



An Introduction to Gregorian Chant

Professor Richard L. Crocker, Richard L. Crocker

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For modern listeners, the sounds of Gregorian chant are compelling, with words and rhythms that seem at once familiar and remote. Even without a musical background or knowledge of the religious significance of Gregorian chant, listeners respond to the unique qualities of this music. Richard L. Crocker, a world-renowned authority on chant, offers in this book and its accompanying compact disc an eloquent introduction to the history and meaning of the Gregorian chant. He explains how Gregorian chant began, what functions and meanings it had over time, who heard it and where, and how it was composed, learned, written down, and handed on. His guided tour of the Gregorian chant provides for any interested listener a richer understanding of this enduringly powerful music. Crocker explains Gregorian chant and its functions within modern catholic liturgy as well as its position outside this liturgy, where the modern listener may hear it just as music. He describes the origins of the chant in the early Middle Ages, details its medieval development and use, and considers how it survived without, and later with, musical notation. The author probes the paradoxical position of the chant in monastic life, where it served as an expression of liturgical fellowship on the one hand, and as the medium of solitary, mystical ascent on the other. The book also includes a detailed commentary on each of twenty-six complete chants performed by the author on the accompanying free compact disc.

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