

# Guillaume Du Fay

Opera Omnia 01/23

## Vergene bella che di sol vestita

Edited by Alejandro Enrique Planchart



Marisol Press  
Santa Barbara, 2008

# Guillaume Du Fay

## Opera Omnia

Edited by Alejandro Enrique Planchart

01	Cantilena, Paraphrase, and New Style Motets
02	Isorhythmic and Mensuration Motets
03	Ordinary and Plenary Mass Cycles
04	Proper Mass Cycles
05	Ordinary of the Mass Movements
06	Proses
07	Hymns
08	Magnificats
09	Benedicamus domino
10	Songs
11	Plainsongs
12	Dubious Works and Works with Spurious Attributions

Francesco Petrarca

01/23 Vergene bella

Guillaume Du Fay

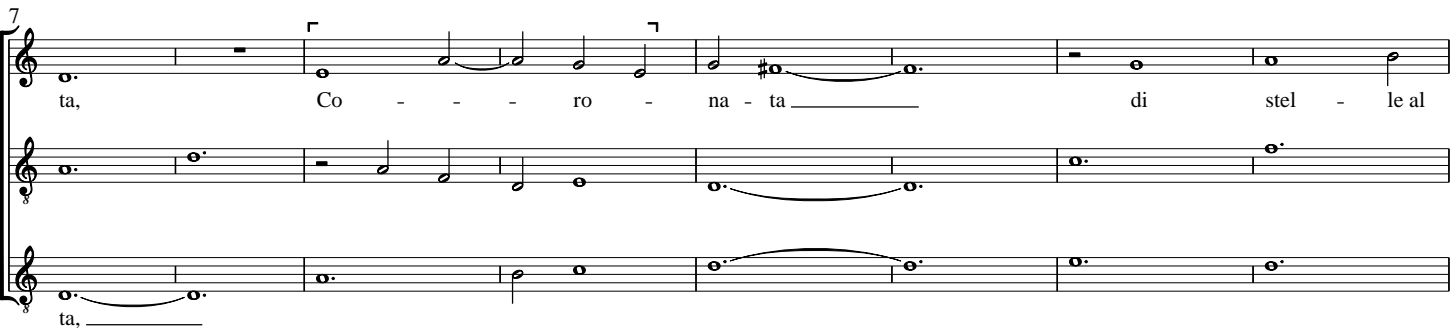
Cantus [Φ] = ♩  
Ver - ge - ne bel - la, che di sol ve - sti - - - - -

Contratenor [Φ]  
Ver - ge - ne bel - la


Tenor [Φ]  
Ver - ge - ne - bel - la, che di sol ve - - - sti - - -



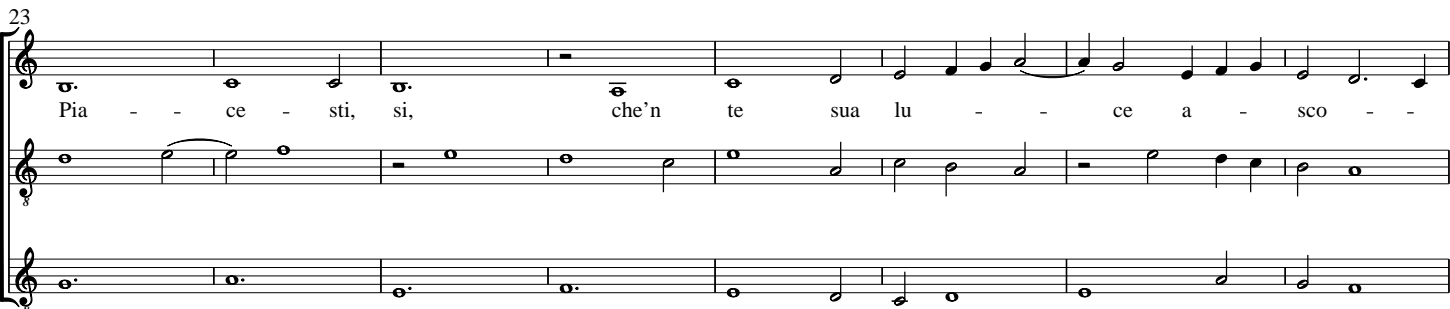
7  
ta, Co - - - ro - na - ta di stel - le al



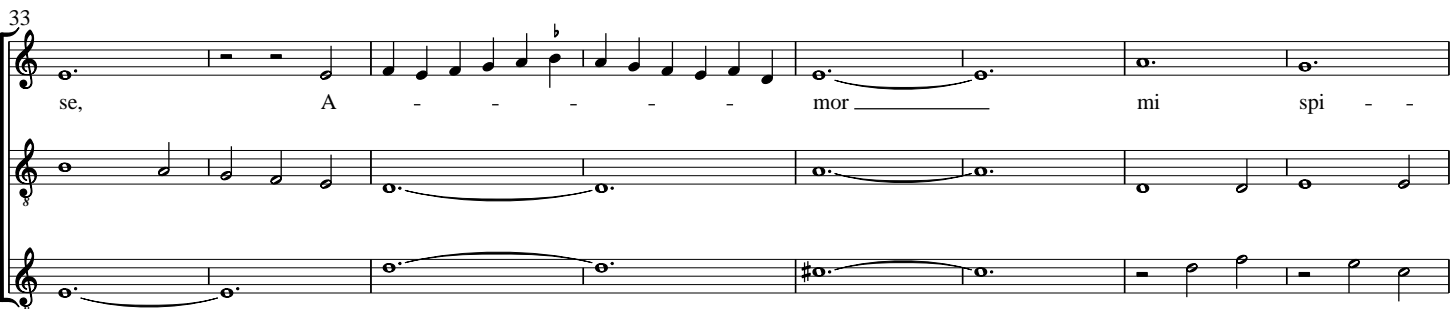
15  
som - mo so - - le, so - - - - - le



23  
Pia - - ce - sti, si, che'n te sua lu - - ce a - sco - -



33  
se, A - - - - mor mi spi - -



39

gne a dir di te pa - ro - - le; Ma non so'n co - min -

This system contains measures 39 through 46. It features a vocal line with lyrics and two piano accompaniment staves. The music is in a simple, homophonic style with a clear harmonic structure.

47

zar sen - za tu' a - i - - - ta,

This system contains measures 47 through 54. The vocal line continues with the lyrics. The piano accompaniment provides a steady harmonic support.

55

E di co - lui ch'a - man - do in te si po - -

This system contains measures 55 through 62. The vocal line begins with a fermata on the word 'si'. The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line.

63

se.

This system contains measures 63 through 70. The vocal line has a fermata on the word 'se.'. The piano accompaniment continues with a consistent harmonic accompaniment.

71

This system contains measures 71 through 78. The vocal line concludes with a final cadence. The piano accompaniment provides a clear harmonic resolution.

78 ○

In - vo - co lei che ben sem - pre si - - spon - - -

In - - - vo - co lei

In - - - vo - co lei sem - - pre ri - spon - - -

83

de Chi la chia - mò con fe - de, Ver - ge - ne, s'a mer - ce -

Chi la chia - mò con fe - de, \_\_\_\_\_

de Chi la chia - mò con fe - de, Ver - ge - ne, s'a mer - ce - de, \_\_\_\_\_

88

de, \_\_\_\_\_

93

Mi - se - ria e - - stre - ma dell' hu - ma - ne

98

co - - - - - se

103

Già mai ti vol-se, al mio pre-go t'in-chi-na.  
Soc-cor-ri al-la mia

108

Soc-cor-ri al-la mia guer-ra.  
guer-ra.  
Soc-cor-ri al-la mia guer-ra.

113

Ben-ch'i si-a ter-ra e tu del ciel re-

121

gi-

129

na.

## 01/23 Vergene bella

## Sources

Q15 (II), A 237v-238, R 208v-209r, M 234: “Du Fay.” Full black notation with void coloration and flagged semiminims.

BU, pp. 70-71, fols. 35v-36r (no. 54): “G. dufay.” Full black notation with void coloration and flagged semiminims.

Ox 213(9), fols. 133v-134r (no. 312): “Guillermus dufay.” White notation with flagged semiminims.

## Clefs and mensurations

		1	79	99	103	114
Cantus	c2, all	- [Φ]	○, all	3, all	○, all	Φ, all
Contratenor	c4, Q15, Ox; c4/F2, BU	- [Φ]	○, all	-	-	Φ, all
Tenor	c4, Q 15, Ox; c4/F2, BU	- [Φ]	○, all	-	-	Φ, all

## Text

Vergene bella, che di sol vestita, Coronata di stelle al sommo sole Piacesti sì, che'n te sua luce ascose; Amor mi spigne a dir di te parole: Ma non so cominzar senza tu' aita, E di colui ch'amando in te si pose. Invoco lei che ben sempre rispose Chi la chiamò con fede. Vergene, s'a mercede Miseria estrema de l'humane cose Già mai ti volse, al mio prego t'inchina Soccorri alla mia guerra, Bench'i sia terra, e tu del ciel regina.	Beautiful virgin, dressed in the sun's rays, Crowned with stars even to the highest sun, Whom you so pleased that he hid his light in you. Love impels me to speak of you, But I cannot do so without your help, And that of Him who, loving you, placed himself within you. I invoke her who always answered well Whoever called her with faith: Virgin, if you have mercy, Extreme pity for human things, Never turn away, incline to my prayers. Help my struggle, Even though I am dust and you the Queen of Heaven.
--	--

The edition follows Q15, but it has been collated with the other two sources for possible better readings. The text underlay is basically that found in Q15, which has the largest amount of text in the lower voices.

The piece is a setting of the opening stanza to the final canzone of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and is one of the earliest settings of any text by Petrarch to music. Du Fay clearly viewed the work as a motet with Italian text, and indeed it is copied in Q15 among the motets.<sup>1</sup> As a motet it was probably intended to be sung by three solo voices, but a performance by a solo singer and two instrumentalists, is also possible, which has been the preferred manner of performance of the work in modern times. One aspect of modern performances that has no basis in tradition and is quite damaging to the piece is when an instrument takes over the extended vocalises in the cantus.

The date of the work has recently been revised through the work of Margaret Bent. Charles Hamm and I had placed it in the late 1420s,<sup>2</sup> while David Fallows and Reinhard Strohm placed it in the early 1420s.<sup>3</sup> The case for the earlier date has been settled by the work of Margaret Bent, who noted that the piece although the surviving copy in Q15 comes from stage II (ca. 1430), the piece had once been copied in stage I, since a fragment of the music survives behind one of the cut and re-used capitals.<sup>4</sup> More recently she has refined her view, pointing to the almost certain possibility that the piece was composed for the ceremonies connected with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Petrarch's death, which took place in Padua in 1424. The grandfather of Du Fay's Malatesta patron, Pandolfo II di Malatesta

<sup>1</sup> Alejandro Enrique Planchart, “What's in a Name? Reflections on Some Works of Guillaume Du Fay,” *Early Music* 16 (1988), 165-175.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Hamm, *A Chronology of the Works of Guillaume Dufay Based on a Study of Mensural Practice*, Princeton Studies in Music 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 59-63; Planchart, “What's in a Name?,” 170.

<sup>3</sup> David Fallows, *Dufay*, rev. ed. (London: Dent, 1987), 27; Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music 1380–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 157.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Bent, *Bologna Q 15: The Making and Remaking of a Musical Manuscript*, 2 vols. (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2008), I, 21, 210, and 282-3.

(1328-73) was a friend and admirer of Petrarch, and shortly before his death received a copy of the *canzoniere* from the poet, which was inherited by his son, Malatesta di Pandolfo (1388-1429), lord of Pesaro and himself a poet, known as Malatesta dei Sonetti. Du Fay's *Vasilissa ergo gaude*, and *Resvelliés vous* were written for two of his children, Cleofe di Malatesta and Carlo di Malatesta. A third child, Pandolfo di Malatesta, eventually archbishop of Patras, was almost surely Du Fay's actual patron among the Malatesta, and Du Fay's motets *Apostolo glorioso* and *O gemma lux* were written for him,<sup>5</sup> so it is quite likely that Du Fay was asked to compose the work either by Pandolfo or his father. Bent notices that a number of the orthographic variants in Du Fay's text align it with the version of the *canzoniere* the belonged to the Malatesta.<sup>6</sup>

The entire work is in *tempus perfectum*, organized in a series of imperfect longs in parts 1 and 3, and as a series of perfect breves in part 2. All the sources indicate ○ at measure 79, following a long and a bar in measure 78, and ⊕ at measure 114, with no bar preceding it. The metric organization of the first part is identical to that of the third, which implies an organization under ⊕, although Du Fay used this sign as an opening mensuration only rarely. Whether these signs indicate a change in tempo has become an extremely contentious issue.<sup>7</sup> The music itself appears to demand a slower tempo for the middle section, and Du Fay is known to have followed the English practice of indicating tempo changes through notational density and not always through signs.

The beat in parts 1 and 3 falls on the breve, moving at ca. MM 48 (semibreve MM 144), while the beat in part 2 falls on the semibreve, moving at ca. MM 96. The use of a bar at the end of Part 1 in the manuscripts implies a pause and a small break in the flow of the piece, but there should be no break between parts two and three, all the more so in that there is no break in the grammatical and syntactic structure at that point.

---

<sup>5</sup> Alejandro Enrique Planchart, "Four Motets of Guillaume Du Fay in Context," *Sleuthing the Muse: Essays in Honor of William F. Prizer*, ed. Kristine Forney and Jeremy Smith (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Bent, "Petrarch, Padua, Malatesta, and Du Fay."

<sup>7</sup> Alejandro Enrique Planchart, "The Relative Speed of Tempora in the Period of Dufay," *Research Chronicle of the Royal Musical Association* 17 (1981), 33-51; Anna Maria Busse Berger, "The Myth of *diminutio per tertiam partem*," *Journal of Musicology* 8 (1990), 398-426; Rob Wegman, "What is *Acceleratio-Mensurae*?" *Music and Letters* 73 (1992), 515-524; Margaret Bent, "The Early Use of the Sign ⊕," *Early Music* 24 (1996), 199-225.