## Perotin

## Sederunt

This is the famous "Sederunt" of Perotin.

I have given each part its proper name; Tenor, Duplum, Triplum, and Quadruplum, at the start of the score.

If you don't know what this music is all about, I suggest you consult the Perotin article on Wikipedia.

Here's the capsule version: After hundreds of years of singing the same old thing in church, that is, "Gregorian" plainchant where a group of male voices all sang exactly the same thing with no instrumental accompaniment (such as 'Dies Irae'), church composers, maddened with boredom, finally convinced their superiors to allow them to experiment a little, such as by having different voices sing different things at the same time. Harmony and counterpoint were thus born.

In the late 12th century in Paris, one idea that arose was to take a known chant and stretch it out so that each syllable was sustained for a long time, like a bagpipe drone or a 'pedal tone' on an organ; on top of these long sustained notes, a few other voices would sing composed parts, using nothing more than the vowel of the drone syllable. For example, if the 'Tenor' -- the voice holding the extended syllables of the original chant -- sang and held the syllable 'Se' from the word 'Sederunt', the ensemble would all be singing the vowel 'e' until that syllable ended and the next began. ('Tenor' in fact is derived from a Latin verb meaning 'to hold.')

Perotin was not the first man to compose music in this style, called 'Organum' -- the earliest known polyphony -- but he is certainly the most well known in our time. Music-history students have almost always been introduced to Perotin, but the vast majority of other people who know the name these days probably owe that to the recordings and performances of England's great Hilliard Ensemble. I encourage you to seek out their CD, 'Perotin.' You can follow this score as you listen to their interpretation.

The Tenor part (the lowest one, with the long pedal notes) is not really notated as it should be for this style of music; you will see many repeated and tied notes. You will notice, if you have never seen this type of music before, that many of the Tenor notes are thus EXTREMELY long. Two or three instruments or singers are meant to do this part, I suppose, in order to maintain the note during breaths. An organ would do the trick as well.

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