

ANCIENT MUSICAL IDEAS THROUGH A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LENS:

AN EXAMINATION OF TARIK O'REGAN'S *SCATTERED RHYMES*

AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT'S

MESSE DE NOTRE DAME

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British composer Tarik Hamilton O'Regan (b. 1978, London) is earning a reputation as an important composer of today. The innovative works of O'Regan are entering the spectrum of professional, educational, and community performing organizations across the United States and Europe. *Scattered Rhymes'* intricate melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic relationships with *Messe de Notre Dame* by Guillaume de Machaut (c.1300-1377) make an examination and comparison of the two works significant. Analyzing *Scattered Rhymes* by tracing its roots to Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame*, results in a renewed interest in this ancient work and brings prominence to Tarik O'Regan's modern musical interpretation of ancient ideas. Understanding *Scattered Rhymes* as a work based on ideas from the fourteenth century in fusion with compositional concepts rooted in the modern era promotes *Scattered Rhymes* as one that is valuable in the current musical landscape.

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CHAPTER I

SIGNIFICANCE AND STATE OF RESEARCH

British composer Tarik Hamilton O'Regan (b. 1978, London) is earning a reputation as an important composer of today. The innovative works of O'Regan are entering the spectrum of professional, educational, and community performing organizations across the United States and Europe. Currently, O'Regan's major project is a chamber opera version of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which opens at London's Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre in 2011.¹ O'Regan is frequently interviewed by classical broadcasting and print media, including National Public Radio, British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC Radio, The Times (London), and British Music Magazine. O'Regan's musical voice has been described as having a "gritty freshness unlike that of anyone else,"² a freshness that is heard in many of his choral works, including *Scattered Rhymes: Fragments of Matters in Common Speech*.³ His works are featured on Austin-based Conspirare's Grammy-nominated recording, *Threshold of Night*. In addition, O'Regan's two works for chorus and strings, *Triptych* and *The Ecstasies Above* are receiving international acclaim.⁴ In 2011, his works are to be performed by choirs such as the Harvard Glee Club, the Los Angeles Master Chorale,

¹ David Miller, "Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*," *The Telegraph*, July 7, 2009.

² Michael Church, "Rich Galleries of Sound by a Real Craftsman," *The Independent*, April 26, 2007.

³ The full title of the work is *Scattered Rhymes: Fragments of Matters in Common Speech*, hereafter referred to as *Scattered Rhymes*.

⁴ Vernier, David. "Review: Threshold of Night – Tarik O'Regan." in *Classics Today*. <http://classicstoday.com/review.asp?ReviewNum=11828> (accessed March 18, 2011) David Vernier writes a positive review for *Threshold of Night* for the online guide to classical music, classicstoday.com. Many other professional reviews of O'Regan's music are beginning to appear in today's classical music landscape.

the National Chamber Choir of Ireland,⁵ and Minnesota's Vocal Essence, as well as on festival programs in England and Ireland.

Tarik O'Regan is burgeoning as a composer of interest to researchers, writers, and performers. He is one of the youngest composers already appearing in current textbooks. For example, in the recently released book *Choral Repertoire*, Dennis Shrock mentions the importance of O'Regan's choral output of over forty works.⁶ Although O'Regan's works are frequently performed and recorded,⁷ very little has been written about his musical inspiration, style, and influence. To date, no major research or dissertations or have been completed on Tarik O'Regan, but his work is beginning to appear in academic recording reviews,⁸ journal articles,⁹ and choral performances of national and international importance.¹⁰

Scattered Rhymes' intricate melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic relationships with *Messe de Notre Dame* by Guillaume de Machaut (c.1300-1377) make an examination and comparison of the two works significant. Machaut's mass represents the earliest instance of a setting of the mass ordinary that is stylistically coherent and conceived as

⁵ The National Chamber Choir of Ireland, conducted by Paul Hillier, is Ireland's flagship choral ensemble and is earning a reputation of highly artistic programs and recordings.

⁶ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 710.

⁷ To date, at least 18 commercially released recordings feature the works of Tarik O'Regan on labels including Harmonia Mundi, Sony Classical, Avie, and Collegium Records.

⁸ Cameron F. LaBarr. Compact Disc Review, *Choral Journal* 24, no. 9 (Nov, 2008) 97.

⁹ Jill Barlow, "Tarik O'Regan's *Voices*," *Tempo: Quarterly Review in Modern Music* 60, no. 237 (June 2006), 69-70.

¹⁰ Tarik O'Regan's *The Ecstasies Above* was featured at the inaugural conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization (San Antonio, 2006), performed by the Yale Schola Cantorum; Simon Carrington, conductor. This work was commissioned from the Robert Baker Commissioning Fund for Sacred Music by the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

one single unit.¹¹ Machaut's mass is written for four voices (triplum, motetus, contratenor, tenor), while O'Regan's *Scattered Rhymes* is composed for four-part chorus (SATB) and solo quartet (ATTB). Machaut employs standard texts of the mass ordinary from the Roman Catholic liturgy, while the texts O'Regan chose for *Scattered Rhymes*, one by Petrarch and the other anonymous, interlace two fourteenth century texts that deal with the ambiguities of divine love. The solo quartet in *Scattered Rhymes* sings the text by Petrarch, while the chorus comments underneath the solo texture with the anonymous text. O'Regan writes, "these texts and this composition are designed to be framed by Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame*...and can be performed separately, interspersed with movements from Machaut's mass, or performed continuously as a fifteen minute work."¹² For example, interspersing *Scattered Rhymes* with Machaut's mass could be performed as follows:

Kyrie – Machaut's mass

Gloria – Machaut's mass

Part I – *Scattered Rhymes*

Credo – Machaut's mass

Part II – *Scattered Rhymes*

Sanctus – Machaut's mass

Part III – *Scattered Rhymes*

Agnus Dei – Machaut's mass

¹¹ Arlt Wulf "Machaut, Guillaume de." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51865> (accessed March 2, 2011).

¹² Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, London: Novello and Co, 2009. This statement from Tarik O'Regan comes from the incipit inside the cover of his score.

Ite Missa Est – Machaut's mass¹³

Analyzing *Scattered Rhymes* by tracing its roots to Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame*, results in a renewed interest in this ancient work and brings prominence to Tarik O'Regan's modern musical interpretation of ancient ideas. Understanding *Scattered Rhymes* as a work based on ideas from the fourteenth century in fusion with compositional concepts rooted in the modern era promotes *Scattered Rhymes* as one that is valuable in the current musical landscape.

¹³ The solo quartet in *Scattered Rhymes* is composed with similar respective vocal ranges to those in Machaut's mass. When performing these works together, the solo quartet is intended for both *Scattered Rhymes* and Machaut's mass.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION AND COMPOSER INFORMATION

Guillaume de Machaut

The life of Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-1377) encompasses most of the fourteenth century and exists almost entirely in our imagination, as we have relatively little record of his personal affairs.¹⁴ Machaut's musical style is one that is difficult to assess and summarize as he wrote music in varying styles during his career as seen in *Messe de Notre Dame*, the virilai *Douce Dame Jolie*, and the ballade *Je puis trop bien*. Machaut was known both as a composer and a poet, codifying the three fixed forms of medieval secular song: ballade, virilai, and rondeau. Machaut was meticulous about compiling his complete works, both musical and literary, as they were collected and copied into illustrated manuscripts for the enjoyment of wealthy patrons. Many of Machaut's manuscripts survive today in near original condition, including the *Messe de Notre Dame*.¹⁵

Machaut is considered to be the first composer of a complete polyphonic mass setting, although isolated polyphonic settings of parts of the mass ordinary are found as early as the eleventh century.¹⁶ His *Messe de Notre Dame* is a votive mass (more specifically, a "Lady" mass, sung in honor of the Virgin Mary), and was innovative in the fourteenth century, because of Machaut's fusing of texture and form from the past with that of the present, while maintaining his own stylistic coherency throughout the work.

¹⁴ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass: an introduction*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1.

¹⁵ Leech-Wilkinson, 7.

¹⁶ Sarah Jane Manly Williams, "The Music of Guillaume de Machaut." (PhD diss., Yale University, 1952), 293.

Machaut's fusion of historical and modern ideas with stylistic coherency is mirrored by Tarik O'Regan over 600 years later.¹⁷

The actual influence of the *Messe de Notre Dame* during and immediately following the fourteenth century is difficult to evaluate. The mass has no immediate imitators in the fourteenth century and it is doubtful that the well-known composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries even knew Machaut's mass.¹⁸ The mass cycle of the Renaissance, which was not solidly established until approximately a century later, seems to have developed separately from the ideas and practices of Machaut.¹⁹

During Machaut's lifetime, no musical style exclusive to sacred music had evolved. Fourteenth century composers (French and Italian), wrote sacred music, drawing on whatever secular styles were available; conductus, motet, ballade, and madrigal. Machaut's mass draws on conductus (note-against-note) style in the Gloria and Credo, and uses isorhythmic motet texture in the Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, Ite Missa Est, and the "Amen" section of the Gloria. Employing conductus texture in the Gloria and Credo allows for Machaut to create faster moving music to get through large sections of text.²⁰ In addition to conductus and motet textures, there are features of the fourteenth century ballade in the contratenor within the "Amen" section of the Gloria. While Machaut uses several styles to complete his mass setting, it nevertheless has a distinct style of its own.

The aforementioned distinct style found in Machaut's mass is best explained by

¹⁷ Gilbert Reaney, *Guillaume de Machaut*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 25.

¹⁸ Williams, 292.

¹⁹ Williams, 292.

²⁰ Reaney, 25.

Sarah Jane Manley Williams, musicologist and founder of the International Machaut Society. Williams considers Machaut's mass to be written during the composer's most mature compositional period, with nearly all of his other works behind him.²¹

Commenting on the musical and liturgical mastery found in his mass setting, Williams says, "In a musical age which did not favor the development of a unified religious style, Machaut approximated this ideal as closely as possible."²² She further states, "It (Machaut's mass) has a stylistic unity which transcends the difference between the movements in motet and conductus styles." Machaut is able to unify the entire work through his distinct use of rhythm. Even the most florid passages in the upper voices are never allowed to obscure the rhythmic skeleton, bringing the isorhythmic and conductus movements into closer stylistic unity.

Machaut's mass is one of the most important artistic achievements of the fourteenth century. Machaut utilized the techniques of isorhythm, conductus, and ballade, while devising one continuous and logical work. Combining the best features of the known styles of his time, Machaut remains in our history a renowned musical figure with his piece *Messe de Notre Dame* in our repertoire as a work with utmost historical importance.

Tarik O'Regan

Tarik Hamilton O'Regan (b. 1978, London) spent much of his childhood in Algeria, with his father working as an accountant and his mother as an Algerian

²¹ Williams, 301.

²² Williams, 302-303.

translator.²³ Michael Church of the British newspaper, *The Independent*, claims that this Algerian upbringing influences O'Regan's imagination and informs much of his music.²⁴ Constantly hearing varying languages used interchangeably while growing up in Algeria had profound influence on O'Regan and inspired his use of multiple texts in his compositions, as is seen in *Scattered Rhymes*.²⁵

O'Regan has completed studies at Pembroke College, Oxford, and at Cambridge University, where he served as composer in residence at Corpus Christi College. Through the residency at Corpus Christi College, he formally began his compositional career in 2000. O'Regan was drawn to composing choral music after listening to evensong performances of the collegiate choral tradition in England. O'Regan currently splits his time between living in New York City and England, following the lead of other twentieth century European composers. He mentions his inspiration for living abroad stemming from the huge list of European composers who worked and composed in the United States including Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky, and Luciano Berio.²⁶

Commenting on his musical style and influence in a radio interview with Bernard Clarke in Dublin on the eve of the premier of *Scattered Rhymes*,²⁷ O'Regan mentioned

²³ Arminta Wallace, "Short, Sharp Reminders of Our Irishness," *Irish Times*, November 23, 2010. Wallace considers O'Regan a person of multiculturalism listing his Irish great-great-great grandfather, English grandfather, English father (born in Sri Lanka), and his Algerian mother (born in Morocco).

²⁴ Michael Church, "Rich Galleries of Sound by a Real Craftsman," *The Independent*, April 26, 2007.

²⁵ RTE Lyric, "Bernard Clarke: Radio Interview with Tarik O'Regan," Media File, http://www.rte.ie/lyricfm/player_av.html?0,null,200,http://dynamic.rte.ie/quickaxs/209-lyrc-nova-2010-11-21.smil (accessed April 30, 2011). This radio interview was completed on the eve of the premier of *Scattered Rhymes* in Dublin, Ireland. In *Scattered Rhymes*, O'Regan uses Petrarch's text alongside an anonymous text found in the British Library.

²⁶ Christopher Morley, "Tarik's American Inspiration," *Birmingham Post*, July 12, 2007.

²⁷ *Scattered Rhymes* was commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival and was first performed by The Orlando Consort and the Joyful Company of Singers conducted by Peter Broadbent at Christ Church, Spitalfields on June 22, 2006.

the dichotomy of his earliest musical memories stemming from the varying interests of his mother and father.²⁸ O'Regan's father was captivated by jazz music from the era of Glenn Miller, while his mother was interested in British rock bands Led Zeppelin and The Who, groups which O'Regan says were profound in his musical heritage, specifically "Won't Get Fooled Again" (The Who).

In the opening of "Won't Get Fooled Again," O'Regan was enamored with the underlying repetitive rhythmic motives in the synthesizer, punctuated by the musical gesture of the guitar. He would eventually use these musical elements from The Who in *Scattered Rhymes*, mixing the ideas of The Who with those of Machaut. While composing *Scattered Rhymes*, O'Regan gave more attention to his musical heritage than he did when writing his earlier compositions, thinking more about the strong and visceral musical memories from his upbringing.²⁹

When asked by Bernard Clarke what drew O'Regan to Machaut's fourteenth century mass, O'Regan commented, "It doesn't feel like it's from the fourteenth century."³⁰ O'Regan added that Machaut's mass sounds strikingly similar to much of the ambient music with which today's audiences are familiar, music that jumps from pure fifths and octaves to unique clusters of sound.³¹ O'Regan was drawn to Machaut's mass because of the work's unique stylistic qualities that sound simultaneously modern and historical. O'Regan admits that his music, namely *Scattered Rhymes*, is partly in

²⁸ RTE Lyric.

²⁹ RTE Lyric.

³⁰ RTE Lyric.

³¹ RTE Lyric.

dialogue with history, partly of a new instant-media generation, and partly influenced by the multiculturalism that surrounded him as a child.

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF *MESSE DE NOTRE DAME*
AND *SCATTERED RHYMES*

Scattered Rhymes is a work carefully modeled after Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame*, fusing the characteristics of this earlier music with profound personal influences and modern compositional technique. Musically, *Scattered Rhymes* is based upon fragments and structures found in Machaut's mass, including modern-sounding dissonances, false relations, open fifths and fourths, and quasi-syncopated, accented chant-like rhythmic motives.³² O'Regan combines these fragments and structures of Machaut's mass with fresh ideas and other influences from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Throughout *Scattered Rhymes*, repetitive Machaut-like rhythmic and melodic gestures occur underneath the harmonic and textural development. O'Regan builds on Machaut's ancient ideas and adds modern musical concepts, constantly fusing old ideas with newly distinct techniques, colors, and textures.

In Examples 1 and 2, note the contrasting use of cross relations in Machaut's mass and *Scattered Rhymes*. The cross relations in each example occur near the cadential points, however Machaut's cross relation is just prior to the final chord in the cadence (G-natural, G-sharp), which completes one section of the Kyrie. O'Regan's cross relation is placed in the transition from one section to another (B-flat, B-natural). Unlike Machaut's mass, where the music completely stops at the cadential point,

³² Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, London: Chester Novello, 2006. This information comes from the composer's notes inside the cover of one of the first editions of this work.

O'Regan adjoins two sections, dramatically placing the cross relation at the climax of this transition.

Machaut uses the cross relation to draw in the listener and to bring importance to the given musical moment, in this case, at the cadential point. Emulating Machaut, O'Regan uses the cross relation to draw in the listener and create intensity, but utilizes the cross relation to eventually take the piece to a new key center, sixteen measures after the cadential point. Throughout *Scattered Rhymes*, O'Regan uses harmonic shifts (as noted in Example 2) to engage the listener in a more profound way with each occurrence of cross relations.

Example 1. Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Nostre Dame*, Kyrie, mm. 63-66

The image displays a musical score for four staves, numbered 63 to 66. The lyrics are "(e) - - - - - ley - son." The score illustrates a cross relation between the notes 'e' and 'ey' in measure 65, with a line connecting the two notes across staves.

Example 2. Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, Part I, mm. 182-186).

The image displays a musical score for Example 2, featuring vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The score is written in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It includes parts for SOLO A., SOLO T.I., SOLO T.II, SOLO Bar., S., and A. The piano part is at the bottom. The lyrics are: "fe - ce lor par - te. sa vi -". The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A box highlights a specific rhythmic gesture in the SOLO Bar. part, which is a triplet of eighth notes. A line connects this box to a similar gesture in the S. part.

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In Examples 3 and 4, Machaut and O'Regan use similar rhythmic gestures. Machaut employs rhythmic groupings of twos and threes that create syncopation-like rhythms familiar to modern audiences. In Example 3, note Machaut's syncopated energy in measures 22-23, 30-31, and 34. O'Regan expands the rhythmic complexity of Machaut's mass by including triplet figures amid the 4/4 texture of *Scattered Rhymes* (mm. 69). This rhythmic expansion by O'Regan is an example of his effort to build on the texture of Machaut's work, while adding modern compositional techniques.

The rhythmic quality of O'Regan's music, and specifically *Scattered Rhymes*, is innovative through the juxtaposition of groupings of twos and threes with the addition of

triplet figures atop an already complex rhythmic texture. O'Regan has found a place among a unique group of composers of his generation whose music embraces rhythm in choral textures to a degree not often seen in the past.

Example 3. Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Nostre Dame*, Kyrie, mm. 20-36.

The image displays a musical score for Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame*, Kyrie, measures 20-36. The score is arranged in four systems, each with four staves. The first system (measures 20-25) shows a vocal line with a triplet highlighted in a black box. The second system (measures 26-31) includes the lyrics "ley - son. Chri - ste" and features a complex rhythmic pattern with multiple triplets and sixteenth notes, highlighted in a black box. The third system (measures 32-36) continues the complex rhythmic texture with further triplets and sixteenth notes, also highlighted in a black box. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 4. Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, Part I, mm. 67-71).

67

SOLO A. *- ni già ce - la - to*

SOLO T.I. *ni già ce - la - to*

SOLO T.II. *ch'a - vean molt' an - ni già*

SOLO Bar. *- te ch'a - vean molt' an - ni già*

S. *ah, ah, ah,*

A. *ah, ah,*

T. *ah, ah,*

B. *ah, ah, ah,*

The musical score consists of eight staves. The first four staves are vocal parts: SOLO A (Soprano), SOLO T.I (Tenor I), SOLO T.II (Tenor II), and SOLO Bar. (Bass). The next four staves are vocal parts: S. (Soprano), A. (Alto), T. (Tenor), and B. (Bass). The final staff is the piano accompaniment. The score includes lyrics in Italian and highlights specific passages with boxes. The piano accompaniment features a triplet in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand.

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In Part III of *Scattered Rhymes*, O'Regan manipulates Machaut's harmonic process by slowing the harmonic rhythm. Throughout the entire *Messe de Notre Dame*, the harmony shifts regularly from pure fourths and fifths to dense harmonic textures of seconds and sevenths. O'Regan uses the same harmonic idea of shifting between the aforementioned pure and dense textures, but slows the harmonic movement, alternating

between unison, fifth, and clustered textures. (Examples 5 and 6.) Note the harmonic shift in Example 5 (Machaut) as follows: unison in mm. 1, fifths and passing tones in mm. 3, dissonances in mm. 4, followed by an open fifth in mm. 5. O'Regan uses a similar harmonic pattern, but in a pulsed motion: unison, cluster, fifth, etc. (See example 6.)

Example 5. Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Notre Dame*, Credo, mm. 1-5.

The image displays a musical score for five measures of a Credo. It consists of four staves: two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and two piano accompaniment staves. The lyrics are 'Pa - - trem om - ni - - po - ten - tem,'. Measure 1 shows unison for all parts. Measure 2 shows a fifth between the vocal parts. Measure 3 shows dissonances and passing tones. Measure 4 shows a cluster of notes. Measure 5 shows an open fifth between the vocal parts.

These harmonic patterns used by O'Regan create deep harmonic interest just as Machaut does, but O'Regan does not simply emulate Machaut's harmonic process. O'Regan fuses Machaut's harmonic ideas with rhythmic ideas of his own, often changing harmonies on unexpected beats and unstressed beats (Example 6, mm. 428-430). Furthermore, O'Regan adds accents to the unstressed beats, which create a heightened sense of instability, increasing the emotional impact on the listener. O'Regan's use of accented harmonic shifts on unstressed beats is primal to his compositional vocabulary. These ideas lie at the heart of the rhythmic and harmonic character of *Scattered Rhymes*, and O'Regan's other major works; *The Ecstasies Above* and *Triptych*.

Example 6. Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, Part III, mm. 427-430.

427
SOLO A. *p* *p sub.*
a l'au-rae-sti-va, o ro-co mor-mo-rar di lu-ci-de on-
SOLO T.I. *p sub.*
- te a l'au-rae-sti-va, o ro-co mor-mo-rar di lu-ci-
429
SOLO A. *mp*
- de s'o-de d'u-na fio-ri-ta et fre-sca ri-va, l'à 'v'io seg -
SOLO T.I. *pp* *p*
- na fio-ri-ta et fre-sca l'à 'v'io seg -

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Texturally, O'Regan emulates Machaut's sonic effect by employing four rhythmically active voices over a sustained chordal effect accomplished by four lower voices. Machaut's texture is similar to O'Regan's but uses half the number of voices, including two rhythmically active voices over two sustaining voices. This texture was typical for isorhythmic mass movements in the fourteenth century with two florid voices and two voices in isorhythm. Additionally, O'Regan's constant syncopation-like gestures in the Tenor II and Baritone solo voices are placed over a rhythmically steady pattern in the choral parts. This technique is similar to Machaut's treatment of the lower voices in his mass setting, in which he uses the two lower parts (tenor and contratenor) as a strict rhythmic foundation while the two upper parts (triplum and motetus) are rhythmically and melodically free. See Example 7 (Machaut) and Example 8 (O'Regan)

for instances of this textural augmentation.

Example 7. Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Notre Dame*, Sanctus, mm. 60-63.

60 61 62 63

ex - - - - - cel - sis.

ex - - - - - cel - sis.

ex - - - - - cel - sis.

ex - - - - - cel - sis.

Example 8. Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, Part I, mm. 288-292).

288 *mf*

SOLO A. a Giu - de-a si, tan - to sovr'o - gni

SOLO T.I. a Giu - de-a si, tan - to sovr'o - gni

SOLO T.II. - de-a si, tan - to sovr'o - gni sta - to hu -

SOLO Bar. - de-a si, tan - to sovr'o - gni sta - to hu -

S. *mf* - re, Ve - nus e - the - re, e -

A. *mf* - re, Ve - nus e - the - re, e -

T. *mf subito* - re: Ve - nus e - the - re, e -

B. *mf subito* - re: Ve - nus e - the - re, e -

L

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This textural concept of O'Regan is a further example of his ability to integrate old and new, supporting a compositional language that is sophisticated and effective.

O'Regan deviates from the previously mentioned texture (four sustained voices beneath four rhythmically active voices) to a texture in which all voices have a more equal role in the declamation of the text, just as Machaut does in multiple sections of the mass. (See Examples 9 and 10.) Writing in conductus style in the Gloria and Credo movements (Example 9, mm.128-31) was typical in the fourteenth century for economic declamation of large amounts of text and also for aural clarity throughout important textual moments.

Example 9. Guillaume de Machaut, *Messe de Notre Dame*, Credo, mm. 128-131.

128 129 130 131

si - mul a - do - ra - tur et con glo - ri - fi - ca - tur, Qui lo - cu - tus est

si - mul a - do - ra - tur et con glo - ri - fi - ca - tur, Qui lo - cu - tus est

si - mul a - do - ra - tur et con glo - ri - fi - ca - tur, Qui lo - cu - tus est

si - mul a - do - ra - tur et con glo - ri - fi - ca - tur, Qui lo - cu - tus est

homophonic texture for efficient text declamation

Both of these medieval textual ideas are involved in *Scattered Rhymes*, where O'Regan used similarly efficient and homophonic techniques of text declamation (Example 10, mm. 593-594), but also brought importance to the highly emotional narrative of the text.³³ Employing a nearly homophonic texture is unusual for O'Regan (in *Scattered*

³³ The text by Petrarch at mm. 593-606 deals with dying and weeping: "Why do you waste yourself before your time? Why pour this river of affliction from your eyes? Don't weep for me, for dying made my day an endless one, and when I closed my eyes I opened them to one great inner light."

Rhymes and in other works) and he judiciously uses homophony near the close of *Scattered Rhymes* to signal the conclusion, which brings a heightened passion to the final notes of the piece.

Example 10. Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, Part III, mm. 593-595.

The image shows a musical score for Example 10, Tarik O'Regan's *Scattered Rhymes*, Part III, measures 593-595. The score is arranged in a system with five vocal parts (SOLO A., SOLO T.I, SOLO T.II, SOLO Bar., and S., A., T., B.) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The lyrics are: "ren-do, e-ter-ni, et ne l'in-ter-no lu-me, - quan-do mo-strai tac-tu li-be-ro, li-be-ro, li-ro, si-num te-ne-rum tac-tu li-be-ro, li". The score includes dynamic markings such as *f sub.*, *ff*, *poco*, and *mf*. A box highlights the homophonic texture in measures 593-595, where the vocal parts and piano accompaniment move in parallel motion. A diagonal line is drawn across the piano accompaniment in the lower part of the score, and the text "homophonic texture" is written below it.

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O'Regan's inspiration for Part III of *Scattered Rhymes* comes not entirely from Machaut's mass, but additionally from a secular influence of the twentieth century. He borrows musical ideas directly from the texture of The Who's³⁴ "Won't Get Fooled Again," a song he knew as a child. O'Regan was enamored with the pulsating eighth notes played by the synthesizer track in the opening of "Won't Get Fooled Again" and wished to employ those pulsating eighth notes and the synthesizer texture as part of his *Scattered Rhymes*. O'Regan's pulsating eighth notes are highlighted with accents on unstressed beats, typical of his compositional vocabulary (as discussed earlier, see Example 6).

Emulating the synthesizer texture of "Won't Get Fooled Again," he gave the pulsating eighth notes to the Orlando Consort (upper four voices) and used the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (lower four voices) as the "rock band," subsequently following.³⁵ (The Who employ the same structural idea with the "rock band" entering with sustained chords after several repetitions of their introductory synthesizer track.) Part III of *Scattered Rhymes* begins with the pulsating eighth note pattern and continues for forty measures before the "rock band" idea enters in measure 463, as seen in Example 11.

³⁴ The Who is an English rock band including Roger Daltrey, Pete Townshend, John Entwistle, and Keith Moon. The Who has been active periodically since 1964.

³⁵ RTE Lyric. O'Regan explains his interest in fusing together Part III of *Scattered Rhymes* with Machaut's mass and The Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again." *Scattered Rhymes* was recorded on the Hamonia Mundi label by The Orlando Consort and The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir.

Example 11. Tarik O'Regan, *Scattered Rhymes*, Part III, mm. 461-464.

461 *f sub.* *molto* *p*

SOLO A. *f sub.* *molto* *p*

SOLO T.I. *f sub.* *p*

SOLO T.II. *f* *molto* *p*

SOLO Bar. *molto* *p*

S. *mp*

A. *mp*

T. *mp*

B. *mp*

Pulsating eighth notes emulating the synthesizer texture in *Won't Get Fooled Again*

ren-do, e - ter - ni, et ne l'in - ter - no lu - me, quan-do mo - strai de chiu - der.» Se

ren-do, e - ter - ni, et ne chiu - der.» Se

- ter - ni, et ne l'in - ter - no lu - me, quan-do mo - strai de chiu - der.» Se

ren-do, e - ter - ni, et ne l'in - ter - no lu - me, quan-do mo - strai de chiu - der.» Se

Se-

Se-

Se-

Se-

463 **T**

SOLO A. *la - men - tar au - gel - li, o ver - di fron - de mo -*

SOLO T.I. *la - men - tar - li, o ver - di fron - de mo - ver soa - ve - men -*

SOLO T.II *la - men - tar au - gel - li, o ver - di fron - de mo - ver soa - ve - men -*

SOLO Bar. *la - fron - de mo - ver soa - ve - men -*

S. *legato* *- pe re - fe - ro cur - sum li - be - rum -*

A. *legato* *- pe re - fe - ro cur - sum li - be - rum -*

T. *- pe re - - fe - -*

B. *- pe re - - fe - -*

T

“Rock band” idea based on *Won't Get Fooled Again* portrayed by the sustained chords sung by the SATB choir, beneath the ATTB solo quartet

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Machaut also integrated popular influences into his sacred music, as was customary in the fourteenth century. While no specific melodic reference to secular melody is known in Machaut's mass, the compositional styles Machaut employed in the mass were of secular origin; conductus, polyphonic motet, and ballade. Other medieval composers additionally integrated the secular styles into sacred compositions, as there was no exclusively appropriate style for sacred music at the time.³⁶

O'Regan's use of ideas from a twentieth century rock band demonstrates how he is willing to explore influences outside the norm. He grew up as part of a generation inspired by more exterior influences than any generation preceding. In his interview with Bernard Clarke, he mentions listening to The Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again" on his media player during the compositional process of *Scattered Rhymes*. O'Regan wished to somehow include some of the same ideas from "Won't Get Fooled Again" into his contemporary choral composition, while continuing to emulate Guillaume de Machaut's work from 600 years prior.³⁷ Machaut and O'Regan successfully combine elements of popular music into their works. This combination of popular elements brings an intriguing dimension to the music, blurring the lines of what is sacred and secular.

While fusing together musical concepts "Won't Get Fooled Again" and Machaut's mass, O'Regan studied the phrasing patterns composed by Pete Townshend³⁸ and related those concepts to acoustics experienced by the audiences of performances of Machaut's mass in Notre-Dame de Reims.³⁹ In Notre-Dame de Reims, where early

³⁶ Williams, 299.

³⁷ RTE Lyric.

³⁸ Pete Townshend is guitarist and songwriter for The Who and composed "Won't Get Fooled Again."

³⁹ RTE Lyric.

performances of *Messe de Notre Dame* likely occurred, not all notes would be heard in the same way for all listeners depending on where the listeners were located within the cathedral. The listeners in the back of the cathedral heard Machaut's mass differently from those near the front, due to the substantial reverberation time, which would blur the already complex rhythm and harmony.

O'Regan modeled Part III of *Scattered Rhymes* in part, after the natural reverberation of Notre-Dame de Reims and the electronic reverberation of the synthesizer track used by The Who. This specific union of old and new exemplifies O'Regan's continue effort to bring fresh, logical ideas to the current musical landscape, where other composers might not consider using an influence from peripheral "rock band" music of their childhoods, combined with acoustical effects of ancient cathedrals.

CHAPTER IV

SHAPING THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MUSICAL LANDSCAPE

Tarik O'Regan's music continues to develop and is earning a highly respected place in the twenty-first century musical landscape. He is carving a prominent compositional niche for himself with his fertile imagination, rhythmic and harmonic languages, and choice of texts. His concept of each new piece is fresh and always offers a number of new ideas to leave a lasting impression in today's choral landscape. O'Regan has captured the imagination of listeners in the twenty-first century through a fusion of compositional ideas, integrating historical and modern influences with his own creative power and voice.

The Irish Times' Arminta Wallace says in an article about new music by O'Regan, "To say that Tarik O'Regan's career is on an upward arc is something of an understatement."⁴⁰ David Vernier, of *Classics Today*, writes of O'Regan's *Scattered Rhymes*, "The connection between this work and Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame*, with which it was designed to be performed, demands a different level of listening and understanding that some listeners will appreciate and others will choose to ignore. However you listen, your efforts to follow the music are made easier because of O'Regan's neatly devised voicings that allow us to hear everything, no matter how complex the texture."⁴¹ Geoffrey Norris speaks of *Scattered Rhymes* as a work that has attracted great attention well after its premier: "Tarik O'Regan's *Scattered Rhymes*...is in that elite league of contemporary works that have enjoyed a continuing life after a

⁴⁰ Arminta Wallace, "Short, Sharp Reminders of Our Irishness," *Irish Times*, November 23, 2010.

⁴¹ Vernier, David. "Review: *Scattered Rhymes*." in *Classics Today*. <http://classicstoday.com/review.asp?ReviewNum=11828> (accessed May 2, 2011) David Vernier writes a positive review for *Scattered Rhymes* for the online guide to classical music, classicstoday.com.

premiere: following its first performance at the Spitalfields Festival in 2006, it has been taken up enthusiastically elsewhere.”⁴²

It is certainly too soon to identify the full impact and legacy of O’Regan and his music, but if *Scattered Rhymes* were used to gauge the continued success of O’Regan, a long-lasting legacy is in order. Tarik O’Regan has effectively established his own compositional voice in the twenty-first century, and we should look forward to future evolutions in his music as he takes on new musical and philosophical challenges.

⁴² Geoffrey Norris, “Hot Ticket: Geoffrey Norris looks forward to the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir,” *The Telegraph*, April 28, 2007.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Analyzing *Scattered Rhymes* by tracing its origin and inspiration to Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame*, helps explain O'Regan's modernistic approach to this ancient work and brings prominence to Tarik O'Regan's modern musical interpretation of ancient ideas. As seen through analysis and discussion, *Scattered Rhymes* is a work diligently modeled after Machaut's mass, amalgamating the characteristics of medieval music with intensely personal influences and modern compositional practices.

Tarik O'Regan's music is indeed growing in importance in today's musical aesthetic. Much of his musical output has been and continues to be performed by groups of great renown across the world. Tarik O'Regan's modern musical response to the work of a fourteenth century master is innovative and inspirational and will persist as one of the great choral works of the current compositional era.⁴³

⁴³ Referring to the early twenty-first century.

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