

W. F. Bach: Concerto in E-flat, F. 42

F. 42 is preserved in the autograph Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach P 331, probably a revision score. It bears the title “Concerto â Cembalo Concertato, 2 Violini, Viola e Basso” followed by the composer's signature “W. F. Bach.” The individual parts in the score, which is written on five staves, are not labeled, but in some passages the composer has written “Violon:” beneath the bottom staff to distinguish notes played by the lowest string part, which is written on the same staff as the lower half of the keyboard part. Only the first movement is complete; the second movement breaks off shortly after the beginning of the first solo episode, and there is no third movement.

Another version of the first movement recurs as the opening sinfonia of the Halle church piece *Ertönet, ihr seligen Völker* (F. 88). As in the sinfonias in a number of J. S. Bach's church pieces, this movement probably substituted solo organ for a stringed keyboard instrument, and it added at least two oboes. But the autograph string parts for the sinfonia (in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach St 474) are partly illegible, at least in the microfiche reproduction seen here (Munich: Saur, 2003), and the movement is absent from the autograph oboe parts preserved separately in Berlin, Archiv der Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, SA 272. A score of the movement, entitled “Sinfonia,” is preserved in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, ms. 17911, which includes two oboe parts but lacks the solo keyboard part. Crowding in the two oboe parts (which are notated on a single staff) suggests that this score, whose handwriting suggests an origin in the nineteenth century, was prepared from manuscript parts. Evidently the latter did not include the solo part, which might never have been copied from the lost autograph score (the composer having originally performed the part from the score).

Descriptions of the two oboe parts as replacing the original solo keyboard part are erroneous, as is demonstrated by lacunae audible in a recording that, incredibly, presents the work as “music minus one,” without the soloist. The misunderstanding was probably encouraged by the fact that the Vienna manuscript shows the oboes as playing only in the solo passages. In fact they were probably expected to double the violins elsewhere, taking on an obbligato role in the solo passages as do the oboes in Sebastian's organ sinfonias. The two versions differ in key, the sinfonia version being in F, although the solo part could have been left in E-flat if played on an organ pitched a tone above the other instruments. Many small differences also occur in the string parts, some of them suggesting that both versions derive from a lost previous version.

Unfortunately, the oboe and string parts in the solo passages cannot be reconciled with the extant solo keyboard part. Hence the sinfonia version differed at these points and its solo part, presumably for organ, cannot be reconstructed. The autograph P 331 is therefore the sole source for F. 42, and the string and oboe parts of the sinfonia can serve only for comparison. The work has previously been published in an edition by Karl Geiringer (*Music of the Bach Family*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), but this is inaccurate and lacks the last system of the fragmentary second movement.

The present score is only provisional, incorporating many editorial conjectures at points where the autograph is difficult to read or interpret in the microfiche reproduction seen here. Some

problems of legibility appear due to alterations made by the composer after the initial entry, not from the physical deterioration of the source, although the latter is apparent on some pages (also in the autograph string parts in St 474). Although some editorial supplementations of the text are shown in brackets, other editorial interventions, especially those involving the division of notes between lh and bs (notated on the same staff in the autograph score), are not noted here. Hence this report does not constitute a formal textual commentary. Only a few instances of alterations in the source are noted below.

Readings in the score of F. 42

m. part reading

mvt. 1

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|-----|--------|---|
| 3 | v1 | beat 1 altered, unclear; reading is from St 474 |
| 12 | v1 | St 474: embellished reading for notes 1–2: g'-eb' (16ths), b (8th-app.), ab (quarter) |
| 14 | v1 | slur from St 474 |
| 21 | v1 | last beat altered, also downbeat of m. 22 |
| 38 | v1, rh | naturals on a' apparently turned to flats |
| 144 | v1 | v1: note 9 orig. ab not g, but “g” written above (but cf. F. 88/1) |

Readings for the sinfonia (F. 88/1)

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| 12 | v1 | St 474: altered, originally = F. 42? |
| 85 | ve | St 474: reading of last note uncertain |
| 88 | ve | St 474: reading of last half of measure uncertain |
| 113 | v1 | St 474: “m” or “mz” (“mo”?) apparently in different (non-autograph) hand from “f” |
| 132-3 | ve | readings uncertain |