



Anne & Rob Burns as A Reasonable Facsimile

“Music of Shakespeare’s Time”

Entertaining and Educational PK-12 Programs
For Schools, Libraries, and Community Centers

“RINASCENZA!:

Italian Renaissance Music”

Upper Elementary, Middle School, Jr. High, High School - Study Guide

INTRODUCTION

“RINASCENZA!” is an entertaining and educational musical presentation featuring Italian Renaissance music on an assortment of appropriate instruments including tamburo (drum), fiffaro (fife), pifarro (shawm), chitarrino (guitar), corno torto (crumhorn), flauto dolce (recorder), lauto (lute), lira tedesca (hurdy gurdy), surdelina (bellows pipes), and viola da gamba (viola da gamba). In this lively show, Anne and Rob tell about each of the Renaissance replica musical instruments they play. “RINASCENZA!” was developed for a series of performances by A Reasonable Facsimile at “Weekends at Two” for the Detroit Institute of Arts during Magnificenza! the exhibit of Italian Renaissance art.

SOURCES

An excellent sourcebook about the Renaissance is *Handbook of the Renaissance* (1999) by Lee McRae. Ms. McRae's book is suggested for grades 7-12, but reviewers have also thought it useful for Middle School and it's a good resource for teachers. For more details about Shakespeare's England, look at *Daily Life in Elizabethan England* by Jeffrey L. Singman (Greenwood Press, 1995). Try your school or public library for other sources. Look under the subject headings: “Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616,” “Renaissance,” “Renaissance — Juvenile literature,” and “Musical instruments — History.”

For “mood music,” A Reasonable Facsimile has a CD *Popular Music of the Renaissance*, available. Part One, *About As Close As You Can Get* is for general audiences and Part Two, *The Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow*, is for children, especially lower elementary ages. There is also a song booklet called *The Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow* which contains the words and music to the songs in Part Two of the CD. CDs are \$15 each, and song booklets are \$10 each. Postage is included to addresses in the U.S. Make checks payable to Second from the Bottom. Order from Second from the Bottom Music, PO Box 80294, Rochester MI 48308.

There is a website that tells about Renaissance musical instruments: Musica Antiqua's "Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Instruments." It features a picture, a sound byte, a description and a bibliography for each instrument.

(OVER →)

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Before the Performance

Introduce the performance: ‘Today [or soon] we will have the opportunity to see a musical production called “RINASCENZA!” performed by a duo called A Reasonable Facsimile. The show is about music and life in the Renaissance. Two professional musicians, Anne and Rob Burns, will be playing old-style musical instruments and wearing Renaissance costumes.’

Translate the name, “A Reasonable Facsimile:” Facsimile = copy, A Reasonable Facsimile = a pretty close copy. Anne and Rob are a pretty close copy of Renaissance musicians, but we can never know exactly what the music back then sounded like because there were no sound recordings made in the Renaissance. People today can only look in books and play the written music on facsimiles of instruments used back then.

Ideas for discussion:

- Discuss the Renaissance - (The period 400 years ago in Europe) Just how long ago is 400 years? Are students' parents, grandparents 400 years old? How did people live 400 years ago? Did they have computers, electricity, automobiles, CD or cassette players?
- Discuss what sort of communities existed in the Renaissance — Farms, villages, large cities. Have students visited a Renaissance fair or a recreation village (such as the Michigan Renaissance Festival or Greenfield Village)?
- Discuss English literature of the late Renaissance, especially the plays of William Shakespeare. Have students seen any of Shakespeare's plays?
- Discuss how young people might have lived in the Renaissance — Modern schools versus home schooling, apprenticeships. Modern toys and games versus making own entertainment.

After the Performance

- Have younger students draw a picture of something they remembered and liked in the production.
- Discuss favorite parts or songs in the show.
- Have students read an abridgement of a play by William Shakespeare or watch a video of one of the BBC productions. If watching a video, students should listen carefully to the background music — can they identify any of the instruments played? Are any instruments visible and/or played on the production sets?
- Encourage students to use the library to answer some of their questions about the Renaissance, or to research a part of history which interests them.
- Talk about careers in music, theatre and dance.

The Instruments

(Depending on the length of the presentation, students may or may not see all of the instruments listed below)

tamburo (drum), fiffaro (fife), pifarro (shawm), chitarrino (guitar), viola da gamba, corno torto (crumhorn), fluvio (3-hole pipe), ossa (bones), flauto dolce (recorder), lauto (lute), lira tedesca (hurdy gurdy), surdelina (bellows pipes), piva (bagpipe)