

A Defense of *Augenmusik*'s Cultural Significance in the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

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Poster Abstract

Renaissance *Augenmusik* (the notation of music in the form of shapes) is often dismissed as frivolous. However, in some contexts, it can strengthen music's connection with text and society. *Augenmusik* achieves this by inventing an interdisciplinary medium that allows audience members to be visually involved with a musical score and physically see the intentions of a performance. This added visual reinforcement can convey a variety of societal ideas. *Augenmusik*'s reflection of society and appeals to the public are shown through case studies of two pieces, Baude Cordier's "*Belle Bonne Sage*" (1400) and Ghiselin Danckerts's "*Ave Maris Stella*" (1535). In Cordier's "*Belle Bonne Sage*" *augenmusik* notation is a method of escapism from societal issues. Through coloration, madrigalisms, and the incorporation of shapes "*Belle Bonne Sage*" appealed to courtly society and diverted attention from Avignon's problems. These problems included: the black plague, the Hundred Years' War, and Papal unrest. Similar methods are employed in Danckerts's "*Ave Maris Stella*" to increase its function as a didactic tool. Danckerts's use of a riddle motet, chessboard notation, and madrigalisms reflect important ideas of Christian humanism in the Netherlands. These ideas include an emphasis on the importance of antiquity, religious morality, and education. *Augenmusik*'s ability to physically illustrate these abstract cultural and musical concepts shows the genre's academic and performance value.