

The main styles of Gregorian chant

The main styles of Gregorian chant are:

- syllabic (one note per syllable),
- neumatic (two to three notes per syllable), and
- melismatic (many notes per syllable).

Other stylistic categories include **how the chant is performed**, such as:

- antiphonal (two choirs alternating) and
- responsorial (choir alternating with a soloist).

Modes (old scales) are based on eight church modes derived from Byzantine chants.

Styles based on the number of notes per syllable

- Syllabic: Each syllable of text has a single note. This is the simplest style.
- Neumatic: Two or three notes are sung on a single syllable. This is also known as semi-ornate.
- Melismatic: Many notes are sung on a single syllable, creating an elaborate and ornate melody. This style is often used for important words and was sung by soloists or trained musicians

Performance and structural styles

- Antiphonal: Two choirs sing in alternating sections.
- Responsorial: A soloist sings a verse, and a choir responds with a refrain.
- Recitative: A style that follows the natural rhythm of speech.
- Organum: An early form of polyphony where a second voice was added to a plainchant melody.

Other stylistic elements

- [Gregorian Modes](#): The chants are organized into eight modes, which are collections of notes with specific tonal centers, influenced by Byzantine church music.
- Notation: Gregorian chant is written on a four-line staff using unique symbols called neumes, which indicated melodic contour but not precise rhythm, suggesting a free and flexible tempo.

What's the style of these pieces of Gregorian chant?

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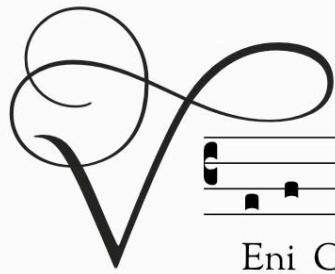
36 PUER NATUS IN BETHLEHEM

1. Puer natus in Béthlehem, alle-lá-ia : Unde gaudet
 Jerú-sa-lem, alle-lá-ia, alle-lá-ia. R. In cordis jé- bi-lo Chri-
 stum na-tum ado-re-nus, Cum novo canti-co.
 2. Assumpsit carnem Fi-li-us, alle-lá-ia, De-i Patris altis-

2

Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o

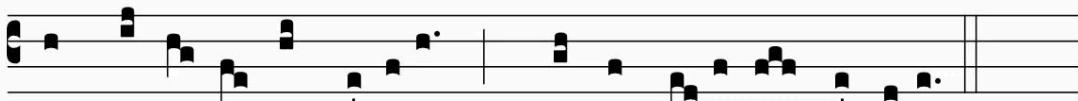
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English Translation: Fr. Adrian Fortescue (1874-1923)

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Eni Cre- á-tor Spí-ri-tus, Mentes tu-ó-rum ví-si-ta:

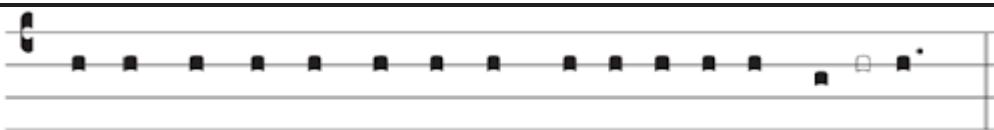


Imple su-pérna grá-ti-a Quæ tu cre- ásti péctora.

1. Come Creator Spirit, visit the souls of thy people, fill with grace
from on high the hearts which thou hast created.

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In con-ver-ten-do Do-mi-nus cap-ti-vi-ta-tem Si - on