

Class 4 : The Art of Transcendence

A. Vespers of the Virgin

1. Section title A (Bernini: *Holy Spirit*)
2. Monteverdi: *Vespers* (opening)
3. Claudio Monteverdi, with the score of his *Vespers*

That was the opening of the *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* of 1610 by **Claudio Monteverdi** (1567–1643); I am taking the unusual step of starting the class with three sections from it, back to back, to show something of the extraordinary range of this music and as a lead-in to the 17th century in general. I am not sure what the organisers of that performance, the Cleveland group **Apollo's Fire**, are referring to specifically when they talk courts assembling for a wedding, but Monteverdi was working at the time for the Duke of Mantua, and composing the *Vespers* in sections. So although it is a religious work, it is quite possible that parts of it were written for some state occasion. This splendid opening section, for example, uses music from this opera *Orfeo*, which he wrote for Mantua in 1607. Other than the brief passage of plainchant, I don't think you would automatically label it as religious.

4. Monteverdi: *Vespers*, “Duo Seraphim” text

I don't imagine that anybody would mistake this text, from later in the work, as secular. In Latin, it is “Duo Seraphim *clamabat*,” Two Seraphim *shouted*. You would expect Monteverdi to blaze out with his trumpets, as in the opening. But no, he does just the opposite. The Seraphim are two tenors, separated from one another in the church, calling to one another over vast interstellar space. Instead of thrills, he goes for hypnosis, and the result is mesmerizing. Later, they are joined by a third tenor, describing the Trinity. It is six minutes long, and quite slow, but there was no way I could cut it.

5. Monteverdi: *Duo Seraphim* (from the *Vespers* of 1610)
6. Monteverdi: *Vespers*, “Nisi Dominus” text

That stereophonic effect comes up a lot in baroque music (and this is the start of the baroque), though not usually in so restrained a manner. The *Vespers* were published in Venice in 1610, and in Venice, for at least a decade, **Giovanni Gabrieli** (1557–1612) had been setting opposing choirs of singers, brass instruments, and strings in balconies on opposite sides of Saint Mark's Cathedral. Monteverdi does something very similar in a few other numbers of the *Vespers*, such as the “Nisi Dominus” shown here. Unfortunately, the space in the Cleveland church is not big enough to totally separate the choirs, but I think you can see the way the singing alternates between the smaller group on the left and the larger one on the right. And so far from being slow and hypnotic, this piece has a driving rhythm that might well have inspired **Carl Orff** in *Carmina Burana*.

7. Monteverdi: *Nisi Dominus*, excerpt (from the *Vespers* of 1610)
8. Claudio Monteverdi, with the score of his *Vespers* (repeat)

The space-spanning acoustics of the second and third clips, the almost secular splendor of the first and third, and even the interior spirituality of the second: these are all qualities that I hope to trace in the art and architecture of the rest of the century, starting in Italy, but eventually moving elsewhere.

B. Looking Up from Below

9. Mantegna: *Camera degli Sposi* (1465–74, Ducal Palace, Mantua)
10. — ditto, the court scene
11. — ditto, the oculus

Let's start secular. Over a century before Monteverdi came to Mantua, the Venetian artist **Andrea Mantegna** (1431–1506) had completely decorated the walls on one room, the *Camera degli sposi* or bridal chamber. On the walls were portraits of the Gonzaga court, both out in the countryside or indoors. These various views seem like extensions of the room itself, and if you look up to the ceiling you see various little *putti* plus some mortal figures looking down on you from above. Since the boys are naked, there is a real sense that you are about to be peed on, and if you remain dry, that precariously-balanced flowerpot could fall at any moment!

12. Section title B (Mantegna's oculus)

This is still in the 15th century, of course—the Early Renaissance—and my subject is 17th-century Baroque. But I need to start there because it occurred to me that I had been advertising this class all wrong. My original idea was that large-scale baroque art, whether painted by artists from Italy, Spain, or the Netherlands, whether for church or court, was an *international* phenomenon in which National Identity counted for less than at most other periods before or since. At the end of the period, this may be true—we'll look at this point later—but it became clear to me that the *development* of the grand baroque style was very much an Italian phenomenon, which artists from other nations copied. And one feature is emphatically Italian: illusionistic painting that dissolves the walls and ceiling of a room, especially the kind like this that Italians call *di sotto in su*, or looking up from below. This is the painting equivalent of the stereophonic choirs of Monteverdi and Gabrieli. Hence the title of this section: "Looking Up from Below."

13. Michelangelo: Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1508–12)

The great High Renaissance ceiling is, of course, the Sistine Chapel by **Michelangelo Buonarroti** (1475–1564). This is sacred, of course, and not illusionistic like the Mantegna, but series of framed pictures; you can see the Creation of Eve and the Temptation in the detail. Yet there is probably as much space given to secular themes such as the *ignudi* and Sibyls as to the sacred ones. And though Michelangelo is quite frank about his framed pictures—the Italians call them *tavola riportate*, or pictures moved to a different place—the elaborate architecture and sculpture that supports them is pure illusion.

14. Annibale Carracci: *The Loves of the Gods* (Palazzo Farnese, Rome, 1597–1608)

The Bolognese painter **Annibale Carracci** (1560–1609)—after **Agostino** and **Ludovico**, the youngest of three brothers of almost equal fame—was obviously inspired by the Sistine Chapel a century later when he painted the ceiling of the *salone* in the **Palazzo Farnese** in Rome. You can see the same framed pictures—this time as though they had simply been lifted up on propped on the cornice—and the same extraordinary confection of supporting architecture, sculptural figures, and nudes—all painted in two dimensions. This time, the theme is frankly secular: *The Loves of the Gods*. But the patron, the **Farnese family**, was not. **Alessandro Farnese**, who originally commissioned the palazzo, became **Pope Paul III** in 1534, and thereafter the palazzo was inhabited by a series of **Cardinal Nephews**—the semi-official position of a privileged relative of the reigning Pope appointed straight to the rank of Cardinal and Secretary of State, often at a very young age; the Pope’s grandson (yes), also called Alessandro Farnese, was appointed Cardinal at the age of 14.

15. Guercino: *The Triumph of Aurora* (1621, Casino Ludovisi, Rome)

Now for more rampant nepotism. On the day that Pope Gregory XV was elected Pope in 1521, he appointed his 25-year-old nephew **Ludovico Ludovisi** as Cardinal. He immediately used his rank to consolidate his status, acquiring a sizeable park, building a bijou pavillion in it, and getting the painter **Guercino** (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, 1591–1666) to paint *The Triumph of Aurora* on the ceiling of its main room. Like the Palazzo Farnese, this has a fictive architectural construction (painted by another artist, of whom more anon), but it is open to the sky, and there we see Aurora sailing by in her chariot. No framed pictures here; it is an example of what the Italians call *quadratura*, an apparently real scene viewed through the openings of a painted architectural surround.

16. Pietro da Cortona: *Allegory of Divine Providence* (1633–39, Rome, Palazzo Barberini)

But that is nothing to the nepotism of the **Barberini Family**. When the rich merchant **Maffeo Barberini** (who had used his money to buy positions in the Church) was elected **Pope Urban VIII** in 1623, he made his brother and two of his nephews Cardinals, elevated his other brother to a Dukedom, and made a third nephew Prefect of Rome. And of course they had a grand Roman *palazzo*, with a ceiling fresco by **Pietro da Cortona** (1596–1669) to knock all previous ceilings into a cocked hat. Called *Allegory of Divine Providence and Barberini Power* (though I’m not sure by whom) it is basically an apotheosis of the family and Urban VIII in particular, who is represented by the crown and crossed keys of the Papacy, together with his family crest of three bees. Wikipedia says, “Some scholars have suggested that one of the fresco’s goals was to portray the Barberini papal election, which had been rumored to have been rigged, as divine providence.” It certainly looks that way.

17. Pietro da Cortona: *Allegory of Divine Providence* (1633–39), another view

Look more closely, and you will see all the usual apparatus of painted architecture, sculpture, and swags, framing the vision above. Pietro treats the side walls a four more paintings, but the figures in them fly out and cross the architectural borders in their eagerness to join the triumph above. This is a new development in baroque ceiling painting, entirely Italian, but it would influence most of Europe.

18. Monteverdi: *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, coronation scene

There is something undoubtedly theatrical and over-the-top in this kind of painting. So it is appropriate to go back to **Monteverdi** in another guise, this time as an opera composer. Let's watch the coronation scene from his last opera, *The Coronation of Poppea*, produced in Venice in 1642. This 1979 production by **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle** has the Roman senators going through the motions, but laughing up their sleeves at the ridiculous marriage of Emperor Nero to a woman who is little better than a prostitute. The figures in black are Love, Destiny, and Fortune.

C. Heavenly Visions

19. Vignola and della Porta: façade of *Il Gesù* (1580)

20. Interior of *Il Gesù* (1580) with GB Gaulli's *Triumph of the Name of Jesus* (1674)

You might not think that such paintings would be welcome in churches, but you would be wrong. The style of the Barberini ceiling was taken to further heights by the decorators of the two principal Jesuit churches in Rome, *Il Gesù* and *Sant'Ignazio*. Although early baroque, the Jesuit mother church, *Il Gesù*, looks sober enough outside. But go in and look up—wow!

21. Giovanni Battista Gaulli: *Triumph of the Name of Jesus* (1674, *il Gesù*)

22. — the same, larger

23. — the same, detail

We talked last week about abstract concepts. Well, it would be hard to get more abstract than this: not the adoration of Jesus, but the triumph of his name—the initials IHS, which are both the name in Greek and the Jesuits' monogram and symbol. The 22-year-old **Giovanni Battista Gaulli** (1639–1709), a protégé of Bernini's, shows the holy monogram gleaming in a halo like the sun, with a host of other beings drawn up into its vortex, including this knot of intertwined figures at the bottom edge. One thing that the painted architecture does is to provide an apparent boundary that the figures can transcend; it would not be nearly as effective if it all took place in a painted sky.

24. Fra Andrea Pozzo: *Apotheosis of Saint Ignatius* (1685–94, *Sant'Ignazio*, Rome)

The *ne plus ultra* of baroque church ceiling decoration, however, is the one in the other Jesuit church in Rome, **Sant'Ignazio**, dedicated to **Ignatius Loyola**, the founder of the Jesuit order in 1540, as a quasi-military regiment of sacred shock troops, dedicated to stamping out the heresy of the Protestant Reformation, and spreading the one true Catholic faith throughout the world. Hence, besides the dynamic figure of a flying Christ welcoming Saint Ignatius into heaven, we get various references to the four continents and to the works of the Jesuit Order. The painter is **Fra Andrea Pozzo** (1642–1709). Let's experience it in a brief video. I have taken the visuals from a rather good art history talk that I'll link to online; the music is the *Gloria* from a mass by Monteverdi's pupil **Francesco Cavalli** (1602–76).

25. Cavalli: *Gloria in Excelsis*, with views of *Sant'Ignazio*

D. Bernini's Theater of Wonder

26. Bernini: Cornaro Chapel, SM della Vittoria, Rome (1647–52), doctored photo

27. — the above, with detail of a stage box

Cavalli, like Monteverdi, was an opera composer. You could call just about everything we have seen so far operatic, and certainly theatrical. Albeit on a smaller scale, those words apply to the little **Cornaro Chapel** in the church of **SM della Vittoria**. It was built in 1647-52 for the Cornaro family from Venice by **Gianlorenzo Bernini** (1598-1680). I have doctored this photograph slightly, adding a theatrical curtain (from the Paris *Opéra*) to cover the central opening, because for all the world this is more like an opera house than a chapel, with members of the Cornaro family occupying the stage boxes on either side of the proscenium to see and be seen.

28. Bernini: Cornaro Chapel, SM della Vittoria, Rome (1647–52), with shading

29. Bernini: *Saint Teresa in Ecstasy*, with text and detail

And what do you get when, metaphorically, the curtain rises? Bernini's masterpiece, the Ecstasy of Saint Teresa—the 16th-century Spanish saint, **Teresa of Avila**, who had been canonized only 25 years before. The subject comes from her autobiography, where she describes a vision of an angel with a long spear. Not only does Bernini set the figures within a stage set, he also arranges the lighting, placing a concealed skylight with amber glass above the group, so the sun lights up the gilded rays coming down from above. But look at that face! This is far more than a mere vision. Teresa describes the experience as a rapture that took possession of her, both soul and body. And that is what Bernini depicts, without any distinction between the two. But there is something disturbing, isn't there, almost voyeuristic, about a bunch of men watching a woman in what is to all intents and purposes an orgasm. That tension makes us almost feel we shouldn't be there, even as we are held fascinated. The result, paradoxically, is to make this very personal; however many people are actually watching, each of us is an audience of one.

30. Bernini: *Cathedra Petri* (1653)

31. Bernini: *Piazza San Pietro* (1656–67)

Bernini's use of the sunburst for *Santa Teresa* was not the only time he tried the trick. Here it is on a monumental scale to back the Chair of Saint Peter, or *Cathedra Petri*, behind the altar at St. Peter's. And his architectural contributions there were even grander: the Colonnade, for example, that Bernini described as "the embracing arms of the Church." Incidentally, the grand avenue that runs almost a mile from the Tiber is Mussolini's idea. Bernini wanted people to approach from ordinary streets, venture into the colonnade, and be surprised by the vast space suddenly opening out around them. That's the thing about baroque architecture: it is meant to be experienced in motion, by walking through it.

32. Bernini: *Sant'Andrea al Quirinale* (1658–61)

But it is a much more modest church I want to show now, Bernini's **Sant'Andrea al Quirinale**. He plays tricks with you before you even go in. As you are walking along the sidewalk, the wall curves back to broaden the space at one side, and then the steps come out like the cowcatcher on an old locomotive to

scoop you up. Walk inside, and you get another surprise; instead of stretching in a long aisle towards the altar, the church is an oval, broader than it is wide. The effect is to make the space suddenly expand on either side of you, even as the altar itself seems to be thrust forward into your face. Above the altarpiece—a painting of the *Crucifixion of St Andrew* on his X-shaped cross—Bernini has placed another of his concealed skylights, with a veritable cascade of boy angels coming down on golden rays. And the whole church, which is not a big one, is covered by a single oval dome, rising to a skylight with more of those angel boys appearing like dust motes in a sunbeam. Three or four years ago, I strung together clips from several tourist videos and paired them with something else from **Monteverdi's *Vespers***. I didn't realize I would be playing so much Monteverdi today. But it works too well for me to change it now.

33. Monteverdi: *Vespers* (1610), “*Lauda, Jerusalem, Dominum*” with Sant’Andrea

34. Opening title (repeat)

E. The Monster Mass

35. Section title E (Salzburg Cathedral)

The kind of decoration that takes over an entire building, as we saw with those two Jesuit churches in Rome, is sometimes referred to a **Colossal Baroque**. The most colossal musical equivalent in music is undoubtedly the *Missa Salzburgensis*, written for the 1100th anniversary of the Archbishopric of Salzburg in 1682 by **Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber** (1644–1704). It was specifically designed for performance in the Salzburg Cathedral shown here. Biber was only one of a long line of Northern composers who popped over the Alps to Venice, to hear the tradition of spatially-separated choirs founded by **Giovanni Gabrieli** in Saint Mark’s. But none developed the idea to such a scale. Written for 53 separate parts, divided between the four balconies of the cathedral and four other locations, it is the largest piece of baroque music ever composed. Here is the opening *Kyrie* in a performance from Salzburg, where it all began, conducted by **Václav Luks**. I will link to the whole thing on the website.

36. Biber: *Missa Salzburgensis* (1682), *Kyrie*

37. Rubens, Velázquez, and Caravaggio

I originally planned this class, as you know, to show the *international* quality of baroque art. But then I discovered how much of it was specifically Italian in its development, so I devoted the first hour to that. In this second hour, however, I am returning to my original theme, emphasizing the spread of the baroque beyond Italy, jumping all around in time, but focusing on the three artists shown here: one Flemish, one Spanish, and one Italian (though in a quite different tradition), all three giants of the era. My musical examples come from Germany (as you have just heard), France, Spain, and Holland.

F. Ambassador of the Baroque

38. Rubens: *Apotheosis of James I* (1634–36), central panel and room view

39. Rubens: *Apotheosis of James I* (1634–36), farthest panel

I think you would agree that the ceiling painting on the left fits right in with the Italian examples I showed before the break. But it is not by an Italian and not in England. This is the only ceiling decoration by **Peter Paul Rubens** (1577–1640), but a very important one, painted in the royal **Banqueting House** in London for **King Charles I of England**, celebrating the start of the Stuart dynasty with the apotheosis of Charles' father, **James I**. It has all the *di sotto in sù* tricks you would expect, although the rectangular panel next to it is more conventional in viewpoint.

40. Rubens: *Assumption of the Virgin Mary* (sketch, 1611, HM the Queen)

41. Titian: *Adoration of the Trinity* (“La Gloria”); 1554, Madrid, Prado

Rubens has all the apparatus of swirling clouds and ascending angels down pat from quite an early stage, as in this sketch for an *Assumption of the Virgin* intended for Antwerp Cathedral in 1611. He undoubtedly learned the style from Italy, where he lived for eight years, but probably less from his contemporaries than from his study of older masters like **Titian** (Tiziano Veccellio, 1485–1576). This Titian painting in the Prado, which the Spanish refer to as *La Gloria*, shows just how far Titian went as a baroque artist before his time. It is also interesting in that it contains portraits of the Spanish Royal Family, not as humble donors kneeling to one side but among the Blessed Souls being accepted into heaven. It is a small step from there to what Rubens would do with James I—although there he was greeted by mythological beings, and not the three-personed God of the Christian Trinity.

42. Rubens: *Portrait of Philip IV* (1628, St. Petersburg)

43. Rubens: *Peace and War* (1630, London NG)

Part of his time in Italy, Rubens spent at the court of **Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua**—where we more or less began this class. And in 1603, Gonzaga sent him to Spain, with gifts for **Philip III**. It was the first of many diplomatic visits he made to Spain and elsewhere. He would undoubtedly have seen the Titian there, together with many of the other late paintings that Titian did for Philip's father Philip II. He returned to Spain in 1621 to serve the new king, **Philip IV**. Philip raised him to the nobility, and also employed him on numerous diplomatic missions, as a spy in France and as an envoy to England. It was a time of only intermittent peace between Spain and the Netherlands, and Rubens was a passionate opponent of war. Hence his allegory, *Peace and War*, or more fully *Minerva Protecting Peace from Mars*, that he painted during one of his sojourns in London, around 1630. **King Charles** also raised him to the knighthood, and in Britain he is known as *Sir Peter Paul Rubens*.

44. Van Dyck: *Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria* (detail, 1633, HM the Queen)

By far the largest project of dynastic boosting that Rubens undertook was in France, in connection of the marriage of these two, **Charles I of England and Princess Henrietta Maria of France**, painted here by **Anthony van Dyck** (1599–1641). He was commissioned by Henrietta's mother, **Marie de' Medici**, widow

of Henry IV, to paint two dozen wall-sized canvases illustrating her life, to be hung in the Luxembourg Palace; they are now in a vast room of their own in the Louvre. Rather than portray recent events with any realism (and thus risk causing offence in politically turbulent times), Rubens mythologized everything—but then he was good at that. I won't talk about them in any more detail, but I have prepared a montage of the first half-dozen. The music, admittedly, is several decades too late, but it fits, especially as the composer is an Italian expat, Giovanni Battista Lulli, forever Frenchified as **Jean-Baptiste Lully** (1632–87).

45. Lully: *Te Deum*, prelude, with Ruben's Medici cycle (1622–24)

G. In the Service of the King

46. Velázquez: *Philip IV* (1623, Madrid Prado), with Rubens portrait

Rubens was not the only artist to paint King Philip IV, but that was because he was foreign. Once the 24-year-old **Diego Velázquez** (1599–1660) first painted the King in 1623, he was granted the exclusive right among Spanish painters to do so. Official portraits of the King, his family, and his court formed a large part of Velázquez's work thereafter, though he also undertook mythological, historical, and genre subjects—almost everything that other baroque artists were doing except religious paintings for churches, because his court appointment made it unnecessary for him to seek such commissions. Though 22 years older, Rubens and he became close friends; they even planned a trip North together, but it never materialized.

47. Velázquez: *Apollo in the Forge of Vulcan* (1630, Madrid Prado)

In 1630, King Philip sponsored Velázquez on the first of his two visits to Italy, both substantial trips lasting over a year. To match himself against Italian artists, the young Spaniard tried his hand at a few narrative subjects, such as *The Forge of Vulcan*, complete with half-naked figures modeled in the best Michelangesque manner. But Velázquez did not go in for swirling clouds and idealized figures; his tastes were more down to earth. In the *Vulcan* painting, the tattle-tale Apollo is clearly of another realm, but Vulcan and his crew seem like ordinary workers in a smithy.

48. Velázquez: *The Surrender of Breda (Las Lanzas)*, 1635, Madrid Prado

Velázquez did not paint pictures of Kings ascending into heaven, but he was certainly willing to depict scenes of national triumph, such as *The Surrender of Breda* from 1634–35; like all his greatest works, the Spanish have given it a nickname, *Las Lanzas*. This was probably as close to the Colossal Baroque that he ever got. He could probably not have painted it without his year in Italy. But in a literal sense too; the Spanish general who is behaving so courteously to his conquered opponent was Velázquez' traveling companion for much of the tour, **Ambrogio Spinola**, who was himself of Italian birth.

49. Rubens: *The Exchange of Princesses* (1624, Louvre), with the above
50. — *Las Lanzas*, details

It may seem a ridiculous comparison, but set this beside one of the Rubens panels from the Marie de' Medici series. This is the *Exchange of Princesses*, which believe it or not is also a real event. It celebrates the double marriage of Anna of Austria to Louis XIII of France and Louis XIII's sister, Princess Elisabeth, to future king of Spain, Philip IV on 9 November 1615. The exchange took place on the Spanish border, but from Rubens' treatment, you would never know it. Velázquez is not interested in a mythological approach at all. These are real people, not just his friend, but real human beings on both sides of the conflict.

51. Velázquez: *The Surrender of Breda (Las Lanzas)*, repeat

So does this mean that Velázquez was not really a baroque painter at all? The scale is baroque, for one thing; this is only a bigg-ish picture, 6 feet across, but its landscape (like the views of Pieter Bruegel) is vast and its concept also. Italian baroque artists have a tendency to think in layers—think of those saints rising beyond the borders of their picture frames—and so does Velázquez, but more subtly. *Las Lanzas* has a foreground, a middleground, and several layers of background. What is most interesting to me is that the main subject, the two generals, occupy the *middle* plane; look how subtly Velázquez has used that man in the yellowish coat on one side and the foreshortened horse on the other to lead us into it!

52. Velázquez: *Las Meninas* (1656, Madrid Prado)

53. — the same, lower portion

54. — the same, with planes

But that is nothing to what he is doing in *Las Meninas* (The Ladies in Waiting, 1656). The 5-year-old girl is the **Infanta Margaret Theresa**, the future Queen of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor. But she is pictorally less important than all that is going on around her: her ladies-in-waiting, her dwarf, her dog, Velázquez himself, her mother and father looking on. But look what Velázquez does with the space; how many planes can you distinguish in this picture?

55. Velázquez: *Las Hilanderas* (1657, Madrid Prado)

56. Titian: *The Rape of Europa* (1652, Boston, Gardner Museum), with detail of the above

A year or so later, Velázquez painted *Las Hilanderas* or The Spinners. Ostensibly a scene in the Royal Tapestry Works, it is even more of a puzzle picture than *Las Meninas*. Once more we have a scene set against a wall with holes punched in it. But what exactly is going on in that background scene? There is a tapestry, certainly, but it seems to be a reproduction of **Titian's Rape of Europa**, painted for Philip II. Two of the figures in front of it are either actors in costume or goddesses come to visit. The two ladies on the right are presumably court ladies looking on. There is also the double-bass, which suggests that this is all a little play or scene from an opera. But surely not performed in the tapestry workshop itself? The most reasonable explanation, it seems to me, is that which *Las Meninas* might be read as an allegory of painting, this one is an allegory of representation in the other arts, including music.

I usually look for relevant music, as you know, to punctuate these classes. But the music does not seem to have flourished particularly in the Spanish Golden Age, which was so productive in art and literature. There was one development on the more popular front, however. In 1657, the King attended a performance of *The Laurels of Apollo* by **Pedro Calderón**. This was a spoken play with songs; we might now call it a musical, but for the Spanish it was the harbinger of a new genre in a popular style, the *zarzuela*. Here is a song from, I think, another *zarzuela* by the same composer, **Juan Hidalgo** (1614–85). It is about the power of love to confuse young girls; someone has set it to a montage of Velázquez paintings. I have not bothered to translate it; it is all about Love affecting the girls of Barajas (the town near Madrid where the airport is now) and putting them into a tizzy.

57. Hidalgo: *Tompicábalas Amor*, with Velázquez paintings

H. Caravaggio's Theater of Reality

58. Velázquez: *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* (1618, London NG)

Las Hilanderas was not the only Velázquez painting with a curious scene opening out in the background. Here is an early work, but what does it represent? A servant girl doing something with fish, garlic, and chiles, with a painting hanging on the back wall, or is this in fact a window, opening out onto a depiction of *Jesus in the House of Mary and Martha* in the far room? But the main point I am trying to make is that, as with the workers in Vulcan's forge, Velázquez seems interested in the naturalistic depiction of ordinary people in simple settings picked out by strong contrasts of light and shade. Where did this come from? For the last quarter-hour, I want to talk about a quite different tradition, coexisting in the baroque, and also starting in Italy. It all stems from probably the greatest Italian painter at the start of the 17th century, **Michaelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio** (1571–1610).

59. Caravaggio: *The Conversion of Saul*, first version (1600, Balbi Collection)

The clearest demonstration I can offer of what Caravaggio was about is to compare two versions of the same subject, a commission for a private chapel in the church of SM del Popolo in Rome. Both show the *Conversion of Saint Paul*, when the Jewish magistrate Saul is on the road to Damascus to root out the newly-established Christian sect there, but is suddenly stopped by a bright light that blinds him and throws him from his horse. Three days later when he recovers his sight, he has become a Christian himself, and changes his name to Paul, who would become the greatest proselytiser for the Gospel. Caravaggio's first version of 1600 was rejected, for reasons we don't know. Apart from being unusually dark—a feature of almost all Caravaggio's works—it is full of the twisting movements we will come to associate with the baroque; it is not difficult to imagine Rubens doing such a composition, though with heightened color and freer brushwork.

60. Caravaggio: *The Conversion of Saul*, second version (1601, SM del Popolo)

But look at the second version; what differences can you see? It is simpler, reduced to Saul and his horse, plus one minor groom. It is more dramatic and spatially more adventurous, with Saul's body seeming to fall towards us out of the picture. It is more strongly lit. And it is more realistic, in the beautifully studied horse, and the very ordinary face of the man holding it. All of these things are aspects of what I call "Caravaggio's Theater of Reality."

61. Caravaggio: *The Supper at Emmaus* (1602, London NG)

Here is a work from the next year, *The Supper at Emmaus*. It takes place after the Crucifixion. Two of the disciples are walking diconsolately towards Emmaus when they are joined by a third man who asks to walk along with them. It is only when they are sitting down for a meal together and the stranger blesses the food that they realize that this is Christ himself, risen from the dead. Caravaggio has the same strong lighting from an unseen source, the same working-class figures, the same realism in the detail, and the same over-the-top energy in the gestures, which seem to break right through the picture surface.

62. Caravaggio: *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (1598, Rome, Palazzo Barberini)

Caravaggio appears to have been a prickly loner—he eventually had to flee Rome after killing someone—and did not have a school of disciples. Nonetheless, he did have followers. Velázquez was one of them, as for a while was Rubens. A few Italians also followed in his footsteps, for example **Orazio Gentileschi** (1563–1639) and his daughter **Artemisia Gentileschi** (1593–1653). Here is a particularly violent Caravaggio from 1598, illustrating the story of the Biblical heroine Judith, who inveigles her way into the enemy camp and beheads the Assyrian general Holofernes. Look what happens with the Gentileschis, father and daughter.

63. *Judiths* by Caravaggio (1598), Orazio (1624), and Artemisia Gentileschi (1613)

64. — the same, with labels

65. — the same, with Agostino Tassi's framework for *Aurora*

I have hidden the first names. Which do you think is by the father, and which the daughter? You might think the later and prettier one, showing the aftermath of the event, is the more feminine. But you'd be wrong. The 20-year-old Artemisia doubles down on Caravaggio's violence with an immediacy that must surely be personal. And almost certainly it is. A few years before, in her teens, she had been raped by one of her father's students, **Agostino Tassi**, the artist who painted the architecture for Guercino's *Aurora*. She brought him to court, and won—but only after *she* had undergone torture to prove her veracity. Small wonder that she felt vindictive towards men!

66. Gerrit van Honthorst: *The Denial of Saint Peter* (1623, Minneapolis)

Much more important than Caravaggio's contribution to a National Style in Italy is his effect on artists in Holland and France, the subject of our next two classes. Beginning in about the 16-teens, a group of artists from Utrecht developed his style in a number of ways, especially his use of working-class models and his strong contrasts of light and shadow. Most significantly, they developed a habit of showing the light-source within the picture, most often with a candle or lantern, as in this striking *Denial of Saint Peter* by **Gerrit van Honthorst** (1592–1656), where Saint Peter is being questioned by a maidservant

outside the Sanhedrin, where Jesus is being interrogated. Here is another one by Honthorst, an *Adoration of the Shepherds*, where the light appears to emanate from the infant Jesus himself.

67. Gerrit van Honthorst: *Adoration of the Shepherds* (1622, Pomeranian State Museum)

68. Caravaggio: *Lute Player* (c.1596, NY Met)

I am showing this to introduce my final musical selection, the Christmas carol *Hodie Christus Natus Est*, by the Dutch composer **Jan Pieterszoon Sweelick** (1562–1621), and published in 1619. I am accompanying it by a variety of pictures of singers and musicians by Honthorst and his Utrecht contemporaries **Dirck van Baburen** (1595–1624) and **Hendrick Terbrugghen** (1588–1629). All follow in the footsteps of Caravaggio's own early paintings of musicians, such as this *Lute Player* in the Met. [I should warn you, however, that not all the Dutch pictures are quite as innocent as they might seem; more on that next week.]

69. Sweelinck: *Hodie Christus Natus Est*

70. Closing title (Honthorst: *The Liberation of Saint Paul*)