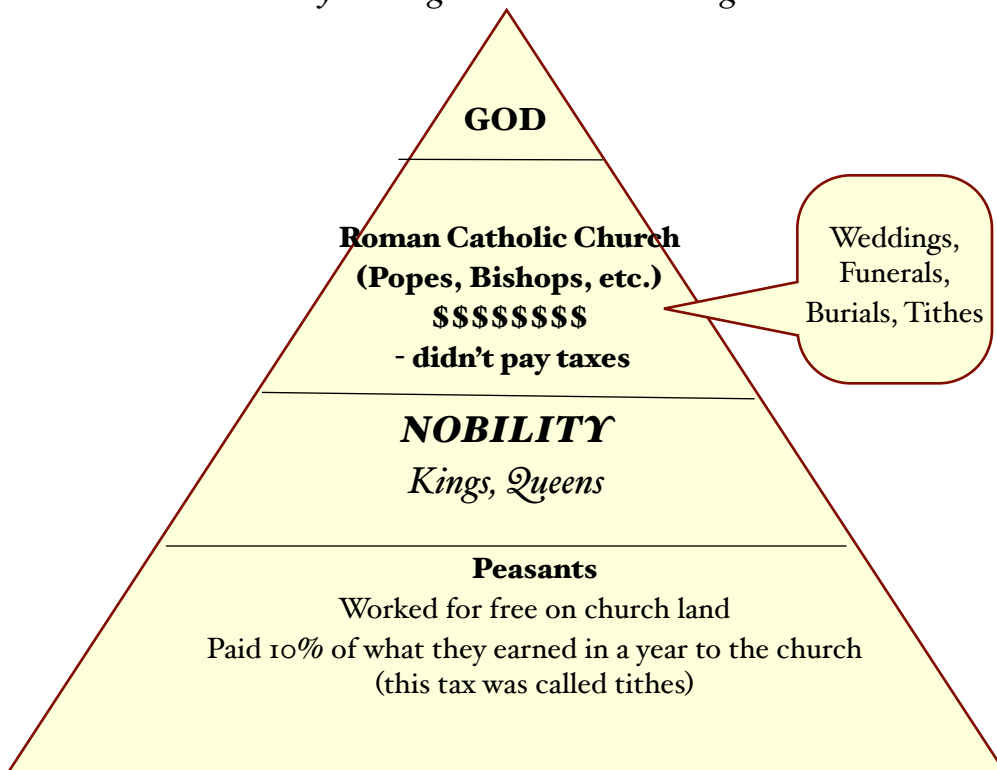


Middle Ages

A Hierarchical Age

Society was organized into interacting levels



Hildegard of Bingen

Hildegard of Bingen was a remarkable woman, especially for the Middle Ages. She was a theologian, a writer, a dabbler in early medicine with extensive knowledge of herbs, and a composer of plainchant. She was the first woman to compose chants.



During the medieval period, another churchman became well known for his connections with plainchant.

Pope Gregory is remembered for compiling the body of chants that retains his name: Gregorian chant.



This age looked unfavorably on scientific discoveries and adventurous thinkers.

The important cultural center was the monastery. The monasteries were microcosms of medieval society, with a complex organization that used the talents of each member for the good

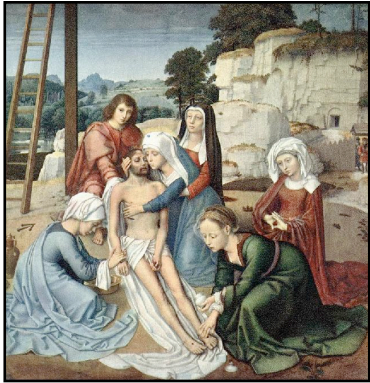
of the community. Some monks farmed, cooked, and built and maintained buildings; others copied manuscripts, taught, worked as musical soloists and composers. In this stable atmosphere grew the first and largest body of medieval *music*, the *chants* of the liturgy.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

1) The rise of universities and scholastic movement, in some ways signaled the end of medieval culture, because the emphasis was shifted from the authority of the church to the questing of man's mind.

2) A rearrangement of entire society caused by the ravages of the "Black Plague", which killed a third of the people of Europe.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE ARTS WAS TO PROMOTE THE WORSHIP OF GOD AND REINFORCE THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH.



Medieval Art.

MUSICAL DEVELOPMENTS

During the middle ages , the typical composer was an anonymous monk, who composed chants for his monastery's liturgies. He also sang in the choir or directed. Another group of musicians were the **jongleurs**, or **minstrels**, who travelled from place to place performing troubadour songs for aristocrats. Another important group wrote treatises about music, and an endless series of discussions about the purpose and basic ideas of music poured from these men.

One of the most significant developments was the gradual evolution of **notation**. It was not an overnight invention. Some of the earlier systems are difficult to decipher, and the world's scholars are still not

completely sure how to interpret some of the systems developed in the medieval period. The first notation that we know of appeared about A.D. 900 and was used in liturgical books. This early notation was not pitch specific, that is, one could not sight read it with any accuracy. It simply indicated on which syllables the cluster of notes appeared and what types of neumes, or clusters of notes, were included. Every note of the chant melody is depicted, but one is not made aware what note to start on, how wide the intervals are, or what any particular note is. **This notation was intended as a memory aid for singers who had already learned the melodies by rote.**

EARLY EXAMPLES OF NOTATION

When **polyphony** began to appear around the year 1400, the question of notation became enormously more complicated. If two or more voices are to be coordinated and synchronized, the notation must include not only pitch, but also rhythm and alignment of the various voices. By about 1300 a system was established which was very much like our own, with different shapes and colors of notes indicating different time values.



CRUCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

POLYPHONY

MUSIC THEORY

SECULAR SONGS

PITCH SPECIFIC NOTATION

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Although most medieval music is vocal, and very little music was written specifically for instruments, instruments were used, especially in vocal music. Some of the most common medieval instruments consisted of ***bowed string instruments (imported from Arab lands), harps, plucked string instruments, various wind instruments, and organ.*** Instruments were usually used to double the vocal line in polyphonic secular music of the period. Percussion instruments - bells and small drums - were used for rhythmic punctuation.



VOCABULARY AND NOTES

motet : polyphonic vocal music. Bottom voices sang a chant and upper voices added melodies on top.

imitative: when a melodic idea from one voice is repeated in another.

melisma: melodic line with many pitches for a single syllable

motive: a short repeated pattern, either melodic or rhythmic

syllabic: a melodic line with one pitch for each syllable.

sacred:

secular:

polyphonic:

monophonic: