

Updates for *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach*

Chapter 7

The “Legrenzi” subject of BWV 574 is by Bononcini (see Zitellini 2013).

Newly discovered manuscript copies of BWV 913 and 914 by a pupil of Bach show that these works had already reached their familiar forms within a year or so of the composer’s appointment at Weimar (see Blanken 2013, 89–93); hence the early version of the D-minor toccata is likely to have been composed before 1708, as has been generally supposed—but it is good to have documentary support for this.

Chapter 8

Tatlow (2015, 254–66) presents a strong argument, based on her theory of “proportional parallelism” involving the counting of measures within a multi-movement work or a set of pieces, that the twelve transcriptions copied by Johann Bernhard Bach in the manuscript P 280 constitute an integral collection assembled by Sebastian himself. She argues further that certain alterations in the number of measures within several of the transcriptions could reflect Bach’s own revisions to achieve the type of numerical proportions between pieces at which he aimed in other collections. This gives potential new meaning to Forkel’s famous comment that by studying Vivaldi’s works Bach learned “order, connection, and proportion” (*Ordnung, Zusammenhang und Verhältniß*; Forkel 1802, 24, cited by Tatlow 2015, 256).

In the Vivaldi concerto arrangement BWV 973, I have concluded after long practice that the fingering shown in example 8.1 is impractical, at least on the instruments on which I have tried to use it, and that it is effective after all to play instead on divided keyboards in mm. 56b–61a of the third movement. This can be prepared by using divided keyboards earlier in all three movements, the right hand playing on the lower (forte) manual, the left on the upper (piano) one, as follows: in first movement, mm. 22–35a, 46–69, 76b–89, and 117–24a; throughout the second movement; and in third movement, mm. 8b–12a, 21 (note 2)–27, and 49b–55a.

Sardelli (2005, 75–7) argues plausibly that the model of BWV 979 is an early work of Vivaldi, not Torelli, and the original concerto is now listed as R. 813. Because the argument rests almost entirely on style analysis, the re-attribution to Vivaldi cannot be considered entirely conclusive, but the case *against* Torelli’s authorship does seem strong.

Chapter 10

The discussion of formal proportions within the designs of individual inventions (pp. 190–91) needs to be revised in the face of Tatlow’s indisputable finding that Bach planned his finished collections of pieces to demonstrate certain “proportional parallelisms.” The inventions and sinfonias constitute one such collection (see esp. Tatlow 2015, 164–72). Therefore the proportions between sections of individual pieces must have been subject to revision depending on Bach’s scheme for the collection as a whole. In other words, the changes that Bach made in the inventions in E minor and A minor, expanding the final section of each, were not motivated in the first instance by considerations of tonal design (as argued on p. 191), although the result in each case was a more mature or compelling example of just such a form.

Chapter 11

An eighteenth-century term for the “metrical playfulness” of the prelude in A seems to have been *imbroglio*, although the sources cited by Petersen (2016) all postdate Bach and give much simpler illustrations than the one shown in example 11.12 (cf. the discussion of the courante in the Fifth Partita on p. 336). In fact, many instances shown by eighteenth-century theorists, and by Petersen in four Bach arias, are little more than traditional hemiolas or suspensions. The term, which the theorist Riepel equated with Italian *confusione* and German *Verwirrung* (Petersen 2016, 138), does not quite convey Bach’s more purposeful technique, which approaches true polymeter in the examples cited in the present book from Bach’s keyboard works.

Chapter 15

Joshua Rifkin has shown that the scherzo of the Third Partita was suggested not by Bonporti’s violin pieces—though the latter may well have been where Bach first saw such a title—but by keyboard pieces that Conrad Friedrich Hurlebusch played during a visit to Leipzig. Rifkin (2007, 31–43) convincingly places the latter in 1726, the year before Bach published the partita, with its added scherzo movement. This point arises in the course of an argument for dating the B-minor orchestral suite BWV 1067, or at least its final movement, the Battinerie, to this same period. Rifkin shows that the parallels between the latter movement and the scherzo include their 2/4 meter, triadic opening motive, and staccato bass that outlines a rising triad in the opening measures. The two are also in the same key, A minor, if one accepts Rifkin’s strong argument that the suite was originally a whole step lower. To be sure, Hurlebusch’s scherzos do not seem to open in the middle of the measure, as Bach does, and Rifkin’s “scamper[ing]” flute in the Battinerie (Rifkin 2007, 73) may be a mis-characterization if one accepts Williams’s argument that 2/4 does not, for Bach, imply an especially quick tempo. That argument is in fact strengthened by the *Vivace* marking of the one Hurlebusch scherzo that Rifkin gives as an example; *vivace* is used for minuets but not for very quick pieces in the early eighteenth century.

Chapter 18

Two typographical errors:

on page 390, line 15, for the he read he

on page 394, lines 9–10 from bottom, for some respects in read in some respects

Gregory Butler, repudiating his earlier findings (1983a), has subsequently argued that it is a “myth” that Bach intended the *Art of Fugue* to include the incomplete *Fuga a 3 soggetti* or that the latter was meant to incorporate the subject of the *Art of Fugue* as its fourth theme (or third countersubject; see Butler 2008, 116–7). In fact, the argument that the piece was to have appeared on six pages of the original publication—the basis of the reconstruction in both editions of the present book—was always provisional, due to the uncertain reading of what Butler originally took to be altered page numbers in the print. But there can be no question that the incomplete fugue is a late Bach fragment standing in need of explanation (if not completion); nor can there be any uncertainty that the subject of the *Art of Fugue* does combine contrapuntally with the three subjects of the fragment, as Nottebohm and countless authors since have recognized. Butler finds Nottebohm’s “syncopation of the principal subject . . . forced and unnatural” (Butler 2008, 112n. 24), but this is to disregard the solution shown in example 18.9. Butler’s ingenious suggestion that Bach might have intended the work as a contribution for Menzel’s Corresponding Society is necessarily speculative. By the same token, it remains speculation that a single quadruple mirror fugue in four parts, never composed, might have filled out

the “other basic plan” (*andere Grund Plan*) mentioned in a mysterious addition by Agricola to the autograph fragment.

Running counter to Butler’s argument is the revised, later, dating for the incomplete fugue (and for the final work on the B-Minor Mass) offered by Milka (2010). Milka has elaborated his own argument for the inclusion of the fugue within the larger work in a book which, as it is available only in Russian (2009), is inaccessible to me. But whether the *Fuga a 3 soggetti* belongs to the *Art of Fugue* may, like similar questions concerning the early version of Contrapunctus 10a and the duo version of Contrapunctus 13, be a matter of definition. It is clear enough that, as with the *Musical Offering*, the Goldberg Variations, and other works, Bach continued to elaborate and add to the *Art of Fugue* after its initial plan had been completed. As with the canons composed on the royal fugue subject or over the Goldberg bass line, the relationship of the new movements to the main or original portion of the collection is uncertain only if one insists that a particular sequence or design must be definitive.

Tatlow (2015, 253), arguing as elsewhere that Bach completed a work such as the *Art of Fugue* by finalizing a set of “proportional parallelisms,” concludes that the “simplest” plan and the one most likely to have been adopted at the end by Bach was the one that included a *Fuga a 3 soggetti* of 280 measures. That Bach, however, really intended the missing 41 measures to remain uncomposed, represented in the printed work by blank space as a “task for Heaven” (a possibility raised by Tatlow 2015, 247 and 254), seems uncharacteristic of a composer who everywhere else rose to the challenges he created for himself.

Appendix A

On BWV 905, the reference to a “dropping out of the bass” in mm. 3–4 of the prelude is an error for the “dropping out of the upper parts.”

Appendix B

On p. 448, no. 29 in P 225 is the C-major prelude from WTC1, not WTC2.

Bibliography

The article cited as Rifkin (n.d.) is the one now cited here as Rifkin (2007).

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Updated August 10, 2016