

WTC I/12 in F minor – Prelude

This prelude is truly intriguing. There are, or so performing pianists try to convince us, three quite different approaches to its interpretation.

- a) The melodic intensity in the 16th-note lines may compel concentration on them as primary features of the composition.

Musical score for approach a) showing the first two measures of the prelude. The treble clef staff features a dense, continuous 16th-note melodic line, while the bass clef staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes.

- b) The almost uninterrupted quarter-note pulse may elicit an interpretation of the piece as a metrically determined composition conveying a meditative character.

Musical score for approach b) showing the first two measures of the prelude. The treble clef staff features a steady, uninterrupted quarter-note pulse, while the bass clef staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes.

- c) The frequent recurrence of the figure introduced in m.1 in the soprano and the near-consistent 4-part writing hint at an “invention.”

Musical score for approach c) showing the first two measures of the prelude. The treble clef staff features a 4-part texture with the melodic figure from the first measure repeated in the soprano part, while the bass clef staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes.

The examples above give an idea of what exactly is at stake. In view of these choices, performers obviously face a host of interesting decisions: melodic intensity, texture, coloring, and tempo, to name just a few, will be different in each of the three cases.

The first harmonic progression concludes at m. 2₃. In it, the subdominant as an inverted seventh chord falls on m. 2₁ and the dominant, as an inverted ninth chord, on m. 2₂. In terms of an “invention,” this cadence coincides with the end of the motif, which has been presented over a bass pedal, and thus does not define a structural section. The larger harmonic progression ends at m. 9₁ in A \flat major, the relative major key. An explicit closing formula in mm. 8-9 suggests a significant caesura.

There are altogether four sections in this prelude:

I	mm. 1-9	i - III	F minor to A \flat major
II	mm. 9-12	III - V	A \flat major to C major
III	mm. 13-16 ₃	V - I	C major to F minor, ending with an interrupted cadence on a D \flat bass
IV	mm. 16-22	I	confirmation of F minor

Three of the sections constitute closed harmonic progressions while the fourth ends in an interrupted cadence that can only be ascertained as structurally relevant because of its obvious correspondence: the beginning of the prelude recurs as a seeming recapitulation that then turns elsewhere (mm. 1-2₃ \approx 16₃-17). This is the only structural analogy in the prelude.

The choice of tempo, dynamics, and articulation depends largely on the performer's interpretation of the prelude type.

- a) Performers who feel that the message of the composition is conveyed primarily by the 16th-notes will want to play in a tempo slow enough to allow these note values to develop full melodic power. In this case, the main concern is with the arabesque-like lines winding through all voices. They will require careful and expressive shaping endowed with all shades of emotional quality. Care must be taken to ensure the constant flow of one voice into the next. As for the articulation, the calm character requires that notes contributing on any level to the melodic fabric be played legato, and only cadential-bass patterns and consecutive leaps be non legato. However, since the first note in several of the leaps is at the same time a quarter-note in another voice and therefore cannot be shortened (see, e.g., the notes in B: mm. 4_{1,2} and 5_{1,2}), the few eighth-notes that actually sound detached appear above all in the context of cadential formulas (B: mm. 6, 8-9, and 11-12) or in similar bass lines (B: mm. 9-10, 13).
- b) Performers who wish to express a meditative character by focusing on the continuous quarter-note pulse will want to choose a faster tempo so as to gear the listeners' attention to the metric feature rather than the surface details. In this case, all emphasis will be on the four beats in each measure, which will then be perceived as a regular rocking motion with a rather low-key melodic intensity. The 16th-notes (and to a lesser degree the eighth-notes) will be treated as purely ornamental and played with an extremely light touch, like delicate lace-work behind a more solid lattice work. As for the articulation, all quarter-notes and eighth-notes will have to be gently detached.

- c) Performers who decide to draw on the inherent structural features and interpret the prelude as an invention can choose any tempo as long as this allows for the thematic figures to be perceived as units. In this case, the interpretation will emphasize a dynamic shading that distinguishes clearly between the different components of the material, giving most intensity to the main motif and its possible companion, less to any other recurring figures, and least to all other passages. In terms of the articulation, either of the two approaches explained above is possible, depending on whether the 16th-notes are regarded, and played, (a) as essentially melodic or (b) as ornamental figurations.

There are four kinds of ornaments, all appearing within the first ten measures. The symbol embellishing the counter-motif (i.e., the main motif's regular contrapuntal companion as introduced in S: mm. 2-3) denotes a long trill that begins on the upper neighboring note, moves in 32nd-notes, and ends in the suffix as indicated by Bach. This ornament recurs three times in the course of the prelude, on the fourth beats of mm. 3, 4, and 10. The symbol in m. 5 also designates a note-filling ornament. It begins on the main note and, including a suffix its five notes, appears like a turn. The trill in m. 8 lacks a resolution—both rhythmically (since it does not fill the time up to the next strong beat) and with regard to pitch (since the resolution note A does not materialize until after three intermittent notes). This is thus a short ornament, a mordent that, launched from the upper neighbor, comprises one double shake. Similarly, the trill on the middle beat of m. 10 is a “point d'arrêt trill.” Approached stepwise and thus starting on the main note, it comprises five notes, stopping with noticeable separation from the following 16th-note.

As any description of a composition sets out from a premise as to what the distinguishing features are, the F-minor prelude allows for three fairly different descriptions, depending on the three choices outlined above.

- a) If the prelude is regarded as a melodically oriented piece, the features that determine the performance will all be sought in the 16th-note lines. Within the first nine-measure section there is an initial curve in which the focus is entirely on the upper pitches and the climax falls on the prolonged D_b on the downbeat of m. 2, with a subsequent diminuendo up to the middle beat of the same measure. This curve is followed by the first of many embellished parallels (see mm. 2₃-3, S: A_b-B_b-C and T + B: F-G-A_b). These parallel ascents, different in detail but joined in their general outline, are sequenced twice (see mm. 3₃-4 and 4₃-5) and create a gradual

crescendo. In mm. 5-6₃, the tension decreases slightly as all melodic figures point downward (see in the soprano the central notes C-B_b, in the alto the descending sequence, and in the bass the target notes B_b, preceded by its leading-note A₄, and A_b, preceded by cadential steps). The extended parallel ascent in mm. 6₃-7₃, in which all four voices participate, then provides an even more intense increase of tension, which peaks on the syncopated high F, relaxing afterward toward the cadential close on m. 9₁.

The second section is distinguished from the first by a much higher portion of highly emotional intervals. The recurrence of the hidden parallels (mm. 10-11) prepares the ascent to the climax in m. 11₃, after which the successive pairs of leading-note + resolution in m. 12 bring about a prompt relaxation (see alto: B-C, F_#-G; tenor: B-C; alto: F-E; tenor: F-E). The ensuing 3½ measures of the third section contain two tension-curves: a gentle one in mm. 13-14 and a slightly steeper one beginning with the last 16th-notes in m. 14, climaxing in m. 15₂, and ending in the interrupted cadence. The fourth section begins with a dynamic curve identical to that at the beginning of the piece. Its descent, however, is extended all the way to the end of m. 18. A final curve (short increase and longer decrease) concludes the prelude on a soft note.




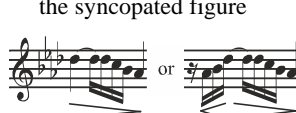
In the overall design, the moments of highest tension are at the end of the first section (where the drive is greatest in the extended parallel) and at the beginning of the second section (where the interval intensity is highest). As this interpretation renders the 16th-note motion as an uninterrupted line to which all voices contribute in complementing manner, no melodic phrasing occurs.

- b) If the prelude is regarded as a metrically oriented piece, the features determining the performance will be sought in the quarter-notes. The focus in the texture now tends toward the lower voices, and all dynamic inflections are of a delicate nature. Within the initial section, a first gentle curve with a climax in the middle of m. 1 is followed by sequencing one-measure groups. As the bass in these groups falls ever further, a gradual diminuendo results. This leads to a state of floating weightlessness in the measure where the quarter-note motion is temporarily suspended (see mm. 5₃-6₃). The subsequent extended ascent leads to a slightly more pronounced climax on the downbeat of m. 8, followed by a relaxation through the cadential close.

The two sections that build the middle of the composition are less regular in their pulse, featuring several passages in which quarter-notes are interspersed with half-note beats (see the first halves of mm. 9, 10, and 12 as well as the second half of m. 14). This impairs the effect of meditative calm that prevails in the outer sections.

The soothing continuity of the quarter-note beats is restored with the interrupted cadence and not broken again before the prelude ends. Dynamic increases and decreases are even more subdued in this section than in the preceding ones, concluding the composition in a state of complete calm.

- c) If the prelude is regarded as a structurally oriented piece with the outline of an invention, the focus will be on the components of the thematic material. These components are introduced within the initial two measures. The example shows the components, in the order of their importance in the composition, with their inherent dynamic shape:

<p>the main motif</p> 	<p>its regular companion</p> 
<p>the relaxing link</p> 	<p>the syncopated figure</p> 

The main motif appears eleven times, more often than not with a variation of its end. These are its statements: (ext = extended, var = varied; inv = inverted)

m. 1	S	mm. 6-7 _{ext}	T	mm. 13-14 _{var}	T
mm. 2-3	T	mm. 9-10 _{var}	T	mm. 15-16 _{inv}	B
mm. 3-4	T	mm. 10-11	T	mm. 16-17	S
mm. 4-5	T	m. 13 _{var}	S		

In four of these eleven statements (mm. 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, and 10-11), the motif is accompanied by its regular companion. On two other occasions (mm. 6-7 and, in inversion, mm. 15-16), it comes with a varied version of the stepwise ascent characterizing the companion. The syncopated figure (mm. 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, and 17) and the relaxing link (mm. 2, 3, 5, 5-6, 12, 15, 17, 18 [2x]), 19 [2x]), and 21 [2x]) account for much of the remainder of the piece.

The first section is thematically dense, with main-motif entrances in almost every measure and, after a short relaxation in mm. 5-6, an extended quotation of the motif in the left-hand part. The two sections that form the prelude's center feature thematic measures interspersed with cadential or imperfect closes. The final section provides a liquidation of the thematic material. In this structurally oriented interpretation, this liquidation together with the extended pedal bass determines this last section as an overall relaxation in which the pitch curve in mm. 19-20 plays only a subordinate role.

WTC I/12 in F minor – Fugue

The subject of this fugue spans three measures. It begins on the second beat of a 4/4 measure with three quarter-notes suggesting a long upbeat. Its ending is defined by the return to the keynote after the half-note G that represents the dominant. With regard to phrase structure, two views are theoretically possible: The subject can be regarded as a single phrase or as consisting of a main body (comprising the first six quarter-notes) followed by an “afterthought” (the descent from B \flat to F). As this mostly chromatic “afterthought” may not appear quite substantial enough to represent a subphrase of its own, the most convincing concept is a combination of the two ideas. In it, the paramount buildup and decline of tension take place within the first six notes, followed by a mere extension of the dynamic decrease in the remaining descent.

The pitch outline is most intriguing. Beginning from the elevated position of the fifth scale degree, the stepwise motion touches first the natural leading-note *above* C (i.e., the minor sixth D \flat), then the artificial leading-note *below* C (i.e., the raised fourth B \sharp). This triggers an unusual step: not only is the expected resolution to the leading-note omitted, but what is more, the interval that follows, while looking like nothing more special than a perfect fourth, is in fact located entirely outside the F-minor scale. To top it all, its target is yet another leading-note (the raised seventh leading up to the keynote) followed by its resolution F. The ensuing descent seems to pick up from the recently heard B \sharp and continues through three chromatic steps before falling onto the lower F.

Within the subject itself, the rhythm consists only of quarter-notes and one half-note. However, a cursory glance beyond the boundaries of the first subject statement reveals that throughout the fugue, eighth-notes and 16th-notes abound, as do tie prolongations.

The subject's harmonic background is unusual in that it sets off from the dominant, reaches the tonic for the first time in the middle of m. 2 and only then continues in an ordinary subdominant/dominant/tonic progression. Another extraordinary feature in the harmonic outline is the fact that the first steps (the ones melodically approaching the leading-notes to C) are both composed as interrupted cadences: the dominant (i.e., the implicit harmony below the initial C) proceeds not to the tonic F minor but to D_b major; the ensuing F⁷ chord (i.e., the implicit harmony below the next C), which one expects to move into B_b minor, leads instead into a G⁷ chord.

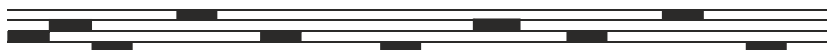
In his very thorough two-volume work *Analyse des Wohltemperierten Klaviers*, Ludwig Czaczkes takes into account all transitory harmonies created by the counter-subjects. Here is the full harmonization of the subject as Czaczkes conceived it, followed by a Roman-numeral analysis:

The image shows a musical score for a piano accompaniment of a subject in F minor. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bass clef staff contains the harmonic accompaniment, with Roman numeral analysis written below it. The analysis is: V vi i⁷ V/V V⁷ i iv i V⁷ i.

The dynamic outline should mirror the melodic and harmonic particularities. Beginning on the exposed fifth degree requires a slightly elevated tension in the first note. The ensuing steps toward the natural leading-note and on to the artificial leading-note create a powerful increase. Next, the extra-scalar fourth interval that reaches the third leading-note represents the apex of this dynamic curve. (For any wind or string instrument, the climax would be between the two notes B₂ and E₂—a solution that is not, unfortunately, open to keyboard players.) The resolution onto the keynote F brings such a relief after all these daring harmonic twists that it involves an almost complete decrease of tension. What little is left will abate gradually through the chromatic descent.

The 58-measure fugue comprises only ten subject statements:

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|---------------|---|
| 1. mm. 1-4 | T | 6. mm. 27-30 | B |
| 2. mm. 4-7 | A | 7. mm. 34-37 | A |
| 3. mm. 7-10 | B | 8. mm. 40-43 | T |
| 4. mm. 13-16 | S | 9. mm. 47-50 | S |
| 5. mm. 19-22 | T | 10. mm. 53-56 | B |



The subject undergoes only minimal variations. The adjustment of the initial interval in the tonal answer occurs only once, and the final note is only once delayed by a tie-prolongation. No parallels or strettos are used. However, Bach invents three counter-subjects of very distinct character.

CS1 is introduced against the second subject entry in mm. 4-7. It consists of five subphrases, thus creating the greatest possible structural contrast to the subject. The predominant note value is the 16th-note, another major contrast to the subject and its prevailing quarter-notes. The first subphrase of CS1 (see T m. 4: F-G-A \flat -A \flat -B \flat -C) presents a slight increase in tension. This is separated from the remainder of the counter-subject by a leap of a minor ninth, thus launching a completely new rise in tension. The second to fifth subphrases follow as sequences ascending toward a peak (and dynamic climax) on the syncopated C.

CS2 is first heard against the third subject statement in mm. 7-10. The first of its three subphrases comprises four eighth-notes, with a gentle climax on C. The second begins almost like a partial sequence (F-E \flat -D in mm. 7-8 can be heard as a sequence of C-B \flat -A \flat in m. 7), with the stronger climax on its first note F and an extended descent to the lower F (the rest is tension-sustaining and does not indicate phrasing, as in CS1). A third small subphrase ascends to a mild climax on the dotted B \flat before relaxing throughout the last three notes.

CS3 only manifests twice. First heard in its expected place against the fourth subject entry, it begins later than any of the other counter-subjects (see the upbeat to m. 14), ascends in a gradual sweep interspersed with tension-sustaining eighth-note rests, climaxes on D \flat , and resolves shortly thereafter. The music example shows the contrapuntal play of the primary thematic material as it is found in mm. 13-16:

The musical score displays four staves for measures 13-16. The top staff, labeled 'S', is the Subject in the treble clef. The three lower staves, labeled 'CS1', 'CS2', and 'CS3', are counter-subjects in the bass clef. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 3/4. The Subject is a simple melodic line. CS1 is a highly rhythmic line of sixteenth notes. CS2 is a more active line with eighth notes and sixteenth notes. CS3 is a line of eighth notes with rests. The score includes phrasing slurs and dynamic markings like accents and a fermata over the final note of CS1.

The further development of the counter-subjects includes several irregularities that may make a convincing rendition of their phrase structure and dynamic design difficult. The two most confusing details are the crossover of voices¹ and the swapping of sub-phrases.²

The F-minor fugue contains eight subject-free passages.

E1	mm. 10-13	E5	mm. 37-40
E2	mm. 16-19	E6	mm. 43-47
E3	mm. 22-27	E7	mm. 50-53
E4	mm. 30-34	E8	mm. 56-58

No episode is related to the subject. Instead, all seem to derive, in one way or another, from the first counter-subject. It is helpful to distinguish two main types of episode in this fugue: E1 is dominated by a motif that uses the first subphrase of CS1 and continues with a segment from CS2 (A mm. 10₃-11 ≈ T mm. 8₃-9₁: a quarter-note followed after a 16th-note tie or rest by a descent in 16th-notes). The CS1-segment is imitated in the bass with a new ending, partly doubled by the tenor. The ensuing measures sound like descending sequences.³ This episode recurs in exchanged voices and with some variation in E4. Here, the bass is the leading voice, imitated by the tenor, while the soprano adds an extended parallel to the descent.

¹After the middle beat in m. 7, the tenor interval A_♭-F crosses over the descending alto leap F-E; they regain their normal position in the middle of m. 8. In m. 13 immediately after the middle beat, the same tenor interval moves the voice into what seems like alto position; when the alto comes in with the upbeat to m. 14, it does so considerably lower than the tenor; they recoup their ordinary places with the fourth beat of m. 14. In mm. 29₂-30₃, soprano and alto cross. In mm. 47-48, there is such a gap between soprano and alto that one easily mistakes the alto for a lower voice. When the tenor comes in an octave above the alto, the confusion is complete. However, the voices disentangle on the last beat of m. 48.

²In m. 19, the alto begins with the first subphrase of CS1 but carries on with the remainder of CS2 (which, on top of everything else, involves an octave displacement on m. 21₂). At the same time, the soprano (after having set off, in m. 19, with notes not belonging to the primary material) takes over CS1, which the alto had abandoned, and concludes it properly. In mm. 27-30, the tenor quotes CS1 but reduces its ninth leap to a simple second. The alto presents the first subphrase of CS2 (see G-C-B_♭-A_♭), continues with notes aping the large leap missed out by the tenor, and from the middle beat onward finds itself in CS3. The soprano, after three non-consequential notes, completes the interrupted CS2. In mm. 34-37, the first subphrase of CS1 is heard in inversion in the tenor, while the remainder sounds in the soprano. The final trill is prevented by a tied note, the resolution avoided altogether. In mm. 47-50, CS2 appears in the (alto-positioned) tenor, deprived of its first subphrase and with a varied ending. Similarly, the CS1 statement beginning in the alto is allowed neither its ninth leap nor its final trill, which is substituted by a written-out figure-work.

³There is no way to make the actual notation heard, which has alto and tenor inverted; this fact would therefore appear inconsequential for the interpretation.

E6 also relies on the same material; this time, the alto takes the lead. (Here Bach strings the motif to its sequence by filling the phrasing space with an additional 16th-note; see the *D*; after the middle beat of m. 44.) The imitation is presented in the bass, with soprano and tenor accompanying.

A second episode-type is established in E2. Here the initial impulse is given in the soprano by a three-note figure that quotes only half of the first CS1 subphrase. A counterpart enters with the bass, which derives its figure from the inversion of the same first CS1 subphrase (the extension bends back upward). The texture is completed by the imitation of the bass figure, sounding in the alto, with the extension of the inverted CS1 subphrase continuing downward. As in the first episode-type, this one-measure model is also sequenced twice (mm. 16-17 \approx 17-18 \approx 18-19). This episode recurs in the first half of E3 (mm. 16-19 \approx 22-25). Here, the leading voice is the alto (which is not at all easy to convey under the parallel soprano). Its main counterpart sounds in the tenor, with the imitation in the soprano. The second half of this episode is based on the same material but uses it freely. E7 is another episode to follow the model of this second episode-type. The texture is very similar to that found in E2; the soprano is in the lead, while the lowest voice, here the tenor, sounds the counterpart and its imitation appears in the alto (mm. 16-19 \sim 50-53).

The two remaining episodes, E5 and E8, do not follow either of these models. E5 features a figure derived from the first subphrase of CS1 (see bass m. 37, sequenced in m. 38, and m. 39, sequenced in 40). The other two voices involved in this episode recall the tied-quarter-note-plus-3/16-note figure from CS2, matched here with free extensions. E8 features a measure presenting nothing but this CS2 segment in four-part texture, followed by two cadential measures.

The role played by each episode in the dynamic outline of this fugue is determined mainly by their ascending or descending sequence patterns. Descending sequences are found in E1, E4, and E8. Episodes that embark on a relaxation before suddenly turning into a final crescendo are E3, E5, and E6, while in both E2 and E7, the ascending motion dominates.

Both the complexity of the rhythmic pattern in this fugue and the high degree of intensity expressed in the interval structure indicate a rather calm basic character. The tempo is confined by features inherent in the composition. On the one hand, the 16th-notes must be calm enough to allow for the expression of melodic intensity; on the other hand, the quarter-notes must convey the impression of stringent movement in order to be felt as the relevant pulse (instead of surrendering this task, as often happens, to the eighth-notes).

The articulation that corresponds with this character requires legato in all melodic parts. With regard to the components of the thematic material this means: All notes in the subject and its three counter-subjects are legato. Exceptions occur only where phrasing separates a note from the beginning of the next subphrase (this happens particularly in CS1 and CS2 after the first subphrases respectively). Non-thematic passages may feature consecutive skips or cadential-bass patterns, as in mm. 34-35, 40-41, and 43 (bass); these must be taken non legato. In the episodes, octave leaps and cadential steps in the lower part should be detached (see the bass in E1: C, C, D, etc.; similarly in E6; also in E3).

The relative tempo of the prelude to the fugue depends on which view is adopted regarding the prelude-type. (a) Performers who feel that the prelude's message is conveyed primarily by the 16th-notes may choose a simple proportion in which a quarter-note in the prelude corresponds to a quarter-note in the fugue. (b) Performers who wish to express a meditative character by focusing on the quarter-note pulse should choose the more complex proportion of 3:2, where three quarter-note beats in the prelude correspond to a half-note in the fugue, or six eighth-notes in the prelude equal a quarter-note in the fugue. (c) For performers who decide to draw on the inherent structural features and interpret the prelude as an invention, either of the two proportions is possible, depending again on how one perceives the prelude 16th-notes.

A last comment on this matter of tempo choice: One should not neglect that the tempo of the fugue, too, may vary depending on the character of the preceding prelude. Thus after a metrically oriented prelude in which the shortest note values served as mere lace-work, performers may want to give extra weight and melodic quality to the fugue's 16th-notes, playing it slightly more slowly than after a rendition of the prelude in which the short values were granted full expressive power. (Approximate metronome settings: (a) all beats = 66; (b) prelude beats = 84, fugue beats = 56.)

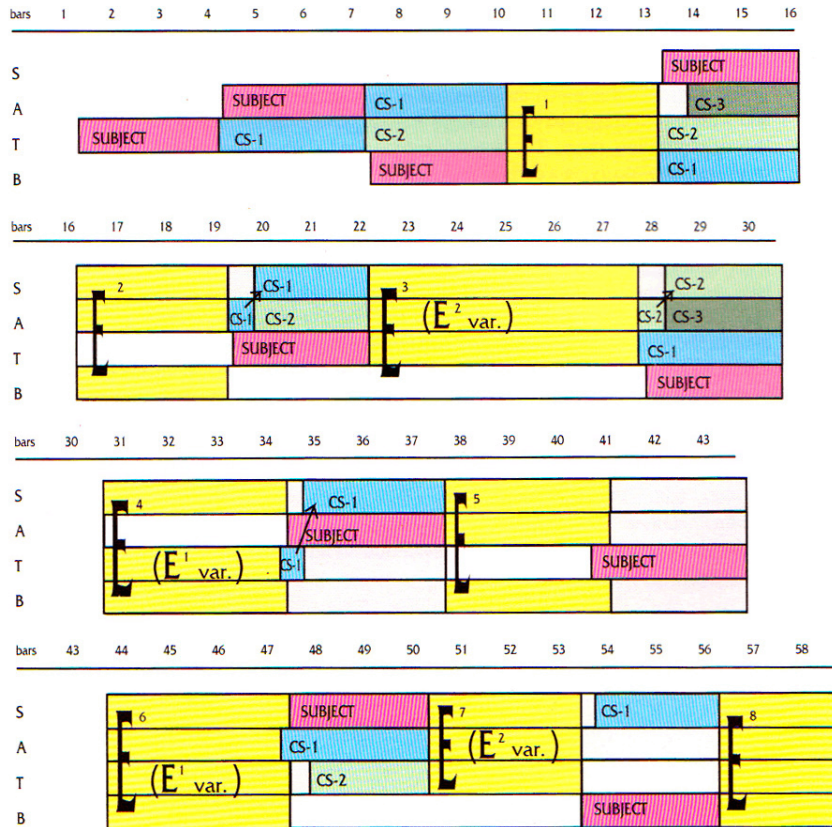
The fugue features two kinds of ornaments. One is part of the thematic material, marking the end of CS1. The others are cadential ornaments embellishing the final closing formula in mm. 57-58. The trill at the end of the counter-subject abides by the rules that apply to a trill in a primary component. As the note it ornaments resolves timely into the subsequent downbeat, this is a note-filling ornament. Having been approached in stepwise motion it begins on the main note, shakes in 32nd-notes, and ends with a suffix. As an integral part of the counter-subject, this trill must be transferred to mm. 9 (S), 30 (T), 15 (B), 55 (S), and 21 (S).

The two cadential ornaments are also note-filling trills. The one on the soprano's E begins on the main note, while the compound ornament in the tenor begins as indicated from below. Both then move in 32nd-notes and end in parallel suffixes.

The episodes in this fugue end in unusual ways. All of them close on an imperfect cadence, and several even present these as unresolved chords (see E1 in m. 13: F is suspended into a chord on C; similarly E2 in m. 19 and E3 in m. 27). This makes the episodes appear ill-suited as section endings. By contrast, a cadential pattern that conveys structural closure occurs in the context of a subject statement, at the end of the tenor entry in mm. 40-43. These observations suggest that in this composition, episodes are not conceived to round off preceding statements but rather to prepare ensuing ones. A further factor that may give hints regarding the structure of this fugue is Bach's use of the ensemble. Two subject statements appear in reduced ensemble (T: mm. 19-22 and S: mm. 47-50) and are therefore likely to mark section beginnings.

The harmonic progress through the subject statements is straightforward. The first six statements sound in the tonic area; four of them begin like the first entry on C, only two in the dominant position on F (tonal answer, m. 4) or G (real answer, m. 19). The seventh and eighth statements relate harmonically to the area of the relative major. The former (mm. 34-37) represents the tonic position of A \flat major but is harmonized with reference to F minor; the latter reads like the dominant of A \flat and ends accordingly. In the detailed steps of their harmonic progression, however, both are not in keeping with the subject's original harmonization. The two final subject statements return to the F-minor key, representing the dominant and tonic positions respectively.

The design of the fugue thus presents itself as follows: The two statements in reduced ensemble must be regarded as first statements in their respective sections. These two sections therefore begin with E2 (in m. 16) and with E6 (in m. 43). The latter section-beginning is confirmed by the explicit cadential-bass pattern at the end of the preceding statement. The two statements harmonically referring to the relative major belong together and form a section of their own. This section begins with E4 and ends with the cadential-bass steps in m. 43. Its two entries are further united by their harmonization of the subject, which deviates from the pattern established earlier in the fugue, and by the fact that the subject appears abandoned by its counter-subjects: CS2 and CS3 are entirely missing in both statements while CS1 occurs only against the first of these entries and is varied at both ends (see S: mm. 34-37).



Within the first section, the tension rises steadily from one subject entry to the next. An increasing density of the material, up to a texture that confronts the subject with three counter-subjects, supports an equally growing intensity. The episode preceding the fourth statement grants a transitory change of color along with a short relaxation, which is cut short by the full force of four thematic voices. The end of the section seems somewhat unresolved since a suspended G mars the final F-minor chord in m. 16. This creates an effect as if this section was strung, if only by a thin thread, to the subsequent one.

The second section begins with an episode of rising tension, causing its first statement to enter already on a somewhat elevated level. The ensuing episode generates a decrease of tension in its first half (up to the transitory

cadence to A_♭ major in m. 25) but then turns around and prepares for the next subject statement with a dynamic increase in mm. 26-27. This statement equals the final statement of the first section in the density of its material and, consequently, in its intensity. Its ending furnishes the long-expected perfect cadence in F minor which, this time, sounds unimpaired by any suspended voice.

The episode opening section III provides a more drastic change of color owing to the position of its material: the two motivic parts are in the bass and tenor, the alto pauses, and the soprano contributes only a parallel, without independent force of its own. This darker color is enhanced in the descending sequences. The episode linking this section's two entries is built similarly to that linking the two statements in the second section. Its first measures feature descending sequences, followed after a transitory cadence in E_♭ major (m. 39) by a last-minute preparation for the ensuing subject entry. The two statements themselves create much less tension than those in preceding sections: with regard to texture, because of the much lower density in thematic material; with regard to melody, because of the major sixth that is more neutral in its tendency than the strong minor sixth; and with regard to harmony, because their dissimilar harmonization omits all the most striking steps. The second entry—and with it the section—closes, as was mentioned before, in a definite cadence.

The fourth section begins with a four-part episode presenting three measures of high material intensity. This comes as a surprise after the preceding subject statement, which generated so little thematic motion around it. The sequences, and with them the tension, descend toward the middle of m. 46 but are followed by a most powerful, partly chromatic ascent in the three lower voices. To fulfill the expectations raised in this sudden crescendo, the soprano with the ensuing subject entry and the tenor with CS2 begin almost two octaves higher than they ended a little earlier. With the bass pausing, this creates a most striking shift and propels the tension up immediately. The linking episode in the middle of this section combines rising and falling tendencies, leaving the final subject entry as unprepared as was the last statement in the first section. This statement returns to the register in the center of the keyboard and to four-part texture but replaces two of its counter-subjects with syncopated appoggiaturas (see T mm. 53-54: C-B_♭, A_♭-G and A mm. 54-55: D_♭-C, G_♭-F). At the closure of this fugue, Bach thus substitutes thematic density with emotional urgency and creates a new kind of climax. The final episode can do nothing but gently resolve this cumulated tension.