

Johannes Ciconia (ca.1370-1412)

Le Ray au Soley

A *Prolation* Canon for three voices by Johannes Ciconia (c. 1370 – 1412). This piece is a unique example of irregular prolation from the French *Ars Subtilior*. Utilizing a 4:3:1 proportion, this piece creates an interesting rhythmic phasing effect between the triplum and the cantus (top two voices) nearly 600 years before the 20th century composer Steve Reich popularized such musical textures.

Text:

Le ray au soley qui dret som karmeyne
En soy braçant la douce tortorelle,
Laquel compangnon onques renouvelle,
A bon droit sembla qeu en toy perfect regne.

The ray of sunlight, in whose true enchantment
sleeps the sweet turtledove – in his embrace –
ever rejuvenating that beloved one
faithfully makes his appearance in your perfect kingdom.

"While three transversed four counts,"
The original melody is augmented so that three beats in the cantus spans four beats in the Triplum. Alternatively, while the Cantus sings three perfect minims (quarter note triplets), the Triplum sings four imperfect minims (four 8th notes).

Triplum
Le ray au soley qui dret som kar-mey-ne En soy braçant

Cantus
Le ray au soley qui dret som kar-mey-ne E

Tenor
* (e)

"The third one - an octave below, but it makes white delays."
The original melody is transposed down an octave and augmented so that one minim in the Tenor is equal to both three minims in the Cantus and four minims in the Triplum. On the white notes in the manuscript, the Tenor should rest.

* On parenthe
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