

# HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC I

MUS 3314-1

Dr. Tony Mowrer

## Chapter 11

### Instrumental Music in the Late Baroque---p. 359

The topic of instrumental music in the late baroque is best described under two headings.

1. **Keyboard music**---this is influenced by technical advancements in the harpsichord and organ, as well as tuning.

Under this heading will be music that fall into the following categories.

1. Toccata and Fugue
2. Chorale Preludes
3. Variations
4. Passacaglia and Chaconne
5. Suite
6. Sonata

2. **Ensemble music**---especially that of the violin. Under this heading will be music in the following categories.

1. Sonata (sonata da chiesa)
2. Sinfonia
3. Suite (sonata da camera)
4. Concerto

The Baroque organ became a significant work of art in its own right. Two noted builders were Silberman and Schnitger. These instruments included pedals spanning two or more octaves, several stops for special sounds, etc. All these advancements allowed for great combinations of sounds, harmonies, and rhythms. The great composers exploited the possibilities. Much German organ music was for the church and was used as a prelude to some action. Great German composers for the organ included:

Buxtehude  
Zachow  
Kuhnau  
J.C. Bach (J.S. Bach's brother)  
Pachelbel  
B hm

The *toccata* developed into a large scale work that might include nonfugal sections that would be irregular, rhythmically free, have an unceasing drive of 16<sup>th</sup> notes, undistinct phrases, and sudden, sharp changes of texture. There might also be sections of strict counterpoint. The fugue is developed from these sections. The effect was one of improvisation. It was a vehicle for displaying skill on the keyboard and pedals.

**Listen NAWM 73**

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In addition to existing within other types of composition, the *fugue* also led an independent life. By 1700 it had almost entirely replaced the *ricercare*. In the fugue, subjects enter in the different voices, in the tonic or dominant, depending on which entrance is being heard. The subject is treated in the episodes, using pedal points, strettos, augmentation, diminution, retrogrades, and inversions, along with other techniques. The fugue has a definite form and was exploited by composers of the Baroque and used by composers of all generations since.

## Listen NAWM 81

One of the developments that influenced keyboard music in the baroque was the development of *equal temperament*. This was a tuning development whereby the instrument would be tuned in equal half steps. This enabled the composer to write more complex modulations than was previously possible. The abilities brought about by equal temperament are easily seen in Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*.

Compositions based on chorale tunes were significant at this time. Part of this was due to the use of the chorale in Lutheran Germany and the importance of the organ in Germany. Keyboard compositions based on chorale tunes included the variation or *partita* and the fantasia.

The term, *Chorale Prelude*, applied to any chorale based organ work. It began as an introduction to a chorale in church and grew to have its own life. It is generally short with the entire melody only being presented once. Sometimes, a set of variations might be composed. These might include original tunes, in addition to chorale tunes. A set of variations based on a chorale tune would be called a *Chorale Variation, Partita*, or a *Chorale Fantasia*. These might be played on the organ and were also written for the harpsichord and clavichord.

## Listen NAWM 74

The *suite* was a collection of stylized dances. When written for ensembles, they were called *sonata da chiesa* or *sonata da camera*. In France, the *ordres* or Couperin were notable. Most of them are in dance rhythms. There is no precise definition regarding the types or order of the movements.

## Listen NAWM 75

In Germany, the suite could also be called a *partita*. The Germans had a definite that was to be followed. These dances came from other parts of the world, in addition to Germany.

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***Allemande***---from Germany

Moderately fast duple with continuous movement of 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> notes

***Courante***---from France

Moderate compound duple or compound triple or shifts between the two

***Sarabande***---from Spain

Usually in a slow 3/2 or 6/4 and more homophonic than the other dances

***Gigue***---Anglo-Irish

Could be in 12/8, 6/8, or 6/4 with a continuous movement of lively triplets

## **Ensemble Music**---p. 373

This was a time when violin making was at its height. Stradavari, Amati, and Guarneri made instruments that are still highly valued. For this reason, ensemble music, featuring the strings, was very important.

The ***ensemble sonata*** was in several contrasting sections or movements and was for 2-4 solo instruments and continuo.

The ***sonata da chiesa*** was a church sonata. Its movements were not obviously in dance forms and did not bear the names of the dances.

The ***sonata da camera*** was a chamber sonata. It was basically a suite of stylized dances. The various movements might be called the dance names. The compositions would be given diverse names such as *Divertimento*, *Concerto*, etc.

A ***Trio Sonata*** was a composition for two treble instruments and basso continuo.

## **Listen NAWM 76**

The crowning achievement of Italian chamber music in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century is found in the work of **Arcangelo Corelli** (1653-1713), Corelli apparently wrote no vocal music. He was very careful to avoid any extreme technical requirements in his compositions. As a result, his trio sonatas are accessible to normally competent players. Corelli employed suspensions, sequences, and very little chromaticism. His sonatas are typically in four movements, following a *slow, fast, slow, fast* arrangement. All movements tend to be in the same key. They are thematically independent with no contrasting themes within or between movements.

## **Listen NAWM 77**

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After 1700, the most important Baroque orchestral composition was the **concerto**. Through the concerto, the composer could exploit the *concertato medium/principal*. Two kinds of concerto were common.

***Concerto grosso***---written for a small group of instruments contrasting with a larger ensemble.

***Solo concerto***---written for a soloist contrasting with an ensemble.