

Hymnology

A Survey of the Times – Tunes

I. The History of Music – Introduction

- A. The history of music is older than man himself, we understand that the sons of God sang at creation (Job 38:7), that Lucifer (the Devil) had some kind of ability to produce music (Ezekiel 28:12-17).
- B. We also know that music was being created early in the book of Genesis (Genesis 4:21), that the Children of Israel were singing and making music at the departure out of Egypt (Exodus 15).
- C. From a secular record, it has been noted that primitive instruments have been found by archaeologists. In fact, music notation has been found written on 4,000-year-old Sumerian clay tablets¹. It is then very well recognized that music has been a part of man since creation.
- D. Modern Christian liturgical music developed from the Mediterranean Bronze Age, specifically Hebrew music. Music is mentioned in the book of Exodus, when Moses sings a hymn of triumph after parting the Red Sea, and Miriam and the Hebrew women sing a response; in Judges, in which Deborah and Barak together sing a battle hymn of praise and thanksgiving; and in Samuel, when after David slew Goliath and defeated the Philistines, multitudes of women sang his praises. And of course, the book of Psalms are words of praise, prayers and prophecy set to music.²

II. Ancient Music Period – Before 500 AD

A. The Music by David

1. Instruments

a. Stringed

- i. The harp (Psalm 33:2; Psalm 43:4; Psalm 57:8; Psalm 71:22; Psalm 81:2; Psalm 92:3; Psalm 98:5; Psalm 108:2; Psalm 137:2; Psalm 147:7; Psalm 149:3; Psalm 150:3)

¹ <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-the-oldest-known-piece-of-music>

² <https://www.liveabout.com/what-is-liturgical-music-2456550>

- ii. The psaltery (Psalm 33:2; Psalm 57:8; Psalm 81:2; Psalm 92:3; Psalm 144:9; Psalm 108:2; Psalm 150:3)
 - iii. Etc. – “The stringed instruments” (Psalm 150:4)
 - b. Wind
 - i. The trumpet (Psalm 47:5; Psalm 81:3; Psalm 150:3)
 - a) Probably the *shofar*
 - b) Made from a ram’s or goat’s horn
 - ii. The cornet (Psalm 98:6)
 - a) Probably a treble wind instrument
 - b) Made of brass
 - iii. The “high sounding trumpets” (Psalm 98:6)
 - iv. The organ (Psalm 150:4)
 - c. Percussion
 - i. Timbrel(s) (Psalm 68:25; Psalm 81:2; Psalm 149:3; Psalm 150:4)
 - ii. Cymbals (Psalm 150:5)
2. David and his Orchestra
- a. David had 4000 that played instruments in praise to God (1 Chronicles 23:5)
 - i. These were divided into 288 courses
 - ii. Under the following leadership
 - a) Asaph
 - b) Jeduthun (aka Ethan)
 - c) Heman
 - b. Instruments that he had made (1 Chronicles 23:5; Amos 6:5)
3. Quote on David and the Psalms
- a. “And now David, being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God, of several sorts of meter....He also made instruments of music, and taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the Sabbathday, and on the other festivals. Now the construction of the instruments was thus: the viol was an instrument of ten strings, it was played upon with a bow; the psaltery had twelve musical notes, and was played upon by the singers; the cymbals were broad and large instruments, and were made of brass...” – Taken from: *The Works of Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, chap. 12, number 3.*