



# Concise History of Western Music

5th edition

Barbara Russano Hanning

## CONCISE HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

BARBARA RUSSANO HANNING

FIFTH EDITION

# Part One

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## The Ancient and Medieval Worlds







# CONCISE HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

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## *Chapter*

# 1

## Music in Ancient Greece and Early Christian Rome



# Prelude

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- History of Western music begins with ancient civilizations in Greece and Rome
  - few surviving works, forty-five Greek songs and hymns
  - sources: writings, images in painting or sculpture, other artifacts
  - music used in religious ceremonies, popular entertainment, accompaniment to drama
  - Greek music theory passed on to Romans, became basis for Western music theory
  - cultivated people educated in music



# Prelude (cont'd)

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- History of Western music begins with ancient civilizations in Greece and Rome (cont'd)
  - emperors were patrons of music
- Decline of Roman Empire
  - musical heritage of ancient Greece and Rome transmitted through early Christian Church
    - writings of Church fathers and other scholars
  - Church practices spread into Africa and Europe
    - picked up musical elements from different areas of Mediterranean region



# Prelude (cont'd)

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- Decline of Roman Empire (cont'd)
  - Roman dominance led to regulation and standardization of Christian liturgy
    - organization of repertory of melodies, Gregorian chant



# F01-01





# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought

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- Greek mythology, music had divine origin
  - music inventors and practitioners: gods and demigods
  - Apollo, Amphion, and Orpheus; music had magical powers
    - could heal sickness, purify body and mind, work miracles
  - similarities in Hebrew Scriptures
- Extant Greek music
  - Greek music primarily monophonic
    - often embellished by instruments, heterophony
  - almost entirely improvised
  - melody and rhythm intimately linked to sound and meter of Greek poetry





# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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## ■ Extant Greek music (cont'd)

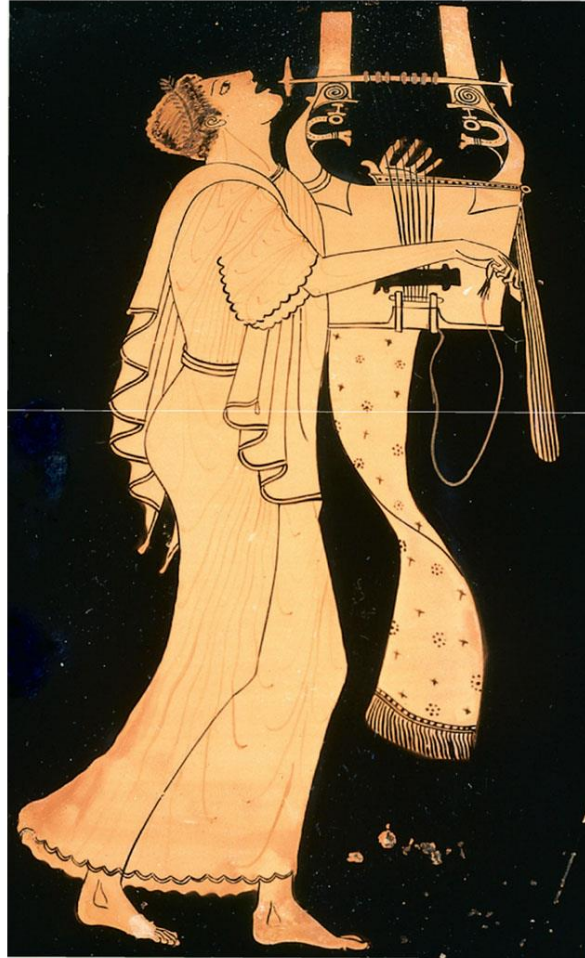
- *Epitaph of Seikilos* (NAWM 1)
  - brief song inscribed on tombstone, first century C.E.
  - close correspondence between theory and practice
- no evidence of continuity in musical repertory from Greek to early Christian practice

## ■ Close union between Greek music and poetry

- were practically synonymous
  - Plato: song (melos) made up of speech, rhythm, and harmony
  - “lyric” poetry sung to the lyre
  - “tragedy” incorporates noun meaning “the art of singing”
  - other Greek words for poetry were musical terms, “hymn”



# F01-02





# F01-03





# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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## ■ Music and ethos

- Greek philosophers believed music influenced ethical character (etho)
- Pythagorean view: music governed by mathematical laws, operated visible and invisible world
  - human soul kept in harmony by numerical relationships
  - music could penetrate the soul, restore inner harmony
    - same way *harmonia* determined orderly motion of the planets
- legendary musicians of mythology could sway human beings and nature



# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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## ■ Theory of imitation

- Aristotle's *Politics* (ca. 330 B.C.E.): music affected behavior
  - music that imitated ethos aroused same ethos in listener

## ■ Music in education

- Plato and Aristotle: gymnastics disciplines body, music disciplines the mind
- Plato's *Republic* (ca. 380 B.C.E.):
  - two must be balanced, certain music suitable
  - endorsed Dorian and Phrygian modes, fostered temperance and courage
  - excluded other modes





# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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- Music in education (cont'd)
  - disapproved changing musical conventions
  - lawlessness in art leads to poor manners and anarchy in society
  - Aristotle less restrictive than Plato
    - music can be used both for enjoyment and education
    - negative emotions purged through music and drama
  - later centuries, Church fathers also warned against certain kinds of music
- Greek music theory
  - modern system of music theory and vocabulary derive largely from ancient Greek



# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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- Greek music theory (cont'd)
  - Pythagoras (d. ca. 500 B.C.E.) and Aristides Quintilianus (fourth century C.E.)
    - discovered numerical relationships among pitches
    - developed systematic descriptions of elements of music, patterns of composition
  - Pythagoras: music was inseparable from numbers, key to the universe
    - rhythms ordered by numbers
    - discovered intervals as ratios: octave 2:1, 5th 3:2, 4th 4:3



# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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## ■ Harmonic elements

- laid foundation for modern concepts: notes, intervals, scales, modes
- defined by Aristoxenus ca. 320 B.C.E. (*Harmonic Elements*) and Cleonedes (ca. second or third century C.E.)
  - intervals were combined into scales
  - consonant intervals: 4th, 5th, and octave
  - principal building block of scale, tetrachord
- tetrachords: four notes spanning P4th
  - genera (classes) of tetrachords: diatonic, chromatic, enharmonic



# Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (cont'd)

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- *Harmonia*: unification of parts into an orderly whole
  - concept encompassed structure of society, as well as music
  - music perceived as reflection of order in entire universe



# Roman Music, 200 B.C.E.–500 C.E.

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- First and second centuries of Roman Empire took musical culture from Greece
  - lyric poetry often sung
  - music part of most public ceremonies
  - Greek architecture, music, and philosophy imported into Rome
  - famous virtuosos, large choruses and orchestras, grandiose musical festivals, and competitions
  - third and fourth centuries economic decline
    - music on large and expensive scale ceased





# Roman Music, 200 B.C.E.–500 C.E. (cont'd)

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- First and second centuries of Roman Empire took musical culture from Greece (cont'd)
  - fifth century, Roman Empire declined in wealth and strength
    - unable to defend itself against invaders



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Thought

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- Roman Empire declined, Christian Church gained influence
  - main unifying force of culture until tenth century
  - Church fathers interpret Bible, set down principles
    - similar to ancient Greeks
    - value of music: power to influence ethos
    - held to Plato's principle: beautiful things exist to remind of divine beauty
    - music was servant of religion
- Transmission of Greek music theory
  - gathered, summarized, modified and transmitted to the west



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Thought (cont'd)

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- Transmission of Greek music theory (cont'd)
  - Martianus Capella *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, early fifth century
    - described seven liberal arts
  - division of liberal arts by Boethius
    - trivium: grammar, dialectic, rhetoric
    - quadrivium: geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and harmonics (music)
  - Boethius (ca. 480–ca. 524) most revered music authority in Middle Ages



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Thought (cont'd)

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- Transmission of Greek music theory (cont'd)
  - *Die institutione musica* (The Fundamentals of Music)
    - widely copied and cited for next thousand years
    - music as science of numbers; numerical ratios and proportions determine intervals, consonances, scales, and tuning
    - compiled book from Greek sources: treatise by Nicomachus and Ptolemy's *Harmonics*



# F01-04







# The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice

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## ■ Greek legacy

- Christian communities incorporated features of Greek music
- early church leaders saw music as servant of religion
  - disapproved of forms and types of music connected with public spectacles and intimate social occasions
- desire to wean Christians from pagan past

## ■ Judaic heritage

- elements of Christian observance derived from Jewish tradition
  - chanting of Scripture
  - singing of psalms



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice (cont'd)

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## ■ Christian observances

- parallels in Jewish temple services and Mass
  - symbolic sacrifice
  - vocal music in worship services
  - Mass commemorates Last Supper, imitates Passover meal
  - singing psalms assigned to certain days

## ■ Psalms and hymns

- earliest recorded musical activity of Jesus and his followers
  - singing of devotional songs, hymns
- psalms and other praise songs traveled from Syria to Western centers



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice (cont'd)

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## ■ Eastern churches

- 395, division of Roman Empire
  - Western Empire: ruled from Rome
  - Eastern Empire: capital at Byzantium
- theological rift between Eastern and Western churches
- Constantinople remained capital of Eastern Empire for more than 1,000 years
  - flourished as cultural center
  - blended elements of Western, African, and Eastern civilizations



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice (cont'd)

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- Eastern churches (cont'd)
  - various Christian churches of Eastern Empire developed different liturgies
    - musical practices used in Western chant
- Western churches
  - Western Church became Roman Catholic Church
  - Fifth and sixth centuries: diffusion of Latin liturgy and music
    - texts remain more stable than melodies



# F01-05







# The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice (cont'd)

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## ■ Chant dialects

- regional differences, variations produced distinct liturgies
- melodies for singing sacred texts in Latin, chant
  - modern France: Gallican chant
  - southern Italy: Beneventan
  - Rome: Old Roman chant
  - Spain: Visigothic, or Mozarabic
  - Milan: Ambrosian
- local chant dialects disappeared over time



# The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice (cont'd)

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## ■ Gregorian chant

- Frankish monks and nuns copied manuscripts
- repertory of melodies known as Gregorian chant
- thousands of chant melodies survive



# Postlude

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- Music from ancient world
  - single melodic line
  - vocal melody linked with rhythm and meter of words
  - musical performances memorized or improvised
  - philosophers believed music was an orderly system
  - scientifically based acoustical theory in the making
  - scales were built on tetrachords
  - well-developed musical terminology



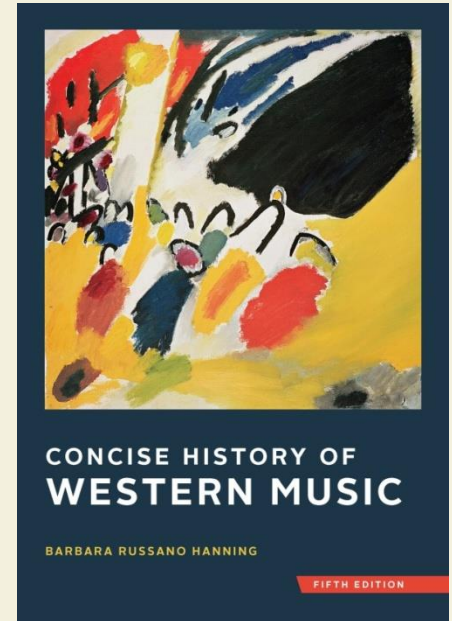
# Postlude (cont'd)

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- Greek heritage transmitted to the west
  - through Christian church and early medieval treatises
  - early Christian church music absorbed elements from many cultures
  - practices of Roman church prevailed



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This concludes the Lecture Slide Set  
for Chapter 1

by

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