

J.S. Bach

Invention no.1 BWV 772

A SUBJECT at the tonic SUBJECT at the dominant X^I X^I X^I X^I

(Right hand leads, Left hand follows)

SEQUENCE descending by a third
3 repetitions

(modulation to dominant)

5 X^I (extended) **B** KEY: G Major X X

X fragment (cadence G: I⁶ V I)

SUBJECT at the tonic SUBJECT at the dominant

(Left hand leads, Right hand follows)

9 X^I X^I Y Y

SEQUENCE moving up by a step
2 repetitions

SEQUENCE moving down by a third
4 repetitions

12 Y X^I fragment X^I fragment (cadence a: i V)

(modulation to relative minor)

X^I fragment (extended)

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a piece in a minor key. The first system starts at measure 15, marked 'KEY: a minor'. It features a treble and bass clef. The right hand (RH) has a melodic line with motifs marked 'X' and 'X^I' (inversion). The left hand (LH) has a bass line with motifs marked 'X^I' and 'X'. A note 'i)' is present in the first measure of the LH. A bracket labeled '(modulation back to tonic)' spans measures 11-14. The second system starts at measure 19, marked 'Ending KEY: C Major'. It shows a cadence in C major with a 'ii' chord and a 'V⁷' chord. A sequence of notes is marked 'Y' and 'Y^I'. A legend at the bottom left states: 'SEQUENCE moving up by a third 3 repetitions'.

This little delightful and intricate pedagogical study by Bach is literally child's play. It was intended, like all the *Klavierübung*, to be used as a teaching aid for his own children. Bach was concerned with more than just keyboard technique, but also the subtleties of composition and musical structure.

It is in three main sub-sections laid out in closely related keys:

- A: beginning in the tonic and modulating to the dominant (bars 1 - 6)
- B: beginning in the dominant and modulating to the relative minor (bars 7 - 14)
- C: beginning in the relative minor and modulating back to the tonic for the final cadence. (bars 15 - 22)

Motivically almost the entire piece is derived from the first bar of the right hand.

The subject lasts for one bar, but the first half of the subject (marked X) is the germinal motive for what follows.

This little fragment displays contrapuntal techniques often employed by Baroque composers:

Principally in this work, inversion, there is much interplay throughout between X and its inversion X^I

The figure marked Y is derived from X by augmentation.

Sequences are used throughout, often assisting in the modulation from one key to the next.

As a pedagogical work there is much concentration on the independence between right and left hands. We see this in the first two sections where what the right hand plays in the opening is taken by the left hand in the new key at bar 7 and vice-versa.

Again we see this reversal of roles between bars 11 - 12 and 19 - 20.

There is much 'question and answer' going on between the hands, such as in bars 15 - 18.