

# The Baroque

1600–1750

Baroque, literally translated to “oddly shaped pearl”, was a time of drama for all art forms. Theater, painting, architecture, and music were all characterized by grandiose concepts, magnificent gestures, ornate designs, and an overall theatrical quality.

## Main Characteristics

Terraced Dynamics  
Contrasts between loud and soft  
Ornamentation  
Long flowing melodies  
Basso Continuo  
Counterpoint

## Significant Composers

Johann Sebastian Bach  
Antonia Vivaldi  
Georg Philipp Telemann  
Charles Ignatius Sancho

## Common Instruments

The harpsichord  
(plucked keyboard instrument)  
Strings (including lute)  
Brass (trumpet and horns)  
Woodwind (no clarinet)

## Musical Forms

Fugue  
Dance Suite  
Sonata  
Concerto Grosso

# Definitions

**Basso Continuo**: The instrumental bass part in an ensemble.

**Concerto Grosso**: A form used in orchestral music. A group of two or three instruments were the soloists playing with a full orchestra as accompaniment. The music would often alternate between the soloists and the accompaniment.

**Counterpoint (Contrapuntal)**: Texture consisting of two independent lines.

**Dance Suite**: A form usually consisting of four movements which were as follows; allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue.

**Fugue**: A form consisting of two independent lines (contrapuntal) with one line called the subject and the other line called the answer.

**Harpisichord**: A keyboard instrument similar to the piano but instead of the strings being hammered, they are plucked.

**Ornamentation**: Also known as embellishments, these are musical flourishes added to notes that are not essential to the overall melody or harmony

**Sonata**: A form that involves two or more players. The definition is broad only during the Baroque era. The sonata becomes a more defined form in later years.

**Terraced Dynamics**: Abrupt changes in dynamics from loud to soft as opposed to a gradual change using crescendos and decrescendos.

