

MISCELLANEA

*Music of the Josquin Era,
1460–1560*

STUDIES IN HONOR OF JOSHUA RIFKIN

Edited by

Mitchell P. Brauner, David Fallows, and Jesse Rodin

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY

Paul L. Ranzini, Director

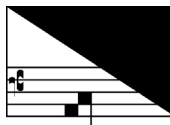
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About a Round

John Milsom*



The brief snatch of music shown above is what a sixteenth-century British musician would call a “round,” “roundel,” “roundelay,” or sometimes a “catch,” and others might call a “canon” or a “fuga.” Three voices enter in succession, answering one another at the unison after six minims, and as the round repeats, so melody becomes polyphony and harmony, and the singers chase one another *ad infinitum* until boredom sets in. In the following study, I tell a partial story of this round. My account, however, is fragmentary, because it draws together scattered materials that have fallen into my hands by chance in recent years, and without question it could be expanded and refined. I offer it now to Joshua Rifkin partly because he will already know bits of the story (though not, I hope, too many of them), partly because he and other readers will enjoy developing it by adding things I have missed and questioning assumptions I have made.

Like many sixteenth-century rounds, this one was mainly transmitted orally and aurally, through the acts of singing, listening, and remembering. It also mutated over time, whether by accident, through slips of memory, or by wilful adaptation and accretion. Its notated sources therefore capture moments in a broader process of transmission, and resemble a crop of mushrooms that can only hint at the existence of a vast and invisible mycelium lurking unseen below the ground. The mushrooms I describe here were chronologically and geographically scattered: they have been gathered from sources notated in Italy, the German-speaking lands, England, and Scotland, and they

* My thanks to David Fallows, Jessie Ann Owens, Klaus Pietschmann, and Jesse Rodin for commenting on an earlier version of their study, and assisting with various queries.

The *Souterliedekens* of Jacobus Clemens non Papa and Tielman Susato: Cashing in on the Reformation

John Kmetz*

While visiting Paris in 1778, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart received a letter from his papa, Leopold, who advised him as to what he might do to enhance his fame and fortune:

When you don't have any students, for God's sake go out of your way a bit to compose some music that will enhance your reputation. But music that is short in length, easy, and popular! Talk to a publisher, and see what he would most like to have—perhaps easy quartets for two violins, viola, and cello. Do you think you demean yourself by writing such music? No way! Didn't [Johann Christian] Bach in London do nothing else but turn out such little trifles? The little piece is big, when it is light, flows naturally, and is grounded in the fundamentals of music. Composing this way is much more difficult than composing incomprehensible artificial harmonic progressions and melodies that are difficult to sing. Did Bach embarrass himself composing such easy pieces? No way!¹

If Clemens non Papa had a papa, like Wolfgang, he would surely have agreed with Leopold. To enhance your fame and fortune, writing music that was short and easy to perform was certainly a formula for success, even in the Renaissance. Take, for example, Hayne van Ghizeghem's three-voice setting of *De tous biens playne*. This rondeau certainly proves that relatively short and easy to sing music gets a lot more attention

* It is only fitting that this article appears in this Festschrift. Indeed I never would have written it, nor would have ever known anything much about Clemens non Papa, if it wasn't for Joshua Rifkin. In November of 2015, Joshua, along with Victor Coelho, organized a conference on the composer at Boston University and asked me to participate by giving a paper. I gave the paper and then shelved it in anticipation that this Festschrift in honor of Joshua would appear one day. That day has come.

1. The author's translation is based on the original text in *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Band II: 1777–1779*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962), 444, lines 75–85.