

The Baroque Period: 1600 to 1750

Composers discussed:

- Johann Sebastian **Bach** (1685-1750)
 - More details below
- George Frideric **Handel** (1685-1759)
 - Wrote the [Hallelujah Chorus](#), part of the oratorio *Messiah*
- Johann **Pachelbel** (1653-1706)
 - Wrote the [Canon in D](#) (to [torture cello players](#) everywhere?!)

Terms & Concepts:

Baroque: comes from the Portuguese word *barroco* (misshapen pearl), used negatively at first, because the music was very ornate and embellished.

Ground Bass: a pattern of bass notes that repeats, for example the bass line in the Canon in D by Pachelbel:



Figured Bass: a form of notation where only the bass notes are written out and rest of the music is improvised according to numerical indications:



Da Capo Aria and A-B-A form: a musical structure where the first section (A) is followed by a contrasting section (B), and then returns (A or A'). In a da capo aria, the return of the A section is more embellished than the first time through.

Major Vocal Genres of the Baroque Period			
Genre	Secular or sacred?	Where / when / how?	Text / subject matter?
Opera	Secular	In concert, with staging and costumes	Stories from Greek and Roman mythology
Oratorio	Sacred	In concert, but not staged or costumed	Biblical/religious texts
Cantata	Sacred	During church services; not staged or costumed	Biblical/religious texts
Common elements:			
Performed by soloists, choir and orchestra			
Contain arias (solo or duet songs) and choruses (pieces sung by choir)			
Operas and Oratorios usually begin with an overture, an instrumental piece that might introduce melodies sung later in the work.			

Note: modern musical theatre is similar to opera in form and structure, except that most musicals have spoken dialogue and most operas are sung all the way through.

J.S. Bach 1685-1750

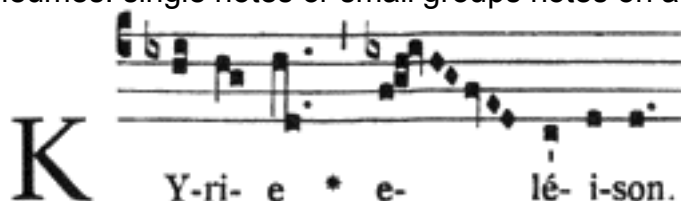
- German
- Came from a family of church musicians; trained as a church musician from a young age
- Married twice; fathered 20 children
- Employed as director of music for churches and local governments
- Duties included composing sacred and secular music, directing choirs, playing the organ
- Wrote many cantatas, sometimes a new one for every Sunday service
- Known as a great organist during his lifetime
- Highly skilled at improvisation (creating a new piece of music while performing it)
- Not widely appreciated as a great composer during his lifetime
- His music was rediscovered and revived by composer Felix Mendelssohn in 1829
- Known for complex keyboard music, including many fugues
- Now considered one of the greatest composers of all time

The Medieval Period: 500 to 1400

Composers & Musical Genres discussed:

Gregorian Chant

- A body of music written for use during the mass and other forms of prayer/worship done by monks and nuns
- Named for **Pope Gregory I** (540-604), but composed by various people through the 9th & 10th centuries
- Notated using neumes: single notes or small groups notes on a 4-line staff:



- Monophonic texture
- Mostly conjunct/stepwise motion
- Mostly in a narrow range: about an octave

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

- Abbess, or head nun of her community
- Polymath: talented in many areas, including theology, botany, medicine, poetry
- Composed Gregorian chant, but had a more expressive style was typical for chant; she used leaps and melismas to emphasize important parts of the text
- Notable works:
 - *Ordo Virtutum* (Order of the Virtues): morality play depicting the struggle of the soul between the Virtues and the Devil.
 - “Alleluia, o virga mediatrix,” chant

Léonin (1150-1201)

Pérotin (1160-1205)

- French
- Composed organum, the earliest form of polyphony

Guillaume de **Machaut** (1300-1377)

- French
- Wrote sacred and secular music
- Wrote the first complete setting of the mass

Terms & Concepts:

Organum: includes two techniques:

1. A second voice is added to the chant melody at the interval of a fourth or fifth
 2. The tenor voice sings the melody in very long notes, while one or more other voices sing faster-moving lines.
- Example: Leonin: [Viderunt Omnes](#)

Fixed sections of the Mass (the same text every day)

- Kyrie
- Gloria
- Credo
- Sanctus
- Agnus Dei

Origins of modern choir section names: soprano, alto, tenor bass:

- Tenor comes from the verb tenere, “to hold;” this voice sang the chant melody in very long notes
- Alto = higher than tenor
- Soprano = higher than alto
- Bass = lower than tenor

The Renaissance Period: 1400 to 1600

Composers discussed:

Guillaume **Dufay**, 1400-1474, French

Josquin Des Prez, 1440-1521 French

- Both composed masses using the tune from a secular chanson, “[l’Homme Armé](#)”

Sacred vocal music genres discussed:

- Mass
- Motet
- Chanson

Motet: sacred piece with Latin text, often for four voices

- Uses alternating textures: canonic entrances, polyphony, homorhythm
- Example: “[Ave Maria, virgo serena](#)”, by Josquin Des Prez

Musical Motives and Scary Music

Motive: a short phrase of music used as a symbol for a person, event, mood, etc.

The 8-note phrase that opens the [Dies Irae](#) chant has been quoted in many later pieces to symbolize fear, death, dark magic, the macabre, etc.

Composer John Williams has written famous scary motives in his film scores, for example the shark music in [Jaws](#) and the imperial march music in [Star Wars](#).

Triskaidekaphobia is the fear of the number 13. The 20th-century composer Arnold Schoenberg suffered from it, and died on Friday the 13th.