

Unit 2:

RENAISSANCE MUSIC



INDEX:

1. RELIGIOUS vocal music
2. SECULAR vocal music
3. INSTRUMENTAL music

basic vocabulary

To achieve: lograr.

Consort/ensemble: grupo de instrumentos.

Counterpoint: contrapunto

Genre: género.

Liturgical: litúrgica.

Made up: compuesto de

Prayer: oración.

Throughout: a lo largo de

Renaissance is the polyphony and counterpoint era. Voices achieve an elaborate independence throughout the 14th century. The importance of the interval of the third as a consonance is one of the most pronounced characteristics of Renaissance European music as well. The lyrics are very important and the musicians try to reflect the meaning of the text as best as they could.

The image shows a musical score for a Kyrie eleison setting, likely a motet. It consists of six staves of music, each with a vocal line and Latin lyrics. The lyrics are: "Ky-ri-e-e-lei-i-son, e-lei-i-son, e-lei-i-son." The music is polyphonic, with each voice part having its own melodic line. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words split across lines. The score is numbered 18 at the top.

1. RELIGIOUS VOCAL MUSIC

Religious music in the Renaissance period achieved an international character. The main composers travelled and worked throughout Europe.

Principal liturgical forms in the Renaissance period were motets and masses.

Motet is a religious piece of music made up of several parts with lyrics in Latin. The name comes from the old French *mot* (word). Normally the texture is polyphonic.

Mass is a choral composition about the main prayers of the Eucharistic liturgy (Kyrie Eleison, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei).

The most important composers of religious vocal genres are Josquin des Prez, Orlando di Lasso, Giovanni Pierluigi de Palestrina, and Cristobal de Morales, Francisco Guerrero and Tomás Luis de Victoria from Spain.

2. SECULAR vocal music

Secular vocal music style is associated with the different national styles. Principal secular vocal genres included the madrigal and the chanson.

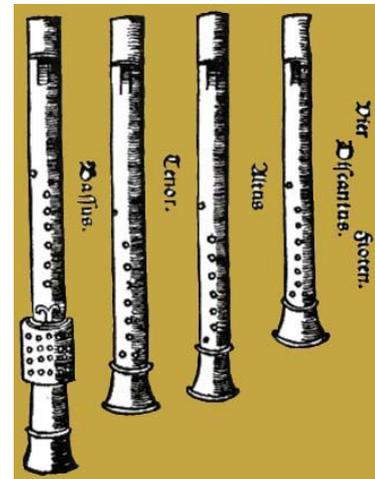
In a madrigal the number of voices varies from two to eight. It's written in Italian and normally the lyrics are about love. Marenzio and Gesualdo were important composers of madrigals. A chanson is a piece of music with lyrics in French. In general, chansons are easier than madrigals.

The most important characteristic of a madrigal or a chanson is the relationship between text and music: the music is a reflection of the text.



3. INSTRUMENTAL music

Purely instrumental music included consort music for recorder or viol and other instruments. A consort is an ensemble of different instruments that could be broken consort (if there are instruments from different families), or whole consorts (if all the instruments were from the same family). Common genres were toccata, prelude, ricercar, canzona and, for sure, dances (basse danse, pavane, galliard, saltarello allemande, courante, etc). Variation was one of the most important techniques of the composers and players. In Spain, we called them *diferencias*.



The first ensembles of instruments appeared in the Renaissance period. Normally, they were grouped by family or intensity.

The main brass instruments in the Renaissance were the cornet, the trumpet and the sackbut. In the woodwind family we could find recorders and traverse flutes.

The string family was used in many circumstances, both sacred and secular. A few members of this family include viol, lyre, lute and harpsichord.

Some Renaissance percussion instruments include the triangle, the tambourine, the bells and various kinds of drums.

In Spain we had a really interesting string instrument: the vihuela. The most important players were Narváez or Luys de Milán.

Renaissance instruments



Vihuela



Lute



Sackbut



Consort of viols

EXERCISES

1) Match the name of the instrument to the picture:

a)



1) Sackbut

2) Viol

b)



3) Lute

c)



4) Harpsichord

d)



2) Fill in the blanks:

- _____ is a religious piece of music made up of several parts with lyrics in Latin.
- _____ is a choral composition about the main prayers of the Eucharistic liturgy.
- In a _____ the number of voices varies from ____ to _____. It's written in Italian and normally the lyrics are about _____.

3) In madrigals and chansons, "the music is a reflection of the text". What do you think that means? How is the music a reflection of the text?