

## WTC I/20 in A minor – Prelude

This prelude displays a contrapuntal texture. The two-part structure is not strictly observed. It thickens occasionally when supporting block chords are added as in mm. 5, 6, 7 and 9, 10, 11 or a *legatissimo* is spelled out by letting one sound overlap with a number of consecutive pitches as in mm. 13-15, 16+18, 17+19, and 26-28. In terms of its thematic material, the composition builds entirely on a single motif, the slightly ornamented broken-chord figure introduced in U: m. 1. The prelude can therefore be regarded as conceived along the lines of a two-part invention.

In conjunction with its two sequences and a complementary figure in m. 4, the principal motif establishes a four-measure phrase that constitutes a complete harmonic progression. The cadential close in m. 4, which coincides with the end of the larger melodic idea, does not qualify as an indication of a section ending. The second harmonic progression concludes in analogy to the first after the statement—now in the lower voice and in E minor—of the four-measure melodic idea (m. 8). Listeners have to wait until the end of the subsequent development, again four measures long, for the relaxation and cadential close indicating a break in the prelude's layout. The harmonic conclusion comes after a modulation to C major and falls on m. 13<sub>1</sub>.

Three structural sections can be distinguished in this prelude:

- I mm. 1-13 tonic – minor dominant – tonic relative
- II mm. 13-22 tonic relative – tonic<sup>1</sup>
- III mm. 22-28 tonic confirmed

The predominant features of pitch and rhythm are broken chords in eighth-notes and ornamental 16th-notes, including written-out trills as in L: mm. 1-3. The basic character of this prelude is thus rather lively. The

<sup>1</sup>The harmonic conclusion of section II is very strange. We expect a return to the tonic, and the chords in mm. 20-21, D minor and G# diminished-seventh, seem to announce this with their iv–vii<sup>7</sup>. At the last moment, however, the lower voice sidetracks with a leap to C instead of a step from the leading note to A. The tonic chord thus appears in inversion and fails to satisfy the listeners' demand for a resolution. Even more strangely, the process is repeated similarly three measures later, where the left-hand progression G#-A-B (A) diverts to C and an unusual major-seventh leap adds to the harmonic irregularity. It is only after yet another cadential measure that the downbeat of m. 26 finally presents the true tonic bass.

tempo should be fairly swift, with the 9/8 time signature read as a convenience for 3/4 time with triplets. The appropriate articulation includes non legato for the eighth-notes and quasi legato for the 16th-notes. The score does not contain any ornament symbols.

The one-measure principal motif M1 consists of an A-minor chord broken in zigzag, changing direction with each of the three compound beats: up, down, up. Only the first interval is filled with a passing note. This motif is sequenced twice, one step up in m. 2 and another three steps up in m. 3. Thereafter, the gradual ascent is complemented with the upper keynote on m. 4<sub>1</sub>. The subsequent passive descent consists of a run and a falling A-minor chord in a complementary pattern between both hands. This descent appears more like a link than an integral part of the four-measure phrase, and later modification can easily be anticipated. Only the very last eighth-note in m. 4 announces the shift from the tonic to the minor dominant with a D $\sharp$ , representative of the chord B-D $\sharp$ -F $\sharp$ -A, the dominant-seventh of E minor. In this key the four-measure phrase is then imitated by the lower voice.

The link following the imitation in m. 8 features the run and broken chord in ascending direction. The final eighth-note of the measure, A $\sharp$ , seems once again about to initiate a harmonic shift, this time to the key of B. However, the motif's ensuing entry in L: m. 9 ignores the modulation and begins once more on E. The shape of the four-measure phrase is modified here. The two sequences of M1 are descending in steps and the linking measure, instead of displaying a complementary pattern, splits the original ingredients. With simultaneous runs in the upper voice and broken chords in the lower, it ends the first section of the piece.

Throughout the entire initial section, the contrapuntal companion is characterized by a long note on the first compound beat in each measure followed by a trill figure on the second beat. Within the initial phrase, both the long note and the trill represent a tonic pedal, while in the imitation and the developing phrase, block chords and moving trills accommodate the steps of the harmonic progression. The final 3/8-note group in each measure serves as a small-scale link, consisting of broken chords in the initial phrase and of varying runs in the second and third phrases.

The second section sets out in m. 13 with M1 and its original four-measure phrase back in the upper voice, the sequences once more moving upward. There are, however, two new modifications. The "counter-motif" omits the trill figure and instead complements the long notes at the outset of each measure with runs. Moreover, the link at the end of the phrase

combines the idea of a run with that of the broken chord by retaining the chord notes from within the run in a split-voice texture. This phrase ends in C major, without any sign of a modulation even in the final eighth-note of m. 16. The next measure thus presents a surprise both in pattern and in harmony. Over a repeated pedal note on the pitch a very mindful listener may have anticipated for the pivotal eighth-note (F#, of D-F#-A-C), the upper voice fits the remaining chord notes into a new complementary pattern. The resolution of this modulating chord follows immediately with the newly established pattern, in the final measure of the C major phrase (compare m. 18 with m. 16). A sequence of the “pivot-chord measure” then leads to D minor in m. 20. The last two measures of the second section come full circle with the principal motif, now in the lower voice, accompanied by a free variation of the modified “counter-motif” (compare U: mm. 20-21 with L: mm. 13-15). The unusual harmonic ending of the section was already mentioned.

The beginning of the third section gives the impression of a recapitulation: the upper-voice motif begins as did the original in m. 1, and the “counter-motif” also takes up the trill-figure familiar from the first section (compare m. 22 with m. 1). The third beat of the measure, however, features a variation in the motif, the second measure is harmonically diverted (compare m. 23 with m. 2), and the expected third segment of the sequential pattern is substituted by a closing link (similar to the one that concluded the initial section in m. 12). This leads to the reiteration of the cadential-bass deviation (see mm. 24-25<sub>1</sub>). The remainder of m. 25 continues the scalar descent and, more importantly, corrects the cadential close by reiterating it with the “proper” bass steps and melodic leading note.

Finally, mm. 26-28 are built upon a tonic pedal. The lower part with its voice splitting is reminiscent of the beginning of the second section (mm. 13-15), while the upper part displays a free variation of the principal motif. The trill figure, added at the very last moment in a split-half of the upper voice, recalls once more the characteristic feature of the original companion and thus ends this invention with a five-part A major chord.

The dynamic presentation of the composition should be designed to reflect the structural outline as well as the varying thematic density. The climax of the first section falls on m. 9 where, after two four-measure phrases in continuous crescendo, the developing phrase sets in with a sudden major mode, both voices sounding in a fairly high register. The second section reaches its dynamic peak at the end of its initial phrase (m. 16). Thereafter, the tension recedes in gradual waves. (Careful: The G# at m.

21<sub>1</sub> often blurts out because of the preceding large leap but should actually be very soft, in keeping with the pending cadential close.) In the third section, the dynamic curves are very gentle as long as tonal stability is still awaited. Then, however, in the final three measures with their multiplying parts, a powerful crescendo leads to a luscious completion.

### WTC I/20 in A minor – Fugue

This subject spans exactly three measures. It begins on the second eighth-note of m. 1 with the keynote A and concludes with the same note at m. 4<sub>1</sub>. The eighth-note rest in the middle of the phrase appears between a strong-to-weak descending third causing a momentary relaxation and a new upbeat; it must therefore be interpreted as an indicator of phrasing within the subject. The two subphrases divided by this rest are almost equal in length. The pitch pattern presents two long stretches of smooth, stepwise motion, both of which end in consecutive leaps (see m. 2: F-G<sup>#</sup>-E and m. 3-4: B-E-A.) The rhythm consists exclusively of eighth- and 16th-notes in a simple pattern. Syncopations, tied notes, or other outstanding rhythmic features do not appear.

Yet while this description of the subject's attributes is correct, it does not convey the entire truth. Two additional observations shed light on the particularities of the melodic line. One regards the groups of 16th-notes. All of them are ornamental figures embellishing an underlying simpler line. The first two groups, e.g., display the well-known inverted mordent. The other observation regards the assumed simpler line that is being ornamented. An examination of the pitches shows that two of the subject's eighth-notes are of secondary relevance with respect to the melodic structure. In m. 2, the low E on the second half of beat 3 provides a harmonic foundation to the unusual diminished-seventh leap; melodically, however, it is an escape note between the high tension captured in the G<sup>#</sup> and the resolution brought about by the A after the rest. Similarly, the E at the end of m. 3 serves to keep the eighth-note pace going: melodically it is another escape note interspersed into the descending tetrachord D-C-B-A. The result of this short melodic analysis is a skeleton that enhances the comprehension of the subject:



In the course of the fugue, Bach harmonizes this subject with slight variations. In mm. 8-9, e.g., the dominant already appears on the downbeat of the second measure, while in mm. 4-5 the tonic is retained much longer and the dominant is only reached on the middle beat. In the second half of the same two statements, Bach harmonizes m. 10<sub>1</sub> as a subdominant representative, while the analogous m. 3<sub>1</sub> returns to the dominant after only an eighth-note resolution to the tonic. Beyond these differences, the basic harmonic outline affirms a progression in which the two relevant steps are the short-lived resolution of the dominant to the tonic on the last eighth-note of the second measure and the perfect cadence that underlies beats 3 and 4 of the subject's third measure and resolves on the final downbeat:



This fugue features the proud number of thirty-nine subject entries. Particularly in the work's final portion, many statements are considerably shortened. In the list below, statements completely lacking the second subphrase are marked with an asterisk.<sup>2</sup>

1. mm. 1-4	A	14. mm. 37-40	A	27. mm. 67-70	S <sub>inv</sub>
2. mm. 4-7	S	15. mm. 43-46	S	28. mm. 68-71	A <sub>inv</sub>
3. mm. 8-11	B	16. mm. 43-46	B	29. mm. 73-76	B <sub>inv</sub>
4. mm. 11-14	T	17. mm. 48-51	A <sub>inv</sub>	30. mm. 73-76	A <sub>inv</sub>
5. mm. 14-17	S <sub>inv</sub>	18. mm. 49-52	T <sub>inv</sub>	31. mm. 76-77	T <sub>inv</sub> *
6. mm. 18-21	T <sub>inv</sub>	19. mm. 53-56	B <sub>inv</sub>	32. mm. 77-78	A
7. mm. 21-24	B <sub>inv</sub>	20. mm. 53-56	S <sub>inv</sub>	33. mm. 77-78	S*
8. mm. 24-27	A <sub>inv</sub>	21. mm. 57-60	S <sub>inv</sub>	34. mm. 80-82	A
9. mm. 27-30	S	22. mm. 58-61	A <sub>inv</sub>	35. mm. 81-82	S
10. mm. 28-31	T	23. mm. 62-63	B <sub>inv</sub> *	36. mm. 83-85	B <sub>inv</sub> *
11. mm. 31-34	A	24. mm. 62-63	T <sub>inv</sub> *	37. mm. 84-85	T <sub>inv</sub> *
12. mm. 32-35	B	25. mm. 64-67	B	38. mm. 84-86	S
13. mm. 36-39	T	26. mm. 65-68	T	39. mm. 85-86	A*



<sup>2</sup>Note that this fugue, while basically in four parts, introduces a fifth voice after the general pause in m. 80. This new voice establishes a tonic pedal in mm. 83-87. It seemed practical, however, to retain the counting of the original four voices as soprano, alto, tenor, and bass during these measures of five-part texture and use "bass 2" for the additional voice that does not participate in the polyphonic play.

In the course of the fugue, the subject undergoes a number of variations, harmonic modifications, and abbreviations. The most frequently occurring change of shape is the inversion: nineteen of the thirty-nine statements, i.e., almost exactly half of the total number, are upside down. The second-last subject note, earlier described as “of secondary relevance for the melodic structure,” is omitted in m. 70 (A) and substituted by an ornamental figure in mm. 17 (S) and 26 (A). The ornamental substitution is followed by a displaced final note in mm. 20-21 (T), 23-24 (B) and, with a slightly different ornamental figure, in m. 60 (A). As all these variations happen in inversions, one might get the impression that they are due to the interval direction. However, the four inverted entries in mm. 48-56 appear without any such adjustments. The four final eighth-notes are substituted by longer note values and harmonic deviations in mm. 60 (S) and 75 (B), whereas in m. 76 (A) they are simply cut off. Even shorter versions of the subject appear toward the end of the fugue where the second subphrase is reduced to two notes (A: mm. 80-82) or even only one (A: mm. 77-78, S: mm. 81-82 and 84-86). In two other instances, the subject statement breaks off after the eighth-note rest (see T: mm. 76-77 and A: mm. 85-86). Even less substance is left where not only the second subphrase is completely dropped but the end of the first subphrase is already varied. In two statements the last two eighth-notes of the first subphrase are replaced by a quarter-note, thus supporting the interpretation that this final eighth-note is another structurally non-essential note (see S: m. 82 and A: m. 86). In mm. 83-84 (B), only the first eleven eighth-note beats are intact; in mm. 77-78 (S), this is reduced to ten and in mm. 84-85 (T) to only eight eighth-note beats.

All these entries appear, however, as structurally relevant components of strettos. The shortest of the abridged subject statements are of equal length as the episode motif that often quotes the subject’s initial bar; this creates confusion—a confusion Bach apparently intended. Thus in mm. 62-63 the stretto between bass and tenor, featuring incomplete first subphrases in both voices, does not immediately reveal whether its loyalty lies forward or backward. Only in-depth analysis will show whether these are “false entries” or structurally relevant ones.

Harmonic alterations of considerable impact occur frequently; see, e.g., mm. 10 (B), 19-21 (T), 44 (B), 58-59 (A), 69-70 (S), and 74-75 (A). Strettos are a characteristic feature in this fugue; in fact, from m. 27 onward, not a single subject statement remains uncontested by an overlapping entry in another voice. Toward the end of the fugue, strettos even involve three voices (as in mm. 76-78: T/A/S) or four (as in mm. 83-85: B/T/S/A).

Given that the imitation distance in the strettos is usually four eighth-notes, i.e., the same length as the sequence at the beginning of the subject, this results in a short parallel. By contrast, parallels of any larger segments of the subject do not occur.

In a fugue that is so essentially based on stretto work, it is certainly not surprising that we will look in vain for a characteristic and independent counter-subject. There are two short accompanying figures that deserve to be mentioned since they recur. Their common feature is the fact that both establish a short parallel to one fragment of the subject. They are thus not quite polyphonically independent. In mm. 4-5 the alto, having just introduced the subject, builds a counterpoint to the beginning of the subject answer. It begins with two descending tetrachords (see the eighth-notes A-G-F#-E and C-B-A-G), continues with a parallel of the first half of the second subject measure, and ends, at the latest, with the B on the middle beat of m. 5. This counterpoint is taken up in mm. 8-9 where it is shared between soprano and alto, and in mm. 11-12 in the alto (where the tetrachords are reinforced by a parallel in the soprano). Later in the fugue, the sequencing tetrachords alone, without the ensuing parallel turn-figure, recur frequently as a companion to a subject entry; see particularly mm. 14-16 (B, T, A), 28-29 (B), 53-54 (T), 57-58 (T+B), and 73-74 (T). In mm. 18-19, the soprano creates a short parallel to the second segment of the subject's first subphrase. Similar brief parallels occur in mm. 21-22 (A) and mm. 24-25 (T). As these parallels can also be read as rudimentary imitations of the subject beginning, an interesting interpretation is that they are embryonic forerunners of the stretto entries to come.

This fairly long fugue encompasses altogether sixteen subject-free passages; most of them, however, are only very short.

E1	mm. 7-8	E9	mm. 52-53
E2	m. 14	E10	mm. 56-57
E3	mm. 17-18	E11	mm. 61-62
E4	m. 27	E12	mm. 63-64
E5	m. 31	E13	mm. 71-73
E6	mm. 35-36	E14	mm. 79-80
E7	mm. 40-43	E15	mm. 82-83
E8	mm. 46-48	E16	mm. 86-87

In the material that makes up these subject-free passages, two facts stand out: many episodes are simple cadential formulas of one-measure or even only half-measure length, and several others feature the subject's head motif. E2, E3, E4, E15, and E16 present variants of the cadential bass steps, E2 and E4 additionally feature the do-si-do formula, E3 and E4 the

typical melodic turn with dotted leading note and anticipated resolution. In three other episodes, the same components make up only a portion of the subject-free passage; see the second half of E8 as well as the conclusion of E12 and E13. In the latter case, the soprano's cadential formula overlaps with the beginning of the subsequent statement in the bass. The subject's head motif is found in seven of the episodes, often accompanied by a scalar passage (see E1, E3, E6, E7, E10, E12, and E16). Finally in E5, E8, and E9 the scalar segment appears without the subject's head motif

Only three of the episodes feature figures that are immediately sequenced and thereby attain a minimum of independence: bass and alto in E7 mm. 40-41, the trill motif in alto and tenor of E9 as well as in the soprano of E10, and the imitations of soprano and tenor including their sequences in the alto of E13. E8 is the only episode presenting an imitation of the subject's tail (see T: mm. 45-47). The 16th-notes in all episode types form ornamental figuration or broken chords.

There are few structural analogies among the episodes. One can detect a correspondence between two cadential and two non-cadential passages (E2 and E4, E1 and E5). Moreover, E9 and E10 share the same prominent motif and scalar descent. The role each episode plays in the development of tension within the fugue is determined by motifs and closing formulas.

- E1 bridges between two consecutive statements but does not create a color contrast since the Ms figure appears as a sequence of the previous measure. Conversely, E2 gives the impression of a close, with a definite relaxation. E3 is ambiguous: the bass pattern speaks of conclusion, the false entry in the alto seems to point forward. E4 follows with an unequivocal closure and a definite tension release.
- Like E1, E5 connects two entries. E6 with its ascending sequences leads to the subsequent stretto. E7 introduces the first color contrast owing to its novel material and, thereafter, a decrease of intensity. E8 presents the long-awaited closure with its extended cadential formula. Surprisingly, it is succeeded by what must be interpreted as a preparation for the ensuing subject statement.
- E9 and E10 serve as dynamic bridges. E11 like E7 presents genuine episode material with a concomitant color contrast but no conclusion (the stretto in mm. 62-63 is structurally analogous to that in mm. 43-46), and E12 with its cadential close corresponds with E8.
- E13 also suggests a color contrast because of its genuine little motif. Its ending with the overlap of a cadential close with the beginning of an ensuing subject statement recalls E2 and distinguishes this as another bridging episode. E14 differs from all its predecessors by its



abrupt halt in a six-part chord. This unexpected halt anticipates the chord on the middle beat of m. 82, also in six-part texture, with which it corresponds in its harmonic distinction as an inverted dominant-seventh chord and its rhythmic feature with ensuing general pause. In other words: E14 is not so much a fugal episode as a dramatic passage and may be interpreted with a matching rise of dramatic intensity. E15, following after the work's second general pause, provides for some relaxation. The concluding E16, set in seven-part texture, has no choice but to crown the fugue with a triumphant climax.

Despite the apparent predominance of stepwise motion in this piece, the ornamental character of the 16th-notes and the overall simplicity of the rhythmic pattern indicate a rather lively basic character for this fugue. A moderately swinging quarter-note pulse is a good choice to accommodate the pensive side of the piece. Both the surface pattern with its ornamental 16th-notes and the assumed underlying simpler line are marked by a strong metrical component and express a dance-like character. In order to convey this quality, the natural metric order in four-four time, with weak second and fourth beats, should be observed. The articulation appropriate for this character demands non legato for the eighth-notes and all longer note values and quasi legato for the 16th-notes. In the frequent cadential closes, the do-si-do figures as well as the dotted-note formulas require genuine legato. Many exceptions occur, however, in the context of notes (often suspensions) that constitute appoggiatura-resolution or closing formulas.<sup>3</sup>

A good choice for the relative tempo of the prelude to the fugue is one that reflects the interpretation of the compound meter: a dotted quarter-note in the prelude corresponds with a quarter-note in the fugue. Approximate metronome settings: 80 for both the compound beats in the prelude and the quarter-notes in the fugue.

The A-minor fugue features both cadential and melodic ornaments. Beyond these, some cadential ornaments may be added where they would have been so self-evident for Bach's contemporaries that marking them explicitly did not seem imperative. In mm. 21 and 64, the dotted-note

<sup>3</sup>For appoggiatura-resolution see mm. 6-7 [alto: C-B, E-D, D-C], m. 11 [soprano: D-C], m. 26 [soprano: B-A], mm. 40-41 [tenor: G-F, F-E, E-D], m. 62 [alto: F-E]; m. 64 [alto: G-F]; m. 70 [tenor: A-G]. For do-si-do formulas see mm. 13-14 [alto: E-D#-E], mm. 16-17 [bass: G-F#-G], m. 23 [soprano: C-B-C], mm. 26-27 [soprano: A-G#-A], m. 32 [tenor: E-D#-E], m. 34 [alto: E-D#-E], mm. 47-48 [soprano: C-B-C], m. 60 [bass: A-G#-A], m. 64 [tenor: D-C#-D], m. 73 [alto: F-E-F], mm. 75-76 [bass: G-F#-G]. There is only one closing formula in the bass that requires partially legato articulation; see mm. 47-48 [D-E-F-G = legato].

figures in the soprano carry the mordent that is so typical for this formula. The brackets indicate that the composer himself did not find it necessary to specify this obvious ornamentation, but one of his students took it down. The same brisk mordent should be added in m. 17 on the dotted F# and in m. 73 on the dotted G. Among these, only the mordent in m. 17 begins on the main note and therefore makes do with only three notes; the remaining ones are launched from the upper auxiliary and comprise the regular four notes.<sup>4</sup> The trill in the motif appearing in E9 and E10 represents a note-filling ornament. Starting each time on the upper neighbor note and shaking in 32nd-notes, it comprises eight notes including the suffix that is spelled out in all cases.

Much headache has been caused by the apparent impossibility to play the fugue's final five measures with their sustained bass pedal and the texture with up to seven voices. The following excerpt attempts to help by suggesting one possible execution, fingering, and use of the middle pedal.

The musical score excerpt shows a complex texture with multiple voices. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff is in middle clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is in A minor and features a dense texture of voices. The excerpt shows a sequence of notes with various ornaments and trills. Fingering numbers (1-5) are provided for many notes. A 'middle pedal' is indicated by a bracket and an arrow pointing to the bass line. The score is annotated with numerous fingering numbers and trill patterns.

In this A-minor fugue, Bach seems to play with transformations of the subject in a way that reminds one of the D#-minor fugue, also in Book I. Conclusive evidence for the structural design can therefore be derived already from an observation of the order in which the subject statements enter, from the change of shape found in a number of consecutive entries, and from the presence or absence of strettos. The data that can be collected in this respect are particularly indisputable in the first three quarters of the fugue.

<sup>4</sup>In m. 27, the figure appears in the alto and thus makes ornamentation much more difficult to execute. However, for performers with a good technique it is possible to play the mordent in the left hand, then take over its sustained final note in the right thumb, the ensuing 16th-note A again in the left—quite without interrupting the legato required for the upper voice.

- The first four entries—one in each of the four voices—appear without any overlapping (see mm. 1-14).
- There follow four inverted statements, also one in each voice, also neatly after one another (see mm. 14-27).
- The next eight entries retrieve the original shape of the subject but are grouped in pairs: every other statement enters already half a measure after its predecessor and thus overlaps for two and a half measures (see mm. 27-46).
- This group is followed by eight entries in inversion that feature the same kind of stretto at the same half-measure distance (see mm. 48-63). Note that the correspondence between the two groups of four-fold stretto gives the two abridged statements in mm. 63-64 more importance than their radically shortened shape would suggest. Analysis reveals that they constitute indeed the fourth, though incomplete, group of this section.

Each of these four groups ends with one of the episodes that were earlier recognized as cadential formulas: E2 in m. 14, E4 in m. 27, the second segment of E8 in mm. 47-48, and E12 in m. 64. The confines of sections I through IV can thus be regarded as confirmed.

The remaining subject statements, from m. 64 onward, comprise a stretto in original shape followed by two strettos in inversion—all using the complete phrase. Immediately afterward there are three strettos comprising, respectively, three entries (mm. 76-78), two entries (mm. 80-82), and four entries (mm. 83-86). All these statements are drastically abridged; in fact, in each of the strettos, only one of the voices progresses at all into the second subphrase. In order to determine the intended grouping of these six strettos one had best again look for guidance in the episodes. There are two subject-free passages ending with a perfect cadence (E13: belated cadential close in m. 73, and E15: cadential formula in m. 83). These should therefore be interpreted as designating section closes. The fact that in the former case, the typical closing formulas in the soprano and alto overlap with the beginning of the subsequent bass statement indicates that the structural partition between the fugue's two final sections is not as clear-cut as the earlier section-endings were. The cadential close of E15 in A major, on the other hand, appears strong and definite; it determines the final measures with their pedal note in the added "second bass" as a coda.

The use of texture in the various sections may give further clues for Bach's conception of the fugue's design. The first stretto of section III (and, with some irregularities at the beginning, also that of section IV) begins accompanied by only one voice, i.e., in reduced ensemble. Even

more striking is the fact that the first stretto in section V is at first entirely unaccompanied. By contrast, the beginning of section VI with three active voices gives the impression of reduced ensemble but actually encompasses four parts; the indirect pedal C in the soprano suddenly comes to life again in m. 75. This substantiates the interpretation that sections V and VI are more closely connected than any other consecutive sections. The fugue's overall design thus contains two pairs of corresponding sections (sections I/II and III/IV), followed by the only minimally structured larger body containing sections V/VI and a short coda.

The harmonic outline supports the structural correspondences.

- The first section comprises entries on the tonic and dominant of A minor before ending on an E-major cadence. Section II begins on the dominant and returns to the tonic with an A-minor cadence.

I/II = tonic - dominant - tonic

- During its three initial strettos section III is still firmly rooted in the home key. After the longer interruption of E7, however, the redundant entry-pair presents the relative major key, which is confirmed, at the end of E8, with a cadential close in C major. Section IV returns to the home key but ends, both in its second stretto and the final abridged pair, in the subdominant region, which is confirmed in E12 with a cadential close in D minor.

III/IV = tonic - its relative major - tonic; end on subdominant

- The two final sections, earlier ascertained as forming a larger unit, further underscore the subdominant field. Section V begins with a stretto of entries in A minor and D minor, and were its final cadence not placed across the beginning of the sixth section, it would conclude in F major, the subdominant relative. Section VI, after several harmonic adventures,<sup>5</sup> ends with a perfect cadence in A major, the Picardy-third version of the tonic (m. 83). In the coda, however, the final four-part stretto is led by a soprano statement in D minor, a last reminder of the subdominant key set against an overwhelming assertion of the tonic (three A-minor entries and the A pedal). The final cadence, as expected, confirms the A major conclusion.

V/VI = subdominant - (its relative major) - major tonic

coda = subdominant/(minor) tonic - major tonic

<sup>5</sup>A striking number of pedal notes mark section VI as concluding. See mm. 73-75: C (soprano), mm. 76-77: G (bass; beginning at m. 75<sub>3</sub> but escaping momentarily to its leading note), mm. 79-80: D (bass, interrupted), and mm. 83-87: A (additional second bass voice), as well as the two inverted dominant-seventh chords that, enhanced by the voice-splitting into six parts, precede the reiterated general pause in mm. 80 and 82.

The image displays a musical score for a fugue in A minor, organized into five systems of staves. Each system includes staves for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score is annotated with various musical terms and symbols:

- System 1 (bars 1-14):** Shows the initial entries of the Subject in Soprano, Alto, and Bass. Labels include 'SUBJECT', 'SUBJ. parallel', and 'CS' (C-sharp).
- System 2 (bars 14-27):** Features inverted subject entries. Labels include 'SUBJ. inverted' and 'SUBJ. parallel'.
- System 3 (bars 27-48):** Continues with subject entries and inversions. Labels include 'SUBJECT', 'SUBJ. inverted', 'SUBJ. inv. incomplete', and 'SUBJ. inv. complete'.
- System 4 (bars 48-64):** Shows further subject entries and inversions. Labels include 'SUBJ. inverted', 'SUBJ. inv. incomplete', and 'SUBJ. inv. complete'.
- System 5 (bars 64-80):** Includes subject entries and inversions. Labels include 'SUBJ. inverted', 'SUBJ. inv. incomplete', 'SUBJ. inv. complete', 'six-part chord', and 'G.P.' (Grave Pedal).
- System 6 (bars 80-87):** Concludes with subject entries and inversions. Labels include 'SUBJECT incomplete', 'SUBJ. inv. incomplete', 'SUBJ. inv. complete', 'six-part chord', 'tonic', and 'pedal'.

The development of tension in the first section of this fugue is both normal, insofar as it describes a steady dynamic rise, and unusual, insofar as this rise seems least caused by contrapuntal complexity. Similar observations can be made with regard to the second section: owing to the frequent

parallel motion in partial phrases, the impression of polyphony remains relatively weak. The third section is the first to present considerable polyphonic contrast. As the connecting episode E6 with its fake stretto entries keeps the tension from dropping, an almost continuous crescendo results through these three paired statements. E7, however, introduces the first pronounced color contrast in this piece. The ensuing fourth stretto of this section is not only redundant due to the entering order of the voices (its "leader," the soprano statement, is a repetition of the soprano-led stretto that opened this section); it also fails to regain the intensity interrupted by E7, owing both to a rather passive fourth voice that consequently drops out and to the less dramatic character of the subject's major-mode variant. The extension of this entry, created by the imitation of the second subphrase, concludes the section with a prolonged diminuendo. The development is similar in the fourth section. The second stretto is the most powerful from a contrapuntal aspect, while the third, with its many parallels of partial phrases, its color contrast in E7, and the often passive voices brings about a relaxation.

The unaccompanied stretto launching the fifth section constitutes the beginning of an entirely new dynamic development. The tension rises despite the color contrast in E13 all the way to the general pauses and the subsequent cadential close. A powerful coda, appropriately interpreted in crescendo allargando, concludes this extraordinary fugue.