

Introduction

The polyphonic music associated with the Parisian Cathedral of Notre Dame in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries marks a paradigm shift in music history. Linked to the authorial identities of Léonin and Pérotin, and intimately connected with significant advances in written musical transmission and systems of rhythmic notation, this music has long been understood to represent a historiographical beginning, a paradigm shift of lasting consequences in the scale, organisation, and ambition of polyphonic composition.¹ Unsurprisingly, organa, clausulae, conducti, and especially the innovative new thirteenth-century genre of the motet, have received considerable attention since the mid-nineteenth century. Much early scholarship was philological, involving the transcription of contemporaneous theoretical treatises, extensive cataloguing of musical concordances and variants, production of manuscript facsimiles, and publication of musical editions in modern notation.² As a means of rationalising a huge amount of dense material, these resources – especially Friedrich Ludwig’s breathtakingly comprehensive 1910 catalogue of almost the entire thirteenth-century polyphonic repertoire³ – established and reinforced large-scale evolutionary narratives of musical development that have proved powerfully indelible.⁴ In the last several decades, research has taken a hermeneutic

¹ This accepted historiographical premise is acknowledged also by Edward H. Roesner and Anna Maria Busse Berger. See, respectively, ‘Who “Made” the *Magnus liber*?’, *Early Music History*, 20 (2001), 227–66; and *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 1.

² The most monumental achievements include Friedrich Ludwig’s catalogue – *Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili*, ed. Luther A. Dittmer, 2 vols. in 3 (New York, 1964–78 [1910]) – and Hans Tischler’s edition, showing every musical variant for each piece: *The Earliest Motets (to circa 1270): A Complete Comparative Edition*, 3 vols. (New Haven, 1982). The seven-volume edition *Le ‘Magnus liber organi’ de Notre-Dame de Paris* (Monaco, 1993–2009) was recently completed under the general editorship of Edward H. Roesner.

³ The conductus is the only thirteenth-century polyphonic genre that is not explicitly included in Ludwig’s *Repertorium*. As a type of composition that is not directly related to earlier plainchant traditions, neither is the conductus a focus of this book.

⁴ Ludwig’s *Repertorium* was reformulated in 1957 as a motet catalogue by Friedrich Gennrich: his *Bibliographie der ältesten französischen und lateinischen Motetten*, SMMA 2 (Frankfurt, 1957) (motet numbers in this catalogue hereafter indicated by Mt). In 1989, Hendrik van der Werf published his *Integrated Directory of Organa, Clausulae, and Motets of the Thirteenth*

turn away from the details of manuscript sources, to focus instead on the interpretation of motet texts and on the sonic and semantic consequences of polytextuality.⁵ Yet in spite of the status of organa, clausulae, and motets as paradigmatic chiefly in a compositional sense – as the first ‘notated’ and ‘complex’ polyphony – these medieval repertoires remain firmly outside the analytical mainstream.⁶

This book gives serious consideration to the primarily musical and compositional concerns that have previously been overshadowed by interests in the philological, poetic, and polytextual characteristics of thirteenth-century polyphony and obscured by general evolutionary narratives. In contrast to, and in order to redress the emphases of, previous studies, polytextual motets feature less prominently here than their two-voice counterparts, which constitute an almost equally significant proportion of the surviving repertoire, and predominate in early- and mid-thirteenth-century sources.⁷ Crucially, the book’s musical objects of study have been selected for their potential to unsettle scholarly preconceptions about the repertoire at large, and to lead outwards towards an array of broader issues and topics extending well beyond the purely analytical and purely musical. The aim is to pose fresh and different compositional and chronological questions that challenge still persistent developmental and historical presumptions, thereby opening up new approaches to organa, clausulae, and motets. The study is not delineated by genre, function, or language, but is instead focused on a practice already well established in the thirteenth century and of continued relevance to current-day musical cultures. This practice is the act of borrowing, quoting, and reworking pre-existing musical and textual materials, in particular the use of plainchant melodies as the basis of new polyphonic compositions. The quotation of an older

Century (Rochester, 1989), essentially a new version of the *Repertorium* in English. Although Ludwig’s original lacks some more recent source and concordance discoveries, the *Repertorium* remains the most reliable catalogue, and its extensive commentaries on the contents and characteristics of individual manuscripts have yet to be supplanted.

⁵ Key examples include Sylvia Huot, *Allegorical Play in the Old French Motet: The Sacred and the Profane in Thirteenth-Century Polyphony* (Stanford, 1997); and Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France 1260–1330*, New Cultural History of Music Series (New York, 2012).

⁶ Notable exceptions include the essay by Norman E. Smith, ‘An Early Thirteenth-Century Motet’, in Mark Everist (ed.), *Models of Musical Analysis: Music before 1600* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 20–40; and work by Dolores Pesce, such as her ‘A Case for Coherent Pitch Organization in the Thirteenth-Century Double Motet’, *Music Analysis*, 9 (1980), 287–31.

⁷ See the discussion of the relative proportion of two-voice and polytextual motets in Catherine A. Bradley, ‘Seeking the Sense of Sound’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 139 (2014), 405–20 (pp. 407–8).

plainchant melody, ‘held’ in the lowest voice or tenor, was a defining characteristic of the thirteenth-century genres explored here: liturgical organa and clausulae, and Latin motets, as well as French-texted ones. As a conceptual focus, the borrowing of plainchant in organa, clausulae, and motets serves to dissolve binary oppositions, not only of monophony and polyphony, but also of sacred and secular, and of Latin and vernacular genres.

Seven contrasting case studies are offered in the following chapters with the aim of underlining the richness and variety of thirteenth-century polyphony, and the necessity of corresponding variety in its historical and analytical treatment. These diverse case studies are proposed as new methodological blueprints, proffering possible ‘ways in’ to the vast repertoire of thirteenth-century polyphony, with its intimidating arsenal of esoteric catalogues and comparative editions. Exploring ways in which thirteenth-century music ‘works’, this book seeks to redefine the idea of musical analysis in a context where analytical approaches that focus on compositional processes might be thought inappropriate or impossible. At the forefront of such concerns are the strongly oral and performative dimensions of medieval musical culture, which might seem to militate against the definition of a musical ‘text’ for close reading.⁸ If so, this would strike also at the heart of the paradigmatic status of thirteenth-century polyphony, suggesting that its perceived compositional importance might reflect our own aesthetic preoccupations more than those of the past.

The relationship between orality and any ‘text’ is complex. As part of the collision of existing oral practices with the highly literate environment of the Parisian university in the late twelfth century, polyphony was not simply an orally created repertoire that was later written down, nor was it a repertoire conceived exclusively in writing that was subsequently memorised. The nature of its musical objects could be shaped in and by performance as well as by compositional attitudes and techniques facilitated by writing. This notwithstanding, Edward H. Roesner has demonstrated that the categories of a composed musical ‘text’ (whether physically recorded in writing or worked out mentally) and of a carefully crafted ‘original conception’ of a piece remain appropriate.⁹ For although surface variation in this repertoire is occasionally considerable (particularly in the genre of organum), it cannot disguise a stability of written transmission that is remarkable. This

⁸ Oral and mnemonic practices in this repertoire have been the focus of studies by Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*; and Steven C. Immel, ‘The Vatican Organum Treatise Reexamined’, *Early Music History*, 20 (2001), 121–72.

⁹ Roesner, ‘Who “Made” the *Magnus liber*?’, pp. 256–8.

evident medieval desire to preserve and respect the integrity of a musical composition facilitates and encourages its analysis. That such compositions must inevitably be accessed through the medium of manuscript sources is not to deny their orality, of which traces can be uncovered within written documents.

From a theoretical point of view, undertaking close analysis of thirteenth-century polyphony may be daunting, not least because it requires sensitivity to elusive oral and performative aspects, as well as the vagaries of manuscript transmission and preservation. This (pre-tonal) repertoire lacks the kind of well-developed analytical systems and conventions that exist for later musics, and there is a paucity of relevant contemporaneous theoretical or circumstantial evidence that might help to establish such tools. Although we know the names of Léonin and Pérotin and of a handful of Pérotin's compositions, any direct indication about how works such as theirs were created, according to what rules or priorities, is distinctly absent. The surviving testimonies of medieval theorists are typically abstract codifications of rhythmic notation, genres, or harmonic intervals, with almost nothing akin to practical compositional advice. What is more, extant theoretical documents are relatively late chronologically: they date chiefly from the second half of the thirteenth century, at a time when the repertoires and practices to which they pertain could have been almost 100 years old. A similar gap in time complicates the interpretation of musical manuscript sources themselves. A decree by the Parisian Bishop Odo of Sully in 1198 proves that four-voice organa were already an established part of the Christmas celebrations at Notre Dame in the late twelfth century, but the earliest surviving manuscript to record such pieces is dated to the 1230s.¹⁰ Examinations of compositional process must therefore accommodate questions to which there may be no definitive answers: how do these comparatively late written records relate to any initial conception (written or oral) of the pieces they contain; what sorts of scribal intervention may have occurred; and what kinds of earlier more contemporary musical sources may have been lost?

Difficulties inherent in the state of surviving thirteenth-century theoretical and musical sources are compounded by the large scope and complex nature of the musical repertoire itself. Interrelationships between multiple versions and different generic incarnations of the same musical material are such that listing and describing them can be an onerous task.

¹⁰ On Odo of Sully's decree, and for a translation of the text, see Craig Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris 500–1550* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 239.

Scholars are both helped and hindered by a profusion of specialist terminology to describe generic types. On the one hand, the definition of multiple sub-genres may seem problematic and artificial: *conductus* motets, *Kurzmotette*, cento motets, motets entés, and *rondeau* motets, are just several of the debated categories.¹¹ On the other, taxonomy was a genuine concern of thirteenth-century theorists, and most manuscripts of this music are scrupulously, almost obsessively, ordered, displaying intricate conventions for groupings on both the large and the small scale. A neat segregation of thirteenth-century genres is reflected in current scholarship. Studies and editions of organa and clausulae, for instance, are typically set apart from those of motets. And work on motets, in turn, often considers Latin-texted pieces separately from their vernacular counterparts. In consequence, investigations of thirteenth-century polyphony have remained preoccupied by and dependent upon general evolutionary narratives to explain inescapable relationships between genres. Linear advances from sacred compositions to secular ones, from Latin-texted clausulae and motets to those in the vernacular, continue – implicitly and explicitly – to form the basis of understandings of this music.¹²

Such narratives already underwrote Ludwig's still indispensable catalogue of thirteenth-century polyphony. They are enshrined within his numbering systems – all in current use – and in his terminology: *Quelle* (source) is employed in place of the generic designation 'clausula' when listing the versions of a motet. These narratives have arguably discouraged close and critical readings of the musical evidence, whose sheer volume intimidates. Developmental models permit ready-made chronologies to be accepted instead of investigated in individual cases, thereby obscuring (perhaps even deterring) serious consideration of any instances of deviation. Furthermore, such models have encouraged reductive conceptualisations of chronologies in this repertoire. The genealogies of motet families, for instance, have frequently been plotted in stemma diagrams that unquestioningly follow a pre-planned chronological sequence, placing a clausula source at the top of the tree, followed by an obligatory series of sub-genres.¹³

¹¹ In particular, Mark Everist has queried the validity of motet sub-genres, notably the motet enté the *rondeau* motet, and the cento motet. See his *French Motets in the Thirteenth Century: Music, Poetry and Genre* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 75–125.

¹² For a recent example, see Thomas B. Payne (ed.), *Philip the Chancellor: Motets and Prosulas*, RRMMA 41 (Middleton, 2011), esp. p. xxv.

¹³ Gordon A. Anderson's 'A Small Collection of Notre Dame Motets ca. 1215–1235', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 22 (1969), 157–96, proceeds on exactly this kind of chronological basis. For more recent examples of stemmata, see Rebecca A. Baltzer, 'The Polyphonic Progeny of an *Et Gaudebit*: Assessing Family Relations in the Thirteenth-Century

Even Wolf Frobenius's controversial denial of the well-established clausula-before-motet hypothesis was primarily a simple reversal of the accepted generic progression.¹⁴ Although more recent scholarship has acknowledged the possibility of less straightforward genealogical lines, this is often as a means of avoiding, rather than addressing, chronological issues.¹⁵

This study tackles chronological issues head-on, tracing sequences of compositional events, and proposing local reversals and qualifications to presumed genetic relationships between thirteenth-century genres that challenge conventional scholarly accounts and origin theories. Nevertheless, chronology does not inevitably dictate the analytical agenda, neither is it privileged to the narrow exclusion of other matters of compositional and cultural interest. Individual analyses participate in wider musical debates about the relationship between monophonic and polyphonic performance (Chapter 1), between theory and practice (Chapter 3), and about the impact of notational technologies and scribal activities (Chapters 4 and 7). Chapter 7, which extends into the fourteenth century, additionally offers a concluding reflection on ideologies of old and new in the age of the self-proclaimed *Ars nova*. Beyond the musical realm, liturgical concerns are central to Chapters 1 and 2. The former charts the unexpected fate of an Assumption Gradual in its various polyphonic forms, while the latter engages with a curious unique collection of very short two-voice settings of snippets of Mass and Office plainchants, for which it is difficult to imagine a clear function. This raises codicological questions about the intended purpose and/or practicality of medieval written documents that are revisited in Chapter 4, which probes motivations for the textless transcriptions of vernacular motets that were apparently placed among liturgical clausulae. Chapter 5 contributes to an on-going discussion in both musicology and French studies about the status of quotation as a defining characteristic of the vernacular refrain, comparing motets in which quoted refrain melodies and those that have the *appearance* of quotations, but were apparently created afresh, play analogous formal roles. Chapter 6 reflects on ideas of

Motet', in Dolores Pesce (ed.), *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motets of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York, 1997), pp. 17–27; and Alejandro Enrique Planchart, 'The Flower's Children', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 22 (2003), 303–48. I have queried the assumed priority of clausulae in both cases. See Catherine A. Bradley, 'Contrafacta and Transcribed Motets: Vernacular Influences on Latin Motets and Clausulae in the Florence Manuscript', *Early Music History*, 32 (2013), 1–70 (pp. 16–17 and 40–57, respectively).

¹⁴ Wolf Frobenius, 'Zum genetischen Verhältnis zwischen Notre-Dame-Klauseln und ihren Motetten', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 44 (1987), 1–39.

¹⁵ See, for instance, David J. Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York, 2011), esp. pp. 39–40.

femininity and female sainthood in the Middle Ages in the context of a newly identified network of musical compositions that evoke and venerate St Elizabeth of Hungary. That this music opens up and is open to such a range of interdisciplinary perspectives invites closer engagement.

In foregrounding the idea of reuse and quotation – the adoption and elaboration of pre-existing plainchant melodies in polyphony – this study sets aside concepts of authorship and originality that are often central to studies of compositional sketches and processes in later repertoires. Thirteenth-century polyphony offers an alternative and non-authorial forum for such analytical investigation: not only do musical and textual reworkings and additions proliferate, but this repertoire is persistently anonymous, especially in comparison to its monophonic counterpart, the vernacular songs of the *trouvères*, where the individual personalities of poet-composers take centre stage. Ideas of compositional process here, therefore, are necessarily formed independently of any attendant complications surrounding the identity or personality of a specific composer. This study thinks about composition in the literal sense of the word, the ‘putting together’ (*componere*) of different musical and textual materials.

Intertextual practices of borrowing themselves offer fertile and varied compositional possibilities inviting correspondingly diverse analytical perspectives. The quotation of plainchant in polyphony may have a strongly hermeneutic dimension, alluding to and situating the polyphonic instantiation within the broader sacred contexts of an existing liturgical tradition (as demonstrated in Chapter 6). But reuse has more practical, musical ramifications, too, for the construction of a new piece (addressed particularly in Chapters 3, 5, and 7): how are new melodies shaped around and adapted to old foundations, or how might texts be added to pre-existing musical structures? Perhaps most importantly, an examination of borrowing helpfully keeps open the subject of chronology that has dominated previous discussions of this repertoire, but without requiring that chronological conclusions be reached in every instance, or subscribing to overarching developmental models. It is possible and productive to posit small-scale linear chronologies in certain cases, and these may operate in various directions. The subsequent chapters are able to demonstrate, for example, that a particular melody is an established quotation accommodated in a new polyphonic context (Chapters 4, 5, and 6); that a text was conceived for a pre-existent musical material (Chapter 3); and conversely that musical material was conceived in conjunction with a text that was later removed (Chapters 4 and 5). In other instances, there is insufficient evidence to reach absolute conclusions (Chapter 7), and it is therefore more productive to ask

different kinds of questions, to map and observe interactions without the imperative of establishing any definitive chronology.

Reflecting the complexity and diversity of medieval musical practices, this book does not seek to propound any totalising analytical methodology. The heuristic analyses proceed ‘from first principles’: analytical questions and tools are tailored to the nature of the material at hand, responding to features of a particular work or group of works that emerge as unusually pronounced or unconventional in the repertoire at large. In Chapter 3, for instance, a pair of highly repetitive motets on the intricate REGNAT tenor prompts a study of melodic repetition as a compositional strategy and its harmonic consequences in practice and in theory. Chapter 5 explores the parallel motivic and constructional procedures involved in vernacular motets that are self-consciously ‘framed’ by opening and closing refrains, developing a wider concern raised in Chapter 4 about the combination of multiple melodic quotations to sound simultaneously in polyphony. Chapter 6 investigates the far-reaching hermeneutic implications of building a motet on an obscure plainchant melody, in this case a plainchant quotation that evokes a female singing voice.

While Chapters 3, 5, and 6 use the details of individual works as a platform for wider compositional and interpretative issues, the remaining case studies show ways in which larger groups of pieces within the vast thirteenth-century repertoire can productively be defined and scrutinised. Chapter 1 takes a new holistic approach that is centred on a single chant melody, tracing the treatment of segments of this melody as the basis of organa, clausulae, and motets across a wide variety of manuscript sources to reveal musical behaviours and generic interrelationships that force a rethinking of current models. By contrast, Chapter 2 engages with a little-studied set of compositions – a collection of so-called ‘abbreviation’ or ‘mini’ clausulae – that already have the status of a group in the manuscript source in which they are uniquely preserved. It demonstrates how salient liturgical and musical characteristics may be identified and brought to bear on questions of function, performance contexts, and transmission, querying and recasting understandings of these apparently marginal mini clausula vis-à-vis the mainstream polyphonic tradition represented by the ‘Great Book of Organum’ (*Magnus liber organi*).

A new corpus is defined in Chapter 4, with the purpose of bringing to the fore a characteristic that has previously proved historiographically disruptive: namely the shared musical currency of liturgical and vernacular genres. Analysis of particular examples pinpoints musical and notational traits that reveal melodic material within sacred clausulae to be genuine

quotations of secular French refrain melodies. This facilitates chronological conclusions about the relationship between clausulae and motets that invite a reversal – within the context of this corpus – of the current default presumption that motets derive from the addition of text to the clausula whose music they share. Only Chapter 7 employs an organising principle with an established pedigree. This is the idea of a motet family, in which a single musical composition takes multiple forms (with various added voices and accompanying texts) as Latin and French motets and a clausula. A textbook example of a conventional concept is invoked here in order to query the developmental narrative it usually typifies. I propose an alternative emphasis to the usual chronological one, asking instead *why* one melody should prove so memorable and long-lived, and how exactly its fame might depend on identifiable musical and poetic techniques.

The case-by-case approach advocated in this book is, I would argue, crucial to a proper appreciation of this music. A recommendation that thirteenth-century compositions should be studied individually was central also to Mark Everist's 1994 monograph, the first to be devoted to the music of thirteenth-century French motets.¹⁶ Yet in charting the musical terrain, Everist's study inevitably continued to be shaped by still-pervasive global narratives within which specific motets were situated or reconciled. Heuristic analytical engagement with the compositional constitutions of certain works and groups of works is put to the opposite purpose here, serving to undermine existing archetypes and to promote an alternative, less totalising conceptualisation of this repertoire. This book's wide generic and chronological range additionally facilitates a new and deeper contextualisation of motets with relation to the genres of organum and clausula, inextricable connections that are difficult to ignore at the level of individual pieces but can only be reductively characterised in abstract terms. The interactions between these genres are fluid, with the result that Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate precisely the reverse genetic relationship between motet and clausula to that proposed in Chapter 3. Chapter 1, meanwhile, reveals a striking lack of any connection at all between clausulae and motets. These kinds of seemingly contradictory behaviours can be accommodated within a methodology that, instead of proceeding from the general to the particular, begins with the particular, as a means towards understanding and embracing the complexity of thirteenth-century musical culture and its multifaceted compositional practices.

¹⁶ Everist, *French Motets in the Thirteenth Century*, p. 13.