



From Ink to Sound: Decoding Musical Manuscripts

Video Transcript

Hearing and writing music

[Matteo Nanni] A warm welcome to our course, From Ink to Sound, Decoding Musical Manuscripts. My name is Matteo Nanni. As a professor of musicology, I taught at the University of Basel, and I'm now teaching at University of Giessen. In this course, we would like to take you on a journey through time, and explore with you the history of musical notation. During the next weeks, we will be your guides to the world of musical script. You will discover how to read musical manuscripts from the past.

[Angelika Moths] My name is Angelika Moths. I'm teaching history of musical notation at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and music theory at Basel University. I also would like to welcome you to this course. To turn ink into sound, it needs voices and instruments. The ensemble Gilles Binchois under the direction of Dominique Vellard and musicians of the Schola Cantorum will ensure that this course will not only be an intellectual, but also, a sensual experience for you.

[Matteo Nanni] Every day, at home or in the street, in the car or at the supermarket, we are surrounded by music, and do never ask if and how it's written down. We hear the passing of the ephemeral sounds, but we are a little stumped if somebody asks us to write them down. Otherwise, we must think, that without written music, we wouldn't have access to the music of the past. In the course of the centuries, musical notation evolved out of the oral tradition of singing and playing.

[Angelika Moths] Our actual system of musical notation is the result of a long-term process, which began in the Middle Ages, and still goes on. In this course, we are going to discover, and to deepen the insight, into the most important occurrences of the development of notation. Through this course, you'll get acquainted with different kinds of musical notation, and you will learn how to decode and transcribe them. Finally, you will be able to reflect on historically informed performance, to look hopefully at ancient music with fresh eyes.

[MUSIC PLAYING]