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Dolores Pesce, ed. *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. xii, 380 pp. ISBN 0-19-509709-2 (hardcover); ISBN 0-19-512905-9 (paperback).

Introduction. Dolores Pesce; Conference Introductory Remarks. James Haar; 1. Rebecca A. Baltzer, "The Polyphonic Progeny of an *Et gaudebit*: Assessing Family Relations in the Thirteenth-Century Motet"; 2. Dolores Pesce, "Beyond Glossing: The Old Made New in *Mout me fu grief/Robin m'aime/Portare*"; 3. Anne Walters Robertson, "Which Vitry? The Witness of the Trinity Motet from the *Roman de Fauvel*"; 4. Margaret Bent, "Polyphony of Texts and Music in the Fourteenth-Century Motet: *Tribum que non abhorruit/Quoniam secta latronum/Merito hec patimur* and Its 'Quotations'"; 5. Robert Nosow, "Du Fay and the Cultures of Renaissance Florence"; 6. Rob C. Wegman, "For Whom the Bell Tolls: Reading and Hearing Busnoys's *Anthoni usque limina*"; 7. Paula Higgins, "Love and Death in the Fifteenth-Century Motet: A Reading of Busnoys's *Anima mea liquefacta est/Stirps Jesse*"; 8. M. Jennifer Bloxam, "Obrecht as Exegete: Reading *Factor orbis* as a Christmas Sermon"; 9. Richard Sherr, "Conflicting Levels of Meaning and Understanding in Josquin's *O admirabile commercium* Motet Cycle"; 10. Patrick Macey, "Josquin, Good King René, and *O bone et dulcissime Jesu*"; 11. Joshua Rifkin, "Miracles, Motivicity, and Mannerism: Adrian Willaert's *Videns Dominus flentes sorores Lazari* and Some Aspects of Motet Composition in the 1520s"; 12. James Haar, "Lasso as Historicist: The Cantus-Firmus Motets"; 13. David Crook, "Tonal Compass in the Motets of Orlando di Lasso"; 14. Jessie Ann Owens, "Palestrina as Reader: Motets from the Song of Songs"; 15. Joseph Kerman, "On William Byrd's *Emendemus in melius*"; 16. Craig Monson, "Byrd, the Catholics, and the Motet: The Hearing Reopened."

Whether in response to the relatively recent impulses of the so-called "new musicology" or simply in an effort to seek a new direction for research, many musicologists are turning to multidisciplinary approaches and innovative research methods in their studies of music from the past. Even so, this trend has not completely eclipsed the more traditional analytical studies of the history of music, as can be seen in what appears to be an appropriate balance of "newer" and more "old-fashioned" research styles in the volume of essays entitled *Hearing the Motet*. This book presents sixteen papers, the majority of which were delivered at the February 1994 conference of the same name held at Washington University in St. Louis. Motets of both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance from late-twelfth-century Paris to beyond the Counter-Reformation are discussed using methodological approaches as varied as the works themselves.

The publisher claims on the jacket that "[i]n *Hearing the Motet*, top scholars in the field provide the fullest picture yet of the motet's 'music-poetic' nature, investigating the virtuosic interplay of music and text that distinguished some of the genre's finest work and reading individual motets and motet repertoires in ways that illuminate their historical and cultural backgrounds." Indeed, this grand assertion is accurate in its emphasis on how the motet texts are employed

in many of the essays to inform analyses of the accompanying music. With reference to the “top scholars” it must be noted that, although this volume is not an exhaustive representation of all current motet research, the impressive list of contributors to *Hearing the Motet* appears almost like a “who’s who” of motet researchers.

In the lengthy introduction (nine pages), editor Dolores Pesce remarks briefly on the nature of the conference *Hearing the Motet* from where this volume grew, and provides details of style and content for each paper. (Pesce’s introduction could conceivably appear as a stand-alone positive and sympathetic book review.) The main focus of both the conference and this book is emphasized by Pesce early in her opening remarks, “The title *Hearing the Motet* reflects an increasing concern among scholars and performers with bringing to light the diverse ways in which these works may have been heard in their own time” (p. 3).

The introduction is followed by James Haar’s appropriate and considerably briefer “Conference Introductory Remarks” where he offers the loaded question, “Motetus quid est?” (p. 12). These remarks include up-to-date references in footnotes, and appear revised for publication. Here, again, a mention is made of the new importance awarded in motet research to *texts*—“their choice, their ‘reading’ by the composer, their effect and affect on the listener” (p. 13). In my initial pass through this material, I had thought it unnecessary that Haar encourages looking beyond “the convenient modern editions” (p. 14), since, is it not understood in our field that all serious musicologists seek out original sources? On reflection, I suppose we could all benefit from such reminders. As introductory material, Haar’s most effective statements make reference to the title of the conference (and this volume): “To hear in the fullest sense is to understand, and that we are certainly trying to do. ... Let us then begin to ‘hear’ the motet” (p. 14).

The sixteen essays, each a chapter, are ordered chronologically. The first two of Rebecca Baltzer and Dolores Pesce deal with thirteenth-century motets. Baltzer presents a study of the motet complex based on the single clausula *Et gaudebit* no.2, and places much emphasis on the variance of *motetus* and *triplum* texts. Her survey results are displayed in clearly-legible tables. Baltzer’s speculations on the omissions of some texts in certain manuscript sources and the pairing of sacred and secular texts by clerics, scribes, or composers provide some understanding of these medieval people and their community of listeners or worshippers.

As might be expected after reading her insightful introductory remarks, Pesce effectively discusses the “hearing” of the motet. Although the subject of her essay is a work frequently included in survey textbooks, the motet *Mout me fu grief/Robin m’aime/Portare*, Pesce presents this piece with a new reading; her detailed musical analysis of pitch emphases and movements from tension to resolution is based on *audible* features which are justified by the writings of a thirteenth-century theorist. In order to provide a certain sense of authority to the wealth of speculation in this article, Pesce both refers directly

to and draws obliquely on her previous work.¹ Numerous examples and generous discussion provide a credible account of some of the more controversial aspects of motet analysis, particularly the possibility that chant fragments may have been altered to suit the needs, tastes, or whims of the composer, and that there may have been a more complex relationship between the composer's thoughts and his intended use of the tenor in combination with the texts of the upper voices.

In keeping with the volume's predominant emphasis on texts, Paula Higgins examines the textual sources for Busnoys's *Anima mea/Stirps Jesse* in order to place this work in the composer's repertory. Speculation on the existence of anagrams of names in the text incipits is stretched to the limits; I wonder if this is one of those cases where the texts will eventually reveal what one wants them to say if one is ingenious and patient enough. In any case, in combination with her evidence of the life at court (which makes for captivating reading—intrigue, deceit, jealousy...), Higgins uses her historically-informed hypothesis to suggest a much earlier date of composition for Busnoys's motet than has previously been accepted.

Other analyses with a specific emphasis on text are found in chapters by Robert Nosow, Margaret Bent, and Jessie Ann Owens. The clear, content-oriented subheadings in Bent's essay are a valuable service to the reader. On the other hand, Nosow's study of three Du Fay motets would benefit from subheadings to help clarify his comparisons.

In one of the longest essays in this volume (twenty-four pages), Anne Walters Robertson provides an informed biographical account of Philippe de Vitry which, in turn, provides more certain attribution to him of the motet *Firmissime fidem/Adesto sancta trinitas/Alleluia benedictus es*. Robertson is convincing in her use of the tenor chant to uncover information on Philippe's locale and possible origins. As might be expected, this article is of a speculative nature, and Robertson is careful to enter "disclaimers" about the conclusions at appropriate places. Although symbolism of the number three in this Trinity Motet appears forced at times, the desire to make it so is warranted. It may only be a coincidence that Robertson's is the third chapter in *Hearing the Motet*. This chapter has an excellent presentation in its clean musical examples and easily readable tables which clearly show manuscript affiliation through melodic comparison.

Enlarging upon traditional musicological research methods, Jennifer Bloxam engages in an analysis adopted from literary theory. Her comparison of the appearance of a motet to that of a page from a biblical gloss is an intriguing investigation, despite the fact that her terminology-replete writing style caused me some probing in the dictionary. The Obrecht motet used by Bloxam to illustrate her argument follows precisely the model of a preached sermon. (In the same way, the rhetorical principles of the Ciceronian classical tradition

¹ Several references are made to "A Case for Coherent Pitch Organization in the Thirteenth-Century Double Motet," *Music Analysis* 9, no. 3 (1990): 287–318. General concepts in her current motet research harken back to "The Significance of Text in Thirteenth-Century Latin Motets," *Acta musicologica* 58, no. 1 (1986): 91–117.

have been likened to J. S. Bach's cantatas.) Shall we suppose that this convincing a portrayal can be repeated for other motets by other composers? Though there appears to be an overabundance of footnotes, Bloxam's examples provide a wealth of valuable information, some of which is not brought into the main text of the paper. On a more detailed note, and recalling my experience as a trumpet player, I disagree with the assertion (not actually hers—see footnote 35) that the opening of the cantus firmus melody is an aural and visual “trumpet call” (p. 185). The figure (F–C–D) is not particularly idiomatic as a natural trumpet figure, since it descends at its first interval in contrast to the majority of known majestic fanfares.² Much like the contributions of Joshua Rifkin and James Haar, this paper has a more conversational tone which seems to expose its origin in an oral delivery rather than written publication.

The chapter by Richard Sherr, which suggests how several Josquin motets might have been heard, is another with a less-elegant style than some of the essays in this volume. Several typographical errors, in addition to some lengthy and awkward sentence structures disturb the flow of the text. Regrettably, Sherr refers to the *Liber usualis* in a discussion concerning the search for a chant source. This remark would have been better omitted, as it is well-understood among chant scholars that the monks of Solesmes compiled the *Liber usualis* from many manuscripts. Unfortunately, the manuscript sources, and the varying geographical regions from which they derive, are not documented alongside each chant in the *LU* (as might be helpful for determining provenance of a chant fragment used in a motet, for example). It must be mentioned that Sherr does raise some interesting points in his discussion, but in direct comparison with some of the other essays in this volume, Sherr's arguments are not as convincing.

A worthy addition to this book is the chapter by Joseph Kerman; this is a reprint of an article which was first published in *The Musical Quarterly* in 1963.³ Although his discussion and detailed analysis of the Byrd motet *Emendemus in melius* is engaging, the fascinating aspect of this article is its continued relevance in motet research of the 1990s, over thirty years after it was written. Kerman's reflections on his original article, contained in the third endnote, are particularly interesting. Kerman exudes authority as he refers to his previous research, while his somewhat colloquial yet still professional writing style breaks the monotony of the detailed analysis. The layout of the original article is intact; the analysis is clear and “reader-friendly” with subheadings for sections dealing with texture, melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, dissonance, text, and history. For the reprint, the references have been updated and the section on rhythm has been rewritten “to reflect a change in conception and perception” (p. 346). In addition to the nine musical examples in this chapter, it would be convenient for the reader to also have the single reference to the melody in the *Liber usualis* reprinted here for comparison (p. 333), since not

²In addition, these pitches together are not part of the harmonic series, and therefore would not be playable on the natural trumpet (unless transposed an octave higher).

³Joseph Kerman, “On William Byrd's *Emendemus in melius*,” *The Musical Quarterly* 49 (1963): 431–49.

all will have this source readily available. In a rare interdisciplinary moment (for the 1960s), Kerman includes an interesting summary of historical events in the section on history. This is particularly relevant for research into composers such as William Byrd, and leads Kerman to his far-reaching observation in the final paragraph on the “hearing” of music from the past. (This has not been altered in the reprint):

And if this is the goal [i.e., understanding], I do not see that we are in a position to refuse any preferred tools: whether analogical, theoretical, musicological, phenomenological, imaginative, speculative, historical, anachronistic, liturgical, statistical. *Emendemus in melius* [*quae ignoranter peccavimus*—Let us amend what we have transgressed through ignorance] (p. 346).

Such a variety of approaches can be found in the remainder of the volume. Although also in traditional analytical styles, Patrick Macey’s examination of two Josquin motets is extremely effective, and David Crook presents well-focused arguments with a logical ordering in his study of the motets by Orlando di Lasso. Rob C. Wegman opens with philosophical musings concerning perception, and deals immediately with the issue of “hearing” early music. He continues with a captivating analysis of the liturgical use of Busnoy’s *Anthoni usque limina*, which includes an examination of the text and its meaning to determine the appropriateness of this motet to the feast of St. Anthony. Liturgical history also informs the analysis given by Craig Monson, as he explores the “Catholic-ness” of Byrd’s music and its political motivations. Monson’s context-based analysis is provided with convincing evidence in the form of “hidden” metaphors in letters and pamphlets from the late-sixteenth century, while the secret presses, the disguising of identities, and other manifestations of political intrigue make for fascinating reading. Monson apparently assumes the best of his readers, as some of the Latin quotations are not translated. This is flattering, yet perhaps not realistic, particularly since students may wish to consult this volume.

Every reader will no doubt wish that another element of the motet could have been included or discussed in *Hearing the Motet*. For instance, very little reference is made throughout the volume to issues of performance practice, and mention of specific recordings and performances is scarce. It would be interesting to hear what these authors think of the interpretations now being offered by modern performing ensembles. Though introduced briefly by Pesce (p. 32), the performance question is an important one: as twentieth-century musicians, how is our “hearing” informed by our environment and background, and to what extent does this affect our interpretations, analyses, and judgments of quality?

Although there is no general bibliography compiled at the end of the volume, readers may consult further references in either the index of names or the endnotes of the individual authors, as the sixteen papers presented in this volume are generously supplied with bibliographical information and appear to be well-documented. I have recently discovered that I am not alone in my

preference for footnotes over endnotes, but at least these citations are given after each article rather than collected at the end of the volume.

Owing to the germination of these papers in a conference with not only a single topic (i.e., the motet), but also a specific focus (i.e., that of “hearing” the motet), many of the papers share resemblances in concepts and interpretations. Though none depend on one another, there has been some attempt to cross-reference the work in other chapters. It is obvious in more than one essay that at least some contributors read one another’s work prior to publication; this has resulted in a more unified book than a set of conference proceedings might generally produce. *Hearing the Motet* has much to recommend it.

As we approach the next millenium, it is probable that this trend towards interdisciplinary research methods will continue. Although I do not expect that traditional musicological analyses will be dismissed completely, it seems that, in order to further our understanding of the music from previous eras, scholars must persist in their efforts to reinvent these more “old-fashioned” methods of interpretation. *Hearing the Motet* shows the strengths of both old and new approaches; it can stand as both a valuable tool, and a model for further research.

Debra Lacoste

John Harley. *William Byrd: Gentleman of the Chapel Royal*. Aldershot, Hants: Scolar Press; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1997. 480 pp. ISBN 1-85928-165-6 (hardcover).

William Byrd is one of the few composers whose music encompasses both vocal and instrumental music. Moreover, his vocal music consists of both sacred and secular compositions, and he contributed to the repertoire of both the Roman Catholic and Anglican liturgies. In *William Byrd: Gentleman of the Chapel Royal*, John Harley has provided the interested musician and knowledgeable amateur with a “life and works” type of book on this very important English composer of the late Renaissance.

The first 151 pages of this volume are devoted to an exhaustive examination of Byrd’s life—there are 739 footnote citations in this biographical section alone. Every detail imaginable seems to have been tracked down and I am in awe of the time and labour Harley has invested in this biographical enterprise. Although the painstaking examination of Byrd’s Roman Catholic roots and connections as well as his ability to find powerful protectors is enlightening, the details of his disputes over property become tiresome quite quickly. And, when all is said and done, one needs to ask: “What has been gained by knowing ‘everything’ about Byrd’s property disputes, recusancy, businesses, etc.?” Perhaps, the few pages devoted to Byrd’s biography in Fellowes’ venerable book (*William Byrd*, 2nd ed. [Oxford University Press, 1948; orig. ed., 1936]) is all that we needed to know?

The above having been said, the biographical section has several aspects to recommend it. First of all, the introduction consists primarily of an “Outline Chronology of Byrd’s Life and Music” on facing pages. Second, there is a series of tables detailing the historical background of the various periods in