Mozart's KV 107 and Johann Christian Bach's Opus V

By NIELS KRABBE

"Rede mit einem graveur, was er am liebsten haben möchte, – vielleicht leichte Quatro à 2 Violini Viola e Basso. glaubst du dich vielleicht durch solche Sachen herunter zu setzen? – keinesweegs! hat dann Bach in London iemals etwas anders, als derley Kleinigkeiten herausgegeben? das Kleine ist Gross, wenn es natürlich – flüssend und leicht geschrieben und gründlich gesetzt ist. Es so zu machen ist schwerer als alle die den meisten unverständliche Künstliche Harmonische progressionen, und schwer auszuführende Melodyen. hat sich Bach dadurch heruntergesetzt? - - keines wegs! der gute Saz und die Ordnung, il filo – dieses unterscheidet den Meister vom Stümper auch in Kleinigkeiten".

These words were written by Leopold Mozart to his son Wolfgang in a letter from Salzburg of August the 13th 1778. Many examples in letters by members of the Mozart family show that this is not just the warning of a father to his son not to throw himself into too ambitious projects; a feeling of true admiration, perhaps even of a kind of kinship with "Bach in London", is behind the words, a feeling which is obviously also shared by Wolfgang. It is a well known fact that Johann Christian Bach was one of the comparatively few composers admired by Mozart. In Mozart's letters—not only from the early years in London, but also from much later when he was no longer under Johann Christian's personal influence—we often find Johann Sebastian Bach's youngest son mentioned as his friend and master. Mozart does not express this admiration in verbal terms only. In his music, too, he reveals his relationship to Bach. In the literature on Mozart these rather intangible stylistic similarities between the two composers are often referred to, but only in rare cases are they expressed in exact musical terms. "Kein Komponist neben Johann Christian Bach hat eine solche Fülle von Mozartismen geschrieben, die geradezu eine musikalische Vorverkündigung des grössten Meister der Epoche bedeutet" [1].

In the whole question of the Mozart–Bach relationship one looks in vain for

1. Ernst Bücken, *Die Musik des Rokokos und der Klassik,* 1927, p. 100.

a clear distinction between those elements in Mozart's music that could have been taken over from Johann Christian Bach and those that belong to the general musical vocabulary of the time. What makes this problem so difficult is the lack of a thorough stylistic analysis of that period in the history of music which is variously designated "galant", "rococo", "Übergangszeit", "Frühklassik", and many other things; under such circumstances the term "mid-century style" [2], suggested by Jens Peter Larsen, seems to be the least binding and, accordingly, the most useful.

It is not only in connection with a general description of Mozart's musical style, however, that Johann Christian Bach comes in for consideration; Mozart's music shows quite a few instances of themes or motives which have been taken over from works by Johann Christian Bach with little or no change, and in the great majority of these cases such quotations must be called "significant" rather than "coincidental", to use the terms of Jan LaRue [3].

The following examples illustrate this:

a. The main theme of the slow movement of *Mozart's A major piano concerto, KV 414 (385 p),* is taken from the Andante of Bach's overture to Galuppi's opera *"La Calamita de Cuori"* (Venice 1752), which was performed under Bach's management in London in 1763 [4]. Mozart only quotes the first four bars of this theme, which is very characteristic of Bach's slow movements with its cantabile, operatic melody, and in Mozart's use of it we find the same subtle underlining of the subdominant as in the model by Bach. Mozart's piano concerto was written in 1782, and in the 6th edition of the *Köchelverzeichnis* this quotation is related to Mozart's words in a letter to his father of April the 10th 1782: "sie werden wohl wissen dass der Engländer Bach gestorben ist?—schade für die musikalische welt!"

   Two years earlier Mozart had already used the same theme in quite a different connection, i. e. in the beginning of the trio of the fourth minuet of *Acht Menuette mit Trio für Klavier (KV 315 g),* in this case with another continuation than the one known from the piano concerto *(music example 1).*

2. *Some Observations on the Development and Characteristics of Vienna Classical Instrumental Music. Studia Musicologica* IX, 1967.
3. *Significant and Coincidental Resemblances between Classical Themes.* Journal of the American Musicological Society, 14, 1961, p. 224–234.
4. Apart from the overture, Bach composed one or two arias to this opera (Terry, *John Christian Bach,* 2nd edition, 1967, p. xxviii). The overture was written for an earlier occasion; it was printed as no. 6 of the collection "Sei Sinfonie . . .", advertised in *Mercure de Français* on the 24th of January 1762 (this edition is not mentioned by Terry).

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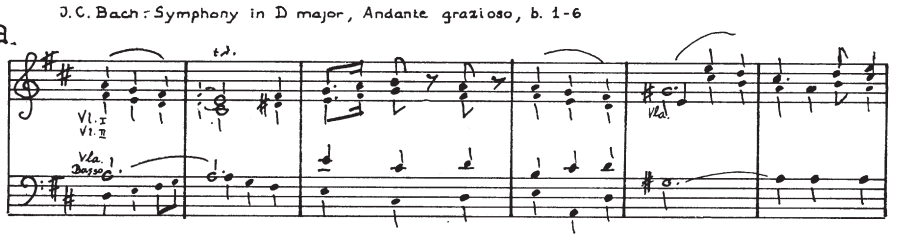

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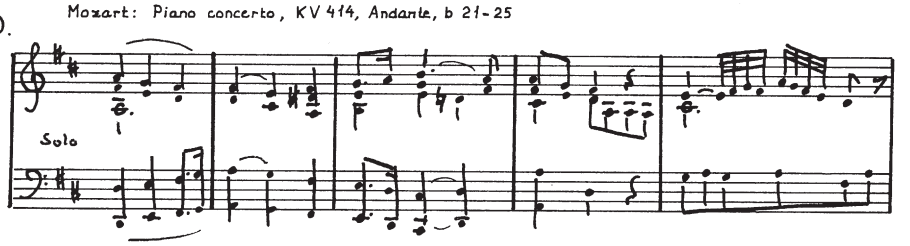

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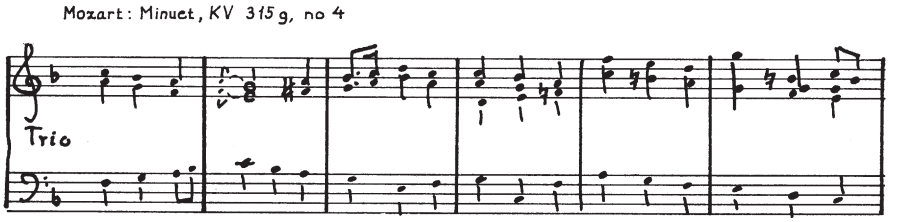


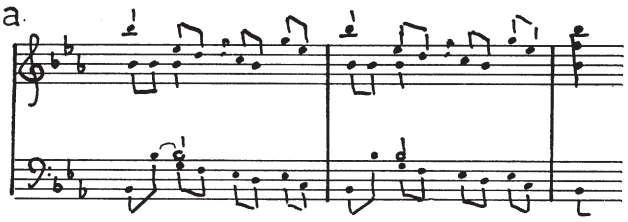
b. In the *sonata in B flat major for violin and piano, KV 378,* the epilogue is a quotation from a sinfonia concertante by Johann Christian Bach in E flat major for 2 violins and orchestra (Terry p. 288), which is also known from a Berlin copy as *Concerto a Fagotto concertato.* In Bach's work, too, the theme functions as the epilogue *(music example 2).*

The earliest, purely musical, proof of a connection between Mozart and Johann Christian Bach is *KV 107,* three piano concertos, based on Johann Christian's piano sonatas, opus V nos. 2, 3, and 4 [5]. In the classical works on Mozart these three piano concertos are either totally neglected, as in Girdlestone's book [6], or they are dealt with as an instance of uninteresting

5. Undated autograph: »*Tre Sonate del Sgr: Giovanni Bach ridotte in concerti dal Sgr. Amadeo Wolfgango Mozart. Concerto 1mo – 2do – III*«.
6. *Mozart and His Piano Concertos.* London 1948.

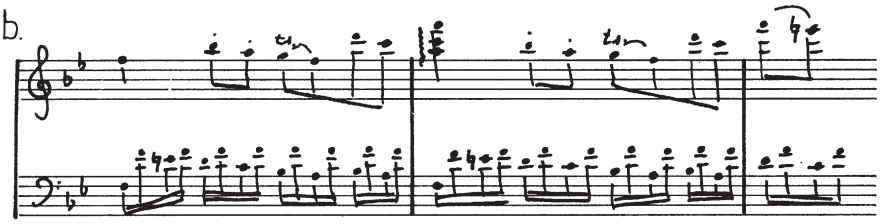
J.C. Bach: Concerted symphony in E flat major, Allegro b. 28-30

2. a.



Mozart: Sonata, KV 378, Allegro moderato. b. 65-67

b.



copying, as in the books by Hutchings [7] and Wyzewa-Saint Foix. Apart from a short study by Edwin J. Simon in Acta Musicologica *XXXI, 1959* [8], a more thorough analysis of Mozart's earliest attempts in a genre which later came to hold an important position amongst his works, has not—to the writer's knowledge—been made.

The dating of *KV 107* has always been a great problem. Wyzewa-Saint Foix and Einstein thought that these concertos were written while Mozart was still in London or immediately after his departure—that is, in 1765 or 1766—on the assumption that Mozart heard or saw the Bach sonatas some time during his stay in London between April 1764 and July 1765; according to this dating, the concertos are claimed as being a spontaneous expression of Mozart's admiration for J. C. Bach's music. However, examination of the autograph version of the concertos themselves and of the two newly-discovered cadenzas to the D major concerto [9] has shown that this dating is most probably wrong. According to these investigations the handwriting indicates a later dating, about 1770–71, that is, 6 years after Mozart's first meeting with Johann Christian, which obviously puts these arrangements in a somewhat different light. The later dating places them at the time of Mozart's travels to Italy and makes them contemporary with

7. *A Companion to Mozart's Piano Concertos.* Oxford 1948.
8. *Sonata into Concerto. A Study of Mozart's First Seven Concertos.*
9. Hans Moldenhauer, *Ein neu entdecktes Mozart-Autograph.* MJb. 1953.
W. Plath, *Beiträge zur Mozart-Autogräfen.* MJb. 1960/61.

a work like the *A major symphony, KV 114,* a fact which contradicts Wyzewa's and Saint Foix's claim that they were hurriedly copied works intended for use in his concerts in Holland and Paris [10].

The dating of Bach's opus V is itself a problem, but it is hardly likely that Mozart saw a printed edition of them during his stay in London. Like numerous other works by J. C. Bach, opus V was printed by various publishers, both English and continental. Apart from the London editions, they are known from prints by Hummel in Amsterdam, Huberty and Richomme [11] in Paris. Terry dates the original English edition as from 1768 (Terry p. 113) or, alternatively ?1770 (Terry p. 171 and 339). The earliest dated source is Breitkopf's thematic catalogue 'SVPPLEMENTO III . . . 1768" where they are registered on p. 24 under the heading "VI. Soli di J. C. Bach Milanese". Indeed, this could refer to a copy and not a printed edition [12], but the fact that Breitkopf numbers the six sonatas and lists them in the order known from the prints might indicate that the work advertised by Breitkopf is a print and not a copy, or in any case, a copy based on a printed edition. If the generally accepted theory, which would seem to be confirmed by Haydn's works, for example, is correct, that normally Breitkopf did not advertise a work until about two years after it had been written, the dating of Bach's opus V must be changed to an earlier year, that is about 1766 [13].

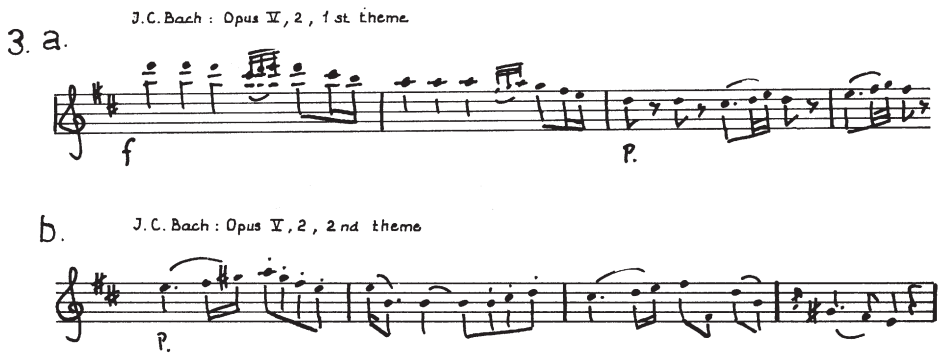
In other words, it may be regarded as an established fact that Mozart could not have seen the printed edition of these sonatas while he was in London; on the other hand, this could well have been the case in 1770–71, especially in view of the wide circulation of the sonatas. Certain circumstances, however, indicate that Mozart—regardless of when he composed the concertos—used a source different from the printed editions of Bach's opus V known to-day. Firstly the tempo indications of the movements in the first and the third concertos differ from the printed version of opus V, as can be seen from the following list:

10. Also the most recent literature on Mozart reflects this uncertainty as to the dating of KV 107. The *Mozart Handbuch* ed. Schneider and Algatzy, (1962) gives the years 1766, 1770, and 1771 as possibilities, whereas the most recent large Mozart monograph, Jean et Brigitte Massin, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,* (Fayard 1970), says "Londre ou La Haye entre juillet 1765 et debut 1766" without further justification.
11. »*Six Sonates pour le Clavecin ou le Piano Forte composees par Jean Cretien Bach . . . Oeuvre V . . . Imprimée par Richomme*". The print is to be found in the Musikaliska Akademien, Stockholm. It is not mentioned by Terry.
12. Even if Breitkopf, on the title page, says that he registers works "in manuscritto" in his catalogues, we do find quite a number of printed works, too.
13. The presence of the fifth sonata in Milan might indicate that this sonata was written even before Bach came to London in 1762.

KV 107,1	Allegro	*opus V,2*	Allegro di molto
	Andante		Andante di molto
	Tempo di Menuetto		Minuetto
KV 107,2	Allegro	*opus V,3*	Allegro
	Allegretto		Allegretto
KV 107,3	Allegro	*opus V,4*	Allegro
	Allegretto		Rondo, Allegretto [14]

Secondly, and in this connection more importantly, the second movement of *KV 107,2,* which is a variation movement, gives the variations in an order different from the one known from the printed edition of opus V, Mozart's variation 1 and 2 corresponding to Bach's 2 and 1, respectively. Of course neither of these differences proves unambiguously that Mozart used a manuscript copy as his source, though both point in that direction.

In spite of Burney's somewhat patronizing description of J. C. Bach's piano sonatas as "such as ladies can execute with little trouble", or the effusion of an anonymous reviewer: "Wenn doch Herr J. C. Bach in London, der original seyn könnte wenn er wollte, in seinen Claviersonaten mehr original wäre" [15], there is no doubt that Bach's contemporaries, including Mozart, took pleasure in these sonatas opus V. Mozart's choice of numbers 2, 3 and 4 of this collection as the sources of his adaptations is not a random one. These three sonatas, especially, are characterized by lyrical, almost aria-like themes, contrasts of expression within a single movement, and a certain brilliance of texture compared to the standards of the time, all of which makes them well suited to the purpose adaption to piano concertos. Burney's famous words from A General History of Music, "Bach seems to have been the first composer who observed the law of contrast as a principle", might have been illuminated by a quotation of the two themes from the first movement of opus V, 2 (*music example 3*):



14. Richomme's edition: *Rondeaux.*
15. Carl Friedrich Cramer, *Magazin der Musik,* Hamburg 1783.

A comparison, movement by movement, of *KV 107* and J. C. Bach's opus V shows that Mozart follows his source quite closely, but a number of details, on the other hand, show that one would be mistaken to call it a mechanical copying as many writers have done. The following description is intended to show this.

First movement

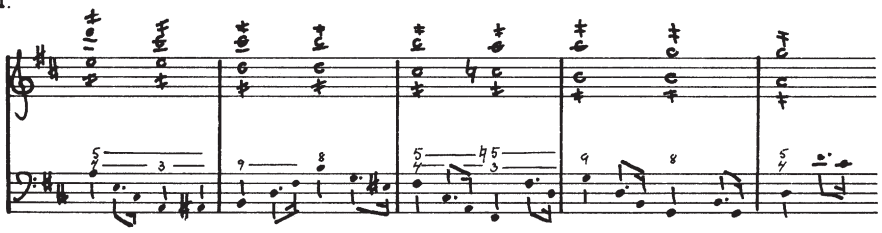
The first movements of opus V, 2 and 4 are in sonata form with a contrasting episode, which in the exposition is in the dominant and in the recapitulation in the tonic. Opus V, 2 is provided with a development section proper, where motives from the exposition are being developed. In opus V, 4, on the other hand, we find a second part which is not a development in the normal sense of the word, but rather a free fantasia built on a number of idiomatic patterns modulating through various keys.

Opus V, 3 shows the well-known bipartite form—also known from many Bach symphonies—with an "exposition" moving from the tonic to the dominant, and a second part which combines both development and recapitulation characteristics: after a quotation of the first theme, this time in the dominant, follows a brilliant modulatory section leading to a final statement in the tonic of the part of the exposition that was originally presented in the dominant.

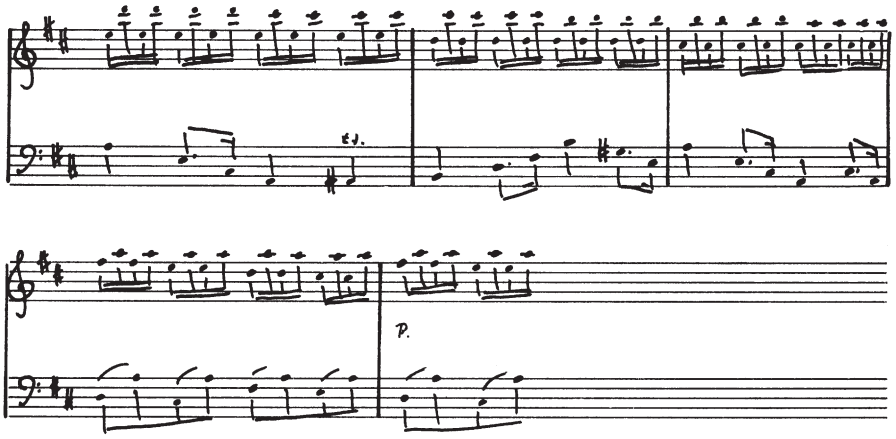
In his arrangements, Mozart takes over these formal characteristics quite literally, with the obvious difference that he provides all the first movements with a tutti-exposition and a short tutti in the end. In *KV 107,1* and 2 this tutti-exposition—apart from a few bars—is an exact copy of the solo-exposition, taken from the first part of the corresponding Bach sonata, of course with the tonal modifications due to the fact that the tutti-exposition ends in the tonic, and not, like the exposition of Bach's sonata, in the dominant. The following eaxmple shows an instance of a tonal progression in which Mozart is quite independent of his source *(music example 4):*

The first thing which strikes one here is in b. 11–12 of the Mozart example: after the b minor chord in bar 11 comes a chord which must be interpreted as the dominant with flattened fifth of f♯ minor. On first hearing one expects this chord to be followed by an F♯ major chord functioning as the dominant of b minor. As can be seen, we get instead an f♯ minor chord, somewhat disguised in that the chord changes its function at the same time as the discord is resolved (i. e. it becomes the dominant of the fourth degree). In other words, we see here an example of a chord with flattened fifth which cannot be interpreted in the usual, classical way as the dominant of the fifth degree (*Wechseldominante),* but which is in itself the dominant.

4. a. Mozart: KV 107,1, Allegro di molto, b. 10-14



b. J.C. Bach: Opus V. 2. Allegro di molto, b. 10-14

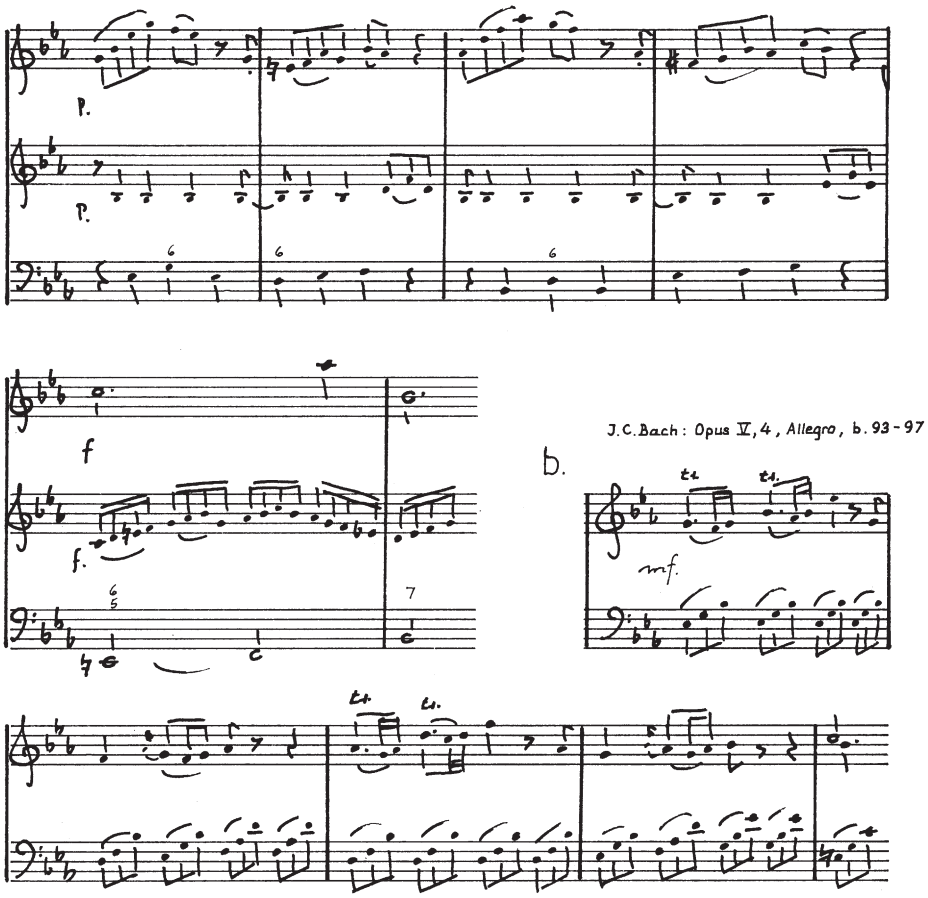


The tutti-exposition of the third concerto does not follow the plan sketched above. After an introductory quotation of the first theme of the movement with its two four-bar units follow 19 bars that are not met with later in the movement. Unlike the two previous movements dealt with, by far the largest part of this tutti-exposition is not a direct copy of the sonata by Bach; a closer examination, however, shows 7 of these 19 bars to be a variation of Bach's second theme, so that in this case, too, we get a "complete" tutti-exposition (*music example 5*).

Rondo

Only in three cases among J. C. Bach's piano sonatas and never among his symphonies, do we find the designation *"rondo"* (or *"rondeaux"*), despite the fact that several of these movements are actually in rondo-form; in his sonatas for piano and violin, the piano sonatas for four hands, and the con-

5. a. Mozart: KV 107,3, Allegro, b. 17–22



certed symphonies, on the other hand, the designation is often met with. Various writers have claimed that the reason why rondo movements in sonatas and symphonies from this time are not explicitly called rondos is the fact that the rondo was severely censured by contemporary theorists, at the same time as an increasing demand for such movements was being made by the general music-consuming public. It has even been attempted to prove [16] that this rondo wave started in 1773, reached its climax with the approval of the form by the theorists in 1778, and ebbed away about 1785–86. Space does not permit us to give further comment on this but it could hardly be pure coincidence that we meet the designation *"rondo"* only three times among about 70 piano

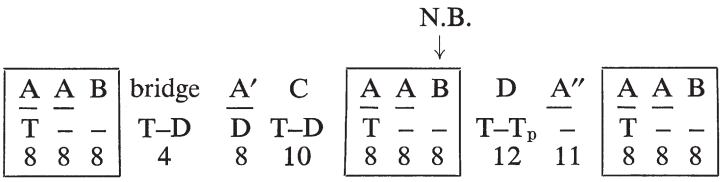
16. Malcolm S. Cole, *The Vogue of the Instrumental Rondo in the Late Eighteenth Century*. Journal of the American Musicological Society, 1969.

sonatas and symphonies by J. C. Bach, and about 20 times among a similar number of works in the lighter and more diverting genres as piano sonatas for four hands, sonatas for piano and violin, and concerted symphonies.

As mentioned earlier, the second movement of opus V, 4 carries the designation Rondo, Allegretto [17], whereas in *KV 107,3* it is called simply Allegretto. As was hinted above, this divergence could be explained by the suggestion that Mozart used another, now unknown, source as the basis of his arrangement. It may, however, be due to quite a different circumstance, especially in connection with *KV 107,3:* as the only instance among all the movements of *KV 107,* Mozart in this movement leaves out some bars from the equivalent movement of Bach's sonata. An analysis of the two movements will illuminate this.

The dominant theme of the movement—a singing eight-bar period without the familiar subdivision into two four-bar periods—is found both in Bach and in Mozart five times: in the tonic, the dominant, the tonic, the relative of the tonic (i. e. the sixth degree) and the tonic. Schematically the movement in Bach's sonata might appear like this:

J. C. Bach, opus V,4, Rondo, Allegretto



As can be seen, we have here an ordinary rondo with three *ritornellos* and two *episodes,* provided the AAB of the scheme is regarded as the ritornello. The greatest contrast with the ritornello is found, as almost becomes the rule in the Viennese Classical rondo, in the last episode, but in spite of this we see that this episode, as well as the first, has a close connection with the ritornello because of the quotation of the A element of the ritornello in the dominant and the relative of the tonic, respectively. The presence of this A motif throughout the movement in different keys might, with some justification, lead one to connect this movement with the form of the baroque concerto-allegro, with its rondo-like repetition of the ritornello in different keys; it should

17. In their book on Mozart, Wyzewa and Saint Foix maintain that the words *rondo* and *rondeaux* in J. C. Bach's works cover two different forms, and that Mozart took over this distinction from Johann Christian. An examination of a number of Bach movements shows that this is not quite true, and that Bach, on the contrary, seems to use the two designations indiscriminately. As to the movement in question we have two different sources using two different designations: the English prints have *rondo;* Richomme's edition has *rondeaux.*

be stressed, however, that another important characteristic of this form, viz., the tutti-solo contrast, is completely lacking in Bach's movement.

The formal outline of the corresponding movement in Mozart's concerto is the same as that sketched above, with one important difference:

Mozart, KV 107,3, Allegretto

N.B. ↓

A	A	B	bridge	A′	C	A	D	A″	A	A	B	Coda
T	–	–	T–D	D	T–D	T	$T–T_p$	–	T	–	–	–
8	8	8	4	8	10	8	12	11	8	8	8	4

Mozart leaves out 16 bars (as mentioned already, this is the only instance of such an occurrence in *KV 107*), and, characteristically, it is the repetition of the motives A and B from the second ritornello in Bach's sonata which is omitted (marked by N. B. in the two schemes). The possible connection between this omission and the different designations of the two movements which was hinted at above, might be expressed thus: in Bach's movement, which is a rondo, the first 24 bars are completely repeated in the middle of the movement; Mozart's movement is *not* a rondo, and in order not to spoil the effect of the recapitulation in the end Mozart leaves out these 16 bars and accordingly does not *call* his movement *rondo*. Whether the reason for this is that Mozart used a source different from the printed one known today, or it is due to a deliberate change of the designation of the movement, the logic of the connection between the omission of the 16 bars in the middle of the movement and the designation is obvious.

As a conclusion to this far from exhaustive comparison between J. C. Bach's opus V and Mozart's *KV 107* one feels tempted to say that it is hardly just to regard Mozart's three piano concertos as an early, somewhat clumsy copy of the three sonatas by Bach, written under the direct stimulus of the encounter with Johann Christian in London in 1764–65. Both bibliographical facts and a direct musical analysis indicate a more reflective attitude on the part of Mozart to the source. A readjustment of the traditional view regarding these three piano concertos, as found in the standard literature on Mozart, would seem, therefore, to be required.

(Translation by the author)