CHAPTER5

CHAPTER 5: ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND BURGUNDY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter Outline

Prelude. (CHWM 95–97)

English music made important contributions to the development of an international style in the first half of the fifteenth century. The influence of English style on Continental composers was celebrated around 1440 in a poem that praised the *countenance angloise*(English quality) of "lively consonance." The new, international style, which blended French, Italian, and English traits, was nurtured especially by composers from the area ruled by the dukes of *Burgundy*, and most of the leading composers of the late fifteenth century came from this area. Burgundian musicians traveled with their patrons and moved to new posts in other regions, and their interactions with musicians from all over Europe aided the development of an international style.

I. English Music and Its Influence (CHWM 97–99, NAWM 23 and 32)

English music frequently used thirds and sixths, often in parallel motion, as illustrated in the *rota Sumer is icumen in*and the *carol Alleuia: A new‘ work*. **Music: NAWM 23 and 32**

1. Dunstable  shows England imperfect consonance style most famous composer in England 5ths and 6ths in parallel  
   John Dunstable (ca. 1390–1453) was the leading English composer in the first half of the fifteenth century, and he wrote in all the prevailing genres and styles of polyphony.
2. Dunstable’s motets   
   In some of his motets and masses, Dunstable continued to use isorhythm. His three-voice sacred works feature style traits common to music of the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. **Music: NAWM 33**
3. Redefining the motet   
   In the fifteenth century, the term *motet*was eventually applied to any polyphonic composition on a Latin text other than the Mass Ordinary. **Music: NAWM 33 Martin Le France : Poet and cleric.**

II. Music in Burgundian Lands (CHWM 100–107, NAWM 34–37)

The main polyphonic genres in the mid-fifteenth century were secular chansons with French texts, motets, Magnificats, and settings of the Mass Ordinary. In a canon the 3rd is added.

1. Texture  (Burgundy is the modern day Netherlands.)  
   Most secular chansons by Burgundian composers were for three voices, with the main melody usually in the *cantus* and with larger ranges for each voice than in the previous century. The foremost composers of the Burgundian style were*Guillaume Du Fay*(ca. 1397–1474) and *Gilles de Bins*, known as *Binchois*(ca. 1400–1460).
2. **Binchois**- Bin wa---He is most famous for his secular songs.   
   Binchois spent most of his career at the Burgundian court chapel.
3. Binchois’s chansons composed 50 of them. Nawm 34 is a typical Bulgarian chanson.   
   Binchois was best known for his **chansons**. His polyphonic chanson *De plus en plus*uses consonant harmonies, a treble-dominated style, varied rhythms, and sixth-to-octave cadences. **Music: NAWM 34**
4. Cadences –Landini embellishments as a result they sound like secular V-1 cadences.   
   The traditional sixth-to-octave cadence between tenor and cantus was harmonized with a contratenor that leapt up an octave to sound the fifth above the tenor, creating a sound like a V–I cadence.
5. **Guillaume Du Fay** : most Esteemed for his contributions to sacred music. And is the most famous composer of his time. His music represents well the international style of the 15th century.   
   Du Fay was the most famous composer of his time, and his music well represents the international style of the mid-fifteenth century.
6. Chansons   
   Du Fay’s ballade *Resvellies vous*(1423) blends French and Italian characteristics. A later chanson, *Se la face ay pale*(1430s), illustrates the [**strong**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/05/outline.aspx) influence of English music. **Music: NAWM 35–37a** 37a is a chanson Du Fay wrote 10 years after 35.
7. Motets   
   Many of Du Fay’s motets were written in three voices with a texture resembling the chanson.
8. Fauxbourdon: under the melody the tenor moves mostly in parallel 5ths and 6ths. While the middle voice , unwritten parallels the melody a 4rth below. The effect is a stram of 6/3 sonorities between cadence.   
   In his hymn *Christe, redemptor****[omnium](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/05/outline.aspx)***, Du Fay paraphrased the chant in the treble part and used a technique called *fauxbourdon*, which was inspired by music from England. **Music: NAWM 36**
9. Isorhythmic motets: Du Gay Nupre rosar un flores.  
   Du Fay and his contemporaries continued to write isorhythmic motets for ceremonial events.
10. Masses: writing a mass became an extreme challenge to a composers creative integrity.    
    In the fifteenth century, it became standard practice for composers to set the Mass Ordinary texts as a coherent whole, thus creating a *polyphonic mass cycle.*
    1. *The Order of the Golden Fleece—an association of nobles from all over Europe. Instituted by Charles the good of Burgundy. May be connected to L, Homme arm—a piece with a military connotation.*

**Biography: Guillaume Du Fay**  
Du Fay was born near Brussels and studied at the Cambrai cathedral school. He served powerful and rich patrons in major cities in Italy and Savoy, then went back to Cambrai, returned to Savoy in the 1450s, and finished his career in Cambrai, making him a truly international composer. Age 30 he became an ordained priest who wrote both secular and sacred music, mostly sacred.

1. Cyclic masses   
   Composers in the fifteenth century used a variety of means to link the separate sections of a mass to one another. One technique was to use the same general style for all five movements. Unity derived from 2 factions 1. Liturgical Association. 2. Procedure.
2. Motto mass: the Head motive.   
   A *motto mass*uses the same *head motive*, or *motto*, to begin each movement.
3. Cantus firmus or tenor mass : soprano added to the motto mass. – By the end of the 15th century this becamt he standard type of mass.   
   Another way to link movements was to write a *cantus firmus mass,*or *tenor mass,*in which each movement is constructed around the same borrowed melody (the cantus firmus, normally placed in the tenor.)
4. Four-voice texture: the addition of Contratenor Bases- (bassus)   
   Four-voice texture became standard in cantus firmus masses. Below the tenor was a *contratenor bassus*(low contratenor), or *bassus,*to provide a harmonic foundation; above it was the *contratenor altus,*or *altus.*The top part was called the cantus, *discantus,*or *superius.*The cantus firmus could be taken from a chant, a secular song, or the tenor of a polyphonic chanson. A cantus firmus mass is named after the source of its borrowed melody. The term Thermic is mentioned.

**In Context: The Feast of the Oath of the Pheasant**  
Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, assembled hundreds of nobles for a banquet called the Feast of the Oath of the Pheasant in Lille on June 17, 1454. It was a lavish affair with a religious meaning, showcasing food, music, dance, and characters in costume, all meant to show support for the Eastern church after the fall of Constantinople.

1. Compositional techniques   
   Obscuring the cantus firmus by giving it a different rhythm or by placing it in an inner voice did not diminish its power to unify the mass.
2. *Missa Se la face ay pale*  
   Du Fay’s *Missa Se la face ay pale*is a cantus firmus mass, whose tenor is taken from Du Fay’s ballade *Se la face ay pale.*Other voices from the ballade are borrowed from in this mass as well. **Music: NAWM 37**
3. Layered texture **in Du Fay’s** masses   
   In *Missa Se la face ay pale* and other Du Fay masses, the top two voices maintain smooth contours and occasionally exchange motives, while the contratenor bassus is more angular and provides a harmonic foundation.
4. Consonance and dissonance in Du Fay’s masses   
   Du Fay’s style features a careful control of consonance and dissonance. **Rondau ABaAabAB**