

CORPUS MENSURABILIS MUSICAE

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FIRMINUS CARON

COMPLETE WORKS

Edited by

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FIRMINUS CARON
COMPLETE WORKS

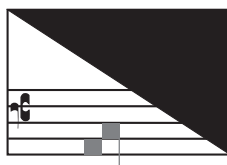
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Introduction

Caron's Masses

All five of Caron's securely-attributed masses use a *cantus firmus*: three are based on chant and two on secular chansons. (See Table 1.) The source of only one of these *cantus firmi* is conjectural: the text "Clemens et benigna" is the first line of an Osanna trope, most frequently associated with Thannabaur's Sanctus 49 and less frequently with Sanctus 54, both of which are Marian.¹ This Osanna trope is a special type of Sanctus trope: an elaboration of the Osanna in the form of an extended prosula with a double-versicle structure very similar to a Sequence. Iversen lists five sources of this trope and CANTUS lists several more.² Caron's *cantus firmus*, however, only vaguely resembles this Sanctus or any of the associated tropes. It may be that Caron knew a different version of this Sanctus or its trope, but it is also conceivable that the text "Clemens et benigna" refers to something that we have not yet discovered. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that although Caron states the *cantus firmus* literally in some sections, he paraphrases it heavily in others, and often intersperses numerous free sections throughout, sometimes within a single phrase of the *cantus firmus*. It is possible, even probable, that Caron began with this Sanctus and embellished it from the start.

Caron occasionally uses a head motive. The most complete one occurs in his *Missa Jesus autem transiens*, where a three-voice motive continues to the downbeat of measure 3 (the last note in the bass voice is different in the Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei compared with the Kyrie and Gloria). The *Missa L'homme armé* uses a two-voice head motive lasting until the downbeat of measure 3, but only in the Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei; the Kyrie and Credo do not use the head motive and are not similar to each other. In the *Missa Sanguis sanctorum*, the Gloria and Sanctus are identical until the downbeat of measure 3, but the other movements are again completely different, so it is not clear if this should be considered a true head motive. Finally, in *Missa Clemens et benigna*, the Alto in the Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus begins with a descending triad G–E–C underneath a sustained G in the top voice, but in a different rhythm each time.

Missa Jesus autem transiens has Caron's only true tail motive; it lasts for two measures and a beat in all the movements, comprises all four voices, and there is one note different in the Kyrie compared with the other movements. It is comprised of a standard cadential formula followed by a short melisma in the Alto while the other voices sustain the final chord. The Credo and Agnus Dei of *Missa Accueille m'a la belle* end the same for two measures and a beat in all four voices, but the other movements are completely different, so it is not clear if this should be considered a true tail motive. As with the tail motive in *Missa Jesus autem transiens*, the one in *Missa Accueille m'a la belle* is comprised of a standard cadential pattern followed by a short melisma, this time in the Bass.

Caron typically begins each movement in reduced texture—most commonly two voices (sixteen times) but sometimes three voices (six times)—before bringing in the *cantus firmus*. Only two of the twenty-four movements in his securely attributed masses begin with all four voices (the Kyries of his *Missae Clemens et benigna* and *Sanguis sanctorum*). I stress this here because this is a significantly different practice from what we see in the masses that have been attributed to Caron by modern scholars.

Caron's use of cadences is typical of the 1460s: one third of the sectional cadences in his masses are octave-leap, which were beginning to decline in popularity at this time. He uses this type of cadence twenty-seven times in his masses, sometimes with a rest between the preparatory note in the Bass and its resolution, but usually not. His next most common type of cadence is the standard later-fifteenth-century cadence, which was gaining popularity at this time. It begins like a double-leading tone cadence

1. Thannabaur, *Sanctus*, 135–40 and 142.

2. Iversen, *Tropes du Sanctus*, 84.

Critical Commentary

1. Missa Accueille m'a la belle

The musical text may not be performed or republished without the written consent of the Vatican Apostolic Library.

Unique Source

VatS 51, fols. 6v–17, Caron

Modern Editions

Thompson, *Caron*, 1:1

Eakins, *Sistina 51*, 1:30

Voice Designations

	1	2	3	4
Kyrie			Tenor	Contra
Gloria		Contra	Tenor	Contra
Credo			Tenor	Contra; Bassus
Sanctus		Contra	Tenor	Contra
Agnus Dei			Tenor	Contra

Mensurations

KYRIE

Kyrie	○
Christe	⋈
Kyrie	⊖

GLORIA

Et in terra	○
Domine Deus	○
Qui tollis	⋈

CREDO

Patrem	○
Et resurrexit	○
Et ascendit	⋈
Et unam sanctam	⊖

SANCTUS

Sanctus	○
Pleni sunt	○
Osanna 1	⋈

1. Missa Accueille m'a la belle

Credo

Cre - do in u - num De - um.

S Pa - - - - - trem o - mni-pot - - - en - - -
A Pa - - - - - trem o - mni - pot - en - - - -
T
B

S - - - - - tem, fa - cto - rem ce - li et - - - - -
A - - - - - tem, fa - cto - rem ce - li et - - - - -

S - - - - - re, vi - si - bi - li -
A - - - - - re, vi - si - bi - li - um o -

S - um o - mni-um et - - - - - vi - si - bi - - - - - li -
A - mni-um et - - - - - vi - si - bi - - - - - li -

S - um. Et in u - - - - - num Do - mi -
A - um. Et in u - num Do - mi - num Je - sum
T Et
B Et in

22

ba - oth.

Sa - ba - oth.]

ba - oth.]

ba - oth.]

27

Ple - ni sunt ce -

Ple - ni sunt ce -

Pleni tacet

Ple - ni sunt [ce -

32

- li et ter - ra glo -

- li et ter - ra [glo -

Pleni tacet

- li et ter - ra glo -

37

ri - a tu - a.

ri - a tu - a.]

Pleni tacet

ri - a tu - a.]