

Monteverdi Gloria a 8 M 35

Why are some sections so hard to sing: Qui Tollis (6.26 on the recording)

This would be tough enough to sing with all the quicker notes and words to fit in without all the modulations. It's worth checking out what the words mean: "Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us". The basses may well be pleading for mercy by the end. Why is it so very difficult to pitch the first few notes? You've learned a lot about how natural it is for the dominant chord to lead onto the tonic chord. It's even quite easy (and lots of fun) to sing a chain of chords, where each tonic becomes the dominant of the next key - like E major, A major, D major, G major, C major. Happy singers. There are several places later in this section where you find part of that sequence. It's an awful lot harder to do the sequence the other way round - and that's Monteverdi does in the first bar. The previous section ended on A, Bass 1 enters moving to E and Bass 2 takes it to B - the only time that key appears in the piece. Bass 1 shifts the music up a semitone into C. That's seriously weird - usually something you'd only find from the late 19th century on. Bass 2 has to catch and take it into G. It's deliberately evoking the pain lying behind the words.

The chord changes get more civilised after the opening, though there's another unusual shift down a semitone half way through bar 133.

In bar 130, the unalert Bass 1 might miss the jump up to C - it's a note higher than you expect. Monteverdi has had to do it to make it fit the chord of C that he wants.

It's quite a relief to get to the nice suspensions in bars 125 and 136

bar 120

Bass 1: Qui tol-lis, qui tol-lis, qui tol - - lis, pec-ca-ta mun -

Bass 2: qui tol-lis, qui tol-lis, qui tol - - lis, pec-ca-ta mun - di, pec-ca-ta

bar 125

B.1: - - di, pec-ca-ta mun - - - di, su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem,

B.2: mun - di, pec-ca-ta mun - - di, su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti

bar 130

B.1: su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem, su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-

B.2: o-nem, su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem, de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem,

bar 133

B.1: o-nem, su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem, de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem, stram.

B.2: su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem, de-pre-ca-ti-o-nem, no-stram.