

MUSICOLOGICAL STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS

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JAMES HAAR

THE TUGENDSTERNE
OF HARSDÖRFFER
AND STADEN

AN EXERCISE IN MUSICAL HUMANISM



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INTRODUCTION

In the humanistic world, that pleasant grove of Academe where Renaissance scholars, crossing themselves perfunctorily as they entered, dreamed their beautiful dreams of antique life and culture, music was given an honored, but usually a rather vague, role to play. It is true that despite the absence of any tangible models, some efforts were made at imitating ancient Greek music;¹ but for the most part Renaissance writers were content to rehearse the paraphernalia of myth and speculation which surrounds the music of classical antiquity, paying the most graceful compliments to an art which they doubtless thought of in the most shockingly anachronistic terms. So the legion of myths about the powers of music, commanded by Orpheus with Arion and Amphion as prominent subalterns, passed in more or less disciplined array through the pages of encyclopaedists² and of musical theorists.³ So too the great Platonic-Pythagorean notions of the harmonious universe, always honored in the canonic statement of Boethius,

¹ A summary of the most important of these attempts may be seen in D. P. Walker, "Musical Humanism in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries", *Music Review* II (1941), pp. 1-13; 111-121; 220-227; 288-308; III (1942), pp. 55-71.

² See, for example, the bewildering collection of myths in Giorgio Valla's *De Expetendis et Fugiendis Rebus Opus* (Venice, 1501), in I, 1, of the *De Musica* section.

³ The opening chapter of Gafori's *Theorica musicae* (1480) is an early, rather disorderly example. More systematic collections of classical myths may be seen in 16th-century theorists, Zarlino being a good example.

Degenwert von Ruhmekk, ein verständiger und
 gelehrter Soldat
 Cassandra Schönleben, eine Adelige Jungfrau
 Reymund Discretin, ein gereist und belesener Student
 [in later volumes a "hofjunker"; the chief of the panelists and the performer of the *Tugendsterne* songs]
 Angelica von Keuschewitz, eine Adelige Jungfrau
 Vespasian von Lustgau, ein alter Hofmann
 Julia von Freudenstein, eine Kluge Matron

The songs on the seasons lead into a *spiel*²⁹ on music, in which the panelists must stand or sit in obedience to a musical beat or, if they fail to do so, answer some humanistic questions about music. The questions (among them, What is the source of music: birds, waterfalls, or hammers at a smithy? What is the meaning of the Siren's tale? Is musical sound rounded, like spreading circles in water? Can music be compared to love? How can music drive away sorrow or lighten work?) are ones typical of the *laus musicae* tradition; they are not answered directly, but Vespasian, into whose mouth words of wisdom are often put, goes from them to a general reflection on the Boethian songs. Pleased that the correspondence of voices to seasons was observed, he adds that the wondrous effects of music rise from its precise analogy to the four elements:³⁰

Our life is but a sort of artful music made up of a harmony of unequal things.³¹ One part of it is subtle as the life-spirit, the discant, and fire; another portion,

²⁹ Spiel xcvi, pp. 290-294 of Vol. II.

³⁰ II, pp. 293-4.

³¹ This is the old Pythagorean dictum, often ascribed to Philolaus: "Harmonia est discordia concors".

DIE TUGENDSTERNE

Reymund: As I thought over the comedy just now presented, ⁷⁹ it occurred to me that Tacitus attempted to put to use on the isle of Lesbos almost the same political arts that Fallacy ⁸⁰ here employs, as the copious account of Trajano Boccalini tells us. ⁸¹ But Tacitus had just as little success with his political sophistry, having to escape in disguise to Parnassus, and having to admit that Heaven and Earth are not so far apart, snow and coal not so unlike in color as paper instructions on the art of government are distant from its actual working out — or that a regime which is not based on virtue and honesty cannot in the long run remain calm and at peace. For this reason I have decided to set forth a pageant of the seven Virtues, which are, by way of analogy, the seven planets. Through these, blessed influences are poured forth upon governments. Since, moreover, Glareanus compares the seven voices or modes ⁸² of music

⁷⁹ *The Sophister*. See above, p. 22, and note 63.

⁸⁰ One of the principal characters in *The Sophister*, in fact the Sophist himself; *Trügewicht* in the German version of the play.

⁸¹ The story is in Boccalini's *Ragguagli di Parsano e Pietra del Paragone Politico*, Centura Prima, Ragguaglio xxix (not xvii, as Harsdörffer says in a marginal note), vol. I, pp. 89-94 in the edition of G. Rua and L. Firpo, 3 vols. (Bari, 1910-12, 1948). Reymund's sentence about heaven and earth, snow and coal, is a paraphrase of Tacitus' account, made to Pliny the Younger, of his failure on Lesbos.

⁸² "Stimmen oder Töne", the *voces* and *modi* of Glareanus.

Echo der Vorredner

Tenor oder DiscantStillStill



Hö - ret mich Toch - ter der Grüß - ten (in Lüff - ten) er - schal - len! hö - ret be - we - gen (und

[Still]



re - gen) der Ge - gen - stimm hal - len! se - het von fer - ne (der Ster - ne) hoch glänt - zen -

Still



de Flam - men fü - gen, und schmie - gen, den Him - mel und Er - den zu -

Still

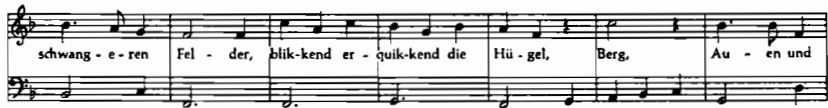


sam - men. prie - fet (wie trie - fet) von o - ben der Wol - ken Ge - rüch - te, schau - et, wie

[Still]



schos - sen (und spros - sen) die reif - fen - de Fruch - te: Stra - len der Son - nen be - mah - len die



schwang - e - ren Fel - der, blik - kend er - quik - kend die Hü - gel, Berg, Au - en und



Wäl - der. Sol - cher weis zie - ren und fül - ren der Tu - gen - den ga - ben, wel - che gleich