

# Renaissance Music 1450 - 1600

This period takes its name from rebirth. Italian in origin the movement gradually spread; its influence reached English music towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth I. This was a time of great exploration and discovery - by travel and through scientific exploration.

By the end of the 16th century, music was becoming very popular and both church and secular music flourished as they freed themselves from the restrictive techniques of medieval music.

Unaccompanied choral music was contrapuntal and more closely related to the meanings of the words. Imitation between voices became unified. Harmony became more important and expressive, with a more controlled use of dissonance than before. Instruments assumed a more important role. Towards the end of this period the first operas were written - with the introduction of recitative.

## Typical Forms

Mass, Motet (Church music), Madrigal, ballet, ayre (secular music)  
Fantasia, division on a ground, Various dance movements,  
Instrumental music.

## Fashionable Instruments

Recorder, Lute, viol (often in collections of different sizes called consorts)  
Harpsichord (or 'virginals' in England)

## Composers

Tallis c1505-1585  
Byrd 1543-1623  
Morley c1557-1602  
Dowland 1563-1626