**The Middle Ages**

The Middle Ages (Bookended by the Glorious Roman/Greek period and the Renaissance)

Medieval Period (this word was invented in the 19th cent), or the Dark Ages (often used for the early part, up to 1000), was a period of roughly 1000 years, from 476, when the last Roman Emperor was overthrown, to 1453, when Constantinople, the capital of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, fell to the Turks.

Before the Medieval Period, the Roman empire ruled most of the world through conquering.

Roman Empire Weaknesses

* Army weakened from within due to recruitment from newly conquered land
* Constantly under attack from all directions
* Threat to imperialistic values
  + The spread of Christianity was a huge threat to these values
  + Christians saw their immediate life as almost inconsequential due to the promised eternal life
  + Didn’t want to praise the emperor

Early Christian church takes over in wake of Rome

In early monasteries, medieval music arose from monks

This period had a vast array of newly created inventions and works, such as Dante’s Divine Comedy or Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. The people of this time expressed their own views of the world at their time.

Differences between today and then: Today we argue and are against embracing new and strange things. Back then they readily accepted mysteries and uncertainties. Faith was a huge role in how they viewed the world

Medieval scholarship: Monks copied things by hand. Their works were all about copying and preserving knowledge without changing it, which would be frowned upon today (plagiarism). Today, scholarship is about creating original ideas and publishing them. Thus, very different.

Politics: Western region had a lot of disarray and fighting

Feudalism – the political division of territory into units that was based on a system of “vassalage” (modeled on the church’s system of vassalage)

Vassalage – A hierarchy of “vassals”

Power of God

Pope King

Bishops Duke

Priests and Deacons Feudal Lords (Barons/Counts)

Common People (Serfs)

Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) – Directed a codification of Christian practices, so they would be brought to universal conformity. He championed musical writing.

* Gregorian Chant OR
* Plainsong OR
* Plainchant OR
* Chant

Each Mass (the most important service by far) was made up of many chants, each fulfilling a separate function.

Pg 72 has all subcategories of the mass

* The mass proper
  + Changes from day to day. Stuff that is only sung on certain days (like Christmas)
* The mass ordinary
  + The standard part of the mass. Never changes

Alleluia – from the mass for Christmas Day [CD - #2]

This was part of mass proper. One of the oldest surviving Gregorian Chants

Written in Latin

Has flexible rhythm. Rhythm makes contact with the physical world, which isn’t the point. Negates any sense of finding physical pleasure

Tones are all close together and wandering

Uses many more scales other than major and minor (Referred to as church modes)

Monophonic (everyone is singing the same thing). For biblical reason. “Two or more gathered in my name”

Men only. Scripture states “women should be silent in church”.

Music serves to deliver the message. Poetry is the most important part of it.