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The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 8.4. Musical Rhetoric in the Easter Piece W. 244

The repetitious rhetoric of the text of the opening chorus (I Corinthians 6:14), already present in the original Greek, is exacerbated in Luther's German by the similarity of the verb forms *aufgewecket* ("raised") and *aufwecken* ("raise") in the two clauses. Bach further assimilates the two clauses by repeating the subject *Gott* in the second one, a small example of his raising the level of the musical rhetoric through a somewhat freer treatment of the text than one finds in his father's works. The same is evident in alterations that Emanuel made in the arias, whose poems Bach adjusted slightly in the autograph.¹ Such changes must reflect the view that expression was more important than any pedantic attachment to a text put in front of the composer, even by a court preacher. But although the rhetorical repetition of a few words in a chorus or recitative resembled something that might occur in a song (as on *als nur ich* at the end of "Die Küsse," W. 199/4), the arias remain entirely Italianate in style, introducing long melismas on such words as *Lob* (praise) and *erneut* (renews).

Another aspect of the composer's rhetorical zeal is evident in his re-use of a phrase from the first recitative in the ritornello theme of the following aria. The words *der Heiland lebt* (the savior lives) recur once within the recitative and again in the B section of the second aria (as "*mein Heiland lebt*"). By repeating the corresponding musical idea as the main theme of the *first* aria, Bach underscores Cochius's use of the expression as a sort of refrain, making explicit its connection with the soloist's "Dir sing ich froh" (Gladly I sing to you, online example 8.20). Bach strengthens the link by going straight from the end of the recitative to the singer's entrance in the aria, omitting the first ritornello. This was a common device in opera when an aria was meant to provide a dramatic answer to something in the preceding dialog. The joining of the recitative and the aria through a musical or textual refrain was also nothing new; similar things occur in Sebastian's church pieces.² Still, it reflects the same concern for integrating consecutive movements into a single rhetorical or dramatic entity as occurs increasingly in Emanuel's sonatas and concertos of the period.

Another rhetorical device that Bach repeated in many works occurs in the B section of the first aria, within the series of phrases in which Bach altered the text. This device, which may be

¹ In his score (P 345) Bach effectively eliminated the first line of text in the B section of the first aria, crossing it out and replacing it with an altered version of line 2, which is then repeated. In a subsequent passage, only the words "Das Grab" are retained from Cochius's original text for line 3 (see online example 8.25 in this file below). Bach worked on this aria as he did his concertos, copying the voice and probably the continuo parts into his manuscript from a separate sketch before adding the strings, which show more alterations.

² The incipit (text and music) of the first aria in *Ich geh' und suche mit Verlangen*, BWV 49, recurs within the following recitative, and in *Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen*, BWV 56, a phrase from the opening ritornello returns in the next movement; the works were composed during consecutive weeks in 1726.

termed a “step sequence,” comprises a series of phrases whose sequential relationship is articulated prominently by a sustained or accented tone in the melody. The effect seems to have been a favorite of the composer, although today it can seem somewhat pedantic. A familiar example occurs toward the end of the “Hallelujah” chorus in Handel’s *Messiah* (online example 8.21).³ By 1756 Bach had already used the device many times in instrumental works, an early instance occurring in the Sonata W. 62/8 of 1748 (online example 8.22); a more famous one is at the beginning of the D-Major Sinfonia W. 183/1, the first of the Four “Orchestra Symphonies” published in 1780 (online example 8.23). Bach used step sequences in vocal works to the end of his career; one instance, in the little-known Sanctus, W. 219, was probably what Heinrich Miesner had in mind when he referred to a passage “shortly before the end [that is] entirely based on Handel’s Halleluja Chorus (online example 8.24).⁴ The rhetorical character of the device is clear in the Easter Piece, where Bach uses it for what were originally three successive lines of poetry; their parallel construction and rising affect are reflected in the music (online example 8.25).⁵

Example 8.20. Aria “Dir sing ich froh,” no. 3 from Easter Music, W. 244, mm. 1–6

³ Although it is conceivable that Bach heard this work or saw its score at Berlin, he might not have gotten to know it well before Arne’s or his own performances of it at Hamburg in the 1770s, listed in Gugger, “C. Ph. E. Bachs Konzerttätigkeit in Hamburg,” 178, 180.

⁴ *Philipp Emanuel Bach in Hamburg*, 98.

⁵ Example 8.25 shows the passage before Bach made the alterations in its text mentioned above; having the first two phrases set the same words perhaps strengthens the rhetorical effect.

Example 8.21. Chorus “Hallelujah!” from *Messiah*, mm. 57–68 (voices and continuo only)

57 + tr. 1

S King of Kings, and Lord of

A

T for - e - ver and e - ver Hal - le - lu - jah, Ha - le - lu - jah,

B

c.c.

61

Lords, King of Kings,

for - e - ver and e - ver Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, for - e - ver and

Example 8.22. Sonata in F, W. 62/8, movement 3, mm. 42–54

42

49

Example 8.23. Sinfonia in D, W. 183/1, movement 1, mm. 1–14

Allegro di molto

vn. 1
mf

vn. 2
mf

va.
mf

vc.
mf

8
f

Example 8.24. Sanctus in E-flat, W. 219, mm.79–87 (voices and continuo only)

79
f

S
glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a,

A
f

B
f

b.c.

83
f

glo - ri - a glo - ri - a e - jus, glo - ri - a e - jus.

Example 8.25. Aria "Dir sing ich froh," no. 3 from Easter Music, W. 244, mm. 102–17 (original text, but with revised readings of notes from autograph P 345)

102

vn. 1

vn. 2

va.

B

b.c.

p

f

p

f

Das Grab um - schlies - - - set dich ver - ge - bens,

p 5^b 6 6 6 7^b 4^b 6 6 6

107

p

f

p

f

Dich hält des To - des Macht ver - ge - bens,

p 4 7 4 6 4

112

f

p

f

p

Dein Wort, das der Na - tur ge - beut,

6 6 4 *f* *p*