Guillaume Du Fay

Opera Omnia

Edited by Alejandro Enrique Planchart

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Guillaume Du Fay, Gaude Virgo, mater Christi: 1

Guillaume Du Fay

Cantus 1

Cantus 2

Tenor

Contratenor

7

15

23

D-00
Guillaume Du Fay, Gaude Virgo, mater Christi: 2
Gaude, quae post ipsum.

Gaude, quae post ipsum.

Et est honor tibi grannis.

Et est honor tibi grannis.

In caeli palamini.

In caeli palamini.

Ubi fructio.

Ubi fructio.

Gaude, quae post ipsum.

Gaude, quae post ipsum.

Ubi fructio.
01/19 Gaude Virgo, mater Christi

Sources

Q15 (III), fols. A 230v-232r, R -, M 227-228, “du fay.” Full black notation with void coloration and flagged semiminims. Full text in cantus 1 and 2, no text in the lower voices.

MuEm, fols. 5v-7, “Duffay.” Full text in cantus 1 and 2, incipits in the lower voices,

Clefs and mensurations

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Text

1 Gaude virgo, mater Christi
Quae per aurem concepisti
Gabriele nuntio.
Rejoice, o virgin, mother of Christ,
Who conceived through the ear
With Gabriel as the messenger.

2 Gaude, quia Deo plena
Peperisti sine poena
Cum pudoris lilio.
Rejoice, for filled with God
You gave birth without sorrow
With the chasteness of the lily.

3 Gaude, quia tui nati,
Quem dolebas mortem pati,
Fulget resurrectio:
Rejoice, for he who was born of you,
Whom you grieved for as dead,
Shines in his resurrection.

4 Gaude Christo ascendente
Et in caelo te vidente
Fertur motu proprio.
Rejoice with the ascending Christ
Seeing you in heaven
Carried by his will.

5 Gaude, quae post ipsum scandis,
Et est honor tibi grandis
In caeli palatio.
Rejoice, for you ascend after him,
And you are greatly honored
In the palaces of heaven.

6 Ubi fructus ventris tui
Per te detur nobis frui
In perpetui gaudio.
Where may the fruit of your womb
Through you, grants us to enjoy
Eternal joy.

Amen.

Besseler published this piece as a sequence. The text is part of a family of texts dealing with joys of the virgin, paralleled by a similar family dealing with her sorrows, that were used some time as sequences but even more often as rhymed prayers, and Du Fay in this case treated it as a rhymed prayer and set it to music in the manner of his cantilena motets, so this piece belongs among Du Fay motets and not his sequences.

In both copies the piece has severe contrapuntal problems. Most can be resolved by the omission of the contratenor, which cannot be by Du Fay and is a singularly incompetent addition. Like many of the contratenors in Q15 it is written on a six-line staff. In MuEm it is written on a five-line staff but the exemplar for that copy was surely on a six-line staff, and this confused the scribe of MuEm. After the first six noted he shifted the clef, wrongly as it turns out, and for the rest of the part the F clef is written on the D line, so the part is a third up.

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2 Robert Nosow, “The Florid and Equal-Discantus Motet Style of Fifteenth-Century Italy,” Ph.D. Dissertation (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1992), 122, reports the presence of this text as a sequence in a Hungarian missal, but Du Fay does not treat the text as a sequence.

Even without the contratenor the piece has a number of contrapuntal problems, a few of which are caused by a note copied a step away (there are emended in the edition). Still, problems remain in measures 21, 44, and 146. The writing in measure 68 is odd, and the motivic repetition between cantus 1 and 2 in measures 135-7 is not common in Du Fay, much less with the two different resolutions.

Nosow’s astute observations on the tonality of the piece, particularly what the added contratenor implies, led him to add a b-flat signature to the three upper parts. This edition does not quite do that, although the effect of the *musica ficta* added is almost the same as Nosow’s signatures. He notes, in addition that the way the tenor is constructed indicates that originally it was most likely intended to carry the text as well, and in his edition he has added the text to it;⁴ I do the same in this edition. The text of the upper voices follows that of Q15, but in a few places I have deliberately ignored the ligature writing.

The date of the motet is also something of a problem. The work is clearly a product of Du Fay’s Italian years, and it is copied in stage III of Q15,⁵ but it may go back to the early 1420s. The contrapuntal writing, which includes a good number of hard appoggiaturas and dissonant semibreves, may be the result of an early attempt on Du Fay’s part to graft the rhythmic and motivic structure of fast triple meter organized in imperfect longs to the Italianate texture moving in *Vasilissa ergo gaude*.

The piece is unperformable as a four-voice work and the added contratenor cannot be a substitute for any of the other three voices. Accordingly I have left it unchanged and ignored it in assigning *musica ficta* to the other voices. I include it in the edition simply because it appears in both sources.

The piece is written in *tempus perfectum* throughout, with the breves organized in pairs. This is the kind of metric organization that was often notated with ♬, although Du Fay seldom used it as an initial mensuration. It calls for a very fast motion by the semibreves. The mensuration signs in MuEm (measures 44 and 45) are probably not authentic and most likely the piece originally had no signs whatsoever. The actual pulse of the music is on the perfect breve, which should move at a tempo between MM 60 and 80; the passages in minims should indeed sound like virtuoso coloraturas.

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