

ML 5186

BACH

PARTITA NO. 5 IN G MAJOR

Praelambulum • Allemande • Corrente • Sarabande • Tempo di Minuetto • Passepied • Gigue

PARTITA NO. 6 IN E MINOR

Toccata • Allemande • Corrente • Air; Sarabande • Tempo di Gavotta • Gigue

FUGUE IN F SHARP MINOR
from "The Well-tempered Clavier"
Book II

GLENN GOULD, Pianist

■ The sharp difference between the Partita No. 5 in G major and Partita No. 6 in E minor by J. S. Bach stimulates some very exciting musical questions.

What is a Partita? To answer this question from the historical, descriptive point of view will give us the information that the Partita, though originally signifying a series of variations, came to be used interchangeably with the term "Suite." This information sheds no light on the markedly different ways that Bach approached the same form in these two examples, numbered five and six. We must know that the Partita was a basic form. In every era of musical composition there are basic forms that encompass the needs of the creative composer to build in length. In a period subsequent to Bach one of the basic forms was known as the symphony; its essence had to do with fundamental key relationships and the dynamics of drama. The basic form allows each composer to approach the common problems of the age within simply defined limits and to work out many solutions in the same general area. For Bach a Partita was a composition of numerous movements, each of which bore direct resemblance to the rhythmic structure of a dance. The first movement of a Partita was rhythmically unlimited and bore such titles as Praelambulum or Toccata. Every Partita of Bach has one central compositional idea that is expressed in various ways through the dance-like movements. To hear this central dynamic and to follow its exposure is the exciting adventure of discovery in knowing these Partitas.

Each movement itself demands more than descriptive understanding. It is not enough to know what the Allemande is. We need to know Bach's use of his central compositional idea in creating an Allemande. Each Allemande of each Partita becomes, then, a totally different work bearing only the most superficial resemblance to any other Allemande. Each work creates its own continuity, its own solutions. To come to an understanding of the whole requires that we discover the central dynamic.

The two Partitas here presented demonstrate two totally different ideas of dramatic continuity. The fifth Partita develops the more usual way: from a given subject to a statement of relationships through the involvement of plot based on the original material, to the climactic moment of transformation just before the end of the dramatic movement. This is the common pattern of Western drama. The sixth Partita begins with its high point.

The Toccata is the fullest expression of Bach's idea in the Partita. The other movements follow the path of consequences from the dramatic beginning. The sixth Partita is extended by tracing the results and applications of the "dramatic act" of the Toccata itself. This kind of drama typifies certain of the works of French drama.

Johann Sebastian Bach born at Eisenach, Germany, March 31, 1685; died in Leipzig, July 28, 1750.
Partita No. 5 in G major and Partita No. 6 in E minor are from Volume I of the *Clavierübung* composed in Leipzig in the years 1726-31.

tists in the theater of deconstruction. The movements of the sixth Partita, though relating to the material and the use of that material in the first movement, ornament the ideas of the Toccata. As the fifth Partita may be said to build a drive and development of musical ideas, the sixth Partita may be said to concern itself with coloration.

■ Partita No. 5 in G major begins in a simple, bold manner.



The fundamental musical elements of this thematic fragment include the whole line of a fifth moving downward, the neighboring tones D-E-D in the treble over the repeated bass tone G, and an unusual metric-rhythmic relationship. Within the meter of 3, the first measures are divided into beat groups of 2, 3 and 1. This comprises the six beats of the first two measures. The uneven balance of beat groups is stated in the scale figure, the chordal figure and the quartet rest. A simple, immediate development of this relationship is heard in the third and fourth measures.



Here the beat relationship becomes 3:2:1. The downward fifth is extended over another octave to become the twelfth. The rhythmic pattern is scalewise movement from one register to another. At the same time the neighboring tone figure is changed to become more closely allied to the scale passage by following it as a cadence over the ground has already established.



The neighboring tone figure is immediately and prominently presented. While there are no vertical chords supporting this figure, the melodic continuation of the neighboring tone figure contains chord outlines and chordal shapes that spell out the support of the neighboring relationship D-E-D. The all-important interval of a fifth and the ground bass G are also present in the melodic unfolding of the single voice, the subject of a fugue. Here, in the last movement, the fugue theme evolves, as the overall governing line, the

downward scale line of the fifth that was presented directly and openly in the first two measures of the first movement. Again, the metric-rhythmic relationship is interestingly uneven.

The close connection between the theme of the opening movement and that of the closing points to the primary compositional drive of the whole Partita, namely, the rigorous development of thematic material into movements of differing qualities, different rhythmic demands, and different colorations. The dance set that has made up this Partita has been more closely allied with the original meaning of the word, however, the concept of variation is not carried out in the usual way; there are six developmental variations on a theme fragment. Perhaps it would be deceiver to say that seven movements are created from the same thematic-structural idea! Bach relates each dance movement to the germ of the original theme fragment of measures one and two in the opening Praelambulum.

■ In the Praelambulum itself, the upward-moving scale passages relate as inversions to the downward passages originally stated; the neighboring-tone figure is the principal material that is extended in ornamentation; the thematic fragment of the first two measures is restated only on the scale steps stated or implied in the first presentation (D-E-D-E-C).

The Allemande, at first starting in its use of triplet, evidences direct relationship to the original thematic material by making the octave followed by the fifth within. Instead of extending the scale progression to the twelfth, the octave is followed by the leap of a fifth upward, back on itself. Though the surface of the piece moves in triplets, the main structural, directional movement moves in units of two and four beats.

The Corrente, in triple meter, states its material in two-measure units. In the opening two measures the beat divisions are 3:1, relating directly to the 3:2:1 relationship of the Praelambulum. This play of uneven beat groups is sometimes experienced as the quality of gathering followed by sudden moving.

The Sarabande opens with the original material stated in thirds and in new rhythmic dress. There is an effect of compression resulting from the vertical emphasis of the thirds.

The Tempo di Minuetto brings the exciting rhythmic-metric relationship most clearly to the fore. Within the meter of three, the two beat of a 4:3 meter is stated. There are essential shifts back to the simple 3:4 with double divisions of beats at the end of phrases and in resolutions of melodic movement. Bach gives the clear sense of writing within the meters of 3 and 3 times unevenly. However, for only a short period of four measures are the rhythms of two and three juxtaposed to almost each other. The rhythmic edge, synopsized quality of two against three is unfolded in horizontal, melodic texture.

The Passepied is a gentle development of the original material, by now clearly heard in its

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FUGUE IN E MAJOR
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Book II

larger structural outlines as well as in its detailed relationships. This movement is an easy breather before the exciting, angular Gigue. The Gigue, a three-part fugue, breaks out in a spiritiveness that strains at the original projection of material. At the halfway point there does come the surprise of an apparently new subject, but its derivation from the fugue subject is immediately clear, and after twelve measures the original fugue subject returns unaltered.

The fifth Partita is a light work. No matter how great the variety of sound and idea, the relationship leads to the single source in emphasis. We never forget the single seed and marvel at the complexities that are inherent within the beautiful simplicity of the original material. As the music moves in expanding areas, Bach gives emphasis to the image of its source, to the light circle of its beginning.

■ The sixth Partita, in E minor, is a slower work. It is a narrative, the title of which is also its punch line. The opening two measures of the Toccata, first movement, encompass the largest panorama of expression and sound that is met in the ensuing movements. The unfolding of the rest of the Partita is the unfolding of different settings, of new ornaments, of new colors for the tale that is completely exposed at once. It is an engaging work as compared to the driving quality of the fifth Partita.

The sixth Partita refers to the ornamental coloration of the organ and harpsichord of Baroque times as well as to the vocal practice. We hear relaxation back to original material, but it strikes us as less important. The original material does not govern the area of expansion nor the harmonic and rhythmic techniques that follow.

The fugue subject of the Toccata relates to the suspensions of the opening two measures but merely as a reference. Each of the movements of the sixth Partita spins the tale in some new dress and in somewhat new dimension, but the tale is not new. The longest and fullest movement is the opening Toccata with its fugue. The remaining movements follow the path of the wave to shore, turning up new lights and new profiles, breaking up into smaller units and traveling further and further from the impetus of the original source. The integrative device that was so much a part of the foreground in the fifth Partita is now part of the background. The unfolding is from a high energy level to a low; the line is played out to the ornamental Gigue, the final movement.

Notes by Alvin Sussman
■ Previous recording by Glenn Gould issued on Columbia Masterwork © records include:
Borovins: Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 160; Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110; Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111. ML 5130.
Bach: The Goldberg Variations. ML 5050.

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ML 5186

ml 5186

glenn gould

piano

bach:

partita no. 5

in g major

partita no. 6

in e minor

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Johann Sebastian Bach 1685–1750

Partita No. 5 in G major BWV 829

G-Dur · en *sol* majeur

1	I. Praeambulum	1:48
2	II. Allemande	1:53
3	III. Courante	0:42
4	IV. Sarabande	2:04
5	V. Tempo di Minuetto	1:06
6	VI. Passepied	0:48
7	VII. Gigue	1:41

The Well-Tempered Clavier II

Das Wohltemperierte Clavier II

Le Clavier bien tempéré II

8	Fugue No. 14 in F-sharp minor BWV 883	3:15
	fis-Moll · en <i>fa</i> dièse mineur	
9	Fugue No. 9 in E major BWV 878	4:17
	E-Dur · en <i>mi</i> majeur	

Partita No. 6 in E minor BWV 830

e-Moll · en *mi* mineur

10	I. Toccata	9:53
11	II. Allemande	2:07
12	III. Courante	2:20
13	IV. Air	0:44
14	V. Sarabande	3:42
15	VI. Tempo di Gavotta	0:53
16	VII. Gigue	3:31

Total Time 41:06

Glenn Gould piano

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July 29/31 & August 1, 1957 [1–7/10–16]; July 30, 1957 [8]; August 1, 1957 [9]

Producer: Howard H. Scott

Cover Photo: Fred Plaut · Liner Notes: Alvin Bauman

LP Matrix: xLP 38378 [1–9], xLP 38403 [10–16] (mono)

Partitas Nos. 5 & 6 have been reissued in set M2S 693 (MS 6504/5) on September 16, 1963, “electronically re-channelled for stereo” (XSM 75104). Tracks 1, 7, 10 & 16 have later been edited in stereo for release in CD set Sony Classical SM2K 52597 in 1993. Tracks 10–16 have been remastered from the original LP production tape xLP 38403. It appears that previous CD issues used alternate takes in track 10.

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The sharp differences between the Partita No. 5 in G major and Partita No. 6 in E minor by J. S. Bach stimulate some very exciting musical questions.

What is a Partita? To answer this question from the historical, descriptive point of view will give us the information that the Partita, though originally signifying a series of variations, came to be used interchangeably with the term “Suite.” This information sheds no light on the markedly different ways that Bach approached the same form in these two examples, numbered five and six. We must know that the Partita was a *basic form*. In every era of musical composition there are basic forms that encompass the needs of the creative composer to build in length. In a period subsequent to Bach one of the basic forms was known as the symphony; its essence had to do with fundamental key relationships and the dynamics of drama. The basic form allows each composer to approach the common problems of the age within simply defined limits and to work out many solutions in the same general area. For Bach a Partita was a composition of numerous movements, each of which bore direct resemblance to the rhythmic structure of a dance. The first movement of a Partita was rhythmically unlimited and bore such titles as Preamble or Toccata. Every Partita of Bach has *one central compositional idea* that is expressed in varied ways through the dancelike movements. To hear this central dynamic and to follow its exposure is the exciting adventure of discovery in knowing these Partitas.

Each movement itself demands more than *descriptive* understanding. It is not enough to know what the Allemande is. We need to know Bach’s use of his central compositional idea in creating an Allemande. Each Allemande of each Partita becomes, then, a totally different work bearing only the most

superficial resemblance to any other Allemande. Each work creates its own continuity, its own solutions. To come to an aural grasp of the whole requires that we discover the central dynamic.

The two Partitas here presented demonstrate two totally different ideas of dramatic continuity. The fifth Partita develops the more usual way: from a given subject to a statement of relationships through the involvement of plot based on the original material, to the climactic moment of transformation just before the end of the dramatic movement. This is the common pattern of Western drama. The sixth Partita begins with its high point.

The Toccata is the fullest expression of Bach’s *idea* in the Partita. The other movements follow the path of consequences from the climactic beginning. The sixth Partita is extended by tracing the results and applications of the “dramatic act” of the Toccata itself. This kind of drama typifies certain of the works of French dramatists in the theater of declamation. The movements of the sixth Partita, though relating to the material and the use of that material in the first movement, ornament the ideas of the Toccata. As the fifth Partita may be said to build a drive and development of musical ideas, the sixth Partita may be said to concern itself with coloration.



Partita No. 5 in G major begins in a simple, bold manner. The fundamental musical elements of this thematic fragment include the scale line of a fifth moving downward, the neighboring tones D-E-D in the treble over the repeated bass tone G, and an unusual metric-rhythmic relationship. Within the meter of 3, the first measures are divided into beat groups of 2, 3 and 1. This

comprises the six beats of the first two measures. The uneven balance of beat groups is stated in the scale figure, the chordal figure and the quarter rest. A simple, immediate development of this relationship is heard in the third and fourth measures.

Here the beat relationship becomes 3:2:1. The downward fifth is extended over another octave to become the twelfth and prepare the way for scalewise movement from one register to another. At the same time the neighboring tone figure is changed to become more closely allied to the scale passage by following it as a cadence over the ground bass already established.

Six movements later, in the Gigue, the theme is:



The neighboring tone figure is immediately and prominently presented. While there are no vertical chords supporting this figure, the melodic continuation of the neighboring tone figure consists of chord outlines and chordal skips that spell out the support of the neighboring relationship D-E-D. The all-important interval of a fifth and the ground bass G are also present in the melodic unfolding of the single voice, the subject of a fugue. Here, in the last movement, the fugue theme evolves, as the overall governing line, the downward scale line of the fifth that was presented directly and openly in the first two measures of the first movement. Again, the metric-rhythmic relationship is interestingly uneven.

The close connection between the theme of the opening movement and that of the closing points to the primary compositional drive of the whole Partita,



namely, the rigorous development of thematic material into movements of differing qualities, different rhythmic demands, and different colorations. The dance set that has made up this Partita has been more closely allied with the original meaning of the term “partita.” However, the concept of variation is not carried out in the usual way; there are six developmental variations on a theme fragment. Perhaps it would be clearer to say that seven movements are created from the same thematic-structural idea! Bach relates each dance movement to the germ of the original theme fragment of measures one and two in the opening Preamble.

In the Preamble itself, the upward-moving scale passages relate as inversions to the downward passages originally stated; the neighboring-tone figure is the principal material that is extended in ornamentation; the thematic fragment of the first two measures is restated only on the scale steps stated or implied in the first presentation (G-D-E-C).

The Allemande, at first startling in its use of triplets, evidences direct relationship to the original thematic material by stating the octave followed by the fifth *within*. Instead of extending the scale progression to the twelfth, the octave is followed by the leap of a fifth upward, back on itself. Though the surface of the piece moves in triplets, the main structural, directional movement moves in units of two and four beats.

The Courante, in triple meter, states its material in two-measure units. In the opening two measures the beat divisions are 5:1, relating directly to the 2:3:1 relationship of the Preamble. This play of uneven beat groups is sometimes experienced as the quality of gathering followed by sudden moving.

The Sarabande opens with the original material stated in thirds and in new rhythmic dress. There is an effect of compression resulting from the vertical emphasis of the thirds.

The Tempo di Minuetto brings the exciting rhythmic-metric relationship most clearly to the fore. Within the meter of three, the two beat of a 6/8 meter is stated. There are crucial shifts back to the simple 3/4 with duple divisions of beats at the ends of phrases and in resolutions of melodic movement. Bach gives the clear sense of writing within the meters of *2 and 3 simultaneously*. However, for only a short period of four measures are the rhythms of two and three juxtaposed against each other. For the most part the edgy, syncopated quality of two against three is unfolded in horizontal, melodic texture.

The Passepied is a gentle development of the original material, by now clearly heard in its larger structural outlines as well as in its detailed relationships. This movement is an easy breather before the exciting, angular Gigue. The Gigue, a three-part fugue, breaks out in a spiritedness that strains at the original projection of material. At the halfway point there does come the surprise of an apparently new subject, but its derivation from the fugue subject is immediately clear, and after twelve measures the original fugue subject returns unaltered.

The fifth Partita is a tight work. No matter how great the variety of sound and idea, the relationship back to the single source is emphasized. We never forget the single seed and marvel at the complexities that are inherent within the fruitful simplicity of the original material. As the music moves in expanding areas, Bach gives emphasis to the image of its source, to the tight circle of its beginnings.

The sixth Partita, in E minor, is a looser work. It is a narrative, the title of which is also its punch line. The opening two measures of the Toccata, first movement, encompass the largest panorama of expression and sound that is met in the ensuing movements. The unfolding of the rest of the Partita is the unfolding of different settings, of new ornaments, of new colors for the tale that is completely exposed at once. It is an easygoing work as compared to the driving quality of the fifth Partita.

The sixth Partita refers to the ornamental coloration of the organ and harpsichord of Baroque times as well as to the vocal practice. We hear relationships back to original material, but it strikes us as less important. The original material does not govern the area of expansion nor the harmonic and rhythmic techniques that follow. The fugue subject of the Toccata relates to the suspensions of the opening two measures but merely as a reference. Each of the movements of the sixth Partita spins the tale in some new dress and in somewhat new dimension, but the tale is not new. The longest and fullest movement is the opening Toccata with its fugue. The remaining movements follow the path of the wave to shore, turning up new lights and new profiles, breaking up into smaller units and traveling further and further from the impetus of the original source. The integrative devices that were so much a part of the foreground in the fifth Partita are now part of the background. The unfolding is from a high energy level to a low; the line is played out to the ornamental Gigue, the final movement.

ALVIN BAUMAN