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**Editor's Note**

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Concordia Publishing House. Since her founding, she has supported the church in a number of ways, most especially through the publication of materials used to proclaim God's word. The Editors now take this opportunity to thank Concordia Publishing House for her work, in general, and for supporting the publication of this issue in particular. May the Lord grant Concordia Publishing House increased blessing in service to him.

The Editors

## **“Exulting and adorning in exuberant strains:” Luther and Latin Polyphonic Music**

**Daniel Zager**

In his *Formula Missae* of 1523, Martin Luther outlined and commented on the reformed Latin Mass as he wished it to be observed in Wittenberg. Behind this bare historical fact is a significant and quite wonderful reality that we should not take for granted—namely, that Luther had no interest in jettisoning either the liturgy or the language of the medieval church as he had come to know them. He valued continuity with the church’s past, insofar as it was consonant with the Gospel. He could not have been more emphatic about this, writing in the *Formula Missae*, “We therefore first assert: It is not now nor ever has been our intention to abolish the liturgical service of God completely, but rather to purify the one that is now in use from the wretched accretions which corrupt it and to point out an evangelical use.”<sup>1</sup> After outlining and discussing the various parts of the Mass, Luther included, near the end of the *Formula Missae*, a call for *vernacular* hymns “which the people could sing during mass, immediately after the gradual and also after the Sanctus and Agnus Dei.”<sup>2</sup> Luther wanted both to retain the Latin Mass *and* to employ vernacular hymns within the Mass. Three years later, in 1526, he was even more adamant about continuing to use the Latin language. In the preface to his *Deutsche Messe*<sup>3</sup> (Luther’s outline of the Mass in the German language—the *Gottesdienst*, or Divine Service), he refers back to the *Formula Missae* and his retention of the Latin Mass:

For in no wise would I want to discontinue the service in the Latin language, because the young are my chief concern. And if I could bring it to pass, and Greek and Hebrew were as familiar to us as the Latin and had as many fine melodies and songs, we would hold mass, sing, and read on successive Sundays in all four languages, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. I do not at all agree with those who cling to one language and despise all others . . . It is also reasonable that the young should be trained in many languages; for who knows

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, “An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg, 1523”: vol. 53, p. 20, in *Luther’s Works, American Edition*, vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86), hereafter AE.

<sup>2</sup> AE 53:36.

<sup>3</sup> AE 53:61–90.

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how God may use them in time to come? For this purpose our schools were founded.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, for Luther, retaining the Latin Mass was important in part for education of the young and enriching their lives through continued use of the Latin language.

Luther's posture regarding languages for the Mass finds parallels in his views on music: Latin chant is to be retained, *and* German hymns and psalm paraphrases are to be newly written; Latin polyphony (music composed of two or more independent parts) is to be retained, *and* polyphonic settings of German hymns are to be newly composed. Luther's view of music in the Mass is inclusive (1) in retaining the historic repertory of Latin chant as it had developed from the seventh century on and (2) in continuing to cultivate Latin polyphony as it had developed during the fifteenth century in the hands of Franco-Flemish composers such as Guillaume Du Fay (1397–1474), Johannes Ockeghem (ca. 1410–1497), and Josquin des Prez (ca. 1450–55–1521). Such Latin polyphonic music would subsequently serve as models for composers like Luther's colleague Johann Walter (1496–1570); drawing on the musical language of Josquin and others, Walter would provide polyphonic settings of the newly developing repertory of German-language hymns (chorales). Luther was committed to both Latin- and German-texted liturgy and music.

The Latin polyphonic music of the church, specifically, experienced remarkable contrapuntal and stylistic development during the fifteenth century. Indeed, the prominent fifteenth-century music theorist, writer, and composer Johannes Tinctoris (ca. 1430–35–1511) observed, in his 1477 *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (Book on the Art of Counterpoint), that “there is no composition written over forty years ago which is thought by the learned as worthy of performance.”<sup>5</sup> On its surface that may seem like an audacious, perhaps even arrogant, statement, but in studying the music of the fifteenth century one notes that there is, in fact, a marked change in musical language by about mid-century, with the older layering of independent lines in late medieval polyphony giving way to a musical language in which the various voice parts of the polyphonic texture are more homogeneous in character, more smoothly integrated one with the other. That is the kind of Latin polyphony that Luther knew and loved and wished to retain, pointing on numerous occasions to Josquin, the preeminent composer of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Recorded sometime before December 14, 1531, in one of his “Table Talks,” Luther stated that “God has preached the gospel through music, too, as may

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<sup>4</sup> AE 53:63.

<sup>5</sup> Johannes Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint (Liber de arte contrapuncti)*, trans. and ed. Albert Seay, *Musicological Studies and Documents*, 5 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1961), 14.

be seen in Josquin, all of whose compositions flow freely, gently, and cheerfully, and are not forced or cramped by rules like the song of the finch.”<sup>6</sup> Also recorded in a “Table Talk” around 1540 is Luther’s observation that “Josquin is a master of the notes, which must express what he desires; on the other hand, other choral composers must do what the notes dictate.”<sup>7</sup> Three years earlier, Luther had lamented, “Alas, what fine musicians have died within the last ten years: Josquin (d. 1521), Pierre de la Rue (d. 1518), Finck (d. 1527), and many other excellent men.”<sup>8</sup> A keen observer of the music of his time, and a man who loved music, Luther not only discerned the quality of Josquin’s music but linked it to proclamation of the Gospel. Luther also corresponded with a well-known composer of the generation after Josquin, namely Ludwig Senfl (b. ca. 1489–91, d. 1543), from whom Luther requested, in a letter dated October 4, 1530, a polyphonic setting of the chant antiphon *In pace, in idipsum* (Psalm 4:8, “In peace I will both lie down and sleep”).<sup>9</sup>

How did Luther know the music of Josquin? Did Luther at some point meet Senfl, thus explaining his very direct and cordial request of the composer? Only by answering these questions and considering Senfl’s Latin polyphony can we provide a basis for understanding Luther’s love of Latin polyphony. Luther expressed this love with great fervor and eloquence in his preface to Georg Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae* of 1538, itself an anthology of Latin polyphony: “It is possible to taste with wonder (yet not to comprehend) God’s absolute and perfect wisdom in his wondrous works of music. Here it is most remarkable that one single voice continues to sing the tenor, while at the same time many other voices play around it, exulting and adorning it in exuberant strains . . . .”<sup>10</sup> It is important to clarify here what Luther means when he writes that “one single voice continues to sing the tenor.” A preexistent chant melody serving as the basis for a polyphonic setting was often placed in the tenor part—the part that quite literally “held” (Latin, *tenere*) the chant melody. Thus, “to sing the tenor,” as the translator Ulrich Leupold has it, means to sing the preexistent chant melody, which may be referred to as the *cantus firmus* (“firm song”) or the *cantus prius factus* (“song made previously”).

Luther was familiar with the magnificent and extensive Franco-Flemish repertory of fifteenth-century Latin sacred polyphony due to Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony from 1486 to his death in 1525. Frederick established his chapel

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<sup>6</sup> AE 54:129–30. For a necessary corrective to Tappert’s translation, see Robin A. Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 368 n199.

<sup>7</sup> Walter E. Buszin, *Luther on Music*, Lutheran Society for Worship, Music and the Arts, Pamphlet Series, no. 3 (St. Paul: North Central Publishing, 1958), 13 [reprinted from *Musical Quarterly*, 1946].

<sup>8</sup> Buszin, *Luther on Music*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> AE 49:427–29.

<sup>10</sup> AE 53:324.

of clergy and musicians—the Hofkapelle—in 1491, their responsibility being to furnish music for the daily Mass and Office liturgies wherever Frederick was “in residence,” whether traveling or in Wittenberg or Torgau, the latter being his primary place of residence.

In Wittenberg, Frederick’s new Castle Church was dedicated on January 17, 1503, one year after he had established his new university in Wittenberg. Also known as the *Allerheiligenstiftskirche* (“Church of the All Saints’ Foundation”), after the small *Allerheiligenkapelle*, or “All Saints Chapel,” which previously occupied that site, the Castle Church had its own group of clergy and musicians responsible for an extensive daily round of Mass and Office liturgies, by one scholar’s estimate “over 1,000 [sung] Masses each year.”<sup>11</sup> That pattern remained until late 1524 when, at Luther’s urging, “all the masses except for the evangelical Sunday mass were discontinued.”<sup>12</sup>

Latin polyphony for those liturgical observances was provided by two groups of music manuscripts, those groups being distinguished one from the other by where they were copied. A total of nineteen manuscript sources of Latin polyphony used at the Castle Church have come down to us, all of which, save one, are now held by the university library in Jena (the one exception residing in Weimar). The first group, of eight manuscripts,<sup>13</sup> was copied between approximately 1500 and 1520 at the Castle Church in Wittenberg for use at that establishment.<sup>14</sup> Those Wittenberg manuscripts preserve polyphony for both the Proper and Ordinary of the Mass as well as music for Vespers. The second group, consisting of eleven manuscripts,<sup>15</sup> was copied between 1500 and 1525 in the famed scriptoria of Petrus Alamire (ca. 1470–1536) and his associates (in present-day Belgium), and either presented to Frederick as gifts by Margaret of Austria or by her father Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (r. 1493–1519) or purchased by Frederick.<sup>16</sup> The Alamire manuscripts furnish, predominantly, music for the

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<sup>11</sup> Kathryn Ann Pohlmann Duffy, “The Jena Choirbooks: Music and Liturgy at the Castle Church in Wittenberg under Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995), 174.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 129.

<sup>13</sup> Jena, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, MSS 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36; and Weimar, Bibliothek der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchengemeinde, MS A (see Duffy, 2).

<sup>14</sup> Duffy, “The Jena Choirbooks,” 2.

<sup>15</sup> Jena, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, MSS 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 20, 21, and 22.

<sup>16</sup> For a recent, detailed study of this group of eleven manuscripts see Hannah Hutchens Mowrey, “The Alamire Manuscripts of Frederick the Wise: Intersections of Music, Art, and Theology” (PhD diss., Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 2010). For descriptions of each manuscript see *The Treasury of Petrus Alamire: Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts, 1500–1535*, ed. Herbert Kellman (Ghent, Amsterdam: Ludion, 1999); the range

Ordinary of the Mass as well as settings of the Magnificat. Ten of the eleven Alamire manuscripts were copied on parchment rather than paper, and exquisite miniature decorative artwork characterizes these sources, as is typical of manuscripts from that workshop. In contrast to these Alamire manuscripts, the eight manuscripts produced in Wittenberg were copied on paper rather than parchment and show very little in the way of artistic miniature illuminations. Both groups of manuscript choirbooks testify to the fact that the first two decades of the century were a time of intensive effort to acquire Latin polyphony for use at Wittenberg's Castle Church.

Of these nineteen manuscripts used at the Castle Church, five include works attributed to Josquin, primarily settings of the Mass Ordinary. Of the Alamire manuscripts, Jena 3 includes five Mass Ordinaries securely attributed to Josquin, with one more in Jena 7 and two in Jena 21. Of the manuscripts copied in Wittenberg, Jena 31 and 32 each preserve three Mass Ordinaries by Josquin. From these manuscript sources alone, it is clear that Luther had ample opportunity to hear the music of Josquin; indeed, in the Mass Ordinaries preserved in these sources, one finds some of Josquin's finest polyphony for the church.

While Luther certainly heard the music of Josquin sung at the Castle Church, it is likely that he knew the composer Ludwig Senfl personally. Who was Senfl? When and under what circumstances might Luther have met the composer? And what did Luther think of his Latin polyphony?

Senfl, whose birth year is uncertain but may be approximated between 1489 and 1491, joined the court chapel of Emperor Maximilian I as a choirboy in 1498.<sup>17</sup> The previous year Heinrich Isaac (ca. 1450-55-1517) had been appointed court composer for Maximilian's chapel, which resided in Vienna when not accompanying Maximilian on his travels. When his voice changed, between approximately 1504 and 1507, Senfl received a three-year period of study at the University of Vienna, after which he returned to Maximilian's chapel as a singer and copyist and became a composition student of Isaac. When Isaac left the imperial chapel in 1515, it is possible that Senfl found additional opportunities as a composer within that establishment. At the death of Maximilian in 1519, the chapel was disbanded, and Senfl held no regular position until 1523 when he joined the Munich court chapel of Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria as a composer, remaining there for the rest of his life.

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of dates for these sources, 1500-1525, reflects the descriptions in this volume. Mowrey argues persuasively that the Alamire manuscripts were used at Frederick's Castle Church in Wittenberg rather than at his court chapel; see pp. 362-77 of her dissertation.

<sup>17</sup> Biographical details are drawn from "Ludwig Senfl," accessed June 12, 2016, <http://senflonline.com>; and from *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Senfl, Ludwig," by Stefan Gasch and Sonja Tröster, accessed June 12, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>.

The Senfl scholars Stefan Gasch and Sonya Tröster, currently working at the University of Vienna on a new edition of Senfl's works, suggest that Luther and Senfl may have met at the Diet of Augsburg in 1518, though Martin Brecht in his magisterial study of Luther casts some doubt on that possibility, stating that the Diet had ended before the October 7 arrival of Luther in Augsburg for his meeting with Cardinal Cajetan, with Elector Frederick the Wise having left Augsburg already on September 22.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it is possible that Maximilian and his chapel, including Senfl, may have departed Augsburg prior to Luther's arrival. Gasch and Tröster maintain that Senfl traveled to the imperial Diet in Worms in 1521, though they offer no documentary evidence for that conclusion. If true, it would constitute another possible point of contact between the two men.

By the time of the 1530 Diet of Augsburg, Senfl was employed as a composer at the ducal court in Munich and would have attended the Augsburg meeting as a member of the chapel of Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria. Senfl's setting of Psalm 133, *Ecce quam bonum* ("Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!") was sung at the beginning of the Diet.<sup>19</sup> Luther, unwelcome at the Diet, resided in Coburg, arriving on April 24 and staying until October 4.<sup>20</sup> One of the first things Luther did on his arrival in Coburg was to have some of his favorite psalm verses painted on the walls of his rooms, verses that encouraged him during this particularly trying time: Psalm 118:17, "I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord"; and Psalm 1:6, "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."<sup>21</sup> He kept in touch with people, both at the Augsburg meeting and in Wittenberg, through written communications, as well as receiving guests in his rooms at the Coburg castle. Brecht notes, "Although the place of Luther's stay was supposed to remain a secret, he was constantly receiving visitors."<sup>22</sup>

One of Luther's last letters from Coburg, dated October 4, 1530, was written to Senfl. Before making a specific request of Senfl, Luther reflects on the nature and purpose of music:

... except for theology there is no art that could be put on the same level with music, since except for theology [music] alone produces what otherwise only theology can do, namely, a calm and joyful disposition . . . This is the reason why the prophets did not make use of any art except music . . . they

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation, 1483–1521*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 250–51.

<sup>19</sup> Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 52.

<sup>20</sup> Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, 372, 407.

<sup>21</sup> Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, 372.

<sup>22</sup> Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, 376.



held theology and music most tightly connected, and proclaimed truth through Psalms and songs.<sup>23</sup>

To “[hold] theology and music most tightly connected” is a recurring motif in Luther’s thought, as is the premise that music is a means to “proclaim truth.” Luther then makes a specific request of Senfl. Luther writes that he has always found delight in the chant antiphon *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam*, Psalm 4:8 (“In peace I will both lie down and sleep”).<sup>24</sup> Luther asks Senfl for a polyphonic setting of this text: “I ask if you would have copied and sent to me, if you have it, a copy of that song: ‘In peace [I will both lie down and sleep].’ For this tenor melody has delighted me from youth on, and does so even more now that I understand the words.” Again, to clarify, “tenor melody” in this context means that the preexistent Latin chant forming the basis of a newly composed polyphonic setting was most often placed in the tenor part of the polyphonic complex. Luther continues,

I have never seen this antiphon arranged for more voices [i.e., a polyphonic setting]. I do not wish, however, to impose on you the work of arranging; rather I assume that you have available an arrangement from some other source. Indeed, I hope that the end of my life is at hand; the world hates me and cannot bear me, and I, in turn, loathe and detest the world; therefore may the best and [most] faithful shepherd take my soul to him. And so I have already started to sing this antiphon and am eager to hear it arranged. In case you should not have or know it, I am enclosing it here with the notes; if you wish you can arrange it—perhaps after my death.<sup>25</sup>

This is an interesting excerpt from the letter, on several levels. First, for a world-weary Luther, this psalm-verse provides comfort, as it points him not merely to evening rest and sleep after the labors of a day but, more significantly, to eternal rest for his soul. Second, it shows us just how deeply Luther loved the Latin chant of the church, how the melody of a single brief psalm antiphon could bring him much delight as a singer. Third, it shows us his musical background and training, which permitted him to notate the chant melody for Senfl’s use. And finally, it shows

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<sup>23</sup> AE 49:428.

<sup>24</sup> For a version of this chant melody in a contemporaneous source, see the 1519 Passau Antiphonarium (Vienna: Johannes Winterburger, 1519), fol. 36v, which is available digitally at VD16 as item number A 2946: [http://www.gateway-bayern.de/index\\_vd16.html](http://www.gateway-bayern.de/index_vd16.html), and in a printed facsimile: *Antiphonale Pataviense (Wien 1519): Faksimile*, ed. Karlheinz Schlager, Das Erbe Deutscher Musik, Bd. 88 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1985). Liturgically, this antiphon is designated in the Passau source for Dominica quarta Quadragesima, ad Completorium (Fourth Sunday in Lent, for the Office of Compline). A modern chantbook, such as the *Liber Usualis*, designates this text for Matins of Holy Saturday and preserves a completely different chant melody; cf. LU 713.

<sup>25</sup> AE 49:428–29.

us how much Luther loved polyphony, with his desire that this single piece of chant form the basis of a larger polyphonic complex.

Luther's first biographer, Johannes Mathesius (1504–1565), provides additional insight on this episode, reporting in his posthumously published 1566 biography of Luther that Senfl did, in fact, provide a polyphonic setting of *In pace in idipsum*, and, in addition, a polyphonic setting of Psalm 118:17, *Non moriar, sed vivam*.<sup>26</sup> That Senfl also provided this second motet is an interesting detail. As far as we know, Luther did not ask for a second polyphonic setting, so why did Senfl send him a setting of *Non moriar*? One reasonable hypothesis is that Senfl visited Luther at Coburg castle (secretly, since Luther remained persona non grata) and saw that psalm verse painted on the wall of Luther's room. Knowing how much that verse meant to Luther, Senfl also provided the second polyphonic setting. Such a hypothetical visit to Luther at Coburg would account for the cordial tone of Luther's October 4 letter to Senfl—the two had already met and become acquainted.

A four-part setting of *In pace in idipsum* is preserved in a set of manuscript partbooks from the mid-sixteenth century. That source, now held by the Zwickau Ratsschulbibliothek as Mus. Ms. 73, is known as the manuscript of Jodocus Schalreuter (born in Gera ca. 1487), who identifies himself as the copyist and owner of the manuscript partbooks.<sup>27</sup> The polyphonic setting of *In pace in idipsum*, however, is entered without composer attribution, without any reference to Senfl. By contrast, this source does include thirteen polyphonic settings that are attributed by the copyist to Senfl. So the question is whether the setting of *In pace in idipsum*, which the copyist declined to attribute to Senfl, is one that he wrote at Luther's request—bearing in mind, however, that Luther did not wish to impose on Senfl the work of composing a new polyphonic piece, Luther assuming that Senfl might have available “an arrangement from some other source.”<sup>28</sup> The editors of the 2004 edition of the Schalreuter manuscript are unwilling to ascribe it to Senfl without adding a question mark.<sup>29</sup> While such questions of attribution are often difficult, my observation, after examining the compositions attributed to Senfl in this source, is that the setting of *In pace in idipsum* is similar in terms of musical style and procedure to other Senfl compositions in this source. But basing an attribution

<sup>26</sup> *Sixteenth-Century Biographies of Martin Luther*, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown, Luther's Works, Companion Volume (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018), 352–53; Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 52 and 369 n 204.

<sup>27</sup> *Die Handschrift des Jodocus Schalreuter (Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau Mus. Ms. 73)*, ed. Martin Just and Bettina Schwemer, *Das Erbe Deutscher Musik*, Bd. 115–116 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2004). Bd. 115a, vii.

<sup>28</sup> AE 49:428–29.

<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the Danish scholar Ole Kongsted adds a question mark after Senfl's name in his edition: *Motetter af Ludvig Senfl*, ed. Ole Kongsted, *Capella Hafniensis Editions A. 1* (Copenhagen: The Royal Library, 2001), 12–17.

on such “internal” evidence as the music itself is always tricky, for the musical style and language of Senfl is hardly unique as compared to his contemporaries represented in this manuscript source. Without concordant sources attributing the composition to Senfl—a type of “external” evidence—the question mark, I believe, will have to remain in place.<sup>30</sup>

In the *prima pars* (“first part,” mm. 1–49 of Kongsted’s edition) of this polyphonic setting of *In pace in idipsum*, nearly every note in the tenor part is taken from the chant, excepting only the flourish on the second pitch (mm. 9–11). Recall Luther’s words from 1538 in praise of Latin polyphony: “Here it is most remarkable that one single voice continues to sing the tenor, while at the same time many other voices play around it, exulting and adorning it in exuberant strains . . . .” What Luther described in 1538 may be illustrated by this setting of *In pace in idipsum*—regardless of whether Senfl or someone else is the composer. The composer has taken a specific chant as the basis for his composition, preserving the pitches of the chant in the tenor and, moreover, allowing the opening melodic profile of the chant to infuse the other three voice parts around the tenor (mm. 1–10). The chant melody that Luther so loved forms the basis of the polyphony, yet it is integrated with the other voice parts so that the whole composition sounds balanced, the preexistent chant melody not dominating the musical texture. While we might take that for granted just in terms of the characteristic overall sound of sixteenth-century Latin polyphony, we should not underestimate the compositional control that is at work here. Luther did not underestimate it, as this comment recorded in the Table Talk reveals: “After some fine and beautiful motets by Senfl had been sung, [Luther] was amazed, accorded them much praise, and said: ‘I would not be able to compose such a motet, even if I would tear myself to pieces in the attempt, just as he [Senfl] would not be able to preach a Psalm as I can.’ ”<sup>31</sup>

Unlike the setting of *In pace in idipsum* transmitted anonymously in the Schalreuter manuscript, which may or may not have been composed by Senfl, there is no doubt about the four-part motet *Non moriar sed vivam* (Psalm 118:17), which is attributed to Senfl in manuscript sources in Berlin, Regensburg, and Zwickau.<sup>32</sup> The text of Psalm 118:17 is as follows:

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<sup>30</sup> In her study *Mehrstimmige Responsorienvertonungen in deutschen Quellen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, *Collectanea Musicologica* 8 (Augsburg: Wißner, 1998), 2:72, Bettina Schwemer indicates the authorship of this composition as “anonym.”

<sup>31</sup> Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music*, 58–59, 371n227; Buszin, *Luther on Music*, 7–8.

<sup>32</sup> “Ludwig Senfl,” accessed May 1, 2019, [www.senflonline.com](http://www.senflonline.com).

*Non moriar sed vivam, et narrabo opera domini.*

I shall not die but live, and tell the works of the Lord.<sup>33</sup>

Motets had no fixed functions within either Mass or Office liturgies; rather, they were employed with great flexibility within a given liturgical occasion, their use not being limited to where the specific texts might be appointed within those liturgies.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, as one can tell from Luther's Table Talk, motets were sung outside of liturgical occasions, such as for recreational or devotional purposes by a group of associates or friends.

Senfl's motet *Non moriar sed vivam* is constructed economically by drawing on a small number of recurring musical ideas. The chant melody associated with this text is stated in its entirety twice: first in the soprano (or discant) voice (mm. 9–24), and later in the tenor voice (mm. 46–62).<sup>35</sup> Senfl uses the first phrase of this chant melody in the opening measures, where alto, tenor, and bass successively preview the preexistent chant melody about to be sung in its entirety by the soprano voice. As this chant melody sounds forth in slower note values, Senfl employs quicker figures on the word "vivam," thereby adding forward momentum to the polyphonic complex. A new and distinctive musical idea appears with the second textual phrase "et narrabo opera." This musical idea at times uses only two pitches, the pitch repetition providing an essentially rhythmic idea that contrasts with the opening melodic gesture derived from the preexisting chant.<sup>36</sup>

In summary, Luther desired to retain the Latin Mass, even as he took the lead in creating a repertory of vernacular hymns and a vernacular form of the Mass. Retaining the Latin Mass meant that the young especially would still have the benefit of using the Latin language. Moreover, in terms of music, Latin chant and Latin polyphony—each a remarkable heritage of the Western church—would also be retained, insofar as individual chant texts and motet texts were consonant with the gospel. Significantly, Luther knew the music of Josquin and came to know Ludwig Senfl sufficiently well to request a specific Latin polyphonic setting from him. And

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<sup>33</sup> Luther tried his hand at setting this text. See Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 58–60; and *Lutheran Choral Anthology: The 16th Century*, ed. Carl F. Schalk and William H. Braun (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 165–69.

<sup>34</sup> Anthony M. Cummings, "Toward an Interpretation of the Sixteenth-Century Motet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 43–59; Anthony M. Cummings, "The Motet," in *European Music, 1520–1640*, ed. James Haar (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 130–56; David Crook, "The Exegetical Motet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 255–316.

<sup>35</sup> For the chant melody, see Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 53, 59. Measure numbers refer to Kongsted's edition (see note 29 above).

<sup>36</sup> For a recording of *Non moriar sed vivam*, see Ludwig Senfl: *Komponist der Reformation*, with Wilfried Rombach and Ensemble Officium, Christophorus CHR 77226, 2000, compact disc.

central to the topic of Latin polyphony is Luther's own love for this music and his sense of wonder at such music—a sense of wonder that reminds us not to take for granted the inherent beauty and the consistent compositional craftsmanship of those repertoires from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A final question to pose here is simply this: To what extent did Latin polyphony continue to be used in Lutheranism *after* Luther's death in 1546? Luther's bilingual model for liturgy found a parallel in terms of musical composition and performance throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and well into the eighteenth century, which is to say that the German chorale in all its musical manifestations coexisted with the continuing use of Latin chant and polyphony in the Lutheran church.

Johann Walter, Luther's most immediate musical colleague, is best known for his 1524 published polyphonic settings of German chorales—a landmark collection in the sense that it was the first in what would become a flood of vocal and instrumental elaborations of chorale melodies.<sup>37</sup> But Walter also composed much Latin polyphony, including a five-part setting of *Non moriar sed vivam*.<sup>38</sup>

Georg Rhau (1488–1548), a composer and music theorist who served briefly (1518–1520) in Leipzig as cantor at the St. Thomas School (a position that some two centuries later would be held by Johann Sebastian Bach), returned to his home town of Wittenberg in 1523. He there became a leading printer and publisher for the emerging church, editing and printing eleven volumes of Latin polyphony as well as music theoretical and pedagogical works written in Latin. Illustrative of his published anthologies is his 1538 *Symphoniae iucundae* (with a preface by Luther), which contains fifty-two Latin motets.<sup>39</sup>

The great Lutheran cantor, composer, and music theorist Michael Praetorius (1571–1621) had a direct link to the Luther circle in Wittenberg since his father was a colleague of Johann Walter. Praetorius was one of the most prolific of all Lutheran composers, both with respect to the German chorale—where he most often provided multiple settings of a given chorale—but also with respect to Latin polyphony. In 1611, for example, he published separate collections of his own Latin

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<sup>37</sup> A facsimile of the 1525 Worms printing was published as Johann Walter, *Das geistliche Gesangbüchlein "Chorgesangbuch,"* Documenta Musicologica, Erste Reihe: Druckschriften-Faksimiles 33 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1979). For a recent, modern edition, see Johann Walter, *Geistliches Gesangbüchlein, Worms 1525*, ed. Christian Schmitt-Engelstadt (Bergheim: Verlag Dohr, 2017).

<sup>38</sup> For Walter's setting of *Non moriar sed vivam*, see Johann Walter, *Geistliches Gesangbüchlein, Wittenberg 1551, Zweiter Teil: Cationes Latinae, Sämtliche Werke* (Kassel: Bärenreiter; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 2:168–70.

<sup>39</sup> Georg Rhau, *Symphoniae iucundae, 1538*, ed. Hans Albrecht, Musikdrucke aus den Jahren 1538 bis 1545 in praktischen Neuausgabe 3 (Kassel: Bärenreiter; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

polyphony: Mass movements (predominantly but not exclusively for the Ordinary), Latin hymns for the church year, and Magnificat settings.<sup>40</sup>

A final example illustrating the continuing use of Latin polyphony in the Lutheran sphere is the extensive anthology of Latin motets compiled by Erhard Bodenschatz (1576–1636)—Lutheran cantor, pastor, composer, and music editor. His *Florilegium portense* is a Latin motet anthology in two parts. The first part, published in 1603 and subsequently enlarged in 1618, included 115 Latin motets by forty-eight German composers, including Bodenschatz himself. In the second volume of 1621, Italian composers predominate. These two volumes enjoyed continuous use in schools and churches in the German-speaking lands, specifically in cities and towns having Latin schools.

Bach, for example, used these volumes during his years in Leipzig (1723–1750). His appointment was as cantor of the St. Thomas school (a Latin school) and Director of Music in Leipzig, responsible to the town council. As Director of Music, he was responsible for all of the music at four Leipzig churches—not only the two so-called principal churches, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas but also St. Peter’s and the so-called New Church, which was opened in 1699 to alleviate overcrowding at the two principal churches. Thus, Bach, with the help of student assistants, prepared and supervised four choirs for these four churches on a weekly basis. In a document from August 1730, written by Bach and directed to the Leipzig town council, he describes the graded choir program at the St. Thomas school and how he allocated his approximately fifty-five students among the four churches for Sunday morning music: “St. Peter’s receives the residue, namely, those who do not understand music and can only just barely sing a chorale.”<sup>41</sup> He added, “In the three churches, namely, St. Thomas’s, St. Nicholas’s, and the New Church, the pupils must all be musical.”<sup>42</sup> A Latin motet was a standard part of the Sunday morning music at all three of those churches. This motet repertory consisted not of the elaborate motets composed by Bach himself but rather of older and simpler Latin motets of the type found in the Bodenschatz anthologies. In 1729, the St. Thomas school records show a payment of 12 thaler to Bach for a *Florilegium portense* “which the pupils need in the churches.”<sup>43</sup> Just as Luther would not jettison the Latin language, the Latin Mass with its chant, or Latin polyphony, opting instead for liturgical and musical

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<sup>40</sup> See Michael Praetorius, *Gesamtausgabe der Musikalischen Werke*, ed. Friedrich Blume (Wolfenbüttel: Georg Kallmeyer, 1928–1940); for his Latin polyphony, see particularly volumes 11–14.

<sup>41</sup> *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, rev. and ed. by Christoph Wolff (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 146.

<sup>42</sup> *The New Bach Reader*, 146.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew Parrott, *The Essential Bach Choir* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2000), 21–22.

continuity with the rich traditions of the Western church, so also Lutheran worship in eighteenth-century Leipzig, among other cities, continued to draw on Latin polyphony in the form of a motet placed at the very beginning of the Divine Service.<sup>44</sup>

While the Calvinist reform movement in Switzerland and France took a cautious approach to music in the church, limiting music to unaccompanied unison singing of metrical psalms, Luther recognized and loved the musical heritage of the Western church and advocated for the continuing use of Latin chant and Latin polyphony. This openness to the best sacred music traditions of his time effectively set a precedent for music in Lutheran worship. While it is not the case that Latin polyphony found a permanent place in Lutheran liturgies, such polyphony from the late fifteenth through the early seventeenth centuries was invariably well-crafted music from well-trained composers working in the traditions of Western art music, and it is those factors that constitute this precedent. Those polyphonic musical repertoires established high standards of quality—not necessarily complexity, but *quality*—that ultimately manifested itself in musical genres as diverse as motets, baroque vocal concertos, cantatas, and anthems, among others. Just as Luther recognized the rich musical traditions of the Western church, so also he discerned the very best composers of his time. That commitment to continuity with the church's traditions and to quality in newly composed music set a course for Lutheran church music, a course that has provided—and continues to provide—extensive and rich repertoires of sacred music for use in the church today and in the future.

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<sup>44</sup> See *The New Bach Reader*, 113, for Bach's own outline for the "Order of the Divine Service in Leipzig."