



Breitkopf
& Härtel

EDITION
BREITKOPF

BACH-BUSONI

Piano Works

Instructive Edition

Volume II

The Well-Tempered Clavier – Second Part
Book 2: BWV 877–882

Translation


for EB 8277

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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 VIII

p. 13:


Idea: 

1) Appearing at the end of the first part are thirty-second-note figures that continue to assume a leading role in the motion. The prelude's initial conduct, which could easily be perceived as an allegro piece, is led to the appropriate broadness of tempo by virtue of these denser rhythms; hence the heading *Molto tranquillo*. The piece belongs in every respect to the genre of inventions.

p. 14:

2) That the theme in the second part of the piece is based on the dominant-seventh chord instead of the triad is to be understood as a kind of inversion (this time of the harmonic genre). As a rule, it is the contrary motion that opens the second part.



p. 15:


3) If the bar lines had not crept into the notation as a necessary evil, this half measure would not have been squeezed in to fill out the measure. Bach was reluctant to interpolate here a 2/4 measure; for the setting would otherwise have thus been the natural one: 

Fuga VIII


p. 16:

1) The subject actually extends to the third eighth note of the third measure, though the last two notes are treated less strictly over the course of the fugue.

2) Once again, an example of chromatic counterpoint whose simple formula is:  and which retains almost the importance of an obligatory countersubject until the first section of the second part is completed. The beautiful, expanding and canonic bass variant of the same countersubject at the end of the second development could have been strictly worked out chromatically: 

Two other variants occur, identified as * and **. The latter (soprano), in diminution and in the inversion according to the formula  is probably not intended. (Compare the comments on the fugues in *C sharp minor* and *A flat major*.)


p. 18:

Idea: 


p. 19:

1) The editor was reluctant to note special performance nuances unmistakably arising from the voices' advancing and receding and the line's rising and falling, though he presupposes that a reasonable economy of this is observed.

p. 20:

NB. Before reaching the half cadence, marked with a double bar line, the subject disappears from the first part after the complete entry of the fourth voice. Considered more precisely, it is still found twice in the ornamentation leading to the second part, just as a head can occasionally be recognized in arabesques. To document this, we execute from the eleventh measure onwards what has been indicated: 

The second part consists of a complete and a more-than-complete development, the first of these is limited in turn by a half cadence at which the second concurrently begins, in order to close in the parallel key. An episode, created from subject fragments, leads back to the tonic, after which the subject appears in the character of an organ-pedal voice

Organ 

At the end, the tenor brings the subject in contrary motion, concurrently with the soprano's original. The fact that Bach did not use the inversion by itself can probably be interpreted thus that he did not find this motif form beautiful; for in the mirroring, not every subject takes on a pleasing appearance.


At work here are traceable and covert laws. It is true that a music motif can be artificially constructed, its laws can be determined; but, fortunately, the most common motifs owe their origin to inspiration. Even if the significance of the term, which is indispensable in the word, disappears in the inversion of the music motif, it always still remains to be seen whether the loss brings to light a musical meaning and something well-shaped. The inversion, moreover, occurs in a different way than in the word, namely, through a symmetrical divergence of the


intervals from a given point (water reflection, vertical inversion, spatial inversion); the absolute inversion, the mirror writing (horizontal inversion, temporal inversion) makes the motif for the ear and even for the eye just as unrecognizable as if one were to read the word “organism” as “msinagro.” Hence, the stupidity of the crab canon, when it appears as nothing more than a theory transferred into practice. The stricter symmetrical inversion, as taught by B. Ziehn, requires that the interval size be observed, that the imitation become at the same time the transposition.


p. 21:


Subject, original 

Tonal inversion, convertible at every starting scale degree:


a) from the fifth 

b) from the third 

c) from the unison 

Inconvertible image of the symmetrical inversion: 


This example shows that starting from various intervals, the diatonic inversion results in various harmonic intermediate scale degrees; whereas the image of the symmetrical inversion remains the same at all scale degrees. The former maintains the relationship of the key to the setting; this transposes independently of it, creating a key of its own for each scale degree on which it is set. The only exception to this is the inversion of the major scale from the third.

Simplest example of a canonic, symmetrical inversion in two voices over a free bass. (From Bach's Canonic Variations on “Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her”):  etc.

p. 22:

Example of a true symmetrical inversion in three voices:



Example of the symmetrical inversion of a canon in thirds: 

Chain sequence of symmetrical inversion concerning four voices: 

p. 23:



Complete fugue exposition in four voices and its symmetrical inversion by Wilhelm Middelschulte


(Subject by Bernhard Ziehn)

The symmetrical inversion

1) Canons and Fugue on the Chorale “Vater unser im Himmelreich” for organ by Wilhelm Middelschulte (Leipzig, Leuckart)

p. 24:

Assumed for the interval ratio of such an inversion is that the pitch *D* is the common point of departure  This order results in a perfectly symmetrical image also for the eye and especially on the keyboard, though it should be regarded merely as a guide and key. So, the following Bach example (from the Musical Offering) has the pitch *G* as the norm. (The solution is by W. Middelschulte) 




There is, however, nothing hindering the inversion from starting on a random interval, especially where it is not constrained by a canon. 

(The first seven measures of this canon are the subject posed by Frederick II, from which, by chance, the imitation can be symmetrically inverted; therefore, this part of the canon appears more natural than its artificial continuation.)

As one progresses along these paths, one arrives at new and unexpected contrapuntal goals. Just as the (vertical) harmony must be borne of the meeting of the (horizontally moving) voices, so the inversion of the whole setting can create a strange yet logical structure. The possibilities are mathematically infinite, especially if one also uses free or recumbent voices and the means of variation, the latter of which is discussed in the next fugue. But ultimately it is always the choice and the feeling that is decisive in the work of art. On this occasion, special reference should be made to B. Ziehn's theory of the canon (Chicago). It is preceded by his theory of harmony as an indispensable companion.

Praeludium IX

p. 25:

The prelude begins as a pronounced canon that is completely abandoned at the ninth measure  although the idea of the coda * could be traced back to that of the canon  and also for the sequence ** from the thirteenth measure of the second part a canonic descent would be demonstrable. 

The new approach at the start of the second part remains fragmentary.

Fuga IX

p. 29:

Idea of the bass: 

SV = Soprano variation

SD = Soprano in the diminution

2D = Soprano in the diminution and in contrary motion

p. 30:

1) A flawless fugue and with its succinct lack of ornamentation, rich in subtlety and resources. The plan is clear, the content labyrinthine:

Exposition;

Stretto across all voices at a distance of a half measure;


Stretto across all voices at a distance of a whole measure;


Variation of the subject in the soprano, then in the bass;


Development with the subject in diminution; followed by an extension working with all previous forms and leading to a G-sharp minor cadence;

Final development and stretto of the subject in the original, combined with the diminution in the inversion;

Final appearance of the “comes” in the bass and closing cadence.




The variation of the subject showing up in the middle of the fugue is a form only very occasionally found in the Well-Tempered Clavier; whereas it runs through the entire work of the “Art of the Fugue” and is Bach’s preferred technique in his organ chorale preludes.  subject | variation

Bach’s application of the variant consists of mainly filling in the chorale’s quarter notes with rhythmically animated passage notes, whereby the ornamentation turns into expression; the wealth of structures and the intimacy that the Master develops in this process are unsurpassable. From his model, the following example is constructed as an elucidation: 


In the same sense, the editor followed the great model in a Fantasia Contrappuntistica on a Bach fragment, and he may be allowed to cite compendiously how this, in terms of the first subject variant, has been attempted in the work mentioned. 

p. 31:

In this same work, the editor has employed the variant on the countersubject as well: 

The last of the organ variations on the chorale  is considered by the editor to be a classic example of Bach’s variant , designed in such a way:  etc.


The first variation in the same work expresses the chorale melody in a very different way; as if stammering and interrupted by sighs, in the language of a soul pleading for solace. A uniformly-moving accompaniment voice combines the fragments into a perfect setting, as if written for English horn and bass clarinet.

Original subject: 




According to this principle, Richard Wagner evidently introduced his own variation of the melody, which de-

lights in repeating therein the individual sections of the melodic setting in order to achieve a longer wind. Mentioned at this point should also be the transfer of the unaltered intervals into an altered time signature: a form of transcription that is assigned a main task in Liszt’s symphonic poems. The editor sees the transformations of the Florestan motif in Beethoven’s two Leonore overtures as the pinnacle of this technique.

p. 32:

It can be stated that the Bach melody is often nothing more than the embellishment (ornamental variant) of the upper part of a given figured bass, as in the E minor prelude of the first volume  In fact, Bach’s drafts for such pieces often show only notes of the chord progression, the later versions increasingly richer ornamentation.

The variation technique offers a valuable tool for making the transition from one subject to another; in symphonic works, mastery of this trick is indispensable.


It makes possible, for example, the transfer of the subject of the D major fugue into that of the D-sharp minor fugue:  and from the Beethoven motif:  (finale of the fifth symphony) to have the signal for the stretta arise 

This brings us back to the constructed example from which we started and concludes our argument without exhausting it.

A book on melodic design, lacking in the theoretical literature, would be a valuable item; if not to help create beautiful new motifs, though certainly to recognize the beauty of those existing and perhaps to prevent demonstrably false melodies from continuing to arise, as they occasionally appear after Beethoven, even among the most esteemed German composers. It is at least conceivable that in the future a plan developed to the highest degree of mastery will replace the gradually fading instinct in art and will be able to present works of the same quality as those of inspiration. But in the later musical work (from whatever moving force it may arise) the melody will have to rule alone and appearing in it will be that final polyphony which is to become a sublimation of Bachian art. For the sake of this connection we found ourselves prompted to append these remarks here.

Praeludium X


p. 33:

1) The theme consists in itself of a motif and its inversion  in such a way that the inversion of the whole, supplying as usual the second part, remains ineffective.


2) It is characteristic of Bach that he uses the descending melodic minor scale with the augmented intervals. That is why the trill has to be configured with the diminished

second (♯c) to eradicate the perception of two voices running parallel.

p. 34:



3) This new motif is not further developed. Its answer at the fifth would have been possible over the untransposed subject 

p. 35:

4) It is strange that what is thematic is not retained in this measure, insofar as this piece's peculiarity must be ascribed to the unceasing adherence to the main motif. The measure in question should therefore be 

Fuga X

p. 36:

1) The subject is based on the framework  that we cite in confirmation of what we said about the variation in the previous fugue. The type of embellishment here has the consequence that this motif, which is contrapuntally very extensive in its simpler form, almost completely forfeits this property in the form used. The second half of the subject in our illustration coincides with the subject of the F-sharp minor fugue, hence the comments on that fugue can be partly referred to here. Again, the similarity of the first half of this subject with that of the G major fugue (in this volume) is another contribution to the variation chapter:  E minor | G major

2) The sixteenth note clearly separate and with weight.


p. 37:

3) The half notes are consistently held and separated from each other, almost thematically performed (compare the first comment).

p. 39:

1) The subject lies in the alto, the soprano becomes the middle voice.

p. 40:

1) The firm subject entry in the subsequent measure would be more impressive if the introductory run were to be assigned to the middle voice: 

p. 41:

Execution: 


2) The unspoken thematic idea is not to be overlooked 


Praeludium XI

p. 46:


1) The piece is mainly composed of five voices; the five-voice structure arises from the fact that a voice is distributed over several voices by retaining individual notes. Our example is intended to demonstrate how the same idea can be reproduced almost equally exhaustively in a setting with various voices, and how, especially when applied to the thinly-strung harpsichord, the notation reveals its meaning more to the reader than to the listener.




In two voices 

In three voices 

In four voices ("normal" setting)²⁾ 


In five voices (original) 

In six voices (organ setting) 


2) Compare the relevant remark in the comments on the F-sharp minor fugue.

p. 47:

It is instructive to follow how in Bach's works for the harpsichord, two voices are often disguised three voices and, on the other hand, three voices are just frequently dispersed two voices.


Right away in the first prelude of this part, the theme is alternately presented as for one voice and for two voices 

Bach basses, like the following  are sometimes notated like this: 

The choice of one or the other notation is usually determined by the piece's structure. It is not uncommon for a formula for two voices to be resolved into one for a single voice in favor of the motion, as, for example, in the G major fugue, which was brought into this second part from the first 

To maintain the number of voices, Bach divides a run into two or more voices; a process that must remain inaudible in the performance:

For one voice 

For two voices 

For three voices  | For four voices 




(Compare the fifth and sixth measures of the first prelude.)

It is a good exercise to reduce a given polyphonic setting to a smaller number of voices in order to achieve the same thing with the fewest means rather than running the whole gamut.

Fuga XI

p. 48:




1) In conjunction with our comment on the prelude and to complete this chapter, we should point out that the first counterpoint can very well be felt as if for two voices.

The given figure  can easily be transformed into  and further shaped from this to achieve the following form  that is approximately the same as that of mm. 66 and 67.

p. 49:

1) Note the variety of counterpoints over the thematic bass sequences.


p. 51:

2) This chain of sequences is to be thematically interpreted as . It is all the more advisable to admit to this view as the fugue with the ascending part of the subject  hardly works imitatively, though on the other hand, the descending half of the subject  is prolifically active. This fills the middle part of the fugue, around which the two developments are symmetrically grouped. The modulation's course is also symmetrical, moving from the tonic to the dominant in the first development (exposition) and from the subdominant to the tonic in the second and last. The symmetrical design is tangible in the six closing measures of both developments. (Compare the B-flat major fugue.)

Praeludium XII

p. 52:


1) Here, the editor hears from the sound a woodwind setting in which the mood approximates an introduction to an aria of the kind found in the cantatas.


Think of a line in the score like the following:  then the singing voice joining in; with his comparison the editor should be proved right.

Fuga XII

p. 55:


Idea: 


1) From one of those occult relationships betraying the fact that thoughts, albeit unconsciously, but nevertheless existant, join forces in a circle, the prelude's motif can be combined with the inversion of the fugue subject 


2) The subject modulates into the dominant key by reaching the third of *C minor* via the raised sixth; consequently, the *comes* should lead back to the tonic 

In the answer Bach kept the intervals that should logically lead to the third of *G minor*; but with a clever harmonic twist he transforms the pitch *B flat*^{*} into the dominant-seventh of *F minor*. Even though against the rule, it is all the more ingenious.

p. 57:

3) A disguised stretto that should not be executed for the sake of the piece's light character 

A stretto of the subject would be even more elaborate, though not completely possible 

4) The pitch  is to be thought of as an ideal organ point sustained for six measures.

Praeludium XIII

p. 58:

*) The double bar line with the da capo sign has been added by the editor to clearly emphasize the form. The repeat is thus not to be executed.

1) The following measures are to be declaimed in one breath.

p. 60:

Inner voice: 



p. 61:

1) The upper-voice cadence contains the first motif of the fugue subject in such a way that without interruption the fugue could directly follow with the upbeat of the second measure.

Fuga XIII

p. 62:


(First episode)

1) Execution of the trill:  or:  and: 

The editor stipulated *con sincerità* in the prelude, *apertamente* in the fugue, both of which are to be translated as openness. Upon interpreting the fugue, he first became aware of the synonymous meaning of the expressions chosen, informing him at the same time of the two pieces' shared identity.

p. 63:


(Second episode)


Idea: 

2) The bass figure is undoubtedly a variation of the first-episode motif in half notes, which is in turn a transformation of the subject's opening trill.


p. 65:

The virtual starting point of the entire fugue lies in these four measures of triple counterpoint around which the polyphonic mechanism revolves.

The horizontal brackets indicate the various rhythmic orders. Read vertically: 

Read horizontally:  Of the several different types we have chosen from the fugue as an example, the one that represents the purest type of this threefold counterpoint, i.e., that can be inverted faithfully. It appears only at the start of the last development; like an organism refined by trial.




In turn, the design of the first part is decisive for the shape of the piece since the rest of the fugue is based on symmetry.

The counterpoint  grows out of the last section of the subject and brings an intimate connection into the exposition, which is followed by a first purely contrapuntal episode consisting of four variations of a two-measure formula. It moves, modulating, from the tonic back to the tonic, which, when again reached, once more produces the subject in the soprano. Concluding the first part is a second, more pleasing sequential episode formed from that specially mentioned last section of the subject.

The second part provides a complete development corresponding to the exposition, the first episode this time modulating from the parallel key to the subdominant, the subject in the subdominant, and also the second episode. A final complete development concludes the fugue.

Theoretically, the arrangement of the present second volume is a supplement to the first, perhaps in a stronger sense than the content itself. It is the master's personality that makes a unity of the two collections, and it is the maturity of his later age that in places imprints the second one with a higher character. The highlights of the two parts are, however, on a par with each other.

If, on the other hand, one wanted to extrapolate from the subject of this second F-sharp major fugue to that of the first F-sharp minor fugue and call them two different elaborations of the same idea, then the prior form would have to be assigned the deeper value.

The subject of the one  looks like the variation of the other  or like a free canon 

Observe also the mutual treatment of the intervals; how above, the leading tone (*e sharp*) is lowered to the tonic (*e*), below, the third (*a*) is raised to the leading tone (*a sharp*), and how this contrast is precisely related to the motif that is falling above and rising below.