



Breitkopf
& Härtel

EDITION
BREITKOPF

BACH-BUSONI

Piano Works

Instructive Edition

Volume II

The Well-Tempered Clavier – Second Part
Book 1: BWV 870–876

Translation


for EB 8276

The pagination in this translation refers to the revised edition published with the copyright of 2023. If you use this translation together with an older edition, please orient yourself by using the titles. As the layout within the music has not been changed, it should be possible to convert the pages accordingly.

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.

p. 12:

Praeludium I

Idea: 

1) The piece is, without tempo marking, originally notated as 

2) From here on, the composition becomes “thematic,” the first nine measures of the prelude are to be thought of as a fantasizing introduction, the entry of the leading motif  as the actual beginning of the main piece.


p. 13:

3) The decision of the soprano to seek out a higher register should be like a manual change on the organ; as in general the whole is closer to the organ than to the harpsichord.


p. 14:

4) The now subsequent seventeen measures give an almost literal repeat of the first part, moved up a fourth.

p. 15:

5) With this setting, leading back, the soprano’s chromaticism is strictly adhered to in the first part of the prelude; without forcing it, that could also be executed here, as 

The random fifth voice is superfluous here; not so in the coda.

6) The editor was unable to discern an internal relationship between the prelude and the fugue; unless it would be in the idea of the contrast. An external connection would be easy to establish, on the other hand, if one expressed the fugue subject in the prelude’s coda 

p. 16:

Composition Study

The C major prelude from J. P. Kellner’s autograph

Fuga I

p. 17:

1) The tempo is almost the same as that of the prelude in our marking; yet here the gesture is more decisive and fresher.

2) The soprano concludes the first part, the alto concurrently opening the second.


p. 19:

1) This measure is neither contrapuntally, harmonically, nor structurally indispensable. This is manifested when this measure is omitted, joining the adjacent measures together; ingenious are the subsequent organ point C wandering through the three voices and finally the fugue’s gradual resolution in homophony.


The measure in question is explained by the fact that the fugue originally ended with the one following it.

Praeludium II

p. 20:

1) Here, the thematic connection with the fugue is evident: the editor nevertheless considers it to be unintentional; but the two motifs are born of the same spirit 

p. 21:

2) A frequently recurring Bach form of bass voice-leading  (compare: Three-part Inventions, Capriccio in B flat major, Goldberg Variations, and the comments on the C-sharp minor fugue).

3) The form would have remained purer in two voices.

Fuga II

p. 22:

1) The analytical results when considering this fugue are laid down in the following composition study.

p. 24:

Composition Study

1) The composition study aims to provide a clear representation of all subject voices, often tracing them back to their original meaning, as well as completing the exposition’s four-voice structure. This is to make the student aware of the significance of all the original’s constraints


and transformations. The subject is everywhere identified by slurs.

p. 25:

The final cadence structured from the subject: 

Praeludium III


p. 26:

1) Execution:  just the same for all places marked the same way.

p. 28:



1) The tempo marking is by Bach




p. 29:

1) We are attempting to reconstruct the thematic idea, whose more faithful configuration has been given up in favor of the chromatic melodic line, and in the following example we attain a version midway between the older version and the main text 

p. 30:


Remarks

This prelude consists of a first section of two times three measures, a second section of four times two plus again two times three and a group of four further measures leading to the fughetta. The fughetta consists of three sections, comprising nine, seven and ten measures: exposition, development and miniature coda. The melodic line resulting from the topmost soprano notes at the end of the prelude's first and second parts  gives rise to the fughetta subject; a hidden relationship that should not be overlooked. 

Doubling the bass  or the middle voice  would enhance the sound to a good effect, whereby, however, one would have to envision the soft tone of the violas and cellos in a string-quintet setting. 

p. 31:

Earlier form of the C-sharp major prelude



Key and structure are reminiscent of the first prelude in the first part, which would suggest organizing the stipulated *Arpeggio* in such a way that the resemblance would be perfect 


To be seen from the natural transposition to *C sharp* is that Bach considered the difference in key character to be eliminated with the introduction of tempered tuning; a tenet that later faltered again, due to ill-advised conjectures (especially concerning Beethoven).

Fuga III

p. 32:

1) The thirty-second-note-figures gradually showing up more densely are not to be rushed; the tempo has to be adapted to them.

Chordal intervals can be developed and used as strettos ad infinitum without any obstacles or any special appeal. Scoring trumpet signals in eight voices requires little compositional art. All the more surprising then is what advantages Bach knows to draw from the subject's first section.  Although this first section is undeniably the piece's main figure, the subject, strictly speaking, consists of at least six quarter notes, and only the premature soprano and alto entries have the effect that for the ear, the subject's continuation is pushed into the background. For the exposition is already based on a stretto in normal as well as contrary motion, so that the contrapuntal options already seem exhausted in the first two and a half measures. Yet, the Master inexorably intensifies it, namely, at first through the rhythm. He presents the *comes* abbreviated by two quarter-note values, then the *dux* in the three-voice imitations with the scope reduced to a third. Furthermore, a complete inversion of the exposition in the parallel (minor) key, then the diminution and finally the augmentation of the subject's first section. In the sixteenth measure, an imitation in the resting voice would still have been possible: 


An allusion to this setting can be found in the Thirty Variations (Goldberg Variations), where the fourth variation reads as follows: 


p. 33:


Idea: 

1) On the question of the subject variants, compare the comments for the E major fugue.

p. 35:

1) The soprano indeed remains short on the subject's augmentation, though this is perceptible from the bustling of the figuration 

Written as for a concerto, the augmentation episode would look something like this 

2) This and the following eighth notes are set in four voices; multi-voiced still in the case of Bischoff, where this passage appears thus 

The two organ points in the last four measures also exceed the regular three-voice structure. The bass organ-point tone in Bach often appears as an extra, free voice.

Praeludium IV

p. 38:

1) Regarding the descending chromaticism in the upper voice, compare the first prelude and the NB. to the following fugue.

p. 39:

Initially a duet over an obligato-bass, the prelude turns, from the second section on, into a trio in which the bass becomes in places the leading voice. The ramifications of the three voices is exquisitely artistic and beautiful. The original, rich in ornamentation, was carefully written out here to ensure the correct execution of the embellishments. The editor has divided the piece into three sections; that in the middle introduces the development of two new motifs; the third section combines the first two, in contrapuntal and harmonic inversion.

Fuga IV

p. 40:

1) This time, the subject developments are numbered because in this case such a formal representation seemed clearest to the editor.

p. 41:




- 1) The subject comprises, indeed, six eighth-note values, however, in the inversion it appears expanded to eight eighth-notes.
- 2) This measure corresponds to the seventh.

p. 42:


1) Transposition of the first episode up to the subsequent fifth measure.

p. 44:

NB. In illuminating preludes I, II and IV we have already had occasion to point out episodes of descending chromaticism. Here, in the C-sharp minor fugue, an obligato countersubject conducted in such a way appears for the first time in this second part of the work. It is a preferred form of late Bach which the Master particularly likes to use in minor-key pieces and is characteristic of his last mode of expression. In order to avoid repetition later on, we shall give at this point a table of main examples relevant to our comment.

Fugue VI in the subject: Fugue XVII in the first countersubject: Fugue XVIII in the second countersubject: Prelude XX in both voices: Fugue XXII. In the countersubject, ascending and descending: 

Additionally, compare the basso continuo from the Crucifixus in the B minor Mass.

In the present fugue, the descending chromatic countersubject first appears above the subject in the parallel key, then scaled-down above the inversion, and is developed independently as an episode. A more extensive use of this countersubject could easily have resulted in a pronounced double fugue, had it been the Master's intention to write such. The following sketch is intended to illustrate briefly the editor's assertion. 

p. 45:

The student should carefully observe the rhythm of the piece's structure, composed of two- and three-part sections, alternating irregularly. If we establish the sign – for the duration of half a measure, we get, for example, from the fugue's opening to the start of the second development, the following graphic-rhythmic image of the setting:

```



- - - | - - - | - - | - - - | - - - | - - - | - - - | - - | - - |
- - - | - - - ||

```

According to this image, the third development in the inversion would appear as: - - - - | - - - - | - - - - | Later, the various voices move above each other in various setting rhythms. This knowledge is important for performing the fugue well.

Praeludium V


p. 46:

The trumpet fanfares sound more cheerful than heroic, for over the whole piece, despite all agility, there is a certain comfort. Of smaller interest in terms of content and form, the prelude is still quite a brisk piano piece, and the editor's additions should contribute to its intensified effect. The notation  corresponds, according to the old orthography, to the eighth triplet 

Fuga V

p. 50:


Development

1) A choral fugue in the conventional Catholic church-music style, to be sung perhaps to the *Christe eleison* text,  which in the Well-Tempered Clavier world looks like something particularly arid and scholastic. The ending in

A major before the turn to E minor in the tenth measure is repeated – almost identically – another ten measures later, indicating that the fugue in the meantime did not make any progress. Rhythmically, it moves uninterruptedly in slow-paced, stiff eighth notes, obstructing any inspiration or freedom in performance. Independent episodes, which could bring enlivening variety, do not occur. At times the editor ponders, wondering what the point might be in chasing a melodic formula through various voices and keys in this way. Like the monotonous hustle and bustle of everyday life, it pokes along and pivots around itself only to reach an inglorious end. If the development does not lead somewhere and beyond, does not work like a force that removes obstacles and shapes new forms from those given, if it does not evoke inner change and blaze like a purifying fire, then may this artifice with the rest of the requisite know-how of medieval scholarship rest as archival material, and a homophony borne of temperament and poetry be proven correct.

2) Subjects consisting of six quarter notes in four-four time are often encountered in this work. Thus, already in the first fugue of Part I. What was cited on the occasion of the C-sharp minor fugue in terms of the rhythmic setting is to be used here likewise.

The strettos are limited to three canonic voices. In the first of these strettos, the bass answers, as if to seal the discussion. In the same sense, the editor has also indicated the bass answer in small notes in the second and third strettos.

The subject is so correctly constructed that the closest stretto can be spun out cum gratia:  etc.

p. 51:

Stretto

3) In the alto the subject appears necessarily mangled.

p. 52:


Closest stretto

As later in the B-flat minor fugue, we have refrained from notating the voice distribution in the hands in order to keep the music text clear.

Praeludium VI

p. 54:

Suggestion for execution: 

1) This measure can also be found in the following form 

p. 55:

Ausf. = Execution

2) Bach's slur over the three notes seems to indicate that the remaining sixteenth should be less slurred.

The first part consists of three sections that are repeated, symmetrically enough, in the second part. Only the third section is extended by a full six measures. The organ point, serving as the basis for the last five measures, marks these as the coda.


p. 56:


Composition Study

Earlier form of the D minor prelude

Fuga VI


p. 58:

1) The answer could already be given in the second measure  + a form used as a transition to the third entry of the subject in contrary motion. (Measure 5)



2) Slow chromatic figures can be nicely conjoined by sliding the fingers, thus, for example: 

In general, as the editor has learned from this experience, to avoid putting the thumb under aids the performance by preventing mechanical trouble and giving a clearer outline of the passage. The editor often uses the thumb as a fulcrum and has the group of the other four fingers play like the second arm of a compass. Choose Chopin's prelude in F sharp minor as a study for such exercises.

p. 59:


Idea: 

p. 61:

3) In the following six quarter notes the melodic contrast  is internally audible. This nicely curved countersubject has the value of an independent fugue subject; it distinctly occurs during the fugue only twice other than in the exposition, although it could also have been used in contrary motion. 

*) Unlike its predecessor, this fugue is a strong character piece, a real piano piece. In the second part the subject is canonically treated in such a way that the second voice

implies the answer; the same is repeated in contrary motion.

This combination could also be enriched if one wanted to apply a more modern concept +:  (measure 17)


Subjects with such distinctive characteristics are usually not very productive in contrapuntal terms (as can also be seen from the D major fugue of the Part I and the E minor fugue following here); thus, this piece proceeds, imitatively and figuratively, energetic and full of feeling, but without any notable polyphonic combinations.

Praeludium VII


p. 62:

NB. In the editor's opinion, the first part ends in the parallel key *C minor*, and the second – in symmetrical relation – in the dominant of the parallel key *G minor*; but the thread is spun without interruption, and it is nicer and more correct to see and feel the form as a unified whole.



The expressive counter-melody founders on the dominant repetition³⁾ in the figure work; instead of running, parallelly shaped, as follows. 

This counter-melody could very well serve as the subject for a fugue to be interwoven with the prelude, were it not that subjects, whose range exceeds an octave, are thus unwieldy because of the conjuring up of multiple crossings of voices.

Tricky for the construction of the fugue would also be the deviation towards the subdominant with which the subject begins, and which would result in a modulatory problem needing to be solved in the answer. The same difficulty would apply to inverting the motif. A symmetrical inversion, as B. Ziehn teaches, is generally not Bachian; with our Master it is important to maintain the key relationship through the interval progression. In this case, starting from the third, the symmetrical inversion would result in an attractive harmonic picture without stepping out of the Bachian circle 

Such a fugue's assignment would accordingly be of educational value and full of stimulating obstacles for the student working on it.

p. 64:

Idea: 

p. 65:

2) As in the first piece of prelude, fugue and Allegro in E flat major, with which this shows a strong relationship, there is a halt on the the third inversion of the dominant-seventh chord before the final resolution. It is a means of calming the steady flowing movement that is almost becoming habitual. We also encounter it in the E minor fugue and in the F-sharp major prelude; similar in form at the end of the G minor fugue, identical in the A-flat major prelude; with the five-six chord in the fugue assigned to it; furthermore, in the B-flat major prelude, and finally, in the last prelude of this part.

Fuga VII

p. 66:

1) The reasons that are supposed to justify the conversion of the two fugues in *E flat* and in *G* were set out in the corresponding passages in the first part.

3) Better middle-voice leading  emulating the soprano in the exposition 

p. 67:

4) The sequences following here contain the latent continuation and the compression (*diminutio*) of the previous one 