

THE BAROQUE (from 1600 to 1750)

1. THE BAROQUE PERIOD:

The word “baroque” is used to describe a particular music style that **took place between 1600 and 1750**. These two dates remain as a marker for the beginning and the end of this period because important and remarkable things just happened in both of them. In **1600** a **new music genre was born**. It was called “OPERA”. In **1750 J. S. BACH died**. He was considered the most important musician of the baroque style.

It is a period of dramatic expression, of a vigorous, highly ornamented art. An era of absolute monarchies, each court had its own group of musicians, both vocal and instrumental.

2. IMPORTANT IDEAS IN THE BAROQUE MUSIC.

- a) **Contrast and movement:** Contrasts (between different timbres, tempos, dynamics, etc) is one of the most important characteristics of baroque music. **The concertato style** involves contrast between opposing groups of instruments.
- b) **Affections:** Composers tried to express the affections. The affections were not their own emotions but were the states of the soul, such as rage, heroism, sorrow or joy. So, they used all the music resources to get it (the rhythm, the melody, the combination of instruments, etc)

3. VOCAL MUSIC:

A new important genre of music was created. It was **called OPERA**, that in Italian means “ obra”. It was created in Florence (Italia). **The first important opera was “The Orfeo”** by Claudio Monteverdi. (1607)

Opera was an art in which singers and musicians perform a dramatic work **combining text** (called a libretto) **and musical score.** **Opera incorporates** many of the elements of theatre, such as **acting, scenery, and costumes and sometimes includes dance.**

Opera was the first musical show that became accessible to anyone that could pay the admission price. The first public opera house was opened in Venice in 1637. Until then most of the music were performed in private places such as palaces.

4. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:

Instrumental music achieved a definitive independence from vocal music during this period. Musicians composed music specifically for instruments. So, a new instrumental ensemble called **ORCHESTRA** appeared. At the beginning the size of the orchestra was much smaller than the size of the orchestra we know nowadays. As nowadays, **strings were the most important section in the orchestra.** However, the rest of the families (woodwinds, brass and percussion) were normally represented by one or two members of each group. **Baroque orchestras had from 20 to 30 players,** primarily strings. **The conductor of this orchestra used to play and instrument.** They used to play the harpsichord or the violin as a soloist.

Also **new musical genres began to appear.** One of the most important was the **CONCERTO**. There are two types of concerto: the **CONCERTO GROSSO** in which there is a dialogue between a small group of soloists called concertino and the rest of the orchestra (the ripieno) and the **CONCERTO A SOLO** in which the dialogue takes place between one soloist and the orchestra. The concerto alternates between fast and slow parts called **movements** (1er movement – FAST / 2nd movement(SLOW) and 3rd movement(FAST)