

BAROQUE (1600 – 1750)

Characteristics and Context:

- * *dramatic sense of energy and movement, strong contrasts*
- * *flamboyant ornamentation (trills, turns)*
- * *logical and precise to mimic the “perfect order” of the universe*
- * *layering of elaborate melodies*
- * *increased chordal accompaniment – soprano and bass lines were outlined and middle voices merely filled in chords, as opposed to polyphony (basso continuo)*
- * *Council of Trent (1545-63) in response to Protestant Reformation, dictated that music must speak directly to the masses instead of the elite.*
- * *Increased awareness of nature and scientific understanding*
- * *flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, French horn, and the entire string family develop into modern versions. Also: pianoforte in the later baroque.*
- * *Instrumental music became more important*
- * *Composers were in the service of wealthy ruling class and wrote for money as opposed to the Church.*

Vocabulary

Rococo Architectural style of 1720's with fussy, ornate details

Prima pratica “first practice” of the 1500's polyphonic, contrapuntal approach of the renaissance, particularly in madrigals. Term proposed by Monteverdi in his *Fifth Book of Madrigals* (1605)

Seconda pratica Freer counterpoint with continuo instrumental accompaniment popular in the 1600's, see Monteverdi.

Basso Continuo Chordal accompaniment

Castrato High-voiced Italian male singers, most famous was Farinelli

Masque English poetical drama with music accompaniment

Ballad Opera Tunes from popular opera with new words

Da Capo Aria aria featuring a “built-in repeat” with extensive cadenzas to allow singers to show off

Recitative half-sung passages in opera

Aria Fully sung passages in opera, became a showcase for virtuoso singing

Bel canto style

tragedie lyrique French opera style pioneered by Lully, with emphasis on recitative, prominent choir, orchestra, and dance, and less prominent airs as opposed to arias

Important Musical Forms of the Baroque

Opera drama + music, Increased interest in drama (Shakespeare), evolved from madrigal, then madrigal cycle (madrigal comedy), masque, and intermedio. By the early 18th century opera was the most popular form

Daphne (1597) by Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), first known opera

L'Orfeo (1607) by Monteverdi, one of the first operas to combine choruses, dances, madrigals, and duets, developed the fully-sung aria, richer and fuller orchestra, developed *bel canto* style

La Serva Padrona by Pergolesi – most popular *opera buffa*

Alceste and *Bellerophon* by Lully – *tragedie lyrique*

Opera seria serious opera

Opera buffa comedic opera, grew out of short comic plays with *intermezzi* (music between the acts) to be performed between acts of serious longer operas.

Opera ballet French style that included dance

Grand Motet French motet with contrasting sections of solo voices and larger chorus with continuo instruments, in Germany this included antiphonal (call and response) between choir and soloists

Anthem Anglican Church service music, verses for solo voices with organ, alternate with full choir sung in English (Henry Purcell)

Chorale Hymn sung in German by Lutheran congregation

Cantata in the baroque a dramatic madrigal by solo voice or voices with basso continuo could be secular (*cantata de camera*) or non-secular (*cantata de chiesa*) (Scarlatti). Became longer and more complex in 18th century w/recitatives and arias (Bach's *Coffee Cantata*, *Peasant Cantata*)

Oratorio Created by Handel – everything in opera except the set, costume, and movement. Sacred themes. Prime example is Handel's *Messiah*.

Ricercare earliest baroque instrumental form, literal transcription of existing vocal work for keyboard or other instruments, became original contrapuntal single-movement form, either homophonic (single melody) and contrapuntal (2/+ contrasting melodic lines), or elaborate fugal or canonical style (Bach's *Das musikalische Opfer*)

Sonata instrumental piece with contrasting sections, originally for 2 melody instruments and continuo (strings and harpsichord, trio sonata), evolved into solo sonata for solo instrument with continuo in 4 movements (slow – fast – slow – fast) with 3rd and 4th based on popular dances. Sonatina is shorter and easier to perform.

Suite Orchestral work with multiple contrasting sections, individual dance movements in the same key. Early baroque was always allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. Late baroque composers experimented.

Concerto orchestral music in late baroque, included strings, woodwinds, trumpets, and timpani with a focus on virtuosity by one or more solo instruments supported by the orchestra.

Prelude, toccata, fantasia allowed for a level of improvisation at the keyboard

Important Composers of the Baroque

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) Italian composer who bridged the gap between renaissance and baroque eras, composed one of the first operas (*Orfeo*, 1607), also a prolific composer of madrigals

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) Most famous piece: Canon in D for three violins + figured bass

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) the foremost Italian composer in the Baroque era best remembered for string concertos such as *The Four Seasons*, he also wrote 43 operas. He used unusual instrumentation for the time and tended toward being playful and exuberant.

J.S. Bach (1685-1750) German-born master of the strict compositional techniques of the baroque, he wrote chamber, orchestral, choral, keyboard works. The only thing he did not write was opera.

Early Period (1708-1717) organ works

example: *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor* (1707)

Middle Period (1717-1723) instrumental works

example: six *Brandenburg Concertos* (1721)

Late Period (1723-1750) sacred choral works:

St. John Passion (1723), *St. Matthew Passion* (1727), *Wachet auf*, Contata No. 140 (1731), *B Minor Mass* (1749)

Other Important works include the, *the Well-Tempered Clavier* (prelude and fugue in each of 12 major and minor keys to demonstrate the instruments tuning, 1722/1744), *Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins* (1731), *Goldberg Variations* (essentially an aria with 30 variations, 1741), and *The Art of Fugue* (1745).

G.F. Handel (1685-1759) German-born, lived most of his productive life in England. Important works include *Water Music* (1717), *Royal Fireworks Music* (1749), *Trio Sonatas Op. 2* (1722-1733) and *Op. 5* (1739), *Concerto Grosso Op. 6* (1739), *Coronation Anthems* (1727), *Messiah* (1741, oratorio). His early career focused on opera, his later career on oratorio, which he created. He was very efficient and reused common themes.

He was an expert of big, showy music and once told the composer Gluck “What the English like is something they can beat time to, something that hits them straight in the eardrum.”

PURCELL (1659-1695) English composer, *Dido and Aeneas* as England’s foremost contribution to opera

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) Developed recitative style as well as 500 single movement sonatas for harpsichord

**For More Music History Notes, Music & Art Resources,
Original Music, Visual Art, Video Art, and Writing from
Underground Artists**

Visit <http://ALARANA.NET>

Alarana.net | 2010 | Texas