

Dithyrambs:

- The origin of western theatre
- Began some time before the 6th century B.C.
 - o With dithyrambs, or hymns
 - Sang to Dionysus, the god of wine and harvests
 - Related episodes from his life

Greek Chorus:

- Introduction of an actor added dialogue

Satyr Play and Tragedy:

- Came out of the ecclesiastical part of the celebration
- Ribald form of comedy
 - o First appearance of folkloric figure of Silenus
 - A water spirit
 - Accompanied by the satyrs
 - o Written by a playwright to be presented in the afternoon of the day on which his tragedies also were to be produced.

Aeschylus:

- First important dramatist
- 525-456 B.C.
- Wrote 80 – 90 plays
 - o Several of which are still in existence
 - o Relied largely on the chorus
- Primarily used traditional themes
 - o Based on myths and Olympian law

Sophocles:

- 2nd major writer of Tragedy
- 494 – 406 B.C.
- Wrote well over 100 plays
- Credited with introducing a third actor and with reducing the size of the chorus from fifty to twelve
- More interested in the interplay between characters than in the telling of religious myths
- Plots much more realistic than those of Aeschylus
 - o Concerned with human beings as the determiners of their own fate, rather than as subjects to the gods.
 - o Central character always has a tragic flaw that brings about his or her downfall.

Euripides:

- 3rd major writer of tragedy
- 480 – 406 B.C.
- Credited with ninety-two plays