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CHAPTER 1: MUSIC IN ANCIENT GREECE AND EARLY CHRISTIAN ROME

Chapter Outline

Prelude (CHWM 16–17)

Western culture has roots in ancient Greece and Rome. Although little ancient music has survived, ancient writings about music, particularly music theory, had a strong influence on later centuries. This ancient heritage was passed on in part by the early Christian church.

I. Music in Ancient Greek Life and Thought (CHWM 17–21, NAWM 1)

In ancient Greece, music was linked to the gods and divine powers.

1. Extant Greek music In ancient Greek mythology music had Divine Origin. Invented by and practiced by god’s and demi-gods. Apollo, Antiphon, and Orpheus, Music had magical powers to heal and purify.   
   Greek music was ***monophonic*,(melody with out harmony)** but was often performed in ***heterophony(sung melody and played melody the same)***. It was usually improvised or learned by ear, not read from notation. **Music: NAWM 1**
   * 1. Greek music was almost entirely improvised.
   1. ***Monophonic:*** Melody without Harmony
   2. ***Heterophony***: Melody Voice and Melody Instrument are the same.
2. Greek theory: Plato, Aristotle wrote about music.  
   Greek theorists and philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle) developed ideas about music that profoundly influenced the musical thought of the Middle Ages and survive to this day.
3. Music and poetry: were synonymous.   
   Music was closely tied to poetry. The rhythms of a melody followed the rhythms of its text, and the pitch contour often followed the inflections of a speaking voice.
   * 1. Plato : Music made up from (melos) (song)speech, lyric, harmony. (lyric) is sung to harmony.

**A Closer Look:**Ancient Greek Music: Kithara and Aulos  
The lyre, aulos, and kithara were the three main instruments in ancient Greece, and they could be played alone or as accompaniment to singing, dancing, or recitation in religious ceremonies, festivals, and [**contests**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/01/outline.aspx). A reaction against the rise of professional musicians, increasing virtuosity, and the growing complexity of music led to a simplification of later Greek music and theory.

1. Music and ethos (ethos is ones ethical character)  
   The Greeks held that music directly affected *ethos*, one’s ethical character.
   1. Pythagoras: Same mathematical laws governed music as the cosmos. Both visible and invisible, and even the human soul.
2. Theory of imitation:   
   **Aristotle** wrote that music represents the passions or states of the soul and arouses passions in the listener, and that music stimulating undesirable attitudes should be avoided.
3. [**Music in education**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/01/outline.aspx)  
   Plato gave music an important role in education, arguing that the right kind of music disciplined the mind and aroused temperance and courage. Aristotle was less restrictive and endorsed music for entertainment and for its role in drama.
   1. Plato Modes: 1. Dorian 2. Phrygian 3. Etc..
   2. Lawlessness in art and education eventually leads to poor manners and anarchy.
4. Greek music theory: from Pythagoras to Aristide Quintillions.   
   Our modern system of music theory and its vocabulary derive largely from ancient Greece.
5. Music and number : Music was inseparable from numbers   
   *Pythagoras*(ca. 580–ca. 500 b.c.e.) is credited with discovering that the basic consonant intervals were produced by simple ratios: 2:1 for the octave, 3:2 for the fifth, and 4:3 for the fourth.
6. Harmonics: Tones , semitones, Intervals, di-tones (thirds): study of matters concerning pitch.  
   The Greek discipline of *harmonics*(matters concerning pitch) laid the foundation for modern concepts such as *notes*, *intervals*, *scales*, and modes.
7. Tetra chords: scales Basic Building Block.   
   Greek scales were constructed from *tetra chords*, groups of four notes spanning a fourth. There were three *genera*(kinds) of tetra chords: *diatonic*, *chromatic*, and *enharmonic*.
8. Transmission of Greek ideas: Greek writers perceived music as a reflection of the order of the ***universe.***   
   Some Greek concepts about music were interpreted and transmitted to the Middle Ages through the writings of early Christians, but others were not rediscovered until the Renaissance.

II. Roman Music, 200 b.c.e.–500 c.e. (CHWM 21)

The Romans adopted (took) many aspects of Greek musical culture.

Military, religious, theatrical, private entertainment, education.

1. Rome’s decline  
   Rome’s economic decline halted grand musical productions, and almost no distinctively Roman traces were left on later European musical developments.

III. The Early Christian Church: Musical Thought (CHWM 21–23)

1. Church Fathers  
   Christian writers and scholars known as the Church Fathers saw in music the power to inspire divine thoughts (for Good or Evil)and to influence the character of listeners.
2. Dangers of music  
   Many early church leaders opposed listening to music for pleasure.
   * 1. Beautiful things exist to remind us of Divine and perfect Beauty.
3. Transmission of Greek music theory  
   Greek theory and philosophy were summarized and passed on by early Christian writers, most notably by ***Boethius***. & Maitianus cpella.
4. Martianus Capella: Treatise ( The marriage of Mercury and Philogy).  
   Martianus helped to codify the seven [**liberal arts**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/01/outline.aspx): the three verbal arts called the *trivium*(grammar, dialectic or logic, and rhetoric) and the four mathematical disciplines called the *quadrivium*(geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and harmonics or music).
5. ***Boethius:*** ***Most revered in middle ages in music***.  
   ***De institutione musica***(The Fundamentals of Music) by *Boethius*(ca. 480–524) is the main source through which Greek music theory was transmitted to the Middle Ages. **Cited for next 1000 years**.

**A Closer Look:**Boethius’s *Fundamentals*  
***Boethius*** listed three kinds of music: ***musica mundana*(**cosmic music—music of the planets)), the orderly numerical relations that control the natural world; ***musica humana***(human music—Musical balance in your body), which controls the human body and soul; and ***musica instrumentalis***,(normal audible music) audible music produced by voices or instruments. He saw music primarily as a science.

IV. The Early Christian Church: Musical Practice (CHWM 24–27)

1. Greek legacy Music was a servant of Religion.
2. Music: is a servant of religion.   
   Early Christian communities absorbed musical practices from ancient Greece and other cultures, but their leaders rejected pagan uses of music and excluded instrumental music from church services.
3. Judaic heritage: sprang from Jewish Roots.  
   Some elements of Christian worship derive from Jewish traditions, including the chanting of Scripture and the singing of *psalms*.
4. Christian observances  
   Like the Jewish temple service, the Christian Mass enacts a symbolic sacrifice, and worshippers and priests partake in a ritual meal and sing psalms.
5. Psalms and hymns  
   As Christianity spread, the church absorbed influences from many areas, including Syria and Milan.
6. Eastern churches  
   Byzantium, later called Constantinople(now Istanbul) , was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire from 395 to 1453, and its musical practices influenced the West. ***Byzantine musical practice left there mark on weatern chant, particularly in the classification of the reparatory into eight modes or melody types.***
7. Western churches  
   Between the fifth and eighth centuries, different regions produced several distinct Western liturgies and bodies of liturgical music. Rome was the western Capital and Byzantine the Eastern Capital

**In Context:**Sounding and Silent Harmony: Music and Astronomy  
Many ancient Greek thinkers linked music and astronomy because both studies were dominated by numerical relationships. Medieval Christian philosophers believed these relationships provided the foundation for knowledge about ***the order of the entire universe***. These ideas persisted through the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

1. Chant dialects  
   Along with a separate liturgy, each region had its own repertory of liturgical melodies we call *chant*.
2. Rome’s musical dominance  
   Eventually, most regional dialects were replaced with a common liturgy and a set of melodies authorized by the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Gregorian chant  
   *Gregorian chant*was preserved for centuries by monks and nuns who sang, memorized, and wrote down melodies.