

HISTORICIST COMPOSITION FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
FRANCE AND BELGIUM, 1894–1937

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge
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Doctor of Philosophy
by
Tadhg Sauvey (Robinson College)

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DECLARATION

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted or is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other university or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant degree committee.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores efforts to “reform” the composition of Catholic church music by imitating medieval and Renaissance models, with a focus on francophone Europe from the zenith of this historicism at the turn of the century to its gradual sublimation between the World Wars.

Chapter 1 describes the ideology behind historicist church composition during this period by analysing the debates among musicians, clerics, and critics over the role of old music in creation, and the relationship to be established between new music and old. Most writers disavowed pastiche by adopting an ahistorical attitude towards music of the past. These debates belonged to a wider problem in contemporaneous European musical culture, that of how to write in the shadow of an ever-expanding canon.

Subsequent chapters turn to more technical discourse on historicist composition. Chapter 2 retraces the aspirations of church composers to invent a new style of choral polyphony independent of the academic “Palestrina style”. Chapter 3 pieces together how new conceptions of “modality” emerged out of older ones of *tonalité ancienne*. Both developments afforded new ways of claiming a creative affiliation with old music.

The conclusion considers the place of historicist church music in the wider context of European and especially French art music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, striving to refine the critical categories available for interpreting this repertoire, and to ponder their implications for historiographical narratives of French musical modernism.

Several concerns run through the whole thesis: to identify changes in the canon of antique sacred music and connect them to their compositional ramifications; to relate church music, usually seen as insular and functionalist, to secular historical and aesthetic thought; and to replace vague or inappropriate categories for interpreting this repertoire, such as pastiche, imitation, and anti-modernism, with fine distinctions grounded in historical context. This last is achieved through closer reading of a wider array of musical examples within a thicker documentary context, and by drawing on the arsenal of critical perspectives developed over the past thirty years for interpreting historicism in more canonical repertoires, adapted here to the particular situation of church music in the early twentieth century.

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to Fauve, with love;

to my family, especially my mother.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

Unless otherwise specified,

- all translations are mine
- all quoted italics are original
- all sources in French were published in Paris.

To save space in the music examples, when irrelevant to the point illustrated I have sometimes omitted resting parts or doubling organ parts or notated multiple parts on the same stave.

Brief entries for almost all cited names (except those that need no introduction) are provided in a personalia.

Abbreviations

CSG *Courrier de Saint-Grégoire*, Liège

CUP Cambridge University Press

MSB *Musica sacra* (Belgian)

OUP Oxford University Press

RM *La Revue musicale*, Paris, 1920–91

RSC *Revue Sainte-Cécile* (a.k.a. *Revue de Sainte Cécile*, *Revue musicale Sainte-Cécile*)

TLS *Motu proprio* “Tra le sollecitudini” issued by Pope Pius X, 22 November 1903

TSG *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, Paris

RISM Library Sigla

F-Pn Bibliothèque nationale de France

F-Dm Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon

F-AN Médiathèque Toussaint, Bibliothèque municipale d’Angers

F-Pbmgf Bibliothèque musicale Lagrange-Fleuret

F-Pahd Archives historiques, Diocèse de Paris

B-Br Bibliothèque royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België/KBR

B-Bc Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles

Ch-LAcu Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, Lausanne

The sixteenth century was the last in which the music of the Catholic church made history. From then on it was history.

Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 1, 629

INTRODUCTION

Sacred Historicism and Its Evolution

The sacred has always been represented through anachronism, as though the span from new to old conjures up something of the distance separating this world from the other one, the two realms that *religio* proposes to relate. The procedure of suggesting the timeless through the untimely is, appropriately enough, timeless. In the music of Christian worship, the oldest surviving melodies may already derive from still older ones lost to history. The oldest surviving polyphonies certainly elaborate older melodies, as sacred polyphony has done ever since. By 1600 at the latest, a definite rift had emerged between churchly (= old) and secular (= new) styles, even if new-style church music was written and accepted; categories such as *prima prattica* and *stile antico, da cappella* and *da chiesa*, and, above all, *alla Palestrina* announce a newly self-conscious allegiance to the past, or secession from what was normal or unremarkable in the present.

This fork in the road, coinciding with the rise of modernity, would splay into a Great Divergence that compounds the perennial association of sacred with old. The ensuing “epic tale of the decline and fall of church music”¹—merely a musical version of the great stories of secularisation and modernisation—is quickly retold. Churches lost power and wealth; their ceremonies lost their pre-eminence as a forum of artistic creation, no longer attracting the best talent; church music drifted further and further from the main thrust of creative effort. The rift only widened as modernity accelerated in the nineteenth century: on the one hand, new aesthetic ideals of autonomy and originality would chafe against the bounds of ritual function; on the other, new ideals of a specially churchly style, distinct from music or painting at large, began to hark back to a pre-modern Golden Age. Thus did the reality of conflict between modernity and, if not religion, at least organised religion, and certainly the Catholic Church, reproduce itself within churchly culture as antimodern nostalgia. Historicism became the default in religious art.

Were that development my chief concern, I should have written this thesis on the period 1815–1914, the great age of ecclesiastical *neo-* movements inspired by Gothic cathedrals, Flemish and Italian “Primitives”, Scholasticism, plainchant, and sixteenth-century polyphony. By the 1890s, the Gothic Revival and Pre-Raphaelite religious painting were already over, or just about, and the Cecilian movement in Central Europe had lost its way.² What happened next is more difficult to characterise. As for the movement to create a “pure” church music in the spirit of the old masters, consider the following examples as representative snapshots. Fig. 0.1 presents a motet by Charles Bordes, that movement’s leader, if there was one, in turn-of-the-century France. An expert would be able to tell this score apart from real Renaissance polyphony, which in any case Bordes never meant to replicate precisely; but a glance suffices to establish that we are dealing here with *neo-*

¹ James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (CUP, 2002), 1.

² See Michael J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival* (Thames & Hudson, 2002), 179–84; Jan De Maeyer, “The Neo-Gothic in Belgium: Architecture of a Catholic Society”, in *Gothic Revival: Religion, Architecture and Style in Western Europe 1815–1914*, ed. Jan De Mayer and Luc Verpoest (Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2000), 33–34; Michael Paul Driskel, *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1992), 8, 203–11. German (indeed all) Cecilianism after 1890 needs modern research; the best source remains Karl Gustav Fellerer (ed.), *Geschichte der katholischen Kirchenmusik*, vol. 2 *Vom Tridentinum bis zur Gegenwart* (Bärenreiter, 1976).

Fig. 0.1: Charles Bordes, *Ave Maria*, bars 1–17

Pas lent.

S. *p* A - ve Ma - rí - a, grá - ti - a ple - na Dó - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - díc -

A. *p* A - ve Ma - rí - a, grá - ti - a pl - na Dó - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - díc - ta tu in

T. *en dehors* *p* A - ve Ma - rí - a, grá - tia - a ple - na Dó - mi - nus te - cum, be -

B. *p* A - ve Ma - rí - a, grá - ti - a ple - na Dó - mi - nus te - cum, be -

ta tu in mu - li - é - ri - bus et be - ne - díc - tus fruc - tus

mu - li - é - ri - bus et be - ne - díc - tus fruc - tus

be - ne - díc - ta tu in mu - li - é - ri - bus et be - ne - díc - tus

- ne - díc - ta tu in mu - li - é - ri - bus et be - ne - díc - tus fruc - tus

rall. *p* **Plus lent.**

ven - tris tu - i Je - su.

ven - tris tu - i Je - su.

fruc - tus ven - tris tu - i Je - su.

ven - tris tu - i Je - su.

faites ressortir le canon

music, a classic case of nineteenth-century sacred historicism, music pointing to a fairly specific historical model and standing clearly and deliberately apart from what the composer and his contemporaries would have considered up-to-date in 1895. Now consider Fig. 0.2, from a 1950 mass by Jean de Valois, a typical sample of the kind of liturgical choral writing produced by this same purist-historicist impulse (de Valois was a card-carrying plainchant scholar and a product of Bordes's Schola cantorum) during its Indian summer after the Second World War. Is this still *neo*-music? Conversely, does it belong in the decade of Elvis and Darmstadt?³ A number of features could seem to reach back to the distant past: imitative counterpoint, snippets of chant, stretches of conspicuous and modal diatonicism; others, particularly in the harmony, date resoundingly to the twentieth century. While still forging a tangible link to the Golden Age (and to the *neo*-music of the previous century), scores such as this one reveal that, somewhere along the line, new ways of relating to older music has come into being, a kind of historicism that did not exist in 1895.

To better describe and explain this evolution is the starting point for my project: How and why did sacred historicism, this movement to reform church music by drawing on antique models, evolve during the early twentieth century? The question follows an established pattern in histories of Catholic thought and culture, which ask how a Catholicism unmistakably marked by the twentieth century could have emerged within half a century of Pius X.⁴

Boundaries

My title, *Historicist Composition for the Catholic Church: France and Belgium, 1894–1937*, sets boundaries to this otherwise unmanageable question, but several of them need clarification or justification. Let us take each in turn.

“Historicist Composition”

“Historicism” is a notoriously ambiguous word, having come to mean at least three different things even if we set aside Karl Popper’s idiosyncratic usage in *The Poverty of Historicism*: 1) interpretation of things relative to historical circumstances (the original and most common meaning); 2) mere interest in or attention to the past; 3) creation in olden style (originally particular to the study of architecture).⁵ In musicology, “historicism” tends to hover between all three.⁶ In one of the few

³ I now owe a nod to David Clarke, “Elvis and Darmstadt, or: Twentieth-Century Music and the Politics of Cultural Pluralism”, *Twentieth-Century Music* 4.1 (2007), 3–45.

⁴ See notably Étienne Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique française entre modernité et Vatican II, 1914–1962* (Desclée De Brouwer, 1998), 9–10 and Philippe Chenaux, *Entre Maurras et Maritain. Une génération intellectuelle catholique (1920–1930)* (Cerf, 1999), 9. Cf. Katherine Davies and Toby Garfitt, “Introduction”, in *God’s Mirror: Renewal and Engagement in French Catholic Intellectual Culture in the Mid-Twentieth Century*, ed. Katherine Davies and Toby Garfitt (New York: OUP, 2015), 4.

⁵ See e.g. James Stevens Curl and Susan Wilson, *The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture*, 3rd edn (OUP, 2016), 362: “Architecture strongly influenced by the past, especially Revivalist architecture”.

⁶ The *locus classicus* is Walter Wiora (ed.), *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik. Aufsätze und Diskussionen* (Bosse, 1969). Early examples in English include J. Peter Burkholder, “Museum Pieces: The Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years”, *Journal of Musicology* 2.2 (1983), 115–34 and Peter Mercer-Taylor, “Rethinking Mendelssohn’s Historicism: A Lesson from *St. Paul*”, *Journal of Musicology* 15.2 (1997), 208–29. A rare French example

Fig. 0.2: Jean de Valois, *Messe "Ave maris stella"*, Kyrie

Posément (♩ = 72)

Soprani

Alt

Ténors

Basses

Orgue

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son e - lé - i -

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son Ky - ri - e e - lé - i -

a Tempo

Soprani

Alt

Ténors

Basses

Orgue

mf Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son *cresc.* *bien calibré*

rit. molto *mf clair* son e - lé - i - son Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son *sonore* Ky - ri - e Ky - ri - e e - lé -

mf son Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son *cresc.*

dim. **Rit. molto** **Très lentement** ($\text{♩} = 60$) **f**

— e — — — — — lé i — son — — — — — Chré -

— i - son, e — — — — — son — — — — — **p** en dehors Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

rit. *suivez* **ppp** lié Chré -

son e — — — — — lé - i - son e - lé - i - son **f**

1^{ers} BARYTONS **p** Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

BASSES **pp** ...e — — — — — lé - i - son

Orgue obligé ($\text{♩} = 60$) **rall. m.g.** **f**

Ped. (et Cordes)

marqué, mais souple et contenu *dim.*

ste — — — — — Chré - ste — — — — — e — — — — — lé - i - son. — — — — —

f Chré - ste e - lé - i - son Chré - ste — — — — — *dim.* e - lé - i - son, e — — — — — lé - i - son. — — — — —

ste — — — — — Chré - ste — — — — — *dim.*

Chré - ste e - lé - i - son Chré - ste — — — — — e - lé - i - son, e — — — — — lé - i - son. — — — — —

f Chré - ste e - lé - i - son Chré - ste — — — — — *dim.* e - lé - i - son. — — — — —

marqué, mais souple et contenu *dim.* **mf** **3**

(2 VOIX) Chré - ste e - lé - i -

Chré - ste, e -

(2 VOIX) *mf* très posément et détaillé Chré - ste e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son

(2 VOIX) *un peu plus fort* Chré - ste, e - lé - i - son

SOLISTE *mf* très posément et détaillé Chré - ste e - lé - i - son e - lé - i - son.

très posément *suivez* *un peu plus fort*

son e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son, e - lé i - son.

lé - i - son, Chré - ste e - lé - i - son.

-ste Chré - ste, e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son.

(♩ = 54) *Plus lent et contenu*

2 T. 1 *mf* Chré - ste

2 T. 2

2 BARYT. *mf* Chré - ste

2 BASSES

rit.

a Tempo ($\text{♩} = 60$)

Chri - ste e - lé - i -

Chri - ste, e - lé - i -

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste, e - lé - i -

e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste, e - lé - i -

a Tempo (♩ = 60)

f

(♩ = 66) *un peu au dessous du mouv^t*

son Chri - ste, e - lé - i - son. Ky - ri - e, e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son.

son Chri - ste, e - lé - i - son.

son Chri - ste, e - lé - i - son.

son Chri - ste, e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son.

son Chri - ste, e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son.

(♩ = 66) un peu au dessous du mouv.

a T° (♩ = 72)

lé - i - son

son Ky - ri - e - lé - i - son

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son, e -

Ky - ri - e - lé - i - son, e -

a T° (♩ = 72)

rit. *3* **ff** Ky - ri -

son Ky - ri - e, e - lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son

-lé - i - son, e - lé - i - son Ky - ri - e, e - lé - i - son **ff** Ky - ri -

son, e - lé - i - son e - lé - i - son

ff *rit.* *3*

a Tempo

avec insistance

tenez

ff Ky-ri - e, e - lé - i - son.

rit. *mf* e - lé - i - son.

avec insistance

tenez

ff Ky-ri - e, e - lé - i - son.

p e - lé - i - son.

rit. *p* e - lé - i - son.

a Tempo

rit.

ff

mf

p

rit.

musicological definitions in English, James Garratt leans more decisively towards the third sense: historicism (or “compositional historicism”) is “the totality of ways in which nineteenth-century pieces engage with the music of the distant past (excluding localized allusion)”.⁷ While I see no reason to exclude localised allusion, nor specify the nineteenth century, this will do for our purposes.⁸ “Engagement” is sufficiently vague to encompass any conceivable mode of relation to the past, and lays the emphasis on intellectual activity. The question of what counts as engagement, or music of the distant past, can wait for my general conclusion.

Church composers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries engaged especially with what used to be called, and what I will call, Medieval and Renaissance works (collectively, “antique sacred music”), which in their eyes constituted a single golden age of the churchly genre; two repertoires in particular enthralled them: “Gregorian chant” and “Palestrinian polyphony”, the latter stretching roughly from Josquin to Allegri. They also fixated on Bach, but, for several reasons, I exclude this third pillar of sacred historicism. Whether as style or as discourse, neo-Bachian historicism stands out less starkly from what, even well into the twentieth century, in conservative quarters, seemed compositionally normal and modern; despite his sometimes medievalising image (as a devout and selfless craftsman, the last in a long line of sacred contrapuntists), Bach stood for modernity, indeed the definitive consolidation of “la tonalité moderne” along with Rameau.⁹ Additionally, Bach reception was entangled with issues of Teutonism and Protestantism that stand apart from sacred historicism at large.

“For the Catholic Church”

A long thesis could be written on religion and musical genre in the nineteenth century; the period terminology—*musique religieuse*, *musique sacrée*, *musique d’église*, *musique liturgique*—is fraught with confusion.¹⁰ Although compositional engagement with antique sacred music stemmed above all from a desire for a style suited to the liturgy of the Latin Church, no airtight definition of the musically liturgical during the period 1894–1937 is possible. In the first place, “the liturgy” itself had no clear boundaries. Was an organ postlude liturgical? What about a motet sung during Communion on a text extrinsic to the service? What about the same motet sung at a *salut*

is Jean-Pierre Bartoli, “Historicisme, éclectisme et modalité dans l’*Enfance du Christ* d’Hector Berlioz”, *Musurgia* 8.3–4 (2001), 7–31.

⁷ Garratt, *Palestrina*, 242. Similarly broad is the notion of “historical interplay” outlined in Deborah Mawer, “Introduction: Revisiting French Musical History”, in *Historical Interplay in French Music and Culture, 1860–1960*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Routledge, 2017), 1: “the nature of relationships in French musical culture operating between one main historical period, broadly the ‘long’ modernist era 1860–1960, and its various historical ‘others’, engaging with topics from the immediate past through to the medieval period and before.”

⁸ A useful reminder that historicism did not begin in the nineteenth century is Karl Kügle (ed.), *Sounding the Past: Music as History and Memory* (Brepols, 2020).

⁹ On the medieval image see Catrina Flint de Médicis, “Nationalism and Early Music at the French *Fin de siècle*: Three Case Studies”, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 1.2 (2004), 65.

¹⁰ Notable discussions include Jean-Yves Hameline, “De l’usage de l’adjectif *liturgique*, ou les Éléments d’une grammaire de l’assentiment culturel”, *La Maison-Dieu* 222 (2000), 79–106; id., “L’invention de la ‘musique sacrée’”, *La Maison-Dieu* 233 (2003), 103–35; Martin Loeser, *Das Oratorium in Frankreich zwischen 1850 und 1914: Grundzüge der Gattungsgeschichte* (Olms, 2011), 34 et seq.

(Benediction of the Eucharist), a very popular devotion of unclear liturgical status during this era?¹¹ Additionally, there is no way to decide what makes a work “for” the liturgy: is it the composer’s intention (what then of music designed for both church and concert?), or approval by a wider community (which? when?), or actual use in the offices? Unless dealing with an unequivocal case, therefore, I prefer the looser term “church music”.

“France and Belgium”

Closely tied to ultramontanist, the historicist trend in modern Catholic church music was highly international. Browse any issue from *circa* 1900 of the *Musica sacra* of Toulouse, the *Musica sacra* of Ghent, the *Musica sacra* of Regensburg, or the *Musica sacra* of Milan, and you will find the same issues, the same arguments, the same rhetoric, even the same phraseology. Take a motet by Charles Bordes, Aloys Desmet, J. A. S. van Schaik, R. R. Terry, Peter Griesbacher, Giovanni Tebaldini, or Julio Valdés and you will be hard pressed to find national peculiarities. There is no intellectual reason to geographically limit a study of this movement, only a practical one. I indeed opt for a linguistic boundary (use of French) that maps poorly onto territory, with the linguistic frontier in Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, and Romandy fuzzy during my period and French the language of prestige. I have preferred the simple “France and Belgium” to “French-Speaking Europe” since I have had little occasion to discuss Protestant-majority Romandy, and most Belgian church musicians of the period were bilingual Flemings.

The international element, modest as it is, offers several advantages over a France-only scope. French church musicians interacted significantly with their Belgian counterparts, who in turn were far more attuned to developments in Germany and the wider world. Additionally, Belgian church music stands particularly in need of research: we have no history of the Lemmens Institute, nor of the Société de Saint Grégoire, and only one national-level survey, dated 1950, while international surveys never give such a small country more than a glance.¹²

“1894–1937”

The period from the 1890s to the 1930s takes in a crucial phase in the transformation of historicist composition for the Catholic Church, in the context of a renewed wave of campaigns for “reform” (on which see below). As a nominal starting-point, the year 1894 stands out for several reasons: the founding of the Schola cantorum, the promulgation of the Sacred Congregation of Rites regulation “De musica sacra”, the tercentenary of Palestrina’s death. 1937 saw the last major church-music congress in France (and Europe) before the 1950s: a symbolic terminus to one phase of reformist activity.

¹¹ See Alexis Meunier, “Les saluts du Saint-Sacrement : des offices de dévotion pour les fidèles”, in *Les cérémoniaux catholiques en France à l’époque moderne. Une littérature de codification des rites liturgiques*, ed. Cécile Davy-Rigaux, Bernard Dompnier, and Daniel-Odon Hurel (Brepols, 2009), 497–516. For a contemporary discussion see Notator [Amédée Gastoué], “Questions pratiques. Saluts du Saint-Sacrement”, *TSG* (Aug.–Sept. 1904), 277–80.

¹² See Joseph Kreps, “Les maîtrises et la musique religieuse”, in *La musique en Belgique, du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, ed. Ernest Closson and Charles Van den Borren (Brussels: La Renaissance du livre, 1950), 317–51.

Literature Review

Returning, with these limits in mind, to my initial question, the historical scholarship offers little of immediate relevance. Bemoaning a “neglected topic” is predictable enough, but hardly avoidable: historicist Catholic church music from the early twentieth century lacks aesthetic and cultural appeal today, not to mention performances (tailored as it was for a function, the Tridentine Mass, that has all but disappeared), and its historiographical uptake has suffered accordingly. The best research on modern French church music focuses on social phenomena rather than composition, on the (correct) assumption that such traditional and functional repertoire offers more social than aesthetic interest.¹³ For the same reason, studies of compositional historicism pay little mind to such a marginal genre, dealing instead with canonical composers (Brahms, Stravinsky).¹⁴

The limited available discussion of church composition in the first half of the twentieth century has sketched out the contours of an overall style trend: a slow and partial adjustment to the modernist revolution, especially after the First World War, corresponding to a “maturation” in the engagement with old music.¹⁵ When it comes to contextualisation, the emphasis has tended to fall on church legislation, and TLS above all. While the church hierarchy’s efforts at top-down control produced undeniable results (and will feature prominently in this thesis), contemporaries would have been amused at the thought of TLS as an “iron frame”¹⁶ keeping church music “sealed off from the currents of contemporary art” merely “because Pius X and a few predecessors wanted it so”;¹⁷ they knew all too well how toothless such documents were unless implemented by dogged local activists, and how vulnerable to free interpretation. A glance at the mountain of literature generated by the historicism problem in church composition, before and after TLS, makes nonsense of suggestions that composers simply took a few decades to realise that the pope was not demanding pastiche of them.¹⁸

A major study of Catholic modernism by Stephen Schloesser has also connected the stylistic evolution, as represented by *L’Orgue mystique* (1927–32), Charles Tournemire’s monumental cycle of organ masses, to the interwar developments in Catholic intellectual culture

¹³ See the studies cited in n. 34 below.

¹⁴ See Postscript. The major exception is Garratt, *Palestrina*.

¹⁵ See Anne Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio de Saint Pie X sur la musique sacrée (22 novembre 1903) et ses répercussions en France de 1904 à 1939” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1998), esp. 141–49, 594; Bernadette Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur. La musique chorale et ses pratiques en France, 1800-1950* (Fayard, 2018), 266–69; Jean-Yves Hameline, “Le Motu proprio de Pie X et l’Instruction sur la musique sacrée (22 novembre 1903)”, *La Maison-Dieu* 239 (2004), 119. Without reference to church music specifically, Sylvain Caron and Michel Duchesneau see a germination of modernism in Catholic religious art of the 1920s, emerging more fully in the next decade; see Sylvain Caron and Michel Duchesneau, “La musique et la foi entre les deux guerres : vers un nouvel humanisme ?”, in *Musique, art et religion dans l’entre-deux-guerres*, ed. Sylvain Caron and Michel Duchesneau (Symétrie, 2009), 3.

¹⁶ T. E. Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England, 1791–1914: A Handmaid of the Liturgy?* (Ashgate, 2008), 183.

¹⁷ “le culte reste hermétique aux courants de l’art contemporain, lui préférant de piètres allusions à la polyphonie de Palestrina puisque Pie X et quelques prédécesseurs le veulent ainsi.” Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 8.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 144, 593–94 and Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur*, 269.

epitomised by the figure of Jacques Maritain.¹⁹ But without attention to the rich prehistory of debate on historicism in church composition, Tournemire's work appears as a "radical reversal of religious musical values", rather than one step in a long tradition of efforts to attach plainchant to the moving target of "modern harmony".²⁰ The fact that review after review praised Tournemire for pulling off the feat only underscores how banal this aspiration had become by the 1930s. And while Tournemire and his supporters presented the achievement as novel, their statements must be handled as the self-serving blurbs that they were.

While Tournemire's exceptional output has managed to escape historiographical oblivion, behind it a vast organ and especially choral repertoire—poorly conserved, difficult to obtain, practically impossible to hear in anything like its intended conditions—lies sunk in obscurity. The most comprehensive study (in fairness, composition is only one of its many concerns) covers only France after 1903, via examples chosen seemingly at random and discussed in passing.²¹ To the best of my knowledge, modern studies devoted to a French or Belgian work of historicist choral music for the Catholic Church can be counted on the fingers of one finger.²² For lack of a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of how the music sounds, critical interpretation remains at a mostly rudimentary level. The repertoire is dismissed *en bloc* as so many "déplorables pastiches", "bad copies" which "mechanically reproduce" old style, "paltry allusions to the polyphony of Palestrina" resulting from "imitation of past works".²³ One can take or leave the value judgements. I have no interest here in rescuing the repertoire from neglect, just or unjust; I merely worry that terms such as "pastiche" and "imitation", and binaries such as historicism/modernism and literal imitation/free imitation, are too blunt to draw out much of its potential interest, when not flatly inappropriate to what is by any standard a heterogeneous corpus. They obscure a whole complex intellectual history: the ideological background to the music is far from a simple matter of attempts, more or less competent, to replicate some model. Little of this music closely reproduces the style of real Renaissance polyphony or any other precursor, and little of it was intended to. James Garratt has made the point with respect to nineteenth-century Germanic church music, and it applies *a fortiori* to the later period.²⁴

Refreshingly, Benedikt Lessmann's recent study of French plainchant reception places a range of choice examples in an intellectual context beyond ecclesiastical sources.²⁵ Even so, it focuses on plainchant, with a special concern for its secular ramifications, drawing mostly on the

¹⁹ See Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919–1933* (U. of Toronto Press, 2005), 282–319.

²⁰ Ibid., 282; a page later the author marvels at "just how novel [Tournemire's] attitude was and . . . how creative an innovation was his hybridization of plainchant with modern music." My critique is largely anticipated in Benedikt Lessmann, *Die Rezeption des gregorianischen Chorals in Frankreich im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Studien zur ideen- und kompositionsgeschichtlichen Resonanz des "plain-chant"* (Olms, 2016), 266.

²¹ See Pillot-Rebours, "Le Motu Proprio", esp. 127–47, 554–63.

²² See Nigel Simeone, "La Messe à trois voix d'André Caplet", trans. Béatrice Cadrin, in *André Caplet, compositeur et chef d'orchestre*, ed. Denis Herlin and Cécile Quesney (Société française de musicologie, 2020), 385–98.

²³ "mauvaises copies"; "de piètres allusions à la polyphonie de Palestrina"; "reproduit mécaniquement"; "l'imitation des œuvres du passé". Pillot-Rebours, "Le Motu Proprio", 8, 141, 143, 148–49. Cf. Lespinard, *Les passions du cœur*, 266–67: "[un] répertoire parfois musicalement intéressant, mais irrémédiablement tourné vers le passé. . . très peu des compositions [chorales] destinées au culte seront vraiment « nouvelles »."

²⁴ See Garratt, *op. cit.*

²⁵ See Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*.

organ and non-ecclesiastical repertoires. The research also covers the early and middle nineteenth century most deeply and grows more secular in focus as it proceeds into the twentieth. Questions remain about the liturgical choral repertoire, especially in its neo-Renaissance strain, as well as the ideologies of compositional historicism, especially as purveyed in the sacred-music press of the early to middle twentieth century.

Aims

My initial question has therefore reduced to a slightly more specific goal: to describe the ideology responsible for historicist church composition. Sometimes, it is true, such music resulted from heedless antiquarianism, blind obedience to orders from above, an urge to flee into the past, a functionalist mindset oblivious to aesthetics; more often, musicians, clerics, and critics invested in church music thought long and hard about the role of old music in creation and the relationships to be desired between old and new. Their basic problem—how church music could live up to the old masters without losing touch with the present—arose from certain ideals of the sacred and liturgical in music, but represents merely an extreme version of a problem facing all composers at the turn of the twentieth century; for all the importance of ecclesiastical legislation, liturgical reform, ultramontanism, and devotional movements, secular musical ideologies played their part.²⁶ Historicist church music can reward intellectual history, as the work of Garratt and his German predecessors proves, even if an old-style intellectual history interested in the summits of human thought would come up disappointed.

While that work offers an approach to follow, its specific conclusions on German music in the (mostly early) nineteenth century cannot simply be transposed to France and Belgium a century later. Certainly, discourse on church music can have a timeless quality that defies the historian looking for change: countless exhortations to noble simplicity, endless proscriptions on chromaticism taken straight from Clement of Alexandria or even Aristotle. Perusing the disquisitions on the true, eternal principles of liturgical style heaped up by the nineteenth century (“not so much a golden age of church music as a golden age of literature about church music”, as Carl Dahlhaus quips)²⁷ can seem to “draw the reader into an endlessly repeating circle of ideas”, it has been said.²⁸ Their authors generally aimed not so much to contribute new intellectual content to a debate as to remind and persuade the listener of what they took to be fixed doctrine, as in the

²⁶ I take inspiration here from studies of the Catholic intellectual (a sociocultural type that dating from my period), which warn against taking at face value the church’s own claims to independence of secular trends; see e.g. Hervé Serry, *Naissance de l’intellectuel catholique* (La Découverte, 2004), 19–20.

²⁷ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (U. of California Press, 1989), 178

²⁸ Catrina Flint, “The Schola Cantorum, Early Music, and French Political Culture from 1894 to 1914” (PhD thesis, McGill U., 2005), 291. Dario Gamboni likewise notes “[le] caractère cyclique du phénomène de réforme de l’art d’église” (“De ‘Saint-Sulpice’ à l’ ‘art sacré’. Qualification et disqualification dans le procès [sic] de modernisation de l’art d’église en France (1890-1960)”, in *Crises de l’image religieuse. De Nîcée II à Vatican II*, ed. Olivier Christin and Dario Gamboni (Maison des sciences de l’homme, 1999), 253) as does Bruno Foucart: “La problématique de l’art religieux, les tensions qui lui sont propres frappent par leur capacité et leur qualité de recommencement. D’un siècle à l’autre, d’une génération à l’autre, on retrouve les mêmes désirs, les mêmes difficultés, les mêmes notions contradictoires. . . . Les résurrections, les renouveaux semblent inhérents aux manifestations de l’art religieux” (“Introduction. Les éternelles résurrections de l’art sacré”, in *L’art sacré au XX^e siècle en France*, ed. Jacques Bony et al. (L’Albaron/Société présence du livre/Musée municipal de Boulogne-Billancourt/Centre culturel de Boulogne-Billancourt, 1993), 7).

“repetitive and reproductive” theological commentaries of the era.²⁹ When it comes to historicism, church musicians thought with a limited conceptual repertoire that had virtually solidified by the middle of the nineteenth century. In substance, many statements of an Henri Potiron or a Joseph Samson in the 1930s are identical to those of F. X. Witt or even E. T. A. Hoffmann long before.³⁰ The historian’s only lifeline is to show how their meaning changed as the world around them changed. In 1819, Friedrich Schlegel wrote that true pastiche is impossible because, wittingly or not, the artist inevitably betrays something of his modernity in his work.³¹ In 1898, Vincent d’Indy wrote that true pastiche is impossible because, wittingly or not, the artist inevitably betrays something of his modernity in his work.³² The contrast is striking. Schlegel’s claim is new and provocative, while d’Indy merely rehearses a tired commonplace. Schlegel is defending the medievalism of the Nazarene painters, while d’Indy is defending the neo-Renaissance church music of the new Schola cantorum. Schlegel is immersed in Germanic idealism, while d’Indy is thinking as a composer working on operas in the shadow of Wagner. Most generally, between Hoffmann and Witt and d’Indy and Samson, the “modernity” serving as historicism’s double would evolve from Liszt and Wagner to Debussy and Stravinsky.

Not least among the contexts for the literature is the music itself, usually null in terms of autonomous aesthetic interest but rich in the insight it can provide into contemporaneous debates. It offers evidence, to be coordinated with other forms of evidence, into the intellectual “engagement” with old music that is our real concern. I therefore choose examples on the basis not of quality (whatever that could mean in such a genre) but prominence in the text sources, or aptitude to represent style issues featuring in those sources. Traditional, formulaic, and uniform this repertoire may be, but not for lack of argument over how it was to be written; if anything, the more functional the music, the more legalistic the discourse and the more fastidious the quarrels over what to permit and what to ban.

Structure

My chapters deal with period discourses and practices of compositional historicism. I divide the discourses into fairly abstract aesthetic debates (Ch. 1, based almost entirely on text sources) and more stylistically specific issues in neo-Medieval and -Renaissance composition (Chs 2 and 3, more attentive to musical examples).

The technical chapters cover two of the most vexed issues in historicist composition: how to achieve “polymelodic” linearity (often considered essential in liturgical music) without ending up replicating the techniques of Palestrina (widely presumed to represent the summit of polymelodic choral writing); and how to use the melodic “modes” of antique sacred music in a context of modern harmony. I have not devoted a chapter to the third great technical challenge,

²⁹ “répétitive et reproductrice”. Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté*, 53. The author continues: “l’idée de recherche en matière de foi, et son corollaire la production d’une œuvre originale, sont assez étrangers aux entourages romains” of the early and middle part of the century.

³⁰ Nor have the basic problems changed much since, to judge from the views of recent church composers discussed in Anthony Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations* (Hillenbrand, 2007), 360–602.

³¹ See Garratt, *Palestrina*, 59.

³² See Vincent d’Indy, “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (March 1898), 66.

that of rhythm, firstly because it would require too much background on plainchant research, and secondly because good work has been done in this area.³³ I do however touch on rhythm to the extent that it pertains to issues of mode and texture.

The conclusion turns, in light of the historical findings, to the dependent question of critical interpretation, asking how the styles of modern historicist church music relate to their surrounding context of style history—are we dealing here with pastiche, conservatism, (anti-)modernism, eclecticism...? I offer a critique of the categories available to interpret this repertoire, building on critical perspectives developed over the past thirty years on historicism in canonical composers.

Reformism in Modern Catholic Church Music: A Brief History

The remainder of this introduction offers a narrative overview of historicist “reform” movements in the Catholic church music of modern France and (so far as the state of research permits) Belgium, from their origins in the post-1789 reorganisation of the church to their demise in the *aggiornamento* of the 1960s. I make no attempt to cover Franco-Belgian Catholic church music in general, nor the conditions of day-to-day musicking in Catholic churches, aiming only to furnish basic context for the reader’s orientation, given the obscurity of the subject and the analytical structure and intellectual focus of my chapters.³⁴ The exercise comes up against a number of under-researched areas, some of which I sketch as I can, others of which I leave to posterity.

First, a (large) word about “reform”, for the idea merits suspicion on several counts. Traditionally, it has served to tie together grand narratives, derived directly from actors in their own story, that take on a partisan, triumphalist tone and an air of linear inevitability in which “everything seems to lead naturally to the reforms of St Pius X”, as Jean-Yves Hameline puts it.³⁵ As a narrative theme, “reform” has also occluded other vantage points; the perspective of those usually condemned as obstructionists or ignorant *routiniers* could offer fresh insight, especially since (to judge from the endless campaigns against them) such people always constituted a silent majority.³⁶ Finally, “reform”, which always really means the policing of boundaries, is at a certain

³³ See notably Benjamin Van Wye, “The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration on the Growth and Development of the Modern French Liturgical Organ School” (DMA thesis, U. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1970); Stefan Morent, *Das Mittelalter im 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur Kompositionsgeschichte in Frankreich* (Steiner, 2013); Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*.

³⁴ On the day-to-day working, see the numerous French microhistories of Parisian churches: Henri Pompidor, “La vie musicale dans les paroisses parisiennes (1918-1921)”, *Revue internationale de musique française* 29 (1989), 39–46; Isabella Montersino, “Saint-Eustache des Halles au XIX^e siècle. Portrait musical d’une église parisienne d’après les archives du conseil de fabrique” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1994); Fanny Gribenski, “L’église comme lieu de concert. Pratiques musicales et usages de l’espace ecclésial dans les paroisses parisiennes (1830-1905)” (doctoral thesis, EHESS, 2015); Vincent Rollin, “Rendre les derniers devoirs en musique. Rituels, chant et pompe musicale des cérémonies funèbres catholiques à Paris sous le régime concordataire” (doctoral thesis, U. Jean-Monnet de Saint-Étienne, 2015); Jean-Marc Leblanc, “Saint-Martin de Paris. Pérennité architecturale, musicale et picturale d’une église provisoire fondée en 1855” (doctoral thesis, U. de Lorraine, 2016); Guillaume Avocat, “La création musicale au service de la liturgie. Pierre Desvignes à Notre-Dame de Paris (1802-1827)” (doctoral thesis, U. de Poitiers, [2023]).

³⁵ “tout semble s’acheminer comme naturellement vers les réformes de saint Pie X”. Jean-Yves Hameline, “Fragments d’une histoire moderne du chant d’église”, in id., *Sur le culte divin et la musique. Écrits rassemblés*, ed. Cécile Davy-Rigaux, Bernard Dompnier, and Daniel-Odon Hurel (Brepols, 2020), 755 [orig. in *Communio*, 2000].

³⁶ The title and back cover of Paul Collins (ed.), *Renewal and Resistance: Catholic Church Music from the 1850s to Vatican II* (Peter Lang, 2011) promise just this, but the volume turns out to have little to say about the resistance to “renewal”.

level simply inherent in the very nature of any church music distinct from music in general, and therefore a perennial phenomenon manifested in policing efforts by popes, councils, and laymen across the centuries.

With these reservations in mind, there can be no doubt that a sustained and reasonably cohesive movement for the “reform”, “renewal”, “restoration”, or “regeneration” of ritual music existed among Catholic musicians, prelates, and intellectuals from the 1830s at the latest to the 1930s at the earliest, scoring notable victories along the way (most notably TLS in 1903). What was to be “reformed” was the quality of performance and, far more divisively, of the repertoire. Repertorial reform meant defining and enforcing a style deferential to the rite and distinct from the ambient secular (“theatrical”) styles of the day, above and beyond the canons of musical aesthetics in general.³⁷ The repertoire question divided mid- and late-nineteenth-century reformism into what we might call, musically, a far right, which accepted only plainchant, and a centre-right, which envisaged a churchly style somehow inspired by both plainchant and Renaissance polyphony (“Palestrina”, synecdochically); all the while, a “left” opposition preferred to assimilate ecclesiastical style to that of the prestige genres in the secular mainstream.³⁸ Of course, some on the “left” identified their own programme as the true “reform”.

Reformism fed on three broad and overlapping movements in modern Catholicism. The so-called liturgical movement, usually traced back to the Benedictine abbot Prosper Guéranger in the 1830s, epitomised a new stress on formalised communal worship as the cornerstone of religious life, and on beauty as a source of that worship’s efficacy.³⁹ The ultramontanist movement, a response to nationalism and in its own way a form of modernisation, strove for a more centralised, standardised, legislated church.⁴⁰ Finally, secularisation had its double in a movement towards Catholic particularism—the gradual constitution of a parallel Catholic world with its own Catholic schools, Catholic newspapers, Catholic philosophy, Catholic syndicates, and so on.⁴¹ And Catholic music, one obvious symptom being the rise, in parallel to the civic conservatoires, of specialist training schools for church musicians, founded (with varying degrees of ecclesiastical support) in Paris (1817, 1853, 1896, 1923), Milwaukee (1871), Regensburg (1874), Ljubljana (1877),

A rare study to take a non-reformist viewpoint is Lucia Marchi, “Rossini’s ‘Stabat Mater’ and the Aesthetics of 19th-Century Sacred Music”, *Revista internazionale di musica sacra* 32.1–2 (2011), 341–61.

³⁷ For a review of philosophical and political contexts of this boundary-setting project see Flint, “The Schola Cantorum”, 255–92 and Jennifer Walker, *Sacred Sounds, Secular Spaces: Transforming Catholicism through the Music of Third-Republic Paris* (OUP, 2021), 23–38.

³⁸ The centre-right position is often called “Cecilianism”, but I keep that term to its narrower original meaning (the one it has in my sources), so as to have a word referring specifically to the Allgemeiner Cäcilienverein. For other reasons to do so, see Garratt, *Palestrina*, 133–34.

³⁹ For a good introduction to the “liturgical movement” see the dedicated special issue (n° 260, Dec. 2009) of *La Maison-Dieu*. See also R. W. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches: The History of a New Catholicism in Württemberg, England, and France* (Garland, 1987).

⁴⁰ On ultramontanism as “the papacy’s counter-nationalism” see Joep Leerssen, “Sacral States: The Politics of Worship, Sacred and Secular”, in *Great Immortality: Studies on European Cultural Sainthood*, ed. Jón Karl Helgason and Marijan Dović (Brill, 2019), 16.

⁴¹ See esp. Vincent Petit, *Église et Nation. La question liturgique en France au XIX^e siècle* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010). Cf. Jean-Yves Hameline, “Le son de l’histoire. Musique et chant dans la Restauration catholique (XIX^e siècle)”, *La Maison-Dieu* 131 (1977), 13–15.

Mechelen (1879), Aachen (1881), Posen (1889), Rome (1910), Vienna, (1910), Montréal (1915), New York (1916), Utrecht (1925), etc.⁴²

Stirrings: 1800s–1820s

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, church music in France and the occupied Low Countries had nowhere to go but up. Reformism began as one facet of broader strivings, after the virtual caesura of the First Republic, for Catholic “renewal”, “restoration”, or “revival”, symbolically announced by the conjunction of Napoleon’s Concordat (1801) and Chateaubriand’s *Génie du christianisme* (1802). The former had an immediate musical outcome in the revival of the Royal (now Imperial) Chapel (1804), and a more gradual one in the restoration of the *maîtrises* (choir schools of cathedrals or large churches), destroyed after 1789 along with so much church infrastructure.⁴³

Intellectually, this first Catholic revival, extending from the First Empire into the Restoration, tended to flee from the neoclassical Enlightenment into a new medievalism overlapping with gothic Romanticism, idealising the Middle Ages as a lost golden age of Christendom and Catholic civilisation. While bands of painters (the Barbus in Paris, the German Nazarenes, eventually the Pre-Raphaelites) forsook their masters’ academic classicism in the name of the fifteenth-century “primitifs”, figures such as Alexandre Choron, A. F. J. Thibaut in Germany, and Giuseppe Baini in Italy led a rediscovery of the musical *primitifs*.⁴⁴ In northern Italy and southern Germany, these first revivals of Renaissance polyphony (not yet called that) overlapped with a continuous *stile antico* tradition, much as continuous “Gothic Survival” shaded into “Gothic Revival” in church architecture.⁴⁵ The *stile antico* had never taken root in France,⁴⁶ but now entered French composition pedagogy via counterpoint treatises by Choron (1808–09) and Cherubini (1835, mostly written by Fromental Halévy), both derived from Italian traditions. Early French encounters with Renaissance polyphony itself reflected a similar mixture of restoration (revivals in Paris beginning with Choron) and tradition (exposure, often via the Prix de Rome, to the Sistine Chapel Choir, whose particular mystique heightened the repertoire’s Romantic allure).⁴⁷

⁴² See Erwin Esser Nemmers, *Twenty Centuries of Catholic Church Music* (Greenwood, 1978), 142 and Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform*, 95–96. Technically, Alexandre Choron’s singing school (1817–34) specialised in religious music only from 1825 onwards; see Katharine Ellis, “Vocal Training at the Paris Conservatoire and the Choir Schools of Alexandre-Étienne Choron: Debates, Rivalries and Consequences”, in *Musical Education in Europe (1770–1914): Compositional, Institutional, and Political Challenges*, ed. Michael Fend and Michel Noiray (Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2005), 125–44. Other such projects, including one in Brussels in the 1840s (see Kreps, “Les maîtrises et la musique religieuse”, 339), came to nothing.

⁴³ See François Lesure, “Une polémique post-révolutionnaire : le rétablissement des maîtrises”, in *Échos de France et d’Italie. Liber amoricum Yves Gérard*, ed. Marie-Claire Mussat, Jean Mongrédien, and Jean-Michel Nectoux (Buchet/Chastel, 1997), 83–91. The rich survey of church music in Jean Mongrédien, *La musique en France, des lumières au romantisme (1789-1830)* (Flammarion, 1986), 155–98 remains well worth reading despite advances in research.

⁴⁴ See Richard Boursy, “Historicism and Composition: Giuseppe Baini, the Sistine Chapel Choir, and *Stile Antico* Music in the First Half of the 19th Century” (PhD thesis, Yale U., 1994) and Garratt, *Palestrina*, Chs 3–4.

⁴⁵ See Garratt, *Palestrina*, 133–40.

⁴⁶ See Mongrédien, *La musique en France*, 171.

⁴⁷ See Henri de Rohan-Csermak, “La canonisation de Palestrina et la mutation de la musique sacrée en France au XIX^e siècle”, *Ostinato rigore* 4 (1994), 199–214; Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (OUP, 2005), 179–208; Richard Boursy, “The Mystique of the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Romantic Era”, *Journal of Musicology* 11.3 (1993), 277–329.

Stimulated by these contacts, a distinct neo-Palestrinian style, not always close to that of real Renaissance polyphony but recognisable by its strict, often imitative counterpoint and scoring for choir *a cappella* or with *colla parte* organ, would be cultivated sporadically from the 1830s onwards as a special register within the already somewhat specialised domain of religious style.⁴⁸

The Heroic Age: 1830s–1860s

Reformist activism entered its most intense phase from the 1830s to the early 1860s, led by crusaders such as Joseph d’Ortigue, Félix Danjou, Théodore Nisard, Félix Clément, and Stephen Morelot and backed by ultramontanist bishops such as Parisis of Langres and Steerckx of Mechelen.⁴⁹ Ironically, later reformists would look back on this period as the nadir of decadence, in which the faithful worshipped to quadrilles in the organ and love duets performed by theatre singers and Jewish instrumentalists, while in the provinces cantors bellowed out their plainchant over the braying of serpents and ophicleides. For reformists, the worst of old and new converged at mid-century: vestiges of barbarous times, and light music spread by a rapidly commercialising music industry. Yet their momentum was always inversely proportional to the actual state of church music: the movement thrived on outrage stories, and the lurid exposé of aesthetic squalor in the temple, revelling in every grotesque detail, was its quintessential literary genre (a “fascinant musée d’horreurs”, for Hameline), along with the essay on the rules of true church music.⁵⁰

The middle of the century saw reformism’s institutional foundations laid down: a centre for plainchant restoration (the abbey of Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1833, *atelier de paléographie* added 1856); a vehicle for the revival of Renaissance polyphony (the Société des concerts of the Prince de la Moskowa, 1843–46); a new school for church musicians (the École Niedermeyer, 1853); numerous periodicals devoted to sacred music; and, in culmination, the first and greatest of the congresses on church music to take place in France (Paris, 1860).⁵¹ Societies sprang up to push similar agendas (always under the banner of “reform”) in church design and decoration, the most important in France being the Société de Saint Jean l’Évangéliste (1839–); in Belgium, the Gilde

⁴⁸ More research is needed on early neo-Palestrinian composition in France; see Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur*, 224–31. Neo-Palestrinian music inspired by the Sistine experience includes works by Gounod, Dubois, and Bourgault-Ducoudray as well as passages of *couleur religieuse* in Massenet, Paul Vidal, and Debussy (to say nothing of germanophones such as Mendelssohn or Liszt).

⁴⁹ See Jean-Jacques Velly, “Joseph d’Ortigue et la musique d’église”, in *Musique et religion aux époques modernes et contemporaines*, ed. Martin Dumont (Champion, 2018), 71–84 and Amélie Porret-Dubreuil, “Contribution à l’étude de la restauration de la musique d’église au XIX^e siècle au prisme de l’expérience de Félix Clément (1822-1885)” (doctoral thesis, U. Jean-Monnet de Saint-Étienne, 2016). A case study of the revolution in sensibilities marked by such figures is Dominique Hausfater, “Les funérailles du duc d’Orléans (1842) : une croisade contre la musique sacrée ?”, in *Musique, esthétique et société au XIX^e siècle. Liber amicorum Joël-Marie Fauquet*, ed. Damien Colas, Florence Gétreau, and Malou Haine (Mardaga, 2007), 79–90.

⁵⁰ Hameline, “Le son de l’histoire”, 29.

⁵¹ See Rémy Campos, *La Renaissance introuvable ? Entre curiosité et militantisme, la Société des concerts de musique vocale religieuse et classique du prince de la Moskowa, 1843-1846* (Klincksieck, 2000); Ikuno Sako, “The Importance of Louis Niedermeyer in the Reform of Nineteenth-Century Church Music in France” (PhD thesis, U. of Melbourne, 2007); Timothy Scott Flynn, “A Study in Music Criticism and Historiography: Sacred Music Journals in France, 1848 to 1870” (PhD thesis, Northwestern U., 1997).

de Saint Thomas et de Saint Luc (1863–1914?) fulfilled an analogous role.⁵² All this institution-building reflects the general dynamism and material prosperity of the July Monarchy and Second Empire, an era of prolific church building and restoration in the neo-Gothic style, developments in organ building (the firms of Cavaillé-Coll in Paris and Merklin in Brussels then Paris), and generous subsidies for the *maîtrises*, some of which spearheaded the reformist agenda.⁵³ The same spirit of progress and industry inspired huge strides in historical research, which touched on sacred music through the work of Fétis, La Fage, Coussemaker, and many others. Historical scholarship and the preservation of artefacts and remains accompanied the rise of “historicism”, a more serious successor to the Romantic yearning for the far-off past, compounded of historical awareness, appreciation, and interpretation, and leading to the beginnings of cultural relativism.

Historicism in the stylistic sense also came into its own during this period, in church music and elsewhere. The aspiration to create a new-old churchly style, somehow both like and unlike the old masters, emerges clearly in the new sacred-music periodicals in the 1840s at the latest,⁵⁴ though *a cappella* liturgical music in neo-Palestrinian style would remain fairly uncommon in France (at least by comparison to Germany) until the 1890s. The old tradition of composition based on the Gregorian *cantus firmus* made a comeback in choral and especially organ works in the middle of the century, stemming from the functional revival of plainchant.⁵⁵ Alkan’s *Petits Préludes sur les huit gammes du plain-chant* (1859) may represent the first designated use of plainchant modes without any connection to chant melodies.⁵⁶ Romantic operas often relied on stylised references to antique sacred music when representing sacred ritual.⁵⁷ The same *couleur antique* marks oratorios such as Berlioz’s *L’Enfance du Christ* (1854) and the contributions of Liszt, who followed French reformism closely.⁵⁸

⁵² See Nadine-Josette Chaline, “La Confrérie de Saint-Jean”, in *Gothic Architecture*, ed. De Maeyer and Verpoest, 169–72 and De Maeyer, “The Neo-Gothic in Belgium”.

⁵³ See Rémy Campos, “La musique religieuse sous le Second Empire” (<http://www.bruzanemediabase.com/fre/Parutions-scientifiques-en-ligne/Articles/Campos-Remy-La-musique-religieuse-sous-le-Second-Empire>). On the *maîtrises*, especially the trio of Langres, Autun, and Moulins, see Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 71–72.

⁵⁴ See Benedikt Lessmann, “Le chant grégorien en France (1811-1908). Entre liturgie, science, politique et esthétique”, in *La musique religieuse en France au XIX^e siècle. Le sentiment religieux entre profane et sacré (1830-1914)*, ed. Nicolas Dufetel (Brepols, 2021), 118 and Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur*, 225–26.

⁵⁵ Relevant composers include Fétis, Boëly, Lemmens, Gevaert, François Benoist, Charles-Alexis Chauvet, and Joseph-François Snel; see Van Wye, “The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration”, 36–44, 53 and Pieter Mannaerts, “Gevaert and the Study of Plainchant”, *Revue belge de musicologie* 64 (2010), 134, 138.

⁵⁶ See Michael Beauvois, “Alkan’s *Petits préludes*: A Musical Time-Machine”, *Alkan Society Bulletin* 96 (2018), 3–8.

⁵⁷ See Jean-Christophe Branger and Alban Ramaut (eds), *Opéra et Religion sous la Troisième République* (U. de Saint-Étienne, 2006); Simon Williams, “The Spectacle of the Past in Grand Opera”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera*, ed. David Charlton (CUP, 2003), 58–75; Sarah Hibberd, *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination* (CUP, 2009), esp. 12–16.

⁵⁸ See Bartoli, “Historicisme, éclectisme et modalité” and Nicolas Dufetel, “Religious Workshop and Gregorian Chant: The Janus Liszt, or How to Make New with the Old”, in *Liszt’s Legacies: A Collection of Essays*, ed. James Deaville and Michael Saffle (Pendragon, 2014), 43–71.

First Period of Stagnation: 1860s–1880s

Reformist activity appears to have slowed in France after the 1860 congress. The first-generation periodicals had all folded by 1870; only the *Musica sacra* run by the choirmaster Aloys Kunc in Toulouse intermittently kept the flame (1874–84, 1887–1901), along with the ephemeral *Le Maître de chapelle* (1888). Despite immediate follow-ups in Belgium (Mechelen, 1863 and 1864), only two more congresses were held in France before 1895, both minor plainchant gatherings in Aiguebelle; an international congress in Arezzo (1882), also chant-focused, was to prove inconclusive. The reasons for this apparent stagnation call for further research. The secularisation campaign of the 1880s may have incidentally dealt a blow to the reformist cause by eliminating subsidies for all but a few *maîtrises*,⁵⁹ but a crisis in church finances seems unlikely in the 1860s–70s, under the clericalist Second Empire and the “moral order” regime of Marshal Mac Mahon.

This stagnation is all the more apparent in light of reformism’s continued vigour elsewhere. In Germany, Cecilianism reached its apogee around 1870, spawning the Allgemeiner Cäcilien-Verband für die Länder der deutschen Sprache (1868, a.k.a. Allgemeiner deutscher Cäcilienverein, Allgemeiner Cäcilien-Verband für Deutschland, etc.), numerous periodicals (late 1860s), the Kirchenmusikschule of Regensburg (1874), and grand edition projects of Renaissance polyphony. The Cecilian model was soon exported or imitated around the Catholic world: in the Netherlands (1868), various regions of the Habsburg Empire (1871–98), the USA (1873, 1913), Ireland (1878), Italy (1880), Alsace (1882), Spain (1912), and Britain (1929).⁶⁰ In Belgium, reformists led by the priest P.-J. Van Damme and the organist Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens set up a full Cecilian package of institutions with episcopal support: the École de musique religieuse (1879, eventually called Lemmens Institute after sundry variations), the Société de Saint Grégoire (1880), and another *Musica sacra* (1881), complete with diocesan-level Sociétés and Écoles de Saint Grégoire (e.g. in Tournai, 1880 and Namur, 1906).⁶¹ An independent Société de Saint Grégoire in Liège (1887), aligned with the Allgemeiner Cäcilienverein, competed with the national society until the death of its fractious chief, the abbé Dirven, in 1906.

In these decades French reformism made most headway outside of choral polyphony, in the plainchant research conducted at Solesmes under Joseph Pothier and André Mocquereau, which began to bear fruit with the former’s *Les mélodies grégoriennes d’après la tradition* (1880) and the *Liber gradualis* of 1883.⁶² Plainchant accompaniment had begun to reflect a restored modality by

⁵⁹ See Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 83.

⁶⁰ See Karl Gustav Fellerer, *The History of Catholic Church Music*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (Greenwood, 1979), 188; Nemmers, *Twenty Centuries of Catholic Church Music*, 144; Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform*, 91, 100–01. In England, earlier attempts (1876, 1882, 1888) to found a Cecilian-style society repeatedly washed up, according to Karl Weinmann, *La musique d’église*, trans. Paul Landormy (Delaplane, 1912), 178. Note that Austria was divided between pro- and anti-Allgemeiner Cäcilienverein societies.

⁶¹ For lack of a modern history, the best source is the speeches given during the semicentennial celebrations, in *MSB* (15 March 1929). A fairly detailed account also appears in Joseph Duclos, “Essai sur la vie et les travaux de l’auteur”, in Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, *Le chant grégorien. Sa mélodie, son rythme [sic], son harmonisation*, ed. Joseph Duclos (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1886), xxix–xxxviii.

⁶² The account by Pierre Combe (*Histoire de la restauration du chant grégorien d’après des documents inédits* (Abbaye de Solesmes, 1969)) is now dated; for recent introductory surveys see Sophie Leterrier, “L’archéologie musicale. La « restauration du chant grégorien » entre liturgie et histoire”, in *Liturgie et Société. Gouverner et reformer l’Église, XIX^e–XX^e siècle*, ed. Bruno Dumons, Vincent Petit, and Christian Sorel (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2016), 263–73 and Lessmann, “Le chant grégorien en France (1811–1908)”.

the 1850s, and from the 1870s adapted to the emerging neumatic performance styles.⁶³ The “restoration” of plainchant, in the sense of textual reconstruction and also wider use, had knock-on effects on liturgical composition too: from the 1860s and especially 1880s onwards, organists such as Eugène Gigout and Alexandre Guilmant created a huge repertory of easy liturgical pieces (mostly *versets* to alternate with verses of sung chant) based on Gregorian melodies or modes.⁶⁴ This humble new genre contrasts with the heights of virtuosity and improvisational skill reached at the same time by *titulaires* such as César Franck and Charles-Marie Widor, in addition to Guilmant and Gigout themselves.

Second Wave and Apogee: 1890s–1910s

Reformist institutions began to proliferate again in France in the 1890s; “the flourishing of sacred music in our country goes back to this period”, declares a survey read at the Paris congress of 1937.⁶⁵ The great era of French congresses (along with innumerable diocesan-level conferences and *journées grégoriennes*) stretches from 1895 to 1922; in Belgium, the general Catholic congresses held periodically in the primatial seat of Mechelen (1891, 1909, 1936) included substantial musical sections.⁶⁶ A small number of *maîtrises* continued to thrive despite the funding cuts of the 1880s, notably the one re-founded (1895) in Dijon by the three Moissenet brothers, all priests.⁶⁷ Tellingly, though, the best cathedral choirs flourished just beyond France’s borders: in Tournai, in Strasbourg under the canon Joseph Victori (1900–25), and in Monaco, where the abbé Perruchot, known for his reformist work at several Parisian churches, was summoned to establish a model *maîtrise* (1904).⁶⁸ In France it was Charles Bordes and his Schola cantorum that drove most of the second wave of reformism. Initially, Bordes followed the Cecilian playbook, founding a choir specialised in antique repertoire (the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais, 1892), a society (1894), a journal (the *Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, 1895), a publishing unit (1895), and finally a school (1896). But his initiative outstripped his organisational follow-through: the provincial *scholae* he sowed across France went their various ways without central coordination, attempts to collaborate with established institutions (Solesmes, the Institut catholique) fizzled out, and the Parisian Schola

⁶³ See Van Wye, “The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration”, 60–80 and Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 184.

⁶⁴ See Edward Zimmerman and Lawrence Archbold, “‘Why Should We Not Do the Same with Our Catholic Melodies?’: Guilmant’s *L’Organiste liturgiste*, op. 65”, in *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, ed. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (U. of Rochester Press, 1995), 201–47 and Nathan L. Lam, “*Tonalité grégorienne: Musica recta* as Prescriptive Harmony”, *Music Theory & Analysis* 7.11 (2020), 320–49.

⁶⁵ “**L’épanouissement de la musique sacrée dans notre pays remonte à cette période**” (bold in original). Armand Vivet, “La musique sacrée en France depuis la Révolution. Rétablissement, épanouissement, avenir”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée, organisé par l’Union des maîtres de chapelle et organistes* (Desclée De Brouwer, [1937]), 151.

⁶⁶ See Xavier Bisaro, “Dialectiques du culte et de la culture. Un siècle de congrès de musique sacrée à Paris (1860–1957)”, *Revue de musicologie* 100.2 (2014), 379–404 and Dominique-Marie Dauzet, “Les congrès de musique sacrée à l’époque contemporaine”, in *Le catholicisme en congrès (XIX^e–XX^e siècles)*, ed. Claude Langlois and Christian Sorrel (U. Jean-Moulin, 2009), 137–54.

⁶⁷ See Georges Viard (ed.), *Renaissance et rayonnement des maîtrises d’églises aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles* (Société historique et archéologique de Langres, 2015) and Katharine Ellis, *French Musical Life: Local Dynamics in the Century to World War II* (OUP, 2022), 114–22.

⁶⁸ On Strasbourg see Myriam Geyer, *La vie musicale à Strasbourg sous l’Empire allemand, 1871–1918* (Société savante d’Alsace/École nationale des chartes, 1999), 251–78.

veered in a secular direction under the control of Vincent d'Indy.⁶⁹ Even so, the Schola revitalised reformism by giving rise to regional spinoffs (such as the Chanteurs de Saint-Boniface in Brussels, 1895) and also rivals, including several ephemeral anti-*scholiste* periodicals (*Le Réveil des organistes et des maîtres de chapelle* and *L'Avenir de la musique sacrée* in Paris, the *Revue de musique religieuse et de chant grégorien* in Marseille, the *Nouvelle Maîtrise* of the École Niedermeyer). In the Lille area, the embryo of a rival organisation coalesced with episcopal backing around the obscure but enterprising abbé Henri Delépine, organiser of a publishing house (the Procure générale de musique religieuse, 1896 or 1898), a journal (*Revue [de] Sainte-Cécile*, 1901), and a congress (Arras, 1904). Another significant nucleus of anti-*scholiste* reformism emerged in Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1912, centred on the heterodox plainchant scholar Georges Houdard and the abbé Clément Besse.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the École Niedermeyer, still a force at the turn of the century despite nominal secularisation in the 1880s, entered a terminal decline after 1910, when it lost its state subsidy and its vigorous director Gustave Lefèvre.⁷¹ The Belgian Société de Saint Grégoire too fell into a near-dormant state between the 1891 Mechelen congress and a major reunion organised in collaboration with the Schola cantorum in Bruges in 1902, partly due to the chronic illness of its main animator, the canon Van Damme;⁷² Belgian reformism was bitterly split between Solesmes and Regensburg partisans over the question of plainchant editions, until the launching of the Vatican Edition project (1904) finally rendered the controversy moot. Nevertheless, a first generation of church composers trained on reformist lines (Émile Dethier, François Verhelst, Aloys Desmet, Oscar Depuydt, Oscar Van Durme), mostly under Edgar Tinel's direction at the Lemmens Institute, came to maturity around the turn of the century.

After 1890, neo-Renaissance polyphony of varying degrees of strictness proliferated in France, becoming the default formula for ecclesiastical choral music by 1914. Charles Gounod anticipated this turn by adopting a neo-Renaissance style more or less exclusively (organ interludes excepted) in his last five masses (1887–90). Théodore Dubois's *Messe brève dans le style palestrinien* (1893, published 1900) announced a similar though less definitive conversion, limited to certain genres (motets and fauxbourdons more than festive masses) but redoubled after TLS.⁷³ Also in the 1890s–1900s, modality became standard in chant accompaniment and *versets*, as reflected in the Schola's liturgical organ series, overseen by Guilmant and featuring notable contributions by

⁶⁹ See Ellis, *French Musical Life*, 75–85. A 1901 letter from Bordes to Guy Ropartz is revelatory: “C’est lancé et... il n’est que temps que je m’en aille, si je ne veux pas détruire ce que j’ai créé. Tel je suis, remueur d’idées, manieur de volontés ; du moment que la chose a pris corps il me faut fuir tant j’ai horreur de tout ce qui a un semblant d’ordre et de méthode.” In Bernard Molla, “Charles Bordes, pionnier du renouveau musical français entre 1890 et 1909” (doctoral thesis, U. de Lyon II, 1985), vol. 3, 116.

⁷⁰ See Aurélie Gommier-Decourt, “Albert Alain (1880–1971), organiste et compositeur français” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1999). Frequenters of this circle included Charles Planchet, René Moissenet, Maurice Emmanuel, and the painter Maurice Denis.

⁷¹ The best source I know of on the obscure later history of the École is a folder of material in F-Pahd, box 2G2, under the heading “Musique sacrée” in the inventory in the red binder. Its last remnants finally closed in 1939.

⁷² See Charles Bordes, “Les fêtes de Bruges”, *TSG* (Aug.–Sept. 1902), 253 and Adrien Dirven, “Le Congrès de Bruges”, *CSG* (June–July 1902), 47.

⁷³ In 1922 Amédée Gastoué remarked: “depuis la publication du « Motu proprio » de Pie X, le vieux maître a voulu rénover sa manière : il y a un abîme entre le Th. Dubois de tel oratorio ou de tel motet en solo qui fut fameux, et le maître que révèlent ses œuvres nouvelles.” Amédée Gastoué, “La musique religieuse française contemporaine”, in *Congrès régional de liturgie et de musique sacrée organisé par l’Association française Sainte-Cécile, Metz, 5-7 juin 1922* (Guénange: Imprimerie des orphelins-apprentis, [1923]), 126.

Chausson, d'Indy, La Tombelle, and Ropartz. Such music was propagated in supplements to the sacred-music periodicals and in the catalogues of the specialist sacred-music publishers that flourished during this period (Biton, Janin, Hérèlle, the Schola, the Procure, the Librairie de l'Art catholique), which often advertised their conformity to TLS as a sort of imprimatur and promised more austere fare than that of mainstream publishers such as Durand and Leduc.⁷⁴

All these reformist initiatives now enjoyed solid backing from the highest levels of the clerical hierarchy. In this respect, TLS (1903), often regarded as an epochal text, merely crowned a long series of increasingly lofty endorsements.⁷⁵ The idealisation of plainchant, *a cappella* singing, and “classical” counterpoint originated mainly with lay (not even necessarily Catholic) figures and only gradually won over the hierarchy, which then in turn imposed it from above, via the musical regulations it had been issuing in steady stream since time immemorial. In terms of content, TLS added nothing important to the doctrines of “centre-right” reformism; notably, the Sacred Congregation of Rites regulation “De musica sacra” (7 July 1894, accompanied by encyclical letter to Italian bishops dated 21 July 1894) had already affirmed second-most-favoured status for “classical” polyphony.⁷⁶ The document’s significance lies rather in its universal purview, even if the authority of such missives was a matter of confusion among rank-and-file clergy and musicians (many assumed that TLS must apply somewhere else, perhaps in Italy, while reformists had touted “De musica sacra” as the church’s universal will despite its strictly Italian destination).⁷⁷ Without enforcement mechanisms, any practical impact on day-to-day music-making relied on local reformism. “In the millennia-long history the Codex of the Roman Church, perhaps no ordinance has been so talked-about and so deliberately flouted, and that in the most rigorously hierarchical and disciplined organisation in the world”, remarked the Belgian musicologist Ernest Closson in 1937.⁷⁸ Whatever its practical impact, though, the document certainly reshaped discourse on the repertoire question: thenceforth, both plainchant extremists and modernisers were, if not silenced, obliged to air their views covertly, or outside of any papal allegiance.⁷⁹ It had a clear effect on compositional trends too, pushing non-historicist style into para-liturgical genres (e.g. the grand festive masses with orchestra or obbligato brass choir by Dubois, Henri Busser, Paul Paray, Léonce de Saint-Martin) or ones that could double as concert music (motets by Aubert, Roger-Ducasse, Schmitt, Louis Vuillemin, Huré, Caplet, Ladmirault, Dupré, Lili Boulanger, Annette Dieudonné).

During this period, the church wavered even more than usual between embrace and rejection of modernity. The 1890s came close to witnessing a breakthrough for a social and democratic Catholicism, a thaw in church-state relations in France, and efforts to bring Catholic

⁷⁴ See Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 376–95.

⁷⁵ On the precursors to TLS see esp. Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music: 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Liturgical Press, 1979), 195–219 and Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 22–38.

⁷⁶ See Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 35.

⁷⁷ See esp. Eugène Chaminade, *La musique sacrée telle que la veut l'Église* (Lethielleux, 1897), a commentary on “De musica sacra”.

⁷⁸ Ernest Closson, “Chant liturgique et musique religieuse”, *L'Indépendance belge* (15 July 1937). For case studies of the implementation (or lack thereof) of TLS see, besides the works by Pillot-Rebours and Muir cited above, Mario Coutu, “La diffusion du *motu proprio* « Tra le sollecitudini » sur la musique sacrée dans le diocèse de Montréal, de 1903 à 1951”, *La Maison-Dieu* 261 (2010), 85–125.

⁷⁹ A revealing case study of the practical obstacles to the implementation is that of Maurice Emmanuel’s abortive stint as choirmaster of Sainte-Clotilde; see Aurélie Decourt, “Maurice Emmanuel maître de chapelle à Sainte-Clotilde (1904-1907)”, *L'Orgue* 278–79 (2007), 63–88.

teaching in line with the state of scientific and historical knowledge. All this was dashed by, on the one hand, the renewed anticlericalism issuing from the Dreyfus affair, and on the other a rightward turn in Rome signalled by the accession of Pius X but already begun in the last years of the relatively liberal Leo XIII. Against such a background, TLS in particular falls into place as one element of a larger reactionary programme led by a pontiff who declared himself “terrified beyond all else by the disastrous state of human society today”,⁸⁰ together with the repression of “Modernism” in the seminaries and universities (from 1907) and of social Catholicism (notably with the condemnation of *Le Sillon* in 1910), and the promotion of neo-Thomism as a particularist Catholic system of thought. Ironically, this antimodern turn could attract intellectuals disaffected with their own age, who, as in the springtime of Romanticism, “converted” to Catholicism in significant numbers, especially between the 1890s and the 1920s.⁸¹

Third Wave, or Second Wave Resumed: 1920s–1930s

The energetic reformism of the early 1920s merely picked up the second wave interrupted by war, drawing new vigour from the drive for rebuilding and (fleeting) hopes of spiritual regeneration in the dawning era. The years 1919–22 saw a spate of congresses and a new crop of reformist periodicals, some of them ephemeral. The need to reintegrate Alsace-Lorraine and rebuild the “pays dévastés” partly accounts for the congresses held in Tourcoing (1919), Strasbourg (1921, home to a vigorous local Cecilian society), and Metz (1922, home to a new diocesan reformist society in the *Œuvre de Saint Chrodegang*). In Belgium, the rebuilding of church music proceeded under the patronage of the powerful Cardinal Mercier and an influx of American monies; Jules Van Nuffel took charge of a revived *maîtrise* in Mechelen (1917), the Lemmens Institute (1918, reduced to twelve students and one professor during the war),⁸² and eventually the Belgian *Musica sacra* (revived 1927). Wartime destruction and displacement also necessitated new church building, not least in the sprawling and squalid Parisian *banlieue*, which in turn fed a host of new organisations dedicated to the “renewal” of church design and decoration, most notably the Ateliers de l’art sacré of Maurice Denis and Georges Desvallières (1919–47). This modernisation push, epitomised by the revolutionary concrete church of Le Raincy, near Paris (1923), echoes in the discussions at the congresses of Tourcoing, Strasbourg, and Paris (1922).

The renewed reformism nevertheless suffered from internal divisions. Ongoing quarrels about plainchant rhythm pitted the Solesmes Benedictines under Dom Mocquereau (newly returned to France after a thaw in church-state relations) against Pothierists at the Schola cantorum and elsewhere, and the mensuralists best represented by the Saint-Germain-en-Laye circle. Solesmes gained a firm supporter in the new archbishop of Paris (1920–29), Cardinal Dubois, who imposed so-called Roman pronunciation of Latin (1922) and founded the Institut grégorien (1923), which, despite some overlap in personnel, would compete with the declining Schola. The idea of a national reformist society on Cecilian lines, floated again and again since 1860, was finally realised at the Strasbourg congress in an Association française de Sainte Cécile, under the honorary

⁸⁰ Thomas Day, “Foreword”, in *Renewal and Resistance*, ed. Collins, 9, quoting Pius’s first encyclical, “E supremi”.

⁸¹ See Frédéric Gugelot, *La conversion des intellectuels au catholicisme en France, 1885-1935* (CNRS, 1998).

⁸² See Al. De Schutter, “À l’Institut Lemmens. L’examen de 1931”, *MSB* (Sept. 1931), 175–77.

presidency of Mgr Perruchot; but the new entity very soon came to nothing, for reasons that need research.⁸³ Increasingly, the role devolved on the abbé Delépine's network, relocated in Paris from 1918: to the publishing house and journal (revived in 1922) Delépine added a new choral group (the Chanteurs de la Sainte-Chapelle, 1924) and fraternal organisation (the Gilde de Sainte Cécile, 1924), which organised frequent congresses and competitions. Located in the *quartier Saint-Sulpice*, the Procure churned out cheap, easy fare, eventually swallowing up the Bureau d'édition of the Schola cantorum.⁸⁴ On the international scale, French musicians showed little interest in the Internationale Gesellschaft für Erneuerung der katholischen Kirchenmusik, which held a number of major congresses from 1927 through the 1950s. Though founded in a 1920s spirit of Catholic internationalism, the organisation was destined to remain a largely German affair; its congress in Paris during the 1937 World's Fair went almost unnoticed by the French, though by that point political tensions were working against such initiatives.

The production of neo-Palestrinian church music never regained its pre-war levels, though it lingered on through the period, often in lightly modernised or simplified form, thanks to distinguished practitioners such as Henri Potiron in Paris, Joseph Ryelandt in Bruges, and Aloÿs Fornerod in Lausanne. A turn away from the neo-Palestrinian manner is evident in leading church composers such as Ropartz and Marie-Joseph Erb in Strasbourg, Amédée Gastoué and Guy de Lioncourt at the Schola cantorum, and Van Nuffel in Mechelen. A new "sound" of Catholic liturgical music gradually emerged, relying on mildly dissonant diatonicism, relaxed counterpoint, attempts to capture the movement of plainchant (whose incorporation had become almost *de rigueur*), and much recourse to parallel fourths and fifths; though related to the white-note Neoclassicism of certain Stravinsky works, it represents also a backwater survival of Debussyan "impressionism". More specifically Neoclassical traces can perhaps be heard in motets by Dupré, Albert Bertelin, Renée Philippart, Albert Alain, and Jehan Alain. All the while, liturgical music oblivious to contemporary trends continued to accumulate, in a kind of timeless, generic reformist style compounded of Palestrina as absorbed through counterpoint textbooks and the Lutheran chorale as absorbed through Bach. Avant-gardism remained unknown to French or Belgian liturgical choral music before 1940, with the solitary and partial exception of Messiaen's mass setting for sopranos and violins (1931), an unpublished and probably unperformed work.⁸⁵

⁸³ Gastoué's account is cryptic: "L'idée, pour généreuse qu'elle fût, n'était pas mûre. Empêchée dans sa réalisation par l'un des personnages sur lesquels on comptait le plus, l'association projetée n'eut aucun lendemain." Amédée Gastoué, "Les Gildes de Sainte-Cécile", in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 97.

⁸⁴ The Schola merger occurred after World War II according to Cédric Segond-Genovesi, "Cahier iconographique n° 1. La Schola Cantorum, de Vincent d'Indy à Daniel-Lesur (1896-1962)", in *Étudier, enseigner et composer à la Schola Cantorum (1896-1962)*, ed. Sylvie Douche and Cédric Segond-Genovesi (Aedam Musicae, 2022), 570; however, a letter from Joseph Samson, probably to Paul Berthier and no later than 1934, already discusses measures to keep the Bureau out of Delépine's hands (F-Pn, NLA 451).

⁸⁵ Joseph Samson's masses of the 1920s sometimes come close, assimilating techniques from Honegger and Caplet. I have not managed to consult the unpublished masses (1929, 1931) of Désiré Pâque, an adept of atonality. In 1935 Henri Potiron warned that modernism "a tenté — avec beaucoup de discrétion jusqu'à maintenant — de pénétrer dans nos églises", citing bitonality in an unnamed but apparently German mass, but admitted that "[l]a tendance moderne ou plutôt moderniste ne s'est guère manifestée en France dans les œuvres vocales religieuses". Henri Potiron, "Modernisme", *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.-Feb. 1935), 60–63. Of parallel efforts in interwar religious painting Jean-Pierre Greff notes: "Ce qu'il est convenu de désigner comme l'avant-garde est, sous toutes ses formes, strictement absent de ce mouvement" ("Art sacré en Europe, 1919-1939. Les tentatives d'un 'renouveau'", in *Un art sans frontières. L'internationalisation des arts en Europe (1900-1950)*, ed. Gérard Monnier and José Vovelle (Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1995), 170).

This modest stylistic modernisation was permitted by the flourishing of a few elite choirs. In the 1930s, the Mechelen *maîtrise* under Van Nuffel was among the most renowned in Europe, undertaking tours, broadcasts, and recordings and promoting a considerable amount of new music.⁸⁶ Its prowess made Belgium a hub for liturgical choral composition, with Van Nuffel leading a core of Lemmens Institute composers (Arthur Meulemans, Marinus De Jong, Flor Peeters, Gustaf Nees) and promoting a range of independents (Ryelandt, Robert Herberigs, Jean-Marie Plum, Camille Jacquemin, Lodewijk De Vocht, Jef Van Hoof). The more elaborate masses by Meulemans or De Jong have no French equivalent. In France, the best church choir was the Dijon *maîtrise* under René Moissenet and Joseph Samson, which premiered works by Charles Kœchlin and Paul Berthier as well as Samson himself.⁸⁷ Some of the finest Parisian groups were educational schemes for disadvantaged children, some of them reflecting the demand for boy choristers after TLS's reaffirmation of restrictions on female liturgical singing: La Cantoria (1916) under Sainte-Clotilde choirmaster Jules Meunier; Clément Besse's Chœur des Franciscaines de Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1906), formed of orphan girls and regarded by some as the best in France in the early 1920s; and the Manécanterie des Petits chanteurs à la croix de bois (1907), which achieved fame after 1930, touring abroad and inspiring many imitators.⁸⁸

The late 1920s and 1930s witnessed significant Catholic modernisation, notably in the form of youth and workers' movements, vast church-building projects, and embrace of the radio. Intellectually, the shakeup precipitated by Pius XI's condemnation of Action française (1926), a quasi-fascist movement extremely influential within the Catholic elite, worked in favour of Christian democracy and the beginnings of *ressourcement* and the *nouvelle théologie*, at the expense of integralism and neo-Thomism. While full-blooded artistic modernism found its voice in the periodical *L'Art sacré* (1935), musical parallels are harder to see. The obvious one is the French organ school, at its height in the 1930s and imbued with Catholicism; but its finest efforts went mostly to the concert hall. These include even Tournemire's *L'Orgue mystique* (1927–32), designed for dual use, and also the work of Messiaen, which, in its turn to symmetrical scales, breaks decisively with the diatonic post-historicist "sound" of interwar church music.

Second Period of Stagnation: 1930s–1960s

As a movement, reformism was losing steam by the 1930s. After 1922 only two congresses were held in France (Paris, 1937 and 1957), though to some extent this reflects a shift to bigger international events (Rome 1950, Vienna 1954, Paris 1957, etc.). No new sacred-music periodicals in French appeared between the early 1920s and World War II; the initiative shifted to generalist organ periodicals (*L'Orgue et les Organistes*, 1924; *Le Grand Orgue*, 1925; *L'Orgue*, 1929; *L'Organiste*,

⁸⁶ The essential information is in *Gedenkboek Mgr. J. Van Nuffel, Jubileum Sint-Romboutskoor Mechelen 19 mei 1946* (Brussels: Uitvoerend comité bij de jubelviering van het Sint-Romboutskoor, [1947]).

⁸⁷ The *entre-deux-guerres* is optimistically characterised as "l'âge d'or des maîtrises de cathédrale" in Olivier Landron, *Le catholicisme français au rythme du chant et de la musique (XX^e-XXI^e siècles)* (Parole et Silence, 2014), 54. See *ibid.*, 54–64 for more on the *maîtrises* during this period; other successful cases included Bourges, Nantes, Rouen, Laval, La Rochelle, and Nice. Nevertheless, an *enquête* on the *maîtrises* in the magazine *L'Art sacré* from 1935 to 1939 is fairly pessimistic, as are the petitions of choirmasters that in 1942 led to temporary restoration of state funding under Vichy (on which see Leslie Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France* (U. of California Press, 2013), 123).

⁸⁸ The Manécanterie's history is told in Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur*, 571–90.

1935). Already before the 1914–18 war the sources register a decline in the quantity and quality of aesthetic debate, due to any number of factors: the dampening effect of TLS, sheer fatigue with endlessly rehashing the same arguments, and most importantly the fact that new music occupied less and less place in the liturgy, crowded out by the old.⁸⁹ Compositional style receives relatively little attention in the proceedings of the great congresses of the 1950s.⁹⁰ Papal pronouncements on church music (“Divini cultus”, 1928; “Musicae sacrae disciplina”, 1955) merely reaffirmed TLS while condemning any modernisms of subsequent origin.

In a reversal of the situation a century earlier, reformism’s midcentury slowdown reflected the breadth of its achievement. To the ears of several witnesses, reformist choral composition in France reached a belated peak between the 1930s and the 1950s, represented by the masses of Samson, Berthier, Jean de Valois, Jacques Chailley, Jean Langlais, and Gaston Litaize and the motets of Henri Carol and Pierre Villette, all of which develop the post-historicist lingua franca of the 1920s.⁹¹ Jean-Yves Hameline often wrote of Duruflé’s Requiem (admittedly a concert work) as the compositional summit of the movement, as though this single achievement redeemed at a stroke the decades of pastiche it took to get there. It is difficult indeed to hear Duruflé’s Kyrie, or his motets on Gregorian themes (c. 1950, published 1960), without feeling that this, at last, is the music the reformists had been looking for all along, but had never found. After all, they had always placed their hopes of solving the riddle of new-old style in the advent of a great genius.⁹²

The 1950s represent the high point too of the practical cultivation of plainchant, marked by ambitious programmes of popularisation (notably through the “Ward Method”).⁹³ Chant accompaniment had reached a considerable sophistication in manuals by Potiron and the seven-volume *Nova organi harmonia ad Graduale* (1943–47) created by the Lemmens Institute professors. But this same drive for popular participation would bring about the demise of not only plainchant but a thousand years of Latin liturgical polyphony. A second “liturgical movement”, begun in Belgium and the Rhineland around 1910 and dedicated to congregational participation, spearheaded the inexorable transition towards a vernacular mass. In France, the vernacular *cantique*, ancestor of the music sung in Catholic churches today, had been quietly displacing Latin liturgical music since as far back as the second half of the nineteenth century; its liturgical use was at last

⁸⁹ See Hubert Schmitt, “La musique religieuse à Paris au cours des années 1930”, in *Musiques et Musiciens à Paris dans les années trente*, ed. Danièle Pistone (Champion, 2000), 186.

⁹⁰ See Igino Anglès [Higini Anglès] (ed.), *Atti del Congresso internazionale di musica sacra, organizzato dal Pontificio Istituto di musica sacra e dalla Commissione di musica sacra per l'anno santo, Roma, 25-30 maggio 1950* (Tournai: Desclée, 1952); *Zweiter internationaler Kongress für katholische Kirchenmusik, Wien, 4.-10. Oktober 1954, zu Ehren des Heiligen Papstes Pius X. Bericht* (Vienna: s.n., 1955) and *Actes du 3^e Congrès international de musique sacrée, Paris, 1^{er}-8 juillet 1957* (Édition du Congrès/Letouzey & Ané, 1959).

⁹¹ See Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 594 and Jean-Yves Hameline, “Le Motu proprio de Pie X”, 119, agreeing with the contemporary view of Joseph Samson, *Musique et chant sacrés* (Gallimard, 1957), 72–74.

⁹² On this phenomenon of messianism among religious and otherwise conservative artists see Garratt, *Palestrina*, 258–60; John Ling “The Debate in England on the Progress and Regress of Music, 1888–1907” (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, U. of London, [2014]), 58–59; Bruno Foucart, *Le renouveau de la peinture religieuse en France (1800-1860)* (Arthéna, 1987), 5–6. Liszt was seen (by himself and others) in this role in the 1860s; see Dufetel, “Religious Workshop and Gregorian Chant”, 47.

⁹³ See Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform*, 216–27 and Landron, *Le catholicisme français*, 16.

officially condoned in 1955.⁹⁴ Low masses continued to gain popularity over high.⁹⁵ The collapse of reformism in the late 1960s exposed, in retrospect, an internal hollowness long in the making: in fact, there had been no reformism for a long time, only a TLS-backed regime favouring old and historicist music.⁹⁶ Quite suddenly and with little ado, a century and a half of dogged campaigns and bitter disputes came to nothing, leaving hardly a trace. There were isolated holdouts, including protest compositions by Langlais and Duruflé,⁹⁷ and a ghost of the old modal chant accompaniment lives on in Joseph Gelineau's vernacular psalmody and Jacques Berthier's Taizé music (both musicians passed through Guy de Lioncourt's École César Franck, a remnant of the Schola cantorum);⁹⁸ but by the 1970s, as far as the vast bulk of music in Catholic churches worldwide was concerned, it was just as though no reformism had ever taken place.

Generalities

The evolution of Catholic liturgical music rested on a contradiction in the “liturgical movement”. The two phenomena lumped together by this expression—the aestheticisation of the liturgy, and the movement for popular participation—really opposed each other, sharing only a basic sense of the importance of liturgy in Christian life.⁹⁹ The triumph of the second movement at Vatican II sealed a large-scale shift from a hieratic mass, remote and heavily stylised, to a more demotic one requiring simplicity.¹⁰⁰

Reformism followed an institutional blueprint—“school, association, journal”, to which one might add flagship choral group and regular congresses—pioneered by Choron and Niedermeyer but perfected by the Allgemeiner Cäcilienverein, and subsequently replicated in all European countries with large Catholic populations—except France.¹⁰¹ Admittedly, the model worked best in a country of Belgian dimensions: Cecilian societies in the USA and, to a lesser extent, Germany relied on regional bases (the German-settled Midwest and Bavaria, respectively). All the same, the constant failure of attempts to found a national reformist society in France, the

⁹⁴ See especially Landron, *Le catholicisme français*, passim and Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 231–37.

⁹⁵ For contemporary testimony see Auguste Le Guennant, “La crise des offices solennels et le chant grégorien”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 72–75.

⁹⁶ For rich testimony of the post-Vatican II transition see the coverage of liturgical music in *La Maison-Dieu*, the journal of the French Dominicans (esp. the special issue on liturgical music: no. 108, 4th trimester [sic] 1971), notable for its bright hopes of congregational participation and its lack of regret for the old regime.

⁹⁷ See Vincent Rone, “A Voice Cries Out in the Wilderness: The French Organ School Responds to the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church” (PhD thesis, U. of California, Santa Barbara, 2014).

⁹⁸ See Nigel Simeone, “Church and Organ Music”, in *French Music since Berlioz*, ed. Richard Langham Smith and Caroline Potter (Ashgate, 2006), 195–96.

⁹⁹ The point is amply developed in Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform*, 243–69 but sometimes missed in undifferentiated discussions of “the liturgical movement”.

¹⁰⁰ But for a tonic nuancing of this generalisation, which served the interests of the Vatican-II reformers, see Vincent Petit, “D’un siècle à l’autre. Réflexions sur deux mo(uve)ments liturgiques”, in *Liturgie et Société*, ed. Dumons, Petit, and Sorel, 13–29.

¹⁰¹ For the slogan see Joseph Kreps, “La musique religieuse en Belgique. École — Association — Revue”, *MSB* (15 Dec. 1928), 179–87.

land of centralism, calls for explanation.¹⁰² For diverse reasons, none of the schools established in Paris managed to grow into or sustain the role of national academy for church musicians, those of Niedermeyer and Bordes deviating sooner or later towards the profile of a general conservatoire.

Across the period under consideration, the relative weakness of French and to a lesser extent Belgian church choirs weighed heavily on liturgical composition—weakness relative to their German and English analogues, but also to domestic prowess in plainchant research and the organ. Valiant efforts notwithstanding, the feebleness of French choirs and choral culture (Alsace-Lorraine excluded) remained perennial and quite literally proverbial. According to Maurice Emmanuel, an “adage” held that “in Paris all the choirs shriek, and not even in tune”.¹⁰³ Émile Vuillermoz declared in 1923 that “any French composer so ignorant of circumstances as to write choral music deserves his own misfortune”.¹⁰⁴ In this regard, 1789, with the suppression of the *maîtrises* and immense destruction of church property and personnel, cast a long shadow. The subsequent history of the resources available to French church music makes for a depressing tale of determined enterprise repeatedly dashed by larger forces just when it was beginning to bear fruit: by the 1830 Revolution which doomed the Chapelle royale and Choron’s choir school, and cut back subsidies for the *maîtrises*; by the secularisation laws of 1884–86 which left just a half-dozen *maîtrises* subsidised; by the 1901–05 secularisation which finally eliminated the subsidies along with those of the École Niedermeyer, exiled most of the religious orders, and disrupted church finances; by the 1914–18 war which brought carnage, destruction, and ruinous inflation; by the further ruination of the Great Depression and the next war.¹⁰⁵ Narratives of Catholicism in European and especially French culture since the Revolution constantly tell of “renewal”, “revival”, and “restoration”, but only against a backdrop of large-scale decline.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Nothing is known about a Société internationale des organistes et maîtres de chapelle which organised competitions of organ music in the early 1880s. To judge from the third competition (1883–84), it was more Parisian than national, let alone international, and not especially given to reformism (see <http://www.bruzanemediabase.com/frc/Documents/Images/OEuvres-couronnees-par-la-Societe-internationale-des-organistes-et-des-maitres-de-chapelle-3e-annee-1883-1884>). The Union des maîtres de chapelle et organistes (1912–present) was more of a fraternal than a reformist organisation.

¹⁰³ “« À Paris, tous les chœurs crient, et faux ! »”. Maurice Emmanuel, “Un chœur au salon”, *Le Correspondant* (25 June 1920), 1035.

¹⁰⁴ “un compositeur français qui se montre assez ignorant des contingences pour écrire de la musique chorale a, certes, bien mérité son infortune.” Émile Vuillermoz, *Musiques d’aujourd’hui* (Crès, 1923), 117.

¹⁰⁵ See Danièle Pistone, “La musique et le sacré à Paris, de la Révolution à nos jours : caractéristiques et évolution”, in *La musica e il sacro. Atti dell’incontro internazionale di studi, Perugia, 29 settembre — 1 ottobre 1994*, ed. Biancamaria Brumana and Galliano Ciliberti (Olschki, 1997), 190: “le destin de la musique religieuse du XIX^e siècle se trace . . . en une succession d’avancées et de retraits.”

¹⁰⁶ The paradox is noted in Driskel, *Representing Belief*, 33–35.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINALITY PROBLEM IN CHURCH MUSIC

Introduction

A problem of originality pervades discourse on the aesthetics of church music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All the sources share a basic assumption that the value of a composition resides at least partly in the difference that it brings from works already available and known, that the artist should strive to create music with a distinctive identity rather than reproduce something already written; but, in the impossibility of producing totally unprecedented music, they disagree over what might constitute such originality.

Sources of the Originality Problem: Timeless Ideals and Old Exemplars

While it has loomed large in all aesthetic writing since the nineteenth century, originality becomes a problem for composers to the extent that some aesthetic ideal restricts their options, and existing music fulfils that ideal. And discourse on church music has always concerned itself first and foremost with the formulation of rules, the definition of a specifically ecclesiastical or liturgical aesthetic. This regulatory impulse especially animated the movement that I have dubbed “reformist”; its quintessential literary genre we might call the nomographic essay, which tries to work out *the* rules for music in some class of ceremonies, relying as far as possible on the authority of church legislation (most importantly the decrees of the Council of Trent, the 1749 encyclical “Annus qui hunc”, the 1894 “De musica sacra”, and TLS).¹ Such nomography is functionalist, in that its authors predicate their aesthetic ideal on one or another supra-musical purpose, in this case a religious ceremony (or, more precisely, some conception of what makes a successful religious ceremony). Which ceremony they rarely say, referring casually to “la liturgie”, “le culte”, “les rites”, etc.; they knew full well the difficulties of circumscribing “les rites”, a loose collection of words, gestures, movements, vestments, spaces, furnishings, and more, but they usually were after a general ecclesiastical aesthetic applicable to all the ceremonies of the Roman Rite (no one expected Good Friday to sound like Christmas, but many did want a certain solemn *recueillement* to prevail in all collective worship). To that end, they usually find proscription (of chromaticism, pianos, etc.) easier than prescription; their essentially negative mindset is wonderfully captured in one of the genre’s most prominent titles, “Was haben die modernen Kirchencomponisten zu meiden?” (“What Must Modern Church Composers Avoid?”, 1874) by Cecilian leader F. X. Witt. But any aesthetic, framed negatively or positively, entails boundaries that work against individuation; if the abbé X decides that church music must be choral and diatonic, all approved works will share at least a choral scoring and diatonic tonality. Such nomography varies enormously in its precision,

¹ The subsequent enforcement mechanisms (diocesan commissions, imprimaturs, juried catalogues, competitions, etc.) fall outside my scope, though they warrant further research. See Jean-Yves Hameline, “Pouvoir et impouvoir en matière de musique d’église”, *Analyse musicale* 28 (2004), 28–35 and (for an earlier period) Vincent Petit, “La musique et le chant dans le culte catholique en France au XIX^e siècle”, in *La musique religieuse en France au XIX^e siècle. Le sentiment religieux entre profane et sacré (1830-1914)*, ed. Nicolas Dufetel (Brepols, 2021), 25–53.

from vague character recommendations to tables of forbidden rhythms and chords, though a certain reformist consensus emerges around restriction to the choir and organ, diatonicism, consonance, and polymelody,² the underlying principle being the minimisation of contrasts (equated to materiality).³

The more definite the aesthetic, the narrower its stylistic range, and the more likely it corresponds to music already written. And the more old music is known and admired, the more likely it will influence the formation of the aesthetic in the first place. Now, the theorists of church music encountered in this chapter usually took care to distinguish between absolute ideals and their exemplars; ostensibly at least, they ask the composer to adhere to abstract, timeless principles (stemming from the nature of “the liturgy” and/or general “laws of the musical art”), which might just happen to be exemplified by plainchant and/or “classical polyphony”. Thus Vincent d’Indy hardly mentions old repertoire in his “L’art en place et à sa place” (1897–98), a typical example of nomography (and an influential one, as a sort of manifesto of the new Schola cantorum where d’Indy had just taken charge of composition classes and the catalogue of church music); he begins instead from the nature of “the liturgy” and deduces that its music must be vocal, collective, text-subservient, and prayerful (“orant”).⁴ A 1908 essay by the Franciscan philosopher Eusèbe Clop confirms the priority: “there exists a sort of metaphysical type and ideal of truly religious art, an objectivity proper to liturgical music, which the ancients knew and the masters of polyphony succeeded in reproducing, guided by a concept somewhat variable in its exterior form but always in accord with the truth.”⁵

Ostensibly, then, the “metaphysical” ideal affords an indefinite range of realisations, much as the truths of Catholic doctrine evolve without growing more true or less.⁶ Plainchant and Palestrina might approach it more than any other music yet known, but not to perfection. “The truth is that not even Gregorian chant is the absolute ideal of religious musical beauty”, explained the Belgian Benedictine theologian Laurent Janssens in 1893, defending a mass setting by his compatriot Edgar Tinel whose modernity had upset some German Cecilians: “it is only the purest creation inspired by this ideal. The ideal endures, and all styles—the Palestrinian, the modern, and that of the future—must measure up to its laws to be worthy to adorn the cult.”⁷ By the time

² This useful term, meaning a texture of equal and independent melodies (as opposed to “polyphony”, which can simply mean multiplicity of voices), enjoyed some currency after being introduced in André Gedalge, *Traité de la fugue*, vol. 1 (Énoch, 1901), 3.

³ Two important and representative nomographic exercises from the period, both derived from Cecilian traditions, are Adrien Dirven, “Base et criterium de la musique sacrée”, *CSG* (June 1891–Dec. 1893) and Eugène Chaminade, *La musique sacrée telle que la veut l’Église* (Lethielleux, 1897).

⁴ See Vincent d’Indy, “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (Oct. 1897), 158–59. On d’Indy’s institutional role see La Rédaction, “Nos concours”, *TSG* (June 1897), 92.

⁵ “il existe comme un type métaphysique et idéal de l’art vraiment religieux ; il y a comme une objectivité propre à la musique liturgique, que les anciens connaissaient et que les maîtres de la polyphonie ont su reproduire, d’après un concept quelque peu divers quant à la forme extérieure, mais pourtant toujours en conformité avec la vérité.” Eusèbe Clop, “Esthétique et composition de la musique sacrée”, *Études franciscaines* (Dec. 1908), 675.

⁶ For one contemporary discussion of the parallel see Henri Dutoit, “Tradition et progrès dans l’Église et dans l’art religieux”, in *La musique d’église. Compte rendu du Congrès de musique sacrée de Tourcoing, 1919* (Tourcoing: Duvivier, 1920), 151–54.

⁷ “La vérité est que même le chant grégorien n’est pas l’idéal absolu du beau musical religieux ; il n’est que la plus pure création inspirée par cet idéal. Celui-ci demeure, et c’est d’après ses lois que doivent se régler tous les styles : le palestrinien, le moderne et celui de l’avenir, pour être dignes de rehausser le culte.” Laurent Janssens, “La Messe in honorem B. V. M. de Lourdes jugée par J. Habert”, *MSB* (May 1893), 78.

Janssens was writing, most reformists had indeed taken to distinguishing, within their favourite repertoires, between one metaphysical layer that instantiated the ideal and another that represented merely “la langue d’un autre âge”.⁸ Thus when François Verhelst, a Belgian priest-musician with impeccable reformist credentials, denounced what he saw as the archaism of the *cantique grégorien* (a controversial genre consisting of chant melodies, or adaptations of them, fitted with vernacular words and harmony), he took aim at plainchant itself without hesitation: “Between our art and the Gregorian monody stands the irreducible opposition separating our musicality from that of the ninth century. . . . [N]ot even the most besotted Gregorianists will deny the superiority of modern music, from the musical point of view, to the primitive forms of antiquity.”⁹ But Verhelst’s crucial reservation implies the existence of a more than musical aspect of music, a spiritual essence in which plainchant might be unsurpassable after all.

In fact, besotted Gregorianists did exalt plainchant to the point of assimilating it completely to the ideal of Catholic liturgical music: just as the Gothic had become simply “Christian architecture” and Thomism the *philosophia perennis*,¹⁰ these melodies bequeathed by the mists of time easily came to seem like a universal language, a holy writ, the voice of nature, a primordial ur-music, a remnant of classical antiquity, the wellspring of the Western tradition, an emanation of the collective soul of Christendom, the official music of Rome and the popes (similar remarks apply to Renaissance polyphony, revisited in Ch. 2).¹¹ Nothing better illustrates this slipper relationship between exemplar and ideal than TLS itself.¹² The document proceeds in standard nomographic fashion by stipulating timeless ideals (“sanctity”, “goodness of form”, “universality”), but then totally identifies them with plainchant:

These qualities are found in the highest degree in Gregorian chant . . . Gregorian chant has always been considered the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following general law: the more a composition for the church approaches the Gregorian melodies in movement, inspiration, and flavour [*nell’andamento, nella ispirazione e nel sapore*], the more sacred and liturgical it is[.]¹³

⁸ A. Le Franc [Arthur Coquard], “De la musique religieuse”, *Le Monde* (18 May 1881). See also Joseph Germer-Durand, “La musique à l’église”, *La Croix* (July 1881), 223–32; Mathilde Daubresse, “Étude sur la restauration dans sa pureté primitive du plain-chant de l’Église catholique”, *L’Art musical* (31 Aug. 1890), 121–23; Adrien Dirven, “Pour la musique figurée”, *CSG* (March 1906), 21 (Dirven began to turn away from plainchant after 1904, when the pope turned his world upside down by endorsing the Solesmes editions).

⁹ “Il y a d’ailleurs entre notre art et la monodie grégorienne l’irréductible opposition qui sépare notre musicalité de celle du IX^e siècle. . . . les plus emballés des grégorianistes n’oseront pas nier la supériorité de la musique moderne, en tant que musique, sur les formes primitives de l’antiquité.” François Verhelst, “Glans de revues”, *MSB* (Dec. 1908–Jan. 1909), 44–45.

¹⁰ See respectively Augustus Welby Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London: Weale, 1841) and Étienne Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique française entre modernité et Vatican II, 1914-1962* (Desclée De Brouwer, 1998), 40.

¹¹ For a few examples see [Edgar Tinel], “Discours de M. E. Tinel prononcé au Congrès des œuvres sociales, à Malines”, *CSG* (1 Sept. 1889), 31 [orig. in *MSB*, May 1889]; André Mocquereau, “L’art grégorien. Son but, ses procédés, ses caractères”, *TSG* (Nov. 1896), 163; Eusèbe Cloup, “Esthétique et composition de la musique sacrée”, *Études franciscaines* (Nov. 1908), 484; Laurent Janssens, “Le chant grégorien et la musique moderne”, *CSG* (1 Feb. 1891), 7–8. It should come as no surprise to find Janssens on both sides of the issue: most authors waver between idealisation and historicism.

¹² For more general commentary on TLS see esp. Jean-Yves Hameline, “Le *Motu proprio* de Pie X et l’Instruction sur la musique sacrée (22 novembre 1903)”, *La Maison-Dieu* 239 (2004), 85–120.

¹³ Trans. adapted from Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music: 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Liturgical Press, 1979), 224. For the Italian text see Felice Rainoldi, *Sentieri della musica sacra, dall’Ottocento al Concilio Vaticano II. Documentazione su ideologie e prassi* (C.L.V. — Edizioni liturgiche, 1996), 555–62. This famous dictum was already a

No sooner has the pope issued this call for imitation, however, than he undercuts it: “The above-mentioned qualities are also possessed to an excellent degree by classical polyphony, especially that of the Roman School, which reached perfection in the sixteenth century with the works of Pierluigi da Palestrina”. Furthermore,

The Church has always recognised and favoured the progress of the arts, admitting to the service of religion everything good and beautiful discovered by genius over the centuries, though always with due regard for the liturgical laws. Consequently, more modern music can also be admitted into the church, since it too furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety, and gravity as to be in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions.¹⁴

How can progress be admitted if plainchant has already furnished the supreme model? The apparent contradiction goes back to TLS’s role as a compromise in the church-music quarrels (for all its draconian reputation among secular commentators); its deliberately vague formulas try to give something to everyone—plainchant idolaters, Palestrina idolaters, partisans of “modern” music—and steer between interventionism and liberality.

Most commentators concluded from this papal paradox that plainchant had to only represent a partial instantiation of the ideal after all; if Leo XIII in his encyclical “*Æterni patris*” had exhorted philosophers to work “in the spirit of” (*ad mentem*) Thomas Aquinas, Pius X could hardly be calling for new plainchant melodies.¹⁵ “The more perfect the imitation, the better would music in the twenty-first century be written in the manner of the tenth or sixteenth. Who can fail to see the impossibility of such an idea?” exclaimed the abbé Henri Delépine in an article setting out the agenda for his reformist periodical in 1924. “It is therefore in the spirit and not the form that we must look for the religious qualities that the *motu proprio* requires of modern works.”¹⁶ Alternatively, one could make *il canto gregoriano* the supreme model but rethink the notion of liturgical fitness as an *a posteriori* construct. The source that comes closest to this latter option is a 1904 commentary on TLS by the historian of medieval music Pierre Aubry. As Aubry saw it, the pope had circumvented the unsolvable problem of codifying a churchly style in simply stipulating

reformist commonplace by 1903; see e.g. Félix Clément, *Histoire générale de la musique religieuse, depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours* (Le Clere, 1860), 366 (“Les compositions musicales religieuses n’ont un caractère en rapport avec leur objet qu’autant qu’elles se rapprochent du plain-chant”); Edmond Monnier, *La musique religieuse et le plain-chant devant les prescriptions du Concile de Trente* (Paris and Lyon: Lecoffre, 1880), 20–1 (“la musique religieuse, pour être digne de ce nom, doit emprunter son caractère, son allure et son expression au chant grégorien . . . Le plain-chant doit donc toujours être pris pour type de l’art musical religieux”); Adrien Dirven, “Base et criterium de la musique sacrée”, *CSG* (Aug. 1891), 50 (“Le chant grégorien est ainsi « le type parfait et absolu de l’expression religieuse », comme dit l’abbé Montein, et par là même ce chant est la base et la pierre de touche de toute musique d’église”); Lazare Perruchot, “Énumération des textes mis au concours”, *TSG* (Aug. 1895), 11 (“plus une composition musicale se rapprochera du plain-chant, et [sic] plus elle aura le droit de porter le titre de musique d’Église”). In 1857, the bishop of Regensburg declared that “Le chant grégorien doit rester, à jamais la source et la base de la musique religieuse, et ce chant, dès lors est le seul critère pour juger de la musique religieuse” according to Joseph Kreps, “La musique religieuse en Belgique. École — Association — Revue”, *MSB* (15 Dec. 1928), 184.

¹⁴ Trans. adapted from Hayburn, *Papal Legislation*, 225.

¹⁵ See Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté*, 39–42. Pius XI’s “*Studiorum ducem*” (1923) likewise calls for “une noble émulation [of Aquinas], respectueuse d’une juste liberté et propice au progrès de la science” (ibid.).

¹⁶ “Plus l’imitation serait parfaite, meilleure serait donc cette musique du XXI^e siècle écrite à la manière du X^e ou du XVI^e ? Qui ne voit l’impossibilité d’un tel concept. . . . C’est donc dans l’esprit et non dans la forme de la musique qu’il faut chercher les qualités religieuses que le *Motu proprio* exige des œuvres modernes.” Henri Delépine, “Notre idéal, notre programme”, *RSC* (Jan. 1924), 2.

plainchant as the gold standard. Aubry the scholar made so bold as to ask why this of all possible repertoires should thus be “taken as the eternal type of church music”, but Aubry the Catholic and commentator had to rationalise that move.¹⁷ In effect, he argues, it is the historical position of plainchant that makes it the archetype of Catholic church music: whatever its intrinsic qualities, the liturgy had grown up around it, and not the other way around. While leading to the same practical implications, Aubry has effectively turned TLS on its head.

Hylomorphism: The Aesthetics of Substance and Accident

As my examples already show, authors looking for a theory of originality in church music almost invariably sought it by distinguishing between a substance common to all music of a certain class and accidents subject to freedom and innovation. Their efforts to name these two aspects generated a plethora of metaphors (left and right, respectively, though some terms did double duty):

substance	forme
essence	moule
fond	échafaudage
sève	surface
suc	détail
moelle	matière
cœur	mécanisme
âme	gymnastique
inspiration	facture
esprit	moyens
pensée	artifices
idée	techniques
sens	métier
sentiment	procédés
impression	formules
expression	manière
émotion	style
ethos	idiome
caractère	écriture
atmosphère	langage
effet	syntaxe
tenue	vocables
art	ressources
palette	édifice
vie	contours

The metaphysical dichotomy underlying all such metaphors we might call “hylomorphism” (matter-formism, a word that, not entirely coincidentally, appeared around the turn of the

¹⁷ “pris comme type éternel de la musique d’église”. Pierre Aubry, “Les idées de S. S. Pie X sur le chant de l’Église”, *Le Correspondant* (10 July 1904), 49.

century).¹⁸ This pervasive habit may well reflect something of the philosophy taught in Catholic educational institutions, just as “particularly Catholic” expressions of hylomorphism (transubstantiation comes immediately to mind) offered some 1920s intellectuals a paradigm for reconciling creative freedom with changeless doctrine.¹⁹ At the same time, dichotomies such as letter/spirit, form/content, style/substance are simply everywhere in Western aesthetics since Aristotle—rarely reflected upon but deeply embedded in the language we use to discuss art.²⁰

This general phenomenon came in many variants: two authors might agree that composers should conform to a timeless “spirit” while inventing new “forms”, yet understand “spirit” and “forms” quite differently (in general, the substance terms—“âme”, “esprit”, “pensée”, etc.—have the more metaphorical relationship to musical sound and require more interpretation). Such dichotomies always raise a problem of the relative independence between substance and accident—the degree to which musical style could vary without compromising the essential character of liturgical piety, or, conversely, to which that indispensable character extended to musical style. If substance and accidents are too interdependent, it becomes impossible to say where the one leaves off and the other begins and the whole dichotomy breaks down, as the rare critics of hylomorphism recognised. Sceptical of the Schola cantorum’s promises of a “modern” church music “inspired by” the old masters, the musicologist Lionel de La Laurencie rejected the possibility of any spiritual link beyond the level of style:

[O]ne can either direct future composers to observe precisely the Palestrinian rules—the handling of the counterpoint, the absence of chromaticism, the preparation of dissonances—in which case one risks ending up with imitation and pastiche, encouraging remakes of Palestrina, or one can take these narrow rules in a broad sense, leaving all liberty to the individual’s discretion, in which case the resulting works will not have any Palestrinian character.²¹

Substance (“caractère”) is consubstantial with concrete features, La Laurencie insists. Another critic of historicist composition, the abbé Clément Besse, rejected in similar terms the proposals to rejuvenate Palestrinian polyphony with modern elements made by the Schola professor Amédée Gastoué: “Either Gastoué means that one can sew a new patch onto a worn-out garment, which would hold no interest for couturiers with talent, or he means that the spirit of Palestrinian

¹⁸ See <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/hyl%C3%A9morphism>. I borrow the term from Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919–1933* (U. of Toronto Press, 2005), 6.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 6, 16. Vincent d’Indy, “Matière et forme de l’art musicale moderne”, *Comœdia* (28 Jan. 1924) superficially draws on then-fashionable neo-Thomism, but d’Indy had been thinking hylomorphically since at least the 1890s.

²⁰ For a random contemporary example with no particular connection to Catholicism see Jean d’Udine, “L’école des amateurs, VIII. Forme et matière”, *Le Courrier musical* (1 March 1906), 159–64; see further Charles Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism* (Indiana UP, 2005), 5–6 and Carlo Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (CUP, 2001), 77–85. Garratt attributes the hylomorphism endemic among German Cecilians to the legacy of Hegel; see Garratt, *Palestrina*, 147–50. Fétis borrowed a similar distinction between “truth” and the “real” from Cousin; see Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–80* (CUP, 1995), 36 and Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, “Fétis and the Idea of Progress”, trans. Holly Chung, *Music Theory & Analysis* 3.11 (2016), 144–69.

²¹ “ou bien on proposera aux compositeurs futurs l’application exacte des règles palestriniennes, l’emploi des contrepoints, l’absence de chromatisme, l’usage des préparations, et on risquera alors de pousser à l’imitation et au pastiche, d’inciter à refaire du Palestrina ; ou bien on prendra ces règles étroites dans un sens large, en laissant toute liberté à l’initiative de chacun, et alors les œuvres qui verront le jour n’auront aucun caractère palestrinien.” Bertrand Ellion [Lionel de La Laurencie], “Vieilles musiques”, *L’Art moderne* (9 Dec. 1900), 389.

polyphony would remain the same when modernised and its religious quality just as efficacious, which is far-fetched.”²²

Aims

This chapter describes the conceptions of originality formulated in literature on church music in French from the 1890s to the 1930s. I have organised it around the various hylomorphic dichotomies that served to articulate the difference between originality and non-originality. Since ideas return again and again, making trends hard to discern, I have opted to capture in a single presentation the maximum range of opinion found across the period and cultural area, isolating differences among the positions and arguments rather than tracking their variations or transmission from one decade or region to another. Suffice it to say that most if not all of the propositions on originality covered in this chapter were highly unoriginal. Inevitably, the exercise cuts across the outputs of most of my authors, and juxtaposes sources from dissimilar situations; I have done my best to account for the immediate contexts bearing on interpretation (though, all too often, information on what was going on behind the scenes is impossible to come by). I will have to leave for another lifetime the question of how these ideas affected composition, how old music really entered into play when a d’Indy or a Tinel exchanged writing paper for music paper—let alone the question of whether the results really do or do not amount to pastiche (I take a stab at that at the end of the thesis). Opining on what church music ought to be like was one thing, actually writing it another: these aesthetic discourses should be understood as a literary phenomenon distinct from the compositional process, of which it offers at best indirect evidence. That said, we are very much dealing with musicians offering their two cents on profound philosophical questions; I try to walk the thin line between making sense of what they write and making it make sense, but there often comes a point at which I have to leave them to their contradictions and ambiguities.

Originality as Inspiration

One sort of hylomorphic dichotomy corresponds to the difference between subject and object: the substance of music is the soul or personality or intentions of its author, or the idea or inspiration put into it, or perhaps the impression aroused by it; its objective form or style then becomes accidental. Essays on church music often appear to imply such subjectivism, making the validity of a work stand or fall on the author’s piety. “Let us write for the Church as believers, without worrying about particular schools or forms”, exhorts the abbé Pierre Chassang, a cleric of conservative tastes who penned many musings on the subject for Delépine’s *Revue Sainte-Cécile*.²³

²² “Ou bien M. Gastoué entend qu’on peut coudre un morceau neuf sur un vêtement trop usé ; alors cela n’intéresse pas les couturiers de talent. Ou bien il entend que l’esprit de la polyphonie palestrinienne demeurerait le même, et sa vertu religieuse aussi efficace au cas où sa forme de composition serait modernisée, et cela est bien aventuré.” Clément Besse, “À propos du Congrès de musique sacrée de Strasbourg”, *La Revue des jeunes* (10 Sept. 1921), 554–55.

²³ “Écrivons pour l’Église en croyants, sans préoccupation d’école ou de formes particulières.” Jean des Barres [pseudonym], “Du style de la musique sacrée”, *RSC* (Nov. 1922). For my money, “Jean des Barres” (the name of a

In keeping with the official line of that periodical, which promoted the easy homophonic music sold by its publisher, Chassang was rebuking those who identified religiosity exclusively with the “Palestrinian” contrapuntal style; but the case of Gounod’s neo-Palestrinian late masses convinced him, just barely, that one could imitate that style with originality:

[N]ot everyone has [Gounod’s] genius: for many, pastiche and the elimination of all personality are to be feared. The way is viable, perhaps, but dangerous. It requires a sure footing, long experience, and masterful skill in counterpoint. . . . Write as one may ‘in the style of...’, unless a sincere, ardent piety, inspired by the mystical intentions of the Sacred Liturgy, vivify the work, it will be nothing more than a soulless dummy, dressed up in a borrowed old rag, a counterfeit that will always leave the scraps of cheap fabric visible here and there.²⁴

Though the accent falls on admonition, Chassang is prepared at least to entertain the possibility of pastiche redeemed by good intentions.

Insofar as it makes style a matter of indifference—the thought is what counts, so any sounds will do—subjectivism sanctions the most faithful pastiche (as old forms infused with new spirit) and the most radical innovation (as new forms animated by an old spirit).²⁵ On the one hand, apologies for imitation typically separate substance from style. When the critic Louis Laloy, a supporter of Debussy and other innovators, found himself having to defend the uncharacteristic imitations of sixteenth-century music in Debussy’s *Chansons de Charles d’Orléans* (1898, 1908), he argued in effect that what really mattered was not whether the songs resembled older music but whether Debussy had expressed himself in them:

There is nothing in these compositions that was added for the sake of resemblance, nothing that does not translate what was in the author’s mind with the strictest accuracy. But it must be added that this mind, not being a slave to modern regimentation, effortlessly makes the forms of the past its own. Thus, the scale without a leading tone . . . was just as familiar to the Renaissance masters; but long ago Claude Debussy rediscovered it, by instinct.²⁶

For Laloy, here, evaluation rests at least partly on “what was in the author’s mind”: the *Chansons* may replicate “the forms of the past”, but sincerity redeems them; the reader is to trust Louis Laloy, the composer’s special confidant, that Debussy had indeed acted out of instinct. But the argument could just as well swing the other way. When Jules Combarieu, a musicologist lecturing at the Collège de France, questioned whether the revival of ancient modes promoted by his colleagues Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray and Maurice Emmanuel would really rejuvenate modern music, he too suggested that accidents were one thing and substance another:

thirteenth-century crusader) is Chassang, who furnished most of the content for *RSC* at this time and writes in a very similar style.

²⁴ “tout le monde n’a pas son génie : il est à craindre pour beaucoup le pastiche et l’arrêt de toute personnalité. La voie est bonne, soit, mais elle est dangereuse. Elle demande des pas avisés, une longue expérience, une habileté contrapontique magistrale. . . . On a beau écrire à la manière de . . . , si une piété sincère, ardente, s’inspirant des intentions mystiques de la Sainte Liturgie, ne vivifie l’œuvre, elle ne sera qu’un mannequin sans âme, attifé d’une défroque empruntée, une contrefaçon qui laissera toujours voir dans certains coins des lambeaux de camelote.” Ibid., 4.

²⁵ Thus Hegel claimed to oppose style replication, Garratt notes, but “the dynamics of his form/content dualism paradoxically provide a strategy for legitimizing the use of historical elements, and even for the replication of historical styles.” Garratt, *Palestrina*, 34–5. See *ibid.*, 163 on subjectivist Cecilian arguments for pastiche.

²⁶ Translation adapted from Deborah Priest, *Louis Laloy (1874–1944) on Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky* (Ashgate, 1999), 211 [orig. in *La Grande Revue*, 1909].

Using this or that mode will not suffice to guarantee a higher poetry, any more than writing in the language of Rabelais or Montaigne, like certain literati of the nineteenth century, suffices to be a Montaigne or a Rabelais. And just as an original thinker even today can write a masterpiece in the language of Descartes or Voltaire, a musician, if inspired, can create admirable compositions in the language of Rameau. It is not grammatical syntax that influences thought, but thought that raises syntax to its level. Genius is never impeded by the insufficiency of a language.²⁷

Though critiquing the revival of something old, Combarieu's argument ends up making novelty or antiquity of style ("langue", "syntaxe", "verbe") irrelevant, if musical value resides entirely in an independent higher spirit ("poésie", "inspiration", "pensée", "génie").

Combarieu, Laloy, and Chassang (among many others) identify substance at least partly with what happens in the mind of the author; subjectivism that identified it with reception introduced an additional factor of relativity (reception by whom?). If, for instance, a Gregorian melody was to produce the same effect on modern listeners that it had produced on the medieval monk who wrote it, it would require more than a little adjustment. So at any rate argued the Belgian composer Adolphe Samuel, who took up the reformist cause after converting to Catholicism in 1895. Though he accepted plainchant as the foundation for all church music, Samuel recognised that its sublime spirituality was lost on the average parishioner in 1890s Ghent: "As far as the masses are concerned, monophony, unless trivial and familiar, has become a dead letter; liturgical music [i.e. plainchant] seems an enigma, something *sad, poor, barbarous*."²⁸ His solution, in a series of liturgical works of which he lived to complete three motets and a mass, was to "translat[e] into modern musical language the impressions aroused by plainchant",²⁹ by fitting the melody with a rich Romantic harmony and adjusting to suit: "Sometimes I keep the original phrase, sometimes I modify it, sometimes I develop its shape" (see Fig. 1.1 for an example of what he did with the *Tantum ergo*).³⁰ Hylomorphism justified his freedoms: one had "not to follow scrupulously the letter of the texts [but] to resolutely *interpret* them" and "have in mind only the *spirit* of these texts, which is the impression, the expression, the life that they exude."³¹ In fact, Samuel hoped that this

²⁷ "Il ne suffit donc pas d'employer tel ou tel mode pour être sûr d'atteindre à une poésie plus haute, pas plus qu'il ne suffit d'écrire dans la langue de Rabelais ou de Montaigne, comme l'ont fait certains littérateurs du XIX^e siècle, pour être un Montaigne ou un Rabelais ; et de même qu'aujourd'hui encore un penseur original pourrait écrire un chef-d'œuvre dans la langue de Descartes ou de Voltaire, de même un musicien, s'il est inspiré, peut faire d'admirables compositions dans la langue de Rameau. Ce n'est pas la syntaxe grammaticale qui influe sur la pensée, mais la pensée qui élève la syntaxe jusqu'à elle. Le génie ne souffrira jamais de l'insuffisance du verbe." Jules Combarieu, "Cours du Collège de France. Les modes (*suite*). Les modes diatoniques. I : Généralités", *La Revue musicale (histoire et critique)* (15 May 1906), 240.

²⁸ "Un chant homophone, — à moins qu'il soit trivial et connu, — est devenu pour [la foule] lettre morte ; la musique liturgique lui semble une énigme, quelque chose de *triste*, de *pauvre*, de *barbare*". Adolphe Samuel, *Sur la musique dans les églises* (Ghent: Beyer, 1896), 5 [orig. in *MSB*, Oct. 1896].

²⁹ "une traduction en langage musical moderne des impressions qu'éveille le plain-chant." Ibid. In an interview Samuel affirmed: "Je n'ai donc, en aucune façon, cherché à faire du *neuf*, mais simplement à faire revivre, à rajeunir, le Plain-Chant, ou mieux, à en traduire les beautés dans notre musique moderne, à l'usage de ceux qui ne sont pas sensibles à un chant homophone." "Extrait de la « Gazette de Liège » du 12 mars 1897" [interview with Jules Ghymers], B-Br, Ms. III 1.526 44 Mus., n.p. He had already formulated this notion of translation when writing his choral symphony *Christus* (1889–94), which uses chant melodies as leitmotifs: "Je ne fais que traduire dans un art plus complexe et actuel, ce qui est accessible à quelques-uns seulement." Adolphe Samuel, letter to Lucien Solvay, 7 Oct. 1894, B-Bc.

³⁰ "Tantôt je conserve la phrase originale, tantôt je la modifie, tantôt j'en développe le schéma." Id., *Sur la musique dans les églises*, 7.

³¹ "ne pas s'en tenir scrupuleusement à la note des textes"; "résolument *interpréter*"; "n'avoir en vue que l'*esprit* de ces textes, qui est l'impression, l'expression, la vie qui s'en dégage." Ibid., 6.

Fig. 1.1: Adolphe Samuel, *Trois Motets*, Tantum ergo, bars 24–35

Poco più mosso

Chœur

pp Ge - ni - to - ri, Ge - ni - to - que *f* Laus et ju - bi - la - ti - o,

pp Ge - ni - to - que *f* Laus et ju - bi - la - ti - o,

Orgue

ppp *f* *mp*

a tempo

f Sa - lus, Ho - nor, *mp* vir - tus quo - que

f Sa - lus, Ho - nor, *mp* vir - tus quo - que

a tempo

f *mp*

p *dimin.* Sit et be - ne - di - cti - o:

p *dimin.* Sit et be - ne - di - cti - o:

p *dimin.* *rf* *p*

“temporary compromise between liturgical monophony and ordinary music” would lead the uncultivated faithful towards appreciation for plainchant on its own one day;³² his mass setting indeed enacted the transition within its own duration, as the composer explained in an interview, progressing from a Kyrie “not too far from ordinary music” to nearly unaccompanied plainchant in the Agnus Dei, which the congregation is led to “accept without realising what has happened”.³³ Predictably, though, more conservative reformists, such as Samuel’s onetime student Edgar Tinel, director of the Lemmens Institute, and the abbé Van Damme, director of the Belgian *Musica sacra*, objected that the “tranquil suavity” and “sober and severe simplicity” of plainchant had been lost in his translations, with their “clashes” and “far too extraordinary audacities” (the music is pretty mild by secular standards, but the chromaticism in passages such as Fig. 1.2 suffices to explain their reaction).³⁴

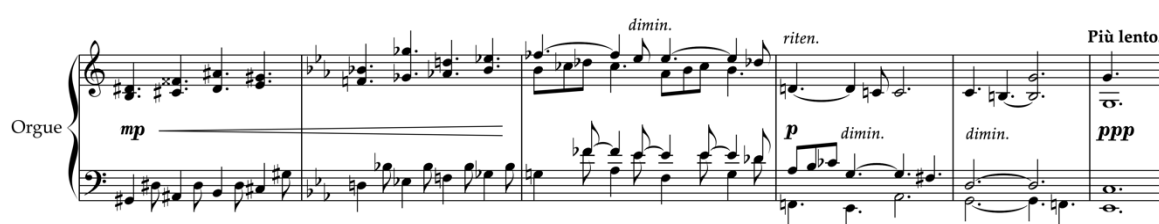


Fig. 1.2: Adolphe Samuel, *Trois Motets*, Tutela præsens, bars 29–34

Pushed too far, then, subjectivism strained credulity. Commentators on church music often oppose “style”, “technique”, “forms” and the like to things that sound decidedly noumenal, such as “soul”, “piety”, “thought”, “idea”, but it seems unlikely that many would have affirmed that the substance of music is completely inaudible, shut up in someone’s head, that just any sound will do. On the contrary, when parcelling out music among the composer’s “inspiration”, the music’s “character”, the listener’s “impression”, and so on they usually presume, precisely, that all parts relate to each other organically—the author’s piety inevitably communicates itself to the work and thence to the listener. They rarely hazard much of a foray into the thorny details.

At the end of the day, many authors simply waffle on the degree of independence between substance and accidents. The ultimate example is Vincent d’Indy, who wrote much on originality in both sacred and secular contexts, and found himself at the turn of the century spread thin between progressivism (the post-Wagnerian opera of ideas, the Société nationale de musique, the Libre esthétique, battles against the “academicists” Saint-Saëns and Dubois) and conservatism (the historical programme for the Schola cantorum, the “reform” of church music, attacks on Naturalist opera assimilated to Dreyfusism, critique of the emerging avant-garde). When defending the Schola’s historicist church music, d’Indy frequently distinguishes between substantive

³² “compromis transitoire entre l’homophonie liturgique et la musique ordinaire”. Ibid., 7.

³³ “pa[s] trop éloigné de la musique habituelle”; “on accepte, sans s’en douter, la reproduction presque intégrale du Plain-Chant de la messe in *Festis simplicibus* [sic]”. “Extrait de la « Gazette de Liège »”.

³⁴ “heurts”; “hardiesses par trop extraordinaires”; “tranquille suavité”; “simplicité sobre et sévère”. L[a] R[édaction] [Pierre-Jean Van Damme and Edgar Tinel], [untitled response to Adolphe Samuel], *MSB* (Oct. 1896), 21. Tinel had pilloried the motets under cover of anonymity in “Bibliographie”, *MSB* (July 1896), 100; cf. Paul Tinel, “Une polémique d’Edgar Tinel”, *MSB* (Dec. 1934), 265–67.

emotions in music and “their cladding of formulas, to which a high mind can attach no importance”;³⁵ “techniques [*procédés*] and means” are “only secondary”, since “art is not in the means you use, it is in *you*”.³⁶ Attacking more progressivist musicians, he reproves those who “make art consist either in formulas (read: pretty chords) or in contemporary language, décor, or dress.”³⁷ He even sanctions style replication so long as the artist’s temperament calls for it, holding up to his students the example of the anonymous medieval artisans who “thought only of imitating in their works the formal types established dogmatically, so to speak, by their predecessors. They never sought originality at any price but were simply and sincerely in harmony with their artistic conscience.”³⁸ On the other hand, when deflecting accusations of pastiche d’Indy sometimes suggests the exact opposite, implying interrelation between substance and accidents rather than independence: no need to worry about innovation, because a strong personality will automatically generate new forms. He disavows at least some degree of imitation (“To remake Palestrina, Bach, or Beethoven would be folly: copying is not creation”)³⁹ and values at least some degree of innovation (“it is necessary to renew the old formulas”).⁴⁰ But he seems confident that renewal will take care of itself so long as the composer has something to say.

General versus Specific, Structure versus Surface

When hylomorphic binaries have an objective dimension they correspond to some difference of degree, such as that between general musical character and specific musical details. Most nomographers of church music indeed renounce any attempt to draw a clear line in the continuum; they might proscribe “sensuality”, but few want to maintain that a single chromaticism would disqualify a piece from liturgical use. Thus the abbé Delépine: “None of the means at the disposal of musical art can be proscribed *a priori*. However, a modern composer, if penetrated with sincere religion, will know as though instinctively how to sacrifice outré expressions, undignified resources, the *procédés* of the theatrical style.”⁴¹ And the abbé René Aigrain, in a survey of Catholic church music from 1929: “certain forms are particularly suitable for church music”, including

³⁵ Vincent d’Indy, “Jeunes musiques”, *L’Art moderne* (23 Dec. 1900), 407. The clothing metaphor was a common guise for hylomorphism; see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 146, 148, 283, 307–08, 316–17.

³⁶ “la question des procédés et des moyens n’est qu’accessoire . . . l’art n’est pas dans les moyens que vous employez, l’art est en *vous-même*”. Id., “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (March 1898), 66.

³⁷ “faire consister l’art soit dans la formule (inemployée en musique : la jolie harmonie), soit dans le vocable, le décor ou le costume contemporains.” Id., “L’artiste moderne”, *TSG* (Dec. 1901), 343.

³⁸ “les admirables ouvriers d’art du Moyen-Âge, qui ne songeaient qu’à imiter, dans leurs œuvres, les types plastiques établis, pour ainsi dire dogmatiquement, par leurs prédécesseurs. Ceux-là ne recherchaient point l’originalité à tout prix, ils étaient simplement et sincèrement d’accord avec leur conscience d’artiste”. Id., “Une école d’art répondant aux besoins modernes”, *TSG* (Nov. 1900), 310.

³⁹ “Refaire du Palestrina, du Bach ou du Beethoven serait une folie : copier n’est pas créer”. Id., “Jeunes musiques”, 408.

⁴⁰ “il faut cependant bien renouveler les anciennes formules”. Id., “Une école d’art”, 311.

⁴¹ “Aucun des moyens actuels dont dispose l’art musical ne saurait être proscrit, *a priori*. Toutefois, un compositeur moderne, s’il est pénétré de religion sincère, saura, comme instinctivement, sacrifier les expressions outrées, les ressources qui manqueraient de dignité, les procédés du style théâtral.” Delépine, “Notre idéal, notre programme”, 3.

“Palestrinian polyphony”, but “no technique is excluded *per se*, so long as it be used in a certain spirit”.⁴²

Alternatively, some rule-givers equate substance to some set of stylistic categories, usually considered structurally essential, such as performing forces, texture, “form”, and “tonality” (diatonic versus chromatic). Above all, they identify it with a general principle of conformity to the shape and sense of the text, of which the composer must set all the words and nothing but the words, in the right order, with proper accentuation but without too much repetition, excessive melismas, or long instrumental interludes. Parameters such as melody, harmony, and rhythm then fall to the composer’s discretion on grounds of superficiality. Thus the journalist André Hallays, asserting in an early propaganda article for the Schola cantorum that “one can easily imagine a music that, Palestrinian in its form, will be modern in its inspiration”, equated “form” (substance) to performing forces, length of movements, and text-setting, and “inspiration” (accidents) to rhythm, harmony, and “accents”.⁴³ Or again, in an apology for “modern” church music read at a 1922 congress of church musicians in Paris, the *scholiste* composer Paul Berthier authorised innovation in harmony by claiming it as inessential: “the kind of emotion produced by a musical work derives, in general, rather little from the harmonic writing”.⁴⁴ One easily hears the echoes of his teacher d’Indy.

One idiosyncratic version of hylomorphism equated the changeless substance of liturgical music with something like the collective work-identities of the melodies comprising “Gregorian chant”: to approach plainchant, as commanded by TLS, meant to effect a recognisable reference to a melodies from that “official” corpus. As for the setting embroidered around it, the composer would enjoy full liberty, making possible works “contemporary in their *écriture* and traditional in their thematic material”, as the choirmaster Joseph Samson once envisioned it.⁴⁵ Perhaps the clearest example appears in a tendentious paraphrase of TLS by the Jesuit Marie-Joseph Rouët de Journal, in the course of a review of that same 1922 congress: “Gregorian chant being, by definition, church music in purest form, the more composers of sacred music draw near to it and borrow its themes to make them into motets and vernacular *cantiques*, the more their works will have the right to enter the sanctuary.”⁴⁶ The commentator ties liturgical fitness to literal presence of a Gregorian melody. The abbé Verhelst approached this conception in distinguishing between the melodic identity (“matière”) of a chant tune and its stylistic properties in the abstract (“forme”). François Brun, a priest-composer affiliated with the Schola cantorum, had exhorted Belgian

⁴² “certaines formes conviennent tout particulièrement à la musique d’église (ainsi la polyphonie palestrinienne)] . . . il n’y a pas de technique qui soit par elle-même exclue, pourvu qu’elle soit pratiquée dans un certain esprit”. René Aigrain, *La musique religieuse* (Bloud & Gay, 1929), 221.

⁴³ “on peut facilement imaginer une musique qui, palestrinienne dans sa forme, sera moderne dans son inspiration”. André Hallays, “La musique d’église”, *La Revue encyclopédique* (17 April 1897), 312.

⁴⁴ “le genre d’émotion produite par une œuvre musical provient, en général, assez peu de l’écriture harmonique”. Paul Berthier, “L’écriture moderne de la musique d’église”, *La Vie et les Arts liturgiques* (June 1923), 352.

⁴⁵ “contemporaines par l’écriture et traditionnelles quant à l’arsenal thématique”. Joseph Samson, *Palestrina, ou la Poésie de l’exactitude* (Geneva: Henn, 1939), 176.

⁴⁶ “Le chant grégorien étant, par définition, le pur chant d’église, plus les compositeurs de musique sacrée s’en rapprocheront et lui emprunteront ses thèmes pour en faire motets ou cantiques en langue vulgaire, plus aussi leurs œuvres auront le droit de pénétrer au sanctuaire.” Marie-Joseph Rouët de Journal, “Musique d’église et musique de concert. Le dernier congrès parisien”, *Études* (5 Jan. 1923), 63. Ostensibly, Rouët de Journal is paraphrasing d’Indy’s talk at the congress (as well as TLS), but the emphasis on melodic quotation is much less clear in d’Indy’s published text; see Vincent d’Indy, “Le motet et le cantique grégoriens”, *Revue du chant grégorien* (May–June 1923), 163–69.

composers to take up the *cantique grégorien* genre favoured there;⁴⁷ Verhelst retorted that his compatriots did draw on plainchant, but without sacrificing “the *procédés* of contemporary art”: “they use its matter, not its form. Nothing is more logical. Matter remains, form is essentially transitory.”⁴⁸ Since Verhelst objected specifically to modality and ametricality, “matière” here probably means a melodic contour sufficiently determinate to be identified as that of the *Veni Creator* or the *Pange lingua* or whatever, but sufficiently indeterminate to adapt to metre and a certain harmonic syntax—as in Renaissance polyphony (“les classiques”), to which Verhelst likens the Belgian approach. The basic aspiration recalls that of Adolphe Samuel, though Verhelst shared his collaborator Tinel’s much more restrained sense of what constituted “contemporary art”.

Other writers articulate to the opposite effect this same distinction between works and abstract properties, proposing that composers imitate principles instantiated in but not exhausted by old repertoires. The idea began especially with the secular scholar-composers Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray and Maurice Emmanuel, keen to distance themselves from antiquarianism: Emmanuel never lost an opportunity to disparage “imitation”, “pastiche”, “systematic returns to the past”, and “archaizing styles, the return to dead things” and preferred to see himself as advocating “the use of all forces that do not wear out” or the “transposition” of certain “principles” from ancient music—that of plurimodality above all.⁴⁹ They loved the metaphor of wealth extraction (in an age that thought of harmony in terms of “exploration”, “conquêtes”, “annexions”): the “vein” of classical harmony had been exhausted, but the “riches” excavated from the “mine” of old music would fuel continued production with new “resources” or “material”.⁵⁰ The metaphor subsequently made the rounds of church musicians: Joseph Samson admired works “wherein the Gregorian mine is exploited”;⁵¹ the Belgian priest-composer Jean-Marie Plum called plainchant “a considerable mine on which it would be a mistake not to draw”;⁵² for the organist Joseph Bonnet, chant melodies were “inexhaustible mines for instrumental

⁴⁷ See François Brun, “Bibliographie” [review of Alphons Moortgat (ed.), *Recueil de cantiques*], *Revue du chant grégorien* (Nov.–Dec. 1908), 70.

⁴⁸ “les procédés de l’art actuel”; “ils en utilisent la matière, et non la forme. Rien n’est plus logique. La matière demeure, la forme est essentiellement mouvante.” Verhelst, “Glans de revues”, 45.

⁴⁹ “les retours systématiques au passé”; “les styles archaïsants, le retour aux choses mortes”; “l’utilisation de toutes les forces qui ne s’épuisent pas”. Maurice Emmanuel, “Avertissement”, in id., *Salamine. Tragédie lyrique en trois actes d’après les Perses d’Eschyle*, libretto by Théodore Reinach (Choudens, 1926), i; id., “Mes avatars”, *Zodiaque* 139 (1984 [1924]), 37; id., *Histoire de la langue musicale*, vol. 2 (Laurens, 1911), 572.

⁵⁰ See Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Trente Mélodies populaires de Grèce et d’Orient* (Lemoine, 1877), 7; id., “Un nouveau système pour l’accompagnement du plain-chant”, *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (24 Feb. 1878), 58; id., *Conférence sur la modalité dans la musique grecque* (Imprimerie nationale, 1879), 48 (quoting César Cui); id., “Discours prononcé par M. Bourgault-Ducoudray, président, à l’ouverture du congrès”, in *Congrès international d’histoire de la musique tenu à Paris à la Bibliothèque de l’Opéra du 23 au 29 juillet 1900* (Solesmes: Imprimerie St-Pierre, 1901), 9; id., letter to Émile Burnouf cited in Peter Asimov, “Comparative Philology, French Music, and the Composition of Indo-Europeanism from Fétis to Messiaen” (PhD thesis, U. of Cambridge, 2020), 161; Maurice Emmanuel, “Le corps de l’harmonie d’après Aristote”, *Revue des études grecques* (1919), 184; id., “Mes avatars”, 37; id., “La polymodie”, *RM* (Jan. 1928), 210–11. On the related trope of “richness” in ancient modality see Benedikt Lessmann, *Die Rezeption des gregorianischen Choral in Frankreich im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Studien zur ideen- und kompositionsgeschichtlichen Resonanz des “plain-chant”* (Olms, 2016), 148.

⁵¹ “où justement se trouve exploitée la mine grégorienne”. Joseph Samson, “Les livres. *Traité d[e] l’harmonie*, de Kœchlin”, *TSG* (Sept. 1929), 162.

⁵² “une mine considérable à laquelle on a tort de ne pas puiser.” Jean-Marie Plum, letter of 1934 quoted in Antoine Lebrun, *Un musicien liégeois : le père Jean-Marie Plum (1899-1944)* (Brussels: Chant-d’Oiseau, 1945), 90.

paraphrase and development”;⁵³ Albert Bertelin found in certain chant melodies “mines whose rich resources are only waiting to be exploited”.⁵⁴ In a liquid variant, plainchant becomes a reservoir of virtual modal harmony; an organ teacher at the Schola cantorum greeted the neo-medieval liturgical drama *Le Mystère de l'Alleluia* (1926), constructed from chant melodies by his teacher Guy de Lioncourt and Dom Lucien David, as fulfilment of Dom Pothier's prediction that plainchant would “enrich composition through the reserves of latent harmony contained in a purely monophonic art.”⁵⁵ Emmanuel's friend the choirmaster René Moissenet, after the two heard a new *Missa paschalis* (1927) by the Lemmens Institute director Jules Van Nuffel, wrote to congratulate the composer for having “drawn out [from plainchant] the harmonic substance” thereby producing, “at last, a mass that responds totally and intelligently to the suggestions of the *motu proprio*”.⁵⁶ Emmanuel also left a strong if temporary mark on his associate Clément Besse; “There can be no question of returning to the past”, the abbé mused in a 1913 book on church music. “But could there be a question of using it?”⁵⁷ His primitivist conception of the superior richness of early music is pure Emmanuel:

In certain respects, the sonic architecture of modern art, which has been progressively stripped of its ancient forms, is no richer and lends itself to imaginative exuberance no more than the Gregorian modal formulas. . . . Like every nascent civilisation, the medieval one was more resourceful in imagination than technique. It was not backward, as is sometimes said; proceeding with curiosity, with abandon, without securing a foothold, it ran too far ahead. It should have taken a rest to exploit at leisure one part of its discoveries. We have only to draw again on this legacy, hitherto unproductive.⁵⁸

By contrast to modern tonality, the old modes “have not exhausted their potential. . . . So let no one say that this style is fossilised or extinct”.⁵⁹ Also pure Emmanuel is the self-promotion of Charles Tournemire, a close friend and colleague:

⁵³ “des mines inépuisables pour la paraphrase et le développement instrumental”. Joseph Bonnet, “Le chant grégorien dans la littérature d'orgue”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée, organisé par l'Union des maîtres de chapelle et organistes* (Desclée De Brouwer, [1937]), 78

⁵⁴ “Ce sont des mines dont les riches ressources ne demandent qu'à être exploitées.” Albert Bertelin, *Traité de composition musicale*, vol. 2 (Schola cantorum, 1931), 31.

⁵⁵ “enrichir l'écriture musicale par les réserves d'harmonie latente que recèle un art purement monodique.” Michel d'Argœuves, [review of Lioncourt and David, *Le Mystère de l'Alleluia*], *Les Tablettes de la Schola* (May 1930), 69. Pothier's prediction was in fact rather less specific: “la musique du passé mieux connue et enrichie des ressources légitimement acquises que le présent peut lui offrir, doit être saluée comme la vraie musique de l'avenir.” Joseph Pothier, *Les mélodies grégoriennes d'après la tradition* (Tournai: Desclée, Lefèvre et cie, 1880), 6. On the complex debates over harmonising *la mélodie antique* see Ch. 3, 170–71 and Ch. 2, 92.

⁵⁶ “en montrer la sève harmonique”; “Voici, enfin, une messe qui répond totalement et intelligemment aux suggestions d[u] *Motu Proprio*”. René Moissenet, letter to Jules Van Nuffel quoted in “Adresses envoyées à l'Institut interdiocésain de musique sacrée à Malines, à l'occasion du 50^e anniversaire de sa fondation”, *MSB* (15 March 1929), 139.

⁵⁷ “Il ne saurait être question de revenir au passé. Mais ne peut-il être question de l'utiliser ?” Clément Besse, *Le chant religieux catholique* (Rivière, 1913), 20.

⁵⁸ “À de certains égards l'architecture des sons qui, dans l'Art moderne, a été progressivement débarrassée des formes antiques, n'est pas plus riche et ne prête pas à plus d'exubérance d'imagination que les formules modales grégoriennes. . . . Le moyen âge, comme toute civilisation qui s'éveille, avait plus de ressources d'imagination que de métier. Il n'était pas en retard, comme on le dit quelquefois ; marchant avec curiosité, avec ivresse, sans assurer ses pas, il allait trop de l'avant. On dut faire une pause, et exploiter à l'aise une partie de ses découvertes. Il ne s'agit que de puiser à nouveau dans ce legs demeuré improductif.” *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁹ “n'ont pas épuisé les promesses qui sont en elles. . . . Qu'on ne dise donc pas que c'est là un style figé, un formulaire éteint” *Ibid.*, 21–22.

J. S. Bach did what the eighteenth century accomplished in French literature: despite his transcendent genius, he killed modal art, exactly as Racine, Molière, and Corneille destroyed the admirable and incomparable language of Rabelais. One can therefore see the advantage of returning to the source of “modality”, in order to develop an art that until now had not flourished again in full liberty. It was necessary to rebuild.⁶⁰

In this well-known passage, seemingly written in 1934, from his unpublished journal-memoirs, Tournemire invokes the trope of *reculer pour mieux sauter* (hence his verbs *renouer*, *remonter*, *refleurir*, *reconstruire*) and claims to have revived “the great modal tradition of the masters prior to Bach” in his *L’Orgue mystique*: “Tradition renewed in *L’Orgue mystique*, after 250 years of neglect. I set myself to continue these masters even while using modern polytonality”.⁶¹ In reality, the tradition of chant-based organ music had never fully disappeared and modal organ music was nothing new,⁶² but Tournemire tries to present his “modality” as an extension, not just a recovery.

Originality as Individuation

Inside and outside of church music, numerous authors attempt to theorise a conception of originality, creativity, personality, or individuality distinct from absolute innovation or novelty.⁶³ That is, they set the bar for aesthetic validity at a distinctive accent or voice or manner relative to the established styles of particular schools, composers, or even works, without insisting on novelty in the light of all of history, as avant-gardists did. They narrow the frame of reference for novelty, condemning only pastiche of specific schools or composers, or even only outright plagiarism. Examples are so numerous that in this section I will simply review the most relevant ones author by author.

Arthur Coquard, a composer on the liberal fringes of reformism who wrote church music in what he considered a modern (i.e., a Romantic) style, found the productions of the Schola cantorum too Palestrinian but accepted a mass by the Sistine Chapel choirmaster Lorenzo Perosi that he heard in 1903 (I have no idea which one; the incontinent maestro would eventually write 54 of them): “Granted, it took Palestrinian polyphony as its starting point, but here and there it showed interesting attempts at emancipation, shafts of light in the modern direction that

⁶⁰ “J. S. Bach a fait ce que le XVIII^e siècle littéraire français a réalisé, il a — nonobstant son génie transcendant — tué l’art modal... exactement comme Racine, Molière, Corneille ont détruit l’admirable et incomparable langue de Rabelais... On voit donc l’intérêt qu’il y avait à remonter à la source de la « modalité », afin de développer un art qui n’avait pas jusqu’à ce jour refléuri en toute liberté... Il fallait reconstruire.” Charles Tournemire, *Mémoires de Charles Tournemire*, ed. Jean-Marc Leblanc, *L’Orgue* 321–24 (2018), 69. Cf. Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 412–15, 429. Tournemire made similar statements in public, e.g. in Charles Tournemire, “La musique modale à l’orgue”, *TSG* (Nov. 1929), 165–66.

⁶¹ “la grande tradition modale des maîtres antérieurs à Bach. Tradition renouvelée dans « L’Orgue mystique », après 250 ans d’oubli. Je me suis efforcé de continuer ces maîtres tout en me servant de la polytonie moderne”. Tournemire, *Mémoires*, 68. The sketches for the “grand projet” inserted into the memoirs include, besides obvious reminiscences of Emmanuel’s *Histoire de la langue musicale*, the note “voir Emmanuel”. See Jean-Marc Leblanc, “Présentation des *Mémoires*”, in *ibid.*, xii. Compare Laloy on Debussy’s *Chansons de Charles d’Orléans*: “not an imitation of but a continuation from Janequin, Costeley and Orlando di Lasso”. Priest, *Louis Laloy*, 210 [orig. in *Revue musicale S.I.M.*, 1908].

⁶² See Introduction, 16.

⁶³ For secular examples see Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics*, Chs 2–3.

vindicated the possibility of a religious art clearly freed from the past.”⁶⁴ Did Coquard mean to suggest that music can start from a 350-year-old model while achieving clear freedom from the past?

Writing in the *Revue Sainte-Cécile* (in 1914, but his articles were regularly recycled), the abbé Chassang distinguished unequivocally between personality and innovation:

To be personal, it is not necessary to create new *procédés*. There are genres and forms of expression ready to hand that have proved their worth and which it would be foolish to proscribe. What must be new is the thought, the special word of the soul, which makes use of material already in circulation and established principles of solid architecture to construct its idea, set it up, make the most of it, but which says things that have never been said and animates them with a personal life, truly one's own. Take up the beautiful Palestrinian forms or the language of the divine Mozart if you like, but above all be sincere in expression . . . Originality will come more from the personal accent that you give to your pieces than the form into which you translate them.⁶⁵

The emphasis here on “thought” and “soul” might at first seem like subjectivism, but if these produce an audible “accent” Chassang would seem rather to be identifying originality with the difference that separates Mozart from Haydn, or even one Mozart symphony from another. After the war, recoiling against a world turned upside down, he was more direct: “let us speak the academic language, at the risk of appearing commonplace or backward.”⁶⁶

Our next example comes from a secular book much read by church musicians, whose title (*Histoire de la langue musicale*) and guiding theme (“the variations in the musical language, which do not exclude the permanence of its principles”) proclaim a hylomorphic dichotomy of content and form.⁶⁷ Maurice Emmanuel, a far from timid composer but a moderate by temperament, took the opportunity when surveying the contemporary scene at the end of his sweeping history to throw some cold water on the neolatry of young radicals: even if a stylistic revolution could abolish all inherited forms, he argued, it might still fail to produce a “living work”, for

musical creation resides in something other than unprecedented combinations of sounds, lines, or forms. It springs from true emotion, disciplined by the mind, served by a solid technique. . . . True artists are those

⁶⁴ “Sans doute, elle prenait son point d’appui sur la polyphonie palestrinienne, mais il y avait çà et là d’heureuses tentatives d’émancipation, des échappées lumineuses dans le sens moderne qui prouvaient victorieusement la possibilité d’un art religieux nettement affranchi du passé”. Arthur Coquard, “Musique sacrée. À propos de la lettre pastorale du cardinal Sarto (1895)”, *Vérité française* (17 Dec. 1903).

⁶⁵ “Il n’est pas nécessaire, pour être personnel, de créer des procédés nouveaux. Il est des formes d’expression, des genres se présentant avec armes et bagages qui ont fait leurs preuves et qu’il serait mauvais de proscrire. Ce qui doit être neuf, c’est la pensée, c’est le verbe spécial de l’âme, qui se sert des matériaux en usage et des principes autorisés d’une saine architecture pour draper son idée, la mettre sur pied, la faire valoir, mais qui dit des choses qui n’ont pas été dites et les anime d’une vie personnelle, bien à soi. Épousez les belles formes palestriniennes ou la langue du divin Mozart, si vous voulez, mais soyez surtout sincère d’expression . . . L’originalité viendra plutôt de l’accent personnel que vous donnerez à vos pièces que de la forme sous laquelle vous les traduirez.” Pierre Chassang, “Un vieux maître de chapelle à son disciple”, *RSC* (Jan. 1914), 3–4.

⁶⁶ “parlons le langage académique, au risque de passer pour des poncifs ou des arriérés.” Id., “La musique d’église et l’évolution”, *RSC* (Oct. 1922), 9.

⁶⁷ “les variations de la langue musicale, qui n’excluent point la permanence de ses principes”. Maurice Emmanuel, *Histoire de la langue musicale*, vol. 1 (Laurens, 1911), 15. Several articles recommend the *Histoire* as a resource for churchmen: Aribon [pseudonym], “Billets à un vicaire”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (Jan. 1921), 7–8; Joseph Samson, “La responsabilité des musiciens d’église”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (Oct. 1922), 70. On Emmanuel’s ecclesiastical contacts (including Moissenet, Besse, Samson, the Alains, and the priest-musician Henri Tissot) see Aurélie Decourt, “Maurice Emmanuel maître de chapelle à Sainte-Clotilde (1904-1907)”, *L’Orgue* 278–79 (2007), 63–88.

who, having something to say, free of prejudice, liberated from all partisanship, passionately seek out and find the precise expression—classic, romantic, symbolist, it hardly matters—of their sound-idea.⁶⁸

Once again, musical value consists in a spiritual content (life, emotion, idea, something to say) sufficiently transcendent that the medium of expression—though exactly where content gives way to medium we never find out—becomes unimportant: “A musician, if he is eloquent, can still write a symphony in the classic form, or even a drama of the [pre-Wagnerian] kind, and produce a powerful work.”⁶⁹

In 1936 the choirmaster Henri Potiron went to Frankfurt for the congress of the Internationale Gesellschaft für Erneuerung der katholischen Kirchenmusik, where he heard the most *erneuerte* sacred music of the day, including works by Messiaen, Malipiero, Marius Monnikendam, and Hermann Schroeder. He was unimpressed: “It comes off badly.”⁷⁰ Perhaps the organ was one thing, but the nature of the choir and liturgical texts simply placed limits that would doom most efforts to incorporate recent innovations. Fortunately, no such thing was necessary: “No, it is not a matter of renewing the harmonic material; it is vain to think that progress comes at such a price. What is missing is strong ideas, genius in the etymologic sense of the word, which would have made real music out of this material.” The genius

will write a simple, true, living work, which will perhaps renew the genre; but it is not a new formula that we need, but rather musicians gifted with imagination and at ease in the narrow frame of the liturgy. With this caveat in mind, I admit full well that the musical material is susceptible to evolution; but a composer’s originality lies in the thought animating this material[.]⁷¹

How is one to tell the difference between original ideas, thought, genius, imagination, life, truth on the one hand and renovation of formulas or material on the other?

Around the same time, Potiron’s colleague Joseph Samson, as director of the Dijon Cathedral Choir, was intensively studying Renaissance polyphony and rethinking originality as a result. His copious notes from the period abound in arguments against “pastiche” in contemporary church music, but show a growing conviction that if Palestrina could write great music while borrowing material right and left, the problem with the church music of a Fernand de La Tombelle

⁶⁸ “une œuvre vivante”; “la création musicale réside en autre chose qu’en des combinaisons inédites de sons, de lignes ou de formes. Elle jaillit d’une émotion vraie, disciplinée par l’esprit, servie par une technique robuste. . . . Les élus de l’art sont ceux qui, ayant quelque chose à dire, exempts de préjugés, libérés de tout enrôlement, cherchent avec passion et rencontrent l’expression exacte — classique, romantique, symboliste, . . . assez peu importe — de leur pensée ‘sonore.’” Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 609–11. Compare Vincent d’Indy and Auguste Séricy, *Cours de composition musicale*, book 2, part 1 (Durand, 1909), 17, drawing on Ruskin: “L’originalité d’une expression ne dépend pas de la découverte de nouveaux mots ; pas plus que l’originalité d’un poème ne consiste en quelque innovation de la métrique, ni celle d’une peinture dans l’invention de nouvelles couleurs ou d’une nouvelle manière de les employer.”

⁶⁹ “Tel musicien, s’il a de l’éloquence, peut écrire encore une symphonie de la forme classique, — même un drame de la vieille manière, et produire une œuvre puissante.” Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 610.

⁷⁰ “Cela réussit mal.” Henri Potiron, “Le Congrès international de Francfort”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Nov.–Dec. 1936), 41.

⁷¹ “Non, ce n’est pas le matériel harmonique qu’il s’agit de renouveler ; il est vain de penser que le progrès est à ce prix. Il a manqué la forte pensée, le génie au sens étymologique du mot, qui de cette matière eût fait de la vraie musique. . . . il écrira une œuvre, simple, vraie et vivante, qui peut-être renouvellera le genre ; mais ce n’est pas une formule nouvelle qu’il nous faut, ce sont des musiciens doués d’imagination et à l’aise dans le cadre étroit de la liturgie. Cette réserve faite, j’admets bien que la matière musicale soit susceptible d’évolution, mais l’originalité du compositeur est dans la pensée qui animera cette matière”. Ibid., 42.

or a Lazare Perruchot had to lie elsewhere. Samson tried to work through the hylomorphic options in a little diagram:

2 Cases

A

- a) New thoughts require new words
- b) Old thoughts also require new words due to the wearing-out of language

B

- a) New thoughts ~~require~~ express themselves in the traditional language
- b) Old thoughts express themselves in the traditional language of which one discovers new aspects, new possibilities⁷²

He apparently concluded, much like Potiron, that renewal of “language” might be unnecessary: “The genius doesn’t shuffle in place, he advances, either by a) investing the old language with new thoughts or b) inventing the words and dynamic turns of phrase not supplied by a system that for him is obsolete.”⁷³ Originality comes apart from innovation and now equates to “the imprint of [one’s] temperament”, which sometimes “expresses itself in already-used chords and syntax on which it shines new spiritual light.”⁷⁴ So long as a composer has something to say, it makes no difference “whether he expresses himself in perfect triads or resorts to the most audaciously polytonal *procédés*”.⁷⁵ Even direct imitation can be valid long as the composer “reinvents”, “recreates”, or “renews” the source in some way.⁷⁶ Following his mentor Charles Kœchlin, who himself was growing more critical of avant-gardism, Samson pointed specifically to diatonic-modal harmony—new arrangements of familiar chords—as an example of novelty in syntax without innovation in vocabulary.⁷⁷

⁷² “2 cas / A / a) Les ‘pensers nouveaux’ exigent des mots nouveaux / b) Les ‘pensers antiques’ exigent aussi des mots nouveaux par suite de l’usure des vocables / B / a) Les ‘pensers nouveaux’ ~~exigent~~ s’expriment avec le langage traditionnel / b) Les ‘pensers antiques’ s’expriment dans le langage traditionnel auquel on découvre de nouveaux aspects[.] de nouvelles possibilités”. Joseph Samson, “La musique moderne à l’église” [early 1930s?], F-Dm, MS 3080/62, n.p. Samson refers to a line of André Chénier: “Sur des pensers nouveaux faisons des vers antiques”.

⁷³ “Le génie ne piétine pas, il avance: a) soit qu’il charge la vieille langue de ‘pensers nouveau’, b) soit qu’il invente les vocables ou les tours dynamiques que ne lui fournit pas un système pour lui périmé.” Ibid., 13.

⁷⁴ “le relief de leur tempérament. Celle-ci s’exprime en des accords et une syntaxe usagés qu’elle soumet à des éclairages spirituels nouveaux.” Ibid., 14.

⁷⁵ “a quelque chose à dire . . . qu’il s’exprime en accords parfaits ou qu’il ait recours aux procédés les plus audacieusement polytonaux”. Ibid., n.p. Samson draws here on the conservative treatise by Pierre Lasserre, *Philosophie du goût musical* (1922).

⁷⁶ “Pourvu qu’il les réinvente, qu’il les recrée, qu’il les renouvelle”. Id., “Le pastiche” [c. 1931], F-Dm, MS 3080/62, pg. 6.

⁷⁷ See id., “La musique moderne à l’église”, n.p. Cf. Marianne Wheeldon, “Defending Tonality: The Musical Thought of Milhaud and Kœchlin”, in *Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice*, ed. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Schedeler, and Philip Rupprecht (Steiner, 2012), 150. Kœchlin’s major theoretical statement is Charles Kœchlin, “Modernisme et nouveauté”, RM (1 July 1927), 1–13.

Eclecticism: New Sums from Old Parts

If the danger to originality lay in replicating too narrow of a model, the easiest way to avoid it was simply to replicate two or three of them, borrowing and mixing from contrasting sources. Such eclecticism especially promised to ward off over-dependence on what TLS calls “classical polyphony”, perhaps through a blend of “Palestrinian” counterpoint, “Gregorian” rhythm, and “modern” harmony. Such was the conception behind the liturgical catalogue (*Répertoire moderne de musique religieuse*) of the Schola cantorum, to judge from the way Charles Bordes defended it against a critic in 1897:

From these two arts [i.e. plainchant and Renaissance polyphony], closely related . . . will emerge a new art . . . which will be able to retain the discoveries of modern harmony by employing them appropriately. The gap must be bridged from Palestrina to the predestined believer who will use these admirable materials to create, in a spirit of faith, a modern religious art, purely choral and truly liturgical.⁷⁸

The same conception informed the productions of Delépine’s rival Procure générale publishing house, despite its more modernising rhetoric. In one of his many articles vaunting “modern” style (on sale in his catalogue) over neo-Renaissance pastiche, Delépine offered as an example a passage from a mass by Dynam-Victor Fumet (Fig. 1.3): “We are not far here from Gregorian chant, nor from the Palestrinian formula”, he admitted; “yet the modern touch is there, not in harmonic experimentation but in the freedom of the counterpoint, the spice of the clashes, the casualness of the lines.”⁷⁹

Fig. 1.3: Dynam-Victor Fumet, *Messe mariale*, Kyrie, bars 14–18

⁷⁸ “De ces deux arts, étroitement liés . . . sortira un art nouveau . . . qui pourra conserver en les employant à propos les découvertes harmoniques modernes. Un pont est à jeter de Palestrina au prédestiné croyant qui saura user de ces admirables matériaux pour édifier dans un esprit de foi un art religieux moderne, purement choral et vraiment liturgique.” Charles Bordes, “La musique religieuse et la Schola”, *Le Guide musical* (21 Feb. 1897), 146.

⁷⁹ “Nous ne sommes pas loin ici du chant grégorien ni de la formule palestrinienne, et cependant la touche moderne est là, non point dans la recherche harmonique, mais dans la liberté des rencontres, dans le sel des frottements, dans la désinvolture des dessins.” Henri Delépine, “Musique palestrinienne et musique religieuse moderne”, *RSC* (Sept.–Oct. 1933), 103.

What Delépine could have meant by freedom, in a passage of strict counterpoint with nothing saltier than a few normally resolved suspensions and passing tones, is anyone's guess, but one can easily appreciate his broader point that the phrase sounds unlike Renaissance polyphony despite using only triads.

As the horizons of church musicians gradually expanded, forwards into *debussysme* and backwards into early polyphony, eclecticism helped them to assimilate the growing range of stylistic options. Amédée Gastoué, its keenest advocate, proposed a steadily growing roster of sources with which to counterbalance Palestrina and Bach: in 1911, elements of plainchant, folksong, and Handel; in 1921, the lyricism of the nineteenth-century *Lied*.⁸⁰ By 1930, writing specifically on the motet, Gastoué had decided that “[t]o fuse the various types and characters that the motet form has taken on through the ages, from the idea of primitive ‘organum’ to the latest harmonic discoveries of a Debussy, not to mention the musical contributions of the Eastern Christians—here, perhaps, is the true foundation for the motet of the future.”⁸¹ Predictably, he credited the Schola cantorum with realising this ideal, by “fusing all these elements, definitively bringing together all these scattered strands into an ensemble”.⁸² The ambition was hardly unique to *scholistes*, however. Romain Rolland indeed regarded such catholicity as a general Catholic trait, after interviewing Lorenzo Perosi (in Paris to conduct his oratorios) in 1899: “We must try to recreate a universal art in which the resources of all countries and all times are blended”, he has the musician say.⁸³ Of Perosi's music Rolland reports: “His style is made up of all styles, from Gregorian chant to the most modern modulations”, by way of “the contrapuntists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Palestrina, Lassus, Gabrieli, Carissimi, Schütz, Bach, Handel, Gounod, Wagner—I would say César Franck, except that he assured me he knows almost nothing of this master”.⁸⁴ The same omnivorous listing comes up in an homage to the Alsatian organist-composer Marie-Joseph Erb by Charles Planchet, a choirmaster and fellow graduate of the École Niedermeyer:

Far from aspiring to cast aside his predecessors, [Erb] wants to ignore nothing done before him: neither the *organum* of the Middle Ages, with its successive fifths or fourths; nor the *procédés* of the Renaissance masters; nor the use that Bach and Mendelssohn made of the chorale paraphrase in their oratorios, cantatas, and organ music; nor the works of the great modern organists; nor finally the most recent ways of writing, except

⁸⁰ See Amédée Gastoué, *La musique d'église. Études historiques, esthétiques et pratiques*, 2nd edn (Lyon: Janin, 1916 [1st edn 1911]), 259–60 and id., “Essai sur le passé et l'avenir de la musique polyphonique”, *TSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1922), 31 [orig. lecture, Strasbourg congress, July 1921], 31–2.

⁸¹ “Fondre, en résumé, les types divers et les caractères que la forme motet a revêtus au cours des âges, depuis l'idée du primitif ‘organum’ jusqu'aux trouvailles harmoniques les plus neuves d'un Debussy, ne pas négliger l'apport que les musiques des chrétiens orientaux nous procurent, voilà quelle peut être la vraie base du motet futur.” Id., “Le motet”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 5, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1930), 3044–45. Gastoué may have written this text as early as the 1910s (the Lavignac volumes came out very slowly), which would explain why Debussy's “trouvailles” are still “les plus neuves”.

⁸² “Fondre tous ces éléments, rassembler définitivement dans un ensemble tous ces faisceaux épars”. Id., *La musique d'église*, 259–60.

⁸³ “Il faut tâcher de recréer un art universel, où toutes les ressources de tous les pays et de tous les temps soient fondues.” Romain Rolland, *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui*, 8th edn (Hachette, 1919), 173 [orig. in *Revue de Paris*, 1899].

⁸⁴ “Ce style est fait de tous les styles, depuis le chant grégorien jusqu'aux modulations les plus modernes. . . . les contrepontistes des XV^e et XVI^e siècles, Palestrina, Roland, Gabrieli, Carissimi, Schütz, Bach, Hændel, Gounod, Wagner, — je dirais César Franck, s'il ne m'avait avoué qu'il ne connaît presque pas ce maître”. Ibid., 172.

for polytonal bolshevism. He draws extensively on these accumulated riches, but in his own way and according to his own temperament.⁸⁵

Even Tournemire's pronouncements about "continuing" the great tradition of Catholic organ music take on an eclectic ring when the composer presents *L'Orgue mystique* as a "synthesis of all the past" (with the difference that Tournemire accepts polytonal bolshevism).⁸⁶

As a form of originality, eclecticism relied on a delicate balance of ahistorical and historical modes of perception. On the one hand, it had to fuse its borrowings into a homogeneous whole if it was to transcend its sources. Fusion saved Joseph Samson's *Messe "Mon âme vous loue, O Dieu"* (1924) in the estimation of the abbé Aurat (successor to Lazare Perruchot as choirmaster of Monaco Cathedral), who had detected traces of Fauré, Debussy, Caplet, and Honegger: "[Samson] has assimilated all these diverse styles and, moulding them to his ideas, blended them into a single one which is his own: a harmonious ensemble newly born out of the combination of neumatic [i.e. Gregorian] melody, Renaissance counterpoint and the harmony of our contemporaries" (note again the tripartite formula).⁸⁷ On the other hand, part of what Aurat appreciates is precisely the impression of assimilation, which disappears when borrowing completely conceals its tracks. Similarly, it was the feat of reconciling opposites that René Moissenet appreciated in the mass by Van Nuffel: "Roland de Lassus and Claude Debussy are no longer separated by four centuries: your work brings them together in a living and harmonious whole as solidly traditional as it is discreetly modern."⁸⁸ Samson himself, Moissenet's successor at the Dijon Cathedral, praised the modal exercises in Kœchlin's harmony treatise (which he regarded as models of liturgical style and would adapt for liturgical use) as "extremely rich realisations in which one sees the Paul Dukas of *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* rub shoulders with the Guillaume de Machaut of the *Messe de Nostre-Dame*."⁸⁹ Here again, the aesthetic experience relies on heterogeneity, on a residual (but only residual) oldness.

⁸⁵ "Loin de prétendre rejeter dans l'ombre ses devanciers, il veut, au contraire, ne rien ignorer de ce qui a été fait avant lui : ni l'*organum* du moyen âge, avec ses suites de quintes ou de quarts, ni les procédés des maîtres de la Renaissance, ni le parti que Bach et Mendelssohn ont tiré du choral varié dans leurs oratorios, leurs cantates ou leur musique d'orgue, ni les œuvres des grands organistes modernes, ni enfin les manières d'écrire les plus récentes, à l'exception toutefois du bolchevisme polytonal. Il use largement des richesses accumulées, mais à sa manière et selon son tempérament propre." Charles Planchet quoted in Georges Renard, "Un musicien d'Alsace : Marie-Joseph Erb", *RSC* (May 1935), 71 [orig. not identified].

⁸⁶ "synthèse de tout le passé". Tournemire, *Mémoires*, 148. See also id., "Des possibilités harmoniques et polytonales unies à la ligne grégorienne", *La Revue grégorienne* (Sept.–Oct. 1930), 173.

⁸⁷ "Il s'est assimilé tous ces styles si différents, et, les pliant à sa pensée, les a pétris en un seul qui est le sien : ensemble harmonieux et nouveau-né de la combinaison de la mélodie neumatique, du contrepoint de la Renaissance et de l'harmonie de nos contemporains." André Aurat, "Une messe nouvelle", *La Vie catholique* (18 July 1925).

⁸⁸ "Roland de Lassus et Claude Debussy ne sont plus séparés par quatre siècles : ils se rejoignent, chez vous, en un tout vivant et harmonieux aussi solidement traditionnel que discrètement moderne." "Adresses envoyées à l'Institut interdiocésain de musique sacrée", 139. Dom Kreps described the same mass as "dans un style à la fois plus moderne et plus archaïque" than Van Nuffel's earlier works. [Joseph Kreps], "Discours de Dom Joseph Kreps, O.S.B., de l'Abbaye du Mont César à Louvain", *MSB* (15 March 1929), 127. Ernest Closson wrote of "une harmonie subtile qui fait songer aux impressionnistes, mais dont l'esprit est celui même de la musique religieuse du XVI^e siècle, les deux éléments fusionnés intimement et de la manière la plus naturelle. Ce sont les principes même [*sic*] de la Schola, mais appliqués d'une manière toute [*sic*] indépendante et personnelle." Ernest Closson "Bibliographie musicale", *L'Indépendance belge* (3 April 1928).

⁸⁹ "des réalisations extrêmement riches où l'on voit le Paul Dukas des *Filles d'Orlamonde* côtoyer le Guillaume de Machaut de la *Messe du Sacre*." Samson, "Les livres", 162.

Originality as Development

A related conception of non-avant-garde originality, more distinct in rhetoric than substance (if I may be permitted a little hylomorphism of my own), was the proposal to recommence the development of some long-abandoned style. In the 1860s the Cecilians, like contemporary architects who wrote of “developing” the Gothic, imagined themselves as “building further” from the Palestrinian model, leaping backwards and then proceeding in a direction different from that taken by Palestrina’s historical posterity, advancing into a sort of parallel modernity or alternative future of the past.⁹⁰ By implying that certain lines of development had been prematurely abandoned or skipped over, such notions break with the conception, more common in the nineteenth century, of musical evolution as a linear, inevitable, logical progression that proceeds by systematically exhausting possibilities. Their compositional results ostensibly represent not a fusion of distinct styles, as in eclecticism, but continuing progress towards a Palestrinian style that Palestrina himself had never fully reached. By contrast to the “mining” envisioned by Bourgault-Ducoudray or Emmanuel, the accent falls on adding to the old rather than extracting “material” for absorption into something else; the entity must be imagined as an unfinished project. Plainchant, texturally thin and textually indeterminate, was susceptible to such portrayals, to the point that the *Revue Sainte-Cécile* felt the need in 1914 to run an article against the view of plainchant as “un art incomplet”.⁹¹ Similarly, the diatonic-modal harmony pioneered around 1860 by Niedermeyer for plainchant and Balakirev for folksong was often justified as at once archaic and ahistorical, un-modern in its diatonicism yet un-medieval in its refusal of *musica ficta*, a new creation growing directly out of plainchant yet distinct from the polyphony that grew out of plainchant in the Middle Ages.

Originality as Modernity

An important binary within the originality debate concerned the difference between music that belongs to the present and that which belongs to the past. Most aestheticians of the last few centuries have propounded an imperative of contemporaneity, encapsulated in the nineteenth-century slogan *il faut être de son temps*.⁹² Their arguments postulate a deterministic relationship between some governing structure—society, culture, thought, ways of life, material conditions, the spirit of the age, etc.—and artistic production: the structure circumscribes what the artist can think and feel, furnishing all the content (ideas, inspiration, inner life, etc.) available for expression, which in turn determines the style. A 1914 newspaper column by the progressivist critic Louis Laloy offers a nice statement:

The variations in any language are not independent, but linked to those in thought, mores, and states of consciousness. . . . It follows that it is not possible for anyone to sincerely speak a language other than that

⁹⁰ See respective Michael J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival* (Thames & Hudson, 2002), 105–08 and Garratt, *Palestrina*, 149–53. For an example within our purview see Adrien Dirven, “À propos du discours de M. Tinel au Congrès de Bruges”, *CSG* (Feb. 1903), 11, drawing on the Cecilian A. G. Stein.

⁹¹ See “Le plain-chant, œuvre d’art et d’art populaire”, *RSC* (March 1914), 37–41.

⁹² E. H. Gombrich saw the “germ” of this doctrine in Herder and Winckelmann; see E. H. Gombrich, *Ideas of Progress and Their Impact on Art* (Cooper Union, [1971]), 48–50. Cf. Garratt, *Palestrina*, 19–21.

of his contemporaries. . . . A well-meaning man of letters rhymes a tragedy in alexandrines and exclaims with satisfaction: 'I do believe it's almost Racine.' This *almost* is an abyss. Racine's tragedy has as its indispensable precondition the court of Louis XIV.⁹³

Constant change in the governing structure demands constantly change in style; "history" never stands still, and artists cannot shut out the world around them. They can only escape the influence of their times through an imitation (*l'art d'après l'art*) that begins where true art ends, since the purpose of art is precisely to give form to the life of the times.

This doctrine of contemporaneity certainly appears in discourse on church music, which often rejects imitation as incompatible with inspiration, arguing that the intellectual activity entailed in recovering a no-longer-familiar style interferes with expression. Paul Berthier in 1922 urged his colleagues to accept some recent innovations with exactly Laloy's argument: "to express oneself in the language of our own time, simply and sincerely, is the only way to be expressive and true", since only that language "comes naturally to one's lips".⁹⁴ Some authors suggest that imitation precludes even purely technical competence. Henri Potiron criticised the Cecilian imitation of Renaissance "formules" as not just uninspired but structurally unsound: "The craftsmanship is often shaky, the breath of life [*le souffle*] almost always missing, and the composition, in the precise sense of the word, fragmentary and lacking internal logic; facility leads to banality".⁹⁵ Though Potiron ventured no explanation for why imitation should necessarily be incoherent, Pierre Chassang, making the same point, argued that Renaissance techniques had simply grown too unfamiliar for modern composers to wield with aplomb: "musical evolution has caused us to lose the key to this style. . . . Centuries of neglect have dried it out. We no longer know how to speak like the Primitives; homophony [*verticalisme*] has cut off the lifeblood and broken the connection. We are reduced to vague and laborious pastiches."⁹⁶ Imitation would turn out "pale, sickly, lacking a personal touch".⁹⁷ But Chassang too gives no reason why the key could not be found again, the unfamiliarity dispelled with sufficient immersion, as Michael Haller and other Cecilians indeed proposed.⁹⁸

By contrast, aesthetic conservatives often reject the notion of a unitary *esprit du temps*, unique to the present, constantly evolving and delegitimizing that which remains the same; they prefer a pluralistic, open, indeed empty conception of the contemporary in which the old

⁹³ "Les variations d'un langage quelconque ne sont pas indépendantes, mais liées à celles de la pensée, des mœurs et des états de conscience. . . . Il résulte de là qu'il n'est possible à qui que ce soit de parler sincèrement un autre langage que celui de ses contemporains. . . . Un honnête lettré rime en alexandrins une action tragique et s'écrit, satisfait : « Je crois que c'est presque du Racine. » Ce *presque* est un abîme. La tragédie de Racine a pour condition indispensable la cour de Louis XIV." Louis Laloy, "La musique chez soi", *Comœdia* (29 Jan. 1914).

⁹⁴ "s'exprimer par le langage de nos jours, simplement et sincèrement c'est la seule manière d'être expressif et vrai"; "vient tout naturellement sur les lèvres". Berthier, "L'écriture moderne", 356, 359.

⁹⁵ "Le métier est assez souvent incertain, le souffle fait presque toujours défaut, et la composition, au sens précis de ce mot, est fragmentaire et sans logique intérieure ; la facilité tourne à la banalité". Henri Potiron, "La musique de l'Église et la musique d'église", *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.-Feb. 1937), 61.

⁹⁶ "l'évolution musicale nous a fait perdre la clef de ce style. . . . Des siècles d'oubli l'ont laissée se dessécher. On ne sait plus parler comme les Primitifs ; le verticalisme a arrêté la sève et rompu la communication. On en est réduit à des vagues et laborieux pastiches." Pierre Chassang, "Aux prises avec un texte", *RSC* (Dec. 1923), 180–81.

⁹⁷ "pâle, tuberculeux, sans sève personnelle". Id., "Le secret", *Revue Sainte-Cécile* (June 1923), 85.

⁹⁸ See Garratt, *Palestrina*, 163.

“belongs” to the present just as much as the new.⁹⁹ The turn-of-the-century polemics of Vincent d’Indy offer a fine example. D’Indy was irked by trends that “haughtily and dogmatically claim to monopolise the musical expression of our time”, by which he probably meant the Naturalist opera of Bruneau and Charpentier.¹⁰⁰ In his essay “L’artiste moderne”, a polemic against Naturalism and avant-gardism given as a commencement address at the Schola cantorum, d’Indy rejected the idea of artistic contemporaneity as an empty pleonasm, “un non-sens absolu”.¹⁰¹ His argument captures the way in which the very determinism of the doctrine of contemporaneity undermines itself. If all art worth the name expresses a mind, and every mind makes up of the spirit of the age, all art is *ipso facto* “of” its time: “there have never been any true artists who were not modern . . . The modern artist is not especially . . . one who makes art according to the ideas of his time—how could he do otherwise?”¹⁰² When d’Indy’s friends from his post-Wagnerian and -Franckian milieu, unenthused by his new passion for early music, worried that the Schola’s plans for a liturgical repertoire “inspired by” plainchant and “Palestrinian” polyphony would lose touch with “l’art de son temps”, d’Indy similarly evacuated this expression of meaning:

[I]f you are indeed inspired by your text, have no fear: what you write will not be pastiche, but indeed *the art of your own time*. Allow me to point out, by the way, that it is absurd to imagine that one could produce anything other than *the art of one’s own time*. To create a work of art is to draw out something of oneself, to give away a little of one’s own substance; so long as you are not a vulgar copyist, then, it will be your heart, your thought, your being that you put into your work, and this work, *whatever the means you employ*, will indeed be the art of your time.¹⁰³

So d’Indy, just like Laloy in 1914, regards personal inspiration as consubstantial with the general zeitgeist, but crucially seems (here at least) to regard inspiration as independent of style—it comes through “whatever the means you employ”. The composer responded similarly to a pseudonymous writer in *L’Art moderne* (a progressivist Brussels magazine usually favourable to him) who attacked the Schola’s programme in the name of contemporaneity, arguing that Palestrinian polyphony represented the product of particular conditions (“the powerful sign and the eloquent symbol of an era, of a quite particular state of mind”), which no longer existed (“We no longer believe as people did in the sixteenth century”), and that even the religiosity of plainchant, seemingly so transcendent, reflected historical circumstances (“the psychic state of man

⁹⁹ See Sarah Collins, “What Was Contemporary Music? The New, the Modern and the Contemporary in the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM)”, in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (Routledge, 2019), 58–59.

¹⁰⁰ “pretend[ent] orgueilleusement et dogmatiquement monopoliser l’expression musicale de notre temps”. D’Indy, “Jeunes musiques”, 408.

¹⁰¹ Id., “L’artiste moderne”, 342–43.

¹⁰² “il n’y a jamais eu de vrais artistes pas modernes . . . L’artiste moderne n’est donc point spécialement . . . celui qui fait de l’art suivant les idées de son époque, — comment pourrait-il faire autrement ?” Ibid.

¹⁰³ “si vous êtes bien inspiré par votre texte, soyez tranquille, ce que vous écrirez ne sera point du pastiche, mais bien de *l’art de votre temps*. Laissez-moi du reste vous faire observer qu’il est absurde de croire que l’on puisse faire autre chose que de *l’art de son temps*. Faire œuvre artistique, c’est tirer quelque chose de soi-même, c’est donner un peu de sa propre substance ; si vous n’êtes point un vulgaire copiste, ce sera donc votre cœur, ce sera votre pensée, ce sera votre être que vous mettrez en votre œuvre, et cette œuvre, *quels que soient les moyens dont vous vous serviez*, sera bien de l’art de votre temps.” Id., “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (March 1898), 66. D’Indy was replying to “un de nos plus aimables abonnés de la première heure” (id., “Nos concours”, *TSG* (Aug. 1897), 120), probably Léon Husson; a letter to Paul Poujaud (12 Sept. 1897) in id., *Ma Vie. Journal de jeunesse, Correspondance familiale et intime, 1851-1931*, ed. Marie d’Indy (Séguier, 2001), 569 refers to “mon article en réponse à Husson (et aussi Bréville, de Serres, etc.)”.

relative to hidden, dominating forces”).¹⁰⁴ D’Indy rebuked this critic (who to his embarrassment turned out to be Lionel de La Laurencie, a relative by marriage) by identifying the substance of art with what stands “*outside of time*”, expressing timeless, universal sentiments: “that which is of a truly superior essence, all creations of all times in which human sentiment is intensely expressed—in a word, everything that is *beautiful* . . . will never age.”¹⁰⁵ Old masterworks speak to all eras for this reason:

all these works, when we put aside their cladding of formulas, to which a strong mind can attach no importance, are as alive, as powerful, as *young* as any, for they all express sincerely and emotionally the human soul, which never changes, except in minute details that in no way affect its general complexion[.]¹⁰⁶

Ironical as it might have seemed for a musicologist to upbraid a composer for paying too much attention to the past, d’Indy’s hylomorphic attitude is thoroughly ahistoricist: old things, if they attain a certain greatness, live in an eternal present.¹⁰⁷ As he affirmed in his address to the Schola the next year, they “live and move us because they live our own life” and express “human feelings, always the same”.¹⁰⁸ And, crucially for the composer, the same spirit can persist through the constant flux of changing styles: “There are no old ideas, only old formulas, old raiment, which come and go with fashion.”¹⁰⁹

Does Liturgicality Evolve?

Conceptions of liturgical music usually presuppose a similar core of universality, but the sources disagree on exactly what part of “the liturgy” remains fixed for all time. If liturgical music served to promote prayerful piety, did this atmosphere or affect belong to that unchanging essence, or could it move with the times? Were church composers in 1900 called to express or elicit the same basic sentiments as Palestrina and Josquin? The idea that *sentiment religieux* might evolve and take on particularly modern forms was common enough; the critic Camille Bellaigue, in a major essay

¹⁰⁴ “le signe puissant et l’éloquent symbole d’une époque, d’un état d’esprit tout spécial”; “Nous ne croyons plus comme ceux du XVI^e siècle”; “l’état psychique de l’homme vis-à-vis des forces secrètes et dominatrices”. Ellion, “Vieilles musiques”, 389.

¹⁰⁵ “*en dehors du temps*”; “ce qui est d’essence vraiment supérieure, toutes les manifestations de tous les temps en lesquelles s’est exprimé intensivement le sincère sentiment humain, tout ce qui est *beau*, en un mot . . . ne vieillira jamais.” D’Indy, “Jeunes musiques”, 407. Cf. Albert Vander Linden, “Lettres de Vincent d’Indy à Octave Maus”, *Revue belge de musicologie* 15 (1961), 92–93.

¹⁰⁶ “toutes ces musiques, abstraction faite de leur vêtement de formules auquel un esprit élevé ne peut attacher d’importance, sont aussi vivantes, aussi passionnantes, tranchons le mot, aussi *jeunes* l’une que l’autre, car, toutes, elles expriment sincèrement et émotionnellement l’âme humaine, qui, elle, ne change jamais, sauf en des détails infimes qui ne portent nullement atteinte à sa tenue générale”. D’Indy, “Jeunes musiques”, 408.

¹⁰⁷ See William Gibbons, “The Uses and Disadvantages of Opera History: Unhistorical Thinking in *Fin-de-siècle* Paris”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Operatic Canon*, ed. Cormac Newark and William Weber (OUP, 2020), 442–52 and Jann Pasler, “Paris: Conflicting Notions of Progress”, in *The Late Romantic Era: From the Mid-19th Century to World War I*, ed. Jim Samson (Macmillan, 1991), 404.

¹⁰⁸ “ils vivent et nous émeuvent parce qu’ils vivent de notre propre vie”; “les toujours mêmes sentiments humains”. D’Indy, “L’artiste moderne”, 345.

¹⁰⁹ “Il n’y a pas de vieilles idées, il n’y a que de vieilles formules, de vieux vêtements, nés de la mode et passés avec elle.” Ibid.

of 1887, celebrated the drama and emotionalism of Romantic religiosity, in part for participating in the universal “law” of constant evolution.¹¹⁰ But Bellaigue refers mostly to oratorio; liturgical art was another matter. At a congress of Belgian Catholics in Mechelen in 1909, an art critic called for liturgical styles to “reflect the piety of [our] age”, “the special nuance of our devotion”; but his intervention reflects above all the backlash (somewhat belated in Belgium) against neo-Gothic dominance in church architecture and decoration—less intimately involved in ritual action.¹¹¹ One figure to explicitly extend Bellaigue’s view to liturgical music was Clément Besse, generally partial to emotion and dazzle and popular appeal in Catholic ceremony, who in his commentary on TLS regretted Bellaigue’s subsequent embrace of liturgical austerity:

We no longer believe as in the time of Palestrina and Carissimi, and our faith, under attack and wounded, is less impassively serene than that of the great masters of classic polyphony. On the other hand, it is more lyrical. From its very woes it draws, in all its tender and dolorous parts, a fervour of passion that relates it to the art of tragedy.¹¹²

Besse’s protégé Joseph Samson, strongly influenced by promoters of “modern” religious art such as Maurice Denis and Jacques Maritain, wrestled with this issue in notes from the 1930s for a never-realised work on “musique moderne” in the church. On the one hand, Samson proclaimed more strongly than anyone the need for liturgical music, just like any other music, to reflect particularly modern feelings, to translate “the current movement of human life”, “a point in history”, “the characteristic essence of the modern soul”, “the sensibility, the conception of life, the tastes of its times”, “the impact of contemporary life on a given soul”.¹¹³ And his conception of “modern” entailed what was new in the present: to be “modern” is “to inscribe one’s living uniqueness in history”.

To be modern is [music’s] *raison d’être*, its utility vis-à-vis the tradition of which it is only one point. It must be [modern] vis-à-vis its contemporaries: we only speak to our times by belonging to it. We must be able to recognise in this man speaking to us with notes the image of what we are, or what we would like to be.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ See Camille Bellaigue, “La religion dans la musique”, in id., *Psychologie musicale* (Delagrave, 1893), esp. 3–4, 13–15, 43, 51 [orig. in *La Revue des deux mondes*, 1887].

¹¹¹ “réflétera la piété [*sic*] de leur époque”; “la nuance spéciale de notre dévotion”. [Joseph] de Wouters de Bouchout, “De l’art dans ses rapports avec la liturgie et l’archéologie”, in *Congrès catholique de Malines, 23-26 septembre 1909. Rapports*, vol. 5 (Brussels: Goemaere, 1909), 25, 29.

¹¹² “Nous ne croyons pas comme au temps de Palestrina et de Carissimi, et notre foi, attaquée, meurtrie, a moins d’immuable sérénité que chez les grands maîtres de la polyphonie classique. En revanche elle est plus lyrique. De ses contrariétés mêmes elle tire, dans toutes ses parties tendres et douloureuses, une ferveur de passion qui l’apparente à l’art tragique.” Clément Besse, “À propos du « motu proprio » de S. S. Pie X sur la musique sacrée”, *Revue du clergé français* (15 Feb. 1904), 630–31. A similar example, though coming from an author whose own Catholicism seems doubtful, is Lucien Augé de Lassus, “La musique religieuse et la musique d’église”, *La Revue musicale* (10 Sept. 1904), 410–12, 414.

¹¹³ “[le] mouvement actuel de la vie humain”; “un point de l’histoire”; “l’âme moderne en ce qui constitue son fond caractéristique propre”; “la sensibilité, la conception de la vie, les goûts de son temps”; “[le] choc de la vie contemporaine sur une âme donnée”. Samson, “La musique moderne à l’église”, 1, 8, 10, 19.

¹¹⁴ “inscrire sa note vivante dans l’histoire. Être moderne c’est sa raison d’être, son utilité et vis-à-vis de la tradition dont elle n’est qu’un point. Elle doit l’être vis-à-vis de ses contemporains : on n’atteint son temps qu’en lui appartenant. Il faut que nous reconnaissons dans cet homme qui n[ous] parle avec des notes l’image de ce que n[ous] sommes ou une image de ce que n[ous] voudrions être.” Ibid., 12. Cf. Maurice Denis, *Nouvelles théories sur l’art moderne, sur l’art sacré* (Rouart & Watelin, 1922), 222–33: “Il est naturel, il est désirable qu’un artiste participe à l’évolution de la

But when he reflects specifically on the liturgy, Samson's modernism quails. "Is it even necessary ~~to change~~ that the artist have new thoughts? No. If he writes a Kyrie or a Gloria, the idea of prayer, of praise is a very old idea; he has to express it. That's all."¹¹⁵ Ultimately, Samson only saves the composer's liberty by separating "language" from "idea", like d'Indy and so many others: the composer "must express [the idea] in the language of his contemporaries"; his ambition to express the zeitgeist itself in liturgical music therefore seems to have disappeared.¹¹⁶ Revisiting the problem in other notes, Samson solves it by distinguishing instead between the fixed "sujet" or "idées directrices" of liturgical music and the "sentiments" or "attitude" of the artist faced with them, which "can be as old as this idea or subject, or new, according to the artist's temperament."¹¹⁷ He has then circled back to the problem of potential disconnect between a fixed substance and a rapidly evolving contemporary language. Samson's more conservative contemporary Henri Potiron found the gap unbridgeable. The asperities of "modernism" might legitimately express the dark mood of the 1930s, but church composers were licensed and indeed obligated to ignore that mood: "What we must never forget is that the Church prays *in peace*. To our troubled time might correspond a dramatic or symphonic music of agitated or anxious character, posing questions without resolving them, ending without concluding and without a hint of repose. In church music there can be nothing of the kind".¹¹⁸ Potiron is content that church music go its own way in its own sealed-off world: the obligatory tranquillity of liturgical art—central to the reformist aesthetic for a hundred years and more—endures outside of the changing times.

How Modern Is Modern?

Reformist literature constantly calls for a new, modern, or contemporary ecclesiastical style: "une musique religieuse moderne",¹¹⁹ "une forme nouvelle",¹²⁰ "une forme musicale liturgique nouvelle",¹²¹ "le style musical liturgique de l'avenir",¹²² etc. The modern churchly style, always just over the horizon, becomes a kind of mythical totem for the impossible reformist project, and

société au milieu de laquelle il vit, et qu'il traduise, avant même qu'elle les discerne nettement, le bouillonnement des forces neuves qui s'agitent en elle."

¹¹⁵ "Est-il même nécessaire ~~de changer~~ que l'artiste ait des pensées neuves ? Mais non. S'il écrit un Kyrie, un Gloria l'idée de prière, de louange est une très vieille idée ; il doit l'exprimer. C'est tout." Samson, "La musique moderne à l'église", n.p.

¹¹⁶ "il doit l'exprimer dans une langue qui joigne son contemporain". Ibid.

¹¹⁷ "ils peuvent être ou aussi anciens que cette idée ou ce sujet ou nouveaux suivant le tempérament de l'artiste." Id., "Le pastiche", 7–8.

¹¹⁸ "Ce qu'il ne faut pas oublier, c'est que l'Église prie *dans la paix*. À notre époque troublée peut correspondre une musique, dramatique ou symphonique, agitée, inquiète, posant les problèmes sans les résoudre, s'arrêtant sans conclure et sans nuance de repos. Rien de tel dans la musique liturgique". Henri Potiron, "Modernisme", *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.–Feb. 1935), 62.

¹¹⁹ Printed on the covers of many issues of *TSG*.

¹²⁰ Fernand de La Tombelle, *Conférence sur la musique religieuse et le chant grégorien* (Périgueux: Imprimerie de la Dordogne, 1898), 30.

¹²¹ Jules Van Nuffel, "Le Congrès international de musique d'église", *MSB* (Dec. 1930), 197–98.

¹²² Edgar Tinel, *Pie X et la musique sacrée* (Schola cantorum, 1909), 9.

church musicians kept watch with remarkable patience. In 1842 Joseph d'Ortigue conceded that "the religious music appropriate to our century has not yet been found".¹²³ In 1930 one reviewer, unduly excited by the masses of Joseph Noyon and Henri Nibelle, thought he had found it: "One can truly believe that our national artists have at last discovered the secret of a modern religious music just as pure as Palestrinian music." But immediately after, the breakthrough seems still incomplete: "M. Henri Nibelle and other musicians are in the process of creating a new language" to achieve "the contemporary expression of the eternal verities."¹²⁴ By the mid 1930s, Potiron was running out of patience: surveying the reformist compositional legacy in a series of articles, he found progress in suppressing liturgically inappropriate music but failure to attract real talent; despite a few interesting experiments (such as Caplet's mass), no one had realised "l'idéal moderne de la musique religieuse".¹²⁵ Potiron summarised the underlying originality problem in an article forthrightly titled "Décadence de la musique d'église": "to create, within the church itself and under the influence of Gregorian chant . . . a style that would connect us to the past, to tradition, without subjugating us to any formula. This we have not yet found".¹²⁶ Yet he still clung to hope that a little more immersion in liturgy and plainchant could work the miracle. The abbé Brun too was prepared to wait: "I am convinced that in twenty or fifty years there will be a modern, very modern polyphonic style, which will get past the current excesses."¹²⁷

The push for a "modern" church music enjoyed its moment in the chaotic aftermath of the 1914–18 war, facilitated by the proliferation of congresses and periodicals and paralleled by a modernisation campaign in the religious visual arts. "A new generation of church musicians is rising up", noted the abbé Louis Boyer in the early 1920s, not without alarm. "A quite visible tendency is leading some to want to renovate everything, while accusing their predecessors of having pastiched."¹²⁸ He probably meant the likes of Joseph Samson, who in 1918 dismissed the reformist legacy *en bloc* as so many "pastiche", "pale imitations", mere "preparatory exercises" which "brought no new means of expression".¹²⁹ Samson's discontent apparently owed something to the wartime experience:

¹²³ "la musique religieuse appropriée à notre siècle n'était pas encore trouvée". Quoted in Bernadette Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur. La musique chorale et ses pratiques en France, 1800-1950* (Fayard, 2018), 225–26.

¹²⁴ "On peut croire véritablement que nos artistes nationaux ont enfin découvert le secret d'une musique religieuse moderne aussi pure que la musique palestrinienne. . . . M. Henri Nibelle et quelques autres musiciens sont en train de créer une langue neuve . . . l'expression actuelle des immuables vérités." "Bibliographie", *RSC* (Nov.–Dec. 1930), 173. It goes without saying that the works reviewed were published by the Procure générale.

¹²⁵ Henri Potiron, "La musique religieuse contemporaine", *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.–Feb. 1934), 95. Compare Samson, "La musique moderne à l'église", n.p.: "Ce qui nous manque, c'est simple, nous n'avons pas de compositeur de génie parmi les compositeurs religieux. Nos meilleurs écrivains sont de 2^d ordre." Such remarks abound in Samson's writings.

¹²⁶ "créer dans l'église même et sous l'influence du chant grégorien . . . un style qui nous attacherait au passé, à la tradition, sans pour cela nous asservir à une formule quelconque. Cela, nous ne l'avons pas encore trouvé". Henri Potiron, "Décadence de la musique d'église", *Musique et Liturgie* (Jan.–Feb. 1938), 62.

¹²⁷ "Je suis persuadé que dans vingt ans ou cinquante, il y aura un style polyphonique moderne, très moderne, qui sortira des outrances actuelles." François Brun, "Le clergé et la musique d'église", in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 137.

¹²⁸ "Une nouvelle génération de musiciens d'église se lève. . . . Une très visible tendance en porte quelques-uns à vouloir tout rénover en accusant les anciens d'avoir pastiché." Louis Boyer, *Musique et musiciens d'église* (Lyon: Gloupe, 1925), 84.

¹²⁹ "pâles imitations"; "n'apportait aucun nouveau moyen d'expression"; "exercices préalables". Joseph Samson, "À propos de l'état actuel de la musique religieuse", *La Revue des jeunes* (10 Oct. 1918), 496–97.

Now that we can judge with a certain distance, we who left behind normal life to plunge into bitter combats are beginning to recognise that [the prewar] phase of activity displayed more taste than true power. Modern music appears to possess more powerful means of expression than the modest medieval monody or the counterpoint of the Renaissance. Everything lies in putting these means to work. Renaissance music no longer satisfies us, any more than pre-Romantic literature. . . . The efforts that preceded and followed the publication of the *motu proprio* can only be considered a preparation for the future: that was the period of emancipation. The period of conquest has begun.¹³⁰

Addressing a congress in newly liberated Tourcoing the next year, Jules Van Nuffel, charged with rebuilding the Lemmens Institute, spoke headily of “these times in which composers of religious music, tired of the Cecilian style and school, are searching for a new style, and [in which] sacred music seems irresistibly destined to enter a new phase!”¹³¹ Even the staid Amédée Gastoué raised eyebrows by joining in such calls at another congress in Strasbourg in 1921.¹³² Paul Berthier seconded his old teacher in Paris the following year, remarking that “some new experiments or even audacities would not go amiss” in a genre that “has even been even less audacious than the other sacred arts”.¹³³ Not that the modernisers went unchecked: Fernand de La Tombelle at Tourcoing and Boyer at Strasbourg provided an anti-modernist pendant, heavily indebted to the talking-points of old-guard musicians such as d’Indy and Saint-Saëns.¹³⁴ Pierre Chassang’s response comes as little surprise:

Let’s leave all this jargon and paltry Esperanto to the cinemas and advanced dance halls. . . . What would you say of the curate or vicar of your parish if, in his homily or sermon, he started talking in Montmartre slang or the argot of the hoodlums in the outer suburbs? You would wonder whether he had lost his mind and ought to be led off to the madhouse.¹³⁵

Nevertheless, the ideological centre had shifted appreciably as the generation of 1905–10, shaken first by *debussyisme* and then by the war, succeeded the men who had led the reformist resurgence of the 1890s. The divide over “modern” style corresponded more to age than profession, politics

¹³⁰ “Maintenant que nous pouvons juger avec quelque recul, nous qui sommes sortis de la vie normale pour nous mêler à d’âpres luttes, nous commençons à constater que, pendant cette période d’efforts, on manifesta plus de goût que de puissance véritable. La musique moderne paraît posséder des moyens d’expression plus puissants que la modeste monodée [*sic*] médiévale et le contrepoint de la Renaissance. Le tout est de les mettre en œuvre. La musique de la Renaissance ne nous suffit pas, de même que ne nous suffit plus la littérature pré-romantique. . . . Les efforts qui précédèrent et suivirent la publication du *Motu proprio* ne peuvent être considérés que comme une préparation de l’avenir ; c’est la période d’affranchissement. La période de conquête est ouverte.” Ibid., 495–96.

¹³¹ “ces temps où, fatigués du style et de l’école céciliennes, les compositeurs de musique religieuse cherchent un style nouveau, et que la musique sacrée semble devoir entrer irrésistiblement dans une phase nouvelle !” Jules Van Nuffel, “L’École interdiocésaine de Malines et la musique d’église”, in *Congrès de musique sacrée de Tourcoing*, 269.

¹³² See Gastoué, “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir”. Cf. Ch. 2, 110.

¹³³ “quelques recherches neuves, quelques audaces mêmes”; “[La musique religieuse] a même été, remarquons-le, moins audacieuse que les autres arts sacrés”. Berthier, “L’écriture moderne”, 358.

¹³⁴ See Fernand de La Tombelle, “Le répertoire moderne”, in *Congrès de musique sacrée de Tourcoing*, 157–76. On La Tombelle’s activity in church music, including his growing conservatism after the war, see Jean-Emmanuel Filet, “Préface”, in Fernand de La Tombelle, *Écrits sur la musique sacrée, 1896-1927*, ed. Jean-Emmanuel Filet (Centre de recherche universitaire lorrain d’histoire/Bru Zane, 2020), 7–38.

¹³⁵ “Laissons ces argots et ces sortes d’espérantos rachitiques pour les cinémas et les dancings avancés. . . . Que diriez-vous du curé ou du vicaire de votre paroisse, s’il allait vous parler, dans son prône ou son sermon, le montmartrois et la langue des apaches de la barrière ?... Vous vous demanderiez s’ils ont perdu la tête et s’il ne faut pas les conduire dans quelque maison de santé.” Chassang, “La musique d’église et l’évolution”, 9.

(everyone was right-wing), or institutional affiliation (Gastoué, Berthier, and Boyer were loyal *scholistes*, Samson a Conservatoire graduate who had hoped to attend the Schola in 1914, La Tombelle an establishment musician who had distanced himself from the Schola).¹³⁶ Those in between were often ambivalent; Clément Besse (b. 1870) expressed conservative tastes yet as a choir director programmed Ravel, Honegger, Emmanuel, Caplet, Alain, and Berthier;¹³⁷ François Brun (b. 1878) showed a persistent fascination with Debussy yet wrote very simple *cantiques* and motets; Boyer (b. 1880) turned reactionary after a youthful *debussyste* phase as a student at the Schola.

What, though, did “moderne”, “nouveau”, “de notre temps” mean in church music? The one thing they never refer to is the style of the most challenging contemporaries. Gastoué directed church composers to Debussy and Ravel in his Strasbourg intervention, but there and in Metz the next year his examples of “modern” church music include works by Dubois, Perruchot, La Tombelle, and d’Indy (whose 1898 *Sancta Maria*, an unassuming little pastiche, “represents the first step for thoroughly modern music in composition for the church”).¹³⁸ The word could cover anything after Palestrina, as seen in the address of an abbé Cistac to a Catholic congress in Reims in 1896: “Let us ask ourselves, Messieurs, what type of music we should prefer: *Palestrinian* music or *modern* music properly speaking? The one illustrated by Palestrina, Victoria, Allegri, or the one made famous by Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Cherubini, Gounod?”¹³⁹ In 1893 the abbé Dirven predicted “an orgy of modernism, as witnessed by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” if Cecilian principles were relaxed.¹⁴⁰ When the abbé Boddaert addresses “musique moderne à l’église” at a congress in Arras in 1904, it becomes apparent that he has in mind something like the style of a Gounod opera.¹⁴¹ In the year 1895, Charles Bordes, launching his *Répertoire moderne de*

¹³⁶ The politics are easily gauged from remarks on Jews (Gastoué, *La musique d’église*, 110), “métèques” (Paul Berthier, letter to Guy Ropartz, 22 May 1939, F-Pn, VM BOB-19939), and “bolchevisme” or “soviétisme” (La Tombelle quoted in Joseph Kreps, “In memoriam F. de La Tombelle”, *MSB* (15 Dec. 1928), 203; Berthier quoted in Guy de Lioncourt, “Toujours les traités d’harmonie !”, *Les Tablettes de la Schola* (April–May 1923), 96; “Réflexions et menus propos. La musique moderniste”, *RSC* (March 1924), 44, for Delépine). Besse supported Action française (see Aurélie Gommier-Decourt, “Albert Alain (1880-1971), organiste et compositeur français” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1999), 133). Samson is the only uncertain case; see e.g. Joseph Samson, letter to Guy de Lioncourt, 29 Feb. 1940, F-Pn, NLA 451 (“pour moi, l’expression « bande judéo-maçonnique » n’a pas de signification”). On La Tombelle and the Schola see Jean-Christophe Branger, “Fernand de La Tombelle (1854-1928) : « un savant et un gentilhomme de la musique »”, *Revue de musicologie* 97.2 (2011), 397–98; on Samson and the Schola see Joseph Samson, letter to Guy de Lioncourt, 26 March 1940, F-Pn, NLA 451.

¹³⁷ See Decourt, “Maurice Emmanuel maître de chapelle à Sainte-Clotilde”, 84.

¹³⁸ “représente le premier pas de la musique tout-à-fait moderne dans la composition d’église”. Amédée Gastoué, “La musique religieuse française contemporaine”, in *Congrès régional de liturgie et de musique sacrée, organisé par l’Association française Sainte-Cécile, Metz, 5-7 juin 1922* (Guénange: Imprimerie des orphelins-apprentis, [1923]), 129. Dubois himself described his 1913 *Messe dans l’esprit du “motu proprio”* as being in “style religieux moderne”, glossed as “Style polyphonique et contrapuntique sévère, mais sans austérité ni sécheresse”. Théodore Dubois, *Journal*, ed. Charlotte Segond-Genovesi and Alexandre Dratwicky (Symétrie/Bru Zane, 2012), 77.

¹³⁹ “Demandons-nous, messieurs, maintenant, quel genre de musique nous devons préférer. La musique *palestrinienne* ou la musique *moderne* proprement dite ? Celle qui a illustré les Palestrina, les Vittoria, les Allegri, ou bien celle qui a rendu célèbre les Bach, les Mozart, les Haydn, les Beethoven, les Cherubini et les Gounod ?” Jules Cistac, “La critique et l’art musical religieux”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Jan. 1898), 18 [orig. lecture July 1896]. Cistac preferred the latter.

¹⁴⁰ “une orgie de modernisme, comme cela est arrivé au XVIII^e et XIX^e siècle”. Quoted in [Adrien Dirven], “Divers”, *CSG* (Feb. 1894), 15.

¹⁴¹ See Jules Boddaert, “La musique moderne à l’église”, in *Compte-rendu général du Congrès de musique religieuse d’Arras* (Arras: Procure générale, 1904), 71–78.

musique religieuse, could cheerfully recommend the harmony of the early seventeenth century while assuring that the Schola “has not sought to shackle the present movement of modern music for the sake of a vanished form of art.”¹⁴² His collaborator Perruchot, a Cecilian admirer, agreed on the goal of “a new and original form” but warned that “moderation is needed... To be modern, will ecclesiastical music have to constantly resort to dissonances and modulations?”¹⁴³

Those who insist that church music use “the language of our time” or the “latest” techniques show a similarly conservative sense of what represents their time. Even the most adventurous voices accepted the doctrine, widespread during this period of disorienting change, that “[recent] technical progress not be adopted in the church unless it has already truly gained the acceptance of connoisseurs”, as the critic Maurice Brillant put it.¹⁴⁴ If novelty was suspect until it had proven its worth and staying-power, church music was guaranteed to bring up the *arrière-garde*; Berthier and Gastoué defended “modern” procedures by pointing out that they had long since become established in secular music, on the theory that dross tends to be discarded over time. Berthier was careful to draw the line at polytonality and atonality in 1922, ridiculing “noise-ism” and “eyedropper music”.¹⁴⁵ “There’s modern and then there’s modern”, he decides, settling on the less than hair-raising motto “tradition in the style and inspiration, prudent novelty in the *écriture*.”¹⁴⁶ That said, the obligatory lag might not be very long: in 1924 Brillant felt that Ravel, Caplet, Poulenc, and the Honegger of *Le Roi David* were ready for assimilation, announcing that “very likely in a few years we will go even ‘further’ than Debussy, and will use the ‘discoveries’ of the ‘young’ musicians at work this very moment; they will be able to enter the sanctuary once they have been well affirmed and coordinated or sufficiently ‘accepted’”.¹⁴⁷ Samson might appear the solitary exception to this *arrière-gardisme*; he criticised Berthier’s caution and wrote in 1924 that he “would even go so far as to say that religious art must be an avant-garde art, as it once was.”¹⁴⁸ But in his

¹⁴² “[La Schola] n’a pas voulu entraver, au profit d’une forme d’art disparue, le mouvement présent de la musique moderne.” Pilot issue of *TSG* reproduced in René de Castéra, *Dix années d’action musicale religieuse, 1890-1900. Les Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais, La Schola cantorum* (Schola cantorum, 1902), n.p. Bordes had called for a music “fuyant toute affectation harmonique, n’employant la dissonance [sic] qu’avec réserve, à la manière des maîtres de la dernière période du contrepoint vocal [Felice] Anério, [Andrea] Gabrieli, [Giuseppe] Corsi.” Charles Bordes, “De l’emploi de la musique figurée et spécialement de la musique palestrinienne dans les offices liturgiques”, *TSG* (June 1895), 8. Bordes chose these three rather than Palestrina, Vittoria, and Lassus) as representatives of old polyphony with a slightly more modern harmonic style; see id., “Notre encartage musical. *Adoramus te Christe*, de G. Corsi (conseils d’exécution)”, *TSG* (Dec. 1895), 8–9.

¹⁴³ “une forme nouvelle et originale. Cependant, il faut une mesure... Pour être moderne, la musique ecclésiastique devra-t-elle recourir perpétuellement à des dissonances [sic] et aux modulations ?” Lazare Perruchot, “Notre concours de janvier”, *TSG* (March 1895), 8.

¹⁴⁴ “que ces progrès techniques ne soient adoptés à l’église que s’ils ont vraiment gagné déjà l’assentiment des connaisseurs.” Maurice Brillant, “Musique”, *Almanach catholique français* (1924), 258.

¹⁴⁵ “bruitisme”; “musique au compte-goutte”. Berthier, “L’écriture moderne”, 357.

¹⁴⁶ “Il y a moderne et moderne”; “En résumé, tradition dans le style et l’inspiration, nouveauté prudente dans l’écriture.” Ibid., 355.

¹⁴⁷ “C’est ainsi que très probablement on ira dans quelques années (j’entends à l’église) « plus loin » que Debussy, et qu’on emploiera les « découvertes » des « jeunes » musiciens qui travaillent en ce moment même ; elles pourront entrer dans le sanctuaire quand elles seront bien affirmées et coordonnées ou suffisamment « admises »”. Ibid., 258. Brillant later added Stravinsky to his list; see id., *L’art chrétien en France au XX^e siècle : ses tendances nouvelles* (Bloud & Gay, 1927), 25.

¹⁴⁸ “nous penserions même volontiers que l’art religieux doit être un art d’avant-garde comme il fut autrefois.” Joseph Samson, “À propos des deux messes de M. Guy Ropartz”, *La Vie catholique* (20 Dec. 1924). For Samson’s response to Berthier see Maurice Brillant, “Les œuvres et les hommes”, *Le Correspondant* (25 Feb. 1923), 746.

notes from the 1930s on “modern music” he too had adopted the doctrine that “the church is not a laboratory for experiments”:¹⁴⁹

There is no question of introducing into the church *procédés* that seem to characterise essentially ephemeral . . . nor indeed of imposing on church art this mobility, this variability, which tend to wear out avidity for the new at any price that manifests itself in art and which, expressing our mobility, our instability of spirit, tends to make us regard a *procédé* as ‘used up’ as soon as it enters into use, but rather to let church art take advantage of technical evolution insofar as this enables the spiritual to find a more adequate expression.¹⁵⁰

Innovation was ephemeral until proven otherwise: “we must rule out ~~systems~~ *procédés* that smack of calculated experimentation, which become outdated in no time at all . . . [W]ouldn’t opening the doors of our chapels to dubious experiments be capitulating in the face of a passing fashion?”¹⁵¹

Les extrêmes se touchent: *The Primitive as Modern*

Conceptions of musical modernity were much complicated by the notion that innovative recent music had returned in certain respects to primitive forms; going back well into the nineteenth century (it already figures prominently in the reception of Wagner),¹⁵² this idea would play a big role in discourse on originality in church music.

The notion owed much of its popularity to the perennial human tendency to view history through *a priori* schemes, including cyclic, spiral, sinusoidal, or parabolic patterns of rise and fall, as in the primitive–classical–decadent progression, of which one could hardly ask for a better illustration than that offered in a 1924 book of armchair musicology by the chemist Georges Urbain: “Every musical tradition in the past has known a period of first steps, awkwardness, abortive experiments; then a period of expansion for an art now in possession of its guiding principles; and finally a rapid and inevitable decadence.”¹⁵³ Like any decent arc, this grand trajectory is symmetrical:

¹⁴⁹ “l’église n’est pas une officine à expériences”. Samson, “La musique moderne à l’église”, n.p. Cf. Maurice Denis, “État actuel de l’art religieux”, *Gazette des Beaux-arts* (July 1933), 51 (“la maison de Dieu n’est pas un champ d’expériences”); Brillant, *L’art chrétien en France*, 25 (“Il suffit que les *convenances* nécessaires à l’église soient observées, qu’on n’en fasse pas un laboratoire d’expériences personnelles”).

¹⁵⁰ “Il ne s’agit pas d’introduire à l’église des *procédés* qui semblent caractériser essentiellement éphémères . . . ni même d’imposer à l’art d’église cette mobilité, cette variabilité qui tendent à user avidité de renouveau à tout prix qui se manifeste dans l’art et qui[,] traduisant notre mobilité, notre instabilité d’esprit[,] tend à nous faire regarder comme ‘usé’ un *procédé* dès qu’il a été mis en usage. Mais de le faire profiter de l’évolution technique dans la mesure où celle-ci permet au spirituel de rencontrer une expression plus adéquate.” Samson, “La musique moderne à l’église”, n.p.

¹⁵¹ “qu’on écarte *a priori* des ~~systems~~ *procédés* dont l’allure est hypothétique, qui sont surannées au bout de peu de temps . . . n’est-ce pas précisément capituler devant une mode fugitive que d’ouvrir les portes de nos chapelles à des tentatives incertaines ?” Ibid.

¹⁵² See Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner’s Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (CUP, 1995), 242–48.

¹⁵³ “Toutes les musiques du passé ont connu l’ère des balbutiements, des gaucheries, des tendances avortées, puis l’ère de l’épanouissement d’un art en possession de ses principes directeurs, enfin une rapide et inévitable décadence.” Georges Urbain, *Le tombeau d’Aristoxène. Essai sur la musique* (Doin, 1924), 62. For an overview of the extensive literature see James Webster, “The Concept of Beethoven’s ‘Early Period’ in the Context of Periodizations in General”, in *Beethoven Forum* 3, ed. Glenn Stanley (U. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1–15. An exhaustive study in a contemporaneous context is Sarah Collins, *Lateness and Modernism: Untimely Ideas about Music, Literature and Politics in Interwar Britain* (CUP, 2019), Ch. 5.

It appears more and more . . . that the tendencies of our age mirror those manifested during the pre-classic era. Then, tonality was being born; today, we are witnessing its decrepitude. Hence all the returns to antique *procédés*: modes, organum, long pedals, abrupt clashes of unrelated keys, atonality, pluritonicity, aimless melodies [*mélopées*] that never cadence.¹⁵⁴

One finds this image of cyclic return everywhere in the early twentieth century. Promoters of old music loved it; here is Lucien David, a Benedictine plainchant specialist, quoting the priest and physicist Giulio Zambiasi (*Intorno alle relazioni del canto gregoriano colla tonalità moderna*, 1907): “the progress of modern art must consist in the use of the double liberty, tonal and rhythmic, characteristic of Gregorian chant, thus accomplishing its evolution in the opposite direction of that of polyphonic art in its early stages.”¹⁵⁵ “Where might the progressive evolution of musical composition lead?” asks a 1921 article by Georges Migot. It would lead to fluid, unpredictable forms that unfolded organically just like *la mélopée antique*, the antidote to the “geometrical” repetition of classicism.¹⁵⁶ By 1938, Dom Clément Jacob could claim: “every musician knows that Gregorian art, with its modal fantasy, its rhythmic liberty, and its unpredictable and fluid modulations and implied harmonies, is very close to us and connects, across the centuries, to the most refined experiments of contemporary composers.”¹⁵⁷ Those who disliked Romanticism especially knew this. Jehan Alain, 1937: “Modern music (or at least what is usually called modern music in 1937) takes after ancient music more than romantic or classical. By a simple game of musical spelling one must be able to pass unnoticed from one to the other and conserve the freshness and tenderness of sixteenth-century music.”¹⁵⁸ Boris de Schlœzer, 1937: “In certain respects, the musical art taking shape before our eyes, in whose life we are participating, is closer to the ideas of, for example, the Renaissance, or the end of the Middle Ages, than of

¹⁵⁴ “Il apparaît de plus en plus . . . que les tendances de notre époque sont diamétralement opposées à celles qui se manifestèrent durant l’époque pré-classique. Alors la tonalité prenait naissance. Nous assistons aujourd’hui à sa caducité. De là ces retours aux procédés antiques : modes, organums, pédales soutenues, contacts non préparés de tonalités qui s’ignorent, atonisme, pluritonisme, mélopées académiques.” Urbain, *Le tombeau d’Aristoxène*, 158. Compare Ludovic Giraud, *La musique d’église telle que l’Église la veut* (Marseille: Publiroc, 1934), 33–34: “Souvent il n’y eut [in recent music] qu’un simple retour à des traditions vieilles de plusieurs siècles. La musique . . . semble — éternelle recommenceuse — après une courbe immense revenir à ses commencements, mais enrichie par l’apport successif des siècles.”

¹⁵⁵ “[que] le progrès de l’art moderne doive consister dans l’utilisation des deux libertés *tonale* et *rythmique*, caractéristiques du chant grégorien, accomplissant ainsi son évolution en sens inverse de l’art polyphonique à ses débuts.” Lucien David, “Chants du passé et musique de l’avenir”, *TSG* (Oct. 1908), 218.

¹⁵⁶ See Georges Migot, “Où peut conduire l’évolution progressive de la composition musicale”, *RM* (May 1921), 156–58.

¹⁵⁷ “tout musicien sait, précisément, que l’art grégorien, par sa fantaisie modale, par sa liberté rythmique, par l’imprévu, la souplesse de ses modulations et des harmonies qu’elles supposent, est très près de nous et rejoint, à travers les siècles, les recherches les plus raffinées des compositeurs contemporains.” Clément Jacob, “L’Église et la musique contemporaine”, *L’Art sacré* (Jan. 1938), 18.

¹⁵⁸ “La Musique moderne (ou du moins ce qu’il est convenu d’appeler musique moderne en 1937) s’apparente plus directement à la musique ancienne que la musique romantique ou classique. Par le simple jeu de l’orthographe musicale on doit pouvoir passer insensiblement de l’une à l’autre et conserver la fraîcheur et la tendresse de la musique du XVI^e siècle.” Quoted in Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 328.

Romanticism.”¹⁵⁹ Messiaen’s well-known characterisation of *L’Orgue mystique* comes to mind too: “mi-gothique, mi-ultra-moderne”.¹⁶⁰

Growing familiarity with “primitive” music no doubt fostered this impression; “advances in history are revealing more and more every day how our most audacious novelties have antecedents in the most distant periods”, claimed Joseph Samson in the 1930s.¹⁶¹ The durable habit of programming very old and very new music together certainly encouraged critics to hear such connections.¹⁶² Compositional developments cannot be discounted either. Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* represented the acme of modernity in 1902, yet its declamation and tonal structures reminded critics of plainchant and ancient modes.¹⁶³ The abbé Brun relished *Mélisande*’s unaccompanied modal song “Mes longs cheveux” as “purest Gregorian chant”.¹⁶⁴ Sometimes the critics seem to have taken such reminiscences as accidental, as when Nadia Boulanger cryptically mentioned “all these forms of early music [*musique du début*] towards which it seems that certain composers are returning in part” in a 1926 lecture.¹⁶⁵ But after Debussy’s death, rumours began to circulate that such reminiscences resulted from direct influence: “The bare monastic *mélopée* had seduced the author of *Pelléas*, who drew from it subtle effects of subconscious poetry, with veiled and monochrome sonorities”, reports the abbé Besse.¹⁶⁶ Brun went further, claiming that “the author of *Pelléas* had the Book of Gregorian Melodies [?] on his work-table”.¹⁶⁷ No such speculation was needed in the case of Saint-Saëns, Fauré, d’Indy, Kœchlin, or Caplet, who openly acknowledged their debts to antique sacred music.

The supposed commonalities usually consisted of “modality” (on which see Ch. 3, 158–61), “free rhythm” (a subject for another and very long thesis), parallel perfect intervals, and sometimes polymelody. Whether pleased or displeased, critics rarely missed a chance to liken the

¹⁵⁹ “Sous certains rapports, l’art musical qui se crée aujourd’hui sous nos yeux, à la vie duquel nous participons, est plus proche des conceptions de la Renaissance, par exemple, ou de la fin du moyen âge que de celles du romantisme.” Boris de Schlœzer, “Les compositeurs et le public”, *La Vie intellectuelle* (25 May 1937), 466.

¹⁶⁰ Olivier Messiaen, *Journalism, 1935–1939*, ed. Stephen Broad (Ashgate, 2012), 42 [orig. in *La Syrinx*, 1938].

¹⁶¹ “les progrès de l’histoire tendent à nous révéler chaque jour que nos plus audacieux nouveautés ont des antécédents qui se retrouvent aux périodes les plus reculées”. Samson, “La musique moderne à l’église”, 8.

¹⁶² See Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (OUP, 2005), 244 and Jann Pasler, “Juxtaposer musique ancienne et moderne”, trans. Sophie Renaut, in *La vie intellectuelle en France*, vol. 2 *De 1914 à nos jours*, ed. Christophe Charle and Laurent Jeanpierre (Seuil, 2016), 349–53.

¹⁶³ See e.g. Paul Landormy, “Debussy et le progrès de l’art musical”, *Le Courrier musical* (15 June 1903), 182 and Bertelin, *Traité*, vol. 2, 33. Cf. Stefan Morent, *Das Mittelalter im 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur Kompositionsgeschichte in Frankreich* (Steiner, 2013), 126.

¹⁶⁴ “du plus pur chant grégorien”. François Brun, “Le cantique d’inspiration grégorienne”, in *Comptes rendus, rapports et vœux du Congrès parisien et régional de chant liturgique et de musique d’église, Paris, les 12, 13, 14 et 15 juin 1911* (Schola cantorum, 1912), 163.

¹⁶⁵ Nadia Boulanger, “La musique moderne”, *Le Monde musical* (28 Feb. 1926), 60 [orig. lecture, École normale de musique].

¹⁶⁶ “La mélopée monacale toute nue avait séduit l’auteur de *Pelléas*, qui en a tiré de subtils effets de poésie subconscient, aux sonorités voilées et monochromes [*si*].” Clément Besse, “La Légende de Saint Christophe à l’Opéra”, *La Revue des jeunes* (25 July 1920), 189.

¹⁶⁷ “l’auteur de *Pelléas* avait sur sa table de travail le Livre des Mélodies grégoriennes.” François Brun, “La musique d’église en 1925”, *Almanach catholique français* (1926), 257. See also Maurice Brilliant, “André Caplet musicien mystique”, *RM* (June 1925), 9; André Cœuroy, “Les formes actuelles de la musique religieuse”, *RM* (June 1925), 245 [quoting Félix Raugel, orig. unidentified]; Charles Kœchlin, “Quelques anciennes mélodies inédites de Claude Debussy”, *RM* (May 1926), 135; Auguste Le Guennant, “Chant grégorien et musique moderne”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (July 1926), 52.

parallel fourths and fifths that proliferated after Debussy to the “balbutiements” of medieval polyphony. When mentioning organum offhandedly in a 1922 article, Nadia Boulanger saw fit to observe that “one finds traces of it, sometimes quite marked ones, in the music of Erik Satie”.¹⁶⁸ Ecclesiastical settings especially predisposed them to listen for archaism; the reception of Caplet’s mass setting, which premiered in the thirteenth-century Sainte-Chapelle, furnishes abundant examples. For Henry Woollett, the music invoked “the barbarous old discant (whose practices are revived nowadays)”, an “archaic (or modern, which is the same thing!) way of writing”.¹⁶⁹ Maurice Brillant noted a figure (Fig. 1.4) that recalls both thirteenth-century diaphony and the opening of Debussy’s *Nuages* or Ravel’s *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges*: “The writing is properly medieval, under the reign of the fourth and fifth, discant and parallel motion”.¹⁷⁰



Fig. 1.4: André Caplet, *Messe à trois voix*, Kyrie, bars 15–19

Another critic found such passages to recall “certain musical conceptions” of “the time of Saint Louis”, as practised by one “Léonin Pérotin”.¹⁷¹ This transhistorical resonance even gave parallelism a new lease on life, to judge from Maurice Brillant’s review of *Panis vitæ* (1931), an oratorio by Edmond Dierickx that exemplifies the late survival of *debussysme* in the backwater of sacred music:

Curiously, these series of fifths, these garlands of fourths, these whole-tone scales, frequent in this oratorio and which, in the hands of certain contemporaries, or of the “debussystes” (by whom Debussy complained he was being “killed”), tire us as facile clichés and already a kind of new academicism, here take on an entirely different character, thanks to the proximity of Gregorian chant, which explains and animates them, from which they arise almost logically; in truth, they recover their original freshness.¹⁷²

At once primitive and modern, neo-organum seemed to go well with other aspects of “modern” harmony. The Belgian organist Paul de Maleingreau saw a potential “renovation” of church music

¹⁶⁸ “dont on retrouve des traces parfois très sensibles chez Erik Satie”. Nadia Boulanger, “La musique religieuse [de Fauré]”, *RM* (Oct. 1922), 103.

¹⁶⁹ “vieux déchant barbare, (dont les pratiques sont aujourd’hui remises en honneur)”; “une écriture archaïque (ou moderne, ce qui est la même chose !)”. Henry Woollett, “La musique française moderne. André Caplet”, *Le Monde musical* (Feb. 1922), 54.

¹⁷⁰ “L’écriture est proprement médiévale : c’est le règne de la quarte et de la quinte, du déchant et des mouvements parallèles”. Brillant, “André Caplet musicien mystique”, 9.

¹⁷¹ “elle fait revivre la foi du temps de Saint-Louis”; “certaines conceptions musicales des maîtres de ce temps (quintes parallèles, etc.)”. G[eorges?] Allix, “La messe de M. André Caplet”, *Le Monde musical* (June 1922), 220.

¹⁷² “Chose curieuse, ces successions de quintes, ces guirlandes de quartes, ces gammes par tons, fréquentes dans l’oratorio et qui, sous la plume de certains contemporains ou de ces « debussystes » (par lesquels Debussy se plaignait d’être « tué »), nous lassent comme des clichés faciles et déjà comme un nouvel académisme, elles prennent ici un tout autre caractère, par le voisinage du grégorien qui les explique, les anime et dont elles sortent presque logiquement; elles retrouvent en vérité leur fraîcheur originale.” Brillant, “Un oratorio eucharistique”, *La Vie catholique* (27 Feb. 1932).

in “the alliance of discant with a harmony arrived at the contemporary stage” in masses by Van Nuffel and Jean-Marie Plum.¹⁷³ In a mass by Arthur Meulemans, sometime student and teacher at the Lemmens Institute, Ernest Closson found that “bare fifths and chains of fourths give rise to an impression of archaism, harmoniously united to a bold modernity in the tonal scheme.”¹⁷⁴ Conversely, medieval polyphony became modernism *avant la lettre*. Joseph Samson drew Kœchlin’s attention to the successive fifths in a mass by Philippe de Monte (a composer rediscovered in the 1930s thanks to Van Nuffel), which “make it a strangely modern work, a cousin of Caplet’s *O salutaris*.”¹⁷⁵ Samson also likened its tonal shifts and false relations to “a quasi-atonal system”¹⁷⁶ and elsewhere equated organum to polytonality.¹⁷⁷ Confronted with an orchestration of a Pérotin organum on a 1933 concert programme, a critic found its “stripped-down harmony” to be “strangely ‘avant-garde’”.¹⁷⁸ When theorists began retrospectively to justify the parallelism that had become widespread since Debussy, they pointed to early polyphony as legitimating precedent.¹⁷⁹

Polymelody presents a more complicated case. It evoked an old-fashioned *style rigoureux* for nineteenth-century musicians, but Wagner’s operas gave it a futuristic image that endured until the turn of the century, especially at the Schola cantorum, according to the logic *polymelodic* = *complex* = *modern*.¹⁸⁰ It features regularly in post-Wagnerian complaints about the complication and fragmentation of the musical language;¹⁸¹ conservatives saw a parallel to the sixteenth century, predicting that out-of-control polymelody would provoke a reaction towards a new simplicity.¹⁸²

¹⁷³ “une rénovation par l’alliage du déchant et de l’harmonie parvenue au stade contemporain.” Paul de Maleingreau, “Semaine musicale. Bibliographie musicale” [review of Van Nuffel, *Te Deum* and *Cantiques eucharistiques*], *Le Vingtième Siècle* (18 May 1930). See also Eugène Collard, “Bibliographie” [review of Van Nuffel, *Missa paschalis*], *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Sept.–Oct. 1930), 55: “le libre jeu, à l’orgue, des quarts nues, évoquant les effets harmoniques de l’ancien organum”.

¹⁷⁴ “des quintes vides, des chaînes de quarts dégagent une impression d’archaïsme, unie harmonieusement à une modernité hardie par le mouvement tonal.” Ernest Closson, “La musique en province. Noël à Saint-Rombaut” [review of Meulemans, *Missa in honorem Sancti Servatii*], *L’Indépendance belge* (27 Dec. 1935).

¹⁷⁵ “en font une œuvre étrangement moderne ; cousine germaine de l’*O salutaris* de Caplet.” Joseph Samson, letter to Charles Kœchlin, F-Pbmfg, B 444, numbered “17” [c. 1935].

¹⁷⁶ “un régime quasi atonal.” Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ “Songe-t-on que les superpositions tonales connues sous le nom de polytonie qui sont devenues familières aux musiciens ‘à la page’ et qui effrayent encore les autres étaient savourées, sous le nom d’*antiphonies*, par les Anciens et qu’au temps de Guy d’Arezzo on les pratiquait encore à l’église avec délices.” Id., “La musique moderne à l’église”, n.p. “Antiphonie” here means parallelism (following Gevaert).

¹⁷⁸ “harmonie dépouillée”; “étrangement ‘avant-garde’”. H. D. C. [Henri de Curzon?], “Œuvres de Raymond Petit (Salle Chopin)”, *RM* (March 1933), 215.

¹⁷⁹ See René Lenormand, *Étude sur l’harmonie moderne* (Eschig, 1913), 11–12; Paul Gilson, *Quintes, octaves, secondes et polytonie. Étude documentaire sur l’art musical* (Brussels: Schott, 1922), 10; Charles Kœchlin, “Les tendances de la musique moderne française”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 1, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1925), 73.

¹⁸⁰ See e.g. the opinions of Séverac cited in Alexandre Robert, “La transformation d’une oreille. Déodat de Séverac à la Schola cantorum”, *Revue de musicologie* 103.1 (2017), 80–81, 87.

¹⁸¹ See e.g. Félix Clément, *Histoire de la musique, depuis les temps anciens jusqu’à nos jours* (Hachette, 1885), 21; Camille Saint-Saëns, “Charles Gounod et le *Don Juan* de Mozart”, *La Vie contemporaine* (1 Nov. 1893), 334; id., “L’évolution musicale”, *Le Ménestrel* (24 June 1906), 190; Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, “Préface”, in Henry Woollett, *Histoire de la musique, depuis l’antiquité jusqu’à nos jours*, 4 vols (Eschig, 1909–24), n.p.; Fernand de La Tombelle, *L’oratorio et la cantate* (Schola cantorum, 1911), 39; Amédée Gastoué, *L’art grégorien* (Alcan, 1911), 198–99; Woollett, *Histoire de la musique*, vol. 4, 446.

¹⁸² See Camille Saint-Saëns, *Harmonie et Mélodie* (Calmann Lévy, 1885), 274–77; Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Trente Mélodies populaires de Basse-Bretagne* (Lemoine, 1885), 16; Félicien de Ménéil, “L’évolution musicale, 5^e partie. La

The advent of *debussysme*, reputedly “vertical” in conception, subsequently muddled the waters; “it seemed for a moment that polyphony was regaining a certain favour (with Brahms, Bruckner, Strauss, Mahler), then there was a regression”, reported Paul Gilson in 1912.¹⁸³ Yet the sense of a long-term rise in textural complexity survived. That same year, a newspaper launched a “grande enquête” to find out whether melody would prevail over the complication of counterpoint and harmony.¹⁸⁴ Surveying the “époque contemporaine” in 1911, Maurice Emmanuel still found “ever-increasing polyphony” and saw in his beloved modes “a recourse against a diffuse, overwhelming polyphony that is cluttering up the orchestra”.¹⁸⁵ Nor did everyone hear *debussysme* as “vertical”, either: Albert Bertelin found “numerous points of contact between the Italian and Flemish motets and madrigals and the creations of the modern impressionists. The *procédés* are largely the same: absence of clear melodic lines, expressionism of the harmonic polyphony, etc.”¹⁸⁶ The postwar vogue for lean linearity then decisively reaffirmed such circular visions. Medieval and ultra-modern music not only benefitted from the same “libération de l’oreille”, according to the musicologist Charles Van den Borren, but shared concrete similarities: “the most advanced music of the present time is oriented towards a type of polyphony not lacking points of contact with that of the final centuries of the Middle Ages.”¹⁸⁷ The more primitive the polyphony, the more modern: the “most modern contemporary composers” were “returning, as though naturally” to the free dissonance of “les Primitifs”, which “disappeared for a long time in music of the Classical period” (Gastoué, 1910)¹⁸⁸; ultra-modern music that piled up dissonances resembled “the gauche motets of the Middle Ages in which polyphony took shape” (Emmanuel, 1926)¹⁸⁹; the “archaïsme” of Ockeghem

modulation”, *La Nouvelle Maîtrise* (Oct. 1903), 168; Jules Combarieu, *Histoire de la musique, des origines au début du XX^e siècle*, vol. 3 (Colin, 1919), 641. Even d’Indy is quoted as saying: “Nous nous trouvons à peu près dans la même situation que les hommes de la fin du XVI^e siècle, lassés d’un trop long usage et parfois de l’abus du contrepoint”. Paul Landormy, “L’état actuel de la musique française”, *Revue politique et littéraire* (26 March 1904), 395.

¹⁸³ “il a semblé un moment que la polyphonie regagnait quelque faveur (Brahms, Bruckner, Strauss, Malher [sic]), puis il y eut régression.” Paul Gilson, “Le tutti orchestral. Étude analytique et documentaire de la dynamique orchestrale”, *Le Diapason* (16 May 1912), 154. Compare Julien Tiersot, *Un demi-siècle de musique française. Entre les deux guerres, 1870-1917* (Alcan, 1918), 221: “L’on croyait avoir accompli chez nous un grand progrès, au temps de l’influence de *Maîtres-Chanteurs* et des œuvres de Bach nouvellement étudiées, en proclamant le triomphe de l’écriture horizontale : nous voilà maintenant [i.e. with the coming of Debussy] revenus à la verticale.”

¹⁸⁴ See Pierre Montamet, “Quel est l’avenir de la musique française ?”, *Excelsior* (7 October 1912).

¹⁸⁵ “la polyphonie toujours grandissante”. Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 1, 6. “un recours contre une polyphonie diffuse, débordante, qui empâte l’orchestre”. Id., *Histoire*, vol. 2, 622.

¹⁸⁶ “de nombreux points de contact entre les motets, les madrigaux flamands et italiens et les productions des modernes impressionnistes ; les procédés employés sont en grande partie les mêmes : absence de dessins mélodiques bien déterminés, expressionnisme de la polyphonie harmonique, etc.” Albert Bertelin, “L’évolution de la musique contemporaine”, *Le Courrier musical* (15 Oct. 1912), 533–34.

¹⁸⁷ “la musique la plus avancée du temps présente s’oriente vers un genre de polyphonie qui ne manque pas de points de contact avec celle des derniers siècles du moyen âge.” Charles Van den Borren, “Pour la musique du Moyen Âge”, *Musique* (15 Jan. 1928), 151. Schoenberg drew a similar parallel in his *Harmonielehre*, see Jérôme Rossi, “Méthodes d’analyse de l’harmonie post-romantique. Bilan et perspectives”, in *L’harmonie post-romantique. Analyse et esthétique*, ed. Jérôme Rossi (Observatoire musical français, 2007), 14.

¹⁸⁸ “un caractère des plus piquants et des plus expressifs, disparu pendant longtemps de la musique classique et auquel reviennent, comme naturellement, les plus modernes des compositeurs actuels.” Amédée Gastoué, *Les primitifs de la musique française* (Laurens, 1922 [1910]), 84–85.

¹⁸⁹ “elles paraissent voisines des gauches motets du Moyen Âge où s’élaborait la polyphonie”. Maurice Emmanuel, Pelléas et Mélisande de Claude Debussy. *Étude historique et critique, Analyse musicale* (Mellottée, 1926), 220.

“now appears singularly modern to us” (Jean Deroux, 1928).¹⁹⁰ Whatever the image of polymelody in general, though, the notion of “polyphonic palestrinienne” always exuded a conservative classicism in its diatonicism and strict dissonance treatment. More than any other, this liminal repertoire—“so simple and so complex at the same time”, for a critic seemingly hearing it for the first time in 1890s Brussels—courted ambiguity.¹⁹¹

All these areas of supposed overlap offered respite from the originality problem: to the extent that modern was now the same as old, there was no more conflict to reconcile. In church music especially, the sense of medieval return emboldened postwar calls for modernisation. Writing at the end of the war, Samson borrowed Emmanuel’s circular narrative of tonal evolution when urging church composers to move past what he saw as a phase of pastiche:

[W]ith the enlargement and loosening of harmonic methods, we now seem to be moving back to the plural tonality from the unitary one, as though a new art, enriched by all the past and full of recent conquests, were on the point of opening up. A return to the old modal language, augmented by sumptuous modern harmony, seems more in keeping with the spirit of the Church than the intrusion of sickly chromaticism into liturgical music[.]¹⁹²

Regression becomes progress when it moves from the simple (“la tonalité unique”) to the complex (“la modalité complexe”). The next year, Van Nuffel justified exposing students to “les harmonies nouvelles”, including those of Debussy, on the grounds of circularity: “In these works we often discover striking archaisms, intimate connections to the modes and quality of movement of plainchant, presented, it is true, in a new light”.¹⁹³ Gastoué urged his colleagues to embrace a “modality, rhythm, and harmony at once archaic and in line with the most modern symphonists—in sum, the ancient substance infused into an entirely modern and forward-looking inspiration.”¹⁹⁴ Berthier, citing both Gastoué and Emmanuel, called modern rhythmic freedom and modality “only a return to, an interpretation of the ancient”:

[I]n many modern innovations, whether in mode and rhythm or even harmony and counterpoint, there is a large part of tradition renewed from our old masters; nowadays we delight in the very rudeness of the

¹⁹⁰ “nous apparaît maintenant comme singulièrement moderne.” Jean Deroux, “Les concerts. Les Amis des cathédrales”, *TSG* (May 1928), 61–62.

¹⁹¹ “si simple et si complexe tout à la fois”. “Musique religieuse”, *Revue de l’art chrétien* (1897), 357–58 [orig. in *La Patriote*, Brussels]. Compare Saint-Saëns’s description of sixteenth-century music: “Sur des bases solides mais restreintes, dont la simplicité nous fait sourire, s’élève un art laborieux et compliqué”. Camille Saint-Saëns, preface to Jacques-Gabriel Prod’homme and Arthur Dandelot, *Gounod, 1818-1893. Sa vie et ses œuvres d’après les documents inédits* [1911], in id., *Écrits sur la musique et les musiciens, 1870-1921*, ed. Marie-Gabrielle Soret (Vrin, 2012), 763.

¹⁹² “il semble que par l’élargissement et l’assouplissement des méthodes harmoniques on revienne, maintenant, de la tonalité unique à la tonalité plurale, comme si un art nouveau riche de tout le passé et plein de conquêtes récentes, était sur le point de s’ouvrir. Un retour à la vieille langue modale, rehaussée des somptuosités harmoniques modernes paraît davantage dans l’esprit de l’Église que l’intrusion dans la musique liturgique d’un chromatisme maladif”. Samson, “À propos de l’état actuel de la musique religieuse”, 496–97.

¹⁹³ “Nous découvrons bien souvent dans ces œuvres des archaïsmes frappants, des rapports intimes avec les modes et les allures du plain-chant, présentés, il est vrai, sous un jour nouveau”. Van Nuffel, “L’École interdiocésaine”, 269.

¹⁹⁴ “la modalité, les rythmes et l’harmonie à la fois archaïques et en conformité avec les plus modernes des symphonistes, la sève antique, en somme, infusée dans une inspiration toute moderne et d’avenir.” Gastoué, “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir”, 35.

Primitives, and I recall one motet from the thirteenth century that Pierre Aubry compared to Ravel. This is proof that medieval music is alive and well, since it imparts renewed vigour to the younger generations.¹⁹⁵

More conservative voices protested such appropriation of old music. Fernand de La Tombelle had grown irritated with what he saw as a disease of “Gregorianitis” (*grégorianite*):

It consists in seeing, putting, imposing Gregorian chant everywhere, in subjecting it to the most fearsome operations in the form of unexpected canons and counterpoint more topsy-turvy [*renversés*] than invertible [*renversables*], in joining it to basses that frolic from unidentified mode to unknown key, using a chromaticism without beginning nor end, all of which suddenly comes to a halt on a random triad (a naïve concession) as if to say: ‘Here I am!’ And when the exasperated ear asks just what this could be or was meant to be, the answer comes back: ‘It’s Gregorian!’¹⁹⁶

La Tombelle’s diagnosis testifies to the success of the circularity discourse: by 1922 the label “Gregorian” had come to serve as a pretext for what one might call modernism (even if La Tombelle called it mere incompetence or bad taste): complex or free polyphony, tonality destabilised by modality and/or chromaticism. The rhetoric of primitivism had become sufficiently banal that the *scholiste* choirmaster Albert Trotrot-Dériot could lampoon it in a review of one of Samson’s masses, in which he bewailed “the deliberate hostility to normal sonority, to orderly counterpoint, to a reasonable tessitura—because creative adventure is a fine thing, because holy is the clumsiness of the Primitives, because classicism is obsolete, because music needs to be ‘rebarbarised’.”¹⁹⁷

All these circularity discourses explain one of the characteristic paradoxes of church-music literature of the early twentieth century (though not unique to it), namely that the most conservative authors write the most about “progress”. Figures such as Laurent Janssens, Tinel, Verhelst, Delépine, Chassang, Louis Boyer, and in some ways Besse lambast “pastiche” and call for “modernity”, but the works they promote and write prove unadventurous in the extreme; a Maurice Emmanuel or a Joseph Samson is at the once more interested in antique music and more tolerant of experiments. The 1908 spat between Verhelst and Brun, the one a Tinel-ite and the other a *scholiste* enamoured of both Debussy and the *cantique grégorien*, perfectly illustrates the disconnect. Verhelst fired a broadside against “those who want to pour modern music into the mould of ancient modes and rhythms”, denouncing lifeless pastiche, dry archaeology, idle

¹⁹⁵ “n’est qu’un retour, une interprétation de l’ancien”; “il y a, dans beaucoup de recherches modernes, une grande part de tradition renouée avec nos maîtres anciens, au point de vue modal, rythmique, et même harmonique et contrapunctique ; nous nous délectons aujourd’hui aux rudesses mêmes des primitifs ; et je me souviens [de] tel motet du XIII^e siècle que Pierre Aubry comparait à du Ravel. Et c’est une preuve que la musique médiévale est bien vivante encore, puisqu’elle fournit une sève renouvelée aux jeunes générations.” Berthier, “L’écriture moderne”, 357.

¹⁹⁶ “Elle consiste à voir, mettre, à imposer du grégorien partout, à lui faire subir les opérations les plus redoutables, sous forme de canons imprévus, de contrepoints plus renversés que renversables, à lui associer des basses qui tour à tour folâtraient entre une modalité ignorée et une tonalité inconnue, usant d’un chromatisme sans commencement ni fin, qui tout à coup s’arrête par hasard sur un accord parfait (naïve concession), en ayant l’air de dire : J’y suis ! Et lorsque l’oreille exaspérée demande tout ce que cela veut et peut être, il lui est répondu : « C’est du grégorien ! ».” Quoted in Jean des Barres, “À propos de grégorien”, RSC (May 1922), 2 [orig. not identified].

¹⁹⁷ “les partis pris hostiles à la sonorité normale, à l’ordre contrapunctique, à la tessiture sage — parce que l’aventure créatrice est belle, que sainte est la gaucherie des Primitifs, que le classicisme est périmé, qu’il faut ‘rebarbariser la musique’.” Albert Trotrot-Dériot, “À Bourges. La Messe ‘O nuit, heureuse nuit’ de J. Samson”, *La Petite Maîtrise* (Sept. 1928), 51. The apparent quotation probably refers to a book by the right-wing primitivist Louis Bertrand: *Le Sens de l’ennemi* (1917).

borrowing, vain efforts to turn back the clock, etc.¹⁹⁸ Brun came back with the circularity discourse, pointing to Debussy: “the old modality is precisely not very far from our current musicality, and the Gregorian language (tonality and line) is far from being a dead language”.¹⁹⁹ In the next issue of *Musica sacra*, Verhelst vindictively panned some of Brun’s own *cantiques*, detailing their “inexplicable bizarreries”, “barbarous” harmony, and violations of “la tonalité diatonique” (he particularly objected to the *debussyste* turn of phrase in Fig. 1.5).²⁰⁰

Fig. 1.5: François Brun, *Cantiques et Cantilènes*, deuxième cahier, Repentance, bars 22–29

So much for pastiche; Verhelst apparently realised the irony, for he switched to claiming that such music “remains a hundred miles from the Gregorian sources, despite a few antique cadences.”²⁰¹ He was in fact raising (like La Tombelle) a significant point about abuse of the discourse of *les extrêmes se touchent* to pass off just anything as Gregorian; but his own conception of modernity, if reflected in a *Tantum ergo* of his composition lauded further down on the same page (by a different author, one hopes) as “one of the most beautiful we know”, turns out to be fairly empty (see Fig. 1.6).²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ “ceux qui veulent couler la musique moderne dans le moule des modes et des rythmes anciens”. Verhelst, “Glans de revues”, 44.

¹⁹⁹ “La modalité ancienne n’est pas très-loin, précisément, de notre musicalité actuelle, et la langue grégorienne (tonalité et ligne) est loin d’être une langue morte.” François Brun, “Les sources grégoriennes”, *MSB* (April–May 1909), 78.

²⁰⁰ “d’inexplicables bizarreries”; “barbare”. François Verhelst, “Bibliographie”, *MSB* (June 1909), 90.

²⁰¹ “reste à cent lieues des sources grégoriennes, malgré quelques cadences antiques.” Ibid., 91. Here Verhelst refers to a similar collection by Albert Alain, also under review.

²⁰² “l’un des plus beaux que nous connaissions”. “Bibliographie”, *MSB* (June 1909), 91. The Schola then re-retorted by slating a new mass by Verhelst: see Henry Noël, “Bibliographie”, *TSG* (Dec. 1909), 290–91.

Tantum Ergo

pour deux voix égales.

Largo. (♩ = 48)

2^e Voix (*très recueilli*)

p Tan - tum er - go Sa - cra - men - tum ve - ne - re - mur

p 1^{re} Voix
cer - nu - i. Et an - ti - quum do - cu - men - tum

p Tutti
no - vo ce - dat ri - tu - i. Præ - stet fi - des

ritard.
sup - ple - men - tum sen - su - um de - fe - ctu - i.
ritard.

Coda: Old Music in the Processes of Learning and Composing

Thus far, I have considered discourse on how a musical work should relate to older works. Before taking leave of the subject, let us consider proposals for putting these doctrines into practice. I should stress that the following section mostly limits itself to statements about how composers should study antique sacred music, rather than the realities of the compositional process.

On the most fundamental question, almost all sources agree that composers of church music should indeed study plainchant and Renaissance polyphony; no one, so far as I can find, advise avoiding old music so as to preserve one's originality (a view that circulated in avant-garde circles, to judge from the need felt by several authors to refute it).²⁰³ Most concur too on the purpose of studying old music: to absorb its "esprit" without falling under the sway of its "procédés", where "esprit" might once again mean a subjective disposition or a general musical character ("laws" or "broad guiding principles" as opposed to "rules" or "details of realisation, of writing", for Joseph Samson), or both.²⁰⁴ A few authors therefore counsel the apprentice church composer to avoid studying the *procédés*. In a talk for a concert of early music at the early Schola cantorum, La Tombelle appears to suggest that the thing to focus on is how such works were made rather than what they consist in: "It is always possible to take inspiration from the doctrines of an earlier art and produce modern works that are neither plagiarism nor pastiche. One need only study its creative methods and not the underlying *procédé*."²⁰⁵ Michel Brenet (pseudonym of the musicologist Marie Bobillier) may have implied a similar view when blaming the practice of making Renaissance polyphony "a school exercise, a technical preparation", rather than simply a source of general inspiration, for the excessive historicism of the Schola's church music.²⁰⁶

Most commentators, however, encouraged study of the *procédés*, and all the specialised pedagogical manuals (or sections of such manuals devoted to church music) indeed rely heavily on analysis of Renaissance polyphony.²⁰⁷ In a substantial meditation on the famous sentence of TLS, "Jean des Barres" (Chassang?) refused to believe that the pope wanted composers to "faire du grégorien" and rhapsodised on the true manner of approaching plainchant:

To take inspiration from Gregorian chant, to immerse oneself in that healthy and strong wellspring of purest religious essence, to let oneself be infused with the virginal freshness of these free and supple chants, to

²⁰³ See e.g. d'Indy, "Une école d'art", 310 and Charles Kœchlin, "Le rôle de Bourgault-Ducoudray et l'enseignement du Conservatoire" [private lecture, 23 Dec. 1915], F-Pbmfgf, B 391/7.

²⁰⁴ "lois"; "grands principes directeurs"; "règles"; "détails de réalisation, d'écriture". Samson, "Le pastiche", 5.

²⁰⁵ "Il est toujours possible de s'inspirer des doctrines d'un art antérieur et de produire des œuvres modernes qui ne sont ni du plagiat ni du pastiche. Il suffit pour cela d'en étudier le mode de formation et non le procédé antérieur." Fernand de La Tombelle, "Les concerts gratuits de la 'Schola'. Allocution prononcée par M. F. de la Tombelle", *TSG* (Aug. 1896), 125.

²⁰⁶ "un exercice d'école, une préparation technique". Michel Brenet [Marie Bobillier], "Art religieux, musique d'église", *Le Guide musical* (4 Feb. 1912), 87.

²⁰⁷ See Vincent d'Indy and Auguste Sérieyx, *Cours de composition musicale*, book 1 (Durand, [1902]), 147–51; François Brun, *Traité de composition de musique d'église* (Schola cantorum, [1912]), passim; Franz Xaver Mathias, "Cours de composition musicale au service de la liturgie", *Échos des sanctuaires de Sainte Odile* (Jan.–June 1932); Albert Bertelin, *Traité de composition musicale*, vol. 4 (Schola cantorum, 1934), 207–13; Henri Potiron, *La musique d'église. Esquisse d'un traité de composition* (Laurens, 1945), 58–61. Hubert J. Uylings, "La composition de musique religieuse", *CSG* (May–Dec. 1907) is essentially a composition course for choirmasters, extremely prescriptive and distilled from Cecilian texts (Haller, Lans, Richter, Bellermaun). The brief section on "musique religieuse" in Émile Durand, *Traité de composition musicale* (Leduc, 1899) simply lists composers to study for style models, from Lassus to Dubois (350).

incorporate their modality and the leonine independence of their rhythm, to watch the inspired ascetics who wrote them at work in their cells and seek out the secret that guided their fervent quills, to dissect the architecture of each piece and study its construction, . . . to nourish oneself on this substance and through it rejuvenate our old forms which are worn rather thin and our *procédés* which smack of fatigue, and thereby to infuse our modern works with the true ecclesiastical spirit: this is what Pius X wanted.²⁰⁸

We have the whole gamut here, from sympathetic identification with the composers to detailed analysis and appropriation (at least in general form) of technical features. But few authors offer much advice on how to extract the spirit *sans faire du grégorien*. Chassang himself (elsewhere, under his own name) simply denied any danger, without elaborating: “There is no need whatsoever to worry that in-depth study of the classics should stifle one’s inspiration and trammel it in outdated forms . . . [C]ontemplation need not lead to imitation and . . . young composers can study the *procédés* of the ancients without fearing to lose their originality, if they have any.”²⁰⁹ In his 1945 manual (largely derived from articles of the 1930s), Henri Potiron apparently saw nothing to explain either: “let [the composer] read the model, and, without servile imitation, assimilate its spirit.”²¹⁰ Samson offered one practical tip: study should be followed by a period of distancing, as when a painter observes a landscape and retreats to the studio to paint the image congealed in memory.²¹¹ Some resort to nutritional metaphors of digesting old music, assimilating its substance which transmutes into something new. D’Indy, in a letter in support of a plainchant congress contemporary with the launch of the Schola cantorum, predicted that in Gregorian chant

those gifted with an artistic and religious spirit will find the elements of a new renaissance, more religious than that of the sixteenth century. This study [of plainchant] will lead them to understand and love the great creators of harmonic art: Palestrina, Victoria, and all the others we have loved together; and, filled with this healthy food, they will have the strength to find the right accents, respectful of the liturgical texts.²¹²

The composition seminar becomes a *Liebesmahl* with old music as eucharist; like Chassang and Potiron, d’Indy seems to envisage detailed study leading to general inspiration in the service of originality, through a process of transubstantiation whose nature he is content to leave mysterious. His best-known statement on the matter, in a speech for the opening of the enlarged Schola in

²⁰⁸ “S’inspirer du chant grégorien, se retremper à cette source saine et forte de la plus pure essence religieuse, se laisser imprégner par la fraîcheur virginale de ces mélodies libres et souples, s’incorporer leur modalité, l’indépendance léonine de leur rythme, suivre jusque dans leur cellule les ascètes inspirés qui les écrivirent et chercher le secret qui guida leur plume fervente, disséquer l’architecture de chaque pièce, en étudier la construction, . . . se nourrir de cette moëlle substantielle et rajeunir par elle nos vieilles formes qui sont passablement élimées et nos procédés qui sentent la fatigue et par là infuser à nos œuvres modernes le véritable esprit ecclésiastique, voilà ce qu’a voulu Pie X.” Des Barres, “À propos de grégorien”, 2.

²⁰⁹ “Il n’y a nullement à craindre que l’étude approfondie des classiques étouffe l’inspiration, la restreigne dans les formes surannées . . . la contemplation n’entraîne pas l’imitation et . . . les jeunes compositeurs peuvent étudier les procédés des anciens, sans craindre de perdre leur originalité, s’ils en ont une.” Pierre Chassang, “Le style”, *RSC* (Feb.–March 1937 [Chassang died in 1933]), 25.

²¹⁰ “qu’il lise le modèle, et, sans l’imiter servilement, qu’il s’en assimile l’esprit”. Potiron, *La musique d’église*, 25.

²¹¹ Samson, “Le pastiche”, 4–5, 12.

²¹² “ceux qui sont doués d’un esprit artistique et religieux, pourront trouver les éléments favorables à une nouvelle renaissance, plus religieuse que celle du XVI^e siècle. Par cette étude, ils seront amenés à comprendre et à aimer les grands créateurs de l’art harmonique, les Palestrina, Vittoria, et tous autres que nous avons aimés ensemble ; et, bien remplis de cette saine nourriture, ils seront forts pour trouver des accents justes et respectueux des textes liturgiques.” Vincent d’Indy, “Lettres d’adhésion [au Congrès de musique religieuse de Rodez, 1895]”, in id., *Écrits de Vincent d’Indy*, vol. 1 1877-1903, ed. Gilles Saint-Arroman (Actes Sud/Bru Zane, 2019), 234.

1900, lends itself to a similar interpretation: “Where then shall we turn to find the vivifying substance that will give us truly new forms and formulas?” he asks. The answer:

in the decorative art of the plainchantists, in the architectural art of the Palestrinian era, in the expressive art of the great Italians of the seventeenth century. It is there, and there alone, that we will find truly new melodic figures, rhythmic cadences, harmonic schemes, if we apply this nourishing juice to our modern spirit. To this end, I prescribe to all students of [the Schola] the attentive study of the antique forms, for these alone can give our music the elements of a new life founded on sure, healthy, solid principles.²¹³

Are students to take from old music only substance (*sève vivifiante, sucs nourriciers, principes sûrs*), or accidents (*formes, formules, tours mélodiques, cadences rythmiques, appareils harmoniques*)? Most likely, given everything we have seen of d’Indy, he meant the former: they come away from the encounter with a basic kind of vitality, or general principles, for the benefit of inventing their own “forms”. By contrast, the director of the Toulouse *Musica sacra*, who unequivocally endorsed “the study of the true masters, of their *procédés*, of their style, and especially of their spirit” during the controversy around the Schola’s *Répertoire moderne*, invoked something closer to classical *amulatio*:

[S]o as to avoid being reduced to foolishly remaking their works, slavishly copying them or merely composing miserable pastiches of them, and in order to follow the true law of progress—*non nova, sed nove*—by taking advantage of modern resources and new means, one would need to be able to manipulate their *procédés* with a skill more marvellous than their own, and, since it is easy to go astray in such complicated work, to be guided by a spirit, a taste, a sentiment still higher than those that guided them.²¹⁴

An alternative justification for studying old music held that only by knowing what had already been done could the composer *avoid* repeating the past; counterintuitively, originality required historical awareness, a kind of conscious anxiety of influence. Naturally, music history teachers liked to say this, as when Bourgault-Ducoudray in his Paris Conservatoire lectures asked how, if “the musical language changes unceasingly”, composers could “preside over its transformation in the present (which is an eternal becoming) if they do not know the history of its transformations in the past?”²¹⁵ His successor Maurice Emmanuel reiterated that “the best apprenticeship of the ‘new’ could hardly rest on a blank slate: the surest way to avoid repetition is

²¹³ “Où donc irons-nous puiser la sève vivifiante qui nous donnera des formes et des formules vraiment nouvelles ? . . . dans l’art décoratif des plain-chantistes, dans l’art architectural de l’époque palestrinienne, dans l’art expressif des grands Italiens du XVII^e siècle. C’est là, et là seulement, que nous pourrions trouver des tours mélodiques, des cadences rythmiques, des appareils harmoniques véritablement neufs, si nous savons appliquer ces sucs nourriciers à notre esprit moderne. C’est dans ce but que je prescris à tous les élèves de l’École l’étude attentive des antiques formes, parce qu’elles seules sont susceptibles de donner à notre musique les éléments d’une nouvelle vie fondée sur des principes sûrs, sains et solides.” D’Indy, “Une école d’art”, 311.

²¹⁴ “l’étude des vrais maîtres, de leurs procédés, de leur style et surtout de leur esprit . . . pour n’être pas réduit à refaire sottement leurs œuvres en les copiant servilement ou en n’en composant que de misérables pastiches, et afin de suivre la vraie loi des progrès : *non nova, sed nove*, en tirant bon parti des ressources modernes et des moyens nouveaux, il faudrait savoir manier leurs procédés avec une habileté plus merveilleuse que la leur, et, parce que s’égarer est facile dans un travail si compliqué, il faudrait se faire guider par un esprit, un goût, un sentiment encore supérieurs à ceux qui les guidaient eux-mêmes.” F.-L. Comire, “À nos abonnés et à nos lecteurs”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Dec. 1897), 3.

²¹⁵ “la langue musicale se modifie sans cesse”; “Comment les compositeurs pourront-ils présider . . . à sa transformation dans le présent, (qui est un éternel devenir) s’ils ne connaissent pas l’histoire de ces transformations dans le passé ?” Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, “Cours d’histoire générale de la musique. Séance d’ouverture, I”, *Le Ménestrel* (1 Dec. 1878), 2.

still to know what has been done. One does not escape the past by ignoring it.”²¹⁶ By telling what remains to be done, the past tells what needs to be done: the argument relates to the conception of style history as a logical process of solving problems, which found ultimate expression in the pedagogical system that guides the pupil chronologically through “the evolution of music” from beginning to end, at which point the student is to emerge with a sense of what must come next. Most famously implemented by d’Indy at the Schola, this system seems to have been in the air in the late nineteenth century; d’Indy apparently got the idea from an early interview with Liszt, while Jean Huré claimed to have proposed it before d’Indy did.²¹⁷

As for full-on imitation of old music, it raised little concern so long as it stayed within an early training stage and was certainly a standard pedagogical method, in church music as elsewhere.²¹⁸ Chassang, a largely self-taught composer, had no qualms: “After a thorough study of the various elements of construction [in the classic models], one should try out some pastiches: pastiches of general architecture, of pure form, of phrases particular to a master, of style.”²¹⁹ Without positively encouraging imitation, the abbé Brun in his small composition treatise regarded it as a price worth paying for a solid technical foundation:

It behoves us to recommend most highly to young composers the analysis in depth of the masterworks of the polyphonic school; perhaps, at first, they will be tempted to “imitate”, but at least they will have acquired the traditional instruction indispensable to all who aspire to the honour of putting one’s talent at the service of the Divine Cult.²²⁰

Pastiche exercises, like the Latin and Greek whose retention in schools occasioned similar debates, were said to impart a sort of general technical fluency that would remain after its specific constraints had been abandoned.²²¹ Thus did Amédée Gastoué explain their proper role to the attendees of the Strasbourg congress of 1921:

²¹⁶ “le meilleur apprentissage du ‘neuf’ ne saurait reposer sur une table rase : le plus sûr moyen d’éviter les redites est encore de savoir ce qui a été dit. On ne s’évade point du passé si on l’ignore.” Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 610.

²¹⁷ See Jean Huré, *Dogmes musicaux (1904-1907)* (*Le Monde musical*, 1909), 61. A debate over the merits of this system is Auguste Mangeot, “Des morts aux vivants, ou des vivants aux morts ?”, *Le Monde musical* (31 Aug. 1921), 256 and Georges Migot, “Des morts aux vivants ou des vivants aux morts ?”, *Le Monde musical* (15–30 Sept. 1921), 275.

²¹⁸ The practice is touched on in Rémy Campos, “Le Cours de composition de Vincent d’Indy”, in *Théories de la composition musicale au XX^e siècle*, vol. 1, ed. Nicolas Donin and Laurent Feneyrou (Symétrie, 2013), 70, 73. Teaching of “strict” counterpoint everywhere relied on exercises in pseudo-Palestrinian style, as in Théodore Dubois’s 1901 *Traité de contrepoint*, eventually adopted at the Schola cantorum (see Vincent d’Indy, letter to Théodore Dubois, 17 Feb. 1909, F-Pn, VM BOB-20535).

²¹⁹ “Après une étude approfondie de ces divers éléments de construction, il faudra essayer quelques pastiches, pastiches d’architecture générale, pastiches de pure forme, de phrase particulière au maître, de style”. Chassang, “Le style”, 24.

²²⁰ “Nous croyons toutefois devoir recommander très vivement aux jeunes auteurs l’analyse approfondie des chefs-[d’]œuvre de l’École polyphonique ; peut-être, au début, seront-ils tentés d’imiter, mais, du moins, auront-ils acquis l’instruction traditionnelle indispensable à celui qui aspire à l’honneur de mettre son talent au service du Culte divin.” Brun, *Traité*, 4.

²²¹ See Charles Planchet, “L’art du maître de chapelle”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 4, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1927), 2348 (“Études [the old masters] comme on étudie au collège le grec et le latin, mais ne cherchons pas à les imiter. . . . Pénétrons-nous de leur moelle et de leur substance, mais gardons-nous bien de leur emprunter leurs procédés si nous voulons faire œuvre sincère et vivante”) and des Barres, “À propos de grégorien”, 2 (“Il en est [du plain-chant] comme du latin et du grec : c’est une langue morte. Études-en les chefs-d’œuvre, comme nous étudions Homère et Virgile”). Cf. Kœchlin, “Le rôle de Bourgault-Ducoudray”, 21 (“Le contrepoint et la fugue, c’est un peu comme le thème et les vers latins... On n’en fait plus après la rhétorique, mais il en reste toujours quelque chose”).

What we need is for the composer to loosen up and enrich his pen and his thought through the study and imitation—even servile imitation, sometimes—of the *a cappella* repertoire and the mighty polyphony of Bach—but as a *school exercise*, until the moment he flies with his own wings, making the most of the discoveries of more modern music, on a solid technical basis drawn from the ancients.²²²

The crucial switch was embedded in the Schola’s curriculum, which divides strictly between *métier* (preliminary technique) and *art* (real composition), corresponding to the division between harmony/counterpoint classes and composition seminars at most contemporary conservatoires including that of Paris and the Lemmens Institute.²²³

Conclusions: *Non nova sed nove*

If this chapter has showed anything, it has showed that a lot was written on the problem of originality in religious art; whatever else it was, historicist church music was not a product of mere backwardness or mindless obedience. If anything, legalistic functionalism and veneration for an ever-growing throng of old masters forced its promoters to confront, however ineffectually, the great aesthetic questions of the day. Conceptions of liturgical functionality may have imposed particularly tight constraints, but every aesthetic ideal imposes constraints; all music is “functional music”, music “for” something else, from the moment that someone implies a higher purpose by saying that it ought to be like *x*.

Though discussions of originality often operate from a vantage point of lofty generality, different repertoires posed quite different problems. By comparison to Renaissance polyphony, to quote or incorporate chant melodies, or for that matter to string together parallel fourths and fifths, could interfere rather little with stylistic “modernity” in the early twentieth century, affording an unconstraining connection to the golden age of sacred music.²²⁴ Though conjunct and diatonic, chant melodies leave the composer a free hand in the rest of a polyphonic texture, and moreover freedom in the adaptation—modifying, extending, fragmenting the melody, even to the point of changing the scale in Messiaen²²⁵—provoked less and less resistance over time.

²²² “Ce qu’il faut, c’est que le compositeur assouplisse et enrichisse sa plume et sa pensée par l’étude et l’imitation, même parfois servile, de l’œuvre *a cappella* et de la grandiose polyphonie d’un Bach, mais à titre d’exercice d’école, jusqu’au moment où il volera de ses propres ailes [*sic*], utilisant alors au mieux les trouvailles de la musique plus moderne, sur les bases solides dont il puisera la technique chez les anciens.” Amédée Gastoué, “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir”, 31.

²²³ See esp. Denis Huneau, “L’enseignement de l’écriture et de la composition à la Schola Cantorum de sa fondation à la mort de Vincent d’Indy (1896-1931)”, in *Étudier, enseigner et composer à la Schola Cantorum (1896-1962)*, ed. Sylvie Douche and Cédric Segond-Genovesi (Aedam Musicae, 2022), 316 and Nathalie Ronxin, “Les classes d’écriture et de composition : cursus complémentaires ou parallèles ?”, in *Le Conservatoire de musique de Paris. Regards sur une institution et son histoire*, ed. Emmanuel Hondré (Association du bureau des étudiants du CNSMDP, 1995), 125–44. Cf. Vincent d’Indy, “La Schola cantorum”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 6, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1931), 3623 and Théodore Dubois, “L’enseignement musical”, in the same vol., 3437. The Lemmens Institute curriculum can be reconstructed from its annual examination reports in *MSB* and the description in *ibid.*, 3462 [section written by Ernest Closson and Charles Van den Borren].

²²⁴ The concepts of allusion or quotation often apply better to such plainchant usage than that of historicism; see Benedikt Lessmann, “Appropriations of Gregorian Chant in *Fin-de-siècle* French Opera: *Couleur locale* – Message-Opera – Allusion?”, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 145.1 (2020), 37–74.

²²⁵ See François Sabatier, “Olivier Messiaen et Charles Tournemire autour du chant grégorien”, *L’Orgue* 283 (2008), 37–48.

Did church musicians advocate pastiche? Almost without exception, they condemn the activities *pasticher*, *imiter*, *refaire*, and *copier*, knowing the negative aura of such terms;²²⁶ they show no interest, committed as they are to solemn sincerity, in the element of irony that can redeem imitation in diegetic music, parody, and other secular genres. But they continually advance conceptions of originality compatible with imitation, validating works that respect the stylistic bounds of the sixteenth century; variations on the phrase “Non qu’il s’agisse d’un pastiche, mais . . .” come up in review after review with depressing predictability.²²⁷ To take them at their word, they advocate a return not to the past but to principles of liturgical propriety lost during times of decadence, the latest of which happened to have covered much of modernity (not such a long time in the grand sweep of church history). Moreover, then as now, understandings of what counted as original, derivative, new, old, modern, historical, outdated, etc. simply varied, and widely. The reception of one corpus, the *Répertoire moderne* published by the Schola cantorum (1896–1916), abundantly illustrates this range. On the one hand, Arthur Coquard in 1903 surmised that for the *scholistes* “there is no salvation outside of imitation of the Palestrinian *procédés*”.²²⁸ Clément Besse, likewise taking stock in the aftermath of TLS, delivered a withering verdict on the collection and the hylomorphism behind it:

This new repertoire disenchants us rather cruelly with the theory, for it is mediocre. How long until we learn to beware those magic words “return to the ancients, do as Palestrina did, animate the primitive idiom of vocal counterpoint with our modern soul”? . . . In reality, honourable works are not lacking here—they abound. Only they are all alike, and alike in being more or less pastiche and little else. The style, the *procédés*, the compositional artifices, everything that can be borrowed and copied has supplanted life and spontaneous art. The desire to renew the repertoire has immobilised it in certain formulas; the desire to make it more sincere has made it more impersonal; above all, the desire to spiritualise it has merely disembodied it. Nothing is left but empty forms. The spirit is gone. The poetry has fled. The fairy-tale turns into a pedant’s lucubrations. As I read and listen to the various motets of the Vocal Series, I become convinced that Palestrina and his followers are not so much imitated as pillaged, and moreover that the thief comes away the poorer. For if he would have let his own nature speak, which normally appears serious and steeped in faith, he would surely have found the phrase that sings, the prayer that prays, the word that has a soul.²²⁹

²²⁶ The only exceptions come from allies of the most conservative Cecilians; see [Adrien Dirven], “La Messe en l’honneur de N. D. de Lourdes, par Edgar Tinel”, *CSG* (April 1893), 20 (“Palestrina a créé une musique pour le culte catholique ; imiter ce maître des maîtres nous semble jusqu’ici plus sensé que de marcher à la découverte de nouvelles voies sous la conduite de Bach, Schumann et Wagner”) and Hubert J. Uylings, “Autour d’un nouveau recueil de cantiques”, *CSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1907), 9 (“Tâchons de rattacher la chaîne interrompue, en nous efforçant de composer à nouveau comme nos maîtres anciens”).

²²⁷ Garratt encounters this slippage in the writings of Witt; see Garratt, *Palestrina*, 149–53.

²²⁸ “qu’il n’y ait de salut possible que dans l’imitation des procédés palestriniens”. Coquard, “Musique sacrée”.

²²⁹ “Ce nouveau répertoire nous désenchanté un peu cruellement de la théorie, car il est médiocre. En faut-il davantage pour nous donner de la défiance contre la vertu que l’on a cru trouver dans ces mots magiques : revenons aux anciens, faisons du Palestrina, animons de notre âme moderne l’idiome primitif du contrepoint vocal ? . . . En réalité les œuvres honorables ne manquent pas ici ; elles abondent. Seulement elles se ressemblent toutes, et toutes elles ont ceci de commun qu’elles sont plus ou moins un pastiche, et un pastiche qui n’est guère que cela. Le style, les procédés, les artifices de composition, tout ce qui s’emprunte et se copie est venu remplacer l’art spontané et la vie. On visait à renouveler le répertoire, on l’a plutôt immobilisé dans quelques formules ; on le voulait plus sincère, on l’a fait plus impersonnel, on avait surtout l’arrière-pensée de le spiritualiser, on l’a seulement décorporalisé. Il ne reste rien que des formes vides. Le souffle s’est envolé. L’ode a fui. La féerie s’achève en grimoire de scoliaste. À lire et à entendre ces différents motets de la série vocale je me suis persuadé qu’on n’imite pas Palestrina et ses émules, mais qu’on les pille, et encore que le voleur est volé. Car s’il eût laissé parler sa nature, qui paraît d’ordinaire sérieuse et pénétrée de foi, il eût trouvé certainement la phrase qui chante, la prière qui prie, le mot qui a une âme.” Besse, “À propos du ‘motu proprio’”, 626–27.

“Michel Brenet” passed from preliminary scepticism to enthusiasm to suspicions of pastiche by 1901; when performed at an exhibition of “modern” religious painting in 1912, the timid *scholiste* motets appeared little better than “archéologie” or Cecilian “pastiche”.²³⁰ In 1930 Félix Raugel, who had once edited the *Répertoire*, assimilated it to Cecilianism and excoriated it as “stillborn under the sign of Palestrina”, an “immense hodgepodge” in a “mechanical style, limp and gloppy, with mincing motions, without grace or flexibility because without force.”²³¹ Samson was equally emphatic when writing to solicit a liturgical work from Kœchlin, probably in the same year: “we do not have, in France, a repertoire of modern religious music. The music of Gastoué, La Tombelle, even d’Indy’s motets = pastiche of the antique.”²³² Louis Boyer was more measured: “If there was a desire [at the Schola] to create a sort of modernised Palestrinian art, there was never *total pastiche*”; and for him that was enough.²³³ “Far from being pastiches of old works . . . these motets are all very modern works of vocal polyphony”, Gastoué sniffed: “imitation of the works of the sixteenth century has been the specialty of German musicians above all.”²³⁴ The abbé Giraud credited the *scholistes* with at least outdoing the Cecilians and achieving “an often personal style”: “they have set off in search of the compromise, which remains to be found, between the Palestrinian style and the legitimate needs of our modern culture.”²³⁵ “No one, or almost no one, writes Palestrinian pastiches anymore”, exulted François Brun in 1908, reviewing two pieces from the *Répertoire*.²³⁶ In an article published in 1927, Eugène Borrel recalled that TLS had inadvertently unleashed “an incredible number of pastiches of the masses of the Renaissance”.²³⁷ What are we to conclude? Brun, Gastoué, and Boyer were *scholistes*, but so were Borrel and Raugel, and Brenet was very pro-Schola. Evidently, no common standard existed to tell how new was new enough.

Yet if church musicians often set the bar for originality rather too low even for some contemporaries, they were hardly alone. One finds the same hylomorphism, the same urge to separate originality from novelty in major secular essays such as Dukas’s “La musique et

²³⁰ Brenet, “Art religieux, musique d’église”, 85–87. The works in question included motets by Bordes, d’Indy, Ropartz, and La Tombelle. Compare ead., “Bibliographie”, *Le Guide musical* (16–23 Aug. 1896), 555–57 and ead., “Bibliographie”, *Le Guide musical* (9–16 June 1901), 516.

²³¹ “œuvres mort-nées sous le signe de Palestrina”; “immense fatras”; “un style mécanique, mollasse et visqueux, aux mouvements compassés, sans grâce et sans élasticité, parce que sans force.” Félix Raugel, “La musique polyphonique dans le cadre de l’office liturgique”, in *Liturgia. Encyclopédie populaire des connaissances liturgiques*, ed. René Aigrain (Bloud & Gay, 1930), 490. Compare Raugel plugging an instalment of the *Répertoire* in 1909: “Cet ensemble d’œuvres modernes, si varié, présente une haute tenue artistique: toutes les œuvres émanent d’une inspiration noble et sincère . . .”. Félix Raugel, “Les nouvelles publications du Bureau d’édition”, *TSG* (Jan. 1909), 22.

²³² “nous n’avons pas, en France, de répertoire de musique religieuse moderne. La musique des Gastoué, des de la Tombelle, les motets de d’Indy même = pastiches de l’ancien.” Joseph Samson, letter to Charles Kœchlin, F-Pbmfg, B 444, numbered “6” [c. 1930].

²³³ “S’il y eut volonté de créer une sorte d’art palestrinien modernisé, il n’y eut jamais *pastiche total*”. Boyer, *Musique et musiciens d’église*, 83–85.

²³⁴ “Loin d’être des pastiches d’œuvres anciennes . . . ces motets sont tous des œuvres de polyphonie très modernes”; “l’imitation d’œuvres du XVI^e siècle a été surtout l’apanage des musiciens allemands”. Gastoué, “Le motet”, 3044–45.

²³⁵ “à travers un style souvent personnel, [ils] se sont mis à la recherche du compromis, qui reste à trouver, entre le style palestrinien et les légitimes exigences de notre culture moderne.” Giraud, *La musique d’église telle que l’Église la veut*, 49.

²³⁶ “On ne fait plus, ou presque plus, de pastiches palestriniens”. Brun, “Bibliographie”, 71.

²³⁷ “un nombre incroyable de pastiches des messes de la Renaissance.” Eugène Borrel, “La forme musicale de la messe”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 4, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1927), 2335–36.

l'originalité" and Kœchlin's "Modernisme et nouveauté". D'Indy's unacknowledged apologies for ecclesiastical pastiche overlap with "Une école d'art répondant aux besoins modernes", "L'artiste moderne", and his other anti-modernist sallies from 1900–01. Eclecticism, which sees progress in the combination of the best that every age has to offer, was a hobby horse of conservatives from Fétis to Saint-Saëns and d'Indy (even if d'Indy rejected the term).²³⁸ Those such as La Tombelle and Louis Boyer who resisted the belated postwar reckoning with modernism in church music drew heavily on well-trod conservative arguments taken from d'Indy or Saint-Saëns: gradualist progressivism ("art must progress, evolve, drawn on the latest conquests"), critiques of "amorphisme", reaffirmation of the need for rules.²³⁹ Much of the ideology in church music indeed belongs to the quasi-official conservative progressivism of the cultural establishment, shared with minor variations by figures as different as Saint-Saëns, Dubois, Bourgault-Ducoudray, Massenet, d'Indy, Emmanuel, and Kœchlin, which identifies progress with the incremental, cumulative extension of tradition: evolution not revolution, *natura non facit saltum*, adding one's brick to the edifice of Art.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Consider d'Indy, "L'artiste moderne", 345: "il faut . . . s'assimiler les hautes manifestations d'art de tous les temps et *les aimer*, ce qui est le seul moyen d'arriver à créer des œuvres utiles au progrès." Compare Camille Saint-Saëns, "L'évolution musicale", *L'Écho de Paris* (4 May 1913): "Il faut, non pas revenir en arrière, mais se retourner pour regarder en arrière et fondre en un art suprême, avec l'art du présent, tous les arts du passé. . . . Il faut, en un mot, de tous les moyens graduellement conquis par l'art musical, faire une vaste synthèse." On Fétis see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 35–36.

²³⁹ "l'art doit progresser, évoluer: il doit profiter des dernières conquêtes". Louis Boyer, "La musique moderne à l'église", *Revue pratique de liturgie et de musique sacrée* (Jan.–Feb. 1923), 312. Cf. La Tombelle, "Le répertoire moderne", 168–69.

²⁴⁰ See Pasler, "Paris: Conflicting Notions of Progress", 398.

Chapter 2

The Search for a Modern Polyphony

Introduction

Reformism in Catholic church music generally valued polymelody (i.e. linear independence, or equal distribution of melodic activity); its nomographic tracts routinely denounce homophonic lyricism (“accords plaqués”, “style vertical”, “carrure”) and vocal soli. Though on a certain level polymelody signified religiosity just by virtue of having been associated with sacred genres for a long time, reformists spilled much ink explaining what it was that made it intrinsically sacred. They invoked a mixture of logocentrism, what we might call choralism, anti-individualism, and anti-materialism. According to the logocentric argument, liturgical music exists to serve a text, so every voice should participate dynamically in text-expression and thereby take on a melodic character.¹ Thus, despite the customary opposition of “melody” to “counterpoint”, love of melody could paradoxically lead musicians to reject the inert chordal filler entailed in modern homophony; to those who found “Palestrinian” music inexpressive, Charles Bordes replied: “This music is all *melody*, each voice sings freely”.² The “choralist” argument held polymelody to be especially suited to the possibilities and limits of the choir, necessary to an idiomatically “vocal” or “choral” style that would resist the encroachment of instrumental figuration and theatrical virtuosity.³ In organ writing, *style lié* (the constant use of suspensions, essentially) played an analogous role, as a texture supposedly idiomatic to the instrument, a bulwark against of pianistic figuration.⁴ The anti-individualist argument made polymelody symbolise collective unity, drawing on a complex mesh of Catholic social values.⁵ Whereas soloists expressed individual feeling, a plurality of voices represented the multiplicity of the faithful; equality of voices matched the equality (at least in matters spiritual) of the ideal Christian community; their interweaving evoked the cooperation among social orders supposedly prevalent in the Catholic Middle Ages; imitative counterpoint, by placing the same message in each voice, symbolised the unity of the Body of Christ, the unanimity

¹ See e.g. Vincent d’Indy and Auguste Sérieyx, *Cours de composition musicale*, book 1 (Durand, [1902]), 143; François Brun, *Traité de composition de musique d’église* (Schola cantorum, [1912]), 7; Joseph Samson, “L’art choral sacré au temps de la renaissance”, F-Dm, MS 3069/9, n.p.

² “Cette musique est toute *mélodie*, toute voix y chante librement.” Charles Bordes, “Les exécutions palestriniennes”, in *Congrès diocésain de musique religieuse et de plain-chant tenu à Rodez les 22, 23 et 24 juillet 1895* (Rodez: Carrère, 1895), 165.

³ See e.g. id., “De l’emploi de la musique figurée et spécialement de la musique palestrinienne dans les offices liturgiques”, *TSG* (June 1895), 8: “Nous voudrions faire naître en France une musique religieuse . . . toujours chorale et particulièrement vocale”. Similarly, Henri Potiron (“Décadence de la musique d’église”, *Musique et Liturgie* (Jan.–Feb. 1938), 59–63) criticised French liturgical choral music as insufficiently *a cappella* in conception. See also Vincent d’Indy, “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (Jan. 1898), 17–18.

⁴ See Benjamin Van Wye, “The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration on the Growth and Development of the French Liturgical Organ School”, (DMA thesis, U. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1970), 47.

⁵ For background see Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (OUP, 2005), 191, 201–02 and Catr[i]na Flint, “The Schola Cantorum, Early Music, and French Political Culture from 1894 to 1914” (PhD thesis, McGill U., 2005), 272 et seq.

of the Creed.⁶ The anti-materialist argument, finally, identified materiality with the performer's distracting physical presence, tone-painting (which refers to objects in the physical world), and even emphatic gestures in the virtual space constituted by musical sound (melodic leaps, dotted rhythms, distant harmonic relations), which supposedly stimulated the senses. On each count, polymelody fared well: it conduced to abstraction, its learned character spoke of mind over matter, and it was easiest to realise with diatonic and conjunct lines.⁷

This polymelodic bias remains a perennial feature of discourse on sacred music throughout the long reformist era, with the notable exception of fauxbourdon and other forms of plainchant accompaniment (on which see below). It always had its critics, who could simply point to Mozart's *Ave verum*, the sole Classical-era work universally admired as liturgical music, as an example of pious "style vertical", as Berlioz had done for evidence of pious *tonalité moderne*.⁸ They could also appeal to pragmatic populism: if the church wanted to win back the masses, it should give them what they liked, and what they liked was a good tune; after all, one priest ruefully observed in the 1890s, France was fast becoming a *pays de mission* and missionaries did well to set their prayers to indigenous melodies.⁹ Across the nineteenth century, populists had denounced the elaborate polyphony of the Renaissance as formalist, elitist, hieratic, inexpressive, scientific, even Protestant or Jansenist (meaning coldly cerebral);¹⁰ though dampened by "De musica sacra" and TLS, such complaints never completely went away. They had national stereotypes (French = warm, spontaneous, songful while German = glum and scientific) going for them too, as well as the Allgemeiner Cäcilienverein's reputation as a pastiche factory. "Let's leave the Catholics across the Rhine their monopoly on [pastiche] and not think with them that heaviness is gravity and somnolence, devotion", urged the abbé Delépine's *Revue Sainte-Cécile* in 1925. "Piety takes on different forms according to race, place, and even individual. Let's not disdain the singing, melodic phrase if this alone at present can appeal to our performers and listeners."¹¹ While their strength at any given moment is difficult to estimate, such dissenters from horizontalist orthodoxy seem to have gained a certain traction in the early 1920s, thanks to fatigue with austerity and nostalgia for the lyricism so absent from reformist music. This was the heyday of the abbés Delépine (promoter of simple music in a kind of generic hymnbook style) and Besse (who championed popular melodic appeal, the vernacular *cantique*, and the relatively lyrical Albert Alain, author of a popular *Tantum*

⁶ See e.g. Brun, *Traité*, 7 and Henri Potiron, "La composition d'une messe moderne", *Revue liturgique et musicale* (March–April 1934), 123.

⁷ See e.g. Eusèbe Clop, "Esthétique et composition de la musique sacrée", *Études franciscaines* (Aug. 1908), 126–27. The best example of period thinking on musical materiality and ideality (with examples from sacred music) is Camille Bellaigue, "L'idéalisme et le réalisme dans la musique", *La Revue des deux mondes* (Nov. 1897), 269–99.

⁸ See e.g. Pierre Chassang, "Causerie du mois. Ce qui fait le style religieux", *RSC* (March 1935), 33 [date of writing unknown; Chassang died in 1933]. Cf. Hector Berlioz, "La musique à l'église, par M. Joseph d'Ortigue" [1861], in id., *À travers chants*, ed. Léon Guichard (Gründ, 1971), 276–77.

⁹ See Abel Gabert, "Quelques notes sur la question musique religieuse", *L'Avenir de la musique sacrée* (15 Aug. 1898), 31.

¹⁰ See Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 196–97.

¹¹ "Laissons aux catholiques d'outre-Rhin le monopole de cette musique et ne pensons point avec eux que lourdeur soit gravité et que somnolence soit dévotion. . . . La piété, suivant les races, les endroits et même les individus prend une forme différente. Ne méprisons point la phrase chantante, mélodique, si elle seule peut, actuellement, convenir à nos exécutants et à notre auditoire." La Rédaction [Henri Delépine and/or Pierre Chassang], "L'esprit du motu proprio de S. S. Pie X sur la musique sacrée", *RSC* (June–July 1925), 61–62.

ergo with, unusually for the motets of the time, a modicum of melodic interest).¹² Even the impeccably *scholiste* Amédée Gastoué called for attention to melodic charm in his lecture at the 1921 Strasbourg congress.¹³

While always minoritarian, this emboldened postwar verticalism may have helped to undermine the hegemony of neo-Renaissance style and encourage the search for a more creative linearity. Since the early nineteenth century, composers stimulated by the Romantic Palestrina revival had sporadically cultivated that style in sacred music; sometimes far removed from real Renaissance polyphony, it is nevertheless recognisable by its strict and often imitative counterpoint, “white” notation, and scoring for choir *a cappella* or with doubling organ part.¹⁴ Such music proliferated in France after 1890, thanks largely to the Schola cantorum, whose catalogue of liturgical choral pieces (the *Répertoire moderne de musique religieuse*, published 1896–1916) mostly fits the neo-Renaissance label and draws transparently on the “maîtres primitifs” revived by Charles Bordes and his Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais. But the turn was anticipated by Charles Gounod, who, starting with his *Messe à la mémoire de Jeanne d’Arc* (1887, introduced by the composer with a plea for the reformist cause at a Catholic festival in Reims), consistently adopted the neo-Renaissance mode he had long practised on an exceptional basis,¹⁵ and also by Théodore Dubois whose smoothly correct *Messe brève dans le style palestinien* (1893, published 1900) evokes the Renaissance polyphony cultivated at the Cathedral of Moulins by the abbé Chérion, the work’s dedicatee.¹⁶ Already, most of this music embodied efforts to modernise rather than merely replicate whatever was taken to by the Palestrinian model, especially by reining in imitative counterpoint. In Belgium, Edgar Tinel saw himself as modernising Palestrina in his ambitious *Missa in honorem Beatae Mariae Virginis de Lourdes* (1891), by using less imitation and wider vocal ranges.¹⁷ Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, perhaps recalling his own efforts in the medium, attributed a similar purpose to Dubois’s *Messe brève*: “Without pretending to keep to the rigour of strictly ‘Palestrinian’ imitation, by giving more fantasy to the work, more prominent melody and more rhythm, and especially in looking for combinations of sonorities and superpositions of different vocal masses, wouldn’t there be something admirable and in a certain sense ‘new’ to be done?”¹⁸

¹² See Clément Besse, “Nos compositeurs de cantiques”, *La Revue des jeunes* (Feb. 1922), 302–16. Cf. Aurélie Gommier-Decourt, “Albert Alain (1880-1971), organiste et compositeur français” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1999), 304–05.

¹³ See Amédée Gastoué, “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir de la musique polyphonique”, *TSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1922), 31–32. In the 1920s Camille Bellaigue too voiced nostalgia for grace and charm (read: melody) in “la musique religieuse” but may not have meant liturgical music; see Henry Eymieu, “L’‘oratorio’ dans la musique moderne. *La Croisade des Enfants et Saint François d’Assise* de M. Gabriel Pierné”, *La Musique sacrée* (July–Aug. 1927), 28.

¹⁴ Examples include works by Gounod (e.g. the *Vokalmesse* of 1843), Stephen Morelot (e.g. *Sanctus*, 1865), Bourgault-Ducoudray (passages of the *Stabat mater*, 1863 and *Symphonie religieuse*, 1868), Saint-Saëns (passages of the Mass, op. 4, 1856), and Rossini (passages of the *Petite messe solennelle*, 1863).

¹⁵ See Auguste Roussel, “Les fêtes de Reims et la nouvelle messe de Gounod”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Sept. 1887), 11–14 [orig. in *L’Univers*, 1887].

¹⁶ On Chérion (including his contacts with Gounod and Dubois) see Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 73.

¹⁷ See Paul Tinel, “La Messe à cinq voix de Tinel”, *MSB* (June 1957), 63.

¹⁸ “Sans prétendre se tenir dans la rigueur d’une imitation strictement ‘Palestrinienne’, en donnant plus de fantaisie à l’œuvre, plus de mélodie saillante et plus de rythme et surtout en cherchant des combinaisons de sonorité et des superpositions de différentes masses vocales, n’y aurait[-]il pas quelque chose d’admirable à faire et de ‘neuf’ dans une certaine mesure ?” Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, letter to Théodore Dubois, 24 May [1900?], F-Pn, VM BOB-19947.

Interrupted by the war, production of such music never fully recovered. Not that it disappeared overnight: in lightly modernised form, the style had its distinguished interwar practitioners. Among the most distinguished in France was Henri Potiron; an *Ave verum* (c. 1935) billed as an illustration of his views on “modernism” offers nothing that would have ruffled Orlando Lasso.¹⁹ The aged d’Indy retained the neo-Palestrinian manner of the 1890s in his last motets, and in 1922 his faithful protégé Guy de Lioncourt published a highly academic mass begun before the war.²⁰ In Belgium, Joseph Ryelandt’s later masses (op. 84, 1925; op. 111, 1934), works of expert pastiche despite a harmony updated to the early nineteenth century, brought the style to an elaborate climax enabled by the strength of the Mechelen Cathedral Choir in its heyday.²¹ It lived on too in francophone Switzerland with the leading Catholic liturgical composers, William Montillet and the Schola-trained Aloÿs Fornerod, who in 1928 was still “convinced that the old masters have created the eternal type of the mass”, according to Joseph Samson.²² But these were holdouts: by 1930, sustained imitation, academic-Palestrinian counterpoint, and specific reminiscences of Renaissance polyphony are relatively difficult to find (though motets and masses sometimes begin with staggered entries as though to create a façade of imitation even when the voices present different material, as in Figs. 2.1, 2.17, 2.22, and 2.23).

Doux et calme, presque sans nuance (♩ = 52 environ)

Fig. 2.1: Joseph Samson, *Messe “Orbis factor”*, Kyrie, bars 1–6

Looking back in 1954, Jacques Chailley found the idiom eclipsed by modernism on the one hand and medievalism on the other: “the Palestrinian style, whose cold and haughty nobility long seemed the very essence of church music, finds itself, it must be said, singularly lost in the crowd. It is not forgotten, to be sure, . . . but the general trend in French religious music is certainly no longer for

¹⁹ Anne Pillot-Rebours (“Le Motu Proprio de Saint Pie X sur la musique sacrée (22 novembre 1903) et ses répercussions en France de 1904 à 1939” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1998), 594) seems mistaken in naming Potiron as an agent of modernisation in liturgical music.

²⁰ See d’Indy’s *Ave regina celorum* (op. 79, 1922) and *O domina mea* (op. 88, 1926) and Lioncourt’s *Messe brève* (op. 42, 1914–22). I have been unable to consult d’Indy’s *Deux Motets en l’honneur de la canonisation de Saint Jean Eudes* (op. 83, 1925).

²¹ See David Vergauwen, *Joseph Ryelandt. Een culturele biografie van een romantisch componist in het fin-de-siècle Brugge* (Academic & Scientific Publishers, 2020), 325–30.

²² “convaincu que les maîtres anciens ont créé le « type » de la messe”. Joseph Samson, “Quelques nouveautés musicales” [review of *inter alia* Fornerod, *Messe brève pour les fêtes de la Sainte Vierge*], *La Vie catholique* (8 Sept. 1928). Samson nevertheless continues: “M. Fornerod prend un plaisir évident à des affrontements piquants de notes : c’est ainsi qu’il rajeunit la vieille langue et la rapproche de nous.” On Montillet, see e.g. his *Messe “Tu es pastor”* (1926).

style exercises.”²³ Though impossible to measure rigorously, this decline can be gauged by the outputs of leading composers who straddled the second and third of my stages. The liturgical œuvre of Guy Ropartz, for instance, divides neatly into neo-Renaissance motets published by the Schola cantorum in the 1890s and (with only a few motets in between) a second phase following his 1919 arrival in the choral stronghold of Strasbourg, in which Renaissance polyphony is a distant memory.²⁴ In the same city the prolific and long-lived Marie-Joseph Erb evolved steadily from a generic neo-Palestrinianism in line with Cecilian orthodoxy to a more relaxed eclecticism.²⁵ At the Schola, Amédée Gastoué slackened his counterpoint in the *Messe en l'honneur de Sainte Jeanne d'Arc* (1920), while Blanche Lucas's motets of the 1920s little resemble her neo-Palestrinian contributions to the *Répertoire moderne*.²⁶ In Mechelen, Jules Van Nuffel's early masses, when revived after the war, appeared surprisingly “classical” to critics familiar with the composer's subsequent evolution.²⁷

Considered more positively, the decline of the neo-Renaissance idiom reflected a search for a new lingua franca in choral church music, one that would somehow achieve independence from the past and express contemporary life without sacrificing the religio-aesthetic qualities treasured in the old masters. This quest has always provided modern Catholic liturgical composition with its grand narrative. An example too characteristic not to cite, despite its extrinsic provenance, is Karl Gustav Fellerer's *Geschichte der katholischen Kirchenmusik*, a work whose origins go back to my period and reflect the mentality absorbed by a graduate of the Regensburg Kirchenmusikschule in the wake of the Great War.²⁸ Fellerer narrates the evolution of Catholic church music as a dialectical movement: Romantic sentimentalism provoked the Cecilian reaction, which veered too far into legalistic archaism until eventually a higher synthesis emerged, combining the best of both, the liturgicity of Cecilianism and the contemporaneity of Romantic church music. After World War I, church composers finally found the holy grail: “ecclesiastical expression in a contemporary idiom”, where “ecclesiastical” means, among other things, essentially “vocal”, “choral”, or “*a cappella*” in conception, and therefore polymelodic.²⁹ Church composition strove (or ought to have striven, in Fellerer's view) towards the invention of a new linearity, anti-

²³ “Le style palestrinien dont la noblesse altière et froide, aux scolastiques contreponts, étaient longtemps apparu comme le canon même de la musique d'église, se trouve, il faut l'avouer, singulièrement débordé. Il n'est pas oublié, certes, . . . mais il est certain que la tendance générale de la musique religieuse française n'est plus aux exercices de style.” Jacques Chailley, “La musique religieuse contemporaine en France”, in *Zweiter internationaler Kongress für katholische Kirchenmusik. Wien, 4.-10. Oktober 1954, zu Ehren des Heiligen Papstes Pius X. Bericht* (Vienna: [s.n.], 1955), 165. As an exceptional case of creative neo-Palestrinianism Chailley cites Gaston Litaize's *Missa solemnior* (1954).

²⁴ See Mathieu Ferey and Benoît Menut, *Guy Ropartz, ou le Pays inaccessible* (Papillon, 2005), 101–03 and Mathieu Ferey, “Joseph-Guy [sic] Ropartz et la Schola Cantorum. Itinéraire d'un compagnon de route”, in *Étudier, enseigner et composer à la Schola Cantorum (1896-1962)*, ed. Sylvie Douche and Cédric Segond-Genovesi (Aedam Musicae, 2022), 469–71.

²⁵ Compare two of his best-known masses, the *Messe de Saint Jean-Baptiste* (op. 78, 1910) and *Messe “In te Domine speravi”* (1937). Cf. *Un grand musicien français, Marie-Joseph Erb. Sa vie et son œuvre* (Strasbourg: Le Roux, 1948).

²⁶ Compare for example her *Jesu dulcis memoria* (1926) to the ambitious *Ave verum* of 1896.

²⁷ See Ernest Closson, “Chronique musicale. À l'église du Sablon” [review of Van Nuffel, *Missa in honorem Sacratissimi Trinitatis*, op. 22], *L'Indépendance belge* (23 Oct. 1928) and id., “Chronique musicale. Musiques de Pâques” [review of Van Nuffel, *Missa in honorem Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu*, op. 28], *L'Indépendance belge* (28 March 1932).

²⁸ See Karl Gustav Fellerer, *A History of Catholic Church Music*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (Greenwood, 1979), esp. 199–207. The text has a complicated history: 1st edn 1939, expanded 2nd edn 1949, Eng. trans. of 2nd edn with minor authorial additions 1961 (repr. 1979), greatly expanded German vsn in two vols with new contributors 1972–77.

²⁹ Ibid., 202. On the term “polymelody” see Ch. 1, 25.

“sentimental” but post-neo-Palestrinian, which would require adjustments on the part of tonality and metre. For the first time since the sixteenth century, thanks to a unique set of postwar circumstances, secular progress (the reaction against emotionalism and academicism) aligned with the progress of liturgical art.

Fellerer credits the realisation of this feat, a little anticlimactically, to various obscure post-Cecilians such as Heinrich Lemacher (1891–1966), Joseph Lechthaler (1891–1948), Hermann Schroeder (1904–84), and his own teacher Joseph Haas (1879–1960), cultivators of what *Grove* calls an “anti-lyrical and unsentimental” music relying on “the fluent contrapuntal combination of melodic lines in a rhythmically regular framework” and a “pervadingly [*sic*] polyphonic, pandiatonic harmonic language that incorporated considerable dissonance”.³⁰ While the discourse of “free” or “linear” counterpoint—often taken to mean “a heedless sort of polyphony paying no attention to vertical simultaneities”, in Carl Dahlhaus’s sardonic words—flourished above all in the *neue Sachlichkeit* of Weimar Germany,³¹ to what extent was Fellerer’s free-linearist ideal shared by French and Belgians church musicians of the interwar generation, excluded from his history?

To understand how the Franco-Belgian choral repertoire passed through its neo-Renaissance phase is the goal in this chapter, and I focus on four intellectual contexts. First, the progress of musicology gradually eroded the ideal construct of “classical” or “Palestrinian” polyphony.³² Second, plainchant competed against Renaissance polyphony and plainchant as the idea for ecclesiastical composers: even though mainstream reformists asserted their fundamental kinship, especially after “De musica sacra” (1894), these two repertoires presented divergent models when it came down to practice, and composers had to make a choice; increasingly, plainchant (or notions of what was *plainchantesque*) got the upper hand.³³ Third, the canon of classics honoured with imitation expanded beyond these two official touchstones, stimulated by research on and performance of polyphony from the fifteenth century and earlier, as well as, to a lesser extent, liturgical chant from Eastern Christian traditions.³⁴ Fourth, changes in theoretical and aesthetic conceptions of dissonance posed new challenges to a “classical” counterpoint defined essentially by its dissonance treatment: the general crisis of authority in harmony and counterpoint pedagogy in the early twentieth century (a subject that deserves dedicated study) did not leave church composers unaffected.

³⁰ Joseph Dyer, “Roman Catholic Church Music”, *Grove Music Online* (accessed Oct. 2022). Dyer is discussing unspecified Catholic and Lutheran composers in interwar Germany, but the description fits Fellerer’s heroes and almost certainly derives from his work.

³¹ Carl Dahlhaus, “Counterpoint: 20th Century”, in *Grove Music Online* (accessed Oct. 2022). Relevant period sources include Walter Harburger’s *Form und Ausdrucksmittel in der Musik* (1926), Hans Mersmann’s *Die Tonsprache der neuen Musik* (1928), Siegfried Günther’s *Moderne Polyphonie* (1930), Hermann Grabner’s *Der lineare Satz* (1930), various essays by Paul Bekker, and Schoenberg’s 1931 essays on linear counterpoint published in *Style and Idea*. Most importantly, Ernst Kurth’s *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts* (1920) was widely misinterpreted in the sense derided by Dahlhaus; see Lee Rothfarb, “Introduction”, in Ernst Kurth, *Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Lee Rothfarb (CUP, 1991), 25–26. On notions of free polyphony in postwar France see Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Legacy and the Construction of Reputation* (OUP, 2018), Ch. 3.

³² Here I extend work on the nineteenth-century reception of Renaissance polyphony, esp. Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 179–207.

³³ This section builds on research on the compositional ramifications of changes in practices of chant performance and accompaniment, esp. Benedikt Lessmann, *Die Rezeption des gregorianischen Chorals in Frankreich im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Studien zur ideen- und kompositionsgeschichtlichen Resonanz des “plain-chant”* (Olms, 2016), 218–30.

³⁴ Here I pursue suggestions made in Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 144.

The Palestrina Ideal and Its Decline

The Palestrina Ideal

To a great many nineteenth-century ears, reformist or otherwise, *a cappella* polyphony had reached its acme in the period c. 1560–90, and above all in the later masses of Palestrina.³⁵ As a touchstone for church composition, this “Palestrinian” polyphony enjoyed a status nominally close, and in practice superior, to that of plainchant. Palestrina is the only composer named in TLS, and “classical polyphony, especially that of the Roman School” the only non-chant repertoire endorsed for its liturgical qualities.³⁶ If only an “excellent” model, according to that document, and thus presumably inferior to the “supreme model” offered by plainchant, it nevertheless exerted more attraction on composers, who were rarely interested in writing monophony. “Take your themes from plainchant and treat them *alla Palestrina*”, Pius X reportedly counselled a French choirmaster. “Music *alla Palestrina* is the true church music.”³⁷ Association with the Sistine Chapel and the Council of Trent only added to the aura of official favour.

The idealisation of Palestrina and the “Palestrinian” had its Romantic side, most evident in a peculiar tradition of ekphrastic literature portraying old polyphony as a kind of portal to a supernatural realm, a tradition that stretches from Alexandre Choron and E. T. A. Hoffmann to reviews of concerts by the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais and Chanteurs de Saint-Boniface in the 1890s, the last decade in which the repertoire retained an air of novelty in the francophone world.³⁸ But the Palestrina ideal was mainly a classicist construct (as the papal phrase “classical polyphony” suggests), one that assimilated the historical repertoire to the contrapuntal style abstracted from it by pedagogues from Zarlino to Fux to Jeppesen and still proposed as a normative model in counterpoint instruction in the early twentieth century.³⁹ This codified style instantiated aesthetic values of sobriety, economy, control, virtuous austerity, and rigour—the *Reinheit der Tonkunst* glorified in A. F. J. Thibaut’s influential book of 1824. As a test of abstract intellection under tight constraints, with all superficial artifices stripped away, the *a cappella* chorus commanded a level of prestige akin to that of the string quartet, a genre to which it was often compared.⁴⁰ This air of intellectuality saved the *a cappella* medium, like the string quartet, from too strong a sense of

³⁵ For extensive though Germanocentric background see Winfried Kirsch (ed.), *Palestrina und die Kirchenmusik im 19. Jahrhundert*, 3 vols (Bosse, 1989–95) and Peter Lüttig, *Der Palestrina-Stil als Satzideal in der Musiktheorie zwischen 1750 und 1900* (Schneider, 1994).

³⁶ See Ch. 1, 27.

³⁷ Pius X to U. Couturier, quoted in Jean de Muris [pseudonym], “Nouvelles de la musique d’église”, *TSG* (Oct. 1904), 317.

³⁸ On this tradition see Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 187.

³⁹ See James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (CUP, 2002), 2–3; Coralie Fayolle, “Les traités de contrepoint en France au XIX^e et XX^e siècles”, in *Le Conservatoire de Paris, 1795–1995. Deux cents ans de pédagogie*, ed. Anne Bongrain and Alain Poirier (Buchet/Chastel, 1999), 269–83; Anthony Bergereault, “L’enseignement du contrepoint et de la fugue au Conservatoire de Paris (1858–1905)”, *Transposition* 1 (2011), 6–7.

⁴⁰ See e.g. Henri Potiron, *La musique d’église. Esquisse d’un traité de composition* (Laurens, 1945), 5 (this book derives substantially from articles of the 1930s). In 1907 Jean Cras explained in a letter that he approached the writing of his *a cappella* mass (at sea, with no piano onboard) as a compositional trial, like writing a string quartet; see Isabelle Breteau, preface to Jean Cras, *Messe à quatre voix* (Symétrie, 2014), ii.

obsolescence in an age whose sense of musical modernity was strongly tied to the variegation and sophisticated deployment of instrumental timbres.⁴¹

Is Another Polyphony Possible?

The great question hovering over the reformist compositional project was whether Palestrina represented not merely the highest point ever attained by *a cappella* polyphony—in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries everyone agreed on this much—but the summit of what that medium could possibly achieve. Had Palestrina “given the full measure of what can be expected of diatonic polyphony”, as the abbé Verhelst put it in his commentary on TLS, or did the possibility exist of a fully distinct but equally linear and equally pious way of writing for multiple voices?⁴²

Verhelst’s view had deep roots in nineteenth-century historiography, which usually invoked the supposed perfection achieved by Palestrina to explain the birth of musical modernity: as Choron explained as early as 1810, “Palestrina offered his successors a model that they despaired of ever equalling, and this belief, coupled with continuing shifts in the foundation of the musical system, soon prompted composers to abandon a genre in which they could no longer acquire more than a modest glory and success.”⁴³ Even in 1924, probably in riposte to the abbé Delépine, the abbé Jules Delporte, director of a rival periodical, made clear that the *Ars perfecta* was “clearly superior” to modern church music on purely musical grounds, marking “an apogee, a summit” with “an ingenuity and mastery never since surpassed or equalled.”⁴⁴ And as late as 1930, Félix Raugel extolled the “école romaine” for having provided “unsurpassable models of a polyphony superior in its fitness to all the other kinds of music since cultivated in the church.”⁴⁵ The implication for modern composers of *a cappella* polyphony was bleak.

Relatedly, some regarded the *a cappella* medium, one of the most important components of “le style palestrinien”, as fundamentally incompatible with modern trends in compositional technique. The critic Jean Marnold, remembered as a Debussy supporter in the early twentieth century, greeted revivals of early polyphony with enthusiasm but had little faith in “the modern development of *a cappella* music, which is in any case unlikely. Without denying that this art can

⁴¹ Relevant here is the work on timbre and sonority in Barbara L. Kelly, *Music and Ultra-Modernism in France: A Fragile Consensus, 1913–1939* (Boydell, 2013).

⁴² “donné la pleine mesure de ce que l’on pouvait attendre de la polyphonie diatonique”. François Verhelst, *La musique sacrée* (Brussels: Schepens, 1904), 17.

⁴³ “Aussi Palestrina fut-il, pour ses successeurs, un modèle qu’ils désespérèrent à jamais d’atteindre, et cette conviction, jointe au mouvement qui continuait à se faire dans le fond du système, engagea bientôt les compositeurs à renoncer à un genre où ils ne pouvaient plus acquérir qu’une gloire et des avantages médiocres.” Alexandre Choron, “Introduction. Sommaire de l’histoire de la musique”, in id. and François-Joseph-Marie Fayolle, *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens artistes et amateurs* (Valade, 1810), xlvii.

⁴⁴ “nettement supérieure”; “une apogée, un sommet”; “une ingéniosité et une maîtrise qui depuis lors n’ont été ni surpassées ni égalées.” Jules Delporte, “La musique palestrinienne. Sa place dans la liturgie”, *Revue pratique de liturgie et de musique sacrée* (July–Aug. 1924), 36. Delporte refers darkly to certain periodicals that fly the flag of TLS while secretly waging an anti-Palestrinian campaign—perhaps a jab at RSC (long based in the Lille area, like Delporte).

⁴⁵ “les modèles insurpassables d’une polyphonie dont la convenance est supérieure à tous les autres genres de musique cultivés par la suite dans l’église.” Félix Raugel, “La musique polyphonique dans le cadre de l’office liturgique”, in *Liturgia. Encyclopédie populaire des connaissances liturgiques*, ed. René Aigrain (Bloud & Gay, 1930), 483.

still produce delicious things, it seems perhaps a little too distant from our sensibility to be practised abundantly nowadays. . . . There is a legitimate worry that its resurrection should only lead in many cases to a pleasant pastiche of the French masters of the sixteenth century”.⁴⁶ Long stretches of polymelody, uniform timbre, and restrained ambit would leave modern audiences bored and creative minds uninspired. Marnold hoped that improvements in Parisian choirs would encourage composers to write for chorus and orchestra instead, in the vein of Roussel’s *Évocations*.

A variant of the question concerned whether it was possible to detach the *a cappella* medium from the Palestrinian style, and therefore potentially develop it. Addressing a congress organised by Delépine in Arras in 1904, the abbé Boddaert distinguished between *a cappella* polyphony—a timeless medium, “the most perfect musical *procédé*”—and other specifics of the Palestrinian style which represented “a still relatively primitive art”, “less developed than modern art”, even monotonous and simplistic to those accustomed to modern “ressources”.⁴⁷ He saw no need for *a cappella* polyphony to eschew those resources (equated to “preponderance of melody” and “a broader and freer harmony”).⁴⁸ Nevertheless, *a cappella* and *palestrinien* must often have been conflated at the time, for a number of writers felt the need to argue for a distinction. Looking back on this period, Amédée Gastoué recalled that the term *a cappella* had led “certain persons” to mistake the “very modern” motets of the *Répertoire moderne* published by the Schola cantorum for “pastiche of ancient works”.⁴⁹ The *Répertoire* had indeed occasioned considerable debate over the relation of *a cappella* to *palestrinien*. D’Indy in “L’art en place et à sa place” (1897–98) had felt obliged to rebut the notion that *a cappella* polyphony was equivalent to Palestrinian style and therefore obsolete, reasoning that the *a cappella* choir presented no more of a straitjacket than the string quartet, which had proved congenial to the most adventurous composers.⁵⁰ By 1901, the musicologist Marie Bobillier (alias Michel Brenet) had come to agree with d’Indy’s unnamed opponents that much of the *Répertoire* amounted to neo-Palestrinian pastiche—which she found justified, as the best that could be achieved in the medium: “If it were forbidden to adopt an artistic form once a man of genius has brought it to its apogee, the *a cappella* motet would have been abandoned after Palestrina”, just like the oratorio after Bach and the symphony after Beethoven.⁵¹ Composers had no choice but to accept a certain epigonism as the price of a liturgical style:

⁴⁶ “[le] développement moderne de la musique *a capella* [*sic*], lequel est d’ailleurs improbable. Non pas que cet art ne soit apte encore à de fort délicieuses choses, mais il semble peut-être un peu trop éloigné de notre sensibilité pour être pratiquée désormais avec abondance. . . . On pourrait assez légitimement redouter que sa résurrection n’aboutît fréquemment chez nous qu’à un agréable pastiche des maîtres françois [*sic*] du xvi^e”. Jean Marnold, “Revue de la quinzaine. Musique”, *Mercur de France* (1 March 1914), 188.

⁴⁷ “le procédé musical le plus parfait”; “encore un art relativement primitif”; “un art moins développé que l’art moderne”. Jules Boddaert, “La musique moderne à l’église”, in *Compte-rendu général du Congrès de musique religieuse d’Arras* (Arras: Procure générale, 1904), 72–73. The intervention was published in at least three other versions (in the *Revue de Lille* and *RSC*, and as a pamphlet), suggesting a wide readership by the standards of such literature.

⁴⁸ “il faut donner la prépondérance à la mélodie”; “une harmonie plus large et plus libre”. *Ibid.*, 73–74.

⁴⁹ “Loin d’être des pastiches d’œuvres anciennes, comme l’ont cru certaines personnes, égarées par le vocable ‘a capella’, ces motets sont tous des œuvres de polyphonie vocale très modernes.” Amédée Gastoué, “Le motet”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 5, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1930), 3044–45. On the controversies Gastoué was recollecting here see Ch. 1, 69–70.

⁵⁰ See Vincent d’Indy, “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (March 1898), 65–66.

⁵¹ “S’il était défendu d’adopter une forme artistique dès qu’un homme de génie l’a portée à son apogée, le motet *a capella* aurait été abandonné après Palestrina”. Michel Brenet [Marie Bobillier], “Bibliographie”, *Le Guide musical* (9–16 June 1901), 516.

“pastiche for pastiche, it is better to take after Palestrina in church music than Lefébure-Wély”.⁵² Yet she later chided the *scholistes* for remaining too timidly neo-Palestrinian, implying that such pastiche could and should achieve a measure of originality: “Beethoven will never be outdone, and yet in neither the quartet nor the symphony did Beethoven say the last word. Why should vocal polyphony have breathed its last with Palestrina?”⁵³ In a secular context, d’Indy’s former student Louis Laloy used the same argument to exonerate Debussy’s *Trois Chansons de Charles d’Orléans* (1898, 1908) of charges of pastiche: “one might as well say that a string quartet cannot be written without copying Beethoven, nor the tuba used without aping Wagner.”⁵⁴ So did Laloy’s foe Camille Bellaigue, when praising Charles Bordes’s *Madrigal à la musique* (1895) in a memorial article for the composer:

Modern, original, and as far as can be from imitation or pastiche, [the *Madrigal*] shows that Bordes, in reviving the genius of vocal polyphony, intended to restore it not merely to honour and glory but to life. We who have witnessed this resurrection learn or re-learn from it that it is possible today, and will be possible tomorrow, to express new ideas with the ancient concert of voices just as as with the modern symphony of instruments.⁵⁵

Bordes’s *Madrigal* and Debussy’s *Chansons* indeed belong to a revival of the *a cappella* quartet among progressive French composers at the turn of the century, in a secular, vernacular form inspired by sixteenth-century polyphonic song and often setting archaic texts—a trend that no doubt helped to give the medium a more independent and less exhausted image.⁵⁶

The case of Brenet illustrates one of the great curiosities of modern church-music discourse: the people venerating Palestrina’s perfection—Brenet, Bordes, Verhelst, Raugel, etc.—were often the same ones calling for and writing a modernised Palestrinian polyphony, without necessarily acknowledging any inconsistency. In an 1896 lecture Bordes declared that “with Palestrina, counterpoint arrived at its *absolute* state. The Sanctus of the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* cannot be surpassed. . . . Palestrina did not write for the future. He seemed rather to have wanted to

⁵² “pastiche pour pastiche, il vaut mieux, dans l’église, se réclamer de Palestrina que de Lefébure-Wély.”. Ibid.

⁵³ “On ne surpassera pas Beethoven, et pourtant avec Beethoven ni le quatuor, ni la symphonie n’ont dit leur dernier mot. Pourquoi la polyphonie vocale aurait-elle perdu la vie avec Palestrina ?” Ead., “Art religieux, musique d’église”, *Le Guide musical* (4 Feb. 1912), 87. See Ch. 1, 70.

⁵⁴ Deborah Priest, *Louis Laloy (1874–1944) on Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky* (Ashgate, 1999), 211 [orig. in *La Grande Revue*, 1909].

⁵⁵ “Moderne, original, et le plus éloigné possible de l’imitation ou du pastiche, il montre que Bordes, en ranimant le génie de la polyphonie vocale, n’a pas entendu la rappeler seulement à l’honneur, à la gloire, mais à la vie. Témoins de cette résurrection, nous apprenons ou rapprenons ici que des penses nouveaux peuvent aujourd’hui, pourront demain s’exprimer, aussi bien que par la moderne symphonie des instruments, par l’antique concert des voix”. Camille Bellaigue, “Revue musicale”, *La Revue des deux mondes* (Jan. 1910), 455.

⁵⁶ Other examples include works by Kœchlin (“Le Renouveau”, 1895), Chausson (*Ballata*, 1897), Roussel (“Le Soucy”, 1897), Hahn (*Chansons et Madrigaux*, 1907), Ladmirault (*Dominical*, 1911), Le Flem (*La Procession* and *Vrai Dieu qui m’y confortera*, 1912), and Ravel (*Trois Chansons*, 1914–15), as well as the *a cappella* canons of Paul Dupin which enjoyed a certain vogue around 1910. Lespinard writes of an “explosion” of such music after World War I; see Bernadette Lespinard, *Les passions du chœur. La musique chorale et ses pratiques en France, 1800-1950* (Fayard, 2018), 447. Another new genre was the *a cappella* folksong arrangement; see ead., “Vincent d’Indy et la naissance d’un genre nouveau : les chansons populaires françaises arrangées pour chœur mixte *a cappella*”, in *Vincent d’Indy et son temps*, ed. Manuela Schwartz (Mardaga, 2006), 283–98. On a humbler artistic level, and for male voices only, *a cappella* music for *orphéons* had been written across the later nineteenth century (see ead., *Les passions du chœur*, 446–53).

crystallise imperishable forms, to fix them for all time.”⁵⁷ Yet he apparently saw no incongruity in concluding his talk with a plug for the Schola’s modernised neo-Palestrinian style.⁵⁸ Perhaps he was simply resigned that the latter would be inferior (just as Palestrina’s more modern students initiated a decline), feeling that composers had no choice but to be of their time. Or perhaps he felt that it would be so different as to not compete with Palestrina, to be subject to different standards.

“*La langue musicale d’une époque*”: Renaissance Polyphony Historicised

As the case of the abbé Boddaert reflects, the Palestrina ideal rested on an aura of timeless, universal validity, independent of circumstances of origin. Anti-Palestrinian plainchant supremacists had already attacked this aura in the nineteenth century, with limited success, undercut by “De musica sacra” in 1894. In Germany especially, excessive veneration for the Palestrina ideal provoked counter-currents that spread to Belgian reformists, more attuned than their French counterparts to external developments. Edgar Tinel, director of the Lemmens Institute and potentate of Belgian reformism, had always been a somewhat indifferent Palestrinian; notably, his attempts to introduce certain licenses into his broadly neo-Palestrinian 1891 mass setting fell afoul of the more hardline Cecilians, who allowed the work into the Allgemeiner Cäcilienverein’s catalogue only after protracted debate.⁵⁹ Over the ensuing decade, Tinel moved towards a more openly anti-neo-Palestrinian stance. At a major congress organised in Bruges in 1902 to unite Belgian reformists and French *scholistes*, he denounced the Palestrinian style as tarnished by passage of time, no longer fully appreciable, surpassed by subsequent musical evolution.⁶⁰ He in fact retained the notion of an evergreen, unsurpassable ideal of sacred polyphony, but transferred this honour to the music of J. S. Bach, with whom “the elements of the religious musical style arrived at their supreme development”, as he explained in a reprise of his argument in a much-remarked presidential address to the Belgian Royal Academy a few years later; Bach “put his stamp on religious music for an incalculable period of time and the universal musical style was born . . . [H]e will probably remain the axis around which the spiral of future evolutions will turn”.⁶¹

⁵⁷ “avec Palestrina, le contrepoint arrive à son état *absolu*. Le *Sanctus* de la *Messe du Pape Marcel* ne peut être dépassé. . . . Palestrina n’a pas travaillé pour l’avenir. Il semble qu’il ait voulu fixer à jamais, cristalliser des formes impérissables”. Charles Bordes, “La musique figurée, de ses origines à la décadence de l’école romaine”, *TSG* (Aug. 1896), 115–16.

⁵⁸ See Ch. 3, 148. For a similar incongruity compare Brenet quoted above to Michel Brenet [Marie Bobillier], *Palestrina* (Alcan, 1906), 4: “Les efforts de plusieurs siècles s’achèvent en [Palestrina], s’y fusionnent, s’y purifient, et s’y expriment sous leur forme parfaite et définitive.”

⁵⁹ According to the composer’s son, “par son modernisme même et l’originalité de sa réalisation, la *Messe à cinq voix* eut l’importance et la portée d’un programme. Elle fut comprise, discutée, critiquée et exaltée comme telle. Les admirateurs exclusifs des formes rigoureusement palestriniennes élevèrent leur voix avec véhémence.” Paul Tinel, *Edgar Tinel* (Brussels: Éditions universitaires, 1946), 152–53. Discussion of this work in the anti-Tinelian *CSG* indeed stretches to almost 25 pages, most of it relayed from the German-language press. See e.g. [Adrien Dirven], “La *Messe en l’honneur de N. D. de Lourdes*, par Edgar Tinel”, *CSG* (April 1893), 20–22.

⁶⁰ See Edgar Tinel, “La musique figurée à l’église”, *TSG* (Aug.–Sept. 1902), 248.

⁶¹ “Ici, les éléments du style musical religieux seront arrivés à leur développement suprême. . . . La musique religieuse, pour une période incalculable de temps aura mis le sceau à sa puissance et le style musical universel sera né. . . . il demeurera probablement l’axe autour duquel viendra s’enrouler la spirale des évolutions futures”. Id., *Pie X et la musique sacrée* (Schola cantorum, 1909), 8 [orig. speech 28 Oct. 1908]. Tinel’s anti-neo-Palestrinianism made waves at the

Tinel was taking aim at the Cecilians first and foremost, but must also have delivered his 1902 remarks with a sidelong glance at his Parisian colleagues, whose *Répertoire moderne* claimed to be “inspired by the Gregorian and Palestrinian traditions”.⁶² In any case, Tinel’s Bachian turn (perhaps a form of alignment with Lemmens’s own much-vaunted Bachian pedagogical lineage) pushed Bordes, who stressed the “modern” side when opportune, into a more historicist stance.⁶³ Succeeding his Belgian counterpart on the congress programme, Bordes acknowledged that “we may not always agree, notably on the applicability of Gregorian melismas or Palestrinian filigree, or on the sources to which one must return in search of the first principles of modern figured [i.e. polyphonic] liturgical music”.⁶⁴ So at least reads the published text of his remarks; in the moment he may have been harsher, to judge from his private account of the proceedings:

I courageously contradicted [Tinel] and demolished his theory about the religious and liturgical art of the future being able to come only from Bach and Palestrina. At base, that’s a theory that could perfectly well be held by Widor! He also seemed to be wanting to reply to d’Indy that he loathes “Art Is Not a Trade”, as if to say we don’t know our business. . . . [A]ll in all, *with my sung examples* I knocked him flat. Palestrina’s *Ave Maria*, of which not one word was missed, and the *Ave verum* by Ropartz were such a success that it shut him up, also the *Benedicta es tu* by La Tombelle which they found delicious.⁶⁵

Despite the odd wording of the first quoted sentence, it must have been the elevation of Bach over Palestrina that irked Bordes, since he manifestly saw himself as defending Palestrina (and perhaps neo-Palestrinian composition as represented by Ropartz and La Tombelle), while Widor was known for his Bach veneration and no friend of the Schola or its *Répertoire moderne*.⁶⁶ Such at

Lemmens Institute and beyond; see notably “Chronique. Musique religieuse”, *Revue de l’art chrétien* (Jan. 1909), 60–63 and Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert, “Tradition et revendication”, *Journal de Bruxelles* (1 Feb. 1909).

⁶² The Cecilians, of course, denied imitating Renaissance polyphony and claimed to improve on what they saw as its flaws (excessive length and complexity, heedless text-setting); see the riposte by the pro-Cecilian abbé Dirven: Adrien Dirven, “À propos du discours de M. Tinel au Congrès de Bruges”, *CSG* (Feb., March–April, May–June 1903), esp. 10–12, 17–20, 29–32. Cf. Garratt, *Palestrina*, 149.

⁶³ On Lemmens see William J. Peterson, “Lemmens, His *École d’orgue*, and Nineteenth-Century Organ Methods”, in *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, ed. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (U. of Rochester Press, 1995), 51–100.

⁶⁴ “nous pouvons ne pas être toujours du même avis, notamment sur l’opportunité des mélismes grégoriens ou des frondaisons palestriniennes, ou sur les sources auxquelles il faut remonter pour demander les principes premiers de l’art liturgique figuré moderne”. Charles Bordes, “Les fêtes de Bruges”, *TSG* (Aug.–Sept. 1902), 252. This text, which merely summarises the proceedings and proffers general thanks and congratulations, may or may not correspond to Bordes’s live remarks, entitled “Un jubé modèle”. Unrelatedly, Bordes and Tinel had a standoff over a misunderstanding as to what the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais were to sing (see Fierens-Gevaert cited below, n. 67).

⁶⁵ “Du reste je l’ai contredit courageusement et ai démolì sa théorie de l’art religieux et liturgique de l’avenir ne pouvant sortir que de Bach et de Palestrina. Au fond, c’est une théorie qui aurait pu parfaitement être tenue par Widor ! En outre, il a voulu paraît-il répondre à d’Indy qu’il exècre ‘L’art est un métier’ [*sic*], avec un air de dire que nous ne savions pas notre affaire. . . . somme toute, *avec mes exemples chantés*, je l’ai mis par terre. L’*Ave Maria* de Palestrina dont on ne perdait pas un mot et l’*Ave verum* de Ropartz ont eu un succès tel qu’il était muselé, ainsi que le *Benedicta es tu* de La Tombelle qu’on a trouvé délicieux.” Charles Bordes, letter to Paul Poujaud, 12 Aug. 1902, quoted in Patrick Hala, *Solesmes et les musiciens*, vol. 1 *La Schola cantorum : Charles Bordes, Vincent d’Indy, Déodat de Séverac, René de Castéra* (Éditions de Solesmes, 2017), 318–19. The misremembered d’Indy quotation refers to the opening lines of “Une école d’art répondant aux besoins modernes”.

⁶⁶ See Widor’s irate reaction when associated with Bordes by Anatole Loquin (cf. Ch. 3, 148): “Par quelle aventure me comprend-il parmi les membres d’un *Schola* avec laquelle je n’ai jamais eu le moindre rapport et aux publications de laquelle je reste absolument étranger ?” Charles-Marie Widor, letter to the editor quoted in “Chronique de la semaine. Paris”, *Le Guide musical* (14 Feb. 1897), 129.

any rate was the audience's impression, as reported by a Tinel supporter: "M. Bordes does not share all of M. Tinel's ideas. He admires Palestrina as Victor Hugo admired Shakespeare." At the end of the session, "the public left divided into two camps: the Palestrina fanatics and the diehard partisans of J.-S. Bach."⁶⁷ How ironic, then, that the next day's programme showcased Tinel's 1891 *Messe de Notre-Dame de Lourdes*, whose lightly modernised Palestrinianism perfectly resembles that of Ropartz or La Tombelle. As so often in church music, the ferocity of debate seems inversely proportional to the material differences at stake.

If Palestrina belonged not to eternity but to the flux of history, where exactly did he belong? Tinel himself was clear that (what I have been calling) Renaissance polyphony belonged to a pre-modern, indeed Medieval era: "We must not forget that these masters were the final culmination of a historical period; their art is the end product of six centuries of slow and painstaking effort, and their glory radiates in the grave and august apotheosis of a medieval music about to disappear. Our musical feeling is no longer that of our medieval ancestors."⁶⁸ For many, including *scholistes*, such mediocrity was precisely the source of Palestrina's appeal: it tied him to plainchant, the Gothic, and other achievements of the golden age of Catholic civilisation.⁶⁹ But for Tinel and others, an unbridgeable gulf separated the Middle Ages from modern sensibilities, at least where music was concerned (plainchant was exempted from this problem, for reasons explained in Ch. 1). Medieval music, with its arcane modal theories and byzantine contrapuntal games, was "a bygone art".⁷⁰

In France prior to 1914, historicising attacks on the Palestrina ideal came from relatively secular musicians free to criticise church legislation and beholden to reformist doctrine. Saint-Saëns was especially listened-to: on various occasions he contended that what seemed so religious in Renaissance polyphony—its naive austerity—was not intrinsic to the music but a projection, an effect of contrast contingent on awareness of modern art; in its own time, he liked to point out, the "Palestrinian" style was luxurious and worldly, used indifferently for motets and madrigals.⁷¹ His pronouncements were cited not only by those one would expect (Fauré) but also by priests who, though broadly reformist, rejected exclusivist linearism and Palestrinianism.⁷² Their main

⁶⁷ "M. Bordes ne partage pas toutes les idées de M. Tinel. Il admire Palestrina comme Victor Hugo admirait Shakespeare. . . . le public sortit divisé en deux camps : les fanatiques de Palestrina et les partisans à tous crins de Jean-Sébastien Bach." Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert, "Les assises de la Scola [this spelling was preferred in 1901–02] cantorum à Bruges", *Journal des débats* (21 Aug. 1902).

⁶⁸ "Il ne faut pas l'oublier, ces maîtres sont l'achèvement final d'une période historique; leur art est l'aboutissement de six siècles de lent et pénibles efforts, et leur gloire rayonne dans l'apothéose grave et auguste de la musique médiévale qui va disparaître. Notre sentiment musical n'est plus le même que celui de nos ancêtres du moyen âge." Tinel, *Pie X et la musique sacrée*, 7.

⁶⁹ See Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 180–81. Much has been written on the Renaissance in nineteenth-century musical periodisation: James Haar, "Music of the Renaissance as Viewed by the Romantics", in *Music and Context: Essays for John M. Ward*, ed. Ann Dhu Shapiro (Harvard UP, 1985), 126–44; Jessie Ann Owens, "Music Historiography and the Definition of 'Renaissance'", *Notes* 47.2 (1990), 305–30; Andrew Kirkman, "'Under Such Heavy Chains': The Discovery and Evaluation of Late Medieval Music before Ambros", *19th Century Music* 24.1 (2000), 89–112; Laura K. T. Stokes, "Medievalisms in Early Nineteenth-Century German Musical Thought", in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Medievalism*, ed. Stephen C. Meyer and Kirsten Yri (OUP, 2020), 17–31.

⁷⁰ "un art révolu". Tinel, *Pie X et la musique religieuse*, 7.

⁷¹ See e.g. Camille Saint-Saëns, "La réforme de la musique religieuse", in id., *Écrits sur la musique et les musiciens, 1870–1921*, ed. Marie-Gabrielle Soret (Vrin, 2012), 586–90 [orig. *Le Figaro*, 1904].

⁷² See e.g. Émile Soullier, "Musique palestrinienne", *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (March 1897), 43; Boddaert, "La musique moderne à l'église", 72–73; Pierre Chassang, "Un vieux maître de chapelle à son disciple", *RSC* (Jan. 1914), 1–4.

outlet after the war would be the *Revue Sainte-Cécile*, whose “programme”, as reaffirmed by the abbé Delépine in 1924, kept neo-Palestrinianism at arm’s length:

It seems difficult to maintain that this mode of musical expression should be the sole, exclusive formula suited to Catholic prayer. This would be to concede that the sixteenth century arrived at the definitive form of religious music. This would be to deny other periods the right to express the believing soul in their own way.⁷³

Collaborators in the *Revue* preferred to see in Palestrinian polyphony merely “the musical language of one era”, “the language particular to that time”, “the form current during [that] era”.⁷⁴ But this represented a shift in the journal’s orientation: as late as 1911, it answered the question “What is the best style to adopt for the church?” with: “The polyphonic style is preferable to all the others. Its perfect type has been furnished for us by *Palestrina*. It is the religious style par excellence”, though going on to qualify vaguely that “it is nevertheless not absolutely required to adhere exclusively to Palestrina’s practice”.⁷⁵

Gregory versus Pierluigi

The Supposed Kinship between “Gregorian Chant” and “Palestrinian Polyphony”

The Palestrina ideal faced not only historical scrutiny but also competition from alternative paragons of liturgical style. Of these, the most important, it need hardly be said, was plainchant, nominally the ultimate paragon. These two pillars of reformism had always been in latent conflict, as Benjamin Van Wye pointed out long ago: the *a cappella* ideal, nourished by the worship of pure choral sound among German Romantics, did not necessarily agree with the ultramontanist goal of making plainchant the centre of the liturgy (to say nothing of the traditional liturgical primacy of the organ in France).⁷⁶ The more this second goal took priority (symbolised notably by the foundation of the Institut grégorien in 1923), the more the Palestrina ideal took a back seat. By the 1930s the duopoly remained intact, but with an internal balance shifted in the Gregorian direction.⁷⁷

Compare Fauré’s remarks on TLS quoted in [Auguste Mangeot], “La réforme de la musique religieuse. Opinions de MM. C. Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, G. Houdard, Alex. Guilmant”, *Le Monde musical* (15 Feb. 1904), 35.

⁷³ “Il nous semble difficile de soutenir que cette expression musicale soit la formule unique, exclusive qui convienne à la prière catholique. Ce serait admettre que le XVI^e siècle ait trouvé la forme définitive de la musique religieuse. Ce serait dénier aux autres époques le droit d’exprimer à leur manière, l’âme croyante.” Henri Delépine, “Notre idéal, notre programme”, *RSC* (Jan. 1924), 2–5.

⁷⁴ “la langue musicale d’une époque”. Ibid., 2. “la langue particulière de ce temps-là”. Id., “Musique palestrinienne et musique religieuse moderne”, *RSC* (Sept.–Oct. 1933), 101. “la forme courante de leur époque”. Chassang, “Un vieux maître de chapelle”, 2.

⁷⁵ “*Quel est le meilleur style à adopter pour l’Église ?* . . . Le style polyphonique est préférable à tous les autres. Le type parfait nous en a été fourni par *Palestrina*. C’est le style religieux par excellence . . . Il n’est toutefois pas absolument requis de s’en tenir exclusivement à ce que pratiquait Palestrina”. “Petite correspondance”, *RSC* (Feb. 1911), 75.

⁷⁶ See Van Wye, “The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration”, 1–2.

⁷⁷ See for example Auguste Sérieyx, “Primauté du grégorien”, *TSG* (March 1928), 2–5, which never mentions Renaissance polyphony (by contrast to the author’s articles on church music from 1904 and 1910). A major exception, unsurprisingly, is Potiron; see Potiron, *La musique d’église*, passim.

In the nineteenth century, the centrist (plainchant-and-Palestrina) mainstream of reformism smoothed over this rift and countered plainchant supremacism by promulgating a doctrine of identity at some essential level between plainchant and Palestrinian polyphony.⁷⁸ The relationship was often explicated, once again, in hylomorphic terms: the two “no doubt differ in form or surface, but in their substance, or *ethos*, they resemble each other and are not far from equalling each other”, explains Camille Bellaigue in his commentary on TLS.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, mainstreamers were anxious to substantiate the similarity in technical terms too: in the words of the abbé Delporte,

Classical polyphony, in the limpidity and suavity of its style, the austerity of its harmonies, the rhythmic liberty of its movement, the choice of its melodic themes, and its impersonal character, manifests on every page a close relation to the traditional liturgical chant, of which it is the immediate inheritor and a kind of natural and magnificent development.⁸⁰

Delporte’s focus on rhythm and tonality was typical: countless writers invoked the notions of *tonalité antique* and *rythme libre* as grounds for lumping together these two repertoires.⁸¹ Many went so far as to see in Renaissance polyphony not so much a descendent as a multiplication of the Gregorian monody, quite literally a superposition of multiple chant or chant-like melodies.⁸²

Further into the twentieth century, influential reformists began to acknowledge differences between the two more openly. Certainly, the orthodox doctrine retained adherents: “A number of ‘enlightened’ persons still believe that Gregorian chant directly engendered the vocal polyphony of the sixteenth century”, reported Amédée Gastoué in 1935—but their number was diminishing.⁸³ The view that Palestrinian polyphony exhibited *tonalité antique* and *rythme libre* had lost ground to conceptions of the repertoire as already late in the transition to modern tonality and metre. The same year Gastoué was writing, Henri Potiron turned a critical eye on the orthodox doctrine in a major series of articles and reached some fairly stark conclusions. “Fundamentally, there is no longer any relation between Gregorian modality and the new conception of harmonic modes” seen in Renaissance polyphony, he found. Palestrina’s “modality is not quite that of Mozart, obviously; but it is much closer to it than to Gregorian modality”.⁸⁴ When it came to *rythme libre*, he reported

⁷⁸ For an overview (and on some of the repercussions for performance practice) see Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 106–13.

⁷⁹ “ils diffèrent sans doute par la forme ou par la surface ; mais, au fond, par le sentiment ou l’*ethos*, ils se ressemblent et ne sont pas très loin de l’égaliser.” Camille Bellaigue, “Revue musicale. La réforme de la musique d’église”, *La Revue des deux mondes* (Jan. 1904), 701.

⁸⁰ “La polyphonie classique, par la limpidité et la suavité de son style, par l’austérité de ses harmonies, par la liberté rythmique de son allure, par le choix de ses thèmes mélodiques, par son caractère impersonnel, manifeste à chaque page sa parenté étroite avec le chant liturgique traditionnel, dont elle est l’héritière immédiate et comme le développement naturel et magnifique.” Delporte, “La musique palestrinienne”, 35.

⁸¹ On *rythme libre* see especially Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 165–82. On *tonalité antique* see Ch. 3, 162–3.

⁸² See e.g. [Edgar Tinell], “Discours de M. E. Tinel prononcé au Congrès des œuvres sociales, à Malines”, *CSG* (1 Sept. 1889), 31; Bordes, “La musique figurée”, 114; Auguste Sérieyx, “Caractéristiques de la musique sacrée destinée à la célébration du culte d’après l’instruction ‘motu proprio’ de S. S. Pie X”, *Le Courrier musical* (1 April 1904), 221; Joseph Guillermin, “Musique d’église et musique de concert”, *Études* (20 May 1904), 566; Brun, *Traité*, 26; Ludovic Giraud, *La musique d’église telle que l’Église la veut* (Marseille: Publiroc, 1934), 37. Cf. Garratt, *Palestrina*, 142–62.

⁸³ “Pour nombre encore de personnes « éclairées », le chant grégorien aurait directement engendré la polyphonie vocale du XVI^e siècle.” Amédée Gastoué, “La musique religieuse polyphonique au Moyen-Âge”, *L’Art sacré* (July 1935), 23.

⁸⁴ “Au fond, il n’y a plus aucun rapport entre la modalité grégorienne et la nouvelle conception des modes harmoniques. . . . La modalité n’est donc pas tout à fait celle de Mozart, c’est évident : elle en est cependant beaucoup

that “the rhythm of polyphony is opposed to Gregorian rhythm, despite some affinities in the details” (Potiron followed Dom Mocquereau’s conception of Gregorian rhythm, it is worth noting).⁸⁵ Ultimately, Potiron would salvage the doctrine of kinship, but only by hylomorphically relegating it to a spiritual level above and beyond style: “the technique of the Gregorian monophony and that of the classical polyphony of the Renaissance are clearly distinct from and almost opposed to each other; but these two arts come together in, if not an identical, at least a fairly similar aesthetic”.⁸⁶ What similarities remained were a matter of general “esprit liturgique”—universality, impersonality, interiority—and even then only partial. When it came to compositional models, Potiron went against the grain in tending to side with Renaissance polyphony over plainchant when the two diverged; but in acknowledging divergence he exemplified a broader trend.

Sources of the Growing Rift: Tonality and Metre

What changed such that later thinkers tended to dwell more on the differences? It was history that created problems for the orthodox doctrine, but not so much new knowledge as a recrudescence of a certain nineteenth-century anti-Palestrinian discourse, according to which the rise of polyphony necessitated the simplification of tonality and metre, inevitably destroying plurimodality and *rythme libre*. As Potiron put it in 1935, “the progress of harmony had as its basis and consequence the ruin of pure monophony. . . . If the one has not been the cause of the ruin of the other, it certainly contributed: harmonic art was only able to rise up on the ruins of monophonic art.”⁸⁷ This sort of narrative had served anti-Palestrinian ends in the nineteenth century: plainchant supremacists sought to drive a wedge between Gregory and Pierluigi according to the logic *polyphony = the pulsation of modern metre and the pull of modern tonality = materialism = the Renaissance/modernity*. Proponents of modern church music were happy to use it too when combatting the rise of Palestrinianism was the overriding consideration; thus in 1898 the abbé Gabert, director of the ephemeral one-man anti-Schola periodical *L’Avenir de la musique sacrée*, eulogised “our beautiful plainchant which your demigods of the Renaissance killed. For you cannot deny it: if modernism snuffed out the sixteenth century, the latter for its part dealt the final blow

plus voisine que de la modalité grégorienne”. Henri Potiron, “Des rapports entre le chant grégorien et la polyphonie de la Renaissance”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (May–June 1935), 94–95.

⁸⁵ “la rythmique de la polyphonie est à l’opposé de la rythmique grégorienne, malgré quelques affinités dans les détails.” Id., “Des rapports entre le chant grégorien et la polyphonie de la Renaissance”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (March–April 1935), 74.

⁸⁶ “En somme la technique de la monodie grégorienne et celle de la polyphonie classique de la Renaissance sont bien distinctes et d’ordre presque opposé ; mais ces deux arts se rejoignent dans une esthétique, sinon identique, du moins assez semblable”. Id., “Des rapports entre le chant grégorien et la polyphonie de la Renaissance”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (July–Aug. 1935), 10.

⁸⁷ “les progrès de l’harmonie ont eu pour condition et pour conséquence la ruine de la monodie pure. . . . Si l’une n’a pas été la cause de la perte de l’autre, elle y a certainement contribué : l’art harmonique n’a pu s’élever que sur les ruines de l’art monodique.” Id., “Des rapports” (March–April 1935), 70, 74. Cf. Jean Huré, *Défense et illustration de la musique française*, 3rd edn (Sénart, 1920), 2–3: “les premiers essais de polyphonie, avant tout le *tempus mensurable*, furent les causes de ce premier appauvrissement d’un art mélodique, dont la beauté ne devait jamais être égalée.” For another version of this narrative see Pierre Dartiguelongue, “La musique d’église depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours”, *TSG* (Sept.–Oct. 1914), 240–41.

to what came before.”⁸⁸ “Modernism” was in fact what Gabert wanted, but in his eagerness to poke holes in the *scholiste* programme he was happy to use the arguments ready to hand. The reference to “your demigods of the Renaissance” was a jab at the centrist-reformist doctrine that Palestrina represented a holdout of medieval piety amidst wholesale return to antique paganism, and at scholistes and others who denied that Palestrina belonged to the Renaissance at all.

Where tonality was concerned, the narrative, inherited from early nineteenth-century historiography (especially Choron and Fétis), of a decisive shift around 1600 from “ancient” to “modern” tonality with the discovery of the dominant seventh chord tended to give way to a gradualist alternative that saw modern tonality emerging bit by bit from the very earliest polyphonies.⁸⁹ The latter view was already gaining the upper hand by the turn of the century, when Julien Tiersot declared that “[m]odern tonality, . . . far from having been formed in one day and being the work of one musician’s genius, is the product of a long evolution stretching across many centuries.”⁹⁰ To some extent this shift followed from advances in research: in 1901, the critic Mathilde Daubresse noted that new findings since Fétis’s day had pushed the emergence of the dominant seventh back to the early sixteenth century.⁹¹ More importantly, conceptions of modern tonality itself were evolving. Fétis and many followers associated it with the unprepared dominant seventh; the leading tones and cadences in Renaissance polyphony (and Fétis’s generation was perfectly aware of *musica ficta*) still belonged to *tonalité antique*. As late as the 1890s, Stephen Morelot, an aged veteran of reformism’s heroic age, denied that such features seriously compromised the *tonalité antique*, plurimodality, or even diatonicism of Palestrinian music.⁹² Similarly, the abbé Perriot, speaking at a plainchant congress in 1895 and eager to dispel any lingering anti-Palestrinianism in his audience, admitted that in Palestrina “the finals and certain melodic and

⁸⁸ “notre beau plain-chant qu’ont tué vos demi-dieux de la Renaissance. . . Car vous ne pouvez le nier : si le modernisme a étouffé le XVI^e siècle, celui-ci de son côté porta le coup de grâce à ce qui l’avait précédé.” Abel Gabert, “Notre credo artistique”, *L’Avenir de la musique sacrée* (15 Aug. 1898), 27–28.

⁸⁹ Notable nineteenth-century gradualists included Coussemaker, Gevaert and Bourgault-Ducoudray; see Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, “Fétis, la naissance de la tonalité moderne et la réception de ses idées au XIX^e siècle”, in *Musica, sive Liber amoricum Nicolas Meeûs. Mélanges offerts au professeur Nicolas Meeûs*, ed. Luciane Beduschi, Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, and Alice Tacaille (U. de Paris-Sorbonne, 2014), 374–75; Thomas Christensen, *Stories of Tonality in the Age of François-Joseph Fétis* (U. of Chicago Press, 2019), 71–88; and Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, “Cours générale d’histoire de la musique. Séance d’ouverture, II”, *Le Ménestrel* (15 Dec. 1878), 18. Later statements of gradualism, besides those cited below, include Maurice Emmanuel, *Histoire de la langue musicale* (Laurens, 1911) and Armand Machabey, *Histoire et évolution des formules musicales du I^{er} au XV^e siècle de l’ère chrétienne* (Payot, 1928). Charles Kœchlin, a special case, acknowledged an early emergence of major-minor tonality but regarded Renaissance polyphony as still modal: “tonality” and “modality” for him were compatible. See Charles Kœchlin, “La musique au Moyen Âge” [lecture, 11 July 1928, Berkeley], F-Pbmgf, B 399/48.

⁹⁰ “La tonalité moderne, . . . loin d’avoir été formée en un jour et d’être l’œuvre du génie d’un seul musicien, est le produit d’une longue évolution qui s’étend sur un grand nombre de siècles.” Julien Tiersot, “Des transformations de la tonalité et du rôle du dièse et du bémol depuis le moyen âge jusqu’au XVII^e siècle (*Résumé*)”, in *Congrès international d’histoire de la musique tenu à Paris à la Bibliothèque de l’Opéra du 23 au 29 juillet 1900*, ed. Jules Combarieu (Solesmes: Imprimerie St-Pierre, 1901), 177.

⁹¹ See Mathilde Daubresse, “Un fait d’évolution musicale”, *Le Courrier musical* (1–15 July 1901), 153. An example of what Daubresse had in mind is Louis Pagnerre, *Origines et variation de notre tonalité. Son avenir. Étude théorique et historique, mise à la portée de tous* (Dentu, 1885), 70–78.

⁹² See for example Morelot quoted in [Jean Artigaram], *Rapport officiel du Congrès de chant grégorien et de musique religieuse tenu à Bordeaux les 9, 10 et 11 juillet 1895* (Bordeaux: Œuvre des bons-livres, 1895), 48 and Stephen Morelot, “La musique religieuse au point de vue confessionnel”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (March 1899), 37–39. Morelot’s idea that the leading tones of Renaissance polyphony differ from modern leading tones appears to come from Fétis (see Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 48, 65).

harmonic passages already give rise to the feeling of major and minor tonality that has prevailed in modern music” yet hammered home that

[t]he tonality of Palestrinian music is in general that of plainchant and its eight modes [*tons*]. . . . Palestrinian harmony is distinguished by the two characteristics of consonance and agreement with the tonality of plainchant. . . . It agrees with the tonality of plainchant, which is to say, it divides up according to the chant modes. . . . [W]ithout the tonality of plainchant, [Palestrinian harmony] is incomprehensible.⁹³

But looser conceptions of modern tonality, as inherent already in the leading tone or in fifth-relations, mostly triumphed after 1900.⁹⁴ Thus Félix Raugel could proclaim Dufay a “bold harbinger of modern tonality” in an encyclopaedia article published in 1930, while qualifying Palestrina’s harmony as “résolument moderne”.⁹⁵ When Gastoué claimed in 1935 that “Palestrina, far from being a beginning, was on the contrary an arrival, the culmination of a whole series of musical experiments and artworks whose point of departure lies far, far earlier, on the day French Notre-Dame polyphony was born”, he might seem to have been merely repeating a cliché of Palestrina as the culmination of medieval counterpoint (compare Tinel above).⁹⁶ But he had the growth of tonality in mind, not the refinement of counterpoint: in a letter to Joseph Samson he affirmed that “Palestrina already represents an advanced state of harmony, which . . . already effectively tended towards tonal construction from the twelfth century . . . So don’t be surprised by the leading tones in Palestrina . . . But fifty years earlier [composers] were still very ‘modal’.”⁹⁷ Such was indeed the view presented by Samson in his own book on Palestrina, completed by early 1937.⁹⁸ Potiron too was clear that the essence of tonality resided in the leading tone—scrupulously avoided in plainchant but omnipresent in Renaissance polyphony—and that chromatic leading tones sufficed to establish new tonics.⁹⁹ Jean Marnold bucked this historiographical trend, defending a “late emergence” view of *tonalité moderne* that allowed him to laud Josquin as the

⁹³ “les finales, quelques passages mélodiques et harmoniques font déjà naître le sentiment de la tonalité majeure et mineure qui a prévalu dans la musique moderne”; “La tonalité de la musique palestrinienne est en général celle du plain-chant et de ses huit tons. . . . L’harmonie palestrinienne se distingue par ces deux caractères qu’elle est *consonante* et qu’elle est en rapport avec la tonalité du plain-chant. . . . Elle est en rapport avec la tonalité du plain-chant, c’est-à-dire qu’elle se diversifie selon les tons du plain-chant. Ce caractère est essentiel à connaître si l’on veut se rendre compte de l’harmonie palestrinienne: sans la tonalité du plain-chant elle est incompréhensible.” Quoted in [Artigarum], *Rapport officiel*, 29–30.

⁹⁴ See Ch. 3, 124–29.

⁹⁵ “hardi vexillaire de la tonalité moderne”. Raugel, “La musique polyphonique”, 480. Id., *Palestrina* (Laurens, 1930), 77.

⁹⁶ “Palestrina, loin d’être un début, fut au contraire l’aboutissement, le point culminant de toute une série de recherches musicales et d’œuvres artistiques dont le point de départ se situe longtemps, bien longtemps auparavant, au jour où naquirent les « Notre-Dame » françaises.” Gastoué, “La musique religieuse polyphonique”, 23.

⁹⁷ “Palestrina représente déjà un état avancé de l’harmonie, laquelle, si déjà elle tendait effectivement dès le XII^e siècle vers la construction tonale, trouva vers le milieu du XVI^e des fixations remarquables. . . . Ne vous étonnez donc pas des sensibiles de Palestrina . . . Mais cinquante ans auparavant, on était encore très ‘modal’.” Id., letter to Joseph Samson, 22 March 1939, F-Dm, MS 3079/12. Gastoué had documented the early emergence of leading tones and the mode of *ut* in id., *Les primitifs de la musique française* (Laurens, 1922 [1910]), 82–83.

⁹⁸ See Joseph Samson, *Palestrina, ou la Poésie de l’exactitude* (Geneva: Henn, 1939), 51–60.

⁹⁹ See Henri Potiron, “Des rapports” (May–June 1935), 93. Palestrina’s increasingly transitional image applies *a fortiori* to Lassus and Victoria, always reputed to be less ethereal and more progressive. For Bordes, Palestrina was a “point d’arrivée”, “l’achèvement d’une forme” (and emphatically not a “primitif”) while Lassus was “le musicien de l’avenir” (Bordes, “La musique figurée”, 115–16).

summit of a still pristine modality; his reading of the sources convinced him that *musica ficta* began only in the later sixteenth century, a view apparently shared with Expert, whom he commended for preserving the “authenticité modale” spoiled by the leading tones of Bordes and most other editors of old polyphony.¹⁰⁰ But Marnold too regarded the music of Palestrina’s time as heavily adulterated with modern tonality.

When it comes to rhythm, we must first examine more closely the similarity between plainchant and Renaissance polyphony imagined by most reformists around 1900.¹⁰¹ It rested on the notion of *rythme libre*, a vague conception that could refer to different things at different structural levels: 1) note values not precisely determined by notation and therefore subtly flexible in performance, 2) irregular accentuation, 3) irregular phrases. Music could display one sort of *rythme libre* but not another, as illustrated by the hair-splitting resorted to by a chant-minded Benedictine, Dom Sablayrolles, in his review of Charles Tournemire’s “paraphrases” of plainchant in *L’Orgue mystique*:

Like all composers of organ or vocal music, the celebrated organist of Sainte-Clotilde has generally not seen fit to paraphrase the Gregorian themes in their proper rhythm. He uses the notes but modifies their temporal value. Obviously, this is no longer Gregorian rhythm but musical rhythm *tout court*. The latter maintains the former’s liberty, suppleness, undulation, breadth; it rejects isochronous measure, stiffness, squareness; its movement is delicate, light, aerial. But when it comes down to it, an organ does not play as voices sing. Sometimes the transformation of the Gregorian rhythm is such that one struggles to recognise the theme.¹⁰²

In short, the music is “free” on the second and third levels but not on the first (though, as noted below, *L’Orgue mystique* does contain monophonic and biphonic passages that permit rhythmic imprecision).¹⁰³ This is what reformists often meant when they satisfied themselves that Renaissance polyphony—by contrast to earlier and later polyphony based on a *cantus firmus*—retained the “rythme libre” of plainchant: its contrapuntal interplay required precise, proportional note values unified around a steady pulse, but the pattern of accentuation was irregular within each voice (hence the frequency of syncopations and ties) and offset between voices due to their rhythmic independence, and the punctuation articulating the phrasing and overall form were likewise text-determined and therefore unpredictable (“free”). Renaissance metre, though invariant

¹⁰⁰ Jean Marnold, “Revue de la quinzaine. Musique”, *Mercure de France* (1 March 1914), 188. Cf. Marnold’s harsh review of Machabey’s *Histoire et évolution des formules musicales*: id., “Revue de la quinzaine. Musique”, *Mercure de France* (15 Nov. 1928), 207–16.

¹⁰¹ For this paragraph see Brenet, *Palestrina*, 151–52; d’Indy and Sérieyx, *Cours*, book 1, 150; Vincent d’Indy, “Le motet et le cantique grégoriens”, *Revue du chant grégorien* (May–June 1923), 168–69 [orig. lecture, Paris congress, Dec. 1922]. The comparison also occupies a large part of André Mocquereau et al. (eds), *Paléographie musicale* [...], vol. 7 (Solesmes: Imprimerie St-Pierre, 1901), summarised in Norbert Rousseau, *L’école grégorienne de Solesmes, 1833-1910* (Rome and Tournai: Société de St Jean/Desclée, 1910), 79–84.

¹⁰² “Comme tous les compositeurs de musique d’orgue ou de musique vocale, le célèbre organiste de Sainte-Clotilde n’a pas cru devoir paraphraser généralement les thèmes grégoriens dans leur rythme propre. Il emploie les notes, mais il en modifie la valeur temporaire. Évidemment, ce n’est plus le rythme grégorien, c’est le rythme musical tout court. Du premier, le second garde la liberté, la souplesse, l’ondulation, l’ampleur ; il rejette la mesure isochrone, la raideur, la carrure ; sa marche est délicate, légère, aérienne, mais enfin l’orgue ne joue pas comme chantent les voix. Quelquefois la transformation du rythme grégorien est telle qu’on a de la peine à reconnaître le thème. . . . quant au rythme, les mélodies grégoriennes paraissent plutôt réfractaires au principe de la paraphrase libre”. Maur Sablayrolles, “*L’Orgue mystique*”, *La Musique sacrée* (July–Aug. 1932), 57–58. Cf. Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919–1933* (U. of Toronto Press, 2005), 303.

¹⁰³ The term *biphony*, a monstrous combination of Latin and Greek, seems to have caught on to designate melody-over-drone texture.

across long sections, supposedly represented nothing more than a notational convenience; neo-Renaissance scores and editions of Renaissance polyphony often came with reminders not to accent according to the notated metre, with the result that listeners newly encountering the repertoire could be struck that “the rhythm that organises the movement of modern music . . . is hardly apparent in Palestrinian music”, as one review of the Chanteurs de Saint-Boniface marvelled.¹⁰⁴ “Rythme libre” was often a matter of (absent) metre, not rhythm—irregularity of accentuation rather than of note-value. Thus, when the abbé Brun writes of neo-Renaissance polyphony displaying an “almost total liberty of rhythm”, or “rhythming [chant melodies] in a modern and free fashion”, what he means is this: “The tonic accent must of course be observed, but, due to the movement and independence of the parts, there can be no question of fixing the accent on one or another beat of the bar. Each voice is subjected to the Gregorian *rythme oratoire*, the metre being no more than a purely notational division.”¹⁰⁵ In the preface to his *Ave verum* (published 1919)—a work notable for presenting the same chant melodies in “original” form (with unmeasured organ accompaniment) and adapted to imitative polyphony—Edmond Dierickx explained: “In the polyphony we have attempted to conserve the élan and the almost evangelic unction of Gregorian chant, totally unknown to the cold German chorale.”¹⁰⁶ But he apparently considered ties and irregular phrasing sufficient to accomplish this (see Fig. 2.2).

Such timidity reflects the difficult balancing act that reformists had to maintain. On the one hand, they preached a return to the old tradition of chant-based polyphony as a means to reconcile tradition (a melody drawn from the official corpus) with originality (the melody’s polyphonic encasement). But they generally accepted the historical narrative—originally, an anti-Palestrinian one—that the rise of polyphony had corrupted plainchant with modern rhythms, metres, and tonality, transforming it into the sedate *cantus planus*. In other words, they were preaching a return to the very source of the “decadence” that plainchant “restoration” was working to undo. “M. Bordes next showed how the introduction of polyphony was one of the main causes of the decadence of Gregorian chant”, a synopsis of one of Bordes’s lectures cheerfully relates.¹⁰⁷ Did Bordes see any contradiction in his enthusiasm for old polyphony? D’Indy, for his part, in the first volume of the *Cours de composition* co-written with Auguste Sérieyx, shielded early polyphony from blame by postponing the advent of modern metre to the seventeenth century (anticipated a little by the Protestant chorale).¹⁰⁸ But in a talk at the 1922 Paris congress he dealt with the problem differently, by distinguishing between good and bad (metrical) forms of early polyphony: he now admitted that the *Ars mensuralis* had already begun the regularisation of metre and initiated a

¹⁰⁴ “le rythme qui mouvemente la musique moderne . . . s’indique à peine dans la musique palestrinienne.” “Musique religieuse”, *Revue de l’art chrétien* (1897), 357 [orig. in *La Patriote*, Brussels, 1897].

¹⁰⁵ “Il semble qu’il soit préférable de rythmer d’une façon moderne et libre le thème . . . Certes, l’accent tonique doit être observé, mais, en raison du mouvement et de l’indépendance des parties, on ne peut songer à la localisation de l’accent sur tel ou tel temps de mesure. Chaque voix est soumise au rythme oratoire grégorien, la mesure n’étant qu’une section purement matérielle. . . . L’écriture des formes que nous avons étudiées nécessite la liberté presque absolue du rythme.” Brun, *Traité*, 21, 29.

¹⁰⁶ “Nous avons essayé de conserver à la polyphonie cet élan et cette onction quasi évangélique du chant grégorien, élan et onction totalement inconnues du froid choral allemand. C’est dire qu’on devra éviter avant tout la rigidité et les mouvements trop lents.” Edmond Dierickx, “Note”, in id., *Ave verum corpus* (St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre: Biton, 1919).

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Dupoux, “Les fêtes musicales d’Avignon”, *Revue de chant grégorien et de musique religieuse* (Sept. 1899), 202. Sérieyx too acknowledged that polyphony’s need to coordinate voices had historically led to measured rhythm; see Auguste Sérieyx, “Plain-chant’ et ‘musique”, *La Vie et les Arts liturgiques* (Oct. 1913), 27–31.

¹⁰⁸ See d’Indy and Sérieyx, *Cours*, book 1, 5–6, 28, 150, 211–18.

Fig. 2.2: Edmond Dierickx, *Ave verum corpus*, bars 14–28

Chœur d'enfants

mf

Vé - re pás - sum, im - mo - lá - tum

Ténors

p

Vé - re pás - sum, im - mo -

Barytons

p

Vé - re pás - sum, im -

Basses

p

Vé - re pás - sum, im - mo - lá -

f

in crú - ce pro hó - mi - ne:

lá - tum in crú - ce pro hó - mi - ne:

mo - lá - tum in crú - ce pro hó - mi - ne:

dim. *pp*

tum in crú - ce pro hó - mi - ne:

Chœur grégorien

Vé - re pás - sum, im - mo - lá - tum in crú - ce pro hó - mi - ne:

Org.

Fonds de 8 p.

period of “*décadence*” (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, seemingly) that saw chant temporarily transformed into rigid *cantus firmi* and encumbered with scholastic counterpoint.¹⁰⁹ This complicates the neat picture in the *Cours de composition* of a great Medieval cycle stretching from plainchant to Palestrina: the spirit of plainchant seems to be lost at the height of the Christian Middle Ages and then recovered during the pagan Renaissance, only to be suddenly lost again. D’Indy indeed reverts to this picture a few paragraphs later, when by a sleight of hand the “decadent”, inexpressive chant-based polyphony is relocated to the seventeenth century.¹¹⁰

In 1935, by contrast, Potiron considered that the notated metre of Renaissance polyphony did indeed entail a regular pulse: “the rhythmic liberty of Gregorian chant has therefore disappeared.”¹¹¹ He moreover cited cases of four-bar phrasing in Renaissance polyphony, something not acknowledged by the likes of d’Indy. Did the difference reflect advances in research, or did Potiron simply prefer to emphasise different aspects of Renaissance polyphony that had been known all along?

Achieving “Rythme libre” in Polyphony: One Problem, Many Solutions

The question of the rhythm of Renaissance polyphony was more than just an academic debate: since, in reality, this rhythm differs quite considerably from that of “restored” plainchant (in whatever performance style), the more church composers felt obliged to write Gregorian or pseudo-Gregorian lines, the more they had to sacrifice neo-Palestrinian counterpoint. It was not *per se* the growing sense of obligation to incorporate Gregorian melodies that caused conflict: free adaptation was traditional. The real problem was the growing aspiration to capture a particular ideal of melody evoked by such words as *mélopée*, *monodie*, *vocalise*, or *arabesque*: a fluidly undulating melody, not merely varied in rhythm but irreducible to proportional notation.¹¹² If the Palestrina ideal depended on the notion of an intrinsically choral style, this monodic ideal related to a new conception of the essence of melody—an ideal of melody sufficient unto itself, conceived prior to awareness of harmony/counterpoint, like plainchant, folksong, or ancient music but unlike the periodic, homophonic melodies of Mozart or Massenet. This preoccupation can be considered a form of primitivism, a desire to recover the primordial core of musical expression, supposedly threatened by excessive development in the more superficial domains of harmony and instrumentation, and reflects a nascent cultural relativism that sought to appreciate the difference of exotic music from modern Western norms. It was this same ideal of absolute melody, inimical to modern notation and harmony, that underpinned opposition to plainchant accompaniment. Once again, then, plainchant restoration (which emphasised plainchant’s distance from modern music) and compositional historicism (which sought to actualise chant as a creative resource) worked at cross purposes.

¹⁰⁹ D’Indy, “Le motet et le cantique grégoriens”, 164–65.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 169.

¹¹¹ “La liberté rythmique du chant grégorien est donc disparue.” Potiron, “Des rapports” (March–April 1935), 72.

¹¹² For a rich cultural background to the notion of arabesque (often used to describe plainchant and old polyphony) see Gurminder Kaur Bhogal, *Details of Consequence: Ornament, Music, and Art in Paris* (OUP, 2013), esp. 168–74.

This monodic ideal, long a feature of folksong- and plainchant-glorification literature, increasingly tempted composers.¹¹³ The first half of the twentieth century indeed witnessed something of a revival of monophony.¹¹⁴ “I dream of a melody, a beautiful melody in unison, a melody without accompaniment or barlines, whose rhythm will be determined by that of the text”, wrote André Caplet to Yvonne Gouverné shortly after his last visit to Solesmes, and shortly before his death.¹¹⁵ In church music short monophonic passages become extremely common, almost invariably taken as opportunities to unfurl a Gregorian or pseudo-Gregorian *mélopée*.¹¹⁶ An especially popular option was to alternate monophonic “call” with polyphonic response, much as in the *alternatim* practice (see Fig. 2.3 for a few examples). Félix Raugel, reviewing various liturgical choral publications of the Schola cantorum, found such passages in masses by Gastoué and Perruchot to be an “intéressant” circumvention of “a problem that continues to be most delicate to resolve, due to the opposing tendencies of the two styles.”¹¹⁷ Yet completely monophonic works remained rare in ecclesiastical music, aside from *cantiques* and the new chant melodies composed by Dom Pothier to account for the modern evolution of the liturgical calendar; I only know of a very few examples by minor *scholiste* composers.¹¹⁸ The Gregorian mythos stood in the way: what use writing liturgical monodies if an abundant supply of perfect ones already existed? There was also a sense that pure melody was a lost art, that modern musicians and listeners were too engrained with harmonic thinking and hearing to get back to a primordial monodic innocence. In 1920 Fernand de La Tombelle confessed to Dom Kreps that

¹¹³ Notably, d’Indy and Sérieyx, *Cours*, book 1, 220–21 prescribes “Composition de *monodies*” as an exercise: “Pour que ce travail, sur lequel le maître devra beaucoup insister, soit fait avec fruit, il sera nécessaire que l’élève dégage son esprit de toute préoccupation harmonique. La monodie devra puiser sa force dans le principe *mélodique*, *uniquement*.”

¹¹⁴ Secular examples include works by Debussy (*Syrinx*, 1913), Stravinsky (the first of the *Trois Pièces pour clarinette seule*, 1919), Migot (*Trois Monodies pour trois poèmes de Tristan Klingsor*, 1929), Huré (*Trois Chansons monodiques sur des vers d’André Spire*, 1930), Kœchlin (numerous), Langlais (*Ligne*, 1937), Jehan Alain (*Suite monodique*, 1935; monodies for flute and piano/organ, 1938), and Daniel-Lesur (Monodie from *Suite médiévale*, 1945, though not absolutely monophonic). Kœchlin mentions further examples by Roussel, Ibert, and Markevitch which I have not managed to identify; see Charles Kœchlin, “De quelques horizons nouveaux”, *RM* (Jan. 1936), 22.

¹¹⁵ “Je rêve d’un chant, d’un beau chant à l’unisson, d’un chant sans accompagnement ni barre de mesure, dont le rythme serait déterminé par celui du texte.” Quoted in Nigel Simeone, “Church and Organ Music”, in *French Music since Berlioz*, ed. Richard Langham Smith and Caroline Potter (Routledge, 2016), 179.

¹¹⁶ For examples see Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 127–29. Other notable cases would include many passages of Albert Alain’s *Messe en l’honneur de Saint Louis* (1926 or 1933) and Tournemire’s *L’Orgue mystique*.

¹¹⁷ “problème qui ne laisse pas d’être très délicat à résoudre, en raison des tendances contraires des deux styles.” Félix Raugel, “Nouvelles publications du Bureau d’édition” [review of, among others, Gastoué, *Credo* and Perruchot, *Messe des anges*, *TSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1910), 40.

¹¹⁸ See Léon de Saint-Réquier, *Motets monodiques pour les saluts* (Schola cantorum, 1913), cited in Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 129. Saint-Réquier added an optional accompaniment with the note: “C’est à regret que nous avons cru devoir ajouter des accompagnements à ces simples mélodies comme soutien des voix ; pensées en dehors de toute harmonie, comme le furent au moyen-âge les véritables monodies grégoriennes, l’adjonction d’un accompagnement quel qu’il soit les alourdit et paralyse, partiellement au moins, leur élan rythmique. Le résultat le plus artistique sera obtenu par un chœur *chantant piano et sans accompagnement*.” Neo-Gregorian monodies by Jean de Valois and an unnamed composer are reviewed in A. Pidoux [André Pidoux de la Maduère?], “Deux motets grégoriens modernes, sur des paroles de Saint Pierre d’Alcantara”, *TSG* (Dec. 1907), 265–66. Kœchlin’s *Chœurs religieux de style a cappella*, of dubious liturgicity (see below), include monophonic movements; see also François Brun, *Chœurs monodiques pour l’Annonce faite à Marie de Paul Claudel* (Librairie de l’art chrétien, [1914]). The Agnus Dei of Adolphe Samuel’s mass setting is mostly monophonic, but this is a case of lightly adapted plainchant. In Germany, Hermann Erpf published a monophonic *Messe* in 1927.

Fig. 2.3a: François Brun, *Tantum ergo*, bars 1–5 (doubling organ part omitted)

(sans presser)

Tan-tum er - go Sa - cra - mén - tum Ve - ne - re - mur cér - nu - i:
Et an - tí - quum do - cu - mén - tum Nó - vo cé - dat rí - tu - i:
Prae - stet fí - des sup - ple - mén - tum Sén - su - um de - fé - ctu - i.

Modéré

S. *mf* Ge - ni - tó - ri, Ge - ni - tó - que
A. *mf* Ge - ni - tó - ri, Ge - ni - tó - que
T. *mf* Ge - ni - tó - ri, Ge - ni - tó - que
B. *mf* Ge - ni - tó - ri, Ge - ni - tó - que

Fig. 2.3b: Joseph Samson, *Messe pour le temps pascal*, Kyrie, bars 1–14

Soprano Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Alto Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Ténor Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Basse Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Les hommes seuls

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

6 Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son

1^{er} Christe : Les enfants seuls
3^e Christe : Tous à l'unisson

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son

12 2^e Christe

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son

the ideal of beauty is a musical phrase that contains its total expression all on its own, without harmony, without accompaniment, without polyphonic padding, without anything. But that contains all this in itself, in its essence! I dream of a mass in unison! but of a kind anyone could enjoy. I won't be the one to write it! And I don't think the musician is born who could solve such a problem.¹¹⁹

Even in 1945 Potiron could dismiss the possibility: “No one dreams of writing monophonically: after Gregorian chant, the enterprise is too difficult to carry off.”¹²⁰

Faced with this taboo, liturgical composers were left to capture the rhythmic imprecision of the *mélopée* as best they could in polyphony, whether chant accompaniment, freestanding chant-based works, or works without genuine chant content at all. The idea of simply building polyphony out of Gregorian lines without modern rhythmic or metrical notation at all did occur to at least one composer, the Schola-trained choirmaster Georges Loth, in a *Tantum ergo* published in 1909 that “frankly disconcerted” Amédée Gastoué with its “absolutely new but highly interesting form, which for this reason we recommend for study by composers”.¹²¹ But such experiments were liable to run into the practical problem that had brought about the rigidification of chant melody in the first place, in the later Middle Ages. By 1945 Potiron, for one, had given up on it: “The absolute liberty of Gregorian rhythm can only work in monophony; the same liberty applied to polyphony leads to nearly insurmountable difficulties in performance”.¹²² Nevertheless, composers experimented with a range of textures in this quest. Over short spans of music, a biphonic texture allowed the *mélopée* to float freely over a drone or static harmony. This approach was perhaps first proposed by Widor in the well-known preface to his *Symphonie romane*, which takes its motto theme (Fig. 2.4) from the Gregorian antiphon *Hæc dies*—in the composer’s words, an “elegant arabesque ornamenting a text of a few words, with about ten notes per syllable; an intangible vocalise like a bird’s song, a sort of fermata designed for a virtuoso free from constraint.”¹²³ Widor apparently saw no way to do justice to such arabesques in true polyphony: “The rhythmic independence of Gregorian chant fits poorly with the rigidity of our metronomic metre. Is there anything more delicate than to transcribe in modern signs the vocalises of a *Graduel* or an *Alleluia*?”¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ “Et dites-vous bien que l’idéal du beau, c’est une phrase musicale, qui, à elle seule, contient son expression totale, sans harmonie, sans accompagnement, sans enroulement polyphonique, sans rien. Mais qui, en elle, dans son essence, contient tout cela ! Je ‘rêve’ moi d’une messe à l’unisson ! mais telle que n’importe qui la goûterait. Mais ce n’est pas moi qui la ferai ! Et je crois que le musicien n’est pas encore né qui serait capable de réaliser un pareil problème.” Fernand de La Tombelle, letter to Joseph Kreps, Aug. 1920, quoted in Joseph Kreps, “In memoriam F. de La Tombelle”, *MSB* (15 Dec. 1928), 200.

¹²⁰ “Personne ne songe guère à écrire monodiquement : c’est une entreprise trop difficile à réaliser après le chant grégorien.” Potiron, *La musique d’église*, 79. Cf. “Le plain-chant, œuvre d’art et d’art populaire”, *RSC* (March 1914), 38: “qui dit monodie, dit mélodie se suffisant par elle-même et n’ayant besoin, pour être complète, du secours d’aucun autre élément de beauté. Je le sais bien, c’est pour nous une langue morte qui nous échappe par certains côtés et que nous ne parlons guère qu’en imitations plus ou moins habiles.”

¹²¹ “franchement déconcerté par sa forme absolument nouvelle mais intéressante à un haut degré, et qu’à ce titre nous recommandons à l’étude des compositeurs”. Amédée Gastoué, “Bibliographie”, *TSG* (Oct. 1909), 240.

¹²² “La liberté absolue du rythme grégorien ne pourrait convenir qu’à une monodie ; la même liberté appliquée à la polyphonie aboutit à des difficultés d’exécution presque insurmontables.” Potiron, *La musique d’église*, 80–81.

¹²³ “élégante arabesque ornant un texte de quelques mots — environ dix notes par syllabe — vocalise insaisissable comme un chant d’oiseau, sorte de point-d’orgue [*sic*] conçu pour un virtuose libre de contrainte.” Charles-Marie Widor, *The Symphonies for Organ: Symphonie romane*, ed. John R. Near (A-R Editions, 1997 [1900]), xxiii.

¹²⁴ “L’indépendance rythmique des chants grégoriens s’accommode mal de l’absolutisme de notre mesure métronomique. Est-il rien de plus délicat que de transcrire en signes modernes les vocalises d’un *Graduel* et d’un *Alleluia* ?” Ibid.

SYMPHONIE ROMANE

I

G.P.R. fonds et mixtures 2,4,8.—Ped. fonds 4,8,16.

Ch. M. Widor. Op. 73.

Moderato. (♩ = 76)

R.

f

Quasi recitativo, espressivo,
G.P.R.

ff

a piacere.

Text

Poco a poco meno vivo.

Consequently, “when this theme is taken up in the symphonic web and becomes an integral part of the polyphony, it must be executed in strict time without any sort of deviation, with calm and grandeur. Then it is no longer free: it becomes the property of the composer who has chosen it.”¹²⁵

Widor’s “fermata” option came into its own only after the World War. Amédée Gastoué, proposing in his 1921 Strasbourg address various textural innovations for church composers to explore, recommended a procedure “that consists in leaving the expressive melody . . . to unfurl on top of a harmonic foundation simply vocalised by the other voices”.¹²⁶ André Caplet had deployed just such a texture, with a wordless pentatonic melody floating over a wordless drone, for the beginning of his 1919 mass setting, premiered only in 1923 (Fig. 2.5). The Gloria of Joseph Samson’s *Messe “Orbis factor”* (1926) opens rather impressionistically with quasi-pentatonic cantillation over an added-sixth chord sustained in the choir, *bouches fermées* (Fig. 2.6). Admittedly, some such drone effects in interwar church music seem to aim more for rustic colouration than rhythmic liberation of a *mélopée*. In Gastoué’s own *Messe en l’honneur de Sainte Jeanne d’Arc*, open-fifth droning underpins a square, folksy modal tune, later treated in academic neo-Renaissance imitation (Fig. 2.7). Poulenc strove for rude simplicity in the opening invocation of his 1937 mass, which unfurls over a kind of drone in octaves, though not a wordless one (Fig. 2.8).¹²⁷

The same approach in slightly more polyphonic form consisted of long note values in the accompanying voices, preserving considerable freedom for the melody (see Fig. 2.9 for an example from a motet by Jean Huré). Such a texture represents in effect a return to a kind of homophony, with one active voice differentiated from a slow-moving chordal backdrop; the ensemble problem is solved at the expense of polyphonic independence. Chant melody floating at liberty over a pentatonic cluster or other static harmony is one of Tournemire’s favourite textures in *L’Orgue mystique* (see Fig. 2.10 for a typical example).¹²⁸ In plainchant accompaniment, whose ethos of total deference to the melody ran counter to the general linearism of interwar reformism, the number of chant notes per chord change was also steadily increasing.¹²⁹ Lining up chords of irregular duration with a rhythmically imprecise melody was one thing for an organist, another for a choir. In this regard, *Le Mystère de l’Emmanuel* (1924), a popular neo-medieval “drame liturgique” by Guy de Lioncourt and Dom Lucien David, furnishes a curious case of chant melodies, taken more or less unmodified from the Vatican Edition, set as four-part *a cappella* choruses (Fig. 2.11). Tellingly, the authors saw fit to provide a simplified organ accompaniment in case the unpredictable chord changes proved too tricky; one can hardly imagine many choirs being up to the challenge in the small towns across France and Belgium where the *Mystère* was performed, especially if the chant was sung Pothier-style in “rythme oratoire” (Lioncourt and David being staunch Pothierites).

¹²⁵ “lorsque ce thème est pris dans le réseau symphonique et devient partie intégrante de la polyphonie, on doit l’exécuter strictement en mesure sans atténuation d’aucune sorte, avec calme et grandeur. Alors il n’est plus libre : il est devenu la propriété du compositeur qui l’a choisi.” Ibid.

¹²⁶ “qui consiste à laisser la mélodie expressive . . . se dérouler sur un fonds harmonique simplement vocalisé par les autres voix.” Gastoué, “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir”, 34.

¹²⁷ See the composer’s remarks quoted in Lucie Kayas, “Les messes de Poulenc, Jolivet et Stravinsky. Essai de comparaison”, in *Du langage au style. Singularités de Francis Poulenc*, ed. Lucie Kayas and Hervé Lacombe (Société française de musicologie, 2016), 263.

¹²⁸ See Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 262–64.

¹²⁹ See id., “« L’anachronisme le plus musical ». L’accompagnement du plain-chant et l’idée de modalité libre en France dans l’entre-deux-guerres”, *Revue de musicologie* 105.2 (2019), 363.

Un peu animé. 88 = ♩

pp lointain

Rall.

Lent. 60 = ♩

f très large

Soprani (Ténors)

Mezzo-soprani (Barytons)

Contralti (Basses)

A Ky - ri - e

Fig. 2.5: André Caplet, *Messe à trois voix*, Kyrie, bars 1–7

Librement (♩ = 52 environ)

mf

1 Ténor

Et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus bo - næ vo - lun - tá - tis

[ouches][loses]

pp

Ténors
Barytons
Basses

Divisez

Fig. 2.6: Joseph Samson, *Messe "Orbis factor"*, Gloria, bars 1–6

Allegretto

mf espress.

Soprani

Et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus bo -

pp

Mezzi

ô - - - - -

pp

Contralti

ô - - - - - Et in ter - ra

næ vo - lun - tá - tis.

pax ho - mi - ni - bus bo - næ vo - lun - tá - tis.

Fig. 2.7: Amédée Gastoué, *Messe en l'honneur de Sainte Jeanne d'Arc*, Gloria, bars 1–12

Animé et très rythmé ♩ = 84
(Commencer en dessous du mouvement)

Ky - - ri - e - - e - le - i - son -

Sopranos
f Ky - - ri - e - - e - le - i - son -
mf Ky - - ri - e - -

Basses
 Ky - - ri - e - - e - le - i - son -
 Ky - - ri - e - -

Fig. 2.8: Francis Poulenc, *Messe en Sol majeur*, Kyrie, bars 1–2

Chant liturgique

Voix moyenne (solo ou chœur)
 O Sa - lu - ta - ris - hos - ti - a Quæ - cæ - li pan - dis - os - ti - um

Soprani (ou ténors)
pp a - *pp* a -

Alti (ou basses)
pp a - *pp* a -

[Organ]
p *pp* *p*

rit.

Fig. 2.9: Jean Huré, *O salutaris*, bars 1–6

Fig. 2.10

2

Cycle de Noël

N° 2

L'Orgue Mystique

51 Offices de l'année liturgique inspirés du chant grégorien et librement paraphrasés

Au R. P. Dom GAJARD
Maître de chœur de Solesmes

Charles TOURNEMIRE
Professeur au Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris
Organiste de la Basilique St^e Clotilde

II

Immaculata Conceptio B. Mariæ Virginis

(L'Immaculée Conception)

Op. 55

①

environ ♩ = 84 sans hâte

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II. Flûte douce 8

Péd: Bourdon 8

3

6

poco allargando

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16

a Tempo

16

a Tempo

14

rit.

a Tempo (senza rigore)

14

rit.

a Tempo (senza rigore)

pp

III

17

17

20

a piacere

rall.

20

a piacere

rall.



Fig. 2.11: Guy de Lioncourt and Lucien David, *Le Mystère de l'Emmanuel*, 6. Chœur

(Offertoire du XX^e Dimanche après la Pentecôte.)

(en dehors)

Sopрани
et Altі

Ténors
(bouche fermée)

Barytons
(bouche fermée)

Basses
(bouche fermée)

Su - per _____ flú - mi - na _____

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano and Alto, Tenors, Baritone, and Basses. The Soprano and Alto part is marked 'en dehors' and has the lyrics 'Su - per _____ flú - mi - na _____'. The other parts are marked 'bouche fermée' (closed mouth). The score is written on four staves, each with a treble or bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano and Alto staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Tenors, Baritone, and Basses staves have a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano and Alto part has a melodic line with a long note on 'Su' and a long note on 'flú'. The Tenors, Baritone, and Basses parts have a more rhythmic line with notes on 'Su', 'per', 'flú', 'mi', and 'na'. The Soprano and Alto part has a long note on 'Su' and a long note on 'flú'. The Tenors, Baritone, and Basses parts have a more rhythmic line with notes on 'Su', 'per', 'flú', 'mi', and 'na'. The Soprano and Alto part has a long note on 'Su' and a long note on 'flú'. The Tenors, Baritone, and Basses parts have a more rhythmic line with notes on 'Su', 'per', 'flú', 'mi', and 'na'.

Ba-by - - - - - ló - nis il - lic sé - di - mus

et flé - vi - mus

dum re - cor - da - ré - - mur tu - - - i

rall. Si - on *rall.* *morendo*

suivez

Drones and long-sustained chords faced another hurdle in vocal liturgical composition: the cardinal reformist demand for active text expression in each voice and a truly “choral” texture. In the examples from Caplet, Gastoué, and Samson (and Lioncourt, liturgical only in an expansive sense), the drone effects rely on wordless singing with vowel sounds or *bouches fermées*, a technique already proposed by Gastoué, and practised by Fernand de La Tombelle, in chant accompaniment before the war.¹³⁰ Though not an absolute novelty in freestanding liturgical composition, the effect had formerly been confined to the margins of reformism, occurring in works by primarily secular composers, or of a somewhat blurred liturgicity (such as an orchestral “grand motet” written by Théodore Dubois for festivities in a Mexican cathedral, premiered at the Paris Conservatoire, and duly condemned in the reformist press).¹³¹ Jean Cras used it in the Benedictus of his *Messe à quatre voix* (1907–08) as atmospheric cushioning for a lyrical, non-Gregorian soprano melody, contrary to the reformist ban on soloists, as did Roger-Ducasse (in the guise of continually repeated alleluias) in the first of his *Trois Motets* (1911). The former was, as noted above, written primarily as an exercise (and unperformed until recently), while the latter are clearly concert works, premiered by the Société musicale indépendante. Jean Huré used wordless singing as ostinati of a somewhat Debussyan flavour in his unpublished 1916 *Missa ad Beatæ Reginis Mariæ gloriam*, probably destined for services in the Cathedral of Angers where Huré was serving as organist during the war. The technique’s acceptance by Gastoué and Samson, liturgical specialists devoted to TLS, therefore marks a significant step (it would continue to fall afoul of church musicians less friendly to modernism: *bouches fermées* are expressly forbidden in the regulations for the composition contest of the 1937 Paris congress, organised under Delépine’s aegis, and also in Potiron’s 1945 treatise).¹³²

The opposite extreme from differentiating the rhythms of melody and accompaniment was to unify them, relying on homorhythm in the fashion of fauxbourdon or primitive organum. A good example of both extremes in alternation is Jules Van Nuffel’s *Missa in honorem Sancti Josephi* (published 1930 but reportedly written c. 1924).¹³³ An outlier in the composer’s oeuvre, it was designed for nunneries rather than a cathedral choir, which partly explains its aesthetic of *dépourillé* austerity. Much of the time, the voices move in rhythmic unison except when one of them holds a drone-like long note. The wordy Gloria and Credo movements are quickly dispatched with syllabic recitation, chant-like in its reliance on a basic crotchet note value with no metre and little melodic motion (see Fig. 2.12). Homorhythm went hand in hand with homage to early polyphony, as the chant-like melodies move alternately in parallel fourths or fifths and in contrary motion.

None of these options could be sustained for long without monotony; a far more popular solution was a texture that aspired not to the rhythmic imprecision of plainchant in “rythme libre”,

¹³⁰ See Amédée Gastoué, *Traité d’harmonisation du chant grégorien, sur un plan nouveau* (Lyon: Janin, 1910), 68 and Fernand de La Tombelle, *Cantilènes grégoriennes du XII^e au XV^e siècle, tirées des manuscrits de l’abbaye de Cadouin (Dordogne)* (Schola cantorum, [1899]). It is unclear whether the latter—published in the series “Le chant populaire à l’église et dans les confréries et patronages”—were designed for liturgical or para-liturgical use, or both. La Tombelle favoured the same technique in *a cappella* folksong arrangements; see Jean-Christophe Branger, “Fernand de La Tombelle et la musique populaire du Périgord”, in *Étudier, enseigner et composer à la Schola Cantorum*, 484–85, 498.

¹³¹ See Pierre Sosson, “Un motet écrit pour le Mexique” [review of Dubois, *Non fecit taliter*], *MSB* (Feb.–March 1895), 59. Sosson considered the *bouches fermées* technique a contravention of “De musica sacra”.

¹³² See “Intéressante compétition musicale”, *RSC* (Oct. 1936), 94 and Potiron, *La musique d’église*, 46.

¹³³ See Eugene Van Nuffel, *Mgr Jules Van Nuffel 1883-1953. Herinneringen, getuigenissen en documenten* (Kortrijk: Groeninghe Drukkerij, 1967), 171 and Georges Systermans, “Chronique religieuse. La nouvelle messe du chanoine Van Nuffel”, *La Libre Belgique* (1 July 1930).

Credo.

Poco con moto.

mf
Pa-trem o-mni-po-tén-tem, —

mf
fa-cto-rem coe-li et ter-rae, —

vi-si-bí-li-um ó-mni-um, et in vi-si-bí-li-um. —

et in vi-si-bí-li-um. —

p *mf*
Fí-li-um De-i u-ni-gé-ni-tum. —

mf *p*
Et in u-num Dó-mi-num Je-sum Chri-stum. —

rf
Et ex Pa-tre na-tum an-te ó-mni-a sáe-cu-la. —

rf
Et ex Pa-tre na-tum an-te ó-mni-a sáe-cu-la. —

but to the metrical weakness of Renaissance polyphony in exaggerated form, via unpredictable accentuation and heterogeneous note values, notated either with ties/syncopations or changing time signatures, as well as rhythmic differentiation of the parts. Such music can be seen as an attempt to realise the liturgical ideal inaptly projected onto Renaissance polyphony, that of a superposition of chant lines (what Joseph Samson dubbed “polypsalmodie”).¹³⁴ The highest praise that could be bestowed on liturgical polyphony was that “[t]he counterpoint flows quite naturally from the plainchant, or is integrated into it, if you prefer”, as the organist Charles Collin wrote of Samson’s *Messe “Orbis factor”*.¹³⁵ The archetype of this texture was perhaps the Kyrie and Agnus Dei of Paul Berthier’s *Messe pour les dimanches violets* (1920), probably written for the Manécanterie des Petits chanteurs à la croix de bois. Berthier would eke out a career as a provincial organist and town archivist, but his two postwar masses caught the fancy of the Catholic intellectual elite (if not of congregations) to a degree exceeded only by Caplet’s setting.¹³⁶ The acclaim bridged the residual *scholiste*/non-*scholiste* divide: Samson called them the best written in fifty years,¹³⁷ Trotrot-Dériot the most successful plainchant paraphrases;¹³⁸ Besse called the second “the only mass to respond intelligently to the demands of the *motu proprio*”;¹³⁹ the composer was proclaimed “the Maurice Denis of music”¹⁴⁰ and the most adroit practitioner of modality in his time along with Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel.¹⁴¹ The characteristic texture consists of overwhelmingly conjunct lines constructed from modified plainchant, interweaving in a close harmony with free clashes of the second and fourth, and saturated with imitation of a fleeting, unsystematic kind arising from continual echoes of small figures and facilitated by the relaxed dissonance handling (see Fig. 2.13).

Caplet’s mass, whose textural inventiveness has been justly celebrated,¹⁴² offers a final kaleidoscopic tour of almost all the options available in interwar church music: quasi-Gregorian monophony, biphony, note-against-note diaphony, fauxbourdon-like parallelism, call-and-

¹³⁴ Samson, *Palestrina*, 177.

¹³⁵ “Le contre-point s’entend tout naturellement du plain-chant, ou s’y intègre, si vous le préférez”. Charles Collin, “La Messe ‘Orbis factor’ de J. Samson”, *La Vie catholique* (3 Sept. 1927).

¹³⁶ Significantly, the work was best known through a partial concert performance by Clément Besse’s choir at the Institut catholique (16 March 1922); see Aurélie Decourt, “Maurice Emmanuel maître de chapelle à Sainte-Clotilde (1904-1907)”, *L’Orgue* 278–79 (2007), 84. A review of a liturgical performance suggests that it went over less well in church: “On lui souhaiterait, à certains moments, moins d’enchevêtrements harmoniques, une naïveté plus continue.” Marguerite Henry-Rosier, “Dimanche violet. La messe de M. Paul Berthier à Saint-Eustache”, *La Vie catholique* (4 April 1925).

¹³⁷ Joseph Samson, “Influence de Bach sur l’art choral liturgique contemporain en France” [lecture, c. 1950], F-Dm, MS 3065/2, n.p. The abbé Aigrain also included it among the five twentieth-century masses he considered successful (along with works by Caplet, Ropartz, Gastoué, and Erb); see René Aigrain, *La musique religieuse* (Bloud & Gay, 1929), 154.

¹³⁸ “les meilleures paraphrases du plain-chant”. Albert Trotrot-Dériot, “Bibliographie”, *La Petite Maîtrise* (May 1928), 35.

¹³⁹ “la seule messe qui répond avec intelligence aux exigences du *Motu proprio*”. Besse, “Nos compositeurs de cantiques”, 310.

¹⁴⁰ François Brun, “La musique”, *La Revue des jeunes* (10 Sept. 1923), 588.

¹⁴¹ Guy de Lioncourt, “Préface”, in Paul Berthier, *Réflexions sur l’art et la vie de Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)* (Picard, 1957), 5.

¹⁴² See Nigel Simeone, “La Messe à trois voix d’André Caplet”, trans. Béatrice Cadrin, in *André Caplet, compositeur et chef d’orchestre*, ed. Denis Herlin and Cécile Quesney (Société française de musicologie, 2020), 385–98. Already Albert Bertelin (*Traité de composition musicale*, vol. 4 (Schola cantorum, 1934), 244) considered the work “surtout intéressante à étudier au point de vue des dispositions vocales très neuves”.

Fig. 2.13: Paul Berthier, *Messe pour les dimanches violets*, Kyrie, bars 1–15

Très modéré. ♩ = 63 *Tous* ***p***

Soprani Ky - ri - e e - - le - i - son

Alti ***p*** Ky - ri - e e - - - le - i -

Très modéré. ♩ = 63 ***p***

Orgue

plus f Ky - ri - e Ky - ri - e e - - le - i - son

plus f son Ky - ri - e Ky - ri - e e - - - le - i -

plus f

assez f Ky - ri - e e - - - - le - i - son

assez f son Ky - ri - e Ky - ri - e e - - - le - i - son

assez f

Rall. ***pp***

Rall. ***pp***

response imitation, many passages of relatively melody-driven, homorhythmic polyphony or hymn-like weak polyphony (as in the closing *O Salutaris*), and only a single brief passage of true imitative polymelody (near the end of the *Kyrie*). This ending aside, the *Kyrie*, nearly devoid of progressions of triadic harmony and relying instead on one- and two-voice textures, is especially notable for its sparsity. Such variety testifies not merely to Caplet's resourcefulness, but also to the profound concern in church music at that moment with finding new textures outside of the neo-Palestrinian options, somewhat discredited by 1919 as hackneyed and morose.

Pierluigi versus Josquin

An Expanding Canon of Antique Sacred Music

As the Caplet and Van Nuffel examples suggest, the Palestrina ideal faced competition not only from plainchant but also from other forms of medieval music. During the interwar period, the longstanding duopoly in compositional ideals for sacred music assimilated a broader range of early sacred repertoire, in an expansion that parallels the contemporaneous shift in Catholic theology from narrow Thomism to broader engagement with medieval and late antique sources. This temporal expansion had at least some geographic equivalent, as francophone church musicians began to take an interest in the singing of the Christian East; both processes would reach perhaps their furthest limit in the 1949 *Hymne de Sérapion* by the Oratorian priest Émile Martin, a bizarre evocation of what Christian praise might have sounded like in the fourth century. They followed from an expansion in the performed (and now also recorded) repertoire led by exponents such as Henry Expert (whose *Chanterie de la Renaissance* reportedly began to venture further back than the sixteenth century in 1912),¹⁴³ Yves Tinayre, Guillaume de Van, Jacques Chailley with his *Psalette Notre-Dame* (1934), and in Brussels the *Pro musica antiqua* of Charles Van den Borren and Safford Cape (1933) – all stimulated in turn by new editions (beginning with Charles Bordes and Henry Expert in the 1890s) and a cohort of researchers including Gastoué, Van den Borren, Pierre Aubry, André Pirro, Yvonne Rokseth, Armand Machabey, Théodore Gérold, and Gustave Cohen, to name only those writing in French.¹⁴⁴ In general, by comparison to nineteenth-century accounts, historiography of medieval music from the 1930s and even 1920s displays sharp detail, a self-conscious commitment to sceptical objectivity, and little reference to grand evolutionary laws, epochal revolutions, *balbutiements* and *tâtonnements*, or deplorable barbarism. As with the historiography of tonality and metre, values changed more than knowledge did: medieval music was being reappraised more than discovered.

¹⁴³ See Jean Marnold, "Revue de la quinzaine. Musique", *Mercure de France* (16 Nov. 1912), 861.

¹⁴⁴ For contemporary testimony see Charles Van den Borren, "Pour la musique du Moyen Âge", *Musique* (15 Jan. 1928), 149–55; Romain Rolland, "Introduction", in Henry Prunières, *Nouvelle histoire de la musique*, vol. 1 (Reider, 1934), 9–10; Gastoué, "La musique religieuse polyphonique", 23–25; Marcel Beaufils, "Musiques « anciennes »", *La Vie intellectuelle* (25 Feb. 1936), 167–71. Cf. Isabelle Ragnard, "La musique antérieure au XVI^e siècle dans la production discographique française (ca 1910-1950) : L'Anthologie sonore, Lumen et L'Oiseau-lyre", in *Musique, disque et radio en pays francophones, 1880-1950*, ed. Michel Duchesneau and Federico Lazzaro (Vrin, 2023), 219–36 and (though oriented towards a later period and secular repertoire) Alice Taccaille, "Un Moyen Âge inouï. De la partition au concert en France, 1933-1950", in *La musique ancienne entre historiens et musiciens*, ed. Xavier Bisaro and Rémy Campos (Droz/Haute École de musique de Genève, 2014), 249–307.

The rehabilitation of the *Ars antiqua* was slow and still incomplete in the 1930s. Francophone musicians had been widely familiar with parallel organum since Coussemaker's *Histoire de l'harmonie au Moyen Âge* (1852)—and despised it. Bourgault-Ducoudray's history lectures at the Conservatoire offer a typical appraisal: "From the year 1000 to 1400, harmony was yet in its infancy. It had begun with the savage *diaphony*, successions of fifths and fourths whose existence strikes us as monstrous even by the standards of those barbarous times."¹⁴⁵ The Schola was marginally friendlier: diaphony is "servile et barbare" in the d'Indy-Sérieux *Cours de composition*, which however goes on to note that the effect might not be completely rebarbative with only a few voices taking the upper fifth.¹⁴⁶ Such negative views remain common in subsequent decades, but more neutral and even positive ones begin to appear alongside them. Jean Huré was a notable defender, declaring in 1909 that "[w]hat was beautiful to the Middle Ages still is for us; it is merely a question of knowing how to employ it skilfully—even *organum* can be delicious to our ears."¹⁴⁷ In a review of *L'Orgue mystique*, Tournemire's student Raymond Petit agreed on "the need to draw on the past to renew our current language", but, remarkably, saw less potential in plainchant than in "this whole admirable school of the dawn of our polyphony, from Pérotin to Dufay".¹⁴⁸ One would like to know more about why this musician, a non-Catholic by his own admission, took such interest in early polyphony. Perhaps the most striking revaluation occurs in a fulsome review of Caplet's mass by the choir director Yvonne Gouverné, for whom the *Ars antiqua* (everyone agreed that Caplet was channelling the *Ars antiqua*) represented not barbarism but a "marvellous era", even "the most beautiful period of the primitive liturgical musical language". In extolling its "exquisite nudity" and "ornamental and supple grace", the "audacious freshness of the parallel fifths" and the "free arabesques of a sensitive, learned, naked art", Gouverné seems to have been self-consciously rebuffing the customary image of early polyphony as rude or stiffly hieratic.¹⁴⁹ Gouverné transfers that negative image to the academic Palestrina style, congratulating Caplet for having "escap[ed] the rigidity of a scholastic counterpoint".¹⁵⁰ By 1935, Amédée Gastoué could look back on the view of organum and discant as no more than "a few barbarous experiments" as a bygone thing,¹⁵¹ and in 1957 Joseph Samson would even propose the thirteenth century—the golden century of Catholic philosophy and architecture—as an alternative classical age for Catholic

¹⁴⁵ "De l'an 1000 à 1400, l'harmonie balbutie. Elle avait commencé par la *diaphonie* sauvage, par des successions de quintes et de quarts dont l'existence nous paraît monstrueuse, même en nous plaçant au point de vue de ces temps barbares." Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, "Cours d'histoire générale de la musique. Séance d'ouverture, II", *Le Ménestrel* (8 Dec. 1878), 10.

¹⁴⁶ D'Indy and Sérieux, *Cours*, book 1, 92.

¹⁴⁷ "Ce qui était beau pour le moyen-âge, l'est encore pour nous : il s'agit seulement de le savoir employer avec tact — l'*Organum* même peut être savoureux à nos oreilles." Jean Huré, *Dogmes musicaux (1904-1907)* (*Le Monde musical*, 1909), 64. Id., *Défense et illustration*, 2 describes discant as an "art merveilleusement organisé — contrairement à ce que l'on a cru" and "un véritable art contrapuntique, très élégant et très raffiné".

¹⁴⁸ "la nécessité de s'appuyer sur le passé pour renouveler notre langue actuelle"; "toute cette admirable école de l'aube de notre polyphonie, de Pérotin [sic] à Dufay". Raymond Petit, "L'Orgue mystique", *Le Ménestrel* (21 June 1929), 282.

¹⁴⁹ "cette merveilleuse époque du *Déchant*, qui confiait aux voix les libres arabesques d'un art sensible, savant et nu. C'est vraiment dans l'exquise nudité de ses formes que dès les premières mesures du *Kyrie Eleison*, la musique nous offre la grâce ornementale et souple de ses vocalises, cependant que les lois de la plus belle période du langage musical liturgique primitif apporte ici l'audacieuse fraîcheur de ces quintes parallèles". Yves Marc [Yvonne Gouverné], "André Caplet", *Le Monde musical* (Aug. 1924), 273.

¹⁵⁰ "qui échappe à la rigidité d'un contrepoint scholastique". Ibid.

¹⁵¹ "quelques essais barbares". Gastoué, "La musique religieuse polyphonique", 23.

music, though his preoccupation with parallel fourths and fifths suggests he was thinking of *Musica enchiriadis* more than Pérotin.¹⁵²

“Franco-Flemish” polyphony also enjoyed a certain reappraisal, in which nationalism played no small part, and which paralleled that of the French and Flemish “Primitif” painters, also driven by nationalism and inaugurated by large exhibitions in Bruges (1902) and Paris (1904).¹⁵³ Correspondingly, the onset of “the Renaissance” as a musical era (a less and less controversial one) tended to be pushed back to the turn of the fifteenth century, displacing the term “primitif”, once applied to Palestrina or even later composers, to the fourteenth and earlier. The *Anthologie des maîtres religieux primitifs* originally edited by Charles Bordes, whose contents mostly date to the sixteenth century and range as late as the eighteenth, appears in the 1919 revival of the *Tribune de Saint-Gervais* rebaptised *Anthologie des maîtres religieux anciens*. Perhaps the first monograph dedicated specially to Franco-Flemish polyphony, and the first to treat it favourably, appeared in 1905, the work of Félicien de Ménénil, an aristocratic dilettante of Flemish background who taught music history at the École Niedermeyer. Though de Ménénil retained the traditional periodisation that made Monteverdi the glorious dawn of modern music, he accorded Flemish (as he called it) polyphony an important role in delivering music from the gloom of medieval scholasticism and leading it to modern expressivity (no longer especially linked to the discovery of modern tonality), and regarded harmonic-contrapuntal technique as already perfect in Josquin.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, in a 1922 article that offers an otherwise typical narrative of the evolution of counterpoint, Félix Raugel pushed back the moment at which polyphony began to produce “artistic” fruits to the end of the fourteenth century, making Dufay, Binchois, and Ockeghem the first “classiques”, creators of the first polyphonic masterpieces, and Josquin “not a precursor but a model; no great musician, from Palestrina to Claude Debussy, will be superior to him.”¹⁵⁵ Potiron’s 1935 essay likewise shifts the centre of gravity of “classical” polyphony from the “Roman school”, or the Palestrina–Lassus–Victoria triumvirate, to the Franco-Flemish. Indeed, he hardly mentions Palestrina or “Palestrinian” music at all, and de-idealises late sixteenth-century polyphony by recognising a development towards modern expressionism already well underway in the contemporaneous motet; Franco-Flemish polyphony, by contrast, shows a “purity” and “primitive naivety” that “come closest to the Gregorian aesthetic.”¹⁵⁶ Potiron’s collaborator the abbé Delporte, who edited and conducted a great deal of this repertoire, was more forceful at the 1937 Paris congress: it was a “fact accepted today by all musicologists” that with the Franco-Flemish school circa 1500 “the technique of vocal counterpoint reached its apogee. As for the mystical feeling (of capital

¹⁵² Joseph Samson, *Musique et chant sacrés* (Gallimard, 1957), 80–81. Also worth noting is the second of the *Trois Pièces contemplatives* for string quartet (1933) by the young Jacques Chailley, entitled Organum.

¹⁵³ See Laura Morowitz, “Medievalism, Classicism, and Nationalism: The Appropriation of the French Primitifs in Turn-of-the-Century France”, *Studies in the History of Art* 68 (2005), 224–41. On the nineteenth-century unpopularity (at least in performance) of Franco-Flemish polyphony see Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 147.

¹⁵⁴ See Félicien de Ménénil, *L'école contrapuntique flamande au XV^e et au XVI^e siècle* (Demets, 1905), esp. 151 on Josquin; the narrative of evolution from medieval barbarism to the glories of modern homophony occurs throughout *ad nauseam*. The book derives partly from articles in the *Revue du Nord* and *TSG* in the 1890s.

¹⁵⁵ “Josquin n’est pas un précurseur, c’est un modèle ; aucun grand musicien, de Palestrina à Claude Debussy, ne lui sera supérieur”. Félix Raugel, “Les origines de la musique polyphonique”, *La Vie et les Arts liturgiques* (April 1922), 266–71.

¹⁵⁶ “La pureté, j’allais dire la naïveté, primitive, nous la trouvons dans l’école franco-flamande du XV^e siècle et de la première moitié du XVI^e. . . c’est chez eux que nous retrouvons le mieux l’esthétique grégorienne.” Potiron, “Des rapports” (July–Aug. 1935), 9.

technique of vocal counterpoint reached its apogee. As for the mystical feeling (of capital importance) that animates these compositions, not only is it not inferior to that of the Italian and Spanish masters of the late sixteenth century, it most definitely surpasses them.”¹⁵⁷ He even proposed to replace the expression “polyphonie palestrinienne” with “polyphonie josquinienne”.¹⁵⁸ In the ultimate testament to the rehabilitation of Franco-Flemish polyphony, Joseph Samson revived the practice of basing masses on secular tunes—the acme of barbarity or decadence, according to generations of historians and church musicians—in his *Messe “Dulcis domina”* and *Messe “Amor a longe”* (both c. 1938).

The important propaganda of Henry Expert on behalf of French Renaissance and Franco-Flemish repertoire certainly drove some of this shift. In a 1912 lecture-concert, according to Jean Marnold’s approving report, Expert “showed [in Josquin and his school] the true apogee of polyphonic art, complete unto itself in all its modal purity and radiating a sublime splendour, while quite rightly noting how much the Palestrinian period of transition, if not of decadence, pales in comparison.”¹⁵⁹ Marnold himself hitched familiar anti-Palestrinian tropes to the new bandwagon: “[Palestrina’s] art, with its cold and superficial formalism [*plasticité*], hovering between already corrupt modal traditions and an incipient *tonality* still feeling its way, may represent, with its transitional, bastard character, the worst obstacle to an appreciation of the masters of Franco-Belgian polyphony.”¹⁶⁰ For Marnold, avoiding the question of overall progress, Palestrina’s transitional status simply put him in the trough between two peaks, representing neither a belated apotheosis of medieval counterpoint nor a promising herald of modern tonality but rather the worst of both worlds, the decadence of the old plus the infancy of the new. Marnold merely pushed back the boundary of the tolerable by a few steps, making Josquin polyphony’s “first and all of a sudden superb artistic florescence. Further back, everyone, Ockeghem and Obrecht included, is properly speaking only a forerunner” marred by “stiffness and primitive awkwardness”; for Marnold’s contemporaries, “an airing of a work by the ancestral figure Dufay could hardly hold more than academic interest”.¹⁶¹ On this score, Marnold had advanced no further than Fétis. But his thinking had evolved just two years later, when he chided his readers: “It would be a grave error to believe that the art of Josquin (1450–1521) and his school constitute the outer limit

¹⁵⁷ “ce fait admis aujourd’hui par tous les musicologues : au dernier quart du XV^e siècle et au premier quart du XVI^e, avec l’équipe de jeunes maîtres français et flamands issus de l’école de Josquin des Prés, la technique du contrepoint vocal est arrivée à son apogée. Quant au sentiment mystique (point de vue capital) qui anime ces compositions, non seulement il n’est pas inférieur à celui des maîtres italiens et espagnols de la fin du XVI^e, mais il les dépasse très certainement.” Jules Delporte, “L’école musicale française des XV^e-XVI^e siècles”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée, organisé par l’Union des maîtres de chapelle et organistes* (Desclée De Brouwer, [1937]), 133.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Delporte attributes this proposal to Gastoué, *Les primitifs de la musique française*, but I do not find it there.

¹⁵⁹ “y montra l’apogée véritable de l’art polyphonique, complet en soi dans toute sa pureté modale et rayonnant de sa splendeur suprême, en remarquant fort justement combien pâtit, à la comparaison, la période de transition, sinon de décadence palestrinienne.” Marnold, “Revue de la quinzaine. Musique” [1912], 862.

¹⁶⁰ “Son art, d’une plasticité froide et superficielle, flottant entre des traditions modales déjà corrompues et les tâtonnements d’une *tonalité* en genèse, est peut-être, par son caractère de transition bâtarde, le plus funeste obstacle à l’intelligence des maîtres de la polyphonie gallo-belge.” Ibid. In 1926 Marnold affirmed still more vehemently: “L’art de Josquin constitue l’apogée de l’art *modal*. Tout ce qui suit, voire Lassus et Palestrina, n’est plus qu’épigonisme ou décadence, pour disparaître bientôt sous l’assaut de l’évolution harmonique et l’avènement de la *tonalité* naissante.” Id., “Revue de la quinzaine. Musique”, *Mercur de France* (1 Oct. 1926), 221–22.

¹⁶¹ “sa prime et tout à coup superbe floraison artistique. Au[-]delà, ce ne sont plus à proprement parler que précurseurs, y compris Ockeghem et Hobrecht”; “raideur et gaucherie primitive”; “l’audition d’une œuvre de l’ancêtre Dufay ne saurait guère avoir pour nous d’attrait que d’ordre didactique.” Id., “Revue de la quinzaine” [1912], 861.

accessible to our current sensibility”.¹⁶² Recent research (he cites Pierre Aubry and Johannes Wolf) had revealed Josquin as “the superb culmination of a whole era of effervescent and sometimes ingenious experimentation”, over whose representatives, going back to the thirteenth century, Marnold now enthuses.¹⁶³

In addition to early polyphony, the liturgical singing of the various Eastern churches began to impinge on the consciousness of French church musicians during the interwar years. Did the “ouverture à l’Orient” among francophone Catholic intellectuals in the second half of the 1920s,¹⁶⁴ reflected in the design of new churches such as the Saint-Esprit in Paris (1928–35), have a musical equivalent too? I can only sketch an answer by way of a coda to this subsection. Contact with such music certainly increased in relatively cosmopolitan interwar Paris and Brussels, thanks to émigré choirs, recordings, and, belatedly, the “international congress” on church music held in Paris in 1937, which featured a substantial Eastern Rite component.¹⁶⁵ The Dominican-run magazines *La Vie intellectuelle* and *L’Art sacré* ran a number of articles on Russian liturgical singing (and recordings thereof) in the 1930s.¹⁶⁶ The ecumenical abbey of Chevetogne, founded in 1925 near the Franco-Belgian border, reportedly accomplished a “diffusion en France” of “[l]e chant byzantin”, though at what point this contact began to exert an influence on Catholic liturgical composition (apparently considerable by the 1970s) is unclear.¹⁶⁷ A few figures encouraged church composers to look to the East for inspiration, most notably Gastoué who at Strasbourg in 1921 invoked the *ison* of Byzantine and “Oriental” chant (along with Notre-Dame organum, its supposed descendent) as precedent for writing drones; in an article for the Lavignac encyclopaedia he reminded his colleagues “not to neglect the contribution that the music of the Eastern Christians brings us”.¹⁶⁸ As early as 1908, Dom Lucien David had pointed to unspecified “Russian” liturgical singing, which he knew through reports by the missionary priest Jean-Baptiste Rebours and the Russophile writer Melchior de Vogüé as well as his own encounters with Ruthenian Catholics, as a potential guide to the fusing of ancient monodies and modern polyphony.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless,

¹⁶² “Ce serait une lourde erreur de croire que l’art de Josquin (1450-1521) et de son école constituât l’extrême limite accessible à notre sensibilité actuelle dans une exploration de cette espèce.” Id., “Revue de la quinzaine. Musique”, *Mercur de France* (1 March 1914), 189.

¹⁶³ “l’aboutissement superbe de toute une ère d’empirisme effervescent et parfois génial.” Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ See Philippe Chenaux, *Entre Maurras et Maritain. Une génération intellectuelle catholique (1920-1930)* (Cerf, 1999), 163–95.

¹⁶⁵ See Anne Rebours, “Musique d’église et musiciens parisiens au Congrès international de musique sacrée de 1937”, in *Musiques et musiciens à Paris dans les années trente*, ed. Danièle Pistone (Champion, 2000), 197. Introducing an Eastern Rite choir from Zagreb, Gastoué was able to assume that such music was already familiar to his audience; on the other hand, a Byzantine Rite mass held in Saint-Germain-des-Prés still “dérouta” the parishioners. See Amédée Gastoué, “Les auditions à Paris du « Cirilo Metodov Kor » gréco-slave de Zagreb”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 24–25. Gommier-Decourt (“Albert Alain”, 316) mentions Albert Alain hearing Ukrainian choral music during this period.

¹⁶⁶ See the issues of 10 April and 10 July 1934 and 25 Feb. 1935 of *La Vie intellectuelle* and Marina Scriabine, “La liturgie catholique russe à Paris”, *L’Art sacré* (Oct. 1937), 105–06.

¹⁶⁷ Olivier Landron, *Le catholicisme français au rythme du chant et de la musique (XX^e-XXI^e siècles)* (Parole et Silence, 2014), 303–04.

¹⁶⁸ “ne pas négliger l’apport que les musiques des chrétiens orientaux nous procurent”. Gastoué, “Le motet”, 3045. Cf. id., “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir”, 34. On the Byzantine roots of organum see id., “Le visage musical de Byzance”, *RM* (Feb. 1932), 94.

¹⁶⁹ See Lucien David, “Chants du passé et musique de l’avenir”, *TSG* (Oct. 1908), 222.

evidence of any impact of Eastern traditions on native francophone Catholic composers before World War II remains thin, though at least two Russian émigrés in Paris, Alexander Grechaninov and Arthur Lourié, wrote Catholic liturgical music, the former in a cosmopolitan style (taking several prizes at the 1937 congress) but the latter reportedly incorporating Russian Orthodox melodies.¹⁷⁰ At the most, traces of Eastern chant might be found in a few motets by the abbé Brun, who reportedly took an interest in the subject,¹⁷¹ such as his 1934 *O virgo pulcherrima* (Fig. 2.14) whose syllabic declamation and mild white-note dissonance faintly recall Stravinsky's Slavonic motets of the same period.

Chœur
mf

Soprano
mf

O dé-cus vîr - gi-num! O spes fi - dé - li - um! O plé-na grá - ti - a!

Alto
mf

O dé-cus vîr - gi-num! O spes fi - dé - li - um! O plé-na grá - ti - a!

Ténor
mf

O dé - cus vîr - gi-num! O spes fi - dé - li - um! O plé-na grá - ti - a!

Basse
mf

O dé - cus vîr - gi-num! O spes fi - dé - li - um! O plé-na grá - ti - a!

Fig. 2.14: François Brun, *O virgo pulcherrima*, bars 19–24

Compositional Ramifications

Altogether, these new influences contributed to the textural diversification of liturgical polyphony, often at the expense of the traditional “écriture polymélodique”. By far the most obvious development was the proliferation of parallel fourths and fifths, usually interpreted (as seen in Ch. 1) as references to medieval polyphony. The technique became sufficiently ubiquitous in 1920s church music to provoke something of a backlash thereafter. In 1930, a reviewer of Van Nuffel’s *Missa paschalis* had some patience left for parallel root-position triads, a “formula dear to Caplet and his emulators. While not unknown, the *procédé* nevertheless has its charm (until such time as its abuse will force us to ban it once again).”¹⁷² By 1932, Maurice Brillant felt that parallels had become “facile clichés and already a kind of new academicism”, though not incapable of

¹⁷⁰ On Lourié see Douglas Shadle, “Messiaen’s Relationship to Jacques Maritain’s Musical Circle and Neo-Thomism”, in *Messiaen the Theologian*, ed. Andrew Shenton (Ashgate, 2010), 90. Cf. Richard Taruskin, “Turanian Revisited, with Lourié My Guide”, in *Funeral Games in Honor of Arthur Vincent Lourié*, ed. Klára Mórícz and Simon Morrison (OUP, 2014), 105 on chant in Lourié’s non-liturgical works.

¹⁷¹ See Rebours, “Musique d’église et musiciens parisiens”, 203.

¹⁷² “la formule chère à Caplet et à ses émules. Pour ne pas être inconnu le procédé n’en a pas moins son charme (en attendant que son abus le fasse proscrire à nouveau).” Eugène Collard, “Bibliographie”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Sept.–Oct. 1930), 55.

revitalisation under the right conditions.¹⁷³ The Schola cantorum alumnus Albert Trotrot-Dériot was harsher already in a 1928 review of Joseph Samson's *Messe* "O nuit, heureuse nuit": he condemned an imitative entry at the fourth in the Hosanna as "cubiste" and "a procédé, a recipe, a piece of technical mischief"; objected to "the tic of dissonant fourths, seconds, and sevenths flickering and clashing systematically"; and bemoaned the Benedictus in which "must flutter the ritual fifths".¹⁷⁴ Echoing the anti-modernist talking-point that unbridled dissonance leads to grey-on-grey homogeneity, the critic saw in Samson's wilfully "anti-scholastique" fifths a threat to the subtlety and variety of traditional contrapuntal working:

[T]he sonorous effect is pleasant but somewhat mechanical; one soon tires of it, and moreover the author overuses it. I do not believe in the future of this pointillist *procédé*; vocal writing has seen other and far more precious things: plastic harmonies extended and dissolved, free even as they form a chain, diversified, modulated, spiritualised to the perfection of polyphonic art. The treasure that is style requires more than just a brilliant material, decorative, perhaps, but too rough-hewn to interest us for long.¹⁷⁵

The material metaphor returns in a review by the organist Victoire Belgodère of Daniel-Lesur's chant-based *Hymnes* for organ (1935), likened to the techniques used at the time to cheaply mass-produce churches for the sprawling Parisian *banlieue*: "Prolonged series of fourths in two voices or fifths in three voices to present a theme really smack of the *procédé*, like pre-moulded reinforced concrete that dispenses with the carving of stone".¹⁷⁶ She had a point: whole movements of this suite proceed in virtually continuous fourths or fifths. Samson himself evidently came to share the same worry in the 1930s: assessing various recent liturgical compositions in his notes for a never-realised work on "La musique moderne à l'église", he found fault with the "somewhat heavy experiments" and "thick harmony" of the Lemmens Institute composers, jotting down: "Danger in what the Mechlinians are doing: systematising the seconds, fifths, ninths".¹⁷⁷ He may have been reacting to the Belgian school's semicentennial festivities in 1929, where he would have heard Van Nuffel's grandiose *Te Deum* with its incessant play of decorative fourths and fifths.¹⁷⁸ Samson's own masses after "O nuit" no longer use parallelism in conspicuous and systematic fashion.

¹⁷³ See Ch. 1, 58.

¹⁷⁴ "le tic des quarts, secondes et septièmes dissonantes, clignotantes, à frottements systématiques"; "un procédé, une recette, une malice d'écriture"; "doivent flotter les quintes rituelles". Albert Trotrot-Dériot, "À Bourges. La Messe 'O nuit, heureuse nuit' de J. Samson", *La Petite Maîtrise* (Sept. 1928), 50–51. Sadly, I have found no trace of this unpublished score.

¹⁷⁵ "l'effet sonore est agréable mais un peu mécanique ; on s'en lasse vite, d'ailleurs l'auteur en abuse ; nous ne croyons pas à l'avenir de ce procédé pointilliste ; les voix ont vécu d'autre chose de beaucoup plus précieux : d'accords plastiques étendus et fondus, libres tout en formant chaîne, diversifiés, modulés, spiritualisés jusqu'à la perfection de l'art polyphonique ; le trésor du style ne se ramène pas à une matière brillante, décorative soit ! mais trop peu façonnée pour nous intéresser longtemps." Ibid., 49–50.

¹⁷⁶ "Des suites prolongées de quarts à deux voix ou de quintes à trois voix pour présenter un thème sont vraiment du procédé : le ciment armé tout moulé qui dispense de creuser la pierre." Victoire Belgodère, "Bibliographie", *La Petite Maîtrise* (Dec. 1936), 71.

¹⁷⁷ "Les tentatives malinoises un peu lourdes (grosse harmonie quasi cécilienne moderne) / danger de ce que font les malinois : systématiser les 2^{ds}, les 5^{tes}, les 9^{es}". Joseph Samson, "La musique moderne à l'église" [c. 1930], F-Dm, MS 3080/62, n.p.

¹⁷⁸ Samson's attendance is mentioned in "Adresses envoyées à l'Institut interdiocésain de musique sacrée à Malines, à l'occasion du 50^e anniversaire de sa fondation", *MSB* (15 March 1929), 138–39.

Sundry other characteristics of early polyphony can occasionally be found referenced in interwar church music. Gastoué believed that drone accompaniment had been practised in Western medieval chant, and partly for this reason endorsed long pedals as an “excellent effet” in chant harmonisation.¹⁷⁹ Cadences to bare fifths become very common after 1920 (almost all the movements of *L’Orgue mystique* end this way, if not in unison). Two-voice composition had an archaic reputation like that of monophony (in 1904 two-voice motets by Brun struck Gastoué as “certainly a novelty, and a rather daring one”)¹⁸⁰, and some instances (e.g. a 1925 *Ave Maria* by Jean Huré and the Benedictus of Berthier’s *Messe pour les dimanches violets*) seem motivated by a desire to evoke early polyphony, not merely by practical constraints. The Kyrie of Caplet’s mass (as noted above) contains passages of diaphony in contrary motion, emphasising fourths and seconds that recall *Musica enchiriadis*. More common are free evocations of organum by means of note-against-note counterpoint accentuating contrary or parallel motion and seconds or fifths (see for instance Fig. 2.15, from a mass by Edmond Dierickx published in 1938 but begun by 1916).¹⁸¹

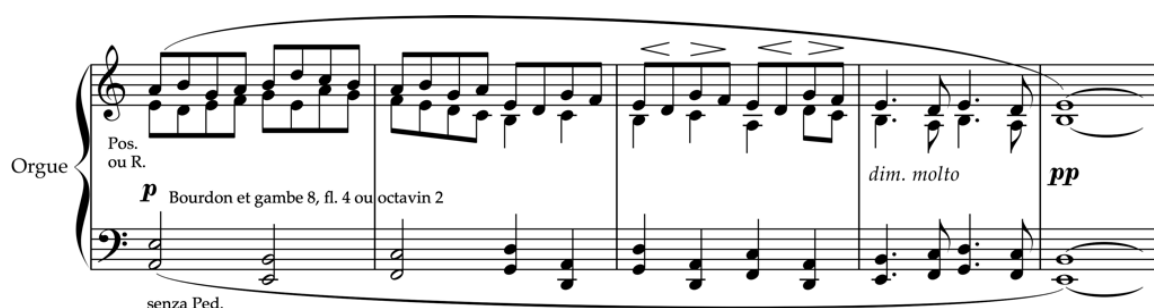


Fig. 2.15: Edmond Dierickx, *Messe solennelle “Pour chanter Notre-Dame”*, Kyrie, bars 21–25

Examples of fauxbourdon texture are uncommon outside of actual fauxbourdon arrangements of plainchant; one passage occurs in Gastoué’s *Messe de Jeanne d’Arc* and another, though in second rather than first inversion, in Caplet’s *Agnus Dei*, within a series of increasingly elaborate statements of the same pseudo-Gregorian theme, first alone, then in thirds, finally in triads (Fig. 2.16). Of Berthier’s *Messe “Pontificali infula”* (published 1928, begun by 1926), which I have not managed to consult, Trotrot-Dériot reported: “This kind of polyphony with three equal voices moving in discant, with voice-crossings and octaves enveloping the middle part, is curious and suggests primitive art, accentuated by dissonant intervals.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ See Amédée Gastoué, “Monodie grégorienne ou polyphonie ?”, *TSG* (Jan. 1911), 3–4 and id., *Traité d’harmonisation*, 29.

¹⁸⁰ “une chose certainement neuve, et un peu hardie”. Amédée Gastoué, “Bibliographie” [review of Brun, *Deux Motets sur des thèmes grégoriens*], *TSG* (Dec. 1904), 386–87. See also Nicolas Joachim, “Un coin trop peu exploré dans la polyphonie ancienne”, *CSG* (Jan. 1910), 1–3.

¹⁸¹ See Étienne Delahaye, *Edmond Dierickx, organiste et compositeur (1880-1952)* (Société historique de Tourcoing et du Pays de Ferrain, 2002).

¹⁸² “La forme polyphonique à 3 voix égales conduites en déchant, avec des croisements et des unissons à l’octave enveloppant une partie intermédiaire, est curieuse et suggère l’art primitif, accentué par l’intervalle dissonant.” Albert Trotrot-Dériot, “Bibliographie”, *La Petite Maîtrise* (May 1928), 35.

librement (Poco rit.) (Poco accel.) a Tempo

pp *pp* *mf*

Soprani
Mezzo-soprani
Contralti

A - - - gnus De - i, Qui

tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di,

Fig. 2.16:

André Caplet, *Messe à trois voix*, Agnus Dei, bars 27–35Amédée Gastoué, *Messe en l'honneur de Sainte Jeanne d'Arc*, Gloria, bars 120–26

accelerando cresc.

S.
A.

in gló-ri - a De - i Pa - - tris.

T.
B.

in gló-ri - a De - i Pa - - tris.

Charles Kœchlin's *Chœurs religieux a cappella* (op. 150, 1935), written at Joseph Samson's behest, transparently evoke the early polyphony that Kœchlin heard sung at the Dijon Cathedral.¹⁸³ They take the basic form of increasingly florid counterpoint over a pseudo-Gregorian *cantus firmus* (though, at Samson's suggestion, a *cantus firmus* with fluid rhythms in some cases rather than uniform long note values).¹⁸⁴ The texts, no more than two words in some movements, are set in extremely melismatic fashion, filled out with wordless singing. In terms of complexity and abstraction these choruses represent the high-water mark in French sacred music of new-old linear writing for choir. They also illustrate why people like Potiron were so sceptical of complex choral writing, especially in the church: at its peak, the polyphony (to say nothing of the words) is completely unintelligible when sung by an unsteady group in a resonant space, as the lone extant recording illustrates. And indeed Samson, despite having exacted modifications from the composer, had still only dared perform one of the pieces by 1940, whether due to their difficulty

¹⁸³ See Robert Orledge, *Charles Kœchlin (1867–1950): His Life and Works* (Harwood, 1989), 180. Samson originally solicited a mass setting from Kœchlin, proffering numerous suggestions, but the latter (a freethinker of Protestant background) ultimately declined to write a Credo or Gloria. See Joseph Samson, letter to Charles Kœchlin, F-Pbmgf, B 444, numbered "17" and Charles Kœchlin, letter to Renée Philippart, 24 Aug. 1935 cited in Orledge, *Charles Kœchlin*, 180. Kœchlin evidently first heard the Dijon choir around Feb. 1929 (see Charles Kœchlin, letter to Joseph Samson, Feb. 1929, F-Pbmgf, B 444) and by 1940 had visited "plusieurs fois" (see Joseph Samson, letter to Guy de Lioncourt, 29 Feb. 1940, F-Pn, NLA 451). The inspiration for his later *Quinze Motets de style archaïque* can be pinpointed to Dijon performances of Notre-Dame polyphony in June 1949 (see Orledge, op. cit., 218–20).

¹⁸⁴ See Samson, *Palestrina*, 176.

or to his parishioners' resistance to contemporary music.¹⁸⁵ Born of Kœchlin's interest in modal counterpoint, which he was writing about in the early 1930s and teaching at the Schola cantorum from 1935 (after the institution's post-d'Indy schism), they underscore the limits of liturgical polyphony to realise the *mélopée* ideal.¹⁸⁶

If imitative counterpoint generally declined in liturgical music after 1914, efforts were made to give it new life. Later liturgical polyphony contains a great deal of loose imitation in which voices enter successively with the same head-motif but quickly go their own ways, or echo each other for only a few notes at a time (see for example Fig. 2.17, from a motet by Berthier; compare Figs. 2.13 and 2.22). Rapid exchange of short motifs provided another source of variety, as illustrated in the opening of a *Missa in honorem Sanctæ Teresiæ* (1935) by the sometime Lemmens Institute professor Arthur Meulemans (Fig. 2.18). A favourite technique of the Belgian school, seen above in Van Nuffel's *Missa in honorem Sancti Josephi*, was a kind of false polyphony in which voices pass back and forth what is really a single line, simply holding long notes when inactive; a fine example is the climax of the same composer's 1935 psalm setting *Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me* (Fig. 2.19): the passage, merely a progression of triads descending by thirds, obeys a harmonic logic, and a quite simple one at that, but the clever distribution of motion amongst the voices creates an illusion of polyphonic interplay (note the ubiquitous fourths used as thickener). The openings of the Kyrie and Gloria in Caplet's Mass feature a similar call-and-response effect, presumably in homage to Gregorian antiphony (see Figs. 2.5 above and 2.20). A few composers tried to rejuvenate strict imitation by deploying entries at unusual intervals (like the fourths that irritated Trotrot-Dériot in Samson's *Messe* "O nuit, heureuse nuit") or allowing them to clash freely, as in an otherwise "rigoureusement cécilienne" mass that vexed Potiron at the 1935 congress of the International Association for the Renewal of Catholic Church Music in Frankfurt.¹⁸⁷ On a smaller scale, a *Tantum ergo* (published 1930) by the organist André Sala, almost totally diatonic and otherwise simplistic, features a canon at the fourth with one beat's delay, generating mildly dissonant harmonies; for whatever reason, Sala's "archaïco-moderne" motets pleased Trotrot-Dériot, who applauded their "audaces" as further proof that Gregorian modality posed no obstacle to modern technique.¹⁸⁸ Relaxation of dissonance control permitted fairly strict imitation in a form "modernised" by its bracing resultant harmonies, as in Samson's masses of the early 1930s, which in fact mark a return to pervasive imitation inspired by the composer's intensive study of Renaissance polyphony.

¹⁸⁵ See Samson to Lioncourt cited n. 183 above. On the modifications see id., letters to Charles Kœchlin, 11 Nov. 1935 and "1936" (numbered "16"), F-Pbmfg, B 444.

¹⁸⁶ It was the modal exercises in Kœchlin's *Traité de l'harmonie* that first elicited the commission from Samson, who praised "les possibilités que vous ouvrez à l'art sacré par vos leçons sur les modes grégoriens." Id., letter to Charles Kœchlin, March 1929, F-Pbmfg, B 444.

¹⁸⁷ See Henri Potiron, "Modernisme", *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.-Feb. 1935), 62. I have not managed to identify the work, probably a German one.

¹⁸⁸ Albert Trotrot-Dériot, "Notre musique", *La Petite Maîtrise* (Jan. 1930), 6.

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Motet à 3 voix égales et Orgue obligé
Offertoire de la fête du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus

à M^r l'Abbé U. LESSE
et à sa chorale

PAUL BERTHIER

Lent ♩ = 58

1^{er} SOPRANO

2^e SOPRANO

ALTI

ORGUE

p *p* *p*

SOLISTES TOUS

in

Dó - mi - ne De - us in sim - pli - ci -

p *plus p*

in sim - pli - ci - tá - te cor - dis me - i in

sim pli - ci - tá - te cor - dis me - i

- tá - te cor - dis me - i in sim - pli - ci - tá - te

plus p

Ped.

sim - pli - ci - tá - te cor - dis me - i læ - tus
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -
 cor - dis me - i læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni - vér - sa

ó - b - tu - li u - ni - vér - sa læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni - vér -
 - vér - sa læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni - vér - sa læ - tus ób - tu - li
 læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni - vér - sa læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni -

sa læ - tus ób - tu - li u - ni - vér - sa
 u - ni - vér - sa
 - vér - sa Et

Fig. 2.18: Arthur Meulemans, *Missa in honorem Sanctæ Teresiæ*, Kyrie, bars 1–17

$\text{♩} = 52 \text{ à } 56$ $\text{♩} = 104 - 112$

I Voce
Cantus (I Tenor)

II Voce
Cantus (II Tenor)

III Voce
Altus (Baryton)

Organum

p *mf* *pp* *p* *mf*

Ky - ri - e e -

Ky - ri - e e - léi - son. Ky - ri - e e -

Ky - ri - e e - léi - son. Ky - ri -

Poco piu con moto

mf *f* *mf* *mf*

- léi - son. Ky - ri - e e - léi - son.

léi - son. Ky - ri - e e - léi - son e -

- e e - léi - son. Ky - ri - e e - léi -

calmato
p

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - léi - - - son.

léi - - - son. Ky - ri - e e - léi - - - son.

son, e - léi - son. Ky - ri - e e - léi - - - son.

p

The musical score is written for five parts. The first three staves are vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass. The lyrics are 'Kyrie eleison'. The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, and the fifth staff is a basso continuo line. The tempo is marked 'calmato' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The score is in 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison'.

Fig. 2.19: Jules Van Nuffel, *Psalmus VI. Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me*, bars 59–68

Tempo I (Largo)

Sop. *ff* Con - vér - te - re Dó - mi - ne, et é - ri - pe á - ni - mam me - am:

Alt. *ff* Con - vér - te - re Dó - mi - ne, et é - ri - pe á - ni - mam me - am:

Ten. *ff* Con - vér - te - re Dó - mi - ne, et é - ri - pe á - ni - mam me - am:

Bas. *ff* Con - vér - te - re, et é - ri - pe á - ni - mam me - am: sal - vum me

Org. *ff*

Tempo I (Largo)

Sop. sal - vum me fac, sal - vum me fac prop - ter mi - se - ri - cór - di - am tu - am.

Alt. sal - vum me fac, sal - vum me fac prop - ter mi - se - ri - cór - di - am tu - am.

Ten. sal - vum me fac, sal - vum me fac prop - ter mi - se - ri - cór - di - am tu - am.

Bas. fac, sal - vum me fac, sal - vum me fac prop - ter mi - se - ri - cór - di - am tu - am.

Org.

poco rit.

Fig. 2.20: André Caplet, *Messe à trois voix*, Gloria, bars 1–20

Très animé et bien rythmé

Soprani (Ténors)

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis in ex - cel - sis De - o

Mezzo-sopran (Barytons)

Glo - ri - a

Contralti (Basses)

Glo - ri - a

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o

-cel - sis Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o

The Emancipation of Dissonance

Contrapuntal Relaxation in Diatonic Historicist Church Music

The main forces sapping the control of dissonance in the nineteenth century, namely pianism and complex orchestration, bypassed choral church music and *style lié* organ music. The slow liberalisation of dissonance treatment in the ecclesiastical repertoire begins only towards the end of the century, with the widespread acceptance of unprepared sevenths within otherwise neo-Palestrinian or pseudo-Gregorian music, discussed in Ch. 3.

The Solesmes-driven transformation of plainchant rhythm contributed significantly, if indirectly, to this shift, as Benedikt Lessmann has effectively shown, by necessitating new approaches to chant accompaniment. The acceleration of Gregorian singing rendered the traditional note-against-note accompaniment style cumbersome, and beginning with Lemmens and Gigout accompanists generally shifted to slower-moving harmonies that inevitably generated frequent, if brief, dissonances against the mobile chant melody. At the same time, a play of consonance and dissonance actually fit quite well the new Solesmian aesthetic ideal of a dynamic, sinuous *mélopée*, just as the unrelenting consonance of the older Niedermeyer accompaniment system matched the hieratic, impassive chant aesthetic of earlier ultramontanists.¹⁸⁹ Accompaniment manuals by Brun (1909), Gastoué (1910), and Potiron and Dom Jean Hébert Desrocquettes (1924) track the rising dissonance toleration, the last of them opening the door to pandiatonicism: “Everything is valid so long as it keeps to the scale.”¹⁹⁰ The functionally static pandiatonic sound of much interwar church music thus arose to some extent as a corollary of the monodic ideal: long-held notes or harmonies, favoured for reasons of melodic freedom, effectively become pedals.¹⁹¹ In self-standing composition, the ramifications first become apparent in chant-based liturgical organ music of the turn of the century; examples have been spotted in collections by Gigout, Guilmant, and Tournemire,¹⁹² to which could be added contributions by Chausson (1897) and d’Indy (1899) to the series *Vêpres du Commun des saints* in the organ series of the Schola cantorum’s *Répertoire moderne*. Mild by secular standards, such licenses nevertheless mark a significant evolution in conceptions of appropriate style for liturgical settings of plainchant, where dissonance (and of course chromaticism) had long been strictly controlled if not totally excluded.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »,” 370–73. The assimilation of the new chant style into chant-based organ music—or rather the evolution of such settings to accommodate the new chant style—is also the main theme of Van Wye, “The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration”.

¹⁹⁰ “Toutes sont bonnes si l’on reste dans la gamme” (referring to harmonies). Cited in Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »,” 386.

¹⁹¹ A fine example is Guy de Lioncourt, “L’accompagnement du chant grégorien”, *Les Tablettes de la Schola* (April–May 1928), 71: Lioncourt prefers a minimum of chord changes and consequently accepts “toutes sortes de dissonances”.

¹⁹² See respectively Nathan L. Lam, “Tonalité grégorienne: Musica recta as Prescriptive Harmony”, *Music Theory & Analysis* 7.11 (Oct. 2020), 336 (on Gigout’s *Album grégorien*, 1895); Edward Zimmerman and Lawrence Archbold, “Why Should We Not Do the Same with Our Catholic Melodies?”: Guilmant’s *L’Organiste liturgiste*, op. 65”, in *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, ed. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (U. of Rochester Press, 1995), 228; and Boguslaw Raba, “Creating a Mystical Musical Eschatology: Diatonic and Chromatic Dialectic in Charles Tournemire’s *L’Orgue Mystique*”, in *Mystic Modern: The Music, Thought, and Legacy of Charles Tournemire*, ed. Jennifer Donelson and Stephen Schloesser (Church Music Association of America, 2014), 193 (on Tournemire’s *Varia preces*, 1901–02).

Unsurprisingly, choral church music was slower to warm to the trend. To my knowledge, dissonance exceeding the precepts of nineteenth-century academic harmony begins to infiltrate the choral repertoire only around 1905. First steps can be seen in Maurice Emmanuel's work during his brief stint as choirmaster of Sainte-Clotilde (1904–07). In a mass written for René Moissenet's Dijon *maîtrise* in 1903, Emmanuel had made a point of preparing all his dissonances (and excluding chromaticism).¹⁹³ But five years later, in a motet for the same destination, he allowed himself “a few unprepared but infinitely gentle dissonances, so that this *a cappella* not be written as pastiche.”¹⁹⁴ Though no trace of these scores seems to survive, Emmanuel's simple 1905 arrangement, modal and totally diatonic, of the medieval hymn *O filii et filiae* may offer a gauge of his trajectory, with its non-harmonic tones handled a little more freely than the nineteenth-century harmony textbook would sanction (Fig. 2.21).¹⁹⁵ More adventurous dissonance treatment, again in an almost entirely diatonic natural minor, appears the same year in René de Castéra's tiny motet *O quam bonus et suavis est*, op. 6, written for liturgical performance by the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais during a festival in Clermont-Ferrand, where François Brun was then cathedral choirmaster.

Chœur

f Et Ma - ri - a Mag - da - le ne Et Ja - co - bi et Sa - lo -

me Ve - ne - runt cor - pus un - ge - re, Al - le - lu - ia,

Fig. 2.21: Maurice Emmanuel, *O filii*, bars 46–59 (words of first chorus only)

Though Castéra was still studying with d'Indy at the time, his motet little resembles those published theretofore by the Schola, and indeed incurred certain criticisms from his teacher.¹⁹⁶ In the opening

¹⁹³ See Maurice Emmanuel, letter to René Moissenet, 2 Nov. 1903, in id., *Lettres choisies, 1880-1938*, ed. Christophe Corbier (Vrin, 2017), 214.

¹⁹⁴ “Quelques dissonances non préparées mais infiniment douces, pour que cet *a cappella* ne soit pas écrit en pastiche.” Id., letter to René Moissenet, early March 1908, in *ibid.*, 252.

¹⁹⁵ Emmanuel deliberately took a similar approach (strictly diatonic but freely dissonant) in his folksong arrangements; see id., “Étude sur les chansons bourguignonnes du Pays de Beaune”, in id., *Trente Chansons bourguignonnes du Pays de Beaune* (Durand, [1914]), xi and Charles Kœchlin, “Évolution de l'harmonie. Période contemporaine, depuis Bizet et César Franck jusqu'à nos jours”, in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 1, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1925), 650, 654.

¹⁹⁶ See d'Indy's letter quoted in Anne de Beaupuy, Claude Gay, and Damien Top, *René de Castéra (1873-1955). Un compositeur landais au cœur de la musique française* (Séguier, 2004), 125–26: “Pas mal de petites scories à corriger. De plus, je ne vois pas trop ce qui vous a engagé à répudier le principe même du motet qui est l'entrée successive aux voix de

phrase (Fig. 2.22), dissonant non-chord tones, some of them multiple, unprepared, or resolved to another dissonance, fall on most of the strong beats (bearing in mind that Castéra, as a good *scholiste*, would have rejected the notion of an automatic “temps fort” on those beats). The resulting prevalence of minor seventh chords on the supposed tonic— $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{7}$ clash in eight of the thirteen dissonances in the opening phrase—undermines any tonal direction. The only other item in the vocal series of the original Schola catalogue to venture beyond nineteenth-century textbook harmony is an *Ave verum* (1908) by Marcel Orban, another d’Indy student. As unlike Castéra’s offering as the orthodox *scholiste* formula—decidedly vertical in conception despite an initial feint at imitative entries, with a thick harmony set in a low register and given to root-position chords with parallel fifths in the bass—this motet displays an unmistakable if superficial assimilation of *debussyisme*. Gratuitous dissonances decorate its simple I–IV–V harmonic schemes, sometimes creating a wash of diatonic sound—ninth chords as well as unresolved non-chord tones, some of which correspond to stacked fourths or pentatonic scales (Fig. 2.23). The voicing of the organ part further accentuates the perfect intervals and parallel motion between them.

“Libération polyphonique”: The Waning Authority of Academic Counterpoint

If the choral repertoire trailed behind organ music, theory lagged still further, as it generally does: explicit calls to relax dissonance controls in church music beyond nineteenth-century academic style came only after the 1914–18 war. In his address to the Strasbourg congress of 1921, Gastoué reminded church musicians that numerous innovations had established themselves in secular music over the preceding decades:

Contemporary counterpoint, let us not forget, is freer, and the harmonic aggregations of our best musicians have enriched the composer’s palette with colours unimaginable fifty years ago: let us not lag behind secular music, but appropriate whatever is good and beautiful in its discoveries. For example, the modern schools—returning, incidentally, to the inspiration of the Middle Ages—know how to skilfully use parallel fifths, prohibited by classical counterpoint; how to superpose certain intervals contrary to the academic rules, which are elaborated only for the student’s training and with a single style in view; how, or under what conditions, to not prepare, or appear not to resolve, certain dissonances; and so on. On these points, the study of contemporary master symphonists such as d’Indy, Debussy, and Ravel, to take three different types, is to be recommended if one really wants to know truly modern ideas of harmony and voice-leading.¹⁹⁷

Such apparent liberalism must be taken with a grain of salt; Gastoué’s examples of “modern” writing include music by Dubois and La Tombelle, while his own *Messe de Sainte Jeanne d’Arc*, billed

la même musique sur les mêmes paroles. Cela fait toujours mieux et c’est plus solide. Sauf ça, c’est joli comme musique mais cela gagnerait à être corrigé d’abord (car bien des choses ne sont pas vocales) et solidifié ensuite si possible.”

¹⁹⁷ “Le contrepoint contemporain, ne l’oublions pas, est plus libre, et les agrégations harmoniques de nos musiciens les meilleurs enrichissent la palette des compositeurs de teintes insoupçonnées il y a cinquante ans : ne restons pas en retard sur l’art profane, et sachons lui prendre ce qu’il a de beau et de bien dans ses trouvailles. Or, les écoles modernes savent par exemple, en remontant d’ailleurs à l’inspiration du moyen âge, de quelles façons on peut employer habilement les quintes de suite, prohibées par le contrepoint classique ; savent comment on peut superposer certains intervalles contrairement aux règles d’école, qui ne sont élaborées que pour la formation de l’élève, et en vue d’un seul style ; comment encore, ou dans quelles conditions on peut ne pas préparer ou paraître ne pas résoudre certaines dissonances, etc. Sur ces points, l’étude de maîtres symphonistes contemporains, tels que d’Indy, Debussy et Ravel, pour prendre trois types différents, est à recommander si l’on veut réellement connaître la pensée vraiment moderne sur l’enchaînement des intervalles et les agrégations harmoniques.” Gastoué, “Essai sur le passé et l’avenir”, 33.

Fig. 2.22: René de Castéra, *O quam bonus et suavis est*, bars 1–10

Modéré

The musical score is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'Modéré'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are 'O quam bonus et suavis est'. The score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves. The first system covers bars 1-10, and the second system covers bars 11-20. The lyrics are distributed across the staves as follows:

- Soprano:** O quam bo - - - - nus
- Alto:** O O quam bo - - - -
- Tenor:** O quam bo - - - -
- Basse:** O quam bo - - - -

The second system continues the lyrics:

- Soprano:** O quam bo - - - - nus
- Alto:** nus O quam bo - - - - nus
- Tenor:** nus O quam bo - - - -
- Basse:** - nus O quam bo - - - -

The dynamic markings are as follows:

- Soprano:** *pp* (bars 1-2), *mf* (bars 3-8), *pp* (bars 9-10)
- Alto:** *pp* (bars 1-2), *mf* (bars 3-8), *pp* (bars 9-10)
- Tenor:** *p* (bars 1-2), *pp* (bars 3-4), *p* (bars 5-6), *mf* (bars 7-10)
- Basse:** *p* (bars 1-2), *pp* (bars 3-4), *mf* (bars 5-10)

The second system has the following dynamic markings:

- Soprano:** *p* (bars 11-12), *f* (bars 13-18), *p* (bars 19-20)
- Alto:** *p* (bars 11-12), *f* (bars 13-18), *p* (bars 19-20)
- Tenor:** *p* (bars 11-12), *mf* (bars 13-18), *mf* (bars 19-20)
- Basse:** *pp* (bars 11-12), *p* (bars 13-18), *f* (bars 19-20)

Fig. 2.23: Marcel Orban, *Ave verum*, bars 1–13

Andante espressivo

p

Ténor

A - ve ve-rum cor-pus na - tum de Ma-ri-a Vir-gi-ne Ve - re

Baryton

A - ve ve-rum cor-pus na - tum de Ma ri-a Vir-gi-ne de Ma-ri-a Vir-gi-ne

Basse

A - ve ver-um cor - pus na - tum de Ma-ri-a Vir-gi-ne

Orgue

pas - sum im-mo - la - tum in cru - ce pro ho - mi - ne

Ve - re pas-sum im-mo-la-tum in cru - ce pro ho - mi - ne

pro ho - mi - ne pro ho - mi - ne

as a sort of compositional manifesto and duly praised for its modernity in the *Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, hardly recalls Debussy or Ravel despite some modest relaxation in the voice-leading and dissonance-handling.¹⁹⁸ In Paris the next year, following up Gastoué's intervention, Paul Berthier likewise identified harmony and counterpoint as the areas of church music most susceptible to modernisation, calling for bolder modulation, chromaticism, enharmony, and "a broad range of licenses: dissonances resolved evasively or to another dissonance, unresolved appoggiaturas, capricious alterations, parallel fourths, fifths, sevenths, etc. In the counterpoint, the same experimentation with clashes, escape tones, audacious contrary motion, evaded consonances...".¹⁹⁹ The most vocal advocate of contrapuntal liberalisation was Joseph Samson, emboldened in this direction by contact with Charles Kœchlin after 1928 or 1929. Though Kœchlin himself had little involvement in church music, he saw an outlet for his ideal of free modal polyphony in plainchant accompaniment: "Don't be afraid . . . of an archaising style full of asperities, of chords without the third, melodic and harmonic tritones; have no fear of parallel fourths and even fifths; admit certain modern harmonic formulas: pedals, seconds, inversions, etc.", he exhorts chant harmonisers in his unpublished *Traité de la polyphonie modale* (1931–32).²⁰⁰ Samson took the advice to heart when working through exercises in the harmonisation of modal tunes under Kœchlin's tutelage: "Overall I've written quite freely when it comes to parallel fifths, false relations, and other prescriptions in the treatises", he informed his mentor. "I haven't shied away from appoggiaturas, especially as accented passing tones, nor harsh clashes when they seemed justified by the melodic line."²⁰¹ Kœchlin's writings echo quite clearly in the vision for a modern church polyphony that Samson fleshed out in his notes:

A play of passing tones, appoggiaturas . . . much freer than what the Renaissance and Classical composers practised, but . . . drawing out the consequences of two centuries of evolution of the ear . . . will liberate the parts in polyphony, let more air into it, more colour, obtain unexpected sonorities which ~~satisfy the appetites of our~~ will not necessarily revolt our modern ears and perhaps enable a deepening of expression. Besides, this polyphonic liberation can be expressed in a wholly classical or modal language. With only the triad as base, by playing freely with passing tones one can arrive at a very modern, very subtle art.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ See L. T. [Louis Tricon?], "Bibliographie", *TSG* (June 1920), 167 and "Les nouveautés du Bureau d'édition", *TSG* (May 1921), 165. Maurice Brillant too heard "accords très modernes, parfois presque debussystes" (Maurice Brillant, "Musique", *Almanach catholique français* (1922), 203).

¹⁹⁹ "un vaste emploi des tolérances : dissonances aux résolutions détournées, ou dissonantes encore, appoggiatures irrésolues, altérations capricieuses, quarts, quintes, septièmes parallèles, et cætera. Dans le contrepoint, mêmes recherches pleines de frottements, d'échappées, d'audacieux mouvements contraires, de consonances évitées..." Paul Berthier, "L'écriture moderne de la musique d'église", *La Vie et les Arts liturgiques* (June 1923), 355 [orig. lecture, Paris congress, Dec. 1922].

²⁰⁰ "Ne pas craindre [...] un style archaïsant rempli d'âpretés, d'accords sans tierces, de tritons mélodiques ou harmoniques; ne pas redouter les quarts et même les quintes consécutives; admettre certaines formules harmoniques modernes : Pédales, 2^{nds}[.] Renversements, etc." Quoted in Philippe Cathé, "Le *Traité de la polyphonie modale* de Charles Kœchlin", in *Polytonalité-Polymodalité. Histoire et actualité*, ed. Michel Fischer and Danièle Pistone (U. de Paris-Sorbonne/Observatoire musical français, 2005), 172. Already in 1917 Kœchlin had advocated "les accords les plus libres" in chant accompaniment; see Charles Kœchlin, "La musique religieuse d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui" [private lecture, 5 May 1917], in id., *Écrits*, vol. 2 *Musique et société*, ed. Michel Duchesneau (Mardaga, 2006), 143.

²⁰¹ "Dans l'ensemble j'ai écrit très librement relativement aux quintes de suite, aux fausses relations et autres prescriptions [sic?] des traités. . . . Je n'ai pas craint d'employer l'appoggiature surtout en forme de note de passage sur le temps, non plus que les rencontres dures quand elles m'ont paru justifiées par les mouvements mélodiques." Joseph Samson, letter to Charles Kœchlin, undated (1930), F-Pbmfgf, B 444, numbered "9".

²⁰² "Un jeu de notes de passages [sic], d'appoggiatures . . . beaucoup plus libres que ne les ont pratiqués les renaissances ou les classiques . . . en tirant les conséquences que deux siècles d'évolution de l'oreille permettent d'en tirer . . . libérera

Samson applied these procedures directly in his masses written in the early 1930s (the *Messe pour les dimanches d'Avent et de Carême* and *Messe pour le temps pascal*), as he informed Kœchlin and announced in a plug-article: “submission to the givens of plainchant does not, it seems to us, impose any limitation on the *procédés d'écriture*: while the triad remains the basis of the harmony, we consider ourselves free when it comes to non-chord tones.”²⁰³

What separated Samson, his friend Berthier, and to some extent Berthier's teacher Gastoué from their more conservative colleagues and predecessors was a belated acceptance of the tenet that rules of harmony and counterpoint rest only on musical sensibilities (“the ear”) themselves in constant evolution, a doctrine endlessly repeated before the war by critical apologists of harmonic boundary-pushing such as Kœchlin, Landormy, Laloy, and Vuillermoz.²⁰⁴ Berthier evoked this relativism explicitly in his plea on behalf of “l'écriture moderne”:

Alongside the adamant laws of the academy must be admitted a praetorian, evolving legislation, and a whole jurisprudence more clement still, whose sovereign jury shall be the cultivated ear. For is anything more transient than harmony? The dominant seventh, such a signal event on its first appearance—how we disdain it! And the diminished seventh which sent a shudder through so many generations: look at it now, banished and out of work. Already the dominant ninth is losing its swoon effect and the augmented fifth being voided little by little of its aura of strangeness.²⁰⁵

Samson, the church musician most abreast of the movement of contemporary ideas (both Catholic and secular), was thoroughly converted to relativism:

[D]issonance as the old masters conceived of it has lost much of its effect for us. The acidity of certain clashes, quite real in a more or less distant past, has turned to sweetness. To recapture their expressive effect we must resort to *procédés* that will repulse certain ears . . . Besides, “dissonance” is so relative. What was dissonant yesterday is consonant today. These two departments are no longer split as was long thought. They interpenetrate constantly. Today one can say they have merged. . . . The system that put in play a basis of

les parties d'une polyphonie, on y introduira plus d'air, plus de couleur on obtiendra des sonorités inattendues [*sic*] qui ~~donnent satisfaction aux appétits de nos~~ ne révolteront pas nécessairement nos oreilles modernes et peut-être permettront des approfondissements expressifs. D'ailleurs cette libération polyphonique peut s'exprimer dans un langage tout classique ou modal. Avec le seul fondement d'acc[ord] p[a]r[fa]it, si l'on joue librement de la n[ote] de p[assage] on peut attendre à un art très moderne, très subtil.” Samson, “La musique moderne à l'église”, n.p. In addition to Kœchlin (cf. his 1922 *Étude sur les notes de passage*) Samson was no doubt also recalling the teaching of his counterpoint instructor André Gedalge, who introduced a new liberality in the handling of passing tones; see Charles Kœchlin, “André Gedalge”, *RM* (March 1926), 244.

²⁰³ “la soumission aux données du plain-chant nous a paru n'imposer aucune limitation aux procédés d'écriture : si l'accord parfait demeure le fond de l'harmonie, nous nous estimons libres [*sic*], quant à l'emploi des notes étrangères.” Joseph Samson, “Notre musique”, *La Petite Maîtrise* (Jan. 1933), 8. Reviewing the *Messe pour les dimanches d'Avent et de Carême*, Samson's spokesman Isidore Dupont relayed the plug in another journal: “L'harmonie reste à fond d'accords consonants, mais le jeu des notes étrangères s'organise sur ce fond en toute liberté.” Isidore Dupont, “Une messe de J. Samson”, *La Musique sacrée* (Sept.–Oct. 1933), 70–71. Cf. Joseph Samson, letter to Charles Kœchlin, marked “15” and “année 1932”, F-Pbmfg, B 444.

²⁰⁴ For a classic statement see Paul Le Flem, “Relativité de la conception harmonique”, *La Revue musicale* (1 July 1906), 313–17, which presents exactly the metanarrative of “émancipation de l'accord dissonant” associated with Viennese modernism (314).

²⁰⁵ “A côté de la loi lapidaire de l'École, il faut bien admettre une législation prétorienne, évolutive, et toute une jurisprudence plus clément encore, dont les oreilles cultivées seront le jury souverain. Car, qu'y a-t-il de plus fugitif que l'harmonie ? La septième de dominante qui, à son origine, fut un événement si gros, comme nous la dédaignons ! et la septième diminuée qui a fait frémir d'effroi tant de générations, la voici bannie, et sans emploi ; déjà la neuvième de dominante perd son effet de pâmoison et la quinte augmentée se vide peu à peu de son parfum étrange.” Berthier, “L'écriture moderne”, 356.

consonances relieved by codified, predictable dissonances, subject to the rules of preparations and resolutions—in itself, this system belongs to the past. . . . [W]e must have the courage to abandon it.²⁰⁶

He also propagated this view in the Catholic press, writing at least four reviews of Kœchlin's *Traité de l'harmonie* alone:

[T]he distinction between consonant and dissonant music is becoming less and less perceptible. Not that the ear is disposed to accept everything a musician might write, but it is certain that the wearing out of the ancient *procédés* calls for new ones to express the same thoughts; that the evolution of sensibility demands corresponding adaptation of forms; that habit has its part, a considerable one, in this matter; that dissonance is moreover relative to the author's style, to the nuances, the dispositions of chords, their expressive function, etc., etc....²⁰⁷

Such ideas found a certain diffusion among church musicians. By 1927 the abbé Brun had been sufficiently impressed by Honegger's oratorios to entertain for a moment the possibility that "ultra-dissonant chords" might one day replace consonance as the norm, though he remained provisionally doubtful, and presumably held liturgical works to a stricter standard.²⁰⁸ More remarkable is the reception afforded Tournemire's *L'Orgue mystique* in the Catholic press, not only overwhelmingly favourable but surprisingly unbothered by its harmonic asperities.²⁰⁹ Certainly, church-musician reviewers treated organ music more leniently than vocal, and could prove surprisingly indulgent when they knew that a work was based on plainchant and/or written by a fervent Catholic; moreover, given the collection's vastness and heterogeneity, they may simply not have known what was in it. Even so, attitudes towards dissonance had shifted. Dom Sablayrolles heard counterpoint "whose savourous clashes (minor seconds, sevenths), from which all harshness is excluded, are a joy for the ear".²¹⁰ Benedictine monks did not find minor seconds a joy for the ear twenty years earlier. A few pages later in the same periodical, the relatively liberal critic Isidore

²⁰⁶ "la dissonance telle que la conçoivent les maîtres du passé a perdu pour nous une grande partie de son action. L'acidité de certains frottements, très réelle dans un passé plus ou moins éloigné, est devenue toute douceur. Pour retrouver l'effet expressif de ces frottements il faut avoir recours à des procédés auxquelles répugnent certaines oreilles . . . D'ailleurs la chose 'dissonance', est si relative. Ce qui hier était dissonance aujourd'hui est consonance [*sic*]. Ces deux départements ne sont plus tranchés comme on l'a pensé longtemps. Tous les jours ils s'interpénètrent. Aujourd'hui on peut le dire : ils se confondent. . . . Le système qui mettait en jeu un fond de consonances [*sic*] qui se mitigeait de dissonances codifiées, prévues, soumises à un jeu réglé de préparations et de résolutions[,] ce système en soi, s'inscrit dans le passé. . . . il faut avoir le courage de l'abandonner." Samson, "La musique moderne à l'église", 18–20.

²⁰⁷ "la distinction se fait de moins en moins sensible entre la musique consonante et la dissonante. Ce n'est point que l'oreille soit disposée à admettre tout ce que pourrait écrire un musicien : mais il est bien certain que l'usure des procédés anciens appelle des procédés nouveaux pour l'expression des mêmes pensées ; que l'évolution de la sensibilité exige des formes adaptées ; que l'habitude joue son rôle dans cette affaire et qu'il est considérable ; que la dissonance est encore relative au style de l'auteur, aux nuances, aux dispositions des accords, à leur à-propos expressif, etc., etc..." Id., "Les livres. *Traité d'le l'harmonie* de Kœchlin", *TSG* (Sept. 1929), 163. The other reviews appeared in *RM*, *La Vie catholique*, and *La Petite Maîtrise*.

²⁰⁸ "accords (?) archidissonants" (question mark original). François Brun, "La musique religieuse en 1925", *Almanach catholique français* (1927), 263.

²⁰⁹ For a survey of the reception see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 311–21.

²¹⁰ "dont les savoureuses rencontres (secondes mineures, septièmes), d'où toute dureté est exclue, sont une joie pour l'oreille." Sablayrolles, "*L'Orgue mystique*", 58.

Dupont, in a glowing review of an organ work by Ermend-Bonnal, cited thirteenth and “fifteenth” chords (perhaps he lost count) without registering any qualms.²¹¹

Serious discussion of rising dissonance remained scarce in church-music criticism, perhaps suggesting a resigned adjustment to permanently altered sensibilities in the wider musical world. One exception is the reception of a *Messe de Saint Grégoire* (1928) by Marc de Ranse, which makes generous use of quartal harmony. Used systematically by Satie almost forty years earlier (cf. *Le Fils des étoiles*, 1891), such harmony remained sufficiently novel in a churchly context to attract critical attention. The *Revue Sainte-Cécile* vaunted de Ranse’s work (published by the journal’s publisher, the Procure générale) as “a step forward in contemporary production”: “a new formula is taking shape among the religious musicians of today which will thrill some and elicit reserve from others, but which is incontestably interesting”.²¹² Noting the pervasive motif G–A–D, printed as a device at the head of the score, the anonymous critic remarked: “here is the key to a new harmonic domain. The work by M. Marc de Ranse is written entirely under the sign of the fourth”, resulting in “chords composed no longer of thirds . . . but of stacked fourths which move freely without a care for their attractions or repulsions, thereby creating polytonal melodies fortunately held together by a uniform rhythm.”²¹³ Puff review as it was, the embrace of the dreaded P word, which elsewhere prompted dark mutterings of bolshevism in the same journal, marks a change, all the more so as de Ranse’s score could have been interpreted in milder terms. By contrast, Edmond Dierickx reassured his readers that for all its audacities—“four-note chords moving in parallel”, “quasi-normative” use of the fourth, pentatonic scales generating “chords by turns bare, normal, and saturated”—the work was moderate, a “clear indication of what the church can admit in terms of modern art”, not ultra-modern and in particular not polytonal: “beneath the apparent complication of the harmonies lies a solid diatonicism.”²¹⁴ Samson, generally hostile to Procure publications, thought enough of it to revise his glum assessment of the state of contemporary liturgical composition, scribbling on a piece of paper: “Don’t forget the mass by de Ranse. A fine thing. Rectify what was said about the absence of any interesting work”.²¹⁵ But whatever “new formula” the *Messe de Saint Grégoire* supposedly represented, quartal harmony itself was not destined for much of a future in church music (in fact Samson had already used it prominently in his *Messe “Orbis factor”* of 1926). The work may not indeed have been intended for church choirs to begin with: I have evidence only of concert performances by the Chœur mixte de Paris, de Ranse’s professional ensemble.

²¹¹ Isidore Dupont, “Le prix des ‘Amis de l’orgue’ à M. Ermend Bonnal” [review of Ermend-Bonnal, *Symphonie d’après Media vita*], *La Musique sacrée* (Sept.–Oct. 1932), 73–75.

²¹² “marque une étape dans la production contemporaine”; “une formule nouvelle s’élabore parmi les musiciens religieux d’aujourd’hui, qui enthousiasmera les uns, qui motivera la réserve des autres, mais qui est incontestablement intéressante”. “Bibliographie”, *RSC* (Jan. 1930), 15.

²¹³ “voilà la clef d’un nouveau domaine harmonique. L’œuvre de M. Marc de Ranse est écrite tout entière sous le signe de la quarte. . . . Des accords composés non plus de tierces . . . mais de quarts échafaudés qui se meuvent librement sans souci de leurs attractions ou de leurs répulsions, créant ainsi des mélodies polytonales heureusement enchaînées par un rythme unique.” Ibid.

²¹⁴ “des suites conjointes d’accords de 4 sons” “quasi-normal”; “accords tour à tour creux, normaux ou surcomplets”; “sous l’apparente complication des harmonies se cache un diatonisme de bon aloi . . . indiquant nettement ce que l’Église peut admettre de l’Art moderne !” Edmond Dierickx, “Bibliographie. Musique religieuse”, *L’Informateur musical et théâtral des Œuvres catholiques* (July 1930), 105–08.

²¹⁵ “Ne pas oublier la messe de de Ranse / Belle chose / Rectifier ce qui a été dit sur l’absence de toute production intéressante”. Samson, “La musique moderne à l’église”, n.p.

Expanded Diatonicism, a New Lingua Franca for Interwar Church Music

By 1928, expanded diatonicism was almost a new default in French and Belgian church music, a distinctive period sound akin in some mysterious way to the cool angularity of the concrete churches built at the time in strange blends of neo-Gothic and Art Deco.²¹⁶ In the big picture, of course, such writing occurs in a vast amount of music from Chabrier to Arvo Pärt, including a great deal of “Impressionism” and Neoclassicism, but within the stylistic evolution of Catholic church music the rise of diatonic dissonance is a major development in the first third of the twentieth century. Technically, its hallmark is a disparity between tonal resources and their deployment, in terms of simultaneous dissonance (“added-note” harmonies, pentatonic clusters, stacks of fourths or fifths) and its linear handling. By comparison to the normative “common practice” style (i.e., the harmony and counterpoint of nineteenth-century pedagogical manuals), the former is narrowly diatonic and the latter quite relaxed. As a result, the suspensions so typical of nineteenth-century *religioso* styles largely disappear—superficially, at least, perhaps the most striking style shift in the ecclesiastical repertoire.

Why did dissonance (by contrast to chromaticism, notably) prove the point of least resistance in the conservative bulwark of Catholic church music, the area in which church composers were willing to make the biggest concession to modernism? The reformist aesthetic offers a partial explanation. Dissonant diatonicism, with its inevitable accentuation of the fourth/fifth and second/seventh, could resonate with a certain ethos of sacerdotal austerity. Like the fourths and fifths of *debussysme*, it could be portrayed as harking back to medieval tradition, to the “tâtonnements” and “balbutiements” of early polyphony. Moreover, conspicuous dissonance can underscore the diatonicism of a passage, insofar as it makes the abstention from chromaticism all the more pointed. But more important no doubt than any of this were practical considerations: expanded diatonicism can be easy to sing. Even densely pandiatonic passages can break down into stepwise, diatonic lines well within reach of the amateurs and children who increasingly populated church choirs. Having proclaimed the freedom of his dissonance, Samson added: “We have nevertheless striven for a counterpoint as conjunct as possible, one that remains in the spirit of plainchant and offers the advantage of a minimum of difficulty for the performers.”²¹⁷ Dom Jeannin rejoiced that, despite its modernisms, Samson’s first mass was designed to be sung with ease.²¹⁸ The ultimate consecration of expanded diatonicism was its penetration into the humblest areas of ecclesiastical music, such as Paul de Maleingreau’s *Élévations liturgiques* (op. 27, published 1935) or Dom Clément Jacob’s *Interludes liturgiques* (1942)—easy short pieces for daily ritual use in convents and monasteries. It was an economical option for those eager to don a semblance of

²¹⁶ Although the examples are far too numerous to cite, I acknowledge here those cited by others before me (looking beyond the strictly liturgical): the opening of Lili Boulanger’s *Psaume 24* (see Simeone, “Church and Organ Music”, 181–02), Albert Alain’s *Messe en l’honneur de Saint Louis* (see Gommier-Decourt, “Albert Alain”, 344), and Kœchlin’s *Cinq Chorals dans les modes du Moyen Âge* (see Lessmann “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 390). *L’Orgue mystique*, too, for all that has been made of its polytonality, features vast stretches of white-note dissonance; see Raba, “Creating a Mystical Musical Eschatology”.

²¹⁷ “Néanmoins, nous nous sommes appliqué à un contrepoint aussi conjoint que possible, ce qui reste dans l’esprit du plain-chant et présente l’avantage de n’offrir aux exécutants qu’un minimum de difficultés.” Samson, “Notre musique”, 8.

²¹⁸ Jules Jeannin, “Bibliographie. Musique religieuse”, *L’Informateur musical et théâtral des Œuvres catholiques* (Oct. 1926), 138–39.

modernity, a varnish of contemporaneity applicable with minimum inconvenience to fundamentally simple structures.

Conclusions

Through the first third of the twentieth century and beyond, reformist conceptions of proper liturgical style continued to favour polymelody, which responded to values of logocentrism, collectivism, and dispassion. Since at least the early nineteenth century, and even in some measure since the Council of Trent, Palestrina's later sacred music had enjoyed a reputation as the ideal of polymelodic writing, at least in a churchly, diatonic *a cappella* style. This construct of "classical polyphony", admirable but unsurpassable, both incited and defied imitation. Cut off from musical modernity (as everyone acknowledged), it existed outside the church only in private pedagogical exercises separate from public composition, or special passages of *couleur religieuse*. Reformists therefore began to entertain the possibility of a new polymelodic style, distinctly modern yet suitable for *a cappella* liturgical use, effectively detaching the linear ideal from the "classical" one. This aspiration shades into less ambitious attempts (going all the way back to Palestrina's immediate successors) to modernise the "classical" model, generally by reducing imitation, shifting melodic interest towards one voice, and allowing more chromaticism and unprepared seventh chords.

All the while, the deepening of historical consciousness continued to undermine the construct of "classical polyphony" as a timeless ideal, or culmination of a pre-modern golden age of Catholic musical art. The movement to install "restored" plainchant as the cornerstone of Catholic liturgical music competed with Palestrina-emulation; in particular, a new aspiration to project the *mélodie* ideal into polyphony proved incompatible with "classical" rhythmic and contrapuntal strictures. New exposure to and reappraisal of pre-"classical" repertoires stimulated experimentation with less polymelodic textures such as biphony and parallelism. Despite the deep-seated linearism of the nomographical literature, signs of fatigue with traditional *religioso* stereotypes based on academic counterpoint ("style fugue", "style lié", "style sévère") appear even among reformists after World War I. Instead, for more and more people, spirituality in music was represented by the free undulation of the Gregorian *mélodie*. Meanwhile, the general crisis in the authority of prescriptive music theory that came to a head in the early twentieth century, after a long divergence between academic rules and public composition, began to affect church music to a certain extent, as composers absorbed new relativistic conceptions of dissonance.

In the long view, the phase of neo-Palestrinian hegemony c. 1894–1914, in which the style aspired to become the liturgical norm rather than a *musica reservata* for special times and places, appears as a local aberration within a panorama of simpler textures, passed over by this chapter but representing the vast bulk of music performed from week to week and decade to decade (monophonic or accompanied plainchant, fauxbourdon, homophonic or monophonic *cantiques*, choruses in a *style vertical* close to Protestant hymnody, a whole range of neo-Baroque idioms). The neo-Palestrinian manner did not so much disappear as become *débordé*, as Jacques Chailley put it, absorbed back into the crowd of options. And, at all times, the importance of the parish, the skill of the choir, and especially the sociocultural level of the congregation set the limits of polymelodic complexity. The fortunes of neo-Renaissance (and for that matter revived Renaissance) music were tied to those of a "high" ecclesiastical sensibility; in that respect, the transition from the

paternalistic social Catholicism of the 1890s, with its aim of elevating demotic taste, to a more populist Christian democracy and liturgical movement in the 1930s was not in its favour. The neo-Palestrinian idiom, marked as “high” in sociocultural terms, physically remote from worshippers listening passively (and impassively) to the strains from aloft, went the way of the long neo-Gothic nave once the liturgical movement began to cluster congregations around the altar in the name of active participation.²¹⁹

Similarly, in the long view, the hegemony of a big-tent reformism balancing plainchant, Palestrina, and modern music, which prevailed with papal support for a decade or so before and after TLS, appears fragile and ephemeral. The various, often contradictory objections to the Palestrina style (elitist, too difficult to sing, too ornate, heedless of the text, pridefully individualist, *l’art pour l’art*, technical display, too modern, too old, too stereotyped) were spread asymmetrically across three constituencies: plainchant supremacists (scholars, monks, radical ultramontanists), pragmatic populists (rank-and-file priests and church musicians), and those who wanted to invent a new kind of polyphony (composers, aesthetes). Given the long-range continuity in anti-Palestrinian discourse (changes in rhetoric and strategy notwithstanding), the post-1914 decline of Palestrinianism might represent a belated and quiet revenge of the two outer wings of nineteenth-century reformism, the plainchant supremacists and partisans of “modern” homophony, allied by convenience against the common foe.

²¹⁹ See Jean-Michel, Leniaud, *La révolution des signes. L’art à l’église (1830-1930)* (Cerf, 2007), 379.

CHAPTER 3

MODES ANTIQUES AND MODALITÉ

Introduction

The last chapter saw “Palestrinian polyphony” mutate from a timeless ideal to a historical artefact, a product of particular circumstances. “Modality” travelled in the opposite direction, to believe the consensus among numerous studies of the modal idea in France since 1800, undergoing a gradual process of naturalisation.¹ In composition, modality first returned as a special effect, exceptional and reflective, designating, together with other markers of alterity, some exotic Other mediated through historiography or ethnography. Little by little, it shed this alterity and became normal, unmarked, a mere “resource” in the service of “natural” or “spontaneous” self-expression, or pure structural logic.² In the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, an idea of *modalité* in general and in the abstract emerged out of the increasingly diverse range of exotic “modes” (ancient, medieval, folkloric, extra-European) seen to instantiate it. This modal principle, unexhausted by past manifestations, no longer condemned the user to re-creation, but offered unexplored potential. When finally admitted into the legitimating domains of academic theory and pedagogy, its assimilation was complete.

A related narrative sees the concept of modality expanding across the same period.³ Beginning from strict consonance and diatonicism in the nineteenth century, the range of style considered “modal” steadily dilated, as reflected in harmonisations of plainchant and other modal melodies. By the interwar period, the concept could encompass music of considerable dissonance and chromaticism by composers such as Maurice Emmanuel, Charles Kœchlin, and Charles Tournemire, as well as non-diatonic scales; “modality” becomes a blanket term for just about anything seen as an expansion to “classical” major-minor tonality—Messiaen’s “modes” of limited transposition (not modes at all but scales) offering a fine example.

Naturalisation entails, among other things, secularisation: in shedding their alterity, *les modes* shed their religious and antique connotations.⁴ The narratives of naturalisation certainly highlight

¹ This paragraph is distilled from Jacques Chailley, *L'imbroglia des modes* (Leduc, 1960), 9; Henri Gonnard, *La musique modale en France, de Berlioz à Debussy* (Champion, 2000), esp. 119, 261; Jean-Pierre Bartoli, *L'harmonie classique et romantique (1750-1900). Éléments et évolution* (Minerve, 2001), 177, 180; Benedikt Lessmann, *Die Rezeption des gregorianischen Chorals in Frankreich im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Studien zur ideen- und kompositionsgeschichtlichen Resonanz des “plain-chant”* (Olms, 2016), 26–28; id., “« L’anachronisme le plus musical ». L’accompagnement du plain-chant et l’idée de modalité libre en France dans l’entre-deux-guerres”, *Revue de musicologie* 105.2 (2019), 362. The narrative goes back to period figures; see notably Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Trente Mélodies populaires de Basse-Bretagne* (Lemoine, 1885), 16; Charles Kœchlin, “Influences diverses”, in id., *Écrits*, vol. 1 *Esthétique et langage musical*, ed. Michel Duchesneau (Mardaga, 2006), 78; Maurice Emmanuel, “Mes avatars” [1924], *Zodiaque* 139 (1984) 37. For a parallel narrative of the French naturalisation of non-diatonic scales see Peter Asimov, “Comparative Philology, French Music, and the Composition of Indo-Europeanism from Fétis to Messiaen” (PhD thesis, U. of Cambridge, 2020), esp. 199, 237.

² Fauré in particular is often named as the first “natural” user of modern modality; see John Vincent, *The Diatonic Modes in Modern Music* (U. of California Press, 1951), 224; Gonnard, *La musique modale*, 181; Robin Tait, *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré* (Garland, 1989), 96–97; Christian Accaoui, “Modalité”, in *Éléments d’esthétique musicale. Notions, formes et styles en musique*, ed. Christian Accaoui (Actes Sud/Cité de la musique, 2011), 336.

³ See Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, esp. 359.

⁴ See *ibid.*, 362.

plainchant, but mainly as a source from which modality was to be extracted. To what extent, then, does the account of modality going mainstream, derived from and featuring mainly secular figures such as Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, Fauré, Debussy, Emmanuel, and Kœchlin, apply to the backwater that was Catholic church music in the francophone world? If modality became a pervasive feature in that music during the first third of the twentieth century, did ecclesiastical modalism come detached from its sense of pastness, or resist this general trend?⁵

This chapter offers an account of the structure of the modal idea as it evolved in discourse on church music in French during our period, broken down into theoretical and ideological dimensions. Its first part develops a history of modality as a theoretical construct via its relation to four adjoining concepts: tonality, modulation, chromaticism, and “modal function” (on which more below). Necessarily, this part draws on mainly secular sources, some of them going back to the early nineteenth century. Just as histories of music theory stand to gain by including church music (as has recently been underlined),⁶ so can an investigation into the ecclesiastical debates benefit from a deep dive into their theoretical presuppositions. To grasp what was at stake in arcane arguments between organists about leading tones, we must look to the treatises, and also to the various humbler genres (reviews, letters, competition announcements, commentaries on church legislation, etc.) in which theoretical discourse circulated during this unspecialised era. Evidence of direct influence from theorists to church musicians may not abound, but shared patterns of thought emerge. The space given over to such background in this chapter is necessitated by a historiographical neglect of early twentieth-century music theory in French; for all the prominence of “modality” in histories of modern French composition, the theoretical conceptions of even such leading figures as Emmanuel and Kœchlin have hardly attracted attention.⁷ Historians of music theory show far more interest in the contemporaneous germanophone world, or the francophone one during the heyday of early tonal theory.⁸

Readers may well wonder at this point what I mean by “modality”. Such basic terms as mode, scale, and tonality still vary widely in signification even among theorists, while other important concepts have no names at all. Here are my definitions:

⁵ For a wide-lens view of modality in the repertoire see Anne Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio de Saint Pie X sur la musique sacrée (22 novembre 1903) et ses répercussions en France de 1904 à 1939” (doctoral thesis, U. de Paris IV, 1998), 131–35, 144–45 and Jean-Yves Hameline, “Pouvoir et impouvoir en matière de musique d’église”, *Analyse musicale* 28 (2004), 33.

⁶ See Thomas Christensen, *Stories of Tonality in the Age of François-Joseph Fétis* (U. of Chicago Press, 2019), 29 and Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 358.

⁷ The most comprehensive study remains Gonnard, *La musique modale*, a thumbnail sketch which ends in 1913 and pays little attention to theoretical discourse. Denis Huneau, “L’approche de la modalité dans les principaux traités d’harmonie de langue française”, in *Musique française. Esthétique et identité en mutation 1892-1992*, ed. Pascal Terrien (Delaunay, 2012), 123–60 surveys some of the major pedagogical texts of the century 1850–1950, showing that they incorporated diatonic modes “timidement et avec beaucoup de retard” (124).

⁸ The best source on the early twentieth century—Felix Wörner, Ullrich Schedeler and Philip Rupprecht (eds), *Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice* (Steiner, 2012)—discusses France almost entirely in relation to polytonality. On the earlier period see (besides the literature on Fétis cited below) Renate Groth, *Die französische Kompositionslehre des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Steiner, 1983), esp. 58–68; Marc Rigaudière, “Harmonielehre und Tonalitätstheorie von Fétis bis Gevaert”, in *Geschichte der Musiktheorie*, vol. 12 *Die Musiktheorie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Teil 3: Frankreich, Belgien, Italien*, ed. Stefan Keym (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2021), 205–56; Nicolas Meeüs, “Théories françaises de l’harmonie et de la tonalité au XIX^e siècle”, in *Le Conservatoire de Paris, 1795-1995. Deux cents ans de pédagogie*, ed. Anne Bongrain and Alain Poirier (Buchen/Chastel, 1999), 259–68 (essentially a reception-study of Catel); id., “Théories musicales à l’époque romantique”, in *Musiques. Une encyclopédie pour le XXI^e siècle*, vol. 4 *Histoire des musiques européennes*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez (Actes Sud/Cité de la musique, 2006), 1049–68.

Scale: An interval pattern that repeats from one octave to the next. The diatonic scale is the pattern ...S[♯]T[♯]T[♯]T[♯]T[♯]T[♯].... Scale is prior to mode and pitch collection. We should call an “F major scale” a one-flat diatonic scale, since multiple modes potentially share that pitch collection. A one-flat diatonic scale and a one-sharp diatonic scale share the same diatonic scale.⁹

Scale position: Absolute position within an asymmetrical scale, without reference to a tonic. Thus *ut* is the member of the diatonic scale with a semitone below and a tone and semitone above, *re* the one with a tone below and a semitone above, etc.¹⁰

Tonic: A pitch class perceived as the most important within a given segment of music.

Mode: A scale with a tonic. We are concerned exclusively with the modes of the diatonic scale: mode of *ut* (= major, ionian), mode of *re* (= dorian), etc. In terms of the diatonic modes, the so-called minor mode is best classified as a mixture of the modes of *la* and *ut*, or as one or the other chromatically modified.

Modal degree: Position in a mode relative to the tonic ($\hat{1}$ = tonic, $\hat{2}$, $\hat{3}$, etc.). Usually called “scale degree”, which I reject for reasons that should now be clear.

Key: A mode plus absolute pitch.

Modulation: Change of key. The diatonic scale affords three kinds of modulation, which I will call Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3:¹¹

Type 1: The tonic migrates from one scale position to another.

Type 2: The diatonic collection changes but the tonic remains the same.

Type 3: Both the scale and the tonic move
 either by the same interval class (Type 3a)
 or by different interval classes (Type 3b).

Type 1 is a transposition of modal degrees within the same pitch collection; Type 2 is a transposition of scale positions to a new pitch collection; Type 3 transposes both. Types 1, 2, and 3b produce a change of mode, while Type 3a transposes the same mode. Conversely, Types 2, 3a, and 3b alter the diatonic collection, while Type 1 is purely diatonic.

Passages of music exhibit scales and tonics, and thereby approximate one or another mode, to varying degrees. Decisions about which notes are tonic and/or diatonic rest on an incalculable number of factors. Modal ambiguity is ubiquitous and has gone by various terms: “pseudo-

⁹ See Nathan L. Lam, “Relative Diatonic Modality in Extended Common-Practice Music” (PhD thesis, Indiana U., Bloomington, 2019), 13–14. The period French terminology—*gamme*, *échelle*, *série*, *mode*, *modalité*, *ton*, *tonalité*, *hauteur*, *modulation*—is a pure chaos, which I shall take on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁰ The concept is introduced (as “diatonic positions”) in *ibid.*, 32. Harold Powers’ term “modal qualities” is similar; see Harold S. Powers, “Mode”, rev. Frans Wiering, in *Grove Music Online* (accessed Dec. 2022).

¹¹ Lam calls my Type 1 “modal tonicization” (Lam, “Relative Diatonic Modality”, 29) and my Type 2 “modal interchange” (after Vincent Persichetti, cited in *ibid.*, 14). Carlo Caballero, “Fauré and Multimodality” (unpublished paper read in abridged form at the 2004 meeting of the American Musicological Society) calls Type 2 “multimodality”; I thank the author for kindly sharing this text. Type 3a is of course “modulation” in the usual sense.

modality”,¹² “neo-modality”,¹³ “tempered modality”,¹⁴ “modalité libre”,¹⁵ “modal inflection”,¹⁶ etc. One can distinguish diatonic-position ambiguity from modal-degree ambiguity. Fig. 3.1 shows a case of diatonic-position ambiguity: G# could be # $\hat{4}$ in D major (i.e. a chromaticism), $\hat{4}$ in D lydian (bringing about a Type 2 modulation), or $\hat{7}$ in A major (an incipient Type 3a modulation)—or conceivably even $\hat{3}$ in E mixolydian, and so on.¹⁷



Fig. 3.1

In the first case, D remains *ut*, but in the second and third it becomes *fa*. Fig. 3.2 shows a case of modal-degree ambiguity: E could be $\hat{1}$ in E phrygian or $\hat{3}$ in C major or $\hat{5}$ in A aeolian, but remains *mi*.¹⁸

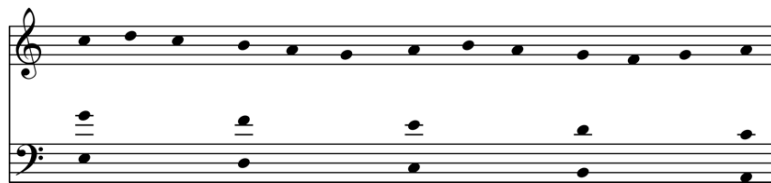


Fig. 3.2

¹² Vincent, *The Diatonic Modes*, 135–39.

¹³ John Clevenger, “The Origins of Debussy’s Style” (PhD thesis, U. of Rochester, 2002), 64–65.

¹⁴ R. Larry Todd, “Late Brahms, Ancient Modes”, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15 (2018), 432.

¹⁵ Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 359.

¹⁶ Nicole Biamonte, “The Modes in the Music of Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms: Historical Context and Musical Function” (PhD thesis, Yale U., 2000), 3–4.

¹⁷ For theoretical considerations see Roland-Manuel, “L’évolution de l’harmonie en France et le renouveau de 1880”, in *Histoire de la musique*, vol. 2 *Du XVIII^e siècle à nos jours*, ed. Roland-Manuel (Gallimard, 1964), 875; Olivier Alain, *L’harmonie* (Presses universitaires de France, 1965), 95; Nicolas Meeùs, “Techniques modales dans l’harmonie des *Mazurkas* de Chopin”, *Analyse musicale* 21 (1990), 103. For analyses see Gonnard, *La musique modale*, 129–32, 145–7, 169–81 and Jean-Pierre Bartoli, “Historicisme, éclectisme et modalité dans *L’Enfance du Christ* d’Hector Berlioz”, *Musurgia* 8.3–4 (2001), 15–16, 21–22. Analyses of Fauré often dwell on modal ambiguity; see e.g. Vincent, *The Diatonic Modes*, 225; Taylor Greer, “Modal Sensibility in Gabriel Fauré’s Harmonic Language”, *Theory and Practice* 16 (1991), esp. 28; Ken Johansen, “Gabriel Fauré, un art de l’équivoque”, *Revue de musicologie* 85.1 (1999), 69–79; Caballero, “Fauré and Multimodality”.

¹⁸ See Lam, “Relative Diatonic Modality”, passim. Cathé’s “modalité non scalaire” rests on a similar observation that plagal progressions can throw the tonic into question; see Philippe Cathé, “Éléments d’une modalité non scalaire en France au début du XX^e siècle trouvés là où on ne les attendait pas, soixante ans plus tôt qu’on ne l’aurait cru”, *Musurgia* 8.3–4 (2001), 65–87.

The strength of each interpretation depends on segmentation in analysis, and shifts from moment to moment in real-time listening.

In my definitions, mode presupposes a tonic; the conceptual relationships can be represented like this:

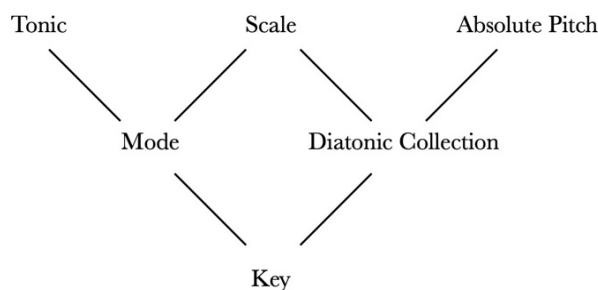


Fig. 3.3

One assigns a passage to the mode of *re*, *mi*, or *ut* in the same way: by identifying the scale and tonic.¹⁹ The question of what makes a tonic, and particularly whether the tonality in “common-practice” music differs in kind from that in Renaissance polyphony or plainchant or 1980s minimalism, remains up for debate.²⁰ The history of that debate being part of our subject, I prefer to embrace all sides within a single term, defined as broadly as possible—as any kind of referentiality, any orientation towards a pitch class perceived as in some way paramount—rather than presupposing distinctions (e.g. between “tonality” and “centricity”).²¹ Unfortunately, this agnostic approach diverges from common parlance and even musicological usage today, where “tonal” usually refers specifically to the major or minor with leading tone, and “modal” to the other six diatonic modes (hereinafter, the “alternative modes”), as though the major were not a mode and dorian or phrygian music had no tonality. “Modal” and “tonal” have been squeezed onto the same spectrum: one reads of music that blends “modality” and “tonality”, or of a historical shift from the “modal system” to the “tonal system”. Music is understood to be non-tonal to the extent that it is modal, and vice versa (hence the alleged “triadic atonality” of the sixteenth century).²² Whatever its theoretical merit, this usage is historiographically useful, since it corresponds to the real historical rift that developed between the major and the alternative modes. The historian wants to be able to refer specifically to music in those marginalised modes, and I will stick with the traditional and concise term “modal”.

¹⁹ Meeùs effectively makes this point (read *centre/centricity* for *tonique/tonalité*): “le problème de la modalité ne peut être distingué totalement de celui de la tonalité. . . . Tel passage qui se joue sur les touches blanches du clavier . . . serait majeur si sa tonique est *ut*, mineur antique (éolien) si elle est *la* . . . L’attribution modale, on le voit, est dans ce cas totalement dépendante de l’identification de la tonalité.” Meeùs, “Techniques modales”, 102.

²⁰ The best introductions are Stanley V. Kleppinger, “Reconsidering Pitch Centricity”, *Theory and Practice* 36.1 (2011), 65–109 and Steven Rings, “Tonic”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Concepts in Music Theory*, ed. Alexander Rehding and Steven Rings (OUP, [2019]), 106–35.

²¹ On the historical meanings of “tonality” the standard reference is Michael Beiche, “Tonalität”, in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, vol. 6 *Si–Z*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht and Albrecht Riethmüller (Steiner, 1992), 412–33; see also Brian Hyer, “Tonality”, in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (CUP, 2008), 726–28.

²² See Edward E. Lowinsky, *Tonality and Atonality in Sixteenth-Century Music* (U. of California Press, 1961).

It goes without saying that my definition of mode diverges in varying degrees from the innumerable, disparate ideas that historians file under this word.²³ According to Harold Powers, these ideas populate the space between the concepts of *scale* on the one hand and *tune* on the other: in its thinnest conceptions, a mode is a mere interval pattern; at the opposite extreme, modes defined by the presence of numerous functions approach the determinacy of melodic figures.²⁴ Here again, I have aimed for the minimal meaningful definition: scale relative to at least one function (a “tonic”). The eight plainchant “modes” (*modes, tons, tonalités, modalités, gammes, échelles...*) familiar to the nineteenth century are both less and more specific.²⁵ On the one hand, they permit inflexion of the diatonic scale (a “hard” or “soft” B) without affecting the modal classification. On the other, tonicity is dispersed among various melodic tones: the final, a weakly defined tone most often called “dominant”, and perhaps the first note or the notes of medial cadences. Factors neither scalar nor centric (ambitus, melodic figures) may enter into the modal definition too. On balance, then, plainchant modes are closer to the “tune” end of Powers’ spectrum, which makes sense if they arose as typologies for classifying existing melodies.

Does stipulating my own definitions create a problem of anachronism? “For ten centuries”, Jacques Chailley warns, “the error of nearly all commentators has been . . . to start from their own age’s conception [of mode] and then try to figure out how it applies to theories or musics that understood things in a completely different way.”²⁶ Instead, we are to “faire table rase” and only discuss historical ideas in their own terms. But such an approach, if really followed, would rule out a history of change over time, which presupposes identity at some fundamental level. It is easy to spot the contradiction in the dictum that “*The notion of ‘mode’ is not ONE notion [but] has transformed over the course of the centuries* such that it can only be defined relative to the time or place under consideration”: how can it transform over time if it is not one thing?²⁷ If Chailley had really begun his own effort to untangle all the historical ideas from a *tabula rasa*, with no preconceptions about what mode is, on what basis could he have decided what to include and what to exclude? The word itself offers no guide (what about “gammes antiques”, “tons d’église”?). We want the history of an idea, not a word, and we can’t write one without deciding what it is. Of course, every definition will resonate more or less with different sources. So I have calibrated my definition of modality to resonate with a considerable but not infinite range of content in French-language sources from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To insist on absolute concordance would be unnecessary and unrealistic: there is a difference between assimilating one idea to another and relating the two, which precisely involves ascertaining difference along with similarity.

²³ The problem has been raised many times, most memorably in Chailley, *L’imbroglio*, esp. 5, 9; see also Carl Dahlhaus, *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality*, trans. Robert O. Gjerdingen (Princeton UP, 1990), 192 and Nicolas Meeùs, “Mode et système. Conceptions ancienne et moderne de la modalité”, *Musurgia* 4.3 (1997), 67–80. Various essays by Harold Powers underline the historical diversity of “mode”; see e.g. Harold Powers, “Is Mode Real? Pietro Aron, the Octenary System, and Polyphony”, *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 16 (1992), 9–52.

²⁴ See Powers, “Mode”.

²⁵ See *ibid.* for an overview.

²⁶ “L’erreur de presque tous les commentateurs a été, depuis dix siècles . . . de partir de la conception que l’on en avait de leur temps pour rechercher ensuite comment l’appliquer à des théories ou à des musiques qui la comprenaient de manière toute différente.” Chailley, *L’imbroglio*, 9.

²⁷ “La notion de « mode » n’est pas UNE notion, valable pour tous les temps et tous les pays. Elle s’est transformée au cours des siècles de telle manière qu’on ne peut la définir qu’en fonction de l’époque et du lieu où l’on l’examine.” *Ibid.*

Part I: Theoretical Conceptions of Modality, 1900–30

Modality and Tonality

Leading-Tone Theories of Tonality

Nineteenth-century discourse on mode divides into two fairly distinct fields: on the one hand, an abstract, theoretical concept of mode (*mode*) enunciated in harmony treatises and speculative theoretical essays; on the other hand, a historical and ethnological awareness of scales or modes (*gammes, échelles, modes, tons*) unfamiliar to the major-minor “tonalité moderne” of European classicism—above all, those of ancient Greece and the medieval Latin West. The relationship seen by contemporaries between historical modes and theoretical modality is a complicated matter; the two might be virtually indistinguishable, as when the seven Ptolemaic octave species are given as “the Greek modes”, or very much not.

Mode in nineteenth-century treatises is a rotation or disposition of a scale—“la manière d’être de la gamme”, as the phrase went—relative to a single fixed point, of which the diatonic scale (always presumed) affords seven.²⁸ Mode is visualised as the position of the semitones in the seven octave species given by the white keys of the piano. What is almost never discussed is the nature of the referential scale member (usually called “tonique”) that determines the permutation, simply glossed as the “point de départ” or “première note de la gamme”.²⁹ Consideration of the grounds on which a pitch class in a passage of real music might be attributed such status, of what it might mean for the passage to be “in” one of the seven theoretical modes, is virtually non-existent before 1900, at least in French.

The concept of tonic certainly occasioned much debate in the nineteenth century but was generally theorised so as to be unavailable in alternative modes—indeed, so as to articulate what it was that made modern European music so different from everything else. Nineteenth-century tonal theory considers pitch relationships with little to no concern for non-pitch salience factors (temporal, melodic, etc.).³⁰ Theorists writing in French tended to follow Rameau in investing tonality in the structure of the diatonic scale, whose semitones seemed to pull ineluctably towards a triad (or at least major third) on *ut*, giving the major a natural supremacy. Different writers proposed different variants of this diatonic tritone as minimum requirements for tonality: the exigent Fétis heard tonality in the dominant seventh chord³¹ (or at least the simultaneous and unprepared combination of *sol*, *si*, and *fa*), while others accepted the prepared V⁷, the V–I cadence, *si* and *fa* together, or even *si* on its own.³² But in every case the leading tone explicitly or implicitly

²⁸ For one example among many see Henri Reber, *Traité d’harmonie* (Colombier, 1862), 5.

²⁹ See e.g. Amélie André-Gedalgé, *Principes de la musique. Cours complet, théorique et pratique* (Énoch, 1905), 96, 118.

³⁰ See Hyer, “Tonality”, 735.

³¹ Strictly speaking we should call it a major-minor seventh or {0, 4, 7, 10}, but Fétis’s claim is precisely that this sonority can only ever be a dominant. See esp. François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l’harmonie*, 4th edn (Brandus, 1849), xxxix.

³² On Fétis’s theory of tonality see esp. *ibid.*, xxxvii–xxxix, xliii, 152 and *id.*, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et Bibliographie générale de la musique*, vol. 1 (Brussels: Méline, Cans & cie, 1837), ccxx–ccxxiii. The secondary literature is vast; see e.g. Thomas Christensen, “Fétis and Emerging Tonal Consciousness”, in *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism*, ed. Ian Bent (CUP, 1996), 37–56 and Bryan Simms, “Choron, Fétis, and the Theory of Tonality”, *Journal of Music Theory* 19.1 (1975), 112–38. Note that “tonalité” in Fétis does not always mean what I mean by “tonality”; see Robert S.

eliminates almost all of the alternative modes (or all of them, except in the last case, since the mode of *fa* has a semitone below its tonic). Historically, the invention of tonality properly speaking (*tonalité moderne*) quickly eliminated the alternative modes, which could only inhabit what Fétis called *tonalité ancienne*—not exactly a total absence of tonality, it seems, but a situation of weak, local gravitations fundamentally unlike the “appellative” charge contained in the dominant seventh.³³ So the “tonic” of a theoretical mode, whatever it was thought to be, was not the same kind of thing as the tonic of tonal theory. No one yet envisaged, or at least ventured in writing, that a non-*ut* scale position might be able to function as the attractive centre of a whole polyphonic texture.

Given that nineteenth-century authors nevertheless do describe music as being “in” modes without leading tones, what then did they think identified it to one mode over another, if not a true tonic? Let us take as exemplary the views of Fétis, the most influential and scrutinised nineteenth-century tonal theorist writing in French. Fétis discussed modality only in terms of plainchant modes defined by, among other things, a final. He does seem to recognise a certain tonal valence in this final—calling it, for instance, a “point of repose”—but never indicates that this phenomenon has any kinship with the tonality inherent in chord V.³⁴ For Fétis, a difference in kind separates the play of melodic affinities from the irresistible charge activated by certain harmonies. A chant mode is just a description of those melodic relationships: a whole texture is major or minor, but only melodies are “in” a mode.

“La note sensible n’y est point nécessaire”: Tonal Theories in Expansion

A new tradition of recognising tonality within modal music took shape between about 1910 and 1930, in a diverse range of sources. In speculative theory, the obscure Xavier Perreau devoted much of a 1908 book to refuting the supposed natural supremacy of the major and the inevitability of its triumph over the alternative modes with the development of harmony.³⁵ In composition pedagogy, the director of the Lille Conservatoire, Émile Ratez, released a harmony treatise in the same year with an appendix on “modes anciens” (the first in French, plainchant accompaniment

Nichols, “Fétis’s Theories of *Tonalité* and the Aesthetics of Music”, *Revue belge de musicologie* 26–27 (1972–73), 116–29. On subsequent debate about the threshold of tonality see Jean Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Harmony in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Historical and Cultural Context of the Principle of Tonality” (PhD thesis, Northwestern U., 2004), 28–29; Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, “Fétis, la naissance de la tonalité moderne et la réception de ses idées au XIX^e siècle”, in *Musica, sive Liber amoricum Nicolas Meeûs. Mélanges offerts au professeur Nicolas Meeûs*, ed. Luciane Beduschi, Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, and Alice Tacaille (U. de Paris-Sorbonne, 2014), 372–77; Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 50, 74, 135.

³³ Fétis sometimes recognises a degree of tonality absent the supposedly crucial V⁷, i.e. in *tonalité ancienne*; on this point I agree with Littlejohn (“Fétis’s Theory of Harmony”, 32, 101, 115–17) that one must take the average of his self-contradictions. By contrast, Dahlhaus, (*Studies on the Origin*, 13) reads *tonalité ancienne* as not in a key at all, while Fétis’s junior contemporary Anatole Loquin argued that *tonalité ancienne* must be not merely *unitonique* but *intonale* (see Ceulemans, “Fétis”, 377).

³⁴ “certaine note qui sert de repos, de point d’appui au chant”. François-Joseph Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire de plain-chant*, rev. edn (Canaux, 1846), 13. Elsewhere Fétis recognises specific characters inherent in each chant mode and attributes them to “la conformation des modes” or “la variété des formes tonales”. Id., *Traité . . . de l’harmonie*, xxix–xxx. Cf. Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Harmony”, 105–06.

³⁵ See Xavier Perreau, *La pluralité des modes et la théorie générale de la musique* (Fischbacher, 1908), esp. 71 [orig. in *La Revue des idées*, 1906].

aside) affirming that “the final goal of all harmonic progressions will always be repose on a tonic, the attractive centre of their motion.”³⁶ At Solesmes in 1923, Dom Jean Hébert Desrocquettes proposed that “Gregorian accompaniment, before being modal, must be *tonal*”, reducing the traditional eight chant modes to a system of tetrachords on C, F, and G, reminiscent of the primary tonal functions.³⁷ In a 1926 compositional manifesto, the orientalist composer E.-C. Grassi distinguished between “modes tonals” (including “les modes antiques”), “modes sans tonalité”, and “modes mixtes”.³⁸ Arthur Lourié, the Russian émigré composer and Catholic convert, tried to couch the relationship in the fashionable jargon of neo-Thomism: “[B]y giving new importance to the mode, by letting it be reborn on new foundations in its relationship to tonality, one finds the means to separate the poles of attraction between tonality and mode and synthesise their two natures.”³⁹ The composer Roland-Manuel praised Debussy, in a popularising survey, for having rediscovered “the laws of *modal* tonality” lost since the Renaissance.⁴⁰ The renowned chemist Georges Urbain, an amateur composer and music theorist, saw a fundamental difference between the ancient modes and their modern harmonic reincarnation, in which “[a] principle that they had until then known nothing of was imposed on them: that of tonality.”⁴¹ Urbain argued that “these modes are entirely compatible with the generalised notion of tonality”, though he qualified that their tonality “always has something indecisive about it. The only forthright tonality is that of the major mode”, and that the dominant seventh “characterises tonality in the highest degree”.⁴² Above all, Charles Kœchlin took to referring, from the late 1920s onwards, to “cet art *tonal* et *modal* tout ensemble” characteristic of contemporary French composers, or to “we French who *love tonality* (in ancient modes or new, what does it matter: it exists in both, and the leading tone is not at all necessary)”; and to lamenting that “modern people, habituated to the dominant seventh and the tonal definiteness that this chord gives, should deny the tonality of the Gregorian modes.”⁴³

³⁶ “Le moment semble donc venu . . . d’exploiter harmoniquement tous les modes mélodiques des anciens ainsi que tout le chromatisme oriental. . . . Néanmoins . . . le but final de toutes les successions harmoniques sera toujours le repos sur une tonique, centre attractif de leurs évolutions.” Émile Ratez, *Traité d’harmonie théorique et pratique* (Leduc, 1908), 143.

³⁷ “l’accompagnement grégorien, avant d’être modal, devra être *tonal*”. Quoted in Lessmann, “«L’anachronisme le plus musical»”, 367–68.

³⁸ Eugène-Cinda Grassi, “Reconstruire”, *Le Ménestrel* (29 Jan. 1926), 45.

³⁹ Arthur Lourié, “The Problem of Modern Religious Music”, trans. Bridget Behrmann and Tamara Levitz, in *Stravinsky and His World*, ed. Tamara Levitz (Princeton UP, 2013), 174–75 [orig. in *L’Art chrétien*, Nov. 1934].

⁴⁰ “les lois de la tonalité *modale*”. Pierre du Colombier and Roland[-]Manuel, *Tableau du XX^e siècle (1900-1933)*, I. *Les arts. Peinture, sculpture, gravure, architecture, cinéma, photographie, musique et danse* (Denoël & Steele, 1933), 305.

⁴¹ “On leur imposa un principe qu’ils avaient ignoré jusqu’alors : celui de la tonalité.” Georges Urbain, *Le tombeau d’Aristoxène. Essai sur la musique* (Doin, 1924), 50.

⁴² “ces modes sont tout à fait compatibles avec la notion généralisée de tonalité”; “la tonalité présente toujours quelque chose d’indécis. La seule tonalité franche est celle du mode majeur”; “caractérise au plus haut point la tonalité”. Ibid., 157, 48–49, 134.

⁴³ Charles Kœchlin, “Sur l’évolution de la musique française avant et après Debussy”, *RM* (April 1935), 277. “nous, Français, qui *aimons la tonalité* (Modes anciens ou nouveaux, peu importe : elle existe dans les uns comme dans les autres, et la note sensible n’y est point nécessaire).” Id., “Tonal ou atonal?”, *Le Ménestrel* (10 April 1936), 117. “que des modernes, habitués à la Septième de Dominante et à la précision tonale que donne cet accord, aient nié la tonalité des modes grégoriens.” Id., “Le XVI^e siècle” [lecture, Berkeley, 17 July 1928], F-Pbmgf, B 399/49, n.p. Cf. id., “Le rôle de Bourgault-Ducoudray et l’enseignement du Conservatoire” [private lecture, 23 Dec. 1915], F-Pbmgf, B 391/7, pg. 15: “ceux qui sont sous l’influence des Allemands les [i.e. the modes] trouvent vagues, sans tonalité définie (à cause du besoin de 7^e de dominante)”.

His disciple Joseph Samson echoed that Fauré's music "fluently draws on the ancient modes, which does not prevent it from being perfectly tonal."⁴⁴ Kœchlin stressed the possibility of hearing a non-*ut* scale position "as a true *tonic*, without ambiguity".⁴⁵ For him, modal music simply displayed "tonal functions less heavily affirmed".⁴⁶

The hypodorian [i.e. mode of *la*] is not really vague: it is supply and subtly tonal, with a discreet precision that does not constitute enslavement and leaves the door open to modulation. The absence of a leading tone is in no way an obstacle to concluding firmly when the shape of the phrase lends itself to it . . . But the conclusion is less peremptory than it sometimes becomes when the minor retains the leading tone and avails itself of the dominant seventh.⁴⁷

Thus the floating sense of key in (for instance) Renaissance polyphony, which Fétis heard as tonal weakness, Kœchlin preferred to hear as tonal multivalence: alternative modes brim with "modulations that are not openly declared but suggested".⁴⁸

This new development responded to, among other things, a relaxation in theories of tonality around the turn of the century, in the context of a general backlash against Fétis's great influence.⁴⁹ The forgotten composer-theorist Anselme Vinée led the way with a 1901 treatise, expanded in 1909, that rejected the what he considered the rigid, artificial dividing line between "the so-called modern tonality" and "almost all other musical systems", created by "overly simplistic" leading-tone theories of tonality (he is particularly scathing towards Fétis).⁵⁰ He proposed instead to "embrace all possible tonalities within a general system", which turns out to be nothing more than the diatonic modes (minus that of *si*).⁵¹ For Vinée, this meant proving that these modes could each be given a firm tonic, a "centre around which gravitates the musical discourse, and which form[s] the element of its conclusion."⁵² Presenting his project to the Société

⁴⁴ "fait couramment appel aux modes anciens, ce qui ne l'empêche pas d'être parfaitement tonale." Joseph Samson, *Palestrina, ou la Poésie de l'exactitude* (Geneva: Henn, 1939), 53.

⁴⁵ "L'allure de la mélodie et la façon dont l'enchaînement est réalisé pourront nous amener à entendre le *sol* final, et sans aucune ambiguïté [*si*] pour nous, comme une véritable *tonique*." Charles Kœchlin, "Évolution de l'harmonie. Période contemporaine, depuis Bizet et César Franck jusqu'à nos jours", in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 2, vol. 1, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1925), 678. Cf. id., "Les tendances de la musique moderne française", in the same vol., 95–96 and id., *Traité de l'harmonie*, vol. 1 (Eschig, 1928), 104: "Il est nécessaire, en certains cas, de savoir '*entendre en Sol, malgré le Fa*'."

⁴⁶ "fonctions tonales moins lourdement affirmées". Id., "Sur l'avenir de la musique modale", *Les Tablettes de la Schola* (Jan. 1935), n.p. [written c. 1932].

⁴⁷ "L'hypodorien n'est pas réellement vague ; il est souplement et subtilement tonal ; il l'est avec une précision discrète qui ne constitue pas un esclavage, et laisse la porte entr'ouverte à des modulations. L'absence de sensible n'empêche aucunement de conclure avec netteté lorsque s'y prête le sens de la phrase . . . Mais la conclusion est moins étriquée qu'elle ne devient, parfois, avec un mineur qui conserve la sensible et se sert de la septième de Dominante." Id., *Traité de l'harmonie*, vol. 2 (Eschig, 1930), 5. See also *ibid.*, 127–30 and vol. 1, 104; id., "Évolution de l'harmonie", 672, 674, 679.

⁴⁸ "ces modulations non ouvertement signifiées, mais comme suggérées". Id., *Précis des règles du contrepoint* (Heugel, 1926), 133.

⁴⁹ On which see Littlejohn, "Fétis's Theory of Harmony", 12.

⁵⁰ "théories trop simplistes"; "la tonalité dite moderne"; "presque tous les autres systèmes musicaux"; "une ligne de démarcation rigide". Anselme Vinée, *Essai d'un système général de musique (Étude sur la tonalité)* (Fischbacher, 1901), 3.

⁵¹ "embrasser dans un système général toutes les tonalités possibles". *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵² "le centre autour duquel gravite le discours musical et en former l'élément de conclusion". Id., *Principes du système musical et de l'harmonie théorique et appliquée* (Hamelle, 1909), 124.

Fig. 3.4: From Anselme Vinée, *Essai d'un système générale de musique (Étude sur la tonalité)*, 24–26

Mode of Fa

Two staves of music in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains a series of chords: F4-A4, F#4-A4, Bb4, C5, C5, Bb4, Bb4, F4-A4, F4-A4. The bass staff contains a series of notes: F3, F3, F3, F3, F#3, Fb3, F#3, F4, F4, F4.

Mode of Sol

Two staves of music in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains a series of chords: G4-B4, G4-B4, Ab4, G#4-B4, F4-A4, F4-A4, Fb4-A4, Fb4-A4, G4-B4, G4-B4. The bass staff contains a series of notes: G3, G3, G3, G3, G4, G4, G4, G4, G#4, G#4, G#4.

Mode of La

Two staves of music in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains a series of chords: A4-C5, A4-C5, B4, B4, Ab4, Ab4, Ab4, Ab4, A4-C5, A4-C5. The bass staff contains a series of notes: A3, A3, A3, A3, A3, A3, A3, A3, A#3, A#3, A#3.

Two staves of music in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains a series of chords: B4, B4, Bb4, Bb4, Bb4, Bb4, Bb4, Bb4, B4, B4. The bass staff contains a series of notes: B3, B3, B3, B3, B3, B3, B3, B3, B#3, B#3, B#3.

Mode of Re

Two staves of music in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains a series of chords: D4-F4, D4-F4, Eb4, D4-F4, D4-F4, D#4-F4, D#4-F4. The bass staff contains a series of notes: D3, D3, D3, D3, D3, D3, D3, D3, D#3, D#3, D#3.

Mode of Mi

Two staves of music in 2/4 time. The treble staff contains a series of chords: E4-G4, E4-G4, F4, F4, F#4, F#4, F#4, F#4, E4-G4, E4-G4. The bass staff contains a series of notes: E3, E3, E3, E3, E3, E3, E3, E3, F3, F3, F3.

internationale de musique in 1913, he took issue with Louis Laloy's dictum that "the principle of tonality is fundamentally contrary to the principle of modality. . . . Music must therefore choose". "What are the modes if not the parts of a whole which is tonality?" Vinée asked; "I prefer to choose the whole."⁵³ Though Vinée still only reckoned tonality on the basis of pitch relations, he reckoned it quite generously: any perfect triad approached by interval class 5 in the bass (not the *basse fondamentale*) becomes a tonic.⁵⁴ He cared not the slightest what harmony was built on the preceding "dominant", indeed proposing a vast panoply of "perfect cadences fully determinative of the key" for his six modes, chromatic alterations included (see Fig. 3.4 for some of the more outlandish specimens).⁵⁵ This strategy of locating tonality in mere fifth-relations, with or without a leading tone, would prove a favourite way to reconcile it with alternative modes. Émile Ratez followed Vinée in always clinching his "modal" progressions with bass motion to a "tonic" from a "dominant" always on $\hat{5}$, sometimes borrowed from the parallel major and sometimes not (Fig. 3.5).



Fig. 3.5: Émile Ratez, *Traité d'harmonie théorie et pratique*, 134

Auguste Sérieyx likewise attributed tonality to fifth-relations (this time in the *basse fondamentale*) in his *Cours de grammaire musicale* (1924). As a harmonic dualist (more on that below), Sérieyx treated ascending and descending fifths almost equally, making various degrees of tonal closure available in six of the diatonic modes.⁵⁶ Georges Urbain, another dualist, regarded tonality as a perception susceptible to conditioning, noting that in the minor "the leading tone no longer seems necessary, and we find a certain charm in eliminating it."⁵⁷ He argued that tonal habits of listening had been extended into the alternative modes such that the perfect fourth between $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{7}$ in the mode of

⁵³ "Or que sont pour moi les modalités, sinon les parties d'un tout qui est la tonalité? Et je préfère choisir tout." Id., "La pluralité des gammes appliquée à l'accompagnement du chant populaire" [lecture, March 1913], F-Pn, FOL-VM7-18965 [<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100760321>]. Cf. Louis Laloy, *Aristoxène de Tarente et la musique de l'antiquité* (Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1904), 128: "Le principe de la tonalité est, au fond, contraire au principe de la modalité. . . . La musique doit donc choisir".

⁵⁴ See Vinée, *Principes du système musical*, 69, 124–28.

⁵⁵ "des cadences parfaites bien déterminatives de la tonalité." Id., *Essai d'un système général*, 24.

⁵⁶ See Auguste Sérieyx, *Cours de grammaire musicale* (*Le Ménestrel*, 1924), 247–52, 264–65, 270.

⁵⁷ "Sa sensible ne semble plus nécessaire, et l'on trouve un charme à sa suppression." Urbain, *Le tombeau d'Aristoxène*, 159.

la, for example, retained the same need to resolve as the tritone between the same degrees in the modern minor with leading tone.

Only slowly did tonal theorists begin to concern themselves with non-pitch salience factors. The first to do so, in 1922, was perhaps Maurice Touzé, another composer-theorist: “Any scale [*échelle sonore*] can be presented in different modes by giving more importance, through duration, intensity, repetition, to the note that one wants to impose on the ear as tonic. In every case, *there are as many possible modes as sounds* in the octave.”⁵⁸ However, Touzé may have been thinking melodically, since he was writing on “la musique orientale”. Kœchlin certainly wrote of polyphonic tonality as a complex product of independent factors in fluid interaction, without elaborating in any great depth. In his *Traité de l’harmonie*, he warns the student: “writing in these modes is a delicate matter and in order to remain *tonal* one has to know what one is doing. For the melodic line enters into play, and all manner of subtleties in the realisation, when it comes to this tonal impression.”⁵⁹ Georges Urbain showed the clearest appreciation for the importance of non-pitch factors, specifically rhythm, in tonicity: having observed that alternative modes generally provide fewer harmonic resources for asserting the tonic, he noted that modern composers, beginning with the Russian nationalists, used pedals to assert a modal tonic, anticipating the concept of “tonic assertion” developed sixty years later in response to “neocentric” minimalism.⁶⁰

Hearing Tonal Functions in Alternative Modes

A parallel development in listening habits can be pieced together from reported reactions to modal harmony. Numerous anecdotes attest that, even into the twentieth century, listeners habituated to major-minor tonality struggled to make sense of alternative modes in terms of tonal function, finding them monochrome or aimless or simply baffling. In 1895 the harmony of Renaissance polyphony still seemed “incomprehensible”, “strange”, and “inexplicable” to those unversed in its “tonalité”, one priest reported.⁶¹ Another complained in 1904 of “the most disparate and amorphous harmonies” in neo-Palestrinian music.⁶² The notion of an inert, functionally undifferentiated *tonalité ancienne* to which Fétis consigned modal music cast a long shadow; as late as 1908, Edgar Tinel invoked it when framing a narrative of musical evolution from Palestrina to Bach: “A clear and marked feeling of tonality was to emerge from the vague and floating modes

⁵⁸ “Étant donnée une échelle sonore quelconque, on peut l’exposer dans différents modes en donnant plus d’importance par la durée, l’intensité, la répétition à la note qu’on veut imposer à l’oreille comme tonique. Dans tous les cas, *il y a autant de modes possibles que de sons donnés* dans l’octave.” Maurice Touzé, “La musique orientale et la loi des quintes”, *Le Monde musical* (30 Sept. 1928), 297.

⁵⁹ “L’écriture, avec ces modes, est assez délicate et si l’on veut rester *tonal*, il faut bien savoir ce qu’on fait. Car la ligne mélodique entre en jeu, et mainte subtilité de réalisation, lorsqu’il s’agit de cette impression tonale.” Kœchlin, *Traité de l’harmonie*, vol. 2, 5. Cf. n. 45 above.

⁶⁰ See Urbain, *Le tombeau d’Aristoxène*, 50, 64, 156.

⁶¹ “incompréhensible”; “étrange et inexplicable”. François Perriot quoted in [Jean Artigarum], *Rapport officiel du Congrès de chant grégorien et de musique religieuse tenu à Bordeaux les 9, 10 et 11 juillet 1895* (Bordeaux: Œuvre des bons-livres, 1895), 29–30.

⁶² “les harmonies les plus disparates et les plus informes”. Jules Boddaert, “La musique moderne à l’église”, in *Compte-rendu général du Congrès de musique religieuse d’Arras* (Arras: Procure générale, 1904), 73.

[*modalités*] of the medieval harmonic system”.⁶³ Who could prefer the *vague et flottant* to the *franc et net*? Secular versions of progress could show even less sympathy: in an 1890 review-essay of orientalist works by Bourgault-Ducoudray and the Belgian priest-composer Erasme Raway, the Wagnerite critic Louis de Romain waved away alternative modes as “primitive forms, whose vagueness and indecisiveness sooner or later engender a tiresome monotony”, contrasting Raway’s “indecisive” melody and “vague and mystical tonality like that of our ecclesiastical chants” to “the clearly settled modes”, major and minor.⁶⁴

Others heard not so much a negation as a perversion of tonal function, not soporific but positively disconcerting. In 1888 many organists reportedly still found the progressions of Niedermeyer-style chant accompaniment “anti-musical, disagreeable, brutal, etc., etc., having nothing whatsoever to do with the sensations produced by the music of today.”⁶⁵ A decade later, the chant expert Antonin Lhoumeau warned that in order to accompany the liturgical melodies “we have to distance ourselves from our modern habits and create a harmonic language (choice of chords, cadences, etc.) that often confounds us, so strange does it seem.”⁶⁶

Tastes had evolved by 1922, when Paul Berthier reported that “[o]ur ears have grown used to [the *modes ecclésiastiques*], no doubt thanks to Gregorian chant accompaniments, some of which are full of charm”.⁶⁷ In 1925 René de Castéra measured the distance covered since 1892, when Charles Bordes had held his first rehearsals of Renaissance polyphony: “One struggles to imagine today how difficult it was back then to initiate these choristers, to whom modes without a leading tone or G minor without E♭ seemed so strange.”⁶⁸ Yet the habit of listening against an implied background of major or modern minor endured: interwar sources often marvel at the “so intensely expressive colours of the archaic *modalités*” as though they represent deviations from that normative structure.⁶⁹ Their designations—“sol mineur sans mi♭”, “la mineur avec si♭”, etc.—imply the same thing. The habit partly explains why pioneers of modal harmony such as Vinée and Ratez, with their clumsy cadences, tried to produce tonal closure in alternative modes by simply adapting the syntax of the major (notwithstanding a warning from Xavier Perreau against

⁶³ “Un sentiment tonal net et franc se dégagera des modalités vagues et flottantes du système harmonique médiéval”. Edgar Tinel, *Pie X et la musique sacrée* (Schola cantorum, 1909), 7–8. Cf. Ch. 2, 82.

⁶⁴ “formes primitives, dont le vague et l’indécision finissent par engendrer à la longue une fatigante monotonie”; “modes clairement tranchés”; “la nature indécise de sa mélodie, sa tonalité vague et mystique comme celles de nos chants d’église”. Louis de Romain, *Essais de critique musicale* (Lemerre, 1890), 186, 189.

⁶⁵ “antimusicales, désagréables, brutales, etc., etc., pas du tout en rapport avec les sensations qui sont la résultante de la musique d’aujourd’hui.” Jean de Murris [*sic*, pseudonym], “Au sujet du plain-chant”, *La Maîtrise* (1 May 1888), 1. For similar earlier examples see Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 63–64. Fétis found cadences with low 7̂ “affreuse[s]” (Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Tonality”, 235–36), while Gevaert called them “barbares”, as quoted in Pieter Mannaerts, “Gevaert and the Study of Plainchant”, *Revue belge de musicologie* 64 (2010), 136.

⁶⁶ “nous devons nous abstraire de nos habitudes modernes et nous créer une langue harmonique (choix d’accords, cadences, etc.) qui souvent nous déroutent, tant elle nous semble étrange.” Antonin Lhoumeau, “De l’accompagnement du chant grégorien”, *TSG* (Jan. 1898), 15.

⁶⁷ “L’oreille s’y est faite, sans doute grâce aux accompagnements de chant grégorien, dont certains sont pleins de charme.” Paul Berthier, “L’écriture moderne de la musique d’église”, *La Vie et les Arts liturgiques* (June 1923) 357.

⁶⁸ “On a peine à imaginer aujourd’hui la difficulté qu’il y avait alors de styler ces choristes à qui les modes sans sensible, le sol mineur sans mi♭, paraissaient si étranges.” René de Castéra, “La fondation de la Schola cantorum”, in *La Schola Cantorum. Son histoire depuis sa fondation jusqu’en 1925* [ed. Guy de Lioncourt] (Bloud & Gay, 1927), 5.

⁶⁹ “couleurs si intensivement expressives des *modalités* archaïques.” Joseph Angot, “Les utilisations profanes du chant grégorien”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (Dec. 1920), 89.

“systematic imitation of the fundamental harmonies of the mode [*gamme*] of *do*”).⁷⁰ “In principle,” Ratez averred, “all the harmonies of the major and minor modes can be applied to the other diatonic modes”, and he indeed simply traces his sample progressions on the I–IV–V–I scheme.⁷¹ The opposite approach, that of asserting tonal functions against the V–I axis, was more typical of Gregorian accompaniment, which from Niedermeyer onward attempted to project the melodic functions of the chant modes into their harmonisation.⁷²

“Il faut un centre d’attraction”: Tonality Universalised

When asserting the importance of tonal closure in modal music, authors such as Ratez, Kœchlin, and Lourié and also Maurice Emmanuel betray a certain anxiety.⁷³ The idea of tonality, as many historians have pointed out, attracted a rush of theoretical and ideological investment precisely at the moment when an atonal future began to loom on the horizon.⁷⁴ Somewhere between 1905 and 1925, “tonality” became a beleaguered citadel to hold at all costs the rallying cry of a new anti-avant-garde that had stopped accepting musical innovations after middle-period Debussy, if not before. This new impulse to make “tonality” the indispensable foundation of all music worth the name could lead to “modality” being annexed to “tonality”. An anti-modernist polemic by Saint-Saëns from 1913 provides a good example: surveying the grand sweep of musical evolution, Saint-Saëns declares that “to overstep the limits of tonality (and under this term we include the ancient modes that engendered it) is to return to the sources from which music began: the sounds of nature, birdsong, animal cries.”⁷⁵ Elsewhere, Saint-Saëns characterises “les modes anciens” as fairly alien to “la tonalité” at least in its modern form, but here “la tonalité” becomes the essential criterion separating music from noise. And since Saint-Saëns did not regard Medieval or

⁷⁰ “imitation systématique des harmonies fondamentales de la gamme de *do*”. Perreau, *La pluralité des modes*, 38. In the development of harmonic modality as Gonnard narrates it (*La musique modale*, 72, 84, 91–96, 247, adumbrated in Chailley, *L’imbroglio*, 9), rudimentary attempts to replicate the V–I axis or the melodic functions of plainchant in alternative modes gave way to more enlightened efforts to develop a syntax for each mode from its intrinsic structure, as in Maurice Emmanuel’s *Traité de l’accompagnement modal de psaumes* or Sérieyx’s dualism. Lessmann observes that modal chant accompaniment avoided the V⁷ and even the V–I cadence as too characteristically major, even after having accepted other dissonances (“« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 363, 371); see also Philippe Cathé, “Le *Traité de la polyphonie modale* de Charles Kœchlin”, in *Polytonalité-Polymodalité. Histoire et actualité*, ed. Michel Fischer and Danièle Pistone (U. de Paris-Sorbonne/Observatoire musical français, 2005), 171.

⁷¹ “En principe toutes les harmonies des modes majeur et mineur peuvent s’appliquer aux autres modes diatoniques.” Ratez, *Traité*, 129.

⁷² See e.g. Guy de Lioncourt, “L’accompagnement du chant grégorien”, *Les Tablettes de la Schola* (April–May 1928), 73: “il est impossible d’attribuer aux modes grégoriens des fonctions tonales analogues à celles de notre majeur ou de notre mineur : la teneur [i.e. dominant], qui est d’une importance mélodique considérable, importance qui doit se retrouver dans l’harmonie, n’est pas toujours à la quinte ou à la quarte de la finale. Il y a donc d’autres fonctions, qui seront fournies dans chaque mode par les degrés les plus souvent employés dans les mélodies, et ceux qui servent le plus fréquemment de repos.”

⁷³ On Emmanuel see below, n. 113.

⁷⁴ See e.g. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Schedeler, and Philip Rupprecht, “Introduction”, in *Tonality 1900–1950*, ed. Wörner, Schedeler, and Rupprecht, 11. Hyer (“Tonality”, 746) claims that “[b]efore 1910 . . . tonality—as a construct that informs the production and consumption of music—had a modest historical provenance”.

⁷⁵ “si l’on franchit les limites de la tonalité (et dans ce terme nous englobons les modes anciens qui l’ont engendrée), on retrouve les sources d’où la musique est sortie : les bruits de la nature, le chant des oiseaux, les cris d’animaux.” Camille Saint-Saëns, “L’évolution musicale”, *L’Écho de Paris* (4 May 1913).

Renaissance music as just noise, *les modes anciens* end up by default on the tonal side of the grand binary. For an even better example of how the new opposition *tonal/atonal* could push the “tonal” and the “modal” closer together, let us cut ahead to April of 1946, when a little item with the header “Modal ou tonal” appeared in the bulletin of the École César Franck, the old-believer remnant of d’Indy’s Schola cantorum. “These days one hears talk of nothing but *style modal*”, grumbled Guy de Lioncourt; had he not stumped for modes decades earlier, when no one listened? Yet this latest change in the winds of fashion brought not even belated vindication, for in many cases “the flag of modality is flown only to wreak havoc on tonality”:⁷⁶

[Modality] must not consist in eliminating the notion of tonic, but in permitting the scale to vary its intervals, which is another thing altogether. Modality and tonality should not exclude each other but coexist in a good relationship and complement each other. In melody, modality contributes new inflexions and shapes. Elsewhere, in the harmonic domain, it creates functions which wonderfully renew (and not abolish) those of the classical tradition . . . But this happy development of modal possibilities, so fecund when the sense of a tonic is safeguarded, would in the contrary case only lead to absolute disorientation. From the moment harmony is employed, there must be a centre of attraction, a function of repose around which all motion gravitates.⁷⁷

If Lioncourt had Messiaen’s recently publicised “modes” of limited transposition in mind, he was making a valid point about the stretching of the modal label. His own little manifesto too registers a drift of modalism, but in the opposite direction.

Many who rallied to the defence of “tonality” were involved, like Lioncourt, in church music, and therefore obliged to take an interest in plainchant, modes and all. For Auguste Sérieyx, tonality stood for God, the King, the Church, the *patrie*, and natural hierarchy: “the tonal order presents itself to our minds as the faithful image of the order of the world, and a striking analogy appears between the organisation of sounds in tonality and that of humans in society.”⁷⁸ He wrote music theory treatises to aid the “effort de réaction” against “the evil besetting modern times” and to abet true progress which lay in “le perfectionnement de la *tonalité*” at the Schola cantorum.⁷⁹ But Sérieyx the Catholic could not simply denigrate the music that came before modern tonality, as a

⁷⁶ “à l’heure actuelle, on n’entend plus parler que de style modal”; “le fanion modal n’est arboré que pour faire pièce à la tonalité”. Guy de Lioncourt, “Modal ou tonal”, *École César Franck. Circulaire* (April 1946), n.p. Sérieyx too came to worry that modal revival (which he credited to TLS) had descended into a “fétichisme des modes”. Auguste Sérieyx, “Primauté du grégorien”, *TSG* (March 1928), 5.

⁷⁷ “[La modalité] ne doit pas consister à supprimer la notion de tonique, mais à permettre à la gamme de varier ses intervalles, ce qui est fort différent. Modalité et tonalité n’ont pas à s’exclure, mais à vivre en bonne intelligence et à se compléter. La modalité apporte à la mélodie des inflexions et des dessins nouveaux. Elle crée d’autre part, dans le domaine harmonique des fonctions qui renouvellent fort heureusement (sans les supprimer) celles de toutes la tradition classique . . . Mais cet heureux développement des possibilités modales, si fécondes quand le sentiment d’une tonique est sauvegardé, ne ferait, dans le cas contraire, qu’engendrer l’indécision absolue. Du moment qu’on emploie l’harmonie, il faut un centre d’attraction, une fonction de repos, autour de laquelle gravitent tous les mouvements.” Lioncourt, “Modal ou tonal”. Cf. id., *Un Témoignage sur la musique et sur la vie au XX^e siècle* (L’Arche de Noé, 1956), 111 (“mon désir de montrer l’union possible du modal et du tonal”) and id., “Préface”, in Paul Berthier, *Réflexions sur l’art et la vie de Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)* (Picard, 1957), 5 (adaptation of modality to tonality is an “entreprise difficile — où réside peut-être le secret de l’avenir”).

⁷⁸ “L’ordre tonal se présente ainsi à notre esprit comme une image fidèle de l’ordre du monde, et une analogie saisissante apparaît, entre l’organisation des sons en tonalité et celle des humains en société.” Auguste Sérieyx, *Les trois états de la tonalité* (Schola Cantorum, 1910), 25.

⁷⁹ “Le mal dont souffrent les temps modernes...”. Id., *Cours de grammaire musicale*, vii (quoting Jacques Maritain’s *Antimoderne*); id., *Les trois états*, 27.

nineteenth-century progressivist would have done; so he had to subsume it under the concept of tonality. Thus, when he divides tonality into three historical-theoretical stages (“immobilité”, “oscillation”, “translation”), in other respects roughly congruent to Fétis’s four tonal “ordres”, he affirms clearly that even music in the first stage is in a key: “logically and organically, the phenomenon of *tonality* (immobility) is prior to that of the *cadence* (oscillation) and that of *modulation* (translation).”⁸⁰

The same defensive conservatism explains why the Schola cantorum in general never became the hub of modalism one might have expected, given its founders’ interest in folksong and old church music. “I think that some very interesting things could be written in the polyphonic style with these ancient modes [*tonalités*]”, mused Alexandre Guilmant in an early issue of the *Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, and the Schola’s liturgical organ series, modelled on Guilmant’s *L’Organiste liturgiste*, is indeed its most modal creation.⁸¹ But the society for church-music reform transformed into an *arrière-gardiste* Catholic conservatoire under the sway of d’Indy, whose grounding in Franckian-Wagnerian harmony and Riemannian theory left him “irreducibly attached to the tonal system”, as Gilles Saint-Arroman writes.⁸² Despite the modal passages in his compositions, d’Indy the writer shows remarkably little interest in modality; there is nothing in his writings to corroborate Amédée Gastoué’s later claim, in an obituary, that “[f]rom the beginning of his career, d’Indy had been struck by the vitality that the modes and rhythms of plainchant [*le cantilène liturgique*], like those of old French folksong, could impart to modern music.”⁸³ If so, he kept remarkably quiet about it. To Louis Laloy it was obvious that when Debussy recovered “the variety of modes” by “overthrow[ing] the barricade of tonality”, he produced an aesthetic “diametrically opposed to that of the Schola.”⁸⁴

There remains the question of d’Indy’s harmonic dualism, transplanted from Germany and propagated by his innumerable students.⁸⁵ Henri Gonnard, no doubt recognising the dualist bases of later theories of modal harmony, sees a modal milestone in the d’Indy–Sérieyx *Cours de*

⁸⁰ “logiquement et organiquement, le fait de la *tonalité* (immobilité) est antérieur à celui de la *cadence* (oscillation) et à celui de la *modulation* (translation).” Id., *Les trois états*, 9. Cf. Vincent d’Indy and Auguste Sérieyx, *Cours de composition musicale*, book 1 (Durand, [1902]), 41: “le principe de tonalité se manifeste [dans le chant grégorien], mais sous une forme exclusivement *mélodique*”.

⁸¹ “Je pense qu’il y a des choses très intéressantes à écrire dans le style polyphonique avec ces tonalités anciennes”. Alexandre Guilmant, “Du rôle de l’orgue dans les offices liturgiques”, *TSG* (Sept. 1895), 11. See also Lazare Perruchot, “Nos concours de mai et de juin”, *TSG* (June 1895), 12: “Les mélodies grégoriennes peuvent, à notre avis, engendrer toute une floraison nouvelle de musique d’orgue si l’on veut bien en approfondir et les modalités et les rythmes”. On Bordes and *versets* see below, 156.

⁸² “irréductiblement attaché au système tonal”. Gilles Saint-Arroman, “Introduction”, in Vincent d’Indy, *Écrits de Vincent d’Indy*, vol. 1 1877-1903, ed. Gilles Saint-Arroman (Actes Sud/Bru Zane, 2019), 51. See also Huneau, “L’approche de la modalité”, 150.

⁸³ “Dès le début de sa carrière, d’Indy, avait été frappé de la vitalité que les modes et les rythmes de la cantilène liturgique, comme ceux de la vieille chanson de France, pouvaient insuffler à la musique moderne.” Amédée Gastoué, “Vincent d’Indy, 1851-1931”, *La Vie intellectuelle* (10 March 1932), 522. The slight exception is Vincent d’Indy, *Chansons populaires du Vivarais* (Durand, 1900), iii, where d’Indy explains his preference to preserve the “modalité ancienne” in his harmonisations.

⁸⁴ “Ainsi se trouvent renversées les barrières des tonalités”; “la variété des modes”; “On voit aisément qu’une pareille esthétique est exactement opposée à celle de la Schola”. Louis Laloy, “Les partis musicaux en France”, *La Grande Revue* (25 Dec. 1907), 796.

⁸⁵ See Cédric Segond-Genovesi, “*Nove sed non nova* ? Penser et enseigner l’harmonie à la Schola Cantorum”, in *Étudier, enseigner et composer à la Schola Cantorum (1896-1962)*, ed. Sylvie Douche and Cédric Segond-Genovesi (Aedam Musicae, 2022), 251–307.

composition musicale.⁸⁶ Dualism certainly underpins the two deepest dives into modal harmony in French before World War II, namely Sérieyx's *Cours de grammaire musicale* and Urbain's *Tombeau d'Aristoxène*. The abbé Brun, a d'Indy student, invoked dualism somewhat vaguely as a key to moving between "modern" and "ancient" modes, when speaking on the *cantique grégorien* at the 1911 congress on church music in Paris: starting from "l'harmonie grégorienne", he suggested,

the modern *cantique* can and does make frequent excursions into the major and minor keys [*tonalités*], whence the need to pass smoothly from the ancient modes [*tons*] to modern colours. This is not so revolutionary as one might think: we know that the true minor . . . is nothing other than a church mode [*ton*]; so the door between them is quite naturally open.⁸⁷

But even if dualists regarded the mode of *mi* (symmetrical to the major) as the "true minor", they treated it as "descending" or plagal, reckoning its tonic triad downwards (*mi–ut–la*) and therefore effectively assimilating it to the mode of *la*, the mode with a minor I, IV, and V to mirror those of the major.⁸⁸ And in practice *d'indyste* publications often let the raised $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{7}$ back in, after duly fulminating against their artificiality and absurdity.⁸⁹ Dualist homage to the mode of *mi* was one thing, composition in the mode of *mi* another. As the name suggests, dualism was conceived to reinforce the major-minor binary centred on the polarity of subdominant, tonic, and dominant, and not to open the door to alternative modes (which Riemann certainly did not want).⁹⁰

"Deux choses très différentes": Non-Tonal Conceptions of Modality

The reconciliation of "tonality" and "modality" is only half of the story: what some joined together, others put asunder, in just as wide a range of sources. Even as writers like Vinée and Perreau proposed liberal notions of tonality, leading-tone theories did not simply go away. Albert Lavignac, who trained countless famous musicians in harmony at the Paris Conservatoire, put little faith in the movement to reconcile tonality with alternative modes:

Modality and Tonality are two very different things. The ancients used the modes without any concern for tonality, of which they knew nothing. The moderns have tried to conserve the ancient modes by forcing them into the mould of tonality. They have succeeded only very imperfectly, deforming them beyond recognition.⁹¹

⁸⁶ See Gonnard, *La musique modale*, esp. 258.

⁸⁷ "Le cantique moderne peut faire, et fait de fréquentes incursions dans les tonalités majeures et mineurs, d'où la nécessité de passer sans heurt des tons anciens aux couleurs modernes. Cela n'est pas aussi révolutionnaire qu'on pourrait le croire ; on sait, en effet, que le véritable mineur . . . n'est autre qu'un ton ecclésiastique, la porte de communication est donc tout naturellement ouverte." François Brun, "Le cantique d'inspiration grégorienne", in *Comptes rendus, rapports et vœux du Congrès parisien et régional de chant liturgique et de musique d'église. Paris, les 12, 13, 14 et 15 juin 1911* (Schola cantorum, 1912), 163. Brun repeated this in his exchange with Verhelst cited in Ch. 1, 77.

⁸⁸ See e.g. d'Indy and Sérieyx, *Cours*, book 1, 112 and Urbain, *Le tombeau d'Aristoxène*, 140.

⁸⁹ See e.g. Sérieyx, *Cours de grammaire musicale*, 244–46; Cécile Gauthiez, *Leçons pratiques de culture musicale, première année* (Rouart Lerolle, 1926), 21; Albert Bertelin, *Traité de composition musicale*, vol. 1 (Schola cantorum, 1931), 30–31.

⁹⁰ See Biamonte, "The Modes", 51 and the literature summarised in Alexandra Kieffer, "Riemann in France: Jean Marnold and the 'Modern' Music-Theoretical Ear", *Music Theory Spectrum* 38.1 (2016), 5.

⁹¹ "La Modalité et la Tonalité sont deux choses très différentes. Les anciens pratiquaient les modes sans aucun souci de la tonalité, qu'ils ignoraient. Les modernes ont voulu conserver les modes anciens en les faisant entrer de force dans le moule de la tonalité. Ils n'y sont parvenus que très imparfaitement et qu'en les déformant au point de les rendre

For Lavignac, a tonic requires a perfect fifth above and below it, and a leading tone; he thus eliminates the modes of *fa* and *si* from polyphony, and adds leading tones to the remaining four alternative modes—indeed deforming them beyond recognition.⁹² The musicologist Jules Combarieu apparently regarded tonality as a strictly harmonic affair uninvolved with modality: whereas major-minor melodies are “subjugated to a fundamental note”, he explained in a 1894 article, “plainchant knows nothing of this law: it sows independence and diffusion where we are used to seeing cohesion and unity; its modes [*gammes*] resemble little systems of constellations from which attractive, centripetal force is absent.”⁹³ His Belgian colleague Ernest Closson objected that such absence of tonality “would be the negation of music itself” and recognised tonality, and even attraction to non-*ut* tonics, in melodic relationships; but in polyphony, he felt that the major or the minor always gets the upper hand, for reasons not explained.⁹⁴ The future Institut grégorien director Auguste Le Guennant declared in 1920 that “try as one might, no fusion is possible” between “two very distinct categories of the musical language: MODALITY and TONALITY”.⁹⁵ He had just lambasted a collection of choruses to be sung in alternation with verses of plainchant as a “bizarre assemblage *showing not the slightest concern for tonal unity, EVEN THE MOST DISTANT*”.⁹⁶ In a letter of protest, the compiler pleaded incomprehension: what could be more unified than the motets in C major and A minor proposed for a chant in mode 8, for instance? But Le Guennant fundamentally saw no possible unity between mode 8 and C major: “modern music can achieve an acceptable accommodation with Gregorian chant only on the express condition of doing violence to its own nature, agreeing not to be fully itself, becoming something hybrid, equivocal, imprecise in its tonality.”⁹⁷ For Le Guennant, polyphony always tends towards major-minor

méconnaissables.” Albert Lavignac, *Théorie complète des principes fondamentaux de la musique moderne* (Lemoine, 1909), 39. This is difficult to reconcile with a well-known passage from a few years earlier: “c’est peut-être dans un retour vers l’emploi de ces multiples tonalités mélodiques, d’une richesse expressive et pittoresque inépuisable, combinées et revivifiées par l’admirable technique harmonique de nos jours, embellies et parées des trésors de l’orchestration qui progressera encore, que réside l’avenir prochain de l’évolution musicale.” Id., *La musique et les musiciens*, 8th edn (Delagrave, 1904), 431.

⁹² See id., *Théorie complète*, 40. For similar examples of leading-tone theories see Élie Poirée, *Essais de technique et d’esthétique musicales, première série* (Fromont, 1898), 159–60; Henri Bouasse, *Bases physiques de la musique* (Gauthier-Villars, 1906), 59; Lucien Chevaillier, “Publications nouvelles” [review of Vinée, *Principes du système musical*], *La Revue musicale* (15 Oct. 1910), 463.

⁹³ “soumis à une note fondamentale”; “le plain-chant ignore cette loi : il met l’indépendance et la diffusion là où nous avons coutume de sentir la cohésion et l’unité ; ses gammes ressemblent à de petits systèmes de constellations d’où la force attractive et centrale serait absente.” Jules Combarieu, “Le plain-chant et le pape Saint Grégoire le grand”, *Le Correspondant* (25 Dec. 1894), 1196. Combarieu later affirmed that “les modes diatoniques” were “non soumis à la note « sensible », à la tyrannie de la tonique, et aux cadences fondées sur ces deux lois”. Id., “Cours du Collège de France. Les modes (*suite*). Les modes diatoniques. I : Généralités”, *Revue musicale (histoire et critique)* (15 May 1906), 237. Cf. id., *Histoire de la musique, des origines à la mort de Beethoven*, vol. 1 (Colin, 1913), 264.

⁹⁴ “Ce serait la négation même de la musique.” Ernest Closson, *L’esthétique musicale. Les matériaux de la musique. La création et l’interprétation musicales* (Brussels: Lombaerts, 1921), 36; see also 34, 66–67, 98. Here Closson is probably following François-Auguste Gevaert, *Histoire et théorie de la musique de l’antiquité* (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1875), 161.

⁹⁵ “quoi qu’on fasse, la fusion n’est pas possible”; “deux catégories pourtant très distinctes du langage musical : la MODALITE et la TONALITE.” Alexandre Le Guennant, “Bibliographie” [review of Alexandre Fleury, *Les Chants populaires de la messe et des vêpres d’après la récente Édition vaticane et Choix de motets pour les saluts*], *La Revue des maîtrises* (Dec. 1920), 97.

⁹⁶ “bizarre assemblage *sans aucun souci de l’unité tonale, MEME LA PLUS LOINTAINE*.” Ibid., 96.

⁹⁷ “la musique moderne ne peut prétendre à un rapprochement acceptable avec le chant grégorien qu’à la condition expresse de faire violence à sa nature propre, de consentir à ne plus être elle-même totalement, de devenir quelque chose d’hybride, d’équivoque et d’imprécis quant à la Tonalité.” Ibid., 97.

tonality, as in the Renaissance, a “transitional period in which, little by little, tonality invidiously took shape within polyphonic art”, inexorably choking out the old modes.⁹⁸

When “modality” was recognised in polyphony at all, it was often identified with modal-degree ambiguity, in which no mode is clearly established. In 1935 Henri Potiron related plainchant modality to the attenuation of harmonic function that results from pervasive dissonance—a version of the *les extrêmes se touchent* trope examined in Ch. 1:

[T]he leading tone has practically disappeared; the cadential formulas that led it to the tonic have been sent to the antiques shop; the harmonic progressions that gave each degree a hierarchical value in the tonal order have disappeared; the “sevenths”, “ninths”, and so on, which formerly had a particular resolution, i.e. a direction, a specific motion, take on a static quality. Tonality sustains a heavy blow, as multiple scale degrees claim the right to be tonics. On the other hand, modality prospers, and when such music consents to remain diatonic it immediately rejoins the Gregorian modes[.]⁹⁹

Not everyone was so glad to be going backwards. The elderly Théodore Dubois, in an appendix (ominously titled “Quelques réflexions à propos des tendances modernistes”) to his 1921 harmony treatise, lamented that “tonality is being replaced by a return to the ancient modes”.¹⁰⁰ Dubois was just as committed as the conservatives at the Schola to defending “the double principle of modern tonality and tonal unity”, natural and eternal; but unlike the younger *scholistes* he evidently saw the return of *les anciens modes* as a threat to and not an extension of that principle.¹⁰¹ Modal music was not tonal, he indicated in a passage of pure Fétis: until Monteverdi and the dominant seventh, “[the] ancient modes dominated exclusively” and “tonality, as we understand it, did not exist, so to speak, unless in a latent state”.¹⁰² Some of the citadel’s assailants agreed. E.-C. Grassi, convinced that tonality had been worn out, saw the future in an “atonal” “modality”,¹⁰³ while Désiré Pâque, a Belgian eccentric who claimed to have invented “atonality” in 1898, felt that “[t]he ancient modes that still persist among exotic peoples constitute a sort of atonality *avant la lettre*”, citing the frequency with which old modal tunes begin and end on different pitch classes.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ “période de transition où, peu à peu, la Tonalité se constituait sournoisement au sein de l’art polyphone”. Ibid. Le Guennant cites Maurice Emmanuel’s *Histoire de la langue musicale* on this point.

⁹⁹ “la « sensible » a pratiquement disparu ; les formules de cadence qui l’amenaient à la tonique sont laissées au magasin d’antiquités ; les enchaînements harmoniques qui donnaient à chaque degré une valeur hiérarchique dans l’ordre tonal ont disparu ; les « septièmes », les « neuvièmes », etc., qui avaient jusqu’alors une résolution, c’est-à-dire une direction, un mouvement précis, présentent quelque chose de statique. La tonalité subit une rude atteinte, car dans l’échelle plusieurs degrés revendiquent le droit d’être toniques. En revanche, la modalité s’enrichit, et lorsque cette musique veut bien rester diatonique, elle rejoint immédiatement les modes grégoriens”. Henri Potiron, “Modernisme”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.–Feb. 1935), 59.

¹⁰⁰ “la tonalité est remplacée par un retour aux anciens modes”. Théodore Dubois, *Traité d’harmonie théorique et pratique* (Heugel, [1921]), 242.

¹⁰¹ “le double principe de la tonalité moderne et de l’unité tonale”. Ibid., 243.

¹⁰² “l’influence des modes anciens dominait exclusivement”; “La tonalité, telle que nous la comprenons, n’existait pour ainsi dire pas, sinon à l’état latent.” Ibid., 39.

¹⁰³ Grassi, “Reconstruire”, 34.

¹⁰⁴ “Les modes antiques qui persistent toujours chez les exotiques constituent une sorte d’atonalité avant la lettre”. Désiré Pâque, “L’atonalité, ou mode chromatique unique”, *RM* (Aug. 1930), 136.

The Terminological Binary Modal/Tonal

It was during this first third of the twentieth century that the terms “tonal(ity)” and “modal(ity)” became a mutually exclusive binary; to take a random example, in 1937 Charles Tournemire could describe Franck’s organ chorales as “plus *modale* que tonale”.¹⁰⁵ In the nineteenth century, the word “modalité” (first attested 1810) meant simply “mode” or, roughly, “organisation into modes” or “property of possessing various modes”.¹⁰⁶ Only around the turn of the century did people begin to write of *musique modale*, as opposed to *musique tonale*; in 1911, for instance, Maurice Emmanuel saw fit to explain that he was adopting the narrow sense of “tonalité” that had become widespread.¹⁰⁷ Still later, “modal” caught on in titles and subtitles such as *Esquisse modale* (Messiaen, 1927), “Fugue libre modale” (Tournemire, *L’Orgue mystique*, book 10, 1930), *Sept Pièces modales* (Ladmirault, 1936), “Fantaisie modale” (Ladmirault, *De l’ombre à la clarté*, 1938), *Messe modale* (Jehan Alain, 1938), *Suite modale* (Flor Peeters, 1938), *Prélude modal* (Langlais, *24 pièces*, 1939), and numerous others by Kœchlin (“Fugue instrumentale de caractère modal”, *Chorals de caractère modal*, etc.).¹⁰⁸ The sense of the word in Emmanuel’s *Accompagnement modal des psaumes* (1913) and Jean Parisot’s *Accompagnement modal du chant grégorien* (1914) falls somewhere between old and new usages.

This oppositional usage of “modal” and “tonal” may or may not signify a belief that “modal” music has no tonality in the broad sense I have attributed to the word (see pp. 146–47 above), that major-minor tonality is all the tonality there is. With some authors, “tonal” certainly means something narrower. Take the Potiron citation two paragraphs above: “*La tonalité* sustains a heavy blow, as multiple degrees of the scale claim the right to be tonics”. If tonics remain present, so does tonality as I understand it. Maurice Emmanuel’s *Histoire de la langue musicale* furnishes a more sustained case of this bivalence. Emmanuel explicitly reserves “Tonalité” (usually capitalised) for the major-minor system,¹⁰⁹ and indeed his narrative of the gradual subjugation of the alternative modes to “le tyran UT” leaves one doubting whether these can survive in polyphony at all.¹¹⁰ Yet he also indicates that “la Tonalité pure” or “la classique Tonalité” was preceded by “la Tonalité plus ou moins modale”, and will give way to a “système tonal agrandi” to incorporate the

¹⁰⁵ Charles Tournemire, “L’orgue à travers les siècles”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée organisé par l’Union des maîtres de chapelle et organistes* (Desclée De Brouwer, [1937]), 50.

¹⁰⁶ See Gonnard, *La musique modale*, 29 and Benedikt Lessmann, “Kirchenstil, Gregorianik und Modalität in Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert”, in *Geschichte der Musiktheorie*, vol. 12 *Die Musiktheorie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Teil 3: Frankreich, Belgien, Italien*, ed. Stefan Keym (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2021), 267–70. Another early instance is spotted in Jeremy Day-O’Connell, *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy* (U. of Rochester Press, 2007), 116.

¹⁰⁷ See Maurice Emmanuel, *Histoire de la langue musicale*, vol. 1 (Laurens, 1911), 16. Emmanuel also tends to use “modalité” narrowly, writing for instance of “les derniers défenseurs de la Modalité” in the seventeenth century (ibid., 413). Compare Jean Huré, letter to Charles Kœchlin, 24 Aug. 1910, F-Pbmfg, B 465, asking the latter to teach a class in modal polyphony: “Je voudrais donc une classe de contrepoint où les élèves seraient habitués à de telles tonalités — ou plutôt modalités.”

¹⁰⁸ See Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 386. Also notable is the expression “style modal” found in Kœchlin as well as Marcel Dupré, *Harmonie stylisée* [unpub. typescript of 30 lessons, c. 1935], n.p., F-Pn VMB-5648 and Frederik Goldbeck, “Les concerts. Arthur Lourié, *Concerto spirituale*”, RM (July–Aug. 1936), 45–46.

¹⁰⁹ See Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 1, 16. Emmanuel specifies: “il faudra trouver une autre étiquette [au régime] qui se prépare, où la Modalité, c’est-à-dire l’emploi des divers modes — il peut y en avoir un grand nombre — paraît devoir renaître” (ibid.).

¹¹⁰ See e.g. id., *Histoire de la langue musicale*, vol. 2 (Laurens, 1911), 342, 429—no doubt the source for Le Guennant cited above, n. 98.

resurrected alternative modes.¹¹¹ He describes his own brand of modal composition as “the application of a modern and tonal harmonisation to a modal [melodic] formula”.¹¹² And in closing he pays homage to a “Tonalité” seemingly broader and more enduring than the “classical” tonality reaching its end: “Abolished in its rigid, exclusive form, repudiated as controller of the essential modulations, it remains present and, it seems, intrinsically necessary.”¹¹³

Mixing Modes

While not exclusively dominant, the new tendency to recognise “tonality” in “modal” music opened the door to also recognising in it phenomena that presuppose key, such as chromaticism and modulation.

Modal Modulation

It was again between about 1900 and 1925 that analytical and theoretical texts in French began to mention the possibility of modulating to and between alternative modes, soon describing all three forms of modulation that involve mode change (see pg. 120 above). Plainchant literature often recognised Type 1 modulation, implicit in the classification of chants as modally “mixed” or “hybrid”; Dom Gajard called it “modal dispersal” (*éparpillement de la modalité*).¹¹⁴ Such a concept might explain why, when Dom Kreps criticised a mass setting for excessive modulation (“l’oscillation continue des tonalités”), the question that came to his mind was: “is this meant to be a reference to plainchant?”¹¹⁵ In polyphony, Type 1 modulation was certainly known to nineteenth-century liturgical organists—in Germany, the Cecilians even produced handbooks for getting from any chant mode to any other¹¹⁶—but theorisation, at least in French, followed later, when Vinée baptised it “demi-modulation” and Sérieyx “modulations naturelles par changement de mode” (both theorists needed to recognise such modulation due to their lax conceptions of

¹¹¹ Ibid., 415, 543. Cf. Joseph Samson, “À propos de l’état actuel de la musique religieuse”, *La Revue des jeunes* (10 Oct. 1918), 496, where Emmanuel is cited: “il semble que par l’élargissement et l’assouplissement des méthodes harmoniques on revienne, maintenant, de la tonalité unique à la tonalité plurale”.

¹¹² “l’application, à une formule modale, d’une harmonisation moderne et tonale”. Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 539.

¹¹³ “Abolie dans sa forme rigide, exclusive, — répudiée en tant que directrice des modulations essentielles, — [la tonalité] reste présente et, pourrait-on croire, intrinsèquement nécessaire.” Ibid., 548–49; cf. vol. 1, 60. Emmanuel also calls the diatonic scale “l’échelle tonale”, as opposed to “atonal” symmetrical scales (vol. 2, 534).

¹¹⁴ Joseph Gajard, *La musicalité du chant grégorien* (Paris, Tournai, and Rome: Desclée/Société de St Jean, 1931), 20 [orig. in *Le Courrier musical*, 1928] and [id.], “Communication du R. P. Dom Gajard”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 61–62. See also André Mocquereau, “L’art grégorien. Son but, ses procédés, ses caractères”, *TSG* (Dec. 1896), 179; Antoine Dechevrens, *Études de science musicale. 1^{re} et 1^{re} études* (the author, 1898), 279–82; Bertelin, *Traité*, vol. 1, 26.

¹¹⁵ “est-ce une réminiscence voulue de plain-chant ?” Joseph Kreps, “Bibliographie” [review of Johan Winnubst, *Missa dominicalis*], *Les Questions liturgiques* (Lent 1919), 133.

¹¹⁶ See Joseph Beltjens, *Modulationen in die alten Kirchentonarten* (Regensburg: Seiling, 1883) and Michael Haller, *Die harmonische Modulation der Kirchentonarten. 321 Modulationen nebst einer Einleitung* (Regensburg: Coppenrath, 1887). The latter was reviewed in “Bibliographie”, *CSG* (1 Oct. 1890), 54–55, but I see no further signs of diffusion in the francophone world.

tonic).¹¹⁷ Of course, the boundary is a fuzzy one between a shifting and merely ambiguous or wavering tonic in a diatonic collection, and expressions such as “oscillations tonales” (Jean de Valois) or “tonalités ondoyantes” (Kœchlin) probably suggest something of both.¹¹⁸ Such notions differ significantly from the “vague” or “floating” tonality heard by Fétis in Renaissance polyphony, which floats only between major or minor keys (the only ones Fétis’s theory can acknowledge) and in any case explicitly does not constitute modulation.¹¹⁹ Type 2 modulation, seemingly alluded to by Bourgault-Ducoudray as early as 1874, is described in Vinée, who recognises the complementarity between Type 1 and Type 2, and also in Maurice Emmanuel’s account of his methods of harmonising Burgundian folksongs.¹²⁰ Ratez distinguishes between “transposition” of a mode (Type 3a) and “modulation” or change of mode (the other three types); unusually, all his examples of modulation move between alternative modes, never major or minor, as if to emphasise that it could be done.¹²¹ Ernest Closson observed that an alteration to the diatonic scale, when not a mere passing chromaticism, can produce three kinds of modulation: transposition of a mode (Type 3a), change of mode without change of tonic (Type 2), and change of both mode and tonic (Type 3b).¹²² Xavier Perreau had already described these three types, providing numerous examples of each.¹²³ Other writers, such as Grassi or Emmanuel in their respective modalist manifestos from the 1920s, simply write of “modulation modale” without clarification.¹²⁴

A certain interest in the subject may have stemmed, inadvertently, from d’Indy’s teaching at the Schola cantorum, in which both modulation and antique modal music figure prominently. D’Indy himself never explicitly connected the two, at least in writing; in “L’art en place et à sa place”, encountered in Ch. 1, he singles out modulation as an under-explored possibility in *a cappella* polyphony (“voilà the new element that we moderns can introduce into church music, voilà the vein to exploit”) but adds nothing about modality or tonality *per se*.¹²⁵ His contemporaneous motet *Deus Israel*, vaunted by the Schola’s propagandists as a lesson in how to modernise the *a cappella*

¹¹⁷ Vinée, *Essai d’un système général*, 9; Sérieyx, *Cours de grammaire musicale*, 272–73. The term “demi-modulation” appears in earlier treatises with the different meaning of chromatic excursions not sealed by a cadence; see Rigaudière, “Harmonielehre und Tonalitätstheorie”, 245.

¹¹⁸ Jean de Valois, “Un nouvel oratorio. *Tobie*” [review of Albert Alain, *Tobie*], *La Vie catholique* (24 April 1926); Kœchlin, “Sur l’évolution de la musique française”, 278; id., “Tonal ou atonal?”, 118. Cf. id., draft of a letter to Joseph Samson, 19 Sept. 1935, F-Pbm, B 458, describing his *Chœurs religieux de style a cappella*: “Ils sont écrits dans un style de contrepoint modal dont la tonalité oscille sans cesse mais ne s’écarte pas loin.”

¹¹⁹ See esp. Fétis, *Traité . . . de l’harmonie*, xliii, 155. Cf. Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Tonality”, 113.

¹²⁰ See Vinée, *Principes du système musical*, 70–71, 212 and Maurice Emmanuel, “Étude sur les chansons bourguignonnes du Pays de Beaune”, in id. *Trente Chansons bourguignonnes du Pays de Beaune* (Durand, [1914]), xi. Cf. Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, letter to Émile Burnouf, 9 Sept. 1874, quoted in Asimov, “Comparative Philology”, 61: “j’ai cherché des combinaisons et des associations nouvelles du mode Dorien [i.e. mode of *m*] et de nos modes majeurs et mineurs.”

¹²¹ See Ratez, *Traité*, 142.

¹²² See Closson, *L’esthétique musicale*, 44.

¹²³ See Perreau, *La pluralité des modes*, 142–68.

¹²⁴ Grassi, “Reconstruire”, 57; Maurice Emmanuel, “La polymodie”, *RM* (Jan. 1928), 210–11.

¹²⁵ “voilà l’élément nouveau que nous, modernes, nous pouvons introduire dans la musique d’église, voilà le filon à exploiter”. Vincent d’Indy, “L’art en place et à sa place”, *TSG* (March 1898), 67.

medium,¹²⁶ includes modality and modulation aplenty, but without much mixing. The opening (Fig. 3.6) displays a modally ambiguous diatonicism in which pure consonance and linearity (producing frequent root-position and incomplete triads) stymie harmonic direction; but when the time comes to settle down on a tonic, d'Indy resorts to Renaissance-style cadences with leading tones, and the whole panoply of *tonalité moderne* follows in train: dissonances unprepared and irregularly resolved, sequences, chromaticism, and indeed some rather daring modulation by liturgical standards. By contrast, d'Indy's pupils Sérieyx and René de Castéra joined together modality and modulation in their respective commentaries on TLS. Castéra follows "L'art en place et à sa place" very closely, as when pointing to "a very precious expressive device that the authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries rarely used: modulation", but adds that *scholiste* liturgical works draw on the "modalité antique" of plainchant, recommending Gastoué's book on the subject ("the second part is of the highest interest for composers, for it covers ecclesiastical modality and rhythm").¹²⁷ Sérieyx suggests the same combination: his permissible modernisms include "the great laws of tonal relationship and modulation, which permit, even in monophony, the introduction of elements of infinite variety, on condition of respecting the modal character of the pieces".¹²⁸ Neither gives any further hint as to how modulation and modality are to be combined.¹²⁹

Indeed, discourse on modal modulation from the early twentieth century generally refrains from tremendous detail. The subject seems to remain mysterious for most musicians, something mentioned with fear and trembling as in the abbé Brun's "great problem of the mixture of tonalities" in 1911.¹³⁰ True, in 1920 Fernand de La Tombelle could describe modulating between modes, in liturgical organ pieces *dans le style grégorien*, as though it were no great matter: "Of course, I use the scale of the mode as a point of departure and arrival and in between I modulate, I go elsewhere, but without losing sight of shore", he explained in a letter (see Fig. 3.7 for an example of one of the pieces).¹³¹ But in 1928 even Maurice Emmanuel called "modulations modales", along

¹²⁶ See André Hallays, "La musique d'église", *La Revue encyclopédique* (17 April 1897), 312 ("En le lisant, on comprendra sans doute ce que nous voulons dire lorsque nous parlons d'une musique à la fois moderne et palestrinienne"); Gaston de Boisjoslin, "Mois musical", *TSG* (Jan. 1898), 22 (the motet shows "qu'avec les formes des maîtres on peut parler une langue moderne, extramoderne même, tout en restant dans un style profondément religieux"); René de Castéra, *Dix années d'action musicale religieuse, 1890-1900. Les Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais, La Schola cantorum* (Schola cantorum, 1902), 55–56 (the motet goes "jusqu'aux confins des hardiesses harmoniques, tout en restant d'une écriture contrapontique admirable").

¹²⁷ "un agent expressif très précieux dont les auteurs du XV^e et XVI^e siècles se sont très peu servis. C'est la modulation"; "la seconde partie est du plus grand intérêt pour les compositeurs, car elle traite de la modalité ecclésiastique et de la rythmique". René de Castéra, "La musique sacrée moderne", *L'Occident* (July 1904), 56.

¹²⁸ "Les grandes lois de relations tonales et la modulation, qui permettent, même dans la monodie, l'introduction d'éléments de variété infinie, à la condition de respecter le caractère modal des pièces". Auguste Sérieyx, "Caractéristiques de la musique sacrée destinée à la célébration du culte d'après l'instruction 'motu proprio' de S. S. Pie X", *Le Courrier musical* (1 April 1904), 222.

¹²⁹ Two other *scholiste* commentaries on TLS call for modality: see Pierre Aubry, "Les idées de S. S. Pie X sur le chant de l'Eglise", *Le Correspondant* (10 July 1904), 53–54 and Joseph Guillermin, "Musique d'église et musique de concert", *Études* (20 May 1904), 573–75. Sérieyx claimed a Joseph Guillermin as a student (see Ch-LAcu, FAS 501), and a Guillermin received a counterpoint diploma from the Schola in 1904 (see "Liste des diplômes de fin d'études délivrés par la Schola jusqu'en juin 1925", in *La Schola cantorum. Son histoire*, 215).

¹³⁰ "le grand problème du mélange des tonalités". Brun, "Le cantique d'inspiration grégorienne", 163.

¹³¹ "Bien entendu, la gamme du mode me sert à 'partir' puis à 'arriver' et dans l'intervalle, je module, je vais ailleurs, mais sans lâcher la rive." Fernand de La Tombelle, letter to Joseph Kreps, 10 Aug. 1920, quoted in Joseph Kreps, "In memoriam F. de La Tombelle", *MSB* (15 Dec. 1928), 202–03.

DEUS ISRAEL

Motet en deux parties

Deus Israel conjúgat vos
et ipse sit vobiscum qui
misértus est duobus únícis
Invocation: Et nunc, Dó-
mine fac eos plénius bene-
dicere te.

Que le Dieu d'Israel vous
unisse et qu'il soit avec vous
celui qui prit en pitié les
deux enfants úniques.
Et maintenant, Seigneur, fais
qu'ils puissent te bénir encor
davantage.

VINCENT D'INDY

Op: 41

(Avril 1896)

N° 14

1^{re} PARTIE (à 4 Voix)

Lent
mf

SOPRANO
De - us Is - rael con - jún - gat - vos. *f*

ALTO
mf
De - us Is - ra - el De - us Is - rael con - jún - gat vos.

TÉNOR
mf
De - us Is - rael con - jún - gat vos. *f*

BASSE
mf
De - us Is - rael con - jún - gat vos.

REDUCTION
des
VOIX

rit. **11** *f* **Plus vite**

- us Is - ra el conjún - gat vos. Et ip - se sit vo - bís -

De - us Is - rael conjún - gat vos. Et ip - se sit vo - bís -

- us Is - ra - el con - jún - gat vos. *rit.*

De - us Is - rael con - jún - gat vos. Et ip - se sit vo - bís -

1^{er} mouv. *mf* *f* *rit.* **3**

-cum, ip-se sit vobis - cum, Qui mi-sér-tus est du ó-bus ú-rit.

- cum Qui mi-sér-tus est du ó-bus u-rit.

f *p* *f* *rit.*

Et ip-se sit vobis - cum, Qui mi-sér-tus est du ó-bus u-rit.

- cum, ip-se sit vobis - cum. Qui misér-tus est du ó-bus u-

23 INVOCATION *Très lent* *pp*

au mouv! *mf* *en diminuant* *rit.*

-ni-cis, qui mi-sér-tus est du ó-bus ú-rit. ni-cis. Et nunc Dó-mi-ne

-ni-cis, qui mi-sér-tus est du ó-bus ú-rit. ni-cis. Et nunc Dó-mi-ne

-ni-cis. Qui mi-sér-tus est du ó-bus ú-rit. ni-cis. Et nunc Dó-mi-ne

-ni-cis. Du ó-bus ú-ni-cis. Nunc Dó-

en augmentant *bien soutenu* *Un peu plus lent* *en diminuant* *rit.*

fac e-os plé-ni-us be-ne-dí-ce-re te, Fac e-os plé-ni-us benedí-cere te.

fac e-os plé-ni-us benedí-ce-re te, Fac e-os plé-ni-us bene-dí-cere te.

-ne fac e-os plénius benedí-ce-re te, Fac e-os plé-ni-us bene-dí-ce-re te.

-mi-ne fac-e-os plénius benedí-ce-re te, Fac e-os plé-ni-us bene-dí-ce-re te.

3^{me} Mode transposé. Authentique Phrygien

Lentement

① *p* les deux mains à l'octave supérieure

②

loco

② ① la main

gauche à la place indiquée, sans octave



(X) (2) la main gauche à l'octave comme la main droite



(1) (4) la main gauche à la place indiquée, sans octave



with other aspects of modal harmony, a “dangerous, difficult game, but one to tempt the musician who is master of his technique.”¹³² The exercises in modulating modality proposed a year later in Kœchlin’s *Traité de l’harmonie* seem designed to help students rise to this challenge, belatedly filling a gap in the pedagogical literature.¹³³ Yet in 1945 Henri Potiron still approached the subject as though venturing into treacherous waters: “the realisation [of the *modes antiques*] is full of pitfalls. The harmony has to be created from scratch; some modulations are possible, but the tonal or modal scheme is not easy to establish”.¹³⁴

Chromaticism as Mode Mixture

As theorists began to recognise modal modulation, they unsurprisingly also began to notice that chromaticism can often be analysed as a mixture of diatonic modes, and not only the major and minor. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a few sources begin to show awareness of this potential ambiguity. Bourgault-Ducoudray evidently played on it in his history lectures at the Paris Conservatoire: “In Bourgault-Ducoudray’s class”, Julien Tiersot recalled decades later, “everything came back to the Greek modes, and all music had to fit into them. If, in a development in C major, a B $\flat$ appeared, the professor would cry out with joy: ‘It’s hypophrygian!’ Was that an F $\sharp$? ‘Hypolydian!’”¹³⁵ A pamphlet published the year Bourgault began teaching, by a certain Charles-Mathieu Domergue, went so far as to portray Wagner’s chromaticism as a return to the plainchant modes in free combination.¹³⁶ An 1889 harmony treatise by Gustave Lefèvre, which permits certain mobile degrees in major and minor keys, has often been related to the mercurial mode mixture of Lefèvre’s student Fauré, though the treatise itself never mentions alternative modes.¹³⁷ Here again, theorisation lagged behind: the observation that any chromaticism can be analysed as a change of diatonic mode was made only in the early 1920s, by Ernest Closson and Maurice Touzé almost simultaneously.¹³⁸ The latter, having shown the same melody in each diatonic mode on the same tonic (an exercise already performed by Combarieu and Vinée), concluded: “it is easy to observe that the seven diatonic modes, when placed under the rule of the same tonic, use all the sounds of

¹³² “tout ce ‘jeu’ dangereux, difficile, mais bien fait pour tenter un musicien maître de sa technique.” Emmanuel, “La polymodie”, 210–11.

¹³³ See Kœchlin, *Traité de l’harmonie*, vol. 2, 10–17.

¹³⁴ “la réalisation est pleine d’embûches. L’harmonie est à créer de toutes pièces ; quelques modulations sont possibles, mais le plan tonal, ou modal, n’est pas aisé à établir . . . Il faut surtout éviter d’écrire d’importants passages dans ce style pour revenir ensuite à la tonalité moderne : la disparate est trop violente”. Henri Potiron, *La musique d’église. Esquisse d’un traité de composition* (Laurens, 1945), 79.

¹³⁵ “Aux cours de Bourgault-Ducoudray . . . il n’était question que de modes grecs, et toute musique devait y rentrer. Si, dans un développement en *ut* majeur, un *si* bémol intervenait, le professeur s’écriait avec joie : c’est de l’hypophrygien ! Était-ce un *fa* dièze ? Hypylodien ? [*sic*]” Julien Tiersot, “La musique au Moyen Âge”, *Le Ménestrel* (20 Oct. 1933), 405.

¹³⁶ See Charles-Mathieu Domergue, *Le plain-chant et la musique de l’avenir* (Toulouse: Hébrail, Durand & Delpuech, 1879) [orig. in *Musica sacra* [Toulouse], 1878].

¹³⁷ See Gustave Lefèvre, *Traité d’harmonie à l’usage des cours de l’École* ([École Niedermeyer], 1889), 51–69.

¹³⁸ See Closson, *L’esthétique musicale*, 40.

the chromatic scale.”¹³⁹ The goal of musical evolution was not a “return to the ancient liturgical modes”, as some maintained, but rather a total chromaticism (“la tonalité chromatique”) that could be understood as a fluid “combination of all the ancient modes”.¹⁴⁰

The reverse of analysing a chromaticism as a borrowing from an alternative mode was to analyse modality as chromatic inflexion of the major or minor.¹⁴¹ This was the option preferred by Tiersot, who blamed Bourgault-Ducoudray for starting an obsession with hearing Greek modes everywhere: “there is only one [mode], the major, which is the natural scale. Certain degrees (the modal notes) are susceptible to be altered so as to form first the minor, then the other modes”.¹⁴² Reversing Charles-Mathieu Domergue’s view of late-Romantic chromaticism as a return to plainchant, Tiersot credited chant for the chromaticism of his teacher César Franck: “consciously or not, [Franck] discovered the principle [of his chromaticism] from harmonising Gregorian melodies; for these, far from having the diatonic rigour usually ascribed to them, are on the contrary, with their numerous mobile degrees, hotbeds of chromaticism that the slightest external circumstance can activate.”¹⁴³ The modality of a melody becomes chromaticism when viewed against an implied major or minor harmonisation, as though the “dorian sixth” or “lydian fourth” represent passing inflections of a normative template. This conception is realised in Émile Ratz’s harmony treatise, which treats the rule of the octave to increasingly elaborate harmonisation in each alternative mode, culminating in considerable chromaticism and dissonance (see Fig. 3.8 for an example).¹⁴⁴ Far from rejecting raised leading tones, Ratz encourages them and uses them often in cadences to establish a tonic, so that the nominal mode tends to sound like a passing inflexion when it subsequently appears in the interior of a phrase.

¹³⁹ “Il est facile de remarquer, en effet, que les 7 modes diatoniques utilisent, sous la souveraineté de la même tonique Do, tous les sons de la gamme chromatique.” Maurice Touzé, “La tonalité chromatique”, *RM* (1 June 1922), 62. Cf. Vinée, *Principes du système musical*, 70–71 and Combarieu, “Cours du Collège de France”, 238. By contrast, Bourgault-Ducoudray presented a melody in each diatonic mode in his celebrated lecture at the 1878 Exposition, but moved the tonic each time so as to stay on the white keys; see Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Conférence sur la modalité dans la musique grecque* (Imprimerie nationale, 1879), 10–12.

¹⁴⁰ “L’ensemble de tous les modes anciens”. Touzé, “La tonalité chromatique”, 61.

¹⁴¹ Biamonte (“The Modes”, 77) claims that “the modes” came to be viewed as alterations of major and minor “in the nineteenth century”, citing Riemann’s *Geschichte der Musiktheorie* (1898).

¹⁴² “il n’y en a qu’un : le majeur, qui est la gamme naturelle. Certains degrés (les notes modales) sont susceptibles d’être altérés pour former, d’abord le mineur, puis les autres modes”. Tiersot, “La musique au Moyen Âge”, 405. This position attracted criticism from Vinée (*Principes du système musical*, 124) and Urbain (*Le tombeau d’Aristoxène*, 66–67, 144).

¹⁴³ “Franck . . . , consciemment ou non, en avait découvert le principe en harmonisant les mélodies grégoriennes ; car celles-ci, bien loin d’avoir la rigueur de diatonisme qu’on leur prête gratuitement, sont au contraire, avec la multiplicité de leurs degrés mobiles, des ferments de chromatisme que la moindre circonstance extérieure peut faire lever.” Julien Tiersot, *Un demi-siècle de musique française. Entre les deux guerres, 1870-1917* (Alcan, 1918), 136.

¹⁴⁴ For an overview of Ratz’s treatment of modality see Huneau, “L’approche de la modalité”, 135–39.



Fig. 3.8: Émile Ratz, *Traité d'harmonie théorique et pratique*, 136

Tiersot's view of Gregorian melodies as "hotbeds of chromaticism" related to the more general and widespread notion (another case of *les extrêmes se touchent*) that chant or folk melodies go well with "modern" or "advanced" harmony, as illustrated by numerous composers from Grieg to Bartók.¹⁴⁵ "Gregorian chant rejects harmony, or else requires a very complicated and delicate harmony", explains Louis Laloy; to bend harmony to melodic modality, the composer must renounce classical cadences and "seek out new combinations, more complex chords, freer progressions, capable of following the melody's most unexpected caprices."¹⁴⁶ Kœchlin and Samson advocated as much in chant harmonisation.¹⁴⁷ Even in church music, Gastoué at the 1921 Strasbourg congress urged composers not to feel obliged by modal melodies to stick to pure diatonic harmony;¹⁴⁸ his *Messe de Jeanne d'Arc*, a "practical application of [this] theory" according to the critic Maurice Brillant, "unites the most characteristic medieval *tonalités* to very modern, sometimes almost Debussyan chords".¹⁴⁹ Gastoué later characterised a modern liturgical style as "the application of the most modern harmonies to melodic motifs taken from liturgical chant, or

¹⁴⁵ After demonstrating extravagant harmonisations of diatonic melodies, Paul Gilson notes: "Les œuvres modernes foisonnent d'harmonisations semblables." Paul Gilson, *Traité d'harmonie*, vol. 3 (Brussels: Cranz, 1926), A32. Contrast the reception of Adolphe Samuel's motets in 1896 (Ch. 1, 41).

¹⁴⁶ "le chant grégorien se refuse à l'harmonie, ou demande une harmonie très compliquée et délicate"; "chercher des combinaisons nouvelles, des accords plus complexes, des enchaînements plus libres, capables de suivre la mélodie en ses plus inattendus caprices." Louis Laloy, "Le chant grégorien et la musique française", *Revue musicale S.I.M.* (15 Jan. 1907), 76, 78.

¹⁴⁷ See Ch. 2, 111 and Joseph Samson, "La musique moderne à l'église" [c. 1930], F-Dm, MS 3080/62, pp. 24–25: "Que quelqu'un s'essaye à marier l'harmonie d[u] Socrate [de Satie] à la monodie grégorienne[,] je dirai même à la psalmodie et je lui promets d'exquises surprises. Nul art ne s'agrége mieux à ces mélodies simples, à ces récitatifs que cette harmonie dépouillée, souvent réduite à 2 parties, où les 7^{èmes} s'enchaînent les 5^{tes}, les 4^{tes} se succèdent par grappes ou s'entremêlent en un incessant renouvellement".

¹⁴⁸ See Amédée Gastoué, "Essai sur le passé et l'avenir de la musique polyphonique", *TSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1922), 33 [orig. lecture, Strasbourg congress, July 1921].

¹⁴⁹ "unit les plus caractéristiques des tonalités médiévales à des accords très modernes, parfois presque debussystes (mise en pratique d'une théorie développée par l'auteur au récent congrès de Strasbourg)." Maurice Brillant, "Musique", *Almanach catholique français* (1922), 203. In practice, Gastoué's harmony, overwhelmingly triadic and diatonic despite some parallel fifths and irregular dissonances, fulfils this aspiration only timidly.

imitating its modes”.¹⁵⁰ Guy de Lioncourt’s success at mixing chant melodies with “very modern writing” in his *Mystère de l’Alleluia* (1927, a follow-up to the *Mystère de l’Emmanuel* encountered in Ch. 2) convinced the organist and critic Victoire Belgodère that “les extrêmes se touchent parfois”.¹⁵¹ By the 1930s, this idea had become sufficiently commonplace that even the very conservative choirmaster Georges Renard, writing in the *Revue Sainte-Cécile*, could appreciate “modally-flavoured melodies, antique cadences, and sometimes also, by contrast, quite modern chromatic harmonies which go well with the neo-Gregorian phrases” in a suite of *Petites Pièces archaïques* by the organist René Quignard (see Fig. 3.9).¹⁵²

Chromatically Expanded Modality

To assimilate chromaticism to mode mixture (as with Bourgault-Ducoudray) or vice versa (as with Tiersot) usually presumes a major or minor key as normative. But the tonal conception of modality gave rise also to a tradition of recognising modal keys even in the presence of chromaticism. Indeed, composers began to take an interest in the challenge of reining in chromatic decoration just enough to preserve an alternative mode’s identity. At one extreme, for Émile Ratez modal individuation was apparently no object—if anything just the opposite: his “modal” harmony is hardly distinct from chromatic expansion of the major or minor. Unlike Vinée, he shows no scruples about effacing the distinctively “modal” degrees (e.g. raising $\hat{2}$ in mode of *mi*, flattening $\hat{4}$ in mode of *fa*).¹⁵³ Citing Ratez in his own appendix on “harmonisation des modes anciens”, the Belgian composer and pedagogue Paul Gilson likewise furnishes examples of “modal” harmony very much compromised by chromaticism.¹⁵⁴ Kœchlin too preferred to err on the side of free mixture, noting with satisfaction that composers had learned to

pass without qualms from the hypodorian [i.e. mode of *la*] to the classical minor, from the hypophrygian [mode of *sol*] to the ordinary major, etc. One cannot fault them for using leading tones, when it seems good to them, after having written dorian or phrygian progressions. So long as there is no incoherence in their ideas, this is all that matters.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ “application des harmonies les plus modernes aux motifs mélodiques pris au chant liturgique, ou imités de ses propres modes”. Amédée Gastoué, “Musique”, in *Dictionnaire pratique des connaissances religieuses*, vol. 4, ed. Joseph Bricout (Letouzey & Ané, 1926), 1227.

¹⁵¹ “une écriture très moderne”. François Johannes [Victoire Belgodère], “Les concerts. Lyon”, *TSG* (July 1928), 101.

¹⁵² “mélodies à tournure modale, des cadences anciennes et parfois aussi, tout différemment, d’harmonies chromatiques bien modernes qui font bon ménage avec les phrases néo-grégoriennes.” Georges Renard, “Notre supplément musical”, *RSC* (Nov.–Dec. 1933), 139. Similar though less explicit is a well-known remark by Joseph Bonnet in his untitled preface to Charles Tournemire, *L’Orgue mystique* [. . .] (Heugel, 1928–32), n.p. “Notre langue musicale actuelle possède des aptitudes surprenantes à paraphraser les mélodies grégoriennes éternellement jeunes.”

¹⁵³ See Ratez, *Traité*, 129–41. Compare Vinée, *Principes du système musical*, 212.

¹⁵⁴ See Gilson, *Traité*, vol. 3, A40–A86, consisting largely of examples of modal melodies harmonised, often quite “tonally”, by other composers.

¹⁵⁵ “Sans scrupule, ils passent de l’hypodorien au mineur classique ; de l’hypophrygien au majeur ordinaire, etc. On ne saurait leur faire un grief d’employer des notes sensibles (lorsque bon leur a semblé) après avoir écrit des enchaînements doriens ou phrygiens. Il n’y a pas dispartite en leur pensée : c’est tout ce qu’il faut.” Kœchlin, “Évolution de l’harmonie”, 600. See also id., *Traité de l’harmonie*, vol. 2, 5.

Fig. 3.9: René Quignard, *Petites Pièces archaïques*, Offertoire, bars 34–57

[Organ]

dolce

dolciss.

rall.

poco lento

dolciss.

rall.

By contrast, the composer Albert Bertelin, explaining how to write chant-based organ pieces, saw a real danger of incoherence and permitted such mixture more reluctantly: “If the melodic fragments are to be harmonised in a strictly modal fashion, modern tonality can appear in the course of its subsequent development, but with extreme circumspection, so as to realise a unity of colour in the composition as a whole and avoid jarring disparities.”¹⁵⁶ Maurice Emmanuel steered a middle course. On the one hand, his modalism began from the nineteenth-century discourse of modality as an alternative to chromaticism, a rejuvenation of diatonicism; he often presented modality and what he saw as Debussy’s total chromaticism as divergent responses to the wearing-out of “classical” tonality.¹⁵⁷ His ideal of “polymodie” (i.e. modal/scalar variety) as an alternative to chromatic saturation implies a concern for preserving the vulnerable alternative modes from effacement.¹⁵⁸ But already In 1911 he was writing of a “possible reappearance of the old Modes, decorated with the colours that chromaticism can apply to them”, and in practice his music is rarely diatonic for long.¹⁵⁹ Eventually, he would come to see himself and Debussy as having converged on a happy medium between the two poles.¹⁶⁰

Emmanuel’s ideas found a certain echo among church musicians. At the Paris congress of 1922, Paul Berthier cited his 1911 prediction as since happily fulfilled: “Sometimes the chosen mode [*échelle*] is used in pure form, sometimes mixed with other elements; sometimes all that remains is a cadence, a fleeting colouration”.¹⁶¹ Emmanuel’s friend Charles Tournemire grew increasingly preoccupied with free handling of modes, as his memoir-journal maintained in the 1930s reveals. Many have cited Tournemire’s reference, à propos of *L’Orgue mystique*, to “the modal system which, by the way, need not exclude chromaticism” nor even “la polytonie moderne”.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ “Si les fragments de cantilène doivent être harmonisés d’une manière strictement modale, la tonalité moderne peut apparaître au cours des déductions qui en découlent, mais avec une extrême circonspection, de façon à réaliser dans l’ensemble de la composition l’unité de couleur et d’éviter les disparates choquants [*sic*].” Albert Bertelin, *Traité de composition musicale*, vol. 2 (Schola cantorum, 1931), 33. Potiron too (*La musique d’église*, 80) warns: “Il faut surtout éviter d’écrire d’importants passages dans ce style [modal] pour revenir ensuite à la tonalité moderne : la disparate est trop violente, et nuit même à l’unité de la composition.”

¹⁵⁷ See Emmanuel, “Mes avatars”, 18 and id., *Lettres choisies, 1880-1938*, ed. Christophe Corbier (Vrin, 2017), 305, 353–54, 560.

¹⁵⁸ See id., letter to Ferruccio Busoni, 29 March 1920, in id., *Lettres choisies*, 346 (“une musique où le « chromatique » est un incident passager, puisque son usage continu a précisément pour effet d’abolir les différences caractéristiques des échelles modales...”). Compare Grassi, “Reconstruire”, 47 (alteration “n’est pas souvent recommandable, car elle tend à l’uniformisation des teintes et trahit les modes qu’elle devrait mettre en valeur”) and Kœchlin quoted in Cathé, “Le *Traité de la polyphonie modale* de Charles Kœchlin”, 172 (“je dois spécifier que le caractère modal est lié au caractère tonal, et qu’il s’oppose plutôt au chromatisme”). Kœchlin seems less open to chromatic adulteration of one mode than to passage between modes, though the two easily blend together in practice.

¹⁵⁹ “réapparition possible des vieux Modes, chamarrés des couleurs que le chromatisme permet d’y appliquer.” Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 1, 6. Compare the more cryptic remark in vol. 2, 529–30: “une transformation les [i.e. the modes] guette : l’usage permanent du chromatisme leur inflige des livrées nouvelles...” For analyses see Philippe Cathé, “Esquisse d’une étude stylistique”, in *Maurice Emmanuel, compositeur français*, ed. Sylvie Douche (Édition Bärenreiter/U. de Paris-Sorbonne, 2007), 221–28 and Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 391.

¹⁶⁰ See e.g. Maurice Emmanuel, Pelléas et Mélisande de Claude Debussy. *Étude historique et critique, Analyse musicale* (Mellottée, 1926), 6; id., “Mes avatars”, 37; id., *Lettres choisies*, 357, 360, 560.

¹⁶¹ “Tantôt l’échelle choisie est employée toute pure, tantôt elle se mêle à d’autres éléments, parfois il n’en reste qu’une cadence, une couleur fugitive”. Berthier, “L’écriture moderne”, 357. Berthier quotes from Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 1, 6.

¹⁶² “le système modal qui ne saurait exclure le chromatisme, d’ailleurs.” Charles Tournemire, *Mémoires de Charles Tournemire*, ed. Jean-Marc Leblanc, *L’Orgue* 321–24 (2018), 69. Contrast the relative caution of Emmanuel, Grassi, and Kœchlin (n. 158 above).

Planning his oratorio *La Douloureuse Passion du Xrist [sic]* in 1936, the composer instructed himself: “Combine *modalités* and *tonalités* to finally emerge, with great dazzle, into the brilliant light of B natural [i.e. B major?].”¹⁶³ Whether he envisaged a simultaneous or successive combination, the result could hardly be diatonic. In his “plan” for the *Petites Fleurs musicales* (op. 66, 1934–35), a collection of easy liturgical organ/harmonium pieces, he commanded: “Use the modes of *re, mi, fa, sol* (chromatic modal music)”, and later: “No link between the pieces. Do not become a slave to the modal ‘finals’. Work it out so that the mode is often implied, but nothing more. This will be much more ‘artistic’.”¹⁶⁴ If Emmanuel tolerated fleeting chromaticism within an overall sense of mode, Tournemire aimed for the occasional suggestion of mode within a prevailing chromaticism.

Both Berthier and Tournemire claimed precedent for mixed modality in the music of the seventeenth-century “transition” from “modality” to “tonality”, as did the writer Joseph Angot and, unfavourably, Auguste Le Guennant, all of them referencing Emmanuel.¹⁶⁵ As Berthier put it, “nothing is more legitimate than this mixture, a return to the organists of the seventeenth century who ornamented their modes with leading tones, subtonics, Picardy thirds. It is enough that the harmony hold together and conclude—a matter of skill and taste”.¹⁶⁶ Such words mark a significant reappraisal of the “transitional” mode mixture of Frescobaldi or Titelouze, which had long represented either the vestiges of an outdated system (for those who celebrated modern tonality as progress) or the last gasp of medieval tradition succumbing to the invader (for those who decried modern tonality as the undoing of religious music).¹⁶⁷ Now it was celebrated as a thing in its own right. Involving a complicated mix of factors—pride in *le grand siècle*, Catholic repudiation of Gallicanism, reformist approval for chant-based composition, reformist dislike of stiff *cantus firmus* chant settings—the reception of seventeenth-century sacred repertoire exemplifies as well the interdependence of historical and theoretical ideas.

Modality and Dissonance

By the 1930s, dissonance in “modal” music caused little alarm even in the church, as another passage from Bertelin’s advice on chant-based organ composition illustrates:

It is absolutely necessary to conserve the *modal* character of the melody, that is, to carefully avoid any chords borrowed from a particular *modern key* [tonalité], foreign to the mode of the melody. This does not mean that

¹⁶³ “Fusionner les modalités et tonalités, pour enfin aboutir, dans un grand éclat, à la belle lumière de « si bécarré ».” Ibid., 181.

¹⁶⁴ “Se servir des modes : Ré Mi Fa Sol. (Musique modal chromatique) . . . Aucun lien entre les piécettes. Ne pas se rendre esclave des « fins » modales. S’arranger de manière à ce que, fréquemment, on sous-entende le mode, mais sans plus. Ce sera beaucoup plus « artistique ».” Ibid., 147.

¹⁶⁵ See Angot, “Les utilisations profanes du chant grégorien”, 91–92. On Tournemire see Ch. 1, 37–38. On Le Guennant see above, n. 98.

¹⁶⁶ “rien de plus légitime que ce mélange, renouvelé des organistes du XVII^e siècle qui ornaient ces modes de sensibles, de sous-sensibles, de cadences majeures. Il suffit que l’harmonie se tienne et conclue : c’est affaire de savoir et de goût.” Berthier, “L’écriture moderne”, 357. Compare Kœchlin, Bertelin, and Potiron likewise worrying about cohesion when mixing modes (nn. 155–56 above).

¹⁶⁷ For an example of the former see Fétis, *Traité . . . de l’harmonie*, 170–73.

one must use only consonant chords or their derivatives. The constituent notes of the mode [*l'échelle modale*] are sufficiently numerous to adorn the theme with a harmonic decoration rich in dissonance.¹⁶⁸

The contrast to so many nineteenth-century sources with their insistence on pure consonance in *tonalité grégorienne* needs no comment. The story of how and why attitudes changed has been told effectively from the perspective of plainchant accompaniment, where the Solesmes-driven transformation of rhythm undermined resistance to dissonance.¹⁶⁹ In this section, I supplement that account with information on changing conceptions of tonality, which can clarify why certain dissonances were tolerated more than others.

By 1900, most francophone reformists had come to agree that church music, and even neo-Palestrinian liturgical polyphony, could accept “modern harmony” or “modern tonality”, much as Catholic theorists of religious art had largely accepted “naturalism” in the last third of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁰ Arguments about “tonalité” in church music, so heated and fastidious around 1850, had died down, reflecting an overall decline in substantive debate on church composition (immediately evident when one compares the proceedings of the 1860s congresses to those from after 1895). By the 1890s, the mood was pragmatic and latitudinarian, weary of the legalism of a Joseph d’Ortigue or the Cecilians, open to a middle way between “tonalité d’église” and the mainstream secular styles of the day. Bans on chromaticism and dissonance give way to warnings, and the red line shifts from dominant sevenths to enharmonic modulation, augmented triads, diminished sevenths, and augmented sixths (the most dangerous sonorities church musicians could envisage at the dawn of the twentieth century).

This embrace of “modern harmony” enjoyed broad consensus: for all their differences, the leaders of the Lemmens Institute, the Schola cantorum, the Toulouse *Musica sacra*,¹⁷¹ and the *Revue Sainte-Cécile* in the Lille area—not to mention the conservatoire directors Théodore Dubois and Adolphe Samuel—all joined in, though some accepted more modernity than others.¹⁷² Lemmens himself had declared that Catholicism “has not closed its temples to the modern musical tonality”—only to “the licenses of the chromatic style”.¹⁷³ His successor Tinel, consulted by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in preparation for “De musica sacra”, opined that “modern tonality in no way excludes the capacity to interpret prayer”, concluding that “the tonality [of church music] should depart only exceptionally from either the ecclesiastical tonality or the tonality called modern or modulating (major and minor), with very moderate use of the chromatic tonality, and preferably

¹⁶⁸ “Il est absolument nécessaire de conserver à la mélodie son caractère *modal*, c’est à dire d’éviter avec soin tout accord emprunté à une *tonalité moderne* déterminée, étrangère au mode auquel elle appartient. Ceci n’implique pas qu’il ne faille user que d’accords consonnants [*sic*] ou de leurs dérivés. Les notes constitutives de l’échelle modale sont en nombre suffisant pour revêtir le thème d’une parure harmonique riche en dissonances.” Bertelin, *Traité*, vol. 2, 33.

¹⁶⁹ See Van Wye and Lessmann discussed in Ch. 2, 130–31.

¹⁷⁰ See Michael Paul Driskel, *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1992), 203–11.

¹⁷¹ See F.-L. Comire, “Notre direction”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Jan. 1897), 16.

¹⁷² See Dubois’s description (admittedly dating to 1913) of “style religieux moderne” in Théodore Dubois, *Journal*, ed. Charlotte Segond-Genovesi and Alexandre Dratwicki (Symétrie/Bru Zane, 2012), 77. On Samuel see “Extrait de la « Gazette de Liège » du 12 mars 1897”, B-Br Ms. III 1.526 44 Mus. and Maurice Kufferath, “Correspondances. Gand”, *Le Guide musical* (25 April 1897), 333–34.

¹⁷³ “n’a point fermé ses temples à la tonalité musicale moderne”; “les licences du style chromatique”. [Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens], *Œuvres inédites de J.-N. Lemmens*, vol. 1 (Leipzig and Brussels: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1883), 1.

without any use at all of this tonality.”¹⁷⁴ At the abbé Delépine’s congress in Arras (1904), a number of speakers gave the same green light, including the abbé Boddaert, charged with covering “modern music”, who chafed at the monotony and limitations of Palestrinian polyphony, proposing “that those who write in this style adopt a broader and freer harmony.”¹⁷⁵ No need for *tonalité ancienne*: “all of modern harmony, in the hands of a sincerely religious artist, can be admirably grave and serene”.¹⁷⁶ At the early Schola, Charles Bordes generally avoided specific style prescriptions for church music, hoping to forestall accusations of factionalism, legalism, or pastiche (to which, as a promoter of old music, he was vulnerable). His call for a “modern” liturgical repertoire “inspired by the Gregorian and Palestrinian traditions” struck many as self-contradictory, including the critic and theorist Anatole Loquin: “How will you constitute your new religious music? . . . *What tonal language will you use in your new religious music?*” Would Bordes follow Joseph d’Ortigue and “exclusively use certain modes [*échelles*] of yesteryear”, creating “a music in which modern harmony, the tritone, a consistent sense of tonality, and modulation do not exist”?¹⁷⁷ After predicting vaguely that an “art nouveau” or “art religieux moderne” would emerge spontaneously from the “materials” of old music, Bordes eventually rejected Loquin’s proposals as “archéologie” and promised to “retain the discoveries of modern harmony by employing them judiciously” (leaving his adversary to conclude that *tonalité ancienne* would stand no chance “once the wolf has entered the fold”).¹⁷⁸

Any number of factors might have favoured this opening to restrained “modern” harmony: concern for broad appeal on the part of a clergy that, under Leo XIII, was urged to “go to the people”; an *esprit nouveau* atmosphere of compromise with modernity; compositional

¹⁷⁴ “que la tonalité moderne n’exclut nullement la capacité d’interpréter la prière”; “que la tonalité ne sort que d’une manière exceptionnelle ou de la tonalité ecclésiastique, ou de la tonalité dite moderne ou modulante (majeur et mineur), donc avec usage très modéré de la tonalité chromatique, et de préférence sans emploi aucun de cette tonalité.” Paul Tinel, “Document inédit de E. Tinel. Rapport sur la musique d’église”, *MSB* (June 1932), 86, 90. By 1889 at the latest, Tinel accepted “la musique figurée en tonalité moderne, quand elle a pour base et le chant grégorien et la musique palestrinienne”. [Edgar Tinel], “Discours de M. E. Tinel prononcé au Congrès des œuvres sociales, à Malines”, *CSG* (1 Sept. 1889), 34 [orig. in *MSB*, May 1889].

¹⁷⁵ “que ceux qui écrivent dans ce style, adoptent une harmonie plus large et plus libre.” Boddaert, “La musique moderne à l’église”, 73. Cf. Émile Wambach, “De l’emploi de l’orchestre à l’église” in *Congrès de musique religieuse d’Arras*, 66–71 and Pierre Chassang, “Commentaire sur le motu proprio de Pie X”, in *ibid.*, 36–46.

¹⁷⁶ “toute l’harmonie moderne, traitée par un artiste sincèrement religieux, peut être admirablement grave et sereine”. Boddaert, “La musique moderne à l’église”, 74.

¹⁷⁷ “Comment voulez-vous constituer votre nouvelle musique religieuse ? . . . *Quelle langue tonale voulez-vous employer dans votre nouvelle musique religieuse ?* . . . se servir exclusivement de certaines échelles d’autrefois”. Anatole Loquin, “À propos de musique religieuse. Simple réponse à M. Ch. Bordes”, *Le Guide musical* (21 March 1897), 225. “une musique où l’harmonie moderne, le triton, le sens *tonal* suivi et les modulations n’existent pas”. Paul Lavigne [Anatole Loquin], “La Schola cantorum et son programme”, *Le Guide musical* (7 Feb. 1897), 104.

¹⁷⁸ “conserver en les employant à propos les découvertes harmoniques modernes.” Charles Bordes, “La musique religieuse et la Schola”, *Le Guide musical* (21 Feb. 1897), 146. “*le loup une fois entré dans la bergerie*”. Loquin, “À propos de musique religieuse”, 225. Bordes had already called for “une musique d’église moderne, qui, . . . en usant avec discernement des conquêtes harmoniques, constituerait un art original et surtout liturgique”. Charles Bordes, “La musique figurée, de ses origines à la décadence de l’école romaine”, *TSG* (Sept. 1896), 131. In a pitch to secure affiliation with the Institut catholique, the Schola’s leaders characterised their *Répertoire* as “des pièces modernes conçues, non dans le caractère du pastiche, mais avec les ressources et les découvertes harmoniques modernes, asservies aux lois de la liturgie”. Letter signed by Guilmant, d’Indy, Bordes, and La Tombelle, 15 June 1898, quoted in Patrick Hala, *Solesmes et les musiciens*, vol. 1 *La Schola cantorum : Charles Bordes, Vincent d’Indy, Déodat de Séverac, René de Castéra* (Éditions de Solesmes, 2017), 500. Castéra later described the goal behind the *Répertoire moderne* as the creation of pieces “moins fermées aux innovations harmoniques modernes” than their Cecilian precursors (*Dix années d’action musicale religieuse*, 55–56).

frustration with the strictures of *tonalité ancienne*; adjustment to the progress of late Romantic harmony; changing ideas about tonality itself.¹⁷⁹ On this last point, one aspect worth signalling, given its serious implications for tonal theory, is a nascent sense of the relativity of harmonic perceptions, resulting from awareness that harmonic boundaries had steadily been pushed across the nineteenth century. Perhaps the dominant seventh had expressed an unprecedented “passion” when Monteverdi invented it, but if time had subsequently worn it down, the frontier of forbidden chords could be adjusted accordingly. So thought the Jesuit Émile Soullier, a relative laxist in church music who looked to Gounod as a model: “Fétis said that the dominant seventh chord is too impassioned to be used in the religious style. But this chord is so widespread, and of such a calm effect compared to other harmonies, that exclusion is now reserved for altered chords, or enharmonic progressions.”¹⁸⁰ In the *Revue Sainte-Cécile*, one Sicard (perhaps Augustin Sicard (1843–1931), priest in the archdiocese of Paris, prolific author on religious and historical topics) applauded Fétis’s “belle observation” that the “simultaneous and unprepared use of the two sounds *si* against *fa* . . . contains impassioned expression in its very essence”—indeed, nothing less than “the influence exerted on us by the spirit of evil”.¹⁸¹ But would he go so far as to ban the dominant seventh? “No; for it is an essential element of our modern music, and has become the custom of the land, so to speak”.¹⁸² Moreover, the more insidious harmonies of “our own time” had rendered it comparatively mild.¹⁸³

Additionally, relatively liberal voices seem to have taken the lead in the long-running debate over whether “Palestrinian” polyphony stood to benefit from incorporating the “discoveries” of “modern harmony”, which many felt would undercut linearity. For the abbé Chérion in 1888, Gounod’s controversial *Messe à la mémoire de Jeanne d’Arc* (1887) had successfully “put the resources of modern harmony at the service of the old traditions”.¹⁸⁴ Similar reactions greeted Tinel’s *Messe de Notre-Dame de Lourdes* (1891), “in which the polyphony of the *a cappella* era is coloured with modern harmony”, according to the composer’s son.¹⁸⁵ Working on an *a cappella* chorus in 1895, Charles Bordes reported: “The *Madrigal* is sufficiently Palestrinian while at the same time modern

¹⁷⁹ On the *esprit nouveau* (a.k.a. *ralliement*) as context for church-music moderates in the 1890s see Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (OUP, 2005), 194.

¹⁸⁰ “Fétis disait que l’accord de septième dominante est trop passionné pour être employé dans le style religieux. Cet accord est pourtant d’un usage si commun et d’une allure si calme auprès d’autres combinaisons harmoniques, que l’on réserve maintenant l’exclusion pour les accords altérés, ou bien encore pour les successions enharmoniques.” Émile Soullier, “Musique palestrinienne”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (March 1897), 44. Soullier cites Eugène Chaminade, *La musique sacrée telle que la veut l’Église* (Lethielleux, 1897), which accepts the V⁷ but draws the line at the vii^{o7} (see esp. 50–51).

¹⁸¹ “cet emploi simultané et soudain de ces deux sons *si* contre *fa* . . . renferme essentiellement en soi l’expression passionnée”; “l’influence exercée sur nous par l’esprit du mal”. Sicard, “Du genre de musique qui convient le mieux à l’Église”, *RSC* (July 1902), 111.

¹⁸² “Non ; car il est un élément essentiel de notre musique moderne, et, si l’on veut nous permettre le mot, — il est passé dans nos mœurs”. *Ibid.*, 110–11.

¹⁸³ “de nos jours”. *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁸⁴ “[mis] au service des vieilles traditions les ressources de l’harmonie moderne”. Auguste Chérion, “Correspondance”, *Le Maître de chapelle* (1 May 1888), 4–5.

¹⁸⁵ “un style où la polyphonie des siècles vocaux se colorait de l’harmonie moderne.” Paul Tinel, “La Messe à cinq voix de Tinel”, *MSB* (June 1957), 60. See also “La Messe d’Edgar Tinel, en l’honneur de Notre-Dame de Lourdes”, *MSB* (May–June 1892), 95–96 [orig. in *Semaine religieuse de Tournai*] and Paul Gilson, “Le Saint Boniface à Bruxelles”, *MSB* (Feb. 1896), 53 (“composition du plus haut mérite, basée sur les procédés de Palestrina — un peu rajeunis quant à la tonalité”).

in harmony and layout.”¹⁸⁶ Though this was a secular work, Bordes was striving for “Palestrinian” linearity and evidently satisfied himself that he had found it, despite his seventh chords. As for his sacred polyphony, an anonymous choirmaster responding to the likes of Anatole Loquin felt confident that Bordes and his collaborators had refuted “those who doubt that one can employ all the resources of modern harmony with the Palestrinian traditions.”¹⁸⁷

Though in practice this consensus amounted to a victory for major-minor tonality, the language of *tonalité* had faded from view, by comparison to the polemics of the middle of the nineteenth century. Commentators tend to frame the issue as one of acceptable chord vocabulary, writing of “découvertes harmoniques modernes”, “conquêtes de l’harmonie moderne”, “progrès de l’harmonie”, or, still more vaguely, “progrès de l’art moderne”, and show little sense that the choice of chords would determine a stark divide between “ancient” and “modern” tonalities in the tradition of Choron and Fétis. And they fixated much less on dissonance than on chromaticism, especially the “theatrical” diminished seventh and enharmonic modulation, apparently stereotyped by that time as formulas for arousing shock or wonder. In the long view, this embrace of “modern harmony” in otherwise historicist liturgical polyphony, along with the contemporaneous proliferation of modality in plainchant *versets* and accompaniment (on which see below), would represent an essential prelude to the “free modality” of interwar church music. By loosening dissonance controls in neo-Palestrinian style, composers began to drive a wedge between historicism and *tonalité ancienne*.

Melodic Modal Functions

The bifurcation between tonal and non-tonal conceptions of modality had a parallel in a split among the systems of modes tabulated in works of musical scholarship; in some measure, both corresponded to a divide between composition and theory on the one hand and historical research and plainchant accompaniment on the other. In general, the former gravitated towards a harmonic conception of modality and paid less attention to melodic phenomena (ambitus, “dominant”) as modal functions, effectively collapsing historical modes into simpler and more uniform diatonic ones.¹⁸⁸ Meanwhile, historical researchers and theorists of chant accompaniment resisted such reduction, hoping to sensitise modern listeners to melodic subtleties and project these into any added harmony.

A certain gap opens between *modalité* as a phenomenon in new composition and *modes anciens* in the music of far-off peoples. One sees it in the work of Maurice Emmanuel, who straddled, with difficulty, both worlds in an age of specialisation and professionalisation.¹⁸⁹ Since Emmanuel the history professor was vulnerable to stereotypes of pedantry, Emmanuel the

¹⁸⁶ “Le *Madrigal* [à la musique] est suffisamment palestrinien tout en étant moderne d’harmonies et d’arrangement.” Charles Bordes, letter to Paul Poujaud, 6 June 1895, quoted in Hala, *Solesmes et les musiciens*, vol. 1, 143.

¹⁸⁷ “ceux qui douteraient que l’on puisse employer toutes les ressources de l’harmonie moderne avec les traditions palestriniennes.” J. Aubeis [pseudonym], letter to the editor quoted in F.-L. Comire, “Musique palestrinienne”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Sept. 1897), 116. See also the commentary on d’Indy’s *Deus Israel* cited above, n. 126.

¹⁸⁸ See Chailley, *L’imbroglio*, 9 and Nathan L. Lam, “*Tonalité grégorienne: Musica recta* as Prescriptive Harmony”, *Music Theory & Analysis* 7.11 (2020), 332.

¹⁸⁹ See Asimov, “Comparative Philology”, 231–32.

composer distanced his modalism from history. Hence the fashion in which Maurice Brillant presented him to readers of the Catholic magazine *Le Correspondant* in 1921: “he wages a most enlightened campaign on behalf of the ancient modes, whose richness and variety are well known; or, rather, he would like for us, like the Ancients, to cultivate this *modality*, which would give our music a greater flexibility and new means of expression.”¹⁹⁰ Emmanuel’s sense of what constitutes a mode seems to depend heavily on the repertoire. When writing on plainchant, he preaches attunement to the multiple independent variables that contribute to a sense of mode unfolding continually in the listener’s ear: mobile degrees, “fondamentale”, ambitus, melodic figures, final, etc.¹⁹¹ Hence his opposition in principle to harmonisation of plainchant, which “accompanists drown in the magma of their stupid chords” even when respecting the scale of the melody.¹⁹² But he accepted that such fine distinctions would fall by the wayside in polyphonic composition: “the individuation of the various modes, if they return, will be less clear than formerly: the clutter of dense harmonisations will quickly efface the melodic lines.”¹⁹³ Thus, when discussing composition or even folksong he wrote simply of “les six modes diatoniques principaux” or “les échelles de *mi, la, sol, fa, ré...*”.¹⁹⁴ These same six feature as protagonists in the *Histoire de la langue musicale*, where Emmanuel has to define his modes broadly to maintain their identities from one century to the next.

Such simplification was typical of music-theoretical discourse, the more so in proportion to its scientific pretensions. Xavier Perreau’s *Pluralité des modes*, whose bristling figures and diagrams ensured that it was read by no one, sets the pattern by deducing a neat system of “*douze modes diatoniques définitifs*” from abstract physical and aesthetic principles, before turning to demonstrate one after another how all historical modes derive from this basic natural set.¹⁹⁵ Anselme Vinée made explicit the ahistorical character of his six diatonic modes, which “are not exactly the Greek modes [*modes*], nor the modes [*tons*] of plainchant, but . . . contain them, as they contain . . . all other musical systems worthy of the name, which are nothing more than their natural or artificial

¹⁹⁰ “il mène un très intelligent combat en faveur des modes antiques, dont on sait la richesse et la variété ; ou plutôt, il voudrait qu’à l’exemple des Anciens, nous fissions refluer cette *modalité*, qui donnerait à notre musique une souplesse plus grande et de nouveaux moyens d’expression”. Maurice Brillant, “Les œuvres et les hommes”, *Le Correspondant* (25 Feb. 1921), 747. For an example of the reputation Emmanuel was keen to dispel, see Clément Besse, “Nos compositeurs de cantiques”, *La Revue des jeunes* (Feb. 1922), 304: “Maurice Emmanuel a dit que la musique, pour se rajeunir, devra s’inspirer de la modalité antique. Il a parlé en helléniste”.

¹⁹¹ See Emmanuel, *Histoire*, vol. 1, 194–95; id., *Traité de l’accompagnement modal des psaumes* (Lyon: Janin, 1913), esp. 47–51; id., “Le chant liturgique de l’Église romaine ne doit pas être harmonisé”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 66. Compare Closson, *L’esthétique musicale*, 98, seemingly based on the first two of these.

¹⁹² “cet art que les accompagnateurs noient [*siè*] dans le magma de leurs stupides accords”. Emmanuel, “Le chant liturgique de l’Église romaine ne doit pas être harmonisé”, 70.

¹⁹³ “l’individualisation des divers modes, s’ils reviennent, sera moins nette qu’autrefois : les empâtements d’une harmonisation touffue se chargeront d’effacer les lignes mélodiques.” Id., *Histoire*, vol. 1, 529–30. See also Henry Expert, “XVI^e siècle. À propos de la musique française à l’époque de la Renaissance” [dated 1913], in *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, part 1, vol. 3, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de La Laurencie (Delagrave, 1931), 1284: “La distinction du plagal et de l’authentique est surtout mélodique. Dans les chants de l’église, et dans les chants populaires, elle est en plein relief ; mais dans l’harmonisation de ces mêmes chants, dans leur composition polyphonique, la distinction s’efface beaucoup, le mode principal et son dérivé s’unissent alors étroitement.”

¹⁹⁴ Emmanuel, “La polymodie”, 212; id., letter to Charles Kœchlin, 6 Feb. 1921, in id., *Lettres choisies*, 360.

¹⁹⁵ See Perreau, *La pluralité des modes*, esp. 181. Compare Sérieyx, *Cours de grammaire musicale*, 241–52. Perreau’s twelve modes, for reasons not worth explaining, are those of *ut, re, mi, sol*, and *la* with their plagals, and *fa* and *si* in authentic form only. I find no reviews or mentions of his book before the 1950s.

derivates.”¹⁹⁶ So did Maurice Touzé with his seven: “There can exist no other modes than these seven diatonic modes. If it is usual to find more, this is because mere variants of several of them . . . are wrongly taken to be modes in their own right.”¹⁹⁷ Ernest Closson went further: “one begins to wonder whether a large number of these modes [*échelles*] ought not to be considered mere melodic alterations of a small number of fundamental modes [*modes*].”¹⁹⁸ Just how small a number he does not say, but, proffering an example, he analyses away the mode of *re* as a passing inflexion of the major. The logical extreme, of course, was to reduce all modes to one, as Julien Tiersot did: “The truth is that the basic scale [*gamme*] is the natural scale [*gamme*], the mode [*échelle*] of *ut*. Certain of its degrees can be altered: hence the modes.”¹⁹⁹ And he goes on to analyse various of the plainchant modes accordingly, insisting that one can always hear a tonic on *ut* (less often *la*), whatever the melodic final. This idea was dear to those who defended the losing cause of harmonising plainchant in major or minor only.²⁰⁰

The case of Closson and Tiersot, historians by trade, proves that knowing a lot about historical modes was one thing and granting them theoretical validity another. The mind-numbing variety of mode systems from Pythagoras to the present could just as easily provoke disgust, as when Tiersot waved away the “confusion” and “muddle” (*fouillis*) of ancient and medieval authors in favour of a simple, universal analytic paradigm.²⁰¹ The reaction of a certain Max George is worth quoting at length, despite its eccentric source, for the vividness with which it illustrates the psychology at work:

[T]he Greek modes, the pure and impure modes, the hypo- and hyper- modes, some of which do double duty, others of which are granted no right to live by some theorists and considered stillborn by others; modes which are modes without being modes at the same time as being modes but not being them; modes 13 and 14 about which no one knows, has ever known, or will ever know whether they should be accepted and classified, or numbered 11 and 12, or not; all these modes in turn reduced to eight, revised and considerably expanded to fourteen, reduced back down to ten, then re-reduced to eight: all this chaos, this theoretical hodgepodge, we leave to the detritus of antiquity and the musicological lucubrations of the Renaissance. It has at the very most a curiosity value, but we firmly believe that for the ear it all boils down, and always has done, to the major and minor.²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ “les *gammes* ¹, ², ³, ⁴, ⁵, ⁶, ne sont pas exactement les modes grecs, ni les tons du plain-chant, mais . . . elles les contiennent, comme elles contiennent . . . tous les autres systèmes musicaux dignes de ce nom, qui n’en sont que des dérivés naturels ou artificiels.” Vinée, *Essai d’un système général*, 8. For a similar conflation see Combarieu, “Cours du Collège de France”, 241 and Jean Huré, *Chansons et Danses bretonnes, précédées d’une étude sur la monodie populaire* (Angers: Metzner-Leblanc, 1902).

¹⁹⁷ “Il ne peut pas exister d’autres modes que ces 7 modes diatoniques. S’il est habituel d’en trouver davantage c’est qu’on considère à tort, comme des modes particuliers, de simples variantes de plusieurs d’entre eux”. Touzé, “La tonalité chromatique”, 59.

¹⁹⁸ “on vient à se demander si un grand nombre de ces échelles ne doivent pas être considérées comme de simples altérations mélodiques d’un petit nombre de modes fondamentaux”. Closson, *L’esthétique musicale*, 64.

¹⁹⁹ “La vérité est que la gamme type est la gamme naturelle, l’échelle d’*ut*. Certains degrés peuvent en être altérés : de là, les modes.” Tiersot, “La musique au Moyen Âge”, 405. Cf. Poirée, *Essais de technique et d’esthétique musicales*, 194.

²⁰⁰ See e.g. L. Fleury and Ladislav Fröczynski [Ladislav Kaczynski], “Harmonisation rationnelle du plain-chant”, *Le Monde musical* (30 Aug. 1893), 134–35.

²⁰¹ Tiersot, “La musique au Moyen Âge”, 405.

²⁰² “les modes grecs, les modes purs et impurs (!), les modes en hypo et en hyper, dont quelques-uns font double emploi, auxquels certains théoriciens ne reconnaissent pas même le droit de vivre, que d’autres considèrent comme des modes mort-nés, qui sont des modes sans l’être, tout en l’étant bien qu’ils ne le soient pas, les modes XIII^e et XIV^e, dont on n’a jamais su, dont on ne sait pas, dont on ne saura jamais s’il faut les accepter et les classer, s’il faut les appeler ou ne pas les appeler XI^e et XII^e ; tous ces modes tour à tours réduits à huit, revus et considérablement augmentés

More seriously, even Gevaert, who knew more about Greek modes than anyone, suggested the simplified nomenclature “mode of C (or of *ut*), of D, etc.” to circumvent the morass of historical systems and names.²⁰³ Already Fétis had replaced the eight plainchant modes with fourteen, simply the diatonic modes and their plagals, displeasing Félix Danjou with his “modern rationalism”.²⁰⁴ Bourgault-Ducoudray, in laying out a tidy twelve-mode system (identical to Perreau’s, incidentally), filled in as necessary the modes unattested in ancient sources.²⁰⁵ One might expect more deference to medieval sources from clerical “restorers” of plainchant, but the Belgian Jesuit Antoine Dechevrens, in his massive self-published *Études de science musicale*, was if anything harsher: “their notion of musical modes is very imperfect, absolutely inadequate. . . . What is most lacking in Gregorian music is a modal theory sufficiently clear and perfect to reveal at last all the secrets of this art, lost for centuries.”²⁰⁶ Dechevrens then proceeds in the fashion of Vinée, Perreau, and Sérieyx, establishing the seven diatonic modes rationalistically, eliminating those of *fa* and *si*, adding plagals to the remaining five. He recognises only one referential modal degree (the “tonique”).²⁰⁷

Dechevrens was driven to embrace ahistorical rationalism by analysing chant melodies: this growing practice, like historical research, could cut both ways. Given the poor fit between the traditional eight-mode system and many chant melodies—Henri Potiron admitted in 1937 that “irregular” chants outnumbered regular—analysts responded in one of two ways.²⁰⁸ Some, like Emmanuel, opted for finer modal distinctions approaching the “tune” end of the spectrum, almost replacing classification with description of individual melodies. Others responded by simplifying the mode categories so as to reduce “irregularity”, like Potiron and Dom Gajard who dropped the authentic-plagal distinction, turning eight modes into four.²⁰⁹ Potiron and Dom Jean Hébert Desrocquettes, who collaborated on various Solesmes publications in the 1920s, aspired to base modes on *l’analyse grégorienne* (the title of an Hébert Desrocquettes article) rather than history. The editorial introduction to one of Potiron’s articles boasts that their “modal theory . . . rests on *Gregorian data* and no longer on a vague likeness to the modal theories of Greek Antiquity”.²¹⁰

jusqu’à quatorze, réduits de nouveau jusqu’à dix, puis reréduits à huit ; tout ce chaos, tout ce fatras théorique, nous le laissons avec les vieilles lunes de l’antiquité ou les élucubrations musicologiques de la Renaissance. Il s’y attache tout au plus un intérêt de curiosité, mais tout cela, pour l’oreille, se ramène et s’est même toujours ramené, c’est notre conviction intime, au mode majeur et au mode mineur.” Max George, *Harmonisation. Nouveau traité de composition musicale libre* (Grelot, 1894), 5.

²⁰³ “Le mieux peut-être serait d’abandonner complètement l’usage des termes antiques, dans le chant d’église, et de dire tout uniment : mode de C (ou d’*ut*), de D, etc.” François-Auguste Gevaert, *La mélodie antique dans le chant de l’église latine* (Ghent: Hoste, 1895), 27.

²⁰⁴ See Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire de plain-chant*, ix, 11–12. Cf. Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Tonality”, 172–73, 179, 226.

²⁰⁵ See e.g. Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Trente Mélodies populaires de Grèce et d’Orient* (Lemoine, 1877), 16.

²⁰⁶ “chez eux la notion des modes musicaux est très imparfaite, absolument insuffisante. . . . ce qui manque le plus dans la musique grégorienne, c’est une théorie modale assez claire et assez parfaite pour révéler, enfin, tous les secrets de cet art, perdu depuis des siècles.” Dechevrens, *Études de science musicale*, 111–12.

²⁰⁷ See *ibid.*, 116, 125, 133, 142.

²⁰⁸ See Henri Potiron, “Les équivalences modales dans le chant grégorien”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 79.

²⁰⁹ See *ibid.*, 79 and [Gajard], “Communication du R. P. Dom Gajard”, 60 (“la musique antique en [i.e. of modes] comptait autant qu’il y a de notes dans le gamme : sept, que l’on peut, pour simplifier, et conformément à la classification médiévale, ramener pratiquement à quatre : les modes de *ré*, de *mi*, de *fa*, de *sol*”).

²¹⁰ “théorie modale, qui repose sur les *faits grégoriens*, et non plus sur une vague assimilation avec les théories modales de l’antiquité grecque”. L[a] R[édaction] [Yves Delaporte?], “La modalité grégorienne”, *La Revue grégorienne* (Sept.–Oct. 1928), 175.

Musicians with a more generalist orientation likewise tended to discount traditional modes and look instead for tonal functions in monodies. Thus Vinée proposed to “determine *key* on the basis of a *tonic* and a *scale*”, rejecting any other modal functions: “for a truly scientific analysis, it is the general spirit of a melody that determines its key, which moreover sometimes remains uncertain, and not factors such as the *final* and melodic *ambitus* in plainchant, which for us cannot have the importance once attributed to them.”²¹¹ Sérieyx too disregarded traditional modes and set out to find tonics on the basis of salience factors such as frequency, melodic prominence, and leaps of a fourth or fifth.²¹² Like Vinée, Tiersot, and to some extent Kœchlin, he dismissed finality as tonally unimportant, maintaining that a tonic can stay in the ear even when the melody finishes elsewhere.²¹³

Something of this reductionism even found its way into plainchant accompaniment. In general, the aspiration of reformist accompaniment from Niedermeyer onwards was to defer to the melody, letting ever-finer modal distinctions come through. But not all accompanists were especially convinced of this mission. For the abbé Artigarum, who would have irked Maurice Emmanuel, simplification was apparently to be welcomed: “should one or several parts move from the authentic to the plagal ambitus or vice versa, it does not follow that accompaniment spoils the modal unity. It would be truer to say that, by fusing two complementary modes [*tons*], it completes and reinforces it.”²¹⁴

Nomenclature offers further clues to how modes were conceptualised, and here too a certain rationalising trend comes through. Theorists, unsurprisingly, tended to write of “mode [gamme, échelle] de *re*”, “de *mi*”, etc., except for Vinée who proposed the even more abstract *Gamme*¹, *Gamme*², etc.²¹⁵ In his *Cinq Chorals dans les modes du moyen-âge* (op. 117bis, 1931–2), Kœchlin preferred the solfeggio names to the medieval ones promised by his title. Indeed, he habitually mixed Greek, medieval, and abstract names with an insouciance matching his openly ahistorical attitude toward modes. The pseudo-Greek names derived from Glareanus and familiar today sometimes appear in secular French titles around the turn of the century (a *Rondel phrygien* by Boellmann, Rhené-Baton’s *Variations sur un thème éolien*) and in church music by Dutch or German speakers, but not in French titles of church pieces.²¹⁶ The latter tended to stick with chant mode

²¹¹ “fonder la *tonalité* sur les déterminations d’une *tonique* et d’une *série*”. Vinée, *Principes du système musical*, 285. “pour une analyse véritablement scientifique, c’est l’esprit général d’une cantilène qui en détermine la tonalité, parfois incertaine, du reste, et non des conditions qui ne peuvent avoir pour nous l’importance qu’on y attachait autrefois, par exemple, dans le plain-chant, la *finale* et l’*ambitus* de la mélodie.” Id., *Essai d’un système général*, 9.

²¹² See Sérieyx, *Les trois états*, 11.

²¹³ Ibid., 12. Cf. id., *Cours de grammaire musicale*, 236 and Tiersot, “La musique au Moyen Âge”, 406. Kœchlin saw certain modes as ending on the “dominant”; see e.g. Kœchlin, “Les tendances de la musique moderne française”, 95.

²¹⁴ “par suite de ce qu’une ou plusieurs parties évoluent de l’authentique dans le plagal ou vice versa, on n’est pas en droit de conclure que l’accompagnement porte atteinte à l’unité modale. Il serait plus vrai de dire que, par la fusion des deux tons supplémentaires, il la complète et la fortifie”. Jean Artigarum, “L’accompagnement du chant grégorien. Son utilité et son importance”, *CSG* (July 1906), 51. Artigarum refers to a lecture in which he expounded this view at a congress in Bordeaux in 1902, which I have not located.

²¹⁵ See Fétis, *Méthode élémentaire de plain-chant*; Ratez, *Traité*; Sérieyx, *Cours de grammaire musicale*; Vinée, *Essai d’un système général*, 7. Gilson and Perreau follow suit but still distinguish authentic from plagal. Kœchlin found this nomenclature “logique” (*Traité de l’harmonie*, vol. 2, 2) but worried that students might assume that “mode de *re*” (for instance) must start on D (since French designates absolute pitch with solfeggio syllables).

²¹⁶ See e.g. Marinus De Jong, *Missa in honorem omnium sanctorum*, op. 25 (Düsseldorf: Schwann, [1930]), with movements marked “Phrygien”, “Lydien”, etc.; Lode Van Dessel, *Missa in honorem Beatae Mariae Virginis, ad duas voces aequales comitante*

names and numbers even when the authentic-plagal distinction had effectively been dropped, as in collections of liturgical organ pieces by Gigout and Tournemire.²¹⁷ More often, they simply refrain from marking mode names at all.

Part II: Ideological Bases of Ecclesiastical Modalism

Modality as Extension of Plainchant

The most important ideological factor behind the rise of modality of Catholic church music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a desire to attune all such music to plainchant: modalisation followed from a steady “Gregorianisation” of the liturgy.²¹⁸ Gregorianisation consisted of two facets. The first was of course the “restoration” of plainchant to liturgical primacy from the middle nineteenth century onwards, meaning more than just wider use: this music came to be regarded as not merely the best liturgical music, but an intrinsic part of “the liturgy” itself in a way that no other music ever could be—a part of the non-negotiable *données* with which the liturgical composer had to work, along with the texts, gestures, furniture, vestments, etc. The second aspect is less obvious but equally important: a new conception of the liturgy as an aesthetically unified total artwork required all liturgical music to “live in harmony with Gregorian chant”, as the abbé Chassang put it, whether directly joined to it or not.²¹⁹

For Chassang himself, a “diatonic framework” sufficed for organ music to “adopt a coloration of the same shade that will blend harmoniously into the sacred modes” (elsewhere: “formes grecques”).²²⁰ Several commentators judged that the “movement, inspiration, and flavour” of plainchant prescribed in TLS had to include diatonicism. In a 1908 essay on the aesthetics of liturgical music, the Franciscan philosopher Eusèbe Clop revealingly misquotes (or mistranslates) that crucial sentence of the *motu proprio*: “Music is the more worthy of the cult the more it approaches the Gregorian form in its overall shape, rhythm, and tonality”; the context makes clear that, for Clop, the *tonalité* of plainchant means nothing more than diatonicism.²²¹ A

organo (Bruges: Desclée De Brouwer, 1934), with movements titled “Kyrie (*Frygisch*)”, “Gloria (*Mixolydisch*)”, etc.; Hermann Schroeder, *Missa dorica, für gemischten Chor*, op. 15 (Schott, 2001 [1932]).

²¹⁷ See Lam, “*Tonalité grégorienne*”, 336. Tournemire opted for a compromise in his *Petite Méthode d’orgue* (1939), keeping the chant-mode numbers familiar to his readers but collapsing authentic and plagal: “Petite improvisation basée sur les premier et deuxième modes (ré)”, “sur les troisième et quatrième modes (mi)”, etc.

²¹⁸ See Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 214–16, 238. The term was also current at the time: “Souvent déjà a été exprimé le souhait qu’à l’adoption des textes grégoriens au *chœur* correspondît la « grégorianisation » des programmes des *tribunes*.” Joseph Angot, “Bibliographie. Une œuvre nouvelle de C.-A. Collin” [review of Collin, *Pro ecclesis [sic]*], *La Revue des maîtrises* (July 1921), 60.

²¹⁹ “vivre en bonne harmonie avec le chant grégorien”. Pierre Chassang, “Au sujet du mois de Marie. Le cantique”, *RSC* (May 1908), 113. For one example see Joseph Kreps, *Le rôle unificateur de l’organiste liturgique* (Leuven: Bureau des Œuvres liturgiques, 1921) [orig. lecture, Tourcoing congress, June 1919].

²²⁰ “trame diatonique”; “adopter un coloris de même teinte qui se fonde harmonieusement avec les modes sacrés qu’interprète le chœur”. Pierre Chassang, “De la bonne et de la mauvaise musique d’orgue”, *RSC* (Nov. 1912), 163. Compare id., “La musique d’église et l’évolution”, *RSC* (Oct. 1922), 9, which again insists on diatonicism only, not modality: “la musique d’église, appelée à figurer côte à côte avec le chant grégorien, ne doit pas être d’une essence toute différente. La juxtaposition jurerait trop. Le chant grégorien est diatonique ; sa compagne doit l’être aussi.”

²²¹ “Une musique est d’autant plus digne du culte que par son ensemble, son rythme et sa tonalité elle se rapproche davantage de la forme grégorienne.” Eusèbe Clop, “Esthétique et composition de la musique sacrée”, *Études*

number of others, however, surmised that the pope was calling for modality. We have already seen Castéra and Sérieyx make this assumption; the latter affirmed in 1913 that “borrowing” the “modalités” of plainchant was as an act of obedience to TLS.²²² A Belgian choirmaster appealed to the document when rejecting the proposition “that a composer of religious music must not write in the modes [*tonalités*] of plainchant, but adapt the principles of the ancients to our own age”.²²³ At a congress in Les Sables-d’Olonne in 1919, the abbé Paul Bayart reportedly listed “modality, gravity, discretion, naturalness” as the qualities of plainchant to be imitated in “figured music”, in accordance with TLS.²²⁴ Even the abbé Besse, who by the 1920s had turned against the modalism he had absorbed from Maurice Emmanuel (see below), believed that TLS left no choice where the liturgy was concerned: “Greco-oriental modality is a pose for us and not a need. In church, during the office, that pose is obligatory, hieraticism is the law. We bend ourselves to it with fervour.”²²⁵

The importance of Gregorianisation as a driver of ecclesiastical modalism is underscored by the number of people who prescribed modality exclusively in interludes (*versets*) to be interspersed with verses of plainchant. When, in 1897, the director of the Toulouse *Musica sacra* spelled out his journal’s stylistic preferences (putatively derived from “De musica sacra”), he specified that liturgical organ music on a chant theme must “rigorously maintain its special tonality, or rather its diverse *modalités*”, whereas the choir need only prefer “the diatonic genus and the Palestrinian style”, and not even absolutely.²²⁶ Bordes, d’Indy, and Perruchot inscribed a similar principle in the programme of the Schola cantorum, and insisted on modality in contributions to its series of *versets*, but never in other genres.²²⁷ In competitions sponsored by the *Revue des maîtrises*, the Toulouse *Musica sacra*, the Belgian *Musica sacra*, the *Revue Sainte-Cécile*, and the 1919 Tourcoing congress, modality figures among the specified style preferences only for *versets*. The *Revue des maîtrises* clarified in 1922 that “[c]omposers retain complete liberty . . . as to the *modal* or *tonal* system. However, *versets* must conform rigorously to the modal rules of one of the eight liturgical

franciscaines (Aug. 1908), 126. For the original see Ch. 1, 26. For a similar interpretation see Wambach, “De l’emploi de l’orchestre à l’église”, 69 and C. V. D. M. [Charles Van de...?], “Pour Palestrina”, *MSB* (Nov.–Dec. 1913), 33.

²²² Auguste Sérieyx, “Plain-chant et ‘musique’”, *La Vie et les Arts liturgiques* (Oct. 1913), 30. See above, 140.

²²³ “qu’un compositeur de musique religieuse ne doit pas écrire dans les tonalités du plain-chant, mais adapter les principes des anciens à notre époque”. Hubert J. Uylings, “Autour d’un nouveau recueil de cantiques”, *CSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1907), 7. Uylings is quoting from a review by Émile Smets, which I have not managed to locate, of a collection of *cantiques* by Nicolas Joachim.

²²⁴ “modalité, gravité, discrétion, naturel”. Henri Potiron, “Chronique générale”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (Aug.–Sept. 1920), 68, paraphrasing a lecture by Bayart (17 Aug. 1919) whose text I have not managed to locate.

²²⁵ “La modalité greco-orientale [*sic*] est pour nous une attitude et non un besoin. À l’église, pendant l’office, l’attitude est commandée, le hiératisme est la loi. On s’y plie avec ferveur.” Besse, “Nos compositeurs de cantiques”, 305.

²²⁶ “en maintenir rigoureusement la tonalité spéciale ou plutôt les diverses modalités”; “le genre diatonique et le style palestrinien”. Comire, “Notre direction”, 16.

²²⁷ See the June 1894 pilot issue of *TSG* reproduced in Castéra, *Dix années d’action musicale religieuse*, n.p. (“l’adaptation rationnelle des mélodies et tonalités grégoriennes aux pièces qui alternent avec le chœur”). Bordes called for modes when requesting *versets* from Chausson (see Ernest Chausson, letter to Paul Poujaud, Nov. 1891, in id., “Lettres inédites à Paul Poujaud”, *RM* (Dec. 1925), 165) and Ropartz (see Charles Bordes, letter to Guy Ropartz, 26 Nov. 1897, in Bernard Molla, “Charles Bordes, pionnier du renouveau musical français entre 1890 et 1909” (doctoral thesis, U. de Lyon II, 1985), vol. 3, 92). See also Lazare Perruchot, “Pièces mises au concours”, *TSG* (Feb. 1895), 14; id., “Nos concours”, *TSG* (Jan. 1896), 12; id., “Nos concours”, *TSG* (April 1896), 59; Vincent d’Indy, “Nos concours”, *TSG* (Nov. 1897), 174–75.

modes.”²²⁸ Two exceptions must be mentioned. In 1897, the Italian publisher Borriero advertised a competition for a mass setting and mentioned “tonalité grégorienne” as preferred though not required.²²⁹ And in 1901, for the first time in a non-*verset* competition, the Schola indicated that “the *tonalité ancienne* is the most called-for”, though with a significant qualification: “Popular folklore often shows [in this tonality] a tendency to *colour* the principal cadences by introducing a sharp as an element of *modulation*.”²³⁰ Sure enough, the winning submissions were congratulated for their “modalité médiévale”.²³¹ These exceptions aside, *versets* served as an important conduit, along with chant accompaniment and chant-based composition, between the modality “restored” to plainchant editions starting in the 1820s and free composition.²³²

First and foremost, then, modal writing in church music served to ensure aesthetic unity with the plainchant now considered integral to the liturgy itself. Modality, by contrast to diatonicism and some conceptions of *tonalité ancienne* (on which see below), attracted church musicians mainly for its association with plainchant, not any intrinsic capacity to express religious sentiment. Consider Eugène Gigout’s pitch for modality in the preface to his *Album grégorien* (1895), a collection of easy modal *versets* for rank-and-file organists: “To seek to make the liturgical tonality prevail in church, or at least in those parts of the office reserved for Gregorian chant, seems commonsensical to me. It must be acknowledged that such ideas are gaining ground every day.”²³³ Gigout’s “at least” strikes me as a significant qualification: the important thing is to avoid jarring style contrasts, so outside of immediate proximity to chant modality is less necessary. Compare a remark by the abbé Brun at the Paris congress of 1911: “while there is no shortage of excellent [*cantiques*] that are modern in tonality and thematic inspiration, it must be said that the most charming are generally those based on the ecclesiastical chant or tonality. And indeed it seems that this *must* be the true point of departure for all church music.”²³⁴ Again, the goal is kinship to plainchant, achieved equally well by *tonalité ecclésiastique* (probably implying some element of modality) or melodic citation.

²²⁸ “Les compositeurs conservent toute liberté . . . quant au système *modal* ou *tonal*. — Toutefois, les *Versets* devront être rigoureusement conformes aux règles modales de l’un des Huit modes liturgiques.” “Concours de musique religieuse”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (Feb. 1922), 11.

²²⁹ “IX. La tonalité n’est pas déterminée. Cependant, à parité de mérite, on donnera la préférence à un travail diatonique dans la tonalité grégorienne.” Borriero et cie, “Concours de musique sacrée”, *MSB* (Jan. 1897), 53–54.

²³⁰ “la tonalité ancienne est la plus indiquée. Le folk-lore populaire nous révèle souvent dans ce cas la tendance à *colorer* les principales cadences par l’introduction d’un dièse comme élément de *modulation*.” Les Secrétaires, “Notre concours”, *TSG* (July–Aug. 1901), 247. The set text was to be treated “soit dans la forme du cantique populaire, soit dans le genre grégorien [i.e. as a *cantique grégorien*], soit en style polyphonique” (ibid., 245). The secretaries listed on the journal’s cover at the beginning of the year are Bordes, d’Indy, La Tombelle, Bourgault-Ducoudray, Edmond de Polignac, André Pirro, and Gaston de Boisjolin.

²³¹ La Tribune, “Notre concours”, *TSG* (Jan.–Feb. 1902), 47.

²³² See Gonnard, *La musique modale*, 42; Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 16, 183; Lam, “*Tonalité grégorienne*”, 321.

²³³ “Chercher à faire prévaloir à l’Église la tonalité liturgique, au moins dans les parties de l’office réservées au chant grégorien, me semble de la plus élémentaire logique. Il faut reconnaître que ces idées gagnent chaque jour du terrain.” Eugène Gigout, untitled preface in id., *Album grégorien pour orgue ou harmonium* (Armelin musica, 2001 [1895]), n.p.

²³⁴ “s’il n’en [i.e. of *cantiques*] manque point d’excellents qui sont modernes de tonalité et d’inspiration thématique, il faut reconnaître que ceux qui ont le plus de charme sont généralement ceux qui sont basés sur le chant ou la tonalité ecclésiastiques. Et il semble bien que ce *doit* être là le vrai point de départ de toute musique d’église.” Brun, “Le cantique d’inspiration grégorienne”, 165. Despite what Brun implies here, *cantiques* were not usually considered *musique d’église*.

Modality as Progress

From its earliest beginnings in the nineteenth and even eighteenth centuries, modalism appropriated the language of progress.²³⁵ Those who called for the revival of ancient modes presented them as sources of variety capable of enriching or rejuvenating a “classical” tonal system whose imminent exhaustion had been announced regularly since at least the early nineteenth century.

This progressive image had to contend with the reputation of *modes anciens* as a rigid, obsolete system whose revival would bind composers in a straitjacket of pastiche. As late as the turn of the century, when, for many, progress still meant post-Wagnerian chromaticism, church and secular musicians wrote of them as onerous constraints. Ernest Chausson chafed at the prospect when composing some organ *versets*: “Bordes asked me to use antique scales. This bothers me a lot. I wouldn’t want to pastiche old music.”²³⁶ In 1899 another Wagnerite, Maurice Kufferath, declared that “the old scales have become as foreign to us as the French or German of the twelfth century; they belong to the system of a dead language. We never use them more than momentarily, in fragments, as a deliberate, calculated effect.”²³⁷ Even the more conservative Edgar Tinel agreed, warning church composers at the Bruges congress of 1902 that “[p]olyphony based on the so-called Palestrinian modes belongs to the past; this art has seen its day, and any attempt to continue it will wear out even the greatest talents in sterile efforts.” Instead, composers should found the new liturgical style on Bach, who belonged to modernity: “to confer on this style something of our modern soul, we will abandon the ancient modes in favour of the tonal system formed by means of our various major and minor scales”.²³⁸ “Ancient modes” appear backward and restrictive not least because they exclude “the tonal system”. In many minds, they remained associated with the restrictive concept of *tonalité ancienne* in which, as Fétis had declared, “there remained nothing more to do” after Palestrina.²³⁹ Nor could *tonalité ancienne* satisfy modern ears, as the abbé Soullier contended in 1897: “We are no longer brought up on the tonality of the ancients; this formative experience is no longer possible. Try as we might, modern art would enter our ears which are bombarded with it.”²⁴⁰

²³⁵ See notably Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 262–65 and Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 147 et seq.

²³⁶ “Bordes m’a demandé d’employer des gammes anciennes. Cela me gêne beaucoup. Je ne voudrais pas pasticher la vieille musique.” Chausson, “Lettres inédites à Paul Poujaud”, 166.

²³⁷ “les anciennes gammes nous sont devenues aussi étrangères que le français ou le tudesque du XII^e siècle ; elles appartiennent au système d’une langue morte. Quand nous les employons, ce n’est jamais que temporairement, par fragments, en vue d’un effet cherché et voulu.” Maurice Kufferath, “Rythme, mélodie et harmonie”, *Le Guide musical* (24 Sept. 1899), 673. Compare Louis de Romain cited above, 130.

²³⁸ “La polyphonie basée sur les modes dit palestriniens appartient au passé ; c’est un art fini, et les plus grands talents même s’épuiseront en stériles efforts à vouloir le continuer. . . . Pour conférer à ce style quelque chose de notre âme moderne, on abandonnera les modalités anciennes pour y substituer le système tonal formé au moyen de nos diverses variétés de gammes majeures et mineures”. Edgar Tinel, “La musique figurée à l’église”, *TSG* (Aug.–Sept. 1902), 248–49 [orig. lecture, Bruges congress, Aug. 1902].

²³⁹ “après Pierluigi di Palestrina, il ne restait plus rien à faire dans son domaine.” Fétis, *Traité . . . de l’harmonie*, 164 (referring to the *ordre unitonique*, equivalent to *tonalité ancienne*). Cf. Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 21.

²⁴⁰ “Nous ne sommes plus élevés dans la tonalité des anciens, une telle formation n’est plus possible ; l’art moderne entre, malgré tout, dans nos oreilles qui en sont rassasiées.” Soullier, “Musique palestrinienne”, 43.

Eventually, the progressive image would get the upper hand. The abbé Besse represents one notable exception in the early 1920s, at least in the *cantique* genre, where he valued popular appeal and opposed the pseudo-Gregorian style favoured at the Schola cantorum:

The danger, it must be said, is overuse of modes. Say what you like, the *cantique grégorien* belongs to an aesthetic sensibility no longer our own. It returns us to an obsolete state of soul. Granted, that might hold plenty of charm for the antiquarians we all are today, but its effect is limited. . . . [I]n the end, these artificial creations, as rigid as pebbles or archaeological stelae, disagree with our imagination, our heart, our thought; after having pleased a great deal, they irritate and open the door to boredom.²⁴¹

Besse probably judged popular taste accurately. Even as late as 1936, the critic Fred Goldbeck found that modality still aroused “the Monsieur Homais buried deep down in many contemporaries, who, on hearing these Gregorian melismas, detects some vague sort of obscurantism, an attack on the Progress of the musical language—a suspicion wildly exacerbated when it comes to . . . a work of religious inspiration.”²⁴² But among professional musicians, especially in the church, the tide had turned by then. “In former times, some took [modality] for a barbarous system; nowadays, all musicians acknowledge its richness, which we would do well to regain”, claimed Potiron in 1919.²⁴³ He later compared modality to modern harmony that had lost tonal function due to constant dissonance: “when this music consents to remain diatonic it immediately merges into the Gregorian modes, not out of a search for vain archaism but following the natural inclination of the inspiration.”²⁴⁴ In a review of one of Potiron’s masses, Jean Huré reminded his readers that he had been announcing “since 1898” the news “that the modes of yesteryear are reawakening each day and that, far from being contrary to the boldest modernism, they singularly encourage it.”²⁴⁵ When some of Eugène Gigout’s diatonic plainchant *versets* were played at the Conservatoire, Huré alleged, “[s]everal composers of the young school admitted themselves to be very surprised. ‘We didn’t know Gigout was so close to us’, one of them said to me.”²⁴⁶ Over the following years, the apostles of modalism would indeed switch from calling for

²⁴¹ “L’écueil, il faut bien le dire, c’est l’abus modal. Le cantique grégorien est situé, quoi qu’on dise, dans une perspective esthétique qui n’est plus la nôtre. Il nous remet dans un état d’âme périmé[.] — Cela, je le reconnais, a beaucoup de charme pour les antiquaires que nous sommes tous aujourd’hui, mais cela est d’effet limité. . . . ces créations artificielles, qui ont la fixité des cailloux ou des stèles archéologiques finissent par être en discordance avec notre imagination, notre cœur, notre pensée; après avoir beaucoup plu, elles agacent, elles ouvrent la porte à l’ennui.” Besse, “Nos compositeurs de cantiques”, 304–05.

²⁴² “du M. Homais qui sommeille au fond du cœur de nombreux contemporains, et lequel, en écoutant ces mélismes grégoriens, subodore je ne sais quel obscurantisme, un attentat au *Progrès* du langage musical — soupçon furieusement aggravé lorsqu’il s’agit . . . d’une œuvre d’inspiration religieuse.” Goldbeck, “Les concerts”, 46. Homais is the pharmacist in Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* who pontificates about science and progress.

²⁴³ “En d’autres temps, certains ont pu la prendre pour un système barbare; de nos jours, tous les musiciens lui reconnaissent une richesse que nous aurions grand profit à reconquérir.” Potiron, “Chronique générale”, 68. See also id., “L’accompagnement du chant grégorien, II. L’harmonie modale”, *L’Orgue et les Organistes* (15 Aug. 1924), 8: “Les successions qualifiées de barbares, et en réalité souvent savoureuses, qu’on trouve chez les vieux maîtres ont été fort heureusement réhabilitées depuis quelque vingt-cinq ans (depuis Debussy surtout).”

²⁴⁴ “lorsque cette musique veut bien rester diatonique, elle rejoint immédiatement les modes grégoriens, cela non point par la recherche d’un vain archaïsme, mais par la pente naturelle de l’inspiration”. Id., “Modernisme”, 59.

²⁴⁵ “la conviction — que j’exprimai dès 1898 — que les modes d’antan rajeunissent chaque jour et que loin d’être contraire au modernisme le plus hardi ils le favorisent singulièrement.” Jean Huré, “Trois nouvelles œuvres de Henri Potiron”, *L’Orgue et les Organistes* (15 March 1926), 15 (on Potiron, *Messe “Resurrexi”*).

²⁴⁶ “Plusieurs compositeurs de la jeune école s’avouèrent très surpris. « Nous ne savions pas me dit l’un d’eux, que Gigout fut si près de nous ».” Id., “Eugène Gigout”, *L’Orgue et les Organistes* (15 Dec. 1925), 13–15.

the resurrection of the old modes to observing with satisfaction that they had, indeed, been resurrected.²⁴⁷ It was in 1929 that Maurice Emmanuel, sketching a narrative of that resurrection in some notes for a lecture, scrawled a triumphant conclusion: “MODES on y est”.²⁴⁸

The idea of modality as enrichment answered to a secular aesthetic problem of originality; its main spokesmen were non-ecclesiastical musicians (Bourgault-Ducoudray, Emmanuel, Kœchlin) writing about music in general and inspired by ancient music or folksong as much as plainchant.²⁴⁹ But it enabled church musicians to claim credit for progress in secular music. When state funding for the French *maîtrises* came under attack in the 1880s, Catholics, knowing that they needed an artistic rather than religious defence, pointed to the richness that chant modes and rhythms could bring to French composition.²⁵⁰ As the progressive image of modality spread over the coming decades, Catholics lost no opportunity to emphasise the contributions of plainchant to secular art. Perhaps the ultimate example is a series of articles written by Dom Gajard, choirmaster of Solesmes, for the readers of the *Courrier musical* in the late 1920s:

We are presently witnessing a kind of revolution in music. Everywhere bursts forth a desire and will to renew our musical language. Composers are suffocating in the narrow, rigid mould in which the old composition treatises would enclose them. . . . Perhaps they will find unexpected succour in the careful study of these old melodies which have stood the test of time—now resuscitated, after a long eclipse, in all the freshness and brilliance of their youth. . . . It seems that [European music], to satisfy its legitimate ambition to renovate and renew itself, can do no better than to go and drink directly from its source.²⁵¹

If eminent secular musicians had already taken an interest in plainchant, they “no doubt find realised in these old chants, and beyond their hopes, the aspiration towards modal and rhythmic suppleness that haunts the dreams of our contemporary musical generation.”²⁵² A few years later,

²⁴⁷ See Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 382.

²⁴⁸ Quoted in Christophe Corbier, “François-Auguste Gevaert et Maurice Emmanuel : le maître et son disciple”, *Revue belge de musicologie* 64 (2010), 116. Kœchlin’s article “La résurrection des modes anciens dans la musique moderne” (1939, but going back to c. 1930 in earlier versions) likewise marks the “apothéose” of the progress-through-modes discourse (Lessmann, “« L’anachronisme le plus musical »”, 385).

²⁴⁹ Other notable examples include Domergue, *Le plain-chant et la musique de l’avenir* and Alix Tiron, *Études sur la musique grecque, le plain-chant et la tonalité moderne* (Imprimerie impériale, 1866).

²⁵⁰ See esp. Arthur Loth, “France. Paris, 30 décembre 1882”, *L’Univers* (31 Dec. 1882): “Des hommes compétents reconnaissent que la musique moderne, qui commence à s’user, aurait besoin de se rajeunir aux sources vivifiantes du plain-chant. Réduite à ses deux seules gammes, majeure et mineure, elle a tellement épuisé la veine mélodique, que la jeune école, voulant faire du nouveau, s’est jetée au détriment du grand art, dans les combinaisons harmoniques et la recherche des effets. Dans la richesse des quatorze gammes du chant grégorien, dont une seule a fait toute la musique moderne, l’art contemporain, singulièrement appauvri par l’usage, trouverait à se renouveler et à transformer. Une large infusion de plain-chant dans la musique contribuerait bien plus aujourd’hui au développement de l’art musical, que la multiplication des conservatoires et la dotation des théâtres par l’État.” One earlier example is Félix Clément, *Histoire générale de la musique religieuse depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours* (Le Clere, 1861), 366, repeated in Arthur Loth, *L’Art* (Bloud & Barral, 1897) and Chaminade, *La musique sacrée*, 52–53.

²⁵¹ “Nous assistons de nos jours à une sorte de révolution dans la musique. Partout éclate[nt] le désir et la volonté de rajeunir notre langue musicale. Les compositeurs étouffent dans le moule étroit et rigide où voudraient les enfermer les vieux traités de composition. . . . Peut-être trouveraient-ils un secours inattendu dans la lecture attentive des vieilles mélodies que le temps a consacrées, et qui, après une longue éclipse, viennent de ressusciter dans toute la fraîcheur et tout l’éclat de leur jeunesse. . . . Il semble que celle-ci, pour satisfaire sa légitime ambition de se rénover et de se rajeunir, n’ait rien de mieux à faire que d’aller s’abreuver directement à sa source.” Gajard, *La musicalité du chant grégorien*, 38.

²⁵² “Ils trouvent sans doute réalisées dans ces vieux chants, et au-delà de leurs espérances, les aspirations de souplesse modale et rythmique qui hantent les rêves de notre génération musicale contemporaine.” *Ibid.*, 7.

the abbé Giraud could proudly rattle off the names of Fauré, Debussy, Kœchlin, Ravel, Caplet, and Roland-Manuel among the Gregorian converts.²⁵³ In part, such claims reflect a need to assert the aesthetic (as opposed to merely religious) value of plainchant, still a relatively new idea.²⁵⁴ More importantly, church musicians were asserting the relevance of a backwater of musical life long dismissed as moribund.

Only slowly did authors begin citing modality's variety or richness as a reason to use it in church music itself, where this motive for modalism never became paramount.²⁵⁵ Reformists turned to this idea (notably in several commentaries on TLS) to argue that making old music the model for church composition would leave plenty of room for creativity.²⁵⁶ Even so, they tended to present it as a pure, healthy, strictly diatonic alternative to chromaticism (they included some figures with extremely conservative tastes such as Félix Clément, Edmond Monnier, Camille Bellaigue, Dom Laurent Janssens, and the abbés Chaminade and Perruchot), by contrast to someone like Maurice Emmanuel who usually envisaged a mode mixture surpassing any one diatonic collection.²⁵⁷ The abbé Guillermin pointed to modal richness after proscribing chromaticism, enharmony, and "brusque" modulations.²⁵⁸ Pierre Aubry promised modal richness as compensation after urging church musicians to totally abjure chromaticism.²⁵⁹ Hubert Uylings, an ultra-conservative choirmaster who wrote for the *Courrier de Saint-Grégoire*, saw in Gregorian modes a constraint that would impede composers from trying too much innovation.²⁶⁰

Modality as Expression of Religious Sentiment

An aura of intrinsic suitability for expressing religious sentiment, like that surrounding polymelody and the *a cappella* choir, may also have endeared modality to church musicians. However, modality *per se* is quite difficult to distinguish from mere diatonicism, and the concept of *tonalité ancienne*, in discourse on the aesthetics of sacred music.

As for diatonicism itself, no other stylistic phenomenon enjoyed such a reputation for religiosity. A very limited range of liturgical content could justify chromaticism even for reformists, as for instance the lachrymose Tenebrae responsory "Plange quasi virgo" set "dans le style chromatique" (note the need for a disclaimer) by d'Indy's student Albert Dupuis for the Schola

²⁵³ See Ludovic Giraud, *La musique d'église telle que l'Église la veut* (Marseille: Publiroc, 1934), 33–35.

²⁵⁴ For background see Jean-Yves Hameline, "Le son de l'histoire. Musique et chant dans la Restauration catholique (XIX^e siècle)", *La Maison-Dieu* 131 (1977), 35–36.

²⁵⁵ An early example is Edmond Monnier, *La musique religieuse et le plain-chant devant les prescriptions du Concile de Trente* (Paris and Lyon: Lecoffre, 1880), 13. See also Guilmant and Perruchot quoted above (133).

²⁵⁶ See Guillermin, "Musique d'église et musique de concert", 568–69, 573, 575 and Aubry, "Les idées de S. S. Pie X", 53.

²⁵⁷ See Laurent Janssens, "Le chant grégorien et la musique moderne", *CSG* (April 1891), 105; Camille Bellaigue, *Études musicales, troisième série* (Delagrave, 1907), 236–37 [orig. in *La Revue des deux mondes*, 1904]; Gastoué, *L'art grégorien* (Alcan, 1911), 198–99.

²⁵⁸ Guillermin, "Musique d'église et musique de concert", 574.

²⁵⁹ See Aubry, "Les idées de S. S. Pie X", 53.

²⁶⁰ See Hubert J. Uylings, "La composition de musique religieuse", *CSG* (May–June 1907), 39–40: "En se montrant sous ce rapport d'une sévérité absolue, on s'épure le goût et on se défait de certaines tendances vers le genre libre trop cultivé de nos jours."

cantorum catalogue. Moreover, absolute bans on chromaticism mostly disappear after 1894, when “De musica sacra” formally recognised that “chromatic music . . . may be suitable to sacred functions”.²⁶¹ But a strong aversion persisted, even among the more adventurous church musicians.²⁶² It rested mainly on a combination of practical considerations (given the limitations of most church choirs) and moralism: since time immemorial, chromaticism had been associated with the lascivious, complicated, and effeminate and diatonicism with the placid, simple, and masculine. General aesthetic values such as structural clarity contributed too; speaking on “modern music” at the Tourcoing congress of 1919, Fernand de La Tombelle declared chromaticism “perfectly acceptable”,

but on condition, of course, that an excessive pluritonicity not accumulate to the point of obscuring where we are or where we are going. Chromaticism is a means, not an end, and when it sets itself up as an end, it ends only in formlessness. . . . And nothing is more contrary to the spirit of the Church than an absence or distortion of the tonal framework, the basis of all form.²⁶³

But La Tombelle and other conservatives valued clear form and tonal orientation everywhere, so there is nothing here specific to church music (hardly in danger of succumbing to an excessive pluritonicity in 1919).

Similarly, the concept of *tonalité ancienne* (also called *tonalité antique*, *ecclésiastique*, *d'église*, *de plain-chant*, *grégorienne*, *liturgique*, etc.), introduced by Choron, elaborated by Fétis, and popularised by Joseph d'Ortigue, constituted religiosity in its very essence, according to not a few nineteenth-century musicians. Fétis equated the attractive pull in *tonalité moderne* with the desire and striving inherent in the fallen human condition, and the inertia of *tonalité ancienne* to the eternal peace of the other world—the essence of religiosity, according to the “ultramontane aesthetic” of the early and middle nineteenth century.²⁶⁴ “Try as one might,” Fétis declared, “music can never be given a truly religious character without the austere tonality and consonant harmony of plainchant; and there can never be impassioned, dramatic expression without a tonality capable of much modulation, like that of modern music”.²⁶⁵ The idea offered legislators and censors of church music such as Félix Danjou, Théodore Nisard, and especially d'Ortigue an attractively simple solution to the age-old problem of distinguishing sacred from profane.

²⁶¹ “Il Canto polifono eziandio, come anche il Canto cromatico . . . possono convenire alle sacre funzioni” (<https://www.vatican.va/archive/ass/documents/ASS-27-1894-95-ocr.pdf#page=42>).

²⁶² See e.g. Chaminade, *La musique sacrée*, a commentary on the above, which admits *musique chromatique* with extreme reluctance and devotes much more space to warning of its dangers. Even Joseph Samson was “l’adversaire déclaré du chromatisme aux voix” according to Isidore Dupont, “Deux messes de M. J. Samson”, *RM* (July–Aug. 1938), 48.

²⁶³ “Lorsque le chromatique agrmente de tout le chatoisement dont il est capable la ligne diatonique, voilée peut-être, mais encore perçue, c’est parfaitement acceptable. Mais c’est, bien entendu, à condition que la pluri-tonalité exaspérée ne prétende pas se superposer au point d’empêcher de savoir d’où l’on vient ni où l’on va. Le chromatique est un moyen, non un but, et lorsqu’il se donne comme but, il n’aboutit qu’à l’amorphisme. . . . Or, rien n’est plus contraire à l’esprit de l’Église que l’absence ou la torture de l’ossature tonale, base de toute forme.” Fernand de La Tombelle, “Le répertoire moderne”, in *La musique d’église. Compte rendu du Congrès de musique sacrée de Tourcoing, 1919* (Tourcoing: Duvivier, 1920), 169.

²⁶⁴ See Driskel, *Representing Belief*, esp. 6–7.

²⁶⁵ “Quoi qu’on fasse, on ne donnera jamais un caractère véritablement religieux à la musique sans la tonalité austère et sans l’harmonie consonante du plain-chant ; il n’y aura d’expression passionnée et dramatique possible qu’avec une tonalité susceptible de beaucoup de modulations, comme celle de la musique moderne”. Fétis, *Biographie universelle*, liii.

We must be careful, though, of assimilating *tonalité ancienne* and its many variants to “modality”.²⁶⁶ In Fétis, *tonalité ancienne* stands somewhat vaguely for whatever it was that came before *tonalité moderne*, defined by the presence of one or another harmony containing a tritone.²⁶⁷ It represents a weakness if not outright absence of (what I call) tonality, without necessarily having anything to do with alternative modes: all *tonalité moderne* is major or minor for Fétis, but not the reverse.²⁶⁸ Fétis also seems to associate *tonalité ancienne* with diatonicism, though he ruled out the chromatic polyphony of Gesualdo and contemporaries as *tonalité moderne*²⁶⁹ and tolerated raised leading tones in plainchant accompaniment without seeing a major violation of *tonalité ancienne*.²⁷⁰

Tonalité ancienne and its variants became still vaguer over time, in the hands of choirmasters and journalists little concerned with the niceties of Fétisian tonal theory. The notion of a great divide between ancient/sacred and modern/profane *tonalités* endured into the twentieth century, but definitions are scarce. Some conceptions of the ancient/sacred *tonalité* do seem to involve alternative modes; in particular, church musicians (by contrast to Fétis himself) often fixated on the leading tone as the key element of *tonalité moderne* deleterious to sacred music, and prized the calm austerity of the low $\hat{7}$.²⁷¹ More often, though, *tonalité d'église* and the like seem to mean diatonicism, or consonance, or even diatonic monophony, as in the grand tonal dichotomy, very much in the Fétisian tradition, described by Edgar Tinel to a Catholic congress in 1889:

As a general rule, theatrical music is the language of the passions. It is particularly constructed by means of the chromatic scale, which is totally foreign to the diatonic scale, the only one used in Gregorian chant. The latter is essentially consonant and its melodies exude calm and devotion; the former, on the other hand, is dissonant by nature and its melodies represent agitation and passion. The diatonic scale gives rise to solemn harmonies suitable for encouraging piety; the chromatic scale gives rise to aggregations of sounds that stimulate the senses and excite the ear. The one is all tranquillity, the other all movement.²⁷²

Reprising the dichotomy twenty years later in another address to a general audience, Tinel further reduced it to a matter of consonance and dissonance:

²⁶⁶ As in e.g. Gonnard, *La musique modale*, 29 and Pillot-Rebours, “Le Motu Proprio”, 134.

²⁶⁷ See above, 124.

²⁶⁸ A prominent example being Fétis’s popular harmonisations of sixteenth-century “Laudi spirituali”, presented as *tonalité ancienne* despite their unequivocal F major; see Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Harmony”, 143.

²⁶⁹ See e.g. Fétis, *Traité . . . de l’harmonie*, xx–xxii, xxxvii–xxxviii, xli, xxxvii–xxxviii and id., *Bibliographie universelle*, ccxxii. Fétis decides that a similar passage in Palestrina “n’appartient à aucune tonalité déterminée” (see Littlejohn, “Fétis’s Theory of Harmony”, 115–17).

²⁷⁰ See Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 41–46. Stephen Morelot followed Fétis on this point; see e.g. Stephen Morelot, “La musique religieuse au point de vue confessionnel”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (March 1899), 38.

²⁷¹ See Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 35–39. See also Perriot cited above, 88–89.

²⁷² “En thèse générale la musique théâtrale est le langage des passions. Elle est particulièrement construite au moyen de la gamme chromatique, laquelle est totalement étrangère à la gamme diatonique seule employée dans le chant grégorien. Celle-ci est essentiellement consonante et ses mélodies respirent le calme et la dévotion; celle-là, au contraire, est, de sa nature, dissonante et ses mélodies dénotent l’agitation et la passion. La gamme diatonique donne naissance à des harmonies graves propres à encourager la piété; la gamme chromatique fait naître des agrégations de sons qui stimulent les sens en excitant l’ouïe. L’une est toute tranquillité, l’autre tout mouvement.” [Tinel], “Discours de M. E. Tinel”, 35. See further d’Ortigue cited in Benedikt Lessmann, “Le chant grégorien en France (1811-1908). Entre liturgie, science, politique et esthétique”, in *La musique religieuse en France au XIX^e siècle. Le sentiment religieux entre profane et sacré (1830-1914)*, ed. Nicolas Dufetel (Brepols, 2021), 118; Monnier, *La musique religieuse*, esp. 20–21; Eusèbe Cloup, “Esthétique et composition de la musique sacrée”, *Études franciscaines* (Nov. 1908), esp. 434–35 (where *tonalité grégorienne*, *tonalité liturgique*, and *tonalité ecclésiastique* are interchangeable with *tonalité diatonique* and *gamme diatonique*); C. V. D. M., “Pour Palestrina”.

The expression of purely human sentiment corresponds to a harmonic system whose characteristic factor is dissonance, which contains the principle of movement, of action. By the same logic, the exteriorisation of religious sentiment corresponds to a harmonic system founded on consonance, which implies repose, serenity, states of soul appropriate to prayer and adoration.²⁷³

In both versions, the basic idea of a split between two tone systems leaves behind tonality properly speaking; Tinel indeed prefers to speak of *gammes* or *systèmes harmoniques*, and as seen above he explicitly accepted *tonalité moderne* in church music, as confirmed in 1908 by his examples of music expressing “sentiment religieux”—Beethoven’s “Heiliger Dankgesang” (full of dominant sevenths) and the Grail Scene from *Parsifal*.²⁷⁴ By the time of the 1911 Paris congress, the expression *tonalité du plain-chant* seems to have lost almost all meaning, at least for Félix Raugel who equated the views espoused in Tinel’s 1908 speech, d’Indy’s “L’art en place et à sa place”, and TLS to Stephen Morelot’s dictum “the tonality of plainchant must be ‘the tonality informing all church music’”, which he found in the proceedings of the 1860 congress.²⁷⁵ Since Tinel explicitly rejected modality and *tonalité ancienne* while TLS and d’Indy say nothing on *tonalité*, Raugel must have equated Morelot’s words with the general idea of looking to plainchant for inspiration.

In any case, the Fétisian tendency to regard *tonalité moderne* as inimical to sacred music mostly died out in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thoroughgoing modernisers rejected any such attempts to codify religiosity in style terms.²⁷⁶ Placidity would remain crucial to conceptions of *sentiment religieux* well into the twentieth century, but the equation between tonal pull and worldly desire stopped making sense. “I fail to see how a scale becomes sensual just by having a semitone between its seventh and eighth degrees,” grumbled one layman confronted with a Fétisian pamphlet in 1879.²⁷⁷ If anything, strong tonality better represented faith, hope, and consolation better than the inert and vacillating *tonalité ancienne*; if the latter lacked a true tonic and therefore the possibility of “repose and conclusion”, as Fétis himself remarked,²⁷⁸ its character could paradoxically seem to resemble that of chromaticism, which, according to one self-appointed censor of church music, “suspends the sense of tonality and thereby produces an effect of vague

²⁷³ “À l’expression des sentiments purement humains correspond un système harmonique dont le facteur caractéristique est la dissonance, laquelle contient le principe du mouvement, de l’action. En raison inverse, à l’extériorisation des sentiments religieux correspond un système harmonique fondé sur la consonance, laquelle implique le repos, la sérénité, conditions d’âme qui conviennent à la prière, à l’adoration.” Edgar Tinel, *Pie X et la musique sacrée* (Schola cantorum, 1909), 2–3 [orig. presidential address to Belgian Royal Academy, Oct. 1908].

²⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, 2–3. Cf. above, 147–48 and 158.

²⁷⁵ “la tonalité du plain-chant doit être « la tonalité informante de toute la musique d’église ».” Félix Raugel, “Le Congrès de musique religieuse de Paris, 27, 28, 29, 30 novembre et 1^{er} décembre 1860”, in *Congrès parisien et régional*, 79. Cf. Théodore Joseph De Vroye and Xavier Van Elewyck, *De la musique religieuse. Les Congrès de Malines (1863 et 1864) et de Paris (1860) et la législation de l’église sur cette matière* (Lethielleux, 1866), 223. Raugel misattributes the quote to Augustin Gontier and seems to have missed that Morelot was calling for lenient adherence to plainchant tonality.

²⁷⁶ See notably A. Le Franc [Arthur Coquard], “De la musique religieuse”, *Le Monde* (18 May–9 Dec. 1881) and Abel Gabert, “Notre credo artistique”, *L’Avenir de la musique sacrée* (15 Aug. 1898), 28.

²⁷⁷ “je ne vois pas bien comment une gamme deviendrait sensuelle, par le seul fait d’avoir un demi-ton entre son septième degré et son huitième.” Ernest Sabatier, *Le plain-chant et la musique de l’avenir, par M. Domergue. Rapport lu à l’Académie de Nîmes [sic] dans la séance du 12 juillet 1879* (Nîmes: Catélan, 1880), 17. For further examples see Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 50.

²⁷⁸ “le caractère de repos et de conclusion”. Fétis, *Traité . . . de l’harmonie*, 152.

uncertainty and doubt which has nothing in common with the upwelling of faith and Christian confidence.”²⁷⁹

A neo-Fétisian view prizing modality, or at least the tonal weakness associated with alternative modes, as particularly suited to the sacred survived after 1900 in a few figures outside the reformist orthodoxy. Saint-Saëns, heavily influenced by Fétis and less and less favourable to emotion in general, continued to regard the “limp” or “indecisive” tonality of Renaissance polyphony as ideal for the impassive character desirable in the church.²⁸⁰ Saint-Saëns’s admirer Jean Huré harked back to this dispassionate aesthetic in several articles on fundamental questions of liturgical music published after succeeding his mentor Gigout as organist of Saint-Augustin in 1926. As he saw it, “nothing in church music should express muscular movement, the march, the dance. It must be calm and restful, a symbol of bodily immobility and flights of soul”.²⁸¹ But neither should it “attract attention” or “take hold of and captivate the mind”.²⁸² The appropriate sound, Huré felt, would be “supple in rhythm” and “rather vague in its contours and harmonies”.²⁸³ For such a purpose, “[t]he Gregorian modes [*tonalités*], which generate vague harmonies, are perfectly suited. . . . Symmetrical melodies in the major or minor mode, with the leading tone, attract too much attention. They are easily grasped and followed. One becomes fixated on them rather than lulled by them.”²⁸⁴ More profusely, Huré’s friend Charles Kœchlin expatiated on the particular atmosphere of serene contemplation that he called “sentiment modal” or “caractère grégorien”. Derived from an Apollinian image of Greek Antiquity and revulsion at a popular taste that craved the brutish decisiveness of V⁷–I cadences,²⁸⁵ this aesthetic idea owed something to the old Fétisianism absorbed via Bourgault-Ducoudray’s history lectures at the Conservatoire, to judge from what Kœchlin remembered of them much later:

These Greek modes, in their absence of leading tones, seem to radiate a singular spirituality; the leading tone and the dominant seventh bring us down to earth and its human passions, which is why so many people prefer the major mode. Do not the Gregorian modes correspond to a sentiment more detached from the hubbub of everyday life, and belong essentially to the life of the cloister?²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ “suspend le sentiment tonal et provoque par là un effet de vague incertitude et de doute qui n’a rien de commun avec l’élan de la foi et de la confiance chrétienne. “Musique religieuse”, *Revue de l’art chrétien* (1893), 177–78 [orig. in *Le Bien public*, Ghent].

²⁸⁰ “flasque”; “indécise”. Camille Saint-Saëns, “L’évolution musicale”, *Le Ménestrel* (24 June 1906), 190.

²⁸¹ “rien dans la musique d’église ne doit exprimer le mouvement musculaire, la marche, la danse. Elle doit être calme, reposante, symbole de l’immobilité des corps et des élans de l’âme”. Jean Huré, “La musique à l’église”, *Le Monde musical* (April 1928), 134.

²⁸² “pour n’attirer pas l’attention, pour ne pas retenir et captiver la pensée.” Ibid.

²⁸³ “de rythme souple”; “assez vague en ses contours, en ses harmonies”. Ibid.

²⁸⁴ “Les tonalités grégoriennes, génératrices d’harmonies vagues, sont ici tout à fait indiquées. . . . Les mélodies symétriques, en mode majeur ou mineur, avec sensibles, attirent trop l’attention, on les saisit aisément, on les suit, elles vous obsèdent et ne vous bercent pas.” Ibid.

²⁸⁵ See Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 163–65.

²⁸⁶ “Ces modes grecs, avec l’absence de notes sensibles, semblent dégager d’eux-mêmes une spiritualité singulière ; la sensible et la septième de dominante nous ramènent près de la terre et des passions humaines : ce qui rend le majeur plus cher à bien des gens. Les modalités grégoriennes ne s’accordent-elles pas, sans doute, avec un sentiment plus détaché des fluctuations de la vie quotidienne, et ne conviennent-elles pas essentiellement à la vie du cloître ?” [Charles Kœchlin], “Étude sur Charles Kœchlin par lui-même”, *RM* 340–41 (1981), 49–50, paraphrasing Bourgault-Ducoudray. Cf. Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Conférence*, which associates the major with “un caractère exclusivement passionné” and “l’art antique” with “sérénité” and “grandeur calme” (31). Sylvain Caron notes Kœchlin’s similarity to Fétis and d’Ortigue on this point, though I would insist on the difference between the former’s *modalité* and the latter’s *tonalité*

While Kœchlin himself found this a little exaggerated, he associated modes with a kind of philosophical detachment, “a repose in no way cold or lifeless or indifferent to reality, but subtle, serene, nuanced, at once broad and refined.”²⁸⁷ Ironically, it was his heterodox religious sentiment (as a kind of agnostic or deist) that led him back to a quasi-Fétisianism no longer in step with reformist discourse: for Kœchlin, the sophisticated ambiguity of modality was also quintessentially modern, a natural vehicle for the complexity and incertitude of modern thought.²⁸⁸

These exceptions aside, evidence that anyone considered modality *per se* intrinsically religious is fairly scanty. Certainly, “the church modes” were often considered specially appropriate to and desirable in church composition; even the mass of the faithful recognised that “la langue modale est la langue de l’église”, one priest wrote in 1921.²⁸⁹ But what made it *la langue de l’église* was mainly association with plainchant, and not, as with diatonicism and consonance, supposedly intrinsic properties. Pierre Aubry makes the distinction clear when recommending, in his commentary on TLS, to adopt the modes of plainchant in new church composition: they have acquired an ecclesiastical quality thanks to history, as “the heritage of the Christian Church”, whereas the diatonic *tonalité* is intrinsically “masculine, grave, and austere”, “forthright and broad”.²⁹⁰ Exactly the same in Auguste Sérieyx’s commentary from the same year: the requirements for liturgical music include “*Ecclesiastical modes*, which a constant, centuries-long tradition has reserved for church music, almost exclusively, ever since the origins of the Christian cult—whence their truly religious character.”²⁹¹ “Out of two compositions of equal value, one should prefer the one written in the ancient modes”, declares Hubert Uylings in 1907; but the reasons he gives are conformity to plainchant (as commanded by TLS), variety within diatonicism, and discouragement of “le genre libre”, rather than intrinsic character.²⁹²

Modality as Emblem of Group Identity

The sense that one or another set of modes belonged to or represented an imagined group, whether a local/regional population, nation, race, or sect, certainly underlay a great deal of modern modalism.²⁹³ Clear evidence of such a motive rarely appears in writings on church music, bound

ancienne; see Sylvain Caron, “L’Abbaye de Charles Kœchlin. Une nouvelle poétique du religieux”, in *Charles Kœchlin, compositeur et humaniste*, ed. Philippe Cathé, Sylvie Douche, and Michel Duchesneau (Vrin, 2010), 176

²⁸⁷ “un repos nullement d’indifférence, à la vérité, ni de froideur ni de manque de vie, — mais subtil, serein, tout en nuances, et large et fin tout à la fois.” [Kœchlin], “Étude sur Charles Kœchlin”, 68.

²⁸⁸ See e.g. Kœchlin, “Les tendances de la musique moderne française”, 64.

²⁸⁹ Aribon [pseudonym], “Billets à un vicaire”, *La Revue des maîtrises* (April 1921), 32.

²⁹⁰ “le patrimoine de l’Eglise chrétienne”; “mâle, grave et austère”; “franche et large”. Aubry, “Les idées de S. S. Pie X”, 53.

²⁹¹ “*Modalités ecclésiastiques*, qu’une tradition séculaire et constante réserve aux chants d’église, à peu près exclusivement, depuis l’origine du culte chrétien : d’où leur caractère véritablement religieux”. Sérieyx, “Caractéristiques de la musique sacrée”, 221.

²⁹² “De deux compositions de valeur égale, il faut préférer celle qui est écrite dans les modes anciens.” Uylings, “Autour d’un nouveau recueil de cantiques”, 8.

²⁹³ For a start see Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”: Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (CUP, 2007), 111–52; Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, passim; Asimov, “Comparative Philology”, passim; Katharine Ellis, *French Musical Life: Local Dynamics in the Century to World War II* (OUP, 2022), 275–316.

by TLS to strive for a certain “universality”.²⁹⁴ But this official universalism was too weak to suppress entirely identitarian discourses in an age of fevered nationalism and racialism.

Conceptions of “l’école française” or of a “French” musical character began to include diatonic modality around the turn of the century, as they have ever since.²⁹⁵ The *locus classicus* of this Franco-modal discourse is perhaps the 1907 article “Le chant grégorien et la musique française” by Louis Laloy, who had studied plainchant at Solesmes and the Schola cantorum and initiated the tradition of hearing plainchant in Debussy.²⁹⁶ As his title suggests, Laloy stressed the historical role of plainchant as a shaper of French music, directly or via folksong. The claim must have seemed political (perhaps reconciliatory) in 1907, hardly a year after the separation of church and state had brought the quarrel between the “two Frances” to its fiercest moment. As shown above, Catholics and church musicians were happy to repeat this claim, since it gave them (or at least their beloved plainchant) some credit for the glories of the “modern French school”. Surprisingly, though, I see no evidence of anyone citing modality’s Frenchness as a reason to use it in church music. Instead, one finds the older, more general discourse of diatonicism as an ingredient of French clarity and grace, as opposed to vulgar German excess. Thus for example Ernest Closson (a Belgian) blamed “the characteristic immoderation of the German” for the “wild modulations, chains of diminished seventh chords, [and] altered chords” in the plainchant accompaniments “manufactured” (*machinés*) by Peter Griesbacher, a professor at the Regensburg Kirchenmusikschule, while hoping that “French moderation and discretion” would save Marc de Ranse from treading the same path.²⁹⁷ The French character, it seems, was more suited to the church musician’s task.

The notion of musical *latinité*, which could involve modality by extension of the common discourse of modern tonality’s “Northern” or “Teutonic” origins, had a presence in church music at least through the writings of Charles Bordes.²⁹⁸ Rebuffing calls for a French Cecilian Society in

²⁹⁴ According to TLS church music must “be universal in this sense, namely, that although each country may use in its ecclesiastical music whatever special forms may belong to its own national style, these forms must be subject to the proper nature of sacred music, so that it may never produce a bad impression on the mind of any stranger who may hear it.” Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music: 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Liturgical Press, 1979), 224.

²⁹⁵ Key texts include Maurice Emmanuel, Pelléas et Mélisande *de Claude Debussy*; Charles Kœchlin, *Gabriel Fauré* (Alcan, 1927); id., *Debussy* (Laurens, 1927); Paul Landormy, “Debussy inconnu”, *Revue Pleyel* (Feb. 1927), 156–58; Léon Guichard, “Erik Satie et la musique grégorienne”, *RM* (15 Nov. 1936), 334–35; Julia d’Almendra, *Les modes grégoriens dans l’œuvre de Claude Debussy* (Énault, 1950); Clément Jacob, “Erik Satie et le chant grégorien”, *RM* 214 (1952), 85–94; René Dumesnil, *Histoire de la musique, des origines à nos jours*, vol. 4, rev. edn (Colin, 1958); Jacques Chailley, “À propos de quatre mesures de l’*Entführung*. La renaissance de la modalité dans la musique française avant 1890”, in *Bericht über den internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress Wien Mozartjahr 1956*, ed. Erich Schenk (Graz and Cologne: Böhlhaus, 1958), 78–91; Roland-Manuel, “L’évolution de l’harmonie”; Alain, *L’harmonie*; Françoise Gervais, “Étude comparée des langages harmoniques de Fauré et de Debussy”, *RM* 272 (1971), 1–152. Though mainly a discourse by French musicians about themselves, it was also shared by outsiders looking in; see Joseph Kreps, “Mélodies grégoriennes et mélodies fauréennes”, *MSB* (June 1928), 65–80.

²⁹⁶ See Louis Laloy, *La Musique retrouvée* (Desclée De Brouwer, 1974 [1928]), 115–18 [orig. in *La Revue musicale*, 1902].

²⁹⁷ “des modulations forcenées, des chaînes d’accords de septièmes diminuées, des accords altérés”; “le manque de mesure propre à l’Allemand”; “la mesure et la discrétion françaises.” Closson, *Esthétique*, 98–99. On the history of this stereotype of German character see Michael Strasser, “The Société Nationale and Its Adversaries: The Musical Politics of *L’Invasion germanique* in the 1870s”, *19th Century Music* 24.3 (2001), 230–32.

²⁹⁸ On tonality see Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 88–91 and Alexander Rehding, “The Quest for the Origins of Music in Germany Circa 1900”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53.2 (2000), 345–85. An introduction to musical *latinité*, now somewhat dated, is Andrea Musk, “Regionalism, *Latinité* and the French Musical Tradition; Déodat de Séverac’s *Héliogabale*”, in *Nineteenth-Century Music: Selected Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference*, ed. Jim Samson and Bennett Zon (Ashgate, 2002), 226–49.

1897, Bordes (or a spokesman) declared in the *Tribune de Saint-Gervais* that “the productions of German Cecilian music . . . appear to be incompatible with our *Latin aspirations* . . . Christian music must be a *Latin music* above all, and we have no need of Germany to lecture us about our duties in this matter.”²⁹⁹ Bordes had in fact conceived the idea of a “kind of Latin Cecilian Society to counter the Cecilian Society of Regensburg”, under Felipe Pedrell, Giovanni Tebaldini, and himself, at a festival of church musicians in Bilbao in 1896, and three years later was still proposing to Pedrell to “try to establish something practical among Latins”.³⁰⁰ But Bordes’s sense of *latinité* had no explicit modal or tonal element to it.

Ethnic, linguistic, national, and regional stereotypes were entangled with sectarian ones. Among francophone Catholics, stereotypes of what was musically Protestant (coldly cerebral, rigid, interior) and Catholic (warm, demonstrative) were highly developed during this period.³⁰¹ Modality entered into them by virtue of each sect’s emblematic repertoires (the chorale and Bach for Protestants, plainchant and Renaissance polyphony for Catholics).³⁰² In the vein of Laloy’s 1907 article, Jean Huré claimed in 1909 that the Catholic Church, by conserving the music of antiquity, had left a modal imprint on French (and some Spanish and Italian) folk tunes, whereas Protestant countries only had “insipid symmetrical melodies, in the major or minor modes (with leading tone), and always implying banal harmonies that endlessly repeat the three tonal chords.”³⁰³ In a well-known passage of his memoirs dating to the 1930s, Tournemire positioned *L’Orgue mystique* as a modal, chant-based, Catholic pendant to Bach’s tonal, chorale-based, Protestant cantata cycle.³⁰⁴ The idea for such a project went back to Lemmens (*École d’orgue basée sur le plain-chant romain*, 1862) and had already informed works by Lemmens’s students Guilmant (*L’Organiste liturgiste*, op. 65, 1865–99) and Clément Loret (*Les Fêtes religieuses*, 1893).³⁰⁵

²⁹⁹ “les productions de la musique cécilienne allemande . . . ne nous paraissent pas compatibles avec nos *aspirations latines* . . . La musique chrétienne doit être avant tout une *musique latine*, et nous n’avons pas besoin de l’Allemagne pour nous dicter nos devoirs en cette matière.” X., “Notes bibliographiques” [review of Chaminade, *La musique sacrée telle que la veut l’Église*], *TSG* (May 1897), 80.

³⁰⁰ “sorte de *Cacilien Verein latine* que l’on pût opposer à la *Cacilien Verein* de Ratisbonne.” René de Castéra, “Dix années d’action musicale religieuse”, *TSG* (July 1902), 186. “chercher à établir quelque chose de pratique entre Latins”. Charles Bordes, letter to Felipe Pedrell quoted in Bernadette Lespinaud, *Les passions du chœur. La musique chorale et ses pratiques en France, 1800-1950* (Fayard, 2018), 563.

³⁰¹ See e.g. Joseph Duclos, “Essai sur la vie et les travaux de l’auteur”, in Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, *Le chant grégorien. Sa mélodie, son rythme [sic], son harmonisation*, ed. Joseph Duclos (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1886), xix: “chez les protestants . . . la musique n’est qu’une solennité extérieure, appelée à relever un culte qui est froid de sa nature”, by contrast to “la vivifiante chaleur du culte catholique”. See also especially Clément Besse, *La crise des cérémonies religieuses et de la musique sacrée* (Versailles: *Le Semeur*, 1907), a defence of Catholic pomp against crypto-Protestant austerity.

³⁰² See e.g. Stephen Morelot, “La musique religieuse au point de vue confessionnel”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (March 1899), 37–39.

³⁰³ “insipides mélodies symétriques, sur les modes majeur ou mineur (avec sensible) et sous entendant [sic] toujours de banales harmonies qui répètent à satiété les trois accords tonaux [sic].” Jean Huré, *Dogmes musicaux (1904-1907)* (*Le Monde musical*, 1909), 182.

³⁰⁴ See Ch. 1, 37–38. Tournemire often repeated the parallel; see e.g. José Bruyr, “Un entretien avec . . . Charles Tournemire”, *Le Guide du concert* (11–18 April 1930), 792–93: “n’est-il pas permis de constater, avec quelque regret, que le développement de son [i.e. Bach’s] art tonal et protestant renie la splendide floraison modale des siècles médiévaux et catholiques ?”

³⁰⁵ On Loret see Kurt Lueders, “L’enseignement de la Schola Cantorum et l’évolution de l’art organistique en France”, in *Étudier, enseigner et composer à la Schola Cantorum (1896-1962)*, ed. Sylvie Douche and Cédric Segond-Genovesi (Aedam Musicae, 2022), 225.

From the opposite side, a sectarian version of the “Northern origins of tonality” discourse, popular among north German liberal Protestants, traced the rise of modern tonality to the chorale, associated with the Reformation and therefore the supposed birth of modern individualism.³⁰⁶ And if the origins of modern tonality was more often located in Italy, Bach was widely credited as its definitive consolidator.³⁰⁷ In France, the Protestant critic Jean Chantavoine revived this view in an aggressive article of 1936, contemptuously rejecting any compositional potential in plainchant and dismissing its modality as “vague, floating, impersonal”, a decayed, sterile remnant of antiquity which “resists or evades all individual expression”.³⁰⁸ In many ways he was simply echoing the contempt of nineteenth-century liberals for all things medieval, as well as banal stereotypes of Western dynamism and Eastern immobility (thus the rise of the major-minor duopoly represents “the Occidental instinct breaking through Oriental tradition”).³⁰⁹ But in contrasting sterile plainchant to the fecund Lutheran chorale, Chantavoine introduced a specifically sectarian element. The fact that Henri Potiron replied with an argument for the medieval roots of modern tonality suggests that at least some Catholics were reluctant to embrace a modal identity.³¹⁰

Conclusion: Subcultures of Modalism

In this chapter, some divergences have emerged within discourse on modality from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Conceptions of modality diverged in particular between the domains of history and ethnology on the one hand, and composition, theory, and analysis on the other, though most figures continued to straddle several of these domains. Rather than migrating from the one side to the other, “modality” persisted in both, but in increasingly distinct versions. On the one hand, research on historical mode systems and theories by Westphal, Gevaert, Hugo Gaisser, Peter Wagner, Emmanuel, Dechevrens, Gastoué, Laloy, Dom Parisot, and others revealed more and more complexity, variability, and distance from modern thought and practice; this particularisation would culminate in the quasi-exhaustive surveys by Antoine Auda (*Les gammes musicales*, published in 1947 but written before the war) and Jacques Chailley (*L'imbroglia des modes*, 1960).³¹¹ On the other hand, theories of diatonic modality grew more simple, rational, precise, and ahistorical, reduced to a matter of scales and tonics understood as natural forms.

³⁰⁶ See Benjamin Steege, *Helmholtz and the Modern Listener* (CUP, 2012), 154–56. In an edition of his *Histoire de la musique* (Delaplane, 1923 [1st edn 1911]), Paul Landormy added a passage relating the chorale to the Protestant birth of individualism, by contrast to the elaborately impersonal Catholic polyphony of the same era, though without mentioning modality (47).

³⁰⁷ Notably in Gevaert's important essay “Les origines de la tonalité moderne” (1868), on which see Ceulemans, “Fétis, la naissance de la tonalité moderne et la réception de ses idées”, 374 and Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 71–74.

³⁰⁸ “vague, flottante, impersonnelle”; “qui répugne ou se dérobe à toute expression individuelle.” Jean Chantavoine, “L'Église et la musique” [review of Otto Ursprung, *Die katholische Kirchenmusik* and Amédée Gastoué, *L'Église et la musique*], *Le Ménestrel* (16 Oct. 1936), 281–82.

³⁰⁹ “c'est la poussée de l'instinct occidental contre la tradition orientale.” *Ibid.*, 282.

³¹⁰ See Henri Potiron, “La musique de l'Église et la musique d'église”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (Jan.–Feb. 1937), 57–63.

³¹¹ See Antoine Auda, *Les gammes musicales. Essai historique sur les modes et sur les tons de la musique, depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à l'époque moderne* (Ixelles: Édition nationale belge, 1947). See also Id., “Ce que sont les modes grégoriens”, in *Congrès international de musique sacrée*, 140–47.

Bourgault-Ducoudray, Kœchlin, and even the more scholarly Gevaert and Emmanuel often conflate the modes of ancient Greece, plainchant, and Western European folksong, as though all share an underlying structure and kinship. Neither of these broad tendencies supplanted the other: they merely diverged over time.

A similar divergence (already glimpsed in Ch. 2) opens up between “restoration” of plainchant and its compositional actualisation, between the kind of historicism that strives to understand old things on their own terms and the kind that exploits their creative potential. As Stephen Bann observed long ago, the one distances the past, and the other brings it closer.³¹² Julien Tiersot writing on medieval music represents the latter: “The truth is that in this kind of study one should not dwell too much on difference, but rather on what resembles and draws together.”³¹³ By contrast, the movement of plainchant research usually sought to reassert the alterity of its object; its favourite metaphor was that of architectural restoration or heritage preservation, a stripping away of accretions to reveal the “original” modes and rhythms beneath and protect them from future contamination.³¹⁴ Théodore Nisard wrote in 1850 of a “revolution underway in France, Belgium, and Germany for the complete separation, within the same piece of music, of the ancient tonality from the new”.³¹⁵ Such figures viewed the *mélopée antique* as its own particular “system” fundamentally inimical to (modern) tonality and harmony altogether—“conceived in an entirely melodic intention outside of any concern for harmony”, as Morelot put it.³¹⁶ Its modality consisted of melodic nuances unrelated to tonality and spoiled by harmonisation, and generally lost on desensitised modern ears.

By contrast, the movement of neo-modal composition embraced anachronism, envisaging precisely the application of “modern polyphony” or “modern harmony” to alternative modes—not fidelity to the past (mere “archéologie”) but rather development or extrapolation.³¹⁷ The favourite metaphor is that of resource extraction, making the *mélopée antique* not a monument to be preserved but a quarry for future monuments, a deposit of “resources” waiting to be tapped and refined, a reservoir of latent harmony that would generate strange new progressions when

³¹² See Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (Twayne, 1995), 10.

³¹³ “La vérité est qu’en ces sortes d’études il ne faut pas trop s’arrêter sur ce qui diffère, mais plutôt sur ce qui ressemble et rapproche.” Tiersot, “La musique au Moyen Âge”, 406.

³¹⁴ See Katherine Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes* (U. of California Press, 1998).

³¹⁵ “révolution qui se fait en France, en Belgique, en Allemagne, pour la séparation complète, dans un même morceau de musique, de l’ancienne et de la nouvelle tonalité”. quoted in Lessmann, *Die Rezeption*, 199.

³¹⁶ “conçu dans une intention exclusivement mélodique et en dehors de toute préoccupation d’harmonie.” Stephen Morelot, “Une utopie prétendue grégorienne”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Jan. 1894), 41. On this broad debate see Alexander Rehding, “Wax Cylinder Revolutions”, *Musical Quarterly* 88.1 (2005), 139–46.

³¹⁷ See e.g. Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, “Cent Pièces brèves dans la tonalité du plain-chant, par E. Gigout”, *Le Ménestrel* (13 Jan. 1889), 13 (“application de la polyphonie aux modes antiques”) and Emmanuel, “Mes avatars”, 37 (“l’harmonisation de tous les modes, relégués depuis le XVII^e siècle au rang des vieilleries inutilisables, peut s’enrichir et se parer de toutes les conquêtes de la polyphonie moderne”).

activated.³¹⁸ These new resources would join the existing stock, furthering the accumulation that constituted progress.³¹⁹

The key question dividing contemporaries therefore concerned whether the modal *mélodie* resisted harmonisation or merely “classical” harmonisation. Were alternative modes essentially melodic? Did harmony always generate major and minor keys? In 1857 d’Ortigue announced (after years of scepticism) that a new kind of harmony conforming to the *tonalité* of plainchant could be, and indeed at last had been, devised.³²⁰ But more nuanced conceptions of the chant modes raised the bar of what counted as a properly modal harmony: to be diatonic and favour the triads of the final and dominant would no longer suffice. The more erudite chant specialists frowned upon harmonisation *tout court*, or justified it on strictly pragmatic grounds as a temporary concession to the weakness of performers and/or listeners. The accompanist’s motto was “primum non nocere”, Potiron wrote; the best one could hope for was to mar the chant as little as possible.³²¹

Ecclesiastical composition with modes fell somewhere between the worlds of chant scholarship and secular neo-modal composition. Church composers had to balance freedom (“development”, “paraphrase”) with fidelity. Though I have never seen liturgical pieces reprimanded for ignoring the ambitus or dominant of a chant mode, fidelity was often taken to entail strict diatonicism, even in free composition; to take one example from 1898, F.-L. Comire censured a *Tantum ergo* marked “8^e ton” by La Tombelle for its “tonalité indécise”, complaining that “the mode [*ton*] remains indistinct, since towards the middle there is chromaticism culminating in an outright modulation to the third scale degree”; some *versets* by Paul Vidal, also ostensibly in mode 8, he found not “suffisamment diatoniques”.³²² For Comire, to obscure a mode’s identity defeated the whole purpose of using it, which was to establish an affiliation, a reference to plainchant—and not to expand the tonal palette, as for someone like Kœchlin. By the 1920s, however, a looser conception of *modalité* had evidently gained a foothold in church music, since very free chant settings in Tournemire and many others elicit little complaint.

Did the concept of modality, the range of music considered to be “modal”, expand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Unquestionably, a diffuse notion of *musique modale* potentially encompassing dissonant and chromatic music circulated during the interwar period. “Mode” in Emmanuel, Kœchlin, Grassi, and eventually Messiaen refers as much to non-diatonic

³¹⁸ See Domergue, *Le plain-chant et la musique de l’avenir*, 10–11 (“harmonies inhérentes aux modes du plain-chant”; “harmonies virtuelles recélées dans le chant ecclésiastique”); Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Trente Mélodies populaires de Basse-Bretagne*, 16 (“[les modes] sont comme les matrices de formules harmoniques nouvelles”); Jean Huré, *Défense et illustration de la musique française*, 3rd edn (Sénart, 1920), 3 (“ces cantilènes ailées, dont les sous-entendus harmoniques étaient si pleins de splendeurs inaccessibles”).

³¹⁹ For a prime example see Jean Hautstont, preface to id. and Mathieu Crickboom, *Étude pratique de l’universalité des modes. Modes des grands systèmes musicaux* (Brussels: La Notation musicale autonome, 1925 [preface dated 1913]): “La loi du progrès réel dans l’art est une loi d’accroissement ; jamais le progrès n’est restrictif. Cette loi procède non pas par élimination, comme la période dite classique l’a fait pour les modes gréco-médiévaux, après Jean-Sébastien Bach, mais par acquisition” (7).

³²⁰ “la tonalité ecclésiastique possède des énergies telles qu’on en peut faire sortir naturellement une harmonie *sui generis*”. Joseph d’Ortigue, “Préface”, in id. and Louis Niedermeyer, *Traité théorique et pratique de l’accompagnement du plain-chant* (Repos, 1857), 8.

³²¹ Henri Potiron, “Des rapports entre le chant grégorien et la polyphonie de la Renaissance”, *Revue liturgique et musicale* (May–June 1935), 93.

³²² “le ton reste indécis, puisqu’il y a, vers le milieu, un chromatisme bien accusé par une modulation franche sur le troisième degré.” F.-L. Comire, “Bibliographie”, *Musica sacra* [Toulouse] (Feb. 1898), 35.

scales as to diatonic modes—but one finds the same already in Bourgault-Ducoudray. By the 1870s, Bourgault-Ducoudray and Domergue were already envisaging a free mode-mixture that would exceed any one diatonic collection within relatively short musical spans, as indeed can be found in much nineteenth-century music. In modal plainchant accompaniment, dissonance certainly increased during the century after its invention in the 1850s, but when it comes to chromaticism, Fétis, Morelot, Lemmens, and others were expounding a *tonalité de plain-chant* adulterated with leading tones, alongside the *musica recta* of Niedermeyer, Guilmant, and Gigout.³²³ Conceptions of the modal were at every point so heterogeneous and vague—divided between *tonalité antique/de plain-chant*, historical mode systems as variously understood, numerous original mode systems proposed by theorists, and the less rigorous modal conceptions harboured by critics and composers—that any uniform evolution is difficult to see.

³²³ See Christensen, *Stories of Tonality*, 65. Cf. Ch. 2, n. 92.

POSTSCRIPT: WHAT IS A HISTORICAL STYLE?

Le temps n'existe pas pour lui. Comme il veut courtoisement faire l'éloge de la musique française, le premier nom qu'il va choisir, comme d'un contemporain, est celui de Josquin, puis celui de Roland de Lassus . . .¹

Having sought thus far to understand “historicism” as a body of thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I turn finally from intellectual historiography to its implications for musical interpretation, asking how what we now know about composition for the church in France and Belgium during that period might contribute to a theory of musical historicism. In my introduction, I noted the poverty of the critical discourse on this repertoire, limited to condemning “pastiche” or praising “modernity”; as for “historicism”, my working definition, “engagement with music of the distant past”, sufficed so long as I was occupied with intellectual activity, but proves too vague to discriminate between aesthetic phenomena. All music “engages with” all previous music in one way or another, insofar as one can trace connections backward from any work to any other. Webern’s Symphony and Stravinsky’s *Threni* “engage with” antique sacred polyphony just like the motet by Charles Bordes with which I opened this thesis.² What sets the motet apart, and poses an interpretative challenge, is something more specific: olden style, or stylistic similarity between temporally distant bodies of music. Indeed, discussions of musical historicism often spring—exactly like the literature covered in Ch. 1—from an impulse to distinguish a good form of engagement with the past, one that avoids too much style replication (as in Brahms, Stravinsky, Webern), from a bad, servile one.³

Stylistic Chronism

Over the last three decades, scholars writing on canonical repertoire, often drawing on literary theory, have proposed a whole raft of categories pertaining to this phenomenon of style replication.⁴ They propose to interpret works as conglomerates of multiple styles belonging to

¹ Romain Rolland, *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui*, 8th edn (Hachette, 1919), 172, on Lorenzo Perosi.

² The point is amply illustrated in the studies that followed the rebellion in literary theory against the concept of influence; see esp. Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Harvard UP, 1990) and J. Peter Burkholder, “Musical Time and Continuity as a Reflection of the Historical Situation of Modern Composers”, *Journal of Musicology* 9.4 (1991), 412–29.

³ The agenda is transparent in the works by Hyde, Straus, and Frisch cited herein. Similar is the “conceptual primitivism” outlined in Elizabeth Pettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (Princeton UP, 2000), 19–20.

⁴ See notably Martha M. Hyde, “Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music”, *Music Theory Spectrum* 18.2 (1996), 200–35; James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (CUP, 2002); Walter Frisch, “Reger’s Bach and Historicist Modernism”, *19th Century Music* 25.2–3 (2002), 296–312; id., “Reger’s Historicist Modernism”, *Musical Quarterly* 87.4 (2004), 732–48. Hyde draws heavily on Thomas Greene, *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), esp. 220–21.

different historical moments—a “contemporary” style belonging to the composer’s present, and one or more “historical” styles belonging to the composer’s past.⁵ The music itself, and not just its author, is said to perform historical distance, to, dramatise, enact, embody it, to acknowledge, foreground, or show awareness of it, to “be about” it.⁶ Such interpretations attribute to style a kind of chronism, presuming a correlation between style and time such that certain ways of writing effectively belong to certain times. This parsing into contemporary and historical layers becomes an exercise in style dating: in effect, the hermeneut goes through the score identifying what does not belong to the time of writing, identifying anachronisms. Thus, in our Bordes motet (Fig. 0.1), one might single out the cadences with 4–3 suspensions as parachronisms (features belonging to an earlier time). But one can consider a work from any vantage point in time. Considered as a sixteenth-century piece, the motet will instead exhibit certain prochronisms (features belonging to a later time, such as the melodic shape in bars 3–4).

On what grounds can one say that a certain style feature does not belong to a time, that it is “historical style” or “period style”—implicitly, that it belongs to another time? On what grounds can one attribute chronism to style? A number of divergent answers have been or could be given:

1. Style does not have chronism. All music belongs equally to the time at which it was written, and cannot in any sense “belong” any more to that time. If someone writes it, it is *ipso facto* contemporary, whatever its style.
2. Style belongs to the time that first created it. The contemporary corresponds only to what is new, unprecedented, particular to recent times. Tradition or continuity is anachronism.
3. A contemporary style is one dominant or well-represented in music produced lately, while an anachronistic style is rare or marginal. A problem of calculating dominance then arises; it might consist in sheer statistical prevalence, or one might want to weight some bodies of music more heavily than others based on prestige, quality, popularity, influence, etc.
4. A contemporary style is one that is on the rise, though perhaps neither new nor dominant; an anachronistic style is declining, though perhaps still well represented.
5. A contemporary style expresses some more fundamental aspect of contemporary life, (culture, society, thought, material conditions, etc.). An anachronistic style is one that clashes with that fundament.
6. There is no single contemporaneity because cultural activity at any time divides amongst incommensurable spheres, each existing in its own “time”.
7. Contemporaneity and anachronism are whatever people have said they are. The concepts have only a history, not an essence.

Three answers (1, 6, 7) effectively reject the notion of chronism, while the other four base it on a variety of independent criteria.⁷

⁵ See e.g. Hyde, “Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses”, esp. 205; Frisch, “Reger’s Bach”, 306–12; Garratt, *Palestrina*, 243; Stephen Miles, “Anton Webern and the Politics of Historicism” (DMA thesis, U. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1990), 7.

⁶ See e.g. Greene, *The Vulnerable Text*, 221; Hyde, “Neoclassic and Anachronist Impulses”, 205; Frisch, “Reger’s Bach”, 306, 312; Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (OUP, 2015), 103, 111, 113–14.

⁷ Notable rejectors of contemporaneity in art have included Ernst Bloch, George Boas, and Hans Keller; for more recent examples see Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 1 *From the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century* (OUP, 2005), 142–45; Cordula Grewe, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Ashgate, 2009), 8–9; Johnson, *Out of Time* (see esp. 7). See also Sarah Collins, “What Was Contemporary Music? The New, the Modern and the Contemporary in the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM)”, in *The Routledge Research Companion to*

No one can dispute that in a certain sense all art belongs to its time simply by virtue of its dates, as George Boas said—that, at some level, the late music of Saint-Saëns or Robert Fuchs belongs to the 1920s just as much as that of Milhaud or Henry Cowell or Irving Berlin.⁸ Equally, though, it would seem obtuse to refuse to recognise the difference in the sense of historicity between a Bordes motet and a Bordes song, or to deny that the music in Pfitzner's *Palestrina* has something to do with the sixteenth century that his *Von deutscher Seele* does not. So the first answer simply passes alongside this phenomenon without helping to explain it.

The fifth answer corresponds to the deterministic doctrine surveyed in Ch. 1. On this view, Robert Fuchs's late chamber music dates from the 1920s without expressing what was characteristic about the age in the same way as, say, the music of Hindemith does. It seems out of place in a world of motion pictures, foxtrot, and Surrealism. Such holism begs the question of what counts as the spirit of the age, if not everything said and done—what were the 1920s an era “of”? Usually, that spirit is identified with things either of recent origin (motion pictures, foxtrot, Surrealism) or dominant in some way; so this answer collapses into numbers 2, 3, and 4.

The last option, that of historicising the definition of anachronism/contemporaneity, runs into the same problem of deciding what represents the age. To ask whether Bordes's *Ave Maria* seemed anachronistic in 1895 is to beg the question “seemed to whom?” As we saw at the end of Ch. 1, any five sources will yield six answers. Faced with a variegated cultural landscape, this seventh option comes back to a choice between dividing it into an indefinite number of incommensurable subcultures (as in no. 6) or singling out one of them to represent the whole (as in no. 3). To take the average of contemporary thought, even arbitrarily restricted to a certain francophone musical elite, would yield fairly bland generalities in 1895, and still blander ones by the 1920s, when unprecedented musical change had polarised opinion. One could identify certain widespread views to speak for the times; at the end of the nineteenth century, certain features such as chromaticism, complex orchestration, and complex motivic development, and certain genres, media, and venues (the symphonic poem, the music drama, the concert hall) enjoyed a reputation for modernity. But to make that dominant view *the* view of the era is to shut out dissenters who preferred to judge certain spheres (such as church music) by their own standards, or who simply held eccentric views on what was up-to-date or not.

Cultural Boundaries

A pluralist (option no. 6) might say, sticking with the Bordes motet, that it makes no sense to identify a single “modern” style for 1895, to hold a motet to a standard of modernity defined by *Pelléas et Mélisande* or *Also sprach Zarathustra*: the motet belongs to a different cultural unit, a different frame of appropriate comparison. How to determine the boundaries of such units? One could divide up the music written in 1895 by stylistic formations but also genre (itself already a complex conglomerate), social formation, tradition, region, language, generation, etc. One could bracket the

Modernism in Music, ed. Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (Routledge, 2019), 54–85. Collins herself sides (somewhat cautiously) with critics such as David Clarke, Terry Smith, and Hal Foster who have sought to rehabilitate a discriminatory conception of contemporaneity (60–61).

⁸ See George Boas, “Il faut être de son temps”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 1.1 (1941), 65 (“To be of one's time is a task which one fulfils through the fatality of one's dates”).

motet within any number of frames: motets, neo-Renaissance pieces, pieces for a *cappella* choir, Catholic church music, Bordes's works, the works written in Bordes's milieu, French music, "Western art music", etc.; each frame of reference changes the chronism of its style. Contemporaneity dissolves, and with it anachronism: what might seem to be neo-Renaissance style in the *Ave Maria* becomes merely the style of liturgical music for non-professional *a cappella* choir.

Catholic church music of the turn of the century both does and does not belong to the same musical culture as *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Up to a point, it had its own values specifically tied to ecclesiastical function. The reformist ideal behind Bordes's *Ave Maria* valued music that offered minimal difficulties of performance and comprehension; appealed to all classes of society; conformed to the most respectable academic canons of verifiable correctness; avoided (as an accompaniment to something more important than itself) attracting attention to the composer or performers; embodied and instilled a pious disposition and ethical values such as simplicity, humility, and abnegation; conducted itself with the deportment of a good priest, with a characteristic mixture of *onction* and *gravité*; avoided anything thought to represent or stimulate the physical, drawing the hearer into an interior *recueillement*. Innovation arrives far down on the list of priorities, while the particular "fashions" of the early twentieth century inspire positive aversion, even if many church composers value just enough modernity to make their works familiar to congregations.

On the other hand, the world of church music contained plenty of diversity and still overlapped quite considerably with the world of secular music. The two shared many basic aesthetic values: even the least ambitious church composers were concerned with construction, and TLS itself enjoins that liturgical music "must be a true art".⁹ When the abbé Brun in 1909 exhorted his colleagues to "keep abreast of musical progress" and "not be ignorant and lag behind just because we are composers of religious music", he was placing them within the same frame as "progressive" music (i.e. Debussy, mainly).¹⁰ Reformism shared with the "advanced tendencies" of the turn of the century an aversion to a certain stereotype of nineteenth-century French opera, with its strong homophony, periodicity ("carrure"), and tonality, as well as an interest in antique sacred music (though not always in the same parts of it). It is banal to point out that both historicism and avant-gardism reject the present, and that historicism produces a kind of novelty to the extent that the past has been forgotten and thereby made "new again".¹¹ Reformism was in many ways, moreover, an ideology of aesthetes, not average parishioners and priests.¹² A large study could be written on its attraction for progressivist secular musicians; we might take the writings of Debussy, the progressive secular musician *par excellence*, as indicative. Debussy's scattered remarks on religious music consistently reflect the reformist notion that church music reached its apogee in the sixteenth century before declining into "theatrical" or "operatic" forms epitomised by Gounod (somewhat unfairly, given the austerity of some of Gounod's sacred

⁹ Translated in Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music: 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Liturgical Press, 1979), 224.

¹⁰ "tenons-nous au courant du mouvement musical . . . ne soyons pas ignorants et en retard parce que nous sommes compositeurs de musique religieuse." François Brun, "Les sources grégoriennes", *MSB* (April–May 1909), 78. Cf. Ch. 1, 63. Compare Amédée Gastoué in 1921: "ne restons pas en retard sur l'art profane, et sachons lui prendre ce qu'il a de beau et de bien dans ses trouvailles" (see Ch. 2, 110).

¹¹ See e.g. William Marx, "Introduction. Penser les arrières-gardes", in *Les arrières-gardes au XX^e siècle. L'autre face de la modernité esthétique*, ed. William Marx (Presses universitaires de France, 2004), 13–14.

¹² See Jean-Yves Hameline, "Musique d'église en France à l'époque de la fondation et de l'essor de la Schola : utopie et réalités", in *Vincent d'Indy et son temps*, ed. Manuela Schwartz (Mardaga, 2006), 245–54.

music).¹³ His famous praise for the “arabesque” in Renaissance polyphony shows a concern for impersonality, and even, despite his verticalist reputation, a certain linearism when taken together with his disparagement of Conservatoire harmony teaching methods.¹⁴ An interview given at the time of the premiere of *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* (when, admittedly, the composer had reason to blandish Catholics) is pure reformism, except for the blitheness with which Debussy repeats clichés that actual reformists had learned to tone down:

I do believe in the renaissance of a liturgical music. Sacred art only flourishes nobly under persecution. And since, it seems, a certain wrong has been done to the Church [in the 1905 separation of churches and state], I think the atmosphere is favourable to religious works. For me, sacred music ends with the sixteenth century. Only the fresh and charming souls of that time were able to express their vehement and disinterested fervour in music free of all worldly compromise. . . . It takes a whole different level of self-renunciation to sing the praises of the divine. You have to give yourself over to the work with heroic generosity and constant renunciation of everything and of self. Who can bring back the pure love of the pious musicians of bygone ages? Who can feel again the grandiose passion of a Palestrina? Who can re-enact the poor, gentle sacrifice of the little jongleur whose touching story has come down to us?¹⁵

Not the least reformist element here is the characteristic history problem: the atmosphere is favourable to religious works, yet sacred music ended in the sixteenth century. For François Brun, Debussy’s interview displayed “the loftiest conception” of church music.¹⁶ It was greeted with open arms at the Schola: “Who wrote these lines? A Gregorianist, known as such? A *scholiste*? Hardly. They are the declarations of M. Claude Debussy, the author of so many works that have revolutionised music, whom no one had yet seen in this light.”¹⁷

Anachronism Relative to a Mainstream

How anachronistic would Bordes’s motet appear if we followed option no. 3 and identified contemporary style with some dominant trend of the age? Rather than get into the problem of determining what music deserves to count as dominant, suppose for the sake of argument that we identify contemporaneity with the repertoire that our historiography has, in fact, consecrated as

¹³ See Debussy, *Correspondance, 1872-1918*, ed. François Lesure and Denis Herlin (Gallimard, 2005), 44–45 and id., *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, rev. edn, ed. François Lesure (Gallimard, 1987), 144.

¹⁴ See id., *Correspondance*, 115–16. Cf. “L’orientation musicale”, *Musica* (Oct. 1902), 5.

¹⁵ “Je crois, en effet, à la renaissance d’une musique liturgique. L’art sacré ne fleurit noblement que dans la persécution. Et puisque l’on fait, paraît-il, quelque tort à l’Église, je pense que l’atmosphère est propice aux partitions religieuses. La musique sacrée s’arrête, pour moi, au XVI^e siècle. Les âmes printanières et charmantes d’alors pouvaient, seules, exprimer en des chants pur de tout alliage mondain leurs ferveurs véhémentes et désintéressées. . . . Il faut un tout autre dépouillement de soi-même pour chanter le divin. Il faut se donner à cette œuvre avec une héroïque générosité et un constant renoncement à toutes choses et à soi-même. Qui nous rendra le pur amour des musiciens pieux des anciennes époques ? Qui éprouvera à nouveau la grandiose passion d’un Palestrina ? Qui recommencera le pauvre et suave sacrifice du petit jongleur, dont l’histoire attendrissante nous est demeurée ?” Henry Malherbe, “M. Claude Debussy et ‘Le martyre de Saint Sébastien’”, *Excelsior* (11 Feb. 1911). See also René Bizet, “M. Claude Debussy et la musique sacrée”, *Comedia* (18 May 1911).

¹⁶ “la conception la plus élevée”. François Brun, [review of Claude Debussy, *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*], *TSG* (March 1912), 96.

¹⁷ “De qui sont ces lignes ? D’un grégorianiste, connu comme tel ? D’un scholiste ? Point. Elles sont les déclarations de M. Claude Debussy, l’auteur de tant d’œuvres qui ont fait révolution dans la musique, et que personne ne connaissait encore sous ce jour.” “Nouvelles musicales”, *TSG* (March 1911), 59.

the canonical mainstream of French music during this period—a canon of innovative and mostly secular but not necessarily radical composers, centring on the Fauré–Debussy–Ravel trinity and radiating outwards to figures such as Satie, Dukas, d’Indy, Roussel, etc.

One area of similarity between this mainstream and reformist Catholic church music emerges from their mutual *rapprochement* to the pre-modern. Though often exaggerated (as seen in Ch. 1), meaningful similarities between certain strands of French modernism and certain repertoires of antique sacred music are well established in the secondary literature. In a macrohistorical perspective, the idea that diatonic modes, parallel voice-leading, unmeasured rhythm, polymelody, and monophony made a comeback in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, bookending a “common practice” or classical era of normative major-minor tonality, regular metre, and homophony, has a grain of truth to it. As a result, the gap between the moderate-modernist canon and historicist church music narrows appreciably between 1890 and 1910, as some aspects of *debussysme* clashed less with a reformist aesthetic than post-Wagnerian modernism had. In a great deal of French repertoire from the early twentieth century, parallel fourths and fifths, diatonic modes (often laden with dissonance), and arabesque-like *mélopées* hover between archaism and the stereotypes of *debussysme* or “impressionism”, as can immediately be appreciated in sacred music of *debussyste* style (of which the 1921 motet by Annette Dieudonné in Fig. 4.1 furnishes a prime example) or, conversely, *debussyste* music with sacred content, such as Gabriel Grovlez’s 1911 “Petites Litanies de Jésus” (Fig. 4.2), a miniature plucked from obscurity to be enshrined in the ABRSM Piano Grade 6 syllabus for 2019–20, which cleverly portrays childlike fervour through the primitivism of clumsy parallels and awkward modal cadences.

Simultaneously, historicist reformism in church music grew less antimodern between the middle nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1860, Catholic church music was polarised between historicists who wanted to return to the past (or to an invented past) and liberals who wanted to adopt a “modern” style (the style of operas by Gounod, Verdi, Massenet, etc.). By the 1920s, the most progressivist church composers were also the ones most engaged with antique music. A mass by Berthier or Samson really is more modern and at the same time more primitive than the “modern” church music of the late nineteenth century (such as a mass by Widor or Samuel Rousseau). Church composers shift from imitating the most classical part of “antique sacred music” (Palestrina) to towards medieval references compatible with “modernity”.

The similarities eventually break down, of course. Reformist church music diverges from much of French modernism in its timbral austerity, stricter diatonicism, and overwhelmingly conjunct lines. Moreover, despite the ideological investment in modality and “free rhythm”, much workaday reformist church music remains strongly tonal, metrical, and homophonic, with simple rhythms and harmonies and strict counterpoint. Whereas church composers certainly imitated antique sacred music, to varying degrees, it is nigh-on impossible to distinguish between deliberate imitation, passive influence, indirect influence, accidental resemblance, etc. within the pre-modern reminiscences of secular French modernism. Contact with antique sacred music unquestionably made some difference to Fauré, Debussy, and Satie (to name only the most-scrutinised figures), as a huge amount of literature, going back to their own lifetimes, has explored.¹⁸ But to weigh the

¹⁸ Besides the literature cited in Ch. 3, n. 295 these include John Vincent, *The Diatonic Modes in Modern Music* (U. of California Press, 1951), 225–29; François Lesure, “Debussy et le XVI^e siècle”, in *Hans Albrecht In Memoriam. Gedenkschrift mit Beiträgen von Freunden und Schülern*, ed. Wilfried Brennecke and Hans Haase (Bärenreiter, 1962), 242–45; James C. Kidd, “Louis Niedermeyer’s System for Gregorian Chant Accompaniment as a Compositional Source for Gabriel Fauré” (PhD thesis, U. of Chicago, 1973); András Wilhelm, “Erik Satie’s Gregorian Paraphrases”, *Studia Musicologica*

Fig. 4.1: Annette Dieudonné, *Deux Motets*, Tota pulchra es, bars 8–27

Fig. 4.1: Annette Dieudonné, *Deux Motets*, Tota pulchra es, bars 8–27

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 168$.

System 1: The vocal line begins with a *mf* dynamic and a slur over the first six notes. The lyrics are "To - ta pul - chra es Ma - ri - a". The piano accompaniment starts with a *f* dynamic in the right hand and a *mf* dynamic in the left hand. The right hand features a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note pattern.

System 2: The vocal line continues with a *mf* dynamic and a slur over the next six notes. The lyrics are "Et ma - - cu - la o - ri - gi -". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic patterns, maintaining the *f* and *mf* dynamics.

System 3: The vocal line concludes with a *mf* dynamic and a slur over the final six notes. The lyrics are "-na - lis non _____ est _____ in te". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic patterns, maintaining the *f* and *mf* dynamics. The final measure of the piano part is marked "un peu élargi".

PETITES LITANIES DE JÉSUS.

Moderato.
naïf, tendre et fervent

GABRIEL GROVLEZ.
(1911.)

PIANO. *p*

Pédale

un peu plus fort

pp

p *espressivo*

plus accentué

cresc. *una corda* *ff* *pp subito* *p*

dim. rall.

importance of this difference, to assess the degree to which Fauré's modality or Debussy's fifths "come from" old music, is another thing altogether. Scholars have gone back and forth, with some pushing back against exaggerated claims of influence.¹⁹ The formal similarities are for the most part too vague to offer conclusive evidence; "modality" in Fauré or Debussy either occurs fleetingly or has little to do with the modality of plainchant. Clear-cut imitation of antique sacred music is marginal to early French modernism—exceptional in Bruneau, Pierné, Debussy, Kœchlin, Ravel, and Caplet and almost absent from Fauré, Dukas, Emmanuel, the mature Satie, Roussel, and Schmitt.²⁰ Such references as we do find arise as special effects foreign to the composer's habitual manner, often as descriptive or diegetic *couleur historique*.²¹

Statistical Chronism

Finally, I would like to argue for the possibility of making chronism a neutral description of temporal distribution, in which a style simply represents or belongs to or "is of" a time to the degree that it corresponds to the music written at that time. It would seem inevitable that a piece should seem out of place when it more resembles the music written much earlier or later than the music written a little earlier or later; it is precisely this correlation that makes possible the dating of texts on stylistic grounds.

Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae 25 (1983), 229–37; Alan M. Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (Macmillan, 1988), 33–34; Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Fauré*, rev. edn (Seuil, 1995), 301–16; Serge Gut, "Die Verflechtung von Modalität und Tonalität in der Musik von Gabriel Fauré", in *Gabriel Fauré: Werk und Rezeption*, ed. Peter Jost (Bärenreiter, 1996), 152–62; Henri Gonnard, *La musique modale en France, de Berlioz à Debussy* (Champion, 2000); Patrick Otto, *Traces et influences de la modalité dans la formation de Claude Debussy* (U. de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000); Carlo Caballero, "Fauré and Multimodality" (unpublished paper read in abridged form at the 2004 meeting of the American Musicological Society); Daniel Saulnier, "Pelléas et Mélisande: un opéra grégorien?", in *Musique française. Esthétique et identité en mutation, 1892-1992*, ed. Pascal Terrien (Delatour, 2012), 305–10; Stefan Morent, *Das Mittelalter im 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur Kompositionsgeschichte in Frankreich* (Steiner, 2013), esp. 121–63.

¹⁹ Sceptics include Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891–1895)", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 92 (1965–1966), 23; Robin Tait, *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré* (Garland, 1989); Robert Orledge, *Satie the Composer* (CUP, 1990), 37–38; John Clevenger, "The Origins of Debussy's Style" (PhD thesis, U. of Rochester, 2002); Robert O. Gjerdingen, "Fauré as Student and Teacher of Harmony", in *Fauré Studies*, ed. Carlo Caballero and Stephen Rumph (CUP, 2021), 60–61. The rumour of Debussy's visit to Solesmes has been decisively put to bed by Patrick Hala, *Solesmes et les musiciens*, vol. 2 *Les années 20* (Éditions de Solesmes, 2020), though too late to stop it from circulating.

²⁰ In Fauré, a few movements in *Masques et Bergamasques*, and the mildly Bachian prelude to *La Passion (a pièce d'occasion)*, reach back as far as the eighteenth century. His Madrigal, op. 35 and Pavane, op. 50 allude to Renaissance genres, though the flavour is more eighteenth-century. The early *Cantique de Jean Racine* features a subtle organic debt to the Renaissance polyphony to which Fauré was exposed at the École Niedermeyer. See Carlo Caballero, "Gabriel Fauré", in *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music*, ed. Donna M. Di Grazia (Routledge, 2013), 289, 297. Notably, Fauré eschewed historicism even when setting medievalising texts (e.g. "Une Sainte et son auréole" from *La Bonne Chanson*, op. 61, *Une Châtelaine en sa tour*, op. 110). Françoise Gervais, "Étude comparée des langages harmoniques de Fauré et de Debussy", *RM* 272 (1971), 27 compares the opening of the thirteenth nocturne to Palestrina; intriguing but unconvincing.

²¹ Examples in Debussy include the *Chansons de Charles d'Orléans*, the heavenly choirs of *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, the funeral scene in *Rodrigue et Chimène*, and the second of the Villon songs. In Ravel the clearest case is the Marot song "D'Anne qui me jecta de la neige" (1899). The young Varèse, who absorbed a genuine enthusiasm for old polyphony from his studies at the Schola cantorum, left at least one work of medievalist juvenilia, a lost *Rapsodie romane* (1906) in homage to Romanesque architecture (like the *Symphonie romane* of Widor, his composition teacher at the time), in which Joséphin Péladan heard "du grégorien profane" and Romain Rolland "solemn convent bells, shimmering autumnal twilights, ascetic souls in prayer". See respectively Fernand Ouellette, *Edgard Varèse*, rev. edn (Bourgeois, 1989), 40 and Alan Clayson, *Edgard Varèse* (Sanctuary, 2002), 47.

Chronology depends on the permanence of change. If we know that a certain feature first appeared at a certain date, we can confidently postdate all music with the same feature relative to that moment, and if we know that a certain feature disappeared at a certain date, we know that instances of the feature predate that moment. When style change remains flat or doubles back on itself, dating becomes impossible. Does the history of music present such linear change? If a score contains a diminished seventh chord, it could conceivably date to the twelfth or any other century—there was nothing to make diminished seventh chords impossible in the twelfth century—but on statistical grounds it probably dates to the seventeenth or later. A piece for viol consort with diatonic triads and strict imitation could date from the twentieth century, though it becomes rather unlikely. All forms are possible at all times, and old forms remain available alongside newer ones. Anachronisms are merely improbable, though, due to conservation, prochronisms (such as the extremely dissonant chords that occur in a few eighteenth-century descriptive pieces and seem strikingly modern to us) may in general be more improbable than parachronisms (which can easily arise through imitation so long as traces of the past survive).

Let us then return one last time to Bordes's *Ave Maria* and ask: if we had just found in an attic a manuscript with this music and nothing else, and had to date it on stylistic grounds, where would we place it? At first, we might confidently date it to the nineteenth century or later, since it contains features not written before that century. At the same time, if we were to take, for each year in history, the stylistic average of all music written, the best match for this motet would probably be a year somewhere around 1600, and certainly not 1895. Due to the same phenomenon of conservation, and hence increasing diversity over time, a style might continue to flourish yet decline as a proportion of all music written. The style of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* may well correspond to more music of the nineteenth century than the sixteenth. On purely statistical grounds, the Gothic is a nineteenth-century architectural style (which is why its occasional twentieth-century examples seem more like belated Victorianism than medieval revival). Yet even if the second peak of the Gothic overshadows the first, it never dominated architecture in Western Europe to the same degree, and therefore never quite managed to shake off its anachronism.

No one would mistake Bordes's motet for Renaissance polyphony (and indeed I would be hard pressed to find a piece from this period that could pass as such), yet no one can seriously regard it as characteristic of music in the 1890s. Similarly, much of the music in this thesis "belongs", in this statistical sense, neither to its time of writing nor to any other time, partly because it harks back to a mixture of sources, partly because its composers did not or could not fully exclude their modernity. In the foregoing chapters, I paid most attention to aesthetically ambitious works, but an immense amount of composition for the church during this period partakes of a generic reformist style eclectically blending plainchant, Palestrina or *stile antico*, Gabrieli, Bach, Protestant hymnody, the conservatoire counterpoint textbook exercise, etc. Its technical specifications can be precisely tabulated:

- scoring for two to four voices, with or without *colla parte* harmonium or organ manual;
- a moderately slow tempo and simple, usually invariant metre (usually duple);
- a moderately polymelodic texture, mostly homorhythmic and "harmonically determined", with abundant suspensions but limited imitation;
- a narrow range of rhythms and rhythmic contrasts, but abundant syncopations and ties;
- overwhelmingly conjunct motion;

- dissonance handled according to the strictures of academic counterpoint;
- a major (less often minor) key with classical harmonic syntax, punctuated by full or half cadences (and plagal cadences following the structurally important full cadences);
- a tonal palette limited to one diatonic collection, plus the occasional secondary dominant or modulation to a neighbouring key;
- a harmonic palette restricted to triads and dominant seventh chords (usually prepared by suspension).

As an illustration (in fact slightly atypical in its triple metre) we might take the little Cecilian motet by Peter Piel that Eugène Chaminade appended to his nomographic tract in order to “give an idea of the kind [of church music] that should be adopted” (Fig. 4.3).²² But the same specifications fit a whole ocean of music produced across several centuries and around the Catholic world (and beyond), including the bulk of the music approved by Cecilian societies, the music supplements to the sacred-music periodicals, and the catalogues of specialist sacred-music publishers. Other styles in church music came and went, and all the while humble musicians, often priest-choirmasters such as Auguste Chérion, Lazare Perruchot, Louis Boyer, and Pierre Chassang, went on churning out motets in this idiom to add to the mountain of others just like them. They found themselves with a guaranteed supply of performers and listeners, and the formulas of the style made composition all too easy. As a result, this style is very difficult to date. Piel’s motet could have been written in 1800 or yesterday in an undergraduate course.

The statistical conception of chronism stands or falls on the notion of taking the stylistic average of the music produced during a given period of time. I have already mentioned the problem of cultural boundaries. Additionally, limited knowledge can skew one’s sense of what is characteristic of a time. Finally, there is a question of weighting. When determining what is the style “of” the 1890s, does the Bordes motet count equally against a piano piece of equivalent length written by Debussy in the same decade? Or should we discriminate on the basis of novelty, quality, influence or some other criterion? In practice, historiography and criticism are constantly discriminating, mainly on the basis of those three values. Just as our sense of what is a sixteenth-century style tends to be skewed towards *a cappella* sacred polyphony, the most prestigious genre of the time, our sense of an 1890s style tends to skew towards symphonies and operas. Bordes’s motet may seem more out of place, more neo-Renaissance, than it really was in purely statistical terms.

To summarise this concluding unscientific postscript, theories of compositional historicism boil down to the attribution of chronism to style, a phenomenon separate from influence in the sense of factors involved in the genesis of a work (the fact that we know that Bordes revered Palestrina predisposes us to compare his motet to Palestrina’s music, but all comparisons are fair game). A sense of the age of style would seem as unavoidable as time itself; the kind of pluralism that makes everything equally contemporary gets us nowhere. But any number of factors might enter into this sense of timeliness, all of them value-laden. The differences between them have not been discussed very much nor the underlying values acknowledged. It is time that they were.

²² “qui donnera une idée du genre qu’il faudrait adopter”. Eugène Chaminade, *La musique sacrée telle que la veut l’Église* (Lethielleux, 1897), 115.

Fig. 4.3: Eugène Chaminade, *La musique sacrée telle que la veut l'Église*, 116–7 [Peter Piel, *Cor dulce*]

Andante con moto

p Cor dul - ce,

p Dolce

mf

cor a - ma - bi - le, A - mo - re nos - tri sau - ci - um, A - mo - re nos - tri

f

lan - gui - dum, Fac sis - mi - hi pla - ca - bi - te A - - - men.

f

PERSONALIA

Aigrain, René (1886–1957): Priest (canon), wide-ranging writer (on religion, history, literature, philosophy, music), small-time composer; prof. at Facultés catholiques de l'Ouest (Angers); editor of encyclopaedias *Ecclesia* and *Liturgia*; admired for wide-ranging erudition, well-versed in contemporary secular music (reviewed discs for *La Vie catholique* in 1930s); seemingly not involved in church music beyond survey monograph *La musique religieuse* (1929).

Alain, Albert (1880–1971): Organist, prolific composer mainly of organ and sacred music; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Fauré for composition, Guilmant for organ); organist of chapel of Franciscaines (1903–71) and Église de St-Germain (1924–71), St-Germain-en-Laye; father of Jehan, Marie-Claire, and Olivier Alain; core member of St-Germain circle of Catholic intellectuals together with Clément Besse, Maurice Denis.

Allix, Georges [or Gabriel, or Grégoire, according to different sources] (?–?): Critic active in Paris, early 20th c.; no information found; generally friendly towards Schola cantorum.

Angot, Joseph (1886–1959): Writer, journalist active in Nantes; possibly a priest and choirmaster; Breton regionalist; small-time composer under pseudonym René Delauney; sympathetic to both Mocquereau and Houdard schools of plainchant (close to Clément Besse); regular contributor to *Revue des maîtrises* (Nantes).

Artigarum, Jean (c. 1860–after 1929): Priest of Bordeaux Diocese, organist, composer of sacred music; organist of St-Jean, Libourne; chaplain of Collège de Libourne; main organiser of 1895 plainchant congress in Bordeaux; author of a plainchant accompaniment manual.

Aubry, Pierre (1874–1910): Musicologist specialised in Middle Ages and music of the Caucasus; studied at École nationale des chartes, École des langues orientales; prof. at Schola cantorum, Inst. catholique, École pratique des hautes études; in contact with Solesmes Benedictines; died in suicide disguised as accident following plagiarism scandal.

Auda, Antoine (1879–1964): French-born Belgian musicologist; lay brother of Salesian Order; specialist mainly in modes and medieval music; choirmaster of Inst. St-Georges, Woluwe-St-Pierre (Brussels).

Bayart, Paul (1877–1959): Priest of Lille Diocese; prof. of music and liturgy at Facultés catholiques, Lille (1921–53); inspector of music for diocese as of 1921; cofounder with abbé Delporte of periodical *La Voix de l'Église*.

Belgodère [or Belgodère-Johannes], Victoire (1875–after 1955): Organist, critic writing for sacred-music periodicals under pseudonym François Johannes, composer; organist of St-Christophe, Paris as of 1947; author of several popularising music histories; incorrectly classified as male on data.bnf.fr.

Bellaigue, Camille (1858–1930): Music critic for *Revue des deux mondes* (1885–1930); studied piano at Paris Conservatoire; typical representative of high-society Parisian Catholics; intellectual protégé of Fernand Brunetière; friend of Gounod and Saint-Saëns; favourite of Pius X (honorary papal chamberlain); member of Action française; proponent of conservative lyricism (Verdi, Massenet) but reformism in liturgical music; Italophile; reservedly pro-Schola; frequent visitor to Solesmes; honorary patron of Inst. grégorien.

Bertelin, Albert (1872–1951): Composer of sacred and secular music, critic; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Massenet, Widor for composition); won 2nd Prix de Rome (1902); an “independent” in *d’indyste–debussyste* quarrel but later taught counterpoint at Schola cantorum/École César-Franck (1932–?) and published pedagogical treatises there; moderately anti-modernist by 1920s.

Berthier, Paul (1884–1953): Composer of sacred music, choir director, organist; studied at Schola cantorum (1903–14); choirmaster and/or organist of Auxerre Cathedral (1919–53); dir. of a local Schola St-Étienne; doctor in music copyright law; co-founder of Manécanterie des petits chanteurs à la croix de bois (1907); father of Jacques Berthier.

Besse, Clément (1870–1923): Priest (canon) of Versailles Diocese, philosopher, polemicist, choir director; studied music with René Moissenet and Charles Planchet; founder-director of Chorale des Franciscaines de St-Germain-en-Laye (fl. 1918–23); zealous follower of Georges Houdard’s mensuralism in plainchant; prof. at Inst. catholique (1922–23, *chargé de cours* from 1905); core figure of St-Germain circle of Catholic intellectuals; proponent of *cantique populaire*, on which he organised a congress (1921); fairly anti-*scholiste*; Action française sympathiser; often confused with Dom Jean-Martial Besse (1861–1920).

Boddaert, Jules (?–1907): Priest, philosophy teacher, composer of light religious music; prof. at Institution N.-D.-de-Grâce, Cambrai; dir. of Maison de famille St-Louis, Facultés catholiques de Lille (c. 1896–1907).

Bonnet, Joseph (1884–1944): Organist, composer; studied with Guilmant; abandoned composition early; organist of St-Eustache, Paris (1906–44); dir. of Inst. grégorien (1923–1929); celebrated touring virtuoso, esp. in USA; Benedictine oblate.

Borrel, Eugène (1876–1962): Violinist, versatile musicographer; studied at Paris Conservatoire, École Niedermeyer, Schola cantorum; prof. of violin (1911–34) and music history (1933–?) at Schola/École César-Franck; co-founder with F. Raugel of Soc. Hændel (1908); briefly choirmaster of St-François-Xavier, Paris (1920).

Bourgault-Ducoudray, Louis-Albert (1840–1910): Composer, musicologist; won Prix de Rome (1862); prof. of music history at Paris Conservatoire (1878–1909); widely interested in music outside of Western art canon; folksong collector; zealous promoter of alternative modes and choral singing; proto-Breton regionalist.

Boyer, Cyprien (1853–1926): Priest (canon), composer of well-regarded motets; studied privately with Guilmant; choirmaster of Minor Seminary of Bergerac (1876–1926).

Boyer, Louis (1880–1934): Priest, composer of sacred music; studied at Schola cantorum; choirmaster of Périgueux Cathedral; nephew of Cyprien Boyer.

Brenet, Michel [Marie Bobillier] (1858–1918): Musicologist, critic; wrote mainly on pre-Revolutionary French music; supporter of reformism in church music and of the Schola cantorum; prolific contributor to musical press.

Brillant, Maurice [Moïse Brilliant] (1881–1953): Versatile Catholic writer and Hellenist; as a critic, eclectic in tastes and a supporter of “modern” tendencies in the religious arts (notably in 1927 book *L’art chrétien au XX^e siècle*); editor of *Le Correspondant* as of early 1920s; acquainted with Stravinsky, Milhaud, Poulenc.

Brun, François[-Joseph] (1878–1943): Priest, composer of sacred music, choir director, critic; studied at Schola cantorum; had lessons with Solesmes Benedictines and Lorenzo Perosi; choirmaster at Clermont-Ferrand Cathedral (c. 1903), St-Antoine-des-Quinze-Vingt (?–1922) and St-Eugène, Paris (1923); dir. of music at Librairie de l'art catholique; main organiser of 1922 Paris congress; prof. of chant accompaniment and general secretary, Inst. grégorien (1923–?); known for *cantiques* and sacred dramas performed at Trocadéro c. 1925–35; acquainted with Milhaud, Ravel; arranged Debussy for the church; commissioned motets from Séverac, Messiaen.

Castéra, René de (1873–1955): Composer mainly of secular music, critic; studied at Paris Conservatoire (1891–?) and Schola cantorum; retired to provinces (Landes) after WWI.

Chaminade, Eugène (1847–1922): Priest, choir director; choirmaster of Périgueux Cathedral (1889–95); expert on local music history and folklore; admirer of Cecilians, early supporter of Schola cantorum; probably related to Cécile Chaminade.

Chantavoine, Jean (1877–1952): Musicographer; primarily interested in 19th-c. and contemporary music, best known for biographies; general secretary of Paris Conservatoire.

Chassang, Pierre (1855–1933): Priest, choir director, critic, composer of religious music; studied informally with Avignon composer G. F. Imbert but largely self-taught; choirmaster at Cathedral and Minor Seminary of Avignon; later located in Geneva for health; frequent contributor to Schola cantorum (in first years only) and Procure générale catalogues; main writer for *RSC*, esp. pre-WWI.

Chérion, Auguste (1854–1904): Priest (canon), choir director, composer of sacred music; choirmaster of Moulins Cathedral (1874–96), renowned at the time and known for antique repertoire, and La Madeleine, Paris (1896–1904); compositions a mix of Palestrina and Gounod.

Cistac, Jules (?–?): Priest in Bordeaux c. 1898.

Clop, Eusèbe (1861–1927): Franciscan friar, writer, organist; resided for periods in Italy and England, returned to France in 1916; choirmaster of Collegio S. Antonio, Rome; “membre de la Commission du Plain-chant grégorien”; wrote on religion, church history, aesthetics, music.

Closson, Ernest (1870–1950): Belgian musicologist, critic; conservator of Musée des instruments de musique, Brussels (1924–36, adjunct from 1896); prof. of music history at conservatoires of Brussels (1912–35) and Mons (1917–35); vice pres. of Soc. belge de musicologie (1946–50); wrote mainly on music of Low Countries; regularly covered Belgian church music in Catholic newspapers.

Collin, Charles-Augustin (1865–1938): Organist, composer; from dynasty of Breton organists; studied at École Niederyemeyer; organist of N.-D.-de-Rennes (1884–1935); mainstay of local musical life; compositions marked by folklorism and superficial impressionism.

Combarieu, Jules (1859–1916): Musicologist; studied at Sorbonne (doctorate 1894) and Berlin University (with Philipp Spitta); prof. at Collège de France (1904–10); founder-director of *Revue musicale (histoire et critique)*; non-Catholic but Solesmes supporter in plainchant as of 1890s; fairly impartial in aesthetic sympathies; promoter of “modes” though less so than Bourgault-Ducoudray or Emmanuel.

Comire, F.-L. (?–1901): Jesuit, composer of sacred music active in Toulouse; dir. of *Musica sacra* (Toulouse) in late 1890s.

Coquard, Arthur (1846–1910): Composer, critic (mainly for *Le Monde*); studied with César Franck; mainly known for opera; defended modern style in church music in prominent articles (1881), later supported TLS but a lenient reformist; secured personal endorsement of Pius X for his fairly Romantic *Messe de mariage* (1909) to embarrassment of purists; distanced from Schola cantorum despite Franckian pedigree.

Daubresse, Mathilde (1863–1937): Critic esp. for *Le Monde musical*, musicologist; possibly a Schola cantorum admirer.

David, Lucien (1875–1955): Benedictine chant scholar; prior of St-Wandrille Abbey (Normandy); main representative of Pothierism after Dom Pothier; dir. of Pothierist *Revue du chant grégorien* (1908–?); friendly with Schola cantorum.

Dechevrens, Antoine (1840–1912): Belgian Jesuit, plainchant scholar; best known as a supporter of mensuralism in chant rhythm; prof. of theology at Inst. catholique, Angers.

De Jong, Marinus (1891–1984): Dutch-born Belgian composer of sacred and secular music, pianist; studied at Antwerp Conservatoire (Mortelmans for composition); counterpoint prof. at Lemmens Institute (1926–63); prof. of piano (1931–?) and counterpoint (1948–?) at Antwerp Conservatoire.

Delépine, Henri (1871–1956): Priest, choir director, entrepreneur; choirmaster of Cathedral and prof. at Major Seminary of Arras; founder-director of publishing house Procure générale de musique religieuse (1896 or 1898), periodical *RSC* (1901), fraternal organisation Gilde Ste-Cécile (1924), and Chanteurs de la Ste-Chapelle (c. 1920).

Delporte, Jules (1882–1942): Priest in Arras Diocese; choirmaster of Inst. N.-D.-des-Victoires, Roubaix; founder-director of periodical *La Voix de l'Église* (subsequently *Revue pratique de liturgie et de musique sacrée*/*Revue liturgique et musicale*/*Musique et Liturgie*); main organiser of 1919 Tourcoing congress; editor of a widely-used book of *cantiques* and motets.

Dethier, Émile (1849–1933): Belgian composer of sacred music, choir director; student then prof. at Liège Conservatoire; organist and choirmaster of Major Seminary of Liège; founder of a local Soc. de St Grégoire in Liège.

Depuydt, Oscar (1858–1925): Belgian organist, composer; studied at Ghent Conservatoire with Joseph Tilborghs; organist of Mechelen Cathedral (1881–1925); prof. at Major Seminary of Mechelen and Lemmens Institute (1896–1925, interim dir. 1917–18); author of a widely-used plainchant accompaniment manual (*Manuale organistæ*, 1896).

Desmet, Aloys (1867–1917): Belgian organist, composer; studied at Lemmens Inst., made prof. on graduation (1888), succeeded Tinel as director (1909–17); choirmaster of Mechelen Cathedral (?–?); dir. of Mechelsch gemengd Koor (?–1910); author (with Alphonse Desmet and Oscar Depuydt) of a widely-used plainchant accompaniment manual designed for Vatican Edition (*Organum comitans ad graduale*, 1906).

Dierickx, Edmond (1880–1952): Organist, composer of sacred music; studied with local composer and Niedermeyer graduate Julien Koszul; organist of St-Christophe, Tourcoing (1901–52); wrote reviews for various church-music periodicals.

Dieudonné, Annette (1896–1990): Pedagogue, composer, musicologist; student and longtime assistant of Nadia Boulanger; taught solfeggio at Paris Conservatoire.

Dirven, Adrien/Adriaan (1858–1906): Dutch-born priest, small-time composer of sacred music, graphomaniac active in Liège area; founder-director of CSG (1889–1906); aligned with conservative wing of German Cecilianism; on poor terms with Belgian Soc. de St Grégoire; ferociously hostile to Benedictine plainchant editions.

Domergue, Charles-Mathieu (1824–after 1890): Amateur savant and composer active as music critic in south of France; member of several learned societies inc. Soc. de St Jean; attended 1860 Paris congress on church music.

Dupont, Isidore (?–after 1939): Critic of religious music seemingly active in Nice c. 1920 and Paris from late 1920s; almost certainly a priest, possibly a choirmaster; occasional contributor to *RM* as well as various Catholic periodicals (notably *La Croix*); critic of the Mocquereau school of plainchant.

Dupuis, Albert (1877–1967): Belgian composer mainly of opera; studied at Schola cantorum; briefly choirmaster of Basilica of St-Quentin (1900); won Belgian Prix de Rome (1903); dir. of Verviers Conservatoire (1908–47).

Erb, Marie-Joseph (1858–1944): Organist, prolific composer in all genres; studied at École Niedermeyer; organist of St-Jean, Strasbourg (1884–1944); prof. at Strasbourg Conservatoire (1910–37); co-founder of Soc. alsacienne de musique religieuse (1882, later Union Ste-Cécile); pro-French Alsatian regionalist.

Ermend-Bonnal [Joseph-Ermend Bonnal] (1880–1944): Organist, composer; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Fauré for composition, Guilmant for organ) and with Tournemire, Vierne; dir. of Bayonne Conservatoire (c. 1920–40); briefly organist of Ste-Clotilde, Paris (1942–44); compositions flavoured by Basque regionalism.

Expert, Henry (1863–1952): Musicologist; studied at École Niedermeyer and with Franck; best known for efforts to propagate French Renaissance choral polyphony through monumental edition *Les Maîtres Musiciens de la Renaissance française* (23 vols, 1894–1908) and Société d'études musicales et de concerts historiques (1903, renamed Chanterie de la Renaissance 1924); taught at École Niedermeyer (1902–05) and École des hautes études (1902); librarian of Bibliothèque Ste Geneviève (1905–09) and Paris Conservatoire (1920–33, assistant from 1909).

Fornerod, Aloÿs (1890–1965): Swiss composer, critic, violinist, pedagogue; studied at Lausanne Conservatoire (1899–1916), Schola cantorum (1909–11), Strasbourg Conservatoire (orchestration with Pfitzner); wrote for *Tribune de Lausanne* (1918–?); taught at Inst. de Ribeaupierre (Lausanne) and Lausanne Conservatoire (1925–?); converted to Catholicism in 1926; composed in deliberately spare and simple style.

Fumet, Dynam-Victor [Victor Fumet] (1867–1949): Composer, organist; biography uncertain, preserved only in romanticised accounts by his son (the Catholic writer Stanislas Fumet); studied at conservatoires of Toulouse and Paris (Guiraud for composition, Franck for organ); organist of

Collège de Juilly and Ste-Anne-de-la-Maison-Blanche, Paris (1910–49); involved in circle of mystical Catholics around Léon Bloy.

Gabert, Abel (1861–1929): Priest, choir director, composer of sacred music; prof. at Minor Seminary of La Côte-St-André, near Grenoble (1884–1894); choirmaster of N.-D.-de-Plaisance, Paris (1894–1907); during an American period (1907–25) choirmaster in New Jersey and prof. at Catholic Univ. of America; choirmaster of cathedral and prof. at Major Seminary of Grenoble (1925–29); proponent of “modern” church style; hostile to the Schola cantorum; founder-director of and sole contributor to ephemeral periodical *L’Avenir de la musique sacrée*.

Gajard, Joseph (1885–1972): Benedictine chant scholar; longtime choirmaster of Solesmes Abbey (1914–71); prof. at Inst. grégorien (1923–25); successor to Dom Mocquereau as leading figure in Solesmes plainchant research and performance; exponent of recordings to popularise Mocquereau-ist method.

Gastoué, Amédée (1873–1943): Musicologist, composer of sacred music, choir director; mostly self-taught though some studies with Guilmant and Lavignac; prof. of plainchant at Schola cantorum/École César-Franck (1898–after 1934) and Inst. catholique; dir. of TSG (1907–?); choirmaster of St-Jean-de-Belleville, Paris (1901–05) and Collège Stanislas (1903–?); primarily a scholar of medieval chant (Western and Eastern); advisor to Vatican Edition commission; supporter of Pothier.

George, Max (?–after 1912): Organist, choir director, pedagogue, composer; substitute choir organist, N.-D.-de-Paris as of 1894; former choirmaster, St-Eugène, Paris as of 1912; author of a harmonium method and an eccentric plainchant accompaniment treatise.

Gilson, Paul (1865–1942): Belgian composer, influential pedagogue; studied at Brussels Conservatoire (Gevaert for composition); won Belgian Prix de Rome (1889); composition prof. at conservatoires of Brussels (1899–1909) and Antwerp (1904–09); main ed. of *Revue belge de musique* (1924–39).

Giraud, Ludovic (?–after 1958): Priest (canon), writer, small-time composer active probably in or near Marseille; author of at least one fairly dissonant motet.

Gouverné, Yvonne (1890–1982): Pianist, choral conductor; studied at Schola cantorum; protégée of André Caplet; involved in premiering much new music.

Grassi, Eugène-Cinda [Eugène César Grassi] (1881–1941): Composer born in Bangkok of Italian and Asian parentage; studied at Schola cantorum (1905–10) and briefly at Paris Conservatoire; associated with Soc. musicale indépendante; specialised in orientalist works; attracted most notice for manifesto-like articles published in *Le Ménestrel* (1922, 1926).

Grovlez, Gabriel (1879–1944): Composer, pianist, conductor, critic; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Fauré for composition); taught piano at Schola cantorum (1899–1909); conductor for Paris Opera (1914–33); fairly in demand as pianist and guest conductor; wrote in a suave impressionist style like that of Pierné or Roger-Ducasse.

Guillermin, Joseph (?–?): Jesuit, author of a commentary on TLS (1904) and religious literature; almost certainly studied at Schola cantorum in early 1900s; appears to have served as chaplain during WWI; wrote words for an oratorio by Perruchot; BNF record confused with an abbé Joseph Abel Guillermin (1845–1902).

Hallays, André (1859–1930): Journalist, critic, member of numerous civic and cultural organisations; aesthete and representative of Parisian *haute bourgeoisie*; initially a lawyer; sometime ed. of *Journal des débats*; strong supporter of heritage preservation, antiquities, liturgical reform, the Schola cantorum; religious affiliation uncertain.

Hébert Desrocquettes, Jean (1887–1973): Benedictine of Solesmes; author of works on Gregorian modes and accompaniment; frequent contributor to *Revue grégorienne* and collaborator with Henri Potiron in 1920s; exchanged several letters with André Caplet on plainchant; prof. at Pontifical Inst. of Sacred Music as of 1950.

Jacob, Clément [Maxime Jacob] (1906–77): Composer, Benedictine, organist; studied at Paris Conservatoire and with Kœchlin; frequented “École d’Arcueil”, figure of Parisian avant-garde; converted to Catholicism under Maritain’s influence, entered Benedictine monastery of En Calcat (1930); thereafter prolific composer of mostly religious music.

Jacquemin, Camille (1899–1947): Belgian priest, composer, organist; studied at Schola cantorum and Inst. grégorien (1925–29); choirmaster at Seminary of Floreffe (Belgium).

Janssens, Laurent [Henri Janssens de Varebeke] (1855–1925): Belgian Benedictine, theologian, papal functionary, choir director; rector of St Anselm College, Rome (1894–?); made a titular bishop shortly before death.

Joachim, Nicolas (1872–1945): Belgian priest (canon), choir director, mainly self-taught composer of sacred music, critic; choirmaster of Tournai Cathedral (1906–36); dir. of CSG after abbé Dirven’s death (1906–14); authority on local music history; early composer of modal, unmeasured *cantiques grégoriens*.

Kreps, Joseph (1886–1965): Belgian Benedictine, organist, musicologist; studied with Léon Du Bois (harmony), Mortelmans (counterpoint), Jongen (organ); organist and eventually sub-prior of Mt-César Abbey, Leuven; co-director with Van Nuffel of revived MSB (from 1927); composed/arranged sacred music based on plainchant.

Kufferath, Maurice (1852–1919): Belgian critic, administrator; editor of *L’Indépendance belge* and *Le Guide musical* (1887–91); dir. of La Monnaie (1900–19); promoter of Wagner and *franckistes* but increasingly conservative later in life.

La Laurencie, Lionel de (1861–1933): Musicologist; studied at Paris Conservatoire; taught at EHESS, Paris; president of Société française de musicologie (1917–20, 1931–33); edited *Encyclopédie de musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* after death of Lavignac.

Laloy, Louis (1874–1944): Writer, musicologist; studied at Lycée Henry-IV, ÉNS (doctorate on Aristoxenus, 1904), Schola cantorum; visited Solesmes c. 1902; taught music history at Sorbonne (1906–?); general secretary of Paris Opera (1913–40); close to Debussy; scholar of Chinese music; author of stage scenarios and libretti; prof. of music history at Paris Conservatoire (1936–41).

La Tombelle, Fernand de (1854–1928): Composer, organist, writer; studied with Guilmant, Dubois; harmony prof. at Schola cantorum (1896–1904) but closer to Saint-Saëns, Massenet; frequent contributor to sacred-music press; conservative and prolific composer of sacred and secular choral music (and all other genres); after WWI estranged from new developments, retreated to estate in Périgord.

Lavignac, Albert (1846–1916): Pedagogue, composer; student and longtime teacher at Paris Conservatoire (harmony prof. 1891–1915); author or editor of several standard pedagogical and reference works.

Le Guennant, Auguste (1881–1972): Organist, choir director, composer of sacred music, plainchant scholar; studied at Schola cantorum but later converted to Mocquereau school of plainchant; organist/choirmaster notably at St-Nicolas, Nantes (1908–1920s); dir. of (as of 1925) and frequent contributor to *Revue des maîtrises* (Nantes); prof. at Inst. grégorien (1927–68, dir. 1933–?).

Lhoumeau, Antonin (1852–1920): Priest, plainchant scholar, choir director; councillor general (1896) then superior general (1903) of Compagnie de Marie; supported a moderate mensuralism in plainchant, but an early theorist of chant accompaniment to take onboard Pothier's performance style; later frequented St-Germain circle around Clément Besse; founder of a schola in Niort; pioneer of the *cantique grégorien* genre; close to early Schola cantorum.

Lioncourt, Guy de (1885–1961): Composer mostly of religious music, pedagogue; affiliated with Schola cantorum throughout career as student (1904–?), prof. of counterpoint (1914–31), prof. of composition (1931), holder of various administrative roles; effectively in charge of Schola from later 1920s, then leader of École César-Franck; married d'Indy's niece (1912); edited final volume of d'Indy's *Cours de composition musicale*.

Loquin, Anatole (1834–1903): Amateur writer, music theorist, critic in Bordeaux (under various *noms de plume*); day job a sinecure at customs office; member (1869) and president (1897) of Académie de Bordeaux.

Loret, Clément (1833–1909): Belgian-born organist, composer; studied at Brussels Conservatoire (with Lemmens, Fétis); prof. at École Niedermeyer (1858–?); organist of various Parisian churches inc. N.-D.-des-Victoires, St-Louis-d'Antin (1858–66), Ste-Geneviève (a.k.a. the Panthéon, 1855–85).

Loth, Arthur (1842–1927): Journalist and historian esp. of Christianity; sometime ed. of Catholic daily *L'Univers*; plainchant extremist in church music.

Loth, Georges (1880–1949): Choirmaster, composer; studied at Rouen *maîtrise* and Schola cantorum; choirmaster of Sacré-Cœur, Montmartre; won a composition competition held by *Revue musicale* (1905).

Lucas, [Juliette-]Blanche (1874–1956): Composer most successful in sacred music; studied with Charles Lefebvre, at Schola cantorum (c. 1900), and possibly with Tournemire; taught women's harmony-counterpoint class at Schola (1901–14).

Maleingreau, Paul de [Paul Malengreau] (1887–1956): French-born Belgian organist, composer; studied at Brussels Conservatoire (with Gilson, Tinel, Alfons Desmet), then taught organ there (1929–53); composed mainly for organ.

Marnold, Jean [Jean Morland] (1859–1935): Critic; pro- then anti-Schola, pro-Debussy, historically erudite and generally friendly to innovation; co-founded *Mercure musical* with Laloy; best remembered for popularising the notion that musical evolution follows the overtone series, and debunking Riemann's theory of undertones.

Mathias, Franz Xaver (1871–1939): Alsatian priest (canon), organist, composer of sacred music, musicologist; culturally German; doctorate in music from Leipzig with Riemann, doctorate in theology from Strasbourg; organist of major and minor seminaries (1887–97) and cathedral (1898–1908) in Strasbourg; held first chair in sacred music in Germany (Strasbourg Univ., 1907–?); co-dir. of periodical *Cécilia* (Strasbourg, 1911–?); organised plainchant congress in Strasbourg (1905).

Ménil, Félicien de (1860–1930): Writer, composer, diplomat; best remembered as promoter of Esperanto; taught music history at École Niedermeyer; old-fashioned for his time in intellectual outlook.

Meulemans, Arthur (1884–1966): Belgian composer, conductor, pedagogue, organist; studied at Lemmens Institute (with Tinel, Aloys Desmet, Depuydt) then taught harmony there (1906–16); founded an organ and church-music school in Limburg (1916–30); wrote prolifically in all genres.

Meunier, Jules (1868–1967): Choirmaster, composer of sacred music; student at École Niedermeyer (1888–94) and Conservatoire (Massenet, Fauré for composition); choirmaster of St-Ambroise then Ste-Clotilde, Paris (1907–46); founder-dir. of boys' choir La Cantoria (1915–1930s?).

Moissenet, René (1850–1939): Priest (canon), esteemed choir director; choirmaster of Dijon Cathedral (1895–1930); consultant for Vatican Edition; close to Maurice Emmanuel and St-Germain circle; on bad terms with Charles Bordes.

Montillet, William (1879–1940): Swiss composer; studied at conservatoires of Geneva and Leipzig; organist of St-Joseph (1901–40) and prof. at Conservatoire (1902–?), Geneva.

Morelot, Stephen [or Stéphane] (1820–1899): Priest (canon), scholar of antique sacred music, organist, composer; studied at École nationale des chartes; became dean of Law Faculty of Dijon; studied organ with Boëly; organist of Dijon Cathedral; prolific contributor to and editor of sacred-music periodicals.

Nibelle, Henri (1883–1967): Organist, composer of sacred music, choir director; offspring of dynasty of provincial organists; studied at École Niedermeyer and Paris Conservatoire (Fauré for composition, Guilmant for organ); organist of Versailles Cathedral (1907–09) and St-Vincent-de-Paul, Paris (1909–12); organist (1912–?) and choirmaster (1931–59) of St-François-de-Sales, Paris.

Noyon, Joseph (1888–1962): Organist, prolific composer of sacred music, choir director; studied at École Niedermeyer and Paris Conservatoire (Vidal for composition); prof. of harmony and solfège at École Niedermeyer; organist/choirmaster of St-Cloud, Paris and N.-D.-d'Auteuil; choirmaster of St-Honoré-d'Eylau, Paris; composed in very simple style.

Orban, Marcel (1884–1958): Belgian-born composer mainly of secular music; studied at Liège Conservatoire (Carl Smulders for composition) and Schola cantorum (1905–16); thereafter based in Paris and best known as a critic, mainly for *Courrier musical*; turned in a Neoclassical direction after WWI, to judge from work titles.

Pâque, Désiré (1867–1939): Belgian composer mainly of secular music, theorist; studied at Liège Conservatoire; brief stints (1897–1914) in Sofia, Athens, Brussels, Paris, Lisbon, various German towns, Geneva; secluded in Paris after 1914; composing in quasi-atonal style as early as 1890s; wrote esoteric theoretical essays, some published in *RM* in 1930s; few compositions published.

Perriot, François (1839–1910): Priest (canon, protonotary apostolic) of Langres Diocese; superior of Major Seminary of Langres; dir. of periodical *L'Ami du clergé*; consultor for Vatican Edition commission; supporter of Dom Pothier.

Petit, Raymond (1893–1976): Composer, critic; studied with Tournemire; wrote for *RM*, *Le Ménestrel*, etc.; interested in very wide variety of music.

Planchet, [Dominique-]Charles (1857–1946): Composer primarily of secular music; student (1878) then harmony prof. at École Niedermeyer; choirmaster then organist (1891) of Versailles Cathedral; choirmaster of La Trinité, Paris (1895); involved in St-Germain circle around Clément Besse; fairly conservative composer.

Potiron, Henri (1882–1972): Choir director, plainchant scholar, composer of sacred music; studied (privately?) with Gigout; studied philosophy at Sorbonne; choirmaster of Sacré-Cœur, Paris (1910–61); prof. at Inst. grégorien (1923–?); main writer in *Revue liturgique et musicale* in 1930s; aligned with Mocquereau faction in plainchant rhythm after 1921; took doctorate on Boethius at Sorbonne in 1954; best known for chant accompaniment manuals and research on Gregorian modes.

Quignard, René (1887–1978): Organist, composer of sacred music; studied at École Niedermeyer and Schola cantorum; choirmaster of N.-D.-de-Versailles; taught organ at Versailles Conservatoire; later dir. of École de musique de Saint-Brieuc.

Ranse, Marc de (1881–1951): Choir director, composer of sacred music, organist; student then prof. of liturgical organ (1911–30) and harmony (1930–33) at Schola cantorum; choirmaster

notably at St-Louis-d'Antin, Paris (1912–?); founder-director of Chœur mixte de Paris (1921); dir. of Inst. grégorien (1929–33); retired to estate in Aquitaine (1933).

Ratez, Émile (1851–1934): Composer, pedagogue; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Massenet for composition); viola player for Opéra comique, choir conductor for Concerts Colonne; dir. of Lille Conservatoire (1891–?); author of several pedagogical works.

Raugel, Félix (1881–1975): Conductor, musicologist, organist, composer; studied at Lille Conservatoire and Schola cantorum; choirmaster notably of St-Eustache (1911–28) and St-Honoré-d'Eylau (1928–40), Paris; co-founder with E. Borrel of Soc. Haendel (1908); holder of numerous official posts.

Renard, Georges (1881–1950): Organist, choir director, composer of sacred music; student then harmony prof. (as of 1909) at École Niedermeyer; organist of N.-D.-de-Grâce, Passy; choirmaster of St-Germain-l'Auxerrois, Paris (1910–?); closely involved in Delépine's enterprises.

Rouët de Journal, Marie-Joseph (1880–1974): Jesuit writer; author of several works on Russian religious history; regular contributor of music criticism and other articles to Jesuit journal *Études*; founded a Bibliothèque slave in Paris.

Ryelandt, Joseph (1870–1965): Belgian composer; studied privately with Tinel; main organiser with Bordes of 1902 Bruges congress; dir. of Bruges Conservatoire (1924–45); best known for oratorios; wrote criticism for Catholic press; composed in conservative style.

Sablayrolles, Maur (1873–1956): Benedictine plainchant scholar; protégé of Dom Mocquereau; researched chant manuscripts extensively in Spain; organist/choirmaster (1896–?) of En Calcat Abbey (Tarn); active across France and Spain as organiser of Gregorian classes and workshops.

Saint-Réquier, Léon [de] (1872–1964): Choir director, composer mainly of sacred music; studied briefly at Paris Conservatoire (with Lavignac, Lenepveu) then at Schola cantorum; prof. of harmony at Schola cantorum/École César-Franck (1899–after 1934); organist/assistant director then director (1909–?) of Chanteurs de St-Gervais; choirmaster of St-Charles-de-Monceau, Paris; founder-director of Soc. Palestrina (amateur choir).

Sala, André (1899–1968): Organist, composer of religious music; studied with Nadia Boulanger and in Fribourg; organist of St-Jean-Baptiste-de-la-Salle, Paris.

Samson, Joseph (1888–1957): Choir director, composer of choral music, writer; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Widor for composition), cut short by military service; protégé of Clément Besse and René Moissenet; choirmaster of Versailles Cathedral (1911), St-Eustache, Paris (adjunct, 1914), Collège N.-D.-d'Avranches (1918), Dijon Cathedral (1930, assistant from 1926); studied informally with Albert Alain and by correspondence with Kœchlin c. 1930.

Samuel, Adolphe (1824–98): Belgian composer, conductor, critic, pedagogue; early champion of Berlioz and Wagner; harmony prof. at Brussels Conservatoire (1860); dir. of Ghent Conservatoire (1871); converted to Catholicism in 1895.

Sérieyx, Auguste (1865–1949): Composer, music theorist; studied at Paris Conservatoire briefly and at Schola cantorum; taught counterpoint, composition at Schola (1900–14); wrote first three vols of *Cours de composition musicale* based on d'Indy's lecture notes; relocated for health reasons to

Switzerland (permanent from 1914); supporter of Action française despite removal as critic of *L'Action française* (1912, due to Wagnerism) and papal condemnation of the organisation (1926).

Sosson, Pierre (1844–1908): Belgian priest (canon), leader of reformism and Pothierism in Namur Diocese; prof. and music director at Seminary of Bastogne (c. 1869–86); promoted to chair in sacred music and architecture at Major Seminary (1887); co-founder and pres. (1898–1908) of Soc. de St Grégoire; ed.-in-chief of *MSB* (1898–1908, *de facto* from 1892); *grand chantre* of Namur Cathedral (1896); founder of diocesan École de St Grégoire and Soc. de l'art chrétien.

Soullier, Émile (?–?): Jesuit seemingly active in the south of France c. 1900.

Tiersot, Julien (1857–1936): Musicologist, critic; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Massenet for composition, Franck for organ); considered a forerunner of ethnomusicology, best remembered for folksong collection and research; assistant (1883) then head (1909) librarian at Paris Conservatoire; pres. of Soc. française de musicologie (1920–23, 1927); collaborated with Bordes on early Chanteurs de St-Gervais.

Tinel, Edgar (1854–1912): Belgian composer; studied at Brussels Conservatoire; won Belgian Prix de Rome (1877); dir. of Lemmens Inst. (1881–1909); prof. of counterpoint (1896) then dir. (1908–12) at Brussels Conservatoire; extremely conservative establishment figure, holder of various official posts; worldwide success with oratorio *Franciscus* (1888); supported Benedictines in plainchant.

Tissot, Henri (1888–1950): Priest (canon), organist, composer of sacred music; studied organ with Albert Alain and composition privately with Maurice Emmanuel; organist of Collégiale de Besançon.

Touzé, Maurice (1882–1967): Composer, theorist, pedagogue; dir. of Bourges Conservatoire, then inspector of music teaching in Vannes; nothing of his work survives except for a handful of musical writings inc. a grandiose-eccentric “Précis de musique intégrale” (1922).

Trotrot-Dériot, Albert [sometimes signed Albert Dériot] (?–after 1937): Critic, choir director, businessman; studied without distinction at Schola cantorum; choirmaster of St-Merry, Paris; dir. of *Petite Maîtrise* and late-1920s revival of *TSG*; fairly conservative but conscientious critic, biased towards *scholistes*.

Urbain, Georges (1872–1938): Prominent chemist (best known as discoverer of lutetium), prof. at Sorbonne, amateur composer and sculptor; wrote one book on music theory (1926) promoting modalism as a tonal expansion alternative to chromaticism; favourable to a moderate modernism.

Uylings, Hubert J. (?–?): Choirmaster, critic, composer of sacred music active in Brussels area in early 20th c.; dir. of a Société de l'*a cappella* at N.-D.-du-Sablon (Brussels) c. 1908; signed articles in *CSG* continuing extreme conservatism and pro-Cecilian sympathies of abbé Dirven.

Valois, Jean de (1886–1965): Chant scholar, choir director, organist, composer of sacred music; student then prof. of plainchant at Schola cantorum/École César-Franck (1928–?); choirmaster of La Madeleine, Paris (1938–65); demanding and relatively intelligent critic of sacred music (for *La Croix*, *La Vie catholique*, etc.).

Van Damme, Pierre-Jean (1832–98): Belgian priest (canon), small-time composer; prof. at Major Seminary of Ghent (1869–?) and Lemmens Inst.; main founder of Soc. de St Grégoire; main editor

of *MSB* (1881–92); main deviser of chant accompaniment method passed down and developed at Lemmens Inst.; incapacitated by illness from 1892.

Van Durme, Oscar (1867–1925): Belgian organist, choir director, composer of sacred music; studied at Lemmens Inst. (Tinel for composition); organist of Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk, Temse (E. Flanders).

Van Nuffel, Jules (1883–1953): Belgian priest (canon), choir director, composer of sacred music; studied composition briefly with Tinel and informally with Ryelandt but mainly self-taught; studied organ with Depuydt and Alfons Desmet; re-founded and directed *maîtrise* of Mechelen (1917–49); dir. of Lemmens Inst. (1918–52); lecturer in musicology at Univ. catholique de Louvain (1933–?) for his work editing Philippe de Monte.

Verhelst, François (1853–1934): Belgian priest (canon), choir director, composer of sacred music in conservative academic style; choirmaster of Collège St-Jean-Berchmans, Antwerp (1890–1904); founded a schola in Antwerp (1908); frequent contributor to *MSB*; doctorate in philosophy (Gregorian Univ., Rome, 1877), degree in physical science from Louvain; also painter, mathematician; consistently hostile in reviews to Schola cantorum publications.

Vinée, Anselme (1847–1921): Composer, theorist/pedagogue; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Guiraud for composition); seemingly favoured Breton and exoticist topics; wrote several treatises late in his career.

Wambach, Émile (1854–1924): Belgian composer primarily of secular music, violinist, conductor; associated with “Flemish movement” despite German-Walloon origin; prof. at Antwerp Conservatoire (1899, dir. from 1912); choirmaster of Antwerp Cathedral (1894–1912).

Woollett, Henri (1864–1946): French composer, critic, pedagogue; studied at Paris Conservatoire (Massenet for composition); fixture of musical life in Le Havre; author of a major *Histoire de la musique* (1909–24).

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