

On Tue, 14 Jul 2009 13:48:06 -0500, James B. Jordan writes:

Sure, you can put up my paper and your reply. We can discuss it all if you want.

But I cannot see any way to sing Psalm 1 in Goudie' harmony with any dancelike speed at all.

James B. Jordan

On Wed, 15 Jul 2009 02:18:43 GMT, Michael E. Owens writes:

Thank you very much. I'd look forward to discussing it. I have a lot to learn.

I've never danced. Could someone dance to my Goudimel Ps 1? Should it be faster?

I suspect almost no one will try the Goudimel homophony acappella. With instruments (not organ) it seems like it could be any tempo the musicians chose.

Thanks again,
Michael

On Wed, 15 Jul 2009 09:11:35 -0500, James B. Jordan writes:

Well, by dance, I mean wardance. Your performance is almost fast enough, but you need to drop the rest between lines 3 & 4 ;-). My point is that no harmonizing congregation has altos who can sing those 16th notes as written, without slowing it way down.

I'll give you an argument: Consider Pss. 20, 23, 79. In each of these you have double or run-on lines. No breathing possible, which indicates they were sung pretty fast. It also indicates, however, that no breath is needed between other pairs of lines. Now, I'd have to know French and look at it to see what might have been the practice, but consider Ps. 23. If you retain the rest at the end of line 1 you get good accents in line two: I SHALL not WANT in PASTures green he FEEDS me.

But between the last two lines, if you keep the rest, you get: In PATHS of rightEOUSness He GOES before ME. Whereas, if you eliminate the rest, you get : IN paths of RIGHTeousNESS he goes beFORE me. The accentuation is much better. You also get a real punch on the high D (let's make that a C, okay?) which adds drive to the ending of the stanzas.

You know, I assume, that a Renaissance D is today's C. We need to typeset these psalms down into the intended ranges.

Do you have my original critique of Cantus Christi?

JBJordan

On Wed, 15 Jul 2009 22:49:16, GMT Michael E. Owens writes:

Jim,

"Well, by dance, I mean wardance. "

I've never even *seen* a wardance. :-) Can you describe the sort you mean? How fast are they?

"My point is that no harmonizing congregation has altos who can sing those 16th notes as written, without slowing it way down."

Good point. I assume that's why the Janssens simplified all the 8th and 16th notes. (As you can probably tell, however, I wasn't willing to second-guess Monsieur Goudimel.)

And I agree: Whether passing or auxiliary tones, nearly all congregational altos and tenors will either ignore them or mush them up. Goudimel clearly intended his homophonic settings sung at a more stately tempo. In fact, the bass lines are an even stronger case in point: with virtually no inverted chords, the bass jumps all over, and is unusually difficult to sing quickly.

But stately does not mean definitely slow. At least, my opinion, enfolded in my recordings, is that the right tempo will be both stately and vigorous.

Part of what informed my choice of tempo was articulation. My Ps47, for instance, is on the verge of being a tongue-twister. Presumably the French lyrics were smoother at a quicker tempo?

"I'll give you an argument: Consider Pss. 20, 23, 79. In each of these you have double or run-on lines. No breathing possible, which indicates they were sung pretty fast. It also indicates, however, that no breath is needed between other pairs of lines. Now, I'd have to know French and look at it to see what might have been the practice, but consider Ps. 23. If you retain the rest at the end of line 1 you get good accents in line two: I SHALL not WANT in PASTures green he FEEDS me.

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Ah, I see. These two arguments make sense of your article: you are advocating cut time, 4/4 time in my case. As you can probably tell I've sung the entire psalter assuming 2/4 timing. Even Pss. 47 and 99. Hm. I'll have to go through all the tunes with that in mind.

Of course, do we know what rhythmic pattern and tempo the English versifiers had in mind, in their syllable selection? I suspect in many cases they were thinking of a slower tempo, giving weight to each half-note. Mr Helder could tell me what he is assuming, and perhaps he would know about Mr van der Kamp also. I'll ask.

Discussion of tempo, I think, would be more fruitful if we both had metronomes at our elbows. I won't have one until I get home, July 26. All I can say is that I chose the fastest tempi which seemed comfortable to me, except for Ps 50 which seems too fast. I never got around to redoing it.

"You know, I assume, that a Renaissance D is today's C. We need to typeset these psalms down into the intended ranges. "

Well,

1. I'm curious of your source. I've never heard that A was lower than 425, though my information doesn't refer before 1700. (That's as far as back as piano tuners learn!)

2. I *believe* the Book of Praise keys (which I follow slavishly) are all lower than the ones in Goudimel's volume 9. They are certainly lower than his polyphonic settings (vol 10). I do not know where the BoP got its keys. But if I'm right, and the vol 9 keys represent the original notation, then the BoP keys already lower than the originals, which (I think) regularly put the melodies into the F57-G59 range. (Sorry, it's been three very full years since I looked at vol 9.)

3. But apart from any discussion of the 'original' pitch, I think the key chosen will depend on whether the congregation will be singing harmony. If only sopranos and tenors sing melody, the BoP keys are appropriate. If everyone does, it should be two or three semitones lower. What do you think? Comparing the old Trinity Hymnal, for instance, with the new one, seems to indicate a concession to the disappearance of congregational harmony.

"Do you have my original critique of Cantus Christi?"

No. I have all your lectures (via Word MP3) but none of your writings except *Advice from a Sojourner.* Could you send it?

I am very interested in your responses to my opinions. It is very refreshing to correspond with someone who knows and loves the GenPs and has a different perspective.

Thank you.

Michael

At 10:52 PM 8/12/2009, Michael E. Owens wrote:

Dear Jim,

It opened well, thank you.

I concur with most of your preferences, though not quite as strongly.

On the Schütz Psalms, however, I concur more strongly. His settings are far more creative and exciting than anything in the Genevan Psalter. I have been chasing down settings from the Becker Psalter for 5 years now, and I've come up with fewer than 30. Have you any idea where to find more? Are there more?

Regarding the pauses in the Genevan Psalms, I still do not see how you've chosen where to omit and where to observe them, or double them. Is it based on the melody alone? Or the English translation of the Book of Praise? Is it consistently based on a 4/4 timing? Have you come up with it independently, or through traditions you're familiar with?

The question interests me greatly, because I hope to republish the Genevan psalter based on the harmony (*Orgelbegeleiding bij het Psalmzingen*) and rhythm you recommend, with lyrics from the Book of Praise revision now in progress. If you would be willing to help, I'd like to know 1. indications of where to pause and where not, and 2. recommended tempi. For instance, Psalm 19: pauses only at the end of every three phrases, and a tempo of half-note = 112-126. Or whatever.

I don't have strong opinions on any of these questions: I like all the harmonies, all the rhythms, and all the tempi I've ever heard. You, by contrast, have principled preferences, based on more years of experience than I've been alive.

The project would not get underway until at least 2013, but I'd be grateful for your input as soon as you can give it, since, if you'll excuse me for saying so, I don't know how much longer you'll be alive. Having lost Bahnsen, Rushdoony, JM Boice, Chilton, DJ

Kennedy, et al, within a decade, I feel some urgency.

There are many of your other recommendations I'd love to hear explained, but I've taken enough of your time.

Thank you.

Michael

On Thu, 13 Aug 2009 13:26:05 -0500, James B. Jordan writes:

Dear Jim,

It opened well, thank you.

I concur with most of your preferences, though not quite as strongly.

On the Schütz Psalms, however, I concur more strongly. His settings are far more creative and exciting than anything in the Genevan Psalter. I have been chasing down settings from the Becker Psalter for 5 years now, and I've come up with fewer than 30. Have you any idea where to find more? Are there more?

I'll send you a complete one. Send me your address.

On a much more important subject...

Regarding the pauses in the Genevan Psalms, I still do not see how you've chosen where to omit and where to observe them, or double them. Is it based on the melody alone? Or the English translation of the Book of Praise? Is it consistently based on a 4/4 timing? Have you come up with it independently, or through traditions you're familiar with?

Combination of the above. As far as I know, observing "all the pauses" is a recent development. The earlier Book of Praise, the Dutch books, and the Hungarian books I have do not observe them all. Most of my suggestions in the essay come straight from tradition, which I accept because it's how people came to sing them over time. A few of the suggestions come from my own experience. And some of it is a desire to create an overall sense of rhythm for the psalm as a whole.

The question interests me greatly, because I hope to republish the Genevan psalter based on the harmony (*Orgelbegeleiding bij het Psalmzingen*) and rhythm you recommend, with lyrics from the Book of Praise revision now in progress. If you would be willing to help, I'd like to know 1. indications of where to pause and where not, and 2. recommended tempi. For instance, Psalm 19: pauses only at the end of every three phrases, and a tempo of half-note = 112-126. Or whatever.

I'd love to help. For instance: Psalm 19, observe EVERY pause.

I don't have strong opinions on any of these questions: I like all the harmonies, all the rhythms, and all the tempi I've ever heard. You, by contrast, have principled preferences, based on more years of experience than I've been alive.

My "principle" is that I don't want to frustrate people over the Genevans. I've heard feedback from four different churches about the awkwardness of the Goudimels in the Cantus. That's what started me out. I know from experience that congregations can start straight with original rhythm chorales and psalms, and love them from day one, and want more and more. The church I'm working with right now it like that. And it's been my experience in the past. I DON'T want people settling for stuff like the Book of Psalms for Singing, which in my opinion is bad in just about every respect. If you start there, you'll

never get out of it.

I challenge people to learn to sing from the text, and then dance through a Genevan afterwards. It's worked well for me in the past. If the leadership is enthusiastic, the congregation loves to do it.

The project would not get underway until at least 2013, but I'd be grateful for your input as soon as you can give it, since, if you'll excuse me for saying so, I don't know how much longer you'll be alive. Having lost Bahnsen, Rushdoony, JM Boice, Chilton, DJ Kennedy, et al, within a decade, I feel some urgency.

Well, I'm 59, and I don't have a congenital heart condition, so I should be good for a few more years.

Jim