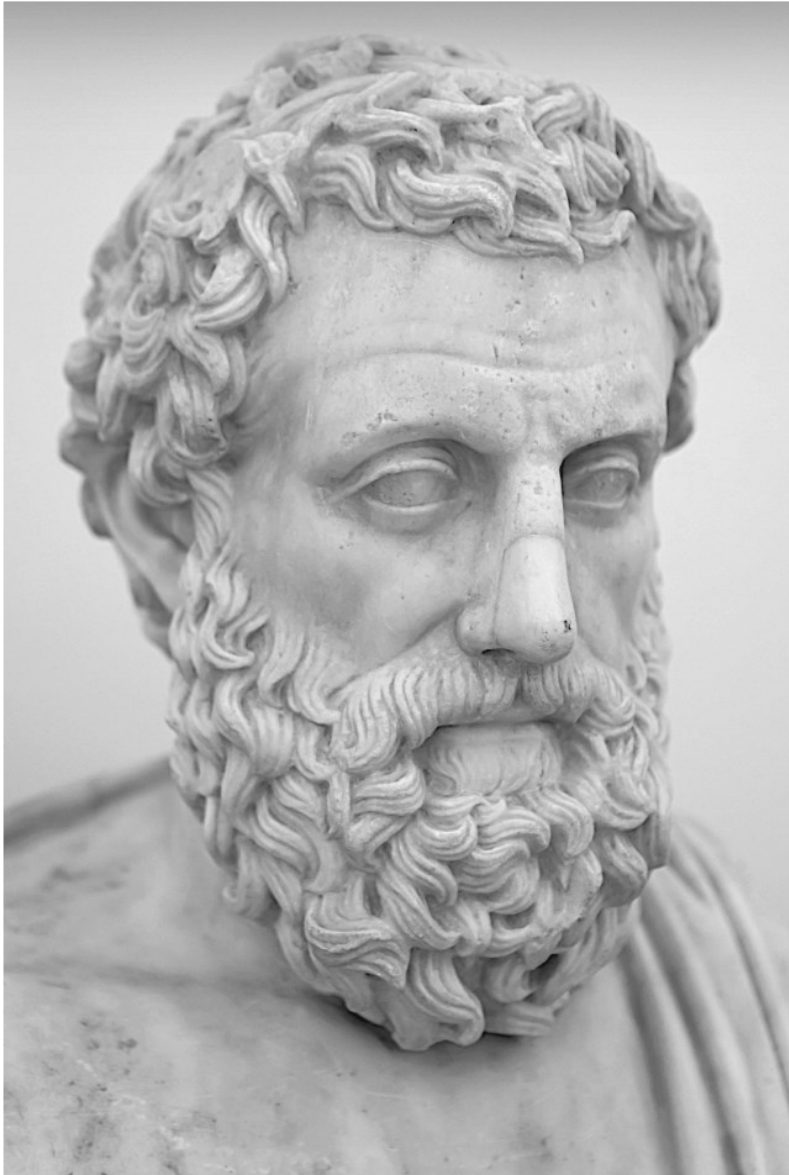


# Music on the Stage



## 3. European Evolution

October 2, 2024

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IN EUROPE AS IN JAPAN, the public performance of music began in the context of religious ritual. Although materials are sparse and difficult to decipher, we have hymns to the gods dating back to pre-classical days. We have the texts of several Greek tragedies performed at religious festivals, and just enough information about their music to conjecture how they might have been performed. Hour One of the class explores various modern reconstructions of Greek drama and one striking attempt to distill its ethos in a new work.

The second hour is in two parts. First, the parallel story of music drama in the Christian church, beginning with simple reenactments; these grew into substantial musical plays, where the church itself is the theater. Then we turn to composed music in a more popular vein, to sometimes sacred but more often secular themes—pieces whose complexity and virtuoso requirements presuppose professional performance in a noble court—hence a different kind of “music on the stage.” *rb.*

### A. Songs of Praise

Hymns to the gods, both classical and earlier, and a demonstration on the reconstruction of Greek Music.

**Video:** Hurrian Hymn #6 (Peter Pringle)

**Demonstration:** Reconstruction of Greek Music (Armand d'Angour)

### B. The Play's the Thing

Historians agree that music was integral to Greek drama, but they differ about how it was incorporated. We look at some examples from modern productions of the plays.

**Euripides:** *Herakles*, first choral ode (Barnard College)  
**Aeschylus:** *Agamemnon*, choral ode (National Theatre 1981)  
**Aeschylus:** *Agamemnon*, choral entrance (Greek, place unknown)  
**Euripides:** *The Trojan Women* (Michael Cacoyannis film, 1971),  
Brian Blessed (Talthybius), Vanessa Redgrave (Andromache)

## C. Stravinsky's Oedipus

The *Oedipus Rex* (1927) by Stravinsky and Cocteau is not so much a musical setting of the Sophocles play as an attempt to create a new work that expresses the classical esthetic in modern terms. We watch part of Julie Taymor's production in Japan that views the piece through the director's interest in *kabuki*.

**Stravinsky:** *Oedipus Rex* (Taymor 1992), final scene  
**Stravinsky:** *Oedipus* / **Moussa:** *Antigone* (Dutch opera trailer 2024)

## D. The Church as Theater

From the earliest example of music drama in church, a celebration of the Easter miracle, we pass to two longer works: an allegory of the Virtues written by Hildegard von Bingen for the nuns at Rupertsberg on the Rhine, and a staging of Belshazzar's Feast for students at the Cathedral of Beauvais.

**Video:** the *Quem quaeritis* trope  
**Hildegard:** *Ordo Virtutum*, Devil 1 (The Song Co.)  
**Hildegard:** *Ordo Virtutum*, Devil 2 (from *Vision* film)  
**Anon:** *The Play of Daniel*, excerpt (Cloisters, NYC)

## E. From Church to Court

Starting with the mid-13th-century *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, which straddle the divide between sacred and secular, we turn to some musical descriptions of the medieval world whose complexity presupposes performance in a court setting.

**Cantigas de Santa Maria**, "Rosa das rosas," version 1  
**Cantigas de Santa Maria**, "Rosa das rosas," version 2 (Galatia Ens.)  
**Lorenzo da Firenze:** *A poste messe* (performer uncredited)  
**Jannequin:** *La guerre* (King's Singers)  
**Willaert:** *Vecchie letrose* (Jordi Savall)

**Aeschylus** (535–455 BCE, *Greek playwright*), Jean **Cocteau** (1889–1963, *French polymath*), **Euripides** (480–406 BCE, *Greek playwright*), **Hildegard** von Bingen (1098–1179, *German polymath*), Clément **Jannequin** (1475–1560, *French composer*), **Lorenzo** da Firenze (–1372, *Italian composer*), Samy **Moussa** (1984–, *Canadian composer*), **Sophocles** (497–406 BCE, *Greek playwright*), Igor **Stravinsky** (1882–1971, *Russian-American composer*), Julie **Taymor** (1952–, *American director and designer*), Adriaan **Willaert** (1490–1562, *Flemish composer*)

The course website is [www.brunyate.com/MusicStage](http://www.brunyate.com/MusicStage)  
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