

Renaissance

1450-1600



Renaissance means 'rebirth.' It was a time of awakening for mankind. People started to love and appreciate arts and sciences, and the world changed completely.

After the Black Death (the bubonic plague, which wiped out a quarter of the population of Europe) life was completely different. People renewed their love of time on earth and the beautiful things around them. Many people

inherited land or possessions from dead relatives, and the cost of food became cheap; there were less people to feed.

There were fewer laborers in the world, so peasants would travel to farms and villages that would pay them to work.

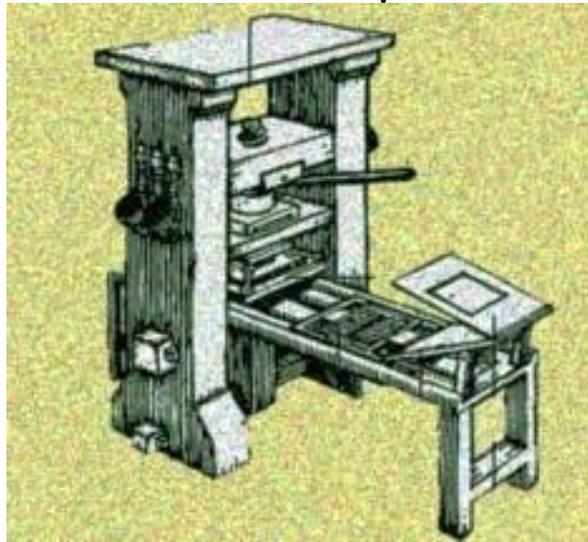
Great new tools were invented to speed up work of all kinds.

The common people began to have money and free time. Many common people chose to work hard and save their money. They began to own things, which made them even more money.

This money enabled them to give their children education, and these children became the first of the 'Middle Class.' This is a class of people who were not royalty, and yet had money and property. This group of people had skills that were valued: tailors, blacksmiths, shopkeepers, teachers, farmers, weavers, and many others.

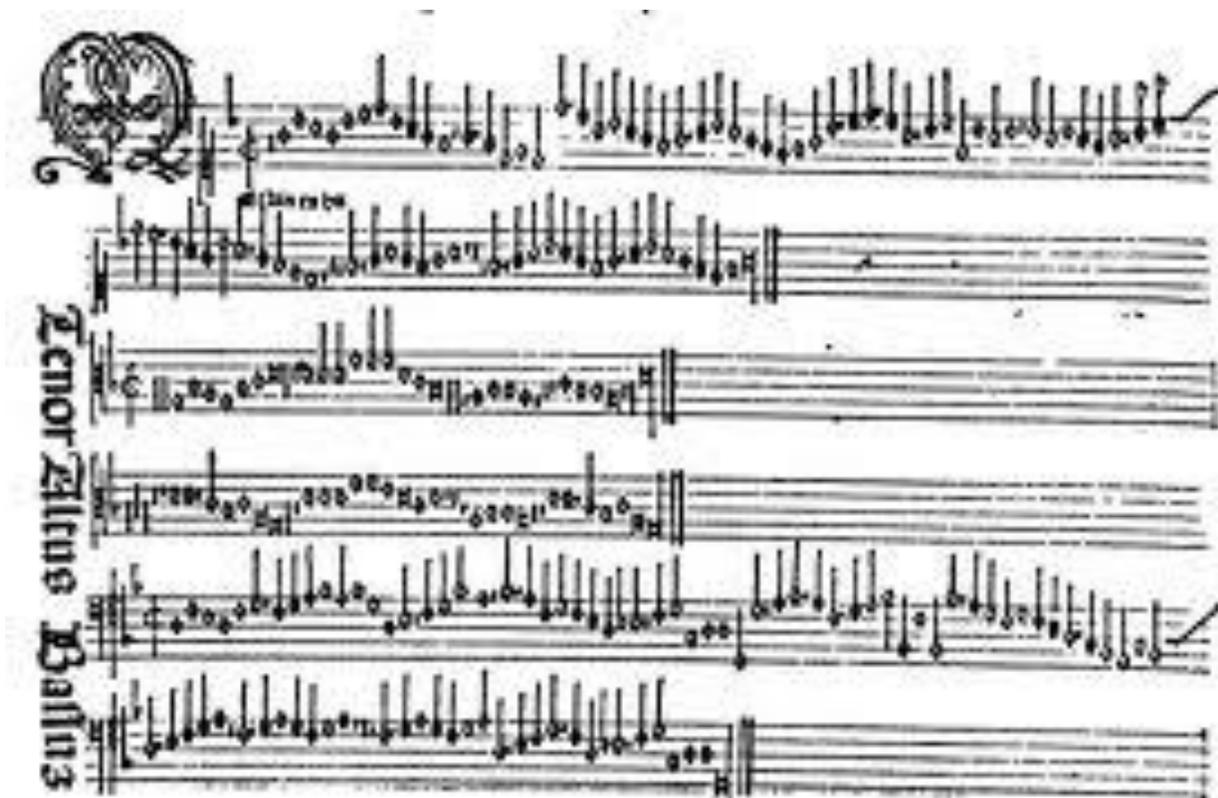
People with money and leisure time started to look for entertainment, and musicians rushed in to do their job. The arts and music took on a whole new importance in this age, was appreciated by all classes of people, and supported not only by the church and by royalty, but by the new middle class.

printing press (A device to stamp out books and music)



The printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg around the year 1440. The availability of printed materials to the masses changed the world forever. No longer could the educated elite dictate what the masses could know and do. The spread of information had an enormous effect on the culture, the politics and the religion of Europe.

Ottaviano Petrucci (famous music printer)



Petrucci was the first highly successful printer of written music. He successfully printed the music of the leading composers of the age beginning in 1501. He was famous for the small and delicate font and clearness of his three step printing process (the staff, then the notes, then the words) He was the first music printer to print polyphonic music and to print the works of Josquin des Prez. Because of this evolution of printed music and the newfound appreciation of secular music, it became possible for composers to write music for the whole world to share.

Secular Music (music that has nothing to do with religion)



Secular music becomes very popular in the Renaissance, because the church loses power. Secular music is the music that has nothing to do with the church. Church music (of any religion) is called *sacred music*. Middle class people want music for fun, music for parties and for dancing. They want music by excellent musicians, music that has nothing to do with being quiet in church.....

Josquin des Prez (famous composer of polyphony)



Josquin des Prez wrote over 300 published pieces of music. He wrote both sacred and secular music and published it all. He wrote wonderful melodies and was a master of the newly popular Polyphony.

Giovanni Palestrina (famous composer of sacred music)



Palestrina was an Italian composer of sacred music. He was famous for writing a great number of masses for the Catholic Church. The pope loved his writing, and loved that he was a local Italian boy, instead of a Frenchman, as so many composers seemed to be. He started his career as an organist, became a choir director, and then a famous composer of the Mass.

Madrigals (a capella party songs)



Madrigals were party songs. Madrigals were 3,4, or 5 part polyphonic songs, sung a capella. These songs were always secular and were performed for both the middle class and nobility. They were most often about love, dancing, and playing. Although one can also find many madrigals written on much naughtier subjects, like drinking and smoking.....

The Recorder (wooden whistle-like instrument)



The recorder joins the lute as one of the most popular instruments of the renaissance. The recorder is just a fancy wooden whistle with measured holes placed along the pipe which are covered and uncovered to produce different pitches. They were used mostly in secular music.

The Sackbut (early form of the trombone)



The sackbut was really the early trombone. The sackbut is a brass instrument with a slide that is moved to get various pitches. The sackbut came in many different sizes, from small soprano ones, to extremely huge and heavy bass sizes.

Michelangelo (famous painter and sculptor)



Michelangelo did his famous paintings during the renaissance. Many great artists and writers joined with musicians to create masterful pieces of art. Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and sculpted the famous Statue of David in 1504.

Leonardo D Vinci (artist, scientist, and inventor)



Leonardo was perhaps the most famous 'renaissance man,' an inventor and architect, a scientist and an artist. He is best known for his paintings of 'The Last Supper,' in 1505, and the 'Mona Lisa,' in 1507.

Christopher Columbus (famous explorer)



'Columbus sailed the ocean blue, in the year 1492.....'

Columbus set off from Spain to find a water route to Asia. He promised the Spanish royalty that he would find a quicker and cheaper way to import the precious spices of the far east. What he did, was make 4 voyages to the New World that were the beginning of the European quest to colonize and conquer these new lands.

William Shakespeare (famous playwright)



When the middle class was itching for entertainment in the renaissance, Shakespeare was happy to provide it. A Successful playwright and shrewd businessman, Shakespeare wrote many famous plays including Romeo and Juliet, and a Midsummer Night's Dream.