Part Three

The Long Seventeenth Century
Chapter 10

Vocal Music of the Early Baroque and the Invention of Opera
Baroque era: 1600–1750

- music acts on emotions, moves the listener
- Italian trends dominate musical fashions
  - new idioms: basso continuo, monody, recitative
  - new styles: unprepared dissonance, focus on solo voice with supporting bass line
  - new genres: opera
General Characteristics of Baroque Music

The second practice

- first practice (*prima pratica*):
  - compositional methods of the sixteenth century
- second practice (*seconda pratica*):
  - deliberately breaking rules handling dissonance
  - better suited to move the affections
- Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) *Cruda Amarilli* (NAWM 71), madrigal
  - *cruda* (“cruel”): “incorrectly” introduced, resolved dissonances
Ex10-01
The second practice (cont’d)

- “ahi lasso” (alas): unprepared dissonances
- criticism of Monteverdi’s madrigal
  - Giovanni Maria Artusi’s *L’Artusi overo delle imperffetioni della moderna musica* (The Artusi; or Concerning the Imperfections of Modern Music)

Regular and flexible rhythms

- flexible rhythms: vocal recitative, improvisatory solo instrumental pieces
- regular rhythms: dance music
General Characteristics of Baroque Music (cont’d)

- Regular and flexible rhythms (cont’d)
  - barlines became common
  - by midcentury, used to mark off measures
  - flexible and metric rhythms used in succession to provide contrast
    - recitative and aria, toccata and fugue

- Texture
  - homophonic texture: firm bass, florid treble
    - contrast highlighted between bass and treble
General Characteristics of Baroque Music (cont’d)

Texture (cont’d)

- basso continuo or thoroughbass
  - written-out melody and bass line
  - performers fill in chords, continuo instruments
    - harpsichord, organ, lute, theorbo
    - later seventeenth-century bass line reinforced; viola da gamba, cello, or bassoon
  - figured bass: added figures above or below bass notes
- realization
  - actual playing of figured bass
  - varied according to work and player; improvised
Le nuove musiche (1601–02), by Giulio Caccini (1551–1618)

- first collection of solo songs with basso continuo
- airs: strophic settings called arias
- madrigals: through-composed
  - Vedrò ‘l mio sol (I’ll see my sun, NAWM 72)
- ornamentation
  - occasionally written in, sometimes newly devised
  - should be used sparingly to enhance message of text
General Characteristics of Baroque Music (cont’d)

- *Le nuove musiche (1601–02)*, by Giulio Caccini (1551–1618) (cont’d)
  - foreword in *Le nuove musiche*: descriptions of vocal ornaments

- Concertato medium: combining voices with instruments
  - concerted madrigal: one or more voices and continuo
  - sacred concerto: sacred vocal work with instruments
General Characteristics of Baroque Music (cont’d)

Harmony

- chords and dissonance
  - consonant sounds: vertical entities, chords
  - dissonance: note that did not fit into a chord
  - greater variety of dissonances tolerated

- chromaticism
  - used to express intense emotions
  - harmonic exploration in instrumental pieces
  - created distinctive subjects in imitative counterpoint
Harmony (cont’d)

- from modal to tonal music
  - early seventeenth-century use of church modes: *cantus mollis* and *cantus durus*
  - by last third of the century, music was tonal
  - Rameau’s *Treatise on Harmony* (1722), first complete theoretical formulation
Harmony (cont’d)

- tonality
  - evolved gradually
  - standard cadential progressions, bass movement of 4th or 5th, conventional bass patterns, suspensions create forward motion
  - figured bass drew attention to succession of chords
Forerunners of Opera

- Association of music with drama goes back to ancient times
  - plays of Euripides and Sophocles: choruses, principal lyric speeches
  - medieval liturgical dramas sung throughout
  - Renaissance plays: songs, offstage music

- Renaissance antecedents
  - intermedio
    - musical interlude performed between acts of a play
Forerunners of Opera (cont’d)

- Renaissance antecedents (cont’d)
  - most spectacular intermedi, for Florentine wedding
    - elaborate productions, almost all the ingredients of opera
    - several of the same artists involved in earliest opera
  - pastoral drama
    - plays in verse with incidental music
    - pastoral poems, rustic settings
    - popular in Italian courts
    - *Il pastor fido* (The Faithful Shepherd, 1590), by Giovanni Battista Guarini
Forerunners of Opera (cont’d)

Greek tragedy as model

- humanist scholars, poets, musicians, patrons revive Greek tragedy
  - hope to generate same ethical effects
  - experiments led to first operas
- Girolamo Mei (1519–1594)
  - believed entire text of Greek tragedy was sung
  - single melody, sung by soloist or chorus, with or without accompaniment
  - powerful emotions through natural expressiveness of vocal registers
Florentine Camerata

- early 1570s, academy hosted by Count Giovanni de’ Bardi (1534–1612)
  - discussed literature, science, and the arts
  - musicians performed new music
  - Giulio Caccini, Mei’s protégé
- Vincenzo Galilei (ca. 1520s–1591): *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* (Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music, 1581)
  - attacked vocal counterpoint
  - argued for single line melody, natural speech inflections
Forerunners of Opera (cont’d)

Florentine Camerata (cont’d)

- ancient versus modern
  - “ancient,” “old” (“antique” or “classical” rather than “conservative”)
  - “modern,” “new” (“au courant” or “fashionably modern”)
  - Bardi and Galilei privileged “ancient” style over “modern”
The First Operas

Recreate ancient genre in modern form

• Bardi in Rome, 1592
  ▪ discussion and performance continued
  ▪ sponsorship of nobleman, Jacopo Corsi (1561–1602)

• Jacopo Peri (1561–1633) and Ottavio Rinuccini’s (1562–1621) *Dafne* (1598)
  ▪ Rinuccini’s pastoral poem
  ▪ first opera: staged drama, sung throughout
  ▪ presented at Corsi’s palace
The First Operas (cont’d)

L’Euridice

- 1600: Rinuccini’s pastoral drama *L’Euridice*
  - performed during court festivities in Florence
  - set to music by Peri and Caccini
  - combination of both composers’ settings
  - both versions published, earliest surviving complete operas
  - story demonstrates music’s power to move the emotions
L’Euridice (cont’d)

- recitative style (NAWM 73)
  - idiom for dialogue invented by Peri
  - halfway between speech and song
  - similar style used for reciting Greek heroic poems
  - basso continuo held steady notes, voice moved freely through consonances and dissonances
    - liberated voice from the harmony
  - consonances occur on all stressed syllables

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

- most innovative and imaginative composer of his day
- born in Cremona, Italy
The First Operas (cont’d)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) (cont’d)

- prodigy as a composer
- 1601, court music director for Vincenzo Gonzaga, duke of Mantua
  - first operas: *L’Orfeo* (1607), *L’Arianna* (1608)
- 1613, maestro di cappella, St. Mark’s in Venice
  - most prestigious musical post in Italy
  - remained thirty years until his death
- 1632, became a priest
- transformed genre of the madrigal
The First Operas (cont’d)

- Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) (cont’d)
  - major works: three surviving operas, nine books of madrigals, three volumes of secular songs, three masses, four collections of sacred music

- Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* (1607)
  - permanent place in repertory
  - modeled on *L’Euridice*; wider range of styles, expanded proportions
  - recitative: careful tonal organization, longer lines; intensely dramatic moments
Ex10-03

Ma la bella furide, Movea danzando il piè sul verde prato.

Quand'ahiria sorte al cerba, Angue crudele spie-

atto Ccheelato giacea tra fiorie l'erba, Punsele il piè.
Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* (1607) (cont’d)

- Alessandro Striggio: librettist
  - interspersed solo airs, duets, madrigalesque ensembles, dances
  - ritornellos and choruses organize scenes into schemes
- *Vi ricorda, o boschi ombrosi* (Do you remember, O shady woods, NAWM 74a)
  - Orfeo’s strophic canzonet
  - simple dance song, hemiola rhythm of frottole, root-position chords
Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* (1607) (cont’d)

- *In un fiorito prato* (In a flowery meadow, NAWM 74c)
  - broadly conceived harmonic movement, melodic contour

- Orfeo’s lament “Tu se’ morta” (NAWM 74d)
  - new height of lyricism for recitative
  - each phrase intensifies in pitch and rhythm
  - dissonances against sustained chords
Ex10-04

Orfeo

Tu_ se' mor-ta
se' mor-ta mia vi-ta ed io re-spi-ro, tu se' da me par-ti-ta,

Un organo di legno e un chitarone
The First Operas (cont’d)

Florence: Francesca Caccini (1587–ca. 1645)
- court preferred ballets, masques, and intermedi
- *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall’isola d’Alcina* (The Liberation of Ruggiero from the Island of Alcina, 1625)
  - billed as ballet, now considered an opera
  - sinfonia, prologue, recitatives, arias, choruses, instrumental ritornellos
  - elaborate staging
  - explores theme of women and power
  - good and evil delineated by contrasting musical styles
Florence: Francesca Caccini (1587–ca. 1645) (cont’d)

- Francesca Caccini, daughter of Giulio Caccini
  - career as singer, teacher, composer
  - highest-paid musician employed by grand duke of Tuscany
  - sang in a *concerto delle donne*
  - among the most prolific composers of theater music
Opera in Rome and Venice

**Rome: center for opera development, 1620s**
- subjects expanded: lives of saints, episodes from Italian epics, comedy
- spectacular stage effects emphasized
- recitative and aria more clearly defined
  - recitatives: more speechlike
  - arias: melodious, mainly strophic
- castrati
  - women prohibited from stage in Rome
  - female roles sung by castrati
  - later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, castrati sang outside of Rome in male roles
Venice: 1637 first public opera house, Teatro San Cassiano

- audience
  - Venice attracted visitors for Carnival, diverse audiences
  - theaters built and supported by rich merchants
  - by the end of the century: nine theatrical stages, 150 operas produced
  - wealthiest families rented boxes

- Monteverdi moved to Venice, 1613
  - three operas for Venetian stage, two survive
  - *Il ritorno d’Ulisse* (The Return of Ulysses, 1640)
Venice: 1637 first public opera house, Teatro San Cassiano (cont’d)

- *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (The Coronation of Poppea, 1643)
  - lacks varied instrumentation of *Orfeo*
  - surpasses in depiction of human characters and passions
  - Act I, scene 3 (NAWM 75): styles change frequently, reflect character’s feelings
  - *recitativo arioso*: somewhere between recitative and aria style

• Monteverdi’s successors
  - Pier Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676)
    - pupil of Monteverdi
    - *Giasone* (Jason, 1649), incorporates most conventions of the period
Opera in Rome and Venice (cont’d)

Venice: 1637 first public opera house, Teatro San Cassiano (cont’d)

- Antonio Cesti (1623–1669)
  - Cavalli’s most serious competitor
  - spent much of his career abroad

- Cesti’s *Oronte*, written for Innsbruck, 1656
  - most frequently performed opera in seventeenth century
  - all over Italy, as well as Austria
  - action unfolds in simple recitative
Opera in Rome and Venice (cont’d)

Venice: 1637 first public opera house, Teatro San Cassiano (cont’d)
  - aria style, *Intorno all’idol mio* (Around my idol, NAWM 76b)
    - strophic form
    - lyrical idiom, smooth, diatonic lines

Italian opera at midcentury
  - features established for next two hundred years
    - concentration on solo singing
    - separation of recitative and aria
Italian opera at midcentury (cont’d)

- introduction of distinctive styles and forms for arias
- arias drew most attention from composers and audiences
- drama and poetry servants of the music
# TIMELINE

## The Early Baroque Period: The Invention of Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Artusi attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monteverdi in print;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L’Euridice (NAWM 73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by Peri and Caccini, performed in Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601–1602</td>
<td>Giulio Caccini, Le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nuove musiche (NAWM 72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Claudio Monteverdi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publishes Fifth Book of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madrigals (NAWM 71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>Monteverdi, L’Orfeo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(NAWM 74), in Mantua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1611</td>
<td>Gesualdo’s last book of madrigals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1613</td>
<td>Monteverdi appointed maestro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>di cappella at Saint Mark’s, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>Francesca Caccini, La liberazione di Ruggiero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1637</td>
<td>First public opera house opens in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1642</td>
<td>Monteverdi, L’incoronazione di Poppea (NAWM 73), in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1590</td>
<td>Guarini, Il pastor fido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>Shakespeare, Othello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1609</td>
<td>Kepler sets forth his astronomical laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618–1648</td>
<td>Thirty Years’ War (religious wars in Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>Mayflower brings first English colonists to New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645–1652</td>
<td>Bernini, in Rome, The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa (Figure 11.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2014 W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
Postlude

- Opera began as an effort to re-create ancient Greek ideals of drama
  - sources in theatrical spectacles: intermedi
  - tension between drama, spectacle, and vocal display

- Seventeenth-century operas only lasted a single season
  - new productions brought new singers
  - focus on solo singing: separation of recitative and aria dominate aria for the next two centuries
Visit StudySpace!

http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/conchis5/

This site provides access to all music selections referenced in the textbook and The *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, 7th Edition. Each new copy of the textbook includes a registration code, valid for 2 years. Your Total Access registration code provides access to

- Chapter Playlists that organize each chapter's listening examples and selections, by NAWM identifier. Met Opera scenes are also available.
- An online EBook, identical to the print copy, with links to all referenced media.
- Review Materials, including chapter quizzes, listening quizzes, outlines, and flashcards
This concludes the Lecture Slide Set for Chapter 10

by

Barbara Russano Hanning

© 2014 W. W. Norton & Company, Inc
Independent and Employee-Owned