

A HISTORY *of* — 9TH —
EDITION
WESTERN MUSIC

J. PETER BURKHOLDER

DONALD JAY GROUT

CLAUDE V. PALISCA



NINTH EDITION

A HISTORY
of
WESTERN MUSIC

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A HISTORY
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J. PETER BURKHOLDER

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In memory of

Donald L. Burkholder
(1927–2013)

He loved this book.



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PREFACE TO THE NINTH EDITION

THE STORY OF A HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

The science fiction writer Ursula K. LeGuin once wrote, “The story—from *Rumpelstiltskin* to *War and Peace*—is one of the basic tools invented by the human mind, for the purpose of gaining understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.”

A History of Western Music is a story about where music in the Western tradition came from and how it has changed over the centuries from ancient times to the present. The story naturally focuses on the musical works, styles, genres, and ideas that have proven most influential, enduring, and significant. Yet it also encompasses a wide range of music, from religious to secular, from serious to humorous, from art music to popular music, and from Europe to the Americas. In telling this tale, I have tried to bring several themes to the fore:

the people who created, performed, heard, and paid for this music;
the choices they made and why they made them;
what they valued most in the music; and
how these choices reflected both tradition and innovation.

We study music history in part because it gives greater understanding to all music, past and present. It may be surprising to discover how much and how often musicians from ancient times to the present have borrowed from musical traditions of other lands or earlier eras. Repertoires from Gregorian chant to Baroque opera represent a fusion of elements from many regions, and musicians in Europe and the Americas have been trading ideas for more than four centuries. Composers from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century drew inspiration from ancient Greek music. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Schoenberg, and many composers living today all borrowed ideas from music written long before they were born. It may be even more surprising to learn that jazz arrangers used harmonies they heard in music by Debussy and Ravel, or that the multiple simultaneous melodic and textual layers in hip hop music were first tried out in the thirteenth-century motet. It is not that there is nothing new under the sun, but that almost anything new is a fresh twist on what has become traditional. Sometimes what seems newest is actually borrowed in part from music of the distant past.

We may also be surprised to learn that things we take for granted about music have not always been around. Pop music aimed at teenagers first emerged after World War II. Most wind and brass instruments assumed their current form in the mid-nineteenth century or later. Concerts of music from the past, which are standard features of today’s musical life, first appeared in the eighteenth century and were rare before the nineteenth. Tonality, our common musical language of major and minor keys, is not even as old as New York City. Knowing the origins of these and other aspects of musical life increases our understanding.

Many questions about music can only be answered historically. Why do we use a seven-note diatonic scale? Why do we have a notation system with lines, staves, clefs, and noteheads? Why do operas have recitatives? Why is the music of Haydn and Mozart called “classical”? Why do Bach and Schumann often use the same rhythmic figure in measure after measure, while Mozart and Schoenberg rarely do? How did jazz change from being a popular form of dance music to a kind of art music? None of these has a common-sense answer, but all can be answered by tracing their history. As a rule, if something does not make sense, there is a historical reason for it, and only knowing its history can explain it.

It is with these themes in mind that I have written the new Ninth Edition of *A History of Western Music*. The text is structured in short chapters and arranged in six parts corresponding to broad historical periods—**The Ancient and Medieval Worlds, The Renaissance, The Seventeenth Century, The Eighteenth Century, The Nineteenth Century, and The Twentieth Century and After**. The parts are further divided into subperiods, each treated in one to three chapters. The first chapter in each chronological segment begins with a summary of the times in order to orient you to some of the most important themes of the era. In addition, each chapter starts with an overview of the music that will be discussed and ends with a sketch of its reception and ongoing impact. By structuring the narrative of music history in this fashion, I have attempted to establish a social and historical context for each repertoire and to suggest its legacy and its significance today. The heart of each chapter explores changing musical styles, the primary composers, genres, and works, and the tension between tradition and innovation, always trying to make clear what is important, where it fits, why it matters, and who cares. Each part, each chapter, and each section tells a story that is in some ways complete in itself but also connects to all the others, like pearls on a string, to form a single narrative thread rooted in human choices and values.

USING THE BOOK

A History of Western Music, Ninth Edition, is designed for maximum readability. The narrative is accompanied by many features to assist you:

- **Brief Part Introductions** highlight the most important themes in each period.
- **Chapter Overviews and Summaries** establish social and historical context at the outset and reception history and musical legacy at

356 CHAPTER 15 • Music for Chamber and Church in the Early Seventeenth Century

ORATORIO

Italy had a long tradition of religious music outside church services, such as the lauda. In seventeenth-century Rome, a new genre of religious dramatic music emerged, combining narrative, dialogue, and commentary. Toward midcentury, such works became known as *oratorios* after the Italian word *oratorio*, or prayer hall, where lay societies met to contemplate, hear sermons, and sing laudas and other devotional songs.

Like operas, oratorios used recitatives, arias, duets, and instrumental preludes and ensembles, but oratorios differed from operas in several ways: their subject matter was religious; they were seldom if ever staged; action was described or suggested rather than played out; there was often a narrator; and the chorus—usually an ensemble of several voices singing one to a part—could take various roles, from participating in the drama to narrating or meditating on events.

Oratorio librettos were in Italian or in Latin, and despite general similarities the two types served somewhat different purposes. Since they were in the vernacular, Italian oratorios were a useful tool for the Catholic Church to spread its message of faith to commoners and nobles alike. Italian oratorios resembled operas very closely and could provide a high-minded alternative to the theatrical form that was at times condemned as sinful by the church. Often the same singers were hired to sing operas and oratorios, helping to blur the stylistic differences between the genres. However, especially early on, the Italian oratorio repertory was not as carefully preserved, since it was considered functional music to spread the faith. The Latin oratorio, on the other hand, was more cherished by the church elite, because like early operas for aristocratic courts, it was presented by invitation only, with the most sophisticated composers vying for patronage.

The leading composer of Latin oratorios was Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674). His *Alphesée* (ca. 1640) exemplifies the midcentury oratorio. The libretto is based on chapters 11–20 of the Bible, with some paraphrasing. In recitative, the narrator introduces the story. Then Jephthah, an heroic general, vows that if the Lord gives him victory in the impending battle, he will sacrifice whatever comes first to greet him on his return home. Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites is recounted by the ensemble of six singers, with appropriate effects including *aria cantata*. The narrator relates in recitative how Jephthah returns home in triumph, but the Lord gives him as his daughter, to be most sacrifice for. Songs of rejoicing for victory are set as solo arias, duets, and ensembles, followed by a dialogue in recitative between father and daughter. The chorus tells how the daughter goes to the mountains with her companions to bewail her approaching death. In the final scene (NINETEEN), she sings a lament, a long, affecting recitative. Two sopranos, representing her companions, echo some of her cadential flourishes. The response by the chorus of six voices employs both polyphonic and madrigalian effects, including the descending ostinato bass associated with laments.

LUTHERAN CHURCH MUSIC

In the sacred concertos of Gabrieli, Grandi, Vittoria, and Cavallini, the oratorios of Carissimi, and other Catholic sacred music, we see composers using a wide range of styles with both secular and religious origins to convey the church's message to their chorists. Theatrical effectiveness was prized for above anything else. In these works, the primacy of the text and instrumental declamation was central.

Lutheran Church Music

In German-speaking regions, composers in both the Catholic and Lutheran churches saw task up the new mensural and contrapuntal techniques. Sacred music in Austria and Catholic southern Germany remained under strong Italian influence, with Italian composers particularly active in Munich, Salzburg, Prague, and Vienna. Composers in the Lutheran central and northern regions explored the new *madrigal*, sometimes using chorale tunes or texts. Although compositions in modern style, Lutheran composers continued to write polyphonic chorale motets and motets on biblical texts without chorale melodies.

Many biblical motets by Hans Leo Hasler, Michael Praetorius, and others in the early seventeenth century were in the large-scale concerto medium, showing German administration for the Venetian fashion. The small sacred concerto was even more common. Here the most influential figures were Vittoria, whose works included in German-speaking lands, and Johann Hermann Schein (1586–1630), who published two important collections in 1610 and 1620 in Leipzig, both titled *Stella nova* (New Little World). The first book consists chiefly of duets with continuo and chorales, freely paraphrasing the chorale melodies, inserting word-embellishments, and dividing phrases among the voices. In these works Schein blends the Lutheran chorale tradition with the modern Italian style. The second book includes more chorales, but most pieces are on the same text and settings are more varied, often using one or more solo instruments and contrasting solo with ensemble voices. Schein's sacred concertos set a precedent for a long series of similar works by Lutheran composers.

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ

Heinrich Schütz (1587–1672) was a master at applying the new Italian style to church music. He studied in Venice with Giovanni Gabrieli, visited again during Monteverdi's years there, and brought their approaches back to Germany, where he was chapel master at the Saxon court in Dresden (see biography, p. 338). He is particularly renowned for writing music that captures the meanings and images of the text. Although he was a Lutheran composer at a Lutheran court, he seldom used chorale melodies in his sacred music, preferring to create motets and sacred concertos on texts from the Bible and other sources.

- **NEW Streamlined Timelines** in every chapter set the music in a social and historical context, facilitating a clear view of the interrelationship between musical and historical events—of what happened when.
- **Four-Color Maps** establish a location and context for the musical events and works.
- **Vivid Artwork and Photographs** throughout provide essential cultural context and highlight important ideas, architecture, people, and events, including portraits of many of the composers and performers discussed.
- **Detailed Diagrams** clarify forms of musical works and genres to help you grasp some of the essential structures of music.
- **Cross-references to the accompanying scores and recordings** are found throughout the text. The scores are identified by their numbers in the *Norton Anthology of Western Music (NAWM)*, Seventh Edition. Symbols in the margins indicate which pieces are in the Concise edition of this text (all of them are in the Full version).

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A. ARIA (SOLO OR WITH CHORUS)

Orchestral introduction	Stanza	Chorus	Tempo di mezzo (middle movement)	Cadetta
	recitative	usually slow	changes tempo, modulates, includes ornament, ensemble, or chorus	usually fast

B. DUET OR ENSEMBLE

Orchestral introduction	Stanza	Tempo di mezzo (opening section)	Tempo di mezzo	Cadetta
-------------------------	--------	----------------------------------	----------------	---------

FIGURE 27.3 Some structures in Baroque operas.

structure that distributed the story more evenly and integrated new plot developments or changes of mood within an aria or ensemble. A continuous succession of architecturally accompanied recitatives, solo arias, duets, ensembles, and choruses all contributed to advancing the plot, with both soloists and choruses playing more significant roles than had in previous Italian operas. As shown in Figure 27.3, a typical scene begins with an instrumental introduction and a recitative section (called a *stanzza*, Italian for “scene”) that is accompanied by the orchestra. The opening aria has two main sections: a slow, lyrical *cantabile* and a lively and brilliant *colabete*. The *cantabile* expresses relatively calm moods such as pensive, sad, or hope, and the *colabete* more active feelings such as anger or joy. Fair or all the *colabete* is repeated, perhaps with improvised embellishments. Some arias, like *Una voce poco fa* from *The Barber of Seville* (NWM 115), have these two sections only, but in most arias, we also find a middle section between the *cantabile* and the *colabete* called the *tempo di mezzo* (middle movement), which is usually some kind of transition or interruption by other characters and in which something happens to alter the situation or the character's mood. A duet or ensemble has a similar form (as in the duet from Verdi's *La traviata* in NWM 110), but the *cantabile* is usually preceded by an opening section (called *scena cantata*) in which the characters trade melodic phrases. The finale of an act is normally an action piece that brings together most or all of the characters and is organized in *scene sections*, employing *arias* or *tragic scenes* and key to accommodate the rapid changes of situation and emotion taking place on stage. The action often culminates in a fast *allegro* corresponding to the *colabete* in an aria or ensemble.

Rossini's basic format could be flexibly applied to suit almost any dramatic situation, and his structure created a dramatic progression from one mood to idea to another while allowing more than two contrasting moods to be presented within a coherent form. In line with the traditional role of Italian opera as a vehicle for virtuoso singing, this structure also provided singers with an opportunity to show a wide range of emotions and vocal effects, from lyrical beauty to sparkling prestidigitations.

Considered today Rossini's most popular opera, *The Barber of Seville* combines features of opera buffa with bel canto tradition. The main character,

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Video excerpts from Metropolitan Opera productions are indicated in the margins. The Ninth Edition features over two hours of stunning performances, from Cluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* to Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, and access to streaming excerpts is included free with every new text.

For Further Reading, collected at the back of the book, provides an up-to-date bibliography corresponding to each part, chapter, and section.

FIGURE 27.1 Ben-jamin Britten (right) and Peter Pears in the history of the 64th Stages in about 1914, when Britten was working on his opera *Peter Grimes*, now considered one of the greatest operas ever written.

FIGURE 27.2 Ben-jamin Britten (right) and Peter Pears in the history of the 64th Stages in about 1914, when Britten was working on his opera *Peter Grimes*, now considered one of the greatest operas ever written.

FIGURE 27.3 Some structures in Baroque operas.

USING THE ANTHOLOGY AND RECORDINGS

Although this book stands on its own as a narrative history, your understanding will be enriched by using it in tandem with the accompanying anthology and recordings:

- Available in three spiral-bound volumes, the *Norton Anthology of Western Music (NAWM)*, Seventh Edition, by J. Peter Burkholder and Claude V. Palisca (Volume 1: Ancient to Baroque/Volume 2: Classic to Romantic/Volume 3: The Twentieth Century and After), provides a comprehensive collection of scores, illustrating the most significant musical trends, genres, and national schools in the Western world from antiquity to the present. Thirty-nine pieces are new to this edition, including five selections from the past fifteen years, offering unprecedented access to recent music.
- Each piece is followed by commentary that relates the piece's origins; describes its form, contents, and important stylistic traits; and addresses issues of the edition and performance when appropriate. In addition, all foreign-language texts are accompanied by English translations.
- The **recordings** that accompany the anthology include outstanding performances of the entire NAWM repertoire by some of the best

musicians and ensembles working today (see below, pp. xxxviii–xxxix). A variety of formats—including streaming and MP3 discs—are now available. Fifty-six performances are new to this edition.

USING TOTAL ACCESS

The new Total Access program unlocks a full suite of media resources with every new book, including:

- **Streaming recordings** of the entire *Norton Anthology of Western Music* repertoire.
- Stunning **Metropolitan Opera video** of scenes from selected operas.
- An **interactive ebook** that allows you to take notes, highlight, and listen to audio examples at the click of a mouse.
- **NEW listening quizzes** by Jessie Fillerup and Joanna Love.

To access these resources and more, go to wnnorton.com/studyspace and register with the code in the front of this book.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

ABOUT THE TEXT

The new Ninth Edition of *A History of Western Music* offers the most current, authoritative scholarship available. Each chapter has been revised and updated to reflect recent research and to incorporate suggestions from reviewers and instructors.

A new final chapter on music in the twenty-first century brings the story up to the present, with a focus on new technologies for producing, distributing, and hearing music and on growing trends toward fusion of traditions to create new approaches to music. The discussion of music in the twentieth century has been reorganized both to delineate the differences between vernacular and classical traditions and to emphasize the commonalities between them. Such common themes include engagement with political and social concerns between the wars, the emergence of music of the Americas onto the world stage, and shared trends in the decades after World War II such as increasing demands on performers and listeners, focus on attentive listening, experimentation with new techniques, and incorporation of non-Western traditions.

Throughout the text, there is greater emphasis on performers and performance, including In Performance sidebars on major performers from ancient times to today and on issues such as historically informed performance, the use of voices or instruments in performing medieval and Renaissance secular music, the careers of performers from medieval minstrels to a modern string quartet, how to add embellishment and ornamentation to music from the Renaissance and Baroque eras through the nineteenth century, and the changing relationships between opera singers and composers.

ABOUT THE ANTHOLOGY AND RECORDINGS

Responding to extensive feedback from instructors and students, I have expanded the repertoire in the Seventh Edition of the *Norton Anthology of Western Music* from 205 to 220 works, with new works from the late Middle Ages by Petrus de Cruce, Philippe de Vitry, Guillaume de Machaut, and Francesco Landini; from the Renaissance by Josquin Desprez, Marchetto Cara, Nicolas Gombert, Thomas Tallis, Anthony Holborne, and William Byrd; from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Jean-Baptiste Lully, Georg Philipp Telemann, Johann Sebastian Bach, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and Joseph Haydn; from the nineteenth century by Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Anton Bruckner, and Gabriel Fauré; from the twentieth century by Richard Strauss, Maurice Ravel, Edgard Varèse, Alban Berg, Kurt Weill, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Silvestre Revueltas, Leonard Bernstein, and Vincent Persichetti; and from the twenty-first century by Elliott Carter, Kaija Saariaho, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, and Jennifer Higdon.

The anthology emphasizes complete works or movements. Each work selected is a good teaching piece—representative of its period, genre, and composer. Major composers such as Machaut, Landini, Du Fay, Josquin, Byrd, Gabrieli, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, John Cage, and John Adams are represented by multiple works, reflecting the composers' range of style. Other pieces reveal chains of development, including genres, conventions, forms, and techniques, from the mass to sonata form and from counterpoint to serialism. Selections encompass not only the standard canon but also music from Spain, Eastern Europe, and the Americas; music of the African American tradition; music by women; and music by living composers.

The newly expanded recorded anthology features updated recordings from some of the best performers and ensembles working today alongside classic recordings by great artists, including:

- Early music ensembles Academy of Ancient Music, Altramar, Anonymous 4, Les Art Florissants, Chapelle Royale, Chiaroscuro, Circa 1500, Concerto Cologne, Concerto Vocale, Dunedin Consort and Players, English Baroque Soloists, Ex Cathedra, Gabrieli Consort, Gothic Voices, The Harp Consort, Hilliard Ensemble, His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Lionheart, London Baroque, Martin Best Medieval Ensemble, Orlando Consort, Sequentia, Tallis Scholars, Theatre of Voices, and La Venexiana.
- Singers Elly Ameling, Bryan Asawa, Julianne Baird, Cecilia Bartoli, Bethany Beardslee, Ian Bostridge, Montserrat Caballé, Paul Elliott, Gerald Finley, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Renée Fleming, Ellen Hargis, Paul Hillier, Lorraine Hunt, Emma Kirkby, Guillemette Laurens, Evelyn Lear, Christa Ludwig, Ethel Merman, Birgit Nilsson, Nigel Rogers, Renata Scottò, William Sharp, Bessie Smith, Joan Sutherland, and Furio Zanasi.

- Harpsichordists Gustav Leonhardt, Byron Schenkman, Geneviève Soly, and Colin Tinley.
- Lutenists Eduardo Egüez, Lex Eisenhardt, Paul O'Dette, and Hopkinson Smith.
- Violinists James Ehnes, Gidon Kramer, Sigiswald Kuijken, Ingrid Matthews, and Jaap Schröder.
- Cellist Yo-Yo Ma.
- Pianists Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Malcolm Bilson, Aldo Ciccolini, Henry Cowell, Jörg Demus, Scott Joplin, Lili Kraus, Jelly Roll Morton, Ursula Oppens, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Artur Schnabel, Rudolf Serkin, and Yuji Takahashi.
- Orchestras Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique, San Francisco Symphony, Members of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and Vienna Philharmonic.
- Conductors Marin Alsop, Herbert Blomstedt, Karl Böhm, Pierre Boulez, William Christie, Aaron Copland, Colin Davis, John Eliot Gardiner, Bernard Haitink, Philippe Herreweghe, René Jacobs, Paavo Järvi, Erich Leinsdorf, James Levine, Sir Charles Mackerras, Kent Nagano, Seiji Ozawa, Robert Shaw, Robert Spano, Igor Stravinsky, and Michael Tilson Thomas.
- Opera companies Bayreuth Festival Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Kirov Opera, and Royal Opera House at Covent Garden.
- Chamber ensembles the Concord String Quartet, Ensemble InterContemporain, Guarneri String Quartet, Kodály Quartet, Tokyo String Quartet, and Yuval Trio.
- Bands the Royal Artillery Band and United States Marine Band.
- Jazz artists Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Earl (Fatha) Hines, Charlie Parker, and Bud Powell.

USING THE INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCES

A History of Western Music, Ninth Edition, comes with a suite of instructor materials that have been carefully developed to align with the goals and content of the text.

- **Instructor's Resource Disc** is a helpful classroom tool that includes PowerPoint lecture slides—with audio excerpts—and all the art from the text.

- **Test Bank** by Anthony Barone (University of Nevada—Las Vegas), Stephanie Schlagel (College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati), and Laurel Zeiss (Baylor University) includes over 2,000 multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, matching, and essay questions. Some questions include musical examples, and each question is identified with a topic, question type (factual, conceptual, or applied), and difficulty level.
- **Instructor's Manual** by Roger Hickman (California State University—Long Beach) includes detailed teaching advice for new and experienced instructors alike. In addition to suggested syllabi, the manual contains an overview and list of learning objectives, lecture suggestions and class activities, discussion questions, and a comprehensive annotated bibliography.
- **Norton Coursepacks** enables students to access quizzes, recordings, and more via their campus learning management system. Organized by chapters in a playlist, all the recordings are available as streaming music within the coursepack, which also includes chapter diagnostic quizzes (with 25 questions per chapter exclusive to the coursepack), new listening quizzes for each musical work, flashcards, and more.
- **Norton Opera Sampler DVD** contains over two hours of top-quality live performances from the Metropolitan Opera. The DVD is available to adopters free of charge.

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No work of this magnitude can be written without a legion of help. My profound thanks to all who have contributed to the preparation of this Ninth Edition.

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Thanks finally but most of all to my family, especially my parents Donald

and Jean Burkholder, who introduced me to the love of music; Bill, Joanne, and Sylvie Burkholder, whose enthusiasm renewed my own; and P. Douglas McKinney, whose unending patience, encouragement, and support have sustained me through three editions over more than a dozen years. My father, who passed away during the final stages of revision, was always my biggest fan, showing my previous editions of this book to every visitor and giving copies to anyone he thought would enjoy it. This edition is dedicated to him.

—J. Peter Burkholder
October 2008

ABBREVIATIONS

- b.c.e. Before Common Era (equivalent to b.c.)
 c.e. Common Era (equivalent to a.d.)
 SR *Source Readings in Music History* (see "For Further Reading," p. A23, for citation code).

PITCH DESIGNATIONS

In this book, a note referred to without regard to its octave register is designated by a capital letter (A). A note in a particular octave is designated in italics, using the following system:

The image shows four musical staves illustrating pitch designations. The first two staves are in bass clef, and the last two are in treble clef. The first staff shows a whole note C on the first line (middle C) and a whole note B on the second line, with the label 'C to B' to the right. The second staff shows a whole note c on the first line (one octave below middle C) and a whole note b on the second line, with the label 'c to b' to the right. The third staff shows a whole note C' on the first line (middle C) and a whole note b' on the second line (one octave above middle C), with the label 'c' to b'' to the right. The fourth staff shows a whole note c'' on the first line (two octaves above middle C) and a whole note b'' on the second line (two octaves above middle C), with the label 'c'' to b''' to the right.



NINTH EDITION

A HISTORY
of
WESTERN MUSIC



• PART •

1

THE ANCIENT AND MEDIÉVAL WORLDS

Every aspect of today's music has a history, and many fundamental elements can be traced back thousands of years. Prehistoric societies developed instruments, pitches, melody, and rhythm. Early civilizations used music in religious ceremonies, to accompany dancing, for recreation, and in education—much as we do today. Ancient writers directly influenced our ways of thinking about music, from concepts such as notes, intervals, and scales, to notions of how music affects our feelings and character. Medieval musicians contributed further innovations, devising systems for notating pitch and rhythm that led to our own, creating pedagogical methods that teachers continue to use, and developing techniques of polyphony, harmony, form, and musical structure that laid the foundation for music in all subsequent eras. Church musicians sang chants that are still used today; court poets and musicians composed songs whose themes of love's delights and torments are reflected in songs of our time; and both church and secular musicians developed styles of melody that have influenced the music of later periods.

The music and musical practices of antiquity and the Middle Ages echo in our own music, and we know ourselves better if we understand our heritage. Yet only fragments survive from the musical cultures of the past, especially the distant past. So our first task is to consider how we can assemble those fragments to learn about a musical world of long ago.

Part Outline

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CHAPTER

1

MUSIC IN ANTIQUITY



The culture of Europe and the Americas—known as Western culture to distinguish it from the traditional cultures of Asia—has deep roots in the civilizations of antiquity. Our agriculture, writing, cities, and systems of trade derive from the ancient Near East. Our mathematics, calendar, astronomy, and medicine grew from Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman sources. Our philosophy is founded on Plato and Aristotle. Our primary religions, Christianity and Judaism, arose in the ancient Near East and were influenced by Greek thought. Our literature grew out of Greek and Latin traditions and drew on ancient myth and scripture. Our artists imitated ancient sculpture and architecture. From medieval empires to modern democracies, governments have looked to Greece and Rome for examples.

The music of Western culture, known as Western music, also has roots in antiquity, from the scales we use to the functions music serves. The strongest direct influence comes through Greek writings, which became the foundation for European views of music. The influence of ancient music itself is more difficult to trace. Little notated music survived, and few if any European musicians before the sixteenth century could read the ancient notation. Yet some musical practices continued, passed down through oral tradition.

These echoes of ancient music in the Western tradition are reason enough to begin our survey by examining the roles of music in ancient cultures, the links between ancient practices and those of later centuries, and the debt Western music owes to ancient Greece. Starting with ancient music also lets us consider how we can learn about music

of the past and what types of evidence we can use to reconstruct the history of music from any age.

Music is sound, and sound by its nature is impermanent. What remains of the music from past eras are its historical traces, of four main types: (1) *physical remains* such as musical instruments and performing spaces; (2) *visual images* of musicians, instruments, and performances; (3) *writings* about music and musicians; and (4) *music itself*, preserved in notation, through oral tradition, or (since the 1870s) in recordings. Using these traces, we can try to reconstruct what music of a past culture was like, recognizing that our understanding will always be partial and will be influenced by our own values and concerns.

We are most confident of success when we have all four types of evidence in abundance. But for ancient music, relatively little remains. Even for Greece, by far the best-documented ancient musical tradition, we have only a small portion of the instruments, images, writings, and music that once existed. For other cultures we have no music at all. By examining what traces survive and what we can conclude from them, we can explore how each type of evidence contributes to our understanding of music of the past.

The Earliest Music

The earliest evidence of music-making lies in surviving instruments and representations. In the Stone Age, people bored finger holes in animal bones and mammoth ivory to make whistles and flutes. Figure 1.1 shows one of the oldest and most complete bone flutes yet found in Europe, dating from about 40,000 B.C.E. Paleolithic cave paintings appear to show musical instruments being played. Pottery flutes, rattles, and drums were common in the Neolithic era, and wall paintings in Turkey from the sixth millennium B.C.E. show drummers playing for dancers and for the hunt, to drive out game. Such images provide our primary evidence for the roles music played in these cultures. Once people learned to work with metal, in the Bronze Age (beginning in the fourth millennium B.C.E.), they made metal instruments, including bells, jingles, cymbals, rattles, and horns. Plucked string instruments appeared around the same time, as shown on stone carvings; the instruments themselves were made of perishable materials, and few have survived.

Although we can learn about various facets of prehistoric musical cultures from images and archaeological remains, our understanding is severely limited by the lack of any written record. The invention of writing, which marked the end of the prehistoric period, added a new type of evidence, and it is with these accounts that the history of music properly begins.

Types of evidence



FIGURE 1.1: Front view of a bone flute made from the radius (wing bone) of a griffon vulture, unearthed in 2008 at Hohle Fels Cave in the Ach Valley in Swabia (southwestern Germany) and estimated to date from about 40,000 to 42,000 years ago. With five finger holes, it is the most complete of the early flutes yet recovered. (SASHA SCHUERMAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES)



FIGURE 1.2: The ancient Near East, showing the location of the main cities and civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Music in Ancient Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (now part of Iraq and Syria), was home to a number of peoples in ancient times. The map in Figure 1.2 shows several of the most important civilizations that developed there and in nearby regions over a span of more than two thousand years. Here in the fourth millennium B.C.E., the first true cities and civilizations emerged—from Nagar and Hamoukar in the north to Uruk in the south—and the Sumerians developed one of the first known forms of writing, using cuneiform (wedge-shaped) impressions on flat clay tablets. This system was adopted by later civilizations, including the Akkadians and the Babylonians. Many tablets have been deciphered, and some mention music.

Instruments and images

Archaeological remains and images are still crucial for understanding the music of this time. Pictures show how instruments were held and played and in what circumstances music was used, while surviving instruments reveal details of their construction. For example, archaeologists exploring the royal tombs at Ur, a Sumerian city on the Euphrates, found several **lyres** and **harps**, two kinds of plucked string instruments, as well as pictures of them being played, all from ca. 2500 B.C.E. In a lyre, the strings run parallel to the resonating soundboard and attach to a crossbar supported by two arms; in a harp, the strings are perpendicular to the soundboard, and the neck that supports them is attached directly to the soundbox. Figure 1.3 is a reconstruction of one of the instruments from Ur: a **bull lyre**, a distinctively Sumerian lyre whose soundbox features a bull's head, which had religious significance. Figure 1.4 is part of an inlaid panel depicting a musician playing

a bull lyre at a victory banquet. The player holds the lyre, supported by a strap around his neck, perpendicular in front of him and plays it with both hands. Together image and instrument reveal that the lyre had a variable number of strings running from a bridge on the soundbox to the crossbar, where they were knotted around sticks that could be turned to change the tension and thus the tuning of each string. Other instruments of the period included lutes, pipes, drums, cymbals, clappers, rattles, and bells.

Combining written records with images of music-making allows a much fuller understanding of how Mesopotamian cultures used music, showing that their repertoires included wedding songs, funeral laments, military music, work songs, nursery songs, dance music, tavern music, music for entertaining at feasts, songs to address the gods, music to accompany ceremonies and processions, and epics sung with instrumental accompaniment—all but the last uses that continue today. As is true for every era until the nineteenth century, we find the best evidence for music of the elite classes, primarily rulers and priests, who had the resources to induce artisans to make instruments, musicians to make music, artists to depict it, and scribes to write about it.

Written sources also provide a vocabulary for music and some information on musicians. Word lists from ca. 2500 B.C.E. on include terms for instruments, tuning procedures, performers, performing techniques, and *genres* or types of musical composition. The earliest composer known to us by name is Enheduanna (fl. ca. 2300 B.C.E.), an Akkadian high priestess at Ur, who composed *hymns* (songs to a god) to the moon god Nanna and moon goddess Inanna; their texts, but not her music, survive on cuneiform tablets.

Around 1800 B.C.E., Babylonian musicians began to write down what they knew instead of passing it on by word of mouth only. Their writings describe tuning, intervals, improvisation, performing techniques, and genres, including love songs, laments, and hymns. Here again we find many aspects of music that continued into later times.



FIGURE 1.4: Inlaid panel from Ur, ca. 2600 B.C.E., showing a bull lyre being played at a victory banquet. (THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON. PHOTO: ERICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE, NY)



FIGURE 1.3: Reconstruction of a Sumerian bull lyre from the Royal Cemetery at Ur, ca. 2500 B.C.E. (© THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM/ART RESOURCE, NY)

TIMELINE

Mesopotamia,
Greece, and Rome

MUSICAL HISTORICAL

- ca. 3500–3000 B.C.E. Rise of Sumerian cities
- ca. 3100 Cuneiform writing established
- ca. 2500 Royal tombs at Ur built
- ca. 2300 Enheduanna composes her hymns
- ca. 1800 Babylonian writings about music
- ca. 1400–1250 Oldest nearly complete piece
- ca. 800 Rise of Greek city-states
- ca. 800 Homer, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
- 753 Rome founded
- ca. 500 Pythagoras dies
- ca. 500 Roman Republic begins

Among the writings are instructions for tuning a string instrument that indicate the Babylonians used seven-note *diatonic* scales. They recognized seven scales of this type, corresponding to the seven diatonic scales playable on the white keys of a piano. These scales have parallels in the ancient Greek musical system as well as in our own, suggesting that Babylonian theory and practice influenced that of Greece, directly or indirectly, and thus European music.

The Babylonians used their names for intervals to create the earliest known musical *notation*. The oldest nearly complete piece, from ca. 1400–1250 B.C.E., is on a tablet shown in Figure 1.5 that was found at Ugarit, a merchant city-state on the Syrian coast. Scholars have proposed possible transcriptions for the music, but the notation is too poorly understood to be read with confidence. Despite the invention of notation, most music was either played from memory or improvised. Musicians most likely did not play or sing from notation, as modern performers do, but used it as a written record from which a melody could be reconstructed, as cooks use a recipe.

OTHER CIVILIZATIONS

For other ancient cultures we also have instruments, images, and writings that testify to their musical practices. India and China developed independently from Mesopotamia and were probably too distant to affect Greek or European music. Surviving sources that shed light on Egyptian musical traditions are especially rich, including many artifacts, paintings, and hieroglyphic writings preserved in tombs. Archaeological remains and images that relate to music are relatively scant for ancient Israel, but music in religious observances is described in the Bible. Although some scholars have tried to discover and decipher musical indications in Egyptian hieroglyphics and wall paintings and in ancient copies of the Bible, no consensus has been reached that musical notation is even present.

Through physical remains, images, and writings about music we can gain a sense of a vibrant musical life in the ancient Near East, but without actual music to perform, it remains almost entirely silent.

FIGURE 1.5: Clay tablet from Ugarit, ca. 1400–1250 B.C.E., with text and musical notation for a hymn to Nikkal, a wife of the moon god. The words are written above the double line, the music below. (DAMASCUS NATIONAL MUSEUM. PHOTO: DR. ANNE KHMER)



Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought

Ancient Greece is the earliest civilization that offers us enough evidence to construct a well-rounded view of musical culture, although there are still many gaps. As shown in Figure 1.6, Greek civilization encompassed not only the Greek peninsula but islands in the Aegean, much of Asia Minor, southern Italy, and Sicily, and colonies ringing the Mediterranean and Black Seas. From this ancient culture, we have numerous images, a few surviving instruments, writings about music's roles and effects, theoretical writings on the elements of music, and over forty examples of music in a notation we can read.

INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR USES

We know about ancient Greek instruments and how to play them from writings, archaeological remains, and hundreds of images on clay pots. The most important instruments were the *aulos* (pl. *auloi*), *lyre*, and *kithara*. The Greeks also used harps, panpipes, horns, an early form of organ, and a variety of percussion instruments such as drums, cymbals, and clappers.

The *aulos* was a pipe typically played in pairs, as pictured in Figure 1.7. Each pipe had fingerholes and a mouthpiece fitted with a reed. No reeds survive, but written descriptions suggest that they were long tubes with a beating tongue. Images of *auloi* being played show both hands in the same finger position, leading most scholars to conclude that the two pipes were played in unison, with slight differences in pitch creating a plangent sound. But modern reconstructions based on surviving *auloi* can also be played to produce parallel octaves, fifths, or fourths, or a drone or separate line in one pipe against a melody in the other, so that these methods cannot be ruled out.

The *aulos* was used in the worship of Dionysus, god of fertility and wine. Links to fertility and wine explain its presence in the drinking scene in Figure 1.7; the instrument is played by a woman who was likely a prostitute as well as musician. The great tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, created for the Dionysian festivals in Athens, have choruses and other musical portions that were accompanied by or alternated with the *aulos*.

Lyres usually had seven strings and were strummed with a plectrum, or pick. There were several forms of lyre, the most characteristic of which used as a soundbox a tortoise shell over which oxhide was stretched. As shown in Figure 1.8, the player held the lyre in front, resting the instrument on the hip and supporting it by a strap around the left wrist. The right hand strummed with the plectrum while the fingers of the left hand touched the strings,

Lyre

- 458 B.C.E. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*
- 408 Euripides, *Orestes*
- ca. 380 Plato, *Republic*
- ca. 330 Aristotle, *Politics*
- ca. 330 Aristoxenus, *Harmonic Elements*
- 146 Greece becomes province of Rome
- 128–127 Second Delphic Hymn to Apollo composed
- 29–19 Virgil, *Aeneid*
- 27 Rome becomes empire under Augustus
- 1st cent. C.E. *Epitaph of Seikilos*
- 98–117 C.E. Roman Empire reaches its peak
- ca. 127–48 Ptolemy, *Harmonics*
- 2nd cent. Cleonides, *Harmonic Introduction*
- 4th cent. Aristides Quintilianus, *On Music*



FIGURE 1.6: Greece and Greek settlements about 550 B.C.E. The main centers of Greek population and culture were the Greek peninsula, the Aegean Islands, the west coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and southern Italy and Sicily, known to the Romans as *Magna Graecia* (Greater Greece).

perhaps to produce harmonics or to dampen certain strings to prevent them from sounding.

The lyre was associated with Apollo, god of light, prophecy, learning, and the arts, especially music and poetry. Learning to play the lyre was a core element of education in Athens. Both men and women played the lyre, which was used to accompany dancing, singing, or recitation of epic poetry like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; to provide music for weddings; or to play for recreation.

The *kithara* was a large lyre, used especially for processions and sacred ceremonies and in the theater, and normally played while the musician was standing. Figure 1.9 shows a *kitharode*, a singer accompanying himself on the *kithara* (see In Performance: Competitions and Professional Musicians, p. 12).

Images from ancient Greece rarely show performers reading from a scroll or tablet while playing. It is clear from this and from the written record that the Greeks, despite having a well-developed form of notation by the fourth century B.C.E. (see below), primarily learned music by ear; they played and sang from memory or improvised using conventions and formulas.

Kithara

Memory and improvisation

GREEK MUSICAL THOUGHT

More writings about music survive from ancient Greece than from any earlier civilization. As a result, we know a great deal about Greek thought concerning music. There were two principal kinds of writings on music: (1) philosophical doctrines on the nature of music, its effects, and its proper uses; and (2) systematic descriptions of the materials of music, what we now call music theory.



FIGURE 1.7: Greek red-figure drinking cup showing a scene at a symposium, or drinking party, where a woman plays the double aulos. A drinking cup, like the one on which this painting appears, is seen on the lower right. On the left is the player's aulos bag, with a smaller bag attached to it that held the reeds for the aulos. (THE LOUVRE, PARIS, FRANCE. PHOTO: RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX/ART RESOURCE, NY)



FIGURE 1.8: Greek red-figure drinking cup showing a lyre lesson. The teacher (left) has just strummed the strings using the plectrum in his right hand. Viewing the student's lyre from the back, we can see the tortoise-shell sound box, the strap around the left wrist, and the fingers of the left hand touching the strings. (BILDARCHIV PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ/ART RESOURCE, NY)

In both realms, the Greeks achieved insights and formulated principles that have remained important to this day. The most influential writings on the uses and effects of music are passages by Plato (ca. 429–347 B.C.E.) in his *Republic* and *Timaeus* and by Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) in his *Politics*. Greek music theory evolved continually from the time of its founder, Pythagoras (d. ca. 500 B.C.E.), to Aristides Quintilianus (fourth century C.E.), its last important writer. As we might expect in a tradition lasting nearly a millennium, writers expressed differing views, and the meanings of many terms changed. The following emphasizes the features that were most characteristic of Greek music and most important for the later history of Western music.

In Greek mythology, music's inventors and earliest practitioners were gods and demigods, such as Apollo, Hermes, Amphion, and Orpheus. The word *music* (Greek *mousikē*) derives from the word for the Muses and originally denoted any of the arts associated with them, from history to dance. For the Greeks, music was both an art for enjoyment and a science closely related to arithmetic and astronomy. It pervaded all of Greek life, from work, the military, schooling, and recreation to religious ceremonies, poetry, and the theater.

Music as a performing art was called *melos*, from which the word *melody* derives. The surviving Greek music is *monophonic*, consisting of a single melodic line, but that does not mean it was always performed that way. We know from pictures that singers accompanied themselves on lyre or kithara, but we do not know whether they sounded notes in the melody, played a variant of the melody (creating *heterophony*), or played an independent part (creating *polyphony*). *Melos* could denote an instrumental melody alone

Music, religion, and society

Music, poetry, and dance

IN PERFORMANCE

COMPETITIONS AND PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

From the sixth century B.C.E. or earlier, the aulos and kithara were played as solo instruments, and competitions were held for the best performers. Contemporary accounts related that Sakadas of Argos won the prize for solo aulos playing at the Pythian Games in 586, 582, and 578 B.C.E., performing the Pythic Nomos, a virtuoso composition that portrayed Apollo's victory over the serpent Python. One writer attributes the piece to Sakadas, making him the earliest composer of instrumental music whose name we know.

Contests of kithara and aulos players, as well as festivals of instrumental and vocal music, became increasingly popular after the fifth century B.C.E. Indeed, the image in Figure 1.9 is from an amphora, a jar for wine or oil, awarded as a prize to the winner of a competition.

As instrumental music grew more independent, the number of virtuosos rose and the music became more complex and showy. When famous artists appeared, thousands gathered to listen. Some performers accumulated great wealth through concert tours or fees from rich patrons, particularly after they garnered fame by winning competitions. Among the musicians acclaimed for their performances were a number of women, who were excluded from competitions. But outside the competitions, most professional performers were of low status, often slaves.



FIGURE 1.9: Kitharode singing to his own accompaniment on the kithara, with his head tilted back, the fingers of his left hand touching some of the strings, apparently to damp them, and the right hand holding the plectrum, which he has just strummed across the strings. Greek red-figure amphora from the fourth century B.C.E., attributed to the Berlin Painter. (THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, FLETCHER FUND, 1956 (56.171.38) IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART)

or a song with text, and “perfect melos” was melody, text, and stylized dance movement conceived as a whole. For the Greeks, music and poetry were nearly synonymous. In his *Republic*, Plato defined *melos* as a blend of text, rhythm, and *harmonia* (here meaning relationships among pitches). In his *Poetics*, Aristotle enumerated the elements of poetry as melody, rhythm, and language, and noted that there was no name for artful speech, whether prose or verse, that did not include music. “Lyric” poetry meant poetry sung to the lyre; “tragedy” incorporates the noun *ōdē*, “the art of singing.” Many other Greek words for different kinds of poetry, such as *hymn*, were musical terms.

For Pythagoras and his followers, numbers were the key to the universe, and music was inseparable from numbers. Rhythms were ordered by numbers, because each note was some multiple of a primary duration. Pythagoras was credited with discovering that the octave, fifth, and fourth, long recognized as consonances, are also related to numbers. These intervals are generated by the simplest possible ratios: for example, when a string is divided, segments whose lengths are in the ratio 2:1 sound an octave, 3:2 a fifth, and 4:3 a fourth.

Because musical sounds and rhythms were ordered by numbers, they were thought to exemplify the general concept of *harmonia*, the unification of parts in an orderly whole. Through this flexible concept—which could encompass mathematical proportions, philosophical ideas, or the structure of society as well as a particular musical interval, scale type, or style of melody—Greek writers conceived of music as a reflection of the order of the universe.

Music was closely connected to astronomy through this notion of *harmonia*. Indeed, Claudius Ptolemy (fl. 127–48 c.e.), the leading astronomer of antiquity, was also an important writer on music. Mathematical laws and proportions were considered the underpinnings of both musical intervals and the heavenly bodies, and certain planets, their distances from each other, and their movements were believed to correspond to particular notes, intervals, and scales in music. Plato gave this idea poetic form in his myth of the “harmony of the spheres,” the unheard music produced by the revolutions of the planets. This notion was invoked by writers throughout the Middle Ages and later, including Shakespeare in *The Tempest* and John Milton in *Paradise Lost*, and underlay the work of Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), the founder of modern astronomy.

MUSIC AND *ETHOS*

Greek writers believed that music could affect *ethos*, one’s ethical character or way of being and behaving. This idea was built on the Pythagorean view of music as a system of pitch and rhythm governed by the same mathematical laws that operated in the visible and invisible world. *Harmonia* in music reflected, and could therefore influence, *harmonia* (usually translated “harmony”) in other realms. The human soul was seen as a composite whose parts were kept in harmony by numerical relationships. Because it reflected this orderly system, music could penetrate the soul and restore its inner harmony.

Through the doctrine of imitation outlined in his *Politics*, Aristotle described how music affected behavior: music that imitated a certain ethos aroused that ethos in the listener (see Source Reading, p. 14). The imitation of an ethos was accomplished partly through the choice of *harmonia*, in the sense of a scale type or style of melody. While later centuries would interpret him as attributing such effects to a mode or scale alone, Aristotle probably also had in mind the melodic turns and style characteristic of a *harmonia* and the rhythms and poetic genres most associated with it.

Plato and Aristotle both argued that education should stress gymnastics (to discipline the body) and music (to discipline the mind). In his *Republic*, Plato insisted that the two must be balanced, because too much music made one weak and irritable while too much gymnastics made one uncivilized, violent,

Music and number

Harmonia

Music and astronomy

The doctrine of imitation

Music in education

SOURCE READING

ARISTOTLE ON THE DOCTRINE OF IMITATION, *ETHOS*, AND MUSIC IN EDUCATION

Music’s importance in ancient Greek culture is shown by its appearance as a topic in books about society, such as Aristotle’s *Politics*. Aristotle believed that music could imitate and thus directly affect character and behavior, and therefore should play a role in education.



[Melodies] contain in themselves imitations of ethoses; and this is manifest, for even in the nature of the harmoniai there are differences, so that people when hearing them are affected differently and have not the same feelings in regard to each of them, but listen to some in a more mournful and restrained state, for instance the so-called Mixolydian, and to others in a softer state of mind, for instance the relaxed harmoniai, but in a midway state and with the greatest composure to another, as the Dorian alone of the harmoniai seems to act, while the Phrygian makes men divinely suffused;

for these things are well stated by those who have studied this form of education, as they derive the evidence for their theories from the actual facts of experience. And the same holds good about the rhythms also, for some have a more stable and others a more emotional ethos, and of the latter some are more vulgar in their emotional effects and others more liberal. From these considerations therefore it is plain that music has the power of producing a certain effect on the ethos of the soul, and if it has the power to do this, it is clear that the young must be directed to music and must be educated in it. Also education in music is well adapted to the youthful nature; for the young owing to their youth cannot endure anything not sweetened by pleasure, and music is by nature a thing that has a pleasant sweetness.

Aristotle, *Politics* 8.5, trans. Harris Rackham, in SR 3, p. 29.

and ignorant. Only certain music was suitable, since habitual listening to music that roused ignoble states of mind distorted a person’s character. Those being trained to govern should avoid melodies expressing softness and indolence. Plato endorsed two *harmoniai*—the Dorian and Phrygian, because they fostered temperance and courage—and excluded others. He deplored music that used complex scales or mixed incompatible genres, rhythms, and instruments. In both his *Republic* and *Laws*, Plato asserted that musical conventions must not be changed, since lawlessness in art and education led to license in manners and anarchy in society. Similar ideas have been articulated by governments and guardians of morality ever since, and ragtime, jazz, rock, punk, and hip hop all been condemned for these very reasons.

Aristotle, in his *Politics*, was less restrictive than Plato. He held that music could be used for enjoyment as well as education and that negative emotions such as pity and fear could be purged by inducing them through music and drama. However, he felt that sons of free citizens should not seek professional training on instruments or aspire to the virtuosity shown by performers in competitions because it was menial and vulgar to play solely for the pleasure of others rather than for one’s own improvement.

GREEK MUSIC THEORY

No writings by Pythagoras survive, and those of his followers exist only in fragments quoted by later authors. The earliest theoretical works we have are *Harmonic Elements* and *Rhythmic Elements* (ca. 330 B.C.E.) by Aristoxenus, a pupil of Aristotle. Important later writers include Cleonides (ca. second or third century C.E.), Ptolemy, and Aristides Quintilianus. These theorists defined concepts still used today, as well as ones specific to ancient Greek music. Their writings show how much the Greeks valued abstract thought, logic, and systematic definition and classification, an approach that has influenced all later writing on music.

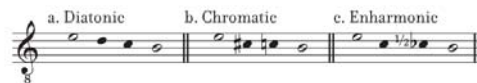
Only part of Aristoxenus' *Rhythmic Elements* survives, but enough remains to show us that rhythm in music was closely aligned with poetic rhythm. Aristoxenus defines durations as multiples of a basic unit of time. This scheme parallels Greek poetry, which features patterns of longer and shorter syllables, not stressed and unstressed syllables as in English.

In *Harmonic Elements*, Aristoxenus distinguishes between *continuous* movement of the voice, gliding up and down as in speech, and *diastematic* (or *intervallic*) movement, in which the voice moves between sustained pitches separated by discrete intervals. A melody consists of a series of *notes*, each on a single pitch; an *interval* is formed between two notes of different pitch; and a *scale* is a series of three or more different pitches in ascending or descending order. Such seemingly simple definitions established a firm basis for Greek music and all later music theory. By contrast, Babylonian musicians apparently had no name for intervals in general, but had names only for intervals formed between particular pairs of strings on the lyre or harp. The greater abstraction of the Greek system marked a significant advance.

Unique to the Greek system were the concepts of *tetrachord* and *genus* (pl. *genera*). A tetrachord (literally, "four strings") comprised four notes spanning a perfect fourth. There were three genera (classes) of tetrachord, shown in Example 1.1: *diatonic*, *chromatic*, and *enharmonic*. The outer notes of the tetrachord were considered stationary in pitch, while the inner two notes could move to form different intervals within the tetrachord and create the different genera. Normally the smallest intervals were at the bottom, the largest at the top. The diatonic tetrachord included two whole tones and a semitone. In the chromatic, the top interval was a tone and a half (equal to a minor third) and the others semitones. In the enharmonic, the top interval was the size of two tones (equal to a major third) and the lower ones approximately quarter tones. All these intervals could vary slightly in size, giving rise to "shades" within each genus.

Aristoxenus remarked that the diatonic genus was the oldest and most natural, the chromatic more recent, and the enharmonic the most refined

EXAMPLE 1.1: Tetrachords

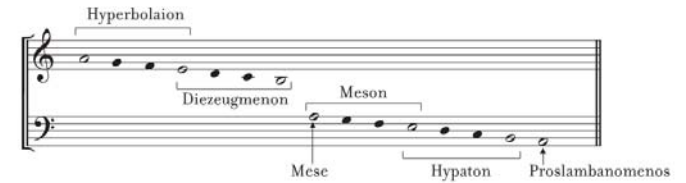


Rhythm

Note, interval, and scale

Tetrachord and genus

EXAMPLE 1.2: The Greater Perfect System



The Greater Perfect System

Species of consonances

and difficult to hear. Indeed, we have seen that the Babylonian system, which predated the Greek by more than a millennium, was diatonic.

Since most melodies exceeded a fourth, theorists combined tetrachords to cover a larger range. Two successive tetrachords were *conjunct* if they shared a note, as do the first two tetrachords in Example 1.2, or *disjunct* if they were separated by a whole tone, as are the second and third tetrachords. The system shown in the example, with four tetrachords plus an added lowest note to complete a two-octave span, was called the **Greater Perfect System**. The outer, fixed tones of each tetrachord are shown in open notes, the movable inner tones in black notes.

Each note and tetrachord had a name to indicate its place in the system. As we see in the example above, the middle note was called "mese" (middle), the tetrachord spanning a fourth below it "meson," the lowest tetrachord "hypaton" (first), and those above the mese "diezeugmenon" (disjunct) and "hyperbolaion" (of the extremes). There was also a Lesser Perfect System, spanning an octave plus a fourth, with only one conjunct tetrachord ("synemmenon," conjunct) above the mese. The system was not based on absolute fixed pitch but on the intervallic relationships of notes and tetrachords to each other. The transcription here in the range *A-a'* is purely conventional.

Cleonides noted that in the diatonic genus the three main consonances of perfect fourth, fifth, and octave were subdivided into tones (T) and semitones (S) in only a limited number of ways, which he called *species*. This concept has proven useful in understanding Greek melody, medieval chant, Renaissance polyphonic music, and even twentieth-century music, so it is worthy of special attention. A fourth contains two tones and one semitone, and there are only three possible arrangements or species, illustrated in Example 1.3a: with the semitone at the bottom (as in *B-c-d-e*), on top (as in *c-d-e-f*), or in the middle (as in *d-e-f-g*). Example 1.3b shows the four species of fifth.

The seven species of octave, shown in Example 1.3c, are combinations of the species of fourth and fifth, a division of the octave that became important in medieval and Renaissance theory. Cleonides identified the species by what "the ancients" supposedly called them. The first octave species, represented by the span from *B* to *b*, was Mixolydian, followed by Lydian (*c-c'*), Phrygian (*d-d'*), Dorian (*e-e'*), Hypolydian (*f-f'*), Hypophrygian (*g-g'*), and Hypodorian (*a-a'*). These seven octave species parallel the seven diatonic tunings recognized by the Babylonians, suggesting a continuity of practice and perhaps of theory. As we will see in chapter 2, some medieval theorists later adopted these names for their modes, but the latter do not match Cleonides'