

Monteverdi Gloria a 8 M 32

Learn how Monteverdi uses imitation to keep the music interesting

Monteverdi writes 2 trio sections in the Gloria where the music is imitative. He has made up a tune that has an obvious way of starting so it will be clear to the listener when another voice enters with it - that's the rising "Rex ce-les" bit of the tune. The rest of the tune works its way back down as a smooth contrast to the rising start. That will mean the two bits of the tune will be distinct, and combine interestingly. Having got his tune he overlaps it. Each voice comes in 5 notes higher than the one before, and taking the music to a new key. That's why the accidentals keep changing. The brackets show where the tune entries are. Look at your score (bar 54 onwards), to see how this imitative texture carries on before ending in a chordal perfect cadence. It's 3.14 on the recording.

Alto
Tenor
Bass

D major chord, dominant of G
A major chord, dominant of D
E major chord, dominant of A

rex ce -
rex ce - les - tis, De - us
rex ce - les - tis, De - us pa -

A.
T.
B.

les - tis, De - us pa - ter om - ni - po - tens, rex ce -
pa - - - ter, rex ce - les - tis, De - us pa - ter om - ni
- - - - ter om - ni - po - tens, De - us

Here's the equivalent section for Choir 2 at bar 91. Can you see how it's almost the same music? Monteverdi has smoothed out the opening statement of the tune by starting it on the first beat of the bar and using a passing note. But the second part of the tune is the same. Compare the 2 sections bar by bar in your score. It's only at the end that they differ. Monteverdi has helped unify his long Gloria by using the same music, but has avoided it becoming boring by having the other choir singing it - so those listening would hear it from another direction, and slightly varying the tune. It's at 5.17 on the recording.

A.
T.
B.

Do - mi-ne De - us, Ag-nus De - - - i,
Do - mi-ne De - us, Ag-nus De - - - i, De - us, Ag-nus
Do - mi-ne De - us, Ag-nus De - - - i, Do - mi-ne