

Sonata in a for Flute and Continuo (excerpt)

G. F. Handel, Op. 1, No. 4, iv

Analysis and commentary by Matthew C. Saunders

Follow the path of the "inner voice" containing E5. Notice that at the end of m. 2, it becomes a dissonance and resolves in a 7-6 suspension.

Phrase 1 resembles the Classical "sentence" in many ways.

The minor dominant chord is formed by passing tones (G3 and B5) and connects the tonic and predominant areas. It is prolongational, not functional.

Phrase 2 begins with a descending fifths sequence that is a prolongation of the tonic area of the phrase. Note alternation of first inversion and root position chords. LIP is 6-10-6-10.

Allegro

Phrase 1: i to V

Phrase 2: i to i

Chord symbols: a: [i V⁶ i v⁶ ii⁶₅ V] [i⁶ iv VII⁶]

Functional labels: [[T D T] PD D] [T

Here the sequence repeats. Notice that the bass is now playing the melody, causing first-inversion chords to become root position chords and vice versa. LIP is now 10-6-10-6.

This repeated four-note segment is over a chord that *could* have been the goal of the preceding sequence.

Chord symbols: III i iv⁶ VII III⁶ VI

Functional labels: Ts

Falling third root motion between versions of the sequence.

It is not just conceivable but likely that a continuo player would harmonize every note of the bassline here, but none of the chords would be functional.

String of first-inversion triads: non-functional, connects two functional areas. Last two (V and iv) are prolonged to help prepare for the end of the phrase.

Note the cadential 6-4, with characteristic bassline and falling upper voices.

Chord symbols: VI iv⁶ ii⁶ i⁶ vii⁶ #VI⁶ V⁶ iv⁶ V i

Functional labels: Ts Ts PD D V T]

This imbalance between phrase length (2.5 bars + 8.5 bars) is typical of Baroque music, but the two phrases together form a period all the same. A Classical or Romantic composer would have been more likely to write two phrases of equal length. Phrase 1 can be understood as a tonic expansion, allowing the period to be conceived of as a single harmonic movement.

Copyright © 2011, 2019

Permission granted to reproduce for educational purposes in original form only.
www.martiandances.com