

# Imagining Medieval Music: a Short History<sup>1</sup>

Annette Kreutziger-Herr

C'est vers le Moyen Âge enorme et delicat qu'il faudrait que mon coeur en panne naviguât, Loin de nos jours d'esprit charnel et de chair triste. (Verlaine)

In the third book of his novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*, published in 1832, Victor Hugo evokes the image of “gothic Paris,” which culminates in the festive peal of bells at Easter or Pentecost:

Behold, at a signal given from heaven, for it is the sun which gives it, all those churches quiver simultaneously. First come scattered strokes, running from one church to another, as when musicians give warning that they are about to begin. Then, all at once, behold! – for it seems at times as though the ear also possessed a sight of its own, – behold, rising from each bell tower, something like a column of sound, a cloud of harmony. First, the vibration of each bell mounts straight upwards, pure and, so to speak, isolated from the others, into the splendid morning sky; then, little by little, as they swell they melt together, mingle, are lost in each other, and amalgamate in a magnificent concert. It is no longer anything but a mass of sonorous vibrations incessantly sent forth from the numerous belfries; floats, undulates, bounds, whirls over the city, and prolongs far beyond the horizon the deafening circle of its oscillations.

Nevertheless, this sea of harmony is not a chaos; great and profound as it is, it has not lost its transparency; you behold the windings of each group of notes which escapes from the belfries. You can follow the dialogue, by turns grave and shrill, of the treble and the bass; you can see the octaves leap from one tower to another; you watch them spring forth, winged, light, and whistling,

---

from the silver bell, to fall, broken and limping from the bell of wood; you admire in their midst the rich gamut which incessantly ascends and re-ascends the seven bells of Saint-Eustache; you see light and rapid notes running across it, executing three or four luminous zigzags, and vanishing like flashes of lightning . . . Assuredly, this is an opera which it is worth the trouble of listening to.<sup>2</sup>

Victor Hugo outlines a “soundscape” of unsurpassed splendour and opulence, in which the description of music is central – be it from bells or produced by human voices. It is as if Victor Hugo had known about the central importance of listening in the Middle Ages, the capacity to listen as the most important quality of man. Hildegard von Bingen and others have repeatedly underlined how important it is to listen to divine intuitions and how singing corresponds, answers, to this supreme sense. Listening is central and runs from the dove of the Holy Ghost whispering liturgical chant melodies in Pope St. Gregory’s ear, through the masses of ecclesiastical sound accompanying the mass, and it seems that the tragic figure of the deaf hunchback is put into the centre of Hugo’s novel in order to hint already here at the decline of the medieval world. In the light of the importance of eye and ear for medieval society at large, the memory of the body being extremely important, the construction of a deaf hunchback working in a Gothic cathedral is an unsurpassed hint to medieval living and thinking.

Victor Hugo’s novel, though billowed with life, sensuous and filled with lush images, is not medieval, but a masterpiece of French Romanticism, conveying sights and sounds for our imagination. At the same time there is a punch line: Around 1830, while Hugo was giving a soundscape to medieval tones, medieval music itself was almost unknown. Being the only reconstructable aspect of medieval soundscapes, be they either urban or rural, music could at least open a door to historic reconstruction of medieval life. But medieval music was in the 19th century absent as a historic fact, and when looked upon in detail it is more colour and atmosphere than reconstruction. When minstrels or chant recitations are described, they lend the description a soft and fictional effect of depth in this literarisation of history. No other effect is aimed at when Matthew G. Lewis, in his 1796 novel *The Monk*, describes the abbot of the Milan Capuchin Monastery, Ambrosio, who in his colossal introductory sermon portrays the pangs of eternal damnation, while his voice turns into “a heavenly melody,” carrying the listeners above the abyss of ultimate destruction into the realm of blessed peacefulness.

With no oral tradition alive and the interest in medieval music gone, which had died around 1500 completely, the sources for a revival of medieval music lay in monasteries waiting to be rediscovered. And polyphony,

---

notated with a notation and harmonic system so different from the notation of modern times, the revival of medieval music had to wait for the transcription of the music first before it could become alive again in sound. This transcription though had to be a reconstruction – and a reinvention, with so many parameters of medieval music lost and gone forever.

### *Music as an Object of Research and Study*

Music as a sounding attribute is at the same time a cultural asset and an object of research. But unlike all other historic artifacts and remnants of material culture, music is irretrievably lost when history progresses. Notations and notes do not convey the essence of sound itself, they cannot by their very nature supply the fullness of information of the resounding, they do not transmit the information in order to comprehend a performance – notations are mere hints and permit only a slight idea of the liveliness and beauty with which time had been formed into sound. Likewise, it is a basic philosophical and musical problem that a musical artifact is only present when it is completely gone. Music is able, like no other art, to illustrate the fleetingness of time and mortality through its very nature, while music is for many philosophers – like Schopenhauer or Bloch – the mediator that, if any, can convincingly reach transcendence. The realisation and manifestation of music is inseparable from the possibilities of the present and is to the highest degree dependent on empathy and knowledge, on emotional understanding, experience, theoretical exploration and penetration. Music is a fleeting something, that only acquires duration through sound and loses this duration immediately in order to *be*.

So music lives in a hidden, invisible space, in what Ernst Bloch once called “the secret territory of the highest good” (“die Geheimlandschaft des höchsten Guts”). Its reconstruction and its sounding belong to the area of tension between the preservation of music, kept like objects of art in a museum – music as sounding history – and on the other hand emotional identification – music as sounding presence, where historical distance has no meaning and the question of any historic context is not asked. The preservation of a musical past for the sake of preserving it – like paintings of court and castle kept in museums without the context that could convey meaning – and without any expectation that ancient music could still have any emotional meaning, stays in contrast to an emotional approach to the music of the past, in which music could mean anything as long as it touches the heart. Most people today do not realise that the classical music they admire and love was composed for specific contexts (church, court, salon) and conceptualised in circumstances totally different from ours today, the same being even more true for the music of ancient times. So the moments in

which “the real meaning” of music unfolds clearly cannot be put down on paper or parchment and they are developed only within the dialogue of composer and interpreter. The ability to see a connection between the deviations from notated music – the small variants that define the character of the individual performance – and musical meaning, are rooted within the conviction that music is eloquent, while at the same time it is not definite or unambiguous what music is saying. It is an expressive language without clearly outlined content and object.

The problem and the opportunity of a realisation of notated music in a concert – the transformation of script to sound – are evident, they culminate in the dilemma of historic reconstruction of musical history and they gain in explosive force when eye and ear are geared towards a musical culture that is removed farther away.

### *Medievalism and Medieval Music*

Medievalism organises, one could argue, forms of recollection and memory of the Middle Ages in a new, creative way, bringing to the surface those aspects of medieval culture which the present is interested in. These can be divided into four forms: the productive, creative medievalism, in which topics, themes, forms, works of art and authors of the Middle Ages are formed into a new work of art; the reproductive medievalism in which medieval works are reconstructed in a way which the present regards as “authentic,” through a musical performance or renovation (of a painting or a building); the scientific medievalism, in which medieval authors, works, events or facts are studied and explained with the methods of each participating discipline; political and ideological medievalism, in which works, themes, ideas or persons from the Middle Ages are exploited for political reasons in the widest sense and used to legitimise actions. These forms of medievalism are rarely separated from each other. The most explosive forces are the second and third ones, for they shake the foundation of the humanities at large. For if artistic, that is intrinsically subjective approaches are accepted into the “objective” humanities, the “pure” foundations of the disciplines are in question.<sup>3</sup>

Generally the medievalist seems to be in charge of the first two categories, though medievalists work in a network, in which all four categories are mixed. Here, one can already perceive that the reconstruction and performance of medieval music is something between creative, reproductive and scientific medievalism, and the mix of those three approaches is guided by imagination: medieval music is an especially convincing dream of the Middle Ages.

For the music history of Europe, medieval culture is the phenomenon

farthest away from the present. From antiquity there are no musical testimonies, and the few which have prevailed are mostly disputable and subject to speculation. Medieval music, therefore, is Europe's oldest music, the earliest music to which access seems to be possible. But this musical culture cannot be accessed by searching and finding – you need first an inner access, which opens ears and eyes for this stunningly new art. As long as thought ignored the Middle Ages as an interesting epoch, no substantial research was done, and the hundreds of sources remained undiscovered in the ecclesiastical and secular archives. So before medieval music was rediscovered in full, starting around 1900, and before it was possible to find a sound for the mysterious manuscripts in the 20th century, a full history of ideas had to develop. The Middle Ages themselves had to become interesting enough for the music to become interesting too, and the reconstruction of medieval music – rediscovery and invention alike – is embedded in the history of medievalism in modernity.

While in the 18th century the Middle Ages were mostly regarded as a dark, retarded time, and while the Middle Ages in history books were often dealt with mostly in one sentence, as an epoch which should be dealt with as quickly as possible, around 1800 the Middle Ages blossom out into an object of longing of first range, away from the rhapsodic prelude of historical observation and towards the monumental importance of medieval culture. Harbingers had been the English *gothic novels* and the leaning towards medieval architecture – *Strawberry Hill* by Horace Walpole and his early attempts to translate the Middle Ages in his novel *The Castle of Otranto* – to be followed by the *Waverley Novels* by Sir Walter Scott, to which also Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* would be indebted.

Goethe's praise of the Dome of Strassbourg – his article *Von deutscher Baukunst*<sup>4</sup> – from 1772 is an early testimony, in which in seemingly modest and unspectacular ways, the foundations of a new aesthetic of art are proposed. Generally, the Middle Ages in England, France and Germany would be rediscovered first on the architectural and literary level, later also on the historical, music historical and political level, to be regarded as an ideal epoch. The traces of this redirecting can be followed through treatises, novels, remarks and speeches published from the late 18th century and into the middle of the 19th, when the Middle Ages were established as an important European epoch and when more could be said about them than one sentence.

In the late 18th century, a specific history of ideas began which prepared the way for concepts of medieval music. To name just one, the English and later on German theories of “gothic forests” and “domes of plants”<sup>5</sup> flourished in an attempt to explain Gothic architecture through analogies to organic growth. This idea, for example, would take root in

concepts of medieval polyphony – concepts of the music of the Middle Ages as an organic art following rules like organic growth. This concept would contribute to a high degree to the elaborated concept of progress in music history, the individual expressions of musical concepts as growing from the meagre to the more elaborated, from the simple to the complex – a concept which permeated all writing on music and was, for many decades, as prevailing as it was misleading.

A first attempt, on a more precise level, to come to grips with medieval music can be found in a glossary of middle and late Latin compiled by the Frenchman Charles de Fresne, Sieur Du Cange (1610–1688). He defined terms like “cantus,” “discantus,” “musica,” “organum,” and gave the etymological meaning of those terms.<sup>6</sup> About a century later, the Benedictine Carpentier added a supplement, comprised of four volumes, that was incorporated into later editions of the “Glossarium.” This supplement added more information, but also added misconceptions, such as the notion that there existed in France, before “the Guidonian hand,” a kind of “new singing” based on staff notation – that is neumes notated on lines.<sup>7</sup>

The *Glossarium novum*, other collections of medieval treatises on musical topics, and other small booklets on music history stand only as modest predecessors to the monumental work *De cantu et musica sacra*, in which Martin Gerbert undertook, in 1774, to write the history of medieval ecclesiastical music.<sup>8</sup> This historic text already shows a deep knowledge of the theoretical sources and led ultimately to his famous collection of medieval treatises called *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimu*. It was the first critically compiled work that would make musical medieval studies possible in a philologically oriented – that is, modern – way. But this work, as well as its successors – including Coussemaker’s supplemental *Scriptores* collection of the 19th century – turned interest in the Middle Ages almost exclusively toward the theorists of music.

Apart from this early systematic approach to medieval music theory, there prevailed a general sort of charming disregard for medieval music, as it surfaces in the writings of Charles Burney, for example, especially in his *General History of Music* of 1776.<sup>9</sup> This book, based on Burney’s readings in libraries in Paris, Rome, Milan, Florence and Venice, tries to do justice to what he calls “the dark ages of ignorance and superstition.”<sup>10</sup> Yet he sees no real beauty and greatness in the music he finds. For example, commenting on a piece of Gregorian chant, written in undiastematic neumes (that is neumes notated without lines and not conveying the general melodic flux), he says that “the history of barbarians can furnish but small pleasure or profit to an enlightened and polished people . . . these chants bear nearly the same proportion to a marked and elegant melody, as a discourse drawn from Swift’s *Laputan Mill* would do with one written by a Locke or a Johnson.”<sup>11</sup>

“Gothic” for Burney is – like for Goethe – a pejorative word: “Melody was so gothic and devoid of grace, that good poets disdained its company or assistance.”<sup>12</sup> At the same time, it is here that interest in a history of earlier music than the present started to develop, again in England. The large collections of medieval manuscripts from John Stow, Robert Cotton and Robert Harley were handed over to the British Library, and they enabled the most important music historians of the Age of Enlightenment, Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins, to catch a glimpse of medieval music history.

### *The 19th century and historic imagination*

A pioneer of research in the 19th century was the French music historian François-Louis Perne, who, as a lone rider in 1814, attempted a complete transcription of a polyphonic mass for the first time – the mass of Guillaume de Machaut of the 14th century. The first extensive studies on the Middle Ages were by Raphael Georg Kiesewetter (1773–1850) and by François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871), both trying to understand neumes – the notation of chant – and to start from there to attempt transcriptions of modal and mensural notation – the notation of polyphony. Their individual contributions prepared the way for many later 19th-century medievalists,<sup>13</sup> the most important one being the Belgian lawyer and music historian Edmond-Charles de Coussemaker, who published the first musicological monography, dedicated in the title to the music of the Middle Ages: his *Histoire de l'harmonie au Moyen Âge* (1852).

While the 19th century saw the evolution of historicism, it also combined the romantic movement and the Gothic Revival, the latter having been supported by the powerful force of nationalism. The seemingly “stable” Middle Ages seemed to be a paradise of political unity and fixed harmony in times of the political unrest, following the French Revolution and eventually reaching all other parts of Continental Europe. At the same time, it is important to see that latter waves of medievalism tried to interpret early testimonies of longing for the Middle Ages as nationalist upheaval, while they spoke out for a general interest in history, in culture and in the roots of thought.<sup>14</sup> This Gothic Revival changed the approach to the Middle Ages from indifference to curiosity, and medieval music, still unheard, was envisioned as the embodiment of the natural, the innocent, and the divine. While a tidal wave of the so-called Gothic Revival swept across Continental Europe and Great Britain, and while a few individuals made important contributions to a budding historiography of medieval music,<sup>15</sup> most important manuscripts still remained unknown and untranscribed. Music histories written at the time continued to display an ignorance of medieval music, which, at least in light of the theory available already, can be explained only by the fact that

eras in general know no more than they are interested in knowing. Only Gregorian chant, revived after 1830 in the monastery of Solesmes, began to live again, conveyed by the intense Cecilian movement – a similar construction to medieval polyphonic music in the 20th century, as Katherine Bergeron has shown.<sup>16</sup> Through the knowledge of Gregorian chant and its “aura,” the rest of medieval music, “the art in its earliest stages” as Carl von Winterfeld described it, would become something of an unreal ideal – more a product of the romantic mind than a tangible presence.<sup>17</sup> Romantic poetry filled the imagination of the general public with “blessed” images, while at the same time, historiography seemed to go beyond mere anti-rationalist feelings, while adding to the essence of the romantic cult of the Middle Ages. Just as the romantics would avoid the study of mathematical proportions and see Gothic cathedrals as having resulted from “an earth-fleeing yearning for the hereafter or the result of ecstatic mysticism,”<sup>18</sup> so too, medieval music would first be studied without looking for principles of organisation – certainly not expecting to find any.

Prominent in all 19th-century writing on medieval music is the word “harmony” – a fashionable term that designated the texture of polyphonic music and implies even more: “Harmony” was viewed as a unifying quality in a political sense, as an aesthetic as well as a political ideal, exemplifying “unity” and even “peace.” Montesquieu and Voltaire had already shown that there is something like a specific European tradition of ideals, which had no universal meaning. It seemed important to link 19th-century history to all of European history and to distinguish Europe’s destiny from the rest of the world. In this regard “harmony” could function as a uniquely European ideal (like “beauty”); it was, for the romantic mind, evident in the important stylistic changes that occurred during the 18th-century and that brought about a musical language preferring homophony and harmony to elaborate counterpoint and polyphony. The specifically romantic definition of “harmony” broadened the meaning of the word, which now carried political, aesthetic, and musical connotations that resulted, eventually, in methodological misunderstanding when applied to medieval music.

In his analysis of the polyphonic compositions of Adam de la Halle, for example, Kiesewetter describes the sonorities, the chords, while not having enough material at hand to analyse the polyphonic peculiarities typical of the medieval motet and the medieval chanson.<sup>19</sup> He was looking for the 19th-century ideal in a 13th-century piece.

But there is more to the concept of harmony: In Germany during the 19th century, the Berlin *Singakademie* and the Heidelberger Singverein were founded – the Heidelberg Association formed between 1811 and 1814 by the author of a widely read pamphlet *Über Reinheit der Tonkunst*, Anton Friedrich Thibaut. His choir would be active until the year of his death in



1840. These institutions took up the English idea of an *Academy of Ancient Music*, which had been formed in London in 1710. For the Heidelberg formation, Thibaut found his repertoire in earlier sacred vocal music, which had been published since 1806 by Alexandre Choron in Paris – who was forming a conservatory himself in 1817, the *Institution royale de musique classique et religieuse*. Its aim was to educate choirmasters, but also to install an appreciation for a *musique sacrée et classique* – an undertaking to be elaborated on by the succeeding institution of Louis Niedermeyer, the *Ecole de Musique Religieuse et Classique*. All these efforts were united by a voiced historic attitude. They were all, with different, nationally-patriotically coloured ways, dedicated to the care of early music, to bringing it closer to the educated and interested audience and to lay the basis for a historic performance practice. Although no medieval music was known or performed here, these efforts prefigure historic thought about medieval music, and especially the attempt by Thibaut in Germany, to unite the interest in early sacred music with concepts of harmony and moral purity, has a promising future for music historical concepts of medieval music.

While between 1800 and 1820 the foundations were laid for historicism and historic thought, and while historicism became the dominating stream of thought in Europe, the aim in music was also the empirical appropriation of historic traditions. There is a feeling of responsibility towards history. There is respectful feeling towards history, a European interest in history is evident. To pick out just the most famous example – the attempt by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and others to prepare the re-entry of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach into concert life in the 1820s – and this was done, among other attempts, by connecting Bach to Gothic Architecture, by then regarded as national German historic style, and connected to German importance. At the same time, first attempts were made to take up the study of German Minnesang – through Karl Lachmann and others – in a philological way, that was able to attract artistic interest, too.

In the 19th century in France and Germany, “medieval music” meant mostly minstrel songs, the songs of the *trouvères* and *troubadours*, the Minnesang. But the romantic interest in Minnesang culminated not only in the theory of the medieval *Kunstlied* – as formulated by many music historians and most eloquently by Hugo Riemann, the most famous and active music historian and one of the founding fathers of modern musicology – in which concepts of Minnesang and *trouvères* melody are derived from the *Lieder* of Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms, but also leads to an overwhelming mass of artificial Minnesang by composers in the wake of Ludwig Tieck’s famous edition *Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter*, published for the first time in 1803. Composers like Joseph Wölfl, Simon Sechter, Wilhelm Taubert, Adolf Jensen and many others “invented” minstrel songs

of their own, which were performed and sung in the salons and concert halls of 19th century Germany. At the same time, a countless number of popularised text editions reached the public, from *Hesperische Nachklänge in Deutschen Weisen*, edited in 1824 by Friedrich Rassmann, to the collection *Altes Gold* from 1878, edited by Karl Ströse.<sup>20</sup>

It was Richard Wagner's turning to the German Middle Ages and his interest in the Minne- and Meistersänger that lead to an unsurpassed boom in 19th century medievalism. Here, Minnesang as a concept reaches the centre of interest, and stories stemming from medieval literature, such as the *Nibelungenlied*, *Parzival*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan and Isolde*, are presented to a large audience in a very effective way. Even today, the interest in the Middle Ages is often triggered through the music-theatrical works of Wagner, which in one way or another are all connected to the Middle Ages, and from *Tannhäuser* onwards, exclusively to the German literature of the Middle Ages. They convey an influential image, against which the parallel to its evolvment, developed specialised humanities, look like pale excavation of facts. Philological studies and history in their early stages in the 19th century could not defend themselves effectively against Wagner's influence, not only the popularised image of the Middle Ages, but also on the discourse within the disciplines themselves. Wagner's artistic ideas of Minnesang were taken up by the early writings on music history as "sources" and not as what they most certainly are: a fantasy idea of the Middle Ages. The dovetailing of music historiography, contemporary music history and historic imagination in the 19th century is evident here – and the connection is "imagination," a concept which had been introduced to medieval studies in 1978 by George Duby in his *Les Trois Ordres ou l'imaginaire du Féodalisme*. This term is central to the whole rediscovery of medieval music – imagination being related to the dream and stemming from the dialogue between *imaginatio* und *memoria*. Imagination fills the empty position within historic reconstruction.

Again, in the 19th century it was not medieval music itself, be it monophony or polyphony, which was the centre of interest; only about 50 examples were known – and even then only mentioned or published untranscribed in facsimiles, hidden in highly specialised literature and mostly mysterious in their meaning and musical adaptability – far too few to understand the notation and to come to grips with an image of music history from the 8th to the 15th century.<sup>21</sup> It is a fiction without a material base. What was known about the music of the Middle Ages at the end of the 19th century came mainly from medieval treatises on music, the group of theoretical writings that had been systematically collected, edited, and interpreted by Gerbert and Coussemaker. The music itself was still presented in a casual way, as it had been since the 17th century; it was most often looked at at

random, as the individual scholar came across a particular manuscript source, almost by chance. It followed that during the Gothic Revival medieval music became something magically “natural” and “harmonic,” the embodiment of the real and the truthful. At the same time we observe the increasing importance of the work of the monks of Solesmes and the Cecilian movement, which swept across Europe and reached into the 20th century. And we see the pioneering efforts of a budding musicology, preparing itself to discover a musical world that still lay hidden in the shadows of castle and cathedral.

*The 20th century and the developing image of medieval music*

Around 1900 there was a breakthrough in musicological medieval studies in Germany and France, and the historic method which had been developed in the 19th century found a fruitful field of application. While in all only about 50 examples of medieval music were known before 1900, the mass of sources now searched for and rediscovered made transcription not as impossible and cryptic anymore, while several people regarding themselves as musicologists entered the stage of the humanities, putting heart and mind into the transcription of medieval music. So notation of polyphonic music from the 12th to the 15th century became understandable and transcription was possible. Sources were discovered by the hundreds, to an extent that had been previously unthinkable. They were copied, studied, transcribed, edited – medieval music developed into an object of study. The interpretation of musical monuments in connection with the theoretical writings, which had been known since the late 18th century, helped people to understand the treatises, and they lead to a coherent concept of medieval music history. The institutionalisation of musicology started with a mass of publications, institutions, *Denkmälerausgaben*, organisations and musicological societies. They carried the discourse on medieval music.

It was now public opinion that helped to construct medieval music history. The zeal with which early medievalists took up their work followed from their pioneering role – which is often described and underlined – but also derived from the public interest in something new. After the world fairs of 1889 and 1900 in Paris, testimonies of foreign, non-European peoples and cultures had been presented to the public, and there was the desire to improve knowledge of the origins of European culture itself – back to the roots. The rediscovery of medieval music in the 20th century is a complex phenomenon. It emerges from several sources: Post-Romanticism and the increasing social and political unrest culminated in World War I and were accompanied by similar unrest and tension in the musical realm, as manifested by various radical experiments. These led to a desire for something

“stable,” “whole,” and “meaningful” – words with which medieval music would soon be described. Wagner’s influence and popularity, only hinted at, continued to rise in the 20th century among European musicians and it continued to trigger the interest in the Middle Ages on the level of research and literary imagination. Also, the continuing growth of musical styles that employed significant elements borrowed from national folk idioms had the general effect of opening listeners’ ears to all kinds of music. At the same time, the movement of neo-Classicism specifically aimed to incorporate new discoveries from early music into musical styles, which had more or less overt connection with principles, forms, and techniques of the past. This contributed to the study and reconstruction of medieval music. Finally, the early music movement can be seen and studied as a reaction to the twelve-tone approaches of Schönberg, Berg, and Webern, culminating in the desire for more audience-pleasing, eclectic, simpler idioms. The musicological research in the Middle Ages also had the special position within the cultural dialogue as mediatrix. It opened the way for early music, which, in German publications, started to be written as *Alte Musik* from around 1920, with capitalised adjective for with added emphasis, becoming a term in itself. Early music became as exclusive and as geared against the classical-romantic repertoire as the exploding musical avantgarde.

In a special “rezeptionsästhetische Konvergenz” (“convergence of reception”) – to use Hans Robert Jauss’s concept – in Germany, the interest in medieval research and the Jugendmusikbewegung merged. With the publication of sheet music and the scope for reconstructing medieval music – which was at first thought of as complex music, but was in fact performed more easily than music from the 1920s composed by the musical avantgarde, such as the second Viennese school – the recorder, the main instrument of the Jugendmusikbewegung and charged with special meaning, featured in the realisation of early music. Both interest groups formed their concerts and activities in opposition to what they felt was the pathos of an out-dated ideal of art and artist, seeming even more senseless and empty after World War I, and set out to fight for the authentic old ideal.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the argumentative arms race must be mentioned, which inflamed the study of medieval music in France and Germany towards the end of the 19th century, and again after the first world war. In France, the focus was exclusively on an archeology of French national music history, especially on the history of the French *chanson*. However for the German-speaking musicologists, the development of a “German music history” was not such a priority, as the 19th century was automatically seen as “the German century.” The musical line of Bach-Beethoven-Brahms or Bach-Beethoven-Wagner was seen as an obvious “fact,” just as it was normal in music historical literature to speak of the “old German” and “new German”

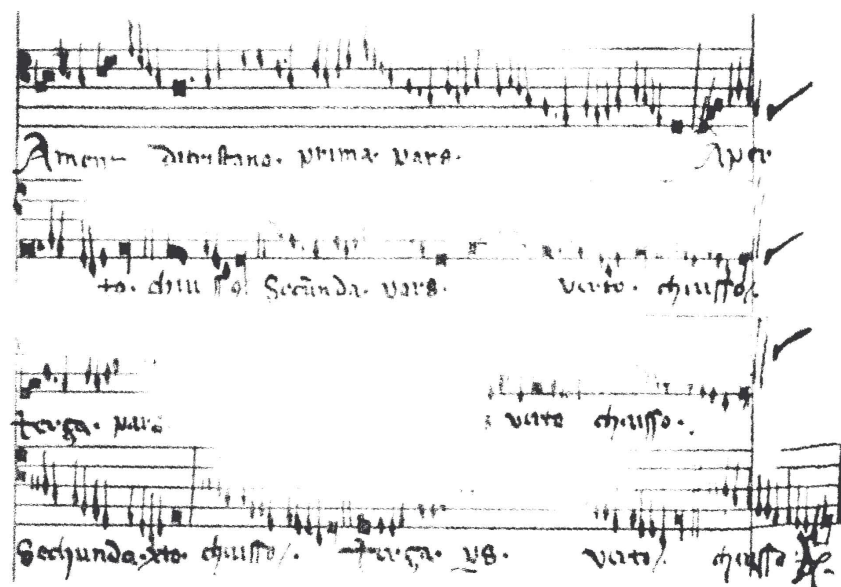
schools, and of national schools. With the talk of “national schools,” the “natural state of German music” was retrospectively established. But developing parallel to this continuing feeling was a more urgent search for German identity against the background of the first world war. The longing for German unity from 1871, the demoralisation that followed the first world war, the development of a theory of the racial superiority of the Germans and the mission to spread German culture to all parts of the globe all leave clear traces in the writings of supposedly apolitical music historians. Some musicologists, but not all, react with argumentational patterns idealising German identity, which had been proliferated in the past and outside of musicology – in Nordic legend and art history, for example. The possible extremes are the presentation of alternatives to the existing picture of music history, deliberate internationalisation, or recognition of the massive devaluation of the foreign, which either questions all independent musical developments outside of the German-speaking world, or attributes an influence from German composers, music theorists or musicologists to all developments showing a progressive character.

These factors support, strengthen and justify musicological medieval studies. They facilitate a process of interaction between historic research and musical artistic approaches within academic circles and the interested public. It is the musicology of the “founding-fathers” who prepare the concepts, the sheet-music, and the basic theories for 20th century medievalism in music: for the movement of historical performance practice, for the study of medieval music, and for the stylistic development of 20th century music in giving controlled access to composers who take up the interest in early music.

The first public performance of medieval music occurred in Paris, in 1900, when a little concert – about which we know almost nothing – took place during the meeting of the musicological society of Paris. Twenty years later, a more important concert series in Germany built upon this first modest attempt: between 1922 and 1924, concerts in Karlsruhe and Hamburg presented medieval music to the public. The concert “Music of the Middle Ages in the Hamburg Music Hall” in 1924, for example, was a “systematic presentation” of medieval music. The first evening was dedicated to the Proper of the Mass, to *Gregorian chant*. The choir, invisible to the audience, sang an Easter mass unaccompanied, followed by pieces which included the *Alma redemptoris mater* by the 11th-century Hermannus Contractus (died 1054) and an anonymous 11th-century *Salve regina*. The second evening featured *musica composita*: one could hear organa from the Parisian Notre Dame School, a variety of motets from the Montpellier and Bamberg manuscripts, vocal and instrumental music of the Italian Trecento, and works by Machaut, Dufay, Ockeghem and Josquin. On the third evening, dedicated to *musica*



in der Hamburger Musikhalle vom 1. bis 8. April  
1924



*Musik des Mittelalters*, Concert Series in Hamburg (1924),  
Title page and illustrated page of the programme notes (Sample).

*vulgaris*, one could hear music by the troubadours and trouvères, instrumental dances, a Spielmannslied, and examples of 14th and 15th century accompanied monody.<sup>23</sup> Although this event could not make medieval music popular, it did help to form a small community of interested *Liebhaber*.

These first performances were made possible through the concerted efforts of medievalists, who dedicated themselves to the rediscovery of

medieval music. At the end of the 19th century, scholars such as Peter Wagner, Friedrich Ludwig, Heinrich Bessler, Willibald Gurlitt, Wilhelm Mayer, and Jacques Handschin began to study medieval sources, aided greatly by the secularisation of monastic libraries. Suddenly, sources were more accessible than ever, and this availability coincided with the development of a keen interest. The interest in them made them visible.

These early medievalists, the “founding fathers of modern musicology,” paved the way for the rebirth of medieval music. Preparation of monographs on medieval chant, a first modern musicologically systematic work on Gregorian chant,<sup>24</sup> the *Editio Vaticana* Chant books, the first history of notation – Johannes Wolf’s *Geschichte des Mensuralnotation von 1250–1460*<sup>25</sup> – and thousands of transcriptions and editions of medieval modal and mensural music all gave the phantom of medieval music a real face.<sup>26</sup> When Guido Adler’s extensive *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* came out in 1924, the chapters on early music largely exceeded the rest, having by then, at least in theory, somehow reversed certain 20th-century musicological notions about music history. Whereas in 19th-century historiography of music, early music seemed to be a blank, now early music seemed to be the very focus of scholarly interest, exceeding all other areas of music history.<sup>27</sup>

The enthusiasm as well the ideology of these scholars can be felt in their writing: One example from the 1930s may stand for many: It is from Rudolf von Ficker, another early champion of medieval music through his performances, editions and writings. His article “Die Musik des Mittelalters” was written in 1929 and appeared in 1930 in the series *Wissenschaft und Kultur*.

We are placed now in the time of the crusades, the movement which would shake and reshape the thinking and feeling of the western world. The first crusaders returned, filled with religious zeal, but also with the unimagined wonders of the sensuous oriental world. The fantastical art of the Gothic is the towering symbol of this new, exuberant world-feeling. In the mystical half-light of the roman cathedral the beholder is enveloped by a feeling of a clear, powerful, spatial presence. Massive wall surfaces, barely pierced by little window niches, accost him on all sides with oppressive force. A mood – as mysterious as it is oppressive – makes itself apparent throughout the entire room and communicates itself to the mind of the believer. Totally different is the impression upon entering a gothic cathedral. The massive walls seem to have burst; in its place glows colorful shimmering glass. Slim columns stream from the earth’s floor to the heights, at one pull running up to the ribs of the pointed arch, pushing out into seemingly infinite distances. All the burdening aspects of con-

struction have been removed. The whole structure breathes movement . . .

As the enormous moving power of the gothic cathedral structure is the expression of an inner excitement and tension of those people who built these structures, so too is the literature of this time, with the excitement of the crisp metrics of the poet's language, yes even in the rhymed reports of Christian chronicles. In music it is the concept of rhythm, which shows forth and organises the movement's powers. We see therefore, that rhythmic principles rule all the music of the so-called gothic era . . .

It is in the organum of Perotinus that the northern impulse (sic!), to increase enormously the simple meaning of the choral and lift it to gigantic heights, has found its highest fulfillment. For example the short choral phrase of the "descendit de coelis" becomes in its arrangement as an organum an earth-shaking, exalted, and visionary expression: we seem to see, descending slowly from distant heights, the brilliant figure of the Saviour bringing redemption to sinful humanity. This movement grows stronger and stronger, the vision grows clearer, until finally a last stroke declares the beginning of the mysterium of God's own son being manifested in the flesh. And there is nothing more powerful in the whole of music literature, a jubilee going beyond all limits, and these are the Alleluias of this great master from Paris.<sup>28</sup>

The expression "northern impulse" is noteworthy. In Von Ficker's, Ludwig's and Bessler's writings, this term means a contrast of northern or Nordic music history to Mediterranean music history, eventually trying to show the superiority of the former and eliminating the focus on the French origin of the gothic style and of polyphony in music. This ideology, in Bessler's case, helped make him an ardent supporter of Nazi ideology in the following years, as precise as his observation on other kinds of music may be. Also, the concept of "northern music" will lead to the notion of the superiority of counterpoint over homophony, and harmony over melody. The Gothic Revival seems to have continued, on a different level, with different masks and with different results – more hidden, but still tangible.

#### *Adaptation, invention, separation*

Medieval music was old and new at the same time, so much so that, in order to be understood, it had to be adapted for the scholar/student and listener of the 20th century. I'd like to present just one example, Rudolf von Ficker's edition of Perotinus's *Sederunt Principes* from the early 12th century. Von



---

Ficker published his edition in 1929, and made it look not like a piece written more than 700 years ago, but like a piece from the romantic era. This he did by casting it into C minor, and by adding various performance instructions such as “*langsam, schwebend*,” *crescendi* and *decrescendi*, and so on. In the introduction, von Ficker explains what was necessary to turn this work into “music.” He describes the conflicts between a “critical-scientific” and a “musical-artistic” task, proceeds to offer an arrangement for piano, and at the end submits a scientific transcription with comment – a critical edition. In his text he poses an important question: “How can we today, with entirely different musical conditions, even think of finding an appropriate substitute for those performing institutions which were present 700 years ago?”<sup>29</sup>

At the beginning of his text, von Ficker quotes Goethe – who himself is quoting Aristoxenos: “What good is the string and all its mechanical divisions, compared to the ear of the musician?” By quoting Goethe, that great monument of German literature, he somehow “enlarged” Pérotin, connecting him to a certain mainstream scholarship culminating in the idea of an *Abendland*, this highly ideological term meaning Europe in contrast to the rest of the world, and at the same time bolstering his argument for the importance of medieval music, justifying his own version of *Sederunt principes*, and backing up his own fight for the acceptance of medieval music.

Under the heading “Our changing attitude,” one of the most knowledgeable advocates of medieval music, Robert Donington, wrote in 1977 that “. . . it still seemed very necessary . . . to make out a case, and to buttress it with argument and evidence, for interpreting early music on its own merits as mature art: as an art not requiring to be patronisingly adapted to our modern habits of performance; but on the contrary, requiring of us a very considerable effort of adaptation in order to avoid the gross inadvertent modernisation which our prevailing habits must otherwise entail.”<sup>30</sup>

Donington, who started to study the performance practice of early music in 1948 and published his study in 1963, underlines the necessity of interpreting “early music on its own terms rather than on ours”: this was the credo of the early music movement. The intention was “separation,” not “adaptation,” not adapting or altering the music, but rather broadening our ears.

Regardless of their different approaches to performance practice, the early music makers were united in their effort to represent medieval music first and foremost as historically correctly as possible and, only as a second priority, to have medieval music come *alive* in the ears of the listener. The second point is especially difficult to realise without some kind of adaptation to listening traditions. As Donington put it: “music of whatever generation

PEROTINUS  
ORGANUM QUADRUPLUM  
SEDERUNT PRINCIPES

Rudolf von Ficker, *Sederunt Principes* (1929), Beginning

will sound more effective and more moving when we make every reasonable attempt to present it under its original conditions of performance. If we want to share in a composer's experience, we have to carry out his intentions. If we find his experience somewhat strange, we have to remember that it may be more rewarding to come to terms with an unfamiliar experience than to recapitulate a familiar one in a less telling form."<sup>31</sup>

The appearance of the long playing record in 1948 greatly helped the early music movement to find its audience. It fostered the idea – now that recordings could be preserved, like critical editions – of presenting an authentic “soundscape” of the Middle Ages. Here, for example, Safford Cape's interest in historical authenticity coincided with his forming of his *Pro Musica Antiqua* and with Deutsche Grammophon's *Archivproduktion*, designed to preserve those “works whose beauty and vitality can still exert an immediate appeal on the music-lover of the present day,” by offering works

“in their complete authentic form,” and by using “historical instruments, in ‘living’ interpretations by highly qualified specialist performers.”<sup>32</sup> And in order to give this “archival effort” even greater scientific meaning, *Archivproduktion* was subdivided into twelve “research periods,” corresponding to the successive phases of musical history: The sounding equivalent of the *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.

The early music movement gained influence and import from such artists as David Munrow and his *Early Music Consort of London*,<sup>33</sup> as well as Michael Morrow and John Beckett and their the London *Musica Reservata*. In the U.S., the scholar/performer Thomas Binkley organised his *Studio der Frühen Musik* in the late 50s together with Andrea von Ramm; they gave over a hundred concerts a year and recorded many items from the early music repertoire.<sup>34</sup> Soon the publication of specialised Journals would become an integral part of the early music movement,<sup>35</sup> and the first edition of *Early Music* in 1973 opens with these words:

Ten years earlier, a journal such as this would have been impossible: there were, at that stage, no early music consorts such as those whose reputation now begins to reverberate beyond these shores. There were relatively few instrument makers, and those interested in early music tended to be divided into members of the various separate societies for recorder, lute or gamba, or were readers of specialist journals. Now all has mysteriously changed. The contents of this first issue make our aims and directions clear. We want those who play or listen to early music to feel that there is an international forum where diverse issues and interests can be debated and discussed. We want to provide a link between the finest scholarship of our day and the amateur and professional listener and performer.<sup>36</sup>

In 1981, again in England, *Early Music History* was founded and edited by Ian Fenlon and published by Cambridge University Press, adding to *Early Music's* approach to fostering and promoting research on medieval, renaissance, and baroque music.<sup>37</sup> These are but a few of the most prominent examples of writing about medieval music. Another important one is *Plain-song and Medieval Music*, a magazine founded in 1992 and currently edited by John Caldwell and Christopher Page.<sup>38</sup>

This separation of early music from the rest of music history introduced a new and different meaning of “separation,” which kept medieval music from entering the canon of concert repertoire. For this, I see essentially two reasons: the early music movement argued that the conditions for performance of medieval music are so different from those of the 19th-century orchestra and choir – on which our concert life still depends – that its integration into the canon would be impossible even if it were desired. Secondly,

the separation of medieval music has been so successful that the desire to adapt it to the classical concert repertoire is simply non-existent.

*Dreaming and Othering the Middle Ages*

In 1988, the German label ECM, guided by its well-known producer Manfred Eicher, brought out a CD featuring the music of Perotinus as performed by the Hilliard Ensemble, a group specialising in early music. The novel sound of this recording is due not only to a different technical approach to sound itself, but also to an innovative handling of “musica ficta”<sup>39</sup> and an entirely new approach to medieval music.<sup>40</sup>

One of the pieces presented is again the organum *Sederunt Principes*, and for his recording, Paul Hillier has chosen to omit the B-flat at the end of the very first melodic phrase. The evidence from the manuscripts is questionable, but I would argue that Hillier’s reason has not so much to do with the manuscript evidence as with the strongly archaic feeling that is produced when the upper leading tone is omitted.

This supposition is supported by Paul Hillier’s introductory text to the CD.<sup>41</sup> Starting with a quotation from Alexandra David-Neel’s *Tibetan Journey*, which says that “each atom perpetually sings its song, and the sound, at every moment, creates dense and subtle forms,” Hillier goes on to describe the long journey that is required to actually hear Perotinus’ music. After a description, he compares it to 20th-century minimalist music and says: “Pérotin speaks to the 20th-century listener quite naturally as a composer of minimalist music, nor is he alone in this amongst the composers of both the *Ars Antiqua* and the *Ars Nova*. The concept of minimalism is of course a modern phenomenon”; but “the attitudes and purposes that stimulate minimalism (in its various guises) occur frequently throughout history and in both Western and non-Western cultures.”<sup>42</sup> The association with minimalist music is especially interesting here because Steve Reich, one of the fathers of minimalism, had earlier recorded his “Music for 18 Musicians” for the same label, ECM. ECM is mainly known for its fine recordings of Meredith Monk, John Adams, European Jazz, and world music. As John Levin recently noted, “the early music of the Hilliard Ensemble seems a logical extension of the ECM catalogue – a music of emotion and integrity suffused with an underlying sense of tonality.”<sup>43</sup>

Comparing a recording like “Perotin” by the Hilliard Ensemble with the early approaches to medieval music, one sees that medievalism has traveled a long road. But there are also many threads which can be shown in detail when looking at strategies of argumentation or concepts for concerts and performances. The idea, for example, to present medieval music together with other kinds of music, to mix it with other styles, to present

medieval music within art galleries or churches with medieval art, is as fashionable as it had been already in the first half of the 20th century. And what about the mix? Medieval music still avantgarde? Or mainstream?

In a concert that took place in July 1995, the Hilliard Ensemble and Jan Gabarek performed most of the pieces of the "Officium" CD in a tour leading them through all the important concert halls and churches of Europe. The concert I attended took place in Hamburg, in the main church of St. Michael's, which was filled with mostly young people, holding hands and full of excitement, as if some popular music idol were about to appear. There was a feeling of expectancy in the air, very different from the "feel" of the traditional early music concert. It was not a scholarly expectancy, the expectancy to *learn* something, but rather a sensuous expectancy, the expectancy to *experience* something. Nobody noticed that the pieces were not performed in the order of their appearance on the program. This simply did not matter. What mattered was sound. The performers themselves, wearing black trousers and brightly colored shirts, were scattered across the church. One by one they stood up and walked and sang their way across the church, down from the balcony, towards the altar, with their heads bent like monks who were absorbed in some kind of secret vision.

The concert, like the recording, was somewhere between the secular and the sacred. It was a kind of religious experience, but one that permitted either participation or uninvolved observation. As Katherine Bergeron has written of a similar occasion, "This was a concert that treated the church as a meaningful, functional space, rather than ignoring its meaning. This concert presented a virtual liturgy. It is the condition of being between two realities, both of which are offered and both of which are denied, that creates the desired effect of this music." Bergeron goes on to argue that her concert, like the one I am describing, strained the limits "of 'authenticity' at the same time that it opened a new arena on which the 'authentic' might be reimagined: in the virtual space of a neither/nor."<sup>44</sup> In thinking about "my" concert, I wondered, why the "in-between" could be so attractive, since both the following realities were indeed denied: (1) The musical reality, which could provide a maximum of penetration and musical experience, and (2) the religious reality, which could provide a maximum of realisation and enlightenment. John Potter, the Hilliard Ensemble's tenor, alludes to this mixture of musical and religious experience, perhaps unwittingly, when he describes the recording experience as being "shut away (sic!) in the monastery of St. Gerold," where "the saxophone became an extension of our own voices."<sup>45</sup>

The interest in the Middle Ages suggests a desire for meaning, for purpose, for renewed guidance and worth. What has fueled this interest is not the feudal political system of the Middle Ages nor its lack of everything

that would later be regained in the Renaissance, but rather more general notions about the Middle Ages, squeezing with the framework of inventive reception hundreds of medieval years together to a few stereotypes, of which I might enumerate four in particular: The Middle Ages serve us as a reservoir for emotions and feelings; they are regarded as the era of the witch and the wizard, the knight and the princess, a magic kingdom of secret knowledge and secret understanding and secret wisdom of a sort which the men of the Renaissance, the enlightenment, the industrial era, and the 20th Century, have lost. One can enter into this "kingdom" not by research or knowledge, but only by *feeling*; they are perceived to be a time when man was in harmony with the universe, dedicating his thoughts and feelings, the rational and the sensual, to *one* centre of supremacy. It is perceived to be time without time, an era in which the narration of its own historicity (unlike the self-conscious eras of antiquity and the renaissance) was stopped. Thinking about the Middle Ages, listening to medieval music, pondering medieval issues thus presents not a loss but rather a gain of time, of timeless possibilities, an encounter with "timelessness," an exploration of "eternity"; finally the Middle Ages are looked upon by composers of the 20th century (whom I have not mentioned here for reasons of space) as a desirable musical period *before* major-minor tonality, *before* the bar line, before "four-four time." The impact of the discovery of medieval music on composers like Stravinsky, Krenek, Hindemith, Nono, Ligeti and many others has been profound.

As in the Gothic Revival, where medieval music was regarded as something wonderfully natural and innocent, this notion persisted somehow in the writings of the first medievalists of the 20th century, tainted, as had been the romantic Gothic Revival as a whole, with nationalist feelings. The current revival of medieval music for meditative purposes depends upon the construction of the Middle Ages as a desired *beyond* or *other* before our eyes. One can even go as far as to say that the Middle Ages seem to occupy a space formerly reserved for concepts of a *Jenseits* (a world beyond). When people developed concepts such as heaven and hell to shape their present, there can be suggested a "virtual" beyond, creating for ourselves the vivid image of a lost world, which in turn has started to shape our present. It is in this sense that the Middle Ages have become postmodern. Their strangeness and diversity can be both puzzling and frightening. To accept strangeness seems extremely difficult, especially in the postmodern era, which tries to incorporate everything into itself without realising its constructive nature, while sometimes playfully displaying a deepening consciousness of itself, being increasingly able to differentiate between the many levels of adaption and separation.<sup>46</sup>

So medieval music, which does not exist without us, is a dramatic way

---

of Othering the Middle Ages, and it can be applied what the musicologist Leo Treitler has described in another context: “What we regard as the opposite traits of the Other show through as the trait of a surrogate, underground – we may as well say unconscious – Self. The Other is, in effect, a projection of the Self, or rather of an unacknowledged aspect of the Self that is suppressed as unacceptable to that identity that is the speaker for the Self.”<sup>47</sup>

The desire for “historical authenticity” has been uncovered as a paradigm of positivist scholarship and performance theory. On the other hand, “historical authenticity” has not been replaced by a new paradigm, being lost in a postmodern notion of subjectivity,<sup>48</sup> in a play with isolated elements, in the indeterminacy of the common. Leo Treitler’s question, “Are we content to yield the decisions about what is interesting and beautiful and the formulation of our discourses about those things to the dynamics of commerce, technology, and politics?” is an important one to ask.<sup>49</sup> Yet whole cultures, unlike individuals, are generally reluctant to absorb normative forces. The paradigm of “historical authenticity,” once recognised as such, will lose nothing of its savor but rather gain in momentum. And the criteria, which we cannot borrow from another epoch, and which are not necessarily coined by the dynamics of commerce, technology, and politics, will be regarded as temporary tools, to be overthrown by better tools.

The rediscovering of medieval music is as much a fascinating invention as a creative reconstruction. Both trends, namely the trend to completely avoid “music itself” (= the hermeneutic notion of music as text only) and the trend to completely avoid “historicity itself” (= the esoteric notion of music as feeling only) will be prevalent until some new, *post-postmodern paradigm* of scholarship and performance practice comes to the fore. In any case, it is important to uncover the premises on which images of medieval music – be they scholarly and written, artistic and written, scholarly and sounding or artistic and sounding – are built, in order to see the dependence of writing and thinking about medieval music on historic models, to start a rethinking of the tidal wave of medieval sounds in the late 20th and early 21st century, and to ask for their reasons. This should be the aim and we should continue the discourse on medieval music.<sup>50</sup> For nothing else is writing about medieval music. Less we cannot hope for and more we should not expect.

## NOTES

1. The long history is: Annette Kreuziger-Herr, *Ein Traum vom Mittelalter: Die Wiederentdeckung mittelalterlicher Musik in der Neuzeit* [Dreaming the Middle Ages. The Rediscovery of Medieval Music in Modernity] (Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2003). The endnotes of this article are relating only to primary sources or direct quotes. The study contains in an appendix an extensive lists documenting a complete overview of literature on medievalism in music, documenting the reception of the music by Guillaume de Machaut (from 1800–1899 and 1900–1957), a documentation of the early concert programmes presenting medieval music to the public since the 19th century until 1927, an index of names and subjects as well as fifty-one images, photographs and facsimiles.

2. Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Third Book: A bird's eye view of Paris (London: 1996).

3. Compare Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 1998) and Annette Kreuziger-Herr, "Postmodern Middle Ages: Medieval Music at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century," in the Canadian Society of Medievalists, ed., *Florilegium* 15 (1998): 187–205.

4. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Von deutscher Baukunst," in *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Werke* (= Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, ed. by Erich Trunz), vol. 12: *Schriften zur Kunst* (Munich: Beck, 1998), pp. 7–15.

5. To name just a few: William Warburton: "An Epistle to Lord Burlington," in Alexander Pope, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, William Warburton, ed. (London: 1751); James Hall, *Essays on the Origins, History and Principles of Gothic Architecture* (London: 1813); Friedrich Schlegel, "Grundzüge der gothischen Baukunst," in *Friedrich von Schlegel: Kritische Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, vol. 4, *Ansichten und Ideen von der christlichen Kunst*, Ernst Behler, ed. (Munich: 1958), p. 179 ff.

6. Charles du Fresne, Sieur Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis* . . . (Paris ca. 1650 – the work was published many times). See also Tibor Kneif, 'Zur Entwicklung der musikalischen Mediävistik' (Göttingen 1963: unpublished Ph.D. thesis), 19–20.

7. Carpentier, *Glossarium novum ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Paris: 1766).

8. For collections of medieval treatises see for example the collections of Ursin Durand and Dom Edmond Martène, which included the 9th-century treatise *Musica disciplina* by Aurelianus Reomensis, now GS I, 27–63; for an early history of music see Pierre Bonnet-Bourdelot's *Histoire de la musique et de ses effets, depuis son orignie jusqu'à présent* (Paris: 1715); Martin Gerbert, *De cantu et musica sacra a prima ecclesiae aetate usque ad presens tempus* (St. Blasien im Schwarzwald: 1774).

9. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, vol. 1 (London: 1776).

10. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, vol. 2 (London: 1782), p. 67.

11. Burney, *General History* (1782), p. 41.

12. Burney, *General History* (1782), p. 173.



13. Kiesewetter and Fétis differ fundamentally on many points, though, including the worth of individual medieval genres such as the organum or the chansons for three voices by Adam de la Halle. Whereas for example Kiesewetter and Coussemaker describe these chansons as “clumsy and unbearable,” Fétis finds them very important (“bien supérieures à l’état des connaissances indiqué dans les écrits de Francon”). See Fétis, *Histoire générale de la musique*, vol. 5 (Paris: 1876), 25–63; 265–82. How little of medieval music was widely known in the first half of the 19th century is evident in this: In 1822 Adam de la Halle’s “Li gieus de Robin et Marion” was printed after the Paris sources for the Société des Bibliophiles de Paris in 25 copies, the only edition available at that time.

14. To name the romanticists Novalis, Ludwig Tieck and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and the later reception of their writings after the French/German war in 1870–71 and in the Weimarer Republic as well as the Nazi time.

15. See for example Johann Nicolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Bd. II (Leipzig: 1801); Drittes Kapitel: “Von Guido bis auf den Franchinus Gasor,” *Erster Abschnitt*, §1–§39.

16. Katherine Bergeron, “A Lifetime of Chants,” in Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlmann, ed., *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 182–96, and Katherine Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1998).

17. Carl von Winterfeld, *Music of Gabrieli and his Time* (Ossining, NY: W. Salloch, 1960; Engl. translation of *Johannes Gabrieli und sein Zeitalter* (Breslau 1834), Introduction.

18. Karl Hampe, *Das Hochmittelalter: Geschichte des Abendlandes von 900–1250*, 4th edn. (Munster: Böhlau Verlag, 1953), 236.

19. Compare François-Joseph Fétis, *Esquisse de l’Histoire de l’Harmonie*, Engl. translation by Mary I. Arlin, Harmonologia Series No. 7 (New York: Stuyvesant, 1994), 4–5. For more information see John Stevens, “The Manuscript Presentation and Notation of Adam de la Halle’s Courtly Chansons,” in Ian Bent, ed., *Source materials and the interpretation of music. A memorial volume to Thurston Dart* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1981), 29–64.

20. Both at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

21. See the appendix of Kreuziger-Herr, Traum.

22. Ib. The first Jugendmusikschule was founded in 1923 in Berlin.

23. See Heinrich Bessler, “Musik des Mittelalters in der Hamburger Musikhalle. 1.–8. April 1924,” in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 7 (Oct. 1924–Sept., 1925), 42–54.

24. Peter J. Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien: Ein Handbuch der Choralwissenschaft* (Freiburg, 1895), Engl. translation: Introduction to the Gregorian melodies, A Handbook of Plainsong (London: The Plainsong and Medieval Society, 1901).

25. Johannes Wolf, *Geschichte der Mensuralnotation von 1250 bis 1460* (Leipzig: 1904).

26. Friedrich Ludwig (1872–1930) made available all the important 13th-century sources of central polyphony, perhaps the most important achievement

made by one man in the study of medieval music. His catalogue of literally thousands of pieces is hard to appreciate in an age where the microfilm or the computer data-base have replaced the manuscript, but it laid the very foundation of the contemporary study of medieval sources.

27. For an overview see also Howard Mayer Brown, "Pedantry or Liberation? A sketch of the Historical Performance Movement," in Nicholas Kenyon, ed., *Authenticity and Early Music. A Symposium*, second edition (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 27–56.

28. Rudolf von Ficker, "Die Musik des Mittelalters," in *Das Mittelalter in Einzeldarstellungen* (= Wissenschaft und Kultur, Bd.III) (Leipzig/Vienna, 1930), 113–14. The northern impulse, von Ficker talks about, reveals in addition to his amazement and wonder a more or less conscious nationalist trend. Von Ficker and Bessler speak often about "the northern impulse" and connect this term to "form" and "spirit," in contrast to "melody" and "the senses." See also Leo Treitler, "The Politics of Reception: Tailoring the Present as Fulfillment of a Desired Past," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 116, Part 2 (1991): 280–98.

29. Rudolf von Ficker, *Introduction to "Perotinus. Organum Quadruplum. Sederunt Principes"* (= *Musik der Gotik*), Klavierauszug mit Text und kritischer Übertragung (Vienna/Leipzig: Universal-Edition, 1930). Paul Hindemith, while working with the Collegium Musicum at Yale University presented also an interesting version of Sederunt Principes. See Andreas Traub, "Eine Perotin-Bearbeitung Hindemiths," *Hindemith-Jahrbuch 1994/XXIII* (Mainz/London/ Madrid: 1994), 30–60.

30. Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music: New Version* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 27–28. The earliest, and most important book on performance practice came out in 1916: Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries, revealed by Contemporary Evidence* (London: Novello and Company and Oxford University Press, 1916). Dolmetsch remarks, p. v: "For nine hundred years notation has progressed, and still it is far from perfect. We are not often conscious of this with regard to modern music, for most of what we wish to play is already known to us from previous hearing . . ." Thurston Dart in his famous study even notes: "The present-day performance of music written between 110 and 1500 presents the students of interpretation with immense problems, many of which will probably never be solved." Thurston Dart, *The Interpretation of Music* (New York/ Toronto/Melbourne: Hutchinson's University Library, 1954), 150.

31. Dart, *Interpretation*, 88.

32. Index-Card in "The Central Middle Ages: Ecole de Notre Dame," *Pro Musica Antiqua*, Safford Cape, rec. July 1956 (= Archive Production ARC 3051–14068 APM).

33. To be followed later after David Munrow's early death by The Medieval Ensemble of London.

34. Binkley died in the summer of 1995 and David Fallows honoured him in a memorial, noting that the Studio der Frühen Musik always performed from memory: "no music was ever allowed on the concert platform, and pieces rather evolved in the course of a tour, so that when it came to record them they existed in a

version that had little to do with anything on the page. This was of course in line with the nature of most medieval sources: the music varies from manuscript to manuscript." David Fallows, "Thomas Binkley, 1931–1995," in *Early Music* 22 (August 1995): 538.

35. Journals on Medieval Studies were founded much earlier, like for example *Speculum, A Journal of Medieval Studies*, published by the Medieval Academy of America since 1925.

36. J. M. Thomson, "Preface," in *Early Music*, vol. I, no. 1, Oxford, January 1973, 1.

37. Ian Fenlon, "Preface," in *Early Music History: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Music*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), vii. Interestingly enough, Fenlon would comment on the vivid discussions about early music itself and how they shaped musicology as a discipline: "Early Music History exists to stimulate further exploration of familiar phenomena through unfamiliar means, and to add to the growing appreciation of the value of interdisciplinary approaches and their potentialities. Another emphasis might be called the contextual. At present some music historians tend to concentrate on the internal analysis of a composition and its relation to a specific and usually narrowly defined historical frame. Indeed, much musicological writing presents by implication a formidable orthodoxy in which history is perceived as a succession of paradigms of musical language, style, and form. Some recent work has attempted explanation through exploration of a wider range of evidence, and Early Music History intends to strengthen this trend by encouraging studies that examine the economic, political and social ramifications of research. In that musicology itself can only benefit if its vision is extended and its methods refined and broadened, the board believes that Early Music History will mark a new departure in the development of the discipline while continuing to support its traditional tasks."

38. *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, vol. I, no. 1 (Cambridge: 1992). This publication succeeds the *Journal of the Members of the English Plainsong and Medieval Music Society*.

39. See Ethel Thurston, *The Works of Perotin. Music and Texts transcribed with explanatory preface and performance directions* (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, 1970), 133.

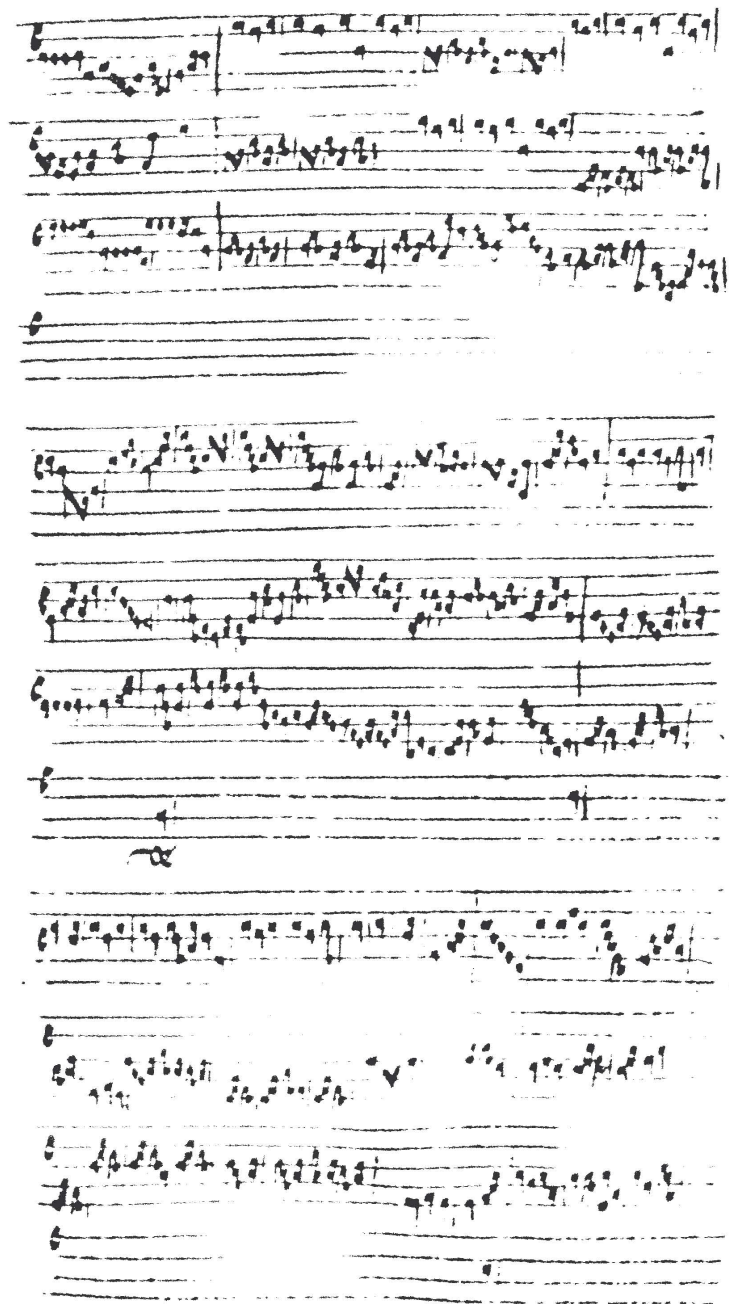
40. Sederunt Principes may be found in the manuscript Wolfenbüttel 677 (= W 1); it may also be found in the manuscript Medicea-Laurenzia Plut. 29/1 (F), in the manuscript Wolfbüttel 1206 (W2) and in the manuscript Bibliotheca Nacional Madrid Hh 167 (M). The version in W2 is incomplete, as is that of M, but M also gives a troped version of the organum.

41. Perotin, *The Hilliard Ensemble* (= ECM New Series 1385 78118–21385–2), Munich 1988. Introduction "Perotin" by Paul Hillier.

42. Introduction to Perotin, *Hilliard Ensemble*.

43. John Levin, "Sax and Polyphony," in *RhythmMusic Magazine*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1995), 19.

44. Katherine Bergeron, "Finding God at Tower Records: The virtual sacred," *The New Republic*, February 27 (1995). See also Katherine Bergeron, "A Lifetime of Chants," in Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman, ed., *Disciplining music*.



Excerpt from *Wolfenbüttel 617*, Sederunt Principes (Sample)

*Musicology and its Canons* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 182–96.

45. Jan Gabarek/The Hilliard Ensemble, *Officium* (= EM New Series 1525 78118–21525–2) (Munich, 1994).

46. Even if many critics of modernity would argue that probably the time for criteria has passed, pushing indeterminacy to its extremes, there are others, like Jürgen Habermas, pushing the Enlightenment further and arguing, that the defects of Enlightenment can only be made good by further enlightenment, not by the relinquishment of reason and judgement. “Modernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another

---

epoch; it has to create its normativity out of itself,” argues Habermas in his philosophical discourse “Modernity’s Consciousness of time.” See Jürgen Habermas, *The philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 7; and Thomas McCarthy’s introduction, xvii.

47. Treitler, “Politics,” 290.

48. A different notion than Hegel’s critique of “the higher criticism”: “This higher criticism has been the pretext for introducing all the un-historical monstrosities a vain imagination could suggest. It too is a method of bringing the present into the past, namely by substituting subjective fancies for historical data – fancies which are considered the more excellent the bolder they are . . .” G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 23.

49. Leo Treitler, “Postmodern Signs in Musical Studies,” *Journal of Musicology*, 13 (1) (1995): 3–17 (10).

50. I would like to thank Kerry Jago for editing my manuscript and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson for active academic exchange. His study *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music: Scholarship, Ideology, Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) complements mine for the chapters focusing on the 20th century. I would also like to thank Dorette Kreutziger and Klaus-Hendrik Herr for unceasing interest and innumerable kindnesses.