

Book Reviews

Joachim Burmeister. *Musical Poetics*. Rostock: Stephan Myliander, 1606. Translated, with Introduction and Notes, by Benito V. Rivera. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.

Reviewed by Vincent Benitez

Classical rhetoric, as developed by Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian, is a theory of discourse whose basic goal is to persuade an audience to a particular viewpoint. Rhetoric offers systematic principles and rules on how to shape and effectively communicate verbal discourse. In Greco-Roman antiquity, rhetoric was used in civic life, primarily in the giving of legal and political speeches. It was later incorporated into the European medieval educational system and became a part of every learned person's education.¹

Connections between music and rhetoric were established in sixteenth-century Europe, particularly in its northern regions, with the rediscovery of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* in 1416 and the growing emphasis on and spread of Renaissance humanist education.² As the century progressed, these connections continued to develop, especially the idea that musical form could be analogous to the organization of a speech as defined by classical rhetoric. Thus, the rhetorical concept of arrangement became a metaphor for musical form beginning in the sixteenth century.³

Parallels between music and rhetoric continued to be drawn with the

¹For an introduction and overview of the history of classical rhetoric, see George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

²George Buelow, "Rhetoric and Music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 15:793.

³Ian Bent, *Analysis*, with a glossary by William Drabkin, Norton/Grove Handbooks in Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 6.

adaptation and application of rhetorical figures to music.⁴ This is a logical consequence, considering that a proper education in northern Europe at the time required a student to memorize anywhere from forty to two hundred rhetorical figures.⁵ Joachim Burmeister (1564–1629), in his *Musica poetica* (Rostock, 1606), presented the first systematic attempt in the history of music to transfer rhetorical figures to music. Burmeister also gave the first known definition of analysis and then followed this with a rhetorical analysis of Lasso's five-voice motet *In me transierunt*.⁶ The importance of this treatise in the history of theory has long been recognized. Thus, Benito V. Rivera's edition and translation of Burmeister's treatise (*Musical Poetics*) is a welcome addition to every historical theorist's library.

Rivera has pursued an excellent approach in dealing with the challenges of translating and editing Burmeister's treatise. First, Rivera gives the reader a thoughtful introduction that traces the development and background of Burmeister's thought. Second, Burmeister's original Latin text is carefully edited and corrected. Besides incorporating the *corrigenda* at the end of the work, Rivera makes changes in grammatical syntax, spelling, and punctuation; alterations in grammatical syntax are noted while changes in spelling and punctuation are not. Third, Rivera strives for a fluent, nonliteral English translation which

⁴Classical treatises on rhetoric normally specified five subdivisions of a speaker's resources (*vis oratoris*): (1) *inventio*—the invention of the subject matter, including all pertinent arguments, (2) *dispositio*—the arrangement of this material, (3) *elocutio* (also called *elaboratio* or *decoratio*)—the elaboration of the material through rhetorical figures of speech, (4) *memoria*—the use of devices that aid memorization, and (5) *pronuntiatio*—delivery of the speech before an audience. For a more detailed discussion of these rhetorical precepts, see Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (Morningside Heights, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959), 67–143.

⁵Brian Vickers, "Figures of Rhetoric/Figures of Music?," *Rhetorica* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 3.

⁶Bent, 7. Claude V. Palisca examines Burmeister's analysis in "Ut oratoria musica: The Rhetorical Basis of Musical Mannerism," in *The Meaning of Mannerism*, ed. Franklin W. Robinson and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1972), 37–65.

tries to capture Burmeister's ideas as accurately as possible. The original Latin is highly idiosyncratic; a literal approach would not have conveyed Burmeister's thoughts precisely. Fourth, Rivera's translation appears on the opposite pages from the Latin text. This allows the reader easily to compare the two while at the same time enhancing the usefulness of the facsimile edition.⁷ Finally, Rivera provides the musical examples that Burmeister referred to but did not include in his treatise.⁸

Most of Rivera's introduction examines Burmeister's ideas on teaching musical composition. Because Burmeister was always revising his ideas, Rivera traces their evolution through Burmeister's three treatises on composition: *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae* (1599), *Musica autoschediastike* (1601), and *Musica poetica*. *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae* is a condensed version of an earlier work, entitled *Isagoge*, which is no longer extant (xiv–xv). An examination of its chapter headings reveals a correspondence in subject matter with the chapter headings contained in *Musica poetica* and agreement in basic doctrine, although with textual differences; moreover, the earlier work does not discuss analysis and learning through the imitation of proven compositional models (xv). *Musica autoschediastike* reproduces the first twelve chapters of *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae* before offering a revised and expanded section on musical-rhetorical figures. Burmeister's second treatise is the most comprehensive version of his teaching but "suffers from an obvious redundance and circularity that make tedious reading. . . . It documents the fluid and unsettled state of some of his most original ideas" (xxiii). *Musica poetica* continues on the path established by the previous two works: it incorporates and clarifies material contained in its predecessors. In addition, *Musica poetica* contains significant new chapters on analysis and on emulating the works of the masters.

⁷Joachim Burmeister, *Musica poetica* (Rostock: Stephan Myliander, 1606; reprint, ed. Martin Ruhnke, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955).

⁸Dedicatory letters and poems from *Hypomnematum musicae poeticae* (1599) and *Musica autoschediastike* (1601) are provided in the original text and translated in appendices A1 and A2, respectively.

Rivera emphasizes that Burmeister's pedagogical methods were ultimately flexible. Burmeister's association of rhetoric and music was an exploration into uncharted musical waters at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Rivera notes that while attempting to produce concrete solutions to musical problems through his method, Burmeister still realized that "the art of musical composition was . . . variable and subject to unforeseen factors" (xxxvi). Therefore, we should not be surprised that Burmeister continually revised his thoughts. Knowledge of the earlier works and all subsequent changes is essential for understanding the context and content of *Musica poetica*, Burmeister's final version. Rivera provides tangible demonstrations of this point by tracing the path Burmeister took in developing his definitions for *metalepsis* and *hypallage* (xxiv–xxxvii). Rivera critiques each version and accompanying musical example from each treatise, thereby assisting the reader in understanding the definitions contained in the final version. Furthermore, Rivera also supplies a broad picture of Burmeister's increasingly refined conception of musical-rhetorical figures with a comparative table that lists figures and accompanying musical examples/citations from all three books (xxxviii–xlv).

Besides giving an overview on the subject of musical-rhetorical figures in his introduction, Rivera reviews Burmeister's ideas on analysis, harmony, and modes. He also explains the letter notation used to represent musical examples in *Musica poetica*. This method of notation can be unwieldy for the modern reader; Rivera circumvents this problem, however, by transcribing these excerpts into modern notation while at the same time supplying the original letter notation from the facsimile on opposite pages during the course of his translation. Rivera concludes his introduction by discussing the need to avoid literal translations of the Latin text, which do not result in the accurate conveyance of Burmeister's ideas. Rivera juxtaposes literal translations with free, nonliteral ones of various passages from *Musica poetica*, clearly adding credence to his arguments (lix–lxii).

Musica poetica contains sixteen chapters, of which the first eleven are devoted to traditional aspects of compositional instruction such as notation, vocal parts, consonance and dissonance, melody and harmony, cadences, and the modes. Chapter 1 focuses on notation, particularly

rudiments such as the staff, clefs, the musical alphabet, rhythmic values, and Burmeister's own peculiar letter notation. Chapters 2 and 3, which deal with voice parts and consonance and dissonance, respectively, present nothing new. The ensuing chapter, however, is of special interest to historians of theory, for it evinces a trend by a growing number of late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century German theorists to recognize the triad's importance as the centerpiece of compositional pedagogy. In chapter 4, Burmeister provides various tables of three- and four-note chordal combinations. He labeled the three notes of triadic combinations (Burmeister preferred the term *conjugation*, a combination of notes and intervals, to triad [liiii]) in a way that closely paralleled the work of Johannes Avianus (*basis*, *media*, and *suprema* [66–67]) but, like Avianus, did not relate root-position and inverted triads in any way.⁹ After considering chords and their formation, Burmeister devotes the rest of the chapter to a discussion of voice-leading errors.

Chapter 5 addresses the subject of cadences. Melodic cadences are described in terms of the four traditional voice parts: discant, alto, tenor, and bass (108–13). Harmonic cadences occur when melodic cadences combine simultaneously. They coincide with the divisions of the text and thus conclude the affections or periods (Burmeister's musical units) of a piece or even the piece itself (114–17).

Chapter 6 is a presentation of the modes after the models of Zarlino and Seth Calvisius (liii–liv). Burmeister presents a twelve-mode scheme that features a modal-defining hierarchy of functional pitches within each mode, typically the final, fifth, third, and octave of authentic modes and the final, fifth, third, and octave below the fifth of plagal modes. He gives these four critical notes the following names: (1)

⁹Otto Siegfried Harnisch, in his *Artis musicae delineatio* (Frankfurt, 1608), refers to modern triadic inversion. He states that the *basis* of a chord can appear above the other notes in the same chord and still be considered the *basis*. He arrives at this important idea by first defining a three-note chord as a composite consonance that is either perfect (a five-three sonority) or imperfect (a six-three sonority). In an imperfect composite consonance, the *basis* relinquishes its position to the *sonus medius*. See Benito V. Rivera, "The *Isagoge* (1581) of Johannes Avianus: An Early Formation of Triadic Theory," *Journal of Music Theory* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 47–49, 59–60.

principium, the lowest note in the modal ambitus, (2) *soni emmesepistrophii*, the fifth (authentic modes) and fourth (plagal modes) above the *principium*, (3) *emmeles*, the third in authentic modes and third above the *sonus emmesepistrophus* in plagal modes, and (4) duple (octave above) of the *principium* (lv, 122–23, 128–29). As Rivera notes, the *principium* does not represent the final in plagal modes and is therefore misleading (lv). Authentic and plagal modes are determined by the interval formed by the *principium* and *sonus emmesepistrophus* (midpivotal pitch). This interval is called the base of the modal disposition; when it consists of a fifth, the mode is authentic, when it is a fourth, the mode is plagal (122–23).

Fourteen initial modes are ordered alphabetically by modal final in authentic and plagal dispositions. Two modes that possess B as a final (Hyperaeolian and Hyperphrygian) are rejected (therefore the twelve-mode scheme) due to their lack of a perfect fifth, which results in an illegitimate base of modal disposition (128–29). Burmeister differentiates modal affect by the location of the semitone in relation to the final, fifth, or third of a mode. For example, modes that possess a semitone below their third (Dorian and Hypodorian) suggest grave and serious topics (for the other modal classifications, see lvi and 132–35). As Rivera notes, this approach in determining modal ethos favors “the grouping of modes in terms of major versus minor or hard versus soft, while at the same time recognizing important nuances that differentiate members of each modal group from one another” (lvi).

The subject of transposition preoccupies Burmeister in chapters 7 and 8. He discusses modal transposition that is either up a fourth or down a fifth in chapter 7. A modal transposition implies a concomitant change in quality, either that of the *diezeugmenon* or *synemmenon* tetrachords. The latter quality requires the placing of a flat at the beginning of the staff because of its characteristic semitone from A to B \flat . Chapter 8 shows us Burmeister the cantor, providing practical advice regarding transposition from the singer’s (and choir’s) perspective in order to insure the better performance of music compositions.

Burmeister redirects us to the subject of cadences in chapter 9, this time in conjunction with his modal scheme. There are four types of cadences in Burmeister’s framework: (1) *finis principalis*—on the

principium, or lowest note in the modal ambitus, (2) *finis minus principalis*—on the *sonus emmesepistrophus*, or midpivotal pitch, (3) *finis affinalis*—on the *emmeles*, or third above the final, and (4) *finis peregrinus*—on a pitch other than those mentioned above. In his observations, Burmeister informs us that the *finis principalis* applies only to authentic modes. In addition, the *finis minus principalis* is directed toward plagal modes, because “the pitch which is the *principium* in an authentic mode is midpivotal in the plagal, where it is not principal and first in modal constitution but secondary and thus less principal” (147). Rivera notes the problem in terminology here: it is odd to label a cadence “less principal” when the ending note is the modal final (iv). Cadences on the *emmeles*, or third above the final (*finis affinalis*), should be used infrequently, although it is appropriate to use them in a long composition (148–49). It should be apparent to the reader that the *finis peregrinus*, in keeping with the above-mentioned eccentric labeling of the *finis minus principalis*, has nothing to do with the *tonus peregrinus*.

Chapter 12 is the most important (and longest) chapter of the entire treatise, since it deals with the famous topic of musical-rhetorical figures (154–97).¹⁰ Burmeister first describes them as harmonic and melodic segments that deviate from the simple fashion of composition and take on a more decorative nature. He enumerates a total of twenty-six figures, dividing them into three categories: harmonic ornaments (sixteen), melodic ornaments (six), and ornaments that belong to both types (four). Burmeister advises his readers that he is not offering a rigid prescriptive system but a flexible scheme based upon musical examples taken from master composers. He urges students to get into the habit of transcribing compositions because he will cite only the texts of specific compositions and will not provide notated examples, so we must assume that Burmeister is hoping for a reader who knows the repertoire. The more logical reason, perhaps, for the lack of notated examples is that Burmeister hopes “to keep this book from becoming too lengthy” (157).

¹⁰Chapters 10 and 11 deal with text alignment and orthography, respectively, and deserve little comment.

Burmeister's musical-rhetorical figures are grounded in the art of polyphony. Many of them are constructive devices that deal with consonance and dissonance, resulting in decorations of the musical surface. Accordingly, musical-rhetorical figures reveal a structural function in Burmeister's formulation. The text serves as the composer's one and only focal point. The novice should examine and note a master composer's sophisticated use of a musical ornament that enhances a particular text. He or she should then attempt to imitate the master composer's stylistic devices in a similar text (156–59). The student will find everything he or she needs in a verbal text, not in a list of rules and prescriptions. Consequently, musical-rhetorical figures evince an expressive function. Musical-rhetorical figures' basis in polyphony and association with texted music continued until the late Baroque, when people such as Johann Mattheson began discussing instrumental music in terms of a sound speech (*Klangrede*).¹¹

Two short chapters (chapter 13, "The Genera of Songs or Melody Making," and chapter 14, "The Types of Polyphony") serve as an interlude between the previous ground-breaking chapter on musical-rhetorical figures and the ensuing significant chapter on analysis. In chapter 13, Burmeister lists three melodic genera (diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic) and examines the intervallic make-up of their respective tetrachords. He notes that the diatonic and chromatic genera are used by composers of his day while the enharmonic genus is not. Burmeister, oddly enough, concludes this chapter by stating that the enharmonic genus "will be used very frequently in the future" (199). Chapter 14 defines polyphony and divides it into three categories: *simple* polyphony occurs when all notes proceed in equal values; *fractured* polyphony when the notes combine in different values (specifically, a few are colored black while the majority remain uncolored); and *colored* polyphony when numerous colored notes are mixed with a few that are not (200–201). The material in these two chapters presents nothing new. Zarlino covered much of the same

¹¹Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1739; reprint, *Documenta musicologica*, ed. Margarete Reimann, Erste Reihe, Vol. 5, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954), part 2, chap. 14.

ground in part 3 of his *Le institutioni harmoniche*.¹² He outlined the intervallic constructions of the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic genera and noted how there were some musicians of his day—probably a reference to Vicentino and his supporters—who attempted to use the chromatic and enharmonic genera in their compositions.¹³ Zarlino defined two types of counterpoint or polyphony, simple and diminished, which correspond to what we would consider first and fifth species. He did not specifically put forth a third category such as Burmeister’s melismatic-type counterpoint, possibly because diminished counterpoint by definition can encompass both *fractured* and *colored* polyphony.¹⁴

“Musical analysis is the examination of a piece belonging to a certain mode and to a certain type of polyphony. The piece is to be divided into its affections or periods, so that the artfulness with which each period takes shape can be studied and adopted for imitation” (201). So opens Burmeister’s famous chapter 15 on analysis. He then lays out five component parts of analysis: one must determine and consider the (1) mode, (2) melodic genus, (3) type of polyphony, (4) quality (whether the melodic notes exhibit the disjunct [*cantus durus*] or conjunct [*cantus mollis*] systems), and (5) division of the composition into affections or periods. After discussing each part in detail, Burmeister addresses a piece’s structure in terms of a three-part rhetorical *dispositio*: *exordium*, *ipsum corpus carminis* (body of the piece), and *finis* (ending).¹⁵ After these preliminaries, he examines

¹²Gioseffo Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint*, trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968).

¹³*Ibid.*, 267–70.

¹⁴“In the simple counterpoints illustrated earlier, each note of the subject received one corresponding note of the same value in the contrapuntal part. Now it will be permissible to write against each note of the subject any number and value of notes in the counterpoint, as suits the purpose.” *Ibid.*, 92–93.

¹⁵As Rivera mentions, Gallus Dressler (*Praecepta musicae poeticae* [1563]) also conceived of a piece’s structure in terms of a three-part *dispositio*: *exordium*, *medium*, and *finis* (xlvi–xlvi). The structures of Dressler and Burmeister must be considered simplified versions of the classical *dispositio*. Mattheson was the first person to appropriate the six traditional parts of a rhetorical speech in describing his concept of a

Lasso's five-voice motet *In me transierunt* from the above-mentioned vantage points, especially that of affections or periods (204–7). The mode is authentic Phrygian; the total range of all voices is *B* to *ee*,¹⁶ the piece's melodic genus is diatonic, the type of polyphony is fractured, and the quality is *diezeugmenon* (*cantus durus*). He then divides the piece into nine periods, the first consisting of the *exordium*, the next seven comprising the body of the piece, and the last period embodying the ending, likened to an epilogue in oratory. For each period, Burmeister cites the principal musical-rhetorical figures used.

Burmeister closes his treatise with a chapter exhorting the student to learn by imitating the works of master composers. Chapter 16 contains the names of twelve worthy composers to emulate. The names are arranged according to four different style classifications, alluding to the low, middle, and high divisions of literary style.¹⁷ Rivera notes that Lucas Lossius, Burmeister's grammar and rhetoric teacher in Lüneburg, cited specific classical authors as exemplary and grouped them into the low, middle, and high categories of literary style. Lossius went even further and mentioned that the three categories may be mixed with one another (I).

Rivera's translation of Burmeister's *Musica poetica* is a superb accomplishment. It will be an indispensable reference work for anyone interested in seventeenth-century music and thought. I have only a few criticisms with Rivera's work, and I will address the minor ones first. As stated before, Rivera provides in an appendix the musical examples that Burmeister cited but did not include in his treatise. Rivera does not provide an index for these composers or titles of pieces, which would have been helpful for the reader in order to get an overview of the repertoire from which Burmeister drew to illustrate his points. Moreover, reproducing all of Lasso's *In me transierunt* somewhere in Chapter 15 or in an appendix would have been a beneficial aid as one

Klangrede: exordium, narratio, propositio, confirmatio, confutatio, and peroratio (*Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, part 2, chap. 14, 235ff.).

¹⁶B2 to E5; see Rivera's explanation for Burmeister's letter notation (lix).

¹⁷Burmeister's fourth style is a mixture of the middle and grand (or high) styles.

is studying the analysis.

My principal criticism of Rivera's work is that he prefers to present and explicate Burmeister's thoughts within their narrow historical contexts as opposed to taking a more analytical stance in his Introduction to *Musica poetica*. Rivera rarely criticizes Burmeister's theoretical ideas, particularly his vague prescriptions regarding musical-rhetorical figures, their applicability as analytical tools, and his analysis of *In me transierunt*. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with such a historical stance: it can be quite valuable as it seeks to recreate a past aesthetic. Yet, despite the manifest historical importance of Burmeister, there are inherent problems in Burmeister's rhetorical and analytical models for present-day readers accustomed to modern standards of analysis, as I shall discuss below. In my opinion, Rivera, at the very least, could have acknowledged them within the limited confines of his introduction.¹⁸

Despite the apparent parallels between music and rhetoric, fundamental difficulties ensue when an aesthetic linguistic art is adapted to an aesthetic non-linguistic art. The transfer of rhetorical figures to music can only go so far and fundamentally breaks down; the rhetorical figure ultimately loses its specificity. If one examines Burmeister's musical figures with their rhetorical counterparts, one finds general or partial analogies. Burmeister was able to preserve in his musical figures only a portion of the contents of the rhetorical figures.¹⁹ For example, *aposiopesis* occurs when a speaker breaks off a sentence, but only after giving the audience enough semantic information to comprehend the sentence's meaning. Burmeister devised a musical version that designated a general pause in all voices ("*Aposiopesis* is that which imposes a general silence upon all the voices at a specific given sign . . ." [177]); consequently, the rhetorical figure has lost its specificity in the transference.

¹⁸Rivera states that his "introduction and the footnotes that accompany the translation of *Musica poetica* cannot come close to giving a comprehensive account of Burmeister's remarkable transformation of the language of music theory . . ." (l-li).

¹⁹The following discussion of rhetorical figures with their musical counterparts is based on Vickers (27-38).

Burmeister engaged in a process of general simplification in his adaptation of rhetorical figures to music, a process that might be considered almost unavoidable given the nature of his task. Moreover, he was no more successful with tropes.²⁰ Burmeister was not able to represent the semantic properties of tropes; instead, he often substituted formal, notational, or structural properties in their stead in his musical formulations. For instance, *hyperbole* means an “elegant straining of the truth” and “may be employed indifferently for exaggeration or attenuation” of actual facts.²¹ It seeks a higher truth and achieves its effect through the meanings of the words it employs, not by their manipulations or shapes. Burmeister defines the figure as “pushing a melody up beyond its upper boundary [of the mode]” (183). *Hypobole*, *hyperbole*’s complement, refers to the “pressing [of] a melody down beyond the bottom limit of its *ambitus*” (183). Both of these musical figures cannot represent the rhetorical trope’s conception of exceeding normal boundaries in order to communicate a higher level truth.

What was Burmeister trying to do theoretically, since the rhetorical figure’s name or explanation in the majority of cases could not completely illuminate the musical figure’s content? He was attempting to understand both musical decoration and text emphasis through his work in relating rhetorical figures to music. This is analogous to an orator’s use of figures as the artistic means to deviate from ordinary language. In both artistic media, all deviations from ordinary language must be sanctioned by the text.²² Burmeister’s rhetorical figures are not exclusively expressive; many of them are structural or constructive devices that arose out of the need to establish coherence in a composition once the *cantus firmus* was no longer used as a unifying

²⁰Quintilian (8.6.1) defines a trope as the “artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another.” He also states that it is not easy to distinguish between tropes and figures (9.1.3). *Institutio oratoria*, 4 vols., Loeb Classical Library.

²¹Ibid., 8.6.67.

²²Martin Ruhnke, “Joachim Burmeister,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 3:486.

framework.²³ Thus, as stated above, musical-rhetorical figures are decorations of the musical surface that are grounded in polyphony, deal with consonance and dissonance, and evince both structural and expressive functions.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, German theorists, following the lead of Burmeister, continued to adopt rhetorical terminology to explain musical figures. They also created a number of new independent musical figures without rhetorical counterparts. On the other hand, there were many rhetorical figures that were not transferable to music. In their *musica poetica* treatises, the various authors displayed many conflicts and differences in meaning and terminology, although they were able to associate the two art forms more coherently than Burmeister.²⁴ Accordingly, there is no unique systematic doctrine of musical figures for Baroque music.²⁵ How does one employ musical-rhetorical figures as a tool for analysis or, for that matter, the understanding of compositional process for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music when such a manifested disarray exists? Which theorist or theorists does one choose and why? If one decides to use Burmeister or any eclectic mix of theorists as a means to analyze texted Baroque music, an examination of the musical-rhetorical figures can yield some fruitful musical/textual relationships. On the other hand, an examination of musical-rhetorical figures in instrumental Baroque music is often tantamount to the arbitrary pointing out of nonharmonic tones or various types of cadences.²⁶

²³Palisca, 56.

²⁴Vickers, 35.

²⁵Buelow, 794.

²⁶Burmeister has been associated with various composers from the Baroque period by assorted authors. Since he started a tradition of *musica poetica* treatises that continued up to Forkel (Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, 2 vols. [Göttingen: 1788, 1801; reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1967]), it is not surprising that his *Musica poetica* has been quoted by authors working on both seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century musical analysis, although it is ironic that he should be quoted in such a manner since he dealt with music from the middle of the sixteenth-century! For examples of the analysis of texted music, see Vincent P. Benitez,

Burmeister's analysis of Lasso's motet *In me transierunt* offers little insight into the understanding of Lasso's compositional process by modern standards. His analysis is rather pedantic, identifying basic components such as mode, melodic genus, and polphonic type. He gives a technical account of the piece's periods and the musical-rhetorical figures used, which begs the question of whether early seventeenth-century musicians thought beyond the mere emulation of stylistic pictorial devices and about questions of meaning or explanation. Do musical-rhetorical figures have any relationships to larger aspects of design, structure, and coherence? In Burmeister's formulation, they do not. Musical-rhetorical figures decorate the musical surface and play no part in a piece's large-scale design. In his analysis, Burmeister makes no mention of how his figures might contribute to the unity and coherence of Lasso's work. Perhaps the reader will think that I am being too harsh in judging Burmeister. One could say that early seventeenth-century musicians (especially *musica poetica* authors) had different aesthetic and practical perspectives and would not be concerned with twentieth-century issues of expression, structure, coherence, and explication. Within the limited confines of this review, I would like to respond to this hypothetical point by drawing a picture of Burmeister and the possible motivations behind his analytical work. According to Claude V. Palisca, the purpose of Burmeister's analysis, from the standpoint of musical mannerism, was

to call attention to certain manners of composition so that young composers might imitate them. . . . A vocal composition is conceived as a collection of periods, each contrived by means of some artifice or more than one. Each period represents a distinct

Jr., "Musical-Rhetorical Figures in the *Orgelbüchlein* of J. S. Bach," *Bach* 18 (January 1987): 3–21; and Hans Davidsson, *Matthias Weckmann: The Interpretation of His Organ Music*, 2 vols. (Stockholm: Carl Gehrman's Musikförlag AB, 1991). For examples of the analysis of instrumental music, see Jacobus Kloppers, *Die Interpretation und Wiedergabe der Orgelwerke Bachs: Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung von stilgerechten Prinzipien* (Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophischen Fakultät der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, 1965).

affection through some manner inspired by the text. . . . This music is for an in-group, one that understands Latin, is sensitive to the constructivist devices, recognizes the allusions, and enjoys mixed-media puns with words, sounds, and musical notation—it is, in a word, a *musical reservata*.²⁷

Later, in his foreword to *Musica poetica*, Palisca gives us another perspective on Burmeister:

Musica poetica was not just an ostentatious name for counterpoint, because its authors took seriously the derivation from the Greek *poieo*: to make, produce, or create. Composition was more than devising counterpoint by properly using consonances and dissonances; it was an art of setting down a completed work that had a *coherent design and unity* [emphasis mine]—a beginning, middle, and end, as Aristotle observed in his *Poetics*. . . . Burmeister far from exhausted the possible parallels of rhetoric to music, a comparison that has become pervasive in discussions of compositional process and musical analysis, not only for the Renaissance but also for the baroque and classic periods.²⁸

Finally, to complete this picture of Burmeister, Martin Ruhnke states that

Burmeister tried, for Lassus's motets, to list and name all the special musical details and all the divergences from normal musical language, which for him was represented by the homophonic structures of the *genus humile*. . . . In his analysis of Lassus's motet *In me transierunt* he succeeded in defining the structure of the work and explaining the compositional methods. Since analysis makes imitation possible he thus gave a considerable impulse to music theory in Germany in the 17th and 18th centuries.²⁹

²⁷Palisca, 56, 58.

²⁸Claude V. Palisca, foreword to Burmeister, *Musical Poetics*, trans. Rivera.

²⁹Ruhnke, 486.

There are several things to consider in the above picture; I would like to focus on expression, coherence of design, and unity. As stated earlier in this review, connections between music and rhetoric fostered the idea that the rhetorical *dispositio* (organization of a speech) was a metaphor for musical form. Coherence and unity were desired goals in classical rhetoric. Plato believed that every oration should cohere. Because he consistently took interest in the organic unity of a whole and the consequent fulfillment of its potential, Aristotle felt that style and arrangement often needed consideration. Technical rhetoric (the theory of rhetoric handbooks) as employed by the Romans stressed a concept of unity of the material, dealing with the whole argument and oration.³⁰ By adapting and employing rhetorical thought and means, early seventeenth-century composers attempted to garner aspects of coherence and unity for their compositions, an objective that would ensure that their works were effective persuasive orations. Thus, coherence of design and unity were specific goals for musicians of Burmeister's time, enabling them expressively to imitate human passions (e.g., joy, love, anger, fear) and persuade their audiences to their desired ends. Parallels between rhetoric and music are intimately linked with compositional process and are a part of musical analysis (which makes imitation possible) for seventeenth-century musicians.

Burmeister's analysis does contain some elements of coherence and unity. His division of Lasso's motet into ten periods and his subsequent grouping of them into the rhetorical parts of an oration—*exordium*, *ipsum corpus carminis*, and *finis*—does display superficial aspects of coherence and large-scale design. Unfortunately, the analysis goes no further. Lasso's motet, according to Burmeister's description, seems to be a patchwork of rhetorical figures with no unifying common thread. In a similar vein, modern writers who have uncritically accepted Burmeister's analytical methods or those of his successors (particularly Mattheson) usually end up with patchwork analyses with no underlying common threads in their examinations of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music, being content to label formal sections without delving into how melody, harmony, voice-leading, and texture interact and

³⁰Kennedy, 56–57, 77, 107.

cohere at different structural levels.³¹

Burmeister's *Musica poetica* is an important document for the history of theory, and we can thank Rivera for his excellent translation and edition. As Rivera has skillfully shown, Burmeister is historically significant for his ideas on rhetoric, analysis, chord formations, and modal ethos. Nevertheless, there are problems with some aspects of Burmeister's work from modern perspectives: his vague formulations regarding musical-rhetorical figures, their applicability in analysis, and his analysis of Lasso's *In me transierunt*. The difficulty of transferring aspects of one linguistic art system to a non-linguistic one lies at the core of the problem and is a hard obstacle to overcome. My criticism of Rivera's historical stance in no way detracts from his distinguished scholarship and pales in comparison to the lasting value of his achievement. He has succeeded in allowing us to access the world of Joachim Burmeister and has made it possible for us to explore in more depth not only Burmeister's work, but the theory and music of the seventeenth century as well. Perhaps someday musical rhetoric can

³¹See Lena Jacobson, "Musical Rhetoric in Buxtehude's Free Organ Works," *Organ Yearbook* 13 (1982): 60–79; and Sharon Lee Gorman, "Rhetoric and Affect in the Organ Praeludia of Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707)" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1990). For an exception to those works cited above, see Daniel Harrison's article "Rhetoric and Fugue: An Analytical Application," *Music Theory Spectrum* 12 (Spring 1990): 1–42. Harrison combines rhetorical techniques with Schenkerian analysis in his study of the fugue from Bach's Toccata, BWV 915. Moreover, he does not depend upon Burmeister in any way; in fact, he is quite critical of him. Harrison is much more successful in his approach, in my estimation, than others who have tackled instrumental music with a rhetorical persuasion (pardon the pun). He considers the idea of *statūs* (issues) in the fugue, which in rhetoric are the problematic issues that an orator faces in generating a persuasive speech. According to Harrison, *statūs* is roughly analogous to the concept of compositional problems. Harrison identifies various *statūs* on different structural levels that must be resolved in order for the fugue to prosper as a persuasive oration. He then pursues the identification of solutions in his analysis of the fugue: "Since the persuasive power of the fugue rests in convincing an audience that the problems posed by the various *statūs* can be overcome, the deployment of arguments that treat *statūs* is the most important rhetorical task of the composer" (14). During the course of his analysis, Harrison provides a wealth of detail relating to different musical parameters. He examines melodic, harmonic, and voice-leading dimensions at different structural levels, connecting everything to the fugue's persuasive purpose.

have more than merely historical interest, especially if we can get beyond many of the difficulties and problems inherent in this aesthetic. Rivera's translation of this important treatise points us in the right direction and is well worth studying.