

MUSICAL CULTURE OF MEDIEVAL WESTERN EUROPE

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The main objective of our work is to study the laws of musical art development in Middle age.

Subjects of research: collections of medieval songs (“Carmina Burana”, “Llibre Vermell de Montserrat”); samples of Gregorian chant (“Dies Irae”).

Latin in Middle age was the base of educational system – “seven liberal arts”. Latin also was a universal language of communication and so underwent major changes, sometimes unacceptable from the positions of Classical Latin. Thus many coevals granted Medieval Latin name of “vulgar” or “cuisine” Latin.

Musical art of Middle age was developing in two different directions: ecclesiastical (official art) and unclerical (temporal art). Birth to medieval ecclesiastical music was given in Antiquity by Saint Ambrose (340-397 A.D.). The most significant innovation of his was called “Antiphony” and implied separation of church choir in two parts located on both sides of the altar. Each part had to sign particular musical fragments in turn.

Pope Gregory I (590-604 A.D.) standardized ecclesiastical singing that eventually was named “Gregorian chant” in his honor. Gregorian chant is the basic element of modern catholic services. Spread of unclerical music in Middle age was implemented by wandering musicians (bards, minstrels etc.). Folk musicians were illiterate. Goliards and vagrants were literacy teachers in artistic environment. They were unsuccessful bishops and students who despised Church and its laws. “Carmina Burana” is the most famous collection of unclerical medieval music and contains songs that describe events of Migration Period. There are many medieval music bands nowadays (In Extremo; Saltatio Mortis; Corvus Corax etc.). They play different genres of medieval music (folk, rock, metal) and are very popular around the world. “Symbiosis” of church and temporal traditions of musical composition in Middle age became a turning point in history of music in general. Art of this “mutual” kind was created for pilgrims to replace folk songs that weren’t godly enough for performing in monastery. “Libre Vermell de Montserrat” contains vivid song samples of mentioned type. They were composed on junction of two eras and symbolize moving of humanity from Middle age to Renaissance.