YORK EARLY MUSIC PRESS

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

(*c*.1562–1621)

Four Passiontide motets
from *Cantiones sacrae* (1619)

O sacrum convivium
Vide homo
Videte manus meas
O quam beata lancea

(SA/TTTB)

Edited by Peter Seymour

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Introduction

As with so many musicians of the time, very little is known of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck's early life. He seems to have been born in Deventer, probably in 1562 and to have died in Amsterdam in 1621. Just after the time of his birth, his father, Peter Swybbertszoon was appointed organist at the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam; Peter's son and grandson (Dirck) succeeded him, giving an almost unbroken line of organists there for two years short of a century. Jan Pieterszoon's first teacher was probably his father, but Peter died when his son was 11 years old and Jan succeeded him at the Oude Kerk in his middle teenage years, somewhere between 1577 and 1580. Jan Pieterszoon apparently never left the Low Countries and even restricted his absences from Amsterdam to a few days. His main task at the Oude Kerk was to provide an hour's music twice a day; the organ was considered a secular instrument by the Calvinists but his employers, the city council, did not share this view and he enjoyed considerable fame (and esteem from his employers) for his improvisations at the organ or harpsichord, becoming known as the 'Orpheus of Amsterdam'. He also acquired a substantial reputation as a keyboard teacher not only locally but as far afield as Hamburg where his influence can be traced through to the seventeenth-century north German organ school which in turn influenced J.S. Bach.

As a composer he is the last and most significant composer of the Netherlands school, one which compares favourably with those in Spain, Italy, England and Bavaria at that time. His surviving vocal music comprises 244 vocal works: 33 chansons, 19 madrigals, 39 motets and 153 psalm settings. The sacred vocal compositions were not written to serve a liturgical function and his largest collection, a polyphonic psalter set to French texts, was probably intended for private use amongst members of the local catholic bourgeoisie who had a preference for the French language. By contrast, the *Cantiones sacrae*, published in 1619, takes texts (mainly) from the Catholic Latin liturgy and employ some of the latest musical techniques of the time. Sweelinck eschews any use of cantus firmus (which had been an important element of his psalm settings), employing some chromaticism and providing a so-called *bassus continuus* although this is much more of an *organo seguente*. Of the 37 motets in this collection, 14 have closing sections to the word 'Alleluia'; these codas show a considerable imagination ranging from the ecstatic to the mystical according to the preceding text.

Performance Information

Transposition
Many of the motets were published in high clefs and have been transposed here in accordance with our current understanding with regard to how these combinations should be performed[1].

Pitch
In the latter part of the sixteenth century various pitches were in regular use. Many organs were tuned a semitone sharp (ie a´= 464 Hz) of modern concert pitch which was the most common pitch (referred to as *mezzo punto)* for wind instruments such as cornett. However, it was not uncommon for organists to transpose down a tone when performing only with singers (or perhaps with string instruments which would be tuned down as necessary); this lower pitch, a semitone below modern concert pitch was called *tuono corista.* This edition presents the music at a (transposed) pitch which avoids remote key signatures. Zarlino, in his *Dimostrationi harmoniche* (Venice, 1571), indicates the popularity of quarter- or sixth-comma mean-tone temperament and this certainly works well in Sweelinck's settings.

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[1] For a fuller discussion see Barbieri, P (2001) 'Chiavette' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* ed. Stanley Sadie, V: 597-600. London: Macmillan.

Scoring

The motets in *Cantiones sacrae* are all scored for five voices, sometimes with two sopranos, and otherwise with one soprano part and with two tenors as here. In this collection the range of the Altus part is probably best suited to a tenor, but may be allocated to a low alto or to a combination of the two. If the motets were intended for private use then performing numbers would have varied according to the number of singers available; the motets are suitable therefore for any combination from solo voices to chamber choir.

Pronouncing the Latin texts of early seventeenth-century choral music from the Low Countries (Dr Alison Wray, Cardiff University, October 2002)

The Low Countries in Sweelinck's day were experiencing political and cultural influence from several quarters. This could mean that there was more than one prevailing pronunciation for Latin. As elsewhere, however, the default 'vernacular' pronunciation would have re-established itself whenever any other dominating influence weakened. The principle of a vernacular pronunciation is that the singers apply the letter-to-sound correspondences of their own language to the Latin text. This means that the prerequisite starting place for a reconstruction would be ensuring that one's singers have a suitable command of, at least, modern Dutch phonology. This is probably a tall order, but, for the really eager, a Dutch native speaker might be able to advise, provided he or she has not been 'contaminated' by learning Latin in school or a Dutch choir, where non-vernacular rules may have been imposed.

In the absence of such help, one option is to use a few features to give a hint of the Dutch pronunciation. It should be emphasised though, that this constitutes a definite compromise, and it may lead to problems of uniformity, as other sounds try to adjust to the outline patterns. Introducing even a skeletal pronunciation like this needs to be handled with care, and sufficient time should be dedicated to helping the singers become accustomed to it. Otherwise, it may detract from the interpretation of the music.

The following suggestions should be read in conjunction with a guide to the International Phonetic Alphabet, as some of the symbols do not have the same sounds as the English letters they resemble (e.g. *c*, *j*, *y*.)
1. Pronounce all of consonants and vowels as in Italianate (choral) Latin except those listed below, but do not attempt to adopt a bright Italianate tone. The somewhat duller tone of normal spoken English is more appropriate.
2. Use the sound [c] instead of the Italianate [tʃ] in the following contexts: (a) *coeli* and its cognates, (b) words with *ce*, *ci*, *sce* and *sci*, (c) words with *ti* followed by a vowel. The sound [c] is approximately the same as pronouncing [t] and [j] at the same time.
3. Use the voiced equivalent of [c], which is [ɟ], instead of Italianate [dʒ] in words beginning with *ge* and *gi*. The sound [ɟ] is approximately the same as pronouncing [d] and [j] at the same time.
4. Replace Italianate [u] with the sound [y] (equivalent to German *ü*), wherever the letter *u* appears.

A legitimate alternative is to use modern Italianate 'choral' pronunciation. Although one runs the risk of losing linguistic features that may make a difference to the sound of the music as a whole, this pronunciation has the advantages of being easy for the singers and having linguistic integrity (which a poor attempt at Dutch Latin may not). As such, it provides a firm and reliable platform from which to launch the music, and, by virtue of long precedent, represents a genuine and traditional solution, even if it is not historically 'authentic'.

Editorial Procedure

Variant readings and any problems of clarity in the printed source are included in the Commentary.

Clefs are modernised where necessary but original designations are indicated in the prefatory information.

Original time signatures, note values and original key signatures are indicated in the prefatory information or above the stave.

Accidentals have been modernised; redundant accidentals have been omitted.

Editorial suggestions for accidentals based on rules of *musica ficta* appear above the stave.

Precautionary accidentals appear in round brackets.

Original bar lines at the end of sections have been retained; otherwise, bar lines are editorial.

Rhythmic notation has been standardised and presented with modern beaming.

Spelling and punctuation have been modernised without comment.

Ligatures are indicated by a square bracket above the stave.

Source

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France: Res. Vm[1]. 58

> *Cantiones sacrum cum basso continuo ad organum quinque vocum* (Antwerp: Phalèse, 1619) in six partbooks.

Editorial Commentary

Vide homo
bar 30	bt 1,2	Bassus continuus 65 figuring appears on beat 2
bar 73	bt 3	Bassus continuus 65 figuring

Videte manus meas
bar 16	bt 3,4	Altus f^1-g^1
bar 32	bts 2	Bassus continuus figuring has sharp

O quam beata lancea
bar 24	bt 2	Quintus has g^2-e^2-g^2
bar 25	bt 1	Bassus continuus 65 figuring

Translations
O sacrum convivium   *Antiphon ad Magnificat in II Vespers in Festo Corporis Christo*
O sacred banquet, in which Christ is consumed, the memorial of his passion is recalled, the soul is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given to us. Alleluia.

Vide homo   (after a 13th century poem by Philippe de Greve)
Behold, O man, the things which I suffer for you; I call to you, I who die for you: behold the agonies with which I am afflicted, behold the nails with which I am pierced. There is no pain like the pain of my crucifixion, but although the external pain is so great, the pain within me is yet more grievous when I find you, O man, so ungrateful.

Videte manus meas   (from Luke 24:39)
See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Alleluia.

O quam beata lancea   (source unknown)
O how blessed that spear, O how blessed those nails, which feared to enter the limbs of Christ. O if I were to stand in the place of that spear, I should wish never to leave the side of Christ, but I should say: this is my rest for ever and ever, I shall dwell here, because this is my choice.

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O sacrum convivium

JP Sweelinck

pas - si - o - nis e - ius, mens im - ple -

pas - si - o - nis e - ius, pas - si - o - nis e - ius, mens im - ple -

nis e - ius, pas - si - o - nis e - ius, e - ius, _____ mens im - ple - tur

si - o - nis e - ius, pas - si - o - nis e - ius, mens im - ple - tur

nis e - ius, pas - si - o - nis e - ius, mens im - ple -

6   7 6   6   3   9   7 #6 4   4   3
              #4

tur gra - ti - a, mens im - ple - tur gra - ti -

tur gra - ti - a, mens im - ple - tur gra - ti -

gra - ti - a, mens im - ple - tur gra - ti - a,

gra - ti - a, mens im - ple - tur gra - ti - a,

tur gra - ti - a,

5   6

tur. Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al -*

tur. Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu -*

tur. Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,*

tur. Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al -

tur. Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al -

6 5 6 5   6 5   6 5

le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu -*

ia, Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu -

Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu -*

le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu -*

le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu - ia,* Al - le - lu - ia, *Al - le - lu*

♯6

Vide homo

JP Sweelinck

51

or, — et cum sit tan-tus do - lor ex -

or, — et cum sit tan-tus do - lor ex - te - ri -

or, — et cum sit tan-tus do - lor ex - te - ri - or,

or, — et cum sit tan-tus do - lor ex - te - ri - or, *et cum sit tan - tus do - lor ex -*

et cum sit tan-tus do - lor ex - te - ri - or, —

♯ ♯ 6 3 5 6 7 6 6 6 5 ♭ 6 5 6 5

57

te - ri - or, — tam in - gra - tum cum te ex -

or, — tam in - gra -

in - tus ta - men do - lor est gra - vi - or, tam in - gra - tum

te - ri - or, in - tus ta - men do - lor est gra - vi - or, tam in - gra -

in - tus ta - men do - lor est gra - vi - or, —

5 6 6 6 6 5 5 6 7 6 7 6 5 6 6 5
♭ 4 3

Videte manus meas

JP Sweelinck

O quam beata lancea

JP Sweelinck

13

be - a - ta lan - ce - a, o quam be - a - ta lan - ce - a, quam be -

lan - ce - a, *o quam be - a - ta lan - ce - a,*

quam be - a - ta lan - ce - a, quam be - a -

quam be - a - ta lan - ce - a, be - a - ta lan - ce - a,

o quam be - a - ta lan - ce - a,

6   6   ♯ ♯

19

a - ti cla - vi, *quam be - a - ti cla -*

quam be - a - ti cla - vi, cla - vi,

ti cla - vi, *quam be - a - ti cla - vi, cla -*

quam be - a - ti cla - vi, *quam be - a - ti*

quam be - a - ti cla - vi,

6 6 5

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