Jean-Paul Montagnier’s book is a much-needed addition to the current literature on French seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music. His in-depth examination of the largely neglected subject of polyphonic settings of the Mass by French composers serves to redress an imbalance in the way sacred music of the period has previously been portrayed. Both in the foreword by John Hajdu Heyer and in the course of Montagnier’s own study, reasons for the neglect of this repertoire are discussed, with reference to, among other things, the somewhat disparaging and dismissive remarks of earlier scholars of Baroque music who had little or no firsthand knowledge of Mass settings, whose focus was primarily on secular genres, and who had a tendency to generalize about music that was in fact far more varied than they suggested. Even when scholars have discussed French sacred music from this period, the focus has more often been on the motets composed for use in Paris and Versailles, with only minimal discussion of music from elsewhere in France and little reference to Mass settings other than those by, for example, Marc-Antoine Charpentier.

Until fairly recently, one of the main challenges of studying this repertoire was that much of the music had remained located primarily in French libraries and archives and thus was not widely accessible. With increasing digitization of archival materials and music, as well as printed facsimiles, scholars and performers now have greater opportunities to familiarize themselves with the repertoire. An additional challenge is that the music was published in choirbook format, rather than in score, and thus required transcription before it could be studied. These factors, together with a bias that has tended not to favor detailed discussions of French sacred music within general studies of Baroque music, have continued to distort our understanding of the development of music in France. Montagnier provides the reader with a much more detailed and varied picture of the role

played by music in French churches and cathedrals than has previously been available. He contests the notion that French composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had essentially ignored the genre of Mass setting, and demonstrates that far from adhering strictly to the *stile antico* in these settings, composers often drew on current musical styles to create an idiosyncratic approach to the genre.

Montagnier examines volumes published by Ballard between 1607 and about 1767 that contain more than a hundred polyphonic Mass settings by over fifty different composers. Even a brief glance at the book’s appendices, which list the names of composers whose Mass settings are found in the Ballard publications, as well as engraved, stenciled, and handwritten choirbooks, reveals a rich repertoire of material barely acknowledged in previous studies.

The book falls into eight chapters that examine the printed choirbooks, the use of instruments during performances of the Mass settings, the social and liturgical context, the musical characteristics, and a number of specific case studies. In the first chapter, Montagnier provides a historical overview of Ballard’s choirbooks, with tables indicating the numbers of publications during the period in question; a section that discusses the figured bass—something largely omitted from the choirbooks; an account of changing practices with respect to bar lines; and an explanation of the page layout together with facsimile illustrations from masses by Cosset and Menault. For readers unfamiliar with the French choirbook layout, Montagnier’s inclusion of the facsimile examples, together with an explanation of the layout and notation (p. 27), is particularly useful. The chapter presents interesting arguments relating to the preference for the use of choirbook format, ranging from the economic perspective of the publisher to the pragmatic considerations of the choir director.

The second chapter provides insights into the practice of singing and playing from a choirbook placed on a lectern, drawing evidence from the music itself, from contemporary writers (though none from France), from archival documents, such as Prothade Amidey’s descriptions of liturgical and musical practices at the church in Dole (pp. 58, 126–29), and from an engraving by Philip Galle in which choristers and instrumentalists are depicted performing together (p. 38). Montagnier refers to the seemingly contradictory evidence in relation to the use of instruments, whereby the choirbooks usually include only the vocal parts yet other sources suggest the addition of instruments. This is an area that could have been examined in greater detail since it has implications not only for scholars but for performers too. How should performers today reconcile the lack of information in the publications themselves with regard to instrumental writing or other aspects of performance practice with evidence that points to unwritten conventions? Montagnier also provides a discussion of the practice of using solo voices in contrast to the full choir—though again leaving the performer with many unanswered questions. The chapter concludes with a fascinating glimpse of
the use of the choirbooks as pedagogical tools, as illustrated by choristers’
doodles and drawings on the music (pp. 64–65)—perhaps little has changed
in the way choirboys treat their music in moments of distraction! It is this
type of detail that allows the reader to gain not only an understanding of the
musical impact of this music, but also a sense that these publications were
utilitarian and not merely aesthetic additions to library shelves.

In Chapter 3, Montagnier discusses the social and liturgical context for
the body of music under consideration, beginning with an outline of the role
played by the provincial maître de musique as teacher, manager, musician,
and “pater familias” (p. 67) for the boy choristers, the need for the maître to
balance the competing demands of the job, and the challenges, particularly
for younger composers, of building a portfolio of work that may eventually
lead to publication. Through descriptions and tables, Montagnier gives a
well-documented overview of the social and geographic origins as well as the
ages of the composers represented in the choirbooks—who were on average
forty years old when their first mass was published. He also provides an inter-
esting discussion of the way these composers developed networks through
publishers, other musicians, and patrons to support and disseminate their
work. Such interconnections influenced stylistic musical developments and
provided a means of highlighting the contributions of musicians outside of
Paris and Versailles.

Chapter 4 ties together musical and liturgical aspects of the repertoire con-
tained in the choirbooks, examining the musical basis of the Mass settings
within the context of the liturgy, including the use of borrowed secular and
sacred melodies. Documentation is provided in the form of tables and music
examples that illustrate the extent to which some composers continued the
practice of using cantus firmus and parody techniques. Many readers will be
familiar, for example, with the melody of Arbeau’s well-known pavane “Belle
qui tient ma vie,” used as the basis for Cosset’s parody mass Missa Eructavit
cor meum. Montagnier includes a table that demonstrates the extensive use of
psalm verses in the titles of the masses (p. 112), as well as tables that list titles
derived from the Song of Songs, antiphons, canticles, hymns, and other mis-
cellaneous selections of a religious nature (pp. 116–20), many of which used
borrowed plainchant melodies as their musical basis. He cautions the reader,
however, that reference to a text in the title does not necessarily mean that
the composer has used the corresponding chant as the basis for the composi-
tion. The chapter also looks at more specific questions relating to the liturgy,
including, for example, the liturgical calendars—the classification of different
feast days—and the way these might affect the stylistic choices and length of
Mass settings.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Gallican church re-
tained its independence from Rome, most composers in France writing for
the Gallican or Parisian rites rather than the Roman rite. While many of the
texts and chants were common to both rites, a number were not. To illustrate
this, Montagnier includes a table that shows the differences between the Proper for Christmas Day at Rome, Paris, and Toul (p. 124). It is useful to see these concrete reminders of differences in text and the implications for both composers and publishers. The chapter concludes with an examination of the close connection between rhetoric and music as reflected in the choice of specific elements of music, such as texture and melody, and in the way the physical gestures of the celebrant are often mirrored in the music. Here and elsewhere in the book, Montagnier refers to the codified rhetorical-musical devices discussed by Pietro Cerone in his treatise *El melopeo y maestro*, published in Naples in 1613. While undoubtedly of interest, I would question the focus on Cerone’s writing in a book on French music. Comments made by French writers of the period might have been of greater relevance.

The remaining chapters focus primarily on the music written for the Mass, beginning with a chapter on Lassus, whose works were published by Ballard and whose music Montagnier convincingly argues served as a model for the Mass settings contained in the choirbooks. Through descriptions, analysis, and music examples, the reader is shown how French composers were influenced by Lassus’s approach to texture (particularly the imitative style), harmony, and form. In the final section of this fifth chapter, Montagnier challenges earlier scholars’ assumptions about French composers’ adherence to the *stile antico* through much of the seventeenth century, noting both sociological and musical reasons for its prolonged use. He recommends a reevaluation of the variety of approaches used by composers of the period and the avoidance of anachronistic attitudes toward a style that continued to be regarded in a positive light throughout the seventeenth century.

Chapter 6 focuses on stylistic aspects of the Mass settings, examining different musical elements in turn, and using examples and illustrative tables to support the arguments presented, including discussions of French composers’ approaches to form, and the use of headmotive and cantus firmi, contrapuntal writing, time signatures and tempo indications, modality, and tonality. The chapter provides valuable insights into the stylistic choices of composers of the period, though the need to refer back to tables, figures, and music examples presented in earlier chapters on a number of occasions can be a little cumbersome, since no page numbers are provided. While the lists of these components presented at the beginning of the book do include page numbers, it would have been much easier for the reader had these numbers been given within the chapter. It would also have been useful if the book’s index had comprised not only names but also subjects.

In Chapter 7, Montagnier focuses on two specific works that were particularly popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cosset’s *Missa Gaudeamus omnes* was important as a pedagogical tool for teaching boys singing and composition in a more conservative style. It appeared in four prints between 1649 and 1725. Campra’s *Missa Ad majorem Dei gloriam* exemplified a more progressive style, which drew, for example, on expressive devices
from secular genres and on a more Italianate idiom that was probably a product of the composer’s upbringing in the south of France. Montagnier notes that the Missa Ad majorem Dei gloriam appeared in two editions within a year—an indication of the demand for a piece that continued to be highly influential on later composers.

The final chapter examines settings of the Missa pro defunctis (Requiem Mass). Montagnier suggests that, because of the differences in text between the Parisian and Roman rites, publishing settings of the Requiem Mass was a less attractive marketing venture for Ballard than publishing settings of the Ordinary, whose texts were common to the two rites and therefore more widely marketable. Certainly the numbers of publications seem to confirm this—just six polyphonic Requiem masses published by the Parisian “Imprimeur du Roy” and none published by Ballard during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition to examining a range of musical devices used within the Requiem settings—some of which are neatly summarized in tables (pp. 261, 267)—Montagnier discusses the texts and intonations, as well as the challenges of associating these works with specific funerals on account of the lack of evidence.

This book is a rich resource for anyone interested in Baroque music, not only for those wishing to learn about a specific genre. Through his copious use of music examples, illustrations, and references to archival material, Montagnier paints a vivid picture of the role played by church musicians within the religious and social fabric of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, through polyphonic settings of the Mass that represented a key aspect of worship yet whose history had been largely forgotten.

C. JANE GOSINE


Cipriano de Rore began his career following the styles of Arcadelt, Verdelot, and Willaert. In the space of just over twenty years, he established a reputation of innovation such that Monteverdi’s brother could later call him “the founder of the seconda pratica.”¹ His late works were imitated by his most significant successors, so that the status of the madrigal as the most outstanding innovative genre of the late Renaissance stems principally from him. The five-hundredth anniversary of his birth (1515 or 1516) was