The Middle Age (450 – 1450)

Music in the Middle Ages (450 – 1450)

- During the Middle Ages, musicians worked for churches, courts, and towns.
- Most medieval music was vocal, though musicians also performed on a wide variety of instrument.
- After about year 1000, organs and bells become increasingly common in cathedrals and monastic churches.

GREGORIAN CHANT

- Western Plaintchant
- Set to sacred Latin texts
- Chant is in Monophonic
 Texture
- Flexible rhythm, without meter, and little sense of beat.
- Passed along by oral tradition



Church Modes



Cont. on Gregorian Chant

- Conveys a calm, otherworldly, spiritual quality
- Composers were relatively uninterested in expressing emotions of a text
- Melodies tends to move in steps

Alleluia: Vidimus stellam

- Latinized form of the Hebrew hallelujah (praise the lord)
- Chant is in A B A form

Secular Music in the Middle Ages

- Troubadour and Trouvere Song
 - Monophonic texture
 - Songs indicates pitches but not rhythm
 - Either performed by their composer or wandering minstrels
 - Woman troubadour are called *troubairitz*



A Chanter (I must sing), by Beatriz, Countess of Dia (Late Twelfth Century)



- Poet
- Story about her love for a man who had betrayed her

Estampie

- Medieval dance
- Single melodic line
- Scores does not specify instrumentation
- Improvisation is used, performers might add drones two simultaneous, repeated notes at the interval of a fifth, performed on a *psaltery* (a plucked or struck string instrument)
- Disc 1 67

POLYPHONY

• Gregorian chant that consists one or more additional melody lines is called *organum*.



14th Century



The "New Art" in Italy and France

- Early 14th century a new system of music notation had evolved, composers could specify almost any rhythmic pattern.
- Syncopation became an important rhythmic practice.

