

BACH'S CELLO SUITE No. 2,
THE PRELUDE: AN ANALYSIS

by *6808*

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INTRODUCTION

The intent of this analysis was to discover what holds the prelude of Bach's Second Cello Suite together, what makes it flow, and how this can be transferred by the performer to the ear of the listener. In doing this analysis the author did considerable aural testing. An harmonic analysis was done first. This proved to be the basis for the rest of the analysis. The study of root movement was an excellent guide in the formation of the great spans into which the music falls.

APPROACH IN THIS ANALYSIS

The composition broke into spans in which the most important implied lower and upper lines were inclined to move simultaneously by thirds and sixths.

The lower line in the spans was derived by taking the lowest harmonic tones in the music.¹ The root movement and the harmonic analysis helped give the proper direction.

The upper line in the spans was derived from the music auditorily. The problem was to find a continuous line that would work with the lower line and correspond with the harmonic analysis.

The first consideration was to derive the line from the highest tones or highest harmonic tones in the music. This procedure often yielded lines which were not musical. They

¹See Appendix I, mm. 1 - 4.

violated the laws of melody and generated such untenable intervallic relations as are found below.

Example 1



Example 1 represents an analysis of the highest and lowest tones in the music. When played, they will be heard but they lack the continuity to be heard as a unifying force.

The second consideration was to derive the line directly from the harmonic analysis.

Example 2



Example 2, from the same passage, was taken from the final analysis. When compared with the score and studied auditorily one can hear that the continuity not present in Example 1 exists here in the form of a progressive harmonic span.

The upper tones enlarge the scope of the melodic flow,

but they are controlled by the memory of the progressive harmonic span.

The spans are broken down into phrases. The phrases are controlled by the patterns of the melodic material, which are broken down into groupings. The length of the groupings depends upon the character of the patterns within them. When dissimilar patterns are associated, as in mm. 1 - 4, one grouping tends to form; when similar patterns of patterns follow consecutively, as in mm. 5 - 6 and 7 - 8, each forms a relatively short grouping; when patterns are repeated in each consecutive measure, as in mm. 18 - 20, they form a grouping in their entirety (such groupings imply areas of considerable motion); when each beat forms a separate pattern, as in mm. 21 - 24, (implying a high degree of motion) they are considered in the same grouping.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

It has been necessary to use a few unusual terms in this study. They are listed below:

Span. The progressive harmonic line upon which one or more phrases may be built.

Grouping. Groupings of patterns of melodic material of which phrases are built.

Motive. A short figure of characteristic design that recurs as a unifying element throughout a composition.

Eiision. An occurrence when the note or notes of one phrase become the first note or notes of the following phrase.

Climax. The highest point in a phrase, pitch-wise or tension-wise or both.

Harmonic Rhythm. The rhythmic pattern provided by the change in harmony derived by analysis of root movement.

Harmonic Rhythm Chart. The heavy lines represent the spans. The long dotted lines represent the phrases. The short dotted lines represent the groupings. The chart shows the rhythmic patterns created by the root movement within the spans, phrases and groupings. It is found in Appendix II.

THE ANALYSIS

The first span, mm. 1 - 4, supports one phrase.

Example 3



The phrase is constructed of dissimilar melodic patterns and is a grouping in itself.

The phrase contains two motives. Motive A (Example 4) is used to announce the main tonalities in the composition and later to give extra stress to certain harmonies before the climax of the composition.

Example 4



Motive B (Example 5) is used in more dissonant harmonies and often in sequence; e.g., mm. 5, 7, 9.

Example 5



The climax of this phrase comes in mm. 3. The statement of motive B embodies the most harmonic tension, a C sharp diminished seventh chord moving to an A seventh chord, and the highest tone in the line. There is also an increase in the harmonic rhythm from the first two measures.²

The second span, mm. 5 - 12, supports two phrases.

²See Harmonic Rhythm Chart

Example 6



The first phrase, mm. 5 - 8, contains two groupings of two measures each. Measures 5 - 6 are sequenced by mm. 7 - 8. These groupings are constructed of motive B followed by an answer measure.

The second phrase, mm. 9 - 12, begins with a sequence of the first grouping and is extended and altered harmonically to accomplish a modulation to the key of F major. This phrase has the same characteristic as the first phrase, mm. 1 - 4, and is a grouping in itself.

The sequences move downward creating an even flow in the tension of the music. In mm. 11 there is an intervallic span of an eleventh, from A to D, the largest in these two phrases. The sweep upward in this measure brings a climax that enables the following measure to slide into the modulation. A change in the harmonic rhythm in mm. 10 preceeds the climax.³

The second phrase forms an elision with the third span. The elision completes the modulation to F major.

The third span, mm. 13 - 24, supports three phrases.

³See Harmonic Rhythm Chart.

Example 7



The span is built of a line of rising thirds, through mm. 20, followed by descending sixths, mm. 21 - 24. A modulation to the key of A minor is accomplished.

The first phrase, mm. 13 - 16, contains two groupings. The first grouping, mm. 13 - 14, begins in the key of F major. Motive A introduces the new key and is followed by an answer measure. The second grouping, mm. 14 - 16, is a varied sequence of the first, in the minor.

The second phrase, mm. 17 - 20, is one grouping. It begins with an elaborate variation of motive A in the key of A minor. Three presentations of motive B follow, forming a rising A minor scale in thirds.

The third phrase, mm. 21 - 24, contains two groupings of two measures each that are joined by an elision. Together they form the descending scale in sixths.⁴ The increase in harmonic rhythm in the first grouping leads to the establishment of the key of A minor in the second grouping.

The climax is in the span rather than in the individual phrase or grouping. The sequences begin the rising series of

⁴See Analysis, mm. 21 - 24, Appendix I

thirds, mm. 13 - 16, and are the foundation of the modulation. The span is built through mm. 20 and then allowed to fall off, with an increase in the harmonic rhythm through mm. 24.

The fourth span, mm. 25 - 48, is the longest span in the composition.

Example 8

The musical notation for Example 8 consists of two staves. The first staff shows measures 25 through 35. Measures 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 are marked with brackets and numbers below them. Measure 30 is marked with a bracket and the number 30. Measures 31 and 34 are marked with brackets and the number 31. Measure 35 is marked with a bracket and the number 35. The second staff shows measures 36 through 48. Measures 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48 are marked with brackets and numbers below them. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals, with some measures marked with brackets and numbers.

This span supports four phrases. It is built of an ascending A major scale, mm. 25 - 29, to a pedal point on A, mm. 30 - 35, to a pedal point on D, mm. 36 - 38, to another pedal point on A, mm. 43 - 47, and resolves deceptively on a C sharp diminished chord in the second inversion.

This span contains the highest pitch in the composition, mm. 44. This measure is the climax of the composition as well as of this span. Tension is built by the use of longer phrases.⁵ There is an increase in the harmonic rhythm in the first phrase,

⁵See Analysis, mm. 25 - 48, Appendix I.

mm. 25 - 31, leading up to the pedal point.⁶

Phrasewise, the material of the span is distributed in this way. The first phrase falls into two groupings. The first grouping, mm. 25 - 29, begins with a variation of motive B. A sequenced beat pattern leads the implied harmony into the second grouping, mm. 30 - 31. The second grouping is short and the patterns are dissimilar. It begins the first pedal point.

The second phrase, mm. 32 - 36, is one grouping. It is formed of a beat sequencing pattern, mm. 33 - 35, which is introduced and ended with dissimilar patterns. This phrase lies over an A pedal point which resolves to the D pedal point in the last measure.

The third phrase, mm. 37 - 42, contains two groupings. The first grouping, mm. 37 - 39, is formed of a beat sequencing pattern over the D pedal point. It begins the A pedal point in mm. 39. The second grouping contains two statements of motive A, mm. 40 and 42, separated by a measure of dissimilar patterns.

The fourth phrase, mm. 43 - 48, lies over an A pedal point. The phrase is constructed of sequenced patterns, mm. 44 - 47, which are introduced by a scale rising from the pedal point, mm. 43, and are followed by a chord (triple stops) with a fermata. The phrase is a grouping in itself.

The fifth span, mm. 49 - 63, supports three phrases.

⁶See Harmonic Rhythm Chart.

Example 9



The first phrase, mm. 49 - 53, is one grouping. The patterns are dissimilar except in mm. 49 and 53. This pattern is identical but transposed an octave lower in mm. 53.

The second phrase, mm. 54 - 58, contains two groupings. Harmonically it produces a rising scale in thirds. The first grouping, mm. 54 - 56, is built of a sequenced pattern of downward moving scales. The second grouping, mm. 57 - 58, is of the same construction but with a different pattern.

The third phrase, mm. 59 - 63, contains no melodic material. It is a cadential phrase, one grouping, and strictly harmonic.

SUMMARY

It was found that the music is held together by great spans generated by the harmonic movement of the music. The phrases that these spans support are built of melodic patterns that can be put into groupings. If this composition is performed so that the patterns emphasize these spans and their flow is directed to the ends of the phrases the harmonic scope can be realized.

The music falls into five spans. Each span supports one or more phrases. The length of the phrases depends upon the patterns of the melodic material found therein, which fall into groupings.

The first span supports one phrase. The patterns in this phrase are dissimilar and form one grouping.

The second span supports two phrases. The first phrase contains two groupings of sequenced patterns. The second phrase is one grouping of dissimilar patterns. This phrase joins the next span with an elision.

The third span supports three phrases. The first phrase contains two groupings of sequenced patterns. The second phrase is one grouping. This grouping is constructed of an introductory pattern followed by a pattern that is sequenced to the end of the phrase. The third phrase contains two groupings. The first grouping is constructed of a beat sequenced pattern, implying considerable harmonic motion. The second grouping, which is joined to the first by an elision, is constructed of two

dissimilar patterns.

The fourth span is the longest in the composition. It supports four phrases. The first phrase contains two groupings. The first grouping is constructed of beat sequenced patterns; the second grouping of dissimilar patterns. The second phrase is one grouping, constructed of beat sequenced patterns over a pedal point. The third phrase contains two groupings. The first grouping is constructed of beat sequenced patterns; the second, two statements of a pattern separated by a different pattern. The fourth phrase lies over a pedal point and is one grouping constructed of a series of sequenced patterns that come to a stop on a C sharp diminished chord with a fermata.

The fifth span supports three phrases. The first phrase is constructed of dissimilar patterns and is a grouping by itself. The second phrase contains two groupings. Both are constructed of sequenced patterns. The third phrase is a cadential phrase and is a grouping by itself.

The climax falls in the fourth phrase of the fourth span. It comes at the point of the highest pitch in the composition. In this span the phrases are longer and except for the first phrase, built over a pedal point. The construction of the groupings is mainly of beat and measure sequenced patterns.

There are subclimaxes in the phrases of the other spans. This building and releasing of tension directs the motion of the patterns and implied harmonies to the ends of the phrases and spans.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX I

SCORE AND ANALYSIS

System 1, measures 1-4. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet in measure 3. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a harmonic line with chords and a long, sweeping slur spanning all four measures.

System 2, measures 5-8. The upper staff continues the melodic line. The lower staff features a series of chords, each marked with a measure number (5, 6, 7, 8) and a finger number (1, 2, 3, 4) above the note.

System 3, measures 9-12. The upper staff continues the melodic line. The lower staff features a series of chords, each marked with a measure number (9, 10, 11, 12) and a finger number (1, 2, 3, 4) above the note.

Handwritten musical score for measures 13 to 16. The notation is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 13, 14, 15, and 16 are written above the staff. The music features a complex melodic line in the upper voice and a supporting bass line in the lower voice. A large slur covers the entire system.

Handwritten musical score for measures 17 to 20. The notation is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 17, 18, 19, and 20 are written above the staff. The music continues with a complex melodic line in the upper voice and a supporting bass line in the lower voice. A large slur covers the entire system.

Handwritten musical score for measures 21 to 24. The notation is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 21, 22, 23, and 24 are written above the staff. The music continues with a complex melodic line in the upper voice and a supporting bass line in the lower voice. A large slur covers the entire system.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 25 through 28. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 25, 26, 27, and 28 are indicated above the staff. The music features a complex melodic line in the treble clef and a supporting bass line in the bass clef.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 29 through 32. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 29, 30, 31, and 32 are indicated above the staff. The music continues with a complex melodic line in the treble clef and a supporting bass line in the bass clef.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 33 through 36. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure numbers 33, 34, 35, and 36 are indicated above the staff. The music continues with a complex melodic line in the treble clef and a supporting bass line in the bass clef.

Handwritten musical score for measures 37-40. The top staff (treble clef) contains the melody, and the bottom staff (bass clef) contains the accompaniment. Measure numbers 37, 38, 39, and 40 are written above the top staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The accompaniment features chords and single notes.

Handwritten musical score for measures 41-44. The top staff (treble clef) contains the melody, and the bottom staff (bass clef) contains the accompaniment. Measure numbers 41, 42, 43, and 44 are written above the top staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. The accompaniment includes chords and single notes.

Handwritten musical score for measures 45-48. The top staff (treble clef) contains the melody, and the bottom staff (bass clef) contains the accompaniment. Measure numbers 45, 46, 47, and 48 are written above the top staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. The accompaniment includes chords and single notes.

Handwritten musical score, page 20, featuring three systems of music. Each system consists of a top staff (treble clef) and a bottom staff (bass clef).

System 1:

- Top staff: Measures 49, 50, and 51. Measure 50 contains a sharp sign (#).
- Bottom staff: Measures 49, 50, and 51. Measure 50 contains a sharp sign (#). A slur connects measures 50 and 51.

System 2:

- Top staff: Measures 52, 53, and 54. Measure 53 contains a sharp sign (#).
- Bottom staff: Measures 52, 53, and 54. Measure 53 contains a sharp sign (#). A slur connects measures 53 and 54.

System 3:

- Top staff: Measures 55, 56, 57, and 58. Measure 56 contains a sharp sign (#).
- Bottom staff: Measures 55, 56, 57, and 58. Measure 55 contains a sharp sign (#). A slur connects measures 55 and 56.

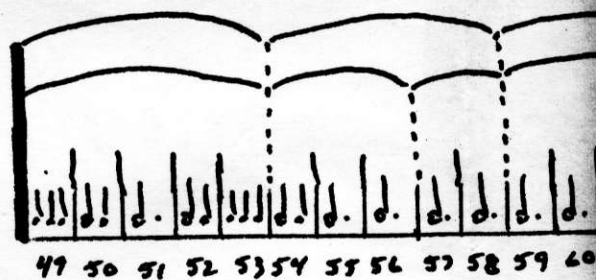
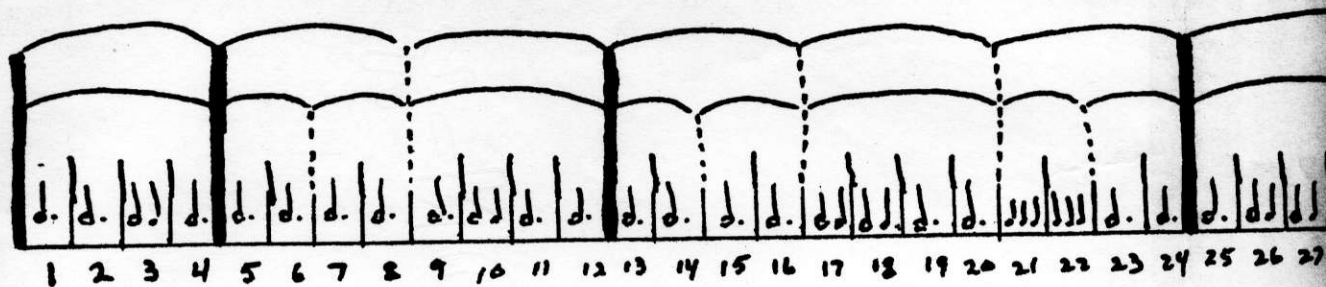
Handwritten musical notation on two staves. The notation includes measures numbered 59, 60, 61, 62, and 63. The notes are written in a stylized, handwritten manner, often with a sharp sign (#) and a dot (·) above them. A large, curved line (possibly a slur or a breath mark) spans across measures 60, 61, and 62. The notation is written on a set of five-line staves.

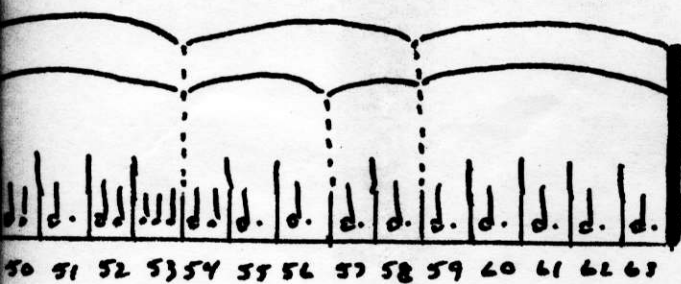
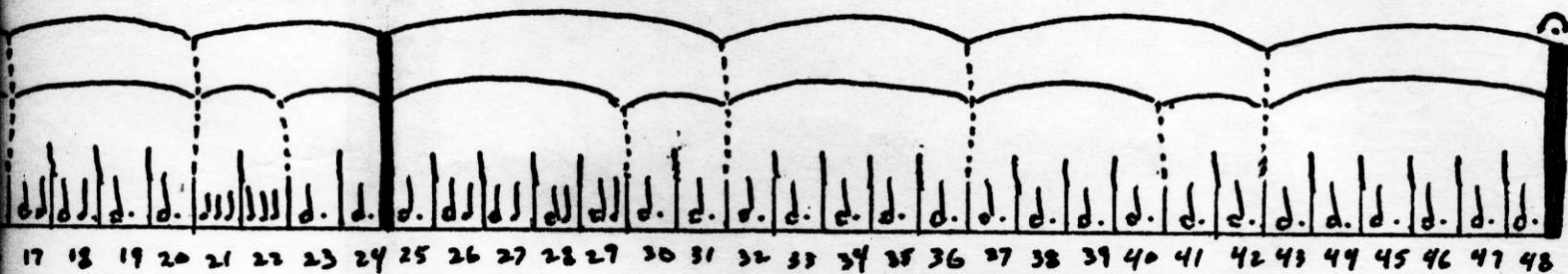


APPENDIX II

**THE FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S) IS
OVERSIZED AND
IS BEING FILMED
IN SECTIONS TO
INSURE
COMPLETENESS
AND
CONTINUITY**

HARMONIC RHYTHM CHART





END

OF

OVERSIZED

DOCUMENT

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The composition broke into spans in which the most important implied lower and upper lines were inclined to move simultaneously by thirds and sixths.

The lower line in the spans was derived by taking the lowest harmonic tones in the music. The root movement and the harmonic analysis helped give the proper direction.

The upper line in the spans was derived from the music auditorily. The problem was to find a continuous line that would work with the lower line and correspond with the harmonic analysis.

The first consideration was to derive the line from the highest tones or highest harmonic tones in the music. This procedure often yielded lines which were not musical. They violated the laws of melody and generated such untenable intervallic relations as are found in the following examples.

Example 1



Example 1 represents an analysis of the highest and lowest tones in the music. When played, they will be heard but they lack the continuity to be heard as a unifying force.

The second consideration was to derive the line directly from the harmonic analysis. Example 2, from the same passage,

Example 2



was taken from the final analysis. When compared with the score and studied auditorily one can hear that the continuity not present in Example 1 exists here in the form of a progressive harmonic span.

The upper tones enlarge the scope of the melodic flow, but they are controlled by the memory of the progressive harmonic span.

The spans are broken down into phrases. The phrases are

controlled by the patterns of the melodic material, which are broken down into groupings. The length of the groupings depends upon the character of the patterns within them. When dissimilar patterns are associated one grouping tends to form; when similar patterns of patterns follow consecutively each forms a short grouping; when patterns are repeated in each consecutive measure they form a grouping in their entirety; when each beat forms a separate pattern they are considered in the same grouping.

It was found that the music is held together by the great spans generated by the harmonic movement of the music. The phrases that these spans support are built of melodic patterns that can be put into groupings. If this composition is performed so that the patterns emphasize these spans and their flow is directed to the ends of the phrases the harmonic scope can be realized.

The music falls into five spans. Each span supports one or more phrases. The length of the phrases depends upon the patterns of the melodic material found therein, which falls into groupings.

The first span supports one phrase. The patterns in this phrase are dissimilar and form one grouping.

The second span supports two phrases. The first phrase contains two groupings of sequenced patterns. The second phrase contains one grouping of dissimilar patterns. This phrase joins the next span with an elision.

The third span supports three phrases. The first phrase

contains two groupings of sequenced patterns. The second phrase contains one grouping constructed of an introductory pattern followed by a pattern that is sequenced to the end of the phrase. The third phrase contains two groupings. The first grouping is constructed of a beat sequenced pattern; the second, of dissimilar patterns.

The fourth span supports four phrases. The first phrase contains two groupings. The first grouping is constructed of beat sequenced patterns; the second, of dissimilar patterns. The second phrase is one grouping constructed of beat sequenced patterns over a pedal point. The third phrase contains two groupings. The first grouping is constructed of beat sequenced patterns; the second, two statements of a pattern separated by a dissimilar pattern. The fourth phrase lies over a pedal point and is one grouping built of a series of sequenced patterns that come to a stop on a fermata.

The fifth span supports three phrases. The first phrase is constructed of dissimilar patterns. The second phrase contains two groupings. Both are constructed of sequenced patterns. The third phrase is a cadential phrase.

The climax falls in the fourth phrase of the fourth span. It comes at the point of the highest pitch in the composition. In this span the phrases are longer and except for the first phrase, built over a pedal point. The construction of the grouping is mainly of beat and measure sequenced patterns.

There are subclimaxes in the phrases of the other spans.

This building and releasing of tension directs the motion of the patterns and implied harmonies to the ends of the phrases and spans.