



## Medieval Period

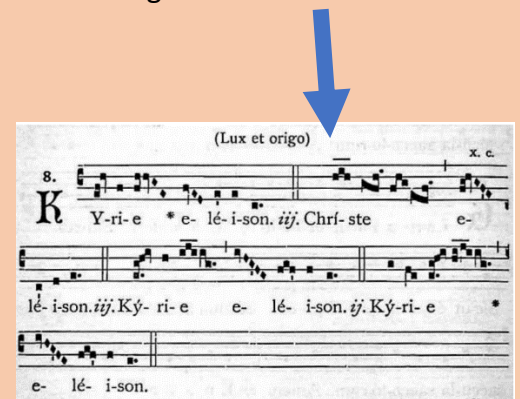
400-1450

In this miniature from the *Prayer Book* of Alfonso the Wise, King David is playing a rebec, in the manner of the Middle Eastern rabab.



# Characteristics of Medieval Music

- Monophonic texture (single melodic line) [\(16\) Monophonic texture example - YouTube](#)
- The music of the early Christian church, called **plainchant** (or just **chant**), [\(16\) Gregorian chant - Circumdederunt me - YouTube](#)
- During the early Medieval era, there wasn't a notational system. People distributed music through oral tradition and memory. Romans, acknowledging this problem, introduced signs called **neumes**. These symbols are usually written above the lyrics or chant texts.
- Instruments - Medieval flute, Lyra, Dulcimer, Recorder, Lute. [\(16\) Medieval Musical Instruments - YouTube](#)
- Medieval rhythms have patterns called "modal scales." There were eight modes, but only five of them were more important: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian & Mixolydian.



**Sacred music** – sounds designed to inspire the faithful to worship.

**Secular music** – can describe as social music-making for entertainment and personal expression.

- Chant
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- Middle Age great music composers-

1. Hildegard of Bingen 1098-1179
2. Guillaume Machaut 1300-1377
3. Guillaume Du Fay 1386-1466



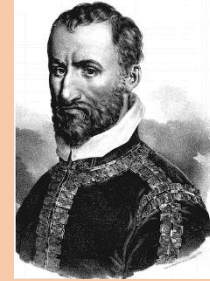
Guillaume Machaut



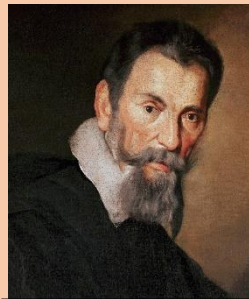
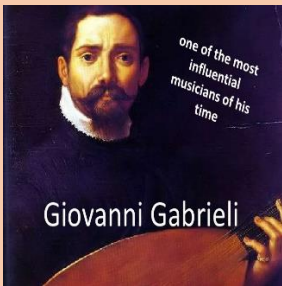
Josquin Des Prez



Guillaume Du Fay



Giovanni Da Palestrina



Claudio Monteverdi

- **The early medieval motet**

Toward end of the thirteenth century musicians began writing new text for the previously textless upper voice of organum. The addition of these texts resulted in the *motet*, the most important form of early polyphonic music. Sometimes different two texts in Latin or French went on the same time. The medieval motet then is a polytextual (more than one) vocal composition, either sacred or secular; it may or may not have had instrumental accompaniment.

Ex- “A dieu” by Adam de la Halle

( secular motet, 13 century, polytextual- with 3 voice each with different text)

- **Gregorian chant**

Gregorian chant also known as plainchant or plainsong. It is monophonic texture, lacking harmonic and counterpoint. Gregorian chant avoids wide leap and dynamic contrasts, allowing its gentle contours to creates a kind of musical speech.(kyrie)

- **Text setting**

- **Syllabic** – 1 note set to each syllable of text.



"messiah", Handel

Hal - le lu - jah Hal - le lu - jah Hal - le lu - jah Hal - le lu - jah

This musical example shows a syllabic text setting in G major, 4/4 time. Each syllable of the text 'Hal - le lu - jah' is set to a single note, with a quarter rest following each syllable. The melody is simple and stepwise, characteristic of Gregorian chant.

- **Neumatic** – a few notes set to 1 syllable.

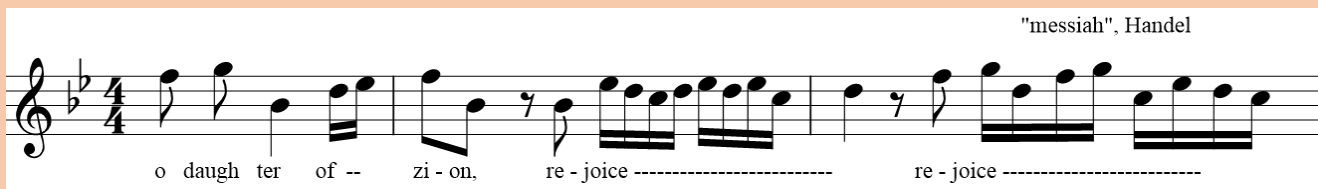


"messiah", Handel

and he shall reign ----- and he shall reigin - for

This musical example shows a neumatic text setting in G major, 4/4 time. The text 'and he shall reign' is set to a group of four notes, followed by a long dash indicating a melisma. The text 'and he shall reigin - for' is set to a group of four notes, with a dash after 'reigin'.

- **Melismatic** – many notes set to 1 syllable .



"messiah", Handel

o daugh ter of -- zi - on, re - joice ----- re - joice -----

This musical example shows a melismatic text setting in G major, 4/4 time. The text 'o daugh ter of -- zi - on,' is set to a group of four notes, followed by a long dash. The text 're - joice' is set to a group of four notes, followed by a long dash. The melody is more complex and includes a melisma.

- **Medieval Mass**

The services of the Roman Catholic Church can be divided into two categories: the daily Offices and the Mass. The Offices are a series of services celebrated at various hours of the day in the monasteries and convents. The collection of prayers that makes up the mass fall into two categories

- ✓ **The Proper Mass -**

Texts that vary from day to day.

- ✓ **The Ordinary Mass**

Text that remains the same in every mass

#### Chant

features monophonic,  
nonmetric melodies set in one of the church **modes**, or scales.