

MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES



1.-INTRODUCTION:

The Middle Age lasted for a long period of time (10 centuries), from the S.-V (fall of the Roman Empire)- S.- XV (geographical discoveries, fall of the Byzantine Empire, Renaissance).

The **society was feudal**, all of the power was held by nobles and those in high position in the Church.

2.-MUSICAL NOTATION:

At the end of the 9th century, about the year 1000, with the invention of the musical notation, the historical period of the music began and it will develop throughout the entire Middle Ages. The great advances in musical notation was in the Ecclesiastical field, since for a long time, the monks were almost the only ones who knew how to read and write.



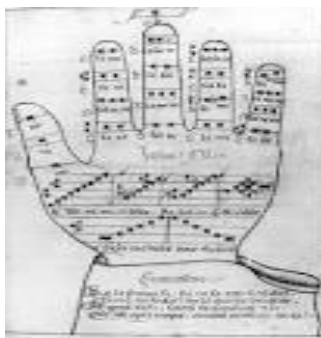
The musical notation was a **huge achievement** because it made possible to faithfully transmit and preserve music, and it stimulated the development and greater complexity of musical art.

The Italian Benedictine monk **Guido of Arezzo** (992-1050) was considered the father of musical language. Among his achievements or inventions, it is worth mentioning:

1- **The Tetragram**, a four-line pattern to write the notes (pitch)

2- **The musical scale** (then of 6 notes) **and the names of the notes** using the beginning syllables of the first six musical lines of the Latin hymn Ut queant laxis.

3- **The Guidonian hand**, is an effective system of reading and intonation music through the assignment of a sound to each phalanx of the hand. By pointing to a part of his hand, a group of singers would know which note was indicated and sing the corresponding note



Ut queant laxis

GUIDO D'ABREZZO

Ut queant laxis, re-sonare fibris, Mi-
ra ses-torum, fa-mu-litiorum, Sol-se-
pol-luti, La-bi-ire-nam, Sanc-te do-mi-nus.

3.-MEDIEVAL MUSIC

3.1.-MONOPHONIC RELIGIOUS MUSIC:

GREGORIAN CHANTS:

The evolution of the Western music comes from the medieval chants of the Catholic church, the Gregorian chants, in honor of **Pope Gregory I**(540-604) who carried out the compilations and unification of all the songs of Christianity.

It is the oldest musical repertoire that we keep in Europe



The most important Characteristics:

- A Capella: only voice with no instruments.
- The subject, is religious, it is a prayer.
- Monophonic or monodic texture, all the voices sing the same melody.
- The language is Latin.
- Its rhythm is free (without a time signature) and flows with the text.
- They were collective chants.
- The authors are anonymous.

3.2.-MONOPHONIC SECULAR MUSIC:

TROUBADOURS AND MINSTRELS:



The troubadours were noble, educated people, poets and musicians ,sometimes even kings as Richard the Lionheart or Alfonso x el sabio.

The most important Characteristics:

- The subjects of the songs were love for a lady, war, honour, loyalty..
- They sang in their own language(modern languages), not latin.
- The rhythm was marked.
- The troubadours sang solos, unlike the collective Gregorian chants.
- They usually accompanied their songs with instruments.
- The composers were known as they signed their songs.

The minstrels (juglares) were street musicians who traveled from one place to another showing their skills:

- They tell stories such as the chansons de geste.
- They sang ballads and played instruments.
- They performed acrobatics and magic tricks
- Their repertoire was oral, so it has been lost
- They were the main cultural channel of the villagers.
- They were rejected by the Church.



4.- SPANISH MEDIEVAL MUSIC.

The Cantigas de Santa María by Alfonso X el Sabio.

- It is one of the largest collections of monophonic (solo) songs from the Middle Ages and is characterized by the mention of the Virgin Mary in every song,
- There are 420 poems with musical notation, written in the medieval Galician-Portuguese language during the reign of Alfonso X of Castile El Sabio (1221–1284)
- The musicians and poets of his court were responsible for most of them but Alfonso X el Sabio not only organised this collection, he also composed some of the Cantigas.
- The Cantigas have survived in four manuscript codices: two at El Escorial, one at Madrid's National Library, and one in Florence, Italy. The E codex from El Escorial is illuminated with colored miniatures providing valuable information about daily life, the mixed of cultures in Spain and showing pairs of musicians playing a wide variety of instruments



Bagpipes



Harps



Fiddles

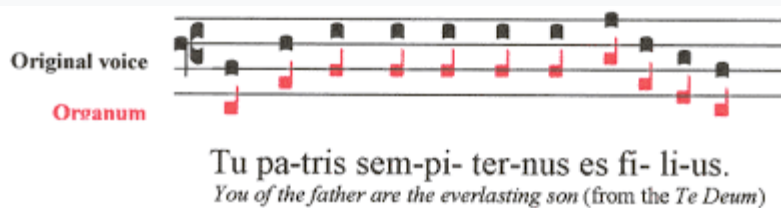


Cornett

5.- POLIPHONY.

Polyphony emerged at the end of the 9th century and developed throughout the Middle E. up to the 4-voice standard of the Renaissance.

The name of the first polyphonic form of history was **THE PARALLEL ORGANUM** Consisting of ADDING a voice (organal voice) below a gregorian chant melody (principal voice), moving in parallel fifths or fourths intervals. Either or both voices may be doubled at the octave.



Original voice

Organum

Tu pa-tris sem-pi-ter-nus es fi-li-us.
You of the father are the everlasting son (from the Te Deum)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff, labeled 'Original voice', contains a Gregorian chant melody with square neumes on a four-line staff. The bottom staff, labeled 'Organum', shows a second voice moving in parallel motion with the original voice, also using square neumes. Below the staves, the Latin text 'Tu pa-tris sem-pi-ter-nus es fi-li-us.' is written, followed by its English translation: 'You of the father are the everlasting son (from the Te Deum)'.

FROM THIS PROCEDURE IT WAS DEVELOPED POLIPHONY gradually throughout Middle Ages (ARS ANTIQUA y ARS NOVA).



1Ars nova Chanson

