Music History Notes
Medieval and Renaissance

Medieval Period (600-1400)

The center for music in the Medieval Period was the church.

Since there were no schools or town centers, church was the main gathering place for people.

This early music, called chant, was sung in unison, in Latin, and only by men.

It was not written down, but instead passed from church to church by memorization.

Then in 1026 AD, Guido of Arezzo created a method of writing music on paper called black-square notation, which allowed music to be carried by merchants to countries throughout Europe.

As the music spread it changed. Parts were added to create harmony and words were stretched or shortened to create changes in rhythm. These changes continued until the year 1400 and the time of the Renaissance.
Renaissance Period (1400-1600)

Church was still main place for music.

Parts had been added to create four-part harmony.

Music was also performed more in the royal courts and town squares.

Guillaume Dufay (1400?-1474) was an early Renaissance composer who skillfully handled several parts at once. Unlike many other composers, Dufay’s music was pleasant to hear.

Josquin Des Prez (1450-1521) used the form called canon, in which each part enters singing the same music, but at different times.

*El Grillo*

| The cricket is a good singer | But unlike the birds who fly off when they've sung a bit, |
| Who sings for a long time     | The cricket just stays where he is. |
| The cricket sings just for fun| When the weather is really hot, |
| The cricket is a good singer | he sings solely for love. |

Renaissance instruments: lute, recorder, tambour (hand drum), shawm, crum horn, sackbut, flute, lyre.

Giovanni Palestrina (1525-1594) was one of the greatest composers of the Renaissance. He began to introduce new harmonies into his music.

Giovanni Gabrielli (1554-1612) was a late Renaissance composer who loved to write music for brass instruments.

Terms: chant, unison, sacred, secular, drone, black-square notation, canon, harmony, rhythm.