

Episode



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ITALY



POETRY, MUSIC, DANCE

Amy: Hello everyone! Welcome back to PodCastle, a fantastic journey into the history of castles, fascinating architectural structures rich in stories and legends.

Today we will talk about music, dance, and poetry.

Daniele: What? Music, dance, and poetry in castles?

Stella: Of course! Life in castles was not just about battles! There were also parties, music, dances... fun!

Daniele: And poetry!

Stefan: Exactly! Think that during the Middle Ages, between 1100 and 1300, a true literary genre was born called courtly poetry.

(track 1)

Andrea: So, there were talented poets!

Sofia: The poets of that time were the Troubadours in Provence and the Trouvères in northern France. They were nobles and knights who composed poetic texts dedicated to the women they loved, and



they travelled from court to court singing their poems, which were often performed with music.
(track 2)

Tancredi: So, the nobles had fun while the common people were always sad.

Elia: Not at all! While nobles enjoyed listening to courtly poetry in castles, in the square's jesters, dressed in bright colours, would make fun of the lords and their love poems, making the common people laugh out loud.

(track 3)

Tancredi: Even the dances of the common people were more fun than those at court.

In fact, common people danced in a livelier way than the nobles, also because of the heavy clothes the latter wore during important occasions.

(track 4)

Alice: Dances in the castle took place on many occasions:

During court celebrations, organized to celebrate marriages and victories...

Francesco B.: After banquets: nobles would get up from the table and start dancing for hours.

At the end of tournaments, when ladies and knights celebrated by dancing and singing.

Mia: Dances were very important moments for both nobles and common people.

They were opportunities to meet and court each other, since they were the only moments when a minimum of physical contact was allowed.

Amira: To dance, they must have needed music!

Amal: Of course! Music was very important in medieval courts: it was played during banquets, celebrations, and tournaments.

Andrea: Musicians included jesters, court musicians called minstrels, and religious singers.

The latter performed the first written form of music: Gregorian chant, sacred choral songs performed without instruments. Listen!

(track 5)

Sofia: So music was always performed "a cappella"? Were there no musical instruments?

Amira: Of course there were, and of many types and sounds!

There were string instruments, such as the lute, harp, vielle, and hurdy-gurdy; (track 6)

wind instruments, such as the flute, horn, bagpipes, and the chalumeau, the ancestor of the clarinet;
(track 7)

Mia: And, of course, percussion instruments, such as drums, castanets, bells, and tambourines.

(track 8)

Francesco : Instruments were not tuned as they are today, so when you listen to medieval music played with instruments of the time, you perceive sounds very different from those we are used to today.



Francesco B.: Music accompanied almost every aspect of medieval life and marked its most important moments.

Alice: In short, even without Netflix and Nintendo, people knew how to have fun!

Amy: Yes, and they had as much fun as we do—if not more!

Stella: Once again, we explored life in castles. We hope you enjoyed it with us!

If you liked this PodCastle, we look forward to seeing you in the next episode!

See you soon!