

EXPLANATION 3.1: THE BAROQUE PERIOD. INTRODUCTION.

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It can be considered that the period of the musical Baroque begins in 1600 and ends in 1750 with the death of one of the great baroque composers, namely, Johann Sebastian Bach.

The whole of the Baroque spans three periods: Early Baroque (1580-1630), Middle Baroque (1630-1680) and Late Baroque (1680-1730). At the same time, at the end of it, there was a transition to the next period, the Classicism, from 1730 to 1750.

The Baroque is a period in the history of music - and of the arts in general - of very marked characteristics such as: the taste for ornamentation or decoration and expressiveness. However, in 150 years of Baroque music, there were very many different musical styles that can not be included with just under the name "Baroque".

In this period the Church and the nobility ceased to have the privilege of having music made by professionals. This privilege also extended to the bourgeoisie, especially when the opera was created, since it was usually attended by the higher classes. With this new genre, vocal music moves towards secular music. Also, new and large compositions of religious works, such as cantatas, oratorios and passions, became well known with Haendel, Telemann and Bach.

Instrumental music boomed and established itself as a new genre with its own personality. This kind of music had played a minor role during the Renaissance but in the Baroque era became very developed and was extremely popular. This happened for several reasons. The main one was because of the manufacture of instruments by excellent makers (luthiers). Instruments grew in quantity and quality, which provided music making among all social classes who were able to afford them. Unlike in the Renaissance, baroque composers created works of great duration and complexity. Thus, new forms emerged, such as sonatas and concertos, which were purely instrumental compositions.

The influence and musical primacy of Italy was felt in all countries, including those who developed their own styles, like France, Spain and Germany.

COMPREHENSION TEXT QUESTIONS 3.1

- 1. When does the Baroque period start and end, and why is the final date important?**
- 2. How is the musical Baroque periodized?**
- 3. What three artistic characteristics does the Baroque musical period show?**
- 4. What is the relationship between baroque music and the bourgeoisie?**
- 5. What social class used to go to the opera before the Baroque period?**
- 6. What three types of religious works are composed in the Baroque?**
- 7. What musical genre is consolidated in the Baroque?**
- 8. Why is instrumental music so booming in the Baroque?**
- 9. Who are the luthiers?**
- 10. How important were the instruments in Baroque society?**
- 11. What characteristic distinguishes Baroque instrumental music from Renaissance music?**
- 12. Which country is the one that influences other European countries in the musical field in the Baroque period?**