BAROQUE MUSIC

the richest and most diverse periods in music history.
When?

Approximately from 1600 to 1750
WHERE DOES THE WORD “BAROQUE” COME FROM?

There are two hypothesis

- Baroque (French) = whimsical
- Barroco (Portuguese) = misshapen pearl
The negative use of the word

To much ornate and heavily ornamented
THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPOSERS

- Johann Sebastian Bach
- George Frideric Handel
- Alessandro Scarlatti
- Domenico Scarlatti
- Antonio Vivaldi
- Henry Purcell
- Georg Philipp Telemann
- Arcangelo Corelli
- Tomaso Albinoni
- François Couperin
- Claudio Monteverdi
- Jean-Philippe Rameau
- Johann Pachelbel
- Jean-Baptiste Lully
BAROQUE MUSIC FEATURES

- Contrast as a dramatic element
- Monody
- Basso continuo
- Different instrumental sounds
Contrast as a Dramatic Element

Contrast is an important ingredient in a baroque composition. The differences between loud and soft, solo and ensemble (as in the concerto grosso), different instruments and timbres all play an important role in many baroque compositions. Composers also began to be more precise about instrumentation, specifying the instruments on which a piece should be played instead of allowing the performer to choose. Brilliant instruments like the trumpet and violin also grew in popularity.
MONODY AND THE ADVENT OF THE
BASSO CONTINUO

During the baroque period the concept of “melody” and “harmony” began to be articulated. Imitating ancient music, composers started focusing less on the complicated polyphony that dominated the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and more on a single voice with a simplified accompaniment, (monody.)
THE BASSO CONTINUO

- The practice of basso continuo, was a method of musical notation in which the melody and bass line are written out and the harmonic filler indicated in a type of shorthand.

- Because basso continuo, or thorough bass, remained standard practice until the end of the baroque period, the era is sometimes known as the “age of the thorough bass.”
DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTAL SOUNDS

- The note to which baroque ensembles tuned, varied widely at different times and in different places. As a result, the music notated on a score might have sounded as much as a half tone lower than how it is usually performed today.

- The harpsichord was the primary keyboard instrument and instruments important in the 16th and 17th centuries like the lute and viol still continued to be used. Variations in instruments still popular today also gave the baroque ensemble a different sound. String instruments like the violin, viola and cello used gut strings rather than the strings wrapped in metal with which they are strung today, for example, giving them a mellower, sweeter tone.

- A baroque score contains elements like articulation, ornamentation or dynamics.
How many Baroque periods do we distinguish?

Three:

- Early baroque music (1580–1630)
- Middle baroque music (1630–1680)
- Late baroque music (1680–1750)
EARLY BAROQUE MUSIC (1580–1630)

The Florentine Camerata was a group of humanists, musicians, poets and intellectuals in late Renaissance Florence. They discussed about arts, especially music and drama. They based their ideals on the ancient Greek musical drama. They rejected their contemporaries' use of polyphony and instrumental music, and discussed such ancient Greek music devices as monody which consisted of a solo singing accompanied by a kithara. The realizations of these ideas marked the beginning of the Baroque.

Concerning music theory, the more widespread use of figured bass represented the developing of harmony. Composers began concerning themselves with harmonic progressions, and dissonance. However, the use of harmony directed towards tonality, rather than modality. This led to the idea that chords, rather than notes, could provide a sense of closure, one of the fundamental ideas that became known as tonality.
Who did further the transition from Renaissance to Baroque?

By incorporating these new aspects of composition, Claudio Monteverdi furthered the transition from the Renaissance style of music to the Baroque period. With the writing of the operas L'Orfeo and L'incoronazione di Poppea Monteverdi brought considerable attention to the new genre of opera.
Middle Baroque Music (1630–1680)

The rise of the centralized court is one of the economic and political features of what is often labelled the Age of Absolutism personified by Louis XIV of France. The style of palace, and the court system he fostered became the model for the rest of Europe. The realities of rising church and state patronage created the demand for organized public music, as the increasing availability of instruments created the demand for chamber music.
THE MIDDLE BAROQUE PERIOD IN ITALY

- It is defined by the emergence of the cantata, oratorio and opera during the 1630s, and a new concept of melody and harmony that elevated the status of the music to one of equality with the words, which before had been regarded as preeminent. The melodies were built from short, cadentially delimited ideas often based on stylized dance patterns drawn from the sarabande or the courante. The harmonies were simpler than in the early Baroque monody, and the accompanying bass lines were more integrated with the melody. This harmonic simplification also led to a new formal device of the differentiation of recitative and aria.
Baroque Italian Composers

- The most important innovators of this style in Italy were Luigi Rossi and Giacomo Carissimi who were primarily composers of cantatas and oratorios, respectively, and Francesco Cavalli who was principally an opera composer. Later important practitioners of this style were Giovanni Legrenzi and Alessandro Stradella.

- Arcangelo Corelli was a violinist who organized violin technique and pedagogy—and in purely instrumental music, he developed the concerto grosso. Corelli was one of the first composers to publish widely and have his music performed all over Europe. The concerto grosso is built on strong contrasts—sections alternate between those played by the full orchestra, and those played by a smaller group. Dynamics were "terraced", that is with a sharp transition from loud to soft and back again. Fast sections and slow sections were juxtaposed against each other. The most important of Corelli’s students was Antonio Vivaldi, who later composed hundreds of works based on the contrasts technique.
JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY

One preeminent example of a court style composer is Jean-Baptiste Lully. He purchased patents from the monarchy to be the sole composer of operas for the king. He completed 15 lyric tragedies and left unfinished Achille et Polyxène.

He introduced the violins ensemble to the lyric theatre, with the upper parts often doubled by recorders, flutes, and oboes, and the bass by bassoons. Trumpets and kettledrums were frequently added for heroic scenes.
LATE BAROQUE MUSIC (1680–1730)

George Frideric Händel (1675 -1759) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) were the most important composers of the late Baroque.