

Music History begins with Creation

This course begins with Ancient Times from Creation and the beginning of music elements.

Memorisation

Scriptures, poems, definitions, historical periods and essential dates are memorised using rhythms, melodies and harmonics.

History blends with theory studies

Reading, writing and aural training examples correspond to themes in the history section of each lesson. Music elements relate to history as well as theory.

Nine weeks on each historical period

There is ample time to borrow books from the library, buy or borrow recordings, see pictures of other art works of the time and read biographies. History covered whets the appetite and encourages readers to further explore history on their own.

Foundational Scriptures

One of the foundational scriptures for the *Elements of Music* programme is Romans 1:20. The study of music history and the elements in Biblical perspective show how ‘... since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.’

Romans 15:4. ‘For everything that was written in the past was written so that, through endurance and encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope.’

2 Chronicles 7:14–15 ‘If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.’



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Music History

Why Learn It?

BY WENDY HILL

History is a major component of Volumes 2–4 of *The Elements of Music* course, running along with the theory. It provides an overview of western church history showing how the history affected music.

A short poem put to rhythm and melody sums it:

*History is His story with a time,
people, places and events that have
been in the past.*

*God is big. Man is small. God delights
to hear us call.*

*History and man may falter but our
God will never alter.*

History is HIS story. This course aims to show the presence of God throughout history. History books emphasise man’s achievements and it is obvious that he has failed to learn from past mistakes and even triumphs. Every generation tries again to change the world using human strength.

History is a constant reminder that we need God. The Israelites followed cycles similar to those of modern times:

1. When times were peaceful and things going well they enjoyed all of God’s blessings.

2. Then they forgot God and many turned to idolatry;
3. Then came wars, oppression, punishment, discipline and judgement;
4. Then followed repentance when they cried out to God again;
5. Then restoration, when God delivered the people and forgave them; then
6. The Israelites promised to obey and returned to peaceful times enjoying God’s blessings again.

History reminds us that we falter as we turn away from God. We need to be constantly reminded that He is still here. This is the reason Jesus came to earth. One of the foundational scriptures for the history content of the course is Romans 15:4. ‘For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that, through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.’ Again in 2 Chronicles 7:14. God spoke to Solomon and said, ‘... if My people, who are called by My name, will humble

themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.’

Many scriptures remind us of God’s presence; Deuteronomy 6:12, 8:2,18, 32:7, 1 Corinthians 10:1 1, Hebrews 13:5–7. These scriptures and a study of history from a Biblical perspective provide answers to many basic life questions such as: Who is God? Who am I? Where do I fit into God’s creation? What is His plan and purpose for me? What am I doing here? Who really is in control — God or man?

Learning about the past from a Biblical viewpoint helps us understand the present and gives great hope for the future. Faith and history link us to believers of yesteryear and the knowledge that we too can be used by God in His overall plan. The study of western history traces our rich Christian heritage based in English common law which is rooted in the Bible.

What has this to do with music?

One of the concepts woven through history in *The Elements of Music* is that a person’s belief affects his philosophy which affects his actions and eventually music. Our faith determines our actions and the type of music composed, listened to, or played. This is simplified as — spirit affects the soul which affects the body which affects the music.

What a composer believes determines whether his music will be for God’s glory

or for man’s glory or a combination. What is in his heart (spirit) influences how he chooses to organise the elements of music (in his soul). How the composer sees himself in relation to God and history determines the style of music he writes. Likewise, how a student sees himself in relation to God and his purpose in history will influence the music he chooses to hear and play.

By going to history and the building blocks of music, this course gives students a firm foundation upon which to appreciate the God-given gift of music and distinguish God-honouring music from that which is not.

The Elements of Music course is based on the concept of *same, but different*. The use of the elements of music has changed just as styles of architecture, art and clothing fashions have changed. The elements themselves, like God, have not. Because man was designed in God’s image, he is creative. Each generation produces different styles of music. In Volumes Two and Three, students trace the use of the music elements from Ancient Times — from monody (one melody) to organum (two melodies) to polyphony (many melodies) to the development of harmony (chords) and instrumental music.

The overview of music shows that the basic building blocks have remained the same and, like God, should not be taken for granted. If God removed soundwaves, we would have no music. They are as fundamental as breathing. We hear music

every day and our ears are bombarded with millions of soundwaves.

Music for Man

Much music written since the rise of humanism in the Fifteenth Century has been instrumental and for entertainment, intellectual and emotional satisfaction. Music history books focus on the great composers and on music written for man. This course attempts to provide some balance by acknowledging the great Christian composers, such as hymn-writers, alongside the commonly recognised great composers. Yet, for thousands of years, the Bible has inspired many composers.

Lack of History Study

Today’s students do not seem to study as much history as once was the case. History provides the framework which balances other elements of the study of music. Without this, students risk becoming limited to performance, exams and the commercial trappings of music. Focusing on the present produces selfcentredness. As we are but a drop in a vast ocean of history, musical education becomes unbalanced and out of focus as God is moved from the centre of focus.

The brief overview provided in these books can be a stepping stone to discover more about the past so the present and future can be put into perspective. The following quotation by Iain Murray in *Sketches from Church History* describes the situation very well.

There are a number of reasons for the decline of interest in Christian history at the popular level during the present century (Twentieth Century). In this period the teaching of history has generally been dominated by a view which would make faith in divine providence no part our responsibility. Facts without a reference to the hand of God are supposed to be the limits of the historian’s province. So history, thus interpreted, becomes only the subject of the classroom or the lecture hall; it ceases to inspire; the music and life which throbs in the way in which the Bible itself teaches history, is gone; the world is all; the soul has disappeared... Church history ought to provide a standard of comparison, it ought to raise our vision of God and it ought to show us by countless examples what faithfulness to Christ and His Word truly means.

Course Organisation

Questions

Tour guides for the music journey are taken from Rudyard Kipling’s poem:

I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I knew. Their names are What and Why and When, How and Where and Who.

These questions help train an inquiring mind which is essential for the study of history.

Overall Picture

The overall picture is given at the start of the book. Students know from the first lessons where they are through timeline and maps and know what they can look forward to.