Baroque Era (Late 16th 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 16th century
  - Women continued to write lots of vocal music in 17th century
  - Women wrote a little polyphonic sacred music by 1600, more in 17th century
  - By the late 17th century women were writing some instrumental music

- Performing:
  - In early 17th C, girls were brought to courts to be trained as singers

- Polyphonic Music in Convents:
  - From late 16th 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 zигane* ("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