

# From Sin to Sensation:

The Progression of Dance Music from the Medieval Period through the Renaissance

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**Thesis:** Because dance music gained historical importance since the medieval period, its rapid progression through oral tradition, religious tradition, and social environments reached new heights in the social and musical life from medieval times through the Renaissance period.

# Dance Music Gained Historical Importance Through:

- Religious Tradition
- Oral Tradition
- Social Environments

# Traced through Religious Tradition

## Sacred

- Medieval Church did not agree with dance and disregarding it as a sacred action.
- Society progressed and the pagan culture influenced the Church into embracing dance disciplines.
- The early medieval church believed that practicing certain dances in a sacred setting would lure people to Christianity.

# Early Examples of Sacred Dance

## 1. Rondeau- a group circular dance:

*The sun is in the south*

*Let us give praises to Mary*

*The day of grace shines out the day of joy*

*The perceptive tongues of sinners*

*should not be torn from Mary's praise*

## 2. The Dances of Death

- A round dance in Medieval Churches that led to the grave, representing equality of social classes through death.

### 3. Dance Dramas were now accepted in the Church

- **Mystery Plays:** Staged in the sanctuary with clergy men as actors who chanted in Latin to accompany the biblical texts.
- **Miracle Plays:** Depictions of the lives of saints and martyrs using actors and prisoners in tortuous scenes to properly present church history.
- **Morality Plays:** Developed later in the fourteenth century and illustrated moral truths such as virtue and integrity.

# Traced through Oral Tradition

## Secular

- Earliest mentions of dance music is from Trouvère Repertory
  - French *formes fixes*: Rondeau, carole, ballade and virelai genres.
- Move from *formes fixes* to Popular Renaissance dances
  - Pavan and galliard, la volta, courante and alman, branle, and gavotte.
- Couples dances were popular in the court
  - Pavan and Galliard was a processional couples dance.

# Traced through Social Developments

## 1. New Instruments

- Medieval and Renaissance

## 2. Publications

- Dance music literature



# Medieval Instruments

- Medieval instruments used in Trouvère dance music
  - Wooden Recorder- Used in Trouvere dances
  - Horn Pipes- Used in Virelai
  - Flute- Used in Round dances
  - Vielle- Used in Estampie

# Renaissance Instruments

## Renaissance instruments used in court music

- Shawm- Used in Italian Bassadanza
- Violin- Used in Branle
- Recorder- Used in Processional dances
- Sackbut- Used in Pavan and Galliard

# Progression through Publications

- Ottaviano dei Petrucci of Fossombrone invented music printing press in the late 15th century.
  1. Improved transmission and reconstruction of dance music literature
  2. Exposed wider variety of people to dance
  3. Allowed for public access to dance music

# Conclusion

Dance music gained historical importance through:

- Religious tradition
- Oral Tradition
- Social Environments

Dance Music progressed through:

- New Instruments
- Dance Form
- Publication and dissemination of dance music