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Teaching Bach's Binary Forms

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As part of their training, most undergraduate music students will experience some of J. S. Bach's works in two-reprise (binary) form, collected into suites and partitas. For some—keyboardists, cellists, violinists, guitarists, flutists—these works are at the heart of the repertoire, as important as any music by classical or Romantic composers. Alongside these experiences, in their courses in theory and analysis, students will learn a set of concepts for analyzing movements in binary form that rely in part on a classification into simple, rounded, and balanced binary structures.[1] However, these concepts, which make easy work of smaller binary forms by composers like Mozart and Haydn, have no particular relevance for Bach or any other baroque repertoire, leading to puzzling discontinuities between applied music study and theory training.

In this article, I will put forth an alternative set of formal options for analyzing Bach's binary movements, derived from his own compositional practice rather than from the music of a different time and place entirely. Yet simply classifying movements' forms in a generically appropriate way is the beginning, not the end, of analysis. Once students are easily able to recognize the most generically prevalent, form-defining features of a binary movement, they can turn their attention to its more individual qualities—the artful, the subtle, the expressive, the unexpected, even the contradictory. My aim is to offer inroads into this part of the analytical process as well, enlivening performance, sharpening discourse, and deepening appreciation.

An Analytical Primer

Titled and styled as various kinds of dances, Bach's binary-form movements are contained mostly in instrumental suites, although a number of individual binary movements are found in other contexts.

[1] A progenitor of this approach is Douglass M. Green, *Form in Tonal Music* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965). It continues to be used in modern textbooks such as Steven G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Theory, Analysis, and Listening,* 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016).

The most conventional of Bach's suites—the cello suites and most of the keyboard suites—are structured in the sequence allemande–courante–sarabande–gigue, with one or more optional dances (*galanteries*) placed before the gigue.[2] In suites of all kinds, omissions and additions to this layout are possible. Additionally, most of Bach's suites begin with a large-scale prelude not in binary form. In this section, I introduce the formal categories and stylistic traits that enable analysis of the binary movements from the suites.

Two Hypermetric Types and First-Reprise Form

Most binary movements from Bach's suites fit easily enough into one of two categories, which I term *hypermetrically regular* and *hypermetrically irregular*.[3] In Bach's hypermetrically regular movements, phrases are nearly always constructed in multiples of four measures, with obvious points of articulation every four or eight measures. Hypermetrically irregular movements sometimes begin with a four-measure unit—a deceptive gesture toward hypermetric regularity—but do not consistently maintain such patterning throughout both reprises, disrupting metric regularity with phrases or sub-phrases of varied lengths.[4] These two traits are strongly (although not perfectly) correlated with dance type and with distinct repertoires of options for first-reprise form (table 1).

[2] Grove Music Online, s.v. "Suite," by David Fuller (2001), https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27091. See also Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, expanded ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009).

[3] For hypermeter, see William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 8–9; and Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 20–25.

[4] In baroque music, the most broadly useful definition of a *phrase* is a unit closed by a perfect authentic cadence (PAC), which is the sense in which I use the term here. It differs somewhat from William E. Caplin's usage in *Classical Form*, which I otherwise follow in many respects. Caplin uses "phrase" to mean a musical "unit" of at least four measures, "often, but not necessarily, containing at least two ideas" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 256. The greater fluidity of baroque phrase structure makes it preferable to reserve "phrase" for entities delineated by an unambiguous PAC. Nevertheless, I consider this merely a guideline, and in some cases it may be advisable to stretch the definition: for instance, when an entire reprise concludes with a half cadence (in which case we still might consider the reprise to represent a complete phrase), or when a potentially reprise-ending PAC is followed by a short codetta that reiterates the PAC (the codetta might not be "phrase-worthy" merely by virtue of ending with a PAC itself).

Table 1. Hypermetric types and their most typical formal correlates

	Hypermetrically regular movements	**Hypermetrically irregular movements**
Dance types	Sarabande, minuet, gavotte, bourrée, passepied, other galanteries	Allemande, courante, gigue
First-reprise forms	Period, sentence, hybrid	Two-part form, three-part form

In an eight-measure, hypermetrically regular first reprise, the opening motive (mm. 1–2) is usually highly characteristic and recognizable. If it is heard again in mm. 3–4—possibly transposed, decorated, or otherwise slightly modified—then a sentential structure is implied (table 2a; see, for example, Bourrée I, Violoncello Suite No. 3 in C Major BWV 1009, mm. 1–8). If the opening motive is instead heard again in mm. 5–6, again subject to the same possible modifications, then a periodic structure is implied (table 2b; see, for example, Polonaise, French Suite No. 6 in E Major BWV 817, mm. 1–8). If the opening motive is not obviously heard again during the first reprise, then the structure of the phrase is a hybrid (table 2c; see, for example, Sarabande, French Suite No. 3 in B Minor BWV 814, mm. 1–8).[5] As most of Bach's first reprises modulate, the modulation is normally accomplished by a simple tonicization and cadence in the second half of the phrase. Other possibilities for hypermetrically regular first reprises might include a length of up to sixteen measures, particularly in the case of a period with an eight-measure sentence as both antecedent and consequent.

[5] For periods and sentences, I adapt the terminology in Caplin, *Classical Form*, 9–13 and 35–58. Caplin's hybrids (59–63) are entities that combine elements of both. The important hybrid in the Bach repertoire, which other authors would term a "contrasting period," is Caplin's "hybrid 1," comprising an antecedent (as in a period) plus a continuation (as in a sentence). Periods and sentences, although sometimes clear and nearly "classical" in this repertoire, are not reified as the main phrase-structural possibilities in Bach, and therefore frequently have details that would be out of place in Caplin's focus repertoire. Furthermore, for the same reason, Caplin's "hybrid" terminology does not necessarily imply a blend of two more conceptually central structures in baroque music; indeed, hybrids are more frequent than sentences as a first-reprise form for binary movements by Bach.

Table 2a. Sentence schematic for an eight-measure first reprise

mm. 1–2	**mm. 3–4**	**mm. 5–8**
Opening motive	Repetition of opening motive	Continuation (may include motivic fragmentation and rhythmic acceleration) and cadence

Table 2b. Period schematic for an eight-measure first reprise

mm. 1–2	**mm. 3–4**	**mm. 5–6**	**mm. 7–8**
Opening motive	Contrasting idea and weak cadence	Opening motive	New contrasting idea and stronger cadence

Table 2c. Hybrid schematic for an eight-measure first reprise

mm. 1–2	**mm. 3–4**	**mm. 5–8**
Opening motive	Contrasting idea and weak cadence	Continuation (may include motivic fragmentation and rhythmic acceleration) and cadence

In hypermetrically irregular first reprises, a periodic or sentential structure is almost never used or even hinted at. Here, the essential components are more easily described in tonal terms: an opening presentation of the tonic key, a tonicization of the secondary key, and eventually a cadence there. In its basic outline, I refer to this as "two-part form," with the first part the opening tonic and the second part the modulation and cadence (table 3a; see, for example, Allemande, Partita No. 2 in C Minor BWV 826, mm. 1–16). In some movements, this structure is overt, with the end of the opening tonic marked by an imperfect authentic cadence (IAC), half cadence (HC), or perfect authentic cadence (PAC). At other times the structural division—while always present in some way—is papered over by seamless figuration.

In some hypermetrically irregular first reprises, the two-part tonal structure is completed relatively early on, leaving room for a third part. At times this may be a codetta or a new thematic idea in the key to which the first reprise has modulated—an additional phrase following a PAC in the new key (table 3b; see, for example, Gigue, Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major BWV 1068, mm. 1–24). Some minor-key first reprises feature instead a three-key tonal structure (i–III–v), in which case the third part of the first reprise is taken up by the move from the key of III to the key of v, and a final PAC in the key of v (table 3c; see, for example, Corrente, Partita No. 6 in E Minor BWV 830, mm. 1–54).

Table 3a. Two-part schematic for a hypermetrically irregular first reprise

Opening tonic prolongation (to authentic or half cadence)	Modulation to, and cadence in, secondary key (V, v, or III)

Table 3b. Three-part, two-key schematic for a hypermetrically irregular first reprise

Opening tonic prolongation (to authentic or half cadence)	Modulation to secondary key (cadence optional)	Thematically independent new idea in secondary key, and final cadence

Table 3c. Three-part, three-key schematic for a hypermetrically irregular first reprise (minor keys only)

Opening tonic prolongation (to authentic or half cadence)	Modulation to, and cadence in, secondary key (III)	Modulation to, and cadence in, third key (v)

Three-Rotation Form

The large-scale form of a binary movement by Bach comes into view when we analyze the second reprise in light of the material in the first. The simplest second reprises are twice the length of the first, and consist of two additional "passes" through melodic material that is drawn from the first reprise. Because these movements feature a total of three hearings

of the melodic material, I term this layout *three-rotation form*.[6] Three-rotation form is by far the most typical choice for movements in the hypermetrically regular style, and thus is associated with certain types of dances (sarabandes and *galanteries*) as well.

Bach's three-rotation form is similar to the rounded binary form found mainly in the late eighteenth century in having three distinct phrases spread across a short first reprise and a longer second reprise; however, it differs sharply from the later form in both tonal structure and the design of the phrases themselves. Rounded binary form is driven by two features, one thematic and one tonal: (1) the melodic similarity of the final phrase (the recapitulation) to the first phrase; and (2) the tonic-key half cadence that sets up the tonic-key beginning of the recapitulation (table 4a; see, for example, Mozart, Allegretto "alla turca," Sonata in A Major K. 331, mm. 1–24). In Bach's three-rotation form, by contrast, the second phrase (the first phrase of the second reprise) usually has a closer resemblance to the first reprise than does the third; there is no sense of thematic contrast in the middle phrase of the movement. And in the tonal domain, the second phrase ends not with a half cadence but with a PAC in a nontonic key.[7] This compels the third phrase to begin not directly on tonic but off tonic, and then to modulate back to tonic in time for the end (table 4b; see, for example, Sarabande, French Suite No. 6 in E Major BWV 817).

Table 4a. Rounded binary schematic for a full classical minuet or similar movement (key scheme may vary)

Reprise 1		**Reprise 2**	
Main theme		Contrasting middle	Main theme (complete or truncated)
I V:PAC		I:HC	I I:PAC

[6] The term "rotation" is adapted from James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 611–14. In an important article, Joel Lester discusses some of the same thematic features I describe, using the term "parallel sections" for my "rotations." "Heightening Levels of Activity and J. S. Bach's Parallel-Section Constructions," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54 (2001): 80–87.

[7] This cadence, which I term the *second-reprise medial PAC*, is usually in the key of vi or ii for a major-key movement, and in the key of iv, v, III, or rarely VII for a minor-key movement.

Table 4b. Three-rotation schematic for a full J. S. Bach binary movement (key scheme may vary)

Reprise 1		**Reprise 2**		
Rotation 1		Rotation 2		Rotation 3
I	V:PAC	V	nontonic key: PAC	I:PAC

Two-Rotation Form

In hypermetrically irregular movements by Bach, the standard second reprise goes only once more through the material laid out in the first (a single rotation). I therefore term the overall layout *two-rotation form*. These forms are generally more complex than three-rotation forms, due to several complications:

1. The first reprise on which the second reprise is based is itself formally looser, more complicated, and often longer than in three-rotation form.
2. The second reprise is often a bit longer than the first, suggesting some amount of internal expansion.
3. The second-reprise medial PAC is present just as in three-rotation form, even though in this context it does not play a role in demarcating one rotation from another. In other words, the second reprise in two-rotation form has the same tonal demands (key structure and cadences) as three-rotation form, but must squeeze this tonal activity into a single thematic rotation.
4. The measure-to-measure similarity between the two rotations (equivalent, here, to the two reprises) is often attenuated relative to that found in three-rotation movements; in some cases, it is nearly absent.

In Bach, rotational correspondence is signaled by the two reprises' *beginning* with the same material (whether or not they continue with it), sometimes ending in parallel ways, and being approximately (although, again, not exactly) the same length. The actual amount of first-reprise material that is heard again in the second reprise—and, in some cases, the order in which that material occurs—is not standardized in Bach's two-rotation practice.[8] Table 5 synopsizes the relatively open-ended layout

[8] Lester points out that a head motive replicating the beginning of the work is the standard way, in some genres, that Bach signals the opening of a new section, and that

of Bach's two-rotation binary form (see, for example, Allemande, Partita No. 2 in C Minor BWV 826).

Table 5. Two-rotation schematic for a full J. S. Bach binary movement (key scheme may vary)

Reprise 1		**Reprise 2**		
Rotation 1		Rotation 2 (most similar to Rotation 1 at beginning and often at end)		
I	V:PAC	V	vi:PAC	I:PAC

A Pedagogical Framework

In order to construct a basic formal overview of an unfamiliar binary movement by Bach, students can be guided through a sequence of analytical steps, listed below. Appendices 1 and 2 offer selections from Bach's binary movements that can be used in classroom instruction or as student assignments; appendix 1 lists first reprises for study (steps 1–3), and appendix 2 lists full movements (steps 1–4).

1. Determine the movement's hypermetric type.
    a. Is the movement's dance type most often associated with hypermetric regularity or irregularity?
    b. Does the movement's phrase structure suggest hypermetric regularity, that is, with a clear division into four- and eight-measure modules with melodic or harmonic arrivals at the end of each? Or are the moments of arrival spaced irregularly or difficult to discern?
2. Determine the movement's large-scale tonal progression.
    a. Does the first reprise modulate, and to what key(s)? What type of cadence, and in what key, concludes the first reprise?
    b. The second reprise always concludes with a tonic-key PAC. Beyond this, does it contain one or more medial PACs, and if so, what key(s) do they confirm?
    c. Are any other cadences prominent? For example, a half cadence in the tonic key may occasionally set up a return of tonic in the second reprise, or the first reprise's modulation may be confirmed with a PAC before the one that closes the reprise.

"the middle portions of most parallel sections are more fluid." The formal looseness of Bach's two-rotation movements can be understood as a genre-specific instance of this general compositional tendency. "J. S. Bach's Parallel-Section Constructions," 78, 80.

3. Determine the first reprise's form.
    a. In hypermetrically regular movements, the most typical structures are:
        i. Antecedent–consequent (period)
        ii. Presentation–continuation (sentence)
        iii. Antecedent–continuation (hybrid)
    b. If a hypermetrically regular first reprise does not conform to one of these eight- or sixteen-measure layouts, see if it can be characterized as a modification of one of those ideas; alternatively, it may use a looser organization akin to the hypermetrically irregular first reprise.
    c. In hypermetrically irregular movements:
        i. Identify—if possible—a fairly self-contained span of music that is entirely in the tonic key, after which the music begins to modulate.
        ii. Following this opening tonic prolongation, locate the first PAC or significant change in melodic material. If it is at the end of the reprise, then two-part form is an appropriate designation. If it is earlier than the end of the reprise, and a substantial span of music follows (e.g., a motivically distinct codetta, or a second modulation and cadence), then the first reprise can be described as a three-part form.
    d. For all movement types, take note of the most melodically distinct aspects of the first reprise. The opening motive nearly always recurs in the movement and may signal the beginning of subsequent rotations; sometimes a later melodic idea, too, will be recognizable upon later occurrences.
4. Analyze the second reprise's "usage" of the first reprise's referential layout.
    a. Compare the proportions of the two reprises: if the second reprise is more than twice the length of the first, then three-rotation form is overwhelmingly likely.
    b. In most movements, the second reprise begins with music that is recognizably drawn from the first reprise's opening. This may be a fairly literal—though transposed—repetition, or it may involve a transformation like invertible counterpoint or melodic inversion. If this is the case, see how far the measure-for-measure correspondence between the two reprises can be tracked.

   c. If the rotational correspondence is fairly literal (although generally more so at the beginnings of phrases than at the ends), does it reach a cadence and proceed to another such rotation? If so, then three-rotation form is a good description. Four-rotation form, whose procedures are the same as three-rotation form, is also possible.
   d. Two-rotation form is the other main possibility, especially in hypermetrically irregular movements, and there is rarely a measure-for-measure correspondence between the two reprises running the duration of the second reprise. In the second reprise, at what point does the correspondence with the first reprise give way to new material? Is correspondence ever resumed, for example, a measure or two before the final cadence? Are other recognizable fragments of the first reprise used again in the second reprise, either in their original ordering or in a different ordering?

5. Students should learn to apply this framework by proceeding from the most straightforward, analytically unproblematic examples to more complex or ambiguous works. As the difficulty increases, the analytical focus can shift away from simply *recognizing* the typical structural features of a binary movement and toward *assessing* a movement's degree of fit or departure from these models. In doing so, students may ask themselves any of the following questions to help organize their understanding of these departures:
   a. Is a feature *ambiguous*? For example, is a harmonic arrival like a cadence in some respects but not in others, complicating the decision to treat a span of music as one phrase or two?
   b. Is a feature *transformed*? For example, can a motive be heard as a disguised version of a motive from earlier in the piece, bringing two phrases into structural analogy with one another?
   c. Can a feature be understood as a *hybrid* of two more usually distinct features? For example, does a second reprise have aspects of both a single rotation and a double rotation, suggesting a hybrid of two- and three-rotational form?
   d. Are the usual *proportions* of a standard form distorted in a way that obscures the movement's fundamental relationship to the standard form? For example, is a second reprise three or four times the length of its first reprise?

e. Is a complicated aspect of a movement a *topical borrowing* from another genre of baroque music? For example, are invertible counterpoint, melodic inversion, or other quasi-fugal devices used?
f. Are the analyst's expectations upended by the insertion of entirely *new material* where it is not ordinarily found?

Four Sample Analyses

This section offers brief analyses of two movements of each hypermetric type, all four relatively straightforward by Bach's standards. Although they do not address the points above in order, they stem directly from asking those questions and assembling the results into a chronological analysis. In each case, the analytical process's end goal is not a mechanical set of answers to questions, but rather a focus on and appreciation of some of the piece's most artful or unexpected characteristics.

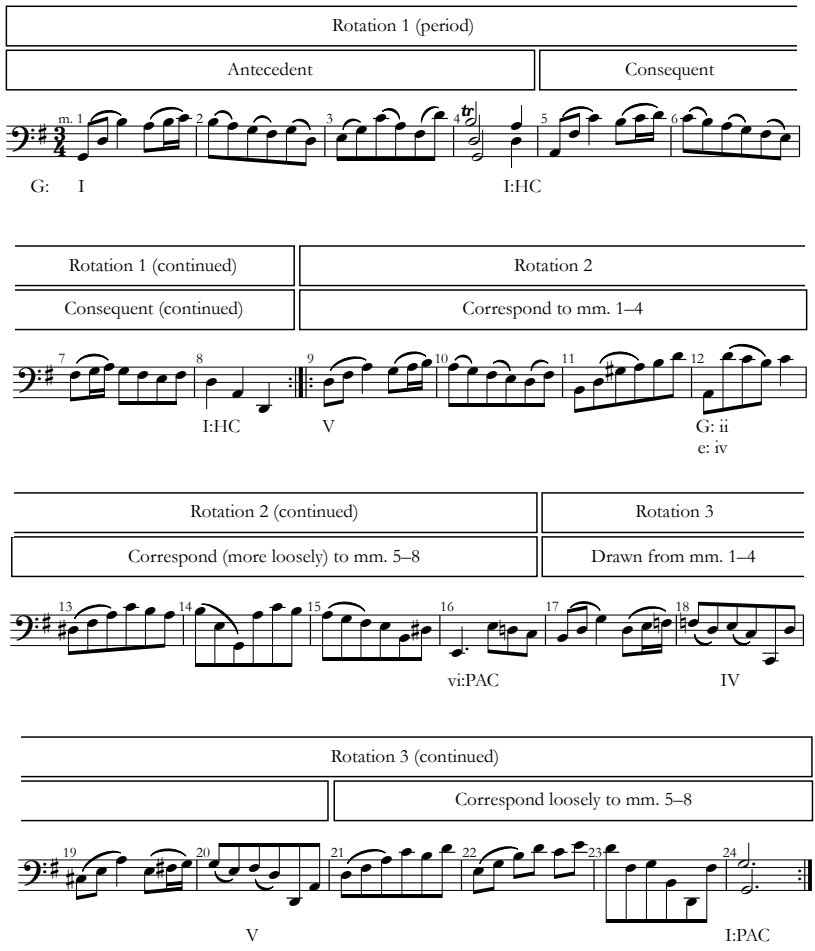
Menuet I, Violoncello Suite No. 1 in G Major BWV 1007

The dance type (minuet) and surface patterning of this movement unequivocally support hypermetric regularity (ex. 1). The first reprise's eight measures are divided at the halfway point by a cadence, and each of the second reprise's two eight-measure phrases also features a harmonic arrival after four measures. The first reprise's melodic aspect is periodic, with mm. 5–6 motivically similar to mm. 1–2. In the tonal dimension, this brief first reprise concludes emphatically on a V chord, which—since it lacks a preparatory C♯—is best understood as half-cadential. At this stage, we cannot know what will be treated as motivic by the second reprise, although two rhythmic ideas (mm. 1 and 2) stand out as potentially motivic, as do their melodic contours.

Comprising two additional eight-measure phrases with PACs on vi and I, respectively, the second reprise follows the most usual tonal plan for major-key movements and its proportioning supports three-rotation form. So too does its motivic usage, inasmuch as the first two measures of each eight-measure unit (mm. 9–10 and 17–18) prominently feature the rhythm and melodic contour from mm. 1–2. For all this, however, the three-rotation form is articulated with great variety: each eight-measure rotation treats the music of mm. 1–2 in a distinct way, disguising the first reprise's periodic form. The second rotation, mm. 9–16, beyond a brief arrival on A minor in m. 12 (iv in the upcoming key of E minor), is occupied by spinning out constant eighth notes drawn from the rhythmic

texture of mm. 2–3. In m. 13, the initial three slurred eighth notes with ascending triadic contour echo the same idea in m. 9 (and in mm. 1 and 5), suggesting a vestigial periodic phrase structure for the second rotation. The same is true of the third rotation's m. 21—yet the rotation's first four measures have also now taken on the aspect of a sentence presentation. Measures 19–20 reuse a version of the two-measure basic idea in mm. 17–18 instead of a contrasting idea drawn from mm. 3–4. These four measures are also sequential, tonicizing successively IV and then V, which makes the eventual return of the tonic all the more emphatic.

Example 1. J. S. Bach, Menuet I, Violoncello Suite No. 1 in G Major BWV 1007



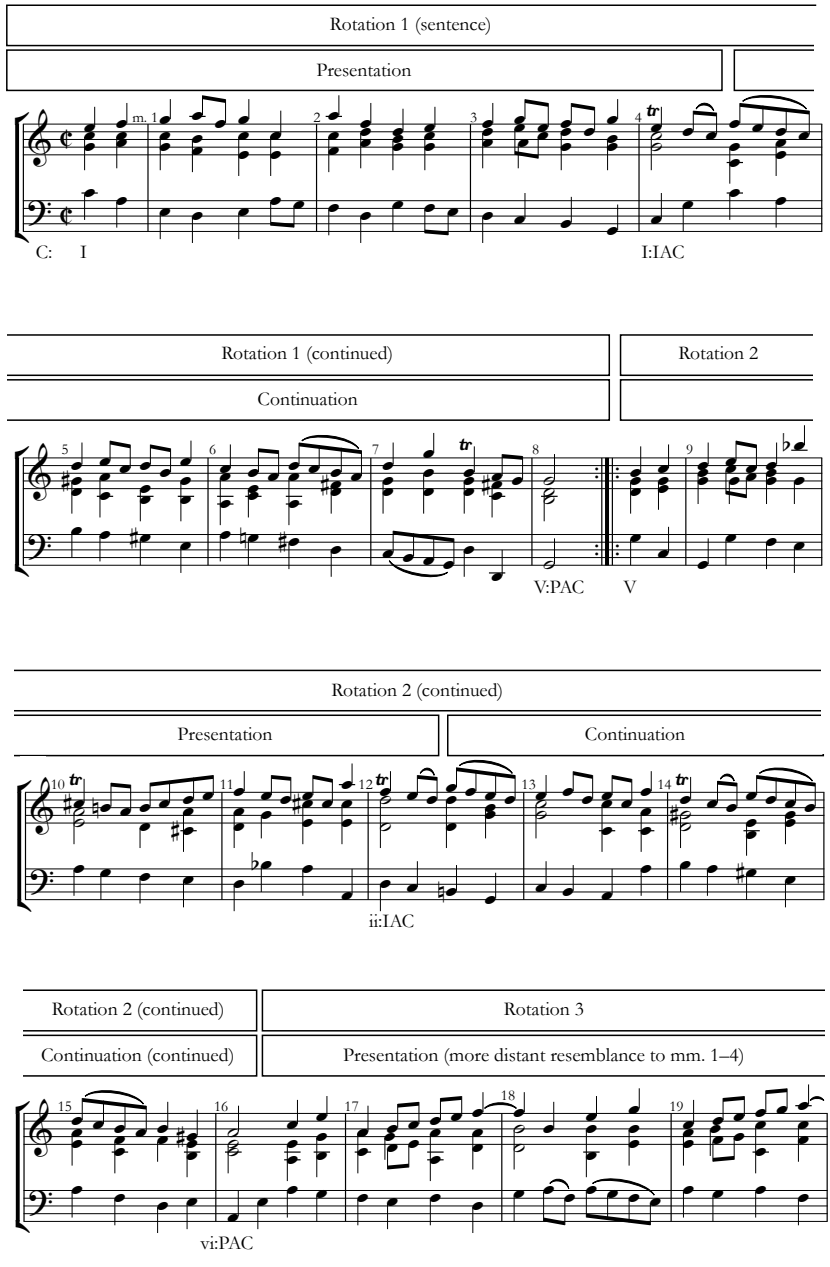
Gavotte I, Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C Major BWV 1066

Clearly similar to the G major cello Menuet in many respects, the C major orchestral Gavotte is identically proportioned and features the same large-scale tonal structure as well (ex. 2). Its first reprise is sentential, with mm. 1–2 repeated—embellished, melodically transposed, and reharmonized—as mm. 3–4, to form a four-measure presentation. Turning to the continuation, while the anacrusis to m. 5 differs from the anacruses to mm. 1 and 3, the motive used in m. 5 is taken from mm. 1 and 3; a slightly more active harmonic progression in the continuation accomplishes the modulation to the key of V. Broadening our scope to the whole movement, the resemblance between mm. 1–8 and mm. 9–16 is, if anything, much clearer than it was in the G major Menuet, with the two rotations sharing their rhythmic patterning almost completely and most of their melodic contour as well. Note, however, that because of the new harmonic environment of mm. 9–16, Bach consistently adjusts the sizes of intervals, writing, in a way, a "new" melody that shares its rhythm and melodic contour with the old one.

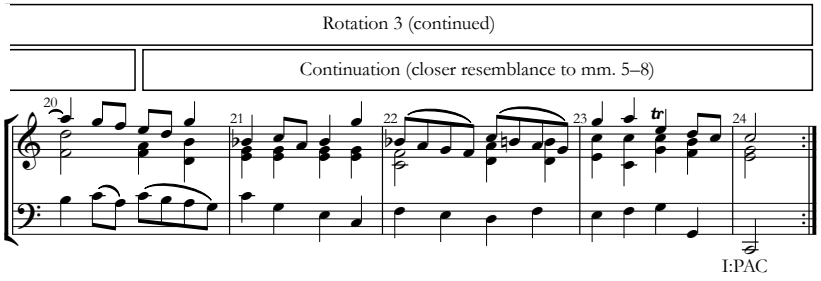
When the resemblance between the first two rotations is so overt, Bach frequently allows the third rotation to vary a good deal more. Do mm. 17–18—which we would expect to correspond with mm. 1–2—in fact derive from the movement's opening at all? At the very least, the rhythm of these measures is similar to that of mm. 3–4, a rhythm that was previously contextualized as a variant of mm. 1–2, and the descending bass here is also drawn from those earlier moments. Yet in melodic direction and other details, mm. 17–20 seem essentially new, "overwriting" the expected first four measures of the third rotation.[9] The status of the final eight measures as rotational is restored only with the close resemblance of mm. 21–24 to mm. 5–8. In cases like this, an ear trained on even more overt three-rotational movements can be sensitized to the delicate tension between the rotational and the non-rotational elements of the final phrase.

[9] This concept within rotational theory is borrowed from Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, e.g., 212–15 and 373–76. When making the analytical claim that thematically new music appears in place of an expected rotational head motive, Hepokoski and Darcy use such terms as "writes over," "overrides," "suppresses," and "blanks out."

Example 2. J. S. Bach, Gavotte I (reduction), Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C Major BWV 1066



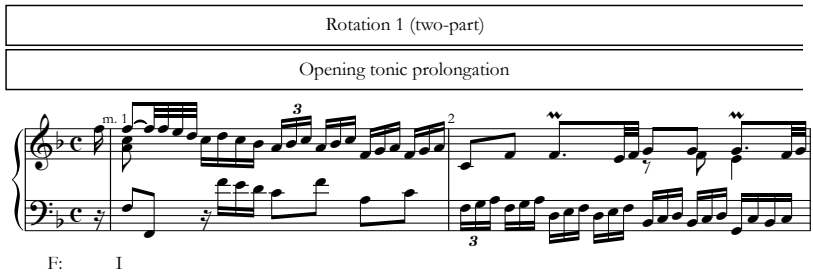
Example 2 (con.)



Allemande, English Suite No. 4 in F Major BWV 809

No two of Bach's hypermetrically irregular movements are structurally identical, and each one presents analytical challenges. Despite inevitable idiosyncrasies, however, the F major Allemande's main features are the standard ones for a movement of this kind (ex. 3). The form of the first reprise is subtle, making use of several recurring motives that are distinguished variously by rhythm and contour. While these play some role in helping mark boundaries between subsections, the two-part structure of the reprise is best understood by its tonal progression. The opening six measures hew close to the tonic, with (weak) cadential confirmations at the downbeats of mm. 3 and 6; the latter of these marks the end of the movement's opening tonic prolongation. Following this, the key of the dominant is introduced without cadential confirmation in mm. 6–7, with a seamless continuity stemming from the fact that m. 6 transposes material from m. 5. The music from mm. 7–10 confirms the new key via a descending-fifths sequence based on already-established motives, leading to an emphatic dominant at m. 10. Here, as often happens toward the end of hypermetrically irregular reprises, mode mixture is used to extend and color the drive to the final cadence.

Example 3. J. S. Bach, Allemande, English Suite No. 4 in F Major BWV 809



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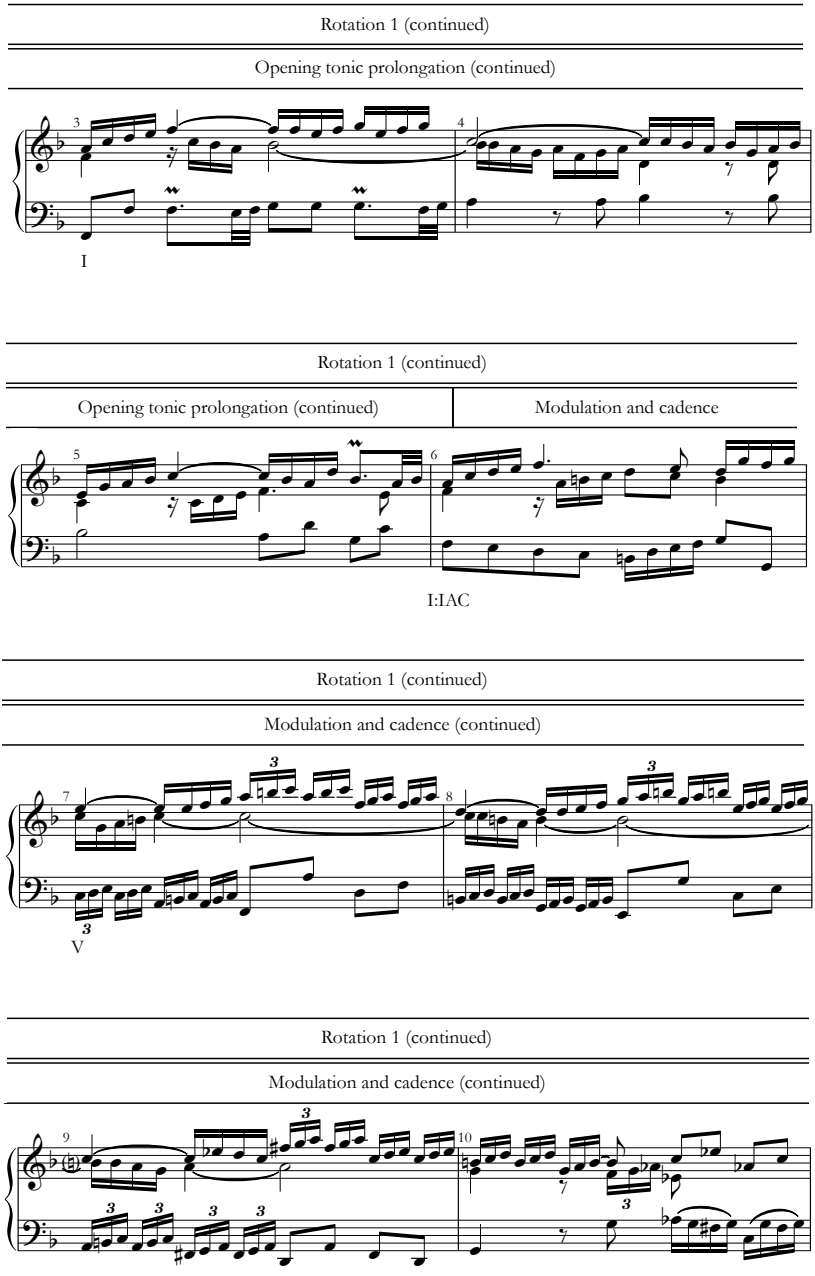

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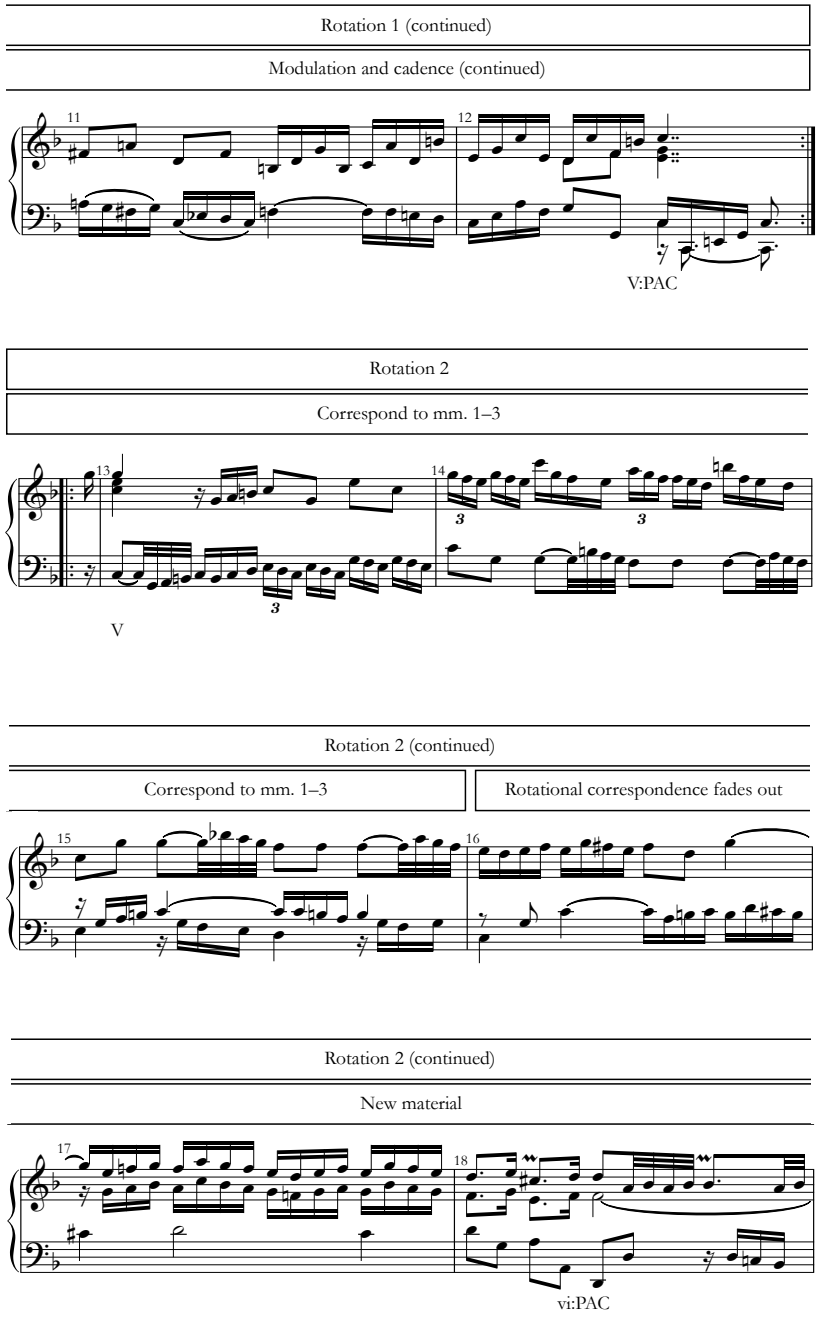

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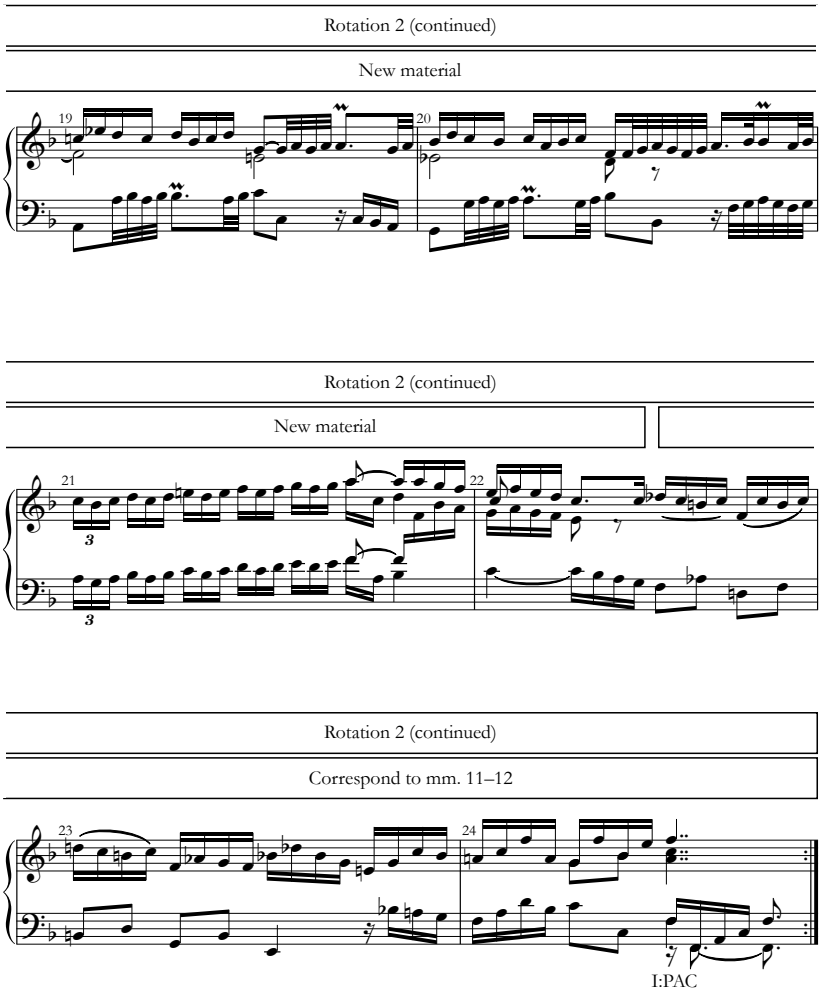


Bach's allemandes are always two-rotation forms, with the second reprise constituting a single additional rotation. Here, this is reinforced by proportionality; the two reprises both take up twelve measures and feature thematically parallel openings and closings. As he often does, Bach subjects mm. 1–4 to both melodic inversion and part inversion (reversing the roles of right and left hand) when their material is reused for mm. 13–16; the recurrence in mm. 22–24 of the mode-mixture idea and cadence includes some part inversion as well. In Bach's idiom, these

differences are minor enough to qualify these passages as rotationally parallel to their first-reprise counterparts. As is usual for these works, however, thematic reuse is limited to the beginning and the end; the central span of music in the second reprise, mm. 17–21, is entirely newly written. This includes, most importantly, the medial PAC (in the key of vi, m. 18), as well as the modulating music prior to and following it. This moderate degree of resemblance between the two reprises is an ideal structural match for Bach's lyrical, ornate allemande style, permitting both the formal clarity of rotational pairing and the quasi-improvisatory freedom of the second reprise. In particular, the sequential approach from m. 18 to the movement's rhetorical climax at m. 21—though plausibly related in tonal-structural and motivic terms to the parallel music in the first reprise—is a melodic flight of fancy, the piece's most strikingly beautiful moment.

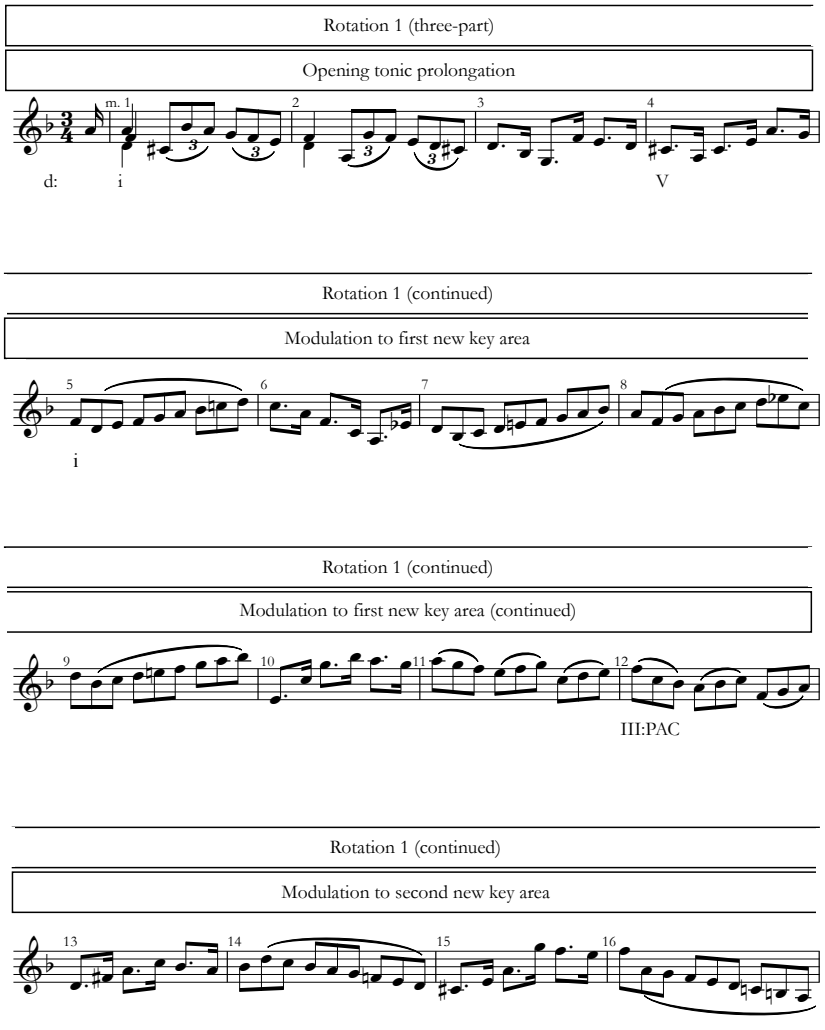
Corrente, Violin Partita No. 4 in D Minor BWV 1004

The three parts of the first reprise in the D minor Corrente correspond to the opening key and two more that are confirmed with cadences: F major (III) and A minor (v) (ex. 4). Hence the reprise is divided unevenly: four measures for the opening tonic prolongation; eight measures for the section that modulates to and confirms III with a PAC in m. 12; and twelve measures for the final part, which, touching on increasingly bold extremes of register, reaches the final PAC in v at m. 24. With such prominently featured multiples of four at structural inflection points, we might assume hypermetric regularity, but such regularity is not especially prominent in the first reprise and is undermined completely in the latter portion of the second.

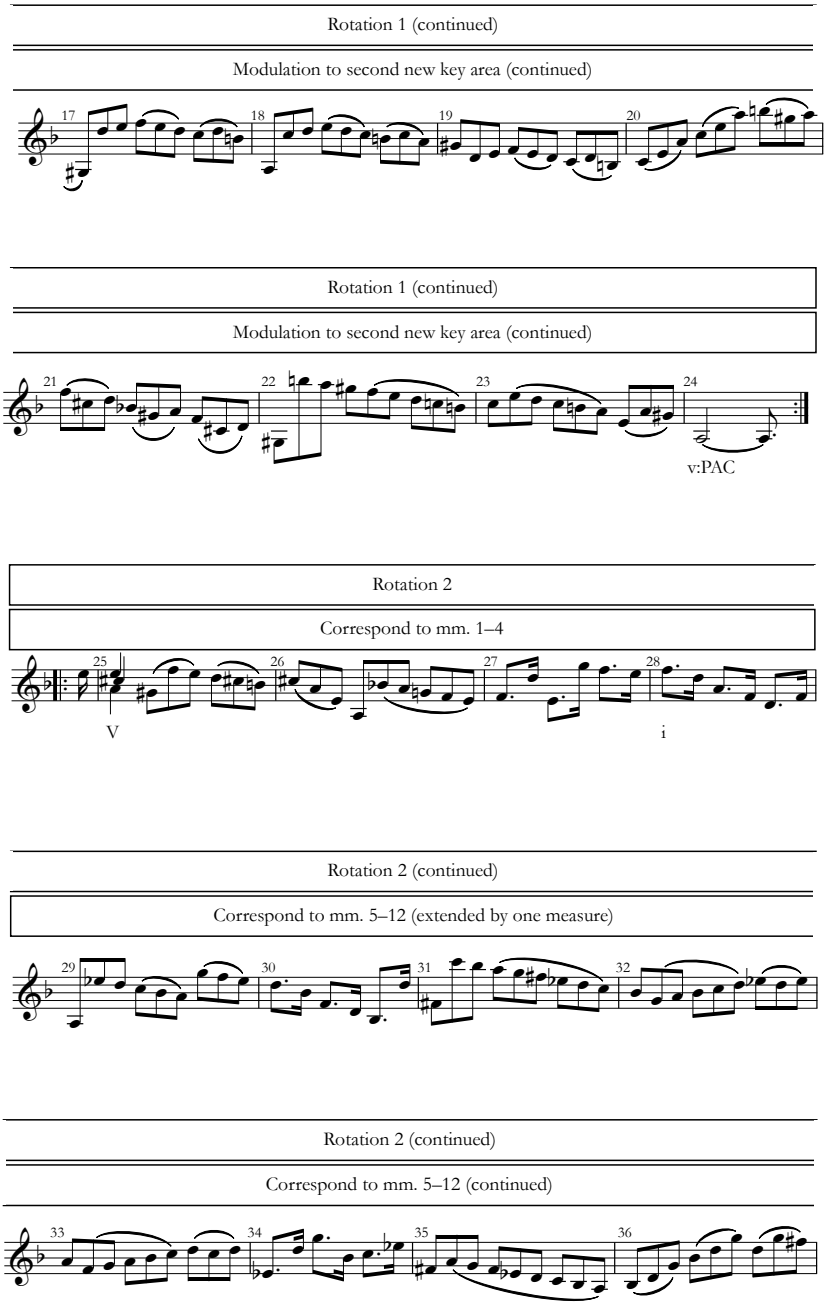
In the second reprise, rotational similarity to the first is initially overt. While corresponding measures are not melodically identical—in part owing to their different harmonic contexts—identical rhythms clearly signal their correspondence. The medial PAC, arriving in m. 37, is parallel to the second-part-ending cadence of m. 12 (m. 36 is an "extra" measure with no first-reprise counterpart). Beyond the medial PAC, rotational correspondence begins to break down. By m. 40, the second-reprise music bears no particular resemblance to the first reprise. The moments of greatest rhetorical impact near the movement's end—the pauses in mm. 44 and 49—are also unique to the second reprise. This is also true of the potential final-cadence gesture at m. 51, which is undone by the subsequent harmonic context and given again, now definitively,

three measures later. As both reprises approach their close, only the final four notes of each remind the listener of their rotational correspondence. This free blending of rotationally derived music and melodically new music is characteristic of Bach's two-rotation forms.

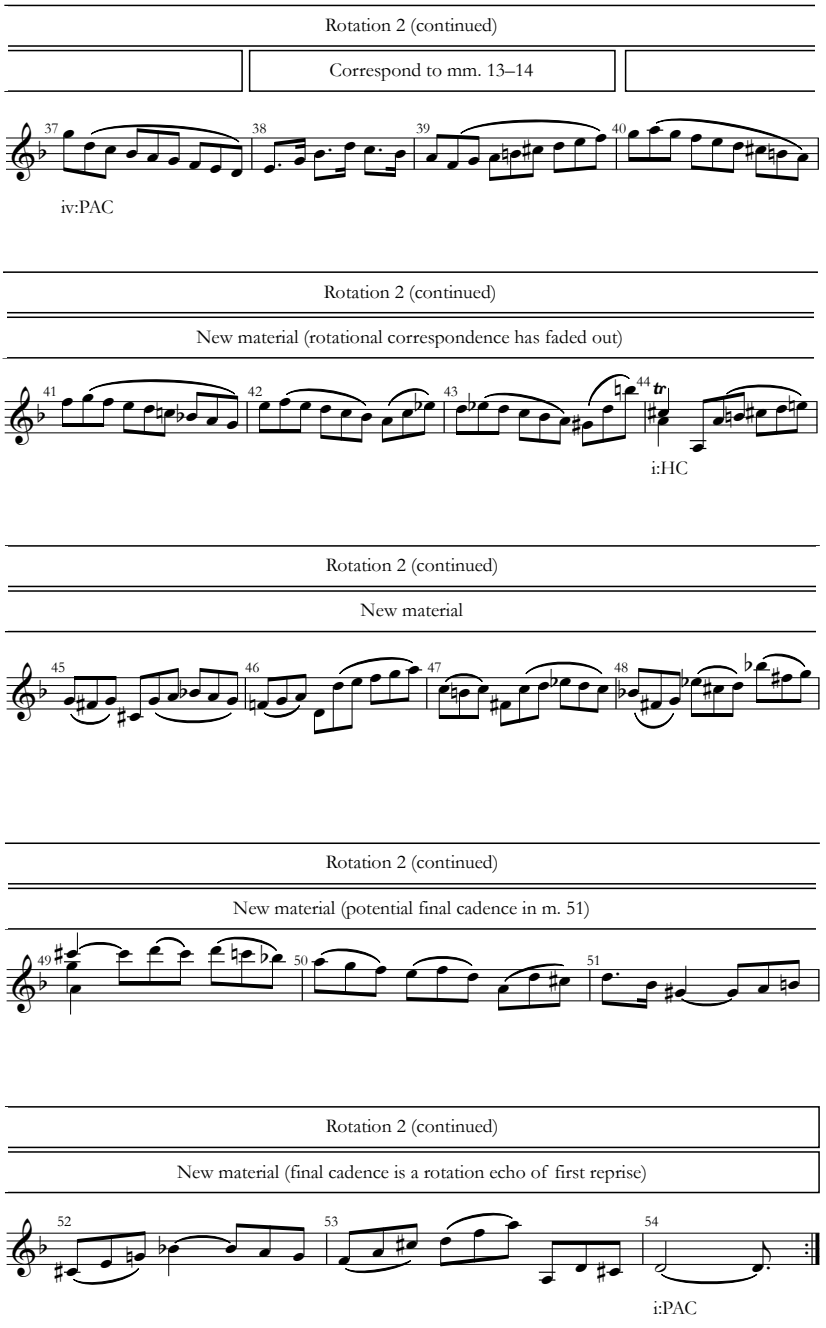
Example 4. J. S. Bach, Corrente, Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1004



Example 4 (con.)



Example 4 (con.)



Complications

Readers will have noticed that, even in the relatively clear-cut movements discussed above, the natural variation and flexibility of Bach's idiom make analysis more difficult than in similar approaches to form in later eighteenth-century music. Movements presenting no analytical challenge are rare or absent. Still, over the course of working through a few of the more straightforward examples, students will begin to internalize their guiding norms and learn to hear the basic structures that underpin the surface complexity. After they have done so, they may be prepared to apply the analytical heuristics they have developed to movements that depart from the models to a greater degree, and even to discuss the different kinds of listening experiences that result from those complications. This section of the article will briefly discuss a few binary movements by Bach that present such difficulties. While stopping short of offering full analyses of these movements, I suggest that application of the methods laid out above—and special attention to the moments where the music contradicts the expectations they set up—will lead students to a well-contextualized understanding of these challenging pieces.

Four-Rotation Form: Sarabande, Violin Partita No. 1 in B Minor BWV 1002

Although three-rotation form is clearly the norm in hypermetrically regular movements, a few such movements follow an eight-measure first reprise with a twenty-four-measure second reprise that can be interpreted as three distinct rotations, for four rotations overall. Although these movements are usually metrically and formally quite clear, their relative infrequency marks them as a variant of the three-rotational layout. While we might expect the second reprise to contain medial PACs in two distinct keys, it is more typical for the first cadence to be a normal medial PAC and the second to be a tonic half cadence, which ushers in a fourth rotation that is a tonic (non-modulating) restatement of the first. In the B minor Sarabande, this cadential pattern is easy to see: a medial PAC in iv at m. 16 and a tonic HC at m. 24. While the head motive (three quarter-note chords, e.g., m. 1) occurs in the expected places, the latter three rotations make an interesting modification to the first reprise's hybrid phrase: they convert it into a sentence structure.

Fugal Gigue: Gigue, English Suite No. 6 in D Minor BWV 811

Fugal texture is a common option for the suite-ending gigue, which provokes an interesting compositional problem: when blending two kinds of structure (binary form and fugue), what should be done when they conflict? Bach addresses this problem in various ways. The two-reprise structure is never altered, but few other structural generalities from his ordinary binary-form practice remain in place without exception. At the same time, many of these pieces are structurally "loose" *qua* fugue as well, frequently beginning with a three-voice fugal exposition that subsequently drops down to two-voice texture, something that never happens in (for example) the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. In the D minor Gigue, the three-voice exposition (with an extra entry in the top voice in m. 8) is analogous to the first part of a two-part hypermetrically irregular first reprise. The second reprise has two features worth noting. First, the fugue subject on which it is based is the melodic inversion of that of the first reprise, a feature that is ubiquitous in gigues, fugal or otherwise. Second, the fugue subject in this case overrides the second reprise's natural tendency to produce a cadence in a new nontonic key (medial PAC), for a moto perpetuo texture that unrelentingly drives to the final cadence.

Module-Reordering Form: Allemande, Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major BWV 825

An elaborate version of two-rotation form that Bach reserved for some of his most ambitious movements can be referred to as *module-reordering* two-rotation form. In these works, head-motive usage and the proportionality of reprise lengths suggest two-rotation form, but the individual melodic components (modules) of the first reprise recur in a different order in the second. One such movement is the Allemande from the B-flat major Partita. In this movement, nearly all the first reprise's music is recapitulated in the second, but the measures that correspond to mm. 7–9 (mm. 33–35 in the second reprise) are heard *after* the measures that correspond to mm. 9–16 (mm. 24–31). This characteristically Bachian feat of compositional ingenuity is akin to the contrapuntal devices that might enliven a fugue.

Conclusion

Analyzing form is a fundamentally comparative endeavor: it is a matter both of observing the regularities of structure that bind together a repertoire and of interpreting any individual work's departures from

those regularities.[10] While students can master the concepts laid out in this article easily enough simply by memorizing them, the most valuable experiences come from internalizing those concepts by prolonged analysis of many such movements. Such experiences assist students in two complementary ways. One way is regularization: students learn to find conceptual order in works that had previously seemed to follow no particular rules. The other is a sharpening of individuation: features of a work that might have previously attracted no notice come to seem striking, daring, inspired, even shocking.

Of course, the analyses stemming from the process outlined in this article are a beginning, not a final product. Equipped with these skills, students can put them into practice in various ways. Most obvious and perhaps closest to the music scholar's heart is the analytical essay. While the individualities of Bach's binary movements may not possess the clear *narrative* implications of later sonata forms, my students have written vivid interpretations of them nonetheless. A second context for this analytical knowledge is performance; while no structural feature demands to be performed in a certain way, deeper understanding leads to more informed choices. Students of performance may find that their grasp of, for example, the importance of a certain cadence leads them to emphasize *or* de-emphasize it greatly, but none have reported to me that the knowledge does not lead them to a valuable thought process. Finally, perhaps the most rewarding context for implementing an understanding of Bach's formal processes is in model composition; blending both large- and small-scale understanding of Bach's idiom and engaging students' creativity as well, it is an exercise in total musicianship and has led to some of the student work I admire most. In all these learning activities, Bach's binary movements can spur our students to vital intellectual and creative achievements.

Abstract

J. S. Bach's binary dance movements are not well described by the system of simple, balanced, and rounded binary forms taught in many textbooks for later eighteenth-century binary movements. Instead, this article offers an analytical system for Bach's two-reprise movements that is based on Bach's own practice. Stemming from the observation that his works in this genre can usually be segmented into phrases beginning with

[10] I argue more formally for this point in "Parametric Interaction in Tonal Repertoires," *Journal of Music Theory* 60 (2016): 97–148.

the same opening motive, the system classifies movements into two- and three-rotation forms. Each of these main formal types is associated with other characteristics as well, such as regular or irregular hypermeter, dance type, and first-reprise form. I give sample analyses of several movements to show both straightforward and complex examples.

For instance, a sarabande, minuet, or gavotte is ordinarily in the three-rotation layout, usually the clearer type of binary form in Bach's suites; its first reprise is most often a parallel period or hybrid phrase, and it displays a regular hypermeter. The second reprise, then, will comprise two more phrases of about the same length, each of which begins with the same melodic idea as the first. An allemande from the same suite will contrast in all of these respects: hypermetrically irregular, a non-periodic first reprise, and a second reprise using only a single restatement of the first reprise's opening idea. Although these trends are clearly discernible from the majority of Bach's binary movements, his trademark compositional inventiveness makes each movement distinctive in some way, whether by obscuring the clarity of these structures or by blending the types with each other or with another genre, such as fugue.

Alongside the analytical system, this article sketches a pedagogical method with which Bach's binary forms can be taught. The method walks students through a few easy questions of identification: hypermetric type, cadence keys and types, and the identity of melodic or motivic material. With this step-by-step method and a robust sense of which options are most prevalent in each formal type, students can uncover a great deal of the complexity and variety in Bach's binary-form practice.

Appendix 1. Selected teaching pieces for first-reprise form in J. S. Bach's binary movements

Hypermetrically regular

Suite	Movement	Type
English Suite No. 2 in A Minor BWV 807	Bourrée II	Period
French Suite No. 4 in E-flat Major BWV 815	Gavotte	Period
Lute Suite in E Minor BWV 996	Bourrée	Period
French Suite No. 1 in D Minor BWV 812	Menuet II	16-bar period
Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major BWV 825	Menuet I	16-bar period
Violoncello Suite No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1008	Sarabande	Longer (asymmetrical) period
French Suite No. 1 in D Minor BWV 812	Sarabande	Sentence
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B Minor BWV 1067	Polonaise	Sentence
French Suite No. 1 in D Minor BWV 812	Menuet I	8-bar hybrid
Partita No. 2 in C Minor BWV 826	Sarabande	8-bar hybrid
Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1004	Sarabanda	8-bar hybrid
Violoncello Suite No. 1 in G Major BWV 1007	Sarabande	8-bar hybrid
Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D Major BWV 1069	Menuet II	8-bar hybrid
English Suite No. 2 in A Minor BWV 807	Sarabande	Longer hybrid

Appendix 1 (con.)

Hypermetrically irregular

Suite	Movement	Type
Violoncello Suite No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1008	Allemande	Two-part
Violoncello Suite No. 3 in C Major BWV 1009	Allemande	Two-part
Violoncello Suite No. 3 in C Major BWV 1009	Courante	Two-part
English Suite No. 2 in A Minor BWV 807	Gigue	Three-part
French Suite No. 5 in G Major BWV 816	Allemande	Three-part
Violoncello Suite No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1008	Courante	Three-part

Appendix 2. Selected teaching pieces for full-movement form in J. S. Bach's binary movements

Hypermetrically regular

Suite	Movement	Type	Comments
English Suite No. 4 in F Major BWV 809	Sarabande	Three-rotation	
French Suite No. 6 in E Major BWV 817	Sarabande	Three-rotation	
French Suite No. 6 in E Major BWV 817	Menuet polonaise	Three-rotation	
Partita No. 2 in C Minor BWV 826	Sarabande	Three-rotation	
Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C Major BWV 1066	Courante	Three-rotation	A non-rotational link joins Rotations 2 and 3
Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C Major BWV 1066	Menuet I	Three-rotation	
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B Minor BWV 1067	Menuet	Three-rotation	The first reprise's hybrid form is made sentential in latter rotations
Violoncello Suite No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1008	Menuet I	Three-rotation	
English Suite No. 1 in A Major BWV 806	Sarabande	Four-rotation	
Overture in the French Style in B Minor BWV 831	Passepied I	Four-rotation	
Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D Major BWV 1069	Menuet I	Four-rotation	Rotational correspondence is less overt than in the other examples of four-rotation form
English Suite No. 4 in F Major BWV 809	Menuet I	Two-rotation	Standard-length second reprise is a single pass through the first reprise's sixteen-measure period form
French Suite No. 5 in G Major BWV 816	Loure	Two-rotation	
Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major BWV 825	Menuet II	Two-rotation	

Appendix 2 (con.)

Hypermetrically irregular

Suite	Movement	Type	Comments
English Suite No. 4 in F Major BWV 809	Courante	Two-rotation	Particularly clear correspondence between rotations
French Suite No. 4 in E-flat Major BWV 815	Allemande	Two-rotation	
Lute Suite in E Minor BWV 996	Allemande	Two-rotation	
Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1004	Giga	Two-rotation	
Violin Partita No. 3 in E Major BWV 1006	Gigue	Two-rotation	
Violoncello Suite No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1008	Courante	Two-rotation	
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B Minor BWV 1067	Badinerie	Two-rotation	Module-reordering second reprise
Partita No. 4 in D Major BWV 828	Allemande	Two-rotation	Module-reordering second reprise
Partita No. 4 in D Major BWV 828	Sarabande	Three-rotation	Third rotation is a tonic recapitulation ("rounded" binary)
Flute Partita in A Minor BWV 1013	Bourrée anglaise	Three-rotation	"Rounded" binary