

RENAISSANCE (late 1300's - 1650's)

Characteristics:

- * *"rebirth" and refinement of polyphony*
- * *less influence from the Catholic Church influence*
- * *rise of the middle class*
- * *simpler, smoother flowing melodies and harmonies than Medieval music*
- * *equal participation of each voice, statement and imitation*
- * *less emphasis on highly structured counterpoint*
- * *introduction of viol, harpsichord, clavichord*

Vocabulary

Ars perfecta – "perfect art" of Josquin, Palestrina, etc

Important Musical Forms of the Renaissance

Canon One voice imitates the other for a long time

Mass important music form of the renaissance, in the 14th century secular songs were used as the cantus firmus and united all five movements, in the 16th century masses were written in unaccompanied counterpoint (see Palestrina), and became more and more elaborate by adding more voices, instruments, and musical ornamentation

1. Kyrie eleison ("Lord Have Mercy")
2. Gloria in excelsis Deo ("Glory be to God on High")
3. Credo ("I believe")
4. Sanctus ("Holy")
5. Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God")

Motet peaked in the 15th and 16th centuries as a vehicle for experimentation, including sectional contrasts such as moving between duple/triple meters or altering the number of voices in a section, individual words were depicted through the text

Chorale Style of sacred song with easy-to-sing melodies based on folk songs for unison singing by the Protestant congregation, important composers were Johann Walter (1496-1570) and *Johann Crüger* (1598-1662), and eventually J.S. Bach.

Chanson (“song”) Ars Nova (unharmonized melodies of late Middle Ages) was picked up by troubadours and during the early 14th century evolved into two- and three-voice pieces. In the 16th century composers (Claude de Sermisy, Clement Janequin) expanded it to include elaborate contrapuntal melodies and effects to mimic birdcalls, cries of street vendors, etc.

Madrigal Inspired from Ars Nova beginning in Italy, most important secular music of Renaissance, unaccompanied polyphonic vocal composition for 4 to 6 voices, based on poem or secular text. Madrigals became popular in England after the 1588 publication of *Musica Transalpina*

Important Composers of the Renaissance

Guillaume Dufay (1397-1474) introduced secular melodies into the cantus firmus of motets, also wrote early chanson and sacred music. Known for control of form rather than innovation. Bridged the gap between Medieval and Renaissance music.

Josquin Des Prez (1450-1521) – developed polyphonic music, first to use repetition of melodies within a composition. Later Masses use fully contrapuntal passages, although his most famous Mass (*Missa Pange Lingua*) uses a stable cantus firmus. Famous for melody – both unadorned and complex melodic lines. Wrote masses, motets, Chanson and secular works

Orlando di Lasso (Orlande de Lassus) (1532-1594) composer of motets and madrigals

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525 - 1594) Composer of over 180 motets, many madrigals, but concentrated on Catholic masses, his Pope Marcellus Mass convinced the Catholic Church not to abolish polyphony, considered the master of Roman Catholic Renaissance polyphony, known for well-balanced vocal parts and beautiful harmony.

William Byrd (1543-1643) English madrigal composer (see also: Thomas Morley, Thomas Weelkes)

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