

CHAPTER II

A CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON THE *MISSA IN ILLO TEMPORE*

Monteverdi's *Missa In illo tempore* has received mixed reviews over the years from the composer's major biographers.¹ Published by Ricciardo Amadino together with the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* in 1610 and also surviving in a separate manuscript copy in the Vatican, this work was Monteverdi's first large-scale essay in the imitative polyphonic style of the sixteenth century.² It has been generally assumed that the Mass was written in order to demonstrate the composer's capacity in the *prima pratica* to both his critics and prospective employers.³ That Monteverdi still smarted from the attacks of Artusi seems evident from the reference in the dedication to "those speaking unfair things against Claudio."⁴ Monteverdi also alludes in this dedication to his "nocturnal labors,"⁵ and a much-quoted letter from the Mantuan singer Bassano Casola emphasizes the effort which the Mass cost the composer.⁶

Although an analysis of the *Missa In illo tempore* proves that Monteverdi impressively surmounted the technical difficulties of treating given motives in continuous imitation, it is also apparent that he did not in this initial effort attain mastery of the polyphonic style on the level of Lassus, Palestrina, or Victoria. While Monteverdi's work is a *tour de force* in the manipulation of motives in multiple combinations, augmentation, diminution, inversion, retrogression, and paraphrase, the composer's concentration on all-pervasive imitation yields a density of texture that is rarely relieved. In only two sections, the *Et incarnatus* and the *Benedictus*, does Monteverdi accede to a homophonic style.⁷ A reduced number of voices appears only in the *Crucifixus*, where the *Quintus* (second tenor) and *Bassus* are *tacet*.⁸ Nowhere do we find the constantly fluctuating textures and combinations of parts that contribute so importantly to the variety and vitality of the six-voice masses of the late Renaissance masters. Monteverdi is so severe in his unremitting imitation investing all parts that the *Missa In illo tempore* may be considered more reactionary than conservative.⁹ Strict, pervasive imitation was not characteristic of the larger masses of the late *Cinquecento*, but rather of the four and five-part masses of the first half of the century. In

composing for six voices Monteverdi exhibited the modern interest in larger and thicker sonorities, but he did not seem to realize the necessity for variety of texture and the juxtaposition of smaller and larger voice groupings in the handling of so many parts.¹⁰ In his intense desire to master polyphonic imitation, he ignored other vital aspects of mass composition that were common currency among those who practiced the polyphonic art regularly. Monteverdi may have overcome Artusi's objections to his voice leading and dissonance treatment through the development of an awesome imitative technique, but there was more than that to the *stile antico* of the late Renaissance.

Additional problems arise from insufficient tonal variety in the work. The most modern feature of the Mass is Monteverdi's fully tonal orientation, but his overwhelmingly predominant C major proves tiresome in the end.¹¹ The close imitation between the two sopranos (*Cantus* and *Sextus*) results in repetitious emphasis on certain pitches, especially *g*", to the point where they eventually grate on the ears.¹² Monteverdi also fails to vary his harmony sufficiently, as illustrated by passages where the bass continually moves back and forth between tonic and dominant in the modern sense (see example 1). It is not that Monteverdi was incapable of coping successfully with harmonic and tonal limitations; in the accompanying Vespers he did so with remarkable virtuosity. But in the Vespers he felt free to vary textures and styles, to manipulate widely divergent rhythms, to experiment with differing sonorities. In the Mass everything is tightly constrained with an often stultifying rigidity. In striving so strenuously to prove his contrapuntal technique, Monteverdi denied himself the variety and flexibility necessary to make that technique truly effective.

Monteverdi's unusual parody procedure in the Mass is both a source and a symptom of his difficulties. Rather than following the more common method of using a pre-existing composition as a structural framework upon which to expand, he has chosen instead to extract motives from his model to be recombined in a wholly new contrapuntal fabric.¹³ His selection of the motet *In illo tempore* by Gombert is indicative of the reactionary outlook of the work.¹⁴ Gombert, who died about 1556, represents in his mastery of imitation a continuation of the Josquin tradition. In extending this mastery to works for five and six voices, while simultaneously abandoning Josquin's characteristic voice pairing, Gombert creates some of the most dense textures of the first half of the sixteenth century.

Gombert's motet *In illo tempore* had two important advantages for Monteverdi: it contained motives with a strong harmonic basis, and it was fully Ionian, with no trace of the older Church modes. The work was therefore quite suitable to Monteverdi's own tonal inclinations. Like the Mass, the motet is for six voices (although only five normally sound at any given time), and it has little harmonic and tonal variety. But because of its short

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Cantus
sa - ba - oth san - - ctus do - minus De - us sa - ba - oth Ple - -

Sextus
- - ctus do - minus Deus sa - ba - oth Ple - - - - -

Altus
Ple - - - ni sunt coe - - - li Ple - - - ni sunt

Tenor
san - - ctus do - minus De - us sa - ba - oth Ple - ni

Quintus
- minus De - us sa - ba - oth Ple - ni sunt coe - li et ter -

Bassus
Ple - ni sunt coe - li et ter - ra Ple - - ni

Bassus
Generalis

25

- - - - - ni sunt coe - - - - - li et ter -

- - ni sunt coe - - - - - li et ter - ra glo - - - riā

coe - - - li et ter - - - ra et ter - ra glo - -

sunt coe - li et ter - - ra glo - - - ri - ā tu - - -

- - ra glo - - - ri - ā tu - - - a glo - - -

sunt coe - - - li et ter - - - ra

EXAMPLE 1. *Sanctus*

duration, these factors are not shortcomings. It is only with Monteverdi's enormous temporal extension of these features without adequate consideration for the resulting aesthetic effect that difficulties arise. Ironically, although Gombert's motet is continuously polyphonic, it is actually much less rigorously imitative than Monteverdi's Mass.¹⁵

Monteverdi's desire to advertise his newly-won technique was so strong that in both the Vatican manuscript copy and Amadino's print he prefaced the Mass with a table of motives, or *fughe*, extracted from the motet.¹⁶ Hans Redlich has located these motives in the motet, where they occasionally differ from Monteverdi's *fughe* in rhythm and even in pitch.¹⁷ Monteverdi uses all of the main motives of Gombert's work, though not in the same sequence. Only Gombert's opening subject occupies a comparable role in the Mass, serving as the head motive for several sections. Nor does Monteverdi employ the ten *fughe* in the order they appear in either of his own tables. Only the *Fuga prima* is located in both tables in a position equivalent to its significance in the Mass.

Monteverdi's manipulation of Gombert's motives and his command of imitative techniques constitute the most impressive and positive features of his Mass. An analysis of these elements not only yields an appreciation of Monteverdi's technical accomplishments, but also confirms the "*studio et fatica grande*" described by Bassano Casola.¹⁸

The opening *Kyrie* offers only hints of the sophistication to come. It is based almost entirely on *Fuga 1*, which at the outset is imitated at the close time interval of a semibreve. However, Monteverdi frequently varies the temporal interval of imitation throughout the section. The subject also appears several times in augmentation, with even the augmented versions treated imitatively. These augmentations create the impression of a long-note *cantus firmus* during much of *Kyrie I*, and Monteverdi returns often to similar augmentations throughout the Mass for the same *cantus firmus* effect. It should be noted that *cantus firmi* in both long and short note values are the structural foundation of the majority of the pieces in the Vespers, so the technique is common to both highly divergent parts of the 1610 collection.

Already in the opening *Kyrie* of the Mass the main imitative subject is joined by a countersubject, consisting of descending scales of varying lengths. While the augmented form of *Fuga 1* is presented in two of the voices, the others engage in sequences derived from the downward scale (see example 2). These descending sequences become an essential part of the contrapuntal fabric of the Mass, particularly in approaching major cadences.

The *Christe* is based exclusively on *Fuga 4*, and at the very beginning this motive is combined with its own inversion after a lapse of only a minim. The order of the two entries of the motive is then immediately reversed in

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Cantus

Sextus

Altus

Tenor

Quintus

Bassus

Bassus Generalis

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EXAMPLE 2. *Kyrie I*

30 Fuga 4 35

Cantus
Chri - ste e - - - - - lei - son

Sextus

Altus
Inversion
Chri - ste e - - - - - leison Chri - ste e - -

Tenor
Chri - ste e - -

Quintus
Chri - ste e - - - - - leison

Bassus
Chri - - ste e - - - - -

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 3. *Christe*

50

Cantus
- - - lei -

Sextus
- son Chri - ste e - - - - - lei - son

Altus
- son Chri - ste e - - - - -

Tenor
e - - - - - lei - son

Quintus
- - - lei - son e - - - - - lei -

Bassus
e - - - - - lei -

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 4a. *Christe*

Example 4a continued shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble. The score is written for seven parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and two Basses (Generalis). The lyrics are: "son Chri - ste e - - lei - - son Chri - ste e - -". The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The score is divided into measures, with a measure number of 55 indicated at the top right.

EXAMPLE 4a continued.

Example 4b, *Dixit Dominus*, shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble. The score is written for seven parts: Cantus, Sextus, Altus, Tenor, Quintus, Bassus, and Bassus Generalis. The lyrics are: "bi - -". The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 200 and 205 indicated at the top right.

EXAMPLE 4b. *Dixit Dominus*

another pair of voices (see example 3). Throughout the *Christe* the inverted form is more prominent than the original subject, testifying to Monteverdi's willingness to manipulate Gombert's *fughe* rather than adhere strictly to their original shapes. After the initial imitative passage, sequences derived from the first three notes of the inverted motive govern the entire texture. These sequences outline a descending diatonic scale and are closely related to sequences from *Dixit Dominus* in the Vespers (see examples 4a and 4b).¹⁹ The falling sequences occur in various rhythmic forms in different voices, but all are based in one way or another on a descending scale.

Kyrie II uses these sequences as its main substance. Here Monteverdi employs a slightly varied form of *Fuga 2*, which possesses its own internal sequence of descending broken thirds. But he soon abandons the complete *fuga* altogether in order to extend the broken thirds to ever-increasing lengths. The descending thirds are themselves a simple elaboration of a scale and are therefore easily combined with other scale-derived sequential motives (see example 5). In the immediately ensuing measures Monteverdi engages in invertible counterpoint through the interchange of various parts (see example 6).

In the opening movement of the Mass, Monteverdi has already demonstrated imitation at varying time intervals, augmentation, inversion, and the free interchange of different contrapuntal lines. In addition, he has displayed a flexible approach to the motives themselves, freely altering their rhythms and even their pitch configurations. In both the *Christe* and *Kyrie II* he virtually abandons the *fughe* in favor of lengthy sequences whose relationship to Gombert's motives is sometimes rather tenuous. The significance of these sequences in the construction of the Mass as a whole cannot be overemphasized, and the reappearance of similar patterns in *Dixit Dominus* and many other polyphonic sections of the Vespers illustrates how much elaborations on the descending scalar sequence dominated Monteverdi's contrapuntal thinking at this time.²⁰

The monothematic character of each section of the *Kyrie* necessarily gives way to greater thematic diversity in the much longer *Gloria* and *Credo*. The *Gloria*, divided in the traditional manner into two large sections, eventually uses all ten of the *fughe*. Monteverdi's normal procedure is to employ one *fuga* at a time, contrapuntally dovetailing each monothematic passage with the next, each new passage being based on a new *fuga*. Except for the opening *Fuga 1*, the order of presentation of the motives is unrelated to either of Monteverdi's tables. As in *Kyrie II*, *Fuga 2* easily leads to descending sequences of broken thirds which form a new motive in their own right. Monteverdi sometimes employs brief countersubjects that are not traceable to any of the ten *fughe*.

Inverted forms of motives also appear on occasion, as do retrograde, embellished, and paraphrased versions (see examples 7a and 7b). Lengthy

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Cantus - lei - son

Sextus Ky - ri - e e - -

Altus e - - - - -

Tenor - lei - son

Quintus - son Ky - ri - e e -

Bassus Ky - ri - e e - - -

Bassus Generalis Ky - ri - e e - - -

EXAMPLE 5. *Kyrie II*

90

Cantus - ri - e e - - lei -

Sextus - son Ky - ri - e e - -

Altus Ky - ri - e e - - -

Tenor - lei - son Ky - ri - e e - -

Quintus - lei - son Ky - ri - e e - -

Bassus Ky - ri - e e - - -

Bassus Generalis Ky - ri - e e - - -

EXAMPLE 6. *Kyrie II*

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Cantus
- bus bo - nae vo - lun - ta - - tis

Sextus
Fuga 6
- bus bo - - nae vo - lun - ta - - - -

Altus
Fuga 6 ornamented
- nae vo-lun - ta - - - - - - - tis

Tenor
- - - ni - bus bo - nae vo-lun - ta -

Quintus
- ra pax ho - mi - - ni - - bus bo - nae

Bassus
Fuga 6 inverted
- bus bo - - nae vo-lun - ta - - tis bo -

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 7a. *Gloria*

Fuga 5 varied 34

Cantus
do - mine De - - us

Sextus
tu - am do -

Altus
- - am do - mine

Tenor
do - mi -

Quintus
- - am

Bassus
do - - mi - ne

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 7b. *Gloria*

motives, such as *Fuga* 3, are at times truncated rather than continued to completion. As in all sections of the *Kyrie*, both segments of the *Gloria* conclude with sequences derived from descending scales. While Gombert also uses descending scalar fifths near the end of his motet, they are not arranged in sequences and function primarily as embellishments, increasing the rhythmic activity. Monteverdi's scalar sequences, by contrast, generate a strong harmonic impetus toward the final cadence. It is this quest for a modern cadential harmonic drive that engenders these sequences in the first place, and they consequently assume a paradoxical and anachronistic role in the otherwise archaic texture.

There are brief passages in the *Gloria* where Monteverdi for the first time unites more than one of Gombert's motives in counterpoint. In the *Qui tollis* section, which opens with a retrograde of *Fuga* 1, the original form of this motive is quickly added and then the retrograde dovetails with a variant of *Fuga* 8. The derivation of the variant from *Fuga* 8 is made explicit only by that subject's appearance in "pure" form in the *Bassus* at the word *misere* (see example 8).²¹ Similar combinations of motives occur elsewhere in the *Qui tollis*, especially at *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus*, but they are otherwise uncommon through most of the *Gloria*. The overall structure of the *Gloria* is rounded, for the movement closes as it opened, with the original form of *Fuga* 1.

The diverse treatments of the *fughe* in the *Gloria* serve as a point of departure for a much freer and more flexible manipulation of the motives in the *Credo*. This movement, which also begins with *Fuga* 1, combines two or more subjects simultaneously far more frequently. Inverted, retrograde, and paraphrased forms are common. The longer *fughe*, 1, 2, and 3, are often truncated, while short motives, such as *Fughe* 6 and 8, are at times extended. Broken thirds in descending sequences emerge even more prominently, and now Monteverdi does not even bother to demonstrate their relationship to *Fuga* 2. Paraphrases of certain motives are increasingly further removed from the original form (see example 9).²² At *Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum*, *Fuga* 1, utilized as a long-note *cantus firmus*, is combined with scalar fifths, illustrating the origin of the scale patterns in the embellishment of the simple fifths that are common to several of the original *fughe* (see example 10). In the concluding segment of the *Credo*, beginning at *Et in Spiritum Sanctum*, paraphrases, inversions, interval expansions, truncated motives, long-note *cantus firmi*, broken thirds, descending and rising sequences (rising sequences at *Et exspecto resurrectionem*), and even a freely composed countersubject all combine to create a texture of great variety and vivacity. This is one of the more successful sections of the Mass, the flexibility of the polyphony evidently liberating Monteverdi's imagination with felicitous results.

The two central sections of the *Credo*, the *Et incarnatus* and the

70 Fuga 1 retrograde Fuga 8 extended

Cantus Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di mi - se - re -

Sextus Fuga 1 retrograde Fuga 1 Qui

Altus Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta Fuga 1

Tenor Fuga 1 retrograde Fuga 8 varied Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta Fuga 8 varied

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

Bassus Fuga 1 Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di mi - se -

Bassus Generalis Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di mi - se -

75 Fuga 8 varied

- re no - bis mi - se - re - re no - bis Qui

tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di mi - se - re - re

Fuga 8 varied

mun - di mi - se - re - re no - bis Qui tol -

Fuga 8 extended

- re no - bis mi - se - re - re no -

Fuga 8 varied

- di mi - se - re - re mi - se - re - re no -

Fuga 8 varied

- re - re no - bis mi - se - re - re

Fuga 8

EXAMPLE 8. Gloria

Fuga 3 paraphrased 115 Fuga 3 paraphrased

Cantus
Cru - ci - fi - xus e - ti - am pro no - - - bis sub Pon - ti -

Sextus
Cru - - ci - fi - xus e - ti - am pro no - - -

Altus
Cru - - ci - fi - xus e - ti - am pro no - -

Tenor
Fuga 1
Cru - ci - fi - xus e - ti - am pro no - - - bis sub Pon - -

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 9. *Credo* (continued on next page)

Crucifixus, provide the only relief in this movement from Monteverdi's consistency of tonality and texture. The *Et incarnatus*, in interpreting the mystery of the incarnation, begins abruptly with the exotic chord of E major, which serves as dominant to the tonality of A (mostly A minor). The texture of this passage is primarily chordal with slow rhythmic movement, though the homophony is enlivened by limited polyphonic activity.²³ This section in Monteverdi's Mass is particularly striking and beautiful, but because of the brevity of the text, it is unfortunately quite short, with a duration of only fourteen breves.

The following *Crucifixus* returns to imitative polyphony, but with a reduced texture of four voices.²⁴ A lighter and more ethereal sonority is achieved by the elimination of the *Bassus* and *Quintus*. At *Et iterum* there is a lengthy passage based exclusively on descending sequences of broken thirds, treated imitatively in all voices. In portions of this passage, the simultaneous combination of broken thirds and a descending scale confirms once again their close relationship. These broken thirds and other more complicated sequences so permeate the Mass that it often seems that Monteverdi has reverted to them whenever he has run out of ideas for dealing anew with Gombert's *fughe*. In the Vespers such sequences are em-

120 Fuga 2 truncated

Cantus
- o Pi - la - - to pas - sus et se - pul - tus est pas - sus

Sextus
- bis sub Pon - ti - o Pi - la - - - to pas - sus et

Altus
- bis sub Pon - ti - o Pi - la - - - to

Tenor
- ti - o Pi - la - - - to pas - sus et sepul - tus

Bassus
Generalis

EXAMPLE 9 continued.

ployed more sparingly and are confined to passages where they form a fundamental element in a large structure or serve as polyphonic climaxes, but in the Mass they are less convincing, less an essential outgrowth of either the texture or the structure. While these sequences undoubtedly help unify the Mass, they are at times overly long and obvious. In contrast to the sophisticated handling of the *fughe*, especially *Fuga 1*, the sequences usually do not give an impression of artfulness or skill in contrapuntal technique. Their purpose is to create an irresistible melodic and harmonic drive in their unremitting descent and repetition, but even though they are effective at some cadences, elsewhere they can sound rather awkward and out of place, as if Monteverdi were at a loss for anything better to do.

The importance of sequences and scales in the Mass has gradually increased through the first three movements to the point where they serve as the primary material for the entire *Sanctus*, except for the *Benedictus* segment. In the *Sanctus*, sequential processes are more successful than in any other movement. The effect is particularly lovely at the very outset. The variety of ways in which Monteverdi treats the sequence hints at the magnificent use he would make of descending broken thirds in the posthumously published Mass of 1650, where this motive is expanded through diversity of texture and rhythm to encompass the entire composition.²⁵ Some of that

180

Cantus Et in spi - ri -

Sextus Et in spi - ri -

Altus Et et in

Tenor Et in spi -

Quintus Et in spi - ri -

Bassus Fuga 1 Et in spi - ri - tum

Bassus Generalis

EXAMPLE 10. *Credo*

diversity also characterizes the *Sanctus* of the *Missa In illo tempore*, but Monteverdi did not in this earlier work achieve the harmonic variety of his later Mass. In the *Pleni sunt coeli* the two sopranos return over and over again to their high *g*", eventually becoming tedious, while the bass is constrained to outlining repeatedly tonic and dominant harmonies (see example 1, page 49).

The *Benedictus*, with its opening E major chord and primarily homophonic texture, is reminiscent of the *Et incarnatus* of the *Credo*. The harmony is more varied, however, with cadences in A minor, D minor, G major, and C major. While Monteverdi's *Et incarnatus* is traditional in its homophonic style and somewhat exotic harmonies, the *Benedictus* is unusual in both these respects. In sixteenth-century masses à 6 the *Benedictus* was very often set for a reduced number of voices in a highly imitative texture. In composing the *Benedictus* in the same style as the *Et incarnatus*, Monteverdi may be deliberately drawing a parallel between the significance of the phrase *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* and the text of the *Et incarnatus*, referring to the appearance of God made man.

The music of the *Benedictus* is related to the original *fughe* only in its descending and ascending scalar patterns, which, as we have seen in the *Et in Spiritum Sanctum* of the *Credo*, are derived by filling out the skip of a fifth common to several of Gombert's motives. Also prominent in the *Benedictus* is the leap of a fourth, which is allied by inversion to the beginning of *Fuga*

Example 11 is a musical score for a section of a mass, specifically the *Sanctus*. It features seven vocal parts: Cantus, Sextus, Altus, Tenor, Quintus, Bassus, and Bassus Generalis. The score is written in a single system, spanning measures 60 to 65. The lyrics are: "Be - ne - di - ctus Be - ne - di - ctus qui ve -" for most parts, and "qui venit" for the Tenor and Quintus parts. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The Cantus part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The other parts follow with their respective clefs and key signatures. The Bassus Generalis part is written in a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The score shows a polyphonic texture with various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

EXAMPLE 11. *Sanctus*

10 (see example 11, especially the lower voices). Following traditional practice, the concluding *Osanna* repeats precisely the music of the first *Osanna*.

After departing almost entirely from Gombert's *fughe* in the *Sanctus*, Monteverdi returns to a limited selection of these motives for the *Agnus Dei*. The *Agnus* is divided into two sections, the last one expanded to seven voices by the addition of a second bass, thus concluding the Mass with a thicker texture and heavier sonority. Such augmentation by one or more voices is a frequent practice in the final *Agnus* of many sixteenth-century masses.

Rather than begin with *Fuga* 1 as a head motive, the first *Agnus* commences with an inversion of *Fuga* 4 very similar in shape to the opening of the *Christe* (see examples 12 and 3). This inversion is closely related to *Fuga* 3, and Monteverdi highlights the connection by constructing his polyphony from both original and inverted forms of the latter motive at *miserere nobis*. Once again the descending sequence appears as a primary polyphonic technique, comprising the larger part of *Agnus I*. But here the sequences are much more varied and rhythmically complex than the broken thirds dispersed elsewhere throughout the Mass. Because the patterns in *Agnus I* are never obtrusive and their disposition in the polyphonic texture constantly changes, the entire passage is quite successful. Approaching the cadence Monteverdi even injects *Fuga* 3 into the texture as a long-note *cantus firmus*, migrating successively from one voice to another.

The musical score for Example 12, *Agnus Dei*, is written for seven voices. The staves from top to bottom are: Cantus, Sextus, Altus, Tenor, Quintus, Bassus, and Bassus Generalis. The Cantus, Sextus, and Altus parts are mostly rests, with a measure number '5' above the Cantus staff. The Tenor part is labeled 'Fuga 4 inverted' and contains the lyrics 'A - gnus De -'. The Quintus, Bassus, and Bassus Generalis parts also contain the lyrics 'A - gnus De -'. The Bassus Generalis part has an additional 'A - gnus' at the end. The notation includes various rhythmic values and melodic lines characteristic of Monteverdi's style.

EXAMPLE 12. *Agnus Dei*

There is a close and obvious relationship between *Agnus I* and the *Christe*, both in the motives used and in their subsequent development. The *Agnus*, which is almost twice as long, exhibits greater flexibility in the handling of sequences and increased fluidity of motion emanating from the character and variety of the rhythmic patterns. Even in *Agnus I*, though, the sequences occasionally sound forced, rather than a natural outgrowth of the polyphonic style.

Agnus II, as already remarked, concludes the Mass with an expanded texture of seven voices. *Fuga 1*, which has not been heard since near the conclusion of the *Credo*, functions as the head motive and primary material of this section. The return of *Fuga 1* at the end of the Mass stresses its cyclic role for the entire work analogous to its office in forming a rounded structure for the *Gloria*. Once the motive has been presented, Monteverdi quickly fills out the opening leap with the intervening notes of the scale, as he had done earlier in the *Et in Spiritum Sanctum*. These scales then move in either direction and are extended even beyond the octave. *Fuga 1* also appears in retrograde, eventually combining with its original form and with *Fuga 6*. The triadic shape of *Fuga 6*, with its clear harmonic outline, is well suited to enhancing the cadential drive of the closing. Near both the beginning and the end of *Agnus II*, *Fuga 1* emerges as a sustained *cantus firmus*. The vigorous cadential motion of *Fughe 1* and *6*, the long-note *cantus firmus*, and the thicker texture of seven voices all contribute to a

forceful conclusion for the entire Mass.

Study of the *Missa In illo tempore* demonstrates that Monteverdi's "nocturnal labors" and "*studio et fatica grande*" bore fruit in his ability to manipulate Gombert's subjects with impressive skill. He has added to his workshop techniques that by 1610 had become somewhat antiquated: the weaving of a continuous polyphonic fabric with imitation at varying time intervals, the polyphonic combination of multiple subjects, the inversion, retrogression, augmentation, and paraphrase of motives, and the long-note *cantus firmus*. But technical skill does not of itself make great art, and Monteverdi did not master his new-found technique to the point where it could fully serve the aesthetic requirements of a work of such dimensions. His frequent reliance on lengthy sequences to spin out the texture is evidence of his discomfort with the polyphonic medium and his inability to work freely and uninhibitedly with it. This uneasiness and constraint are striking in contrast to the seemingly infinite imagination and virtuosity of the multi-faceted and stylistically varied Vespers. In the Vespers, Monteverdi was the complete master of every situation, and the enthusiasm with which performances are received today is further confirmation of their artistic success. Modern interest in the Mass, however, is focused chiefly on its documentary and biographical significance. As a work of art it is uneven, containing many lovely and effective passages, but lacking consistent vitality.

An inquiry into what role the *Missa In illo tempore* played in Monteverdi's compositional development, aside from the work's immediate function as proof that he could write in the *stile antico*, produces no definitive answer. Very likely his enhanced skill in the imitation and manipulation of motives served him well in the imitative duets that form so significant a part of the *concertato* style of the contemporaneous Vespers and later sacred and secular works. On the other hand, Monteverdi's two subsequent masses in the *prima pratica* show little dependence upon the *Missa In illo tempore*.²⁶ Both of these masses are set for only four voices, but even with fewer parts Monteverdi employs the full texture rather sparingly, concentrating much of his attention on two-voiced passages resembling his *concertato* technique. The rhythms in the masses are certainly more restrained in the use of dotted patterns than the *concertato* madrigals or *seconda pratica* sacred music, and rapid embellishments are avoided altogether. But there is a liveliness and lilt to these two masses that is missing from the more turgid and dense *Missa In illo tempore*. Monteverdi was obviously far more comfortable with the thinner texture and *concertato* treatment of the parts in these later masses, and they evince a buoyancy and natural flow that he was unable to achieve in his first effort in the genre.

The 1650 Mass is especially revealing of the differences between these

later works and the *Missa In illo tempore*, since its motivic basis is the same descending sequence of broken thirds so prominent in the parody mass of 1610. But where these sequences appear somewhat unnatural in the archaic style of the earlier work, they are the essence of vitality in the later composition. In the 1650 Mass they are handled with deftness and virtuosity, begetting a fluidity, forward impetus, and motivic cohesion that constitute Monteverdi's best work in the *prima pratica* and an outstanding contribution to the mass repertoire by any standards.

It appears justifiable to conclude that in the *Missa In illo tempore* Monteverdi learned as many negative lessons as he did new technical skills. He never again attempted such systematic imitation and henceforth abjured altogether such dense textures. In the future his desire for a large sound would be satisfied by chordal sonorities, and extended imitation would be confined primarily to duets of identical voices or instruments. In these homophonic and duet textures he was able to utilize to the fullest his natural rhythmic exuberance and superb coloristic sense, both of which failed him in the 1610 Mass. The *Missa In illo tempore* was a one-time experiment, possibly prompted by Artusi's attacks, but probably also necessitated by Monteverdi's search for ecclesiastical employment. In retrospect it seems fully appropriate that he did not find a position in Rome or Milan, the bastions of conservative sacred music, but in Venice, where it was the Vespers, not the Mass, that qualified him in the eyes of the Procurators of San Marco.²⁷

NOTES

1. Denis Arnold has moderate praise for some aspects of the Mass while explicitly and implicitly criticizing other features. Arnold, *Monteverdi* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1963), p. 138. See also the revised edition of 1975, p. 138. Leo Schrade has only admiration for Monteverdi's technical mastery and his "purest imitation of the sixteenth-century style." Schrade, *Monteverdi, Creator of Modern Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 250. Hans Redlich is non-committal, noting only the work's austerity and "remarkable contrasts in colour-effects" in the *Crucifixus*. Redlich, *Claudio Monteverdi: Life and Works*, trans. Kathleen Dale (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 123. Henri Prunières, while commenting on the Mass's archaisms, is unreserved in his praise of specific passages. Prunières, *Monteverdi: His Life and Work*, trans. Marie D. Mackie (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1926; reprint edition by Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), pp. 112-115. Guido Pannain feels the Mass must be taken as an important part of Monteverdi's artistic personality, not simply prompted by external practical considerations or Artusi's attacks upon the composer. Pannain stresses the work's tranquility and smoothness, "very far from Palestrinian transports." Guglielmo Barblan, Claudio Gallico, and Guido Pannain, *Claudio Mon-*

teverdi (Turin: Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione italiana, 1967), p. 333. Domenico De' Paoli also remarks on the extreme rigor and archaism of the Mass as well as its very solid architecture: the "closed" style of the work does not impede "the beauty of certain melodic phrases" or "moments of sudden illumination." On the other hand, De' Paoli also refers to "stylistic attitudes which began to seem a little arid and scholastic." De' Paoli, *Claudio Monteverdi* (Milan: Editore Ulrico Hoepli, 1945), pp. 163-164. Denis Stevens's recent book on Monteverdi treats the Mass in only a cursory fashion and draws no critical conclusions at all. Stevens, *Monteverdi: Sacred, Secular, and Occasional Music* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1978), p. 68. None of Monteverdi's biographers undertakes a thoroughgoing critical study of the work and all shy away from comprehensive critical judgments. The only detailed study of the Mass is in Gerhard Hust, *Untersuchungen zu Claudio Monteverdis Messkompositionen* (Ph.D. dissertation, Ruprecht-Karl-Universität in Heidelberg, 1970), hereafter cited as Hust. Another briefer but trenchant discussion is in Jerome Roche, "Monteverdi and the *Prima Pratica*," *The Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), pp. 167-178. Roche cites several faults in the Mass. The earliest published analysis of a portion of the Mass, the first *Agnus Dei*, appears in Giambattista Martini, *Esemplare o sia Saggio Fondamentale Pratico di Contrappunto Fugato, Parte Seconda* (Bologna: Lelio dalla Volpe, 1776), pp. 242-250. The *Agnus* is used as a model of the contrapuntal sacred style for young composers.

2. The manuscript is *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cappella Sistina Ms. 107*. This source is discussed in chapter I, pp. 8-15. Don Siro Cisilino of the Cini Foundation in Venice has transcribed and published an anonymous collection of three masses under the title *Claudio Monteverdi: Tre Missae* (Milan: Universal Edition, 1974). Cisilino considers these works to pertain to the period around 1600 and to be Monteverdi's answer to the criticisms of the theorist Giovanni Maria Artusi. There is no evidence to support Cisilino's attribution to Monteverdi, however, and the rationale he offers in his preface is unsound.

3. See chapter I, pp. 11-12.

4. See chapter I, pp. 13-15.

5. Ibid.

6. See chapter I, pp. 9-10.

7. Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century it was customary to begin the *Et incarnatus* with a chordal texture and longer note values than used in other parts of a mass. In this section the mystery of the incarnation was also frequently interpreted by means of unusual harmonies resulting from chromatic alterations in the prevailing mode.

8. See chapter I, pp. 28-29. Reduction of the number of parts in the *Crucifixus* was another very common sixteenth-century practice. Often one or more lower voices are *tacet*, as in most of Gombert's masses and in Monteverdi's Mass, but there are also numerous instances where upper parts drop out or the reduced texture is spread more evenly across the vocal ranges.

9. See Hust, p. 99: "Monteverdi steht in seinem thematisch transparenten Parodieverfahren dem des (ausgehenden) 15. Jahrhunderts wesentlich näher als dem—freilich schon mit Obrecht einsetzenden—Zeitaler [sic] der 'Parodiemesse' im engeren Sinne. Die Ausrichtung

der Komposition an einlinigen Gebilden, der Aufbau mittels 'thematischer Bausteine' ist ihm mit jenem Verfahren gemeinsam."

10. One of Gombert's own six-voice masses, the *Missa Quam pulchra es* of 1532, also entails some very dense textures resulting from the thoroughly polyphonic treatment of all parts. Imitation is especially strict in this work, which conceivably could have served as a model for Monteverdi's own imitative techniques. See Joseph Schmidt-Görg, ed., *Nicolai Gombert: Opera Omnia* (American Institute of Musicology, 1963), vol. III, pp. 1-52.

11. C major is itself only a notational convention and represents neither an absolute pitch nor the key in which the Mass would actually have been sung. See the discussion of pitch and transposition in chapter I, pp. 37-40. Only two sections of the Mass, the *Et incarnatus* and *Benedictus*, provide any real contrast of key.

12. This is especially noticeable in the *Credo*, from *Et in Spiritum Sanctum* to the end, and in the first section of the *Sanctus*.

13. Monteverdi's procedure resembles Gombert's in the *Missa Quam pulchra es* cited in note 10. See the Foreword to Schmidt-Görg, *Nicolai Gombert*, vol. III.

14. The Marian text of Gombert's motet makes it a suitable source for a mass dedicated to the Virgin.

15. See Hust, pp. 84-85.

16. The numbering of the *fughe* is somewhat different between the two sources. See chapter I, p. 13. In the analysis below, the numbering of the motives is based on Amadino's print.

17. Hans F. Redlich, ed., *Missa "In Illo Tempore" a 6 by Claudio Monteverdi* (London: Ernst Eulenburg, 1962), pp. VIII-IX.

18. See chapter I, pp. 9-10.

19. See Roche, "Monteverdi and the *Prima Prattica*," p. 178, where other resemblances between the Mass and the Vespers are described.

20. See Hust, pp. 73-78. Sequences of the type described here are not confined solely to Monteverdi's 1610 print. His posthumous four-voice mass, first published in 1650, is based throughout on some of the same sequential patterns. See the discussion below and the analysis of the latter work in Reginald Smith Brindle, "Monteverdi's G minor Mass: an Experiment in Construction," *Musical Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (July 1968): 352-360.

21. See Hust, pp. 64-65.

22. Hust sees the *Cantus* part as deriving from the inversion of *Fuga* 1. Ibid., p. 64.

23. See note 7 above.

24. See chapter I, pp. 28-29, note 8 above, and example 9.

25. See Brindle, "Monteverdi's G minor Mass."

26. These two masses were published in the *Selva Morale e Spirituale* of 1640 and the posthumous collection of 1650 (1651), *Messa a Quattro Voci et Salmi*. Aside from Malipiero's *Tutte le Opere di Claudio Monteverdi*, easily accessible modern editions are by Denis Arnold, *Messa a 4 voci da cappella by Claudio Monteverdi (1641)* (London: Ernst Eulenburg, Ltd., 1962); and Hans F. Redlich, *Messa a 4 Voci da cappella by Claudio Monteverdi (1651)* (London: Ernst Eulenburg, Ltd., 1952).

27. See chapter I, pp. 10-12. Denis Arnold has discovered evidence that Monteverdi underwent a public *prova* in Venice prior to his appointment, the music of which must have been drawn from the 1610 Vespers. See Arnold, "The Monteverdian Succession at St. Mark's," *Music and Letters* 42, no. 3 (July 1961): 205-211.