MEDIEVAL PERIOD SUMMARY
(dates are only approximate to present a general timeline for study)

500 (476) = Fall of Roman Empire and beginning of the Middle Ages

500 – 1500 (476-1450) = Middle Ages (Medieval Period)
    Generally primitive without much recorded, governed primarily by the King and Catholic Church. Pope Gregory influenced canonic law (550 – 600). Mostly sacred music (religious/church origin in Latin), but with increasing amounts of secular (non-religious) works created. Art was unnatural (portraits elongated and somewhat expressionless); architecture was angular and less ornamented.

500 – 1000 = Early Middle Ages (Dark Ages)
    Monophonic textures that evolved into simple polyphonic settings; shorter works; predominantly vocal (male voices), largely arhythmic, based on church modes (Gregorian Chant or Plainsong); generally stepwise melodic motion; simple rhythmic ideas developed, mostly with a triple-meter feel; predominantly sacred text (in Latin), although secular works also existed.

850 – 1100 = Simple polyphonic music began to appear
    Organum (2 – 3 voice active counter melodies above a long sustained melody called a cantus firmus – sustained tones in lower voices, derived from Gregorian Chants)

1000 = Guido D'Arezzo devises a notational system of music

1000 – 1500 = Gothic Period of the Middle Ages
    Hildegard of Bingen (1100 – 1175), German female composer/poet/writer who wrote many pieces for performance during various times during the proper of a mass – very spiritual in nature; her music featured some dramatic leaps in the melody.

    Notre Dame School – 1150 – 1250, a time when more sophisticated artistic styles emerged (such as the isorhythmic motet), developed in the area of Paris, France.

    Leonin (Notre Dame School) active around 1150 – 1200, master of simple organum.

    Perotin (Notre Dame School) active around 1200 – 1225 (successor to Leonin), master of more complex organum (cantus firmus with 1 – 3 counter melodies, utilized more complex rhythms in upper voices, including isorhythms (short recurring rhythms which appear in all upper voices throughout the musical work to hold it together)

1000 – 1250 = Ars Antiqua (Old Art)

1250 – 1500 = Ars Nova (New Art)

Guillame de Machaut (1300 – 1370), Notre Dame School – composed many motets (usually accapella/unaccompanied, similar but longer and more complex than organum with cantus firmus being altered rhythmically on a similar level to the upper voices (making it less noticeable), and utilizing more than one text simultaneously; sometimes the cantus firmus was assigned to an upper voice; use of iso-rhythms, composer of the first COMPLETE mass.

Guillame Dufay 1400 – 1470 – Franco-Flemish composer born in Brussels, considered a composer of the early Renaissance period/late Medieval period, writing music of all types, further expanding melody, rhythm, and polyphony; favored writing in the FAUX BOURDON style (harmonizing the melody/cantus firmus with 2 melodic lines below it in the same rhythm, moving in parallel motion, producing consonant sonorities).

General Song Forms

Initially sacred but with increased secular themes/text as well.
Gregorian Chant (plainsong)
Mass
Organum
Motet
Chanson (originated in France, serious secular/sacred love songs)
Round (originated in England in later Middle Ages)
Dances

Musicians

Minstrels (city street performers)
Troubadours/Trouveres (French, professional writers, poets, musicians, vocal/instrumentalists)
Minnesingers (the German variety of French Troubadours).

Instruments

Lute (guitar), Shawm (oboe), Recorder (Flute), Cornetto (trumpet), Sackbutt (trombone), Dulcimer (hammered harp-like stringed instrument), limited pipe organs, various non-pitched percussion instruments, etc.

Instrumental Music

Mostly accompanimental but also used alone in various dances of the day.

RENAISSANCE PERIOD SUMMARY
(dates are only approximate to present a general timeline for study)

1500 (1450) – 1600 = Renaissance
> A general increased interest in humanism, individualism, learning, refinement, the Arts (with greater emphasis on realism), world trade and influences (Asia), and classical ideals of the ancient Greeks. Musical instruments were greatly improved, and more complex use of polyphonic structures was utilized; tonality moved closer to our current major/minor tonal system. Vocal music without accompaniment (a cappella) was very common, and duple meters appeared in music. Primary artists of this period: Michelangelo, Palestrina, Leonardo Da Vinci, Shakespeare. The printing press greatly aided this interest in learning. Text painting with musical melismas and melodic contours was practiced. The influence of plain song (Gregorian Chant) was much less noticeable, with an increase in homophonic textures and clearer defined phrases with simultaneous cadences in multiple voices.

Elizabethan Era (England, 1550 – 1600)
Venetian School (Venice, Italy, 1550 – 1600)

Musical Forms
> Motet
>> Exclusively sacred polyphonic work

> Madrigal
>> Secular polyphonic work

> Mass
>> Divided into two sections (ordinary – fixed) and proper (changes depending on day, season, time, etc.)
>>> Ordinary – 5 basic parts (although could be increased)
>>>> Kryie
>>>> Gloria
>>>> Credo
>>>> Sanctus
>>>> Agnus Dei

>>> Proper
>>>> Introit
>>>> Alleluia
>>>> Offetory
>>>> Communion
>>>> Benedictus

Composers

Josquin des Prez (1450 – 1500)
Italian composer of many motets, and masses

Palestrina (1525 – 1600)
Italian composer of many masses and mostly sacred music; refined/controlled polyphony and more usage of homophonic writing to clarify vocal lines.

Jaques Arcadelt (1500 – 1550)
Italian composer of sacred/secular music, including madrigals and chansons.

John Farmer (1500 – 1600)
English composer writing songs and madrigals in the English language.

Giovanni Gabriele (1550 – 1600)
Venetian composer from well-known musical family, writing highly polyphonic vocal and instrumental works.