

Chapter 6: Religious and Secular Music of the Sixteenth Century

I. Introduction

- A. The Protestant Reformation and the Counter-Reformation prompted many changes in musical styles.
- B. The music publishing business boomed, and popular genres such as the frottolas, chansons, and madrigals (featuring illustration of the meaning of words through madrigalisms) flourished.

II. The Protestant Reformation

- A. A series of revolts against the Catholic Church, spearheaded by Martin Luther, had far-reaching consequences on the history of Europe.
- B. Music did not hold a high place for many of the new Protestants.
- C. Luther was an exception to this anti-music bent.

III. The Lutheran chorale

- A. Luther promoted congregational singing.
- B. The strophic German hymn sung in the Lutheran Church is a *chorale*.
 - 1. Some chorales are translations of Catholic hymns.
 - 2. Some chorales are adapted from secular songs.
- C. Johann Walther arranged the first printed polyphonic chorales.
- D. The soprano part eventually received the melody in chorales.
- E. The choral prelude was an instrumental genre that grew out of the *cantus firmus* being accompanied by organ or ensemble instruments.

IV. The Catholic response: the Counter-Reformation

- A. The Counter-Reformation was the Catholic response to the Reformation.
- B. The *ars perfecta* ideal did not suit the new emphasis on emotional response to the liturgy.
- C. Sensuality that could provoke an emotional response was desired, as was sheer sound and spectacle (such as *cori spezzati*).

V. Polychoral and “concerted” music

- A. Two musicians whose music suited the new aesthetic ideals of the Counter-Reformation belonged to the same family: Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli.
- B. The elder, Andrea, was organist at St. Mark’s in Venice.
 - 1. His works employed antiphonal choirs, and some were accompanied by instruments.
 - 2. His published works included the title *CONCERTI*.
- C. In 1602, Lodovico Viadana published *concerti* that included *basso continuo*.

VI. The art of orchestration is born

- A. Early publications did not indicate which instruments were to be used.
- B. The first composer to specify such was Giovanni Gabrieli, an organist at St. Mark’s.
 - 1. Giovanni published *Sacrae Symphoniae*, in which he requires specific instruments in addition to the singers.
 - a) *In ecclesiis benedicite Domino* exemplifies Giovanni’s style.
 - 2. Giovanni’s spectacular approach veers widely from the *ars perfecta*.
- C. The elaborate instrumentation of the Venetian composers demanded professional performers.

1. Examples include the *sonata* and *canzona per sonare*.
2. One of the best known of these is Giovanni Gabrieli's *Sonata pian'e forte*.

VII. Music printers and their audiences

- A. The growth of mercantilism spurred the growth of the printing industry, which in turn helped spread the ideas of humanism.
 1. Petrucci began publishing music in 1501.
 2. Even though Petrucci published music of the *ars perfecta* style, most money was made in printing vernacular songs.
- B. Vernacular song in Italy
 1. The Italian *frottola* was a popular song in a light style, and its popularity increased with publication.
 - a) Marco Cara (ca. 1465–1525) wrote frottole with dancelike rhythms and poetry based on an eight-syllable pattern.
- C. The “Parisian” chanson and the music of description
 1. As seen with the Tenorlied and frottola, French song of the sixteenth century took a turn toward a national style, which differed from the international courtly style of the fifteenth century.
 2. The name most associated with the Parisian chanson was Claudin de Sermisy.
 - a) Attaignant published Sermisy's chansons.
 - b) His style matches the musical emphases to that of the text declamation.
 3. Another famous composer of Parisian chanson was Clement Janequin.
 4. Attaignant also published his works, which became influential all over Europe.
- D. Several of his chansons are large works and vividly recall acts of war in the music.
- E. Lasso: the cosmopolite supreme
 1. One of the most brilliant composers of the sixteenth century, Orlando di Lasso was extremely versatile.
 - a) A Netherlander by birth, Lasso spoke French and worked in Mantua and Bavaria—he was quite cosmopolitan. All his appointments were secular.
 - b) Lasso's compositions clearly show the influence of growing up with printed music.
 - c) That he tried his hand at so many different genres demonstrates his association with the idea of national styles, rather than *ars perfecta*/international style.
 - d) The text includes one example from four languages spoken by Lasso.

VIII. The literary revolution and the return of the madrigal

- A. The musical debate of the sixteenth century can be described as one between those who championed the *ars perfecta* and those who mixed styles to achieve a measure of expression.
 1. Composers such as Lasso moved between the two as they saw fit.

2. “Literary” music is music that embodies or responds to meaning, which is most clearly seen in the genre of the madrigal.
 - a) The madrigal as a literary genre was chiefly driven by the Petrarchan revival.
 - b) The sixteenth-century madrigal bears no connection to that of the trecento.
 - c) It bears hallmarks of northern-styled polyphony (the composers were called *oltremontani*).
 - d) Important early madrigal composers were Verdelot and Jacques Arcadelt, both of whom published books of madrigals in the 1530s.

B. The return of the madrigal

1. The humanist scholar Pietro Bembo emphasized the device known as antithesis.
2. Arcadelt’s first book of madrigals was the most frequently printed book in the sixteenth century.
 - a) From this book, the piece *Il bianco e dolce cigno* was the most famous.
 - b) It typifies madrigals of this period.
3. *Da le belle contrade d’oriente* by Cipriano de Rore takes these ideas further.

IX. Paradox and contradiction: late Italian madrigalists

A. Native Italians eventually took over madrigal composition from the *oltremontani*.

1. The first of these was Luca Marenzio.
 - a) His *Solo e pensoso* sets Petrarch’s poem.
 - b) Word painting vividly mirrors the text.
2. The chromaticism and dissonance treatment found in madrigals was the source of consternation for some sixteenth-century composers.
 - a) The most famous instance is *Cruda Amarilli* by Claudio Monteverdi, attacked in print by Giovanni Maria Artusi.
 - b) The most extreme composer in this regard was Carlo Gesualdo, a southern Italian nobleman.

B. Music for the eyes

1. Some composers made the music fit the text not only aurally, but also visually.
 - a) Germans call this *Augenmusik*.
 - b) What is significant about this is the implication of notation as a part of music performance.

X. Back over the mountains: the English madrigal

A. Music printing was slow to get going in England, as was the rise of vernacular art music.

1. Most English song was for a solo singer, accompanied by instrumentalists.
2. The accompaniments frequently were polyphonic, texts were melancholy, and the music followed the structure of the poem in a manner that was not seen in the madrigal.
3. John Dowland wrote ayres for solo voice and lute.

4. Many of his works appeared in arrangements.
 5. Thomas Morley promoted Italian style in England with his madrigal publication *Musica Transalpina*.
 6. The English madrigal tradition lasted into the 1620s.
- B. The three W's: Ward, Wilbye, and Weelkes
1. John Ward, John Wilbye, and Thomas Weelkes were all famous composers of English madrigals.
 2. English madrigals differ from Italian ones primarily in the choice of texts (lofty Petrarch for the Italians, much lighter fare for the English).