



# The Christian West and Its Singers: The First Thousand Years

*By Christopher Page*

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**The Christian West and Its Singers: The First Thousand Years** By Christopher Page

A renowned scholar and musician presents a new and innovative exploration of the beginnings of Western musical art. Beginning in the time of the New Testament, when Christians began to develop an art of ritual singing with an African and Asian background, Christopher Page traces the history of music in Europe through the development of Gregorian chant—a music that has profoundly influenced the way Westerners hear—to the invention of the musical staff, regarded as the fundamental technology of Western music. Page places the history of the singers who performed this music against the social, political and economic life of a Western Europe slowly being remade after the collapse of Roman power. His book will be of interest to historians, musicologists, performing musicians, and general readers who are keen to explore the beginnings of Western musical art.

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"Shrewd and perceptive. . . . Virtually every sentence bristles with detail and the meticulous care required to negotiate such complex and contested territory."--Jeremy Begbie, *Books and Culture*  
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"[This] is a magnificent book, brimming with fresh insights and with unexpected pieces of information drawn from little known sources and unpublished manuscripts."--Robert L. Wilken, *First Things*

(Robert L. Wilken *First Things*)

"Once or twice in a generation a book comes along that crosses disciplinary boundaries to make unexpected connections, open up new imaginative vistas, and refocus what had seemed familiar historical landscapes. Christopher Page's musician's-eye view of the evolution of Western Christendom is one of those books."--Eamon Duffy, *The New York Review of Books* (Eamon Duffy *The New York Review of Books*)

"Replete with creative insights and compelling new interpretations, astonishingly rich in detail and breadth of coverage, this book is Page's crowning accomplishment to date. Only he could have told this tale, not only because of the knowledge and skills that he brings to it, but also, perhaps more importantly, because of the imagination that characterizes all of his research...It will provide information and inspiration to the disciplines of musicology, literary studies, liturgical studies, and medieval history for a long time to come."--Elizabeth Aubrey, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*  
(Elizabeth Aubrey *Journal of the American Musicological Society*)

"Christopher Page has challenged the entire field to follow where he has led, and to undertake the painstaking work of exploring with care the citations he has unearthed, thereby drawing as closely as we can to the singers of the Christian West."--Margot Fassler, *Plainsong and Medieval Music*  
(Margot Fassler *Plainsong and Medieval Music*)

#### About the Author

**Christopher Page** is Professor of Medieval Music and Literature in the University of Cambridge, Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, and founder of the acclaimed ensemble Gothic Voices.

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