

A Monastic Influence on André Raison:  
An Interpretation of his *Messe du premier ton*

by

Sarah Holland

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Church Music and the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Musical Arts.

---

Dr. Michael Bauer, Chairperson

---

Dr. Kyle Camarda

---

Dr. James Higdon

---

Dr. Alicia Levin

---

Dr. Forrest Pierce

Date Defended: November 4, 2014

The Thesis Committee for Sarah Holland  
certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

A MONASTIC INFLUENCE ON ANDRÉ RAISON:  
AN INTERPRETATION OF HIS *MESSE DU PREMIER TON*

---

Chairperson Dr. Michael Bauer

Date approved: November 4, 2014

## Abstract

André Raison, a seventeenth century French Classical organist-composer, lived a life entirely devoted to the Catholic church. The primary purpose of this study is to point out the sacred characteristics found in Raison's *Messe du premier ton*. This is accomplished through the study of chant and liturgy, culminating in an *alternatim* pairing of Raison's Mass with Henri DuMont's *Messe du premier ton*. Raison's compositional style harkens back to Titelouze. He includes two pivotal moments that most composers of his time neglect (the *Elevatio* and *Deo Gratias*), showing his appreciation for the scope and breadth of the liturgy. The form and style of the music of Raison often runs parallel to the structure of the liturgy and provides a sense of fluidity to the liturgy. Finally, in contrast to some of his contemporaries, he remained true to the ecclesiastical modes. In light of these factors, Raison is perhaps not given as much acclaim as he deserves, considering his influence on Johann Sebastian Bach, on his student, Louis-Nicolas Clérambault, and the important work he did for the church.

## Introduction

André Raison was one of a group of composers working in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whose names are familiar to organists, but are largely unknown outside of the organ world: Nicolas Gigault, Louis Couperin, Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, Nicolas Lebègue, Guillaume Nivers, and the subject of this lecture-recital, André Raison. Raison belongs to the so-called French Classical organ school, which flourished from roughly 1620-1740, spanning the time between the works of Jean Titelouze in the 1620's and the publication of Michel Corette in 1740.<sup>1</sup> While some scholars state that the French Classical school of organ composers excludes Titelouze, more recent scholarship includes Titelouze in this period, notwithstanding the gap in significant organ compositions between Titelouze in 1623 and Nivers in 1665.<sup>2</sup> Despite its seemingly anachronistic name (since the dates constitute what we commonly call the Baroque era), this repertory is referred to as "Classical," since it involves subtle graces and delicate gestures. Under Raison's hands, this delicacy is principally applied to sacred compositions.<sup>3</sup> While some scholars consider the aforementioned characteristics found in Raison's *Messe du premier ton* to be riddled with secular traits, the primary purpose of this study is to point out the sacred characteristics found in this work, including its structural foundation.<sup>4</sup> I will do this

---

<sup>1</sup> Corliss Richard Arnold, *Organ Literature: A Comprehensive Survey*, Vol. I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), 128; Edward Higginbottom, "The French Classical Organ School," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, ed. Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 178.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, *Organ Literature*, 125; John Shannon, *Organ Literature of the Seventeenth-Century: A Study of its Styles* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), 87.

<sup>3</sup> Higginbottom, "The French Classical Organ School," 176.

<sup>4</sup> Hwaeja Yoo Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses* (Ann Arbor, MI.: University Microfilms, 1970); Richard Taruskin, "Class of 1685," in *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 288; Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1951), 95.

through the study of both chant and liturgy. I will then discuss implications for performance, and finally present my interpretation of Raison's work.

### The Life of Raison

In order to understand Raison's compositions better, let us examine the life of this seventeenth century Frenchman. Although the exact dates of Raison's life are unknown, he is thought to have been born in 1641 in North Central France, in or near Nanterre (a small suburb, eight miles northwest of *Notre Dame de Paris*).<sup>5</sup> He likely died in 1721 at the *Abbey de Sainte Genevieve du Mont*, at the age of eighty. While this may seem to be a rather long life expectancy for the time, several of Raison's contemporaries lived for approximately the same number of years or longer, namely Nivers, Gigault, Du Mont, and Lebègue.<sup>6</sup>

We have sparse information about Raison's early childhood and upbringing. During his years in Nanterre he received formal musical education as well as faith formation at the seminary, which was founded in 1657.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the instruction was of such a high quality that the University of Paris filed a lawsuit against the institution, charging infringement upon its position as a university. Apparently, the lawsuit did not hinder educational programming at the seminary.<sup>8</sup> Raison told the Abbot, François Morin, that it was during his time at the seminary in Nanterre that he found his purpose in life.<sup>9</sup>

This strong education in an environment of devout faith led to Raison's next position, as organist at the *Abbey de Sainte Genevieve du Mont*. King Clovis founded this historic abbey in

---

<sup>5</sup> Harry Gay, *Four French Organist-Composers, 1549-1720* (Memphis, TN.: Memphis State University Press, 1975), 45-49.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

the fifth century.<sup>10</sup> Clovis is significant; he established the religious body that later become known as the *Chanoines Réguliers*. Clearly the history of the abbey influenced Raison, who dedicated his *Premier Livre d'Orgue* to François Morin, Superior General of the *Chanoines Réguliers*.<sup>11</sup> The abbey, like the seminary in Nanterre, functioned as an institution of higher education. In fact, this abbey was influential in the founding of the University of Paris.<sup>12</sup> Raison remained at the abbey until at least 1720.<sup>13</sup>

After his time at the *Abbey de Sainte Genevieve*, Raison moved to Paris proper. Here, he resided in the *Rue Saint Etienne des Grez*. Despite his move to a bustling metropolitan area, Raison again resided on sacred ground: namely, on the parish property of *Saint Etienne du Mont*.<sup>14</sup> Even in Raison's second Parisian residence, he occupied a small portion of a larger building, which was known as *le sacrifice d'Abraham (the sacrifice of Abraham)*.<sup>15</sup>

### The Influence of King Louis XIV

The reigning King of France during the *grande siècle* was King Louis XIV, also known as "The Sun King," who was a great patron of the arts. The economy flourished so much under Louis XIV's rule that compensation for organists was significant.<sup>16</sup> This is not a time in which musicians had to wear several hats in order to make a living. As we will see later, Raison fits this trend well. A favorable economy under Louis XIV was also a factor in the construction of quality instruments.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>16</sup> Higginbottom, "The French Classical Organ School," 178.

As Wilfrid Mellers notes, the king was their sun, and the French world rotated around him.<sup>17</sup> Louis XIV had an extraordinary influence upon all aspects of life at court and throughout France. This included the liturgical and musical life of his court and of the various religious establishments in France, including monasteries, in one of which Raison lived throughout much of his life. Of particular importance to our study is the fact that the Sun King valued chant, supporting a chant *schola*, or choir, known as the *Chapel de Plainchant* that sang in the royal chapel at Versailles.<sup>18</sup>

### The Secularization of the Sacred

The Age of Reason, often known as the Enlightenment, lasted from the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries. Both the intellectual and artistic life of this period of time witnessed an increasing secularization of the sacred, a phenomenon that dates back to at least the beginning of the Renaissance.<sup>19</sup> My thesis in this lecture-recital is that Raison constitutes an exception to the developing tradition of the secularization of the sacred. In this regard, it is important to remember Raison's unique background. His entire life was devoted to the Catholic Church, from his work at the seminary in Nanterre to the *Abbey de Sainte Genevieve* to Parisian parish life at *Saint Etienne*.

---

<sup>17</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 184. Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 38.

<sup>19</sup> Lukas Perry, "From Modality to Tonality: The Reformation of Harmony and Structure in Seventeenth-Century Music," University of Puget Sound, *Sound Ideas Summer Research* no. 78 (2011), 1. There are many examples of this trend at different times through the history of the French church. These include the composition of Renaissance masses and motets based on secular *cantus firmi*, the inclusion of mass movements in French Classic music based on dances that had been outlawed by the Council of Trent, and transcription of operatic arias for use as organ music in the nineteenth century French Mass.

## Raison's Organ Compositions

André Raison composed five organ masses. Corliss Arnold and Harvey Grace note that Raison's compositional style is tuneful, and employs rapid manual changes.<sup>20</sup> In his *Messe du premier ton*, this is evident in the second *Kyrie* (Ex. 5.1). Raison's lyrical melodic style is certainly characteristic of the subtle contours of plainsong.

**Example 5.1** Raison, *Messe du premier ton*, Second *Kyrie*, mm. 16-19

Within the twenty-one movements found in Raison's masses are settings of the *Elevatio* and *Deo Gratias*, both of which are often excluded in French Classical organ masses.<sup>21</sup> By including two pivotal moments that most composers of his time neglect, Raison shows his appreciation for the scope and breadth of the liturgy. Only two other known French Classical composers wrote these movements: François Couperin and Nicolas de Grigny.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, Couperin wrote both an *Elevatio* and a *Deo Gratias* in his 1690 *Messe pour les convents*; de Grigny included an *Elevatio* in his 1699 *Messe pour les principaux fêtes*.<sup>23</sup> Couperin also included a *Deo Gratias* movement in his *Messe à l'usage ordinaire pour des paroisses*.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Arnold, *Organ Literature*, 129. Harvey Grace, *French Organ Music Past and Present* (New York: H.W. Gray, 1919), 29.

<sup>21</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*; François Couperin, *Two Masses for Organ* (Mineola, NY.: Dover Publications, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Couperin, *Two Masses for Organ*; de Grigny, *Livre d'Orgue* (Miami, FL: Kalmus, 1985).

<sup>24</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, 88.



Raison writes in accord with the legislation contained in both Roman and French ceremonials, the former of which favors the organ after the *Elevatio*, and the latter of which favors organ and *schola* during the concluding rite.<sup>25</sup> The significance of the *Elevatio* is pivotal for Catholics, who believe in transubstantiation, the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist through consecration. It is important to note that the *Benedictus* was taken as a single unit in the *alternatim* scheme by this time.<sup>26</sup> The term Mass itself is derived from the dismissal: *Ite missa est*.<sup>27</sup> The Mass is not concluded until the presider states "*Ite Missa est*," or "The Mass is ended," and the assembly responds "*Deo gratias*," or "thanks be to God." In the French Classical organ repertoire, the *Deo gratias* was played by the organ, in response to the chanted *Ite missa est*.<sup>28</sup> There are no extended preludes or postludes in the French Classical repertory such as exist in the Northern European liturgies. Rather, the *Deo gratias*, which is as brief as the other versets of the Mass, functions as the concluding music for the Mass.

Raison preserved Titelouze's *plainchant en taille* style in his aforementioned *Kyrie* with the plainsong in the pedal (Ex. 5.2). Additional examples of this style include: *Kyrie des doubles a cinq parties* from the 1685 *Livre de musique pour l'orgue* by Gigault (1624-1702) (significantly, taken from a composer who pre-dates Raison) (Ex. 5.3); a *Pange Lingua* setting

---

<sup>25</sup> Edward Higginbottom, "Organ Music and the Liturgy," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, ed. Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 132.

<sup>26</sup> Aaron James, "The Liturgical Function of French Baroque Organ Repertoire," *Nota Bene: Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Musicology* 1, no. 1 (2008), 86.

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 34.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Silbiger, *Keyboard Music Before 1700* (New York, NY.: Routledge, 2004), 95; Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, *École d'orgue* (Montréal: Les Éditions Outremontaises, 2010); Charles Tournemire, *Suite de Morceaux*, Op. 24. (Paris: Pérégally et Parvy fils, 1902). Later French composers, including Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens of the nineteenth century and Charles Tournemire of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, composed organ works entitled *Ite missa est*.

by Titelouze, from his 1623 collection entitled *Hymnes de l'église* (Ex. 5.4); and Raison's *Autre Premier Kyrie* from the work at hand, his 1688 *Messe du premier ton*.<sup>29</sup>

**Example 5.2** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Autre Premier Kyrie*, mm. 5-9



**Example 5.3** Gigault, *Livre de musique pour l'orgue, Kyrie des doubles a cinq parties*, mm. 5-9



Pédale de Trompette.

<sup>29</sup> Nicolas Gigault, *Livre de musique pour l'orgue* (Paris: Durand, 1902); André Raison, *Premier livre d'orgue* (Saint Maurice, Switzerland: Editions musicales de la Schola Cantorum, 2014); Jean Titelouze, *Oeuvres complètes d'orgue* (Paris: Schott, 2014).

**Example 5.4** Titelouze, *Hymnes de l'église, Pange Lingua*, mm. 1-11

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 1-6. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the keyboard accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are "Pan - - ge lin - - gua". The second system shows measures 7-11. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "glo - - ri - - o - - - - si". The keyboard accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

Secular and Sacred Characteristics

Scholars such as Hwaeja Yoo Lee believe that Raison's work contains influences from dance forms.<sup>30</sup> Like Lee, Arnold refers to a specific dance form, the *chaconne*, as fitting the secular tastes of the day.<sup>31</sup> Composers during this time in France use the term *chaconne* quite loosely, for any *rondeau* with couplets and a refrain. Furthermore, the term *chaconne* and *passacaille* were often used interchangeably.<sup>32</sup> Are these repetitious traits not also true of the structure of various parts of the liturgy, from litanies to psalmody paired with an antiphon? In other words, the formal connection between a liturgical form and a musical composition may justify the use of the musical form, despite possible secular associations with this form. Thus, it

<sup>30</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses*, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold, *Organ Literature*, 129.

<sup>32</sup> Betty Bang Mather. *Dance Rhythms of the French Baroque: A Handbook for Performance* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 279.

is possible that Raison wrote *chacottes* in imitation of liturgical forms. Notice that Raison utilized this form in his *Trio en passacaille* from the *Christe* movement of his *Messe du deuxième Ton*. In addition to potential formal liturgical associations with their organ compositions, French Classical composers such as Raison undoubtedly wrote musical forms to fit the requirements of liturgical practice, creating short pieces to fit the brief period of time allotted for organ playing between various sections of the Mass.

These so-called secular elements are not limited to dance forms. Some consider excessive *agréments*, or ornamentation, as well as colorful echos to be secular characteristics in French Classical repertoire.<sup>33</sup> While Raison did incorporate both of these traits, even a pedal trill, into his *Messe du premier Ton*, he was far from a showman.<sup>34</sup> As for the echos, rather than being excessively colorful, Raison utilizes these to suit the ritualistic action. For instance, in the *Gloria*, specifically in the sixth organ verset, the echo may be used to illustrate the text “hear our plea,” asking the audience, like God, to listen again in order to hear the prayers (Ex. 6.1). Raison’s use of echo functions in a similar fashion to *lectio divina* in contemplative prayer.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison’s Organ Masses*, 22-23.

<sup>34</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 223. This is reminiscent of the argument made by Bernard of Clairvaux of the twelfth century, who was opposed to Abbot Suger’s grandiose Gothic architectural plans at the Abbey of St. Denis in Paris. Bernard argued that excess in art and ornament was distracting to worshippers.

<sup>35</sup> *Lectio divina* is the style of sacred reading embedded within contemplative prayer. Like the echo employed by Raison, during the practice of *lectio divina*, one reads the passage more than once, listening to the material again.

**Example 6.1** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Gloria: Qui Tollis*, mm. 5-7

The Style of Raison's Organ Masses

In the French Classical organ mass, the organ played principally during the Mass Ordinary.<sup>36</sup> Gradually, a style of writing of the organ developed which had its own characteristic stylistic traits. One of these traits involved organ registration and its connection to the individual styles of the different movements of the Mass.<sup>37</sup> The styles employed by Raison are typical for Mass movements of the early French Classical period: a *plein jeu* for the opening movements of the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*, while the *Sanctus* ends with a fugue.<sup>38</sup> What makes Raison's fugues unique is his treatment of the plainsong melody with *vorimitation*. This is seen in the second organ verset of the *Gloria*, the *Benedicimus Te*. (Ex. 7.1). As you will see and hear, the opening leap of a perfect fifth is immediately imitated with a tonal answer in the tenor voice before the plainsong melody enters in the soprano part.

<sup>36</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Arnold, *Organ Literature*, 129.

<sup>38</sup> Yvonne Rokseth, *La Musique d'orgue au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XVI<sup>e</sup>*, trans. Patricia Fitzsimmons (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1977), 198.

**Example 7.1** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Gloria: Benedicimus Te*, mm. 1-3



Gay describes Raison as “a man of much method, proficient at counterpoint.”<sup>39</sup> Such proficiency in counterpoint parallels the disciplined polyphony of Titelouze described by Dufourcq.<sup>40</sup> This is significant. It suggests that Raison was writing in a more serious style than the simple melodic gestures that characterized the operatic and courtly compositions of the time. While Gay refers to a “noticeable repetition of material and idea” in a rather pejorative fashion, it may be that this is not due to any sort of limitation in compositional skill, but rather is a means of providing fluidity within the liturgy. We should note that Gay’s opinion of Raison’s compositional abilities is not entirely negative. In fact, he refers to the organist-composer as having a “contrapuntal inventiveness that is probably the greatest of his day, second only to Titelouze.”<sup>41</sup> This also links Raison to the early stages of the French Classical period.

---

<sup>39</sup> Gay, *Four French Organist-Composers*, 55.

<sup>40</sup> Fenner Douglass, *The Language of the Classical French Organ: A Musical Tradition Before 1800, New and Expanded Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>41</sup> Gay, *Four French Organist-Composers*, 55.

## Modality Evolves to Tonality

Modality has functioned as a method of organization of Roman Catholic liturgical plainsong since its inception.<sup>42</sup> The modal influence on both sacred and secular music changed in the seventeenth century, at the same time as the Enlightenment challenged orthodox ideas about theology.<sup>43</sup> In fact, the majority of seventeenth century music falls in this gray area between modality and tonality.<sup>44</sup>

In Catholic liturgical music that is based upon chant, composers generally respect the mode of the chant in use.<sup>45</sup> This is fitting, as the modal system remained the primary music theoretical construct until the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>46</sup>

Raison employs his previously discussed compositional restraint, by staying true to the Dorian mode in his *Messe du premier ton*. Nivers also took this ecclesiastical approach.<sup>47</sup> This is evident in his *Livre d'orgue contenant cent pièces de tous les tons de l'église* and *Troisième livre d'orgue des huit tons de l'église*.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Perry, "From Modality to Tonality: The Reformation of Harmony and Structure in Seventeenth-Century Music," 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Perry, "From Modality to Tonality: The Reformation of Harmony and Structure in Seventeenth-Century Music," 3.

<sup>47</sup> Willi Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, trans. Hans Tischler (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1972), 398.

<sup>48</sup> Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers, *Livre d'orgue contenant cent pièces de tous les tons de l'église* (Paris: R. Ballard, 1665); Nivers, *Troisième livre d'orgue des huit tons de l'église* (Paris: R. Ballard, 1675).

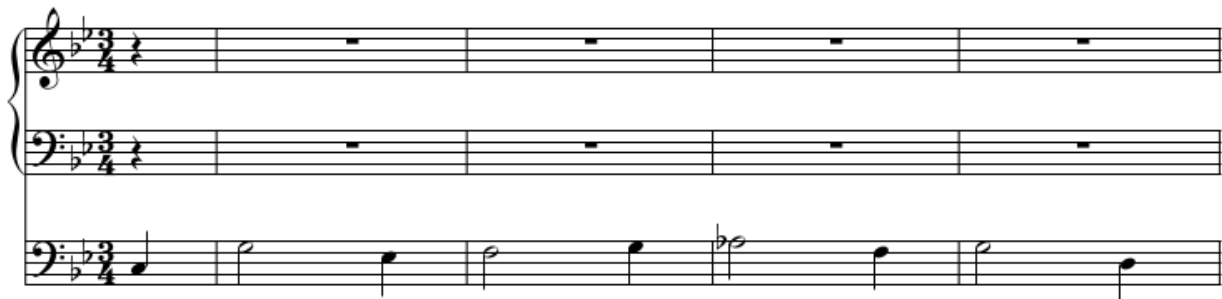
## Raison's Influence on Johann Sebastian Bach

In the late seventeenth century, French music became famous across Europe, including Germany.<sup>49</sup> Many of Johann Sebastian Bach's pieces featured influences from French music. One instance of this influence was the possible borrowing of the theme from Raison's *Trio en passacaille* in his famous *Passacaglia*, BWV 582 (Ex. 9.1-2).

**Example 9.1** Raison, *Messe du deuxième ton: Christe: Trio en passacaille*, mm. 1-6



**Example 9.2** Bach, *Passacaglia*, BWV 582, mm. 1-4



At this time in Germany, the *passacaglia* was considered to be distinct from other dance forms, due to its use of continuous variations as opposed to strictly bipartite form.<sup>50</sup> Again, repetition is shared by the *passacaglia* and the liturgy, for instance during the prayers of the faithful. Bach also utilized this formal structure in his Cantata 150, which concludes with a

<sup>49</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, 62.

<sup>50</sup> Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, Inc., 1991), 199.



*Ciaccona* in B minor, *Meine Tage in den Leiden* (Ex. 9.3). The *chaconne* illuminates the textual interplay between God “my faithful shield” and Christ “he who now stands beside us.”<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach*, 202.

**Example 9.3** Bach, Cantata 150, *Ciaccona*, mm. 1-13

Fagotto.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Soprano.  
en - det Gott den - noch zu Frue

Alto.  
en - det Gott den - noch zu Frue

Tenore.  
en - det Gott den - noch zu Frue

Basso.  
en - det Gott den - noch zu Frue *tr*

Continuo.  
8 6 9 7 4 6

Fagotto.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Soprano.  
den; Chri - sten

Alto.  
den;

Tenore.  
den;

Basso.  
den;

Continuo.  
9 7 6

Like many composers, Raison was better known by generations following his own. For Raison this was, in part, because he was never employed as a secular court musician.<sup>52</sup> As Arnold states, “the public preferred the secular.”<sup>53</sup> Therefore, his legacy lives on through those whom he influenced, such as his student Louis-Nicolas Clérambault; Bach; and through subsequent performances.<sup>54</sup> In addition to Raison’s aforementioned influence on Bach, as seen in the German composer’s *Passacaglia*, Pirro notes a strong similarity between the theme of Raison’s *Duo* from the second *Agnus* of his *Messe du premier ton* and Bach’s so-called “Dorian” *Toccat*a, BWV 538 (Ex. 9.4-5).<sup>55</sup>

**Example 9.4** Raison, *Messe du premier ton*, *Second Agnus*, *Duo*, mm. 1-5



**Example 9.5** Bach, “Dorian” *Toccat*a, BWV 538, mm. 1-3



<sup>52</sup> Gay, *Four French Organist-Composers, 1549-1720*, 51.

<sup>53</sup> Arnold, *Organ Literature*, 135.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>55</sup> Grace, *French Organ Music Past and Present*, 29.

Raison's lack of fame certainly should not imply that he is not worth studying. Raison is at the forefront of liturgical composition for the Mass during the French Classical era. As Higginbottom states, "his work merits pride of place in an account of French organ music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."<sup>56</sup> Lee concurs, stating, "Raison's five Masses constitute one-third of the fifteen known organ Masses written by composers of the French Classical period."<sup>57</sup>

### *Alternatim* Practice

One way in which organ music is connected to the liturgy is through *alternatim* practice. Both Raison and Bach employ this technique in their sacred music. Bach utilized *alternatim* practice in his setting of the *Te Deum*, namely *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 725 (Ex. 10.1).<sup>58</sup> Raison's *Messe du premeir ton* is also a work which utilizes *alternatim* practice.

---

<sup>56</sup> Higginbottom, "The French Classical Organ School," 176.

<sup>57</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses*, vi.

<sup>58</sup> Higginbottom, *The French Classical Organ School*, 188.

**Example 10.1** Bach, *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 725, mm. 1

Herr Gott

9 Dich Gott Vater

At root, the term “*alternatim* practice” simply refers to the alternation between two different musical forces. According to Yvonne Rokseth, this practice harkens back to the Renaissance, a period in which French abbeys and parishes utilized *alternatim* plainsong in antiphonal psalmody.<sup>59</sup> In fact, it probably predates the Renaissance, harkening back to the beginnings of responsorial and antiphonal psalmody. From the beginning, *alternatim* practice did not rely on an obviously audible plainsong melody.<sup>60</sup> This is also true in regard to French Classical organ music. One benefit of not needing to hear a recognizable chant *cantus firmus* is flexibility. Raison himself advocated this, to allow for more frequent use in diverse religious institutions.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Rokseth, *La Musique d’Orgue au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XVI<sup>e</sup>*, 51.

<sup>60</sup> Higginbottom, *The French Classical Organ School*, 186.

<sup>61</sup> Raison, *Premier livre d’orgue*, i.

Aaron James notes that some ceremonials did not always call for *alternatim* practice. Rather, the chant and organ were to sound simultaneously.<sup>62</sup> However, this is not true of all ceremonials. The specific ceremonial most relevant to Raison is the *Caeremoniale Parisiense* of 1662. It called for organ in the following portions of the Mass: *Kyrie, Gloria, Offertory, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, Communion, and Deo Gratias*.<sup>63</sup> Raison followed this *Caeremoniale* by excluding the *Credo*.

While Raison did exclude the *Offertoire* from his Mass, this does not necessarily imply that he disobeyed the regulations of the *Caeremoniale*. It is likely that this movement was improvised, as the *Offertoire* is often one of the more virtuosic movements in the French Classical Mass repertoire. One example is François Couperin's *Offertoire sur le Grands Jeux* from his 1690 *Messe pour les paroisse*. In this work, Couperin features an active pedal line, consecutive *agréments*, and changes of mode and meter.<sup>64</sup>

Much of this repertoire was only notated for pedagogical purposes.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, notation allowed for the spread of Parisian tastes into the provinces.<sup>66</sup> Although *alternatim* practice was employed throughout the year, publication of elaborate organ and choral music in *alternatim* was especially important on higher feast days.<sup>67</sup> Raison was certainly aware that liturgically speaking, the *Offertoire* featured ritual action that needed musical accompaniment.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> James, "The Liturgical Function of French Baroque Organ Repertoire," 86.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold, *Organ Literature*, 129.

<sup>64</sup> François Couperin, *Two Masses for organ*.

<sup>65</sup> Higginbottom, "The French Classical Organ School," 186.

<sup>66</sup> Shannon, *Organ Literature of the Seventeenth-Century*, 88.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>68</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 34. During this portion of the liturgy, the gifts of the people in bread and wine are presented at the altar, accompanied by music. These very gifts are later distributed to believers during Communion.

## Chant and the Modern Interpretation of a Raison Mass

Raison was responsive to the needs of the individual communities he served, and of the needs of those who might use his music. We do not know if Raison's *Messe du premier ton* was written for a particular church or employed a particular chant or *fauxboudon* setting. Without this information, the modern interpreter must face the difficult decision about what setting to use when performing one of Raison's masses using *alternatim* practice.

Fortunately, Raison did leave us with the following statement to consider:

I have written the Masses to accommodate the playing of a number of monks and nuns who have special melodies, and who are often at a loss to find a number of adequate pieces to complete their Mass. I have left a page after each mass for putting the first plainsongs of the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus*. For those who wish to send them to me, I will compose and copy them as clearly as if they were printed, and in this way all the communities which have special melodies will therefore have Mass which will be appropriate for them, and which will employ the *plein jeux* on other occasions.<sup>69</sup>

While the aforementioned "special melodies" may imply a *fauxbourdon* texture, this statement also emphasizes Raison's flexibility, as the composer wrote for individual communities.<sup>70</sup> Of course, the number of monks and nuns available to sing depended on the size of the community. Raison's life was not spent in a cathedral setting where choral music could have alternated with organ compositions. Therefore, I consider either a monophonic or a

---

<sup>69</sup> André Raison, *Premier livre d'orgue*.

<sup>70</sup> Deborah Kauffman, "Fauxbourdon in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: 'Le secours d'une douce harmonie,'" *Music and Letters* 90, no. 1 (2009): 22.

*fauxbourdon* setting of chant to be appropriately paired with Raison's mass, the former texture perhaps more appropriate for liturgies in which the composer himself participated, and the latter of which would have been heard in larger communities.

Regarding the chants that I have selected for tonight's interpretation, they were written by Henri DuMont.<sup>71</sup> Joseph Butler also utilized DuMont's chants in his interpretation of a Raison Mass.<sup>72</sup> Over a decade later, Marie-Claire Alain as well selected DuMont's chant for use in her recording of François Couperin's *Messe pour les couvents*.<sup>73</sup>

Du Mont arrived in Paris approximately two years before Raison was born. Du Mont was employed by the brother of the Sun King. He was the only composer of his time to write masses directly based on plainsong themes.<sup>74</sup> While it is possible that, due to Raison's cloistered lifestyle, he did not know Du Mont personally, this is not an impediment to the pairing of their works.

Organ music in alternation with plainsong must conform to specific requirements, such as mode. Both Du Mont and Raison adhered to Mode I, or the Dorian mode. While some composers strayed from the *cantus firmus* utilization of plainsong over time, ecclesiastical prescriptions often required that the incipit phrase of the plainsong should continue to be utilized. This was even more important in versets written in solemn modes. In his treatise *Le institutioni harmoniche*, the sixteenth century Italian music theorist Gioseffo Zarlino characterized Mode I

---

<sup>71</sup> Henri DuMont, *Cinq messes en plain-chant*. (Paris: 1669).

<sup>72</sup> André Raison, *Messe du deuxième ton*. Henri DuMont, *Messe du deuxième ton*, Joseph Butler, et al, recorded October 1985, *Pro Organo* 7008, compact disc.

<sup>73</sup> François Couperin, *Messe pour les couvents*, Henri Du Mont, *Ordinaire de la Messe du 6<sup>3</sup> Ton*, Marie-Claire Alain (organ), *compagnie musicale Catalane*: Josep Cabré, director; Ivette Gonzàlez, Sheryl Sueyres, Anne Ibos-Augé, Bertille de Swarte, Corine Nanette, recorded October 27-November 1, 1998, *Erato Disques* 3984-25507-2, compact disc.

<sup>74</sup> "Henri Du Mont," *Gazette Musicale*, last modified 2009, [http://www.musicologie.org/Biographies/dumont\\_henri.html](http://www.musicologie.org/Biographies/dumont_henri.html).



as being half-way between sad and cheerful. He claims that this mode is appropriate for pairing with a serious text.<sup>75</sup> It is plausible that Raison adhered to the ideas contained in Zarlino's writings, as the composer states in his preface, "In these Masses, you will find three from each tone, which will serve for the variety of feasts."<sup>76</sup> Organists naturally preferred to write for liturgies more common than a particular feast day, so that their work could be used more frequently.

Du Mont's chant setting is sensitive to the contours of the Latin text that it sets. French musicians had been taught about Latin text setting since the end of the sixteenth century. This was the result of the work of Charles IX, under whose patronage the *Academie de poesie et musique* was founded.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the fact that composers of seventeenth century France composed organ music that was sensitive to Latin texts should come as no surprise. This sensitive text setting calls for metrical rhythm, contrary to the free rhythm practiced by the well-known monks of the monastery of Solesmes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>78</sup>

#### Melodic Similarities between Raison and DuMont's *Messes du premier ton*

In addition to mode, there are definite melodic similarities between DuMont's chant and Raison's *Messe du premier ton*. Specifically, in the *Christe* movement, both prolong the fifth scale degree, before descending to the first scale degree (Ex. 13.1-2). This is again evidence of

---

<sup>75</sup> Christopher Stenbridge, "The modes (*toni*) and their attributes according to Zarlino," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, ed. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 316.

<sup>76</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's organ Masses*, 14.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>78</sup> David Tunley, *François Couperin and 'The Perfection of Music'* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), 45.

Raison and DuMont's adherence to the Dorian mode, typically features a reciting tone on scale degree five, second only in importance to the final, or scale degree one.<sup>79</sup>

**Example 13.1** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Christe*, mm. 1-4

**Example 13.2** Du Mont, *Messe du premier ton, Christe*, m. 5

Other phrases, such as the second phrase of Du Mont's *Christe* and the alto line beginning in measure eight of Raison's *Christe* are strikingly similar (Ex. 13.3-4). Such melodic similarities coupled with rhythmic disparities are fitting for the chant and the French Classical repertory, both of which treat rhythm freely, the former depicting the natural flow of speech, the latter treating rhythm unequally, as in *notes inégales*. Raison himself wishes for his compositions to have a sense of motion, by instructing the performer to give "movement and air to all the pieces."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Perry, "From Modality to Tonality: The Reformation of Harmony and Structure in Seventeenth-Century Music," 4.

<sup>80</sup> Grace, *French Organ Music Past and Present*, 26.

**Example 13.3** Du Mont, *Messe du premier ton, Christe*, m. 6



**Example 13.4** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Christe*, mm. 8-10



Wilfrid Mellers claims that such rhythmic subtleties achieve emotionalism.<sup>81</sup> Certainly the emotionalism of the French Baroque is stylized. It has not reached the heightened emotionalism of the later Romantic era. Nonetheless, there are several liturgical moments featuring the absence of text, allowing for individual prayer, in which a certain preparatory ethos must be achieved. Raison's modal music also aims to achieve this state of being in a manner analogous to the way the Doctrine of Affections functions in the Baroque period.<sup>82</sup>

Lee states that it is not surprising to find the *air de cour* style fused with Raison's organ works, reasoning that organ music has had close ties with vocal music from the beginning.<sup>83</sup> While this is a good point, one must not overlook the plethora of sacred vocal music with ties to organ music, for instance, the practice of chanting in *alternatim* with organ. Lee gives another

---

<sup>81</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, 294.

<sup>82</sup> Perry, "From Modality to Tonality: The Reformation of Harmony and Structure in Seventeenth-Century Music," 6.

<sup>83</sup> Lee, *Secular Elements in André Raison's organ Masses*, 25.

example of sacred vocal music correlating to organ music; namely, the *ricercare* of the sixteenth century, which developed from the vocal motet.<sup>84</sup>

Both Raison and Du Mont wrote multiple *Kyrie* settings with melodic similarities, specifically in the incipit phrases. Du Mont's first setting of the *Kyrie* is found in Raison's second and final *Kyries* (Ex. 13.5-7), while Du Mont's final *Kyrie* is found in Raison's first *Kyrie* (Ex. 13.8-9).

**Example 13.5** Du Mont, *Messe du premier ton, Premier Kyrie*, m. 1



**Example 13.6** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Second Kyrie*, mm. 1-2

Jeu doux pour vne Basse et Dessus de Trumpette

**Example 13.7** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Quatriesme Kyrie*, mm. 1-2

1 DUO

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 26.

**Example 13.8** Du Mont, *Messe du premier ton, Dernier Kyrie*, mm. 10-11

Ký - ri - e

\* e - lé - i - son.

**Example 13.9** Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Autre Premier Kyrie*, mm. 1-3

The *Sanctus* is yet another Mass movement featuring melodic similarity. There is an obvious shared melodic shape between the first and second versets (Ex. 13.10-11). The characteristic repeated notes, followed by a leap of a perfect fifth, found in Raison's *Benedictus*, are also found in DuMont's setting (Ex. 13.12-13).

Example 13.10 Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Sanctus*, mm. 1-7

Musical score for Example 13.10, measures 1-7. The score is written for piano in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features a treble clef with a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with a long note on C5. The bass clef has a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. The second system (measures 5-7) continues the melodic line in the treble clef, moving from C5 down to B4, A4, and G4. The bass clef continues with a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2.

Example 13.11 Du Mont, *Messe du premier ton, Sanctus*, m. 2

Musical score for Example 13.11, measure 2. The score is written for voice in G major, 4/4 time. The melody starts on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with a long note on C5. The lyrics "San - - - ctus," are written below the notes.

Example 13.12 Raison, *Messe du premier ton, Benedictus*, mm. 1-3

Musical score for Example 13.12, measures 1-3. The score is written for piano in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system (measures 1-2) features a treble clef with a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with a long note on C5. The bass clef has a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. The second system (measures 3) continues the melodic line in the treble clef, moving from C5 down to B4, A4, and G4. The bass clef continues with a bass line starting on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. The lyrics "Jeu doux", "Main gauche.", and "Basse de Voix humaine." are written below the notes.

**Example 13.13** Du Mont, *Messe du premier ton, Benedictus*, m. 9



Conclusion

In conclusion, Raison's *Messe du premier ton* represents an exception to the developing tradition of the secularization of the sacred during the Enlightenment. This is evident in his harkening back to the compositional style of Titelouze. This preservation of the sacred is no surprise, due to Raison's unique background. His entire life was devoted to the Catholic Church, from the seminary in Nanterre to the *Abbey de Sainte Genevieve* to Parisian parish life at *Saint Etienne*. Furthermore, this was a time under King Louis XIV in which the arts, including plainsong, were valued. Specifically, the form and style of the music of Raison often runs parallel to the structure of the liturgy. Additionally, Raison included pivotal versets, namely the *Elevatio* and *Deo Gratias*, which many of his contemporaries overlooked. Finally, he remained true to the ecclesiastical modes. This composer is perhaps not given as much acclaim as he deserves, considering his influence on Johann Sebastian Bach, on his student, Louis-Nicolas Clérambault, and his important work for the church.

## Bibliography

- Apel, Willi. *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*. Hans Tischler, trans. Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1972.
- Arnold, Corliss Richard. *Organ Literature: A Comprehensive Survey*, Vol. I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Lanham, M.D.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003.
- Douglass, Fenner. *The Language of the Classical French Organ: A Musical Tradition Before 1800*, New and Expanded Edition. New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Gay, Harry. *Four French Organist-Composers, 1549-1720*. Memphis, TN.: Memphis State University Press, 1975.
- Gazette Musicale*. "Henri DuMont." Last modified 2009.  
[http://www.musicologie.org/Biographies/dumont\\_henri.html](http://www.musicologie.org/Biographies/dumont_henri.html).
- Grace, Harvey. *French Organ Music Past and Present*. New York: H.W. Gray, 1919.
- Higginbottom, Edward. "The French Classical Organ School." in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, edited by Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber, 176-89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- . "Organ Music and the Liturgy." in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, edited by Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber, 130-47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- James, Aaron. "The Liturgical Function of French Baroque Organ Repertoire." *Nota Bene: Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Musicology* 1, no. 1 (2008): 81-98.
- Kauffmann, Deborah. "Fauxbourdon in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: 'Le secours d'une douce harmonie.'" *Music and Letters* 90, no. 1 (2009): 68-93.
- Lee, Hwaeja Yoo. *Secular Elements in André Raison's Organ Masses*. Ann Arbor, MI.: University Microfilms, 1970.
- Little, Meredith, and Natalie Jenne. *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach*. Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Mather, Betty Bang. *Dance Rhythms of the French Baroque: A Handbook for Performance*. Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Mellers, Wilfrid. *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*. New York: Roy Publishers, 1951.
- Perry, Lukas. "From Modality to Tonality: The Reformation of Harmony and Structure in Seventeenth-Century Music." University of Puget Sound, *Sound Ideas Summer Research* no. 78 (2011): 1-45.



- Rokseth, Yvonne. *La Musique d'orgue au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XVI<sup>e</sup>*. Patricia Fitzsimmons, trans. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1977.
- Shannon, John. *Organ Literature of the Seventeenth-Century: A Study of its Styles*. Raleigh, NC.: The Sunbury Press, 1978.
- Silbiger, Alexander. *Keyboard Music before 1700*. New York, NY.: Routledge, 2004.
- Stembridge, Christopher. "The modes (*toni*) and their attributes according to Zarlino." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, edited by Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber, 316-18. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Taruskin, Richard. "Class of 1685." In *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 288. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Thompson, Bard. *Liturgies of the Western Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Tunley, David. *François Couperin and 'The Perfection of Music'*. Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013.
- Wainwright, Geoffrey, and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

#### Scores

- Bach, Johann Sebastian. *Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich*, BWV 150. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1884.
- . *Tocatta et Fuga in d*, BWV 538. New York: Bärenreiter, 1972.
- . *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 725. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1893.
- . *Passacaglia*, BWV 582. New York: Bärenreiter, 1984.
- Couperin, François. *Two Masses for Organ*. Mineola, NY.: Dover Publications, 1994.
- de Grigny, Nicolas. *Livre d'Orgue*. Miami, FL.: Kalmus, 1985.
- DuMont, Henri. *Cinq Messes en plaint-chant*. Paris: 1669.
- Gigault, Nicolas. *Livre de musique pour l'orgue*. Paris: Durand, 1902.
- Lemmens, Jacques-Nicolas. *École d'orgue*. Montréal: Les Éditions Outremontaises, 2010.
- Nivers, Guillaume-Gabriel. *Livre d'orgue contenant cent pièces de tous les tons de l'église*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1665.

———. *Troisième livre d'orgue des huit tons de l'église*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1675.

Raison, André. *Premier Livre d'orgue*. Saint Maurice, Switzerland: *Editions musicales de la Schola Cantorum*, 2014.

Titelouze, Jean. *Oeuvres complètes d'orgue*. Paris: Schott, 1903.

Tournemire, Charles. *Suite de morceaux*, Op. 24. Paris: *Pérégally et Parvy fils*, 1902.

#### Discography

Couperin, François. *Messe pour les couvents*. DuMont, Henri. *Ordinaire de la Messe du 6<sup>3</sup> Ton*.

Marie-Claire Alain, *compagnie musicale Catalane*: Josep Cabré, director; Ivette

González, Sheryl Sueyres, Anne Ibos-Augé, Bertille de Swarte, Corine Nanette.

Recorded October 27-November 1, 1998. *Erato Disques* CD 3984-25507-2.

Raison, André. *Messe du deuxième ton*. DuMont, Henri. *Messe du deuxième ton*. H.

Joseph Butler, et al. Recorded October 1985. *Pro Organo* CD 7008.