Remote Learning Packet - Week 7

May 11-May 15, 2020

Course: Music

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Weekly Plan:

On Week 6, you learned about characteristics of the Romantic Style. To help you with your final assessment, this week we will review style features of Baroque and Classical period music, as well as learn about composers from these periods. You will listen to some of their important works and will select one composer from each period to write about in your final assessment.

Make sure you are taking thorough notes and keep your summaries and listening logs, as these will be valuable for the final assessment.

Monday, May 11

☐ Read Style Features of the Baroque Period

To turn in: Please answer these questions using full sentences and listen to the following examples below. *The videos are optional, but recommended.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djmhKxt9FxI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bU1IEMpRNxI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YaGwI7GjlA

-How did the Baroque Recitative become more popular than the high Renaissance Madrigal? (p. 83)

-How did instruments start to act like choir voices? How did this add to the "pomp" and "magnificence" of the Baroque style? (p. 84)

-How did the concept of rhythm become more prominent in Baroque music? (p. 86)

Tuesday, May 12

☐ Listen to one of the links posted on Google Classroom. As you listen, you may read and answer the questions below regarding Antonio Vivaldi and his Violin Concerto in G, Op. 4, No. 12, 2nd movement Here is a link to this movement: (*The video is optional, but recommended.)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vEOc8lvS-k

To turn in: Please answer these questions using full sentences.

-Why was Vivaldi called the "Red Priest," and where did he work? What was his job there? (p. 124)

-What was Vivaldi's main instrument, and why is this important for the type of music that he composed? (p. 124)

-From today's recording, do you feel a steady beat? Does the violin have a prominent place in this piece, or does it have a supporting role?

Wednesday, May 13

☐ As you listen to the links below, you may read and answer these questions regarding J.S. Bach and G.F. Handel. *The videos are optional, but recommended.*

*J.S. Bach

Listen to the first movement of J.S. Bach's Violin Concerto in A minor: (from 0:00-3:07 only)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4bUCMV2oCE

*G.F. Handel

Listen to this example of Handel's "Water Music"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foacRsak3cQ&list=TLPQMDYwNTIwMjBoUwjldFP4eg&index=27

If time allows, also listen to this sample from "The Messiah"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVB5r-ui-C8

To turn in: Please answer these questions using full sentences.

-Did J.S. Bach hold more than one job at a time? How did he make a living? (p. 130)

-Would you say that J.S. Bach's family was a family of composers? How many children did he have, and of those, how many were composers? (p. 130)

-What are some examples of musical works that Handel composed, and for whom did he write some of his music? (p. 145)

-What are your impressions from these samples of beautiful Baroque music? Note the different purposes (instrumental concert music, sacred vocal music, etc.)

Thursday, May 14

☐ **To turn in:** This week, you had a large amount of reading, so please go back through these readings and write a 6-sentence reflection on items you may have missed, or topics that you more fully understand after reading this a second time. You may include 2 sentences from each day's readings. Also, please re-play the music from Monday-Wednesday while you read to become better acquainted with music from this style.

☐ In Google Classroom, look for a video where I explain the final assessment. More details will come to you next week.

☐ Also, please review the biographies of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, which were covered on Week 5.

***A note about the final assessment:**

During Week 8, you will be given specific directions about the final assessment. Your final assessment will include listening to a concert with a variety of classical music or a variety of musical selections, and you will write a paper about it. You will be expected to use the terminology provided in the weekly handouts. In the meantime, try to get good-quality notes and a strong listening log.

If you already turned in your concert review, you will still be expected to do all of these assignments, and your final project will be somewhat reduced.

To have a better idea of which composers belong to each of these periods, please refer to this useful timeline (composers' names are represented by green lines).

The final paper will include:

-One major work from the Baroque period. (Vivaldi through Handel)

-One major work from the Classical period. (C.P.E. Bach through Carl Maria von Weber)

-One major work from the Romantic, Late Romantic period.

CHAPTER 8

The Early Baroque Period

In the years around 1600, music underwent rapid changes at the sophisticated courts and churches of northern Italy. Composers began to write motets, madrigals, and other pieces more directly for effect—with a new simplicity, but also with the use of exciting new resources. A new style, the style of the early Baroque period, took hold all over Italy and in most of the rest of Europe.

1 From Renaissance to Baroque

The madrigal, we saw in Chapter 7, was the most "advanced" form in late Renaissance music. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the search for expression led madrigal composers to increasingly extreme—even weird—kinds of word painting. Previously taboo dissonances and rhythmic contrasts were explored to illustrate emotional texts in a more and more exaggerated fashion. The fluid High Renaissance style broke down.

At the same time, a reaction set in *against* the madrigal. In Florence, an influential group of intellectuals mounted an attack on the madrigalists' favorite technique, word painting. Word painting was artificial and childish, they said, and the many voices of a madrigal ensemble could not focus feeling or express it strongly.

True emotionality could be projected only by a single human agent, an individual, a singer who would learn from great actors how to move an audience to laughter, anger, or tears. A new style of solo singing was developed, *recitative,* that aimed to join features of music and speech. This led inevitably to the stage and, as we shall see, to opera. Invented in Florence around 1600, opera became one of the greatest and most characteristic products of the Baroque imagination.

"Why cause words to be sung by four or five voices so that they cannot be distinguished, when the ancient Greeks aroused the strongest passions by means of a single voice supported by a lyre? We must renounce counterpoint and the use of different kinds of instruments and return to simplicity!"

A Florentine critic, 1581

Music in Venice

Meanwhile, there were important developments in Venice, the city of canals. The "Most Serene Republic," as Venice called itself, cultivated especially brilliant styles in all the arts—matched, it seems, to the city's dazzling physical beauty.

Venice, the most colorful of European cities, and one of the most musical. Several major painters made a speciality of Venetian scenes, which were very popular; this one, of an aquatic fete across from the central square, the Piazza San Marco, is by Canaletto (1697–1768).

Wealthy and cosmopolitan, Venice produced architects whose flamboyant, varied buildings were built of multicolored materials, and painters—the Bellinis, Titian, Tintoretto—who specialized in warm, rich hues. Perhaps, then, it is more than a play on words to describe Venetian music as "colorful."

From the time of Palestrina's *Pope Marcellus* Mass (see page 75), composers of the sixteenth-century had often divided their choirs into low and high groups of three or four voice parts each. These semichoirs would alternate and answer or echo each other. Expanding this technique, Venetian composers would now alternate two, three, or more whole choirs. Homophony crowded out counterpoint as full choirs answered one another stereophonically, seeming to compete throughout entire motets and Masses, then joining together for climactic sections of glorious massed sound.

The sonic resources were enriched even further when the choirs were designated for singers on some parts and instruments on others. Or else whole choirs would be made up of instruments. As the sonorous combinations of Venetian music grew more and more colorful, the stately decorum of the High Renaissance style was forgotten (or left to musical conservatives). Magnificence and extravagance became the new ideals, well suited to the pomp and ceremony for which Venice was famous. And as Venice became the tourist center of Europe, its distinctive music proved to be one of its big attractions.

Extravagance and Control

Wherever they looked, knowledgeable travelers to Italy around 1600 would have seen music bursting out of its traditional forms, styles, and genres. Freedom was the order of the day. But they might have been puzzled to notice an opposite tendency as well: In some ways musical form was becoming more rigorously controlled and systematic. As composers sought to make music more untrammeled in one respect, it seems they found they had to organize it more strictly in another. Listeners could not be allowed to lose track of what was happening.

The clarity and control composers exercised over Baroque form, in other words, was an appropriate response to Baroque extravagance and emotionality of expression.

GIOVANNI GABRIELI (c. 1555–1612)

Motet, "O magnum mysterium"

The most important composers in Venice were two Gabrielis, Andrea (c. 1510–1586) and his nephew Giovanni. As organists of St. Mark's Basilica, the cathedral of Venice, both of them exploited the special acoustics of that extraordinary building, which still impress tourists today. By placing choirs of singers and instrumentalists in some of St. Mark's many different choir lofts, they obtained brilliant echo effects that even modern audio equipment cannot duplicate.

Giovanni's "O magnum mysterium," part of a larger motet, was written for the Christmas season. The words marvel that lowly animals—the ox and the ass—were the first to see the newborn Jesus. This naive, touching text made "O magnum mysterium" a favorite for motet settings at the time; there are lovely versions by Victoria and William Byrd.

Gabrieli's music marvels along with the text. In the manner of a madrigal, the exclamation *O* is repeated like a gasp of astonishment. Then lush chord progressions positively make the head spin, as the words *O magnum mysterium* are repeated to the same music, but pitched higher (that is to say, in sequence—see page 53).

Gabrieli uses two choirs, each with three voice parts and four instrumental parts, plus organ, though at first all we hear is a sumptuous blend of brass instruments and voices in a mainly homophonic texture. A more polyphonic texture emerges for the first time at the word *sacramentum*. Solo voices, first tenors, then boy sopranos, imitate one another during the line *iacentem in presepio*. Their motive is finally taken up by the brass.

Gabrieli unleashes his musical resources in a big way at the choral "Alleluia" section. The music moves in quick triple meter, matching the jubilation of repeated *alleluias,* and the choirs echo back and forth across the sound space:

FAST—triple meter SLOW—duple meter

	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1
CHOIR 1	Al-le-	lu-ia,	al-le-lu-	ia;			al-le-lu-	ia,	al-le-lu-	ia:	Al -- le-	lu------	ia
CHOIR 2				Al-le-	lu-ia,	al-le-lu-	ia,	al-le-lu-	ia,		Al -- le-	lu------	ia

To make a grand conclusion, the two choirs come together again. There is another wash of voice-and-brass sonority as the tempo slows and the meter changes to duple for a climactic *alleluia*. And for still more emphasis, Gabrieli

> "Sometimes there sung 16 or 20 men together, having their master or moderator to keep them in order, and when they sung the instrumental musicians played also. Sometimes 16 played together: 10 sagbuts, 4 cornets, and 2 violdegamboes of an extraordinary greatness, sometimes 2, a cornet and a treble viol . . ."
>
> *Venetian music in 1611, as reported by an English tourist*

sagbut: an early trombone
cornet: a woodwind instrument played with a trumpet mouthpiece
viola da gamba: a cello-like instrument; see the picture on page 125

LISTEN Gabrieli, "O magnum mysterium"

0:00	O magnum mysterium,	O, what a great mystery,
0:29	et admirabile sacramentum	and what a wonderful sacrament—
0:51	ut animalia viderunt Dominum natum	that animals should see the Lord new born
1:16	iacentem in presepio:	lying in the manger.
1:51	Alleluia, alleluia.	Hallelujah, hallelujah.

repeats the entire "Alleluia" section, both the fast triple-time alternations and the massive slow ending. This kind of clear sectional repetition shows one way Baroque composers worked to impose clarity and control on flamboyant chords and the solo rhapsodies.

2 Style Features of Early Baroque Music

Music from the period of approximately 1600 to 1750 is usually referred to as *baroque*, a term that captures its excess and extravagance. (It was originally a jeweler's term for large pearls of irregular shape.) A number of broad stylistic features unify the music of this long period.

"Music is a roaring-meg against melancholy, to rear and revive the languishing soul; affecting not only the ears, but the very arteries, the vital and animal spirits, it erects the mind and makes it nimble."

Oxford scholar Robert Burton, 1621

Rhythm and Meter

Rhythms become more definite, regular, and insistent in Baroque music; a single rhythm or similar rhythms can be heard throughout a piece or a major segment of a piece. Compare the subtle, floating rhythms of Renaissance music, changing section by section as the motives for the imitative polyphony change. (Renaissance dance music is an exception, and in the area of dance music there is a direct line from the Renaissance to the Baroque.)

Related to this new regularity of rhythm is a new emphasis on meter. One technical feature tells the story: Bar lines begin to be used for the first time in music history. This means that music's meter is systematically in evidence, rather than being downplayed as it was in the Renaissance. (Full disclosure: For ease of reading, we have added bar lines to our examples in Chapters 6 and 7, but there are no bar lines in the original music.) The strong beats are often also emphasized by certain instruments, playing in a clear, decisive way. All this is conspicuous in Gabrieli's motet "O magnum mysterium."

Texture: Basso Continuo

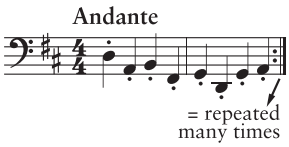
Some early Baroque music is homophonic and some is polyphonic, but both textures are enriched by a feature unique to the period, the **basso continuo.**

As in Renaissance music, in Baroque music the bass line is performed by bass voices or low instruments such as cellos or bassoons. But the bass part in Baroque music is also played by an organ, harpsichord, or other chord instrument. This instrument not only reinforces the bass line but also adds chords continuously (hence the term *continuo*) to go with it. The basso continuo—or just continuo—has the double effect of clarifying the harmony and making the texture bind or jell.

One can see how this device responds to the growing reliance of Baroque music on harmony (already clear from Gabrieli's motet). Originally, the continuo was simply the bass line of the polyphony reinforced by chords; but later the continuo with its chords was mapped out first, and the polyphony above adjusted to it. Baroque polyphony, in other words, has systematic harmonic underpinnings.

This fact is dramatized by a musical form that is characteristically Baroque, the **ground bass.** This is music constructed from the bottom up. In ground-bass form, the bass instruments play a single short melody many times, generating the same set of repeated harmonies above it (played by the continuo chord instruments). Over this ground bass, upper instruments or voices play (or improvise) different melodies or virtuoso passages, all adjusted to the harmonies determined by the bass.

A ground bass (the Pachelbel Canon)



Baroque ground-bass compositions discussed in this book are "Dido's Lament" from the opera *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell (page 92), a passacaglia by Girolamo Frescobaldi (page 96), and Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in G, Op. 4, No. 12 (page 122).

Another name for the ground bass comes from Baroque Italian musicians: **basso ostinato**, meaning "persistent" or "obstinate" bass. By extension, the term *ostinato* is also used to refer to any short musical gesture repeated over and over again, in the bass or anywhere else, especially one used as a building block for a piece of music. Ostinatos are found in most of the world's musical traditions (see page 98). This is not surprising, since the formal principle they embody is so very fundamental: Set up a repeating pattern and then pit contrasting musical elements against it.

Functional Harmony

Inevitably, in view of these new techniques, the art of harmony evolved rapidly at this time. Whereas Renaissance music had still used the medieval modes, although with important modifications, Baroque musicians developed the modern major/minor system, which we discussed on pages 35–37. Chords became standardized, and the sense of tonality—the feeling of centrality around a tonic or home pitch—grew much stronger.

Composers also developed a new way of handling the chords so that their interrelation was felt to be more logical, or at least more coherent. Each chord now assumed a special role, or function, in relation to the tonic chord (the chord on the home pitch). Thus when one chord follows another in Baroque music, it does so in a newly predictable and purposeful way. **Functional harmony**, in this sense, could also be used as a way of organizing large-scale pieces of music, as we will see later.

In a Baroque composition, as compared with one from the Renaissance, the chords seem to be going where we expect them to—and we feel they are determining the sense or the direction of the piece as a whole. Harmonies no longer seem to wander, detour, hesitate, or evaporate. With the introduction of the important resource of functional harmony, Baroque music brings us firmly to the familiar, to the threshold of modern music.

3 Opera

Opera—drama presented in music, with the characters singing instead of speaking—is often called the most characteristic art form of the Baroque period. Baroque opera combined many different arts: not only music, drama, and poetry but also dancing, highly elaborate scene design, and spectacular special effects. Ingenious machines were contrived to portray gods descending to earth, shipwrecks, volcanos, and all kinds of natural and supernatural phenomena. Scene designers often received top billing, ahead of the composers.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

The son of a Venetian violinist, Antonio Vivaldi was destined to follow in his father's footsteps. He entered the priesthood—where his bright red hair earned him the nickname of the "Red Priest"—and in 1703 became a music teacher at the Seminario Musicale dell'Ospedale della Pietà, a Venetian orphanage for girls. The Ospedale was one of several such institutions in Venice that were famous for the attention they paid to the musical training of their students. A large proportion of Vivaldi's works were composed for the school, whose concerts were a great tourist attraction.

The Ospedale allowed him frequent leaves of absence, so Vivaldi toured a good deal, but the composer's contract specified that he should write two concertos a month for the pupils and rehearse them if he was in town. Near the end of his life, Vivaldi left Venice permanently to settle in Vienna.

Internationally renowned as a virtuoso violinist, Vivaldi is remembered today chiefly for his brilliant concertos. He wrote more than four hundred of these, including concertos for harp, mandolin, bassoon, and various instrumental combinations; we know of more than 250 solo violin concertos, including our Concerto in G from *La stravaganza*. Critics of the day complained that Vivaldi's music was thin and flashy and that the composer was always playing for cheap effects. But the young Bach, before writing his *Brandenburg* Concertos, carefully copied out pieces by Vivaldi as a way of learning how to write concertos himself.

Vivaldi's most famous work—it has been recorded over a hundred times—is also one of his most unusual: *The Four Seasons,* a set of four violin concertos that illustrate, in one way or another, spring (bird songs, gentle breezes, and so on), summer (a nap in the sun), fall (a tipsy peasant dance at a harvest festival), and winter ("the horrible wind," says the score). Baroque composers were fond of musical illustration, especially with the words of vocal music, as we shall see; but they seldom pursued it this far.

Chief Works: Solo concertos for many different instruments, including the very famous *Four Seasons* ■ Concerti grossi for various instruments ■ 21 extant operas; oratorios; cantatas

Encore: After the Violin Concerto in G, listen to *The Four Seasons;* Concerto for Two Violins in A Minor, Op. 3, No. 8.

That theme may be a complete melody in the soprano range or a shorter melodic phrase in the bass. Given the emphasis in the Baroque era on the basso continuo (see page 86), it is not surprising that Baroque variations tend to occur above repeating bass patterns. A name for such patterns is **basso ostinato**, meaning "persistent" or "obstinate" bass. Sometimes the bass itself is slightly varied—though never in such a way as to hide its identity. Dynamics, tone color, and some harmonies are often changed in variations. Tempo, key, and mode are changed less often.

There are a number of names for compositions in variation form, which grew up independently all over Europe, first as improvisations—opportunities for impromptu display on various instruments—and then as written-out compositions. Besides the French *chaconne* and the Italian *passacaglia* (*pah-sa-cáhl-ya*), there was the English term *ground* (the repeating bass figure being called the **ground bass**). One seventeenth-century Italian composer, Girolamo Frescobaldi, left a passacaglia for organ with exactly a hundred variations. More compact examples of variation form sometimes appear as one movement in a larger Baroque genre, such as a concerto.*

*We examine earlier examples of variation (ground bass) form on pages 92 and 96: "Dido's Lament" from *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell and a passacaglia—with 18, not 100 variations—by Frescobaldi.

As this child appears to be finding out, music lessons can often serve as a cover for lessons in something else—a fact that helps explain the enduring popularity of music lesson pictures.

The term *ostinato* has come to be used more broadly than just for repeating Baroque bass lines. It can refer to any short musical unit repeated many times, in the bass or anywhere else, especially one used as a building block for a piece of music. Ostinatos are by no means unique to European music; in some form they are found in almost all musical traditions (see, for example, pages 98 and 206).

ANTONIO VIVALDI

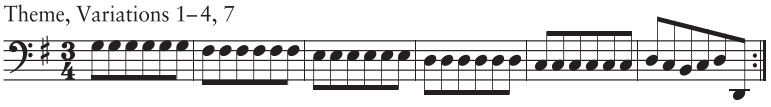
Violin Concerto in G, *La stravaganza*, Op. 4, No. 12 (1712–1713)

Second Movement (Largo) As is typical, Vivaldi's Concerto in G has three contrasting movements—the first vigorous and brilliant, the second gentle and slow. This slow movement is in ground bass variation form.

Our first impression of this music is probably of its texture and timbre—the gentle throbbing, the ingenious weaving in and out of the orchestral violins and the solo violin, and the delicate, subsidiary continuo sounds. There is, however, not much melody to listen to in the violin's music. There is less, in fact, as the movement goes along and the texture changes.

Sooner or later we notice that the only real melody is in the bass, where a solemn, quiet theme (the ground bass) is heard repeatedly in the cellos and bass viol. The theme sinks down and down, ending with a strong cadence:

Theme, Variations 1–4, 7



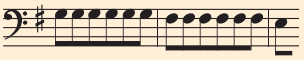
Variations 5–6

LISTENING CHART 4

Vivaldi, Violin Concerto in G, second movement

Variation (ground bass) form. 2 min., 59 sec.

0:00	**Theme**	**Orchestra and Solo:** descending bass
0:22	**Var. 1**	**Solo:** Flowing material
0:41	**Var. 2**	Faster flowing material
1:03	**Var. 3**	Even faster music, though now in spurts
1:23	**Var. 4**	Faster yet: rapid figuration
		CADENCE Brief stop at the cadence ending Variation 4
1:44	**Var. 5**	Thin texture (organ and lute drop out), with expressive violin material over a varied bass: in the minor mode
2:04	**Var. 6**	Like Variation 5, but the violin is a little faster and more expressive.
2:26	**Theme**	**Orchestra and Solo:** as at the beginning (i.e., back to the major mode, and the continuo returns)



▶ Access Interactive Listening Chart 4 at **bedfordstmartins.com/listen**

We develop a sort of double listening for music like this, listening simultaneously to the unchanging theme and to the changing material presented above that theme. (This is a little like taking in a distant view while noticing someone in the foreground.) After the theme's initial statement, four more statements with violin variations follow, during which the solo violin plays faster and faster material above the unvaried ground bass. In its quiet way, this movement is showing off the violinist's ability to play music that is fast and sleek.

After Variation 4, however, there is a marked stop. Variation 5 makes a grand contrast of the kind relished by Baroque composers and audiences. The continuo stops, and since the texture is now thin and ethereal, the ground bass (played by the orchestra violins) can be heard more clearly—and what we hear is that the theme itself has been varied. It is now in the minor mode.

The mood becomes muted and melancholy; the violin is now showing off not its speed, but its expressive capabilities. The mood deepens in Variation 6. Rather abruptly, after this, the original theme returns in the full orchestra and continuo, played just as it was at the beginning, to end the movement.

The construction of this movement as a set of variations over a ground bass exemplifies the thorough, methodical quality of so much Baroque music. The effect of the contrast that Vivaldi has added with Variations 5 and 6 is not diminished by the steadily repeating, even obsessive bass. On the contrary, double listening can make the contrast seem richer and more interesting.

Third Movement (Allegro) Like the first movement, the third movement of the Concerto in G is a fast one in ritornello form. This time ritornello form is treated much more freely—or, as Vivaldi might have said, "extravagantly."

Vivaldi begins with a long solo passage for the violin—and when the orchestra finally breaks in, all it can offer by way of a ritornello is a sort of hasty fanfare, interrupted by a short solo. The second ritornello is a much longer, very spirited passage of new music. Extravagant features of this movement would include the eviction of the orchestra from its customary place at

LISTEN

VIVALDI **Violin Concerto in G,** third movement

0:00	**Introduction** solo
0:16	**Ritornello 1** interrupted by solo
0:30	**Solo**
1:15	**Ritornello 2**
2:08	**Ritornello 3**
2:53	**Ritornello 4**
3:46	**Ritornello 5**

the beginning; the fact that the lively second ritornello has nothing whatsoever to do with the official ritornello, namely the fanfare; and the way the solo violin keeps darting around and changing the kind of virtuoso material it plays throughout the movement.

However, order is asserted when the third ritornello takes the original fanfare as its point of departure (in the minor mode). And the final ritornello returns to its origins almost literally, as in the first movement.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, for Flute, Violin, Harpsichord, and Orchestra (before 1721)

A concerto grosso is a concerto for a group of several solo instruments (rather than just a single one) and orchestra. In 1721 Johann Sebastian Bach sent a beautiful manuscript containing six of these works to the margrave of Brandenburg, a minor nobleman with a paper title—the duchy of Brandenburg had recently been merged into the kingdom of Prussia, Europe's fastest-growing state. We do not know why this music was sent (if Bach was job-hunting, he was unsuccessful) or if it was ever performed in Brandenburg.

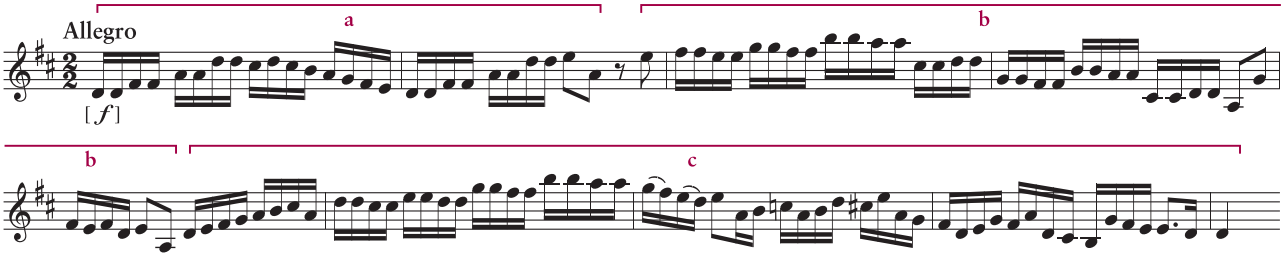
To impress the margrave, presumably, Bach sent pieces with six different combinations of instruments, combinations that in some cases were never used before or after. Taken as a group, the *Brandenburg* Concertos present an unsurpassed anthology of dazzling tone colors and imaginative treatments of the concerto contrast between soloists and orchestra.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 features as its solo group a flute, violin, and harpsichord. The orchestra is the basic Baroque string orchestra (see page 113). The harpsichordist of the solo group doubles as the player of the orchestra's continuo chords, and the solo violin leads the orchestra during the ritornellos.

"I Shall
1. set the boys a shining example of an honest, retiring manner of life, serve the School industriously, and instruct the boys conscientiously
2. Bring the music in both the principal Churches of this town [Leipzig] into a good state, to the best of my ability
3. Show to the Honorable and Most Wise Town Council all proper respect and obedience."

Bach's contract at Leipzig, 1723—the first three of fourteen stipulations

First Movement (Allegro) In ritornello form, the first movement of *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 5 opens with a loud, bright, solid-sounding orchestral ritornello. We have seen this music before, as an example of a typical Baroque melody—intricate, wide-ranging, and saturated with sequences (see page 114). The brackets show the three segments of the ritornello, **a**, **b**, and **c**, that recur in the movement:



Once the ritornello ends with a solid cadence, the three solo instruments enter with rapid imitative polyphony. They dominate the rest of the movement. They introduce new motives and new patterns of figuration, take over some motives from the ritornello, and toss all these musical ideas back and forth between them. Every so often, the orchestra breaks in again, always with clear

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

During the Baroque era, crafts were handed down in family clans, and in music the Bach clan was one of the biggest, providing the region of Thuringia in central Germany with musicians for many generations. Most of the Bachs were lowly town musicians or Lutheran church organists; only a few of them gained court positions. Johann Sebastian, who was himself taught by several of his relatives, trained four sons who became leading composers of the next generation.

Before he was twenty, Bach took his first position as a church organist in a little town called Arnstadt, then moved to a bigger town called Mühlhausen. Then he worked his way up to a court position with the Duke of Weimar. As a church organist, Bach had to compose organ music and sacred choral pieces, and at Weimar he was still required to write church music for the ducal chapel as well as sonatas and concertos for performance in the palace. The way his Weimar position terminated tells us something about the working conditions of court musicians. When Bach tried to leave Weimar for another court, Cöthen, the duke balked and threw him in jail for several weeks before letting him go. At Cöthen the prince happened to be a keen amateur musician who was not in favor of elaborate church music, so Bach concentrated on instrumental music.

In 1723 Bach was appointed cantor of St. Thomas's Church in Leipzig, a center of Lutheran church music in Germany. He had to not only compose and perform but also organize music for all four churches in town. Teaching in the choir school was another of his responsibilities. Almost every week in his first years at Leipzig, Bach composed, had copied, rehearsed, and performed a new cantata—a religious work for soloists, choir, and orchestra containing several movements and lasting from fifteen to thirty minutes.

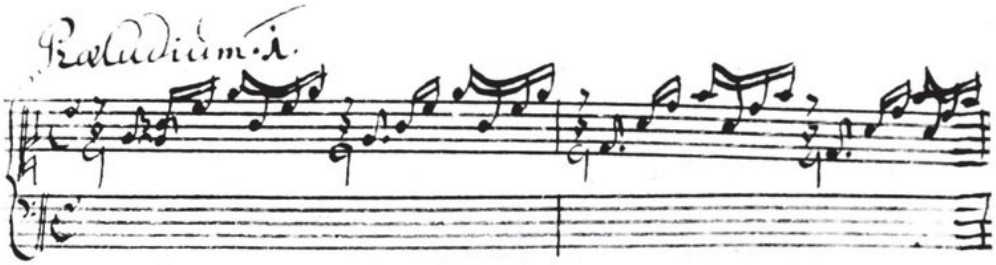
Bach chafed under bureaucratic restrictions and political decisions by town and church authorities. The truth is, he was never appreciated in Leipzig. Furthermore, at the end of his life he was regarded as old-fashioned by modern musicians, and one critic pained Bach by saying so in print. Indeed, after Bach's death his music was neglected by the musical public at large, though it was admired by composers such as Mozart and Beethoven.

Bach had twenty children—seven with his first wife (a cousin) and thirteen with his second (a singer), for whom he prepared a little home-music anthology, *The Note-Book of Anna Magdalena Bach*. The children were taught music as a matter of course, and also taught how to copy music; the performance parts of many of the weekly cantatas that Bach composed are written in their hands. From his musical response to the sacred words of these cantatas and from other works, it is clear that Bach thought deeply about religious matters. Works such as his Passions and his Mass in B Minor emanate a spirituality that many listeners find unmatched by any other composer.

Bach seldom traveled, except to consult on organ construction contracts (for which the fee was often a cord of wood or a barrel of wine). Blind in his last years, he continued to compose by dictation. He had already begun to assemble his compositions in orderly sets: organ chorale preludes, organ fugues, preludes and fugues for harpsichord. He also clearly set out to produce works that would summarize his final thoughts about Baroque forms and genres; such works are the Mass in B Minor, the thirty-three *Goldberg* Variations for harpsichord, and *The Art of Fugue,* an exemplary collection of fugues all on the same subject, left unfinished at his death. Bach was writing for himself, for his small devoted circle of students, perhaps for posterity. It is a concept that would have greatly surprised the craftsmen musicians who were his forebears.

Chief Works: More than 200 sacred and secular cantatas; two Passions, with words from the gospels of St. Matthew and St. John; Mass in B Minor ■ *The Well-Tempered Clavier,* consisting of 48 preludes and fugues in all major and minor keys for harpsichord or clavichord ■ Three sets of suites (six each) for harpsichord—the French and English Suites and the Partitas; solo cello suites; violin sonatas; *Goldberg* Variations ■ Organ fugues and chorale preludes ■ *Brandenburg* Concertos, other concertos, orchestral suites, sonatas ■ Late composite works: *A Musical Offering* and *The Art of Fugue* ■ Chorale (hymn) harmonizations

Encore: After *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 5, listen to the Concerto for Two Violins; Mass in B Minor (Gloria section).



The Prelude in C Major from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1—in Bach's own musical handwriting, beautiful and intricate

and arias. On the other hand, it also makes much use of the chorus—a major difference from Italian opera of the time, where the chorus played little role.

Unlike most other religious genres, an oratorio was not actually part of a church service. Indeed, in opera-crazed Italy, the oratorio was prized as an entertainment substituting for opera during Lent, a somber season of abstinence from opera as well as other worldly diversions.

In England also, the oratorio substituted for opera, though in a different sense. Thanks largely to Handel, Italian opera became very popular in London for a quarter of a century, but finally audiences tired of it. At that point, Handel, already in his mid-fifties, began composing oratorios, and these turned out to be even more popular, the pinnacle of his long career.

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Georg Friedrich Händel—he anglicized his name to George Frideric Handel after settling in England—was one of the few composers of early days who did not come from a family of musicians. His father was a barber-surgeon and a valet at a court near Leipzig. He disapproved of music, and the boy is said to have studied music secretly at night, by candlelight. In deference to his father's wishes, Handel studied law for a year at Halle, one of Germany's major universities, before finally joining the orchestra at Hamburg, Germany's leading center of opera.

From then on, it was an exciting, glamorous life. Still in his teens, Handel fought a duel with another Hamburg musician about which of them was to get top billing. In 1706 he journeyed to the homeland of opera and scored big successes in Venice, Florence, and Rome. Though he became a court musician for the elector of Hanover, in northern Germany, he kept requesting (and extending) leaves to pursue his career in London, a city that was then beginning to rival Paris as the world capital.

Here Handel continued to produce Italian operas, again with great success. He also wrote a flattering birthday ode for Queen Anne and some big pieces to celebrate a major peace treaty; for this he was awarded an annuity. In 1717, after the elector of Hanover had become George I of England, Handel got back into his good graces by composing music to be played in a royal celebration on barges on the River Thames. This famous *Water Music* consists of two suites for the Baroque festive orchestra.

As an opera composer, Handel had learned to gauge the taste of the public and also to flatter singers, writing music for them that showed off their voices to the best advantage. He now became an opera impresario—today we would call him a promoter—recruiting singers and negotiating their contracts, planning whole seasons of opera, and all the while composing the main attractions himself: an opera every year, on average, in the 1720s and 1730s. He also had to deal with backers—English aristocrats and wealthy merchants who supported his opera companies and persuaded their friends to take out subscriptions for boxes.

Handel made and lost several fortunes, but he always landed on his feet, even when Italian opera went out of style in Britain, for he never lost a feel for his audience. After opera had failed, he popularized oratorios—retellings of Bible stories (mostly from the Old Testament) in a half operatic, half choral form. Opera audiences had always been ready to identify opera's virtuous Roman emperors with local princes. Now they were delighted to identify oratorio's virtuous People of Israel with the British nation.

Handel was a big, vigorous man, hot-tempered but quick to forgive, humorous and resourceful. When a particularly temperamental prima donna had a tantrum, he calmed her down by threatening to throw her out the window. At the end of his life he became blind—the same surgeon operated (unsuccessfully) on both him and Bach—but he continued to play the organ brilliantly and composed by dictating to a secretary.

Chief Works: 40 Italian operas, including *Giulio Cesare* (Julius Caesar) ■ Near-operatic works in English: *Semele* and *Acis and Galatea* ■ Oratorios, including *Messiah, Israel in Egypt, Samson,* and *Saul* ■ Concerti grossi and organ concertos ■ *Water Music,* written for an aquatic fete on the River Thames, and *Royal Fireworks Music,* celebrating the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, in 1747 ■ Sonatas for various instruments

Encore: After *Messiah,* listen to *Acis and Galatea;* Concerto Grosso in B-flat, Op. 6, No. 7.

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Messiah (1742)

2 12–13 1 14–15

Handel's oratorio *Messiah,* his most famous work, is also one of the most famous in the whole of Western music. It is the only composition of its time that has been performed continuously—and frequently—since its first appearance. Today it is sung at Christmas and Easter in hundreds of churches around the world, as well as at symphony concerts and "*Messiah* sings," where people get together just to sing along with the Hallelujah Chorus and the other well-known choral numbers, and listen to the well-loved arias.

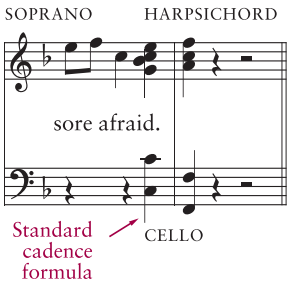
Unlike most oratorios, *Messiah* does not have actual characters depicting a biblical story in recitative and arias, although its text is taken from the Bible. In a more typical Handel oratorio, such as *Samson,* for example, Samson sings an aria about his blindness and argues with Delilah in recitative, while choruses represent the People of Israel and the Philistines. Instead, *Messiah* works with a group of anonymous narrators, relating episodes from the life of Jesus in recitative. The narration is interrupted by anonymous commentators who react to each of the episodes by singing recitatives and arias.

All this is rather like an opera in concert form; but in addition, the chorus has a large and varied role to play. On one occasion, it sings the words of a group of angels that actually speaks in the Bible. Sometimes it comments on the story, like the soloists. And often the choristers raise their voices to praise the Lord in Handel's uniquely magnificent manner.

The first two numbers in *Messiah* we examine cover the favorite Christmas story in which an angel announces Christ's birth to the shepherds in the fields. Included are a recitative in four brief sections and a chorus.

Recitative *Part 1 (secco)* Sung by a boy soprano narrator accompanied by continuo (cello and organ), this recitative has the natural, proselike flow typical of all recitatives. Words that would be naturally stressed in ordinary speech are brought out by longer durations, higher pitches, and pauses: "*shep*herds," "*field,*" "*flock,*" and "*night.*" As is typical in recitative, but unlike aria, no words are repeated.

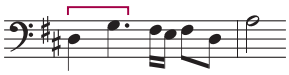
Part 2 (accompanied) Accompanied recitative is used for special effects in operas and oratorios—here the miraculous appearance of the angel. The slowly pulsing high-string background furnishes the angel with a sort of musical halo. It is also a signal for more vigorous declamation: The words *lo, Lord,* and *glory* are brought out with increasing emphasis. The end of this brief accompanied recitative is heavily punctuated by a standard cadence formula, played by the continuo. This formula is an easily recognized feature of recitatives.



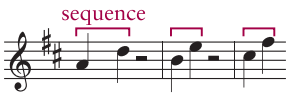
Part 3 (secco) Notice that the angel speaks in a more urgent style than the narrator. And in *Part 4 (accompanied),* the excited, faster pulsations in the high strings depict the beating wings, perhaps, of the great crowd of angels. When Handel gets to what they will be saying, he brings the music to a triumphant high point, once again over the standard recitative cadence.

Chorus, "Glory to God" "Glory to God! Glory to God in the *highest!*" sing the angels—the *high* voices of the choir, in a bright marchlike rhythm. They are

accompanied by the orchestra, with the trumpets prominent. The *low* voices alone add "and peace on *earth,*" much more slowly. Fast string runs following "Glory to God" and slower reiterated chords following "and peace on earth" recall the fast and slow string passages in the two preceding accompanied recitatives.



After these phrases are sung and played again, leading to another key, the full chorus sings the phrase "good will toward men" in a fugal style. The important words are *good will,* and their two-note motive is happily sung (in imitation) again and again by all the voices of the angel choir. To conclude, the "good will" motive is singled out in an enthusiastic ascending sequence.



The whole chorus is quite concise, even dramatic; the angels do not stay long. At the very end, the orchestra gets quieter and quieter—a rare effect in Baroque music, here indicating the disappearance of the shepherds' vision.

LISTEN

Handel, *Messiah,* Recitative
"There were shepherds" and Chorus "Glory to God"

2 12 1 14

*(**Bold italic** type indicates accented words or syllables. Italics indicate phrases of text that are repeated.)*

RECITATIVE PART 1 (secco)

0:01 There were ***shep***herds abiding in the ***field,*** keeping ***watch*** over their ***flock*** by ***night.***

PART 2 (accompanied)

0:22 And ***lo!*** the angel of the ***Lord*** came upon them, and the ***glory*** of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. — Standard cadence

PART 3 (secco)

0:42 And the angel said unto ***them: Fear*** not, for be***hold,*** I bring you good ***ti***dings of great ***joy,*** which shall ***be to all peo***ple. — Standard cadence
For unto you is born this ***day*** in the city of ***Da***vid a ***Sa***viour, which is ***Christ*** the ***Lord.*** — Standard cadence

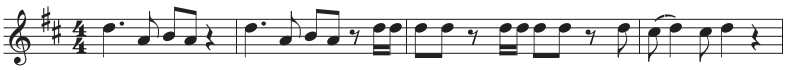
PART 4 (accompanied)

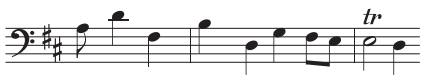
1:39 And ***sud***denly there was with the ***an***gel a ***mul***titude of the heavenly ***host,*** praising ***God, and saying:*** — Standard cadence

CHORUS

1:51 Glory to God, *glory to God,* in the highest, and peace on earth,
2:30 good will toward men *good will*
2:48 *Glory to God*

Hallelujah Chorus This famous chorus brings Act II of *Messiah* to a resounding close. Like "Glory to God," "Hallelujah" makes marvelous use of monophony ("King of Kings"), homophony (the opening "Hallelujah"), and polyphony ("And he shall reign for ever and ever"); it is almost a textbook demonstration of musical textures. Compare "And peace on earth," "Glory to God," and "Good will toward men" in the earlier chorus.





In a passage beloved by chorus singers, Handel sets "The Kingdom of this world is become" on a low descending scale, ***piano,*** swelling suddenly into a similar scale in a higher register, ***forte,*** for "the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ"—a perfect representation of one thing becoming another thing,

Elite opera and oratorio were not the only music in Handel's London. This famous scene by William Hogarth (1697–1764) shows a violinist, sometimes identified as a player in Handel's orchestra, enraged by low-brow music and noise beneath his window.

similar but newly radiant. Later the sopranos (cheered on by the trumpets) solemnly utter the words "King of Kings" on higher and higher long notes as the other voices keep repeating their answer, "for ever, Hallelujah!"

George II of England, attending the first London performance of *Messiah,* was so moved by this chorus that he stood up in his box—prompting everyone else to stand—honoring the King of Kings, no doubt, but also reminding everyone of his own majesty, which was being acclaimed by the typical Baroque festive orchestra. Audiences still sometimes stand during the Hallelujah Chorus.

LISTEN **Handel, *Messiah,* Hallelujah Chorus**

2 13 1 15

(Italics indicate phrases of text that are repeated.)

0:06 Hallelujah, *Hallelujah!*

0:23 For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. *Hallelujah!*
For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

1:09 The Kingdom of this world is become the kingdom
of our Lord and *of his Christ.*

1:26 And He shall reign for ever and ever, *and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

1:48 KING OF KINGS *for ever and ever, Hallelujah!*
AND LORD OF LORDS *for ever and ever, Hallelujah!*