

Anonymous

Missa Sine nomine a 3 (Missa La plus dolente)
in Parma, Bibl. Naz. Palatina, Fondo parmense,
ms. 1158

Introduced and edited by
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August, 2023

ISBN 978-87-93815-13-1

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http://sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_An02.pdf

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(*Missa La plus dolente*)

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Kyrie and Gloria from a mass for two equal high voices (*c'-f'', a-f''*) and a tenor voice, which is based on canonic imitation at the unison between the upper voices all the way through. The musical material in the mass is borrowed from an anonymous three-part rondeau “La plus dolente qui soit née” written for a similar disposition of the voices. The mass is simple and euphonious and an obvious choice for performance with the boys of a *maîtrise* supported by their *maitre*.

A paper manuscript, Parma, Bibl. Naz. Palatina, Fondo parmense, ms. 1158, which contains treatises on music theory, was made by the young Franchinus Gaffurius (1451–1522) in Lodi in the years 1472–74. On empty pages following the first treatise, a later hand has entered a three-part mass on ff. 34v–38v.¹ It is not complete. The copying stopped after only one staff of the Credo on f. 38v, and the underlay of text stops after the two first staves of the Gloria on f. 35v, while the Kyrie as intended is provided with full text. There are still six openings with blank staves left after the Gloria in the MS, so there was room for a complete copy.

It is easy to imagine what happened. The copyist, who could be Gaffurius himself later in his career, has taken an opportunity to secure an interesting mass that a passing musician had brought with him, and hastily started copying where there was room in an older manuscript. He simply did not manage to finish before the owner of the exemplar moved on.

The distribution of the text in the Gloria has proved difficult. Gloria consists of four sections. The second section ends with four fermata chords in bars 92–96. Such chords usually appear with the words “Jesu Christe”, but after them follow two more sections, and that is too much for the few words left in “Cum sancto spiritu”. It could have happened that at some point the two sections in the middle of Gloria were exchanged. In that case, the two-part section would have the text “Domine deus”, while the three-part section could begin “Qui tollis” and end with “Jesu Christe”. However, I have not succeeded in getting the words to fit the music, so the order of the sections in the edition is unchanged from the source, and the text has been adapted with a single text omission and a repeat of words.

The mass is built on a three-part rondeau »La plus dolente qui suit née«, which appears without composer attribution in the two ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers, Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517 (Dijon) and Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf

¹ Cf. Francesco Saggio, ‘Il codice Parmense 1158. Descrizione del manoscritto ed edizione delle musiche di Gaffurio’, in Davide Daolmi (ed.), *Ritratto di Gaffurio*. Lucca 2017, pp. 73–103 (at pp. 75–76). A facsimile of the MS can be found at <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/1452/#/images>.

number, both created during the early 1470s. It is a sad song expressing sorrow until the wish of death, and it is sung by a woman. It is written for two high voices, which treat most verse lines in unison canonic imitation, and the canon structure is supported by a contratenor placed an octave lower. The mass is for the same set of voices with their ranges slightly expanded in order to carry through the longer stretches of music. The music of the rondeau has put its stamp on all the mass music. In the edition, the Dijon version of the song can be found after the mass for easy comparison.

Kyrie quotes all three voices of the song's first line prolonged from six bars into 12 bars, and Christe obviously builds on motives from the song's second line. Gloria opens with the same music as Kyrie, transforming the song's two first lines into its first section. The second section uses the song's second line, and at the end of Gloria, in the last section which must have had the text "Cum sancto spiritu", we meet a literal quote in bars 158-167 of the whole second part of the rondeau.

A characteristic feature of the rondeau is its disregard of the normal placements of cadences in the mensural pattern, that is, at the start of a perfection in *tempus perfectum*. This feature is repeated in the mass where it directly quotes the song, see the cadence in Kyrie, bar 11, and the cadences at the end of Gloria, bars 161 and 166. Between these quotes the canons and material derived from them are used freely in the mass sections: There are many stock phrases in the Dorian mode fit for canonic treatment. For example, the simple figure involving the mode's third and fifth steps, which is inserted in the first Kyrie bars 5-8 and returns to open Christe and the last section of Gloria. It has an uncanny likeness to the second line of Robert Morton's rondeau "N'aray je jamais mieulx que j'ay?", a song with which "La plus dolente" is obviously related. In a few instances, also the contratenor takes part in the imitations, see for example in Kyrie bar 13 and Gloria bars 29 and 46; this does not happen in the song, where the contratenor has a more restricted and supportive role.

In spite of the few sources for "La plus dolente" with French words, the song must have been widely circulated and have started its career at an early date, maybe around 1460 or earlier. Its music appears as Latin contrafacta in sources geographically stretching from Bohemia to Italy and spanning several generations from the late 1460s to the first decade of the 16th century – as a table blessing and as prayers. The close relations between the rondeau and the mass make it probable that they were created by the same composer.

See further the online editions of the anonymous »La plus dolente qui soit nee« and Robert Morton's »N'aray je jamais mieulx que j'ay?« in *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*.²

2 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH074.html> and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH003.html>.

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Missa Sine nomine a 3

(*Mass La plus dolente*)

Incomplete: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo (fragment)

Source: Parma, Bibl. Naz. Palatina, Fondo parmese, ms. 1158, ff. 34V-38V

[Superius 1] Mensura = d

[Superius 2]

Contratenor

6

e - lei - son.

e - lei - son.

e - lei - son.

13 Mensura = o

Chri -

Chri -

Chri -

1) *Superius 1*, bar 4.1 is a *semibrevis* (error).

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24

ste
ste
ste

2)

3)

35

e - lei - son.
e - lei - son.
e - lei - son.

49 Mensura = $\frac{1}{4}$

Ky

Ky

Ky

56

ri - e e lei - son.
ri - e e lei - son.
ri - e e lei - son.

2) *Contratenor*, bar 26 is missing in the ligature (error).

3) *Superius* 1, bar 31.1 is not coloured (error).

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[Superius 1] Mensura = $\frac{1}{2}$

[Superius 2]

[Contratenor]

5

bus bo - ne vo - lun-ta - tis. Lau - da - mus

mi - ni - bus bo - ne vo - lun-ta - tis. Lau -

bus bo - ne vo - lun-ta - tis. Lau -

10

te. Be-ne - di - ci-mus te. Ad - o - ra - - - mus

da - mus te. Be-ne - di - ci-mus te. Ad - o - ra - - - mus

da - mus te. Be-ne - di - ci-mus te. Ad - o - ra - - - mus

15

te. Glo - ri - fi - ca - mus te. Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti -

te. Glo - ri - fi - ca - mus te. Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti -

te. Glo - ri - fi - ca - mus te. Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti -

1) Contratenor, bar 6.1 is a *minima* (error).

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21

bi prop - ter mag - nam glo - ri - am tu - - am.

bi prop - ter mag - nam glo - ri - am tu - - am.

bi prop - ter mag - nam glo - ri - am tu - - am.

$\text{O} \cdot = \text{H}$

Mensura = O

29

Do mi - ne de - us, rex ce - le - stis,

Do mi - ne de - us, rex

Do mi - ne de - us, do - mi - ne de - us, rex ce -

37

de - us pa - ter om - ni - po -

ce - le - stis, de - us pa - ter om - ni - po -

le - stis, de - us pa - ter om - ni - po -

45

tens. Do - mi - ne fi - li u - ni - ge - ni -

tens. Do - mi - ne fi - li u - ni -

tens. Do - mi - ne fi - li u - ni - ge - ni -

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57

te Jhesu Criste. Domine deus, agnus dei, fidei
genitatem te Jhesu Criste. Domine deus, agnus dei
te Jhesu Criste. Domine deus, agnus dei

67

li - us pa - - - tris. Qui tol -
de - i, fi - li - us pa - - - tris. Qui
de - i, fi - li - us pa - - - tris. Qui tol - lis pec -

76

lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui tol -
tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui
ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui

85

lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re.
tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re.
tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re.
[Tacet]

2) Contratenor, bar 77, e-g (error).

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97 Mensura = o

Qui se - - des ad dex - te - ram pa - - -

Qui se - - des ad dex - te - ram pa - - -

107 tris, mi - se - re - re no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu so -

tris, mi - se - re - re no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu

118 lus sanc tus. Tu so - - lus

so - lus sanc tus. Tu so - - lus do -

128 do - mi - nus. Tu so - lus al - tis - si - mus,

mi - nus. Tu so - lus al - tis - si - mus,

140 Jhe - - su Cri - - - ste.

Jhe - - su Cri - - - ste.

3) *Superius 1*, bar 140.2 is g' (error).

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o ≤ o.

151 Mensura = d

Cum sanc - to spi -

Cum sanc - to spi -

Cum sanc - to spi -

156

ri - tu, in glo - ri - a

ri - tu, in glo -

ri - tu,

160

de - i pa - tris. A -

ri - a de - i pa - tris.

de - i pa - tris.

164

men.

A - men.

A - men.

4) *Contratenor*, bar 165.1, the *minima a* is missing (error).

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[Superius 1] Mensura = d

Pa - - - trem om - ni - po-ten -

[Superius 2]

[Contratenor]

8

6

tem, fac - to - rem ce - li_ et ter - re, vi - si - bi - li

This musical score page from 'Missa Sine nomine' features three staves. Staff 1 (Superius 1) begins with a melodic line consisting of a series of eighth-note heads, followed by a sustained note with a vertical stroke, and then a series of eighth-note heads. The text 'Pa' is written below the notes. A 'trem' instruction is placed above a group of notes. The text 'omni poten' follows. Staff 2 (Superius 2) and Staff 3 (Contratenor) are entirely blank. The key signature changes to one sharp at the beginning of the second system. The vocal parts continue with the text 'tem, fac - to - rem ce - li_ et ter - re, vi - si - bi - li'. The Contratenor staff has a '8' written below it.

Dijon no. 44

Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517, ff. 52v-53

La plus dolente qui soit née [Anonymous]

[Superius 1] Mensura = d

[Superius 2] 1)

Contratenor

Bassus

5

soit né - e et aus - si la plus for -
ord - né - e, et suis en tel point de -
né - - - e et aus - si la plus point
don - - - e, et suis en tel point
né - - - e et aus - si la plus for - tu - né -
don - - - e, et suis en tel point de - me - né -
10

tu - né - e je suis, sans a - voir point de joy -
me - né - e que_es - jou - ir je ne point me pour -
for - tu - né - e je suis, sans a - voir point de
de - me - né - e que_es - jou - ir je ne point me pour -
e je suis, sans a - voir point de
e que_es - jou - ir je ne point me pour -
15

2)

- - - e, pour - quoy, sur n'ay ma foy, je
- - - e, et si riens qui me
joy - - e, pour - quoy, sur n'ay ma foy, je
- roy - - e, et si riens qui me
joy - - e,
- roy - - e,

1) *Superius 2* has a signature flat before *b* in the first staff (error).2) *Superius 1*, bar 16.3 is *f'-e'* (error).

Dijon no. 44, p. 2

20

voul - droi - e que la mort me fut tost don - né - e.
res - joy - e par - quoy doi bien e - stre nom - mé - e
voul - droi - - e que la mort me fut tost don - né - e.
res - joy - - e par - quoy doi bien e - stre nom - mé - e
voul - droi - - e que la mort me fut tost don - né - e.
res - joy - - e par - quoy doi bien e - stre nom - mé - e

2a. De tous lieux suis ha - ban - don - né -
2a. De tous lieux suis ha - ban - don - né -
2a. De tous lieux suis ha-ban - don - né -

6

e, car For - tu - ne m'a de - sti - né - e
e, car For - tu - ne m'a de-sti - - -
e, car For - tu - ne m'a de - sti - né - e d'e -

11

d'e-stre tous - jours ou que je soi - - - e

né - e d'e - stre tous - jours ou que je soi - - - e

stre tous - jours ou que 1. La soi - - e

2b.4. la plus do - len - te qui soit né - - e.

2b.4. la plus do - len - te qui soit né - - e.

2b.4. la plus do - len - te qui soit né - - e.