

LESSON 16

THE FOUR PERIODS OF MUSIC HISTORY

THE BAROQUE PERIOD

KIRNBERGER, TELEMANN, AND VIVALDI

The history of music since 1600 is divided into four periods (dates are approximate):

Baroque: **1600-1750**

Classical: **1750-1830**

Romantic: **1830-1900**

20th & 21st Centuries: 1900-present

(Currently, there is not a definitive name for stylistic periods of the 20th and 21st Centuries. It is sometimes called the "Contemporary Period," "Modern," or "Post-Common Practice." It may also be divided into two groups: the 20th Century (1900-1999), and the Contemporary Period (2000-Present).)

Music of the **BAROQUE PERIOD** (appx. 1600-1750) is characterized by the following:

- a. **Polyphonic Texture:** Two or more separate voices are interchanged to create the music. The melodies are passed between the parts, and the parts are of equal importance.
- b. **Use of Ornamentation:** Composers included many trills, mordents, and other ornaments in their music. It was the performer's responsibility to know how to play the ornaments correctly. Performers could also add their own ornaments at appropriate places in the music.
- c. **Improvisation:** Not only did music of the Baroque Period contain many ornaments, the performer was also free to improvise sections of the music. This not only included adding the ornaments mentioned above, but also playing **Cadenzas**, entire sections of music that the performer created, often after a cadence in the music.

Another type of improvisation in Baroque music included the use of **Figured Bass**. The performer was given an outline of the chord progression of a composition. The performer improvised using the harmonies specified by the figured bass.

Written:

Performer

Plays: I V vi iii IV I IV ii⁶ I⁴ V⁷ I

6 4 7

- d. **Dance Suite:** Works which include many different dances, performed together. Typical Baroque dance suites include these dances, in this order:

Allemande: A dance in moderate $\frac{4}{4}$ time with a short upbeat, often using short running figures that are passed through a semi-contrapuntal texture.

Courante or Corrente: A **Courante** is a French dance in moderate $\frac{2}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{4}$ time, which shifts from one of these meters to the other. The texture is free counterpoint, with a shifting melody. A **Corrente** is an Italian dance in quick triple meter, with continuous running figures and homophonic texture.

Sarabande: A dance in slow triple meter and dignified style, often with an accented or long tone on the second beat. It probably originated in Mexico as a spirited dance, but as it moved to France and England its style became calm and dignified.

Optional Dances: Minuet: A French country dance in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

Bouree: A French dance, usually in quick duple meter with a single upbeat.

Gavotte: A French dance in moderate $\frac{4}{4}$ time with an upbeat of two quarter notes, and with phrases usually beginning and ending in the middle of the measure.

Passapeid: A spirited dance in quick $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, possibly originating in Brittany (a cultural region in the northwest of France).

Polonaise: A Polish dance of stately and festive character in moderate triple meter. It often contains measures with a short repeated rhythmic motive.

Anglaise: A dance in fast duple meter, derived from the English country dance.

Loure: From the 16th and 17th century term for bagpipe, this dance is in moderate $\frac{6}{4}$ time, with dotted rhythms and heavy downbeats.

Air: A song, rather than a dance, with melodic characteristics.

Gigue

Originated from English Jigs, the **French Gigue** is in compound duple meter (for example, $\frac{6}{8}$), contains dotted rhythms and large intervals (6ths, 7ths), and has fugal texture. The **Italian Giga** is quicker, non fugal, and has running passages over a harmonic bass. These are found less frequently in Baroque suites than the French Gigue.

- e. Most keyboard music of the Baroque Period was written for the **harpsichord**, **clavichord**, and **organ**. The piano was not invented until fairly late in the Baroque Period. (The piano was invented sometime around 1700 by Bartolomeo Cristofori, but did not gain widespread use until several years later.)

f. **Terraced Dynamics:** Since much of the keyboard music from the Baroque Period was written for the harpsichord, which does not have the capability of making *crescendos* or *diminuendos*, performers used terraced dynamics. This takes place when the dynamics increase or decrease by sections: *p mp mf f*, rather than gradually. (This type of dynamic contrast is most prevalent in keyboard music of the period. Other instruments, such as the violin, did create true *crescendos* and *decrescendos* during the Baroque Period.)

This example, from *Short Prelude No. 7* by J.S. Bach, shows these characteristics: Polyphonic texture and terraced dynamics.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, G major (two sharps), and common time. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef, C major (no sharps or flats), and common time. It contains sustained notes and bassoon entries. Dynamics are indicated with *mf* (mezzo-forte) over the treble staff and *f* (forte) over the bass staff. A basso continuo staff is also present at the bottom, showing a bassoon line with a bassoon key signature.

JOHANN PHILIPP KIRNBERGER

Johann Philipp Kirnberger was born in the Baroque Period, and wrote compositions during both the Baroque and Classical Periods (making him a "transitional" composer rather than specifically Baroque or Classical). He was born in Germany in 1721. Kirnberger studied violin and harpsichord in his local area until 1739 when, at age 18, he studied with J.S. Bach. His jobs after that included working for various Polish noblemen, music director at the Benedictine Convent in Reusch-Lembert, violinist at the Prussian royal chapel, a job at the chapel of Prince Heinrich of Prussia, and finally working for Princess Anna Analia of Prussia.

While Kirnberger did write a fair amount of music, including solo instrumental music, chamber music, and vocal works, he is mainly known for his contributions as a theory scholar. He wrote many theoretical works and was highly regarded as a teacher, having taught the well-known musician J.A.P. Schultz.

Kirnberger died in Berlin in July of 1783.

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

Georg Philipp Telemann was another Baroque composer, born in 1681 in Germany. He taught himself as a child by studying the works of other composers, and at age twelve wrote his first opera. He began studying law at Leipzig University, but switched to music study. He held a number of positions which included organist and director of the Neukirche in Leipzig, musical director of the Leipzig Opera, Kappelmeister of court of Sorau (in present-day Poland), Kappelmeister at the Barfusserkirche in Frankfurt, and finally musical director and Kantor in Hamburg.

His vocal works include several operas, oratorios, secular cantatas, serenades, Passions, sacred cantatas, odes, chorales, sacred canons, Masses, psalms, and motets. He wrote an overwhelming amount of instrumental music as well, including orchestral works, chamber music, duos, trios, and a large amount of keyboard music. During his lifetime Telemann was considered the leading German composer, being more highly regarded than J.S. Bach. His style was influenced by many different countries, and his music had appeal to the general public as it was written not only to meet the needs of professional musicians, but also those of amateurs. He had a true concern for music for the masses, exhibited by his attempts to create musical societies in the cities where he worked.

After Telemann's death in 1767, his music was largely forgotten. In recent years, however, interest in his music has grown. He may have written more music than any other composer in the history of music.

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Antonio Vivaldi is yet another Baroque composer, born in Italy in 1678, and a son of a violinist. He was a priest, but almost immediately upon receiving his full priesthood he had to quit saying Mass because of an illness. He then became a teacher at an orphanage for girls which had special emphasis in music education, and an excellent choir and orchestra. He taught violin, and composed a great deal of music for the girls to perform. He later went to work for the governor of Mantua and spent several years in Rome, while at the same time returning to Venice frequently to write and direct operas.

Vivaldi made important contributions to the development of violin playing and to the concerto. He was well known for his virtuosity as a performer, and his compositions include many of the techniques for which he was admired. His 500 or so concertos were more like those of the Classical Period than those of his Baroque contemporaries. His most popular work is the *Four Seasons*, which is used frequently in today's television shows, movies, and weddings.

Vivaldi died in Vienna in 1741. Although he earned a great deal of money, he died a poor man due to his extravagant lifestyle.

Some other well known Baroque composers are:

J.S. Bach, born in Germany, 1685-1750

Girolamo Frescobaldi, born in Italy, 1583-1643

G.F. Handel, born in Germany, 1685-1760

Henry Purcell, born in England, 1659-1695

Domenico Scarlatti, born in Italy, 1685-1757

Antonio Soler, born in Spain, 1729-1783 (composed during both Baroque and Classical Periods)

1. Name the four periods of music history and give their approximate dates.

Baroque	1600-1750
Classical	1750-1830
Romantic	1830-1900
20-21 st Century	1900 - present

2. List six characteristics of Baroque music and describe each.

- a. Polyphonic Texture - There are two or more melodies are played together and they are of equal importance.
- b. Ornaments - Composers adds trills, mordents, and other ornaments.
- c. Improvisation - The performer could improvise the music. They could also add cadenzas, an entire section of music written by the performer.
- d. Dance Suite - Works that had many dances would include these dances, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Minuet, and Gigue.
- e. Keyboards - Most music in this period was written for the harpsichord, clavichord, and organ. The piano was invented in about 1700.

f. Terraced dynamics - Because music was written for the harpsichord which was not capable of making crescendos or diminuendos, they used terraced dynamics. They increased or decreased by sections.

3. Name the movements of a Baroque Dance Suite, and give a brief description of each.

Allemande: a dance in $\frac{4}{4}$ with a short upbeat

Courante: a french dance $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{4}$ switching between these two

Sarbande: a slow triple meter dance

Minuet: french country dance in $\frac{3}{4}$

Gigue: A compound double meter ($\frac{6}{8}$) and has large intervals

4. Complete the following information about each of these composers.

a. Johann Philipp Kirnberger

Dates of birth and death: 1721 - 1783

Historical period: Baroque - Classical

Country of birth: Germany

Types of compositions: solos, chamber music, vocal works

Positions held: working for Polish noblemen, violinist at the Prussian royal chapel, a job at the Chapel of Heinrich of Prussia, and working for Princess Anna of Prussia,

Other contributions to music: wrote many theoretical works and was teacher.

b. Georg Philipp TelemannDates of birth and death: 1681 - 1767Historical period: BaroqueCountry of birth: GermanyPositions held: Organist & Director of the Neukirche in Leipzig,
Musical director of the Leipzig Opera, Kapellmeister of court of Sorau,
Kapellmeister at the Barfüsserkirche in Frankfurt, musical director and Kantor in HamburgTypes of works: Operas, oratorios, secular cantatas, serenades, passions, Sacred
cantatas, odes, chorales, sacred canons, Masses, psalms, motets, orchestral
works, chamber music, duos, trios, and lots of keyboard music.**c. Antonio Vivaldi**Dates of birth and death: 1678 - 1741Historical period: BaroqueCountry of birth: ItalyTypes of compositions: ViolinPositions held: Was a priest, taught violin, wrote and directed
operasOther contributions to music: his virtuosity as a violinist, and
his techniques used in his compositions

5. Name six other Baroque composers, their places of birth, and their dates of birth and death.

<u>J.S. Bach</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>1685-1750</u>
<u>Girolamo Frescobaldi</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>1583 - 1643</u>
<u>G.F. Handel</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>1685-1760</u>
<u>Henry Purcell</u>	<u>England</u>	<u>1659 - 1695</u>
<u>Domenico Scarlatti</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>1685 - 1757</u>
<u>Antonio Soler</u>	<u>Spain</u>	<u>1729 - 1783</u>