

Music Appreciation - Chapter 3

The Early and Middle Baroque Period

General Characteristics

A. "Baroque" as Term and Period

The word baroque (from a Portuguese word for an irregularly shaped pearl) was first used to describe art regarded as bizarre or exaggerated. Later, it was used by art historians in a more positive way to describe the flamboyant decorative and expressive tendencies of 17th- and early-18th-century art and architecture. Music historians now use it for the period of about 1600 to 1750, which includes a variety of musical styles that share some general conventions and ideals.

B. Geographical and Cultural Background

Italy remained the most influential region, with important centers at Florence, Rome, Venice, Naples, and Bologna. French music absorbed Italian influences before an Italian, Jean-Baptiste Lully, established a French style after mid century. German music also had Italian roots, and a native English tradition was eventually largely displaced by the Italian style. Many rulers supported music, as did the Church, many cities, and independent academies. Literature and art flourished throughout Europe in the Baroque period, from the poetry of Milton to the paintings of Rembrandt. New developments in philosophy and science were particularly spectacular, with Bacon, Descartes, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and others who helped lay the foundations of modern thought.

C. New Musical Idiom

Musicians at the turn of the 17th century sought to give expression to a wider range of emotions and ideas than before. Their search for new methods involved considerable experimentation and led to the codification of a new musical language by the middle of the century.

D. The Two Practices

Writing in 1605, Monteverdi distinguished between the *prima prattica* (first practice), in which a composer follows the rules of dissonance treatment codified by Zarlino, and the *seconda prattica* (second practice), in which those rules could be violated in order to

express better the feelings in the text. The former came to be called *stile antico* (old style), as opposed to the *stile moderno* (modern style). Others divided music into church, chamber, and theatrical styles.

E. Idiomatic Writing

Renaissance polyphony might be sung or played by various combinations of voices and instruments, but the growing importance of soloists led 17th-century composers to write with a specific medium in mind. As a result, distinctive idiomatic styles developed for the voice, violin family, viol family, wind instruments, keyboard, and other instruments.

F. The Affections

Baroque composers sought to write music that was expressive of the affections, or states of the soul. These are not the emotions of the composer (or anyone else), but generalized states of feeling.

G. Rhythm

Music before the 17th century was conceived primarily in terms of durations, but Baroque and later composers thought in terms of strong and weak beats grouped in measures. On the other hand, free and irregular rhythms were used in vocal recitative and instrumental preludes and toccatas. Some standard forms paired a relatively free section with a strictly metered section, such as a recitative and aria or a toccata and fugue.

H. The Basso Continuo

Renaissance polyphony used a texture of equal voices, but in Baroque music the melody and bass were the two essential lines. In the system of notation called thoroughbass or basso continuo, the accompaniment was not fully written out; instead, continuo instruments such as harpsichord, organ, or lute would play the notated bass line and fill in the appropriate chords above it, while often a sustaining instrument like a viola da gamba or bassoon would reinforce the bass.

Accidentals, nonharmonic tones, and chords other than root-position triads could be indicated by numbers and other figures; a part notated this way is called a figured bass. A basso continuo part can be realized by the

performer(s) in various ways from simple chords to elaborate improvisations.

I. The New Counterpoint

Composers continued to use counterpoint. Gradually there evolved a new kind of counterpoint in which the lines had to fit the harmonies implied by the basso continuo. This marks the beginning of counterpoint governed by harmony.

J. Dissonance

The new importance of harmony led during the later 17th century to a conception of dissonance as a note outside a chord, rather than an interval between two voices, and to an increased role for dissonance in defining the tonal direction of a piece.

K. Chromaticism

Chromaticism was used in the early 17th century for expression of extreme emotions or to give harmonic interest to improvisations. Later in the century, it also gained a role in defining tonal direction.

L. Major-Minor Tonality

These and other developments led by last third of the 17th century to tonality, or the major-minor system, which replaced the older system of modes.

II. Early Opera

A. Forerunners

An opera is a staged drama set to continuous music. The first operas were written around 1600, but many earlier forms of theater used music, including Greek tragedies, liturgical dramas, religious plays, and Renaissance theater.

B. Intermedi

Intermedi were theatrical interludes between acts of a 16th-century play, and the more elaborate intermedi often incorporated madrigals, songs, and other music. Some madrigals set scenes from dramatic poems or represented a dialogue between characters, and these approached the idea of opera.

C. Madrigal Cycles

Madrigal cycles were groups of madrigals that presented a plot or represented a series of

scenes. Cycles of light madrigals are now sometimes called madrigal comedies.

D. The Pastoral

A pastoral was a poem, sometimes staged as a drama, about shepherds, nymphs, and other rural (or pastoral) subjects in an idealized setting.

E. Greek Tragedy as a Model

The ancient Greek tragedies were a model for the dramatically effective theater Renaissance dramatists sought to achieve. Some felt that only the choruses of Greek tragedy were sung, but Girolamo Mei (1519-1594), a Florentine scholar, argued that the tragedies were sung throughout. This set the stage for the invention of opera.

F. The Florentine Camerata

Mei's theory that the Greeks achieved powerful emotional effects through melody that followed the inflections and rhythms of the human voice was a strong influence on the Florentine Camerata, an informal group that met at the house of Giovanni Bardi in Florence during the 1570s and 1580s. Influenced by Mei, Vincenzo Galilei attacked counterpoint and argued that only a single melodic line, by following the natural inflections of a good orator, could express the feelings of poetry.

G. The Earliest Operas

The poet Ottaviano Rinuccini (1562-1621) and singer-composer Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) produced *Dafne* in Florence in 1597, as the first pastoral sung throughout. The first opera was *L'Euridice* (1600) by the same pair; that same year, Giulio Caccini (1551-1618) also set Rinuccini's *L'Euridice* and Emilio de' Cavalieri (ca. 1550-1602) produced in Rome *Rappresentatione di Anima e di Corpo* (The Representation of the Soul and the Body), a religious musical play. All three composers sought a style intermediate between speaking and singing, and all three wrote monody, music for solo voice and accompaniment. Peri developed a new style for dialogue, known as *stile recitativo* or recitative style. Other kinds of monody at the time included the *air*, which was atrophic, and the solo madrigal, which was through-composed; both are included in Caccini's collection *Le nuove musiche* (The New Music, 1602). Music: NAWM 555

H. The Recitative Style

In recitative style, Peri sought to imitate speech by allowing the natural rhythms of speech to determine the rhythm of the melodic line; harmonizing the syllables that were naturally stressed or intoned in speech; letting the bass follow these main syllables, rather than making the voice "dance to the movement of the bass"; and setting the syllables in between to notes that might be either consonant or dissonant with the bass, to resemble the continuous motions of speech. The various styles of monody—recitative, air, and solo madrigal—were used in all kinds of music in the early 17th century, and they made a dramatic musical theater possible by allowing composers to represent a great variety of situations and emotions.

I. Claudio Monteverdi

Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* (Mantua, 1607), to a libretto by Alessandro Striggio, is on the same subject as Peri's *Euridice* and also uses contrasting styles. The recitative is more continuous and tonally organized; there are more airs and madrigals; repeating ritornellos and choruses create large-scale form; and the orchestra is large and varied. Most of Monteverdi's next opera, *Arianna* (1608), is lost, but *Arianna's* widely admired lament survives.

J. Francesca Caccini

Only a few more operas were staged through the 1620s. The Florentine court preferred ballets and intermedi, such as *La liberazione di Ruggiero* (1625), an opera-like blend of ballet and intermedio by Francesca Caccini (1587-ca. 1640). The daughter of Giulio Caccini, she was known as both a singer and a composer and was the highest-paid musician at court

K. Rome

Opera became established in Rome in the 1620s, particularly through the sponsorship of the Barberini family. There the comic opera became established as a separate genre. Solo singing separated into two distinct types, recitative and aria. By the middle of the 17th century, operas often included comic episodes, scenic spectacle, extraneous characters, and other elements that were entertaining as theater but no longer conformed to the Florentine ideal of a unified drama akin to that of ancient Greece.

L. Venetian Opera

Opera was introduced to Venice in 1637 in a public theater; this marked the first time opera was staged for a paying public. Venice was ideal for opera, with many visitors during Carnival season (from the day after Christmas to the day before Lent), wealthy backers, and a steady audience. Plots were drawn from mythology, epics, and Roman history. Monteverdi's last two operas, *11 ritorno d'Ulisse* (*The Return of Ulysses*, 1641) and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (*The Coronation of Poppea*, 1642), were written for Venice. Pier Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676) and Marc' Antonio Cesti (1623-1669) were also important composers of opera in Venice. By the mid-17th century Italian opera was characterized by a focus on solo singing, with little ensemble or instrumental music; a separation of recitative and aria; and the use of distinctive types of aria. The most prominent vocal style was the *bel canto* (beautiful singing) idiom of smooth diatonic lines and easy rhythms.

III. Vocal Chamber Music

A. Strophic Forms and Bass Patterns

Most secular vocal music was chamber music. Chamber works also used monody and basso continuo. Strophic airs used the same music for each strophe; atrophic variations used the same harmonic and melodic plan for each strophe, but varied the melodic details. Some composers based works on the *romanesca* and other standard patterns for singing poetry in *ottave rime* (stanzas of eight 11-syllable lines) or on a repeating bass figure called a ground bass or *basso ostinato*. The *chaconne* and *passacaglia* both feature a repeating bass figure in a slow triple meter and usually in the minor mode.

B. The Concertato Medium

The 17th-century concerto brought together contrasting sounds into a harmonious whole, in what is called the concertato medium. A concertato

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passacaglia both feature a repeating bass figure in a slow triple meter and usually in the minor mode.

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The 17th-century concerto brought together contrasting sounds into a harmonious whole, in what is called the concertato medium. A concertato madrigal uses instruments as well as voices; a sacred concerto likewise combines a vocal setting of a sacred text with parts for instruments; and an instrumental concerto pits groups of instruments against each other, usually soloists against a larger group. Monteverdi's later books of madrigals include a number of concertato madrigals. His Book 8, *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* (Madrigals of War and Love, 1638), also includes two staged ballets and 11 *combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (The Combat of Tancred and Clorinda), a theatrical piece of 1624. The latter uses pictorial music to suggest the action and introduces a new style, *stile concitato* (excited style), to suggest warlike feelings and actions. Monteverdi and his contemporaries mixed diverse elements in order to represent a variety of emotions, situations, and characters. In arias by younger composers such as Cesti and Cavalli, the creation of a graceful melody became more important than portraying every image or feeling in the text.

C. Genres of Vocal Solo Music

Monodies were very popular in early-17th-century Italy and were published in large number. The *cantata* (a "sung" piece) was a work for solo voice and continuo; early cantatas often used atrophic variations, and later ones, such as those by Barbara Strozzi (1619-after 1664), alternated recitatives and arias, like an operatic scene. Composers outside Italy absorbed Italian influences but also worked in native forms like the French *air de court* Music: NAWM 60

D. Influences on Church Music

Elements of the *stile moderno* (modern style) such as monody, the basso continuo, and the concertato medium were used in church music as well as in secular music. But Renaissance polyphony was not abandoned; the counterpoint of Palestrina became the model for elevated church style. New pieces in Palestrina's style were said to be in *stile antico* (old style), codified in the treatise *Crudus ad*

Parnassum (Steps to Parnassus, 1725) by Johann Joseph Fux.

IV. The Venetian School

A. Social Conditions in Venice

In the 16th century, Venice was an independent city-state, a major trading center, and the second most important city in Italy (after Rome). St. Mark's Church was one of the centers of Venetian music and pageantry, and some of the best composers of the time served as choirmaster (including Willaert, Rore, and Zarlino) or organist (including Andrea Gabrieli and Giovanni Gabrieli, ca. 1553-1612). Venetian music was often homophonic, richly textured, and varied in sonority.

B. Venetian Polychoral Motets

Many Venetian motets were written for two or more choirs, each accompanied by instruments or organ and positioned separately from the others. In these motets for *coro spezzati* (divided choirs), called polychoral motets, the choirs sing alone, answer each other in antiphony, and join together for large climaxes. This use of contrasting sonorities became an important element of Baroque

C. Venetian Influence The Venetian style influenced many composers throughout Europe.

V. Genres of Catholic Church Music

A. The Grand Concerto

A grand concerto was a large work for singers and instruments, often arranged in two or more separate choirs.

B. The Concerto for Few Voices

More common were concertos for one, two, or three voices with organ continuo. Lodovico Viadana (1560-1627) was among the first composers to use this medium, publishing 100 of them in *Cento concerti ecclesiastici* (One Hundred Church Concertos) in 1602. Alessandro Grandi (ca. 1575-1630) was noted for his sacred works in the new style.

C. Oratorio

An oratorio is a sacred drama like an opera, sung throughout with recitatives, arias, ensembles, and instrumental preludes and ritornellos, but performed without staging or costumes in a church hall called an "oratorio," from which the musical genre took its name

around the middle of the 17th century.

Oratorios often featured a narrator, and the chorus was much more prominent than in opera. Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674) was the leading Italian composer of oratorios in the mid-17th century.

VI. Lutheran Church Music

A. The New Styles

Lutheran composers in Germany in the 17th century also wrote grand concertos and concertos for few voices, along with chorale motets and madrigal-like works. An important collection of small sacred concertos was *Opella nova* (1618 and 1626) by Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630).

B. Heinrich Schutz

Heinrich Schutz (1585-1672) was the leading German composer of the mid-17th century. He studied in Italy and was chapelmaster for the Elector of Saxony at Dresden for over half a century. He is renowned for his church music; he apparently wrote no independent instrumental music, and most of his secular vocal music is lost. His sacred music includes simple German psalm settings, Latin motets, polychoral works (*Psalmen Davids*), sacred concertos for few voices (*Kleine geistliche Konzerte*), concertato motets (*Symphoniae sacrae*), and oratorios, such as *The Seven Last Words* (ca. 1645).

VII. Instrumental Music

A. Types of Instrumental Music

Basso continuo and vocal styles affected instrumental music in the 17th century, particularly in the sonata for solo instrument with accompaniment. Over the first half of the century, instrumental music gradually became the equal of vocal music in quantity and content. The following major types can be distinguished, several of which carry over from the 16th century:

1. Fugal works in continuous imitative counterpoint, such as the *ricercare*, *fantasia*, *fuga*, and related genres.
2. Canzonas that feature sections of imitative counterpoint and other styles. By mid-century, the canzona is succeeded by the related form of the *sonata da chiesa* (church sonata).

3. Pieces that vary a given melody or bass, such as the partita, passacaglia, chaconne, chorale partita, and chorale prelude.

4. Dances and pieces in dance rhythms, as separate pieces and as part of dance suites.

5. Pieces in improvisatory style for solo keyboard or lute, called toccata, fantasia, or prelude.

B. Ricercare

Most 17th-century ricercares are short, serious pieces for keyboard that treat a single subject in imitation throughout. Cirolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643), organist at St. Peter's in Rome, is well known for his ricercares.

C. Fantasia

A longer imitative work on a single subject was usually called a fantasia. English composers wrote imitative fantasias or fancies for viol consort.

D. Canzona

Canzonas featured a series of sections, most of them in imitative counterpoint. A variation canzona uses variants of the same subject in each section.

E. Sonata

In the 17th century, sonata came to be used for works for one or two instruments with continuo. The solo writing was often idiomatic and expressive, as in solo vocal works. Sonatas tend to be sectional, with contrasting mood and figuration in each section. In violin sonatas, the idiomatic violin style includes runs, trills, double stops, and improvised embellishments called affetti. A common scoring for a sonata was two treble instruments and continuo, called a trio sonata.

F. Variations

Variations were common in the 17th century, sometimes under titles like partite (divisions). There were several types:

1. In cantus firmus variations, the melody was largely unchanged and was surrounded by other contrapuntal lines.

2. In another type, the melody was in the top voice and was embellished differently in each variation.

3. Other types of variations are based on a bass or harmonic plan rather than on a melody.

German composers wrote variations on chorale tunes

G. Dance Music

In addition to music for dancing and stylized dance movements, other types of pieces also used dance rhythms.

H. Suites

German composers especially favored the dance suite, a series of dances of varied character that often were melodically related.

I. French Lute and Keyboard Music

French composers adapted to the keyboard the playing style of the lute, which played chords one note at a time (this was the style *brise'* or broken style) and used ornaments called *agrement*s to highlight or prolong a note.

These features became characteristic of French keyboard music. Denis Gaultier (1603-1672) was the most important French lute composer of the early 17th century, and Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (ca. 1601-1672) and Louis Couperin (1626-1661) the most important French keyboard composers. Johann Jakob Froberger (1616-1667) took the French style to Germany and standardized the sequence of dances in the suite as *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue*. Music: NAWM 66a, 66b, and 67

J. Improvisatory Compositions

Among the best-known toccatas of the 17th century are those by Frescobaldi, which feature a series of overlapping sections, and Froberger, who alternates free improvisation with imitative sections

I. Opera

A. Venice

In the late 17th century, opera spread throughout Italy and Europe. The main Italian center was Venice. Musical interest in operas lay primarily in the arias. Singers were the stars, and popular singers commanded much higher fees than composers (just as today film and popular music stars earn more than the screenwriters and songwriters whose works they perform). There were many types of aria, including *tragic songs*; arias over *ostinato basses* or a running bass (also called a *walking bass*), in which the bass moves in steady eighth notes; and arias which used march or dance rhythms, fanfare motives, or *coloratura*. Continuo arias were accompanied only by

continuo, with or without an orchestral ritornello.

B. Venetian Opera Exported

Many Italian composers made careers writing Italian operas in Germany. A common type of aria was a motto aria, in which the singer states the opening motive (the motto), the instruments interrupt, and then the singer begins again.

C. Naples

A new style of opera developed in Naples in the late 17th century and became dominant in the early 18th century. Here the emphasis was on beautiful singing and elegant melodies, at the expense of drama. There were two types of recitative, which became known as recitativo secco (dry recitative), for long dialogues or monologues, and recitativo accompagnato (accompanied recitative), for dramatic situations. Composers also used arioso, a type of singing between aria and recitative. The most common aria type was the da capo aria, in which the first section (with or without the opening ritornello) is repeated after a contrasting middle section. Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) was one of the leading composers of this kind of opera.

D. France

A distinctive style of opera developed in France in the second half of the 17th century under the patronage of Louis XIV. Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) drew on two strong French traditions, court ballet and classical French tragedy, to create what he called a trage'die lyrique (tragedy in music).

E. Jean-Baptiste Lully

Lully was born in Italy, came to Paris, and was put in charge of theatrical music in France (where King Louis XIV controlled his realm in part through centralized control of the arts). His librettos by Jean-Phillippe Quinault featured mythological plots often interrupted by divertissements, long interludes of choral singing and dancing. Lully's recitative is in a new style, more dramatic and compelling than Italian recitativo secco and perfectly matched to the rhythms and inflections of French, especially as spoken on the dramatic stage. There are two types: re'citatif simple, in which the meter shifts freely between duple and triple, and re'citatif mesure', in a more

songlike, measured style. Lully's airs are simpler and much less florid than Italian arias.

F. The Overture

The overture or French overture was used to introduce an opera, ballet, suite, or other large work. A French overture usually has two parts, the first slow, stately, homophonic, and marked by dotted rhythms, and the second fast and imitative, often closing with a return to the slower first tempo. Georg Muffat (1653-1740) introduced Lully's style into Germany, where it found many imitators. French composers also mixed elements of opera and ballet in the opera-ballet.

G. England

Musical theater in 17th-century England included the masque, akin to the French court ballet; plays with extensive incidental music, called semi-operas; and only two operas, in the sense of a drama that is sung throughout.

H. John Blow

John Blow (1649-1708) was organist and composer at Westminster Abbey and in the Chapel Royal. His masque Venus and Adonis (1684 or 1685) is sung throughout, like an opera. It combines French overture and dance styles, Italian recitative and bel canto, and English song and choral styles.

I. Henry Purcell

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) is considered the greatest English composer of the Baroque era. He wrote a large amount of music for chorus, voice, chamber ensembles, and keyboard, and incidental music for forty-nine plays, including five semi-operas such as The Fairy Queen (1692). His opera Dido and Aeneas (1689) combined French overture, dance, and choral styles with Italian and English vocal styles. Music: NAWM 71-72

J. Germany

While German courts supported Italian operas, some German cities, particularly Hamburg, supported opera in German, called Singspiel (play with music). These usually used spoken dialogue instead of recitative and featured a variety of aria types drawing on Italian, French, and German styles.

K. Reinhard Keiser

Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739) was the foremost composer of German opera in the early 18th century, unifying German and Italian traits.

III. Vocal Chamber Music

A. The Cantata in Italy

In the second half of the 17th century, the Italian cantata was a dramatic narrative or soliloquy for voice and continuo laid out as a series of two or three recitative-aria pairs. It was like a scene from an opera, but performed in a chamber setting and without staging. The leading Italian composers of opera also wrote great numbers of cantatas.

B. Alessandro Scarlatti

Scarlatti wrote over 600 cantatas. His music is fully tonal and uses diminished seventh chords, distant modulations, and unusual harmonies for expressive effect.

C. Other Vocal Chamber Music

Other types of Italian vocal chamber music included the vocal duet and the serenata, a semidramatic work for several singers and small orchestra.

D. Song in Other Countries French and German composers also wrote cantatas, following Italian models. Solo songs continued to be written in the national styles of France, Germany, and England. English composers also wrote catches, unaccompanied canons to texts that were usually humorous, and odes, large works for soloists, chorus, and orchestra celebrating state occasions and holidays.

III. Church Music

A. General

In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Catholic church music was written in the old *stile antico*, in the modern styles, and in mixed styles.

B. Italy

The basilica of San Petronio in Bologna was a center of church music in both *stile antico* and the modern concerted style. The music of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) of Naples exemplifies the plaintive chromaticism and sentimental tone of much Italian religious music of the early 18th century. German

writers called this style *Empfindsamkeit* (sentimentality).

C. South Germany

South German composers of church music blended old and new styles and Italian and German traits. Masses were often on a grand scale, featuring chorus and soloists with full orchestral preludes and accompaniment.

D. Vienna

The Masses of Antonio Caldara (1670-1736) include a variety of styles and ensembles, with self-contained concerted arias and duets, choral movements, and movements that mix chorus and soloists.

E. Oratorio

Italian oratorios were performed in sacred concerts. Most of them were in Italian rather than in Latin, and were in two parts with a sermon or intermission between them. Oratorios were written in the same style as operas and substituted for opera during Lent and other seasons when theaters were closed.

F. French Church Music

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634-1704), a student of Carissimi's, introduced the Latin oratorio to France. He combined Italian traits with French ones, including a prominent role for the chorus. At Louis XIV's chapel, the leading genres were the motet for solo voice and continuo and the grand motet (large motet) for soloists, chorus, and orchestra.

G. Anglican Church Music

Services and anthems continued to be the leading genres of Anglican church music. Purcell and others wrote anthems and odes for special occasions and non-liturgical songs and ensembles for private devotional use.

H. Lutheran Church Music

Lutheran music reached its height in the period 1650-1750. Orthodoxy was challenged by Pietism, which emphasized individual freedom and simple, direct expression of feelings in music.

I. Chorales

Johann Crüger (1598-1662) wrote many new chorale tunes and edited the most influential Lutheran songbook of the second half of the 17th century. Many of these songs were

intended for use in the home, but began to be used in church in the 18th century. Four-part settings of the chorales in cantional style, like those of J. S. Bach, were popular. Pietist songs were simple and sentimental, while Orthodox composers wrote sacred concertos that included concertato arias and choruses, concerted chorale settings, or a mixture of both.

J. Concerted Church Music

Among important composers of Lutheran concerted church music are Matthias Weckmann (1619-1674), Franz Tunder (1614-1667), Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) and Dietrich Buxtehude (ca. 1637-1707). Buxtehude wrote chorale variations, in which each verse elaborates a chorale in a different way, as well as freer concerted pieces. Much of his church music was composed for the Abendmusiken, concerts after the afternoon church services. A standard format for concerted church music was an opening chorus, solo movements, and a choral setting of one verse of a chorale. Lutheran services included some Latin, and Lutheran composers set Latin texts as well as German ones.

K. The Lutheran Church Cantata

The Lutheran church cantata was devised around 1700 by Erdmann Neumeister (1671-

1756) as a series of recitatives and arias meditating on a biblical text and closing with a chorale. Neumeister blended Orthodoxy with Pietism, and composers setting his cantata texts to music blended elements of chorale settings, solo song, the sacred concerto, and opera. Today J. S. Bach is considered the greatest exponent of the church cantata, but in his time Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) was more highly regarded. Telemann wrote more than 1000 cantatas and published four complete cycles for the entire church year.

L. The Passion

The historia was a German genre setting a Bible story to music. The most important type was the Passion, telling the story of the suffering and death of Jesus. Plainchant Passions survive from the Middle Ages. Passions in the 16th and early 17th centuries were written in motet style throughout (the motet Passion) or alternating plainsong and motet style (the dramatic or scenic Passion). In the late 17th century a new type appeared that resembled an oratorio and is known as the oratorio Passion. Passions came to include not only the Bible story but also interpolated chorales sung by the choir or congregation and poetic texts set as solo arias.