

November 21, 2007

Concerto form:

- Concerto form arose out of the *concerto grosso*. In a concerto grosso, a large body of strings (the *tutti* or *ripieno*) would alternate with a smaller group (the *concertino*). In a concerto grosso, the larger body usually has a *ritornello* theme that returns several times, setting the smaller group in relief. This ritornello often modulates to a new key, setting up the smaller group to provide new thematic material in these new keys. Later concertos followed this same form.
- The concerto also eventually fell under the influence of sonata form. Elements of both formal plans (sonata form and concerto grosso) are mixed in concerto form.

Mozart and J.C. Bach:

- The two composers met in England while Mozart was still a child. Bach had quite an impact on the young composer who subsequently modeled his style on Bach.
- Mozart's uses Bach's 5/2/i sonata as the basis for his concerto K. 107/1.
- In order to more fully understand concerto form, it will be helpful to observe how Mozart's concerto adapts the sonata.

J.C. Bach 5/2/i

- (see handout)
- For the most part, this sonata form is very straightforward. The first theme is found in mm. 1-8, after which a transitional passage leads to a half cadence in A major in m. 18. Beginning in m. 19, we find the second theme. This ends with a perfect authentic cadence in A major and is concluded with a terminative passage in mm. 34-42. The development passes through the key of the submediant before arriving at the recapitulation in m. 73.
- The transitional passages are worth some extra attention:
  - In the exposition, the transition modulates quickly leading to an applied dominant in m. 16. In the recapitulation, however, Bach uses a root position variant of the Pachelbel sequence.

## Mozart K. 107/1

- Most of the material from this concerto is drawn straight out of J.C. Bach's sonata. Mozart does, however, have to make several alterations and additions in setting the piece as a concerto. Most significantly, this concerns the alternation of ritornelli and solo sections.
- Ritornello 1:
  - The piece begins with a tutti section. The basis of this section is the exposition of Bach's sonata. Mozart, however, makes one important alteration. The opening section cannot modulate (because the following solo passage will be playing the same opening material in the tonic key). To accommodate this requirement, Mozart recomposes the transition between the first and second themes to avoid modulation. (Often, in a concerto form, the composer will elect to omit the second theme altogether to bypass this situation.) After the orchestra plays through the second theme (in tonic), we get the first instance of the recurring ritornello signal (a vestige of the earlier concerto grosso style). Mozart's ritornello theme is newly composed as its function was not required in the Bach sonata.
- Solo 1:
  - The soloist then plays through the exposition. This time, the transition does modulate.
- Ritornello 2:
  - After the solo exposition's terminative section, the ritornello returns.
- Solo 2:
  - The second solo section constitutes the development. This leads to a retransition, ending with...
- Ritornello 3:
  - Sometimes, this third ritornello in between the development and the recapitulation may be omitted. In this case, however, Mozart chose to include it.
- Solo 3:
  - The third solo section provides the recapitulation of the first and second themes. In this case, Mozart uses the Bach's original transition (which sounds fresh because he composed a different non-modulating transition for the opening tutti). After the terminative section of the recapitulation, the orchestra rejoins the soloist and leads to a big cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord. The cadenza, an operatic addition to the form, follows and is wrapped up by...
- Ritornello 4:
  - This final occurrence of the ritornello theme closes the piece.