

Abstracts

Giovanni Zanovello: Heinrich Isaac, the Medici, and Other Florentines

Was Heinrich Isaac really part of the Medici household, as Medici client Niccolò de' Pitti claimed in a famous letter? Recent studies of the Medici organization's operations, as well as a number of recently published archival discoveries, offer material for a partial reassessment of Isaac's relationship with his Florentine patrons. In this paper I review the existing documents (including a letter by Lorenzo de' Medici not yet discussed in the musicological literature) with a special consideration for their rhetorical context and functional value. As I propose, a critical reexamination of the Medici network's key evidence, considering recent knowledge of the culture of clientage, will show that part of the original evidence warrants reconsideration. I aim not to deny Isaac's connection to the Medici, but rather to explore its cultural background, significance, and limits, and thus to propose a more nuanced perception of the composer's status in Florence.

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Sonja Tröster: Heinrich Isaac's Songs. On Everyone's Lips and yet an Unknown Repertoire

Isaac's *Lieder* have been assigned a pivotal role in the evolution of the German *Tenorlied*, but only few of them – apart from *Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen* – were subject to musicological studies. The essay reassesses two compositions that had already been singled out by the 19th century scholars Johann Nikolaus Forkel and August Wilhelm Ambros. Whereas *Es het ein Baur*, as a *Volkslied*-setting, presents a great sense of variety, *Mein Freud allein* illustrates Isaac's approach to the composition of a *Hofweise*, which in this special case probably even involves composing in pairs.

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Nils Grosch: ›Es wollt ein Maidlein ...‹. On an Erotic Song by Heinrich Isaac

This essay discusses the history of reception and transmission of Isaac's ›Graserin‹-song (first published in 1513). This song is one of the most remarkable examples in early-modern song collections because of the extraordinarily explicit description of the erotic relationship between a young girl and her male counterpart. Because the sexual contents is so directly related, the song was ignored by the 19th-century folk song editors. Late 20th-century researchers have interpreted it as being related to a complex of erotic ballads (›Graserin und Reiter,‹ ›Wäscherin,‹ and others), to which it had been linked already by

16th-century manuscript copies and broadsheets. But even compared to these, I argue, the purely erotic text made up the main interest in this song, which during the 16th century had been copied and published in its one-stanza-version only, without necessarily suggesting a ballad-type linear plot.

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Markus Grassl: General and Particular Thoughts on Heinrich Isaac's Chanson Arrangements with Cantus Firmus

Heinrich Isaac's mostly textless transmitted secular works comprise a group of compositions which are based on a literally quoted voice extracted from a pre-existent polyphonic chanson. Following general remarks on the problem of textless music c. 1500 and informations about transmission, provenance and date the relationship between these settings and their models is examined. Based upon these analytical observations and recent insights in Isaac's Florentine background the article finally considers the relevance of text within the compositional process and the question of vocal vs. instrumental performance.

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Thomas Schmidt-Beste: Style and Structure in Heinrich Isaac's Tenor Motets

Heinrich Isaac's tenor motet have rarely been the subject of analytical enquiry in the past; rather, scholars have concentrated on their contextual aspects (function, place in the liturgy or ceremony, intertextual references of the cantus firmi). The present study intends to fill this lacuna at least for the three large-scale motets on pre-existent cantus firmi, *Angeli archangeli*, *Optime divino* and *Virgo prudentissima*. In doing so, it also compares the three works to a number of roughly contemporary tenor motets. It can be concluded that, all generic similarities notwithstanding, there are some stylistic traits specific to Isaac's tenor motets, in that he deploys both his cantus firmi and the outer voices in a way which seems almost playfully unsystematic (as opposed, for example, to Josquin), but which is in fact highly consistent in his treatment of motives and textures.

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Andreas Pfisterer: Imitative techniques in Isaac

Imitation (in the traditional musical meaning) is almost omnipresent in music from around 1500; it is, however, not easy to define. Three typical patterns of imitation, representing ›wide‹, ›narrow‹ and ›middle‹ imitation, are described on the basis of examples from Isaac's music. The implications of a chant cantus firmus on the choice of imitation is explored. Finally, some expansions of the pattern of paired imitation are described that point to imitative techniques of the later 16th century.

David J. Burn: From Chant to Polyphony. Composing Techniques in Isaac's Mass-Propers

The 16th-century theorist Heinrich Glarean gave special mention to the attention that Isaac lavished on embellishing plainchant. In the light of Isaac's unparalleled contribution to the genre of the mass-proper in particular, it is true that Isaac outranks his contemporaries in the number of chant-based pieces that he produced. Comparison of one of Isaac's mass-propers with its chant-model, however, suggests that Glarean may have been impressed by more than sheer quantity. Analysis shows that Isaac paid detailed attention to the specific verbal and structural features of the model.

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Katelijne Schiltz: »Aus einem Hauptgedanken alles Weitere entwickeln!«. The Canons in Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus* II

Compared against volumes I and III of Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus*, contrapuntal complexities are more frequently used in the music for the Konstanz cathedral. This could be one of the main reasons for Anton Webern's fascination with this part of Isaac's oeuvre. Canons appear in almost every mass, but most of them are rather short and unspectacular, as a complete survey of all canons in this volume makes clear. Some of the canons, however, make use of retrograde, augmentation and mensuration games; examples of double-canons and three- and four-part canons can also be found. Inversion does not occur anywhere, nor do we find enigmatic inscriptions. In several cases, textual reasons seem to have influenced the use of canonic procedures.

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Christiane Wiesenfeldt: Function and Distance. Heinrich Isaac's *Missae de Beata Virgine* in the Context of their Reception History

The vast group of Heinrich Isaac's four (probably five, possibly six) »Missae de Beata Virgine« belongs to his main compositions, not only in his own work, but also in the context of the BMV tradition of the 16th century in general: No other composer made more settings of this type. While the importance of the masses itself was never questioned, their influence on the BMV genre seems to be rather small. Neither was any model for Isaac's inventive alternatim-concept with altering chants and lines known, nor so far any imitators or successors. But the masses are not by any means as isolated as they may appear: The article will show first several influences on Isaac's four-part BMV mass, which became essential for his following settings. The second part shifts the focus on the four-part BMV mass from Benedictus Ducis, a late and singular, but important retrospect on Isaac's second five-part BMV. Isaac composed »from a distance« in melting several aspects of the young BMV tradition into a kind of individual »Habsburg-model«, which was rather difficult to follow.

Stefan Gasch: *Hic jacet ... Isaci discipulus ...* . Heinrich Isaac as a Teacher of Ludwig Senfl

In several documents Heinrich Isaac is mentioned as teacher of Ludwig Senfl. Although, there is no further evidence proving this training it is well known that Senfl was entrusted with Isaac's duties at the Imperial court chapel when the latter retired. The paper follows three thoughts: how did Senfl learn from Isaac, where can we find traces of Isaac in the works of Ludwig Senfl and how can we document them. For the last question some of Senfl's mass-proper will be examined trying to emerge imprints of Isaac's composing principles.