

Choruses

Movements 4 and 5 of Vivaldi's Gloria are clear examples of the two main types of texture found in Baroque choral music.

The first of these, 'Gratias agimus tibi', is a strictly **homophonic** (or **chordal**) setting in which all the parts, vocal and instrumental, move in the same rhythm like a hymn.

The second, 'Propter magnam gloriam', has a **contrapuntal** texture and is a **fugal** movement in which the subject announced by the sopranos in bar 1 is imitated by each part in turn. Notice how the initial rising 5th in the soprano and tenor entries becomes a rising 4th in the alto and bass parts, in order to avoid modulation in these opening bars. Entries of the fugal subject dominate the rest of the movement, including a **stretto** (see page 39) in bars 12–13. The choir is doubled by strings, Vivaldi ingeniously using the first violins to double the altos *an octave higher*, giving the impression of a countermelody above the soprano part.

Most choral movements include a variety of textures, as can be heard in 'Domine fili unigenite', movement 7 from Vivaldi's Gloria. This joyful chorus, with its infectious skipping rhythms, is another ritornello structure. Vivaldi uses various different pairings of voice parts when there is singing during a ritornello, reserving the full choir for contrast in the three episodes:

The last movement of the Gloria is a **double fugue** (with two simultaneous subjects), which Vivaldi reworked from a movement in a Gloria by one of his Venetian contemporaries.

Bars	Section	Key	Comments
1–8	Opening ritornello	F major	Rising theme in violin 1 against descending scale in bass. Hemiola in bars 7–8. Cadence overlaps with start of ...
9–17	Paired entry of altos and basses	F major	Varied repeat of ritornello followed by a one-bar link (bar 17) that modulates to the dominant
18–25	Paired entry of sopranos and tenors	C major	Varied repeat of ritornello in the dominant. Cadence overlaps with start of ...
26–37	First episode: SATB in four-part counterpoint	F major → A minor	Circle of 5ths in bars 26–33. Sopranos and altos in canon at interval of 4th and distance of one bar. Prominent hemiola in bars 35–36. Cadence overlaps with start of ...
37–40 ¹	Shortened ritornello	A minor	Last note overlaps with start of ...
40–53	Second episode: SATB in four-part counterpoint	A minor → D minor → B \flat major	Soprano melody in bar 40 is imitated by altos three bars later. Free counterpoint in tenor and bass parts. Hemiola in bars 51–52. Cadence overlaps with the start of ...
53–61	Paired entry of tenors and basses	B \flat major	Ritornello in the subdominant followed by a one-bar link (bar 61) that modulates back to the tonic. Essentially a transposed and rescored repeat of bars 9–17
62–69	Paired entry of basses and tenors	F major	Ritornello in the tonic. The counterpoint of bars 53–61 is inverted so that basses now have the theme. Descending sequences over a circle of 5ths starting in bar 65
70–90	Third episode: SATB in four-part counterpoint	F major	Similar to first episode. Starts with SA in 3rds imitated by TB in 3rds over a circle of 5ths. Imperfect cadence in bars 77–78. Bars 79–84 are repeated to form bars 85–90
90–98	Final ritornello	F major	Repeat of first ritornello