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The Lyrical Relationship of Religious Music in the Post-Reformation Romantic Period, Using Bruckner's Mass No.3 in F minor as an Example

Xintian Zhang*

University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 2021.12.29

Accepted: 2022.01.14

Published Online: 2022.01.20

Keywords:

Bruckner

Religious music

Reformation

ABSTRACT

As a composer who remained true to traditional style and compositional rigour during the Romantic period, Bruckner's work is permeated with both religious ethics and Romantic catharsis. It adds a unique dimension to the religious music of the Romantic period.

1. Introduction

Religious music, in its constant adaptation to the age in which it was written, and the different styles and characteristics brought to music by musicians of different eras, were also related to his experience and to the requirements and needs of the Church in his time. Church music is an important integral part of religion, and the relationship with it is both simple and complex. The Reformation brought about great changes to religious

music, and the Counter-Reformation, once again, had an impact on the development of musical composition.

Anton Bruckner (1824.09-1896.10), a composer of the Romantic period, was deeply influenced by the compositional styles of his predecessors and his time, and because of his own experiences, composed religious music that was both conservative and disciplined, as well as the romantic and liberal aspects that belonged to his time, with a skillful technique that illustrates the relationship between religion and music.

*Corresponding Author:

Xintian Zhang,

University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK;

Email: 781611886@qq.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55121/card.v1i1.16>

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This article introduces Bruckner's work and style through the context of his upbringing and North 3, as well as a slight analysis of selected Renaissance Palestrina works in Part III, in contrast to the 19th century style of composition.

2. Reformation

Religious music is an important part of the development of Western music. At the same time, polyphonic music is an integral part of the religious liturgy. Polyphonic music enriches the expressiveness of religious music and can be better adapted to the religious atmosphere. It guides the faithful in their pursuit of faith and, at the same time, serves to soothe the soul. Thus, no period can be without religious music, even if it is not in the same form or style.

During the Renaissance, the French composer Josquin (1450/1455-1521) breaking the monophonic chant fixation on the appearance of a single voice, this compositional approach directly contributed to the emergence of a new genre of masses, the imitation mass. This style of composition has led to a shift in focus from ornate and complex melodies to the relationship between words and music, with a greater emphasis on emotional expression and sentiment. The emotional and religious connotations of the work are more clearly articulated.

But after the impact of the Reformation in the 16th century, the following problems emerged in religious music; 1. polyphony made the lyrics difficult to hear and diluted the religious connotations; 2. too much secular music, or references to secular music, in religious music was not sufficiently dignified; 3. inappropriate instruments were used in religion; 4. the musicians did not have a proper attitude towards composition.

At the same time, Catholic composers, represented by Palestrina (1525-1594), responded to the above problems by deciding that the melody of the music would no longer be abused for secular music; the lyrics had to be intelligible. This period is known as the Counter-Reformation period. Palestrina composed 104 masses, the best known being the Papal Mass of Marcelos. His customary a cappella form for four or five voices is used to achieve a serious and solemn religious atmosphere. As well as the intricate reliefs that give the faithful a divine purifying effect.

The music of the Baroque period shifted from serving the church to serving the court. The genre of the Mass, developed from the Renaissance, matured in the late Middle Baroque period. The composer Lodovico Grossi Viadana (1560-1627) incorporates the basso continuo into the mass, making it a characteristic feature of the Baroque mass. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)'s *Mass in b minor* is a masterpiece of the Baroque Mass.

The classical period, with its lucrative theatres, became the centre of the mass. This period shows more of the grandeur and magnificence of the orchestra. The most famous is Beethoven's Solemn Mass in D major.

In one article "The Development of the Western Missa", Zhu Ningning(1982) of Hangzhou Normal University gives different descriptions of the Missa in different periods.

The Middle Ages established the norms of the Mass. During the Art Nouveau and Renaissance periods, the Mass appeared in the form of a set. The Mass of the Baroque period is mixed in style. The main key classic is the compositional grid of the Classical period. And in the Romantic period, the Mass was sublimated. And the 20th century that followed was a time of even greater diversity^[1].

It is true that religious music has evolved over a considerable period, with different styles in different eras.

The analysis of raptorial from different periods provides the greatest possible insight into the creative style and aesthetic preferences of the period.

3. Anton Bruckner and His Religious Music

The 19th century saw the flourishing of the Romantic Enlightenment. Most composers, writing scores with personal experience and taste, expressed feelings. Even many composers no longer serve the Church. But there was still one composer who adhered to the traditional style, whose works were permeated by a strong religious ethic but with a Romantic catharsis.

Bruckner was born in Austria. He is a famous composer, educator, and organist in church. Especially famous for his religious music, which is influenced by his growing up the background. His father is the headmaster in their countryside and taught Bruckner the violin and pipe organ when he was a child. At the same time, theoretical knowledge is constantly being learned. The musical life of the church and his studies were also with him. Because of his lifelong religious influences, most of his repertoires have a religious flavor.

His symphonies are imposing and brightly coloured, using the traditional techniques of both the classical Beethoven and the romantic Schubert. And because of his admiration for Wagner, Bruckner's Three Masses and the First Symphony are heavily influenced by Wagner in terms of harmonic orchestration.

Due to the influence of the Cecilian movement, religious music in the 19th century began to recover the style that had preceded it. It took place in the 19th century and was centred on Germany. The aim was the reform of Catholic music. The Cecilians wanted to restore authority to religion and the church. The "real, true church music"

was a liturgical adjunct, and that words and music were more important than artistic personality^[2].

In particular, the following proposals of the Cecilian movement had a great impact on the development of religious music in the nineteenth century. First of all, the use of hymns in liturgical music; secondly, a renewed interest in the counterpoint technique of the Palestrina; then the inclusion of wind instrument accompaniment; and finally, the singing of hymns in tongues.

Bruckner's Mass in e minor further strengthening Bruckner's ties with the Cecilian movement. Not only because he experimented with Palestrina's compositional style, but also because it uses wind instruments, a style that in line with the objectives expressed by Franz Xaver Witt (1834-1888), a major figure in the Cecilian movement for the reform of the Tiers^[3].

Bruckner's Mass No. 3 in F minor not only reflects Bruckner's religious influence and strong religious musicianship, but also combines Schubert's harmonic technique with Beethoven's musical style. The creative approach is both innovative and traditional.

In terms of harmonic use, while Bruckner followed the conventional V7 chord to the dominant triad progression, he would often use the VII and VII7 chords as alternative chords to the genus seven chord, sometimes, exercising the genus function. The III and III7 chords in their natural temperament, on the other hand, are often modified in the form of major triads and V7 chords. In terms of harmonic connections, Bruckner often adopted the principle of the "hexatonic cycle", a passing, chromatic, counterpoint-quality connection that satisfied his quest for a glossy sound in the major third^[4].

Bruckner's Mass in F minor is a masterful and classic use of polyphony. It is divided into six movements in total.

The first movement is kyrie. The female voice sings "The Lord" and then the male voice slowly joins in. The male and female voices are in the same direction in sixths, echoing each other. The intensity of the movement also varies from *f* to *pp*, from strong to very weak, creating a contrast. After the main theme there is a slight pause and an extension of the thematic pattern "Lord have mercy on me". The key changes from *f* minor to A flat major. A strong colour contrast is shown. In bar 38, the female voice calls out "Christe" in a very weak voice, while the male voice follows "Christe" with increasing intensity. This is echoed. The lyrics follow closely on the theme "Lord, have mercy on me".

The second movement is the Gloria. It opens with "Glory to the Lord" sung by the high and low voices with *ff* intensity. In the third bar the male voices follow up with

"Glory to God". The echoes are echoed in the form and sound. The four voices then sing together "We praise you and magnify you". The contralto style of singing is what makes this Mass so charming.

The third movement, the Credo. This is the most surprising section. It is the heart of the composer's polyphonic composition and a key movement in Bruckner's display of devotional faith. The first part, sung in unison in rhythm. The three voices maintain the same notes, except for the lower male voice, which is an octave lower. The purity and simplicity of religious music is on display.

The fourth movement Sanctus is only 52 bars long and begins in F major, showing an overall ethereal and beautiful melodic line, highlighting the contrast between the vocals and the orchestra.

Fifth movement Benedictus. It begins with the same introduction by the orchestra, showing the expressive power of the string orchestra. The alto begins with "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord", the soprano joins in the second bar and the tenor in the third, creating a staggered echoing chorus.

The final movement is the Scripture of the Lamb. It is slow and light in overall intensity and displays a completely religious musical atmosphere. The musical theme is taken from the previous movements.

In general, Bruckner's polyphonic string technique combines the classic strict polyphonic writing of the Palestrina period with the free polyphonic writing of the Bach era^[5].

It has been called a masterpiece of the 19th century Mass, not only because Bruckner followed the basic counterpoint techniques of Mass music, but also because he added glorious orchestration to the Mass, giving it a flamboyant feel. It is even more so because it was composed with a more sublime and holy realm, with a quiet and introspective feel, than the Masses of others. A perfect blend of Baroque and Romantic styles. It has been done in such a way that it retains the rigorous seriousness of religious music, but also has the effect of enhancing the aesthetic appreciation of the faithful and resonating with them in a religious context.

As can be seen, the lyrics of Bruckner's Masses were still closely related to religion in Bruckner's time, with the lyrics still dominated by "God", "Christ" and so on. Musically, they combine the regularity and clarity of their predecessors with the charm of polyphonic music, which is pleasant to the ear.

Bruckner composed a Mass in his characteristic style that not only caused a great sensation at the time but continues to do so to this day.

4. The Relationship of Music and Religion

As in the second part, the breakdown of each part of the Mass in f minor is introduced, the words of the Mass still revolve around the heart of the Church, around God.

The operation of music, like music itself, is not universally applicable to any era, and different eras will have their own peculiar qualities. The operation of music depends on people, and so composers need to satisfy the circumstances of their time to a large extent when they compose^[6].

According to the chapter 2, *Song and Sanctity: The Struggle for Ownership of devotional Music* of “*Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*” referenced in “*Martinus ist nit gschwigen*”, “Central to popular piety in the early sixteenth century was veneration of the saints.”^[7]

In Palestrina’s “Mass of the Popes of Marcelos”, for example, there are no additional passages to maintain purity and pertinence. And the lyrics are repeated singularly. The tradition of the Middle Ages is continued. Its focus is on reforming the lyrical relationship, with a particular emphasis on the clarity of lyrics in music. It was the same purpose of the church and the functionality of music since the 16th century that music was to be subordinated to lyrics. And to clearly express the content and meaning at the heart of the Mass. The polyphonic techniques of music in the past, the ornate decorations that appeared to show off technique, were not conducive to the transmission of liturgy and scripture for the Church. The “Marcelos Papal Mass”, on the other hand, completely avoids such flashy forms. It was known at the time as a most exemplary work^[8].

In the Lamb’s Scripture, “The Lamb of God, the Lamb of God.” The “Lamb of God” repeated three times takes up 15 bars, “The Lord who takes away the sin of the psalmist” is repeated three times again, as is “Have mercy on us”, which is the first part, 54 bars in all. The composition is relatively homogeneous compared to the period in which Bruckner lived.

At the same time, however, the overall structure does present its symmetry, its canonicity. Symmetry, or arching as it is called, nevertheless permeates the structure of each single phrase. The canonicity, on the other hand, clearly demonstrates the relationship between the lyrics and the structure.

The Renaissance, unlike the Baroque period, had no hugely influential theory to guide it and had to rely on experience. The Renaissance Mass suites can be divided into three main categories: narrative texts, spiritual texts, and prayer texts. It also directly determines the differences in compositional style and lyrical relationships.

The prayerful texts are shorter in content, repeating one or two lines repeatedly for the purpose of prayer. Spiritual texts are usually more abstract and are declarations of doctrine and belief, expressions of religious thought. Narrative texts tell the story of the Nativity and Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus. The aim is to convince the public through the content presented in the storytelling episode.

The nineteenth century gave composers more scope and freedom, both in terms of compositional style and technique and in terms of the emotions and connotations they wanted to express. For example, in the 19th century, musicians would change other people’s works at will, whether they were performers or composers. And the composer whose work was altered did not care. At the same time, compositional styles became diverse, mainly in the popular retro style. The importance of Gregorian chant was re-established. The extensive use of orchestras is characteristic of the religious music of this period.

Therefore, when Bruckner’s works, such as the Mass in F minor, have been adapted many times, Bruckner doesn’t care, even if the adaptations lose the coherence and fluidity of the original work.

According to Wang Qiong, Bruckner’s music reflects a dualistic worldview that is adept at ugliness, and Bruckner paid much attention to the opposition between the two, with the contrast of musical images being a more important part of Bruckner’s work than the so-called continuity of the sequence. Beethoven’s compositions, on the other hand, tend towards the idea that there is freedom and light after suffering, and that there must be a logical transition between musical images.

The music itself is depressing or sad in a minor key, while in a major key it gives the listener a sense of joy and lightness. Many scholars of Bruckner’s music have therefore hypothesized the minor parts of Bruckner’s music as “darkness” and “hardship”, and the “light” and “triumph” as the symbols of the “light” and “triumph”. “triumphant” allegory on the composition of music in major keys. Even this analysis can be seen in other works.

In any analysis, Bruckner’s work builds on his predecessors while adding his own interpretations and aesthetics, but of course his style and preferences are influenced by both his upbringing and the current time.

5. Conclusions

Through a concise overview of the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Cecilian movements, this article lists the different musical styles and representative works of the different periods. Special mention is made of the Romantic period, Bruckner’s Third Mass, and

the relationship between the words and the music of religious music in the Romantic period, using his most representative mass, the Mass in F minor, as an example. It also briefly explains, in the light of Bruckner's upbringing, the reasons why Bruckner composed in a period of great creative freedom in Romanticism, but still composed in a disciplined and regular manner.

In the third section, a special listing of Renaissance masses by Palestrina is given, dissecting their lyrical relationships, and comparing them with the 19th century.

When people explore whether religious service music should be always kept clear or whether it should celebrate the wonders of the Church and God, a form that falls somewhere in between is perhaps the best answer. It is important to ensure that the lyrics are clear and glorify God, while at the same time aiming for musical expressiveness and grandeur.

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