Ideas *and* Styles *in the* Western Musical Tradition

FOURTH EDITION

Douglass Seaton

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Preface

I WROTE THIS BOOK FOR UNIVERSITY-LEVEL MUSIC HISTORY students—in fact, for my own students. For years they (and I with them) had struggled bravely but unhappily, reading music history textbooks that provided enormous amounts of information, although the reasons that anyone should care about any of that stuff never came through clearly. What we wanted, instead, was a book that pursued a story: a story about music, the contexts in which music has lived, and changing ideas about music in the different cultures in the Western tradition from antiquity to the present.

So this book explores music from the point of view of musicians' ideals and values, their problems and needs, and their solutions to their everyday practical situations. You will find that it carries their story often in their own words and, even more important, by letting the musical styles speak for themselves. This makes a fascinating study in its own right, because music enthralls us and because musicians' lives and thoughts make for pretty interesting material. It also offers us insights into people's experiences in different times and situations from our own, and understanding other people is an important part of becoming fuller humans ourselves. Finally, the study of the history of music—both the ideas that drive it and the means by which it responds to those ideas—makes us better musicians. And this is so, whether we are primarily players or singers, composers, or listeners.

Music in the Western tradition—and, of course, in other traditions as well—is a form of expression and communication. All communication becomes more meaningful when we become more aware of its motives and the foundations of its thought processes. Like any other area of human experience and endeavor, music embodies and reflects the *epistemological* underpinnings of the culture in which composers created it. In other words, music depends on and carries within itself the thought processes of its time and place, the intellectual assumptions and the values of the society in which and for which it was made. That means that we have a responsibility to approach any music with well-informed minds and ears. If we learn how to listen empathetically—accepting the epistemological framework proper to the music that we are hearing—our musical experience will be both deeper and more sensitive. Equally, the musical experience of works from different cultures (which may be

separated from our own by either geography or, as in this case, time) brings us into direct contact with the mental processes and values of others and thereby enriches our own thinking and our own human spirit.

This applies to all our musical activities. Performers will present music more effectively if they know what purposes and values inform their music. Composers will enrich their imaginations by understanding other composers' ways of musical thinking and how they have created solutions to musical problems. Listeners will hear more sensitively and alertly when they enrich their understanding with knowledge of the social contexts and philosophical ideas from which the music arose.

We should approach the study of musical thinking from a historical perspective for two reasons and, correspondingly, we study two kinds of music history. First, music is inextricably woven into the fabric of all human activity; that is, history affects music and music affects history. One can, of course, write a book that is primarily a cultural history of music in Western civilization. The purposes for music—whether to worship, to glorify political powers, or to entertain the common citizen; the sources of support for music—what people had the necessary peace and leisure to enjoy it, who had the money to buy it; the philosophical foundations for music—the emphasis on intellectual elegance or intense feeling, the models by which musicians and listeners expected it to achieve expressiveness; the art and literature surrounding music—the architectural spaces where singers and players performed it, the poetry that they sang; the technological achievements that facilitated music—the means of reproducing scores, the invention of new instruments: all these and many more factors enhance and indeed are inseparable from the understanding of the music itself. Such factors come and go, reinforce or conflict with each other at different times. This book will identify some of these forces that have shaped musical styles.

One might, alternatively, adopt a more technical viewpoint and compose a history of musical style. Throughout the course of Western history, musicians, like thinkers in any field, have responded to their past. Such responses may be positive or negative; they may build on what has gone before or reject it in favor of new directions. Because ideas take time to achieve their full development and because there is no one ideal style, we commonly view the history of music (or history in general) as a series of contrasting although typically overlapping cultures, each with phases of conception, development, and maturity. We must acknowledge that this directional view of history belongs to a particular period in Western thinking and that it is not necessary to music; some other cultures do not view human thought as requiring such forward motion or history as requiring divisions into successive periods characterized by emergence, attainment of full stature, and decline. Moreover, we must not allow our generalizations regarding period styles to obscure the complexity and diversity of a period. Individuals differ, the characteristics of one

century's music survive into the following centuries, and ideas that have been underground reemerge. Neither should we think that the value of any music depends on its belonging to any particular period or phase within a period. Different types of music incorporate their own value systems, and we must not judge music of one type by the criteria that apply to another. Further, the conception of a new way of thinking, the exploration and building up of its possibilities, and its full mastery all have values of particular kinds.

The history of music presented here takes a balanced approach between consideration of external influences on music and internal changes within the art itself. This book views music history through the conviction that the cultural and philosophical contexts in which music lives—the *ideas* that surround it—interplay continuously with the *styles* of the music itself. At a fundamental level, the manner in which people thought and acted in any cultural period manifested itself in music in ways that necessarily paralleled their other activities in scientific thought, religion and politics, literature and art. For as long and as widely as those ways of thinking and acting operate, we can speak of a historical culture or a coherent style period.

In keeping with a general tendency in music history, this book steers away from references to historical periods by some unfortunately common anachronistic and misleading catchwords. In general, time references identify specific centuries or decades, without use of the now antiquated nicknames that often simply mischaracterize music. For example, the name "Middle Ages" for music of the vast period between the fall of Rome and the fifteenth century would have had no meaning to musicians of those many generations, and so I have discarded it. The name "Classic" for the music of the second half of the eighteenth century, a term that in any case did not become applied to that music until the nineteenth century, is largely replaced here by "Enlightenment," which would have made sense in that time. The word "Baroque," not used for music until the twentieth century and then at best as a somewhat forced attempt to align music with visual art, I have likewise replaced in appropriate contexts with "Rationalist," a term that thinkers and musicians of the seventeenth century understood to represent their culture.

If we want to understand the music of other times and cultures, we must orient ourselves to their ideas about what sorts of things music should do and how it should do them. It makes sense on this basis to approach music through the conceptual models that musicians have adopted to guide and to explain their music. As you will read, each of the major periods in Western music history has had its own models; in the centuries before the fifteenth, musical thinking and musical style focused on cosmological, mathematical, and symbolic models, and in later times they became literary models, in turn poetic, rhetorical, dramatic, and narrative. Each of these conceptual frameworks gave wide-ranging unity to the music of a cultural environment, and each allowed opportunities

for an impressive variety of explorations of a general way of thinking. This book traces these ideas and the variety within each style.

Although we may read about the ideas and styles of music in books or discuss them in the classroom, we must also *experience* them in music. We may understand the ideas in a book about music, but we will truly comprehend them only through hearing, performing, and studying the music. When I first began to study music history, a wise teacher told me, "The history of music is the music itself." I made myself a bookmark with that statement and put it in my music history textbook so that I would be reminded of that truth every day. I still have that bookmark, now tucked into my copy of this book.

After all, what we all want to learn is what creative musicians have thought, felt, and expressed in their music. The best thing that a book can do is to lead you deeper into the music itself. So you should spend much more time listening to and studying representative works than you do reading. Along the way, the book will suggest some music that you will want to hear, both epoch-shaping masterpieces and less monumental but representative works. You will be well on your way if you regard this book as a supplement to music, rather than vice versa.

I have one last reminder about what this book does and does not intend to do. It provides, as the title suggests, a look at some important contributions to Western musical thinking. It intends to encourage you to respond with thoughts of your own about the music that you make and hear. But this book should not serve as a comprehensive historical reference book about music; certainly many interesting events, fine composers, and important musical works cannot be mentioned here. It is not even a compendium of information that a musically cultured person should know. I hope you will find areas in which you wish to know more and that you will pursue them in more detailed studies as far as your interest takes you. You may wish to begin with dictionaries and encyclopedias of music, larger and more detailed history books, or studies of musical philosophy and theory; or you may prefer to go directly to specific books and articles on composers, instruments, genres, and so on. Read widely, enjoy conflicting ideas, and form and refine your own ideas. Most of all, always remember to keep the music foremost!

Features of This Book

Along with the main story in this book you will find a number of additional features. Most important of these are the many *music examples*. These should help to clarify aspects of musical styles that are much more tedious to describe in prose. Sing and play them as you go. Feel free to mark them up with whatever analytical cues help you—circling and labeling melodic details, drawing arrows to reinforce voice leading, adding harmonic symbols, and so on.

The *illustrations* are of various kinds. Some of these provide artistic contexts for the music, so that you will be able to see art that comes from the same times as the music that you are studying. The captions accompanying the pictures will start you out in thinking about what music shares with contemporary painting and sculpture. As you look and listen closely, you may find more points of contact. Other pictures intend to show the appearance of instruments and musical notations that are now unfamiliar. Still others place music in its performance settings, since little or none of this music was intended to be experienced in the form of recordings, much was not designed to be heard from concert stages, and none had its original home in any way in a classroom.

At the end of each chapter is a list of *suggestions for further reading*. These are some of the standard, reliable, and most interesting books on these topics—but only some, of course. You will find here the main specialized texts on each historical period, as well as composer biographies, books on different genres, and so on. These will lead you in turn to other resources, and you will also want to use references such as *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* or its online manifestation Grove Music Online for detailed information. Also pursue the music journals for recent research on the topics that interest you.

Maps appear from time to time throughout the book. We must not forget that musicians lived and worked in the contexts of political and cultural areas. Some of the maps will show you (or remind you of) the extent of some of those territories. Others will help you to place or trace the careers of various musicians.

Although this book does not intend to focus on mere dates in the abstract, dates help us to keep our stories in order. The *timeline* should help to establish temporal contexts, just as the maps show geographic contexts. The different columns of the timeline show in synoptic fashion some of the important political and cultural events contemporary with musicians' lives.

Finally, beyond the pages of the book itself, the coordinated *website* will give you additional materials and tools. It includes study aids, including chapter synopses, review and quiz materials, and suggestions for further thinking and writing. Most important, it also offers suggestions (specific and general) of musical works to study in connection with the ideas and styles discussed in this book.

What Is New to This Edition

Readers and teachers who have known the earlier editions of *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition* will find the same approach and discursive style in this edition. The book has been enhanced and updated, however. I have included some recent discoveries—most notably, that of the earliest known example of a practical polyphonic composition,

dating from the tenth century, which provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to show how history can still change. Of course, recent deaths of composers are included. The "Suggestions for Further Reading" at the ends of the chapter incorporate books published in the five years since the previous edition.

Some ideas get more nuanced treatments. The description of the goliards, for example, represents them as more serious contributors to musical life than did previous editions. The discussion of the frottola and its related genres makes clearer the use of a repertoire of stock poetic and musical designs. The treatment of the movements of seventeenth-century keyboard suites takes into account the variety of tempos that might govern different movement types. In dealing with Romantic music, I took opportunities to refer to instances that reinforce the essential idea of the narrative or lyric "voice" for a work.

New information also finds its way into this edition. In several cases this consists of the introduction of people other than composers who contributed importantly to musical life. An example is Isabella d'Este in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in her time a leader not only in music but also in culture generally. Likewise, the figure of Fanny Hensel as salonnière is more fully developed. Another new personality here is John Sullivan Dwight in late-nineteenth-century Boston, whose views and writings, for better or worse, powerfully influenced American thinking about the direction of musical life in "high" culture.

The new edition also features notable changes in formatting and design. Each chapter has a title page that summarizes the main ideas in the chapter and shows the organization of headings and subheadings. For most paragraphs a keyword now appears in the margin, drawing attention to the local topic, and periodically the margins also serve as a place for full-sentence quotations extracted from the main text, to emphasize an important thought. The longer quotations that have always formed an essential component of the text, allowing musicians to speak in their own voices to student readers, remain part of the main body of the text but now with marginal notes to draw attention to the historic speakers' interests.

Acknowledgments

This book has profited immensely from the contributions of many people other than its author. Numerous classes of students worked with it in its draft stages and its previous editions, patiently noting typographical and factual errors and making suggestions. Many teachers who have used the earlier versions provided useful comments, including especially my colleagues at The Florida State University, Elias Dann, Jeffery Kite-Powell, Charles Brewer, and Denise Von Glahn, and our graduate teaching assistants who have been willing to teach from the book and offer ideas. My heartiest thanks go to all of them. For work on the nuts and bolts of

this book over the past several years, I thank my graduate assistants: Kurt Carlson, Emily Allen, Ryan Whittington, and Rebekah Taylor.

I extend my warm gratitude to colleagues who have read the book in typescript and offered wonderfully insightful and constructive comments and suggestions: Daniel Dominick, Austin College; James Grymes, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Jonathan Gibson, James Madison University; Melanie Lowe, Vanderbilt University; Virginia Boaz, East Texas Baptist University; and one anonymous reviewer.

The editorial support and assistance that I have received from Oxford University Press has been outstanding. Richard Carlin, Executive Editor, has been supportive and always patient with the occasionally grumpy author. His assistants, Meredith Keffer and Erin Janosik, were ever reliable and efficient, as was Simon Benjamin's management. Praise and gratitude go to the fine production team led by Michael B. Kopf, Production Editor, including Susan Brown for copyediting and Linda Westerhoff for proofreading.

Finally, my thanks and my love to my wife, Gayle, for her wisdom and her encouragement, which make everything possible.

1

Music in Classical Antiquity

The music of antiquity serves as the basis for much in later musical thinking. The Greek principle of musical ethos related music's power over human character to features of style. Greek music theory related acoustics to pitches in musical practice. The Romans later created an important framework for music in education.

Music in the Life and Philosophy of Ancient Greece

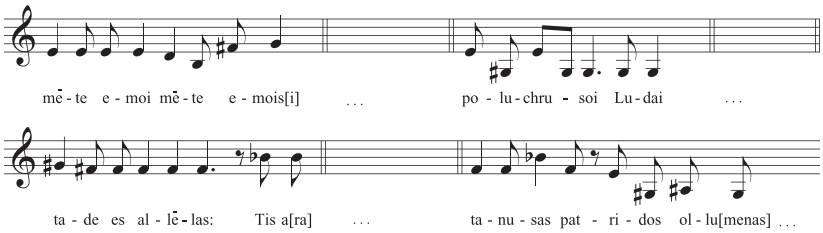
The culture of ancient Greece has provided the philosophical and intellectual roots for much of later Western culture. Time and again, thinkers have returned to the ideas of the great early philosophers to revitalize and redirect contemporary imagination. This once led the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead to speak of all later Western philosophy as a series of footnotes to Plato.[1] In the sense that it provides a model or standard, we refer to the culture of ancient Greece as "classic."

The importance of ancient Greek music

In the sense that it provides a model or standard, we refer to the culture of ancient Greece as "classic."

Greek writers had much to say about music, and we will find that their ideas have influenced Western music at several important stages in its history. Unlike Greek thought, however, ancient Greek music has not

Example 1.1 One of the earliest pieces of music that has survived from Greek antiquity is a fragment of papyrus from ca. 230 BCE containing a few phrases from a speech by the Chorus in Euripides's drama *Iphigenia at Aulis* (ca. 407 BCE). The complete sentence would read, "[Oh! may there never appear] to me or to my [children's children the prospect] that the rich Lydian women [and the brides of Phrygia will have, as they talk at their looms] together. Who [will pluck this fair blossom] from her ruined country, [tightening his grip on my lovely tresses until the tears flow]?" Text from Euripides, *Euripidis fabulae*, vol. 3, ed. Gilbert Murray (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), lines 784–92; music from Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 113.



survived in any significant quantity. The total repertoire consists of only a few dozen examples, most of them fragmentary and dating from comparatively late. Ironically, the Greek philosophers had almost nothing to say about their sculpture and architecture, many examples of which still exist, whereas they devoted a great deal of discussion to their music, which has nearly vanished (Example 1.1).

Greek philosophers' definitions

The writings of the time reveal that the Greeks had an active, vibrant musical life. Music played an important role in a variety of social contexts. Musical art was intimately connected to verbal art. Plato defined music as consisting of words, harmony, and rhythm, whereas Aristotle listed words, melody, and rhythm as the components of poetry. The epics of Homer were sung, as were the plays of Sophocles and Aeschylus. In

Music in ancient Greek experience

Greece, as in all cultures, music accompanied religious ritual. In addition, players and singers participated in musical competitions, events as important as the Olympic athletic contests. Certainly there was much day-to-day music for work and home as well. The scarcity of surviving ancient Greek music leaves the scholar all the more frustrated because what we can learn from the philosophical and theoretical documents is so fascinating.

Greek study of acoustics

The organized study of musical phenomena was a lively concern in Greece. The Greeks understood the acoustic properties of musical tones early, and Greek treatises attribute to the sixth-century BCE philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras (of the famous theorem about right triangles) the identification of the mathematical relationships underlying the harmonic series. They calculated in impressive detail the numerical ratios that define musical intervals.

Plato and Aristotle, the two major philosophers of the fourth century BCE, had different views of music—views that have reemerged at various times in the history of musical thought. Plato's roots were in mathematics and abstract thinking, his philosophical affinity was for the ideal, and he viewed the sensible world as merely the shadow of a pure and abstract Reality. For him, music derived its value from its reflection of ideal forms, and its purpose was to inculcate excellence rather than to provide pleasure. Aristotle's background in biological studies led him to take a more inductive and empirical approach than Plato, and he adopted a more pragmatic view of music. To Aristotle music did not reflect abstractions but imitated human action (*mimesis*); he also allowed for music to be pursued for pleasurable or practical ends.

Complementary philosophical views

Music and the Doctrine of Ethos

One of the major contributions of Greek philosophy, shared by both Plato and Aristotle, is the doctrine of *ethos*. Applied to music, this doctrine is the belief that music can powerfully affect human character and behavior. Such beliefs may be found in many musical cultures, of course, most clearly those in which music is related to shamanism. We shall see that this doctrine continued to be reflected in much later historical periods.

Music's ethical influence

The Greek thinkers applied the doctrine of ethos to music in a variety of ways. First, music could be related to spiritual life in the context of religion. The gods of Olympus represented a variety of characters, and the worship of each was necessarily suited to the specific deity. The Greeks made a major distinction between the worship of Apollo, god of the sun and of music and poetry, which was characterized by discipline and restraint, and that of Dionysus, god of fertility and wine, which was typically emotional, even orgiastic, and, in consequence, as one might well imagine, extremely popular. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in the late 1800s established the use of the terms *Apollonian* for art that is abstract and appeals to the intellect and *Dionysian* for art that arouses strong emotions, but, as we shall observe, the two inclinations have operated in uneasy tension throughout our music history. The music employed in worship clearly reflected such distinctions.

Apollonian and Dionysian

In secular life as well, music was considered a major component of education and character-building. Some Greeks believed that ennobling music could produce a noble and virtuous character, whereas exposure to lascivious music would lead to a debauched life. Good music would also serve to fortify the *polis*, or city-state. Characteristically, when Plato discussed the political organization of the ideal state in his *Republic*, he prescribed certain types of music and forbade others. To Plato, the true value of music was its power to educate one to virtue. Equally characteristically, Aristotle believed that even impassioned and Dionysian music had value in inducing emotional release, or *catharsis*. He

Some Greeks believed that ennobling music could produce a noble and virtuous character, whereas exposure to lascivious music would lead to a debauched life.

recognized different social circumstances and was less concerned with restricting music to certain types but instead concentrated, for any given situation, on applying music with the appropriate ethos.

Sources of ethos

The Greeks understood ethos to be rooted in both the words of songs and the specific aspects of musical style. One of the aspects of style that contributed to musical ethos was instrumentation. The *lyre* and *kithara*, stringed instruments, were associated with the cult of Apollo and therefore, naturally, with more noble types of ethos; the *aulos*, a double-barrel reed pipe employed in the Dionysian rites, consequently evoked a sensual and less disciplined ethos (Figure 1.1). In similar fashion, rhythms, that is, poetic meters, had their own ethical force. Finally, the particular melodic configuration—placement of scalar intervals, characteristic gestures, range, and so on—used in a piece, generally referred to as *harmonia* (pl. *harmoniai*, often translated as "mode"[2]), also determined the piece's ethos. The harmoniai were generally named by association with different regions and cultures among the peoples of the Greek world—Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and so on. Aristotle (*Politics*) regarded the Dorian harmonia as "steadfast and most manly in character," the Phrygian as leading to ecstasy and emotion, and the Lydian as suitable for children because it had the "capacity to contain both elegance and educativeness." Plato (*Republic*) accepted Dorian and Phrygian music but rejected the Mixolydian and Syntonolydian harmoniai as too mournful, whereas he considered certain Ionian and Lydian harmoniai "slack" and likely to induce softness and sloth.

Figure 1.1 Music contest between Apollo and Marsyas, relief sculpture (320 BCE). According to myth, the aulos player Marsyas challenged the god Apollo to a musical competition. Apollo, playing the lyre, defeated Marsyas and had him skinned alive for his insolence. The myth illustrates the relative virtues of the two most important Greek instruments.

Characteristics of Music

Musical style

Despite the paucity of musical documentation, we can determine some characteristic aspects of Greek music itself. Of primary importance is the connection of music with words. We have already noted the similarity of Plato's and Aristotle's definitions of music and poetry, respectively, and it is clear from the surviving music that the Greek musical archetype was a sung text. One effect of this conception was that musical rhythm corresponded to the rhythm of poetic verse. We know that the Greeks employed instruments in songs—the kithara, the aulos, and a wide variety of other instruments, including percussion—so singers were undoubtedly accompanied by instruments, and in some cases instrumental interludes appear in surviving musical notation. No evidence survives, however, to show that complex textures were used; rather, the instruments may have doubled the vocal melodies in monophonic texture or varied from the vocal lines in their ornamentation of basic patterns, producing the texture called *heterophony.* There is also plenty of evidence of the use of instruments without voices, undoubtedly mostly improvised. This would have been the case for the competitions of virtuoso instrumentalists and perhaps for dancing.

The Greeks developed the concept that melodies consisted of discrete pitches and that these could be organized systematically.

Greek Music Theory

Another major contribution made by the Greeks to Western music was a sophisticated theory of musical pitch organization constructed according to acoustical principles. The Greeks developed the concept that melodies consisted of discrete pitches and that these could be organized systematically.

Tetrachords

The fundamental scalar unit of Greek music theory was not the octave, as it has been in more recent Western theory, but the *tetrachord,* four consecutive pitches spanning a fourth (Figure 1.2). The inner pitches of the tetrachord (indicated in Figure 1.2 by filled-in note heads) were not fixed but could subdivide the fourth in different ways, each producing a different *genus* (pl. *genera*). In the *diatonic* genus the fourth was divided into two whole tones and a semitone, with the semitone adjacent to the lower of the outer two pitches; the *chromatic* divided the fourth into approximately an augmented whole tone and two

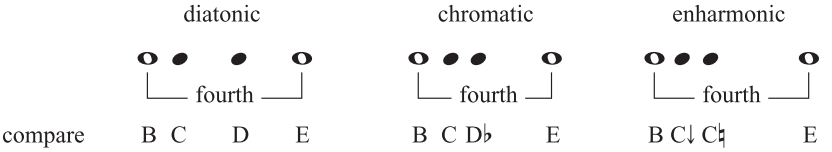


Figure 1.2 The three genera of Greek tetrachords. The interval between the outer pitches is a perfect fourth in each case, and the inner tones are movable.

consecutive semitones; and the *enharmonic* employed a division something like a ditone (the interval equivalent to two whole tones) and two quarter tones.[3] (In all the diagrams, here modern letter names for notes serve for comparison only; the Greeks sometimes did indicate pitches by letter names, but not the same ones that we use today, nor did they adopt any absolute pitch; Figure 1.3.)

To account for melodies that extended beyond the range of a fourth, the Greek theorists constructed a complete pitch spectrum,

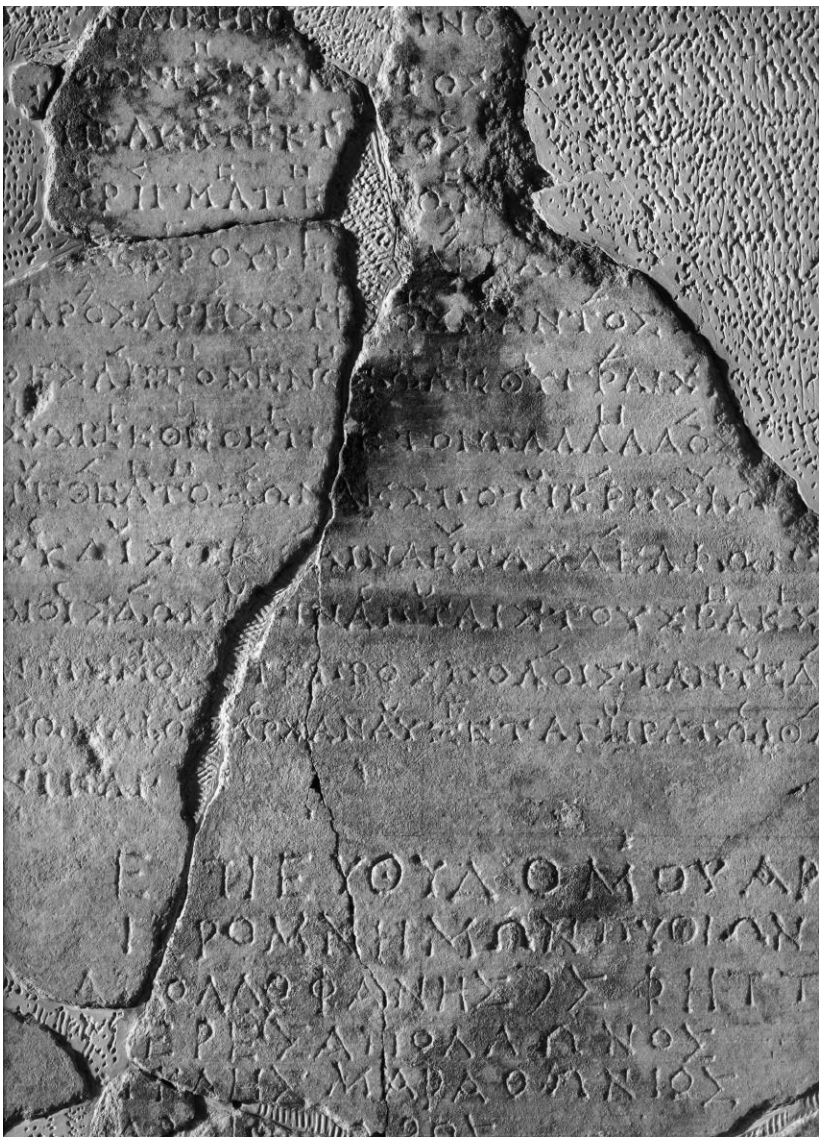


Figure 1.3 One form of Greek musical notation is preserved in the first Delphic hymn to Apollo, inscribed on the marble wall of the Treasury of the Athenians at the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. The letters that indicate notes can be seen between the lines of text.

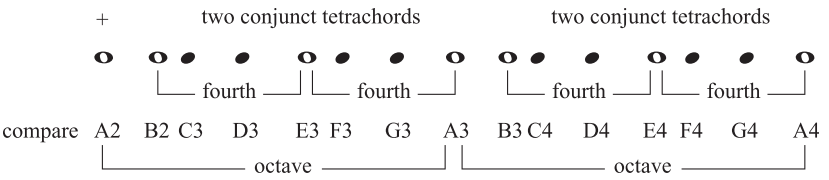


Figure 1.4 The Greater Perfect System.

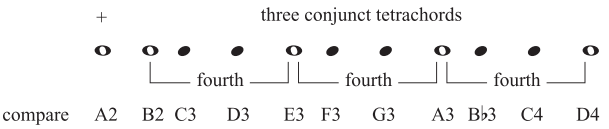


Figure 1.5 The Lesser Perfect System.

placing several tetrachords end to end, producing a plan known as the Greater Perfect System. They set the tetrachords consecutively so that they formed two pairs of conjunct fourths (that is, the tetrachords share one common pitch) separated by a whole tone. The addition of one more whole tone at the end of the spectrum created a span of two octaves (Figure 1.4). The theorists also recognized a Lesser Perfect System composed of three conjunct tetrachords and the added note (Figure 1.5).

The Perfect Systems

Another aspect of the Greek theoretical concept of pitch organization was the elimination of redundancy by focusing on a single or characteristic octave, just as we do today. Theorists recognized different ways to take an octave from the Greater Perfect System, each one producing an arrangement of pitches within the octave to form a distinct *tonos* (pl. *tonoi*) or scale (just as, for example, on a modern keyboard the diatonic white-key octave scale produces a major scale beginning on C or a natural minor scale beginning on A). As many as fifteen different scales were proposed. Figure 1.6 shows one octave each for the seven scales listed by the theorist Ptolemy in the second century CE, with their names. Like the harmoniai, the tonoi were assigned names from various regions within the Greek world. The Dorian tonos, for example, which has the same pattern of tones (T) and semitones (S) as the two disjunct tetrachords in the middle of the Greater Perfect System, uses the intervals S T T T S T T (assuming the diatonic genus).[4] The prefix "hypo-" here means "lower."

Scales

In Figure 1.6 the note that the Greeks called *mese* ("middle") is underlined in each scale. The mese had a governing role, in the sense that the functions of the various notes of the scale were determined by their relationship to it. As Figure 1.6 shows, the basic intervallic pattern of consecutive pitches actually remains the same for all the scales, except that everything shifts over by a step as we compare each scale to the next. The functions of individual notes depend on the position of the mese as it rotates through the octave.

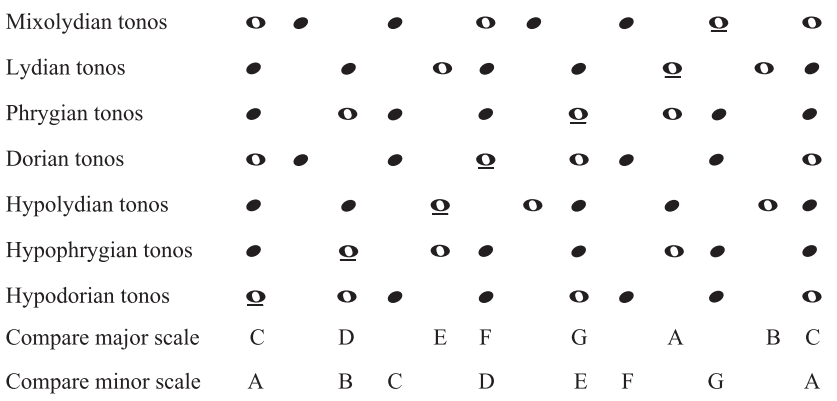


Figure 1.6 Greek tonoi compared.

Modes

The relation of these abstract theoretical constructs to actual Greek music and specifically to the ethical effects attributed to musical modes by the philosophers is obscure. It is likely that the use of a particular array of pitches within the range of the characteristic octave (i.e., a particular *tonos*) produced certain melodic patterns or formulas—that is, "modes"—that would be common to all pieces employing the same scale, which in turn would determine the music's style (*harmonia*) and consequently its ethos.

Historical significance of Greek theory

Greek pitch systems differed considerably from the one used in Western music for the past few centuries and therefore might seem complicated or difficult for us to assimilate today. But the central point here is that the Greek theorists' explanations of music on the basis of a systematic grouping of articulated pitches organized according to their acoustical relationships constituted a major contribution to the heritage of Western musical thought. As we shall see, a later age in the West found it possible to maintain an elaborate musical culture without such an abstract theoretical foundation—as many non-Western societies have as well. It is significant, however, that the eventual rediscovery of the Greek theoretical heritage encouraged construction of a new pitch system.

Music in Ancient Rome

Music in Roman culture

As political and military power moved from Greece to the Italian peninsula in the last century BCE, Roman music, like much of the intellectual and artistic culture of Rome, was built on the heritage received from Greece. The Romans apparently adapted the music of the Greeks to their own manner of life. Instead of the philosophical and theoretical pursuits that seem to have interested the Greeks, the Romans were more inclined to develop music for the pleasure of the privileged class.

As a result, musical works became more grandiose and elaborate. The Romans developed instruments to provide more volume and

sometimes played them in huge ensembles. At the same time, increased complexity in the melodies gave rise to a new emphasis on virtuosity. This was supported by the influence of Asian styles that entered Roman culture as a result of military conquest in the East.

The Romans made important contributions to ideas about the way music fit into the educational system.

Wealthy Romans employed professional musicians, including slaves, to entertain at all kinds of social events and adopted the Greek practice of musical competitions. The stars of that time were idolized, fawned over, and lusted after as much as rock stars of today. Patricians also aspired to virtuosity. For example, the emperor Nero's reputed concern for his skill as a musician and relative indifference to the crisis in his capital led to the familiar expression "Nero fiddled while Rome burned."

As one would expect, the military conquests of the Roman armies provided one special field for musical development, the field of battle. It is not surprising that this period produced notable developments in brass instruments.

During the first several centuries the Romans did not contribute significantly to the philosophy or theory of music, although they developed and transmitted some of the older Greek ideas and ideals through the early centuries of the Christian era. At the close of that period, however, the Romans made some important contributions to ideas about music in connection with the way music fit into the educational system.

Music and the liberal arts

In the fifth century CE Martianus Capella outlined a program for education based on seven "liberal arts." These were arranged into two divisions: (1) the *trivium*, consisting of the three language arts, *ars grammatica* (grammar), *ars rhetorica* (rhetoric or style), and *ars dialectica* (logic); and (2) the *quadrivium*, comprising the four mathematical disciplines, *ars arithmetica* (basic mathematics), *ars geometria* (plane geometry), *ars musica* (music), and *ars astronomia* (astronomy). The grouping might seem peculiar compared to modern curricula, in which we treat music as closer to literature than to mathematics and natural science. Capella assumed, however, that the study of music would deal exclusively with harmonic proportions. Thought of in that way rather than as an expressive art form, music takes a natural place between the study of spatial relationships in geometry and the observation of the regular motions of the stars and planets in astronomy.

Boethius's view of music

More influential in the history of music than Martianus Capella was the scholar Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (ca. 480–524). Boethius followed Capella's lead by writing treatises on the arts of the quadrivium. In his *De institutione musica* (On the organization of music) he codified many of the ancient ideas about music. Like Capella, Boethius was concerned only with what he called *musica speculativa* ("speculative" or "reflective" music, from the Latin *speculum*, meaning "mirror"), because by its harmonic proportions music reflects mathematical principles. He addressed the *musicus* (the true musician), who understood the

principles of music. Boethius saw no place in the liberal education for *musica practica*, the domain of the mere *cantor* (literally "singer," but including all performing musicians), who had the talent to make beautiful sounds but no understanding of the principles of the art.

Three types of *musica*

Boethius's greatest contribution to musical thought was a classification of music in three divisions. The most important of these was *musica mundana* (the music of the spheres), which was the product of the regular rhythmic motions of the sun, moon, stars, and planets. Such harmonious relationships, Boethius proposed, must produce musical tones, even though these tones could not be heard by human ears. (Christian thinkers later reasoned that our inability to hear this heavenly music was caused by the corruption of our senses through Adam's sin.) The second type of music was *musica humana* (human music), the music that gave harmony to human existence. Human harmony would govern life by keeping everything in proportion, both individually and in society; a personality or relationship that was out of proportion would be appropriately described as disharmonious and consequently unmusical.

The lowest form of music, *musica instrumentalis*, incorporated all sounding music, including singing. Thus, actual music sung or played would present a concrete image of the order of the universe, a reflection—following in the tradition of Plato—of a great principle or higher Reality.

Loss and survival

When Roman culture collapsed, after the transfer of the imperial capital to Constantinople and the sacking of Rome in the fifth century by northern invaders, there was little time or concern for the finer aspects of life. Survival in a dangerously unstable world became a primary concern. Many of the documents of Greek culture disappeared from view, fortunately preserved in the Middle East in the great libraries of Muslim scholars, to reappear only centuries later. As Christianity spread, the relics of pagan art were crowded out and later deliberately suppressed. Therefore, we must next turn to the Christian culture.

Suggestions for Further Reading

For translations of some of the important discussions of music by the writers cited in this chapter, see Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History*, rev. ed., Leo Treitler, gen. ed. (New York: Norton, 1998); and Andrew Barker, ed., *Greek Musical Writings*, vol. 1, *The Musician and His Art* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

Warren D. Anderson has written two studies of music in ancient Greece, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966) and *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994). Edward Lippman's *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964) explores the philosophical issues. A newer, magisterial survey of Greek

music and music theory is Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

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1. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 63.
2. The terms for mode in Greek writing vary. *Harmonia* can mean mode in a general sense, more akin to "style." The term *tropos* (pl. *tropoi*) is also used in the more technical sense, referring to a mode as a specific configuration of pitches.
3. Each of the genera could also have different shadings based on small differences in the placement of the movable pitches of the tetrachord.
4. Note that the names and the pitch arrangements do *not* correspond to later usage, in which Renaissance theorists appropriated the Greek names for scales derived from the ecclesiastical modes.

2

The Early Christian Period

After the fall of Rome the Christian church became the root of the growth of Western music. The church's musical practices and style came largely from Jewish sources. As the church spread and developed its own repertoire, diverse traditions emerged across Europe.

The Growth of the Christian Church and Its Music

The emergence of Christianity

Christianity rose just as the power of Rome was passing its peak. It began in a small corner of the Mediterranean, where a tiny band of Jews embraced the rabbi (teacher) Jesus's message that love of God and for one's neighbor was the principle that would redeem humankind, a principle that challenged both rigid, legalistic interpretations of the law of Moses and the imperialistic hegemony of the Caesars. This faith thus appeared subversive to the powerful leaders at the time, both in Jerusalem and in Rome. Jesus was executed for treason, and for three hundred years Christians suffered persecution and martyrdom throughout the Roman Empire. In 313 CE the emperor Constantine, who himself became a Christian, issued the Edict of Milan, allowing religious freedom to Christians, and indeed he made Christianity the official religion of the empire. The church was free to grow, and it became the dominant power in Western culture. Because of this, it should not be surprising that the

The history of Western music for a long period becomes the history of the music of the Christian religion.

history of Western music for a long period becomes the history of the music of the Christian religion.

The Church's cultural dominance

Our understanding of music from the fourth to the ninth century is also influenced by the fact that the historical evidence preserved from those centuries comes substantially through the church. As the church's power grew, it rooted out paganism and its cultural relics with the same vigor that had been exercised against the church during its first three centuries. Meanwhile, with Europe in political turmoil and general learning on the wane, the church's reliance on scripture gave it a special reason to preserve literacy, which pagan religion did not have. Moreover, together with architecture and the visual arts, music was an essential medium of worship. And finally, Christian worship was really the only cultural activity whose custodians had the wherewithal to maintain it.

It was not to be taken for granted that music would thrive in the young religion, however. Some church leaders harbored serious qualms about the power that music could hold over the minds and hearts of the faithful. Music had been important to the Greek and Roman religious cults and therefore had dangerous associations with paganism. The belief in a musical ethos remained strong, manifesting itself in the musical philosophy of the church fathers. The dilemma contemplated by St. Augustine (354–430) in his *Confessions* sums up the problem.

St. Augustine confesses his struggles over whether music should form part of Christian worship

> Remembering my tears that poured out at the Church's melody when I first recovered my faith, and now being moved not by the singing but by the things that are sung about—when they are sung with a fluid voice and the most suitable melody—I acknowledge again the great usefulness of this custom. So I alternate between the danger of sensual pleasure and the experience of the good effects that music can bring. Not, indeed, rendering an irreversible judgment, I am inclined to approve the custom of singing in the church, so that, by delighting the ear of the weaker person, the soul might be aroused to pious feeling. However, when it happens to me that I am moved more greatly by the song than by what is sung, I confess that I am sinning and deserve punishment, and then I would rather not hear the singer. . . . But you, my Lord God, listen favorably to me. Look and see and pity and heal me, in whose own eyes I have become a puzzle—and this is my weakness.[1]

The sensuous pleasure derived from music threatened to distract him from the words being sung and turn his attention away from the contemplation of God. Nevertheless, Augustine recognized the power of music to fire devotion, especially that of the newer and weaker minds among the faithful, and he recalled "my tears that poured out at the Church's melody when I first recovered my faith." Indeed, Augustine bears an honorable place in the history of Christian music; according to legend, at the moment of Augustine's baptism by St. Ambrose of Milan, the two men extemporized one of the great hymns of the church, "Te Deum laudamus" (We praise

thee, O God). Thus, he wavered "between the danger of sensual pleasure and the experience of the good effects that music can bring."

Ultimately, of course, Christian musicians secured a place for music in Christian life. Throughout the church's history, however, music has developed within a state of constant tension in which the imaginative and progressive impulses of musical creativity are held in check to some degree by severer concerns of religious conservatism.

The Jewish Heritage

The earliest Christians inherited their worship and music practices from the Jewish tradition of the apostolic church of the first centuries rather than from pagan Hellenism. Although Judaism did not have the kind of technical, theoretical literature about music that the Greeks cultivated, it had as rich a musical tradition as any religion. The exhortations in the Psalms to praise God with songs and musical instruments provide ample evidence of this.[2]

Music and Jewish scripture

Psalms 98 and 150 describe the use of voices and instruments to praise God

O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things! . . .
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!
(Ps. 98:1, 4–6)

Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with timbrel and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
(Ps. 150:3–5)

The power of music over the human mind was also part of Jewish experience. The first book of Samuel reports the therapeutic effect of David's harp playing on the troubled King Saul (1 Sam. 16:23) (Figure 2.1).

Jewish worship

Jewish synagogue worship incorporated several types of worship activities, mostly based on scripture. These included prayer, readings and teaching, and the giving of alms. All these features were carried over into Christian practice.

The Jewish religious musical repertoire comprised both scriptural and nonscriptural songs. The scriptural songs included the *psalms* (from the Book of Psalms) and other poetic passages from the religious writings, known as *canticles*. Since the Christian Old Testament retained the Jewish scriptures, the psalms and canticles were naturally retained as well (Figure 2.2). The nonscriptural songs were *hymns*, a simpler and

Figure 2.1 Anonymous, King David playing the harp, from Westminster Psalter (London, ca. 1200). King David, to whom many of the Psalms are attributed, was depicted not only with the harp but also with a variety of other musical instruments. Here he is also surrounded by bells.

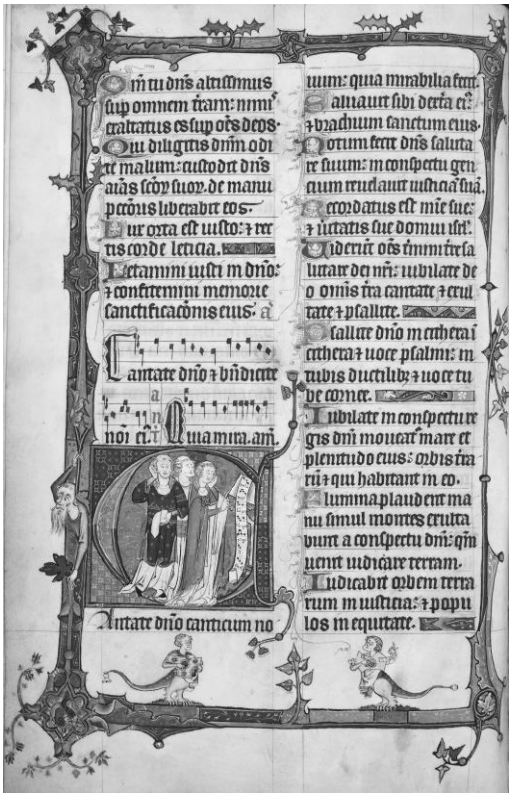


Figure 2.2 Manuscript illumination showing church singers at a lectern, singing from a scroll. The image decorates the first letter of Psalm 95, "Cantate Domino canticum novum" (O sing to the Lord a new song).

more popular genre than the psalms and canticles. Vestiges of the Jewish hymns and their music certainly survived into Christian repertoire, but since they did not have biblical authority, they rapidly gave way to newly composed hymns embodying the Christian faith.

Musical style and performance

The musical style of early Christian music was derived from that of Judaism. The texture of the music was monophonic, although actual performance presumably involved doublings and heterophonic ornamentations. Rhythm was not metered but controlled in general by word rhythms. There were three different means of performing. The simplest was *direct* performance, that is, solo or unison performance of the music throughout. Also common was *responsorial* singing, in which a solo singer or leader performed verses of the text and the entire congregation answered each verse with the following verse or with a response or refrain. Common responses were the simple Hebrew words *amen* (an expression of affirmation) and *hallelujah* (praise Yahweh), but others were more extensive:

Psalm 136 illustrates the use of a responsorial refrain

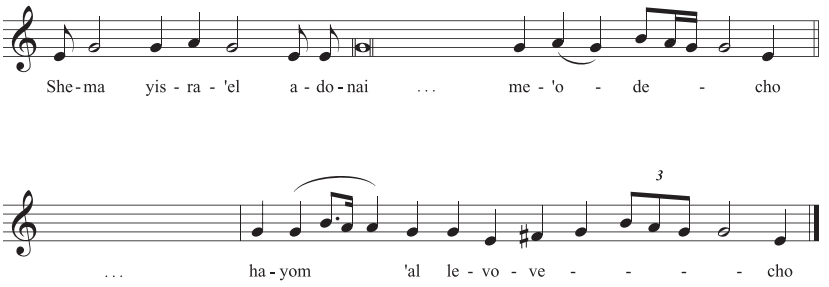
O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who spread out the earth on the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
the sun to rule over the day,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever; . . .
(Ps. 136:1–9)

Given the structure of psalms in paired verses, it was possible to divide the singers into two groups and have them sing in alternation. Such performance is termed *antiphonal.* Direct, responsorial, and antiphonal singing continued in Christian musical practice.

Pitch structures

The pitch organization of Jewish music was different from that of the Greeks and from our familiar scales. It relied on the principle of *modes,* classes of melodic configurations or formulas (Example 2.1). The basic units were not individual notes considered as abstract points in tonal space, but instead melodic outlines or prototypes serving as patterns for actual sung phrases. The manner of performance, sometimes referred to as *intonation* rather than singing, arose from the fact that a pitched and

Example 2.1 An ancient Yemenite Jewish melodic formula for the "Shema yisrael" ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone," Deuteronomy 6:4). Shown here are the opening and two phrase endings. The sustained pitch that carries the bulk of the text leads to an elegant close with the fall of a minor third, a natural interval for calling out. Adapted from Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge: The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church during the First Millennium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 342.



focused vocal tone carries more clearly than mere speaking. Stylized inflections amplified the natural rise and fall of the voice and elucidated grammatical and poetic structures.

The basic melodic units were outlines or prototypes serving as patterns for actual sung phrases.

In some cases the early Christians may have adopted the existing Jewish melodies themselves. More important, as we shall see, the principle of melodic construction based on modal formulas became the basis for the music of the church for at least the first ten centuries of its existence.

Diversification of Practice

In the centuries following the Edict of Milan, Europe gradually became Christianized, but as the religious faith spread, its worship and musical practices diversified. Decentralization of political power led to the formation of smaller, loosely organized dominions. Because the means of communication were slow and unreliable, it was difficult to disperse any uniform repertoire or style throughout the continent. Diverse interests, both religious and political, within the church itself led to a variety of conflicting theological opinions associated with different spiritual leaders. Some positions were absorbed into the dogma of the church; others were rejected as heretical. In this context it is not surprising that the musical tradition was extremely fragmented.

Fragmentation of Europe

The Eastern Influence

The strongest political, cultural, and musical center was the eastern portion of Christendom, centered in the new capital of the Roman Empire at Constantinople, or Byzantium, to use its traditional name (modern Istanbul). The emperor Constantine had made the city his imperial capital in 330, so that while the Catholic Church remained centered around

the pope, the bishop of Rome, an eastern branch of the church grew up in Byzantium. This branch produced the modern Orthodox Church.

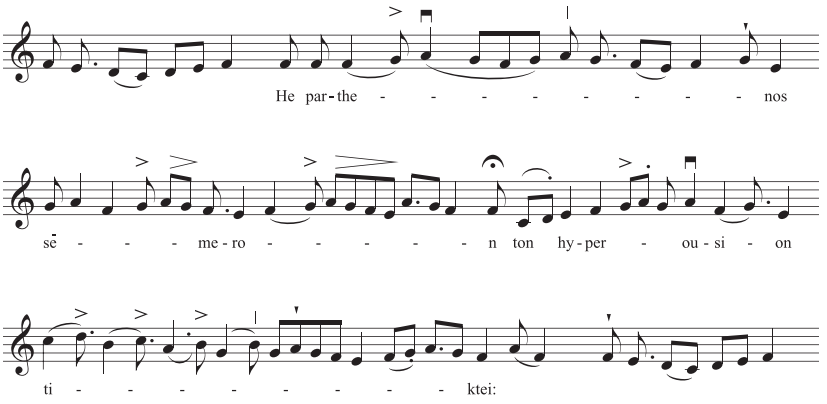
The relative stability of the Byzantine Empire, which for a thousand years staved off one attack after another from the outside, permitted the development of a highly sophisticated culture. In politics this manifested itself in a system of court intrigue that led to the modern connotation of the epithet *Byzantine*. In Byzantium the emperor Justinian (483–565) achieved a monumental and intricate codification of the Roman imperial law. He also ordered the building of the great church of Hagia Sophia (Figure 2.3). Religious thinkers reveled in the pursuit of arcane details of theology.

The Byzantine Church developed a repertoire of elaborate, extended musical compositions.

It should not be surprising that in this context the Byzantine Church developed a repertoire of elaborate, extended musical compositions. Particularly impressive was the huge repertoire of perhaps a hundred thousand or more hymns. There were a number of special types of musical pieces to ornament worship. Characteristic of the spirit of Byzantine music, the *kontakion* (pl. *kontakia*) resembled a long, poetic sermon on a biblical text (Example 2.2). Each kontakion contains a prologue (*prooimion*) and twenty or more long stanzas, linked by a shared refrain. Equally grandiose is the *kanon* (pl. *kanones*), a complicated, multisectional piece based on a series of nine biblical canticles. For each canticle, a kanon provides a so-called *ode* consisting of several stanzas.

Figure 2.3 Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (earlier Constantinople and Byzantium), the greatest church of the Byzantine era. The massive structure was built in the reign of the great emperor Justinian (r. 527–565), a time when Constantinople exerted ecclesiastical, political, and artistic domination over Europe. Following the Turkish conquest of the city in 1453, Hagia Sophia was converted to a mosque and the minarets were added.

Example 2.2 The opening of a Byzantine kontakion for Christmas by Romanos the Melodist (fl. sixth century), showing the melismatic style of this genre. The text begins, "Today the Virgin gives birth to the Almighty." Taken from Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 401.



The style of the music could be as complex as the repertoire was extensive. The performance of these pieces was conceived as monophonic, but they were by no means simple. The kontakia and kanones were originally syllabic, but they developed an elaborate, florid style called *kalophonic* (beautiful sounding), actually a number of different idioms for embellishment associated with individual musicians. This impulse, of course, still inspires some of the impressive melodic tendencies that we admire in the music of Middle Eastern and Asian musicians.

Byzantine music theory

By the eighth century, music theorists organized the tonal structures of Byzantine church music on the basis of a modal system; that is, an actual piece of music was based on a given melodic formula. In this, it resembled Jewish and other Eastern musical styles. The melodic formula was known as an *echos* (pl. *echoi*). The complete system incorporated eight different echoi, classified in two series of four. In each series the formulas were oriented, respectively, around the pitch centers D3, E3, F3, and G3 (not, however, based on a system of fixed absolute pitch). This system strongly influenced the thinkers who later developed a music theory in western Europe.

Local European Practices

After the fourth century the churches and monasteries in the different parts of Europe developed a number of local musical idioms. Before we turn our attention to the great centralized musical repertoire that came to dominate Christian music after the ninth century, a brief note of the evidence of the diversity of the early church is in order.

Roman chant

The religious and musical tradition of Rome itself is commonly termed *Old Roman.* It continued as an oral tradition until the ninth

century, when musicians began to develop a suitable notation that would preserve it; consequently, a substantial quantity of Old Roman music is available for modern scholars to study and compare to the related, but significantly different, music of the later Catholic Church. By comparison, much less is known about the musical repertoires and styles of the "peripheral" regions of northern and western Europe.

Ambrosian chant

St. Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan, was a musical leader in the early church. He is credited with promoting the singing of hymns as a means of strengthening faith and fortifying belief in the true doctrines of the Christian religion. He actually composed the texts of several great hymns, although he probably did not invent music for them. The music and worship practice that was used in Milan came to be called *Ambrosian* in his honor. Like the Old Roman, the Ambrosian repertoire was eventually notated. Within the Italian peninsula other regional traditions have also left traces: the Beneventan in southern Italy and some music associated with Ravenna, which served by turns as both sacred and secular capital for European and Byzantine leaders.

Celtic chant

In Ireland, one of the first areas almost entirely converted to Christianity, there was a *Celtic* musical tradition associated with the monasteries that St. Patrick founded in the fifth century. It did not last past the seventh century, and none of the actual music is known today.

Frankish or Gallican chant

Between the sixth and eighth centuries, singers in the Frankish territory, consisting of what is now western France and the Netherlands, also developed a local musical idiom, called *Gallican*. Of the various "peripheral" styles, it was undoubtedly the one with the most influence on the Western church's later, unified repertoire, but the lack of surviving music makes it impossible to determine the nature and extent of the relationship.

Mozarabic chant

The Christians living in the Iberian region (Portugal and Spain) during the domination of the Moors from the eighth to the eleventh century were known as Mozarabs. The surviving musical manuscripts of the *Mozarabic* (or Hispanic) tradition remain mostly undecipherable.

This diversity of regional, political, social, religious, philosophical, and artistic forces characterized Europe following the fall of Rome. The construction of a relatively unified European civilization from the wreckage of Greek and Roman culture was the achievement of the leaders, thinkers, artists, and musicians from the sixth century on. Music holds a proud position in that civilization.

Suggestions for Further Reading

The discussion of music in St. Augustine's *Confessions* and some writings of other church fathers are translated in Oliver Strunk's *Source Readings in Music History*, rev. ed., Leo Treitler, gen. ed. (New York: Norton, 1998). For other sources of the early church's thought about music, see James W. McKinnon, ed., *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

On the Jewish musical tradition, see A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Schocken, 1967). The standard study of Byzantine chant is Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnody*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971).

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1. Augustine, *Confessions*, text and commentary by James J. O'Donnell (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), vol. 1, 138–39; web reprint as *The Confessions of Augustine: An Electronic Edition*, 10.33.50 http://www.stoa.org/hippo/text10.html/. [Translation by DS]
2. The instruments named here are not the instruments that go by these names in later periods of Western music history; they are merely the translators' best approximations of the instrument names in the original Hebrew.

3

The Establishment of a Catholic Tradition

The music of the church was part of the project to establish a newly cultured Europe. To accomplish this, church and political leaders developed a general plan for worship, including sacred music. The need to teach the authorized music of the church led to more precise forms of notation and a new approach to music theory. Within the unified framework of church music, musicians found opportunities for creativity by elaborating the liturgy.

The Political–Cultural Situation at the Beginning of the Ninth Century

One lofty ambition of the ninth century was the establishment of a Europe unified on religious and political grounds. An important product of that unification was the development of the musical repertoire commonly known as "Gregorian" chant. This repertoire takes its name from Pope Gregory I, who led the Roman church from 590 to 604. As far as

Gregory I

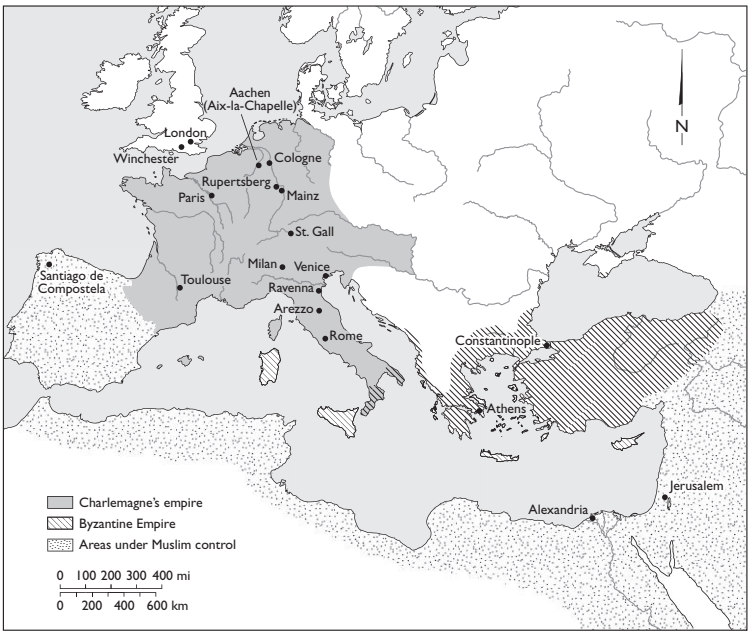
can be determined, Gregory did not actually compose any of the music. His reputation derived from his consolidation of ecclesiastical authority in Rome and the assertion of the church's power in worldly affairs. Pope Gregory came from a political background and was a remarkably capable administrator; he was responsible for sending out missionaries who spread not only the Christian faith but also its musical practice throughout Europe. Within the realm of worship and music, Gregory's limited contributions may have touched on the codification of parts of the service and influenced the development of distinctions between the priests, with their pastoral duties, and designated singers, with responsibilities for leading the music in worship.

The church's music belonged to a tradition of oral practice.

It is important to remember that the church's music belonged to a tradition of oral practice. The earliest surviving manuscripts with reasonably precise musical notation for the chant date from the end of the ninth century. Like all oral traditions in music, the chant required concentration on a nucleus of fundamental melodic designs, although it naturally varied from place to place, from generation to generation, and to some extent from singer to singer.

Charlemagne and the new empire

The establishment of a single, universal body of church music actually came considerably later than Gregory I, beginning from the time of Charlemagne (747–814). It arose as a natural corollary of the attempt to unify the European continent politically, in a sense a propaganda move. Charlemagne well understood the need to base his secular power on the



Europe and the Mediterranean during the time of Charlemagne.

Figure 3.1 The Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne at Aachen. Aachen was Charlemagne's capital, and the chapel contained his throne. The architecture represents the imposing, weighty style of the ninth century.

support of the church, and when the unpopular Pope Leo III was threatened, Charlemagne came to his rescue. Leo in turn crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day in 800.

The Carolingian renaissance

Charlemagne made the cultivation of learning a major project of his administration. He gathered to his court at Aachen (Figure 3.1) leading scholars from other parts of Europe, notably the Anglo-Saxon scholar Alcuin of York (ca. 732–904), who headed up the projects of recovering and preserving writings that had all but perished, as well as writing his own treatises on the disciplines in the trivium. Under imperial sponsorship, reading and writing spread through monasteries and cathedral schools, for which Alcuin prepared a curriculum. We call this resuscitation of learning the Carolingian renaissance, after Charlemagne (Carolus Magnus in Latin).

The concern for a unified practice of sacred music is described in a charming, if likely fictitious, anecdote about Charlemagne written in the late ninth century by a monk at the abbey of St. Gall in Switzerland:

The Monk of St. Gall tells a story about the regulation of the chant

> [Some clerics from Rome] plotted among themselves (since all Greeks and Romans are ever consumed with envy of Frankish glory) how they could so alter the chant that its unity and harmony might never be enjoyed in a realm and province other than their own. So . . . everyone of them strove to sing, and to teach others to sing, as differently and as corruptly as they could possibly contrive. But the exceedingly clever Charles celebrated the feasts of Christmas and the Epiphany one year at Trier and Metz and very alertly and sharply comprehended the quality of the chants, . . . and then in the next year he followed the same festivals at Paris and Tours and heard nothing of that sound which he had experienced the year before in the above-mentioned places. Thus he discovered in the course of time how those he had sent to different places had come to differ from one another, and he conveyed the matter to Pope Leo. . . . Leo, after recalling the cantors to Rome

> and condemning them to exile or to lifelong confinement, said to the illustrious Charles: "If I send others to you, they, blinded by envy like those before them, will not neglect to deceive you. Rather I will attempt to satisfy your wishes in this manner: give me two very intelligent clerics of your own, in such a way as not to alert my clergy that they belong to you, and they shall acquire, God willing, the total proficiency in this skill that you seek."
>
> It was done in this way, and after a reasonable length of time Leo returned the clerics to Charles perfectly instructed.[1]

Partly because of the importance of centering the Catholic musical practice in Rome and partly because of the musical taste of Charlemagne and his father, Pepin, the new worship service and music were grounded in the practice described in books sent north from Rome. Roman singers also traveled as musical missionaries to teach the Roman melodies to their Frankish colleagues. The compilation of the entire repertoire was directed by Alcuin. Aachen was in Frankish territory, and in consequence the final product appears to have assimilated elements of the Gallican practice. In support of the authenticity of this music over the existing regional styles, the legend grew up that Pope Gregory I himself had composed the music under divine inspiration.[2]

The Roman Liturgy

Liturgy

The prescribed order for the conduct of worship is called the *liturgy*. An understanding of the Roman church's liturgy is essential for any understanding of its music, because the liturgy provides both the context and the shaping plan for the musical expression of chant.

The Roman liturgy can be regarded as the largest unified artistic experience possible.

The Roman liturgy can be regarded as the largest unified artistic experience possible because it encompasses the entire year and is reenacted as a great symbolic ritual each year in a subtly changing but never-ending cycle. As a result, every piece of the chant has its particular place or places within space and time provided by architectural settings and within a gigantic liturgical form. Each day in the *liturgical year* is unique; the form and content of its music are based on its relationship to the two greatest days in the church year—Christmas, which celebrates the birth of Christ and in the Western church is fixed on 25 December, and Easter, which celebrates Christ's resurrection on a movable date in the spring—and to other feasts (Figure 3.2).

The church year

The liturgical year begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, which marks the beginning of the season of Advent, the period when the church anticipates the coming of Christ. Advent is the first of two penitential seasons in the liturgical year, which are traditionally marked by prayer, self-examination, and fasting, as well as by relatively austere music and worship. The celebration of Christmastide begins on Christmas Day and continues for the next twelve days (hence, the "Twelve Days of

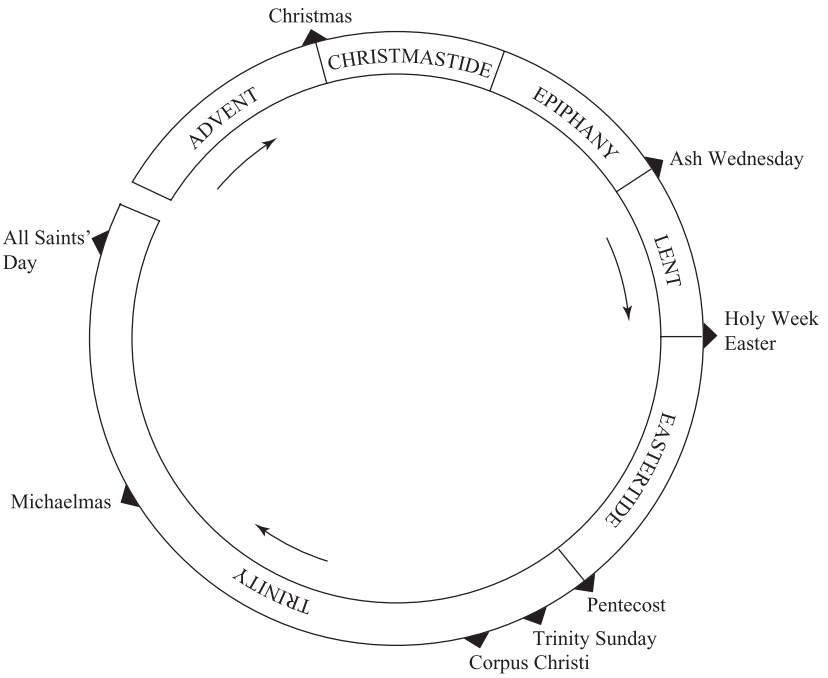


Figure 3.2 The liturgical year, showing the seasons and some of the major festivals of the church.

Christmas"). Then follows Epiphany, the day when the church commemorates the visit of the Magi to the child Jesus, and its season, which signifies the manifestation of Christ to the whole world. Epiphany ends with the beginning of Lent, the second of the penitential seasons, which consists of the forty days leading up to Easter. The last week before Easter is known as Holy Week. Easter is the most important festival of the year, since it marks the resurrection of Christ. The Easter season lasts seven weeks and ends on the Sunday known as Pentecost (fifty days after Easter) or Whitsunday. On Pentecost the church celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit to the apostles (Acts 2). Then comes Trinity Sunday and the long season of Trinity, continuing through the summer and fall until the arrival of the first Sunday of Advent and the start of a new church year. There are numerous other festivals in the church, notably St. Stephen's Day, the day after Christmas; Corpus Christi, the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday; Michaelmas, 29 September; and All Saints' Day, 1 November. Because the exact dates of Advent and Easter change from year to year, the developers of the liturgical calendar had to establish a complicated hierarchy of celebrations in cases when two liturgical days fell on the same date.

The liturgical calendar may seem strange to modern students, but it need not be thought of as totally foreign. Indeed, some of our familiar secular holidays are based on the liturgical calendar. Mardi Gras (French for "fat Tuesday"), the last day of the season of Epiphany, arose as a "last

fling" before the long season of fasting that begins with Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Ash Wednesday is a church holiday (i.e., holy day); Mardi Gras is emphatically not. Similarly, Halloween (All Hallows Eve) is the night before All Saints' Day (or All Hallows). All Saints' Day is a church holiday; Halloween probably has its roots in the Celtic pagan observance of the beginning of winter.

The Divine Office

The Roman liturgy for each day provides two different settings for worship: a relatively private one known as the *Divine Office*, which is observed by the cloistered community in a monastery or convent; and a public one, the *Mass*. The Divine Office has its roots in the Jewish synagogue services and early Christian night vigils from the centuries when the church still suffered Roman persecution. A standardized plan for monastic worship, as for the governance of monastic life and work in general, was established by the Rule of St. Benedict. Benedict (ca. 480–ca. 547) set out detailed regulations to order every aspect of the activities of the monks. The rule prescribed eight services that articulated the day of study and work, the Divine Office or Canonical Hours. The daily schedule ran approximately as follows:

Divine Office

The Benedictine Rule prescribed eight services that articulated the day of study and work, the Divine Office.

Matins (morning)—Shortly after midnight (The ever-practical Rule of St. Benedict suggests that "When they arise for the Divine Office, they ought to encourage each other, for the sleepy make many excuses.")
    Private study and prayer
Lauds (praise)—Early morning
Prime (the first Hour)—After Lauds
    Breakfast (if any)
    Private study
    Possibly Mass
    Work begins
Terce (the third Hour)—Midmorning
    Return to work
Sext (the sixth Hour)—Noon
    Return to work
None (the ninth Hour)—Midafternoon
    Dinner. According to the Benedictine Rule, there would normally be only two dishes, and each monk would have a ration of a pound of bread for the entire day. Only the infirm were allotted red meat.
    Private study and prayer
Vespers (evening)—At dusk
Compline (complete)—Before bed
    Bed. Nuns or monks retired relatively early, since once daylight ended, light was expensive and rarely bright.

Worship was thus an important part of the monastic vocation. The monks dedicated themselves not only to charitable work but also to a career of worship.

The named Offices (Matins, Lauds, Vespers, and Compline) are called the Greater Hours, and their music is more extensive, more complicated, and more important to music history than that of the numbered or Lesser Hours (Prime, Terce, Sext, and None). The book containing the music of the Offices is the *Antiphonary*; that containing only the texts is the *Breviary*. Ecclesiastical scribes prepared beautifully decorated breviaries (also known as Books of Hours) for wealthy patrons; among these are some of the most elaborate and famous examples of manuscript illumination (Plate 7).

Books of Hours

The musical content of the Offices centers on the singing of psalms; the number of these ranges from three for the Lesser Hours to nine at Matins. The psalms are set off by nonbiblical pieces (the *antiphons* and *responsories*). Except for Matins, each of the Greater Hours climaxes with a canticle. For Vespers the canticle is the *Magnificat*, or Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55, beginning "My soul magnifies the Lord"), and for Compline it is appropriately the Song of Simeon, *Nunc dimittis* (Luke 2:29–32, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace"). There is also a hymn in each Office. In addition to these elements there are opening and closing formulas, brief passages from the Bible, and prayers. The Offices include neither preaching nor Holy Communion. The entire service does not last long, perhaps fifteen minutes for the Lesser Hours and up to half an hour or a bit more for the Greater Hours on major feast days.

Content of the Divine Office

Mass

The Mass is the most solemn service of the liturgy. Like the Divine Office, the Mass originated in the Jewish worship practice, combining the synagogue teaching tradition with the celebration of Holy Communion (also known as the *Eucharist*, from the Greek word for "thanksgiving," or as the Lord's Supper), derived from the rite of the Jewish Passover. The Mass therefore has two parts. The first part, the teaching service or Fore-Mass, concludes after the sermon, if there is one, and the statement of the Christian faith in the Nicene Creed (known in music as the *Credo*). The second part consists of Holy Communion. In the early days of the church the teaching service was open to inquirers who were not yet baptized Christians, and they were excused when the faithful prepared for the Eucharist.

Main divisions of the Mass

The essential structure of the Mass was established in a more or less unified pattern much later than that of the Offices, in fact, not until the tenth century. The book that contains the music for the Mass is known as the *Gradual*; the book that contains only the text is called the *Missal*. For general use, the most important materials were later collected from the

vast total repertoire into a smaller and more convenient *Liber usualis* (literally, "practical book").

Ordinary and Proper

An important structuring principle in the liturgy is the division of material into those parts of the text that always remain the same and those that change according to the particular day in the liturgical year. The former are called *Ordinary* and the latter are known as *Proper*. In the Offices of Vespers and Compline, for example, the canticles are Ordinary because these texts are sung every day; the psalms, which change according to the church calendar, are Proper. The same holds true for the Mass. In this case the parts of the service that were originally intended to be sung by the entire congregation are always the same, or Ordinary; the Proper tended to be reserved for the choir and solo singers. The Mass Proper is older and more closely tied to the texts of the scripture than the Ordinary. In later periods in music history the term *Mass* often refers to a musical setting of the five main components of the Mass Ordinary only, for the practical reason that composers generally wrote only the Ordinary and left the Proper, with its relatively limited usefulness, to the traditional chant or to the choirmaster's choice from the available repertoire of composed pieces.

The Mass has a clear shape with well-placed climaxes and distinctly articulated segments.

The complete Mass forms an effective artistic as well as religious experience. Like most large artworks, it has a clear shape with well-placed climaxes and distinctly articulated segments. Its structure can be understood in two main divisions—the teaching service and the Eucharist—and these are subdivided into two and three smaller groups of movements, respectively. The following discussion outlines this organization, noting which movements belong to the Ordinary and which to the Proper (Figure 3.3).

Design of the Fore-Mass

Within the first half of the Mass the first subgroup of movements forms a brief opening ceremony. This starts with the singing of the *Introit*, or introductory psalm verse (originally an entire psalm), proper to the day, framed by two statements of a brief piece known as an *antiphon*. Then comes the first pair of movements of the Ordinary, the plea for forgiveness *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy—the only part of the Mass sung in Greek after Latin became the language of the Western church) and the song of praise *Gloria in excelsis* (Glory to God in the highest). This part of the service closes with the *Collect*, or prayer for the day, which is not sung but read or intoned by the priest, the congregation responding "Amen."

The next portion of the Mass contains the instruction of the congregation through scripture and sometimes a sermon. The Proper assigns each day two scripture readings. The first reading is an *Epistle* selection taken from the letters to early churches contained in the New Testament. It is followed by the singing of a responsorial *Gradual* (from the Latin word *gradus*, meaning "step," because that is where the solo singer stands), and an *Alleluia*, which frames a psalm verse. The Gradual and the Alleluia, which have the most elaborate music of the Mass, form the service's musical climax. Then the second reading, the *Gospel*, follows.

	by ca. 400	added by ca. 800	added ca. 1000
Fore-Mass		Introit Psalm	
		KYRIE ELEISON	
		GLORIA IN EXCELSIS	
		(Collect)	
	(Epistle reading)		
	Gradual Psalm		
	Alleluia or Tract		
		Sequence	
	(Gospel reading)		
			CREDO IN UNUM DEUM
Eucharist		Offertory Psalm	
	(Eucharistic prayers)		
	SANCTUS		
		(CANON)	
	(PATER NOSTER)		
		AGNUS DEI	
	Communion Psalm		
		(Postcommunion)	
		ITE MISSA EST	

Figure 3.3 The design and historical development of the Mass. The seven sections of the Mass Ordinary (including the Lord's Prayer and Benediction) are shown in all capitals. The five highlighted sections are those usually composed as the Mass since the sixteenth century. Items in parentheses are spoken or intoned rather than sung.

After the Gospel there may be a sermon, but this is optional. The whole first part of the Mass closes with the singing of the *Credo* (I believe [in one God]), the third musical movement of the Mass Ordinary.

Design of the Eucharist

The second half of the Mass begins with the offering of the Eucharistic bread and wine. A musical *Offertory* is sung, followed by the saying of prayers and the Twenty-fifth Psalm. Then the priest prays a silent prayer known as the *Secret*.

Between two prayers—the *Preface*, which belongs to the Proper and is intoned aloud, and the *Canon*, which is Ordinary and prayed silently by the priest—comes the singing of the fourth musical movement of the Ordinary, the *Sanctus* (Holy, holy, holy).

The Holy Communion forms the liturgical climax and conclusion of the Mass.

The actual partaking of Holy Communion forms the liturgical climax and conclusion of the Mass. The *Pater noster* (Our father—the Lord's Prayer) is intoned, followed by the singing of the Ordinary *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). A Proper movement appropriately called *Communion* is then sung. After the Communion come prayers, the *Postcommunion* prayer, and finally the *Benediction*, which is sung. There are only two forms for the Benediction, so it can be regarded as belonging to the music of the Ordinary, but it is so brief that it has rarely been included in

compositions of the Mass. Curiously, it is one of these simple formulas, "Ite, missa est" (Go, it is dismissed), that gave the service its name, in Latin *Missa* and, of course, "Mass" in English.

Special forms of the Mass

Under special circumstances the form of the Mass may vary somewhat. The Gloria is omitted during penitential seasons, and during Lent the position usually occupied by the celebrative Alleluia is taken by a somber movement called the *Tract*. An even more substantial variant is the Mass for the Dead, or *Requiem Mass*, so named from the text of its introit, *Requiem aeternam dona eis Domino* (Give them eternal rest, O Lord).

Aesthetic Considerations Regarding the Chant

To understand any music, it is necessary to hear it, or at least to imagine it, in the context for which it was intended. This is perhaps even more strongly the case for the chant than for other music in our cultural heritage. The chant is distant enough in time from the music we are accustomed to hearing that it seems foreign. On the one hand, it is simpler than the polyphonic music and stylized forms that govern more familiar styles; on the other hand, its principles and the concepts on which it is based are quite sophisticated, although they differ from those of later music.

That much of this music appears at first somewhat austere should not surprise us, since we know that it belongs in the framework of the liturgy.

That much of this music appears at first somewhat austere should not surprise us, since we know that it belongs in the framework of the liturgy. We must remember that the church fathers, including St. Augustine, were greatly concerned that the music should not distract from the worshiper's meditation on God. To answer this concern, the music eschews virtuosic display that would force the singer to concentrate on the problems of performing and seduce the listener's attention from the music to the singer. Similarly, for cautious church authorities the spiritual rather than physical focus of the service called for a style that did not encourage a physical rhythmic response such as clapping or toe tapping.

Chant and worship

The early church fathers were also particularly concerned that the music not obscure the words of the chant. The style of the chant is not merely adapted to the communication of its texts, however, but also closely dependent on the text for its musical structure. On the one hand, the monophonic texture of the music allows the words to come through unimpeded, and, as our analysis will show, the rising and falling inflections of the speaking voice and the grammatical structure of language actually define the music. On the other hand, the musical expression of specific sentiments in the sung texts, which became an essential assumption for the Renaissance and later periods, was not a priority in the chant.

The words in the chant

The chant's monophonic texture and the suitability of the music for singers of modest technical qualifications bear special significance. The unity of the "community of believers" finds expression in the uniting of voices in a single statement, especially within the religious cloister, where all the members of the monastery or convent participate in singing the Divine Office. Thus, the chant's unification of worshipers' voices into a

Unity and unison

single line both embodies this idea and facilitates it in practice; its simplicity should not by any means be regarded as evidence of primitiveness.

The worship space

Another aspect of the context in which the chant was sung is the architecture of the churches where it was performed. During the Gregorian and Carolingian periods, churches were still somewhat weighty in construction, embodying more solidity than lightness and reflecting firmness of faith rather than soaring ecstasy. The music of the chant has a corresponding sense of gravity and solemnity.

Purely physical aspects of early church architecture offered both problems and opportunities for music. Acoustically, the open space in the nave or central body of the church presented a very "live" environment for music, and hard stone and wood surfaces provided considerable reverberation. This meant that the chant's simple texture easily filled the space in which it was sung; indeed, the sound in a resonant room could become blurred in detail but produce an audible atmosphere similar in effect to the incense wafted from the thurible in the Mass. The actual design of the space and the placement or movement of singers could also be exploited in the performance of the chant. Processions were, of course, a significant part of the action of worship, and the division of the singers into two groups facing each other in the choir reinforced the effect of antiphonal singing.

The Musical Style of the Chant

The chant is conceived as performed by unaccompanied solo and choral male voices in unison, although undoubtedly in actual practice there were other possibilities. In the earliest centuries all worshipers sang together. As the institution of the church developed, gender roles became articulated, and the singing of the chant in public became largely a male activity. Boys often sang with men, using octave doubling; and in convents of nuns, assuming that a male choir was not available, the women could sing the services. The existence of documents by church authorities banning instruments from churches implies that *ad libitum* performance on instruments also took place.

Chant scoring

Within the limits of unison singing, variety in sound arose from doubling and from the contrast of direct, antiphonal, and responsorial performance. Hymns and the chants of the Mass Ordinary were sung in direct fashion. Psalms and the antiphons that framed and articulated them were performed antiphonally. Responsorial chanting increased as more elaborate music developed, and we shall see that the solo portions of responsorial pieces provided a fruitful field for musical experimentation.

Rhythm

We do not have reliable notational evidence of measured rhythm in the style of the chant, but this does not mean that there was no rhythm in the music. The rhythm of the singing derived from that of the spoken language. In Greek and Latin, dynamic syllable stress did not contribute to grammar or expression. Syllables fell into the categories long and short, and the linguistic phrase flowed smoothly from beginning to end