

## EXPLANATION 2.3: THE MADRIGAL

### THE MADRIGAL

The madrigal is a secular musical form emerged in Italy. Thanks to it Italy becomes for the first time the center of European music. The rise of this form is related to the valorization of the poetry of Petrarca (s.XIV). For this fact in the madrigal the relationship between the text and music is very important since the madrigal is essentially polyphonic poetry. Music illustrates the meaning of words through madrigalisms.

The form of the madrigal is by sections, like the motet, where the voices imitate each other and the style is contrapuntal. The medieval madrigals of the 14<sup>th</sup> century used a strophic form and bear no resemblance to this new Renaissance madrigal that resembles the motet, since it is composed in a style with sections that are imitated. It is the most used form because of the great possibilities offered by using counterpoint.

### THE MADRIGALISMS

Madrigalisms are sound effects, such as cackling, ringing of bells, onomatopoeias, sounds that imitate the rumble of battles and so on. There are also of another kind, that has to do more with the text, like a precise sonority in certain words. Thus, a melody would go up in the word "sky" or down in the word "hell".

There are several periods in the madrigal:

- **First period:** around 1530 to 1550.  
It is the period of the primitive madrigal which is vertical and with predominance of the upper voice as in the frottola. The main composers among others are:
  - **Bernardo Pisano, Philippe Verdelot, Jacob Arcadelt and Costanzo Festa.**
- **Second period:** from 1550 to 1580.  
It is called the "classic" period of the madrigal. It is the era of splendor of the madrigal, with completely polyphonic writing, with the use of madrigalisms and visual effects in the score like 5 hollow notes like 5 pearls; blackening of the score to mean closed night. Composers:
  - **Orlando di Lasso, Pier Luigi da Palestrina, Cipriano da Rore, Philippe de Monte and Clement Janequin.**
- **Third período:** from 1580 to 1620.  
Goes into the Baroque period which starts in 1600. The voices are polarized. Tend to be homophonic. Madrigalisms increase in quantity and music becomes more expressive with more dissonance. Composers:
  - **Carlo Gesualdo and Luca Marenzio.**

### COMPREHENSION TEXT QUESTIONS

1. To what genre belongs the madrigal and in which country does it arise?
2. Why is the madrigal related to a 14th century poet. Which poet was it?
4. What musicalizes the madrigal and what does music illustrate?
6. How is a madrigal similar to a motet?
7. What style does a madrigal have?
8. Why is the madrigal a very used form?
9. What is a madrigalism? Give two examples.
10. What is similar to a madrigal of 1530?
11. What is the most mature period of the madrigal, how is its writing?
12. In a Gesualdo madrigal, what two things are more often used than in previous periods?