

Fantasia in D major for solo violin after the Sinfonia BWV 1045

Johann Sebastian Bach's D-major Sinfonia BWV 1045 survives incompletely as the opening instrumental movement of an unspecified sacred cantata dating from the early-to-mid 1740s. Halfway into the 150th measure, at the end of 12 sides of paper, the autograph manuscript (the only primary source) abruptly ends. Appended to the end of the manuscript in an as-yet-unrecognised hand is a two-and-a-half-measure conclusion that is generally thought not to represent Bach's intentions.

It appears from the handwriting of the autograph that Bach was likely copying from an earlier source for strings alone¹ (although motivically the wind parts are not always easily extricable). This has led to widespread speculation that the sinfonia originated as a concerto movement, though its ritornello structure is considerably less developed than is typical of Bach's concertos.

This in turn has led to speculation that the original composer might not have been Bach. While this is stylistically plausible, there are two counter-considerations. Firstly, there are no confirmed instances in which Bach incorporates the music of another composer into his sacred cantatas (excepting, of course, chorale melodies that he harmonizes). Secondly, while the treatment of ritornello principles is admittedly less developed than is typical of Bach, the structure of the sinfonia is in fact quite intricate, consisting of three chiasms (the third is nearly complete where the autograph manuscript breaks off):

- mm. 1-8: Ritornello (complete), D major
 - mm. 9-11a: Modulating material, D maj. to A maj.; upper voice (v.c.) leads
 - mm. 11b-32: Episode: sustained arpeggiated chords in v.c., A major
 - mm. 33-35a Ritornello (partial, variant), A maj. to D maj.
 - mm. 35b-55: Transposition of mm. 11b-31, D maj.
 - mm. 56-61: Modulating material, D maj. to A maj.; b.c. leads
- mm. 62-70a: Ritornello (complete) A major
 - mm. 70b-76a: Episode beginning with material sequenced in G, A, and D maj.
 - mm. 76b-84: Episodic material developing principal motifs; solo, *tutti*
 - m. 84a: Cadence on e min. (one of two minor cadences with m. 95b)
 - mm. 84b-95a: Episode (see below): solo, solo/*tutti*
 - m. 95b: Cadence on b min. (one of two minor cadences with m. 84a)
 - mm. 96-99: Episodic material developing principal motifs
- mm. 100-101b: Partial ritornello (variant of beginning), D maj.
 - mm. 102-109: Episode beginning with variation of mm. 70b-76a
- mm. 110-112a: Partial ritornello (variant of end), D maj.
 - mm. 112b-121: Episode repeating motivic cells ascending to a''' and descending
 - mm. 122-147: Sustained arpeggiated chords in v.c.
 - mm. 147-148: Similar motivic material to mm. 112b-117
- mm. 149-?: Ritornello (variant)
- [end of manuscript]

Interestingly, various early instrumental works of Bach that are also anomalous in ways—for instance, the G-minor fugue BWV 1026 and the lost D-minor violin concerto BWV 1052R—show particular interest in chiasmic structures, as I have described elsewhere.² It is plausible to me, therefore, that the material of BWV 1045 might have originated as a relatively early work of Bach: perhaps around 1713, after encountering Vivaldi's ritornello treatment but before systematising his own approach to it.

¹ See *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* I.34, kritischer Bericht.

² See, for instance, Appendix B in Shute, *Sei Solo: Symbolum? The Theology of J. S. Bach's Solo Violin Works* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016).

It is interesting to consider that another sinfonia that is atypical of Bach's orchestral writing (and which shares some elements in common with BWV 1045, most strikingly, brilliant arpeggiated bariolage passages built on descending chains of suspensions) is the sinfonia of Cantata 29, which originated as the prelude of the E-major partita for unaccompanied violin (BWV 1006). Although there is no evidence that BWV 1045 similarly existed in a form for unaccompanied violin, it is nevertheless interesting to experience the work's anomalies through the unique lens of unaccompanied violin texture. With a few minor adjustments that are commensurate with a sort of reverse-engineering of the process by which a single line with actual or implied polyphony can be spread among multiple voices in a larger ensemble, the *violino concertato* line of BWV 1045 sits remarkably well within the realm of historical plausibility for early 18th-century unaccompanied violin writing, especially when considering the broader tradition beyond the heavily chordal style of Westhoff's six unaccompanied suites that appear to have influenced Bach's own collection of six solo sonatas and partitas.

A few elements of BWV 1045 can even be made uniquely successful in solo violin scoring. For example, in the sinfonia, the cadential figure in measure 32 never repeats—strangely, for Bach—though its contour is implied in m. 56, where the tutti texture would render comparable triple-stopping awkward and texturally unnecessary. In unaccompanied violin reduction, however, the texture of m. 56 can be made to parallel that of m. 32, bringing a closure that is typical of Bach and seeming to more fully realise the potential inherent in his own material. More subjectively, when scored for solo violin, the material from m. 112b (or 118?) to m. 146 can feel more like a cadenza, to which it bears every resemblance. In fact, the way in which BWV 1045 accompanies this passage in the ripieno is reminiscent of the material with which the ripieno progressively encroaches on the substantial solo cadenzas/capriccii in the outer movements of what would become the D-minor harpsichord concerto BWV 1052 when compared with the earlier BWV 1052a and the opening movements of cantatas 146 and 188.

As to devising a suitable completion for the movement: it is evident from the diagram above that the manuscript breaks off very close to what must surely have been the end. The third chiasm begins with partial ritornelli flanking episodic material in the solo violin, and therefore it should end similarly; and so after the varied ritornello material with which the manuscript ends, I simply insert some brief episodic material loosely inspired by the ending appended in an unknown hand before concluding the movement with the final portion of the ritornello—slightly embellished at the end, as one occasionally finds in Bach. I should note that this is a different conclusion than that one that I proposed in a 2017 completion of the sinfonia published by PRB Productions. My 2017 completion does have a numerical correlation that I particularly like, but on balance I felt that it was architecturally less satisfying with unaccompanied violin than with a full ensemble, and so I have here endeavoured something different that still satisfies what I believe are the requirements of the movement's structure.

Benjamin Shute
Dunfermline, October 2023

Fantasia in D major for solo violin

after BWV 1045

J. S. Bach
trans. Shute

Allegro

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14

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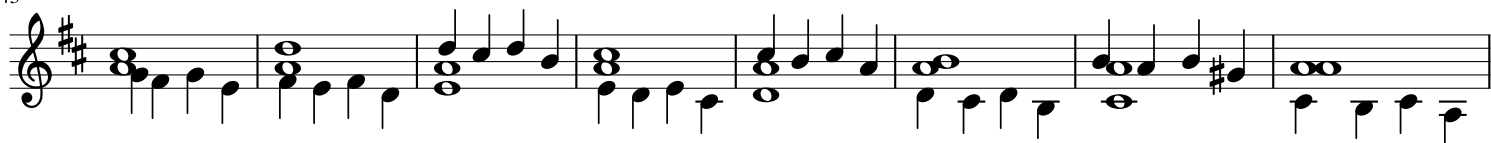
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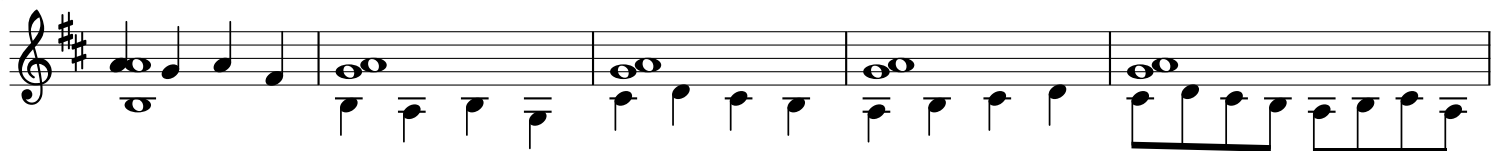
arp.

arp.

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56



59



61



63



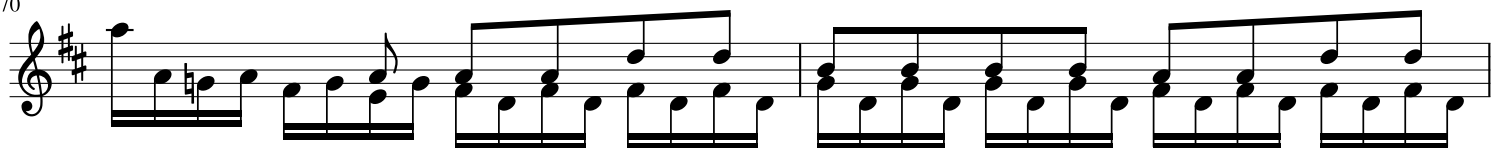
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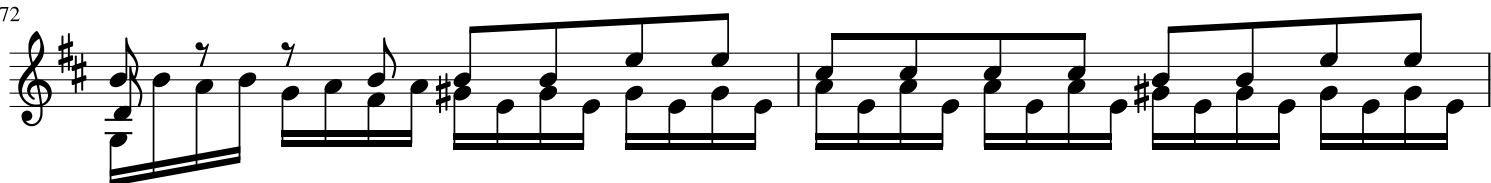
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* ossia: 8th-note a'

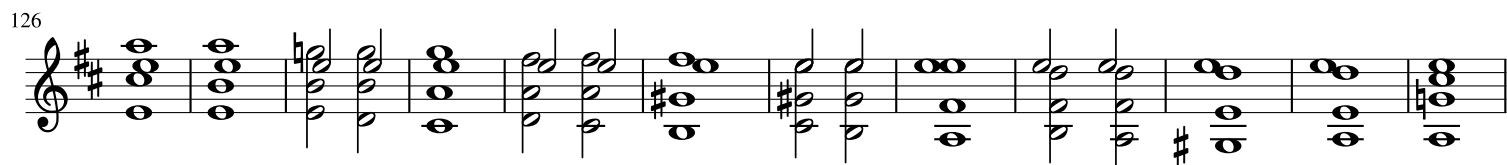
120



arpeggio ad lib


This musical staff contains measures 120 through 125. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measures 120-124 feature a continuous eighth-note arpeggiated pattern. In measure 125, the pattern transitions into a series of chords, with the instruction "arpeggio ad lib" written below the staff.

126



This musical staff contains measures 126 through 137. It continues with a series of chords and arpeggiated figures in the treble clef, maintaining the two-sharp key signature.

138



This musical staff contains measures 138 through 146. The notation shows a continuation of the harmonic progression with various chordal textures and some melodic movement within the chords.

147



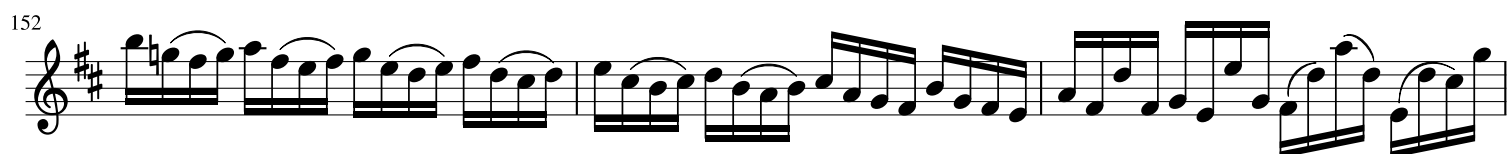
This musical staff contains measures 147 through 149. It features a more active melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs, still within the two-sharp key signature.

150



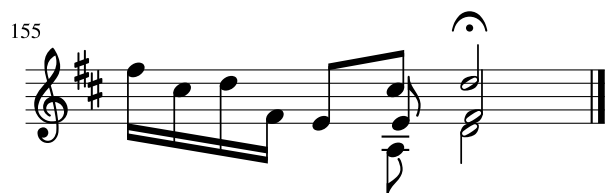
This musical staff contains measures 150 and 151. Measure 150 includes an asterisk (*) above a specific note. The staff concludes with a double bar line.

152



This musical staff contains measures 152 through 154. It continues the melodic and harmonic development with eighth-note runs and slurs.

155



This musical staff contains measure 155, which is the final measure on this page. It ends with a double bar line.