



# Concise History of Western Music

5th edition

Barbara Russano Hanning

## CONCISE HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

BARBARA RUSSANO HANNING

FIFTH EDITION

## Part Two

# The Age of the Renaissance







# CONCISE HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

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## *Chapter*

# 5

England, France,  
and Burgundy in the  
Fifteenth Century



# Prelude

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## ■ Strong English presence in France

- English victories during Hundred Years' War; Agincourt, 1415
- English nobility brought musicians with them
  - sing mass, provide secular entertainment
- English music spread throughout the Continent
- French poem early 1440s, *countenance angloise*, “English quality”

## ■ Duchy of Burgundy

- Low Countries and France: pathways for importing English music to the Continent



# Prelude (cont'd)

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## ■ Duchy of Burgundy (cont'd)

- Burgundy: feudal vassal of the king of France
  - ruling dukes acquired vast territories
  - presided until 1477, as independent kingdom
- nearly all leading composers came from these regions
  - many connected to Burgundian court and chapel

## ■ Court chapels established

- salaried composers, singers, instrumentalists, as many as thirty
  - furnished music for church services and court entertainment



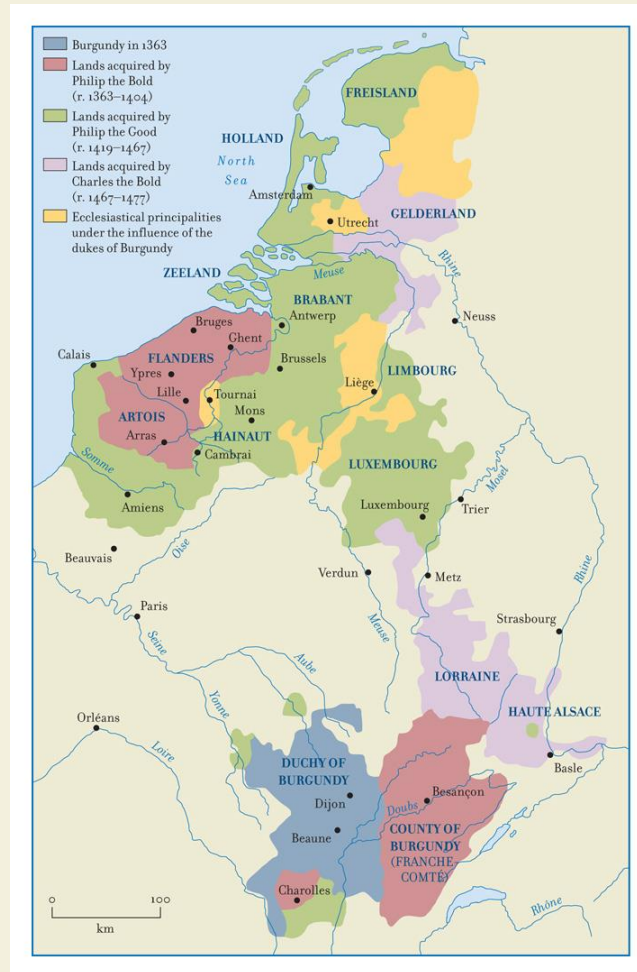
# Prelude (cont'd)

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- Court chapels established (cont'd)
  - Charles the Bold (r. 1467–1477) and Philip the Good (r. 1419–1467)
    - most resplendent court and chapel of fifteenth-century Europe
    - recruited musicians from northern France, Flanders, and the Low Countries
    - band of minstrels: from France, Italy, Germany, Portugal



# F05-01





# Prelude (cont'd)

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- Cosmopolitan style of the Burgundian composers
  - presence of many foreign musicians
  - chapel members continually changing
  - prestige of the Burgundian court, influenced other musical centers





# F05-02





# English Music and Its Influence

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- English music style in thirteenth century
  - *Sumer is icumen in* (NAWM 24)
    - imperfect consonances in parallel motion, rota
  - English carols (NAWM 33)
    - succession of simultaneous 3rds and 6ths, often parallel motion
- John Dunstable (also known as Dunstaple, ca. 1390–1453)
  - leading English composer of his time
    - part of his career in France with English duke of Bedford



# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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- John Dunstable (also known as Dunstaple, ca. 1390–1453) (cont'd)
  - composed in all polyphonic genres of the time
  - twelve isorhythmic motets, old form still in fashion
- Dunstable's motets, 3-voice sacred works
  - settings of antiphons, hymns, Mass movements, other liturgical or biblical texts
  - historically his most important works



# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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- Dunstable's motets, 3-voice sacred works (cont'd)
  - various styles
    - cantus firmus in tenor or ornamented chant in treble
    - florid treble lines, borrowed melodies in middle voice
    - not based on existing melody; *Quam pulchra es*
  - *Quam pulchra es* (How beautiful you are, NAWM 34)
    - three voices, similar in character, nearly equal in importance





# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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- Dunstable's motets, 3-voice sacred works  
(cont'd)
  - same rhythm, pronunciation of syllables together, syllabic
  - tenor moving in 3rds and 6ths below; consonant vertical sonorities
  - attention to text declamation



# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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## ■ Refining the motet

- motet: gradually broadened in meaning, sacred or secular
- previous definition: any work with texted upper voices above a cantus firmus
- by 1450 isorhythmic motet disappeared
- motet applied to settings of liturgical texts in newer musical styles, whether or not chant melody was used



# F05-03

## **Motet**

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1. early 1200s   | Polyphonic piece derived from discant clausula, with words added to the upper voice  |
| 2. 1200s–1300s   | Polyphonic piece with one or more upper voices, each with sacred or secular text in Latin or French, above a borrowed chant or other tenor |
| 3. ca. 1310–1450 | Isorhythmic motet: distinguished by a borrowed tenor structured by isorhythm   |
| 4. 1400s on      | Polyphonic setting of a Latin, especially sacred, text other than the Mass Ordinary  |



# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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## ■ Refining the motet (cont'd)

- eventually came to designate almost any polyphonic composition on a Latin text, including texts for Mass Proper and the Office

## ■ Renaissance music theory

- Consonance
  - new emphasis on 3rds and 6ths challenged music theorists
  - Middle Ages: only octave, 5th, 4th consonant





# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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## ■ Renaissance music theory (cont'd)

- Johannes Tinctoris (ca. 1435–1511): *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (A Book on the Art of Counterpoint, 1477)
  - distinction between new and older practice
  - shows humanism, referenced Greek and Roman writers
  - sensory perception, relied on empirical evidence
  - described strict rules for introducing dissonances



# English Music and Its Influence (cont'd)

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- Renaissance music theory (cont'd)
  - Gioseffo Zarlino (1517–1590): *Le istituzioni harmoniche* (The Harmonic Foundations, 1558)
    - synthesized rules of Tinctoris and later Italian treatises



# Music in Burgundian Lands

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- Guillaume Du Fay and Binchois, foremost Burgundian composers
  - Du Fay esteemed for sacred music, Binchois for chansons
  - four basic types of polyphonic compositions:
    - secular chansons with French texts
    - motets
    - Magnificats and hymn settings for the daily Offices
    - settings of the Mass Ordinary
  - most pieces, three voices
    - texture resembles fourteenth-century French chanson or Italian ballata



# F05-04







# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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## ■ Guillaume Du Fay and Binchois, foremost Burgundian composers (cont'd)

- slightly larger vocal ranges, span 10th or 12th
- each line has distinct role
  - main melody in cantus firmus
  - contrapuntal support in tenor
  - harmonic filler in contratenor

## ■ Binchois and the Burgundian chanson

- Binchois [Gilles de Bins] (ca. 1400–1460)
  - at center of Burgundian court, chapel of Duke Philip the Good



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

- Binchois and the Burgundian chanson (cont'd)
  - direct knowledge of English musicians
  - central figure in creation of Burgundian style
  - embraced *countenance angloise*
- Binchois's chansons
  - fifteenth-century chansons: any polyphonic setting of French secular poem
  - Binchois: particularly esteemed for his chansons
  - stylized love poems, courtly tradition of *fine amour*
  - most followed form of rondeau (ABaAabAB)



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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## ■ Binchois and the Burgundian chanson (cont'd)

- style example: *De plus en plus* (More and more [renews again...my wish to see you] NAWM 35) (ca. 1425)
  - full consonant harmonies, triadic melody
  - gentle arching lines, fluid rhythms
  - less intricate than Ars Subtilior
  - cadences
    - Landini: major 6th expanding to octave
    - new version: lowest note rises a 4th, sounds like V–I cadence



# Ex05-01

Cantus

8 De plus en plus \_\_\_\_\_ se re - nou - vel - le, Ma

Tenor

Contratenor

*More and more renews again, . . .*





# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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- Guillaume Du Fay (ca. 1397–1474)
  - Most famous composer of his time
    - trained at the Cathedral of Cambrai, northern France
    - traveled as chapel musician, various courts in Italy and Savoy
    - honorary appointment to chapel of Duke Philip the Good
    - music represents cosmopolitan style of mid-15th century



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

- Guillaume Du Fay (ca. 1397–1474) (cont'd)
  - major works: six masses, thirty-five other Mass movements, four Magnificats, sixty hymns, twenty-four motets, thirty-four plainchant melodies, sixty rondeaux, and other secular songs
  - *Resvellies vous* (Awake and be merry, NAWM 36) (1423), chanson
    - early stage of synthesis
    - French characteristics:
      - ballade form (aabC)
      - rhythmic complexities



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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## ■ Guillaume Du Fay (ca. 1397–1474) (cont'd)

- Italian elements:
  - relatively smooth vocal melodies
  - melismas on last accented syllable of each line of text
- *Se la face ay pale* (If my face is pale, NAWM 38a) (1433), ballade
  - blend of three national traditions, strong English influence
- sacred music in variety of styles
  - 3-voice texture resembling chansons, main melody in cantus firmus



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

- Guillaume Du Fay (ca. 1397–1474) (cont'd)
  - cantus: newly composed or embellished version of chant
  - *Christe, redemptor omnium* (Christ, Redeemer of the world, NAWM 37), hymn
    - paraphrase of chant, treble voice
    - fauxbourdon: cantus and tenor parallel 6ths, phrases end on octave, unwritten middle voice P4th below; produced stream of 6-3 sonorities
- isorhythmic motets: solemn public events
  - *Nuper rosarum flores* (Roses recently [bloomed])
    - dedication of Brunelleschi's dome, Florence, 1436



# F05-05





# F05-06







# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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## ■ Masses

- English and Continental composers wrote polyphonic settings of Mass Ordinary
- until 1420, set as separate pieces
  - compiler grouped them together
- 15th century: standard to set as musically unified whole; polyphonic mass cycle
- masses commissioned for specific occasions
  - Du Fay's Missa *Se la face ay pale* (1450s)
  - *L'homme armé* (The armed man), used by most major composers



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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## ■ Masses (cont'd)

- cyclic masses
  - initially derived from liturgical association and compositional procedure
  - motto mass
    - each movement begins with same melodic motive (head motive)
    - more noticeable connection
  - cantus-firmus mass, or tenor mass
    - same tenor voice cantus firmus in each movement



# F05-07





# F05-08







# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

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## ■ Masses (cont'd)

- first written by English, adopted on the Continent
- principal type of mass by second half of fifteenth century
- compositional problems
  - fifteenth century, lowest voice functioned as harmonic foundation
  - cantus in lowest voice limited composers
- led to 4-voice texture
  - superius (“highest”) (soprano)
  - contratenor altus (“high contratenor”), later altus (alto)
  - tenor
  - contratenor bassus (“low contratenor”), later bassus (bass)



# Music in Burgundian Lands (cont'd)

## ■ Masses (cont'd)

- compositional techniques
  - tenor of a polyphonic chanson used for cantus firmus
  - song's original rhythm retained, pattern could be made faster or slower
  - mass names derived from borrowed melody
- Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale* (1450s)
  - first complete mass to use secular tune for cantus firmus
  - tenor from his own ballade *Se la face ay pale*
  - symbolic meaning to choice of song
  - rhythmic pattern of tenor melody subject to augmentation
  - each voice has a distinctive function and character
  - launched century-long tradition of secular cantus firmus





# F05-09





# TIMELINE

TIMELINE Fifteenth-Century England and Burgundy		
Musical Events	<b>1422–1435</b> Dunstable possibly in France	<b>1430s</b> Du Fay, <i>Se la face ay pale</i> (NAWM 38a)
	<b>1423</b> Du Fay, <i>Resvellies vous</i> (NAWM 36)	<b>1436</b> Du Fay, <i>Nuper rosarum flores</i>
	<b>ca. 1425</b> Binchois, <i>De plus en plus</i> (NAWM 35)	<b>ca. 1450s</b> Du Fay, <i>Missa Se la face ay pale</i> (NAWM 38b)
	<b>ca. 1427–1453</b> Binchois at Burgundian court	<b>1460</b> Binchois dies
Historical Events	<b>1430s</b> Death of Dunstable	<b>1474</b> Du Fay dies
	<b>1453</b> Death of Dunstable	<b>1477</b> Tintoris, <i>Liber de arte contrapuncti</i>
	<b>1415</b> English under Henry V defeat French at Agincourt	<b>1431</b> Joan of Arc executed
	<b>1417</b> End of Papal Schism	<b>1453</b> Turks conquer Constantinople
	<b>1419</b> Philip III (the Good) begins his reign as duke of Burgundy	<b>1454</b> Feast of the Oath of the Pheasant in Lille
		<b>1467</b> Charles the Bold of Burgundy succeeds Philip III (the Good)
		<b>1477</b> Charles the Bold dies in battle; France absorbs duchy of Burgundy



# Ex05-02

a. Cantus firmus in the tenor at three times its original duration

[Superius]  
19  
mus - te, A - do - ra - mus te. Glo - ri - fi - ca - mus te. Glo - ri -

Contra  
te. A - do - ra - mus te. Glo - ri - fi - ca - mus te. Glo - ri -

Tenor bassus  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
A - do - ra - mus te. Glo - ri -

Tenor basus  
A - do - ra - mus te. Glo - ri -

*We adore thee. We glorify thee.*

b. Cantus firmus in the tenor at twice its original duration

[Superius]  
125  
bis. Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - no - bis. Qui mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui

Contra  
bis. Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - no - bis. Qui mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui

Tenor bassus  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
mi - se - re - re no - bis. Qui

Tenor basus  
Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta

*Have mercy upon us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world.*

c. Cantus firmus in the tenor at its original duration.

[Superius]  
165  
Cum sanc - to spi - ri - tu Cum sanc - to spi - ri - tu tu

Contra  
tu

Tenor bassus  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15  
Cum sanc - to spi - ri - tu

Tenor basus  
tu

*With the Holy Spirit*



# Postlude

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- Dunstable and the Burgundian composers
  - formed and disseminated new musical language throughout Europe
  - fused musical languages
    - French: rhythmic suppleness
    - Italian: melodic suavity
    - English: clear, bright harmonies
  - hallmarks of Renaissance style
    - composers wrote homophonic or homorhythmic textures
    - predominantly consonant sonorities, parallel 6-3 chords



# Postlude (cont'd)

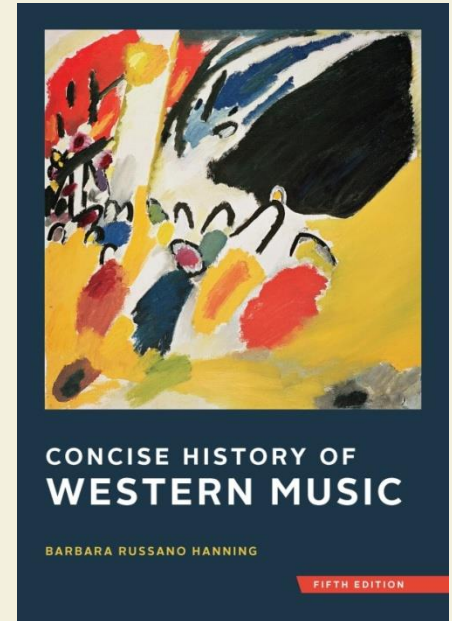
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## ■ Dunstable and the Burgundian composers (cont'd)

- control of dissonances
- equal importance of voices
- greater melodic and rhythmic identity of lines
- 4-part textures
- occasional use of imitation



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This concludes the Lecture Slide Set  
for Chapter 5

by

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