Concise History of Western Music
5th edition

Barbara Russano Hanning

Chapter

2

Chant and Secular Song
in the Middle Ages

CONCISE HISTORY OF
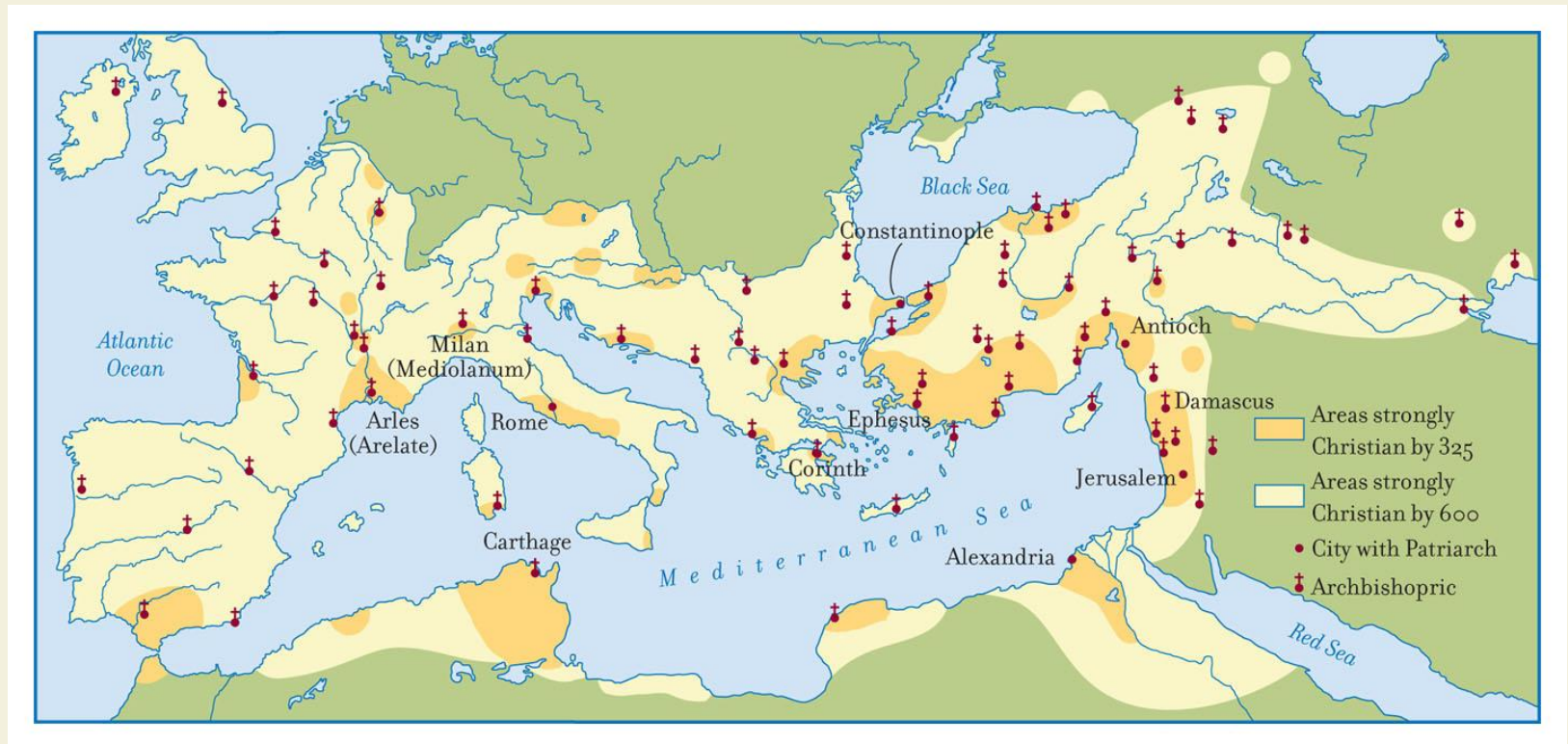WESTERN MUSIC

BARBARA RUSSANO HANNING

FIFTH EDITION

Prelude

- Two distinct bodies of song flourished in Middle Ages: sacred and secular
  - sacred: plainchant, principal element of liturgy of Western Christian Church
  - two types of secular monody: courtly and elite, popular and traditional
    - most secular music has vanished
  - similarities in three repertories
    - primarily monophonic
    - all originated in oral cultures, for centuries performed from memory according to formulas
    - eventually written down, evolving notation

F02-01

Prelude (cont'd)

- Western Christian liturgy changed and expanded over time

  - texts were relatively stable

  - chant repertory more fluid

  - preservation of melodies: classification into church modes

  - medieval music theory created

Prelude (cont'd)

- Medieval song outside the Church: different types, distinct functions
  - medieval drama, religious and secular subjects
  - epic or lyric in style
  - twelfth-to-thirteenth-century poet-composers most artful and refined: troubadours and trouvères
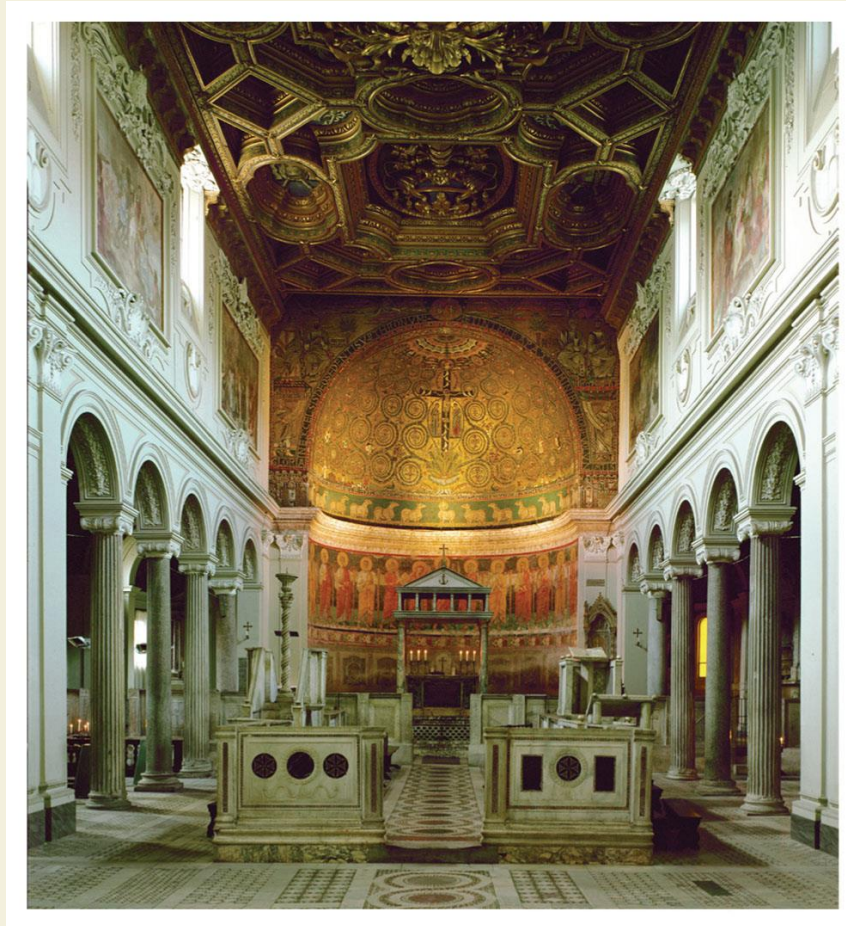
Western Christian Chant and Liturgy

- Plainchant: melody projects sacred and devotional words
  - shape cannot be separated from its verbal message, or placed in worship service
  - degree of musical elaboration depends on functions and position of chant in liturgy
- Liturgy: sacred worship
  - comprised of body of texts and rites
    - glorify God and the saints
    - teach the Gospels

F02-03

Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- **Liturgy: sacred worship (cont'd)**
  - exhort worshippers to path of salvation
  - Church calendar
    - yearly cycle of Bible readings
    - weekly cycle of Book of Psalms
    - feast days: commemoration of events or saints
    - aspects of liturgy change with day or season
  - two principal types of service: the Office and the Mass

Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- Divine Office: communal reading of psalms
  - Office (Canonical Hours): liturgy codified in *Rule of St. Benedict* (ca. 530)
  - series of eight services, specified times around the clock
    - provides ritual in monasteries and convents
    - prayers, recitations of Scriptural passages, song
  - Office liturgies include:
    - several psalms, each with an antiphon

Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- Divine Office: communal reading of psalms (cont'd)
  - chant sung before and after the psalm
  - all 150 psalms sung each week
  - lessons (Bible reading) with music responses called responsories
  - hymns, canticles (poetic biblical passages), prayers
- Matins and Vespers most important liturgically and musically

Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- Mass: most important service of Catholic Church
  - central act is symbolic reenactment of Last Supper
  - Liturgy of the Mass in three parts:
    - introductory prayers
    - Liturgy of the Word
    - Liturgy of the Eucharist
  - Proper of the Mass: variable portions
   - Introit, Collects, Epistle, Gradual, Alleluia, Gospel, Offertory, Communion, and others

F02-05

	Proper	Ordinary
Introductory Section	Introit (a)	Kyrie (b) Gloria (c)
	Collect	
Liturgy of the Word	Epistle Gradual (d) Alleluia (or Tract) (e) Sequence (on major feasts) Gospel Sermon (optional)	Credo (f)
Liturgy of the Eucharist	Offertory (g) Secret Preface	Prayers Sanctus (h) Canon Pater noster (Lord's Prayer) Agnus Dei (i)
	Communion (j) Postcommunion	Ite, missa est (k)

Blue: Sung by choir   Red: Intoned   Green: Spoken

F02-06
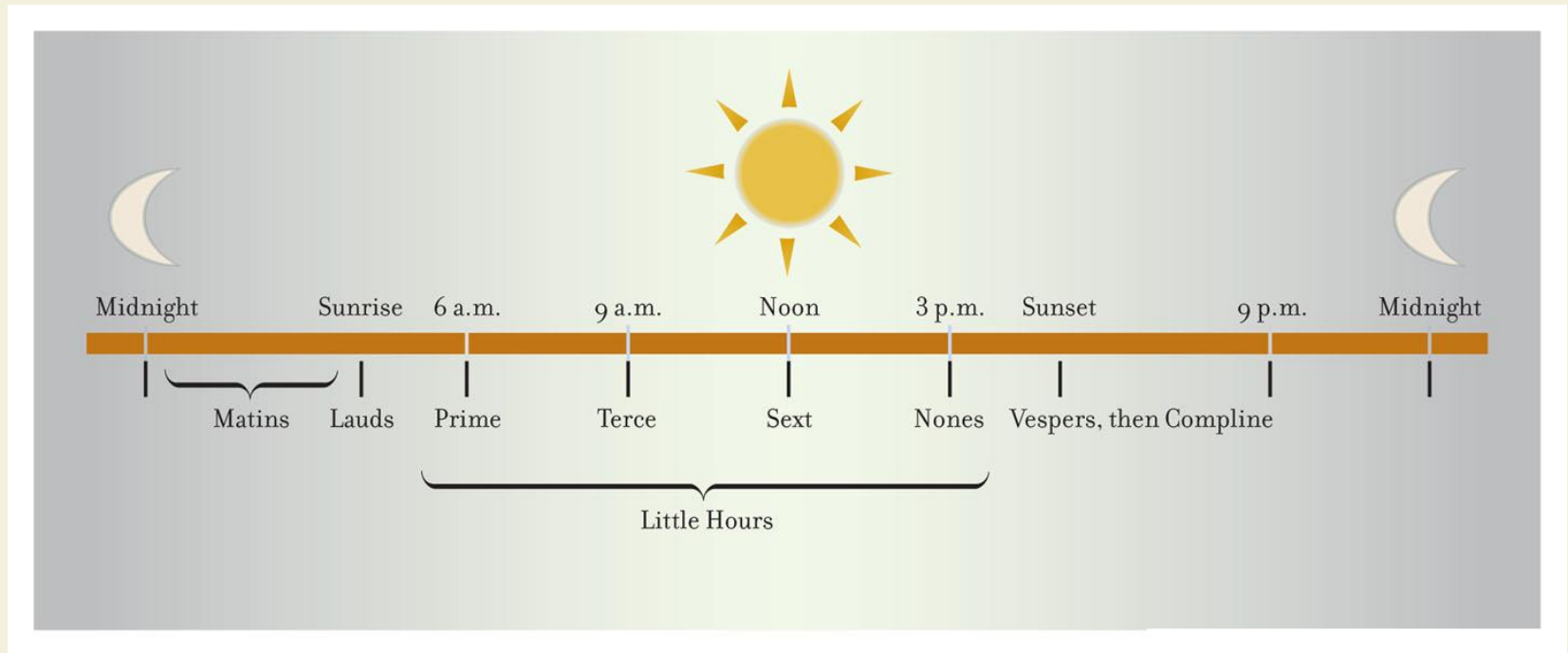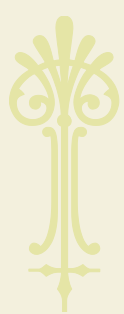
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Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- Mass: most important service of Catholic Church (cont'd)
  - Ordinary of the Mass: invariable portions
    - Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Ite, missa est
- Oral transmission of chant melodies
  - improvised within strict conventions based on formulas
  - melodies subject to change and variation
  - subject of study and controversy

Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- Notation of chant

  - late eighth and ninth centuries, notation invented to standardize performance of chant melodies

  - Frankish campaign to promote uniform liturgy and music

    - consolidate and increase influence on worshippers

  - legend of Saint Gregory

  - fifth to ninth centuries, western and northern Europe converted to Christianity
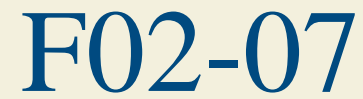
Western Christian Chant and Liturgy (cont'd)

- ■ Notation of chant (cont'd)
  - official "Gregorian" chant established Frankish empire
  - important developments took place north of Alps

F02-07

Genres and Forms of Chant

- Classification of chants
  - by texts: biblical or nonbiblical, prose or poetry
  - manner of performance
    - antiphonal: alternating choirs
    - responsorial: choir responds to a soloist
    - direct: sung by one choir
  - musical style
    - syllabic: one note per syllable of chant
    - melismatic: many notes per syllable
    - neumatic: two to seven notes per syllable

Ex02-01

Genres and Forms of Chant (cont'd)

- Recitation formulas
  - simple melodic outlines
  - can be used with many texts
- Text setting: straightforwardly, ornately
  - reflect Latin pronunciation
    - prominent syllables set to higher note
    - emphasis through melismas
  - florid chants
    - long melismas on weak syllables
    - emphasis through syllabic setting

F02-09
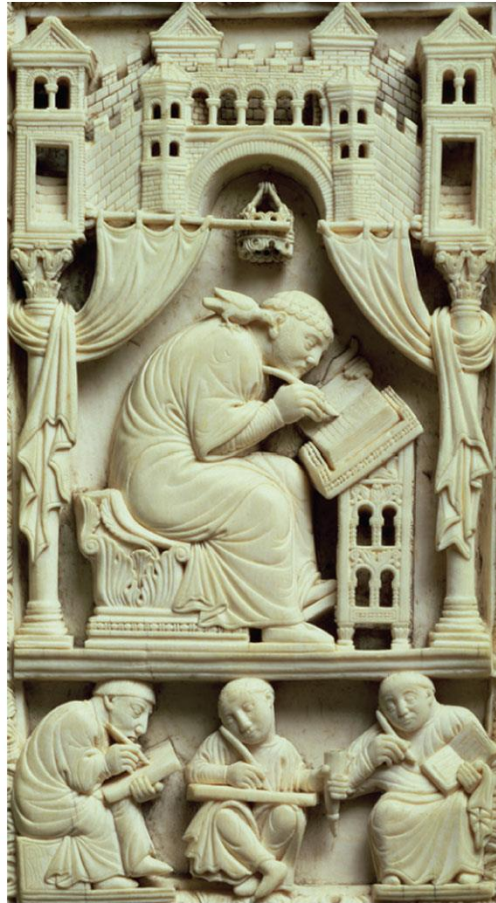
Genres and Forms of Chant (cont'd)

- ■ Text setting: straightforwardly, ornately (cont'd)
  - melodies conform to rhythm of text and to function
    - ▪ no attempt to express emotions or depict images
- ■ Melodic structure
  - phrases and periods correspond with text
    - ▪ most phrases resemble arch, parallels spoken Latin
    - ▪ appears in subtle combinations

Ex02-02

Genres and Forms of Chant (cont'd)

- Chant forms
  - psalm tone: one of eight melodies used for singing psalms
    - two balanced phrases correspond to two halves of typical psalm verse
  - strophic: same melody to several stanzas, e.g. hymns
  - free form: may be entirely original

Chants of the Office

- Psalm tones: formulas for chanting psalms
  - oldest chants in liturgy
  - easily adapted to fit any psalm
  - one psalm tone for each of eight modes, and *Tonus peregrinus* "wandering tone"
  - sung to tone that matches mode of its prescribed antiphon (NAWM 4a)
  - five separate melodic elements:
    - intonation: rising motive to reciting tone (tenor), used for first verse
    - recitation on reciting tone
    - mediant: cadence for middle of each verse

Chants of the Office (cont'd)

- Psalm tones: formulas for chanting psalms (cont'd)
  - continues on reciting tone, second half of verse
  - termination: final cadence at end of verse
  - final verse leads into Lesser Doxology
    - formal praise to the Trinity
    - places Hebrew Scripture into Christian framework
  - every psalm framed by different antiphon, attached to one day of calendar year (NAWM 4a)

Chants of the Office (cont'd)

- Antiphonal psalmody
  - half-verses alternate between two choirs or between small and full choir
    - eventually both chants were abbreviated
  - antiphons: verse or sentence with its own melody
    - opening phrase of antiphon sung before psalm, entire antiphon after psalm
    - more numerous than any other type of chant, 1,250
    - originally meant to be sung by a group,
    - older ones more syllabic, stepwise motion, simple rhythm, limited melodic range

F02-10

Chants of the Office (cont'd)

- **Responsorial psalmody**
  - soloist performs verse, congregation or choir responds with refrain
  - also occurs in Office responsories

Chants of the Mass Proper

- Antiphonal chants
  - Introit
    - originally a complete psalm with its antiphon
    - many verses accompanied entrance procession
    - opening part of service shortened over time (NAWM 3a)
  - Communion
    - near end of Mass, counterpart to Introit
    - short chant, often one scriptural verse (NAWM 3j)

Chants of the Mass Proper (cont'd)

- **Responsorial chants**
  - Graduals and Alleluia, most highly developed chants
    - more contemplative moments in service, no ritual action occurs
  - choir and soloist in alternation (NAWM 3d and 3e)
  - Graduals
    - came to Frankish churches from Rome, form already evolved
    - florid melodies

Chants of the Mass Proper (cont'd)

- **Responsorial chants (cont'd)**
  - melismatic formulas recur: intonations, internal cadences, terminations

- Alleluias
  - also more florid
  - respond text is single word "Alleluia"
    - jubilus: long melisma on final syllable (NAWM 3e)
  - performance
    - soloist (or solo group) sings word "Alleluia"
    - chorus repeats it, continues with jubilus
    - soloist sings psalm verse, chorus joins on last phrase
    - entire "Alleluia" repeated by soloist, chorus joining at end

F02-11

SOLOIST	CHORUS	SOLOIST	CHORUS	SOLOIST	CHORUS
Alleluia*	Allelu-ia...(jubilus)...	Ps. verse...*	...	Allelu-*	-ia (jubilus)

Chants of the Mass Proper (cont'd)

- **Responsorial chants (cont'd)**
  - Offertories
    - melismatic as Graduals
    - Middle Ages, performed during offering of bread and wine
    - choral respond, two or three ornate verses sung by a soloist
    - each followed by second half of respond
    - verses dropped later; respond only (NAWM 3g)

Later Developments of the Chant

- Chants of the Mass Ordinary
  - originally simple syllabic melodies sung by congregation
  - by ninth century, choir took over
    - trained singers: new more ornate melodies
  - syllabic setting retained for Gloria and Credo (longest texts)
  - Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei: 3-part sectional arrangements
  - Kyrie musical forms
    - AAA, BBB, AAA[1]; AAA BBB CCC[1] (NAWM 3b) or ABA CDD EFE[1]

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- Chants of the Mass Ordinary (cont'd)
    - usually performed antiphonally; half-choirs alternate statements
    - final Kyrie often extended
    - melismas on last syllables of "Kyrie" and "Christe"
- Antiphons
    - many composed for additional feasts, ninth to thirteenth centuries
    - four Marian antiphons, independent compositions

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- **Tropes**
  - expanded existing chant, three types:
    - new words and music before the chant and between phrases
    - melody only, extending or adding melismas
    - text only, called *prosula*
  - first type most common, Introits
  - all increased solemnity of chant
  - creative outlet for musicians

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- **Tropes (cont'd)**
  - interpret text; link to specific occasion
    - Introit antiphon for Christmas Day (NAWM 3a) and (NAWM 6)
  - trope composition flourished in monasteries, tenth and eleventh centuries
  - tropes banned by Council of Trent (1545–63)
- **Sequences**
  - follow the Alleluias
  - began as tropes in ninth century

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- **Sequences (cont'd)**
  - derived from melismas added at end of an Alleluia
- Notker Balbulus ("The Stammerer"; ca. 840–912)
  - most famous early writer of sequence texts
  - learned to write text syllables as memory aid
- important creative outlet, tenth to thirteenth centuries
  - popular sequences imitated and adapted for secular genres

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- **Sequences (cont'd)**
  - banned by Council of Trent
    - five sequences survive, including *Victimae paschali laudes* (NAWM 5)*, and *Dies irae*
  - all are set syllabically in couplets, second line repeating melody of first
- **Liturgical drama**
  - type of play performed on important holy days, near altar
  - originated in troping

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- Liturgical drama (cont'd)
  - Easter and Christmas plays most common, performed all over Europe
  - Quem queritis in presepe (NAWM 6), Easter play
  - music: number of chants strung together
  - theatrical presentation: staged, scenery, costumes, actors drawn from clergy

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)
  - Renowned visionary, composer of sacred monophony
    - born to noble family, Rhine region of Germany
    - consecrated to the church; vows at Benedictine monastery
    - 1150 founded convent, Rupertsberg near Bingen
    - famous for prophecies
    - corresponded with emperors, kings, popes, and bishops
    - preached throughout Germany

F02-13

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- **Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) (cont'd)**
  - prose works in the *Scivias* (Know the Ways, 1141–51); account of twenty-six visions, books on science and healing
  - religious poems set to music: preserved in two manuscripts in liturgical cycle
  - major works: *Ordo virtutum*, forty-three antiphons, eighteen responsories, seven sequences, four hymns, five other chants

- *Ordo virtutum* (The Virtues, ca. 1151)
  - Hildegard's most extensive work: sacred music drama in verse with eighty-two songs

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- **Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) (cont'd)**
  - she wrote both the melodies and poetic verse (uncommon)
  - morality play with allegorical characters
    - Prophets, Virtues, Happy Soul, Unhappy Soul, Penitent Soul
  - all sing in plainchant; Devil speaks, separation from God
  - final chorus (NAWM 7), typical of Hildegard's expansive melodic style

Later Developments of the Chant (cont'd)

- Women excluded from priesthood
  - choir took over singing; women silenced in church
  - convents: separate communities of religious women
    - hold positions of leadership
    - participate in singing and composing
    - learn to read Latin and music
  - Hildegard achieved great success as prioress and abbess, writer and composer
    - songs were divinely inspired
    - visions became famous, music known only locally

Medieval Music Theory and Practice

- **Church modes**
  - medieval modal system developed gradually, completed by eleventh century
  - eight modes identified by number
  - *finalis*, final: main and last note in melody
  - modes paired, share same final
    - authentic: odd-numbered modes; rose above final
    - plagal: even-numbered modes; circled around and went below the final
  - not based on absolute pitch

Ex02-03

Medieval Music Theory and Practice (cont'd)

- Church modes (cont'd)
  - tenor, reciting tone:
    - higher or lower in keeping with their range
  - church modes also had Greek names
    - misapplication of ancient Greek scales
  - modes: primary means to classify chants
    - not all chant melodies conform to modal theory
      - many existed before theory developed

Medieval Music Theory and Practice (cont'd)

- Solmization

  - facilitated sight-singing

  - introduced by Guido of Arezzo (ca. 991–after 1033)

  - set of syllables to remember whole tones and semitones

    - ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la

    - syllables helped locate semitones in chant

    - solmization syllables still used; do for ut, addition of ti

Medieval Music Theory and Practice (cont'd)
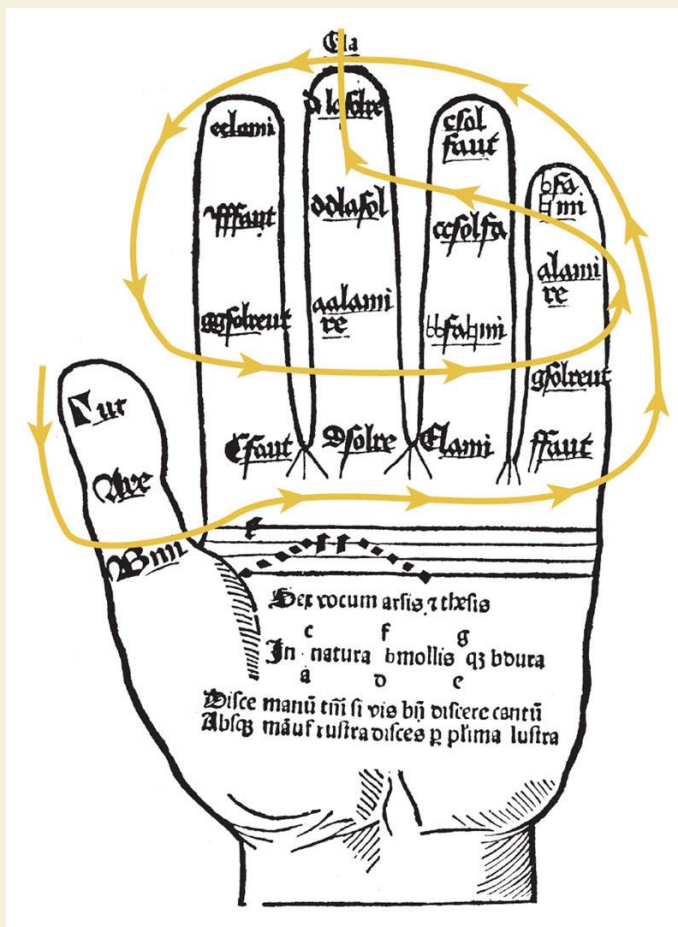
- **"Guidonian Hand"**
  - visual aid to locate pitches of system of hexachords
  - joints in hand stood for one of twenty-one notes
  - other notes "outside the hand"
  - included in medieval and Renaissance textbooks
- **Stages of notation**
  - earlier stages: neumes placed above text
    - varying heights indicate size and direction of intervals

Medieval Music Theory and Practice (cont'd)

- Stages of notation (cont'd)
  - horizontal lines scratched into parchment
    - revolutionary: musical sign that did not represent a sound
    - corresponded to particular note
    - neumes oriented around the line
  - Guido of Arezzo: arrangement of lines and spaces
    - evolved into modern staff
    - pitches notated precisely
    - freed from dependence on oral transmission

Medieval Song

- Goliard songs
  - oldest written secular songs, Latin texts
  - goliards: wandering students and clerics
  - songs celebrate three topics: wine, women, and satire
  - music does not survive in precise notation
  - early manifestation of literacy
    - vernacular languages gradually written down, repertories collected

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Jongleurs, minstrels: sang secular songs
  - itinerants or in service to a particular lord
  - traveled alone or in small groups
    - performed tricks, played instruments, dancing
  - social outcasts, denied protection of the law
  - eleventh century, economic recovery of Europe
    - minstrels' situation improved
    - organized into brotherhoods
    - later developed into guilds

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Troubadours and trouvères: twelfth-century French poet-composers
  - troubadours (feminine trobairitz)
    - southern France, spoke Provençal (*langue d'oc* or Occitan)
  - trouvères: northern France
    - spoke French dialect (*langue d'oïl*)
    - active through thirteenth century
  - varied backgrounds: kings, children of merchants, craftsmen, jongleurs
    - performance often entrusted to a minstrel

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Troubadours and trouvères: twelfth-century French poet-composers (cont'd)
  - songs preserved in chansonniers
    - 2,600 troubadour poems survive, one-tenth with melodies
    - 2,100 extant trouvère poems, two-thirds have music
    - great variety of poetic and musical structures
  - important trouvère structural feature, refrain
    - line or two of poetry that returns with its own music from one stanza to another
  - troubadour poetry
    - wrote complaints about love, political and moral topics, songs that tell stories, courtly love

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Troubadours and trouvères: twelfth-century French poet-composers (cont'd)
  - alba (dawn song), canso (love song), tenso (debate song)
  - *fine amour,* "refined love" central theme
    - formal, idealized love
    - object was a real woman of noble birth
      - adored from a distance, discretion, respect, humility
      - lady depicted was lofty and unattainable
  - *Can vei la lauzeta mover* (When I see the lark beating, NAWM 8), by Ventadorn
    - Bernart de Ventadorn (ca. 1150–ca. 1180), popular poet of his time

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Troubadours and trouvères: twelfth-century French poet-composers (cont'd)
  - best preserved courtly song
  - lover's complaints, main subject
- typical song, or canso, structure
  - most are strophic
  - syllabic setting, occasional short melisma at end of line
  - narrow range, sixth to an octave
  - rhythm not indicated
  - each poetic line receives its own melodic phrase
    - phrases join to make one long melody
    - variety through variation, contrast, repetition of short musical phrases

TIMELINE

TIMELINE **The Middle Ages**

Musical Events

386
Bishop Ambrose introduces responsorial psalmody in Milan

ca. 500
Boethius, *De institutione musica*

9th cent.
Earliest notated manuscripts of Gregorian chant

10th cent.
Monks at Saint Gall compose tropes (NAWM 6) and sequences (NAWM 5)

ca. 1025–1028
Guido proposes system of solmization

11th cent.
Goliards flourish

ca. 1151
Hildegard, *Ordo virtutum* (NAWM 7)

ca. 1180
Bernart de Ventadorn dies

ca. 1212
Beatriz de Día dies

300 — 1300

Historical Events

313
Constantine I issues Edict of Milan, proclaiming religious freedom in the Roman Empire

330
Constantinople becomes new capital of Roman Empire

395
Separation of eastern and western Roman empires

397
Saint Augustine begins writing his *Confessions*

ca. 530
(Monastic) *Rule of Saint Benedict*; Benedictine order founded

590
Gregory I ("the Great") elected pope

600s
Muslim conquests in Asia, North Africa, and southern Europe (completed by 719)

768
Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks with his brother

789
Charlemagne orders Roman rite used throughout empire

800
Charlemagne crowned emperor by pope

800–821
Rule of Saint Benedict introduced in Frankish lands

1095–1099
First Crusade

ca. 1100
Chanson de Roland, French epic poem

1147–1149
Second Crusade

1189–1192
Third Crusade

1347–1350
Plague devastates Europe

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Troubadours and trouvères: twelfth-century French poet-composers (cont'd)
  - melodic freedom, spontaneity, simplicity
  - *A chantar* (NAWM 9), by Comtessa Beatriz de Día
    - only trobairitz song to survive with music
- Minnesinger: German knightly poet-musician
  - troubadour model
  - flourished between twelfth and fourteenth centuries

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Minnesinger: German knightly poet-musician (cont'd)
  - Minnelieder (love songs), more abstract
    - sometimes had religious tinge
  - music correspondingly more sober
    - some melodies written in church modes
    - probably sung in triple meter
    - strophic; melodic form AAB (bar form)
      - Stollen (A section): sung twice, corresponds with two units of text
      - Abgesang (B section): longer, sung only once

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- Minnesinger: German knightly poet-musician (cont'd)
  - written in Middle High German
    - new genre: Crusade song *Palästinalied* (Palestine song, NAWM 11) by Walther von der Vogelweide (ca. 1170?–ca.1230?)

- *Cantigas de Santa María*, honor the Virgin Mary
  - collection of over 400 cantigas (songs) in Galican-Portuguese

Medieval Song (cont'd)

- *Cantigas de Santa María*, honor the Virgin Mary (cont'd)
  - prepared 1270–90 under King Alfonso el Sabio (the Wise) of Castile and León (northwestern Spain)
  - preserved in four beautifully illuminated manuscripts
  - most songs relate miracles performed by the Virgin
  - *Non sofre Santa María* (NAWM 12)
  - songs all have refrains; illustrations of dancers *Cantigas* manuscripts

Postlude

- Creation of Gregorian chant
  - resulted from spread and stabilization of Roman rite
  - many types of chant, each with distinct function
    - liturgical celebrations of the Office and Mass
  - chant: early Christian times to sixteenth century
  - chants classified by church modes
  - notation gradually evolved
    - means of teaching and standardization
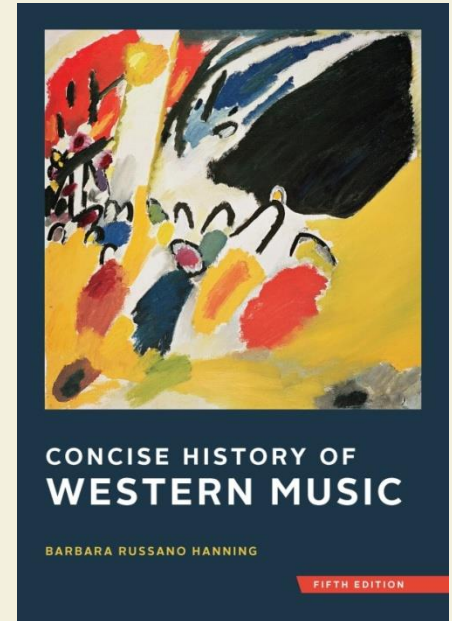
Postlude (cont'd)

- Secular songs
  - flourished in cultural centers and courts of later Middle Ages
  - sophisticated and virtuosic
  - variety of strophic forms
  - large body of courtly love songs by troubadours and trouvères

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This concludes the Lecture Slide Set
for Chapter 2

by

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