

Concerto and Concerto grosso

Two important instrumental styles associated with Baroque music are:

- Concerto Grosso – this was exclusive to the Baroque period and did not continue in subsequent periods.
- Solo Concerto – this began in the Baroque period and has continued throughout the musical periods, right up to and including the 20th Century

Features of both types of concerto in the Baroque period:

- They are usually in three movements: fast – slow – fast
- Fast movements are often structured in **RITORNELLO** form, in which the recurring **RITORNELLO** theme alternates with themes played by soloists (called '**EPISODES**')
- The main orchestra is known as the **RIPENO** and this usually plays the ritornello theme. In the Concerto Grosso, the group of soloists is known as the **CONCERTINO**.

Ritornello 1	Episode 1	Ritornello 2	Episode 2	Ritornello 3	Etc.....
Ripieno	Soloist	Ripieno	Soloist	Ripieno	
Ripieno	Concertino (concerto grosso)	Ripieno	Concertino (concerto grosso)	Ripieno	

- In both a solo concerto and concerto grosso in the Baroque period there is a **BASSO CONTINUO** part played by **HARPSICHORD** along with either **CELLO** or **BASSOON**. The composer would write just the bass line and the harpsichord player would improvise chords over the bass line to fill out the harmonies.

Brandenburg Concerti – CONCERO GROSSO

Between 1708-1721 Bach composed 6 concerti in the CONCERTO GROSSO style. They were dedicated to the nobleman Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg and so became known as the ***Brandenburg Concertos***. Each feature a RIPIENO group (strings), a CONCERTINO group (soloists) and BASSO CONTINUO.

In Brandenburg Concerto No 2 the following instruments are heard:

Ripieno: *Strings*

Concertino *Trumpet. Recorder, Oboe, Violin.*

Continuo: *Harpsichord & cello*

The trumpet used is a very high-pitched Baroque trumpet

The main **ritornello** theme is played by both **ripieno** and **concertino** groups:



In between playings of the **ritornello** theme the **episodes** are played by the **concertino** group in the flowing combinations:



- Episode 1:** *Solo Violin With basso continuo (harpsichord & cello accomp)*
- Episode 2:** *Oboe with solo violin playing the accomp.*
- Episode 3:** *Recorder, with oboe playing the accomp.*
- Episode 4:** *Trumpet with recorder playing the accomp*

Contrapuntal Texture

Listen to the opening of the 2nd movement from the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* by J S Bach.

Against the constant background of the cello and harpsichord (the **basso continuo**), notice how the other three instruments enter one after the other in **imitation**; each instrument starts with the **same** melodic idea, but comes in at different times. This creates a **polyphonic** (or **contrapuntal**) texture.

Andante.

Listen to this excerpt again and answer the following questions.
Write your answer in the spaces provided.

- How many beats are in each bar? There are _____ beats in each bar.
- Apart from the cello and harpsichord, list the other three instruments that are playing, in the order in which they enter.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- The concept to describe these three instruments entering one after the other, but playing the same melodic idea, is: _____.
- The piece is in the key of _____.

- Listen to the third movement of Brandenburg Concerto No 2 (from 8:36) and fill in the grid below with what you hear. Make sure you identify musical concepts and place them in the correct categories.

Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/Tempo	Texture/Structure/Form	Timbre

- What makes the music clearly sound Baroque? Identify as many features as you can in relation to ***Melody/ Harmony, Texture, Timbre, Style*** etc.

Listen to these 2 excerpts from other Brandenburg Concertos. In columns 1 and 2 tick all the concepts you hear (matching the total at the bottom). In the final column select seven concepts that are common to both

CONCEPTS	EXCERPT 1	EXCERPT 2	COMMON TO BOTH
MELODIC Acciacatura			
Trill			
Sequence			
Mordent			
Melodic minor			
HARMONIC			
Major			
Polyphonic			
Tierce de Picardie			
Homophonic			
RHYTHMIC			
Rubato			
Anacrusis			
Triple time			
Duple time			
STRUCTURAL			
Ground bass			
Basso continuo			
Pedal			
Ritornello			
STYLES/FORMS			
Renaissance			
Baroque			
Concerto grosso			
Sonata			
Symphony			
Solo concerto			
	9 total	9 total	7 common