

Baroque Music: More Than Meets the Ear

Lecturer: Olivier Henchiri

Lecture Series Outline:

Week 1 – Baroque Basics

We will discuss the origins of Baroque music and the innovations that made it revolutionary compared with the Renaissance style. Listening to musical excerpts, we will explore counterpoint, melody, basso continuo, harmony, dissonance, contrasts and other common features of the music. Last but not least, we will define the essence of the style: the single most important thing that makes Baroque music Baroque music.

Week 2 – Advanced Concepts

We will explore some of the most fascinating musical concepts of the period, such as the doctrine of affections, imitative writing, canons, fugues, ornamentation, and the human emotions embodied by musical keys.

Week 3 – Word Painting

Word painting: musical effects and performance techniques that reflect the imagery and emotions conveyed in a music composition. We will make a case study of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. You might have heard this piece a hundred times, but you won't believe what you've missed!

Week 4 – Historically Informed Performance (HIP)

With demonstrations on both a modern and a Baroque cello, we will dive into HIP practices: period instruments, articulations, tempos, ornamentation, improvisation, and musical temperament. Learn to spot differences between modern and HIP practices by sampling and comparing various recordings. Which pleases your ear the most? That will be for you to decide...

Week 5 – National Styles

Nobody orders pizza at a French restaurant! This class will help you avoid making a similar blunder in the domain of music. We will visit Italy, France, Germany and England. Don't forget to bring your passport!

Week 6 – Baroque and Beyond

What happened in the transition from the Baroque to the popular Classical style of Mozart and Haydn? A whole lot, it turns out! We will sample some of the lesser-known flavours of that brief period, such as rococo and galant style, the Mannheim school, and Neapolitan operas.