to the memory of Floyd Grave

Borrowing for Contrast, I:

Schütz, Bach, and Mozart

Contrast is one of Western music's foundational elements, and yet—beyond a literal description—it is a difficult, perhaps impossible element to theorize about.[1] In Mozart's C minor keyboard Concerto, for instance, the opening, ominously rising arpeggio, C-E ♭ -A ♭ , finds its long-awaited response in the *cantabile* subordinate theme, whose gently descending arpeggios fall through a slow alternation of the mediant and its dominant (Examples 1a and 1b). That the contrast between the two—and their affinity—is an issue in the piece becomes clear when the opening arpeggio returns, in E ♭ minor, just as soon as the subordinate theme has closed (Example 1c). [2]

If we can't theorize about these contrasting yet complementary arpeggios, we can nonetheless try to explore their sources. At the very least, this quest might open a window into the character and behavior of the rising and falling arpeggios, and into the conduct of the extended passages linking them. Moreover, these intervening passages are likely to contain additional borrowings, from the same or from associated sources; those borrowings may account for additional degrees and kinds of contrast (or, much less frequently, no contrast at all). The exploration of

[1] For the exception that proves the rule see Grave 2021.
[2] Hepokoski and Darcy refer to the E ♭ minor comeback's "fatalistically negative connotations" (2006, 483).

their sources can in turn give us a clearer picture of how the entire exposition hangs together.

Mozart's opening arpeggio is a previously discovered, literal quotation of a similarly broad and symphonic opening arpeggio by J.C. Bach (Example 2a);[3] the subordinate theme, on the other hand, derives from a succession of falling arpeggios that occurs at the climactic pages of the Sarabande from J.S. Bach's D minor English Suite, a suite that figures prominently in Mozart's Allegro movement (Example 2b).[4] Besides the common arpeggios, Mozart's subordinate theme and Bach's climactic moments share a distinctive and unusual feature: the opening, strong measure of each simulates a lead-in to the arpeggios, which begin on their second, weaker measure (see the asterisks in Examples 1b and 2b).

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I shall return to these Mozart and Bach family connections shortly. Before I do so, however, let's consider Heinrich Schütz's Symphonia Sacra No. 1, SV 257, from whose opening group of measures and opening section J.S. Bach derived the fugal subject of the Prélude to his D minor English Suite, and also derived the principal thematic material for the middle section of that vast da capo movement (Examples 3a, 3b, and 3c).

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[3] Derr 1997, 281. There is also a possibility that Scarlatti's "Cat's Fugue," the sonata in G minor, K. 30, played a role in the construction of Mozart's theme; see Gloede 2016, 399, Abb. 57 and 58.

[4] Some may find the claim for the Bach Sarabande source a bit of a stretch. One must keep in mind that where many likely borrowings appear (see below), some more hidden appropriations from the same source can become more highly persuasive.

The intimate isorhythmic connection—as well as the overt contrast—between Bach's appropriated, transformed fugal subject and his somewhat more literal adaptation of Schütz's very same theme in the middle section of his movement are encapsulated by the manner in which Bach closes his middle section. The connective passage through which Bach leads from the subdominant tonicization near the end of his middle section to the returning tonic of his A' section employs Schütz's original form—two rising steps and an ascending fifth, which in Bach's B section have become two rising thirds and a falling leap—minus the more slowly descending thirds that continue Schütz's subject and complete Bach's fugal subject (Example 4a). Bach reserves the more slowly descending thirds for the A' section's opening (see the broken brackets in Example 4b), where these clinch the juncture of the two sections.

Bach's resourcefulness allows him to build two contrasting subjects out of Schütz's one subject, with the help of some very important repeated notes, which (as we shall soon see) figure prominently also in Mozart's Concerto (Example 5). With his characteristic wizardry, Bach conjures up several variants of the subject he purloins from Schütz (Examples 6a and 6b): on the way to tonicizing the mediant, Bach expresses the subject in parallel sixths (Example 6a), a take on Schütz's parallel thirds (Example 3a, bars 8 and 13); and as soon as the mediant enters, Bach introduces the subject in inversion, with broken but wonderfully sonorous parallel 6/3 chords (Example 6b). Preparing for a long interpolation of the subtonic, C major (see the parentheses in Examples 7a and 7b), Bach omits the fugal subject's second descending third (bar 52), supplying it as a series of descending vertical

thirds once the interpolation has concluded (bars 57-60; see the asterisks in Example 7a).[5]

Much of Bach's passagework throughout his Prélude sets the opening 16ths of his fugal subject (the square brackets in Example 8a) against leaping eighths (the curly brackets in Example 8b). Especially important is the formation of leaping eighths found in bars 68-69 and 73-74 (Examples 8b and 8c): Mozart adopts them repeatedly, in different ways, in his Allegro movement. And, as one might expect, Bach inverts his subject and turns the inversion into developmental flow (bars 75-77, Example 9).

In the course of his B section, Bach inverts the neighbor note and passing tones of Schütz's original ascent, setting them against Schütz's more slowly falling thirds, now expressed as rising vertical sixths (bars 90-92; see the brackets in Example 10a). He also fragments and sets Schütz's ascent as a series of parallel vertical tenths (bars 93-96, Example 10b), and then transforms the ascent into rising arpeggios (bars 127-130, Example 10c).

It is hardly necessary to provide an exhaustive list of the contrasting contrapuntal permutations and combinations to which Bach submits Schütz's subject. Even selectively, it's instructive to observe how a single source engenders such widely contrasting fugal and developmental passages as those found in both the A and B sections of Bach's Prélude. This economy in borrowing sets Bach apart from other composers, especially those included in this two-part study: when they need substantial contrast, they "simply" turn to a different piece, by the same

[5] The sketch in Example 7b is based on Willner 1996, 100, Example 3.

composer or by a different composer. When Bach needs contrast, he might only manipulate the one source from which he draws his basic material.[6]

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Returning to the opening of Mozart's Concerto, we can now see (and, I hope, hear) how Mozart continues the arpeggiation that he culls so directly from J.C. Bach: Mozart absorbs the subsequent falling step and rising leap from a rising step and rising leap in J.S. Bach's developmental passages (Mozart, bars 3-10; Bach, bars 68-69 and 73-74; see the curly brackets in Examples 11a and 11b). The woodwind dialogues that ensue pick up the same thread but also add, from Bach's B section, Bach's falling thirds and the repeated notes against which they were set, on the opposite side of the measure, as it were (Mozart, bars 35-43; Bach, fugal subject and bars 68-69 and 86-90; Example 12). The quietly expressive repeated notes in the violins' accompaniment to the wind solos' continuation in bars 44ff. (Example 13a) support this connection to Bach's repeated notes in his B section, as does the winds' figuration in bars 56-62, capped by a falling third in bar 62 (Example 13b). If these relationships are not immediately apparent, that is because Mozart fragments his source material and spreads it out across many measures, in accordance with the much slower harmonic rhythm that marks the Classical style in general and the Classical symphonic genres in particular.

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[6] For a detailed account of the circumstances under which Handel uses contrasting elements from different sources to generate compositional tension (which subsequently needs to be worked out and resolved in the course of the composition) see Willner 2005, Chapter 5.

Mozart's ritornello is somewhat unusual in that it brings back the opening gestures about two-thirds of the way through (bars 63-71), allowing the ritornello to acquire the character of a rondeau.[7] (This was an afterthought: the original order of the hastily composed ritornello's thematic groups was different, a feature that has been intensively studied.[8]) What with Mozart's penchant for organic development (over and above the need for contrast at the surface), it is not surprising that the ritornello *qua* rondeau's B section (bars 35-62) reflects a close attachment to the J.S. Bach borrowing that immediately follows J.C. Bach's arpeggio (recall Example 11).

But the ritornello *qua* rondeau's C section (bars 73-90) does require more contrast, and Mozart finds it by mining Bach's fugal subject, more—rather than less— explicitly, assigning Bach's slowly falling thirds to the strings, first as double neighbors (bars 74-79; see the square brackets in Example 14a), then as autonomously falling thirds (bars 80-87; see the square brackets in Example 14b). Mozart at the same time assigns Bach's fast-rising sixths, reimagined initially as falling sixths, to the winds (bars 75-79; the curly brackets in Example 14a); he then has them emerge as rising sixths in bars 81-87 (the curly brackets in Example 14b). Mozart's tendency, at least in this movement, to cull his source material more—again, rather than less—openly from his source as he goes along, by way of

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[7] Another ritornello whose opening Mozart brings back later on is that of K. 467/I; the opening of both K. 467/I and K. 459/I recurs throughout each movement. See Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 482-83.

[8] Mishkin 1975 and Levin 2014. A fresh look at this issue was offered by Alan Tyson during the Michigan MozartFest of 1989 (see Willner 1990, 332), but Tyson's talk was not reproduced in the conference proceedings. For additional discussion of this issue and its repercussions, as well as an illuminating analysis of the entire movement's underlying structure, see Wen 1990.

development, is a surprising feature, one that we shall encounter soon again, in the solo exposition.

The ritornello's closing figure (bars 91-96, Example 15), though contrasting at the surface, derives nonetheless from the steps and leaps in the opening theme (bars 3ff.). These are the steps and leaps that originate (as we have already observed) with Bach's running passagework (see the brackets in Example 15).

And so it is that Mozart, almost like J.S. Bach, culls some but by no means all of his contrasts from the same source, treating the source differently as the need arises—just as Bach does with Schütz's subject. But unlike Bach, Mozart changes his source when the contrast needs to be marked, namely after the opening gesture (bar 3) and at the subordinate theme (recall Example 1b, above).

As Mozart embarks on the solo exposition (Example 16a), he returns yet again to J.S. Bach's repeated notes and falling eighths (those he borrowed in bars 35-55, Example 16b), and to J.C. Bach's rising arpeggio (Example 16c), but not in a way that would likely be immediately apparent. In the orchestral exposition, the repeated notes occupy almost ten measures; only then do the falling eighths enter (bar 44, Examples 12 and 13a, above). In the solo exposition, the falling eighths come first, after an introductory rising leap (bars 100-102).[9]

The entrance of the solo keyboard responds to the A♭ of J.C. Bach's C-E♭-A♭ arpeggio by way of a large neighbor note motion, g^2-a♭ ^{2}-g^1, which spans bars 100-104-107 (see the annotation atop Example 16a). The explicitly falling arpeggios in

[9] A rising leap marks the keyboard entry also in the B♭ Concerto, K. 450, and in the D minor Concerto, K. 466.

bars 109-112, in contrast (also quoted in Example 16a), respond to J.C. Bach's rising arpeggio more directly, while also offering a premonition of the subordinate theme's falling arpeggios (recall again Example 1b).

After the orchestra has sounded J.C. Bach's rising arpeggio once more (bars 118ff.), the winds remind us again of J.S. Bach's rising-step-and-leap motive (bars 121-123, Examples 17a and 17b). The solo keyboard then amplifies the motive by adding an octave to each leap (bars 125-134, Example 17c), and filling the leaps with running sixteenths (bars 136-140, Example 17d).

The *elevated bridge theme*, as I call it, appears in bars 147ff. (Example 18a).[10] It differs from more conventional bridge themes in that it ends with a perfect authentic cadence, thereby simulating a self-contained subordinate theme. Here the bridge theme offers a confluence of veiled references to the solo entrance in bars 101ff. (Example 18b) and to the solo keyboard's descending quarter notes and rising leaps in bars 121ff. (Example 18c). We have already observed how the basic elements of these passages are borrowed from J.S. Bach's Prélude; their falling steps and rising leaps set them apart from the "true" subordinate theme's falling arpeggios, and from the celebrated return, in E ♭ minor, of J.C. Bach's opening arpeggio (recall Examples 1b and 1c).[11]

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[10] Elevated bridge themes can also be found in the G major concerto, K. 453, I, bars 110ff., and the D major Concerto, K. 537, I, bars 128ff., not to mention the keyboard Sonata in C minor, K. 457, I, bars 23ff. See Willner 2021 for a discussion of the elevated bridge theme in K. 453.

[11] That the order of the bridge theme and subordinate theme is reversed in the recapitulation (see the discussion in Wen 1990, 111) does not alter their fundamental functional status, which is established during the exposition. A similar reversal takes place in the recapitulation of the opening Allegro from Mozart's keyboard Sonata in D, K. 576.

The transition that links the bridge theme with the subordinate theme contains one of Mozart's most intriguing references to J.S. Bach's Prélude (Example 19a): a series of underlying, slowly descending thirds in the keyboard's right hand part (bars 170-171, 172-173; see the curly brackets in Example 19b) that is set against rapidly rising sixteenths in the left hand (see the square brackets in Examples 19a and 19c). It seems yet again that the more Mozart was developing his thematic material, the closer he was getting to the source of his borrowings (recall bars 73ff. in the orchestral exposition, Example 14, and the discussion above).[12]

If the subordinate theme's connection with J.S. Bach's Sarabande looked a little unlikely at the beginning of this paper, it should appear rather more convincing now, considered within the context of the many borrowings from Bach's D minor English Suite by which it is surrounded. And that brings us to the display episode, the burst of virtuosity that links the subordinate theme with the exposition's closing ritornello.[13]

The display episode (bars 220ff.) opens with the well-known E♭ minor quotation of the opening theme, acting as a kind of second bridge theme. The episode then introduces one last reference to Bach's Suite, a fleeting yet palpable recollection of the Gavotte's opening measures (Example 20a). The reference, chromaticized, appears within the keyboard's right-hand part (Example 20b), where

[12] These references, though hidden, are not an isolated case within the corpus of Mozart's concertos; similar references, under similar circumstances (if after—rather than before—the subordinate theme), play a foundational role in the display episode of the C major keyboard Concerto, K. 467, I. See Willner 2007 for a detailed account.

[13] I discuss display episodes in detail in Willner 2019, with further references.

a repeated a♮^{2} (bar 245) leads to a♭^{2} (bar 246) via c^3-b♭^{2}-a♮^{2}-a♭^{2}; a half-step lower, a repeated a♭^{2} (bar 246) leads to g^2 via b♭^{2}-a♭^{2}-g^2 (bars 246-247). During a varied repetition of the passage (bars 249-253, Example 20c), the repetitions of b♭^{2} and the vertical third, b♭^{2}/g^2, allude to the Gavotte's repeated thirds a^2/f^2-b♭^{2}/g^2-a^2/f^2-g^2/e^2 (see again Example 20a)—a Harold Bloom moment if one there ever was.

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We have now had the opportunity to observe the wide range of juxtaposed borrowings that informs both J.S. Bach's D minor English Suite and Mozart's C minor keyboard Concerto. In Part 2 we shall explore Johannes Brahms's similar treatment of sources by Mozart and Schumann, by way of a Mozart borrowing from Scarlatti.

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