

COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editor of the JOURNAL:

Jennifer Bloxam's pathbreaking study "In Praise of Spurious Saints: The *Missae Floruit egregiis* by Pipelare and La Rue" (this JOURNAL 44 (1991): 163–220) throws important new light on a problematic issue: the relationship between Matthaëus Pipelare and Jacob Obrecht. Although direct contact between the two composers has never been demonstrated, there are good reasons for suspecting a connection. Pipelare operated in the same kinds of musical circles as Obrecht (in fact their paths may have crossed in Antwerp in the 1490s), and his two early Masses show him to be a man cast in very much the same compositional mould.¹ Professor Bloxam's demonstration that Pipelare's *Missa De Sancto Livino* was almost certainly written for Ghent, the hometown of Jacob Obrecht, opens the intriguing possibility of contact through Ghent channels. Documentary evidence, to be presented below, strengthens that possibility. A Mass in polyphony for St. Livinus was sung annually in Ghent's main church, St. John's (now St. Bavo). The musical establishment responsible for its execution was the Guild of Our Lady associated with that church, the largest of the three Marian confraternities in Ghent. Jacob Obrecht's father, the Ghent city trumpeter Willem Obrecht, was a member of that guild, and a parishioner of St. John's.

Professor Bloxam's research has revealed that Pipelare's *Missa De Sancto Livino* is closely related to Obrecht's *Missae De Sancto Donatiano* and *De Sancto Martino* (p. 197). In addition to the structural and stylistic connections she points out, there are striking parallels in cantus firmus treatment, particularly between the St. Livinus and St. Martin Masses. Both employ equal-breve rhythmicization in some sections and free embellishment in others; when the former procedure is applied, both composers tend to retain the original ligature patterns of the chant and to place rests after each word or two of the text, analogous to similarly-placed barlines in contemporaneous chant books.² So far as I know, procedures of this kind are unique to these two Masses. Even within Obrecht's oeuvre there is no parallel to them: the *Missa*

¹ Ronald Cross has argued that Pipelare's earliest surviving Masses are those in the "Meester Heyarijc van Looen" fascicle of VienNB 11883; see "Matthaëus Pipelare: A Historical and Stylistic Study" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1961), 296–98. Of these, *Missa Sine nomine* presents a notationally fixed melody in various mensural and canonic permutations, procedures of which Obrecht was the chief exponent in the last decades of the fifteenth century. The other is *Missa De Sancto Livino*, whose connections to Obrecht's Masses for St. Donatian and St. Martin have now been demonstrated by Bloxam ("In Praise of Spurious Saints," 197; see also below).

² Cf. Barton Hudson, ed., *New Obrecht Edition* (Utrecht: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1984), vol. 3, xxvii, and Bloxam, "In Praise of Spurious Saints," 185 and 192–94.

De Sancto Donatiano employs free rhythmicization and embellishment all the way through, and the *Missa De Sancto Johanne Baptista* (if it is Obrecht's) adopts the rhythmic layout of Busnoys's *Missa L'Homme armé*.³

The close relationships in cantus firmus selection, layout and treatment would suggest that Obrecht's and Pipelare's Masses were written for similar occasions. Reinhard Strohm has discovered that polyphonic Masses for St. Donatian and St. Martin were donated by Bruges citizens in the years when Obrecht, as succentor of St. Donatian's, would have been responsible for writing them.⁴ If a similar endowment led to the creation of Pipelare's Mass, as seems likely, then Ghent is the obvious place to look for candidates.

As far as the musical establishments of Ghent are concerned, one does not need to look far. The accounts of the Guild of Our Lady in the church of St. John, which have survived more or less complete for the periods 1475–1492 and 1498–1578, record the following annual payment: "Item a sung Mass for St. Livinus on the day of his Elevation ordered by heer Willem de Wilde, 30 sous parisis."⁵ This item, which recurs until well into the sixteenth century, can be traced back to an endowment made on 17 June 1448 before the aldermen of the Ghent bye-law.⁶ The document laying down its practical and financial details is given below, with a literal translation. It can be summarized as follows. A Mass for St. Livinus is to be celebrated annually on the day of his Elevation (27 June), before his altar in the Church of St. John. The full personnel of St. John's is required to participate: three parish priests, dean, subdean, sextons, vicar-singers,⁷ organist, and carillonneur. The administration of the endowment is entrusted to the Guild of Our Lady. To this end, Willem de Wilde has provided capital enabling the guild to purchase land or property yielding an annual interest of at least 30 sous parisis.

³ The possibility of Obrecht's authorship of the latter Mass was first raised in Bloxam, "A Survey of Late Medieval Service Books from the Low Countries: Implications for Sacred Polyphony, 1460–1520" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1987), 438–51, and further elaborated in R.C. Wegman, "Another 'Imitation' of Busnoys' *Missa L'Homme armé*—And Some Observations on *Imitatio* in Renaissance Music," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 114 (1989): 189–202.

⁴ *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 40–41 and 146–47; *New Obrecht Edition*, vol. 3, xiii–xv and xxvii–xxviii.

⁵ "Item een ghesonghen messe voer Sente Lievin upten dach van ziinder Elevatiën gheordineert bij her Willem de Wilde, xxx scellingen parisis" (RA K 5224, 1483–4, fol. 4v). This payment was independently discovered by Reinhard Strohm. On the guild, see most recently P. Trio, *De Gentse broederschappen (1182–1580)* (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent, 1990), 57–78. All archival references here are either to the Rijksarchief (RA) or Stadsarchief (SA) in Ghent.

⁶ *Schepenboeken van de keure*, SA 301.40, fol. 159 (17 June 1448). A copy was kept by the Confraternity of Our Lady (RA O 2089).

⁷ The word used in the document is *cotidianisten*, a separate body of vicar-singers which had its own administration. In general, *cotidianisten* did not necessarily sing polyphony, but the single surviving fifteenth-century account of the *cotidianisten* of St. John (1484–5; RA K 3957), shows that they did by the mid-1480s at the latest. The list of singers on fols. 7–8v includes a distinct group of nine men whose salary is more than twice that of their colleagues. Two of these are called tenorists, of whom one is also paid for copying "twee messen in discant." At the Guild of Our Lady all polyphony was sung by the *cotidianisten* of St. John. A list itemizing the expenses for four Masses with polyphony, which happens to survive in the accounts of 1485–6 (RA K 5224, fol. 5), enables us to establish that the cost of a Mass involving parish-priests, dean, subdean, sexton, singers, organist with bellows-pumper, and carillonneur was about 28 sous. This is consistent with the amount of 30 sous fixed in Willem de Wilde's endowment.

The motivation behind the endowment is "good devotion" and probably penitence, as is suggested by the phrase "for certain reasons of his own."⁸

There is of course no proof that Pipelare's *Missa De Sancto Livino* was written for Willem de Wilde's endowment. Further search through the church archives of Ghent has yielded no documentation on polyphonic St. Livinus Masses in other institutions, but such negative evidence cannot be entirely conclusive, given the fragmentary survival of these archives. Full certainty can only be obtained by systematically sifting through the year-books of the aldermen of the bye-law (*Schepenboeken van de keure*), which record hundreds of thousands of financial transactions, contracts and resolutions passed in Ghent in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and which have survived completely for this period (SA, series 301). Any endowment in Ghent would have been recorded here.

Yet if firm proof is lacking, a working hypothesis can at least be proposed. If Pipelare was in Ghent at some stage of his career, as is suggested by Professor Bloxam's research, then it is attractive to assume that he worked as a choirmaster at St. John's and the Guild of Our Lady, a position identical to the one he held in 's-Hertogenbosch in 1498–1500.⁹ In that capacity it would have been his responsibility to have existing endowed services carried out properly, and to provide new music whenever necessary. The *Missa De Sancto Livino* may have been written for that reason: on the basis of its style I suggest that this might have been somewhere in the 1480s. What makes the assumption doubly attractive is that Jacob Obrecht's father Willem was a member of the Guild of Our Lady: his death is recorded in the list of deceased members in 1488–89 (RA K 5224, 1488–9, fol. 2v). Willem had close ties with the church of St. John anyway. He was a prominent member of the trumpeters' guild of St. Andrew and St. Lazarus, which had its own chapel in

⁸ It is tempting to see a connection with the recurring "refrain" section of Pipelare's Mass, which appears at the end of four movements and whose cantus firmus is a prayer for intercession "pro nobis peccatoribus" (Bloxam, 187 and n. 56).

⁹ The matter of Pipelare's activities at the Confraternity of Our Lady in 's-Hertogenbosch (Bloxam, p. 170, n. 26) can be clarified on a small but important point. The reason why the account of 1499–1500 distinguishes between two periods of service by Pipelare, lasting twenty-two and twenty-three weeks respectively, is that the currency increased in value by one-ninth in late November 1499. The distinction between periods of service before and after that change is made with all singers mentioned in the account, and invariably the first period is given as twenty-two weeks. Albert Smijers consistently omitted these details in his transcription; see *De Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch* (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1932), 213–14. The full entry referring to Pipelare's salary reads: "Item matheusen pijpeler sangmeester van xij weken bij hem gediend ende ter weken den selven gegeven xvijij st. current, ende noch van xxijij weken gegeven xvijij st. in munte deser rekeninge. fc. xxxviiij gl. x st. 1½ oirt." It follows that Pipelare was continuously in service for forty-five weeks after the beginning of the financial year (24 June 1499), that is, until approximately 4 May 1500. This is consistent with an entry elsewhere in the account, which records a payment of 120 Brabant groats to Pipelare "to keep him here" (*ibid.*, 212–13). This comes between two other payments (neither transcribed by Smijers) dated respectively "palmavont" (11 April 1500) and "beloken paasdach" (26 April 1500). Evidently Pipelare had threatened to leave the confraternity in mid April, and despite the gift of 120 groats he left about two weeks later. The confraternity was without a choirmaster for more than a month, but two weeks before the account was written, around 10 June 1500, Pipelare's place had been filled by Jan Vernei (*ibid.*, 214).

the crypt and had a weekly Mass celebrated there on Sundays. Being a professional musician himself, parishioner of St. John, member of its Marian guild, and father of the most famous composer in the Low Countries, it would be surprising if Willem did not know the choirmaster personally, and serve as an intermediary between him and his son. Jacob Obrecht himself had almost certainly grown up in the parish of St. John in the 1450s and 1460s, and must have been familiar with the annual St. Livinus celebration.

The crucial piece of the puzzle is missing: there is no documentary proof of Pipelare's presence in Ghent. As far as the church of St. John and its Guild of Our Lady are concerned, this actually means very little: the accounts are so fragmentary that all they exclude is his presence as a musician in 1484–85 and after 1503. Our main hope, once again, are the *Schepenboeken van de keure*: any financial transaction between Pipelare and a Ghent resident, ranging from a small debt to the purchase of a house, would have been recorded here.¹⁰ These vast and daunting yearbooks may hold the key to many of the unsolved problems in the musical history of Ghent, including those that Bloxam's research has so admirably highlighted.

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Ghent, *Schepenboeken van de keure*, SA 301.40, fol. 159 (17 June 1448):

Kenlic zij allen lieden dat her Willem de Wilde presbyter commen es voor scepenen vander keure in Ghend, kende ende lude dat hy, uut goeder devocie ende zekeren redenen dien hem toe purren, ter eeren van Gode ende den helegghen marteleer Sente Lievin heeft gheordineert te doen doene eene ghesonghene messe in Sent Jans kerke te Ghend ten autare van Sente Lievin elcx jairs up den dach vanden Elevatie van Sente Lievin voorscreven, xxviiste dach van wedemaent, van us voortan eeuwelic duerende. Welke ghesonghene messe men doen zal

Be it known to all that *beer* Willem de Wilde, priest, has come before the aldermen of the bye-law at Ghent, declaring that he, out of good devotion and for certain reasons of his own, [and] in honour of God and the holy martyr St. Livinus, has ordered a sung Mass to be celebrated in the Church of St. John in Ghent at the altar of St. Livinus, each year on the Elevation of the aforesaid St. Livinus, 27 June, from now on in perpetuity. Which sung Mass is to be celebrated solemnly, with dean, subdean, and the full company of the choir,¹¹ for which purpose

¹⁰ They contain, for instance, the earliest surviving reference to the Ghent tenorist Gillis Hasaert, who is otherwise documented only from 1484–5 onwards: in October 1459 he borrowed 240 Flemish groats from Gillisse vanden Moorgate (SA 301.45, fol. 3v). A good example of a musician possessing a house in Ghent is the Burgundian Court singer Matthieu Cocquiel, son of Jacobus; see SA FP 1377 (documents proving his ownership, 23 March 1468), and SA 20.4 (confiscation of interest, for siding with Maximilian of Habsburg during the Ghent conflict of 1488–89 and fleeing to Lille).

¹¹ "Choer" is not to be taken here as "body of canons", since St. John was not a collegiate church until the sixteenth century. The expression "ghemeen en gheselscepe" refers to the *cotidianisten* singers, most of whom had no fixed association with the church but worked there more or less on a day-to-day basis.

solemplic, met dyaken, subdyaken, ende ghemeeenen gheselscepe vanden choere, daer toe hij gheordineert ende ghestelt heeft dertich scellingen parisis siaers die men daer toe distribuieren zal. Te wetene zesse scellingen parisis den drie prochipapen onder hem drien, dies zellen zij de messe doen of doen doen. Item den cotidianisten vanden coore, dyaken, subdyaken metten costers, gheliic dat zij van andren pasten ghecostumeert zijn van hebbene, die de kerke pleecht te betaelne. Item den beyaerder vier scellingen parisis. Item den organiste metten blaser twee scellingen parisis. Van welker voorscreven messe wel ende ghetrouwelic te doen doene ten autare van Sente Lievin up den dach van zien elevatie perpetuel also voorscreven es. Dlast onderstaen ende gheannueert hebben ter kennessen van scepenen Symoen Borluut ende Jan van Hoedevelde filius Claeis, als guldemeesters ende regeerrers van Onser Vrouwen Gulde inde voorscrevene kerke, ende heer Joos Broeke priester als ontfangher vanden selven gulde in desen tut bij consente vanden prochipapen. Ende hebben, ende hemlieden ende over haerlieden naercommeren die naermaels guldemeesters, regeerrers ende ontfanghers ziin zullen vanden voorscrevenen gulde, ghelooft de voorscrevene ghesonghene messe wel ende ghetrouwelic te doen doene perpetuel, gheliic voorscreven staet. Ende dit omme eene zekere somme van ghereeden ghelde die de voorscrevene her Willem de Wilde hemlieden betaelt ende overgheleyt heeft omme mede te coopen de voorscrevene erflike rente van xxx scellingen parisis tsiaers. Mids dat den gulde toebehoren ende bliven zal over de distributie ende moeyte zal tghuend dat daer af overschieten zal, ende ooc tghelt van alsulken faulten als van eenighen vanden gheselscepe vanden choere ter voorscrevenen messen vallen moghen. Dit was ghedaen den xvijsten dach van junio int jaer xiiij^c ende xlvij^{iij} int scependom van Claeis Triestzoon ridder, heer Pieter Hueublocx, ende hueren ghesellen.

he has fixed a sum of 30 sous parisis per annum,¹² to be distributed [among them]. Namely 6 sous parisis for the three *prochipapen* together; with this they shall celebrate, or have celebrated, the Mass. *Item*, for the *cotidianisten* of the choir [vicarsingers], dean, subdean and sextons, the same as they are used to receive on other occasions which are paid for by the church. *Item*, for the carillonneur, 4 sous parisis. *Item*, for the organist with the bellows-pumper, 2 sous parisis. For this [amount] the aforesaid Mass is to be celebrated well and faithfully at the altar of St. Livinus on the day of his elevation, in perpetuity, as is written above. This obligation is accepted, with the knowledge of the aldermen, by Simon Borluut and Jan van Hoedevelde son of Claeis, as masters and rulers of the Guild of Our Lady in the aforesaid church, and *beer* Joos Broeke, priest, as receiver of the same guild, [who] acts herein with the consent of the *prochipapen*. And they have promised, also on behalf of their successors, who will be masters, rulers or receivers of the said guild after them, to have the aforesaid Mass celebrated in perpetuity, well and faithfully, as is stipulated above. And this for a certain sum of cash which the aforesaid Willem de Wilde has paid and given them to buy the aforesaid hereditary rent-charge of 30 sous parisis per annum, with the condition that the guild shall possess and keep—because of the distribution and its [other] pains—all [money] that remains after the distribution, and also the money that will be left if some men from the company of the choir are absent. This was agreed on 17 June 1448 in the aldermanship of Claeis Triestzoon, knight, *beer* Pieter Hueublocx, and their companions.

¹² This is Flemish, not French royal money parisis; from about 1390 onwards, the Flemish sou parisis was treated as equivalent to 1 Flemish groat which, from 1433 onwards, was equivalent to 1½ Brabant groat.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL:

Mr. Wegman's discovery of archival documentation for the endowment of a Mass for St. Livinus at the parish church of St. John in Ghent during the fifteenth century provides welcome confirmation that the kind of performance venue one might expect for a work such as Pipelare's *Missa de Sancto Livino* did indeed exist in Ghent. We can look forward to learning more about the musical life of this important Flemish city as both Mr. Wegman and Professor Reinhard Strohm continue their work in its archives. My thanks to Mr. Wegman for bringing this new information to attention. I would also like to express appreciation to Mr. Wegman for confirming, by illuminating the incomplete nature of the transcription of the accounts of the Confraternity of Our Lady in 's-Hertogenbosch provided by Smijers, that Mattheussen Pipelare and Johannes Pipelare were indeed two different people.

I have only two small reservations about the association between Pipelare's Mass for St. Livinus and the particular endowment suggested by Mr. Wegman. First, although Mr. Wegman states unequivocally that a Mass for St. Livinus was sung in polyphony at St. John's, the foundation document and later payment records cited refer not to a Mass in discant but simply to "eene ghesonghene messe," which may well indicate a Mass sung in plain-song. The generous amount of the endowment, which Mr. Wegman argues was sufficient to pay for polyphony, is certainly suggestive but not conclusive.

Second, it may be significant regarding the putative connection between Pipelare's Mass and this endowment that the feast so honored by Willem de Wilde was the June feast of the *elevatio* of St. Livinus, not his *depositio* celebrated in November. Rubrics in the manuscript B-Gu 15, the Antiphoner of the St. Bavo Abbey copied between 1471 and 1481, indicate that a few differences in the selection of chants for these two feasts existed in the liturgy of this institution by the latter half of the fifteenth century. Most notable among these incongruities is an omission from the liturgy for the feast of the *elevatio* of St. Livinus: the matins responsory *Gloriose igitur sanctus martyr Livinus*, heard as the twelfth responsory at matins on the feast of the *depositio*, is replaced during the *elevatio* by the responsory *Gemma Dei martyr Livine*. Pipelare drew upon the first phrase of the verse of *Gloriose igitur* for a cantus firmus at the opening of the Credo of his *Missa de Sancto Livino*, and if the secular churches of Ghent followed the Abbey's lead in omitting this chant from the liturgy for the elevation of St. Livinus, then it may be that Pipelare's Mass for St. Livinus was intended not for the *elevatio* of the saint, but rather for his *depositio*. Because coeval books of the liturgy and chant from the church of St. John do not survive, however, we cannot be sure that the responsory *Gloriose igitur* did not play a role in the celebration of the elevation of St. Livinus at this institution. Nevertheless, the association of Pipelare's Mass with the endowment discovered by Mr. Wegman remains an attractive possibility.

Mr. Wegman favors a date in the 1480s for Pipelare's Mass, but I am not persuaded that the style of the piece rules out an earlier dating. Further investigation of the only source of the Mass, A-Wnh 11883, may offer helpful

clues through watermark analysis. The possibility of a connection between this Mass and Balduinus Henrici, the professor at Louvain who assumed the post of dean at the church of St. Livinus in Zierikzee in 1463, remains an attractive hypothesis for this author.¹

The likelihood of a connection between Pipelare and Obrecht upon which I briefly commented in my article is strengthened by the information offered by Mr. Wegman regarding Obrecht's father's association with Ghent.² Perhaps even more telling than the confluences of style and *cantus firmus* treatment mentioned by myself and Mr. Wegman that link Pipelare's *Missa de Sancto Livino* and Obrecht's *Missa de Sancto Martino* is the larger conceptual framework shared by these two works: they are the most overtly narrative in design among the distinctive group of multiple *cantus firmus* Masses on which I am currently working.³ As I have shown elsewhere, the centrality of the storytelling thread in these two Masses places them within the larger context of the ambitious literary and visual religious narratives that were especially prized in Flanders during the latter half of the fifteenth century.⁴

In addition to acknowledging Mr. Wegman's contributions to the content of my study, I would like to thank Professor T. Herman Keahey, one of the editors of the new La Rue edition, who kindly brought to my attention additional sources for La Rue's *Missa "Nunca fué pena mayor."* To my note 97 should be added the following sources: A-Wnm 15499, D-Ju 22, D-Mu 327, D-Sl 45, I-Rvat Cappella Sistina 45, and *Misse Petri de la Rue* (Venice: Petrucci, 1503 RISM, L 718). The Benedictus of this Mass appears as a *contrafactum* in *Diphona amoena et florida* (Nürnberg: J. Montanus and U. Neuber, 1549 RISM 1549¹⁶).

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¹ See Bloxam, "In Praise of Spurious Saints," this JOURNAL 44 (1991): 172, n. 31.

² It should first be noted the the Obrecht family's connection to Ghent was established by Berten de Keyzer, "Jacob Obrecht en zijn vader Willem: de Gentse relaties," *Mens en Melodie* 8 (1953): 318-19.

³ An initial exploration of multiple *cantus firmus* Masses and motets is found in this author's "A Survey of Late Medieval Service Books from the Low Countries: Implications for Sacred Polyphony, 1460-1520" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1987), 220-454.

⁴ Bloxam, "Storytelling in Late Medieval Sacred Music: The Multiple *Cantus Firmus* Masses," paper read at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference at the University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, July 1991, and at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Oakland, 1990. I am currently expanding this topic into a monograph treating exegesis and storytelling in late medieval music and the arts.