Fawkyner - Gaude virgo salutata

Transcribed and edited by Bert Schreuder from https://imslp.org/wiki/Eton_Choirbook_(Various), part 5, starting on page 14. Original pitch, note values halved. Original clefs: G2, C2, C4, C4, F4.









































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This is one of two pieces by Fawkyner which survived the ages in the Eton Choirbook. The other is 'Gaude virgo sine spina', of which there is an edition on CPDL by Jason Smart. A third piece by Fawkyner in the book, a six-part 'Salve regina vas mundicie' is completely lost.

You can find the facsimile of 'Gaude virgo salutata' on the DIAMM site, or on <u>https://imslp.org/wiki/Eton_Choirbook_(Various)</u>, part 5, starting on page 14.

We are not sure what Fawkyner's Christian name was; it could have been Richard or John; see <u>https://www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Fawkyner</u>, Richard might be the best bet.

Both surviving pieces are rather ecstatic works, requiring a lot of stamina from the singers.

Some remarkable traits of 'Gaude virgo salutata'

The bass part has (bottom-)Bb's at the beginning of each stave, which is why I used it as a key signature. The medius (alto) also has many (top-)Bb's at the beginning of the stave, but the part rarely goes that high, so most of the time it doesn't make much difference. Note: the flat only applies to that pitch; the bottom B is not affected by it. The other voices have B-naturals most of the time, so there are many cross relations, though (almost) never simultaneous.

A technique Fawkyner uses regularly is parallel motion between the outer voices, which especially in the tutti's has a sweeping effect:



At the end of the section of the previous example a magical moment occurs:



The cross-relation between F# and F is in itself not unusual, but the fact that the F enters while the bass sings a G, is. A very delicate moment.

A true miracle in my view is the 'Amen'. The polyphony is very dense, with all parts busyly hopping about, including the bass, producing quickly moving harmonies, until in bar 276 the bass becomes more regular, and the tenor reaches its final long notes. This is bar 268 to 275:



This is polyphony not as a combination of melodies, but more as a mosaic or entanglement of melodic motifs and syncopated notes. The voices are dancing around within moving harmonies, seemingly independent of each other: there is no imitation, with the possible exception of the dotted motif in bar 271 in bass, T1 and S. Occasionally voices do sometimes work together in parallel motion, making them briefly dominate the texture: for instance bar 267 T1 and T2:



The same is true for bars 269-270, where soprano and bass have the same rhythm, partly parallel, but after that the bass follows his own bumpy path. The only part which can be perceived as having a melodic character is the soprano, being less jumpy than the others. Actually, T1 is also quite melodic, having more stepwise motion than leaps, but as it is in the middle of the turmoil, that is difficult to hear.

This 'Amen' consists of three segments:

The first is bar 265-270, with a semiminim rhythm as the dominant motif. The soprano starts, joined in bar 266 in parallel by the bass, which together with T2 is still very regular, while T1 fills in the harmonic gaps; next T1 and 2 have their brief parallel semiminims mentioned earlier; then in bar 268 the bass gets jumpy, but from the 3d beat moves together with the soprano, thus producing some audible coherence.
The second segment is in bars 271-275: this is the most irregular bit. The bass introduces a dotted motif which is then taken up by T1 and S, while the tenor starts a sequentially rising motif, which seems intended as a backbone, though it's so full of syncopation (as all the parts are), that it doesn't really stand out as an

anchor of stability.

3. The last is 276-end, where the tenor quietly descends to its final, where the bass temporarily moves in regular semibreves, if only for six beats, after which it joins the other parts in dancing around the tenor in syncopation, which finally resolves in the final bar.

I wonder how the composer conceived this: did he build it up part by part, but with a vague awareness of the overall moving harmonies he wanted to achieve? The fact that the tenor has this syncopated sequence from bar 270 does suggests that he did build it up, as it is very unlikely that working from an overall sound of independently moving parts, he would accidentally have produced this sequence. So: probably tenor first, then soprano and bass and possibly also T1, and finally the alto, being the least melodic of the four top-voices, jumping up and down to fill the harmonic gaps and to avoid parallels. It is generally assumed that composers of Renaissance music did not use scores while composing: they could imagine the music and the parts in their head. Nonetheless I wonder whether Fawkyner may have used a score format (which was known) on his cartella (slate) to pull this off, as the complexitiy of this 'Amen' is astonishing, as is the fact that notwithstanding this complexity it does have a sense of direction.

There are some harmonic liberties here, like 7th-chords and added 6ths, but all quickly passing.

Cantus Firmus

The tenor is based on the chant "Martinus Abrahae sinu laetus", which is mainly sung in the tutti's:



Accidentals

Notation of flats and sharps is quite precise in the Eton Choirbook. Generally it seems that a b or # remains valid for the rest of the stave, until it is corrected by the other sign, or possibly by a longer group of rests or a section-barline. Nonetheless some editorial corrections above the notes were necessary. No leading notes at cadences have been suggested; whether or not the music benefits from them is arguable. Summarizing:

- a b or \$ before a note is in the manuscript, either just before it, or a bit earlier in the same stave. In the transcription the repair sign # ocurring in the choirbook before B (or E) is indicated, even if it is unnecessary in modern notation, as the validity of the earlier b is limited to a bar.
- a b or \$\u03c4 in parenthesis before a note means that it occurs substantially earlier in the stave, but does still make sense;

• a b or \$\$ above a note is editorial. When in parenthesis, they are redundant in modern notation; it means that a sign occurring earlier in the stave actually could still apply, but has been editorially corrected.

Text underlay

When I transcribed Walter Lambe's 'O Maria plena gratia' I had two sources at my disposal: both the Eton Choirbook (though incomplete) and the Lambeth Choirbook. I noticed that the text underlay perhaps looks precise, but there were quite a few differences. So I decided that taking some considered liberties is a possibility, and so I did.

The first liberty has to do with a peculiarity of text underlay in the Eton Choirbook that looks like this:



The '-um' of 'celestium' is placed under the short notes before the breve, instead of under the breve. This happens many, many times, also with even shorter notes. Sometimes it seems clear there wasn't enough room: the syllable would have come too close to the first syllable of the next line, but many times that isn't the case. To modern ears it makes more sense to place the final syllable of a line on the final note. Perhaps that's what they did anyway? And perhaps not...

Nonetheless, that is a liberty I took in many instances. these are not indicated by italics. Other liberties concern enhancing the unity between the parts. From bar 126 to 138 the soprano is substantially behind the other voices with the text. It made me wonder: was this deliberately done by the composer, and if so, why? As I could not find an answer to the last question, I provided an alternative below the original underlay, which I feel makes the music sound a bit more coherent. The same goes for T1 in bars 181 to 185. Besides these longer bits there are also some incidental deviations from the original text underlay. They are all in italics. Sections for full choir have bold text (black in the source), reduced sections have regular text (red in the source, except for 'haberes perpetuam' in the soprano, where the scribe apparently forgot to change colour). Ligatures were generally left unbroken, except in the tenor-part in bars 64-88, with too many syllables under the ligatures and notes, despite the fact that the text is incomplete.

Finally, speaking about text being incomplete: in bar 260 the soprano seems to perish halfway through the word 'pereamus', stopping after 'pere...' Perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek joke?

Bert Schreuder