

Harken back to a time...

Musicians use instruments in vogue 500 years ago

IN CONCERT

What: Renaissance winds concert

Where: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 680 Courtney St.

When: 8 p.m. Sunday

Tickets: \$15 at the door

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Times Colonist

With recorders, crumhorns, shawms, zink, dulcian and sackbut, four Victoria musicians are recreating music from five centuries ago.

And what, pray tell, is a sackbut?

"There are various explanations about that name," said group founder Bill Jamieson with a chuckle. "It probably came from the French ... it's a precursor to the modern trombone and dates back to about the 14th century."

The wind band, called A Great Noyse, specializes in Renaissance music and will give a concert at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Sunday evening. The group formed three years ago when Jamieson bumped into an old friend, Stacey Boal, who had studied early music with him at



HANDOUT

A Great Noyse from left are: Cuyler Page, Stacey Boal, Bill Jamieson and Bob Fraser. They use instruments like zinks, crumhorns and shawms.

the University of British Columbia decades earlier. There are four in the group now and they play 26 reproduction instruments.

"Don't tell our wives, but it's been a handy excuse to buy expensive toys," said Jamieson, a former professional symphony musician, now a chartered accountant here.

Boal is a member of the Victoria Symphony, playing viola, and other members

are Bob Fraser, who plays trombone in the symphony, and Cuyler Page, curator of the B.C. Maritime Museum.

One of the most distinctive instruments they play is the crumhorn.

Used extensively in the Renaissance, it died out in the early part of the 17th century. "It has a strange nasal, buzzing sound and if we get a bunch together in consort it sounds almost like a chorus of kazoos,

only more subtle."

Why should people listen to Renaissance music?

"Because it's wonderfully tuneful, light-hearted and accessible to modern ears," Jamieson said.

"And it's when our modern music lexicon was born. All the conventions we have — triadic harmony, eight-bar musical phrases, repetition of themes — began at this time."

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