Medieval Music A.D. 450-1450

Social Structure:
- Peasants (the masses) = poor workers/farmers (serfs, feudal system), illiterate.
- Nobility (political power, wealth) = royalty, knights, castles, mostly illiterate.
- Clergy (political power, intellectual, moral influence) = Roman Catholic Church
gothic cathedrals, monks, literate, educated

Everyone very religious - People lived obedient lives focused on preparation for the afterlife
(Heaven vs. Hell).
Musicians and their Music:

Clergy:

Gregorian Chant = sung melody alone (monophony) without meter
- **sacred**: for worship [services] --> religious text - vocal only, instruments: "pagan"
- named for Pope Gregory I (ca. A.D. 600) legend = creator of chant (not quite)
- modal (pre-major/minor, weak gravity)
- fluid, stepwise, small range,
  speechlike (one pitch per syllable vs. melisma (multiple pitches per syllable)
  causes devotional, meditational, solemn ritual-like sound

*Alleluia: Vidimus stellam* - anonymous composer: A.D. 600 – 1300
- oral tradition, then **notated** by monks (earliest examples from A.D 900) - uniformity of worship

Hildegard von Bingen: *CD1.50 O Successores* - drone, more speech-like
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfCmHuzS0Tk&feature=hp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfCmHuzS0Tk&feature=hp)
Peasants:

Minstrels (jongleurs) - lowest social level (i.e. parasites).
- performed or improvised secular songs, often regarding the latest news (no newspapers)
- performed instrumental dance music (harp, fiddle, lute), in castles, taverns, town squares
- no written records of their music.

Estampie - medieval dance – double drone, instruments not indicated, but suggested by paintings.
[Link](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYEh6213zjM)

Nobility:

Troubadours & Trouveres = poet/musicians employed by nobility, or poet/musicians who were nobility themselves.

- composed secular songs.
- texts: often about love or other earthly subjects
- some notated (melody and text only) by monks (1650 melodies survive)
- sung melody alone (monophony) or likely with instrumental accompaniment
- likely performed with dance meter
- performances by troubadours & trouveres were an important aspect of courtly life.
[Link](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdIYmW8NNEk)
Medieval Music: The Birth of Polyphony

Organum ("singing together")
parallel (chant in 5ths or 4ths) A.D. 700 - 900
free (melodies independent,
    higher melody: shorter notes, lower melody: longer notes)

School of Notre Dame (Paris – intellectual and artistic center of Europe after A.D. 1150)
Leonin & Perotin (A.D. 1100's) composed and notated organa:
    higher line(s): dance tune with notated rhythm
    lower line: very slow (drone-like) or faster, but measured chant melodies
        intermixed with chant (for example 1:21 in the following)
        Faster lower line sections = clausula, for example 0:48 in the following:

Leonin: Viderunt omnes
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtkmnhnHWhw&list=PL580CE69ABC653F80&index=2

Perotin: up to 3 dance melodies atop a much slower chant melody
Faster lower line sections (all the voices “dance”) = clausula (for example 2:30)

Perotin: Viderunt omnes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aySwfcRaOZM

Motet = shorter polyphonic compositions: derived from clausula
- 1 or more dance tunes atop a slower moving, measured chant.
- each line has its own text (multi-textual, often multi-lingual),
  secular and sacred texts combined,

J'ai mis – Je n'en puis - Puerorum
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJbgL80-Hq0
**Ars Nova** (New Art) 1300's - weakening of Church’s influence and power
Motet = the preeminent form
- notational system for very complex rhythms (e.g. **syncopation**)  
  result: greater expression.

Guillaume de Machaut 1300-1377 = poet and musician

*Machaut: Puis qu’en oubli sui de vous* (1363) Motet for 3 voices using a single text.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yi2MMtlimY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yi2MMtlimY)

*Machaut: Notre Dame Mass: Agnus Dei* (1360's) first polyphonic setting of the mass ordinary (5 prayers used in a service that reenacts the Last Supper) –

- Kyrie
- Gloria
- Credo
- Santus et Benedictus
- Agnus Dei

  - polyphonic and rhythmic complexity of motets
  - harmony, exotic sounding cadences on open fifths, dissonance between.

Agnus Dei [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHRAYbgdxew](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHRAYbgdxew)