

Medieval music



Hildegard of Bingen's "Ordo Virtutum" is an example of liturgical drama, considered to be one of the oldest morality plays that survived to these days. Her music consisted of melodic lines while her composing style was characterized by soaring melodies that were outside the normal range of chant at that time. It often had recurrent melodic units with a close relationship between the text and the music. Hildegard's songs were open for the rhythmic interpretation due to the use of neumes without a staff. It is evident that her poetry and music mainly concerned female anatomy desire often described as Sapphonic or related to Sappho. This connected her to the history of female rhetoricians.

John Dunstable was best known for composing English music. He was a mathematician and astronomer who composed for the duke of Bedford during the Hundred Years' War. Dunstable's music was religious and inclined to isorhythmic motets, which influenced the next generations of France and Italy.

Guillaume Du Fay was one of the most important music composers in the first part of the 15th century. He trained as a choirboy and acted at Italian courts which included the papal choir. In his works, he joined solemn English sonorities, French theoretical forms fixes and foundations and Italian melodic vocal styles. Du Fay's four main genres of Burgundian period were mass, magnificent, motet and chanson, which sounded similar because the texture and the writing styles were indistinguishable. Sometimes the three-part treble dominated while, at times, homophonic fauxbourdon sound dominated.

Gilles Binchois composed his works in all styles, which existed then, but was mostly prominent because of his chansons that preserved rondeau and ballade forms. Chansons were particularly widespread at those times; some composers even employed them as cantus firmus in sacred works which were based on the same melodies. The borrowed melodies used to be sacred chants, secular popular songs or one voiced polyphonic chansons.

Jean Johannes Ockeghem's style was darker and contained more homogenous sonorities & with smooth seamless textures; such an effect was achieved by avoiding strong internal cadences and flexible irregular rhythms. The variety of sounds was expressed by textural reduction in duos and trios where voices drove towards cadences which were more active. Intricate canons and other compositional and notational devices were rather unique and artificial.

Josquin des Prez was the model composer of polyphony and humanistic text setting in the 16th century. He was one of the artists who saw the first generation of composers who achieved significant published work. His humanist influence paid more attention to the underlay text, clearly understood text, observed word stresses and music that matched the words' meanings.

The theory of music in the medieval period witnessed several advancements over time in regard to texture, tonal material and rhythm. Rhythm experienced dramatic changes both in notation and conception, which originated from scholars like Johannes. For a long period, most composed

music was primarily in perfect tempus with special effects created by imperfect tempus sections.