

Possible Discussion Questions

1. During the Renaissance period, composers began drawing on the influence of other art forms, such as fine arts and literature. Do composers and musicians do this today? Can you think of any examples?

Listening #1: The Renaissance composer Monteverdi's musical setting of the poem *Hor che'l ciel e la terra* by the Renaissance poet Petrarch. Previously, many composers only set music to liturgical texts from the church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMxV4TbA8sM>

Listening #2: *Third of May / Ōdaigahara* by Fleet Foxes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GqgNebPm50>

This song is based on the painting *The Third of May 1808* by Francisco Goya

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Third_of_May_1808#/media/File:El_Tres_de_Mayo,_by_Francisco_de_Goya,_from_Prado_thin_black_margin.jpg

2. It was also common for composers to borrow from each other. Some ways in which they would do this was by using someone else's melody, or by setting the same text as someone else but to different music. Is this still common today? In which genres of music? How do people usually react?

Listening #1: This short song from the Renaissance, *L'homme armé*, was borrowed by many composers in writing masses https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-E2_iNmYOE

Listening #2: This melody is used in the first movement of Guillaume Dufay's *Missa L'Homme Armé* (from 0:45), in which the tenor sings an elongated version of the melody, called the *cantus firmus*, which functions as the basis for the rest of the voices.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibSeyIbNGYA&t=49s>

Listening #3: A-ha's *Take on Me* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djV11Xbc914>

Listening #4: *Feel This Moment* by Pitbull (feat. Christina Aguilera). The quotation comes in at 0:41 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LU4EAEit0A>

- a. Listen to the synthesizer melody that comes in near the beginning of *Take on Me*. Compare immediately to 0:41 in *Feel This Moment*. The quotation is heard with a slightly different orchestration, but the same melody.
 - b. Sampling, also common today, is when a producer takes an exact sound recording from an existing piece of music and inserts it into a new one. This is especially common in hip-hop music.
 - c. From a negative point of view, sometimes new songs will have similar chord progressions or melodies to older songs, often unintentionally, without having obtained the proper permissions from the original artist. This has occasionally led to copyright lawsuits.
3. Songs like the ones featured in this concert were popular music in their day. Just like we have pop music on the radio, they had their own version. Many people played an instrument like the lute and sang these songs with their friends. What elements of this music are similar to the pop songs of today?

Listening #1: John Dowland's lute song 'Come again, sweet love doth now invite'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpvAtdzPV78>

Listening #2: A modern boy-band adaptation of the same song
<https://vimeo.com/15227017>

- a. The Dowland lute song features a repetitive structure with verses and choruses, like nearly any modern pop song.
 - b. One difference between this song and many popular songs on the radio today is that the focus is on musical expression, rather than on dance beats.
 - c. As a love song, it bears many resemblances to today's popular music, just in a different language.
4. By the end of the Renaissance period, composers could gain income from multiple sources – not just from writing music for the church. Sometimes they wrote for wealthy patrons, but they were also able to make money writing music for amateur players, which could reach a bigger audience after the invention of the printing press. How would this have changed the style of music that composers were writing? What was their purpose now as composers? How had this changed?

Listening #1: 15th-century harmonized sacred chant, Guillaume Dufay's *Ave Maris Stella*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mexEtyEUw4>

Listening #2: early 17th-century secular consort song, William Byrd's *Fair Britain Isle*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5CE_rQ0-DQ

Listening #3: The ukulele has become very popular with amateur players, much like the

lute was in its day <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyQ3xg5LQwM>

- a. Composers in the Renaissance who were writing for amateur players would have written simpler music that was more accessible for players with less training.
- b. Composers were also writing treatises that focused on specific aspects of playing, such as the ornamentation of melodies.
- c. Many pop songs have simple chord progressions with few chords, making them easier for amateur players to play on their own.
- d. Modern classical composers write in a range of styles, from difficult works for highly trained performers, to works designed for young, developing players, bands, and orchestras.