
Worksheet 2.1 Elements: Sound and Pitch



1. What is sound?

2. After something vibrates, what happens to the sound?

3. What are the four main properties of musical sounds?

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1) | 2) |
| 3) | 4) |

4. What is pitch?

5. What makes a pitch sound higher?

6. What will sound lower, a small instrument or a large instrument?

7. What is a tone?

Worksheet 2.1 Elements: Sound and Pitch

8. Name three (3) sounds that have no tone.

1)

2)

3)

9. What is an interval?

Elements: Dynamics and Timbre

How loud or soft music sounds is called **dynamics**--the second property of sound. Skillful, subtle changes of dynamics add spirit and mood to performances. In rock and roll and other current popular styles, the range of dynamics tends to be fairly small (loud and louder!!). In other styles, like jazz and classical, the range can be wide (very soft to very loud).

When notating (writing down) music, composers have used the following Italian words, and their abbreviations, to tell the performer what the dynamics should be during any given musical passage:

TERM	ABBREVIATION	MEANING
pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	very soft
Piano	<i>p</i>	soft
mezzo piano	<i>mp</i>	moderately soft
mezzo forte	<i>mf</i>	moderately loud
forte	<i>f</i>	loud
fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	very loud



Elements: Dynamics and Timbre

The third property of sound is called tone **color** or **timbre** (pronounced tam-ber). Tone color is how we can tell the difference between a flute and a trumpet even if they are playing the same pitch at the same dynamic level.



Tone color is described by words like bright, dark, mellow, and rich. Sometimes we say an instrument might sound "light" or "fat." How would you describe the sound of a flute? A tuba? An electric guitar?

Changes in tone color give music some contrast: for example, the same melody will have a different emotional effect on a listener when it is played on one instrument and then another.



Listening to Timbre: CD 1 Track 1

This track shows how different instruments sound. Each instrument is playing the same notes and, basically, the same rhythm (a few variations). Your teacher will pause the CD player after each instrument. Can you identify each instrument as it plays?

Directions: Write down the order in which you hear the instruments. Choose from the list to the right:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

- trumpet
- organ
- bass guitar
- alto sax
- tenor sax
- oboe
- cello
- bassoon
- clarinet
- guitar
- violin
- flute
- piano
- harp

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Worksheet 2.2 Elements: Dynamics and Timbre



1. What is dynamics?

2. What do changes in dynamics add to a performance?

3. What kinds of music have a wide range of dynamics?

4. Tell the meanings for the following dynamic marks:

<i>mp</i> - _____	<i>ff</i> - _____
<i>p</i> - _____	<i>mf</i> - _____
<i>pp</i> - _____	<i>f</i> - _____

5. What is the third property of sound?

6. What are some words we use to describe tone color?

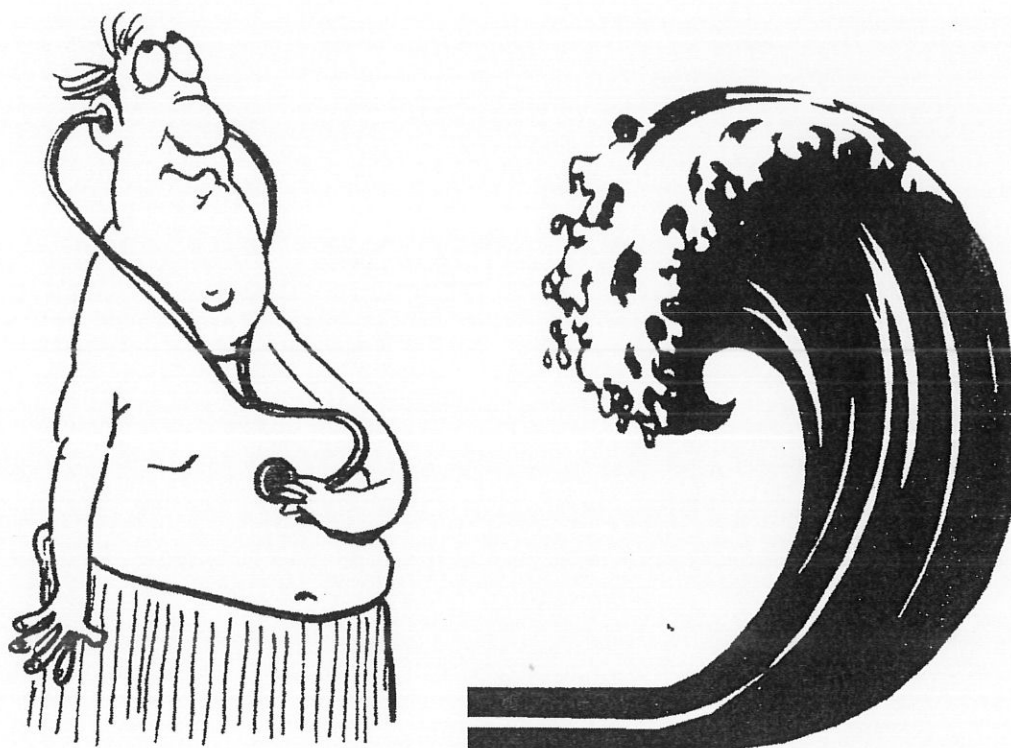
7. How would you describe the sound of an electric guitar?

8. How does tone color give music contrast?

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Elements: Rhythm

The fourth property of a musical sound is **rhythm**. Rhythm is basic to life. You can find it in your heartbeat, and feel it when you breathe and walk. There is rhythm in nature--the cycle of day and night, the four seasons, and the rise and fall of ocean tides.



Rhythm is a pattern of tension and release that happens again and again. Rhythm is closely tied to the flow of time, for example, a drummer “keeps time” in a rock band. But time, in our lives, can be very different. Each hour has sixty minutes. But how different one hour may seem from another!

Rhythm is at the heart of music, too. We can define rhythm as the ordered flow of music through time. How the other musical elements (pitch, dynamics, and tone color) change in time, and how often or how fast they change, has to do with rhythm. Rhythm has several parts that we will look at one at a time: beat, meter, accent, and tempo.

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Worksheet 2.3 Elements: Rhythm

1. Give three examples of rhythm in nature.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

2. Rhythm is a _____ of tension and _____ that happens again and again.

3. Give an example of when time felt like it was going very slow.

4. Give an example when time felt like it was going very fast.

5. What is a good definition of rhythm?

6. Name all four musical elements.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

7. Name four parts of rhythm.

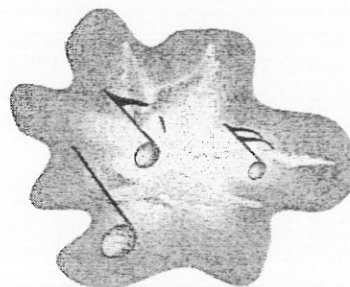
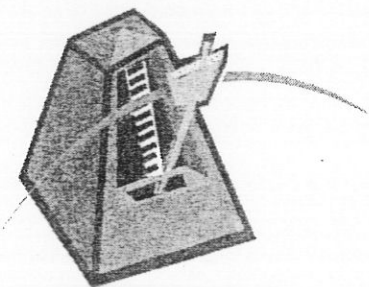
- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____



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Elements: Beat and Meter

When you clap your hands or tap your foot to music, you are feeling the beat. We can define beat as "a regular repeating pulse that divides music into equal parts." Sometimes the beat is powerful and easy to "feel" like in rock music. In other styles of music the beat cannot be felt much at all. This type of music might sound like it is "floating."



In most of the popular music of today it is easy to hear the beat being played by the drummer. But you can "feel" the beat without drums, too. Here is the beginning of the song "America":

My **coun- try,** **'tis** **of** **thee,** **Sweetland** **of** **lib-** **er-** **ty,**
 / / / / / / / / / / / / /

Of **thee** **I** **sing.** **Land (etc.)**
 / / / / / / /

Each of the marks below the words is a beat. Did you notice how you held the word, "sing" for 3 beats? You could feel the beat and knew to hold that word longer than the rest.

Beats form a solid base where composers will then put notes of many different lengths. Beats are the basic unit of time by which all other notes are measured. Notes can last a fraction of a beat, or an entire beat, or more than a beat. In the example from "America," the syllables, or notes, range from 1/2 beats for "of" to 3 beats for "sing."

Elements: Beat and Meter

In music, some beats feel stronger than others do. The strong beats and weak beats make patterns that repeat over and over. The organization of beats into regular groups is called meter. A group with a fixed number of beats is called a measure. The first, or stressed, beat of the measure is called the downbeat. There are several types of meter based on how many beats are in the measure.

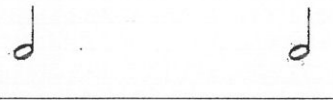
When there are two beats in a measure we count 1 - 2, 1 - 2, 1 - 2, etc. When there are three beats in a measure, we count 1 - 2 - 3, 1 - 2 - 3, etc. When there are four beats in a measure we count 1 - 2 - 3 - 4, 1 - 2 - 3 - 4, etc.

Here is how to read the value of the notes:

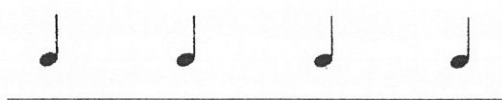
1 whole note:



2 half notes:



4 quarter notes:



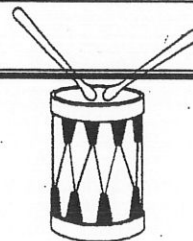
8 eighth notes:



There can be any number of beats in a measure, but there are a few that are very common. The most common number of beats is 4. Measures with 3 or 2 beats are also fairly common (3 beats in a measure is used for a "waltz"). Measures with 5, 6, and 7 beats are very uncommon. In some modern music, and music from other countries, India for example, there can even be measures with 13 beats.



Worksheet 2.4 Elements: Beat and Meter



1. What is beat?

2. Name two (2) words to describe beat.

3. What do beats form for a composer?

4. How long can notes last?

5. What is meter?

6. What is a measure?

7. What is a downbeat?

Worksheet 2.4 Elements: Beat and Meter

8. One whole note = _____ half notes.
9. Two half notes = _____ quarter notes.
10. One whole note = _____ quarter notes.
11. Four quarter notes = _____ whole note.
12. How many eighth notes are in a whole note? _____
13. What is the most common number of beats in a measure? _____
14. Name two uncommon beats to have in a measure. _____

Elements: Accent and Tempo

Accent

An important part of rhythm is how the notes are stressed. One way to emphasize a note is by giving it a dynamic accent. This means that you would play that note more loudly than the other notes around it. Remember that dynamics is how loud and soft music is!!). In most of the music that you hear, the accent is easily felt on the downbeat (beat 1) of any measure. But there are times where the beat falls where we don't expect it! When the accent falls on a beat that we do not expect, it is called syncopation. Think of accent and syncopation like a person dribbling a basketball. A steady dribble would only accent time the ball bounces. An uneven dribble, like basketball players do when they are trying to keep the ball away from an opponent, would be a syncopated bounce.



Tempo

Tempo is the speed of the beat. The tempo of a song can affect the way we feel about the song. A fast tempo suggests energy, drive, and excitement. A slow tempo makes us feel sad or calm. In a short piece of music, like popular songs, the tempo usually stays the same throughout the song. But in longer pieces of music, like a symphony, the tempo often changes. It may gradually speed up or slow down. It might change from a slow tempo to a fast tempo all at once. Just as the tempo of your breathing changes, so do the tempos in music!

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Worksheet 2.5 Elements: Accent and Tempo

1. What is accent?

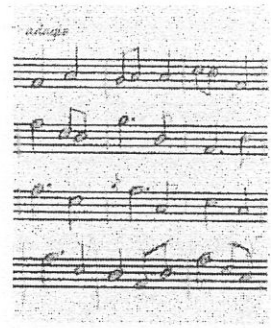
2. What is syncopation?

3. What is tempo?

4. What does a fast tempo suggest?

5. How might you feel during songs with slow tempos?

6. How do tempos change in long pieces of music?



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Elements: Voices

Voices

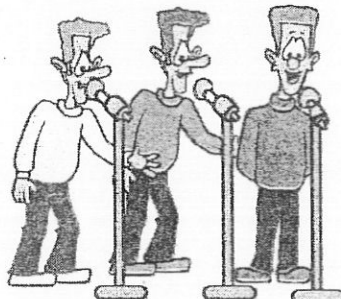
Singing has always been the easiest and most familiar way to make music. Singing is unique in music because of the ability to mix words with musical tones. There is a kind of “magic” that happens between a singer and the listener. There is communication using both music and words.

Although everybody can sing, only a few can sing well. It is a difficult art that takes years of practice and a lot of natural talent. While an instrumentalist can push a valve or key, or finger a string to play a note, a singer must be able to hear the note and then adjust the vocal cords in order to produce the correct pitch.

Men's vocal cords are longer and thicker than women's are, and this difference makes their voices lower. The voices of men and women are classified as follows from highest to lowest:

WOMEN
soprano
mezzo-soprano
alto

MEN
tenor
baritone
bass



Methods and styles of singing vary from culture to culture. The way that Japanese and Americans sing is very different. Classical, jazz, folk, rap, and rock and roll are all sung differently.

Until the late 1600's, most of the music that we will be studying was vocal. Since then, instrumental music has become just as important. And now, popular music is both vocal and instrumental.

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Worksheet 2.6 Elements: Voices

1. How is singing unique in music?

2. Explain why it is harder to **sing** a note than it is to **play** a note.

3. What is the highest women's voice called?

4. What is the lowest men's voice called?

5. Answer **in your own words**. Why does a rock singer sound different from a rap singer? You **must use musical terms** (pitch, dynamics, tone color, and rhythm).

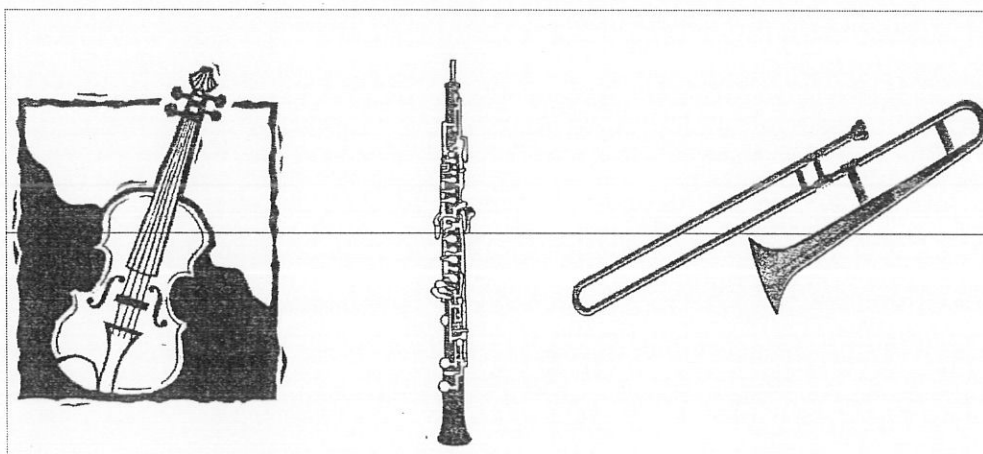
6. What was most music of the 1600's like? Why do you think it was like that?

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Elements: Instruments

An instrument can be defined as any mechanism that produces musical sounds. In our study of Western music--which is music from Europe and America--musical instruments are usually classified into six large categories. They are: strings (such as guitar and violin); woodwinds (flute, saxophone); brass (trumpet, trombone); percussion (drums, cymbals); keyboards (piano, organ); and electronic (synthesizer).

There are four sections in a symphonic orchestra. The modern orchestra is very large. Orchestras of two hundred years ago were much smaller. Today's orchestra has about 100 musicians divided into the four sections as follows:



STRINGS

18 first violins
 16 second violins
 12 violas
 10 cellos
 8 double basses

WOODWINDS

3 flutes, 1 piccolo
 3 oboes
 3 clarinets
 3 bassoons

BRASS

4 trumpets
 6 French horns
 4 trombones
 1 tuba

PERCUSSION

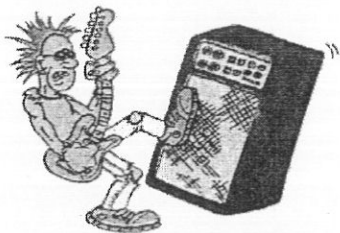
4 timpani (1 player)
 bass drum, snare
 drum, cymbals,
 triangle, xylophone,
 celesta, etc.
 (2-4 players)

Elements: Instruments

There are also four sections in a **jazz Big Band**. Big Bands became very popular in the 1940's. They are the types of jazz bands that are played in high schools and colleges today. A Big Band is made up of the following sections:

<u>Rhythm Section</u>	<u>Sax Section</u>	<u>Trombones</u>	<u>Trumpets</u>
drum kit	2 alto saxes	4 trombones	4-5 trumpets
bass (elec. or acoustic)	2 tenor saxes	1 bass trombone	
piano	1 baritone sax		
electric guitar			

Most of the music that is popular today, like rock and country, use a basic set of instruments, too. There is a "core" of instruments that are used in most popular styles. This core has the following instruments: **drums** (kit), **electric bass**, **electric guitar**, and **keyboards** (electric piano and **synthesizer**). Many other instruments are used to enhance the main band, such as violin, harmonica, flute, sax, and trumpet.



Worksheet 2.7 Elements: Instruments



1. Define "musical instrument."

2. What is "Western music?" (Hint: **NOT** country and western!)

3. Name the six categories of instruments in Western music.

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1) | 2) | 3) |
| 4) | 5) | 6) |

4. About how many string players are there in a modern orchestra?

5. Name the sections of a jazz Big Band.

6. Name the instruments that make up a rhythm section in a jazz band.

7. Name the "core" instruments in a rock band.

8. Name an instrument that is **not** one of the core instruments, and is used in a band that you like. Tell the name of the band and what the instrument is.

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Elements: Melody and Harmony

For many listeners, music means **melody**. A melody is a series of notes that add up to a recognizable whole. You can think of a melody as a musical sentence. The single notes act as the words in the sentence. A melody begins, moves, and ends. It has direction and shape.

Melodies can be short or long. They can be simple or complex. They can move by **steps**--notes that are right next to each other--or they can move by **leaps**--notes that are far away from each other. A melody's range is the distance between its highest and lowest notes. A range can be wide or narrow. Melodies written for instruments tend to have a wider range than melodies written for voices.

Rhythm is also very important for a melody. Even very well known melodies will be almost unrecognizable if it is not sung or played in the right rhythm.



When a singer accompanies himself or herself on a guitar, they add support, depth, and richness to the melody. We call this harmonizing. Most Western music is a blend of melody and harmony. Music from other cultures blends melody and rhythm, rather than harmony.

Harmony is when two or more notes are played at the same time. This can form a chord. A chord is when three or more notes are played together. So, harmony is when notes are played at the same time. A melody is when notes are played one at a time, one after another. When chords move in a series it is called a progression. Chord progressions enrich a melody by adding surprise and suspense.

Some chords sound stable and restful. We call these kinds of chords consonant. Other chords sound unstable and active. These chords are called dissonant. Chords that are dissonant want to move to a chord that is consonant. This gives music a sense of movement between chords of tension (dissonant) and chords of restfulness (consonant).

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Worksheet 2.8 Elements: Melody and Harmony

1. What is melody?



2. Tell how a melody is like a sentence.

3. Name two ways that a melody can move.

4. Why do you think that melodies for instruments have a wider range than those for voices?

5. What is harmony?

6. Explain the difference between melody and harmony.

7. How do consonant chords sound?

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Elements: Texture and Style

At any moment in a piece of music, we might hear a melody by itself. Or we might hear several melodies at the same time. Or we might hear a melody with harmony. The term musical texture describes these possibilities. It tells how many layers of sound are heard at once.

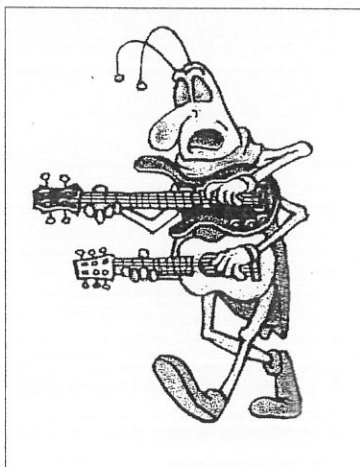
There are three basic textures. We will look at each, one at a time.

Monophonic Texture

When a melody is sung or played by itself, it is a monophonic texture. If you sing alone, you are making monophonic music.

Polyphonic Texture

When two or more melodies are played together, it makes a polyphonic texture. In this kind of texture, several melodies compete for attention. Polyphonic music often uses imitation. This happens when a melody is played by one voice or instrument and then repeated by another right away. An example would be like in a song such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat... This is a song that uses imitation.



Elements: Texture and Style

Homophonic Texture

When we hear one main melody that is accompanied by chords, the texture is homophonic. Attention is focused on the melody. Almost all of the music that you hear today is homophonic. The guitar and keyboard play the chords, while the melody is sung by the singer.

Musical Style

In music, **style** is how a musician uses melody, harmony, rhythm, tone color, dynamics, and texture in their own way. This is how two or more musicians can record the same song, yet each version will sound totally different. The song "Yesterday" by the Beatles has been recorded several hundred times, and each one sounds different. This is how musicians put their own personality into a song.

In addition, the study of Western music can be divided into six stylistic periods. During these time periods, the music that was made sounds generally alike. This is not to say that every composer during these periods sounded like every other composer, but they all used musical elements in very similar ways. The six periods that we will be studying are:

Middle Ages (450-1450)

Renaissance (1450-1600)

Baroque (1600-1750)

Classical (1750-1820)

Romantic (1820-1900)

Twentieth Century (1900-Present)



Worksheet 2.9 Elements: Texture and Style

1. Give an example of monophonic texture.

2. What is polyphonic texture?

3. What kind of texture is almost all of the music today?

4. What is style?

5. What is an important historical event that took place during the Renaissance?

6. What is an important historical event that happened during the Classical Period?

7. What is an important historical event that took place during the Romantic Era?



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Music in History: The Middle Ages 450-1450

People have always made music. Early people imitated the sounds they heard around them. They whistled like birds and howled like wolves. Later peoples, like the Greeks and Romans, used music to tell stories and for dancing.



But we don't really know what early music sounded like. In those days people did not **notate** (write down) music. Instead, they learned music by being told about it. Older musicians showed them how to perform it.

During the Middle Ages, there were three main social classes of people. The richest people made up the **nobility**. These were Kings, Queens, and landowners. The second group was the **peasantry**. These were poor workers who lived terrible lives. The third group was the **clergy**. These were the monks and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. Each of these groups used music in different ways. First, we will look at the music of the clergy.

Around the year 700, monks began to write down their music. This was the official music of the Roman Catholic Church. It is called **Gregorian chant**. This is named after Pope Gregory I who helped to organize the chants.

A chant is a single melody (**monophonic texture**) set to a Latin text. It was used to create an atmosphere for prayers and rituals in the church service. The **rhythm** is very flexible and there is no sense of **beat**. **Melodies** tend to move by **step** within a narrow range of **pitches**.

Music in History: The Middle Ages 450-1450



This manuscript shows how Gregorian chant looks when **notated**. Notice that the staff only has four lines. The text would be written under each staff. Each chant was hand written. Because of this written record of the music, there are several thousand chants known today. Most of them were written between the years 600 and 1300.



A Minstrel from the Middle Ages



Noble women playing for the court

The second social class of people in the Middle Ages was the **nobility**. The nobility had enough money so that they could buy musical instruments. They could also hire musicians to perform for them. These musicians were often **minstrels**. A minstrel traveled the countryside playing music, telling stories, and performing magic tricks. Music was also performed for dances and feasts.

Music in History: The Middle Ages 450-1450

The third social group were the lowly peasants. Most of the people were in this class. They worked long hours, ate poorly, were often sick, and had no money. They often sang or played music as a way to escape from their miserable living conditions. Like the nobles for whom they worked, peasants played music to accompany dancing, too. They also played music as part of their jobs, such as tending sheep or pigs. Most peasants did not own or play musical instruments, except ones that they made themselves. These might be wooden flutes and drums.



Minstrels also played for the peasants as they travelled through their villages. In France, the minstrels were called **troubadours**. Most of the songs that troubadours sang to the peasants were about love, but there were also songs about the Crusades, dance songs, and spinning songs. Most of the travelling musicians were men, but there were also a few women troubadours. They would sing songs and play instruments like the harp, fiddle, and lute.

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Listening to Music from the Middle Ages

Gregorian Chant: “Introitus—Laudate Deum”

This musical example of Gregorian Chant comes from the Proper of the Mass, meant to be sung by monks in monasteries. Listen for the monophonic texture. This is a good example of how monophonic texture can have more than one voice, but all the singers sing the same part. In the opening, the entire group sings together on the word “Alleluia.” Then, the solo singer sings the main portion of the chant. Gregorian chant is very simple, but also very effective at setting a spiritual tone for the Mass.

“In Saeculum Artifex”

This was written by Walther von der Vogelweide (1165?-1230?). It features the recorder, medieval harp, and violin. Listen for the timbre of the instruments as they tend to sound lighter and softer than instruments of today. This was a secular piece of music that could have been played for nobility at festive occasions.

Music of the Nobility and Peasants: “Estampie”

This is the type of music that might be played by minstrels and troubadours and was meant for dancing. Have your students visualize a dance for nobility where ladies in colorful clothing touched hands above their heads with their men dance partners while moving in slow circles. Then, reverse hands and the direction of the circle. If you have a class that likes to try new things, have a couple of students try to imitate the dance of the nobility while the song plays!



A Minstrel from
the Middle Ages



Noble women
playing for
the court

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