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Johann Christian Bach's influence on Mozart's developing style

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The methods by which great composers create their masterpieces often remain a mystery to modern scholars. There are essentially two approaches to determining what these methods might be: investigating a composer's surviving drafts, sketches, and letters and analyzing their musical influences. The first approach can be very limiting, especially when applied to a composer such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who did not leave behind many musical sketches. Therefore, when studying Mozart's compositional process, it is more useful to rely on the second method in which one traces his stylistic development to key musical figures. From these major influences, one can uncover how Mozart learned his craft and determine what musical elements he must have considered to be most important. Although Mozart experienced a wide range of influences throughout his life—he was known for quickly picking up various forms and styles of music—this paper will focus on one composer in particular: Johann Christian Bach. Many musicologists have formed a general consensus that Christian, aside from Mozart's father, Leopold, was one of the leading musical influences in Mozart's life. Musicologist Georges de Saint-Foix, for instance, makes the dramatic claim that "[Bach's influence] replaced the influence of the father…so that Johan Christian Bach became the only the true teacher of Mozart."[1] Another scholar, Robert Gjerdingen, similarly states, "[Mozart] always viewed [J.C. Bach] as the great model, the man whose style he worked to emulate more assiduously than any other during his early years."[2] Through this paper, I intend to investigate the true significance of the role that Bach played in Mozart's life and determine how this influence might shed light on Mozart's own compositional practices.

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[1] Heinz Gärtner, *Johann Christian Bach: Mozart's Friend and Mentor* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1994), 211.

[2] Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 263.

There are multiple promising points of study in this investigation that provide evidence for the existence of personal and musical connections between J.C. Bach and Mozart. First are the pieces that Mozart composed as a youth while he was touring as a child prodigy in London, England—the city in which Bach was the music master to the queen of England. Among these pieces are his early symphonies, K. 16 and K. 19, which were modeled off of those written by Christian in his Opus 3.[3] Other important connections between Bach and Mozart can be found in Mozart's early piano concertos and keyboard pieces. Bach's Opus 5 keyboard sonatas and Opus 13 piano concertos provide some of the most direct evidence of his influence upon Mozart's keyboard style. The last connection I will study involves the link between Mozart and Bach's operas. Evidence of such connections can be found in Mozart's setting of Bach's aria "Non so d'onde viene" and other instances in which Mozart clearly references arias by Bach in his own works.

In order to understand the connections between these two composers, their musical background must be examined since they shared many similarities in their compositional development. Both Christian and Amadeus were born into musical families and, thus, were exposed to composition and instrumental technique at young ages. Christian, as one of the sons of the renowned Johann Sebastian Bach, was immersed in music from birth. In addition to the musical style of his father, he was exposed to the new musical styles and techniques of the many composers and students who came to visit Sebastian. Although it is unknown at what age he began receiving musical instruction, it is likely that his father started his musical education before the age of nine—the age at which Sebastian's eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, began

[3] Georges de Saint-Fox, *The Symphonies of Mozart* (London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1947), 11.

talking lessons.[4] Johann Sebastian likely applied the same techniques that he used with his brothers before him, teaching from his pedagogical works, such as the *Klavierbüchlein* written for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, and the *Orgel-Büchlein*.[5] These books provided instruction in both keyboarding skills and compositional technique. If Sebastian followed the same instructional format that he applied to his older sons, Christian would have been taught the compositional basics of the Baroque era. Such basics include realizing a figured bass, learning distinctions among compositional forms such as the allemande and minuet, and harmonizing chorales.[6] Thus, Sebastian influenced the development Christian's style to a great extent by exposing him to the principles Baroque technique.

Unfortunately, Sebastian's health began to steadily decline while Christian was still young, limiting the number of years he could instruct his son. After his death in the summer of 1750, Christian traveled to Berlin in order to live with his second oldest brother Carl Philip Emanuel Bach. In this city, Emanuel had established himself as the keyboardist for Frederick the Great and had become influential in the formation of a Germanic style referred to now as the *Empfindsamer Stil*. The intent of this style was to convey the emotions of the composer to the listener through compositional devices.[7] Such devices included chromaticism, sudden dynamic changes, irregular melodic lines, sudden dissonances, and free rhythms. Emanuel's number of musical publications was not very great at the time of Christian's arrival since his appointment as accompanist did not require him to compose music. His compositions consisted of mainly of keyboard sonatas that featured the characteristics of the new style. He had also recently

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[4] Gärter, 33.
[5] Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 226.
[6] Wolff, 328-329.
[7] Paz Corazon Canave, *A Re-evaluation of the Role Played by C.P.E. Bach in the Development of the Clavier Sonata* (Anne Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1977), 43.

published his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, which contains methods of keyboard playing that he likely passed down to Christian.

It would be safe to conclude that Christian's abilities as a performer and composer continued to develop under Emanuel's guidance. As musicologist Heinz Gärtner states, "Christian was bound to have profited from Emanuel's teaching—though not so much in matters of technique, where their father had laid a solid foundation, as in artistic questions concerning musical interpretation."[8] Christian's high level of keyboard playing can be observed through some of his earliest compositions—piano concertos he wrote in Berlin under Emanuel's guidance. These concertos highlight the influence of his older brother, who had also composed works in this genre. Although they do feature intense melodies and emotional displays, Christian's concertos seem to highlight a more simplistic texture that aligned with the principles of the *galant* style—the style that Christian eventually chose to fully adopt as his own.

During the 1750s, the *stile galant* was becoming increasingly popular with the public taste while the style of Sebastian Bach was looked upon as being old-fashioned. Christian, having learned the basics of Baroque era composition from his father, likely depended on the music of his surroundings and Emanuel's guidance to learn the principles of the *galant* style. Unlike the heavy, thick-textured music of the Baroque era, which featured the continuous repetition of short melodic motives, known as *fortspinnung*, the *stile galant*, featured light, graceful melodies, thin texture, and homophonic harmonies that followed the guidelines of functional harmony. *Galant* music also featured balanced, symmetrical, and contrasting melodic phrases that were developed during the course of a piece. Since the melody was of main importance, the accompaniment parts were usually limited to repetitive patterns designed to

[8] Gärter, 85.

highlight homophonic, chordal structure of the piece.[9] Such features departed from the polyphonic music of the Baroque era, in which each instrumental part of a musical work simultaneously sounded independent melodic lines. At the time of Mozart's birth and during his early development, the *stile galant* represented a dominant trend in European musical style that he tended to follow. As a result, Mozart's mature style is clearly rooted in the tendencies of this style, which Christian helped to promote.

Mozart's education and childhood, aside from his tour as a child prodigy, in many ways, mirrored that of J.C. Bach. Like Christian, he was born into a musical family in which he was exposed to performance and composition at a young age. His father, Leopold was a composer who served as the deputy Kapellmeister in Salzburg, Austria. He began to instruct Mozart in the art of keyboard playing when he was only three years old. [10] Like Sebastian Bach, Leopold taught both Mozart and his older sister Nanerl himself, developing his own lessons and methods. In order to instruct Nannerl, he compiled a pedagogical keyboard book, "consisting mostly of minuets and other short pieces by contemporary composers arranged in progressive order of difficulty."[11] Using this book, Leopold imposed a strict musical program on his children that required them to practice for many hours. Mozart began to study his father's keyboard manual at the age of four and soon began to write his own compositions in its pages.[12]

In addition to their early exposure to music, Bach and Mozart also traveled to the same European cities, which exposed them to the similar musical styles. In their travels, spanning Germany, France, and Italy, they came into contact with the some of the same composers and musical practices. Christian's travels began when he embarked on a journey to Italy in 1754,

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[9] Canave, 32.
[10] Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: A Life* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1995), 22.
[11] Solomon, 38.
[12] Solomon, 38.

arriving in Milan two years later.[13] While in Italy, he received two and a half years of instruction from the respected Italian composer, musician, teacher, and writer Giovanni Battista Martini.[14] Martini, a member of the Accademia dell'lstituto delle Scienze di Bologna and the Accademia Filarmonica, was a well-respected teacher who had devised numerous teaching methods and theories on music.[15] As Gärtner states, Martini was "a master of the 'strict' church style, who was also the foremost theorist of his age."[16] Through Martini, Bach gained a firm foundation in strict counterpoint as applied to sacred music composition. These studies helped Bach to attain proficiency in writing choral music.

During Christian's stay in Italy, his music underwent many changes as he adopted stylistic principles from the country in which *stile galant* originated. In addition to establishing a solid foundation in sacred music, he began to focus on Italian opera. Following the examples of other *opera seria* composers, such as Niccolò Piccinni and Johann Adolph Hasse, he adopted stylistic principles of Italian arias. His first operatic works consisted of substitute arias that were inserted into other composer's operas at the request of singers.[17] He composed his first full opera, *Artaserse*, in 1761. While adhering to the general stylistic norms of the *galant* style, the opera is noted for being innovative in its shortening of the da capo aria form.[18] Generally, Bach did not repeat the first section of the arias in this work and cut the length significantly as a result.

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[13] Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720 – 1780* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 885.

[14] Gärtner, 115.

[15] Howard Brofsky and Sergio Durante. "Martini, Giovanni Battista." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,1.

[16] Gärtner, 113.

[17] Heartz, 892.

[18] Ibid., 890.

After attaining recognition as an opera composer in Italy, Bach received a commission for the King's Theater in London and departed for England in the summer of 1762.[19] Although his work with the King's Theater was only temporary, he ended up being appointed as the music master to the royal family about a year after his arrival.[20]Having attained this secure position, he remained in England for the rest of his life. It was shortly after his move to England that he had his most significant encounter with the young Mozart, who, at the time, was touring Europe as a child prodigy.

Like J.C. Bach, Mozart also received an international exposure to music. During his tour as a child prodigy, he traveled across Europe with his family so that he could perform before aristocratic courts. Although Leopold's decision to go on this trip may have may have been motivated by the prospect of monetary gain, he was just as likely influenced by the desire to educate his son by exposing him to a wide-range of international styles.[21] As a result of this tour, which included cities in modern day Germany, Austria, France, and London, Mozart, by the age of eight, had been introduced to an international array of composers, singers, and musicians—many of whom also influenced Christian. A few years after visiting Bach in London, for instance, Mozart had the chance to meet and receive instruction from Padre Martini, J.C. Bach's influential teacher. Martini instructed him in the art of counterpoint and introduced him to aspects of music composition that Christian had adopted years before.[22] Other figures who impacted both Mozart and Bach's musical styles included Giovanni Battista Lampugnati, Franz Benda, Georg Christoph Wagenseil, Giovanni Battista Sammartini, and Ignaz Holzbauer. As

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[19] Gärtner, 167.
[20] Gärtner, 179.
[21] H.C. Robbins Landon, "Family Background," in *The Mozart Compendium: A Guide to Mozart's Life and Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 103.
[22] Solomon, 89.

Gärtner states, "Christian's and Mozart's areas activity intersected repeatedly…they had numerous mutual friends and acquaintances among singers and composers" [23]

Although Mozart indirectly crossed Christian's path numerous times, he only met the well-established composer as a child on one occasion. This occurred on his trip to London, which lasted from April 23, 1764 through July 1, 1765. The fifteen-month stay was, by far, the longest visit of his original European tour.[24] While Mozart was in London, Bach took responsibility for his family's arrangements since he was the musical director to the Queen. He helped to structure their visit by establishing accommodations and scheduling musical concerts.[25] Mozart, therefore, had ample opportunity to become acquainted with Bach and other London artists.

Mozart and his father would have found London's musical environment to be stimulating. England's musical culture, at that time, was growing rapidly as a result of its prospering middle class.[26] Members of this class had greater amounts of leisure time, creating more demand for public concerts, music for amateurs, keyboard instruments, and printed music.[27] This demand caused growth in England's publishing and keyboard manufacturing industries and popularized public concerts at a time before they became mainstream in other European countries. Thus, England provided composers with many unique opportunities, which attracted international composers such as J.C. Bach and Mozart. Musicologist David Wyn Jones stresses the importance of the London music scene, stating "Indeed, it could be argued England

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[23] Gärtner, 144.
[24] Solomon, 43.
[25] Gärtner, 203.
[26] Peter Holman, "Eighteenth-Century English Music: Past Present, Future," in *Music in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 3.
[27] Stanely Sadie, "Preface," in *Johann Christian Bach: Favorite Songs at Vauxhall Gardens* (Tunbridge Wells: Richard Macnutt, 1985), vii.

was the most musical country in all of Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century, judged by the number of musical activity of all types."[28] This prospering musical environment may explain why Mozart and his father spent so many months of their European tour in London.

Although there were many forms, styles, and composers in London at the time of Mozart's visit, Bach would remain one of his central influence during this period of time. As Gärtner states, "If the boy Mozart, after four weeks in England, showed…progress beyond what he had already known when they set out on their journey, Johann Christian Bach's caring instruction deserves much of the credit."[29] Leopold had reason to be interested in exposing Mozart to Bach's style since it represented the dominant trends of Italian *galant* music that were at the height of their popularity. As Gärtner states, "[Leopold] gave Mozart free rein, even encouraging him to turn to Johann Christian Bach, the one person to whom the boy was strongly attracted to as a musician and as a human being."[30]

There are a number of written accounts and musical links that provide evidence for the close relationship Mozart had with Christian while he was in London. These support the idea that Bach functioned as Mozart's mentor.[31] One well-known account, written by Nannerl shortly after Mozart's death, reveals the closeness that J.C. Bach and Mozart shared during this time:

> Herr Johann Christian Bach, the Queen's teacher, took the son between his legs, the former played a few bars, and the other continued, and in this way they played a whole sonata, and someone not seeing it would have thought that only one man was playing.[32]

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[28] Holman, 3.
[29] Gärtner, 206.
[30] Ibid., 214.
[31] Ibid., 206.
[32] Nannerl Mozart, "The Reminiscences of Nannerl Mozart," in *Mozart Speaks* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1991), 322

From this quote, it can be concluded that Mozart had a close, personal relationship with Bach while he was in London. This statement also reveals that Mozart must have been fluent in Bach's instrumental style since he was able to mimic Christian closely enough to sound as if "only one man was playing."

Many of the pieces that Mozart wrote while he was in London provide further support for his interaction with Bach. The influence of Bach's music on Mozart's development took on great importance during a period of time in which Leopold fell ill and relocated to Chelsea—a town outside of London. During Leopold's illness, Mozart gained independence to explore music on his own since his father refrained from instructing him during this time.[33] Without his father's assistance, Mozart wrote down his first compositions in his own hand, creating what is known today as *The London Sketchbook*.[34] This book contains multiple musical sketches and fragments that clearly show the musical experiments he was engaging with. Before the *London Sketchbook*, Mozart's compositional output consisted of small keyboard pieces, which Leopold wrote himself in Nannerl's music book.[35] Although the pieces in the sketchbook are also written for keyboard, they exhibit his independent exploration of new genres and styles. Musicologists, such as Gärtner, also claim that Mozart may have intended for these works to be orchestrated for instrumental ensembles. In reference to a modern-day orchestration of the London Sketchbook, Gärtner states, "The result [of the orchestration] is surprising: much of what sounds awkward if played on the harpsichord alone displays tonal beauty that suggests a much more mature Mozart. Through these orchestrations we may find a partial answer to the question of whether the sketch

[33] Gärtner, 207.
[34] Ibid., 207.
[35] Ibid., 216.

book reveals any of Christian's influence."[36] Thus, the orchestrated version of the London Sketchbook shows early melodic and tonal connections between Bach and Mozart.

In addition to *the London Sketchbook*, another major compositional development Mozart experienced while in London involved the writing of his first symphonies. Such symphonies include his K. 16, and K. 19, which have been cited as sharing a close resemblance to symphonies Bach and Carl Friedrich Abel—another German-born composer living in London.[37] Gärtner supports the conclusion that Mozart modeled his symphonies off of Bach's opus three stating, "In the K. 16 and K. 19 symphonies, a teacher student relationship is still evident [between Bach and Mozart]."[38] Although Christian's opus three, which consists of a set of six sinfonias, had not been published by the time of Mozart's visit, he must have granted Mozart access to these pieces in their manuscript form since the connection to the young composer's first works are so strong.[39] Mozart also may have been able to attend public performances of Bach's symphonies. The year 1765 marked the beginning of the Bach-Abel series of subscription concerts, which featured the instrumental works of these two composers. According to musicologist Neal Zaslaw, Mozart, in addition attending these concerts, may have even been invited to participate in the performances because of his status as a virtuosic instrumentalist.[40]

Bach's sinfonias on which Mozart based K. 16 and K. 19 more closely resembled an expanded, three-movement opera overture than the mature four-movement symphony associated with the latter half of the 18th century. Instead of four movements, the sinfonias would generally have three—an allegro, andante, and a presto. Although this form may be considered to be more

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[36] Gärtner, 209.
[37] Ibid., 215.
[38] Ibid., 217.
[39] Ibid., 206.
[40] Neal Zaslaw*, Mozart's Symphonies: Context, Performance, Practice, Reception* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 21.

simplistic, it is what established the foundation for later symphonies and clearly dominated Mozart's early instrumental works. Saint-Foix describes Christian's three-movement symphony in the following statement:

> Johann Christian Bach, in England, did not modify his symphonic procedure; he continued to build a veritable overture, in three movements, brilliant and elegant, the first movement revealing clear cut dualism between its ideas, the two themes being in opposition to each other, the one strong and rhythmic, the other slighter and more cantabile in style.[41]

As Saint-Foix states, Bach utilized an early sonata form as the basis for the structure of his first movements. This form features a clear dual-motive "exposition" of sorts in the first half of a movement and repeats this material in the tonic key in the second half. However, it lacks a true development section, which is a standard feature of the mature sonata form. The formal tendencies of this early sonata form can be found throughout Mozart's early works.[42] His symphony K. 16 provides a good example.

The beginning of K. 16 features a three-measure arpeggio of the Eb-major triad—a simple gesture characteristic of *galant* music. This leads to the first theme group, which, after an eight-measure transition of sorts, is followed by a second theme group in the dominant key. Like J.C. Bach's works, there is no true development section. Mozart simply repeats the first theme group of the exposition in the dominant key and then modulates to the relative minor. In this repetition, the transition between the two theme groups expands to twelve measures and ends on a dominant seven chord. Just as in the mature sonata form, the second theme group then repeats in the key of the tonic. Thus, while the movement has elements of sonata form, it more closely resembles binary form since it does not have a development section.

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[41] Saint-Foix, 12.
[42] Zaslaw, 35.

In addition to its form, Mozart's K. 16 exhibits other characteristics of Bach's symphonic style. The three-movement, allegro—andante—presto, structure follows the standard format of symphonies by Christian and other London artists. Aside from the first theme group of the allegro, which simply consists of block chords, the symphony also features light, graceful melodies that are reminiscent of those by Christian. The opening melody to the third movement, for instance, is typical of Christian's style, featuring arpeggiated triads in 3/8 time.

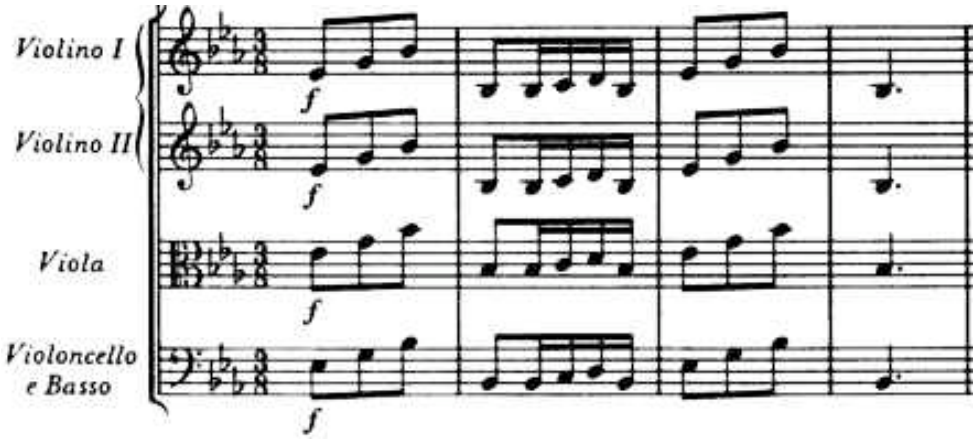

Figure 1. Mozart Symphony in E flat Major, K. 16, Movement 3, mm. 1 – 4.

Mozart also applies the same orchestration as J.C. Bach, scoring the symphony for violins, viola, bass, horns, and oboes. This thin instrumentation complements the light texture of the piece in which the melodic line and block-chord harmonies are of main importance.

Mozart's Opus 19 more closely follows Bach's work, and many musicologists directly link it to the second symphony from the Opus 3 collection. Gärtner states the reasons for this in the following quote:

> [K.19] resembles Christian's Opus 3 number 1, both in choice of keys for each movement…and in the tempo markings…There are similar fanfare like phrases and contrasts of major and minor. The first movements are especially light,

> spirited, and joyful, featuring the 'singing allegro' manner that Bach bequeathed to his young friend."[43]

Mozart's opening melody in the first movement, consisting of the fanfare melody referred to by Gärtner, does resemble Bach's opening melody to the third movement of his first symphony.

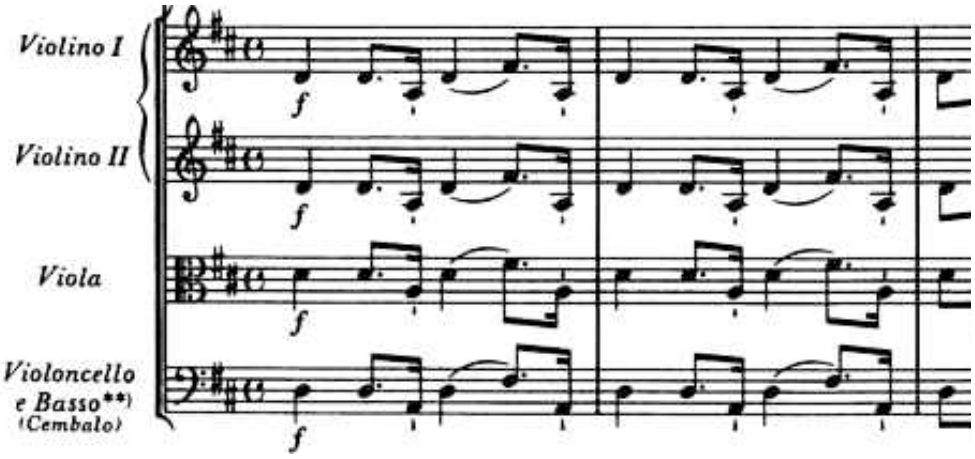

Figure 2: Mozart, Symphony in D major, K. 19, Movement 1, mm. 1 – 2

Both feature the same rhythm, consisting of a quarter note followed by a dotted eighth-note and sixteenth, and a similar arpeggio of the notes of the D major triad.[44] The form of this symphony also follows the principals of the early binary form featured in K. 16—two theme groups in the tonic and dominant keys, a proto-development section beginning in the key of the supertonic, and a partial recapitulation section in which the second theme group is repeated in the tonic. Although this form does not relate directly to the first symphony in Bach's Opus 3, which features a full recapitulation, it is still characteristic of the early forms used by Bach. Overall, from the analysis of the K. 16 and K. 19 symphonies, one can conclude that Christian's music provided Mozart with both melodic and structural models upon which he could base his works.

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[43] Gärtner, 216.

[44] Bach, *J.C. Bach: Sinfonias, Vol. 1*, dir. Hanspete Gmur, Naxos 730099408325, 1995, compact disc.

While in London, Mozart wrote two symphonies in between the composition of K. 16 and K. 19 that were based off of works by composers other than Bach. His second symphony, K. 18, for instance, is simply a direct copy of a work by Abel from his Opus 7.[45] Although his second symphony is not an original work, its existence proves that Mozart was familiar with Abel's work and may have attained copies of his music through Bach. This would not be an abnormality since Bach and Abel lived in the same dwelling for a period of time, and their styles were very similar.[46] Both Abel and Bach, for instance, composed symphonies in the same three-movement form and applied similar orchestration and texture.

Compared to Mozart's works prior to his visit to London, the compositions he wrote under Bach's guidance highlight major developments that took place during a critical part of his childhood. As Gärtner states, "Mozart was exposed to J.C. Bach during a crucial point of his formative years…J.C. Bach plays a crucial role in the pivotal transition form childhood to adulthood."[47] In London, Mozart's first works for orchestra appeared in addition to his first vocal pieces. The melodies he wrote for these pieces clearly mimic Bach's style, proving him a solid foundation in the *stile galant*. These stylistic qualities would become staples of his musical language as his compositional abilities progressed.

After staying fifteen months in London, Mozart and his family departed from England in order to complete their European tour. This marked an end to the most important and influential encounter Mozart had with Bach. The stay in London, however, had a lasting impact on Mozart, judging from his continued references to J.C. Bach in his letters and his music. The most direct evidence of Mozart's lingering connection to Bach is provided by letter correspondence with his

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[45] Alan Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores and Sketches* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 11 – 13.

[46] Gärtner, 257.

[47] Ibid., 211.

father in which he occasionally mentions Christian. Many of these references to Bach occurred in letters written during Mozart's 1777-1778 trip to Mannheim and Paris. The high frequency at which Bach's name is mentioned in these letters is indicative of the possibility that his music played an important role in Mozart's musical word before this period of time. One of the first references to Bach occurred in a letter written from Mannheim in November of 1777. In this letter, Mozart documents a disagreement he had with the composer Georg Joseph Vogler regarding Bach's reputation. This letter reveals both Mozart's love and respect of Bach and his desire to seek out copies of Bach's newest works:

> [Vogler] disparages the great masters. Why, he even ran down [Johann Christian] Bach to me…I had wanted to see Bach's opera and I had heard from Holzbauer that Vogler possessed a copy. So I asked him for it…When he saw me a few days later, he asked me with an obvious sneer: 'Well, do you find it beautiful?...It has one fine aria…why of course, that hideous aria by Bach, that filthy stuff…which he certainly wrote in his cups.' I thought I should have to seize his front hair and pull it hard, but I pretended not to hear him, said nothing, and walked away.[48]

From this quote, one can assume that Mozart made a habit of seeking out J.C. Bach's newest works and, thus, provides evidence that Bach's music had a prolonged influence on Mozart.

In the letter correspondence during this trip, Leopold also made numerous references to Bach's music, proving that he too was aware of his son's high opinion of the composer. His first reference occurs in a response to a letter from Mozart in which his son asks him to send a copy of J.C. Bach's aria "Cara la dolce fiamma." Leopold's response makes it clear that the members of the family still possess Christian's works and made a habit of copying them. He also reveals that Mozart had written coloratura passages for this aria, providing further evidence that Mozart made additions to a number of works by Bach.[49] Leopold refers to Bach again in a later letter in

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[48] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Letters of Mozart and his Family* volume 2, trans. by Emily Anderson (London: Macmillan and Co, 1938), 543.

[49] Ibid., 731.

which he attempts to prompt Mozart to increase his compositional output. In the letter, he tells Wolfgang to write music of a "simple" nature that would be appropriate for the amateur music market. He references Bach as a model Mozart should follow, knowing that his son had a high opinion of him. Citing Bach's works for amateurs, he states, "Did Bach lower himself by such work? Not at all. Good compositions, sound construction, *il fiol*—these distinguish the master from the bungler—even in trifles."[50]

A letter Mozart wrote to his father from Mannheim in February of 1778 further clarifies how Bach's music may have played a role his compositional process. In it he discusses how he used an aria by Bach as an inspirational model for one of his new compositions, revealing his fondness for some of Bach's works.

> For practice I have also set to music the aria "Non so d'onde viene," which has been so beautifully composed by Bach. Just because I know Bach's setting so well and like it so much, and because it is always ringing in my ears, I wished to try and see whether in spite of all this I could write an aria totally unlike his. And, indeed, mine does not resemble his in the very least.[51]

Mozart clearly had a passion for Bach's music, and his vivid musical memory latched on to some of his pieces. Such model compositions would serve as starting points from which Mozart's would base own works. This practice certainly explains many of the connections between the music of the two composers and will be discussed in greater depth later in the paper.

Soon after Mozart wrote this letter, he had a final encounter with J.C. Bach while he was staying in Paris. Bach was in the city preparing for the premier of his newest opera, *Amadis de Gaule,* and Mozart expresses the delight at meeting the great composer again. After mentioning the composer's visit to his father, he states "You can easily imagine [Bach's] delight and mine at meeting again; perhaps his delight may not have been quite as sincere as mine…I love him and

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[50] Mozart, *Letters*, 889.
[51] Ibid., 736.

respect him with all my heart."[52] Such enthusiasm is clearly indicative of the close relationship that they had in London and of the fondness that Mozart continued to feel for him. Shortly after this meeting Mozart began his long journey back to Salzburg, where his correspondence with his father ceased until his trip to Munich in 1780. This marks an end to the general references to Bach. Mozart's final reference to Christian occurs shortly after the composer's death in April of 1782. On the subject of Bach's death, he states "What a loss to the musical world."[53] This statement, although brief, shows that Mozart maintained a positive opinion of Bach throughout his life. Such an opinion is noteworthy since Mozart rarely spoke so highly of other composers. As musicologist Alfred Einstein states, "Johann Christian is the only musician—perhaps with the exception of Joseph Haydn—about whom not a harsh word appears in Mozart's letters."[54]

While Mozart made a number of references to Bach in his letters, these occurrences are sporadic and clearly do not account for all of the instances in which Mozart may have come into contact with Bach's music. Musical references to Christian's style and melodies, however, help to fill in these gaps. Since Mozart made so many of these references after his return from London, he must have taken some of J.C. Bach manuscripts with him. As Gärtner states, "When Mozart said farewell to England, he carried with him a substantial parcel containing music by J.C. Bach, including the three Opus 5 sonatas that Wolfgang had arranged as concertos...His strong stylistic ties to Christian remained in place, as reflected in Mozart's occasional literal quotations of Bach's themes."[55] Bach's image as a great composer had clearly been cemented in his mind, and he would always be on the lookout for his works. Documentation and music

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[52] Ibid., 900.
[53] Mozart, *Letters* Volume 3,1193.
[54] Alfred Einstein, *Mozart: His Character and his Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 116.
[55] Gärtner, 246.

reveals that Mozart must have still been gaining exposure to some of Christian's newest works and that even his old works remained fresh in his mind.

Mozart's symphonies composed shortly after his return to Salzburg from England provide direct evidence that he still had access to J.C. Bach's works. In the years following his tour, he continued to compose symphonies in the three-movement, *galant* style commonly applied by Bach and Abel. As Saint-Foix states, "Mozart remains stubbornly attached to the practices that London master had himself never pursued with a like persistency…Italianisms of J.C. Bach are retained in all of his instrumental movements."[56] As an example, Saint-Foix cites how Mozart still had yet not utilized basic sonata form in his opening movements, choosing instead to leave out a development section and not return to the principal theme in the tonic at the end of the piece. Mozart's symphonic melodies also still referenced works by Bach. This melodic similarity can be seen in the final movement to his serenade K. 62a, which is shown in the example below.

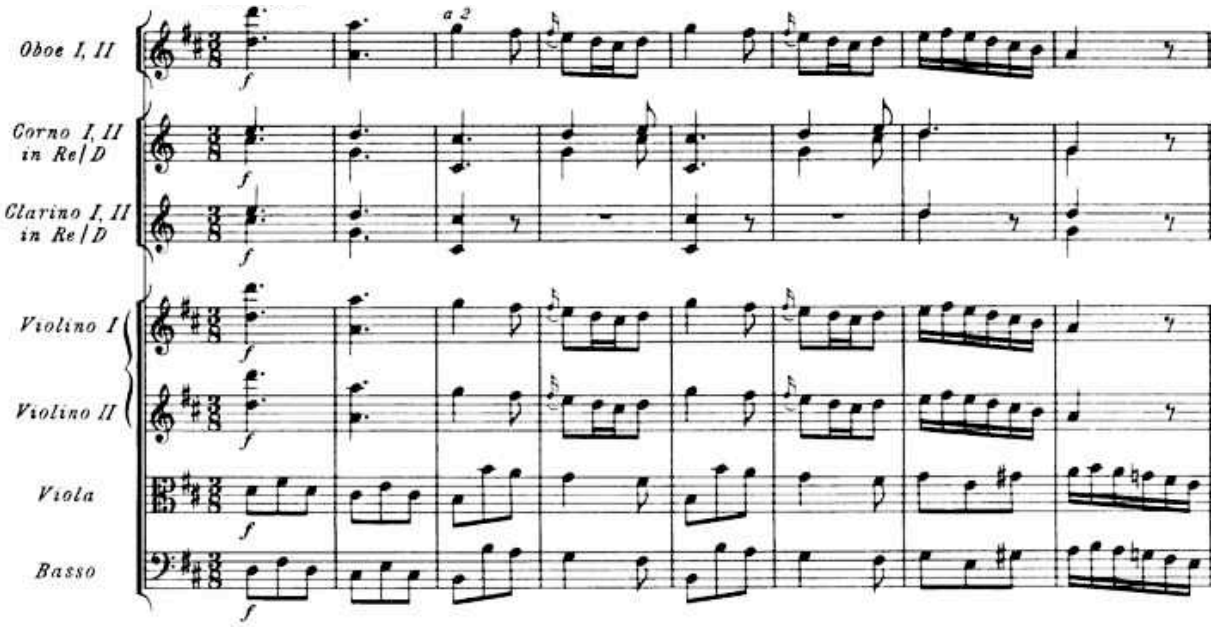

Figure 3. Mozart, Serenade No.1 in D major, K 62a, Movement 5, mm. 1-8.

[56] Saint-Foix, 17.

The light, jovial melody in 3/8 time is characteristic of Christian's presto finales in his overtures and symphonies. In fact, it seems to be modeled off of Bach's final movement from the overture to the opera *Catone in Utica*.[57] Gärtner supports the possibility that Mozart could have used this work as a model, stating that while he was in London "he must have heard the overtures to *Artasere*, *Catone in Utica*, and *Alessandro nell'Indio*."[58] Thus, it is likely that he could have taken such works with him after he left London.

Mozart's keyboard concertos provide another set of musical references that provide a link to Bach's music. Christian's keyboard music would have attracted the attention of Mozart and his father since they were among some of the first pieces written specifically for the pianoforte, which was still a relatively new instrument at the time.[59] The most direct evidence linking Mozart to Bach's keyboard music is the set of 'pasticcio' piano concertos, K. 107, which Mozart composed in 1772. According to musicologist John Irving, Mozart had written a number of other pasticcio concertos—K. 37, 39, 40, and 41—in 1767, which were basically "concerted transcriptions of movements from solo sonatas by other composers."[60] Such a practice likely served an educational purpose and was encouraged by his father. This can be gathered from the fact both Mozart and his father's handwriting can be found in the manuscripts of the concertos. The K. 107 concertos, for instance, feature Wolfgang's handwriting in the string parts, while Leopold's notation can be found in the figured bass and keyboard parts.[61]

Mozart's K. 107 concertos are basically piano quartet arrangements of Bach's opus 5 keyboard sonatas. The instrumentation of these pieces, consisting of two violins, a cello, and a

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[57] Johann Christian Bach, *J.C. Bach Overtures*, Volume 1, dir. Anthony Halstead, Cpo Records, 1995, cd recording.

[58] Gärtner, 217

[59] Heartz, 919.

[60] John Irving, *Mozart's Piano Concertos* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 17.

[61] Ibid., 19.

piano, matches the kind of ensemble that Christian used in his Opus 1 and 7 concertos. In the arrangements, Mozart adds tutti sections, which feature all of the instruments, to Bach's sonatas so that the works feature sections of keyboard solo in alternation with the full ensemble.[62] Looking at movement one from the first concerto of K. 107, Mozart has basically kept the music of Bach's sonata intact, including aspects of rhythm, melody, accompaniment, and harmony.[63] However, he has inserted four tutti sections, which basically repeat or introduce Bach's melodic motives. The first tutti section is the most significant, lasting nearly thirty measures. In it, he introduces the two theme groups of Bach's exposition in the strings, while the keyboard provides figured-base harmonization. The other three tutti sections, occurring in measures 70-74, 143-147, and 148-152 are noticeably shorter and simply provide emphasis for the ending of a particular section. Measures 70-74, for instance occur right before the development section while 143-147 mark the final cadence before Mozart's cadenza.[64]

While Mozart may have written K. 107 early in his life in 1772, a much later work—Piano Concerto no. 12 in A major, K. 414—still highlights JC Bach's lasting influence. The work was composed in the latter half of 1782, which was the year of Christian's death.[65] Its andante movement directly quotes the theme from the second movement of J.C. Bach's overture to opera *La calamita de cuori.* Since Mozart composed K. 414 a number of months after Bach's death, one can assume that he utilized this theme as a memorial to the composer.[66] In addition to showing Mozart's respect and continued admiration of Bach, the existence of this piece also

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[62] Irving, 19.

[63] Bach, Johann Christian, *Klaviersonaten I, Opus 5*, No. 2, Movement 1 (G. Henle Verlag Munchen, 1981), 6-10.

[64] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, "*Konzert in D, K 107*, Concerto I," in *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe,* NMA X/28/Abt. 2: Bearbeitungen von Werken verschiedener Komponisten: Klavierkonzerte und Kadenzen, 1964.

[65] Konrad Küster, *Mozart: A Musical Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[66] Mozart, *Letters*, 1193.

indicates that he still had Bach's works in his catalogue. Both Bach and Mozart's settings of the theme are shown in the figures below.

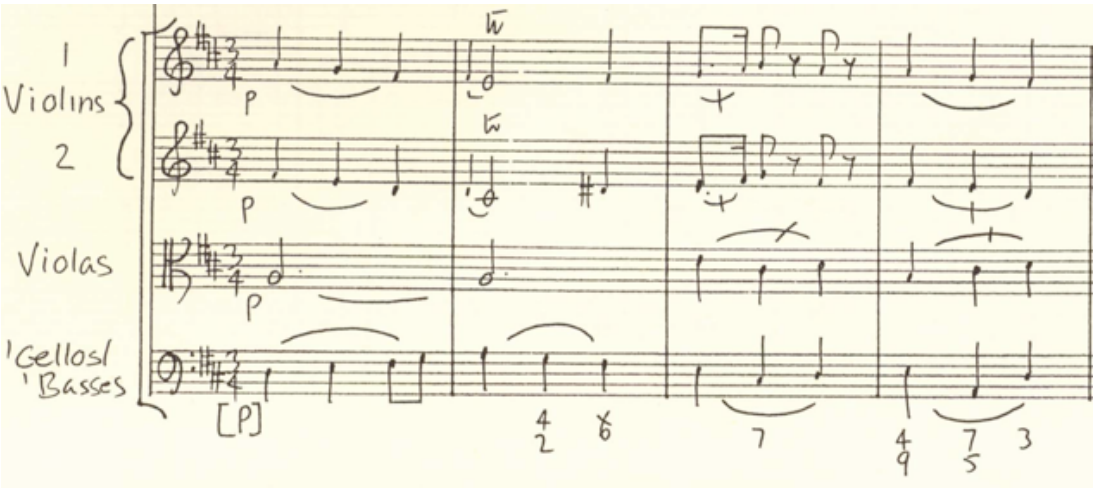

Figure 4. Johann Christian Bach, Overture to *La calamita de cuori*, Movement 2, Measures 1-4.

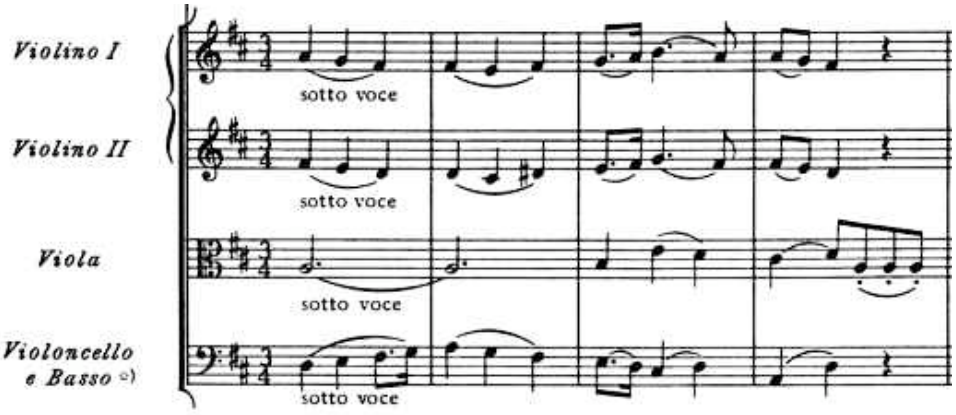

Figure 5. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 12, K. 414, Movement 2, mm. 1-4.

Aside from some subtle rhythmic and harmonic changes to the viola and cello parts in the third and fourth measures, Mozart produced a nearly identical version of Bach's theme, preserving even the original orchestration. This concerto is not the only instance in which Mozart quoted

this theme. He also used it as the basis for themes found in his Acht Menuette, No. 4 (K. 315a) and in his aria "Dolce d'amor" from *La finta giardiniera*.[67]

Around the time of the composition of K. 414, Mozart made other melodic references to Christian's music in his piano concertos. Most of these references point to Bach's Opus 13 concertos, which had been composed in 1777 and are considered today to be an example of some of his highest achievements in this genre.[68] In reference to the connections with Mozart's concertos, musicologist Richard Maunder states, "It seems quite likely that Mozart knew the Opus 13 concertos even though, unlike Opus 7, there is no record of their having been published in Vienna."[69] One instance that he cites involves the link between the beginnings of movement two of Bach's second concerto and Mozart's second movement of his twelfth piano concerto, K. 466. Both of these movements begin with a section of solo piano playing by itself without an orchestral introduction, which went against the established tradition of presenting the melodic material in the orchestra first. Maunder states that such a practice was rare and that Mozart may have copied Bach's original idea.[70] There are other instances in which Mozart briefly quotes Bach's melodies and incorporates his style in his piano concertos written during the 1780s.

Mozart's reference to a J.C. Bach opera overture in his twelfth piano concerto provides evidence that Mozart was also familiar with Bach's music in another significant genre—opera. While in London, Mozart had ample opportunity to see some of Bach's early works of this type. In 1765, for instance, Mozart was able to attend the premier of Bach's opera *Adriano in Siria*.[71]

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[67] Heartz, 928.
[68] Heartz, 917.
[69] Richard Maunder, "Keyboard Concertos IV" in *The Collected Works of J.C. Bach*, Vol. 35 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), vii.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Martha Feldman, "Staging the Virtuoso," in *Mozart's Piano Concertos* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 174.

Although his attendance of these performances was not documented, it can be assumed that he went to them since his father wished for him to absorb to musical environment of London.

Opera at the time of Mozart's birth was experiencing a series of changes. The old traditions of baroque *opera seria* were beginning to give way to *galant*-style writing. In addition to this, a new genre of opera, known as *opera buffa*, began to distance itself from the old operatic format. French composer, Christoph Willibald Gluck, also began to stress forward-looking ideals in opera, which was to have a lasting impact for over a century. Having been born in the midst of these changes, Mozart experienced a wide range of influences. Although Bach was a full generation ahead of Mozart, he was subject to these influences as well since he did not begin studying and writing opera until the late 1750s. Christian focused mainly on *opera seria* but adapted it to fit the changes of the *galant* style. Although he followed the basic established forms and guidelines outlined by the masters before him, Bach was very innovative with his melodic writing and his inclusion of instrumental music.[72] It is in these areas that Bach stood out from his contemporaries and captured the imagination of the young Mozart.

Mozart composed his first opera aria, "Va, dal furor portata," K. 19c/21 around the same time that he was exposed to Bach's *Adriano in Siria* in London.[73] Although the aria features the vocal simplicity associated with Bach's style during that time, no direct melodic links can be established with vocal works by Bach. Mozart does, however, structure the aria in accordance with the da cappo aria form, which Bach was still applying in his works at that time. Early evidence supporting that Mozart looked directly to Bach's arias as models and sources of inspiration, however, is provided by a series of works in which Mozart elaborated upon arias already composed by Bach. One of the earliest of these elaborations involves the aria "Cara, la

[72] Heartz, 890.
[73] Gärtner, 223.

dolce fiamma" from Bach's *Adriano in Siria*. Mozart's version of this piece, which may have been written by his father, simply involves decoration of the melodic line.[74] Regardless of who may have written this decorative line, the existence of this elaboration provides evidence that the Mozart family owned at least one aria from *Adriano in Siria*.

Another instance in which Mozart elaborates upon a Bach vocal work involves the aria "Non so d'onde viene," which he refers to in the letter of February 1778. In Mozart's version of the aria, the orchestration, form, and harmonic progression differs from Bach's, but there is still melodic similarity between the two versions of the piece. This similarity can be observed in the examples below.

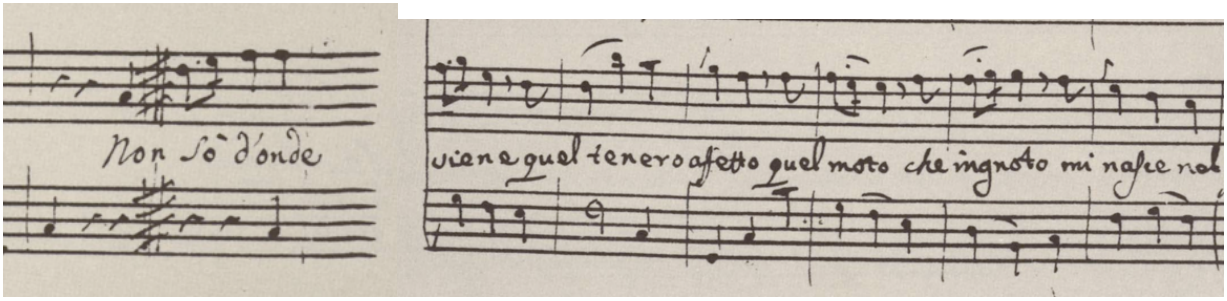

Figure 6. J.C. Bach, "Non so D'onde Viene" measures 20-27.

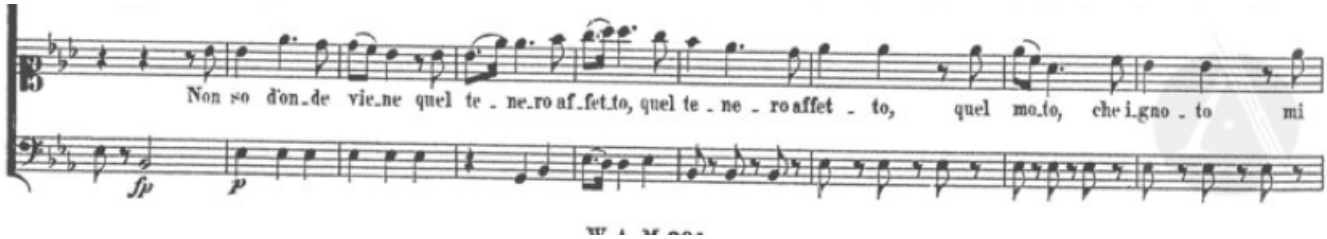

Figure 7. W.A. Mozart, "Non so D'onde Viene" mm. 40-48.

From these excerpts, one can see how Mozart's melody follows the same contour as J.C. Bach's and contains similar rhythms. Although Mozart does embellish the melody through the repetition of the phrase "quell tenero afetto," he still upholds the same basic structure. Such an example

[74] Heartz, 899.

highlights Mozart's use of Bach's works as models as a part of his compositional process. Instead of copying the piece directly, he adds to the form and expands the melody until he truly ends up creating something unique. As Einstein states, "Mozart used his models as a kind of springboard—he soared higher and farther than his predecessors."[75] From the above information, much can be inferred about Mozart's compositional process and education beyond the basics presented at the beginning of the paper. Clearly the technique of using works by other composers as models played an important role in both the learning process and the compositional process itself. Mozart must have commonly used works by Christian as inspiration for a number of his other compositions. This could possibly explain why there are uncanny similarities in many of his later works.

As the eighteenth century progressed, Bach's style continued to evolve along with Mozart's. Both began to exhibit features of the high classical era. During this period, it is not known for sure if Mozart had access to Bach's newest works. One specific instance, however, provides evidence supporting the conclusion that Mozart was either still able to attend performances of Bach's operas or attain manuscript copies of his scores. The instance in question concerns the aria "Inflelice in van m'affanno" in Bach's *La Clamenza di Scipione* and its connection to Mozart's "Matern aller arten" in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. In "Infelice" Bach employs an unconventional style that resembles the form of a sinfonia concertante. This aria opens with a unique instrumental introduction, which presents fast and slow themes and introduces a concertino consisting of violin, cello, oboe, and flute. The instrumental section eventually gives way to the solo singer, highlighting the virtuosity of the performer. Concertino instruments, however, continue play solo sections in alternation with the singer. Such use of a

[75] Einstein,122.

group of solo instruments is derived from the sinfonia concertante—a musical form in which sections of orchestral ritornello are interspersed with solos featuring multiple instruments playing simultaneously. Bach composed a number of sinfonia concertantes while in Mannheim and France, and seemed to incorporate its characteristics into his opera.

"Infelice" opens in manner similar to the traditional aria form in which the first theme is presented in the full ensemble. In measure 11, however, the second theme is introduced in a duet between solo oboe and violin. Five measures later, the theme is repeated by solo flute and cello, thereby introducing all the instruments of the concertino. All four instruments continue to play in repetitive alternation throughout the rest of the introduction. The full concertino finally plays in measure 26, solidifying the unity of this group of instruments. Figure 4 below shows this section in which all four solo instruments (flute, oboe, violin, and cello) enter.

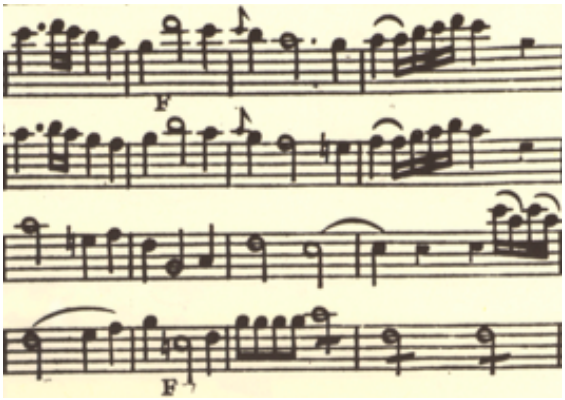

Figure 8. Johann Christian Bach, "Infelice" mm. 26-29. Introduction of the full concertino.

After the soprano enters, the solo instruments continue to play a significant role. In many instances, they alternate with the soprano part as if the vocal line were a part of the concertino, creating a dialogue between all five parts. This is evident in the example below in which the soprano's melisma is interrupted by imitation in the concertino parts. From top to bottom, the parts are flute, oboe, violin, cello, and soprano.

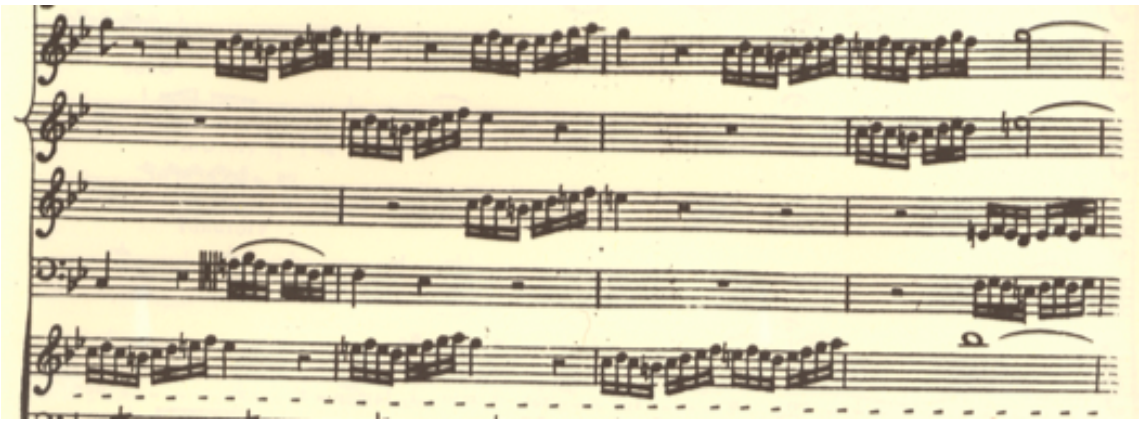

Figure 9. Johann Christian Bach, “Infelice,” Imitation between soprano, cello, violin, oboe, and flute.

There are numerous instances in which the concertino interrupts the soprano altogether and takes on the role of a ritornello in a concerto. On page 120, this happens for the first time.

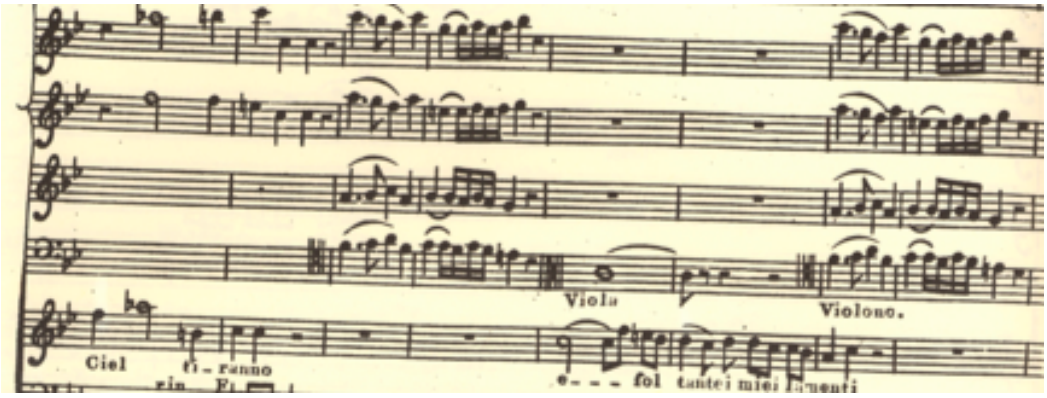

Figure 10. Johann Christian Bach Concerted form of aria—interruption by concertino ritornello.

From the example above, one can observe how the concertino interrupts the soprano part in order to play a motive introduced by the solo instruments in the opening. This particular motive is only played by the concertino and dramatically interrupts the soprano in three other instances. Such features of this concertino are readily apparent in Mozart’s “Alla Martem,” providing the greatest connection between the two pieces.

Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* premiered almost five years after Bach's final opera, but Mozart's unusual usage of a concertino in "Martern" provides evidence that he may have used "Infelice" as a model. As in Bach's opera, "Martern" begins with a dramatic instrumental opening, which features contrasting slow and fast sections. Although this opening is on a larger scale, it still exhibits sinfonia concertante form, presenting four solo instrument parts, which together form the concertino. Like Bach, Mozart's concertino consists of solo flute, oboe, violin, and cello. Presenting each part individually in the first section of the opening, Mozart, introduces the four instruments as a group towards the end in a manner similar to Bach.

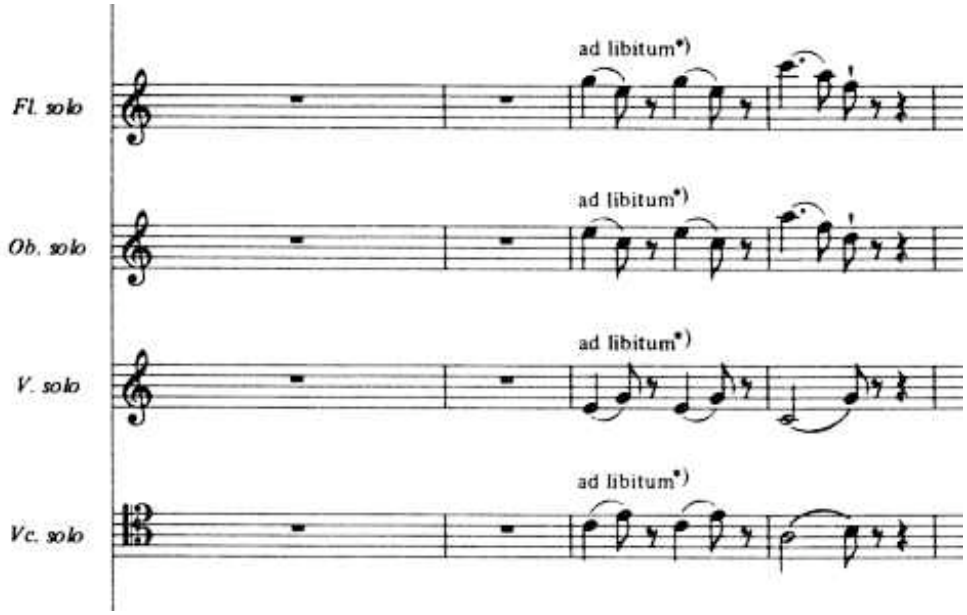

Figure 11. Mozart, "Alla Martem," mm. 22. Introduction of the solo concertino.

Mozart also uses the above theme as a ritornello that is only played by the concertino instruments throughout the course of the piece. In measure 93, for instance, he restates this motive in the concertino, providing dramatic contrast.

Once the soprano enters, Mozart uses the solo instrumental parts in alternation with the singer. Such an instance is shown in the figure below in which the soprano part is interrupted by the solo instruments in a manner reminiscent of Bach.

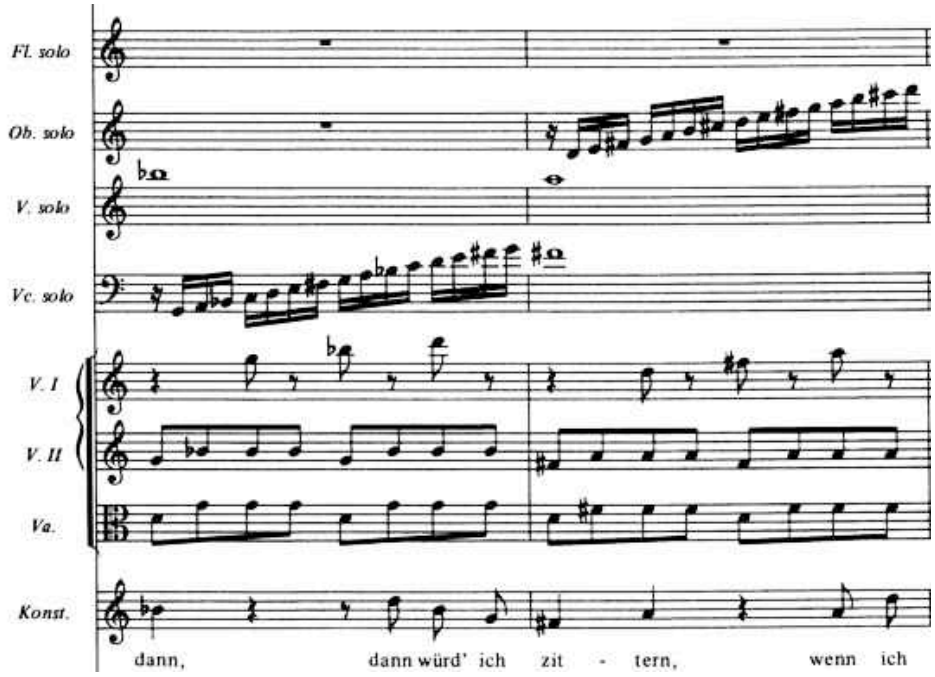

Figure 12. Mozart, "Alla Martem," Measure 84. Soprano and solo instruments together.

In general, Bach and Mozart utilize their concertino parts in the same manner. While interacting with the soprano, they also provide a ritornello that is juxtaposed with the main vocal line throughout the piece. Such a unique combination of the sinfonia concertante form and the aria surely provides clear connection between the two composers. Thus, Mozart must have attained a manuscript for *La Clamenza di Scipione* after its composition in 1778. Judging from his 1778 letter in which he documents his search for the score to Bach's *Lucio Silla*, his attainment of *La Clamenza di Scipione*'s score is not unlikely.

Overall, Mozart was born during a time of great change in which composers all over Europe were experimenting and adopting new practices. Bach happened to be one of these

experimental composers who came into contact with Mozart during his youth, influencing him significantly. Through Bach, Mozart was exposed to the successful fusion of styles from Germany, Italy, and England—a cosmopolitan sound that he would later come to master. He also received a solid foundation in the basics of the *galant* style. One can conclude that Bach truly provided Mozart with a musical foundation upon which he built his mature compositional style.

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