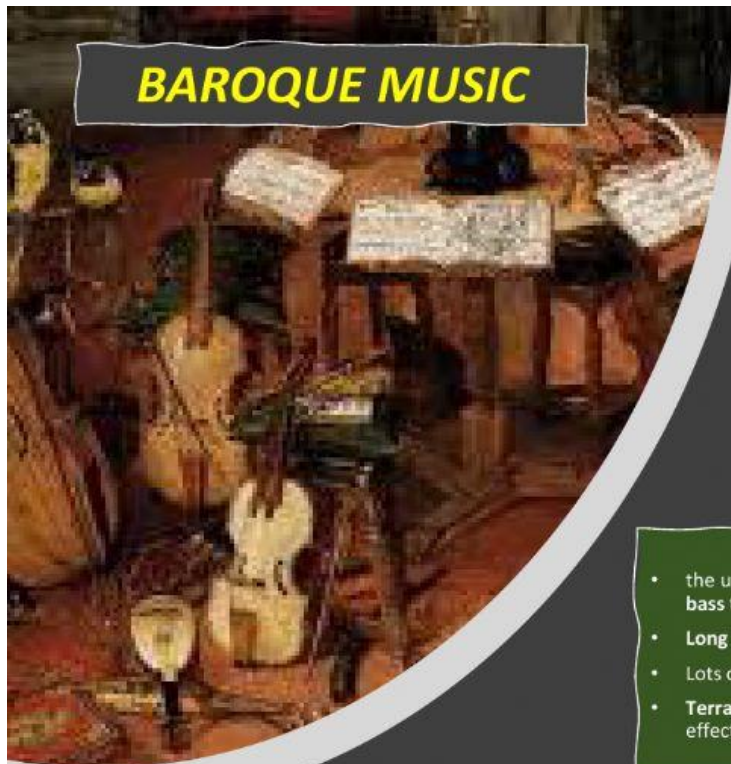


BAROQUE MUSIC



The *continuo* (or *basso continuo*) part was usually played on the **harpsichord** or **organ**. The instruments were used in the harmonies and for holding the ensemble together. The bassline was often played by the cello or bassoon.

The Baroque orchestra was relatively small (a small orchestra is known as a chamber orchestra). The orchestra was still evolving during the Baroque period. At first there were no set instruments, but as the 17th century progressed, the orchestra began to take shape.

Baroque orchestra instruments usually included:

- Mainly strings - violins, violas, cellos and double basses (*replaced the viols*)
- woodwind - recorders or wooden flutes, oboes and bassoon
- brass - sometimes trumpets and/or horns (without valves)
- timpani
- Basso continuo - harpsichord or organ

Musical characteristics of Baroque music

- the use of **harpsichord basso continuo** provides foundation, providing a **strong, purposeful bass** that causes the music to press forward throughout.
- **Long flowing melodic lines** often using **ornamentation** (*decorative notes such as trills and turns*)
- Lots of **polyphonic textures** contrasting with homophonic passages
- **Terraced dynamics** - sudden changes in the volume level, sometimes creating an echo effect. Contrast between loud and soft created by **contrasting solo and ensemble**

Main forms/ structure

Binary (AB)

Ternary (ABA - including *da capo* aria)

Variations on ground bass

Fugue

Main styles of music

Vocal

Opera, Oratorio

Recitative, Aria, Choruses

Instrumental

Solo concerto, Concerto grosso

Overture, Dance Suite, Trio sonata, Fugue

Watch the following video of Purcell's 'Music for a While'

Write down anything you notice about this piece in the grid below

MELODY/HARMONY	
RHYTHM/TEMPO	
TIMBRE/ STYLE	
TEXTURE/ STRUCTURE	