V WORK DISCUSSION 2

Pierre de la Rue, *Missa pascale*

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Any reader, whether musician, scholar, or book fetishist, who opens the Mechelen Choirbook to folios 16^{v} and 17^{r} will encounter the beginning of a mass that bears neither title nor author. And yet, if the reader is even moderately acquainted with European culture, he or she will readily identify the illuminations that immediately catch the eye (▶ Fig. I.2 and ▶ Fig. II.1). Opposite Emperor Maximilian kneeling in prayer, the main illumination shows Christ just risen from the dead, with the one Roman soldier to be awake obviously confounded. A very similar illumination appears on fol. 15^{v} in D-Ju 4, another source of the mass.[1] The reader will suspect that this mass has something to do with Eastertide.

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If we assume our reader to understand Latin and to be sufficiently acquainted with the Roman liturgy – two preconditions more easily met in the Renaissance than today – another prominent feature will strengthen this conjecture. Although the mass opens with a "Kyrie", as masses do, the tenor quotes another text in red ink, that of the Gregorian chant introit to the Easter mass: "Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum alleluya alleluya." These words, taken from an archaic Latin translation of Psalm 138 (139), verse 18, are commonly understood to refer to Christ speaking after his resurrection: "I have risen and now I am with you."

1 A third manuscript, B-Br 15075 (fols. 64^{v}–83^{r}), opens with more general and conventional illumination. The first pages of three other copies of La Rue's work all fell victim to art collectors: In B-Br 6428 (fols. 106^{v}–22), the illuminations and any title or ascription adjacent to them were cut out; in D-Ju 5 (fols. 26–43) and I-Rvat 34 (fols. 20–35), the first page is missing altogether. One can only surmise that they also contained pictures of Christ risen. A single fragment from the "Sanctus" and "Pleni" (lacking ascription, as is normal) is found in D-BÜ 1604. For a complete list of sources, see Appendix 4.

The importance of this inscription is shown not only by the red ink (*rubrica* – from which the term "rubric" is derived), which always highlights important statements in medieval manuscripts; it is also demonstrated by the fact that the text in red ink was entered into the manuscript first, before the liturgical text "Kyrie eleyson" was added in black ink in the tenor voice. A look at the introit chant melody confirms that the tenor not only paraphrases the chant but that the text in red ink is carefully aligned with its corresponding melodic phrases (▶ Ex. V.1 and ▶ Ex. V.3).[2] Every other source of this work – all of them produced in the Alamire workshop – contains the same additional texts in red ink, though the strategies of the text copyists were different in each source. For instance, in D-Ju 5, the text scribe forgot to add the mass ordinary text to the tenor in the "Christe", leaving only the introit text "Posuisti super me" (in red ink, of course). Immediately afterwards, in "Kyrie" II, the words of the mass ordinary were entered first and the red introit text only crammed in later.

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Picture and chant thus immediately instruct the user of this manuscript that this is an Easter mass, even though the mass does not bear a title.[3] The designation was so obvious that there was no need to name it.[4] As they survive today, only D-Ju 5 and B-Br 15075 name the author as Pierre de la Rue, although in four other sources the attribution may have been lost.[5]

The work comes from late in La Rue's life. Two outward factors point to this: first, the fact that it is for five voices throughout (except for the "Pleni" and "Benedictus"), a texture still comparatively rare in the early decades of the sixteenth century, and explored by La Rue only after c. 1505; and second, that it is found exclusively in manuscripts from the Habsburg-Burgundian source complex, more informally known as Alamire manuscripts. Both factors may be dependent on each other. Of the eight five-voice masses that La Rue wrote after 1506, five are found

2 For convenience, the chant examples in the present article draw on the *Graduale Pataviense* of 1511. The versions given there seem to match La Rue fairly closely, though not exactly. No implication is intended that La Rue knew or used the 1511 *Graduale*. The *Graduale Pataviense* is published in facsimile, ed. Christoph Väterlein, and is also available online at urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00001999-9.

3 Only one extant source today identifies the work as *Missa pascale*: B-Br 15075.

4 On the importance of naming masses in Alamire manuscripts, see Meconi, "Habsburg-Burgundian Manuscripts".

5 See footnote 1 and Appendix 4.

only in Alamire manuscripts. The same can be said for only two of the twelve four-voice masses that he composed in the same period.[6]

There is a substantial tradition of mass movements related to Easter from the mid-fifteenth century onwards.[7] Around 1500, the tradition of the Easter mass was fully developed, as witnessed by no less than four settings by Heinrich Isaac (two for four voices, one for five, one for six). But it was almost exclusively a German tradition; Isaac's masses were almost certainly composed during his employment at the court of Emperor Maximilian I.[8] Besides Isaac, most Easter masses are by German composers (for instance, Conrad Rein) or turn up anonymously in German sources.[9] La Rue's mass is one of the very few instances where a composer of the Franco-Flemish tradition took up this tradition (see Table 1). At least two other composers of Easter masses – Agricola and Isaac – had relations to the Habsburg courts.

Most of these masses and Kyrie movements are based on a specific technique, the paraphrase of relevant mass ordinary chants. Instead of using a single cantus firmus throughout all sections of the mass ordinary, which would then give the mass its name – such as a *Missa L'homme armé* or a *Missa Ave regina celorum* – the relevant chants that would be sung monophonically on Easter Sunday were paraphrased in each ordinary movement: a Kyrie chant in the Kyrie, a Gloria chant in the Gloria, etc. This means that every movement of the mass had its own, distinctive cantus firmus. In earlier generations, this chant was most often presented more or less embellished in the superius, but in La Rue's time it could turn up in every part or combination of parts, and the compositional spectrum would extend from traditional cantus firmus technique on the one end to more modern through-imitation on the other. The use

6 Information extracted from Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue*, 98–99. This count ignores pieces of doubtful authorship, pieces attributed to La Rue by modern scholarship, and stand-alone mass movements. Masses that include a five-voice movement in an otherwise four-voice texture (such as the Credo in the *Missa Ave Maria*) are counted as four-voice masses.

7 For a list of mid-fifteenth-century polyphonic settings of proper and ordinary chants for Easter, see Haggh-Huglo, "Easter Polyphony".

8 On the possibility that Isaac's four-voice *Missa pascalis* (i) was originally destined for Constance, see Burn, "What Did Isaac Write For Constance?", 67–70. One of the few non-German composers participating in this tradition was Jacob Barbireau, who composed a *Kyrie pascale* (extant in the Alamire sources D-Ju 22, A-Wn 1783, and A-Wn 15497). Barbireau may have written this movement – a rare example of a Netherlandish *alternatim* setting, as Staehelin has pointed out – at the emperor's request, however; in 1490, he was called a "musicus prestantissimus" and "familiaris" of Maximilian. See Staehelin, *Die Messen*, vol. 3, 135; and Wegman, "Barbireau". See also Dumitrescu, "The Paschal Kyrie", 14–15.

9 See Burn, "New Light".

TABLE 1. *Missae* and *Kyrie pascales* in the Alamire manuscripts

COMPOSER	MASS OR KYRIE	SCORING	SOURCES AND NOTES
Alexander Agricola	Mass	4	A-Wn 1783 – attr. Agricola D-Ju 22 I-VEcap 756 – Kyrie and Gloria without ascription; Credo from Isaac, *Missa Tmeiskin was jonk*; Sanctus and Agnus attr. Johannes Ghiselin
Jacob Barbireau	Kyrie	4	A-Wn 1783 A-Wn 15497 D-Ju 22
Heinrich Isaac	Mass	6	B-Br IV.922 – Kyrie separate; Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus combined with Kyrie from Isaac's *Missa pascalis* (ii) à4 I-Rvat 160 – Kyrie only ("Kyrie" III missing)
Pierre de la Rue	Mass	5	B-Br 6428 B-Br 15075 D-BÜ 1604 D-Ju 4 – called "Missa Resurrexi" D-Ju 5 I-Rvat 34 Mech
Pierre de la Rue	Kyrie	4	A-Wn 15497
Laurentius Vorda	Kyrie	4	B-Br IV.922 I-Rvat 160

of the liturgically appropriate chants instead of some other chosen melody or model explains why these masses have no title or name but bear a liturgical designation. In order to distinguish these two practices, two German terms are useful, and will be employed in what follows: *Eigentenores*, a term probably coined by Heinrich Besseler and roughly translatable as "proper tenors", will refer to masses that use the relevant ordinary chants, while masses using a non-ordinary cantus firmus, whether sacred or secular, can be said to have a *Fremdtenor* (foreign tenor).[10]

10 Besseler, *Bourdon and Fauxbourdon*, 135. Besseler's terms have been used in German musicological literature, though infrequently. See, for instance, Staehelin, *Die Messen*, vol. 3, 14 and passim.

TABLE 2. Pierre de la Rue, *Missa pascale:* cantus firmus layout

MOVEMENT	SECTION	FREMDTENOR	LITURGICAL PLACE	EIGEN-TENOR•
Kyrie	"Kyrie" I	Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum	Easter mass, introit	Kyrie I
	"Christe"	Posuisti super me manum tuum		
	"Kyrie" II	Mirabilis facta est scientia		
Gloria	"Et in terra"	Prae timore autem eius	Easter vespers, fourth antiphon	Gloria I
	"Qui tollis"	Cito euntes dicite discipuis ejus		
Credo	"Patrem"	Resurrexi et adhuc	Easter mass, Introit	Credo I
	"Et resur-rexit"	–	–	
Sanctus	"Sanctus"	Postulavi patrem meum	Easter vespers, second anti-phon	Sanctus IV?
	"Pleni"	[3vv. – no c.f.]	–	
	"Osanna"	Et valde mane una sabbatorum	Easter lauds, Benedictus antiphon	
	"Benedictus"	[2vv. – no c.f.]	–	
	"In nomine"	[2vv. – no c.f.]	–	
Agnus Dei	"Agnus" I	Vespere autem sabbati	Holy Saturday, antiphon	Unidenti-fied
	"Agnus" II	Surrexit Dominus Alleluja (3 x)	?	

• Designations refer to the *Liber usualis*.

Modern scholars have placed La Rue's *Missa pascale* in the *Fremdtenor* category – to be more precise: almost every movement of the mass uses a different *Fremdtenor*. As already noted, the Kyrie uses the introit chant to the Easter mass – that is, the chant accompanying the entrance of the celebrant and his ministers and thus preceding the Kyrie – in the tenor. In like manner, every subsequent movement of the mass ordinary uses a different *Fremdtenor*, from the proper of either the mass or the office (exceptionally, the Credo re-uses the introit *Resurrexi*; see Table 2).[11] And every proper chant is very conveniently identified, as already pointed out, by its text in red ink. This is an approach not found in any other Renaissance Easter mass, and it is puzzling. Why did La Rue choose these specific chants, and in this order? They do not form a "narrative framework" (a *historia*, as in a late-medieval chant office),[12] and the repetition of *Resurrexi*, especially, destroys any attempt to interpret them as a coherent narrative.[13]

As it turns out, this is not the whole story. Not previously noted is the fact that La Rue's *Missa pascale* does not restrict itself to *Fremdtenores*, but *also* uses the *Eigentenores* of the Easter mass throughout, even if the precise models in two of the movements are difficult to discern.[14] These chants are sung, embellished, in the superius, and sometimes in the altus and bassus as well. In other words, this is a double cantus firmus mass throughout: whenever the tenor is quoting a proper chant, an ordinary chant sounds simultaneously (see again Table 2). This is a singular achievement. Though some motets combine two chants simultaneously – Josquin's *Alma redemptoris mater* / *Ave regina caelorum* and *Victimae pascali laudes* / *D'ung aultre amer* come immediately to mind – double cantus-firmus treatment in masses appears to have been usually restricted to Credo settings. Again, Josquin is the composer who in-

11 See Kreider, "The Masses", 47–51; Bloxam, "A Survey", 399–408, and Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue*, 109.
12 Bloxam, "A Survey", 401.
13 Bloxam, ("A Survey", 401–3), argues that the coherence of this seemingly random selection is musical, not text-based, as all chosen cantus firmi start with an upward skip.
14 Jesse Rodin has noted that La Rue's Credo paraphrases Credo I, and Ted Dumitrescu has noted that La Rue's Kyrie paraphrases Kyrie I. These observations, however, were passing remarks in the context of research focused elsewhere. My own discovery occurred independently of both. See Rodin, *Josquin's Rome*, 289 n. 49; Dumitrescu, "The Paschal Kyrie", 15.

dulges most in this compositional approach (usually with the Gregorian Credo I, sometimes Credo IV).[15]

By using this approach, and varying it by using not only different *Eigentenores* but different *Fremdtenores* as well, La Rue's *Missa pascale* may be seen as an attempt at one-upmanship over Josquin.[16] It may also be understood as a reference to Heinrich Isaac. Isaac was the composer at the Habsburg courts with the highest output of Easter masses – all of them using only *Eigentenores* (and adhering to *alternatim* practice). La Rue and Isaac may have met personally at Innsbruck at the famous encounter of Philip's and Maximilian's chapels on 26 September 1503,[17] and the two composers were certainly aware of each other's work. It is noteworthy that among the not so many works of Isaac in the Habsburg-Burgundian court manuscript complex, there are two of Isaac's *Missae pascales*, though they are transmitted in a hodgepodge arrangement (see again Table 1).

Whether the *Missa pascale* represents an attempt to outshine both Josquin and Isaac or not, combining two different cantus firmi simultaneously is a daunting task, and it was certainly a gesture meant to impress. La Rue simplified his task by carefully choosing proper chants that had the same *finalis*, or last note, as the *Eigentenores*.[18] He therefore avoided the complication of having to handle different modes simultaneously – though he did not shy away from that challenge elsewhere.[19] And of course, he could handle his models with considerable rhythmic freedom and embellish them at will to make them fit contrapuntally.

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15 Peter Urquhart has listed the following cases for combination of *Eigentenor* and *Fremdtenor* in Josquin's Credo settings (here ordered alphabetically): The masses *Faysant regretz*, *Fortuna desperata*, *Gaudeamus*, *Hercules dux Ferrarie*, *L'homme armé super voces musicales*, *La sol fa re mi*, *Malheur me bat*, *Pange lingua*, *Sine nomine*, as well as the slightly dubious *L'ami baudichon* and *Mater patris*, and the stand-alone Credo *De tous biens playne*. See Urquhart, "An Accidental Flat", 130 n. 8. Rodin, *Josquin's Rome*, 287–92, represents the most comprehensive discussion of *Eigentenor*-Credos so far.

16 On La Rue's relation to Josquin, see Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue*, 172–80.

17 Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue*, 36. See also Körndle, "*So loblich, costlich und herlich*". Körndle provides an explanation for the seemingly odd combination of Requiem mass (probably not La Rue's *Requiem*) and mass for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (probably not Isaac's *Missa Virgo prudentissima*) on that occasion.

18 For instance, in the Gloria "both *cantus prius facti* are based on melodies in the seventh mode, whose incipits are almost identical" (Bloxam, "A Survey", 403). La Rue's choice of modality was obviously based on the fact that the Gregorian Gloria chant also is in the seventh mode. Similar observations are valid for the other movements.

19 I refer to his motet *Regina celi*, where the tenor is Lydian but the other voices are Phrygian; see Fuhrmann, "Pierre de la Rues *Regina celi*".

INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT DISCUSSION

Let us have a closer look at the Kyrie and Gloria to understand how La Rue approached his self-imposed challenge. As we already know, the opening of the mass combines the mass ordinary chant known now as Kyrie I in the superius with the first phrase of the introit *Resurrexi* in tenor 1, in a version probably originating from Mechelen.[20] The *Eigen-*
▶ p. 203 *tenor* Kyrie, in a version contemporary with La Rue, is shown in ▶ Ex. V.2.
▶ p. 204 The introit phrase, in the tenor, is transposed up a fifth (▶ Ex. V.3).

What are the other voices doing? Whenever La Rue chooses to present his chant-bearing voices simultaneously, the options for the other voices are naturally somewhat limited. In the very beginning, there is a text-book imitation between altus, bassus, and tenor 2, but soon these voices
▶ p. 204 engage in busy, unpredictable counterpoint (▶ Ex. V.3). The texture is somewhat loosened shortly before the first cadence, in b. 10, when the tenor pauses, and is then reduced to a three-voice intermezzo; in both passages bassus and tenor 2 go more or less in parallel motion.[21] A more complex texture emerges again in b. 14, and from b. 18 there is a drive to the cadence. The overall impression is one of complexity – La Rue's texture is conceived not so much in terms of sheer sound (as Isaac's sometimes is), but in the virtuosity of lengthy, eminently singable lines.

La Rue quotes the beginning of the Kyrie I chant in his first "Kyrie" with very slight embellishment in the superius, and the long notes at the beginning – *g'-a'-c"-b'-a'* – would remind every contemporary singer immediately of the chant model. This is probably why La Rue is quite faithful to the first two phrases of the chant. The end of the Kyrie is more problematic. Every version of the Kyrie I chant known to me ends on *e* – a fact reflected in Isaac's settings.[22] But in La Rue's mass, the superius closes on *g'*. This is all the more striking as La Rue ends the first "Kyrie" on a triad built on E. One possible explanation for this would be that La Rue wished to correct what he perceived as a "deviant" modality: despite its first phrase ending on *e*, the Kyrie I chant as a whole has a *finalis* of *g*, and may be assigned to the eighth mode. In this context, the final *e* of the chant's first invocation is an abnormality. By changing the final note

20 As speculated by Bloxam, "A Survey", 405–8.
21 Bar numbers refer to CMM 97/5.
22 In addition to the 1511 *Graduale pataviense*, where the Kyrie is found on fol. 184^{v}, I have checked various sources on the Cantus database (http://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/).

(and by implication the final phrase) of the melody while ending on a sonority built on E, La Rue may have "corrected" the modal incoherence. In contrast, he follows the introit in the tenor (but for the transposition) much more closely.

Another, perhaps more plausible, explanation for the departure from the *Eigentenor*'s closing pitch is that La Rue favoured a relaxed approach to chant paraphrase. It is typical for his style to quote a chant model in long notes at first and then abandon or at least obscure it afterwards. In the next section, for example, the "Christe", the only reference to the *Eigentenor* might be detected at the beginning, in the first three notes of the bassus. But this can also be understood as a pre-imitation of tenor 1, where the second phrase of the introit ("Posuisti super me") starts with the same pitches; the way in which the same counterpoint accompanies the chant quotation, first in tenor 2, then in the superius, strongly suggests the latter interpretation. It is also possible that La Rue consciously intended the ambiguity of the reference. But he also throws the *Fremdtenor* introit melody overboard after the first phrase, and the texture relaxes after b. 40, with playful imitations and even the kind of final repetition that La Rue loves so much (bb. 51–53 more or less repeated in bb. 54–56).

The second "Kyrie" returns to business, when La Rue makes a clear reference, once again, to the *Eigentenor* in the superius. But here his approach is totally different from the first "Kyrie": even if we count the pre-imitation in tenor 2 at the very beginning, La Rue is done with the chant paraphrase after six bars (b. 67), and then the superius happily engages in free play, at one point even imitating tenor 1 (in b. 70). Tenor 1, in its turn, paraphrases its chant quite faithfully, with certain licences that may or may not go back to La Rue's chant models. The texture is varied, sometimes almost amounting to an "antiphonal" division, with playful minim runs in all voices, especially from b. 80 to the end.

The Gloria treats its models even more diversely than the Kyrie. La Rue opts here for a highly varied texture, with many duets and with the tenor cantus firmus absent for long stretches. Two principles present themselves. At the beginning, the outer voices are almost totally dependent on the chant model (Gloria I in the *Liber usualis*). They paraphrase it with very minor embellishment, as is natural with such a long text (▶ Ex. V.4 and Ex. V.5).

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First, superius and altus proceed in imitation at the octave, then tenor 2 and bassus take up the next clause, "Laudamus te", in imitation at

the upper fourth. For "Benedicimus te" the imitation is at the upper fifth, and then La Rue reverts to the upper fourth for "Adoramus te". Even more than in the Kyrie, anyone familiar with this chant must have recognised it immediately: in fact, the reference to the chant is so precise that it would easily be possible to align the syllables of the text to the pitches derived from the chant, although this is not evident from the leisurely text placement in the Alamire choirbooks.

After a final short duet between the upper voices, tenor 1 sets in, bearing the antiphon "Prae timore autem eius". Here, La Rue necessarily has to change the texture completely, restricting the *Eigentenor* to the superius, as he did in the Kyrie. We may note also that he opts for a much looser paraphrase, leaving out pitches like the repeated *b*s in "Gratias agimus" because they would clash with the long *c'* in the tenor.

Throughout the Gloria, La Rue employs a working method of imitative and fairly exact paraphrase of the *Eigentenor* chant model in the outer voices when tenor 1 is not sounding, and looser paraphrase, restricted to superius, when it does.[23] This same approach is also partially valid for the Credo. In this movement the reference to the *Eigentenor* is, once again, not continuous: sometimes the chant is clearly quoted; at other times there is no reference at all. La Rue follows here a tradition of intermittent chant quotation in Credos with a *Fremdtenor*. The most outstanding representatives of this tradition are Marbriano de Orto and Josquin Desprez, as Jesse Rodin has shown.[24] That De Orto, Josquin, La Rue, and many others did not opt for paraphrasing the chant throughout is understandable from a musical point of view: Gregorian Creeds are usually composed of humble stock phrases repeated many times, probably to be easily memorable even by lay people. La Rue refers often enough to the chant to make his intention clear.[25] For instance, the very opening of the setting, "Patrem omnipotentem", clearly refers (transposed up a fifth, and in the altus) to the chant phrase characterised by

23 In the superius-altus duet in bb. 136–41, the chant phrase "Qui sedes ad dexteram patris" is paraphrased in the altus exclusively because the superius would have to go up to *g''* at this point; the remainder of the clause ("miserere nobis") is paraphrased in both voices, in imitation.

24 Rodin, *Josquin's Rome*, especially 289 n. 49, where Rodin lists masses that "incorporate Credo I quotations alongside another *cantus prius factus*". According to Rodin, La Rue does this also in four other compositions: the masses *Ave sanctissima Maria*, *O salutaris hostia* (the two totally canonic masses!), *Sancta Dei genitrix*, and the stand-alone *Credo Angeli Archangeli*.

25 Rodin has counted sixteen quotations, though he did not specify them. In my view, some phrases are ambiguous enough to defy any clear classification as either chant-based or freely composed.

the initial turn *a*–*b*♭-*a* and ending on *g*. In case anyone should doubt the reference, La Rue repeats this several times, always in the same voice and transposition, adapted to new text phrases: "et invisibilium", "filium dei unigenitum", "ante omnia saecula" (a little veiled), "ex Maria virgine", "passus et sepultus est", and possibly "et vivificantem". But he did not hesitate to depart from the model altogether if he saw fit ("et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam" being a particularly glorious example in its triumphant ascending motion from bassus to superius, spanning two and a half octaves).

La Rue deviates from his established procedure by setting the second part of the Credo, from "Et resurrexit", without any *Fremdtenor*. A break at "Et resurrexit" is not unusual, but here it carries a symbolic intention: while the introit serving in the first part told us that "I have risen" ("Resurrexi"), now the Creed itself speaks about Christ's resurrection. It is also hardly an accident that the music changes into a dance-like triple proportion at the words "et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum" ("and I await the resurrection of the dead"). There is also a short tripla section at the "Amen".

Just as La Rue gave up on the use of the *Fremdtenor* in the second part of the Credo, it initially appears that he gives up using an *Eigentenor* in the Sanctus and Agnus. In the Sanctus, the superius does not paraphrase Sanctus XVII as, for instance, Isaac's masses do. Instead, there is a faint resemblance to Sanctus IV of the *Liber usualis*, especially in the first two phrases. Afterwards, any resemblance is seemingly lost. The same thing holds with the Agnus Dei. But the texture of these movements suggests that there was an *Eigentenor* model being used. For instance, both "Sanctus" and "Osanna" present a particularly opaque surface, with little or no imitation and almost no reduced texture (though in the second half of the "Osanna" there is a kind of free ostinato between the three lower voices at bb. 113–22, which adds a bit of playfulness). Such dense setting occurs typically in this mass when both *Eigentenor* and *Fremdtenor* are displayed simultaneously.

Moreover, both the "Sanctus" and the two "Agnus Dei" movements start with an imitation of a motif dissimilar to the *Fremdtenor* that appears a few measures later: in the "Sanctus", an upward leap of a fourth, followed by a downward third; in the first "Agnus", an ascending triad followed by a downward fourth; and in the second "Agnus", a syncopated

jump to the upper second and then a stepwise descending fourth.[26] Comparing this to the beginnings of "Kyrie" II, Gloria, and Credo, it is hard to avoid the impression that, here too, La Rue is using some not-yet-identified pre-existent material. It seems unlikely that a composer as methodical (or stubborn) as La Rue suddenly gave up with one of the mass's central ideas mid-composition. It is not unthinkable that La Rue chose to dismiss the second cantus firmus after the Credo's "et resurrexit" for symbolic reasons. But I consider it much more probable that La Rue referred in Sanctus and Agnus to a local chant tradition as yet unidentified.

The Sanctus sections not based on any chant – the trio "Pleni sunt caeli", and the two duets, for "Benedictus" and "In nomine" – are noteworthy in displaying another peculiarity of La Rue's style: his fondness for playing with through-imitation without applying it consistently. For instance, the "Pleni" starts with an imitation between altus and superius at the upper fourth, while the bassus provides a free counterpoint. But in b. 40, the altus takes up the last four measures of that bassus contrapuntal line to accompany the material repeated in the superius. On the upbeat to b. 43, the bassus unexpectedly repeats a snippet of his own previous line (bb. 38–39), causing a false cadence. Meanwhile, altus and superius start another imitation, this time at the upper fifth. The bassus once again provides free counterpoint, but goes along more co-operatively, first doubling the altus in tenths, and after the second cadence (b. 47) doubling the superius in tenths. Beginning at the pickup to b. 50, the superius repeats its post-cadential snippet, but now the altus takes up the doubling (in parallel sixths, but otherwise exactly analogous to the bassus), while the bassus presents a new line that turns out to be the first point of imitation taken up by all three voices in turn. This somewhat cumbersome description sets out what is immediately grasped by the listener: a fluid play of repetition and variation that unfolds unpredictably, seemingly following its own hidden logic. The "Benedictus" is a kind of fantasy on two motives in invertible counterpoint, while the "In nomine" starts with imitation of one of these same motives (the one first presented in bassus), then continues with what sounds almost, though irritatingly not quite exactly, like a two-voice canon.

26 Interestingly, in "Agnus" I La Rue combines coloured breves in the outer voices with *integer valor* in altus and tenor 2, thus making the listener believe for a moment that a mensuration canon or some other device is at work here.

As noted before, there is evidence – even if inconclusive – that the two "Agnus" sections also simultaneously present both *Eigentenor* and *Fremdtenor*. But, in contrast to the rather dense "Sanctus" and "Osanna", they proceed in a more relaxed manner, with greater textural variety (witness particularly the almost antiphonal grouping in bb. 28–34 of "Agnus" I), and imitation or at least motivic interplay between the outer voices. With repeated listening, the Agnus sounds more and more like a fitting conclusion to a boldly demanding cycle. At the end of the second "Agnus", La Rue starts to unfold the "dona nobis pacem" on an ascending motive, first, characteristically, introduced in passing. The simplicity of this concept seems to be a fitting conclusion to a mass that sometimes tries almost too hard.