

Rinaldo del Mel: Hodie Christus natus est

Born in around 1554, Rinaldo del Mel was a Flemish composer who spent time working in various Italy cities (including both Rome and Venice), as well as in his native Flanders; little is known with certainty about the latter part of his life, the last documentary evidence dating from 1597. The present motet was published in an anthology compiled by the cantor of St. Aegidius church in Nuremberg, Friedrich Lindner ; his *COROLLARIUM CANTIONUM SACRARUM QUINQUE, SEX, SEPTEM, OCTO ET PLURIUM VOCUM DE FESTIS PRÆCIPUIS ANNI* was printed there by Catharina Gerlach in 1590. The six part-books are ordered according to the liturgical seasons; thus this Magnificat antiphon for Christmas is among the very first items (No. V. of motets “*De Nativitate, Circumcisione & Epiphaniis Domini*”), and they are headed as follows:

Part-book name:	Composer:	Part designation:
Cantus.	Renati del Mel.	Cantus primus.
Altus.	Renati del Melle.	Altus.
Tenor.	Renati del Mel.	Tenor primus.
Bassus.	Renati del Mel.	Bassus.
Quinta vox.	Renati del Mel.	Quinta vox.
Sexta vox.	Renati del Mel.	Tenor 2.

All original accidentals are retained; editorial additions are bracketed. Horizontal brackets are printed above notes that were printed as ligatures (the 16th-century equivalent of short slurs); where these were combined with coloration (a proportional shortening of the printed note), the black notes are enclosed in angled brackets. While some people argue that there is no need to preserve such notations at all, I feel that they must conceal something that was important to performers of the time, as there are occasions when the same rhythm is printed *without* coloration and one would imagine that there must have been a reason for such discrepancies, even if we are not aware of it. The text is mostly very clearly set out under the notes, with the standard idem marks (“ij”) to tell singers to repeat the word or words that they have just sung represented in the edition by italic print.

I have opted to print the *alla breve* music in four-minim bars for. The time signature at Bar 34 is $\text{c} \frac{3}{2}$ so, assuming that the tactus should remain constant, I have interpreted the triple time as being bars of two semibreves subdivided into three minims. This approach is supported by the fact that there are no dots on the rests in the Tenor 1 and Bass parts. Since the print uses the high clefs *chiavette* convention, I have transposed the piece down a minor third. I have decided to leave all matters of *musica ficta* to performers; it is far easier to add accidentals in pencil than to ignore or replace printed ones, and even printing accidentals above notes might suggest alterations where none are necessary. In Bar 2, Soprano 2’s second note is sharpened in the original; when the phrase is imitated by the Alto, and again by Tenor 2 and later still by the Bass, the sharp is absent. I have thus taken the rather radical decision to remove the printed sharp in Soprano 2. When the righteous exult, Mel effortlessly weaves the plainsong intonation to the *Gloria* section of the mass into the polyphonic texture.

Brian Clark
Arbroath, 12th August 2014

*Today Christ is born; today the Saviour has appeared; today on earth angels sing,
archangels rejoice, today the righteous exult, saying: Glory be to God on high, noë, alleluia.*

HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST

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Rinaldo del Mel

Soprano 1
Cantus (G2)

Ho - - di - e Chri - stus na - tus

Soprano 2
Quinta vox (G2)

Ho - - - di - e Chri - stus na - - -

Alto
Altus (C2)

Tenor 1
Tenor (C3)

Tenor 2
Sexta vox (C3)

Bass
Bassus (F3)

4

est, ho - - - di - e Chri - stus

- - - tus est, ho - - di - e Chri -

Ho - - - di - e Chri - stus na - - - tus

Ho - - di - e Chri - stus na - tus est,