

Chapter V

CHAPTER-V

Baroque Music.

The term Baroque was originally used by historians of art to describe certain architectural and pictorial tendencies which developed at the end of the Renaissance. It evolved as a sort of theatricalism which displayed itself in the elaboration of design and proportions, effects of light and shade, and a sought-after impressiveness of size and setting. The dominant spirit behind this tendency, which originated in Italy, to spread to other parts of Europe, was the Catholic Counter-Reformation, which sought to oppose the Protestant movement and recover the lost provinces by conquering the world with an impressive, emotional and all-powerful church. The spirit of this movement found adequate expression in all the arts that were connected with the church; thus music showed the same tendencies that are manifest in the architecture and painting of that period, which extended from the latter half of the sixteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth. In music it is characterized by a sudden break with polyphony, (which, however, was later re-introduced) and by the use of new dynamic and dramatic forms, such as the opera, cantata and various categories of instrumental music.

In the first stages of the movement, opera was an expression of the classic aspirations of the late Renaissance men of letters.¹ Initially it was an attempt to bring together the arts of music and drama as they were supposed to have existed in the Age of Pericles. The immediate result was artificial and bloodless. However, it was soon enlivened by the inclusion of the madrigal, and the festival and religious plays. This time it emerged as the true product of the Baroque. It was popular not only as a feature of court life, but also as a feature in the life of the ordinary Italian people, whose enthusiasm was later shared by much of the rest of Europe. Opera influenced the entire future course of music, exploiting the dramatic elements in the madrigal, the poignant choruses of the Venetian composers, the natural aptitude of the Italians for expressive singing, and all the resources of opulent theatrical art and fondness for display of the Baroque. It provided in the symmetrical aria, and so-called da

capo aria, the design which was to serve as a basis for practically all subsequent music, both vocal and instrumental; and in the overture and other purely instrumental portions it created independent instrumental types and forms which were to become important influences on the classical symphony.

The Oratorio, The Passion, and the Mass, under the influence of the opera, were filled with a dramatic spirit, and a splendour of effect that made them impressive and grand. No one can listen to such a work as Bach's B Minor Mass or Handel's Messiah, without sensing the magnificent sweep of the Baroque style. There is nothing in the literature of Music, not even the great symphonies of Beethoven or the great epic dramas of Wagner which excels it in grandeur of conception or richness of sound.²

With the spread of opera, instrumental music too, was greatly extended and expanded. A purely instrumental style suitable to the artistic capabilities of the various instruments was evolved. The making of instruments reached a new level of perfection with the violins of such craftsmen as Stradivari and Guaneri, and the violin family with its enhanced emotional quality of tone displaced the viols. The Harpsichord and Clavichord, now at the height of their perfection, the one with a wide variety of colour effects, the other with sensitive and expressive dynamics, achieved the popularity formerly accorded to the lute. The organ became more flexible, and adopted modern notation, inspiring such great composers as J.S. Bach. Initially the orchestra, which was indispensable to the opera, was an assorted collection of instruments, which varied with the fancy of the composer, but in the later Baroque operas, it was permanently established as a group of wind instruments in combination with the standard string ensemble of violins, violas, cellos and basses.

In the field of organ music the compositions of the Italian and German masters of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries are the backbone of the period. The great fugues of Bach, his exquisite choral preludes, the organ concertos of Handel, the various short compositions of the Italian and French organists are the chief products of the period.

Another important instrument of the period is the harpsichord. Violin music, too, of such Baroque composers as Corelli, Vivaldi, and other Italians has always been admired by string players, who consider the music of this period unexcelled in its feeling for the nature of the instrument.

In its own time Baroque music was naturally greatly admired and was patronised by the nobility, which had definitely supplanted the church as the chief patron of the arts. All the various European courts employed groups of musicians, whose performances were the important features of the social life of the time. In Italy and France opera became a brilliant spectacle, staged with the most spectacular effects. Singers were greatly in demand, and moved from opera-house to opera-house, exercising a great authority over the public and over the music that they so graciously consented to sing.

Church music reflected the popular trend of the period. Even the most modest churches had proficient choirs and orchestras for elaborate musical services that often lasted for many hours. In the Roman Catholic Church the influence of the popular operative style made itself felt in the increasingly dramatic quality of the music. The new and important instrumental accompaniment to the Mass was evolved. Operatic elements such as aria, aria and recitative, also found their way into Protestant church music. Meanwhile, the Lutheran Reformation developed a new popular style of church music based upon the chorale, a simple hymn with the text in the vernacular, which was well adapted to congregational singing. In German music the fusion of the contrapuntal elements with the dramatic-operatic, coming from the Italian Catholic Baroque, reached its final synthesis in the works of J.S.Bach.

The principal vocal forms of the Baroque were the opera and the oratorio, similar to the opera in its plan, but more contemplative in nature; it was set to a religious text and generally presented without scenery of costumes; the cantata, is a shorter chorale work, resembling the oratorio but based upon the story of the New Testament and the Mass.

The instrumental forms were the Fugue, an extension of the transcribed

motet and *ricercar*; the sonata da chiesa (church sonata), a composition for two or three instruments in several movements; the concerto grosso, an ensemble piece of several movements; and the solo concerto, an outgrowth of the latter. The opera sinfonia, or the overture, also belongs to this group for these were often performed as independent pieces. Short pieces in free style, such as the fantasias and the cantatas were sometimes connected with the fugues, but often appeared separately. The passacaglia, a composition constructed upon a fixed bass pattern, was very popular, especially for the organ.

The Baroque style is very different in effect from the familiar designs of the Classic and Romantic periods. To begin with there is the matter of harmony. The Baroque composer is interested in modulation chiefly because of the direction which it gave to the music. Almost all the forms are based upon a succession of planned tonalities, beginning generally from the starting key to that of its nearest neighbour and then returning to the original. (In the case of the major, tonic to dominant; in minor, tonic to the relative major.) Other modulations are made in the same deliberate manner, not to impress but to extend the length of the composition. There is hardly any incidental modulation.

Baroque music is seldom concerned with contrasting themes, but with a singleness of purpose, and generally only one idea goes ahead with an inevitable forward movement. It is this insistent progress which provides its interest and excitement for the crescendo the device of gradual increase from piano to forte, upon which the Classic and Romantic composers depend so much for their dramatic climaxes.

Baroque melodies also have a style of their own. The melodies are inclined towards longer periods and more elaborate organizations. They are often ornamented and embellished with trills and shakes, especially in melodies intended for the harpsichord, where they serve to emphasize the accents of the rhythm. Sometimes there appears to be no melody at all, but merely a pattern of rhythmic figuration which will continue throughout an entire piece with little contrasting motion. Except in the fugue, the concentrated motive so characteristic of the later symphony is seldom employed. The treatment of

the central subject of the fugue is quite different from that of the motive of the symphony. There is no development except the occasional modulation of the subject by the devices of augmentation, diminution and inversion, or the piling up of the subject upon itself in "stretto". The essence of the fugue is its repetition of a short pattern in the various strands as they are woven together. Its unity comes from the subject, its forward motion and flow of thought come not from development but from its logic of key succession.

Baroque music is only incidentally chromatic and seldom employs keys of many flats and sharps. The tempered scale of equal semitones as opposed to the old "natural scale" had been accepted but, although Bach made more extensive use of it in the forty-eight preludes and fugues in almost every key, major and minor, his method was not generally followed by others.³

The fugue is the extension of the transcribed motet of the Renaissance via the *ricercar*. The form of the beginning remains the same, that is, there is a melodic passage which each voice entering separately, states. The subject of the fugue contains the essence of the music. It establishes not only the rhythmic and tonal patterns but also sets the mood of the entire composition. In Bach's fugues we have an encyclopedia of musical imagination. Although he was brilliant in his ability to manipulate his ideas, it is in the ideas themselves that his genius shows its intense force. Few other composers could enrich a short melodic pattern with so much significance. When the subject itself is wanting in all the elements necessary to the piece, it is supplemented by a counter subject which is usually stated in combination with the answer, and the subject is transposed to the dominant. In cases where the subject is adequate, the counter subject is replaced by free counterpoint. The fugue subject may be augmented, diminished, or inverted. It may be combined in stretto, but it remains essentially the same, and its frequent repetition in one voice or another established a pattern of great unity that was totally different from the dramatic progressive flow of the symphony. The impelling values of the fugue, as in the case of all Baroque music, are an alternation of piano and forte without gradation between them. The entrances of voices, or the manipulation of the rhythm, may sometimes give the effect of a crescendo, but this is in reality a building

up of texture, not the increase of dynamics. When one listens to a great fugue of Bach's there is often a feeling of growing excitement, caused by the persistent repetition of rhythms which beat upon our emotions with an effect similar to the ostinato figures of primitive music-When one gets used to the polyphonic style so that its ever-changing patterns cease to be a confusion and present a clear picture, the fugue is a source of intense musical enjoyment. The two greatest writers of the fugue are J.S. Bach and D. Scarlatti.

A succession of dances of contrasting rhythm, but all in the same key and in the same binary design, formed the basis of the Baroque instrumental suite. When these were written for the solo instrument and continuo they were called sonatas (da camera); for an ensemble of strings or wind instruments, suites; and were written for the harpsichord. The different dances used were derivations of old dances, but by the eighteenth century most of them had lost their dance-like qualities and were standard instrumental forms, consisting of rhythmic patterns of considerable complexity.⁴

The first three movements of the suite usually are the allemande, a serious allegory in duple time; the courante, a rapid movement in triple rhythm; and the sarabande, a slow expressive melody in triple rhythm. The last movement is generally a gigue, a quick dance pattern usually in six-eight time. In between the sarabande and the gigue two or three pieces are usually inserted, of a less sophisticated character, such as the Minuet, Gavotte, Bouree, Rigaudon, Loure, Polonaise and Air. This kind of composition was extremely popular in France. Couperin wrote a number of pieces in suite form with programmatic titles. Rameau, another French composer, wrote a number of harpsichord suites. The best and most popular compositions of this style, however, are the French suites, English suites and partitas of J.S. Bach.

Another popular Baroque form is the sonata. The sonata of this period should not be regarded as a primitive ancestor of the classic sonata but as a highly perfected type of composition of entirely different design. One of the reasons for the great success of this type of composition was the popularity of the violin and the skill of the composers. But sonatas were also written for

flute, oboe, viola da gamba, and other instruments.⁵ There was a variable element in the sonata of the period, the accompaniment usually provided by an instrument of the harpsichord type. Only the bass voice was written out by the composer, and the performer, guided by figures written over the notes, was expected to fill in suitable harmonies. The accompaniment was known as basso continuo or figured bass, and it will be easily understood that skill in the realisation of this part varied with different performers. These were the solo sonatas for violin or other instruments. The violin sonatas by such composers as Corelli, Vivaldi, Tartini, Geminiani, Locatelli, Veracini, Porpora, Vivaldi, and Handel are of this type. Bach, in addition to sonatas for violin and continuo, wrote six for the harpsichord and violin, three for harpsichord and cello and three for harpsichord and flute, in which the keyboard part was written out.

Corelli established the form of the Baroque sonata as a four-movement work. It begins with a slow movement, is followed by an allegro in fugal style and a melodious andante in homophonic style, and is concluded by a rapid movement in triple rhythm. This type of sonata was known as the church sonata (sonata da chiesa) because of its serious nature and because it was frequently performed during church services. In contrast to this were the chamber sonata (sonata da camera) and the instrumental suite. A characteristic type of Baroque sonata, is the trio sonata. This was written for three instruments, usually two violins and cello or gamba. The number of players performing such a composition, was at least four; the harpsichordist played the continuo from the figured bass part and other players could join the ensemble by doubling any of the parts.

In general the sonatas of the Italian composers are more tuneful and less polyphonic than those of the Germans, although Handel's style in instrumental music greatly resembles that of the Italian masters. Italian genius, which appears so brilliant in the Baroque violin compositions, later concentrated exclusively on the opera, while German and Austrian instrumental composers, developed the models of their southern contemporaries, and combined the dramatic quality of the opera with the instrumental pattern and dominated the symphonic music.⁶

The sonatas for harpsichords of Domenico Scarlatti constitute a unique category among the various forms of the Baroque sonata. Since the majority of these sonatas are complete in one organic movement, sometimes even anticipating the design later to be found in the classic sonata, it is evident that Scarlatti was using the term "sonata" (Italian sonare; to sound) in its true connotation, to distinguish pieces of instrumental music from cantatas (Italian cantare; to sing), pieces composed for vocal performance. The free usage of musical terminology of the time is demonstrated in the title of the only book of music which Scarlatti published. The pieces of this collection Esercizii per gravicembalo (Studies for Harpsichord) are separately entitled 'sonata'. Though each composition is complete in itself, it was not unusual for later publishers and editors to arrange these sonatas into suites and to add descriptive titles, like Pastoral Cortege and the lovers' passionate and sentimental emotions were associated with some of the sonatas.

The importance of these pieces in the evolution of keyboard music, and, in fact, in all instrumental music, can hardly be exaggerated. They discard the old polyphonic style of the period, and forecast the new homophonic style. From a totally technical point of view the sonatas are equally significant. Scarlatti's long and brilliant career as a harpsichordist provided him with an intimate understanding of the technical resources of the instrument and its virtuoso potentialities. Among the technical devices associated with Scarlatti, are rapid repetition of tone, crossing of hands, double notes, wide skips and arpeggios. The sonatas are short, and usually follow a basic pattern of binary form. Several musical ideas, concise and epigrammatic, are stated in the first section. The piece consists of repetitions of this material with variation in a series of tonalities returning to the home key. There is little development of thematic material and repetition of short rhythmic and melodic motifs is frequent.

During the latter half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries, the most popular form of instrumental ensemble was the concerto grosso. This is a composition in several movements in which two tone masses are introduced. One of these is called the Tutti or concerto.⁷ This is generally a four - part string choir for violins, violas, cellos and basses. The violins are divided into two groups; the violas take the part beneath the second violin, while cellos

and basses playing together, furnish the fourth part. The bass part is supported by a keyboard instrument, usually the harpsichord, which also provides suitable harmonies. These are not written out but are supposed to be improvised by the performer, who is guided by numeral symbols over each note indicating the proper chord. The bass portion is called *continuo* or *figured bass*. All Baroque instrumental music written for ensemble, whether concerto, sonata, suite or accompaniment to choral music, contains this feature. Often, in choral music, the organ is substituted for the harpsichord. It is only in the time of Haydn that it ceases to be a necessary part of ensemble music.

The second tone mass is a group of solo instruments usually three, called *solo* or *concertino*. Generally this consists of solo strings, winds or a combination of both. The essence of the concerto is the antiphonal relationship. Although the concertino are given more elaborate parts as a rule, the purpose of the music is not so much virtuoso displays, as developed in the classic concerto, as a contrast of single voices of individual colour with the more impersonal and full-bodied tones of the tutti.

The number of movements of the concerto grosso varies as do their design and tonality. Polyphonic movements of a rapid tempo generally alternate with expressive homophonic melodies. The most characteristic form is that in which the tutti states a refrain in a succession of keys, and the concertino elaborates features of its melodic design or occupies itself with solo subjects in the transitional passages. In all its forms, orderly progression from one key to one or several others and return is the guiding principle of the music.

The Italian masters, Corelli and Vivaldi and the Germans, Handel and Bach, are the great exponents of the concerto grosso.

The solo concerto as found in the works of Vivaldi, Bach and Handel retains the rule-of-competing melodies which is the chief feature of the concerto grosso, but because the concertino is here confined to a single solo instrument, there is a greater degree of virtuosity.⁸

The chorale is the German equivalent of the familiar English Protestant hymn.⁹ It was included in the church service by Martin Luther (1485-1546) with the express purpose of establishing a music suitable for the congregation to sing. The Lutheran Reformation stressed democratic principles of worship, the worshipper himself was to participate in the service as much as possible. Instead of just listening to the celebrant and the choir, who spoke and sang in Latin, he was able to take a more active part because the service was conducted in German and the music was of a sort to be sung by the layman rather than by the professional.

The words of the chorale were adaptations of old hymns or were written by contemporary poets. The music was composed by church composers. Sacred and secular popular songs were also pressed into service. In the chorale, therefore, German music was subjected to a genuine popular strain, characterised by a simple melody that was arranged in regular phrases. This music was never sentimental. It is strong and masculine and even when it is expressive it never loses its devout, somewhat austere, religious feeling. For Bach the chorale was a source of rich inspiration. Almost all the chorales which were used in the service were arranged by him in four-part harmonization for singing by the congregation. He also used them in his cantatas and Passions and organized them as short organ pieces which are known as "chorale preludes".

The chorale prelude originated as an improvisation by the organist upon the hymn which the congregation was to sing. Later it developed into several distinct types of composition. One of these, is a polyphonic piece with characteristic fugal entrances based on each phrase of the chorale. Another is an ornamental elaboration of the chorale melody in the rich Baroque style. Another type is a fantasia, developing freely some of the elements of the melody. Perhaps the most appealing type is the one found most often in Bach in which the chorale appears without alteration in the top voice and the accompaniment is a poetic interpretation of the mood of the poem.

The term Oratorio has a number of meanings, but the most familiar interpretation is that of the choral composition on a religious subject for soloists,

chorus and orchestra, generally performed without costumes and scenery. The opera and oratorio originated at about the same time and at the same place—in Italy, in the early seventeenth century. Many of the composers of the period wrote both operas and oratorios, and indeed for a while the difference between them was slight except in subject matter. Both used the recitative for passages, and included solo arias, duets and choruses of formal design for purely musical purposes. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, however, the opera and the oratorios became separate entities.

The most spectacular flourishing of the concert oratorio developed in England in the career of the German-born composer, George Frederick Handel, a composer of opera in the Italian style, became not only the dominant influence in opera in the first half of the eighteenth century, but an impresario as well. He composed oratorios as a device to keep his opera singers and opera house in London busy during the Lenten season, when the public was inclined to forego the worldly joys which opera represented. It was discovered that religious subjects, presented without scenery and costumes, constituted no breach of the public conscience, and the oratorios were enormously successful.

It is ironic that though Handel was a great composer of operas, his oratorios have eclipsed his operas today. This is not because of the operatic music, but because many of the operatic conventions of Handel's time perished with the age and are not acceptable to modern audiences. During the eighteenth century singer worship was at its height and operas were instruments for the popular stars. The male soprano and alto were much in fashion and choruses were frequent and rather perfunctory. In the oratorio, although the various types of arias are found, the choruses are more important and the subject matter, not designed for theatrical representation, is less perishable. The greatest oratorio ever written is Handel's The Messiah. Handel is the most important composer of oratorios in the entire Baroque period. His oratorios have an "earthy" quality less worshipful than similar works of Schütz and Bach. He wrote some of the most imposing choruses. In most of the oratorios, biblical history and decorous love interest are to be found. A strong operatic influence on Handel's oratorios is to be found in his use of three acts instead of the

conventional two acts. Other oratorios by Handel are Althalia, Semele, Samson, Israel, and Egypt, Belshazzar, Judas Maccabeus and Solomon.

The origin of Passion Music dates back to the fourth century, when during Easter week the story of the Passion and death of Jesus, according to the New Testament, was recited in church. Presentation of the story of Easter according to the Gospels of Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John has a long history, going back into the early Christian era.¹¹ From about 300 A.D. to 1000 A.D. it was common practice in the church to have the Gospels of the Evangelists recited during Holy Week. In the twelfth century the Passion story was presented as a sort of play in which the part of Christ was sung in a low register by a priest, the part of the Evangelist or narrator was sung in the middle register by another priest and the part of the crowd (turba) was sung in the high register by still another priest. Most of this was done in the psalmodic style, except for the words of Christ, "Eli Eli, lama a sabathani", which were given a more expressive melody. As the art of music developed the style of presentation changed. In the Renaissance period composers set the passion "a capella". Moreover, the Renaissance composers began using polyphonic settings of the story, at first setting only the exclamations of the turba. One of the earliest of these was a setting of the St. Matthew Gospel by A. Longueval in the late fifteenth century. Polyphonic Passions were composed by most of the sixteenth century masters, including Palestrina. In the seventeenth century, Heinrich Schütz, the most important German composer of the early Baroque, established a pattern of Motet Passion which was influenced by the Italian opera. The Bible text was used throughout. The narrative was sung by a solo voice, the Evangelist, in recitative style, and the various characters of the drama appear in recitative passages. Four-part choruses are used to represent groups such as disciples, the high priests and the crowd on the street. Many of the effects are extremely dramatic. After Schütz, there appeared a new type of Passion Oratorio, in which the Bible text was supplemented and later even supplanted by rhymed verses of contemporary poets.

Although the bulk of Bach's choral work is made up of oratorios, ranging from short solo compositions to extended choral works approximating the oratorio in scope and design, he is supposed to have written four passion

oratorios. But only two have been discovered - the Passion according to St. John, written in 1723 and Passion according to St. Matthew, written in 1729. Bach uses a verse text, selecting portions of poems by Brockes and Pleander, but collaborated on both libretti and restored the Biblical text for the narrative parts. In these Passion oratorios Bach's choral style as exemplified in the cantatas is enhanced by the dramatic implications of the Biblical narrative.

By far the most popular and perhaps the most characteristic form of music of the Baroque period was the opera. The city and the palace set within its gardens and parks are magnificent testimony to the desire of the Baroque to cast nature in man's image and exhibit the power of the human spirit. Even more remarkable are the grand scenes that were put on the stage in the form of an entirely new art form - the drama di musica or the opera.¹² Claude Monteverdi (1567-1643) wrote magnificent Baroque operas. Among these are Orfeo, (1609), The Rape of Proserpina (1630), The Return of Ulysses (1641), The Marriage of Aeneas, (1641) and The Coronation of Poppea (1642). These operas of Monteverdi were all composed in the spirit and unity and power of deep emotion and stately ritual in which the Baroque glorified. Here music and literature, painting and sculpture were all united to produce magnificent compositions. While the music was subordinated to the words, at the same time a constant effort was made to express restrained emotions in a strictly nonsentimental fashion. If Lope de Vega and Calderón were bothered because their language was overshadowed by the musical accompaniment of interwoven songs and dances, of choral pieces and the like, these various elements were worked into a comprehensive whole by the unity of Monteverdi. Most of these operas were written for festive occasions. They were performed in the open and they can be considered as the culmination of that life of Baroque man, which is at once dignified and playful, enhanced by illusion and full-life reaching out to the infinite in an ecstatic sense of man's power and at the same time full of a sense of cosmic unity and of the passing of time. Monteverdi may be said to belong to the Venetian school of opera. He took up the innovations of the Florentines and developed them adding his own genius of dramatic expression. Monteverdi had what might be called a dual style : he retained the old contrapuntal styles of which he was the master throughout his life. He wrote many madrigals. He also became a master of the new homophonic, dramatic

style. His specific innovations in the instrumental field are the violin tremolo and the string pizzicato. His operas are radical and expressive.

Naples was the first of the Italian cities to develop opera, late in the seventeenth century. The Neapolitan school developed a sense of musical form rather than dramatic truth. The principal form of the school is the Da capo aria which follows a simple ternary plan. The melodic style of the Neapolitan school is characterized by vocal embellishments, florid writing and coloratura, much of which was improvised by the singer. In addition to the ornamental melodic style, virtuosity was of great importance to the Neapolitans. Along with the love for virtuosity was the popularity of the Castrati (male altos and sopranos). They were the stars of the day and their vocal pyrotechniques were of more interest to the public than the opera itself. The Neapolitans made little use of the chorus.¹³

Francesco Provenzale is considered to be the founder of the Neapolitan school. The greatest figure is Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) whose principal operas are La Rosalina (1690), Teodora (1693) and Griselda (1721). In addition to operas Scarlatti wrote some six hundred cantatas, a hundred and fifty oratorios and a great quantity of church music.

Italian opera spread to France and flourished there before the native French opera appeared.¹⁴ The French paid more attention to the words, the drama and the dancing than did the Italians. The French opera was dominated by the influence of the classical tragedy of Corneille and Racine. The high quality of poetry and the greater importance of drama are characteristic features of French opera. It made use of the short airs than extended and elaborate arias. They also introduced dances like the chaconnes, bourees, minuet and gavottes. In the seventeenth century there was much use of fantastic stage machinery. In general the French made greater use of the instrumental music in their operas. Five-part string orchestration characterizes the instrumental music of the French Baroque opera.

French opera under Lully developed a special overture. The first movement is in a slow stately style, and is, specially characterized by the use of dotted rhythms. The second movement is fast, lively and fugal. The third

movement, which was not always used, returns to the pattern of the first movement.

Court dances with costumes and scenery with singing or spoken dialogue were common in Burgundian and French courts. The earliest extant music for ballet is that of the Ballet comique de la reine (1581).¹⁵ The highest development of ballet was reached in the Baroque period in the Versailles court of Louis XIV. One of the most important court ballets was the Ballet de nuit (1653) by Lully. Later Lully and Molière collaborated to create the "comédie-ballet"-a combination of play and ballet. Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (1670) is perhaps the most famous of these. Later Lully introduced ballets in his operas and called these productions "tragedies" or "opera ballets". Armide and Cadmus et Hermione are examples of this type of opera.

The first opera in the French language was called Pastorale written by Abbe Pierre Perrin (librettist) and Robert Cambert (composer) in 1659. Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) is the most significant composer of French opera in the seventeenth century. His librettist was Phillipe Quinault. Jean Phillippe Rameau (1683-1764) carried on the great tradition of ballet and opera that was founded by Lully.

During the Baroque period there was little indigenous opera in Germany. This was partly because of the great impact of Italian opera, but in part also because of the Thirty Years' War. Apart from an early opera by Heinrich Schütz Dapne (1627) nearly all operatic activity in Germany consisted of Italian opera performed by Italian companies. Even the German composers were quite happy to write in the Italian style. They also used Italian texts. Some of the composers are Fux, Husse, and later Gluck and Mozart. The principal cities in Germany where opera flourished were Vienna, Munich and Dresden. In Hamburg the first German opera was produced. An opera house opened in 1678 with John Theile's Adam and Eva. The most significant names connected with Hamburg are Georg Philip Telemann (1681-1767) and Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739).

Similarly there was very little real English opera in the Baroque period. The first genuine opera in English is John Blow's Venus and Adonis. The only great figure in English opera is Henry Purcell who wrote Dido and Aeneas.

In the second half of the eighteenth century there arose in England a type of comic opera known as "ballad opera". These were parodies of the mannerism of Italian grand operas. They were composed by setting words to already existing popular tunes or folk songs. The heroic characters of grand opera were substituted by beggars, pickpockets, thieves and prostitutes. The best example of this type is Thomas Gay's The Beggar's Opera in 1728.

Early in the eighteenth century a new type of opera called "comic opera" began to appear in various forms in Europe and England. Comic opera in general differs from serious opera in several respects. It uses light, frivolous and often humorous subjects; commonplace characters replace the exalted personages of serious opera. Its chief characteristic is light, popular melody instead of heavy dramatic arias. Above all the comic opera is a parody; a parody of character. It employs frivolous tunes set to words of a well-known serious aria.

Comic opera in Italy was called "opera buffa". Its origin was in the comic "Intermezzi" used between acts of serious opera. Its popularity as entertainment increased throughout the century. It contains full chorus finales, popular tunes, lively action and witty dialogue. An example of "opera buffa" is la Serva padrona by Perfolesi (1733). Other composers of "buffa" opera are Logroscino Paisiello, Cimarosa, Galuppi and Mozart.

In France comic opera originated in the early eighteenth century as a farce, or parody of the serious opera. Short satirical poems sung to already existing popular airs called "vaudevilles" were commonly employed. Poets of the early parody opera in France are Le Sage and Favart. Composers of the opera-comique are Doni, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Monsigny and Gretry.

The term "singspiel", (drama with music) was first used for serious and comic opera alike. Later it came to designate comic opera. Singspiel began as an offshoot of the English Ballad opera. Coffey's ballad opera The Devil to Pay was translated into German and set to music in about 1750. Principal developments of Singspiel took place in the second half of the century. The most important composers are Johann Adam Hiller and Mozart.

In addition to Italian opera, which flourished in England as it did on the continent, there were certain types of dramatic productions that tended to take the place of opera. The "masque" is a dramatic form of entertainment produced for the nobility, based on an allegorical or mythological subject, and consisting of poetry, vocal and instrumental music, scenery, stage machinery, costumes and dancing. Famous literary names connected with the writing of masques are John Milton and Ben Jonson. Henry Lawes wrote the music for Milton's Comus. Other composers of masques are John Blow, Matthew Locke, William Lawes and Henry Purcell. Acis and Galatea is a famous masque by Handel.

English composers were fond of writing music to go with already existing plays. "Incidental music" was composed as background or atmosphere music used during the action of a play. Examples of incidental music are Purcell's The Fairy Queen and King Arthur. "Entr'acte music" was composed for performance between the scenes and acts of a play some of these are Matthew Locke's Instrumental Musick used in The Tempest, and Henry Purcell's Dioclesian and Collection of Ayres composed for the Theatre.

The music of many composers is significant for the musical thought of the succeeding century. Composers laboured hard to solve the problems presented by improved instruments, by the conception of tonality and by the obvious advantages of combining the monodic and polyphonic styles. Their music, played in churches, at the courts, in opera houses, and in the chambers of noblemen and wealthy patricians, was one of the great achievements of the Baroque period. The characteristic forms of western European civilization were rapidly coming into being, and the artists as well as the soldiers, statesmen and businessmen contributed their share to the process of development that was to make the Baroque culture in Europe.

Carl Friedrich remarks. "As one beholds the vast array of wonderful creations in literature, the arts and music that constitute the high Baroque, one is tempted to proclaim it the high-water mark of European creative effort. Surely it was one of the most productive periods in all these fields. The sense of limitless power, checked by an overwhelming sense of cosmic relationships produced a style which startles by contrasts, yet exhibits a singular and unique unity."

CHAPTER V

NOTES

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