

1. Johann Sebastian Bach lived from 1685-1750 during music's Baroque era. Native to Germany, Bach's illustrious career began chronologically in the towns of Arnstadt, Muhlhausen and Weimar. There, he mostly developed his earliest compositions for organ as well as vocal music on occasion. These first three periods of his career illustrate on a grand scale Bach's unique and enduring stamp of combining tonal counterpoint and concerto form in the late-baroque Italian harmonic style with traditional German polyphony, which had independent voices. From 1703-1707, Bach was organist at the New Church where he composed organ music, save cantatas preserved for special occasions beyond the daily services. In 1705, Bach took a trip to Lubeck to hear the well-regarded organist and composer Dietrich Buxtehude. This experience helped catalyze Bach's development of his own style in his organ music that nonetheless soaked in some of Buxtehude's features. He "undertook the famous pilgrimage to Lubeck (1705) in order to study vocal concertato and organ music with its best representative, Buxtehude" (Burnett, Lecture 10). From 1707-1708, Bach moved on to Muhlhausen where he became organist at St. Blasius's. This position marked the first in which Bach began grouping for a personal, individual style. However, Bach left Muhlhasen for Weimar in 1708 as he felt Muhlhausen was not the ideal place to pursue his ever-growing tangible musical goals. Bach's 1707-1717 residency in Weimar marks the period of his masterful organ compositions, especially those outside of the chorale. These organ works include: Little Fugue in gm, Passacaglia in cm, Fantasia in gm, Toccata in dm, and Orgelbuchlein. Through these virtuosic compositions and his showmanship displayed through his post as court organist in Duke Wilhelm Ernst's service and later as Vice-Kappelmeister and concert master of the Duke's orchestra in 1714, Bach established himself as the

indisputable greatest organist of his time, the “virtuoso of his chosen instrument” (Burnett, Lecture 10). Thus, it was in Weimar that Bach’s career as organist finally took off.

These landmark organ compositions composed in Weimar are undeniably the product of a synthesis of Bach’s inherent genius along with his important trip to Lubeck to hear and learn from Dietrich Buxtehude. A vast composer of organ music, Buxtehude (1637-1707) was originally Danish born and organist as well as chief bookkeeper of the Marienkirche in North Germany’s Lubeck. Similar to one of Bach’s positions, he was responsible for composing organ music for the daily services and vocal music for special occasions lying outside the everyday church service (funerals, weddings, state functions, etc). His Renaissance Netherlands contemporary composers included Josquin Des Prez, Heinrich Isaac and Jacob Orbecht. Early 17th century organists included Sweelinck, Tunder and Scheidemann (who were Buxtehude’s German students). In Italy and South Germany, Frescobaldi and Froberger were flourishing. These parallel schools of organist thought between Germany and Italy led to the fusion on the Italian and Dutch Organ schools in the late 17th century as a result of Buxtehude’s in many ways, offspring, of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Buxtehude’s organ music can be divided into two categories: Free forms (prelude, toccata, and fugue) which were not based on any former theme or cantus firmus, and Obligato forms (“Gebunden’ or ‘bound’ forms (Burnett, Lecture 6)), which included the passacaglia (variations above a repeated bass pattern) and the organ chorale prelude (a detailed setting of a Lutheran hymn-tune). Bach notoriously employed these forms and parallels can be seen between Bach’s *Fantasia in G minor* and Buxtehude’s *Praeludium*

in G minor. Buxtehude's BUX WV (Werk Verzeichnis) 149: G Minor Praeludium begins with a freely improvisatory 1st section resplendent with upper voices over a ciaccona (reiterated) bass line. Beginning in gm or i, the 2nd section features the first of two fugue sections which is in ricercare style in cut time, followed by a free ending in the major V, or D though beginning on i or gm. The 3rd section is Allegro and is in Italian basso continuo style. The harmonic progression follows D to g (V-i), and then features a lengthy pedal solo (pedal solos being an "invention" of sorts by Buxtehude), followed by a iv-V-I progression or c-D-g. The 4th section features the second fugue, which is a "Fuga Pathetica," featuring unprepared dissonances. It is in triple time (modern style), largo and begins in gm. The free ending concludes with a return of the ciaccona ostinato pattern present in the first section. Like the 3rd section, the free ending begins in cm (iv), moves to D (V) (though a V6 in this case) and finishes on i (gm). Beginning with structure, there are some unifying features with Bach's *Fantasia in G Minor*. The *Fantasia* begins, like Buxtehude's *Praeludium*, with a free style first section known as "Vordersatz" which is dance-like in nature similarly to Buxtehude's first section. It consists of a recitative style over a G pedal. Chromatic upper voices outline a diminished 7 triad upheld by left hand diminished chords (two diminished triads on C natural and B natural). The heavy bass and upper voice chromaticism and diminished chords employed by Bach are not found in Buxtehude's *Praeludium* though both feature improvisatory upper voices over a more static bass line. The 2nd section ("Fortspinnung I") of the *Fantasia* moves to V as does Buxtehude's, and features the first imitative passage (thematically based on diminished triads) and involves a cycle of 5ths around dm. The diminished triads in the first section move to a D pedal, and the bass commences its ascending chromaticism via moving from

$A^b - A^{\flat} - B^b - C^b - C^{\flat} - D^b - D^{\flat} - E^b - E^{\flat}$. The introduction of the A^{\flat} initiates the 2nd free section in V (D), which is followed by the chromatic bass line ($A^b \dots E^{\flat}$). While Buxtehude's second section delves into V and features a lengthy pedal solo followed by a iv-V-I harmonic progression, Bach's second section features a "spinning-out" (being a "Fortspinnung") and development of V that exceeds in experimentation and harmonic complexity that of Buxtehude's. The second free section ends on the V of V/V or E (as the V/V of D is E). The "Fortspinnung II" then contains the 2nd imitative passage and a cycle of 5ths around gm, thus following the same pattern in the first Fortspinnung but now revolving the cycle of 5ths around gm rather than dm. This is achieved through an ascending chromatic bass line as before, going from gm (i) to $E^{\flat} - F^{\flat} - F^{\sharp} - G$. At the occurrence of the F^{\sharp} , there is a V7 chord, which goes to V, overshooting gm. The PCA then repeats with $G - A^b - A^{\flat} - B^b - B^{\flat} - C - C^{\sharp} - D - D^{\sharp} - E - E^{\sharp} / F - F^{\sharp} - G$. The chromatic bass line from $A^{\flat} - F^b$ is explored in the upper voices as a fugal stretto in the upper voices, in which one voice responds with the subject before the previous voice has completed its entry of the subject. After the elaborate second Fortspinnung comes the final free passage which employs a consistent withholding of the tonic. Beginning in V (at the second fortspinnung's conclusion), the PCA ascending chromatic bass line resounds for the last time going from $G - A^b - A^{\flat} - B^b - B^{\flat} - C$ with the underling harmony maintaining V throughout. This is followed by the "Epilog," a final cadence resolving the diminished 7th chords and chromatic lines. The C^{\sharp} diminished 7th chord, for example, resolves to V then to I, as C^{\sharp} is the leading tone of V. The C^{\sharp} diminished 7th chord occurs over a chromatic line in the pedals consisting of $C^{\sharp} - D - E^b - E^{\flat} - F$, followed by $F^{\sharp} - G$ in accordance with the final V-I cadence. The G minor Fantasia can be summarized by diminished triads

followed by a “chromatic scale treated harmonically and thematically,” concluded with a “Triadic tonic resolution” (Burnett, Lecture 10). Thus, in essence traveling from i-V, to a prolonged expansion of V with chromatic and diminished 7th harmonies to an eventual cadence on i in the triadic tonic resolution. This overarching i-V-ii harmonic structure is of course shared with Buxtehude’s G Minor Praeludium. However, Buxtehude’s piece doesn’t employ diminished 7th chords or much chromaticism, made up for by the ciaccona ostinato pattern in the bass line and perhaps by employing iv chords more as a true subdominant or lead-up to V rather than choosing to heavily ornament and expand upon the dominant area. Buxtehude’s *Praeludium* can also be said to be more rhythmically rigid (though both composers are flexible with time in parts of free passages or solo sections) because the *Praeludium*’s 2nd section is in cut time, followed by a change to triple time in the second section. Bach’s *Fantasia* maximizes tension by straying from the tonic for so long, practically skipping it entirely from the second fortspinnung until the Epilog’s resolution. Buxtehude’s *Praeludium*, on the other hand always cadences on i in each of the 4 sections except when utilizing a half cadence at the end of the 2nd section and beginning on V in the next. A unifying feature of the two pieces is the 1st section, which is improvisatory in both, begins and stays in the harmonic area of i (until the very end in Bach’s case) and features experimentation and improvisation in the upper voices over a more strict and directional bass line. Similarly, the last section of both pieces features a final concluding free passage. Bach employs the fugue less than Buxtehude (as Buxtehude’s second and fourth sections are fugues), but does use a fugal stretto in the upper voices at the end of the second Fortspinnung. Buxtehude features a repeating ciaccona ostinato pattern in the bass present at the beginning and end of the

piece. Similarly, Bach uses repetition of his ascending chromatic bass line, but his is basically present throughout the entire fantasia. An obvious unifying factor is the plain virtuosity and flashiness given to the organist in both pieces. Buxtehude's features a long pedal solo, while Bach's is simply ceaselessly in motion in both right and left hand parts (as well as feet at times).

At the end of his residency in Weimar (1717), Bach compiled the *Orgelbuchlein*, a collection of short chorale preludes. The organ chorale prelude was a setting of the chorale hymn in which the "chorale melody is played through once (usually in the top voice) with elaborated (and often symbolic) counterpoint in the lower parts" (Burnett, Lecture 10). The counterpoint was often taken from motives in the chorale itself, and sometimes the chorale melody itself is strongly embellished. The whole congregation sang the chorale melody in unison after the chorale prelude. Bach originally planned to include settings for the chorale melodies required by the liturgy for the complete church year, a total of 164, though 45 were only completed. However, "the plan is characteristic of Bach's desire to fulfill thoroughly the potentialities of a given undertaking and to realize all the suggestions inherent in any musical situation" (Burnett, Lecture 10). As a wonderful teacher to pupils and his own children, Bach also intended to use the *Orgelbuchlein* as a teaching method. A significant chorale prelude from the *Orgelbuchlein* is *Durch Adams Fall* (*Durch Adams Fall is ganz verderbt* or In Adam's Fall the World was lost), in which heavy word painting was employed as the "accompaniment exemplifies the practice-common to many composers of the Baroque-of recognizing, by means of pictorial or symbolic motives, the visual images or underlying ideas" of the chorale's text (Burnett, Lecture 10). In this chorale's case, the idea of fall

from grace is shown through a harsh falling motif in the pedals. Chromatic lines resplendent in the inner voices suggest sorrow and sin and the torture that ensues from committing wrongdoings. The serpent or snake, a telltale pictorial symbol of the Devil and sin, is present in the text as well as in the winding, agonized parts of the inner voices. In addition, characteristic of Bach, tension and the concept of loss are maximized by the harmonic absence of a definitively established tonic until the very last chord. Thus, *Durch Adams Fall* is significant for Bach's masterful portrayal of the text and in doing so, bringing out the emotionally laden passionate potential of the text, overachieving in his job as a composer and good Lutheran.

2. Johann Sebastian Bach began writing cantatas from 1703-1708 in Arnstadt and Muhlhausen (on special occasions only however due to his being expected to write solely "organist's music" as a hired organist). Cantatas are sacred Lutheran works for chorus, soloists and orchestra. They were performed before the sermon and after the gospel reading. Some are for soloists only in which the chorus only sings the concluding chorale. In the church service the cantata was often referred to as the "polyphonic piece" or known as a concertato motet or sacred concerto since "cantata" was still considered a secular term. During Bach's early and middle career, he composed two different types of sacred cantata. The earliest form has a biblical/chorale text in which the text is based solely on the Bible (up to c. 1708, examples being Nos. 196 & 71). After 1708, the cantata is based on a blend of Biblical and chorale texts (e.g. No. 131 & 106). Lastly, the cantata was based solely on a chorale hymn (chorale/variation) (e.g. No. 4 "Christ Lag in Todesbanden"). Most of these three different types within Bach's first stage of cantata writing with biblical/chorale text have a central idea or theme. They feature several

important unifying characteristics, beginning with their seven movements. The early cantatas resemble a cross with the central chorus acting as the crossbeam. Based on Buxtehude's model, they are absent of da capo arias or recitatives (employing elaborate ariosos instead) and any breaks between movements. The vocal writings are very similar to the organ style of the late 17th to early 18th centuries. The choruses "are in style concertato with an abundance of ideas, none of which are fully developed (motet style- each line of text is given a different musical idea)" (Burnett, Lecture 12). Further, Bach quotes several different chorale melodies and texts, 3rd related keys are symbolic of the Trinity and the instruments have completely independent parts and are fashioned as a separate choir to that of the chorus.

A defining example of this first cantata style in Biblical text is Cantata No. 106, "Gottes Zeit is die allerbeste Zeit" (God's time is best), composed in 1708 in Muhlhausen. This cantata was considered "organist's music" as it was composed for a special occasion of some sort. It opens with a "sonatina" for 2 violas da gamba and recorders with organ continuo. The two records entwined a funeral wreath over a 5ths cycle. Save the chorale at the end, the text is based on the Bible. The opening instrumental sonatina is in the 1-flat key of F Major. The opening chorus (motet style) in the sections follows. The first two sections, "God's time is best" and "For man liveth" march along in F major before the abrupt modulation to the relative d minor on the fitting words "and we die" (in accordance with the word-painting and emotional adherence to the text). D minor then goes to its dominant of A, followed by a tenor arioso in d minor, then a bass arioso (accompanied by recorders obbligato) in d minor that cadences in g minor. Here, the central chorus in fugal texture arrives in G minor with a G major chord

cadence as common practice. The main chorus reads “It is the ancient law: man, thou must perish.” The chorus synthesizes three different events: 1. The rigidity of the “law” (Old Testament) with a fugal texture in the lower voices, 2. The New Testament redemption of Christ sung by the sopranos, and 3. The chorale (“My cause is God’s”) played by the instrumental ensemble and representative of the congregation’s emotion. The central chorus is followed by an arioso for alto in C minor, then an arioso for bass with a chorale sung by alto in B-flat followed by D minor. The arioso for alto follows the now clear pattern of increasing the number of flats per section (from 1 in F major, to 1 in d minor, to 2 in g minor, to 3 in c minor). As the cantata nears the concluding chorus, it descends back to 2 flats in g minor’s relative major of B-flat for the bass arioso before returning to the 1-flat key of d minor. This transition from B-flat to d minor also initiates the thirds progression, which is confirmed by the move back to F major in the motet-style concluding chorus. This conclusion has 2 sections: the opening chorale and the double fugue it breaks into on the last line of the hymn. It is fitting that the peak of flats (and the peak of the departure of the F major tonic) of g minor occurs during the climax and middle of the cantata, the central chorus. This secures its emotional weight in the cantata, giving more importance to the text than any other section. Being the most text-laden section, it is therefore more imperative that Bach assigns the most importance to its powerful messages. Mostly initially dealing with the inevitable perishment of man and the strictness of God’s law, the key of g minor is necessary. However, as the redemption of Christ follows and the closing chorale preaches giving oneself entirely to the cause of God, it is also fitting that Bach conclude the central chorus with a Picardy third on a G major chord. Also emphasizing the central chorus’s importance is its fugal texture,

unique from the rest of the cantata. Thus, “Gottes Zeit” is a perfect culmination of all the meaningful characteristics present in Bach’s first biblical text cantata writing.

The second stage of Bach’s early cantata writing is known as Free Poetry (or Reform) Cantatas. Here marks the first time the word “cantata” is used. However, the conservative Lutheran service still avoids the term due to its secular connotations. This “free poetry” involves the absence of Biblical and chorale texts, and direct quotations are replaced by paraphrasing of the Bible texts. If written well, this can help ease the composer’s struggle to adhere rigidly to the rhythm of the true text, and allow the music to breathe more naturally. The free poetry cantatas began in Weimar (c. 1712-1714), where Bach was influenced by Erdmann Neumeister’s idea of the “Reform cantata.” A pastor working in Hamburg around 1700, Neumeister injected the da capo aria and recitative texts into the cantata in the belief that the cantata should make use of Italian opera (Orthodox Lutheran). Neumeister’s follower, poet Salomon Franck, became Bach’s poet in Weimar and Franck is responsible for the solid and highly passionate texts for Bach’s cantatas nos. 21, 61, and 31. During Bach’s “Fifth Period,” he was hired as Kantor (though he was never defined as so) and Municipal Kapellmeister (the City’s Civic Director of Music) for Leipzig, Germany. He was also given the post of Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony in Dresden. A converted Catholic, the Elector was both Elector of Saxony (a mainly Lutheran state) and King of Poland. As head of Leipzig’s church music, Bach was responsible for overseeing the daily music for church services at St. Thomas’s, St. Nicholas’s, The New Church, and St. Peter’s. His official duties required a cantata for every Sunday and feast day of the liturgical year. Only about 200 of the approximately 350 cantatas in the 5 complete cantata cycles he wrote have

been maintained. These free/chorale cantatas have texts taken from chorale hymns, either by direct quotation or in freely paraphrased poetry. They are generally in seven movements, the “first and last choruses being the corner-stones of the cantata since they are the ones that directly quote from the first and last stanzas of the chorale” (Burnett, Lecture 13). The movements in between compiled of arias and recitatives paraphrase the inner chorale stanzas. The first movement can be considered a complex setting of the chorale for chorus and orchestra (or a Chorale Fantasia) whose 1st stanza of the hymn is a direct quotation and whose melody is sung once through (often in the soprano) over a thick polyphonic texture in the lower voices. Movements 2 through 6 are comprised of recitatives and arias in which poetry is either free paraphrase or directly quoted from the text. The last seventh movement is generally a simple 4-part setting of the chorale where the 12th stanza of the hymn is a direct quote of both text and music.

A prime example of Bach’s free/chorale cantata period is Cantata BWV 8 “Liebster Gott, wann werd ich sterben” (Dearest God, when will I die). A cantata on Casper Neumann’s 5-verse hymn, it was written in the 2nd series of cantatas for September 24, 1724. The “unknown librettist retained the first and last verses as they stand and paraphrased the inner verses into movements 2-5” (Burnett, Lecture 13). The opening chorus is a chorale fantasia in ritornello form and directly quotes from the chorale hymn’s first verse. The haunting hymn’s question (Dearest God, when will I die?) is given extraordinary expression through the musical setting. The instrumental ritornello has its own thematic material, the 2 oboes d’amore hold sway over the rest, plucked (or pizzicato) strings are used and a flute imitates the tolling of funeral bells in the highest register. The choir performs the chorale line by line into the instrumental

texture, serving as episodes between ritornello statements by the orchestra. The ritornello statements follow the E major chorale's harmonic progression of I-V-vi-I. In 1659, Daniel Vetter, organist at St. Nicholas's church in Leipzig, composed a funeral hymn whose melody is used for the chorale hymn, appearing always in the soprano and doubled by the horn. These characteristics all serve to dramatically lend deep expression to the text in the very opening of the cantata, thus in the process raising the bar for the rest of the piece. Symbolism is employed in the use of horns doubling the main melody, as horns represent death and the afterlife. Further, the funeral bells being sounded through flutes in the highest register indicates the overall supremacy and power of heaven over hell and lends an element of positivity to the daunting question of impending death. This hymn "sounds quite 'modern' (i.e. has a strong melodic profile) in its expressiveness compared with most of the other hymns chosen for the chorale cantatas" (Burnett, Lecture 13). The tonal idea of the entire cantata is founded upon the falling succession of 3rds as it begins with a chorale fantasia in E major, followed by a c-sharp minor tenor aria to an alto recitative, followed by an A major bass aria, an f-sharp minor to g-sharp minor soprano recitative, and concluding with the closing chorale in E major. It is also worth noting that this falling succession of 3rds involves a back-and-forth between major and minor harmonies with each section of the cantata. The unknown librettist paraphrased the three middle arias in the form of 2 arias and 2 recitatives in order to adapt the hymn as a viable cantata basis, while directly retaining the pillars of the original text, the first and last verses.

Another masterwork in the free/chorale cantatas period of Bach's career is the famous Cantata BWV 78: Jesu der du meine Seele (Jesus, who delivered my soul). From

Bach's 2nd cycle of cantatas, it was composed for the 14th Sunday after Trinity on September 10, 1724. Johann Rist created the chorale hymn in 1641 and it tells of the cleansing of the ten lepers. Like Cantata BWV 8, the librettist who paraphrased and arranged the cantata's text is unknown. The paraphrased text includes meditations from the gospel for the Sunday (St. Luke XVII, 11-19). As always, the "first verse of the chorale (the chorale has 12 stanzas, each 8 lines long) forms the basis for a full-scale choral movement (opening chorale fantasia), in which the individual lines of the hymn are skillfully introduced in episodes based on imitation" (Burnett, Lecture 13). Each of these episodes has a high point marked by the entrance of the soprano, who sings the phrases of the chorale melody unembellished and is accompanied by the flute and the horn. The most striking feature of the opening chorus, however, can be attributed to Bach's wedding of the chorus to the strict structure of a chaconne (or passacaglia), whose path is marked by a constantly-recurring melodic four-measure bass line. This descending chromatic passage with the interval of the 4th dominating is a well-used lamenting idea, symbolizing sadness and suffering throughout the Baroque period and beyond. Bach manages to combine three distinct forms in cantata 78's opening chorus. A passacaglia theme with variations is present throughout the entire opening due to the strict recurring four-measure lamenting bass line. The omnipresence of this bass line allows inner and upper voices to experiment with other forms, as the lower voices carry out fugal episodes with "the chorale sung 'straight' in the sopranos" (Burnett, Lecture 13). Lastly, the ritornello/concerto form is dictated by the harmonic cadences of the chorale melody, which occur simultaneously with the lower voices' fugal episodes and the passacaglia theme and variations between the bass and rest of the voices. The way in

which the individual lines of the hymn are introduced in episodes based on imitation allows a fugal form to develop while maintaining its ritornello/concerto form in the process. Thus, in cantata 78 Bach successfully weaves three distinct forms into one powerful opening chorale fantasia.

3. George Frideric Handel lived from 1685-1759 and began his career as a composer of Italian opera seria in 1706, after initially studying in Halle, Germany until 1703 and then in Hamburg from 1703-1706. Apprenticing under Reinhard Keiser, a regarded German opera composer of the time, Handel wrote his first opera, *Almira*, in Hamburg in 1705. With the support of several powerful Roman cardinals, Handel accepted their invitation to travel to Italy and he visited Florence, Naples and Venice while stationed in Rome. Though a Lutheran, Handel composed Italian opera seria, several secular cantatas, and Catholic church music during his Italian stay and was even inducted into the Roman Arcadian Society (home to Corelli and A. Scarlatti a year previous) in 1707, under Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni's patronage. His first oratorio, *La Resurrezione*, was composed for the Roman Arcadian Society in 1708, as well as some of his secular cantatas.

Handel's Italian opera seria in London was highly founded upon the type of Italian opera seria established by Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782), who was 18th century's most famous Italian poet and librettist. Baroque and Classical composers of the 18th century set his over 100 librettos countless times to opera. Metastasio built opera seria's standard formation: the "conflict of human passions based on Greek or Latin history or mythology showing the monarch as a noble and charitable character who struggles against adversity to overcome and forgive his enemies" (Burnett, Lecture 14). This entire procedure culminates in a format of 3 acts in which all the action is carried on in

recitativo semplice, sometimes accompanied in highly emotional scenes. Several interrelated plots revolving around a monarch and/or hero and his love serve to dramatize the main love story that takes center stage. Subplots (or *accidenti*) are provided by the love entanglements of the main couple's confidants and servants. High voices, either female sopranos or male castratos, played all the main characters and rarely did a tenor voice play the male lead (tenors were generally associated with comic servants). Handel was one of the first composers to give a tenor a male lead in opera seria because he had a magnificent tenor, John Beard, who sung his oratorios in London. The villain of sorts was often played by a bass voice, and all "lead parts sang elaborate coloratura" whose "music was rarely individualized as to character (everyone sang similar music which changed according to the emotion of the text, not according to who was singing it)" (Burnett, Lecture 14). This identical sounding music evenly given to both genders gave rise to the term "sexless heroics" often ascribed as a label in Baroque opera seria. Lastly, the score of an opera seria labeled that each act is divided into numerous scenes. Each new scene featured a different arrangement of characters that conversed in recitativo semplice concluding in a grand da capo aria for an individual character. Handel was appointed artistic director of the freshly formed Royal Academy of Music (based on Paris' French Academie royale de musique) in 1719. There, he formed an Italian opera company, writing its very first repertory, and from 1719-1728 he dominated the scene as England's incontestable head of the Italian operatic style.

Handel's greatest opera, and arguably greatest work, is 1724's *Giulio Cesare*, an opera seria in 3 acts. It was an immediate resounding success and was his fifth work for the Royal Academy Music. Nicola Haym arranged the libretto from earlier Italian

librettos. *Giulio Cesare* contains the many elements that make it an opera seria, as well as special traits securing its place as a masterpiece surpassing its contemporary opera seria of the time. It follows the formula of opera seria in its depiction of a noble and charitable monarch (Giulio Cesare) who is entangled in a love affair with Cleopatra, which must overcome much adversity to flourish, as does his quest against Pompey the Great to gain control of the Roman world. The parts, save the villains Curio (Roman tribune) and Achilla (general of the army and Tolomeo's counselor as well as in love with Cornelia) are sung by alto castratos or sopranos. Cornelia, the wife of Pompey is sung by a contralto. The two different "kings", Giulio Cesare, Roman emperor and Ptolemy, king of Egypt, both are sung by alto castratos, indicating an equal footing of sorts, which is in line with opera seria's non-emphasis on individualizing characters. Though in many ways enemies to each other, their music is somewhat identical with emphasis on musical dynamics dependent on changes in the text rather than on character roles. Further, in accordance with the general "rules" of opera seria established by Metastasio, each new scene of *Giulio Cesare* features a different configuration of characters. In addition, Caesar's 2nd aria takes place at the conclusion of Act I, a "Rage" aria in full da capo form in c minor as outlined by Metastasio. Act I begins with an Allegro French style binary form overture in A major with string orchestra and oboes doubling the violin parts. There is a unique seamlessness in the method in which Handel moves from the overture to Act I, Scene I (Non troppo allegro) as it begins as if it were still part of the minuet overture in A major. The entrance of four French horns, however, marks the opening chorus' commencement. Caesar's first aria then occurs as the music shifts to D Major and Caesar accepts the assembled Egyptians' honors of victory. This is a "cavatina" form aria,

exceeding the normal structure of saving one grand da capo aria for the end of the act. Short and sung without repeats, this first aria, in a way, builds up and bolsters the finale grand da capo aria of Caesar's 2nd aria at Act I's conclusion and adds a triumphant conclusion to the first scene, a trait common in opera seria. In Scene 2, the other main characters appear and the harmony goes from G to C with recitativo semplice singing carrying out the action (as Metastasio's formula indicates). Scene 3 continues in recitativo semplice. However, there is a striking shift in harmony as it travels from A Major to a tritone away to E-flat major. This dissonant change in harmony, the first of its kind in the opera, parallels the change in mood after Achilla presents Caesar with the head of Pompey. The Romans are all horrified at the Egyptians' barbarity and Caesar turns on Achilla and throws him out of the palace. This helps shed positive light on Caesar, an important aspect of an opera seria plot line. The drama is maximized by this first occurring accidental of E-flat and the "devil"-like leap of a tritone, foreshadowing the incensed "Rage" aria occurring directly after. Caesar's 2nd "Rage" aria is in full da capo form, following opera seria's guidelines and is in c minor, the first minor key of the opera. Thus, the harmonic "progress of the opening of Act I mirrors the unfolding drama, moving from a very bright A major (sharp key) to a very 'outraged' c minor (flat key) at the end of the 3rd scene" (Burnett, Lecture 14). The introduction of E-flat in the 3rd scene helps prepare the 3-flat key of c minor (in which an e-flat is required to stabilize the c minor tonic). Thus, Handel closely follows the general prerequisites of opera seria established by Metastasio but boldly enriches the style as well through dramatic word painting, lending deeper expression to the libretto through an intense harmonic progression achieved seamlessly scene to scene.

Handel's conception of opera seria differs from that of Rameau's in many ways. First of all, Rameau favored employing dissonance as often as possible (according to his theory, each chord besides the tonic should carry a dissonance whenever possible). Handel, on the other hand, saved dissonances for highly expressive moments or climactic scenes in an act. Rameau used many dissonant chords including diminished 7ths, augmented 6ths, as well as a huge range of modulations to keys with 5 or more accidentals, while Handel stuck to only adding a couple or more accidentals at most. This is exemplified in Rameau's *Hippolyte* finale of Act IV where the monster rises from the sea and a range of chords and 7th chords appear with many flats applied. Handel's climactic scene in Act I, on the contrary, simply leaps a tritone away from A to modulate to c minor. They also differed in their use of da capo arias. Rameau employed da capo arias set apart from the recitative and with "coloratura passages along side rondeau/continuo arias of Lully type" (Burnett, Lecture 9). Rameau's structure of an act consists of an ariette (either da capo or rondeau) to a recitative broken up with arioso, to a duet or ensemble, to a recitative, to a divertissement with dancers and chorus to a concluding recitative and final chorus. Simply put, Handel's general structure is much more stripped down. A chorus is used in Act I solely in the first scene, after the overture. An aria doesn't occur until the end of Scene 1, and a da capo aria is reserved for the culminating final scene of Act I. There are also no divertissements or dances in Handel's construction and Handel uses recitativo semplice to carry out the action, while Rameau breaks it up frequently with "airs" (or arioso) and duets or ensembles. Instruments of the orchestra also accompanied these arias and ariosos used by Rameau, while Handel's fewer arias were rarely, if at all accompanied. Of course, both being expressive and

successful opera composers, they employ word painting and striking harmonic changes to emphasize drama and emotion of the libretto. Rameau, however, uses many more accidentals at a more rapid pace to achieve this end, often resulting in numerous modulations to far-out keys, while Handel definitively modulates at key scene moments and stays in a harmonic area for longer. Both composers use plots based on the clash of human passions present in Greek or Latin history or mythology, as was the traditional opera seria practice. Lastly, Rameau's scene changes do not necessarily involve a reconfiguration of on-stage characters, while Handel's distinctly does. This results in fewer delineated scenes in Rameau's style of opera seria than Handel's.

4. After 1728, when Handel began losing his greatest singers to rival companies supported by the Prince of Wales and English parodies and burlesques of opera began to appear in London, Handel never achieved another operatic accomplishment. When in 1733 the Academy attempted to reopen again and quickly collapsed, Handel focused his energies on the composition and invention of the English oratorio. Handel was strongly influenced by the English's anthems, choral music and masques (as pioneered by Purcell), German cantata, and Italian solo oratorio and church music. All these relied a lot on the chorus, and thus the Handelian oratorio involved much choral drama. They were usually based on Old Testament stories, had native English and non-operatic voices (church singers), often replaced recitative with chorus which was "more musical and dramatic" with "action advanced by full musical means" (Burnett, Lecture 15). There was less use of da capo arias and new aria forms including the cavatina were developed. Lastly, because oratorios were generally performed during the Lenten season when opera or any staged performance was prohibited, there were no scenery or costumes. Handelian

oratorio developed in two ways simultaneously, both initiated by Handel during his first post as Kappelmeister to the Duke of Chandos in England in 1718. Written in 1718, *Esther* is his first work to be labeled an oratorio and was semi-acted and largely influenced by the English anthem. The libretto, taken from the Old Testament, led to Handel's sacred oratorios, including *Israel in Egypt*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Solomon*, and *Saul*. These oratorios marked Handel's achievement in the first entrance of the tenor voice as a heroic male lead. Also composed in 1718 was *Acis & Galatea*. Called "a masque," *Acis* "is a large-scale serenata influenced by Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*" (Burnett, Lecture 15). This led to Handel's secular oratorios including *Hercules*, *Semele*, *Susanna*, and *The Triumph of Truth*. The early piece written as a prototype for the Duke of Chandos marks the first time a secular vocal work has its nearest equivalent to English opera. Despite its heavy use of chorus and lack of staging, it paves a new road for the possibilities of the oratorio form to expand into what could be considered an entirely new type of opera.

The first masterpiece oratorio written after the Royal Academy of Music's fall is 1738's *Israel in Egypt*. It tells the Old Testament story of the plagues of Egypt and the last escape of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity. Rather than using secco recitative, the oratorio is a choral drama with chorus that narrates the main events of the story. Resplendent with drums, trombones, strings, oboes and trumpets, the oratorio has only two da capo arias; the other numbers are all mostly double choruses. Choruses 6-9 of the first part, "The Plagues of Egypt" begin with chordal homophony in B-flat major with the commanding text: "He spake the word." The 7th chorus then moves up to C major and features more polyphony for the text "He sent them hailstones for rain." The ever-

increasing polyphony continues for the 8th chorus, which is a choral recitative. Depicting the disorientation of the Egyptians, it serves as a transition between the 7th and 9th choruses as well as a key transition by switching from fm to e-flat minor to em to E Major (as the V of a minor), before cadencing on a minor for the 9th chorus. This 9th chorus and first definitively minor section in a minor is thus the first climax of the first part of the oratorio. Owing to the grisly nature of the text, which depicts the execution of Egyptians' first-born, the words "He smote all the first born of Egypt," are sung with force and dominance. Furthermore, the polyphony reaches its climax as it has risen steadily from the 6th to 9th chorus.

Handel's choral style differs from Bach mainly in the use of the chorus. Handel uses a full choir much more extensively than Bach. Bach tends to save the full choir for final movements or climactic moments. Further, Bach's vocal writing featured instruments with completely independent parts and treated them as a separate "choir" to the actual chorus, while Handel's chorale style featured more unity between instruments and voice parts. Bach's vocal writing tended to be very "organ-like," that is fast moving notes but often close together with few leaps. Handel's on the other hand has a generally slower, easier to grasp speed, with unified singing of melodic lines that are not necessarily step-wise in motion (e.g. choruses 6-9 of *Israel in Egypt*). Bach and Handel's styles are unified in their lack of da capo arias and recitatives and use of ariosos instead. However, Handel did use da capo arias on occasion, while Bach generally avoided them entirely. Similarly, both use stories from the Old Testament as libretto, but Bach's texts are often more paraphrased or feature more of a mix of Biblical and chorale texts. Furthermore, Handel's singers were native English speakers, making his oratorios have a

more mass appeal and accessibility to the English congregation. Bach, on the other hand, never used an English text and would sometimes not even use a German translation, sticking rather to the original Latin biblical text. Overall, Handel's chorale style was much more "opera"-like in that it was super dramatic (known as a "choral drama") and often told sweeping large-scale stories with clear-cut beginning, middle and ends with obvious climatic points. Bach's style was in many ways, more low-key in comparison, as it was by no means opera-like, with less use of short, dramatic chorus lines (e.g. the recurring "He smote all the first born of Egypt" in Handel's *Israel in Egypt*) and more emphasis placed on including an abundance of ideas, none of which get fully developed. Thus, Bach's choral style is more complex yet calmer (notwithstanding its undeniable density and intensity) in its effect and presentation, while Handel's features a more sweeping plot-line and emphasis on powerful, individual choruses that serve as high points in the plot.