

Analyzing Josquin Canons Through Improvisation

David Geary | Indiana University | degeary13@gmail.com
Tonal Structures in Early Music at Twenty | Waltham, MA | June 2, 2018

Figure 1: Hypothetical Canon Improvisation

Melodic Intervals for a Canon at the Fifth Above:
 → U †3 †5 †7 †2 †4 †6 †8

Embarrassment

Framework

5

E.

F.

Figure 2: Josquin, “Sanctus” from *Missa Mater patris*, mm. 58–66; Strong Beat Preference Rule

Melodic Intervals for a Canon at the Second Above:
 12 †4 †6 †7 †2 †4 †5 †7

Consonant Anticipation	Structural Downbeat
------------------------	---------------------

Altus

Altus

Reduction

58

62

A.

A.

R.

Figure 3: Josquin, “Agnus Dei” from *Missa Ave maris stella*, mm. 38–42; Structural Rest

Melodic Intervals for a Canon at the Fourth Above:
12 14 16 18 12 13 15 17

Strong Beat	Weak Beat
Structural Rest	Surface Embellishment

Bibliography:

- De Beldomandi, Prosdócimo. *Contrapunctus*. Translated by Jan Herlinger. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
- Canguilhem, Philippe. “Improvisation as concept and musical practice in the fifteenth century.” In *Cambridge History of Fifteenth Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 149–63. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Coclico, Adrianus Petít. *Compendium musices*. Translated by Albert Seay. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College Music Press, 1973.
- Collins, Dennis. “Canon and Music Pedagogy 1500–1800.” *Theoria* 8 (1994): 53–72.
- Collins, Dennis. “‘So You Want to Write a Canon?’ An Historically-Informed New Approach for the Modern Theory Class.” *College Music Symposium* 48 (2008): 108–23.
- Cumming, Julie. “Renaissance Improvisation and Musicology.” *Music Theory Online* 19 (2013).
- Cummings, Julie, and Peter Schubert. “The Origins of Pervasive Imitation.” In *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 200–228. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Gauldin, Robert. “The Composition of Late Renaissance Stretto Canons.” *Theory and Practice* 21 (1996): 29–54.
- Judd, Christle Collins, ed. *Tonal Structures in Early Music*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.
- Milsom, John. “Analyzing Josquin.” In *The Josquin Companion*, edited by Richard Sherr, 431–84. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Milsom, John. “‘Imitatio,’ ‘Intertextuality,’ and Early Music.” In *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned*, edited by Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach, 141–51. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2005.
- Schubert, Peter. “Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance.” In *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, edited by Thomas Christensen, 503–33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Schubert, Peter. “From Improvisation to Composition: Three 16th Century Case Studies.” In *Improvising Early Music*, edited by Dirk Moelants, 93–130. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014.
- Schubert, Peter. *Modal Counterpoint, Renaissance Style*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Figure 4: Josquin, "Sanctus" from *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie*, 19–57

Melodic Intervals for a Canon at the Fifth Above:
→ U | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8

19
Altus
Bassus
Reduction

26
A.
B.
R.

33
A.
B.
R.

Figure 4: (cont.)

40

A. Treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Melody with eighth notes and rests.

B. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Bass line with eighth notes and rests.

R. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Chordal accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 40 through 45. The treble staff (A) features a melody of eighth notes with some rests, including a half-note rest in measure 41. The bass staff (B) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests. The right-hand bass staff (R) contains chordal accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

46

A. Treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Melody with eighth notes and rests.

B. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Bass line with eighth notes and rests.

R. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Chordal accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 46 through 51. The treble staff (A) continues the melody with eighth notes and rests. The bass staff (B) continues the rhythmic accompaniment. The right-hand bass staff (R) continues the chordal accompaniment.

52

A. Treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Melody with eighth notes and rests.

B. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Bass line with eighth notes and rests.

R. Bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Chordal accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 52 through 57. The treble staff (A) continues the melody with eighth notes and rests. The bass staff (B) continues the rhythmic accompaniment. The right-hand bass staff (R) continues the chordal accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line.