

Renaissance Study Sheet (1450 – 1650 +/-) Praxis Workshop

Musical Style

- Homogenous tone color: consorts, etc.
- Parts written simultaneously instead of successively—thinking more vertically
- Imitative counterpoint, w/ homorhythmic passages for contrast; and polyphony pervading compositional style
- Overlapping phrase structure w/in a piece: e.g., “hocket cadences” “continuous texture,” as in Palestrina
- Bass voice gradually assumes a functional foundation within a four-voice scheme
- Word/text painting—united with music: syllabically set and the setting to represent meaning.
- Rise of instrumental music, but choral is still pervading aesthetic for musical compositions
- Vocal range: extended downward to Bb below staff; upward to G2 in treble clef
- Sacred is more composed than secular music; the motet is popular genre after the 16th century

Schools of Composition

- Netherlands—Franco Flemish School: 1450-1550; took over Burgundian School; composed at churches and courts and became an international style;
 - Composers of note here:
 - Johannes Ockeghem (1410/20-1497)
 - Jacob Obrecht (1458-1505)
 - Josquin Des Prez (ca. 1440-1521)
 - Adrian Willaert (ca. 1490 – 1562)
- Styles of this school/innovations include composing in a concealed structure:
 - Existing music as basis for compositions
 - Inversion of melodies
 - Retrograde writing (backwards)
 - Retrograde inversions
 - Mensuration canons (one voice regular rhythm; another voice augmented)
 - Use of augmentation and diminution
- National/Secular Styles of Vocal Music
 - France: chanson equal voiced polyphony; homorhythmic/homophonic, melody in top voice; clearly defined form (AB, ABA, etc.); dance-like, elegant, duple meter, usually; used “musique mesure”, or measure music dictated by rhythm of text
 - Italy: frottola (an Italian chanson); madrigal (through composed, used text painting, sometimes polyphonic/imitative, 4 to 6 parts with 5 being typical, sectional); composers included Gesualdo, Monteverdi—who changed conception by end of period to a more continuo-like setting for solo voice (Baroque style)

- Germany: tenor lied (melody in middle/tenor line; polyphonic); quodlibet (many melodies running at the same time)
- England: madrigals with fa, la, la's
- Spain: romance—a ballad, strophic, homophonic, melody in top voice; villancico—sontrapuntal, 3 – 4 vv.; duple meter; instruments doubling/playing non-singing voices.
- Instrumental Music: 4 types; lute music, keyboard music (harps; virginals, etc)
 - Vocal model compositions: ricercar, canzona
 - Dances
 - Variations
 - Improvised pieces