Instruments and their Music in the Middle Ages

Edited by
Timothy J. McGee

Music in Medieval Europe

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Series Preface

This series of volumes provides an overview of the best current scholarship in the study of medieval music. Each volume is edited by a ranking expert, and each presents a selection of writings, mostly in English which, taken together, sketch a picture of the shape of the field and of the nature of current inquiry. The volumes are organized in such a way that readers may go directly to an area that interests them, or they may provide themselves a substantial introduction to the wider field by reading through the entire volume.

There is of course no such thing as the Middle Ages, at least with respect to the history of music. The Middle Ages – if they are plural at all – get their name as the temporal space between the decline of classical antiquity and its rediscovery in the Renaissance. Such a definition might once have been useful in literature and the fine arts, but it makes little sense in music. The history of Western music begins, not with the music of Greece and Rome (about which we know far too little) but with the music of the Latin Christian church. The body of music known as Gregorian chant, and other similar repertories, are the first music that survives to us in Western culture, and is the foundation on which much later music is built, and the basis for describing music in its time and forever after.

We continue to use the term 'medieval' for this music, even though it is the beginning of it all; there is some convenience in this, because historians in other fields continue to find the term useful; what musicians are doing in the twelfth century, however non-medieval it appears to us, is likely to be considered medieval by colleagues in other fields.

The chronological period in question is far from being a single thing. If we consider the Middle Ages as extending from the fall of the Roman Empire, perhaps in 476 when Odoacer deposed Romulus Augustus, into the fifteenth century, we have defined a period of about a millenium, far longer than all subsequent style-periods ('Renaissance', 'Baroque', 'Classical', 'Romantic' etc.) put together; and yet we tend to think of it as one thing.

This is the fallacy of historical parallax, and it owes its existence to two facts; first that things that are nearer to us appear to be larger, so that the history of the twentieth century looms enormous while the distant Middle Ages appear comparatively insignificant. Second, the progressive loss of historical materials over time means that more information survives from recent periods than from more distant ones, leading to the temptation to gauge importance by sheer volume.

There may be those who would have organized these volumes in other ways. One could have presented geographical volumes, for example: Medieval Music in the British Isles, in France, and so on. Or there might have been volumes focused on particular source materials, or individuals. Such materials can be found within some of these volumes, but our organization here is based on the way in which scholars seem in the main to organize and conceptualize the surviving materials. The approach here is largely chronological, with an admixture of stylistic considerations. The result is that changing styles of composition result in volumes focused on different genres – tropes, polyphony, lyric – that are not of course entirely separate in time, or discontinuous in style and usage. There are also volumes – notably those on chant

and on instrumental music – that focus on certain aspects of music through the whole period. Instrumental music, of which very little survives from the Middle Ages, is often neglected in favour of music that does survive – for very good reason; but we do wish to consider what we can know about instruments and their music. And liturgical chant, especially the repertory known as Gregorian chant, is present throughout our period, and indeed is the only music in Western culture to have been in continuous use from the beginnings of Western music (indeed it could be said to define its beginnings) right through until the present.

The seven volumes collected here, then, have the challenge of introducing readers to an enormous swathe of musical history and style, and of presenting the best of recent musical scholarship. We trust that, taken together, they will increase access to this rich body of music, and provide scholars and students with an authoritative guide to the best of current thinking about the music of the Middle Ages.

THOMAS FORREST KELLY
Series Editor

Introduction

Medieval Musical Instruments and their Repertory

The twenty-eight essays reproduced here have been chosen in order to place in a single volume some of the most significant studies in the field of musical instruments and their repertories. They are a set of specific, tightly focused essays that illuminate the subject as well as demonstrate the controversies and problems that arise from attempts to study such an illusive and insufficiently documented area of history. They do not present a full or comprehensive picture of the subject; that task has not yet been accomplished, although there are a number of excellent sources for overviews of the entire field of medieval instruments and their repertories, as well as some studies of particular genres that are highly recommended to anyone wishing to pursue the subject further.[1]

Each of the essays presented here concerns itself with one particular aspect of the topic, and when viewed as a whole they do provide an extremely broad picture. While illuminating the major points of their narrow topics, most of the authors provide us with the social or historical setting, placing the particular issue within a context that provides us with far more information than would be suggested by the essay's title; they are excellent examples of the finest scholarship in the field. All of the essays, however, presume a good deal of knowledge on the part of the reader; that the reader has a fair understanding of the general historical context into which each particular essay fits. In order to assist the reader to place each of these studies in perspective, I present below a summary of the broad picture of medieval musical instruments, the occasions on which they performed and the instrumental repertory.

Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages

Musical instruments were an important part of most festivities during the Middle Ages. They are found mostly in the secular world, but they were also a part of many sacred occasions. The instruments were as varied as those of later periods: winds, strings, keyboards and percussion, and they performed on many of the same types of occasions as those in later centuries. Whether in the great palaces of the nobles, the city streets, pastures or the humble abodes of the peasants, music was one of the most important and most frequent diversions

1 For larger studies of the histories of the instruments and repertory the following books are recommended: Bachmann (1969), Panum (1971), Crane (1972), Marcuse (1975), Montagu (1976), Munrow (1976), Remnant (1978, 1986), McGee (1985), Brown and Sadie (1989) and Duffin (2000). Additional material can be found in journals devoted all or in part to the study of musical instruments: *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, *Early Music*, *Galpin Society Journal*, *Historic Brass Society Journal*, *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*. Twenty of Christopher Page's essays about instruments, including those published here, are collected in his *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages* (1997).

in the medieval world. Depictions and descriptions of special celebrations as well as scenes from everyday life indicate that musical instruments were often a part of events such as banquets, processions and courtly entertainment, as well as dancing and general relaxation on all social levels. Nobles frequently entertained family, friends and important visitors with musical performances; street musicians played their instruments in the city squares for the delight of the passing crowd; shepherds played pipes to while away their time in the fields; and the villagers danced and sang to the music supplied by instrumentalists. As far as can be ascertained, this general picture of instrumental music in society was true of all of Europe, although the existing evidence is spotty in terms of geography, with some areas far better documented than others.[2]

Many of the medieval instruments will be recognized as the ancestors of instruments played today in churches, chambers and concert halls, while others we would recognize as folk instruments, and a few would seem to be only remotely connected to any instrument in the modern Western world. The people of the early centuries had their own particular way of categorizing musical instruments. Instead of the current methods of classifying instruments according to the material from which they are made (for example brass, woodwind) or the way in which their sound is produced (percussion, double reeds, bowed strings), the medieval way of thinking about them was according to volume of sound – loud and soft (Chapter 1).[3] The distinction was fairly rigid, and although both loud and soft instruments were often present on the same occasions, they were rarely mixed together.[4]

The loud instruments, trumpets, drums, shawms and bagpipe, were further subdivided according to function and traditional groupings as well as performance venues. Trumpets were mostly ceremonial instruments (as distinguished from those instruments that played melodies) and came in several sizes. The largest (usually referred to as buisines) were straight trumpets approximately four and a half to five feet in length, mostly cylindrical, ending in a small flared bell. Their use was to represent the power and authority of governments, and trumpeters played often from horseback, with the coat of arms of the ruler or the municipality suspended from the instruments. It is thought that these large trumpets were capable of sounding only a few notes, perhaps the first four partials of the harmonic series: the fundamental note, its octave, the next octave and a fourth below the highest pitch.[5] By the end of the fourteenth century advances in the treatment of metal allowed tubes to be bent and the result was instruments in a folded or 'S' shape that were more conical and therefore capable of playing as high as the eighth partial of the overtone series.[6] Ceremonial trumpets were often found in the company

2 Practices in England, France, Italy and the Low Countries have been covered more extensively than Germany or Iberia.

3 In England the terms were 'loud' and 'still' (see Chapter 5). The discussions by Konrad of Megenberg and Johannes Tinctoris (Chapters 2 and 4) are more along the lines of later groupings into families according to material and sounding method, but in both cases the authors are trying to describe the variety of instruments rather than make performance distinctions.

4 Bagpipe and pipe-and-tabor were usually considered to be loud instruments, but in certain circumstances they were also listed with the soft instruments (see Chapter 5, p. 64).

5 The number of notes possible on the early instruments is a subject of controversy (see Polk, 1992, p. 49, and Chapter 19).

6 On the development of trumpets, their ranges and shapes, see Chapter 19; Bowles (1977); Polk (1992, pp. 46–8); and Tröster (2001, pp. 185–90).

of percussion instruments: large tabors, nakers (a pair of small tympani-shaped instruments, either slung across the neck of a horse or suspended from the waist of the performer) and cymbals. This combination performed at large ceremonial functions and with the military where the instrumentalists sometimes served as signalmen.

The other loud instruments, shawm and bagpipe, are often found in conjunction with dancing – in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they appear either as solo instruments or as a duo. The shawm (shalamei, celamella) is a double-reed instrument and was made in two sizes: treble and alto (a fifth lower). Shawms sometimes sounded with trumpets, although very little is known about the repertory of that ensemble.[7] Bagpipes came in a variety of sizes, large and small, and with two drone pipes, one drone pipe or even without a drone. Beginning some time in the late fourteenth century one particular ensemble of loud instruments more and more became associated with courtly dancing. In Germany, Switzerland, France and the Low Countries an ensemble of two or three shawms (sometimes including a bagpipe) grew in popularity as a distinct musical group, and by the end of the century the idea had spread to Italy.[8] Through the decades of the fifteenth century the instrumentation of this ensemble (known as the 'alta cappella') changed, first replacing the bagpipe with a third shawm and then adding a cup-mouthpiece instrument (possibly a slide trumpet, see Chapters 19–23), becoming a performing trio of two shawms and a trumpet.[9] By the late century the trumpet was replaced by a trombone. The 'alta cappella' is often depicted performing both in outdoor scenes, with dancing taking place in a garden, and inside of buildings, where it accompanies the dancing of nobles in great halls, with the instrumental ensemble often placed in a loft or on a platform overlooking the dance floor (see illustrations in Chapters 20 and 21).

The soft instruments, a much larger and more varied group of instruments which includes soft winds, plucked and bowed strings, and keyboards, are not found as set groups as are the loud instruments. The wind instruments in this group were all of the treble whistle type: flute, recorder, pipe (with small tabor), as well as a small bagpipe known as a cornemuse and a rather mysterious instrument known as the douceinne (douçaine) which is thought to have been a soft, muted, double-reed.[10] The most popular and versatile of the plucked strings were the harp and the lute, both as solo instruments and as a standard duo. Harps, which came in a number of shapes, were most often small, easily portable instruments with 18 to 24 diatonic strings (ranging down to tenor 'c'), and on some there were bray pins attached to the sound

7 See Chapter 2 for a theorist's description, and Chapter 19, pp. 383–83, for speculation as to the repertory.

8 There were a number of such ensembles in the Lowlands possibly beginning as early as 1389 in northern cities such as Arnhem, Deventer and Den Haag, and shortly after in the Germanic cities of Nuremberg, Augsburg and Cologne (see Polk, 1992, pp. 60–64). On the custom at the court of Philip the Bold, see Wright (1979, p. 24). On the gradual adoption of this ensemble in Italian cities and courts, see McGee (forthcoming).

9 The iconography usually shows four musicians including a third shawm player who is resting. The tradition apparently was for two of the shawm players to take turns on the treble line, so that only three musicians were usually playing at a time. I have intentionally avoided referring to trumpets and trombones as "brass" instruments. There is ample evidence that brass was not one of the materials used for these instruments until well into the fifteenth century. See McGee (2005), and follow up articles by various authors in *ibid*, 18, forthcoming.

10 On the douçaine, see Fallows (1982).

board that touched the strings and made a metallic ring, amplifying the sound. There was no standard size for a lute, but most had nine or eleven strings (four or five double courses and a single high string). Until the mid-fifteenth century the spacing of the strings was quite close and most depictions indicate that it was played with a plectrum, which suggests strumming or playing with drones as the preferred sound (see Chapter 11, pp. 207–8, and Chapter 12, pp. 241–2). Also frequently mentioned are psalteries of several different sizes and shapes, and lute-types such as gittern, citole and cetra. The difference in these last mentioned instruments would seem to have been size (and therefore the pitch), shape, numbers of strings (double or single courses) and the material of the strings (gut or metal) (see Chapter 13).

Bowed strings also came in a variety of sizes, shapes and numbers of strings. As with the plucked strings, there was no uniformity or standardization of shape, size or decorations. Iconography shows a wonderfully broad and varied array of these instruments.[11] The small, treble rebec had two or three strings, the somewhat larger vielle had four or five, the lira da braccio had five with one of the strings off-board (that is, it did not pass over the fingerboard and therefore could not be stopped),[12] the crwth (or crowd) had as many as six with one or two off-board and the hurdy-gurdy had one or two drone strings and a treble melody string.[13] Most of the bowed strings would have been in the treble or alto range, but there are some iconographic representations of instruments as large as a tenor viol, meaning that it would have been capable of notes as low as G at the bottom of the bass clef. Most bowed instruments were held in the arm or on the shoulder, but there are also depictions of instruments of all sizes played in the 'down' (cello) position (see Chapter 15, plates I and II). Iconography shows both flat and rounded bridges, meaning that some instruments were best adapted to drone sounds while others were constructed for melodic playing without the encumbrance of a drone (Chapter 14).

The keyboard instrument that is most frequently seen and mentioned in the company of other soft instruments is the portative organ, usually a small instrument of approximately two octaves, held in the arm or on the knee allowing the performer to play melodically with one hand while using the other to pump the bellows (illustrated in Chapter 19, p. 386). There were also larger portative instruments that employed a separate bellows blower, allowing the performer to play polyphonically, as well as a great variety of positive organs that were built into churches and chapels, which over the centuries grew in size, number of manuals and ranks of pipes. While it is the portative instrument that is most often depicted in conjunction with other soft instruments, there are illustrations of larger instruments in the company of plucked and bowed strings (Chapter 9). Other keyboard instruments employing plucked or

11 Although there was some variety in the shape and size of wind instruments, the very nature of the pipes limited that mostly to external decoration. Trumpets as well were limited by the nature of the metal but also because they were intended to perform together and thus standardization was necessary. The flexibility of the tuning of strings allowed for far more variety in both the bowed and plucked instruments without limiting their ability to play in ensemble.

12 The standard studies of the lira da braccio, Winternitz (1967, ch. 5) and Jones (1995), date the origin of the instrument to the late fifteenth century. This is contradicted by iconography and literature (see Bachmann, 1969, esp. plates 69–76; Remnant, 1975, pp. 47–49; and Chapter 14, pp. 295–313). It may be that Winternitz and Jones identify the lira da braccio as having only a specific shape.

13 There was also an earlier two-player hurdy-gurdy, usually referred to as an organistrum. It does not seem to have been in use after the twelfth century. On its history, see Marcuse (1975, p. 458).

struck strings – harpsichord, clavichord, chekker and so on – are also depicted as playing both solo and in the company of other soft instruments.[14] They are mentioned mostly in terms of domestic music-making, and frequently at the hands of nobles.

What is common of soft instruments is that all of them could be found in the company of voices, whereas none of the loud instruments were mixed with voices. The soft instruments also were far more flexible in terms of combinations than were the loud instruments; they can be found in almost any imaginable combination, although there were some groupings that seem to have been more common than others. A duo of two lutes, or lute and harp, for example, is found frequently in all types of settings: playing for dances; providing dinner music; or engaged in an evening's serenade; and numerous sacred pictures include various combinations of lute, harp, vielle and portative organ in a setting that would suggest that they performed sacred music as an ensemble.[15]

Of all the soft instruments, the vielle was singled out by theorist Johannes Grocheio as the most important because of its appropriateness to a wide variety of occasions and repertories. According to Grocheio, the vielle could play every type of musical form, and commonly performed for feasts and games (Rohloff, 1972, p. 136; Seay, 1973, pp. 19–20; Page, 1993, pp. 31–32). Jerome of Moravia indicates that there were different tunings for the vielle depending on the repertory.[16]

Occasion

There were a very broad number of occasions on which both loud and soft instruments would be present. Many of the more splendid references are in conjunction with banquets; the more lavish the banquet, the larger and more varied the instrumental group (Chapter 27). At the banquets of lords and nobles, trumpets would sound to call the guests to dinner and then would announce each course as it arrived. Dinner itself would be accompanied by music from loud and/or soft instruments as well as by singers, and after dinner the instruments would play for everyone to dance. Important civic and religious occasions usually included processions, as, for example, the welcoming of a head of state to the city or the celebration of a church feast day. On these occasions groups of trumpets could be found leading the procession, sometimes in the company of drums and the other loud instruments, parading through the city streets followed by hundreds of citizens (Chapter 28).

From modern experience we would expect that the instrument most often associated with church and chapel would be the positive organ – which is correct. During the medieval period, however, other instruments also were associated with sacred occasions. Loud instruments are recorded as playing during mass on very special feasts, and they also provided incidental music for mystery plays, as did a number of the soft instruments (Chapter 1, pp. 22–24).

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14 In addition to Chapters 6–9, see Ripin (1967).

15 I am suggesting here that these four instruments probably performed together in various combinations as practical ensembles. There are also numerous sacred paintings that include both loud and soft instruments, but these would most likely be symbolic – for example, intending to represent the 150th psalm, rather than to suggest a practical ensemble. See below.

16 See discussions of the instrument and its tuning in Chapter 1, pp. 16–17, and Chapter 14, pp. 293–95.

Trumpets are recorded as playing at specific times during a church service (Fallows, 1983), and when an organ was not available, instruments such as a lute were used to intone the sacred chant (Chapter 26, p. 485). There are enough depictions of soft instruments in religious settings that we can assume that they must have performed sacred music, although whether or not they performed during mass or other services is not clear (see the illustrations in Chapters 12 and 14).

Trumpets were important for a number of different occasions. In addition to the celebrations mentioned above, they were considered to be a sign of nobility and civil authority and were employed by wealthy households as well as by governments. For the most important events, groups of trumpets with drums, often numbering eight or more and frequently on horseback, would announce the official coming and going of important individuals or officials. On more modest occasions the nobles or civic authorities would move through the streets preceded by a pair of trumpets. When representing households or governments the musicians wore uniforms with the emblems and colours of their patrons, and pennants bearing coats of arms were suspended from their instruments (Chapter 5, pp. 70–74).

Performances on any and all occasions could have been by soloists or ensembles of soft or loud instruments, and many events contained a variety of both soloists and ensembles (Chapter 1). The musicians who performed for peasant occasions would have been either professionals or, more frequently, local amateurs entertaining their neighbours. For the nobles, there was a much larger available selection of performers: there were often professional musicians attached to the household who served both to entertain and to teach members of the family, and there was usually an abundant supply of itinerant musicians who could be employed for special occasions. It was also common for the nobles themselves to perform; several of Boccaccio's young nobles in the *Decameron*, for example, are instrumentalists who play while they and the others danced, sang or listened. But whereas professionals are known to have played all of the instruments, only some instruments were considered to be suitable for nobles: the plucked strings (harp, lute, psaltery), keyboards (portative and positive organ, clavichord) and the vielle (Chapter 14, pp. 297–98). In the *Decameron*, Dioneo appears to be the principal and the most versatile musician among the ten young nobles: at the beginning of day one he plays a lute and vielle duet with Fiametta; at the end of the same day he again plays his lute while Lauretta and Emilia sing; and at the end of day five he tells the queen that if he had a keyboard instrument (cembalo) he would play a particular song. But when on days five and six a bagpipe accompanies dancing, it is the servant Tindaro who plays.[17] There is no evidence that nobles performed on any of the loud instruments (trumpets, shawm, drum, bagpipe) or any of the soft winds such as flute, recorder, pipes and so on. A single exception to this would seem to be the tambourine which is often depicted in the hands of noble women in conjunction with dancing.[18]

An overwhelming amount of evidence indicates that dancing was the most favoured social activity at all levels of society during the late Middle Ages. Throughout those centuries and on into the Renaissance nearly all instruments, either solo or in an ensemble, are found in scenes

17 For a discussion of music in the *Decameron*, see Brown (1977).

18 The most famous of the depictions are Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco *The Effects of Good Government*, in the Palazzo Publico in Siena, and Andrea da Firenze's fresco *The Way to Salvation*, in the Spanish Chapel of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

involving dancing; the instruments frequently depicted are harp, lute, vielle and especially the alta cappella, as mentioned above.

Another common use of soft instruments was for the accompaniment of singing. The most frequently mentioned instruments in this regard are again the plucked strings: lute, harp and psaltery, but the vielle, portative organ and other keyboard instruments are found frequently enough to suggest that they too were standard instruments for vocal accompaniment. The iconographic and literary references often indicate that the singer accompanied himself/herself, although there are an ample number of scenes that show an accompanist separate from the singer.

Repertory

Determination of what was the instrumental repertory during the Middle Ages is a somewhat controversial subject among investigators owing to the fact that there is very little extant music that is securely known to have been intended for instrumental performance. The surviving repertory from prior to 1450 consists of fewer than 100 pieces, most of which are monophonic dances, but also with a few polyphonic preludes and settings of vocal music; most of the repertory is not specifically designated for any particular instrument.[19] After 1450 there is a little more material: polyphonic settings of dances, songs and preludes, mostly intended for keyboard or lute performance (Chapters 11, 12 and 26). This, of course, does not compare to the quantity of music intended for vocal performance, and although this small surviving repertory helps us understand what kinds of pieces were performed by instruments, in no way does it present the actual picture of the quantity of instrumental music performed during the period. The reason for this is that instead of playing from score, the largest share of what instrumentalists performed was either improvised or learned by rote memory, and therefore we are left to complete the picture of the instrumental repertory from hints in the literature or other written documents as well as by extraction from the small quantity of surviving material.

From all sources of evidence it is clear that the most frequently performed instrumental repertory was dance music and, as the literary sources tell us, there were numerous kinds of dances for both courtly and peasant celebrations. Dancing was a very common activity during the Middle Ages and, in fact, the names of the major secular vocal forms suggest that they too were originally for dancing: ballade, ballata = dance; virelai = to twist; rondeau, carol = round dance. There were slow, processional dances (bassdanse, bassadanza, estampie), jumping dances (saltarello) and line dances (carol, rigoletto, moresca), which took on a number of formations and were performed on a variety of occasions including during religious processions. Some of the dance repertory was vocal music[20] but, according to the iconographic and literary evidence, a very large quantity of dancing was done to the sound of instruments.

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19 The dances (and some other possible instrumental repertory) can be found in McGee (1989). Preludes and other possible keyboard pieces are in *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, vol. 1.

20 See information about the estampies 'Souvent souspire' and 'Kalenda Maya' in Husmann (1953). On sacred vocal dances, see Spanke (1930) and Rokseth (1947).

The instruments most often found in this context are bagpipe, all plucked strings, all bowed strings, percussion (especially tambourine) and, after 1380, the alta cappella.[21]

One of the most frequent uses of soft instruments was in conjunction with the solo singing of poetry – both the song-type repertory and the long narrative historical legends (Chapter 5, pp. 66–68). In these settings the accompanying instruments were most often the traditional harp or lute, or even a bowed string (vielle or rebec), and in Italy the performance of narrative poetry was closely associated with improvised accompaniment by the lyra da braccio (although other instruments such as harp and lute were also commonly used).[22] We know also that instruments functioned regularly in the performance of the secular monophonic vocal repertory: playing a prelude as a way of introducing the song and setting its scale; accompanying the song by providing some basic harmonic support; adding instrumental interludes between verses or songs; and bringing the performance to a close with a coda.[23] There is considerable evidence that singers often accompanied themselves in this manner (Chapter 14, pp. 297–301).

But while it is well established that instruments frequently accompanied monophonic singing, the question of whether they also participated along with voices in the performance of polyphonic music continues to be debated. A number of the essays reprinted in this volume either state directly that it was a common practice or discuss performance with the assumption that it was true. There is, however, strong reason to doubt the basis on which these claims and assumptions are made. Chapter 25, from as early as 1946, seriously questions one of those assumptions by re-examining some long-held beliefs about the difference between vocal and instrumental writing. The topic has been pursued more recently in a number of essays and especially in a recent book by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (2002), which makes a convincing argument that prior to 1500 voices and instruments did not participate together in the performance of polyphonic music.

This was true not only in the performance of the secular repertory, but also in the performance of sacred music. The function of a positive organ in a church or chapel apparently was to intone the music to be sung by the choir and on occasion to play alternatim verses – that is, the choir would perform one verse and the organ would perform the next. There is no evidence that the organ ever accompanied the choir during the medieval period.

This does not remove composed polyphonic music from the instrumental repertory; instrumentalists undoubtedly performed it, but not in the company of voices. From the evidence that we have in the sources that contain instrumental elaborations of polyphonic vocal music, for example the Faenza Codex, it is possible to speculate that instrumental ensembles adopted both the secular song repertory as well as some of the motets, and performed them with elaborate decorations. The occasions when they would have presented this repertory probably would have been for the entertainment of nobles, both in private and at banquets. We have records from the last decades of the fifteenth century of alta cappella ensembles in the Low Countries and Italy performing motets in the village squares for the enjoyment of the citizens (Polk, 1990, p. 20; Strohm, 1990, pp. 86–87; and Prizer, 1995, p. 185). How early this practice was begun is not known.

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21 Many of the essays include illustrations of instruments playing for dancing.

22 This is the instrument referred to as a vielle and fiddle in Chapter 14, p. 298, in conjunction with the singer of narrative songs (*cantastoria*).

23 All of this is extracted from statements in the treatise of Johannes Grocheio, discussed in McGee (1998, pp. 110–11). See also Binkley (1977) and Huot (1989).

Even the small amount of repertory that has survived is not without its controversies concerning purpose, provenance or even the instrument(s) for which it was intended. We assume that the monophonic dances were the repertory of all of the single-line instruments – the soft winds and strings, and the shawms – performed as solo or in ensemble (haut and bas separately), but there is little evidence to confirm this. The Italian dance repertory has been associated with Eastern Mediterranean style and therefore may not even be typical of what European dance musicians performed (see McGee, 1982). And the polyphonic elaborations found in the Faenza Codex, once thought to have been intended for keyboard instruments, may in fact have been written for lute duet (Chapter 26).[24]

Although the instrumental repertory would have been mostly monophonic in its basic format (especially the dance music), that is probably not how it was usually performed. The presence of drones on some of the instruments (hurdy-gurdy, bagpipe) and the ready availability of drones on many others (for example flat-bridged bowed strings, all of the lute-like plucked instruments) strongly suggest that performances of the monophonic repertory often included the sound of drones. It is also thought that in an ensemble performance of monophonic music (two or more performers) the performers would have individually ornamented the melody simultaneously, producing heterophony. This approach would also have been likely when instruments performed the non-dance repertory – songs, hymns and so on.

No music survives for the processional and heraldic instruments: the trumpets and percussion. For these instruments we have only the knowledge that the trumpets were confined to the overtone system, and that their basic repertory undoubtedly was what we would refer to as fanfares or heraldic sounds, although on whether it was unison or polyphonic there is no information.

The Essays

As the reader will encounter in the following essays, the investigation of medieval musical instruments and their repertory presents a significant number of unknowns. The general picture as represented above is fairly clear, but we are less secure when we attempt to focus on the details. Because so few instruments and so little repertory survive from the period, investigators must rely heavily on information from art and written sources, and both of those areas introduce their own problems.[25] Whereas the iconography provides clear depictions of the instruments as well as scenes where they are being performed, it rarely contains any information about the names of the instruments depicted,[26] and ideas of exact measurements and playing techniques are often in doubt when so many of the instruments are placed in the hands of angels. Written sources supply similar information about scenes and occasions that include instruments, but narrative and poetic descriptions of the instruments rarely provide details about shape, tuning or performance technique, and it has not been possible to securely match all of the names in the literature with images in the iconography. Further, neither source can be taken completely at face value. Iconography is frequently symbolic rather that realistic,

24 For other opinions, see Plamenac (1951) and Eberlein (1992).

25 See Frederick Crane's admirable but small *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments* (1972), which describes all known surviving medieval instruments.

26 An excellent source of iconographic evidence can be found in Brown (1984–88).

as, for example, a scene showing a great variety of instruments, both loud and soft, celebrating the glory of God in heaven (see the numerous examples in Chapter 14). It is not possible to believe that all of these instruments played together; it is far more likely that they are illustrating the 150th psalm.

Iconography sometimes depicts sequential rather than simultaneous activity, showing in a single scene groups of loud and soft instruments, but not intending to convey the message that they performed together. And the images cannot be relied upon for accuracy in terms of finer technical details that would be so important for our understanding of instrument construction, range, tuning and so on (see, for example, the discussion of the Ghent Altarpiece in Chapter 9, as well as the curious placements of bridges on some string instruments in Chapter 14). Scenes described in literature also can mislead when they are symbolic rather than realistic, and they often are exaggerated, mentioning hundreds or even thousands of instrumentalists in order to bring forth an image of grandeur when the number that would have been present on an actual occasion was undoubtedly far more modest (Chapters 1 and 28).

The problem of identifying instruments in the literature is compounded by the habit of medieval writers of referring to several different instruments by a common name, or to a single instrument by different names depending on its function (as, for example, the confusion over the nature of the chekker, Chapters 6–8). The lists of instruments found in the literary works of Guillaume de Machaut, as well as of many other writers, present a number of identification problems (Chapter 1, p. 6, and Chapter 3, pp. 156–7).[27] Additional problems are caused by the lack of standard shapes and sizes of instruments and a lack of a standard or consistent set of names for them from one region to another. Works of art and literature were not intended by their creators to be accurate historical documents, and the wary investigator must be careful not to treat them as such.

Nonetheless, I do not wish to obscure the significant accomplishments of research on the subject by focusing overly long on the problems of the discipline or on the questions that still remain unanswered. Although there still remains work to be done, we have come a long way in our understanding of musical instruments in medieval society, as demonstrated by the enlightening essays included here.

One essay in particular has been a major influence on the field. It is one of the most frequently cited essays and one that assists us in understanding the way in which the people of the time thought of the musical instruments. Edmund Bowles' 'Haut and Bas: The Grouping of Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages' (Chapter 1) provides a large overview of the subject and helps to place medieval instruments in their relationship to those that preceded them, as well as clarifying how they were understood, used and combined as a natural extension of a long tradition of instruments in European society. The importance of this work will be seen in the frequent references to the classifications of haut and bas in many of the other essays, as well as specific references to Bowles' essay. Since its publication over fifty years ago much work has been done refining our knowledge on all phases of music history. As a result the reader will find that certain statements that were up to date at original writing can no longer be accepted as wholly accurate, but the basic information is still correct. This excellent essay

27 See also the problems with identifying some of Konrad's instruments in Chapter 2, pp. 334–5.

is still of enormous value.[28] Many of the other essays printed here will report the results of more recent research which will adjust Bowles' statements, but his 'Haut and Bas' remains an excellent introduction to the overall picture.

I should also point to two sets of essays that illustrate the difficulties of interpreting ambiguous evidence, in which several authors use much the same pool of evidence but arrive at quite different conclusions. The first of these is the controversy over the nature of the instrument known as the 'chekker', a debate that is spread over a large number of years with a number of scholars weighing in on what a chekker was – or was not. The reader can follow the various ideas beginning with Bowles' 1966 essay (Chapter 6), where it is mentioned more in passing while the author pursues a different issue. In 1975, Edwin Rippin (Chapter 7) attacked the issue directly and published all known references to the instrument, and twenty-three years later David Kinsela (Chapter 8) used this same evidence to produce a slightly different image.[29] Along the way each of the authors furthers our knowledge of the difficult field of early instruments by setting their arguments within a broader picture of keyboard instruments, their construction, use and repertory.

The other controversy included here deals with the existence of the slide trumpet. Again we encounter a variety of conclusions resulting from the evaluation of much the same evidence, demonstrating how obviously subjective the topic is. The argument begins with Peter Downey,[30] who in 1984 seriously questioned whether the instrument existed in the fifteenth century (Chapter 19). This essay sparked a rather spirited set of responses from Herbert Myers (Chapter 20), Keith Polk (Chapter 21) and Ross Duffin (Chapter 22), all of them demonstrating how complicated this type of issue can be when most of the evidence is from iconography. This set of essays also demonstrates how one can use circumstantial evidence in the absence of anything more substantial.[31] As they construct their arguments for and against the existence of the instrument, all four scholars provide additional information that greatly enriches our understanding of the alta cappella, its history, use and repertory.[32]

Taken as a whole, these twenty-eight essays emphasize the importance of instrumental music throughout the centuries of the late Middle Ages, as well as the enormous diversity in the instruments themselves and the occasions on which they performed. It is unfortunate that

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28 The reader is cautioned about fully accepting Bowles' translation of instrument names which are occasionally inaccurate. On p. 9, for example, he translates 'bombard' as 'bass shawm' rather than 'tenor shawm', and there and again on p. 14 he translates 'douchaines' as 'cromornes', whereas the correct translation would be 'douçaine', about which there is some controversy (see above, note 10). Many of Bowles' other instrument identifications should be considered to be 'best guesses' rather than proven fact. More accurate translations and descriptions of instruments can be found in Marcuse (1975). For a more cautious identification of instrument names, see Chapter 10.

29 At least two other historians have also weighed in on this subject, see Page (1979) and Barry (1985).

30 See also Welker (1983). This essay apparently was unknown to Downey at the time of his writing.

31 The controversy is not yet resolved. Welker has again questioned the existence of the instrument in 'Wind Music Around 1500 and the Early History of the Trombone,' a paper given at Musikinstrumente und instrumentale Praxis um 1500, at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Basel, Switzerland, December, 2005.

32 I wish to thank the following people for assistance and advice: Steward Carter, Ross Duffin, David Fallows, Thomas Kelly, Herbert Myers, Keith Polk and Richard Rastall.

so little actual music survives from that period, but through these essays the reader should be able to gain a fairly clear idea of the total picture and the enormous role instrumental music played in medieval society.

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Part I
Classifications and Lists of Instruments

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[1]

HAUT AND BAS: THE GROUPING OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

EDMUND A. BOWLES

In this age of specialization we have naturally come to think of musical instruments as belonging to families of the same species, all having like characteristics. This division according to type (string, reed, or woodwind, brass and percussion) was revised and, as it were, broken down by musicologists and ethnologists working together into groups of sub-species according not only to type, but to method of producing sound as well [1]. It may seem strange to the concert-goer of today, who sees the orchestra conveniently displayed in four so-called family sections, to envisage an entirely different system of grouping musical instruments. Such was the case, however, during the later Middle Ages.

Three conditions led to the full development of the medieval orchestra. First, the abandonment of the simple Greco-Roman instruments which began during the Carolingian era led to the development of new instrument forms. Second, the development of polyphony gave musical instruments added roles by increasing the number of parts potentially available. Third, the emancipation of instruments as mere substitutes for, or as aids to, the singers in the Gothic period meant the increased growth of secular instrumental forms. It is actually in the thirteenth century that for the first time is found documentary evidence of pure instrumental music which must have been developing for some time [2].

This development took place in the secular centers throughout Europe. The settings were the many courts of kings, nobles, and feudal lords. The participants were at first the troubadours and trouvères, traveling from place to place with their heroic sagas and love songs, their entertainers and musicians. The troubadour seldom performed his own music. The

[1] The classical system was first established in 1914 by Drs. Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs. Based largely on acoustical principles, the grouping included idiophones (concussion instruments), aerophones (wind instruments), membranophones (drums), and cordophones (stringed instruments).

[2] Théodore Gérold, „Les Instruments de musique au moyen âge", *Revue des Cours et Conferences,* (XXIX) 1938, 235.

jongleur did this, in addition to many other feats of diversion [3]. Later the minstrels assumed the role of musical performers, singing songs and accompanying themselves on some instrument. Always a welcome guest, the minstrel sought employment at town and castle alike. During Lent, when secular entertainment of all kind was curtailed, the minstrels from all over Europe would gather together at „schools" to exchange the latest songs and the newest musical instruments [4]. Outside of the so-called wandering minstrels, the musicians of the later Middle Ages were either attached to some feudal household (hence the Latin *ministrallus,* or „household attendant") or employed by a city or town [5]. The court minstrels figured among the regular servants, and their expenses, including money to buy instruments, were recorded in the lord's account books. Some of them indeed became a steady companion to their master [6]. The civic minstrels (known as *waits* in England) received fixed fees, wore the town livery and a silver badge. They performed at all local celebrations, festivals, and the like [7].

[3] An interesting account of the attainments of these jacks-of-all trades is cited in Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, *Music in History* (Boston: 1940), p. 170.

> I can play the lute, vielle, pipe, bagpipe, panpipes, harp, fiddle, guittern, symphony, psaltery, organistrum, organ, tabor, and the rote. I can sing a song well, and make tales to please young ladies, and can play the gallant for them if necessary. I can throw knives into the air and catch them without cutting my fingers. I can jump rope most extraordinary and amusing. I can balance chairs, and make tables dance. I can somersault, and walk doing a handstand.

Many poems stress both the familiarity on the part of the jongleur with musical instruments, and the amazing number at his command. One of the most interesting sources is the poem *Fadet Joglar,* by Guiraut de Calançon (1210). See Wilhelm Keller. „Das Sirventes ‚Fadet Joglar' des Guiraut von Calanzo", *Romanische Forschungen,* XXII (1906), 144 f.

[4] J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life,* tr. Lucy Smith (New York: 1950), p. 103.

[5] „They wandered at their will from castle to castle, and in time from borough to borough, sure of their ready welcome alike in the village tavern, the guildhall, and the baron's keep. They sang and jested in the market-place, stopping cunningly at a critical moment in the performance to gather their harvest of small coins from the bystanders. In the great castles, while the lords and ladies supped, or sat around the fire, it was theirs to while away many a long bookless evening with courtly *geste* or witty sally. At wedding or betrothal, baptism or knight-dubbing, treaty or tournament, their presence was indispensable. The greater festivities saw them literally in their hundreds, and rich was their reward in money and in jewels, in costly garments, and in broad acres. They were licensed vagabonds, with free right of entry into the presence-chambers of the land", E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (London: 1903), I, 44 f.

[6] E. Faral, *Les Jongleurs en France au moyen âge* (Paris: 1910), p. 104.

[7] Chambers, *Op. Cit.,* I, 51.

It must be remembered that the medieval orchestra had a greater variety of instruments than that of today. Beginning with the era of the Crusades, the number of instruments increased many times over. The great influence of both Arabic and Byzantine musical culture was felt in the introduction of both new forms, such as cymbals, nakers, several lutes and guitars, struck psalteries, and leather horns. The instruments were all grouped into families, each with its members corresponding roughly to the natural human vocal ranges [8].

The bewildering number of instruments is noted by the contemporary observer John Lydgate, a monk of Bury Saint Edmunds [9].

Eke Instrumentys high and lowe
Wel mo than I koude knowe,
That I suppose, there is no man
That aryght reherse kan
The melodye that they made.

Contemporary poetry abounds with enumerations of the many different ones used. For example, the court musicians in the *Roman de Brut,* by Wace (ca. 1155) play songs, rotruenges, vocal accompaniments, lays, and instrumental notae on vielles, rotes, harps, panpipes, lyres, dulcimers, shawms, hurdy-gurdies, psalteries, trumscheits, cymbals, and citharas [10].

Mult ot a la cort jugleors
Chanteors, estrumenteors,
Mut poïssies oïr chançons,
Rotruenges et noviax sons,
Vieleurs de lais et de notes,
Lais de vieles, lais de rotes,
Lais de harp et de fretiax,
Lyre, tympres et chalemiax,
Symphonies, psalterions,
Monocordes, cymbes, chorons.

Erec et Enide, by Chrestien de Troyes, includes twelve of the most common instruments: harp, rote, rebec, vielle, flute, shawm, drums, bagpipe, recorder, panpipes, and clarions [11].

[8] Henri Lavoix, *La Musique au siècle de Saint Louis* (Paris: 1883), p. 316 f.
[9] Lydgate's *Reason and Sensuallyte,* ed. Ernst Sieper (London: 1901), I, 146 f.
[10] *Le Roman de Brut,* ed. Leroux de Lincy, II (Rouen: 1838), 111 f.
[11] Théodore Gérold, *Histoire de la musique des origines à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: 1936), p. 400.

Cil sert de harp, cil de rote
Cil de gigue, cil de viele
Cil de flaüste, cil chalemele
Sonent timbre, sonent tabor
Muses, estives et fretel
Et buisines et chalemel.

In one of the better known poems by Guillaume de Machault, the *Remede de Fortune,* a long list of musical instruments is given. Through the author's fancy they are all heard being performed together. However, they were all in contemporary use [12].

Viële, rubebe, guiterne,
Leü, morache, michanon,
Citole et le psalterion,
Harpe, tabour, trompes, naquaires,
Orgues, cornes, plus de dis paires,
Cornemuses, flajos, chevrettes,
Douceinnes, simbales, clochettes,
Tymbre, la flaüste brehaingne,
Et le grant cornet d'Alemaingne,
Flajos de saus, fistule, pipe,
Muse d'Aussay, trompe petite
Buisines, eles, monocorde
Ou il n'a c'une seule corde,
Et muse de blef tout ensemble.

The fifteenth century chronicler Jean Molinet in his *La naufrage de la Pucelle,* gives the reader a complete medieval orchestra: harps, organs, vielles, psalteries, lutes, nakers, shawms, virginals, cymbals, hurdy-gurdies, bagpipes, cromorne, drums, rebecs, hand-bells, timbrels, flutes, guitars, trumpets, clarions, barrel-shaped drums, struck harps, fifes, bells, cornets, trumscheits, and ten-string psalteries [13].

Instead of being divided into pairs, as is the usual case in the modern orchestra, each medieval instrument was grouped in a family of many different sizes. However, the important fact for our consideration is not the variegated list of instruments, but the musical esthetics of the age. The emphasis was upon the volume of sound produced, as well as the robustness of tone. In general, the more noise, the more the instrumental combination was generally admired and enjoyed in festive gatherings.

It was this esthetic tendency to think of instruments in terms of volume

[12] Guillaume de Machault, *Oeuvres,* ed. Ernest Hoepffner (Paris: 1911), II, 145 f.

[13] *Les Faictz et dictz de Jean Molinet,* ed. Noël Dupire (Paris: 1936), p. 89 f.

that led to the dual grouping according to sonority; those instruments with a loud, shrill tone color (*haut*), and those whose sound was soft, or low (*bas*). Specific documentation of this is to be found in the letters-patent received from King Charles VI of France by the Confraternity of Saint Julian and Saint Genesius at Paris [14]. That the musicians of this band were grouped according to the sonority of their respective instruments is evident from the document itself: [15]

> Menestrels, joueurs d'instruments, tant hauts que bas.

A few years later, in 1407, the king granted letters-patent to the guild of Parisian city musicians. Again, the distinction between *haut* and *bas* is recognized [16].

> Nous avons reçeu l'umble suppliçacion du roy des ménestriers et des autres ménestriers, joueurs d'instrumens tant haulx comme bas, en la ville, viconté, et dyocese de Paris et des autres de nostre royaume...

Not only civic performers, but court musicians were so grouped. In the description of the household of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy (1396-1467) the chronicler Olivier de la Marche writes that [17]

> Le duc a six haulz menestrelz, qui par l'ung d'eulx six sont gouvernés, et portent les armes du prince, et sont comptez par les escroez comme les trompettes; le duc a quatre joueurs de bas instruments pareillement comptez...

A cursory glance at medieval literature reveals that many authors followed the established classification when mentioning musical instruments. The thirteenth century poem, *Li Roumans de Cléomadès,* by the troubadour Adenez le Roi, mentions vielles, psalteries, harps, rotes, rectangular psalteries, bagpipes, guitars, lutes, pipes, and rebecs in one group, and then speaks of instruments which make much more noise, including copper field-trumpets and drums [18]).

[14] Saint Genesius was the patron-saint of jongleurs. The Confraternity itself was actually established between 1328 and 1335. Chambers, *Op. Cit.,* II, 259.

[15] Hans Schletterer, *Geschichte der Spielmannskunst in Frankreich* („Studien zur Geschichte der französischen Musik", II) (Berlin: 1885), p. 96.

[16] B. Bernhard, „Recherches sur l'histoire de la corporation des ménétriers ou joueurs d'instruments de la ville de Paris", *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes,* IV (1842-43), 526.

[17] *Mémoires,* ed. Beaune and d'Arbaumont (Paris: 1888), IV, 71.

[18] *Li Roumans de Cléomadès,* ed. André van Hasselt (Brussels: 1865), p. 91.

Viëlles et salterions,
Harpes et rotes et canons
Et estives de Cornouaille...
On lui avoit guintarieurs,
Et si avoit bons leüteurs,
Et des flaüteurs de Behaingne,
Et des gigueöurs d'Alemaigne

* *

Tabours et cors sarrazinois.

The author of another poem, *Floriant et Florete,* divides his musicians into two groups, loud and soft. In the former are musicians who „are going to stir up too much gaiety," with buisines, shawms, horns, and drums. In the latter category are those players who perform on rotes, vielles, psalteries, citoles, harps, bagpipes, and hurdy-gurdies [19].

Salteres et citoles beles,
Harpes de cor et armonies,
Et estives et chiphonies.

Jean Lefebvre de Resson, in his *Respit de la mort* (1376), exhibits a less formal grouping, but nevertheless implies the same system. First he lists organs, vielles, harps, and psalteries, followed by bagpipes, shawms, bombards, trumpets, and drums [20].

We are fortunate in being able to turn to several sources for a specific listing of *haut* and *bas* instruments. The anonymous author of the *Echecs amoureux* defines the loud group [21].

On sonnoit lez haulz instrumens,
Que mieulx au dansez plaisoient
La peuist on oïr briefment
Sonner moult de renoisement
Pour la grant noise qu'ilz faisient
Trompez, tabours, tymbrez, naquaires,
Cymballes (dont il n'est mes guaires)
Cornemusez et chalemelles
Et cornes de fachon moult belles

Johannes Tinctoris, in his treatise *De Inventione et Usu Musicae* (Book

[19]) *Floriant et Florete, a Metrical Romance of the Fourteenth Century,* ed. Francisque Michel (Edinburgh: 1873), p. 214.

[20] André Pirro, *Histoire de la musique de la fin du XIVe siècle à la fin du XVIe* (Paris: 1940), p. 10.

[21] Hermann Abert, „Die Musikästhetik der Echecs amoureux", *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft,* VI (1904-05), 354 f.

III), states that „when all these instruments (i.e. shawm, bombard, bagpipe) are playcd together, it is called loud music [22].

As to the low instruments, Eustache Deschamps mentions the most common ones in his poem *Ballade pour Machaut* [23].

Rubebes, leuths, vielles, symphonie,
Psalterions, trestous instrumens coys
Rothes, guiterne, flaustes, chalemie,
Traversaines . . .

Again, the *Echecs amoureux* speaks of flutes, cromornes, „and other such soft instruments" employed for interludes when „less noise" was wanted. These low instruments, „very soft and wholesome", were pleasing for the appropriate entertainment [24].

Et puis aultrefois reprenoient,
Quant mendre noise demandoient,
Flasoz, fleutez et douchaines,
Qui sont moult doulces et saines,
Et telz autrez instrumens bas
Dont moult est plaisans li esbas.
La ouist on sonner vielles
Et harpes excellentment
Et psalterions ensement,
Ghisternez, rebeblez et rotez,
Qui faisoient moult doulcez nottez,
Leuz qui sont de plus grant ton,
Orguez en main y oist on
Et citoles meismement,
Qui sonnoient moult doucement
Chyffonyes et monocordes . . .

Thus we have a rather complete listing of the musical instruments in both the groupings of *haut* and *bas*. The loud category included the bombard (bass shawm), buisine (clarion), chalumeau (reed pipe), cornamuse (bagpipe), cymbals, drums, horns, and trumpets. The soft instruments comprised the cithara, douçaine (cromorne), flageolet (recorder), flute, guitar, harp, hurdy-gurdy, lute, trumscheit (monochord), panpipes, psaltery, rebec, rote (crwth), and vielle.

Let us review the respective sonorities of these instruments. Turning

[22] Anthony Baines, „Fifteenth-century Instruments in Tinctoris's De Inventione et Usu Musicae", *The Galpin Society Journal*, III (1950), 21.

[23] *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. A. Queux de St. Hilaire, I (Paris: 1878), 245 f.

[24] Abert, *Op. Cit.*, p. 355.

to the *hauts instruments,* the buisine was a large trumpet of metal. In a majority of the medieval references to this instrument, its military employment is emphasized. This may be why Bessaraboff calls the buisine a herald's trumpet [25]. It was also used at weddings, festivals, and tournaments. Hung with a flag bearing the coat-of-arms of the feudal lord, the clarions were played by minstrels who belonged to his private retinue. The sound of this instrument is described as „bright", „noisy", or „loud" [26]. In the famous *Chanson de Roland* [27],

Li amirailz at sa barbe fors mise,
Altresi blanche come flor en espine;
Coment que seit, ne s'i voelt celermie.
Met a sa buche une clere buisine,
Sonent la cler que si paien l'odirent,
Par tot lo champs ses compaignes ralient.

Owing to its bore being narrower than that of the trumpet, the buisine sounded brighter and fresher. The high overtones could be produced with it. In the poem *Willehalm,* the tone is described as being „shattering" [28].

Von pusînen galme
Was vor im groz gesnarren.

The chalumeau, or shawm, was one of the three reed-blown types of instruments used during the Middle Ages. It was manufactured of wood, with either a willow or a boxwood reed. The shawm was an especial favorite in France. We find it mentioned in accounts of jousts, banquets, weddings, rural gatherings, and, curiously enough, used by watchmen and tower-guards at medieval castles [29]. Thus, to serve as a warning or signal instrument, its tone must have been loud and penetrating. The Burgundian chronicler Jean Molinet referred to shawms as „ . . . enlèverent melodie tant extreme et fort haulte . . ." [30] The bombard, or bass shawm, had a very deep and piercing tone [31].

[25] Nicholas Bessaraboff, *Ancient European Musical Instruments* (Boston: 1940), p. 188.

[26] Fritz Brucker, „Die Blasinstrumente in der altfranzösischen Literatur", *Giessener Beiträge zur Romanischen Philologie,* XIX (1926), 18.

[27] *Le Chanson de Roland,* ed. T. A. Jenkins (Boston: 1924), p. 243 f.

[28] Edward Buhle, *Die musikalischen Instrumente in den Miniaturen des frühen Mittelalters* (Leipzig: 1903), I, 30.

[29] Brucker, *Op. Cit.,* p. 45.

[30] A. van der Linden, „La Musique dans les chroniques de Jean Molinet", in *Mélanges Ernest Closson* (Brussels: 1948), pp. 178-180.

[31] Gérold, *Op. Cit.,* p. 743.

Among the drum family were the timbrel (tambourine), tambour (an elongated cylindrical drum), and the naker (a small kettledrum). The timbrel, together with the fife, was one of the most popular instruments in use during the Middle Ages [32]. It was a frequent combination at banquets and tournaments. Timbrels were used in conjunction with trumpets and field drums to make lots of noise outdoors. In the Histoire de l'Empereur Henri, by Henri de Valençiennes, we read [33]

> ... Et si grant tumulte de tymbres, de tabors, et de trompes, ke toute li terre en tramploit.

An interesting description is furnished by Christine de Pisan in the account of a tournament in her poem *Le Livre du duc des vrais amants* [34].

> Menestrelz, trompes, naquaires
> Y avoit plus de troys paires
> Qui si haultment cournoyent
> Que mons et vaulx resonnoyent.

The tambour, or field drum, was employed in battle, at tournaments, during mealtimes, festivals, dances, mystery-plays, and for triumphal entries. Johannes de Grocheo wrote that „it is possible that such an instrument moves men's souls more due to its deep sonority, as in fetes and tournaments" [35]. That its sound was strong and penetrating is obvious from a statement in the poem *Li Roumans de Cléomadès* to the effect that the drums and horns were placed outside the palace entrance when played because they made too much noise [36].

> Et, quant il avoient mengié
> Entour la table et soulacié
> A dont leur feste commençoit.
> Plenté d'estruments y avoit:
>
> * * *
>
> Tabours et cors sarrazinois
> Y ot; mais cil erent as chans
> Pour ce que leur noise et trop grans.

[32] Lavoix, *Op. Cit.*, p. 339.

[33] Frederick Dick, „Bezeichnungen für Saiten- und Schlaginstrumente in der altfranzösischen Literatur", *Giessener Beiträge zur Romanischen Philologie,* XXV (1932), 138.

[34] *Le Livre du duc des vrais amants,* ed. Maurice Roy, III (Paris: 1896), 79.

[35] Gérold, *Op. Cit.*, p. 741.

[36] *Op. Cit.*, I, 91.

The naker was a kettledrum; actually a bowl of leather or brass over which was streched a piece of animal skin. These drums were very small in size, being carried at the waist from a belt. In 1309, Joinville, the chronicler of the Crusades, wrote of the infidels that [37]

> La noise que il menoient de leurs naquaires et de leurs cors sarrazinois estoit espouventable a escouter.

Some thirty-odd years later, Jean Froissart recorded that nakers were among the instruments used at the triumphal entry of King Edward III into Calais during the Hundred Years' War [38]. Horn signals, shrill trumpet calls, and thundering nakers were employed during battles to indicate attack and also to instill fear into the hearts of the enemy [39].

> Et qui en ce tumulte pour donner encore plus grand effroy, faisoient de tous costez sonner leurs cors grailles, nacaires et trompettes, pour monstrer que tout le corps de leur armée estoient là present.

But the kettledrum was also employed as an orchestral instrument for festive music, dances, and banquet concerts. As remarked before, the medieval listener usually preferred loud music, and the drums satisfied this craving. Their sound is aptly described in the *Parfait du Paon* [40].

> ... Tabours, naquaires et font tel tambourrie
> Que ciel et bos et yaue et li airs enfourmie,
> Li mur en retentissent ...

The horn was a large, almost man-sized instrument, which was thin and slightly curved. Its earliest use in battle had been in the form of an animal horn, or oliphant. By the Gothic period it had evolved into a metal instrument, its strong tones serving as both a signal and morale factor. For example, in the poem *Annolied,* in describing a battle [41],

> Noch hoeret ein anderen sturmschal
> Von unserm herhorne tiezzen.

Horns were the loudest and most resounding instruments that the Middle Ages knew. Their sound must have been impressive, to say the least [42].

[37] *Histoire de Saint Louis,* ed. Natilis de Wailly (Paris: 1874), p. 98.
[38] Bessaraboff, *Op. Cit.,* p. 33.
[39] Dick, *Op. Cit.,* p. 142.
[40] *Ibid,* p. 127.
[41] Buhle, *Op. Cit.,* p. 18.
[42] *Loc. Cit.*

Nû nâhent ez dem strîte;
Der helt ûz sturmlant
Begunde ein horn blasen,
Daz manz über sant
Wol von sinen kreften
Hôrte drîzic mîle.

The „king of instruments" was the trumpet. Following the old eastern social privileges, only emperors, kings, nobles, and prominent municipalities in Europe had the right to maintain trumpeters. Consequently, the trumpeters themselves formed an exclusive guild, or profession. They always traveled in the retinue of their lord, playing fanfares at entries into towns, providing dinner music, and standing behind their master's chair at beck-and-call [43]. There were two forms. The smaller trumpet was an „s" shaped instrument, with a clear, ringing tone. Owing to its narrower tube, its sound was brighter than that of the trumpet proper. Etymologically, the small trumpet, or *trompette,* was called *grêle* in Old French, which meant „shrill," or „sharp" [44]. The larger trumpet, about three feet long, was used largely in military formations and for fanfares during feudal processions [45]. Cuvelier, in his *Chronique de Bertrand du Gueslin,* says that during battle, the trumpeters blew loudly enough to awaken the dead, and that the hero [46]

Bertrand du Gueslin ot sa trompette devant
Qui moult hardiement s'ala devant boutant,
Qui prist si a sonner et d'un voix si grant
Qu'il n'i avoit si sourt ne le voist escoutant;
L'assamblée cornèrent haultement en oiant;

Turning now to some of the more important *bas* instruments, the cithara and its smaller mate, the citole, were guitar-like in form, with an elongated, pear-shaped body, short neck, and four wire strings. They were usually played by the jongleur and minstrel, using a plectrum. In court orchestras the cithara and citole were associated especially with the harp, vielle, and guitar [47]. They were used for caroling, or dancing, by court ladies, as is mentioned in the *Roman de Renart* [48].

[43] Curt Sachs, *History of Musical Instruments* (New York: 1940), p. 280 f.
[44] Brucker, *Op. Cit.,* p. 15.
[45] Francis Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music* (London: 1910), p. 201 f.
[46] *Chronique de Bertrand du Gueslin,* ed. Ernest Charrière (London: 1910), p. 201 f.
[47] Galpin, *Op. Cit.,* p. 27.
[48] Rowland Wright, *Dictionnaire des instruments de musique* (London: 1941), p. 33.

Harpes i sonent et vielles
Qui font les melodies beles,
Les estives et les citoles
Les damoiselles font caroles.

Their tone quality was described as being very soft [49].

Et citoles meisement
Qui sonnoit moult doulcement.

The douçaine, or cromorne, was a reed instrument in the shape of a crook. As its name implies (Old French *douçenne*) it had a soft sonority. The author of the *Echecs amoureux* notes that when less noise was desired, „recorders, flutes, and cromornes" were played [50].

Most of the flutes played in the Middle Ages were of the end-blown type, either flageolets (recorders) or whistle-flutes (pipes). These instruments were referred to frequently as being favored at courtly centers. For example, in *Dumars le Galois* [51],

Devant le roi sonent frestel
Et flahutes et chalemel,
Et des flajoz et des vieles
I sunt les melodies beles.

In the poem *Du métier profitable,* by Eustache Deschamps, is an interesting statement regarding the position of the recorder at that time [52].

Neantmoins, pour plus proufiter
Avoir argent, robe, heritage,
Compains, apran à flajoler.
Car princes oyent voluntiers
Le flajol; qui en aprendra
Advancez sera des premiers,
Puis que bien jouer en sçara;

This same author refers elsewhere to the „soft" sonority of this instrument [53]. Other sources say substantially the same thing, such as the poem *Tristan le menestrel* [54].

[49] Abert, *Op. Cit.,* p. 355.
[50] *Loc. Cit.*
[51] Edmund Stengel, „Dumars le Galois", *Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart,* CXVI (1873), 215.
[52] *Oeuvres complètes,* VI, 128.
[53] *Ibid,* II, 35.
[54] Brucker, *Op. Cit.,* p. 33.

En sa main a pris un flagueil,
Molt dolcement en flajola.

Transverse, or side-blown flutes, on the other hand, were most favored in Germany (hence, *flauste d'Allemand*), and became widely used in a military connection. From the Crusades on, the fife and drum were the principal instruments of the infantry [55].

The harp, of all the indoor instruments, was held in the highest esteem; members of royal families and the feudal aristocracy played it. The jongleur or minstrel traveled with his small harp, which was carried on his back. The harpist was not an ordinary entertainer. He was a story-teller, and as such enjoyed a special regard. These bards were frequently mentioned in connection with heroic literature, and to *harper un lai* meant to sing a verse-tale accompanied by the harp. Guillaume de Machault wrote a poem entitled *Dit de le Harp,* in which he says [56]

Mais la harpe qui tout instrument passe
Quand sagement bien en joue et compasse,
A la harpe partout telle renommée,
Qu'autre douceur a li n'est comparée.

Although remembered as the instrument of the Renaissance *par excellence,* the lute was nevertheless popular during the Middle Ages as well. It was always an aristocratic instrument. John Lydgate, in his poem *Reason and Sensuallyte,* says that „lutys" were more fit for „estatys" (i.e. noblemen's houses) than for „taverns" [57]. The lute was widely used in courtly circles. Johannes Tinctoris wrote that „the lyre, which is called the lute, we use at feasts, dances, and public and private entertainments . . ." [58] Lutes were referred to as possessing a very soft and delicate tone quality, as in the *Vieil Testament* [59].

Psalterions, lutz et arquetes,
Harpes et tous instrumens doulx.

Eustache Deschamps calls the lute a quiet instrument [60].

Leuths . . . trestous instrumens coys

[55] Sachs, *Op. Cit.,* p. 287.
[56] Dick, *Op. Cit.,* p. 26.
[57] *Op. Cit.,* I, 146 f.
[58] Baines, *Op. Cit.,* p. 24.
[59] Dick, *Op. Cit.,* p. 57.
[60] *Oeuvres complètes,* I, 245.

Islamic in origin, the psaltery was as frequently mentioned in medieval literature as was the harp. Etymologically, it was derived from the Greek word meaning „to pull and let go," or „to pluck." The psaltery first appeared in western Europe during the eleventh century [61]. It was a harp-like instrument, either rectangular or triangular in shape, held in the performer's lap. The earliest form of the psaltery, the *tympanon,* was the triangular form, with metal strings, and played with small sticks. During the Gothic period a rectangular or trapezoid form evolved, the *canon* (Arabic *qânûn*), with gut strings, played with a plectrum held in the left hand [62]. It was in this form that the psaltery assumed predominance in both France and Italy. In poetical references as well as in actual performance, the psaltery was associated with stringed instruments. The troubadours and wandering minstrels played it, and its popularity as vocal accompaniment is attested by the many feasts where the presence of a psaltery is documented. For example, it is featured in a twelfth century poem describing a coronation banquet of King Arthur, and in 1306, the actual Feast of Westminster had several psaltery-players present [63]. The church fathers saw in the structure of the psaltery many symbolic references, and in their allegorical commentaries established its primacy as a musical instrument. It „looked to heaven," and as Pope Gregory I wrote, was the best instrument with which to illustrate or express divine things [64].

The vielle was probably the most widespread and popular musical instrument throughout the Middle Ages. It had developed from the more primitive, pear-shaped rebec, and was first illustrated in a Greek manuscript illuminated in 1066 [65]. Beginning with three strings, the standard number became four, normally tuned G-g-d'-g' or G-d-a-e' (actually about one-half tone lower, since the modern pitch has been raised) [66]. The tone produced was deeper than that of the rebec, but is was still rather weak and quite nasal. The vielle was at first held vertically between the performer's legs, but later the smaller ones were held horizontally against the collarbone.

One of the most common uses of the vielle was in the service of divine worship. Whether within or without the church, whether as a supplement to the choir or as a substitute for voices, the vielle was always important. In 1316, Abbot Aimery du Peyrac of Moissac observed that the charm

[61] Bessaraboff, *Op. Cit.,* p. 211.
[62] Gérold, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 404.
[63] Galpin, *Op. Cit.,* p. 60 f.
[64] Theodore Gérold, *Les Pères de l'église et la musique* (Paris: 1931), p. 125 ff.
[65] Galpin, *Op. Cit.,* p. 86.
[66] Bessaraboff, *Op. Cit.,* p. 264.

of plainchant lost almost none of its sweetness when played on a vielle [67]. Indeed, the vielle seems to have been typed by some as a liturgical instrument, for the poet Eustache Deschamps wrote that [68]

Vielle est jeux pour les moustiers.

The musician in Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles de la Vierge* is reminiscent of the famous *Our Lady's Tumbler* [69].

Ma viële viëler vieut un biau son
De la bele qui seur toutes a biau non,
En cui Dieux devinir hon
Vont jadis
Dont chantent en paradis
Angle et arcangle a haut ton.

Johannes de Grocheo, the fourtheenth century theoretician and cleric, wrote about musical instruments that „the first place ought to go to the vielle" [70].

As one of the principal instruments of the jongleur and minstrel, the vielle was used for many types of musical accompaniment. It was employed both as a solo and as an accompanying instrument. It could play either the melody or a different part underlying the vocal line. Sometimes the performer would play both the vielle and sing at the same time [71]. The vielle served especially during the recital of stories, when part or all of the text was to be sung. The famous *chant-fable Aucassin et Nicolette* alternated prose sections with musically-accompanied poetry.

Some of the orchestral performances of the Middle Ages featured both loud and soft instruments. This was true for liturgical services, mystery plays, banquet festivities, and dances. The majority of these events displayed a rather rigid and invariable distinction between the two groupings. At some specific performances only the *haut* are heard, while at others, only the *bas* appear. This is quite apparent in much of the literature dealing with social events in particular. Hertzmann suggests that the former group served for ceremonial, *Gebrauchsmusik,* while the latter was more for „art" music [72]. The separation is seen, for example, in Part II of the

[67] Pirro, *Op. Cit.*, p. 20.

[68] *Oeuvres complètes,* IV, 127.

[69] Dick, *Op. Cit.,* p. 81.

[70] Charles van den Borren, „Quelques remarques sur les tendances esthétiques de la musique du moyen âge", *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique,* XIX (1937), 139.

[71] Gérold, „Les Instruments de musique", p. 364 ff.

[72] Erich Hertzmann, „Studien zur Basse-Danse im 15. Jahrhundert", *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft,* XI (1929), 402.

Monologue des sotz joyeulx, entitled „Le preparatif du festin." Originating in the Feast of Fools, these burlesque scenes were performed by groups of celebrants, *sots,* who displayed their idiosyncracies or vices and parodied the liturgical service and priestly hierarchy. The monologue was usually recited by one of these actors [73].

> Le seigneur de Plaisance ordonne
> De la musicque et hault et bas.

It will be recalled that in the *Echecs amoureux* a passage stated that loud instruments were used for dances and festivities because of the great volume of sound they produced [74].

> Et quant il vouloient danser
> Et faire grans esbattemens,
> On sonnoit lez haulz instrumens,
> Pour mieulx aux dansez plaisoient
> Pour la grant noise qu'ilz faisoient.

The *Livre du duc des vrais amans,* by Christine de Pisan, mentions on one specific occasion that minstrels began to play wind instruments after supper, and provided the music for the ball that followed [75]. Another account describes a royal fête given by King Charles VI in 1393 at the Hotel St. Pol, where musicians of all sorts performed prior to the dancing [76].

> Pour la compaignie esjoir, on y sonnoit maint instruments, comme flahutes, tambourins, chalemies, harpes, vielles et bedons, et se y avoit grand mellodie de trompettes et de clarons ... Au lever de la table, estoient les chantres de musique de la chapelle royale et les haux menestreux.

At such festivities, the musicians were normally placed on a high scaffold above the floor. This was true for both civic and courtly affairs. In the account-rolls of the court of Blois, it is recorded that on January 24, 1448, when the Duke of Orleans returned to his native city from England, twelve scaffolds were built, upon which various actors performed allegories, and one Oudin de St. Avry was sent for to direct the *haults*

[73] *Recueil de Poésies françoises,* ed. Anatole Montaiglon, III (Paris, 1856), 23. L. Petit de Julleville, *Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1886), p. 105 f.

[74] Abert, *Op. Cit.,* p. 354 f.

[75] André Pirro, *La Musique à Paris sous le règne de Charles VI* (Strasbourg, 1930), p. 22.

[76] *Ibid.,* p. 29.

menestrels who performed [77]. At the marriage of Philip the Good of Burgundy and Isabella of Portugal, instruments on a platform accompanied the dancers [78].

> Dedens la dicte salle, y avoit fait ung moult bel hourdys et hault sur l'un de des costez, la où les héraulx se tenoit pour regarder les estatz et pour cryer les festes. Et là jouoient les trompectes et menestreux pour danses. En icelluy eschaffault povoient bien entrer LX hommes.

At banquets the same procedure held true. Nicole de la Chesnaye, in the *Condemnacion des Banquetz,* writes that [79]

> Et a noter que sur l'eschaffault ou en quelque lieu plus hault seront les instrumens de diverses façons pour jouer et diversiffier quant temps sera.

Often, a raised gallery or scaffolding was erected permanently in the hall, opposite the place where the lord's dinner-table and dias were set [80].

Loud instruments were employed for the large courtly dances which were ever-popular with the feudal aristocracy. Lavish entertainments were held at the slightest pretext, and music naturally played a basic role in such festivities. Usually an impression was trying to be made; and the more noise the better. The *haut danse* was perhaps the most universal form of group entertainment in the Middle Ages as far as the nobility was concerned. The term itself was used by extension to signify a type of dance which employed the loud instruments. According to Antonio Cornazano's *Il Libro dell' arte del Danzare* (1455), it was a saltarello [81].

> El saltarello, come e dicto, si chiama
> a gli spagnoli alta dança . . .

In round-dances, with their varying sections, were found instruments with penetrating sonorities when performed by a large and noisy crowd of people. Füctrer's poem *Trojanischer Krieg* describes such a court dance [82].

[77] Léon de Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne,* III (Paris, 1852), 450 f.

[78] Jean Lèfevre de St. Remi, *Chronique,* ed. François Morand (Paris, 1881), II, 160 f.

[79] Jeanne Marix, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens de la Cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe le Bon* (Strasbourg, 1939), p. 51.

[80] Jusserand, *Op. Cit.,* p. 111.

[81] Hertzmann, *Op. Cit.,* p. 403.

[82] Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance* (New York, 1937), p. 283.

Ez wart nie schöner reige
Gemachet von deheiner schar,
Sie wunden sich dan unden dar
Und brâchen sich her unde hin.
Man hôrte lûten under in
Tambûren, schellen, pfîfen.
Lis uf den füezen slifen
Und dar nâch balde springen

The moresca and mummery were the most frequently mentioned dance-entertainments throughout the fifteenth century. For such noisy and spectacular extravaganzas, the use of loud instruments was mandatory. At festivals, banquets, balls, and masquerades, the moresca was almost always danced. It was an exotic court ballet with allegorical scenes, or tableaux interspersed (known as *entremets*), elaborate costumes, fancy disguises, masks, and bells attached to the participants' shoes. In the chronicles of Jean Lefèvre describing the festivities following the wedding of the count of Geneva and Anne of Cyprus, such a dance is mentioned [83].

> Et, le merquedy suivant ... il y eult dances esquelles y eult xviij chevaliers et escuiers vestus de robes de drap ganne, couvers de cloquettes, chapperons et robes tenans ensemble. Et avoient les chapperons grans oreilles, commes folz; et ainsi dansserent avec les dames.

Olivier de la Marche, major-domo to Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, devotes a considerable section of his memoires to the fabulous Feast of the Pheasant, held in February 1474 [84]. The musicians at this banquet were grouped together in two separate floats erected on the huge banquet-tables. Within a replica of a church, complete with stained-glass windows and a bell-tower, were four singers and an organist. Sweltering beneath the crust of a gigantic pastry pie on the next table were twenty-eight minstrels playing bagpipes, cornets, trumpets, lutes, cromornes, flutes, and drums. All the music at this feast was furnished alternately by these two groups [85]. At the conclusion of the affair a moresca was danced by twelve couples who had just participated in an allegorical play [86].

[83] *Op. Cit.*, II, 296 f.

[84] For a discussion of the loud and soft instruments employed at this feast, see the author's article, „Instruments at the Court of Burgundy (1363-1467)", *The Galpin Society Journal*, VI (July 1953), 41 ff.

[85] See Henri Quittard „Deux fêtes musicales au XVe et XVIe siècles", *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, VIII (1907), 464-467.

[86] Olivier de la Marche, *Op. Cit.*, II, 378.

> ... Et commençèrent à danser en quise de mommerie et à faire bonne chiere, pour la feste plus joyeusement par fournir.

The mummer's play was a threefold affair consisting of a prologue, in which the players were introduced, the drama itself, and a „collect", where the supernumerary characters disguised in grotesque masks appeared and collected the monetary contributions [87]. A typical mummery is described in a fourteenth century English account. On Sunday, February 1, 1377, the night before the Feast of the Purification, a group of minstrels performed at entertainment provided by the young noblemen for Prince Richard [88].

> ... In the night, one hundred and thirty men were disguised and well-mounted on horseback to go mumming to the said Prince, riding from Newgate through Cheapside, where many people could see them, with great noise of minstrelsy, trumpets, cornets, and shawms, and a great many wax torchlights lighted ...
>
> When they reached the manor, they alighted and entered the hall... The trumpets began to sound and other instruments to pipe, etc., and the Prince and the lords danced on the one side and the mummers on the other a long time.

Loud instruments were also used at tournaments. Fanfares announced the contests and processions into the lists. The knightly audience was always impressed by the tumult of trumpets and clarions. Whenever one participant wrought a heavy blow upon his opponent, all the musicians would play at once very loudly [89].

> Lors menestrelz liement
> Cournoient, hairauz crioient
> Lances brisent, cops resonnent,
> Et ces menestrelz hault sonnent
> Si qu'on n'oïst Dieu tonnant.

Soft instruments were employed in connection with religious music for both liturgical services and mystery-plays. The musicians themselves really never outgrew the stigma attached to actors, buffoons, singers, and instrumentalists during the late Roman Empire. The church fathers spoke out against attending the performances of these men who sang secular music, often with licentious words, were guilty of tom-foolery while playing

[87] Chambers, *Op. Cit.*, I, 211 ff.
[88] Edith Rickert, *Chaucer's World* (New York, 1948), p. 233 f.
[89] Christine de Pisan, *Op. Cit.*, III, 79.

for church services or mystery-plays, and in general led „scandalous" lives. Even though the jongleurs were excommunicated and labled „instruments of the devil", it was to little avail. As time went on, however, the musicians settled down, and their profession was looked upon as fairly quiet and respectable. Even the church came to recognize, and favor those performers who sang or played music which praised God, the saint's lives, or the exploits of the heroes who fought for both Church and empire [90].

Ecclesiastical musicians served in the household retinues of feudal lords, bishops, and other high lay and church officials. Musicians were frequently found in cathedrals and monasteries, took part in the holy day festivals of religious confraternities, and often accompanied pilgrims enroute. It was Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy who added lay musicians to his chapel, thereby establishing an important precedent [91]. At the court chapel of Maximilian of Austria, the choristers were sometimes supported by the organ, cornets (zinks), and trombones [92]. For the celebration of the offices of daily prayer, only mixed voices with organ were used. Instruments were added for high feast days and other solemn occasions. Jean Gerson, in his *De canticorum originali ratione,* noticed that loud instruments (trumpets, bombards, and shawms) were frequently added in church services. For example, trumpets and clarions were played in a church at Ghent in 1386 after a sermon by Duke Philip the Bold of Burgundy. Organs and trumpets played at the processional in Notre Dame, Paris, when the English regent was received in 1424 [93]. Frequently, shawms and a sackbut, or trombone, for the bass part, took the place of the choir at especially festive occasions, such as the marriage of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York [94].

> Assez tost après recommença ladicte quette son propoz, et pour mieulx festoyer la compaignie, demanda ses haulz menestriers; et tantost furent les quatre fenestres ouvertes, et par la saillirent chevres et ung bouc, moult bien et vivement faictz. Le bouc jouoit d'une trompette saicqueboute, et les trois chevres jouoient de shalmayes; et en celle manière jouerent ung motet...

[90] Faral, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 16-45.

[91] George van Doorslaer, „La Chapelle musicale de Philippe le Beau", *Revue Belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art.* IV (1934), 159.

[92] Pirro, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 140.

[93] André Pirro, „Remarques sur l'exécution musicale, de la fin du XIVe au milieu du XVe siècle". *Congrès de la Société internationale de Musicologie* (Liège, 1930), p. 58.

[94] Olivier de la Marche, *Op. Cit.,* III, 152.

The many religious confraternities had their own musicians. As the Sacrament was being carried through the streets of Middelbourg in 1365, the minstrels in the procession played vielles, guitars, psalteries, rebecs, and woodwind instruments. At Langres, the Confraternity of Saints Peter and Paul was led in all processions by their two minstrels [95].

As a general rule, churchmen in the Middle Ages seem to have preferred low instruments. Philippe de Mézières, in his *Nova religio milicie passionis Jesu Christi,* makes several remarks on the use of music in the crusading army he dreamed of instituting. He would use portative organs for minor festivals, larger organs for solemn days, and *bas* instruments for the divine worship service. Pierre d'Ailly, Chancellor of the University of Paris, and later Bishop of Cambrai, liked music which was „not harsh", and Jean Gerson preferred „soft" music [96]. Even the most austere of ecclesiastics, Robert Grosseteste, consented to employ a private harper [97].

Both loud and soft instruments were featured in the mystery-plays which became increasingly widespread in the later medieval period. The organization of the dramas was undertaken by the whole community, high-born and low, lay and ecclesiastic alike. A specific lay confraternity was usually granted special privilege to put on a specific drama. These religious brotherhoods were extremely numerous. The Parisian Confraternity of the Passion had existed since the early fourteenth century. The members were mainly workers, although the wandering scholars, or *clerici ribaldi,* and minstrels also performed. These musicians were also members of guilds which participated regularly in these plays [98]. A director also served as organizer, prologue-speaker, commentator, stage-manager, and orchestra-leader. He normally stood at a vantage point overlooking the stage, with manuscript and baton in hand. Both the orchestra and chorus were located behind the scenes. The instrumentalists were normally divided into two groups: the high at ground-level, and the low on an elevated section.

All instruments, both loud and soft, were used for the processions through the city to attract an audience. The company would proceed from the lodgings of the players to the stage, usually erected in the *parvis* directly in front of the cathedral. The whole troupe was accompanied by [99]

> sons de trompets, clerons, bussines,
> orgues, harpes, tabourins, etc.,
> jouans de tous costez.

[95] Pirro, „Remarques sur l'exécution musicale", p. 56.

[96] Pirro, „La musique à Paris", pp. 15-19.

[97] Chambers, *Op. Cit.,* I, 56.

[98] Robert Haas, *Aufführungspraxis der Musik* (Potsdam: 1931), p. 63.

[99] Gustave Cohen, *Histoire de la mise-en-scène dans le thèâtre religieux français du moyen âge* (Paris: 1906), p. 249.

At a procession in the city of Seurre (Cote-d'Or) in 1496 announcing the performance of a mystery-play, loud and soft instruments, including organs, harps, drums, trumpets, and clarions, were played [100]. Fifes and drums alone were often used beforehand to call people to the performance, during the speech of the „barker", and during the parade introducing the actors [101]. A musical „overture", or prelude, preceded the liturgical drama. It consisted of contemporary rondeaux, ballades, virelais, and chansons. All instruments together were also played during the entr'actes to maintain the audience's interest. Actual directions were given in extant manuscripts: „Silete de tous les instruments du jeu"; „De tous les instrumens du jeu soit joue beau silete", for example [102].

A few mystery-plays give explicit directions as to the use of various instruments. Jacques Milet, in the *Istoire de la Destruction de Troye la Grant,* written in 1450, designates players of loud instruments here, soft ones there. Trumpets, clarions, and buisines were used for introducing key speeches, triumphal entries, marches, Judgement Day, and military scenes [103]. Loud noises always accompanied „the forces of evil" and scenes from hell. The nether-regions were ordinarily depicted on the earthen base upon which the actual stage-scaffold was erected. A large „mouth" or entrance-way was made, from which smoke poured. It was large enough to contain people standing erect. Sometimes hell was shown behind doors in a scenic flat, which would open to show demons and a large cauldron. A deep pit was also appropriately featured. For the devil's speeches, thunder, earthquakes, and fire, large pipes, drums, barrels filled with stones, and sometimes actual artillery pieces were used. Drums and cymbals depicted the deeds of the devil himself [104]. In the *Actes des Apostres* of Simon Greban, the bombard was used, its tones even deeper than the voice of Leviathan, which bellowed „louder than two bulls". In an instrumental interlude of the *Mystère de Saint Vincent,* the moaning of hell was depicted. In order to show the agony and suffering of the damned, music which was „non pas on mellodieux ton" was performed [105].

The organ and vielle were the most important soft instruments employed in mystery-plays. The former, because of its religious associations, accompanied the choir of angels and represented God. Harps, lutes, rebecs, and the portative organ were played whenever Jesus appeared to preach [106].

[100] Pirro, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 129.
[101] Haas, *Op. Cit.,* p. 64.
[102] Cohen, *Op. Cit.,* p. 138.
[103] Pirro, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 128 f.
[104] Lavoix, *Op. Cit.,* p. 352.
[105] Pirro, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 127.
[106] Cohen, *Op. Cit.,* p. 136.

Shepherds in the Christmas plays always performed on flutes, recorders, or bagpipes [107]. At scenes of paradise, low instruments were placed around the stage setting. Heaven was depicted on a raised platform on the stage, garnished with papier-mâché flowers, trees, and fruits. Rows of actor-angels, cherubims, and seraphims surrounded a central throne for the figures of the trinity. At a Bourges Apostles play, a gigantic float on a wagon represented paradise. Next to it marched minstrels playing flutes, harps, lutes, rebecs, and vielles [108].

In the *Chronique scandaleuse,* this type of portable, ambulant mystery-play is mentioned. Players of soft instruments performed melodies on a float, where three naked girls sang motets. This play took place along the route which Philip the Good took in traveling to the coronation of King Louis XI at Reims in August, 1461 [109].

> Et, ung peu avant dedens ladicte ville, estoient à la fontaine du Ponçeau hommes et femmes sauvages, qui se combatoient et faisoient plusieurs contenances. Et si y avoit encores trois bien belles filles, faisans personnages de seraines, toutes nues, et leur veoit on le beau tetin droit, separé, rond et dur, qui estoit chose bien plaisant, et disoient de petiz motetz et bergerettes; et près d'eulx jouoient plusieurs bas instrumens qui rendoient de grandes melodies.

It was the practice of the medieval courts to have minstrels perform on low instruments after meals. Philippe de Mézières states this esthetic predilection for soft music following the repast [110].

> Encore est chose convenable que tu aies des ménestreux a bas instrumens pour aucune recreation, faisant digestion de ta personne royale après les conseils et travaux de la royale majesté.

King Charles V of France was noted for favoring their use at such occasions. The court usually retired to the Parlement chamber after supper to listen to music, according to Christine de Pisan [111].

> ... Instrumens bas, pour resjouir les esperis, si doulcement jouez comme la musique peut mesurer son, oyoit voulentiers à la fin de ses mangiers.

While the son of the Holy Roman Emperor was visiting the King of France,

[107] Pirro, *Loc. Cit.,* p. 128.

[108] Haas, *Op. Cit.,* p. 65.

[109] *Journal de Jean de Roye connu sous le nom de Chronique scandaleuse,* ed. Bernard de Mandot (Paris: 1884), I, 27 f.

[110] Marix, *Op. Cit.,* p. 93.

[111] *Le Livre des fais et des bonnes meurs de sage roy Charles V,* ed. Michaud & Poujoulat (Paris: 1851), I, 610.

many feasts were given in his honor. After the meals were finished, Charles, as was his custom, adjourned, followed by his guest and as many of the nobles as could comfortably fit into the room. Then the minstrels performed the king's favorite compositions on soft instruments [112].

> Après soupper, se retray le Roy, avec lui le filz de l'Empereur, et tant de barons comme entrer y pot, en la chambre de parlement; et là jouerent, selon la coustume, les menestriers de bas instrumens se doulcement comme plus peut, et la estoyent assis les deux rois, en deux haultes chayres, où, sus chascune ot ciel brodé à fleur de lis.

The same habit was in vogue at the Burgundian court. Philip the Bold enjoyed listening to soft music after dinner. On one occasion he gave a gratuity to [113]

> Symon Guioteaul, sergent mons. le duc,
> qui li faisoit anuyt et souffloit en
> son cornet.

Philip's great-grandson, Charles the Fearless, also followed this custom, according to the chronicler Jean Molinet [114].

Low instruments were preferred for the rendition of chansons, those charming unions of poetry and music so popular in the fourteenth and fiftheenth centuries. Pastoral, outdoor gatherings were frequent, and both songs and dances were usually featured. The best-liked forms in the later Middle Ages were the *rondeau, virelai,* and *ballade.* Love usually constituted the theme: one's regrets, hopes, remembrances, etc. The courts of love and schools of rhetoric in northern France furnished the musicians with ample poetry [115]. The delicate, refined fabric of the music, combined with the importance of the text, indicated soft instruments as accompaniment to the vocal parts. An earlier poem, the *Comte d'Anjou,* by Jean Maillart, is informative in this respect [116].

> Li auquant chantent pastourelles,
> Li autre dient en vielles
> Chançons royaus et estampies,
> Dances, notes et baleries,
> En leüt, en psalterion,
> Chascun selonc s'entençion,
> Lais d'amours, descore et balades
> Pour esbatre ces gens malades.

[112] *Ibid,* II, 108.

[113] Bernard Prost, *Inventaires mobiliers et extraits des comptes des Ducs de Bourgogne,* I (Paris: 1902), 81 f.

[114] A. van der Linden, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 177-180.

[115] Jeanne Marix, *Les Musiciens de la Cour de Bourgogne au XVe siècle* (Paris: 1937), p. XVIII.

[116] Eugene Droz & Gaston Thibault, *Poètes et musiciens du XVe siècle* (Paris: 1924), p. 5.

Until the mid-fifteenth century the *superius* was usually sung, while the contratenor and tenor parts were performed on instruments. Later, the chansons were sung, played, or a combination of both voices and instruments [117].

The more popular form of the round-dance was the carol. The couples all joined hands, forming a sort of chain. It was usually performed in a garden or open meadow to the music of contemporary *rondeaux* and *virelais*. Vielles, rotes, and flutes were the accompanying instruments [118]. The jongleurs (later the wandering minstrels) supplied the music, according to the *Roman des Sept Sages* [119].

Li jongleours vont viëlant
Et les lorjoises karolant.

The famous fifteenth-century basse-dance took its name from the *bas* instruments which accompanied it. In form it was a rhythmical variant of the *haut* dance (saltarello), and was performed to the music of popular chansons of the day. According to Nicole de la Chesnaye's *La nef de santé,* it was a new form of dancing [120].

Sus, sus, sonnez une chançon
Si verrez quelque saul gaillart
Tantost monsteray la façon
De dancer sur le nouvel art.

Cornazzano's *Il Libro dell' arte del danzare* says that the basse-dance was a slow, stately court dance, the performers taking small, gliding steps and rising on their toes. The movements were bows, simple steps, and oscillations sidewise and backwise [121]. The instruments used to furnish the music for the basse-dance included the lute, organ, harp, flute, and cornet (a leather-covered wooden instrument with finger-holes).

Interestingly enough, noblewomen in the Middle Ages seem to have preferred the soft instruments to the loud ones for court dances [122].

Weder mit tambur noch mit busine
Wolten sich die frowen lan betoren:
Videln, herpfen, rotten und ander
Suzze doene sie wolten horen.

[117] Marix, *Les Musiciens de la Cour de Bourgogne,* p. xii.
[118] Haas, *Op. Cit.,* p. 72.
[119] Gérold, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 355.
[120] Hertzmann, *Op. Cit.,* p. 403.
[121] Sachs, *World History of the Dance,* p. 311 ff.
[122] Gérold, *Histoire de la musique,* p. 356.

Isabella of Portugal, third wife of the duke of Burgundy, brought with her and retained in service two players of low instruments: Jehan Fernandez, vielle, and Jehan de Cordoval, lute [123].

In this brief survey of the grouping of musical instruments in the later Middle Ages, we have followed the important role of sonority in determining their use, as well as the undeviating principle of selection which runs through all the musical events of this era. In every performance, sacred or secular, the esthetical question of dynamics and tone color was paramount: loud or soft; *haut* or *bas*.

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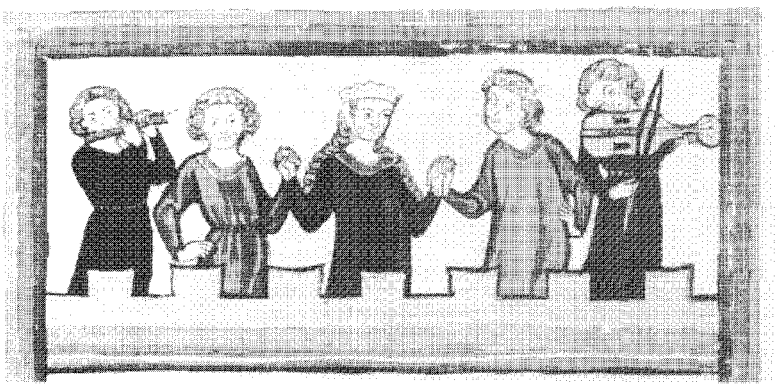
[123] Marix, *Les Musiciens de la Cour de Bourgogne*, p. XIII.

[2]

German musicians and their instruments

A 14th-century account by Konrad of Megenberg

Christopher Page



1 'flutes . . . sometimes play together with fiddles' (see text and translation, ll.37–8). Detail from a painting of Meister Rumslaut from the Manessische Liederhandschrift (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod.pal.germ.848, f.413*v*). German, before 1340, executed by hand G

It is impossible to say where valuable references illuminating the musical life of the Middle Ages may be found in the vast literature of the period.[1] What, for example, might we expect to learn about 14th-century music and instruments from a treatise on the education and concerns of a prince? Konrad of Megenberg's *Yconomica* provides a surprising answer.[2]

Konrad was born in 1309 and died at Regensburg in 1374. He studied at the University of Paris and rose to become a teacher there.[3] His *Yconomica*, written between 1348 and 1352, gathers material which the young sons of princes must study: *filii principum in yconomicis instruantur doctrinis*.[4] In addition to somewhat intellectual considerations drawn from Greek philosophy, from history and from the Bible, Konrad discusses many aspects of the household, including the servants, scribes, marshalls, notaries and so on who live and work within it:[5]

Capitulum quadragesimumoctavum de servis delectabilibus[6] [extract]

Chapter 48, concerning servants who entertain

1 *Musicus autem est, qui sonorum armoniis aut voces canit humanas aut inanimatorum organorum clingitus clangoresque adornat, quibus animos auditorum delectat. Unde tria sunt genera eius. Vibrodus scilicet, cyrodus et aviodus. Vibrodus*
5 *est, qui arteriis et cannis naturalibus canit . . . Cyrodus autem est, qui instrumento manuali canit. Et dicitur a cyros, id est manus, et odus, cantus, quasi manualis cantor. Et cyrodorum alius cordicen, alius cannicen et tercius plagicen exstat. Cordicen est, qui in cordis cantat. Sunt autem cordicines*
10 *diversorum instrumentorum et secundum pluralitatem et paucitatem instrumentorum cordarum, sicut sunt monocorda, tricorda, tetracorda, penthacorda et policorda, et secundum varias figuraciones, sicut sunt cythare, rutte, psalteria, rubele, lute, quinterne, lyre at alie huiusmodi. Cannicen est, qui in*

The musician is [a servant–entertainer] who either sings vocal notes with harmonies of sounds,[7] or embellishes the sounds and noises of inanimate instruments with which he delights the senses of his hearers. There are three kinds of [musician]: the singer, the instrumentalist and the imitator of birdsong. The singer is one who makes music with natural pipes and windpipes . . . The instrumentalist makes music with a manual instrument. He takes his name from *cyros*,[8] that is 'hand', and *odus*, 'song', whence 'manual singer' as it were. The first type of instrumentalist is the string player, the second the wind player, and the third the percussionist. The string player is the one who makes music on strings. There are, moreover, string players of various instruments, which are distinguished both according to the number of strings (as