

Worksheet: Exploring Medieval Music

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read the passage below about medieval music and answer the following questions.

Medieval Music

During the medieval period, roughly spanning from the 5th to the late 15th century, music played a significant role in society. Most of the music from this era was vocal, with instruments accompanying or enhancing the melodies. The church was a major patron of music during this time, and much of the surviving music from the Middle Ages is religious in nature.

Key Features of Medieval Music:

Plainchant: Also known as Gregorian chant, plainchant was the dominant form of music in medieval Europe. It consists of monophonic, unaccompanied singing, often with Latin texts, and was used in religious ceremonies and liturgies.

Secular Music: In addition to religious music, secular music was also present. This included songs performed outside of religious contexts, often accompanied by instruments such as the lute, harp, or flute.

Instruments: While vocal music dominated, instruments like the pipe organ, hurdy-gurdy, and various types of drums were also used. These instruments were often played in conjunction with vocal performances or during instrumental interludes.

Notation: The earliest surviving musical notation from the Middle Ages dates back to the 9th century. However, most medieval music was passed down through oral tradition, with written notation being used primarily for sacred music.

Questions:

What time period does the medieval period refer to?

What role did the church play in medieval music?

What is plainchant, and what are its characteristics?

Besides religious music, what other type of music existed in medieval Europe?

Can you name three instruments commonly used in medieval music?

When was the earliest surviving musical notation from the Middle Ages created?

How was most medieval music transmitted?

What language were the texts of plainchant typically in?

What is another name for plainchant?

Why was the church a major patron of music during the medieval period?