Claudio Monteverdi (1567 - 1643)
Biography

Monteverdi was born in Cremona, Italy on May 15, 1567.

He published his first composition at 15 years old!

By 20 years, multiple.
At a young age, Monteverdi studied composition under the Flemish composer and orchestra director Giaches de Wert and soon surpassed him, creating more avant garde compositions than his teacher.

His first book of 5-voice madrigals succeeded in establishing his reputation outside of Cremona.

He took de Wert’s place as maestro di cappella at St. Marks Cathedral in Venice in 1612 and remained there until his death in 1652.
Musical talent

During the Baroque era, with the new technologies that led to new instruments, many people were also virtuosic performers.

Monteverdi was an exception - he was primarily a composer, although he began his career as a string player under de Werk.
Public reaction

Monteverdi was propelled into the spotlight by his opposition.

“imperfection of modern music”

He expanded the polyphonic Renaissance style and introduced, utilized, the basso continuo of the Baroque period.
Monteverdi began his career as a madrigalist composer.

He coined the term *seconda prattica*, which literally means “second practice”. Refers to the less strict limitations and rules of counterpoint during the Renaissance.

Later he would expand his talents by writing the first opera.
Monteverdi was a composer with many varied abilities. In 1610, he wrote a setting of the service of *Vespers for the Blessed Virgin Mary*—in a modern style that would appeal to the officials at St. Marks. But at the same time, to please the more conservative papal service in Rome, he wrote a six-voice Mass setting in the old style.
Monteverdi is the composer that blends the Renaissance into the Baroque Era.

His shift from composing *madrigals* to magnificent *operas* exemplifies the change in musical thinking that took place between 1500 and 1600.
Operas

Opera evolved from short musical selections that were performed between different acts of a play. Monteverdi's first opera moved this process out of its experimental era and provided the first fully developed example of the new genre.

*L’Orfeo* - written in 1607, with a libretto written by Alessandro Striggio.

This was followed in 1608 by *L’Arianna*, which, despite its popularity at the time, no longer survives except in libretti, and in the title character's famous lament, a polyphonic arrangement of which appeared in his sixth book of madrigals (1614).
Orfeo
Mass for 4 Voices
His secular vocal songs and madrigals were made popular and revisited by French vocalist Nadia Boulanger in the 1940s.

In 1637, the first public opera houses were opened. As the only indigenous composer (in Venice) with any knowledge of this genre, Monteverdi was involved from the beginning.
Works Cited

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