Music in time:
Royal patronage & renaissance

O’Neill Media Center Stacks
ML172 .R69 2004

1492:
Iberian Purity/Danger:
Statist Unity/Expelling
Margins/Inventing “Europe”

25 September 2007
Week 04 - Lecture 01
Was the “Renaissance” an age of “secularization”?

Steinberg: we find in the Renaissance not only all kinds of religious subjects; but we also find their bodies emphasized, and especially their sexuality

Leo Steinberg: Sexuality of Christ in the Renaissance and Modern Oblivion (1983)
From Middle Ages to “Renaissance” [*re-birth*]:
Emphasize the BODY
(and “NATURE” in general)
In other words: not “Super-natural”
Michelangelo, *Risen Christ* (1514-20)
Sexuality has come in from margins to sacred center of Christian story.

Significance???

Christian / Humanism hybridity:

*Divinity became Humanity and suffered as we do.*

NB: Post-Plague turn to this world as the center of attention / value. Not “secularization” – i.e., not replacement of tradition with “modernity” – but rather: same religious images hybridized with humanism
Opening words of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*:

*Umana cosa è aver compassione degli afflitti...*

*Human(e) it is to have compassion on the afflicted...*

What does Steinberg mean by “modern oblivion”?

Oblivion = *forgetting* → “to wipe out of existence”
Moderns have literally “erased” the memory of Christ’s sexuality---American Puritans!
Conclude:
Was Renaissance an age of “secularization”? 

• Don’t think linearly in terms of “progress”
  –  E.g., “secular” replaces “religion”; “perspective” replaces “hieratic”

• RATHER: think “cultural hybridity”

• Renaissance “Christian Humanism”
  –  a hybrid of two cultures
  –  Christianity + “Pagan” Humanism of “antiquity”

Christian-Humanist Hybrid: Musical Example

Can we represent 3-dimensional “realism” musically?
2- and 3-dimensional representations

**Monody: “one voice”**
Gregorian Chant / Hildegard of Bingen
Polyphony: “several voices”

Missa se la face ay pale

I. Kyrie

Conson: Tenor crescit in duplo.

Soprano, alto, tenor, bass

“one voice” [even though all of Fenway is singing!]

“four voices”:

Soprano, alto, tenor, bass
MONODY [chant] = “one line”

POLYPHONY = “several voices”

Three Renaissance musical tools:
Compare visual tools: perspective; contraposto; chiaroscuro

• Polyphony [cf. perspective]
  – “many voices”
Three Renaissance musical tools:

- *Cantus firmus* -- i.e., “song solid [firm]”
  - “solid [unchanging] song in bass”

Three Renaissance concepts:

- Counterpoint [cf. *contraposto*]
  - voices singing “counter” to one another
  - provides 3-dimensions
Guillaume Dufay, "Missa 'Se la face ay Pale'" [1460]
[Si la face est pale]
Mass based on the song "If the face is pale"

- Guillaume Dufay, France
- "Mass"
  - five musical movements:
    - Kyrie; Gloria; Credo; Sanctus; Agnus

Piece #1: Ballad, “If the face is pale” : a song of unrequited love!!

If the face is pale
  the cause is love.
  This is the main cause,
  and Love
  is so bitter to me that
  I think he would fancy
  seeing me drown
  in the high seas.

Now one can plainly see
  that without
  the beautiful one I pursue,
  I can have nothing good.
Love bites, love bleeds
It’s bringin’ me to my knees
Love lives, love dies
It’s no surprise
Love begs, love pleads
It’s what I need
--Def Leppard

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the cause is love.
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I think he would fancy
seeing me drown
in the high seas.

Now one can plainly see
that without
the beautiful one I pursue,
I can have nothing good.

-- Anonymous

I wish you’d look at me
that way
Your beautiful eyes
lookin’ deep into mine
Telling me more than
any words could say
But you don’t even know
I’m alive
Baby to you all I am
Is the invisible man
--98 Degrees

I sit in the crowd
And close my eyes
Dream you’re mine
And you don’t know
You don’t even know that I exist
--Toni Braxton

Piece #2: **Kyrie, eleison!** [Lord, have mercy!]

• **Kyrie: hybrid!!!**: first movement of the Mass + *If my face is pale*...
Christian Humanism: Musical hybrid

- Tenor voice [cantus firmus] sings the love song to words of “Kyrie”, i.e., Kyrie, eleison! Lord, have mercy on me!!!

- Other three voices: sing against [contra] this voice: “counterpoint” to give the “3-D” feel
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Conclude: Was Renaissance an age of “secularization”?

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1492: “Spain”
al-Andalusia ("Spain"): ca. 720 - 1492
Islamic ["Moorish"] kingdom + co-existing Christians and Jews
Fundamentalists -- e.g., Tunis -- "fanatical Almohadists" -- Berber tribesmen -- set up puritanical regime in Marrakesh [Morocco].

Factions destroy al-Andalus. Allows “Catholics” to “re-conquer” [reconquista].

The Alhambra [1238-1358]
Fortress and palace of Islamic rulers
Granada, Spain
Modeled on Garden of Eden
“Flowing waters…”

Tigris and Euphrates
Alhambra [“Spain”] --- Venice [“Italy”]
[Note Arabian / Islamic arches]
1492: Expulsion of the Jews
[Modern nation-states: one language, one religion]

- **1469: Marriage**
  - of Ferdinand of Aragon [eastern Spain] and Isabella of Castile [western Spain]

- **1478: Spanish Inquisition**
  - set up to deal with Jews and conversos
  - NB: a crown court, no appeal to Rome!

- **1492: conquest of Granada**
  - Christopher Columbus sails west
  - “Catholic Monarchs”
  - Expulsion of the Sephardim (i.e., Iberian Jews)

- **1502/1526: “Moors” given choice between baptism and expulsion**

- **1609/1614: Final expulsion of Moors**
  - Shakespeare: “Othello” 1598-1604
1492: From “Iberian Peninsula” to “España”
Creation of “Spain” as modern nation-state

- Defeat of the Moors at Granada
- New Kingdom created by Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella
- Expulsion of the Jews [Sephardim]
- Columbus sent to “New World” by new monarchs
- Shift from Mediterranean to “Atlantic Triangle”