

THE SARABANDES FROM J. S. BACH'S SIX SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO: AN ANALYSIS
AND INTERPRETIVE GUIDE FOR THE MODERN GUITARIST

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The purpose of this dissertation is to present a comparative analysis of the sarabandes from the six cello suites. Six individual analyses each address the following elements: harmonic reduction, the relationship between the large-scale harmonic and metrical structures, the melodic elaboration of the harmonic-metrical structure, and the type and prevalence of sarabande rhythm. A summary at the end of each analysis provides a cumulative comparison of the results.

Knowledge gained from this exercise will provide insight into Bach's conception of the genre by identifying both those features that stylistically unify the sarabandes as well as those that make each unique. In addition, the author will demonstrate the relationship between analysis and interpretation, using the sixth sarabande as an example. This interpretive process will also take into account the idiomatic nature of the guitar.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Bach's Cello Suites and the Guitar

Of the truly monumental figures of Western music, J. S. Bach is the only composer whose works constitute a significant portion of the modern guitarist's repertoire. Three sets of unaccompanied suites - those for lute, cello, and violin – comprise the majority of this portion. Whereas the lute works do not present a cohesive six-suite cycle, and the violin works subdivide into contrasting groups of three sonatas and three highly variable partitas, the six cello suites exhibit a uniform organization that allows them to be more readily compared with one another. Each consists of a Prelude, an Allemande, a Courante, a Sarabande, a pair of *galant* dances (Minuets in Suites 1 and 2, Bourrées in 3 and 4, and Gavottes in 5 and 6), and a concluding Gigue. Clearly, Bach systematically organized the six suites as a group within which he pursued a remarkably broad range of stylistic possibilities. A side-by-side comparison of these works, therefore, should yield considerable insight for the modern musician.

Existing research concerning the cello suites falls into several broad categories, each of which is addressed in detail in the State of Research section below. The first of these categories is literature that discusses performance practice for the violoncellist from a historically informed perspective. Second are writings that discuss the relationship of French Dance steps and rhythms to the conception and performance of the dance movements. Third, a wide variety of analytical studies exist, ranging from comparative analyses of specific dance forms to application of twentieth-century approaches stemming from the field of cognitive science. Specifically with respect to guitar, significant research concerning the arrangement and interpretation of these

suites is available. Taken as a whole, a considerable amount of pertinent research concerning the suites has been carried out; nonetheless, ample space for further inquiry remains.

1.2. Purpose

This study will complement the existing literature by presenting a comparative analysis of the sarabandes from the six cello suites. This analysis will serve a multi-faceted purpose. First, it will provide insight into Bach's conception of the genre by identifying both those features that stylistically unify the sarabandes as well as those that make each unique. Second, it will inform the interpretation of the sixth sarabande within the idiomatic context of the guitar.

1.3. State of Research

As previously stated, existing research concerning the cello suites, though extensive, is by no means exhaustive. Most dissertations are by cellists whose chief aim is to provide a performance guide for the modern performer. Some, as exemplified by Nathan Davis's dissertation, focus the majority of their attention on the instrument for which the music was originally written and the resulting implications regarding interpretation.¹ Others contain briefer discussions of the period instrument and focus instead on the relationship of French dance to the interpretation of stylized dance movements. This approach is evident in Harriet Kaplan's dissertation.² More recently, Jungmook Lim applied her research regarding stylistic interpretation toward the creation of a critical edition of Suite No.5 that contains extensive

¹ Nathan Davis, "The Baroque Violoncello and the Unaccompanied Cello Suites of J.S. Bach, B.W.V. 1007-1012," Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1986.

² Harriet Kaplan, "An Examination of Johann Sebastian Bach's Fifth and Sixth Suites for Solo Cello, BWV 1011 and 1012," DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1994.

interpretive detail in her dissertation.³ While this subset of extant research presents much valuable material not only for the cellist but also for the wider community of musicians, it leaves much room for more detailed analyses.

Serving as a reference for many of these dissertations are two books that address more comprehensively the subject of French dance: Betty Bang Mather's *Dance Rhythms of the French Baroque* and *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach* by Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne. The latter work is particularly valuable in that it provides brief synopses of the rhythmic underpinning for many of the dance movements comprising the cello suites.⁴

Of the existing analytical studies of this repertoire, much attention has been focused upon the allemande. For instance, Victor Mansure provides in his dissertation a comprehensive stylistic assessment of all Bach's allemandes, grouping them according to the characteristics they exhibit.⁵ Others, as seen in Nancy Snustad's dissertation, have narrowed their focus to the allemandes of the cello suites. Snustad analyzes the selections using ideas from theorists who were contemporaries of Bach – for example, Kirnberger and Marpurg – as well as from the modern theorist Leonard Ratner. She subsequently compares the analytical results as a means of identifying both common and distinguishing traits of the genre.⁶

While the cello suite sarabandes have not been addressed as a set, several essays concerning individual movements exist in the literature. Among these are analyses by Schenker and by others who adapt his analytical approach. While these articles may provide valuable insight into the composition's architecture, they provide only peripheral attention to the

³ Jungmook Lim, "A Performance Guide to J.S. Bach's Suite No.5 for Violoncello Solo: The Interpretation of Ornaments, Rhythm, Bowing and Phrasing, and Polyphonic Texture," DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2004.

⁴ Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, Expanded Edition (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001).

⁵ Victor Mansure, "The Allemandes of Johann Sebastian Bach: A Stylistic Study," DMA diss., University of Oregon, 1992.

⁶ Nancy Snustad, "The Allemandes in the Six Suites for Solo Cello by J.S. Bach: An Analysis and Comparison," DMA diss., Indiana University, 1994.

relationship between analysis and interpretation.⁷ Also bearing mention is Cohen's and Wagner's article "Concurrence and Nonconcurrence Between Natural and Learned Schemata: The Case of J.S. Bach's Saraband in C minor for Cello Solo." In this article, the authors elucidate the traditional concept of contrast and repetition by providing an exhaustive explanation of the relationship between the motivic and harmonic structures of the fifth sarabande. Again, while the essay provides significant insight into the piece's architectural organization, it does not apply this information to the interpretation of the composition.⁸ Taken as a whole, the writings concerning the sarabandes of the cello suites, while substantial, leave room for further inquiry, especially with regard to 1) treating the set of six as a whole and 2) applying the analysis to interpretation.

Among those works that address the issue of arranging and performing the cello suites on guitar, several articles by Stanley Yates merit serious consideration. Yates proposes that the modern transcriber follow the examples of Bach and his contemporaries by creating arrangements that, while stylistically and idiomatically viable, allow for a pronounced degree of individual expression.⁹ He subsequently articulates in detail a process for creating these arrangements. In addition, he sets forth a thorough approach for developing one's interpretation of this music. Application of certain aspects of his interpretive approach to the selected sarabande will enhance the body of literature as a whole.

⁷ Heinrich Schenker, "The Sarabande of J.S. Bach's Sarabande No.3 for Unaccompanied Cello, [BWV 1009]," translated by Hedi Siegel, *Music Forum*, II (1970), 274-282.

⁸ Dahlia Cohen and Nephtali Wagner, "Concurrence and Nonconcurrence Between Natural and Learned Schemata: The Case of J.S. Bach's Saraband in C minor for Cello Solo," *Journal of New Music Research*, XXIX/I (March 2000), 23-36.

⁹ Stanley Yates, "Arranging, Interpreting, and Performing the Music of J. S. Bach," Guide accompanying J. S. Bach, *Six Unaccompanied Cello Suites Arranged for Guitar* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, Inc., 1998), 151.

1.4. Method of Analysis

Each of the six sarabandes from the Unaccompanied Cello Suites, BWV 1007-1012, will be analyzed in the manner described below. The first five sarabandes will be transposed to keys more suitable to the guitar. For purposes of this study, the version presented in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, key changes notwithstanding, will serve as basis for the analysis.¹⁰

1.4.1. Harmonic Reduction

As Bach considered thoroughbass to be the foundation of the compositional procedure, a harmonic reduction of each sarabande seems the most suitable starting point for the analytical process.¹¹ This reduction will detail the harmonic rhythm and the range of chord-tones present within the given harmony. As a high degree of harmonic inference exists in this repertoire, additional pitches may be judiciously supplied in order to clarify these points. Parentheses will indicate these added pitches.

Ex.1. Harmonic Reduction of Sarabande 1, mm.1-8

The image shows a musical staff in 3/4 time with a treble clef. It contains eight measures of music, each with a chord. Below the staff, figured bass notation is provided for each measure. The chords and their corresponding figures are: Measure 1: C major (6/4); Measure 2: C major (6/4); Measure 3: C major (6/4); Measure 4: C major (6/4); Measure 5: C major (6/4); Measure 6: C major (6/4); Measure 7: C major (6/4); Measure 8: C major (6/4). The figured bass notation includes: 6/4, b7, 7, 4/2 6, 4/2 6, #4/2 6, and 6/4.

1.4.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

The prevalence of 4-bar units (or multiples thereof) in Bach's dances supports the notion that he frequently determined the number of measures in a composition before writing it.¹² Upon this symmetrical grid he produced a seemingly endless variety of harmonic plans. In other dance forms – the allemande, for instance – Bach frequently placed a harmonic structure that contrasts

¹⁰ J.S. Bach, *Sechs Suiten für Violoncello Solo*, ed. Hans Eppstein, *Neue Bach Sämtlicher Werke*, Series VI: Kammermusikwerke, Band 2 (Kassel, Basel, London, New York: Bärenreiter, 2000).

¹¹ Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 145.

¹² Anthony Newman, *Bach and the Baroque* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1985), 161.

with the metric regularity. The sarabande's large-scale harmonic plans typically reinforce the metric symmetry, albeit with great imagination. The purpose of this step, therefore, is to detail the relationship between these two fundamental parameters.

Table 1. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 2, mm.1-12

m.4-HC E Major (V)	m.8-HC G Major (V/III)	m.12-PAC C Major (III)
--------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------

In Table 1, while the cadential placement reinforces the four-bar units, the hierarchical arrangement of the cadences (two relatively weak half-cadences on dominant harmonies followed by a perfect authentic cadence on the relative major) joins these three units into one larger gesture by postponing significant resolution until the section's end.

1.4.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

This large-scale harmonic structure is reinforced by the melodic elaboration. That is, the strongest cadences usually coincide with the conclusion of one sequence and the beginning of another, whereas lesser goals may be obfuscated by appearing in the middle of a sequence or by presenting a new sequence via elision. In this way (as indicated in Ex.2), the melodic material further informs the harmonic-metrical structure.

Ex.2. Melodic Elaboration of Sarabande 4, mm.1-12

The image displays a musical score for Sarabande 4, measures 1 through 12. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by overlapping slurs and trills. The first line (measures 1-4) features a melodic line with a trill in measure 1 and overlapping slurs extending across measures 2 and 3. The second line (measures 5-9) continues the melodic line with a trill in measure 8 and overlapping slurs. The third line (measures 10-12) concludes the section with a trill in measure 11 and overlapping slurs. The bass line provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

The A section of Sarabande 4 above also contains three cadences, the first two of which are less conclusive than the last. This relative lack of closure is due not only to the fact that they are imperfect, but also to the *fortspinnung* that commences at the first cadence in m.4 (under the overlapping slurs), and subsequently to the elision and voice transfer from melody to bass in mm.8 and 9.

1.4.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Dance Rhythm

The goal of this portion of the analysis is to determine the nature of the relationship between traditional sarabande rhythms and Bach's stylized versions presented in the cello suites. Little and Jenne present a chart detailing the typical French sarabande rhythmic patterns, and subsequently mention which of these undergirds each of the cello suite examples. Table 2 presents these rhythms.

Table 2. Typical French Sarabande Rhythmic Patterns¹³

1. $\frac{3}{4}$ 
2. $\frac{3}{4}$ 
3. $\frac{3}{4}$ 
4. $\frac{3}{4}$ 
5. $\frac{3}{4}$ 
6. $\frac{3}{4}$ 
7. $\frac{3}{4}$ 

The purpose, then, of this part of the analysis will be to determine the consistency with which these rhythms are employed; and further, to note any unique ways in which Bach expounds upon the characteristic second-beat emphasis.

¹³ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 106-7.

Ex.3. Accent Pattern of Sarabande 5, mm.1-8



A comparison of the seventh rhythmic pattern with the opening section of Sarabande 5 reveals that its melodic contour essentially reinforces the stated rhythm, although the second-beat dissonances create another layer of emphasis. Also notable is the breaking of the pattern in m.4.

1.4.5. Assessment of Individual Movements and Comprehensive Assessment

After completing each of the previous steps (harmonic reduction, relationship between large-scale harmonic and metrical structures, melodic elaboration of the harmonic-metrical structure, and the type and prevalence of sarabande rhythm), I will present a summary of both typical and unusual features of the sarabande considered. Of particular significance are the composition's distinguishing characteristics. For instance, Bach juxtaposes an unusual syncopated harmonic rhythm in mm.1 and 2 with the traditional rhythmic pattern discussed above in Sarabande 5.

Ex.4. Harmonic Reduction of Sarabande 5, mm.1-4



After analyzing all six sarabandes, a comprehensive assessment will follow. This assessment will, as stated in the Purpose, provide insight into Bach's conception of the genre by

identifying both those features that stylistically unify the sarabandes as well as those that make each unique.

1.5. Method of Applying Analysis to Interpretation

Knowledge gained from the analytical process will be applied toward the development of an informed interpretation for the Sarabande from Suite 6. I do not wish to imply, however, that interpretation can be reduced to a mechanical, verifiable process that will yield a single correct result, nor that the following exercise serves as an all-encompassing explanation of the vast array of subtleties present in a fully developed interpretation. Rather, my intent is to suggest how the observations presented in the above analysis aid the fundamental formation of an informed interpretation.

While many of the following steps toward developing a fundamental interpretation constitute the practical application of those suggested by Stanley Yates in the excellent performance guide accompanying his edition of the cello suites, “Arranging, Interpreting, and Performing the Music of J. S. Bach,” these steps are tailored to the specific structure of the above analysis.

1.5.1. Arrangement and Performance on Guitar

The larger thrust of this paper precludes an extensive discussion of the arranging process for the modern classical guitar. Stated concisely, while the guitar lacks the sonority and breadth of the cello, it is able to compensate somewhat by way of its greater harmonic and polyphonic capacity. Therefore, guitar arrangements typically contain fuller harmonization and a more explicit realization of the polyphony. Articulation also differs significantly due to the marked

difference between plucked and bowed string instruments. Due to the fact that Sarabande 6 contains the fullest harmonies of any movement in the cello suites, it requires no additions.¹⁴

1.5.2. Determining the Affect

It is well known that music in the Baroque era was considered a corollary to speech, the primary goal of which was to project an overall “affect,” or emotion.¹⁵ The fact that the many writings from the period on this topic present contradictory opinions serves as evidence of the ultimately subjective nature of the matter, as well as of the greater cultural diversity within a relatively small geographic region prior to the homogeneity of the modern era. Therefore, the modern performer has a certain imaginative freedom, within the boundaries of good taste, in determining the character of the piece considered. In the instance of Sarabande 6, however, several tangible clues – the joyful key of D Major, the 3/2 meter that suggests grandeur, the multitude of triple and quadruple stops – are consistent with the exuberant affect expected in the last suite of a six-suite Bach cycle.¹⁶

1.5.3. Dynamic Response to Harmonic Reduction

In this step one plays the harmonic reduction, being as sensitive as possible to the alternation of tension and resolution. As a general rule, dissonances are played loudly, while consonances are played quietly.

¹⁴ Wilfrid Mellers, *Bach and the Dance of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 30.

¹⁵ Yates, “Arranging, Interpreting, and Performing the Music of J. S. Bach,” 175.

¹⁶ Mellers, *Bach and the Dance of God*, 26.

Ex.5. Dynamic Response to Harmonic Reduction of Sarabande 6, mm.9-12

Musical score for Ex.5, measures 9-12. The score is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notes are: m.9: G4, B4, D5; m.10: G4, B4, D5; m.11: G4, B4, D5; m.12: G4, B4, D5. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: m.9 (p), m.10 (mp, 4, 2), m.11 (mf, 7, #6), m.12 (f, b7, 6, 4, 3). Dynamics are p, mp, mf, f, mp, p.

Next, the dynamic decisions are recast within the context of the larger harmonic structure of the piece. A shape that coherently projects the architecture as a means of achieving dramatic intensity is the goal of this step.

Ex.6. Dynamic Response to A Section of Sarabande 6

Musical score for Ex.6, showing two systems of harmonic reduction and dynamics. The first system covers measures 9-12 with notes: m.9 (G4, B4, D5), m.10 (G4, B4, D5), m.11 (G4, B4, D5), m.12 (G4, B4, D5). Fingerings: m.9 (p), m.10 (mp, 6, 4), m.11 (p, mp, mf, 6, 6, 6, 6, 4, 3), m.12 (mp, mf, #6). Dynamics: p, mp, p, mp, mf, p, mp, mf. The second system covers measures 13-16 with notes: m.13 (G4, B4, D5), m.14 (G4, B4, D5), m.15 (G4, B4, D5), m.16 (G4, B4, D5). Fingerings: m.13 (f, 6, 5), m.14 (p, 7), m.15 (mp, 6, 7, #), m.16 (p). Dynamics: f, p, mp, p.

1.5.4. Influence of Characteristic Dance Rhythm

Determining the underlying dance rhythm and absorbing its influence into the phrasing of the piece is yet another essential step. While it eventually breaks the pattern, this sarabande is based on the second rhythmic pattern from Table 2. As one can see, the pattern breaks in mm.7 and 8.

Ex. 7. Accent Pattern of Sarabande 6, mm.1-8

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the first eight measures of Sarabande 6. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system covers measures 1 through 4, and the second system covers measures 5 through 8. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks such as accents and slurs. The bass line is a simple, steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the treble line features a more complex melodic line with slurs and accents.

1.5.5. Sing and Play Voices Separately and in All Possible Combinations

For Bach, arriving at a *cantabile* style of performance was fundamental to the making of music.¹⁷ The myriad technical obstacles involved in realizing polyphonic music, however, often distract the performer's attention to the lines. Being able to sing each line with ease, both by itself and while playing the others that sound simultaneously with it, is therefore absolutely fundamental to the realization of the piece. At this time, one may refine decisions regarding the phrase structure, dynamics, articulation and *rubato*.

1.5.6. Achieve Awareness of Underlying Metrical Symmetry

One should also count out loud the passing measures while playing in order to clarify the underlying metrical symmetry that anchors the composition. The tension between this symmetry and the rhythmic irregularities that mark the surface of the piece may otherwise be lost.

¹⁷ John Butt, *Bach Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 9.

1.6. A Brief History of the Sarabande

In existence for almost two hundred years before Bach made his contribution to the genre, the sarabande underwent a remarkable transformation as it passed through different eras and geographic regions. The original dance, which developed in Spanish-controlled areas of Latin America, was “banned for its extraordinary obscenity” upon its arrival in the Motherland.¹⁸ Accompanied by guitars and castanets, this wild dance was based on harmonic patterns rather than the characteristic rhythms that later distinguish the genre.¹⁹ As the dance gradually spread throughout Western Europe, it split into two types: a fast version reminiscent of the original character that prevailed in Spain, Italy and England; and a slower, more refined version that developed in the courts of France and subsequently spread into Germany.²⁰ It was in the French courts that the characteristics typically encountered in Bach sarabandes evolved. Among these are the symmetrical phrases, the slower tempo, the more serious affect, and the characteristic rhythmic patterns that typically accent the second beat of a three-beat measure.²¹ These patterns, previously presented in Table 2, play a significant role in the sarabandes from the cello suites.

¹⁸ Richard Hudson, “Sarabande,” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed August 17, 2006) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 95.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE SARABANDE FROM CELLO SUITE NO.1, BWV 1007

2.1. Harmonic Reduction

The harmonic reduction of Sarabande 1 reveals several notable features. First, its prevalent harmonic rhythm is two chords per measure, changes in inversion notwithstanding. These two chords typically occur on beats one and two, with the first presenting a dissonance and the second a consonance. The opening measures of each section (mm.1, 9 and 10), however, present consonance first and dissonance second as a means of initiating the phrase. Exceptions to the two chords per measure norm occur before each cadence: one chord in m.4, and three in mm.7, 11, and 15. Sarabandes 1 and 5, the shortest two of the set of six, exhibit the greatest degree of consistency in their harmonic rhythm.

2.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

Both the A and the B sections of Sarabande 1 contain eight measures. It is the shortest sarabande of the set and also the only one that contains A and B sections of equal length. This symmetrical grid underpins the following harmonic structure:

Table 3. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 1

A section		B section	
m.5-IAC C Major (I)	m.8-PAC G Major (V)	12-PAC A minor (vi)	m.16-PAC C Major (I)

This cadential structure reinforces the four-bar symmetry, with the exception of the first cadence on tonic that is displaced to the fifth measure. This displacement offsets undue predictability of the piece's structure.

2.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

This sarabande exhibits the most florid and free melodic material of the set of six. While the large-scale phrase structure coincides with the cadential structure, these large phrases are consistently subdivided into units that are both asymmetrical and open to multiple interpretations. For instance, the opening 4-measure, 2 beat-long phrase may be subdivided into two unequal units of 9 and 5 beats respectively. Further, these subdivisions are weakened by the continuous flow of the larger descending melodic gesture from the opening high E to the concluding E an octave lower in m.5. Thus, the piece's relatively simple foundation contrasts significantly with its complex melodic surface.

2.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Rhythm

Little contends that this sarabande is unified by the first measure of the first rhythmic pattern from Table 2.²² While Bach refers to the complete pattern in mm.1 and 9, the lack of any regular rhythmic accent in the third beat negates its significance. Therefore it is a simplified version of this rhythm – a quarter followed by a half note – that consistently permeates the composition. The second beat, which is clearly accented in every measure except m.15, serves in this sarabande as the typical ending point for phrases on both small and large levels. Three of the four cadences are preceded by measures containing accents on all three beats (mm.7, 11 and 15).

²² Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 106.

2.5. Assessment of Sarabande 1

This sarabande is conventional in several fundamental respects. First, its four-square foundation (with the exception of the displacement of the first cadence) supports a typical A:I-V, B:vi-I binary harmonic plan. Further, the characteristic second-beat syncopation is readily apparent throughout the work. On the other hand, its modest dimensions, relatively predictable harmonic rhythm, and most notably, its florid and asymmetrical melodic syntax distinguish it from the others to be considered.

In the subsequent analyses' Assessment sections I will provide a cumulative comparison of the significant characteristics the sarabandes. This comparison will serve several purposes. First, it will make clear those fundamental characteristics that anchor the sarabande's identity as such. Second, the identification of unique characteristics will provide insight into the scope of Bach's compositional imagination. Discovering these distinguishing features also illuminates both the extent and the type of stylization present in each piece. Further, the information discovered in this process will serve as the basis for the creation of an informed interpretation, as will be seen in Chapter 8.

Score 1. Sarabande 1 with Analysis

Cello

Harmonic Reduction

Accent Pattern

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE SARABANDE FROM CELLO SUITE NO.2, BWV 1008

3.1. Harmonic Reduction

The harmonic reduction of Sarabande 2 differs from that of Sarabande 1 in several ways. First, the harmonic rhythm varies significantly, with over half of the relatively calm A section presenting only one chord per measure, changes in inversion notwithstanding. The less stable B section presents an increase to a prevalence of two chords per bar. In these measures, the chords again typically appear on beats one and two; but in this case consonance appears first and dissonance second, as opposed to the opposite alternation typically encountered in the first sarabande.

3.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

This sarabande, almost twice as long as the first, contains a 12-bar A section and a 16-bar B section. Its cadential pattern is completely symmetrical:

Table 4. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 2

A section			B section			
m.4-HC	m.8-HC	m.12-PAC	m.16-IAC	m.20: HC	m.24-PAC	m.28-PAC
E Major	G Major	C Major	D minor	E Major	A minor	A minor
(V)	(V/III)	(III)	(iv)	(V)	(i)	(i)

While the metrical location of these cadences is perfectly predictable, the significant variety in cadential strength serves as a means of varying the dramatic pace of the composition by fusing the four-bar groupings into larger gestures. For example, the relatively weak half-cadences in the A section enhance the sense of closure provided by the strong cadence at the

section's end. Finally, this sarabande is the only one of the six that contains a four-bar closing section that reaffirms tonic.

3.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

The second sarabande exhibits a greater degree of both melodic symmetry and motivic unity than does the first. The four-bar phrases can be labeled as follows:

Table 5. Phrase Structure of Sarabande 2

A section			B section			
a	a'	b	c	d	b'	b''

The above Table details a two-fold repetition of the opening phrase as well as the modified return of the A section's last phrase at the B section's end. In addition, the three eighth-note pick-up figure first appearing in m.2 occurs seven times during the course of the piece, lending further cohesiveness to the melodic material.

3.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Rhythm

The sarabande's opening eight measures clearly exhibit a four-fold repetition of the first rhythmic pattern from Table 2.²³ Subsequently Bach abandons strict usage of the two-bar pattern, though he maintains the second-beat emphasis. Measures preceding authentic cadences (mm.11, 19, 23, and 27) contain accents on all three beats. Also of note is the consistent tendency in this sarabande to end phrases on the first beat rather than on the second.

²³ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 106.

3.5. Assessment of Sarabande 2

The second sarabande is conventional in its use of four-bar units, its presentation of a B section that is of greater length than the A section, and its use of a typical rhythmic pattern at the piece's onset. Its greater length allows for more variety in both harmonic rhythm and cadential strength. This variety contributes to an effective dramatic pacing of the composition. While the piece does contain some free melodic material, it presents a significant increase in motivic unity when compared to Sarabande 1. Finally, its four-bar closing section reaffirming tonic is unique in the set of six sarabandes.

Taken as a whole, Sarabande 2 presents a considerable contrast to Sarabande 1 in each of the parameters addressed in the above analysis. This variety exemplifies the wealth of the composer's imagination. The abundance of this imagination will become more evident with each additional analysis.

Score 2. Sarabande 2 with Analysis

Cello

Harmonic Reduction

Accent Pattern

14

20

20

20

25

25

25

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE SARABANDE FROM CELLO SUITE NO.3, BWV 1009

4.1. Harmonic Reduction

Of the six sarabandes, the third is exceeded in variety of harmonic rhythm only by the sixth. The third sarabande's typical rhythm is two chords per measure, the second of which is consistently embellished with a 4-3 suspension. The B section, however, presents a significant reduction in the rate of harmonic rhythm. For instance, the opening two measures contain one chord each, and at two points (mm.13-14 and 17-18) the rate decreases to one chord every two bars, inversions notwithstanding. On the other hand, bars preceding cadences contain three (for example, 15, 19, and 23) or even four chords (m.7). Another distinguishing characteristic of this sarabande is that in those bars containing two chords, the dissonance appearing on beat two resolves in this case on the third beat rather than the downbeat of the next bar, as was seen in Sarabande 2.

4.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

Again, Bach varies the dimensions of the composition, presenting an eight-bar A section and a sixteen-bar B section. The harmonic structure is as follows:

Table 6. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 3

A section		B section			
m.4-HC	m.8-PAC	m.13-IAC	m.16-PAC	m.20-IAC	m.24-PAC
D Major	D Major	E Major	A minor	D Major	G Major
(V)	(V)	(V/ii)	(ii)	(V)	(I)

Two cadences warrant explanation. First, the half-cadence in m.4 does serve as the end of the opening four-bar phrase; however, the dominant harmony it contains resolves to I on the downbeat of m.5, thus establishing tonic. This dovetailing weakens the strength of the cadence and postpones closure to the A section's end. Second, the cadence on the downbeat of m.13 constitutes a metric shift similar to the one encountered in m.5 of the first sarabande. It is further weakened by its first-inversion presentation of the E-Major harmony, as well as by the immediate continuation of melodic material that proceeds to the much stronger cadence on ii in m.16. Therefore, the third sarabande employs both metric displacement and relative strength of cadences as means of offsetting the predictability of the underlying symmetry.

4.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

Sarabande 4 commences with a motivically unified A section, then proceeds toward relatively free material in the B section. The bar-long motive presented in m.1 serves as the basis for the A section. It spins out twice, yielding each of the four-bar units. The melodic elaboration of the B section, while not related to that of the A section, reinforces the cadential structure previously discussed. For instance, both the third and fourth units (starting in m.17 and 21, respectively) begin with twofold sequences of a bar-long motive. The motivic unity of this sarabande falls between the florid syntax found in the first one and the more tightly constructed phrases of the second.

4.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Rhythm

The melodic activity supports Little's assertion that the A section of this sarabande is based on the sixth rhythmic pattern from Table 2.²⁴ The change of harmony and placement of the suspension on the second beat, however, complicates the half-note/quarter-note pattern characterizing the rhythm (for example, mm.1 and 2). In this respect Bach stylizes the rhythm at the onset of the piece. The B section subsequently exhibits an even freer rhythmic approach, especially in mm.13 and 14. Finally, this sarabande's ending small phrases on the third beat (for example, mm.1, 2 and 20) distinguishes it from the first two compositions.

4.5. Assessment of Sarabande 3

Sarabande 3 again exhibits four-bar symmetry, a common sarabande rhythm as a point of departure for the composition, and consistent emphasis on the second beat throughout the work. Distinguishing features include its unusually varied harmonic rhythm, its dovetailed cadences, and the tendency to end phrases on the third beat. Further setting this sarabande apart from the others is its greater size and its relatively modest degree of motivic unity.

A comparison of Sarabande 3 to the first two of the set further supports the idea that every sarabande in the set presents a significant degree of variety in most of the parameters considered in the analysis. The emerging result is that each of these compositions presents a highly distinctive expression that is at the same time tied to the other members of the set by their common features.

²⁴ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 106.

Score 3. Sarabande 3 with Analysis

Cello

Harmonic Reduction

Accent Pattern

11

15

6 4 #3

#4 2

#6 5

6 6 7 #

20

4 3

6 7 4 4

#4 2 6 4 2

6 4 3

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE SARABANDE FROM CELLO SUITE NO.4, BWV 1010

5.1. Harmonic Reduction

Sarabande 4 presents a prevalent harmonic rhythm of one chord per measure. Again, exceptions occur in bars preceding cadences and in the transition to the relative minor in the B section's beginning (mm.15-19). Like Sarabande 3, this work also makes consistent use of the 4-3 suspension as a means of embellishing the harmony. In this instance, however, the suspension typically occurs on the first rather than the second beat (for example, mm.2 and 4). Also of note is the piece's unusual opening, which presents a tonicization of IV (mm.1-2).

5.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

Containing thirty-two measures, this sarabande is equaled in length only by Sarabande 6. Its A section consists of twelve bars, and the B section contains twenty. The harmonic structure is as follows:

Table 7. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 4

A section			B section				
m.4-IAC	m.9-IAC	m.12-PAC	m.16-IAC	m.20-PAC	m.24-IAC	m.28-DC	m.32-PAC
A major	E Major	E Major	C# Major	F# minor	E Major	F# minor	A Major
I	V	V	V/vi	vi	V	vi	I

As was the case with the third sarabande, the fourth also employs both metric displacement and relative strength of cadences as a means of offsetting the predictability of the underlying symmetry. The need for variation is even more pronounced in this case as a result of the piece's greater length. Therefore, Bach in several instances converts an expected resolution

into a dominant (mm.8, 16 and 24) as a way of continuing momentum toward more important goals.

5.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

Sarabande 4 employs *fortspinnung* as a means of developing the opening two-bar motive. The motive's second measure is extended by a beat in m.4 and subsequently sequenced throughout the modulation to the dominant. Bach uses the motives first seen in mm.1, 2, and 4 throughout the work, resorting to free material only at cadences (for example, mm.11-12, 27-28, and 31-32). He deemphasizes weaker cadences by overlapping them with sequential material (for example, mm.3-5) and accentuates stronger cadences by following them with new sequences, as in m.13. Sarabande 4 exhibits a greater degree of motivic unity than that encountered in the first three compositions.

5.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Rhythm

This sarabande employs the fourth rhythmic pattern from Table 2, once again using a familiar pattern as a point of departure rather than as a consistent undergirding for the work.²⁵ For instance, the two-bar pattern is only stated twice in the A section (mm.1-4). In addition, the fourth bar is altered via the extension of the phrase in m.4, resulting in a shift of accent to the third beat. This is also the case in each bar of the ensuing sequence (mm.5-7). The placement of a moving line on the second beat in mm.10 and 11 (B to C sharp) then shifts the accent back to beat two.

While the pattern makes only one unaltered appearance in the B section (mm.13-14), embellished versions of the two-bar pattern occur three more times (mm.15-16, 17-18, and 21-

²⁵ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 107.

22). This continued reference to the initial pattern in the B section sets the fourth sarabande apart from the second and third, both of which assumed a freer approach in their second sections.

5.5. Assessment of Sarabande 4

Sarabande 4 also exhibits four-bar symmetry and a common sarabande rhythm as a point of departure for the composition. Like the second and third sarabandes, it also uses cadences of significantly varying strength as a way of pacing the composition, and like the third sarabande, it uses the 4-3 suspension as an embellishing device. It is the only one of the first four to maintain a prevalent harmonic rhythm of one chord per measure throughout the piece. Further, it is the only one to begin with a secondary dominant function. Also distinguishing this piece is its greater length and increased motivic unity.

While the consistent use of the 4-3 suspension results in a more pronounced similarity between Sarabandes 3 and 4 than between any others of the set, this sarabande nonetheless contains numerous features – the extended sequences, its rhythmic pattern, and its slower harmonic rhythm - that set it apart. The result is another highly distinctive member of the group.

Score 4. Sarabande 4 with Analysis

Cello

Harmonic Reduction

Accent Pattern

6

6

6

11

11

11

17

17

17

17

23

23

23

23

29

29

29

29

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF THE SARABANDE FROM CELLO SUITE NO.5, BWV 1011

6.1. Harmonic Reduction

Like the fourth sarabande, the fifth also presents a prevalent harmonic rhythm of one chord per measure, excepting bars preceding cadences. It contrasts the fourth markedly, however, in its juxtaposition of an upper-voice arpeggiated harmony on the first two beats with a lone bass note on the third. In mm.1, 2, 9 and 10, this bass note is particularly unusual in that it belongs to the harmony of the following bar (Bach heightens the intensity of the effect in the lute arrangement, BWV 995, by dropping these bass notes an octave). Further, the leap from melody to bass frequently spans a highly dissonant interval – for instance, the diminished fifth D-G sharp in m.2 and the major ninth C-B flat in m.9. Strong and often chromatic dissonance also embellishes each of the two-beat arpeggiated figures via the second-beat appoggiaturas (for example, the G sharp in m.1). Therefore, the distinguishing harmonic features of this sarabande are its unusual staggering of harmonic rhythm and its employment of intense dissonance.

6.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

Only the first sarabande is shorter than the fifth, which contains an eight-bar A section and a twelve-bar B section. The harmonic structure is as follows:

Table 8. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 5

A section		B section		
m.4-IAC	m.8 – PAC	m.12 – IAC	m.16 - HC	m.20 – PAC
A minor	C Major	D minor	E Major	A minor
i	III	iv	V	i

As was the case with the first sarabande, the shorter length of this piece reduces the demand for variety of cadential strength. Only the fourth, which immediately precedes the piece's climax, does not provide a clear resting point.

6.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

This sarabande displays the highest degree of motivic unity among the set of six. Every measure (except m.8) is clearly derived from the first. This initial motive may 1) reappear at another pitch level, as in m.2; 2) be extended by an eighth note, as in m.3; or 3) be loosely inverted and extended, as in m.5. These three possibilities account for all the bars except the previously mentioned m.8 and the last bar, which presents the inversion without the extra eighth note. In their exhaustive treatment of this sarabande's structure, Cohen and Wagner note that the pairs of measures beginning each four-bar unit successively present original and inverted statements of the motive.²⁶ Furthermore, mm.13-20 are unified by constant eighth-note motion that, together with the half cadence on the dominant in m.16, contributes to the dramatic peak in m.17.²⁷ Thus, strict motivic organization is also a distinguishing characteristic of this composition.

6.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Rhythm

Little and Jenne contend that the seventh rhythmic pattern from Table 2 serves as the basis for this sarabande.²⁸ This assertion is credible in that the highest and lowest notes of each measure occur on beats one and three, but it is contradicted by the accent resulting from the continual second-beat dissonance. The constant flow of eighth notes in mm.5-7 and 13-20

²⁶ Cohen and Wagner, "Concurrence and Nonconcurrence," 32.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 31.

²⁸ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 107.

further obfuscates the obvious presence of the four-bar pattern. Therefore, the traditional figure serves once again as a familiar feature that recedes into the background as a result of stylization.

6.5. Assessment of Sarabande 5

This sarabande is the most distinctive and unusual of the group. While it presents the expected symmetrical cadence placement and refers to a traditional rhythmic pattern, it displays many peculiar features. It is unusually sparse, consisting of a single line throughout. Its juxtaposition of melody on beats one and two with bass on beat three is distinctive, as is its staggering of harmonic rhythm in the first two bars of each section. In addition, the consistent use of strong dissonance and the severe economy evident in the motivic organization further set this composition apart from the others in the set. Thus, Sarabande 5 contains the greatest degree of stylization in the set of six.

Score 5. Sarabande 5 with Analysis

Cello

Harmonic Reduction

Accent Pattern

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF THE SARABANDE FROM CELLO SUITE NO.6, BWV 1012

7.1. Harmonic Reduction

The harmonic rhythm of the first sixteen bars of this piece varies between one and three chords per measure. Those bars containing only one harmony typically present a suspension or change in inversion that supports the underlying rhythmic pattern, as in mm.1 and 4. In this respect, they function in a manner similar to those bars containing two chords. As in the other sarabandes, those bars containing three chords precede cadences (as in mm. 7 and 15). This conventional handling of harmony changes at m.17, where the rhythm slows considerably. This decrease in harmonic rhythm is most extreme in mm.24-first beat of 28, which constitutes a dominant prolongation of over four bars. Thus, this sarabande presents the greatest variety of harmonic rhythm of the set. The fullness of the harmonies, which frequently contain three or four voices, also distinguishes this piece from the others.²⁹

7.2. Relationship between Large-Scale Harmonic and Metrical Structures

Containing thirty-two measures, the sixth sarabande is equaled in length only by the fourth. Its lopsided distribution of those bars - eight in the A section and twenty four in the B section - is the most extreme of the six. Its harmonic structure is as follows:

²⁹ Mellers, *Bach and the Dance of God*, 30.

Table 9. Cadential Structure of Sarabande 6

A section		B section				
m.4-IAC	m.8-IAC	m.12-IAC	m.16-PAC	m.24-IAC	m.29-IAC	m.32-PAC
D Major	A Major	E minor	G Major	A Major	B minor	D Major
I	V	ii	IV	V	vi	I

Again, the piece's greater length requires an increase in variety of the harmonic plan. This sarabande is the only one that tonicizes four closely related keys. Bach varies the pace of activity by avoiding a cadence in m.20 and by displacing and deemphasizing the cadence on B minor in m.29. These two features contribute to the expansive quality of mm.17-32.

7.3. Melodic Elaboration of Harmonic-Metrical Structure

The opening sixteen bars present clear, symmetrical two-bar phrases that delineate the underlying sarabande rhythm (discussed below). The series of suspensions first appearing in m.7, however, serves as the basis for the departure that begins in m.17.³⁰ Aside from a brief interruption in mm.28 and 29, this motive pervades the remainder of the piece. Bach builds momentum toward the climactic passage in mm.25-29 by harmonizing the motive in sixths beginning in m.21. Therefore, while the B section is three times the length of the A section, the melodic material divides into equal halves.

7.4. Type and Prevalence of Sarabande Rhythm

The only sarabande of the set notated in 3/2, the first sixteen bars of this piece provide the clearest and most consistent presence of the rhythm upon which it is based, the second rhythm from Table 2.³¹ The ensuing departure from this rhythm is equally apparent, beginning as mentioned above in m.17. From this point forward the four-bar rhythmic pattern is abandoned as

³⁰ Mellers, *Bach and the Dance of God*, 30.

³¹ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 97.

the motive from m.7 takes over, and only five of the remaining sixteen measures (24, 26, 28, 29 and 32) contain a clear second-beat emphasis. Thus, the sixth sarabande contains both the most transparent reference to a typical rhythm and the most obvious departure from that starting point.

7.5. Assessment of Sarabande 6

Like the other long sarabandes, the sixth also presents a varied harmonic plan on a foursquare grid. It differs from the others, however, in numerous respects. It features the greatest variety of harmonic rhythm, employs the fullest harmonies, and tonicizes the greatest number of related keys. While its first half presents the most obvious use of a conventional sarabande rhythm, the second half presents the clearest departure from the conventional rhythmic pattern. Another rhythmically unusual feature is its 3/2 meter. Finally, the lopsided division between the A section and the B section is offset by the splitting of melodic material into equal halves.

The austerity of Sarabande 5 is counterbalanced by the transparent, pastoral quality of Sarabande 6. Thus, these two establish the outer boundaries of the expressive spectrum Bach explores in the group.

Score 6. Sarabande 6 with Analysis

Cello

Harmonic Reduction

Accent Pattern

16

16

16

16

21

21

21

21

25

25

25

25

29

29

29

29

7.6. Comprehensive Assessment of Sarabande Analyses

While certain fundamental characteristics common to each of the six sarabandes make them recognizable as members of the same genre – for instance, the three-beat meter, a prevalent second-beat emphasis, the foursquare metrical structure - it is the distinguishing characteristics that provide more valuable insight into Bach's compositional approach. The remarkable degree of variety in all of the musical parameters considered in the above analysis serves as evidence of Bach's inherent tendency to search continuously for new compositional possibilities.³² For instance, all but two of the pieces are of differing length, and those two (the fourth and the sixth) differ in the proportion of their A section's size to their B section's size. In addition, each sarabande presents unique harmonic characteristics at the local level. The pace and regularity of the harmonic rhythm varies from the consistent two chords per measure encountered in the first sarabande to the wide range seen in the sixth, which varies from three chords per measure to a four-bar dominant prolongation. Also unique is the large-scale harmonic structure of each sarabande, as the series of cadential goals differs in every piece. Though these goals typically reinforce the foursquare metrical underpinning, Bach creates a different structure in each case by varying the significance of the cadences in the numerous ways previously described. Thus each of the large-scale metrical-harmonic plans is unique.

The melodic surface of these large-scale plans further distinguishes each of the sarabandes from one another. Spanning the spectrum from the florid, free style of the first sarabande to the strict, sparse style of the fifth, each piece's melody unfolds in a unique manner. This melodic elaboration is tied to the piece's underlying rhythm, which again differs in each case (while the first and second are both based on 3a, Sarabande 1 only uses the first bar of the

³² Christoff Wolff, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed May 19, 2006) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

pattern). Bach proceeds to stylize these familiar patterns in many ways, sometimes commencing the variation immediately (for instance, the second-beat dissonant emphasis in the fifth sarabande), and in others cases making a clear, simple presentation of the rhythm before departing from it in the B section (as in Sarabande 6). Therefore, the unique foundation of each composition is further distinguished by its surface elements.

The compositions resulting from this search for new possibilities in the manner described above each present a distinctive style and character. The wealth of ideas contained therein provides both musician and listener with an artistic expression that continues to yield fruit upon repeated consideration. In this respect the complexity resulting from this exploration contributes significantly to the lasting greatness of the music.

CHAPTER 8

APPLICATION OF ANALYSIS TO INTERPRETATION: SARABANDE 6

8.1. Overview

As stated previously, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how knowledge gained from the preceding analysis should be applied in developing an interpretation of the selected sarabande. I do not mean to suggest that interpretation is a rigid, mechanical process that yields a single correct result, nor that the following exercise satisfactorily addresses all the important aspects of a fully developed interpretation. Rather, my purpose is to correlate the analytical observations with the interpretive parameters (dynamics, articulation, *rubato*, phrase divisions) that they may affect. This step-by-step process is somewhat artificial in that treating harmony, rhythm and melody individually ignores to a certain extent the fact that they are fundamentally intertwined into a singular expression. Nonetheless, addressing these elements individually ensures a greater degree of thoroughness in considering the piece's content. Therefore, the benefits of this approach outweigh its disadvantages.

8.2. Arrangement and Performance on Guitar

As Bach's Lute Suites, Cello Suites and the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin hold a fundamental position in the modern guitarist's repertoire, the subject of arranging this music is a major one that has been addressed extensively in the literature. Stanley Yates' position, previously described in the State of Research (with which I agree), requires a deeper compositional knowledge of this music than is the norm among modern musicians. This paper seeks to address this deficit. Therefore, a detailed discussion of actual arrangement lies beyond

the scope of this study. To that end, the sixth sarabande is the ideal candidate for this portion of the study because its full harmonies make it adequate for guitar performance in its original state.

The performance of the piece, however, will contrast markedly due to the idiomatic differences between guitar and cello. The guitar's relative lack of sustain is countered by its superior capacity for polyphonic realization. Therefore, while certain fundamental musical ideas regarding interpretation may transcend instrumental concern, their presentation will vary depending on the characteristics of the instrument on which the music is performed.

8.3. Determining the Affect

Bach often concluded his cycles of six compositions with an exuberant final work. The sixth cello suite, taken as a whole, also adheres to this idea. While the detailed discussion that follows aims to provide a deeper awareness of the piece's expressive content, several immediately apparent elements noted by Mellers provide clues regarding this sarabande's affect. First is the choice of key, D Major, which connoted joy in the Baroque era. Second, the use of 3/2 instead of 3/4 suggests grandeur. Third, he notes that the consistent use of triple and quadruple stops also contributes to the piece's majestic quality.³³ Further contributing to the affect is the overall transparency of the piece. The simple presentation of the sarabande rhythm in the piece's first half, the transparent harmonic and melodic structure, and the expansive gestures of the last sixteen measures support the notion of an affect that is both joyful and majestic.

³³ Mellers, *Bach and the Dance of God*, 30.

8.4. Dynamic Response to Harmonic Reduction

The performer can begin developing a dynamic plan for the sarabande by responding dynamically to the alternation of dissonance and consonance in the harmonic reduction. One may begin by considering the relative degree of dissonance at the local level. For instance, the dominant seventh chord on the second beat of m.3, the most dissonant of the opening four bars, is the loudest harmony in the first phrase. In addition to considering the relative degree of dissonance present in each chord, one must also consider the larger tonal context. For instance, the G sharp in m.5 forms an augmented fourth with the D below, and it also signals the modulation to the dominant. Therefore, it presents instability more significant than the immediate dissonance it creates, and should be played accordingly. Finally, one must refine the dynamic plan by considering its relationship to the large-scale structure. For example, the dramatic peak of the A section, the V/V in m.5, should be louder than the corresponding peak of the first phrase (the previously mentioned A 7 chord). Following is the entire harmonic reduction with dynamic inflection.

Score 7. Sarabande 6 Harmonic Reduction with Dynamic Response

The score consists of six systems of music, each with dynamic markings and fingering:

- System 1:** Measures 1-5. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*. Fingerings: 6, 4; 6, 6; 6, 4; 6, 4; 3; #6.
- System 2:** Measures 6-10. Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*. Fingerings: #6, 7; 6, 7; 4, 2; 7, #6.
- System 3:** Measures 11-15. Dynamics: *f*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*, *p*. Fingerings: b7, 6, 4, 3; 6, b3, 6, 6; 4, b5; 6, b7.
- System 4:** Measures 16-21. Dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*. Fingerings: b4, 3; 6; 4, 2; 6.
- System 5:** Measures 22-27. Dynamics: *f*, *ff*, *p*. Fingerings: 6, 4; 6, 5, 4, 3; #6, 7; 6, 4; 7; b6, 6, 4.
- System 6:** Measures 28-33. Dynamics: *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*. Fingerings: #6, 5; 6, b7; 6; 6, 5; 4, 7.

8.5. Influence of Characteristic Dance Rhythm

The rhythmic pattern upon which this sarabande is based, the second pattern from Table 2, will influence decisions regarding articulation and accents. The basic accent pattern will undergo subtle variation depending on the disposition of the other musical elements it undergirds. For instance, the second beats of mm.1, 3 and 5 will receive stronger accents due to the dissonances they support, whereas the consonant second beats of mm.2 and 8 are played softly. The characteristic articulation between beats one and two also varies depending on several factors: the rhythmic duration of the first beat, the size of the melodic leap and the extent of harmonic contrast from the first beat to the second. Therefore, the degree of articulation between the first two beats of m.5 will be greater than those of m.2. The clarification of the rhythmic pattern, which unifies the first half of the piece, will heighten the effectiveness of the contrast that the second half of the composition presents.

8.6. Sing and Play Voices Separately and in All Possible Combinations

This step is fundamental to arriving at the *cantabile* style of playing advocated by Bach. Singing heightens the performer's awareness of melodic nuance and allows for detailed thinking about interpretive matters without the distraction of instrumental concerns. In addition to synthesizing prior interpretive decisions, one may clarify decisions regarding phrase divisions at this point. The goal of this step is to be able to execute each line as clearly and musically as if it were the only one requiring the performer's attention. Doing so often clarifies voicing in those places that may otherwise be improperly realized. For instance, the high A's in mm.22 and 23 appear at first glance to belong to the descending quarter-note melody; however, they are actually doubling the dominant pedal two octaves below while the middle two voices move in

parallel sixths. Therefore, singing all melodic material, both alone and while playing the piece, is an invaluable step in bringing the interpretation of the piece to maturity.

8.7. Achieve Awareness of Underlying Metrical Symmetry

A cursory glance at the score reveals the foursquare metrical organization of this sarabande. Obvious as it may be to the eye, however, experiencing and projecting this underlying symmetry while performing the piece typically requires some conscious reinforcement. One may do so by counting the measures out loud in groups of four while practicing. Doing so clarifies the metrical structure in the performer's mind and highlights the tension between the composition's surface irregularities and its fundamental symmetry.

8.8. Assimilation of Prior Decisions into Interpretation

After taking each element into consideration individually, one must organically assimilate these features. This process also contains a subjective element in that the performer's personality and musical taste play an important role in the decision-making process. Therefore, the overarching plan of creating an interpretation by 1) recognizing obvious clues to the piece's character, 2) considering the above elements separately and 3) assimilating prior decisions into a unified gesture and affect gives the performer an approach that combines both analysis and imagination in the final result. Following is a brief explanation of how the intertwining of these decisions results in the interpretation of the opening eight measures of Sarabande 6, detailed in Score 8.

This section consists of four symmetrical phrases. In the opening two beats of the first phrase, the change of inversion, the leap in the bass, and the repeated note in the melody reinforce the expected articulation of the underlying rhythmic pattern, a staccato followed by an

accent. The contour of the line combined with the alternation of consonance and dissonance result in the mild dynamic arch that marks the entire phrase. Its relatively quiet dynamic establishes a serene affect and leaves room for the musical events that lie ahead.

The second phrase is more active than the first. It is more ornate, contains a greater degree of dissonance, and reaches a higher register. Therefore, it commences more loudly, peaking on the second beat of m.3. As the phrase does not escape tonic harmony, however, it tapers off to the resolution at its end. The melodic elaboration of beat one offsets the expected staccato.

The rhythmic profile of the third phrase is identical to the first, but its greater prevalence of dissonance, its initiation of tonal movement to the dominant, and its melodic ascent make it the dramatic highpoint of the A section. The crescendo follows both the ascending melodic contour and the increased dissonance. The phrase's opening articulations on beats one and two mirror those of the piece's beginning. As it is the only one of the four phrases to conclude on a dissonance, the dynamic remains strong on beat two.

The fourth phrase breaks away from the expected rhythmic pattern. Instead, it presents a series of suspensions that together with the bass line establish the modulation to the dominant. The phrase's harmonic stability, lower melodic register and smooth melodic contour provide a sense of repose in the new key that calls for the softer dynamic. A mild crescendo with a slight accent on each suspension provides movement to the section's final cadence. I present interpretive details for the entire piece in the following score.

Score 8. Sarabande 6 with Interpretation

The musical score consists of six systems of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamic markings and phrasing slurs.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):
Measure 1: *p*
Measure 2: *mp*
Measure 3: *p*
Measure 4: *mp* *mf* *p*

System 2 (Measures 5-8):
Measure 5: *mp* *mf*
Measure 6: *f*
Measure 7: *p*
Measure 8: *mp* *p*

System 3 (Measures 9-12):
Measure 9: *p* *mp*
Measure 10: *mf*
Measure 11: *f*
Measure 12: *mp* *p*

System 4 (Measures 13-16):
Measure 13: *mf*
Measure 14: *f*
Measure 15: *mf*
Measure 16: *p* *mf* *p* *pp*

System 5 (Measures 17-20):
Measure 17: *p*
Measure 18: *pp*
Measure 19: *mp*

System 6 (Measures 21-24):
Measure 21: *f*

25

ff *p* *pp* *mp*

29

p *mp* *p* *mf* *mp*

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Over a period of almost two hundred and fifty years, the sarabande had evolved from its hedonistic, untamed roots to become the expressive centerpiece of the Baroque dance suite. Bach's contribution to the genre represents its culmination. As evidenced by the works considered in this study, each is a highly distinctive rendition of the genre that is at the same time immediately recognizable as a sarabande. Bach achieves a unique expression in each case via the remarkable variety evident in all the musical parameters addressed in the previous analysis, whether it be the harmonic motion at the local level, the large-scale harmonic structure, the melodic elaboration of this structure, or the type and prevalence of dance rhythm that underlies the work. In this respect, the relatively narrow study presented here serves as specific evidence of Bach's consistent tendency throughout his output to explore the range of possibilities within a given set of compositions.³⁴ The result is a repertoire of exceptional depth, both expressive and intellectual.

The wealth of diversity present in the above-mentioned musical parameters serves, of course, the greater purpose of conveying the central affect of the given movement. Within the generally serious tone expected in a sarabande of this period, Bach presents a wide array of emotions, ranging from the grief and loneliness of the fifth to the joy and expanse of the sixth. While the performer may gain some superficial insight into the affect from obvious clues – for instance, the 3/2 meter and choice of D major for Sarabande 6 - a matured interpretation requires a detailed consideration of the music from a number of perspectives. The interpretive process

³⁴ Wolff, "Bach, Johann Sebastian."

described above certainly does not constitute a complete consideration of the work. It does, however, demonstrate a direct relationship between analysis and interpretation that is rooted in logic and yet leaves room for the individual performer's imagination and personality.

Elucidating music in this analytical yet imaginative manner mirrors Bach's own compositional process: one that is not rigid, but that is open to a multitude of possibilities and that always leaves room for continual improvement.

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