

Hear the Music; Meet the People

Imagine you are traveling back in time to hear the music of people who lived in different centuries and countries. Whatever year and country you choose, the music there will sound unique because the people of that time and place created it.

The history of music spans all times and places. This expedition will take you through art music in Europe and the United States, with a few detours along the way.

1000

1200

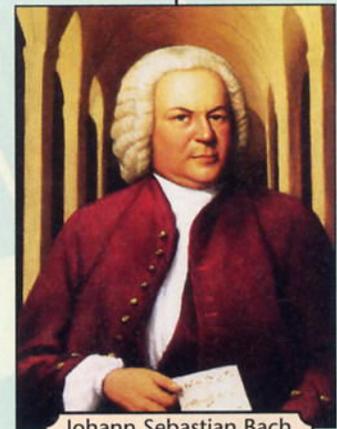
1500

1600



Hildegard von Bingen
(1098–1179)

Medieval
(1100–1450)



Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Renaissance
(1450–1600)

To begin the journey, **listen** to these excerpts. Try to match each excerpt to the person who created it or to a point on the time line. What qualities of the music give you clues about the answers?



5-18

Montage of Historical Styles

as composed and performed by different people from many times and places

This listening montage includes eight excerpts, each from a different time.



Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)



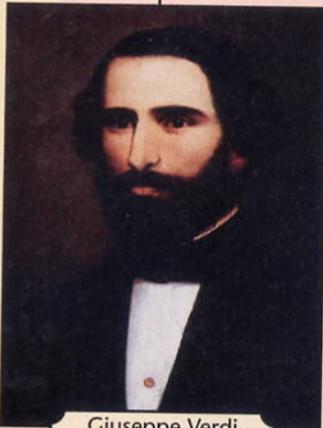
Gustav Holst
(1874–1934)



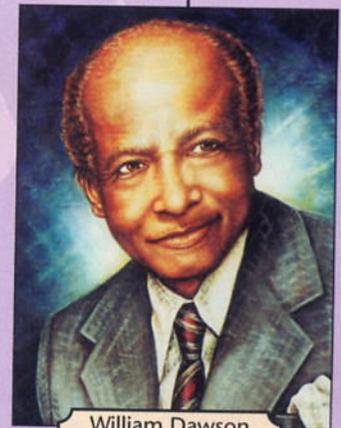
Bright Sheng
(born 1955)



Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)



Giuseppe Verdi
(1813–1901)



William Dawson
(1899–1990)

Baroque
(1600–1750)

CLASSICAL
(1750–1830)

Romantic
(1830–1900)

MODERN
(1900–Present)



CHANT

A WORLDWIDE TRADITION

The music we make with our voices can vary from a “plainsong” to a decorative melody that flows across an octave or more. Plainsong is also called **chant**.

In the days of the Roman Empire, monks developed a highly artistic style of chant that was heard not only in Rome but from Syria and North Africa through Europe to the British Isles and Ireland.

Listen to this chant. **Describe** the melody and the quality of the voices in this recording.



O ignis spiritus Paracliti (O Holy Fire that Soothes the Spirit)

by Hildegard von Bingen
 as performed by the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, England
 Hildegard is one of the few Medieval composers whose music still survives.

chant A type of singing, with a simple, unaccompanied melody line and free rhythm.

Music MAKERS

Hildegard von Bingen

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179) was a German abbess who was known for her work in literature, science, medicine, and music. She spent most of her life in an abbey, (a religious institution) where she wrote poems and set them to music. Some of her chants are very simple, but she also composed highly decorative melodies.

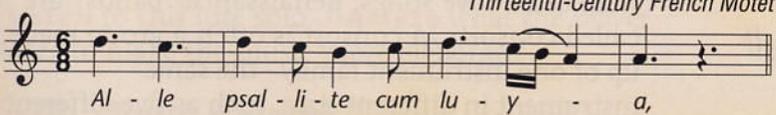


Medieval Pop

The heyday of chant in Europe spanned the eighth through the fifteenth centuries. Can you imagine a song style today that will last for 800 years? Chanting voices were heard in churches, monasteries, and processions through village streets. Sometimes chant melodies were combined and harmonies were produced, as in this **motet** below.

Sing this chant melody from *Alle psallite cum luya*. Then follow the melody as you **listen** to this Medieval *motet* from France.

Thirteenth-Century French Motet



Al - le psal - li - te cum lu - y - a,

Alle psallite cum luya (Alle, Praise with, luia)

Anonymous

5-27 as performed by Revels, conducted by John Langstaff

This *motet* was found in a manuscript collection called the Montpellier Codex.

Everybody Chants

Chant knows no boundaries. People from many cultures use chant as a way to perform poetry, express religious beliefs, or honor ancestors.

Listen to three examples of chant. Make a list and **evaluate** them for their chant-like characteristics. How many—or how few—itches do you hear in these chants?

Chant Montage

5-28 These selections from Algeria and Japan show how people from different parts of the world perform chants.

Chants have also been performed in North America for many hundreds of years. **Listen** to this Native American chant. Compare it to the chants you have already heard.

Bear Dance

5-30 from the Southern Ute people of Colorado as performed by the American Indian Dance Theater

This chant celebrates the time of year when bears awaken from their winter's sleep.

motet Medieval or Renaissance unaccompanied vocal music with two or more simultaneous melody lines. The music serves the words: *mot* is the French word for "word."

▲ Ute bear dancers

Oldies but Goodies

Picture this: A knight in armor rides off to battle. Next to his heart he carries the handkerchief of his lady love. Before leaving, he has written her a love poem and has just sung it beneath her window. Will he return and marry her? No, she is probably from a higher class of society and promised to another. But to the knight she is the “ideal woman” whom he will love and serve but never win. The concept of courtly love was found in France and Germany in medieval times.

Love, Medieval Style

In southern France in the 1200s, there were traveling singer/poets who composed and sang many songs about courtly love. They were called *troubadours*. One troubadour song is *Ahi! Amours*, written in the time of the Crusades. In this song, a knight is going off to war. Read the English meaning of the text. Then **listen** to this old love song.

*Alas, Love, how hard it is to part
A better lady never was loved or served
May God bring me back to her in his sweetness
inasmuch as I depart in pain.
Alas! What have I said? I will not leave her:
even as my body goes to serve our Lord,
my heart remains completely in her service.*



Ahi! Amours

by Conon de Bethune
4-30 as performed by the Early Music Consort of London, conducted by David Munrow
The language of this song is Medieval French.

Medieval rhythm was organized in **modes**. The next Medieval song you will hear is based on this simple rhythm: ♩ ♪

modes Small rhythmic ideas based on groupings of 3 used in Medieval music.

Arts Connection

Scenes of courtly love often appeared on armor like this wooden Medieval kite shield from the 1400s.



Listen to *O tocius Asie*. The vocal parts weave in and out independently. **Describe** what the accompanying instrument parts do.



O tocius Asie (Oh, Glory of All Asia)

Anonymous
4-31 as performed by the Early Music Consort of London, conducted by David Munrow
This song was composed by an unknown musician during the time of the Crusades.



Take It to the Net To learn more about Medieval and Renaissance music, visit www.sfsuccessnet.com.

Folger Consort, with guest artists Trefoil (vocal trio) performing at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. ▶



Madrigals— Popular Hits of the Renaissance

The outstanding **secular** vocal music of the 1500s was the **madrigal**. In some phrases, the voice parts move together in **homophonic** texture. In other phrases, the voice parts move independently, creating **polyphonic** texture.

Listen to *Ombrose e care selve*, in which the composer, Luca Marenzio writes about the beauty of nature and how it compares to Amaryllis and Thirsis' love. **Listen** for musical elements that create a mood of longing in this song.



Luca Marenzio



Ombrose e care selve

4-32 by Luca Marenzio
as performed by the Folger Consort
Love songs like this one were popular in the Renaissance Era.

English Madrigals

The madrigal next caught on in England. Follow the lyrics as you **listen** to *The Silver Swan*. The poetry expresses the composer's reflections on death, and the virtue of silence.

*The silver swan, who living had no note,
When death approached unlocked her silent
throat.*

*Leaning her breast against the reedy shore,
Thus sang her first and last and sang no more.
Farewell, all joys, oh death come close mine eyes.
More geese than swans now live, more fools
than wise.*



Orlando Gibbons



The Silver Swan

4-33 by Orlando Gibbons
as performed by the
Hilliard Ensemble
Orlando Gibbons
wrote the words and
the music for this
madrigal.

English madrigals could also be lighthearted. **Listen** for the *fa la la* refrains in *Sing We and Chant It*.

secular Nonreligious in nature.

madrigal An unaccompanied song for four to six voices with poetic text that was developed in Italy.

homophonic Melody supported by harmony.

polyphonic Music consisting of two or more independent melodies sung or played together.



Sing We and Chant It

4-34 by Thomas Morley
as performed by the Folger Consort
The original version of this lighthearted song was composed by Giovanni Gastoldi and published in 1591.