

21M011 (spring, 2006)  
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Lecture IV

## Baroque Vocal Music

*Genres:*  
opera (per musica)  
opera seria  
opera buffa  
oratorio  
church cantata

*Terms:*  
aria (air)  
recitative  
secco (simple)  
accompanied  
word-painting  
castrato

## Opera

### 1. Monteverdi, *The Coronation of Poppea* (1642) K 1.15-16

recitative: recitation, declamation, syllabic, fluid/free form, reduced accompaniment

continuo: bass line played by cello and harmonized by harpsichord or lute

aria: more elaborate, ornamented, repetitive forms, richer accompaniment

castrato: male treble, virtuoso singer

music as drama

musical characterization of individuals

### 2. Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689)

Recitative → aria → chorus

Recitative: “Thy hand, Belinda” K 1.17

Vocal descent through chromatic line, as Dido sinks into death

Largely syllabic recitation, but still with some melismas (“darkness” extended like a miasma around her)

Aria: “When I am laid in earth” K 1.17

Chromatic ground bass (relentless fate)

Rising vocal line pushes away and cadences overlap (elide) until Dido “meets” her fate at the joint vocal and ground bass cadence (“forget my fate”)

instrumental postlude: full chromatic scale from top of register

**Recitative and Aria performed by Ellen Harris (music faculty), voice and piano**

Chorus: “With drooping wings” K 1.18

Full diatonic scale from top to bottom (moving from the transcendental to those left on earth to mourn)

Madrigal word-painting: “drooping,” “scatter,” “soft,” “never”

### 3. Handel, *Giulio Cesare* (1724): opera seria

Recitative → aria

Recitative: more like recitation, less melody, moves very quickly (secco or simple recitative) NOT INCLUDED with example

Aria: “La giustizia” (“Justice”) K 2.8

da capo form

unison violins and continuo

“revenge aria”: one of many types of affects depicted by da capo arias

singularity of the accompaniment

rushing scales and forward motion

especially long coloratura (melismas) on “vendetta,” “traditor” (=arrow ready for vengeance)

high notes on “punire”

ornamentation on da capo makes it less a repetition and more of a heightening (ratcheting up) of intensity

4. other examples of Handel arias, showing da capo form, manipulation of the formal template, instrumentation

**Rinaldo** (1711) complete recording: Cecilia Bartoli with Christopher Hogwood, conductor (l’Oiseau-lyre, 2000)

1. Armida (a sorceress): *da capo aria*

(harpsichord solo in the A section; in the B section strings pizzicato in running eighths)

**A:** Vo’ far guerra, e vincer voglio  
collo sdegno chi m’offende  
vendicar i torti miei.

I shall wage war, and will defeat  
with disdain the man who has insulted me  
to avenge my wrongs.

**B:** Per abbatter quell’orgoglio,  
ch’il gran foco in sen m’accende,  
saran meco i stessi Dei.

The gods themselves will be with me  
in crushing the pride  
that enrages me.

**A:** *da capo*

2. Armida: *accompanied recitative and da capo aria*

(accompanied recitative: strings reflect her shifting mood—longing and agitated)

(longing bassoon-oboe duet in A section moving into 2-note motive: “crudel” and “pietà”; in B section raging runs in orchestra and voice)

*recitative*

Dunque i lacci d’un volto,  
tante gioie promesse,  
li spaventi d’Inferno,  
forza n’avran per arrestar quel crudo?

So the snare of a face,  
the promise of so much joy,  
and the terrors of hell  
are not strong enough to hold that cruel  
man?

E tu il segui, o mio core!

My heart, you go with him!

Fatto trofeo d'un infelice amore!  
No:// si svegli 'l furore,  
si raggiunga l'ingrato,  
cada a' miei piè svenuto.//  
Ohimè! Che fia!  
Uccider l'alma mia?  
Ah! Debole mio petto,  
a un traditor anco puoi dar ricetta?//  
Su, furie, ritrovate  
nova sorte di pena e di flagello;  
s'uccida, sì.// Eh! No. ch'è troppo bello.

You are the trophy of an unhappy love!  
No:// let my anger arise,  
and find the ungrateful man,  
let him fall lifeless at my feet.//  
Alas! How can it be?  
Can I kill the man I love?  
Ah, my feeble heart,  
Can you shelter a traitor still?//  
Arise, furies, and discover  
new types of pain and punishment;  
let him die.// Ah, no, for he is too handsome.

*aria*

**A:** Ah, crudel!  
il pianto mio,  
deh! Ti mova per pietà.

Ah! Cruel man,  
for pity's sake,  
be moved by my tears.

**B:** O infedel  
al mio desio  
proverai la crudeltà.

Unfaithful  
to my desire  
you will feel my cruelty.

**A:** *da capo*

3. **Semele** (1744) *after the manner of an Oratorio*, complete recording: Samuel Ramey with John Nelson, conductor (Deutsche Grammophon, 1990)

Somnus (the god of Sleep):

**A:** Leave me, loathsome light.  
Receive me, silent night.

**B:** Lethe, why does thy ling'ring current cease?  
Oh, murmur me again to peace.

(rich four-part strings; Somnus becomes increasingly tired and falls asleep at the end of the B section; listen to how incomplete the aria sounds—not only have you become accustomed to hearing the return of text and music, but listen for the ending in the “wrong” key that is not the key of the beginning)

The Enlightenment can be defined in part by its interest in rational methods of analysis and classification; it was the era of the encyclopedists; we find this outlook in Bach's exploration of all 24 keys in the Well-Tempered Clavier or in his close examination and explication of contrapuntal methods in the Art of the Fugue; similarly, Handel, in his lifetime (in opera, oratorio, cantata), wrote over 2000 arias, resulting in an encyclopedic investigation of human emotion.

See next page for comparison of da capo, ritornello, and fugue form.

**Da Capo form** (typical “five-part” pattern of late Baroque era):

**A** R1 S1 (=A1) R2 S2 (=A2) R3 ||  
 home key new key(s)→ home key  
 (these 5 parts=A section)

**B** S3 (=B section)  
 new key→

**A** *da capo* (“from the head” or “from the top”: from R1 to R3)

**Ritornello form:**

Brandenburg #5, mvt 1 (shown in relation to da capo form)

<b>A</b>		(=A1)				(=A2)			
	R1	<u>E1</u>	R2	<u>E2</u>	R3	<u>E3</u>	R4	<u>E4</u>	R5
medium	tutti	solo/t	t	s(t)	t	s(t)	t	s(t)	t
motives	abc	xy/a	a	b	b	free(a)	b	x-by	b
keys	home→	new→							home
track/time	(1)								(2)
measure/bar	1	9	19	21	29	32	40	42	58

<b>B</b>	E5	R6	E6
	s(t)	t	s/t
	b/c--a	a	xy/a
	free		(like E1)
	new (encompassing what		
	Kerman calls the “central solo”)		
	(2/0:06)	(3)	
	61	110	111

<b>A</b>	R7	E7	R8	E8	R9
	t	s(t)	t	s(t)--solo	t
	ab	b	b	zw--cadenza	abc
	I	I	I	I-x-V	I
	home→				
	(3/1:30)			(4)	(5)
	121	126	137	140	219 (-227)

**Fugue** (related to da capo and ritornello form)

subject	episode	subj.	episode	subj.	episode	subj.
home key→	new key(s)→					home key
=Rit.	S1	R2	S2	R3	S3	R4

Brandenburg #5, mvt 3: is actually in Da Capo form (that is, the return is not written out) and, further, the ritornellos are fugal, so that Bach is combining **three** forms in this movement

## Oratorio

### 3. Handel, *Messiah* (1741)

a. “There were shepherds”—“Glory to God” K 2.9

Secco→Accompanied→Secco→Accompanied→Chorus

- Musical imagery of angel wings in the accompanied recitatives and chorus
- Word-painting in chorus: “highest” = high voices; “earth” = low voices; “good will” = fugue (acclamation of the “multitude of the heavenly host”) leading to sequence (coming together)
- Instrumental postlude: decrescendo depicts angels departing

b. “Hallelujah” K 2.10

Chorus: “sacred madrigal” with very effective use of texture

- homophony: opening “Hallelujah” (and “Hallelujah” as refrain) representing congregational voices joined together
- monophony: “For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (=one God)
- counterpoint (fugue): “And he shall reign for ever and ever” (like a round, without end)

## Church Cantata

### 4. Bach, “Christ lag in Todesbanden” K 2.11-13

chorale cantata: a sacred cantata based on a Lutheran chorale (hymn); use of the chorale as a sacred, pre-existent foundation (similar to the earlier use of Gregorian chant as a cantus firmus or paraphrased); typically each stanza of the chorale is given a different compositional presentation

gapped chorale: a movement in which the chorale melody is heard in long notes phrase by phrase against a continuously moving melody or texture in counterpoint to it (see pattern in Kerman/Tomlinson, p. 160, right margin)

a. stanza 3:

- solo tenor against a continuous solo violin part (=death?)
- note how the music stops after the word “nichts” (nothing) and starts up again slowly without the continuous violin part at first

b. stanza 4:

- the altos, doubled by organ, sing the chorale in long notes
- the continuous music consists of imitative entries of the other voices, like points of imitation, phrase by phrase
- the imitative entries use paraphrase, while the alto uses quotation

c. stanza 7:

- a straightforward and richly harmonized version of the chorale

### 5. Bach, Chorale Prelude, “Christ lag in Todesbanden” K 2.14

chorale prelude: a composition for organ incorporating a chorale melody

- this prelude incorporates a continuous melody in the bass (organ pedals) played in counterpoint with the chorale, which is heard without any gaps