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Renaissance Music

European music came into its own during the Renaissance. No longer was music just background for the words to a song. It became an art form.

There were many interesting developments in music during this time period. One of these, as unrelated as it may sound, was the invention of the printing press. Along with literature, news, and advertisements, the printing press also allowed for the publication of sheet music. This made music available to the public for the first time.

Before the invention of the printing press, the average person could only learn a new song if he memorized it by ear. The only way to copy a piece of music was to rewrite it by hand in the same way that monks made handwritten copies of the Bible.



In the 1500s, more and more people became interested in music. Many types of music flourished during the Renaissance. There was church music, instrumental dance music, and many types of songs.

Masses and motets were traditional forms of church music. A mass was a section of a church service set to music. Some were performed for actual church services while others were meant to be listened to on their own. A motet was a composition for several voices singing sacred text. Giovanni Palestrina was one composer of religious music in the Renaissance.

A new type of church music also became popular during this time. Chorales were simple hymns meant to be sung by an entire congregation, not just choir members who had been trained in music. Chorales became popular in Germany during the period of religious change known as the Reformation.

At the same time that church music was changing and progressing, so was secular, or non-religious, music. Composers were hired to create elaborate pieces of instrumental music for ballroom dances. In the courts of the nobles, musicians performed complex pieces of music with parts for several instruments all playing at the same time. Lutes and viols were popular instruments for dance music. So were recorders, harpsichords, shawms, and krummhorns. Often a group of musicians, known as an ensemble or a consort, would play for the dancers.

Songs, simpler tunes with lyrics, were popular with people of all classes. Many paintings of Renaissance scenes show a singer playing a lute to accompany his song. Lute songs were very popular, but so were unaccompanied songs. One favorite type was the madrigal. Madrigals were written to be sung by a small group without the aid of musical instruments. These songs were often about love; many of them told a sad tale. Still, they were performed frequently at festivals, weddings, and other celebrations. Madrigals were divided into verses which were separated by a repeating chorus, like many popular songs of today.

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Many of these types of Renaissance music had something in common. They were written for several voices or several instruments. The voices or instruments did not all play the same tune. Each one had its own line of music. This type of music with several independent lines of music to be played at the same time is known as polyphony. It is often considered the Renaissance's great contribution to music.

With the idea of polyphony, European music took a giant step forward. Compositions became more elaborate. Composers began to create long musical compositions. Music became a fine art. It was well on its way into the age of the great composers.

Renaissance Music

Questions

- _____ 1. This article is about music during the _____.
 - A. 1300s
 - B. 1960s
 - C. 1700s
 - D. 1500s

- _____ 2. _____ were forms of church music.
 - A. masses
 - B. motets
 - C. chorales
 - D. all of the above

- _____ 3. The invention of the printing press made _____ widely available.
 - A. sheet music
 - B. live music
 - C. orchestra concerts
 - D. all of the above

- _____ 4. Chorales were popular with members of the _____.
 - A. Catholic Church
 - B. Reformation
 - C. cathedrals
 - D. traditional churches

- _____ 5. Music for _____ was often instrumental music, or music without words.
 - A. ballroom dances
 - B. festivals
 - C. masses
 - D. church services

- _____ 6. A *shawm* is a _____.
 - A. musical instrument
 - B. piece of sheet music
 - C. type of music
 - D. none of the above

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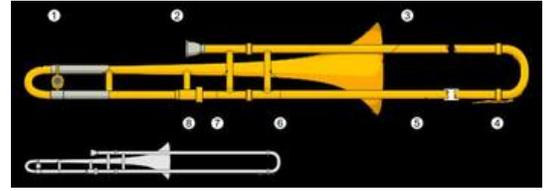
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- _____ 7. One name for a group of musicians playing together is a _____.
- A. lute
 - B. shawm
 - C. krummhorn
 - D. consort
- _____ 8. This type of music with several independent lines of music to be played at the same time was developed during the Renaissance.
- A. ensemble
 - B. krummhornology
 - C. polyphony
 - D. mass

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How Does a Trombone Work?

Caption: 1. tuning slide 2. mouthpiece 3. bell 4. water key 5. main slide



6. second slide brace 7. first slide brace 8. slide lock ring

How does a trombone work? With no keys to press, what makes it play different notes? How does a trombone player get the notes just right?

More than anything else, the sounds produced by a trombone depend on the ears of the trombone player. A trombone player, more so than most other musical instrument players, needs to have a good ear for music to make his playing sound good.

Here is how it works.

A trombone player begins to play a note by buzzing his lips on the mouthpiece of the trombone. This sets up a vibrating air column in the body of the trombone. Vibrations of different wavelengths produce different sounds, or different musical notes.

There are two things that affect the wavelength of the vibration and what note is produced. The first is the position of the trombone's slide. The second is the way the trombonist blows into the mouthpiece.

A trombone has seven basic slide positions, but it is up to the trombonist to find each position on the long slide. That is why a trombonist must have a good ear. He must be able to tell by sound just how far to push or pull the slide for each position.

Notes with a low pitch are produced by pushing the slide out to its farthest position, making the body of the trombone as long as possible. Notes with a high pitch are produced by pulling the slide in to its closest position, making the body of the trombone as short as possible. In-between notes are produced on the in-between positions.

With no other adjustments, the seven slide positions alone would produce only seven notes. So other adjustments must be made to produce the full range of notes possible on a trombone. These adjustments are made by the trombonist adjusting his mouth position. For example, a trombonist can tighten his lips and blow harder to produce a higher buzzing sound for a higher pitched note. By making small adjustments to his mouth position and the way he blows a note, a trombonist can get several notes from each slide position. These small adjustments to the mouth position are known as embouchure.

The sounds produced by a trombone can also be adjusted by the use of a mute. A mute is placed on the bell of

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the trombone to dampen the sound. Muting a trombone changes its tone and can even make it sound like a different instrument. There are mutes made especially for trombones, and the rubber ends of bathroom plungers are also used as mutes.

Trombones have a unique ability to play "between the notes." When the trombonist slides the slide as he plays from one note to another, he produces a full range of pitches from one note to the next. This is a special effect that trombones can provide, but it is not used frequently.

Trombones are used in many types of music. In orchestra music, a trombone generally plays harmony, not the main tune. Orchestra music for trombone is usually written on the lower, or bass, clef.

Trombones are also used in many other kinds of music. Some of these are jazz, salsa, swing, rock, and rhythm and blues. And trombonists don't play harmony all the time. There are pieces of music that feature the trombone and other music with room for trombone solos and improvisations.

Trombones can be enjoyed in many kinds of musical presentations from orchestra concerts to small jazz ensembles. They can be seen in big bands, brass bands, military bands, and marching bands. And of course, they can also be seen and heard in the brass section of school bands.

How Does a Trombone Work?

Questions

- _____ 1. Buzzing is the way that a trombonist _____.
- changes the slide position
 - blows air into a trombone
 - mutes the trombone
 - hums along with the trombone
- _____ 2. Buzzing air into a trombone causes _____ in the body of the trombone.
- problems
 - valves to move
 - keys to strike
 - vibrations
- _____ 3. Different sounds are produced by different _____ of vibrations.
- wave heights
 - wavelengths
 - colors
 - wave numbers

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_____ 4. The part of a trombone that allows it to play "between the notes" is the _____.
A. mute
B. mouthpiece
C. slide
D. bell

_____ 5. For orchestra concerts, trombone music is usually written in the _____ clef.
A. bass
B. treble

_____ 6. Trombones are only used in orchestral and classical music.
A. true
B. false

7. How is a trombone different from most other brass instruments?

8. What ability is especially important for a trombone player to have?
