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**RAJALATU, NAMKUM, RANCHI, JHARKHAND-834010**

## Music Topic 1

21M011 (spring, 2006)

Ellen T. Harris

Lecture I

### Introduction (with in-class examples)

Music exists in time and is notated on a vertical and horizontal axis. The vertical axis represents sounds heard simultaneously. The horizontal axis consists of the unfolding of music over time, as a melodic, harmonic and rhythmic progression. The vertical and horizontal can be easily grasped in terms of a simple round, like “Row, row, row your boat.” If everyone sings the tune together, the resultant melody represents a horizontal line. If sung as a four-part round, a distinct vertical element is created by the simultaneities as the different voices enter in delayed sequence. This can be graphed as follows. The tune itself has four parts: A Row, row, row your boat, B Gently down the stream. C Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, D Life is but a dream.

As a melody, this reads: ABCD. Once the melody is sung as a round, the vertical element begins to appear:

A B C D A B C D A ...

A B C D A B C D A...

A B C D A B C D A...

A B C D A B C D A...

Note that once all the voices enter, the vertical column becomes: A

B

C

D,

which repeats over and over again. This sound can be duplicated by having each of the four sections sing only one phrase over and over again, such as AAAA, or BBBB. The sound columns remain the same. The reason a round works is that each of the phrases “works” with the others over a repeating harmonic pattern. In “Row, row, row your boat,” the pattern essentially consists of the repetition of a single chord (with an upbeat leading into it to provide rhythmic and harmonic impetus). That is, each phrase (giving an Arabic number to each chord) is simply: 1 1 . Or, possibly 1 (2)-1 (2)- .

A longer pattern exists in the familiar “Heart and Soul,” based on four chords. This fourchord pattern is frequently used: its four “vertical columns” also support such familiar songs as “Blue Moon” and “Santa Catalina” (“Twenty-six miles across the sea”) originally sung by the Four Preps in 1958. What does this shared bass mean? First, it means that all these songs can be sung together (which is a lot of fun).

Heart and soul, I fell in love with you. Heart and soul, ...

Twenty-six miles across the sea, Santa Catalina

Blue moon I saw you standing alone, ...  
1 2 3 4 1 2

Secondly, like “Row, row, row your boat,” it means that any of these songs can be sung as a round over the repeating four chords—or, if you have enough people, all of the songs can be sung as rounds together.

Notated music has five components that determine what is played: texture (how the various parts intertwine); harmony (the vertical axis and its progression over time); rhythm (duration and organization into strong and weak beat patterns); melody (the horizontal tune or tunes); and form (large-scale organization in terms of repeated, varied or contrasting units). These are all important things to notice about any piece of music. In addition composers can add notations about how the notated music should be performed: dynamics (volume), tempo (speed), timbre (by what instruments or voices), articulation (for example, legato [smooth connections between notes] or staccato [short, individual attacks] ). These are all things we will consider as we consider the history of Western classical music.

## Middle Ages

- fall of the Roman Empire (476) to 1400
- Robin Hood, King Arthur; St. Augustine, Charlemagne, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer
- a period of massive migration and privation due to repeated invasions, famine and plagues
- education and technology of ancient Roman and Greek civilizations were lost in the West (just as previously the advances of Egyptian and Babylonian cultures were lost)
- this period called the "dark ages"

Music (sacred and secular)

Chant (or, plainchant) is the starting point for the history of Western music because it is the first music to be notated, collected, and preserved. Its liturgical function within the Catholic church is, of course, responsible for its codification. However, chant was not newly discovered by the Catholic church, but was and remains a function of many, if not most, religious liturgies, Jewish, Muslim and Christian. The Catholic chant of the Middle Ages derives from earlier Byzantine and Jewish chant through an oral, not written tradition. Development of musical notation occurs in about the 9<sup>th</sup> c.

**1) Preface: “Vere dignum”:** introduction to the mass (the liturgical service of the Catholic Church (Kerman/Tomlinson disk 1, track 1: henceforth K 1.1)

- reciting tone
- formulaic: ascending to the reciting tone, declaiming the text, descending at end of phrase
- repetition of this formula

**2) Antiphon: In paradisum:** chant for the burial service , requiem (mass for the dead) (K 1.2)

rhythm: no regular pulse  
form: no repetitive structure  
texture: monophony  
timbre: men's voices  
melody: free-floating, with line rising upward on "paradisum" and extended over many syllables (a melisma) on "aeternum" (eternal), a kind of "word-painting" music is meant here to lift the listener away from the everyday world, away from the physical, to the meditative and spiritual

\*Please note that Kerman/Tomlinson mistakes the Biblical reference to Lazarus in this text, associating it with the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus (John 11: 1-54). Rather the text alludes to the parable of Lazarus the beggar who is raised to heaven in the bosom of Abraham (Luke 16: 9-31).

Thanks to Martin M. Marks (Music Faculty) for making this correction.

qualities:

- monophonic (all male)
  - non-tonal (modal)
  - non-metrical (free rhythmically)
  - conjunct; small range
  - text-setting: largely syllabic (one note for each syllable)
  - through composed (without formal repetition)
- context: processional--repeated as many times as necessary during transport of the body from the church to the burial ground

**3) Hildegard von Bingen**

"For Hildegard, music was an avenue of access to mystical experience. She composed music as a way to make palpable God and divine beauty" (Karin Pendle, *Women and Music* [Indiana University Press, 1991])

Although the church forbade the singing of women in church or in public, cloistered women were encouraged to create and perform their own music. Through the seventeenth century, the religious calling (or profession) offered women a creative outlet that was not possible anywhere else in society.

Hildegard thought of the human soul as "symphonic," which expressed itself by tuning itself to the celestial music of the spheres not only by responding to musical vibrations but by creating harmony with the human body with singing. **Sequence: Columba aspexit** (K 1.3)

form AA' BB' CC' . . .

(beginning of congregational singing, responsorial, "call and response": soloist sings the first text phrase and the congregation—here a congregation of nuns—responds with the next text phrase (which is written to be parallel in length and rhythm) using the same music; for each set of paired phrases this pattern repeats using different music) texture: monophonic with drone accompaniment

harmony: modal rhythm: free

melody: mostly conjunct, wide range (especially upper range)

context: cloister expression: regulated (in form) and ecstatic (in melody) performance: all female

*Whereas sacred music was meant to create an out-of-body, transcendental religious experience, either through meditation (repetitive chanting) or ecstasy (soaring melodies), secular music and composition emphasized earthly and bodily needs and desires. This music uses rhythm to make the body respond and clarifies its formal structure with clearly audible forms.*

**Secular: Troubadours, trouveres, minnesingers** (wandering minstrels)

songs: strophic; each strophe=aab

jazzy accompaniment: and "activated" pitch drone using a repeated rhythmic pattern

**4) Bernart de Ventadorn, "La dousa votz"**-- late 12th c. (K 1.4)

rhythm strong pulse form AAB, strophic

timbre: monophony accompanied on stringed instrument (the oud, or early lute/guitar)

**Polyphony** organum developed out of chant as a kind of vertical embellishment or

elaboration

chronological development is from simple to more and more elaborate, although a good deal of overlapping between categories can also be assumed

parallel organum: accompanying voice moves along with the chant note for note in parallel motion

melismatic organum: many notes in the upper, newly composed voices to one of the original chant

**5. Perotin: melismatic organum: "Alleluia: Diffusa est gratia" (1200) (K 1.5)**

texture: polyphonic; non-imitative counterpoint (3 voices) harmony:  
modal

rhythm: free on bottom; measured and elaborate on top

melody: undulating and entwining; very melismatic

form: organized by texture (and melody): chant—organum—chant

The monophonic chant consists of an “alleluia,” which is itself melismatic (compare to the more syllabic “In paradisum.” The last syllable of the “alleluia” is typically extended into a huge melisma called a “jubilus” (think “jubilation” or “jubilee”). The biblical verse (“Diffusa est gratia”) is then set as polyphonic organum, but its last two words (“in aeternum”/ in eternity) are sung to the monophonic jubilus. The monophonic “alleluia” then repeats.

Function: Alleluia↔jubilus      biblical verse↔jubilus      Alleluia↔jubilus

Texture: chant      organum----↔chant      chant

context: liturgical

performance: all male, all vocal

\*\*expression: lowest voice (chant) = cantus firmus: a religious foundation supporting the earthly intertwining of the upper voices, symbolic of the church as--

"a mighty fortress,"

"how firm a foundation,"

"on this rock will I build my church"

blending of sacred and secular; world view that has secular supported by the sacred; architectonic

**6) motet: Machaut: "Quant en moy" (1350) (K 1.6)**

- smaller rhythmic units: repeated bricks rather than long layers
- cantus firmus: repeated measured chant
- sacred and secular merger emphasized by used of different texts and different languages (religious and vernacular)
- cantus firmus=instrumental (wordless)

musical construction changes here from joining the flow of celestial harmony to recreating the mathematical formulas found in the nature consciously  
compositional and calculating

from the bottom to the top, each line of music is increasingly active: the chant segments move the most slowly, the middle voice moves at a moderate pace, the upper voice

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moves very quickly; this is related to text: the bottom line is untexted, the middle line sets about half as much text as the upper line

form: each stanza of the poem is set to music in the same rhythm but not the same melody, which can be heard best in the hockets, where the two upper voices interact with one another in quick succession with short motives; because the upper two voices have different texts, the hockets provide the only moments when the text is clear—offering a key to the meaning of the piece

**isorhythm**: creating cycles of sound through repetitive rhythms without a repeating melody