FUGAL AND CANONIC TECHNIQUES IN SELECTED LARGE CHORALE PRELUDES

OF *CLAVIERÜBUNG III* BY J.S. BACH

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Numerous scholars have studied the Clavierübung III, but their studies mainly focused on the relationship between the chorale text and Bach's response in music. Analysis without explaining J.S. Bach's word painting in other chorale preludes can be found easily, but most analyses treat rhetoric, especially those dealing with Clavierübung III.  There have been numerous studies linking Bach's organ works to Lutheran doctrine. However, to give a better understanding of the work's structure and its implications for performance, a contrapuntal analysis is indispensable. This study deals with an analysis focused on canonic and fugal techniques in selected large chorales, and it will provide a better understanding of Clavierübung III.

For purposes of comparison with typical fugal techniques, the C minor fugue from the Well-Tempered Clavier I, BWV 847, is taken as a model. This work reveals typical eighteenth-century, late Baroque fugal structure with a well-defined subject. The episode modulates through the keys of Eb major-G minor and C minor. Below is an outline of the present paper.

Chapter I discusses the purpose of this study.

Chapter II covers the earlier research on Clavierübung III and includes a discussion of the general background of the Clavierübung III.

Chapter III provides a contrapuntal analysis of the three chorale preludes. A translation of the text will be included in each analysis.

Chapter IV, the conclusion, will summarize and confirm the findings from the present study of the analysis.

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LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

All musical examples are taken from J.S. Bach. Johann Sebastian Bach Organ Music. Bach-Gesellschaft edition. New York: Dover Publications, 1970.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Composers of the North German organ school used simple hymn tunes in their chorale preludes. Usually J.S. Bach's predecessors borrowed a melody line from plainchant or hymn tunes, and used it in chorale preludes. As with other major composers, such as Buxtehude or Pachelbel, J.S. Bach used fugal and canonic techniques in his chorale preludes, inserting a cantus firmus in compositions or using a subject that quotes some motive from the cantus firmus.

*Clavierübung*, which means "keyboard practice," consists of four books; Bach started to compose it in 1731. Except for *Clavierübung III*, the three volumes of the *Clavierübung* are intended for the harpsichord, and often feature galant style. In *Clavierübung III*, written in 1739, there are two separate settings of the mass using plainchant and chorales as the main tunes.

Previous studies on *Clavierübung III* have focused mainly on revealing the reasons for including four *manualiter* duets, and on defining the rhetoric of the whole collection. Peter Williams refers to fugal and canonic techniques used in the chorale preludes, but does not pursue this significant idea.[1] In fact, there is less written about the *Clavierübung III* than about either *Orgelbüchlein* or the Great Eighteen (Leipzig) chorales. There has been much commentary and analysis of the chorale preludes of *Clavierübung III*, but, again, most scholars have ignored fugal and canonic techniques found in these works. The third part of the *Clavierübung III* has been studied most closely from the relationship between the chorale text and Bach's musical response. Researchers have focused on numerology and on Lutheran doctrine because *Clavierübung III* includes catechism chorales, as Bach revealed in his title page. The title reads as follows:

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[1] Peter Williams, *The Organ Music of J.S.Bach,* vol. I (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U. Press, 2003).

Third Part of the Keyboard Practice consisting of various Preludes on the

Catechism and other hymns for the Organ. … by Johann Sebastian Bach.[2]

As we observe in the passage quoted, this work was intended to have a religious purpose.

Previous studies have overlooked the significance of Bach's use of contrapuntal techniques to

express his religious conviction through his music. Therefore, three large chorale preludes of

*Clavierübung III* will be analyzed to demonstrate the use of imitative counterpoint. These three

chorale preludes show a diversity of imitative techniques in the chorale prelude genre. This new

study of the *Clavierübung III* is justified so that organists can become aware of the very

sophisticated contrapuntal relationships existing among the parts, and deepen their understanding

of these rich contrapuntal textures.

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[2] Peter Williams. "Musical Aims of J.S. Bach's *Clavierübung III,*" 259.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION TO *CLAVIERÜBUNG III*

Historical Background

The *Clavierübung III* was composed in 1739 as the part of *Clavierübung.* Bach started to

compose the whole collection in 1731 as a set of six keyboard partitas. The second volume,

composed in 1735, includes an Italian concerto and a French overture. The Goldberg Variations

were the fourth volumn, composed in 1742. The most distinctive difference between the

*Clavierübung III*  and the other volumes is the intended instrument: according to the title page of

the *Clavierübung III,* Bach composed it for organ,[3] whereas the other volumes are intended for

harpsichord.

Musical Contents in *Clavierübung III*

This volume starts with a monumental five-voice preludium and ends with a triple fugue.

Between the two, there are twenty-one chorale preludes in which Bach used mainly fugal or

canonic technique. The collection includes large chorale preludes and small chorale preludes.

The large chorale preludes are *pedaliter,* which require pedal, and the small chorale preludes are

*manualiter,* without pedal. In addition, the scope of the larger chorale preludes is much longer

than that of the small chorale preludes. The collection of 21 pieces is organized as follows:

Preludium pro Organo Pleno

1.Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit (large setting)  −c.f. in soprano, 2 clavier and pedal: 3-voice

fugue

2.Christe, aller Welt Trost  (large setting)  − c.f. in tenor, 2 clavier and pedal: 3-voice fugue

3.Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist  (large setting) −c.f. in bass, 5-voice, organo plenum: 4-voice fugue

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[3] "Third Part of the Keyboard Practice, consisting of various preludes on the Catechism and other hymns
for the organ."

4.Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit (small setting) – manualiter: canon

5.Christe, aller Welt Trost  (small setting)–manualiter: canon

6.Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist  (small setting)–manualiter: 4-voice fughetta

7.Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr (small setting) – c.f. in alto, manualiter: 2-voice fugue

8.Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr – (large setting), 2 clavier and pedal: 2-voice fugue

9.Fughetta super Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr (small setting) – manualiter: 3-voice fughetta

10.Dies sind die heilgen zehen Gebot (large setting)- 2 clavier and pedal: canon

11.Fughetta super Dies sind die heilgen zehen Gebot  (small setting)- manualiter: 4-voice fughetta

12.Wir glauben all an einen Gott (large setting)- in organo pleno with pedal: 3-voice fugue over ostinato bass

13.Fughetta super Wir glauben all an einen Gott (small setting)- manualiter: 4-voice  fugue

14.Vater unser im Himmelreich (large setting)-c.f. canonically, 2 clavier and pedal: 2-voice fugue

15.Vater unser im Himmelreich (small setting)- manualiter, canon

16.Christ, unser Herr,zum Jordan kam (large setting)-c.f. in pedal, 2 clavier and pedal: canon

17.Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam (small setting): canon

18.Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir (large setting)- organo pleno : 6-voice fugue

19.Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir (small setting)- manualiter: 4-voice fugue

20.Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, der von uns den Zorn Gottes wandt (large setting)-c.f. in pedal : 2- voice fugue

21.Fuga  super Jesus Christus, unser Heiland (small setting)- manualiter: 4-voice fugue

4 duets: E minor-F major-G major-A minor

Fuga 5 con pedale pro organo pleno

Many scholars have defined this work as a catechism mass[4] because the *Clavierübung III* follows the structure of the Lutheran service.  Bach used two cycles of the Kyrie, which came from the German trope, and one cycle of the Gloria. The cantus firmi of six of the chorale preludes were taken from Luther's Catechism.

The twenty-one chorale settings include fugues and follow the order of the Catechism. Musical versions of the Invocation of the Trinity, Kyrie, (Kyrie Gott Vater in Ewigkeit, Christe aller Welt Trost, and Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist) and the Gloria (Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr) are included. For the Ten Commandments, "Dies sind die heilgen zehen Gebot" is used. The Creed is expressed by "Wir glauben all an einen Gott." "Vater unser im Himmelreich" is the Lord's Prayer, and "Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam" is the Baptism hymn. "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir" is used for Penitence, and "Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, der von uns den Zorn Gottes wandt" is used at Holy Communion.

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[4] David Humphreys, *The Estoric Structure of Bach's Clavierübung III* (Cardiff: University of Cardiff Press, 1983), 7.

CHAPTER III

CONTRAPUNTAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CHORALE PRELUDES

In following chapters, the author will analyze contrapuntal devices in three chorale preludes, mainly focused on a discussion of fugal techniques.

Fugal Glossary

Before the counterpoint of three chorale preludes is examined, fugal terminology needs to be summarized.[5]

Subject: The primary theme in a fugue.

Rectus: The subject in its original form.

Inversion (Contrary motion): The subject is presented upward or downward is reversed.

Answer: A melodic theme of the same pattern as the subject, but responding to the subject in a
    different key, often the dominant.

Countersubject: A new melody line presented in counterpoint with the subject and answer.

Exposition: First section of fugue where the subject and answer are stated in each voice.

Counter-exposition: The second exposition after the original exposition. The key and order of
    entry may vary. This section is not present in every fugue.

Episode: Transitional modulating passage. The contrapuntal materials are often derived from the
    subject or countersubject.

Restatement: The subject is stated in a new key.

Fragment: A part of the subject used in subsequent episodes or restatements.

Stretto: The subject entries overlapped between two voices.

Reprise: Return to original key with statement of subject.

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[5] Kent Kennan, *Counterpoint, Based on Eighteenth Century Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

In the view of the outline of the eighteenth century fugue,[6] the C minor fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* I, BWV 847, can be useful as a model. This work reveals a typical eighteenth century, late Baroque fugal structure with well-defined subject and episodes which modulate to the related keys of Eb major and G minor before returning to the original key, C minor, for final entry. This piece has one exposition, three episodes, four restatements, and a reprise. A canon appears in mm. 9-10 and mm. 22-23. In final ending, the last statement of the subject appears over a pedalpoint, and the tonality returns to the original key.

Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist, BWV 671

This chorale prelude is a four-voice fugue over a cantus firmus in the pedal. The cantus firmus is below:

Example 1. Cantus firmus



Even though the key signature has three flats, Bach uses Bb major as a beginning tonality, then returns to C minor. This fugue is peculiar because an octave stretto presents as a form of inversion.

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[6] George Oldroyd. *The Technique and Spirit of Fugue* (London: Oxford U. Press, 1977), 22-28.

Example 2. Octave stretto, mm. 1-3



Rectus and inversion are paired in stretto. The countersubject propulsion gives rhythmic energy. For this prelude, Bach uses the third part of a cantus firmus melody from "Daß wir am letzten End," at the end, which is same as the "Groß ist dein' Barmherzigkeit," from the first *kyrie* to the end.

The text is below:

*Kyrie, Gott Heiliger Geist,*

*Tröst, stärk uns im Glauben allermeist,*

*Daß wir am letzten End'*

*Fröhlich abscheiden aus diesem Elend.*

*Eleison, eleison! Amen.*

Kyrie, Have mercy, O God the Holy Ghost,

Guard our faith, the gift we need the most;

So that our last hour bless;

Let us leave this sinful world with gladness.

Have mercy, have mercy! Amen.

Structurally, this chorale prelude has one exposition, four restatements, alternating with three episodes and a final ending.

Table 1. The whole structure

| Exposition | Restatement | Episode | Restatement | Episode |
|------------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| 1-11 | 11-14 | 14-17 | 17-23 | 24-28 |
| Restatement | Episode | Restatement | Reprise | |
| 29-32 | 32-47 | 48-54 | 54-60 | |

Exposition (mm. 1- 11)

Table 2. Subject, answer, and inversion

| Subject rectus | mm. 1-4 | Alto |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Inverted subject | mm. 1-4 | Sop. I |
| Answer rectus | mm. 5-8 | Tenor |
| Inverted answer | mm. 5-8 | Alto |
| First countersubject | mm. 3-4 | Sop. II |
| Second countersubject | m. 6 | Sop. I |
| First countersubject | mm. 7-8 | Sop. I |
| Beginning of the cantus firmus | mm. 9-10 | Bass |

The subject is constructed on the first phrase of the cantus firmus. The subject and the answer each have their own inverted version. The subject rectus is followed by an inverted subject in stretto.

Example 3. The subject, mm. 1-4

Inverted subject

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Subject rectus

The answer progresses in a similar manner. The inverted answer is followed by stretto.

Example 4. The answer rectus, mm. 5-8



Example 5. The inverted answer, mm. 5-8



The countersubject, which is played against the subject or answer above or below, appears consistently, and gives rhythmic energy in this piece. In this chorale prelude, two countersubjects are used, and the second one is stated repeatedly in the episodes.

Example 6. The first countersubject, mm. 3-4



Example 7. The second countersubject, m. 6



Restatement (mm. 11-14)

The inverted subject appears first, then the subject rectus follows it.

Table 3. Inverted subject and subject rectus

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inverted subject | mm. 11-13 | Eb major | Tenor |
| Subject rectus | mm. 11-14 | Eb major | Alto |

Episode (mm. 14-17)

In the episode, the materials from countersubjects are stated.

Table 4. Countersubject in episode

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The first countersubject | mm. 14-15 | G minor-Bb major | Sop. |
| The sequence of the second countersubject over cantus firmus | mm .14-17 | G minor-Bb major-Eb major-Bb major | Alto |

Restatement (mm. 17-23)

The subject and its inversion in F major and C major are stated.

Table 5. Subject rectus and its inversion

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subject rectus | mm. 17-19 | Bb major | Alto |
| Inverted subject | mm. 17-20 | Bb major | Sop. |
| Subject rectus | mm. 20-23 | C minor | Tenor |
| Inverted subject | mm. 21-23 | C minor | Sop. |

Episode (mm. 24-28)

Like the first episode, the countersubject is stated in sequence.

Table 6. Sequence in episode

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The sequence of the second countersubject over c.f. | mm. 24-28 | Bb major | Sop. and Alto |

Restatement (mm. 29-32)

After the subject and its inversion are stated in C minor, the second countersubject flows

beneath them.

Table 7. The subject and its inversion

| The subject rectus | mm. 29-31 | C minor | Sop. |
|---|---|---|---|
| The inverted subject | mm. 29-32 | C minor | Sop. II |

Episode (mm. 32-47)

This episode is filled with the sequence of the second countersubject. It starts without

using the cantus firmus, but two measures later, the sequence goes along with the cantus firmus

in the pedal.

Table 8. Episode

| The second countersubject | mm. 32-36 | C minor-F minor | Sop. and alto |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stepwise motion | mm. 37-44 | F minor | Alto |
| Sequence | mm. 41-44 | C minor-F minor-Bb major | Sop. |

Restatement (mm. 48-54)

Table 9. Subject, answer and inversion

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subject rectus | mm. 48-50 | Bb major | Sop. |
| Inverted subject | mm. 48-51 | Bb major | Alto |
| Answer rectus | mm. 51-53 | F major-Bb major | Sop. II |
| Inverted answer | mm. 51-54 | F major-Bb major | Tenor |
| Imitation | m. 52 | F major | Sop. and Alto |

Reprise (mm. 54-60)

The final phrase of the cantus firmus features diminished seventh chords, and ends with the dominant of C minor.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that this chorale prelude combines a number of fugal techniques, such as subject rectus, inverted subject, answer rectus, inverted answer, two countersubjects, and imitation with the presentation of a cantus firmus.

The simultaneous presentation of a rectus subject in a stretto with its inversion is highly astute and complicated. Furthermore, this association is maintained throughout the entire work. During the course of many contrapuntal works, Bach used inversion occasionally, but rarely throughout an entire structure as seen in *Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist*.

Bach uses key changes more creatively, however, when he links *Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* and *Christ, aller Welt Trost* with *Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist* by, for example, beginning the final section of Christ in Bb major, concluding with a C major chord, beginning Kyrie in Bb major, then modulating to C minor to knit what appears to be three separate pieces into one.

In modulation, this piece's tonal scheme follows a typical fugue, like the C minor fugue from *Well-Tempered Clavier I*, in which the tonality modulates to closely related keys. However, if the typical fugue returns to the original key in the last restatement, here, the original key is stated in the middle of the restatement because of the entry of the cantus firmus.

Bach considered the text and how to express it in music. Even though diminished seventh chords sounded dissonant in the meantone tuning system, Bach did not hesitate to use them. It could be thought that Bach wanted to express "mercy," as in the last phrase, mm. 54-57, so he chose accidentals and diminished chords that present that concept. In a typical fugue, without a text association, however, such expression is not an issue. The author suggests that these remote and dissonant tonicizations derive from Bach's intent to reflect the meaning of the chorale text in the music itself.

In summary, the main difference between a typical eighteenth century fugue and this chorale prelude is that the inversion of the subject and answer always follows like a shadow in a stretto. Next, even though the key signature indicates three flats, the piece starts with Bb major because the first phrase of cantus firmus is in Bb major, and the subject follows the cantus firmus. Example 8. The first phrase of cantus firmus (mm. 9- 10, mm. 15-18)
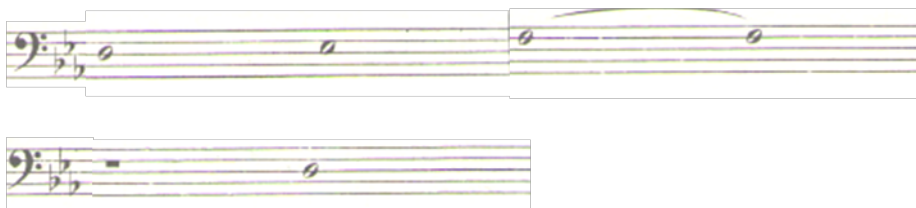
Finally, this chorale prelude is anchored to the cantus firmus, so Bach had to consider the text. An excellent examples of word painting can be found in the last phrase of the cantus firmus. The use of accidentals and sequence perfectly expresses the intense anguish requiring "mercy" suggested by the chorale text.

<center>Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr, BWV 676</center>

This chorale prelude is a two-voice fugue over a continuo bass which does not present subject entries. This piece incorporates a cantus firmus as well as fugal elements simultaneously. In addition, the subject and bass derive from the cantus firmus. This fugue incorporates paraphrase technique.[7]

Example 9. Cantus firmus



The text is below:

*Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr und Dank für seine Gnade,*

*Darum daß nun und nimmer mehruns rühten kann kein Schade.*

*Ein Wohlgefalln Gott an uns hat; nun ist groß Fried ohn Unterlaß,*

*All Fehd hat nun ein Ende.*

---

[7] Paraphrase technique: A restatement of an original melody by changing the melody or rhythm by adding or omitting parts of it.

To God alone on high be glory and thanks for His mercy,

since now and forever more no harm can touch us.

God is pleased with us, now there is great peace without cease;

all feuds have now an end.

Structurally, the piece has two expositions, three episodes, alternating with two

restatements, and a final entry.

Table 10. the whole structure (mm. 1-126)

| Exposition | Counter exposition | Episode | Restatement | Episode | Restatement | Episode | Reprise |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-32 | 33-65 | 66-77 | 78-91 | 92-99 | 99-107 | 108-114 | 114-126 |

Exposition (mm. 1-33)

In the exposition, the subject, the answer, and sometimes the countersubject are stated in

each voice. The key starts in G major and modulates to E minor, returning quickly to G major.

Table 11. Exposition (mm. 1-32)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Subject | Sop | mm. 1-4 |
| Answer | Alto | mm. 5-8 |
| Countersubject | Sop | mm. 5-9 |
| Subject with cantus firmus | Alto | mm. 12-15 |
| Subject in E minor | Alto | mm. 18-20 |
| Subject in G minor | Sop | mm. 26-28 |
| Inverted subject with cantus firmus | Sop | mm. 29-32 |

The subject, a paraphrase of the first phrase of the cantus firmus, is four measures long and has six groups of sixteenth notes. Later, the first two beginning notes are adjusted in each entrance, and sometimes, the subject appears in the form of inversion. This example contains six distinctive figures, identified as A, B,C, D, E, and F.

Example 10. The paraphrased subject, mm. 1-4
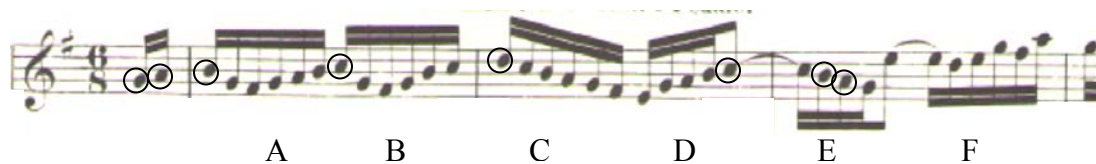


        A        B        C        D        E        F

The countersubject, which is played against the subject or answer above or below, appears consistently and can be seen having three distinct characteristics. First, it features rhythmically tied eighth notes in m. 5. Second, a running scale-like passage. Finally, there is a sequential progression in mm. 8-9.

Example 11. The countersubject, mm. 5-9



Under the countersubject, the answer begins in m. 5. This is an exact answer in the dominant key.

Example 12. The answer, mm. 5-8

The bass paraphrases the cantus firmus. However, it does not contain subject entries.

Example 13. The bass, mm. 1-4



In m.12, the subject is stated again in soprano with cantus firmus in alto.

Example 14. The subject and cantus firmus, mm. 12-15



In m. 18, the subject in E minor appears in the alto. The bass paraphrases the cantus firmus. From m. 21 to m. 25 is a short bridge returning to G major. In m. 26, the subject is stated again in G major. In mm. 30-32, Bach inverts the subject over the second phrase of the cantus firmus.

Example 15. The inverted subject with cantus firmus, mm. 30-32

The counter-exposition is a second exposition in the tonic key. However, the entries occur in a different order than in the first exposition, beginning with m. 33. The key scheme is the same as in the original exposition.

Table 12. Key scheme in counter-exposition (mm. 33-66)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Subject | mm. 34-37 | Alto |
| Answer | mm. 38-41 | Sop |
| Countersubject | mm. 38-42 | Alto |
| Subject with Cantus firmus | mm. 45-50 | Alto |
| Subject in E minor | mm. 51-53 | Sop |
| Subject in G major | mm. 59-61 | Alto |
| Inverted subject with Cantus firmus | mm. 62-66 | Alto |

This section starts with the fragment of subject in soprano, but the countersubject is stated in the alto. The answer appears in soprano (mm. 38- 40), and the countersubject appears in alto simultaneously. Compared to m. 5, the range of the countersubject is in the lower octave.

In mm. 41-44, there is a sequence. From m. 45, Bach gives the subject with cantus firmus.

Example 16. The subject with cantus firmus, mm. 45-48

From m. 47, the key modulates to E minor, and the subject appears (mm. 51-54) in the soprano. In the short bridge (mm. 54-58), the key returns to G major. Below the subject in G major (mm. 59-61), there is a paraphrase in the bass of the cantus firmus (mm. 59-61). In m. 63, the subject is inverted.

Example 17. Inverted subject with cantus firmus, mm. 63-65



Episode (mm. 66-77)

Mm. 66-77 is considered an episode because this section uses modulation as well as a fragment of the subject and has a constant sequence. The key modulates through G major-D major-A minor-D major-E minor- B minor-E minor-G major-A minor and back to G major. Most of the time, the episode includes Figures A, B and C (see example 9) from the subject, along with tied eighth notes, from the countersubject, used in sequence. Figures A and B appear in the same form as in the original, or inverted.

Example 18. Inversion, mm. 70-71



Restatement (mm. 78-91)

After the episode, the subject is stated again. The cantus firmus appears canonically.

Table 13. Canon (mm. 78-82, mm. 87-91)

| False entry with canonic cantus firmus | mm. 78-82 | Alto |
|---|---|---|
| Short bridge | mm. 83-86 | - |
| Cantus firmus canon at the octave | mm. 87-91 | Alto and Bass |

In mm. 78-91, there is a canon at the octave between the soprano and the bass with the cantus firmus, which appears in twice (mm. 78-82, mm. 87-91).

Example 19. Canon at the octave, mm. 78-82

Example 20. Canon at the octave, mm. 88-92



Episode (mm. 92-99)

In the second episode (mm. 92-99), a sequence between the upper two voices

predominates.  Figures A and B (example 10) are used as material for this episode. The key

moves through E minor-G major-A minor to G major.

Restatement (mm. 99-107)

Table 14. Subject and answer from the second phrase of cantus firmus (mm. 99-107)

| Subject from the second phrase  of cantus firmus | mm. 99-103 | Alto |
|---|---|---|
| Answer from the second phrase of  cantus firmus | mm. 104-107 | Sop |

In mm. 99-107, the second line of the cantus firmus appears twice, slightly embellished.

Example 21.  The second line of cantus firmus, mm. 99-103



Episode (mm. 108-114)

The short episode begins in m. 108, and features sequence. The key moves through A

minor-C major and G major.

Reprise (mm. 114-126)

In the final entry, the inverted subject appears twice while the cantus firmus is stated at the same time. The key returns to G major.

Table 15. Inverted subject and subject in stretto (mm. 114-126)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Inverted subject with the second phrase of cantus firmus | mm. 114-118 | Sop. |
| Inverted subject in with the first phrase of cantus firmus | mm. 119-122 | Alto |
| Subject in stretto | mm. 123-126 | Sop. and alto |

In mm. 119-122, the subject is inverted, and the cantus firmus appears in the soprano.

Example 22. The inverted subject with cantus firmus, mm. 119-122



The last appearance of the subject is shown with stretto at a distance of one measure between upper voices over a pedalpoint. The beginnings of two notes in left hand are adjusted.

Example 23. Stretto, mm. 121-126

Conclusion

This chorale prelude combines cantus firmus and fugal techniques, including the subject, the answer, and the countersubject. In the beginning, the subject notes are derived from the first phrase of the cantus firmus. However, the whole cantus firmus is stated both in the manual and the pedal (mm. 12-16, mm. 44-49, mm. 63-66, mm. 78-83, mm. 87-91, and mm. 115-122).

The first and second phrases of the cantus firmus are undecorated in the exposition (mm. 1-33) and counter-exposition (mm. 33-66). A note of the third phrase of the cantus firmus is changed (m. 81, second beat). The original melody has the note of "B", but Bach changed it to "G#", and makes a sequence with the melody of the fourth cantus firmus. The last phrase of the cantus firmus appears in the pedal. The second phrase and the last phrase are the same except for the beginning two notes. Bach repeats the second phrase of the cantus firmus in reprise because the text tells, "since now and forever more no harm can touch us." Bach seems to make clear God's eternal protection toward us. In many texted works, canon seems to suggest obedience. Is not the implication here that he who follows God is immune from harm?

The subject is derived from paraphrase technique. The texture is similar to a trio sonata, and only the manual parts engage in imitation. Similar to a typical fugue, this piece has an exposition and a counter-exposition. In the counter-exposition, the subject begins with alto, while the prior subject is placed in soprano.

Compared to a typical fugue, this chorale prelude often returns to the original key even in the middle sections because the cantus firmus is in a set key, so that most of its appearances do not modulate, although there are brief tonicizations derived from secondary dominants.

In typical episodes, the episode usually deals with sequence, canonic progression, or free imitation. This chorale prelude follows a similar usage of typical eighteenth-century episodes. It

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has three episodes, of which the first episode, beginning with mm. 66-77, demonstrates sequence between the manuals with a fragment of the subject. The second episode, mm. 92-99, has free imitation. In the third episode, the sequence is stated again. The inversion of the subject is stated in mm. 63-66, mm. 69-76, mm. 99-100, mm. 115-117, and mm. 119-122.

In the middle sections, the cantus firmus is stated in a canon at the octave between the manuals and the pedal, in mm. 78-83, and mm. 87-92. Bach seems to emphasize the text, "God is pleased with us, now there is great peace without cease." In the reprise, the last statement of the subject is stated in stretto over the pedalpoint.

In summary, Bach employs a variety of fugal techniques throughout the piece as he combines cantus firmus and paraphrased theme simultaneously in his usual intriguing methods.

<center>Wir glauben all einen Gott, BWV 680</center>

This chorale prelude is three-voice fugue with pedal accompaniment.   The original tune is from the Nicene Creed, which itself is very long. Bach paraphrased the subject melody from the two phrases of the Nicene Creed for this piece.

The text is below:

*Wir glauben all' an einen Gott,*

*Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden,*

*Der sich zum Vater geben hat,*

*Daß wir seine Kinder werden.*

*Er will uns allzeit ernähren,*

*Leib und Seel' auch wohl bewahren,*

*Allem Unfall will er wehren,*

*Kein Leid soll uns widerfahren;*

*Er sorget für uns, hüt't und wacht,*

*Es steht alles in seiner Macht.*

We all believe in one true God,

Who created earth and Heaven,

The Father, who to us in love

Has the right of children given.

He both soul and body feeds,

All we need He does provide us;

He thro' snares and perils leads,

Watching that no harm happens to us.

He cares for us day and night.

All things are governed by His might.

Structurally, this piece has one exposition, two episodes, alternating with two restatements, and a reprise.

Table 16. The whole structure (mm. 1-100)

| Exposition | Restatement | Episode | Restatement | Episode | Reprise |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-11 | 11-32 | 33-46 | 46-65 | 66-84 | 84-100 |

Exposition (mm. 1-11)

Table 17. Key scheme in exposition (mm. 1-11)

| Subject | Alto | D minor | mm. 1-4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Answer | Sop | D minor | mm. 2-6 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Countersubject | Alto | D minor | mm. 5-7 |
| Bridge | - | D minor | mm. 8-11 |

The subject is paraphrased from the first line of the chorale. The cantus firmus is below.

Example 24. Cantus firmus



Example 25. The subject, mm. 1-4.



The answer begins on the fifth scale step, and paraphrases the third line of the chorale.

Example 26. The answer, mm. 2-6.



Against the answer, the countersubject follows the subject.

Example 27. The countersubject, mm. 5-7.



The function of pedal is *basso ostinato*. It shows disjunctive intervals. Each entry of the pedal, D-A, F-C, G-D, opens with an ascending fifths in the same manner as the beginning two notes of the subject. In addition, this disjunct interval symbolizes a veritable ladder of faith.

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Example 28. Pedal ostinato, Mm. 4-9



Restatement (mm. 11-32)

Table 18. Key scheme in restatement (mm. 12-30)

| Subject | Alto | A minor | mm. 12-15 |
|---------|------|---------|-----------|
| Answer | Sop | A minor | mm. 13-17 |
| Countersubject | Alto | A minor | mm. 16-18 |
| Bridge | - | A minor | mm. 19-21 |
| Subject | Alto | G minor | mm. 21-25 |
| Answer | Sop | C minor | mm. 23-26 |
| Subject | Tenor | F major | mm. 25-29 |
| Countersubject | Sop | F major | mm. 28-30 |

In m. 12, the subject is suggested in the dominant of D Dorian.

Example 29. The subject in dominant, mm. 12-15
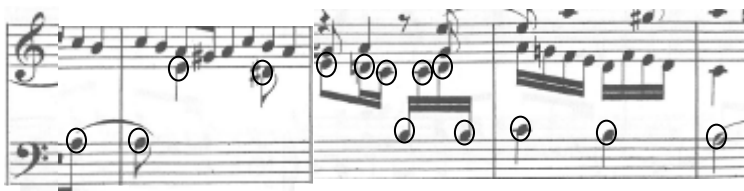


In m. 21, the third entry begins in G minor, but it modulates to F major, mm. 21-23, and

mm. 23-25 have stretto between subjects.

From m. 33, the sequential progression begins. After a sequence, the fourth pedal ostinato appears and new materials appear in both hands.  The sequential progression in mm. 33-39 reappears in the middle of second episode (mm. 66-70).

Restatement (mm. 46-65)

Table 19. Subjects and countersubject (mm. 46-63)

| Subject | Sop. | F major | mm. 46-50 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subject | Sop. | C major | mm. 50-54 |
| Subject | Sop. | D minor | mm. 54-58 |
| Subject | Tenor | G minor | mm. 58-62 |
| Countersubject | Sop. | G minor | mm. 61-63 |
| Bridge | Not applicable | G minor | mm. 64-65 |

The sequence appears over running figures. The tonality moves through F major, Bb major, G minor, C major, A minor, D minor, and G minor to C minor.

Example 30. Sequential progression, mm. 47-58

Right after the stretto ends, the subject appears without any answer or countersubject, but the pedal ostinato is stated.

Episode (mm. 66-84)

The subject appears without any answer or countersubject, but the fifth pedal ostinato appears. From m. 72, there are two types of sequential progression.  In the first progression, sequence materials come from the subject and the second progression uses pedal ostinato. The disjunct figure moves into the left hand.

Example 31. Sequence, mm. 72-75.

Example 32. Sequence, mm. 77-80.



Reprise (mm. 84-100)

Table 20. Subject and answer in reprise (mm. 84-100)

| False entry | Alto | A minor | Mm. 84-88 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Answer | Sop. | A minor | Mm. 86-89 |
| Subject | Alto | D minor | Mm. 89-92 |
| Final passage | - | D minor | Mm. 93-100 |

After the episode, the final entry (mm. 84-100) begins with a false entry in the alto. The last subject appears in the alto, in m. 89, and then the last subject is stated to the alto.

Example 33. False entry and the subject, mm. 84-89



False entry

Conclusion

This chorale prelude is a three-voice fugue with basso ostinato. The subject is paraphrased from the first phrase of the cantus firmus. The pedal motive is stated six times throughout the piece. In the exposition and final entry, the pedal ostinato plays in D minor, while in other sections, new keys are presented. In first restatement, mm.11-32, the motive starts in A

minor.  In the second restatement, mm. 46-65, the bass is stated in G minor. In the first episode, mm. 33-46, the basso continuo plays in C major, and in the second episode, mm. 66-84, the left hand substitutes for the pedal.

Despite the D Dorian key signature, the piece takes on a D minor feeling in the beginning and ending. Tonally, as with the other typical fugues, the music moves to closely related keys. Furthermore, the length of each tonal area is identical. The original passage in D minor is eleven measures long. The sections in A minor, mm. 12-18, and mm. 84-89, are each eleven measures long; and the sections in G minor, mm. 21-25, and mm. 58-63, are each eleven measures long.

Similar to the *Well-Tempered Clavier* fugues, the subject and countersubject are stated, and between restatements, the episodes are filled with sequences. Especially in mm. 72-75 and mm. 77-80, the fragment of subject is used as sequential progression. In the final measures, the last statement of the subject is stated with the pedal ostinato.

In summary, this chorale prelude combines fugal techniques, with basso ostinato. The subject, the answer, and the countersubject are stated in various keys. In addition, this piece paraphrases the cantus firmus, but uses only the first phrase, "We all believe in one true God." In the Nicene Creed, this text is the most essential, and Bach would have known this.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

For a better understanding of structure and its implications for performances, a

contrapuntal analysis is indispensable. Traditionally, scholars have focused on the relationship

between the chorale text and Bach's response in the *Clavierübung III*.  It is important to

investigate the issues linked to the chorale text, but if one adds a contrapuntal analysis, it will

provide a rich understanding of *Clavierübung III* and other large chorale preludes.

The general structure of the three examples chosen for discussion follows the layout of

the typical eighteenth-century fugue. All three chorale preludes have expositions, restatements,

episodes, and reprises. According to George Oldroyd,[8] the typical style of an episode deals with

sequence including *Fortspinnung*[9] and canonic progression or free imitation. In addition,

augmentation, diminution, inversion, pedalpoint, stretto, canon, fragmentation, permutation, or

even a false entry could occur.

The first chorale prelude, *Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist* BWV 671, has four restatements,

three episodes, and a reprise. The first and second episodes, mm. 14-17, mm. 24-28, consist of

sequence and the third episode, mm. 32-47, is similar to the first episode. The imitation can be

found in m. 52 between soprano I and soprano II.

The second chorale prelude, *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 676, has a counter-

exposition, two restatements, alternating with three episodes, and a reprise. This chorale prelude

follows a format of a typical eighteenth-century fugue. It has three episodes, and the first episode,

beginning with mm. 66-77, features a sequence between manuals with a fragment of subject. The

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[8] George Oldroyd. *The Technique and Spirit of Fugue* (London: Oxford U. Press, 1977), 22-28.

[9] The word comes from a German term meaning "figure extension."

second episode, mm. 92-99, highlights free imitation. In the third episode, the sequence is stated again. The octave canon is stated between manual and pedal in mm. 78-83 and mm. 87-92.

In the third chorale prelude, *Wir glauben all einen Gott* BWV 680, there are two restatements, two episodes, and a reprise. The episode is filled with sequence. Especially in mm. 72-75 and mm. 77-80, a fragment of the subject is used as sequential progression.

In summary, these three chorale preludes combine fugal techniques with cantus firmus quoted literally or in paraphrase. Canons were sometimes used. Strettos, sequential progression, and imitation appear throught. To express textual meaning, Bach used accidentals to create discordant harmony especially when heard in the tuning of the early eighteenth century. The first chorale prelude, *Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist* BWV 671, uses a cantus firmus in the pedal part, while *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 676 states the cantus firmus in manuals. In *Wir glauben all einen Gott* BWV 680, the cantus firmus does not appear literally.

In performance, such understanding of the  contrapuntal procedures will enable the performers in communicating the structure of these complicated pieces. The performer should thereby consider sensitive adjustments of phrasing, articulation, and sectionalization in order to make counterpoint more understandable to listeners. Several examples will illustrate these concepts.

In the chorale prelude, *Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist,* BWV 671, the inverted subject is stated in mm. 48-51. However, this subject is in the tenor, so the performer could easily be unaware of this entrance. In this case, the performer should be aware of each entry, and give either a small articulation or accent.

Example 34. Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist, mm. 48-51
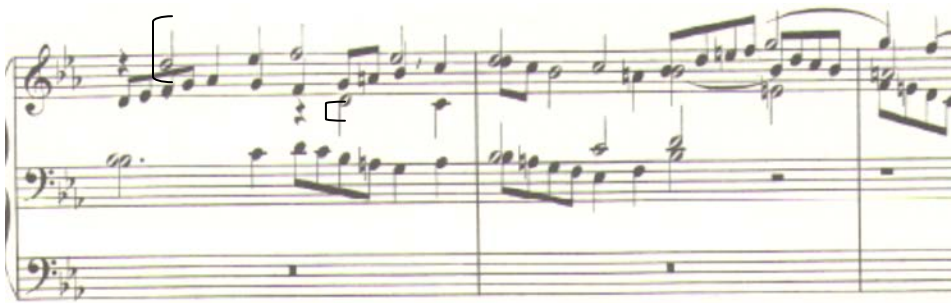


In the second chorale prelude, *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 676, a performer might fail to perceive the subject because he is too often preoccupied by the continuous line of sixteenth notes. For example, in m. 26, soprano, the first two notes of the subject are changed, and the subject is stated right after the sixteenth-note progression.

Example 35. Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr, mm. 26-29

In this case, the subject cannot be recognized easily. Therefore, the performer might slightly accent and detach the beginning note of the subject from the previous chain of sixteenth notes so the listener can detect the subject entrance.

In the case of inversion, the performer should be aware of its presence. In m. 63, the inversion appears in the left hand under the cantus firmus in the right hand. If the performer gives a small accent to the beginning note of the subject, the subject could be more easily heard.

Example 36. Inverted subject, mm. 62-65



In highlighting canonic progression, the performer should make a small articulation before the canon enters.

Example 37. Canon at the octave, mm. 88-92

When the subject is stated in an inner voice, a performer might miss it. In *Wir glauben all einen Gott,* BWV 680, the subject is hidden in m. 21. In this case, the player should lift the fingers and make a small articulation in order to express the subject clearly.

Example 38. Hidden subject in *Wir glauben all einen Gott*, mm. 18-23



For most cases, in performance, the player should recognize each entrance, and clarify these entrances as much as possible. Sensitive performers will draw out the subject from the complicated counterpoint, and allow listeners to grasp the contrapuntal structures.

These three chorale preludes show a diversity of fugal and canonic techniques in the chorale prelude genre. This study of the *Clavierübung III* chorale preludes exists so organists may become aware of the very sophisticated contrapuntal relationships existing among the parts, and deepen their understanding of these rich contrapuntal textures.

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