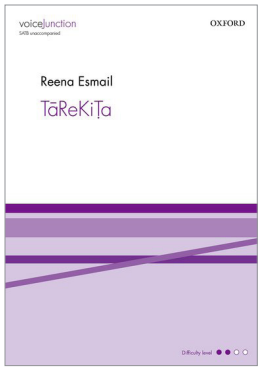
If the book has a principal weakness, one finds that in his effort to highlight a balance of choral organizations from around the world, de Quadros inevitably cannot go into equal detail on each of them. Some choirs and geopolitical regions receive greater attention than others, while de Quadros's accounts of individual choirs often mirror their own consciously crafted public images as presented through publicity materials and interviews with their conductors, rather than questioning how these public portrayals are produced or received. Conversely, de Quadros writes most vividly when he makes room for the voices of choral participants as interlocutors in his research, such as when he relates the experiences of two participants in a prison choir in Thailand, or his own difficulties mediating tensions between audience members during a concert he conducted in Israel. These more extended vignettes gesture at future possibilities for focused ethnographic studies on musical transmission, inter-cultural contact, and the multiple meanings of social justice in specific choral contexts; one hopes that this book serves as an inspiration for such research.

Focus: Choral Music in Global Perspective is an ambitious and timely book, and de Quadros makes up for the occasional cursory nature of some sections through the breadth of choral organizations that he profiles for the first time in academic print and his sincere advocacy for these organizations. Conductors considering portions of this book as course readings will find its opening chapters particularly useful for discussing current activist approaches to choral practice, as well as evolving directions in choral pedagogy driven by choral leaders working directly with issues of culture, class, and identity. Throughout, de Quadros offers a model for ethnographic research by conductors in the service of broadening our field's knowledge of current choral practices worldwide. That is reason enough to read this book.

— Patrick Murray

Choral Reviews

John C. Hughes, editor



TāReKiTa (2016, rev. 2020)
Reena Esmail (b. 1983)
SATB unaccompanied
(c. 2')
Oxford University Press
ISBN: 9780193540750

https://global.oup.com/academic/product/tarekita-9780193540750?cc=us&lang=en&

With justified concern over authenticity and misappropriation, it is heartening to find new resources being championed by composers of underrepresented races and cultures. One such composer lighting the musical scene is Reena Esmail, an Indian-American composer who, as her website describes, "works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces." Esmail holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Yale University and is currently the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020–23 Swan Family Artist-in-Residence.

TāReKiTa is written for Western, classically trained musicians and uses syllables to imitate the sounds of the Indian drum, the tabla. Wonderful resources accompany this new work, including three engaging videos produced by Esmail herself that serve as pronunciation, rehearsal, and performance guides. The call-and-response approach of these tutorials adds another level of authenticity since this is the typical approach used in teaching Indian music. These educational resources ease the anxiety associated with the pursuit of accuracy and authenticity. *TāReKiTa* will introduce choral musicians to the captivating rhythmic and aural aspects of Indian musical culture.

Esmail wrote this piece in 2016 for the Urban Voices Project as a practical application of a lesson about Indian rhythms. Esmail's revised version of this fresh work was performed by the Los Angeles Master Chorale in a virtual choir format in November 2020 (https://youtu.be/rKK1YKfcGAw).

Pronunciation Guides:

Part 1: https://youtu.be/40ZWCBuJV7U

Part 2: https://youtu.be/rvT_YXEKyO8

Part 3: https://youtu.be/_Pax7cGIrwI

https://www.reenaesmail.com/catalog-item/tarekita/

— Phillip A. Swan

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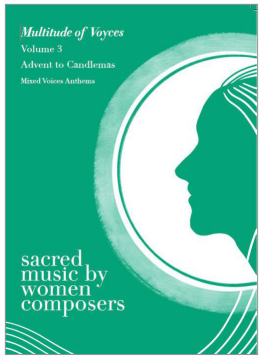

Multitude of Voyces, Anthology of Sacred Music by Women Composers, Volume 3: Advent to Candlemas, Mixed Voices Anthems

Louise Stewart, ed. (2020)

SATB, div., various accompaniments

Texts: English, German, Italian, Latin, Swedish, Welsh

Stainer & Bell

176 pages, £14.99, softcover

ISBN: 978-1-9162164-2-6

In his thought-provoking book *Teaching with Respect: Inclusive Pedagogy for Choral Directors*, Stephen Sieck poses this question: "…If you were asked to name five significant female choral composers pre-1950, how would you do?" Sieck suggests that many of us might list Nannerl Mozart, Fanny Mendelssohn, or Clara Wieck-Schumann but aptly points out that we primarily know of these women because of their relationship to prominent male composers. At long last, our profession is currently engaging in introspection and philosophical discussions about representation, inclusivity, and equity. And rightly so—for centuries, choral music has been dominated by Western European Christian men. The *Multitude of Voyces* series is, therefore, a timely resource. Published in December 2020, this third volume contains works appropriate for Advent through Candlemas, a fixed feast day on February 2, forty days after Christmas, when Christians commemorate Jesus' presentation at the temple.

A great variety of pieces exist in this collection, and all types of choirs can find fulfilling repertoire within these pages. There are works from the Renaissance period through present-day. New voices appear next to familiar names such as Amy Beach (née Cheney), Judith Bingham, and Elizabeth Poston. The volume contains pieces in many languages, for many ensemble types (including unison, two-part, treble, bass-clef, and SATB with *divisi*), of varying difficulty levels, and with flute, piano, organ, and simple percussion parts, as well as ones with no accompaniment. Helpful biographical information and program notes appear at the end of the collection.

Each piece within this anthology deserves consideration. A handful of works merit particular mention. The *Nunc dimittis* setting by Amy Beach (née Cheney) (1867–1944), with an editorially reconstructed Gloria by Sarah MacDonald, is a welcome addition to the Benediction repertoire. Its straightforward, four-part writing with pleasing harmonies could easily be used in place of the Lutkin or Rutter settings of *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*. *Attesa* by Maddalena Casulana (c. 1544–c. 1590) reminds conductors that programming works by women composers does not necessitate choosing only modern works. *Attesa*, from Casulana's *Il secondo libro de' madrigali a quattro voci* (1570), boasts beautiful polyphony and well constructed suspensions. Libby Croad (b. 1981) offers a new setting of Joseph Mohr's "Silent Night" text. Croad creates sumptuous harmonies without dividing the SATB voices. Finding upbeat pieces for these seasons can be a challenge amid the many slow nativity lullabies, which is why *Blessed be!* by Melanie DeMore (b. 1955) is a great selection. With optional percussion and a rhythmic ostinato, the piece is easy to learn and quite fun. In *Nativity*, Hannah Kendall (b. 1984) combines texts from the Gospel of John and poetry by John Donne. This work for SSA choir and three soloists is a tremendous contribution to music for advanced treble ensembles. Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987) simply and sincerely sets William Blake's famous poem, "The Lamb," for a soloist or unison voices. This is truly a lovely piece full

of heartfelt expression. Other notable works in this collection include Sarah Cattley's rhythmic *Ivy, chief of trees it is*, Tamsin Jones's rollicking two-part Noel: *Verbum caro factum est*, and Emma Mundella's hauntingly beautiful *The Desert*.

All three volumes of the *Multitude of Voyces, Anthology of Sacred Music by Women Composers* rightly take their place on the shelf next to *The Oxford Book of Carols, Carols for Choirs*, and other such collections. One could easily choose pieces for an entire concert from these books and achieve a wonderfully balanced and varied program. The *Multitude of Voyces'* series is indispensable as our field seeks to be inclusive and representative of all voices.

—John C. Hughes

Composers included in *Multitude of Voyces, Anthology of Sacred Music by Women Composers, Volume 3: Advent to Candlemas, Mixed Voices Anthems*

Amy Beach (née Cheney) (1867–1944)
Judith Bingham OBE (b. 1952)
Kerensa Briggs (b. 1991)
Maddalena Casulana (c. 1544–c. 1590)
Sarah Cattley (b. 1995)
[Gwendolen] Avril Coleridge-Taylor (1903–1998)
Libby Croad (b. 1981)
Melanie DeMore (b. 1955)
Emily Hazrati (b. 1998)
Tamsin Jones (b. 1972)
Hannah Kendall (b. 1984)
Isabella Leonarda (1620–1704)
Sarah MacDonald (b. 1968)
Elizabeth Maconchy DBE (1907–1994)
Emma Mundella (1858–1896)
Helena Paish (b. 2002)
Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759–1824)
Katharine Parton (b. 1982)
Yshani Perinpanayagam (b. 1983)
Sheena Phillips (b. 1958)
Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)
Rhian Samuel (b. 1944)
Olivia Sparkhall (b. 1976)
Amy Summers (b. 1996)
Alice Tegnér (1864–1943)
Alison Willis (b. 1971)

The Authors

Matthew Abernathy is a doctoral candidate in conducting at the University of Minnesota. He teaches at the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN) and conducts Project Opera at Minnesota Opera, in addition to a lively freelance life (pre-COVID).

Don R. Crowe is Professor and Coordinator of Music Education for the South Dakota State University School of Performing Arts. Dr. Crowe has taught instrumental music at all levels and music education courses at several universities during his career. He has presented and published at the national level, and is a Past President of the South Dakota Music Educators Association.

John C. Hughes enjoys a multifaceted career as a professional conductor based in Chicago. He is the Music Director of Chicago Master Singers (CMS) and the Conductor of the Green Lake Festival of Music's Composer Residency.

Sally Kelley resides in the Midwest where she is artistic director of White River Sound and director of choirs at her local church. She is currently finishing her doctorate in choral conducting at Ball State University, writing her dissertation on three of Alice Parker's choral cycles of Emily Dickinson poetry.

Minji Kim is a Korean-born choral conductor and church musician based in the Greater Boston area. She is a D.M.A. candidate in Choral Conducting at the University of Maryland and serves as the music director at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.

Jameson Marvin was Director of Choral Activities, Senior Lecturer on Music at Harvard University for 32 years. From 1978 to 2010, Harvard's Choral Program garnered a distinguished national reputation through his conductorship of the Harvard Glee Club, Radcliffe Choral Society, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum as they rose to be among the premier collegiate choruses in America.

Patrick Murray is Director of the University of Toronto Scarborough Concert Choir, Lecturer in Choral Music at Western University (London, Ontario), and a D.M.A. candidate in choral conducting at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

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Phillip A. Swan is Co-Director of Choral Studies at Lawrence University and Musical Director for LU Musicals. Swan directs Cantala and LU Vocal Spectrum, and teaches courses in conducting and music education. He also serves as artistic director and conductor for newVoices (recipient of the 2016 Chorus America Education and Community Engagement Award), and is worship choir director at Appleton Alliance Church.

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