

A Time for Fresh Arts

"I always loved music; whoso has the skill in this art is of a good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools; a schoolmaster ought to have skill in music ..."

—Martin Luther (1483–1546)

The European Renaissance (1300–1600; for music, 1450–1600) was a time when fine arts flourished. Visual artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian created some of the greatest works of all time.

The music of the Renaissance was more complex than the music of the Medieval Era. Instead of two or three voice parts written as melodies, composers began writing four or more parts, paying attention to harmony for the first time.

Renaissance Pop

Just like today, popular songs of the Renaissance were often love songs. Renaissance "bands" are called consorts. A consort is often a group made up of one instrument family—the same instrument in different sizes, such as five different sizes of recorders playing together. Consorts played arrangements of the most popular songs, just as many of today's bands play the top hits. People often danced to Renaissance "pop."

Listen to a consort of viols. **Describe** how the style of dancing to this music might be different from today's dance styles.



Saltarello detto Trivella

by Orazio Vecchi (1550–1605)
as performed by The King's Noyse

Saltarello detto Trivella was played for a style of dancing involving small leaps.

Arts Connection

◀ Detail from *Court Ball at the Palais du Louvre* (1852) Flemish School



ON YOUR OWN

Use the resources of your school library or those of your local public library to locate photographs of Renaissance paintings. Share these photographs with your class.

Plucked Strings from Persia

Another popular string instrument of this time was the lute. It is a plucked string instrument that came to Italy from Persia. Often an instrumentalist would play a tune and then improvise on that tune to make it more elaborate. Jazz musicians still do this today.

Listen to this lute solo. **Analyze** what the player does to make the music more elaborate.



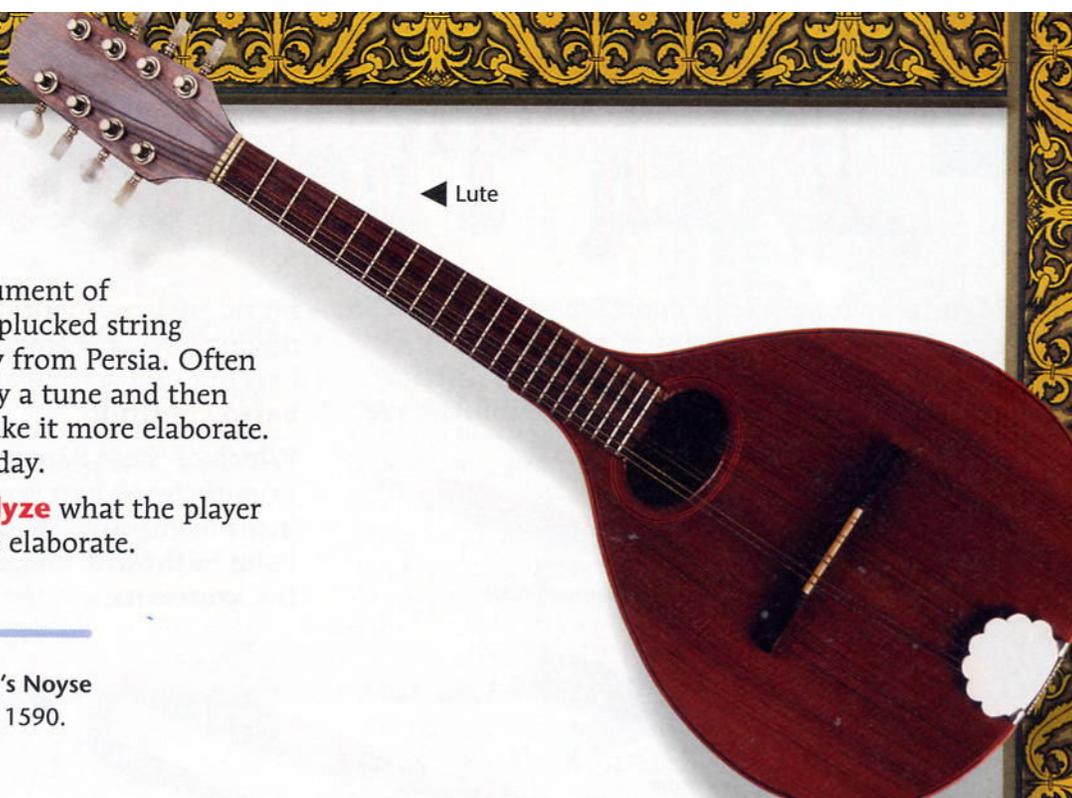
Danza (Dance)

Anonymous

5-32 as performed by The King's Noyse

This piece was written circa 1590.

◀ Lute



A Royal Band

Royalty throughout Europe hired court musicians to play in consorts for their festivities and dancing. These consorts sometimes used a mixture of string and wind instruments. Some Renaissance instruments, such as the shawm, cornetto, crumhorn, and sackbut are loud when compared to the quieter sounds of the harpsichord, lute, viol, and recorder.

Listen to this music by Tylman Susato. Decide whether it would be likely to be played indoors or outside. How many different instruments do you hear? **Describe** the sounds they make.

Basse danse bergeret sans rock & Reprise



5-33

by Tylman Susato (1500–1564)
as performed by Early Music Consort of London
and the Morley Consort

This dance tune is part of a collection of dances from 1551. Loosely translated, the title of the collection is "Really Fun Dances Playable on All Instruments."



Take It to the Net For more information on Renaissance music and musical instruments, go to www.sfsuccessnet.com.



Arts Connection

◀ A Renaissance band in action: the instruments from left to right are dulcian, shawm, cornetto, two shawms, and a sackbut in a detail from *Procession of Notre Dame de Salon* by Denys van Alsloot (1570-1628).

◀ Composer Francesco Landini in an illumination, or an elaborately designed sheet of music, from the "Squarcialupi Codex."

What About Instruments?

In medieval times, secular music could be sung or performed with any combination of instruments. **Listen** to this troubadour song played by instruments of the time. Note the alternation between verse and refrain. How can you tell the difference?



Domna, pos vos ay chausida (Lady, for You)

Anonymous

5-1 as performed by Ensemble Unicorn

In this selection, the bagpipe plays the introduction, then is joined by the *shawm* and drums.

Medieval books and music scores were made by hand. Most of them have disappeared. One way to find out what medieval instruments looked like is to examine Medieval visual art. Paintings and other art works show the instruments played then.

The *estampie* [es-tom-PEE] was an early kind of music intended for instruments only and may have been used for dancing. It consists of short phrases that are repeated, with first and second endings that are like a refrain.

Now **listen** to *La tierche estampie real*. **Identify** the two alternating endings for each phrase.

The *crumhorn* is a curved double-reed instrument that sounds like a kazoo. ▶



ON YOUR OWN

Look at concert listings in your local newspaper to see if there are performances of Medieval and Renaissance music. Look up the composers listed to see if they are from these eras. Attend one concert and write about the performance.



La tierche estampie real

Anonymous

5-2 as performed by the Early Music Consort of London

Scholars are undecided as to whether this music was played for dancing or just for listening.



◀ The *sackbut* is a brass instrument with a slide that is the ancestor of the trombone.

◀ The *regal* is a small organ that can be carried.

Instruments in the Renaissance

Tylman Susato (c. 1500–1561) was a Renaissance instrumentalist, composer, and publisher who lived in Antwerp, Belgium. Today he is remembered for *Danserye*, a collection of dances published in 1551. This collection serves as a valuable record because little music from that time was written down. Renaissance musicians usually played from memory or improvised. **Listen** to *Ronde* by Susato, and **conduct** in duple meter.



Ronde

5-3 from *Danserye*
by Tylman Susato
as performed by the Early Music Consort of London
This music is played by *crumhorns*, a *regal*, and *sackbuts*.

Dueling Brass

During the Renaissance, some churches allowed instrumental music and some did not. A few churches featured it. In Venice, Italy, the composer Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1557–1612) wrote brass music for the great Cathedral of St. Mark. Gabrieli took advantage of the expansive size and acoustical possibilities of the cathedral by writing **antiphonal** music. As you **listen** to this **canzon**, imagine sitting between two groups of musicians located on opposite sides of a huge space with the sound meeting and mingling around your head.



Canzon in Echo Duodecimi Toni a 10

5-4 by Giovanni Gabrieli
as performed by the London Symphony Orchestra Brass
This *canzon* may be performed with twenty people: two groups of ten players.

antiphonal Singing or playing that involves one group echoing or answering the other.

canzon Italian word for a song.