

A Small Selection from among the Many Things that I Still Do Not Know about Baroque Music

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My whimsical title makes reference to the fact that W. W. Norton published my survey of the Baroque period in 2005,¹ which would seem to suggest that I should now know everything possible about Baroque music. I only mean to joke; we both know that this is very far from true. But during the weeks and months of study that preceded the drafting of each chapter of my book, I was surprised to discover that modern scholarship had left unanswered, or in most cases had left unasked, some questions that I felt the need to address for a cogent overview of the material. In many cases I could not answer the question for a variety of reasons. As I worked on the book, I thought that I should keep a log or some kind of diary of these questions, but the pressure that resulted from the Norton editor's insistent prodding and my own inertia prevented me from writing myself notes of that kind. In effect, I am now trying to recall some of those unanswered questions, although I am sure that I have forgotten many of them.

I intend to exclude from my selection things that I still do not know simply because I failed in my task of study. And I also intend to exclude questions that can never be answered or that are based on bad assumptions. I mean, questions like "Exactly when did the Baroque Era begin?" or "Do we call a work by Schütz *Baroque* because it contains the same baroque features that have caused us to call his period *The Baroque Era*?" I also mean to exclude previously unasked questions that I thought I could answer. These would include: "Of what significance is it that seventeenth-century composers who enjoyed noble status number in the dozens, whereas such composers active

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1. John Walter Hill, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe, 1580–1750*, The Norton Introduction to Music History (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005). The book is accompanied by John Walter Hill, ed., *Anthology of Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe, 1580–1750*, The Norton Introduction to Music History (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005).

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during the Renaissance before Gesualdo can scarcely be named?” Or “What prompted German courts to interest themselves in Italian music, musicians, musical styles, and musical genres during the early and middle seventeenth century, while the French and Spanish courts did not?” Or “What was Mersenne attempting to demonstrate through his application of verse scansion to the music of court dances?” In the end, I have decided to pose questions that can be grouped under the following headings: Ritornello, Voices and Instruments, Catholic Solo Motets and Lutheran Cantatas, Semi-Opera, Spain, Tonality, Corelli’s Harmonic Language, and Rhetoric.

Ritornello

I addressed other questions but feel that my answers were not adequate or were even more inadequate than my other answers. For example, I wanted to give a historical account of the ritornello procedure familiar to us from the concertos and arias of the early eighteenth century. I offered early examples from Torelli’s trumpet sonatas of the 1690s, but I feel that there was more that could be said about it. Michael Talbot, in his entry “Ritornello” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (hereafter, *New Grove*), claimed that certain arias from the 1680s “provided the opportunity for ritornellos to become a fixed component of vocal music in many genres.” But when I asked Michael to name some of these arias, he replied “I withdraw the remark.” In the entry, Talbot claims that some of these are of the “church aria” type, and this term caused me just as much trouble. I attempted to illuminate and clarify the term in at least two of my chapters,² but I am convinced that the full importance this category of aria has not yet been recognized and its history has not been seriously attempted.

Voices and Instruments

I did attempt to trace the history of the particular combination of voices and instruments that results when the chorus declaims the text in block chords while the instruments, particularly the violins, play combinations of scales, arpeggios, and repeated notes with more energetic rhythmic patterns. Historians of eighteenth-century church music tend to call this a feature of “Neapolitan church music,” and name Alessandro Scarlatti as its originator.³ However, Scarlatti adopted it only in his late works. Handel seems to have brought it

2. Hill, *Baroque Music*, Chapters 12 and 14.

3. For a representative summary, see James W. McKinnon, et al, “Mass, III. 1600–2000, 3. 18th Century, (I) Neapolitan,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45872> (accessed May 5, 2010).

from Venice to Rome in 1708, and Scarlatti could have encountered it there. But I do not think the style originated in Venice, either. It seems to have been used earlier in Bologna. I found it in the few works of Giovanni Paolo Colonna available to me,⁴ but the two main scholars who have written about Colonna have nothing to say about this issue.⁵ Others assure me that I would find still earlier examples among the voluminous works of Maurizio Cazzati, but existing scholarship on this composer does not address this question. So I feel that the history of this nameless technique, which became foundational for choral music after 1700, has yet to be written, just as the history of ritornello procedure and the church aria.

Catholic Solo Motets and Lutheran Cantatas

The church-aria family of formal designs provided me with a link between the Lutheran church cantatas of Bach and Telemann and the ubiquitous but little researched genre of the Latin-texted solo motet of the early eighteenth century.⁶ The text basis and deployment of musical styles in early eighteenth century Lutheran cantatas and in the Catholic solo motets of the same and slightly earlier years are so similar that I was surprised to find that no one seems to have noticed or asked questions about this. I do hint at a connection in my book,⁷ but I feel that the whole area needs to be researched with this issue in mind. After all, Lutheran composers adapted to their use a number of Catholic musical genres, forms, and style features over a period of two centuries, beginning with the early years of the Reformation. Why wouldn't they model the New Lutheran cantata on the popular Catholic solo motet? Erdmann Neumeister's earliest cantata texts are, after all, alternations of recitatives and arias of about the same number, length, verse forms, and content found in the contemporaneous solo motet. He even offers a Latin cantata, which Telemann set, that is indistinguishable from a solo-motet text, except that it lacks the concluding Alleluia. Neumeister, as is well known, likens his cantatas to segments of an opera, even though they contain no characters, dialogue, or action. I actually suspect that he was misdirecting his readers for theological reasons. I would have liked to search collections of solo motet

4. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 414.

5. Mary Nicole [i.e., Anne] Schnoebelen, "The Concerted Mass at San Petronio in Bologna, ca. 1660–1730: A Documentary and Analytical Study," PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1966; and Marc Vanscheeuwijck, "De religieuze muziekprokuktie in de San Petronio-kerk te Bologna ten tijde van Giovanni Paolo Colonna (1674–1695): Een onderzoek naar culturele, historische, liturgische en muzikale aspecten uit de Bolognese Hoog-Barok," PhD diss., Ghent University, 1995.

6. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 454–67.

7. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 458.

texts to see if Neumeister actually derived cantata texts from them through translation. I still feel that basic questions about the origins of the New Lutheran Cantata remain unanswered and largely unasked.

Semi-Opera

Questions like that of the relation between the New Lutheran Cantata and the Catholic solo motet have not been asked, it seems to me, because of scholarly specialization. Specialists in Lutheran church music or the life and works of J. S. Bach tend not to pay much attention to Italian church music. This same isolation among specialists has left other questions unasked, as well. For example, Is it only a coincidence that similar forms of semi-opera arose in Spain, France, and England only a few years apart? The Spanish collaborations between Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Juan Hidalgo in this genre began in 1652 with *La fiera, el rayo y la piedra*, while the remarkable series of Restoration semi-operas in England is usually traced back to 1670s. Both the English and the Spanish forms of semi-opera bear resemblances to the French *comédie-ballet*, a genre that seems to arise with *Les Fâcheux* in 1661. Purely on the basis of chronology, one might think of tracing connections from Spain to France, and thence to England, although no one has suggested this, as far as I know. Still, I was struck by the curious coincidence that Pelham Humfrey used triple meter and static harmony to set dialogue in *The Tempest* of 1674, an approach otherwise only known in Spain.⁸

Spain

I have a lot of questions about Spain. Does the music survive for any *auto sacramentale*? Of what significance is it that no Spanish songs from the first half of the seventeenth century are found in notation for solo voice with accompaniment? Even the songs that we know were sung as guitar-accompanied solos in Spanish plays are preserved only as three-voice arrangements. The same is true of *villanelle* in Spanish Naples. And there is no notation of guitar accompaniments from early-seventeenth century Spain, although there are Spanish-guitar alphabet-tablatures for Spanish songs in Italian manuscripts of this time. And what about the constant hemiola and syncopation, and the unique chordal style of Spanish *villancicos*? Some would like to believe that these features imitate African music.⁹ I have countered that these

8. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 372.

9. Paul R. Laird, *Towards a History of the Spanish Villancico* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1997).

features have a long history in Spain.¹⁰ But do they precede contact with Africa? Did Spain become culturally and musically isolationist during most of the seventeenth century, or is it just that I, as an Italianist, always expect that Italian trends will be followed and need some explanation when they are not? And where and who were the Spanish violinists and violin makers in the seventeenth century?

Actually, bowed strings instruments seem to have nearly disappeared from Spain at about the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹¹ They can be seen in Spanish manuscript illuminations and church frescos from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries. And the recently uncovered frescos in the Valencia cathedral, painted between 1472 and 1481, depict bowed string instruments remarkably similar in design to members of the violin family. But afterward, both the images and the evidence of playing and making violins nearly disappear from Spain until the trickle of Italian influence begins in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when music with designated violin parts makes its first appearance in Iberia. The chronological coincidence of this lacuna with the Jewish expulsion of 1492 is suggestive.

Musicians of Jewish Ancestry

This leads me to a much larger question. What was the role of Jewish musicians and instrument makers in the dissemination of the violin in Europe? Or rather, I should say, musicians of Jewish ancestry, as I will explain in a bit. I can only take time, here, to suggest why this is a question, at all. Much of what I have to say concerns the sixteenth century, but I contend that the appearance of a written repertoire for the violin beginning in the early seventeenth century, one of the events that marks the onset of the Baroque era, cannot be understood without the background of sixteenth-century violin playing and making.

In his 1983 *Musical Quarterly* article, Roger Prior revealed that the consort of Italian string players brought to England by Henry VIII in 1540 were actually descendants of Sephardim who presented themselves as New Christians but who were later deported for crypto-Judaism.¹² In his *Four and*

10. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 266.

11. For some rare exceptions that tend to support this generalization, see Ramón Pinto Comas, *Los luthiers españoles* (Barcelona: Ramón Pinto Comas, 1988).

12. Roger Prior, "Jewish Musicians at the Tudor Court," *Musical Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (1983): 253–65. Prior's title is a bit misleading, since it is clear that these musicians did not officially present themselves as Jewish when serving the English royal court. Seizing upon Prior's insistence on simply identifying these musicians as Jews, plain and simple, opened the way for an attempted refutation of his findings by Alessio Ruffatti, "Una migrazione di strumentisti italiani in Inghilterra e la presunta identità ebraica dei Bassano," *Il saggiaiore*

Twenty Fiddlers of 1993, Peter Holman shows that their instruments were identified as violins from at least 1545 onward, and that descendants of these Sephardim continued to populate royal violin ensembles for at least a hundred years.¹³ Holman also shows that additional violinists of Jewish ancestry shuttled between London and Antwerp, where Karel Moens found that the earliest violinists and violin makers were also Sephardim, at least in name.¹⁴ Earlier, in 1989, Elia Santoro published irrefutable documentation that the brothers Andrea and Giovanni Antonio Amati of Cremona, often credited with constructing the first fully modern violins, served their apprenticeships as instrument makers, from 1526 to 1534, under Giovanni Leonardo de Martinengo, a baptized Jew.¹⁵ What Santoro did not realize, however, is that Amati, itself, is the Italian translation of the Hebrew name Habib. The Spanish version, Amat, was a family name assigned to Jews named Habib at their Christian baptism according to early records of the Holy Office in Spain.¹⁶

The matter of religious conversion is extremely complex for a historian, as we are dealing with a period in which baptismal records are spotty, census statements tended to aggregate families into categories and report only total numbers, and tax documents name only citizens. Then, of course, there is the problem of the actual religious convictions held by individuals who, in many cases, were forced to dissimulate. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a very large number of the refugees from Iberia were termed *marranos*, that is, Jews or descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity under duress.¹⁷ The first wave of such conversions in Spain took place in 1391, and

musicale 6, no. 1–2 (1999): 23–37, which focuses on the Bassano brothers, relies on rather weak, indirect arguments, and ignores the factor of religious conversion or its simulation.

13. Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540–1690* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 15, 81–88, 105–6.

14. Karel Moens, “De eerste violisten in Antwerpen, 1554–1560,” *Musica antique* 11, no. 4 (1994): 170–73.

15. Elia Santoro, *Violinari e violini: Gli Amati e I Guarneri a Cremona tra Rinascimento e Barocco* (Cremona: Sanlorenzo, 1989), 41–57.

16. Heinrich W. Guggenheimer and Eva H. Guggenheimer, *Jewish Family Names and Their Origins* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1992), 26; Guilherme Faigeunboim, et al., *Dicionário sefaradi de sobrenomes*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Fraiha, 2003), 177; Pere Bonnin, *Sangre judia: Españoles de ascendencia hebrea y antisemitismo cristiano* (Barcelona: Flor del Viento, 1998), 355; and <http://www.sephardim.com/> with references provided there.

17. In his introductory editorial to the first issue of the *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Crypto Jews* (Spring, 2009): 3, Abraham D. Lavender writes, “There is no consensus on whether to use the term *marranos*, conversos, crypto Jews, secret Jews, hidden Jews, lost Jews, New Christians, or anusim.” Although *marrano* was once a term of disparagement, it is now freely used by specialists in this field of research. The trouble with the term *converso* is that in the view of both Christians and Jews of that time, anyone forced to convert or whose mental reservations about conversion manifested themselves in any form of adherence to Judaism could not truly be considered a convert. On the other hand, all the terms that

these early *marranos*, many of them very wealthy, intermarried with the Spanish nobility and royal family. When the remaining unconverted Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, a large number of them went to Portugal, where, however, they were all forced to convert in 1497. Although officially forbidden to emigrate from Portugal, many bought their freedom with bribes, and in such numbers that the term “Portuguese” became a euphemism for *marrano* in Italy.¹⁸ In their diaspora, especially in Italy, these Iberian forced converts took on a new, independent ethnic and cultural identity,¹⁹ neither wholly Christian nor entirely Jewish. A tendency to marry within the group and to maintain a network of commercial and trade relations for generations helped to preserve and develop this particular identity,²⁰ lasting in some cases well into the twentieth century.²¹

Actually, I am not concerned with the real or professed religion of individuals, but rather with family traditions and cultural patterns.²² In Europe during the Early Modern period, there were still significant correlations between families, communities, nationalities, and ethnic identities on the one hand and occupations on the other.²³ Our ethnomusicological colleagues are familiar with strong and even exclusive correlations between ethnic groups

combine the word Jews with crypto, or similar, beg two important questions because not all baptized Jews retained their birth religion, and those who did were not always secretive about it. Furthermore, some *marranos* and their descendants showed indifference or ambivalence toward religion and are not correctly described as either New Christians or anusim.

18. This historical outline can be found in many places. The classic exposition in English remains Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1932), which, based largely on Inquisition records, is held to be reliable, although it contains very little explicit documentation. A recent interpretive account, with many citations of modern secondary scholarship, is Yovel Yirmiyahu, *The Other Within: The Marranos, Split Identity and Emerging Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

19. See the essays in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *L'identità dissimulate: Giudaizzanti iberici nell'Europa Cristiana dell'età moderna* (Florence: Olschki, 2000), especially Lucia Frattabelli Fischer, “Cristiani Nuovi e Nuovi Ebrei in Toscana fra Cinque e Seicento: Legittimazioni e percorsi individuali,” 99–150.

20. Federica Ruspio, *La nazione portoghese: Ebrei ponentini e nuovi cristiani a Venezia* (Turin: Zamorani, 2007).

21. See, for example, Abraham D. Lavender, “The Secret Jews of Spain, Portugal, and Italy and Their Descendants Today: Major Issues in a Growing Field of Academic Research,” *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Crypto Jews* 1 (2009): 3–16; and several other articles in the same issue of the *Journal*.

22. The theme of traditions preserved while memory of Jewish ancestry is lost is taken up in several recent writings on descendants of *marranos* in the American Southwest, e.g., Stanley M. Hordes, *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

23. Philip M. Soergel, ed., *Nation, Ethnicity, and Identity in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (New York: AMS Press, 2006).

and specific musical practices and occupations in multiethnic societies such as are found in India and Indonesia.²⁴ To what extent was sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy like this? My reasons for continuing to wonder about this include my identification of surnames with Jewish or New Christian connections among the violinists and other instrumentalists in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Brescia during periods when Jews were excluded from residence there,²⁵ and similarly in the musical rosters of the Venetian Scuola Grande di San Rocco that would have excluded Jews.²⁶

Tonality

Another very large but unrelated question concerns the term and concept “tonality,” a feature of European art music often said to have emerged during the Baroque era. Actually, I did not use the word “tonality” in my book, and I try to avoid it in teaching and in professional communication. This is because I consider the word to be insufficiently defined, at least when used in connection with the history of Baroque music. I think it remains so partly because one cannot name the precise features of pitch structure, including harmony, that differentiate all music that is said to be tonal from all earlier music that is not considered to be tonal.

Attempted definitions of “tonality” nearly always connect the concept to patterns or behaviors among chords that are defined by their relation to a tonic harmony to which harmonic progression is directed.²⁷ Such definitions are, however, too vague and idealistic for my purposes. In a previous article, I have shown how a chord progression in a work by Heinrich Schütz, which an expert and highly respected author adduced as directed toward a clear harmonic goal, could just as easily have led to an entirely different conclusion.²⁸

24. Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964); Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983).

25. Giovanni Bignami, *Enciclopedia dei musicisti bresciani* (Brescia: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, 1980), used in conjunction with the lists of Jewish and New-Christian surnames cited above; and Francesco Bontempi, *Il ferro e la stella: Presenza ebraica a Brescia durante il Rinascimento* (Brescia: Circolo Culturale S. Alessandro, 1994).

26. Rodolfo Baroncini, “Contributo alla storia del violino nel sedicesimo secolo: I ‘sonadori di violini’ della Scuola Grande di San Rocco a Venezia,” *Ricerca* 5 (1993): 61–190.

27. A recent survey and summary of such definitions is found in Bella Brover-Lubovsky, *Tonal Space in the Music of Antonio Vivaldi* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), xi–xix, to which should be added the entry “Tonality” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, on line.

28. John Walter Hill, “Cognate Music Theory,” *Music in the Mirror: Reflections on the History of Music Theory and Literature for the 21st Century*, ed. Andreas Giger and Thomas J.

In a similar vein, Carl Dahlhaus cautions that neither the circle-of-fifths sequence nor any one of the several Renaissance and early-Baroque ostinato-bass patterns necessarily results in “tonal” harmony.²⁹

Although Dahlhaus names a large number of highly abstract and theoretical criteria for the determination of “tonal harmony,” his most concrete measures fail to differentiate Corelli’s from earlier “non-tonal” harmony. For example, Dahlhaus insists that “It is . . . one of the criteria of harmonic tonality that the T-S-D-T cadence is not reversed to become T-D-S-T,” and that the progression V-IV, in particular, is avoided.³⁰ But **Example 1** shows Corelli beginning a Sarabanda with chords that we would analyze as I-V-IV-I:

Example 1: The progression I-V-IV-I in Corelli, II/10/iii/1–4.³¹

The musical score for Example 1 is in 3/4 time and D major. It consists of four measures. The bass line is annotated with chord symbols: E: I, 6, #, IV, I, #, I. The treble clef part shows a melodic line with various intervals and rests. The bass clef part shows a simple harmonic accompaniment.

Harmonic motion from dominant to subdominant is even more common in minor keys, as in **Example 2**. Bach and Handel used the V-IV chord progression, as well (**Example 3**). As a corollary to the supposed avoidance of V-IV, Dahlhaus speculates that the progressions V-ii, iii-IV, and iii-ii will not be found in tonal harmony, either. But they are present in sonatas by Corelli (**Examples 4–6**). These and similar chord progressions may disappear by 1760 or so, but then other patterns, unknown to Corelli, will have come to take their place. In exactly what sense do both repertoires belong to the category of “tonal harmony?” I do not presume to answer this question. I merely wish to point out that these criteria proposed by Dahlhaus, as well as all other criteria

Mathiesen, *Publications of the Center for the History of Music Theory and Literature*, 3 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 127–28.

29. Carl Dahlhaus, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung der harmonischen Tonalität*, Saarbrücker Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1968), trans. Robert O. Gjerdingen, as *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 102–5, 142–3, 139–41.

30. Dahlhaus, *Studies*, 65.

31. Here and in the following musical examples of Corelli, the abbreviated references to printed music represent opus/work/movement/measure(s).

Example 2: Two instances of the chord progression V-iv in Corelli, I/10/v/1–12.

The musical score consists of two systems of three staves each (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The first system (measures 1-6) shows a sequence of chords: *i*, *iv*, *V*, *iv*, *V*, *iv*, *v*, *i*, *v*. The second system (measures 7-12) shows: *i*, *6*, *V/v*, *v*, *i*, *V*, *iv*, *V*, *iv*, *5_b*, *7*, *V*, *i*.

that I know about, do not contribute with sufficient precision to an account of the harmonic styles of Corelli, Bach, Handel, and their contemporaries.

I think that typical harmony and pitch structure are features of musical style that change with time, just as all other features of musical style do. But in most accounts “tonality” is assumed to be one thing, and in its history there is a considerable and deleterious amount of what I call “developmental essentialism” involved. Really, the only other term and concept regularly used by musicologists that approaches “tonality” in terms of developmental essentialism is “sonata form.”

By “developmental essentialism,” I mean the assertion or tacit supposition that certain concepts, features, forms, or constructs exist as essences before and independently of any particular manifestation of them, and that the history of those concepts, features, forms, or constructs consists in their origin, genesis, and gradual and inevitable development or emergence from an initial seed or germ into the fully developed manifestation, which at last completely corresponds to the essence.³² Although the roots of this idea are as old as Plato,

32. Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 26–34, calls this simply “essentialism.” David Hackett Fischer, *Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 155–7, calls it the “genetic

Example 3: Instances of the chord progressions V-iv and V-IV in Bach and Handel.

3a) Bach, Passacaglia, BWV 582, mm. 9–12.

c: i V i⁶ ii⁶ V⁷ iv⁶ iv⁷ V

3b) Handel, “V’adoro, pupile,” *Giulio Cesare*, mm. 19–26.

v'a - do - ro, pu - pi - le, sa - et - te d'a -
mo - re, le vo - stre fa - vil - le son - gra - te nel sen,

F: ii⁶₅ I⁶₄ V IV⁶

its application to historical process owes much to Hegel’s concept of historical necessity.³³ Aside from the epistemological absurdity of this concept and its employment in the service of totalitarian politics of both left and right, it has had a particularly pernicious effect on the historical study of the arts, including music. This has been adequately, although perhaps not perfectly, expressed in

fallacy,” and its “most hateful” form, “historicism,” in which a temporal sequence is converted into an ethical system.

33. For a survey of critiques of Hegel’s concept, see Will Dudley, ed., *Hegel and History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009).

Example 4: Two instances of the chord progression V-ii.

4a) Corelli, I/4/i/10–12.

6 7^b 5 3 C: I V ii vi
5 4

4b) Corelli, V/6/ii/6–8.

4 5 3# 4 3# 5 3 7 5 6 # #
2 4 4 4 4 4 # 5 5 # #
E: I V ii V vi ii V I

Leo Treitler's 1967 *Musical Quarterly* article "On Historical Criticism" which was required reading for my graduate students for forty years.³⁴

One pernicious effect of developmental essentialism in the historical study of music is its encouragement of certain retrospective points of view toward less familiar music that preceded music that is generally better known to us. From this perspective, the earlier music is too often considered merely an as-yet-not-fully developed version of the later music. Or this view tempts us to focus upon, or hear selectively, certain features that we know will become more important in later music. Or we will select for study certain earlier works that remind us of later ones and call those earlier works "progressive," "foreshadowing," or "prophetic." This retrospective view, fostered by developmental essentialism, is met everywhere the term and concept of "tonality" is invoked in the study of Baroque music. Bukofzer's treatment of the subject

34. Reprinted in Leo Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 79–94.

Example 5: Two instances of the chord progression iii-IV.

5a) Corelli, I/3/iv/8–11.

6 # # 6 # # #

E: I V iii IV I V I

5b) Corelli, III/1/ii/32–37.

5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 6 5 5 3 9 8
4 4 4 4 4 3 5 4 3 4 3 8

F: I V ii vi iii IV vii I V vi

5 3 9 5 3 5 6 7 6 7 6 5 3
4 8 4 4 3 3 4 4 3 4 4 4

iii IV I V iii IV ii V I

is a good illustration because it was not original with him but had become commonplace in German writing during the first half of the twentieth century.³⁵ Bukofzer places the emergence of tonality in the time of Arcangelo

35. Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 12, 219–20.

Example 6: Two instances of the chord progression iii-ii.

6a) Corelli, I/7/ii/12–14.

6 6 6 6 7 6 5 6 6 5 4 3
C:I V IV iii ii I ii vii I V I

6b) Corelli, IV/5/iii/6–10.

6 6 6 6 6 5 4 3
C:I V IV iii ii I IV V I

Corelli and Alessandro Scarlatti, and he says that it was later codified by Rameau. He claims that it established a graduated system of chordal relations based on relative distance from the tonic in the circle of fifths. Bukofzer acknowledges the descending sequence of “6” chords, actually the most common sequence in Corelli’s music, but he is not troubled that the circle of fifths has nothing to do with it and seems unaware of Rameau’s futile attempt to show such a connection.³⁶ Furthermore, the circle-of-fifths model does not explain the second-most common family of chordal sequences in Corelli, those that might be described as involving root progressions moving a third down then a fourth up—often found with the 5-6 figure pattern applied to a rising scale-wise bass. The circle-of-fifths model also cannot explain why some movements in Corelli’s sonatas and most dances and airs by Lully may sound just as “tonal” to us even when they contain no sequences whatever and actually very little root movement along the circle of fifths. It cannot even

36. Hill, “Cognate Music Theory,” 123.

explain the common root movements I-IV-V-I or I-vi-ii-V-I without recourse to the dodge of the “double employment” and the “chord of the added sixth.”

I will only mention but not elaborate here that Dahlhaus’s 1966 *Habilitationschrift* concerning the emergence of harmonic tonality was no more useful to me than Bukofzer’s single page on the subject, since it does not offer a definition that I could use to distinguish historical styles. And it is a clear example of developmental essentialism—as the word *Entstehung*, itself, announces in the title of the book—since the origin or genesis of something can only be identified in retrospect, in the light of later events. Dahlhaus, himself, succinctly formulates the underlying philosophical fallacy of his approach: “The interpretation of a [historical] ‘tendency’ includes the idea that the nature of a thing shows itself most clearly in the consequences that proceed from it.”³⁷

It was in exactly this spirit that François-Joseph Fétis adduced a passage (**Example 7a**) from Claudio Monteverdi’s madrigal *Cruda Amarilli* as an (unacknowledged) illustration of Alexandre Choron’s chimerical notion that, with this and similar passages, Monteverdi created the independent, unprepared dominant-seventh chord and thus came to know tonal harmony, ignoring Artusi’s (1600) report that the explanation given either by common opinion or by Monteverdi and his adherents (it is not clear which) involved an elliptical transformation of the normal counterpoint, also shown in **Example 7b**.³⁸ Although Simms and Dahlhaus adequately exposed the fallacy of Choron’s and Fétis’s historical interpretation of Monteverdi’s *secunda pratica*,³⁹ still receives a respectful presentation in the *New Grove* entry on “Tonality,” by Brian Hyer.

If the *New Grove* entry did not help me distinguish “tonality” from other styles of seventeenth-century harmony, Hyer’s definition (b) does contain a very clear indication of the connection between the concept of “tonality” and the fallacy of developmental essentialism: “While tonality *qua* system constitutes a theoretical (and thus imaginative) abstraction from actual music, it is often hypostatized in musicological discourse, converted from a theoretical structure into a musical reality. In this sense, it is understood as a Platonic form

37. Dahlhaus, *Studies*, 163.

38. These two musical illustrations are given on pages 44–45 of my *Baroque Music*, as Examples 2-5 and 2-6, except that Example 2-5 contains errors in the soprano part. Corrections of these and other errors in my book are offered on line at <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/jwhill/Baroque%20Music/Corrections%207-8-2010.pdf>. Artusi’s discussion is well translated in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History*, IV, *The Baroque Era*, 7th ed., ed. Margaret Murata (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 18–22.

39. Bryan Randolph Simms, “Alexandre Choron (1771–1834) as a Historian and Theorist of Music,” PhD diss., Yale University, 1971, pp. 73–81; Simms, “Choron, Fétis, and the Theory of Tonality,” *Journal of Music Theory* 19 (1975): 112–38; and Dahlhaus, *Studies*, 121–35.

Example 7: Monteverdi's "independent unprepared dominant-seventh chord," according to Fétis, and a period explanation recorded by Artusi.

7a) Monteverdi, *Cruda Amarilli* (1605), mm. 12–14.

d'a - mar, ahi las - so,
 d'a - mar ahi las - - - so,
 d'a - mar, ahi las - so,
 d'a - mar, ahi las - - - so,
 d'a - mar, ahi las - - - so,

7b) Artusi's normalized soprano (1600) fitted to the same passage.

d'a - mar, ahi las - so,
 d'a - mar ahi las - - - so,
 d'a - mar, ahi las - so,
 d'a - mar, ahi las - - - so,
 d'a - mar, ahi las - - - so,

or prediscursive musical essence that suffuses music with intelligible sense, which exists before its concrete embodiment in music, and can thus be theorized and discussed apart from actual musical contexts.”⁴⁰ Hyer, however, seems to prefer his last definition (h), which includes this:

It [tonality] gives rise, moreover, to abstract relations that control melodic motion and harmonic succession over long expanses of musical time. In its power to form musical goals and regulate the progress of the music towards these moments of arrival, tonality has become, in Western culture, the principal musical means with which to manage expectation and structure desire. It is thus understood to be essential to modern Western music: it determines the coordination of harmony with melody, metre with phrasing, and texture with register, thus encompassing—within its historical domain—the whole of music.

For my purposes, at least, definition (h) is very much like definition (b), inasmuch as it reifies “tonality” and posits it as something distinct and separate from, actually logically prior to, any actual example of it, because it “gives rise” to “relations that control” music and has the power “to form” and “to manage” features of the music that “it determines.” But earlier in definition (h) we are told that “tonality” refers to “the arrangement of musical phenomena,” which must be a feature shared by actual music that is, in turn, controlled, formed, managed, and determined by “tonality.” This is, of course, a tautology.

I have no quarrel with the idea that established patterns of harmony, melody, meter, phrasing, texture, and register can create expectation and desire. But I have not found, in studying and teaching music of the seventeenth century and later, that these established patterns are the same throughout any “common-practice” period. I do believe, however, that many musicians’ greater familiarity with certain works and repertoires helps to create expectations and desires of earlier, less familiar music that may actually contain fewer or different patterns. I would like to encourage my students and readers to liberate themselves from the habit of listening to Baroque music in that way.

Corelli’s Harmonic Language

In my quest to understand the harmonic language of Corelli, I attempted to formulate rules of root progression, including all the contexts and circumstances in which Corelli’s chordal roots proceed by rising or falling step, or by rising or falling third. Of course, I noticed that many chord progressions

40. Brian Hyer, “Tonality,” in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/28102> (accessed May 25, 2010).

occur in only one inversion, which makes root progression analysis somewhat beside the point. It is a commonplace that the quintessential Baroque sequence involves root movement by descending fifth. And so, since I temporarily bought into Carl Dahlhaus's idea that "tonal" chord progressions are irreversible (see below), I assumed that Corelli's chordal roots never progress by rising fifths. None of these ideas would hold up in a thorough and complete analysis of Corelli's works, however.

In the end, I concluded that what makes Corelli's harmony seem goal-directed is a combination of well-worn patterns, not all of which conform to an easy generalization, melodic patterns and structures that belong to traditions and practices of modal composition, rhythmic and metrical features, and the strategic deployment of dissonance.

As for the well-worn paths of chord progressions, I took a cue from Corelli's students Francesco Geminiani and Francesco Gasparini. Gasparini describes all harmonic sequences in terms of figured bass, and not in terms of roots and invertible chords. And he describes cadences as harmonizations and embellishments of the two-voice framework presented in modal theory of the previous two centuries.⁴¹ Geminiani credited Lully, Corelli, and Bononcini with creating a new harmonic style by eliminating chord progressions that had been employed earlier—a useful insight in my estimation. He did not, however, attempt to generalize about this harmonic style, and he certainly did not describe it in terms of fundamental bass or invertible chords. Instead, in his *Guida Armonica* of ca. 1752, he offers a large vocabulary of figured bass modules, consisting of two, three, four, or five notes each, which can be linked together in a restricted number of ways. His tables of modules and links, however, do not quite add up to Corelli's harmonic practice, partly because Geminiani attempts to improve on Corelli by adding back the "substance of ancient modulation" in order to restore some of the variety that recent composers had lost, in his estimation.

Taking my cue from Geminiani, nevertheless, I enlisted the students in a graduate seminar to create a lexicon of figured-bass modules, which, when combined with transition and linkage statistics, might begin to provide us with something resembling a true description of Corelli's harmonic practice. Well, the attempt failed, largely because we could not agree on what constituted a figured-bass module or which bass tones were chordal and which were contrapuntal embellishments. The effort did, however, provide certain useable data. It taught me that while certain modules and links were very common, the total vocabulary of chord progressions was much larger than I thought.

41. Francesco Gasparini, *The Practical Harmonist at the Harpsichord*, trans. Frank S. Stillings, ed. David L. Burrows (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

And indeed there is scarcely any chord progression that is not found somewhere in Corelli's six opuses. It certainly provided enough information to defeat all generalizations about tonal harmony that the class could find in the literature. In the end, I concluded that we tend to hear Corelli's music as "tonal" in part because we ignore or filter out the aspects that do not correspond to the practice of later composers. This filtering process, I fear, affects common perceptions of other early music, too.⁴²

The discrepancy between Corelli's compositional style and common generalizations about tonal harmony has, of course, been noticed by others. Notable among these is Gregory Barnett, whose 1998 article in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, "Modal Theory, Church Keys, and the Sonata at the End of the Seventeenth Century," recommends that "those pieces that defy the norms of the major/minor system of keys" be understood, instead, in the context of "the collection of tonalities within which late seicento composers and theorists conceived their music."⁴³ (Let us leave aside, for now, the curious idea that seventeenth-century sonatas might "defy" norms that had not yet been established.) Here, Barnett uses "tonalities" according to Hyer's definition (a),⁴⁴ but he is actually making a reference to a better-understood designation that he used in his title: "modal theory." My approach was to combine modal theory, which describes melodic and contrapuntal structures, with a sketch of the common chord patterns of Corelli's generation, which I present as a "normalized harmonic style," using a summary gleaned from the treatise by Francesco Gasparini mentioned earlier.⁴⁵ Modal and chordal composition were two separate and distinct facets of early seventeenth-century music, both recognized by period theory, and their gradual fusion over the course of the Baroque era is one of the major themes of my book.⁴⁶

42. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau already pointed out in the eighth edition of his *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1768; repr. Hildesheim, 1969), 375: "Ces modes, tells qu'ils nous ont été transmis dans les anciens Chants Ecclésiastiques, y conservent une beauté de caractère & une variété d'affections bien sensible aux connoisseurs non prévenus, & qui ont conserve quelque jugement d'oreille pour les systèmes mélodieux établis sur des principes différens des nôtres . . ." Alexandre-Etienne Choron, *Principes de composition des écoles d'Italie*, I (Paris, 1808), xxxviii, was less optimistic: "Ce système a entièrement prévalu au point de devenir exclusive, au point de pouvoir donner lieu à la question de savoir si les peuples modernes de l'Europe peuvent sentir une autre tonalité . . ."

43. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 246.

44. "As an adjective, the term [tonal] is often used to describe the systematic organization of pitch phenomena in both Western and non-Western music. Tonal music in this sense includes music based on, among other theoretical structures, the eight ecclesiastical modes of medieval and Renaissance liturgical music . . ." *New Grove*, "Tonality."

45. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 330–43.

46. I developed this idea in my teaching over a period of years, beginning in the 1970s. Only recently have I become aware that exactly the same conclusion is offered by Eric Tho-

Rhetoric

Another, equally important, theme is the changing emphasis in the relation of music to vocal text over the course of the Baroque Period: from rhetorical delivery (musical control of interpretative accentuation, inflection, pacing, etc.) in the early Baroque, shifting to elocution (compositional reaction to rhetorical figures found in the text) during its middle decades, giving way to rhetorical invention (reliance on commonplaces, support of metaphor, and amplification of overall affect) in the later years.⁴⁷ Here, again, I based my approach on period theory or commentary, refocused so as to satisfy modern requirements of precision, consistency, and thoroughness while remaining hypothetically recognizable to a Baroque musician, an adjustment combining “etic” and “emic” approaches and resulting in what I have termed a “cognate music theory.”⁴⁸ I felt the need for such caution particularly when identifying and discussing rhetorical figures in vocal music. I am well aware that many music theorists of the Baroque era used the Latinized Greek names of rhetorical figures to designate such purely musical features as imitation, dissonance, or cadence.⁴⁹ It is this approach that has given rise to nearly all of the modern antagonism toward the application of rhetorical figures in musical analysis.⁵⁰ For this reason, I limited my observations in this regard to instances in which a rhetorical figure is unequivocally present in the vocal text, in which case I have addressed the question of whether, to what extent, and how the com-

mas Chafe, *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 67.

47. A brief summary of these three terms, as they are used in rhetorical treatises and as I reference them in discussions of vocal music, can be found in Hill, *Baroque Music*, “The Rhetoric of the Arts,” pp. 15-20, and further in each chapter in which vocal music is studied.

48. Hill, “Cognate Music Theory,” 117-41.

49. Hill, *Baroque Music*, 315.

50. Writings in this vein by Cameron, Forchert, McCreless, Vickers, and Williams are cited by Jonathan Gibson, “A Kind of Eloquence Even in Music: Embracing Different Rhetorics in Late Seventeenth-Century France,” *The Journal of Musicology* 25, no. 4 (2008): 394-433. I don’t understand why Gibson did not also cite a series of short articles, along the same lines, by Carl Dahlhaus, such as “Musica poetica und musikalische Poesie,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 23, no. 2 (1966), 110-24; “Seconda pratica und musikalische Figurenlehre,” *Claudio Monteverdi: Festschrift Reinhold Hammerstein zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Ludwig Fischer (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1986) 141-50; “Bach und der Zerfall der musikalischen Figurenlehre,” *Musica* 42, no. 2 (1988): 137-40; “Zur Geschichtlichkeit der musikalischen Figurenlehre,” *Festschrift Martin Ruhnke zum 65. Geburtstag* (Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1986), 83-93; and “Die Figurae superficiales in den Traktaten Christoph Bernhards,” *Bericht über den Internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress, Bamberg, 1953* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954), 135-37. None of these writings critically address the approach that I have taken in *Baroque Music*.

poser has treated the figure; or to instances in which the composer, in setting the text, has introduced a rhetorical figure not present in the literary text, as, for instance, by adding a dramatic pause or by introducing various patterns of repetition. I avoided the temptation to find rhetorical figures in instrumental music or in places where the text, originally or as manipulated by the composer, does not actually present any recognized rhetorical figure. I have found, in my study and teaching over several decades, that precision and sensitivity are enhanced by the application of a rather large, historically developed vocabulary of rhetorical figures. To those among my readers who are put off by this, I would quote Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), the great biological encyclopedist: “If you do not know the names of things, the knowledge of them is lost, too.”⁵¹

* * *

There are, of course, a great many other things that I still do not know about Baroque music, but I promised, in my title, to keep this short. If, instead, I had chosen to write about “Things That I Still Do Not *Understand* about Baroque Music,” my list would have been quite different, although probably shorter. Because understanding includes a larger subjective component than knowing does, an older scholar like me will tend to have formulated at least an overall understanding of the subject, whereas knowledge always seems less complete. You may understand Baroque music differently. But I hope that you will eventually know more about Baroque music than I do.

51. *Linnaeus' Philosophia Botanica* [1751], trans. Stephen Freer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 169.