

CHAPTER IV

Ritornelli

The invention of a ritornello is undoubtedly the most important act in the composition of an aria. The structure of the ritornello is crucial because "it is in the ritornello that the operating forces of the composition are set in motion, and the ritornello, designed to function as both the beginning and end of the aria, is, to some extent, an autonomous, if miniature, composition."¹ Not only does the ritornello introduce and conclude an aria, but it normally provides much of the thematic material for the rest of the movement. In view of the centrality of the ritornello, it is appropriate to provide an overview of the ritornelli in the Weimar, Cöthen, and Jahrgang I arias.

The General Categories of Ritornello Forms

Bach's approach to the composition of melodies was informed by different aesthetic principles than those of composers after 1750. In contrast to the Classic and Romantic insistence upon "organic unity" in the structure of

¹Robert L. Marshall, "The Genesis of an Aria Ritornello: Observations on the Autograph Score of 'Wie zittern und wanken,' BWV 105/3," in Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Music in Honor of Arthur Mendel, ed. Robert L. Marshall (Kassel and Hackensack, N. J., 1974), p. 167.

musical phrases, it has been noted that "the notion of an 'organic' theme is essentially irrelevant in a discussion of Bachian melody."² Hugo Riemann described the architectonic features of the modern "komplexive Thema" exemplified by Bach's ritornelli as follows: "The modern theme of the homophonic movement...is a completely self-contained melody which combines a number of individual motives into a larger whole, which is performed by a single voice, and whose harmonic content determines all other voices in the accompaniment."³

Riemann's investigations provided the point of departure for Wilhelm Fischer's seminal study⁴ which differentiated between two main categories of melodic structures in Baroque music, including the ritornelli of arias. The first type, which Fischer termed the Liedtypus, is a periodic structure in which the antecedent and consequent of a period are either equivalent or closely related phrases. The structure of a typical Liedtypus melody can be summarized as a ($\alpha\beta$), a' ($\alpha'\beta'$) (see Illustration 1).

²Robert L. Marshall, The Compositional Process of J. S. Bach, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1972), I, p. 125.

³Cited in Wilhelm Fischer, "Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wiener klassischen Stils," Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, III (1915), p. 25.

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-84.

Illustration 1. Liedtypus Melody: BWV 77/5 (Trumpet)



The other important form is the more linearly conceived Fortspinnungstypus, in which a modulatory Fortspinnung (b), consisting of one or a series of sequences, follows the antecedent (a) (see below).⁵

Fischer's analytical framework was refined and expanded by Alfred Dürr in his Studien über die frühen Kantaten Johann Sebastian Bachs.⁶ In addition to the Liedtypus and Fortspinnungstypus, Dürr drew attention to a group of one-part ritornelli which function as ostinati, and for which he coined the term Ostinatotypus (see Illustration 2).

⁵In this chapter, the lower-case letters a, a', and b are used to indicate antecedent, consequent, and Fortspinnung respectively, while Greek letters represent smaller units such as subphrases and motives.

⁶Alfred Dürr, Studien über die frühen Kantaten Johann Sebastian Bachs, revised edition (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 120-28.

Illustration 2. Ostinatotypus Melody: BWV 25/3 (Continuo)



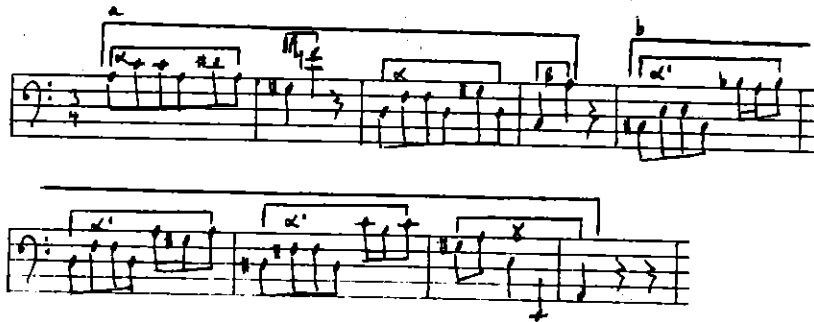
He described these melodies as follows: "For the most part, they form in the continuo an (extended) cadence, either by means of scalar figures...or with sequential figuration..."⁷ Dürr also distinguished among three different forms of the Fortspinnungstypus: the simplest form, with a one- or two-part antecedent and a one-part Fortspinnung (see Illustration 3a); an expanded version, with a one- or two-part antecedent and a two-part Fortspinnung (see Illustration 3b);⁸ and the parallel form, a bipartite structure in which the antecedent and consequent are in parallel construction and both contain Fortspinnungen (see Illustration 3c).

⁷Ibid., p. 123.

⁸This form is described by Dürr as follows: "After a first cadence, more often than not on the dominant or relative major, the Fortspinnung begins again, motivically varied or different, and brings the ritornello to a close on the tonic." Ibid., p. 125.

Illustration 3.

- a. Fortspinnungstypus Melody: BWV 76/10 (Viola da gamba and Continuo)



- b. Fortspinnungstypus Melody With Two-Part Fortspinnung: BWV 138/5 (Violin I)



Illustration 3 (cont.)

- c. Fortspinnungstypus Melody With Parallel Opening Between Antecedent and Consequent: BWV 86/5 (Violin I)



Finally, there is the imitative ritornello, a contrapuntal structure which Dürr described as "the intensification [Potenzierung] of the Fortspinnungstypus"⁹ (see Illustration 4).

⁹Ibid., p. 126.

Illustration 4. Imitative Melody: BWV 179/5 (Oboes da caccia I, II)



Although Laurence Dreyfus has recently emphasized the need for increased consideration of the harmonic aspects of Bach's ritornelli,¹⁰ the present investigations (which were completed before Dreyfus's essays appeared) are based upon the traditional view of the ritornello as a succession of melodic motives. The forms of the ritornelli for the Weimar, Cöthen, and Jahrgang I arias are provided in Tables 15, 16, and 17.¹¹

¹⁰See Laurence Dreyfus, "J. S. Bach's Concerto Ritornellos and the Question of Invention," The Musical Quarterly, LXXI (1985), pp. 327-58, and "The Articulation of Genre in Bach's Instrumental Music," in The Universal Bach (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 10-38.

¹¹These tables also include the solos in the Magnificat, the aria-like settings of Biblical texts, and the solo settings of chorales.

TABLE 15

Ritornello Forms in the Weimar Arias
(Adapted from Dürr, Studien, Anhang VI, pp. 249-59)

Fo = Fortspinnungstypus
Fo2 = Fortspinnungstypus with two-part Fortspinnung
Fo-P = Fortspinnungstypus with parallel opening between
antecedent and consequent
Im = imitative ritornello
Li = Liedtypus
Ost = Ostinatotypus

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
1708-10?	150/3	Ost
	150/5	Ost
2/23/1713?	208/2	Fo
	208/4	Ost
	208/7	Fo
	208/9	Fo
	208/12	Fo
	208/13	Fo
	208/14	Ost
2/19/1713 or 2/4/1714?	18/4	Fo2
3/25/1714	182/4	Fo
	182/5	Fo2
	182/6	Ost
4/22	12/4	Fo2
	12/5	Im
	12/6	Ost

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
5/20	172/3	Fo2
	172/4	Fo
	172/5	Ost
6/17	21/3	Li
	21/5	Fo
	21/8	no ritornello
	21/10	Fo
7/15	54/1	Im
	54/3	Im
8/12	199/2	Fo2
	199/4	Fo2
	199/6	Fo2
	199/8	Fo2
12/2	61/3	Fo2
	61/5	Fo
12/30	152/2	Fo
	152/4	Fo
	152/6	Li
3/24/1715	80a/1	Fo
	80a/3	Ost
	80a/5	Im
4/21	31/4	Fo
	31/6	Fo
	31/8	Fo2

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
6/16	165/1	Im
	165/3	Ost
	165/5	Fo
7/14	185/1	beginning of antecedent
	185/3	Fo-P
	185/5	Fo
11/24	163/1	Fo-P
	163/3	Fo2
	163/5	no ritornello
12/22	132/1	Fo-P
	132/3	Fo
	132/5	Fo-P
1/19/1716	155/2	Li
	155/4	Fo
9/27	161/1	Fo
	161/3	Li
10/25	162/1	Im
	162/3	Fo
	162/5	Fo
12/6	70a/2	Fo
	70a/3	Fo
	70a/4	Fo2
	70a/5	no ritornello

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
12/13	186a/2	Ost
	186a/3	Fo
	186a/4	Fo
	186a/5	Li
12/20	147a/2	Fo2
	147a/3	Fo
	147a/4	Fo-P
	147a/5	Fo2
12/25/1714 or 1715	63/3	Fo2
	63/5	Fo

TABLE 16

Ritornello Forms in the Cöthen Arias

Fo = Fortspinnungstypus
 Fo2 = Fortspinnungstypus with two-part Fortspinnung
 Fo-P = Fortspinnungstypus with parallel opening between
 antecedent and consequent
 Im = imitative ritornello
 Li = Liedtypus
 Ost = Ostinatotypus

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
12/10/1718	66a/2	Fo2
	66a/4	Fo
	66a/8	Fo
1/1/1719	134a/2	Fo
	134a/4	Fo
	134a/6	Fo-P
	134a/8	Fo2
12/10 c. 1722?	173a/2	Fo-P
	173a/3	no ritornello
	173a/4	binary: a (I--V) / b (V--I)
	173a/6	Li
	173a/7	Li
	173a/8	binary: a (I--V) / b (V--I)
	184a/2	Fo-P
	184a/4	Fo
1722-23?	184a/6	binary: a (I--V) / b (ii--I)

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
2/7/1723	23/1	Im
	22/1	Fo
	22/2	Fo
	22/4	Li
1718-23	202/1	unique
	202/3	Fo
	202/5	Fo
	202/7	Fo
before 1723	202/9	binary: a (I--V) b (V--I)
	194a/1	French overture
	194a/3	Li
	194a/5	Fo
	194a/7	Fo
	194a/9	Fo2
	194a/11	binary: a (I--V) / b (V--I)

TABLE 17

Ritornello Forms in the Jahrgang I Arias

Fo = Fortspinnungstypus
 Fo2 = Fortspinnungstypus with two-part Fortspinnung
 Fo-P = Fortspinnungstypus with parallel opening between
 antecedent and consequent
 Im = imitative ritornello
 Li = Liedtypus
 Ost = Ostinatotypus

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
5/16/ 1723?	59/1	Fo
	59/4	Li
5/30	75/3	Fo-P
	75/5	Li
	75/10	Fo2
	75/12	Fo
6/6	76/3	Fo-P
	76/5	Fo
	76/10	Fo
	76/12	Im
6/20	24/1	Fo
	24/5	Im
6/24	167/1	Fo-P
	167/3	Fo
7/18	136/3	Fo2
	136/5	Fo
7/25	105/3	Li
	105/5	Fo2

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
8/1	46/3	Fo
	46/5	Fo2
8/8	179/3	Fo
	179/5	Im
8/15	69a/3	Im
	69a/5	Li
8/22	77/3	Fo-P
	77/5	Li
8/29	25/3	Ost
	25/5	Fo
8/30	119/3	Im
	119/5	Fo
9/5	138/5	Fo2
9/12	95/3	no ritornello
	95/5	Li
9/19?	148/2	Fo2
	148/4	Li
10/3	48/4	Fo-P
	48/6	Fo
10/17	109/3	Fo
	109/5	Fo
10/24	89/1	Fo
	89/3	Li
	89/5	Li

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
11/7	60/1	Fo
	60/3	Fo
11/14	90/1	Fo2
	90/3	Fo
12/25	243a/2	Li
	243a/3	Fo
	243a/5	Fo
	243a/6	Fo
	243a/8	Fo
	243a/9	Fo
	243a/D	Fo
	243a/10	no ritornello
12/26	40/4	Li
	40/7	Im
12/27	64/5	Fo
	64/7	Fo-P
1/1/1724	190/3	Fo2
	190/5	Fo-P
1/2	153/3	Fo
	153/6	Fo
	153/8	binary: a (I--V) / b (V--I)
1/6	65/4	Im
	65/6	Fo2

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
1/9	154/1	Fo-P
	154/4	Fo
	154/5	no ritornello
	154/7	Fo-P
1/23	73/2	Fo-P
	73/4	Im
1/30	81/1	Fo-P
	81/3	Fo
	81/4	no ritornello
	81/5	Im
2/2	83/1	Fo2
	83/3	Fo-P
2/6	144/2	Li
	144/5	Fo
2/13	181/1	Li
	181/3	Fo? [solo violin part lost]
4/7	245/7	Im
	245/9	Fo
	245/13	Fo
	245/19	unique
	245/20	Fo
	245/24	Fo
	245/30	Li
	245/32	Fo
	245/35	Fo

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Ritornello Form</u>
4/16	67/2	Fo
	67/6	Fo
4/23	104/3	Im
	104/5	Fo
5/7	166/1	Li
	166/2	Im
	166/3	Fo
	166/5	Fo
5/14	86/1	Im
	86/2	Fo
	86/3	Im
	86/5	Fo-P
5/18	37/2	Fo? [solo violin part lost]
	37/3	Li
	37/5	Fo
5/21	44/1	Im
	44/3	Fo2
	44/4	Ost
	44/6	Li

Fortspinnungstypus Ritornelli

The most common form is the Fortspinnungstypus. The ritornelli in this form are remarkably homogeneous. The percentage of Fortspinnungstypus ritornelli remains constant throughout the period under consideration: about 40% of the ritornelli for the Weimar, Cöthen, and Jahrgang I arias are in this form. Moreover, there are no clear stylistic differences between the earlier and later melodies. About half of the Fortspinnungstypus ritornelli have simple antecedents, while in the others the opening motive or subphrase is repeated.

Dürr suggests that the preponderance of Fortspinnungstypus ritornelli in the Weimar arias was a result of Bach's studies of Italian forms around 1713-14.¹² The high percentage of such ritornelli in the Cöthen and Jahrgang I arias demonstrates that the Italian influence continued at least through the end of his first year in Leipzig (May 1724).

Fortspinnungstypus Ritornelli With Two-Part Fortspinnungen

Ritornelli with two-part Fortspinnungen are quite common in Weimar: about a fifth of the Weimar arias have ritornelli in this form. There is a precipitous drop in Cöthen and Jahrgang I, however: only about 10% of the

¹²Dürr, Studien, p. 170.

ritornelli from this period have two-part Fortspinnungen.

Moreover, the motivic and harmonic structure of these melodies changes. Only three of the 18 Weimar and Cöthen ritornelli with two-part Fortspinnungen have doubled antecedents (BWV 31/8, 163/3, and 134a/8), whereas the beginning is repeated in over half of the 11 in Jahrgang I. This shift to a more complex gambit seems especially remarkable since the harmonic progressions become simpler. In three of the Weimar ritornelli (BWV 182/5, 199/2, and 147a/2), the mediant is reached at the end of the first Fortspinnung; one remains in the tonic (BWV 199/6); and the other 11 cadence on the dominant. But in Cöthen and Jahrgang I, all but one of the 14 modulate to the dominant (BWV 76/10 stays in the tonic).

Fortspinnungstypus Ritornelli With Parallel Openings Between the Antecedent and Consequent

Ritornelli in this form are not found until quite late in the Weimar period, beginning with the alto aria "Sei bemüht in dieser Zeit," BWV 185/3, for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity (14 July 1715).¹³ But the percentage of arias with parallel ritornelli gradually rises, from 7% (5 movements) in Weimar to 10% (3 movements) in Cöthen to 12% (13 movements) in Jahrgang I. The preference for periodicity entailed in this shift is also reflected in the

¹³Ibid., pp. 171-72.

increase of Liedtypus ritornelli during the same period (see below).

Imitative Ritornelli

There is a significantly higher percentage of imitative ritornelli in Jahrgang I than in Weimar or Cöthen. Bach's preference for imitative ritornelli seems to have affected the instrumentation of the later arias: the vast majority of arias with imitative ritornelli are scored for two instruments, and there are far more movements with pairs of instruments in Jahrgang I than in the earlier cantatas. For instance, among the Jahrgang I vocal works, BWV 245/7 and 44/1 are scored for a pair of oboes; BWV 24/5, 104/3, and 86/3 for a pair of oboes d'amore; BWV 179/5, 119/3, and 65/4 for a pair of oboes da caccia; BWV 76/12 for oboe d'amore and viola da gamba; BWV 69a/3 for recorder and oboe da caccia; and BWV 166/2 for oboe and violin.¹⁴ But there are only three comparable movements in Weimar and Cöthen: the bass aria "Ich folge Christo nach," BWV 12/5, in which the idea of following Jesus is illustrated by a thoroughgoing imitative texture which encompasses not only the pair of solo violins but also the voice and continuo; "Wie selig ist der Leib, der, Jesu, dich getragen," BWV 80a/5, which is

¹⁴Four other movements with imitative ritornelli are scored for more than two instruments: BWV 40/7 is for pairs of horns and oboes; BWV 73/4 for strings; and BWV 81/5 and 86/1 for strings and a pair of oboes d'amore.

scored for alto, tenor, oboe da caccia, and violin; and "Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn," BWV 23/1, for soprano, alto, and a pair of oboes d'amore. Two other Weimar arias, "Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel," BWV 54/3, and "O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad," BWV 165/1, have imitative ritornelli for an entirely different reason: they are constructed as fugues.¹⁵

Liedtypus Ritornelli

The percentage of Liedtypus ritornelli increases markedly, from 7% (5 movements) in Weimar to 15% (16 movements) in Jahrgang I. The increased use of periodic structures in the arias is surely related to the incorporation of secular, especially dance-derived, characteristics in the vocal music of the early Leipzig period, as a result of Bach's compositional activities in Cöthen.¹⁶

Even more striking, however, are the stylistic differences between the earlier and later Liedtypus ritornelli. Four of the five Weimar melodies are unusual in

¹⁵The solo setting of the Biblical text "Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch" (John 16:23) which opens Cantata 86 (Fifth Sunday after Easter, 14 May 1724) is also fugal.

¹⁶See Doris Finke-Hecklinger, Tanzcharaktere in Johann Sebastian Bachs Vokalmusik (Trossingen, 1970), pp. 9-10, 132ff. About half of the arias with Liedtypus ritornelli have explicitly dance-like features, including BWV 21/3, 152/6, 186a/5, 173a/6, 173a/7, 22/4, 75/5, 69a/5, 77/5, 89/5, 243a/2, and 40/4.

various respects. In the soprano aria "Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not," BWV 21/3, for instance, the end of the antecedent and the beginning of the consequent overlap. The ritornello of "Mein Verlangen ist, den Heiland zu umfassen," BWV 161/3, manifests the expected parallelism between the antecedent and consequent, but the two halves contain an odd number of measures (5 + 5) rather than the usual multiples of two. BWV 152/6 and 186a/5 both have extended ritornelli which fall into three parts (a a' a'') instead of the normal antecedent-consequent relationship.¹⁷ Only the ritornello of "Du musst glauben, du musst hoffen," BWV 155/2, has the symmetrical structure one expects of a Liedtypus melody: the antecedent and consequent are in parallel construction and are each two measures long.

On the other hand, the Liedtypus ritornelli in Cöthen and Jahrgang I are remarkably regular. They are all in parallel construction; all but two (BWV 181/1 and 166/1) fall into two sections of equal length; and the number of measures in each section is almost always a multiple of two, usually four or eight (see Table 18).

¹⁷On the ritornelli of BWV 21/3, 152/6, and 186a/5, see Dürr, Studien, p. 122.

TABLE 18

Liedtypus Ritornelli in the Cöthen and Jahrgang I Arias

<u>Date</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Structure</u>	<u>Number of Measures in Antecedent and Consequent</u>
12/10 c. 1722?	173a/6	a ($\alpha\alpha$) a' ($\alpha\beta$)	8 + 8
	173a/7	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\gamma$)	4 + 4
2/7/1723	22/4	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\beta'$)	8 + 8
before 1723	194a/3	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\gamma$)	2 + 2
5/16	59/4	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\beta'$)	4 + 4
5/30	75/5	a ($\alpha\alpha'$) a' ($\alpha''\beta$)	8 + 8
7/25	105/3	a ($\alpha\alpha'$) a' ($\alpha''\beta$)	8 + 8
8/15	69a/5	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\beta'$)	4 + 4
8/22	77/5	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\beta'$)	8 + 8
9/12	95/5	a ($\alpha\alpha$) a' ($\alpha\beta$)	8 + 8
9/19	148/4	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\gamma$)	4 + 4
10/24	89/3	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\gamma$)	2 + 2
	89/5	a ($\alpha\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\alpha\gamma$)	4 + 4
12/25	243a/2	a ($\alpha\beta\alpha'$) a' ($\alpha\alpha''\gamma$)	6 + 6
12/26	40/4	a ($\alpha\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\alpha'\gamma$)	8 + 8
2/6/1724	144/2	a ($\alpha\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\alpha'\gamma$)	8 + 8
2/13	181/1	a ($\alpha\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\alpha\gamma$)	3 + 5
4/7	245/30	a ($\alpha\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\alpha\gamma$)	2 + 2
5/7	166/1	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha\gamma$)	6 + 8
5/18	37/3	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\alpha'\gamma$)	1 + 1
5/21	44/6	a ($\alpha\beta$) a' ($\gamma\beta'$)	4 + 4

Table 18 also reveals that two or more chronologically adjacent Liedtypus ritornelli often have identical or similar structures; moreover, they became increasingly complex. For instance, the ritornelli of BWV 75/5 and 105/3 both begin with a subphrase α , followed by two varied versions of this subphrase (α' and α''), and concluding with a contrasting subphrase β . A different element of variety is present in the next two Liedtypus ritornelli (BWV 69a/5 and 77/5), in which the antecedent contains two contrasting subphrases (α and β) and the consequent contains varied versions of the same two subphrases (α' and β').¹⁸ In the ritornelli for two subsequent arias, BWV 148/4 and 89/3, a second contrasting subphrase (γ) is introduced into the consequent, with the resultant form ($\alpha\beta$) ($\alpha'\gamma$).¹⁹ A new level of complexity is reached in the next six Liedtypus ritornelli (BWV 89/5, 243a/2, 40/4, 144/2, 181/1, and 245/20), five of which have antecedents with the same three-element structure ($\alpha\alpha\beta$).²⁰ The consequents of these melodies progress from the straightforward ($\alpha\alpha\gamma$) structure in BWV 89/5, to a more complex version ($\alpha'\alpha'\gamma$) in BWV 40/4, to an even more elaborate structure involving inversion of the headmotive ($\alpha;\alpha;\gamma$) in BWV 144/2, and returning to the

¹⁸The ritornelli for two earlier arias, BWV 22/4 and 59/4, also have this structure.

¹⁹The ritornello for BWV 166/1 also has this structure.

²⁰The structure of the antecedent in the ritornello for BWV 243a/2 is ($\alpha\beta\alpha'$).

simpler version in BWV 181/1 and 245/30 (XX). Finally, in the last new aria in Jahrgang I, BWV 44/6, the parallel opening of antecedent and consequent is abandoned altogether. This evidence compels the conclusion that, as was the case for other aspects of the arias, Bach experimented with the structures of the Liedtypus ritornelli during his first year in Leipzig.

Ostinatotypus Ritornelli

Although Ostinatotypus ritornelli are common in Weimar, they are very rare in Cöthen and Jahrgang I. In fact, only one aria from this period, "Ach, wo hol ich Armer Rat?" BWV 25/3 (Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, 29 August 1723), has an Ostinatotypus ritornello.²¹ The dearth of these ritornelli is related to the scarcity of continuo arias which was noted in Chapter II, since almost all of the movements with Ostinatotypus ritornelli are scored for voice(s) and continuo alone. It was suggested there that Bach may have avoided ostinato forms (and continuo arias) because they were old-fashioned. This notion is strengthened by the observation that both arias in the earliest Weimar cantata, "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich," BWV 150, which dates from c. 1708-10,²² have Ostinatotypus

²¹The solo setting of the chorale "Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid," BWV 44/4 (Sunday after Ascension, 21 May 1724), also has an Ostinatotypus ritornello.

²²Dürr, Studien, p. 199.

ritornelli.

Ritornelli in Binary Form

The unusual form of the ritornello for the alto aria "Soll ich meinen Lebenslauf," BWV 153/8, has raised questions about the origin of this movement. Ritornelli are usually stated in their entirety at the beginning of an aria. But the melody which opens BWV 153/8 (mm. 1-12) turns out to be just the A section of a larger structure in binary form. This phrase manifests two important characteristics of binary form: it modulates from the tonic (G major) to the dominant (D major), and it is immediately repeated (in the first vocal section, mm. 13-24). Moreover, it is followed in mm. 25-48 by an extended B section which modulates first to the submediant (e minor) and then back to the tonic by way of a dominant pedal (mm. 40-44). The rest of the movement is essentially a repetition of this section, although there is an imitative, "allegro" interpolation in mm. 71ff.

In view of the obvious stylistic similarities between BWV 153/8 and secular dance forms,²³ the Kritischer Bericht for NBA 1/4 suggests that it may be based upon an earlier

²³Finke-Hecklinger classifies the movement as a sarabande, but Dürr views it as a minuet. See Finke-Hecklinger, Tanzcharaktere, pp. 62 and 137, and Alfred Dürr, Die Kantaten von Johann Sebastian Bach, 2 vols. (Kassel and Munich, 1971), I, p. 161.

(unknown) composition.²⁴ Dürr offers the plausible hypothesis that it may have originated as a vocal adaptation of a movement from a suite, or as a parody of a movement from a secular cantata.²⁵ This seems especially likely since several arias from the Cöthen period (BWV 173a/4, 173a/8, 184a/6, 202/9, and 194a/11) are in similar forms.

Summary

The most common form for the ritornelli of the Weimar, Cöthen, and Jahrgang I arias is the Fortspinnungstypus, a melodic structure in which the antecedent is followed by a modulatory Fortspinnung, consisting of one or a series of sequences. There are no clear stylistic differences between the earlier and later Fortspinnungstypus melodies.

Ritornelli with two-part Fortspinnungen are also present throughout the period under consideration, although they are more frequently found in Weimar than in Cöthen or Jahrgang I. Many of the later melodies have doubled antecedents, whereas the beginning is not usually repeated in the Weimar ritornelli. On the other hand, the harmonic structures of the Cöthen and Jahrgang I ritornelli are more predictable than in Weimar: all but one modulate to the dominant at the end of the first Fortspinnung, before returning to the tonic.

²⁴NBA I/4, KB, p. 126.

²⁵Dürr, Kantaten, I, p. 161.

Fortspinnungstypus ritornelli with parallel openings between the antecedent and consequent do not appear until quite late in the Weimar period. But they are found throughout the Cöthen period and Jahrgang I.

There is a significantly higher percentage of imitative ritornelli in Jahrgang I than in Weimar or Cöthen. Bach's preference for imitative ritornelli seems to have affected the instrumentation of the later arias: the vast majority of arias with imitative ritornelli are scored for two instruments, and there are far more movements with pairs of instruments in Jahrgang I than in the earlier cantatas.

Liedtypus ritornelli--periodic structures in which the antecedent and consequent are either equivalent or closely related phrases--are quite rare in Weimar. But the percentage of such melodies more than doubled in Jahrgang I, when Bach began to incorporate some of the features of secular, dance-derived music into his church cantatas. Not only are the Liedtypus ritornelli more numerous in Cöthen and Jahrgang I than in Weimar, but their structures are more regular: they are all in parallel construction, and the number of measures in each half is almost always a multiple of two. Moreover, the fact that two or more chronologically adjacent Liedtypus ritornelli often have identical or similar structures, and that they became increasingly complex, suggests that Bach experimented with the structures of these melodies during his first year in Leipzig.

Although Ostinatotypus ritornelli are common in Weimar, they are rare in Cöthen and Jahrgang I. Bach may have avoided this form because it was old-fashioned. This notion is strengthened by the fact that several of the later arias have ritornelli in binary form--a form that was more often encountered in modern, secular instrumental music--whereas this form is not found in Weimar.

CHAPTER V

Strict Da-Capo Arias

The strict da-capo form is the most common form for the arias in Bach's vocal works. It was also quite popular throughout the 18th century. In 1792, Johann Georg Sulzer described it in detail:

First the instruments play a prelude, which is called a ritornello, in which the main expression of the aria is briefly presented; then the vocal part comes in and sings through the first part of the aria without a lengthy extension; afterwards it repeats the sentences and parses them; then the voice rests for quite a few measures so that the singer may get his breath back again. During this time the instruments play a short interlude in which the main points of the expression are repeated; then the singer begins to parse the words of the first part again, and especially dwells on the most important part of the feeling; then he concludes the singing of the first part; but the instruments continue to confirm the expression more and more, and finally conclude the first part of the aria.

Afterwards the next part is sung through all at once, without all the repeating and parsing which took place in the first part--the instruments only confirm the expression now and then, when there are short rests in the vocal part. When the singer is completely finished, the instruments play a ritornello again, after which the first part of the aria is repeated just as before. This is the general form of contemporary arias.¹

¹Johann Georg Sulzer, Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste, 2nd edition (Leipzig, 1792; facsimile reproduction edited by Giorgio Tonelli, Hildesheim, 1970), pp. 209-10. This description was also quoted by Heinrich Christoph Koch in his Musikalisches Lexicon (Frankfurt, 1802; facsimile reproduction, Hildesheim, 1964), pp. 160-61.