Greece, and concluded that a single melody line (monody) with all the inflections of human speech would serve to move the listener better. The composer Caccini (1551–1618) clearly stated the new priorities in his Nuove Musiche (‘new musics’) of 1602: “...music is nothing other than speech, then rhythm, and lastly sound...” However, it was Monteverdi’s L’Orfeo presented at Mantua in 1607 which attained a fully effective dramatic dimension.1

The first operas

- 1598 Rinuccini's Dafne after a setting by Jacopo Peri
- 1600 Rinuccini's L'Euridice after a setting by Jacopo Peri
- 1607 Striggio and Monteverdi's L'Orfeo
- 1608 de Gagliano's Dafne

Jacopo Peri (1561–1633) was an Italian composer and singer of the transitional period between the Renaissance and Baroque styles, and is often called the inventor of opera. He wrote the first work to be called an opera today, Dafne; and also the first opera to have survived to the present day, Euridice.

Peri and Jacopo Corsi's work added to that of the Florentine Camerata of the previous decade, which produced the first experiments in monody, the solo song style over continuo bass which eventually developed into recitative and aria. Peri and Corsi brought in the poet Ottavio Rinuccini to write a text, and the result, Dafne.

Rinuccini and Peri next collaborated on Euridice. The work involved recitatives, a new development which went between the arias and choruses and served to move the action along.

Ottavio Rinuccini (1562–1621) was an Italian poet, courtier, and opera librettist at the end of the Renaissance. At the urging of the Duke of Mantua in collaborating with Jacopo Peri to produce the first opera, Dafne, he became the first opera librettist. He is noted for his use of the unrhyming versi sciolti (“blank verse”) structure in his libretto L'Euridice established this as the verse structure for opera, following the syllable structure 7-7-11-7.

Stile rappresentativo (‘representative style’), one of several new terms applied to the ‘new music’ of the 17th century’s affective style. It was developed by V. Galilei in the Florentine Camerata, but the term first appeared on the title page of Caccini’s Euridice (1600). It is a dramatic recitative style of the early Baroque era in which melodies move freely over a foundation of simple chords. A narrow-minded definition: new mode of monody duplicating spoken accent, intended to capture emotional power of passionate delivery in Greek tragedy.

However the term was not restricted to stage music. It could be applied to solo songs or dialogue, for sacred concerti, and even for polyphonic seconda pratica madrigals for example. “Thus is denote music for theatre, music in a recitative style, or music that (re)presents a text in a particularly dramatic or emotional way.”2

1 http://performances.kyropoulos.com/RecitarCantando.pdf
2 James Haar: European Music 1520–1640