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# BACH-BUSONI

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*Piano Works*

Instructive Edition

Volume II

The Well-Tempered Clavier – Second Part  
Book 4: BWV 889–893

Translation


*for EB 8279*

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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 XX

p. 14:

- 1) Don't miss out on the harmonic refinement of this measure 
- 2) In another reading:  $\sharp A$

p. 15:

In its form, this prelude is also independent of others. Motif and idea beget their own structure and cannot comply with given patterns. This is not to deny that the knowledge of previously originated forms appears advisable for anyone who is studying further.

This form derives its own law\*) from two measures, one of which establishes a descending, in the tonality persisting, and chromatic , the other an ascending, modulating, and diatonic motif in eighth-note motion .

From the continued conversion and transposition of these motifs and their obligatory counterpoint, the piece is proportioned as a unit of two times sixteen measures in length.

Bach's mastery of writing in two voices is no less admirable than that in most aggregated polyphony, in so far as his duets are not lacking in anything and leave no room for possible additions.

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\*) Already at the beginning of the 19th century Wainwright (a poet, painter, and poisoner, as O. Wilde calls him) recognized that a work of art could be judged only according to laws derived from the work itself, and that the question of artistic values culminates in whether or not the work in itself appears logical. This sentence, which I later read, struck me because the view and even the wording are identical to my remark above. If art criticism were to grasp this simple idea, then it would have to fall apart before it or break with the presuppositions on which its craft is based.

### Fuga XX

p. 16:

(defiant)

p. 17:



- 1) The point hidden here is the subject's diminution: 

p. 18:

Execution: 


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**NB.** The thirty-second note figures that the prelude and the fugue have in common allow the two pieces to have an almost identical tempo.


The short motif  serves the whole fugue; it continues in the subject and in the countersubject as a variation in diminution .


The motif is identical to that of the double fugue in the Kyrie from Mozart's Requiem.


p. 19:

It is revealed at the same time as a fragment of the subject from the A minor fugue in the first volume; here as there, we see the rest that follows the fall of the diminished seventh and, furthermore, the same ending of the subject: .

Parallels of this kind can be found even more frequently among pieces in the same key. So, for example, in the following two instances

from the 1st part 


from the 2nd part 

Again, the pairs of fugues in *C sharp minor*, *D minor*, *E minor*, *G major* could reciprocally yield the countersubject for the subject: .

A common circle finally also encompasses the two E major subjects .


### Praeludium XXI

p. 20:



Idea: 

- 1) The upper mordent with the minor second (*A flat*) is probably stylistically pure. We find this second in a very analogous way as an appoggiatura in the third measure of the Italian Concerto. Incidentally, the first two measures are a varied form of the Italian Concerto's main theme.


p. 22:

1) Instead of the *Ritendo*, a fermata on the fourth eighth note should also be able to express the feeling of the reprise in the next measure. The editor plays the passage approximately like this: 


p. 24:


1) Harmonic idea of the figured fermata   
Thematic-contrapuntal idea of the fermata 

p. 25:

\*) A good example of how a smaller piece can be made into a larger one by means of internal expansion. The core of this prelude, measured against other Bach models, lies in a shorter version, which is expanded to the present impressive extent by inserting intermediate links. The first part consists of a main section, a middle section, and a closing section. Appearing after two regular eight-measure periods (main section and middle section) is the first inner expansion, which, instead of going straight ahead, leads via detours to the final section. In the following example, the connecting sections from m. 19 up to the beginning of the final section (m. 28), intended as an overgrowth of the basic section, have been eradicated to clarify what has been said 

(Following are the five measures comprising the closing section.)

The middle, developing part of the prelude begins after the double bar line. The three measures (from m. 43 to the end of m. 45) signify a parenthesis and could be dispensed with 

The third part opens at m. 49 and continues as a freely symmetrical side piece to the first. But instead of the final section adjoining the already greatly expanded middle section, as this arrangement promises, a lively, rolling cadence begins with m. 65, to which a variation of itself is added after a fermata. This whole thing bridges the distance between mm. 64 and 83, both of which belong together in the original idea. According to our reconstruction, the number of measures results in the following numerics: for the first part 28, for the second and third 34; altogether 62. In reality, the piece has 87 measures. Take this opportunity to go back to the two older versions of the preludes in *C major* and *D minor* offering some similarities. It seems to me that Bach was not aware of the similarity of the first motif in the prelude to the first measure of the fugue subject ; but that there is something sisterly about the two pieces is unmistakable.

p. 26:**Composition Study**


The B-flat major prelude reduced to its basic form

Main section (antecedent)  
(consequent)  
Middle section (first motif) | (second motif)  
Transition  
Closing section

p. 27:

Development



**Fuga XXI**p. 29:


Idea: 

p. 30:


1) Suggestion for execution 

p. 31:

The subject is a variation of  The idea of initially building the exposition on the simpler form of the subject and gradually converting this into its variant by the motion of the countersubject would not have been without appeal:  etc.

The variation should start with measure 32, that is, the fugue should continue literally as in the original text. In this second part, two obligatory countersubjects appear, capable of accompanying the subject from two different scale degrees – namely, to exchange roles – in that one is the variation of the other: 

The closings of the first and the last parts, identical in shape, end like a lied; as in general the fugue appears not at all strict, rather in the character of a quiet dance.

The combination of lied and fugue forms can be observed in variations 10 and 22 in Bach's Aria with 30 Variations [Goldberg Variations] and can be compared with this piece. It seems to the editor that the fughetta in Beethoven's Diabelli Variations is also based on these patterns. Its theme is even closely related to the subject of our fugue: 

Probably from these fugue variations, the idea and form of the concluding fugue had developed in German set of variations, in which a justification and an intellectual connection with the complete work cannot always be demonstrated. The relationship between theme, variation, and fugue is most closely established in Beethoven's piano version of the Eroica, where both the theme of the variations and the fugue subject arise from the bass root; a form that in a figurative sense refers in turn back to the passacaglia. Crossovers between the fugue and the sonata forms are less common but can turn out to be very advantageous; the editor cannot recall a more masterful ex-

ample of this than the overture to the Magic Flute. To be mentioned, finally, is that the Bach gigue is constructed of a mixture of dance and fugue forms.

## Praeludium XXII

p. 32:

The alla-breve sign (♩) already doubles the tempo, so that Riemann's *Allegro risoluto* seems inexplicable. The editor feels the flow in the motion of the piece, which should not, however, be rushed to the detriment of its intimate character.

p. 34:


Idea: 


1) Literal inversion of the first part up to the next partial double bar line.

p. 35:

**NB.** The theme showing up in the middle voice comprises a full five measures, which is to be made comprehensible by the performance. At the same time, the bass in the fifth measure indicates the inversion. In the third and fourth measures, the two outer voices bring variations of the subject as it progresses in their midst.

The form, as odd as it is rounded, can be divided into four sections, each (except for the third) containing a development of the theme followed by a free episode. The third part differs from the others in that it links to the next without an episode, and that each two voices takes turns with one another in presenting the theme. In the last section, the episode turns into a coda.

The theme is, strictly speaking, a melodic fugue subject that sounds like a minor variation of the motif from the previous B-flat major fugue. 

Treated as a fugue subject, it would have to belong to the genre of modulating subjects and assume the following form 

The canon at the fourth would be fully feasible 

Various other canonic forms are included in the motif.


## Fuga XXII

p. 36:

Idea: 

From the third subject entry onwards, the editor has this time notated pairs of voices, one on each staff, regardless of their allocation to the two hands, as it is written in the original and as it corresponds to the primarily polyphonic meaning of the piece.

p. 38:


1) The complete inversion of the countersubject would have to be:  (answer)

p. 39:

Possible variant: 

Thematic idea: 

p. 41:

To be admired is how here a contrapuntal and sovereign instinct devised a motif of unprecedented applicability, especially since its melodic and rhythmic impetus does not suggest something constructed. Imitations of the subject are possible from all intervals, both in the normal and in the contrary motion, such that the distance of a scale step in space coincides with the length of a half note in time. 

(D flat major)

(F flat minor) | (B flat minor)

(G flat minor)


(enharmonic)

(the same as in "Alla Nona")

In contrary motion

In this table, each line is intended in relation to that at the top (the original subject); the lines, however, can optionally also be combined with each other, and – no less advantageously – converted into major. An example of this (see the next page):

p. 42:


I believe that I have found the key to this subject's canonic universality in the fact that the motif contains a latent counterpoint at the tenth that ascends uniformly in intervals of the second and in half notes; such that any given half note can be made the starting point of the canon: 

Starting point of the canon at the seventh:


Starting point of the canon at the octave:

And so forth

Meaning of the parallel fifths for the imitation of the falling interval 

further, that the subject's likewise latent harmony is based on two single chords, together totaling all the notes in the scale, and alternately recurring  such that each of the scales intervals fits harmonically on either *A* or *B*. Thus, it stands to reason that the canon, beginning with a triadic tone, begins on *A*, and correspondingly occurs in the other case. The same is true of the subject's inversion, adopting the pitch *F* as the center of the system.

## p. 43:

For more untoward cases, the option still remains of altering the intervals or a changed harmonization: 

So much is what my investigation reveals about the contrapuntal nature of this subject, whose secret law ultimately remains undisclosed.

Just as perfect as the structure of the subject is the structure of the fugue, piling up monumental settings in stages. Here is the schema

## FIRST PART

in the normal motion

1. Exposition, or first development: the subject once for each voice
2. Stretto, **T** and **A** in the tonic  
    **S** and **B** in the parallel key

## SECOND PART

in contrary motion

1. Simple, complete development
2. Stretto, **T** and **S** in the tonic  
    **A** and **B** in the dominant

## THIRD PART

Stretto in the normal and in contrary motion

1. **2** and **T** in the parallel key of the dominant
2. **B** and **V** in the tonic
8. **S** and **A**, **I** and **A**, concurrently in the tonic

Thus, we see the idea striving upwards (vertically), unfolded by a four-line art (horizontally) serving it. The sign of the cross, the plan of the cathedral!

**Praeludium XXIII**

## p. 44:


- 1) “Bravura” in the sense and within the limits of the harpsichord.

**Fuga XXIII**


## p. 48:

New countersubject

Inner voice: 

- 1) The new countersubject can be executed over the subject from the tonic as well as from the subdominant. It seems like a figured counterpoint at the tenth: 
- 2) The following four measures represent the form of parenthesis already familiar to us.


## p. 50:

- 1) One would interpret this passage almost as a figured stretto 

## p. 51:

Idea: 

The subject, which starts off with such dignity and is nothing more than a bass voice to a harmony example, is completely sterile from a contrapuntal viewpoint. It could be done in contrary motion, but it would not gain a new expressive side. Even Bach had to seek refuge in the countersubject and in the harmonization. He nevertheless does not succeed in reaching a climax, although he draws from the juxtaposition of subject and countersubject all that they allow in terms of possibilities. In this way, he forms an exposition from this material that has an impressive effect through a characteristic countersubject (one that is subsequently almost completely abandoned) and closes on the dominant after an extra subject entry by the bass.


It is followed by three incomplete developments with the aid of a new countersubject:<sup>1)</sup> the first – *comes, dux, comes* – in the tonic; the second starting from the parallel key (the answer in *E major*, but harmonized as *C sharp minor*) and the last properly in the tonic. Between the second and third developments there is an episode of twelve measures. It is done in only three voices, but the last seven measures would naturally allow for the bass to enter, which could first progress thematically and thereafter halt on an organ point, which the setting virtually demands. The following elaboration of this idea, like all examples constructed by the editor, may be considered as a study 

- 1) Out of conscientiousness, we must also add that Riemann wants to recognize a second fugue subject in this new countersubject, and that from this he justifies coining the piece as a double fugue.

Our view of this question can be found in note 1) on p. 48.

**Praeludium XXIV**

## p. 52:


- 1) The tempo is prescribed by Bach. The alla-breve meter  $\text{♩}$  would double the motion so that the Allegro would be conceivable in such a way . The editor is inclined to perform the piece more calmly.
- 2) The consequent is in its first section (mm. 9–12) a parallel to the second motif of the A minor prelude. Its thematic impetus is primarily driven by the syncopation.

3) The consequent's second section, the melodic sequence, is of the same spirit as that which begins its ascent at the tenth measure of the A-flat major prelude; it also fills in the same space within the piece's structure.

p. 53:

4) Now all the variations could be combined in one piece: 

p. 55:


5) The following phrase up to the fermata is an embellishment of this harmonic and syncopated setting 

6) The shorter slurs are from Bach.


### Fuga XXIV

p. 57:


1) The new countersubject, beginning on the third measure of the subject and obligatory from now on, is harmonically in two voices (comments on the preludes in *F*


*major* and in *G major*) and is to be considered a piano arrangement in this form: 

p. 58:

Idea: 

p. 60:

The subject's canonic treatment (of which only rudiments are perceivable in the fugue) would bring these (or similar) useful form types to light: 

The variation in augmentation is a canonic form not yet encountered by the editor. He may be permitted to write down as a proposal also the following unconstrained combination: 

The exposition yields a superfluous answer in the middle voice. The second development leads the subject from the parallel key to the dominant. The third part, seemingly commencing with the home key and canonically, initially places the subject on the subdominant, answers it with the soprano in the tonic, and achieves an energetic conclusion via beautifully serpentine groups of sequences.