

And when he has sung it to the end, let the three respond in unison:  
Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified, O celestial one.

Whereupon the first:

He is not here; he is risen, just as he foretold. Go, announce that he has risen from the dead.

At the word of this command let those three turn themselves to the choir, saying:

Alleluia! The Lord is risen today; the strong lion, the Christ, the Son of God. Give thanks to God, eia!

This said, let the one seated still, as if recalling them, sing the antiphon:

Come and see the place where the Lord was laid. Alleluia! Alleluia!

And saying this, let him rise, and let him lift the veil and show them the place bare of the cross, but only the cloths laid there in which the cross was wrapped. Seeing which, let them set down the censers which they had carried into the same sepulchre, and let them take up the cloth and spread it out before the eyes of the clergy; and, as if making known that the Lord had risen and was not now therein wrapped, let them sing this antiphon

The Lord is risen from the sepulchre, who for us hung upon the cross.

And let them place the cloth upon the altar. The antiphon being ended, let the Prior, rejoicing with them at the triumph of our King, in that, having conquered death, He rose again, begin the hymn:

Te Deum laudamus. [We praise thee, O God.]

And this begun, all the bells chime out together.

Ethelwold, *Concordia regularis* (c. 975), trans. E. K. Chambers, in W. L. Smoldon, "The Easter Sepulchre Music Drama," *Music & Letters*, XXVII (1946), 5-6.

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### *Musical Notation and Its Consequences*

The earliest forms of Western notation appeared in the Frankish lands in direct response to the need to transmit the Roman chant to the north (see above, p. 43). These so-called *neumes* were borrowed from the markings rhetoricians (like Quintilian, p. 12 above) used to indicate vocal inflections. Placed over lines of

text, they gave at best an approximation of pitch, and no indication whatsoever of rhythm. Such notation could serve only as a reminder to a singer who already knew the melody he was to sing. And that singer had to learn the melody in the first place by hearing it and repeating it until he knew it by heart: that is, by the rote method. The idea of being able to sing a melody one had never actually heard was inconceivable. Pitch was eventually fixed by means of the staff, first used in Frankish monasteries in Switzerland. It remained for trainers of choir-boys to devise methods to enable a reader to make a direct connection between the sounds of music and the signs that represented them. Among these teachers, Odo of Cluny and Guido of Arezzo were outstanding. Odo made extensive use of the monochord, an "instrument" that was used the way one uses the classroom piano today, to demonstrate the intervals and drill them until the pupil had assimilated them. In his *Enchiridion musices* ("Musical Handbook, c. 935), Odo describes his teaching method and reveals, in his answer to the question "What is music?" a newly practical attitude (compare it with the *Scholia enchiriadis*, p. 38 above) that suggests the waning of Platonic influence, and with it, the beginning of the end of medieval musical thought.

Here begins the book also called *Dialogus*, written by Dom Odo, and concisely, fittingly, and admirably arranged for the benefit of its users.

My dear brethren: you have asked me most earnestly to set down for you a few rules of music, such rules as children and simple people will understand, and by which they may with God's help quickly acquire skill in singing. You made this request because you had heard that such an accomplishment was possible and had verified those reports carefully. And indeed I have, while I have been with you, succeeded with God's aid in teaching certain children and adolescents that art by those means, in such a way that in a short period of time—sometimes three days, sometimes four, sometimes a week—they learned, by themselves, a great number of antiphons, without having heard them sung by someone else, but having only a proper transcription of them according to the rules. After a little while, they could perform them without hesitation. Just a few days later, moreover, they were able to sing accurately at sight, with no preparation, whatever had been written down in proper musical notation—an accomplishment which the common run of professional singers have not hitherto been able to equal, though many of them have spent fifty years in the study and practice of music and not learned a thing.

At this point, you were even more eager than before. You urged, with vehement prayer and great pressure, that for the honor of God and His holy Mother Mary (in whose convent all this was taking place) rules should be set up, and the whole antiphoner transcribed properly, together with the formulas for the psalm tones.

Trusting in your prayers, and bearing in mind the advice of our common Father, I neither wish nor am able to let this work go. It is true, the theory of this art is a lengthy and difficult study among the scholars of our

time; let them cultivate it if they wish, I say, and go the whole length of the course. But those who take this little gift of God on its own terms will be content with the enjoyment of it alone.

And now, so that you may better understand all this, and accept the truth of your own free will, let one of you step up and ask me questions. I will answer them as best I can, and as well as God has made me able.

STUDENT: What is Music?

TEACHER: The knowledge of how to sing accurately, and the direct and easy path toward the acquiring of that skill.

S: How is that learned?

T: Your schoolteacher first shows you all the letters of the alphabet on a slate; just so the musician will reveal to you all the notes used in a melody on the monochord.

S: What sort of thing is the monochord?

T: It is a long, rectangular wooden chest, hollow like a cithara; there is a string placed above it, by sounding which you may easily come to understand all the different notes.

S: How is the string placed?

T: A straight line is drawn lengthwise through the middle of the chest, with a one-inch space left blank at either end. Then a point is marked at either end. Then, in the space left blank, there are placed two bridges, with the strings suspended above the line in such a way that the length of the string between the two bridges is equal to the length of the line.

S: But how can just one string produce many pitches?

T: The letters, or notes, which musicians use are placed along the line below the string; and as a movable bridge runs between the line and the string along the letter, the string, becoming longer or shorter, reproduces every song perfectly. When some antiphon or another is sounded out for children by means of these letters, they learn it better and more quickly from the string than they would from a human being. Teach them in this way for a few months, and you can take the string away, and they will sing at sight, unhesitatingly, things they have never heard.

Martin Gerbert, *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica* . . . , I (St. Blasien, 1784), 251 ff. Trans. for this book by Lawrence Rosenwald.

Guido of Arezzo's goals were the same as Odo's: to reduce all practical situations to a set of basic principles or rules which could be applied confidently by the pupil. He scorned the monochord as "childish," however, and preferred the use of memorized models of each musical interval, as he describes below in a famous passage from his *Epistola de ignoto cantu* ("Letter on singing unheard songs," c. 1030). This method, too, is still employed by teachers of "ear training."

And so, inspired with divine charity, I have shared this grace that God has given me—unworthy as I am—with you and with as many other people as I could, as diligently and expeditiously as possible. My hope is that posterity will learn with ease those same church chants that I, with all my predecessors, could only learn with difficulty, and will bless us and our colleagues for what we have done. Then, perhaps, there will be, by God's mercy, some remitting of my sins—or at least, from the good will of so many, some prayer on my behalf. Other students, after all, have prayed to God for their teachers, though they have gained from them in ten years of study only an imperfect knowledge of singing. What do you think will be done for us, who can train accomplished singers in a year, or two at most? Perhaps, of course, the habitual wickedness of mankind will be ungrateful for such blessings. But then will not God, who is just, reward us for our labor? Perhaps, again, someone will say that we deserve nothing, on the ground that God is responsible for all, and we can do nothing without Him. Heaven forbid! Even the apostle, knowing that God's grace is at the bottom of everything, writes: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; and now there is stored up for me a crown of justice." Secure, then, in our hope of reward, let us pursue this useful work. And since, after all, storms must eventually yield to fair weather, let us set sail cheerfully and with good hope.

In your captivity, however, you cannot, I suppose, easily put your trust in freedom. I will set out what has happened point by point. Pope John [XIX, reigned 1024–33], who governs the Roman church, heard of our schola's reputation. He heard in particular of how, by means of our antiphoners, boys could learn songs they had never heard. He was greatly astonished, and sent three messengers to bring me to him. I went to Rome, therefore, together with Dom Grunwald, the venerable abbot, and Dom Peter, the provost of the canons of the church of Arezzo, a most learned man by the standards of our time. The Pope was most glad to see us, talked much with us, and asked a great many questions. He turned over the pages of our antiphoner as if it were some great prodigy, thinking over in particular the rules prefixed to it. He did not stop, in fact, or move from the place in which he sat, until, fulfilling a vow he made, he had learned to sing one versicle that he had never heard. What he had hardly believed to be true of others he could not but acknowledge in himself. What more is there to say? I had to leave Rome soon—the summer fevers in those wet and swampy places were death to me. We agreed, however, that when the winter returned I would return with it, to explain our work to the Pope, who had already tasted it, and to his clergy.

A few days afterwards, I went to see Dom Guido, the Abbot of Pomposia, our spiritual father, a man beloved of God and men for his virtue and wisdom, and a part of my very soul. He is an intelligent and percep-





Do you see how this melody begins, in each of its six phrases, on a different note? Now if someone has studied and learned the beginning of each phrase in such a way that he can sing readily whatever part he wishes, then whenever he sees those same six notes on which the several sections begin, he will be able to sing them properly and exactly. Moreover, hearing some neume without seeing it written, he will think it over, and decide which of the phrases fits best with the end of the neume—fits, that is, so that the last note of the neume and the first note of the phrase in the melody above are the same. Let him be certain, however, that the neume ends on that note on which the phrase above appropriate to it begins.

Now if you begin to sing some melody you do not know beforehand, but do have written out in front of you, you must be careful to end each neume properly, and take care that the end of each neume is well joined to the beginning of that phrase which begins on the same note as that on which the neume ends. If you want to sing new songs as soon as you see them, and to comprehend quickly those that you hear and are to write down quickly, this rule will be of the greatest help to you.

Gerbert, *Scriptores* . . . , II, 43 ff. Trans. for this book by Lawrence Rosenwald.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the work of these monks. If there was a single greatest revolution in the history of Western music, this was undoubtedly it. For the conversion of the Western tradition of music into a literate one determined all future development of the art. Innovation was now infinitely facilitated, and so musical style began to change with increasing rapidity. Moreover, the refinement of musical notation and training made the cultivation of polyphony on a grand scale really practicable for the first time, and it is no coincidence that the history of polyphonic music—which above all sets Western music apart from all other traditions—begins at precisely this time. Equally important, the philosophical outlook of Western man on music was fundamentally changed. Music now became for him—we should say for *us*—increasingly what medieval writers called a *res facta*, a “made thing,” on which craftsmanship was to be lavished, and whose quality and originality commanded respect. One eventual result of this change was the gradual elevation of the composer, the one who made the *res facta*, over Boethius’s speculative “musician” (see above, p. 37).

Of course, the Guidonian reforms did not take hold instantly; rote methods and oral transmission persisted for a long time, witness Chaucer’s description of a fourteenth-century English choirboy.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood  
Doun at the further ende, in which there were  
Children an heep, ycomen of Cristen blood,  
That lerned in that scole year by year  
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,

This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,  
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among these children was a widwes sonne,  
A litel clergeon, seven yeers of age,  
That day by day to scole as was his wone  
And eek also, wher-as he saugh th’image  
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage  
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye  
His *Ave Marie* as he goth by the way.

.....

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,  
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,  
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,  
As children learned hir antiphoner  
And, as he droste, he drough him ner and ner,  
And herkened ay the wordes and the note,  
Til he the first vers coude all by rote.

*The Canterbury Tales*, “The Prioresses Tale,” lines 43–56, 64–70

## 15

### Music in Courtly Life

In the poems of the Provençal troubadours, the German minnesingers, and the other medieval singers of courtly love and the knightly tradition, we may observe a close interrelationship of music with the life of the times that parallels in the secular realm the honored place of music within the church. The knightly life was itself a kind of ritual, courtly love a kind of religion. Like the music of the Church, the poetry and music of the noble troubadour were sober and reflective, and served to elevate and memorialize the permanent values of life, such as were worthy of commemoration in writing. These values included service to lord and lady, the idealization of love, and the fervor of the Crusades. We know a good deal about several of the troubadours, thanks to the way in which their poetry and music were preserved. The songs of knighthood are found in rich manuscripts known as *chansonniers*. These were never used for