

**Richard Freedman. *Music in the Renaissance*. Western Music in Context. Series editor, Walter Frisch. New York: Norton, 2013.**

**xix + 258 + 27 pp. \$42.00.**

**ISBN 978-0-393-92916-4 (paper)**

**Richard Freedman. *Anthology for Music in the Renaissance*. Western Music in Context. Series editor, Walter Frisch. New York: Norton, 2013.**

**x + 175 + 1 pp. \$42.00 (\$32.00 if packaged with textbook).**

**ISBN 978-0-393-92019-2 (paper)**

JENNIFER S. THOMAS

Norton's new music history series *Western Music in Context* (edited by Walter Frisch) makes its aims clear immediately: "Music consists of more than notes on a page or the sound heard on a recording" (p xv). Thus, each book in the series explores the people and practices surrounding music in Western culture. These slim volumes with accompanying score anthologies offer an alternative to the comprehensive, highly enriched, general textbooks with equally comprehensive anthologies of scores and CDs, as well as to Norton's large period histories, also with score anthologies. The deliberately selective approach to topics and repertoire adopted in this new series not only allows but requires instructors to take an active hand in shaping the intent and content of the courses that use them.

Introducing the goals of *Music in the Renaissance*, Richard Freedman invokes the words of Cicero to demonstrate the force of humanism in shaping Renaissance thought: "I am always more affected by the causes of events than by the events themselves" (p. xvii). Accordingly, the book offers a rich mixture of questions and observations about the causes and outcomes of musical events, along with study of the music itself. The book is organized in four parts. Part I,

Beginnings, introduces the musical style of the period with a polytextual Latin motet by Johannes Ciconia and a madrigal by Luca Marenzio. These works invite an examination of the aesthetic and theoretical foundations for each work, the education that would have equipped musicians to create and perform them, and the spectrum of subject matter and musical styles that frame the Renaissance. The subsequent three major parts break the time period into three large chronological chunks: pre-1500, around 1500, and post-1500.

The table of contents conveys a detailed sense of the book's intricate, integrated view of music's encounters with Renaissance life. For example, Part II, Before 1500, contains three chapters: "Music at Court and a Songbook for Beatrice"; "Piety, Devotion, and Ceremony"; and "Structures and Symbols in Cantus Firmus and Canon." Each of these further subdivides into sections of 2–4 pages articulating specific relevant concepts. Chapter 3 begins with an account of Guillaume Du Fay's tenure at Savoy and a brief snapshot of his training and career to that point, then considers the ways that music itself was transmitted, both orally and in manuscripts available to elite patrons. The chapter considers the hierarchical structure of music-making in aristocratic homes; a celebration that would require music (the wedding of Louis of Savoy); the motivations for patrons to use their wealth in artistic display; the theoretical discourse for a shifting musical aesthetic; the transmission of music; and finally, a particular songbook, the Mellon Chansonnier, created for the princess Beatrice.

The inevitable chapter on Josquin des Prez begins with study of his iconic motet *Ave Maria* and the idea of the musical *ars perfecta*. The era's most revered composer inspired an outpouring of research over the past half-century that spurs consideration of contemporaneous reception of Josquin, of attribution and authenticity, of identity and genius, and of the Josquin "brand." The intense scholarly spotlight on Josquin has begun to widen to include his peers, exemplified here by Heinrich Isaac. The new sixteenth-century technology of printing and its implications for music's preservation, dissemination, and authorship naturally finds a place alongside Josquin, the first composer to step into the public eye via Petrucci's single-composer editions. These chapters represent the variety of topics that intersect around the discussions of music.

The sub-sections within the chapters rest on the seminal research cited at the end of each chapter (*For Further Reading*) and further expanded on the companion website; the textbook's narrative skillfully weaves the essence of these separate research articles into an integrated whole. Chapter 3, for instance, directs readers to Jane Alden's 2010 book *Songs, Scribes, and Society*, Paula Higgins's 1991 article "Parisian Nobles, a Scottish Princess, and the Woman's Voice in Late Medieval Song," and Rob Wegman's 2003 article "Johannes Tinctoris and the 'New Art,'" to name just three of the eight cited in the book (plus eleven more on the companion website). The various topics and authors introduce students

to the wealth of research that has underpinned Renaissance musicology since the inception of the discipline. The book's close tie to musicological research demonstrates to both undergraduate and graduate students the relationship between scholarship and the ideas that become widely accepted as truths in any period. Freedman's inviting, efficient prose traverses this dense thicket of complex ideas with apparent ease, demystifying the world of scholarship and inviting students to examine not only the cultural practices surrounding music but also the intertwined scholarly pathways radiating from each topic. The articles themselves offer rich pedagogical opportunities. They can be read and discussed to identify main ideas, methodologies, and bibliography. Students can examine and compare different authors' uses of language, ways of identifying and posing research questions, approaches to structuring articles, and means of communicating the significance of their findings. Both graduates and undergraduates will find models as well as information for their own research.

The accompanying anthology includes twenty-seven works that support the narrative of the textbook and represent the major genres of the Renaissance: Mass (three Kyries, a Credo, and an Agnus Dei), madrigal, motet, chanson, English songs, and instrumental works. The repertory draws from the canon of standard study literature, such as Josquin's *Ave Maria* and *Mille regrets*, Arcadelt's *Il bianco e dolce cigno*, and Dunstable's *Quam pulchra es*, but also presents less familiar works, such as Luca Marenzio's *Liquide perle*, Thomas Morley's *Miraculous love's wounding*, and a fantasia by Fabrizio Dentice. The inclusion of the Kyrie from Obrecht's *Missa de Sancto Donatiano* invites users to expand their study of the music of this Mass, its origins, patron, original purpose, and the culture that surrounded it via M. Jennifer Bloxam's masterful website exploring the work and its supporting scholarship. The scores included in the anthology are prepared by the author from original sources or taken from reputable scholarly editions. Each includes commentary that draws students into the music's construction and text (with translations provided), its compositional techniques and the aesthetic values of the period, the circumstances in which this work and others like it would have been performed, and more.

Two websites support the text. Norton's StudySpace provides expanded chapter bibliographies, study helps, playlists, links to listening examples, and a gradebook. Freedman's own extensive website designed to accompany the text, *Music in the Renaissance: Digital Resources* (<https://sites.google.com/a/haverford.edu/freedman-renaissance-resources>), also enriches the learning and research possibilities with its links to an enticing array of resources. General links guide students and instructors to online resources from research libraries and archives throughout the world. Facsimile editions of manuscripts, printed music sources, and theoretical treatises introduce students to primary sources and the language and notation of the period. In the page for Chapter

1, for example, the link to the *Heilbrunn Time Line of Art History*, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, launches the reader into a web of maps, art, and history. Lists for further reading include links to WorldCat records and full text databases such as JSTOR. Study pages for each chapter focus attention on key names, terms, and musical works, and point students and instructors to appropriate readings in Strunk's *Source Readings*. Listening lists for each chapter include complete bibliographic information for finding recordings, including links to online sound files from Naxos, iTunes, or Amazon.

The series, like this book, reflects the concern of the editors and authors with academic users and their needs. The fourteen chapters of *Music in the Renaissance* fit neatly into one semester. The modest sizes of both the textbook and anthology mean that students and teachers will not think twice about tucking the set into the backpack. The abundant online resources reflect not only the scholarship and primary sources increasingly available to remote users but also the way students want to work. The textbook itself, while amply illustrated, does not attempt to compete with slicker, glossier books that include timelines, full-color art reproductions, and source readings. Instead, the book encourages and supports independent exploration of these sorts of tools by providing links directly to them. This approach keeps the price down, and package deals that include the anthology and *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History: The Renaissance* provide further discounts.

This book will work best when teachers and students are fully committed to investing in their own thoughts, developing their own questions, and following their own interests. In and of itself, *Music in the Renaissance* does not guarantee a memorable learning experience—rather, it offers a guide and a portal for users to create their own unique and memorable learning. The book and the series offer a flexible, approachable format and content adaptable for many levels, from undergraduate non-majors to graduate musicology students. The research-based approach allows the book to expand far beyond what any one class could possibly contain, but eschewing any pretense of comprehensiveness frees users to focus the material according to need and preference. Since the text focuses around culture rather than musical style, it does not require in-depth knowledge of analytical techniques. However, in courses where musical style will be an important component, the anthology offers a starting place for that work and allows teachers and students to choose supplemental repertory from collected works or the many available online scores. If deeper cultural understanding is the goal, musical scores and listening can function as enriching secondary information while primary and secondary readings take a more prominent role.

The series *Western Music in Context* and the book *Music in the Renaissance* represent a philosophy of learning and teaching that has awakened wide

interest in recent years—trading comprehensive content for depth of process. As textbooks have grown ever larger in their attempts to capture new knowledge while retaining a standard repertory of music and topics, instructors have been faced with the dilemma of what to leave out and the necessity to maintain a brisk pace. The new approach offers an opportunity to try depth over breadth, selectivity over comprehensiveness. What it requires is the sincere investment of instructor and student.