

Sample Essay for Chapter 5

Describe the Baroque aesthetic and how it expressed non-musical notions about women during that era. Use sample works from the chapter to illustrate this phenomenon.

STOP and write your essay before scrolling down.

Describe the **Baroque aesthetic** and how it expressed **non-musical notions about women** during that era. Use **sample works** from the chapter to illustrate this phenomenon.

The **Baroque era** (roughly 1600-1750) was a relatively long period in music history, but was **aesthetically** bound together by its focus on emotion and irregularity. The Baroque “Doctrine of the Affections,” which leaned on the ancient Greek Doctrine of Ethos, held that music elicited specific emotional responses, and it was the work of the composer to elicit emotion in those who listened. This overarching emotional aesthetic fit well with cultural **notions about women** during this time period, and in fact, some of these notions still exist today.

Emotion in music can be expressed in many ways, but during the Baroque era there were several common practices. In general, the monodic style that featured a single vocalist over an instrumental

accompaniment allowed the singer the flexibility to express emotion by using excessive ornamentation. Further, rapid starting and stopping of sound, and extreme breath control of the singer contributed to an emotional performance. Francesca Caccini's "Maria, dolce Maria" is a good **example** of how vocal ornamentation and word painting are used to express spiritual ecstasy in a sacred text. This slower work can be contrasted with Barbara Strozzi's "Amor dormiglione" where long melismatic passages and changing speeds elicit notions of playfulness and the fickleness of love. Singing itself, and the topic of love, were strongly associated with women in part due to the direct connection between the performer's body with her audience. **For longer essays, further examples can be inserted. For example, the ornamentation technique and its connection to emotion can be heard and seen in keyboard works like those of Elisabeth Claude Jacquet de la Guerre. The essay could also detail why keyboards were connoted female.**