

MUSICOLOGICAL STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS

17

GIACHES DE WERT  
(1535 - 1596)

# LIFE AND WORKS

BY

CAROL Mac CLINTOCK



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General Editor

GIACHES DE WERT  
LIFE AND WORKS  
by CAROL MacCLINTOCK

# THE ART OF THE NOVEL

by Armen Carapetyan

## THE NOVEL AS A FORM

The novel is a form of literature that has evolved over time, reflecting the changes in society and culture. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

## THE NOVEL AS A MEDIUM

The novel is a medium that allows the author to explore the human condition in a way that is both fictional and non-fictional. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

## THE NOVEL AS A GENRE

The novel is a genre that has evolved over time, reflecting the changes in society and culture. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

## THE NOVEL AS A FORM OF LITERATURE

The novel is a form of literature that has evolved over time, reflecting the changes in society and culture. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

## THE NOVEL AS A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

The novel is a medium of communication that allows the author to explore the human condition in a way that is both fictional and non-fictional. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

## THE NOVEL AS A FORM OF ART

The novel is a form of art that has evolved over time, reflecting the changes in society and culture. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

## THE NOVEL AS A MEDIUM OF EXPLORATION

The novel is a medium of exploration that allows the author to explore the human condition in a way that is both fictional and non-fictional. It is a narrative that is both fictional and non-fictional, and it is often used to explore the human condition.

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Bloomington, Indiana  
March 23, 1964

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The mists of time, even as clouds over a mountain range, have obscured for some three hundred years, or very nearly, many of the bright and shining peaks of the sixteenth century musical world. Giaches de Wert, one of the most significant and important composers of his time, is one of those who, together with most of his contemporaries, fell into near oblivion and is only now emerging into the clear light of day and his musical stature beginning to assume its true proportions.<sup>1</sup>

In his own time a prominent musical figure, he was admired and respected by his contemporaries;<sup>2</sup> from the number of references to him that have survived it is evident that he figured among the élite, invariably referred to by a qualifying term that witnesses to the esteem in which he was held — “virtuoso raro,” “doctissimus,” “eccellentissimo.” In a letter of February 2, 1568 to the Duke of Mantua, Palestrina, himself a virtuoso, calls Wert “virtuoso così raro,” and in a letter of March 8, 1570, again bestows the title “virtuoso” on the Mantuan maestro di capella.<sup>3</sup> This is no mean praise from such a source. A younger master, Monteverdi, also makes clear his estimation of his former *chef* when, in 1601, he speaks of the “eccellente Sig. Giaches” as opposed to the merely “sufficiente Messer Pallavicino” who, instead of Monteverdi, had succeeded to Giaches’ post.<sup>4</sup> Further witness to Wert’s celebrity may be seen in Adam Berg’s account of the music heard at the Diet of Augsburg in 1566, when all the Princes of Christendom were assembled with their retinues and their musical cappellas. Berg has only praise for Wert’s part in the discussion of counterpoint before the assembly of dignitaries and musicians — an assembly which included Kerle, Vaet, Lasso and Monte — a performance which aroused the admiration of all.

<sup>1</sup> *Complete Works of Giaches de Wert*, ed. C. MacClintock, is being published by the American Institute of Musicology, 1961 —. Four volumes have appeared to date.

<sup>2</sup> Wert was known outside the musical world also. In his *Descrittione di tutti i Paese Bassi* (1569) Guicciardini writes, „Di presente vivono . . . Orlando di Lasso . . . Giaches de Waet (*sic*) Giachetto di Berchem . . . et molti altri maestri di musica celeberrimi et sparsi con honore et gradi per il mondo . . .” (p. 27).

<sup>3</sup> Arch. Gonzaga. Letter of Feb. 2, 1568. Printed in A. Bertolotti, *La Musica in Mantova* (Milan: Ricordi, 1890) p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of 1601. Printed in G. F. Malipiero, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 1929, p. 128. Still smarting from his disappointment Monteverdi was not inclined to be flowery; still he could not fail to acknowledge Wert’s genius in the term „eccellente” which was an expression of highest praise.

## II

### BIOGRAPHY

Giaches de Wert — the name at first sight declares him to be one of the many *oltremontani* who came to Italy as children or youths and passed most, if not all of their lives there. Like Cipriano de Rore, Orlando di Lasso, and Filippo de Monte, Giaches was of Flemish origin. Although no records exist, he is invariably referred to as Flemish and there can be no question that he came from the Netherlands. The exact place of his birth, however, poses a more difficult problem. Canal presumed that because he was called "de Wert" (*from Wert*) he must have been born in the district of Wert in the county of Horn near Brabant.<sup>1</sup> Van der Straeten thought that he came from Antwerp, basing his opinion on a statement by Jean-Albert Ban in the preface to his collection of songs which he published in 1642.<sup>2</sup> Van der Straeten also refers to another Flemish singer, Richard de Weerdt, from Antwerp who had been a member of the cappella of Charles V:<sup>3</sup> he further cites the community accounts of the city of Antwerp for 1550, which contain the record of a certain "Jacques de Weerdt, cleric des impôts de la bière *extra muros*."<sup>4</sup> Certainly there was a Weerdt or Wert family living in Antwerp at the period in question. On the other hand, it is possible that Giaches came from in or near Brussels. Bautier-Regnier mentions the existence of records of a family "de Wert" in Brussels as early as 1265.<sup>5</sup> Again, he may have come from a small town, Weert, which still exists in the southeastern Netherlands, near the Belgian border.

In any case, from the form of name he used, Giaches, direct transliteration of Jacques, he must have come from a French-speaking region.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Canal, *op. cit.*, 37.

<sup>2</sup> "Waerlyk Monteverde heeft getoont dat zyne eerst en tweede boek der Madrigalen, volgende den styl van Luca Marenzio (die een navolger was van Giaches de Wert, een Nederlander, geboren tot Antwerpen, zoo ick hebbe verstaen)..." A. Bannius *Zangh-Bloemzel*, Preface; pr. in *Musique et Musiciens au XVIIe siècle: Correspondence et oeuvres musicales de Constantin Huyghens*, W. J. A. Jonckbloet et J. P. N. Land, Leiden, Brill, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Van der Straeten, *op. cit.*, II, 327.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 209ff.

<sup>5</sup> Bautier-Regnier, *op. cit.*, p. 44, fn. 19, "Remarquons que très anciennement déjà des Wert s'étaient établies à Bruxelles; en 1265 un certain Henri Wert était même échevin de Bruxelles." (Quoted from Pergameni, *Les arch. hist. de la ville de Bruxelles*, 1943, p. 402.)

<sup>6</sup> It would be normal for the French *Jacques* or the Flemish *Jacob* to be italianized as *Giacomo*, and this was the case when he was still a youth. The three earliest references to him — a letter of 1553, the first madrigal to be printed, and a letter of 1565 — refer

strumenti, mi sarà necessarissimo che egli venisse in qua subito; però supplico V. Ecc<sup>a</sup>, col magg<sup>re</sup> affetto ch'io possa, mi faccia degno di questa grazia, di comandargli che se ne venga domani." <sup>60</sup>

Giaches, whom Alfonso still calls "mio Maestro di capella" even though he was no longer in his service, was to prepare both singers and instrumentalists for this performance.

But *fieste* and theatricals were not the only matters that occupied him during the years 1567—69. In 1567 his fourth book of madrigals, dedicated to Guglielmo, was published, and reprinted in 1568. <sup>61</sup> In that same year he contributed a motet to Joanelus' *Novi thesaurum musicum*, *Lib. II* and another motet to Joanelus' Fifth volume. <sup>62</sup> A reprint of the first book of Motets appeared in 1569, and in 1570 the third reprint of the four-voice madrigals.

More fatiguing perhaps than the enormous amount of musical composition and direction he was expected to provide were the constant attempts by some of the jealous singers in his charge to make him give up his post. A certain faction, headed by Agostino Bonvicino, disappointed by Wert's appointment as maestro di capella, tried by every means, fair or foul, to make his situation so unpleasant that he would leave voluntarily. It would appear from Giaches' letter of August 27, 1567 to the Duke that just as they had tried earlier to discredit him in a dispute over the *quinta falsa*, so now they were attempting to replace him as maestro di capella by Bonvicino who, however, failed miserably when given a trial. Wert goes on to explain that the cabal has now gone so far and his patience is so sorely tried that there is nothing left for him to do except put hand to sword unless the Duke will insure peace. <sup>63</sup> In another letter

<sup>60</sup> Arch., Mantua, B. 1350. In each instance when this letter has been cited, no mention has been made of the fact that *both* voices and instruments were to be used. This comedy was probably performed as part of the public festivities on the occasion of Conte Alfonso's marriage to Donna Vittoria di Capua, Nov. 16, 1567. The couple did not arrive in Novellara however until December 20. The public nuptials were celebrated the following month, with fireworks, *fieste*, *conviti*, etc., and a number of spectacles given January 21-23. A comedy was recited the evening of January 22, with a ballo composed by Muzio Busi and with "apparato e scena bellissima fatta da Lelio Orsi, pittore eccellente." (Davolio, *op. cit.*, *La Contea di Novellara*) Although Alfonso's letter specifically states that the comedy was to be given the 11th of January, it is quite possible that it was repeated later for the public festival.

<sup>61</sup> Il Quattro Libro de madrigali a 5... Venice, Gardano, 1567. (Modern edition CW IV, 1965).

<sup>62</sup> See App. C, Bibliography of sources. The motet *Transeunte Domine* was taken from his first book of motets. The *Egressus Jesus à 7* may have been composed especially for this collection as it was not published in one of Wert's own books until 1581.

<sup>63</sup> Arch. Mantua, B. 2578. (Pr. in full in Bertolotti, *op. cit.* 41.) A few extracts will suffice to show Wert's vexation. "... me lo dimostrò Messer Agostino la vigilia di S. Bartolomeo l'insolenza del quale non voglio referirle a V. E. ma se non po chiarire... e perche so che vanno tentando... di farmi perdere la pazienza, però fanno animo ad Agostino di tal sorte che non havemo hora a far altro che mettere mano



### III

#### THE LITERARY SOURCES

The extant corpus of Wert's sacred works is limited entirely to music used in the church of Santa Barbara, including three published volumes of motets. Texts for them include, in addition to the Ordinary of the Mass, 17 Psalms for Matins and Lauds, a Passion according to St. Mark and various verses from both Old and New Testaments for the 44 motets, while most of the 129 hymn texts are taken from the liturgy for feasts throughout the year or from poems approved for the rites of Santa Barbara. These will be discussed more appropriately in the chapter on Wert's sacred music.

There exists, however, a record of one group of hymns especially written for the liturgy of Santa Barbara by Marc-Antoine Muret, the eminent French philosopher and humanist.<sup>1</sup> In 1569 or 1570 Duke Guglielmo commissioned him, then one of the brilliant members of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este's literary circle in Tivoli, to compose a number of Latin hymns for Santa Barbara. Between the years 1570 and 1580 Muret sent at least thirty-one hymns, and nine letters regarding their composition exist.<sup>2</sup> On September 15, 1570 Muret writes to Aurelio Zibramonte, the Duke's minister, from Tivoli that soon he will have completed the thirty hymns the Duke has commissioned. He includes a letter to the Duke apologizing for his slowness, saying he was somewhat out of the habit of writing verse. On November 4 of the same year he writes to the Duke, sending him 27 hymns and explaining they are "non come io havevo voluto ma come ho potuto."<sup>3</sup> He asks the Duke to let him know if he

<sup>1</sup> Marc-Antoine Muret (1526-1585), brilliant French scholar and man of letters, pupil of Joseph Scaliger, became professor at the age of 18! He was a member of the faculty of the Collège at Aich, where he lectured on Cicero and Terence. In 1527 he was *professeur de belles-lettres* at Bordeaux and numbered Montaigne among his pupils. In 1552 he was called to Paris to the Collège du Card. Lemoine, where he became famous for his lectures in theology, jurisprudence, philosophy and poetry — even Catherine de' Medici attended them. His success aroused much envy, and, accused of a revolting vice, he was imprisoned in the Chatelet. After his release, no longer able to remain in Paris, he went first to Toulouse and in 1554 to Italy, where he was made welcome by the humanists, especially in Venice. In 1560 he was called to Rome by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este to enhance the Cardinal's small literary court. In Rome Muret found happiness, fame, and wealth. In 1567 he gave a series of lectures on history and philosophy which so pleased Pope Gregory XIII that he named Muret a Roman citizen and gave him a handsome stipend. His works were collected and printed in Verona in 1727-1730 in five volumes. In 1789 a corrected edition of four volumes was brought out in Leyden.

<sup>2</sup> See Ch. II, fn. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Bertolotti, *Lettres inédits de Muret*, ..., Letter 2.

## IV

### THE SECULAR WORKS:

#### MADRIGALS AND CANZONETTE

##### *Early works: 1558—1565*

Within four years, 1558—1561, Giaches published his first and second books of five-part madrigals, his first and only book of four-part madrigals, and a second edition of the first two volumes in Scotto's series *Madrigali del Fiore*.<sup>1</sup> Two years later came the third book of *Madrigali a cinque voci*. Such an outpouring indicates not only popular acceptance of his work but also that he had a reserve of unpublished material upon which to draw, for by the time the first book appeared in print he had been Alfonso Gonzaga's maestro di cappella for several years, and most of the compositions are undoubtedly the fruits of this period. The four volumes show a certain homogeneity and, as might be expected, a definite relationship to Rore and Willaert, upon whose music most of Giaches' generation modelled their early work. Though the early madrigals show an affinity to those of older masters, Giaches nevertheless reveals himself a master of his craft, thoroughly grounded in contrapuntal techniques, forward-looking in his concepts of tonal relations and in his use of polyphony. From the outset his ability to expand and build a phrase by variation, avoiding strictly academic imitation, is clear; his handling of thematic material is developmental, never stereotyped, imparting a noticeable continuity and cohesiveness and at the same time a freedom and suppleness. Harmonic color is an important means of expression for Wert; association with Rore most certainly influenced his artistic approach and brought him very early into the group of composers concerned with subjective expression of the text.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Giaches' first collections of madrigals for five and four voices (I and II à 5, I à 4) were published by the Venetian house of Girolamo Scotto. About 1561 he changed publishers, turning to Scotto's rival, Antonio Gardano, whose careful work and use of the Haultin types and single impression method insured accurate and rapid printings. After 1562 Gardano printed all of Wert's music with the exception of Libro VI (1577), and two books of motets (1581), which were again printed by Scotto. Bautier-Regnier (*Op. cit.*, 46) states incorrectly that Gardano brought out the two *Madrigali del Fiore* volumes.

<sup>2</sup> In my discussions of the musical aspects of Wert's works I have vastly overworked an adjective, "expressive", and a noun, "expression". It is inevitable, for Wert himself had constantly in his mind this aspect of his art. He was a man of his time, reflecting quite subconsciously, I am sure, the esthetics of the "baroque" which sought expression above all. If the reader can supply a synonym it would relieve the monotony of reiteration. Meanwhile, the apologies of the author!



is imitated at the lower 5th by both Quinto and Basso in a duo, with Basso singing the motif in mirror inversion. Tenor, entering after 2 measures, makes a canon with Canto at the octave; at m. 5 Alto enters in canon at unison with Quinto, and all parts continue somewhat freely to a cadence, the end of which becomes, in Basso, the beginning of a new statement. Canto then enters (m. 8) in canon at the octave with Bass, rhythmic values altered, and at the same time forms a duo with Quinto; at m. 9 Alto and Bass form a duo; at m. 10 Tenor enters in canon at unison with Canto (rhythms altered) while Quinto answers at the lower fifth. All voices continue in an extended cadence, which turns into a tonic pedal by the insistent repetition of G in one voice or another for ten measures. The *seconda parte* makes effective use of chordal trios and quartets which echo and repeat each phrase; for the final section (mm. 25—41) he takes a motive heard in the first part (Bass, m. 15—16) and uses it for a brilliant closing section using paired voices in imitation. Such intricate constructive measures could easily become academic, but the constant variation in rhythmic values and irregular entrances remove any dryness from the counterpoint.

Expressive madrigals abound: *Trascende l'Alpe*, a charming love-letter, combines clear declamation of the text with some very realistic tone painting in the *seconda parte*; continually changing timbres, contrasts of register over pedal points in the lower voices make this one of Giaches' most delightful compositions. In *Son animali al mondo* brief passages in choral recitative serve as foils to long passages of imitation, while overlapping of themes, persistent regrouping of parts and shifting sonorities, affective intervals, cross-relation, all aid in imparting the essence of Petrarch's exquisite sonnet. The lyric quality displayed in *Per mezz' i boschi*, the text also by Petrarch, is a kind of expression that goes deeper than mere word painting, depending largely on the pliancy and movement of the melodic lines, and is a worthy descendant of Rore's earlier setting of the same text. The initial phrase, built on the restless intertwining

|                                 |       |                          |   |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|---|
| (Omnis felix meritique)         | V     | Beheading of S. John     | 167, XLI  |
| (Pange lingua . . . certaminis) | V     | Passiontide              | 168, XXIX   |
| Pange lingua . . . corporis     | V     | Corpus Christi           | 168, LI   |
| Ponatur lacrimis                | V     | Easter                   | 168, XXX  |
| Rector potens verax             | Sext  | Various feasts           | 167, VII, XIII,<br>XVIII, LI, LV,<br>LIX, LXIII,<br>LXXIV<br>168, IX, XIII,<br>XX, XXIV,<br>XXXVI, XLVI                                       |
| Rerum Deus tenax vigor          | None  | Various feasts           | 167, VIII XIX,<br>LXVI<br>168, XXXVII<br>XLII   |
| (Salutis humanae sator)         | V     | Oct. Ascens.             | 167, IV   |
| Sancte triumphum virginis       | V     | S. Barbara               | 167, LXXII  |
| Sanctorum meritis               | V     | Comm. Martyrs            | 167, LXXXV  |
| Sanctorum meritis               | V     | Comm. Martyrs            | 167, II, XI,<br>XVI, XXI,<br>XXIX, XLIII,<br>XLIX, LIII,<br>LVII<br>168, III, VII,<br>XI, XV, XVIII,<br>XXII, XXXI,<br>XL, XLIV,<br>XLIX, LII |
| Te lucis ante terminum          | Comp. | Various feasts           | 167, XXIV   |
| (Te splendor et virtus patris)  | V     | Appar. S. Michael        | 167, XLVI   |
| Tibi Christe splendor Patris    | V     | S. Michael               | 167, LXVI   |
| Tristes errant apostoli         | V     | SS. Apostles             | 167, LXXVIII  |
| (Tristes errant apostoli)       | V     | SS. Apostles             | 167, LII  |
| Urbs beata Ierusalem            | V     | Ann. Ded. of a Ch.       | 167, XLII   |
| Ut fidam sanctam                | V     | S. Adrian mart.          | 167, XXV  |
| Ut queant laxis                 | V     | S. John Baptist          | 168, XLIII  |
| Veni creator spiritus           | V     | Pentecost                | 168, II   |
| Verbum supernum prodiens        | V     | Vig. Nat. of our<br>Lord | 167, XXXIII   |
| Virginis sancte                 | V     | S. Margaret              | 167, XXXV   |
| Voce Iesu quem                  | V     | S. Mary Magd.            |   |

The following hymns lack intonations, beginning in the MS with the second verse, and have not yet been definitely indentified.

|                         |   |                   |          |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|----------|
| .....                   | M | S. Barbara        | 167, III |
| 2. In creatum de creata |   |                   |          |
| .....                   | V | S. Barbara        | 167, IX  |
| 2. In patris valida     |   |                   |          |
| .....                   | V | Chair of S. Peter | 167, XIV |
| 2. Jam bone pastor      |   |                   |          |