

Music Appreciation - Chapter 1

Antiquity to Ars Antiqua

Musical Life and Thought In Ancient Greece And Rome

I. The Greek and Roman Heritage

Western culture has roots in ancient Greece and Rome. Although little ancient music survived, ancient writings about music, particularly music theory, had a strong influence on later centuries.

II. Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought

A. Greek Musical Life

In ancient Greece, music was linked to the gods, divine powers, and religious ceremonies. There were three main instruments, played alone or to accompany singing:

1. The lyre, a plucked string instrument associated with Apollo;
2. The aulos, a reed instrument associated with Dionysus and Greek drama;
3. The kithara, a larger relative of the lyre.

Music festivals and contests were an important part of Greek musical life after the 5th century B.C. About forty pieces or fragments of music survive, most of them from relatively late periods, when Greek music had become simplified after a period of greater complexity. Greek music was monophonic, but was often performed in heterophony. It was usually improvised, not read from notation.

B. Greek Musical Thought

Greek theory associated music with numbers (through the simple ratios that produced the consonant intervals) and therefore with astronomy. Music was closely tied to poetry, which was usually sung.

C. The Doctrine of Ethos The Greeks held that music could directly affect character and behavior by arousing desirable or undesirable feelings. Because of this, some argued that only certain kinds of music were desirable. (Ethos is related to the English word "ethics" and means "character"; music was believed to convey ethical attitudes.)

III. The Greek Musical System

The Greek musical system shares several elements with later Western systems, such as notes, intervals (including tones, semitones, and thirds), and scales. Greek scales were constructed from tetrachords, groups of four notes spanning a perfect fourth. Pythagoras (ca. 500 B.C.) is credited with having discovered that the consonant intervals were produced by simple number ratios of 2:1 for the octave, 3:2 for the fifth, and 4:3 for the fourth.

Sidebar: Greek Music Theory in Depth

There were three genera (plural of genus, meaning type or class) of tetrachords: diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic. Tetrachords could be arranged so that they were conjunct (so that the top note of one was the bottom note of the other) or disjunct (with a whole tone in between). The Greater Perfect System was an arrangement of four tetrachords covering two octaves. The scale-types used by the Greeks were called tonoi (plural of tongs); theorists differ in describing them. Cleonides and Ptolemy recognized seven different scale-types, each with a unique series of tones and semitones, like the scales that can be played on the white keys of the modern piano starting on the seven different notes.

IV. Music in Ancient Rome

The Romans adopted many aspects of Greek musical culture, including religious and ceremonial music, music in private entertainment, and public festivals and competitions. Roman music shared most characteristics of Greek music.

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V. The Early Christian Church

A. The Decline of Rome

As the Roman Empire declined and the Western Empire collapsed in the fifth century A.D., the

Christian Church became the main cultural force in Europe. It rejected pagan uses of music, while adapting music to the needs of the Church.

B. The Judaic Heritage

Although Christian worship services were not modeled directly on Jewish ceremonies, there are strong parallels, including a symbolic sacrifice, a ceremonial meal, the reading of Scripture, the singing of psalms, and the practice of assigning certain readings and psalms to specific days of the calendar.

C. The Spread of Christianity

As Christianity spread, the Church absorbed musical practices from many areas. Among the most important were psalm singing and hymns as used in the monasteries in Syria and later cultivated in Byzantium and Milan.

D. Byzantium

Each region of the church in the east developed its own liturgy. Byzantium, later called Constantinople after the Roman Emperor Constantine, was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire from 395 to 1453, and its musical practices influenced the West.

Sidebar: Byzantine Music in Depth

Particularly important were the Byzantine hymns, of which there were several types. The kanones were poetic elaborations on the biblical canticles. Their melodies were created from melodic formulas in a process called centonization. Byzantine music used eight modes (called echo), singular echos) that resemble the modes later adopted in Western music theory

E. Western Liturgies

Between the fifth and eighth centuries, each region of the Western Church also developed its own liturgy and repertory of liturgical melodies, called chants. The Frankish king Charlemagne, crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800, sought to impose the Roman liturgy and repertory of chant throughout his entire domain (modern France, Switzerland, western Germany, and northern Italy). This led to the rise throughout this region of Gregorian chant (named for Pope Gregory I or II), which combined ancient, Roman, and Frankish elements and became the standard repertory of chants for the Western Church from the 9th through the 16th centuries. Modern editions of Gregorian chant, including the Liber usualis, were prepared in the late 19th century by monks at the Benedictine

Abbey of Solesmes in France. The next most important chant repertory in the West is that of Milan, named Ambrosian chant after St. Ambrose.

F. The Dominance of Rome

Beginning in the 4th century, the bishop of Rome, also known as the pope, became the leader of the Western Church, and Latin its official language. Several popes sought to improve singing and standardize the chants.

G. The Church Fathers

Early Church leaders regarded music as the servant of religion, opposed listening to music for pleasure, and excluded instrumental music from church services. Christian writers passed on the music theory and philosophy of the ancient world, including the seven liberal arts: the three verbal arts called the trivium (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) and the four mathematical disciplines called the quadrivium (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and harmonics, or music).

H. Boethius

The heritage of Greek music theory was transmitted to the Middle Ages through De institutione musica (The Fundamentals of Music) by Boethius. He described three kinds of music: musica mundana (cosmic music), the orderly numerical relations that control the natural world; musica humana (human music), which controls the human body and soul; and musica instrumentalis, audible music produced by voices or instruments.

CHANT AND SECULAR SONG IN THE MIDDLE AGES

I. Roman Chant and Liturgy

A. Chant

Chant was created for religious services in the Roman Church, and the shape of each chant is determined by its role in the service. Thus, our study of chant must begin with an understanding of the Roman liturgy, the texts and actions that make up a religious service.

B. The Roman Liturgy

There are two main types of service.

1. The Office or Canonical Hours evolved from group prayer and psalm singing. Eight Offices are celebrated at specified times each day. Offices feature the singing of psalms and canticles (poetic passages from the Bible), each with an associated chant called an antiphon. They also include the singing of hymns and the chanting of lessons

(passages of Scripture) with musical responses called responsories.

2. The Mass is the most important service.

It opens with introductory prayers and chants, continues with Bible readings, responses, and the Creed, and culminates in a symbolic reenactment of the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples. The texts for certain parts of the Mass, called the Proper, change from day to day. The texts of other portions, called the Ordinary, are the same each time. (For this reason, the Proper chants are called by their function, such as Introit, Gospel, or Communion, while the Ordinary chants are named by their first words, such as Kyrie or Credo.)

C. Modern Plainchant Notation

Plainchant notation uses a staff of four lines, two movable clefs, and a variety of note shapes called neumes, which may indicate one or more notes. Before notation, chant melodies were passed down orally. Notation helped to standardize the melodies and reduced the need for memorization.

II. Classes, Forms, and Types of Chant

A. Classifications of Chant Chants can be classified in several ways:

1. by the origin and nature of the text (biblical or nonbiblical, prose or poetical);
2. by the manner of performance (antiphonal, responsorial, or direct);
3. by the number of notes per syllable (syllabic, primarily one note per syllable; neumatic, 1-5 notes; or melismatic, with many syllables having many notes); and
4. by the form (balanced phrases, atrophic form, or free form).

Different types of chant reflect the accentuation and phrasing of the words in differing ways.

B. Recitation Formulas

The simplest chants are recitation formulas for chanting prayers and Bible readings. Psalm tones are formulas for singing the psalms in the Office. There is one psalm tone for each church mode (plus one "wandering tone"). Most of the formula consists of recitation on the tenor or reciting tone of the mode, with an initial figure at the beginning of the first verse and cadential figures to mark the middle and end of each psalm verse. The Magnificat is sung to a similar, slightly more decorated formula.

C. Antiphons

Each psalm tone and canticle in the Office is paired with an antiphon, sung before and after the psalm or canticle. (They are called antiphons because the psalms and canticles are sung antiphonally by halves of the choir.) There are also independent antiphons used on other occasions.

D. Responsory or Respond

A responsory or respond is a chant sung before and after a Scripture reading or prayer. (Responsories were originally sung responsorially, although this is not always true today.)

E. Antiphonal Psalmody

In the Mass, the Introit and Communion were once full psalms with antiphons (more elaborate than Office antiphons) sung antiphonally by the choir. The Introit now has only one verse (plus the Doxology) and the Communion has none. (Note the link between antiphonal performance by the choir and the neumatic style of these chants.)

F. Proper Chants of the Mass

The most elaborate chants of the Mass are the Graduals, Alleluias, Tracts, and Offertories. Like the Introit and Communion, they are part of the Proper.

1. Tracts are long, melismatic, and formulaic and evolved from direct singing of a psalm by a soloist. (Note the link between solo performance and melismatic style.) They are sung only in Advent and Lent.

2. Graduals are shortened responsories in terms of their texts, with a respond followed by a single psalm verse, but are long chants because they are melismatic. They are sung responsorially between a soloist and the choir. (Note again the link to melismatic style.)

3. Alleluias include a refrain on the word "alleluia," closing with a long melisma called a jubilus; a psalm verse that usually ends with part or all of the refrain melody; and a repetition of the refrain. Alleluias are sung responsorially and are melismatic. They are omitted during Advent and Lent.

4. Offertories evolved from antiphonal psalms but became very elaborate, often melismatic.

G. Chants of the Ordinary

The chants of the Ordinary began as simple syllabic melodies sung by the congregation. Now they are sung by the choir. The Gloria and Credo, with their long texts, remain mostly syllabic, while the others

are more elaborate. Because of their texts, the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei tend to have three-part sectional arrangements that can vary between settings. Music: NAWM 3b, 3c, 3g, and 3h

III. Later Developments of the Chant

A. Historical conditions

Because of the rise of new cultural centers in western and central Europe and the decline of Christian influence in the south, almost all important developments in music from the 9th century to near the end of the Middle Ages took place north of the Alps.

B. Tropes

Tropes are newly composed additions to existing chants. They served as prefaces or were interpolated within a chant. There are three types: adding both text and music; adding music only; or adding text to existing melismas. Tropes flourished in the 10th and 11th centuries and then gradually disappeared. Music: NAWM 7

C. Sequences

Sequences were newly composed chants, usually sung after the Alleluia in the Mass. The first sequences (ca. 9th century) were melismas added to Alleluias, to which prose texts were sometimes added. Later sequences were composed independently. The genre was at its peak between the 10th and 13th centuries. The form usually consists of a series of musical phrases, of which all but the first and last are repeated to new phrases of text. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), a famous abbess and mystic, composed both words and music for several sequences. All but a few sequences were eliminated from the liturgy by the Council of Trent (1545-63)

D. Liturgical Drama

Liturgical dramas were short dialogues set to chant and performed just prior to the Mass.

Medieval Music Theory and Practice

A. Treatises

Treatises from the eighth century through the late Middle Ages tend to focus on practical issues such as performance, notation, and the modes. Among the most significant is the *Micrologus* (ca. 1025-28) by Guido of Arezzo.

B. The Church Modes

Medieval theorists recognized eight Church modes, defined by their finalis or final, their tenor or reciting tone, and their range. Authentic modes have the final near the bottom of their range;

plagal modes have the final near the middle. There is one plagal and one authentic mode on each of four finals: D, E, F, and G. These modes served as the foundation for music theory for centuries.

C. Solmization

The 11th-century theorist Guido of Arezzo devised a set of solmization syllables to help singers remember where whole tones and semitones occur. With some modifications, these same syllables are still in use. The medieval system evolved to include three hexachords (natural on C, hard on G, and soft on F, with a B^b) and the idea of changing between hexachords (mutation) to cover a wider range and account for both B^b and B[#]. The Guidonian hand assigned a pitch to each joint of the left hand as a tool to teach notes and intervals.

D. Notation

Chant notation evolved from neumes above the words to indicate rising or falling pitches (9th century), to heightened or diastematic neumes which showed the pitches more clearly (10th century), to the inclusion of one or two lines to indicate certain relative pitches, to the invention of the four-line staff in the 11th century, which allowed precise notation of relative pitch. Durations were not indicated precisely, and we do not know what the rhythm of chant was like

V. Nonliturgical and Secular Monody

A. Early Secular Genres

Early forms of secular music (from the 11th and 12th centuries) include three types of monophonic song:

1. Goliard songs are secular songs with Latin texts celebrating the vagabond life of students and wandering clerics called Goliards.

2. Conductus is a term used for any serious, nonliturgical Latin song, sacred or secular, with a metrical text and a newly composed melody.

3. The *chanson de geste* was an epic narrative poem in the vernacular (such as the Song of Roland, the French national epic), sung to melodic formulas.

B. Jongleurs

Jongleurs or menestrals (minstrels) made a living as traveling musicians and performers, on the margins of society.

C. Troubadours and Trouveres

Troubadours (feminine: trobairitz) were poet-composers active in southern France in the 11th and 12th centuries. They wrote in the language of the region, called Provençal (or langue d'oc or Occitan), and were from or associated with the aristocracy. Their counterparts in northern France, called trouveres, wrote in the langue d'oïl, the ancestor of modern French, and remained active through the 13th century. Many of the troubadour and trouvère songs are about love. Some included dialogue or enacted little dramas, and others depicted a kind of love—called courtly love—in which a discreet, unattainable woman was adored from a distance.

D. Troubadour and Trouvère Melodies

Troubadour and trouvère melodies are mostly syllabic with a range of about an octave or less. The rhythm of troubadour melodies is obscure, but later trouvère melodies have clear rhythms. Various patterns of repetition are used, along with free composition. Some trouvère songs feature a refrain, a recurring line of text with a recurring musical setting.

E. Minnesinger

The Minnesinger were knightly poet-composers active in German lands from the 12th through the 14th centuries. They sang of an idealized love (Minne), and their melodies are formed of phrases that repeat in orderly patterns.

F. Meistersinger

The Meistersinger were German poet-composers of the 14th through 16th centuries, drawn from the urban middle class of tradesmen and artisans rather than from the aristocracy. Their songs were governed by rigid rules. A common form is the barform: aab, with the b section (Stollen) often repeating some or all of the a section (Abgesang).

G. Songs of Other Countries

Other types of monophonic song include religious songs not intended for use in church, such as the Spanish cantiga, songs of praise to the Virgin, and the Italian lauda

VI. Medieval Instrumental Music and Instruments

A. Dances

Dances were accompanied both by songs and by instrumental music. The oldest surviving form of instrumental music is the estampie, several of which survive from the 13th and 14th centuries. Each section was played twice, first with an open,

or incomplete, cadence and then with a closed, or full, cadence.

B. Musical Instruments

There was a rich variety of instruments in the Middle Ages, including plucked strings such as the harp, psaltery, and lute; bowed strings such as the vielle or Fiedel; an ancestor of the hurdy-gurdy called the organistrum; wind instruments such as recorders, transverse flutes, shawms, and bagpipes; brass instruments such as the trumpet; and drums. There were also church organs, portable organs, and positive organs.

THE BEGINNINGS OF POLYPHONY AND THE MUSIC OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Historical Background of Early Polyphony

The 11th century brought prosperity and a cultural revival to much of Western Europe, including the beginning of modern cities and universities and the rise of Romanesque architecture. This was also a time of change for music.

1. Polyphony, music of two or more independent voices, was becoming prominent in the church, starting a development unique in music history.

2. The development of precise notation allowed composers for the first time to fix a work in definitive form and transmit it accurately to others, so it could be performed by someone who had not already learned it by ear.

3. Written composition began to replace improvisation as a way to create new works.

4. Music was increasingly structured by principles of order, such as the eight church modes and rules governing rhythm and consonance.

II. Early Organum

A. Parallel Organum and Organum with Oblique Motion

Polyphony was probably improvised before it was written down. Motion in parallel intervals and heterophony appear in many musical cultures and were probably practiced in Europe. Polyphony was first unmistakably described in *Musica enchiriadis* and *Scolica enchiriadis*, a treatise and textbook from ca. 900. In this early organum, an added voice (organal voice or vox organalis) appears below a chant melody (principal voice or vox principalis), moving either in parallel motion at the interval of a fourth or fifth (parallel organum) or in a mix of parallel and oblique motion (organum with oblique motion).

B. Eleventh-Century Organum

In 11th-century organum (also called free organum or note-against-note organum), the added voice usually sings above the chant (although the voices may cross), moving most often in contrary motion to the chant and forming consonant intervals with it (unison, fourth, fifth, and octave). Only those portions of chant that were sung by soloists were set polyphonically, so that in performance sections of polyphony alternate with sections of chant.

III. Florid Organum

New types of polyphony, called Aquitanian polyphony, appeared early in the 12th century in southern France and Spain. In florid organum, the chant is sustained in long notes in the lower voice (called the tenor), while the upper voice sings from one to many notes above each note of the tenor. This style was called organum, organum duplum (double organum), or organum purum (pure organum), and organum was also used to refer to a piece that used this style. When voices move in similar measured rhythm, the texture is called discant. Polyphonic settings of Latin poems called versus are the earliest polyphony not based on chant. Manuscripts for these types of polyphony use score notation (one part above the other, with notes that sound together aligned vertically), but do not indicate rhythm.

IV. Notre Dame Organum

A. The Rhythmic Modes

A notation was developed during the 12th and early 13th centuries to indicate patterns of long and short notes. By about 1250, these patterns were codified as the six rhythmic modes, each indicated by a different succession of note groupings or ligatures. The modes were based on divisions of a threefold unit called a perfection.

B. Polyphonic Composition

From the 12th to the 14th century, polyphonic music developed primarily in northern France and disseminated from there across western Europe. The first composers of polyphony known to us by name are Leonin (ca. 1135-ca. 1201) and Perotin (ca. 1170-ca. 1236). They worked in Paris at the Notre Dame Cathedral, the center for a style of music called Notre Dame polyphony. (We know their names because of a treatise known as Anonymous IV, which describes their music and names some of their works.)

C. Leonin

Leonin wrote or compiled the Magnus Liber Organum (The Great Book of Organum), a cycle of organa for the solo portions of the responsorial chants of the

Mass and Office (Graduals, Alleluias, and Responsories) for the entire church year. His organa are in two voices and alternate sections of organum with sections in discant style, called clausulae (singular clausula). The discant sections use the rhythmic modes. The upper voice of the organum may be in free rhythm, although some editors and performers treat it in modal rhythm.

D. Perotin Organum

Perotin and his contemporaries revised Leonin's work, writing discant clausulae to replace sections of organum and substitute clausulae in place of older sections of discant. The tenors often repeat rhythmic patterns and segments of melody. Perotin also wrote new organa in three and four voices, in which the upper parts are written in the rhythmic modes and often use voice exchange. The new style of long notes in the tenor and measured phrases in modal rhythm in the upper parts is called copula.

V. Polyphonic Conductus

The polyphonic conductus is a setting of a metrical Latin poem (like the earlier monophonic conductus and the versus). The tenor is newly written and is not based on chant. The two, three, or four voices move in similar rhythm and declaim the text together, in an almost syllabic style. This nearly homorhythmic and syllabic texture is known as conductus style, and works in other genres were sometimes written in this style. Some conductus feature long melismas called caudae, especially at the beginning or end. As in the organa and discant clausulae of Leonin and Perotin, vertical consonances of the fifth and octave are prominent throughout and required at cadences, and the music is written in score notation. Both organum and conductus fell out of favor after 1250.

VI. The Motet

A. Origins and General Features

Starting in the first half of the 13th century, words were often added to the upper voices of a discant clausula. This produced a new genre of independent composition, the motet (from the French word mot, for "word"). The duplum of a motet is called the motetus. Composers freely reworked existing clausulae and motets adding; or substituting new upper lines and texts. Motets were also newly composed, instead of being taken from existing clausulae, but still used fragments of chant in their tenors; later in the 13th century, secular tunes were also used in the tenors. Tenors were often laid out in repeating rhythmic patterns and were probably played rather than sung. Once removed from the liturgy, motets came to be sung on secular occasions. Their texts could be sacred or

secular and need not relate to the text of the tenor. In three-voice motets, there were often two texts, both in Latin, both in French, or (rarely) one in each language. Although the texts differ between voices, they are usually on related subjects. A motet is identified by a compound title with the first word(s) of each text, including the tenor. Frequently, the upper voices would cadence at different places to maintain forward momentum.

B. Motet Texts

Motet texts were often written to existing music and had to follow its shape. Frequently the same vowels or syllables appear in different texts, binding them together through sound as well as sense. Later motet texts are predominantly secular, and most are love songs.

C. The Franconian Motet

In the second half of the 13th century, composers often wrote motets in which the upper voice moved more quickly and had a longer text than the middle voice, while the tenor remained the slowest voice. This type is called the Franconian motet, after the composer and theorist Franco of Cologne (fl. cat 1250-1280). Petrus de Cruce (fl. 1270-1300) used even more notes and shorter note values in the top voice in a style named Petronian, after him. Harmonically, these later motets were similar to the earlier ones, with perfect consonances on the main beats and free dissonance in between. Toward the end of the century, cadences began to be standardized, with the lowest voice moving down by step and the upper voices up by step to form a fifth and octave above the lowest voice. In this type of cadence, the outer voices expand from a harmonic sixth to an octave, and the bottom and middle voice move from a harmonic third to a fifth.

D. Hocket

Hocket (from the French word for "hiccup") is a technique in which a melody is interrupted by rests, while the missing notes are supplied by another voice. It was used in motets and conductus in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Works that use it extensively, whether vocal or instrumental, are called hockets.

E. Notation in the Thirteenth Century

The notation for the rhythmic modes depended on patterns of ligatures, but the syllabic text-setting of motets made ligatures impossible. This required a notation that indicated the duration of each note. Franconian notation, codified by Franco of Cologne in *Ars cantus mensurabilis* (The Art of Measurable Music, cat 1280), solved this problem by using different note shapes for different relative values. (This same principle underlies modern notation.) With this more exact notation, polyphonic works no longer had to be written in score, and were notated instead in choirbook format, in which the voices all appear on the same or facing pages but are not aligned.

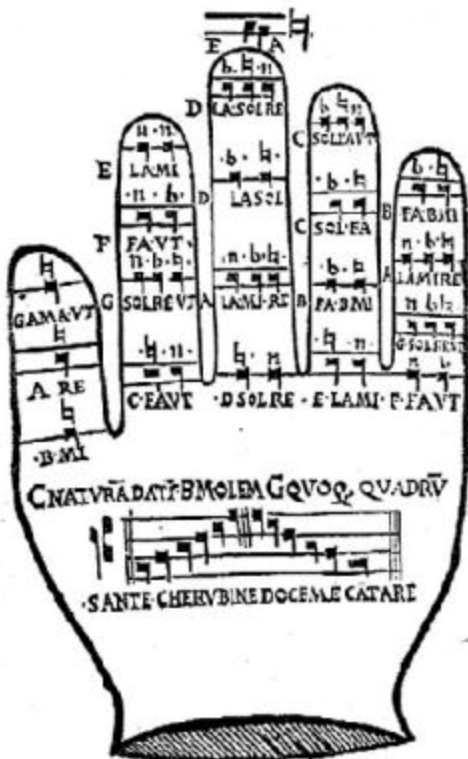
Sidebar: Thirteenth-Century Notation in Depth
Franconian notation used four note shapes: the double long, the long, the breve, and the semibreve. The basic time unit was the tempus (pi. tempora), the length of one unaltered breve, and there were three tempora in a perfection, equivalent to a modern measure of three beats. A long was either perfect (three tempora) or imperfect (two), a breve could be altered to be two tempora, and divisions of the breve were notated by semibreves. Although this notation still emphasized threefold divisions, it gave new freedom from the rhythmic modes.

VII. Summary

Polyphony developed from the 11th through the 13th centuries as a process of elaborating on existing works. New voices were added to existing chants in note-against-note organum, florid organum, and discant. New discant clausulae substituted for older sections of organum or discant. Words added to the upper parts of clausulae—a kind of troping—produced motets. Additional voices and texts could be added in turn, and motets were also newly composed using segments of chant and other melodies. At each step, composers elaborated on existing material. New technical developments focused on rhythm and notation, from the rhythmic modes to Franconian notation. Whereas until the early 13th century almost all polyphony was sacred, by the end of the century secular texts were also being set polyphonically.



Contest of Apollo and Marsyas (Mantineia reliefs) late 4th century (Athens: National Museum)



Guidonian Hand