Baroque Era
1600-1750
Baroque Society & Historical Developments

Overall theme

• “bizarre”, “irregular”, outside the ordinary
• Things were colossal and meant to overwhelm you in both art and architecture (see page 125-Palace of Versailles)
• Emphasis was on drama and text
Baroque Society & Historical Developments (con’t)

**Age of discovery**
- Galileo
- Newton

**Religious conflict**
- Protestant vs. Catholic
- Counter-Reformation

**Political Absolutism**
- Concentration of power and wealth in the hands of educated nobles
Baroque Music: Three Phases

• Early Baroque: 1600-1640
• Middle Baroque: 1640-1680
• Late Baroque: 1680-1750
Early Baroque: 1600-1640

- homophonic texture
- texts conveyed extreme emotion
- words were easy to understand
- belief in the power of music to affect the listener emotionally
- frequent use of dissonance to depict extreme emotions
- contrast of sounds were stressed (solo vs. chorus, voice vs. instruments, loud vs. soft, fast vs. slow)
- opera was created (drama with orch. accompaniment)
Middle Baroque: 1640-1680

• New style spread from Italy to all of Europe
• Now major and minor scales replaced church modes
• Instrumental music became more important
• Compositions were now being written for specific instruments, esp. the violin
Late Baroque: 1680-1750

• V-I progression became standard
• Instrumental music became just as important as vocal music
• Dominance of melody and bass line in 4 part texture, inner voices were indicated by numbers rather than written in the score
• Use of virtuoso performers both vocal and instrumental
• Use of a limited number of basic and regular meters (strong beat)
Characteristics of Baroque Music
Unity of Mood

• music expressed one basic mood (joy, grief, etc.)
• specific rhythms, melodic patterns, tempos, & keys were associated with specific moods
• moods were called affections
Continuity of Rhythm

- Patterns are repeated throughout a piece
- provided energy and uninterrupted motion
- beat is emphasized
Melody: creates a feeling of continuity

- melodic phrases are often repeated
- melodic sequence used to add variety
- melodies are elaborate and ornamental—difficult to sing
Continuity Dynamics

• volume stays the same for long stretches of time
• terraced dynamics: abrupt changes in dynamic levels (like stairs)
• no gradual changes like crescendo or decrescendo
Texture

• Polyphony was common
• combination of homophony and polyphony often used
Harmony

- chords became more important
- The bass part called the basso continuo (continuous bass) was played with chords improvised above it
- Figures bass indicated what chords were to be played using numbers (see page 129)
Words & Music

• Use of melissma (several notes on one syllable) was common and often used to highlight a singer's virtuosity (talent)

• Music used to depict the meaning of the words (word painting/tone painting)

• Became more standardized, for example: descending chromatic scale always meant pain and grief.
Doctrine of the Affections

• developed by Baroque theorists and composers
• assigned specific meanings to designated keys, tempi, rhythmic patterns, and even intervals, for example: major=happy, minor=sad
Baroque Orchestra

- 10-40 players
- instrumentation varied from piece to piece
- always had basso continuo (harpsichord + cello, bass, or bassoon) and upper strings (violin & viola)
- use of other instruments was varied and could include: recorders, flutes, oboes, trumpets, horns, trombones, and timpani
- 4 section orchestra (string, woodwind, brass, perc) became standard by the end of this era
Baroque Forms

• Divided into movements each with its own theme or mood.
• Often AB or ABA with contrasting tempi, instrumentation, dynamics, and keys
Music in Baroque Society

- Music was written to order for specific events
- Performers and audiences wanted new music each time
- Musicians were employed by the courts of the aristocracy as composers, performers, and teachers
- Musicians also worked for the church as composers, performers, and teachers
- Opera houses were built and musicians earned money as opera composers and performers.
- Musicians were often trained by family members or through apprenticeships.
- Women were not permitted to be music directors of instrumentalists in court or opera orchestras.
Baroque Instrumental Genres

Concerto
  • Concerto Grosso
  • Solo Concerto

Fugue

Opera

Sonata

Suite
Concerto Grosso

**Small groups of solos vs. orchestra (tutti)**

Several contrasting movements

- fast-slow-fast

**Ritornello form** used in 1st and last movements

- ritornello-refrain or theme played by the full orchestra (tutti)
- see diagram pg. 134

A (ritornello)  
B (solo)  
A (ritornello fragment)  
C (solo)  
A (ritornello fragment)  
D (solo)  
A (ritornello)
Concerto Grosso

• **Main Composers**
  - Vivaldi
  - Bach
  - Corelli
Solo Concerto

- organized like the concerto grosso
- written for only one instrument
- **Main Composers**
  - Vivaldi
  - Handel
  - Bach
Listening #1

• Read pp 134-135 of text
• Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D Major by Johann Sebastian Bach
• CD 2/1-5
• Listening Guide Pg. 135-136
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcFwdauW-wE
Fugue (vocal and instrumental genre)

• Polyphonic composition based on one main theme, called a subject
• 4-5 voices (melodic lines)
• Subject is always announced with a single voice followed by entrances by other voices, one at a time
• Countersubject—a melodic idea that accompanies the subject fairly constantly
• Episodes—transitional sections between presentations of the subject
• Prelude—a short piece often used to introduce a fugue
Common musical procedures

**Stretto**
- statements of the subject overlap; subject is imitated before it is completed, one voice tries to catch up with the other

**Pedal point** (organ point)
- single tone in the bass which is held while the other voices produce a series of changing harmonies
Fugue compositional techniques

• **Inversion**-subject is turned upside-down
• **Retrograde**-subject is played backwards
• **Augmentation**-original subject values are lengthened
• **Diminution**-original subject values are shortened
Main Fugue Composers

• Handel
• Bach
Listening #2

- Organ Fugue in G Minor (Little Fugue) by Johann Sebastian Bach
- CD 1/83
- Listening Guide Pg. 139-140
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zO8i5D2uz84
Opera

• Drama that is sung to orchestral accompaniment
• Started in Italy around 1600
• 1st Opera house built in Venice in 1637
• Secular themes-Greek & Roman legends were often used for plots
• Italian libretto (the text of the opera)
• Fully staged with costumes, scenery, acting, and orchestra
• Operas were social gatherings
Parts of the opera

• **Aria**-song for solo voice with orchestral accompaniment

• **Recitative**-vocal line that imitates the rhythm and pitch fluctuations of speech

• **Overture** (prelude)-Instrumental piece to open the opera

• **Well Known Operas**
  • *Orfeo* by Monteverdi
  • *Dido and Aeneas* by Purcell
Listening #3

• Tu se morta from Orfeo by Monteverdi
• CD 2/14
• Listening Guide Pg. 149-150
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W AjLPbD2xOw
Listening #4

• Dido’s Lament from Dido & Aeneas by Purcell
• CD 2/15
• Listening Guide Pg. 151-152
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_50zj7J50U&list=RDD_50zj7J50U&t=41
The Baroque Sonata (instrumental genre)

• Musically the most important genre
• Originated in Italy and spread to Germany
• 4 sections slow-fast-slow-fast
Types of Baroque Sonatas

**Solo for unaccompanied instrument**

**Solo sonata**
- one solo instrument (violin)
- plus continuo (cello/harpsichord)

**Trio Sonata**
- usually 2 violins
- plus continuo (cello/harpsichord)
Main Composers

• Corelli
• Vivaldi
• Handel
• Bach
The Baroque Suite
(instrumental genre)

• Series of movements, each based on a particular dance rhythm and style
• Movements had contrasting tempos, meters, and character
• Usually includes the allemande, courante, gavotte, saraband, gigue
• Not intended to accompany dancing
Listening #5

• Suite No. 3 in D Major by JS Bach, 2\textsuperscript{nd} movement-Air
• CD 2/33-34
• Listening Guide Pg. 171
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct_lcLP0Ho8
Listening #6

• Suite No. 3 in D Major by JS Bach, 4\textsuperscript{th} movement-Bouree
• CD 2/35-36
• Listening Guide Pg. 171
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kD1SLZWUvTM
Vocal Genres

• Chorale
• Church Cantata
• Oratorio
Chorale

• Hymn tunes with religious words
• Composers
  Bach
  Luther
Church Cantata

• German religious text
• A sermon in music that reinforces the minister’s sermon
• Usually written for chorus, vocal soloist, organ, and small orchestra
• Several movements including choruses, recitatives, arias, and duets
Listening #7

- Cantata No. 140 “Awake, A Voice is Calling Us” by JS Bach
- CD 2/39
- (Chorale Base CD 2/45)
- Listening Guide Pg. 174-178
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sj-NKqR0tw
Oratorio

• Sung drama for chorus, solo voices and orchestra
• no scenery, costuming, or stage action (like the chorus productions)
• usually Old Testament text
• Sung in Latin
• A singing narrator helped to explain the dramatic action (that was left out)
• Series of arias, recitative, choral movements, and instrumental sections
• substitution for opera because theatrical performances were banned during Lent
Listening #8

• Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah by Handel
• CD 2/54
• *Listening Guide Pg. 190-191*
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usfiAsWR4qU
Baroque Composers

Monteverdi
Purcell
Vivaldi
Bach
Handel
Claudio Monteverdi (pg. 147)

• Italian 1567-1643
• organist, violinist
• composed over 250 pieces including madrigals, operas, masses, and motets
Henry Purcell (pg. 150)

• English 1659-1695
• leading English composer of the Baroque
• also wrote music for plays
• wrote mainly vocal works
Antonio Vivaldi (pg. 156)

• Italian 1678-1741
• Leading Italian composer of the late Baroque
• Master of the Concerto
• used ritornello form, 3 movement structure, cadenzas
• virtuoso violinist, contributed to violin technique
• wrote mainly concertos but also wrote cantatas, church music, and instrumental pieces
• his music stressed wide leaps, syncopation, frequent use of 7th chords
• studied with his father and in the church
• composer, violinist, harpsichordist, and teacher
Vivaldi Listening

• **Listening #9:** La Primavera (Spring), Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra, Op. 8, No. 1 from The Four Seasons, 1<sup>st</sup> movement
  
  CD 2/17
  
  Listening Guide pg. 157-158
  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHLEOz6uzpA

• 2<sup>nd</sup> movement
  
  CD 2/22

• 3<sup>rd</sup> movement
  
  CD 2/23
Johann Sebastian Bach (pg. 160)

• German 1685-1750
• regarded as the consummate master of Baroque styles, genres, and structural principles
• great master of counterpoint
• composer, teacher, organist, and violinist
• composed over 300 cantatas, masses, passions, oratorios, keyboard pieces, sonatas, suites, and concertos
• fused traditional and contemporary styles and forms as well as many national forms
• from a family of professional musicians (6 generations)
Bach Listening

• **Listening 10**: Prelude in c minor, from The Well-tempered Clavier, Book 1
  CD 2/26
  Listening Guide pg. 164
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXcXFsaAv8TQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXcXFsaAv8TQ)

  **Listening 10 continued**: Fugue in c minor, from The Well-tempered Clavier, Book 1
  CD 2/29
  Listening Guide pg. 165
George Friedric Handel

• German-English 1685-1759
• Major force in English music
• Great composer of dramatic music including opera & oratorio
• Organ virtuoso with a wondrous gift for improvisation
• Violist and composer
• Composed more than 40 operas, 35 oratorios, 40 sonatas, many concertos, cantatas, and suites
Handel Listening

• **Listening #11:** Comfort Ye from Messiah
  • CD 2/48
  • Listening Guide pg. 186
  • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmknWYFr6Xk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmknWYFr6Xk)

• **Listening #12:** Ev’ry Valley Shall Be exalted from Messiah
  • CD 2/50
  • Listening Guide pg. 187
  • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlkMlw1wz7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlkMlw1wz7A)

• **Listening #13:** For Unto Us a Child is Born from Messiah
  • CD 2/51
  • Listening Guide pg. 188-189
  • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAW7kcEb6LE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAW7kcEb6LE)