
Main Characteristics Of Baroque Music

Baroque music

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Ten things you may not know about Wikipedia ,Jump to: navigation, searchHistory of European art music Early Medieval (500 , 1400) Renaissance (1400 , 1600) Common practice Baroque (1600 , 1760) Classical (1730 , 1820) Romantic (1815 , 1910) Modern and contemporary 20th century classical (1900 , 2000) Contemporary classical (1975 , present) Baroque music describes an era and a set of styles of European classical music which were in widespread use between approximately 1600 and 1750.[1] This era is said to begin in music after the Renaissance and was followed by the Classical music era. The original meaning of "baroque" is "irregular pearl", a strikingly fitting characterization of the architecture of this period; later, the name came to be applied also to its music. Baroque music forms a major portion of the classical music canon, being widely studied, performed, and listened to. It is associated with composers such as Claudio Monteverdi, Antonio Vivaldi, George Frideric Handel, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

The baroque period saw the development of diatonic tonality. During the period composers and performers used more elaborate musical ornamentation; made changes in musical notation, and developed new instrumental playing techniques. Baroque music expanded the size, range and complexity of instrumental performance, and also established opera as a musical genre. Many musical terms and concepts from this era are still in use today.

History of the NameMusic conventionally described as Baroque encompasses a broad range of styles from a wide geographic region, mostly in Europe, composed during a period of approximately 150 years. The application of the term "baroque", which literally means "irregularly shaped pearl", to this period is a relatively recent development, first used by Curt Sachs in 1919, and only acquiring currency in English in the 1940s. Indeed, as late as 1960 there was still considerable dispute in academic circles whether it was meaningful to lump together music as diverse as that of Jacopo Peri, Domenico Scarlatti and J.S. Bach with a single term; yet the term has become widely used and accepted for this broad range of music. It may be helpful to distinguish it from both the preceding (Renaissance) and following (Classical) periods of musical history.

A small number of musicologists argue that it should be split into Baroque and Mannerist periods to conform to the divisions that are sometimes applied in the visual arts.[edit] Styles and forms[edit] The baroque suite[edit] AllemandeOften the first movement of an instrumental suite, the allemande was a very popular dance that had its origins in the Renaissance era, when it was more often called the almain. The allemande was played at a moderate tempo and could start on any beat of the bar. In some suites it could be preceded by a prelude or an overture.[edit] CouranteThe courante is a lively French dance in triple meter.

The Italian version is called the corrente.[edit] SarabandeThis is one of the slowest of the baroque dances with a speed of about 40 to 66 beats per minute. It is also in triple meter and can start on any beat of the bar, although there is an emphasis on the second beat, creating the characteristic 'halting', or iambic rhythm of the sarabande.[edit] GigueThe gigue is an upbeat

and lively baroque dance in compound meter, typically the concluding movement of an instrumental suite. The gigue can start on any beat of the bar and is easily recognized by its rhythmic feel. The gigue is said to have originated in England, its counterpart in folk music being the jig. These four dance types make up the majority of 17th century suites; later suites interpolate additional movements, sometimes termed intermezzi or gallantries, between the sarabande and gigue: [edit] Gavotte The gavotte can be identified by a variety of features; it is in 4/4 time and always starts on the third beat of the bar, although this may sound like the first beat in some cases, as the first and third beats are the strong beats in duple time. The gavotte is played at a moderate tempo, although in some cases it may be played faster. [edit] Bour The bour is similar to the gavotte as it is in 2/2 time although it starts on the second half of the last beat of the bar, creating a different feel to the dance. The bour is commonly played at a moderate tempo, although for some composers, such as Handel, it can be taken at a much faster tempo. [edit]

Minuet The minuet is perhaps the best known of the baroque dances in triple meter. It can start on any beat of the bar. The speed of the minuet is normally moderate, although this may vary. In some suites there may be a Minuet I and II, played in succession, with the Minuet I repeated. [edit] Passepied The passepied is a fast dance in binary form and triple meter that originated in Brittany. Examples can be found in later suites such as those of Bach and Handel. [edit] Rigaudon The rigaudon is a lively French dance in duple meter, similar to the bour, but rhythmically simpler. It may have originated in Provence. [edit] Baroque versus Renaissance style Baroque instruments including hurdy gurdy, harpsichord, bass viol, lute, violin, and baroque guitar. Baroque music shares with Renaissance music a heavy use of polyphony and counterpoint. However, its use of these techniques differs from Renaissance music. In the Renaissance, harmony is more the result of consonances incidental to the smooth flow of polyphony, while in the early Baroque era the order of these consonances becomes important, for they begin to be felt as chords in a hierarchical, functional tonal scheme.

Around 1600 there is considerable blurring of this definition: for example essentially tonal progressions around cadential points in madrigals are noted, while in early monody the feeling of tonality is still rather tenuous. Another distinction between Renaissance and Baroque practice in harmony is the frequency of chord root motion by third in the earlier period, while motion of fourths or fifths predominates later (which partially defines functional tonality). In addition, baroque music uses longer lines and stronger rhythms: the initial line is extended, either alone or accompanied only by the basso continuo, until the theme reappears in another voice. In this later approach to counterpoint, the harmony was more often defined either by the basso continuo, or tacitly by the notes of the theme itself. These stylistic differences mark the transition from the *ricercars*, *fantasias*, and *canzonas* of the Renaissance to the *fugue*, a defining baroque form.

Claudio Monteverdi called this newer, looser style the *seconda pratica*, contrasting it with the *prima pratica* that characterized the motets and other sacred choral pieces of high Renaissance masters like Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. Monteverdi used both styles; he wrote his *Mass In illo tempore* in the older, Palestrinan style, and his 1610 *Vespers* in the new style. There are other, more general differences between baroque and Renaissance style. Baroque music often strives for a greater level of emotional intensity than Renaissance music, and a Baroque piece often uniformly depicts a single particular emotion (exultation, grief, piety, and so forth). Baroque music was more often written for virtuoso singers and instrumentalists and is music, although idiomatic instrumental writing was one of the most important innovations of the period. Baroque

music employs a great deal of ornamentation, which was often improvised by the performer. Expressive performance methods such as notes ingales were common and were expected to be applied by performers, often with considerable latitude.

Instruments came to play a greater part in baroque music, and a cappella vocal music receded in importance.[edit] Baroque versus Classical styleIn the Classical era, which followed the Baroque, the role of counterpoint was diminished (albeit repeatedly rediscovered and reintroduced), and replaced by a homophonic texture. The role of ornamentation lessened. Works tended towards a more articulated internal structure, especially those written in sonata form. Modulation (changing of keys) became a structural and dramatic element, so that a work could be heard as a kind of dramatic journey through a sequence of musical keys, outward and back from the tonic. Baroque music also modulates frequently, but the modulation has less structural importance. Works in the classical style often depict widely varying emotions within a single movement, whereas baroque works tend toward a single, vividly portrayed feeling.

Classical works usually reach a kind of dramatic climax and then resolve it; baroque works retain a fairly constant level of dramatic energy to the very last note. Many forms of the Baroque served as the point of departure for the creation of the sonata form, by creating a "floor plan" for the placement of important cadences. In Baroque music, articulation was emphasized more than dynamics. Dynamics were still important, but baroque-era keyboards (harpsichords and organs) were incapable of producing the full range of dynamics possible in later eras. Thus, articulation given more importance.[edit] Other featuresbasso continuo - a kind of continuous accompaniment notated with a new music notation system, figured bass, usually for a sustaining bass instrument and a keyboard instrument monody - music for one melodic voice with accompaniment, characteristic of the early 17th century, especially in Italy homophony - music with one melodic voice and rhythmically similar accompaniment (this and monody are contrasted with the typical Renaissance texture, polyphony) text over music - intelligible text with instrumental accompaniment not overpowering the voice vocal soloists dramatic musical expression dramatic musical forms like opera, dramma per musica combined instrumental-vocal forms, such as the oratorio and cantata new instrumental techniques, like tremolo and pizzicato clear and linear melody notes ingales, a technique of applying dotted rhythms to evenly written notes the aria the ritornello aria (repeated short instrumental interruptions of vocal passages) the concertato style (contrast in sound between orchestra and solo-instruments or small groups of instruments) precise instrumental scoring (in the Renaissance, exact instrumentation for ensemble playing was rarely indicated) idiomatic instrumental writing: better use of the unique properties of each type of musical instrument virtuosic instrumental and vocal writing, with appreciation for virtuosity as such ornamentation development to modern Western tonality (major and minor scales) cadenza- an extended virtuosic section for the soloist usually near the end of a movement of a concerto. [edit] GenresBaroque composers wrote in many different musical genres.

Opera, invented in the late Renaissance, became an important musical form during the Baroque, with the operas of Alessandro Scarlatti, Handel, and others. The oratorio achieved its peak in the work of Bach and Handel; opera and oratorio often used very similar music forms, such as a widespread use of the da capo aria.In other religious music, the Mass and motet receded slightly in importance, but the cantata flourished in the work of Bach and other Protestant composers. Virtuoso organ music also flourished, with toccatas, fugues, and other works.Instrumental sonatas and dance suites were written for individual instruments, for chamber groups, and for (small) orchestra. The concerto emerged, both in its form for a single

soloist plus orchestra and as the concerto grosso, in which a small group of soloists is contrasted with the full ensemble.

The French overture, with its contrasting slow and fast sections, added grandeur to the many courts at which it was performed. Keyboard works were sometimes written largely for the pleasure and instruction of the performer. These included a series of works by the mature Bach that are widely considered to be the intellectual culmination of the Baroque era: the Well-Tempered Clavier, the Goldberg Variations, and The Art of Fugue. [edit] Vocal Opera Zarzuela Opera seria Opera comique Opera-ballet Masque Oratorio Passion (music) Cantata Mass (music) Anthem Monody Chorale [edit] Instrumental Concerto grosso Fugue Suite Allemande Courante Sarabande Gigue Gavotte Menuet Sonata Sonata da camera Sonata da chiesa Trio sonata Partita Canzona Sinfonia Fantasia Ricercar Toccata Prelude Chaconne Passacaglia Chorale prelude [edit] History Composers of the Baroque [edit] Early baroque music (1600,1654)

The conventional dividing line for the Baroque from the Renaissance begins in Italy, with the Florentine Camerata, a group of academics who met informally in Florence in the palace of Count Giovanni de' Bardi to discuss arts, as well as the sciences. Concerning music, their ideals were based on their perception of ancient Greek musical drama, in which the declamation of the text was of utmost importance. As such, they rejected the complex polyphony of the late renaissance and desired a form of musical drama which consisted primarily of a simple solo melody, with a basic accompaniment. The early realizations of these ideas, including Jacopo Peri's *Dafne* and *L'Euridice*, marked the beginning of opera. Musically, the adoption of the figured bass represents a larger change in musical thinking, namely that harmony, that is "taking all of the parts together" was as important as the linear part of polyphony. Increasingly, polyphony and harmony were seen as two sides of the same idea, with harmonic progressions entering the notion of composing, as well as the use of the tritone as a dissonance.

Harmonic thinking had existed among particular composers in the previous era, notably Carlo Gesualdo; however the Renaissance is felt to give way to the Baroque at the point where it becomes the common vocabulary. Some historians of music point to the introduction of the seventh chord without preparation as being the key break with the past. This created the idea that chords, rather than notes, created the sense of closure, which is one of the fundamental ideas of what came to be known as tonality. Italy formed one of the cornerstones of the new style, as the papacy, besieged by Reformation but with coffers fattened by the immense revenues flowing in from Hapsburg conquest, searched for artistic means to promote faith in the Roman Catholic Church. One of the most important musical centers was Venice, which had both secular and sacred patronage available. Giovanni Gabrieli became one of the important transitional figures to come out of the drive to revive Catholicism against the growing doctrinal, artistic and social challenge mounted by Protestantism. His work is largely considered to be in the "High Renaissance" style.

However, his innovations came to be considered foundational to the new style. Among these are instrumentation (labeling instruments specifically for specific tasks) and the use of dynamics. The demands of religion were also to make the text of sacred works clearer, and hence there was pressure to move away from the densely layered polyphony of the Renaissance, to lines which put the words front and center, or had a more limited range of imitation. This created the demand for a more intricate weaving of the vocal line against backdrop, or homophony. Claudio Monteverdi became the most visible of a generation of

composers who felt that there was a secular means to this "modern" approach to harmony and text, and in 1607 his opera *Orfeo* became the landmark which demonstrated the array of effects and techniques that were associated with this new school, called *seconda pratica*, to distinguish it from the older style or *prima pratica*.

Monteverdi was a master of both, producing precisely styled madrigals that extended the forms of Marenzio and Giaches de Wert. But it is his pieces in the new style which became the most influential. These included features which are recognizable even to the end of the baroque period, including use of idiomatic writing, virtuoso flourishes, and the use of new techniques. This musical language proved to be international, as Heinrich Schz, a German composer who studied in Venice under both Gabrieli and later Monteverdi, used it to the liturgical needs of the Elector of Saxony and served as the choir master in Dresden. Middle baroque music (1654,1707)The rise of the centralized court is one of the economic and political features of what is often labeled the Age of Absolutism, personified by Louis XIV of France. The style of palace, and the court system of manners and arts which he fostered, became the model for the rest of Europe.

The realities of rising church and state patronage created the demand for organized public music, as the increasing availability of instruments created the demand for chamber music. This included the availability of keyboard instruments. The middle Baroque is separated from the early Baroque by the coming of systematic thinking to the new style and a gradual institutionalization of the forms and norms, particularly in opera. As with literature, the printing press and trade created an expanded international audience for works and greater cross-pollination between national centers of musical activity. The middle Baroque, in music theory, is identified by the increasingly harmonic focus of musical practice and the creation of formal systems of teaching. Music was an art, and it came to be seen as one that should be taught in an orderly manner. This culminated in the later work of Fux in systematizing counterpoint.

One preeminent example of a court style composer is Jean-Baptiste Lully. His career rose dramatically when he collaborated with Moliere on a series of comedie-ballets, that is, plays with dancing. He used this success to become the sole composer of operas for the king, using not just innovative musical ideas such as the tragedie lyrique, but patents from the king which prevented others from having operas staged. Lully's instinct for providing the material that his monarch desired has been pointed out by almost every biographer, including his rapid shift to church music when the mood at court became more devout. His 13 completed lyric tragedies are based on libretti that focus on the conflicts between the public and private life of the monarch. Musically, he explored contrast between stately and fully orchestrated sections, and simple recitatives and airs. In no small part, it was his skill in assembling and practicing musicians into an orchestra which was essential to his success and influence. Observers noted the precision and intonation, this in an age where there was no standard for tuning instruments.

One essential element was the increased focus on the inner voices of the harmony and the relationship to the soloist. He also established the string-dominated norm for orchestras. Arcangelo Corelli is remembered as influential for his achievements on the other side of musical technique, as a violinist who organized violin technique and pedagogy, and in purely instrumental music, particularly his advocacy and development of the concerto grosso. Whereas Lully was ensconced at court, Corelli was one of the first composers to publish widely and have his music performed all over Europe. As with Lully's stylization and organization of the opera, the concerto grosso is built on strong contrasts, sections alternate between those played by the

full orchestra, and those played by a smaller group.

Dynamics were "terraced", that is with a sharp transition from loud to soft and back again. Fast sections and slow sections were juxtaposed against each other. Numbered among his students is Antonio Vivaldi, who later composed hundreds of works based on the principles in Corelli's trio sonatas and concerti. In England the middle Baroque produced a cometary genius in Henry Purcell, who despite dying at age 36, produced a profusion of music and was widely recognized in his lifetime. He was familiar with the innovations of Corelli and other Italian style composers; however, his patrons were different, and his musical output was prodigious. Rather than being a painstaking craftsman, Purcell was a fluid composer who was able to shift from simple anthems and useful music such as marches, to grandly scored vocal music and music for the stage. His catalog runs to over 800 works. He was also one of the first great keyboard composers, whose work still has influence and presence. In contrast to these composers, Dieterich Buxtehude was not a creature of court but instead was an organist and entrepreneurial presenter of music. Rather than publishing, he relied on performance for his income, and rather than royal patronage, he shuttled between vocal settings for sacred music, and organ music that he performed. His output is not as fabulous or diverse, because he was not constantly being called upon for music to meet an occasion.

Buxtehude's employment of contrast was between the free, often improvisatory sections, and more strict sections worked out contrapuntally. This procedure would be highly influential on later composers such as Bach, who took the contrast between free and strict to greater limits. [edit] Late baroque music (1680,1750) The dividing line between middle and late Baroque is a matter of some debate. Dates for the beginning of "late" baroque style range from 1680 to 1720. In no small part this is because there was not one synchronized transition; different national styles experienced changes at different rates and at different times.

Italy is generally regarded as the first country to move to the late baroque style. The important dividing line in most histories of baroque music is the full absorption of tonality as a structuring principle of music. This was particularly evident in the wake of theoretical work by Jean-Philippe Rameau, who replaced Lully as the important French opera composer. At the same time, through the work of Johann Fux, the Renaissance style of polyphony was made the basis for the study of counterpoint. The combination of modal counterpoint with tonal logic of cadences created the sense that there were two styles of composition, the homophonic dominated by vertical considerations and the polyphonic dominated by imitation and contrapuntal considerations. The forms which had begun to be established in the previous era flourished and were given wider range of diversity; concerto, suite, sonata, concerto grosso, oratorio, opera and ballet all saw a proliferation of national styles and structures. The overall form of pieces was generally simple, with repeated binary forms (AABB), simple three part forms (ABC), and rondeau forms being common. These schematics in turn influenced later composers.

Antonio Vivaldi is a figure who was forgotten in concert music making for much of the 19th century, only to be revived in the 20th century. Born in Venice in 1678, he began as an ordained priest of the Catholic church but ceased to say Mass by 1703. Around the same time he was appointed maestro di violino at a Venetian girls' orphanage with which he had a professional relationship until nearly the end of his life. Vivaldi's reputation came not from having an orchestra or court appointment, but from his published works, including trio sonatas, violin sonatas and concerti. They were published in Amsterdam and circulated widely through Europe. It is in these instrumental genres of baroque sonata and baroque concerto, which were still

evolving, that Vivaldi's most important contributions were made. He settled on certain patterns, such as a fast-slow-fast three-movement plan for works, and the use of ritornello in the fast movements, and explored the possibilities in hundreds of works, 550 concerti alone. He also used programmatic titles for works, such as his famous "The Four Seasons". Vivaldi's career reflects a growing possibility for a composer to be able to support himself by his publications, tour to promote his own works, and have an independent existence. Domenico Scarlatti was one of the leading keyboard virtuosi of his day, who took the road of being a royal court musician, first in Portugal and then, starting in 1733, in Madrid, Spain, where he spent the rest of his life. His father, Alessandro Scarlatti, was a member of the Neapolitan School of opera and has been credited with being among its most skilled members.

Domenico also wrote operas and church music, but it is the publication of his keyboard works, which spread more widely after his death, which have secured him a lasting place of reputation. Many of these works were written for his own playing but others for his royal patrons. As with his father, his fortunes were closely tied to his ability to secure, and keep, royal favour. But perhaps the most famous composer to be associated with royal patronage was George Frideric Handel, who was born in Germany, studied for three years in Italy, and went to London in 1711, which was his base of operations for a long and profitable career that included independently produced operas and commissions for nobility. He was constantly searching for successful commercial formulas, in opera, and then in oratorios in English. A continuous worker, Handel borrowed from others and often recycled his own material. He was also known for reworking pieces such as the famous Messiah, which premiered in 1741, for available singers and musicians. Even as his economic circumstances rose and fell with his productions, his reputation, based on published keyboard works, ceremonial music, constant stagings of operas and oratorios and concerti grossi, grew exponentially. By the time of his death, he was regarded as the leading composer in Europe and was studied by later classical-era musicians. Handel, because of his very public ambitions, rested a great deal of his output on melodic resource combined with a rich performance tradition of improvisation and counterpoint.

The practice of ornamentation in the Baroque style was at a very high level of development under his direction. He travelled all over Europe to engage singers and learn the music of other composers, and thus he had among the widest acquaintance of other styles of any composer. Johann Sebastian Bach has, over time, come to be seen as the towering figure of Baroque music, with what Bela Bartok described as "a religion" surrounding him. During the baroque period, he was better known as a teacher, administrator and performer than composer, being less famous than either Handel or Georg Philipp Telemann. Born in Eisenach in 1685 to a musical family, he received an extensive early education and was considered to have an excellent boy soprano voice. He held a variety of posts as an organist, rapidly gaining in fame for his virtuosity and ability.

In 1723 he settled at the post which he was associated with for virtually the rest of his life: cantor and director of music for Leipzig. His varied experience meant that he became the leader of music, both secular and sacred, for the town, teacher of its musicians and leading figure. Bach's musical innovations plumbed the depths and the outer limits of the Baroque homophonic and polyphonic forms. He was a virtual catalog of every contrapuntal device possible and every acceptable means of creating webs of harmony with the chorale. As a result, his works in the form of the fugue coupled with preludes and toccatas for organ, and the baroque concerto forms, have become fundamental in both performance and theoretical technique. Virtually every instrument and ensemble of the age, except for the theatre genres, is represented copiously in

his output.

Bach's teachings became prominent in the classical and romantic eras as composers rediscovered the harmonic and melodic subtleties of his works. Georg Philipp Telemann was the most famous instrumental composer of his time, and massively prolific, even by the standards of an age where composers had to produce large volumes of music. His two most important positions, director of music in Frankfurt in 1712 and in 1721 director of music of the Johanneum in Hamburg, required him to compose vocal and instrumental music for secular and sacred contexts. He composed two complete cantata cycles for Sunday services, as well as sacred oratorios. Telemann also founded a periodical that published new music, much of it by Telemann. This dissemination of music made him a composer with an international audience, as evidenced by his successful trip to Paris in 1731. Some of his finest works were in the 1750s and 1760s, when the Baroque style was being replaced by simpler styles but were popular at the time and afterwards. Among these late works are "Der Tod Jesu" ("The death of Jesus") 1755, "Die Donner-Ode" ("The Ode of Thunder") 1756, "Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu" ("The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus") 1760 and "Der Tag des Gerichts" ("The Day of Judgement") 1762[edit] Influence on later music[edit] Transition to the Classical era (1740,1780)The phase between the late Baroque and the early Classical era, with its broad mixture of competing ideas and attempts to unify the different demands of taste, economics and "worldview", goes by many names. It is sometimes called "Galant", "Rococo", or "pre-Classical", or at other times, "early Classical".

It is a period where composers still working in the Baroque style were still successful, if sometimes thought of as being more of the past than the present, Bach, Handel and Telemann all composed well beyond the point at which the homophonic style is clearly in the ascendant. Musical culture was caught at a crossroads: the masters of the older style had the technique, but the public hungered for the new. This is one of the reasons Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was held in such high regard: he understood the older forms quite well and knew how to present them in new garb, with an enhanced variety of form; he went far in overhauling the older forms from the Baroque.

The practice of the baroque era was the standard against which new composition was measured, and there came to be a division between sacred works, which held more closely to the Baroque style from secular or "profane" works, which were in the new style. Especially in the Catholic countries of central Europe, the baroque style continued to be represented in sacred music through the end of the eighteenth century, in much the way that the stile antico of the Renaissance continued to live in the sacred music of the early 17th century. The masses and oratorios of Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, while Classical in their orchestration and ornamentation, have many Baroque features in their underlying contrapuntal and harmonic structure. The decline of the baroque saw various attempts to mix old and new techniques, and many composers who continued to hew to the older forms well into the 1780s. Many cities in Germany continued to maintain performance practices from the Baroque into the 1790s, including Leipzig, where J.S. Bach worked in the end of his life.

In England, the enduring popularity of Handel ensured the success of Charles Avison, William Boyce, and Thomas Arne, among other accomplished imitators, well into the 1780s, who competed alongside Mozart and Bach. In Continental Europe, however, it was considered an old-fashioned way of writing and was a requisite for graduation from the burgeoning number of conservatories of music, and otherwise reserved only for use in sacred works.[edit] After

1760 Because baroque music was the basis for pedagogy, it retained a stylistic influence even after it had ceased to be the dominant style of composing or of music making. Even as Baroque practice fell out of use, it continued to be part of musical notation. In the early 19th century, scores by baroque masters were printed in complete edition, and this led to a renewed interest in the "strict style" of counterpoint, as it was then called. With Felix Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's choral music, the baroque style became an influence through the 19th century as a paragon of academic and formal purity. Throughout the 19th century, the fugue in the style of Bach held enormous influence for composers as a standard to aspire to and a form to include in serious instrumental works. In the 20th century, Baroque was named as a period, and its music began to be studied.

Baroque form and practice influenced composers as diverse as Arnold Schoenberg, Max Reger, Igor Stravinsky and Bla Bartók. There was also a revival of the middle baroque composers such as Purcell and Corelli. There are several instances of contemporary pieces being published as "rediscovered" Baroque masterworks. Some examples of this include a viola concerto written by Henri Casadesus but attributed to Johann Christian Bach, as well as several pieces attributed by Fritz Kreisler to lesser-known figures of the Baroque such as Gaetano Pugnani and Padre Martini. Alessandro Parisotti attributed his aria for voice and piano, "Se tu m'ami", to Pergolesi. Today, there is a very active core of composers writing works exclusively in the Baroque style, an example being Giorgio Pacchioni. Various works have been labeled "neo-baroque" for a focus on imitative polyphony, including the works of Giacinto Scelsi, Paul Hindemith, Paul Creston and Martin, even though they are not in the baroque style proper.

Musicologists attempted to complete various works from the Baroque, most notably Bach's The Art of Fugue. Because the baroque style is a recognized point of reference, implying not only music, but a particular period and social manner, Baroque styled pieces are sometimes created for media, such as film and television. Composer Peter Schickele parodies classical and baroque styles under the pen name PDQ Bach. Baroque performance practice had a renewed influence with the rise of "Authentic" or Historically informed performance in the late 20th century. Texts by Quantz and Leopold Mozart among others, formed the basis for performances which attempted to recover some of the aspects of baroque sound world, including one on a part performance of works by Bach, use of gut strings rather than metal, reconstructed harpsichords, use of older playing techniques and styles. Several popular ensembles adopted some or all of these techniques, including the Anonymous 4, the Academy of Ancient Music, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, William Christie's Les Arts Florissants and others. This movement then attempted to apply some of the same methods to classical and even early romantic era performance.