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Contrast As A Governing Principle: Topic Deployment In Selected Sonatas Of Johann Christian Bach

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ABSTRACT

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Between the end of the Baroque era and the end of the Classical era, there was a shift in the way music was composed. This shift allowed composers to employ multiple topics in one work as opposed to the single-affect-per-movement that was standard under the Doctrine of Affections. Despite plenty of scholarship about both of the eras, the transition from one to the other has been relatively unexplored. Early musicologist Charles Burney noted in a volume of his General History of Music that there was a composer who was the first to employ "contrast as a governing principle", and this comment functions as the starting point in examining Johann Christian Bach as the crux of the transition between eras. The extant scholarship surrounding how music was composed at the start of his life is examined in conjunction with his musical biography to contextualize the unique position Bach held in his day. He was a composer whose early musical education laid in Baroque tradition, but broke away from certain parts of it as his career took him from Berlin to Italy to London, where he soaked up the new and different music of the respective areas before incorporating them into his own works. This resulted in compositions like his Opus 5 sonatas, three of which are surveyed with Burney's comment in mind. The analyses reveal different ways that Bach employed contrast, including different perspectives of the same topic, contrasting high- and low-class styles, and more. This kind of

contrast paved the way for music in the later decades of the Classical era that used topics in a faster, wittier manner that would not have been possible without Bach's particular approach to contrast.

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coffee, this would still be incomplete answer to my research question, doomed to the archives of my notes from my time in graduate school. With all my love, thank you all.

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CHAPTER I

CHANGES IN MUSIC FROM THE BAROQUE TO THE CLASSICAL

The pioneer of topic theory, Leonard G. Ratner, defined musical topics as "subjects for musical discourse," further explaining that "music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of *characteristic figures*, which formed a rich legacy for classical composers."[1] Based on this definition, topics are to be understood as musical gestures or ideas that have some kind of subjective extramusical meaning.[2] These meanings would have been clear to informed and experienced listeners of the Classical era, not dissimilar to how one can hear a song in a mid-tempo triple meter today and infer that it is most likely a waltz. According to Ratner, topics were further subdivided into types and styles, a subdivision that is rather flexible; generally, types are dances or marches, while styles would indicate the manner or attitude to be played with, such as the military style, or the *Empfindsamer stil*.

Historically, topics are associated with the Classical era, but this development began long before, in the mature Renaissance. The French philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650) held that there were six basic affects (admiration, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow), although there was never agreement on a fixed list; these affects were caused by imbalances of the four

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[1] Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1980) 9. Thesaurus has an older definition that means a "treasury" or a "storehouse of knowledge", such as a dictionary, encyclopedia, etc. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "thesaurus sense 2.a," July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7791526097.

[2] Not to be confused with programmatic music, which has a story or narrative that is typically (but not always) made explicit by the composer.

humors, or temperaments: blood (animated and enthusiastic), yellow bile (aggressive, hot-tempered, ambitious), black bile (melancholy and dark), and phlegm (reserved behavior). The origin of humoral theory lies in the ancient world, but it survived in various forms; following Descartes and his contemporaries, such late Baroque and early Classical music critics as Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), Johann Scheibe (1708-1776), and Johann Sulzer (1720-1779) conceived of affects in terms of motion: motion of the animal spirits in the body, motion of the blood, and so on.[3] These three men and their respective theories, which extended into and very nearly through the Classical era, will be scrutinized to demonstrate the large-scale evolution in the way music was discussed and written during this 98-year period.

Close to the end of the Classical era, Mozart wrote about a set of his concerti to his father, saying that they pleased both amateurs and professionals alike, and in them "all artistic expression, including music, was dedicated to *stirring the feelings.*"[4] This represents a development rooted in but moving beyond the Doctrine of Affections (often the German is used: *Affektenlehre*) which sought to explain, in physiological terms, how musical expression produced its effects on listeners.Ultimately, my goal is to explain how composers at the end of the Classical era came to employ flexible and rapidly-changing uses of topoi so soon after the end of the Baroque era. The Baroque era was concerned with sharp codification and sticking to the rules (in society, in music, and so on), so this quick turnaround in how music was composed is rather odd, especially since it is not typically explained. A close examination of the piano sonatas of Johann Christian Bach (hereafter, Bach) will make a logical bridge between the late Baroque and the Classical, since this composer spanned both eras and was once described as the

[3] Danuta Mirka, *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23-4.
[4] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 3.

first to use "*contrast* as a governing *principle*."[5] However, before musical analysis begins, it is necessary to understand the way music and the process of its composition was being discussed before and during Bach's lifetime.

History Of Affects In Music Up To 1735

In his explication of musical styles, Ratner builds on a discussion that is much older than the field of topic theory. Perhaps one of the earliest formal categorizations of music in the manner of styles would be the Baroque divisions of chamber, church, and theatrical styles proposed by Marco Scacchi in 1649.[6] Music for each place had its own purpose, and therefore its own distinct sound. Johann Mattheson expanded upon this system when he wrote *Das beschützte Orchester* in 1717. In this publication, he proposed no fewer than nine different styles, ranging from the motet style, madrigal style, recitative style, and so on.[7] This is still a Baroque outlook; Mattheson's theoretical discussions in later years tend to look backwards at the music of his youth, considering that he was nearly sixty by the time he summarized all of his thoughts in full. Further, in his 1739 publication *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister*, Mattheson emphasizes the importance of learning each style and its respective characteristics to be able to use them in the proper place: here he is giving advice to other, especially younger, composers. Using them out of their proper place allows for compositions to descend into a "formless mass," which would have been antithetical to the Enlightenment mind.[8] For example, composers following Mattheson's advice would not have put a *courante*, one of the highest French court

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[5] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music From the Earliest Pages to the Present Period, v*ol. 4 (Unknown: GGJ and J Robinson, 1789), 483.

[6] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 3. Of course, this is far from the first time that composers were categorizing music. Monteverdi's *prima* and *seconda prattica*, the early divide of sacred and secular, and many others come to mind. However, Scacchi's particular system is one of the earliest divisions relevant to the field of topic theory.

[7] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 3.

[8] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 5.

dances, in the same piece as a *contradanse*, one of the most common and low peasant dances. Not only would the *courante* sound strange to members of the lower-class (as they would not have the context for the court dance), the "language" of the *courante* would have certainly been inaccessible to anyone outside the French court. These were dances for two very different audiences, so it would not make sense to use them together. Ultimately, Mattheson and his writings reflect the doctrine of affections—i.e., there is one affect that is supposed to rule a work, otherwise the music runs the risk of being a confusing "Mischmasch."[9]

Mattheson believed that affects were created by the motion of the soul, a theory he adopted from a much earlier theorist, Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680). According to Kircher's theory, affects were created by "the so-called animal spirits flowing in nerves and simulating physiological processes such as blood circulation."[10] Mattheson elaborates, building on the ancient theory of the Greeks and Romans that specific types of music had the power to physically influence the listener in one way or another. According to Mattheson's interpretation of Kircher's theory, each of the main affects (love, sorrow, joy, anger, compassion, fear, insolence, and wonder— we see how far this already is from Descartes) is produced by a specific motion that can be represented in music. This leads him to assigning these affects to interval types:

> Since, for example, joy is felt [*empfunden*] as an expansion of our animal spirits [*Lebens-Geister*], thus it follows reasonably and naturally that I could best express this affect by large and enlarged [*erweiterte*] intervals. Instead, if one knows that sadness is a contraction of these subtle parts of our body, then it is easy to see that the small and smallest intervals are the

[9] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory,* 5.
[10] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory,* 10.

> most suitable for this passion [*Leidenschaft*]. If we further consider that love is in fact essentially a diffusion of the spirits [*Geister*], then we will rightly conform to this in composing, and use similar relationships [*gleichhförmigen Verhältnissen*] of sounds.[11]

Intervals are not the only thing to which Mattheson ascribes affective significance. In his 1713 publication *Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre*, he also assigns different affects to different meters and demonstrates their abilities by changing melodies from chorales to a variety of dances via altering their meters and rhythms. In this same publication, Mattheson also lists the affective qualities of different keys, but not without admitting that they are subjective and can be perceived differently by people with different temperaments: "for someone with a sanguine temperament a key may seem lively and merry, but for someone who is phlegmatic, it will seem complaining and troubled etc."[12]

For Mattheson, the categorization of affects was related to their moral value, as well as the location for which a composition was intended. Heavy or powerful emotions, especially in the negative sense, were not intended to be written in a high style:

> For what can be lower than anger, fear, vengeance, despair, etc. Beating, boasting, snoring, is indeed no true nobility… Divine majesty, heavenly splendor, rapture and magnificence , together with the elevated style of writing [*hohen Schreib-Art*] naturally required for it, are subordinated to the sacred main style [*dem geistluchen Haupt-Styl unterworffen*].[13]

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[11] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 10.
[12] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 11-12.
[13] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 6.

He also explicitly wrote about affects associated with each style in *Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre*: the *courante* had a "sweet hopefulness," the *gigue* contained "passionate and volatile ardor," the *minuet* was moderately gay, and so on and so forth.[14] His requirement of specific affects for specific pieces was mostly confined to these small, instrumental works. He believed that the affects in larger works like symphonies were less specific, and the expression of the affects would need to stick to the passions that rule the work itself. In his discussion of sonatas in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* from 1739, Mattheson even mentions the characters of the form as being "manifold and various," even though there is another generation of composers after him who insisted that larger works should be unified. Despite being decades ahead of his time, Mattheson was able to anticipate that, eventually, sonatas (small instrumental works) would be written using contrasting characters, as would often be the case in the Classical era.

Johann Scheibe took Mattheson's categorizations from 1717 and simplified them into the high-, middle-, and low-class styles in his 1745 publication, *Der critische Musikus* (Ratner returns to this division in his discussion of styles).[15] According to Scheibe, the high style must be "stately and emphatic; the harmony must be full, the ideas fully carried through, the melody rich in invention" and should only be used for "heroes, kings, and other great men and noble spirits."[16] His perception of the middle style is "ingenious, pleasant, and flowing: it must please the listener rather than excite" them; the harmony should "serve only to make the melody clearer," and is associated with "joy, delight, love, devotion, modesty, and patience."[17] Finally, Scheibe's version of the low style should be used mostly for short pieces and represents nature in its simplest form, for low-born people and the situations in which they find themselves– country

[14] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 7.
[15] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 7.
[16] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 7.
[17] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 8.

dances, pastoral tunes, and the like.[18] For Scheibe, different styles were associated with different affects, as opposed to their morality. Majesty, splendor, vengeance, rage, and despair are all examples of things that he believed could *only* be expressed in the high style.[19] The powerful emotions demanded powerful expression, best done with many instruments, counterpoint, and things generally associated with the high-class style. Some of Scheibe's other theories connect music and emotion via the doctrine of mimesis.[20] According to this doctrine, the function of art was to imitate nature. Further, visual art should relate to the physical world, but music should imitate human passions, with the rhythm and pacing of music allowing for the emphasis and inflection of various kinds of speech to be depicted.[21]

Scheibe was one of the aforementioned critics, post-Mattheson, who believed that large scale works should be unified by a single character. When discussing operas, he posited that characters do not feel the same emotion equally, but instead "the character of persons softens or strengthens the passions."[22] One character can experience many affects, but they are unified under the character. If the composer mixes up the affects or the expressions of one character with another, they end up with a disorganized mess. While Scheibe dissented against Mattheson in this manner, he began to use the concept of character to describe and analyze works. This flexibility would allow for one character to experience several different affects in a large-scale work (like an opera), but not in one small piece.

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[18] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 8.

[19] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory,* 6.

[20] The doctrine of mimesis does have French roots– the idea was put forth by Abbe Jean-Baptiste DuBois in *Reflexions critiques sur la poesie et sur la peinture* in 1719. Charles Batteaux and Jean-Jacques Rousseau also helped develop it, and Gottsched translated Batteaux's 1746 publication on the doctrine into German in 1751, thereby raising the influence of French neoclassicism in Germany. Detailing exactly the original doctrine as the French theorized is outside the scope of this project, and Mirka's introduction to the *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* provides in in-depth analysis in section 2, titled "Music and Affects."

[21] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory,* 12.

[22] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 7.

Johann Sulzer, contemporary of Scheibe, continued to develop this concept of character, related to the work of Scheibe, as well as to the work of his teacher, Johann Christian Gottsched. In his 1730 publication *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst*, Gottsched explains that a character takes into account the entire disposition of one individual, their natural inclinations, habits, and how they are manifested in feelings, actions, and words.[23] However, Sulzer extended this concept to instrumental music, removing it from the context of a specific character from a larger work (especially an opera), and instead using it to describe the nature of a piece. In his 1771 publication, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, Sulzer declares that "Every composition, whether it is vocal or instrumental, should possess a definite character and be able to arouse specific sentiments in the minds of listeners."[24] He goes on to say that a composer must select the character before composing, even if randomly selected, in order to maintain consistency throughout the work. To contrast affects was suspicious, since it implied someone who "in their deeds and ways of thinking show no definite character."[25]

Sulzer's stance on the definition of an affect is quite similar to Mattheson's. However, instead of resulting from the motion of the spirits, Sulzer believed an affect to be the motion of sentiments. The power that music held to arouse one sensation over another was based on its effect on the nervous system: "sound can carry tenderness, good will, hate, anger, despair, or another passionate expression of a soul. Therefore one soul can become sensible to the other through sound."[26] Furthermore, he describes several different ways that these sentiments can change:

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[23] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 7.

[24] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 8.

[25] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 8 . The music of the character of Don Giovanni in Mozart's opera under the same name is a fantastic example of this.

[26] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 14.

> There are passions in which impressions flow evenly like a gentle brook. There are other passions which flow onward faster and with more turbulence. In a few, the succession of impressions rush forward as if a raging stream whose banks are swollen after a heavy rain, sweeping away everything that stands in its way. Sometimes the feelings caused by these impressions are like the wild sea crashing before the shore, retreating back only to surge forth again with renewed strength.[27]

He goes on to say that these changes can be represented or displayed by all musical parameters– therefore, all musical parameters are the means of expression. Sulzer lists six basic parameters that include harmony (outside the context of meter), meter (which imitates movement), melody and rhythm (the language of emotions), changes in dynamics, accompaniment (especially in regard to *what* is accompanying and how it is arranged), and how the piece modulates away from and back to the tonic key.[28] For Sulzer, using every possible parameter as a means of expression was also the ultimate goal of music; according to him, the best art is capable of making the listener or consumer feel moved by the fates of others, even able to sympathize with them.[29]

By taking this stance, Sulzer effectively fuses the doctrine of affections (represented by Mattheson) with the doctrine of mimesis (represented by Scheibe). Individually, these doctrines do not allow for much flexibility– in fact, both of them are intended to represent one thing in a work, whether that be an affect or a character. Sulzer's fusion of both, however, allows for him to reflect nature, human passions, and emotions in a more fluid manner without creating the mishmash that previous generations of composers were so concerned with. To quote theorist

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[27] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 15.
[28] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 15.
[29] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 13.

Danuta Mirka, "The difference between Mattheson's affects and Sulzer's sentiments is that the affects are static and distinct from each other while sentiments are dynamic and fluid. The ebb and flow of sentiments means that each of them is always in danger of sliding into the others."[30] Sulzer's theory also takes character into consideration as an overarching quality, as opposed to sentiments, which are fleeting, variable, and decidedly not grand-scheme qualities. In any case, Sulzer's later theories also align with the earlier theories in the sense that musical parameters are a means to express (seen in the discussion of Mattheson and how he categorized intervals and keys), but Sulzer and others greatly expanded upon Mattheson's prescriptions. Sulzer and his contemporaries are the generation that took the most interest in defining musical parameters as one expressive device or another, and Sulzer was not the only one to extensively detail the different meanings behind one compositional choice or another.

Johann Kirnberger (1721-1783) was a close associate of Johann Sulzer and wrote an even more detailed treatise in 1774, titled *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*.[31] This treatise explores the minutiae of what each compositional decision can mean. Even the way Kirnberger begins discussing the topic of categorization is similar to Sulzer: "One must know how to give an appropriate meter and rhythm to a piece in one or more parts in consideration of its character."[32] In this treatise, Kirnberger takes great pains to emphasize in different ways that he is not creating hard and fast rules, and that the context of a given harmonic progression or melody must be considered when deciding what the work is implying with its choices:

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[30] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 17.

[31] The complete publication is extremely thorough and summarizing its entirety is well outside the confines of this project.

[32] Johann Phillip Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, trans. David Beach and Jurgen Thym (London: Yale University Press, 1982), 9.

> Melody must have several qualities that, though inseparably linked, need to be considered individually for the purpose of instruction… To a certain extent each interval has its own expression, which, however, can be greatly changed or completely lost through the harmony or through the different manner of using the harmony.[33]

Some of his ideals are related to Mattheson: for example, Kirnberger lists leaps as one type of interval that is well-suited to expressing joy.[34] On the other hand, Kirnberger's categorization is also more flexible than Mattheson's in some ways; in the same sentence that he denotes leaps with joy, he also lists anger as an emotion that can be expressed with large intervals. Further, Kirnberger revisits the concept that Mattheson began by categorizing specific keys as well-suited to express one emotion over another. Kirnberger does the same, but is far more exact about what key is good to express what emotion, because he uses proportions to distinguish the keys from one another, based on the purity of their thirds.[35] In this context, purity refers to how mathematically close to perfect the thirds were. Before equal temperament, each key had a slightly different thirds proportion, because either the thirds *or* the fifths can be perfect in just intonation, not both. The general tuning preference was to make the fifths perfect, and make the thirds wider to compensate for the narrower, perfect interval. The keys with the purest thirds (or the keys that mathematically were as close to perfect as possible) had the "most gentle and pleasing tenderness and sadness," and the keys with the most impure thirds "blend the most

[33] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, 347, 373.

[34] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, 353.

[35] Recall that equal temperament was not yet used in practice. For more information on how temperament was different, see Rita Steblin's *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*.

painful and adverse qualities" and were better suited to works with characters of dark or negative nature.[36]

Kirnberger categorized many musical parameters, not just the keys based on their thirds. He made observations about other intervals, as well as rhythm, meter, and tempo. Very often in his writings, Kirnberger compares music to speech, and he was not the only one to do so. The discussion of principles of composition in a parallel manner to rhetoric was extremely common: Gottsched, Scheibe, Mattheson, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Charles Batteaux are just a few names among many that held this belief.[37] In the words of Kirnberger, "To a certain extent each interval has its own expression, which, however, can be greatly changed or completely lost through the harmony or through the different manner of using the harmony."[38] An alternate interpretation of this quote that the aforementioned critics would have also agreed with, in terms of discussing music and rhetoric in parallel with each other, would be, "Each word has its own definition, which can be greatly altered through the context of its use." This philosophy led Kirnberger to assign individual affects to ascending intervals, descending intervals, different tempi, rhythms, even specific meters. For example, the ascending major second could be pleasant or pathetic based on its context, the diminished fourth was melancholy or plaintive, the tritone was intense, and so on and so forth.[39] He defined tempi in a familiar manner: "Lively" sentiments should use a fast tempo, but based on the motion "of the parts of the measure" or the rhythmic steps; the expression of the sentiment could also be flirtatious, tender, or a variety of other similar but distinct sentiments.[40] Contrastingly, a slower tempo was best suited to sad

[36] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, 340.
[37] Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 38.
[38] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, 373.
[39] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, 373.
[40] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, 380.

sentiments, but through its motion (as above) could be used in a more or less agitated sentiment, a violent sentiment, or even a gentle sentiment.[41] Going even further, he describes "large 4/4" with a weighty tempo as best suited to church pieces, fugues, and choruses "due to its emphatic nature," whereas "small 4/4" has a lighter execution and a more lively tempo, suiting it better for other types of works.[42] Finally, Kirnberger defines rhythm as what ties all of these smaller parameters of expression together, allowing us to perceive several measures as one phrase, phrases combined in sentences, and phrases combined into sentences as part of a larger unit.[43]

Musical parameters that "mean" one thing or another continued to be used through the Classical era. In his book, *Classic Music*, Ratner gives countless examples of composers playing into the kind of ideology outlined above, while also updating it for the modern audience— entire chapters on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* from 1787, and Haydn's Sonata in E♭ major from 1794-5 are just two among many. While using musical parameters as a means of expression was taken from earlier theorists, these composers often intensified contrast in their compositions. They no longer felt the need to follow the one-affect-per-movement rule, or the affects-must-be-unified-under-one-character rule. Contrast in this era is taken to a degree that would not have been acceptable to the theorists above, because— according to Daniel Heartz— it is the kind where a comic relief character in an opera can erupt "onto the scene and seize control, breaking up the gallantries [of a love duet in 3/8] in a most literal sense by his insistent, pounding rhythms in 4/4."[44]

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[41] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition,* 380.
[42] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition,* 391.
[43] Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition,* 404.
[44] Daniel Heartz, "The Creation of the Buffo Finale in Italian Opera," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 104 (1977-8), 70.

This kind of rapidly changing music would not have been accepted, much less allowed, in the era of Mattheson, Sulzer, or Scheibe. Before this rapid use of topics was common, something had to shift from allowing just one topic in a piece to allowing the use of several. Sulzer, Kirnberger, and their contemporaries were theorizing about it decades before the music was reflecting their theories, however. Johann Christian Bach is the bridge that connects the musical theories to musical practice. Early musicologist Charles Burney described Bach's compositions as employing contrast as a governing principle, which by its nature implies the use of more than one affect per composition. Contrast in music boils down to the use of different melodies/tempos/meters/rhythms to indicate different affects or topoi, as the above discussion has demonstrated. While the contrasts in the later decades of the Classical era tend to be rather distinct, the pioneer of an idea is typically not the one to push it to its limit. The kind of contrast employed by Bach is not the kind seen in the later decades, but rather the more general concept that two ideas or perspectives on the same topic can coexist in a piece: different either in their use of melody, harmony, or other means without disrupting the listener's perception of the piece as unified.

Additionally, Burney's use of the word "principle" is quite fascinating—it suggests that Bach used contrast to *unite* a piece of music that contained different or varied subject matters instead of sticking to the same one-affect-per-movement rule of thumb that his predecessors and contemporaries used. Despite music history textbooks generally recognizing the end of the Baroque era as 1750 with the death of Bach's famous father, the Doctrine of Affections continued to influence composers. Scheibe and Sulzer were of the same generation as Bach, yet their compositional approaches were very different. Recall that Scheibe believed that mixing affects led to a disorganized style, and that Sulzer applied this principle to vocal and instrumental

genres, saying that any genre of piece that mixes affects were morally suspect. It will be shown through extensive analysis of select sonatas by Bach that he mixed affects or topoi in a manner forbidden by his contemporaries and different from his musical descendants. He seems to have been the first to employ contrast in his works, thereby paving the road for other composers to develop how contrast could be used in music in later decades.

In later chapters, further examples of Bach's use of contrast in music in his sonatas will be discussed in much deeper detail. However, it was first necessary to illustrate the hole that Bach fills between the transition from the Baroque to the Classical. Before diving into such analysis, it is also necessary to overview Bach's biography to understand how he arrived at composing in the manner he chose. His consumption of several different types of music ultimately allowed him to develop his style in addition to connecting with the young Mozart, who had a very similar type of education, when they first met in London.

CHAPTER II

THE MUSICAL LIFE OF JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH

Early Life: Berlin And Leipzig

Christian Bach (as he is usually called; hereafter Bach) was born on August 5, 1735, in Leipzig, when his father, Johann Sebastian Bach, was already 51 years old.[45] Bach's early education began in 1738, and was handed to his father's cousin, Johann Elias Bach, because of his father's other engagements (e.g. teaching Latin, composing sacred music, teaching students). Elias taught and raised the boy until he was eight years old, but past this point, who was in charge of his education is unclear until later.[46] It's possible that Bach attended the Thomasschule, as his older brother, Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach (hereafter Emanuel Bach) had done, but the relevant records from the period have been lost.[47] Biographer Charles Terry surmises that Bach began playing harpsichord around age 9 and likely learned from one of his father's pupils as well as from his father.[48] Despite not knowing exactly who was teaching Bach what, we *do* know that he was familiar with his father's pedagogical methods; Terry quotes Bach recalling that he "labored for the first years of his life" without intermission at the "extremely difficult" exercises of *Das wohltemperirte Clavier*.[49] We also know that, during his early musical education, Bach occasionally "received castigation" when his compositional exercises

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[45] Three main biographies of Christian Bach's life in English explore his life in much greater detail than this project has adequate room for. See Charles Terry's *Johann Christian Bach* (1929) or Reinhard Pauly's translation of Heinz Gärtner's *Johann Christian Bach: Mozart's Friend and Mentor* (written 1922, translated 1994) for complete biographies. Daniel Heartz also gives a thorough overview of Christian's life in the ninth chapter of his book, *Music in European Capitals*.

[46] Charles Terry, *Johann Christian Bach* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 2.

[47] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 3.

[48] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 3.

[49] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 5.

were too harmonically exploratory, which indicates that from an early age, Bach was interested in composing outside the realm of the normative.[50] He remained in Leipzig until age 15, and there he would have had exposure to opera by German composers. The Königliches Opernhaus was opened in 1742 after Frederick the Great's efforts to restore opera in Germany, and only programmed German composers, such as Hasse, Graun, and Agricola.[51]

In 1750, after Sebastian's death, Emanuel Bach took charge of his younger brother's education. The youngest Bach son studied with Emanuel in Berlin for five years, during which time he reportedly developed an ear for melody along with maturing as a composer and deepening his compositional craft.[52] While studying with his brother, Bach was also able to experience opera in Berlin, which played an important part in his travel arrangements to Italy.[53] He would have been exposed to many great minds during his time in Berlin as well—Emanuel kept the company of other composers and poets whose music may also have influenced Bach, including but not limited to the Graun brothers, Johann Gottlieb (1703–71), August Friedrich (1699–1765), and Carl Heinrich (1704–59); the Benda brothers Franz (1709–86) and Georg (1722–95); Johann Phillip Kirnberger (1721–83), Johann Joachim Quantz (1697–1773), and others.[54] Emanuel saved some of his younger brother's early works, which have been described as mature and already exhibiting "qualities which distinguished him throughout his career," such as his previously mentioned ear for melodies[55] His early education was firmly planted in the

[50] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 3.
[51] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 7.
[52] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 8.
[53] Experiencing opera at Dresden was also very likely a possibility for the young Christian.
[54] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 5-6.
[55] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 8. The surviving compositions from the Berlin era include mostly *concertos* for clavier and orchestra.

teachings of his father and brother, and an early composition like his Concerto in F minor, WC [Ernest Warburton] 69 could blend in with the repertoire of any of his family members.

This suggests that, in his early years, Bach's music was likely more "German" than in his later years. It is important to remember that, by the time of his birth, the German taste for music was beginning to move beyond the dense counterpoint of his father's earlier works. Instead, the lighter, more melodic *galant* style was beginning to take off in Germany– the very style of music for which Bach is remembered for today. Generally, this style sought to evoke the simplicity of folk melodies: the harmonic rhythm slowed down from that of the complex High Baroque style, the bass parts were no longer completely independent from the rest of the work, and clearly balanced phrases became more common.[56]

Italy

In 1755, Bach arranged to travel to Italy through unknown means; one account has him wearing a beard and pretending to be a coachman for an opera singer who needed to get there, while another says that an Italian opera singer that he met in Berlin convinced him to travel back with her.[57] Regardless of what actually happened, both of these accounts agree that an Italian opera singer was his ticket to Italy. Bach found patronage in Milan with Count Agostino Litta (who sponsored him through 1761) and began taking lessons with Padre Giovanni Battista Martini, possibly as early as 1755.[58] As a musician and a composer, Martini was able to sing and play cello and violin.[59] During his lifetime, he taught many composers, including but not limited

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[56] Robert Marshall, "Bach the Progressive: Observations on His Later Works," *The Musical Quarterly*, 62 no. 3 (July 1976), 330.

[57] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 11; Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals* (New York: WW Norton, 2003), 884.

[58] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 885.

[59] Howard Brofsky, and Sergio Durante, "Martini, [Padre] Giovanni Battista," *Grove Music Online.* 2001; Accessed 2 Jul. 2024. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.unco.idm.oclc.org/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000017921.

to Niccolò Jomelli, Ferdinando Bertoni, Mozart, and many others in addition to Bach.[60] Since Martini was centered in Bologna and hardly ever left, many of these lessons were done via written correspondence, with the young Bach sending Martini musical exercises– or even compositions for various jobs around Italy– for correction or revision.[61] Since Litta was his patron, all of Bach's movements were subject to his approval, and Litta often wanted him at his country estate as well as his city estate in Milan.[62] While under the guidance of Martini, Bach likely studied the strict older style of counterpoint of Palestrina and set liturgical texts in both the older and more modern styles.[63] It was during his time in Italy that Bach converted to Roman Catholicism, since both his patron and his teacher believed he had the makings of a *maestro di capella*. Their instincts that he could be employable in a church setting were correct, for before long, Bach was given a position as an organist at the Duomo di Milano, a post which gave him "800 *lire* and not much to do."[64] Meanwhile, he kept busy, staging his first opera, *Artaserse,* for the Teatro Regio in Turin in 1760, and it was a smashing success.[65] Metastasio's famous libretto was a vehicle for new composers to prove themselves, and Bach did just that. This first foray into opera also earned him his second commission, *Catone in Utica*, which premiered at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples in 1761.[66] He did not stop composing instrumental works, either. His reputation as a secular composer had spread to Paris and Germany by 1761, and he was

[60] Brofsky and Durante, "Martini, [Padre] Giovanni Battista." He also was a music librarian, and his personal library was estimated to be around 17,000 volumes by Burney.

[61] Terry's biography includes translations of most, if not all, of the letters by Christian to Martini, as well as letters from Litta to Martini.

[62] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 887.

[63] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 886. The Oxford Music Online entry on the previous page also corroborates this claim.

[64]Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 49. This position did not require him to compose, as that was the job of the *maestro di capella*. Christian hired someone to perform the job for him most of the time, and continued to travel around the country.

[65] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 888-9.

[66] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 892.

writing various pieces at the requests of the courts.[67] Bach had one final opera premier at the Teatro San Carlo in January of 1762, *Alessandro nell'Indie*.[68] According to Burney, Bach's operatic successes demonstrated his "genius as a lyric composer and placed him among the leaders of the Neo-Neapolitan school, whose influence was shortly to fall upon Mozart."[69] His melodic fluency and expressive ornamentation were characteristic of the Italian style of music that he was mastering during these years: this is sometimes called his "singing allegro" style of composition.[70] However, this does not mean that Bach abandoned his German roots. To quote Burney after seeing one of Bach's only *seria* operas that premiered in London later, the "Neapolitan school, where he studied, is manifest in his cantilena, and the science of his father and brother [Emanuel] in his harmony."[71]

After two operatic successes in Naples, Bach was in high demand: Naples was petitioning him for another opera, Venice wanted him to travel there to write an opera, but London won the composer's attention by negotiating with him for two serious operas at the The King's Theater.[72] Bach famously petitioned his supervisors for a year of leave to go to London to complete these works, but it is unlikely that he ever intended to come back to Italy, given that, in his last letter to Martini from this era, he explains his opportunities in London and does not mention returning to Italy.[73]

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[67] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 887.

[68] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 894.

[69] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 57. This quote does not refer to any specific school that was studied at by composers in Naples, but to the next generation of *opera seria* composers in Naples at this time.

[70] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 907.

[71] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music From the Earliest Pages to the Present Period, v*ol. 4 (Unknown: GGJ and J Robinson, 1789), 483. In this context, the Neapolitan school Burney refers to is another name for *opera seria* that was thriving in Naples at this time, as the last quote.

[72] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 894.

[73] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 894.

England

There is admittedly some debate about why Bach traveled to England. Terry's older biography recounts that the English queen (Sophia Charlotte of Mecklinburg-Strelitz) wanted a German composer for her court and would have none that were already in London.[74] Another theory recalls that Emanuel was the teacher of the future English queen as well as some of the younger royals in earlier years, including when his younger brother Christian was under his care, so it is not impossible that Bach went with his older brother to Strelitz on an occasional visit. This *could* be what secured Bach's invitation to England.[75] However, Heartz posits that the most likely reason Bach was desired by The King's Theatre in London was because of an opera singer, Colomba Mattei, who sang at least one of his works in Milan and could vouch for his success.[76] Given that an opera singer also got him to Italy, and later to Paris, added to the fact all other trips or moves in his adult life are related to opera, I find this the most persuasive reason for his move.[77]

Despite arriving in London during the opera season of 1762, Bach did not produce any original works for The King's Theatre until 1763. In Italy, Bach was accustomed to working with and for some of the finest Italian opera singers of their day, and he was not so willing to hand his music over to the singers available at the theater: at least, not until the employment of the De Amici sisters. Until that time, he produced and arranged a number of *pastiches*, occasionally writing overtures for them. For example, *Il Tutore e la Pupilla (Il Matrimonio alla*

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[74] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 65.

[75] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 895.

[76] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 894-5. Although it was called The King's Theatre, the royals did not sponsor the theater and had little to no involvement with whom they hired.

[77] As previously discussed, Bach moved from Berlin to Italy to study opera up close, in its home country. He traveled to Mannheim and Paris later in his life for his operas. In his day, he was known as an opera composer, and he was certainly far from the only composer to move around to study opera in Italy or to write it in various places. Niccolo Piccinni, Verdi, Rossini, and Carlo Goldoni are just a few among many that come to mind.

moda) was a pastiche he arranged and wrote an overture for.[78] Once the De Amicis were employed at The King's Theatre, Bach composed the works for which he was commissioned: *Orione, o sia Diana vendicata* and *Zanadia,* both premiering in the 1763 opera season.[79] The former was a favorite, and according to Burney, the general public and critics alike were struck by the "richness of the harmony, the ingenious texture of the parts, and, above all, with the new and happy use he had made of wind-instruments."[80] Burney refers to the use of clarinets in the opera orchestra, since they were not used prior to the premier of *Orione*.[81] Additionally, *Orione* inspired Burney's comment that Bach used *contrast* as a governing principle in his works.[82] *Zanadia* was much less noteworthy, and Burney recalls that the performance by the singers was partly to blame, but that the music overall was "more admired as instrumental pieces, than compositions for the voice."[83] Although Bach was known in his day for his opera compositions this particular comment suggests that he was equally strong in writing music for the stage as well as for the chamber or concert.

Bach was not confined to composing for the opera as he settled into life in London. Figure 1 lists all of the works with opus numbers published in London during Bach's lifetime; the genres include sonatas, concertos, symphonies, canzonettas, quartets, quintets, and one of his operas (to be discussed).[84] Given that Bach was publishing piano works, and in the dedication of op. 1, he refers to Queen Charlotte (his principal patron) as both a "singing pupil" and an

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[78] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 66.

[79] Burney, *A General History of Music,* 481.

[80] Burney, *A General History of Music,* 481.

[81] Mozart later favored the clarinet as well. Despite great effort, I've been unable to locate a complete recording of any of Bach's operas, and only a couple of scores. I would be intrigued to compare the clarinet parts in their operas. This could also be done with the more-available overtures of Bach's operas, since they are sometimes used in his symphonies. Either way, I suspect that the way they wrote for clarinets specifically may be similar.

[82] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 69.

[83] Burney, *A General History of Music,* 482.

[84] Taken from Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 907.

"indulgent listener," Bach clearly did *not* stop playing harpsichord or pianoforte after leaving Germany, despite Burney's alleged claim that Bach told him so.[85] Interestingly, Burney also claims that it was Bach's arrival in England that prompted keyboard makers to push the instruments to be able to handle more powerful playing: "After the arrival of John Chr. Bach in this country, and the establishment of his concert, in conjunction with Abel, all the harpsichord makers tried their mechanical powers at piano-fortes," and once the maker Zumpé made an instrument that was small and affordable enough, "he could not make them fast enough to gratify the craving of the public."[86] Many of Bach's piano sonatas are, in Burney's words, "such as ladies can execute with little trouble," indicating (in less sexist language) that they were meant for the consumption of the general public, not for the virtuoso performer.[87] Nevertheless, this does not make them any less high art than his symphonies or operas; Leopold Mozart actually encouraged his son in 1778 to follow in Bach's footsteps when he was struggling to make a living in Paris.

> The *small* is *great* if written in a natural, flowing, and easy style, and soundly composed. Creating in this manner is more difficult than all those complicated harmonic progressions, unintelligible to most, and those melodies that are difficult to perform. Did Bach lower himself by such work? Not at all! Good writing [der gute Satz], order, *il filo* [the thread]--these distinguish the master from the bungler even in small works.[88]

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[85] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 906; Burney, *A General History of Music*, 482.
[86] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 919.
[87] Burney, *A General History of Music*, 482.
[88] Letter from 1778 by Leopold Mozart, as quoted in Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 920.

It is also important to note that Bach relied on the income from these publications, and petitioned King George III for a copyright on his publications to protect that income. It was granted in 1763, and it "forbade the king's subjects from copying, reprinting, or publishing his works for a period of fourteen years," as well prohibiting the publication of music from London in other countries, thereby protecting him from pirating, at least in theory.[89]

[89] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 913.

Table 1. All Of Bach's Works Published In London During His Lifetime.

Opus Number	Title	Date
1	*Six concerts pour le clavecin, deux violons, et un violoncelle*	1763
2	*Six sonates pour le clavecin accompagnées d'un violon ou flute transverière et d'un violoncelle*	1763
3	*Six simphonies a deux violons, deux hautbois, deux cors de chasse, alto viola, et basse*	1765
4	*Sei canzonette a due*	1765
5	*Six sonates pour le clavecin ou le piano forte*	1766
6	*Sei canzonette a due*	1766
7	*Sei concerto per il cembalo o piano e forte con due violini e violoncello*	1770
8	*Six quartettos for a German flute, violin, tenor, and violoncello*	1772
9	*Trois simphonies*	Unknown
10	*Six Sonates, for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte; with an Accompagnment for a Violin*	1773
11	*Six Quintettos for a Flute, Hauboy, Violin, Tenor, and Bass*	1774
13	*A Third Sett of Six Concertos for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte*	1777
14	*La Clemenza di Scipione*	1778
15	*Four Sonatas and Two Duetts for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord, with Accompaniments*	1779
16	*Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Piano-forte, with an Accompaniment for a German-Flute or Violin*	1779

In addition to publishing his piano sonatas, Bach collaborated with Carl Friedrich Abel to begin a subscription-based concert series in 1764. In the first year, they presented only a few concerts, but to satisfy the overwhelming demand, they more than doubled the scheduled programming in the following year; after a few years, they even had to put a cap on the number of subscribers.[90] This series of concerts ran annually until 1781.[91] Bach wrote his op. 3 symphonies for these concerts, as well as his six trios (op.2), but the programs for these concerts

[90] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 898; Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 95.
[91] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 165.

have for the most part not survived.[92] However, an advertisement for his op. 3 announces it includes "Six new Overtures, in 8 parts; as they were performed at the Wednesday Subscription Concert in Soho-square;" and this is presumably how much of Bach's published music was advertised.[93]

Bach was also always closely associated with the royals; as previously mentioned, Queen Charlotte was his student, and he also occasionally accompanied King George III, who played violin and flute.[94] Terry reports that some of the royal children also became Bach's students, stating that "Bach was in regular attendance at Court, and, as the royal children grew up, they too became his pupils."[95] Terry also recounts that Bach was a member of the Queen's Chamber Band, where he likely met Abel.[96] At some point in 1764, after he had dedicated several publications to the royals, and public display of favor for his music had grown, Bach was appointed to the position of Music Master to the Queen.[97] He held this position at the time of the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's visit to England in April of 1764, and continued to do so to the end of his life.[98]

The importance of Bach's influence on Mozart must be considered, to use Terry's word, "vital."[99] Mozart was so taken with Bach's music that he took a few of the op. 5 sonatas of Bach's and used them as the basis of his own in *concerto* form. As will be demonstrated in the

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[92] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 898; Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 78.

[93] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 910.

[94] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 74.

[95] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 74.

[96] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 76.

[97] The royals attended several of Bach's operas and pastiches, sometimes even repeatedly, as in the case of *Orione, o sia Diana vendicata*. The exact date of appointment is unknown, but Terry deduces it had to have happened between February and April of 1764. One of Bach's letters that Terry translated is from February of 1764, and does not yet mention the appointment. By April of 1764, when Mozart visited, Christian Bach was the liaison between the Mozart family and the court. See Terry's biography for more details.

[98] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 80.

[99] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 80.

next chapter, by employing contrast as a governing principle in his works, Bach inspired later composers, like Mozart, to employ more rapid and contrasting use of topoi. Terry recounts the famous and charming story of Bach lifting the then-eight-year-old Mozart onto his lap and playing the first statement of a fugue, which Mozart then completed.[100] Nevertheless, Mozart was never a formal student of Bach's; rather, they were friends, and Mozart greatly admired Bach's works. Writing to his father, Mozart said:

> I love him (as you know) with all my heart and respect him highly; as for him, there is no doubt that he has praised me, not only to my face, but to others also, not in an exaggerated way like some, but seriously, truly.[101]

Mozart mourned the death of his friend and mentor as "a pity for the world of music."[102]

Bach's entire repertoire of operas has not been detailed here, but his success in both *opere serie* and in comic *pastiches* was such that Mozart certainly would have been aware of many of them in addition to Bach's numerous instrumental works. From Bach, Mozart certainly learned, in Terry's words, "melodic purity, inclination to subordinate dramatic expression to sheer beauty of phrase… [and] a rare and spontaneous beauty" in the operatic and instrumental genres.[103] Mozart's music uses topics in a way that would not have been possible without the introduction of the use ofcontrast to the musical canon; plainly, Bach's use of contrast *is* the transition between the Baroque Doctrine of Affections and the use of topics at the end of the Classical era.

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[100] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 80.
[101] Letter by Mozart dated August 27, 1778, as quoted in Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 929.
[102] Letter by Mozart dated April 10, 1782, as quoted in Heartz, *Music in European Capitals,* 929.
[103] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 80.

Trips To Mannheim And Paris, And His Final Years

Bach resided in London for the rest of his life, but he was occasionally called to Mannheim and Paris for commissions— namely operas. He traveled to Mannheim during the golden age of its orchestra, when all of the individual players were compared to an "army of generals" by Terry, each suited to solo work as much as to playing together.[104] Bach visited Mannheim in 1772 to compose *Temistocle*, which was successful enough that it was revived during the next season.[105] Bach's other operas were staged at the Mannheim court from time to time, until he visited again in 1776 to compose *Lucio Sillia*.[106] This was the last work Bach wrote for Mannheim, but a diminishing public taste for *opera seria* at this time must be taken into consideration before deeming the work a failure. Both of these operas were set to Metastasian libretti at a time when public taste was beginning to shift away from the classic heroic or tragic subjects and towards the steadily-growing genre of *opera buffa*.[107]

Once again, the importance of opera singers in this era needs to be considered. Bach arrived in Paris only after a performer by the name of Anton Raaf, who performed in both of the Bach operas for Mannheim had traveled to Paris to perform there, and sung one of Bach's arias at a concert.[108] While correlation is admittedly not causation, it is a distinct possibility that Bach was invited to Paris only after the introduction of his music there. After arriving in Paris, Bach

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[104] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 126.

[105] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 128-9.

[106] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 130.

[107] I have, so far, been unable to locate complete recordings of any of Christian Bach's operas or pastiches– but I personally hypothesize that if he had set his mind to writing an *opera buffa* instead of arranging pastiches, he would have been better preserved in the canon. However, he was quite a traditionalist, and as a member of the generation *before* Mozart, may not have had a taste for using topics in the way of Mozart's generation. As the last to compose in the old style, and the first to employ contrast as a governing principle, he is, unfortunately, not considered remarkable enough in either category despite his important part in the shift towards a different, more varied use of topics.

[108] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 131. Mozart also called this aria his favorite in a letter to his father in 1778.

selected for a libretto Quinault's *Amadis et Gaule,* which made its premier in late 1779.[109] Bach's selection of a romance derived from the myths of the Round Table put Bach in opposition to Gluck's recently proposed reforms, but that did not stop his success. This opera was praised for its "pure and sustained harmony" and "rich and delicate" instrumentation; it was also criticized by the fans of both Gluck and Piccinni, currently in opposition due to the press, in addition to being locked in a competition proposed by the director of the Paris Opera to see who could compose a better setting of *Iphigénie et Tauride*.[110] Nevertheless, Bach's success in Paris is suggested by the publication of his "Four Progressive Lessons for the Harpsichord and Piano-forte" around the same time of the premier of *Amadis et Gaule* and the number of his later works that were published in France.[111]

Bach had little association with London's The King's Theatre in the 1770s, with a few exceptions, including *Gioas* in 1770, *Temistocle* in 1772, *Lucio Sillia* in 1776, and *La Clemenza di Scipione* in 1778.[112] Bach's final opera for the London stage, *La Clemenza di Scipione, was* popular enough to be revived over several seasons.[113] His output in later years was focused on composing for his concert series with Abel, and teaching: Terry suggests he was quite in demand for both.[114] At the end of his life, Bach was stricken with chronic illness and financial difficulties, but his death was still unexpected.[115] On January 1, 1782, the same day of his death, a London newspaper reported that the Bach-Abel concerts were supposed to resume about three

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[109] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 133.

[110] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 133-4. The "feud" between Gluck and Piccinni has been studied in more recent days, and scholars like Heartz posit that they were not actually enemies, but perhaps their overzealous fans were. It's also extremely likely that the feud was invented as a marketing scheme. The competition was real, but the actual degree of competitiveness felt between the two men is uncertain.

[111] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 134-5.

[112] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 155-6.

[113] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 164.

[114] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 155-6.

[115] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach,* 166.

weeks later.[116] Instead, Abel gave a concert to the benefit of the late composer's wife, Cecelia Grassi, for the numerous debts that had accrued during Bach's lifetime and then subsequently passed on to the widow.[117] Despite composing for and being a part of a long-standing successful concert series until a year before he died, the general public took little notice of the death of the once-famous composer. Terry posits that he was "eclipsed by the more perfect art of an era whose threshold he only approached," and while his works in any genre are not often programmed today, he successfully laid the groundwork for those who followed him.[118]

It is sometimes believed that Bach and his music had little effect on Mozart and his compositions. Nevertheless, I have laid out the personal influence of the former on the latter. The next chapter will analyze in further detail how Bach paved the way for the rapid use and exchange of topics to take over in both operatic and instrumental compositions. His compositions altered the view of the Doctrine of Affections to make way for the strong and lively contrasts that come with the use of several topics in one piece present at the end of the Classical era. However, for the kind of contrast that employs quick changes and juxtaposition of a comic lower-class character interrupting a more serious love duet to be acceptable, contrast must be introduced into the canon in a more subtle way first. This is important to keep in mind as select sonatas of Bach's opus 5 are analyzed closely.

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[116] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 167.
[117] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 167-8.
[118] Terry, *Johann Christian Bach*, 168.

CHAPTER III

SELECTED SONATAS OF JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH'S OPUS 5

No. 1

This chapter will examine three of Christian Bach's (hereafter, simply, "Bach") sonatas to determine the role contrast played in his compositional approach. The selected works come from op. 5, which was published in England in 1766.[119] The theoretical terminology used to analyze and discuss these works comes largely from William Caplin's *Analyzing Classical Form*, and definitions are occasionally interspersed to provide further clarity to my analysis, and from Leonard G. Ratner's *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style.*[120] The first piece to be examined is op. 5 no. 1, and like all the sonatas of this opus, it is a charming piece; closer analysis, however, reveals plenty of contrast in each movement.[121] The movements are marked *Allegretto* and *Tempo di Minuetto* respectively, and both begin in B♭ major.

The *Allegretto* movement contrasts the free style so closely associated with the *galant* (theme 1) with a gavotte (theme 2). Both themes are in the middle style, the broad category between the more easily characterized high and low styles, and reflect one main melody with accompaniment. The *free* style, as defined by Ratner, also contains melodic elaborations and a style of harmony that is not as tight as counterpoint is usually considered to be.[122] As can be seen in the first ten measures of Example 3.1, in this case allowing the lively texture to decorate

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[119] Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals* (New York: WW Norton, 2003), 907; see Figure 1 in chapter 2.

[120] William Caplin, *Analyzing Classical Form*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2013; Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980).

[121] Two of these sonatas, Op. 5 nos. 1 and 3, are in two movements; Op,. 5, No. 6 is in three movements, although it doesn't really correspond to the fast-slow-fast model that will later become typical.

[122] Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), 23.

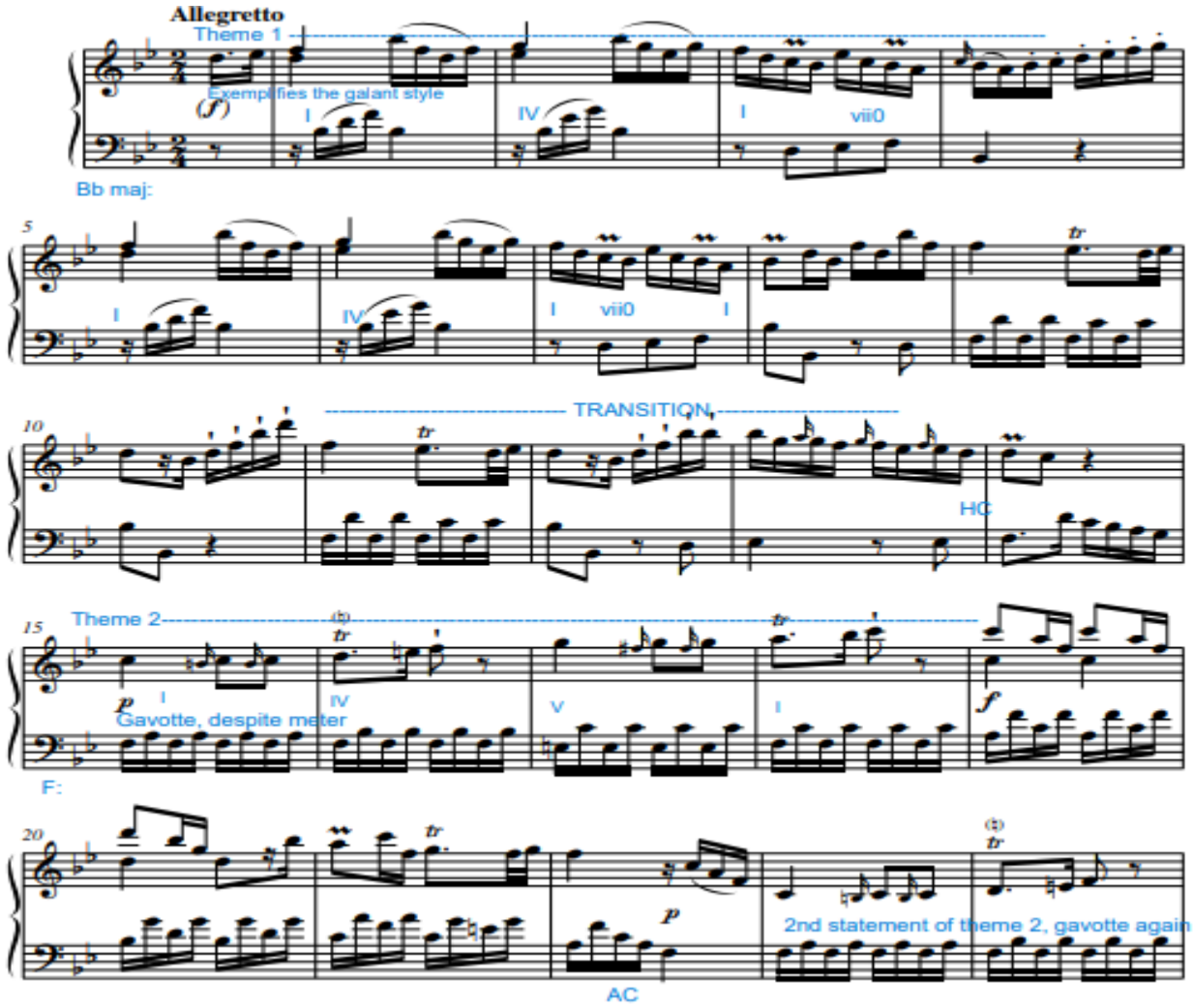
a simpler melody.[123] The harmonic rhythm is comfortably paced, with the decoration of the melody allowing each chord to flow into the next. This lends the music of theme 1 a genteel, polished air, but without the grandiosity of the high style. Meanwhile, theme 2 is a gavotte, which is defined by Ratner as "a rather lively dance in duple time, distinguished by a caesura after the second quarter-note of the measure."[124] This particular statement of theme 2 is eight measures with the first four measure phrase emphasizing mostly the tonic, and the second four-measure phrase increases the surface rhythm, answering the first four-measure phrase. Quick rests are used as punctuation in the first phrase (second beats of mm. 16 and 18) as well as at the very end of the second phrase, before the cadential idea (pickup to mm. 21). The cadential idea is simply a short (two measures or less) unit that leads to a cadence or implies it, supported by the corresponding harmony.[125]

EXAMPLE. 3.1. Galant and Gavotte. Johann Christian Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 1, I, mm. 1-24.

[123] Heartz *Music in European Capitals*, 907; The singing Allegro has been discussed by other scholars, such as Allanbrook and Heartz, but an exact definition remains elusive. I have intended to provide a definition based on what is present in Bach's music, given that when this singing Allegro is discussed, it is usually mentioned in conjunction with Christian Bach, and how he perfected it.

[124] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 14.

[125] Caplin, *Analyzing Classical Form*, 704.



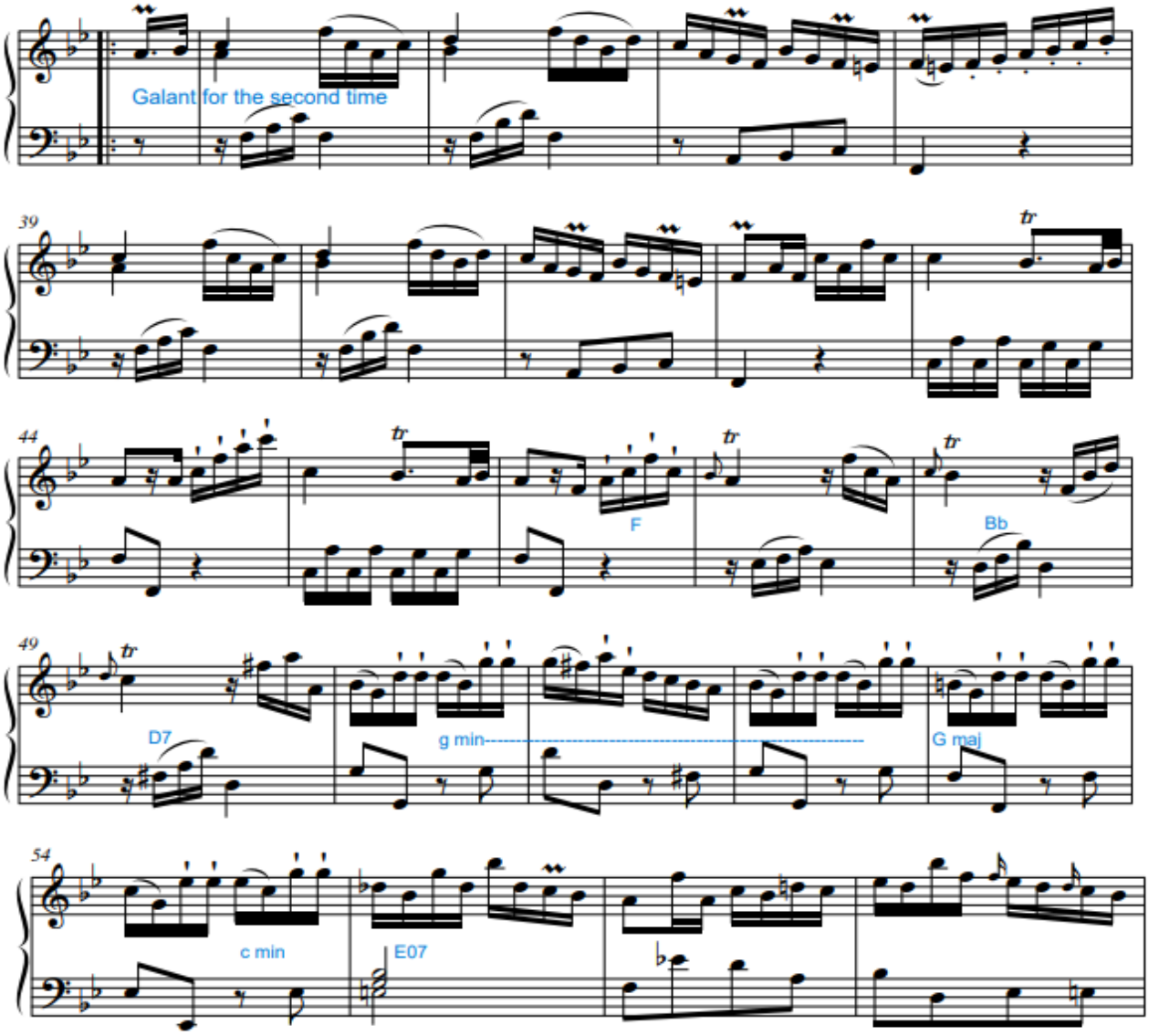
The gavotte, usually in 4/4 or cut time, typically has a phrase that ends halfway through a measure, as it does in mm. 15–16. This gavotte topic is played twice in the exposition of this sonata, as seen in mm. 23. Theme 2 first appears after the transition of mm. 12–14 and a modulation to the dominant, F major, and is repeated an octave down beginning in measure 23; this leads to the little Rococo, recitative-style figure from m. 30 to the end of the exposition at m. 34. This is identifiable by its uneven rhythms (reminiscent of the Rococo architectural style) and the fact that it does not actually contain a melody yet is not *un*related to the material presented

immediately before it.[126] The exposition also ends with a weak or feminine cadence, which is associated with the gavotte.

In the development of this movement, the material of theme 1 that uses the *free* style is repeated verbatim as it was in the exposition, except it has modulated to the key of V. The development also contains an approximately fifteen measures of a toccata-like passage derived from the first theme; here, Bach is simply modulating through different harmonies, including but not limited to B♭, D7, g minor, G, c minor, and E°7, before finding its way back to the original dominant (F major) and setting the recap to be theme 2, the gavotte, in the original key of B♭ (see Example 3.2). When the recapitulation begins, there is no theme 1 present. This also indicates that this sonata is following the precedent of the Baroque binary model, A-B-X-B, where material from the first theme is not repeated but influences the development. Rather, throughout the whole work, we get presentations of both themes in the key of B♭, the tonic, in addition to the key of F, the V. The piece ends with two presentations of theme 2, as in the exposition, again followed by the Rococo recitative figure.

[126] Daniel Heartz and Bruce Alan Brown, "Rococo," *Grove Music Online* (2001).

EXAMPLE 3.2. Repeated Galant. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 1, I, mm. 35-57.



The second movement of this sonata is labeled *Tempo di Minuetto*, but, in fact, is a polonaise in the first section. According to Ratner, a polonaise is "a dance in triple meter, was rather serious and deliberate in style in the early 18th century. Its characteristic figure was a momentary pause within the measure. It fell out of favor in mid-century but returned in the Classical era as a quick dance."[127] Polonaises, as described by Jonathan Bellman, had the

[127] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 12–13.

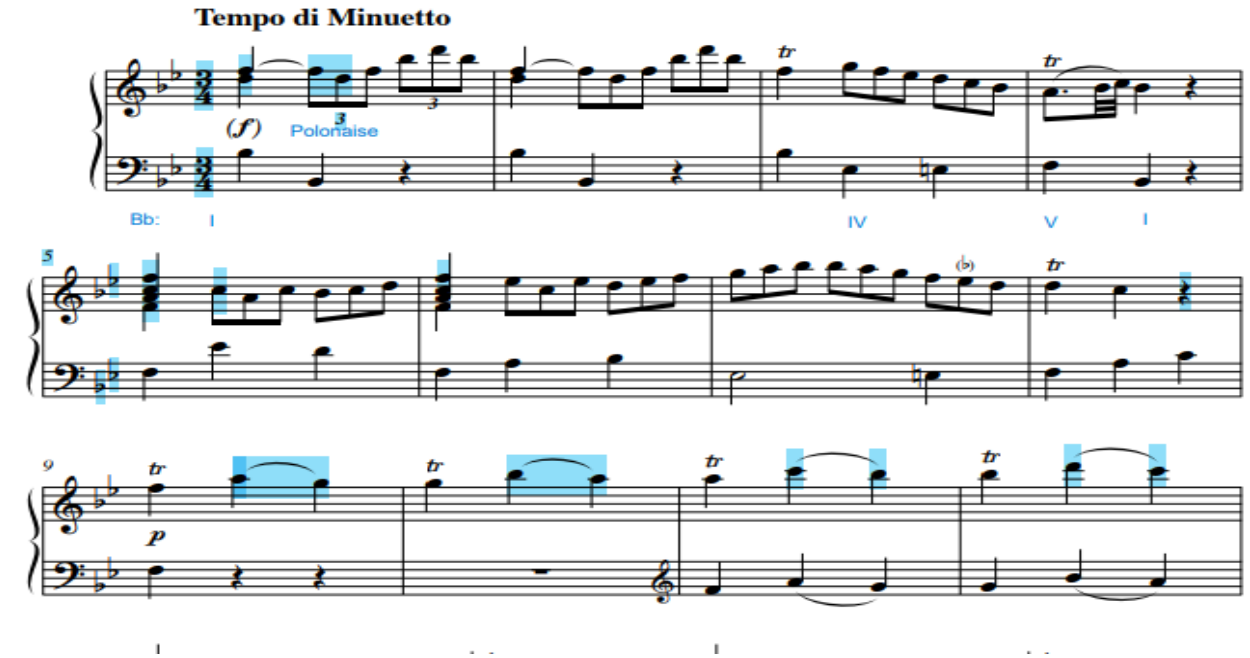
character of a presentation step (at least until the early nineteenth century), with emphasis on beats one and two (see Example 3.3, m. 4), also commonly contain subdivisions that keep the moderate tempo moving, as well as French-style *agrèments* to evoke the earlier Baroque origin.[128] Example 3.3 contains an excerpt of the beginning of the movement that highlights the consistent subdivisions as well as the momentary pause Ratner mentions, an air that is also carried further into the movement, highlighted in blue.

This particular polonaise is not particularly serious, but rather light and lively, and still decorated enough to retain a courtly tone and proximity to the high style. The contrast comes immediately after the double bar, and the topic changes rapidly to something that is decidedly not high-class. This new topic is pastoral; the murky bass maintains a drone on F for the first nine measures of the new section while the treble seems to be a little flute duet, with runs and chirping descending figures. The audience of the day might well have noted the change in tone—sharp contrasts were still not common in music, when this sonata was published.[129] See Example 3.4.

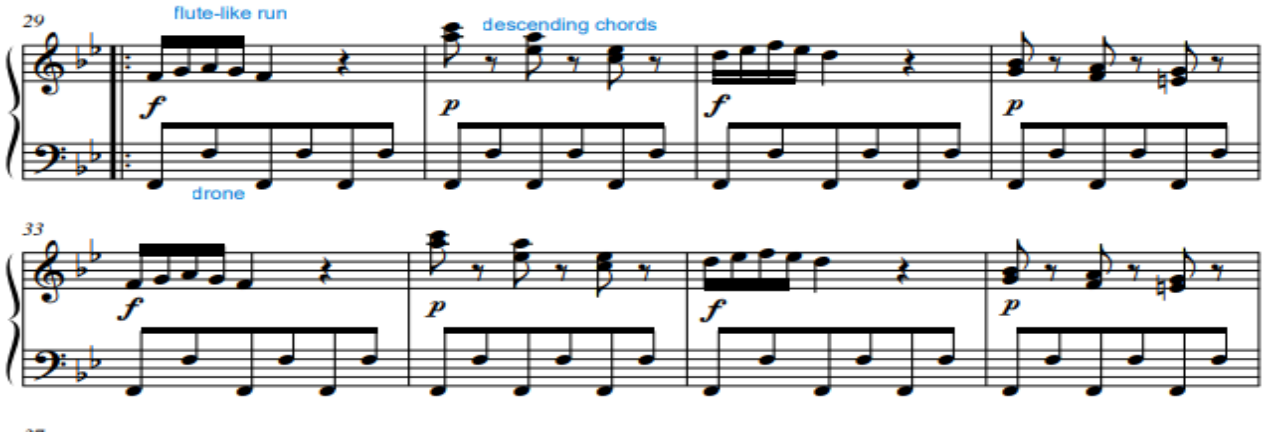
[128] Jonathan Bellman, "Ongherese, Fandango, and Polonaise: National Dance as Classical-Era Topic," *Journal of Musicological Research* vol. 31 (2012), 88. Bellman also notes that the subdivisions are frequently on the first beat, but as seen in this movement of the sonata, that is not required for it to be a polonaise.

[129]Some writings from Chapter 1 by Scheibe and Sulzer begin to discuss contrast as being unified by a character.

EXAMPLE 3.3. Polonaise. Johann Christian Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 1, II, mm. 1-12.



EXAMPLE 3.4. Pastoral. Bach, op. 5 no. 1, II, mm. 29-36.



However, this sharp contrast only lasts about as long as the above example, and then the next ten measures are spent elaborating on the flute-like figure in measure 29. Before the flute gesture is repeated, four eighth notes are played against the droning bass, either outlining a chord

or moving down a scale to circle back around to the polonaise by measure 47. The movement repeats the polonaise from the first section verbatim, followed by a nine-measure reprise of part of the thematic material. With that, the second section of this movement is repeated exactly, meaning that by the conclusion of the movement, the polonaise has been played a total of four times, and the pastoral a total of two. The 2:1 polonaise to pastoral ratio provides a period of time to reflect on the elegant and courtly polonaise that is then starkly interrupted by the pastoral, before devolving back into the court dance. This kind of sharper contrast is not typically thought of as being common until a little later in the Classical era than 1765, but this illustrates why Bach is the *pioneer* of this kind of writing. It is also likely that later composers, such as Haydn, drew inspiration from this particular movement of op. 5, no. 1 in later years, when Haydn was writing his minuets and trios that employ a more vivid kind of contrast.[130]

This first movement contained typical contrast for a miniature-sonata, where both themes are played in full in both key areas. The second movement contained more unconventional contrast, putting a high-style court dance against a pastoral topic in such a way to make the contrast between them clear without creating the "formless mass" that theorists of previous decades worried could result from mixing up affects too strongly. The latter contrast was not strong enough to be jarring, but striking enough to ensure the listener walks away from hearing the piece being able to hum both themes. Sonata-style contrast will be used again by Bach, but this second movement is an early and somewhat rare example of contrast being used sharply, and this will inspire composers in later decades to use more of that kind of contrast.

[130] This opus was published in 1766, before Haydn's compositions that were inspired by Bach were written.

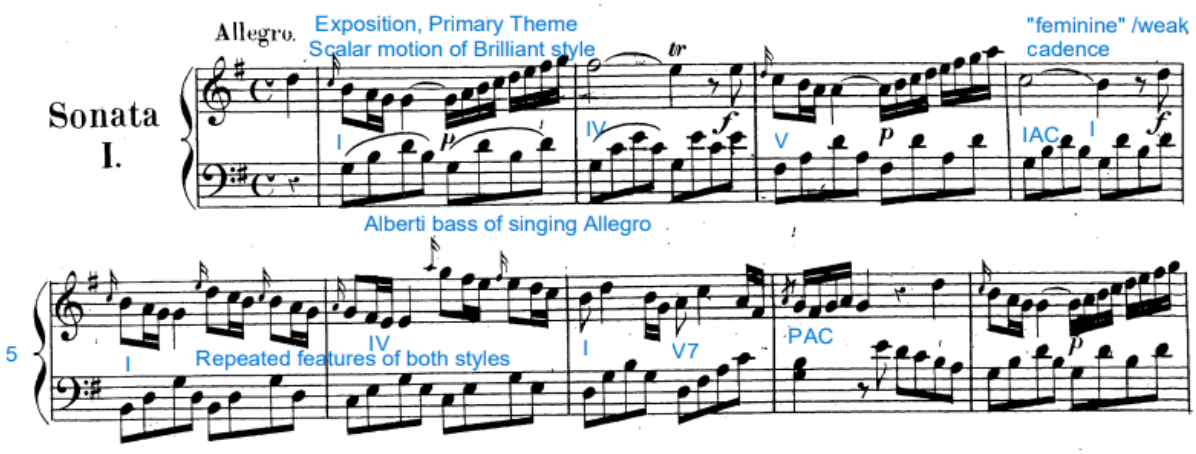
No. 3

The next sonata of interest from this opus is no. 3, which consists of *Allegro* and *Allegretto* movements. Example 3.5 gives the opening of the first movement, which combines the singing Allegro with the brilliant style. As previously discussed, the singing Allegro was something Bach had perfected by the time he arrived in England, and typically had a one-line melody with an Alberti bass accompaniment, and may or may not actually have been singable.[131] The right hand features the characteristic one-line melody with Alberti bass of the singing Allegro, and the brilliant style is exhibited in the decorations to the melody. Ratner defines the brilliant style by identifying its use of "rapid passages for virtuoso display," further citing the short, decorative ideas that contribute to the topic's sparkling effect.[132] While this sonata is not truly virtuosic in the sense that it would challenge a professional performer, like the other sonatas of Op. 5 it was written for the consumption of the general public, which means that the measure of what is virtuosic is different—and the melody that has scalar motion or arpeggiated chords would sound impressive played by an amateur pianist. These patterns are pervasive throughout the movement.

[131] Wye Allanbrook also calls this the "singing allegro" in her analysis of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*. It seems likely that Mozart heard this style in Bach's music and developed it further.

[132] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 19–20.

EXAMPLE 3.5. Allegro and Brilliant. Johann Christian Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, I, mm. 1–10.

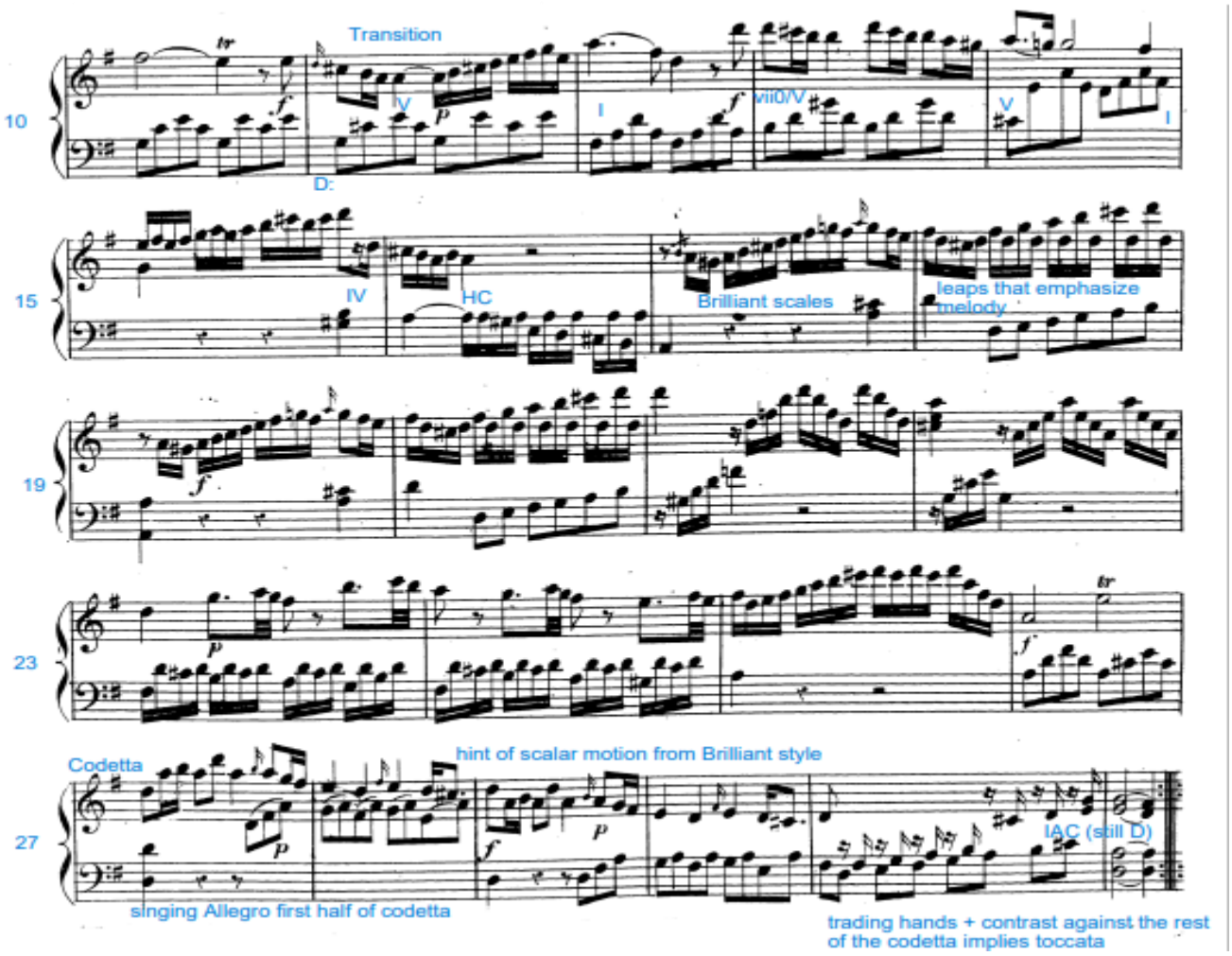


As can be seen in Exx. 3.5 and 3.6, the brilliant style continues as Bach begins the transition in measure 11 after the opening period. As defined by Caplin, a period is a short theme consisting of an antecedent phrase (pickup through beat 3 of m. 4) and a consequent phrase (pickup to m. 5 through beat 1 of m. 8).[133] The consequent phrase follows the same harmonies as the antecedent phrase, elaborating on it to extend the length that each harmony sounds, building up to the perfect authentic cadence in measure 8. Bach then plays on the listener's expectations set up by the opening period, beginning the next phrase with the same material, and then modulating to D major in measure 11. After modulating, Bach uses the same melody with different harmonies to explore the new key area, such as vii°/V, V, ending the phrase with a half cadence before going on to introduce new material that reinforces D as the new tonic. The new material is mostly scalar in nature with a similarly sparse texture as the opening period, oscillating back and forth between the V and I chords for several measures, occasionally incorporating leaps that emphasize the singing Allegro melody. In m. 22, when Bach does not resolve to the I, it is that much more of a surprising move, keeping the listener on

[133] Caplin, *Analyzing Classical Form*, 710.

the edge of their seat. He uses this surprise to simply roll a few chords to harmonically explore before introducing more material in the Brilliant style, including G#7°, B°, and C#°.

EXAMPLE 3.6. Allegro and Brilliant II, Implied Toccata. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, I, mm. 10-32.



New material that returns to the singing Allegro is introduced and is used as a closing gesture in the exposition (see mm. 27-28). It will be used again later in the development; Bach just introduces it in two measures at this part of the sonata. It's a simple melodic gesture, and then before the listener has time to continue to expect material with the same gesture, Bach closes off the idea with a decorated version of the same material from mm. 11–12 with a quick

perfect authentic cadence that actually pauses for the first time in the movement. After the PAC, the movement gets a brief codetta that introduces new material that hints at a toccata (Example 3.6). According to Taruskin, toccatas were pieces that "derived their continuity from discontinuity," and used contrast "between short striking sections, rather than the continuous development of motives, to sustain interest."[134] The use of the word "striking" also implies a type of virtuosity that "turned the very act of playing" into a show, relying as it does on rapid alternation of the hands.[135] The first half of the codetta is very similar to what has already been heard in the exposition; simple in texture and harmonically limited to V and I (still in the key of D), and continuing to combine the brilliant style in the brief scalar motion (see m. 28 beat 4, m. 30 beat 4) with the melodic gestures of the singing Allegro and the Alberti bass. The second half of the codetta plays on the scalar motions of earlier in the exposition, but in such a way that the two hands alternate, chasing each other up the keys before ending on a weak cadence. The way the two hands alternate combined with the sharp contrast against the more melodic first half of the codetta hints at a toccata, but just as the melodic gesture is simply introduced in the exposition, this topic is just hinted at. This material becomes important in the development and recapitulation in this movement.

The development begins the exact same way as the exposition, just in the key of D instead of G. As in the exposition, the key change begins three measures after the end of the first period, but then moves in a new direction. Instead of moving to the dominant of the new key, the music leaps through harmonies, ranging as far as VI (B major) and v (A minor). Although it takes some large leaps harmonically, the music takes the same motives from the exposition and

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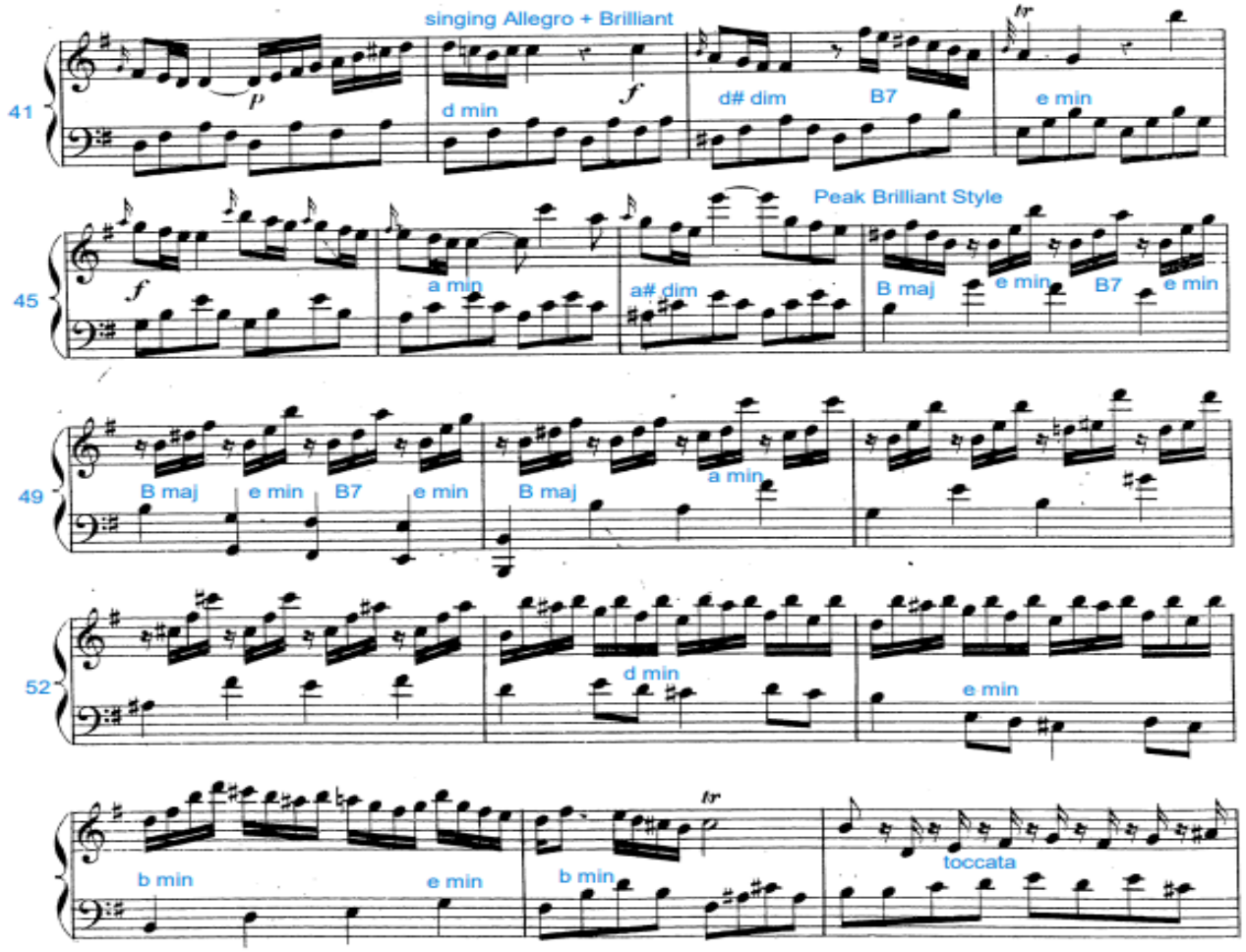
[134] Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music: The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 41.

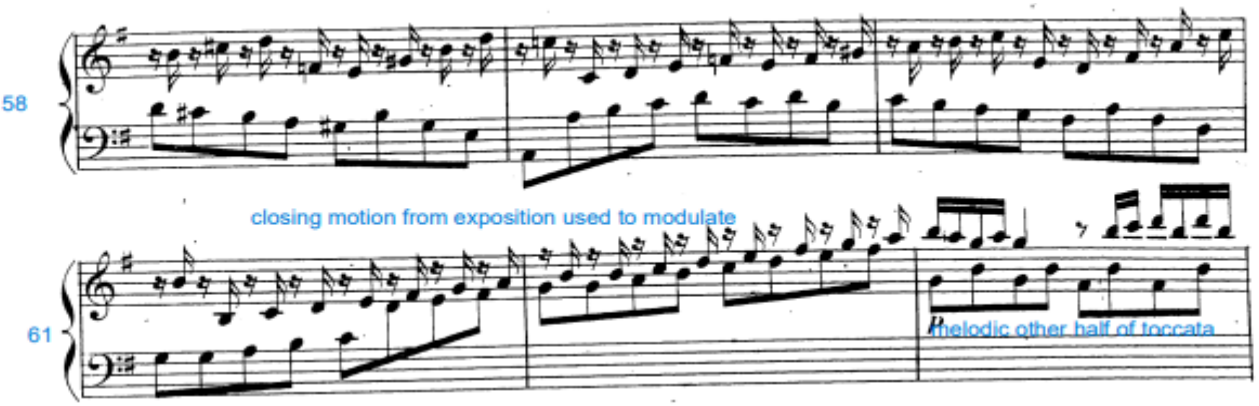
[135] Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music* 41. Even the name for the form references this. Toccare translates to touching (the keys).

expands upon them. This is still very much the singing Allegro plus the brilliant style, combining the Alberti bass with the scalar motions at first, and then shifts to focus on the Brilliant style in mm. 48–9, when Bach mostly uses arpeggiated chords for freedom of harmony: See Example 3.7. At the very end of the example, in mm. 58, a gesture from the coda of the exposition emerges, but the familiar motion fully embraces the toccata instead of just hinting at it. The two sections of the toccata are played in reverse order from the codetta of the exposition, now beginning with the hands chasing each other, and then the melodic section. In the codetta, the topic was just five measures, but in the development, it takes up nine measures, with most of the measures exploring the previously less-developed chasing (Example 3.8). This part of the development is also used to pull the listener through a final round of modulations to get back to G major, the original key of this movement.

EXAMPLE 3.7. Allegro and Brilliant III. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, I, mm. 41–57.

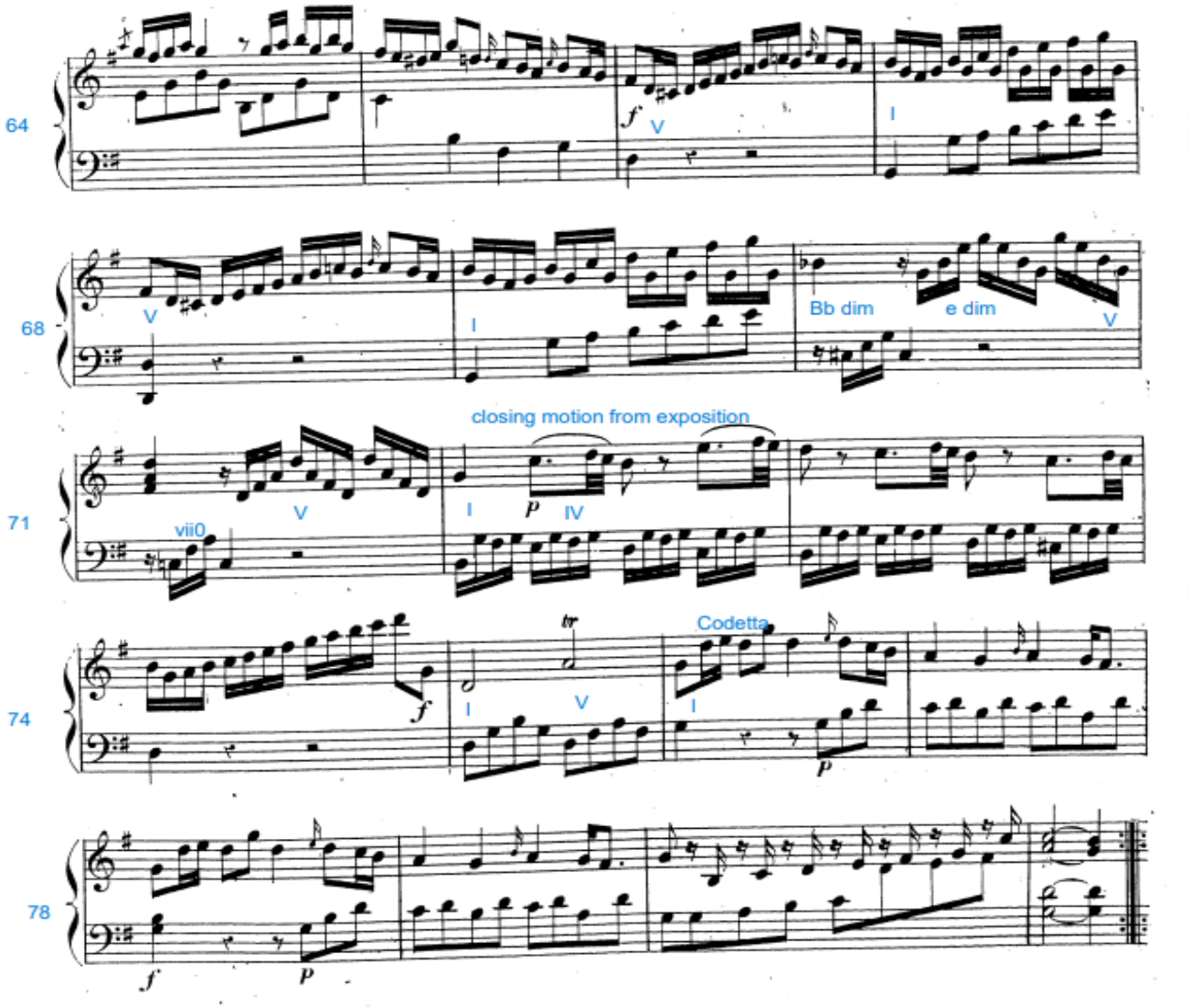


EXAMPLE 3.8. Modulation. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, I, mm. 58–63.



Once G major is reached, the development is over and the recapitulation has begun. The purpose of the thematically-driven sonata form is reached, since both themes from the exposition are played in the tonic key. In this way, this movement of no. 3 is similar to the corresponding movement of no. 1. The closing passage from the exposition that plays on the singing Allegro reappears in m. mm. 63–64, signaling movement's end. Bach plays the codetta at the end of the movement as it was played in the exposition, and by the end, the harmonic goal of a sonata has been reached. The different harmonies explored in the exposition versus the development, again, represent combining the Brilliant style with singing Allegro and presenting them in two different ways. See Example 3.9 for the return to G major to the end of the movement.

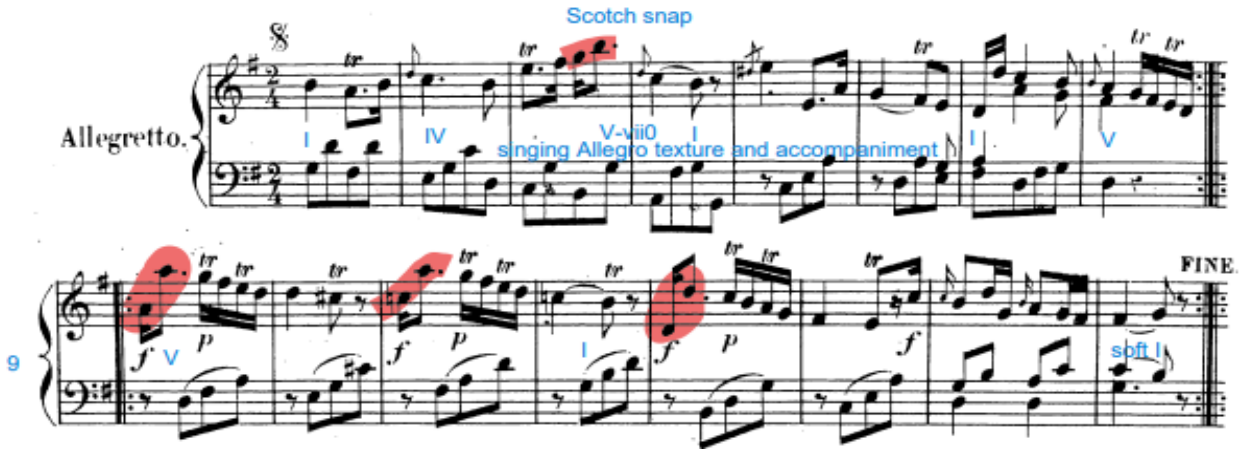
EXAMPLE 3.9. Closing. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, I, mm. 64–81.



The second movement of this sonata is not as conventional as the miniature sonata-form first movement. Instead of a rondo or a minuet, Bach writes a rather simple sixteen-measure melody with a topical focus on Scottish folk music (expanded to 32 measures by repeat signs) and four variations on it. The variations grow increasingly complex over the course of the second movement in one of two styles, and then it ends with one final statement of the original melody. This movement is also in G major, and the harmonies only change a minimal amount

across variations, instead favoring being decorated in different ways. Example 3.10 shows the original melody, a singing Allegro texture with melodic "Scotch snap" rhythms (the short-long patterns highlighted in the example) and added trills.[136] These two factors, with the added instruction of *Allegretto* make for an easy-going theme. Other devices amplify the Scots character of the theme: the trills are strategically placed in the same register as a Scottish flute, and the melodic leaps are typical of Scottish folk melodies. The singing Allegro is present both in the accompaniment and in the texture, and although the melody is decorated by chromatic neighbors, the main harmonies of the melody still come through to produce a charming legato line, even when octave leaps are present. The right hand is still only being asked to play one melody, and the other hand accompanies to fill in harmonies.

EXAMPLE 3.10. Scotch Snaps and Singing Allegro. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, II, 1-16.

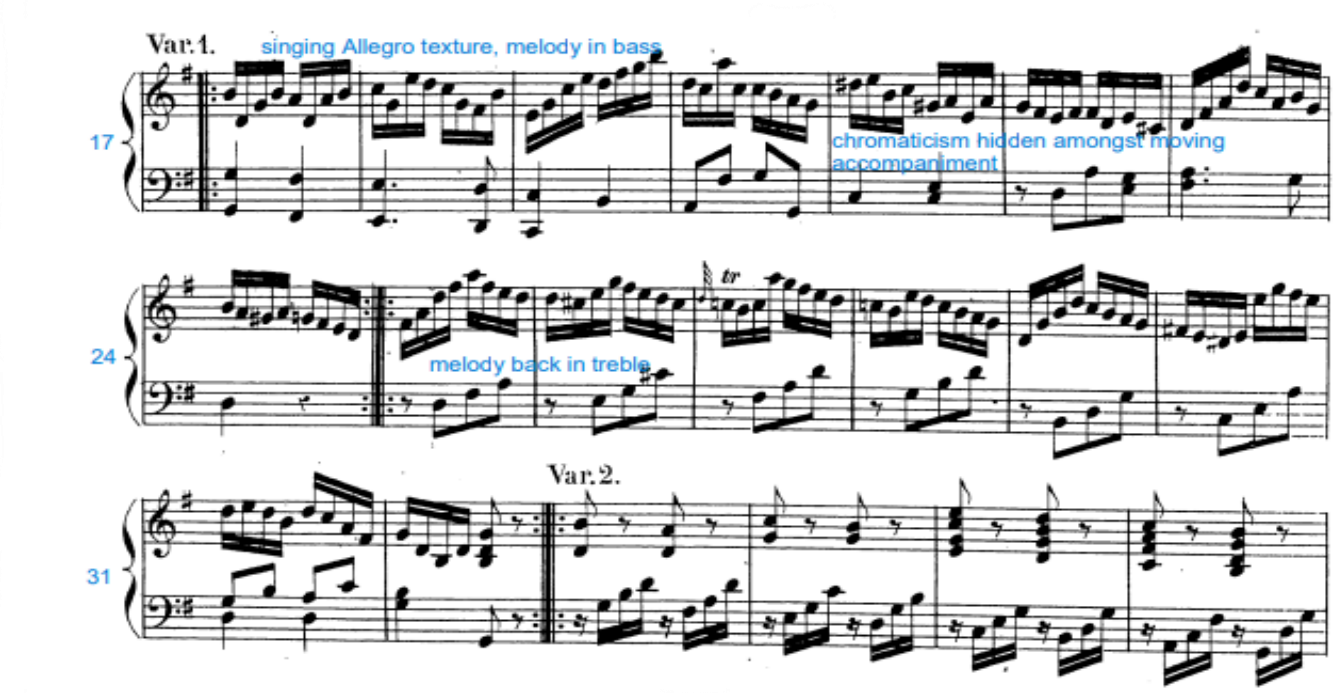


In the first variation of the movement, the same melody is played in the Brilliant style, swapping the roles of the hands in the first half of this variation. This allows the melody to be heard in a lower register, which also allows it to employ an imitation of Scottish pipes. The right hand has the accompanying harmonies, unfolding the chords and connecting the melody

[136] David Temperley and Nicholas Temperley, "Music-Language Correlations and the 'Scotch Snap,'" *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 29, no. 1 (2011), 51.

smoothly. This application of the Brilliant style is in the previous movement: it sounds beautiful and would allow the performer to emphasize expression differently than from the original melody, but does not require expert virtuosity to draw on the style. This variation smooths the chord-to-chord changes, which also helps to bring out the singing Allegro of the original melody. See Example 3.11 for the full variation. This Brilliant style take on a folk melody also brings out the middle-style character of this movement. The chromaticism of the trills from the original melody are present, but hidden within the rapidly moving right hand, regardless of if it is playing the melody or the accompaniment.

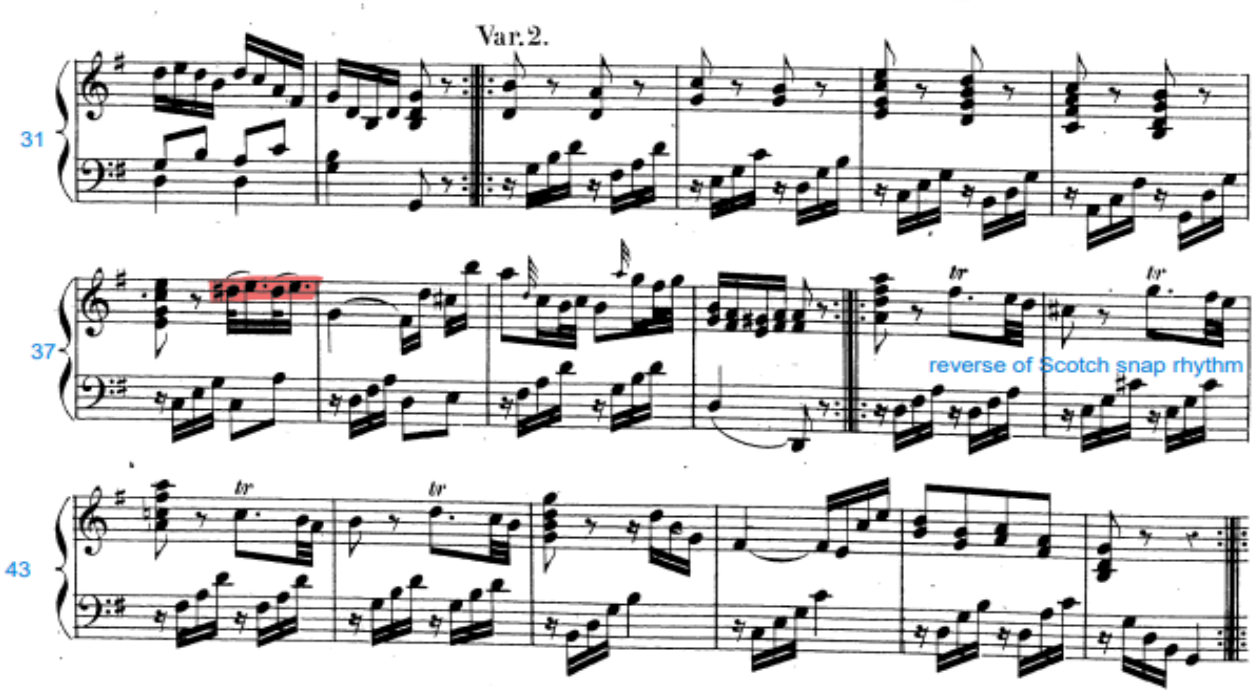
EXAMPLE 3.11. Variation I. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, II, mm. 17-36.



The second variation in this movement is in the style of a *toccata*. The right hand has the melody again while the left hand accompanies, and rests are inserted between chord changes to bring out the *toccata* style of this variation. The effect on the listener is that the hands are chasing each other, as in the previous movement of this sonata, and the melody is even more

sparse. Additional scale degrees or chromatic decorations to the melody are used in a more obvious way in this section due to the thinned-out texture. The contrast of a *toccata* is provided by the second half of this variation, where the texture changes again back to the melody-with-accompaniment; additionally, the Scotch snap is emphasized in this section, resulting in an overall busy-sounding variation (see Example 3.12).

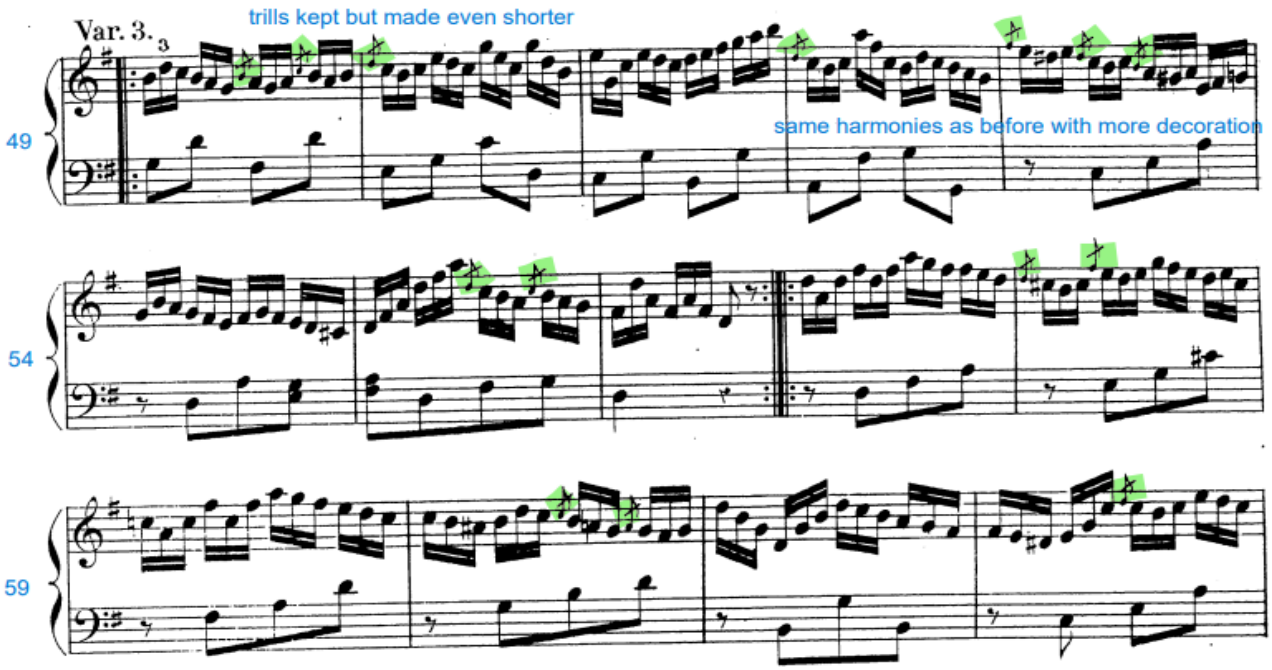
EXAMPLE 3.12. Variation II. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, II, mm. 31-48.



The third variation of this movement does something new, moving almost exclusively in eighth- or sixteenth-note triplets in the fashion of a *moto perpetuo*. This is another variation in the Brilliant style, and is similar to the first via its filled-out harmony, but is rather lively as opposed to legato due to the entire melody being sixteenth-notes. The notes added are mostly scalar in motion or move by thirds. The trills are kept in the melody despite sharing the same amount of rhythmic room with more decorations, so the trills are now thirty-second notes. The harmonies are the same, but the brilliance of this variation does not allow the middle-style,

Scotch folk-song origin of the melody to be easily heard. Instead, the pace is quick enough that the phrases are blurred together.

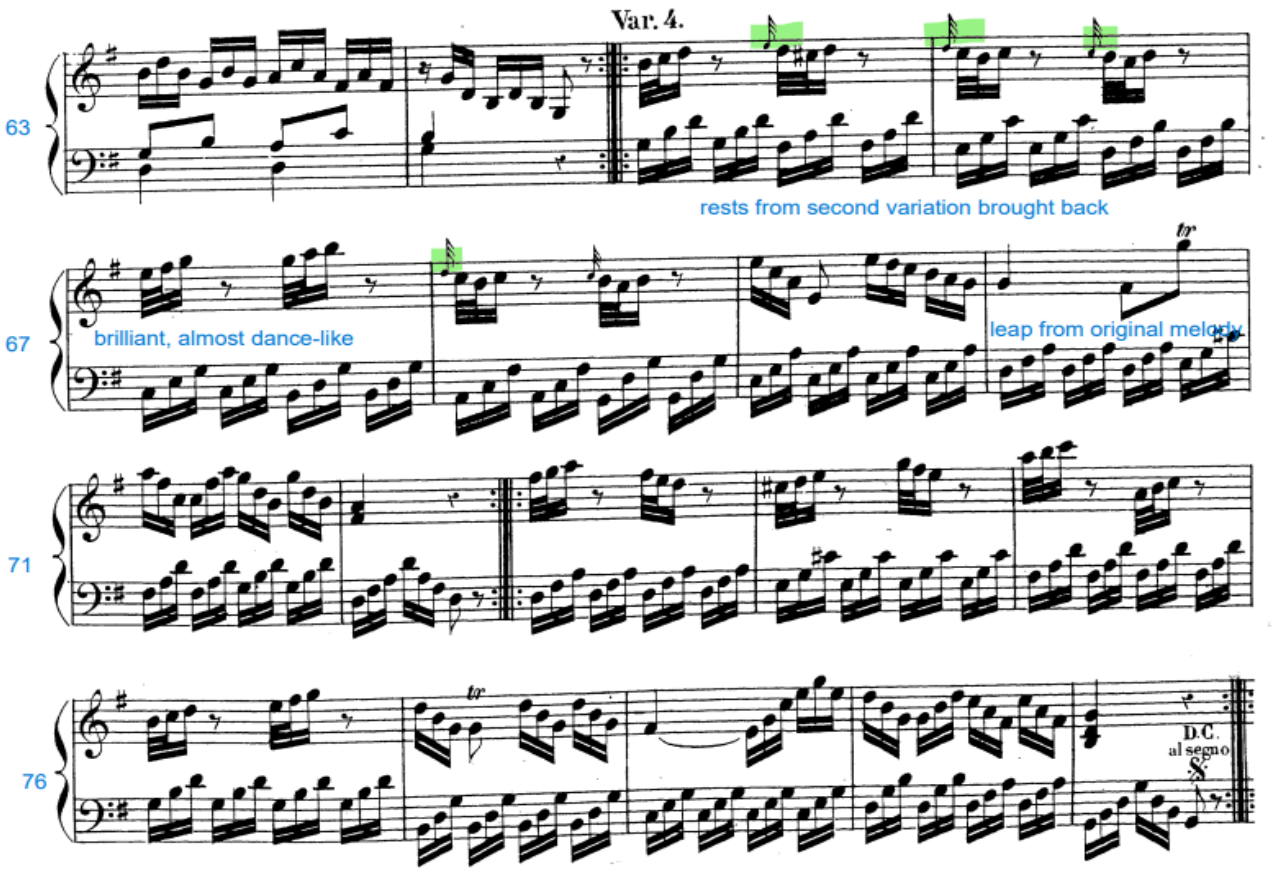
EXAMPLE 3.13. Variation III. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, II, mm. 49-62.



The final variation of this movement, as seen in its entirety in Example 3.14, breaks down the melody and moves so quickly that the entirety of the original melody cannot be played. Instead of the melody being preserved, the first eight measures are related harmonically enough to mm. 1–8 to bring the whole theme to mind without actually playing it. The harmonies are decorated in a rapid, brilliant style designed to show off the agility of the performer. Additionally, the leap from the original melody is also preserved. The process of evoking the melody without playing it completely is helped along by the fact that the pace of movement has progressively gotten faster between variations one and four, meaning that the way the melody is broken down across variations makes sense. Traits from other variations are also worked in, such as the thirty-second note trills, and the rests from the second variation. This variation is

played quickly enough that it is difficult to tell accompaniment from melody, despite still technically bearing the melody-with-accompaniment texture of the singing Allegro.

EXAMPLE 3.14. Variation IV. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 3, II, mm. 63–80.



At the end of this variation, the listener may be left with a feeling of excitement or anticipation, waiting to see how the theme can be changed to make it even more complicated in the next variation. This set of sonatas were written for public tastes and abilities, so limitations stemming therefrom needed to be honored. Burney recalls Bach's piano compositions generally being "such as ladies can execute with little trouble," where the "allegros rather resemble bravura songs, than instrumental pieces for the display of great execution."[137] The charm of

[137] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 907–8. It is possible that this quote is the origin of the term "singing Allegro."

works like this second movement of op. 5 no. 3 comes from the phenomenon Burney is mentioning, where the melody is pretty (and in this case becomes increasingly complicated), and accompanied by a part so "masterly and interesting to an audience, that want of hand, or complication in the harpsichord part, is never discovered."[138] Instead of a new variation that is even more complicated, the music returns to the original theme, both reminding the listener of where the movement began, and slowing down the piece so when the end comes, it is not so abrupt. Although the theme ends on an imperfect authentic cadence, the slowed down harmonic rhythm and tempo combined with the listener's expectation of the IAC allow this ending to be heard as final enough.

Contrast is present in this movement between the different variations. Of course, there is contrast between each variation due to the changes made at each opportunity, but there is also contrast between the third variation and the others due to the difference in topic. As discussed, the variations 1, 3, and 4 are all played in the Brilliant style, while the second is reminiscent of a toccata. Additionally, this set of four that use topics that require mastery of counterpoint or virtuosity contrasts starkly with the original theme, which is Bach's take on a Scottish melody in the middle-style, complete with Scotch snaps, leaps, and trills. All of these contrasts result in a wide array of different approaches to the combined topics— arguably the most concentrated amount of contrasts in any one movement from this set of sonatas.

The sonata Op. 5, No. 3 uses contrast much as no. 1 did; the first movement presents the kind of contrast that offers two different perspectives on a theme by being in two different key areas, and additionally expands on some of the motives from the exposition in the development. The second movement does something unexpected, but instead of contrasting high- and low-

[138] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 908.

styles, it presents a folk-tune theme and a set of variations that take the original melody and set it in higher style due to the employment of the Brilliant and toccata styles. A pattern of employing contrasting takes on one style in the first movement, followed by an unexpected twist or sharper contrast in the second movement, is emerging across this opus. The first movements especially stick close to the theories of Bach's youth, since they are ruled by the same general affect even as they incorporate more than one actual topic.

No. 6

The final sonata to be examined is the last from this same set, op. 5 no. 6. Overall, it is a reflection on Baroque dances, but the movements follow the same kind of contrast pattern employed by nos. 1 and 3, featuring closely related topoi that are represented in two different contrasting ways, and sharp and unexpected contrasts that last only a moment or two. The general form of no. 6 includes a *Grave* first movement that is a loose sonata form, the *Allegro moderato* second movement is a fugue, and the *Allegretto* third movement is a five-part rondo form. All of the movements are predominantly in E♭ major and c minor, and encompass a variety of different topics. This layout is something like that of the French Baroque dance suite, and includes the contrasts of sarabande and polonaise in the first movement, a short fugue second movement, and then an exploration of the gavotte in the final movement.

The first movement contains two primary topics: the sarabande and the polonaise. Polonaises have already been defined in the discussion of Op. 5 no. 1 above; the sarabande is defined by Ratner as a slow minuet, with "emphasis on the second beat of its triple meter. With its slow tempo, this halt gave the sarabande a delicate, serious character which represented the high style." [139]Ratner's definition follows that of Charles Burney, who was of course much more

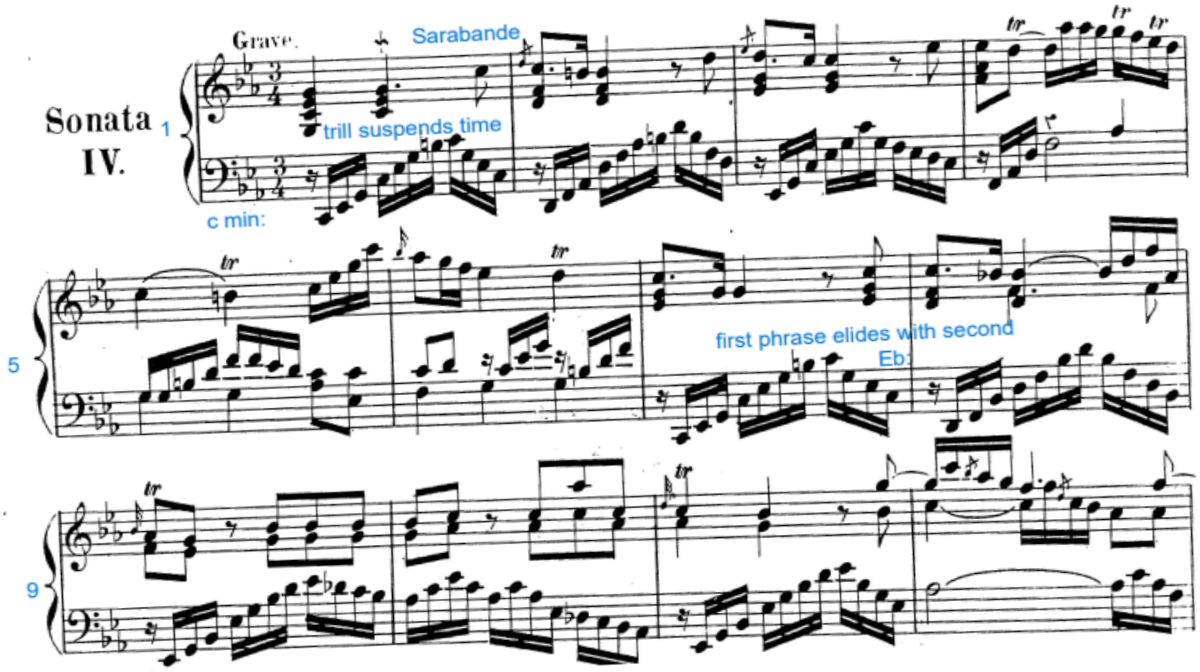
[139] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 11–12.

attuned to the aesthetic of the second half of the 18th century than, say, that of 1650–1750, the period that saw the actual flowering of the French noble style in Baroque instrumental music. With the French dance suite, the true sarabande (as opposed to a species of minuet) tended to be the slowest movement, affording the dancers opportunities for beautiful poses and lines, especially on the agogically emphasized second beat, and sought to defy time (and, for the dancers, gravity itself) gravity with beautiful balances and florid ornaments that would "sustain" pitches on the harpsichord. This was in almost all key ways different from what the minuet would become.

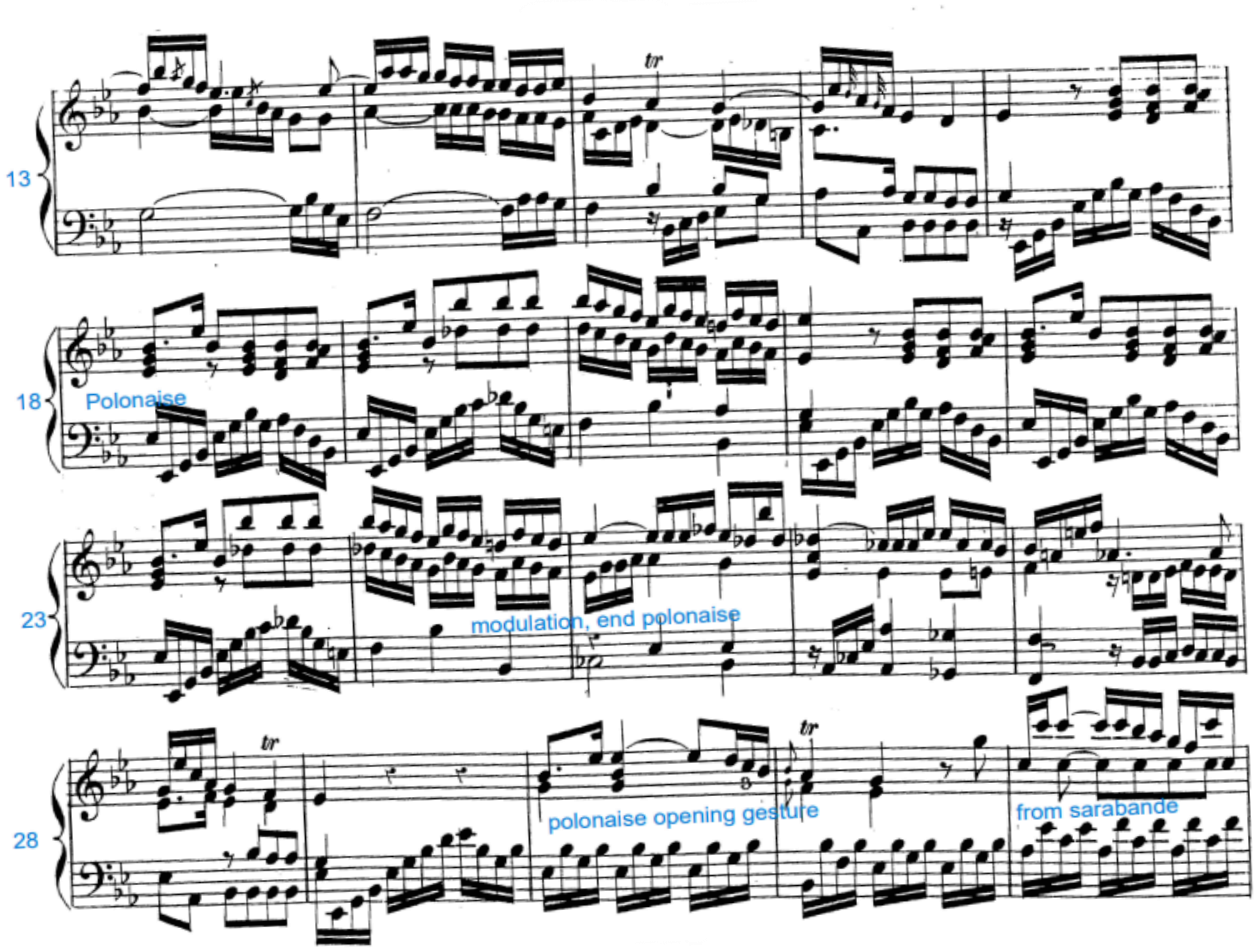
This first movement of op. 5 no. 6 is quite similar to the other first movements in the sense that it compares two aspects of a single caste. In this case, the caste is the nobility, represented by the high style, rather than the middle styles, as in the other first movements. The first movement of no. 6 opens with a somber sarabande in c minor, with the primary theme starting with a typical quarter-dotted-quarter-eighth rhythm. Bach also trills on the dotted-quarter of the first measure, a gesture that probably developed as a sustaining device on the harpsichord, which lends the chord a graceful turn that almost feels cut short by the following eighth-note. This idea is repeated several times throughout the movement, so the sarabande as a topic is not only present, but pervasive. For example, after the initial presentation in six-and-a-half measures, it is played again in the parallel major (E♭), but carries on longer than the original theme and begins to make harmonic explorations (see Example 3.15 for an overview of the introduction of the sarabande). Note that the sarabande is accompanied by arpeggios that cover a wide range, that help in filling out the texture, and this is more than likely a reference to the older Baroque style counterpoint of Bach's father, Sebastian. While elaborating on the original theme, Bach takes the sarabande and turns it into a gentle, lilting polonaise for a few brief measures

between measure 18 and 24, even including the brief pause and subdivision on the first beat of the first two measures of this transformed topic. The accompaniment remains similar to how it was in the sarabande though, suggesting that these two topoi are united under their larger categorization of the high style. When finishing the polonaise section, Bach redeploys a scalar passage from the sarabande (from mm. 4–5) to modulate back to the tonic. The transition between the two topoi in both places is so smooth that it is easy to miss if the listener is not being attentive. The fact that both of these dances are not just high-class court dances, but dances that came from the French court specifically, eases the transition between the two topics. Example 3.16 provides the measures leading up to both transitions.

EXAMPLE 3.15. Grave Sarabande. Johann Christian Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, I, mm. 1–12.



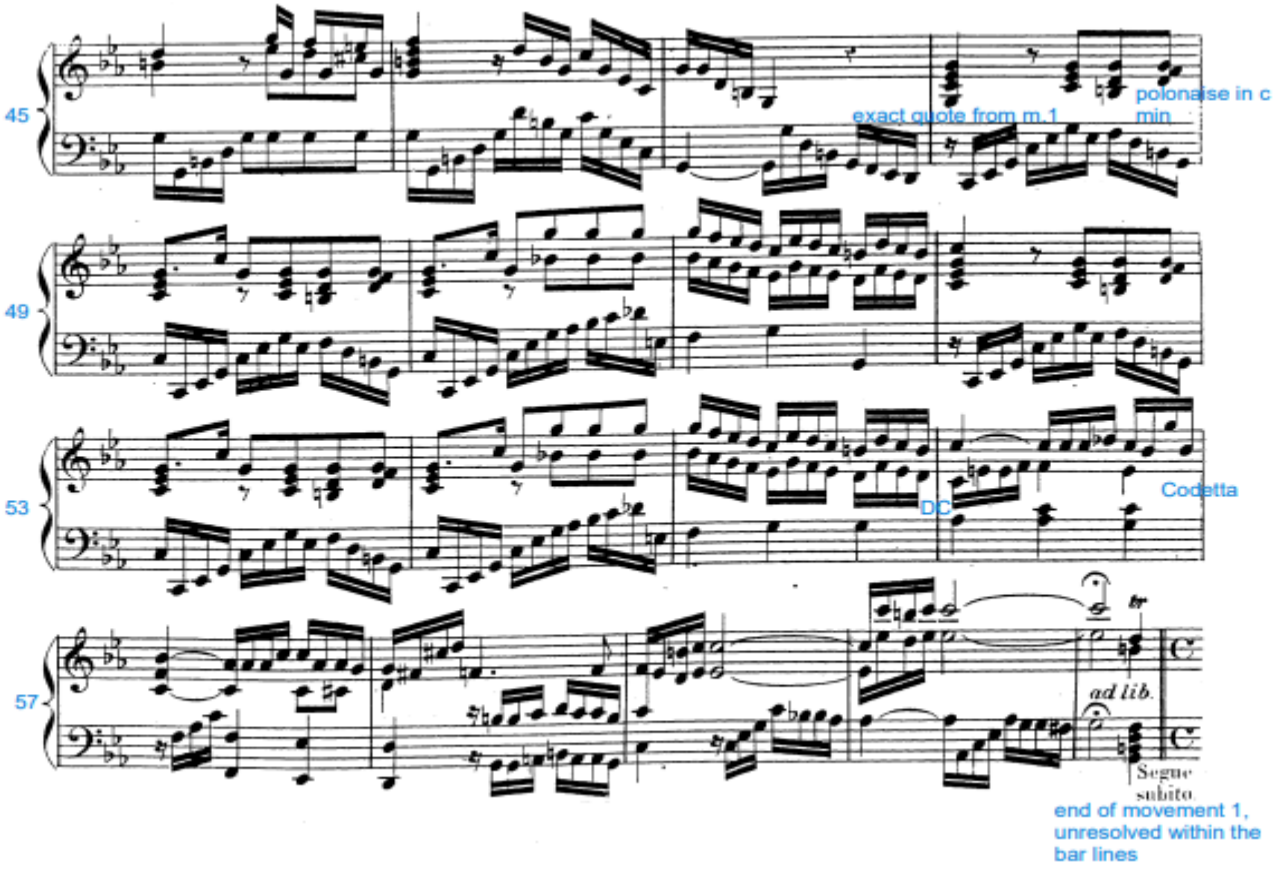
EXAMPLE 3.16. Polonaise, Modulate, Combining Sarabande and Polonaise. Bach, Sonata Op. 5 No. 6, I, mm. 13–32.



After this brief exploration of polonaise territory, the exposition closes with a variant on the sarabande, foreshadowing what is to come in the next section. The development begins with a new variation, this time one that appears to be a fusion of both topoi previously established (see Example 3.16 for more detail). This topic combines the opening melodic gesture from the polonaise with a large leap followed by a descending scalar gesture from the sarabande before modulating to f minor and continuing to explore aspects of both of these topics together through the development, but leaning more towards the sarabande by the time the development reaches

the typical dominant prolongation. In the recapitulation of this movement, as in previous works examined, Bach does not revisit the first theme, instead playing the first chord of the whole movement, then proceeding to the polonaise topic in minor. The first theme is not entirely absent, as the left hand is a mixture of the arpeggiated accompaniment of the sarabande as well as the polonaise, but it is not made explicit in the melody. This combination also suggests a combined approach to the topoi already established instead of keeping them separate. In c minor, the polonaise loses its lighthearted character, and is actually affectively close to the original sarabande, which further plays on the combination. Bach uses a deceptive cadence to extend the movement a few more measures with a codetta, and instead of ending the movement with characteristic double bar lines, the resolution of the final chord of this movement is actually the first downbeat of the next movement. See Example 3.17 for a complete look at the recapitulation as well as how the movement ends.

EXAMPLE 3.17. Hanging Resolution. Movement 1. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, I, mm. 41-61.



The next movement, the *Allegro moderato* is a fugue, where the beginning of the movement is elided with the resolution from the last movement. This fugue has two subjects, each with two parts. They are correspondingly labeled in Example 3.18 as S1a, S1b, S2a, and S2b, and color coded. I have chosen to label S2b as such, as opposed to a third part of S1 or a countersubject, because it typically appears in conjunction with S2a, and makes subject 1 an unusual length if analyzed that way. This entire movement is played in the Learned style, another manifestation of the high-style, and reminds the listener that Bach was well-educated in the counterpoint of his father.[140] Throughout the movement, both themes are given time to

[140] Biographers C.H. Bitter and J.N. Forkel made comments such as Christian "did not benefit from his father's instruction," and that only being Sebastian's son saved Christian's music from obscurity. See the Preface of Pauly's translation of Heinz Gärtner's biography of Johann Christian Bach, page XI.

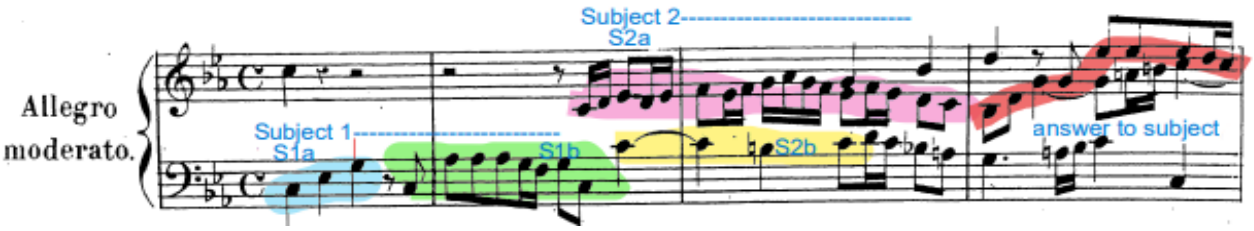
develop individually, but Bach also mixes up the smallest units of the themes, playing the first halves or second halves of the subjects together. Examples 3.19 and 3.20 show the subjects being played individually, and the first half of both subjects being mixed respectively.[141] These two subjects are related— subject 2 enters on the off-beat, complementing subject 1, and they emphasize the same pitches. They are also used effectively to modulate when S1a is played with S2a instead of with the other half of their respective subjects. This explains why the two ideas are mixed so seamlessly once Bach begins to play with the subjects on their smallest level. S1a and S2b cannot be considered the subject and answer, since the answer of a fugue is typically the same motive played again (or in the case of a tonal answer, similar,) but transposed. The notes highlighted in red at the end of 3.20 highlight the beginning of the actual answer of the subject. As seen in Example 3.18, S2a is not just S1a transposed, but adds rhythmic interest as well as filling out the original harmonies of S1a.

This is perhaps the only movement of the works analyzed here that is the exception to Burney's remark about these works being easy to play. This fugue takes several contrasting figures and configures a dense work out of them that is admittedly more complicated than other selections from this opus, but still does not require true virtuosity to pull off. This movement goes beyond the melodic, thin-textured *galant* style that characterizes other works from this opus, and reminds the listener that Bach was the son of Sebastian Bach, known for dense counterpoint and complexity. The formal devices that Bach uses to knit this piece together are intricately chanting, and quite reminiscent of his training with both Sebastian and Emanuel. For the sake of the larger scope of this project, this fugue will not be analyzed blow-by-blow, but the formal devices that Bach uses to knit this piece together are both intricate and enchanting, and

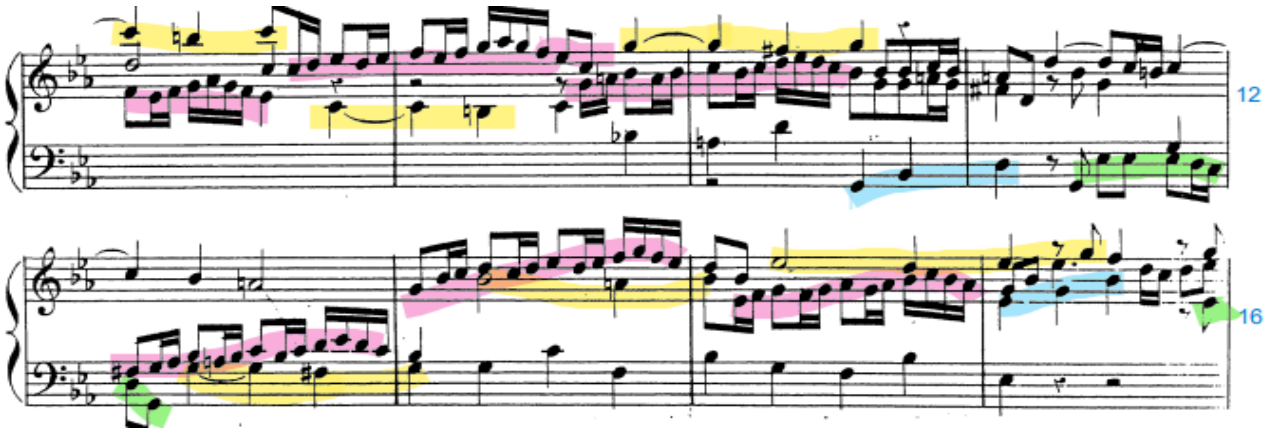
[141] The two themes do overlap at very brief moments in this example, e.g. m.13b.1, but these should not be counted as Bach playing with the themes yet since this is the order they are initially presented in.

are quite reminiscent of his training with both Sebastian and Emanuel. They are not the *same* as the tools used by his relatives, per se, but they certainly use the same approach and discipline.

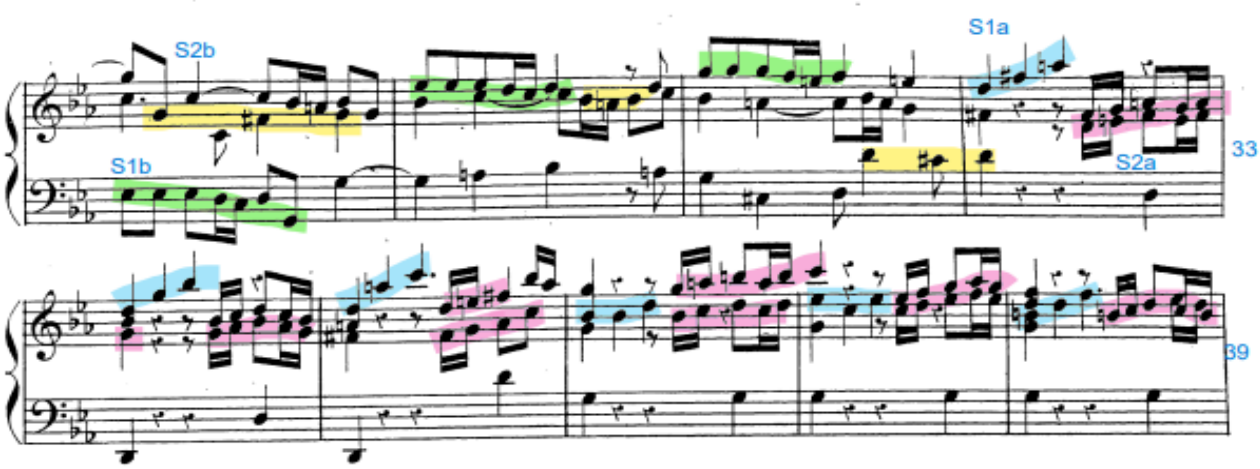
EXAMPLE 3.18. Fugue intro. Johann Christian Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, II, mm. 1-4.



EXAMPLE 3.19. S2a And S2b. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, II, mm. 9-16.



EXAMPLE 3.20. S1b and S2b; S1a and S2a, Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, II, mm. 30–39.



Contrast permeates this movement at every turn. The building blocks of the subjects are played in various registers throughout the movement, sometimes even in quick succession. For example, S2b is played starting at C6 in m.7, and then at a G3 in m. 13 in Example 3.19; S1a is played starting at a G2 in m.11 of Example 3.19, and then at a D5 in m. 33 of Example 3.20. This also allows the smallest unit in the movement to be explored at different places, resulting in different sounds. The impact of S1a in m.1 is extremely different from that of the same motive at m. 33, when it is being used as a modulatory device. Mixing and matching the building blocks of the two themes is another example of contrast, as well as a smaller-scale example of the Learned style being employed in this movement. Writing the two subjects so that they can be blended is a manifestation of well-studied compositional practice on the one hand, and and an effective use of contrast on the other, since the themes when combined could be a convincing third theme. Finally, this second movement provides stark contrast to the movements around it, that do not contain counterpoint of this kind.

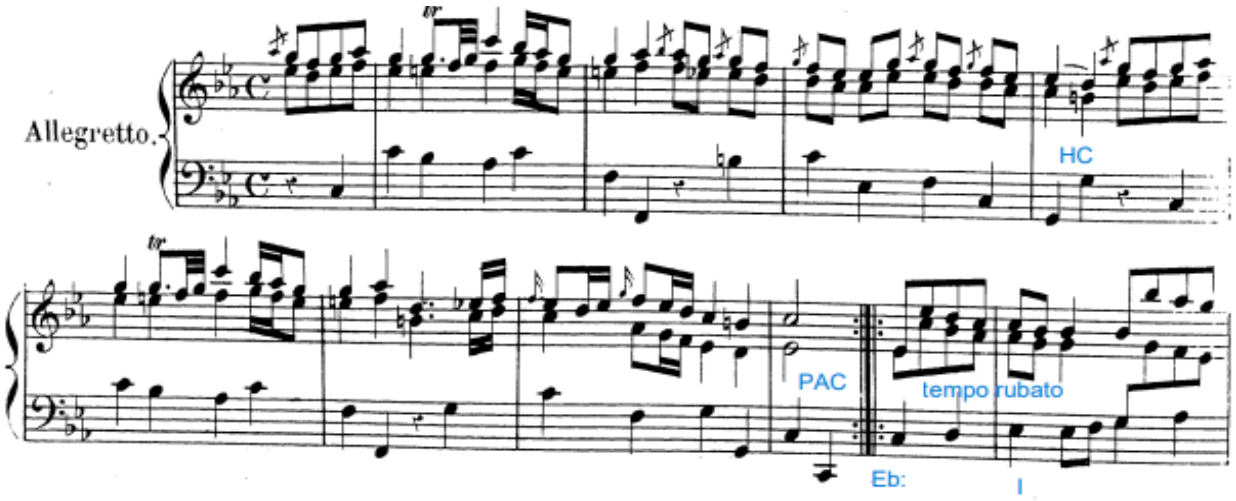
This fugue, published in 1766, was published for either harpsichord or piano.[142] However, due to the nature of the contents of movements like this fugue, they were more likely written at a piano than a harpsichord. This is bolstered by the fact that Bach gave the first public solo performance on a piano in England in June of 1768, and it is probable that he performed pieces he wrote for piano (or harpsichord) from the immediate years leading up to the concert.[143] These heavier instruments were more suited to highlighting the difference between the big, bold quarter notes of S1a and the much lighter sixteenth-sixteenth-eighth patterns of S2a. Additionally, the respective halves of subject 1 come back at octaves, or thirds and sixths

[142] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 907.
[143] Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 919.

respectively, which are characteristic for the piano. Although there is one style of playing present in this movement, it contains contrast within it, and against the other movements.

The final movement of op. 5 no. 6 is marked *Allegretto*, and Bach is following the rhythmic plan of some dance suites: slow–fast–moderate. He follows suit harmonically, beginning this final movement in c minor, as the previous two movements. In the first couple of measures, the music establishes itself as a gavotte, complete with the characteristic emphasis that results in the melody ending over a bar line, and feminine cadence in m. 4 (see Example 3.21). This movement is a five-part rondo; Example 3.21 displays the A section, which undergoes little, if any, development during this movement, and lends a more serious sound to this gavotte.

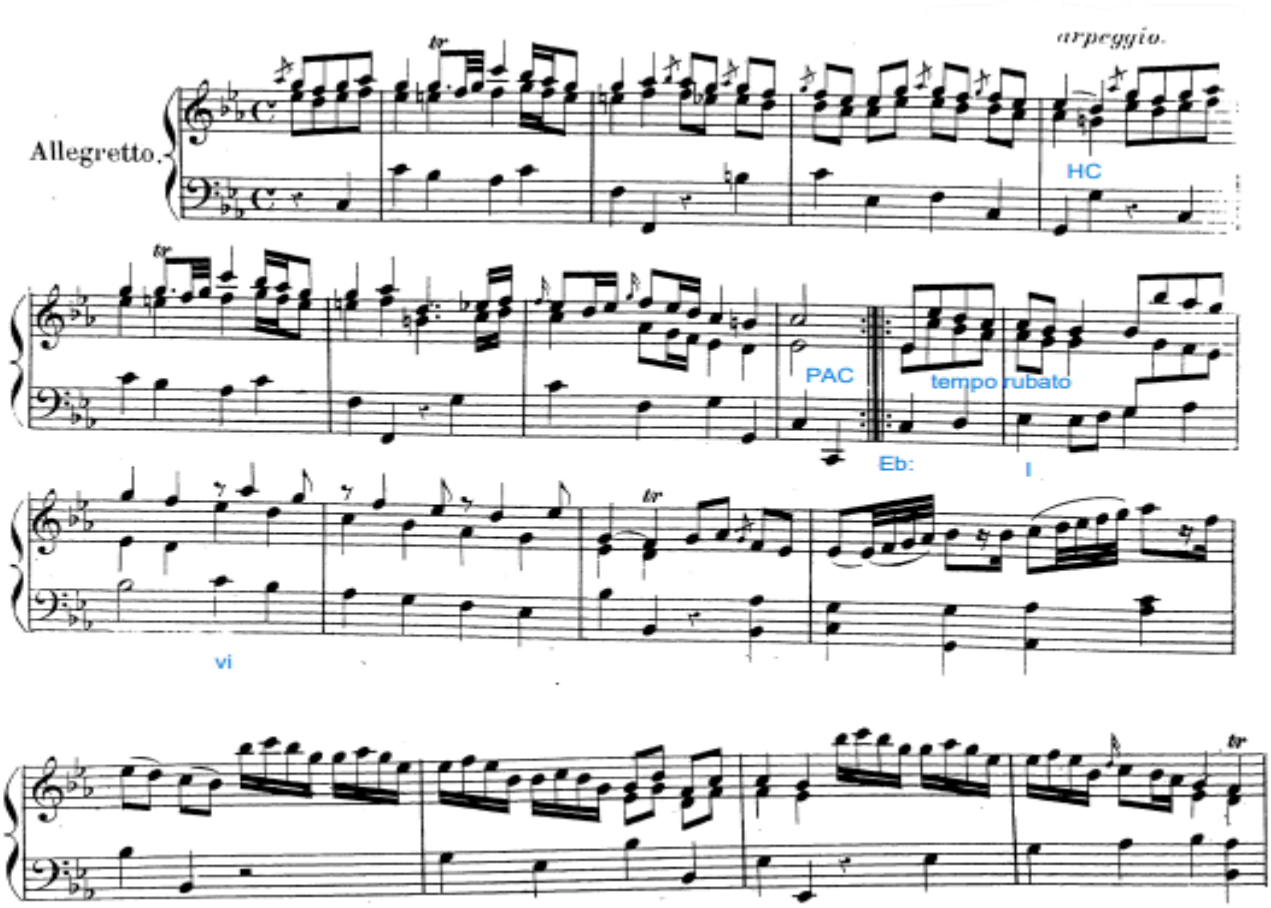
EXAMPLE 3.21. Serious. Johann Christian Bach, Sonata Op. 5 No. 6, III, mm. 1–11.



Meanwhile, the B section (Example 3.22) modulates to the relative major of E♭, taking similar motives (four eighth-notes and a quarter) or style (music that does not stop moving) and displaying a much lighter and brighter sound for the same gavotte. These two sections, when played back-to-back as in the first three sections of the five-part rondo, give the listener the impression that two different sentiments, as in the words of Scheibe, are united by being a

reflection of one character (or, in this case, one dance).[144] Sentiments were able to bump against and slide past each other, and Bach is certainly relying on flexibility to be able to compose two melodies that comprise similar parts with very different sounds.

EXAMPLE 3.22. Lighter. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, III, mm. 6–19.

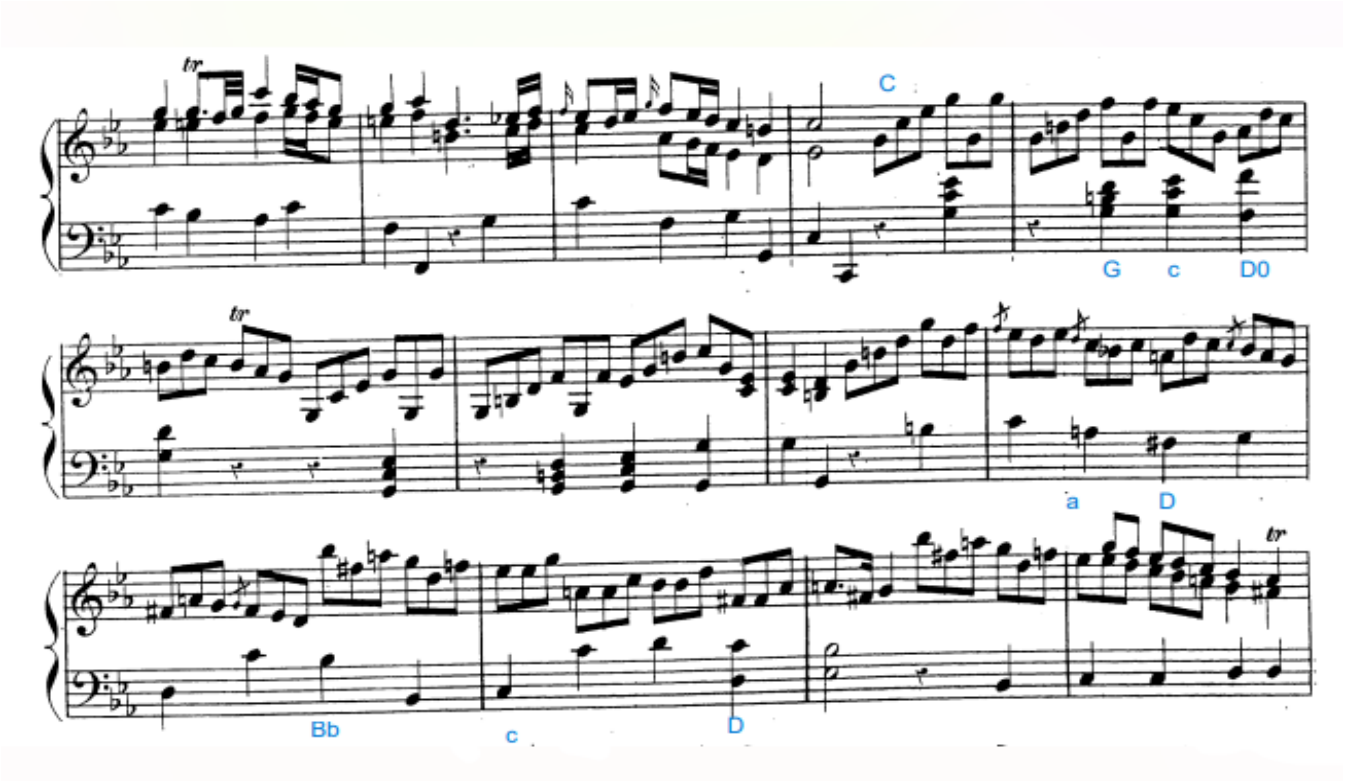


When the C section is introduced, it contains new ideas not explored in either A or B sections. It is the moment in the final movement where Bach moves harmonically, visiting chords including but not limited to: D°, B♭ major, D major, A♭ major, and others—see example 3.23. Nor does this section try to fuse A or B, as we have witnessed him do previously. This

[144] See footnote 20 and the sentence immediately following it in Chapter 1.

makes sense formally, as it is a five-part rondo, but this is another opportunity to give the audience even more contrast than two sentiments, which we have seen him use in previous analyses. The section begins as somewhat serious, beginning and ending in c minor to be able to flow properly back to the A section. The fact that the harmonic rhythm is accelerated, especially compared to the regular structure A provides, makes this C section almost whimsical, dancing through harmonies of several keys in just under ten measures. The actual rhythm of the section still suggests a gavotte, with the melody still ending in the middle of measures, but the *moto perpetuo* tempo combined with the way the melody is filled out suggests that this C section was written to impress, related to the brilliant style, influenced with the *ongherese* triplets. The melody is used to modulate and therefore varies on itself, but is presented repeatedly across a good percentage of the keyboard. The wide range allows for minor contrast to be presented in the melody in a manner much like the various basic ideas from the fugue movement of this opus.

EXAMPLE 3.23. C Section. Bach, Sonata op. 5 no. 6, III, mm. 25-37.



The contrasts that Bach deploys in these early sonatas are of several different kinds. These include variations of the same dance (and therefore united by character but expressing different sentiments), sharp yet brief contrast between classes and settings (court vs. pastoral), contrasting two different dances in the same movement (sarabande and polonaise), writing dense counterpoint among lighter movements, and even using key areas to contrast the way a theme sounds. Admittedly, these are not the mercurial changes of tone and affect that will characterize later Classical writing. Bach was composing earlier in the Classical era, and therefore his contrasts could not be as extreme as those of Mozart and other composers in later decades. The kinds of contrast that Bach employs in these three sonatas demonstrate how music began to shift to allow the kind of contrast witnessed at the end of the Classical era. As a composer who was writing in both the late Baroque and Classical styles, with a musical education comprising many

different national styles and types of training, Bach was the key to starting the musical shift to employ contrast more often and in a more flexible manner than composers of the previous generation. Composers of the next generation would see this technique and develop it further, later on in the Classical era, but the idea of consistently using *contrast* as a governing *principle* began with Johann Christian Bach.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARD THE CLASSICAL FLOWERING OF TOPICS AND STYLES

Since the analysis of three sonatas of Johann Christian Bach's (hereafter, Bach) opus 5 has revealed a variety of ways that he employed contrast in the early days of the Baroque-to-Classical transition, it is important to recall the full picture that Bach fits into. In the decades before his birth, the prevailing compositional approach was that of the Baroque Doctrine of Affections. Although the Baroque era was beginning to yield to the Classic, with is transparent textures, *galant* elegance, and homophony, some theorists (e.g. Mattheson) were still very entrenched in strictly codified thinking and discussing meters, intervals, and other parameters as having one affect or another. One affect ruled one piece, or movement, in order to produce a single feeling, or "affect," in the listener. Using the correct style of composition in the correct setting was very important to avoid a "formless mass"— and this was still one of the dominant ideologies in Bach's childhood.[145] The ideology became slightly more lax over time, and by 1745, works were still unified, but under characters instead of affects. Characters as a unifier allowed more than one affect in a work in a limited capacity, and this likely was the dominant ideology through the death of Sebastian Bach, and likely even when the youngest Bach son was studying with his older brother, Emanuel.[146] Although Bach's compositional approach does not

[145] As quoted in Danuta Mirka, *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5

[146] Since Emanuel is primarily responsible for the *Empfinsamer styl*, this could be debated. On the other hand, the degree to the style is shaped by affect or by character could also be debated.

strictly adhere to these rules, they are not completely abandoned either. The first movements of Bach's sonatas were likely composed with these principles in mind. When a sarabande is juxtaposed with a polonaise, as in op. 5 no. 6, the character of high-class court dances is ruling the work, and contrast is provided within the different sounds of those dances. Op. 5 no. 6 is also a mini dance suite, which suggests that late Baroque principles were on Bach's mind when composing that particular sonata. Occasionally, Bach used more extreme contrast, such as the polonaise in the same movement as a more pastoral theme, or a movement containing the dense counterpoint of his youth surrounded by lighter movements.

By 1771, characters were still ruling works, but affects had been replaced with sentiments. Affects were rigid and intended to produce a specific feeling in the listener, but sentiments were not. Instead, they were fluid— Sulzer literally used water imagery to describe them and the different ways they move: "evenly like a gentle brook," or "rushing forward as if a raging stream" or "like the wild sea crashing before the shore, retreating back only to surge forth with renewed strength."[147] The sentiments of the second movement of op. 5 no. 2 mvmt 2 follow this pattern, where a polonaise is right next to a more pastoral topic. The second movement of op. 5 no. 3 also has more flowing sentiments, where each variation leads to the next one, becoming more removed from the original gavotte melody, and increasingly complicated. The transition between the first two movements of op. 5 no. 6, where the ending of the first elides with the next, also suggests a kind of fluidity within the more traditional form of a dance suite.

The final movement of Bach's op. 5 no. 6 sonata is a special case from the set of works analyzed, since it employs both techniques. By playing similar melodies for both the A and B sections of the rondo, Bach exhibits two different takes on the same dance. Because they are in

[147] As quoted in Mirka, *Handbook of Topic Theory*, 15.

the minor and major modes respectively, and the C section is harmonically exploratory, Bach also uses sharper contrast and lets the different versions of the melody fluctuate in the manner of sentiments. Of all of the movements analyzed, this one best encapsulates how Bach loosely followed the musical tradition of the generation before him, while simultaneously embracing contrast without requiring the listener to make large leaps. The sharpest contrasts he uses are still connected in some way, as in this movement.

All of these sonatas were published just a few years before Sulzer published his theories about sentiments. Clearly, a shift in the general compositional approach to music was underway that was becoming increasingly flexible. This shift began before Johann Christian Bach was a composer, not just a student, with the use of characters as opposed to affects to unify a work; Bach was the first to take it a step further to make contrast a governing principle. As the decades passed, other composers took this principle even further, resulting in the variable and fast-paced topical changes and contrasts of the late Classical era. Haydn's symphonies and string quartets are prime examples of topical diversity in instrumental music, and since the composers are of the same generation, might not have been unlike the kind of compositional approach Bach could have adopted later in life, had he not died at the age of 47. Regardless, the witty use of topics at the end of the Classical era grew out of the central principle of contrast, which began with Bach; his diverse training, beginning with counterpoint in the style of his father, continuing with Emanuel, and then transplanting to Italy to study opera allowed him to command full control over both dense counterpoint and the *galant* style, which we see in the opus 5 sonatas. The fugue of no. 6 and the various places the singing *Allegro* is used highlights the mastery of both styles especially well.

Clearly, this is a pilot study; these methods need to be applied to Bach's symphonies as well. While he was known as an opera composer in his day, he was successful in London primarily for his subscription concerts. When detailing the kind of instrumental works Bach composed, Heartz claims that Bach took composing symphonies more seriously than his sonatas.[148] Even if this is true, his sonatas are still rich with contrast, and they serve to encourage the listener to consider the different approaches that can be taken to a single character, how far it may be stretched until there is clearly a contrasting topic. This also indicates that his symphonies would be even more full of contrast, and I want to encourage their investigation. Since Bach is the connective tissue between the more prescriptive Baroque standards and the looser approach to topics at the end of the Classical era, his works will more than likely yield lots of information about how the transition occurred. Understanding the events of the transition allows for a more in-depth understanding of how topics arose and became popular as compositional tools. This also grants an understanding of how the Baroque legacy gave way to the Classical era, and how the Classical era contains traces of its predecessor.

[148] Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals* (New York: WW Norton, 2003), 912. The same is true of Mozart, masterful as his sonatas were; symphonies were public works, while sonatas remained in the domestic sphere.

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