

Part MT 49. N666 1989

FRIEDERICH ERHARDT NIEDT

THE MUSICAL GUIDE

Parts 1 (1700/10), 2 (1721),
and 3 (1717)

TRANSLATED BY

Pamela L. Poulin

AND

Irmgard C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES BY

Pamela L. Poulin

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD

1989



§. 11. In writing the canon one proceeds as follows. When the first voice has been written out as far as it will go, then on the same line the other voice is written in reverse (without a closing sign [*fermata*]), starting from the end, as for example:



Here the second discant voice starts from the end, going to the beginning, and is written through [to the end] in the same way.

§. 12. *Summa Summarum*, write a canon however you will, the ear will not be pleased; yet it is indisputable that music is for the ear and not for the eye, and even less for the stomach, because *Venter caret auribus* [the stomach has no ears].⁸ Therefore, I shall stop now and not begrudge canon-lovers the pleasure of writing a canon so artfully, so neatly, so prettily, and so beautifully. I have herewith wished to protest [most] solemnly while doing my utmost not to denigrate them, but even less have I striven to imitate them, because I do not believe this farce is worth the trouble, and it would be a pity and a shame to waste precious time on them [canons]. Therefore, I close the chest wherein the monster of the canon is contained and wander on to . . .

CHAPTER III On Motets or Mutets

§. 1.

THE explication of Motets I leave to the peasants of Thuringia since they will keep to [the style] of Hammerschmidt's¹ time for the rest of their lives (just as the peasant girls of

⁸ This expression also appeared in the Intro. to Pt. I, § 6.

¹ Andreas Hammerschmidt (c.1611–85), a German organist and prolific composer of sacred choral music, was highly regarded during his lifetime, particularly by Heinrich Schütz. Although Niedt respects Hammerschmidt's music (see Pt. III, Chap. 1, § 11), he rightly observes it is written in an earlier style.

MUSICAL GUIDE: PART III

Altenburg have inherited their boots and, as have the Spaniards, their short cloaks from their ancestors).

§. 2. Actually, a type of Motet is common in sacred style, in which a *Vers* from a chorale or church song is introduced and ordinarily sung by the discant. At the same time, the other voices, i.e. the alto, tenor, and bass, perform a polyphonic setting of the proverb or passage from the Bible, as the following text will show:

Chorale

When Thou awakest the dead on that day,
Then extend Thy hand also to my grave;
Let Thy voice resound and arouse my body
And lead it transfigured to the company of the chosen.

Text: 1 Cor. 15: 52–3: The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.²

§. 3. If I would not get the reputation of a musical Pietist,³ I could write more on this and show in which manner I am accustomed to composing motets. But since there is not space enough to do this with notes, I shall forgo it this time and refer devotees to Motets written by other clever composers. God willing, two of my musical creations shall soon see the light [of day], namely

(1) The *Helden-Drama* [epic poem] performed at the funeral of the late Lieutenant General Tramp [on 19 November 1704] and

(2) The *Juneste Gericht in einem Sing Gedichte* [The Last Judgement as a poem for voice].⁴

In both pieces different chorales with Motets can be found. From these, the manner of their composition can be learned.

§. 4. The most important thing to be observed, I believe, is that the chorale agrees with the Biblical text in meaning and expresses the same theme and import. Otherwise, it would turn out as ridiculous as the *Inventiones* of a certain village cantor in Saxony, intended for a parish fair or, as the common man calls it, 'Kirmes' [an annual fair commemorating the original consecration of a given church]. The text from Luke 19:9 was

² The translations of this and other Biblical texts are taken from the Authorized Version.

³ The followers of Pietism, a reform movement in the German Lutheran Church during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, tried to renew the devotional ideal in Protestantism.

⁴ The text to the former was indeed published in Copenhagen in 1704, suggesting that Pt. III was written before the year 1704. In Chap. IV, § 5, Niedt states that he wrote Pt. III while living in Copenhagen. (See also the note to the Pref. to Pt. III and the Introduction to the Translation, p.xviii ff.) Except for a Recitative and Arioso which appear in Chap. VI, § 13 of this part, the latter composition does not appear to have survived.

properly explained from the pulpit and then this cantor combined it with the following Chorale:

Text: Luke 19:9 This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Chorale

They teach nothing but false cunning,
Whatever human wit invents;
Their hearts are not in tune,
Founded on God's Word.
The one chooses this, the other that,
They sow discord exceedingly,
And beam so fine without.

These go together now like bacon in cold fruit soup or like a fist in the eye.

§. 5. Even more ridiculous was the following [Motet] which a schoolmaster from Thuringia composed in honour of his minister's young daughter. This [young maiden], was by the will of God with child (supposedly without her knowledge [!]). For this reason she had to do church penance in public, as is customary. The hymn, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, etc.' was sung to her right after the conclusion of the sermon, at which time this dear little daughter kneels before the altar to listen to her text. Now the minister proposed to the schoolmaster, who believed himself to be the most elegant composer, to set the hymn 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, etc.' as a Motet, in such a way that the shame of his dear daughter would not be so great. The proposal was a good one! The schoolmaster chose the following text to go with the Chorale in order to make his motet impressive:

Text Ps. 128: [1-3] Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table, etc.

Chorale

Have mercy on me, O Lord,
According to Thy great compassion;
Wash away and cleanse me of my misdeeds;
I recognize my sins and do deplore them . . .
(and so on throughout the entire stanza)

Any half-wit can easily see how consoling such a motet must have sounded. But I must hasten on to . . .

Friedrich Erhard Niedtens
Musicalischer Handleitung

Dritter und letzter Theil/
Handlend vom

Contra-Punct, Canon, Motteten, Choral, Recitativ-
Stylo und Cavaten.

OPUS POSTHUMUM.

Deine bengefüget

VERITOPHILI

Deutliche Beweis-Gründe/

Worauf der rechte Gebrauch der Music/ beydes in den Kirchen
und aussr denselben beruhet/

Aus der Heil. Schrift/ den Zeugnissen der heil. Väter/ und aus der Theoria Musices
selbst/ mit alt und neuen/ so wohl Geiste als Weltlichen/ Exempeln/ nebst der möglichen Pflicht eines jeden
Christen/ im Gebrauch dieser göttlichen Gabe/ erörtert/ und mit ungemeinen/ bisher versectgelegenen,
doch nöthigen Erinnerungen versehen; dessen Nachdrucks wegen mit einer

Vorrede

zum Druck befördert
Von

MATTHESON.

HAMBURG / bey sel. Benjamin Schillers Erben im Dohm / 1717.

Breitendich
Immer

Choral.

Wenn du die Todten wirfst an jenem Tag erwecken/
So thu auch deine Hand zu meinem Grab ausstrecken/
Laß hören deine Stimme/ und meinen Leib weck auf/
Und führe ihn schon verklärt zum auserwählten Hauf.

Text. 1 Cor. XV. 52. 53.

Es wird die Posaune schallen/ und die Todten werden auferstehen unverseh-
lich/ und wir werden verwandelt werden: Denn diß verwestliche muß an-
ziehen das unverwestliche/ und diß Sterbliche muß anziehen die Unsterb-
lichkeit.

3. Wolte man mich nicht vor einen Musicalischen Pietisten halten/ könnte ich mehr derglei-
chen hersetzen/ und zeigen/ auf welche Art ich sie zu componiren pflege/ weil aber der
Raum solches mit Noten zu thun/ nicht leidet/ verpare ich es für dieses mahl/ und
will indessen die Liebhaber an die von andern klugen Componisten verfertigte Mote-
ten gewiesen haben. Wo Gott will/ so werden bald 2. von meinen Musicalischen
Geburten das Licht sehen/ nemlich:

1. Das bey des sel. Hn. Gen. Lieutenant Trampens Beerdigung gehaltene Hel-
den-Drama, und

2. Das jüngste Gericht in einem Sing-Gedichte.

In beyden diesen Stücken wird man verschiedne Choral-Gesänge mit Mureten eingefü-
het finden/ woraus man schon die Arten/ wie solche zu setzen sind/ wird erkennen können.

4. Das meiste/ was ich dabey nöthig halte zu observiren/ ist/ daß der Biblische Text mit
dem Choral einetley Sinn führe/ und gleichen Inhalt und Verstand exprimire;
denn sonst wird es eben so lächerlich heraus kommen/ als jenes Dorff-Cantors in
Gachsen Invention, auf die Kirchweyhe/ oder/ wie es bey dem gemeinen Mann heist/
Kirnweß/ gerichtet; deren Text ward/ wie gebühlich/ aus Lucæ XIX. 9. von der
Zanckel erklärt/ und fügte gedachter Cantor solchen mit folgendem Choral zusamen:
Text.

37
wie ein fruchtbarer Weinstock um dein Haus herum; deine Kinder / wie die
Oel-Zweige um deinen Tisch her u.

Choral.

Erbar dich mein / O Herre Gott/
Nach deiner grossen Barmherzigkeit/
Wasch ab / mach rein mein Missethat/
Ich erkenne meine Sünd / und sind mir leid / u. s. f. den ganzen Vers

durch.

Wie tröstlich solche Morete wird gelungen haben / kan auch ein halb-fluger leichte
sehen. Doch ich muß fortellen zum

IV. Capitel.

Vom

Kirchen = Styl.

I.



Obte ich Regeln schmieden vom Kirchen-Styl / würde ich mich über solchen / ehe ich
einmahl damit zum Ende käme / wohl zu todt arbeiten. Dem ich weiß und bin
versichert / daß selber kein Componist mir sagen kan / was jehiger Zeit der rechte
Kirchen-Styl sey? Mir dünckt / es geht damit / wie mit denen Kleider-Moden / da
sich die Schneider jehiger Zeit nach Englischen Modellen ansehen / da doch vor dem
die Frantzösischen überall das prä hatten; so sehen sich auch die Herren Musici immer
nach Italiänischen Manieren um / was es da gutes neues giebt / und das muß stracks
nachgeßet werden / Gott gebe / es klinge oder klappe / so muß es doch gut heissen / es
hat es ja ein Italiäner gemacht! quasi vero, als wären in Italien keine Narren.

2. Und

E 3