

# Mu 101: Introduction to Music

Instructor: Dr. Alice Jones

Queensborough Community College

Fall 2019

Sections F2 (T 12:10-3), J4A (Th 3:10-6), M4 (6:10-9)



# Recap

- Musical meaning = ?
  - Musical sounds, a listener's experience/knowledge, how a listener listens, the person creating/performing
  - End write: practicing supporting your ideas with multiple distinct reasons
- Careers in music
  - Ethnomusicology
  - Arts administration
- Necessary roles for effective group work
- Concert going
- Opera
  - Aria vs. recitative
  - Henry Purcell (1659-95)



# The Baroque attitude

- Belief (and expectation that) music can express a wide range of emotions, not just accompany dancing or religious services
  - Word painting, affect, moving the listener's emotions

Key

Tempo

Rhythms

Melodic figures

The Residenz of the Prince-Bishop  
of Würzburg, built 1720-44

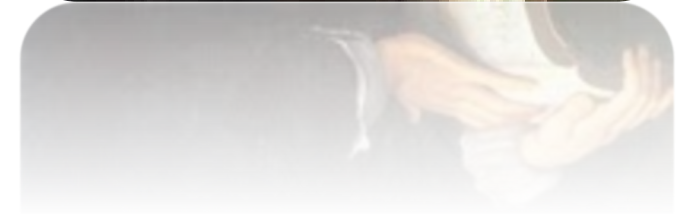


# Genre: The madrigal

- Secular vocal music (not religious)
- Entertainment for noblemen
- Composers try to depict the meaning of individual words, not just their overall mood
- Music imitates spoken language, sensations, and emotions – music as imitation of the real world

# Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

- Worked as a court musician in for the Gonzaga family in Mantua, Italy
- Well-known across Europe due to publishing of his works
- Moved up from performer (1590) to *maestro di cappella* (1601)
- *Maestro's* duties: teach voice lessons, conduct ensembles, compose music, play violin
- Composed his first opera in 1607: *Orfeo*



# Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

- Monteverdi composed secular music at the duke's court and sacred music at the cathedral
- 1613: became the *maestro di cappella* at St. Marks Cathedral in Venice
- Allowed to freelance and solicit patronage from the aristocracy of Venice



St. Marks Cathedral,  
Venice, Italy

# Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), “Sì, ch’io vorrei morire” (1603)

- Language: Italian
  - Translation: “Yes, I would like to die”
- Instrumentation: 5 voices (all male) *a cappella*
- Genre: madrigal
  - Madrigal – sophisticated vocal polyphony that seeks to mirror and intensify the imagery and emotional content of a poem
  - Word painting or madrigalism – translating the meaning of the words into musical sounds
- Music allows for multiple layers of communication simultaneously

Sí, ch'io vorrei morire,  
ch'io vorrei morire,  
ch'io vorrei morire.

"Sigh" figure

ora ch'io bacio, Amore,  
la bella bocca del mio amato core.

Ahi, cara e dolce lingua, (Datemi  
tant'umore)  
datemi tant'umore,  
che di dolcezz'in questo sen  
m'estingua!

Ahi, vita mia,  
a questo bianco seno,  
deh, stringetemi fin ch'io venga meno!  
a questo bianco seno,  
deh, stringetemi fin ch'io venga meno!  
a questo bianco seno,  
deh, stringetemi fin ch'io venga meno!  
(Ahi bocca, ahi baci, ahi lingua)

Ahi bocca, ahi baci, ahi lingua; torn' a  
dire:  
"Sí, ch'io vorrei morire!"

Yes, I would like to die,

Love, now that I kiss the beautiful lips  
of my beloved sweetheart.

Ah, dear, sweet tongue,  
Give me kisses so moist  
That I perish from their sweetness  
upon her breast!

Ah, my life,  
please crush me  
To your white bosom until I faint!

Ah, lips, ah, kisses, ah tongue, I say  
once more:  
"Yes, I would like to die!"

Homorhythm



Dissonance

Each voice  
echoes the  
previous  
(imitative  
polyphony)

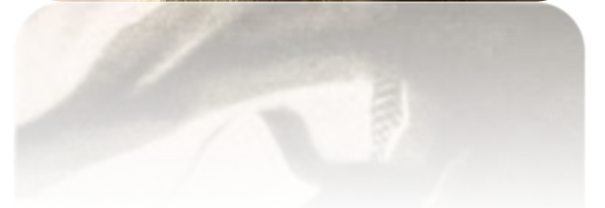
Palestrina-like  
smooth polyphony  
and imitation

Polyphony gives  
way to  
homorhythm



# The Artusi-Monteverdi controversy

- Divergence of secular and sacred styles
  - Sacred music – preference for more conservative sound (later composers imitate Palestrina)
  - Secular music – more experimental
- Giovanni Artusi (c. 1540-1613)
  - From Bologna, Italy
  - Conservative music theorist
- Dissonances are the “problem” in Monteverdi’s music



# The Artusi-Monteverdi controversy

- Monteverdi calls his style “the second practice” (*seconda pratica*) – it is different from the “first practice” of Palestrina
- Text is mistress of the music, not its servant
- Monteverdi justifies his musical decisions in the name of text expression and imitation of reality

This new style of music is best appreciated “by loftier spirits with a better understanding of true art [than by people like Artusi].”  
–Monteverdi’s brother, 1605



# Music criticism

- Each group will receive an example of music criticism
- What are the author(s) main ideas? (What do they like? What do they dislike?)
  - You may need to infer these based on what they *don't* say
- Turn your music criticism (or its general ideas) into a silent film that you can act out
  - One person in your group may narrate

# Music criticism

- Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), criticisms of his symphonies, 1810-1899
- Anne Shaw Faulkner, “Does jazz put the sin in syncopation?” (1921)
- Alex Ross, “Why do we hate modern classical music?” (2010)
- Damian Thompson, “There’s a good reason why there are no great female composers” (2015)
- Erica Jeal / Norman Lebrecht / Stephanie Eslake, reviews of Proms 2019

# Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III (1850)

1. What are your first impressions of this piece?
2. What does this piece seem to communicate or convey? What feelings does it instill in you (the listener)?

# Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III (1850)

What inimitable art did Beethoven employ in his “C-minor Symphony,” [No. 5], in order to steer his ship from the ocean of infinite yearning to the haven of fulfillment! He was able to raise the utterance of his music *almost* to a moral resolve, but not speak aloud that final world; and after every onset of the will, without a moral handhold, we feel tormented by the equal possibility of falling back again to suffering, as of being led to lasting victory. Nay, this falling-back must almost seem to us more “necessary” than the morally ungrounded triumph, which therefore—not being a necessary consummation, but a mere arbitrary gift of grace—has not the power to lift us up and yield to us that “ethical” satisfaction which we demand as outcome of the yearning of the heart...

# Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, (1865) Act III Liebestod [Love-death transfiguration]

- Idealizes death (a climactic, beautiful, romanticized event)
- Isolde hallucinates about Tristan
- The orchestra is equally important as the singer
- The voice is sometimes engulfed by the orchestra (just like Isolde is engulfed by her passion)



Leontyne Price (b. 1927), soprano

Shall I drink of them,  
plunge beneath them?  
Breathe my life away  
in sweet scents?  
In the heaving swell,  
in the resounding echoes,  
in the universal stream  
of the world-breath –  
to drown,  
to founder –  
unconscious –  
utmost rapture!

# Reactions to *Tristan und Isolde*

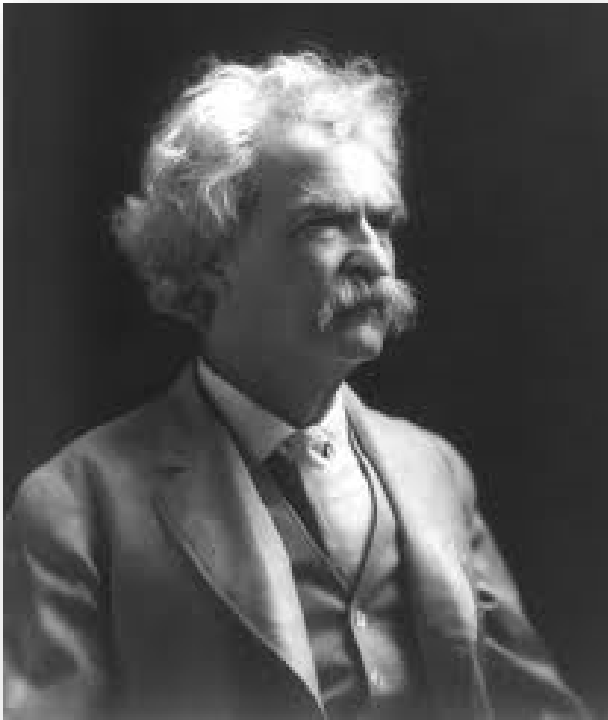


"So there I sat in the topmost gallery of the Berlin Opera House, and from the first sound of the cellos my heart contracted spasmodically... Never before has my soul been deluged with such floods of sound and passion, never had my heart been consumed by such yearning and sublime bliss... A new epoch had begun: Wagner was my god, and I wanted to become his prophet."  
–Bruno Walter, conductor 1889

"There was only Beethoven and Richard [Wagner] – and after them, nobody."  
–Gustav Mahler, composer (1904)



# Reactions to *Tristan und Isolde*



"I know of some, and have heard of many, who could not sleep after it, but cried the night away. I feel strongly out of place here. Sometimes I feel like the one sane person in the community of the mad." –Mark Twain, 1891

It was "the most repugnant thing I have ever seen or heard in all my life."  
–Clara Schumann



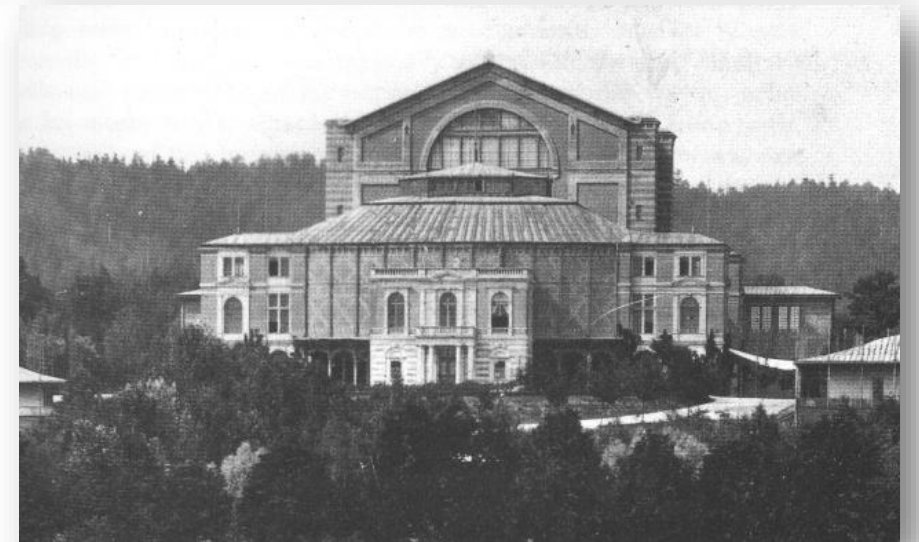
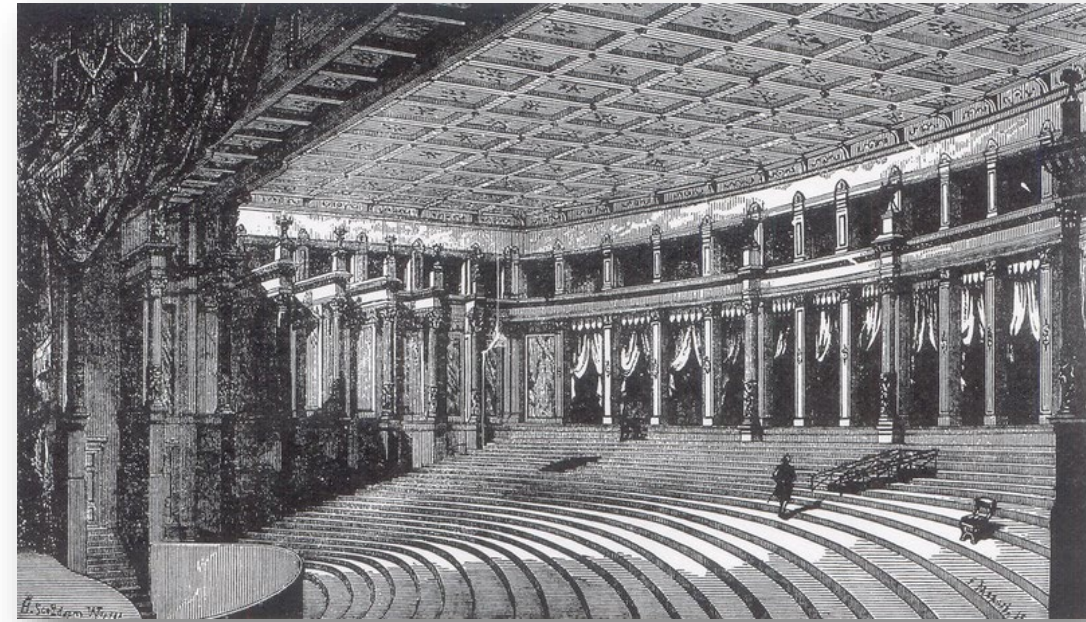
# Richard Wagner, Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act III (1850)

3. Who is another artist or musician that you think commands the same intensity of reaction, admiration, and influence that Wagner did in his time?
4. How do Wagner's ideas make you feel?
5. How would you feel if your favorite artist or musician made similar statements?
6. How is your listening experience different now compared with your first impressions of the piece?



# Wagner's influence

- Concert going: Bayreuth Festspielhaus
  - Stadium seating (no private boxes and the audience's attention is focused on the stage)
  - Lights are dimmed during performances
  - Sunken orchestra pit
- Every musician working in the West at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had to contend with the shadow of Wagner: imitate, follow, or reject



# Reminders

- Reading for next class is available online: 20<sup>th</sup> century, Impressionism, Expressionism
- Peer critique #2 ends Sunday, Nov 10
- Next week: Online discussion #10 (Sound migration), Nov 11-17
- Writing #7 (Music criticism) due T Nov 19 / Th Nov 14
- Optional midterm rewrite due T Nov 19 / Th Nov 14
- Writing Portfolio due T Dec 10 / Th Dec 12
  - Includes Concert Response Essay
  - Nov 20, 12:30pm – QCC faculty recital
  - Nov 24, 2pm – Dr. J. recital in Brooklyn



# End write

Is it necessary to know who a musician *is* (as a person) when you listen to their music?

Provide a specific example that shows why it is necessary.

Provide a specific example that shows why it is not necessary.