

HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC I

MUS 3314-1

Dr. Tony Mowrer

Chapter 3

The Beginnings of Polyphony and the Music of the 13th Century

The Ars Antiqua

Here, the distinguishing characteristics of Western Music are developed.

1. Composition slowly replaced improvisation.
2. Invention of notation.
3. Music was made subject to specific principles of order.
4. Polyphony replaces monophony.

The break between eastern and western musics begins c. 1000 AD.

Development of Polyphony

(pp. 99 ff.)

The first record of polyphony is in *Musica Enchiridas* (Music Handbook), c. 900 and an accompanying text *Scolica Enchiridas*.

Here, two different types of polyphony are discussed. They are called ***Organum***.

In one form, the chant is in the tenor and is called the *vox principalis* and is duplicated at a fourth or fifth below by the *vox organalis*.

Initially, the second voice did exactly what the first did, except on a different pitch. Later, the second voice developed independence of movement and is heard **above** the *vox principalis*. This would be the other type of polyphony discussed.

In the 11th century, the consonant intervals were the unison, 4th, 5th, and octave.

At this time, polyphony primarily occurred in tropes. The oldest large collection in organum style is the *Winchester Troper*. It is notated without staff lines.

HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC I

MUS 3314-1

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Florid Organum

p. 77ff

As the development progressed, another style of organum began to appear in the 12th century at the monastery Santiago de Compostela, in Spain, and the Abbey of St. Martial, in France.

Florid or Melismatic Organum placed the cantus firmus in the low voice. This was called the tenor (*tenere*), which means to hold. These notes are prolonged and the upper voice moved in varying lengths above.

Listen to **NAWM 1:31**

The lower voice becomes like a drone. The upper voice likely originated as improvisation.

The term *organum* properly refers to the style where the lower voice holds long notes. When both voices began to move in measured rhythm, the style was called *discantus*.

Because organum first included only two different voices, the style was known as *organum duplum*.

With the development of polyphony, it became necessary to develop a system of measured rhythm. The system they worked out was a system of rhythmic modes that worked well into the 13th century. The modes were identified by number. Note p. 79.

Note that the rhythmic modes are dominated by divisions into three---Trinity---Godhead.

This division was called *perfectio*. The modes were easily connected and combined. For example, Mode one could be placed in the upper voice and mode five could be placed in the lower voice. They could come to a cadential point at the same time.

The specific mode was indicated through ligatures and neumes.

Notation was written to conform to musical practice. Therefore, the music existed before the notation.

Compositions from Paris and Northern France c. 1200 were known as coming from the Notre Dame school---or, the school of thought growing from that monastery.

Two leading composers were:

Leonin---(c. 1159-c. 1201)

Perotin---(c. 1170-c. 1236)

HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC I

MUS 3314-1

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Three types of composition predominated at Notre Dame.

1. Organum
2. Conductus
3. Motet

Leonin wrote a cycle of two part Graduals, Alleluias, and Responsories for the church year. These are found in the *Magnus Liber Organi*---Great Book of Organum.

Listen **NAWM 1:32-41**

Two part organum was typically called *organum duplum*.

Perotin continued the work begun by Leonin, but Perotin moved to greater rhythmic precision. His tenor moved in shorter notes than Leonin's. This caused it to be repeated.

Further, Perotin, et al expanded organum to three and four voices.

Listen to **NAWM 1:42-44**.

The first completely original work was the *Conductus*.

1. Metrical Latin
2. Non-liturgical
3. Less complex than organum
4. Organized around the octave, 4th, and 5th.
5. Voices moved together---homo-rhythmic---conductus style.
6. Text usually set syllabically
7. Tenor was frequently newly composed---a new thing

Listen to **NAWM 1:45**

Organum and conductus disappeared by c. 1250. After that, the Motet was all that remained.

Listen to **NAWM 1:46**

What do you notice from this?

The Motet
p. 89ff

The motet grew from distinct sections of organum written in discant style (these were called clausulae.)

HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC I

MUS 3314-1

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These substitute clausulae could be substituted for one another and many were written, usually with no words in the upper voice. Eventually texts, perhaps a paraphrase of the tenor, were fitted to them.

Then, they were cut loose from the organum and were called motets---mot---word.

Motet---full work

Motetus---added voice

There are three surviving manuscripts of Motets.

1. Montpelier Codex---contains 345 motets
2. Bamberg Codex---contains 108 three voice motets
3. Las Huelas Codex---141 polyphonic compositions, most of which are motets

Most motets have a different voice in each voice. The title of a motet comes from the first words (incipit) of the texts in each voice from the top down.

The motet was very flexible. Note pp. 89, 90

Initially, the tenor came from existing liturgical sources. After 1250, composers made use of secular songs and instrumental estampies for the melodies (tenor).

Listen to **NAWM 1:47-52**

In most motets, the upper voices were similar in character. Later, there was an attempt to make the upper voices distinct from one another and the tenor. This new approach became known as the *Franconian Motet* after Franco of Cologne (p. 91), a composer and theorist active from c. 1250-1280.

Listen **NAWM 1:46**

Regarding consonance, it was sufficient to be consonant with either the tenor or the upper voice on **strong beats**.

The Petronian Motet was named after Petrus de Cruce (p. 92).

The triplum was lively, free, and speechlike

The motetus moved more slowly

The tenor moved with a more uniform pattern

The rise of the motet made the use of measured notes essential. The codification of such a system was done by Franco of Cologne in *Ars Cantus Mensurabilis*, c. 1250. In this, rules were established for note values and ligatures and rests. This system, called *Franconian notation*, was used through the first 1/4 of the 14th century. Note p. 95.

HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC I

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Music was generally published (not yet printed) using *choirbook format*. In this format, the tenor would be written across the bottom of the pages while the upper voices would be written in columns or on different pages above the tenor.

A type of music that became somewhat of a convention was the *hocket*. In this form, the flow of the melody is interrupted by the insertion of rests. These missing notes would be supplied by other voices. The effect was that of a hiccup. Pieces in which *hocketing* is used extensively were called hockets. They are found most often in secular conductus and motets.