Wycliffite Music:
Theological and Aesthetical Critiques of Compositional Practices within the Wycliffite Movement

by

Kieran Alexander Foss

Bachelor of Music, University of Ottawa, 2014
Master of Music, University of Victoria, 2019

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Abstract

In his article "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium: Cantus in the Middle English Rosarium theologie," Bruce W. Holsinger acknowledges the need for musicological attention to be given to the fourteenth- century English Christian heresy known as Wycliffism. The Wycliffites embraced the theological criticisms of John Wyclif (c. 1328-1384), who promoted biblical text as the true source of Christian faith and rejected performative practices such as saint worship, idolatry, imagery, and ornamentation. A chronological survey and literary analysis of Wycliffite commentaries on music demonstrate a rhetorical arc that transitions from a reformist to a revolutionary to a compromising position. Wycliffite tracts like *Of Feigned Contemplative Life* and *The Lanterne of Lizt* denote categories of musical criticism that enable a comparative analysis between these writings and contemporaneous musical compositions. The categories of intelligibility, distraction and sensuality relate to musical concerns while the category of cost functions as an extramusical critique. Roger Bowers' doctoral dissertation addresses the effects of Wycliffism on synchronous musical practices, concluding that it motivated an orthodox counterreaction, but this dissertation is hampered by a limited delineation of musical and extramusical concerns. Intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality offer a possible inflection point between Wycliffite musical theology and the changes occurring in late-medieval English musical aesthetics. 'La contenance angloise,' the predominant style recognized in scholarship on early-fifteenth-century English music, exhibits compositional changes that reflect concerns akin to those expressed in Wycliffite tracts. This hypothetical link could potentially alter current perceptions on English music's evolution during the transition from the medieval era to the Renaissance.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my incredible spouse, Allison Miller. Her love and support remind me every day to be grateful for and make the most of the opportunities life throws our way, and I attribute much of my success in completing this project to her tenacious example.

Introduction

> As Augustine and Gregory teach well, prayer is better heard by God through compunction and weeping and silent devotion, as Moses and Jesus Christ did, than by great crying and jolly [fine] chanting that stirs men and women to dancing and lets [keeps] men from the sentence [meaning] of holy writ, like Magnificat, Sanctus, and Agnes Dei, that is so broken by new knacking.[1]

This condemnation of liturgical polyphony (knacking),[2] attributed to the fourteenth-century Oxford theologian John Wyclif (1330-1384), appears in *The Order of Priesthood*, an heretical tract that denounces the errors of the clergy as asserted by the author. The excerpt serves as a succinct summary of Wyclif and his followers' attitude towards contemporaneous liturgical music. The Wycliffites were those heterodox Christians who followed Wyclif in opposing many Catholic dogmas and practices approximately 150 years before the Protestant Reformation. Wyclif and his disciples' core principle stipulated that religious devotion was found in adherence to biblical text, not sacred ritual, putting them in conflict with the second estate, the religious class situated in-between the aristocratic (first estate) and peasant (third estate) classes of medieval Europe's trifurcated societal structure.[3] Wycliffite historical and literary scholarship has subsisted and even thrived since the nineteenth century, examining

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[1] As austyn & gregory techen wel, preiere is betre herd of god bi compunccion & wepyng & stille devocion, as moyses & ihu crist diden, þan bi gret criynge & ioly chauntynge þat stireþ men & women to daunsynge & lettiþ men fro þe sentence of holy writ, as Magnyficat, sanctus & agnus dei, þat is so broken bi newe knackynge. F. D. Matthew ed., "The Order of Priesthood," in *The English works of John Wyclif hitherto unprinted* (London: Trübner, 1880), 169.

[2] The word 'knacking' has a multifaceted definition. Anne Hudson defines it as "elaborate counterpoint," suggesting that it refers to complex polyphony. Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 322. The Middle English Compendium (MEC) defines it as "singing with trills or in parts," which also suggests polyphony, but adds the melodic concept of trilling. "Knakking," *Middle English Compendium*, accessed March 24, 2021. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED24385/track?counter=1&search_id=6165776 J.R.R Tolkien defines knacken as "to sing in a lively or ornate manner – [it] ref[ers] esp[ecially] to the breaking up of simple notes into runs and trills." This broadens the word's meaning to refer to any musical practice considered to be ornate. J. R. R. Tolkien, "A Middle English Vocabulary" in *Fourteenth century verse and prose*, ed. Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 368.

[3] Helen Barr, "Wycliffite Representations of the Third Estate," in *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England*, eds. Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens, and Derrick G. Pitard (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), 197.

fundamental beliefs such as their rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation and condemnation of the second estate, yet musicological discourse has remained generally silent on the subject. Though critiques of musical practices are not central to the movement, there are a number of tracts that argue against church music and the complex counterpoint found in contemporaneous liturgical composition.

Bruce W. Holsinger acknowledges the need for musicological attention directed at the Wycliffite movement in his 1999 article, "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium: Cantus in the Middle English Rosarium theologie."[4] He gives a sampling of the accusations leveled at sacred musical practices, providing the impetus for deeper exploration. In this thesis I seek to fulfill Holsinger's appeal and initiate further musicological scrutiny. My chronological survey of the musical commentaries found in Wycliffite tracts illustrates a rhetorical arc that mirrors historical events: criticisms begin as reformist, escalate to heightened, revolutionary rhetoric following the Peasant's Revolt, and then subside to a compromise with orthodox practices. Discernable categories of criticism within the tracts speak to the theological and aesthetical premises behind Wycliffite arguments; I investigate four specific criticisms related to the role of music in the liturgy: textual intelligibility, music's potential to distract, the inappropriate sensuality of music, and its cost. These distinctions provide a starting point for future explorations into the connections between Wycliffite writings and contemporaneous music, and can help to establish a causal link between the movement and some of the compositional changes observed in early-fifteenth-century English music. I have adapted the Middle English excerpts within the text to reflect Modern English spelling traditions while maintaining Middle English

[4] I use the term 'Lollardy' in this thesis to refer to the social movement inspired by Wycliffism. Bruce W. Holsinger, "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium: Cantus in the Middle English Rosarium theologie," *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, no. 8 (October 1999): 95-106.

semantics and syntax. This allows for precision in the literary analysis; the original Middle English appears in the footnotes.

I draw on a more comprehensive list of tracts than previous discussions on Wycliffite music to display the chronological element of my argument. Dating all these tracts is difficult and I rely on the estimates given by Anne Hudson, F. D. Matthew, and Thomas Arnold as well as some of my own suppositions to construct a chronological timeline. Authorship is rarely certain and many tracts have been attributed to Wyclif himself in the past, although this is likely due to a correlation in subject matter rather than hard evidence of authorship. I have assigned alphabetized pseudonyms to all anonymous authors within my discussion to avoid monotonous references to 'the author.' I also provide a complete list of the tracts that appear (see Figure 1.), including the datings I utilize for my survey, but there are a few tracts that function as important benchmarks within the discussion. Two of Wyclif's Latin treatises - *De Mandatis Divinis* and *Opus Evangelicum* - are the basis for the theological and aesthetical arguments that underlie the visceral condemnations found in tracts by Wyclif's followers. *Of Feigned Contemplative Life* contains the longest passage on liturgical music from the earlier tracts, and could be viewed as a steppingstone to the musical commentaries found in the revolutionary works of the 1380s. The "Cantus' entry in the late-fourteenth-century *Rosarium Theologie* includes a contemporaneous attempt to categorize Wycliffite musical criticisms, though it frames the discussion around practical performative concerns rather than theological and aesthetical criticisms. The author of the early-fifteenth-century dialogue, *Dives and Pauper*, synthesizes a compromise between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in a short discussion on liturgical music, which is mirrored by a Wycliffite disciple in *The Lanterne of Liȝt* who maintains the movement's criticisms while also supporting the constructive middle way presented in *Dives and Pauper*.

Figure 1. List of Wycliffite Tracts and Their Dating.

Tract	Dating
De Mandatis Divinis (Latin – L) †	1375/76
Of Feigned Contemplative Life (Middle English – ME)	1376-79*
De Precationibus Sacris (ME)	Before 1379
Of Clerks Possessioners (ME)	Before 1380
Of Prelates (ME)	After 1383
The Order of Priesthood (ME)	After 1383*
How the Office of the Curates is Ordained of God (ME)	After 1383
Of the Leaven of Pharisees (ME)	After 1383
Opus Evangelicum (L) †	1384 - Incomplete
On the Twenty-Five Articles (ME)	Circa 1388
The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards (ME)	1395
Rosarium Theologie (ME)	After 1396
Dives and Pauper (ME)	1405-10
The Lanterne of Liȝt (ME)	1409-15

*Matthew lists these tracts as early. I have extrapolated more specific datings based on the rhetoric and musical arguments.
† Written by John Wyclif.

In my discussion of Wyclif's *De Mandatis Divinis*, I outline the seed of Wycliffite musical thought, found in his reformist guidelines for textual intelligibility and its entanglement with concerns about distraction. I then compare both the arguments and rhetoric found in *De Mandatis Divinis* to *Opus Evangelicum*, Wyclif's later Latin treatise, highlighting the evolution of his theological position and precipitating my exploration of Wycliffite Middle English tracts. My analysis of *Of Feigned Contemplative Life* delineates four categories of criticism found in this and subsequent Wycliffite commentaries: intelligibility, distraction, sensuality, and cost. The former three are all interconnected, but the discourse on cost, concerned with economic rather than aesthetic factors, is distinctive enough to warrant a independent discussion. By tracing these four components chronologically through numerous commentaries on church music, I show the evolution of Wycliffite rhetoric, which became increasingly ideological and revolutionary up until the early-fifteenth century. I introduce *Dives and Pauper* as an orthodox precursor to the compromise position found in the Wycliffite *The Lanterne of Liȝt*; the correlation of content

establishes the diminishing differentiation found between orthodox and heterodox positions. I then provide a case study that segues my argument from theorical to practical concerns, using the findings of my chronological survey to investigate Wycliffite influence in the music of John Dunstaple and 'la contenance angloise.' I offer this as a tangible example, which demonstrates the function of my survey and analysis for scholars looking to further expand the discourse.

I synthesize material from both historical and musicological discourses to distill the four critical categories outlined. Rogers Bowers' brief survey of Wycliffite commentaries on liturgical music delineates Wycliffite condemnations, although he predominantly focuses on concerns associated with cost.[5] Only his third and final category alludes to musical criticisms; he writes: "They condemned – the decoration of the performance of the liturgy by indulgence in polyphonic settings of the sacred texts."[6] Bowers' emphasis on cost serves his assertion that choral institutions grew in the wake of the Wycliffite movement, a consequence of the orthodox counterreaction that pushed religious institutions to overt displays of orthodoxy that included the expansion of their choirs.[7] However, by minimising musical concerns, Bowers misses the possibility that these same choral institutions may have adopted some of the musical changes purported by the Wycliffites. Hudson alludes to concerns about intelligibility and cost in her authoritative book of Wycliffism, *The Premature Reformation*: "The oral embellishment of *knakkyng* [*elaborate counterpoint*], a practice that involves unnecessary expense and which obscures the words of scripture," was condemned. "The second objection is summarized in the comment 'Lorde! whеþer þis chauntyng of Kyries, Sanctus, and Agnus, wiþ Gloria in excelsis

[5] Roger Bowers, "Choral institutions within the English church: their constitution and development 1340-1500," PhD diss. (University of East Angelia, 1975).

[6] Ibid., 4036.

[7] Ibid., 4009.

and Patrem maken þat men heren nout þo wordis but onely a sowne [noise]!'"[8] This second objection, taken from *On the Twenty-Five Articles*, suggests that singing the liturgy makes the text less intelligible than speaking it would; the ear hears noise rather than words. Katherine Steele Brokaw outlines sensuality and distraction in "Sacred, Sensual, and Social Music." Sensuality references the physiological reactions of the body to music, "a source of anxiety for everyone from Augustine to late medieval Wycliffites, from early reformers to Puritans and Anabaptists… [it] undermines [music's] ability to facilitate or present spiritual transcendence. "[9] This comment shows the interconnectedness of the different categories, suggesting that sensuality causes distraction. Distraction refers to any factor that dissuades either the performer or the listener from the contemplation of liturgical text. By foregrounding musical rather than economic concerns, I open the door to exploring Wycliffism's influences on contemporaneous English liturgical music, a possibility that does not contradict the explicit reactionism denoted by Bowers.

[8] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 322.

[9] Katherine Steele Brokaw, "Sacred, Sensual, and Social Music," in *Staging Harmony: Music and Religious Change in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 17-18.

Wyclif's Latin Treatises

The following excerpt from Henry's Knighton's chronicle situates the musical commentaries found in Wyclif's Latin treatises within their contemporaneous theological framework.

> But just as a man does not think of an image as being of oak or of ash, but sets his thoughts on Him whom the image represents, so much more should a man not reflect upon the kind of the bread, but think upon Christ, for His body is the same bread as the sacrament of the alter; and so with all cleanness, all devotion, and all the charity that God will give him, let him worship Christ, and then *he receives God spiritually more effectively than the priest who sings the mass with less love*. For the bodily eating profits the soul not at all, but only as much as the soul is fed with love.[10]

This is a record of Wyclif's 1382 confession, which details his rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Though the confession focuses on esoteric theological arguments, Wyclif reveals his thoughts on church music in his metaphoric comparison to the singing of mass. Wyclif professes that devotion to God is a personal, internal act, reliant on adherence to holy writ, not performative displays of piety. This was irreconcilable with the communion sacrament, the Catholic ritual surrounding transubstantiation, which was considered integral to Christian faith. Transubstantiation is the metamorphosis of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, a public ritual facilitated by an ordained priest.[11] Wyclif opposed the powers of the second estate, which likely influenced his advancement of a devotional transition from external to internal. This mirrored the ideological shift occurring within the humanist movement in respect to the function of the individual in society. He extends this transition to the role of music in the liturgy in this excerpt; as music is performative, it cannot be considered necessary for

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[10] I have italicized a portion of this excerpt to emphasize the reference to liturgical music. Henry Knighton, *Chronica de eventibus Angliæ a tempore regis Edgari usque mortem regis Ricardi Secundi. English and Latin Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 253.

[11] Wyclif's theological argument rejects the material change lauded in the doctrine of transubstantiation. However, I limit my discussion to the performative aspects for the purposes of containment and relevance to musical discourse. Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 281-290.

religious devotion. However, the idea that mass could be sung with 'less love' carries the implication that it could be sung with 'more love,' thereby safeguarding music's function within the liturgy for the moment. Knighton disliked Wyclif, making him a biased source and raising doubt as to whether this can be trusted as an authentic replication of Wyclif's confession, but Wyclif's own words survive in several theological treatises.

Language is an important indication of intended audience in late-medieval theological treatises. Wyclif's comments on liturgical music appear in two of his Latin works: *De Mandatis Divinis*, written circa 1375/76; and *Opus Evangelicum*, still unfinished at the time of his death in 1384. His use of Latin indicates that his target audiences were the clergy and members of the university class who would have been fluent in the language,[12] unlike the general English population. "Lollardy began life as a powerful expression of reformist tendencies inside the Church, whose status as a heresy was achieved as much by reactionary shifts within the definition of orthodoxy as by its own growing extremism."[13] Wyclif's Latin works show a desire to reform the Church, not instigate a theological revolution. This differs from many of the Middle English Wycliffite tracts, intended for a more general audience, which use revolutionary rhetoric different in tone to Wyclif's. The connection between language and class makes it easy to recognize the point at which the Wycliffites transitioned from reform to revolution; though Wyclif used Latin until the end of his life, as seen in *Opus Evangelicum*, his disciples pivoted to capture the revolutionary spirit of the third estate.

[12] Matthew recognizes the relationship between language and the 'different class of readers' in his discussion about the Latin and Middle English versions of *De Officio Pastorali*. Matthew, *The English Works of John Wyclif*, 405.

[13] Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409," *Speculum* 70 (1995): 826.

The dating of these two works reveals the evolution of Wyclif's position in the decade that separates them.[14] This decade contained numerous incidents for Wyclif, including investigations into his teachings in 1377 and 1378, the Peasant's Revolt and his subsequent retirement from Oxford in 1381, and his heresy trial in 1382. The Peasant's Revolt was a turning point in Wyclif's career as the social implications of his anti-clerical rhetoric were widely assumed to be responsible for the uprising.

> In Wycliffite texts, it is members of the second estate who are demonized, accompanied by an idealization of the place and worth of those belonging to the third… While modern criticism is generally sceptical of the notion that Wyclif and/or his followers were the cause of the uprisings in 1381, it is hard to ignore the considerable body of contemporary opinion which apparently believed that there was a very strong connection between Lollardy and insurrection.[15]

The Peasant's Revolt caused panic within the first and second estates, which led to Wyclif's trial and forced retirement from Oxford. This provides a psychological explanation for the hardening of his convictions in-between these two Latin treatises; it is not surprising that Wyclif's rhetoric in *De Mandatis Divinis* is more tempered in comparison with the later *Opus Evangelicum*, which was written after his numerous confrontations with the church.

In *De Mandatis Divinis*, Wyclif states:

> For this reason, therefore, the clergy alternately use notes, musical instruments, or do without notes, so that out of the strangeness of their orations they might fashion one more palatable to both clerics and laypersons. Therefore clerics should very much take care to make distinct accents, giving to whichever syllable its proper length, and at the middle of the verse or end of the sentence a proper pause, and they should especially wait silently until the end of a complete sentence. If indeed we babble like dogs in a sack, having our minds in the public square and our bodies in the choir, our tongues singing hymns while our affections lay with the dance, we shall be poorly disposed to ask anything of God; and with this we shall not be able to capture the minds of the laity in this effort, but rather, as if they were enemies, disperse them.[16]

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[14] Brokaw notes that religious perspectives and identities are by no means fixed for an individual throughout their lifetime. Brokaw, "Sacred, Sensual, and Social Music," 16.

[15] Barr, "Wycliffite Representations of the Third Estate," 199.

[16] Unde ex ista causa alternant clerici nunc cum nota, nunc cum instrumentis musicis et nunc sine nota, ut ex oracionis extraneacione fiat oracio tam clericis quam laycis sapidior. Unde summopere notandum quod clerici

Wyclif writes a targeted but constructive criticism, outlining concerns with textual intelligibility and distraction, two essential components to the Wycliffite stance on liturgical music, although here they appear entangled. He explains that the intention behind the church's addition of music to the liturgy was to make it more 'palatable,' a disconcerting perspective for someone arguing that the text is supposed to change the listener, not the listener the text. This is the seed of the Wycliffite criticism of distraction, which stipulates that the mind should be free to focus on the meaning of the text rather than on other aesthetic characteristics. Wyclif's comments on proper textual accents, appropriate syllable lengths, and correct punctuation in oration highlight the distracting alterations made to sung texts for the sake of palatability, although these also hinder intelligibility, demonstrating the categorical entanglement at this point. Wyclif also criticizes music's sensuality, a concern that appears prominently in later Middle English tracts. His allusion to dancing indicates music's pathetic influence: "In dance, the musical and the sensual are nearly coterminous in their bodily location."[17] The relationship between sensuality and sexuality explains the Wycliffite concerns about music's power over the emotions.[18] Music that moves the listener to physical movement could inspire sensations of a sexual nature, rendering the hearer incapable of sustaining the Christian virtues lauded in holy writ. However, the subtly of this particular criticism makes it easy to overlook; the focus is on the more explicit comments about distraction and intelligibility.

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distincte accentuent, attribuendo cuilibet sillabe tempus suum, cuilibet medio versus vel fini sentencie pausacionem debitam, et specialiter expectent usque in finem completam sentenciam redicentis. Si enim combalbutimus tanquam canes in sacculo, habentes mentem in foro et corpus in choro, linguam in ympno et affeccionem in tripudio, pessime indisponimur ad impetrandum quicquam a Domino; cum non colligimus cum eo mentes laicorum in ipsum tendencium, sed tanquam adversarii sibi dispergimus. Johannis Wyclif, *Tractatus de mandatis divinis, accredit Tractatus de statu innocencie*, ed. Johann Loserth and F. D. Matthew (London: C. K. Paul & Co., 1922), 251. – English translation by Dr. Alexander Fischer.

[17] Brokaw, "Sacred, Sensual, and Social Music," 26.

[18] Ibid.

Wyclif's language becomes more brazen in *Opus Evangelicum*:

> It is clear that this saint John Chrysostomus wishes this harmonic or subtle song not at all to be commended, but rather to be condemned, because it distracts the one singing, as well as the person listening, from the consideration of celestial things; and since it is not founded in scriptural faith, but obviously is contrary to it, it is clear that this practice was introduced out of fear of the Devil. Indeed it does not follow that if the fathers of the old law sang with many organs in the temple of Solomon, Christians therefore should sing like this today. Nor does it follow that if the common folk long ago were sometimes inspired by this to devotion, therefore this practice should follow now. And so it is said of the ringing of bells, of the singing of choirs, and of many other things that the faithful have lately introduced, from which it is plausible that they might sometimes profit; but [these things] are clearly more harmful to the greater number.[19]

Wyclif' arguments evolved in the time between *De Mandatis Divinis* and *Opus Evangelicum*; this is detectable in his condemnation of 'harmonic song.' Where in *De Mandatis Divinis* he highlights concerns about phonetic and syllabic integrity, in *Opus Evangelicum* he expands the issue to include music with multiple, simultaneously sounding parts. Being careful to avoid presentist conceptions of harmony, the comment appears to be directed at polyphonic music - here meaning contrapuntal music with multiple rhythmically independent voices - both contemporaneous and historical. Wyclif also forwards the notion that things 'not founded in scriptural faith' are 'obviously contrary to it.' This denies the validity of all church practices not based on scripture and repudiates many musical and non-musical rituals while emphasizing the role of vernacular textual understanding. This is a substantial rhetorical shift which rejects much of Europe's musical development since the twelfth century. Wyclif's argument leaves chant as the only acceptable genre for liturgical music, a significant change from the reformist spirit of his

[19] Videtur istum sanctum parum vel nichil commendare cantum organicum vel subtilem sed pocius condempnare, quia distrahit a cogitacione mentali supracelestium tam cantantem quam eciam populum audientem; et cum non fundatur in fide scripture sed evidencius eius oppositum, videtur quod iste modus fuit ex cautela diaboli introductus. Non enim sequitur: Patres legis veteris canebant in diversis organis in templo Salomonis, ergo christiani debent hodie sic cantare; nec sequitur: Si rudes distantes laici per hoc quandoque excitantur ad devocionem, ergo modus ille est adeo observandus; et sic dicitur de pulsibus campanarum, de cantibus chororum et multis aliis ut fides hodie introductis, de quibus est probabile quod per accidens quandoque proficiunt, sed est evidencius quod pluribus viantibus magis obsunt. Johannis Wyclif, *Opus Evangelicum*, vols. I&II, ed. Iohann Loserth (London: Trübner & Co., 1895), 261. – English translation by Dr. Alexander Fischer.

earlier work. Furthermore, Wyclif differentiates between the value of instructions provided in the Old and New Testaments, a position that, while not heretical for the time period, was used by Wycliffites to castigate numerous contemporaneous church practices.

The changes in both tone and content observed between these two Latin treatises illuminates the first point of transition in the chronological arc I have outlined. The transformation of Wyclif's musical concerns from constructive criticism to condemnation sets the tone for his disciples, encouraging those who may have otherwise sought to work from within the church institutions to instead abandon them. While the rhetoric in *Opus Evangelicum* indicates an escalation in Wyclif's convictions, his use of Latin shows that his intended audience is still the second estate and university class. This should not be overlooked in view of Wyclif's commitment to vernacular religious discourse, as evidenced by the Wycliffite Bible: "It seems first that the wisdom of God's law should be taught in that tongue that is more known, for this wisdom is God's word. When Christ said in the Gospel that both heaven and earth should pass, but His words shall not pass, he understood by His words his wisdom."[20] The Wycliffite Bible was the first translation of the Bible into Middle English, the purpose of which, like Martin Luther's undertaking in the early sixteenth century, was to make holy writ accessible to all literate members of the public.

[20] It semyþ first þat þe wit of Goddis lawe schulde be tauȝt in þat tunge þat is more knowun, for þis wit is Goddis word. Whanne Crist seiþ in þe Gospel þat boþe heuene and erþe shulen passe, but His wordis shulen not passe, He vndirstondith bi His wordis His wit. F. D. Matthew ed., "De Officio Pastorali," in *The English works of John Wyclif hitherto unprinted* (London: Trübner, 1880), 429. Hudson discusses the difficulty in dating the first 'Early version' of the Wycliffite Bible; the only clue is the fact of its ownership by Thomas, Duke of Gloucester who died in 1397. Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 247. However, *De Officio Pastorali* was written prior to 1378, providing an early indication of Wyclif's intent to translate the Bible into Middle English.

Musical Criticism in *Of Feigned Contemplative Life*

The comparison between *De Mandatis Divinis* and *Opus Evangelicum* shows the mutability of Wyclif's own position and thus creates an opportunity to search for this same transition within the broader Wycliffite movement. This necessitates a rewind in order to observe the evolution of Middle English tracts, a difficult task as these tracts cannot always be dated with precision. *Of Feigned Contemplative Life*, though often attributed to Wyclif, is an anonymous Middle English work with problematic dating. If the attribution to Wyclif were to be accepted, it would make this excerpt his longest discussion on the subject of church music. However, the level of Wyclif's involvement with the dissemination of his ideas to the general public, the assumed audience of a tract in Middle English, has been a battle ground for scholars with no definitive answer.[21] Matthew posits that the tract is an earlier work,[22] but the vagueness of this dating makes it difficult to contextualize within a chronology. The rhetoric is less visceral than that found in *Opus Evangelicum* which supports an earlier dating, but the elevated writing style complicates the question of audience as one would expect works written in the vernacular to communicate on a level more appropriate for less educated readers. Michael Wilks' suggests that Wyclif interacted directly with the Lollard gentry, also known as the poor preachers; if this is accepted,[23] they may be the intended recipients for this tract. I speculate that this places the dating somewhere in-between 1376 and 1379 as the earliest references to the poor preachers appear in 1376-77,[24] and the rhetoric in the excerpt on music is too reformist to reflect the revolutionary convictions of the Wycliffites in the 1380s.

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[21] There is an outline of this discourse in Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 62-63.
[22] Matthew, *The English Works of John Wyclif*, 187.
[23] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 63.
[24] Lawrence M. Clopper, "Franciscans, Lollards, and Reform," in *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England*, eds. Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens, and Derrick G. Pitard (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), 187.

Of Feigned Contemplative Life allows for a deeper exploration of the four categories of criticism as it contains a longer excerpt on music than *De Mandatis Divinis* or *Opus Evangelicum*. The excerpt appears in full:

> Also by song the fiend lets [hinders] men to study and preach the gospel; for since man's wisdom [intellect] be of certain measure and might, the more that they be occupied about such man's song the less may they be set about God's law; for this stirs men to pride and jollity [revelry] and lechery and other sins and other, and so unables [makes unavailable to] them many gates [ways] to understand and keep holy writ that teaches meekness, mourning for our sins and other men's, and stable life and charity. And yet God in all the law of grace charges [requires] not such song but devotion in heart, true teaching and holy speaking in tongue, and good works and holy lasting [continuance in life] in charity and meekness; but man's folly and pride stirs up ever more and more in this vain novelty. First men ordained song of mourning when they were in prison, for teaching of the gospel, as Ambrose and men said, to put away idleness and to be not unoccupied in good manner for the time: and that song and ours accorded not, for ours stirs to jollity and pride, and theirs stirs to mourning and to dwell longer in words of God's law. Then were matins and mass an evensong, placebo and dirige[25] and commendation and matins of our lady ordained of sinful men, to be sung with high [elevated / loud] crying to let [keep] men from the sentence [meaning] and understanding of that that was thus sung, and make men weary and indisposed to study God's law for aching heads; and in short time then were more vain tricks found; descant, counterpoint and organum and small breaking [fine trilling][26], that stirs vain men to dancing more than to mourning, and therefore be many proud and lecherous scoundrels found and endowed with temporal and worldly lordships and great cost. But these fools should dread the sharp words of Augustine that say: as often as the song likens [pleases] me more than does the sentence that is sung, so often I confess that I sin grievously.
>
> And if these knackers[27] excuse themselves by song in the old law; say that Christ, that best kept the old law as it should be afterward, taught not nor charged [burdened] us with such bodily song nor any of his apostles, but with devotion in heart and holy life and true preaching, and that is enough and the best. But who should then charge [burden] us with more over the freedom and lightness of Christ's law? And if they say that angels hear God by song in heaven; say that we know not that song, but they be in full victory of their enemies and we be in perilous battle, and in the valley of weeping and mourning; and our song lets [keeps] us from better occupation and stirs us to many great sins and to forget ourselves. But our fleshly people have more liking [pleasure] in their bodily ears in such knacking and tattering than in hearing of God's law, and speaking of the bliss of heaven,

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[25] Dirige refers to "matins in the office for the dead." Tolkien, "A Middle English Vocabulary," 331.

[26] Small breaking refers to "the breaking of a long note into a number of shorter ones, fine trilling." Ibid., 315.

[27] This could be a play on words. The MEC's second definition of 'knakking' refers to "quibbling, arguing." Quibbling especially denotes a sense of feebleness that would provide an effective double entendre in this instance. "Knakking," *Middle English Compendium*.

for they would hire proud priests and other lecherous scoundrels thus to knack notes for many marks and pounds; but they would not give their alms to priests and children to learn and to teach God's law; and thus by this novelty of song is God's law unstudied and not kept, and pride and other great sins maintained. And these fond lords and people guess to have [believe themselves to have] more thanks of God and to worship him more in holding up of their own novelties with great cost than in learning and teaching and maintenance of his law and his servants and his ordinance. But where is more deceit in faith, hope and charity? For when there be forty or fifty in a choir, three or four proud and lecherous scoundrels should knack the most devout service that no man shall hear the sentence [meaning], and all others should be dumb [mute] and look on them as fools. And then strumpets and thieves praise Sir Jack or Hobbe and William the proud clerk, how small [finely] they knack their notes; and say that they serve well God and the holy church, when they despise God to his face, and let [keep] other Christian men from their devotion and compunction, and stir them to worldly vanity; and thus true service of God is let [hindered] and this vain knacking for our jollity [revelry] and pride is praised above the moon.[28]

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[28] Also bi song þe fend lettiþ men to studie & preche þe gospel; for siþ mannys wittis ben of certeyn mesure & myȝt, þe more þat þei ben occupied aboute siche mannus song þe lesse moten þei be sette aboute goddis lawe; for þis stiriþ men to pride & iolite & lecherie & oþere synnys & oþere, & so vnableþ hem many gatis to vnderstonde & kepe holy writ þat techeþ mekenesse, mornynge for oure synnys & oþere mennus, & stable lif & charite. & ȝit god in all þe lawe of grace chargiþ not siche song but deuocion in herte, trewe techynge & holy spekynge in tonge, & goode werkis & holy lastynge in charite & mekenesse; but mannus foly & pride stieþ vp euere more & more in þis veyn nouelrie. First men ordeyned songe of mornynge whanne þei weren in prison, for techynge of þe gospel, as ambrose & men seyn, to putte awey ydelnesse & to be not vnoccupied in goode manere for þe tyme; & þat songe & oure acordiþ not, for oure stiriþ to iolite & pride, and here stiriþ to mornynge & to dwelle lenger in wordis of goddis lawe. Þan were matynys & masse & euen song, placebo & dirige & comendacion & matynys of oure lady ordeyned of synful men, to be songen wiþ heiȝe criynge to lette men fro þe sentence & vnderstondynge of þat þat was þus songen, & to maken men wery & vndisposid to studie goddis lawe for akyng hedis: & of schort tyme þanne weren more veyn iapis founden; deschaunt, contre note & orgon & smale brekynge, þat stiriþ veyn men to daunsynge more þan to mornynge, & here-fore ben many proude & lecherous lorelis founden & dowid wiþ temperal & worldly lordischipis & gret cost. But þis foolis schulden drede þe scharpe wordis of austyn, þat seiþ: as oft as þe song likiþ me more þan doþ þe sentence þat is songen, so oft I confesse þat I synne greuously. ¶And ȝif þes knackeris excusen hem bi song in þe olde lawe; seie þat crist, þat best kepte þe olde lawe as it schulde be aftirward, tauȝt not ne chargid vs wiþ siche bodily song ne ony of his apostlis, but wiþ deuocion in herte & holy lif & trewe prechynge, & þat is ynowþȝ & þe beste. but who schulde þanne charge vs wiþ more ouere þe freedom and liȝtnesse of cristis lawe? & ȝif þei seyn þat angelis heryen god bi song in heuene; seie þat we kunnen not þat song, but þei ben in ful victorie of here enemys & we ben in perilous bataile, & in þe valeye of wepynge & mornynge; & oure song lettiþ vs fro betre occupacion & stiriþ vs to many grete synnes & to forȝete vs self. but oure fleschly peple haþ more lykynge in here bodely eris in sich knackynge & taterynge þan in herynge of goddis lawe, & spekynge of þe blisse of heuene, for þei wolen hire proude prestis & oþere lecherous lorelis þus to knacke notis for many markis & poundis; but þei wolen not ȝeue here almes to prestis & children to lerne & to teche goddis lawe; & þus bi þis nouelrie of song is goddis lawe vnstudied & not kepte, & pride & oþere grete synnys meyntenyd. & þes fonnyd lordis & peple gessen to haue more þank of god & to worshipe hym more in haldynge vp of here owen nouelries wiþ grete cost þan in lernynge & techynge & meyntenynge of his lawe & his seruauntis & his ordynaunce. but where is more disceit in feiþ, hope & charite? For whanne þer ben fourty or fifty in a queer þre or foure proude & lecherous lorellis schullen knacke þe most deuout seruyce þat noman schal here þe sentence, & alle oþere schullen be doumbe & loken on hem as foolis. & þanne strumpatis & þeuys preisen sire iacke or hobbe & williem þe proude clerk, hou smale þei knacken here notis; & seyn þat þei seruen wel god & holy chirche, whanne þei dispisen god in his face, & letten oþere cristene men of here deuocion & compunccion, & stiren hem to worldly vanyte; & þus trewe seruyce of god is lettid & þis

Anonymous A delineates the categories of intelligibility, distraction and sensuality within the tract. His comment about 'high crying' inhibiting understanding addresses concerns of intelligibility. References to 'crying' appear consistently in Wycliffite criticism and, in combination with the word 'high', imply that extensive use of vocal range and loud volumes obscures text. This criticism is not without merit as faithful reproduction of the phonemes of regular speech in the extremities of range is difficult, making intelligibility a struggle. Concerns related to distraction appear in the comment, "man's wisdom [intellect] be of certain measure and might" referring to the mind's limited capacity - musical characteristics increase the number of interpretive components, distracting both the listener and practitioner from textual contemplation. The word 'stirs' implies a physiological sensation where the hearer is overcome by undesirable emotions such as pride, revelry, and lechery. Pride and lechery were problematic in this period as they invoke the seven deadly sins, and lechery evokes explicit inferences to sexual deviancy.

Anonymous A also includes a specific list of compositional styles rejected by the Wycliffites: descant, counterpoint, organum, and small breaking. The term 'descant' is ambiguous since it could refer to either the English descant style, or the use of an upper counter-melody. The second option is more likely in this context considering the comment about 'high crying' in conjunction with the fact that none of the other terms reference genre. Counterpoint and organum both signify polyphony: counterpoint is the practice of organizing simultaneous notes, and organum refers to the use of two or more parts in a musical composition.[29] Small breaking is the fine trilling of notes, although trilling should not be understood in modern

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veyn knackynge for oure iolite & pride is preised abouen þe mone. F. D. Matthew ed., "Of Feigned Contemplative Life," in *The English works of John Wyclif hitherto unprinted* (London: Trübner, 1880), 191-192.

[29] Tolkien, "A Middle English Vocabulary," 392.

musical parlance; in this context it means the use of ornate rhythms and florid melismas on a single word or syllable. The specific musical terminology telegraphs Anonymous A's knowledge of the subject, which demonstrates an acquaintance with compositional practices and methodologies that increases the perceived value of the stated criticisms.

Anonymous A elaborates on the subordination of the Old Testament observed in *Opus Evangelicum*, although his concern is with knacking rather than the use instruments. Prioritization of the New Testament comes from the implication of Jesus' infallibility; it offers a means for representing his interpretations of Old Testament law as beyond criticism, arguing that the Old Testament must be interpreted via the New Testament. This argument devalues any evidence taken from the Old Testament to support church music, and further diminishes allusions to Old Testament music by dismissing it as 'bodily music,' another example of criticizing its sensuality. This is different from previously stated concerns with sensuality because it conflates the physical with the mental, implying that music not only causes sinful feeling, but that these feelings distract the listener from faithful devotion. Anonymous A's amalgamation of distraction and sensuality is a crucial reframing of the argument, which becomes an important logical device in subsequent Wycliffite works that represent all liturgical music as sinful.

Anonymous A's appeal to Augustine's *Confessions* further complicates clarity between the categories. The full quote, as Brokaw recalls it, is:

> So I waver between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which, as I know from experience, can accrue from singing. Without committing myself to an irrevocable opinion, I am inclined to approve of the custom of singing in church, in order that by indulging the ears weaker spirits may be inspired with feelings of devotion. Yet when I find the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, I confess that this is a grievous thing, and at those times I would prefer not to hear the singer.[30]

[30] Brokaw, "Sacred, Sensual, and Social Music," 38.

Fragments of this quote appear in numerous Wycliffite tracts, but it is useful to see it in full here as it shows the Wycliffite cherry picking of sections that support their beliefs and omission of those that do not. The discrepancy between Anonymous A and Brokaw's accounts shows the importance of clear delineation between critical categories since Brokaw's version reads as a condemnation of sensuality in church music, while Anonymous A's appears to argue against music that distracts from holy writ. These translational differences are the reason I have chosen to maintain the original semantics and syntax in the updated Middle English quotes so as to avoid such discrepancies and not compound the problem further.

The distinctions between intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality may appear minor, but their importance can be observed in the different tactical solutions with which a composer might approach such criticisms. In attempting to make the text intelligible a composer might limit melismatic passages, set texts homorhythmically so that the words can be perceived, or reduce vocal range as previously suggested. To avoid distraction a composer might simplify the harmony or rhythm in an effort to foreground the words, ensuring greater contemplative capacity. To avoid sensuality and safeguard the right pathos, a medieval composer might re-evaluate their use of dissonance, often associated with the imperfect. This conception of dissonance comes from Boethius' *De Institutione Musica*, where he describes it as a "harsh and unpleasant percussion of two sounds coming to the ear intermingled with each other."[31] The value of drawing parallels between Wycliffite musical criticisms and compositional characteristics will becomes clear in the case study section of this thesis.

Anonymous A, building on Wyclif's *De Mandatis Divinis*, disentangles intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality in *Of Feigned Contemplative Life*, albeit with a few moments of

[31] A. M. S. Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, ed. and trans. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 16.

complication. The tract's status as an earlier Middle English work suggests that it informed the discourse found in subsequent vernacular works. Wyclif's authorship is doubtful, as it is with numerous other Middle English tracts, but Wyclif had no shortage of disciples, many of whom might have written these works. In this discussion, I focused on the three criticisms that relate directly to musical characteristics; concerns about the fourth category – cost – are addressed in the following section.

Chronology of the Concerns about Cost

I explore cost separately from the other three criticisms as it functions as an extramusical concern and follows an independent trajectory. Cost, unlike the other criticisms outlined, is not mentioned in either of the excerpts from *De Mandatis Divinis* or *Opus Evangelicum*; it differs from the other criticisms as it is less theologically driven, which explains why it appears in Middle English tracts targeting members of the third estate rather than those written for theological audiences. Anonymous A addresses Wycliffite concerns about the cost of ornamental musical practices in *Of Feigned Contemplative Life*; he briefly mentions them in the first paragraph, but delivers his clearest indictment in the second. He disparages those who would pay 'marks and pounds' for liturgical polyphony, but would not provide economic support for religious education. His comment shows that concerns about the cost of elaborate church music are to be understood not in terms of the expense itself, but contingent on other potential applications of funds more reflective of Wycliffite values. 'Alms for priests' references the Wycliffite belief that priests should eschew all worldly goods and political standing, relying solely on charity provided by those for whom they preached, hence the poor preacher moniker given to the individuals who helped disseminate Wyclif's teachings throughout the general population.[32]

Anonymous B takes this anti-second estate sentiment further in *Of Clerks Possessioners* by criticizing the cost of educating members of the clergy in performative tasks that are unrelated to teaching holy writ:

> But set there a vicar or a parish priest for little cost, though he be unable [incapable] both of cunning [intellectual capacity] and [a manner of] life to rule his own soul, and for

[32] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 358.

> poverty of benefit he may not go to school, nor learn at home for busyness of new singing and gathering of tithes and ministering of sacraments and other occupations.[33]

Anonymous B's meaning in this excerpt is difficult to interpret from a modern perspective since he uses cost indiscriminately to refer to both time and wealth. Nevertheless, his allusion to the poor priests suggests that the clergy should not represent an expense to the church or the local community beyond the upkeep of the individual's most basic human needs. 'New singing,' 'gathering of tithes,' and 'ministering of sacraments' all represent wastes of the time and money that should be directed towards clerical education in holy writ, preparing them to lead their parishioners in true Christian devotion. This function, according to the Wycliffites, was imperative for establishing a symbiotic relationship between preacher and community.

Anonymous C, likely a close disciple of Wyclif, clarifies the nature of this relationship between priest and parish in his tract, *Of Prelates* – prelate refers to the possessor of a high-ranking office within the church's hierarchical structure.[34] Matthew does not provide a specific date for the tract, but references to Despenser's Crusade in the text mean that it cannot have been written earlier than 1383.[35] A dating later than the Peasant's Revolt offers an explanation for the revolutionary rhetoric found in this tract. This is the first of a few excerpts from this tract that appear:

> And for this skill [cause], true men say that prelates be more bound to preach truly the gospel than these subjects be held to pay their dismes [tithes], for God charges that more, and that is more profitable to both parties and more easy [comfortable]. And therefore prelates be more cursed to cease of this preaching than the subjects if they cease to pay tithes; yea when their prelates do well their office.

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[33] But setten þer a viker or a parische prest for litel cost, þouȝ he be vnable boþe of kunnynge and lif to reule his owene soule, & for pouert of benefis he may not go to scole, ne lerne at hom for bisynesse of newe syngynge & gedrynge of tyþes & mynystringe of sacramentis & oþere occupacions. F. D. Matthew ed., "Of Clerks Possessioners," in *The English works of John Wyclif hitherto unprinted* (London: Trübner, 1880), 116. Matthew does not definitively attribute this tract to Wyclif. He suggests that, if the tract is Wyclif's, it most likely predates 1380.

[34] Matthew, *The English Works of John Wyclif*, 52.

[35] Ibid.

> Also prelates be more bound to this preaching, for that is the commandment of Christ before his death and more so after, than to say matins, mass, evensong, or placebo, for that is man's ordinance; then since prelates be not worthy to have dismes [tithes] and offerings if they do not matins, mass and other man's ordinances, much more [unworthy they be] if they do not this high ordinance of God;[36]

The symbiotic nature of the relationship between priest and parish relies on the prelate's teaching of the gospel; the parishioners can 'cease to pay tithes' if this function is not provided as true preaching is a commandment of Christ while 'dismes [tithes] and offerings' are not. Under this structure, offerings would be provided as an indication of gratitude for services rendered, not as a necessitated religious responsibility on the part of the parishioners. This is a radical reframing of tithes as a form of religious taxation. Resistance to tithing has been associated with numerous Wycliffites and proponents of Lollardy, and is reflective of a larger resistance to institutional religion.[37] However, here there is the suggestion of a *quid pro quo* whereby control of the tithes is given to parishioners, making the institutional church subservient to the masses, a reversal of the existing state of affairs.

It is necessary at this point to give a brief historical summary in order to clarify the socio-economic backdrop to this Wycliffite *quid pro quo*. Anonymous C's reversal of supply and demand in *Of Prelates* mirrors the sociological reality of late-fourteenth-century England as still reeling from the catastrophic effects of black death during the 1340s and 1360s. Huge swathes of the population were wiped out, leading to a labour shortage that threatened the feudal system's dependence on abundant labour as a mechanism for enforcing indentured servitude. The

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[36] & for þis skille trewe men seyn þat prelatis ben more bounden to preche trewely þe gospel þan þes sugetis ben holden to paie here dymes, for god chargiþ þat more, and þat is more profitable to boþe parties & more esy. And þerfore prelatis ben more cursed to cesse of þis prechynge þanne þe sugetis ȝif þei cessen to paye tiþes; ȝe whanne here prelatis don wel here offis. ¶Also prelatis ben more bounden to þis prechynge, for þat is commaundment of crist bifore his deþ & eke aftir, þan to seie matynes, masse, euen song, or placebo, for þat is mannus ordynaunce; þanne siþ prelatis ben not worþi to haue dymes & offrynges ȝif þei don not matynes, masse & oþer mannes ordynyngis, moche more ȝif þei don not þis heȝe ordynaunce of god; F. D. Matthew ed., "Of Prelates," in *The English works of John Wyclif hitherto unprinted* (London: Trübner, 1880), 57.

[37] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 153.

rebalance that occurred following the plague allowed for greater freedom of movement and upward social mobility as landlords began to compete for workers, offering increases in pay along with other incentives.[38] By the 1370s the first and second estates desired a return to the pre-plague status quo and sought solutions that would drain this new-found wealth from the third estate. The 1380-1 Parliament introduced a flat rate poll tax that averaged twelve pence per person over fifteen years of age, regardless of wealth or status.[39] This resulted in the Peasant's Revolt in 1381, in which members of the third estate besieged London, executing a number of Privy Councillors. Chroniclers like Walsingham and Knighton claimed that Wycliffism helped instigate the Peasant's revolt, drawing connections between Wyclif and John Ball, one of the leaders of the Peasant's Revolt, calling him "Wycliffe's John the Baptist."[40] This position is suspect due to the anti-Wycliffite bias of the chroniclers, and modern scholarship has questioned the existence of a causal link, suggesting instead that both movements were responding to the new economic reality by proposing independent but related paradigms shifts.[41]

Returning to *Of Prelates*, Anonymous C further acknowledges the broken relationship between priest and parish with his assertion that ornaments are purchased by misappropriating the goods of poor people. Here is another excerpt from *Of Prelates*:

> For they do not their sacrifices [make] by meekness of heart and mourning and compunction for their sins and the people's, but with knacking of new song, as organum or descant and motet of fornicators,[42] and with worldly pride of costly vestments and

[38] David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 48.

[39] P. J. P. Goldberg, "Urban identity and the poll taxes of 1377,1379, and 1381," *The Economic History Review* 43, no. 2 (May 1990): 195.

[40] Barr, "Wycliffite Representations of the Third Estate," 197.

[41] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 67-68.

[42] This translation of 'holouris' is taken from Eve Salisbury ed., "Of Weddid Men and Wifis and of Here Children Also," in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), accessed February 15, 2021. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-trials-and-joys-of-weddid-men-and-wifis-and-of-here-children-also

> other ornaments bought with poor men's goods and suffer them perish for mischief and late poor men have naked sides and dead walls have great plenty of wasteful gold.[43]

Anonymous C indirectly accuses the prelates of murder by suggesting that poor people 'perish' as a result of the cost of 'new song' and other ornamental adornments. The human cost of 'harmonic' music makes its existence and use morally deplorable from the Wycliffite perspective. This is clarified in Anonymous C's allusion to Christ's death - the poor man's 'naked sides' is an allegorical reference to the holy lance piercing Christ's naked side on the Cross. Allegations of deviancy are evident in the accusations of mischief and fornication, the latter directed towards the motet. The association between fornication and the motet indicates the licentiousness attributed to ornamental polyphonic music, although Anonymous C's directs his accusation at the practitioners rather than the genre itself. The conflation of music and musician is likely hyperbolic, but it functions as a transfer of agency, framing the transgression of writing polyphonic music as a sin rather than an error in judgement. Anonymous C's implication that members of the third estate die for the sake of perpetuating not just erroneous but sinful behaviour explicates the Wycliffite movement's rhetorical progression away from the constructive criticisms found in Wyclif's *De Mandatis Divinis*.

Anonymous D's rhetoric in *The Order of Priesthood* becomes explicitly revolutionary and blurs the line between the first and second estates. Matthew claims that if the tract were written by Wyclif it would have an earlier dating,[44] but the rhetoric here seems too strong to predate 1380. I would speculate that, based on the rhetoric, the tract was written by a Wycliffite

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[43] for þei don not here sacrifices bi mekenesse of herte & mornynge & compunccion for here synnes & þe peplis, but wiþ knackynge of newe song, as orgen or deschant & motetis of holouris, & wiþ wordly pride of costy vestymentis & oþere ornementis bouȝt wiþ pore mennus goodis, & suffren hem perische for meschef & laten pore men haue nakid sidis & dede wallis haue grete plente of wast gold. Matthew, "Of Prelates," 91.

[44] Matthew, *The English Works of John Wyclif*, 164.

disciple in the same time period as *Of Prelates* - after 1383. Anonymous D offers only a passing reference to music as seen in the following excerpt:

> Also they make rich men and tyrants to hold war against God after their death day; for when these rich merchants and tyrants die and may no longer maintain sin in this world by their own person, then they find many worldly and sinful priests, by goods falsely got that should be restored to poor men, not to learn and teach holy writ as Christ commanded but dwell at a place and cry on high [aloud] with new song that lets [hinders] devotion and the sentence [meaning] [meant] to be understood; and these worldly priests let [hinder] most other priests that live well and teach well, lest their sin be espied and their winning [acquisition of wealth] and bodily ease [convenience] cease.[45]

Anonymous D's suggests that the clergy holds power over members of the first estate, referred to here as tyrants. He acknowledges reciprocal relationship whereby the 'rich merchants and tyrants' attain the services of priests to perform 'new song' for their souls after death in exchange for providing said priests with goods taken wrongfully from 'poor men.' This makes the aristocracy appear as willing participants in the oppression of the third estate, further destabilizing the trifurcated structure of society by encouraging the third estate to share the blame equally between the first and second estates.

This perspective explains why concerns about cost dissipated after the 1380s. It is likely that the movement's revolutionary rhetoric in a period of social upheaval threatened its connections to important members of the aristocracy such as John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster (1340-1399). Gaunt was one of Wyclif's staunchest defenders, but he was also one of the Councillors denounced by the leaders of the Peasant's Revolt. The Wycliffites had hoped to disenfranchise the second estate by reversing the levers of supply and demand,[46] but the

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[45] Also þei maken riche men & tirauntis to holde werre aȝenst god after here deþ day; for whanne þes riche marchauntis & tirauntis dien & mowen no lengere meyntene synne in þis world bi here owen persone, þan þei fynden many worldly & synful prestis, bi goodis falsly geten þat schulden be restorid to pore men, not to lerne & teche holy writ as crist comaundiþ but dwelle at o place & crie on hey wiþ newe song þat lettiþ deuocion & þe sentence to be vnderstonden; & þes worldly prestis letten most oþere prestis þat lyuen wel & techen wel, last here synne be aspied & here wynnynge & bodily ayse ceese. Matthew, "The Order of Priesthood," 177.

[46] See quote connected to fn. 15 on pg. 9. Barr, "Wycliffite Representations of the Third Estate," 199.

Peasant's Revolt convinced the aristocracy that any attacks on sacred power would eventually translate to attacks on secular power.[47] This slippage can be seen in *Of Prelates* where Anonymous C acknowledges the overlap between the first and second estates in the following excerpt:

> Also prelates deceive lords and all Christian men by vain prayers of mouth, and vain [and costly][48] knacking of new song, for by title of prayer they have many worldly lordships and many parish churches appropriated to them, and do neither the office of prelates as Christ's disciples did, neither the office of lords as they ought to do by God's law, neither the office of parsons nor vicars to their parishioners.[49]

Anonymous C observes that prelates can hold both sacred and secular positions of power, implying a commonality between the two estates. His proposition that prelates can 'deceive' lords by convincing them of the cost benefit of ornamental musical practices such as 'new song' paints secular leadership as either weak minded or infiltrated by evil members of the clergy, both damaging images to aristocratic power. This rhetoric endangered further support from John of Gaunt and other aristocrats, leaving the Wycliffites vulnerable to the mounting discontent amongst the second estate. The dissipation of revolutionary rhetoric around cost was thus a survival mechanism, intended to separate the Wycliffite movement from the third estate, thereby diminishing first estate fears of a conflation between religious and social revolution.

Concerns about cost did not fully disappear after the 1380s, but the rhetoric did change in tone. This can be seen in *The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*, written by Anonymous E. *The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* was nailed to the doors of Westminster Hall and Saint Paul's

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[47] Kenneth Sisam, *Fourteenth century verse and prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 115.

[48] This fragment has been shifted from its original placement at the end of the clause to reflect its function as a descriptor of 'knacking of new song.'

[49] Also prelatis discyuen lordis & alle cristene men bi veyn prieries of mouþ, & veyn knackyng of newe song & costy, for bi title of preire þei han many worldy lordschipis & many parische chirchis approprid to hem, & don neiþer office of prelatis as cristis disciplis diden, neiþer office of lordis as þei owen to do bi goddis lawe, neiþer þe office of parsones ne vekeris to here parischenes; Matthew, "Of Prelates," 76.

Cathedral in 1395 in a Wycliffite act akin to Luther's later treatment of his ninety-five theses.[50] Anonymous E does not overtly refer to music, but directs his comments at a wide variety of artistic and ornamental practices patronized by the church. Anonymous C's comments in *Of Prelates* about 'costly vestments' and 'dead walls having a great plenty of wasteful gold,' show that concerns about cost already extended to any art or skill deemed unnecessary for religious piety. Anonymous E outlines this in his twelfth and final conclusion:

> The twelfth conclusion is that the multitude of crafts not needful [necessary], used in our church, nourishes much sin in waste, curiosity[51] and disguising. This shows experience and reason proves it, for nature with a few crafts suffices to the need of man. The corollary is that, since Saint Paul says, "We having our bodily food and covering, we should hold ourselves appeased [satisfied]", we think that goldsmiths and armourists and all manner of crafts not needful [necessary] to man after the apostle should be destroyed for the increase of virtue. For though these two crafts named were much more needful [necessary] in the old law, the new testament has voided these and many others.[52]

Though music is not explicitly addressed, Anonymous E's arguments are congruent with many of those outlined in the preceding commentaries. However, the rhetoric is different, adopting an instructional rather than a combative character. Overt references to cost are omitted, using 'waste' as a less-subversive substitute. This separates the movement from the socio-economic arguments associated with the Peasant's Revolt, reframing the conversation in a manner more palatable for the first and second estates. There are no references to a societal restructuring and no musings about systematic abuses of power; the conclusion asserts that these 'crafts,' being

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[50] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 335.

[51] The MEC defines curiosity as an "idle or vain interest." Though its modern usage holds a positive connotation, its Middle English meaning is more sinful in nature. "Cūriǒusitē," *Middle English Compendium*. Accessed March 24, 2021. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED9170/track?counter=3&search_id=6166214

[52] Þe xii conclusiun is þat þe multitude of craftis nout nedful, used in oure chirche, norsschith michil synne in wast, curiosite and disgysing. Þis schewith experience and resun prouith, for nature with a few craftis sufficith to need of man. Þe correlari is þat, sitthin seynt Powel seyth, "We hauende oure bodili fode and hilling, we schulde holde us apayed', vs thinkith þat goldsmethis and armoreris and alle manere craftis nout nedful to man aftir þe apostle schulde ben destroyd for þe encres of uertu. For þou þese to cratis nemlid were michil more nedful in þe elde lawe, þe newe testament hath voydid þese and manie others. Anne Hudson ed., "The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards," in *English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 28.

unnecessary for religious devotion, offer only distraction, a position it justifies with an appeal to the supremacy of the New Testament over the Old Testament.

Roger Bowers' submission of an orthodox counterreaction relies on commentaries found in this section and others like them; he foregrounds concerns about cost as an introduction to his findings on the increasing size of Chapel and Cathedral choirs.[53] This tactic functions well as a method for containing the argument to an economic discussion, but it sidelines the possibility that concerns focused directly on musical characteristics followed a separate trajectory. I show in this section that the chronology of concerns about cost charted its own arc, related to the arc outlined in the introduction, but differentiated by its quicker decline and eventual dissipation due to its alienation of the first estate. This separates the extramusical criticism of cost from the musical criticisms of intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality, allowing for an independent investigation of the latter three's trajectory towards the aforementioned compromise position.

[53] Bowers, "Choral institutions within the English church," 4009.

The Revolutionary Peak of Wycliffite Musical Criticism

The revolutionary phase of the chronological arc peaked in the 1380s, following the socio-economic turmoil of the Peasant's Revolt. Although I have already demonstrated this in my investigation of cost, the following four excerpts from anonymous Wycliffite tracts show the effects of this rhetorical shift on the three musical categories of criticism: *How the office of the curates is ordained of God* and *Of the Leaven of Pharisees* both postdate 1383 as evidenced by the references to the Despenser's Crusade in their full texts; *On the Twenty-Five Articles* postdates 1388, this date coming from Knighton's record of this list of twenty-five errors; the *Rosarium Theologie* postdates 1396, the date given by Hudson to its forerunner, the *Floretum.* The first two excerpts mention musical concerns within tracts that broadly illustrate the heightened revolutionary rhetoric that followed the Peasant's Revolt. The third excerpt outlines in full the late-1380s-Wycliffite distain for music. The fourth excerpt characterizes the rhetorical diminution of the 1390s, as seen in *The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*, and attempts to methodically categorize Wycliffite musical concerns.

How the Office of the Curates is Ordained of God contains passing references to liturgical music in a blatant attack against the second estate. Anonymous F uses a number of terms and phrases that exemplify the increased urgency and vitality of 1380s Wycliffite rhetoric; the charge of heresy is a clear indication of the essentialist nature of the Wycliffite position. He writes:

> They teach Christian men to blaspheme God and hold war against him… and cry fast [steadfastly]…if they would bring priests out of this glorious life and new song to meekness and ghostly [spiritual] poverty and busy work in learning and preaching of the gospel, as Christ and his apostles did, they should be cursed and have war and mischief, both in this world and the next; and this makes the blind people to war against God and his ordinance and pursue his teachers as heretics.[54]

[54] þei techen cristene men to blaspheme god & holden werre aȝenst hym; for þei techen cristene men to meyntenen mennys lawis & ordynaunces for betre & more nedful þan þe clene lawe of crist & his witty ordynaunce;

The accusations of blasphemy and war levelled against the church elevate 'cry,' a word already imbued with a primal quality, to a battlefield sound. Anonymous F maintains this imagery throughout the excerpt, which indicates his belief that the church instigated the war and thus deserves violent retribution on account of its failure to teach the gospel. He portrays Wycliffites as the genuine teachers of Christian devotion, which, in the context of this heightened rhetoric, insinuates that Wycliffism is the saviour of Christianity itself. Anonymous F's rhetoric indicates that the Wycliffite movement has abandoned all pretense of reform, and now advocates for a theological revolution.

The Wycliffite's conception of music as an evil practice is evident in *Of the Leaven of Pharisees*, in which Anonymous G includes knacking in his list of sinful studies that also includes witchcraft. Matthew suggests that the poor writing style indicates that the tract is not Wyclif's; the vehemence of the tone implies a devoted but less educated disciple.[55] Anonymous G writes:

> If they study on the holy day about experiments[56] or witchcraft or vain songs and knacking and harping and gitterning[57] and dancing and other vain trifles to get the

& crien faste, ȝif cristene men meyntenen þe multitude of worldy clerkis in here newe lawis & customes & libertes þei schullen haue goddis blissynge & prosperite & pees & reste, bi so many deuout prestis secular & religious preiynge, redynge & syngynge nyȝt & day; & ȝif þei wolden brynge prestis out of þis glorious lif & new song to mekenesse & gostly pouert & bisi traueile in lernynge & prechynge of þe gospel, as crist & his apostlis diden, þei schullen be cursed & haue werre & myschif, boþe in þis world & þe þother; & þis makeþ þe blynde peple to werre aȝenst god & his ordynaunce & pursuen his techeris as heretikis. F. D. Matthew ed., "How the office of the curates is ordained of God," in *The English works of John Wyclif hitherto unprinted* (London: Trübner, 1880), 162.

[55] Matthew, *The English Works of John Wyclif*, 1.

[56] One of the definitions of experiment in MEC states that it is "a supernatural act or feat," associated with the practice of alchemy. This shows that the word should be understood here with a negative connotation. "Expĕriment," *Middle English Compendium*. Accessed March 24, 2021. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED14948/track?counter=3&search_id=6166214

[57] A gittern is a short-necked lute from the Middle Ages. Laurence Wright, "Gittern," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, 2001), accessed February 15, 2021. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011223?rskey=NtIHpW

> stinking love of damsels and steer them to worldly vanity and sins: they break foul their holy day and be procurators of the fiend.[58]

His forceful language denotes a switch from reason to passion, a common theme in Wycliffite tracts that immediately postdate the Peasant's Revolt. Witchcraft is an obvious allusion to the demonic status of music and dance. The only conceivable purpose for these crafts is to arouse bodily urges within the listeners, portrayed here as women who lack the agency to maintain faith when exposed to music, dance, or witchcraft. Anonymous G asserts that practitioners of music and other evil crafts are 'procurators of the fiend,' a reversal of Anonymous A's logic in *Of Feigned Contemplative Life* where it is the fiend who stops people from preaching the gospel by distracting them with music; musicians are no longer victims of devilish interference, but willing collaborators in the spread of evil practices.

The militant rhetoric found in these two tracts continued throughout the 1380s and was adopted by other Wycliffite authors commenting on music. Knighton provides a list of twenty-five erroneous beliefs held by the Wycliffites in his chronicle entry for 1388.[59] Error number fifteen states: "Also that divine office ought not to be sung to music, and that God does not delight in such singing."[60] This is the first explicit statement that all liturgical music should be removed from religious services. Alone, Knighton's list could be construed as hyperbolic propaganda, but the Wycliffite tract, *On the Twenty-Five Articles*, contains the same list of grievances accompanied by defences of each Wycliffite position.

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[58] ȝif þei studien on þe holy day aboute experymentis or wiche craft or veyn songis and knackynge and harpynge, gyternynge & daunsynge & oþere veyn triflis to geten þe stynkyng loue of damyselis, and stere hem to worldely vanyte and synnes; þei breken foule þer holyday and ben procuratours of þe fend. Matthew, "Of the Leaven of Pharisees," 8-9.

[59] Knighton writes: "Although their noisy assertiveness began to fade they added yet new error to their old ones." Knighton, *Chronica de eventibus Angli*æ, 433-435.

[60] Ibid., 437.

The defence of article fifteen is the longest discussion on music to be found within all Wycliffite literature of which I am aware. Anonymous H harkens back to earlier arguments from Wyclif, although he stretches these arguments to the point of excluding all music from liturgical function. The entire text takes up four pages of Arnold's collection and so I have condensed it down to the following abridged account:

> Here Christian men say plainly, that Christ and his apostles prayed devoutly without such song, and they never taught in word nor deed, nor openly counselled in holy writ to this song, and much more they never charged [burdened / imposed upon] man herewith [with this] in all holy writ… Lord! Whether this song disposes men for to understand the sentence [meaning] of holy writ, and for to mourn for their sins, or else to pride, vanity, dancing and lechery, with vain spending of time…Yet, Saint John Chrysostom on Matthew, where Christ bids that we should not speak much in prayer as heathen men do… that three great harms come of prayer with cry, first that men thus crying… lets [keeps] other men from prayer… Lord! Whether this chanting of Kyries, Sanctus, and Agnus, with Gloria in excelsis and Patrem makes that men hear nought the words but only a sound!... Lord! Since we be so feeble of wit [intellect], feeble of bodily might, and of full short time, and holy writ [be] so hard, and plenty of sweet sentences to which God binds us sore [harshly], what reason is it to bind us to new song and new sermons of diverse uses all day, that we never may do both together?... Yet, though Salisbury use may sometimes occupy well some slow wretches, it is no reason to bind all priests thereto, or to such another… for God says not that he is blessed that sings or knacks sweet notes, nor that keeps the ordinal of this ceremony or that, but he is blessed that night and day thinks in the law of God, that is, for to understand it and life thereafter, and teach truly, and willfully suffer tribulation.[61]

[61] Here Cristen men sayne pleynly, þat Criste and his apostilis prayden devoutly wiþouten siche songe, and þai never tauȝtten in worde ne dede, ne openly counseiled in holy writte to þis songe, and myche more þai never chargid man herwiþ in al holy writte…Lorde! wheþer þis songe dispose men for to understonde þo sentence of holy writte, and for to mourne for þer synnus, or ellis to pride, vanite, daunsyng and lecchery, wiþ vayne spendynge of tyme… ȝit Seint Jon Crisostome on Mathew, where Criste biddus þat we shul not speke much in prayer as heþen men done… þat thre grete harmys comyn of prayer wiþ crye… ffurste þat men þus cryinge…lettis oþer men fro prayer… Lorde! weþer þis chauntyng of Kyries, Sanctus, and Agnus, wiþ Gloria in excelsis and Patrem maken þat men heren nout þo wordis but onely a sowne!... Lorde! siþen we be so feble of witte, febul of bodily myȝte, and of ful schort tyme, ande holy writ so harde, and plentynouse of swete sentences to whichee God byndus us sore, what resoun is hit to bynde us to newe songe and newe sermonyes of diverse uses al day, þat we never mowe do boþe togedur?... ȝit, þow Salisburye use may sumtyme occupie wele summe slowe wrecchis, hit is no reson to bynde alle prestis þerto, or to suche anoþer… For God seis not þat he is blessed þat syngus or knackus swete notis, ne þat kepis þo ordynale of þis cermonye or þis, but he is blessed þat nyȝt and day þinkis in þo lawe of God, þat is, for to understonde hit and lif þeraftur, and teche hit trewly, and willefully suffer tribulacione. Thomas Arnold ed., "On the Twenty-Five Articles," in *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), 479-482.

Anonymous H's repetition of 'Lord!' intonates an anxious plea, designed to foster a sense of urgency in the reader. He rejects all liturgical music with the same logical tactic seen in Wyclif's *Opus Evangelicum* - things 'not founded in scriptural faith' are 'contrary to it' - written four years prior. Christ and his apostles' silence on music should be taken to mean that music has no place in Christian prayer; only an explicit 'charge' to sing in the New Testament would suffice in altering this position. This elevation of the New Testament aligns with Anonymous A's position in *Of Feigned Contemplative Life*.

Anonymous H's strict adherence to New Testament doctrine explains his rejection of the Salisbury Use, also called the Sarum Use, which was pervasive in England by the late Middle Ages. A Use is a sufficiently distinctive body of custom that provides an ecclesiastical institution with a constitution, a liturgy, and a repertory of chant;[62] the Salisbury Use was "one of the most elaborate of all liturgies."[63] Fourteenth-century English polyphony was largely composed atop cantus firmi taken from Sarum chant,[64] and so to dismiss the Salisbury Use was to dismiss most of the liturgical music in England, both chant and polyphony. Sarum chant had been a liturgical staple in England for over a hundred years by the late-fourteenth century,[65] and so its rejection was no minor amendment. This is the most revolutionary stance on music seen from within the Wycliffite movement.

Anonymous H uses the majority of his article fifteen defence to address specific musical criticisms. He reiterates concerns about intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality and associates them with 'heathen' (pagan) practices. This implies that anyone involved in liturgical music is

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[62] Nicholas Sandon, "Salisbury, Use of ['Sarum']," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, 2001), accessed December 18, 2020. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000024611?rskey=YzAPBz&result=3

[63] Bowers, "Choral institutions within the English church, 4036.

[64] Sandon, "Salisbury."

[65] Ibid.

not a true Christian. Though Anonymous H addresses sensuality at length, his comments are congruent with those found in previous tracts; I therefore limit the following discussion to intelligibility and distraction as Anonymous H makes some terminological choices that forward the Wycliffite positions on these concerns. His use of the term 'sound' helps to clarify the entanglement between intelligibility and distraction as observed in previous tracts: while it is possible that 'sound' refers to a lack of semantic conviction in the sung text, the context given by Anonymous H makes it more likely that the term describes text obscured by weak diction, alluding to Wyclif's comments in *De Mandatis Divinis* where concerns with intelligibility are expressed in phonetic as opposed to sematic terms. Furthermore, his mention of humanity's 'feeble wit [intellect]' alludes to Anonymous A's comment in *Of Feigned Contemplative Life* about 'man's wisdom [intellect] be[ing] of certain measure and might;' being 'bound' to 'new song' distracts from the 'sweet sentences' of holy writ, which are already 'hard' to understand. Anonymous H's delineation between intelligibility and distraction embraces the logical arguments of the 1370s while maintaining the revolutionary convictions of the early 1380s.

New Song is another term that requires further delineation. Wyclif uses 'new song' interchangeably with 'new praying' in his *De Precationibus Sacris*, a Middle English tract dated prior to 1379.[66] This can be seen in the following excerpt:

> Wonder it is why men praise so much this new praying, by great crying and high [loud and high pitched] song, and leave the silent manner of praying, as Christ and his apostles did. It seems that we seek our own liking [pleasure] and pride in this song more than the devotion and understanding of that that we sing, and this is a great sin. For Augustine says in his confession, As often as the song delights me more than that [which] is sung, so often I acknowledge that I trespass grievously. Therefore says Paul, I have rather five words in my wit [intellect] than ten thousand in [my] tongue. Paul's wit [intellect] is in devotion and true understanding; the tongue is that [which] a man understands not, and has no devotion. One Pater Noster said with devotion and good understanding is better than many thousands [said] without devotion and understanding. And this new praying occupies men so much that they have no space to study holy writ and teach it. But

[66] Thomas Arnold ed., *Select English Works of John Wyclif,* vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), 219.

> Augustine asks, Who may excuse him from preaching and seeking and saving of souls, for love of contemplation? Since Jesus Christ came from heaven into this wretched world to seek souls and save them, by open example of holy life and true preaching. And Gregory says in his Pastoralis, they that have plenty of virtues and cunning [knowledge] of God's law, and [have] gone into the desert for rest of contemplation, be guilty of as many souls, as they might profit to in cunning [teaching knowledge] to men dwelling in the world. Where [shall][67] this new song excuse us from learning and preaching of the gospel that Christ taught and bade? Therefore, you priests, live well, pray devoutly, and teach the gospel truly and freely as Christ and his apostles did.[68]

Wyclif's implied congruency of 'new song' and 'new praying' explains his perception of liturgical music as not an additive to prayer but as a function of prayer itself. Any decrease to prayer's functionality caused by music is therefore unacceptable and requires the music to be excised. Wyclif parallels his rhetorical tactic in *De Mandatis Divinis*, conflating his concerns for intelligibility and distraction (here in more essentialist terms). The rhetoric in this tract hints towards the revolutionary trajectory of the Wycliffites in 1380s as outlined in this section.

'New song' and 'new singing' appear numerous times in excerpts from the preceding section on cost, referenced once in *Of Clerks Possessioners*, and thrice in *Of Prelates*. It was also mentioned once in *How the Office of the Curates is Ordained of God*. Yet, the authors of these segments provide no explicit definition of the term and no indication as to whether it denotes a

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[67] This word was moved forward to clarify the question function of the sentence.

[68] Wonder it is whi men preisen so moche þis newe preiynge, bi gret criynge and hey song, and leven stille manere of preynge, as Crist and his apostils diden. It semeþ þat we seken oure owene likynge and pride in þis song more þan þe devocion and understondynge of þat þat we syngen, and þis is grete synne. For Austyn seiþ in his confessions, As oft as þe song delitiþ me more þan þat is songen, so oft I knowleche þat I trespasse grievously. Þerefore seiþ Poul, I have levere five wordis in my witt þan ten þousand in tonge. Poulis witt is in devocion and trewe undirstondynge; þe tonge is þat a man undirstondiþ not, and haþ no devocioun. O Pater Noster seynge wiþ devocion and goode understondynge, is better þan many þousand wiþouten devocion and undirstondynge. And þis newe preiynge occupieþ men so moche þat þei han no space to studie holy writ and teche it. But Austyn axeþ, Who may excuse him fro prechynge and sekynge and savynge of soulis, for love of contemplacion? Siþ Jesus Crist cam fro hevene into þis wrecched world to seke soulis and save hem, bi opyn ensaumble of holy lif and trewe prechynge. And Gregory seiþ in his Pastoralis, þei þat han plente of virtues and kunnyge of Goddis lawe, and gone into desert for reste of contemplacion, ben gilty of as many soulis, as þei myȝten profiten to in kunnynge to men dwellynge in þe world. Where þis newe song schal excuse us fro lernynge and prechynge of þe gospel þat Crist tauȝte and bad? Þerefore, ȝe prestis, lyveþ wel, preieþ devoutly, and techiþ þe gospel trewely and freely, as Crist and his apostils diden. Thomas Arnold ed., "De Precationibus Sacris," in *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), 228-229.

style or a genre. Anonymous C (*Of Prelates*) offers a hint with his repeated use of the gerund 'knacking' preceding the term, signifying a connection with polyphonic styles and/or genres like organum, English descant, or cantilena. However, the qualification of 'new' suggests that it refers to a musical practice novel to late-fourteenth-century England. Anonymous C's mention of motet in the second segment provided from *Of Prelates* insinuates that French stylistic influence could be the origin of concerns about New Song; the French Ars Nova style began to appear in England at this time,[69] and the linguistic correlation between New Song and Ars Nova (New Art) cannot be ignored. The excerpt from *The Order of Priesthood*, provided at the beginning of this thesis, takes the association between New Song and polyphonic music further, altering the term by substituting knacking for song. "New knacking' implies that polyphony is essential rather than adjacent to the New Song criticized by the Wycliffites. This indicates that Ars Nova style and the motet genre are the focus of the criticisms.

Returning to *On the Twenty-Five Articles*, Anonymous H uses the term, 'sweet,' to describe an object's beauty. 'Sweet sentences' refers to the beauty found in the texts of holy scripture, an obvious belief for a Wycliffite disciple in the context of their affirmation of holy writ's supremacy. However, it is important to clarify the meaning of 'sweet' in light of Anonymous H's other use of the term. Using 'sweet' as an adjective to describe music is not a new phenomenon, but this iteration is the first example of such usage within a Wycliffite text. The phrase, 'knacks sweet note,' is the first recognition in a Wycliffite tract of music's beauty. Despite all the criticisms, this is an acknowledgement that there are positive characteristics to be gleaned from music's aesthetic qualities, as long as it is not practiced in a devotional context.

[69] Lisa Colton, "Making Sense of Omnis / Habenti: An Ars Nova Motet in England," in *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Christopher Page*, eds. Tess Knighton and David Skinner (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2020), 223.

Notwithstanding Anonymous H's harsh dismissal of religious music, his use of 'sweet' potentially sets the tone for the compromise commentaries found in the final phase of the chronological arc.

'Sweetness' also appears in the "Cantus" (singing) entry in the *Rosarium Theologie*, an abridged copy of the anonymous *Floretum* florilegium. A florilegium is a "compilation of brief, often proverbial extracts from past writers - fundamental[ly] importan[t] in the transmission of classical and early Christian literature to medieval writers and intellectuals."[70] The *Rosarium Theologie*, completed sometime after 1396,[71] is considered to be a Wycliffite text since it includes excerpts from Wyclif's works.[72] Anonymous I mentions sweetness near the end of the entry where he includes a quote from a sermon by Odo of Chateauroux: "Odo says thus in *Sermone Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum*, 'Some men', he says, 'are suddenly delighted of custom or sweetness of sound in the number of psalms and in songs which be understood not.'"[73] This connects to Anonymous H's comments about sound and sweetness in *On the Twenty-Five Articles*, and clarifies that the beauty attributed to music is aesthetic rather than conceptual, a distinction reserved only for text.

The primary function of the Cantus entry is to outline the errors commonly committed in singing. As with the excerpt from *On the Twenty-Five Articles*, the Cantus entry is too long to replicate in full. The following is a brief summary that highlights the categorical nature of the entry:

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[70] Holsinger, "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium," 97.

[71] Anne Hudson, "A Lollard Compilation and Dissemination of Wycliffite Thought," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 23, no. 1 (April 1972): 72.

[72] Christina von Nolcken, *The middle English translation of the Rosarium theologie: a selection* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979), 33.

[73] Odon seiþ þus in *Sermone Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum*, "Som men', he seiþ, 'ar soudenly delited of custome or swetnes of sovne in þe number of psalms and in songes wiche þe understonde not.' Holsinger, "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium," 105.

> Song has three things reprehensible or reprovable. The first is when a man seeks either fluting or flattering of voice either for to glorify or for to delight… The second is breaking of voice, where for it is said in *Legenda Sancti Sebastiani*, 'Trust thou not him to be numbered among worshipers of Christ that seeks the savours of heavenly things and breaks his voice.' 'Where,' says Bernard, 'Breaking of voice is a sign of a broken soul…' The third is over much enhightening [raising] of the voice, as do they that will rather sing high than openly.[74]

Anonymous I addresses many of the same critiques seen in previous tracts such as 'small breaking,' 'high crying,' and the sin of pride, and includes a number of quotes from historical writers such as Augustine and Saint Paul that have already been encountered. His categorical approach generates a more proactive tone than earlier critical works, suggesting that the entry may have functioned as advice for church singers who hoped to avoid the pit falls of unintelligibility. Anonymous I retreats from Anonymous H's position in *On the Twenty-Five Articles* - that all music should be omitted from the liturgy – and focuses instead on critiquing polyphonic styles and other new musical innovations. This is clear in the references to breaking and high singing as chant music utilized neither. This indicates a return to the constructive criticism denoted in Wyclif's *De Mandatis Divinis*.

Revolutionary rhetoric remained heightened throughout the 1380s. The Wycliffites pushed a holy war narrative against the church and attempted to formulate conceptions of a new process of worship, aligned with Wyclif's dismissal of performative religion. This extended to a rejection of music's liturgical function that stemmed from the familiar concerns of intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality. In this section, I have examined the terminological choices made by the authors, highlighting 'sound,' 'new song,' and 'sweet,' and conjectured their rhetorical

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[74] Song haþ þre þings reprehensible or reprouabel. Þe first is wen a man sekeþ ouþer fagyng or flateryng a voice, ouþer for to glorifie or for to delite… þe secunde is brekyng of voice, wer for it is seid in *Legenda Sancti Sebastiani*, "Trow þou not hym to be numbered among worschiperes of Criste þat sekeþ þe sauours of heuenly þings and brekeþ his voice.' 'Wer,' seiþ Bernarde, "Brekyng of voice is signe of a brokon soule…' þe þerdis ouer miche enhiȝhyng of þe voice, as doþ þo þat will raþer syng hiȝ þan openly. Holsinger, "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium," 103-104.

implications to both the chronological and categorical arguments in this thesis. *On the Twenty-Five Articles* represents the rhetorical peak of the chronology while the *Rosarium Theologie* provides an early indication of the compromise position that appeared in the first decade of the fifteenth century.

The Compromise Position

The concept of a compromise position within the Wycliffite movement is a crucial reframing that enables further exploration of Wycliffism's tangible influence on contemporaneous liturgical music. The movement has until this point in the discourse been portrayed as too obstinate and heretical for their beliefs to have affected orthodox musical practices, but Brokaw's recognition of the compromise spirit in *Dives and Pauper* encourages a recontextualization of the Wycliffite *The Lanterne of Liȝt*.[75] The two works are almost synchronous and contain analogous perspectives on both the pros and cons of liturgical music. By illustrating this similarity, I hope to persuade musicologists that a comparative analysis between Wycliffite musical criticism and contemporaneous musical compositions has value within the musicological discourse.

One important factor in Wycliffism's rhetorical evolution was the church's reassertion of orthodox practices, which occurred in the early-fifteenth century. Orthodox reactionism increased to address the pervasiveness of Wycliffite sympathies.[76] Archbishop Thomas Arundel's 1409 *Constitutions* were "one of the most draconian pieces of censorship in English history,"[77] banning vernacular circulation of holy writ. Arundel's *Constitutions* ended all debate on Wycliffite critiques within the church,[78] driving many steadfast Wycliffite supporters underground, and resulting in a short-lived Lollard uprising in 1414, led by Sir John Oldcastle.[79] However, this overshadows the less dramatic compromise narrative that was beginning to transpire.

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[75] Brokaw, "Sacred, Sensual, and Social Music," 13.
[76] Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England," 825.
[77] Ibid., 826.
[78] "Until the *Constitutions* decided the debate in favour of the conservatives [those against vernacular translation], both sides could claim to represent the orthodox position." Ibid., 841.
[79] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 1.

Dives and Pauper, a dialogue on the ten commandments written in-between 1405 and 1410,[80] contains a single back and forth on liturgical music. Dives, a rich man intended to represent the book's audience,[81] expresses his belief that music should not be used in the church office. Pauper, a poor yet pious layman,[82] rebuts this with a defence of church music, but also acknowledges the existing problems and identifies music exhibiting such issues as 'evil.' "Pauper's point of view is neither an apology for the shortcomings of the clergy nor a plea for a Wyclifian reform of doctrine but rather something in between the two."[83] It is impossible to know if *Dives and Pauper* intentionally discourses with the Wycliffite movement, but numerous comments speak to the concerns purported in the previously discussed tracts, and the treatise's timing and terminology fit within the rhetorical diminution trend observed throughout the 1390s and into the 1400s.

Anonymous J's principal emphasis in *Dives and Pauper* is his commentary on the ten commandments, and so the focus in his excerpt on music understandably shifts around to reflect this emphasis. His original segment appears in full in the footnotes, but I have rendered the following version to illustrate the points salient to this discussion:

> **Dives** - Me thinks it were better to say God's office in holy church without note than to say it by note and hacking [small breaking] the words and the syllables in our prayer and our praising, for whoso should tell the king of England a tale or make his prayer to him and he make so many notes and hackings [small breakings] in his tale he should have little thanks.
>
> **Pauper** - The king of heaven is above the king of England and otherwise [differently] we must worship him than the king of England… when we sing in our prayer we do no displeasure to God but much pleasance… for every note sung to God in church or in other places with good intention is a prayer to God… And but men praise God with song that [they] can sing when they must in due time, else they sin grievously… For many skills [reasons], faithful [dear] friend, song and melody was ordained in holy church;

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[80] Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), ix.
[81] Ibid., x.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

> first, to the more worshiping of God, also to more excitation of devotion of the people… And therefore God's office should be said and sung lively, distinctly, devoutly, with gladness of heart, for if the office be said and sung so heavily and deadly and so drawn along that it loses both the singer and the hearer and brings folk into heaviness and distraction, it is then evil said and sung… Also we sing in church to conform us to saints in heaven, which praise God and serve God always with high [raised] voice and sweet singing, as we find in the Apocalypse and many other places in holy writ. And therefore David says: Sing a new song to our Lord, for such is his praising in the church of all saints. And therefore they that despise song and melody in church and let [hinders] his worship. And they make men slothful and heavy in God's service and let [keep] men from their devotion, and they offend all the saints in heaven inasmuch as they reprove their manner of praising and worshiping and praying that the holy church has taken of them.[84]

The logical error in Dives' question belies his status as a uneducated thinker; any educated contemporaneous reader would recognize the conflation of God and King as a breach of the commandment, "thou shalt have no other gods before me." His musical opinion is thus suspect,

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[84] **Dives** – Me þynkith it were betere to seyn Godis offys in holy chirche withoutyn note þan to seyn it be note & hackyn þe wordis and þe silablis in our preyere & our preysynge, for hoso schulde tellyn þe kyng of Engelond a tale or makyn hys preyere to hym & he made so made notis & hackyngys in his tale he schulde han lytyl þank. **Pauper** – þe kyng of heuene is abouyn þe kyng of Engelond & oþirwise us must worchepyn hym þan þe kyng of Engelond, for us must worchepyn hym with al our myȝt & al our herte and al our wyt as hym þat is maker and lord of alle þing, & so mon we nout worchepyn þe kyng of Engelond. It nedyth to spekyn to þe kyng of Engelond & to euery erdely man distynctly, for þey knowyn nout manys herte ne his wil, but God knowyth it longe or we spekyn it with our mouth. And þerfor whan we syngyn in our preyere we don non displesance to God by mychil pleasance, inasmychil as we preysyn hym & worchepyn hym with our power, for euery note syngynge to God in chirche or in oþir place with good / entencion is a preysyng to God, & þe mor þat we preysyn hym & worchepyn hym in our preyere þe mor plesaunt is our preyere. And but men preysyn God with song þat connyn syngyn whan þey mon in dew tyme, ellys þey synnyn greuously. And þerfor Dauid seyth: Cantate, exultate et psallite. Syngith, seyth he, & makyth merþe outward and syngith to God craftylyche. Iubilate Deo omnis terra, seruite domino in leticia, introit in conspectus eius in exultacione. All ȝe, seyth he, þat dwellyn upon erde, makith hertly ioye to God, seruyth our lord in gladnesse, entrith in his syȝth with ioye & merþe. ¶For many skyllis, leue frend, song and melodye was ordeynyd in holy chirch; first, to þe mor worchepyng of God, also to þe mor excitacion of deuocion of þe peple; also to puttyn awey heuynesse & vnlusthed, as seyth Sent Bernard, for men han mor lykynge to seruyn boþen God and man in gladnesse þan in sorynesse and heuynesse. And þerfor Godis offys schulde ben seyd & songen lyflyche, distynctlych, deuoutlych, with gladnesse of herte, for ȝif þe offys be seyd & songen so heuylyche & dedlyche and so drawyn along þat it loþith boþe þe synger and þe hereris and bryngith folc into heuynesse & distraccion, it is þan euyl seyd and songyn. For þat maner of seynge is lettynge of mychil goodnesse & cause of ydilchepe and of mychil folye, for it is cause þat men withdrawyn hem fro Godis hous & from Godis seruyse & so wantyn grace, De conse., di. V, Non mediocriter. Also we syngyn in chirche to conformyn us to sentis in hefne, which preysyn God and seruyn God alwey with hey voys and swete syngyng, as we fyndyn in þe Apocalyps and many oþer placis in holy writ. And þerfor Dauid seyth: Cantate domino, canticum nouum, laus eius in ecclesia sanctorum, Syngith a newe song to our lord, for swych is his preysynge in þe chirche of alle sentis. And þerfor þey þat despysyn song and melodie in chirche & lettyn his worchepe. And þey makyn men vnlysty & heuy in Godis seruyse & lettyn men of her deuocion, and þey offendyn alle þe sentys in heuene inasmychil as þey reprouyn here maner of / preysynge & worchepynge & preyynge þat holy chirche hat takyn of hem. Barnum, *Dives and Pauper*, 206-207.

invoking a simple binary that lacks the nuance expected in a critical treatise. Pauper's response by comparison is a cultivated argument, rounding out the discussion by delving into the subject's subtilties. He identifies 'good intention' as the key component in determining music's functionality in prayer. Pauper claims that singing performed from a place of devotion instills devotion within the listener, unlike numerous Wycliffite tracts which insist that music distracts both the singer and listener. However, Pauper also warns that music 'brings folk into heaviness and distraction' if not undertaken properly - heaviness entails sensuality as it describes a physiological sensation, though it lacks a sexual connotation. Pauper's comment about 'sweet singing,' within the context discussed in the previous section, reclaims music's beauty in service of the liturgy, a function achieved by singing with 'high voice' amongst other techniques.

Pauper acknowledges the same concerns peddled by Wycliffite writers while establishing a middle ground, insisting that singing in church can bring 'much pleasance' to God, but also, if done improperly, can cause the singer to 'sin grievously.' This could be considered a compromise proposal. Pauper implies that the dialogue is to be viewed as reasonable rather than combative with his use of the phrase 'faithful [dear] friend,' which speaks to the spirit in which this compromise is offered. If such a proposal was accepted by the Wycliffite movement, one would expect to see a rhetorical softening and an acknowledgement of music's dualistic nature. Both of these elements appear in the Wycliffite *The Lanterne of Liȝt*.

The Lanterne of Liȝt, an anonymous Wycliffite treatise written in-between 1409 and 1415,[85] shares *Dives and Pauper's* conciliatory tone, dividing its commentary on music into two paragraphs that discuss its pros and cons respectively. The original version provides external

[85] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 214.

quotes in both Latin and Middle English, but I have removed the Latin from the following replication to condense the excerpt and avoid repetition:

> Singers [who] be in Christ's church that sing heavenly songs, and with their sweet melody please God at full [to the fullest], as Paul says in his epistle to the Colossians… suffer you the word of God to dwell plenteously among you, in all manner heavenly wisdom increasing you in virtue, teaching and admonishing yourself in psalms and hymns and ghostly songs, singing in grace with fervent devotion in your God and whatever ye shall do in word or in work do you that thing perfectly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, yielding thankings to the father of that same Jesus Christ, and since he is both God and Lord and king of all this world, the prophet David counsels us that we should sing wisely, for he that is occupied in heavenly desires, though his tongue be still and make no noise, he sings a song Saint Augustine said that God likes best… Hananiah and Azariah and Mishael also sung blessings to the Lord in such manner of song, when they were in Babylon in the burning furnace.
>
> But singers in the fiend's church break curious [elaborate] notes and this is but a puff of wind as says Saint Bernard wisely, to please the people with likeable [pleasing] voice and fill their ears with a vain din, but see what Saint Gregory says, according with Saint Bernard… when joyful and fluting voice is sought perfect life is forsaken, and the people is led in to sin as God says by his prophet Ezekiel… my people sit before thee and hear thy words, but they do not after [follow] them when their back is turned, for 25 of the priests turn them to song of their mouth, and the heart of the people follows their priest's avarice, and it is to them as a song of music that is sung merrily with a lusty [pleasurous] sound, and they hear thy sermons. But they keep them not says the Lord God, and after God says again by [via] the prophet Amos… do [take] thou away from me the pride of thy chanting, and I shall not also hear the songs of thine harp, Lord what may this mean that priests in the church, given them[selves] thus much to song and so little to preaching and in few places or else in no one of the new testament, should we ground this manner of song neither among our doctors, but often they be charged to preach. Yea under great pain, all ways that they have good will to do that they may, that the people were truly taught to lead a sober life, therefore Gregory in his decree 92. Smite them with a curse, that busy them in the court of Rome about such feigned singing, where thorough should be tarried the office of preaching.[86]

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[86] Syngars ben in Cristis chirche þat syngen heuenli songis / | and wiþ her swet melodie plesen God at fulle / as Poul seiþ in his pistil to þe Colsencis / Colo. iii°, 'verbum christi habitet in vobis habundanter in omni sapientia docents & commonentes vosmetipsos in psalmis & ympnis & canticis spiritualibus in gratia cantantes in cordibus vestris deo ‖ Omne quodcumque facitis in verbo aut in opere. In nominee domini nostri iesu christi facite. gratias agentes deo & patri per ipsum' / þat is to seie. Suffre ȝe þe worde of God to dwelle plentiuousli among ȝou / in al manere heuenli wisdam encresing ȝou in vertu / teching & monesting ȝoure silf in psalmes & ympnys & goostli songis / singyng in grace wiþ feruent deuocion in ȝoure God and what euer ȝe schal do in word or in werk do ȝe þat þing perfiȝtli in þe name of oure Lord Iesu Crist / ȝelding þankingis to þe fadir bi þat same Iesu Crist ‖ And Siþen he is boþe God & Lord & kyng of al þis world / þe prophete Dauiþ counseiliþ vs þat we schulde sing wijseli / for he þat is | occupied in heuenli desiris / þouȝ his tung be stille & make no noyse / he singe a song seynt Austin seiþ þat God likeþ beest ‖ 'Qui desiderat & si lingua taceat corde cantat' / Hec Augustinus ‖ Ananye & Azarie & Mysael also / soungen blessing to þe Lord in suche manere song / whanne þei weren in Babiloyne in þe brennyng furneise. ¶But syngars in þe fendis chirche breken curiouse nootis & þat is but a puff of wynde as seiþ Seint Bernard wijsli /

In paragraph one, Anonymous K champions music's power to please God and inspire 'heavenly wisdom,' specifying that this is music's intended role in 'Christ's church.' His argument shares distinct similarities with Pauper's, proposing that music does not need to be eradicated from church practice as it enriches the liturgy in a way that inspires the listener to greater devotion. Anonymous K's comment about 'sweet melody' harkens back to the use of the term 'sweet' in *On the Twenty-Five Articles*, the *Rosarium Theologie*, and *Dives and Pauper*, though sweetness now headlines the discussion rather than appearing as a later caveat.

Anonymous K then cautions in paragraph two that certain criteria, compiled from the wealth of Wycliffite musical commentaries, must be observed to maintain music's spiritual properties, lest practitioners become members of 'the fiend's church.' These criteria include criticisms of intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality. Anonymous K's reference to 'breaking curious notes' criticizes intelligibility as it lengthens and complicates the intonations of individual syllables.[87] His quotations of Bernard and Gregory warn against singing that elicits vanity as this distracts the singer from devotional thoughts, the principal requirement for music's

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to plese þe peple wiþ likerouse voice & fylle her eeris wiþ veyn dyn ‖ But se what seint Gregor seiþ. acording wiþ Seint Bernard / 'Dum blanda vox queritur perfecta vita deseritur' ‖ þat is to seie, whanne faging & glosing vois is souȝt perfijt lijf is forsaken / & þe peple is ledde in to synne as God seiþ bi his prophet Eze, xxxiii°. 'sedent coram te populus meus & audiunt sermons tuos & non faciunt eos quia in canticum oris sui vertunt illos & auariciam suam sequitar cor eorum & es eis quasi carmen musicum quod suaui dulcique sono canitur | & audiunt verba tua & non faciunt ea' ‖ þat is to seie. Mi peple sitten before þee & heeren þi wordis / but þei don not aftir hem whanne her bak is turned / for 25 þe prestis turnen hem in song of her mouþe / & þe herte of þe peple folowiþ her prestis auarice / & it is to hem as a song of music þat is soungen myrili wiþ a lusti sounde / & þei heeren þi sermouns. But þei kepe hem not seiþ þe Lord God / And efte God seiþ aȝen bi þe prophete Amos. v°. 'Aufer a me tumultum carminum tuorum. & cantica lire tue non audiam' ‖ þat is to seie. Do þou awey fro me þe pride of þi chauntyng / & I schal not also here þe songis of þin harpe ‖ Lord what may þis bimene þat prestis in þe chirchis / ȝyuen hem þus miche to song & so litil to preching & in fewe placis or ellis in no one of þe newe testament / schullen we grounde þis maner of song neiþir among oure doctours ‖ but often þei ben chargid to preche. ȝhe vndir greet peyne / algatis þat þei haue good wille to do þat þei may / þat þe | peple were treweli tauȝt to lede a sobre lijf / þerfore Gregor in his decre 92. Smyteþ hem wiþ a curse / þat bisien hem in þe courte of Rome aboute suche feyned syngyng / wherþoruȝ schulde be tarried þe office of preching ‖ L. M. Swinburn ed., *The Lanterne of Liȝt* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1917), 57-59.

[87] Holsinger has suggested that the 'Cantus' entry in the *Rosarium Theologie* was likely consulted by the author of *The Lanterne of Liȝt* during the process of writing this segment. Holsinger, "The vision of music in a Lollard florilegium," 96.

functionality in spiritual endeavours. This concern echoes Anonymous A (*Of Feigned Contemplative Life*) - 'man's wisdom [intellect] be of certain measure and might;' vanity encroaches on the thought space necessary for absolute devotion. 'Lusty [pleasurous] sounds' alludes to sensuality, and the suggestion that music arouses desire within the listener on account of 'their priest's avarice' is reminiscent of Anonymous C's (*Of Prelates*) denunciation of priests for valuing worldly goods over their responsibility to teach the gospel. Anonymous K's negotiation between music's ability to both inspire and obscure devotion invokes the same compromise observed in *Dives and Pauper* though expressed in Wycliffite rhetoric.

Anonymous K's compromise position in *The Lanterne of Liȝt* opens the door, closed by the radicalism of the 1380s, to early-fifteenth-century composers of sacred music who wanted to align their music with Wycliffite principles. Roger Bowers' observation that chapel choirs increased in size throughout this period due to a Wycliffite-inspired orthodox push back reveals that Wycliffite concerns over cost were not adopted, but this does not preclude the possibility that concerns about intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality changed the compositional approach taken by English composers. These changes could be similar to those brought about by the Council of Trent in response to the Protestant reformation in the sixteenth century, but there has been no musicological exploration of this possibility. This is perhaps due to the inflammatory rhetoric in earlier tracts that, removed from their chronological context, make the Wycliffites seem immutable on the subject of liturgical music. However, music within the contemporaneous 'contenance angloise' by composers like John Dunstaple exhibit characteristic changes from earlier English styles that directly address the same areas of concern as those purported by the Wycliffites. This could be construed as an attempt to realize the compromise

spirit, bringing English liturgical music closer to the vision outlined in *Dives and Pauper* and *The Lanterne of Liȝt*.

Case Study: John Dunstaple and 'La Contenance Angloise'

The practical application of my survey of Wycliffite musical commentaries relies on linking the concerns of intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality to recognizable musical features. As discussed above, intelligibility speaks to a desire for textual clarity and can be understood in phonetic terms; hence features that aid the listener in recognizing words and phonemes can be considered to address intelligibility. For example, monotextuality allows for the same text to be uttered throughout all the voices in a polyphonic work. Avoiding melismas, or long, elaborate vocal lines on a single syllable, increases the textual rhythm within the music, bringing it closer to the speed of spoken text. Limited vocal range keeps the vocal parts within the range of normal speech, avoiding the difficulties related to phonetic distortion in the upper extremities of the voice. Homorhythm allows the text to move concurrently throughout all vocal parts rather than giving each line independent text settings. Homorhythm is also a sub-feature of homophony as the rhythmic alignment in all voices creates vertical block chords that progress like as a singular voice through the music. Homophony addresses distraction as these block chords make it easier to hear the vertical harmonic structure, in contrast to polyphony where the harmony is comprised of the counterpoint between multiple, independent lines of melody, emphasizing the horizonal rather than the vertical.

Like intelligibility, distraction relates to text, although it denotes semantic rather than phonetic concerns. Harmonic simplification limits the number of components the listener must perceive, allowing more cognitive space for contemplating the meaning of a text. The switch from multiple melodic lines to block chords offers the composer greater control over the interplay of consonance and dissonance.[88] This helps to avoid problems with sensuality;

[88] Margaret Bent, *Dunstaple* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), 18.

dissonances were deemed capable of inciting a physiological response that stirred the listener to thoughts of a sexual nature. Restricting dissonance thus limits the potential for musical licentiousness, incompatible with contemporaneous Christian values, and the subsequent wash of consonance creates a sweetness in the sound that inspires religious devotion. These delineations highlight specific features, relevant to a comparative study between Wycliffite musical commentaries and contemporaneous English music. However, there remain significant barriers to analytic projects of this nature.

Although it is easy enough to articulate how Wycliffite preferences relate to composition, the lack of any significant amount of surviving music is a considerable roadblock to a comparative analysis between Wycliffite commentaries and tangible musical examples. There are no substantial volumes of English polyphony in-between the *Winchester Troper*, compiled circa 1000, and the early-fifteenth-century *Old Hall Manuscript*,[89] making analysis difficult and limiting the discourse. Though the dissolution of the English monasteries during the reformation bears the brunt of responsibility for this sparseness,[90] it is possible that censored Wycliffite music did not survive the orthodox resistance, fronted by Archbishop Arundel and elevated after the unsuccessful Lollard uprising in 1414.[91] Hudson writes:

> It seems clear that the dominating figures were not found in Lollardy of the last sixty years before Lutheranism. In part this is doubtless the effect of the continued persecution, and most notably of Arundel's *Constitutions*; conventional wisdom would add the effect of [John] Oldcastle's rebellion in removing lay support for the heretics amongst the aristocracy and gentry.[92]

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[89] Colton, *Angel Song*, 4.

[90] Bent mentions that *The Old Hall Manuscript* may have passed into private ownership following the dissolution. Though this manuscript survived, there is no knowing how many were less fortunate. Margaret Bent, "The Old Hall Manuscript," *Early Music* 2, no. 1 (January 1974): 14.

[91] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 1.

[92] Ibid., 450.

The aristocracy's renunciation of support in conjunction with its influence likely discouraged the output of overtly Wycliffite musicians, but more importantly, works that bore any semblance to Wycliffism may have been disavowed and destroyed for fear of contamination by association. This all but ensures that only music able to masquerade as orthodox would have survived past the early decades of the fifteenth century.

A considerable portion of the English music that does survive exhibits characteristics that have been given the collective moniker, 'la contenance angloise' (the English style). Lisa Colton divides musicological perceptions of contenance angloise into four distinct groups: the first group portrays the vertical consonances in contenance angloise as the root of tonality, the second focuses on the style's textual simplicity and euphony, the third emphasizes its melodic grace, and the fourth identifies within the style certain rhythmic and mensural elements that distinguish English repertory from continental pieces.[93] Contenance angloise is most often associated with a revolution in harmony - highlighting third and sixth consonances and avoiding dissonance - but it also reflects other characteristics like homophony, homorhythm, and monotextuality.[94] Much of the music composed in the contenance angloise style fits the requirements outlined for survival as it uses orthodox genres and language, builds on established trends in English music, and has not thus far been associated with known Wycliffites. Yet, it seems suspect that a style noted for its revolutionary use of harmony and counterpoint appears in England at the precise moment that the Wycliffite movement enters its conciliatory phase. The warmth produced by the pervasive third and sixth consonances aligns with the bid for 'sweetness' and avoids the sensuality of dissonance, whereas contrapuntal and textual simplifications negate concerns over intelligibility

[93] Colton, *Angel Song*, 135.

[94] J. Peter Burkholder et al., *A History of Western Music*, 10th ed. (New YorK: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019), 161.

and distraction by foregrounding text rather than musical virtuosity. This makes the contenance angloise a perfect subject for an investigation of Wycliffite influence.

John Dunstaple (c. 1390-1453) is the principal composer associated with the contenance angloise. His association with the style stems from the contemporaneous French poet, Martin Le Franc, who credits Dunstaple as the movement's harbinger in his poem *Le champion des dames*, written circa 1440.[95] Margaret Bent identifies Dunstaple as "the foremost English composer of the fifteenth century,"[96] and suggests that his compositional style was inspired by the music exemplified in *The Old Hall Manuscript* (OHM).[97] His importance to musicological discourse lies in the relationship between his compositional style and those found in the OHM; Dunstaple rejects "music at the simplest and the most complex ends of the technical spectrum."[98] Yet, despite his towering musical reputation, most of Dunstaple's biography remains unknown, forcing any examination of his intentions to be constructed cautiously with limited biographical information.[99]

The inclusion of Dunstaple's motet *Veni Sancte Spiritus* in the OHM connects him to the manuscript, which was potentially produced for Henry V's (1382-1422) Chapel Royal.[100] Henry's penchant for music exhibiting characteristics of contenance angloise can be assumed based on his own compositions that appear in the manuscript under the name, 'Roy Henry;'[101] his *Sanctus* (see Appendix 1 for the full score) displays textbook examples of homophony, third and sixth consonance, and dissonance avoidance. Henry was the brother of Dunstaple's patron,

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[95] Colton, *Angel Song*, 133
[96] Bent, *Dunstaple*, 1.
[97] Ibid., 4.
[98] Ibid., 10.
[99] Colton, *Angel Song*, 85.
[100] Bent, Margaret Bent. "The Old Hall Manuscript: A Paleographical Study," PhD diss. (University of Cambridge, 1968), 23.
[101] Bent, *Dunstaple*, 5.

John, Duke of Bedford (1389-1435), which adds a further connection between these two composers.[102] The family connection between Dunstaple's patron and Henry and the observable similarities between Henry's *Sanctus* and Dunstaple's motet *Quam Pulcra Es* (see Appendix 2 for the full score) provide a context for the possibility that their shared compositional features denote similar influences.

Bedford's patronage provides a potential link between Dunstaple and the Wycliffite movement as Bedford was a grandson of Wyclif's aristocratic defender, John of Gaunt. Wycliffite sympathies may have passed down through the Lancastrian line, causing Bedford to be more receptive to the compromise position present in later Wycliffite tracts and thus influencing the music he commissioned for his household chapel. There is evidence that Henry IV (1367-1413), Bedford's father, retained some his father's Wycliffite sympathies; upon taking the crown, he reinstated two Lollards at Oxford University expelled by his predecessor Richard II (1367-1400),[103] and he had numerous combative encounters with Archbishop Arundel over Wycliffite sympathies amongst Henry's knights.[104] The inherent weakness of Henry's position as a usurper monarch - he overthrew Richard II in 1399 - would have made explicit displays of Wycliffite sympathies impossible as he relied on the legitimizing power of church support for stability in his rulership. However, this does not preclude the possibility that he maintained private religious notions. Furthermore, Bedford's uncle, Thomas duke of Gloucester, owned a Wycliffite Bible,[105] and Hudson has suggested that Bedford's older brother Henry V persecuted Lollards because they were guilty of lèse-majesté, a term that suggests a belief that the

[102] Colton, *Angel Song*, 86.
[103] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 89.
[104] Ibid., 113.
[105] Ibid., 205.

movement had committed affronts to secular rather than sacred authority.[106] Henry V also had a personal friendship with Sir John Oldcastle, the leader of the 1414 Lollard uprising,[107] and Henry appears to have been reluctant to prosecute Oldcastle before "his hand was forced by the rebellion."[108] His reluctance could indicate support for the Wycliffite beliefs not representing an attack on secular authority. Evidence of Wycliffite sympathies amongst Bedford's close family members makes it plausible that Bedford also subscribed to some Wycliffite theological criticisms.

It is possible that musical criticisms like intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality represent the type of theological concerns supported by Bedford's hypothetical Wycliffite sympathies. This gives further credence to my investigation of Dunstaple's music in this case study. Dunstaple's motet *Quam Pulcra Es* offers an opportunity to evaluate Dunstaple's compositional style from a Wycliffite perspective. It survives as individual vocal parts in MS 314, though it originally may have been composed in full-score format due to its homophonic structure.[109] The piece has been recognized as somewhat anomalous in Dunstaple's output due to it semblance to the English descant style; however, Bent has an explanation for this:

> [English descant] style is conspicuously absent from Dunstaple's surviving music; this does not necessarily mean that he did not use it, and indeed he could hardly have avoided exposure to it. However, it was becoming archaic by the time OH[M] was compiled, and we can associate him more closely with subsequent developments which took this style as their point of departure. Despite the great difference in rhythm, declamation, and poise, we can surely recognize the common chordal sense which links [the homophonic style seen in OHM 2, *Gloria*] with the composer of *Quam Pulcra Es*.[110]

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[106] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation,* 363.

[107] Thomas Walsingham writes that Oldcastle was "beloved of the king." Thomas Walsingham, *The St. Albans Chronicle: the Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham* vol. 2, ed. and trans. John Taylor et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003-2011) 623.

[108] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation,* 119.

[109] Margaret Bent, "The Transmission of English Music," in *Essays on the history of English music in honour of John Caldwell: sources, style, performance, historiography*, eds. Emma Hornby and David Maw (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010), 92.

[110] Bent, *Dunstaple*, 11.

This implies that the *Quam Pulcra Es* represents the evolutionary starting point of Dunstaple's compositional style, explaining why the same characteristics - homophony, monotextuality, and homorhythm - appear in his mature style, though in a more complex manner. The simplicity of the piece may be anomalous, but its characteristics are not.

The similarities between *Quam Pulca Es* and English descant style can be seen in a comparison of its opening phrase with that of Roy Henry's *Sanctus* (see Figures 2. and 3.), an example of the genre. The three voices in *Sanctus* move together in block chords for the most part, composed to ensure only consonant vertical harmonies such as 8-5, 6-3, and 5-3.[111] Even though there are only two syllables sung in the phrase, they are aligned in all the voices, giving them clarity despite the word being stretched over multiple beats. The opening phrase of *Quam Pulcra Es* is written in the same manner, albeit with a higher degree of complexity. The vertical harmonies are more adventurous, using intervals beyond the octave such as 10-5, 10-6, and 12-8, and there is a single 7-3 dissonance in the third beat of measure 2. With the exception of 'in' in measure 6, all of the syllables are aligned for intelligibility. The works, however, differ in their textual rhythms: the text in *Quam Pulcra Es* proceeds at a quicker pace than the text in *Sanctus* with no syllable stretching beyond two beats in the opening phrase. While both composers are using the structure of English descant style, Dunstaple has made the text setting more concise, offering greater textual clarity. The appearance of these characteristics in Dunstaple's motets suggests an intent to modify the new French genre.

[111] The sharps in the two upper voices are mostly editorial markings that reflect the double leading-tone rule in Musica Ficta, a contemporaneous performance practice designed for this as well as other purposes. This rule ensures that the vertical harmony remains a consonant 6-3 chord. Margaret Bent and Alexander Silbiger, "Musica Ficta," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, 2001), accessed November 29, 2019. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19406

Figure 2. OHM 94, Sanctus, Roy Henry, measures 1-3 (originally edited into 6/4).[112]

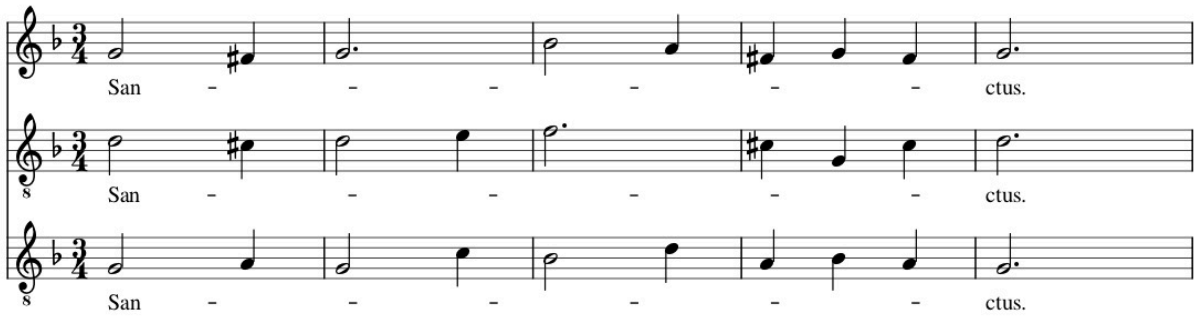
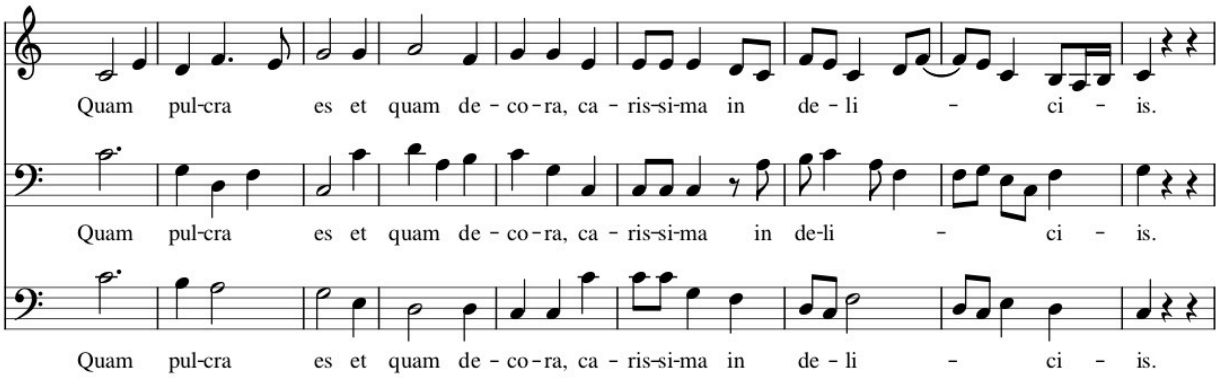


Figure 3. JD 44, Quam Pulcra Es, John Dunstaple, measures 1-9.



Dunstaple's use of vocal range also aids the textual intelligibility. The range in *Quam Pulcra Es* appears muted in comparison to motets influenced by the French Ars Nova style. *Omnis / Habenti* (see Appendix 3 for the full score), is an anonymous English example of fourteenth-century Ars Nova polyphony, which I offer as a counter-example for comparison.[113] The triplum in *Omnis / Habenti* extends up to the C5 while the same voice in *Quam Pulcra Es* reaches only to the A4; the duplum reaches the A4 in *Omnis / Habenti* but only the E4 in *Quam Pulcra Es*; the tenors reach E4 and D4 respectively. Though the differences appear minor, they make a significant difference in terms of the vocal passaggio. Passaggio refers to the inflection

[112] This sample has been modified from the version appearing in Appendix 1. The C4 on beat 1 of measure 4 has been raised to avoid the augmented fourth otherwise created, following the guidelines of Musica Ficta. Bent and Silbiger, "Musica Ficta."

[113] *Omnis / Habenti* is connected to Bury St. Edmunds. Lisa Colton, "Making Sense of Omnis / Habenti," 221.

points between different vocal registers,[114] and the lowered range in the three voices of *Quam Pulcra Es* avoids the passaggios of the counter-tenor, tenor, and baritone voice types, the voices most likely to sing these three vocal lines. Keeping the respective vocal ranges below the passaggio limits the need for phonetic modification, making the words easier to understand. It is therefore possible that the Wycliffite complaints about 'high crying' explain the constraints placed by Dunstaple on the upper registers.

The most distinctive feature of the French motet is the use of different texts in each voice, as seen in the opening phrase of *Omnis / Habenti* (see Figure 4.). However, Dunstaple's motets do not always exhibit this feature. Many of his isorhythmic motets are polytextual, but "the known texts used by Dunstaple in his regular isorhythmic motets are exclusively hymns and sequences, which confines them to a narrower liturgical range than that of plainsong tenors."[115] His 'motets for various liturgical occasions'[116] on the other hand are all monotextual, which raises questions as to why these differ from his isorhythmic motets. *Quam Pulcra Es* offers a possible answer: unlike the texts commonly found in hymns and sequences, *Quam Pulcra Es* takes its text from *The Song of Solomon*, one of the Old Testament books of the Bible.[117] The text's status as holy writ offers an explanation as to why these liturgical motets avoided polytextuality: it makes the words less intelligible, flouting the Wycliffite belief in the biblical supremacy. The use of Latin in this motet does not contradict the Wycliffite stance on making holy writ accessible since it was likely composed for Bedford's household chapel. Aristocratic

[114] J. B. Steane, "Passaggio (iv)," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, 2001), accessed March 10, 2021. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O009487

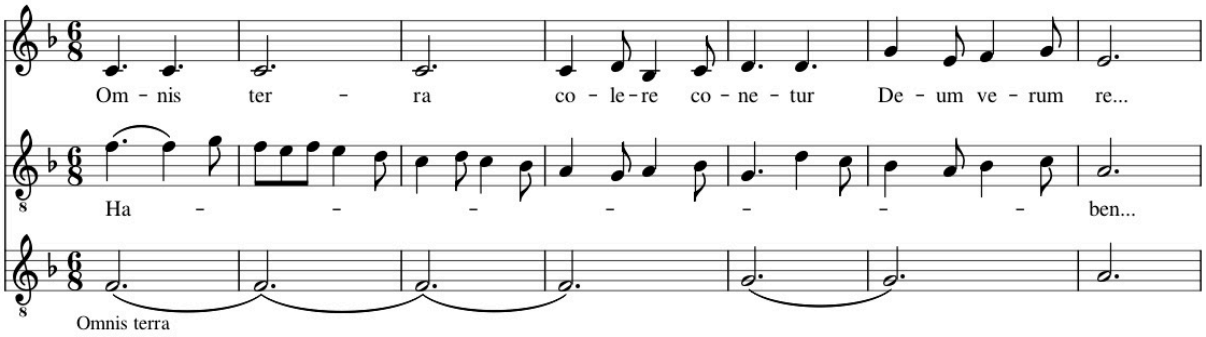
[115] Bent, *Dunstaple*, 62.

[116] This moniker is taken from Manfred Bukofzer ed., *John Dunstable: Complete Works*, Musica Britannica: A National Collection of Music, vol. VIII (London: Stainer and Bell, 1970), xii.

[117] Bent, *Dunstaple*, 40.

education included Latin in its curriculum;[118] therefore, Latin texts in music composed for aristocratic household chapels do not negate Wyclif's position.

Figure 4. Making Sense of Omnis / Habenti, Omnis / Habenti, Anonymous, measure 1-7.



Latin liturgical texts were an expectation within orthodox church music. However, the content of the text in *Quam Pulcra Es* deserves further examination. A textual analysis of *Quam Pulcra Es* offers a starting point for investigating concerns over sensuality, highlighting Dunstaple's cautious use of dissonance to minimize the effects of the text's sensuous and sexual content.

Quam pulcra es et quam decora,	How beautiful and how lovely,
Carissima in deliciis.	My most beloved in delights.
Statura tua assimilate est palme,	Your stature is like a palm tree,
Et uber atua botris.	And your breasts like clusters of grapes.
Caput tuum ut Carmelus,	Your head is like Mount Carmel,
Collum tuum sicut turris eburnean.	Your neck like a tower of ivory.
Veni, dilecte mi,	Come, my love,
Egrediamur in agrum,	Let us go into the field,
Et videamus si flores fructus parturierunt,	And see if the flowers give forth fruit,
Si floruerunt mamala Punica.	If the pomegranate blooms.
Ibi dabo tibi ubera mea.	There I will give my breasts to you.
Alleluia.	Alleluia.[119]

The text is a love song that focuses on physical aspects of romance: the first stanza, written in the male voice, provides an aesthetic description of his beloved's body, comparing it to items of

[118] Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English kings and aristocracy 1066-1530* (London: Methuen & Co., 1984), 145.

[119] Dennis Shrock ed., *Choral Scores* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 939.

beauty in nature. The list of similes emphasizes the comparative nature of the poetry, but also has the effect of creating distance between the male character and the object of his desire.[120] The constant references to disparate places and things imply that the character's thoughts are flittering back and forth between present and past, searching through memories for items to which he can compare the features he is attempting to describe. In contrast, the second stanza, written in the female voice, uses the metaphor of ripening fruit to imply a sexual encounter before explicating her intentions in the penultimate line. It refers singularly to the near future, the realm of events expected, but as yet undetermined. This heightens the drama and reorients the tone of the poem from one of reason to one of passion. The dichotomy between reason and passion fits historical connotations of gender that cast the male as reasonable and the female as passionate.[121] Reasonability was the desired trait, particularly in the context of chivalry and Christian values,[122] and so we can conceive of the first stanza as a perfect contemporaneous representation of love and the second stanza as an imperfect representation.

The sensual and dichotomized nature of the text possibly affected Dunstaple's use of vertical harmony in his composing of the music. Bent writes that Dunstaple's avoidance of 'florid complexities' allowed him to better control the consonances in his music,[123] but this does

[120] The distinction made between 'lover' and 'beloved' in the poetry supports this notion of the objectified female. Catherin Osborne has argued that 'lover' often identifies the subject while 'beloved' identifies the object. Catherine Osborne, "The Bow in the Clouds," in *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7.

[121] Female passion has been a troupe in Western literature for the majority of its history. The ancient Greeks believed the womb to be the dominant female organ, which manifested traits like lust, deceit, irrationality etc. Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr, "Introduction to the Series," in *Veronica Franco: Poems and Selected Letters*, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe, edited by Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret F. Rosenthal (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), xi. See also Herta Nagl-Docekal, "The Feminist Critique of Reason Revisited," *Hypatia* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 49.

[122] Chivalry was a social code of conduct that developed in the twelfth century. One of its central themes was the veneration of women in the context of courtly love. Women were placed on a pedestal to be venerated, but this also encouraged their objectification. Nigel Saul, "Chivalry and Women," in *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 262.

[123] Bent, *Dunstaple*, 18.

not explain the intention behind such control. By revisiting Boethius' conception of dissonance as a "harsh and unpleasant percussion of two sounds coming to the ear intermingled with each other,"[124] here representing imperfection, minimal dissonance could be construed as avoiding a charge of licentiousness on Dunstaple's part.[125] Since thirds and sixths have now been reframed as consonances[126] along with unisons, fourths, fifths, and octaves, dissonance is left to include seconds, sevenths, ninths, and tritones (augmented fourths and diminished fifths).[127] *Quam Pulcra Es* contains only nine vertical dissonances in its fifty-seven measures. In comparison, *Omnis / Habenti* contains eleven vertical dissonances in the first seven measures alone (see Figure 4.).[128] The 'small breaking' in the duplum, in conjunction with the static nature of the tenor creates a constant flip-flopping between consonance and dissonance, showing that *Omnis / Habenti* does not avoid dissonance in the same manner as *Quam Pulcra Es*.

Only one of the nine vertical dissonances in Dunstaple's setting appears in the first stanza; the other eight vertical dissonances emerge in the second, which begins in the music at measure 31. Boethius' definition of dissonance in the context of the dichotomy of male reasonability and female passion offers a possible explanation as to why the substantial majority of the dissonances appear in the second stanza. Though the concept of word painting with dissonance is usually associated with later genres such as the madrigal, Dunstaple's precise

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[124] A. M. S. Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 16.

[125] Dunstaple owned a copy of Boethius' *De Institutione Muscia*. We can therefore assume his familiarity with its contents. Colton, *Angel Song*, 153.

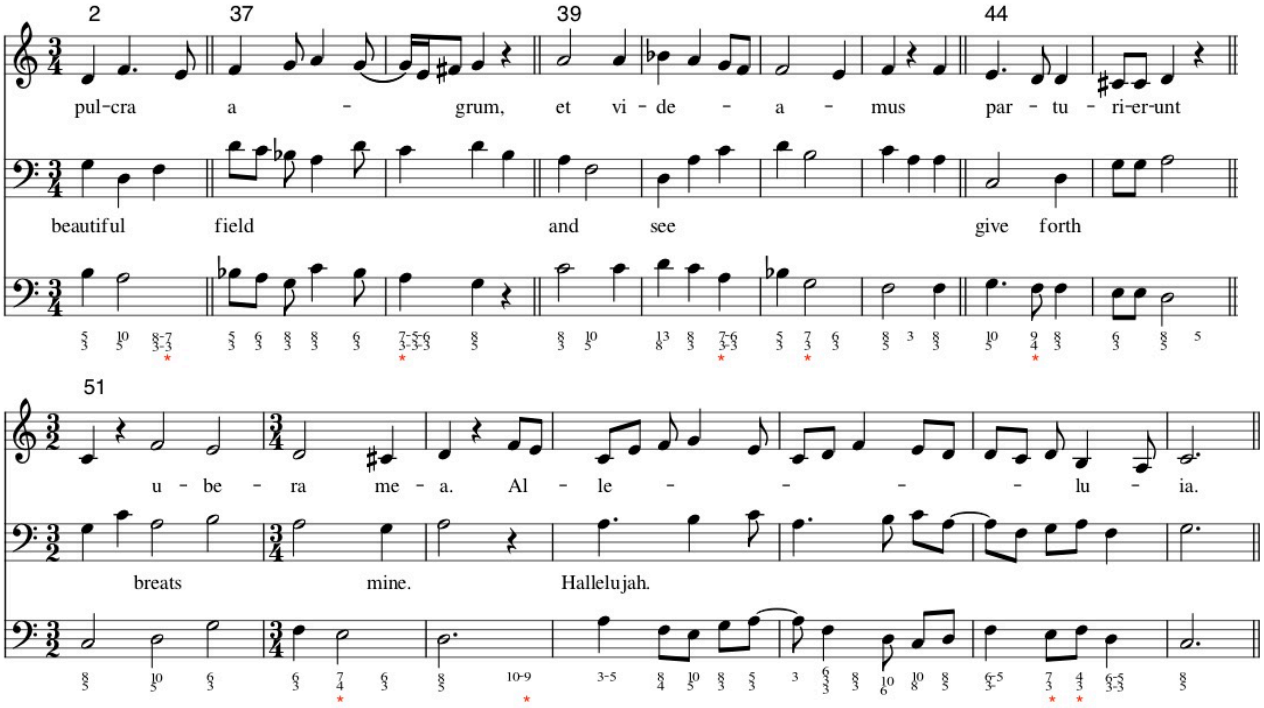
[126] Bent calls Dustaple's style 'pan-consonant.' Since his music is recognized for its abundant use of 6-3 chords, we can take her to mean that sixth and thirds should now be considered consonances. Margaret Bent, "Dunstaple, John," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, 2001), accessed March 8, 2021. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08331

[127] This precludes the augmented fourth in measure fifteen which is most likely an example of missing ficta and the augment fourths in measures 21, 28, 38, 45, and 53 which are the result of cadential leading tones created by ficta.

[128] This measure count corresponds to the number of measures used by the duplum for its first syllable of text.

usage of dissonance merits an investigation. The 7-3 chord in measure 2 (see Figure 5.), the only vertical dissonance in verse one, appears on ‘pulcra’ (beautiful), perhaps a nod to the sensuousness of the objectified female. The dissonance comes on the latter half of beat 3, a weak position that would not draw much attention, suggesting that, though the male character has a moment of weakness, it quickly fades. The second vertical dissonance, another 7-3, appears on the down beat of measure 38, the strong beat, implying a more important function. ‘Agrum’ (field) may not at first appear as something to be sensualized, but it is the location of the amorous triste suggested by the female. Rather than colouring a word already infused with sensuousness, Dunstaple directs the listener’s attention to the agrum’s implicit poetic function. He does the same thing with the 9-4 on ‘parturierunt’ (give forth) in measure 44; one might expect the dissonance to appear on ‘fructus’ (fruit) since this term metaphorically describes the result of copulation, but ‘parturierunt’ is the active agent in the phrase, justifying it recipiency of the dissonant chord. In measures 39-42, Dunstaple stretches ‘videamus’ (see) over multiple beats while using two 7-3 chords. The word’s elongation in conjunction with the two dissonances suggests that Dunstaple is conceiving of this as the sexual act itself. The 7-4 chord in measure 52 sounds distinctive as it creates the effect of a pre-cadential suspension which pulls the music towards the cadence. This occurs at the moment the female character is the most sexually explicit; she is offering ‘ubera mea’ (my breasts) to the male as part of the proposed liaison, and the directionality created by the 7-4 chord seems designed to entice said male. Dunstaple saves the crunchiest vertical dissonances for the ‘Allelulia,’ which takes on a different meaning with the 7-3 - 4-3 in measure 56, immediately following ‘ubera mea.’

Figure 5. Vertical dissonances in JD 44, Quam Pulcra Es, John Dunstaple.



The confluence of dissonances and inferences of female sexuality indicate that Dunstaple was using dissonances in a manner congruent to Boethius' definition, but this does not explain why the number of dissonances is so low. The overt sensuousness of the text offers a considerable opportunity for a composer using dissonance to highlight the problematic representations of sexual passion. With a clear opportunity for dissonance presented within the text alongside the historical precedent for its more frequent usage as observed in *Omnis / Habenti*, why does Dunstaple hold back? It seems possible that, in light of Bedford's potential Wycliffite sympathies, Dunstaple was attempting to avoid a charge of sensuality in his music. The limited dissonances and the abundance of 6-3 consonances - this includes chords like 10-6 which adds an octave to the third - creates a sweet tone, making it unlikely that one would garner the true content of the poetry from the harmony alone. *Quam Pulcra Es* could therefore be construed as an attempt to balance Boethian dissonance with the Wycliffite ideal that liturgical

music should inspire only spiritual devotion and avoid problems related to sensuality or distraction. Moreover, avoiding dissonance is a hallmark of the contenance angloise style. It is conceivable that this characteristic played a part in the harmonic changes recognized during the early-fifteenth century. This would indicate a causal link between Wycliffite musical criticism and the contenance angloise – a hypothesis supported by this case study and ripe for further investigation.

Conclusion

Scholars in the field of musicology have overlooked Wycliffite musical commentaries from the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries. The movement's pervasiveness throughout the English population suggests that it played a role in molding contemporaneous English culture, and the musical criticisms shown throughout this thesis provide a wealth of samples from which to begin constructing more specific hypotheses. Prior work on the intersection of Wycliffism and music has treated its musical criticisms as consistent and restrictive throughout, leaving little room for discussion about the tangible effects of Wycliffism on English compositional practices. However, my chronological survey demonstrates the historical development of the Wycliffite stance and highlights the opportunities it created in the early-fifteenth century with the compromise seen in tracts like *The Lanterne of Liȝt*. Bowers' claim that Wycliffism inspired a counterreaction in English musical practice, while demonstrably true, does not tell the complete story when criticisms about cost are separated from directly musical concerns. While the size of English choral institutions grew following the revolutionary period of Lollardy, the music written for these choirs by composers like John Dunstaple exemplified new forms of composition that addressed concerns over intelligibility, distraction, and sensuality. These concerns, while often entangled in Wycliffite tracts, have distinct functions within compositional problem solving that manifest in textual, rhythmic, and harmonic solutions akin to the changes observed in the contenance angloise. Though a causal link remains speculative, the survey of Wycliffite texts presented in this thesis offers an impetus for further musicological inquiry.

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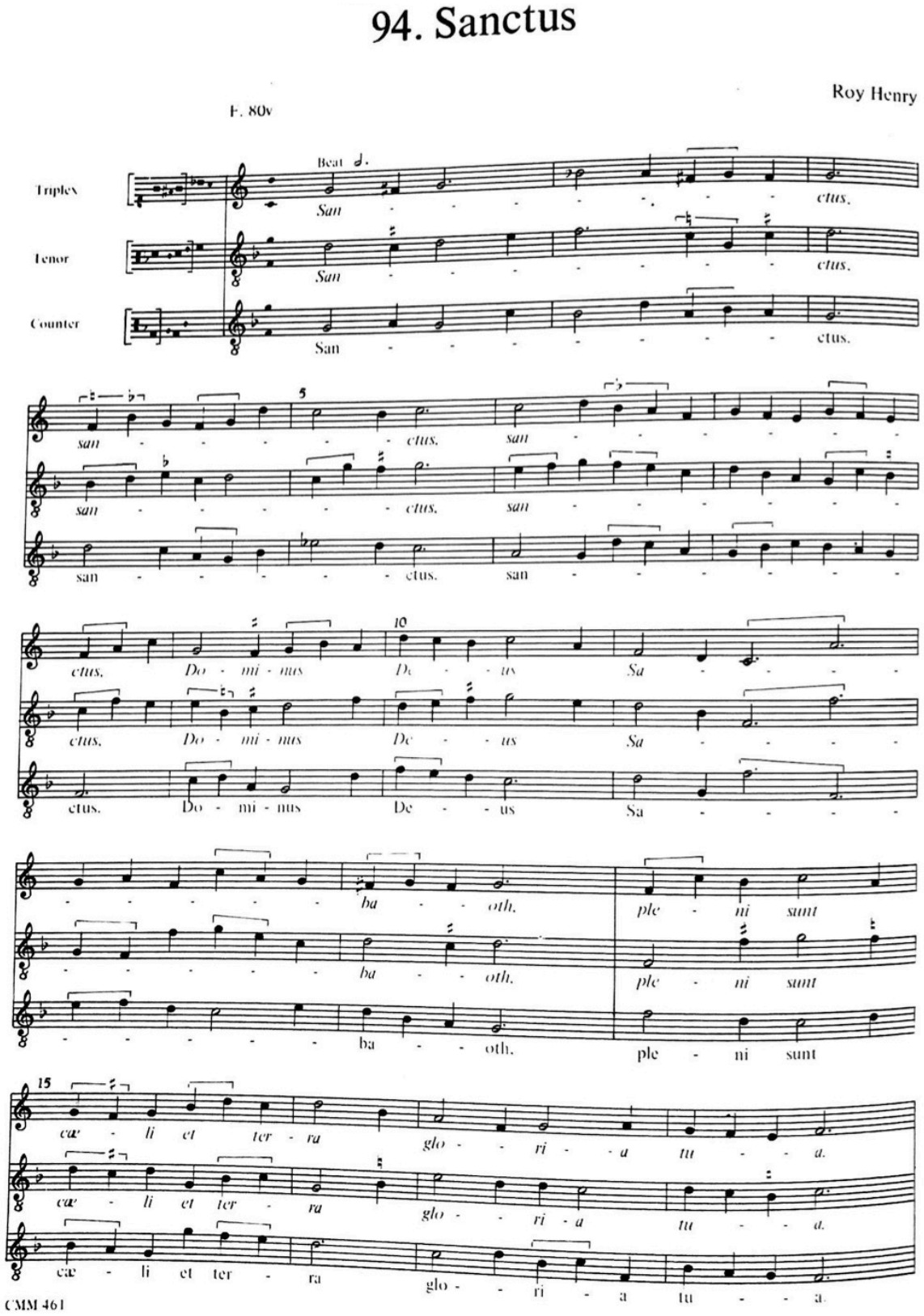
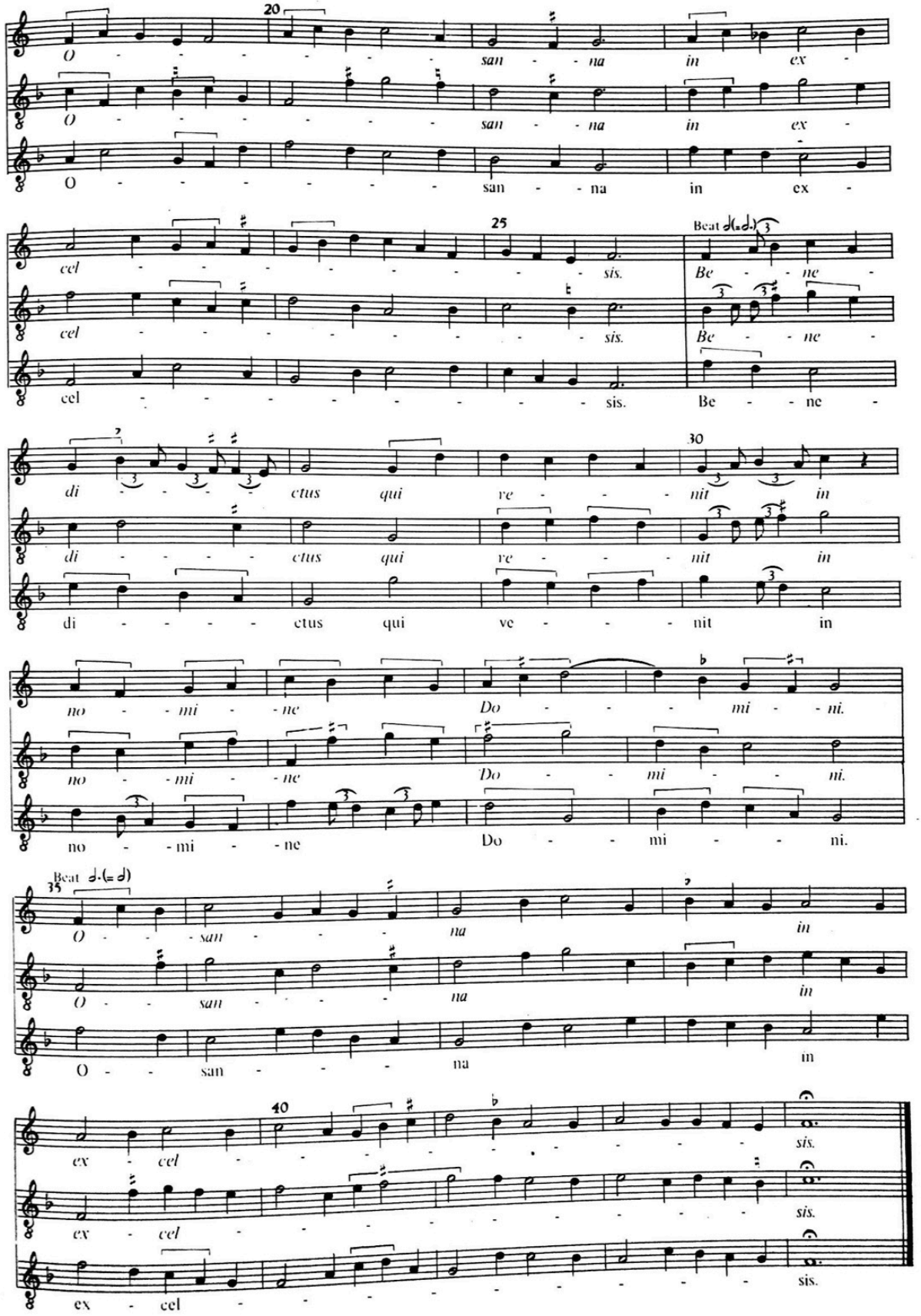
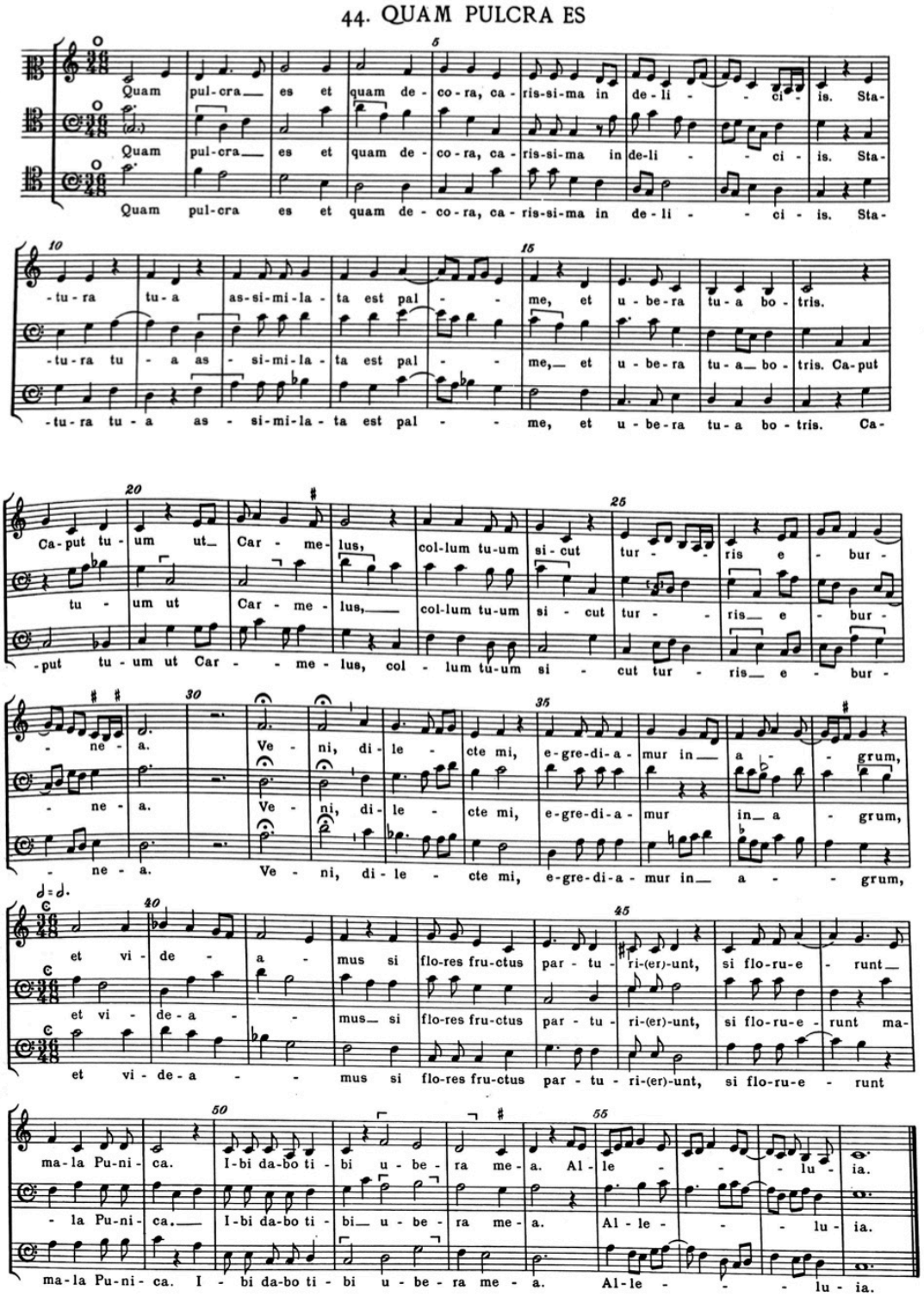
Appendix 1


94. Sanctus
Roy Henry
F. 80v
Triplex
Tenor
Counter
Beat
San
ctus.
san
Do - mi - nus
De - us
Sa
ba - oth.
ple - ni sunt
cæ - li et ter - ra
glo - ri - a tu - a.
CMM 461



1 Sanctus - Margaret Bent and Andrew Hughes, eds., The Old Hall Manuscript, vol 2 (American Institute of Musicology, 1969-1973), 312-313.

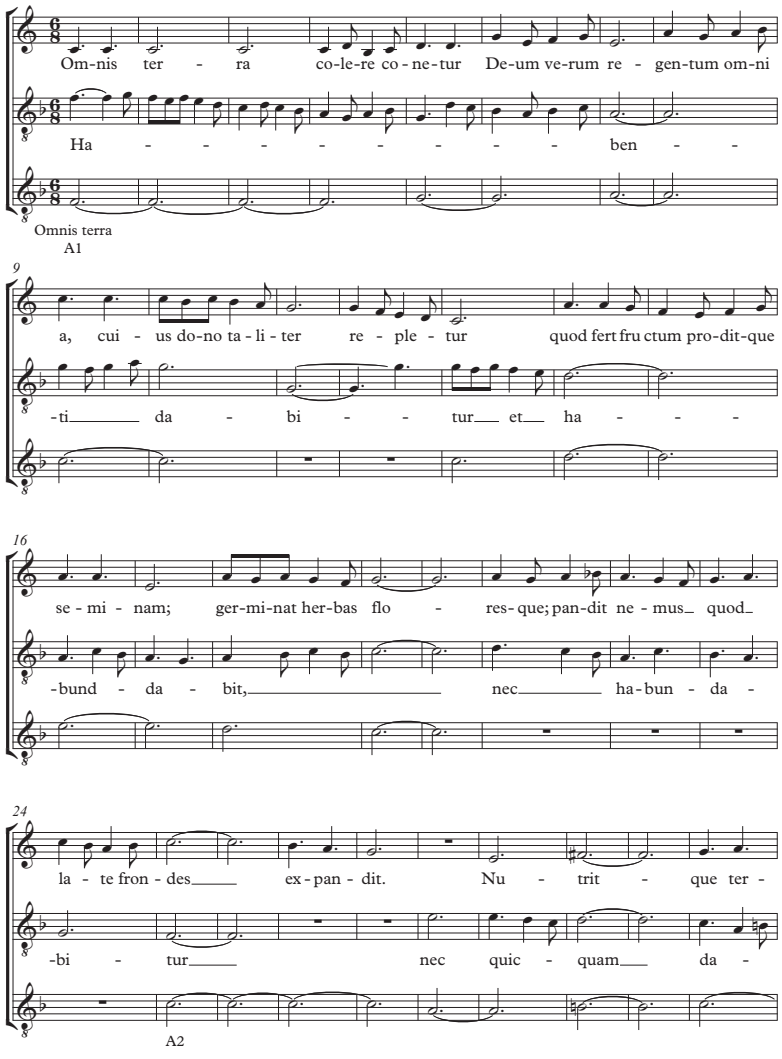
Appendix 2

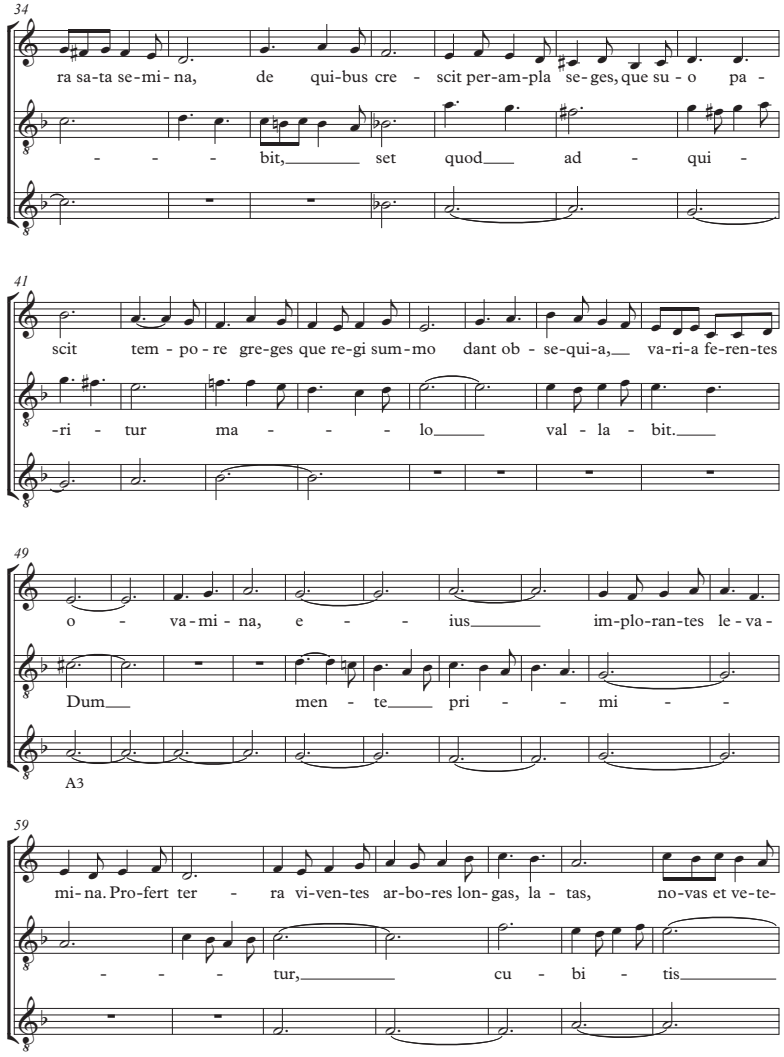


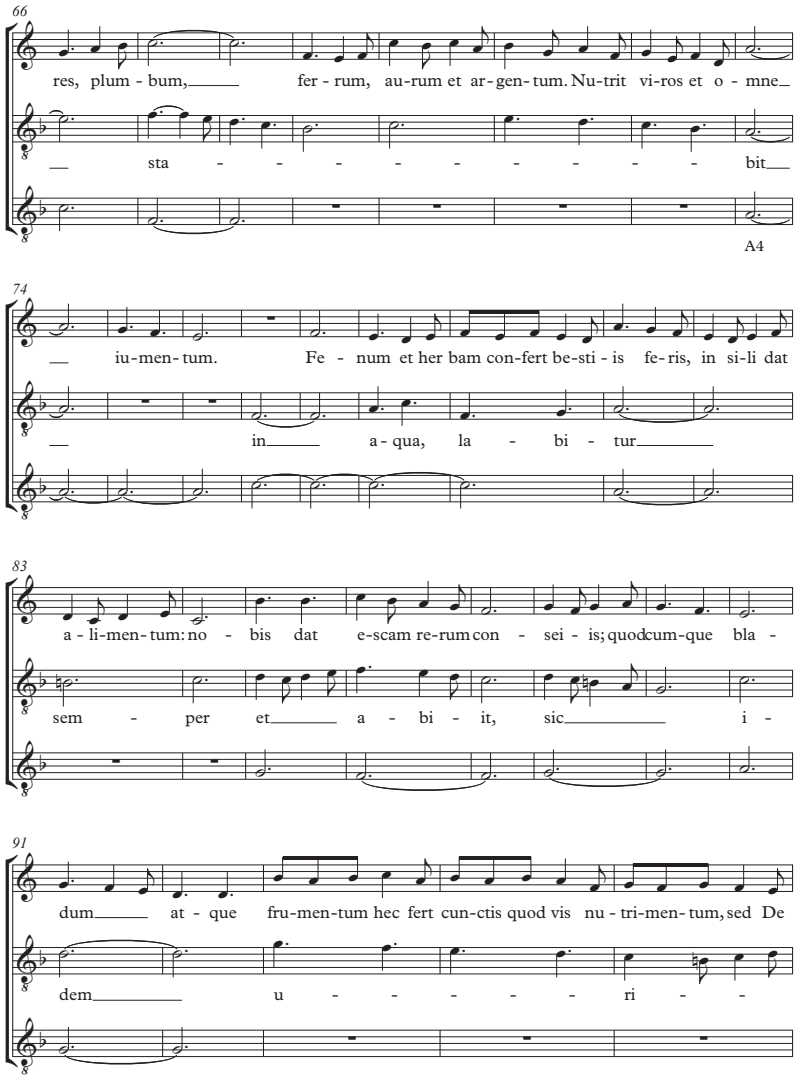
2 - *Quam Pulcra Es - Manfred F. Bukofzer, ed., John Dunstaple: Complete Works. Musica Britannica: A National Collection of Music, vol. VIII (London: Stainer and Bell, 1970), 112-113.*

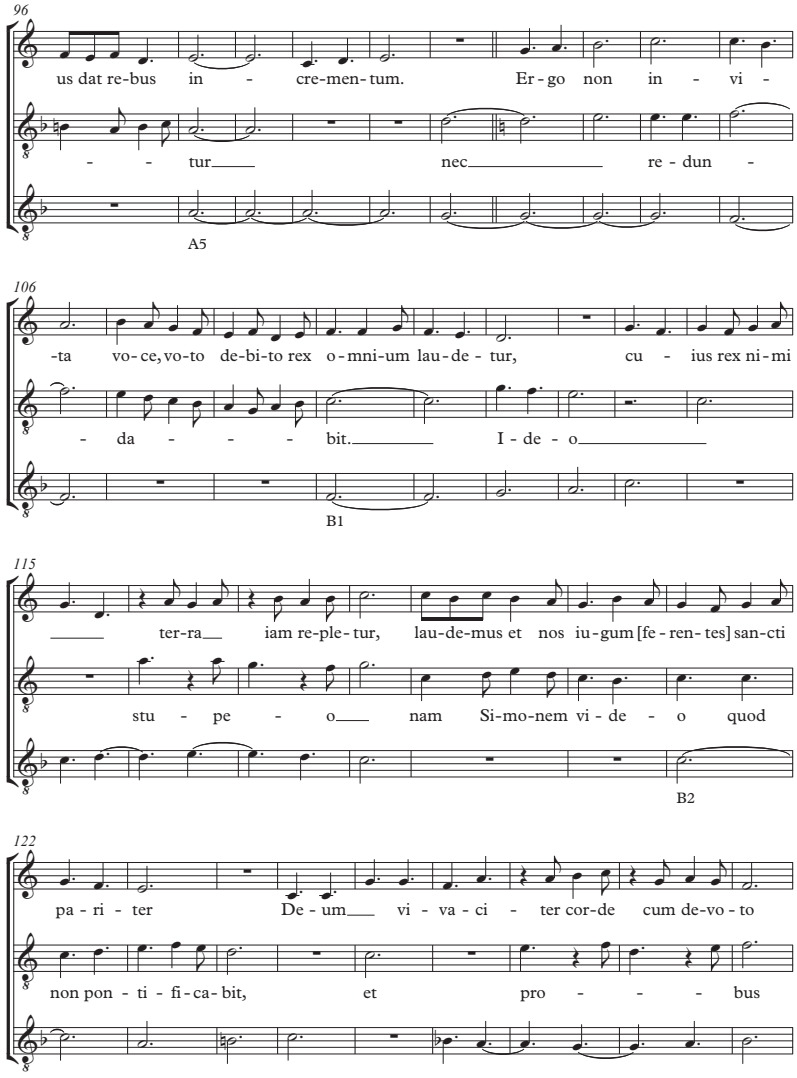
Appendix 3

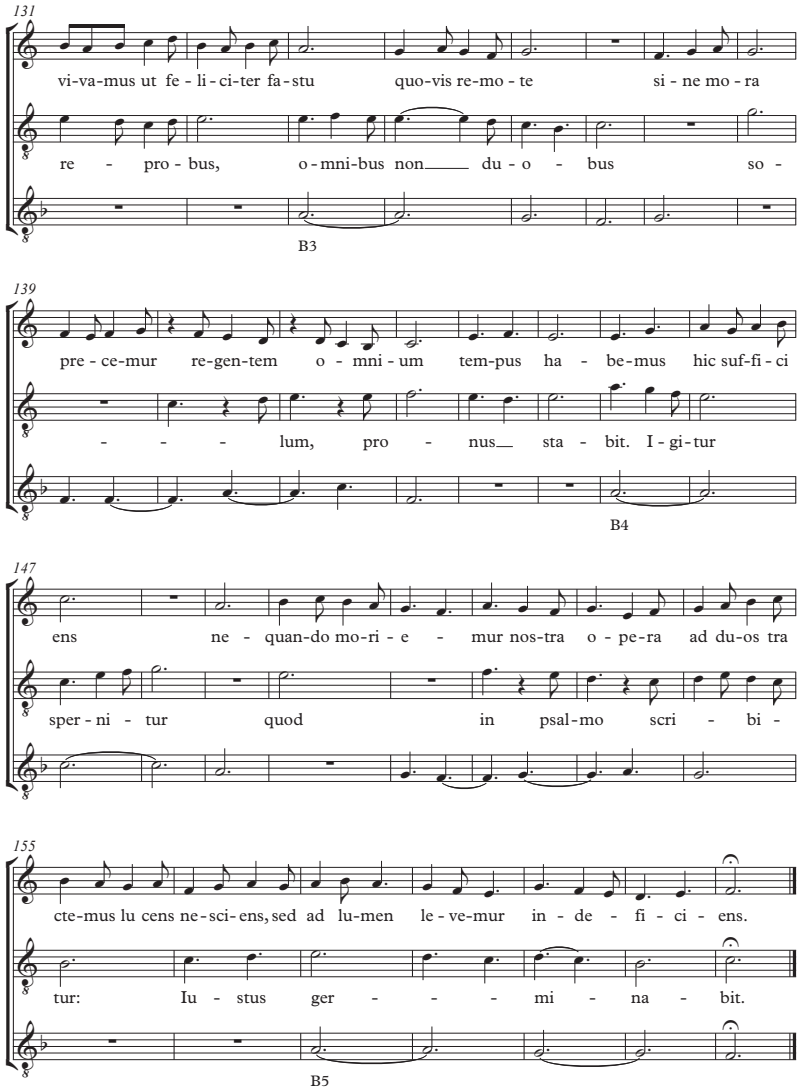
B. Anonymous, *Omnis / Habenti* (ed. Lisa Colton)




34
ra sa-ta se-mi-na, de qui-bus cre - scit per-am-pla se-ges, que su - o pa -
- - - bit, set quod ad - qui -
41
scit tem - po - re gre-ges que re-gi sum-mo dant ob - se-qui-a, va-ri-a fe-ren-tes
-ri - tur ma - - - lo val - la - bit.
49
o - va-mi-na, e - - ius im-plo-ran-tes le - va -
Dum men - te pri - - mi - -
A3
59
mi-na. Pro-fert ter - ra vi-ven-tes ar-bo-res lon-gas, la - tas, no-vas et ve-te-
- - - tur, cu - bi - tis


66
res, plum - bum, fer - rum, au-rum et ar-gen-tum. Nu-trit vi-ros et o - mne
sta - - - - - - - - - bit
A4
74
iu-men-tum. Fe - num et her bam con-fert be-sti - is fe-ris, in si-li dat
in a - qua, la - bi - tur
83
a - li-men-tum: no - bis dat e-scam re-rum con - sei - is; quodcum-que bla -
sem - per et a - bi - it, sic i -
91
dum at - que fru-men-tum hec fert cun-ctis quod vis nu - tri-men-tum, sed De
dem u - - - - - ri - -


96
us dat re-bus in - cre-men-tum. Er-go non in - vi -
- - tur nec re - dun -
A5
106
-ta vo-ce, vo-to de-bi-to rex o-mni-um lau-de - tur, cu - ius rex ni-mi
- da - - - bit. I - de - o
B1
115
ter-ra iam re-ple-tur, lau-de-mus et nos iu-gum [fe-ren-tes] san-cti
stu - pe - o nam Si-mo-nem vi - de - o quod
B2
122
pa - ri - ter De - um vi - va - ci - ter cor-de cum de-vo - to
non pon - ti - fi - ca - bit, et pro - - - bus



3 Lisa Colton, "Making Sense of Omnis / Habenti: An Ars Nova Motet in England," in Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Christopher Page, eds. Tess Knighton and David Skinner (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2020), 242-246.