CHANT

an astonishing collection of melodies
a vast body of work reflecting individual composition, communal refinement, and collective memory

ORIGINS OF CHANT

We do not know when it was first sung, how it was first composed, where or by whom. (Pope Gregory I (d. 604) was not the composer!)

Three periods of evolution

• 'Gregorian' strictly speaking c. 700-850
  some 500-600 pieces established
• Carolingian 850-1000
• Medieval 1000-1300

All of it commonly called: chant, Gregorian chant, plainchant, plainsong

now a collection of some 3,000 pieces

LISTENING(!) example 1

Listening(!) example 1

Gregorian chant – Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, you are blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

RESERVE CD TRACK 1

CHANT

MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

• REPETITION? usually NO
• TEMPO? well . . . DEBATABLE
• METER? NO
• TEXTURE? MONOPHONIC

CHAN

MELODIC CHARACTERISTICS

• REPETITION? subtle, small scale
• CONTOUR & MOTION? CONJUNCT & SMOOTH
• RANGE? NARROW (narrow ambitus)
CHANT
NEW MELODIC TERMS

• MELISMA – multiple notes per syllable of text (adj. melismatic)
• SYLLABIC TEXT SETTING – one note per syllable

"mel" is Latin root for "honey"

Listening example for melisma

Kyrie ........................................... elison
(reserve CD track 2)

CHANT
PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

• SUNG BY? MEN AND WOMEN BUT NOT TOGETHER
• PERFORMED EVERY DAY IN TAVERNS? NO ON THE STREET? NO AT COURT? NO IN MONASTERIES AND CONVENTS? YES

CHANT
PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

• SUNG WHEN? DAILY
• HOW OFTEN? TO OBSERVE THE HOURS

The Hours (approximately)

Matins (3 Nocturnes) – during the night
Lauds – at cockcrow (7 a.m.)
Prime = 6 a.m.
Teresa = 9 a.m.
Mass = 10 a.m.
Sext = noon
None = 3 p.m.
Vespers = 6 p.m.
Compline – at nightfall

Neumés

In the beginning was the word, but how do I remember all those tunes?

Neumes – notational signs for single tones and groups of notes; about 20 symbols used
from NEUMES to NOTES (almost)

11th c.

NEUMES

note CONTOUR, INTERVAL and, with a staff and clef, PITCH, suggestions for duration

BUT RHYTHM comes later

GUIDO d’ AREZZO

Around 1000, defines THE STAFF

\[ \text{ut re mi fa sol la} \]

and adds new names for the 6 notes

Part of the Culture of the Book

1615 edition
**TROPES**

**TROPE** – the addition of words to extended melismas to aid in memory; melismas become syllabic

Great example of Medieval mindset, layering text upon text – the Culture of the Book.

---

**A TROPEd PIECE**

Example: Kyrie from An English Ladymass sung by Anonymous 4 (not on reserve or textbook CD)

*Original text in bold; added text is blue*

---

**HILDEGARD OF BINGEN**

1098-1179

Abbess, scholar, visionary, poet, musician, healer, spiritual leader

One of the earliest "named" composers in the European tradition

---

**LISTENING EXAMPLE**

Hildegard of Bingen, *Columba aspexit*, c.1150

- large intervals
- large or wide range (large ambitus)
- this is NOT Gregorian chant
- performed with a drone in this realization

---

While we listen, some of Hildegard’s illuminations of her visions

9 rings of angels

---

While we listen, some of Hildegard’s illuminations of her visions

Giving birth
EARLY MEDIEVAL SUMMARY
800-1150

- POLITICS & SOCIETY – Charlemagne, Ottonian (German) emperors; FEUDALISM
- ARCHITECTURE – Romanesque Style
- ART – relief sculpture and a fantastic approach to human form
- IDEAS – The Culture of the Book; monasteries
- MUSIC – consolidation of chant; early notation neumes & staff (staff c.1000)

LISTEN THREE TIMES

Bayeux Tapestry c. 1088

Battle of Hastings 1066
FEUDALISM

New Anchor Dates
1000
- Musical STAFF used for
- CHANT in the
- EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD in
- MONASTERIES

1066
- BATTLE OF HASTINGS depicted in the
- BAYEUX TAPESTRY which we associate with
- FEUDALISM

Up to dates?
480 BC
Start of CLASSICAL GREEK PERIOD

0
Just after the start of the ROMAN EMPIRE; Caesar Augustus reigns

547
SAN VITALE: sort of end of Early Christian period

c.1000
Guido describes the MUSICAL STAFF