



Interactive Online Choir Lessons



Domine, Fili, Unigenite

Composed by Antonio Vivaldi
Lesson by Dr. J.D. Frizzell



Background

Includes Sections on:

The Composer

The Geographical Region

The Musical Stylistic Period

The Composition

Lesson # 1

About the Composer

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) was an Italian Baroque musical composer, virtuoso violinist, teacher, and Roman Catholic priest. It is important to note that at the time, Italy was not a country yet, so technically Vivaldi was from Venice, the capital of the Venetian Republic (*Repubblica di Venezia*).

One of the most famous and prolific Baroque composers, Vivaldi wrote 500 concertos, 46 operas, and dozens of sacred choral works. His most famous concerto is called *The Four Seasons*. You may recognize the *Spring* movement:



The Venetian Republic

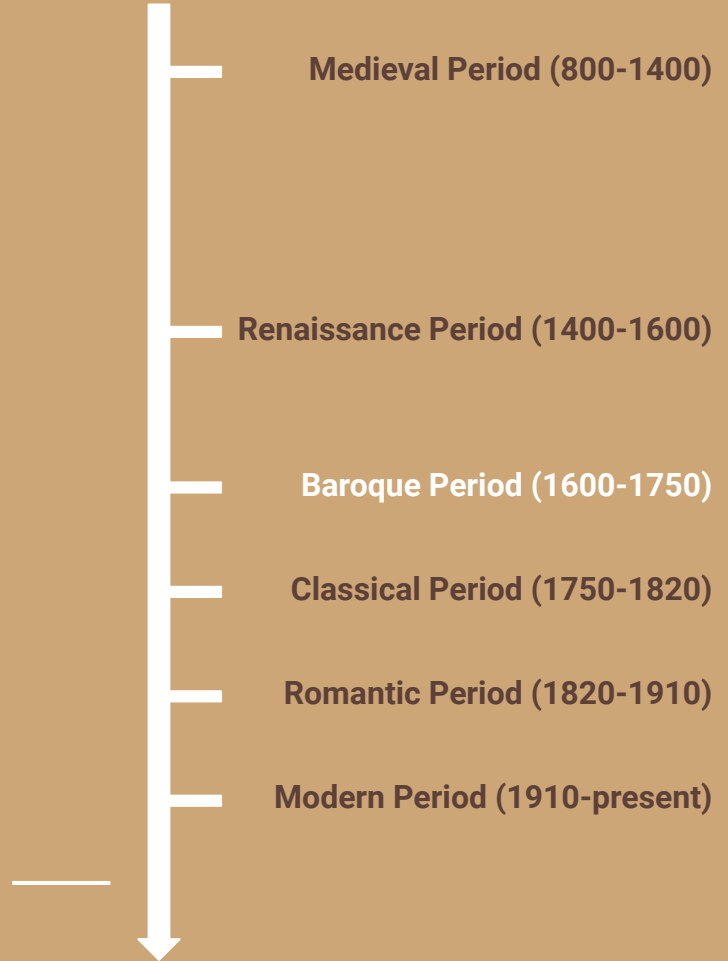
The Venetian Republic lasted from 697-1797. Located in what is now northeastern Italy, it extended through modern day Greece and Cyprus. A trading power, the Venetian Republic was ruled by a **doge** (*dōj*) along with a powerful group of nobles, aristocrats and merchants called the **Great Council of Venice**.



Venice Today



The Baroque Period 1600-1750



The Baroque Period



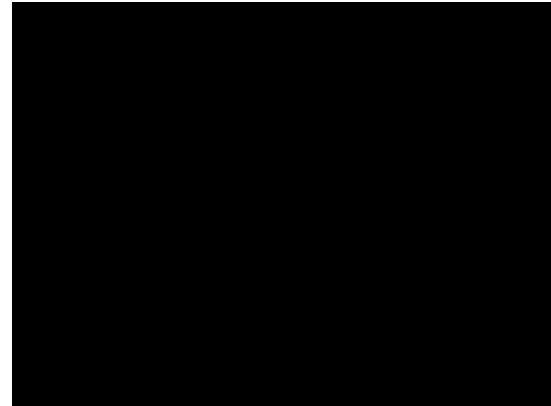
The Baroque Period Musical Characteristics

- Development of **key signatures**
Key signatures define a clear tonal center to a piece or section
- Use of **figured bass**
Employs an accompanimental instrument like harpsichord or organ to realize a bass line with “figures” to create the full harmony
- Development of the **orchestra**
Many instruments playing together, at this time usually strings plus wind and/or brass instruments
- Use of **counterpoint**
Two or more melodic lines combined
- Use of **terraced dynamics**
Sudden shifts from soft to loud or vice versa. Think of terraces like levels-- instead of gradual crescendos and decrescendos, there are abrupt changes like steps.

The Composition

Gloria was written while Vivaldi was working at the *Ospedale della Pietà*, an orphanage for girls. It has twelve movements and was most likely originally sung by all women. The movements are based on the Gloria from the **Ordinary** of the Roman Catholic Mass and they alternate between soloists and choir.

1. Gloria (Chorus)
2. Et in terra pax (Chorus)
3. Laudamus te (Sopranos I and II)
4. Gratias agimus tibi (Chorus)
5. Propter magnam gloriam (Chorus)
6. Domine Deus (Soprano)
7. Domine, Fili unigenite (Chorus)
8. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei (Contralto and Chorus)
9. Qui tollis peccata mundi (Chorus)
10. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris (Contralto)
11. Quoniam tu solus sanctus (Chorus)
12. Cum Sancto Spiritu (Chorus)



Music Theory

Includes These Topics:

Score Organization

Tonal Centers/Key Signatures

Melody and Countermelody

Melodic Fragmentation

Sequences

Lesson # 2 and Lesson #3

Music Theory

Listen to a performance of Domine,
Fili, Unigenite as performed by The
Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne,
conducted by Michael Carboz.
Follow along with the score.



The image displays a musical score for the piece "Domine, Fili, Unigenite". It consists of four staves of music, each with a vocal line and lyrics underneath. The first staff is in treble clef and contains the lyrics "Je - su, Je - su Chri -". The second staff is also in treble clef and contains the lyrics "U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su Chri -". The third staff is in treble clef and contains the lyrics "Je - su Chri - ste.". The fourth staff is in bass clef and contains the lyrics "Je - - - - su Chri -". The score is presented on a white background with black musical notation and lyrics.

Music Theory

The piece begins with an orchestral introduction followed by the altos singing the **melody**. They are joined by the basses singing the **countermelody**. Both melodies start on the pitch F, which is the **tonal center** of the key signature for this movement.

Singers either call the tonal center of a piece scale degree 1 or “do”.

Later in this lesson, when you are asked to find the tonal center of a section, find the first note of the melody-- it is the key!

6

Contr. *f*

MELODY Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni

Bassi *f*

COUNTERMELODY Do - mi - ne Fi - li

sempre f

11

- ge - ni - te, Je -

U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je -

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (measures 6-10) features a Contralto (Contr.) and Basses (Bassi) with piano accompaniment. The Contralto part is labeled 'MELODY' and the Basses part is labeled 'COUNTERMELODY'. Both vocal parts start on the pitch F. The piano accompaniment is marked 'sempre f'. The second system (measures 11-15) continues the vocal lines with lyrics: '- ge - ni - te, Je -' for the Contralto and 'U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je -' for the Basses. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and rhythmic patterns.



Music Theory

Look at the next phrase starting at measure 18.

Which voice part sings the melody?

Which voice part sings the countermelody?

What is the starting pitch of both the melody and the countermelody here?

16

Sopr. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,

Contr. - su Chri - ste.

Ten. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni -

Bassi - su Chri - ste.

The musical score is for a choral setting. It features five staves: Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, Basses, and Piano. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part begins at measure 16 with a melodic line starting on a G4. The Contralto part has a countermelody starting on a G3. The Tenor and Basses parts have a lower melodic line starting on a G2. The Piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.



Music Theory

The fourth phrase finally sees the entrance of all four voices parts at once.

Instead of a melody and countermelody, the voice parts use **melodic fragmentation**. Melodic fragmentation is when a small part of the melody is used and developed.

The first fragment occurs in the alto part in measure 26. This fragment is repeated with variation in the next measure in what voice part?

The image displays a musical score for a choral piece, spanning measures 26 to 31. The score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Latin: "ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su, U - ni - ge - ni - te, ge - ni - te, U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su". The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 26 to 30, and the second system covers measures 31 to 35. The piano accompaniment is written in the bottom two staves of each system. The vocal parts are written in the top four staves of each system. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The score is in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The tempo and style are not explicitly indicated.



Music Theory

Harmonically, this section uses what is called a **sequence**. A sequence is a series of pitches and rhythms repeated at different pitch levels.

Look at the tenor part as an example of this. What pitch does the tenor start on in the first part of the sequence? What pitch does it start on in the second? The third?

Can you identify the pattern?

26

ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,

Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,

ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li, Do - mi - ne

Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su, U - ni - ge - ni - te,

FIRST PART OF SEQUENCE SECOND

31

ge - ni - te, U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su

U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su

Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - su

Je - su, Je - su

SECOND THIRD SECOND



Music Theory

The fourth phrase ends at measure 37 with a **cadence** in the key of a minor. A cadence is a melodic or harmonic configuration that creates a resolution, usually at the end of a phrase.

Even though the tonal center has shifted to a minor, the key signature in the music has not changed. Rather, the composer uses accidentals to create the new key. This is quite common in the Baroque period.



36

Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne

Chri - ste.

Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne

Chri - ste.

sempre *f*

Need a review on key signatures? Watch this!

Key Signature



Music Theory

What compositional tool does Vivaldi again use here in the fifth phrase? (hint: small repeated sections)

36

Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne

Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne

Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne

Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne

sempre *f*

41

Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,

Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,

Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,

Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,



Music Theory

The sixth phrase begins in what tonal center (key) at measure 53?

Which voice part has the melody?

Which voice part has the countermelody?

51

Je - su Chri - ste.
ge - ni - te, Je - su Chri - ste.
Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,
- su Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni -

marcatissimo

This musical score covers measures 51 to 55. It features three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Je - su Chri - ste. ge - ni - te, Je - su Chri - ste. Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, - su Chri - ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni -". The tempo marking *marcatissimo* is present above the vocal staves. The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and a steady bass line.

56

Je - su Chri -
ge - ni - te, Je - su Chri -

This musical score covers measures 56 to 60. It features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Je - su Chri - ge - ni - te, Je - su Chri -". The vocal parts continue with melodic lines, and the piano accompaniment provides harmonic support.



Music Theory

The seventh phrase is centered around what key?

Which voice part has the melody?

Which voice part has the countermelody?

What is different about this phrase compared to the previous phrases with melody and countermelody?

61

ste. Do - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - - -

ste. Do - mi - -ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - - -



Music Theory

The eighth phrase, starting at measure 70, contains paired voices in what is called **duetting**.

What are the two paired groups of voices?

What compositional device does Vivaldi employ once again in this phrase? (hint: think patterns)

66

più f
Do - - - mi - ne
più f
Do - - - mi - ne
Je - - - su Chri - - - ste.
- su Chri - - - ste.

71

Fi - li, Do - - - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,
Fi - li, Do - - - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,
Do - - - mi - ne Fi - li, Do - - - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,
Do - - - mi - ne Fi - li, Do - - - mi - ne Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te,



Music Theory

Look at the final cadence of the voice parts in measures 88-90.

Notice how the soprano and alto parts reinforce a rhythm of half notes starting at measure 88, thereby creating a momentary feeling of being in a time signature of 2/4 instead of 3/4.

This overlapping of one time signature onto another is called **hemiola**, and it became quite common in Baroque and Classical period music.

The image shows a musical score for voice and piano, starting at measure 86. The score is written in G major (one flat) and 3/4 time. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a grand piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "su - Chri - ste. su - Chri - ste. Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - suChri - ste. Fi - li U - ni - ge - ni - te, Je - suChri - ste." The piano part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The vocal parts have a melodic line with a final cadence. The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is present at the end of each vocal line. The score illustrates the concept of hemiola, where the vocal parts temporarily feel like they are in 2/4 time by overlapping half notes.

Vocal Technique

Lesson # 4

Vocal Technique

First practice speaking the opening line in Latin.

Latin was the language used by the Roman Catholic Church for their services. In fact, in many places today, Latin is still used in Roman Catholic churches.

Domine Fili Unigenite, Jesu Christe



Record yourself speaking this first line after you have practiced it a few times. Focus on making pure, open vowels.

Vocal Technique

Now that you have practiced the Latin, sing the opening melody along with the alto. If you would prefer, you may sing this melody an octave lower.



Notice the articulation of the singer, who is lifting after the first note of each measure. This separation between notes is called **staccato**.

The other notes are connected, or **legato**.

Once you have finished practicing, please record yourself singing this line. You may sing along with the recording if it is helpful. Be patient-- it may take up to 15 minutes or so to get it!

Listening and Evaluating

Lesson # 5

Listening and Evaluating

Listen to the following two performances of *Domine, Fili, Unigenite*.

Listening and Evaluating

University of North Texas: Collegium Singers & Baroque Orchestra

Richard Sparks, conductor



Listening and Evaluating

Vivaldi's Women (Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi)

The OAE/Jerwood Experience

Note that these performers are recreating the original performance setting, including having women sing all voice parts, singing behind barriers, and performing in a church.



Listening and Evaluating

Describe the similarities and differences between the two performances in the following areas: tone, tempo, and dynamics

Which performance do you prefer? Why?