

WTC I/13 in F# major – Prelude

This prelude is determined by two features: one rhythmic, the other thematic. The rhythmic pattern is established in m. 2 and continues, with only minor interruptions, through the entire piece. Its significant trait is a syncopated right hand figure omitting the beats given by the left hand line and thus creating a complementary rhythm. The thematic material is based on three components: (1) a six-note broken-chord figure ending in an iambic note repetition and regularly followed by an imitation, (2) a treble figure over a falling bass in the above-mentioned complementary rhythm, and (3) a cadential bass matched by a rhythmically varied closing formula in the upper voice (first heard in mm. 5₇-6₇). These thematic components follow one another but never oppose each other contrapuntally, as would be the case in a motivically determined piece of this period. In fact, the second and third components are presented exclusively in homophonic settings. Only the first component is polyphonic in nature.

The first cadence concludes on the downbeat of m. 4, with the lines continuing in both hands. The subsequent harmonic progression ends on the middle beat of m. 6. It encompasses a modulation to the dominant key, which is announced with the first appearance of the B# in m. 4. The cadence comes with an explicit cadential-bass pattern and an embellished version of a typical closing formula in the upper voice (see the ornamented version of C#—B#—C# in U: mm. 5-6). This close marks the end of the first section.

The F#-major prelude comprises six sections:

- I mm. 1-6₇ tonic to dominant
- II mm. 6₇-12₁ modulation to the tonic relative
- III mm. 12-15₇ modulation to the dominant relative
- IV mm. 15₇-18₇ modulation to the subdominant relative
- V mm. 18₇-24₇ modulation back to the tonic
- VI mm. 24₇-30 tonic confirmed

As there are only three components of thematic material in this piece, several portions sound reminiscent of one another. Genuine analogies, however, do not occur.

The choice of tempo is based on the understanding that the compound time signature does not designate the number of beats in a measure but only aims at facilitating reading. The pulse is in fact felt in 4/8 time, with

continuous triplets in each eighth-note. This eighth-note pulse should be moderately flowing. There are two equally possible solutions for the corresponding articulation. Under the assumption that the “flowing” quality prevails over the moderate mood, the non-syncopated longer values (i.e., the dotted eighth-notes) would be taken in gentle non legato while all other notes sound quasi legato. Conversely, performers who feel that this composition exudes calm beneath its ornate surface would want to play mainly legato. (This second option proves slightly more listener-friendly.) Both options demand a precise distinction between dotted eighth-notes forming part of the melodic bass line and others belonging to a cadential-bass pattern. Moreover, careful phrasing, particularly in the complementary-rhythm patterns, is essential to assure that lines “breathe.”¹

In the right hand, phrasing requires attention primarily in the passages in complementary rhythm. As each subphrase in these passages ends with a momentary interruption of the syncopated rhythm, the points of phrasing are not difficult to spot. But since the final note of these patterns often overlaps with the beginning of a closing formula, there are instances where no cut may be possible between the two components.²

The prelude features one regular ornament in connection with the first thematic component, the broken-chord figure ending in a note repetition. This ornament is indicated by different symbols throughout the fugue. It might, however, be preferable to decide in favor of one version and retain this in all cases. Transferring the trill to structurally analogous notes that appear unornamented is not appropriate in this piece since the notes to which this might apply (e.g., m. 2₁) double as new beginnings. At any rate, the trill is not note-filling since its resolution does not fall on the strong

¹From these two requirements results the following articulation in the bass line:

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| legato | mm. 1-3 (E#); phrasing before C#; legato mm. 3-5 (C#-C#) |
| non legato | in the cadential pattern mm. 5-6 |
| legato | mm. 7-10 (E#); phrasing before D#; legato mm. 10-11 (D#-D#) |
| non legato | in the cadential pattern mm. 11-12 |
| legato | mm. 12-14 (A#); non legato mm. 14 (A#)-15 |
| legato | mm. 16 (first half); non legato mm. 16 (C#)-17 |
| legato | mm. 19-20 (F#); phrasing before B |
| legato | mm. 20 (B)-21 (C#), phrasing |
| legato | mm. 21 (D#)-22 (G#); legato mm. 22 (F#)-23 (F#) (non legato also possible) |
| non legato | in the cadential pattern mm. 23 (A#)-24 (F#) |
| legato | mm. 24 (F#)-27 (tied C#); non legato up to the end. |

²The treble is phrased as follows: m. 4, after downbeat A#, m. 8, after middle beat F#, m. 10, after downbeat G#, m. 21, after middle beat F#, m. 29, after downbeat A#.

beat but is always both delayed and approached indirectly. This thematic ornament can be rendered as a mordent (as indicated in m. 1), in which case it includes four or—better—six notes whenever it begins on the upper neighbor note, as in all cases of note repetition, and five notes when it begins on the main note as in m. 12₁, or as a compound ornament (as indicated in m. 7), in which case it comprises eight notes, beginning always on the upper note, describing a turn to the lower neighbor and back to the main note, and ending with two trill pairs. The appropriate rhythmic position of this interrupted ornament is such that the point of interruption avoids any beat. The example shows two possible solutions for each version:



The initial section features all three thematic components. The broken-chord figure begins in the upper voice and is imitated in the lower voice. The complementary-rhythm figure consists of two segments with overlapping phrase endings (phrasing in U after m. 4₁, in L already after the third dotted eighth-note in m. 3). The closing formula begins in the right-hand part on the middle beat of m. 5, in the left-hand part on the second dotted eighth-note of the same measure. Harmonically this section describes a modulation from F# major to the dominant C# major.

In the second section, the three components appear with different emphasis. The broken-chord figure is merely transposed; the complementary-rhythm figure much extended. Two descending subphrases in the treble (see mm. 7₈-8₇, mm. 8₈-10₁) are accompanied in the lower voice by a single unphrased descent followed by an additional curve. The closing formula, however, is only represented by its bass part while the upper voice continues in the complementary-rhythm pattern. The harmonic progression leads from C# major to D# minor, the relative minor key of the tonic.

The third section is considerably shorter but features all components in compressed versions. It begins at m. 12₁ with the broken-chord figure in the bass, imitated in the treble before returning once more to the bass. The bass then gives way almost directly to an extended cadential pattern. In the treble, a little link precedes a very condensed complementary-rhythm figure followed by the complete closing formula. The structure of the fourth section is similar but even more compressed.

The fifth section begins with an extended imitative pattern of the broken-chord figure recalling the third section. This leads to an extended complementary-rhythm figure. This segment is reminiscent of the second section, especially in the ensuing cadential pattern in which the closing formula of the upper voice is omitted. The section returns to F# major, the prelude's home key.

The final section confirms the home key. The broken-chord figure is stripped here of both its ornament and its polyphonic reply. Instead, after a short quotation of the complementary-rhythm component, the broken-chord element is restated (L: m. 26) and followed by a short dominant pedal with non-thematic figures in the right hand part. The composition ends with the two subphrases of the complementary-rhythm figure over a non-melodic bass and the original closing formula, completed in the upper voice by a graceful, unaccented F#-major-chord descent.

WTC I/13 in F# major - Fugue

The subject of this fugue spans exactly two measures. It begins in m. 1 after an eighth-note rest and ends at m. 3₁. This downbeat marks the return to the tonic after the dominant-seventh chord represented by B, G#, and C# in the second half of m. 2. The subject's pitch outline is near symmetrical. While the first and last intervals are leaps, all notes in between move in steps. In the subject itself, the rhythmic pattern features eighth-notes, 16th-notes, 32nd-notes in the trill and its written-out suffix, and a quarter-note. Counter-subjects and episode motifs later add several types of syncopation. The overall effect is one of considerable variety in note values. The way in which the various rhythmic values in the subject are introduced is interesting to observe. The initial eighth-notes give way first to 16th-notes and then to the 32nd-notes of the trill. After this continuous acceleration, there is a sudden stop on the quarter-note—a halt that is even prolonged by the rest—before the initial eighth-notes return.

This rest in the center raises a question: does the gap in the sound flow signify an interruption of the tension or is the tension carried through the silence? The harmonic development reaches its climax at m. 2₁, which also marks the center in the symmetric patterns of pitch and rhythm. One may surmise that the comparatively long note value, enhanced by the ensuing rest, serves to sustain this climax before the subsequent stepwise descent. The subject thus consists of a single indivisible phrase.

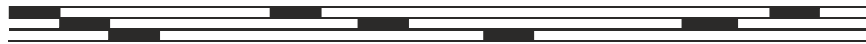
Although the harmonizations of the subject occurring throughout the fugue feature a number of intricate and varying progressions, it can be said that in its main steps, the harmonic background of the phrase is that of a simple cadential progression. The active step from the tonic to the subdominant (or, more frequently, its relative minor) takes place at m. 2₁, followed by the dominant in the second half of m. 2 and the tonic on the final note.



The subject's climax is thus ideally supported in all parameters: representing the subdominant harmony and a sudden rhythmic stop, it is composed as a kind of axis in a largely symmetric contour where the preceding pitches emphasize two rises (see the first leap C#-F# and the step from the trill C# to D#), while the ensuing tones perform two descents (see the falling line D#-C#-B-A#-G# and the final skip C#-A#).

The fugue comprises eight subject statements.

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| 1. mm. 1-3 | U | 5. mm. 15-17 | M |
| 2. mm. 3-5 | M | 6. mm. 20-22 | L |
| 3. mm. 5-7 | L | 7. mm. 28-30 | M |
| 4. mm. 11-13 | U | 8. mm. 31-33 | U |



The only modifications in the subject, both very common ones, occur at its beginning and end. The initial interval is adjusted in the first answer but never again thereafter, and the final interval is on two occasions (mm. 6-7 and 21-22) enlarged to a fifth to include a drop to the keynote. No stretto or parallel statements of the subject appear.

The two counter-subjects are of very different character and importance. CS1 is introduced against the second subject statement (see U: mm. 3-5). The first of its two subphrases begins with an ascending octave followed by a circling figure and a halt on a syncopation. The second subphrase is an extended transposition of the first, beginning with a longer preparation and closing with an additional do-si-do formula.³ The climaxes in the two subphrases could fall either on the analogous syncopations (this results in a somewhat saucy expression) or on the bottom of the curve before (on E# and A# respectively), thereby underpinning the tender mood of the counter-subject. The second subphrase, lower than the first, is softer overall.

³Cf. m. 3: F#-E#-F#-G#-D#-E#-F#-G# with mm. 3-4: D#-C#-D#-E#-B#...A#-B#-C#.)

Although CS1 is an almost constant companion to the subject, it undergoes significant modifications on its way through the fugue. Its initial interval, originally an assertive octave leap, becomes gradually smoother: reduced first to a seventh (m. 5: C#-B), then substituted by a three-note figure beginning with a fifth (m. 11: G#-C#-B), it is finally leveled to a stepwise figure (m. 15: A#-G#-F#; similarly in mm. 20 and 31). Moreover, CS1 also loses momentum at its end. In mm. 11-13, the last syncopated figure is replaced by a quarter-note and an appoggiatura that resolves belatedly after a tie suspension. In mm. 15-17 and 31-33, the second subphrase turns into a cadential-bass pattern, in mm. 20-21, CS1 is shortened to its first subphrase, and in mm. 28-29, it is entirely omitted.

The second counter-subject is normally expected as a companion to the third subject statement. However, the line appearing in the upper voice of mm. 5-7 turns into a rhythmic parallel of the subject. It is thus necessary to look further, to the ensuing subject entry in mm. 12-13, in order to find the true second counter-subject. CS2 begins belatedly half a measure after the subject. It is characterized by a rising scale interspersed with pairs of the repeated keynote. In keeping with this straight gesture in the ascent, the development of tension also depicts only a single direction: no subphrasing interrupts the continuous crescendo to the upper F#. This counter-subject is heard only three times altogether: after its introduction it recurs in U: mm. 20-22 and in U: mm. 28-30.

Another line that accompanies the subject twice and might, at a first glance, appear as a counter-subject occurs in U: mm. 15-17 and in M: mm. 31-33. Upon closer inspection one detects that its end is composed as a complement to the “CS1 turned cadential bass,” is actually making up, in free style, for the omitted syncopated figure at the end of the first counter-subject. This note group should therefore not be regarded as a primary component in its own right. The following sketch shows the phrase structure and dynamic design in the thematic material of this fugue.

The musical sketch consists of three staves labeled S, CS1, and CS2. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). The Subject (S) is in the treble clef, starting with a trill (tr) on the first note. CS1 is in the middle clef, starting with a quarter note followed by a syncopated figure. CS2 is in the bass clef, starting with a quarter note followed by a syncopated figure. The sketch includes dynamic markings such as 'tr' and 'or'.

The F#-major fugue comprises six subject-free passages:

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| E1 | mm. 7-11 ₃ | E4 | mm. 22-28 ₁ |
| E2 | mm. 13 ₃ -15 ₁ | E5 | mm. 30-31 ₃ |
| E3 | mm. 17-20 ₁ | E6 | mm. 33 ₃ -35 |

The cadential close in mm. 22-23₁ partitions E4, separating a short E4a from a much longer E4b. Of the remaining episodes, none is further subdivided. The material employed features components of the subject and of the counter-subjects as well as an independent episode motif.

- The subject appears, complete or represented by a segment, in all six episodes. It is quoted most completely in E2 and E5. In the upper voice of E2, the first four notes are a transposition of the subject's head, the fourth note has the value of a quarter-note followed by an eighth-note rest and is thus reminiscent of the climax in the subject, and the ensuing six eighth-notes constitute a free inversion of the subject's second half. The middle voice in this episode sets out as an imitation, then omits the climax portion and joins the end of the upper voice figure in parallel thirds. E5 is a transposition of E2, with the upper and middle voices inverted. Here the middle voice carries the more complete version of the subject and is thus leading, while the upper voice is second in importance (which is not easy to play). Another quotation of subject material appears as a bracket around the first episode: The head motif opens this episode in the lower voice, stating a rearrangement of the original pitches but retaining the eighth-note rhythm. The middle voice concludes this episode with the subject's second half, retained almost exactly in the shape of the original. The opening segment in its particular rearrangement of pitches recurs twice in the fugue: at the beginning of E3 (where it is sequenced; see L: mm. 17-18) and at the beginning of E6, where it is taken up faithfully. Finally, the subject's head alone in its original shape reigns in the largest portion of E4 where it is presented first in an imitative texture of upper and middle voice, then in a pattern of descending sequences in the lower voice.

Mcs2, a figure derived from CS2, is also found in all six episodes. However, while CS2 is characterized by a hidden two-part structure consisting of a complete ascending scale over a repeated pedal, the episode figure mostly plays with two moving lines and creates distinct little gestures of varying length. Mcs2 occurs as follows:

in E1 (U: m. 7, L: mm. 7-8, M: m. 8, L: mm. 8₃-10),⁴
 in E2 (L: mm. 13-14),
 in E3 (M: m. 17, U: mm. 17-18, L: mm. 18-20),
 in E4 (L: mm. 23-25₃, M: mm. 25-26, U: mm. 26-27, L: m. 28),⁵
 in E5 (L: m. 30), and
 in E6 (U: mm. 33-34, L: m. 34, M: mm. 34-35).

M1 is an independent episode motif that occurs only in E1, E3, and E6, and only ever in the upper voice. It is made up of an ascending fourth leap followed by syncopated notes in various guises that, more often than not, feature a descent. M1 is introduced in E1 (mm. 7-8 C₃-F₃-E₃-D₃-C₃-B₃). It is then sequenced freely in m. 8 (D₃-G₃...) to m. 10 (...B₃) and again in mm. 10-11 where the syncopations accommodate the do-si-do closing formula. In its second version it reappears in E3 (mm. 18-19). Its shortened third version is taken up in E6 (mm. 34-35).

The two episodes that, as was mentioned above, appear as corresponding owing to their fairly complete quotation of the subject (E2 and E5), share a further feature: both are interwoven with the ensuing subject statement by an anticipation of the CS1 beginning. At the end of E2 (see L: mm. 14₃-15₁), the note group from G₃ to G₃ anticipates the subsequent group from A₃ to A₃; the same recurs at the end of E5, in the first half of m. 31. Finally, cadential-bass patterns occur at the ends of E1 and E6 respectively, as well as in E4a—the only episode segment in this fugue clearly serving as nothing but a cadential close. While in E1 and E6 the formulas appear embedded in episode material, E4a features none of the above-mentioned components or motifs. Instead, both the upper and lower voices present obvious closing formulas, thus underpinning the concluding gesture of this measure.

As has surely become obvious from the above analysis, several relationships exist between the episodes of this fugue. E2 corresponds directly with E5. E1 is related to E3, which presents a shortened version, and to E6, which repeats its beginning literally. E4b features analogies within itself; the segment in mm. 23-26 corresponds largely with that in mm. 26-28.

The details unraveled above allow us to discern between three types of episodes. One type, represented by E2 and E5, is very closely related to the primary material, as it quotes the largest portion of the subject and is intertwined with the ensuing subject statement through its CS1 anticipation.

⁴Interestingly, Mcs2 actually appears earlier than the counter-subject from which it stems.

⁵L: m. 28 belongs to this episode in view of its material, although there is an overlap with the beginning of the next subject entry.

This type serves as a bridge. Another type, represented by E1, E3, and E6, gains limited independence by using a distinct episode motif. In both E1 and E6, a cadential close is present, whereas this more definite ending is missing at the tail of E3.⁶ This episode type provides a color contrast to the primary material and conveys the impression of structural closure. The third type is represented exclusively by the five measures of E4b. Utilizing only segments from subject and CS2 and carrying these through various harmonic steps, this episode seems purposefully to postpone the ensuing subject statement.⁷ The message of this episode type is therefore neither bridging nor closing but delaying.

The material of this fugue does not express a single character. In the subject, the first counter-subject, the episode figures derived from these, and the independent episode motif M1, the complex rhythmic pattern and the overall stepwise motion clearly indicate a rather calm basic character. By contrast, the second counter-subject and the episode figure derived from it (Mcs2) feature a simple rhythmic structure and a pitch pattern consisting exclusively of skips, thus suggesting a rather lively basic character. The conclusion to be drawn from these observations should accommodate both facts. The tempo is moderately flowing; swift enough to convey liveliness in the 16th-notes of CS2, but moderate enough to convey calm in those of CS1. The articulation should take into account the differing characters represented by the material. In the subject and the motifs derived from it as well as in CS1 and M1, all notes are legato, whereas in CS2 and Mcs2, all notes are quasi legato.⁸ Non legato articulation is appropriate in the cadential-bass notes of mm. 11, 16, 22, 33, and 34 as well as in the octave leap of m. 25.

The relative tempo of the prelude to the fugue is ideally represented by the compound relationship of 3:2. This translates as follows: three dotted eighth-notes in the prelude equal two quarter-notes (half a measure) in the fugue. Approximate metronome settings: prelude beats (dotted eighth-notes) = 96, fugue beats = 63.)

⁶It may not seem too farfetched to speculate that this missing close of E3 is made up for by E4a which, as was shown, presents an explicit cadential formula.

⁷It reminds one faintly of that episode portion in the C#-major fugue that serves as something like the “development section” in a “sonata form” fugue. The reader may wish to refer back to the chapter on WTC I/3.

⁸For the sound balance within these components it is of greatest importance that the frequent note repetitions do not sound with a greater degree of detachment than the other intervals; any effect of slurring should be carefully avoided.

The composition comprises two ornaments. The first embellishes the subject. It should be transferred to all subsequent subject entries, slight technical inconvenience being no excuse. The difference of symbols in mm. 1, 3, and 15 should probably not be taken to indicate different executions. In each case, the trill is note-filling. It begins on the main note since it is approached stepwise, moves in 32nd-notes, and ends with the suffix that, in all cases but one, is written out. The other ornament appears in the cadential measure of E4a. It is a mordent launched from the upper neighbor note G# and then touching down on F# twice. Its shakes may be in 32nd-notes or slightly faster.

As has been shown above, the fugue features two explicit cadential formulas. One of them marks the end of the first episode. The other, following the sixth subject statement, was identified as the only subject-free segment devoid of all the components characterizing the material of the other episodes, i.e., a typical cadential close. While these cadential formulas already provide an important clue for the design of the fugue, earlier observations regarding the episodes and their role in the development of the composition also contribute to the understanding of structure. E2 and E5 have been acknowledged as bridging episodes, each stringing together two statements belonging to the same section. E1 and E6 were found to exert concluding power, while E3 showed a similar tendency but lacked a final closure (to be complemented by E4a). Finally, E4b was shown to be neither bridging nor concluding; one might therefore assume that its position is neither in the middle nor at the end of a section.

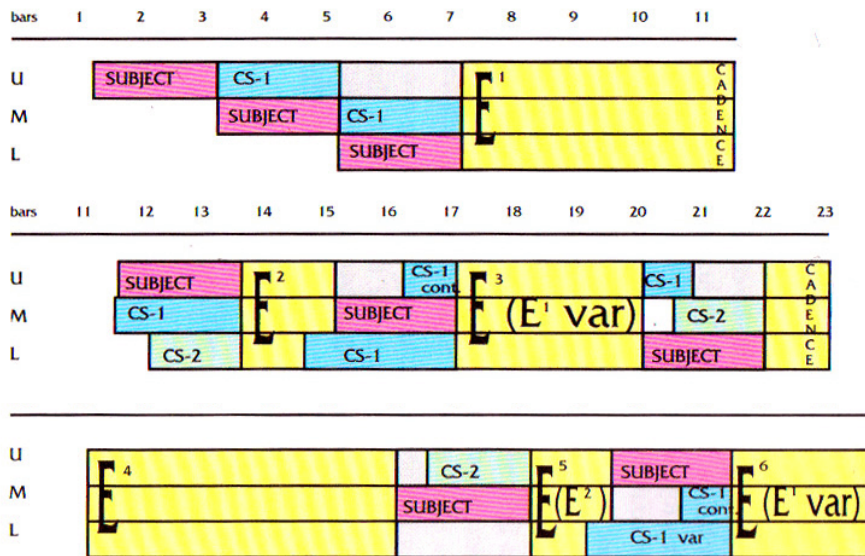
Having said all this, it is time to state one noteworthy analogy in the fugue. Three separate facts have already been recognized: the correspondence of E2 and E5, the relationship in material of E3 and E6, and the correspondence of the subject entries in mm. 15-17 and 31-33 (both are accompanied by a variant of CS1 in which the end appears substituted by a cadential-bass pattern, and by a third voice that in its second half makes up for the abandoned tail of CS1, at least in its rhythmic idea). To sum up:

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|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| mm. 11m-18 | correspond with | mm. 28-35 |
| subject statement + CS2 | | subject statement + CS2 |
| bridging episode | | bridging episode |
| subject statement | | subject statement |
| with CS1 irregularity | | with CS1 irregularity |
| E3 | | E6 |

The overall harmonic development begins after three statements in the realm of F# major with a modulation to the dominant and leads to a close with a C#-major cadence at the end of the first episode. After an immediate

return to the home key, the third episode modulates from C# major to the tonic relative minor that, after a subject entry in D# minor in mm. 20-22, is confirmed in the cadential close of m. 22-23. E4b undertakes the return to the home key before the next subject entry. Thus all but one of the subject statements appear in F# major, either on its tonic or on its dominant.

The following conclusions may be drawn from what has been observed: The first section encompasses three subject statements and one episode, with the cadential formula at the end of E1 concluding this section. The second episode comprises two statements that appear strung together by the bridging E2, followed by the episode type that, elsewhere in this fugue, concludes a segment but here lacks the final cadential close. The ensuing statement appears thus almost as redundant, an impression enhanced by the fact that it is the only one in the minor mode. The cadential measure of E4a concludes this second section in m. 23₁. The third section begins with an opening (“delaying”) episode followed by the passage that was recognized as structurally analogous to the second section without its quasi redundant final entry. In this section, the third subject statement is now completely stripped off.



Within the first section, the tension grows from the first to the second subject entry along with both the growth of the ensemble and the emergence of the contrasting first counter-subject. However, from here to the third

entry, there is almost no increase as the upper voice does not contribute independent material but runs a rhythmic parallel to the subject. The ensuing episode begins with a distinct color contrast. It then allows for a slight increase of tension as M1 comes in and is sequenced upward, only to give way to the relaxing cadential close that concludes both the episode and the first section.

The beginning of the second section can be regarded as the climax not only of this section but of the entire fugue because the juxtaposition of the subject with its two counter-subjects creates the greatest degree of polyphonic contrast. The bridging episode sounds softer than the surrounding subject statements but not necessarily as different in color as did E1. It is followed by an entry that makes no use of the newly introduced CS2 and thus sounds less assertive than the preceding one. The ensuing episode begins again with a color contrast and a slight increase of tension in connection with M1. Its relaxation is interrupted by the quasi redundant entry that is the most subdued both in this section and in the fugue.

The third section sets off in an almost floating atmosphere. The remaining two subject entries and two episodes repeat the development of the second section, omitting, however, both the climax and the anticlimax. The first subject statement of this section is accompanied by CS2 but not CS1 and thus sounds less polyphonically exciting, and the quasi redundant final entry is dropped entirely.