Academic Institution

Colonial Music analysis

Purpose Statement

By

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**Introduction**

The early 17th century was the beginning of the colonial era in the United States. During this period, the music of every genre emerged in the country. In this context, it ranged from local spiritual music to African Banjos. The music in the United States has been diverse like its overall population[[1]](#footnote-1). In the colonial period, religion had a significant influence on the people, and that is the reason why they preferred music with a religious theme. The rhythm has been the focal point in the music of America in that phase. Also, those who first colonized the United States brought diversity in music. In this respect, the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century witnessed the popularity of Baroque and Classical music.

**Baroque Music**

Generally, music historians used the term baroque to explain a wide range of classes from a broad geographic region in Europe and America. Baroque was composed for more than 150 years, i.e. from 1600 to 1750 and made an impression on the hearts and minds of people[[2]](#footnote-2). At first, it was thought that the term Baroque was specific to architecture, but it appeared in the context of music in a satirical analysis of the premier in *Hippolyte et Aricie* of Rameau in the year 1733, which was printed in France in 1734. The overall period of Baroque is categorized into three major stages: early, mid, and late. However, their time periods overlap, they are traditionally dated from 1580-1630, 1630-1680, and 1680-1730. In this paper, the history of Baroque music is analyzed with respect to its time periods.

Early Baroque (1580-1630)

A group named Florentine Camerata was comprised of different musicians, intellectuals, poets, and humanists during the latter part of Renaissance Florence gathered under the supervision of Count Giovanni de’ Bardi to share and guide various styles in music, drama, and art. In this regard, their ideas were based on the theme of Classical (particularly ancient Greek) music drama that underlined speech and discourse. Furthermore, they ignored their contemporaries’ style of instrumental and polyphony music and described the ancient Greek musical instruments as monody, which was based on the idea of solo singing alongside kithara[[3]](#footnote-3). The early ideas that included Jacopo, L’Euridice, and Peri’s Dafne set the foundation of opera, which served as the facilitator of overall Baroque music.

In regards to music theory, the prevalent use of figured bass also called thorough bass signifies harmony as the basic underpinning of polyphony. Harmony is the outcome of counterpoint while figured bass is a visual aspect of harmonies, generally used in musical performances. In addition, the composers started associating themselves with the overall progress of harmony, and also utilized the Triton, which was considered as an unbalanced interval to make dissonance. Meanwhile, certain composers invested in harmony during the Renaissance. Harmony led to the tone, instead of modality, the overall pattern shifted from the Renaissance into the Baroque era[[4]](#footnote-4). Furthermore, it referred to the concept that chords, instead of notes, could give a feeling of closure, which is among the basic ideas, and was called tonality.

Moreover, by introducing the new segments of composing, Claudio Monteverdi advanced the transition from the Renaissance theme of music to that of the Baroque phase. Also, he developed two separate trends of music: Renaissance’s heritage of polyphony (prima practica), and the fresh basso continuo method of the Baroque (seconda practica). Alongside texts of the operas *L’incoronazione di Poppea* and *L’Orfeo* among others, Monteverdi managed to bring considerable attention towards the new genres of Opera.

Middle Baroque Music (1630-1680) Jean-Baptiste Lully

The mid-Baroque period is described by the rise of oratorio, cantata, and opera in the decade of 1630s. This theme was one of the most significant contributions towards the refinement of Baroque as well as the Classical pattern. Meanwhile, it was created by a new idea of melody and the harmony that raised the standard of the music to one of the equivalences of the words that formerly had been renowned.

Furthermore, The Florid, coloratura monody of the initial Baroque paved way to straight forward, and the more sophisticated musical theme, particularly in ternary rhythm. In this context, these melodies were developed from short and defined ideas on the basis of stylish dance techniques inspired by the courante or sarabande[[5]](#footnote-5). In addition, harmonies were more straightforward compared to that initial Baroque monody. The complimentary bass lines were more aligned with the melody, yielding a contrapuntal equivalence of the components that gave way to the new proper instrument of the variation of aria and recitative. In this respect, the most significant innovators of this theme were the Romans Giacorno and Luigi Rossi, and predominantly they were the composers of oratorio and cantata respectively. However, the notable practitioners of this theme include Alessandro, Giovanni Legrenzi, and Antonio Cesti.

Moreover, the middle Baroque had absolutely no compliance with the theoretical work of Johann Fux, who regularized the rigid counterpoint feature of the initial ages in his *Gradus ad Parnassu*s, 1725. Subsequently, one leading example of a court style musician is Jean-Baptiste Lully. He managed to buy patents to become the solitary composer of operas, and his idea was to stop others from entering operas staged. Also, he was the one who accomplished 15-lyric misfortunes and left unaccomplished *Achille et Polyxène.*

Late Baroque Music (1680–1730)

During the late Baroque, George Frideric Handel and George Frederic Handel were the major composers of this style of music[[6]](#footnote-6). Also, the instruments like Violin, Viol, Viola, and others took effect. The music became much more instrumental due to the strings and the development of keyboards.

There are several types of music such as the Opera, the Dance Suite, and the Cholera. The next half of the 18th century and the subsequent period mainly belonged to classical music.

**Classical Music (1750 to 1820)**

Classical period was the time when people began to participate in different musical styles. The involvement of people in large numbers led to live concerts and stage performances. The general public started paying for shows, which provided composers with the luxury to write what they wanted as long it inspired masses. The focus was shifted from the elite class, and composers adopted a public-oriented approach for music. The foundation of Classical music was the balance[[7]](#footnote-7). The extravagant, and heavy ornate theme were the hallmarks in the Baroque phase, but they were no longer the specialty in the Classical period. Also, compositions did not employ flowery names such as "The Four Seasons." Furthermore, the compositions had more substantive titles, for example, "Piano Concerto No. 9”.

The music of that particular time comprised symphonies, sonatas, rondos, and minutes. Harmony had polyphonic items, although imitative polyphony had no longer been favorable. Harmony was mostly a melody of single line alongside the use of chords that hints the end of the musical phrase. The breakthrough in the innovation of the instrument came when pianoforte was invented, which actually means "soft-loud[[8]](#footnote-8)." However, prior keyboard tools were not pressure sensitive such as the sound generated by harpsichord had the same effect irrespective of the tickle of ivories by someone. The overall theme and style of the classical period were considered much more dynamic and soft as compared to earlier phases. Finally, classical music has a clearer, softer, lighter, and much simpler texture with more contrast and variety than Baroque music.

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