**Summary and Personal response in Week 2**

The theme of last class is the medieval times. We began the class with talking about the background of history and culture, then focused on the development of music during that time.

The Medieval times is an era full of turbulence, in which the Roman Empire fell and all the power was centralized on the pope. Wars never stopped and many deadly diseases were very popular among people. And because people’s thoughts were bound by religion, research of science and technology didn’t make any progress during that period. So the Middle Ages is also known as “Dark Ages”.

However, despite its bleak reputation, the Middle Ages was also an era of art masterpieces. As for music, the most outstanding achievement should be the development of church music.

During that time, church music went through a period of transformation, changing from monophony to polyphony, so that music can be more expressive. And talented composers represented by Hildegard created many new forms of musical works, such as Plainchant, Gregory Chant and so on, which laid foundations for the prosperity of western music. The texts of these songs are mostly prayers, and melodies are very beautiful, which reflects people’s faith and love for God. They are precious masterpieces, and their value lies in the fact that they reflect the situation of the society at that time.

In fact, not only music, literature and architecture also got a rapid development in the Middle Ages. Dante’s Inferno inspired many people to fight against the pope’s feudal system, and Gothic cathedrals were regarded as a wonder in architectural history. So why did art develop so rapidly in such a dark age?

From my point of view, it was so much suffering that forces artists to reflect problems in society and to find ways to solve these problems. Some artists believed in the power of God, so they tried to communicate with God, hoping to receive his forgiveness; while other artists thought it was the decay of the ruling class that caused all problems, so we could see anger and sarcasm in their works. However, no matter what opinions the artists came up with, they all thought much and expressed their solutions to these problems in their works. As the old saying goes “the times produce their heroes”, it is the era full of suffering and problems that inspired artists, leaving lots of excellent works to us.

And that’s the summary and some of my opinions. Thanks for my teacher’s explanation, and I’m looking forward to the next class!