

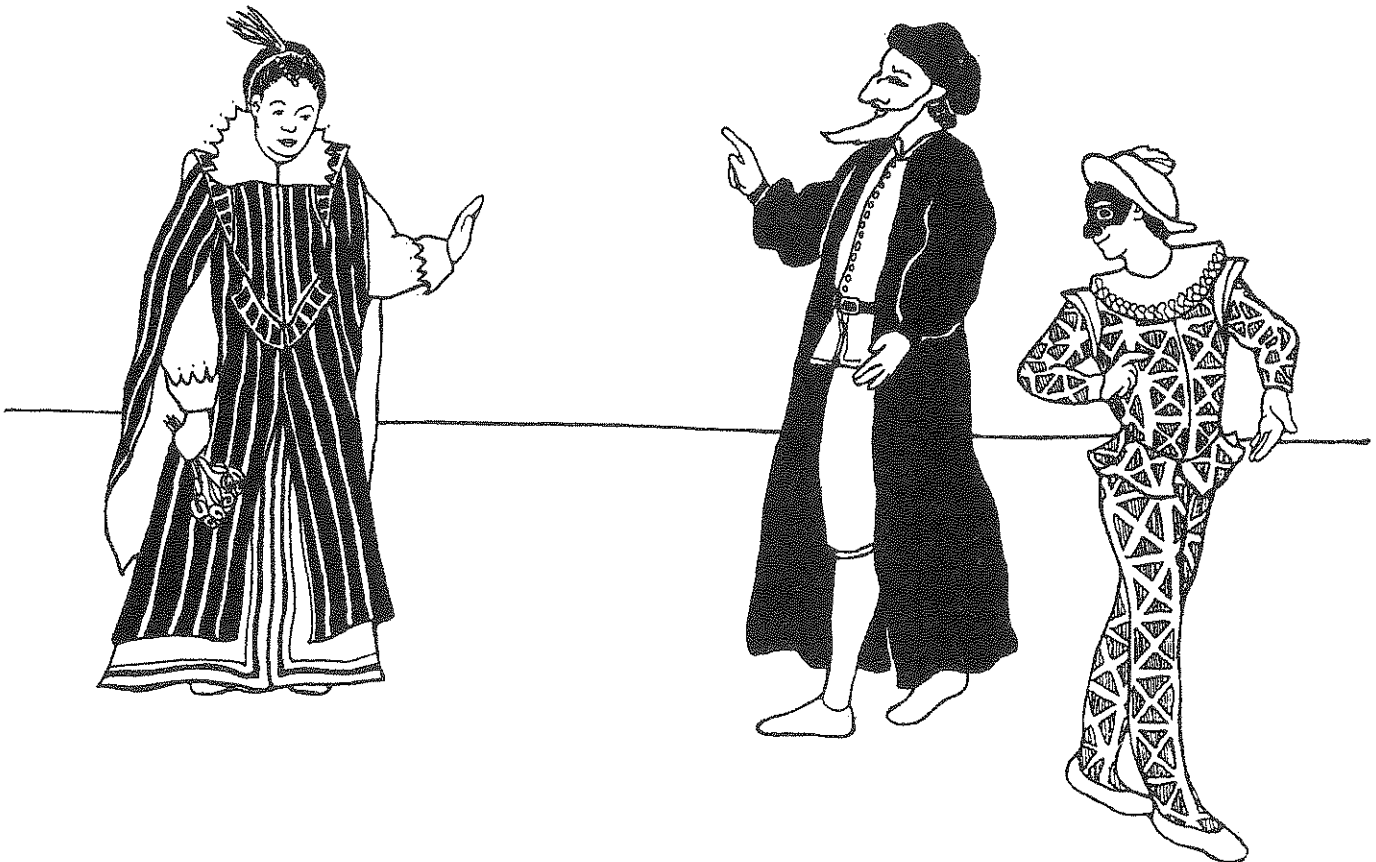
Commedia dell'Arte

A new form of theater developed in Italy around 1550. This was the Commedia dell'Arte, and it quickly spread across Europe and England, lasting until the late 18th century. The Commedia dell'Arte actors were professional troupes who travelled from city to city performing for peasants and noblemen alike. They had a set of stock characters and an outline of a plot around which they improvised the dialogue and action. Each performer always played the same character, with its fixed attributes and costume. Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Pulcinella were some of the characters of the Commedia dell'Arte. Part of the costume of many of the characters was a half mask which covered the eyes, cheeks, and nose. The masks not only showed the personality of the character but drew more attention to the body movements of the actors.

Have students put on short improvised plays using masks and characters they create.

After writing a short character description, have students make half-masks with features that show the personality they described. Use the pattern on page 70 or they can design their own.

In small groups have the students outline a simple scenario for their play using the characters they created, making sure that each has a part. Have the students present their own Commedia dell'Arte performance.



Greensleeves



Anonymous (English, 16th Century):

from *Faire, Sweet & Cruell* (Bis CD 257): track 9

Of all English Renaissance tunes, *Greensleeves* which may have been written by King Henry VIII of England is the most familiar, partly because of its modern use for the Christmas carol "What Child Is This?"



However, it was a wildly popular tune in its own day, and was arranged in endless different ways. Here we hear it sung much as it must have sounded in the 16th century. Although the text speaks in the voice of a man spurned by his lady love, it is here sung by a woman, which would not have bothered a Renaissance audience one bit. They had little concern for the gender of the singer of a song so long as the voice was a pleasant one. The message was conveyed by the

words and melody, and not by the person of the singer.

Alas my love, ye do me wrong
to cast me off discourteously:
And I have loved you so long,
Delighting in your companie.

Greensleeves was all my joy
Greensleeves was my delight:
Greensleeves was my heart of gold,
And who but my Ladie Greensleeves.

I have been readie at your hand,
to grant what ever you would crave
I have both waged life and land,
your love and good will for to have.

Refrain:

Greensleeves was all my joy, etc.

Thou couldst desire no earthly thing,
But still thou hadst it readily,

Thy musicke still to play and sing,
And yet thou wuldst not love me.

Refrain:

Greensleeves was all my joy, etc.

Greensleeves now farewell adieu
God I pray to prosper thee,
For I am still thy lover true
Come once again and love me.

Refrain:

Greensleeves was all my joy, etc.

To Listen to *Greensleeves* visit:

[http://www.empire.k12.ca.us/capistrano/Mike/capmusic/renaissance/Greensleeves\[1\].mid](http://www.empire.k12.ca.us/capistrano/Mike/capmusic/renaissance/Greensleeves[1].mid)

Music of Henry VIII's Court

The court of King Henry VIII was alive with music. King Henry VIII was a trained musician, with a large collection of musical instruments. The King played the lute and composed music. Pastime with Good Company was one of many compositions attributed to His Majesty. Music was used at the King's Court for both ceremonial occasions and court entertainment. Court dances were sumptuous occasions, with the King, Queen, and members of the Royal Court dancing pavans, galliards, and many other dances of the day.

In addition to the King's musicians, called "The King's Musicke," numerous towns employed musicians to play for civic, religious, and private occasions. Their town bands, called "Waites" played a variety of instruments. Many instruments that they played, as well as instruments used at court, might look somewhat familiar to modern eyes, and indeed evolved into the instruments we use today.

Recorders and flutes were both pleasing to Renaissance ears. They were made in sets, with various sizes from the large great bass to tiny soprano and played together "in consort." There were also "consorts" of viols, which look like modern cellos, but differ from them in many respects. Ancestors of modern violins were present too, having been brought over from the continent. One instrument that did not survive beyond the Renaissance was the krummhorn. This "I" shaped reed instrument, with a cap covering the reed, produced a strange muted sound, and had a very limited range. Though the krummhorn died out at the end of the Renaissance period, its cousin the bagpipe lives on.

At one time, the court of King Henry VIII had 63 musicians employed, including two instrument repairmen! A musical king made this a wonderful time for musicians.

Popular and Social Dance

The earliest documentation of the social dances popular in Western Europe is from the Middle Ages. The predominant dance forms of the early Middle Ages were chain dances, in which the participants linked in a line and accompanied themselves with singing. Carol, reign, branle, and farandole were the dances most frequently mentioned in early literature. In the later Middle Ages, members of the feudal nobility concerned themselves with chivalry, knighthood, and troubadour songs, about courtly love. In this environment, couple dances began to achieve popularity. The estampie was one of the first formal couple dances; it was a slow, stately dance performed to instrumental accompaniment in the courts of Europe.

As humanism and an interest in Classical Greece and Rome became powerful ideas, dances tended to reflect secular values. In their ordered patterns, the dances of the Renaissance seem to mirror the fascination with the movements of the planets and other celestial bodies. Many of the dances were created by professional dancing masters hired by the nobility. For the first time, instruction manuals became available, showing the steps and patterns of the various court dances – the trend-setting dances of the 15th through the 18th century. The dances taught by the masters were balli and balletos, the bassadanza, and its northern counterpart, the basse dance. Dances with simple movements and gentle shifts of weight by couples who touched hands at arms length, the basse danse proceeded around a hall in a quiet stately manner. When the Italian noblewoman Catherine de Medicis became Queen of France in 1547, she brought to the French Royal court not only Italian influences, but also her Italian dancing master.

Dance manuals published between 1550 and 1630 describe dances such as the pavane, galliard, allemande, courante, saltarello, and volta as well as circular branles and progressive long ways dances (in which each couple repeats the dance pattern with one new couple after another). The sense of order and harmony, so important during the Renaissance, gave rise to formalized suites of dances; pavaues, for example were followed by galliards. The pavane replaced the basse danse as the usual processional dance. The galliard, with its spring leaps and kicks became a dance of male display to a more subdued female partner.

Renaissance Music

As with art, architecture, exploration, and literature, music also made some dramatic changes during the Renaissance era. The development of the violin, the flute, and the organ gave rise to a demand for new musical forms. Up until the 1600's, most music was written for and performed in churches. Now music was also written for theater and court entertainment. Below are some people, places, and things involved in these new changes.

The Court of Burgundy

Under the patronage of Phillip the Good and Charles the Bold during the 15th century, Guillaume Dufay and Gilles Binchois wrote many compositions. They wrote music for Masses in the Roman Catholic Churches, and popular songs called chansons. *Chansons* is French for songs. Written for several voices and two or more instruments, these were popular court entertainment.

Flemish Composers

Jean d'Ockeghem, Josquin des Prez, Heinrich Isaac, and Clement Janequin were all well-known for their excellent works in religious music, chorals, and chansons.

Madrigals

Around the 1500's, madrigals became popular. These were vocal settings of Italian poems. They were often about unrequited love and were intense and expressive. Luca Marenzio of Italy and Thomas Morley of England wrote many beautiful madrigals.

Ayres

This was another popular vocal form from England. The ayre was a song for a solo voice with a lute or viol accompaniment. Most of these were very serious and emotional.

Baroque Music

This term refers to music composed from 1600 to 1750. The music compositions were huge and elaborate, requiring great numbers of singers and players to perform them. It began in Florence, Italy, when a group wanted to revive the Greek drama. Instead, they produced something entirely new—opera. One of the most daring composers of this new time was Claudio Monteverdi.

Stringed Instruments

The lute was a popular stringed instrument at the beginning of the Renaissance. It is referred to in the beginning paragraph of *The High Voyage* and pictured on the "Women at Court" pages of *The Renaissance* by Tim Wood. By the late Middle Ages, simple bowed instruments began to appear, called viols. These were used to perform chamber music. By the early 16th century, the first violin appeared, and eventually the complete family: violin, viola, cello, and double bass. The development of the violin family enabled a greater range of music to be written. Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737) was the most famous of violin makers during the late Renaissance. His instruments, some of which are still in existence today, are prized collector items.

Organ Music

Renaissance composers like Giovanni Gabrieli and Jan Pieters Sweelinck wrote many pieces for the organ. Girolamo Frescobaldi perfected some of the main forms of organ music: the toccata, fugue, and partita.

Renaissance Music

Find the words associated with Renaissance music in the puzzle below.

Ayres	Baroque	Burgundy	Chansons	Composers
Compositions	Instruments	Lute	Madrigals	Music
Opera	Organ	Renaissance	Stradivari	Viol
Chamber Music		Chorals	Violin	Vocal

B N S O L E L J Q Z D E T C G V S G R B Y H Q
 C D C O I D A N L L E B O Q V O Q T E Q E G S
 G A I V W G W A A W U M A A Y Q Q F U L O N Q
 M V Y F K D C E L K P Q F T J L D I Z O B X I
 S R L R T O R O N O D O O V I O L I N T A P L
 T L F L V N B D S Q X Y O Z V H P B H Z D R S
 R B A R E N A I S S A N C E D L Q X Z X T M W
 A Y A G A P T O R S U U Z Y U X K K M Y I C Z
 D X F Y I I F K L I U R Z Z J M B I S J O H R
 I A Q P O R I M C H A N S O N S P H Y M Z A O
 V H K N O K D B X E J P X G T F A B P Z Y M L
 A H S T I S S A A T A R E P O E S O O M F B S
 R X M M P Q E T M U B S T P N S S Z R S I E N
 I J V C K K B X V L U E C E Y E Y E D L E R O
 K D K O W T T C S R L R I P R M X R O A R M R
 E O Y D N U G R U B X Y S S Z B Y D M R P U Z
 A Q O V U Q B L V W M A U U Y F O L B O X S P
 T Q F N G Z E U Z C Y J M Y O W R X M H P I S
 Z Y Z U T X T U X Z X O J V H X G W Z C C C A
 H O P Y X V Q O E U Q O R A B E A T V N D W S
 I N S T R U M E N T S E G H M F N O L Z X X L
 J E J K J N G H P M T T I C Q J E U I D L L B