

Fugue Lesson

Major sections in bold, with double bars

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Technical points in regular

Exposition.

Artistic advice in italics

Answer in the dominant

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Subject stated.

end of subject

begin counter-subject

I could have ended the subject with just a half note on [rest], but I knew this little flourish would add interest. Later on it becomes important in development. It also introduces the movement that will drive the piece.

S

A

T

B

6

6

6

6

end of answer.

modulation back to the tonic key

clash

clash

resolve

resolve

end of counter-subject

note the suspensions I've employed here. Suspensions add harmonic interest and are highly desirable in contrapuntal writing; one must be careful to resolve them properly. The little jumps are often called "escape tones," and are also desirable. Mozart used suspensions similarly in his famous set of variations on this theme.

Subject stated, back in the t

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2
11

S

A

11

T

8

11

B

this held "common tone" in the alto line here is another desirable choice. It creates a situation of oblique motion, and anchors what is going on in the soprano and bass.

The last voice could have entered here with its Answer. But notice I added a measure here to solidify the tonality. I didn't want to have the answer enter with a B in the bass. This was an artistic judgment call on my part. You will make many such decisions in writing a fugue, as with any kind of composition; avoid taking too much license in the Exposition, though; as the fugue progresses, you can take more license legally, so save it.

15

S

A

15

T

8

15

B

Answer in the dominant.

note that when the bass voice is not stating the subject, it takes on more of the characteristics of a bass line, as it would in any other kind of composition

End of Exposition.

1st Episode.

As you begin the 1st Episode, start thinking about which voice you want to enter next, and take that voice out of the texture as soon as it is practicable. Not only is it customary to "give that voice a rest," as it were, changing the texture adds interest and makes the ear appreciate the full texture more. Continue to consider this as the fugue progresses. Always think a little ahead.

18

S

A

T

B

8

Passing dissonance here. It's OK and even desirable as long as you anchor the tonality regularly.

If you have reached the end of the Exposition, all voices having entered successfully, you're doing well. This is, honestly, the most difficult thing to accomplish. From here it is not necessary to Answer as was done strictly in the exposition.

I liked the bass line in the previous measure, so I decided to develop it in this episode. Notice how the alto and tenor take it up and "play" with it in a harmonic sequence. Sequences are almost indispensable in fugal writing. They assist in development and help you get from place to place harmonically. See how quickly I've modulated to B-minor? Very handy and desirable.

harmonic statement of subject - intervals changed to fit the prevailing harmony at point of entry.

21

S

A

T


B

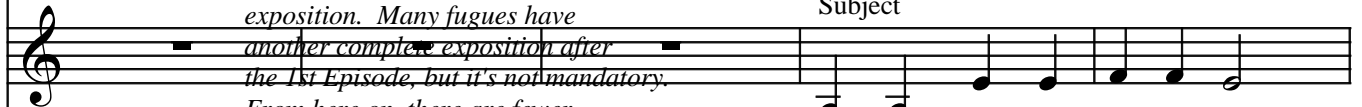
8


21


21

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S 

A 


T 


B 

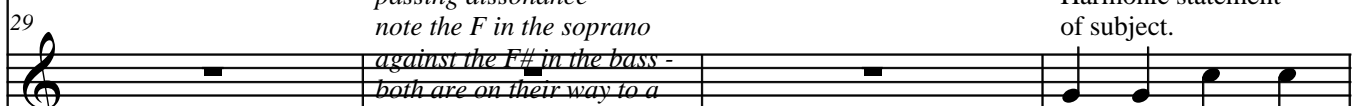
Technically, this little episode constitutes an incomplete exposition, which is allowable after the main exposition. Many fugues have another complete exposition after the 1st Episode, but it's not mandatory. From here on, there are fewer absolute requirements. You must be more vigilant, however, because errors are easier to make from here on.


Subject

oops! the tenor is above the alto! OK once in a while - here it works, but use it sparingly if you must, or the voices lose their individuality. Avoid it altogether if you can.

S 

A 

T 

B 

embellishment of the subject.

passing dissonance - note the F in the soprano against the F# in the bass - both are on their way to a consonant point of arrival, and it works.

Harmonic statement of subject.

33

S

A

T

B

Subject

(augmentation is a compositional technique you can use to "spice up" your fugue. It's basically showing off, but it can be very cool)

notice the point of imitation between the alto and tenor here, a measure apart. Very desirable.

38

S

A

T

B

Sequence

I had to add an extra measure to balance this sequence, but I was able to make the cool "cross relation" between the C in the tenor and C# in the soprano work here.

42

S

A

42

T

8

42

B

46

S

Full harmonic statement of subject in "stretto"

Partial statement of subject

46

T

8

46

B

Stretto is when a voice begins a statement of the subject before the previous voice has finished its statement - another "bells and whistles" technique.

important point of arrival here; it seemed time for a change in texture and character, so I dropped to two voices and changed the way they interact.

Episode over subject in augmentation

50

S

A

50

T

8

50

B

Harmonic statement of subject
in stretto and augmentation

Detailed description: This musical score is for a fugue lesson, specifically an episode over the subject in augmentation. It consists of four staves labeled S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), and B (Bass). The Soprano staff (S) begins at measure 50 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The Alto staff (A) also begins at measure 50 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The Tenor staff (T) begins at measure 50 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, featuring a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The Bass staff (B) begins at measure 50 with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The text 'Harmonic statement of subject in stretto and augmentation' is placed between the Tenor and Bass staves.

NOTE: The fugue could go on indefinitely from here, alternating between subject statements and episodes. I have chosen to begin heading toward the end, employing advanced techniques

Continuation of Episode
over pedal point

55

S

A

55

T

8

55

B

Pedal Point - holding a note (usually in the bass) against
contrasting activity in other voices

Detailed description: This musical score is a continuation of the episode over the subject in augmentation. It consists of four staves labeled S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), and B (Bass). The Soprano staff (S) begins at measure 55 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The Alto staff (A) also begins at measure 55 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The Tenor staff (T) begins at measure 55 with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, featuring a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The Bass staff (B) begins at measure 55 with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The text 'Pedal Point - holding a note (usually in the bass) against contrasting activity in other voices' is placed between the Tenor and Bass staves.

60 *development of subject material*

S

A *point of imitation in canon*

T

B

65 **Subject** **Episode**

S

A *Partial statement of subject in stretto*

T *partial statement of subject in stretto, "inverted" (upside down)*

B *partial statement of subject in stretto, inverted.*

71 Subject

S

A

71

T

8

71

B

point of imitation between tenor and alto

75 Coda.

S

A

75

T

8

75

B

*The fugue is technically over at this point.
The purpose of the coda is to "wrap it up with a bow" - release the built up tension and come to a satisfying ending.*

79

S

partial statement of subject in Coda,
with partial augmentation.

A

79

T

8

79

B

6

Detailed description: This page contains four musical staves for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). Each staff begins with a measure number '79'. The Soprano and Alto parts are in treble clef, while the Tenor and Bass parts are in treble and bass clef respectively. The Soprano staff has a '79' above the first measure. The Alto staff has a '79' above the first measure and the text 'partial statement of subject in Coda, with partial augmentation.' centered above the staff. The Tenor staff has a '79' above the first measure and an '8' below the first measure. The Bass staff has a '79' above the first measure and a '6' below the final measure. Each staff ends with a double bar line.