# BACHBUSONI

## Two Part Inventions

Instructive Edition

Piano solo

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# JOH. SEB. BACH

# Two and Three Part Inventions

for the Pianoforte

With reference to the Execution and the Composition analyzed and revised by

#### FERRUCCIO B. BUSONI

Book I. 15 Two Part Inventions — Book II. 15 Three Part Inventions

Dedicated to the Music Institution of Helsingfors

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#### Preface

A close observation of the average system of musical instruction as generally pursued, has led me to the conviction that the Bach "Inventions" are in most cases, regarded merely as dry and technical material which is serviceable to the beginner in piano-technique, and that, on the part of the teacher, little is done to awaken in the pupil an understaning and appreciation of the deeper significance of these creations of Bach.

Generally the study of the "Inventions" is narrowed down to a selection of some of them, made without any system whatever; the copious use of incorrect or poorly edited editions with unstrust-worthy embellishments and signs of executions seems to be added to make the comprehension of the Bach spirit more difficult to the student; finally, too, the explanation of the construction, from the composer's standpoint, is neglected altogether, while it is precisely this, that—beyond all other means,—is likely to develop the purely musical side of the student's nature, and exalt his critical faculties.

If so deeply thoughtful a nature as Bach's has specifically claimed here the intention of demonstrating "a distint school" and also "to give a strong foretaste of the composition," it is to be accepted that the master in his works has followed a preconceived plan, and that each of the combinations that appears in them conveys a certain intention and meaning.

To bring this meaning nearer to the general comprehension is the task I have undertaken in this revision.

Moscow. Ferruccio B. Busoni

The most important points which present themselves for our consideration in this task are:

- 1. An unmistakable presentation of the text throughout (especially in correctness, execution of the embellishments, and clear presentation of the middle voice in the three part numbers).
- 2. Choice of the appropriate fingering (Especially, the employment of the thumb and 5th. finger on the black keys, the fingering for diatonic figures with stationary thumb;
  - a) ascending with 343-454-4534-4523 etc. b) descending with 545-434-4354-3254 etc.
  - Employment of the "parallel" fingering 13-24-35, 31-42-53 in diatonic progressions and trills.
  - Avoidance of change of fingers on sustained tones).
- 3. Markings of Tempo. NB. The Italian and English terms are not intended to supplant, but rather to supplement and complete each other, since the Italian expression are frequently formal and conventional and therefore not sufficent to represent subleties of shading, the English ones,—on the other hand,—not sufficiently definite to convey a fixed and certain meaning, as for example, Allegro, And date etc.
- 4. The signs of execution which are to serve as guide to a proper comprehension of Bach's style.
- This style is characterized above all others by manliness, energy, breadth and loftiness. The softer shadings, the employment of the pedal, the *arpeggiando*, the *tempo rubato*, even a too smooth *legato* and a frequent *piano*, arebeing contrary to the Bach spirit-generally to be avoided.
- 5. A commentary, which-besides the technical hints, and remarks upon execution-is intended to be a contribution towards the study of Form.



### 15 Two part Inventions

by

English text by Louis C. Elson.

#### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH.

Revision by F. B. Busoni.



1) That a sharp was placed before the second 8th note in this measure, is almost always forgotten by the student. This experience seemed to indicate to the editor the necessity of rewriting c sharp at this point.

1a) To avoid a collision of the two thumbs on the same key the e in the parenthesis can be replaced by a sixteenth rest.



2) To be treated in the same manner as at 1).

3) The key is so firmly established in the third measure before the end that a retarding of the tempo in the penultimate measure—wherein the directly following end is clearly foreshadowed—is made unnecessary.

4) The incomprehensible Arpeggiando sign, which one finds before this chord in many editions, is contrary to the manly style of the piece, and may be classed in Bach's phraseology as "styleless. Against such effeminacies in this and in analogous cases, the student is especially warned.

N.B. As regards the form of this piece, it may be classed as belonging to those in three divisions. The figure or theme, of the halfmeasure: the sth note in parenthesis is treated as a free interval) is the foundation of the entire composition; only each closing cadence which terminates the three divisions (and which is here, as in every other similar case in the 30 inven-

tions, indicated by a double bar) shows a nonemployment of this chief figure.

At first this figure appears four times, interchangeably, between the upper and lower voice and then its inversion appears linked together four times in the upper voice, forming a downward progression which at the same time establishes a modulation into the dominant key; in the fifth measure the sequence z like augmentation of the last part of this figure leads to the cadence in the dominant, which closes the first division. Almost entirely symmetrical with this first part, is the second division, which begins in the parallel key, and in which the two voices exchange their labors; the interpolated third and fourth measures—a freely symmetrical imitation of the two preceding—have especially a modulatory significance. This doubling of the two first measures in the second division takes a more organic form in the third division, where the figure in its original shape and in contrary motion, interchanges in each measure. The change of the previously zemployed movement of 8th notes, in the countertheme (the counterpoint above the chief figure) into a sustained halfnote, is noteworthy, as also is the inversion of the downward progression (formed by three repetitions of the chief figure, linked together,) into an upward progression which leads triumphantly into a return of the principal key.

Given with a tense, rhythmic execution, this miniature masterpiece will be one of the most

satisfactory to interpret.



1) nK = New counterpoint can be regarded here only as a harmonic necessity, to make the transition to the dominant more evident. According to the general, fundamental idea of the form here employed, the passage marked A would enter unsupported in the lower voice the upper voice remaining silent.

2) Actually and originally the second eighth is given thus 3) For weighty technical reasons the mordent on d is omitted.



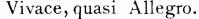
4) F S: Free ending.

N. B. The entirely new impression, that in this invention—as compared with the first Character and Content are given through Form, would require an entirely different presentation as justification. Above all in importance we find the (generally overlooked) canonic treatment to be here the object presented to examination, and from its proper construction hangs the appreciation of the form.

The phrase of two measures at A is imitated by the second voice in the deeper octave, in measures 3 and 4, while the first voice carries on counterpoint B above it. The same treatment is given to the counterpoint B in the lower voice, and a new counterpoint (C) appears above it. In this succession, in double measures, the work is carried on, D above C, E above D, through which the upper voice gives an unbroken, continuous theme made up of A, B, C, D and E, ten measures long, which is reproduced two measures later by the lower voice. But as both voices end their imitative course together at the 10<sup>th</sup> measure, the phrase E is not reproduced in the imitating voice. Therefore the second part is begun by the lower voice and the whole proceeding are repeated in the key of the subdominant, and, through the inversion of the double counterpoint, yet 10 measures more are evolved.

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<sup>\*)</sup> the two measures which follow serve to indicate the modulatory return to the key of the tonic and stand in a certain degree on neutral ground between the second, and the abruptly ending third, division.





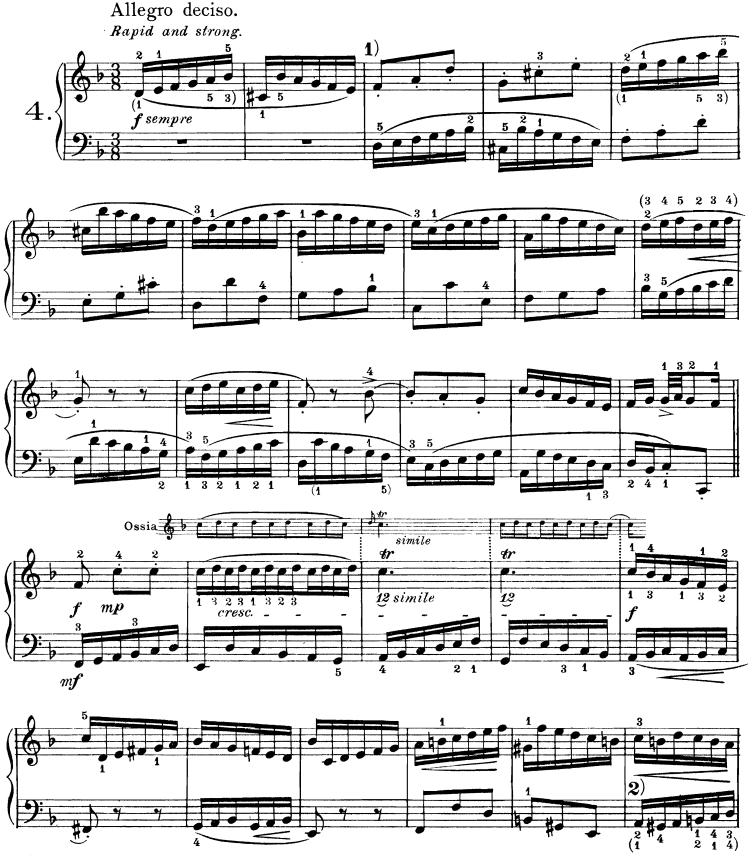
- 1) Although this measure is undoubtedly to be reckoned as belonging to the theme, yet the figure is of less importance since, with the exception of the corresponding passage in division III, it only appears once again, at 12).
- 2) In quicker tempo,—and conception of the work admits of different rates of speed,—the editor recommends the following simplification. The rhythmic and melodic outlines must never seem blurred.
  - 3) The progression of the theme in seconds, becomes a third at +.
- 4) The two 16ths of the broken measure beginning the theme, have three added to them in the development, wherefrom the following figure is evolved: This form is also employed in the coda.



N.B. One must pay equal attention to the exact holding of the key for the proper length of time, where sustained notes occur, and (on the other hand) to the uplifting of the hand at the rests. The unoccupied hand (the left hand) is frequently allowed to rest upon the keyboard, a fault which frequently results in unintentional, yet disturbing organ-points, and which should therefore be corrected from the first. This remark applies to such passages in all the inventions, and is of importance in all piano execution.

<sup>\*) + -+</sup> These are really transition measures from the second to the third divisions. (See note\*) to the preceding invention.)

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- 1) The Staccato employed here should have about the same effect as the "Martellato" stroke on the violin. One is to take from each note only sufficient value to afford time to accent the next with a short, vigorous wrist action.
- 2) To correctly represent this construction of form, it will be of advantage to imagine this passage as corresponding to the beginning of the second division. Therefore about as follows:

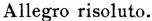




3) The trill of a minor second, as given here, is, in the Bach sense, entirely right and in proper style even though the crossrelation with the upper voice may shock some too prudish ears. The trill represents the descending, the linking of the theme above it the ascending, melodic minor scale.

4) The interpolated measure here is in symmetrical relation to the end of the first division, and thus points directly to the conclusion of the piece, thus leading one to regard the four measures yet following as Coda.

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of execution will give an approximate idea of the desired style: 2) The 16th figures of the counter subject, should, on the contrary, flow on in the most equal

legato. The three detached forms: The player should therefore, by comparing them carefully, form a rule for himself, as regards them; this will develop his mind, as, on the other hand, the technical study of the chain of figures will develop his fingers.

3) The theme itself contains but four measures, then undergoes an imitation in the dominant, and is finally employed, in a fragmentary state, to build an ascending sequence of three measures. This first division corresponds entirely to the second, with the only exception that the sequence is now a descending one.

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4) The following 4 measures are regarded by the editor as the first half of the theme, and its imitation in the tonic. Another, less justifiable conception, would be to accept the preceding measure, (the last of the second division) as a foreshadowing of the fourth measure of the third division, (forming a single sequence) and to regard all that lies between merely as "extension":



5) A broader "Ritenuto", which also seems permissible, necessitates an enriching of the trill as follows:

N.B. This piece opens the series of those two-part inventions in which the Countersubject plays an obligato role, that is one and the same counter-theme (Counterpoint to the theme) is kept throughout the work, and serves as the inseparable companion of the theme. To this class of inventions belong Nos. 6,9,11 and 12. Attention is called to this, their characteristic, here, once for all.



- 1) This figure, according to the editor's view, should be made strongly rhythmic, not to legato, and should be free from that modern elegance which is most of all unsuited to the Bach style. The o d fashioned phrasing: by which the two 32nd notes are generally hurried in tempo, is therefore to be discarded.
- 2) Only through the prescribed use of the pedal is the legato of the upper voice to be attained.
- 3) What was said at 1), is in full force here. E. B. 3127.



4) The previously given phrasing will show the thematic derivation of this and the following, similar measures.

N. B. This Invention is the only one among all, in which the original shows the limits of the first division by a double-bar. We have at this part, (marked N. B.) omitted to mark the end of the second, and the beginning of the third, divisions, in order not to perplex the student as to the exact significance of the repeat—mark which occurs at the end, and which has reference to both of these divisions.

The two-part song—perhaps an intermezzo for flute and violincello in a Pastoral - Cantata—entices because of its soft, melodious charm, and the natural, unforced character of its counterpoint, and becomes through the employment of various styles of touch, a very useful study of expression. Besides this, it is to be noticed that the third division is a contrapuntal inversion of the first, and the two voices change their parts, with the exception of a few variant passages, which are identified by their remaining in the original key.

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\*) Considering the form and the quality of this Invention, one could class it as belonging to a higher development than the usual first Inventions.



N.B. In contrapuntal forms, the entrance of an organpoint upon the dominant is always to be taken as an indication of the beginning of the last division. Here this is especially the case, as from this point the principal key is never deserted. The figure and the following, is to be regarding as a change of an organpoint upon the dominant is always to be taken as an indication of the beginning of the last division. Here this is especially the case, as from this point the principal key is never deserted. The figure and of its sequences.



1) In all other editions this eighth-note appears, slurred to the succeding 16th note; this is a clear violation of the "broken measure" or arsis quality of the two separated figures.
2) This and the following measure, require diligent practice of the left hand.

st) As quickly and as lightly as is consistent with clearness.



N.B. In its essentials this form is one of three divisions, which however, like the second Invention, receives a greater significance through its canonic treatment. The canon begins with strict imitation in the octave, which however, for harmonic reasons, changes at a) to the ninth below and ceases at b). c) denotes the beginning of the development (Division II) in which a livelier modulatory progression, and a new figure d) are noticeable. If one adds the following three measures from the scheme of the first division



placing them between divisions II and III at e) (they are omitted in order to avoid interrupting the "sixteenth note" movement) one will have an exact copy of Division I, transposed to its subdominant, and thereby gain a clear insight into the fundamental plan of the form.

Besides the prescribed rapidity and lightness, the execution of this bit of Virtuosity demands the utmost possible precision.



- 1) Regarding the countersubject see "N. B." to Invention 5.
- 2) This measure must be regarded as belonging to the theme, as it repeatedly appears in connection with it, and is also developed.
- 3) The interval of the sixth has here been inverted, in order not to remove the upper voice from its position in middle register.
- \*) The skipping eighthnotes must be struck forcibly with both hands, and must be strongly marked rhythmically. The slurred note must be clearly intoned and fully sustained. For the style of expression to be employed here one might best use the Italian terms, "non leggiero." It must be borne in mind however, that "non leggiero by no means indicates "pesante" (heavily) any more than "non legato" signifies "staccato." R R 3127.



5) A single appearance of the theme extended by a closing cadence, cannot be regarded as an independent division. Therefore the six final measures must either be ascribed to the second division, or be regarded as a Coda. As soon as one has recognized the relationship between the preceding measure (\*) and the penultimate one of the piece, one is moved to regard the four intervening measures as a mere addition, or extension, given to satisfy the feeling for symmetry.

6) This seemingly new counterpoint is in reality only a recognizable variation of the first countersubject. The figure must ring out in a strong "non legato."

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1) The wrist is to remain perfectly quiet, but the finger is to leave the key before the next one is struck. This must however be practised slowly and forcibly beforehand, and in the following manner:

Naturally this prescription does not extend to the execution of the many mordentes, which are to be played legato, and in which only the last of the three notes (where this is not slurred over) is to be played short.

The observance of this advise will be, after many repetitions of the passages, of great technical benefit, and will lead to precision and lightness of touch especially.

2) For a better observance of the form and construction here, let one imagine a third voice entering at the third measure, the idea of which can be reduced thus



- 3) One should observe the analogy between this and the following three measures and measures 2-5 of division I.
- 4) The leading of the upper voice in this measure only expresses the figuration of a suspension resting on the seventh, which is resolved in the next measure: In a similar manner, in the next measure, we can imagine the bass note sustained, and forming the fundamental tone of the dominant chord of the second.
- 5) This and the succeeding measure are to be regarded as an innate extension of the period, which gives to the melodic phrase a broader swing, and imparts a certain character of irrevocability to the final resolution. In a strictly organic sense the preceding measure is strongly united to the penultimate one through which it is necessary to imagine the upper voice an octave higher.

N.B. The form shows itself definitely as the one of "two divisions" The same will be found in all the following two part inventions, with the exception of a few variants.

Moderato espressivo (il tocco dolce, ma pieno).

Ruhig bewegt und ausdrucksvoll (mit weichem doch vollem Anschlag vorzutragen).



- 1) The part played by the countersubject (here made almost important enough to be classed as an independent second theme) has already been discussed in the "N.B." to Invention 5.
- 2) The fugue-like modulation to the dominant is here only a seeming one since the theme (with the exception of a slight deviation of the interval of the seventh +) is actually answered in the tonic.
- 3) The response of the Countersubject follows in contrary motion. It begins a halfmeasure later than the original, on the 8th, instead of on the 4th, eighth-note, and begins its progress on the fifth of the scale. This forms, thanks to its melodic and harmonic beauty, a most admirable contrapuntal combination.

4) and 5) are to be regarded as variants of the foundamental thematic idea: \*) Corresponding three barred phrases at the end of the first and second divisions, in the tone relationship of Domi-

nant and Tonic. E. B. 3127.



6) From the ornate progression of this melodic figuration (which is to be performed with broad expression) one can extract this harmonic foundation

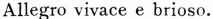


The performer must strive to bring out the suspension-like character of this phrase and allow it to shine through the embellishments.

N.B.2. The employment of the embellishments given in small notes is left to the discretion of the player.

F. B. 3127.

N.B.1. Because of the excellent balance of form, and the lofty melodic impressions conveyed in it, this Invention is to be ranked with the most perfect models of its class. It possesses in the three-part invention, No.7, (22) a most fitting companion-piece.





1) At first, with slow playing, the trill is to be played in 32nd notes When a very rapid tempo is attained, even the perfected execution will demand no more, and even the following is sufficient:

2) According to the scale-progression of A major, in which key we now find ourselves, the mordente must take a major second as its interval.

3) The figure is to be regarded as a variant of the theme:

<sup>\*)</sup> The bold and hearty dashing-off of figures and trills may, when combined with constant and great clearness, develop a certain modern brilliancy which our responsive grand piano of today, will justify. The virtuosity which is a characteristic of this piece may even allow, after technical infallibility has been attained, a moderate use of the pedal.

\*\*) See N.B. to Invention 5.



\*
4) The slurs on the four following long grace-notes (second progressions) are traditional, but for all that, not unassailable. A continuous staccato would also find justification.

5) The editor recommends to push on towards the end energetically, without any retarding of tempo. Those players who are not able to help themselves without recourse to the oldfashioned Bach Allargando may, according to there taste, use these embellishments from

the autograph composition.

<sup>\*\*\*)</sup> A similar case to that noticed in Invention 9, note 5). E. B.3127.



1) According to the preceding canonic scheme, it would be natural to find at both of these, designated places, — instead of what follows — a quarter and a 16th rest.

One must —of the four eighth-notes —make the first two somewhat prominent, through

which the effect of the imitation will receive its full value.



2) In many editions A flat is erroneously given instead of A.

3) The attempt—the possibility of which is easily explained—to play this passage two - voiced is by no means to be allowed. The chordfigure of this belated quarter note is not an ornamental end-flourish, for it finds its conception in the beginning of the third measure and thereby is given its true significance.

N. B. Seemingly the chief characteristic of this form is its duality, in which each of the two divisions is again subdivided into halves.

It would also be justifiable to divide the work into three parts; to make such a division clear, one must recognize the ideal connection between the first half of the 13th and the and the last half of the 17th measures, and regard all the intervening passage as transition from the second to the third division. i.e. 13th measure

According to which each portion is presented as an independent division.

The analysis in Friedemann Bach's "Clavier-Büchlein" ("Little Pianobook") only admits of the three divisions. This brings, instead of the 16th and 17th measures, the following variant of both, and omits the next four measures going at once to the 22nd thus





1) The thematic figure is made by the combination of two interlacing motives on the arsis, the one a diatonic, the other a chord formation, from the interdependence of which the following

form may be imagined: The proof of the correctness of this assumption is

given especially in the development, 2nd division (+-+) which works up only the first part of the motive presented. The editor finds it advisable to treat this first motive as the variation of a syncopated passage, through which the following rhythmic formation will easily be deduced:

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Through the threefold linking together of this figure and its inversion the thematic phrase is evolved.

2) The response to the theme (thematic phrase) is only found after an intervening passage of four measures. This forms at the same time the close of the first division,—a 16 barred period. On account of the absolute simplicity of this form one may certainly regard it as the original type of its species.

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N.B.1. The original notation has the following form:



Through the doubling of the value of the notes, the presentation of the text gains in clearness and intelligibility.

N.B.2. The remark 5) in Invention 9, has with slight modification, application here. Instead of dealing with six measures, we here have eight, but these eight receive the same treatment as the former six.

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- 1) The theme consists of two full measures.
- 2) Complete Cadence instead of the original halfcadence, in the theme.



3) Although this passing touch of canonic treatment may be unintentional, it should nevertheless not be passed by unnoticed by the auditor.

4) This and the succeding three figures of two quarternote's length each, are a free imitation of the preceding thematic fragment For the sake of a more flowing

progression the mordente is changed into an interval of a third. In the second measure the progression of the second (on the second eighth) (+) is inverted to a descending seventh.

5) The response in the tonic is here anticipated by half a measure.

6) The D is here to be regarded as the highest note of the secondary seventh chord on the fourth degree.

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