

Sumerian Tablet Song

In the early 1950's, archaeologists unearthed several clay tablets from the 14th century B.C.E.. in the ancient Syrian city of Ugarit.

These tablets contained cuneiform signs in the Hurrian language which turned out to be the oldest known piece of music ever discovered, a 3,400-year-old cult hymn.

In 1988 Richard Fink writes in an article entitled 'Archeologia Musicalis' that the tablets found confirm a musical theory structure of a 7-note diatonic scale, as well as other harmonies, existing 3,400 years ago.

The Sumerians
Transcription, E. Laroche / T. McGregor

♩=80

5

9

13

17

20

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled 'The Sumerians'. The score is written on six staves of music, each beginning with a treble clef. The tempo is indicated as quarter note = 80 (♩=80). The music consists of a series of chords and single notes, primarily using a 7-note diatonic scale. The score is divided into measures, with bar lines and repeat signs. The first staff starts with a tempo marking. The second staff begins with a measure number '5'. The third staff begins with a measure number '9'. The fourth staff begins with a measure number '13'. The fifth staff begins with a measure number '17'. The sixth staff begins with a measure number '20'. The music is characterized by its simplicity and the use of a diatonic scale, reflecting the ancient Sumerian musical structure mentioned in the text.