

Analysis of Josquin Desprez' *Missa Pange Lingua: Kyrie*

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To start off, the *Kyrie* from Josquin Desprez' *Missa Pange Lingua* has three distinct, yet connected sections. I will be analyzing each section as its own entity while realizing elements that are similar to all three that go into creating the cohesive piece that we now have.

Section I, labeled *Kyrie I*, is set to the text of *kyrie eleison* and it is set neumatically and syllabically. The special rhythmic contour includes some syncopation, dotted quarter notes followed by eighths as well as sixteenth-note imitative patterns. The time signature is 3/2. I feel the harmonic rhythm is every dotted whole note or in this case, by measure. The mode of this first section of the *Kyrie* begins in phrygian, then the tonal center switches at measure 11 from E to C, indicating a switch to ionian mode. The cadence of this *Kyrie I* section feels like a half cadence in the ionian mode. We also see some similarities between the vocal parts as far as passages, motifs, and polyphony are concerned as well. The initial motif is started by the tenor with three half notes followed by a second measure of a whole note followed by two quarters, a third measure of a quarter note followed by a half note, followed by two eighth notes and a dotted quarter followed by an eighth, with a fourth measure of a quarter note followed by a dotted quarter note and an eighth, and a half note and a quarter note. This motif is started by the tenors and is echoed by the sopranos in measure five. The altus and bassus also have an echoed motif. This second motif starts in the bassus in measure two and consists of three measures, the first consisting of three half notes, a second measure of a whole note followed by a dotted quarter and an eighth, and a third measure of four quarter notes followed by a half note. This particular motif is then echoed in the altus at their initial entrance in measure six. Measures twelve through 15 are very polyphonic throughout the voices with the imitative sixteenth-note runs.

Section two labeled *Christe* is also set pneumatically and syllabically. The time signature for this section is cut time. The harmonic rhythm is a whole note, or every measure. The mode of this section is hypodorian. It switches from the ionian mode to dorian in measure 49 and has a final cadence feel at measure 52. The rhythmic contour is less elaborate than the *Kyrie I* section featuring only a few dotted rhythms, sixteenth-note runs, and little syncopation. There are some repeated motifs in this section as there were in the *Kyrie I*. The initial motif begins on C and is started by the bassus at measure one, and is echoed by the altus at measure three. There is a second motif with the same rhythm that is seen in the bassus and altus but starts on a g and is echoed by the tenor and superius. The rhythm of this motif is seven measures. The first measure consists of a whole note, the second measure of two half notes with the second tied to a quarter in the third measure followed by two eighth notes and a half, the fourth measure consisting of a whole note tied to a half note in the fifth measure followed by another half, the sixth measure consisting of two half notes with the second tied again to a quarter note followed by two eighth notes and two quarter notes with the second of the two tied to four sixteenth-notes in the seventh measure followed by a half note.

The third and last section of Desprez' *Kyrie* from *Missa Pange Lingua* is titled *Kyrie II*. Similarly to the first section, the time signature is 3/2, it is set neumatically and syllabically, and the harmonic rhythm is a dotted half note, or every measure. This movement clearly is the most syncopated and rhythmic out of the three and feels very canonic. This section begins in the ionian/ hypodorian mode then switches to aeolian/hypodorian on beat three of measure 67 where the altus ends on the new tonal center of a, instead of c. The initial motif of the soprano at measure 53 is dotted half, quarter, half, dotted quarter, eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, eighth and is echoed in the tenor at 57. The start of the altus motif of dotted half, quarter, half, followed by

dotted quarter, eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, eighth, quarter, followed by quarter, dotted quarter, eighth, quarter at measure 54 is echoed by the bassus at measure 58. We can also see a very nice descending sequence in the sopranos and tenor parts in measures 60-64 and then a pattern of contrary motion between those two parts at measures 65-67, leading to the half cadence in the aeolian mode.