

THE INTONATION-BASED AND RHYTHM-
BASED APPROACHES TO SINGING OF MOTETS
CANTABO DOMINO AND *CANTATE DOMINO*
FROM THE *SACRAE CANTIONES* COLLECTION
OF IVAN LUKAČIĆ

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UDK: 2-535:783.4]Lukačić, I. M.“1620/“1648“
082.1 Sacrae cantiones Lukačić,I. M.
Original scientific paper
Paper received: 2/2021

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Abstract

Considering the most significant musical characteristics of Ivan Lukačić's motets and the perceptual nature of today's musicians, shaped by compositions with typical tonal features, the paper seeks to predict common errors in reading early music notations. These errors arose from the firm tonal orientations and expectations of academic musicians. This paper provides a method for improving the skill of reading rhythm and intonation that could significantly affect the overall experience and sensitization for the music of the early Baroque period. Motets Cantabo Domino and Cantate Domino are from Lukačić's Sacrae cantiones collection.

Keywords: *musical language, understanding of music, tonality, mode, rhythmic reading, melodizing, intonation*

Introduction

The *Sacrae cantiones* (1620) collection of motets is the only preserved motet book of Ivan Lukačić. Lukačić's music compositions are associated with the most incredible and exciting discoveries in Croatian musicology, which affected the thought about Croatian history and understanding of Croatian culture in the broadest sense. A great Croatian composer and musicologist, Dragan Plamenac (1895-1983)¹, discovered the collection due to his exten-

¹ According to Ennio Stipčević after a long search, Plamenac found Lukačić's collection

sive and highly professional scientific work. K. Kos stated, “Plamenac’s particular editions and related scientific studies form organic unity”.²

The paper focuses on the transfer of early music. The presented approaches seek to respond to the question: “How to sensitize today’s young students of (Croatian) music academies to the opus of Ivan Lukačić?”

The intonation-rhythmic approach to particular motets includes not merely music sheet reading but pondering the nature of music essence. Such an approach is the basis for understanding and adopting the true spirit of Lukačić’s music. The proposed method for musical notation reading instruction considers the musical features of the selected compositions and the intonation and rhythm abilities of an academic musician educated in *sofeggio* tradition.

1. Aesthetics and dominant musical features in Lukačić’s time

Lukačić was a composer of the early baroque period, significantly influenced by late Renaissance music and monody or monophony with instrumental accompaniment. Since the instrumental accompaniment often included keyboard instruments (sometimes lute), notations were not complete but partly left for improvisation with figures and accidentals. A continuous bass line which lasts through whole composition with improvised harmonies above it is called *basso continuo* or *continuo*.

The motet evolved over time, from its origins in the 13th to the middle of the 18th century. The medieval secular motet derived from an early form of a cappella vocal polyphony. The motets differed in treatment of lyrics drawn from sacred texts and music.³ Lukačić’s motets appeared on the threshold of a new period in music history. They reached the highest expressiveness and compositional technique as the motets of well-known composers such as G. P. Palestrina (1525-1594) and O. di Lasso. (1532-1594).

of *Sacrae cantiones* in Berlin, in the old Prussian State Library, and prepared the first critical edition of *Selected Motets*. Cf. Ennio Stipčević, *Ivan Lukačić*, Muzički informativni centar Koncertne direkcije Zagreb, Zagreb, 2007, p. 128.

² Cf. Koraljka Kos, Dragan Plamenac-istraživač i objavljiivač rane glazbe, *Arti Musices* 17 (1986) 2, p. 159.

³ Cf. Albe Vidaković, Motet, *Muzička enciklopedija* II, 1974, pp. 614–616.

The main elements that characterize the motet of the 17th century are the addition of *continuo*, the effect of contrasting choral groups, solo and *tutti* passages, the oscillating of harmony between major and minor, and mode.

1.1. The characteristics of Ivan Lukačić's motet

We present the most significant characteristics of Lukačić's motets, i.e. those that are essential for the creation of the original musical image of the proposed music, following the proposed intonation-rhythmic approach:

- Throughout musical history, a motet is a composition in which one strives to reach a close relationship between music and lyrics. While the Renaissance motet represents a series of connected or imitated chained units, Lukačić's motet of the early Baroque type is specific for successive cadence-separated parts;
- Lukačić's motets were not *a cappella* compositions since they used *basso continuo*;
- The original notation does not have bar lines for vocal parts. Instrumental music of the 15th and 16th centuries uses bar lines, but Lukačić used them only for *basso continuo*. In modern music transcriptions, bar lines in vocal sections are often placed between lines or omitted;
- Rhythm is either binary or ternary and is strongly related to the text. There is a difference in meaning concerning binary or ternary forms. Binary forms usually express melodies of greater expressiveness, frequent melisma, etc., while ternary ones are often "more rounded" with more uniform rhythmic patterns and, as a rule, suggest a slightly faster tempo;
- The harmonic tonality or language of the motet has a lot of remnants of modal features. Major or minor tonality is expressive primarily in unambiguous cadences. However, the tonality in question has not yet generated elements of modulation and chromatic processes of later periods of musical material evolution, so we take into account its "softness" and instability;
- A key signature consists of only one flat (no sharps). Sometimes, key signatures, omitted in some section, occurs during the composition. Elsewhere, the omission of the key-signature undoubtedly indicates *modus*;⁴

⁴ It is an old rule of modern reading of 16th-century music. A key signature of minor-to-

- Lukačić's compositional technique includes numerous polyphonic procedures such as imitations at the unison, fifths, fourths, imitations at a specified time interval in voice performances, imitations in the reverse direction, various combinations of imitation procedures and sequencing. However, polyphonic procedures are of "short breath" except e. g. motet *Ex ore infantile*, having imitation polyphony coherently performed throughout the motet, i.e. it is a type of high renaissance motet with only added *basso continuo*.
- Closely related keys are commonly used for modulations in motets;
- Melodic movements express a great wealth of syllabic and melismatic movements, sequences, syncopations, etc.⁵

2. Mutual conditionality of the didactic approach to learning musical language and the way of reading and understanding a musical work

The quality of perception or "reception" of a musical work of any academic musician is closely related to the didactic approach to the acquisition of musical language. More precisely, it is related to a methodology of acquiring intonation and rhythm in *solfeggio* teaching. An intonation modelling method (relative or absolute) significantly affects the acquired image of musical language.

Even though in the historical sense, the tonality belongs to the past, learning a musical language or teaching *solfeggio* is associated with the acquisition of systematized musical materials, i.e. musical masterpieces created from 1600 to 1900, and the principles of our perception that correspond to the tonal system.⁶

nality has to be identical to that of major-tonality at a second lower, e.g., D minor has the accidentals of C major, G minor has the accidentals of F major, etc.

⁵ Josip Andreis, *Ivan Lukačić. Šesnaest moteta iz zbirke "Sacrae cantiones" (1620.)*, Muzikološki zavod Muzičke akademije, Zagreb, 1970, p. 15.

⁶ These are principles defined by Gestalt psychology or Gestalt theory (Cf. Pavel Rojko, *Psihološke osnove intonacije i ritma*, Muzička akademija Zagreb, Zagreb, 2012, p. 80). One of the most important principles is the principle of grouping (Cf. John Booth Davies, *The Psychology of Music*, Hutchinson & Co (Publishers), London, 1978, p.83). Musical-psychological points of view consider comparisons of learning a musical and

The perception of most academic (even other) musicians is emphatically tonal, with tonal determinations and expectations. A tonally educated musician understands and accepts music with clearly defined outlines: melodic, rhythmic-metrical, harmonic, formal. The musician will perceive different properties of a music piece “in relation” to the tonality, but such an approach has its advantages and disadvantages.

Indeed, pure intonation and rhythmic elements contribute to the quality of music performance. However, reducing different musical expressions to exclusively tonal criteria (musical form and performance) can result in misunderstanding of the relationship between musical elements and thus affect missed or inappropriate aesthetics and poetics when performing a piece of music.

3. The problem of reading Lukačić’s music

Given the aforementioned main characteristics of Lukačić’s compositions, it is reasonable to expect contemporary musicians who encounter the motet texts of the *Sacrae cantiones* collection to notice many tonal features as the basis of initial musical understanding. It primarily includes specific tonalities and cadences in compositions and the metrical organization of rhythm. Also, since modern transcriptions have the *basso continuo* parts, we can observe many harmonic patterns and a clear relationship between the melodic and harmonic components. The tonality of Lukačić’s compositions and tonal skills and expectations of contemporary musicians cannot equate. An exclusively acoustic approach to the nature of tonality relationships (i.e. derivation of entire tonal structure from the effect of tritone phenomenon, D. Despić⁷) suggests we can view tonality as a kind of “static” phenomenon of unchange-

discursive language, as shown by E. Gordon. He grounds his theory of learning the musical language on learning intonation and rhythmic patterns (Cf. Edwin E. Gordon, Cause and Symptoms: Keynote address for the 4th International Conference on Music Learning Theory, AUDEA, *A Journal for Research and Applications of Music Learning Theory* 19 (2017) 1, p. 13).

⁷ We refer to the theory of the Russian music theorist A. Ogolovec who similarly observes the tones’ orientation of scale systems. D. Despić extends similar thinking to the harmonic component in the book *The Theory of Tonality*, Umjetnička akademija u Beogradu, Beograd, 1971.

able features. Thus, it is necessary to understand its historical development and the impact of the entire music experience from different stages of its ascending and descending trajectory on contemporary musicians. Contemporary musicians can develop their tonal musical thinking by absorbing music created in various stages of the evolution of the tonal system. The development of tonality did not proceed in a straight line. Its initial stage included functional relationships until it advanced to a so-called “Floating tonality” (De Leeuw 1995: 24).⁸

This paper aims to shift the focus from music to the musician and observe the tonality from the prism of contemporary musicians. The tonality in modern compositions results from generating, regenerating, purifying, and revising musical material through the centuries. Tonal music is not just a cultural heritage but a human being musical consciousness, which affects the musicians whether aware of it or not. Reading of Lukačić music today does not only imply the perception of tonal features with modal characteristics (specific for classical music education) but *understanding the tonality as a harmonic concept of melodic origins, initial instability, fluidity, and “purity”*. Reading his motets is a challenging task. So, to get closer to the true nature of the relationship of musical components in his pieces and regarding the “tonal expectations” of academically educated musicians, we propose a didactic-methodical approach.

3.1. Rhythm reading

The temporal aspect of music significantly contributes to the abstraction of the overall experience of its “language”. As for grading musical comprehensibility, we would say that the music is more understandable if better organized in time. Given the grouping nature of our musical perception, this would refer to a musical time we can count well or rhythmic structure. We measure the pulse of the music in beats, which enable accurate recording and precise

⁸ Dutch music theorist T. De Leeuw cites this term (in German translation *schwebende Tonalität*) when explaining the reasons that led to the collapse of the tonality system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Cf. Ton De Leeuw, *Die Sprache der Musik im 20. Jahrhundert. Entwicklung, Strukturen, Tendenzen*, Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart, 1995.

performance. We distinguish two opposite rhythms that have historical authenticity:

1. Rhythmic-metric organization of musical time (divisional rhythm);
2. Rhythm is organized as the duration “of note value” (additive rhythm).

The first rhythm is specific for the tonality of classicism (approach to counting by grouping). As for musical understanding, there is a kind of three-layer perception of rhythm. Rhythm has three elements of beat (micro beat), its divisions and multiplications, and “a bar” as a whole (macro beat), audited synchronously.

The second rhythm, the so-called free rhythm, is associated with the theory of the composition of the French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). It is an opposite way of thinking from the previously described, i.e. taking into account the smallest note value that multiplies to accurately measure the subtle relationships of note values that are not subject to any proper groupings as those in meter-organized rhythm.

The following example, in which we apply this principle, can be performed precisely only if the additive logic, i.e. sixteenth note value is the smallest note value that accurately determines the duration (countdown) of all other notes values. Thus, the first “bar” counts 4, 4, 4, 2, 3, 2, the second 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 1, and the third 2, 3, 4, 8.⁹



If we observe different parts of music material synchronously, we can identify the first, the second type of rhythm or their blend. It can be a typical structure in almost every musical composition and musical period. Of course, the general impression of a temporal organization is affected by the interrelationship of rhythm with the other two essential musical components, melody and harmony.

⁹ The presented rhythmic flow is a combination of Indian rhythmic patterns (tala) from the 1st movement of the *Quartet for the End of Time, Crystal Liturgy* (Cf. Usp. Olivier Messiaen, *Technique de mon langage musical*. Texte., Leduc, Paris, 1944, p. 18).

Due to the tonal (harmonic) features at the initial stage of establishing the system, the influence of horizontal thinking, and remnants of modal features, the rhythm in Lukačić's motets is not firmly defined, despite the indicated binary and ternary organizations. Also, despite modern transcriptions, the vocal parts in the original music sheet were without bar lines, which is an additional challenge for today's musicians to persevere in their efforts to reveal the original metric rhythm of this music.¹⁰

When a musician sees bar lines, his way of thinking automatically "match" the music into patterns of emphasized metrical structure. So, for the first acquaintance with Lukačić's motets, it would be best to use editions that (respecting the original) have bar lines in the basso continuo parts and slight indications of bar lines in the staff in vocal parts. Considering the above extremes of rhythmic reading, it is interesting to note that in reading the first rhythm of Lukačić's parts or score, we are more focused on note values than on metrical structure.¹¹ It is due to the character of Lukačić's music: the basic definition of rhythm would be that it breathes life into melodic motions and movements more from duration than from metric itself. It is slightly easier to read rhythm in ternary measures since less divergent rhythmic divisions appear, mostly several major rhythmic combinations, according to J. Andreis (1970: 25).

Pointing out this peculiarity of musical notation and its reading will contribute to the later faithful interpretation of the composition. Focusing much more on each note value than on the bar as a whole is more efficient than adding bar lines in vocal sections to facilitate rhythm reading. The highlighted peculiarities of the approach to rhythmic reading refer to all motets from Lukačić's collection.

¹⁰ Speaking about the subtle nuances that are an integral part of Lukačić's original music sheet, E. Stipčević comments: "In general, the original notation always has a layered information addressed to musicians, which modern transcription is never able to convey faithfully." (Cf. Ennio Stipčević, *Ivan Lukačić*, p. 106.)

¹¹ The author refers to her experience and the work with students at the Music Department of Arts Academy.

3.2. Reading intonation

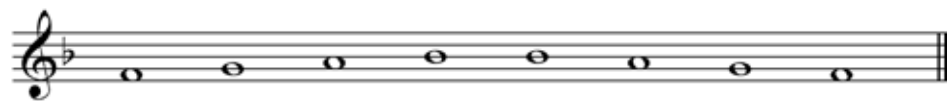
Besides the rhythm reading peculiarities of Lukačić's scores, we highlight some intonation elements that are essential for a better understanding of the presented compositions.

The rhythmical organization is not nearly as solid as we know from typical tonal compositions. So, we propose that an approach to intonation does not include the initial tonality and thinking of intonation directed to the usual (tonic) tonal base. It would be wrong to start intonation by focusing on tonality and understand modal features only as modality variants, e.g. the Mixolydian mode as the major scale with lowered scale degree 7 or the Dorian mode as a natural minor scale with a raised scale degree 6, etc. Such thinking about scale does not correspond to the historical trajectory (the reversed order) and does not affect the true nature of the mode. To avoid a strongly tonal orientation at the beginning, we suggest singing a kind of pre-exercises as getting ready for entering the actual tonality and tonal space by focusing on the melodic component. The presented intonation exercises can be beneficial for practising intonation without text and melodic-harmonic patterns. They can serve as a neutral space for finding tonality or mode (a mixture of both) and directing the intonation on the peculiarities of each motet. So, these exercises are not universal because each motet has different intonation patterns and thus requires adequate intonation exercise.

For example, intonation exercises for the monophonic motet *Cantabo Domino* encompass the melodic spaces of F major, Mixolydian in F, B-flat major, G minor, and D minor. There are two spaces of intonation: F major and B-flat major with their parallel minors. In this sense, the F Mixolydian mode brings a kind of fluctuation of the tones e and e-flat (e in F major, es in the Mixolydian mode) since the tone e-flat and the chord eb-g-bb sometimes belong to modus and sometimes mean modulation in B-flat major. In many of Lukačić's motets, this is a slight shift to different but very close intonation spaces.

Below, we present intonation exercises with empty noteheads. Exercises having full noteheads suggest the concrete melodic features of the thematic material from the motet *Cantabo Domino*.

Example 1



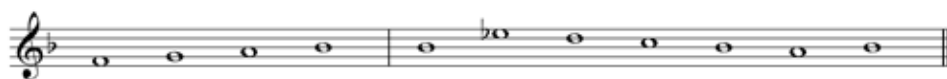
Example 2



Example 3



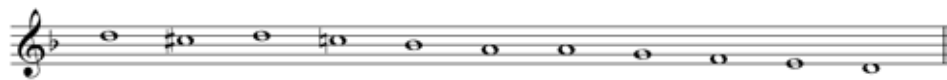
Example 4



Example 5



Example 6



Example 7



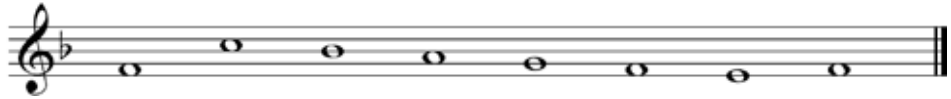
Example 8



Example 9



Example 10



Example 11



We designed the exercises so that before reading a specific musical text, we make the basic intonation exercises (entering the melodic space) and the melodic outlines of the thematic material.

After performing intonational exercises several times, we somehow enter the melodic space of the composition, contrary to the tonal logic of intonation where the added harmonic accompaniment strengthens the intonation. Here we avoid playing the *basso continuo* part as long as possible and intone “bare” melodic material with solmization or neutral syllables. It is one of the essential features of the intonation-rhythm approach to early music. The time factor, i.e. the number of repetitions of the example, the order of intonation, longer or shorter duration of a particular part, etc., play a decisive role in forming the musical opinion and general impression of a musical composition. Also, a way of entering into the intonation space is crucial, whether by strengthening the harmonious cadence of the initial intonation predispositions or “only” by melodizing the scale space. If, for example, we repeat the F major cadence several times before the first intonation of composition such as *Cantabo Domino*, we will significantly strengthen the auditory perception of tonality, and no later interventions or clarification of melodic and harmonic nuances can help to have an impression of Lukačić’s music or to perform it softer, more flexible, or horizontally, etc.¹²

¹² In his most important book *Learning sequences in music: A contemporary music learning theory*, E. Gordon argues that in learning the musical language, tonal patterns are stored in the deeper layers of our memory as a kind of musical-linguistic “infrastruc-

After mastering the intonation-rhythm problems of the vocal part, we add the *basso continuo* part or the harmonic component to detect cadences and thus the main outlines of formal sections. The motet *Cantabo Domino* has five timely-balanced sections. The first section contains two themes, one in three-beats (a) and the other in four-beat (b); the a and b themes repeat at the beginning. The scheme is A A1 B C D Coda. In addition to the transition to B-flat major, which is the main counterbalance to the initial F major and the F Mixolydian, the main contrast of the motet are precisely the two mentioned themes.

Example 12

a

Can- ta- bo Do- mi- no, Can- ta- bo Do- mi- no

in vi- - - ta me- a,

ture". It essentially determines all intonation and rhythmic knowledge, skills and is significant for learning *soffeggio*.

Example 13

b

a, psal- - - lam De- o me- o

quam _____ di- u sum.

Theme a	Theme b
Organized ternary	Organized binary
Initial tempo	Slightly slower tempo
Syllabic text treatment	Melismatic text treatment
F major + F Mixolydian	Only F major

After we approached the intonation and rhythm in this way and got an idea of the formal outlines of the composition, we can sing along with the appropriate analysis of the text and possibly work further on the musical performance.¹³

¹³ Although performing composition is not part of the proposed approach to rhythm and intonation nor of the solfeggio, we emphasize the richness of ornamentation in b theme, for which L. Županović says: “As if the soul of the performer, carried and inspired by the text, seeks to prolong the time by singing the melodic line. A delightful result: everything merges into a harmonious whole, understandable textually and melodically, harmoniously supplemented just as much as needed.” (Cf. Lovro Županović, *Umjetnost Ivana Lukačića Šibenčanina, Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 13-14, 1968, p. 382).

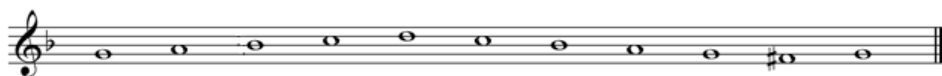
We suggest a similar approach to reading the two-voice motet *Cantate Domino*.

The intonation structure of this motet consists of the tones g-bb-d. Each new section in each voice always begins with one of these three tones. As in the previous motet, regardless of the tonal centers, we will not start reading with a strong confirmation of the initial tonality (B-flat major), but with pre-exercises. In this way we can achieve a kind of “softer” melodic sensitization for G minor, B-flat major and D minor, and then intone the most typical melodic movements:

Example 14



Example 15



Example 16



Example 17



Example 18



Example 19



Example 20



Example 21



Example 22



Example 23



Example 24



In the following sections, we will focus on the intonation nuances of the tones f (example 25) and f-sharp (example 26).

Example 25



Example 26



It would be practical to sing these two sections alternately several times. The intonational nuance of the tones f and f-sharp after the initial experience of “fluctuations” of tonality and mode ultimately leads to their “merging”.

Then, we can focus (consider analytically) on some distinct melodic places such as nuances that make up the cadence in G minor and that of melodic D minor:

Example 27

The image shows two systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature is G minor (one flat). The first system's vocal line has lyrics: "glo-ri-am e-ius, glo-ri-am e-ius in om-nibus" and "-riam e-ius, glo-ri-am e-ius, glo-ri-am e-ius". The piano part includes a "6" marking. The second system's vocal line has lyrics: "po-pu-lis mi-ra-bi-li-a e-ius, in om-nibus" and "in om-nibus po-pu-lis mi-ra-". The piano part includes a "343" marking.

After performing separate and intonation exercises, “merging” of the two voices follows, singing with the text, then adding basso continuo and further work on the performing nuances of the composition.

Conclusion

The proposed approach to intonational-rhythmic reading/singing of the selected motets *Cantabo Domine* and *Cantate Domine* can be valuable for the new generations of musicians that seek a way to discover music from a score. Even though just two thoughtfully sung/read compositions can reveal to a musician the entire Lukačić's opus, even the one that might exist besides his only preserved motet collection.

To truly understand and perform musical composition means gradual revealing its layers in a different order. Finding the right one is like finding the key to understanding that is not the same for each of us, nor does it have to apply as a general rule for musicians at all times.

The musical masterpiece is the result of our encounter with living matter. Listening to how some music "breathes" and to get closer to the time of its creation, we often forget to listen to our breathing. Yet creating music is not a mere effort to bridge time and connect today's musicians with that of a hundred, two or four hundred years ago. Moreover, it is a taste of eternity and imperishable as the music of Ivan Lukačić, our ancient fellow citizen, undoubtedly testifies to it.

