

EXPLANATION 3.4: THE LUTHERAN CANTATA. THE PASSION. THE ORATORIO.**THE LUTHERAN CHORALE. 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES**

The Kirchenlied (church song) is composed of two elements: text and melody. It is a hymn in stanzas (series of verses). These songs were sung by the choir in unison and without accompaniment, although later, composers harmonized the melodies for the choirs. The melodies could be old, or of new composition, or taken from profane or sacred songs. Often, in the songs, the profane texts were changed to become religious. This is known as *contrafacta*. In the 17th century the organ accompanied the melody and at the end of that century the choirs were sung with harmonies of chords and simple rhythms. Lucas Osiander is a composer of this era.

CORAL-MOTET

At the end of the 16th century, with another genre like the motete-choral, Lutheran religious music goes definitely into two paths: hymn-style music for anyone to sing, and more elaborate music for more trained choirs. Composers of choral-motets were: Hans Leo Hassler and Michael Praetorius. The most important German religious composer of the first half of the seventeenth century was Heinrich Schütz.

THE 18TH CENTURY CANTATA

It was also developed a type of music called "cantata", that takes its texts from biblical sources, free poetry, sacred odes and chorales. This type of cantata suffered a change when around 1700 the poet and theologian Erdmann Neumeister introduced new texts, in poetic style, for the cantatas in religious music. Many composers used these texts to compose works that contained choirs, solos, concerted styles and elements of opera like the recitativo and the aria. The most important cantata composers are J.S.Bach, G.F.Handel and J.P.Telemann. Before these famous ones J.P. Krieger and F.W.Zachow were also well-known.

THE ORATORIO

The oratorio is a vocal religious compositional form that narrates biblical themes of the Old and New Testament. It is performed by soloists, choir and orchestra. It is staged in the church and unlike the opera the oratorio is not dramatized but narrated. The characters are static. Through arias, recitatives and choirs the story is told. One of the most famous oratorios is Handel's "Messiah", composed in 1741 when he lived in London. Other important authors are Giacomo Carissimi with oratorios in Latin and in Italian, and Georg Philipp Telemann.

THE PASSION

The form known as Passion is an oratory in which it deals exclusively with the suffering and death of Christ. It is a vocal religious compositional form. In it, appear the main characters involved in the passion of Christ: the Evangelist, who is the narrator and relates the events in recitative style, Jesus Christ, the apostles (sung by the choir), Pilates, the crowd that comments (sung by the choir) etc. Two important passions are: "The passion according to Saint John" and "The passion according to Saint Matthew", both by J.S.Bach.

COMPREHENSION TEXT QUESTIONS

1. What two elements does a Lutheran corale have?
2. How were the corals sung by the congregation?
3. What is *contrafacta*?
4. What two characteristics does a coral of the end of the 17th century have? Name one composer.
5. What happened to the music for choirs at the end of the 16th century? Name one composer.
6. From what sources were the cantatas before Neumeister nurtured?
7. What does Neumeister bring to the old cantata?
8. Name the most important cantata composers.
9. What types of voices does an oratorio have?
10. Where is an oratorio represented, and what is the main difference with the opera?
11. Who, when, and where, was the "The Messiah" oratorio composed?
12. What is narrated in a musical passion?
13. Who narrates the story in the passion and what other characters do appear?
14. Name a well-known passion and its composer.