

Chapter 14 The Invention of Opera

1. [307] What is the etymology of the word *opera*? Give a definition.
Italian for work; a drama with continuous, or nearly continuous, music that is staged with scenery, costumes, and action
2. Do the same for *libretto*.
Italian for little book; usually a play in rhymed or unrhymed verse
3. What are the two viewpoints of opera's origin?
 1. Recreate ancient Greek tragedy (a drama, sung throughout, in which music conveys the emotional effects)
 2. Blend of existing genres (plays, theatrical spectacles, dance, madrigals, and solo song)
4. List briefly the distant precedents.
Choruses and principal lyric speeches in the plays of Euripides and Sophocles were sung; liturgical plays; Renaissance plays often had songs or offstage music
5. (308) Now the recent influences (with examples) We'll start with the drama. TQ: Do you know the Orpheus story?
Pastoral drama (in courts and academies) (Angelo Poliziano's *Favola d'Orfeo*, 1471)
6. Madrigal.
Madrigals, the madrigal comedy or madrigal cycle, such as Orazio Vecchi's *L'Amfiparnaso* (The Slopes of Parnassus, 1594)
7. Intermedio.
Intermedio (pl. intermedi), a musical interlude on a pastoral, allegorical, or mythological subject performed between acts of a play
8. What was the function of an intermedio? How many in a normal play?
There were no curtains, so the intermedi were a diversion; six, one on each side of the five acts of a play
9. What was the title of the famous Florentine intermedio of 1589? Who contributed to them?
La pellegrina (The Pilgrim Woman); Emilio de' Cavalieri, producer, composer, choreographer; Ottavio Rinuccini, poet; Jacopo Peri, singer-composer; Giulio Caccini, singer-composer; Giovanni de' Bardi, count
10. (309) Who is Vittoria Archilei?
Famous soprano known for improvised ornamentation
11. Statement: These musical/theatrical genres needed an interest in ancient Greek drama in order for opera to come to life.
12. What were the two views of music in ancient Greek tragedy?
Only the choruses were sung (Andrea Gabrieli, 1585, *Oedipus Rex*); the play was sung throughout (Girolamo Mei)
13. (310) What were Mei's conclusions?
Single melody sung by a soloist or chorus with or without accompaniment. The melody (register, rhythms, tempo) could have a powerful effect on the listener
14. What was the Florentine camerata? Who were its members?
Circle or association (an academy); Bardi, Galilei, Caccini, (Peri)
15. What was Galilei's published work?
Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna, 1581.
Polyphony can't accurately represent the emotional meaning of text; word painting and such were childish
16. What genre resulted? Definition, please.
Monody; accompanied solo singing
17. (311) What was Caccini's publication? What were the two types of monody? What is the modern term for the second?
Le nuove musiche, 1602; aria = strophic form; madrigal = through composed; solo madrigal
18. (312) Who carried on Bardi's gatherings? What was the first opera?
Jacopo Corsi, Jacopo Peri, Ottavio Rinuccini; *Dafne*, 1598
19. A second example was offered by Emilio de' _____ with his musical morality play _____.
Cavalieri; *Representation of the Soul and the Body*
20. In _____, _____ set _____'s *L'Euridice* to music. Later _____ did one too. Which one was best?
1600; Peri; Rinuccini's; Caccini; Caccini's was more melodic; Peri's was closer to the ancient Greek play in his use of recitative
21. (313) SR and the following text. What was the objective of recitative?
Combine speech and melody; stressed syllables coincided with the bass
22. (314) What is a ritornello? Sinfonia?
Refrain; ensemble piece

23. (316) SR. Know something about Monteverdi's life and list his works.
Child prodigy; Mantua; L'Orfeo and L'Arianna; maestro di cappella at St. Marks in Venice, 1613-1643; two late operas (Return of Ulysses, Coronation of Poppea)
Three surviving operas; 9 books of madrigals, 3 volumes of secular songs; Vespers of 1610; 3 masses; 4 collections of sacred music
24. What is Monteverdi's first opera? Date? Librettist? Orchestra?
L'Orfeo; 1607; Alessandro Striggio; 40 instruments named
25. (317) Why is "Possente spirto" important? What is its form?
Ornamentation written out by the composer; strophic variation
26. What is the overall structure of Act I?
Arch form
27. (319) What was Monteverdi's second opera?
L'Arianna
28. What is stile concitato? What piece is cited as the example of this compositional technique?
Rapid reiteration on a single note; excited style; The Combat of Tancred and Clorinda
29. Name his two last operas.
The Return of Ulysses, 1640; The Coronation of Poppea, 1643
30. What is recitativo arioso or arioso?
Style midway between aria and recitative
31. (320) What is Marco da Gagliano's opera?
Dafne (1608)
32. The courts preferred _____ and _____. Francesca Caccini wrote a ballet that had opera traits. It was called _____.
Ballet; intermedi; The Liberation of Ruggiero from the Island of Alcina (1625)
33. Francesca Caccini was a _____, _____, and _____. She performed with her sister, _____, and step-mother, _____, in a _____. She composed ___ dramatic entertainments.
Singer, teacher, composer; Settimia, Margherita, concerto delle donne; 14
34. (321) Where is the next location for opera? What year? What family?
Rome; 1620; Barberini
35. Besides pastoral and mythological plots, what other subjects were used?
Epics, saints, comic
36. Who is the librettist? The name of the opera and composer.
Giulio Rospigliosi; Sant' Alessio (1632); Stefano Landi
37. What are the two types of solo singing?
Recitative and aria
38. Who played female roles in Rome? Male roles outside Rome later in the century?
Castrati; castrati
39. What happened in 1637? By 1678 there were how many?
First public opera house (Teatro San Cassiano) in Venice; 9
40. (322) What were the three sources of Venetian opera?
Mythology, epics, Roman history
41. How many acts? What about choruses and dances? There's a continuation of the separation between recitative and aria, but how did aria change?
3; eliminated; more lyrical, often in triple meter
42. Who are the leading composers?
Cavalli (30; *Giasone*), Cesti
43. (323) Who were the singers? What was their worth? Signora Girolama, Giulia Masotti (two to six times a composer), Anna Renzi
44. Where were Italian operas performed?
Touring companies to northern Italy; Paris, 1640s, Luigi Rossi, Orfeo; Innsbruck, Cesti, 1654; Vienna, Cesti, Il pomo d'oro; France has their own starting 1670.
45. What are the style characteristics illustrated by *Orontea*?
Entertain; static, rapid recitative; strophic, lyrical aria
46. (324-25) Impresario? Diva? Prima donna? Statement: The soprano was larger than her role and could exercise prerogative. She was the consummate actress/singer. Producer; star; first lady, the lead soprano in an opera; Anna Renzi.
47. (327) What are the three features of Italian opera at 1650?
Concentration on solo singing rather than ensembles and instrumental music; separation of recitative and aria; use of varied styles
48. What do you think are the important summary points? Began as an effort to recreate Greek drama; there were precedents; solo singing and theatrics took over though there were later reforms to restore drama; operas were generally performed in the season in which they first appeared; if it were performed later, pieces were substituted for the original; opera influenced church music, vocal chambers music, and instrumental music