



ARIOSO

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Cantata "Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe"

Sinfonia, BWV 156 (1729)

Concerto for harpsichord, strings and continuo No 5 in f minor

Largo, BWV 1056 (1738)

Violin and strings

f minor

Urtext edition by Erlend Vestby, 2020

PREFACE

The title *Arioso* was not given by Bach himself, but was used early to describe the character and style of the piece. Perhaps a title like this was necessary because the *Arioso* appears in two of J.S. Bach's compositions, both included in this edition. The first is the *Sinfonia* from Cantata BWV 156, and the other version is the much more ornamented 2nd movement, *Largo*, of the harpsichord concerto BWV 1056. The title *Arioso* is only used when this movement (usually BWV 156) is played by its own, and not in connection with the rest of the work. This might be another reason for using a unique title for such occasions. The inspiration to the composition came probably from the *Andante* in Telemann's Flute Concerto in G major, TWV51:G2. The first two bars here are identical to Bach's *Arioso*.

Arioso is Italian and means "airy". The term first appeared in the 16th century to describe an aria of a melodious and songlike character as opposed to a declamatory character. D. Scarlatti, a composer and performer contemporary with Bach, used the term to describe music "in a flowing melodic style."

The most common edition of the *Arioso* for violin or cello and piano or organ was made by Sam Franco in 1915. This version is more richly harmonised than the original version, and includes editorial slurs, dynamics, articulations, bowings, and fingerings. I decided to create a historically informed edition to stay closer to Bach's language and composition, and to give performers more freedom in their interpretative choices.

Instrumentation and keys

BWV 156 in d minor: Solo oboe. 2 violins, viola and basso continuo. (Strings arco)
BWV 1056 in f minor: Solo harpsichord. 2 violins, viola and basso continuo. (Strings pizz.)

This new edition is written in various keys and instrumentations:

- Violin, viola or cello and piano
- Violin, viola or cello and organ
- Violin, viola or cello and strings

They are written in d minor, g minor, f minor and e minor.

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

This edition of the *Sinfonia* BWV 156 is made after the surviving anonymous copies of the instrumental parts (A) created between 1750 and 1761, just after Bach's death. Bach's own manuscript and the original parts were lost to history early on. I have compared these copies with the first printed edition (E1) of the Cantata, made in 1886 by Ernst Naumann for Breitkopf und Härtel Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe.

The edition of the *Concerto* BWV 1056 however is made primarily after J.S. Bach's own autograph manuscript (MS). I have also used the first printed edition (E2) of this work made in 1869 by Wilhelm Rust for Breitkopf und Härtel Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe. Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818), musicologist, organist and the first biographer of J.S. Bach, made a copy of the MS which I have also consulted (F).

The MS has been the primary source and has also been used to compare A and E1 when making the *Sinfonia* due to the lack of survived autograph manuscripts of the Cantata. The E2 has been used to better understand the writings of MS and as a quality control. F is the source that has the largest discrepancies to all the other sources. Some changes have been necessary in order to make the transposition (g minor), but the copy also includes more embellishments than in the other sources (marked in blue in the score). F has its own chapter below where the major differences are shown.

Abbreviations:

S: = solo part

1: = 1st voice (1vln)

2: = 2nd voice (2vln)

3: = 3rd voice (vln)

C: = continuo (bass)

b = bar number

n = note in the bar. Slurs, ties, grace notes and rests are not included when counting.

MS = manuscript (1738) (J.S. Bach of BWV 1056)

A = Autograph (1750-1761) (anonymous copy of BWV 156 parts)

F = Copy of BWV 1056 by J. N. Forkel (1760-1789) (transposed to g minor)

E1 = first edition BWV 156 (1886) (Ed. Ernst Naumann)

E2 = first edition BWV 1056 (1869) (Ed. Wilhelm Rust)

SINFONIA, BWV 156

C: b4, n4 – Eb in *A*, *E1* and *F*. Double stop Eb/D in *MS*. D in *E2*.

S: b4, n10 – Ab in *A*. Bb in *MS*, *E1*, *E2* and *F*.

1: b14, n3 – Eb in *A*, *MS*, *E2* and *F*. C in *E1*.

S: b14, n12-19 – Slurs 3+1 x2 in *MS*. Slurs 4+4 in *E2*. Slurs 2+2 x2 in *A*. Slurs 2x3 +1+1 in *E1*. No slurs in *F*.

S: b14, n16 – Bb in *A* and *E1*. Ab in *MS*, *E2* and *F*.

1, 2, 3: b17, n1 – Db, Bb and Bb in *A* and *E1*. Db, Bb and Eb in *MS*, *E2* and *F*.

3: b18, n1 – F in *E1*. Eb in *A*, *MS*, *E2* and *F*.

S: b18, n11 – Tie in *A* and *E1*. No tie in *MS*, *E2* and *F*.

LARGO, BWV 1056

S: b2, n4-8: No tie or slur in *F*. The tie appears in *E2*, the slur in *MS*. The embellishment is only written in *MS*.

3: b2, n4: Eb in *F*. Db in all other sources.

S: b2, n13-15: Slur in *F*. No slur in *MS*, *E2*, *A* or *E1*.

C: b4, n4 – Double stop Eb/D in *MS*. D in *E2*. Eb in *A*, *E1* and *F*.

S: b5, n1-5: No slur in *E2* or *F*. The slur is written in *MS*. The tie appears in all sources.

S: b10, n12, 14: No flat in *F*.

S: b11, n7-8 – Double stop Bb/Db and Db/Bb in *MS*. It is difficult to tell which of the notes were intended. Db, Bb in *E2* and *F*. Bb, Db in *E1* and *A*.

S: b12, beat 3: No slur in *F*. Slur in *MS* and *E2*.

S: b13, n13,15 – *MS* shows double stop C/Ab on both notes. It is difficult to tell which of the notes were intended. *E2* indicates C, Ab. *A*, *E1* and *F* show Ab, C.

2: b14, n4 – Ab in *F*. C in all other sources.

S: b14, n12-19 – Slurs 3+1 x2 in *MS*. Slurs 4+4 in *E2*. Slurs 2+2 x2 in *A*. Slurs 2x3 +1+1 in *E1*. No slurs in *F*.

2 and 3: b15, n2 – the two voices swap notes in *F*. (Eb one octave down.) Notated here as printed in *MS*, *E2*, *E1* and *A*.

S: b17 and 18, last beats – no embellishment sign in *F*. Notated in *MS* and *E2*. The exact position in *MS* is unclear and is here placed as found in *E2*. B17: Slur in *F* covers 4 notes, *MS* appears to cover 3 notes, the slur in *E2* covers 2 notes. B18: Slur in *F* only.

2 and 3: b18, n3: Notes swap in *F*. (Eb one octave down.) Notated here as printed in *MS*, *E2*, *E1* and *A*.

C: b19, n2 – Flat in *MS*. No accidentals in *E2* or *F*.

S: b19, n5-6 – Tie in *MS*, no tie in *E2* and *F*.

S: b20, last beat – Slur over 2 last notes in *MS*. Slur over 2 first notes in *E2*. No slur in *F*.

Special differences between *F* and the other sources:

There are specific grace notes and embellishments added in the copy by Forkel that are not written in the other sources. These are embellishments that might have been added by contemporary performers. I have therefore kept them in the score marked in blue.

Slurs and other minor differences in *F* are marked in the commentary above in the same way as the other sources are discussed.

Larger differences are described below:

- Strings, b6:



The image shows a musical score for strings, measure b6. It consists of four staves: two treble clefs (Violins I and II) and two bass clefs (Violas and Cellos/Double Basses). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs. Some notes are marked with a blue 'z' symbol, indicating grace notes or embellishments. The slurs are placed over groups of notes, and some are marked with a blue 'z' symbol, indicating differences from other sources.

- S: b8-9 – The ossia staff shows a different embellished line found in *F* only.
- Strings, b8:

- Strings, b10-11 (octave differences):

- S: b15:

F:

Other sources:

- S: b16, last beat:

- Two last bars in *F*. The printed version is as found in *MS* and *E2*:

The image shows a musical score for two staves, measures 20 and 21. The key signature is G minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 20 is marked with a '20' above the first staff. The first staff contains a complex melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The second staff has a simpler melody with some rests. The bass line is also simple, with rests and a few notes. Measure 21 continues the melodic lines, ending with a cadence. The score is enclosed in a double bar line at the end of measure 21.

ADAGIO AND LARGO

There are some uncertainties with the tempo relationship between *adagio* and *largo* in the Baroque era. They were both used to describe a slow movement, but which of them were the slowest depended on who you asked. The Italian writers and composers mostly saw *adagio* as slow and *largo* as very slow. Most French musicians placed them the other way around. It is uncertain what Bach himself thought, but it is a possibility that he didn't make a distinction between them at all; they just meant "slow". I will shortly explain some of the various other meanings *adagio* and *largo* could have that may explain why BWV 156 and BWV 1056 are marked differently:

According to musicologist David Fallows, *adagio* in the Baroque era up until the Classical period, meant a slow movement that asked for extra embellishments from the performer. The *Sinfonia* marked *adagio* is sparingly embellished, whilst the harpsichord concerto marked *largo* is much more elaborated. This might be the very reason that they are marked differently. Both the *adagio* and the *largo* should be played equally slow, but the *adagio* also needs to be embellished.

Bach expert and performer, Anthony Newman, argues that *adagio* has a slow tempo with emphasis on the strong beats. *Largo* is also slow, but with emphasis on strong as well as weak beats, increasing the number of accents in the bar. With the long and many embellishments written out in the *largo*, extra accents and heavy beats might come naturally as a result of these.

SOURCES:

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E1:

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E2:

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F:

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Sinfonia

Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe

J.S. Bach, BWV 156

Adagio



Violin

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Basso Continuo

4

9

tr

3

14

Musical score for measures 14-17. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It consists of five staves: a vocal line and four piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line begins with a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with eighth-note patterns and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note bass line.

18

Musical score for measures 18-20. The score continues in the same key signature and time signature. It consists of five staves: a vocal line and four piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line features a melodic line with a fermata at the end of measure 20. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including a right-hand part with eighth-note figures and a left-hand part with a bass line.

Concerto No 5

for harpsichord, strings and continuo

J.S. Bach, BWV 1056

Largo

Violin

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Basso Continuo

Detailed description: This block contains the first three measures of the score. The Violin part features a melodic line with a trill in the second measure and a fermata in the third. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Basso Continuo) provide a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Detailed description: This block contains measures 4 through 7. The Violin part continues its melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The string parts maintain their accompaniment pattern.

8

Detailed description: This block contains measures 8 through 11. Measure 8 begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The Violin part has a complex passage with many sixteenth notes and a trill. The string parts continue their accompaniment.

12

Musical score for measures 12-15. The system consists of five staves: Treble clef (top), two Middle clefs, and Bass clef (bottom). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Measure 12 features a complex melodic line in the top staff with triplets and a fermata. Measures 13-15 show a more rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes across all staves.

16

Musical score for measures 16-18. The system consists of five staves. Measure 16 has a melodic line with a trill (tr) and a fermata. Measure 17 continues the melodic development with a trill. Measure 18 concludes the system with a melodic phrase and a fermata. The accompaniment remains consistent with eighth and sixteenth notes.

19

Musical score for measures 19-21. The system consists of five staves. Measure 19 features a melodic line with a fermata and a sharp sign (+). Measure 20 continues the melodic line with a fermata. Measure 21 concludes the system with a melodic phrase and a fermata. The accompaniment remains consistent with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Sinfonia

Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe



J.S. Bach, BWV 156

Adagio



Concerto No 5

for harpsichord, strings and continuo



J.S. Bach, BWV 1056

Largo