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The word originally belonged to the term in rhetoric, and here Bach used to describe the idea that could be used as a compositional theme. When providing such pieces for his pupils, Bach expected those who studied performance to leap from the stage of technical finger exercise to a more musical approach, and those who studied composition to acquire an effective method of finding ideas and developing them. In his *De Inventione*, Cicero listed five stages in creating an oration, namely invention *inventio*, arrangement *dispositio*, style *elocutio*, memory *memoria* and delivery *pronuntiatio*. We can find examples of this approach to music as early as the music theory of 17th-century Germany. Bach then moves on to mention the performance technique of two-part writing, and when it was accomplished satisfactorily, he says, one is allowed to proceed to the three-part exercises. As singers are required to pronounce clearly with a view to conveying the meaning of words, it should mean that keyboard players must also provide clear articulation according to the character and affection of individual motifs. This is the essence of contrapuntal music whereby the independence of each voice results in the harmony; this is indeed one of fundamental concepts of composition.

Origin and Process of Revision In discussing the origin of Inventions and Sinfonia, there is an earlier collection by Bach, which we cannot ignore: The instruction by his father seen here is organised systematically and thoughtfully, which is most impressive of its kind. Bach began the lesson with Friedemann by teaching him how to read music, followed by the realisation of ornaments and the application of fingering. This collection contains 62 little pieces. The first half consists of pieces focused on finger exercises where we also find simple chorale preludes, suites, and the 11 preludes that were later expanded and integrated into the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. The manuscript, which is currently held in the Yale University Library in Connecticut, USA, is in such a fragile condition that the spine of the volume is damaged; probably for this reason the last two leaves are now missing where must have been accommodated the second half of the *Fantasia No.* By examining the collection carefully as a whole, one may deduce the progress that Friedemann had made in his performance techniques. In fact, it cannot be a mere coincidence that the 31st piece of the collection, which preceded this early version of Inventions and Sinfonias, is the only fugue BWV in this book. What is intriguing about this is that the counterpoint is the main feature of the second half of this book. Actually this concept of symmetry is present in the fifteen *Praeambulae* if we look closely: A different system can also be found when looking at them from a different angle. If the fifteen *Praeamlulae* are examined from the points of compositional techniques and styles, it is obvious that they are organised in threes; the first group C, d, e uses the scale-based subject, followed by the arpeggiated tonic triad F, G, a and long-breathed subject with a counter-subject b, B-flat, A. A closer examination of this notebook gives further insight into how it was written and compiled over many years. Except for a few pieces copied by Friedemann, all the pages were filled by Bach. There are many traces of later revisions, too. In such pieces as *Praeamlulae* in C minor and G minor, we can confirm how Bach modified the shape of the subjects themselves, from which it can be deduced that Bach could be critical of his own compositions. These revisions were entered in an early compositional stage, as it can be ascertained from the context. Yet Bach also revised the piece when he was writing the fair copy of the Inventions. For instance, the Inventions Nos. In the final version, the third phrase received different treatment, as a result of which they were extended into 23 and 25 bars respectively. Among these is the *Invention No.* Originally this subject was based on semiquavers, but Bach later introduced a passing note between the descending leap of a third on the second beat, resulting in the introduction of a triplet motif. Consequently, the character of the piece became more lively and charming.

Construction Each of the two parts of Inventions and Sinfonias starts with C major, and the pieces are arranged on an ascending chromatic scale until it reaches B minor. There is no duplication of the same keys. When the major and minor keys use the same tonic note, the major key is placed before the minor counterpart, exactly what we also see in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. It is evident therefore that the construction of the Inventions and Sinfonias is very similar to the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Their differences are equally evident: It seems reasonable to suppose that the concept of keys, which Bach explored

systematically in the Well-Tempered Clavier, plays a significant role here as well. It seems clear, therefore, that Bach left out the keys which were rarely used in his day. The remaining eight keys were arranged in the descending order B-flat, A, g, f, E, E-flat, D, c, but as we can see, these do not follow a particular system, but, he allotted the remainders to a similar scheme as closely as possible. In this scheme, Bach introduces to his pupils the concept of different keys step by step, starting with six pieces using fewer than one sharp or flat, and two in Nos. Because this key-sequence is identical in both Praeambulae and Fantasias, it seems safe to assume that Bach decided to employ this scheme before writing them down in this book. From this it may be inferred further that by putting together two separate collections Bach considered both structural beauty and educational merit. This key-system is completely redesigned in the version of Inventions and Sinfonias in his fair copy, appearing in the order: There is no division in the system. This newly established system is partially modelled on the Well-Tempered Clavier completed in , as we can see that in rearranging the key sequence, Bach maintained the order of major and minor keys, and arranged the key on the chromatic scale starting with C major. The last piece, B minor, is also identical between them. In other words, a private collection was transformed into a universal didactic work. Viewing from a different angle, this novel, systematic arrangement has a clear advantage in the ease of finding a specific piece. It would not be totally surprising that beneath what appears as a methodically assembled architecture there could be shared theological concepts as a fundamental framework of the work. There is a yet-to-be-proven theory, however bold and speculative, that the number symbolism can be considered present in both works. This theological allusion in a didactic situation conforms to the attitude of musicians who lived in the Lutheran tradition of music education. This was also related by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach in the obituary of his father. This can be traced from a copy made in , which now survives, by one of his scribes known as Anon. Interestingly, on this score Bach supplemented figures, suggesting that Bach not only paid serious attention to the work but perhaps also performed the piece. It would appear as if Bach regarded this work to be of its own, unique genre. Above all, its most distinguishing feature that determines the character of this work is the simplicity and liveliness of the principal motifs. In addition, the contrapuntal technique employed here itself contributes to the inherent ideas in the motifs, as many pieces use the imitation at octave rather than fifth. This becomes a direct factor for giving clarity in the way the motifs are presented and developed during the course of musical discourse. As a result of this clarity in contrapuntal texture, harmonic structure is also stabilised, which in turn strengthens the logic behind modulations. In contrast to the two-part Inventions, the three-part Sinfonias are not merely one part extra. They can be considered seriously for various reasons as belonging to another distinct genre. In this form, for example, we can find frequently therein the imitations at fifth, clear-cut episodes, and the organisation of sections resembling the sonata form. In this sense, it shares many characteristics with his own fugues. But they differ fundamentally in the treatment of the bass part and the associated contrapuntal texture, for in the Sinfonias we can observe widely that when compared with the fugues, the bass is not bound to the same rules of counterpoint. On this free-style bass line, we can frequently find that only two upper-parts are strictly contrapuntal, thus resembling the texture of Trio Sonata. A similar pattern can be observed in the scale of the pieces; the Sinfonias are not just generally longer than the Inventions; many of them uses long-breathing motifs. Nevertheless, the Sinfonias differ fundamentally from Trio Sonatas in the way the bass line always accompanies the first entry in the upper-part at the commencement. There is little doubt, therefore, that the Sinfonias belong to a unique genre. The fusion between polyphony and homophony bestows upon it a clear direction and persuasive logic in music, as if it anticipates the appearance of Classical Sonata form. The basic structural principles in the Inventions and Sinfonias do not differ very much from his other large-scale works; they are simply manifested in miniature. That is to say, each phrase here can be compared with one section in the pieces of other genre, and the next phrase becomes the developmental section, which is followed by the final phrase to conclude the piece. Not all the pieces follow this ternary design, however: A wide variety of contrapuntal techniques is employed here as well. In the Inventions, the main ideas used are strict canons c, F, fugal style G, b, quasi-sonata form in binary structure E, double counterpoint E-flat, E, f, A, and the manipulation of the opening motif inversion, repetition, voice-exchange: C, D, d, e, g, a, B-flat. Rather, the priority was given to develop each motif both freely and logically. In clear contrast to the

Inventions, the greater majority of Sinfonias follow the fugal style. Among a few exceptions which include such pieces as Nos. The latter is especially unique in the collection in the sense that it takes the form of a duet on an independent bass line, and that the melody parts are heavily embellished, producing highly expressive effects. Among the most dramatic and at the same time contrapuntally strictest is No. This intense musical affection and highly elaborate construction of music have attracted a number of intense and speculative arguments. Among these, the analytical discussion by Ulrich Siegele and Eric Chafe are most fascinating readings. Through various accounts they left, we can learn how he taught his pupils from a completely different perspective, namely in the eyes of others who were very much inspired by this famous teacher. For this purpose, he made them practice, for months together, nothing but isolated exercises for all the fingers of both hands, with constant regard to this clear and clean touch. For some months, none could get excused from these exercises; and, according to his firm opinion, they ought to be continued, for from six to twelve months. But if he found that anyone, after some months of practice, began to lose patience, he was so obliging as to write little connected pieces, in which those exercises were combined together. According to him, Bach gave him the Inventions first, then moved onto some suites and then to the Well-Tempered Clavier. Remember that Gerber was a university student at the time, and it is likely that his performance standard was already at certain level. Actually his copy made in survives, now in Gemeente Museum in the Hague. Naturally one would speculate that they were added extemporarily during the lessons to demonstrate how to execute them effectively on the keyboard. This statement was presumably given to encourage a pupil who was in low spirits for not being able to make sufficiently rapid progress. I am glad that you wish to study the art of tones from its roots up, and it depends only on you to learn for yourself so much of it as has become known to me. I require nothing of you but the assurance that you will transplant that little in turn in the minds of other good students who are not satisfied with the ordinary *lirum-larum*, etc.

Chapter 2 : Inventions and Sinfonias (Bach) - Wikipedia

The little 2 and 3 part creations last just a couple minutes each and present a wealth of creativity from the mind of Johann Sebastian, expertly enunciated by the most technically complete Bach pianist of the century.

April 6, By Ernest Hutcheson Probably no single work known to teachers and students of the piano is more constantly used than the inventions of Bach. The lapse of time since they were written has served but to enhance our recognition of their musical and technical value; no substitute for them has been found or even suggested. Yet few persons thoroughly understand the Inventions. To do so is to have made a significant step toward real musicianship, and no student should be content to rattle through these masterly miniatures without seriously trying to grasp their meaning and appreciate the beauty of their workmanship. I may begin by pointing out that the two-part and three-part Inventions each consists of fifteen pieces written in a particular series of keys. These keys are C major and minor, D major and minor, E flat major, E major and minor, F major and minor, G major and minor, A major and minor, B flat major and B minor. The reason for the omission of the other keys is an interesting one. By the older method, not all keys could be equally well tuned, and naturally those least often used, namely those with many sharps and flats, were sacrificed in favor of the others. Bach, therefore, avoided all keys having more than four sharps or flats, and also F sharp minor, C sharp minor and A flat. Later, when equal temperament was suggested, Bach threw the weight of his influence solidly behind the innovation. His propaganda work had an immortal results in the well-tempered i. Bach gave to the Inventions a quaint and lengthy title. As few take the trouble to read it, it is worth translating: It is essential, therefore, that at the outset we should understand the main features of polyphonic writing. The following simple definitions and explanations will suffice for the uninitiated: If you compare measures of the sixth Invention with measures you will see that either passage is a contrapuntal inversion of the other. Better still, take the trouble to invert the entire first Invention, playing the bass an octave higher with the right hand, and the soprano two octaves lower with the left hand. Almost all the Inventions are written in double counterpoint. The Inventions all abound in imitation. A canon is a composition written throughout in strict imitation between two or more parts. A popular example, familiar to every child, is the tune of Three Blind Mice. Actual canons do not occur in the Inventions, but we shall find several instances of canonic structure. A stretto occurs in the imitation of a theme or motive when a second part enters before the first is complete. An example will be mentioned in discussing the fourteenth Invention. Thematic or melodic inversion, not to be confused with the contrapuntal inversion already explained, is best shown by an example. In a contrapuntal composition there is usually a leading idea called a theme or subject, often very short, which recurs frequently in the different voices. Let us now examine some of the Inventions in detail, in order to observe their wide variety of style and structure. Cadences at measures 6, 14 and divide the piece into three sections, and the first two of these cadences are the only places in which the theme is absent. In measures the theme appears four times in melodic inversion: Here the counterpoint in the left hand should be noted; it recurs frequently, and consists of an augmentation of the first four notes of the theme. From this point on the theme occurs almost as often in its inverted as in its direct form. Other instances of this general type are Inventions 4, 7, and The upper voice begins with a subject A of two measures in length. When the lower voice repeats this the upper adds a counterpoint B. The lower voice now proceeds to B and the upper voice again presents a new counterpoint C. The process continues until, in all, five melodies or counterpoints have been introduced. The whole scheme is then repeated in the contrapuntal inversion. The lower part beginning and the upper part following. Finally, after an imitative episode of two measures the counterpoints A and B are alternated in both parts to form a coda. The whole plan might be graphically shows as follows, each vertical line except the last representing a section of two measures: At f a new counterpoint will be found, but this is merely to preserve the continuity of the upper voice, and there is no recurrence. This particularly interesting form has no counterpart in any other Invention. It is seldom given, however, in its complete form. Occasionally the longer fragment, b, occurs alone. Most frequently, however, we find b with a prefix of three notes, as at the twelfth measure: There is also a euphonious little phrase, continued from a, which is used in all the cadences see

measures , , etc. Finally, the first notes of the theme are once or twice subjected to a slight variation. Bach follows the main plan of the D major Invention in many others. That is to say, there is often a theme which is occasionally or frequently curtailed, only the chief motive or figure being quoted. See, for instance, No. Here there is a comparatively long theme of four measures, the first of which announces a striking motive often used alone in the development. This piece also shows a persistent counter-subject in sixteenth notes. The thematic announcement is spun out by repetition to three measures, but the subject proper is contained in one. This subject itself consists of a motive a, followed by its melodic inversion b: And the motive is again sub-divisible, the figure c playing a very prominent independent part in the course of the piece. In the first half of the Invention there is a counter-subject in eighth notes, which afterward disappears as the imitations become more closely crowded. Toward the end Bach uses a clever stretto; I quote the beginning of it for convenience on a single staff. Other examples in which the theme is often quoted in part only are Nos. These three Inventions are all characterized by distinct counter-subjects. The whole group 3, 5, 9, 11, 12 and 14 is also conspicuous by the absence of thematic inversion, the figure c in No. Invention 6, in E major, is an excellent illustration of double counterpoint. It is constructed of two melodies or counterpoints of equal importance, used simultaneously. One of these concludes with a strongly rhythmic figure: Which is used independently, sometimes in thematic inversion. This is the only invention divided by Bach into two repeating sections. The student is strongly recommended to make a careful comparison of the first twenty measures with the final twenty; except for some trifling variations resulting from the change of tonality, the two passages are written in strict inversion. Harold Bauer has not hesitated to introduce it on his recital programs. The piece may most accurately be described as being written in canonic imitation. It has, in fact, all the effectiveness of a canon without the stiffness almost inseparable from an extended strict adherence to that form. In this connection it may well be emphasized that Bach always displays the utmost freedom in handling all polyphonic forms and devices. He treats the medium with consummate mastery and easy, disdaining all rigidity of rule where musical effects are in question. I should be observed that the second Invention, already referred to, might also be regarded as canonic in structure. To me it seems preferable to consider it as merely a series of counterpoints, but the difference is purely technical. There is again a well-defined semblance of canon in No. At a casual view, this Invention may seem rather loosely put together, with little relation to its main theme, a. Two longer phrases b and c in the example below are used later; the first of them is treated in close imitation stretto. These phrases seem new, but their essential identity with the original theme is disclosed by the rhythmical similarity of the three examples at a and the prevalence of progression by thirds. They are, therefore, simply variations of a single leading idea. I do not pretend to have given, in the above remarks, anything resembling an analysis of the Inventions. This could be done only by quoting and appropriately marking the entire text. I have been content to indicate general lines of structure, in the hope of stimulating interest toward a more exhaustive study.

Chapter 3 : calendrierdelascience.com | Bach: 2 & 3 Part Inventions / 4 Duets, Angela Hewitt | CD (album)

The Inventions and Sinfonias, BWV , also known as the Two- and Three-Part Inventions, are a collection of thirty short keyboard compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach (): 15 inventions, which are two-part contrapuntal pieces, and 15 sinfonias, which are three-part contrapuntal pieces.

Chapter 4 : Bach: Two part Inventions; Three Part Inventions (CD, Mar, Decca) | eBay

The program here ranges from the more simple of Bach's compositions (Two-Part Inventions) to some of the more treacherous, virtuosic masterpieces (the two fantasias). Written by Bach for his son and students around , the Two-Part and Three-Part Inventions form the foundational know-how and skills of Bach's countrapuntal keyboard art.

Chapter 5 : Inventions and Sinfonias (Bach) - Wikipedia

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Chapter 7 : Bach -- 2 & 3 Part Inventions: Leather Bound Book by Johann Sebastian Bach

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2 and 3 Part Inventions is a ballet made by New York City Ballet ballet master Jerome Robbins on students at its affiliated school, the School of American Ballet, to Bach's Inventions and Sinfonias, BWV , ().

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