



Brandenburg Concerto No. 3
Movement 1
By Johann Sebastian Bach

Explore the Ritornello Musical Form

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote 6 Brandenburg concertos as a job application in 1721. The first movement of the piece that you will hear is in ritornello form, which is an Italian word meaning a recurrent musical section that alternates with different episodes of contrasting material. The musical idea introduced at the beginning of the movement will return many times. If you wanted to be really pop-culture about it, you could say it's like the Baroque version of the modern chorus we hear in pop songs, with different material thrown in for variety.

Below is a chart outlining the form of the movement. Listen to see if you can identify the recurring phrase of music and each time it comes back.

| Section | Measures No. | Video Timestamp |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Ritornello | measures 1-8 | 1:34-1:54 |
| Episode 1 | measures 9-40 | 1:55-3:12 |
| Ritornello | measures 40-46 | 3:13-3:29 |
| Episode 2 | measures 47-54 | 3:30-3:51 |
| Ritornello | measures 55-58 | 3:51-4:00 |
| Episode 3 | measures 59-69 | 4:01-4:27 |
| Ritornello | measures 70-77 | 4:28-4:48 |
| Episode 4 | measures 78-96 | 4:48-5:35 |
| Ritornello | measures 97-101 | 5:36-5:48 |
| Episode 5 | measures 102-125 | 5:49-6:47 |
| Ritornello | measures 126-end | 6:48-7:21 |

Dive Deeper

- More examples of Ritornello form
 - Bach ['Können Tränen meiner Wangen'](#) from *St. Matthew Passion*
 - Ritornello in G minor (bar 1 - 13)
 - Episode, first solo, new material, modulating to the relative major (bar 13 - 24)
 - Ritornello in the relative major (bar 25 - 33)
 - Episode, second solo, modulating back to tonic via C minor (bar 33 - 51)
 - Ritornello, tonic, which closes this section A of the ternary aria
 - Short section B and the return of A