Analyzing Fugue: A Schenkerian Approach by William Renwick. Harmonologia Series No. 8 (edited by Joel Lester). Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1995.

Review by Robert Gauldin

In recent years focus has tended to shift from Heinrich Schenker's canonical principles of hierarchical voice leading to his comments on musical form, as formulated in the final section of *Der freie Satz*.[1] While Schenker's middleground and background levels are eminently suited for revealing the tonal structure of such designs as ternary and sonata, their application to other formal genres raises certain questions.[2] Aside from his essay on organicism in the fugue, which deals with the C Minor fugue in *WTC* I, Schenker rarely ventured into contrapuntal genres.[3] In fact, only a handful of fugal analyses exist in subsequent Schenkerian literature.[4] It is

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[1]See his *Free Composition*. 2 vols. Translated and edited by Ernst Oster. (New York: Longman, 1979), I:128-45.

[2]In this regard, Joel Garland and Charles Smith have recently explored specific aspects of rondo and variation form, respectively. See Garland's "Form, Genre, and Style in the Eighteenth-Century Rondo," *Music Theory Spectrum* 17/1 (Spring 1995), 27-52, and Smith's "Head-Tones, Mediants, Reprises: A Formal Narrative of Brahms' Handel Variations," paper delivered at the Eastman School of Music, March 1995. In the latter, interest centers around Variation 21, where the original *Urlinie* $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ in Bb major is now set as $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ in the relative minor key. A similar problem of *Urlinie* reinterpretation occurs in Brahms' Haydn Variations Op. 56; here the tonal goal of the first reprise in Variations 6 and 8 eschews the original tonic for VI# (G major) and III# (D major), respectively. The possibility of linking consecutive variations to allow a 5-line descent to tonic is discussed by Anne Marie deZeeuw in her "Overall Structure and Design in a Variation Form," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 1/1 (Spring 1987), 39-56.

[3]See "Das Organische der Fuge," in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* 2:55-95, translated by Sylvan Kalib in *Thirteen Essays from the Three Yearbooks Das Meisterwerk in der Musik by Heinrich Schenker: An Annotated Translation*." (Ph.D. dissertation: Northwestern University, 1973), 2:245-320.

[4]The most familiar is Carl Schachter's "Bach's Fugue in Bb major, Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I, No. XXI," *The Music Forum* III (1973), 239-67. For a less rigorous Schenkerian reduction, see Wallace Berry's analysis of the D#-minor Fugue in *WTC* I, *In Theory Only* 2/10 (January 1977), 4-7.

therefore refreshing to see that this lacuna has at long last been filled by William Renwick's *Analyzing Fugue: A Schenkerian Approach.*

As the title of the book suggests, Renwick assumes a prior knowledge of the principles of Schenkerian analysis and the various symbols and notational procedures associated with this system.[5] In his preface, Renwick raises a number of questions that he subsequently addresses. These may be summarized by his query: "In what ways do fugues, each of which develops its own unique form, reflect Schenker's conceptions of formal structure in the large?" (page vii). In other words, is it possible to posit generalized voice-leading paradigms and procedures that apply to the entire fugal repertoire in tonal music? This review will attempt to ascertain how well Renwick is able to answer these initial questions. Following an overview of its content and organization, and some comments on specific topics or details, the latter portion of this review will provide a broader critical evaluation of the work.

As an introduction to the fugal genre, Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the significance of thoroughbass in fugal composition of the Baroque period. Renwick systematically traces successive contrapuntal elaborations of note-against-note exercises to their culmination in the *partimento* fugue, accompanied with generous examples from Bach's figured-bass manual,[6] Niedt, the Princess Anne studies of Handel, and the Langloz manuscript. Complementary to this topic are theoretical constructs and stereotypical patterns of tonal structure, such as the *regola del l'ottova* and harmonic sequences.

From here, it is but a small step to a consideration of the voice-leading characteristics of fugue subjects and their answers in Chapter 2. After listing the underlying models de-

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[5]Some aspects of Renwick's foreground sketches will be critiqued later in this review.

[6]Most scholars agree that this manual was complied by Bach's students. See Hedi Siegel's "A Source for Schenker's Study of Thoroughbass: His Annotated Copy of J. S. Bach's *Generalbassbuchlein*," in *Schenker Studies*, Edited by Hedi Siegel. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15-28.

duced by Schenker himself in his analyses of fugal subjects (pages 20-21), Renwick mentions the question of tonal answers and the harmonic pivot (usually I = IV) that links the end of the subject to the beginning of the dominant answer. Going beyond his earlier dissertation and 1991 article,[7] Renwick proceeds to establish no less than thirty-three subject-answer paradigms, which are laid out in pages 26-27, 55-56, and 64-65. Contrary to traditional classifications based on the initial scale degree(s), the three main categories into which Renwick groups his subject/answer models are determined by their cadential close: non-modulating subjects that end on I or V, and modulating subjects that end on V.[8] Many of the subjects that feature a stepwise descent from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{5}$ are preceded by preparatory *Anstiegs*. Each successive paradigm is discussed in detail and illustrated by copious quotations from the literature. I applaud Renwick's original approach, classifications, and accompanying analyses as a major achievement.

Before broaching the issue of tonal structure in the exposition, Renwick proceeds to establish the implied voice-leading complex of the subject and answer, and demonstrates some typical harmonic supports for each. This discussion leads logically to a consideration of invertible counterpoint in Chapter 3. Eschewing the customary manner of calculating harmonic intervals that retain their consonance under inversion (3rd = 6th, etc.), Renwick establishes an underlying three-voice model for invertible counterpoint that forms the basis for subsequent inversional permutations:

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[7] *Voice-Leading Patterns in the Fugal Expositions of J. S. Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier* (Ph.D.. dissertation, City University of New York, 1987). and "Structural Patterns in Fugue Subjects and Fugal Expositions," *Music Theory Spectrum* 13/1 (1991), 197-218.

[8] For a "front-end" approach, consult Marpurg's extensive groupings in his venerable *Abhandlung von der Fuge I.* His oft-belabored approach seems to neglect any implied harmonic background, such the typical pivot tonic chord at the entry of the dominant answer. Gerald Krumbholtz's instructive discussion of this portion of the treatise may be found in his *Friedrich Wilhelm Marparg's Abhandlung von der Fuge (1753-54)* (Ph.D. dissertation: Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 1995).

(1) $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$	(2) $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$	(3) $\hat{8}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{8}$	
(2) $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$	(3) $\hat{8}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{8}$	(1) $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$	(etc.)
(3) $\hat{8}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{8}$	(1) $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$	(2) $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$	

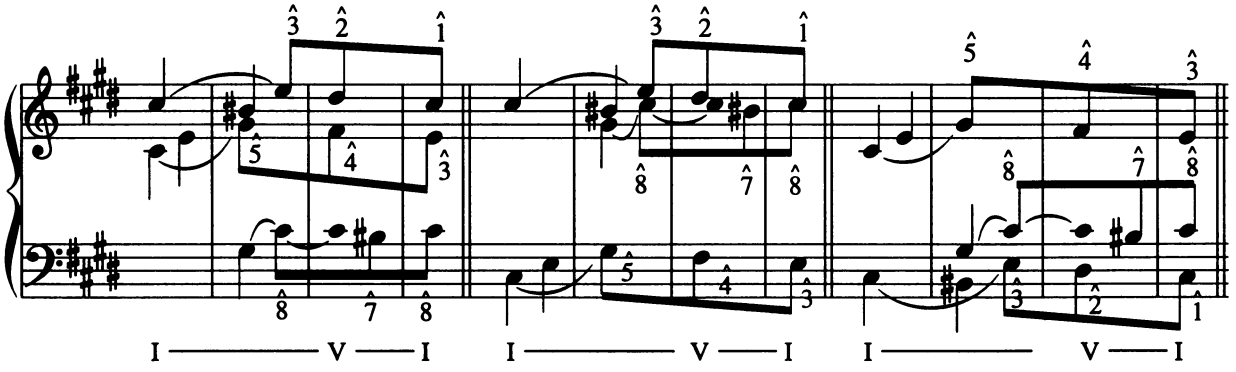
While double counterpoint normally employs Nos. 1/2 and 2/3 in superimposition, the remaining part is often explicit through melodic elaboration or implied voices; triple counterpoint utilizes all three. This basic model neatly "plugs into" the subject/answer paradigms established earlier.

Renwick's innovative reexamination of the age-old phenomenon of invertible counterpoint is in complete agreement with his concern for the larger voice-leading characteristics of passages and is entirely appropriate for his purposes. As Example 1 shows, the problem of the initial tonic triad and its possible $^{6}_{4}$ position upon inversion can be largely avoided, since in many cases the structural scale degrees arrive *after* the initial tonic has been established, so that the $^{6}_{4}$ assumes a cadential role.

As a way of viewing invertible counterpoint through voice leading, my further application of Renwick's paradigm beyond the examples in the text convinces me that it holds up remarkably well, especially in the counterpointing of subject material.

Renwick also includes some examples of episodic double/triple counterpoint which cadence on the harmonically-open dominant (pages 100-102). However, on rare occasions one may encounter an open sequential episode (by second or fifth), whose parsing into segments of triple counterpoint is difficult to reconcile with his basic voice-leading paradigms. For instance, in Bach's F Minor Three-Part Invention, perhaps his ultimate achievement in triple counterpoint, the first episode, which moves from the exposition to the mediant subject presentation (measures 9-11), employs a series of tonicized fifth relations, as sketched in Example 2. The triple counterpoint manipulations exchange by the half

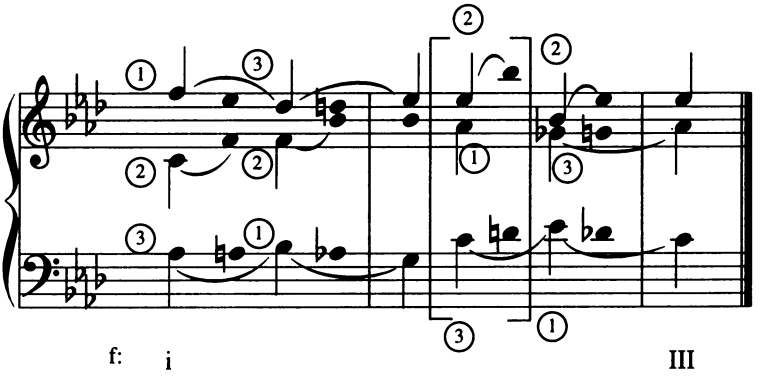
Example 1. Renwick's triple-counterpoint paradigm in Bach's C♯ Minor Fugue (*WTC* I)



(mm. 59-62) (mm. 76-79) (mm. 81-84)

measure (although Bach inserts a statement in the second bar that momentarily breaks the fifth descent); this episode later occurs in measures 20-23. Another open 5-6 sequence in triple counterpoint appears in measures 15-17 and 28-30.

Example 2. Triple-counterpoint episode in Bach's F Minor Three-Part Invention, mm. 9-11



Since the initial entries of the exposition represent the most regimented and predictable section of a fugue, they are ideally suited for the construction of underlying structural paradigms. Renwick has not disappointed us in this respect; the application of stereotypical voice-leading patterns to his previous categories is nothing short of brilliant. In Chapter 4, he states in his general observations on the exposition that the tonal closure typical of three-voice points of imitation (I-V-I) is "all that is really required to fulfill the basic tonal and motivic requirements" (page 111). I am not completely convinced of his predilection for three-voice expositions, as this view disregards most Baroque organ and choral fugues that feature four voices. Although Renwick does include some quadruple entries in his modulating voice-leading paradigms (page 129), in most cases the last answer closes in tonic rather than the usual dominant key. In his concluding section on the exposition, he poses the question of whether larger voice-leading "correlations were . . . part of an instinctive or indeed conscious knowledge of principles akin to those presented

here" (page 135). I, for one, would answer in the affirmative. The occurrence of these persuasive repetitive patterns is in part verified by his illustrative dual analysis of the pair of C Major fugues from *WTC*, revealing the remarkable similarity in their underlying voice leading (pages 135-37).

The relations between sequence and fugal episode in Chapter 5 is the most comprehensive discussion I have encountered on this topic. Renwick takes the traditional root movements (by second, third, and fifth), and successively examines in great detail the sequential patterns that result from each, as well as their subsequent incorporation in fugal episodes. Although his supporting examples and analyses are comprehensive in scope, I am occasionally puzzled by his allusions to the use of incidental canonic technique in episodes. I would prefer a more conventional definition of canon as strict imitation. The "canons" in Examples 5-16b and 5-16d both contain momentary lapses, while Example 5-12 hardly qualifies as a "quadruple canon," which normally implies the presence of four separate melodic strands; this latter passage simply represents a *two-voice* canon with intervallic doubling at the tenth and third; Example 5-19 (*cf.* my Example 5a on page 110) is, in my view, a sequence by falling fifth relations that employs triple counterpoint in what Daniel Harrison calls an A, C, B succession.[9]

Renwick's treatment of some of the standard contrapuntal devices (such as inversion, canon, augmentation, and diminution) is less comprehensive. While he occasionally alludes to contrary motion or thematic inversion, mentioning in passing that the mediant scale degree is normally the axis note (pages 33-34), he reserves the majority of his discussion for a consideration of stretto in Chapter 6. He speculates (quite correctly, I believe) that Bach's knowledge of the fundamental characteristics of fugue subjects allowed him to anticipate their later incorporation in stretto, as revealed in his

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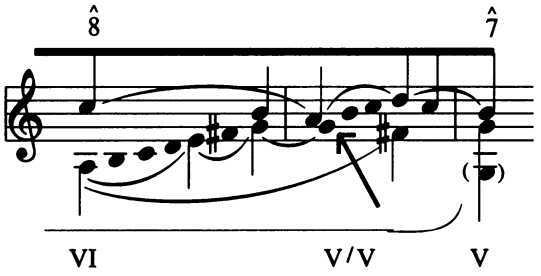
[9]Daniel Harrison, "Some Group Properties of Triple Counterpoint and Their Influence on Compositions by J. S. Bach," *Journal of Music Theory* 32 (1988), 23-49.

famous remark to Carl Phillipe that Renwick quotes on page 165. Renwick cites five basic situations that allow the incorporation of stretto, commencing with chordal prolongation (usually I or V) and concluding with sequential stretto. The wealth of material in this chapter is especially gratifying, since the majority of discussions on stretto in the theoretical literature resort to a kind of "pick, hunt, and good luck" approach. In addition to Renwick's observation that most stretti occur at the intervals of the octave and fifth/fourth, one might even posit that they customarily appear in or near the realm of the tonic key. Indeed, I would almost go so far as to hypothesize that most "stretto fugues" rarely venture outside the tonic and dominant areas; consult the C Major (I), D Minor (I), and D Minor (II) fugues in *WTC*. Since such fugues focus more on the exploitation of contrapuntal devices and less on modulating episodes and recurring subject entries in related keys, they are less dependent on the establishment of elaborate tonal schemes.

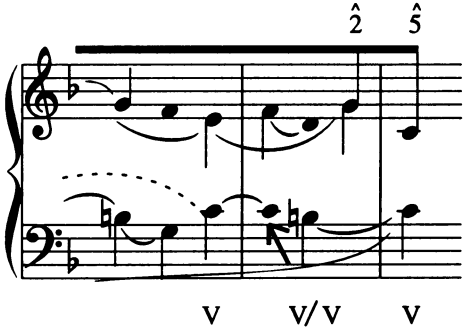
Chapter 7 concludes with a consideration of overall voice leading in complete fugues. Renwick selects three fugues from *WTC* (the F♯ Major from Book I, and the C Major and B♭ Minor from Book II) for his analyses, discussing in some detail their design, tonal structure, and fundamental line. I would have personally preferred that his choices include one of the larger organ fugues, as they are often unduly neglected in fugal analysis. His graphing is perfectly convincing in these instances; all three display a five-line, which is somewhat interesting in the case of the first two, since Schenker tends toward three-line backgrounds in major-mode pieces. Although I seriously doubt whether one might uncover an interrupted *Urlinie* in fugal writing, the author is mute on this point. The background of the E Minor "Wedge" Fugue BWV 548 for organ might pose an interesting case, since the piece is an exact "da capo" fugue, where measures 1-59 = 175-244.

Renwick's incorporation of Schenkerian notational procedure at various hierarchical voice-leading levels is quite orthodox. However, his use of stemmed and unstemmed note

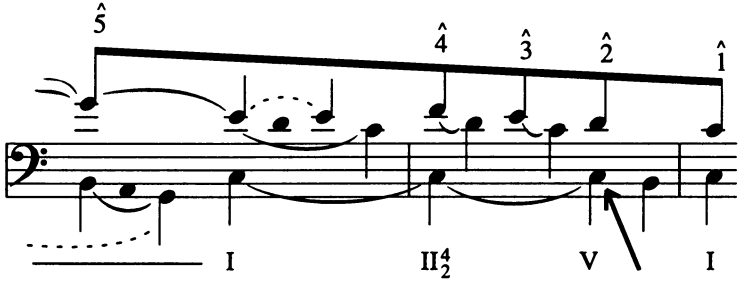
Example 3a. Bach: C Major Fugue (*WTC* II), mm. 7-9 (Renwick's 2-8)



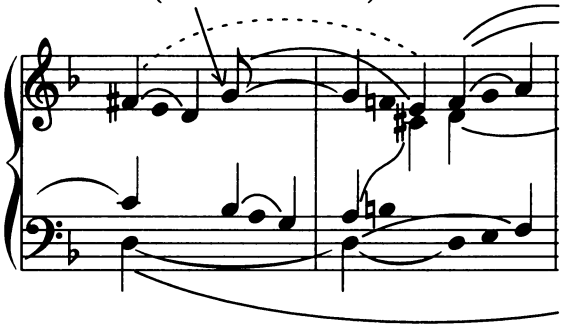
Example 3b. Fischer: Fuga X in F Major, mm. 7-9 (Renwick's 2-39)



Example 3c. Bach: Cantata BVW 21-II-5, mm. 17-19 (Renwick's 2-47)

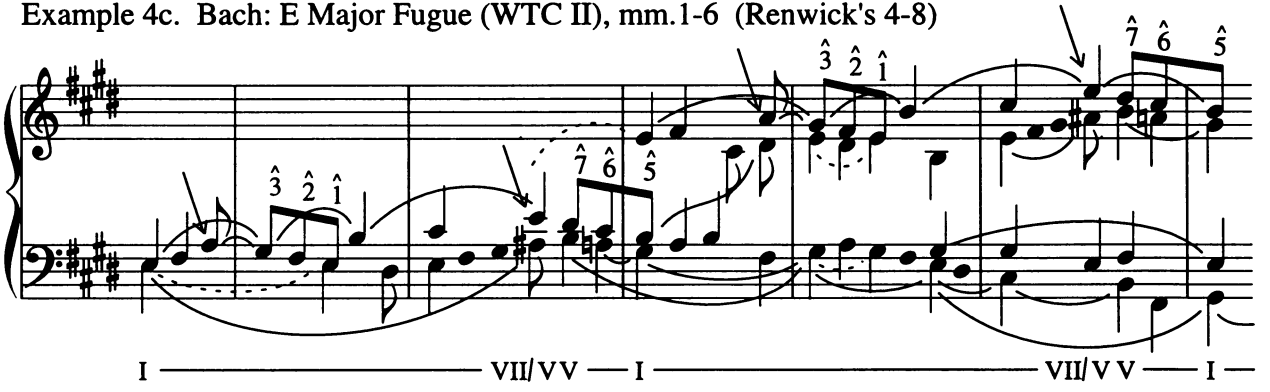


Example 4a. Bach: F Major Fugue (*WTC* I), mm. 38-39 (Renwick's 5-30)



Example 4b. Gibbons: A Voluntary of Four Parts, m. 4 (Renwick's 6-27)

Example 4c. Bach: E Major Fugue (WTC II), mm.1-6 (Renwick's 4-8)



heads in several of the foreground reductions seems confusing. For instance, the concluding bass suspensions in Examples 2-8 and 2-39 are notated with unstemmed notes heads, but the one in Ex. 2-47 uses a stemmed note. (These are reproduced here as my Example 3.)

Likewise, his incorporation of stemmed eighth notes appears arbitrary to me. Most of the foreground analyses get along without them, but when they are used, their function sometimes seems contradictory. Example 4 reproduces Renwick's Examples 5-30, 6-27 and 4-8. In 5-30, stemmed eighth notes are employed to denote a long-range neighboring motion, acting as the suspension *preparation* of seventh chords, while in 6-27 they signify the *suspension* itself! In 4-8, why is the third note of the subject indicated with eighth notes in the tonic presentations of the subject (measures 1 and 4) but not the equivalent notes in the dominant entries (measures 3 and 6)?

On occasion, Renwick's surface reductions seem excessively elaborate for his purpose. In his discussion of episodes (Chapter 5), some of the excerpts might be further simplified to reveal their underlying sequential patterns, which is the main point of the discussion; for instance, Renwick's Examples 5-12 and 5-30 might resemble the reductions in my Examples 5a and 5b.

Finally, I take issue with several of Renwick's harmonic analyses; the concluding I^{6-5} (?) at the end of the second system of Example 3-29 is a case in point. (See Example 6a.) I cannot hear Bach's setting in Example 3-30b (my Example 6b) in terms of B♭ Major, as that key is then required to get along without its fourth scale degree (E♭); perhaps a vacillation between D Minor and F Major would be more appropriate.[10]

The book is relatively free of errata; one exception is Example 2-8 that cites the incorrect volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. While the extensive bibliography and list of

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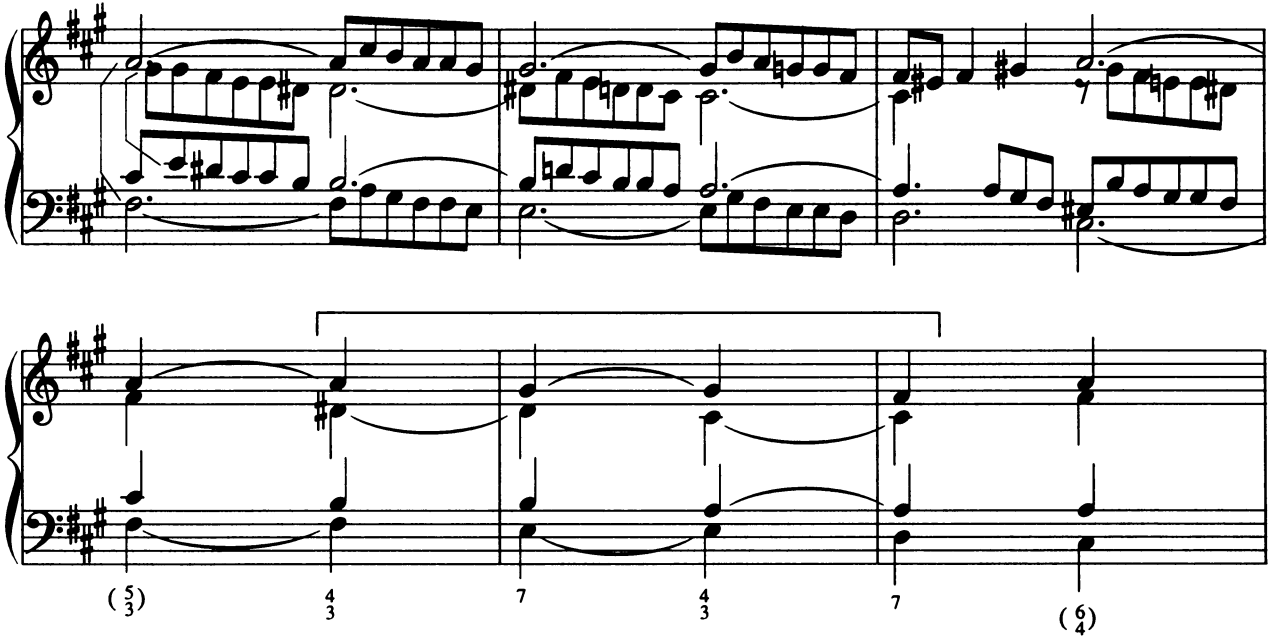
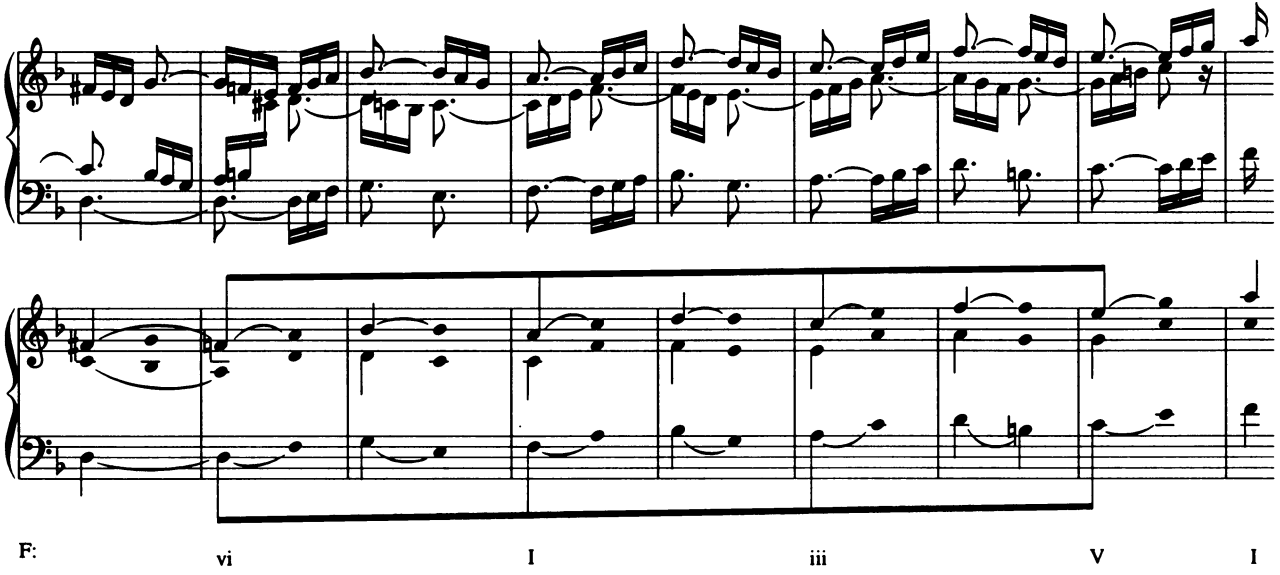
[10]I would like to thank David Beach for his input in my consideration of these passages.

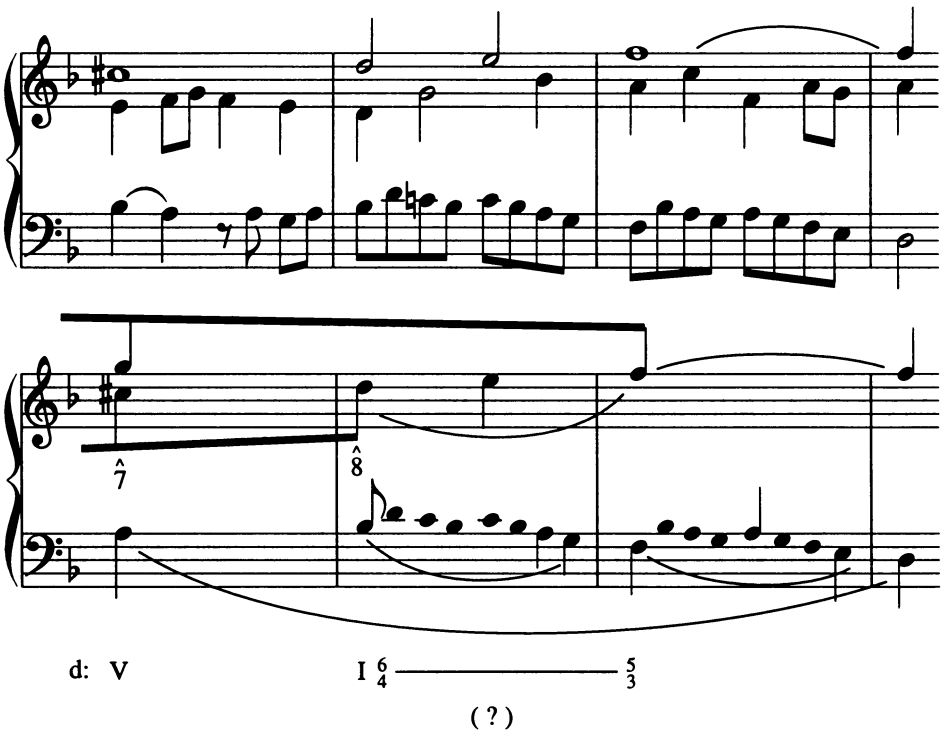
Example 5a. Bach: F♯ Minor Fugue (*WTC* II), mm. 35-37



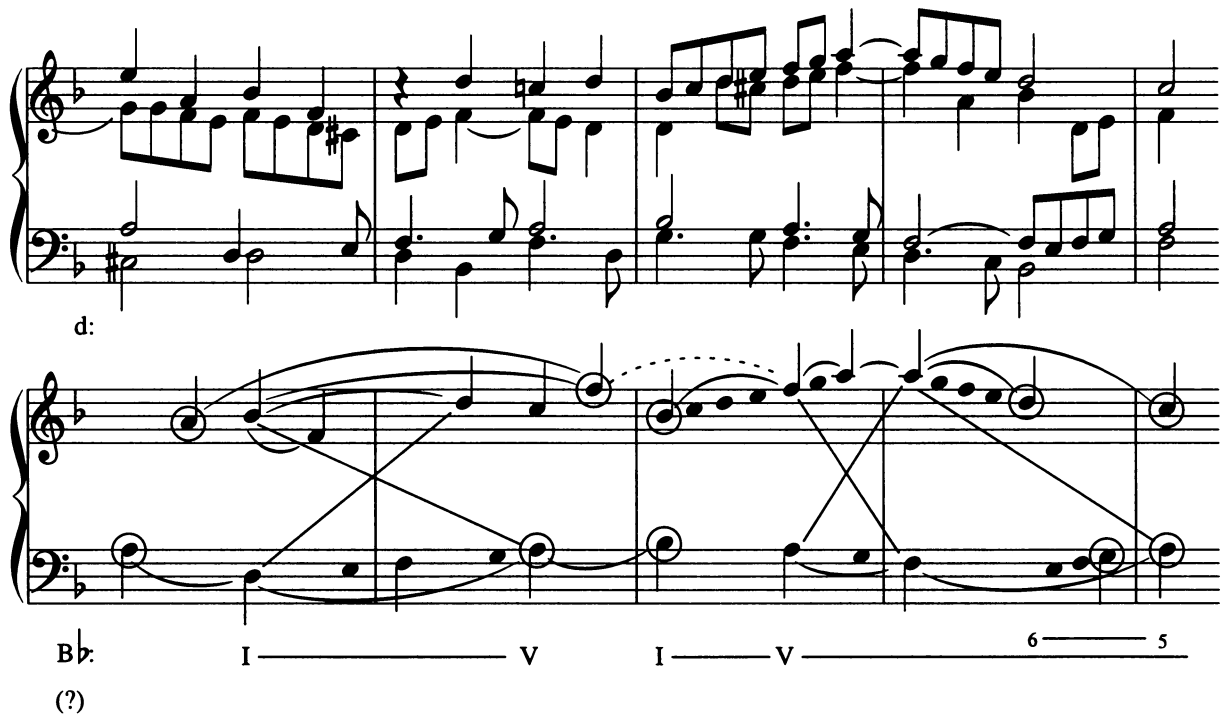
Example 5b. Bach: F Major Fugue (*WTC* I), mm. 38-44



Example. 6a. Bach: Contrapuntus 9 (*Art of the Fugue*), mm. 39-42. (Renwick's 3-29)



Example 6b. Bach: Contrapuntus 10 (Art of the Fugue), mm. 66-70. (Renwick's 3-30b)



compositions from which the musical examples are drawn are valuable appendages, the book is in dire need of a general index.

In his concluding chapter, Renwick briefly touches on Rothstein's terms *outer form* (design) versus *inner form* (tonal structure).[11] Without a doubt, most previous fugal analysis has placed an undue emphasis on the former. In contrast, Renwick states that from a Schenkerian point of view, fugal form "develops essentially out of tonal structure and voice leading," citing Schenker's own words that it is these elements that "alone make a fugue an organic whole" (page 190). While I would not deny the primacy of tonal structure, at the same time we must be careful not to relegate the issue of design to the dust bin. Bach was always the teacher, and in many of his fugues he "instructs" us on the use of specific devices or key relationships. For instance, most existing analyses of the familiar C Minor Fugue (*WTC* I) fail to note that this piece represents a "study" in invertible counterpoint, employing both double (at the octave and twelfth) and triple varieties. Examples of "stretto, inversion, or canonic fugues" abound in his output, as Renwick demonstrates in his analysis of the B♭ Minor fugue (*WTC* II) in Chapter 7. In addition, a "scheme of keys" may well represent Bach's basic premise in a particular piece. In the "Great" G Minor organ fugue, BWV 542, a recurrent cycle of fifths occurs at the surface level in almost all of the subject presentations and episodes, while at the larger level the succession of key centers outlines a cycle of ascending thirds: i - III - v - VII - (i) - iv - VI - i; the tonic in parentheses substitutes for the diminished supertonic, which cannot be tonicized. Thus, in my opinion, Bach's genius in the fugal genre is revealed *equally* in his handling of outer and inner form. As we begin to move from the middleground toward the background, the tonal structure and voice leading of "well-composed" fugues display an increasing resemblance to one another. On the other hand, in Bach's

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[11]William Rochstein, *Phase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), 104.

case, their individual designs are intentionally and wonderfully diverse. Perhaps Bach's greatest achievement lies in the imagination he brought to bear on fugal design. One has only to examine the Two-Part Inventions to see the distinctive sense of individuality he bestowed on each of these pieces.[12] The *Well Tempered Clavier* is full of such examples; for instance, examine the unique designs of the D♯ Minor (*WTC* I) or the F♯ Major (*WTC* II). It is this trait that lifts Bach like a gigantic monolith above his contemporary composers working in this genre.

Since Renwick's basic thrust is the voice-leading *analyses* of fugues,[13] his book hardly qualifies as a typical tonal counterpoint text. Nevertheless, there are many aspects of his work that have immediate pedagogical application. In particular I would cite the chapters on figured bass, the subject-answer paradigms, the regimented tonal structure of expositions, the detailed discussion on sequences and episodes, and even his categories of stretto. I have always strongly advocated the use of surface reduction as a means of demonstrating the underlying voice leading of fugal passages; Renwick's copious foreground sketches represent a vast repository of this technique. I sincerely hope that much of his research eventually filters down to counterpoint classes at the collegiate level and to future counterpoint texts. I, for one, intend to make valuable use of it.

In conclusion I would like to commend Renwick on his consummate and meticulous scholarship. His knowledge of both the existing literature in this field and the fugal repertory in general is extensive. This expertise permits him to speak from a position of authority on the subject.

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[12]Ellwood Derr has undertaken a comprehensive survey of these works in "The Two-Part Inventions: Bach's Composers' Vademecum," *Music Theory Spectrum* 3 (1981), 26-48.

[13]Although Renwick mentions Daniel Harrison's study of fugal rhetoric in a footnote, this important topic lies largely outside Renwick's more structural organic approach. See Harrison's "Rhetoric and Fugue: An Analytical Application," *Music Theory Spectrum* 7/1 (Spring 1990), 1-42.