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The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 9.12. Further Analysis of the String Sinfonias W. 182

One important distinction between the two Hamburg sets of sinfonias lies in the greater autonomy of the slow movements in the works for strings, where the slow movements of all but no. 5 are closed tonally. Even in no. 5, the second movement is a quasi-ritornello form, like the first. Nevertheless, the slow movements retain a transitional character in their constantly shifting tonality and epigrammatic thematic ideas. In no. 3, the “ritornello” is a four-measure modulating sequence over the B-A-C-H bass line, and in no. 6 it consists of little more than four gnomic quarter notes, played in octaves (online examples 9.60 and 9.61). Although this idea proceeds toward a standard cadential formula, the tonality comes into focus only gradually, and the mode varies, making the recurrences of the idea mysterious even when it is harmonized and treated in canon in the final section. In no. 5, on the other hand, the first four measures of the ritornello are always stated at the same pitch level, yet the tonality then veers toward G major, D major, and finally E minor. The tonal ambiguity is ingenious and entirely appropriate, falling as it does at the center of what is probably the strongest and certainly the most audacious of the string sinfonias.

[Example 9.60. Sinfonia in C, W. 182/3, movement 2, mm. 1–5](#)

Adagio

The musical score is for the first four measures of the second movement of the Sinfonia in C, W. 182/3. It is marked **Adagio** and features dynamic markings of *ff*, *p*, and *pp*. The score is written for four parts: violin 1 (vn. 1), violin 2 (vn. 2), viola (va.), and bassoon (b.c.). The bassoon part begins with the instruction *ff* *tasto*. The dynamics for each part are as follows:

Measure	vn. 1	vn. 2	va.	b.c.
1	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i> <i>tasto</i>
2	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
3	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>
4	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i>
5	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
6	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>

Example 9.61. Sinfonia in E, W. 182/6, movement 2, (a) mm. 1–5, (b) mm. 43–52

Modulatory virtuosity is not confined to the slow movements. In the opening Allegro of no. 2, an apparent reprise of the main theme in E-flat turns out to be a sort of false ritornello, a parenthesis within a phrase that concludes the middle section a half-step lower, in D minor (online example 9.62).¹ In the first movement of no. 5, the same Neapolitan degree (again E-flat) is embedded as a quiet *piano* excursion within a closing phrase that is now in D *major* (measures 12–13 in online example 9.63). When this *piano* phrase next appears, it is diverted from F-sharp minor toward the remote keys of C minor and A minor, through a violent series of chords over a variation of the B-A-C-H motive (mm. 27–28). This is likely to disrupt even the most acute listener's sense of the long-range tonal plan of the work. Yet the first bass note under the *fortissimo* chords is f (m. 27), enharmonically equivalent to the e-sharp last heard in the bass register (m. 24). This type of registral connection is crucial in maintaining the coherence of one phrase with the next, despite the dramatic discontinuity at the surface. Similar connections hold together the more radical keyboard pieces for *Kenner und Liebhaber* that Bach was composing at the same time.

¹ Another false reprise, in the final movement of no. 3, involves a restatement of the main theme in the tonic (C), but only as a parenthetical phrase within a cadence to E minor (mm. 49–50).

Example 9.62. Sinfonia in B-flat, W. 182/2, movement 1, mm. 54–66

54

vn. 1

vn. 2

va.

b.c.

p *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

61

f

6 6 6 6 unis. 6 6 4 3 5 # 7

Example 9.63. Sinfonia in B Minor, W. 182/5, movement 1, (a) mm. 11–16; (b) mm. 24–28

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of the Sinfonia in B Minor, W. 182/5, by Franz Liszt. It is divided into two sections: (a) measures 11–16 and (b) measures 24–28. The score is written for four staves: Violin 1 (vn. 1), Violin 2 (vn. 2), Viola (va.), and Cello/Double Bass (b.c.).

Section (a) mm. 11–16: The key signature is B minor (two sharps: F# and C#). The time signature is common time (C).
- **Measure 11:** Violin 1 and 2 play a melody starting on G4, marked *p*.
- **Measure 12:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 13:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 14:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 15:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 16:** The melody concludes with a fermata, marked *f*.
- **Viola and Cello/Double Bass:** They play a bass line starting on G2, marked *p*.
- **Measure 16:** The bass line concludes with a fermata, marked *f*.
- **Figured Bass:** p^4_{2b} , $6b$, $6b$, $4b$, 3 , 7 , 6 , f , 6 , $\#5$.

Section (b) mm. 24–28: The key signature is B minor. The time signature is common time.
- **Measure 24:** Violin 1 and 2 play a melody starting on G4, marked *p*.
- **Measure 25:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 26:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 27:** The melody continues, marked *p*.
- **Measure 28:** The melody concludes with a fermata, marked *ff*.
- **Viola and Cello/Double Bass:** They play a bass line starting on G2, marked *p*.
- **Measure 28:** The bass line concludes with a fermata, marked *ff*.
- **Figured Bass:** ff^4_2 , $6b$, ff^4+ , 6 .

Performance Instructions: The word "tasto" is written below the Cello/Double Bass staff at the beginning of section (b).