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PREFACE

This thesis is focused on the specific attributes of melodic structure in Bach's fugues for lute. The correspondence between the theme/themes and contrapuntal accompanying voices/characteristic brief motifs comes together to express an overall image revealing the inimitable quality of Bach's art of composition which is also displayed in the polyphonic works for lute. As I have already undertaken a detailed study of a various specific areas in earlier publications^{*1a}, certain individual aspects will only be briefly addressed and accompanied by references to already published facts. An exception is the Fugue from the Suite in C minor BWV 997 which requires a more detailed examination as I am not aware of any already existing in-depth contrapuntal analysis of the work.

Alongside my analytical approach, I should also like to concentrate on the idiomatic aspect of Bach's fugues for lute, drawing comparisons with his other works. Are there common factors? Is it possible to detect and hear specific divergences in the melodic structure of the fugues for harpsichord, organ and orchestra which show us that Bach had deliberately taken account of the individual characteristics of the relevant instrumentation? Are there also indications which could give us an idea of the degree of Bach's familiarity with the lute, or could the development of a specific compositional style be attributed to his perhaps insufficient knowledge of this instrument? I will examine this aspect in an additional section of my discourse which is focused on a comparison of the fugal works of famous lutenists originating in the time of Bach and before.

Upfront, I must admit that the presentation of all theories, clues and evidence will not lead to the resolution of all compositional enigmas in Bach's fugues for lute. In consideration of the time lapse of over 250 years coupled with a certain degree of humility and an even greater degree of respect for the compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach, my objective is more oriented towards an approach to his music from a variety of angles, possibly providing a better understanding and making it more comprehensible. If the sum of learning experience permits at least one of these fugues to be followed with greater attentiveness and perhaps additionally leads to a more profound perception, the musicological analysis has fulfilled its sense and purpose. I would be delighted if the following pages could contribute to an enhanced insight.

The significance of the fugue for Bach

There is hardly any instrument or ensemble which Bach did not consider suitable for the composition of a fugal work. All his large-scale choral works for example include movements containing imitation, and even in compositions not constructed on the basis of imitation – for instance the many hundreds of chorales – we can still recognise the contrapuntal concept in the correspondence of the vocal lines. Although Bach was not the first to incorporate multi-voiced fugal elements into compositions for solo string instruments^{*1b}, the degree of complexity as seen in the three solo fugues for violin is unparalleled. The fugettos, fugatos and fugues scored for between two and five voices within a spectrum ranging from brief to epic dimensions composed for his favourite instruments harpsichord and organ display a cross-section of virtually all possible methods of polyphonic treatment of a subject. Even a large number of pieces not specifically titled as fugues (including numerous gigues from the suites for harpsichord and final movements from the trio sonatas for organ) can also be counted among this genre. And ultimately, it is Bach's great compositional legacy specifically devoted to this genre *The Art of Fugue* which displays the technical possibilities of variation on a single theme with such consummate imagination and comprehensiveness like no work cycle before and since its composition. It is therefore no great surprise to discover that the fugue also plays a major role in the works for lute.

*1a c.f. Tilman Hoppstock: *Bach's Lute Works from the Guitarist's Perspective* Vol. 1, Prim Musikverlag 1750-B1 and Vol. 2, Prim Musikverlag, 1750-B2

*1b c.f. for example Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), various movements from the *Sonatas for Violin + b.c.* op. 5, Heinrich I. Biber (1644-1704), *Sonata Representativa*, Johann P. von Westhoff (1656-1705), various movements from the *6 Suites for violin solo* (1683)

This heightens the tension in the third thematic entry by making the theme actually appear to be divided polyphonically. Reinforced by the octave transposition of the quavers in the subject, the theme enters into counterpoint with itself within the first four bars. Bach introduces an accentuated quaver in contrary motion on the first beat of each bar in the soprano range as a third element, thereby achieving a maximum effect with relatively few notes, additionally providing a skilful link between the two upper voices beginning in bar 26 (second semiquaver) through the renewed transposition at the octave of the theme for the return to two-voice counterpoint:

Third subject entry, from the end of bar 21:

The fourth thematic entry presents the countersubject once again, but the theme itself appears less distinctively due to its slightly altered form in continuous semiquavers. The increase in the volume of notes adds extra refinement to the middle voice area:

Fourth subject entry, from the end of bar 29...

...and its "decipherment":

The fifth entry displays a blend of the concept of the previous and first subject models. A further moment of variation can be discovered in the slightly altered conclusion of the theme. Here the flow of movement is briefly interrupted, thereby documenting the culmination of a larger section. Although the accompanying voice still retains the genetic content of the countersubject, it is now staggered by one bar (I therefore term it CS 1b) and additionally contains a slight extension:

Fifth subject entry (lute), from the end of bar 45:

ever, the individual voices actually progress in parallel unity. The pronounced ambivalence between cooperation and competition reveals a compositional structure which in this form is more frequently found in Bach's earlier compositions, although not in such a focused manner as in this work. *77b (p.p.)

Presto movement from BWV 996 as a diagram of vocal parts:

The image displays a musical score for the Presto movement from BWV 996, presented as a diagram of vocal parts. The score is written in G major and 3/8 time, featuring a complex, stormy texture with multiple voices. The notation is dense, with many notes and rests, and includes a series of thick black lines overlaid on the notes, suggesting a vocal line or a specific melodic path. The score is divided into five systems, each starting with a measure number: 13, 25, 37, and 49. The first system starts at measure 1. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

The attack and stormy character of the fugal movement perhaps provides a small hint that a keyboard instrument with a very fast action such as a harpsichord would be most effective for the adequate performance of this music. In contrast, the melodic structure of the eight-bar theme does not give a particularly keyboard-specific impression and would be just as appropriate for a string instrument or lute. Incidentally, we encounter a wealth of sequential themes in Bach's fugues for the organ (here in contrast to the Presto, the subject is always initially presented in full prior to the entry of the *comes*).

If all notes in the lower voice are depicted in their correct rhythmic order on several lines of the staff, the permanent leaps between the three different levels become clearly visible. That naturally produces a syncopated progression of voices. There could barely be a greater contrast between the organ-like soprano voice and the fanned out bass which once again displays associations with the melodic lines in the cello suites:

thematic phase 9, from b. 75, original (lower voice divided between three lines of the staff):

Thematic phase 10 (from bar 85.1):

The thematic phases six to eight follow one another directly whereas the last four subject passages (nine to twelve) occur at a distance of ten bars. In the tenth thematic phase, Bach permits the first subject to be played three times in stretto, firstly at the closest possible distance of one semiquaver and then a dotted crotchet later. With the aid of dynamics (on the lute) and articulation (on lute or harpsichord) in performance, it is possible to reveal this type of dense action-packed texture, but the listener is simply unable to process the extreme wealth of information simultaneously. That is also the reason that the Fugue BWV 997 demands such a great degree of concentration from its listeners. The diminished voice is now in the treble and is accompanied by a sort of pedal point bourdon which lends the passage greater rhythmic presence (the arrows indicate the direction of the vocal lines):

Thematic phase 10, from bar 85 (with one possible directional option A):

Alternatively, the polyphonic progression of the thematic heads in the upper system could be analysed in a different fashion. This would be conceivable from the aspect of intervals (*f sharp*' to *f* and *a* to *g*'), but the rhythmic progression would be interchanged from bar 86 onwards:

Thematic phase 10, from bar 85 (with one possible directional option B):

The entire complex as illustrated below in a five-line score shows us how eventfully the penultimate thematic phase unfolds. The climax of the fugue is further intensified by the fictitious thematic entry in bar 97. The subject which is continued after the imaginary five-note scale (bar 97) with the genuine ascending chromaticism in bar 98 begins in C major and is subsequently resolved via G major onto C minor. The notes *c'-d'-e'-f'-g* included in the scale are in actual fact all present in the other voices (circled notes) with the exception of the *c'*. As a logical consequence, the two five-note motifs in bars 98/99 on the third level no longer have an episodic function, but slip elegantly into their new role as Theme 2 forming an adequate answer to the entry in the previous bar! The conclusion of the subject omitted by Bach (notes *e flat'- d'- c'* in small print) is once again present in levels two and five (see circled notes).

Thematic phase 11, original and decoded form as a score, from bar 95:

The score is presented in a five-line format, labeled 'midi 36' through 'midi 40'.
 - **Level 3 (from Ab')**: Treble clef, contains the original thematic material.
 - **Level 4 (from f')**: Treble clef, contains the original thematic material.
 - **Level 1 (from g)**: Bass clef, contains the original thematic material.
 - **Level 5 (from f)**: Bass clef, contains the original thematic material.
 - **Level 2 (from Ab')**: Treble clef, contains the original thematic material.
 - **Level 1 (midi 37)**: Treble clef, contains 'Theme 1 (mirrored)'.
 - **Level 2 (midi 37)**: Treble clef, contains 'Theme 1 (fictive entry notes)' and 'real continuation'.
 - **Level 3 (midi 37)**: Treble clef, contains 'Theme 1 (part. mirrored)'.
 - **Level 4 (midi 37)**: Bass clef, contains 'Theme 1 (mirrored)'.
 - **Level 5 (midi 37)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 1 (midi 38)**: Treble clef, contains 'Theme 2'.
 - **Level 2 (midi 38)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 3 (midi 38)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 4 (midi 38)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 5 (midi 38)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 1 (midi 39)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 2 (midi 39)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 3 (midi 39)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 4 (midi 39)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 5 (midi 39)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 1 (midi 40)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 2 (midi 40)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 3 (midi 40)**: Treble clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 4 (midi 40)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Level 5 (midi 40)**: Bass clef, contains 'SM 1'.
 - **Bar 99**: Shows the continuation of the subject and the end of Theme 2 (fictitious).
 - **Annotations**: 'pedal point (bourdon bass)' with an arrow pointing to the bass line in bar 98; 'CS 1' (Circled Note 1) pointing to circled notes in levels 1, 2, 3, and 5; 'SM 1' (Subject Motif 1) pointing to various motifs in levels 2-5.

(in the soprano). Then the composer shifts the notes *F* (tenor) and *G* (bass) onto a different tonal level before the two final notes *Ab* and *Bb* are back in the soprano voice. Bach intensifies the stretto effect with the third entry from the middle of bar 36 before the other two subjects from bar 35 are brought to an end. Here the initial notes are equally concealed in tenor and soprano registers (the rest of the theme then appears in the bass line) just as in the fourth stretto entry beginning on the second beat of bar 37. When listening to the section, we can establish that the last virtual entry in its sequential function acts as preparation for the ensuing thematic phase (from the second beat of bar 39):

Virtual thematic entries from bar 35:

The musical score illustrates the virtual thematic entries from bar 35. It is divided into three systems:

- System 1 (midi 47):** Shows a 'virtual theme (subject notes circled)' in the treble clef and a 'thematic entry on Eb' in the bass clef. A 'thematic fragment (original)' is also indicated in the bass clef.
- System 2 (midi 48):** Shows a 'thematic entry (virtual beginning)' in the bass clef and a 'Theme (virtual beginning)' in the bass clef.
- System 3 (starting at bar 38):** Shows a 'thematic entry on Bb (original)' in the treble clef and a 'thematic fragment (original)' in the bass clef. A 'continuation of virtual theme' is also shown in the bass clef.

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) succeeded in establishing the subject '*in augmentationem*' at the beginning of the second section (from the middle of bar 29).^{*125} Before the theme then occurs in the tenor in bar 31, we can discover it in an additional concealed appearance beginning in bar 30, although its final notes overlap with the

*125 Also see Busoni's commentaries in his musical edition of the Prelude, Fugue and Allegro BWV 998 (Bach, Klavierwerke, Busoni Edition, Vol. XIV, p. 71f.). The idea of the augmented theme – represented in the musical example on the next page – has been taken from the musical edition (there on p. 72).

If we transcribe the movement into a three-line staff (several notes in the soprano are sustained longer here)...

Luys Milan, Fantasia V (bars 1-19, in drei Systemen notiert):

The image shows a musical score for Luys Milan's Fantasia V, bars 1-19, transcribed into a three-line staff. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It shows the first system (bars 1-9) and the second system (bars 10-19). The soprano part has several long notes, particularly in the first system.

...and place it alongside the beginning of a three-voice motet by the Spanish composer Cristóbal de Morales (around 1500-1553), we can see the original vocal concept:

Cristóbal de Morales, Domine Deus:

The image shows a musical score for Cristóbal de Morales' Domine Deus, showing the beginning of a three-voice motet. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It shows the first system (bars 1-6) and the second system (bars 7-12). The lyrics "Do - mi - ne De - us" are written below the notes.

*157 Cristóbal de Morales: *Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris* (Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of Father), transcription by Nanchó Alvarez (Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share-in IMSLP)

The Fugue in C major by Weiss with its almost epic proportions (207 bars), well-known within lutenist circles, gives us an impression of how to shape the various arcs of tension within a clearly constructed framework (with only one theme and never more than three structural levels) to avoid any hint of uniformity throughout the entire movement. The theme could just as well have been written by Johann Sebastian Bach; if a trill was inserted prior to the final note *d'*, there would have been no doubt that the subject was intended for an organ work. The two outer notes as semibreves form the scaffolding and the beginning of the theme presents a C major chord followed by a brief sequence in crotchets (with an alternating note motif in quavers). The finely-proportioned melody divided into two sections acts as the admission ticket to the remainder of the piece, and we are certainly not disappointed by the composer. Both the initial contrapuntal answer to the *comes* (which can be generously described as a rhythmic inversion of the theme) and the treatment of the accompanying voices in the third thematic entry (see for example the extended suspensions at the beginning in the alto and the leaping sequence in the soprano from bar 19) are a testament to Weiss's rich sense of invention:

S. L. Weiss, Fugue in C major (exposition bars 1-22): *200

The musical score for the exposition of the Fugue in C major by S. L. Weiss, bars 1-22, is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 1-6) shows the 'thematic head' and 'second part of theme' for 'Theme (dux 1)'. The second system (bars 7-12) shows 'Theme (comes)', 'CP1a: scale + brief leaping sequence', and 'CP1b: linear counterpoint'. The third system (bars 13-18) shows 'Codetta', 'CP2a: linear counterpoint', and 'final codetta = counterpoint'. The fourth system (bars 19-22) shows 'CP2b: brief leaping sequence'.

Following the traditional presentation of the theme on the notes *g'*, *c''* and *g*, we see six further consecutive subject entries (on *c*, *G*, *g'*, *c''*, *d* and *G* *201) up to bar 69 which are only interrupted by twelve episodic bars (seven bars beginning in bar 34 and five bars from bar 53). The overlapping of the episodes with the next thematic entry in bar 58 is conspicuous. From a formal aspect, the fugue can be subdivided into three large sections, the first of which appears as a colossal exposition with its nine subject entries over a total of 69 bars. Although lively movement almost always takes place in a single voice, the middle register (see passages from bars 23 and 35) gains in significance in comparison to other fugues for lute. We can additionally establish a greater differentiation between the countersubjects crystallising out of the many thematic entries. On the one hand, we have a frequently recurring motif (bars 8-9), and on the other hand room for new ideas (from bars 15, 19, 28-33 and

*200 *Fuga C major*, WeissSW 6.1 à 7, GB-Lb1 Add. Ms.30387, p. 118-121, folios 59 v. à 61r. (The British Library, London)

*201 The entries on the note *G* mostly form the dominant fundamental note leading from G major to C major, whereas the entries on *C* display the minor seventh of the dominant D major leading to G major.

Final considerations: a few thoughts on the idiomatics of Bach's fugues for lute

The major finding from the examination of the fugal works in the previous chapter was the discovery of a completely different polyphonic structure in lute music of the Renaissance prior to 1625 in comparison to fugues dating from the period after 1700. In the time after John Dowland, the structural intensity and complexity in pieces involving imitation for plucked instruments progressively wanes. While we even encounter lively conversations between three and frequently four voices in non-fugal English lute works of the Renaissance (for example pavans and galliards), we only find individual instances of more profound contrapuntal structures in the fugues of the lute masters in the eighteenth century.

Although we also observe a tendency towards a change of direction in music for keyboard instruments, this is by far less conspicuous in Germany than for example in France. Alongside the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, the suites for harpsichord by George Frideric Handel represent a further milestone in polyphonic design. We should also not forget Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746) whose keyboard works frequently display an intensive correspondence between individual voices. Numerous reasons must have played a role – not only in French and German courts, but also in locations independent of courtly obligations – in the increasing development of the lute repertoire towards a *galant*, airy and less melancholy character.

The lutenist Joachim Held summarises the historical problem as follows: *“The former ideals of complex polyphonic structures defining the masterpieces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were called into question by a group of intellectuals associated with the Florentine Camerata who pleaded in favour of music emotionally orientated towards the models of Greek antiquity. Music should directly address the soul and move the emotions of individuals. This necessitated a change in the manner of composition, and the emergence of monody created music which achieved its objectives through its stylistic methods. Above a simple bass line, poetic texts were declaimed with the emotional intensity expressed through melodic intervals. Here, apparent ‘mistakes’ in composition are intentional and served to enhance poetic expression. To provide an adequate tonal support for this new musical style, the chitarrone was developed in Italy; although tuned in a similar manner to the Renaissance lute, it was less suitable for performing complex polyphonic music due to its length and re-entrant tuning. The chitarrone was indeed not intended for music of great complexity, but for creating an accompaniment which highlighted the text in the singer’s recitation and emphasised its emotional content.*

The tendencies in France had a similar intention, but took a completely different path, primarily experimenting with different tuning models while leaving the construction of the instruments virtually unchanged. The result was the so-called ‘accord nouveau’ which was also less suitable for polyphonic masterpieces due to the intervals of a third in its tuning. As in Italy, polyphonic music was also substantially less called for during this period. The German composers preceding and contemporary with Weiss were also more focused on a mode of composition evolving out of improvisation.” *203 + 204

The question is therefore justified as to whether the popular D minor tuning model of the time presented lutenists with fewer possibilities of composing complicated music, or whether there was simply a dwindling of interest in

*203 From correspondence via e-mail with the author on 14.10.2013

*204 Within this context, a conspicuous common feature was discovered between the fugues for lute written by Weiss and a number of fugues for organ by Bach. If we establish that Weiss's music does actually have its roots in improvisation, we can then assume the same to be true for many of Bach's organ fugues. The nature of thematic melody writing displays certain parallels between the two individuals, but what stands out the most is that the Bach organ fugues frequently contain a high proportion of sequences, a compositional technique which is also a major foundation of the fugues by Weiss and can be considered as a characteristic of improvisational concepts. This is for example particularly striking in the famous Fugue in D major BWV 532 in comparison with the Fugue in G major (from the Suite XVIII) by Weiss. Bach integrates an expansive sequence into the theme: although the four-bar theme in the Weiss fugue does not end with a series of motifs, he does add a sequence to virtually every thematic entry, giving the impression of a complete symbiosis between theme and sequence (in Bach's case between thematic head and sequence), an alliance which runs through the entire piece like a red thread. The similarities become conspicuous when both fugues are listened to consecutively. The same principle is less seldom encountered in Bach's fugues for the harpsichord, but the identical approach can also be observed in several toccatas (such as BWV 911) which conjure up a vivid image of a fugal composer improvising on the instrument.