

recall the old organum terminology). In places where imperfect consonances had been common before (especially the "precadential" position), we are now apt to find triads, or else a combination of fourth or fifth plus a seventh over the lowest voice that is justified by its characteristic approach to the concluding consonance by contrary motion—a harmonically amplified occursus.

The strategic placement of dissonance (or imperfect consonance) immediately before perfect consonance, and its "resolution" to the latter by contrary voice-leading, was henceforth regarded as the essential "function" of discant harmony and the definer of musical "motion." It became the primary signal of "closure," or phrase-ending in polyphonic music, the necessary determiner of cadences, and eventually the primary shaper of musical form. As befits something so important to musical structure and perception—to musical "language," in effect—it was eventually standardized in practice, and particularly in teaching, as "laws of counterpoint."

Still and all, the note-against-note harmony of the earliest surviving three-part discants, like *Verbum patris humanatur*, is the kind of harmony that is easily worked out in the act of "harmonizing"—that is, by ear—and depicts in writing, like a kind of snapshot, an informal oral practice of evident long standing, and with many descendants in today's world. There is no telling how far back in time such practices may extend.

Notre Dame de Paris

PARISIAN CATHEDRAL MUSIC IN THE TWELFTH
AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES
AND ITS MAKERS

THE CATHEDRAL-UNIVERSITY COMPLEX

Many circumstances conspired to make Paris the undisputed intellectual capital of Europe by the end of the twelfth century. The process of urbanization, traced to some degree in chapter 4, brought about a decline in the importance of monasteries as centers of learning and a swift rise in the prestige of cathedral schools. These schools were learning centers attached to cathedral churches, the large urban churches that were the seats (*cathedrae*) of bishops and that served as administrative centers for a surrounding ecclesiastical territory called a diocese.

The enhanced importance of the cathedral beginning in the twelfth century, especially in northern Europe, was underscored by the gigantism of cathedral architecture. The Gothic style (so called since the nineteenth century to emphasize its northern European provenance), with its soaring lines and huge interior spaces, had its start precisely at this time. Paris and the surrounding area (including the northern suburb of Saint-Denis, site of the royal crypt) was one of its earliest sites. The abbey and basilica of Saint-Denis were constructed between 1140 and 1144. The cornerstone of the present-day cathedral of Paris, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and affectionately known therefore as *Notre-Dame de Paris* ("Our Lady of Paris"), or simply as Notre Dame, was laid in 1163 by Pope Alexander III himself. The altar was consecrated twenty years later, and the building began to function, although the whole enormous structure was not finished until the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Within and around the great Gothic cathedrals, the clergy was organized into a community modeled in many of its aspects on the feudal ideal. The resident staff or faculty was sworn to a quasi-monastic regime defined by a *canon* or consensual law. From this word they derived their title: a full member of the community was a "canon regular," or simply canon. The canons elected the bishop who ruled them, and who parceled out the church lands and their incomes to the canons in the form of *prebends* (from *praebenda*, that which is to be granted), much as a lord would deed land to his vassals. The community of canons, known as the college or chapter, was organized into a hierarchy of ranks and offices overseen by the chancellor or dean, the bishop's chief of staff. They included the *scolasticus* (school director) and the *precentor* (musical director).

Much of this vocabulary, as the reader has surely noticed, is now used to designate the ranks and offices in a university, and that is no coincidence. The university as we



FIG. 6-1 Interior of the cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris.

Notre Dame, that of the canons regular at the abbey of St. Victor (known to us already as a center of sequence composition), and that of the collegiate church of St. Geneviève. (A collegiate church was the next lower rank after cathedral: it had a dean and chapter but no resident bishop.) As a physical plant the University of Paris grew up alongside the new cathedral. It was fully functioning by around 1170 with the cathedral's chancellor as its ecclesiastical superintendent" charged with granting its faculty the *licentia docendi* (license to teach), known to us as the doctor's degree. It was formally chartered by a papal bull—a letter carrying the pope's *bull* or seal—in 1215. Since the sixteenth century it has been known as the Sorbonne,



FIG. 6-2 Philip II of France (Philip Augustus, r. 1180–1223), handing the royal privilege to the masters and students of the University of Paris in 1200. Illumination from a mid-fourteenth-century Latin chronicle known as the *Book of Procurors*, now kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

know it—or as it was originally called, the *universitas societas magistrorum discipulorumque* (universal association of masters and disciples, i.e., teachers and pupils)—was a twelfth-century innovation, formed initially by consolidating and augmenting the faculties of cathedral schools. The University of Paris, the first great northern European university, was by far the largest. It was preceded only by the University of Bologna, originally endowed in the eleventh century as the pope's own vocational school of "canon law" for training church administrators.

Its instructional and administrative staff was formed out of the faculties of three large existing schools: that of

Notre Dame, that of the canons regular at the abbey of St. Victor (known to us already as a center of sequence composition), and that of the collegiate church of St. Geneviève. (A collegiate church was the next lower rank after cathedral: it had a dean and chapter but no resident bishop.) As a physical plant the University of Paris grew up alongside the new cathedral. It was fully functioning by around 1170 with the cathedral's chancellor as its ecclesiastical superintendent" charged with granting its faculty the *licentia docendi* (license to teach), known to us as the doctor's degree. It was formally chartered by a papal bull—a letter carrying the pope's *bull* or seal—in 1215. Since the sixteenth century it has been known as the Sorbonne, after its largest constituent college, an elite doctoral school of theology founded—that is, funded—by Robert de Sorbon, the royal chaplain, in 1253.

This unprecedented royal/papal

ecclesiastical/educational establishment was the environment in which an equally unprecedented musical establishment thrived. Our knowledge of it, while extensive, is curiously indirect, pieced together by collating evidence from two or three skimpy descriptive accounts, four immense musical manuscripts, and half a dozen more or less detailed theoretical treatises. What we now call the "Notre Dame School" of polyphonic composition, and are accustomed to regarding as the first great "classical" flowering of Western art music, is actually a sort of grand historiographical fiction. Constructing it was one of the earliest triumphs of modern musicology—and still one of the most impressive.

The musical documents, three service books compiled in Paris in the mid-to-late thirteenth century and one compiled in Britain somewhat later (but seemingly containing a somewhat earlier version of the repertory), house an imposing body of polyphonic chant settings that stands in relation to the modest repertories of the "St. Martial" and Compostela manuscripts in more or less the same way that the great central cathedral-university complex itself stood in relation to the outlying monasteries and shrines of an earlier age.

The earlier repertories had been local ones in the main, emphasizing patron saints and intramural observances, and concentrating on recent chants like sequences and *versus*. The new one emphasized the general ("catholic") liturgy, the great yearly feasts, and the largest, musically most elaborate liturgical items. The Parisian or Parisian-style music books consisted mainly of settings of the Great Responsories for matins and the highly melismatic "lesson chants" (Gradual and Alleluia) of the Mass, arranged in the order of the church calendar, with particular concentrations around Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost (along with the Feast of the Assumption, in recognition of the Virgin Mary's status as patron at Notre Dame; but even so, she was hardly a local figure).

Where the earlier repertories had consisted, with only the rarest (and oft-times dubious) exceptions, of two-part settings that paired the original chant tenor with one added voice, there is a whole cycle of Notre Dame settings with two added parts for a total texture of three voices, and even a few especially grandiose items with three added parts for an unheard-of complement of four. The earlier repertories had favored two styles: a note-against-note style called *discant*, and a somewhat more florid style called *organum*, with the tenor sustained against short melismatic flights in the added voice. A typical Notre Dame composition alternated the two styles and took them both to extremes. In "organal" sections, each tenor note could literally last minutes, furnishing a series of protracted drones supporting tremendous melismatic outpourings; the *discant* sections, by contrast, were driven by besetting rhythms that (for the first time anywhere) were precisely fixed in the notation.

The chant settings associated with Notre Dame, in short, were as ambitious as the cathedral for which they were composed. They took their stylistic bearings from existing polyphonic repertories but vastly outstripped their predecessors in every dimension—length, range, number of voices. They set the world (well, the Western-world) record for "intrasyllabic melodic expansion," to use a wonderfully precise term

a Russian folklorist once coined to describe melismatic proliferation and the way it eats up a text. (That record still stands, by the way, after eight hundred years.)

To find the motivation for this astonishing copiousness, one might look no further than St. Augustine's metaphor of "a mind poured forth in joy." But there may be more to it. The overwhelming dimensions these composers achieved may not only have accorded with the size of the reverberant spaces their works had to fill, but may also have carried a message of institutional triumph at a time notable for its triumphant institutionalism.

In any case, the Notre Dame composers aspired to an unprecedented universality. Their works, unlike those created at previous polyphonic centers, could be used anywhere the Latin liturgy of the western Christian church was used. And they aspired to encyclopedic completeness: it is evident that the surviving codices reflect an attempt—indeed, multiple attempts—to outfit the entire calendar of feasts with polyphony. (A codex, plural *codices*, is a large manuscript consisting of several smaller component "fascicles" collected and bound together.) Thus, with their works, the musicians of Notre Dame symbolized the strong, united church they served, and promoted catholicism in the literal and original sense of the word. As we know from the dispersion of their works in the extant sources, their program was successful. The central Parisian repertory was copied far and wide and sung well beyond its home territory. Either as such or as the basis for further elaboration, moreover, the repertory lasted for generations after its creators' lives had ended.

PIECING THE EVIDENCE TOGETHER

Those who copied and sang these works for generations did not, however, know their authors' names. Like most manuscripts containing music for ecclesiastical use, the Notre Dame sources carried no attributions. (Only "secular" works like courtly songs could carry an author's name without taint of pride, a deadly sin.) We do think we know the identities of some of the authors, though, and we think we know something about the history of the repertory and its development. And we know what we know (or what we think we know) precisely thanks to the alliance of the cathedral church of Notre Dame with the University of Paris.

From the very beginning, the student body at the university had comprised a strong English contingent. Even earlier, it had been the rule for English theologians to go to Paris for their doctoral training. An example was John of Salisbury (ca. 1115–80), the great neo-Platonic (or "realist") philosopher and biographer of Thomas à Becket, who traveled to Paris in his youth to study with Pierre Abélard. His first important work, a treatise on good government called *Policraticus*, was written around 1147, when he had just returned from Paris, and contains a notorious complaint about the gaudy music he heard in churches there. We don't know what music he heard; maybe it was something like *Congaudeant catholici* (Ex. 5-9), whose composer, Albertus, was the cantor at Notre Dame around the time of John's visit. More likely it was never written down at all. But the fact that the dour English clergyman found so much to condemn is already an indication that Paris was a special place for music.

Something over a hundred years later, around 1270 or 1280, we get another Englishman's testimony—in this case entirely approving, even reverent—about music in Paris. This second Englishman was the author of a treatise called *De mensuris et discantu* ("On Rhythmic Notation and Discant") that was published as the fourth item in a batch of anonymous medieval writings on music brought out by the great music bibliographer Charles-Edmond-Henri de Coussemaker in 1864, when musicology was in its infancy. The treatise was headed *Anonymus IV* in this celebrated publication, and the name, anglicized by the insertion of an "o," has unfortunately come since to be associated, thanks to popular writers and textbook authors, with the writer instead of the text. The poor fellow, whatever his name may have been, is irrevocably known to music history students as "Anonymous Four." We can surmise that he was English since the treatise survives in English manuscript copies and makes reference to local English saints (and even to the "Westcuntrie," the author's immediate neighborhood). We assume that he learned the contents of his treatise as a student in Paris, since he based most of his discussion slavishly (at times verbatim) on the known writings of Paris University *magistri* (lecturers), which he may have first encountered in the lecture hall.

If, as seems evident, the treatise is something like a set of university lecture notes, we may imagine the lecturer pausing amid the technical complexities he was laboriously imparting to reminisce briefly about the traditions of Parisian polyphony and the men who made it. This brief memoir—it is without doubt the most famous passage in any medieval treatise on music—begins with an obeisance to "Leoninus magister" (Master Leonin, short for Leo), who, "it is said," was the best *organista* (composer of organum). He made a *magnus liber*, a "great book" of organa *de gradali et de antiphonario*, "from the Gradual and the Antiphoner"; that is, he made organa on chants from the Mass and the Office books. That is all we are told about Master Leonin.

Next, *Anonymus IV* reports what the lecturer said about *Perotinus magnus* (the great Perotin or Pierrot, short for Pierre), who was the best *discantor* (composer of discant) and "better than Leoninus." Perotin is identified first as the reviser of Leonin's work. He *abbreviavit* the great book (let the translation of that word wait for now) and inserted many *clausulae* ("little discant sections") of his own devising into Leonin's compositions.

Then comes a list of Perotin's original works, beginning with the real newsmakers, the *quadrupla*, organa in four parts (that is, three parts added to the Gregorian tenor). Two titles are given: *Viderunt* and *Sederunt*. Both, it turns out, are graduals: *Viderunt omnes fines terrae* ("All the ends of the earth have seen"), for Christmas, was reserved at Notre Dame for the newly instituted Feast of the Lord's Circumcision (January 1); *Sederunt principes et adversum me loquebantur* ("Princes sat and plotted against me") was the gradual for the Feast of St. Stephen the Martyr (December 26).

Next some famous *organa tripla* by Perotin are listed, including an Alleluia for the Mass commemorating the birth of the Virgin Mary. Finally, Perotin is credited with continuing the already venerable tradition of composing music to new Latin religious lyrics in the form of conductus, both polyphonic and monophonic. Three titles are mentioned, of which one—*Beata viscera* ("O blessed womb") in honor of the