

Module 2: The musical and dramatic influences shaping Opera

I. Introduction

- A. Overview of the Module
- B. Exploration of the beginnings of opera
- C. Focus on the musical and dramatic influences shaping its formation

II. Historical Precedents

- A. Dafne (1597) as the generally acknowledged first opera
- B. Recognition of opera's roots in a rich history of musical and theatrical forms
- C. Influence of Greek theater and the Roman theater's retention of music

III. Medieval Foundations

- A. Emergence of liturgical drama in the 11th century
- B. Significance of Gregorian chant as a musical form
- C. Development of the mystery as a visually oriented theatrical form

IV. Guittone di Arezzo: A Medieval Figure

- A. Guido's contributions to the modern musical system
- B. Introduction of 'do-re-mi' for teaching musical notes
- C. The Guidonian hand as a mnemonic device in music education

V. Renaissance Evolution

- A. Evolution of secular music during the Renaissance
- B. Masquerade as a festive spectacle during Carnival
- C. Intermedio as a theatrical spectacle performed between acts of plays
- D. Pastorale as a combination of words, dance, and song prefiguring the earliest operas

VI. Camerata Fiorentina (Late 16th Century)

- A. Composition of scholars, writers, poets, and musicians
- B. Meetings at the Giovanni Bardi Palace for discussions on arts trends
- C. Objective: Revival of ancient Greek culture, ethics, and musical style
- D. Experimentation with monody—a blend of solo voice and instruments
- E. Emergence of two types of Monody: declamatory and melodic
- F. Development of recitative and aria from the two types of Monody

VI. Proliferation of Opera (Early 17th Century)

- A. Adoption of Camerata Fiorentina's ideas by composers
- B. Widespread prevalence of opera by the first decade of the 17th century
- C. Camerata Fiorentina's pivotal role in shaping musical development

VII. The Question of the First Opera

- A. Debate over Dafne (1597) as the first opera

- B. Historical significance of Jacopo Peri's *Dafne* and its limitations
- C. Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607) as the enduring earliest opera

VII. Monteverdi's Legacy

- A. Claudio Monteverdi's contributions to opera
- B. Publication of books on religious and secular music during adolescence
- C. *Orfeo* as a blend of Renaissance opulence and pastoral simplicity
- D. Introduction of enduring singing forms: aria and recitative
- E. Technical marvel of Monteverdi's recitative and its variations
- F. Monteverdi's role as the inaugural great operatic composer