

MEDIEVAL MUSIC — VOCABULARY STUDY GUIDE

Instruments • Important Figures • Musical Terms

Name: _____ Class Period: _____ Date: _____

INSTRUMENTS

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| 1. Vielle | The most common bowed string instrument of the Middle Ages; a flat-bridged ancestor of the viol and violin, used to accompany sung poetry. |
| 2. Rebec | A small, pear-shaped bowed instrument carved from a single piece of wood, with a brighter and more nasal tone than the vielle. |
| 3. Psaltery | A plucked box zither whose strings are stretched across a flat soundboard and sounded with the fingers or a quill plectrum. |
| 4. Shawm | A loud double-reed instrument, ancestor of the oboe, used outdoors for processions, dances, and civic ceremony. |
| 5. Hurdy-gurdy (organistrum) | A stringed instrument sounded by a rosined wheel turned with a crank; keys stop the melody string while other strings sustain a drone. |
| 6. Portative organ | A small organ light enough to be carried or set on the lap; one hand works the bellows while the other plays the keys. |

IMPORTANT FIGURES

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| 7. Pope Gregory I | Pope (r. 590–604) to whom chant was later attributed by legend, giving “Gregorian chant” its name; the attribution is now regarded as myth. |
| 8. Guido of Arezzo | Monk and teacher (c. 991–1033) credited with staff notation, solmization syllables (ut, re, mi...), and the Guidonian hand. |
| 9. Hildegard von Bingen | German abbess, visionary, and writer (1098–1179) who composed a large body of monophonic chant and the morality play <i>Ordo Virtutum</i> . |
| 10. Léonin | Composer of the Notre Dame School (fl. late 1100s), credited with the <i>Magnus Liber Organi</i> , a cycle of two-voice organum for the church year. |
| 11. Pérotin | Léonin’s successor at Notre Dame (fl. c. 1200), who revised the <i>Magnus Liber</i> and expanded organum to three and four voices. |
| 12. Guillaume de Machaut | Leading French poet-composer of the Ars Nova (c. 1300–1377); wrote the <i>Messe de Notre Dame</i> and many secular songs. |

MUSICAL TERMS

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| 13. Plainchant (Gregorian chant) | Monophonic, unmetered, Latin-texted sacred song of the Roman Catholic liturgy; the core repertory of medieval sacred music. |
| 14. Neume | An early notational sign written above the text to show melodic direction; later placed on a staff to indicate exact pitch. |
| 15. Church modes | The system of eight scale patterns—each defined by its final and range—that governed the behavior of medieval melodies. |
| 16. Melisma | A passage in which many notes are sung on a single syllable of text; the opposite of syllabic setting. |
| 17. Organum | The earliest notated Western polyphony, created by adding one or more voices to an existing plainchant melody. |
| 18. Motet | A polyphonic vocal genre built over a borrowed tenor line, frequently with a different text—sometimes a different language—in each upper voice. |
| 19. Isorhythm | A structural technique repeating a rhythmic pattern (<i>talea</i>) against a repeating pitch pattern (<i>color</i>) in a voice, common in Ars Nova motets. |
| 20. Troubadour / trouvère | Poet-composers of secular monophonic song—troubadours in the langue d’oc of southern France, trouvères in the north. |

MEDIEVAL MUSIC — FILL IN THE BLANK

Match each term from the word bank to the sentence it completes.

Name: _____ Class Period: _____ Date: _____

WORD BANK

Church modes	Guido of Arezzo	Guillaume de Machaut	Hildegard von Bingen	Hurdy-gurdy
Isorhythm	Léonin	Melisma	Motet	Neume
Organum	Pérotin	Plainchant	Pope Gregory I	Portative organ
Psaltery	Rebec	Shawm	Troubadour	Vielle

Directions: Write the correct term on the line in each sentence. Each term is used exactly once.

1. Loud enough to be heard outdoors, the double-reed _____ led processions and dances and is an ancestor of the modern oboe.
2. The abbeys _____ composed dozens of chants as well as the morality play *Ordo Virtutum*.
3. When many notes are sung on a single syllable of text, that passage is called a _____.
4. Strings stretched across a flat wooden soundboard and plucked with a quill identify the _____.
5. Legend credits _____ with receiving the chant repertory from a dove, which is why that music still bears his name.
6. The earliest notated Western polyphony, made by adding a voice to an existing chant, is _____.
7. A rosined wheel turned by a crank sounds the strings of the _____ while the player presses keys to shape the melody.
8. Medieval melodies were classified by final and range within a system of eight _____.
9. The *Magnus Liber Organi* is traditionally credited to _____ of the Notre Dame School.
10. A poet-composer of secular song in the langue d'oc of southern France was a _____.
11. Before exact pitch could be notated, a _____ showed only the rise and fall of the melodic line.
12. The most common bowed string instrument of the period, the _____, regularly accompanied singers of narrative poetry.
13. Working at Notre Dame around 1200, _____ expanded organum to three and four voices.
14. A small, pear-shaped bowed instrument with a bright, nasal tone is the _____.
15. Monophonic, unmetred Latin song of the Roman Catholic liturgy is known as _____.
16. Repeating a rhythmic pattern (*talea*) against a repeating pitch pattern (*color*) is the technique of _____.
17. Light enough to be carried, the _____ let one hand pump the bellows while the other played the keyboard.
18. A polyphonic piece built over a borrowed tenor, often with a different text in each upper voice, is a _____.
19. The first complete polyphonic setting of the Mass Ordinary attributed to a single composer is the work of _____.
20. The staff, the solmization syllables, and a hand-shaped memory aid are all associated with _____.