

# Musicians of the Renaissance



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## *John Dunstaple*

John Dunstaple was one of the first renaissance musicians. He composed a type of music called 'polyphonic' music, where the multiple singers overlap their voices, singing different melodies. Polyphonic music was almost always religious and was a big part of the renaissance. Though Dunstaple did not invent the style himself, he truly helped push forward the practice of music. He also had a huge influence on our modern music, with his invention of chords with triads.

Did You Know? Many of the pictures depicting Dunstaple feature a not particularly attractive man with a big nose, yet there are a few that portray him as a handsome man, proving that sometimes you can't trust the records of history!



## *Thomas Tallis*

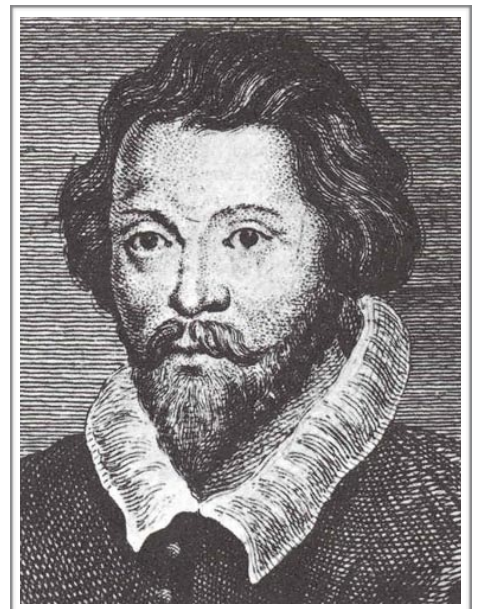
Thomas grew up in a crowded household with another 6 kids, but was a great musician none the less. It is believed that he wrote many of his famous songs while he was still a teenager! He composed and performed for Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth the First. He was a mentor and partner to William Byrd, and in his lifetime, achieved many great advancements for music.

Here is a link to a performance of one of his songs titled 'If Ye Love Me': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6RgaPTo4hE>

## *William Byrd*

William Byrd was a great, english composer who wrote polyphony, keyboard and consort music. His ability to write music for many different instruments was one of the reasons Byrd's music is so well known.

Here is a link to a performance of one of his songs titled "Agnus Dei - Mass for five voices": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqqoag8s1E>



Some of William Byrd and Thomas Tallis's best works were done together. In 1575, Queen Elizabeth gave them permission to print and publish music, which around the time was a great privilege. In modern day society, we may take the ability to reproduce music for granted, but we would never have been able to if these musicians did not start the trend.

Tallis was a great partner and mentor to Byrd, so when he Tallis died, Byrd was devastated, and wrote a song titled 'Ye Sacred Muses' in honor of his partner. Here are the lyrics:

Ye sacred Muses, race of Jove,  
whom Music's lore delighteth,  
Come down from crystal heav'ns above  
to earth where sorrow dwelleth,  
In mourning weeds, with tears in eyes:  
Tallis is dead, and Music dies

### *Giovanni Gabrieli*

Giovanni Gabrieli was a very influence musician who helped with the shift from renaissance music to baroque music. His music was always dramatic and religious as he was a huge fan of high-impact music. Later on in his life, Gabrieli's music changed into more of a homophonic style.

Homophonic music is more similar to the typical singing style we regularly hear today. The idea of polyphonic music is to layer different melodies over the top of each other, whereas the idea of homophonic is to have the same melody sung in maybe different octaves or different styles.



### *Orlando Gibbons*

Orlando Gibbons was a leading composer in England in the early 17th century. He was alive for the end of the renaissance and his music was similar to the baroque style, which was the main music style after the renaissance.

Gibbons wrote around thirty fantasias for viols, a number of madrigals, many popular verse anthems and even songs for the keyboard! Six of his pieces were used in the first printed collection of keyboard music in England, titled 'Parthenia'.