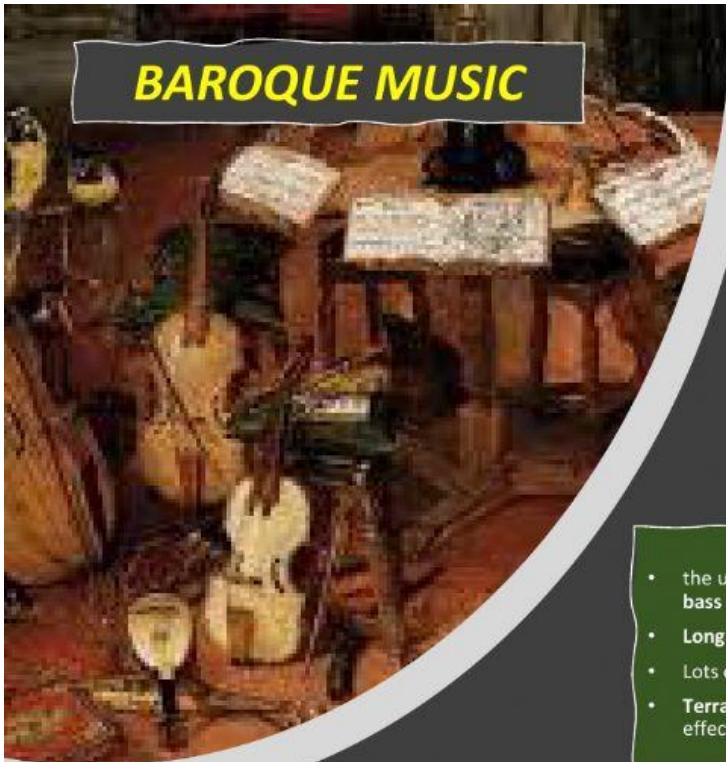


# BAROQUE MUSIC



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

<b>Vocal</b> Opera, Oratorio Recitative, Aria, Choruses	<b>Instrumental</b> Solo concerto, Concerto grosso Overture, Dance Suite, Trio sonata, Fugue
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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	