

J.S.Bach: BADINERIE from Orchestral Suite No.2

The Composer

- Johann Sebastian Bach was a German composer and musician of the Baroque era.
- He was born on the 31st of March 1685 and died at the age of 65 on the 28th of July 1750.
- He is known for instrumental compositions such as the Brandenburg Concertos and the Goldberg Variations, and for vocal music such as the St Matthew Passion and the Mass in B minor.
- He is generally regarded as one of the greatest composers of all time.

The Music

- Composition date: 1738-1739. Orchestral Suite No.2 contains seven movements (sections): Overture, Rondeau, Sarabande, Bourree, Polonaise, Menuet and Badinerie.
- Instrumentation: (Transverse) Flute, String Orchestra and Harpsichord (Basso Continuo).
- Tempo: Allegro (not marked on the score).
- Dynamics: Mostly forte, including use of terraced dynamics (although very few markings appear on the score, which was typical of the period).
- Form and Structure: Binary form (AB), with each section repeated once (AABB):
Section A Bars 0² – 16¹ 16 bars
Section B Bars 16² – 40¹ 24 bars
- Tonality: Section A begins in B minor and ends in F# minor whilst section B does the opposite, beginning in F# minor and ending in B minor.
- Harmony: Diatonic throughout. Section A modulates from the tonic to the dominant minor and Section B does the opposite. Imperfect and perfect cadences are clearly presented throughout. Chords frequently occur in inversion with occasional use of V⁷ in third inversion. A Neapolitan sixth chord is used in bar 35. Suspensions also occur in bars 8¹, 10¹ and 32¹.
- Melody and Pitch: The movement is based on two short musical ideas (X and Y). The flute part has a two-octave pitch range. The movement includes ornaments and compositional devices typical of the Baroque era:
Trills: Bars 8¹, 10¹, 15², 27², 30¹ and 32¹
Appoggiaturas: Bars 33¹ and 40¹
Sequences: 6² – 10¹ and bars 28² – 32¹.
- Rhythm and Metre: Simple ostinato rhythms, forming the basis of the two short musical ideas (X and Y), consisting almost totally of quavers and semi-quavers. The time signature is 2/4 throughout.
- Texture: Homophonic (melody and accompaniment). The flute and the cello provide the main musical material, but the 1st violin participates occasionally. The 2nd violin and viola provide harmony with less busy musical lines.

