Discovering Medieval Song

The *conductus* repertory is the body of monophonic and polyphonic non-liturgical Latin song that dominated European culture from the middle of the twelfth century to the beginning of the fourteenth. In this book, Mark Everist demonstrates how the poetry and music interact, explores how musical structures are created and discusses the geographical and temporal reach of the genre, including its significance for performance today. The volume studies what medieval society thought of the *conductus*, its function in medieval society – whether paraliturgical or in other contexts – and how it fitted into patristic and secular Latin cultures. The *conductus* emerges as a genre of great poetic and musical sophistication that brought the skills of poets and musicians into alignment. This book provides an all-encompassing view of an important but unexplored repertory of medieval music, engaging with both poetry and music even-handedly to present new and up-to-date perspectives on the genre.

MARK EVERIST is Professor of Music at the University of Southampton and is the author of books including *French Motets in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994) and *Mozart's Ghosts: Haunting the Halls of Musical Culture* (2013). He is co-editor of *Analytical Strategies and Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1996) and of *The Cambridge History of Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 2018) as well as editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 2011). His recent collected essays on music in the French nineteenth-century theatre will be published in 2018. His current project is a monograph on Gluck reception in nineteenth-century Paris. He was President of the Royal Musical Association from 2011 to 2017.

Discovering Medieval Song

Latin Poetry and Music in the *Conductus*

MARK EVERIST

University of Southampton

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy
of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

For Jeanice and Amelia

Contents

Figures

viii

Tables

Music Examples

xii   *List of Music Examples*

Acknowledgements

Antiqua, and much of this was enhanced by the work of Rob Wegman who not only set up one of the most active social media groups I know (1789 members at time of writing) but also ran the first of two conferences that brought together most of the world authorities on the music of the long thirteenth century (Princeton in 2011 and Southampton in 2013). Late in the day, I spent a pleasant afternoon in Philadelphia with graduate students from the University of Pennsylvania who read the final draft of the book and provided much-needed precision to some occasionally careless formulations. These events brought so many together, all of whom fed into *Discovering Medieval Song* in one way or another, but Rebecca Baltzer, Mary Caldwell, Helen Deeming and Thomas Payne have all been engaged in conversations about the *conductus* during the time I have been working on the subject. All will undoubtedly see the fruits of their discussions somewhere in the book. Tessa Webber kindly shared much material on her forthcoming work on *lectio publica* and engaged in endless but productive conversations that shaped much of the thinking in Chapter 2. In addition, Solomon Guhl-Miller, Bruce Holsinger, Peter Lefferts and Ernest Sanders read drafts of chapters and immeasurably increased their quality. I thank them all.

In Cambridge, Victoria Cooper commissioned the book, and Kate Brett took over the reins in its final stages. Lisa Sinclair managed operations. One could not wish for a better editorial team.

That's a lot of people, and working on *Discovering Medieval Song* has been a gregarious experience, with many individuals coming into and going out of the project at various times. But the people who have always been with it have been those who have had to discuss the subject at breakfast (well, sometimes), lunch and dinner and have tolerated my absences from home in support of the project. Amelia and Jeanice deserve far more than the mere dedication of this volume – and I'm sure at some point they will let me know exactly what 'far more' entails. I look forward to repaying my debts.

Banister Park, Southampton,
St Vincent de Paul, Paris

Note to the Text

All manuscripts are cited by their full shelf-mark at first occurrence in each chapter, thereafter abbreviated according to the conventional system employed by the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM).[1] Few issues seem to divide medievalists as much as the nomenclature of manuscript sources, and there will be many who will complain that *Discovering Medieval Song* prefers *I-Fl* Plut. 29.1 to *F* as the *siglum* for one of the sources most often discussed, now housed in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. Such single-letter *sigla* worked perfectly when the subject was handling just a tiny number of large sources, but we now have to consider eight sources in Florence alone, and larger libraries – the Bibliothèque nationale de France – preserve simply dozens (not far short of a hundred, in fact), all of which require differentiation. Add to this that some single manuscripts have been given anything up to six *sigla* depending on which genre is being considered, then the use of a consistent set of *sigla* that are easy to decode on the spot without reference to the list in the Bibliography becomes essential. I just hope I have not lost too many friends in following this path.

Music examples are all edited afresh and follow the general guidelines and specific diacriticals outlined in the critical edition of the *Magnus liber organi*, produced under the general editorship of Edward Roesner during the 1990s and 2000s.[2] Although largely designed with *organum* in

---

[1] Répertoire international des sources musicales: Online Catalogue of RISM Library Sigla, consulted 10 October 2016; www.rism.info/en/sigla.html

[2] Edward Roesner (ed.), *Les Quadrupla et tripla de Paris*, Le Magnus liber organi de Notre-Dame de Paris 1 (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1993); Mark Everist (ed.), *Les Organa à deux voix pour l'office du manuscrit de Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. 29.1*, Le Magnus liber organi de Notre Dame de Paris 2 (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau Lyre, 2003); Everist (ed.), *Les Organa à deux voix pour la messe (De Noël à la fête des Saints Pierre et Paul) du manuscrit de Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. 29.1*, Le Magnus liber organi de Notre Dame de Paris 3 (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau Lyre, 2001); Everist (ed.), *Les Organa à deux voix pour la messe (De l'Assomption au commun des saints) du manuscrit de Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. 29.1*, Le Magnus liber organi de Notre Dame de Paris 4 (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau Lyre, 2002); Rebecca Baltzer (ed.), *Les clausules à deux voix du manuscrit de Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Pluteus 29.1, fascicule V*, Le Magnus liber organi de Notre-Dame de Paris 5 (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1995); Thomas Payne (ed.), *Les*

mind, these principles handle the same notational shapes employed in the *conductus* and are adopted here.

In many cases, discussion of single works is aided by the use of modern transcriptions of the music, facsimiles of the original sources or both. Occasionally, however, it is necessary to attempt to give an overview of the structure and nature of a single *conductus* by means of an annotated text and commentary. Here the following conventions are used: *italics* indicate the presence of a *cauda*; **bold face** is used to show a *punctus organi*; ***italic bold face*** simply indicates the presence of both *cauda* and *punctus organi* in the setting of a single word or syllable. This leaves the convention of <u>underscoring</u> to indicate various sorts of parallels between different texts or parts of the same text. Chapter 4 depends on material published in 'Tails of the Unexpected: The *Punctus organi* and the *Conductus cum caudis*', *Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance. Festschrift Klaus-Jürgen Sachs zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Rainer Kleinertz and Wolf Frobenius, Veröffentlichungen des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung (Berlin and Hildesheim: Olms, 2010), 161–195.

Organa à deux voix du manuscrit de Wolfenbüttel, Hertzog [sic] August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 1099 Helmst, 2 vols., Le Magnus liber organi de Notre-Dame de Paris 6A-6B (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1996); Roesner (ed.), *Les Organa et les clausules à deux voix du manuscrit de Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 628 Helmst*, Le Magnus liber organi de Notre Dame de Paris 7 (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau Lyre, 2009).

Introduction: Repositioning the *Conductus*

The title of this book, *Discovering Medieval Song*, loosely translates a line from music theory of the 1280s that describes the composition of the *conductus*[1]; its subtitle alludes more broadly to poetry and music in the Middle Ages, and more particularly to what might be called the 'long' thirteenth century, starting in the 1160s and ending sometime in the 1320s. For the study of music, this period encompasses the rise and fall of *organum* with all its subsidiary parts (*clausula*, *copula*, plainsong), rhymed offices, sequences, the development of the motet, measured notation, the emergence of polyphonic vernacular song, the work of most of the *trouvères* and *troubadours* and, perhaps most strikingly, the development of written tools to preserve this highly varied music in ways that make it possible for even the early twenty-first century to understand. But most of all, the long thirteenth century witnessed the growth of the *conductus*, which balanced Latin poetry and music in a way that no other type of composition attempted during the period.

Linear stories for the music of the long thirteenth century abound: Parisian *organum* emerged in the last third of the twelfth century at the hands of Leoninus, was developed by Perotinus in the very early years of the thirteenth and then was 'superseded' by the motet that appeared out of the *clausulae* embedded in *organum*. Polyphonic song surfaced as the result of a collision between registrally sophisticated *trouvère* poetry (the *grand chant*) and the mensural polyphony of the motet. However wrong these tales may be shown to be, and whichever one is told, the *conductus* seems to have limped along as very much a poor relation. Insofar as there exists any story behind the *conductus*, it is one that places the genre in the corner of the room occupied by the motet and *organum*, rather

---

[1] 'Anyone who wishes to compose a *conductus* ought first to invent as beautiful a melody as he can' ('Qui vult facere conductum, primam cantum invenire debet pulcriorem quam potest'; Gilbert Reaney and André Gilles (eds.), *Franconis de Colonia Ars cantus mensurabilis*, Corpus scriptorum de musica 18 (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1974) 73–74; translation from Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Antiquity through the Romantic Era* [New York: Norton, 1950] 155). The literal translation of *invenire*, used here, does not account for such wider, creative meanings as 'find' or 'discover'.

like the unloved stepchild at family celebrations in a Victorian novel. The *conductus* is made to hobble along more or less at the same time as *organum* and then the motet, only to disappear later in the thirteenth century.

This is a very strange view, wrong in terms of content and emphasis and misleading in terms of the relationship between the *conductus* and other musical and literary genres. Not only does the *conductus* represent a largely coherent repertory of music that aligns both Latin poetry and melody in ways in which *organum* and motet were never intended, but the sheer volume of the *corpus* is staggering. The field covered by *Discovering Medieval Song* includes 957 poems, of which 867 survive with music. Perhaps more significantly, the *conductus* is preserved in no fewer than 570 sources, spanning the mid-twelfth century to the end of the fourteenth, with some even later. The geographical spread of the *conductus* is similarly vast with no part of medieval Europe apparently immune to the attractions of the genre. And unlike *organum* and the motet, which genuinely seem to have originated in Paris and then radiated out all over Europe, the *conductus* was cultivated across the continent, and all Paris did was to provide an environment in which the repertory could be collected and, to an extent, codified. Also unlike *organum* and motet, the *conductus* enjoyed contributions from some of the best-known poets of the age – Philip the Chancellor, Peter of Blois, Gautier de Châtillon, for example – and the composer Perotinus, more famous for his composition of the four-voice *organa*, 'Viderunt omnes' and 'Sederunt principes', as well as three-part works and *prosulae*, contributed to the repertory of two-voice and monophonic *conducti* as well as to the variable-voice *conductus*.

Much of the lack of focus on the *conductus* may be the result of little more than the caprices of modern scholarship. Although Friedrich Ludwig, the pioneer of research in this field, catalogued many of the sources for the *conductus* in his monumental *Repertorium*, completed in 1910 (parts of which were not published until much later), his interests – as the rest of his title suggests – lay in 'the most recent *organa*' and 'motets in the oldest style'.[2] The *conductus* – not forming part of the complex of plainsong,

---

[2] Friedrich Ludwig, *Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili*, 2 vols. (1 (1) – Halle: Verlag von Max Niemeyer, 1910; *R* [ed. Luther A. Dittmer, Musicological Studies 7] Brooklyn, NY: Institute of Mediaeval Music; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964); (1 (2) – [345–456 ed. Friedrich Gennrich including *R* of 'Die Quellen der Motetten altesten Stils', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 5 (1923) 185–222 and 273–315, Summa musicae medii aevi 7] Langen bei Frankfürt: n.p., 1961; *R* [345–456], [457–783, ed. Luther A. Dittmer, Musicological Studies 26] [Binningen]: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1978); (2 – [1–71 ed.

polyphony, retexting and recomposition that characterised *organum* and the motet – had to wait more than a quarter of a century for even a listing of the contents of some of the surviving manuscripts,[3] and no real study of the genre has been forthcoming until now.[4] But a more pressing reason for the relative neglect of the *conductus* is its different pattern of survival, perhaps indicating different patterns of medieval cultivation, which results in the repertory surviving in a large number of medieval sources, with a very few works in each manuscript. True, the so-called central sources of *organum* and – mostly – motet also include collections of *conducti*, and without these four sources (two in the Herzog-August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, one in Madrid and the fourth in Florence) our picture of the repertory would be very different indeed.[5] But the vast number of sources, many of which contain the poetry of the *conductus* alone, are not only scattered all over Europe and beyond but were largely unknown to those who catalogued or commented on the *conductus* in the past.

Monophony outweighs polyphony in a ratio of 2:1 in the *conductus* repertory, and it is easy to see why scholars of monophonic music are quick to point to the importance of the former as opposed to the latter. In the case of the *conductus*, the argument could be pushed further, and it could be argued that the function of the monophonic *conductus*, and the way in which it is understood, underpins those of its polyphonic counterparts. And while Chapters 4 and 5 of *Discovering Medieval Song* clearly focus exclusively on the polyphonic *conductus cum caudis*, the rest of the book shuttles back and forth between monophonic and polyphonic types. In short, *Discovering Medieval Song* reflects, although perhaps not

---

Friedrich Gennrich, Summa musicae medii aevi 8, 65–71 in page proof only] Langen bei Frankfürt: n.p., 1962; *R* [1–64, 65–71 corrected], [72–155 ed. Luther A. Dittmer (Musicological Studies 17)] Brooklyn, NY: Institute of Mediaeval Music, n.d.; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972).

[3] Eduard Gröninger, *Repertoire-Untersuchungen zum mehrstimmigen Notre-Dame Conductus*, Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung 2 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1939).

[4] Robert Falck's indispensable study of the *conductus* focussed on manuscript distribution and transmission as well as providing an inventory of the repertory, but stopped short of most of the questions posed here. See 'The Structure of the Polyphonic and Monophonic Conductus Repertories: A Study of Source Concordances and Their Relation to the Chronology and Provenance of Musical Styles' (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1970), published as *The Notre Dame Conductus: A Study of the Repertory*, Musicological Studies 33 (Henryville, Ottawa and Binningen: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1981). Another, almost exactly contemporary inventory of the repertory was Gordon Anderson, 'Notre-Dame and Related Conductus: A Catalogue Raisonné', *Miscellanea musicologica* 6 (1972) 153–229; 7 (1975) 1–81.

[5] Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 628 Helmst.; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 1099 Helmst.; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Pluteus 29.1; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 20486.

in exactly the *proportio dupla* of the relationship between monophony and polyphony, the essential structure of the surviving repertory.

Similarly, poetry and music are of equal importance. Explaining the structure of *rithmus* is as important as accounting for *discantus*, and the circulation of works without music is just as significant as their distribution with fully fledged notation. It is taken as axiomatic that a *conductus* consists of words and notes and that a surviving *conductus* text with no notated concordances was probably conceived to be sung. Of course, there must have been occasions when this was not true, and it might perhaps be going too far to agree with those who hold that *rithmus* was a style of poetry inherently destined to be sung. And it also raises the question of what a *conductus* poem without music signifies: is it simply an *aide-mémoire* in which the music is committed to memory? Does the unperformed poem have value without the music? Or is the source merely deficient? There are examples of all three possibilities, and more, but as far as the working practices in *Discovering Medieval Song* are concerned, a *conductus* poem is a *conductus*. In addition to explaining how the poetry and music of the *conductus* work and how they interrelate, *Discovering Medieval Song* tries to disentangle questions of context, function and performance. With the starting point that no single explanation can account for the entire repertory, the strengths and weakness of competing pieces of evidence – some known, others new – are evaluated to give, if not a definitive view of the function of the genre, at least a set of broadly acceptable considerations for how each part of the repertory might be so viewed.

And talking about 'parts' of the repertory returns to the question of defining its scope. Ever since Eduard Gröninger's first attempt to pull together all the surviving sources for the genre in 1939, the *conductus* has been caught up with the four major surviving sources just mentioned and with the concept of the 'Notre-Dame School', a model for understanding the music of the long thirteenth century that emerges, however, not from work on the *conductus* but from a study of *organum*. So, for example, the single critical edition of the *conductus* repertory bears the title *Notre-Dame and Related Conductus*.[6] But unlike the case of *organum* – where the idea of 'Notre-Dame' really means something about origin and style – for the *conductus* it means little more than 'preserved in one or more of the four surviving major sources'. This becomes problematic

---

[6] Gordon Anderson (ed.), *Notre-Dame and Related Conductus: Opera omnia*, 11 vols. [Institute of Mediaeval Music], Collected Works 10 (Henryville, Ottawa and Binningen: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1979–) [all but vols. 7 and 11 have appeared].

when other repertories are brought into play. For example, the four offices that preserve *conducti* – and that reveal much of their twelfth-century function – from Beauvais, Laon, Le Puy and Sens do not share a great deal in terms of material with the works found in the 'Notre-Dame' sources. The same could be said of the Norman-Sicilian repertory or fourteenth-century sources from east of the Rhine that employ the term *conductus* as a descriptor for the work. Although this serves to distance the *conductus* from the repertory of Aquitanian *versus*, it leaves a large number of ragged ends to the repertory, perhaps inevitable when dealing with 570 surviving sources. But it does raise some interesting questions *a propos* such a work as 'Novus annus dies magnus', for example, a monophonic *conductus* that is found in the Norman-Sicilian repertory, the Le Puy and Sens offices and one of the earliest manuscripts of the Aquitanian repertory, but not in any of the so-called Notre-Dame sources. It is a good example of how the different parts of the repertory may hold together and – just as importantly – how they may resist explanations that link to them.

The only surviving complete edition of the repertory was conceived no later than the mid-1970s, and although in some respects it has stood the test of time (especially in terms of its critical commentaries, notes on the poetic texts and so on), understandings of how *musica cum littera* (the parts of the *conductus* that carried the text [*littera*]) was projected in medieval performance have moved on a good deal to the extent that, were one planning an edition of the repertory today, the fundamental premises on which it would be based would be very different. Reasons for this claim are given in Chapter 3 but are taken as axiomatic throughout the book, especially in the attitude taken to the display of music examples in modern transcription. It would be wrong, though, not to recognise the immense erudition and meticulous scholarship that characterise the editorial work of Gordon Anderson, Hans Tischler and Janet Knapp, even if ultimately the conclusions in *Discovering Medieval Song* vary radically from theirs.[7]

Work on *Discovering Medieval Song* was greatly advanced, indeed made possible, by a series of three large grants from the United Kingdom's Arts and Humanities Research Council that enabled a number of related

---

[7] Anderson, *Notre-Dame and Related Conductus*; Hans Tischler (ed.), *The Earliest Polyphonic Art Music: The 150 Two-Part Conductus in the Notre-Dame Manuscripts* [Institute of Mediaeval Music], Collected Works 24 (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 2005); Janet Knapp (ed.), *Thirty-Five Conductus for Two and Three Voices*, Collegium Musicum 6 ([New Haven, CT]: Yale University Department of Music Graduate School, 1965).

initiatives, of which this monograph is one.[8] Jointly titled 'CPI Cantum pulcriorem invenire' (of which the title of this monograph is a loose translation), the funding permitted the research towards, and construction of, the database that underpins so much of this book,[9] three fully funded PhD studentships (the work of which is referred to throughout this volume) and the time required to research and write this monograph. Most important of all, it funded the work of three professional tenors to conduct a Europe-wide programme of performance and three CDs with Hyperion Records.[10] This allowed the project to put into practice the results of the work in Chapter 3 and was based on sustained workshop practice that developed a method of declaiming the *cum littera* sections of *conducti* (all parts of the monophonic repertory and the texted sections of the *conductus cum caudis*) that started from the structure, meaning and aesthetic of the poetry. The 46 works recorded on the three CDs are available to purchase, download or stream and form the basis for the discussion of large parts of the book. Works that form part of the recording project are identified with an asterisk (eg *'Relegentur ab area') in the text to aid the process of gaining access to a sonic image of the work under discussion.

---

8 Arts and Humanities Research Council, Research Grant, July 2010 (*Cantum pulcriorem invenire*: Thirteenth-Century Latin Poetry and Music (CPI-I); AH/HO34226/1); Arts and Humanities Research Council, Research Grant, April 2014 (Medieval Music, Big Data and the Research Blend [Transforming Musicology] (CPI-II); AH/L006820/1); Arts and Humanities Research Council, Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement, November 2014 (*Cantum Pulcriorem invenire* – Thirteenth-Century Latin Poetry and Music: Workshop, Performance and Impact (CPI-III; AH/M006425/1).

9 Gregorio Bevilacqua and Mark Everist, '*Cantum pulcriorem invenire*: Latin Poetry and Song, 1160–1330', 2012, http://catalogue.conductus.ac.uk.

10 John Potter, Christopher O'Gorman and Rogers Covey-Crump, 'Conductus 1: Music and Poetry of Thirteenth-Century France'. Hyperion, CDA67949, 2012 (www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA67949); John Potter, Christopher O'Gorman and Rogers Covey-Crump, 'Conductus 2: Music and Poetry of Thirteenth-Century France'. Hyperion, CDA67998, 2013 (www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA67998); John Potter, Christopher O'Gorman and Rogers Covey-Crump, 'Conductus 3: Music and Poetry of Thirteenth-Century France'. Hyperion, CDA68115, 2016 (www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA68115).