CHAPTER10

CHAPTER 10: VOCAL MUSIC FOR CHAMBER AND CHURCH IN THE EARLY BAROQUE

Chapter Outline

Prelude. (CHWM 200)

New genres of sacred music emerged in the seventeenth century. Much early-seventeenth-century music was truly experimental, but by the middle of the century, new resources had become part of a common musical language.

I. Vocal Chamber Music (CHWM 200–7, NAWM 72–73)

Most secular vocal music in the early seventeenth century involved instrumental ensembles with voices and was performed in private settings.

1. Strophic aria   
   In the early seventeenth century, Italian composers wrote thousands of pieces for solo voice or small vocal ensemble with basso continuo, including *strophic arias*.
2. Concerted madrigals   
   *Concerted madrigals*exemplify the impact of the new concertato medium on old polyphonic vocal music in early-seventeenth-century chamber music.

**In Performance: Embellishment and Improvisation in the Baroque**  
Baroque musicians regarded a composition as a basis for improvisation, not as an unalterable text, and performers were expected to add to what was written.*Ornamentation*was a means of moving the affections, and it was done by using*ornaments*(brief embellishing formulas) or through a process called *division*,*diminution*, or *figuration* (creating more extended embellishments). Performers could also change the score in other ways, including omitting, rearranging, and substituting sections or adding *cadenzas*.

1. Madrigals of War and Love   
   Monteverdi’s eighth book of madrigals, *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*(Madrigals of War and Love, 1638), contains a variety of concertato forms. It includes the*Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*(The Combat of Tancredi and Clorinda), a composition that blends mime and music and that features the *concitato genere*(the excited style).
2. Ostinato basses   
   Many songs and instrumental works of the early seventeenth century used a*basso ostinato,*or *ground bass.*
3. Laments   
   The descending tetrachord was a common ground bass pattern, often used for laments.
4. Cantata   
   The *cantata*was a new genre of composition for voice and continuo.

**Biography: Barbara Strozzi**  
*Barbara Strozzi* (1619–1677)was born in Venice and, along with her father, was a part of intellectual circles. She studied with Cavalli and was supported financially by her family and her patrons. One of the most prolific composers of vocal chamber music, Strozzi published more cantatas than any other composer of the time.

1. Strozzi’s chamber cantata   
   Strozzi’s *Lagrime mie*, which is in several sections, including both recitatives and arias, is representative of the solo chamber cantata. **Music: NAWM 72**
2. Airs de cour   
   An *air de cour*is a homophonic, strophic song for four to five voices or for solo voice with lute accompaniment. Airs de cour have mostly syllabic text setting and diatonic melodies. **Music: NAWM 73**

II. Catholic Sacred Music (CHWM 207–11, NAWM 74–76)

Composers of Catholic sacred music adopted the theatrical idiom in works like *sacred concertos,*which used a dramatic medium to convey the church’s message.

1. *Stile antico*  
   Composers utilized both the *stile antico*(old contrapuntal style) and *stile moderno*(modern style) in their works.
2. Large-scale sacred concerto   
   Large, wealthy churches celebrated major feast days with large-scale works, often using antiphonal effects. **Music: NAWM 74**
3. Small sacred concerto   
   The small sacred concerto, with one or more soloists and organ continuo, was more common and economical than the large-scale concerto. *Lodovico Viadana*(1560–1627) was a pioneer of this medium. *Alessandro Grandi*(1586–1630) composed many solo motets that used the new style of monody. **Music: NAWM 75**

**In Context: The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa**  
Bernini’s sculpture *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*is typical of Baroque art: it is theatrical, represents action, and seeks to move our emotions.

1. Oratorio   
   *Oratorios*were religious music dramas performed outside of church services.
2. Oratorio versus opera   
   An oratorio uses most of the same types of music as an opera, but it has a religious subject, is rarely staged, often has a narrator, and employs a chorus that can participate in the drama.
3. Carissimi’s *Jephte*  
   The leading composer of oratorios was *Giacomo Carissimi*(1605–1674)*,*whose*Jephte*exemplifies the midcentury oratorio. **Music: NAWM 76**

III. Lutheran Church Music (CHWM 211–14, NAWM 77–78)

Composers in both Catholic and Lutheran churches in German-speaking regions used elements of theatrical monody and concertato techniques.

1. Heinrich Schütz   
   *Heinrich Schütz*(1585–1672), the leading German composer of his time, studied in Venice.
2. Sacred concertos   
   Schütz published most of his sacred works in a series of collections that show a variety of styles and techniques. In 1636 and 1639, he published his *Kleine geistliche Konzerte*(Small Sacred Concertos) for one to five solo voices with continuo that use Italian monody to convey the text. In *Symphoniae sacrae II*and*III*(1647 and 1650), Schütz published large-scale concertos that blend Gabrieli’s polychoral style with Monteverdi’s expressive techniques. **Music: NAWM 77–78**

**Biography: Heinrich Schütz**  
Schütz’s early musical training was sponsored by the landgrave of Hesse, who persuaded him to study composition with Giovanni Gabrieli in Venice. Schütz spent his entire career in the service of the elector of Saxony in Dresden, where he composed church music as well as sacred and secular music for major ceremonies.

1. Historia   
   Schütz’s *The Seven Last Words of Christ*(ca. 1650s) is an historia that utilizes a variety of singing styles for dramatic effect.
2. Passions   
   The most common type of historia was a Passion, and Schütz composed three such works.
3. Legacy   
   Schütz was best known in Lutheran areas of Germany. His synthesis of German and Italian elements influenced later German composers.