

STRAVINSKY AS SCHOLAR: EARLY MUSIC AND THE AMERICAN WORKS

Paul Whitehead
Dr. Erol Ücer Center for Advanced Studies in Music (MIAM)
Istanbul Technical University (ITÜ)
whitehead@itu.edu.tr

Abstract: Igor Stravinsky's interest in early music intensified after his emigration to the United States, where the music that he studied included newly published pedagogical anthologies and other items. He refers to early music at several points in the "conversation" books and elsewhere, yet rarely broaches directly the influence of early music on his own. Nevertheless, features of Stravinsky's music can be seen to engage with the contents of the various early-music sources available to him. This aspect of his style can be studied as an interesting component of his late-stage neo-classicism and early serialism.

Keywords: Stravinsky; early music; anthology; Mass; Orpheus; Agon; Canticum sacrum

STRAVINSKY COMO ESTUDIOSO: MÚSICA ANTIGA E AS OBRAS AMERICANAS

Resumo: O interesse de Igor Stravinsky sobre a música antiga se intensificou depois da sua emigração aos Estados Unidos, onde a música por ele estudada incluiu antologias pedagógicas recentemente publicadas e outros itens. Ele se refere à música antiga em vários momentos nos livros de "conversa" e em outros lugares, porém, raramente admite abertamente a influência da música antiga sobre a sua própria. Contudo, pode-se observar aspectos da música de Stravinsky engajando com o conteúdo de diversas fontes de música antiga então disponíveis. Este aspecto do seu estilo pode ser estudado

como um componente interessante do seu neoclassicismo tardio e primeiro serialismo.

Palavras-chave: Stravinsky, música antiga, antologia, Missa, Orfeu, Agon, Canticum sacrum.

The post-World War II years were a time of vigorous scholarly activity in the area of early music, notably in the United States, where emigré European scholars encountered a receptive academic environment and performing ensembles found stimulation in a steady exploration of early-music repertoires hitherto little known. The years following Igor Stravinsky's arrival in America in 1939 coincided fruitfully with the endeavours of performers, academics, and publishers in this field (both American and European), and his exploration of their monographs and music editions (particularly anthologies) makes for an interesting area of study. Harry Haskell mentions Stravinsky's contacts with performers Noah Greenberg and Safford Cape (while also noting that Stravinsky's earlier moves towards neo-classicism, in the 1920s, had had nothing to do with the early-music performance movement) (1988, 76 and 206). Scholars of early music who interested Stravinsky included Edward Lowinsky, and he also admired Ernst Krenek, a fellow emigré composer who had made a study of the music of Ockeghem, and whose own interactions with early music provide some interesting parallels with Stravinsky's. Looming largest among his closest associates is, of course, Robert Craft, the composer and writer whom he met in 1948 and who undoubtedly played a much larger role than the tag of "assistant" would imply. Craft in later years insisted that his close relationship with Stravinsky had assumed one of guidance as regards artistic

direction, and we can be sure that he facilitated many of Stravinsky's explorations of early music.¹

Stravinsky's neo-classical phase had taken hold many years before his move to the United States, and formed a background to his ongoing interaction with early musics after his emigration. The critical work, the ballet *Pulcinella*, had been premiered in Paris in 1920, and was famously described by the composer as "my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible" (1962, 113). The comment is intriguing, and since this work is based on actual music (by Pergolesi and others) rather than merely its style (and a style that, moreover, Stravinsky was inclined to disparage in later years), it sets an incomplete precedent for his later endeavours, both before and during his American period.

Indeed, the stylistic spectrum of Stravinsky's early-music interests in the American years spanned a wide range, and engaged in diverse ways with the techniques of his late-stage neo-classicism and eventual move towards serialism. The discussion below will rest on three premises: that Stravinsky's comments on the relevance of his early-music discoveries for his own compositions are deliberately cryptic, and leave many relevant connections "behind the scenes," as it were; that the individual works of Stravinsky discussed here each present their own unique complex of ingredients, in which input from early-music sources varies in type (and arguably in relevance); and that in Stravinsky's transitional music of the 1940s and 1950s archaisms and modernity nestle side by side in mutual complementarity.

Stravinsky's public and private American writings (the former represented most volubly by the so-called "conversation" books co-authored with Craft) demonstrate an avid interest in music dating

1 The situation is summarised in Pasler 1983. The importance of Craft for Stravinsky has emerged as a field of study in itself.

back to the Middle Ages (and indeed, beyond), one that took hold in earnest during the period immediately following arrival in the United States.²

As an area for investigation, however, the relationship between his consumption of early music, as auditor and browser, and his own compositional output can soon become tangled and vague. At the very least, the role played by early music in the works of these years, rather than forming any systematic pattern, was sporadic and tailored to the characteristics of the specific work in question. Often it is not a question of model transformation in any explicit sense; indeed, any influence usually went unacknowledged by Stravinsky, if not denied outright, in one or other of the conversation books.

According to Craft, Stravinsky acquired as many of the standard music anthologies as he could find. These almost certainly provided the material on which Stravinsky based his impressions of much early music, as well as sources for the name-dropping sprinkled throughout the conversation books. He would almost certainly have had access to the widely circulated American pedagogical anthologies which appeared from the 1940s onwards, such as the *Historical Anthology of Music* (hereafter *HAM*),³ *Examples of Music before 1400*,⁴ and *Masterpieces of Music before 1750*.⁵ But these American publications were by no means the first music anthologies, and Stravinsky may well have had access (either before or after his emigration) to such earlier

2 These are: *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (1959), *Memories and Commentaries* (1960), *Expositions and Developments* (1962), *Dialogues and a Diary* (1963), *Themes and Episodes* (1966), *Retrospectives and Conclusions* (1969), *Themes and Conclusions* (1972; a reprint of *Themes and Episodes* and *Retrospectives and Conclusions*).

3 Ed. Archibold T. Davison and Willi Apel, 2 vols., "Oriental, Medieval and Renaissance Music," and "Baroque, Rococo, and Pre-Classical Music" (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946 (rev. 1949) and 1950). I am grateful to Professor Richard Taruskin for first alerting me to the significance for Stravinsky of these and other collections.

4 Ed. Harold Gleason (Rochester, N.Y.: Eastman School of Music Publications, 1942).

5 Ed. Carl Parrish and John F. Ohl (New York: W. W. Norton, 1951).

publications as Johannes Wolf's *Geschichte der Mensural-Notation von 1250-1460*,⁶ Hugo Riemann's *Musikgeschichte in Beispielen*,⁷ Alfred Einstein's *Beispielsammlung zur Musikgeschichte*⁸ and Arnold Schering's *Geschichte der Musik in Beispielen*.⁹ (In addition, Wolf's *Sing- und Spielmusik aus alterer Zeit*¹⁰ was republished in New York (probably in 1946) as *Music of Earlier Times*.¹¹)

These anthologies played an important role in education during the 1940s and 1950s (and indeed, beyond: *HAM* was still commonly used as a teaching aid up until the 1980s). Inevitably, considering the huge repertoire these collections represent, their sheer selectivity can appear as a handicap. They undoubtedly introduced their readership to many composers and style periods for the first time, but simultaneously circumscribed that exposure to rather few exemplars. Indeed, the already highly selective content of the collections would often overlap. Johannes Ockeghem's chanson "Ma bouche rit," for example, appears in both *HAM* and Wolf's *Music of Earlier Times*, while the Agnus Dei I of Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame* is found in both *Examples of Music Before 1400* and *Masterpieces of Music Before 1750*.

Alongside these high-circulation items, a considerable additional amount of early music of varying vintages was published and available by the 1940s and 1950s. In fact, they include publications from which many of the anthologized items were sourced. The notably thorough Commentary in *HAM* provides source references for all of the featured works, along with details of any available sound recordings. Apart from primary manuscript and print sources, the editions cited include the series *Denkmäler deutscher*

6 Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904.

7 Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1925.

8 Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1930.

9 Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1931.

10 Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1926.

11 New York: Broude Bros.

Tonkunst,¹² *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern*,¹³ and *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich*,¹⁴ along with Volumes 1 and 3 of Friedrich Ludwig, ed., *Guillaume de Machaut, Musikalische Werke*,¹⁵ Volume 1 of Dragan Plamenac's collected works of Ockeghem,¹⁶ Leonard Ellinwood, *The Works of Francesco Landini*,¹⁷ and Thomas Marrocco, *Fourteenth-century Italian Cacce*.¹⁸ Influential and pioneering textbooks published in the United States around this time are also cited in *HAM*: notable are Willi Apel, *Notation of Polyphonic Music*,¹⁹ and Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*,²⁰ the latter hailed by Paul Echols and Maria Coldwell as "the first great milestone in American early-music studies."²¹

Apart from printed materials, gramophone recordings, again commonly in the form of anthologies, would also have been available to Stravinsky. Chief among these was probably the French *Anthologie sonore* series, begun in 1934 by Curt Sachs, who also provided many of the accompanying notes.²² By 1948 fourteen volumes had been issued, each comprising ten twelve-inch records. This early-music series ultimately comprised twenty volumes, and it rivals in scope the printed series cited above; in fact, several works featured in music anthologies were subsequently (or had been previously) recorded for *Anthologie sonore*. The set is cited several times in the notes on

12 Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1892–1931.

13 Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, from 1924 Augsburg: Filser, 1900–31; *HAM* gives the end-date as 1913, presumably a misprint.

14 Vienna: Artaria (and other publishers varies); *HAM* gives the dates as 1894-1938.

15 Leipzig, 1926 and 1929.

16 Leipzig, 1927.

17 Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1939.

18 Cambridge, MA, Mediaeval Academy of America, 1942.

19 Cambridge, MA, Mediaeval Academy of America, 1942.

20 New York: W. W. Norton, 1940.

21 Paul C. Echols and Maria V. Coldwell. "Early-music Revival." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 17 Oct. 2015.
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2235052>>.

22 A useful history and description of the *Anthologie sonore* series is provided by Pierre-F. Roberg at <http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/cds/ans99999.htm>

available recordings included in the *HAM* commentaries (examples include Guillaume de Machaut's "Je puis trop bien," *HAM*, vol. I, no. 45, *Anthologie sonore*, record 67, and Giovanni de Florentia's "Io son' un pellegrin," *HAM*, vol. I, no. 51, *Anthologie sonore*, record 8).

As in *HAM*, source references were conscientiously provided throughout the accompanying notes to *Anthologie sonore*. While overlapping to some extent with those for *HAM*, these tend to focus more on such older European publications as Sir John Stainer's collections *Early Bodleian Music*,²³ Henry Expert's *Collection Anthologie Chorale*,²⁴ the J. A. Fuller Maitland and William Barclay Squire edition of *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*,²⁵ and the *Publikationen älterer Musik* series.²⁶

Various other record anthologies were already available in the 1940s, though invariably on a more modest scale than the *Anthologie sonore*. They included the *Columbia History of Music through Ear and Eye* (a chronologically organised set whose first three volumes feature Renaissance and Baroque music),²⁷ HMV's *French Masters of the Middle Ages* (including examples of organum, and the Kyrie and "Qui propter nos" sections of Guillaume de Machaut's Mass),²⁸ the Parlophone series *2000 Years of Music* (an earlier project of Curt Sachs, lasting from 1931-33), and the two sets of *Seven Centuries of Sacred Music* recorded by Yves Tinayre in 1937 for the Lumen label.²⁹

23 London, Novello: 1898 and 1901.

24 Paris: Alphonse Leduc, from 1900.

25 London and Leipzig, 1894-99.

26 Ed. Theodor Kroyer (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926-1940).

27 Supervised by Percy Scholes (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1930-38). These collections were listed in *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*, 3rd edn. (New York: Crown Publishers, 1948), 614-17.

28 A significant later project was HMV's *The History of Music in Sound*, compiled by Gerald Abraham, from 1953 to 1959. Including detailed accompanying notes and musical examples, the set was apparently designed to complement the *New Oxford History of Music*, Vols. II (1954) and III (1960).

29 Haskell (1996, 73-130) provides a useful history of the rediscovery of early music during this this period.

Although much of this material would be found wanting by modern standards of scholarship (the performances on the sound anthologies particularly, whatever their huge documentary importance, are mainly of curiosity value today), it is nonetheless clear that the years following Stravinsky's arrival in America were by no means a dark age with regard to early-music availability. And it seems that Stravinsky readily took advantage of at least some of the resources available. It is known, for example, that he owned *Anthologie sonore*, and it is perhaps no coincidence that Josquins's *Duke Hercules Mass*, referred to in *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, 25, should appear in vol. III (record 73) of that set. As a further Josquin example, the second (three-voice) *Agnus Dei* of the *Missa l'Homme armé*, cited admiringly for the composer's handling of rhythm in *Memories and Commentaries* (107), is another *HAM* item (vol. I, no. 89). Among the instrumental repertoire, the "Stravaganza" of Giovanni Macque, mentioned in *Memories and Commentaries*, 116, is likely to have been the *Consonanze stravaganti* included as *HAM*, vol. I, no. 174 (incidentally, Giovanni Trabaci, referred to in *Themes and Conclusions*, 191, in relation to the chromatic tendencies of Macque and Gesualdo, is discussed in rather similar terms in the *HAM* commentary on this piece). And, noting Stravinsky's suggestion in 1956 of a "ricercar for 4 trombones" for inclusion in the concert program in which his *Canticum sacrum* would be premiered, we can observe that such a piece (though lacking any instrumental designation) is featured in *HAM* (vol. I, no. 136).

It is also quite possible that Stravinsky became alerted to otherwise obscure composers by a chance reference in *HAM* or in one of the other wide-circulation sources, and that this then provided the impetus for a more detailed exploration of their oeuvre or style. In *Memories and Commentaries*, 101, for instance, Stravinsky comments on a fragment from Baude Cordier's chanson "Pour le deffault de dieu

Bacchus,” almost certainly quoted from Gilbert Reaney, ed., *Early Fifteenth-Century Music*.³⁰ It is highly likely that he first discovered Cordier through *HAM* (vol. I, no. 48), or from Apel’s *Notation of Polyphonic Music* (pp.175, 427).

In fact, the inventory of books and music, manuscript or published, owned by Stravinsky and sometimes in signed copies (drawn up in the assessment of the Stravinsky estate) includes a number of specialist publications of renaissance and pre-renaissance music. Books and articles in the library included Manfred Bukofzer’s *Speculative Thinking in Medieval Music*³¹ and Edward E. Lowinsky’s *Secret Chromatic Art in the Netherlands Motet*.³² Early-music publications included Vol IV (*Cantiones sacrae*) of the Opera Omnia of Nicolai Gombert,³³ vol. II (comprising masses and mass sections) of the Collected Works of Johannes Ockeghem,³⁴ the *Opere complete* of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina,³⁵ and *Le Manuscrit de Musique du Tresor d’Apt (XIV-XV siecle)*.³⁶

This section of the estate comprises, in part, material inscribed to Stravinsky. Admittedly, this included gifts and complimentary copies of works which he might not otherwise have exerted himself to obtain. Yet his correspondence with publishing houses does show that he took an active interest in what was on the market, making an effort to acquire whatever interested him. In a letter to Boosey and Hawkes of July 1959, Stravinsky refers to the catalogue of H. Tiedemann of Berlin, requesting thirteen items (specified in the letter by catalogue number and a very abbreviated description, such as

30 Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1955, p. 2.

31 Offprint from *Speculum*, no. 17 (1942). This is most probably the article referred to in V. Stravinsky and Robert Craft 1978, 645.

32 New York: Russell and Russell, 1946.

33 Ed. Joseph Schmidt-Görg (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1951).

34 Ed. Dragan Plamenac (New York: American Musicological Society, 1947).

35 Ed. Raffaele Casimiri and Lino Bianchi (Rome: Scalera; Rome: Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, from 1939).

36 Ed. Amédée Gastoué (Paris: E. Droz, 1936).

“Neumes,” “Reaney,” “Willaert,” “Borren. Orlando di Laso”).³⁷ Earlier, in August 1954,³⁸ he had contacted Edgar Bielefeldt (also of Boosey and Hawkes) with a view to buying three items from the catalogue of Musikantiquariat Hans Schneider as soon as possible. These were: no. 73 “Guillaume de Machaut,” no. 75—“Luis Milan—Sämtliche Werke,” and no. 77—“Schütz—Sämtliche Werke.”³⁹ As a final illustration of Stravinsky’s keenness to obtain editions of early music, in October 1955 he asked Bielefeldt to acquire for him Anton Webern’s edition of the second book of Heinrich Isaac’s *Choralis Constantinus* in the DTÖ series.⁴⁰ Stravinsky already had Book III in his possession—a Christmas present from Robert Craft in 1952—and he may well have been alerted to Webern’s edition by Louise Cuyler’s reference to it in her Introduction (p. 16).⁴¹ It is known that Stravinsky had a particular fondness for the music of Isaac, claiming in a 1952 interview with the *Herald Tribune* that “between his musical thinking and my own there is a very close connection,” and describing the *Choralis Constantinus* as “a great work” (quoted in Joseph 2002, 221).

When we turn to Stravinsky’s actual remarks about early music, especially in the Stravinsky/Craft conversation books, we can see that they emphasize a number of pet interests and theories. One of these is the approach to “tonality” outlined by Edward Lowinsky. Stravinsky

37 Craft 1985, 421. “Neumes” (catalogue no. 1012) might refer to a publication such as Michel Huglo, “Les noms des neumes et leur origine,” *Études grégoriennes* n. 1 (1954). “Reaney” (no. 1117) is probably a reference to *Early Fifteenth-Century Music*. “Willaert” (1518) is probably the *Opera omnia*, ed. H. Zenck and W. Gerstenberg, *CMM* 3, Vols. I-III (1950), IV (1952) or V (1957). “Borren, Orlande de Lassus” (808) is almost certainly a reference to that author’s monograph on that composer (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1920). Of the additional items listed in the letter, “Banchieri” (105) might mean Francesco Viatelli, ed., *Adriano Banchieri: Musiche corali*, in the series *I classici musicali italiani* (Milan, 1919); Schering (1931) includes as no. 151 a “Sinfonia für vier Instrumenten” by Banchieri.

38 Craft 1985, 382.

39 Stravinsky’s interest in Milan might have been aroused by his appearance in the *Anthologie sonore* (Vols. II (Record 17) and IV (Record 40).

40 Ed. A. von Webern, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, xxxii, Jg.xvi/1 (1909).

41 Ed. Louise Cuyler (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1950).

was familiar with Lowinsky's work on the Renaissance motet (he apparently even corresponded with him), and he comments approvingly and in some detail in *Expositions and Developments* (121-23) on that author's *Tonality and Atonality in Sixteenth-Century Music*.⁴² In *Memories and Commentaries* he talks specifically about chromaticism, contending that "the century of chromatic development, from Clemens Non Papa ... to Macque ... and Gesualdo, exceeds in sureness of harmonic movement and in the use of dissonance the chromaticism of the operatic composers of the seventeenth century" (111).

At the same time, he points out that "our whole approach to sixteenth-century music is apt to be slanted toward a chromaticism that was really no more than a tiny development" (110)—in recognition, perhaps, that it is so often the atypical and exceptional among early-music repertoires that most often peaks the interest of later composers.

Often, and of course most intriguingly for us, Stravinsky's references to early music are made apropos his own. They therefore form a strand of discourse by which the ever voluble composer chooses to provide for his reader a kind of erudite contextualisation of his works, and to hint obliquely at his techniques of composition. Numerous quotes from the conversation books could be given; together they present an unsystematic invocation of historical examples designed primarily to illuminate some of the different facets of Stravinsky's style as it evolved up to the 1950s. But at virtually no point does the composer detail any specific influences of early music upon his own compositions. Rather, he seems to have taken a riddling delight in continually evading this issue, offering instead a sparkling facade of anecdotes and suggestive comparisons with his own works—all of a *post hoc* nature.

42 Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

Thus, in connection with Lowinsky's observation that repetition of cadence "keys" at other points in the form was entailed in certain forms of dance music (*Expositions and Developments*, 121), Stravinsky suggests a parallel with his own use of "tonality repetition" in ballet scores "versus my development, in *Threni*, for example, of a kind of 'triadic atonality'" (122). And in *Conversations* (19) he professes to having studied Palestrina's complete service, and the Lamentations of Tallis and Byrd, prior to composing *Threni* (although denying that there is any influence of these works on his own music). In *Memories and Commentaries* (99), though, he does posit a vague structural parallel between a Baroque work and his *Epitaphium*: "as I worked the music out, it became a kind of hymn, like Purcell's Funeral Music for Queen Mary."

Stravinsky's comments, mentioned above, on a Josquin Agnus Dei and on the music of Baude Cordier (*Memories and Commentaries*, 107) are apparently made to provide parallels (not "equivalents," he stresses) to the polyrhythmic complexities found in *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*. His explanation is characteristically cryptic, yet seemingly reflects his deliberations, around this time, on the changing nature of the vertical/horizontal tensions generated by the encroaching serialism in the music of this typically harmony-oriented composer. Stravinsky continues here a tendency to stress the vertical dimension of his music: "My polyrhythmic combinations are meant to be heard vertically ... I hear harmonically, of course, and I composer in the same way I always have" (*Conversations*, 22).

The question of atypicality has already been broached, and it is not surprising that, for instance, these Josquin and Baude Cordier excerpts should display metrical and rhythmic complexities hardly typical of their eras. Stravinsky's notation of the Cordier, in fact, heightens visually the marked linearity of the music through a liberal

use of time signatures not present in the original Reaney edition.
(Example 1.)

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Pour le deffault de dieu Bacchus" by Baude Cordier. The score is written for three staves: a vocal line at the top and two lute accompaniment lines below. The time signatures are highly complex and change frequently throughout the piece, including 12/8, 6/8, 3/4, 2/4, 3/2, 6/4, and 3/8. The lyrics "Pour le deffault de dieu Bacchus" are written below the vocal line, with the word "deffault" in brackets and "[fault]" in square brackets. There are also some annotations like "2-" and "4" above the notes, possibly indicating fingerings or breath marks.

Example 1: Baude Cordier, "Pour le deffault de dieu Bacchus," as presented in
Memories and Commentaries, 107.

The comments provided above suggest that Stravinsky was casting around for examples of how previous composers and styles addressed the crucial issue of how the vertical and horizontal dimensions relate to one another. Thus, while the restrictions of serial writing differ little from the rigidity of the great contrapuntal schools of old, they simultaneously "widen and enrich the harmonic scope." Just a few lines later, though, Stravinsky re-affirms the basic distinction between the two orientations: "We are located in time constantly in a tonal-system work, but we may only 'go through' a polyphonic work, whether Josquin's *Duke Hercules Mass* or a serially composed non-tonal system" (*Conversations*, 23).

The various denials of influence that typify Stravinsky's remarks about earlier composers' music need to be handled carefully, however. Significantly, we have it from Robert Craft that during the parts of the year occupied with composition, Stravinsky listened to music which he considered "directional" to his work (1957, 7). It would therefore seem legitimate to explore some features of Stravinsky's postwar

works with a view to the potential significance for them of these early-music collections.

An obvious starting point here would be the Mass, both as regards its highly traditional genre and its dates of composition. It was begun in 1944—the Kyrie and Credo date from this year—and the remaining three movements were completed in late 1947 and early 1948. Stravinsky himself pointed out that the work was conceived in terms of liturgical function: “My Mass was not composed for concert performance but for use in the church. It is liturgical and almost without ornament” (quoted in Craft 1949, 201).

These words suggest that stylistic purity and economy of means were intrinsic to the work, and to an austere and solemn vision of Mass worship. More specifically, the Mass was “provoked,” as he put it, by some masses by Mozart that he came across in a second-hand music store in Los Angeles: “As I played through these rococo-operatic sweets-of-sin, I knew I had to write a Mass of my own, but a real one” (*Expositions and Developments*, 65).

This “negative” influence alerts us to the presence of important alternative traditions in the work. The Mass is actually one of Stravinsky’s most consciously archaic works, appropriately enough in genre so steeped in tradition. But at the same time, his engagement with the techniques of more remote musical pasts would return, in diverse configurations, among several of his later pieces. As Stephen Walsh puts it (2015), the Mass “linked to a certain archaism of sound and technique, in which respect it looks not only backward but also forward in Stravinsky’s own work.”

Stravinsky offered following denial: “I was not influenced in my Mass by any ‘old’ music whatever, or guided by any example” (*Expositions and Developments*, 65). This amounts to a veritable throwing down of the musicological gauntlet. Craft (1949) outlines

some of the work's reflections of earlier traditions, particularly regarding textural features and modal elements. He also suggests that that the concertante-ripieno vocal style employed in the Gloria and Sanctus "reconstitute the oldest Psalmis Graduale-Response idea of the liturgy." And beyond the employment of responsorial techniques lie a broader range of early stylistic procedures. At several points in the work, for example, the melodic style can be said to approach that of plainsong. If we consider the rhythmically supple vocal line at the beginning of the Gloria, for example, we see that it consists of two melodic statements (each performed "preferably solo") of limited melodic range (a fourth), moving by step with written-in decorative inflections (triplets) and, significantly, relatively little rhythmic vitality (at least as compared to the instrumental parts at this point). The second statement, by the discanto, is a quasi melodic inversion of the opening. This soloistic section is followed by choral recitational delivery—with very few deviations in the upper line from a 'reciting' note, E_b—with the middle voices moving somewhat more freely, though for the most part by step. This whole choral formula is then repeated in order to accommodate another line of text.

Within the second solo section, at "Domine Deus," the stylistic engagement of the melodic material with medieval precedents becomes still clearer. After a restatement of the opening solo line a passage evoking parallel organum follows, based, as a sort of contrapuntal adornment, on the opening bars of that line (suggestive of the *vox principalis/vox organalis* relationship; Rehearsal 16, 17). This itself is subject to a varied repeat (beginning one bar before 18), the first bar being stated twice, and some of the note values are lengthened towards the end of the phrases. The last two bars (in the original note values) then alternate with two further choral interjections—again recitational in nature—with the bass line now for the most part in octaves with the discanto. More 'organum' follows

(Rehearsal 22); this time, the two solo lines gradually diverge from a unison opening—a technique exemplified in Reese's excerpts from the anonymous ninth-century handbook *Musica enchiriadis* (1940, 253-57)⁴³.

Also strongly suggestive of plainchant is the fugue subject in the central section of the Sanctus, for solo voices (two bars after Rehearsal 45), which is based, initially, on the pitch e with small inflections. Perhaps Craft (1949) had this passage in mind when he announced that the movement contains a "amazing revival of Gregorian Neumes"—including even a Climacus Resupinus Flexus. This neume is included in Reese (1940, 131), being the longest of the compound neumes there itemized, which presumably provided Craft with his terminology.⁴⁴ It is highly likely that Stravinsky too knew this influential book.

The Mass comes nearest to homorhythmic and recitational chanting in the largely syllabic Credo, the central and longest movement. But a major shift occurs at its closing Amen: both the orchestral accompaniment and the homophonic texture are relinquished, and yield to a brief set of imitative entries of a new theme, leading to the closing cadence. Here, though, there is common ground with late-medieval Mass settings. In both the Gloria and Credo of the Machaut Mass, and the "Et in terra pax" by Ciconia included in *HAM* (vol. I, no. 55), the Amens appear as new, melismatic sections appended to the end of their respective movements. Significantly, in the Machaut examples the sectional break also coincides with an element of stylistic contrast.

With regard to cadential procedures, Craft cites the Plagal close of the Credo, but appears to overlook the more convincing Plagal

43 *HAM* would also include examples of organum, in a section on "Early Polyphony."

44 The neume is not explicitly named in Apel 1942.

cadence at the end of the Gloria (where a IV-I progression is articulated particularly clearly in the choral parts). The cadence at the end of the Sanctus is interesting in terms of Stravinsky's treatment of the Phrygian mode.

In this discussion of modal elements in the Mass, Craft suggests that its Phrygian tendencies were anticipated in the closing chord of *Mavra* and the first movement of the *Symphony of Psalms*. The clearest allusions to this mode occur in the Sanctus, in the fugato from two measures before Rehearsal 46, where Phrygian has in a sense been "prepared" for by the final establishment of a triad on E in the previous bar (E, the root of the triad, has been approached from F, itself a Phrygian move—and the sense of arrival at this point is enhanced by the fact that this is the first time that a prominent quintuplet on b and c[♯] has been given full triadic support).⁴⁵

The Dorian mode is also prominently used in the Mass. At Rehearsal 3 of the Kyrie, for example, there is a short Dorian section, framed by D major harmony such that, initially, the music simply conveys the impression of a shift from major to minor. The brief switch to Dorian is highlighted by new material—another choral fugue, based on a 'gap-fill' type of theme starting with a falling octave leap, and a quasi-ostinato figure in trio-sonata texture assigned to bassoon and oboes (Craft [1949, 204] likens this instrumental figuration to Purcell's style).

It is the Dorian mode that actually has the last word in the work, which ends instrumentally and with palindromic figuration. In fact, in the work's penultimate bar the first oboe plays the same d-e-f-e-d motive with which the bassoons completed the Dorian section of the Kyrie. And, Dorian is here being associated again with D major, if

45 In a study of pitch organization this work, Kofi Agawu (1989, 155) downplays the importance of the Phrygian mode in this fugato section, pointing out that the lines move away from their initial points of imitation, E, B, E, B.

less immediately than in the Kyrie. The recurring instrumental passage in the Agnus Dei has closed on a D major triad; thus, three subsidiary cadences on D major are finally replaced by the closing Dorian sonority (making for a “serene and complete” ending, as Craft [1949] puts it).

Stravinsky’s disclaimer regarding influence notwithstanding, then, aspects of the Mass clearly stand in the shadow of earlier practices. Yet the time period over which he composed this work inevitably comes into play in any discussion of influences. The publication of *HAM* during the period intervening between the first two movements and the three later ones makes the Machaut Amen at least a viable influence on the Credo (while Reese’s book, on the other hand, had been potentially “directional” from the outset of the compositional process). At the same time, we might easily account for the consecutive fifths and other ‘organum’ features of the Gloria, for instance, as part of a generally available sound ideal, easily conceivable independently of any specific trigger from a printed source. (Likewise, we should of course allow that even the Credo’s employment of a separate Amen might simply have sprung directly from the composer’s own creative instincts.)

Orpheus, a ballet in three scenes, was premiered in 1948, which makes it contemporaneous in composition with the later stages of the Mass. One of the trilogy of ‘Greek’ ballets produced in collaboration with George Balanchine, it has sometimes been interpreted as a romantic equivalent to the classicism of the earlier *Apollo* (***Apollon musagète* of 1927-28 (the third, *Agon*, will be discussed below)**). Though it falls well before the American period, some comments on *Apollo* might be appropriate before we consider *Orpheus*.

Apollo (as Stravinsky came to prefer the title), premiered in a program at the Library of Congress, Washington, in 1928, does not present a pre-existing narrative as such. Rather, it provides representations of Apollo (including, at the start, Apollo's birth) along with three of the muses. (This restriction to three Muses appears to have been in response to a time constraint included in the commission.) In musical style this work is closest of the three to the traditional formulations of musical neo-classicism in its textural sparseness and somewhat monochrome scoring (its "whiteness," as the composer himself put it), being limited to a conventional string orchestra of violins, violas, cellos and double basses. The work immediately brings us to the question of how an ancient Greek theme is to be represented in ballet music. Important to Stravinsky appears to have been the wish to evolve a style "free of folk-lore," as he expressed it in *Dialogues and a Diary*. At the same time, he heralds a musical past in his explicit invocations of the French seventeenth century, announced at the outset by music evoking a French overture. More pertinently, however, it is in classical poetic metres, studied so assiduously in the cultural ambience of the court of Louis XIV, that antiquity is represented. Stravinsky himself remarks in *Dialogues and a Diary* that the real subject of *Apollo* is versification, and he goes on to draw attention to the prevalence of iambic (short-long) rhythmic patterns throughout the work. He also points to the 12-syllable Alexandrine line; one such, by the seventeenth-century author and staunch classicist Nicolas Boileau, heads the Calliope variation.

Stravinsky described *Orpheus* as "mimed song," and from the standpoint of symbolic representation, this work presents one important shift of medium in that Orpheus, famed in legend as singer and lyre player, is here portrayed through the combination of ballet and instrumental music. These two media therefore combine to evoke the one element, Orpheus's voice, that is central to his legendary powers yet not physically present. And in an imaginative stroke, his

voice is again alluded to—but at a still further remove—when, in the closing “Apotheosis” movement following Orpheus’s death, the solo harp, symbolizing his lyre, twice interrupts a fugal passage on the horns with an accompanimental pattern derived from the earlier Second Air de Danse, in which Orpheus had appealed to Hades through his music. As Stravinsky put it to Nabokov (1949), “Here in the Epilogue it sounds like a kind of... compulsion, like something unable to stop... Orpheus is dead, the song is gone, but the accompaniment goes on.”

Predictably, Stravinsky denied specific early-music influences in this ballet:

The question of influences, incidentally, cannot be broached at all. They do not exist—not Monteverdi in the end movements, not Czerny in the arpeggio passages before [Rehearsal 146] and [Rehearsal 148] (Themes and Episodes, 48).

...But even if I knew ancient Greek music, it would be of no use to me. The sophisticated painters of the Renaissance painted the stories of ancient Greece or the Bible in the European landscape and costumes of their own time without attempting to reconstruct the scenes of Greece or Palestine with historical accuracy. (Written response to questions posed by RCA’s Allan Kayes in 1949, quoted in Joseph 2002, 190)

Such broaching of non-influences echoes his comments on the Mass. In the case of Monteverdi he perhaps feared that the step-wise harp line in the framing movements might too casually be related to a Baroque walking bass, or that the earlier composer’s treatment of the same legend might prompt more far-fetched parallels. Ingolf Dahl’s opinion on the work is insightful, “what connects *Orpheus* with the composers of the early Baroque era is a strong affinity in attitude rather than an affinity in details of means” (1949, 70).

As mentioned earlier, *Orpheus* addresses a different element of Greek culture than *Apollo*, in its retelling of a narrative, in this case a myth with universal attributes. It is significant in this regard that Stravinsky's score contains more instances of the marking *espressivo* than any of his previous neo-classical works. Yet in certain of its musical traits we also can track a closer and more tangible engagement with the tonal materials of Greek music.

The outer movements exhibit noticeable modal properties (these are the beginning of the first scene, in which Orpheus laments the loss of Euridice, and the third scene, the apotheosis). In the work a harp is used to represent Orpheus's lyre. Joseph (2002, 207) has described the harp's line as "motionlessly descending . . . a marvel of stasis, capturing not only the music's eternalness but also the ancient power of the myth it seeks to evoke." Arguably, the effects of motionlessness and eternalness are grounded in some fairly specific materials consciously applied by the composer. At the outset the harp plucks a descending Phrygian scale (the Greek Dorian) between e' and e. Moreover, the harp line more often than not breaks up this scale by interjecting the initial e' between b and a, thereby dividing it into its two adjacent (or disjunct) tetrachords. Here, Reese's discussion of the Greek modes in *Music in the Middle Ages* is surely enlightening as regards Stravinsky's compositional toolbox when he worked on *Orpheus*. Reese (1940, 28) postulates a six-stringed lyre, which would, he says, have been capable of spanning one octave. He goes on to discuss the modes with reference to an e'-e octave range, the 'Dorian octave': this was, as he puts it, the "octave par excellence of Greek music," and the one comprising the two distinct tone-tone-semitone (TTS) tetrachords (in descending order) (1940, 29). Stravinsky's descending harp scale is an exact representation of that scale as it appears in Reese's music example. (Example 2.)

Further, in order to elucidate the various modal configurations of tones and semitones within this characteristic octave, Reese (30) refers to the Greek *tonoi* to our present-day keys in a music figure. He relates the Greek Dorian to A (A minor). Might this be significant in view of the way in which the first movement of *Orpheus* ends? In the final bars of the opening scene, the last complete scale played on the harp is that of a-A; A then forms the root of the closing chord. In addition, the a-a' octave virtually provides the pitch range of the first violins. b' provides only one, decisive, appearance—one which coincides with the only accidental used in the string parts, c# (as well as the harp's first excursion, albeit still by step, out of the e'-e octave). Moreover, the simultaneous arrivals on b' and c# do not merely present a technical extension of the pitch vocabulary, but form a syntactical, structural gesture: the chord thus produced arrests the string music, to be followed immediately by a pause and the first chordal interruption by the wind instruments.

The closing tableau of *Orpheus* is "Orpheus's Apotheosis": "Apollo appears. He wrests the lyre from Orpheus and raises his song heavenwards."⁴⁶

46 Stage direction in score.

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ORPHEUS
ORPHÉE

1

First Scene **Premier Tableau**

Orpheus weeps for Eurydice.
He stands motionless, with his back to the audience.

Orphée pleure Eurydice.
Debout, dos au public, il ne bouge pas.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Lento sostenuto, ♩ = 69

Arpa
mf marc.

Violini I

Violini II

Viola

Violoncelli

Contrabassi

Example 2. Opening of Stravinsky, *Orpheus*.

2 Some friends pass bringing presents and offering him sympathy. *Passent des amis avec des présents. Compliments de condoléances.*

p *p ma marc.*

mp dolce

mp dolce

4 Vc. Solo *glissier tout le long de l'archet sans portamento*

mp dolce

non div *attaca*

B. & H. 18285

Example 2 (continued)

Here though, the harp's originally descending scales yield after four bars to rising scales beginning on d, the Greek Phrygian. But again, tetrachordal divisions of the octave are at work. In fact, the new ascending scale mirrors exactly the opening scene's descending pattern by presenting its melodic inversion. This is pursued exactly, even with regard to the small irregularities incorporated into the music. The upward octave leap, e-e' at bar 2 of the first scene, then, is matched by d-D (two bars after Rehearsal 144) in the third scene. Also pertinent here is the ending of the unison violin/muted trumpet line. At Rehearsal 148, after the second of two harp interruptions, the line rises stepwise to a sustained f[#]—the third of the major triad with the work closes.

Naturally, then, this closing "Apotheosis" departs significantly from the opening. In place of a homophonic texture it features a more complex, contrapuntal fabric suggestive of the textural differentiation of, for example, the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century motet. Yet, with the exception of the caccia (of which examples, such as *Tosto che l'alba*, or other contents of the 1942 Marrocco compilation of fourteenth-century cacce were available to the composer), medieval precedents for the fugal horn parts are virtually non-existent.⁴⁷ To be sure, the language Stravinsky used when discussing the piece with Nicholas Nabokov during Christmas 1947 is rich early-music connotations: "See the fugue here ... The two horns are working it out, while a trumpet and a violin in unison sing a long, drawn-out melody, a kind of cantus firmus. Doesn't this melody sound to you like a medieval vièle?" (Nabokov 1949, 179).

Again, though, the comparisons appear to be after-the-fact, rather than insightful in regard to compositional models. The reference to cantus-firmus technique certainly seems appropriate, the

47 White (1979, 444) suggests that the fugue subject, played by the horns, is itself an inversion of the violin line in the opening scene.

texture having something in common with that of a chorale prelude. Randel (2014, 137) observes that the use of brass timbres in this scene carries echoes of Monteverdi, who also employs a brass sinfonia on the entrance of Apollo at the same point in the story. Stravinsky's reference to the *vièle* is less clear, however. Since Stravinsky was apparently demonstrating this music at the piano when he made these remarks, it is unlikely that he was referring to the tone quality of the solo violin/trumpet combination. The *vièle* itself might well have come to Stravinsky's attention via Reese (1940, 203 and 218).

These framing sections of *Orpheus* embody a different paradigm than those offered by the two other ballets in the Greek trilogy. Though highly expressive, they also work on a level of theoretical abstraction—a tonal space involving the division of an octave according to a particular Greek *tonos*—which is converted into real sound when presented as, at the opening, a descending line that unfolds in a manner reminiscent of a Baroque walking bass. (The descending complementary tetrachords are familiar to us as the expression of lament in so much mid- to late-Baroque music.) But this abstract and (literally) textbook source of 'Greek' influence is not only something inevitable (given the lack of examples of actual music from ancient Greece), but also quite consistent with Stravinsky's overall artistic concept. These modal scales present a somewhat veiled picture of Greece, subtle and far from cliché. We see from his 'program notes' that for the stage set, for example, overtly Greek backdrops would have been unsatisfactory: "...it was Lincoln Kennedy's happy idea to invite the Japanese master Isamu Noguchi, who at least saved us from the cliché 'Greek,' the chlamys, Doric backdrops, and so on" (*Themes and Episodes*, 47).

Agon, the last in the Greek trilogy in collaboration with Balanchine, is essentially a ballet without a plot. More abstract in

conception than its forbears, it is quite devoid of character representation, being a series of abstract dances. Joseph introduces the work in these terms:

Although at least nominally Greek, Agon hardly represents a dramaturgical culmination of what had begun nearly thirty years earlier with Apollo. In almost every way—musically, theatrically, choreographically, even spiritually—Agon, the last of Stravinsky and Balanchine’s epoch-making full-length ballets, stands a world apart from Orpheus and Apollo. (Joseph 2002, 211-212)

As with *Apollo*, though, earlier French culture provided a model—this time in the form of two seventeenth-century books on music, which provided a framework for the dance orderings and metres. Here, though, the parallels with *Apollo* end.

In *Conversations* (19), Craft explicitly indicated a connection of parts of the ballet *Agon* with archaic forms and procedures. In an exchange about *Threni* Craft mentions that some of the *Agon* pieces were modelled from François de Lauze’s *Apologie de la Danse* (1623) and from Mersenne’s music examples of various dance forms—two sources which detail dance practices in the French court of the seventeenth century. In fact, it is well documented that American impresario Lincoln Kirstein, who had founded with Balanchine the Ballet Society in 1946 (subsequently renamed the New York City Ballet), sent the composer a modern edition of the de Lauze manual in an effort to stimulate Stravinsky to compose what, it was hoped, would form the culmination of a trilogy. This manual was published in London in 1952 in a bilingual volume in which the editor also included excerpts from Mersenne’s *Harmonie universelle*, of 1636⁴⁸. The dance types featured in the second and third parts of *Agon*—Saraband, Gaillard, Bransles simple, Gay, and double—are described in the book and exemplified in the music section. With the exception of the

48 Edited by Joan Wildeblood (London: Frederick Muller, 1952).

Sarabande, which in *Agon* occurs before the other forms mentioned, at the start of Part II (yet as the sixteenth dance of Mersenne's collection), Stravinsky's ordering of the dance categories follows Mersenne. The three Bransles, in fact, run consecutively and comprise Part III (whereas three movements separate the Galliarde from the first Bransle).

Joseph (2002, 228-254) has shown in detail how closely Stravinsky must have studied the 1952 edition of de Lauze and Mersenne. He points out that not only the dance metres, but also the melodic patterns and orchestration, influenced Stravinsky as models. As an example, the melody of Mersenne's Bransle Gay is strikingly similar to the opening of that dance in *Agon*. Likewise, Mersenne's mention of guitar and castanets is reflected in Stravinsky's orchestration of this dance. Joseph even suggests that Mersenne's reference to "little sticks of wood, or other matter, ... held in the fingers," prompted the "scintillating tremolos of the xylophone employed in the *Agon* version" (2002, 238-239).⁴⁹

Additional examples of specific historically oriented choices of instrumentation can be mentioned: the use of plucked string instruments, particularly mandolin (Van den Toorn 1983: 413), and, at the start of the Bransle simple, of two solo trumpets (Vlad 1978: 199), an idea derived from an illustration that appears in the de Lauze/Mersenne edition (opposite p. 33, although the 'trumpets' pictured there appear to be shawms or cornettos).

Furthermore, Roman Vlad (1978, 199) refers to the distinction made in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries between so-called "hautes" and "basses" instruments in the performance of dances,

49 Stilwell (1994, 29-33), by contrast, de-emphasizes the importance of the de Lauze, suggesting that Stravinsky's citing of him might actually constitute a case of deliberate *misdirection*, the term being applied according to "the literary principle of misreading as defined by Harold Bloom."

suggesting that these groupings are discernible in Stravinsky's score in terms of timbral differentiation of sections. He does not elaborate on the possible sources of influence for such procedures, although he does suggest one result of it in the opening *Pas-de-Quatre*, where the internal structure of the movement is largely articulated through such vivid timbral contrast. In fact, this historical division into "high" and "low" instruments was available to Stravinsky through, again, the *Anthologie sonore* series of recordings. Record 5 in vol. I of the anthology consists of French dances of the sixteenth century (*Bassedanse*, *Tourdion*, *Allemande*, *Pavane*, and *Gaillarde*, ending with three *Bransles*). In the notes accompanying the record set, Curt Sachs explains that dances such as these were played at first on "all types of brass, woodwind and string instruments," although strings (both plucked and bowed) increasingly became the norm. Record 16 of vol. II features dances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and here explicit mention is made of the distinction between low and high instruments. Sachs explains that it applied to tone colour rather than pitch: "low" instruments include bowed viols, for instance, while "high" instruments include drums and winds.

In addition to these matters of scoring, more pre-Baroque archaisms can be detected in the *Agon* dances, and contribute thereby to its pluralistic nature. In reference to the *Pas-de-Quatre*, Van de Toorn (1983, 413) cites such "neo-Renaissance" features as voice-leading procedures at cadence points, with the II-I formula embellished with inflections which recall the "double leading tone" and "Landini cadences" of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

To these features (as well as the general *trecento* quality of the melodic lines in this opening), can be added some points in the largely C major *Gaillarde* where the canonic interplay between harp and mandolin produces intervallic configurations redolent of the sixteenth century. Especially striking are the suspension formulae

seen at bars 172-73. (Example 3.) In this movement, Stravinsky's achieved a sensuous effect that derives in part from his highly imaginative approach to the harmonic drone which accompanies the canons. The delicate lushness of the combination of flutes, solo viola, and solo cellos and basses playing harmonics, produces novel instrumental sonorities and was a particularly imaginative stroke on Stravinsky's part—even though the “drone” principle is undoubtedly another of *Agon's* pseudo-historical ingredients.

Bewildering in its stylistic heterogeneity, *Agon* above all synthesizes history and modernity in creative, often unpredictable ways. Characteristically, though, Stravinsky was far from forthcoming in his acknowledgments of the historical elements. As Joseph points out, after reading a 1958 review of *Agon* which stated that its dances were modelled on those of a French dance manual of the seventeenth century, Stravinsky wrote in the margin, “Too little to be worth to speak about of [sic]—only the names, like Bransle, Galliarde, Sarabande.” This reticence is consistent with his remarks about others among his post-war works but does not square with his ongoing absorption in, amongst other repertoires, Renaissance dance and choral music. These provide a broad context in which to situate *Agon* and others among his partly-serial works. His open admiration of the *Choralis Constantinus* of Renaissance composer Isaac, a work partially edited by Anton Webern, is hardly a coincidence, occurring as it did at these critical years for Stravinsky's gradual adoption of serialism. Yet in *Agon*, as generally in these post-war works, the composer did not fall prey to an ironic academicism. The models, if such they can be termed, provided only a starting point for Stravinsky's ongoing experimentation with sonorities, textures, and of course the serialism that subsequently most preoccupied Stravinsky scholars.

That these reflections of earlier musics in *Agon* are at a heightened level of detail when compared to the much earlier *Apollo* is indicative of the cultural milieu arising from Stravinsky's American surroundings and significantly perhaps, his acquaintances. Yet both ballets represent an underlying vision of Greek culture filtered and transmitted largely through the French Renaissance and early Baroque (the occasional double-leading note cadence notwithstanding)—and it was a vision that clearly appealed to Stravinsky. For Mersenne in particular, respect for antiquity ran deep, and he regarded a knowledge of Greek metres as necessary to mastery of the dance steps of his own time. As Joseph (2002, 235) puts it, Stravinsky's dependence on the melodies given in *Wildeblood* is

critical; for while the temporal divisions of Mersenne's tunes are "French" on the surface, they revert to a deeper Greek wellspring. In this sense, the underlying rhythmic structure of Agon's courtly dances is as Greek as the mythologies upon which Apollo and Orpheus are based.

Apropos early music, the *Canticum sacrum* (first performed in September 1965 in St. Mark's, Venice, and dedicated "To the City of Venice, in praise of its Patron Saint, the Blessed Mark, Apostle"), follows an altogether different trajectory from *Agon*. As Walsh (2015) reminds us, the partial use made in both works of 12-notes rows should not be allowed to obscure the "profound differences" between them. It is the circumstances surrounding the performance of *Canticum sacrum*, its dedication and its connection with the cultural history of Venice (a city to which Stravinsky had long felt a special attachment) that alert us to the profoundly ecclesiastical and structurally all-embracing nature of this work's references to a musical past.

38

Fl. I
Fl. II
Fl. III
Mand.
Arpa
Piano
Timp.
C. B. II Solo

170 171

p

sempre poco sf

secco poco sf

ben tenuto

sim.

*barm.

sempre fp ben tenuto

* Wood's 2nd bass

B & H. 18386

Example 3. Stravinsky, *Agon*, Galliard, bars 170-175.

In *Conversations* (85) Stravinsky carefully defined his interest in Venice's musical heritage:

The "Venetian" music I would like to revive is by Monteverdi and the Gabriellis, by Cipriano and Willaert, and so many others—why even the great Obrecht was a Venetian at one time—not that so much richer and so much closer-to-us period [i.e., the eighteenth century]

The early-music anthologies are indeed rich in selections from this repertoire: *HAM* brought to a wide readership vocal and instrumental works of the Gabriellis, including Giovanni's *Sonata pian'e forte*, which also appeared in Schering 1931.

Certain features of the *Canticum sacrum*, such as its quasi-Venetian orchestration, do indeed suggest an acquaintance with Venice's musical history, while other parallels can be drawn from wider-ranging repertoires. The spare, solemn *Dedicatio*, for instance, features several cryptic echoes of earlier eras: the chant-like quality of the melodic lines, the hints of renaissance-style suspension patterns, the 'under-third' cadential figure in bar 9. The 4/2 time signature is itself noteworthy, as it actually necessitates the notation of a breve in the contrabasso line in bar 3. On the other hand, the alternation of starkly contrasting blocks of music, which provides the basic formal principle in movements I and IV, is not only a Baroque trait, but was surely intended to provide a close technical approximation to the antiphonal effects pioneered in St.Marks itself.

Canticum sacrum does offer one structural parallel with *Orpheus*, in that both include closely related framing movements, the second of which modifies the first through some type of reversal process. But whereas the reversal in the last scene of *Orpheus* involves melodic inversion of the harp scales, in *Canticum sacrum* "Illi autem profecti" is essentially a cancrine version of "Euntes in mundum." Both

the 'harmonic blocks' of the choral/orchestral sections of the outer movements and the vivid contrast they offer with the organ ritornellos—which consequently reinforce the sectional structure—are equally effective in their retrograde version. In addition, the internal symmetry of their structure (A B A B A) is unaffected by the reversal.

Craft (1956, 44) has remarked upon Stravinsky's use of rhythmic patterns which work well in both direct and retrograde forms, in reference to the rapidly repeating sixteenth-notes in the A sections, which propel the music in both directions. (The opposite side of the same coin might be the effect of stillness and non-directionality achieved in the organ ritornellos, in the B sections. Here, the nullifying of metric pulse entailed by the various conflicting rhythmic units among the five parts involves a reduction to a basic rhythmic common denominator—suggestive of the *tactus* in Renaissance polyphony.)

Historical precedents for the technique of retrograde were hardly in short supply. Stravinsky was probably familiar with the example from the Ivrea Codex and with the Guillaume de Machaut rondeau *Ma fin est mon commencement* offered in Reese's *Music in the Middle Ages* (336 and 351-52 respectively; also in Gleason 1942, 81). But it is in the radically extended use made of the retrograde technique (i.e. over an entire movement), and in its novel (perhaps unprecedented) combination with Venetian-style 'antiphonal' contrast, that the startling novelty lies. Craft (1956: 35) has suggested that the cancrine relationship between the outer movements provides a symbolic representation of their texts. Whereas "Euntes in mundum" is in the imperative mode with, naturally, a future time implication, in "Ille autem profecti praedicaverunt ubique" this future has become the past. Extending the time symbolism, Roman Vlad (1987: 187)

claims that “the concept of time which returns to God, and the concept of finality of the Divine Order that hinted at the repudiation of the chronology of “cause and effect” are invoked. If, indeed, the denial of uni-directional, cause-and-effect chronology were intended, then the analogy with architecture—a spatial, atemporal art form—and more specifically, with St. Mark’s itself, would seem appropriate (both White 1979: 482-83 and Craft offer analogies with the building, though concentrating on dome/movement correspondence).

Also relevant, finally, to a consideration of the *Canticum sacrum* in terms of early music are those works nominated by Stravinsky for inclusion in the concert which premiered it, in a letter from November, 1955. These include the “ricercar for four trombones” by Andrea Gabrieli mentioned earlier, a “Psalm for 5 voices” of Heinrich Schütz, “Motet no. 14” by Gesualdo, and Monteverdi’s *Lauda Jerusalem*. These works (notable for their Venetian pedigree) would, he believed, “effectively situate the *Canticum*.”

The list of points displaying traits of medieval and renaissance music in those works that, like *Agon* and *Canticum sacrum*, form a transition from the neo-classical to the serial phases, can certainly be extended. Several have been indicated by scholars. Hughes (1995), for instance, in considering works dating from the critical years 1952 to 1957, identifies a number of cadential patterns that, to greater or lesser degrees, conform to cadential models intrinsic to earlier styles. Some of the derivations, which are from renaissance (and late-medieval) models, are more speculative than others, his most convincing examples being a set of cadences in *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*. These are of structural weight through their placement at important divisions in the work (and also meet two necessary additional criteria that he posits, “consciousness and explicitness”). Interestingly, among the works he considers, this is the most serially constructed. Other examples cited occur in the Cantata, the Gigue of

the Septet, and *Three Songs from William Shakespeare*, in addition to *Canticum sacrum* and *Agon*. Hughes (64-66) lobbies for a more integrated approach to analysis of these transitional works, one that simultaneously evaluates their neoclassical components and serial techniques.

It is on this analytical level that the real challenge ultimately lies. Individually, the archaisms that can be traced in these later works of Stravinsky traverse a broad spectrum: “Landini”-type cadences, renaissance voice-leading, Greek and medieval modes, walking basses, echoes of early instruments. To list so many features in a single sentence is to indicate the breadth of his allusions to music of earlier eras, yet also to beg the question of just how such eclecticism is to be assimilated into an account of Stravinsky’s modernistic vision. Naturally, some of these works provide clearer interpretive contexts than others, employing frameworks drawn variously from genre, text, expressive content, external circumstance, and so on (the Mass, *Apollo*, *Canticum sacrum*). It is probably *Agon*, in its combination of plotless abstraction and stylistic plurality, that remains the most intractable of these works, even as its sparkling sound-world delights the listener. But whatever work we consider, for these archaisms to be more than anachronisms we invariably depend on Stravinsky’s ability to transform and reinvigorate. His well known statement on tradition in *Memories and Commentaries* (121) is highly prescient:

Tradition is generic ... it undergoes a life process: it is born, grows, matures, declines, and is reborn, perhaps. These stages of growth and regrowth are always in contradiction to the stages of another concept or interpretation: true tradition lives in the contradiction.

One thing that emerges clearly is that when Stravinsky emigrated to the United States he encountered a unique constellation of scholars, performers, and also fellow composers engaged in the

discussion, discovery, and revival of early musics. Such an environment must have possessed a tremendous latency for this intellectually curious composer, the unquestionably fruitful outcomes of which continue to tantalise the scholar.

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