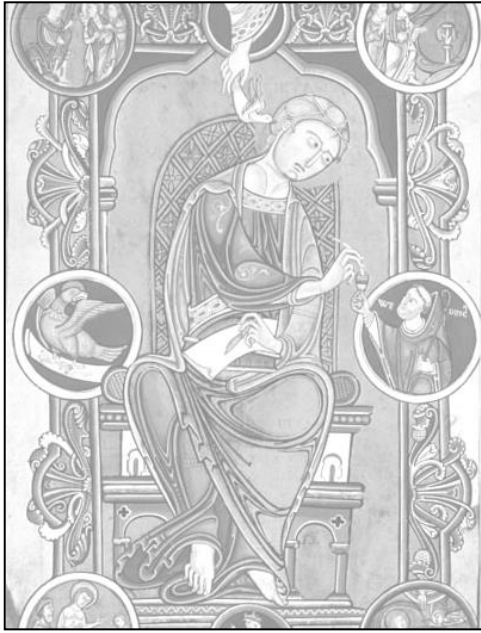




Music has always been an important and integral part of the Church. During the 'Dark' and 'Middle' Ages, the Church was in control of all of the arts, including music. During this time all church music was vocal and was used to teach hymns and to put emphasis on and to support the meanings of the words.

GREGORIAN CHANT, or PLAINSONG, was composed as a single-line chant melody to be sung in unison without any type of harmony to support it. The rhythm of Gregorian Chant is a free rhythm – similar to speaking to music. During the later Middle Ages (from the 9th century on), other voice parts were added to the original chant melodies. This was the beginning of polyphony (which means “many melodies”).

Music in the Middle Ages was largely the preserve of the church. Surviving medieval sources were mostly produced by

monastic scribes, and kept in monastery libraries. While secular music existed, much of it was improvised, so the earliest music to survive was generally intended for sacred use.

The names of individual composers become scarcer the further back into history we travel. Among the earliest musicians who may be singled out from the 12th and early 13th centuries are the French composers Leonin and Perotin, who were associated with the newly built cathedral of Notre—Dame in Paris, as well as the visionary music of the 12th century nun Hildegard von Bingen, who not only has the distinction of being one of the earliest known composers, but was also a woman working in a field where women have traditionally not been prominent.



Soldiers of the world have always marched to music, even if it was only the rhythmic tread of their own feet. By 1600 BCE, Egyptians were marching to trumpet and drum and, a thousand years later, Roman trumpeters played on the march. Military bands came to the attention of western Europeans during the Crusades from the 11th to 13th centuries, when they encountered bands consisting of sunray (oboes), nafir (trumpets) buq (horns) and naqqara (kettledrums). During the late Middle Ages European armies began to copy these bands loosely, employing combinations of viols, shawms, bagpipes, trumpets and drums (seen above right). The duties of the musicians were mainly to play at tournaments and to accompany the soldiers on campaign.

Some Important Definitions

MONOPHONIC	Single unaccompanied melody sung in unison
PLAINCHANT	A single melody written for unison voices, with words in Latin. An early form of church music also known as plainsong or Gregorian Chant
SACRED	Music written for the Church
SECULAR	Those compositions that are not sacred. They have no connection to religion.
ORGANUM	An early form of harmony in which a second melody was performed along with the original plainchant melody
MINSTREL	A poet-musician who traveled from castle to castle singing secular songs
ORGAN	Keyboard instrument, used in church, where bellows force air into pipes, producing sound
LUTE	A stringed instrument, like a guitar, but with a rounded back

Some Important Composers

Romanos the Melodist	c.490-c.560
William IX, Duke of Aquitaine	1071-1127
St Hildegard of Bingen	1098-1179
Perotin the Great	c.1200

