UNIT 2: MIDDLE AGES

MUSIC HISTORY

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DISCOVERING MUSIC

Hodie, Christus natus est
Non sofre Sta. María (Afonso X)
Ad morten festinamus (Livre Vermell)
MUSIC HISTORY

1.- RELIGIOUS MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES

1.1.- MONODIC MUSIC

In the Middle Ages religious music was vocal music, because the Church did not allow the use of instruments (considered pagan). There were different liturgies and songs, highlighting the Gallican, Ambrosian, Mozarabic and Byzantine.

1.2.- GREGORIAN CHANT

Pope Gregory I (540-604 AD) decided to unify the different schools and liturgical chants, in order to avoid any kind of heresy within the Church. He collected and arranged the tunes that Christians had been singing for centuries (until then dispersed) and soon became the "official chant of the Roman Church."

1.2.1.- Main features of Gregorian Chant
✔ Music linked with a religious text (a liturgical chant)
✔ Melodies with few sounds (normal range of an octave)
✔ Monodic music or singing with one voice. This is a single melody sung by one or several people with the same rhythm and pitch.
✔ Free rhythm based on the text, which is in Latin.
✔ Music sung by male voices (specialized chanting monks) and a capella (without instrumental accompaniment).

1.2.2.- Musical notation

Probably, at first these songs were learned in a short time. But by increasing their number, they were impossible to learn, so they invented some signs, neumes, which were placed on the text, indicating the singers rise or fall in pitch of the sound.

In X Century a horizontal line in red was added, to separate the different pitches of sound more precisely. After, another yellow appear. And so on up to three lines.

In the XI Centuruy, Guido D'Arezzo, a Benedictine monk, introduced a fourth line, making the four-line stave (tetragrama, set of four lines and three spaces, a predecessor of the stave).

He also gave names to musical sounds, creating what we call notes. For that, he used the first syllables of the first verses of St. John the Baptist Hymn: UT, RE, MI, FA, SOL, LA. Later, UT became DO and SI was introduced (combining the first two letters of the last two words of verse). In some languages (like English) the initial S changed to T (TI) so that each note would begin in a different consonant (SOL and SI start both in S).

2.- SECULAR MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The domain of religion in medieval musical culture resulted in a lack of interest in popular song, considered a pagan event.

2.1.- MINSTRELS (JUGGLERS)

Minstrels were wandering characters who went from city to city in order to entertain the public, whether in town squares, festivals or markets. They were the representatives of popular secular song and they belonged to the lower class.

Despite their low social status, they knew how to do a little of everything: from singing or reciting to playing instruments, dancing or performing complicated acrobatics.

2.2.- TROUBADOURS

The troubadours emerged in southern France as a result of the Crusades of the late XI Century, in order to narrate the highlights of these. They used to be poets, composers (of lyrics and music) owned by nobility or the bourgeoisie. They sung in Provençal language, away from the Latin texts of religious music.

The main themes of their works were love, war (historical and heroics events), the nature,
UNIT 2: MIDDLE AGES

honor and singing to their ladies. They were accompanied by various instruments like the viola, harp, lute and percussion.

3.- POLYPHONY

3.1.- BIRTH OF POLYPHONY

In the IX century polyphony, the singing of many voices that sound simultaneously, started. This creation was one of the most significant events in the entire history of music. The two basic types of polyphony in the Middle Ages were the organum and discantus.

3.1.1.- Organum (IX-X Centuries)

Organum was a form of early Western polyphony, which peaked at the School of Notre Dame in Paris, and the center of the Ars Antiqua (especially between the eleventh and twelfth centuries). In Western music of the Middle Ages, the Organum was a genre of sacred vocal and instrumental music, intended to improve the interpretation of a passage parallel by adding a second voice.

It was based on parallel repetition of the same melody, note for note, but usually at a distance of four or five notes.

The Gregorian chant is the *vox principalis*, the second voice is the *vox organalis*.

![From the booklet edited by Gerald Abraham accompanying The History of Music in Sound (booklet published by Oxford University Press); example reprinted with permission of the publisher.](image)

3.1.2.- Discantus (XI Century)

Discantus referred to the voices that followed contrary movement.

![Example](image)

3.2.- ARS ANTIQUA (XII-XIII Centuries)

In the thirteenth century, many polyphonic (various voices) songs were performed in the cathedral of Notre Dame. Leonin and Perotin were two composers in this style, and there was a large number of artists who have remained anonymous.

At this time, the number of voices involved in singing were increased, as well as those becoming more independent.

One of the most important musical forms was *conductus*, where the composer composed all the voices (the *vox principalis* was not from the Gregorian chant, but was composed as the others).
UNIT 2: MIDDLE AGES

There were also other more developed polyphonic forms, like the motet, where different voices have different text. The earliest motets were composed in Latin, but since the middle of the XIII century French was used. The most important musical centers of this movement were:

- Abbey of St. Martial (Limoges)
- Notre Dame Cathedral (Paris)
- Santiago de Compostela Cathedral with the Codice Calixtino

3.3. - ARS NOVA (XIV-XV Centuries)

Ars Nova is the title of a book which proposed new compositional techniques of the time. Thus arose the name of this new musical style, born in the XIV century and it aimed to break all previous music, tradition and rules (Ars Antiqua), consistent with the Gothic spirit of the time.

3.3.1. - Main Characteristics

✔ The motet was the main music form, with a developed rhythm.
✔ The music was composed to be enjoyed and not exclusively for a specific purpose.
✔ The composer had more freedom and was no longer anonymous.
✔ It increased the compositions of secular music (instrumental music, dance ...)

Guillaume de Machaut was one of the most important composers of the period who implemented new polyphonic techniques.

4. - MEDIEVAL MUSIC IN SPAIN

In Spain secular song was called cantigas. There were different types:

✔ Cantigas de amor: songs of love, the lover sang to attract the attention of his sweetheart.
✔ Cantigas de amigo: songs of friendship, the girl in love sang, sadly, the absence of her lover who she called “amigo”.
✔ Cantigas de escarnio ou maldicir: songs of scorn and cursing, with moral and satirical topics.

All songs are contained in a series of songbooks. Alfonso X the Wise, Martin Codax (which had seven cantigas de amigo), Cangas Xoán (three preserved ballads) and Mendiño (which had a cantiga de amigo) are some highlights of the troubadours.

Polyphonic music, which was religious, was played at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (Códice Calixtino) and the Monasterio de las Huelgas (Códice de las Huelgas). These two places were the most important among others during the growth of Ars Antiqua.

CÓDICE CALIXTINO

◆ The Códice Calixtino was very important musically speaking because it included the oldest three-voice polyphonic score from the XII century.
◆ It consisted of five books and two appendices.
◆ Book V was a kind of "Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago", featuring places to be visited along the route and warn the travelers of the dangers that would be on the road. It described the city of Santiago and its cathedral in great detail.
◆ Appendix I contained sheet music, 22 compositions.
written for 2 voices and a hymn for 3 voices. 
In Appendix II there was the Anthem of the pilgrims: Dum pater familias.

◆ The book was stolen from its security case in the cathedral`s archives on 3 July 2011 and appeared in 2012.

The most important document of the Spanish Ars Nova was the Llibre Vermell in the Monastery of Montserrat (Barcelona), which collected songs and dances of pilgrims.

5.- MEDIEVAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Thanks to the iconographic and literary sources, we know some folk instruments of the Middle Ages. We assume that these instruments accompanied the singing and dancing.

5.1.- STRINGS

✗ Fidula or fiddle
✗ Lute
✗ Harps
✗ Psaltery
✗ Organistrum
✗ Hurdy-gurdy or wheel-fiddle

5.2.- WOODWINDS AND BRASS

✗ Trumpets (añafil)
✗ Flutes
✗ Hornpipe (chirimía)
✗ Bagpipe (gaita)
✗ Organ

5.3.- PERCUSSION

✗ Cymbal
✗ Bells
✗ Chifro and drum
The musical instruments represented in the Port of Glory were a fundamental document for the instrumental knowledge of the Middle Ages.

The Port of Glory was made by Master Mateo in the twelfth century, and it shows: Christ in the center, around him the four evangelists and angels, and above them in a semicircle, the twenty elders of Revelation, carrying musical instruments.

The instruments are nearly perfect (even the size between the instrument and the musician is real) and are represented in great detail.

The elderly appear in pairs, looking as if they were communicating or giving the tone; it looks like they are tuning up because they do not use bows.

There are stringe instruments: fiddles (bowed strings), harps, lyres, lutes (plucked) and organistrum (ancestor of the hurdy-gurdy).

**DISCOVERING MUSIC**

➢ **HODIE, CHRISTUS NATUS EST - LISTENING GUIDE**

- This is a religious song and belongs to the Gregorian repertoire of Christmas.
- It was written in a four-lines stave (introduced by Guido D’Arezzo) C-clef and uses geometric symbols to write notes. Neumatic notation.
- It has a free rhythm, without time signature or note-length that represent a precise length of each sound. The rhythm of the song comes from the accentuation of Latin words.
- It’s a monodic chant, performed by a chorus of men, a capella (without any instrument accompaniment)

- Gregorian chant styles are divided into three types, which you can recognize in the score:
  1. Syllabic chant: one note for each syllable.
  2. Neumatic chant: two or three notes per syllable
  3. Melismatic Chant: more than three notes per syllable

- The sounds are represented by square and rhomboid-shaped neumes, without a change in length.
- At the end of each four-lines stave is a cut neume. It doesn’t sound but is a guide that indicates which note starts the following four-lines stave.
Hodie Christus natus est:  
Today Christ is born:  
Hodie Salvator apparuit:  
Today the Savior appeared:  
Hodie in terra canunt Angeli:  
Today on Earth the Angels sing,  
laetantur Archangeli  
Archangels rejoice:  
Hodie exsultant justi, dicentes:  
Today the righteous rejoice, saying:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Glory to God in the highest.  
Alleluia.

➢ NON SOFRE STA. MARÍA (AFONSO X) - LISTENING GUIDE

✗ It is a secular song.  
✗ Instruments: recorder, fidula or fiddle and percussion  
✗ Alfonso X “the Wise” (1221-1284) was a king of Castile and Leon who lived in the XIII century. He was a great lover of music, so he composed and compiled songs he liked. He composed the Cantigas de Santa Maria.  
✗ Nowadays, there are 400 songs preserved in four manuscripts or codices. One of these, the Codex of the Escorial, is decorated with fantastic miniatures of instruments of the period.  
✗ The melody is simple and interpreted with the following formal scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>Percussion</th>
<th>AA´ BB´ AA´</th>
<th>AA´ Choir BB´ AA´ Soloist</th>
<th>AA´ Choir BB´ AA´ Soloist</th>
<th>AA´ Choir BB´ AA´ Instrumental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

✗ The melodic instruments have the same melody as the voices. They are the recorder (woodwind) and the fidula or fiddle (bowed string). Percussion instruments of different size accompany.

AD MORTEN FESTINAMUS (LLIVRE VERMELL) - LISTENING GUIDE

✗ Ad Morten is a monodic song, a dance included in the Llibre Vermell (red book), named for the color of its covers. It was copied in the XIV century, but its compositions could be older.  
✗ It contains ten compositions: three canons, two polyphonic songs and five dances.  
✗ The purpose of music was to entertain (with songs and dances) the pilgrims who came to the Monastery of Montserrat (important place of pilgrimage like Santiago de Compostela).  
✗ This composition is also called “the dance of death” because its lyrics talk about the inevitability of death and the need to stop sinning.  
✗ The song begins with the instrumental melody: brass instruments, double reed woodwind, castanets and percussion.  
✗ The chorus is sung by the whole choir accompanied by all instruments.  
✗ The verses are sung by two soloists and are only accompanied by percussion. The melody of the verses ended at the end the melody of the refrain.  
✗ The structure of the melody when lyric starts is: A – BBA – A – BBA – A  
✗ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IMyc0Ur-3c&feature=related