

Classical music

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Castro BBC Documentary The Baroque era represented European musical culture between 1600 and 1750, a style that emphasized on integrating art to music. The Baroque era witnessed a surge in the use of vocal music, operas and orchestra. Composers began to examine how music could be used to depict the human spirit. The Baroque period was also characterized by increased use of homophonic compositions that illustrates the musical culture at the time. The current paper gives a critical review of the Castro BBC Documentary concerning the Castro singers of the Baroque era.

The Castrati were the undoubted 18th century music celebrities, with many people associating with their entertaining virtuoso voices that illustrated the musical culture at the time. A critical analysis of the Castro BBC documentary reveals that the documentary investigates the musical aspects of the castrati including private and public details. The castrato involved the use of unbroken soprano voices. It is widely argued that the 18th century performance was done by men castrated during childhood to keep their voices unbroken. Mutilating young boys to achieve this purpose raises numerous ethical issues.

The historical context of the castrati reveals the dark aspects of the Baroque opera. From the documentary narrative, it becomes clear that opera had shifted from the use of straight drama to artistic performances using male soprano voices. The male soprano voices could be described as artificial in the sense that they were achieved by castrating boys before they reached maturity. The vocals used in the documentary suggests that the voices are not natural, neither male nor female voices. On the other hand, the documentary illustrates the practice of using male voices for musical voices,

especially for sacred music in which women were forbidden.

The singers combined unique tempo and musical dynamics with variations in melody and combination of ornamentals to produce entertaining classics.

The music was intense and elaborate melodic lines were often used. The use of liturgical musical styles features prominently in the documentary, illustrating the entertaining aspects of the European musical culture. There are also small ensembles of solo performances combined with orchestra tunes. This helps create a unique volume and texture, a feature that characterized European classical music.

The documentary depicts the physical perspective and the medical aspects of the operation. The narrator suggests that barber surgeons performed clandestine operations and at times medical professionals were involved. The young boys were put into warm bath to enhance the operation; opium would be administered to minimize pain.

The documentary illustrates the physiological effects of the castration and their significance to the classical music. This particularly shapes the understanding of the historical developments and use of the human voice as applied in the musical culture in question. Although the physiological and biological impact of the operation remains the reserve of medical professionals, the documentary exposes intriguing connotations on its relevance to the musical culture of the time. For instance, Carlo Broschi (Farinelli) was one of the popular castrati. Farinelli performed across Europe and he represented the influential aspects of the musical culture, especially in Italy. In Part 2 of 6 of the documentary presents fast-moving beautiful Italian sceneries. Castrato vocals are played intermitted with narratives

describing the musical culture and the practice of castration. Listening to the narrative, it appears clear that the castration was illegal. The castration of boys was done secretly.

Works Cited

“ CASTRATO, BBC Documentary”. YouTube. 19th, March 2010. Retrieved April 21, 2012 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWRurzEPAcA&feature=autoplay&list=PL093EBA61CDDBC96C2&playnext=>

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