

Mu 21 Outline, The Middle Ages

"The history of Western art music properly begins with the music of the Christian church. But all through the Middle Ages and even to the present time men have continually turned back to Greece and Rome for instruction, for correction, and for inspiration in the several fields of work."

Donald J. Grout, *History of Music*

Music in Ancient Greece & Rome

Extant accounts nearly non-existent

No real agreement on manner of performance

Context: social. social music banished by the church (the keeper of culture) but cultivated in non-religious civilizations

Instruments: lute-like (lyre, kithara); wind (aulos, flutes);
later, organ-like

Texture: monophonic

Improvisation

Greek & Roman music theory as foundation of Medieval music theory

a. doctrines of nature of music

b. systematic descriptions on composition

"Music" from Greek (mythology) "Muse"

Greek doctrine of 'ethos'

Greek musical system

Greek authors enumerated seven aspects of music theory:

notes, intervals, genera, scale systems, tonoi, modulation, and melodic composition.

Pythagoras, fl. 530 BC - philosopher, religious
teacher

Boethius (480-524)

Principal building block: tetrachord -

Music in the Middle Ages

Most extant music of the Middle Ages (Medieval period) is liturgical music of the Catholic Church. It is *practical* music but there has always been (and still is in today's church music) a tension between its *practical* and *aesthetic* qualities.

Classification of Chant Texts & Melodies

Classification of text: biblical & non-biblical; poetic & prose

Classification of Performance Style

Classification of chant types

syllabic: one note per syllable

melismatic: many notes per syllable

neumatic: 2-4 notes per "neume"

recitational (reciting & psalm tones): syllabic;

Classification of chant structure (form)

Four important elements in development of early Christian church led to the body of music as it appeared c. 1000

1. direct lineage from Judaism & Arabic cultures

2. Period following conversion of Constantine (roughly 4th - 6th cent.) - period of intellectual activity by Christian writers & scholars

3. Developments in the liturgy

4. Reign of Charlemagne (768-814)

Jeremy Yudkin, Medieval Music: The music that has come down to us, therefore, from the first 800 years of the history of the church is the result of centuries of development in fluid form, amalgamated for political reasons into a more or less unified whole, and crystallized at one point in its evolution.

Polyphony ("many sounds"), emerges c. 850

idea of composing a piece w/ more than one simultaneous line of music begins to appear c 850

represented rare departure from norm

represented a fraction of composed music at least until

in music, theory follows practice

practice of adding parallel 4ths, 5ths, octave no doubt preceded earliest treatises

Musica enchiriadis (musical handbook) c. 900

Guido of Arezzo (990-1040)

Paris as center of European civilization in M.A.

Site of 1st university (12th cent beginning; 13th - most important)

Cathedral of Notre Dame, 12th – 13th cent.

Master Leo - Leoninus

poet & composer; b c. 1135; educated cathedral school, ND; composer of 1st comprehensive body of polyphony

"Magnus Liber"

rhythmic modes

Secular Music

Jongleurs, troubadors, trouberes, minnesingers
Courtly Love, chivalry

Guillaume de Machaut, c. 1300-77

The chanson

Fixed forms

Rondeau: ABaAabAB

Ballade & Virelai

Instrumental forms

Musical instruments