Music of the Baroque Period

1600-1750
Baroque: extravagantly ornamented, florid or convoluted in style.

or

Relating to, or having the characteristics of a style of artistic expression prevalent especially in the 17th century that is marked generally by use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and the juxtaposition of contrasting elements often conveying a sense of drama, movement, and tension
The first use of the term “Baroque” in music was in 1919.

“Baroque” is used to describe an artistic style across different art forms.

Started in **Rome, Italy**

Tension, Exuberance, Grandeur, Ornate
Music of the Baroque Period

Musical Context

• A Time of *Experimentation*

Embracing new idea: Music could move the listener in a *real and physical way*

*Opera*, a blend of *music and drama*, is the full realization of this ideal

Composers experimented with ways of creating impressive effects in *Instrumental Music* as well
Music continued to be used as an important tool of statecraft (conducting public affairs)

- **Expanding Roles of Music**

  Extravagant musical styles served as rich adornment to religious services in both Catholic and Protestant churches

  Music, especially *Opera*, became an important source of entertainment for the growing merchant and land-owner classes
Music of the Baroque Period

**Historical Themes**

- **Increasing Importance of Scientific Investigation**
  Scientists broke away from the old model of proofing prior assumptions, and instead worked on devising new hypotheses through observation and experimentation.

  *Galileo Galilei* (1564 – 1622)
  *Isaac Newton* (1642 – 1727)

- **Culmination of Royal Despotism**
  Small group of leaders (Kings, queens, emperors) wielded absolute power in Europe

  *Louis XIV of France* (1638 – 1715)
  "*l'état, c'est moi*” – “I am the state” (absolutism)
  *Palace of Versailles*
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Historical Themes cont.

• Development of the **New World**

  The *English*, *French*, and *Spanish* holdings in the New World continued to supply Europe with wealth.

  As generations passed, colonists began growing allegiance to their new homes, which eventually led to the independence of these lands.

• **Artificiality & Marvelous effects valued in Arts**

  Sculptors found ways to create the **illusion of energetic**, even **violent movement** in their works.

  *Giovanni Bernini* (1598 – 1680)

  Painters created **larger** and **more crowded** canvases.

  **Virtuosity** was highly priced in all the arts.
Vocabulary
**Organ**
A multiple keyboard instrument that produces sound by driving pressurized air through pipes.

**Harpsichord**
A keyboard instrument which preceded piano and was used widely in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries. It produces sound by plucking a string when a key is pressed.
**Sonata**
A composition for one or more solo instruments, one of which is usually a keyboard. It generally consists of 3 or 4 contrasting movements. This form has been used by composers from the Baroque era to the present day.

**Suite**
A larger work consisting of individual movements descended from Renaissance dances. It is also a term often given to a collection of pieces taken from music written for and opera or ballet and compiled into an orchestral Suite for performance in a concert setting.
**Concerto**
A composition for one or more solo instruments with orchestral accompaniment and usually consisting of three contrasting movements. This musical form has been used by composers from the Baroque era up until the present day.

**Concerto Grosso**
A concerto in which the musical material is passed between a small group of soloists and full orchestra.
Oratorio
A large-scale musical work for orchestra and voices, typically a narrative on a religious theme, performed without the use of costumes, scenery, or action. Well-known examples include Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Haydn's *The Creation*.

Cantata
Very similar to an Oratorio in form and structure but meant to be a direct part of the Protestant worship service. They are generally much shorter in duration than Oratorios.

Opera
A large-scale musical work for orchestra and voices. It is a fully staged production featuring costumes, scenery, and action. Most music historians agree that the first real opera was Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*.
Basso Continuo
Literally “Continuous Bass”. A type of accompaniment developed during the Baroque period where a written bass part is played by a low voice, usually the cello and the chords are improvised by the keyboard, usually a harpsichord.

Ground Bass
A short, recurring melodic pattern in the bass part of a composition that serves as the principal structural element or foundation of that composition.
**Recitative**
A style used in operas, oratorios, and cantatas in which the text is declaimed in the rhythm of natural speech with slight melodic variation and little orchestral accompaniment.

**Aria**
A solo vocal piece with instrumental accompaniment, as in an opera.
Claudio Monteverdi (1567 – 1643)

Listening: Monteverdi – L’Orfeo

• Leading composer and transitional figure of late Renaissance and early Baroque

• Composed:

  **Operas:** “L’Orfeo” (Greek legend of “Orpheus”)
  First opera to realize all its full potential

  **Secular Vocal:** 9 books of Madrigals

  **Sacred Vocal:** Vespers (Evening Prayer)
  Masses, Motets, and Psalms

• Music composition as an outgrowth of the written words

  **Listening-** “Tu Se Morta” (Aria)
Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

German organist, composer and teacher.

Best known work: Canon in D Major
• Famous ground bass pattern and chord progression adapted by many contemporary musicians.

\[ \text{D-A-B-F#-G-D-G-A} \]

Helped develop the Prelude and Fugue forms.

Taught composition to Johann Christoph Bach, older brother of Johann Sebastian Bach.

\textit{Listening-Canon in D major}
Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695)

• Leading *English* composer and organist of early Baroque

• Uniquely *English* form of Baroque Music
  Incorporating *Italian* & *French* elements

*Secular & Sacred Vocal works and Instrumental Music*

• Composed:
  *Opera*: “*Dido and Aeneas*” (Virgil’s *Aeneid*)
  
  listening- “When I am laid to earth” (Didos Lament)
Composers of the Baroque Period

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

• Leading Italian composer and violinist
• Development of Concerto form
  His concerti are definitive of the genre in the Baroque, into the Classical Era

• Composed:
  Orchestral Music:
  Over 500 Concerti (239 for the violin), including The Four Seasons (Program Music)

  Chamber Music

  Sacred Vocal: Oratorio, Mass, Hymn

  Secular Vocal: Cantatas and over 50 Operas

Listening: Vivaldi Violin Concerto – “The Four Seasons” Spring, Mvt.1, Allegro
Composers of the Baroque Period

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)

• Leading *English* composer, *German* by birth

• Contrast to J. S. Bach:
  Composed for the public; man of the world; a world traveler

• Celebrated as *English National Treasure*

• “The Messiah” and the “Hallelujah Chorus”

• Composed:

  *Sacred & Secular vocal music:*

  *Operas (over 40), Oratorios, Cantatas, Arias*

  *Instrumental Music*

  *Concerti, Sonatas, Suites, Chamber Music*

  *Produced Opera at the Royal Academy of Music*

*Listening: Handel – Messiah “Hallelujah Chorus”*
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)
• Most famous and most important *German composer* and *organist* of the *Baroque era* (and maybe all time) – *a true genius*

• Created music of the *highest-level of craftsmanship*.

*Sacred & Secular Vocal*: Cantatas, Motets, Passions, Mass, Oratorio.

*Instrumental Music*: Concerti, Suites, Sonatas & Partitas, etc ....

*Listening*- *Brandenburg Concerto #2 (Concerto Grosso form)*

Studied works of his contemporaries to learn more. Once walked 200 miles to meet the composer and organist Dietrich Buxtehude.

*Deeply religious, Devout Lutheran*
Married his second cousin Maria Barbara in 1707 with whom he had seven children. (four survived to adulthood)

Maria Barbara died in 1720 and Bach Married Anna Magdalena in 1721. She was a 21 year old singer and he had 13 more children (six survived to adulthood).

Began working professionally at age 15 (1700)
Luneberg, Arstand, Muhlhausen

Bach’s life was separated into 3 compositional periods based where he worked
Weimer (1708-1717) – Church organist – composed organ music
Cothen (1717-1723) – Composed mostly instrumental music
Leipzig (1723-1750) – Composed choral music
Wrote 298 cantatas
WHAT IS A FUGUE?

A fugue is a composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts.

• Key Fugue words

• Subject – Theme
• Answer – played after the subject and consists of the subject played in a different key.
• Countersubject-The music that accompanies the answer.

Listening: Toccata and Fugue in D minor- J.S Bach, Little Fugue in G minor-J.S. Bach