

Bach - Invention in Bb major No 14 from BWV 785

What does the title mean?

An invention is a short composition in two-part counterpoint style (polyphonic texture). Bach's inventions were written as exercises for his students. BWV refers to the Bach catalogue called Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis (Bach works catalogue).

What key is this in?

Bb major (Bb and Eb in the key signature)

Form and analysis:

Bars 1-4 - Bb major - subject exposition

Bars 4-6 - modulates to F major - episode

Bars 6-9 - F major - subject

Bars 9-16 - modulate back to Bb major - episodes

Bars 16-20 - Bb major - subject and coda to finish

What period is this work from?

Baroque period

What is typical of the Baroque style?

- polyphonic texture and counterpoint
- Consistent rhythmical ideas and consistent pulse
- Modulation to related keys
- Use of keyboard instruments like the harpsichord (no pedal and limited volume changes with keyboard instruments)
- Standard time signatures
- Balanced phrases
- Formal structures such as fugues and inventions

Notation:

(NB a lot of these markings are editorial ie Bach did not write these in)

C - 4/4 time - simple quadruple - 4 crotchet beats per bar

Poco non legato - little not smooth - detached notes

Mp - mezzo piano - moderately soft

P - piano - soft

Diminuendo - gradually getting softer

Crescendo - gradually getting louder

Slur - play legato - smoothly

Mf - mezzo forte - moderately loud

Staccato - short and detached

Fermata - pause - hold the note longer than written

Flat - lower the note a semitone

Natural - cancel the sharp or flat

Sharp - raise the note a semitone

Tie - hold the notes for their full value