

**MUSIC 301/501**  
**Women in Music**  
**Baroque Music Part I**

**Baroque Era** (Late 16<sup>th</sup> Century through about 1720 or -30)

- General traits:
  - Interest in dramatic music continued to rise
    - Investigations of ancient treatises led to experiments leading to opera
    - Madrigals were conceived with utmost drama in mind (chromaticism)
  - Two parallel lines of development for a while:
    1. Continuation of the old way of doing things: Palestrina style
    2. Experimental, radical approach: Monteverdi
  - **Monody**: an early Baroque song type where melody imitated speech patterns
  - Baroque music often uses **basso continuo** or at least has a polarized quality
  - The most defining characteristic of Baroque music is **affect**
  - Some increase in activities of women composers: more visible; composed in more genres

**What did women achieve between 1570-1700?**

- **Composition:**
  - Many madrigals published in final decades of 16<sup>th</sup> century
  - Women continued to write lots of vocal music in 17<sup>th</sup> century
  - Women wrote a little polyphonic sacred music by 1600, more in 17<sup>th</sup> century
  - By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century women were writing some instrumental music
- **Performing:**
  - In early 17<sup>th</sup> C, girls were brought to courts to be trained as singers
- **Polyphonic Music in Convents:**
  - From late 16<sup>th</sup> Century on there are many accounts of music-making at convents, esp. San Vito in Ferrara and convents in Milan
- **Private Instruction in Music:** gradually grew in popularity over church-based schools
  - Some of the most prolific women composers were educated by famous composer parents in courts (e.g. Francesca Caccini, Barbara Strozzi)
- **Music Printing:**
  - Availability of music through printed sources meant more models to study

**Deterrents for Women 1570-1700:**

- **Scarcity of professional posts for women:**
  - Most “music employers” did not employ women
- **Negative attitude toward Women's Creativity:**
  - Women experienced confinement to domestic realm
    - Music might “deflect them from concerns more appropriate to intended roles as wives and mothers”
- **Restrictions on music making in convents:**
  - Council of Trent curtailed activity, “enclosure”

### Some Italian Composers:

- **Francesca Caccini** (1587-~ 1640; daughter of Giulio) singer at Medici court
  - Trained by her famous father, lived at the court that would employ her
  - Only two works survive in print:
    - ***Il Primo Libro***: collection of songs for one or 2 voices (publ. 1618); many contained virtuosic ornamentation. Some sacred, some secular
    - ***La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*** (opera, "Liberation of Ruggiero from the Island of Alcina" (a sorceress) 1625); this is one of several known stage works; there were other dramatic works for court incl. ***Il ballo delle zingane*** ("Ballet of the gypsies," 1615; not published)
- **Barbara Strozzi** (1619-64):
  - Also daughter (illegitimate) of famous figure in music world, Giulio, poet for many operas incl. Monteverdi's
  - She wrote mostly secular cantatas
- **Isabella Leonarda** (1620-1704) (life overlaps Bach and Handel)
  - Daughter of noble family, entered convent at age 16
  - Wrote mostly religious works; late in life wrote some instrumental