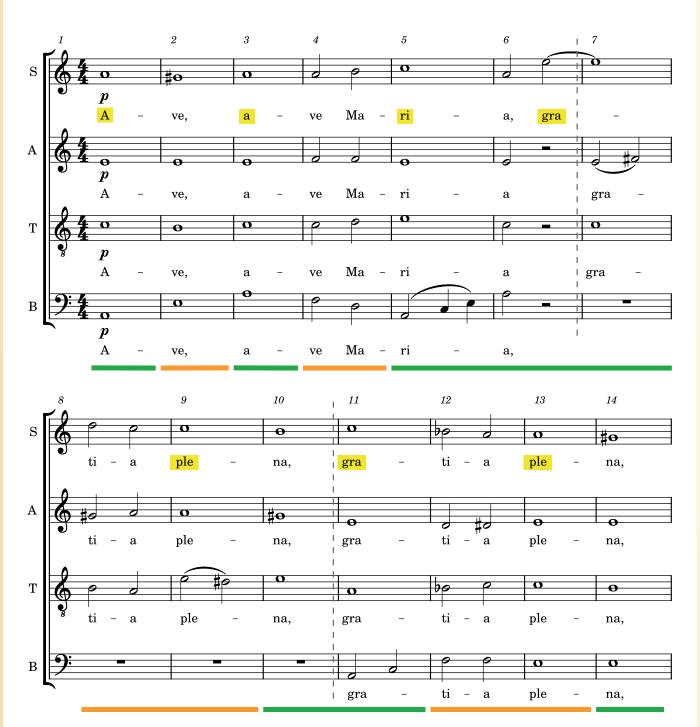# Aiblinger – A "true" Cecilian Composer?

Research Question:

To what extent is J. C. Aiblinger's „Ave Maria" composed according to the musical ideals of the Cecilian movement?
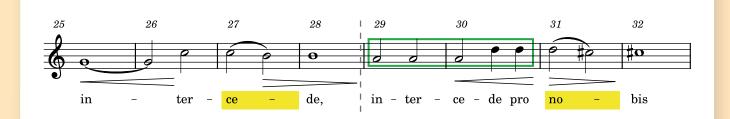
Example 1 (Bar 1–14):

The beginning of the piece exemplifies how well Aiblinger's structure follows the principle of "Rest – Movement – Rest" while melody and text correspond to each other:

» This part is structured in 6+4+4 bars, with each phrase following the principle of Rest – Movement – Rest, which is achieved by the length of the notes and the harmonics (Green: Rest | Orange: Movement)

» Emphasis of the text is transferred to the music by assigning stressed syllables whole notes and heavier bars

» The words "Gratia plena" are repeated, with tension being created in both cases by countermoveing Soprano and Alto and diminished chords resolved by a simple E-major

» In the repetition chromatics are used to further diminish the melody progression in the echo, making this part of the prayer even more devotional and profound
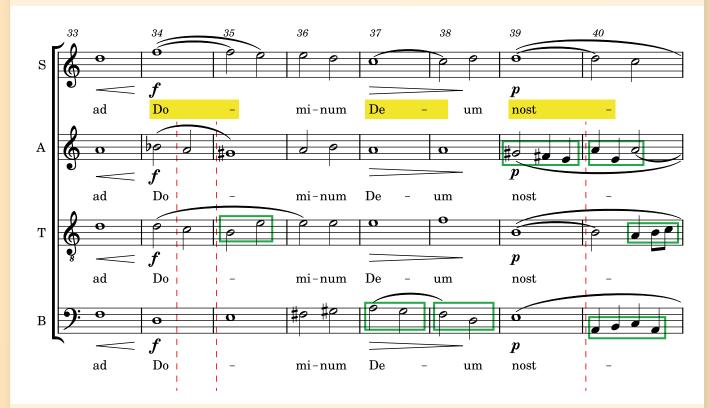
Example 2 (Bar 25–32):

In this phrase Aiblinger proceeds using text from a different prayer, which is rather unusual for Cecilians. However, the material he uses addresses Mary to plead for the speaker in the face of god as well. The music continues to correspond with the text:

» The plea to intercede is uttered twice with the words "pro nobis" added in the repetition

» The repetition uses the same intervals as in the beginning but is moved up one key and sped up rhythmically to compensate for the additional text which makes it sound more pressing. The syllable "no" ("us") is stressed by the suspended fourth

Example 3 (Bar 33–44):

The words "Dominum Deum nostrum" mark the climax of the composition, which is achieved by using many compositional devices:

» The "Do" in bar 34 is assigned to the highest and loudest note of the composition

» Emphasized syllables are extended to a whole and a half note (yellow)

» The former homophonic structure is broken in this part by the use of passing notes (green) and multiple different chords (dashed red) on one held syllable

Musical Ideals

» Music facilitates text
» Structure follows the principle of „Rest – Movement – Rest"
» Use of Latin as preferred language in religious music
» To be avoided are "profane" musical devices like…

…leaps larger than a fifth
…tone repetitions
…overemphasizing individual notes
…profane rhythms (e. g. 3/4, 6/8 resembling vivid or dancing rhythms)
…chromatics, if they don't correspond to the text

Conclusion:

» The music is used to convey the message of the text
» The structure is kept simple, following the principle of "Rest – Movement – Rest"
» Latin is used, but the composition combines two prayers which are both left incomplete
» Aiblinger uses special musical devices like leaps, chromatics or even rhythm only to emphasize certain textual elements, setting his composition apart from so called "profane" music

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