



UNIVERSITÀ DI PAVIA
Dipartimento di
Musicologia e Beni Culturali

Analysing Josquin

*Tonal Organization, Form, Structure,
Expression and Rhetoric in Josquin's Music*



International Online Conference

University of Pavia
Department of Musicology
and Cultural Heritage
(Cremona, IT)

18-19 November 2021

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18 November 2021, h 17:00-20:30

DANIELE SABAINO, FRANCESCO SAGGIO
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(Boston University, College of Fine Arts)
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(Institute of Art of the
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CLARE BOKULICH
(University of Zürich)
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ABSTRACT

CLARE BOKULICH
(University of Zürich)

Josquin and the Two-Voice, Three-Part Benedictus

Reduced-texture sections of the mass (e.g., *Christe, Pleni, Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei II*) fit awkwardly into contemporary narratives of Renaissance music. Usually eschewing borrowed material, it is unclear how these sections relate to the unified outer movements of the mass. An extensive analysis of reduced-texture sections throughout the period, however, reveals that several composers treated these sections in a consistent and distinctive manner, such that it is even possible to discern certain signature approaches. Josquin's signature, unique among his contemporaries, hinges on subdividing the *Benedictus* into three free-standing sections: *Benedictus/Qui venit/In nomine domini*, each of which is composed as a duo. Ranging between seven and sixteen breves in length, these duos are the shortest self-contained sections in Josquin's entire compositional output. Drawing on a comparative analysis of two-voice writing across genres, I argue that Josquin's tripartite *Benedictus* settings shy away from many of the features found elsewhere in the composer's mass writing, and thus offer insight into the interplay between length, form, and counterpoint, while also enriching our understanding of Josquin's manifold compositional guises.

ANNE-EMMANUELLE CEULEMANS
(Université catholique de Louvain, Louven-La-Neuve)

The Clausula Formalis in Josquin's Motets for Four and Five Voices

The paper focuses on the treatment of a stereotypical cadential turn in Josquin's four- and five-part motets: the so-called *clausula formalis*. This two-voice progression is characterised by the succession of an imperfect consonance and a perfect consonance, preceded by a dissonant suspension. Sarah Fuller has shown that in the fourteenth century the directed progression that

forms the basis of the *clausula formalis* fulfilled three musical functions: articulating the musical discourse through the introduction of more or less pronounced closures; highlighting or, on the contrary, contradicting the text; and finally, hierarchising the scale degrees. These three functions were maintained until the end of the sixteenth century. My research will focus on the last of these functions, examining the harmonisation of the *clausula formalis*, its position within the scale and its relation to the final.

ANTONIO CHEMOTTI
(Institute of Art of the
Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw)
Audible Silence. Rests as Expressive Means

In his *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae* (1599), the composer and music theorist Joachim Burmeister described an expressive use of rests termed *aposiopesis* as a "complete silence in all voices indicated through a certain sign". Burmeister's definition points at the key aspects of such "general rests", namely their textual status and the participation of all parts. It is an intentional silence explicitly notated. Instances of *aposiopesis* to express death, mortality, absence, silence etc. are very common around 1600, as Katrin Bartels' catalogue of musical-rhetorical figures has shown. In Josquin's times, instead, such expressive rests do not seem to have been much favoured by composers. Accordingly, musicological studies that addressed rests occurring simultaneously in each part around 1500 discussed them as markers of textual-musical structures or as indicators of mensuration. In my paper, I will review a few examples of "general rests" in the music of Josquin Desprez and his contemporaries. Do these fulfil solely practical and syntactical functions? Is there an expressive intention to be identified in them? Are sectional barlines to be interpreted as "notated silence"? The analysis will be complemented by a comparison with selected examples from earlier and later repertoires, and I will argue that composers could make silence "audible" with expressive purposes long before the theoretical conceptualisation of *aposiopesis*.

MARCO MANGANI
(Università degli Studi di Firenze)
*Rereading Aaron Analysing Josquin:
The Case of the Chansons*

In this paper I intend to reconsider the four *chansons* by Josquin for which Aaron's Treatise (1525) proposes as many modal classifications: *La plus des plus* (*Odhecaton* 64), *L'homme armé* (*Canti B* 1), *O Venus bant* (*Odhecaton* 78) and *Comment peult* (*Canti B* 19). For the purposes of this investigation, I will leave aside all attributional problems concerning, in particular, *O Venus bant*, placing myself in the perspective of what Aaron himself considered to be by Josquin. The aim of the investigation is to understand:

- (1) in what sense one can speak of "mode" in the case of secular polyphony, and what are, again in this case, the indicators that Aaron considers relevant;
- (2) whether the constant presence in the Tenor of a pre-existing melody determines, as in the case of sacred polyphony on *cantus firmus*, the modal classification of the entire structure;
- (3) whether and to what extent the conditioning of the fixed form of the *rondeau* (in the case of *La plus des plus*) affects the modal profile;
- (4) whether and to what extent the canon technique conditions the modal profile (in the case of *Comment peult*);
- (5) what are the reasons for assigning the problematic tonal type $g^2 \flat \frac{1}{2} C$ to the seventh mode (again in the case of *Comment peult*).

For the purposes of this investigation, the *chansons* by other composers that Aaron considers together with those of Josquin will be taken as a comparative repertoire.

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JOSHUA RIFKIN
(Boston University, College of Fine Arts)
Josquin and Ambiguity: Seven Openings

Josquin's works, especially those of his later years, abound in things that we can read and hear in more than one way. Often, in fact, the reading and the hearing

can seem contradictory. Analyses have often privileged the first member of this pair; I shall seek, on the basis of seven openings involving canon, to redress the balance, asking how contrapuntal procedures favored by Josquin create what the singer or listener experience in ways not immediately inferable from the written notes—a kind of deceptive ambiguity that contributes powerfully to the richness of his music.

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JESSE RODIN
(Stanford University)

*Finding Josquin Among the Nymphs:
Style and Technique in a Lament for Okeghem's Death*

No one could plausibly deny the raw eloquence of *Nymphes des bois/Requiem*, Josquin's *déploration* on the death of Johannes Okeghem. Lushly textured in five voices with a Tenor that sings the *Requiem* chant down a step in doleful Phrygian, this setting of Jean Molinet's lament has brought tears to the eyes of many a listener. The *prima pars* marshals nymphs, goddesses, and expert singers to cry piercingly for the departed composer; the *secunda pars* commands Josquin and his fellow singers to put on mourning clothes and weep copiously. Throughout the musical notation is dressed symbolically in black. For all of its emotional power, *Nymphes des bois* has long posed a problem, in that it apparently eschews Josquin's characteristic compositional language. Gustave Reese, having doubtless noticed a marked absence of imitation, paired duos, and clearly delineated phrases, called the *prima pars* "an imitation of the style of Ockeghem." More recent writers have amplified this view, with David Fallows in his 2009 monograph saying the piece is "quite unlike what we otherwise know of Josquin." Did Josquin really mourn Okeghem by echoing his compositional style? I suggest that the answer is an emphatic no: in *Nymphes des bois* Josquin is hiding in plain sight, once we know where to look for him. Drawing on analytical methods developed by Joshua Rifkin and John Milsom, I argue that the piece is shot through with the motivic writing and combinative techniques for which Josquin

has only fairly recently become famous. Moreover, *Nymphes des bois* turns out to have much in common with another five-voice work from the years around 1500, the *Stabat mater*. Indeed on closer inspection it emerges that some of the most eloquent—and seemingly old-fashioned—passages show Josquin paying homage to Okeghem in a voice very much his own.

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DAVID J. ROTHENBERG
(Case Western Reserve University)

*Mourning, Mode, Recitation, and Text Expression
in Planxit autem David*

Heinrich Glarean praised the four-voice motet *Planxit autem David* for “everywhere express[ing] most wonderfully the mood of lamenting.” Though Glarean was sure the piece was by Josquin, stating “nor is there anything in this song that is not worthy of its composer,” Richard Sherr has pointed out that Glarean’s edition of the motet was copied from Petrucci’s *Motetti C*, which transmits it without attribution. Attributions or lack thereof in other sources leave significant doubt about Josquin’s authorship—one source attributes the work to Ninot le Petit. Still, *Planxit autem David* remains very much part of the conversation about Josquin’s style. The New Josquin Edition counts it among the securely attributed works, many scholars continue to believe it might well be by Josquin, and those who don’t consider it authentic still take the time to discuss it because they share Glarean’s assessment of its high quality. This paper treats *Planxit autem David* as a likely work of Josquin worthy of analysis in the context of the composer’s oeuvre and the wider repertoire of sacred music ca. 1500. Building on excellent analyses by Ludwig Finscher, Todd Borgerding, and especially Timothy McKinney, I argue that much-discussed quotations of the Roman Lamentations tone in this motet are part of a broader web of stylistic features that place it squarely within the tradition of mournful and penitential liturgy and music from the turn of the sixteenth century. These features include use of the Hypolydian mode, which recalls not just the Lamentations of Holy Week but also the Mass; passages of declamatory texture that recall

monophonic chant recitation in mournful liturgies; and extensive use of homophonic texture, which can be understood to honor the dead by aligning their deceased bodies with the body of Christ.

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DANIELE SABAINO
(Università degli Studi di Pavia)

“*Si come fece il Dotto Josquino*”:
Zarlino’s Modal (Re)interpretations of Josquin’s Music

In the Fourth Part of the *Istitutioni Harmoniche*, as it is well known, Zarlino mentions some motets and the *Missa Gaudeamus* by Josquin as compositions particularly representative of the modes. These references constitute a double challenge for modern analysis: on the one hand, about Josquin’s possible modal consciousness, and the on the other hand about the correspondence between that possible awareness, which could in case have existed only with regards to the eight-mode system, and Zarlino’s horizon, which advocates a system comprising twelve modes. The paper will therefore focus on the music features that led Zarlino to attribute each composition to a specific mode in order to clarify the importance that Zarlino gives to the single modal constituents in the process of modal attribution, as well as to verify once again the legitimacy of a modal reading of Josquin’s music.

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FRANCESCO SAGGIO
(Università degli Studi di Pavia)

The Notation of Josquin’s Masses

This paper aims to start a study of the meaning of the mensural sign found in Josquin’s music. The mass repertoire seems particularly useful to start the study: in fact, at least thirteen compositions are now deemed to be surely by Josquin. The multi-part structure of each mass cycle, resulting, in five movements of different

length, sometimes divided into even smaller sections, allows us to observe the mensural signs in various context: used one after the other or combined simultaneously in vertical combinations; applied to different textures and different liturgical texts, each one with its own expressive features. This manifold usage raises a number of questions: Why did Josquin choose a certain mensural sign in a specific part of a Mass? Is there any relationship between each sign and the texture or the sung text of the section? What is the expressive meaning (if any) of a particular combination of *mensurae*? Is it possible to understand the compositional reasons underlying each mensural choice? The paper will try to provide a first answer to these questions, analysing the most authoritative masses in the context of their textual tradition and into the framework of the music theory of the time.

PETER SCHUBERT
(McGill University, Montreal)

Comporre di fantasia:
Josquin's Progressively Linked Soggetti

The word “fantasia” has several meanings in the Renaissance. Gregory Butler (1974) identified it as a voice-leading pattern, first found in a piece titled “Fantasies de Joskin,” which we now call “stretto fuga” (Milson 2005). However, in a passage from the *Istitutioni Harmoniche* (1558) that has not been much studied, Zarlino uses the term to mean something else. He says “Ma quando il Compositore andrà cavando il Soggetto dalle parti della cantilena, cioè quando caverà una parte dall'altra, & andrà cavando il Soggetto per tal maniera, & facendo insieme la compositione, come vederemo altrove; quella particella, che lui caverà fuori delle altre, sopra la quale dipoi componderà le parti della sua compositione, si chiamerà sempre il Soggetto. Et tal modo di comporre li Pratici dimandano Comporre di fantasia: ancorache si possa etiandio nominare Contrapuntizare, o Far contraponto, come si vuole.” (*Istitutioni Harmoniche*, Parte Terza, cap. 26, p. 172). In my talk I will show some instances of this type of fan-

tasia in short sections of masses and motets of Josquin. This technique, which I call “progressively linked *soggetti*,” is a way to generate new melodies from old ones, to maintain a continuous texture while introducing new melodic material, and to move smoothly through successive phrases of text. Although it is not as common as paired non-imitative duos, imitation, and homorhythm, it is an ingenious means of adding variety to a polyphonic texture. I will conclude with an example from a *Musica Nova* madrigal by Willaert.



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Analysing Josquin

Tonal Organization, Form, Structure, Expression and Rhetoric in Josquin's Music

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In occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of Josquin des Prez (Aug 27, 1521), the **Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage** (University of Pavia, Campus of Cremona), organizes an **International On-line Conference** devoted to the analysis of **Josquin's Music**, which will be held on **18-19 November, from 5pm to 9pm (UTC +1)**. The Conference will address topic of tonal organization, form, structure, expression and rhetoric.



You Tube The Conference will be streamed on YouTube, on the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage channel:

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 **zoom** Anyone who wish to take part in the discussion following each paper should send a mail to francesco.saggio@unipv.it to get Zoom login credentials. Access will be granted as far as time permits.

