



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Bach's "Art of Fugue": suggestions for the last gap

Author(s): Glen Wilson

Source: *Early Music*, May 2014, Vol. 42, No. 2 (May 2014), pp. 249-257

Published by: Oxford University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43307056>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Oxford University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Early Music*

JSTOR

Glen Wilson

Bach's *Art of Fugue*: suggestions for the last gap

IN 1979, Dr Alfred Dürr wrote:

The literature on Bach's *Art of Fugue* has swollen to such proportions in the last decades that it is hardly to be kept track of ... Observing the degree to which the findings of even the most distinguished researchers differ, one is almost tempted to write a satire on the subject ... [but recent research has shown that] study of the sources is still capable of turning up new insights of far-reaching significance.¹

When I wrote the first draft of this article in 2000 to settle some questions in my own mind, the stream had already swollen considerably, and it shows no sign of abating yet.² But largely through the remarkable work of Gregory Butler, something resembling a consensus has emerged, at least as regards the final layout. We can set aside for the moment the question of whether the Berlin autograph represents a first version of the work, and concentrate on the original edition (OE), now seen as a partially mangled representation of Bach's final intentions. Several movements found towards the end there clearly do not belong:

Contrapunctus *a4*, an earlier version of Contrapunctus 10
Fuga *a2* Clav. and *Alto modo Fuga a2* Clav., an arrangement for two keyboards of Contrapunctus 13

Choral prelude *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein*

Gregory Butler,³ later supported by Pieter Dirksen,⁴ showed that Bach intended the 'Canon per Augmentationem in Contratio motu', also extant as a three-page autograph *Stichvorlage* (engraver's copy), to be the final piece of *Die Kunst der Fuge*, at the end of a group of four two-voice canons. When he sent the second batch of *Stichvorlagen* to the Schübler family, engravers in the iron-working town of Zella in

the Thuringian forest (where the engraving of luxury firearms was their bread and butter), he left a gap of six pages in the pagination, intended for the final four-voice Contrapunctus, which had evidently not been completed at that point. The obituary published in 1754 in Mizler's *Musikalische Bibliothek*,⁵ known as the *Nekrolog*, tells us what it was to have been:

Die Kunst der Fuge. Dies ist das letzte Werk des Verfassers, welches alle Arten der Contrapuncte und Canonen, über einen einzigen Hauptsatz enthält. Seine letzte Krankheit, hat ihn verhindert, seinem Entwurfe nach, die Vorletzte Fuge völlig zu Ende zu bringen, und die letzte, welche 4 Themata enthalten und nachgehends Note für Note umgekehret werden sollte, auszuarbeiten.

The Art of Fugue. This is the author's last work, which contains all types of fugues and canons on a single theme. His final illness prevented him from carrying his plans to completion. The penultimate fugue was not altogether finished, and the last, which was to have four themes and subsequently be inverted (*umgekehret*) note for note in all four voices, was not worked out.

It is difficult to imagine such a detailed description without the authors having had some physical evidence; I explain below what I think that may have been.

Butler has more recently convincingly shown that the 'penultimate fugue' is the inversion of Contrapunctus 13;⁶ hence Contrapunctus 14, never *ausgearbeitet* (elaborated), was to have been a third mirror fugue. The resulting scheme is the grandest and most symmetrical of all Bach's layouts in the late works:

- 4 simple fugues
- 3 counter-fugues
- 4 double and triple fugues

3 mirror fugues
4 canons

The groups are presented like a Baroque façade, in alternating modules of four and three. The central group (flanked by a total of 14 movements) is given extra emphasis: its corner columns are the two triple fugues, Contrapunctus 8 and Contrapunctus 11, both of which use the same themes in inversion, one of them being his motto-theme B-A-C-H in disguise. Many other symmetries and number relationships present themselves on further study, but there is no need to labour the point here.⁷ The various combinations of threes and fours are also a neat way of achieving symmetry using the number 14, the numerological symbol for 'Bach'; it shows up most obviously in the number of fugues, followed by the four canons. The latter look like an echo of the four Duetti at the end of *Clavierübung III*, convincingly shown by Robin Leaver to represent the four moments for daily prayer at home prescribed in Luther's 'Small Catechism'.⁸ Bach seems to be putting himself in the position of a supplicant to the Almighty, like the portrait of a donor in an altar painting.

The missing mirror fugue, Contrapunctus 14, where every voice would be 'Nachgehends Note für Note umgekehret', could have been a homage to Bach's greatest mentor, Dietrich Buxtehude. The latter's *Fried- und Freudenreiche Hinfahrt* (Lübeck, 1674) has often been pointed out as one of the most significant antecedents of the *Art of Fugue*. I suspect Bach would here be duplicating the technique of one or the other of the two settings of the chorale *Mit Fried' und Freud' fahr' ich dahin*, which Buxtehude entitles 'Contrapunctus' and follows with an inverted *Evolutio*, using different means from those employed in Contrapunctus 12 and 13. Contrapunctus 12 is a true 'mirror-fugue': not only the order of the voices is mirrored, but their melodic lines as well. On the other hand, Contrapunctus 13, known as the 'Three-voice mirror fugue', is no such thing. It is, rather, a dizzying hybrid, a *trait d'union* between two complementary models of *Umkehrung*, Contrapunctus 12 and the postulated Contrapunctus 14: its voices are first shuffled—S/A/B becomes B/S/A—and only then are the lines melodically inverted. The proposed group-arrangement *a4–a3–a4* is symmetrical, and a microcosm of the cycle.⁹

The editors of the *OE*, faced after Bach's death with the already numbered plates for the closing group of

canons, decided to fill the gap by renumbering the Augmentation Canon (which lost its logical place at the end of the group of four) and inserting the early version of Contrapunctus 10. The unfinished fugue, understandably but incorrectly, was placed at the end, followed by the chorale as compensation.

There may be another clue that the ideal Contrapunctus 14, a third mirror-fugue, had at least an embryonic existence. The passage from the *Nekrolog* quoted above dovetails with a somewhat cryptic note, variously ascribed to Johann Christoph Altnikol or Johann Friedrich Agricola,¹⁰ on the back of the last page of the unfinished fugue: *und einen anderen Grund Plan* (and [there is also] another ground plan) (illus.1).¹¹ This curt message, either from Bach's son-in-law or one of authors of the *Nekrolog*, both former students, has been variously interpreted. I would submit here that the scribe is using a synonym for 'Grundriss', which Marpurg, in his *Abhandlung von der Fuge*, defines thus:

Alle die verschiedenen Sätze, die untereinander verbunden werden sollen, müssen, bevor man sich an die Arbeit macht, erstlich nach den Regeln des doppelten Contrapunkts zusammengesetzt werden ... Hiernach entwirft man den Grundriß der Widerschläge in der Partitur.

All themes which are to be connected with one another must, before one commences work, first be put together according to the rules of invertible counterpoint ... Subsequently one puts the ground plan of the later entrances into score.¹²

These two pieces of evidence combined (*Nekrolog* and *Grund Plan*) could be construed as follows: the editors of the *OE* had in front of them fragments of two separate fugues, and the note is a warning not to overlook what may have been a mere scrap of paper.¹³ The one 'not altogether finished' we have (the inversion of Contrapunctus 13),¹⁴ but no trace remains of a third mirror-fugue.

And so we are left wondering what to think about the unfinished fugue. It is obviously not the mirror-fugue mentioned by the authors of the *Nekrolog*. Were they misinformed, like Humphrey Bogart's character Rick Blaine in *Casablanca*, or is there another explanation?

Gustav Leonhardt, in his youthful essay on the *Art of Fugue*,¹⁵ mentioned the unfinished fugue as 'belonging in our opinion to the *Art of Fugue*!'.¹⁶ He later came around to the view that it had nothing whatsoever to do with the cycle, a view expressed



1 Bach, autograph of *Die Kunst der Fuge*, Contrapunctus 14, bars 69–127

with great vehemence in discussions about this article. Butler followed the same trajectory, and now agrees with him.¹⁷

But much evidence tugs it back into the powerful gravitational field of *Die Kunst der Fuge*:

- (a) The very fact that the editors of *OE* included it is prima facie evidence of its belonging to the complex.
- (b) F. W. Marpurg, in his preface to the second edition,¹⁸ and C. P. E. Bach, in an advertisement,¹⁹ explicitly associate it with the work, though without committing themselves to a specific place in the cycle.
- (c) It is highly unlikely that Bach would have bothered with an isolated piece so similar to the Contrapuncti in the last stage of his life, with *Die Kunst der Fuge* lying unfinished.

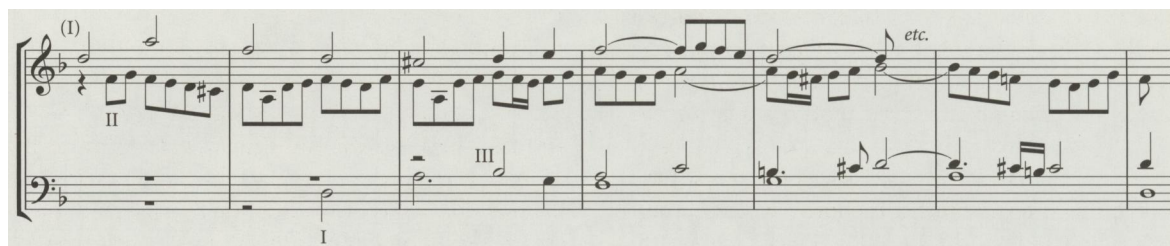
So it seems that a place needs to be found for the torso.

*

The first step towards a true understanding of this piece is the relinquishment of a cherished myth: that the Main Theme fits in with the existing three, thus furnishing the makings of a quadruple fugue (though certainly not one where all the voices can be inverted). The combination was first proposed in 1880 by the Beethoven scholar Gustav Nottebohm (1817–82).²⁰ Here are my objections to what seems to me the single most salient error still current in Bach scholarship:

- (1) The third bar of ex.1 is a congeries of dissonances and parallels. Bach sometimes goes amazingly far in such things, but never this baldly. This is a blot of improbable ugliness on such an exposed location in an exemplary work.²¹ The small shifts of rhythm found in most 'reconstructions', in order to evade the worst of these, look to me like cheating. If the Main Theme is to return in triumph, should it not be in its original state?

Ex.1 Bach, *Die Kunst der Fuge*, Contrapunctus 14, suggested combination of four themes



- (2) It leads, on the first beat of bar 4, to what looks like an F major triad with no 5th and a doubled major 3rd. The latter weakness, though frequently frowned upon, is certainly not mortal; but the former comes in for heavy criticism from German Baroque theoreticians, who share Bach's love of full harmony. To name just two examples: Joachim Burmeister (1606)²² condemns the omission of a member of the 'trias harmonica', and gives it a typically half-Greek, half-Latin rhetorical label: *Elleimma conjugati*. Andreas Werckmeister (1702)²³ arranges chords into three degrees of acceptability, but such monstrosities as this one do not even make it into the third rank, which is already bad enough in the author's eyes to merit the following excommunication:

Der Grund worauf die Harmonia beruhet wird verschwächet, und die Zweige der Würtzel wovon die Harmonia gleichsam ihre Nahrung hat werden weggerissen, daher sie nicht so gut sein kann als sie sein sollte, und kommt so zu reden alles aus der Ordnung.
The ground upon which the harmony stands is weakened, and the branches of the roots from which the harmony, as it were, takes its nourishment, are ripped away, so that it is not as good as it ought to be, and everything collapses, so to speak, in disorder.

- (3) It is Bach's norm to have multiple themes enter consecutively, but not for one to end before the others. The Main Theme is absent for the final third of Nottebohm's *Grund Plan*.
(4) Theme I and the Main Theme are far too similar. Contrast between themes is a solid principle of this and earlier composers.
(5) To bring this putative quadruple fugue to a conclusion following Bach's practice, the following must still take place: development of Themes I–III together, exposition of the Main Theme, development of Themes I–IV together. There is no space left for all this in the single page remaining for this already very long fugue (longer again by a third compared to its closest rivals, Contrapunctus 8 and Contrapunctus 11, the 'pillars' of the cycle's layout).
(6) Aside from problems of space and relative length, any further developments would be aesthetically impossible and grotesquely anti-climactic after the

tremendous non-thematic pre-peroration in bars 229–32, with its pedal-point, five cadences and eschatological rhetoric. After this, surely all that remains is to develop Themes I–III together, and add a fitting coda; just right for one page of 50 bars at the most.

- (7) The particular configuration of the four themes in ex.1 is one of the very few that work to any extent at all, or are even playable. This fact ought to arouse suspicion, since the point of multiple themes is to be able to show them in a respectable number of combinations.
(8) The return of a fugal theme in its original shape after its having been transformed through variation is without precedent. This kind of innovation, suitable in, say, Britten's *A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (with trombones and gong), would have been repugnant to a Bach going about the business of consolidating all the inherited lore of counterpoint in one of the two crowning achievements of his life. We are not dealing here with the *Kraut und Rüben* of the *Goldberg Variations*, with its *Aria da capo*.

There are other technical details about which one could quibble, but the point is this: with the free fourth voice in the manuscript, at the point where the three themes are combined (bar 233) and just before Bach breaks off, none of these objections arise in the first place (ex.2).

Contemplating his *Grund Plan*, Nottebohm says, 'Dies kann kein Werk des Zufalls sein' (This cannot be the result of coincidence).²⁴ About this he was quite correct, although not in the way he meant it. Given that, as we shall presently see, Theme I and II are variants of the Main Theme, it is really not that surprising that the Main Theme can almost be squeezed into this fertile contrapuntal environment, so carefully prepared in advance by Bach for just such combinations. Much is made of the quavers from the Main Theme in bar 4; it is thought that they fit so well that all possible doubt as to the rest ought to be silenced. But of themselves they fit in at various other places in the *Grund Plan* of

this triple fugue, so their fitting so nicely into bar 4 of the example is no particular justification for overlooking all the other glaring faults enumerated here. Any other bit of complementary counterpoint would have supplied the same motion, as in fact the free soprano voice in bar 236 (bar 4 of ex.2) does.

The extent to which otherwise rational people have been blinded by a chimera is shown by the numerous completions of the so-called 'Fuga à 3 Soggetti', as the editors of the *OE* titled the unfinished fugue. Aside from the highly questionable wisdom and taste of connecting one's own lucubrations to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and unqualifiedly calling them a 'reconstruction', the results, often prominently published, are never convincing. The crux towards which they so earnestly strive—the return of the Main Theme after so much development and change—always ends up sounding puny and futile in the shadow of Bach's immense edifice.

*

The unfinished triple fugue is sufficiently interesting without the unaltered Main Theme being dragged in by its heels, and if the following hypothesis is correct, the piece's plan and significance are momentous enough, if not, perhaps, worked out with the same diligence as the rest of the cycle. I suggest that the similarity of Theme I and the Main Theme mentioned above is intentional; the editors, and everyone

before Nottebohm, saw the former for what it actually is—a variant of the latter.

Theme II continues the Main Theme to its conclusion, also in varied form. From the exact point where Theme I breaks off being the Main Theme and becomes, instead, an armature for Theme III (B-A-C-H), Theme II practically takes us by the hand and leads us on an extended variation in quavers of the second part of the Main Theme (ex.3).

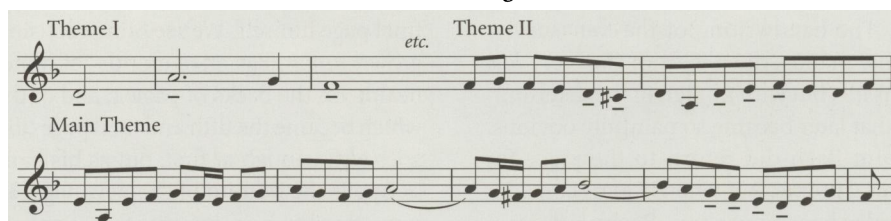
If the unfinished fugue (without the Main Theme as fourth *soggetto*) is indeed the intended replacement for the *Grund Plan* Contrapunctus 14, it would be the only one in the cycle where the Main Theme is split in two and then varied, after the manner of the variation canzonas and ricercars of more than a century previous. One of the artistic statements implicit here is a reference to the character of the *Art of Fugue* as a whole: that of a gigantic variation ricercar.²⁵ This is of a piece with Bach's well-documented late preoccupation with the *stile antico*.

I would not be surprised if the *Altro ricercar* from Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali*, a copy of which Bach acquired in 1714, was the original germ for a project which probably occupied Bach intermittently from the 1730s until the end of his life. Its theme bears a strong resemblance to the Main Theme (ex.4). The key signature is the same, and the work is a straightforward triple fugue, like the suggested Contrapunctus 14. But this may all be mere coincidence.²⁶

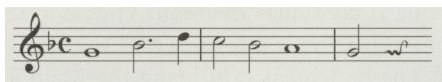
Ex.2 Bach, *Die Kunst der Fuge*, Contrapunctus 14, bars 233–9



Ex.3 Bach, *Die Kunst der Fuge*, themes I and II



Ex.4 Frescobaldi, 'Altro recercar' from *Fiori Musicali*
(1635), main theme



I yield to no man in my scepticism about most of what has been written about number symbolism in Bach;²⁷ but I still believe the prominent presence of two numbers is significant. The gematrical explanation for the surprising length of Theme II would be that it contains 41 notes, a number thought to be both a signature (J=9 + S=18 + BACH=14), and the reverse of 14 (B=2 + A=1 + C=3 + H=8).

*

What circumstances could have driven Bach to abandon his original plan for Contrapunctus 14, destroy the beautifully symmetrical group of what might best be called 'inversion-fugues', and substitute a variation *ricercar* of largely symbolic significance?

We now know that the *Nekrolog* was wrong about the *Art of Fugue* being Bach's last major work; this was, in fact, the completion of the B minor Mass. The final phase of this almost life-long project produced a number of new compositions. He returned to this solemn duty when his vision began to deteriorate in August 1748.

I think that, perhaps in a state of near-panic about his health and vision, Bach despaired of 'working out' the horrendously difficult *Grund Plan*, and as an expedient before setting *Die Kunst der Fuge* aside, composed an entirely new Contrapunctus 14. He got as far as what Alfred Dürr called an *Ausarbeitungspartitur* (working score),²⁸ in the form of a keyboard score on ten-stave printed paper, to a length which he knew would later be expanded into six pages of 12-line open score for a *Stichvorlage*, but held it back for revision and passed on the final numbering scheme (with the gap of six pages) to the Schüblers. The handwriting of the four surviving pages of this manuscript²⁹ is from the 'very last stage'³⁰ of Bach's life, but with no sign of the deterioration of vision that later became so painfully obvious.

At some point Bach did return to the piece for revision at several points. But when? Let us consider what the *Nekrolog* has to say about Bach's last days:

Zehn Tage vor seinem Tode schien es sich gähling mit seinen Augen zu bessern; so daß er einsmals des Morgens ganz gut wieder sehen, und auch das Licht wieder vertragen konnte. Allein, wenige Stunden darauf, wurde er von einem Schlagfluße überfallen; auf diesen erfolgte ein hitziges Fieber, an welchem er, ungeachtet aller möglichen Sorgfalt zweyer der geschicktesten Leipziger Aertzte, am 28. Julius 1750, des Abends nach einem Viertel auf 9 Uhr, im sechs und sechzigsten Jahre seines Alters, auf das Verdienst seines Erlösers sanft und seelig verschied.

Ten days before his death his eyes seemed to improve gradually, such that, one morning, he could see quite well, and bear the light. But a few hours later he suffered a stroke; there followed an acute fever, of which, in spite of all possible care taken by two of Leipzig's best doctors, he died, by the grace of his Saviour quietly and blessedly, at 8.15 pm on 28 July 1750, in his sixty-sixth year.

The *Nekrolog* tells us that Bach's 'industry must have been unremitting'. What would he have done on that July morning in 1750, finding himself given a reprieve from darkness of unknown duration, but go to his *Componierstube* (composing study) looking out over the formal garden across the Pleisse, and set to work again on *Die Kunst der Fuge*? I suspect that what he saw when he took up the ersatz Contrapunctus 14 did not please him. The over-long and quasi-improvisatory first exposition is no match for the density and force of the rest of the piece. His most significant correction on the first four pages (in German tablature at the bottom of the page, illus.1) is a massive strengthening of the original transition to the second development. The handwriting here is noticeably shaky.

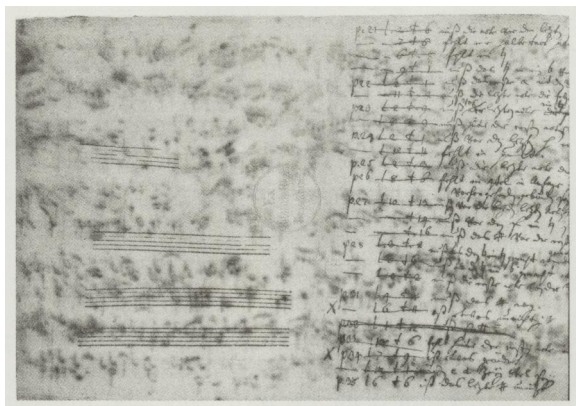
The fifth page bears a completely different aspect:

- (a) It has a singular watermark.³¹
- (b) The handwriting looks heavier and less secure than that of the first four pages.
- (c) The degree of *Tintenfrass* (ink corrosion damage) is much greater, indicating a different, and perhaps hastily mixed batch of ink.

I submit that at this point in the revision, Bach discarded his original ending completely and embarked on a new version. He had to rule the staves of this final page himself. We see him practising the process, grown unfamiliar after months of blindness and ill-health, on the backs of page 4, and of the blank sheet which became the fifth and final page (illus.2). The job goes well enough at first, but as his hand stiffens up, he spoils the bottom of the new page. I do not think it mattered to him, because this is not a fair copy, but

a composing manuscript (illus.3). (The same thing happened on the second page of 'Et incarnatus est' in the B minor Mass, another work of his last phase.)

The tremendous transition to the combination of the three themes uses the same B^b'' to e'' leap



2 Bach, autograph of *Die Kunst der Fuge*, trial staves

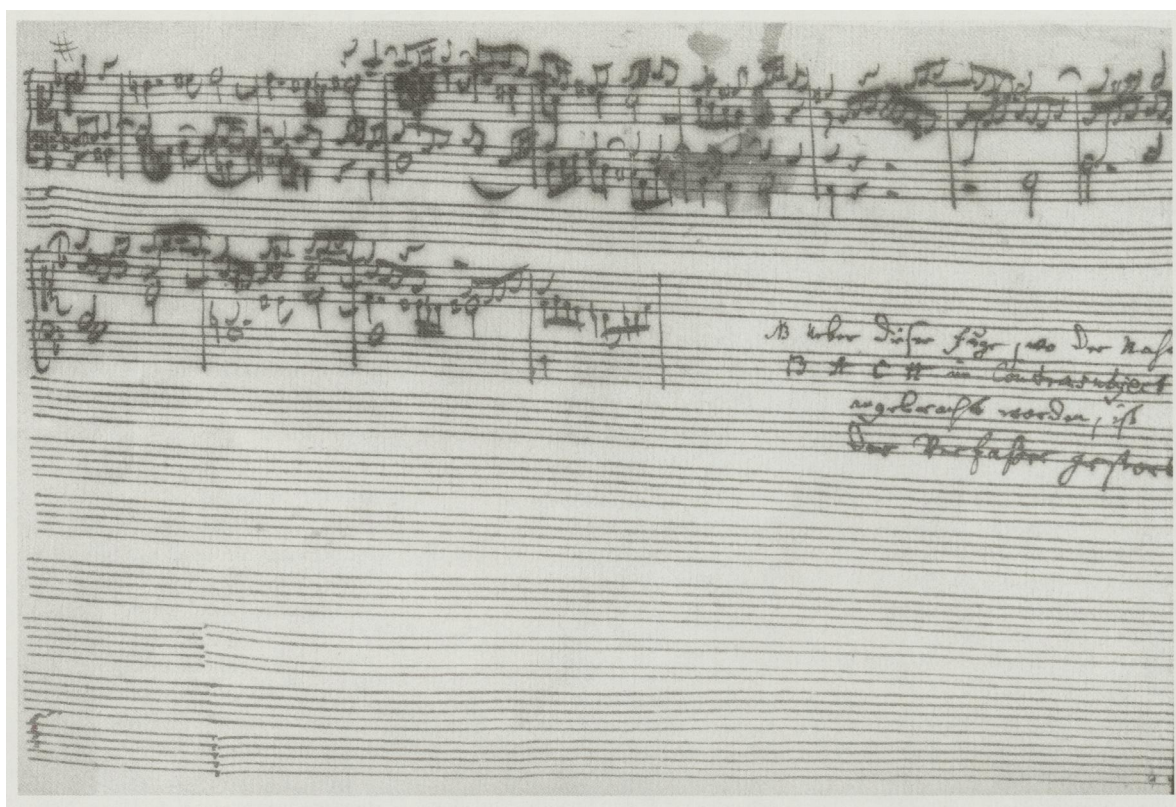
(ex.5, soprano) as the previously mentioned correction. The similarity is remarkable, and these are by far the most emphatic uses of the high range in the whole piece.

This is where C. P. E. Bach's famous inscription on the last page enters the picture (illus.4):

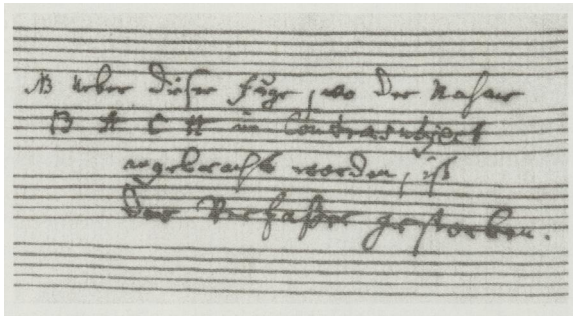
NB Ueber dieser Fuge, wo der Name BACH im Contrasubjekt angebracht worden, ist der Verfasser gestorben.

N.B. Over this fugue, where the name BACH appears in the countersubject, the composer died.

This is usually classified as 'legend', sometimes because it conflicts with other theories.³² Why not simply take Emanuel Bach's statement at face value? It seems more likely to me that this momentous piece of evidence, inserted by J. S. Bach's second son into the autograph of what I would argue is his last piece of work, should be inaccurate only to the measure of the few hours or days that elapsed



3 Bach, autograph of Contrapunctus 14, bars 227–39



4 Note in the hand of C. P. E. Bach on the final page of Contrapunctus 14 (detail)

between the fatal stroke and the actual time of death, than that he erred, intentionally or no.

Until the lost *Grund Plan* turns up in Altnikol's attic in Naumburg or elsewhere, this idea can

only be classified as speculation. But one pleasant aspect of this solution to the puzzle is that the only error it ascribes to those entrusted with divining Bach's intentions after his death is that of over-inclusiveness.

To summarize: I think that Bach, under pressure of his failing health, decided to fill the last gap in his plan with a triple fugue which, if not the cycle's most complex, could serve as a farewell to the *Art of Fugue*, claimed for his own name and that of his family line not only in its third theme, but also with a signature in the mystic language of numbers. It was his relentless perfectionism, possibly alongside a sense that he had botched his supreme effort, which brought on the stroke that killed this choleric personality, and thus prevented his carrying to its final destination the heaviest burden ever taken up by a composer of music.

Glen Wilson studied harpsichord at the Juilliard School (with Albert Fuller, 1969–71) and the Amsterdam Conservatorium (with Gustav Leonhardt, 1971–5). He was then harpsichordist of the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra until resigning in 1982 to devote himself to a growing career as a soloist, in chamber music and as a teacher (Utrechts Conservatorium 1982–8, Musikhochschule Würzburg 1988–). He was harpsichordist at the Netherlands Opera for some 30 years and has recorded seven solo CDs for Teldec and a dozen for Naxos. His edition of the *Préludes of Louis (recte Charles) Couperin* received the German Music Publisher's Award for best scholarly edition. glenwilson@t-online.de

Bach-Dokumente refer to the sequentially numbered documents published by Bärenreiter in three volumes between 1969 and 1984. Reproductions from the facsimile edition of *Die Kunst der Fuge* (Leipzig, 1979) are by kind permission of the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin.
It is a pleasure and an honour to acknowledge my debt to Prof. John Koster (University of South Dakota, National Music Museum) for his boundless patience and wisdom, demonstrated

on occasions without number in consultations about this article.

- 1 A. Dürr, 'Neue Forschungen zu Bachs Kunst der Fuge', *Die Musikforschung*, xxxii (1979), p.156.
- 2 Most recently by Z. Göncz, *Bach's Testament: on the philosophical and theological background of the Art of Fugue* (New York, 2013). See Yo Tomita's online Bach Bibliography <http://homepages.bw.edu/bachbib/> for an extensive list. For an English translation of the *Art of Fugue* historical documents,

- see H. T. David and A. Mendel (eds.), rev. C. Wolff, *The new Bach Reader: a life of Johann Sebastian Bach in letters and documents* (New York and London, 1998), pp.256–60 and 360–1.
- 3 G. G. Butler, 'Ordering problems in J. S. Bach's "Art of Fugue" resolved', *The Musical Quarterly*, lxix (1983), pp.44–61.
 - 4 P. Dirksen, *Studien zur Kunst der Fuge von J. S. Bach* (Wilhelmshaven, 1994).
 - 5 *Bach-Dokument* 666. According to a theory advanced by H. G. Hoke, 'Neuen Studien zur "Kunst der Fuge" BWV 1080',

Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, xvii (1975), the *Art of Fugue* was to be Bach's third and final statutory contribution to Lorenz Christoph Mizler's Societät der musikalischen Wissenschaften (Corresponding Society of the Musical Sciences), of which Bach was the fourteenth member.

6 G. G. Butler, 'Scribes, engravers, and notational styles: the final disposition of Bach's *Art of Fugue*', in *About Bach*, ed. G. G. Butler, G. B. Stauffer and M. Dalton (Urbana and Chicago, 2009), pp.111–23.

7 Dirksen, *Studien zur Kunst der Fuge von J. S. Bach*, devotes much space to the subject.

8 R. A. Leaver, 'Bach's "Clavierübung III": some historical and theological considerations', *Organ Yearbook*, vi (1975), pp.17–32. The two voices reflect the dialogue between Deity and mortal propounded in Lutheran theology.

9 A similar inspiration from Buxtehude can be found for the *Goldberg Variations*: his variations for harpsichord entitled *La Capricciosa* (see the notes to my recording of *Buxtehude: Harpsichord Music* (Naxos 8.557413) at www.naxos.com).

10 For Altnikol, see H. G. Hoke, in a leaflet accompanying the facsimile edition of *Die Kunst der Fuge* published as vol.xiv of the *Faksimile-Reihe Bachscher Werke und Schriftstücke* Herausgegeben von Bach-Archiv Leipzig (Leipzig, 1979); for Agricola, see C. Wolff, *Bach, essays on his life and music* (Cambridge and London, 1991), p.356.

11 The words in parentheses are implied by the accusative case-endings.

12 Friedrich Wilhelm Marburg, *Abhandlung von der Fuge...*, I. Teil (Berlin, 1753), pp.131–2.

13 Had the scribe been referring, as is sometimes asserted, to the difference in order between *OE* and the Berlin autograph, I think he would have used different wording, and made his remark elsewhere. The back of the last page of the unfinished fugue, kept in a separate folder from the main manuscript, would be a logical place to note the existence of another fragment.

14 See n.5.

15 G. M. Leonhardt, *The Art of Fugue, Bach's last harpsichord work* (The Hague, 1952).

16 Leonhardt, *The Art of Fugue*, p.4. On a marginally related note, Leonhardt here proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that *Die Kunst der Fuge* was written for the harpsichord or clavichord. Organists and pianists (and string quartets, accordionists, etc.) are, of course, free to borrow it—as long as they realize they are using an arrangement. Leonhardt also denounced all number-symbolism in conversations with the author: 'Het be-STAAT niet!'

17 Butler, 'Scribes, engravers, and notational styles', pp.116–17.

18 *Bach-Dokument* 648.

19 See *Bach-Jahrbuch*, lxxviii (1992), pp.101–2.

20 Martin Gustav Nottebohm, 'J. S. Bach's letzte Fuge', *Musik-Welt*, i (1880–1), pp.232–6, at p.234.

21 Johann Philipp Kirnberger, in *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* (Berlin, 1771), quotes many unusual turns in Bach's works, but warns repeatedly, almost frantically, against trying to imitate the freedoms taken by 'men of the first rank'. *Bach-Dokument* 767.

22 Joachim Burmeister, *Musica Poetica* (Rostock, 1606), English translation by B. V. Rivera (New Haven and London, 1993), pp.99–101.

23 Andreas Werckmeister, *Harmonologia Musica* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1702), quoted in R. Damman, *Der Musikbegriff im deutschen Barock* (Laaber, 2/1984), p.48.

24 See n.20.

25 Forkel calls the work 'Variationen im Großen': Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (Leipzig, 1802), facs. edn W. Vetter (Berlin, 1974).

26 This is not the place to develop the idea of the variation *ricercar* in connection with *Die Kunst der Fuge*, but let anyone who considers the idea far-fetched consult J. Ladewig, 'Bach and the prima prattica: the influence of Frescobaldi on a fugue from the Well-Tempered Clavier', *The Journal of Musicology*, ix (1991), pp.358–75. That a concept as antiquated as the hexachord was on Bach's mind at the end of his life is illustrated by the canon 'Fa Mi, et Mi Fa est tota Musica', BWV1078, dated 1 March 1749. And who knows? Frescobaldi's

magnificent *Recercar nono, con quattro soggetti* might have given him an idea as well—one that did not quite work out. The Venice reprint of Frescobaldi's combined *Capricci, Canzonas and Ricercars* (1626) is given a misdated citation by Bach's cousin Johann Gottfried Walther in his *Musikalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1732, facs. edn Kassel, 1953).

27 See, for example, R. Tatlow, *Bach and the riddle of the number alphabet* (Cambridge, 1991).

28 A. Dürr, *Johann Sebastian Bach—Seine Handschrift—Abbild Seines Schaffens* (Wiesbaden, 1984), 'zu Blatt 80'. Butler, 'Scribes, engravers, and notational styles', p.117, thinks the manuscript is a *Stichvorlage* for Bach's 1749 contribution to Mizler's Society. After the *Canonic Variations* and the *Musical Offering*, this would seem anti-climactic, and the factors connecting the piece to *Die Kunst der Fuge* cited above militate against this conclusion. He also (n.26) cites Wolff's suggestion that the sheets were part of the batch prepared for the *Stichvorlagen* of the canons. Klaus Hofmann, cited in the same note, wonders why Bach then did not use the backs of these sheets. Perhaps because he was too ill and in too much of a hurry to rule them?

29 Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. ms. Bach P 200, adnex 3.

30 Prof Yoshitake Kobayashi, in a conversation with the author in Göttingen on the occasion of Dr Alfred Dürr's 80th birthday celebrations. See Y. Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Bachs—Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750', *Bach Jahrbuch*, lxxiv (1988), for most matters of chronology discussed here.

31 For the first four pages, Weiß 19; for the final page, Weiß 24. Dirksen, *Studien zur Kunst der Fuge von J. S. Bach*, p.171.

32 C. Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach, the learned musician* (New York and London, 2000), p.436, says he 'was misled'. This is sharpened somewhat in the German translation (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), p.476, to 'ließ sich dazu verleiten', with overtones of a self-seduction into fibbery.