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Genres and Forms in the Baroque Era

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Introduction

Overview of Vocal Genres

Instrumental Genres

Significant Forms

Conclusion

Bibliography/Further Reading

Music List

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Introduction

The wide variety of musical genres and forms developed during the Baroque period reveals a musical encyclopaedism that pervades a repertoire that embraces many brand new compositional models.[1] Genres such as opera, the sonata, and the concerto are established in this period, setting the stage for further development of these genres in more recent periods of music history. In fact, the nascent genres and forms of the Baroque period continue to permeate the western classical music canon and serve as models for contemporary compositions today.

Renaissance genres such as the madrigal and motet persist in a distinctly baroque guise while the birth of opera inaugurates a new period in the history of vocal music. The oratorio and settings of passion texts recounting the life of Christ make ready use of music to articulate drama in sacred settings, and blended ensembles of vocalists and instrumentalists color the musical texture of the cantata and sacred concerto of the period.

While many Baroque genres exhibit a relatively unrestrained approach to form, musical structures, such as the da-capo aria, are established at the opera during the first half of the eighteenth century (1700s–1740s) foreshadowing its prevalence in number operas later in the century. Similarly, the tidy binary forms found in dance movements of the multi-movement instrumental suites of the period serve as an important precursor to the more highly developed sonata form found in many first movements of multi-movement sonatas and symphonies in the early classical period. Moreover, the contrasting tempos and dance styles of the multi-movement instrumental suite provide a foundation for the multi-movement forms of the sonata and the concerto, which both begin to take a distinct shape in the Baroque period.

An emphasis on freedom in the service of innovation permeates the instrumental genres of the period, which are characterized by a new independence of pre-existing melodic material, formal flexibility, and an improvisatory style. Idiomatic writing for individual instruments dissolves the previously close relationship between instrumental music and vocal models in the renaissance period. Interest in counterpoint remains, but while many of the imitative forms of the Renaissance, such as cyclic mass ordinary settings, were based pre-existing chant tunes or secular songs, the composers of the Baroque crafted their own melodic material as a basis for their imitative counterpoint. The chorale prelude, however, remains a vestige of the intertextual compositional techniques of the renaissance that readily borrowed musical material from existing works.[2]

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[1] Jonathan Rhodes Lee describes this encyclopaedism in his introduction to the baroque period in this anthology. Jonathan Rhodes Lee, "Introduction to the Baroque Period," A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/ARMA-Baroque-Lee.pdf.

[2] See J. Peter Burkholder, "Borrowing," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52918

Overview of Vocal Genres

The Baroque period ushered in the development of both dramatic and non-dramatic vocal genres, all accompanied by instrumental ensembles. While opera, oratorio, and passion settings recount dramatic stories, the sacred concerto and the German sacred cantata are not inherently narrative in nature. Italian cantatas set to music love poetry similar to the texts found in French cantatas, which relay amorous poetry, often melodramatic and witty in subject, with lyric, sweet melodies that are elegantly ornamented, resonating with the easy, graceful manner of French dance music.[3]

The rapidly expanding practice of monody, a sparse scoring for solo voice accompanied by basso continuo, an improvised harmonic accompaniment performed by a single keyboard player whose bass line may be doubled by a cello, characterizes several genres of vocal music of the period.[4] This innovative texture is found in the baroque manifestations of the madrigal, a solo setting of Italian love poetry, and the motet, a setting of a sacred Latin text, both continuations of genres that flourished in the Renaissance. The Italian cantata of the period also makes ready use monody, which also appears in the speech-like recitative sections of Baroque opera as well.[5]

Opera

Opera, the dramatic vocal genre that remains central to stage traditions for centuries to come, emerges at the outset of the Baroque period around the turn of the seventeenth century. The roots of this dramatic musical genre reach as far back as the morality plays or liturgical dramas of the medieval period by figures such as Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and comedies performed by troupes or guilds of professional actors in the middle ages.[6] It is not until around 1600 that dramas set to music, in part or in entirety, take the stage chiefly to entertain. In Baroque opera, drama and music come together into a single genre for the first time, a practice that will continue into the eighteenth century with opera seria and opera buffa, eventually culminating in the conception of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) with Richard Wagner (1813–1883) late in the nineteenth century.[7]

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[3] See David Tunley, "The French Cantata to 1800," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04748pg3.

[4] See "From *The Choragus, or, Some Observations for Staging Dramatic Works Well* (c. 1630)," in *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 629–34, and Peter Williams and David Ledbetter, "Continuo," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06353.

[5] See Tim Carter, ed. *Monteverdi and his Contemporaries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), and Barbara Russano Hanning, "Love's New Voice: Italian Monodic Song," in *The World of Baroque Music: New Perspectives*, ed. George B. Stauffer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 25–47.

[6] See Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., "The Earliest Operas" in *Music in the Western World,* 2d ed. (Cengage Learning, 2008), 147–150, and Howard Mayer Brown, et al. "Opera(i)," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/40726.

[7] See Barry Millington, "Gesamtkunstwerk," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O011027.

Early opera facilitated the development of the new monodic texture described above along with a new vocal style.[8] The *stile recitativo* is a speech-like singing style, a middle ground between spoken word and sung lyric, a syllabic setting accompanied by basso continuo.[9] This new style is used for narration or dialogue, sections of the opera that move the plot along, and contrasts starkly with the melodic aria style, which characters use to express their feelings or react to particular events in the libretto. The contrast between the free-flowing rhythms and syllabic speech-like text setting of the recitative movements with the more regular, metric and melodic writing in the aria sections is evident in examples from Jacopo Peri's (1561–1633) *Euridice*[10] and Claudio Monteverdi's (1567–1643) *Orfeo.*[11]

The earliest operas were performed at the courts of wealthy families in northern Italian cities such as Florence, Mantua, and Rome.[12] While the Medici family was a noteworthy patron of opera in Florence[13] around 1600, producing operas with music by Jacopo Peri (1561–1633) and Giulio Caccini (1551–1618) and text by Ottavio Rinunccini (*Euridice*, 1600), the Gonzaga family made substantial contributions to the genre in Mantua at the same time including Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. Several decades later (1620s–1640s), opera flourished in Rome with the support of the Barberini family for productions particularly during the church's Carnival season, lavish spectacles glorifying Rome and the operatic patrons.[14]

The stories told on stage in early operas were largely those of classical history or Greek mythology, such as the tale of Daphne and Apollo, which is recounted in *Dafne* (1598),[15] the earliest known opera with text (libretto) by Ottavio Rinuccini and music by Jacopo Peri and Jacopo Corsi. An especially popular myth on the early opera stage was the tale of Orfeo and Euridice, a story that was set by both Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri, rival Florentine composers, around the turn of the seventeenth century. Not coincidentally, both of these stories feature a mythic musician as a protagonist, Apollo in the case of *Dafne* and Orpheus in the case of *Euridice,* a reflection of the focus on music as a natural means of expression. Roman history also provided subjects for the operatic stage in works such as Claudio Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione*

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[8] See Nino Pirrotta, "Early Opera and Aria," in *New Looks at Italian Opera: Essays in Honor of Donald J. Grout,* ed. William Austin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), 39–107.

[9] See Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* (1602), 2d ed., ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock, Recent Researches in Music of the Baroque Era, 9 (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 2009), 43–44, and Jacopo Peri, "From Preface to *The Music for Euridice* (1601)," in *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History,* ed. Leo Treitler (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 659–62.

[10] Jacopo Peri, *Euridice* excerpts*,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=249.

[11] Claudio Monteverdi, *Orfeo* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=297.

[12] Howard Mayer Brown, et al. "Opera(i)," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40726.

[13] See Suzanne Cusick, *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court: Music and the Circulation of Power* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[14] Howard Mayer Brown, et al. "Opera(i)," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40726, and John Walter Hill, *Roman Monody, Cantata, and Opera from the Circles around Cardinal Montalto* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[15] Jacopo Corsi, *Dafne,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=282.

di Poppea (The Coronation of Poppea), which was composed for performance in Venice, a commercial center for opera in the seventeenth century.[16]

Although the expense of producing the earliest operas limited their performance venues to the theatres of wealthy patrons, opera was the first musical genre widely available to a paying public at the first public opera house in Venice in 1637. In fact, in the second half of the century the business of opera boomed there,[17] cultivating a distinct genre of Venetian opera that made use of stage machinery, trap doors, and disguising of characters for dramatic and comic effect, as can be seen in Francesco Cavalli's (1602–1676) *La Calisto*.[18]

Across the Alps in France Louis XIV cultivated an entirely different iteration of the staged musical drama.[19] The *tragédie lyrique* was produced by the centralized absolutist French government and performed in the grand state-owned opera houses in Paris and Versailles. The large-scale spectacle of these works represented the powerful government of Louis XIV and demonstrated the institution's wealth. To flaunt the artistic prowess of the court *tragédie lyrique* productions incorporated grand ballet and chorus scenes involving large groups of dancers and singers on stage peppered amid sections of aria and recitative. The sets were similarly elaborate, as was the staging, which often included the use of extensive stage machinery and live animals appearing along with large groups of performers on stage.

An opening French overture set the tone for the production, the slow introduction and stately dotted rhythms of which would later make their way into the classical symphony. The famously grand orchestra of Jean Baptist Lully (1632–1687), which at 24 violins was a large instrumental ensemble for the time, would have contributed to the substantial musical sound of the spectacle. As in Italian opera, the stories dramatized on the French stage were based largely on classical subjects from mythology or chivalric legends. The depiction of the French monarchy on stage is noteworthy, as French productions consistently cast the king in a positive light, usually as a *deux ex machina*[20] swooping in to save the day at the conclusion of the drama.

Meanwhile in England, where both Italian opera and the French *tragédie lyrique* were familiar to audiences and performers, the English tradition of spoken drama infused with incidental music held fast against the import of any fully sung dramas until relatively late in the period.[21] Rather, English theater in the Baroque period continues to use music solely in dances accompanying

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[16] See Ellen Rosand, *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), and Claudio Monteverdi, *L'incoronaione di Poppea,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=295.

[17] See Beth Glixon and Jonathan Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[18] See Francesco Cavalli, *La Calisto,* ed. Jennifer Williams Brown, Collegium Musicum Yale University 16 (Middleston, WI: A-R Editions, 2007), and Francesco Cavalli, *La Calisto,* directed by Herbert Wernicke (Brussels: Harmonia Mundi, 1996), DVD.

[19] Howard Mayer Brown, et al. "Opera(i)," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40726

[20] See F.W. Sternfeld, "Deux ex machina," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O901323.

[21] Howard Mayer Brown, et al. "Opera(i)," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40726

introductory and transitional scenes and popular songs interpolated into the drama, as in the English dramas or masques of Matthew Locke (1621–1677).[22]

Fully sung drama took root in England late in the seventeenth century as shown by Henry Purcell's (1659–1698) *Dido and Aeneas* (1689), an anomaly in both the English repertoire writ large and in Purcell's dramatic output, which consists largely of music designed to accompany spoken plays as in traditional English practices.[23] Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* exhibits a blend of Italian and French influences. The extended passages of declamatory, recitative-like dialogue, reflect the innovative Italian dramatic practices, and the individual airs he composed for the two protagonists, Dido and Aeneas, represent an English manifestation of the Italian aria. Purcell's ample use of a dancing chorus (Purcell mentions dancing 17 times in the score!), however, divulges a clearly French influence. Although this piece is an outlier in the English repertoire, Dido's lamenting aria that she sings as Aeneas, her love, sails away inspiring her suicide, is famous for its form as a ground bass aria shaped by a repeated descending chromatic bass line that underscores her grief and becomes emblematic of the lament for centuries to come.

Oratorio

In addition to opera, the seventeenth century saw the birth of oratorio, an unstaged setting of a sacred, dramatic text.[24] As in opera, oratorios included sections or aria, recitative, and choruses. However, the un-staged nature of the genre demanded dramatic exposition in the text, usually in the guise of a narrator whose recitative is punctuated by solo arias, sections of recitative, and choruses that are sung by specific characters of the story to dramatize the events described by the narrator. The genre's name heralds from the original performance context for these works, which were performed in a church's oratory, a small room in a church building separate from the main body of the church where worshipers would gather for devotion. The texts of oratorios recounted stories from the Bible and could be in Latin or the vernacular English, German, or Italian. The musical setting of these sacred dramas encouraged Christians in recalling Biblical stories and inspired them to visualize and relate to the experiences described by the characters in the bible stories in pieces such as Giacomo Carissimi's (1605–1674) *Historia di Jephte.*[25] While the oratorio was born in Rome and Passion settings were composed mainly in Germany, the genre

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[22] See Murray Lefkowitz, "Masque," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/17996
[23] Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=164 and http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=165. See Andrew Walkling, "The Masque of Actaeon and the Antimasque of Mercury: Dance, Dramatic Structure, and Tragic Exposition in Dido and Aeneas," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 2 (2010): 191–242, Janet Schmalfeldt, "In Search of Dido," *The Journal of Musicology* 18, no. 4 (2001): 584–615.
[24] See Howard Smither, "Oratorio," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20397.
[25] Giacomo Carissimi, *Historia di Jephte* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=273.

also flourished in England in the seventeenth century with pieces such as George Frideric Handel's (1685–1759) *Saul*,[26] and his more famous *Messiah*.[27]

Oratorios that set texts from the Gospels, sections of scripture that tell the story of Jesus's life and death, are termed "Passions". While the Passion settings by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) are the most famous, Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), a German composer who served as the concert master in Dresden just before the time of Bach[28] composed Passions as well.[29]

Sacred Concerto

Non-dramatic vocal genres were cultivated in the aroque period as well. Sacred concertos set Biblical or sacred texts for multiple groups of vocalists and instrumentalists in a concerted texture, in which the different groups of musicians engage in a musical dialogue of sorts not entirely unlike the interactions between a soloist or group of soloists and an orchestra in the instrumental concertos discussed below. Heinrich Schütz composed sacred concertos with texts in either Latin or German. While the musical texture is similar to that of the sacred cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach discussed below, these concertos consist of a single movement and are substantially smaller in scale than the sacred cantatas. While these pieces are not intended explicitly for a liturgical performance context, the nature of their texts would allow performance during a church service. See, for example, Schütz's *Veni de Libano*.[30] In Italy, Lodovico Viadana[31] also composed sacred concertos such as *Fili mi, Absolon*[32] or *O Domine, Jesu Christe*.[33]

Although the sacred concerto was not inherently dramatic in nature, composers would use the musical setting of the text to aurally depict key elements of the Bible story at hand. For example, in Schütz's *Saul, Saul, was verfolgst du mich,* the composer uses a concerted texture of voices repeating the name "Saul, Saul, Saul" to musically dramatize the moment when a voice from heaven, that of Christ, calls down to Saul while he is on the road to Damascus, striking him blind and appealing to him, "Why do you persecute me?" a poignant moment in Saul's life prefacing

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[26] George Frideric Handel, *Saul* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=102.

[27] See Stephen Groves, "The Picturesque Oratorio: Haydn's Art in Nature's Clothing," *Music and Letters* 93, no. 4 (2012): 479–512.

[28] See Bettina Varwig, *Histories of Heinrich Schütz* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), and Gregory Johnston, ed. *A Heinrich Schütz Reader: Letters and Documents in Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[29] Heinrich Schütz, *Die sieben Worte…Jesu Christi am Kreuz,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=175.

[30] Heinrich Schütz, *Veni de Libano,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=180.

[31] See Ludovico Viadana, "Preface to One Hundred Sacred Concertos," in *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History,* ed. Leo Treitler (W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 617–21.

[32] Ludovico Viadana, *Fili mi, Absalom,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=196.

[33] Ludovico Viadana, *O Domine, Jesu Christe,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=197.

his conversion from a persecutor of Christians to a Christian himself. Although the piece is not inherently diegetic, Schütz's musical setting effectively dramatizes the text at hand.[34]

Cantata

The cantata flourished in two different guises in the period. In protestant Germany the cantata took on a sacred character at the hands of Johann Sebastian Bach.[35] Sacred German texts were set in a wide variety of musical forms and styles. Recitative and aria movements were interspersed with four-part hymns in simple homophony or lengthier concerted movements composed for choir, soloists, and instrumentalists in a style reminiscent of the sacred concertos described above, complete with recurring instrumental ritornello sections. While much of the melodic material in German cantatas was freely conceived, a hymn tune usually provided the basis for the melodic material of the large-scale movements or vocal fantasia movements that often incorporated variations on the hymn tune.[36] The Italian cantatas of Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677)[37] and Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725),[38] were completely independent from their German homonym and set Italian love poetry for solo voice or a small vocal ensemble accompanied by a continuo group.[39]

The madrigal, a secular Italian genre established in the Renaissance, persists in the Baroque period. In addition to composing opera, Claudio Monteverdi published eight volumes of madrigals throughout the later part of his career.[40] These madrigals, specifically his *Cruda Amarilli*, provided the impetus for a noteworthy conflict between Monteverdi and his contemporary Giovanni Artusi (1540–1613) regarding the use of dissonance in composition.[41]

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[34] Heinrich Schütz, *Saul was verfolgst due mich,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=178

[35] See Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), Eric Chafe, *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J.S. Bach* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), and Michael Marissen, *Bach and God* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[36] See for example Johann Sebastian Bach, *Wachet auf* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=438, *Ein' feste Burg*, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=258, *Jesu, der du meine Seele*, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=259, and *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=260

[37] See Ellen Rosand, "Barbara Strozzi, 'virtuosissima cantatrice': The Composer's Voice," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31 (1978): 241–81, Beth Glixon, "New Light on the Life and Career of Barbara Strozzi," *Musical Quarterly* 81 (1997): 311–35, and idem., "More on the Life and Death of Barbara Strozzi," *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999): 134–41.

[38] See Roberto Pagano, *Alessandro Scarlatti and Domenico Scarlatti: Two Lives in One,* trans. Frederick Hammond (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2006).

[39] Alessandro Scarlatti, *Clori vezzosa e bella ,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=172, Barbara Strozzi, *Begli occhi,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=183, and *Lagrime mie,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=184.

[40] See Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi's Seconda Prattica* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), and Mauro Calcagno, *From Madrigal to Opera: Monteverdi's Staging of the Self* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012).

[41] Claudio Monteverdi, *Cruda Amarilli,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=294.

Artusi published a statement condemning Monteverdi's rather free use of dissonance, which was not always properly prepared or resolved according to the long established contrapuntal rules.[42] Although Artusi saw this use of dissonance as unprecedented, Monteverdi rebutted, arguing that his use of dissonance was expressive and emblematic of an innovative *seconda prattica*, a compositional style in which the rules of counterpoint could be broken in favor of an affective expression of the text. The *seconda prattica* allowed the affective setting of the text to override any compositional guidelines, granting a new authority to the text and contrasting with the *prima prattica,* an old fashioned style of composition that abided strictly by the established rules of counterpoint.

While Monteverdi's madrigals were composed for multiple voices, Giulio Caccini includes monodic madrigals for solo voice and continuo along with homophonic strophic airs or "arias"[43] in the first volume of his *Le nuove musiche* (1602).[44] This collection of vocal music published in Florence contains a preface addressing another contentious issue at the beginning of the seventeenth century: vocal ornamentation. In this preface Caccini describes how many singers ornament his melodies too extensively to the detriment of the text setting and argues for a focus on clear expression of the text in performance. To circumvent the extra ordinate ornamentation that disrupts the articulation of the text Caccini notates his preferred ornamentation in detail in this printed collection, the first music publication to do so. He also provides a list of ornaments that can be implemented in performance but warns against ornamentation to simply show off the vocal chops of the performer without careful consideration of the text.

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[42] See Giovanni Maria Artusi, "From *Artusi, or, Of the Imperfections of Modern Music,*" in *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History,* Rev. Ed. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 526–534.

[43] Giulio Caccini, *Vedrò il mio sol,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=226, and *Al fonte, al prato,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=223, *Sfogava con le stelle*, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=380, *Amarilli mia bella,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=224.

[44] Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* (1602), 2d ed., ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock, Recent Researches in Music of the Baroque Era, 9 (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 2009), 43.

Instrumental Genres

The Baroque period saw the first flourishing of instrumental genres.[45] Baroque genres such as the trio sonata and the concerto serve as important predecessors to symphony, a genre that dominates later periods of music history and continues to dominate concert programs to this day, and whose development occupies the beginning of the classical period. While the concerto was established later in the baroque period, the sonata, another instrumental genre that remains pervasive in today's musical canon, albeit in a later, more well-developed form, was a mainstay of the period from the beginning.

Sonata

Early sonatas were composed for both solo instruments and ensembles of like instruments, namely strings, accompanied by continuo. The earliest sonatas were penned by composers of northern Italy and of the German speaking lands of the Holy Roman Empire including present day Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Compared to the relatively standardized form of the later sonata with its particular pattern of movements and the sonata form of its opening movement, the baroque sonata is a free form genre. Sonatas could have multiple movements or be a single movement in and of itself.[46] The unrestrained nature of this genre made it an ideal venue for experimenting with compositional innovations.

A representative example of this is found in the so-called "Mystery Sonatas", pieces for solo violin and continuo, of Heinrich Biber (1644–1704),[47] a court composer and violinist in Salzburg in the late seventeenth century.[48] Each of the fifteen sonatas of this collection is accompanied by an engraved picture of one of the fifteen scenes from the lives of Jesus and Mary that make up the fifteen mysteries of the Catholic rosary. In addition to this uniquely programmatic element of the manuscript collection, Biber composes each of the sonatas for a violin using *scordatura* tuning in which the strings of the violin are tuned in an irregular manner. Furthermore, these sonatas are technically demanding of the performer, making ready use of double stops and rapid string crossings. Biber's one of a kind collection of solo sonatas demonstrates the free-form and innovative nature of the solo sonata in the Baroque period.

While the solo sonata served as an ideal place for virtuosic experimentation, the trio sonata, composed for three instruments, most often strings, accompanied by continuo, serves as an important precursor to the symphony. This genre lends both its multi-movement (fast-slow-fast) form and its treble dominated texture to the future genre. In early trio sonatas, each of the three instruments carry even weight: no one instrument's part is more virtuosic in comparison to the others. However, later in the period, the texture of trio sonatas tended towards the treble dominated texture that dominates the early symphonic writing of Giovanni Battista Sammartini

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[45] William Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era,* 3d ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972).

[46] William Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era,* 3d ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972).

[47] Eric Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Press, 1987).

[48] Heinrich Biber, *Mystery Sonatas for Violin and Continuo,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=61 and http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=62.

(1700–1775) and Johann Stamitz (1717–1757). See, for example, the virtuosic violin parts accompanied by the harmonic support of the bass line in the trio sonatas of Arcangelo Corelli.[49]

Two other subsets of the Baroque ensemble sonata include sonatas for church performances (*sonatas da chiesa*) and sonatas for chamber performance (*sonatas da camera*). *Sonatas da chiesa* consist of abstract movements that are identified simply by tempo, while *sonatas da camera* include dance movements alongside abstract movements. For example, Arcangelo Corelli's *Sonata da Chiesa*, Op. 5, no. 1, consists of four through composed movements arranged in alternating tempos: fast-slow-fast.[50] In contrast, Corelli's *Sonata da Camera*, op. 2, no. 4 is comprised of dance movements such as an allemande and gigue in addition to abstract movements such as a prelude and a slow movement.[51] The presence of these dance movements indicates that this particular sonata is not intended for church and is rather suited for performance at court.

Concerto

The concerto was established in Italy towards the end of the baroque period and popularized by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) who composed a great number of concertos for his students in Venice.[52] While the later concerto would become a prominent form of virtuosic display, its origins in the baroque period are more modest and defined by the varying of performance textures rather than a virtuosic solo part demonstrating a performer's technical prowess. In fact, the term "concerto" comes from the Latin word *concertare,* which means to "contend, dispute, or debate" or "to work together with someone" and was applied to any piece in which contrasting performing groups engage in a sort of dialogue.[53] As in the sonata of the Baroque period, the concerto could be composed for a wide variety of instrumental groups including strings and/or woodwinds. The complementary groups of instrumentalists consisted of a larger group accompanying a smaller group of instrumentalists including two or more soloists in a *concerto grosso*,[54] or a small orchestra accompanying a soloist.[55] Like the sonata, the baroque concerto served as an important precursor to the early symphony, consisting of three movements in

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[49] Arcangelo Corelli, Trio Sonata, Op. 3, No. 2, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=280.
[50] Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonata da Chiesa,* op. 5, No. 1, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=231.
[51] Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonata da Camera,* Op. 2, No. 4, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=232.
[52] See Michael Talbot, *Venetian Music in the Age of Antonio Vivaldi* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
[53] Arthur Hutchings, "Concerto," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40737.
[54] Arcangelo Corelli, *Concerto Grosso,* op. 6, No. 8, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=279 and *Concerto Grosso,* op. 6, no. 2, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=591. Antonio Vivaldi, *Concerto Grosso,* op. 3, no. 2, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=205.
[55] Antonio Vivaldi, *Concerto in A major for Violin and Orchestra,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=206 and *Concerto in A minor for Violin and Orchestra,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=207

contrasting fast-slow-fast tempos, a multi-movement form that echoes that of its contemporary ensemble sonata and the classical symphony.

Keyboard Music

The keyboard genres of the Baroque period were composed largely for harpsichord and organ since the modern day (forte)piano was not yet popular.[56] The keyboard suite, the multi-movement form similar to that of the ensemble sonatas described above, includes both dance and abstract movements.[57] This genre was cultivated both in France and the German-speaking lands. German keyboard suites, such as those by Johann Jacob Froberger (1616–1667), are fairly straightforward in nature involving a regular pattern of dance movements in simple binary forms (allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue).[58] The allemande is a duple meter dance in a moderate tempo with usually two or three brief sections or "strains". The triple meter courante embraced a binary form and a homophonic texture and existed in two versions: the Italian courante was usually in 3/4 or 3/8, while the French corrente was in 3/2 and was usually characterized by metric ambiguity created by hemiola. The sarabande, a stately binary-form dance in triple meter, has Spanish origins but was composed throughout France and Germany. The gigue, which usually concluded a dance suite, is a lively dance in 3/8 or a compound triple meter.

French composers[59] took a more liberal approach to the genre incorporating a substantially freer use of ornamentation in both abstract and dance movements. Another distinctly French practice was to open a suite with an "unmeasured" prelude: an improvisatory sounding movement without a meter or barlines. It was also common for French composers to provide extramusical subtitles for their keyboard movements, in a sense crafting early precursors to the keyboard character pieces of the nineteenth century composers Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) and Franz Liszt (1811–1886).[60]

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[56] See Christopher Hogwood, ed., *The Keyboard in Baroque Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press) and Andrew Woolley and John Kitchen, eds., *Interpreting Historical Keyboard Music: Sources, Contexts, and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
[57] See Barry Cooper, "The Keyboard Suite in England before the Restoration," *Music & Letters* 53 (1972): 309–19, Sally Park, "The Seventeenth-Century Keyboard Suite in South Germany and Austria (Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1980), Alexander Silbiger, "The Roman Frescobaldi Tradition, 1640–1670)," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 33 (1980): 42–87, and Robert Armstrong, "An Historical Survey of the Development of the Baroque Solo Keyboard Suite in France, England, and Germany," (D.M.A. thesis, Wester Virginia University, 2011).
[58] Johann Jacob Froberger, Suite no. 22 in E minor, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=88.
[59] See James Anthony, *French Baroque Music: From Beaujoyeux to Rameau* (Portland, OR: Amadeus, 1997) and Wilfred Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London and Boston: Faber, 1987).
[60] Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre, Suite I in D minor, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=114 and François Couperin, *Pièces de clavecin: Vingt-cinquiéme ordre,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=283

The fantasia and the toccata are improvisatory-sounding keyboard genres of the period free of any vocal or dance model. While the toccata serves as free-form virtuosic showpiece,[61] the fantasia is more contrapuntal in nature, often opening with a section of clear imitation as in the chromatic fantasia of Jan Pieterzoon Sweelinck (1562–1621).[62] Both genres were intended to exhibit the technique and invention of the composer or performer.

Yet another independent keyboard genre of the baroque period consists of the combination of a prelude, toccata, or fantasia followed by a contrapuntal fugue, a combination that runs through and through the keyboard repertoire of Johann Sebastian Bach. While the opening movement is free-form, improvisational, and virtuosic, the following fugue is densely contrapuntal, a challenging composition both to craft and perform. In a fugue, a single subject is stated in staggered imitative entries in multiple voices. As each voice enters with its own statement of the fugue's subject, the other voices accompany with a countersubject to create a compact labyrinth of melodies. Bach crafted 34 sets of preludes/fantastias/toccatas and fugues for organ in addition to fugues on themes by Giovanni Legrenzi (1626–1690) (BWV 574) and Arcangelo Corelli (BWV 579). Furthermore, the two volumes of his *Well-Tempered Clavier* include a prelude and fugue in each of the twenty-four chromatic keys, reflecting the musical encyclopaedism of the period mentioned at the outset of this essay.[63]

The canzona and the chorale prelude, both for keyboard, build off vocal models.[64] The keyboard canzona emulates the style of its vocal namesake with its simple homophonic texture and a distinct opening long-short-short rhythm.[65] The chorale preludes of the period also make use of vocal models, albeit in a freer and more inventive manner, as the preludes decorate protestant hymn tunes with contrapuntal polyphony. These pieces would have been performed during a Lutheran church service before the singing of a hymn to both establish the proper key and to introduce the hymn tune the congregation was about to sing.[66] In addition to functioning as a musical prelude, Bach would use his musical setting to musically illustrate the meaning of the text at hand. For example, in *Durch Adams Fall,* a chorale prelude for a hymn on the topic of the fall of Adam and Eve into sin in the book of Genesis, the story in which Adam and Eve succumb to the temptation of the devil in the form of a snake, Bach musically depicts the devil's presence

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[61] Girolamo Frescobaldi, Toccata no. 3, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=85 and Toccata no. 9, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=86.

[62] Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Fantasia chromatica,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=187.

[63] Johann Sebastian Bach, Well Tempered Clavier, Book 1, Prelude and Fugue No. 1, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=557, Well Tempered Clavier, Book 1, Prelude and Fugue No.2, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=558, and Well Tempered Clavier, Book 2, Prelude and Fugue 7, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=445.

[64]See J. Peter Burkholder, "Borrowing," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52918.

[65] Anonymous, *Canzona per l'epistola*, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=327.

[66] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=397 and *Vater unser im Himmelreich,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=398.

in a snaking, chromatic melody that pervades the counterpoint accompanying the hymn tune. Furthermore, Bach portrays the Adam and Eve's fall into sin with audible descending leaps in the lowest voice, which is played in the organ's pedal part. In this way, the prelude introduces not only the hymn tune but also the topic of the chorale's text.[67]

Significant Forms

In the Baroque period few musical forms are clearly defined, but the forms that do emerge in the period serve as important precursors to the genres of the more formally-focused classical period that follows.

Da Capo Aria

In late baroque opera, the da capo aria, which includes two clearly delineated, contrasting sections (A and B) took shape.[68] Once the singer sings through both the A and B sections, he/she returns to repeat the A section, creating a ternary form. On the repeat of the A section, the vocalists have free rein to embellish the melody to demonstrate their vocal prowess. Da capo arias are found mainly in opera seria of the late baroque period, in works such as "Mi rivedi" and "Colomba inamorata" from Alessandro Scarlatti's *La Griselda,*[69] and "Fammi combattere, mostri e tifei" and "Lascia Amor, e siegui Marte, và" from Handel's *Orlando* (1733)[70] or "Non disperar, chi sà" and "L'empio, sleale, incegno" from his *Giulio Cesare* (1724).[71]This form was not limited to performance on the opera stage. In fact, Bach uses the form in his German cantatas, as found with the aria *Mein Freund ist mein* from his *Wachet auf* BWV 140.[72]

Sonata Elements

Binary form is prevalent in the instrumental music of the period, in both the abstract and dance movements of solo/ensemble sonatas and keyboard suites. Binary form consists of two individual, contrasting sections that are roughly the same length. Each section may or may not be repeated. These two sections grow into the exposition (A) and development/recapitulation (B) of the sonata form that will be established in the following classical period.[73]

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[67] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Durch Adams Fall,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=396

[68] See Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms,* rev. ed. (W.W. Norton & Co., 1988).

[69] Alessandro Scarlatti, *La Griselda* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=173.

[70] George Frideric Handel, *Orlando* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=487.

[71] George Frideric Handel, *Giulio Cesare* excerpts, A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=101.

[72] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Wachet auf,* A-R Online Music Anthology, http://www.armusicanthology.com/anthology/?music_id=438.

[73] See James Webster, "Sonata Form," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26197.

While the contrasting textures and multi-movement (fast-slow-fast) structure of the Baroque concerto certainly points forward to the classical concertos of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven,[74] the concerto form of the baroque period differs substantially from that found in the classical period. The concerto of the baroque period is defined by contrasting solo and ritornello sections, each playing different musical material. This contrasts with the later concertos in which thematic material is shared between the two performing groups. Each movement of the Baroque concerto, moreover, is shaped by a dialogue between modulating solo sections and the consistent return of a harmonically stable ritornello performed by the large group. This differs substantially from the double exposition form that will be established in the classical concerto, in which the soloist and accompanying large group share melodic material, each introducing the themes in individual expositions.

Conclusion

The Baroque period saw the development of many new genres and styles. Composers of the period facilitated the development of both opera and monody. Concerted music, a development of the late Renaissance, appears in both sacred and secular genres of the period, especially in the concerto, the sacred concerto, and the German cantata. Extended techniques were explored in the solo sonata repertoire of the period, and ensemble sonatas were composed for both sacred and secular contexts. Keyboard genres, especially those free of vocal models, were particularly improvisatory and inventive. The period was not without controversy: two important polemics emerged, both involving vocal music. Giovanni Artusi and Claudio Monteverdi disagreed regarding the treatment of dissonance in relation to text setting while Giulio Caccini argued for tasteful ornamentation in his volume of monody. While the Baroque was a period of innovation for both instrumental and vocal genres, the proliferation of instrumental genres is particularly characteristic of the time. The many innovations that characterize the genres described in this essay point forward to developments that are cultivated further in the classical period.

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[74] See Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998).

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