

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Antiphony *Quaerite primum regnum:*  
Admittance Examination as a Member  
of the Philharmonic Academy in Bologna (1770)**

During the summer of 1770 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart studied with Father Giovanni Battista Martini, to prepare for the difficult admittance examination as a member of the Philharmonic Academy in Bologna. In those years the European reputation of Padre Martini was so considerable that many young composers were in Bologna to study at the Franciscan school. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was quite ignorant of contrapuntal style church, whose knowledge was essential for the membership at the Academy, and Martini's were valuable lessons for his further musical development. Mozart's interest in counterpoint has its start in this Bolognese apprenticeship, and the lessons would later reveal themselves not as dry academics but as a genuine element of beauty. Under the influence of Martini, Mozart composed numerous liturgical works, including the *Miserere in A minor* for three voices and continuo (K. 85) and the *Kyrie for five sopranos* in G (K. 89). In the *Enigmatic Canons* (K. 89a), Mozart took as model the canons included by Martini in his *History of Music*. The antiphona *Cibavit eos* (KV 44) is also written according to the standards prescribed by the Philharmonic Academy, and is an evidence of his exam work.

The membership at the Philharmonic Academy was a prestigious title; with the Papal bull of Benedict XIV (February 22, 1749), the title of Academic Philharmonic had become essential to practice as a choirmaster. The rules regulating the admittance of Academics at the time of Mozart had been fixed by the Statutes of 1721.

To become a member of Bologna Philharmonic Academy, a written test was required, a counterpoint in the severe style on a Cantus firmus from Gregorian Antiphony, drawn at random by the jury and to be done in seclusion. The admittance examination required submitting a formal request or "memorial".

The jury for Mozart was formed by a large group of prominent academics. Padre Martini was the Perpetual Academy Councilor, a position that was important in settling the disputes in terms of musical material. Although not a member of the Board examinations, Martini was able to influence decisions with the weight of his authority. Among the committee members were some of Bologna's most important musicians at the time, including Petronio Lanzi, Antonio Mazzoni, Lorenzo Gibelli, Bernardino Ottani, Angelo Caroli, Giuseppe Corsini.

The Board of the Philharmonic drew the antiphony *Quaerite primum regnum Dei* before young Mozart. After a quite brief seclusion, Mozart presented the Philharmonic Commission a four voice elaboration of the antiphony, which was judged with "sufficient".

There are actually two versions of this work. The first one (kept at the International Museum and Musical Library of Bologna) is Wolfgang's actual test piece, dated October 9, 1770. Then there is the second one (kept at Bologna Philharmonic Academy), which is actually a different arrangement by Padre Martini, handcopied by Mozart. Making a comparison between the two versions of the experiment, Martini's arrangement showed no violations of the 'strict style' while such violations occurred frequently in Mozart's. In short, it appears that Wolfgang's original composition might have not met the Academy's strict style requirements. The version presented to the Philharmonic Academy was then drawn up by Father Martini and simply copied by Mozart during the examination. In spite of his genius, Mozart was only 14 years old at the time and did not have yet full rules of ecclesiastical counterpoint, of which Bologna Philharmonic Academy was authoritative custodian. Since then all Mozart biographers have mentioned this episode, which has become one of the most famous ones among all the rich anecdotal Mozart literature. The concert hall on the ground floor of Bologna Philharmonic Academy was named after Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1922.

The purpose of this report is to examine and compare the two versions of Mozart's experiment by highlighting the mistakes in the first version by Mozart and the corrections made by Padre Martini, in accordance with the strict style requirements.

But what are the mistakes actually made by Mozart? We have counted at least twelve and all of them are considerably serious, an evidence of the violating of strict counterpoint rules by the young composer:

- 1) bar 7: too many melodic leaps of consecutive descending third to a ninth frame.
- 2) bar 7: the octave delay between soprano and contralto is not allowed.
- 3) bars 7–8: the two melodic leaps of descending minor thirds take place to a diminished fifth: *Bes, G, E*.
- 4) bar 8: too many melodic leaps of consecutive descending third, followed by a diminished fifth.
- 5) bar 8: again the octave delay between soprano and contralto, and soprano and tenor.
- 6) bar 8: doubling of the sensible, leading to a double resolution, is not allowed.
- 7) bar 12: diminished seventh chord is not allowed in this style.
- 8) bar 13: the consecutive fifth between tenor and alto.
- 9) bar 17: again two melodic leaps of descending minor thirds taking place to a diminished fifth and again doubling of sensible.
- 10) bar 18: On the *E* at the bass voice, a seventh inversion takes place, which is not allowed in this style.
- 11) bar 19: again the octave delay between bass and soprano.
- 12) bar 23: the consecutive fifths between alto and bass.

### Santrauka

#### W. A. Mozarto antifonija „*Quaerite primum regnum*“, sukurta stojant į Bolonijos filharmonijos akademiją (1770)

1770 m. vasarą Mozartas mokėsi pas Tėvą Giovanni Battista Martini ir rengėsi sunkiam stojamajam egzaminui į Bolonijos filharmonijos akademiją. Tais laikais Tėvo Martini reputacija buvo tokia didelė, kad daugelis jaunųjų kompozitorių vykdavo studijuoti į pranciškonų mokyklą Bolonijoje. Mozartas neturėjo jokio supratimo apie bažnyčios kontrapunktinį stilių, kurį išmanyti stojant į Akademiją buvo labai svarbu. Martini pamokos buvo labai vertingos Mozarto tolesniam muzikiniam išsilavinimui. Kompozitoriaus mokslo metai Bolonijoje atskleidžia jo susižavėjimo kontrapunktu šaknis. Stojant į Bolonijos filharmonijos akademiją buvo atliekamas rašytinis testas, kontrapunktas griežtu *cantus firmus* stiliumi iš Grigališkojo antifonarijaus, tekstą parinkdavo komisija atsitiktinumo būdu, darbą kandidatas turėjo atlikti izoliuotoje vietoje. Po stojamojo egzamino būdavo pateikiamas formalus pasiūlymas arba „memorialas“. Jaunajam Mozartui Filharmonijos komisija išrinko antifoną „*Quaerere primum regnum Dei*“. Netrukus Mozartas pateikė Filharmonijos komisijai patobulintą keturių balsų antifoną, kuri buvo įvertinta „patenkinamai“. Muzikos bibliotekoje yra Wolfgango testas, datuotas 1770 m. spalio 9 d. Antrasis darbas (Bolonijos filharmonijos akademijoje) iš tikrųjų yra Tėvo Martini sukurta, o Mozarto nurašyta antifonos plėtotė.

Abiejų versijų lyginimas parodė, jog Martini aranžuotėje jokių „griežtojo stiliaus“ pažeidimų nebuvo, o Mozarto darbe jų pasitaikė dažnai. Atrodo, kad originali Wolfgango kompozicija galėjo neatitikti Akademijos „griežtojo stiliaus“ reikalavimų. Filharmonijai pateiktą versiją parašė Tėvas Martini, o mokinys ją nukopijavo. Mozartas, 14 metų genijus, nežinojo visų bažnytinio kontrapunkto taisyklių, kurių autoritetinga sergėtoja buvo Bolonijos filharmonijos akademija. Nuo to laiko visi Mozarto biografai mini šį epizodą kaip juokingiausią iš pasakojimų apie Mozartą. Koncertų salė Bolonijos filharmonijos akademijos pirmame aukšte 1922 m. buvo pavadinta Mozarto vardu.

Pranešime nagrinėjamos ir lyginamos abi eksperimento versijos.

Appendix

2

In gri: te - gre: mi: re: gna: de: - i et ju: ki: -

an e - us: et ha: om: ni: a: ab: i: -

on: ta: tur - vo = by ab: le = lu: - ja:.

Amadeo Volpiano, Roma 1870



*Allegro* *2/4* = *Introduzione* *2/4* = © 1770. = *Mozart Wolfgang*

N. 134.

*Kyrie - e - lei - son - num De - um de - i et Je - su - chi - sti*

*in - cae - les - tis et haec om - nia a - d - i - cu - li*

*in - cae - les - tis et haec om - nia a - d - i - cu - li*

AMADEO *Wolfgang Mozart*

# Quaerite primum regnum Dei

KV 86

(Bologna, 9. Oktober 1770)

Magnificat-Antiphon  
15. Sonntag nach Pfingsten

Amadeo Wolfgang Mozart

Soprano

Alto

Tenore

Basso

8 Qu[a]e - ri - te pri - mum re - gnum De -

14 - i et jus - ti - ti - am e - [j]us : et

20 ha[e]c om - ni - a a[d] - [ji] - [ci] - en - tur

- vo - bis[,] al - le - lu - ja.

# Quaerite primum regnum Dei

KV 86  
(Bologna, 9. Oktober 1770)

Magnificat-Antiphon  
15. Sonntag nach Pfingsten

*Amadeo Wolfgango Mozart*

8 Qu[a]e - ri - te pri - mum re - gnum De -

14 - i et jus - ti - ti - am e - [i]us : et

20 ha[e]c om - ni - a a[d] - [i] - [ci] - en - tur

vo - bis[,] al - le - lu - ja.

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# Quaerite primum regnum Dei

Fassung v. Padre Martini (vgl. KV 86)  
(Ms. v. W. A. Mozart, Bologna 1770)

Magnificat-Antiphon  
15. Sonntag nach Pfingsten

AMADEO Wolfgango Mozart  
[recte: Padre Martini]

8 Qu[a]e - ri - te pri - mum Re - gnum de -

15 - i et jus - ti - ti - am e - ius: et ha[e]c om -

21 ni - a a[d] - [ji] - [ci] - en - tur vo -

bis[,] al - le - lu - ia.