

From Counterpoint to Community: Bach, Kant, and Philosophical Enquiry with Adolescents

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Abstract: This article examines how Johann Sebastian Bach's contrapuntal writing can serve as a stimulus for philosophical enquiry with adolescents aged 13–16. The argument does not claim any historical influence between Bach and Kant. Rather, it proposes a structural and pedagogical analogy between Bach's rule-governed polyphony and Kant's account of reflective judgment, autonomy, and purposiveness. Focusing on Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* in C major, BWV 772, the article shows how students can move from attentive listening to conceptual discussion within a Community of Enquiry. The musical work becomes a shared object of perception: students hear imitation, continuity, variation, tension, and closure before they are asked to name or theorize them. Through guided dialogue, these musical observations can be transformed into philosophical questions about freedom and constraint, identity and transformation, expectation and fulfilment, and the difference between personal response and reasoned judgment. The model advances Philosophy for Children and Community of Enquiry pedagogy by offering a concrete music-centred procedure in which aesthetic experience is not treated as decorative, but as the starting point for disciplined conceptual reflection. Its scope is deliberately limited: the approach depends on students' developmental readiness, the teacher's musical and dialogical competence, the selected work, and the classroom environment.

Key words: Kant, Reflective judgment, J. S. Bach, *Two-Part Invention No. 1*, Philosophy for Children, Community of Enquiry, Adolescent education

Introduction

This article proposes a pedagogical model linking structured musical experience to the development of reflective judgment and philosophical enquiry in adolescents aged 13 to 16. The model draws on Kant's analy-

sis of judgment in the *Critique of Judgment* (CJ), his conception of autonomy in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (GMS), and his remarks on education in the *Lectures on Pedagogy*.¹ These philosophical resources are brought into dialogue with the structural features of certain musical repertoires, exemplified here by the contrapuntal writing of Johann Sebastian Bach. The choice of Bach is illustrative rather than prescriptive: his music provides unusually clear examples of ordered multiplicity, internal normativity, and purposive coherence, which lend themselves to reflective exploration in pedagogical settings.

The pedagogical approach integrates music with the Community of Enquiry (CoE) framework associated with Philosophy for Children (P4C), as developed by Matthew Lipman, Ann-Margaret Sharp, Joanna Haynes, and others.² Within a CoE, music operates not as a source of philosophical propositions but as a shared experiential stimulus from which conceptual questions naturally arise. Children (including adolescents) listen to, perform, or move to musical excerpts; they describe what they perceive; they identify patterns or contrasts; and they generate questions that invite conceptual exploration. The enquiry is then conducted through reason-giving, collaborative discussion. This sequence allows young learners to move from perceptual discernment to conceptual articulation without requiring premature abstraction.

This transition becomes more convincing when read alongside Orff Schulwerk and the Kodály Method. In Orff-based settings, students often come to understand patterns through movement, gesture, percussion, and playful improvisation before they can explain what they have grasped. Kodály, by contrast, builds understanding through the disciplined habits of singing, inner hearing, solmization, and carefully sequenced literacy work. The two traditions proceed differently, yet both ask learners to notice fine distinctions, hold patterns in mind, and re-

¹ Regarding the Kantian pedagogical perspective, K. Bosáková notes that Kant's anthropological reflections are inseparable from the project of *Bildung* and practical self-formation. She cites Kant's pedagogical orientation according to which the human being must be educated toward freedom and maturity rather than merely trained for utility. She also recalls Kant's statement that all progress in culture ultimately has the human being as its end. In this sense, educational cultivation aims at autonomy, confidence, and participation in a wider civic world. This supports the present article's use of music not as ornament, but as a medium for the formation of judgment and independence. Bosáková, K., 2024. Moving Around the Question of the Human. Was Kant an Anthropological Philosopher? *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 13(1), esp. pp. 52, 57–58.

² Lipman, M., 2003. *Thinking in Education*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Haynes, J., 2002. *Children as Philosophers: Learning through Enquiry and Dialogue in the Primary Classroom*. London: Routledge.

spond imaginatively to form. Those are precisely the kinds of capacities upon which reflective judgment depends.³

The present article narrows its pedagogical focus to adolescents aged 13–16 and to one concrete musical example: Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* in C major, BWV 772.⁴ This restriction is methodologically important. Younger children may respond richly to music through movement, metaphor, and emotion, but the present argument requires learners who can begin to distinguish personal response from structural observation and who can give reasons for interpretive claims. The selected age group is therefore appropriate for connecting musical perception with philosophical enquiry. Bach's invention is used not as an illustration of Kantian doctrine, but as a compact musical field in which students can hear independence and interdependence, rule and freedom, repetition and transformation. The Community of Enquiry then provides the dialogical setting in which these perceptions may become philosophical questions.

The argument unfolds in three parts. Part I clarifies the structural analogy between Bach's contrapuntal writing and Kant's account of reflective judgment, purposiveness, and autonomy. Part II develops a concrete pedagogical application centred on Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* in C major, BWV 772, within a Community of Enquiry for adolescents aged 13–16. Part III clarifies the limits and innovation of the model, showing how it advances P4C/CoE practice without reducing music to philosophy or philosophy to music.

I. Structural Affinities Between Bach's Counterpoint and Kantian Judgment

1. Methodological Framework

Any attempt to place musical structure in dialogue with Kantian philosophy must begin with methodological clarity. There is no historical evidence that Kant was aware of Bach's music, nor that Bach anticipated Kant's critical system; the relationship proposed here is therefore *structural rather than historical*. The inquiry compares forms, not intentions, and analyses patterns of organization rather than claims of influence.

Structural analogy respects Kant's caution against speculative infer-

³ Kant, I., 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Ed. Guyer, P., trans. Guyer, P., Matthews, E. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Bach, J. S., n.d. *Inventions and Sinfonias*, BWV 772–801. Ed. Scheideler, U.; fingering Schneidt, M. Munich: G. Henle Verlag. Urtext Edition, HN 589.

ence, focusing on internal features of two domains — musical and philosophical — and examining where these exhibit comparable logics. The comparison seeks insight through parallelism rather than genealogy.

The advantage of this method, for the present article, is not that it permits unlimited analogies, but that it allows one carefully delimited comparison to be pedagogically productive. Bach's contrapuntal writing is treated here as a structured musical field in which relations of independence, constraint, continuation, and closure become audible. The comparison with Kant remains analogical: it concerns forms of judgment and organization, not historical influence or doctrinal identity.

By focusing on structural relations—such as independence of lines, internal normativity, and purposive coherence—the analysis avoids overinterpretation. The aim is neither to translate music into philosophy nor to claim that musical works contain philosophical doctrines, but to show how musical structures can serve as analogues clarifying aspects of Kant's theory of judgment and autonomy. This level of analogy suffices for pedagogical purposes in contexts where children explore conceptual distinctions arising from shared perceptual experiences.

2. Rule-Governed Independence: Counterpoint and the Form of Autonomy

One of the most distinctive features of Bach's polyphonic writing is the independence of voices within a system of strict internal constraint. In a typical two- or three-part invention, or in the fugues of the Well-Tempered Clavier, each voice is melodically self-sufficient, with its own contour, rhythm, and developmental trajectory, yet remains bound by the rules of counterpoint, regulating intervals, dissonances, entries, and inter-voice relations. Musicologists such as Alfred Mann, Christoph Wolff, and David Schulenberg have documented these internal laws as defining characteristics of Bach's compositional practice.⁵

This combination of freedom and lawfulness provides a close structural analogue to Kant's conception of moral autonomy. In the *Groundwork*, Kant argues that freedom is not opposed to law; law is intrinsic to freedom because a free will "is a law to itself" (GMS, Ak. 4:440).⁶ Auton-

⁵ Mann, A., 1987. *The Study of Fugue*. New York: Dover Publications; Wolff, C., 2000. *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*. New York: W. W. Norton; Schulenberg, D., 2006. *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

⁶ Kant, I., 1998. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Ed. and trans. Gregor, M. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

omy does not consist in acting without rules, but in endorsing rules that reason can affirm as universally valid. Heteronomy, by contrast, subjects the will to inclinations or external commands.

A comparable principle can be observed in Bach's contrapuntal writing. Each voice acquires clarity and expressive scope precisely through its relation to the larger musical whole. Constraint here is not the negation of freedom but one of its conditions. In this respect, both the musical and moral domains present freedom as something achieved through participation in an order that is internally governed rather than externally imposed.

Although these features can be studied in larger fugal works, they are also audible in a compact pedagogical form in Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* in C major. Its two voices do not merely accompany one another; they answer, imitate, and transform a shared musical idea. This makes the piece especially useful for classroom enquiry, because students can hear both independence and interdependence without needing advanced technical training.

This structural resonance is pedagogically significant. Children listening to or performing simple contrapuntal textures can perceive that individual parts retain their identity while contributing to a coherent whole. Without theoretical vocabulary, they intuitively grasp that the freedom of a single voice gains meaning only through its relation to others. This experience forms an intuitive analogue of Kant's insight and it can be taken up explicitly within a Community of Enquiry as a basis for philosophical reflection.

3. Tonal Directionality and Purposiveness Without Determinate Purpose

Another meeting point between Bach's idiom and Kant's aesthetics can be found in the peculiar experience Kant describes as purposiveness without purpose. Tonal writing of the eighteenth century frequently feels as though it is going somewhere. A dominant harmony unsettles the listener and asks for continuation; sequential motion can intensify expectancy; a cadence often sounds less like interruption than arrival. None of this requires a story, an image, or any representational programme. The impression of direction is generated from within the musical language itself. Even listeners with no technical training commonly sense that one event calls for another, or that a phrase has reached its

proper close. Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment offers a precise account of this experience. In §9 of the *Critique of Judgment*, he describes the judgment of beauty as grounded in a "free harmony of the faculties" (CJ, 5:217), where imagination and understanding interact without the imposition of a determinate concept.⁷ This experience produces the feeling of purposiveness: the form appears suited to our cognitive faculties even though it serves no conceptual end (CJ, 5:227). The judgment is reflective rather than determinative; it seeks a concept adequate to the intuition rather than applying one already in hand.⁸

The teleological character of tonal music exemplifies this experience. The resulting pleasure stems less from the recognition of any external end than from an apprehension of internal coherence. Order is sensed through voice-leading, patterned continuation, and cadential resolution before it is named conceptually. In this respect, listeners encounter something akin to Kantian purposiveness without purpose. The pedagogical implications are equally significant. Children frequently describe cadences as moments when "the music is finishing," or hear sequences as "climbing" or "going somewhere," despite having no formal theoretical vocabulary. Such remarks indicate early exercises of reflective judgment: attention is directed toward structural relations rather than representational content. Within a Community of Enquiry, these intuitions can be refined into distinctions between repetition and development, expectation and closure, or tension and release.

4. Internal Normativity and the Autonomy of Musical Practice

Fugal composition provides a clear example of internal normativity in Western art music. Its procedures—the construction of a subject, formulation of an appropriate answer, treatment of a countersubject, and permissible transformations—arise from the internal logic of the practice itself rather than external representational aims. Scholars such as Alfred Mann and Laurence Dreyfus have shown that Bach's fugal idiom is defined by procedural constraints that generate expressive possibilities through their limitations.⁹ These constraints do not restrict creativity; they constitute the conditions under which it flourishes. A fugue is

⁷ Kant, I. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, *ibid.*

⁸ Allison, H. E., 2001. *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹ Mann, A., 1987. *The Study of Fugue*. New York: Dover; Laurence Dreyfus, L., 1996. *Bach and the Patterns of Invention*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

thus an autonomous structure: its rules emerge from systemic relations among its elements, not from outside imposition.

This structural autonomy parallels Kant's account of moral autonomy, in which the will is bound by the law it gives to itself rather than external commands: "the property of the will by which it is a law to itself" (GMS, Ak. 4:440),¹⁰ contrasting it with heteronomy, where the will is subordinated to inclinations or external authorities. Moral law derives from pure practical reason; it is validated internally, not by external aims.

Although musical and moral domains differ, the similarity lies in the *self-sufficiency of the normative framework*. In both, normativity arises internally: a fugal answer is appropriate depending on its relation to the subject and tonal system; a maxim is morally acceptable if it can be universalized. The analogy shows how children engaging with a simplified fugal texture encounter rules as generative principles rather than arbitrary constraints.

Pedagogically, this insight is particularly powerful when mediated by the Kodály Method, which emphasizes internalization of structural relations through solmization and literacy. Singing, recognizing, or notating imitative entries allows children to experience permissible transformations within a system. They need not grasp Kant's theory of autonomy; they encounter *a domain of rules whose normative force is intrinsic*. Within a CoE, these experiences can prompt discussions about what counts as a rule, how rules differ from preferences, and why some structures feel coherent while others do not.

5. Reflective Judgment and Concept Formation Through Musical Experience

Reflective judgment, which Kant distinguishes from determinative judgment, occurs when a particular is encountered for which no settled concept is immediately available (CJ, 5:179). Rather than applying an already given rule, the mind searches for one adequate to the case before it. This activity is central not only to aesthetic judgment but also to the gradual formation of concepts and to the P4C tradition, where enquiry proceeds through dialogue, revision, and clarification rather than through the passive acceptance of definitions.

Music often prompts this kind of reflection. When youngsters hear a motive return in altered form, they may wonder whether it is "the

¹⁰ Kant, I., 1998. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *ibid*.

same” or “different,” requiring conceptual articulation. Listening to a sequence, they may sense that a pattern continues despite changes in pitch, prompting them to determine essential versus variable features. Engagement with such patterns, as noted by Doug Goodkin and Lois Choksy,¹¹ strengthens their ability to discern structural relations before articulating them.¹²

In a Bach invention, for example, the initial motive may appear literally, then transposed, inverted, or sequenced. Students’ intuitive sense of “sameness” across transformations becomes fertile for enquiry. The CoE encourages them to propose criteria – contour, intervallic pattern, or rhythm – and debate whether a transformation preserves identity or creates a new idea. These discussions exemplify reflective judgment: the community seeks concepts adequate to their perceptual experiences.

Younger children often register such differences in imagistic or metaphorical terms (“it sounds like the shadow of the first bit”), whereas older learners (on whom this article focuses) begin to formulate more explicit criteria. The gradual movement from perceptual recognition to conceptual articulation exemplifies a core function of judgment in Kant’s sense, and music offers a shared, low-risk medium in which that development can occur.

6. Compatibility Without Reduction: Preserving the Autonomy of Music and Philosophy

A final consideration concerns the need to avoid reducing either domain to the other. Structural analogies between musical practice and Kant’s philosophy are illuminating, but they do not imply that music conveys philosophical doctrines or that Kant’s theory is intrinsically musical. Music remains a non-conceptual art: it gives rise to judgments of taste, not truth. Kant emphasizes that aesthetic pleasure arises from

¹¹ Goodkin, D., 2004. *Play, Sing, and Dance: An Introduction to Orff Schulwerk*. Mainz: Schott – EAMC; Choksy, L., 1999. *The Kodály Method I: Comprehensive Music Education*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

¹² Convergetly, L. E. Motorina argues that Kant’s anthropology includes attention to implicit and pre-conceptual dimensions of cognition, including what Kant elsewhere calls obscure or indistinct representations. She connects this with the broader task of what the human being “can and should make of himself” as a free being. Such a reading supports the present claim that children may recognize musical identity, transformation, tension, or closure before possessing explicit conceptual vocabulary for them. Musical understanding can therefore precede discursive articulation without being cognitively empty. Motorina, L. E., 2017. Kant’s Anthropology as a Coherent Doctrine of Man. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 6(2), esp. pp. 21–22, 26, 28.

the free play of imagination and understanding (CJ, 5:217), whereas philosophy proceeds through concepts, reasons, and argumentative scrutiny. The present pedagogical model preserves that distinction by treating music not as a carrier of propositions, but as a stimulus from which philosophical enquiry may begin. Educators invite students to reflect on structural features and articulate conceptual distinctions, maintaining a conceptual focus even when the stimulus is non-conceptual.

The present article therefore keeps the analogy deliberately narrow. Its concern is not to establish a general theory of all music-centred philosophical enquiry, nor to claim that any coherent musical form may be paired with any philosophical framework. Bach's contrapuntal writing and Kant's account of judgment are brought together here because they offer a particularly clear case in which musical structure, reflective judgment, and dialogical enquiry can illuminate one another without being collapsed into one another. Other repertoires or philosophical traditions may later be explored through a similar procedure, but such extensions would require separate justification. In the present argument, the restriction to Bach and Kant is a strength rather than a limitation, because it allows the pedagogical mechanism to be shown with sufficient precision.

II. Pedagogical Application: Bach's Invention No. 1 as a Music-Centred Community of Enquiry

7. Why Music? Why This Model? Philosophical and Affective Foundations

The previous section has insisted on keeping the analogy between Bach and Kant carefully delimited: structural rather than historical, pedagogical rather than doctrinal. This narrowing is not merely a precaution. It also indicates how the model should be brought into the classroom. If the argument is to remain convincing, it must pass through one concrete musical work rather than through general claims about music as such. The following section therefore turns to J. S. Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1 in C major*, BWV 772. The work is short enough to be used in a classroom, clear enough for non-specialist listeners to follow with guidance, and structurally rich enough to support philosophical reflection. Its two voices imitate, answer, overlap, and diverge while remaining part of a coherent whole. This makes the piece especially suitable for dis-

cussion of autonomy, rule-governed freedom, identity through transformation, and purposiveness without an externally imposed programme.

The activity is designed for students aged 13–16. At this age, learners are usually able to move beyond immediate liking or disliking and begin to justify their responses. They may still begin as lay listeners, noticing energy, balance, tension, or mood, but with guidance they can learn to connect these impressions to audible features of the work. The aim is not to turn them into technical analysts. It is to help them notice that their responses are not arbitrary and that music can give them something precise to think about together.

Because music does not contain concepts, the enquiry necessarily operates within the realm of analogy, intuition, and reflective expansion. Philosophical exploration therefore remains general rather than doctrinal. What the model can do is prepare students for ideas such as autonomy, purposiveness, or reflective judgment without asking them to absorb a philosophical system in advance. That is not a defect of the approach. It is one of its educational strengths. The task here is less to transmit doctrine than to form habits of thought that later make doctrine intelligible.

What unifies these diverse possibilities is not stylistic similarity but methodological consistency. The educator selects a musical excerpt with a clear perceivable structure—motivic, harmonic, rhythmic, timbral, or textural—and invites students to explore what they notice and feel. Thus, the Community of Enquiry can develop from these perceptions into conceptual exploration. In this sense, the model is not tied to any particular repertoire or philosophical framework. It is better understood as a general procedure for bringing aesthetic experience into contact with enquiry. Feeling often provides the first impulse: something is noticed, puzzled over, or found compelling. From there, perception sharpens, concepts begin to form, and discussion becomes possible. Emotion is not the enemy of reflection in such cases. More often, it is what sets reflection in motion.

8. Structuring a Music-Centred Community of Enquiry

At the centre of the model stands the Community of Enquiry, the setting in which musical experience can be turned into philosophical conversation. Developed within the P4C tradition by Matthew Lipman, Ann-

Margaret Sharp, and others,¹³ the CoE offers enough structure to sustain serious discussion while remaining open to unexpected lines of thought. Music is especially useful here. It is rich in pattern, capable of stirring response, and suggestive without telling learners what to think.¹⁴

A session may begin with uninterrupted listening. Students are first asked simply what they noticed: whether the music seemed orderly or free, whether the two voices seemed to cooperate or compete, whether something returned, and whether the ending felt prepared. The second listening is more focused. The teacher may ask students to follow one voice, then the other, or to raise a hand when they think an idea has returned. Only after this perceptual work should the class move toward philosophical questioning. Possible questions include: Can two independent voices still belong to one whole? Can rules make freedom possible? What makes a musical idea remain the same when it changes? Is an ending satisfying because we expected it, or do we learn to expect it because of how the music is built?

Within the Community of Enquiry, the musical work remains the common reference point. Students are encouraged to return to the piece when claims become too general. A student who says that the music is “free” may be asked where that freedom is heard. Another who says that the voices “follow rules” may be asked whether rules restrict the music or make it possible. In this way, the dialogue moves between listening and reasoning. The philosophical concepts are not imposed from above; they are gradually drawn out of shared attention to the musical example.

The facilitator’s judgment plays an essential role in a CoE. He or she must ensure that the discussions remain open and as close to the topic as possible, and provide structure without steering learners toward pre-fabricated conclusions. Feeling, attentive observation, and the giving of reasons all need room within the same conversation.

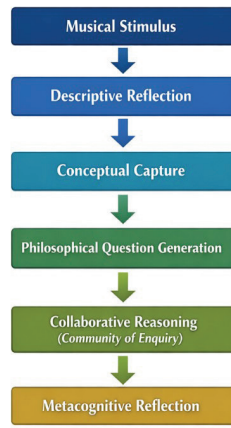
¹³ Lipman, M., Sharp, A. M., Oscanyan, F. S., 1980. *Philosophy in the Classroom*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

¹⁴ In a similar vein, the Kantian scholar A. Salikov emphasizes that Kant’s lectures on anthropology were conceived as a pragmatic discipline directed toward worldly judgment and social competence. He notes Kant’s description of anthropology as knowledge useful for morality, interaction among persons, and “the way to educate and govern human beings.” Anthropology therefore mediates between abstract philosophy and lived practice. This is consonant with the present pedagogical model, where musical experience becomes the starting point for reflection, communication, and collaborative judgment within a Community of Enquiry. Salikov, A., 2018. Some Political Aspects of Kant’s Lectures on Anthropology. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 7(1), esp. pp. 4–5, 15–16.

8.1. Schematic Overview of the Music-Centred Enquiry Model

The model may be described in broad stages rather than as a rigid sequence. Learners begin with a shared musical encounter. They then give initial descriptions of what they noticed or felt, gradually identify patterns that seem significant, and turn those observations into questions worth discussing. From there, collaborative reasoning becomes possible within the Community of Enquiry. The process concludes, where appropriate, with reflection on how the discussion unfolded and what was learned from it.

Musical Enquiry and Development Model



Progression from Perception and Emotion to Philosophical Dialogue

Source: authors' own diagram.

The diagram should be read as a flexible pedagogical sequence rather than as a rigid method. Students first encounter Bach's invention as listeners. They then describe what they hear in ordinary language. With guidance, some of these descriptions are connected to structural features such as imitation, repetition, variation, tension, and closure. These observations become the basis for philosophical questions, which are then discussed in a Community of Enquiry. The final stage asks students to reflect not only on the music, but also on how their own judgment changed through listening and dialogue.

Expert and Lay Listening

The model also requires a distinction between expert and lay listening. Expert listening usually attends to explicitly musical relations: subject, imitation, sequence, interval, cadence, tonal direction, and the distribution of voices. Lay listening more often begins with affective or global impressions: the music may seem calm, tense, playful, orderly, restless, or complete. These two modes of listening are not opposed, and the distinction should not be understood hierarchically.

Affective response is not a mistake, and structural listening is not emotionless. The difference lies rather in the balance between immediate experience and articulated criteria. In the classroom, this distinction becomes pedagogically productive. Students aged 13–16 may first describe Bach's invention in ordinary language: one voice "answers" another, the music "keeps going," or the ending "sounds right." The teacher's task is to help them refine these responses without dismissing them. A feeling of order can be connected to imitation; a feeling of movement can be connected to sequence; a feeling of closure can be connected to cadence. In this way, lay listening is not replaced by expert listening. It is educated by it. The Community of Enquiry then gives students the opportunity to ask what kind of judgment they are making when they move from "I like this" to "this passage is coherent because...". That movement is central to the article's Kantian argument.

Phase 1: Attentive Listening to Bach's Invention (Musical Stimulus)

A session should begin with attentive listening to Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* in C major, BWV 772. At this first stage, the aim is not explanation but encounter. Students are invited to listen for what they notice: whether the music seems orderly or restless, whether the two voices appear to cooperate or compete, whether an idea returns, and whether the ending feels prepared. These first responses may still be intuitive, but they provide the experiential material from which later enquiry can grow.

Phase 2: Descriptive Articulation (Reflection)

After the first listening, students are asked to describe their responses in ordinary language. Precision is not yet the main goal. One student may hear balance, another movement, another tension, another a sense of return. Such descriptions are pedagogically valuable because they

show how lay listening begins: not with technical analysis, but with felt and perceptual impressions. The teacher's task is to preserve these responses while gradually asking students to connect them to what can actually be heard in the music.

Phase 3: Structural Noticing (Conceptual Capture)

The second listening should be more focused. Students may be asked to follow the entry of one voice, then the other, or to indicate when they think the opening musical idea returns. At this point, impressions begin to acquire structure. What first sounded simply "orderly" may now be connected with imitation; what felt like movement may be connected with sequence; what seemed like completion may be connected with cadence. Students are therefore no longer merely reacting to the music. They are beginning to organize experience in ways that make philosophical reflection possible.

Phase 4: Philosophical Question Formation (Question Generation)

From these emerging distinctions, philosophical questions can arise naturally. What makes a musical idea remain the same when it changes? Can two independent voices still belong to one whole? Do rules restrict freedom, or can they make freedom possible? Why does an ending feel satisfying? Such questions are not imposed from outside. They grow from the students' attempts to understand what they have heard in Bach's invention.

Phase 5: Dialogical Deliberation (Collaborative Reasoning)

The enquiry then proceeds through dialogue within the Community of Enquiry. Students offer reasons, test interpretations, disagree, reconsider, and return to the musical example when needed. Bach's invention serves as a common reference point, preventing the discussion from becoming purely subjective. A claim such as "the voices are free" or "the music follows rules" must be connected to something audible in the work. In this way, judgment is exercised publicly and collaboratively.

Phase 6: Reflective Review (Metacognitive Reflection)

The session should end with a brief reflective review. Students may consider what changed in their listening, which question proved most difficult, whether their first impression was confirmed or revised, and how the discussion affected their understanding of the music. This final

stage is important because it turns enquiry back upon itself. Students do not merely listen and speak; they begin to notice how their own judgment develops through attention, dialogue, and reasons.

9. Adolescents Aged 13–16: Reflective Judgment, Structure, and Dialogue

The model is best suited to adolescents aged 13–16 because it requires more than an immediate emotional response to music. They must be able to listen repeatedly, compare what they hear, distinguish personal impression from structural observation, and give reasons for interpretive claims. These capacities are not fully mature, and they vary considerably among learners, but they are sufficiently developed in this age range to make a Bach-centred Community of Enquiry pedagogically plausible.

In work with Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1*, students can first approach the music through ordinary listening. They may describe the piece as lively, orderly, playful, insistent, or balanced. The teacher then helps them connect these impressions to audible relations: one voice begins and the other answers; an idea returns but not always in the same place; movement continues through sequence; closure feels prepared rather than accidental. Such guidance allows students to move gradually from affective response toward reflective judgment.

The philosophical discussion should remain close to the musical example. If students ask whether the two voices are free, they should be invited to say what in the music gives that impression. If they claim that the music follows rules, they should consider whether rules merely restrict the voices or allow them to cooperate. If they notice that the opening idea returns in altered form, they can ask what makes something remain the same through change. In this way, Bach's invention becomes a shared object through which questions about autonomy, identity, order, and purposiveness can be explored.

This does not require students to master Kant's philosophy. Rather, the teacher may introduce simplified conceptual language after the musical experience has already generated the problem. Kant's reflective judgment can then be presented as a way of naming a familiar activity: the attempt to find adequate concepts for something first encountered in perception. The educational value lies in this movement from hearing, to noticing, to questioning, to reasoned dialogue.

10. Assessment, Reflection, and the Development of Autonomy

Assessment in this model should not measure technical musical achievement alone. Its central concern is the quality of the movement from perception to judgment. Students may be assessed informally according to whether they can describe what they hear, connect an impression to an audible feature, formulate a philosophical question, offer reasons, listen to alternative interpretations, and revise their view when appropriate.

In this sense, the model links musical attention with intellectual autonomy. A student who moves from “I like this passage” to “this passage feels coherent because the second voice answers the first and the ending sounds prepared” has begun to transform preference into judgment. The Community of Enquiry strengthens this process by requiring students to make their interpretations public, test them against the musical example, and respond to others. Autonomy is therefore not treated as isolated self-expression, but as the ability to think for oneself in a shared space of reasons.

Kant’s *Lectures on Pedagogy* repeatedly return to the need for education to cultivate both discipline and freedom, so that autonomy becomes something responsibly exercised rather than merely asserted.¹⁵ The present model serves that aim by giving learners room for independent thought within a shared and demanding dialogue. Emotion need not be treated as a distraction. It often alerts students to contrasts that matter, sustains attention, and prompts further questioning. When examined rather than dismissed, it becomes part of reflective judgment itself.

The same arrangement can also foster what Kant calls the public use of reason: the practice of stating one’s view openly and answering for it before others.¹⁶ A well-run Community of Enquiry models this in miniature. Students learn to speak clearly, attend seriously to objections, and revise positions when reasons require it. In doing so, they move toward forms of cognitive, affective, and social autonomy.

¹⁵ Kant, I., 1997. *Lectures on Pedagogy*. In: Heath, P. – Schneewind, J. B., eds. *Lectures on Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ Kant, I., 1996. *Practical Philosophy*. Ed. and trans. Gregor, M. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Schmidt, J., 1992. What Is Enlightenment? A Question, Its Context, and Some Consequences. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 30(2), pp. 247–260.

III. Limits, Innovation, and Theoretical Significance

11. Synthesis

The preceding sections have argued that Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* can function as a concrete stimulus for reflective judgment within a Community of Enquiry. The work gives students a shared perceptual object: two voices, a recurring musical idea, imitation, continuation, variation, and closure. These musical relations can be heard before they are conceptually named. The philosophical task begins when students try to say what they have heard, compare interpretations, and give reasons for their claims.

This movement from perception to concept is the point at which Kant becomes pedagogically useful. The article does not claim that Bach's music should be used to teach Kantian philosophy. Rather, it argues that Bach's contrapuntal structure can help students experience, in an accessible form, problems that Kant's theory of judgment helps us understand: how we seek order without simply applying a ready-made concept, how freedom can exist within lawfulness, and how purposiveness can be felt without an external purpose.

Within this framework, Bach's music serves as a particularly transparent illustration of ordered complexity, independence-within-constraint, and purposive coherence. Crucially, however, the pedagogical framework is not dependent upon Bach's idiom, nor upon any singular stylistic canon. Its broader applicability rests on the presence of perceivable structural relations capable of sustaining conceptual enquiry.

What this synthesis offers is therefore not a reinterpretation of Kant, but a pedagogical instantiation of capacities Kant identifies as fundamental to judgment. Musical structure provides a concrete experiential field in which relations such as similarity and difference, dependence and independence, tension and resolution may be perceived prior to conceptual articulation. When these relations become objects of communal reflection, learners engage in the movement Kant describes: judgment operating without predetermined concepts, yet oriented toward conceptual coherence.

At the same time, this synthesis clarifies an essential constraint. Musical experience does not itself become philosophical discourse. Music remains a non-conceptual and affective domain; philosophy remains conceptual and discursive. Their relationship is mediated by enquiry. Such a distinction preserves the autonomy of both domains while allowing musical struc-

ture to function as a catalyst for reflective activity rather than as a bearer of philosophical content.

When enquiry begins from a shared musical experience, students have something concrete to return to as they test claims, offer reasons, and negotiate criteria together. Such practices are closely tied to intellectual autonomy: one learns to think for oneself without becoming deaf to the views of others. At the same time, the embodied habits encouraged by Orff work and the procedural discipline characteristic of Kodály practice help keep reflection connected to experience rather than allowing it to drift too quickly into abstraction.

12. Maintaining Distinct Domains: Music as Experience, Philosophy as Conceptual Reflection

Methodological clarity depends on keeping music and philosophy distinct. Music unfolds in time, works through affect, and does not proceed by concepts. Philosophy, by contrast, trades in distinctions, reasons, and explicit argument. In the present model, the relation between them is neither mystical nor reductive. Experience comes first; reflection follows.

The model depends on preserving the difference between music and philosophy. Bach's invention is not a philosophical text, and it should not be treated as if it secretly contained Kantian doctrine. Music unfolds through time, perception, affect, and form. Philosophy proceeds through concepts, reasons, distinctions, and arguments. The educational connection between them is mediated by enquiry.

For this reason, the teacher should not begin by explaining Kant and then asking students to find Kant in Bach. The better sequence is the reverse: students listen, notice, describe, and question; only then may philosophical vocabulary be introduced as a way of clarifying what the enquiry has already begun to uncover. This preserves the autonomy of both domains. Music gives the community something concrete to experience together; philosophy gives the community tools for thinking about that experience.

13. Developmental Limits and Pedagogical Conditions

Although the model may later be tested with other repertoires, the present article restricts itself to Bach in order to demonstrate the pedagogical mechanism with sufficient precision. However, this model has clear limits. It is not equally suitable for every age group, every classroom, or every musical

work. Its strongest application is with adolescents aged 13–16, because students at this stage are more likely to sustain attention to a complex musical example, distinguish emotional response from structural observation, and give reasons for interpretive claims. Even within this age range, however, results will depend on several conditions: prior musical exposure, the teacher's ability to guide listening, the quality of the classroom climate, the type of school, the time available, and the students' confidence in speaking before others. These factors do not invalidate the model, but they prevent exaggerated claims about its universal effectiveness.

The teacher's role is therefore decisive. The teacher need not be a professional musicologist, but must be able to select a musically appropriate excerpt, direct attention to audible features, and prevent the discussion from becoming either purely technical or purely subjective. The selected music must be complex enough to reward attention but clear enough to remain accessible. Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* fulfils this function because its imitative structure can be heard without advanced theoretical training, while still supporting discussion of rule, freedom, identity, and coherence. The classroom environment must also support careful listening and respectful disagreement. Without such conditions, the Community of Enquiry risks becoming either an exchange of impressions without reasons or a teacher-led explanation that leaves little room for enquiry.

14. Innovation of the Model

The music-centred enquiry model contributes to educational theory by illustrating how aesthetic experience can give rise to conceptual reflection without reducing either domain. Kant's account of reflective judgment provides a useful framework: cognition involves not only applying concepts but seeking concepts adequate to new experiences. Music offers precisely the kind of structured yet non-conceptual experience that invites such activity.¹⁷ When learners perceive similarity and difference, tension and resolution, or expectation and closure, they exercise capacities central to judgment formation.¹⁸

¹⁷ Bowman, W., 1998. *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁸ Recent Kant scholarship in *Studia Philosophica Kantiana* has likewise stressed that anthropology and pedagogy form an indispensable practical complement to critique, because they concern how rational capacities are cultivated in concrete human beings rather than merely analyzed in abstraction. See Bosáková, K., 2024. Moving Around the Question of the Human. Was Kant an Anthropological Philosopher?, *ibid.*, pp. 52–58; Salikov, A., 2018. Some Political Aspects of Kant's Lectures on Anthropology, *ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

The innovation of the model lies in the way it connects three elements that are often treated separately. First, Bach's contrapuntal writing provides a shared aesthetic object whose structure can be heard and revisited. Second, Kant's account of reflective judgment gives philosophical language for the movement from perception toward conceptual articulation. Third, P4C and the Community of Enquiry provide the dialogical procedure through which students test claims, offer reasons, revise interpretations, and learn to think with others. The model therefore does not merely add music to philosophy lessons as an attractive stimulus. It uses musical structure as the medium through which philosophical questions become available.

This advances existing P4C and CoE practice by giving the community a non-verbal but highly structured object of enquiry. Many P4C sessions begin from stories, images, or moral dilemmas. A Bach invention offers a different kind of stimulus: it does not state a problem, describe a conflict, or propose a narrative. Instead, it presents relations that must be noticed, interpreted, and discussed. Students must learn to say what they hear, to distinguish evidence from preference, and to test whether their interpretation can be shared by others. In this sense, music-centred philosophical enquiry strengthens the epistemic discipline of the Community of Enquiry while preserving its openness.

The employment of Orff and Kodály approaches reinforces this point. Both perspectives focus on the role of embodiment, gradual internalization, and well-paced sequenced learning. Conceptual insight is not treated as separate from perception, but as something that grows through disciplined engagement with it.

Conclusion: Music as a Gateway to Reflective Autonomy

This article has argued that Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 1* in C major, BWV 772, can serve as a concrete stimulus for philosophical enquiry with adolescents aged 13–16. Its contrapuntal structure allows students to hear independence and interdependence, rule and freedom, repetition and transformation, tension and closure. These relations are first perceived musically, but they can become philosophically significant when explored within a Community of Enquiry.

The article has not claimed that Bach's music contains Kantian philosophy, nor that Kant's theory requires musical illustration. The relation is pedagogical and analogical. Bach's music offers a structured experience; Kant's account of reflective judgment helps clarify the movement from

perception to concept; P4C/CoE provides the dialogical setting in which students learn to give reasons, listen to others, and revise their interpretations.

The model is intentionally limited. It depends on an appropriate age group, a carefully selected work, a competent facilitator, and a classroom climate that supports both attentive listening and respectful disagreement. Within these limits, however, the model offers a distinctive contribution to P4C and Community of Enquiry practice. It shows how philosophical reflection can begin not only from stories, dilemmas, or texts, but also from the disciplined listening to musical form.

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