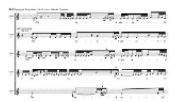# Oxford Music Online

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Heterophony

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Heterophony

(from Gk. *heteros*: 'other', 'different' and *phōnē*: 'voice').

Term coined by Plato, of uncertain meaning; now used to describe simultaneous variation of a single melody. Plato used the word (*Laws*, vii, p.812) when discussing the unsuitability of music for lyre and voice in musical education. It is not clear if he meant that the 'other voice' (the lyre) provided a contrasting melody, a harmonization of the vocal part or deliberate variations on it. Thus its meaning could range from reference to minute discrepancies in singing or playing in unison or octaves (even, for instance, those produced unintentionally within the first violins of an orchestra) to the most complex of contrapuntal writing. In modern times the term is frequently used, particularly in ethnomusicology, to describe simultaneous variation, accidental or deliberate, of what is identified as the same melody. Ex.1 [not available online], from Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, illustrates the practice of distributing the same melody among different voice or instrument parts with different rhythmic densities. While this is a common enough occurrence between the cello and double bass parts in European orchestral writing, it is basic to some non-European music, for example the gamelan music of south-east Asia (*see* INDONESIA).

The term 'heterophony' is also used in discussion of much accompanied vocal music of the Middle East and East Asia, where the instrument provides an embellished version of the vocal part. One instance is the relationship between *lyra* and voice in the performance of Kleftic ballads (*see* GREECE, §IV, 1(IV)). Heterophony is also likely to occur frequently in group singing within orally transmitted monophonic traditions, as in ex.2, where the highly individual and ornamental treatment given to a straightforward metrical psalm tune is explained as the work of 'individual people, who in the singing fellowship reserve the freedom to bear witness to their relation to God on a personal basis' (Knudsen).

Ex.2 Opening of 'Martyrdom', Isle of Lewis, Hebrides (Knudsen)

Bibliography

MGG2 (R. Schumacher)

G. Adler: 'Über Heterophonie', *JbMP* 1908, 17–27   **Find it ⊛ NU**

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W.P. Malm: 'On the Meaning and Invention of the Term "Disphony"', *EthM*, xvi (1972), 247–9

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Homophony

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Homophony

(from Gk. *homophonia*: 'sounding alike').

Polyphonic music in which all melodic parts move together at more or less the same pace. A further distinction is sometimes made between homophonic textures that are homorhythmic (**ex.1**) and those in which there is a clear differentiation between melody and accompaniment (**ex.2**). In the latter case all the parts – whether melodic soprano, supporting bass, or accompanimental inner parts – work together to articulate an underlying succession of harmonies. Homophonic music balances the melodic conduct of individual parts with the harmonies that result from their interaction, but one part – often but not always the highest – usually dominates the entire texture. While in principle the same basic precepts govern the melodic behaviour of all the parts, in practice the treble tends to be more active than the others and to have a wider ambitus, and while conjunct motion is the rule in upper voices, leaps are common and sometimes even prevalent in the bass. Inner parts are used to fill in between the two outer voices, which form the contrapuntal framework of the music.

Ex.1 Tallis: If ye love me (c1549)

To hear this example please click here   Sibelius Enabled

Ex.2 Chopin: Nocturne in E major, op.62 no.2 (1846)

To hear this example please click here   Sibelius Enabled

Homophonic textures occur in most if not all European musical traditions. Since at least the middle of the Baroque period music theorists have regarded the homophonic arrangement of four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) as the normative texture of Western music: it has been generally assumed that all tonal music, including melodic imitation, can be represented in terms of a four-part texture and heard as chorale-like successions of harmonies. An important pedagogical practice has thus arisen around the 371 chorale harmonizations of J.S. Bach, while Gottfried Weber chose a homophonic composition – the march of the priests from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* – for the first ever

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Brian Hyer

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Monophony

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Monophony

(from Gk. *monos*: 'single', and *phōnē*: 'voice').

Music for a single voice or part, for example plainchant and unaccompanied solo song. The term is contrasted with POLYPHONY (music in two or more independent parts), HETEROPHONY (the simultaneous sounding of a melody or line and a variation of it) and HOMOPHONY (which implies rhythmic similarity in a number of parts).

For monophonic vocal forms in Western music *see* PLAINCHANT; TROUBADOURS, TROUVÈRES; MINNESANG; MEISTERGESANG; LAUDA and SONG; *see also* ESTAMPIE. Monophonic music is also important in non-Western and traditional cultures, where it may have an improvised or drone accompaniment.

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Polyphony

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Polyphony.

A term used to designate various important categories in music: namely, music in more than one part, music in many parts, and the style in which all or several of the musical parts move to some extent independently. *Polyphōnos* ('many-voiced') and *polyphonia* occur in ancient Greek without any connotations of musical technique. After classical antiquity, forms of the adjective came into use in modern languages, designating both non-musical phenomena such as birdcalls, human speech and multiple echoes, and musical phenomena such as instrumental range and tonal variety, as well as the various tunes playable on an automatic musical device.

I. Western

1. Multiplicity of parts.

In connection with the technique of composition, the Latin terms *polyphon(ic)us* and *polyphonia*, and their modern derivatives, were first used to refer to 'music in multiple parts'. An author named 'Johannes' contrasted *cantus simplex* for one part with *polyphonia* for more than one (*Summa musice*, ?*c*1200, wrongly attributed to Johannes de Muris; *GerbertS*, iii, 239*a*). He described polyphony as *dyaphonia*, *triphonia* or *tetraphonia*, according to the numbers of parts, and distinguished between *basilica* (sustained-note organum) and *organica* (discant). *Polyphonia* is mentioned in an anonymous treatise, probably of the mid-14th century (*B-Br* 10162–6), not so much as an all-embracing term for *dyaphonia*, *triphonia* and *tetraphonia*, but rather as the alternative to *dyaphonia*. The treatise distinguishes between music for one voice and music for more than one voice, describing the former as *monophonia*, the latter as *dyaphonia seu poliphonia* (f.48). *Dyaphonia* and *poliphonia* differ both in the number of parts ('unio duarum' or 'plurium vocum') and in the setting. *Dyaphonia* (the Guidonian organum and the extempore discant of the late 13th century, based largely on parallel 5ths and octaves; *see* DIAPHONIA) is regarded as an essentially homorhythmic setting ('duarum vocum simul in eodem tempore vel quasi eodem prolatarum unio' [the bringing together of two voice parts performed simultaneously or more or less simultaneously]; 'finaliter tamen ad unum aliquid revertuntur et dyaphoniam causant' [but finally they return to a certain unity and form a *dyaphonia*]), despite the use of hocket and other devices. *Poliphonia*, on the other hand, can have great rhythmic diversity in its parts – although only parts 'cum discretione mensurabilis' [with mensuration], not liturgical parts 'sine discretione, puta organica' [without mensuration, that is to say in accordance with organum] (f.54). These two treatises may appear to represent historically isolated instances, but from at least the time of Luscinius's *Musurgia seu praxis musicae* (1536), in which instruction in the notation and composition of music for several voices is given under the heading 'De concentus polyphoni ratione', there has been a continous tradition for the concept, extending through Johann Heinrich Alsted (*Scientiarum omnium encyclopaedia*, 1649) and Kircher to the present day. Where 'polyphony' is used more specifically for composition involving several parts of equal importance (see §2, below) – that is, in most languages except English and French – the older terminology survives almost exclusively in its

more general sense, as in *SchillingE*, Mendel and Reissmann (1877/*R*) and Kurth (*Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts*, Berne, 1917, p.59, n.1). In English and French, however, the older, non-specific usage is the primary one (see, e.g., Nettl).

Since the early 17th century the terms 'polyphonic' and '**polyphony**' have also been used in a narrower sense to denote musical composition for more than four parts (see Alsted, Eng. trans., 1664, pp.70, 89), Kircher (i, 322), Häuser (*Musikalisches Lexikon*, 1828, 2/1833, 'Vielstimmig, polyphonisch') and Bellermann (p.291).

2. Several parts of equal importance.

Perhaps as early as Kircher (1650), and certainly since Marpurg (*Kritische Einleitung in die Geschichte und Lehrsätze der alten und neuen Musik*, 1759), *polyphonicus* and its modern-language equivalents have also been used in the sense of 'consisting of several parts of equal importance'. Kircher undoubtedly had polyphonic writing in this sense in mind when he challenged the belief that **polyphony** cannot move the emotions (i, 561). He also used the term 'homophonous' in its modern sense in speaking of 'voces … [homophones] sive aequali processu … progredientes', in which 'semibrevium syncopae' and 'fugae' are avoided (i, 314). However, he never contrasted **polyphony** and homophony. Not until Bellermann (1862), to whom 'in many parts' (*vielstimmig*) was 'the real and natural meaning' of 'polyphonus', were both the 'homophonic' and the 'polyphonic' style characterized by the rhythmic relationship of the parts to each other (p.292). In this Bellermann did not follow Kircher, considering that the 'more modern' usage dated from not long before 1800. However, the contrast is clear in Marpurg, who in turn followed the tradition of Printz.

Printz himself had used the terms *monodicus* and *polyodicus*, applying the former to music with only one main voice (the principal part) and the latter to counterpoint consisting of several parts of equal importance (*Phrynis*, iii, 1696, pp.97, 131). He seems to have been one of the first to draw a terminological distinction between monody and **polyphony** (in the sense used here), although he did not use those terms. His distinction was adopted, sometimes word for word, by Nichelmann (*Die Melodie*, 1755), although the latter saw 'polyody' as determined by harmony (quoted in Marpurg, *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, ii, 1754–8, p.264); a century later **polyphony** was defined by the secondary importance in it of harmony (see §4 below). More specifically, Nichelmann, like Marpurg, had in mind the contrast between melodies devised together with their harmonies, and those devised regardless of harmonic considerations. Marpurg, however – and this must have been a deciding factor in future linguistic usage – preferred the terms 'polyphonic' and 'homophonic' (*polyphonisch* and *homophonisch*) to 'polyodic' and 'monodic' (*polyodisch* and *monodisch*), which he associated with the chorody and monody of classical antiquity (*Kritische Einleitung*, 1759, p.234).

The next occurrences of '**polyphony**' are in Koch (1782–93, iii, index, 1802, 'Polyphonische Schreibart', 'Styl Schreibart' and 'Hauptstimme'); in the last-named entry Koch referred to the linguistic usage of certain unnamed music theorists (possibly Marpurg), implying that this was not yet generally accepted, as it obviously was after Koch. Since Koch, however, reference works have differed in the precise definitions that they offer and in the ideals of **polyphony** that they propound.

3. Equal development of individual parts.

Since Koch's *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802/*R*), full development of the separate parts – the investing of several parts with the character of a main voice and the raising of accompanying voices to the status of counter-voices – has been regarded as a defining feature of **polyphony**. Even authors who otherwise distinguish between **polyphony** and homophony primarily on the grounds of the compositional function of harmony (see §4) consider this a valid criterion in defining 'the most genuine polyphonic composition' or 'true **polyphony**' (e.g. Adler, p.53). The definition of **polyphony** by the melodic structural value of the parts allowed writers concerned with the differentiation of styles to distinguish among different kinds of **polyphony**. Mersmann, for instance, defined **polyphony**

as either 'constructive', 'contingent on sound' or 'linear' (also 'absolute'), depending on the relative importance of rhythmic, harmonic or melodic forces; he admitted 'linear polyphony' only before and after the epoch of major and minor tonality (*Die Tonsprache der neuen Musik*, 1928, p.36). Harburger distinguished polyphony from homophony by citing the 'refined polyphony of Mozart's and Haydn's melodics' at one extreme, and from heterophony by citing the polyphony of late Beethoven and the later developments of 'linear counterpoint' at the other (*Form und Ausdrucksmittel in der Musik*, 1926, p.130).

In addition to Koch's definition of this technical feature of polyphony (i.e. that 'several parts can claim the character of a main part'), his observation that 'the feelings of several people are expressed' also deserves emphasis. This is not simply a description of the way music is experienced in general. Even genres such as the fugue were felt by Forkel, Sulzer and Koch to carry a heightened expression of feeling (it was only in the course of the 19th century that they came to be pronounced in general 'objective', that is, emotionally neutral). Koch's remark applies more specifically to the kinds of music he cited as examples of polyphony: operatic ensembles, duets, trios and quartets. Gathy (*Musikalisches Conversationslexikon*, 1835, 2/1840) mentioned among other examples the finale of Act 1 of Spontini's *Olimpie* and the finale of Act 4 of Salieri's *Axur* ('polyphonic composition'). Küster, who several times claimed that polyphony could express 'dramatic liveliness' (*Populäre Vorträge*, iv: *Das Ideal des Tonkünstler*, 1877, p.88), cited the chorus 'Fuggiamo, corriamo' from Mozart's *Idomeneo* (*Populäre Vorträge*, ii: *Die höheren Tonformen*, 1872, p.189). However, the understanding of polyphony as the simultaneous expression of different feelings was diminishing; Koch's definition was significantly weakened by the words 'as it were' in Schilling, who described polyphony as the type of writing 'in which … as it were, the feelings of several persons are expressed simultaneously' and later abandoned the definition altogether. Typical of the tendency to find polyphony 'objective' is A.B. Marx's article on J.S. Bach in the second edition of Schilling's encyclopedia, which emphasized the distant, grave objective and universal nature of polyphonic music, opposing it to the greater subjectivity of homophony. Marx regarded Bach's polyphony as his ideal (see §6, below), and he viewed polyphony as part of the 'strict' style. Koch (1802, 'Styl, Schreibart') described it as including both monothematic and imitative elements (and thus being particularly suitable for sacred music); he also characterized it by the 'grave progress' of the melody and the strict handling of dissonance. However, if polyphony cannot be consigned to the 'strict' style (*MCL*, 'Styl'), that is due not least to the contribution of the Viennese Classicists and 19th-century composers to the individual development of polyphonic parts and their use of contrapuntal techniques. (The distinction between 'strict' counterpoint and 'free' polyphony in the writings of Riemann and Knorr also took account of this; see §7, below.) Mendel and Reissmann went so far as to prefer a distinction drawn on the grounds of musical forces – e.g. between vocal, keyboard and orchestra polyphony – to one between a strict and a free style, even within polyphony.

In using the term 'polyphony' to classify musical compositions, writers have been aware that polyphony and homophony represent two extremes, separated by intermediate stages. Bellermann (p.292), for instance, objected to the terms 'polyphonic' and 'homophonic' because 'in every song for more than one voice the parts are to be developed melodically, and therefore independently, and because of the different rhythmic movement of individual parts there will be an enormous number of pieces in which the separate parts appear too independent for the style to be reckoned homophonic, or even, polyphonic'. Consequently, some writers, such as Koch, favoured a tripartite division of compositional styles: of Koch's three 'processes' of composition the first two represent 'homophonic' procedures and the third 'polyphonic' procedure (1782–93, ii, 82–3; cf Marx, *Anleitung zum Vortrag Beethovenscher Klavierwerke*, 1863, 5/1912, pp.97–8).

4. Subordinate importance of harmony.

Since the middle of the 19th century, with the gradual rediscovery of medieval and Renaissance music for several voices, polyphonic music has been defined as such by the subordinate importance in it of harmony. The term 'polyphonic' has also been used by some musicologists to designate a historical period (though less convincingly so as polyphony has increasingly come to supplant harmony in contemporary music). One of the earliest of these references occurs in Helmholtz, who

distinguished between 'three main phases of development' in music (*Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen*, 1863, 6/1913, p.396; cf. *AmbrosGM*, iii, 121):

> "(1) the homophonic (one-part) music of antiquity, with which is linked the music now being produced by the peoples of Oriental and Asiatic lands; (2) the polyphonic music of the Middle Ages – in many parts, but still without reference to the independent musical significance of the simultaneous sounds – extending from the 10th to the 17th century when it passes over into (3) harmonic or modern music, characterized by the independent significance accorded to harmony as such. Its origins lie in the 16th century."

Many authors take the function of harmony as a criterion so seriously that they describe even Bach's organ polyphony as secondary and illusory (Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, i, 1873–80, 3/1921, p.101), or consider its harmonies the product of the part-writing (Adler, p.266), although Riemann thought that the true nature of polyphony was revealed only within the harmonic framework of major/minor tonality (*Grosse Kompositionslehre*, i, 1902, pp.175–6). Later authors, on the other hand, regarded Bach's polyphony as a transition between (or a unification of) polyphony and functional harmony (A. Berg, 1930), quoted in W. Reich, *Gespräche mit Komponisten*, 1964, pp.234–5, and L. Balet and E. Gerhard [Rebling], *Die Verbürgerlichung der deutschen Kunst: Literatur und Musik im 18. Jahrhundert*, 1936, p.342). Others saw the practice of continuo serving as a historical link between polyphony and homophony (E. Pepping, *Der polyphone Satz*, i, 1943, p.10).

Schoenberg (*Harmonielehre*, 1911, 3/1922, p.466) even credited the polyphonic style of writing with the ability to legitimize new harmonies. Conversely, new and more particularly dissonant harmonies were described by others as 'polyphonic' (e.g. E. Stein, 'Schönbergs Klang', *Arnold Schönberg zum 60. Geburtstag*, 1934, p.27; T.W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, 1949, 4/1972, pp.55–6). As harmony assumed this new position within polyphony, however, a precise balance between the parts was demanded, what Boulez called a 'mutual responsibility of the notes' ('Contrepoint', *FasquelleE*). Schoenberg himself did not approve of establishing the principles of part-writing or harmony as absolutes, however, and ascribed to harmony in polyphonic composition the function of 'controlling taste' (*Das Komponieren mit selbständigen Stimmen*, 1911; ed. R. Stephan, 248).

The systematic musicology of the early 20th century radicalized the principles of harmony and polyphony, seeing pure 'harmony' as created by the parallel movement of parts at a constant interval, and pure 'polyphony' as created by the melodic differences between the parts (as in the drone, ostinato and heterophony); medieval discant and the kinds of polyphony that succeeded it were regarded as 'harmonic-polyphonic forms' (C.H. Hornbostel, 'Über Mehrstimmigkeit in der aussereuropäischen Musik', *IMusSCRIII: Vienna 1909*, p.208). Similarly, though staying closer to Helmholtz, Stumpf (*Die Anfänge der Musik*, 1911, pp.99–100) distinguished strictly between 'polyphony' as 'the simultaneous performance of several different melodies, coming together only now and then in consonant intervals or in unison' and 'harmonic music' as 'finding aesthetic pleasure or the opposite in the simultaneous sounding of several different notes and the succession of such tonal complexes'.

5. Simultaneous use of several structures.

For Webern, the individual voice parts are less important as an element of polyphony than the sequence of notes contained in them. Although that sequence serves as an 'original form' or 'basic set' (*Grundgestalt* cf. Adorno) in the composition process, is subjected to familiar procedures and is arbitrarily endowed with a rhythm, Webern still described the style as 'polyphony' (p.37), even though the notes sometimes sound together in chords. Webern's own serial forms, however, are clearly reminiscent of part-writing, even of canon, which has given rise to the expression 'serial polyphony', a usage criticized by Eggebrecht because 'polyphony' no longer refers to genuine parts:

'Polyphonie', *RiemannL12*). According to Boulez (*Penser la musique aujourd'hui*, 1964, p.153), on the other hand, the compositional parts are not done away with, but are freshly defined as 'constellations of events obeying a certain number of common criteria; distribution of families of evolving structures in a mobile and discontinuous time dimension, with variable density and using non-homogeneous timbre; these constellations are mutually dependent in a very special way as far as pitches and durations are concerned'. Correspondingly, when referring to his own technique of composition Boulez also spoke of polyphony in addition to monody (music in one part), homophony ('density-transformation of monody': 'the structure unfolds its objects horizontally, the vertical density of the object being variable', p.135) and heterophony ('the superposition upon a primary structure of a modified aspect of the same structure'). He defined polyphony as a combination of structures of which one is answerable to the other. The 'forms of syntactical organization' that he mentioned may also be combined to make a 'polyphony of polyphonies', a 'heterophony of heterophonies', a 'heterophony of polyphonies' and so on (p.133). Likewise, transitions may be effected between them; in other words, 'a monody may in fact represent a "reduced" poyphony, just as a polyphony will in actual fact be the distribution of "dispersion" of a monody' (pp.138–9).

Non-serial and post-serial music, on the other hand, adheres to an essentially traditional concept of polyphony, although one that embraces new stylistic possibilities. Among them is Ligeti's 'micro-polyphony', the 'technique of the close, dense amalgamation of instrumental and vocal parts' that he used particularly in the late 1950s. That it was still conceived within the framework of traditional polyphony is evident from its gradual transformation into a 'more transparent, more clear-cut, thin and more brittle polyphony', closer to the ideal of compositional part-writing (introduction to Ligeti's *San Francisco Polyphony*, 1973–4, in *Musik und Bildung*, vii (1975), 500).

6. Ideals of polyphony.

The different emphases of meaning conveyed by the term 'polyphony' reflect different concepts of the polyphonic ideal. Marx, who valued Bach's polyphony above all, measured even the polyphonic writing of the late Beethoven by that standard. Harmony, he considered, while only a contingent factor in Bach, was the very foundation and point of departure in Beethoven (and the reason why his polyphony remained rooted in homophony); the parts which came together in Bach were striving for freedom in Beethoven and the double counterpoint which was a guiding principle and purpose in Bach was only a means to Beethoven, and was thus less perfect ('Beethoven', *SchillingE*, i, 518). In line with this ideal of polyphony, Brahms denied the polyphonic character of the 'sound-surfaces' in Richard Strauss's F minor Symphony: 'One may weave together several triadic themes but that is still not polyphony' (quoted in 'Polyphonie', H.J. Moser, *Musik-Lexikon*, suppl. 1963). Mahler, on the other hand, strove for the greatest possible differentiation of parts, referring to the random sounds of a forest festival – noises from swings and merry-go-rounds, shooting-galleries and puppet theatres, a military band and a male-voice choir – as the archetype of his polyphony. (That Mahler emphasized the need to observe strict compositional organization in these sound-pictures sets him apart from Ives, who preferred the disorganized chance factor in such phenomena.) Mahler distinguished polyphony from 'something merely written in many parts' or 'disguised homophony':

> "'Do you hear that? That is polyphony and that is where I have got it from …
> Exactly like that, coming from quite different sides, this is how the themes must be
> completely distinct in their rhythmic and melodic character (anything else is
> merely something written in many parts, disguised homophony); it requires that
> the artist should organize it and unify it into a congruous and harmonious whole'.
> (N. Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler*, 1923, p.147)"

Busoni, for whom only melody was capable of a real function and harmony existed only as the aural result of polyphony, wanted polyphony to obey any impulse, to be nonthematic (and emancipated from fugue) and indeed atonal (*Von der Einheit der Musik*, 1922, pp.207, 211, 278) – an ideal that he approached most closely in his *Berceuse élégiaque* op.42 (1909) and in the second Sonatina for

piano (1912), and to which Schoenberg's free atonality largely corresponded. To Webern, finally, polyphony was the manner of writing in which melodic relationships between the parts could be made to form a musical synthesis (p.28).

7. Relationship to counterpoint.

The relationship between the terms 'polyphony' and 'counterpoint' depends less on definitions than on traditional musical classifications. Indeed, the two terms have been clearly differentiated only occasionally, as by the anonymous author of *Harmonie oder Kontrapunkt* (*MMg*, iv, 1872), who took counterpoint to mean the older method of composing in several parts and polyphony the newer method (although in discussing each method he spoke of both homophonic and polyphonic composition). More commonly, 'polyphony' has been used as a synonym for 'counterpoint': 'Polyphonism … composition in parts; contrapuntal composition. … – Polyphonist … a master of the art of polyphony; a contrapuntist' (*Dr. Webster's Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. C.A. Goodrich and N. Porter, 1864). However, 'counterpoint' is often used specifically for the actual process of forming additional parts (or the theory of doing so), while 'polyphony' refers to a composition constructed in parts e.g. Schucht, 'Wie und warum studiren wir Contrapunct?', *NZM*, xlvi (1880), 382*b*). Consequently, stylistic changes are ascribed to polyphony rather than to counterpoint. According to Riemann, for instance, polyphonic composition is taught as free composition, in contrast to strict counterpoint (Stephan, 241). Knorr, too, in his *Lehrbuch der Fugenkomposition* (1910), called for 'mastery of free modern polyphony' (p.vi); he used the fugue from Brahms's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* as a model (p.137). Kamiński distinguished in a positively polemical way between polyphony and counterpoint (as the traditional theory of the process of forming additional parts ('Über polyphone Musik', *Musica*, i (1947), 82). However, Anselm Hughes and Eric Blom ('Polyphony', *Grove3–5*) and Viret ('Polyphonie', *HoneggerD*) used 'counterpoint' only to describe the teaching of composition, while 'polyphony' denoted a style of writing. In the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1944), Apel recommended the use of 'polyphony' for medieval music, in opposition to monophony, and 'counterpoint' for personal styles, employed in teaching, apparently assuming that 'polyphony' has a wider sense than 'counterpoint' (i.e. involving a multiplicity of parts, see §1, above) and that medieval multiplicity of parts is not yet counterpoint as written by Palestrina and Bach. However, in view of the re-emergence of polyphony in the 20th century, both in a historicizing context and as determined by chromaticism, new harmonies continue to be created and indeed justified, by part-writing (see §4, above). Here polyphony becomes objectively opposed to counterpoint, which of its very nature is bound by the rules of harmony (Eggebrecht, *RiemannL12*).

If, despite differences in usage, the terms 'counterpoint' and 'polyphony' are practically synonymous, they nonetheless signify two different styles of writing in Adorno's view: 'counterpoint' denotes a composition in which parts are graduated according to rank, 'polyphony' is a melodic arrangement of parts of equal importance ('Die Funktion des Kontrapunkts in der neuen Musik', *Nervenpunkte der neuen Musik*, 1969, pp.69, 73).

See also COUNTERPOINT; DIAPHONIA; HETEROPHONY; and ORGANUM.

Wolf Frobenius

II. Non-Western

1. General.

Multi-part music is encountered in many regions of the world. However, ethnomusicologists have

frequently felt uneasy about using the term 'polyphony' for all its various manifestations, adopting instead such terms as 'polivocal', 'polyphonic parallelism', 'plurivocal', 'multi-phonic', 'multi-sonance' and 'diaphony'. This is partly due to a pervasive feeling among early scholars who looked at non-Western music within an evolutionary framework (in which learned European contrapuntal and harmonic traditions stood at the apex and 'polyphonic' had acquired a rather specialized meaning) that orally transmitted folk and 'primitive' traditions could not possibly share the same terminology. Some ethnomusicologists have nevertheless used 'polyphony' to cover all kinds of multi-part singing. William P. Malm proposed that it serve as an umbrella term embracing homophony, heterophony and 'disphony'. He coined the last term to denote music 'in which the different parts have different pitches and are relatively independent rhythmically', in other words, music that is neither heterophonic nor monophonic and which in the past may often have been called polyphonic (Malm, 1972, p.249). His use of 'disphony', however, has not been taken up by other ethnomusicologists.

Although German ethnomusicologists – for instance, Erich von Hornbostel and his successor at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, Marius Schneider – found multi-part styles of considerable interest, they used the label *Mehrstimmigkeit* in preference to *Polyphonie*. Schneider's *Geschichte der Mehrstimmigkeit* (1934–5), though dependent on the limited research of the day, was the first attempt at a comprehensive survey of multi-part practices. Simha Arom, who attempted to classify 'African polyphonies' (see §4 below), is rigorous in his definition of polyphony and maintains that 'all multi-part music is not necessarily polyphonic'. Among non-polyphonic multi-part procedures he lists heterophony, overlapping, drone-based music, parallelism and homophony. For him, true polyphony is a procedure which must be 'multi-part, simultaneous, hetero-rhythmic and non-parallel' (1991, pp.34, 38). Other ethnomusicologists continue to use the term polyphony at the most general level and concern themselves more with indigenous labels and concepts when discussing a particular multi-part musical style in detail.

Continuing scholarly interest in multi-part music has been evident in periodic conferences focussing on the theme (e.g. International Folk Music Council meetings in 1963 and 1967, and the Colloque de Royaumont in 1990). The high status accorded by scholars to such musical practices has undoubtedly been one factor in the revival of a number of older multi-part styles (see Goffre, 1990). Furthermore, in European folk revivals, especially since 1960, monophonic singing styles have increasingly been abandoned in favour of multi-part singing based on European triadic harmony and drone techniques; examples are the multi-part harmonized renderings by folk groups of monophonic English and Scottish ballads and lyric songs. There is a long history to this process, however: for example, in the rural and popular music of Latin America the widespread practice of singing and playing in parallel 3rds can be viewed as a Hispanic introduction sometimes blending with pre-Hispanic multi-part pentatonic traditions. Similarly, throughout the Pacific Islands traditional habits of choral singing (which frequently incorporates drone polyphony, heterophony and overlapping responses) are now found to be inextricably blended with choral styles derived from hymns introduced by European missionaries and later influenced by European and American popular music styles (*see* MELANESIA, MICRONESIA and POLYNESIA).

Scholars are increasingly interested in socio-cultural aspects of multi-part singing. Uri Sharvit, for instance, in his discussion of new 'plurivocal' processes in present-day Jewish musical culture, suggests that a lack of individual musical initiative 'reflects an uncohesive community' and that the 'process which creates the sound of parallel 5ths and seconds, is not only an aesthetic value … but

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The sections that follow focus on a small number of regions which together exemplify many of the different musical and social processes giving rise to multi-part vocal music. (Multi-part layering of instrumental music is so widespread that it is not discussed in this article.) Further references to multi-part vocal styles may be found in the articles on individual countries.

Peter Cooke

2. The Mediterranean.

(i) General.

Polyphonic singing styles have been preserved in the oral traditions of many parts of the wider Mediterranean area, including Albania, northern Epirus (Greece), Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Portugal. They are typically, though not exclusively, found among agro-pastoral communities organized on a strong collective basis, in mountainous regions where indigenous populations have habitually found refuge in the face of invasion and whose inaccessibility has allowed for the preservation of numerous archaisms. In general, the aesthetic values governing folk polyphonic systems are very different from those associated with the Western art tradition. Within localized stylistic areas, musical forms often remain relatively stable and serve for a wide variety of genres such as laments, love songs, wedding songs, harvest songs, dance songs, satires and historical songs. Stanzas may also be improvised. In many places, polyphonic singing has also been preserved in the churches. A range of styles is involved, and questions concerning the exact provenance of these repertories, which tend to be more complex structurally than related profane material, while often sharing similar stylistic characteristics, remain unanswered.

In some cultures, polyphonic singing is almost exclusively the prerogative of either men (e.g. Sardinia and Corsica) or women (e.g. Bulgaria). In others (e.g. southern Albania and areas of former Yugoslavia), both men and women sing polyphony, but clear gender distinctions are drawn and mixed groups remain the exception (Sugarman, 1989; Petrović, 1995). Polyphonic singing in the church tradition is usually male-dominated. Threatened by recent liturgical reform, oral repertories have often been best preserved in connection with Holy Week rituals.

(ii) Structure.

A wide diversity exists both between and within different cultural areas. Partsinging in the Balkans is predominantly diaphonic. Corsican *paghjella* singing involves three voices (*see* CORSICA, **ex.2**) and Sardinian *tenore* four (*see* SARDINIA). Songs in two, three or four parts are found in southern Albania, the lower parts often being sung in chorus by several singers (*see* ALBANIA). More rarely, the melody passes from one voice to another in the course of the song. The underlying conception can be either horizontal or vertical or both. Some forms include drone parts (simple or double, straight or alternating, continuous or rhythmic), ostinatos or parallel movement between voices; some have a chordal basis; others are more complex, combining a variety of structural principles. Responsorial forms are also found (e.g. in parts of the Balkans and Italy). Where there is a strong connection with dance, the songs have a clearly discernible rhythm. Others are non-mensural and the voices rhythmically non-aligned; often described as 'long' or 'drawn out', some feature sustained notes that produce 'ringing' harmonic effects, alternating with dense melismatic activity. Some forms suggest older modal systems, the voices interacting without any concern for concordance in the Western European scholastic sense; in many parts of Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia, the preferred interval is the major or minor 2nd. More recently developed styles reflect the influence of 'Western' harmonic functions with the 3rd and 5th as the most common intervals. While most song types retain the same tonal centre throughout, others include characteristic modulations (*see* SARDINIA).

Despite the heterogeneity in terms of musical structure, many features relating to the organization of the voices are common to different areas of the Mediterranean. The lead part is often sung by a solo voice which begins alone and is sometimes the only voice to sing the whole text, while the accompanying voices use the vowel sounds of the text or patterns of unrelated vocables. The text itself can also be deformed to the point of incomprehensibility to the outside listener, both by the manner of its intonation and by the way in which it is adapted to the musical phrase with word breaks or the omission, repetition or addition of syllables characteristic of some styles (Sugarman, 1989; Petrović, 1991; Ricci, 1993; Salini, 1996). Other recurring features include staggered entries,

slight anticipations and suspensions, non-tempered intervals and subtle modal inflections, rhythmic elasticity and an element of improvisation.

(iii) Vocal styles and the singers' interaction.

Each individual voice has its own strictly defined role; local terminology often provides a graphic description of how each part is conceived (see ALBANIA and BULGARIA). Many styles feature a tense or vibrant voice-production associated with singing outdoors, while each vocal line has its own distinctive timbre; the resulting 'polyphony of timbres' (Lortat-Jacob, 1993) is often popularly compared with environmental sounds. Timbre can be specifically selected in order to produce a characteristic clash of overtones and fundamentals (as in the Balkans) or the phenomenon of an additional 'virtual' voice, as described by Lortat-Jacob (1993), in Sardinia. Often associated with timbral quality is pitch mobility: Rice noted that in the case of Bulgarian singing 'pitch is manipulated subtly along a continuum to achieve a particular harmonic effect' (1980). Many styles also feature a pronounced vibrato or 'trembling' and the incorporation of shouts, yips, yodels, slides, glottal stops or a sobbing effect which contributes to both rhythm and resonance. Staggered breathing can be employed to maintain continuity of sound.

Typically, the songs are performed for the benefit of the singers themselves as much as for an audience. A sense of complicity is vital and it is common for the same group of singers to perform together for many years. For men in particular, polyphonic singing combined with alcohol consumption induces a transcendent state of heightened spiritual harmony (Sugarman, 1989; Petrović, 1995). Intense concentration and close physical contact between the performers are crucial for their successful interaction, in particular with respect to both timing and the ultimate fusion of the individual voices; hence the horseshoe formation commonly adopted. The hand is often used to cup the ear or is held with the fingers touching the ear and the palm turned towards the mouth (Rihtman, 1952; Lortat-Jacob, 1993; Ricci, 1993).

(iv) Contemporary trends.

In many areas, polyphonic practices have inevitably declined as a result of increasing modernization, urbanization and changing fashions. Where such singing was the prerogative of small select groups of men (e.g. in Corsica), continuity was severely compromised by losses suffered in the two world wars. Elsewhere (e.g. in Portugal), marked regional differentiation in terms of economic development and mechanization of agriculture also had an effect on polyphonic singing practices.

While early studies in 'folk' polyphony were concerned predominantly with the analysis of musical structure and the description of style, more recent research has drawn attention to contexts and social function (Sugarman, 1988), psycho-physical factors and the singers' interaction (Lortat-Jacob, 1990, 1993), emic conceptualization and symbolism (Rice, 1980), and responses to social and political change and the manner in which polyphonic genres have sometimes assumed an emblematic role in issues of national identity (Petrović, 1995; Bithell, 1996, 1997). Römer (1983) and Macchiarella (1994) have investigated formal and stylistic relations between oral and written traditions in sacred music with reference to Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily.

The increased valorization of polyphony in the late 20th century, as reflected in the number of international conferences and festivals devoted to polyphonic singing, has been charted by Goffre (1990). In Corsica and elsewhere this has led to reconstructions of semi-forgotten polyphonic repertories and, following the trend-setting phenomenon of the *Mystère des voix bulgares* recordings, the generation of new compositions based on traditional styles, accompanied by a shift from the domain of popular expression to that of artistic product. Folk polyphonic practices have also attracted renewed attention for the light they might throw on questions of performance practice in former times.

Caroline Bithell

3. Russia and west-central Asia.

With the exception of parts of Siberia and central Asia, partsinging is ubiquitous in Russia, Belarus′ (especially in the Poles′ye region) and Ukraine, including the multi-ethnic Volga River basin (especially Mordoviya and Komi, as well as the republics of Udmurtiya and Mari, and among the so-called Tatar-Kryashen), in all three Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), and in the northern, central and western sections of the Caucasus (Georgia, Osetiya, Abkhaziya, Adygey and western Dagestan), as well as in the Carpathian Mountains and throughout the Balkans.

There are two types of singing ensemble in the region. One involves groups that are 'closed' in terms of membership; the same people sing together for years. The second, associated with collective activities such as line-dances, harvesting and indoor working parties, is 'open' to all who know the tradition, though in practice groups consist of not more than 16–18 people. Instrumental polyphony is more widely distributed throughout Eurasia; the following discussion, however, focusses on vocal polyphony of the oral tradition.

The first examples of sung polyphony in this region were recorded at the end of the 19th century, although isolated cases were known much earlier (e.g. in the 18th-century anthology of Russian folksongs by L′vov and Pratsch), and a few examples were published by Mily Balakirev in 1866. In 1878 the first collection of Georgian partsinging (edited by Mily Machavariani) appeared, and the following year Yuly Melgunov transcribed and published a collection of Russian popular songs in which he pointed out that Russian folksinging was essentially polyphonic. In 1891 Angel Bukureshtliyev documented the existence of Bulgarian polyphony. Other polyphonic cultures of Europe did not reach the scholarly world until the 1920s, 30s or even later; for instance, the first examples of Albanian sung polyphony were published in the 1950s and 60s (see §2, above).

Melgunov (1846–93) described the fundamental characteristics of Russian folk polyphony, such as the dependence of all voices on one tune, the use of unison to mark the end of sections, the equal aesthetic value of all the voices, and certain principles of part-writing distinct from those of classical European harmony (see Melgunov, 1979). He introduced the terms 'zapev' for the solo introduction sung by the 'zapevala' (intoner) and 'podgolosok' (literally, 'undervoicelet') for subsidiary voices. Despite the essential work on partsinging in Russian villages by Nikolay Palchikov (1888) and Nikolay Lopatin and Vasily Prokunin (1889), many scholars continued to doubt its existence. Definitive proof was provided by Yevgeniya Lineva (1853–1919), who in 1904 published her seminal work, *The Peasant Songs of Great Russia*, transcribed from phonograms (see Taruskin, 1996, pp.723–32).

In 1937 Yevgeny Gippius and Zinaida Ėval′d pointed out that the functional differentiation of voices in north Russian choirs was reflected in folk terminology. In 1979 Anna Rudneva, Svetlana Pushkina, B. Shchurov and other Russian musicologists used multi-channel recording to capture exactly what each voice was singing. As a result, the concept of Russian polyphony as based on one main voice accompanied by subsidiary voices was revised; most Russian ethnomusicologists no longer speak of *podgoloski*, preferring instead to refer to the wide range of polyphonic textures that reflect variations in musical thinking and local traditions. In Estonia the most significant multi-channel recordings of Setu partsinging (the Orthodox ethnic group in southeastern Estonia, on the Russian border) were made by Yaan Sarv in 1980. The similarity between Setu and Mordoviyan partsinging may reflect the extended contact between the two peoples in the remote past. Villis Bendorfs has hypothesized a kinship between Baltic, Balkan and Caucasian multi-part singing based on the drone principle (Zhordaniya, 1988).

Five main types of Russian vocal polyphony have been identified. The first is monodic, that is, the singing is almost in unison (sometimes described as 'wide unison'; Ėval′d called this 'unison-heterophonic'). The second is truly heterophonic and is widespread from the Smolensk region in the west to the White Sea in the north: its many local and structural variations include parallel octaves (in the Ural Mountains) and other forms of multi-registered singing. These types can be

distinguished by the intentions of the performers: in the first, the intention is monophonic but produces a heterophonic result; in the second, the intention is polyphonic and creates a heterophonic structure.

The third type of Russian polyphony consists of a melody and a drone sung to a text. It is especially typical of the Bryansk region in the west and the Voronezh region in the south. At cadences, the drone merges into a unison or octave with the melody. The drone may be above or below the melody, or it may frame it both above and below (a frame of droning 5ths is characteristic of the Bel 'gorod region). Along the River Oka and in some areas around Bryansk is found the so-called fake drone, which is not sung by a single voice but emerges from the combination of several voices. Drone polyphony (especially with a two-part drone) is also popular in the Balkans, Latvia and Belarus'.

The fourth – and the most widespread and characteristic – type of Russian polyphony is that in which two voices are differentiated in range, register, timbre and melody. The lower, leading voice is sung by a chorus, sometimes heterophonically, and is called the 'bass' (bas) or 'thick' (tolstïy) voice, whether sung by men or women. The higher voice consists of an anhemitonic tune without text. Among the Cossacks in the South, it is sung by a solo singer known as a golosnik or diskant; in the north it is sung by a chorus to the same melody as the bass and one octave above it. In central Russia, among non-Slavic Finno-Ugric peoples such as the Mordoviyans, Udmurt and Komi-Permyak, the bass voice is commonly accompanied by an improvised descant (podvodka), as documented by Margarita Yengovatova (1989). The most elaborate examples of this type of sung polyphony are found among the Old Believers (semeyskiye) in Siberia, around Lake Baykal and the Buryat city of Ulan-Ude (Zemtsovsky, 1972; Dorofeyev, 1989; Shchurov, 1998). The many folk expressions relating to this type of polyphony show that Russian villagers recognize the texture of partsinging as polyphonic.

The fifth type of polyphony involves three functionally distinct voices. It is found in central and southern Russia in the regions around Bel'gorod, Voronezh and Ryazan', and among the Don Cossacks and Mordviniyans. Most of the singers perform a texted bass part. The second voice (golosnik) is an upper drone, sometimes without text. The third or 'thin' voice (tonkiy golos) is performed by at least two women in heterophony with the bass; their voice production is characteristically tense. Dmitry Pokrovsky (1980) discovered four functional parts within this general type among the Cossacks: a relatively stable bas; a decorative and relatively independent diskant; an unnamed and previously unrecognized part that somehow coordinates the other parts; and another voice called tenor in close contact with the third part.

In general, the more complicated the polyphonic structure, the fewer the singers involved. It has also become clear that these complicated traditions require a kind of specialization and that there are certain master singers capable of creating complex forms while leading these polyphonic performances.

In the 1920s Gippius recorded duets and trios in the Russian north sung by men and having independent voices, but this style seems to have disappeared. Yet another kind of polyphony occurs when different songs are sung simultaneously at such rituals as weddings, spring-summer circles or women's cemetery laments (Folkways 40462). A rare wedding canon has been recorded in the Bel 'gorod region of southern Russia. In the old Russian settlements of the Urals, the middle Volga and Sibir', another type of partsinging involves two voices moving mainly in parallel 3rds. This style, which resembles Western European homophony, is also characteristic of urban songs and peasant songs in the so-called late-traditional style.

The Mordoviyan (or Mordviniyan) tradition of multi-part singing is one of the most remarkable among the Finno-Ugric peoples. There are three main types: heterophonic, three-part polyphony, and a two-part texture (in which the upper voice, or vtora, often duplicates the bass melody at the interval of a 3rd) akin to the style of Russian and Ukrainian group singing in the late 19th century and the early 20th. Three-part polyphony is most characteristic of Mordoviyan folksong; it consists of a lower voice (alu vaygyal), upper voice (vyari vaygyal) and middle voice (mora vaygyal; literally, 'voice of a song'). Both lower and upper voices function as drones, while the middle voice is a kind of cantus

firmus. The upper voice correlates to the middle voice at the interval of a 5th. Although all three parts are intrinsically heterophonic, they are functionally homogeneous within the polyphonic texture. This complex form has become more or less clear only since the development of recordings made with multiple microphones.

Izaly Zemtsovsky

4. Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa provides such a rich variety of multi-part singing styles that it was regarded by some comparative musicologists almost as a laboratory for the study of how polyphony may have evolved. Three factors may be seen to play an important part in such diversity. First there is the essentially participatory nature of African music-making. Second, the ubiquitous use of call and response demands two or more voice parts by its very nature, and overlapping of parts frequently gives rise to polyphony. Third, the use of cyclical forms, some as brief as a few seconds, provides repetitive frameworks which encourage variation making. Rycroft's study of the multi-part organization of Nguni vocal music (1967) adopted a circular model based on its cyclical form to demonstrate how overlapping, non-simultaneous entry of voices and choral ostinatos could all contribute to the polyphonic texture of Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi songs. He also pointed out how such singing can be linked to the innately polyphonic nature of musical bows (both gourd- and mouth-bows), the strings of which produce a drone bass (which can be varied during play), each drone pitch supporting simultaneously its own set of harmonics, which are selectively emphasized as required.

Much partsinging among Bantu peoples is homophonic, using mostly parallel motion. This parallelism follows mainly from the need to preserve tonal structures inherent in Bantu and other languages. Kubik (1994) demonstrated that an underlying principle of 'skipping' (of notes in the scale) leads to partsinging in 3rds among peoples using heptatonic systems (exceptions occur south of latitude 14–15°S), and in 4ths (with occasional 3rds) in pentatonic areas. In the case of the former he suggested that a scale temperament is adopted to avoid producing minor 3rds. However, Kubik pointed out instances where parallelism is present only in theory, and cited singing in eastern Angola, where a relatively loose combination of voices, fluctuating between triads, bichords and more or less dense accumulations of notes, leads to a rich texture. Brandel also remarked that in Africa different polyphonic features rarely occur in isolation but may often intermingle within one piece and may appear in any vocal and instrumental combination (*HDM2*, p.19).

Simha Arom concerned himself mostly with polyphony produced by melodic instruments in his major work on African polyphony and polyrhythm (1985), but he and colleagues have analysed the similarly complex vocal polyphony of pygmy and Bushman peoples. For example, Fürniss (1990) identified four different principal melodic parts in the singing of certain songs of Aka pygmies: *motangole*, the part that carries the text; *ngue wa lembo*, 'the mother of the song'; *osese*, 'underneath'; and *diyei*, 'yodel'. Even when performing alone a singer will draw readily from more than one of these four parts during a performance. Fürniss and Olivier, comparing the superficially similar polyphonic sounds of pygmy and Bushman peoples (1997, p.25), confirmed the findings of England (1967), who showed that the different melodic strands of Bushman polyphony result from the application of variation techniques to a single melody. These techniques include rhythmic displacement, imitation and melodic transposition up or down at the 4th or 5th. Thus Bushman polyphony is conceptualized as monophonic, Aka music as polyphonic. Yodelled parts, common in both Bushman and pygmy singing (as well as in that of some related peoples), are also heard as ostinatos among the rich mosaic of parts which make up the *edho* (polyphonic) songs of the Dorze people of southwestern Ethiopia (Lortat-Jacob, 1994).

Recent developments in many parts of Africa include the composition of polyphonic religious works by Western-schooled musicians (for examples, see Kishila w'Itunga, 1987) and the frequent use of multipart singing in popular genres such as Nigerian juju.

Peter Cooke

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