

Tafelmusik

Educational Resource

Baroque Guide

Baroque Guide

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Curriculum Expectations	3
Junior	3
Intermediate	3
Senior	3
Information	5
What does “baroque” mean?	5
How is a baroque orchestra different from a modern orchestra?	5
The orchestra – a baroque innovation	6
Baroque notation	7
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	8
Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Final movement	8
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)	9
Winter from The Four Seasons, First movement	9
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)	10
Bourrée in F+ from Water Music	10
Concerto grosso in D+ Op. 3 no. 6 last movement	10
Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)	11
La Triomphante (solo harpsichord)	11
Rondeau contredanse (final piece in the opera Pygmalion) .	11
Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)	12
“Conclusion” from Tafelmusik, book 3	12
Activities	13
Objective	13
Summary	13
Activity	13
A Baroque Music Quiz	15

Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for downloading and using this educational resource guide. We hope that you will find the material useful. Within this guide you'll find content information prepared by one of Tafelmusik's own musicians, activities for students from grades 6-12 based on this information, and curriculum connections for these grades as set by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Tafelmusik, based in Toronto, is a period instrument orchestra that has achieved international stature through its recordings and concerts. Founded in 1979, the orchestra is currently lead by violinist Jeanne Lamon as music director, a post she has held since 1981.

The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in Baroque choral performance practice and vocal technique, was formed in 1981 to complement the orchestra and is currently under the direction of Ivars Taurins.

This resource guide has been created for any teacher that wants to integrate the arts into their classroom; this can include core music teachers as well as classroom teachers who want to deliver a more well-rounded curriculum.

We have created this document in effort to create a strong link between ourselves and educators in the hope of promoting knowledge of Tafelmusik, period performance, and baroque and classical music in general. As such, feel free to recommend this guide to colleagues or other interested parties.

Curriculum Expectations

Tafelmusik focuses its attention to delivering resources appropriate for grades 6 through 12. This educational resource, including the activity presented, address the following curriculum requirements for these levels for the province of Ontario.

Junior Grade 6

Music	Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., painting, computer animation);
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Intermediate Grade 7

Music	Identify ways in which the music industry affects various aspects of society and the economy (e.g., hair styles, clothing styles, values);
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Grade 8

Music	Describe some aspects of the historical context of music that they sing, play, or listen to (e.g., identify some major political events, social or philosophical movements, architectural or painting styles);
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Senior Grade 9

Music	Demonstrate an understanding of music history and its cultural context;
	Demonstrate an understanding of the function of music in society;

Grade 10

Music

Demonstrate a detailed understanding of music history and its cultural context to interpret repertoire;

Evaluate the function of music in society;

Grade 11

Music

Compare some stylistic characteristics of baroque and classical music with characteristics of some of the other arts in the eighteenth century (e.g., ornamentation in music and architecture of the baroque);

Explain the influence of some political, social, and/or technological factors on the lives and music of the major composers of the baroque and classical periods (e.g., Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven);

Grade 12

Music

Demonstrate an ability to do independent research on a specific topic, to organize their research in written form, to follow accepted scholarly procedures (e.g., acknowledgement of sources), and to give a presentation on a topic;

Information

The information presented here benefits from reference to Tafelmusik's *The Critic's Choice Collection*, WSK 062714 on the Sony Classical label. Throughout this document, reference will be made to specific tracks from this compact disc (e.g. CD track 5).

What does "baroque" mean?

The word "baroque" was originally used as an insult to describe art or music which was overly extravagant, even slightly bizarre. It comes from the Portuguese word *barroco*, a misshapen pearl. In the twentieth century it has become the respectable nickname for music from about 1600, when opera was born in Italy, until about 1750, the year of Johann Sebastian Bach's death. This guide will look at some of the most often-performed baroque composers in baroque repertoire: Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, Antonio Vivaldi, Jean-Philippe Rameau and Georg Philipp Telemann.

How is a baroque orchestra different from a modern orchestra?

A baroque orchestra is different from a modern orchestra in several ways:

1. In Tafelmusik we play on so-called "original instruments" - the instruments that the composers of baroque music played themselves. Orchestral instruments have changed over the years to reflect changing tastes in sound production. Modern violins have to be loud enough to be heard in the back row of a large concert hall; the violin of Bach's time was usually played in a small church or the salon of a palace and the warm sound of gut strings (made from sheep intestines) was loud enough to fill the intimate space.

Notes

2. One of the most striking features of a baroque orchestra is the continuous presence of the harpsichord. It doubles the line played by the cello and bass in the left hand and makes the orchestra sound louder by filling out the harmonies with chords. The harpsichord's distinctive sound is created by quills made from bird feathers which pluck the strings, making the bass line sound clearer and the rhythms more driving. To hear the sound of the harpsichord listen for its "jangle" in the first movement of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5* where it begins as an orchestral instrument in its continuous or "continuo" function, then becomes a soloist along with the flute and violin. (CD track 3).

3. Baroque orchestras were usually directed by one of the players instead of a separate conductor. In Tafelmusik we are led from the first violin by our Music Director, Jeanne Lamon.

The orchestra – a baroque innovation

In renaissance instrumental ensemble music, each part was played by one musician. Baroque composers continued to compose solo and chamber music but they also experimented with creating a fuller sound by putting several performers on one part to form an orchestra. The Tafelmusik Orchestra has adopted the configuration of one of Bach's orchestras which had two oboes, bassoon, harpsichord and strings.

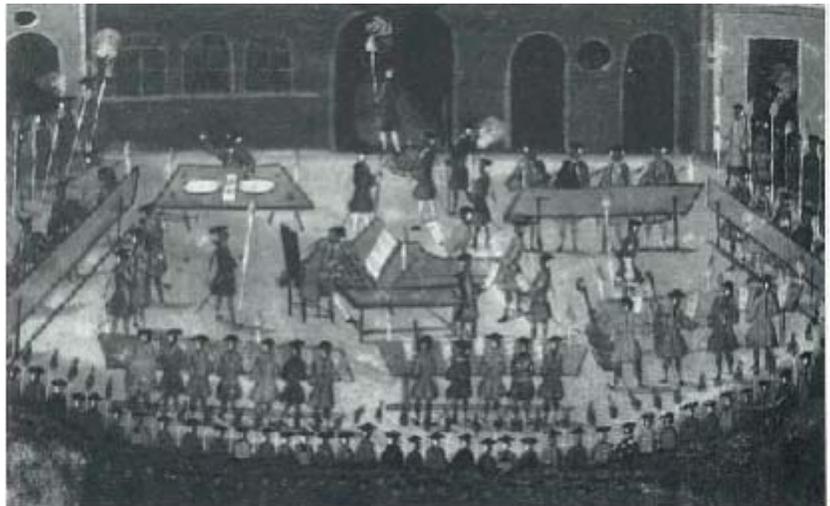


Figure 1 A baroque orchestra

Baroque composers began to compose more extended instrumental pieces than in former times and they created forms in which several movements could be grouped together. Sometimes these movements were in contrasting but related keys. Our modern system of major and minor keys is an invention of the baroque period; baroque composers were the first to think of their

Notes

music as a series of chords built above a bass line, each having a relationship with the main note of the key.

Three of the most important forms of baroque instrumental music were the dance suite, the concerto grosso, and the solo concerto.

The dance suite. Baroque people loved to dance and they loved to watch professional dancers perform. Even when just listening at concerts, they loved to hear dance music. Composers created works in which favourite dance pieces such as the allemand, courante, sarabande or gigue were grouped together in one key. Dance suites often began with an overture in the style of French operatic overtures of the day. Handel's *Water Music* is a dance suite of this type.

The concerto grosso is a work usually in four movements (slow, fast, slow, fast) in which several soloists play in dialogue with a large orchestral accompaniment. Handel's Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No. 6 (CD track 7) is a work of this kind.

The solo concerto is usually in three movements (fast, slow, fast). Here a virtuosic soloist alternates with the full orchestra. Composers often wrote these works for themselves to perform; this was the case with the concertos in Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.

Baroque notation

In each period of history, the way that music is written down reflects elements of style which are important for the performer. If we look at a bass part from an instrumental piece published in 1577 (about 30 years before the baroque period began), we can recognize the five-line staff, a bass clef, a flat sign and a "3" for triple time. The notes are in a different shape from ours but we can decipher the pitches and the rhythms.

If we look at an original bass part from a baroque piece, published in 1714, the first difference we notice is the presence of barlines. The notes are organized with rhythmic groupings and resulting strong beats in mind. Musical notation often lags behind changes in musical style by a few years; the adoption of bar lines in the baroque period reflects a new interest in strong rhythmic drive in all types of music.

This part would have been played by the cellos, double bass and by a chordal instrument such as harpsichord or organ. The keyboard player would play the same line as the cellos and bass in the left hand and improvise chords above the bass line at the same time. The numbers above many of the notes are a guide to the keyboard player for choosing the chords. This type of bass line is called a "figured bass". The group of players who play from this part are called the "basso continuo" or continuous bass.

Notes

Notice that unlike the earlier piece of music, there are a few dynamic markings and a tempo indication.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Born into a famous family of musicians, Johann Sebastian Bach lived in Germany and was most famous in his own lifetime as a virtuoso organist. Today we revere him as a composer of solo instrumental music, chamber and orchestral works, and cantatas. Bach composed cantatas for the church choirs of Leipzig where he lived for the last 27 years of his life.



Figure 2 Johann Sebastian Bach

Early in his life he worked as official composer to Prince Leopold of Cöthen, and was responsible for providing musical entertainment for the royal family. Here he composed his famous *Brandenburg Concertos* for various combinations of instruments.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Final movement

The third concerto is scored for three violins, three violas, three cellos and continuo. In its joyful final movement, Bach uses the rhythms of dance music; although it was not intended to be danced to, the movement is composed in a dance form with two sections, each of which is repeated. The rhythmic structure is like that of a dance called a gigue. There are four beats to the bar, but every beat is in triple time. This movement has a feeling of perpetual motion because at least one instrument at a time has sixteenth notes throughout the entire movement. Bach gives us a striking example of the compositional technique of imitation, in which the opening melody is passed from the first violin to the second, to the third, then to the violas and finally to the cellos. If a score is available, have a look at the opening of the movement in Bach's handwriting. You can see the opening sixteenth-note melody passing down through the voices. If you have a CD of this movement available, listen for the point where the first section ends and goes back to the beginning. Listen for the perpetual motion of the sixteenth notes and to the points of imitation.

Notes

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice, the Italian city of canals and gondolas. He spent much of his life teaching at an orphanage for girls; this establishment had a famous orchestra made up of the most talented students whose playing was an attraction for music lovers from all around Europe. Vivaldi was one of the most renowned violin soloists of his time and many of his famous violin concertos were composed for himself to play with the all-girl orchestra.



Figure 3
Antonio
Vivaldi

Winter from *The Four Seasons*, First movement

Vivaldi's most famous composition is *The Four Seasons*, a series of four violin concertos inspired by four Italian poems about the characteristics of the different seasons.

The lines of poetry which go along with the first movement of Winter are as follows:

The sonnet	The music
Frozen and trembling among the chilly snow	Each part enters, one at a time beginning with the bass, with staccato repeated notes and violin trills representing shivers.
Exposed to horrible winds	The solo violin enters with wild arpeggios representing the wind.
We run and stamp our feet	A repeated "stamping" motif with octaves in the bass.
Our teeth chatter in the extreme cold.	Tremolo double stops in the solo violin.

Vivaldi uses the form of a solo concerto with alternating orchestral and solo sections but stretches the normal form by using the instruments to portray these dramatic effects. As you listen to track 8 of the CD try to pick out the special effects that Vivaldi uses to represent chattering, shivering and winds.

Notes

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

George Frideric Handel was born in the same year and in the same area of Germany as J.S. Bach. Unlike Bach, however, who spent his entire life in Germany, Handel spent his early twenties in Italy where he became famous as an opera composer, and then moved to England where he lived until his death.



Figure 4 George Frideric Handel

Bourrée in F+ from Water Music

The famous *Water Music* was composed for a special excursion of King George I of England on the Thames River in London on July 17, 1717. The king invited his guests to sail on open barges up the river while they were entertained by about 50 strings and winds. A newspaper from the time reported that the king liked the music so well that he had it all performed three times over.

The bourrée was one of the most beloved dances of the baroque period; there are 24 known charts for the dance steps still in existence. It had a quick tempo and a duple rhythm (a time signature of 2 or C). It was always in two sections, with each half repeated. Handel gave instructions that the movement be repeated three times, first with strings, then winds, then with everyone. If you have a CD available, try to pick out the structure of the piece with its two repeated sections, followed by the contrasting version for oboes and bassoon.

Concerto grosso in D+ Op. 3 no. 6 last movement

The last movement of the *Concerto grosso Op. 3 No. 6* shows Handel infusing the rhythms and liveliness of dance music into a concert piece. The bourrée and this movement are instantly recognizable as being by the same composer with their similar instrumentation and rhythmic drive. If you have access to a recording, listen for the opening melody with its repeated fifths passed from part to part.

Notes

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Jean-Philippe Rameau was the leading French composer of the eighteenth century. For 22 years he conducted the private orchestra of a rich Parisian businessman and tax collector named La Pouplinière. For his patron's household Rameau provided music for family church services, concerts, plays, and balls; in France, everyone loved to dance. His job also included giving harpsichord lessons to Madame La Pouplinière, and for her he composed many solo pieces.



Figure 5 Jean-Philippe Rameau

La Triomphante (solo harpsichord)

La Triomphante is a baroque harpsichord piece. Rameau was famous for experimenting with new instrumental colours and effects. In *La Triomphante* he imitates the exuberance of a triumphant woman with flashy arpeggios which rise up from the depths of the keyboard.

Rondeau contredanse (final piece in the opera *Pygmalion*)

Both *La Triomphante* and the *Rondeau contredanse* are in a favourite French form called the "rondeau", a circular form which repeats the same music at the beginning, middle and end of the piece, with short contrasting sections in between.

At the age of 50 Rameau composed his first opera and soon became the most famous opera composer in France. It was about his opera music that critics first used the word "baroque" as an insult because his harmonic writing sometimes broke established rules of theory and because listeners found his colourful use of orchestral instruments extremely exotic. Rameau's operas contained an enormous amount of dancing. The *Rondeau contredanse* is the final dance from the opera *Pygmalion*.

Notes

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

Georg Philipp Telemann was Bach's most famous contemporary in Germany. In his own day his light and entertaining music was often more highly esteemed than Bach's and in 1722 he was chosen over Bach in a job competition. He spent the last 45 years of his life in Hamburg composing music for the five main churches of the city, writing operas and producing hundreds of pieces of chamber music.



Figure 6 Georg Philipp Telemann

"Conclusion" from Tafelmusik, book 3

Among these were his three books of *Tafelmusik*, or banquet music from which our orchestra takes its name. The collections of *Tafelmusik* were suites with an overture, dance movements and a "conclusion". The "conclusion" contains two very typical baroque features a long "pedal" note held for the opening seven bars of the piece in the bass line over which the upper parts play furious arpeggios, and a fugal section with each voice entering with the same melody one at a time. It also features a technique which is very typical of Telemann - a conversation between the oboes and the strings as they toss back and forth little snatches of melody like a ball in a tennis game.

Activities

This activity is meant to accompany the content given in the Information section of this document. The activity helps makes use of the content to teach students in an activity-based manner that is guided by the curriculum mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Also, please find at the end of this activity a sample quiz for students on the information presented in this document above.

Objective

This activity will help students develop a thorough (music, art, literature, architecture, and politics) understanding of the baroque era while building research, group cooperation, and presentation skills.

Summary

A timeline activity. Students will, as a class, create a timeline for the baroque era.

Activity

Remember to play music of the baroque period for students to allow students to hear music of the era.

Divide the class. Optionally, divide the class in half; each half will be assigned the same assignment, creating a timeline. Then, divide the halves into 5 groups each. Each group will be responsible for the following topics to research about the baroque era: music (composers and major compositions), art (painters, sculptors, and major works), literature (writers and major works), architecture (architects and major works), and politics (politicians such as kings, major political events, such as wars or revolutions, and differences in political geography from today). Encourage students to research their topics beyond European borders.

Hold ongoing discussions. Spend time with each half the class discussing as a large group what they have learned so far. Discuss similarities between findings.

Prepare a timeline. Students must work together to create a timeline out of construction paper and other materials. Because of the wealth of content, the physical timeline will be quite large. Encourage students to be creative and to choose a theme for their timeline based on the similarities found during the ongoing discussion.

Share the timeline. Display the timelines on a wall or walls. Each half of the class will present their timeline to the other half of the class, either chronologically or by subject. Have each subject group of the non-presenting half prepare at least one question for their corresponding presenting group to help generate discussion.

A Baroque Music Quiz

1. Baroque violin strings were made of:

2. Harpsichord strings were plucked with quills made from:

3. The following composers were closely associated with musical establishments in which cities:

Antonio Vivaldi:

Jean-Philippe Rameau:

4. On which instruments were J.S. Bach and Antonio Vivaldi famous performers?

Bach:

Vivaldi:

5. Name two types of baroque dances:

6. What instruments play in the bourrée from *Water Music*?

7. What type of piece is “*Winter*” from *The Four Seasons*?
