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# BACH-BUSONI

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*Piano Works*

Instructive Edition

Volume II

The Well-Tempered Clavier – Second Part  
Book 3: BWV 883–888

Translation


*for EB 8278*

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## Translation of the Remarks within the Music Text

Translations of German words or abbreviations are given from top to bottom and at each tier from left to right. They occur once for each piece.

Words and phrases that Busoni emphasized by spaced type are underlined in the translation for better visibility. The rare original underlining is represented by a double line.

The symbol  represents one or various consecutive music samples in the German text.

### Praeludium XIV


p. 12:

1) To be sung, and indeed with a longer breath than is possible for a singer.

p. 13:

1) We might expect that in the second half, the theme would first show up in the middle voice but the second measure teaches us that in this case we are not facing an inversion of the first part, but a development of the main motif.

In the first half, the development revolves especially around the second measure of the thematic melody, in the next section around the third.

But the development is by no means to be taken in the polyphonic, but purely in the melodic sense; the whole piece is a solo song with an artistic, two-voice accompaniment. The impression of contemplative calm that the first seven measures give despite the ongoing motion of the accompanying voices, is probably due to the fact that underlying the period are two implicit organ points, quasi an imaginary organ pedal voice .

In that respect, the setting and the ambiance is reminiscent of the Belgian master César Franck's manner, one of the few of our time who were moved by the poetry of counterpoint.


### Fuga XIV

p. 16:


Idea: 


1) The performance must despite all seriousness have something flourishing; the tempo remaining lively despite all the stateliness; more of a restrained Allegro than an accelerated Andante. The content, for all its wisdom, is full of youth; the intellectual stands next to the emotional. Here, one is reminded of Faust's acknowledgement: "I am too old merely to play, too young to be without desire."

p. 20:

The subject's framework is reduced to the following formula .

Thanks to its structure, based on the scale and the syncopation, the subject allows for manifold canonic combinations.

In this case, the canonic scheme of syncopated scales can be represented this way .


The upbeat-like interval of a fourth can occur at every half measure, the turn [Doppelschlag] between every interval of a second, and in fact alternating through all voices. They are the ones who lend the intervals the thematic character .


We list as examples a selection of such combinations that were not used in the fugue

1) At a distance of seconds and of two eighth notes .


2) At a distance of octaves and of three quarter notes .

p. 21:

3) At a distance of a measure and in the ratio of the sub-dominant .


4) At a distance of a half measure, in four voices, with free interval treatment of the upbeat motif .

5) Counterpoint at the interval of the tenth .


6) Canon at the octave, combined over the first entry of the subject in the fugue's second half (mm. 28–31); the original, three-voice setting is unaltered, the soprano added .



Other canonic possibilities, such as augmentation and inversion, both of which do not appear in the fugue, are only mentioned here to leave room for the student's own contemplation.

p. 22:

A relationship between the fugue and its prelude can be thematically established as follows: .


Although the fugue dispenses with all the contrapuntal processing mentioned, it nevertheless offers rich material for analysis, especially regarding its innovative form. Right away, the first counterpoint is not maintained, and the exposition is further developed in a playful way with the help of the upbeat figure of the subject. With the surplus fourth subject entry in the soprano, the bass (m. 16) appears like an arrangement of two voices that canonically follow each other; in such a way that the fugue here gains the semblance of four voices.



Our tonal system, the range and the main categories of the human voice, the cycle of musical setting, made it possible for the four-part texture to remain the satisfying norm: that in fact a reduced number of voices was felt as a restriction, a greater number of voices was felt as an overgrowth of the norm. I believe that any Bach setting can be made into a setting for four voices, because such a setting is already included in the conception.  measure 16


Immediately before this episode there is an inconspicuous, short transitional figure, claiming, though, great importance:  It is the cause of the first obligatory countersubject, the independent development of which the second part of the fugue initially deals with. 


And here, too, the four-part texture is, veiled, expressed. Shortly thereafter, the subject itself appears in conjunction with the obligatory countersubject, once in the subdominant and once in the dominant.


p. 23:

The second part of the fugue ends with the subject's resolution in *C sharp minor*, concurrently opening the third fugue part, which establishes and develops a second obligatory countersubject  sounding almost like an ornamentation of the subject.

 At the end of the thirteenth measure (counting from the start of the sixteenth-note motion), this development reaches its peak; the next three measures delay and weaken the effect of the main subject's entry, which could easily adjoin the thirteenth measure 

With the answer to the subject (this time in the tonic), both countersubjects join it and finally form a structure related to the triple fugue 

In order not to ignore any possibility, we also add to the other studies and attempts the (not very favorable) strict inversion of the whole setting, along with a freer one 


Compare the double fugue in the Kyrie of Mozart's Requiem, which resembles the two outer voices of this inversion. 

After a final complete development (tonic–dominant–tonic), the fugue ends in a simple, decisive cadence.

### Praeludium XV

p. 24:

As a piano piece, the prelude is only two voices, purely for two hands. The third voice is used as a sustained note, and is hence not contrapuntally legitimate. Ultimately, though, the organism is based on a setting for four voices, pianistically dispersed; it is, so to speak, a transcription.

(Organic idea)  etc.

The comments on the F major prelude are to be consulted here.

The two parts consist of an antecedent in a three-measure rhythm and a consequent in an even-numbered


measure rhythm. An attractive form for a short performance piece and perfectly balanced.

p. 25:


1) Modeled on the first part: organ point G in the middle voice, through three measures.

p. 27:

### Fuga XV

1) The answer would be expected to lead back to the tonic, as occurs later with the inversion, and to read something like this 

p. 29:


Idea: 

2) If the introduction of the canon did not skip a section of the subject,+ then parallel octaves would arise in the imitation.

p. 30:

\*) see comment 2)

p. 31:

3) The four measures now following cleave the piece, which originally joined the edges of the cleft by the unity of key and by virtue of the imagined organ point 

But the interruption brings a fresh emphasis into the stretta, which very much befits the whole thing. For the aspect that shows individually in this part lies in the change from serenity to expressed joy.

### Praeludium XVI


p. 32:



1) From the text it is not clear by what power the middle voice becomes the bass in the second measure, why the first bass disappears from the setting, nor where to attribute the voice to that joins in as a fourth one in the third measure. Present here is obviously an abbreviation in the notation. The *Largo tempo*, coming from Bach, must not lead to excessive broadness.

p. 33:

Compare the comments on the following page.

## p. 34:

What the editor finds characteristic in this piece is the degree of harmonic movement, encompassing half notes for the antecedent and quarter notes for the consequent. So the harmonic structure of the first four measures gives the following picture: 

Drawn over this framework in the manner of a subject is an ornamental line with a strong character  which only through imitative interweaving lends the piece its physiognomy. The thematic consequence could have been more completely pursued than it actually occurs 

The form initially presents a symmetrical, recreated setting leading from the subdominant to the dominant. Only upon the third attempt does the river find another bed, flowing from now on more freely and broadly until entering the coda. Whereas in the G minor prelude of the previous book one could establish a closer relationship between the organ-point idea of the coda and that of the subject, this organ point shows the familiar gesture of the epilogue, combining dignity and finality with a certain prevalence of feeling.


In the rhythmic presentation, be sure to distinctly separate the dotted sixteenth notes from the dotted eighth notes.

## Fuga XVI

## p. 35:

The resolution of the exposition as four voices: 

## p. 36:

1) As in a previously discussed passage in the F-sharp minor fugue, the bass can also be perceived here as a two-voice contraction, namely 

2) Transformation of the countersubject motif  to 

## p. 37:

1)  appears abbreviated in the alto.

## p. 38:


1) Perhaps the alto represents here a variation of the subject's eighth-note repetitions 

## p. 39:


Idea: 

1) To the editor, a piano episode seems required. Tonally, this setting in thirds would provide a good opportunity for it.


## p. 40:


The subject is very promising, but contrapuntally unwieldy; its inversion exhausts itself in the countersubject, which is basically a variation of the subject in contrary motion 

## p. 41:

The possibilities of a fragmentary stretto over a continuous voice are set out in the following example; a similar combination, appearing more curious than beautiful, cannot be encountered in the fugue. 

On the other hand, counterpoint at the tenth (sixth and third), which is equally favorable for subject and countersubject, has been used in many different ways.


Some forms of the episodes are reminiscent of variations on the subject; they are also perhaps intended as such. It is difficult to distinguish the sequence structures from the subject variants, but the very last occurrence of the subject can leave us in no doubt. The fugue's undoing is the periodic rhythm, striding strictly in time, weighing heavily on the downbeat and is reminiscent, incidentally, of the violin chaconne. The first five measures of the last ten move in a circle and end at their starting point in such a way that they would not be missed if they did not materialize. On the other hand, this cadenza-like parenthesis is interesting enough that we reproduce it here in a purely thematic representation intended to explain the meaning of the "Abbreviatura." 

The third to last measure is again the same, which – in the repeated attempts at a conclusion – has already occurred twice; the upper voice a transformation of 

This rhythmic, modulatory and conceptually equally expressed uniformity would have to be open to question unless it were perceived and intended as a rhetorical formula.

## Praeludium XVII

## p. 46:

The setting is divided into two solo voices and an ensemble that as a tutti accompanies the respective antecedent of a part. This idea can be better recognized from the execution given in the following example: 

This approach, together with two others (for the C-sharp major prelude and the F minor prelude), makes a contribution to the theory of transcription.

The form, related to that of the prelude in F major to be consulted here for comparison, repeats and transforms the same setting structure four times:

I. Tonic,	Antecedent = 6 measures.
	Consequent, falling = 4 measures;
	rising = 8 measures; resolving = 2 measures.

- II. Dominant, Antecedent  
Consequent, rising = 6 measures;  
falling = 4 measures; resolving = 1  
measure.
- III. Parallel key, Antecedent  
Consequent, falling = 4 measures;  
rising = 4 measures; resolving =  
2 measures.
- IV. Subdominant, Antecedent expanded and modulating,  
leads to the half cadence on the tonic  
14 measures.  
Consequent, rising = 6 measures;  
falling = 5 measures.  
Fermata and final cadence = 3  
measures.

p. 47:

### Praeludium

**belonging to the draft of the A-flat major fugue, written in F major**

For studying the editor recommends transposing the piece to *A flat major*.

### Fuga XVII



p. 48:

- 1) As attractive as this measure is, due to the fact that it harmonizes the dominant answer as a tonic, it is not essential. Without it, the entry of the third voice would sound almost smoother ☺
- 2) The soprano rests a full fourteen measures.

p. 49:

- 3) Here, for the first time, the four-part texture appears completely; but the voice filling in, assigned to the alto, can hardly be ascribed the importance of a third countersubject.

p. 50:


- 4) The syncopation is continued in augmentation 
- 5) If consistently developed, this measure and a half would sound like 
- 6) The tenor represents here an incomplete counterpoint at the third (tenth).

p. 51:

- 7) Voice-leading of the alto 


p. 52:


The comments on chromatic countersubjects (C-sharp minor fugue) and on variants (E major fugue) are to be looked up on this occasion. Both cases occur here and are intertwining. The chromatic counterpoint


A flat major 



undergoes the following more important transformations:

A flat major  (measure 13)

D flat major 

E flat minor 

A flat major, in two voices 


Borrowed from it is also the episode motif  to which the subject naturally fits: 

The first part of the fugue encompasses two developments in the tonic (separated from each other by the episode).


The second part (beginning in the tonic) includes everything occurring in unrelated keys.


The third part is again set entirely in the main key.


The last subject entry of the bass (in the ninth-from-last measure) is, as so frequently the case, derived from the organ, the origin of which is also indicated by the cadence and fermata. Organists would be advised to transcribe certain Bach piano fugues for their instrument.

Organ 

p. 53:


Listed for the sake of completeness are two canonic possibilities that do not occur in the fugue 


Variant of the subject 

The same in augmentation 

The transformation into the dotted rhythm is Bachian and its application is preferred in the “Art of the Fugue.”

Referring to our comment on the F-sharp minor fugue, in which the contents of the two volumes are weighed against each other, we invite the student to make a comparative review here, too. This time, one should open the A major prelude from the first part, entitled “Fughetta” by the editor, where the identity of the bass voice-leading with our chromatic countersubject must first attract attention. Moreover, the analogy between the structure of the setting there and the fugue subject here will become apparent to them. With the necessary changes, the prelude’s two outer voices can serve as counterpoints to the fugue


Fugue in A flat major from the second part: 

Prelude in A major, from the first part (transposed): 

### Praeludium XVIII


p. 54:

The editor is delighted to look into Bach’s sheer inexhaustible variety of forms. In the following three preludes, the

editor was again able to identify three different types of the genre. This present one in *G sharp minor* has its own formation, characterized by a lied-like main section in three voices being followed alternately by a two-voice and a developing side section. Besides this, the appeal of the main section is based on a crossing of the voices .

We perceive this as like playing on two manuals of the harpsichord.

Piano in the third measure and Forte in the fifth are original instructions indicating that the piece should begin as forte. The editor determined the dynamic shadows and lights during the course of the piece according to this given formula. The fingering for the subject in the left hand is tricky. After a few attempts, the editor has chosen the following as the most useful:

measure 16 .

The thumb rests on the *E sharp* and provides a fixed point for the hand.

### Fuga XVIII


p. 59:


Idea: .

1) Slightly emphasize the middle voice for the next four measures.


p. 60:

1) The subject of the second fugue has its second half in common with its first countersubject.

1st countersubject .


Subject of the 2nd fugue .

The counterpoint of the new subject is formed in the second measure from the episode motif that first appears in the seventeenth measure of the whole piece.

Episode motif .

Counterpoint for the 2nd fugue's subject .

Throughout the entire fugue, these episodes, constructed as sequences, rather regularly alternate with the subject's entries; like doors and pillars on a house front. Accordingly, the fugue would develop in a rather monotonous manner, had Bach not continually devised new twists and turns for the third voice accompanying the subject, which results in a series of variations and in a form that stands between the fugue and the passacaglia.

2) The inserted connecting measure provides the motif  which, due to its diatonicism, is especially differentiated from the entries of the chromatic subject. In the second fugue the motif is obligatory. Applied later (NB) in contrary motion, where it initially appears also chromatically formed, it expands exhaustively into a ten-measure episode.

p. 61:

1) Variant of the connecting measure, running through all voices.

p. 62:

1) The following six measures are to be interpreted as an inserted extension (parenthesis) that is placed between two conceptually adjoining movements. Similar formations have been noted in the fugues in *G major* and *G minor*.

p. 63:


### Study

Summarized presentation of the succession of variations in the G-sharp minor fugue

### Praeludium XIX

p. 64:

Idea: .

The editor had some difficulty in coining the precise formula for this prelude's structure, now deciding to recognize the form as a chain of paired antecedents and consequents. Of these, each two-measure antecedent includes a fourfold statement of the motif  whereas the consequent, episode-like, proceeds at an unequal length. To be found in the text are small lines drawn at the end of each pair. The fifth group repeats the antecedent. The whole play evokes the idea of a serene beach, onto which, incessantly, wave after wave glides, referred to by the editor's specification "ondeggiate."


### Fuga XIX

p. 66:

1) The dotted rhythm in counterpoint, applied for filling in the tied thematic eight notes, gives the piece its character.


p. 67:

1) The dotted rhythm, appearing here as broken down into the subject's sixteenth-note figure, should still linger within the idea.

2) The soprano's contrapuntal motif from the seventh measure should also be understood here: .



p. 68:


3) Finally, the bass in the closing measure should be constructed as follows, true to the character of the piece: 

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Ideational development of the subject: 

The editor considers the recognition of such developments to be very beneficial in helping to instill a sense of organic enhancement within the contrapuntalist.

We encounter a similar example in the B-flat major fugue, which also begins immediately with the variation of the subject, leaving the image of the original to the reader's imagination. Gaining a new form of the sub-

ject from the first is of great help in constructing a fugue. Study the "Art of the Fugue" and regularly exercise yourself in such tasks. In this case, the three main forms of the subject could be summarized with some freedom 

The form turns out to be simple and consists of three crude developments.

1. Development: Tonic, dominant, tonic, dominant (superfluous bass entry)
2. Development: Parallel key, dominant, tonic (with episode and epilogue)
3. Development: Subdominant, dominant, tonic (two episodes)