

5.8 Fugue/Invention/Canon - Contrapuntal Forms

In a contrapuntal form, the interaction of the voices as they articulate particular themes or motives throughout the piece generates the music. Hence, process is more important for these works than sectional divisions.

➤ **Great websites for fugue and contrapuntal forms (subject to change):**

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~tas3/mus303/index.html> - Timothy A. Smith, DMA, Northern Arizona U site

<http://www.kunsterfuge.com/theory/terms.html> - terms

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~tas3/bachindex.html> - much information on Bach (fugues, canons, etc.)

➤ **Fugue (Latin “fuga” to fly)**

- A fugue is a contrapuntal elaboration of a given motive called the **subject**. Sometimes there can be more than one subject (see double fugue below), but one subject at a time is the most common situation.

- The typical fugue unfolds as follows:

i. **Exposition**

1. To begin the fugue, the first voice states the **subject** unaccompanied. Subjects nearly always have two parts:
 - a. The **head** of the subject grabs the listeners attention
 - b. The **tail** of the subject often involves a sequential pattern, and often has a slightly different character (rhythmic or in terms of more conjunct pitch contour) than the head.
2. When the 1st voice finishes the subject, it continues with a **countersubject**:
 - a. Countersubjects accompany subjects or answers
 - b. Countersubjects return frequently with subjects/answers
 - c. Not all fugues have a consistent countersubject; some have 2 or 3
3. Meanwhile, the 2nd voice enters with an **answer**:
 - a. The answer is closely related to the subject, but is transposed (normally to the dominant).
 - b. If the answer is slightly altered with respect to the subject (ex: a 3rd interval becomes a 4th, etc.) to stay in the key, it is a **tonal answer**.
 - c. If the answer is an exact replication of the subject in the new key, it is a **real answer**.
4. The remaining voices then enter one by one.
5. Subjects alternate with answers.
6. Usually a voice is followed by an adjacent voice (ex: alto is followed by soprano or tenor, not bass). The soprano and bass are considered “adjacent” for this purpose.
7. **Codetta**: Transitional, sequential material between entrances in the exposition. In other words, a **codetta** is an **episode** in the **exposition** (see below).
8. Concludes when all voices have stated a subject or answer.

ii. **Middle section** (sometimes called “**development**” section)

1. Includes statements of subjects (and/or answers) in various keys
2. “Transitional” sections between subjects are called **episodes**:
 - a. Episodes modulate from one key to another
 - b. Episodes always involve sequence
 - c. The sequence is normally based on a motive from the subject

iii. **Coda**

1. The subject is restated
2. Often includes tonic pedal point
3. Often includes an increase in voices at the very end of the fugue.

Continued on next page...

5.8 Fugue/Invention/Canon, cont.

Augmentation/Diminution: Statement of a melodic motive with rhythmic values that are proportionally doubled or halved.

Double and triple fugues: Fugues with 2 or 3 distinct subjects (answers aren't counted). Subjects may be presented simultaneously in the exposition (Book I, prelude 19), or in sectional triple fugue three fugues are connected together, with parts of the 1st fugue in the 2nd, and the 3rd either new or combining the first 2.

False entry: An entrance of the subject or answer that is incomplete. This term is only appropriate when the incomplete subject/answer is followed immediately with a complete statement. Most other "incomplete subjects" are part of an episode or codetta.

Fugato: Passage in fugal style in a work not otherwise a fugue.

Fughetta: Little fugue; may have just an exposition and an ending.

Invertible counterpoint: Counterpoint in which the order of the voices (top to bottom) can be changed while still following stylistic voice leading and counterpoint guidelines. For instance, the melody in the soprano and bass might be switched. Common intervals for inversion are octave (raise/lower one voice an octave), tenth, and twelfth. Not all counterpoint is invertible!

Melodic Inversion: Statement of a melody with the direction of each interval reversed (ex: third up becomes third down, fourth up becomes fourth down, etc.)

Mirror inversion: An inversion in which the quality of the intervals is maintained exactly (ex: MAJOR third up becomes MAJOR third down, etc.).

Pedal Point: A single sustained pitch (often the bass) that is alternately consonant and dissonant with the other voices.

Retrograde: Statement of a melody's pitches in reverse order; starting at the last note and reading backwards.

Sequence: Restatement of a melody starting on a different pitch. A *real sequence* maintains all the intervals exactly, while a *tonal sequence* follows the prevailing key. Sequence is common in episodes and codettas.

Stretto: Entry of a subject or answer in a second voice before the first voice has finished its subject/answer. The second voice "gets excited" and comes in "early" before the 1st voice has finished.

Fugue	Invention
Subject begins alone	First subject may be accompanied
Answer normally P5 higher/P4 lower than subject	Answer can be any interval away, often an octave
Instrumental or vocal	Only instrumental
3 or 4 voices typical	2 or 3 voices (3-voice also called <i>sinfonias</i>)
Long subject with head and tail	Shorter subject typical; sometimes head only
Use of stretto, augmentation, inversion, etc. possible	Few contrapuntal devices

Canon (from Greek for "rule" or "law")

A canon is a contrapuntal form in which the following voice (comes, pronounced "co-mace") is strictly generated from the melody of the first voice (the leader, or dux, pronounced "dukes")

Accompanied Canon: A canon with additional non-canonic accompanimental voice(s).

Canon in Contrary Motion: The melody of the *dux* is stated by the *comes* with inversion (i.e. the direction of each interval is reversed)

Cryptic canon: A canon with "cryptic" notation that indicates only the leader's melody and provides "clues" for the following voice, such as alternate clefs, upside down clefs, upside down key signatures, text inscriptions, etc. Cryptic in this sense means "concise" in that the single notated melody thus represents more than one contrapuntal part.

Double and Triple Canon: A canon that has two leaders and two followers is a double canon.

Mirror canon: a canon in contrary motion in which the inversion is *exact* in terms of interval quality (ex: a MAJOR third up becomes a MAJOR third down)

Proportional Canon: Also called canon in augmentation or diminution. The follower(s) restate the melody of the leader with the rhythm doubled (or halved, or 2/3 as long, etc.) The follower(s) may start after the leader or simultaneously.

Retrograde Canon (Cancrizans, or crab canon): The melody is stated forward & backward simultaneously.

Riddle or enigmatic canon: A cryptic canon in which the solution is not obvious or the composer intentionally obfuscated his intent. Bach included several of these in the *Musical Offering*.

Spiral Canon: A canon that moves to a new pitch level when repeated. Ex: Bach's canon a 2 per tonus of the *Musical Offering*.