

INTRODUCTION TO INSTALMENT 4

This instalment of the Trent 88 edition gives all of the four-voice Mass cycles therein, and the works presented are as follows.

- 93. Missa *Veterem hominem*
- 94. Missa *Puis que m'amour*
- 95. Missa *Rozel im gorten*
- 96. Missa *Se tu t'en marias*
- 97. Missa *Sine nomine*
- 98. Simon de Insula: Missa *O admirabile*
- 99. Ockeghem: Missa *Caput*
- 100. Dufay: Missa *Se la face ay pale*
- 101. Domarto: Missa *Spiritus almus*
- 102. Faugues: Missa *Le serviteur*

The digital age has transformed the way in which fifteenth century studies approaches this music, most of which was not well known before the last quarter of the twentieth century. 1950's and 1960's microfilms of sources such as Trent 88 and Cappella Sistina manuscripts tended to be barely usable because unedited photographs frequently show up severe page deterioration, and not many of the Trent 88 Ordinary cycles had appeared in print at the time. Some of the exceptions as I began my research were Dufay's Missa *Se la face ay pale*, Ockeghem's Missa *Caput*, and the very thorough edition of the Missa *Veterem hominem* produced by Margaret Bent in 1979. The Missa *Se la face ay pale* was also recorded by David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London in the early 1970's, with discreet instrumental participation backing up a small vocal ensemble.¹ Unfortunately this seems to have encouraged a trend that earlier fifteenth century Masses seem to require instrumental support for the singers in order to sound convincing. The other common misconception with four- and five-part Masses from the fifteenth century is that they somehow parallel much later works in some sort of symphonic development. To listen to this music like that is to expect items of event where they are unlikely to occur (closing movements are often simpler than Gloria and Credo movements) or to impose some sort of structural, extramusical or procrustean 'meaning' on a complete Mass which its composer might not have shared nor indeed understood. In performance, the Ordinary items of which these cyclic Masses consist were usually separated by the Propers and chants that made up the rest of celebrating a sung Mass.

This collection features three works which were composed in emulation of the famous Missa *Caput* (nos 93, 98 and 99) and which honour it in various ways. Simon de Insula's Mass is largely a stylistic imitation. Ockeghem's *Caput* Mass transposes the cantus firmus an octave down which produces a richly-textured but odd-sounding work. The Missa *Veterem hominem* seems to be another stylistic imitation and may be the earliest of these derivative works. Despite the fact that it is close in style to the original *Caput* Mass I have argued elsewhere that it may not be the work of the *Caput* composer.² Also very much in the shadow of English music here is the Missa *Sine nomine* no. 97, and the Missa *Puis que m'amour* no. 94. Despite the latter's cantus firmus being the Tenor of a Dunstable chanson, it is questionable whether the Mass itself is English and the same applies to no. 97 which contains some very clumsy four-part writing. No. 95 (the Missa *Rozel im gorten*) is more likely to be insular, both on grounds of texture and style. Quite how it acquired its German title in Strahov is not easily explained, but this was probably quite an old work by the time that it was copied in Strahov and also Trent 88. As is usual with continental copies of insular pieces, the *Veterem hominem* and *Rozel im gorten* Masses suffer considerably from transmission problems. Trent 88 is also the first of the Tridentine collections to give most of its cyclic Mass contents as sets of Ordinaries copied in their performance order. In parts of Trent 90 the older system of copying all the Glorias together and all the Credos

¹ LP EMI 3C 065 (1973).

² See nos 29a-b and pp. 1429-1433 in the DIAMM Trent 89 edition.

together still prevailed. Trent 88 also gives most of its Proper cycles as self-contained sets, whereas Trent 93 and Trent 90 share a large set of Introit settings copied together.

The Missa *Se tu t'en maries* (no. 96) is something of a rarity since it seems to be the sort of music written by choirmasters whose output was barely good enough to achieve much more than local use. Based on the same monophonic song as the Binchois *Filles a marier*, it employs mensural subtleties to give its sometimes poorly put together texture an aura of learning. One of these subtleties (in the Sanctus) stretches the principles and rules of mensural notation beyond their normal means. This is also exactly the sort of music that humanist bigots and later reformers loved to hate, since it seems to combine the Ordinary of the Mass text with the vernacular cantus firmus text *If you marry you'll regret it - and when? Maybe within a year*. Possibly it originated in one of the Franco-Flemish urban centres where combinative chansons were also common fare.

The final four Masses in this instalment are important because their historical positions. Ockeghem's derivative *Caput* Mass was the basis of one of the first English-language detailed studies of his style (by Bukofzer). Dufay's *Se la face ay pale* Mass is also noteworthy because it possibly represents an expansion of his four-part style into the unified cyclic medium. Domarto's Missa *Spiritus almus* was probably the first widespread example of the mensural transformation Mass, in which a monomorphic Tenor is rhythmically changed by repetition using different mensurations. In addition to the Trent 88 copy (which seems to be the earliest) there are three concordances in north Italian sources and also a fragmentary concordance in Poz 7022 - which was discovered amongst the leaves of a sixteenth century accounts book from Lvov and may have originated in Silesia rather than in the Polish-Lithuanian state's eastern regions.³ Domarto's Mass also drew quite a lot of comment from Tinctoris on account of its dissonance technique and incorrect use of mensuration signs. Finally, Faugues's Missa *Le serviteur* is a mature work by this well-known composer of cyclic Masses, and because of its length and sophistication it deserves the place it has been given in general accounts of fifteenth-century Mass developments. The way in which the composer uses his borrowed material also anticipates later parody methods.

It is commonsense to assume that lengthy and ambitious works were usually not written unless there was a specific occasion or demand for them, and in this context Anne Walters Robertson has presented a hypothesis into which Dufay's Missa *Se la face ay pale* fits very well - the arrival of the so-called Shroud of Turin in the Duchy of Savoy in 1453. Similarly, Rebecca Gerber has suggested occasions to which other cyclic Masses might have belonged. She proposed that some sort of *Caput* Mass might have been performed at Pope Nicolas V's coronation, and also that the coronation of Pope Calixtus III (1455) might have provided the context for Faugues's Missa *Le serviteur*. Additionally she suggested dates in 1452 associated with Frederick III's visit to Italy that might have occasioned the Missa *O admirabile* and the Missa *Rozel im gorten*.⁴ But it remains to be seen whether any of these suggestions can be reinforced by documentary evidence. Trent 88 is a little earlier than the Sistine and Modena cyclic Mass collections, so items like nos 94-97 present features which may not be familiar to admirers of later cyclic works. Amongst these features are hybrid cadence types in four-part writing, an uncertainty in the allocation and naming of supporting parts (sometimes resulting in some wide-ranging voices) and a notable stylistic debt to English works of the 1430's and 1440's. Otherwise there is a wealth of superb music in this instalment which it would simply be wrong not to advertise, including the elaborate trio work in the Missa *Puis que m'amour*, the splendidly long Kyrie to the *Veterem hominem* Mass, the structurally very disciplined and expansive Gloria and Credo in the Missa *Se la face ay pale*, and the unusual sonorities of Ockeghem's *Caput* Mass. In conclusion, my thanks for help in putting together this instalment of the Trent 88 series goes to the following people. Pawel Gancarczyk, Jaap van Benthem, Paul Kolb, Margaret Bent, Eric Jas, Rob Wegman, Jeffrey Dean, Reinhard Strohm and Mike Beauvois.

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³ See Gancarczyk, P., *Musica scripto. Kodeksy mensuralne II połowy XV wieku na wschodzie Europy Łacińskiej* (Warsaw, 2001) pp. 167-171.

⁴ Gerber, R., *Sacred Music from the Cathedral at Trent*, Introduction, pp. 16-18.