

EXPLANATION 2.1: THE RENAISSANCE: INTRODUCTION.

EL RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance is the period of the history of art that, in music, spans from 1420 to 1600 approximately. In these years commerce developed considerably, for this reason the bourgeoisie rised to important positions due to the power that obtained. On the other hand, the feudal lords faced kings who created alliances with the bourgeoisie. State cities are also formed and vigorous monarchies are installed to unify territories.

Some important dates such as the fall of Constantinople held by the Turks in 1453, the invention of the printing press by Gutemberg in 1450, the first musical publications by Ottaviano Petrucci in 1455 and the arrival in America by Columbus in 1492 mark the 15th century. Artistically the classical culture of ancient Greece is revalued and in music the medieval poetry of Francesco Petrarca is admired and studied to be musicalized.

Musicians were still dependent on patrons who pay them for their services as composers. Patrons were usually kings, nobles or important figures of the ecclesiastical world (popes and cardinals) whose prestige is enlarged by having the best musicians in their courts. Musicians were an element of prestige and to liven up trips and parties but also to compose music for the churches or chapels of Popes, emperors, kings and princes.

The music of this period is essentially polyphonic and "a cappella" vocal music is the basic model. Counterpoint is developed (relationship between the voices of a composition). However, it is in the Renaissance that autonomous instrumental music begins to be formed, which will be consolidated in the Baroque period.

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What dates cover the beginning and end of the Renaissance?**
- 2. Why does the bourgeoisie rise to important positions?**
- 3. Write two important dates of this period and the event that relates them.**
- 4. Why was Petrucci important in the history of music?**
- 5. What was revalued in this period and what poet was important?**
- 6. What is a patron and who specifically were the patrons of the Renaissance?**
- 7. What functions did musicians have in the Renaissance at the court of someone powerful?**
- 8. What was the basic model of Renaissance music?**
- 9. What is counterpoint?**
- 10. What begins to be formed in this period and consolidates in the Baroque period?**