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The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 9.8. The Concertos W. 41 and 42

By the time W. 41 was performed in 1768, Bach had already written at least the solo keyboard version of what was to be his second Hamburg concerto, W. 42. Because the latter is in many respects a simpler work, it may be considered first.

The original version of W. 42 clearly was conceived as a composition for unaccompanied keyboard. It is not a draft or sketch for the later orchestral version, nor a reduced score like the ones that served as keyboard parts for the six concertos published in 1772.¹ Nevertheless, gaps at the boundaries between what became tutti and solo passages make it imperfectly idiomatic as a solo piece (online example 9.30). Comparable things occur in Sebastian's Italian Concerto and in Emanuel's earlier unaccompanied concerto, W. 112/1. But unidiomatic leaps at such points are more frequent and more extreme here, and the texture, at least in the outer movements, shows even less concern with filling out the harmony of the ritornellos than in W. 112/1. In fact neither of Emanuel's solo concertos is as idiomatic a keyboard piece as is his father's famous work, whose form, on the other hand, is not as close as theirs to that of an actual concerto for soloist and ensemble. Indeed, one cannot be certain whether the Italian Concerto imitates a concerto with a single violin soloist or one with an additional cello soloist as well, given the presence of "solos" for both hands in the last movement.

In creating the ensemble version of W. 42, Bach presumably worked from a no-longer extant draft that served as the exemplar for the existing autographs of both versions. Yet although the first movement was distinctly orchestral in style to begin with, the second movement is less clearly so, and the third preserves unmistakable signs of having been adapted from a keyboard piece. These include the broken-chord bass line of the opening measures and the division of the bass line later between second violin and viola (online example 9.31).² Toward the end of the movement Bach even let stand an apparently unfinished reading from his draft, whose empty octaves for the right hand and the questionable voice leading of the left are inferior to the more finished reading of the solo version (online example 9.32).³

¹ It was therefore misleading to edit the unaccompanied version of W. 42 alongside the solo parts of W. 43 in a volume of "keyboard arrangements" (CPEBCW 1/10). Helm quite properly listed the solo version of W. 42 as a separate item, no. 242. In movement 1, measure 10, where Bach added c' in the lower staff to allow the left hand to take this note, he failed to delete the same note from the upper staff, and the parallel passage at m. 85 was left unmodified; CPEBCW 1/10 mistakenly eliminates the left-hand c' in m. 10.

² Arnfried Edler lists further indications that the orchestral version is the product of a "transcription" (CPEBCW 3/9.14:xiii), but some readings in the sources may simply reflect uncertainty due to an illegible or confusing exemplar.

³ Apparently the three sources of W. 42 agree on the readings in the passage in question, although their stemmatic relationships are not clearly explained in CPEBCW 3/9.14:137–38 (the

Example 9.30. Concerto in F for solo keyboard, H. 242, movement 1, mm. 44–55 (“S” = solo passage in W. 42; “T” = passage for tutti)

Example 9.31. Concerto in F, W. 42, movement 3, (a) mm.1–4, (b) mm. 97–104

discussion there suggests that St 212 and SA 2616 give earlier versions than the principal source, Bc 5887).

Example 9.32. (a) [Concerto in F for solo keyboard, H. 242, movement 3, mm. 278–81](#), with (b) [corresponding passage in ensemble version, W. 42, mm. 327–30](#)

The image displays two musical excerpts side-by-side. Excerpt (a) is for solo keyboard (H. 242), measures 278-81. It features a treble and bass clef with a 3/8 time signature. The right hand plays a series of eighth-note chords and single notes, while the left hand provides a simple accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. Excerpt (b) is for ensemble (W. 42), measures 327-30. It includes staves for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Keyboard. The Violin 1 and 2 parts play a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p*. The Viola part has a long note with a slur. The Keyboard part plays a similar eighth-note pattern as in (a). A bracket on the far right indicates a comparison point with a question mark [?].

The grander scale of W. 41 is immediately apparent in its slow introduction, which is repeated at the dominant after the first solo episode in the main part of the first movement. The latter is in the genuinely orchestral manner of Bach's late Berlin symphonies. Moreover, it draws as closely as anything by Bach to the Viennese Classical style that was just emerging at this time in compositions by Haydn and the teenaged Mozart. The thematic material in the main, quick sections is that of Bach's Berlin symphonies—hardly thematic at all in the usual sense, rather mostly rushing scales and broken chords of various types. The first movement, however, also introduces a recurring idea exchanged between the flutes and violas (mm. 45–46, 76–79) that functions somewhat like a true Classical second theme. The recurrence of the opening Largo is a characteristic surprise, but the movement otherwise contains none of Bach's signature fragments or interruptions, and even the cadenza is prepared in the Classical manner (as previously in W. 30).

An eight-measure solo passage within the Largo is reminiscent of the sonatinas, constituting a varied repetition of the preceding orchestral phrase. The second movement, also marked Largo but unrelated thematically, likewise relies heavily on Bach's special brand of variation technique, but it achieves something more than the somewhat similarly conceived movements in the sonatinas. Although the spacious melodic line of the second movement seems freely spun out, the first sixteen measures of the ritornello are in fact varied in the corresponding portion of the first solo episode. The parallelism is not as obvious as in the varied reprises of the sonatinas, however,

for the phrasing no longer comprises simple periods and the keyboard figuration is more independent than usual of the original melodic line. The movement therefore seems rhapsodic, if not formless, even though the entry of the second ritornello in the dominant provides a clear formal articulation (m. 55). Thereafter, however, the movement lacks distinctive divisions until the cadenza, which leads not to a closing ritornello but the transition to the following movement—another instance of the innovative approach to form that would be a basic feature of Bach's next six concertos.

This second movement is best viewed as a binary form, the latter half opening with a restatement of the first sixteen measures at the dominant (mm. 55–70). The movement lacks a return or even a distinct recapitulation section, although brief passages from the first half are restated in varied form. After the tutti restates the first eight measures of the ritornello at the dominant (mm. 55–62), the keyboard restates its variation of the next seven measures (mm. 63–69). Those seven measures are then varied again, a whole step lower (mm. 70–77), and this brings the music back to the tonic C major. After that only brief passages from the ritornello are restated, mostly in varied form. The reappearance within a long, discursive passage of a few vaguely familiar bars, as when mm. 25–27 from the opening ritornello return in a variation with solo keyboard (mm. 95–97), is one way in which Bach creates the particular dream-like atmosphere of this very special movement.⁴

Whereas the rhythm and phrasing of this second movement recall Bach's *lieder*, the last movement has some of the character of a rondo finale. The same was true of Bach's previous concerto finale, that of W. 42, which arguably *is* a rondo. Both movements are quite long, and the finale of W. 41 can be considered a more mature version of the same type, realized at less excessive length. In W. 42, the rondo character of its concluding *Poco presto* lies in the fact that its main theme returns in the tonic twice (at mm. 205 and 303; see table below). Although the first of these restatements is short and might be considered a false reprise, that the movement is distinct formally from anything in Bach's previous concertos is evident from his revisions for the orchestral version. These included insertions of substantial new material within a passage that recurs in three of the five solo episodes (“S” or “s” in the table).

Like the finale of W. 42, that of W. 41 can be analyzed in the same terms as Bach's usual concerto-ritornello form. But again there is an extra reprise in the tonic, near the center of the movement (now within the solo episode at measure 200; see table below). The light minuet character of the main theme is even closer than that of W. 42 to a type common in the Classical rondo, perhaps representing Bach's “comic” style. There is an older parallel as well, however: the main theme of the “Rondeaux” (*sic*) in J. S. Bach's Second Partita (online example 9.33). Both themes are essentially sequences that can emerge effortlessly out of contrasting material when the theme is restated; this was a clever way of making what is still a very long movement seem a little shorter.

⁴ Measures 77–78 are parallel to measures 16–17; mm. 86–89 to mm. 41–44; mm.90–92 to mm. 16–18; and mm. 95–97 to mm. 25–27.

Example 9.33. (a) Concerto in E-flat, W. 41, movement 3, mm. 1–8 (without horns and violas; flutes double violins); (b) J. S. Bach, Partita no. 2 in C minor, BWV 826, movement 5, mm. 1–8

(a) **Ziemlich geschwinde**

(b)

Formal design of H. 242 / W. 42, movement 3

section:	R	S	R	S	r ¹	s	R	s ²	r ³	S	R	(end)				
key:	F	F->	C	C->	F->	->	Bb	->	F	F	F					
measure																
number in:																
H.242:	1	56	56	114	115	154	186	200	217	218	236	254	262	328	329	372
W. 42:	1	56	57	115	134	173	205	219	236	267	285	303	311	377	401	454
number of																
measures																
inserted																
in W. 42:	1		18					30						23		

Corresponding passages in W. 41, movement 3

section:	R	S	R	S	r	s ¹	r	s ²	r ³	S	R	(end)	
key:	Eb	Eb->		Bb	->	c->	Eb->		Ab	->	Eb	Eb	Eb
m.:	1	48	98	126	177	200	216	219	272	276	287	320	

R = main ritornello r = short or secondary ritornello
 S = main episode s = additional episode -> = modulating to the next key shown

¹false reprise ²retransition ³return