

Composers of the Month.

Every morning that you come into school this year, you'll hear music filling the corridor! Each month we'll travel back in time to a different musical world and meet two exciting composers. Get ready to discover new sounds, tap your feet, and maybe even find a new favourite tune!

September – Renaissance music

Renaissance music (about 500 years ago) was all about beauty and harmony. People sang in **choirs** using many different voices that blended together, like puzzle pieces. The main genre was **sacred music** for church, but there were also lively **dances and songs** for fun. Common instruments included the **lute** (like a guitar), **recorders**, **viols** (early string instruments), and small **organs**. When you listen, try to hear how the voices weave in and out, almost like a conversation. A fun piece to listen to is “**Spem in alium**” by **Thomas Tallis**, which has **40 different voices singing at once**—it’s like a giant musical rainbow!



Thomas Tallis

Born: around 1505

Died: 23 November 1585

Musical Period: Renaissance (c. 1400–1600)

featured rich, polyphonic vocal music, including sacred forms like masses and motets and secular forms like madrigals and chansons.

- Tallis was a famous English composer and organ player.
- Tallis composed sacred choral music for the church, sung by choirs. He was famous for using **polyphony** — different voices singing independent melodies together. He also wrote simpler music in English for the new Church of England, like the anthem “If Ye Love Me.”
- Tallis played the organ and was paid £2 a year to lead people singing in Dover Priory in Kent when he was 26.
- Many people think Tallis was one of England's best composers.



Born: In Italy 1544

Died:1590

Musical Period: Renaissance (c. 1400–1600)
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sacred forms like masses and motets
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Maddalena Casulana

- Maddalena Casulana was an Italian **composer, singer, and lutenist** (someone who plays the lute, a guitar-like instrument).
- She was the **first woman in history to have her music printed and published**—a big achievement at a time when almost all composers were men.
- She wrote **madrigals**—beautiful songs for several voices, often about love, nature, or poetry.
- Her madrigals use rich harmonies and emotional words. They sound gentle and expressive, like musical poems.
- Her first book of madrigals (in 1568) was dedicated to a duchess, showing that powerful women also supported women in music!
- Try listening to her *First Book of Madrigals* and imagine a group of friends singing together, weaving their voices like threads in a tapestry.