

# 165. Bach: Air

Hintergründe von S. Radic

The **Air** (also Ayr, Ayre, Aria) is a secondary form of the musical genre song, but can also be described as a simple instrumental piece. However, it is always a simple composition, usually in two-part song form. "The term air (meaning "melody", "song") in this context does not come from English, but from French. In the Baroque period, unless it was a vocal composition, the air was an instrumental piece that did not allude to a dance, even if it was inserted into a suite. "English Ayres for singing voice and lute. The airs for singing voice and lute originated at the court of Queen Elizabeth I of England at the end of the 16th century and enjoyed great popularity until the 1620s. The air is probably based on the Italian monody on the one hand, and on the air de cour on the other. These are solo songs with a lute accompaniment of several - usually three - parts.

**Air of Bach.** Johann Sebastian Bach uses a movement marked "Air" or "Aria" in several of his suites, for example in the second and fourth French suite and in the fourth and sixth partitas. These sentences are very different in tempo and character, so that a concrete meaning of this term can hardly be inferred. Bach will also have simply meant "melody" when he used this sentence title. This melodious piece with its characteristic *lento* rhythm and octave bass run is often played by baroque ensembles.

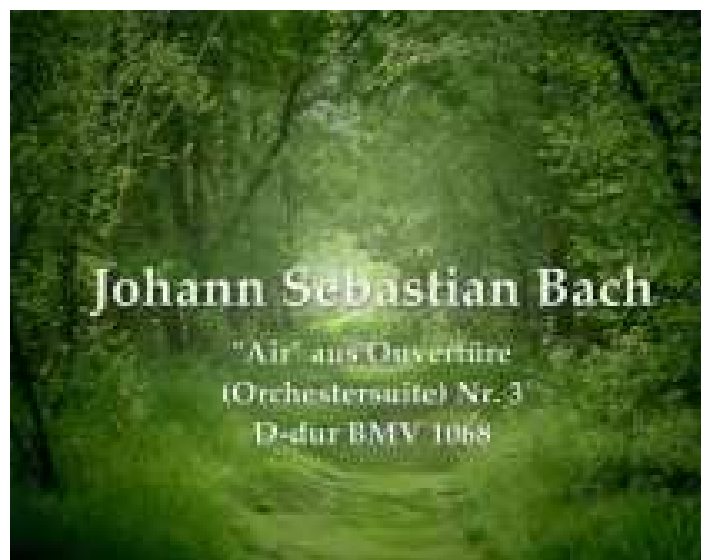


*YouTube commentary: The "Air" from the 3rd Suite for Orchestra, 2nd movement. Just lean back, look into the green and enjoy.*



Air from Bach's 3rd orchestral suite, arranged for violin and piano (recording from 1920) is probably the best known example of a movement in Bach's Overture in D major BWV 1068 entitled Air: in the 2nd movement the trumpets, oboes and timpani are silent; strings and basso continuo alone develop a songlike movement in 4/4 time, which contains imitating middle voices fully developed motivically between the sweeping upper voice melody and the bass moving in regular eighths.

An arrangement for violin and piano goes back to the violinist August Wilhelm, in which this Air in C major is transposed and played only on the G-string; in this arrangement the piece received the name Air on the G-string. The composition is still performed in this form and in many other arrangements based on it.



Tempo: 60  
Auflösung: 4-4

Step-by-Step-Programmierung

1 2 3 4  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Hi-Hat

Snare

B-Drum

Real-Time-Programmierung

Drums

Break

CHORD

BASS

### Programming instruction

*This slow beat programming has the task to give the beautiful title "Air" a little rhythmic support - nothing more! For this reason, the use of the snare has only been reduced to one beat per beat. The snare sound should come off very well. This is already available in the form on many R units and is usually called "SNARE REVERBED". This unique sound of the Genesis drummer PHIL COLLINS was invented and is called "Collins-Snare" in the insider circles. The eighth note hi-hat is opened on the last beat, which creates a smooth beat transition. Under the given circumstances, the accompaniment can only consist of the chord area (strings or choir) and the basic bass with the bass drum phrase. The intro/break programming consists only of the bass drum (second bracket in the note image).*