

TIMELINE

300-650 650-1000 1000-1300 1300-1450

SCIENCE

605 Grand Canal of China constructed



800 Soap came into widespread European use in semi-liquid form. Hard form perfected by the Arabs in the 1100s.

Astrolabe, 1050

1050 The astrolabe, an ancient tool of navigation, is first used in Europe.

1200s Europe adopts gunpowder

1338 Hour-glass first documented in Siena, Italy

1439 Johannes Gutenberg invents the printing press

ARTS

413 St. Augustine, City of God



www.notredamedeparis.fr

Notre Dame of Paris, 1163

1163 Cornerstone of Notre Dame of Paris laid

1295 Marco Polo publishes his tales of China



Giotto, 1305

1305 Giotto, frescoes at Arena chapel, Padua

1307 Dante, Divine Comedy

1353 Boccaccio, Decameron

1381 The Bible is translated into English by John Wycliffe

1386 Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales

EUROPE

330 Constantinople new capital of Roman Empire

395 Separation of Eastern and Western Roman Empires

Ca. 520 Rule of St. Benedict (of Nursia)

529 Benedictine order founded

590 Pope Gregory I (the Great) elected Pope

Constantinople, 330



715 Pope Gregory II elected pope

754 Pepin becomes king of the Franks

768 Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks

789 Charlemagne orders Roman rite used in Empire

800 Charlemagne crowned emperor by pope

800-21 Rule of St. Benedict introduced in Frankish lands



St. Benedict, 520, 529, 800

1189 Richard Coeur de Lion, king of England

1209 St. Francis of Assisi founds Franciscan order

1215 Magna Carta signed

1309 Clement V moves papal seat to Avignon

1316-34 Pope John XXII

1378 Start of papal schism

Magna Carta, 1215

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Renaissance & Baroque Outreach Program

5530 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-361-2048
www.rbsp.org

MISSION: Renaissance and Baroque of Pittsburgh has been the city's leading presenter of early music performances since 1969. Its mission is to further the education of the community by fostering the understanding and appreciation of the music, arts and culture of the Renaissance and Baroque, and to present historically informed performances of music from the Medieval through the Early Classical periods.

PROGRAM: The musicians performing on the concert series extend their time in Pittsburgh to teach, demonstrate, lecture, and perform in schools, universities, medical facilities, and concert halls. Activities are tailored to fit a school's current curriculum.

Study Guide created by Mia Bonnewell

A Study Guide to Medieval Music

Renaissance & Baroque

From *medium aevum*, "the middle age." AD 200-1450

BRINGING EARLY MUSIC TO PITTSBURGH



MEDIEVAL MUSIC IN A NUTSHELL

It was in the Middle Ages that music developed into a theory and practice that is still recognizable in popular music today. In theory, Western music was first influenced by the Greek philosophers who wrote many doctrines and descriptions of music that established our musical vocabulary. In practice, Western music begins from the Christian era. The Roman Catholic Church was the main source of music for 1400 years, and the music was composed to serve a religious function. The Church absorbed Jewish musical practices as well as those from parts of the world to which it spread, such as Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Sacred



Example of chant notation.

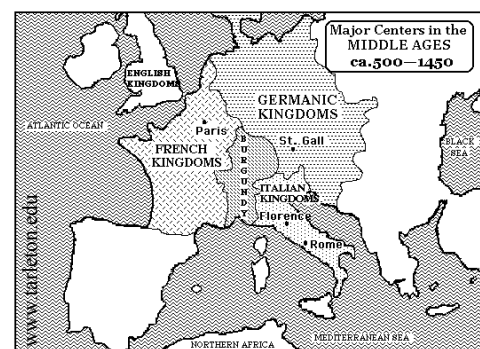
Chant was the primary style of religious music and it was sung in Latin, the language of the Church. Pope Gregory I established an order of the liturgy for the Church which, in turn, inspired a uniform repertoire of chant for the Church in all countries. The reforms became standard practice for centuries and the music was so highly regarded that Gregory is forever associated with the repertoire, which is also known as Gregorian chant.

Chant was sung on church modes which are particular sounding scales that still exist in American traditional folk music, recent jazz, and popular music. Composers of chant consisted of monks, nuns, and other religious persons who did not identify which chants they composed; only late in the Middle Ages did composers begin to write their names on their music. Another distinguishing characteristic of this early music is the musical notation. They used a different system of markings than we do now, and often made

elaborate copies of the music since books and written manuscripts were rare and therefore highly regarded.

Secular

Although music was primarily created for religious use, there were various forms of secular music spread by wandering minstrels (called *Troubadors* in southern France, *Trouvères* in northern France, and *Minnesinger* and *Meistersingers* in Germany). They made their living traveling between villages and castles singing, acting, storytelling, performing tricks, juggling, dancing, and exhibiting trained animals. The minstrels



were often societal outcasts, but are considered one of the earliest communities of professional musicians. Their music was often related to dancing and was performed in the

context of other entertainment, and therefore was not notated until the late Middle Ages. One example of the entertainment they provided is the epic narrative poem sung to music, such as *Tristan and Iseult* and *Song of Roland*. These poems were long, exciting stories that could take the minstrel a few hours to recite to a captive audience; the poems served as a person's only entertainment until another group of minstrels happened to pass through town. Recognized still today is a collection of medieval poetry on which these epic poems were based, called the *Carmina Burana*. The collection also inspired a notable composition by Carl Orff in 1935-6.

Composer of Note: Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), German Benedictine abbess known for her prophetic powers and revelation. She composed chant, liturgical songs and dramas, and a nonliturgical sacred music drama, called *Ordo Virtutum*, in which all the parts except the devil sing in plainchant.



BUZZ WORDS

CANTUS FIRMUS

(Latin, "fixed song")
A melody, such as plainchant, that is the "fixed line" in a piece. It became known as the tenor line. Musicians in medieval times might add a second line to the cantus firmus for variation and harmony. This became the bass line. What we recognize today as soprano and alto lines do not come along for a few more years.

CHURCH MODES

Scales that were used for chant.

MONOPHONY

(From Greek, mono- one, alone; -phony, sound)
A single melodic line. For example, chant or unaccompanied solo singing.

HOMOPHONY

(From Greek, homo- the same, belonging to two or more jointly; -phony, sound)
When one melody is predominant and is supported by harmony or chords in the background. Most of American popular music and folk music can be called homophonic.

NEUMES

Marks that represented notes in Gregorian chant. They indicated a general shape, but not necessarily the rhythmic value.



SPOTLIGHT ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS



HURDY GURDY: three strings, played by turning a crank.



ORGANS: Great big ones in churches and also portable organs, instruments that could be carried.



HARP: Oldest characteristically medieval instrument. From Ireland and Britain.



BAGPIPE: Universal folk instrument. Player blows air into the bag and squeezes it out through the drone.



PSALTRY: Plucked string instrument.



Diabolus in Musica