

Compare and contrast the music of the medieval, re essay



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naissance, and Baroque periods. Music throughout the ages has changed dramatically. Starting in the Medieval period, from 400-1475, music was in the form of what is called the Gregorian chant. Instruments were very rarely used at this time. Since songs during this period were either troubadour or trouvère these chants had no real harmony. One example of this type of medieval composition is “Viderunt Omnes” by Leoninus. Like most Gregorian chants the texture of this piece is monophonic and polyphonic. “Viderunt Omnes” is a typical Gregorian chant in that it uses diatonic, not chromatic notes of the scale. Musical compositions during the Medieval period were made mostly by members of the church for the church. It was and is a very slow and steady movement that was meant to create a feeling of peace for worship purposes.

As time passed and music continued to evolve what is known as the Renaissance period emerged from 1475-1600. Music during this period was still written with worship as its intentions. Where the Medieval period had no harmony the Renaissance period introduced the use of a constant chord to form the building block of the different pieces. A good example of this period of music is “Ave Maria” by Josquin written in 1485. The many different voices that repeat the same words create a process called imitation. This particular chant is capella, meaning that it is performed by voices alone and has no musical accompaniment and with all the voices entering at different times but in harmony counterpoint is created. During this period music with instruments was created, the Gregorian chant remained strong as a preference.

After the Renaissance period came the Baroque period from 1600-1750. The Baroque period was broken up into two periods called the Early Baroque period from 1600-1710 and the Late Baroque period from 1710-1750. During the Early Baroque period music from composers such as Vivaldi and Monteverdi emerged and became popular. Music became more light and airy. Instruments were used more often than not than vocals. Melodies on larger scales with more daring leaps came about. An example during this period would be “The Spring” by Antonio Vivaldi. Just like its name sounds, it is a light piece that gives the warm feelings that a person might feel during the spring. Harmony becomes more apparent during this period as diatonic chords are played by a continuous bass line to help create melody. Texture becomes more rich with the bass as a support for the melody line and form becomes more apparent as the process of ritornello emerges during this period. The Late Baroque period can be marked by the great Bach. His concerto “Organ Fugue in G Minor”, written in 1710 is one of the most famous pieces to come out of this period. It is performed as the title states, on the organ. The melodies of this time became more expansive. They changed often, giving the concertos more texture and feeling. The rhythm continued to pick up speed and lent the music a more exciting feel. Walking bass as it was termed supported the melody. In using instruments instead of vocals the scale range that was limited became wide open. The fugue was the most popular at this time.

Throughout time music has changed and evolved into what we listen to today. It is good that we have music sheets that allow us to study the evolution of this music over time to see how it has evolved.