

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 melisma (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 it's 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=WAjLPbD2xOw>

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, 2nd 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, 4th movement-Bouree
- CD 2/35-36
- Listening Guide Pg. 171
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDISLZWUvTM>

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, 1st movement

CD 2/17

Listening Guide pg. 157-158

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHLEOz6uzpA>

- 2nd movement

CD 2/22

- 3rd 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=IXcXFsAv8TQ>

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>

- **Listening #12:** Ev'ry Valley Shall Be exalted from Messiah
 - CD 2/50
 - Listening Guide pg. 187
 - <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>