

Music History Cover Sheet

Distance learning packet

Concert Choir, Women's Ensemble, A Cappella Choir, Chamber Singers,
Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Jazz Bands, Music Theory & Technology

Student Name: _____

Student Class: _____

Student Teacher: _____

Directions:

Read each music history unit packet and highlight important information. At the end of each music history unit there are questions to answer and complete. Please complete those questions on a separate piece of paper and attach it to this cover sheet.

Renaissance Period

c. 1430–1600

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Discuss some of the major changes that took place in Europe during the Renaissance.
- Describe the most important characteristics of Renaissance music.
- Identify the major forms of sacred and secular music during the Renaissance.
- Discuss the most important characteristics of Renaissance choral music.

Early in the fifteenth century, a “rebirth” began in Europe—a renewal of creative activity, of intellectual curiosity, and of artistic development. This was the beginning of the Renaissance, a period that takes its name from the old French word *renaistre*, meaning “to be born again.”

Changes During the Renaissance

The Renaissance was a time of growth, experimentation, and discovery in many fields. Scholars retreated from an acceptance of what they read; instead, they began using observation and experimentation to draw new conclusions about the world around them. The results of this new approach were a series of important advances in science, mathematics, and technology.

The Renaissance also saw important advances in exploration and trade. For the first time, European sailing ships reached the southern coast of Africa, the Americas, and India, and even succeeded in sailing around the world. These journeys brought a new expanding sense of the world, an influx of new ideas, and new opportunities for trade to the people of Renaissance Europe.

A particularly significant development of the Renaissance was the invention of a printing press with movable type, usually credited to Johann Gutenberg. This press meant that books no longer had to be copied by hand. Books—including books about music and books of music—became much less expensive and much more widely available; reading words and reading music were no longer pursuits restricted to the wealthy, privileged few.

Changes in religious practice and belief were also important during the Renaissance. The Catholic church, which had been a center of learning, a formidable political power, and an important force in the daily lives of nearly all Europeans, gradually lost some of its influence. The foremost Renaissance scholars embraced humanism, a belief in the dignity and value of individual human beings. In addition, the Protestant Reformation resulted in the establishment of new Christian churches not under the rule of the Catholic hierarchy.

The visual arts of the Renaissance reflect the era’s growing awareness of the natural world. The human figures depicted by painters and sculptors became more realistic and more individualized.

COMPOSERS

John Dunstable (c. 1390–1453)
Guillaume Dufay (1400–1474)
Josquin Desprez (c. 1440–1521)
Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450–1517)
Clement Janequin (c. 1485–1560)
Adrian Willaert (1490–1562)
Christopher Tye (c. 1500–c. 1572)
Thomas Tallis (1505–1585)
Andrea Gabrieli (c. 1520–1586)
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525–1594)
Orlande de Lassus (1532–1594)
William Byrd (1543–1623)
Thomas Morley (c. 1557–c. 1603)
John Dowland (1563–1626)
Michael Praetorius (c. 1571–1621)
Thomas Weelkes (1575–1623)

ARTISTS

Donatello (1386–1466)
Fra Filippo Lippi (c. 1406–1469)
Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510)
Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)
Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)
Michelangelo (1475–1564)
Raphael (1483–1520)
Titian (c. 1488–1576)

AUTHORS

Thomas More (1478–1536)
Martin Luther (1483–1546)
Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616)
Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1552–1618)
Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586)
William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

CHORAL MUSIC TERMS

a cappella
Gregorian chant
madrigal
mass
motet
motive imitation
polyphony
sacred music
secular music



▲ The perfection of Leonardo da Vinci's (1452–1519) *Ginevra de' Benci* is achieved by exacting attention to detail, including the study of human anatomy. Attention to a balanced distribution of voice parts progressing in a calm, smooth momentum expresses Renaissance musical style.

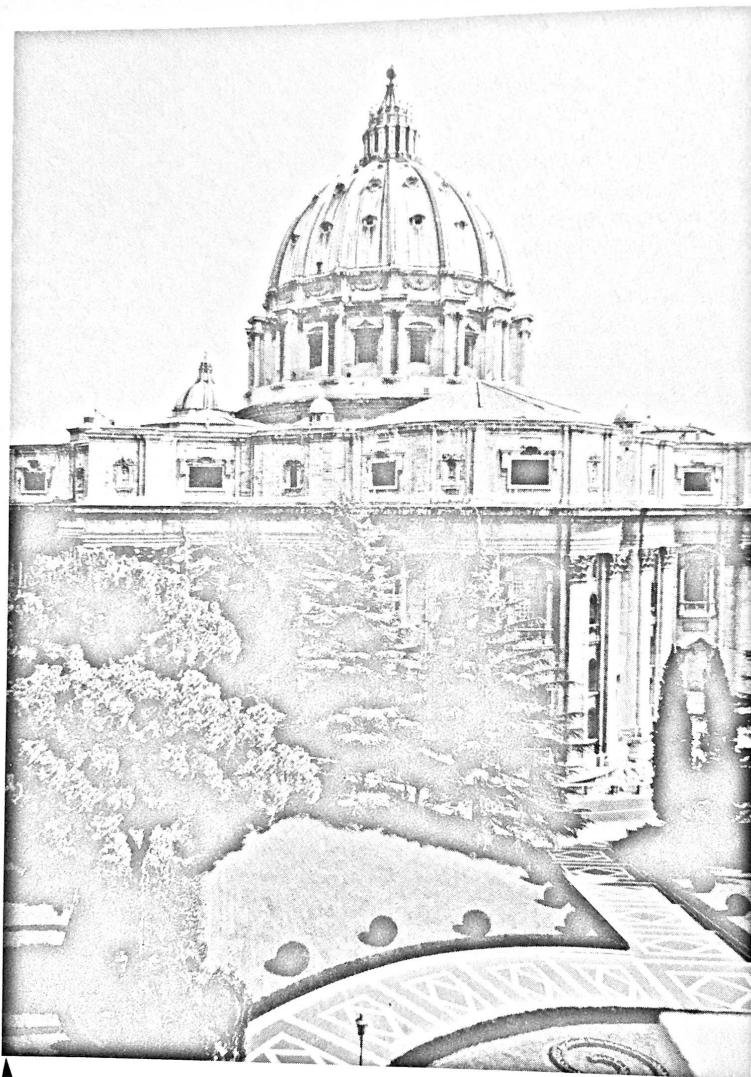
c. 1474. *Ginevra de' Benci*. Leonardo da Vinci. Oil on panel. 38.8 x 36.7 cm (15 1/4 x 14 1/2"). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund.

c. 1435

1465

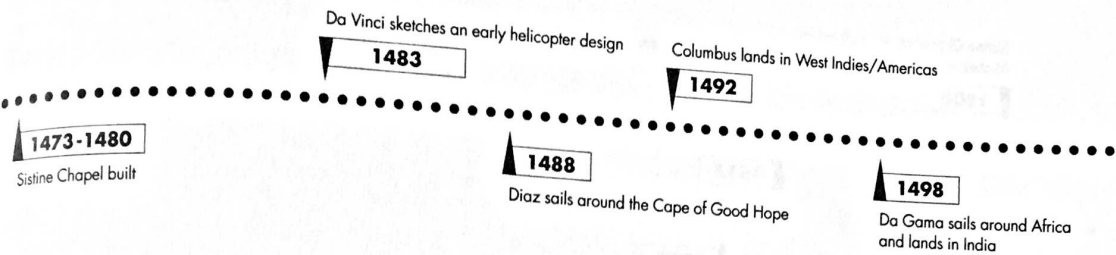
1453

Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople, marking end of Byzantine Empire



Every aspect of the dome of St. Peter's by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) contributes to the impression of an upward thrust of energy. The ribs, buttresses, and supports of the dome bear a relationship to the borrowed plainsong melodies that support religious music composed during the Renaissance.

1546–64. Dome of St. Peter's Basilica, view from the southwest. Michelangelo Buonarroti. (Completed by Giacomo della Porta in 1590.) Vatican State, Rome, Italy.



Although many paintings and sculptures depicted religious subjects, nonreligious subjects, especially those taken from Greek and Roman mythology, became increasingly acceptable. Artists also created individual portraits, such as the famous *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci. New materials and new techniques enhanced the artists' ability to create lifelike works.

Renaissance Music

Throughout the Renaissance, the Catholic church continued to exert a strong influence on the arts. Much of the important music composed during this period was **sacred music**, *music used in religious services*.

In the centuries preceding the Renaissance—the Middle Ages—the most important musical form was the **Gregorian chant**, *a melody sung in unison by male voices*. All these chants were sung **a cappella**, *without instrumental accompaniment*. The earliest Gregorian chants consisted of a single melodic line; later, a second melodic line was added. This addition was the beginning of **polyphony**, *the simultaneous performance of two or more melodic lines*. In polyphonic music, each part begins at a different place, and each part is independent and important. The sacred music of the Renaissance grew from the medieval Gregorian chants. The use of polyphony was extended and developed by Renaissance composers; and although instrumentation was added to many sacred works, the Renaissance is often called the golden age of a cappella choral music.

The two major forms of sacred Renaissance music were the **mass**, *a long musical composition that includes the five major sections of the Catholic worship service*, and the **motet**, *a shorter choral work set to Latin texts and used in religious services, but not part of the regular mass*.

John Dunstable was one of the foremost composers of Renaissance masses and motets. His works show new developments in the harmonic structure of polyphony. Later, Josquin Desprez introduced homophonic harmonies, produced by chords that support a melody. He was also one of the first to compose works with **motive imitation**, *short repeating melodies between voice parts*.

Although many sacred works of the period were sung a cappella, instruments were added in other compositions to accompany and echo the voice parts. Composers such as Adrian Willaert combined voices, pipe organs, and other instruments in sacred music.

Sacred music for Protestant services was also written during the Renaissance. Martin Luther, one of the most important leaders of the Protestant Reformation, wrote hymns that are still sung in Protestant churches today.

There were also changes in **secular music**, *any music that is not sacred*. As secular music gained in importance and popularity, the center of musical activity began to shift from churches to castles and towns.

Sistine Chapel ceiling painted by
Michelangelo

1508

Cortez conquers Mexico

1519

1517

Protestant Reformation begins in Germany
with Luther's 95 Theses

1519

Magellan begins voyage around the world

The **madrigal**, a secular form written in several imitative parts, became the most popular kind of nonsacred composition during the Renaissance. Composers including Clement Janequin, Heinrich Isaac, Thomas Tallis, William Byrd, Thomas Morley, and Thomas Weelkes wrote madrigals to be sung by everyday people; singing madrigals together was an important entertainment during this period.

Characteristics of Choral Music During the Renaissance

Most of the music of the Renaissance was choral; instruments were used primarily as accompaniment. The choral music of the time can be considered in terms of its meter and stress, tempo, dynamics, texture, expressive aspects, and tone quality.

Meter and stress as we know them were not introduced into choral music until after the Renaissance period. Renaissance works lacked a clearly defined beat. Instead, choral works had a gently flowing rhythm. This rhythm often varied among the melodic lines, creating a special challenge for singers of Renaissance compositions. Renaissance works were generally sung at a moderate tempo, without any unusual shifts from one tempo to another.

The dynamics of most Renaissance choral compositions were moderate and steady; there were typically no major shifts from loud to soft or soft to loud.

The texture of Renaissance choral music was primarily polyphonic. The separate voices within a work—as many as six voice parts—usually conveyed equal melodic interest. In general, the music of the period had a fuller, richer sound than did compositions from the Middle Ages.

The expressive aspects of choral music reflected the attitudes of the Renaissance: rational, balanced, and emotionally restrained. Many of the sacred works were intended not only to enhance religious worship but also to strengthen the influence of the Church.

Sacred choral works were performed with men and boys singing all the voice parts, although women participated in singing many madrigals. The tone quality was generally restrained, with little or no vibrato.

Elizabeth I crowned Queen of England
(died 1603)

1558

William Shakespeare begins play writing

c. 1590

1584

Sir Walter Raleigh discovers Virginia

1599

Globe Theatre built in London

Check Your Understanding

Recall

1. Why was the invention of a printing press with movable type such an important development during the Renaissance?
2. What is the difference between sacred music and secular music?
3. What is a Gregorian chant?
4. What is polyphony?
5. What is the difference between a mass and a motet?
6. What is a madrigal? How is it different from a motet?
7. What kind of tempo is typical of Renaissance choral music?
8. What kind of texture do most Renaissance choral works have?

Thinking It Through

1. Identify and describe a Renaissance choral work you have heard. In what ways is that work characteristic of the period?
2. What relationships can you identify between Renaissance music and music that is being composed and performed now? Explain your ideas.



Listening to . . .

Renaissance Music

CHORAL SELECTION

Desprez — “Ave Maria”

Josquin Desprez was a Flemish Renaissance composer. He was born about the year 1440 and died 1521. He enjoyed an international career and spent much of his time in Italy. His music strongly influenced later composers.

The motet “Ave Maria” is an a cappella choral work set to a sacred Latin text that is not part of the main mass of the Catholic church. It was often used at vesper services at sunset. “Ave Maria” is a four-voice setting of a Latin prayer to the Virgin Mary.

INSTRUMENTAL SELECTION

Dowland — “The Most Sacred Queen Elizabeth, Her Galliard”

John Dowland (1563–1626) was a well-known English Renaissance composer and lutenist. He published eight books of music during his lifetime. As a court musician to the minor aristocracy and to the King of Denmark, he wrote many secular works—both songs and instrumental—as well as sacred pieces. Although his compositions were very popular with the middle class, it was not until five years before his death that he was recognized by the English Court and appointed as one of the King’s Lutes to the Court of England.

A *galliard* is a composition written for social dancing. Galliards from the period 1590 to 1625 were plentiful and have a musical substance and interest far beyond the needs of functional dance music. Those written for keyboard and lute often display considerable brilliance. Each strain is followed by a variation enlivened by scales, runs, and other kinds of figuration, instead of a customary repetition of the strain. The use of *hemiola* is one consistent feature of the galliard throughout most of its history.