

The Early Baroque Period

(ca. 1600-1630)

A madrigal by Luca Marenzio

- ▶ Luca Marenzio, "Solo e pensoso" (1595)
 - ▶ Marenzio here breaks many of the rules that Palestrina lived by. Why does he do this?
 - ▶ Effects used to dramatically illustrate the meanings of the text:
 - ▶ Chromaticism
 - ▶ Juxtaposition of fast and slow rhythms
 - ▶ Increased dissonance and cross-relations
 - ▶ Unusual melodic contours
 - ▶ Extreme ranges
 - ▶ Large leaps left unbalanced

Artusi's attack on new music

- ▶ Artusi: "On the Imperfections of the New Music" (1600)
 - ▶ Vario: "Signor Luca, you bring me new things which astonish me not a little. It pleases me, at my age, to see a new method of composing, though it would please me much more if I saw that these passages were founded upon some reason which could satisfy the intellect. But as castles in the air ... these novelties do not please me; they deserve blame, not praise. Let us see the passages, however."
 - ▶ Luca: "Indeed, in the light of what little experience I have in this art, these things ... are contrary to what is good and beautiful ... They are harsh to the ear, rather offending than delighting it, and to the good rules left by those who have established the order and the bounds of this science they bring confusion and imperfection of no little consequence. Instead of enriching, augmenting, and ennobling harmony by various means, ... they bring to it such estate that the beautiful and purified style is indistinguishable from the barbaric."

Seconda prattica

- ▶ Claudio Monteverdi, "Cruda Amarilli" (ca. 1600)
 - ▶ Monteverdi responded to Artusi's attack by differentiating between a *prima prattica* and a *seconda prattica*
 - ▶ The restrained style of the late Renaissance came to be called "the strict style" or the *prima prattica* (first practice)
 - ▶ The "seconda prattica" (or second practice) heralded the onset of the Baroque period
 - ▶ The essence of this second practice was that "the music should be the mistress of the text" rather than the other way around
 - ▶ An underlying idea was that music should move the emotions (or "affects"), creating not only moods of serenity and peace, but also portraying harsher emotions such as fear, sorrow, passion and anger

Genres

- ▶ **Madrigal**
 - ▶ A polyphonic setting of secular poetry
 - ▶ Composers of madrigals tried to paint each line of text vividly with musical effects
- ▶ **Opera**
 - ▶ A new type of dramatic music which emerged at the turn of the century (early operas by Peri, Caccini, and Monteverdi)
 - ▶ A new declamatory singing style for recitatives (also called monody or *stile rappresentativo*) advanced the drama quickly

Composers

- ▶ **Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)**
 - ▶ Italian composer of secular music (madrigals and operas)
 - ▶ His music achieved a dramatic expression of human emotions
- ▶ **John Dowland (1563-1626)**
 - ▶ English composer, singer, and lutenist
 - ▶ He is best known for his melancholy lute songs
- ▶ Other early Baroque composers:
 - ▶ Francesca Caccini, Heinrich Schütz, Barbara Strozzi

Characteristics of the early Baroque

- ▶ Striking contrasts
- ▶ Exaggerated, dramatic effects
- ▶ Sudden changes in pace or texture
- ▶ Small forms divided into many short contrasting sections
- ▶ Striking dissonances that are intentionally highlighted
- ▶ Solo vocal lines with instrumental accompaniment
- ▶ Polarity between the treble and bass
- ▶ A declamatory manner of singing which reflects the nuances of speech

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