

Example 67A Josquin: Canon at the Unison, First Portion

Agnus Dei
from *Missa Mater Patris*

Josquin des Prez

The first subject is stated and answered conventionally at a two-measure distance. While the entire piece was cast in the Soft Lydian, it begins as if it were in Soft Dorian and this is confirmed by Dorian monophonic cadences terminating each of the first 4-measure imitative passages. Subject 1 begins and ends on high D, and then descends to end on an octave coupling. Then, unexpectedly, the subject is restated and re-answered. But at the same time, the text continues to move forward. Because of this thematic restatement, a sense of double counterpoint is generated beginning in measure 5. And, for the first time in the piece, one gets the feeling of material being thrown back and forth between the two voices.

Seemingly, a complete phrase is created by the polyphonic Lydian cadence on the downbeat of the 10th measure, but it's not nearly that simple. The *Dux* voice ended its second phrase with a monophonic Lydian cadence. Then, off the beat, it

started another imitative unit with the next phrase of text. It could just as easily have vamped around on "tollis" until the *Comes* finished in bar 10. Even with the cadence, the new text with subject 2 that begins before it acts to propel the music ahead and lessens the power of the full close. It is a nice moment and shows another way a cadence may be elided, via text-overlap alone.

The new off beat subject also offers contrast to the regularity of the four previous 2-bar imitations; something different seems to be happening. The problem of successive perfects in measure 9 was actually created by the *Dux* in bar 7. The quarter was fine the first time, and was probably added to keep the rhythm moving ahead. But it makes a mess when it returns. This is an example of a function reversal gone bad. Incidentally, it could be fixed easily by making the quarter an E. The use of the X in the analysis will be discussed below.

Example 67B Josquin: Canon at the Unison, Second Portion