Common Features in Baroque Music
— Early and Late Periods —

by
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Abstract

The Baroque period of music spanned over 150 years as a style of music. This a comparatively long time, when we consider that the Classical period which followed was only about 75 years. Although there were many developments from early to late Baroque music, many aspects remained the same. This paper shall explore some of the more common aspects of Baroque music in its early and late periods. The focus will be on Monteverdi's contributions to Baroque Opera, a comparison of a Monteverdi and Handelian opera, Bach's keyboard interpretations of Vivaldi concerti, and a comparison of the instrumental styles of Handel and Bach. There will also be short discussion of ornamentation. Through this, we shall be able to identify aspects of music which are uniquely Baroque.

Key Words: prima prattica, seconda prattica, stile concitato, recitative, da capo aria.

Part One: Early Versus Late Baroque Opera: Monteverdi and Handel

Music historians have generally agreed that the music written between 1600 and 1750 belongs to the Baroque period, although some examples of Baroque music may be placed somewhat earlier than 1600 and later than 1750 (Grout 293). During this long period, there were of course changes and developments, but certain features were typical throughout (Grout 296). One feature which was typical throughout was described by Monteverdi as the first and second "practices" (*prima prattica* and *seconda prattica*) (Grout 297). The first practice was vocal polyphony as it had developed in the Netherlands and saw its perfection in the works of Palestrina, in which "music dominated the text" (Grout 297). The second practice was a newer one in which "text dominated the music" and the established rules regarding the use of dissonances were modified such that they could be used more freely to express feeling in the text

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(Grout 297). Beginning in the Baroque period, we see the development of the expression of "*affectations* or states of the soul, such as rage, excitement, grandeur, heroism" among others, which inevitably led to freer use of rhythm and dissonances than would have been allowed in the earlier, more moderate practices of the Renaissance (Grout 298). In the Baroque, we see rhythm treated in two ways: "(1) regular metrical barline rhythm...and (2) free unmetrical rhythm, used in recitative or improvisatory instrumental pieces" (Grout 299). Compositions in which freer rhythms and a more improvisatory solo style were used gave rise to the figured bass (*basso continuo*), a kind of harmonic short hand for accompaniment which also came to be used in the accompaniment of polyphonic music (Grout 300–302). As major-minor tonality developed, the *basso continuo* became an important feature which served to outline harmonic progression (Grout 303). The Baroque period can be divided into at least three sections: early, middle, and late (mature). I shall attempt to show how excerpts (one instrumental piece and one solo song each) from Monteverdi's opera (actually titled as *favola in musica*) *L'Orfeo* and Handel's opera *Giulio Cesare* can help us to place these works in the Baroque period and classify them as either early or late Baroque.

L'Orfeo begins with an instrumental *tocatta*. This use of the word *tocatta* here is not to be mistaken for the word as we generally know it today, that is, as a short prelude to a fugue in which a player demonstrates his agility on the keyboard (Kennedy 659). The fact that *L'Orfeo* begins with this and not an overture is our first clue that this work belongs to the early Baroque. The *tocatta* is a short, brisk piece (1'30) which has the quality of a royal fanfare in common time. It starts with a semibreve on an open fifth in the lower voices. This is followed by a simple melody beginning with a rapid burst of ascending sixteenth notes followed by a descending pattern of dotted eighths. This is accompanied by a pattern of four sixteenth notes followed by a quarter which is exchanged between the lower and middle voices. Its form is AAA, with the brass taking the first and last strophes and the strings and continuo taking the middle (at least, this is how it is orchestrated in recorded version cited). The piece stays on a single chord throughout and is highly reminiscent of renaissance dance band music (one is reminded here of the renaissance composer Tylman Susato's 'Danserye' –1551). The *tocatta* places *L'Orfeo* unmistakably in the early, rather than late, Baroque.

In contrast to this, *Giulio Cesare* opens with an overture (3'oo) of the style we would identify as French overture, as developed by Lully (1632–1687) (Kennedy 239 and 381). The French overture originally had three parts, fast-slow-fast (Kennedy 239). It became typical of Baroque opera in the middle and late period (Grout 310). By the late Baroque, it came to have two parts: a slow external introduction featuring dotted rhythms followed by a faster, somewhat fugal section (Grout 349). In *Giulio Cesare* we see a very clear example of this later type of French overture. Further, its harmonic pattern is of the sort of symmetry we expect by the late Baroque. The first section progresses from I to V at the repeat (thus setting up the return to the tonic) and ends on

V in the second ending (bar 14). The second section begins with a fugal motive (more or less devoid of dotted rhythms) that is then repeated in the other voices on the tonic, dominant, mediant, and other related harmonies. We are carried through sequences which are reminiscent of those used by Vivaldi in his instrumental works (see bars 42–49, for example). Near the end of the overture, we see a reintroduction of the dotted rhythm pattern, which is most prominent in the closing two and a half bars.

An example of solo song from *L'Orfeo* is the *Prologo* in which *La Musica* tells us that she is going to relate the story of *Orfeo*, the eponymous hero. The *Prologo* is an early example of what is meant by the *seconda prattica*. Most of the chords in the *basso continuo* are held for a long periods (breves, semibreves) over which the solo voice can sing in somewhat free style, adding embellishments where appropriate. The song consists of five strophes for which the *basso continuo* is hardly altered at all. If we consider the "key" of the piece to be d-minor, we can outline the following root movements: i, v, i, iv, i, VII, III, VII, I, IV, VII, iv, i, v, II, V (except in the last strophe where II replaces V). From this we can see that the strophes do not follow a pattern in which either i or I are established at their cadences, this being the duty of the instrumental *ritornello*. The *ritornello* in the *Prologo* is four 4/2 bars long (repeated) and is heard in this form at the beginning and end of the *prologo*. Between the strophes, the *ritornello* is reduced in length to three bars. In all cases it establishes a pattern which moves from v to a cadence of V–I, thus providing a clear harmonic context for the piece and further delineating the form of the *Prologo*. The *stile rappresentativo* of the Florentine Camerata was characterized by a speech-like melody with fast moving bursts of speech and long-held words without ornamentation which were sung over a slow-moving bass and meant to imitate spoken language (Grout 308). In the *L'Orfeo*, we see this style (which later developed into what we would now call recitative) developed and strengthened, with more variety harmonically and melodically, and perceptible musical forms which contribute to continuity (Grout 309). The *Prologo* certainly shows these attributes. One more point which must be mentioned is the kind of trill typically used at cadences in the early Baroque. Here, the trill is performed not as the shake that we associate with the later Baroque and after, but is rather the same note rapidly repeated.

By the late Baroque, *secco recitativo*, in which all the action took place, alternated with *da capo* arias (ABA) in which a single mood (occasionally contrasted in the B section with a different mood) had become the norm in opera (Grout 440–441). Handel's *Giulio Cesare* is no exception, and virtually any aria in this opera could be used as a good contrast to the *Prologo* in *L'Orfeo*. I have chosen the recitative and aria from Act III, scene iii of *Giulio Cesare*, because it is one of those rarer cases in which there is a change of mood between the A and B sections, and also because it is so unmistakably Handelian in its beauty and lyricism. In the recitative, Cleopatra tells us that Cesare is most likely dead, no one can come to her rescue, and, therefore, she is without hope. This is the perfect set up for the mood of the following aria in which she sings her

lamentation and resigns herself to cruel fate (*Piangerò*). The aria contains many features which are typical the late Baroque. For example, the singer must make several large leaps (in one case a 9th in bar 13), whereas in the *Prologo* of *L'Orfeo* we see a great deal of step wise motion and undemanding intervals. The aria goes clearly from I at the beginning through a series of related chords over a falling bass (very like a passacaglia) back through V to I at the first and second endings, as we would expect. It then modulates to the relative minor for the dramatic and angry B section (marked *allegro*), where Cleopatra tells us that her ghost will mercilessly haunt Tolomeo, her evil brother and the opera's villain. In the B section, we hear sequential patterns and string work which are (as in the overture) quite reminiscent of Vivaldi (see bars 59–67, for example). The B section ends on iii, which of course contains a note in common with the tonic as well as the leading tone to the tonic, thereby taking us safely back to the A section for its embellished repeat. The chords occasionally go quite far afield from the tonic key, a feature we do not see in *L'Orfeo*. These more distant harmonies help to underline the sadness of the text, but are always carefully approached and resolved according to traditional harmonic theory (secondary dominants, as in bar 11, or step wise motion by the bass into chords which are distantly related, as in bars 17–18 or bars 21–22).

There are a few more general details which help us to place *L'Orfeo* in the early Baroque and *Giulio Cesare* in the late. In general, the singing in *Giulio Cesare*, with its long melismas and wide intervals, is quite acrobatic when compared to *L'Orfeo*. There are only two short choruses in *Giulio Cesare*, which are unremarkable and homophonic, with all voices moving at the same time; polyphonic vocal writing, it seems, had all but disappeared in this late Baroque opera. *L'Orfeo* is rich in choral work, much of it polyphonic and reminiscent of madrigals. *Giulio Cesare* is orchestrated throughout, whereas in *L'Orfeo*, the orchestration is explicit in only a few places (Bukofzer 58). But perhaps the most striking feature is the length of these works: *L'Orfeo* is a mere ninety minutes long, while *Giulio Cesare* is upward of four hours. While both works can be called Baroque, they are very different listening experiences.

Part 2: A Closer Look at Monteverdi

It has been said that Monteverdi "set the future of the course of opera" by going beyond the limitations of the Florentine Camerata, and that his work *L'Orfeo* can be considered "the first operatic masterpiece" (Bukofzer 58–60). If so, the question of what Monteverdi's contributions to opera were can be fairly asked. In 1605, Monteverdi himself expressed the idea of two contrasting practices which were already in use, the older *prima prattica*, a metered style of vocal polyphony in which text is subordinate to music, and the newer *seconda prattica*, in which music is subordinate to text and where both rhythm and dissonance can be used freely, as employed in recitative

(Grout 297).[1] Monteverdi sought to make this *seconda prattica* "a fluid mixture of speech like recitative and more lyrical and formal monody," and resisted a strict separation of recitative and aria (Palisca, Grout 370). While this may be true of *L'Orfeo*, Monteverdi in his later work began to experiment with a still newer style in which recitative and aria were separated. Bukofzer tells us that Monteverdi, as opposed to his contemporaries, employed greater stylistic and dramatic complexity, traditional closed forms, the *stile concitato* (excited style) in choruses as well as in solo song, and sudden key and orchestration changes to "set the characters against one another" (58–60). All of these innovations can be found in *L'Orfeo*, as examples of these features in excerpts from *L'Orfeo* Acts II and III will show. Also, certain features of the final duet between Nero and Poppaea from *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* where we see an example of Monteverdi's development as a composer in his latest work will be discussed.[2]

Act II of *L'Orfeo* begins with a joyous pastoral scene involving sections alternating between Orpheus, two shepherds (solo and duet), and a chorus of Nymphs and shepherds. The sprightly, dance-like music here alters between triple and duple meter, and is accompanied by members of the lute family, bowed strings, and harpsichord in various combinations. This opening music can be taken as an example of the metered *prima prattica*. This joyous scene is not to last, however. The scene is set up for tragedy with the entrance of Eurydice's companion Sylvia. It is here that we can see some of the contributions Monteverdi made to opera. Sylvia, the messenger, appears in order to tell everyone that she has something terrible to report. Bukofzer mentions the messenger scene as a place where we hear abrupt changes in harmony and orchestration to contrast the characters (59–60). Monteverdi here abandons the *prima prattica* in favor of the *seconda prattica* in order to allow for more dramatic expression of the text. The messenger is accompanied by organ, an instrument not yet heard in Act II, and *chitarrone*.[3] When Orpheus and the shepherds question Sylvia, it is to the accompaniment of *viol da gamba* and various members of the lute family, thus helping to delineate the characters. When Sylvia finally gets out the news that Eurydice is dead, Orpheus, in his disbelief, utters a single "*Ohime*," whose plaintiff simplicity is tragically believable. Sylvia then tells the story in one long strophe, over a slow moving (and in many places static) accompaniment (still organ and *chitarrone*). The drama is intensified by various devices in the speech-like voice part; certain words and phrases are drawn out in juxtaposition to rapid *stile concitato* phrases. For example, in bars 7–9, in which Sylvia tells us that a treacherous snake lay hidden in the grass and then bit Eurydice, we see the word *insidioso* (treacherous) drawn out and juxtaposed to the rapidly sung *stile concitato* phrase which describes the inevitable poisonous bite to Eurydice's foot (Palisca 362). We hear again the *stile concitato* in bars 16–18, where Sylvia is telling of the panicked way in which she and the other women tried to help Eurydice (Palisca 363). The movement is then slowed down in bar 19 where Sylvia tells us that all efforts were useless (Palisca 363). We see great dramatic effect in the way Sylvia relates Eurydice's last

words, the name of her lover Orpheus. She utters "*Orfeo*" twice: the first time on rising pitches of short duration followed by a quick, halting breath, and then finally a second time, drawing out the second syllable of his name, and then falling a minor sixth to the last syllable (Palisca 364). We form a clear mental image of Eurydice calling out to Orpheus with her last breath, pining for him, only to expire with his name on her lips. When Sylvia finishes her sad story, the first shepherd reacts with an outburst of grief, followed by the second who reacts with disbelief. Monteverdi employs an abrupt key change between these two (bars 33–34), going directly from A major to F major. A second outburst by the first shepherd leads us into Orpheus' reaction, for which Monteverdi indicated one organ and one *chitarrone* as accompaniment (Palisca 365). I do not want to leave Act II without pointing out one more notable feature, and that is the chorus when they sing the dramatic "*Ahi caso acerbo*" (Oh, bitter fate), just after Orpheus sings his farewell to the earth, heavens, and sun. It is here that we see an example of *stile concitato* in the chorus. It happens in the sudden rapid movement on the words "*che tosto fugge*" (*fugire* can be taken to mean "run away") (Palisca 368).

In contrast to the pastoral setting of the first two Acts, in the hell of Act III we hear "dark brass instruments, and the reedy nasal regal serving as continuo instrument" (Bukofzer 59). As Act III begins, Hope leads Orpheus to the gates of hell. She informs him that she may go with him no further, singing the famous words "*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate*" (Abandon all hope, you who enter). It is now up to Orpheus alone, to the accompaniment of organ and members of the lute family, to persuade the stern Charon to ferry him across the river into hell. Charon, to the accompaniment of regal and guitar, is having none of this however. Orpheus then tries to soften Charon's hard heart by singing an appeal to him. After an introductory *Sinfonia* of bowed strings, we hear the famous *Possente spirto*, an example of strophic variation in which text and melody vary, but in which the bass remains more or less the same for each strophe, thus unifying the aria with a clear harmonic outline (Grout 314). Orpheus is accompanied by organ and *chitarrone* in the strophes, the individual lines of the first four strophes being accented by short instrumental sections played by various instruments: paired violins, paired cornetts, double harp with double bass, and bowed strings, respectively. These strophes are separated by short sections played on the same groups of instruments in the above order, but these sections are not indicated as ritornellos.[4] This is the only piece in *L'Orfeo* where instruments support the singer, the first four strophes in "a vivacious *concertato* dialogue, and...the final one in simple chords" (Bukofzer 60). The final strophe is accompanied by bowed strings, with the *chitarrone* joining in later. There are two versions of this aria, one unembellished and the other a fully ornamented version suggested by Monteverdi (Bukofzer 60). Whatever the case, Monteverdi gives the singer every opportunity to wring as much out of this song as he can by using this closed form with its slow moving, repeating base. The singer must have superb coloratura technique and add lavish embellishment to make this piece the

dramatic show-case it deserves to be.[5]

It is fitting to conclude with an example from Monteverdi's later work. Unfortunately, except for his last two operas, all others after *L'Orfeo* have been lost (Bukofzer 62). By the time of his last opera, certain aspects of Monteverdi's style had begun to change. We begin to see recitative being "broken up by *cantabile* sections or refrains in triple meter marking the incipient stage of division between aria and recitative which was developed in the bel-canto style" (Bukofzer 63). The final duet between Nero and Poppaea in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* shows this change. On first hearing, one might assume that it is in fact a short duet in *da capo* form. Closer inspection will reveal, however, that its form is in fact ABBA. *Pur ti mio* is without doubt one of the most touching and beautiful duets of its time. The text is simple in both A and B sections and contains little if any change in mood; a feature we associate with later Baroque arias (Grout 440–441) This duet could, in fact, very nearly be mistaken for a work by Handel. The A section rests upon a delicate, descending bass after the manner of a passacaglia.[6] The harmonic structure of the duet moves in a simple, graceful pattern evocative of the middle or late baroque. In the A section, we hear a repeated pattern of [I, V6, IV6, I].[7] Near the end of this section, the piece modulates to a prominent secondary dominant, but then quickly returns to the tonic by way of a brief sequence. It could have come right out of book of traditional Baroque harmony exercises. The two voices are imitative, and tenderly wind around each other in strings of plaintiff suspensions which are sublimely resolved. One need not understand Italian to know that this is a profession of mutual love. The B section (repeated) is slightly *a tempo* and contains a longer sequential pattern. It too reaches the secondary dominant near its end and returns by brief sequence to the tonic. This duet is far more lyrical than anything in *L'Orfeo* , and clearly embodies the spirit of a later period. It is remarkable that *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* ends with this piece. Monteverdi avoids the use of a big ending with a massed ensemble and chorus. Rather, he uses this tender duet to give the opera a gentle and reflective sense of closure.

Part 3: Bach Interprets Vivaldi

In his early years, Bach spent a great deal of his time at the keyboard and was heavily influenced by Buxtehude, who was to become his teacher (Wolff 150). In his first period as a composer, Bach's works were "characterized by excessive length, superabundance of ideas, unbridled exuberance, and inclusive with regard to harmony" (Bukofzer 272). The years in which Bach lived in Weimar (1708–1717) can be called his "second creative period" (Bukofzer 275). It was during this second period that Bach went through an "Italian phase," having been influenced by the works of Vivaldi among others (Bukofzer 276). I shall examine here what Wolff (as well as some other authors) have had to say about Vivaldi's influence on Bach. Some examples

Bach's transcriptions of Vivaldi's opus 3 *L'Estro armonico* will show how Bach added his own distinctive style to these concerti.

Grout tells us that Vivaldi's concerti had a strong impact on Bach (410). The most influential attributes of Vivaldi's concerti he lists as: "the concise themes, the clarity of form, the rhythmic vitality, [and] the...logical continuity in the flow of musical ideas" (Grout 410). Bukofzer is certainly in agreement with Grout as regards the concerto form: in his transcriptions of Vivaldi's concerti, Bach hardly ever altered the form (276–277). Bukofzer mentions that Bach's countrapuntal style was far ahead of that of the Italians, and that he added his own countrapuntal expertise to the concerti he transcribed (276). He emphasizes the "new thematic incisiveness and lucidity of form" that developed in the instrumental works of Bach's Weimar years as a result of the Italian influence (277). Wolff agrees, saying that Vivaldi's thorough working out of "the outer voices, concise and unified thematic material and clearly articulated plan of modulation" remained influential in Bach's style of composition, and that Bach added his own "complex counterpoint, distinct and lively texture of middle voices, and harmonic finesse" to what he had learned from Vivaldi in his transcriptions (151–152). Bukofzer confirms that the influence of the concerto form can be seen clearly in Bach's trio sonatas of the Cöthen period (1717–1723), and that Vivaldi's concerti, specifically, served as the model for Bach's Brandenburg Concerti of 1721 (288–291).

Bach transcribed nine of Vivaldi's concerti, five of them from *L'Estro armonico* opus 3 (Wolff 178). Wolff tells us that these concerti revealed to Bach a new style of "musical thinking," based on "organization, continuity, as well as proportion and relation" to which Bach applied own "complex counterpoint, marked by busy interweavings of the inner voices as well as harmonic refinement." (178). Tobias Möller agrees, and adds that in these works, Bach would "alter the basic material...in an attempt to break down schematic repeats and avoid an over-emphasis on sequential techniques in the melodic writing" (9). A comparison of the scores will confirm that Bach closely adheres to the framework of the movements in *L'Estro armonico* laid down by Vivaldi, with the same number of bars in most movements as well as *ritornelli*, *tutti*, and *soli* occurring at the same places. It is of interest to note how Bach altered these concerti. Below, I shall compare excerpts from Vivaldi's Opus 3 number 9 and Bach's transcription of it (BWV 976) to outline some of Bach's alterations.

In movement one, Bach at times adds inner voices under the solo voice, suspended over a pedal note, thus providing more harmonic sophistication than Vivaldi's original (see bars 61–65 in both). In movement two, we can see how Bach thickens the texture of the original harmony by comparing bars 28–32 in both works. Here, Bach uses *fauxbourdon* in the upper voices which descend over a rising base in bar 31. Vivaldi's original is comparatively lean harmonically. Bach added much counterpoint which is reminiscent of his two-part inventions. From movement three, compare Bach's version from bar 102 in and Vivaldi's version in from bar 103.[8]

Regarding the matter of Vivaldi's influence on Bach and Bach's keyboard transcriptions of Vivaldi's concerti, no author disagrees directly with Wolff's interpretation. Wolff goes into considerably more detail than most other authors, particularly when we consider his close analysis of Bach's BWV 978 (161 and 163-4). Wolff takes the view that Bach's transcriptions of the Vivaldi concerti should be viewed in terms of "general compositional procedure" rather than "formal design of characteristics and genre" (178). He views the concerto as a secondary musical form, and places it on the same level as other "technical aspects of musical composition" (178). I find myself in agreement with Wolff here. While no one disputes the importance of Vivaldi's influence on Bach, it is well to remember that Bach was expressing his genius in other genres well before he came into contact with Vivaldi's concerti. Wolff suggests that it is fruitful to use Bach's transcriptions as a way of identifying "the foundations and principles of Vivaldi's art" (177). Comparing both the scores and the recordings of these works is of great value in helping one to understanding how Bach used his gifts in, what was to him, a new form.

Wolff provides evidence that "the Bach-Vivaldi relationship" is not so easily measured as some authors have suggested, but leaves the matter there (177). While Wolff does not actually say so, one gets the impression that he feels that Vivaldi's influence on Bach is somewhat overrated by other critics. It is safe to assume that had Bach never encountered Vivaldi's concerti, but only those of other Italian composers, his later works like the Brandenburg Concerti would still have been composed; he would still have mastered the genre and learned to write in a simpler melodic style. How much different the later works would have been is open to question. Bach was an avid learner as well as a remarkable genius. He transcribed Vivaldi's concerti in order to practice the principles of a new form, add it to his repertoire, and explore his remarkable genius through it.

Part 4: A Word about Baroque Vocal Ornamentation

In approaching the ornamentation and performance of a late baroque *da capo aria*, the singer must have 1) knowledge of the historical background behind the development of vocal ornamentation, 2) a knowledge of traditional harmony and the ornamentation typical of the late baroque, 3) an understanding of the text and its affectations, and 4) considerable technical skill in the art of *bel canto*.

In the early baroque period, singers were expected to embellish written music, ornamentation being used "as a means of conveying affectations" (Grout 392). Such embellishment originated as a contrapuntal device first in the sacred music of the early sixteenth century, but soon became an improvisatory device used by the secular vocalists of the opera (Celletti 3). One treatise by Giovanni Luca Conforto, written in 1593 and now published under the title The Joy of Ornamentation, concerns itself exclu-

sively with vocal ornamentation, and contains many instructional examples. Conforto makes it clear that the soloist must have a firm grasp of harmonic principles, and warns that ornamentation must be accompanied by erudition and good taste (Stevens 9–10).

From the middle of the sixteenth century, all vocal soloist were expected to be able "to negotiate, and even to invent, ornamentation of some complexity" (Brown, Sadie 234). Vocal and instrumental virtuosity developed side by side, and many instrumentalists, starting in the middle sixteenth century, explicitly stated that the "the human voice is... the model to be followed" in ornamentation (Celletti 3). Instruction books on ornamentation began to appear at this time, notably those of Luzzaschi, Caccini, and Puliaschi, and while these were primarily written for instrumentalists, they apply to the solo singer as well (Brown, Sadie 235). As the art of instrumental and vocal improvisatory embellishment developed, the one influenced the other (Celletti 5).

The art of *bel canto* arose from the technical skills developed by singers during the baroque period, and by the time of the late baroque, composers were writing expansive, flexible melodies which the singer could elaborate upon at will (Celletti 5). The *da capo aria* was an important form in which the singer could display his or her technical skill, although there were sometimes complaints that some singers over-embellished to a tasteless degree (Grout 466–467). In the ornamentation of a Handelian *da capo aria*, J.A.Hiller advised in *Anweisung zum musikalische-zierlichen Gesange* (published 1780), that it is proper to perform the first 'A' section as written, and the 'B' section with little, if any, alteration; the return of the 'A' section is where the singer may take more liberties (Dean, Knapp 29). Other commentators of the period are more liberal in their allowance of ornamentation, but all agree that whatever ornamentation is used, it must be in good taste and reflect the affectations of the text (Dean, Knapp 29). Ornaments typical of the late baroque were: *appoggiatura, cambiata,* division, *cadenza* or cadential flourishes, and trills.

The tenor *da capo aria* "*Waft her, angels, through the skies*" from Handel's last dramatic work, the oratorio *Jephtha*, provides the singer with ample opportunity for ornamentation. The same mood is maintained in both 'A' and 'B' sections of this aria with the simple text:

> *Waft her angels through the skies,*
> *Far above yon azure plain.*
> *Glorious there like you to rise,*
> *There like you forever reign.*

This text is sung by Jephtha after he has resigned himself that, in order to fulfill his tragic vow, he must offer up his daughter, Iphis, as a sacrifice to God. The affectation is hopeful: that the airy substance of Iphis's soul will be gently carried up to heaven by

the angels. But it is also plaintive, as is shown in Jephtha's appeal to the angels for help. The ornamentation must have a rising, wafting quality to it, yet also a touch of sorrow. It is appropriate to follow Hiller's advice as stated above, and ornament only the 'B' section and the return of the 'A' section.

Ornamentation for "*Waft her angels, through the skies*" may be approached in the following way: In the repeat of the A section of the aria, bars seven through ten, divisions should outline the wafting or fluttering of the airy soul as it ascends. Bar eleven should begin with an accented *appoggiatura* on the leading tone, in order to add a plaintive quality. The melody in bar 11 should further be divided, with a small flourish before the cadence in bar 12. At bar 13, Jephtha is calling on the angels for their gentle assistance. A *cambiata* is suggested on the word "Angels" in order to enhance Jephtha's plea. Bars 13 through 16 call for more division to emphasize the wafting of Iphis's soul to heaven, and a *cambiata* at the end of bar 14 and again at the end of bar 16 will remind us that this is a plea for help. A modest *cadenza* is suggested in bar 17; too elaborate a *cadenza* would not be in keeping with the mood of the piece. A standard trill should be used before the cadence in bar 18. For the 'B' section of the aria, little ornamentation is suggested: a brief flourish on the final note of bar 21, a few divisions in bars 22 and 23 to make the line less static, *appoggiatura* at the beginning of both bars 26 and 28, and a cadential flourish in bar 29.

Some remarks on what is required of the singer to perform "*Waft her angels through the skies*" and the suggested ornamentation are appropriate here. The *tessitura* of this piece is high, much of the piece being written between D4 and G4.[9] For most lyric tenors, the *primo passaggio*, or first registration point, occurs at or near D4 and the *secondo passaggio*, or second registration point occurs at or near G4 (Miller 11). The area between the *primo* and *secondo passaggio* comprises what vocalists call the *zona di passaggio* (Miller 3). Much of this aria is written in the *zona di passaggio*, and singing skillfully in this range is perhaps the greatest challenge in the art of *bel canto*. The singer will need to have mastered the *appoggio* technique of breath management to maintain the high *tessitura*, ensure sufficient vocal agility for the ornamentation, and facilitate a smooth transition between registration points (Miller 15–27). Vowel modification will be needed to maintain the unity of vocal timbre throughout the voice range (Miller 51–58). Beyond the technical considerations, the singer must be experienced enough and mature enough to convey the affectations of the piece convincingly.

Part 5: Bach and Handel: Two Diverse Baroque Styles

Bach and Handel are the two greatest names most commonly associated with the Late Baroque. Though their music is very different, the two share much in common. Both were born in the same part of Germany, both were famed for their improvisational abilities, both preferred playing the organ to any other instrument, and both went

blind later in life. They share the same year of birth (1685) and died within a decade of each other (Bach in 1750, Handel in 1759). Both were influenced by the Italian composers: Bach had transcribed several Italian concerti for keyboard, and Handel had spent the years 1706–1710 in Italy, where he "assimilated the musical language of the country" (Robbins-Landon 62). The concerto form, particularly as developed by Corelli and Torelli, and later Vivaldi, was to become an important form in the late baroque (Grout 386–401). It is of interest to identify elements associated with the late baroque in this Italian form as applied by both Bach and Handel. Further, we can compare the different styles of the two by looking at how they composed in this form. For these purposes, we shall look at excerpts from Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #2 in F major (BWV 1047) and Handel's Concerto #10 in D minor opus 6.

There are "certain musical ideas, typical of the late baroque" in the work of both Bach and Handel (Bukofzer 346). In the concerto of the late baroque, we see "the *concertato* principle; the texture of a firm bass and florid treble; musical organization based on the major-minor key system; and the building of a long work out of separate autonomous movements." (Grout 398).[10] While there is little modality, there is strong rhythmic movement, and a complete statement of the melodic material with cadence at the outset which is expanded, or "spun out" (*Fortspinnung* in German) by the use of sequences and modulations to related keys (Grout 387–390).

To summarize, then, in the late baroque concerto, we expect to find autonomous movements, vigorous rhythm (in fast movements), melodic material which is presented in whole at the outset, sequences and modulations which will be used to "spin out" the melodic material, *concertato* style, a firm bass with florid treble, and a marked major-minor tonal structure. These then, are the features to be found in both Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #2 in F major (BWV 1047) and Handel's Concerto #10 in D Minor (opus 6).

Bach's Concerto #2 (BWV 1047) is divided into three wholly independent movements: the first is in F major in simple duple (or cut) time and is untitled, the second is in the relative minor in 3/4 time marked *andante*, the third is in F major in 2/4 time marked *allegro assai*.[11] Looking at the first movement, we see that the rhythm is vigorous throughout, with sixteenth notes in one or more voices in every bar. The whole of the melodic pattern is set out in the first eight bars (*tutti*) and the following two *concertato* bars (*solo*). There are many areas in the piece where the melodic material is "spun out" by the use of modulations and sequences (bars 32–35 and bars 50–54, for example). We see the *concertato* style in many places, very strikingly, for example, between bars 60 and 68, where the solo instruments join one another at two bar intervals in fugue, which is then followed by a *tutti* section starting in bar 68. We often see florid treble over a firm bass, as in bars 14–28. But, this being Bach, we are not surprised to find that the bass is equally florid in many places against the treble, as in bars 31–35. There is a definite major-minor tonal structure to the piece. The sequences observe

the rules of traditional harmony. For example, the sequence which follows from bar 95 has a root movement which falls a fifth and rises a fourth: assuming the key center to be A minor, we have {i, iv, VII, III, VI, ii, V, i} (bars 95–99).

Handel's Opus 6 number 10 is divided into six movements, but they are not always wholly autonomous. For example, the overture (movement one) ends on a V chord to lead us directly to the Allegro (movement two). Focusing on the Allegro movement five, we can see the late baroque elements summarized above. The piece is rhythmically active, although there are places where it is not quite so, as in bars 28–31. The main melodic material is presented at the outset in the *concertino* violins in bars 1–8, and a second prominent melody is introduced in bars 9–12, starting with the 2nd concertino violin. New material is added in bars 28–31. The melody is extended by sequence, as can be seen in bars 56–59. *Concertato* style is noticeable throughout the piece. For example, a long section from bar 82–92 is played only by the *concertino* instruments. The orchestra joins them part by part starting in bar 93. The fast-moving treble instruments have a firm grounding over the bass throughout the piece, with little sixteenth note activity in the bass part. The piece has a tonal major-minor structure. For example, whenever the initial melody is stated, it is always in a closely related key, as it is in bar 44 with the relative major. Also, the sequences follow the patterns of traditional harmony, as does the one in bars 56–59, by falling a fourth and rising a second: If we take the key in bar 56 to be C major, sequence following to bar 59 would be: {I, V, vii, iii, IV, I, ii, vi}.

While both Bach and Handel used many of the same Baroque devices in their music, it remains to be said what the differences between these two composers are. Grout tells us that in Bach's music we hear "the opposed principles of harmony and counterpoint, melody and polyphony, [which] are maintained in a tense but satisfying equilibrium found in no other composer" (435). In contrast, "Handel's emphasis on melody and harmony, as compared to the more strictly contrapuntal style of Bach, links him with the more progressive elements of his time" (Grout 446). Bukofzer speaks of "the fundamental polarity between Bach and Handel" (345). Handel was more conventional than Bach in his approach to composition, and his works show uniformity (Bukofzer 346). In instrumental works, Handel employs simple melodies which lend themselves to improvisation, and keeps his counterpoint simple (Bukofzer 348). Bach, however, provides much counterpoint which "is designed essentially as the interplay of abstract lines" and melodies are therefore already much elaborated (Bukofzer 348). The texture of Bach's music is more polyphonic, and individual lines are worked in such a way as to limit improvisation (Bukofzer 348–349).

Thus, in Handel's music, we expect to see emphasis placed on a melody line which lends itself freely to improvisation, and not so much in the way of contrapuntal voices. In Bach's music, we expect to find much more in the way of contrapuntal voices and therefore a thickness of texture, and a melody which is elaborately tied to the counter-

point, allowing for less improvisation.

If we compare movement five from Handel's opus 6 #10 and movement one from Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #2, we can see the contrapuntal differences mentioned above. Compare a typical *tutti* section from Brandenburg #2 movement one (bars 32–35) with a typical *tutti* section from opus 6#10 (bars 65–69). In the Bach excerpt, the eight voices are playing independent yet contrapuntally inter-related parts. In the Handel, among the seven voices we have only three independent parts: the *concertino* 1st violin doubled by the *ripieno* 1st violins, the *concertino* 2nd violins doubled by the *ripieno* 2nd violins, and the *concertino* cello doubled by the basso continuo with the viola line filling out the harmony. Now compare two typical *concertato* sections, bars 60–68 of movement one from the Brandenburg Concerto #2 and bars 81–89 of opus 6 #10. In the Bach, we see that the individual lines are so elaborate and tightly woven together that little embellishment can be added. In the Handel excerpt, however, the lines are much simpler and open to embellishment.

Bukofzer, in his comparison of Handel and Bach, says that Handel "assimilated the various national style" and composed within the idiom of a given style, and that his concerti closely follow the model laid down by Corelli (348–349). Bach, however, adapted national styles in such a way that they became fused with his own personal style (Bukofzer 349). Generally, the whole of Handel's opus 6 does represents a style of writing in which simple melody can be much embellished, in which the supporting voices provide harmonic accompaniment with little use of counterpoint, and in which counterpoint, when used, is limited to two or three voices. In Bach's Brandenburg Concertos however, we see complex melodic writing and a frequent use of counterpoint in many voices; we seldom see a simple harmonic accompaniment. While one may enjoy the works of both composers, it is certainly Bach, with his complex contrapuntal textures, who demands more of the listener.

End Notes

1. I must point out here that the term *seconda prattica* was also used to mean solo instrumental pieces (Grout, Palisca 351). For the purposes of this paper, I intend for it to mean the style as employed vocally

2. *L'Incoronazione di Poppaea* was in fact Monteverdi's last opera, first performed in the year of his death, early 1643, and not, as some have stated, in 1642 (Carter 19).

3. Unless otherwise stated, I rely on my ear in the recorded version of *L'Orfeo* by John Elliot Gardener. In this recording, the lute family is well represented: three *chitarroni*, one *cetera*, and one *ceterone*. There is also a Baroque guitar. The *chitarrone* is distinctive in its low range, but in some cases, I may have mistaken one plucked or strummed instrument for another. When I am certain which instruments Monteverdi actually indicated in the score, I shall say so

4. Again, I rely here on my ear, not having seen what is actually indicated in the score. The recording is again the one by John Elliot Gardiner.

5. We are fortunate that Gardiner uses Anthony Rolfe Johnson for the role of Orpheus in his recording. I heard a heavy voiced baritone with little gift for coloratura attempt this piece in recital some years ago. It bored me to death.
6. Bukofzer refers to this pattern as a chaconne (63–64). My first impression was that it resembled a passacaglia, but Kennedy informs us that these two terms are practically interchangeable (123).
7. I rely here on my ear.
8. The discrepancy in bar numbers is accounted for by the fact that Bach drops a bar out earlier in the piece. Bar 80 in BWV 972 movement three counts as bar 81 in Vivaldi's original.
9. The U.S.A. standards for pitch designations are used here: middle c would be C4.
10. The *Concertato* principle refers to a style which emphasizes the contrast of one instrument against another, one group of instruments against another group, or solo instruments against the group (Grout 315–316).
11. The untitled first movement is reasonably fast in Leonhardt's recording: at 92: half-note and 184: quarter-note it is a *presto*.

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