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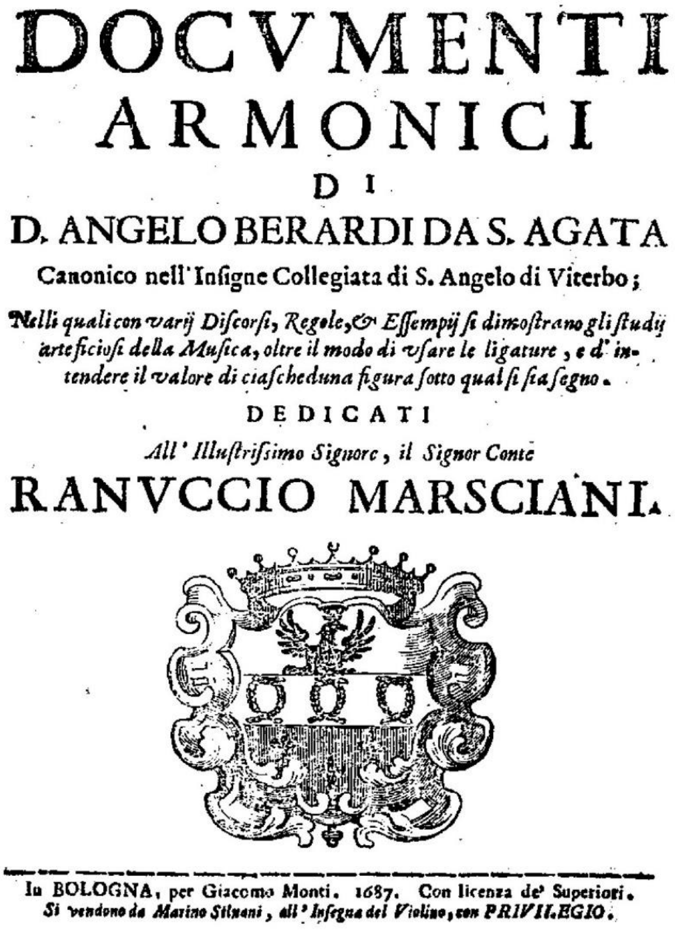

DOCVMENTI
ARMONICI
DI
D. ANGELO BERARDI DA S. AGATA
Canonico nell'Inſigne Collegiata di S. Angelo di Viterbo;
Nelli quali con varij Diſcorſi, Regole, & Eſſempij ſi dimoſtrano gli ſtudij arteficioſi della Muſica, oltre il modo di vſare le ligature, e d' intendere il valore di ciaſcheduna figura ſotto qual ſi ſia ſegno.
DEDICATI
All' Illuſtriſsimo Signore, il Signor Conte
RANVCCIO MARSCIANI.

In BOLOGNA, per Giacomo Monti. 1687. Con licenza de' Superiori.
Si vendono da Marino Silvani, all' Inſegna del Violino, con PRIVILEGIO.

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COVER: Angelo Berardi (compiler), *Documenti armonici ... nelli quali con varii discorsi, regole, & essemplii si dimostrano gli studii arteficiosi della musica, oltre il modo di usare le ligature, e d'intendere il valore di ciascheduna figura sotto qual si sia segno.* (Bologna, 1687), title-page (source: IMSLP).

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Editorial

It may be stating the obvious that much research on historical performance practice is motivated by a wish to change performance in the present. Nevertheless, it is worth pondering a little what is meant by this. Research in this area is often concerned with specific issues such as historically appropriate instruments, tunings, ornamentation and so on. On the other hand, its aims can encompass what the music meant to the composer and his contemporaries and how this might affect a performer's approach. Commenting on modern understanding of J.S. Bach's two books of the *Well-tempered Clavier*, David Ledbetter observed in 2002 that the 'Fugues in particular tend to be treated as abstract entities when for Bach they were rooted in improvisation, sonority, character and expression'.[1] His comment was aimed at a type of analysis with a limited focus on how Bach uses subjects and harmonic structure, though it could equally apply to a tendency in modern performance (typically on piano, and not that uncommon) to highlight the contrapuntal workings by bringing out subject entries in an exaggerated manner. As Ledbetter has shown convincingly, a key to understanding this music comes from grasping the idioms and genres in which the composer worked, or the traditions of performance and composition that Bach reinvented for expressive ends.

Questions such as how Bach exploited the sonorities of a four-octave keyboard instrument may seem more directly relevant to performance today. The issue of improvisation, in contrast, appears somewhat remote; Bach the keyboard virtuoso by definition can never be experienced. As Ledbetter has argued, however, it is important, since one of Bach's principal aims was to equip his students with models for composition and performance. In recent decades much progress has been made in understanding how improvisation was practiced in the baroque period. Treatises such as the *Documenti armonici* (Bologna, 1687) compiled by the Italian composer, theorist and writer Angelo Berardi (1636–94) are now understood to illustrate the types of contrapuntal structures organists were encouraged to imitate.[2] Though they lack comment on performance technique, they show the basic materials Bach and other composers typically had in mind when creating music in fugal style. As Ledbetter shows in the present issue of *EMP*, Bach was doubtless steeped in the theoretical traditions found in seventeenth-century treatises that he sought reinvigorate in his characteristically practical manner. If actual recreation of Bach's practice as an improvising performer seems beyond reach, knowledge of how such materials were transformed certainly gives shape to Bach as a thinking musician interested primarily in moulding his materials to expressive ends – a lesson about performance that many players today might do well to take to heart.

Andrew Woolley
March 2022
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[1] *Bach's Well-tempered Clavier: the 48 Preludes and Fugues* (New Haven and London, 2002), xii.

[2] Many of Berardi's musical writings, including a large proportion of the *Documenti armonici*, were derived from manuscripts written by his teacher, Marco Scacchi (d.1662). See Eric Bianchi, 'Scholars, Friends, Plagiarists: the Musician as Author in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 70 (2017), 61–128.

Improvisation Practices in J.S. Bach's Instrumental Music

David Ledbetter

The last two decades have seen a very lively interest in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century techniques of improvisation, particularly in Italy. It has transformed our view of the music and opened a new door to the analysis and interpretation of the composed repertoire. It is particularly refreshing that this is based on the training practices of musicians of the time and plainly reflects how they themselves thought of their music. This article is intended as an introductory guide for performers to some concepts, sources and literature for improvisation in German traditions as they relate to J.S. Bach. It is a companion to an article surveying German sources for improvised fugue on the organ.[1]

There is no need to stress the importance of improvisation for Bach's functioning as a musician. He was acknowledged as one of the greatest extempore players of his time on organ and clavier and we have descriptions of his extended organ improvisations.[2] For organists, improvising was their primary function, essential to the continuity of services: 'How could organists manage if they weren't able to improvise?' asks Johann Mattheson in 1737, 'they would produce nothing but wooden, memorised and worn-out stuff'.[3] Bach was of course a highly ingenious and original improviser, but he operated within a rich tradition of improvisation, particularly contrapuntal improvisation, where the supreme art was the improvisation of fugue.

Mattheson goes on to regret the lack of tutors for improvisation, and in spite of its importance there is indeed remarkably little specifically about techniques of improvising, particularly contrapuntal improvisation. By far the most thorough demonstration dates back to 1565 in the *Libro llamado arte de tañer fantasia* of Thomas de Sancta Maria. Between Sancta Maria and Friederich Erhardt Niedt's *Musicalische Handleitung* (1700, 1706 (rev. 1721) and 1717), the only equivalently substantial published tutor in the German area is the *Nova instructio pro pulsandis organis spinettis manuchordiis* (1670–75) by the Carmelite friar Spiridion, though there are numerous manuscript and printed *Fundamenta* for *Generalbass*, and there is a rich trove of Italian manuscript treatises, particularly from the eighteenth century, dealing with counterpoint and improvisation.[4] Much of what was taught as thoroughbass and composition must have overlapped with it. Niedt, a pupil of Bach's Jena cousin Johann Nicolaus Bach, did not develop the idea of contrapuntal improvisation beyond a single example of thoroughbass fugue, and even that is little more than an exercise in thoroughbass.[5] Niedt's instructions are exactly what his title says, variations on a given thoroughbass, the method used also by C.P.E. Bach in his chapter 'Von der freyen Fantasie' of 1762.[6] Niedt recommends improvising a series of dance pieces over a common bass, a method of learning improvisation that dates at least from the Renaissance and which goes beyond the usual techniques of partimento realisation. The third part of Niedt's *Handleitung*, on counterpoint, canon, motets etc. continues the thoroughbass approach. He gives voice leading in four parts for standard basses such as ascending and descending scales and harmonic sequences, but deals with canon as a written ('abgeschrieben') exercise. There is little about contrapuntal improvisation as such.[7]

Niedt promised a tutor on improvising fugues, but it never saw the light of publication. It may have been similar to a manuscript 'Anweisung zur Fantasie und zu den Fugen' that Jacob Adlung tells us about in 1758, since both Niedt and Adlung had been in the orbit of J.N. Bach in Jena and Adlung collected such things. Adlung says that his 'Anweisung' was destroyed in a fire at Erfurt in 1736 but that several of his students had made copies (a recently discovered eighteenth-century copy is too late to be one of these). He says that he did not wish to publish it since he intended to make a better version, but evidently never got around to it. He also says that it would need too many music examples to make publishing a realistic option, which must have been one of the principal reasons why so few tutors for improvised fugue were published.[8] Accordingly, the 'Anweisung' consists essentially of a large number of contrapuntal decorations of standard harmonic patterns, not unsimilar to Poglietti's *Passagetti* and *Risposti* in Ex. 3 (see below). A feature of such tutors from Spiridion to Wiedeburg is the enormous increase in the number of examples to be memorised by pupils.[9] Adlung writes out every repeated pattern in full, rather in the manner of old piano scale books that write out in full every version of every scale. One wonders if it would not be more encouraging to improvisatory freedom just to give the beginning of a pattern and leave the pupil to complete it. The points could more profitably be made more economically, and in fact Adlung gives this as a reason for not re-writing his 'Anweisung' after it was burnt – better for pupils to make their own collections than get one off the peg (pupils were encouraged to keep commonplace books, the equivalent of Italian *zibaldoni*).[10]

What Adlung and Niedt have in common is *Variiren* – Niedt on *Generalbass* outlines, Adlung on the standard progressions listed in such tutors. Adlung's patterns have much in common with the Pachelbel Erfurt tradition, and are valuable for analysis of music in that tradition, including Bach's, as well as for practising improvisation in that style. Many of the patterns are readily identifiable in keyboard works of Bach, and Adlung finishes with two extracts from the first *Well-tempered Clavier*. The changing focus during the eighteenth century is evident from the chapter on 'Fantasiren' in the *Gelahrtheit* of 1758 which is more like the 'rule of the octave', an approach that came to predominate after the 1720s.[11]

Very disappointing from a practical point of view is Georg Andreas Sorge's *Anleitung zur Fantasie* of 1767. Sorge was a great admirer of Bach, though Bach evidently did not return the esteem.[12] The *Anleitung* is an armchair work, largely theoretical and discursive, with only a brief section on 'Die Fugenlehre der Natur'.

Two systems for teaching basic improvisation were published shortly after 1700. The first, by Andreas Werckmeister in his *Harmonologia Musica* of 1702, has been thoroughly and expertly investigated by Michael Dodds.[13] It is based on traditional thoroughbass and the sort of counterpoint doubled in thirds found in *Kunstbuch* demonstrations of counterpoint at the 10th and 12th.[14] It is a system for beginners, based on three chords and on playing 3rds in both hands and, though highly ingenious, the results are somewhat crude. There is nonetheless no denying Werckmeister's enthusiasm and thoroughness in working the system out. No doubt it would be useful for those starting contrapuntal improvisation, who could then move on to something more sophisticated. The other system is by Mauritius Vogt, in his *Conclave thesauri magnae artis musicae* published in Prague in 1719, who gives a number of traditional interval patterns.

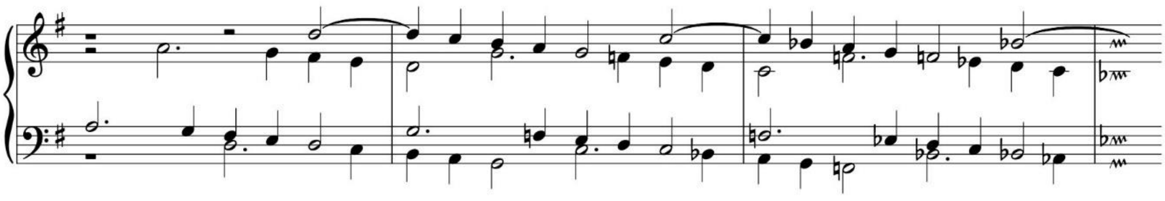
Like Mattheson and Adlung, Werckmeister also laments the general lack of tutors for contrapuntal improvisation, his reason being that many with the skill regarded it as a special professional *arcanum* that they kept to themselves.[15] It is also probable that talented pupils had a reasonable facility for improvising by the light of nature to begin with, which could best be refined and built on by direct example from their teacher. There is so much overlap with material suitable for improvisation in the many tutors for *Generalbass* and composition that special tutors for improvisation may not have been thought necessary, and in fact these three skills were considered aspects of the same thing, rather than separate entities.

In addition, much written repertoire, particularly in the verset tradition, appears to have the dual function of providing suitable models for those desirous of learning, as well as material for those unable to improvise. The summit of this tradition was the connoisseur's ideal of a piece so closely argued that virtually every note is derived from its subject. There are examples in J.C.F. Fischer's *Ariadne Musica* (1702) and it appears from other European traditions that such pieces were considered the hallmark of a master improviser.[16] It is not difficult to think of examples among the keyboard works of Bach.

Since the 1990s much attention has been given to the eighteenth-century Neapolitan tradition of teaching singing, improvisation and composition as a single process by means of partimenti and solfeggi.[17] Partimenti, generally speaking, are bass lines using standard progressions which in turn go with standard upper-part movements. The pupil learns improvisation and composition by building up a repertory of these gambits, which can then be developed by techniques of variation. The classic exemplar of these progressions and part movements was considered to be Corelli, though of course Corelli did not invent them, nor were they limited to Italy. Contrapuntal partimenti in Bach's environment have been equally well explored.[18]

Singers in Italy learned virtually everything from their singing teacher. Quite apart from voice production there was keyboard accompaniment and improvisation, variation technique, and also counterpoint and composition. Part of this regime were singing exercises in improvised counterpoint along the lines of the old *cantus super librum*, where the pupil memorises standard formulas to go with each melodic interval that may appear in a cantus firmus.[19] Example 1a gives a typical formula for making counterpoint out of a descending scale. Each note of the scale is decorated by an *attacco*, or brief attachment, of steps down to the 5th below, giving the cycle-of-5ths progression.[20] This can be either diatonic, staying within a key, or chromatic, going around the circle of keys. An example from Corelli is in Ex. 1b; and Ex. 2 has it in a vocal canon by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, one of the leading masters of counterpoint in Bach's environment. Example 1c is from a page of contrapuntal demonstrations by Handel, in which Handel gives five versions of this pattern, with imitation at various intervals, recto and inverso.[21] Vincent Novello in 1830 wrote on the page that these were sketches by Handel for the canonic sections of the 'Amen' chorus in *Messiah*. Handel certainly used them there, but they are more likely to have been demonstrations for one of his professional pupils such as John Christopher Smith the younger.[22] Johann Mattheson tells us that in his early days in Hamburg, Handel used to get free meals at the Matthesons' house, in return for which Handel showed Mattheson 'einige besondere Contrapunct-Griffe'.[23] The word 'Griffe' could mean just tricks, but it was also a standard word for the handshapes of chords or progressions on the keyboard, and the fact that Mattheson here is talking specifically about Handel's strength on the organ in 'Fugen und Contrapuncten, absonderlich *ex tempore*', suggests that Ex. 1c may have been just the sort of 'Griff' that Handel passed on. The notion that this sketch is Handel working out original canons for the Amen Chorus is rendered improbable by Ex. 1d, where Bach uses the identical 'Contrapunct-Griff' in Cantata 21.[24] Clearly this is traditional material, and evidence of what Gjerdingen calls 'Bach's thorough training as an artisan'.[25]

a)



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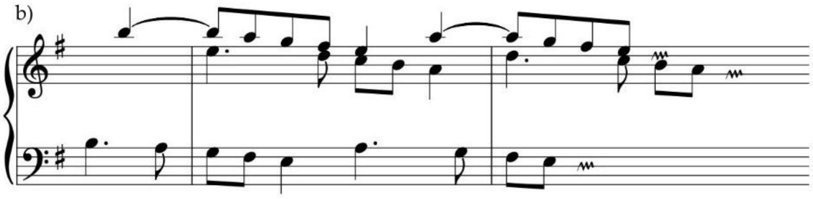

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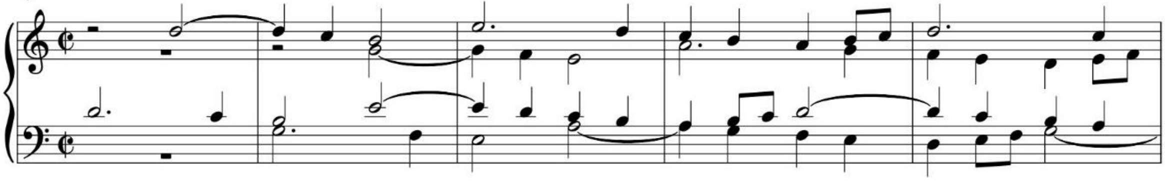
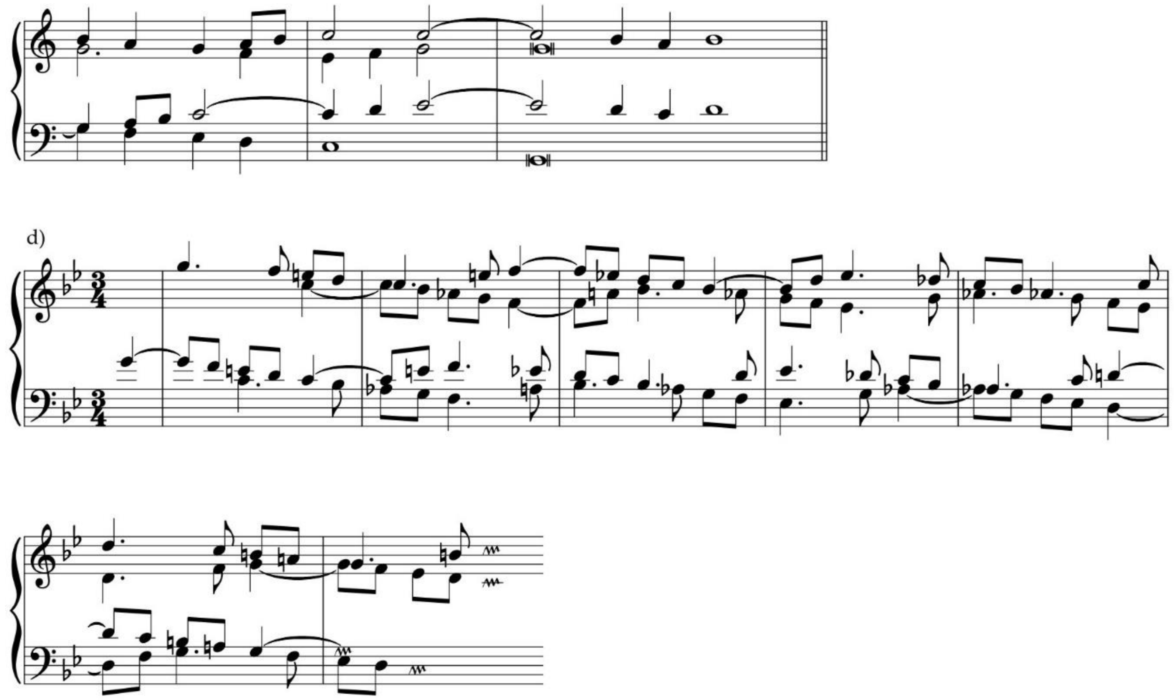
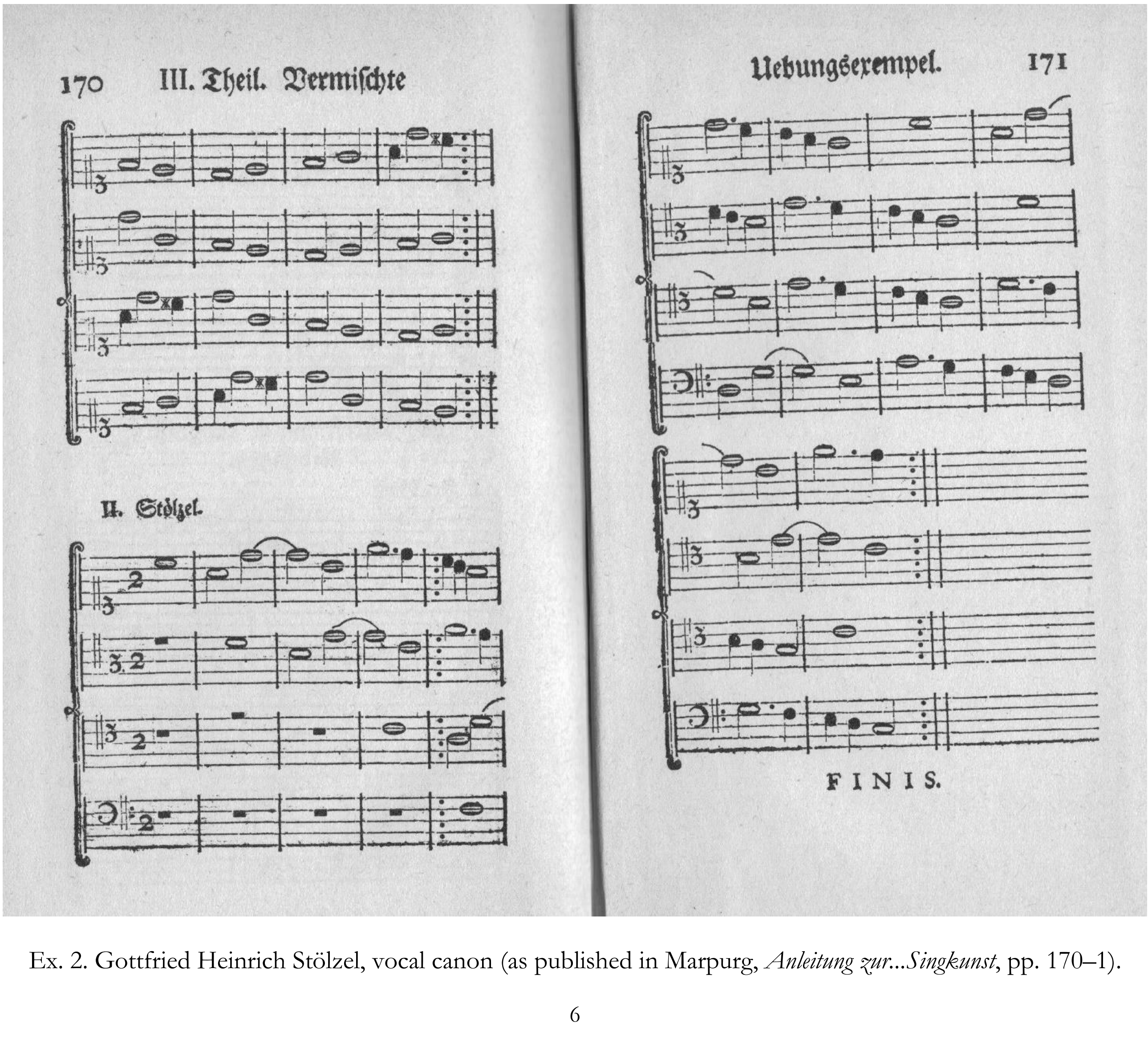




Exx. 1a–d. Canonic formula for decorating a descending scale (a); Corelli Op. 1 no. 2, Vivace, bb. 2–4 (b); Handel, sketch for canon (c); J.S. Bach, Cantata 21/6, bb. 17–24 (d).


170 III. Theil. Vermiſchte

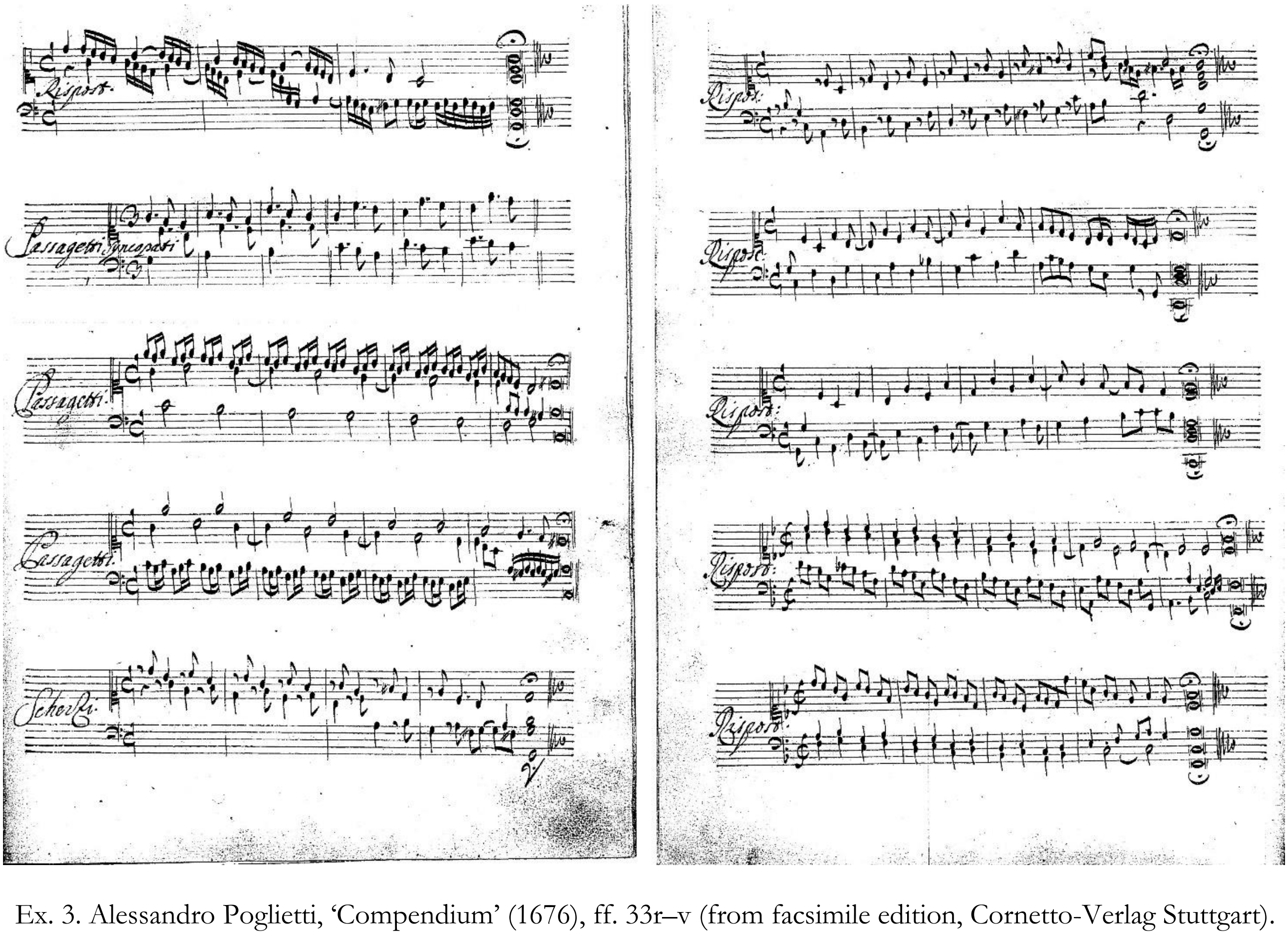
II. Stölzel.

Uebungsexempel. 171

FINIS.

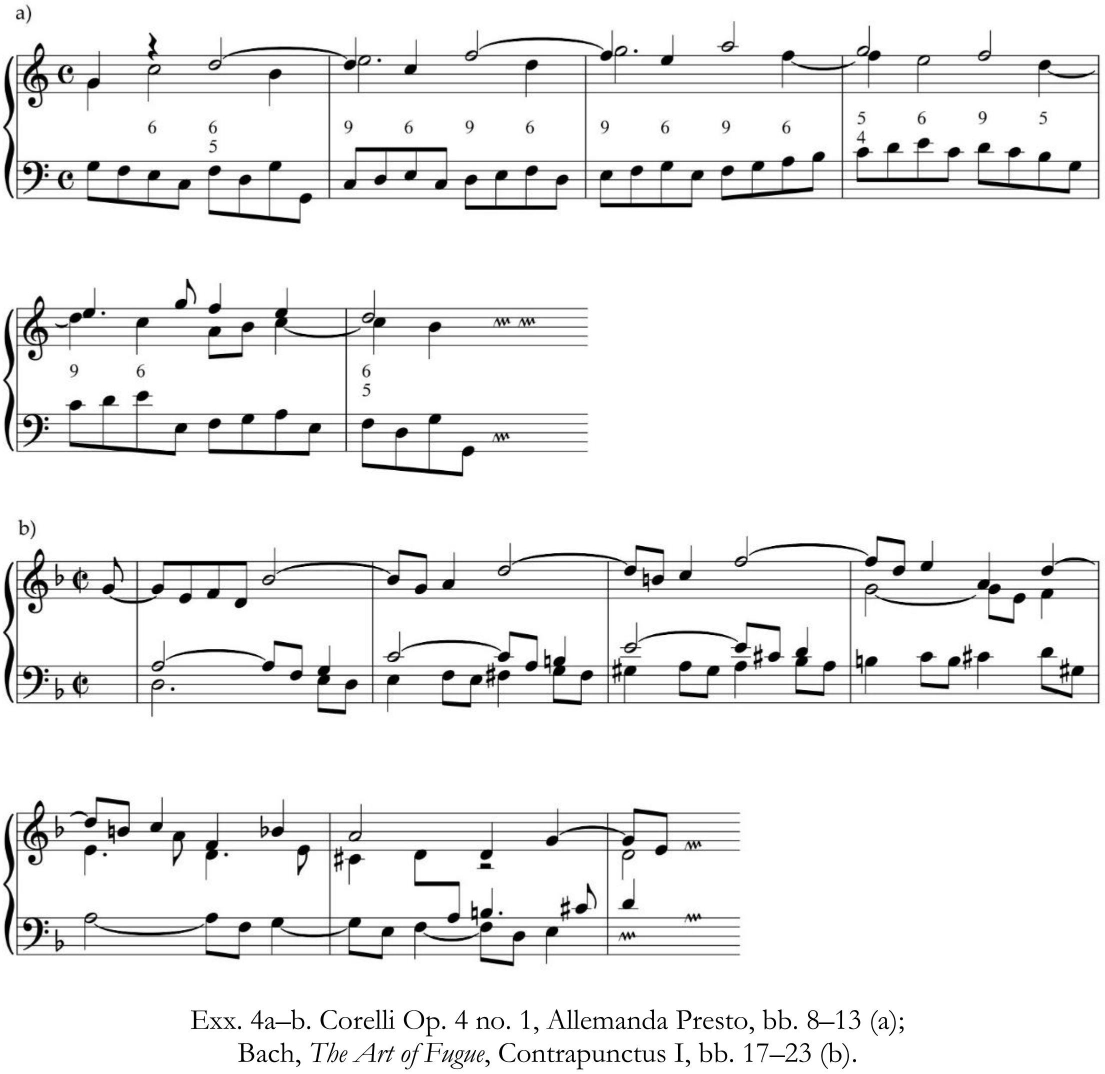
Ex. 2. Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, vocal canon (as published in Marpurg, *Anleitung zur...Singkunst*, pp. 170–1).

Many of the bass progressions common in Baroque music are already present in Sancta Maria's *Arte de tañer fantasia*. Sancta Maria's fundamental building block for constructing continuous improvisation is the sequence, generally a series of interval alternations decorating an ascending or descending scale. Sequence is common enough in the polyphonic style of Josquin, whom Sancta Maria mentions as his model, but it came in the later sixteenth century to be associated particularly with improvisation (*contrapunto a mente*) and was rejected by Zarlino as too facile for composed works.[26] Decorated scale sequences remained fundamental to improvisation in the Baroque. One of the most suggestive seventeenth-century tutors from the German area is Alessandro Poglietti's 'Compendium' of 1676, which provides much grist for improvisation in the guise of thoroughbass patterns and model pieces.[27] Poglietti also includes some standard imitative sequences, useful for continuations and episodes: Ex. 3 gives two pages of them. He calls them variously *Risposti* (that is, imitations, what Purcell calls *Reports*), then *Passagetti*, or *Scherzi*.[28] These also come under the heading of *attacchi*, that is, brief motifs for imitation. Significantly these demonstrations are not much different from the simpler sort of verset fugues such as those in the anonymous *Wegweiser* of 1689. Some of the versets are so simple, consisting of no more than an imitative head, a sequential continuation and a cadence, that they only make sense as repertory for players of very limited ability, or as models for simple improvisation.[29] The archetypal shape of head–continuation–cadence is of course Wilhelm Fischer's *Fortspinnungstypus* ritornello shape, so much used by Bach.[30] But the shape goes back to Sancta Maria's improvised counterpoint, and thence ultimately to the age of Josquin. It can be expanded to form the first strain of a dance or sonata movement, with a couple of phrases in a dance character; one or more sequences as a continuation (including a modulation in the case of a binary movement); a closing motif and a cadence. The convenience of this formula for improvisation is perhaps not so evident in the highly finished works of Bach, but it is very evident in more loosely constructed music of the time, such as the lute sonatas of Silvius Leopold Weiss.[31]



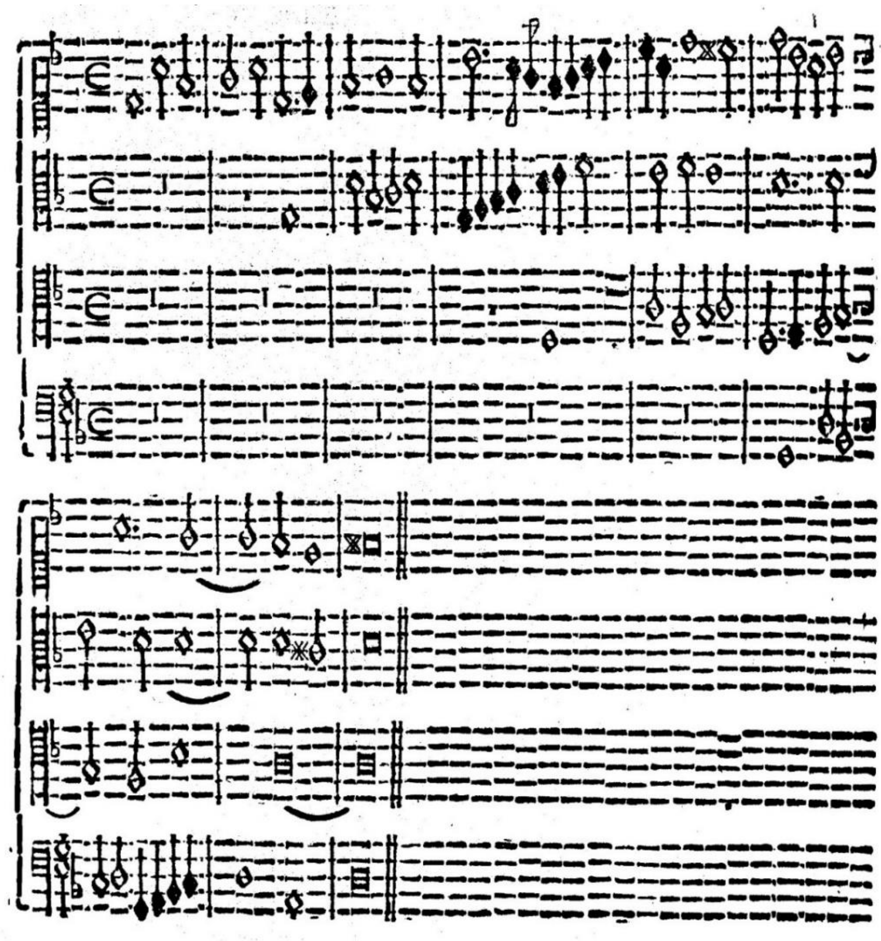
Ex. 3. Alessandro Poglietti, 'Compendium' (1676), ff. 33r–v (from facsimile edition, Cornetto-Verlag Stuttgart).

Poglietti's imitative sequences are some of the commonest formulas of Baroque music and as such appear in significant places in Bach's contrapuntal demonstrations. The *Scherzi* at the bottom of f. 33r, with a climbing version at the top of f. 33v, are the basis for the 'Cuckoo' episodes in Contrapunctus IV of *The Art of Fugue*, episodes that demonstrate a number of contrapuntal inversions in quadruple counterpoint. The chains of suspensions in the two *Passagetti* on systems three and four of f. 33r are one of the commonest formulas. Equally common is a climbing version where the parts leapfrog over each other, as in Ex. 4a from Corelli's Opus 4. Bach uses a very striking version of this as episode material in Contrapunctus I of *The Art of Fugue* (Ex. 4b). Later in the same fugue Bach brilliantly develops not only the effect of overlapping pitches but also of overlapping rhythms, as in Poglietti's *Passagetti syncopati*. Elaborately interlocking rhythms are a favourite contrapuntal effect of Frescobaldi and Froberger. Bach here is not just using traditional materials. He is revealing the purpose of *The Art of Fugue*, which is to demonstrate fresh and ingenious uses of these traditional ingredients, for the delight of connoisseurs and of those 'already skilled in this type of research'.[32]



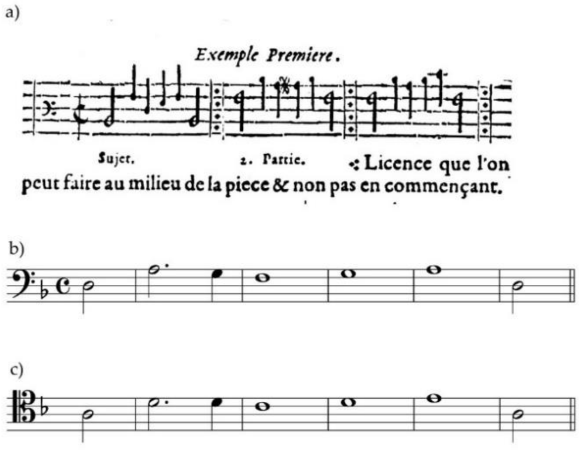
Exx. 4a–b. Corelli Op. 4 no. 1, Allemanda Presto, bb. 8–13 (a);
Bach, *The Art of Fugue*, Contrapunctus I, bb. 17–23 (b).

The connection of the incomplete *Fuga a 3 soggetti*, sometimes billed as 'Contrapunctus XIV', to *The Art of Fugue* was questioned by Spitta, and more recently by Pieter Dirksen and Gregory Butler.[33] Dirksen has convincingly shown that this fugue is in an improvised style. Like many of Bach's keyboard pieces, it feels as if Bach began with improvisation at the keyboard, and continued the later, more elaborate stages at the desk, a method of composing keyboard works that C.P.E. Bach tells us was habitual with his father.[34] Butler points out that there is no real evidence that it belongs to *The Art of Fugue* other than Gustav Nottebohm's observation that the three subjects can be made to combine with the *Art of Fugue* subject. Many have pointed out the flaw of this thematic combination, that the first subject is too similar to the *Art of Fugue* subject itself. Butler suggests that the *Fuga* was intended to be Bach's contribution to the 1750 packet of Lorenz Mizler's Corresponding Society. In which case one wonders if the three subjects are in some way symbolic, as could be the three subjects of the canon BWV 1076, also written for Mizler's Society, that Bach holds in his right hand in the Haussmann portrait.[35] It may be significant that the first subject of the *Fuga* is a version of the subject of a *fuga reale* in Angelo Berardi's *Documenti armonici* of 1687 (Ex. 5). Bach evidently made his own manuscript copy of Berardi's *Documenti*, and Gregory Butler has shown that in *The Art of Fugue* Bach is demonstrating a number of the genera of counterpoint that Berardi discusses in the first section of the *Documenti*.[36] This section is immediately followed by Berardi's discussion of fugue, and the demonstration of *fuga reale* is his first fugal example. The subject has an archetypal Mode I shape (it is used in a Mode I verset in the *Wegweiser*) and in Berardi's example it epitomises seventeenth-century *stile antico* fugue. In which case the second subject of Bach's *Fuga* is *in stile moderno*, after which they are both combined with the 'B-A-C-H' motif (b flat–a–c–b natural). Or, in terms of the verset tradition where the word *Fuga* is most at home, this is *fuga major* (*stilus gravis*), subsequently combined with *fuga minor* (*fughetta*) and finally combined with Bach's signature motif.[37] Bach's *Fuga a 3 soggetti* may also have something to do with Mattheson's 1739 challenge to Bach to publish fugues on three subjects.[38] The only published ones that Mattheson could think of at that time were his own fugues in the *Finger-Sprache* of 1735/37, a collection of fugues that also has a decided feel of improvised counterpoint.[39] Mattheson is said to have been a noted master of improvised counterpoint in his youth.[40]



Ex. 5. Angelo Berardi, *fuga reale* (*Documenti armonici*, p. 37).

Berardi was not the only one to give this subject as his very first example. Jean Denis (Paris, 1650) also gives it as the first example in his chapter on how to improvise in fugal style (Ex. 6a).[41] It is useful as a first teaching example not only because it epitomises the authentic Dorian Mode I, but also because it immediately raises the problem of the answer. An answer beginning with a rising 5th from *a* would take us outside the Mode I (or D minor) octave and give an awkward 9th with the tonic. The answer would therefore traditionally replace the rising 5th with a 4th, as does Berardi's next example (which he calls *fuga artificiosa*). Denis demonstrates how awkward it would be to compress all the answer into the range of a 4th (*2. Partie*), introducing a mannered chromatic element, out of place in plain style. His *Licence* is much better. It was no doubt the standard solution, and is the one used by Bach. The connoisseurish Berardi, by contrast, shows how it is indeed possible to have a real answer (the meaning of *fuga reale*, 'real' because it replicates exactly all the intervals of the subject) by having what in traditional fugal parlance is called a subdominant answer.[42] Both demonstrations highlight Bach's subtle art (Exx. 6b–c). By shortening the first note of the subject to a minim and dotting the second note he strengthens the effect of the initial leap at every subject entry; the crotchet then shortens the repeated note of the answer, taking attention away from the lack of a step down. Lengthening the three subsequent rising notes sets the scene for expansive paragraph-building as the fugue develops. If Bach kept to tradition, Berardi's subject would have been Lesson One in his teaching of fugal style.


a)
Exemple Premiere.
Sujet.
2. Partie.
Licence que l'on peut faire au milieu de la piece & non pas en commençant.
b)
c)

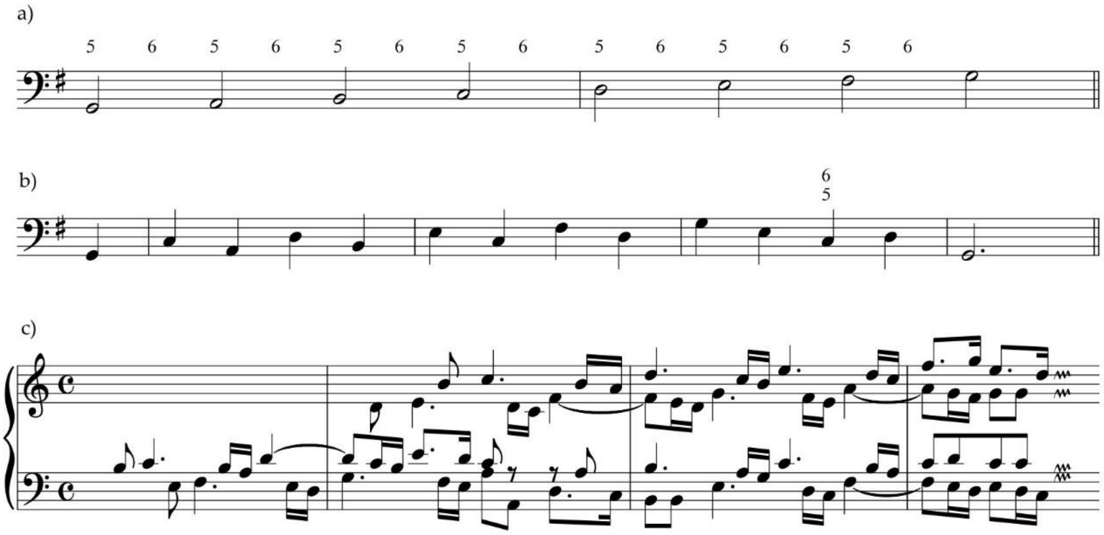
Exx. 6a–c. Instructions by Jean Denis (1650) for improvising in fugal style (a); first subject and answer from J.S. Bach, Contrapunctus XIV (b, c).

Returning to Poglietti's improvisation patterns in Ex. 3, the two *Risposti* on systems two and three of f. 33v give what is one of the commonest interval alternations for a climbing sequence, with the bass going up a 4th and down a 3rd, a pattern also given by Sancta Maria. Many of these patterns are interlinked, and this is related to the traditional way of going up a scale with 5–6 anticipations, as in Ex. 7a–b. Some contemporaries such as Roger North and Jacob Adlung sneered at these traditional interval alternations in improvisation, saying that they were only to fall back on if you could think of nothing better.[43] The 5–6 alternation is nonetheless put to sublime use by Bach in the central section of the so-called *Pièce d'orgue* BWV 572, and with chromatic steps in the six-part Ricercar from the *Musical Offering*, again a magnificent, connoisseur's elaboration of traditional improvisation material. The bass alternation of 4ths and 3rds is useful for canonic constructions, as in Ex. 7c from Cantata 71. This formula may then be doubled in 3rds or 10ths, yielding four parts out of two, as in *Kunstbuch* demonstrations of counterpoint at the 10th and 12th. Doublings of this sort are common in Bach's cantatas and keyboard works, and are the basis of Werckmeister's ingenious method for improvising quadruple counterpoint and canons, mentioned above.[44]

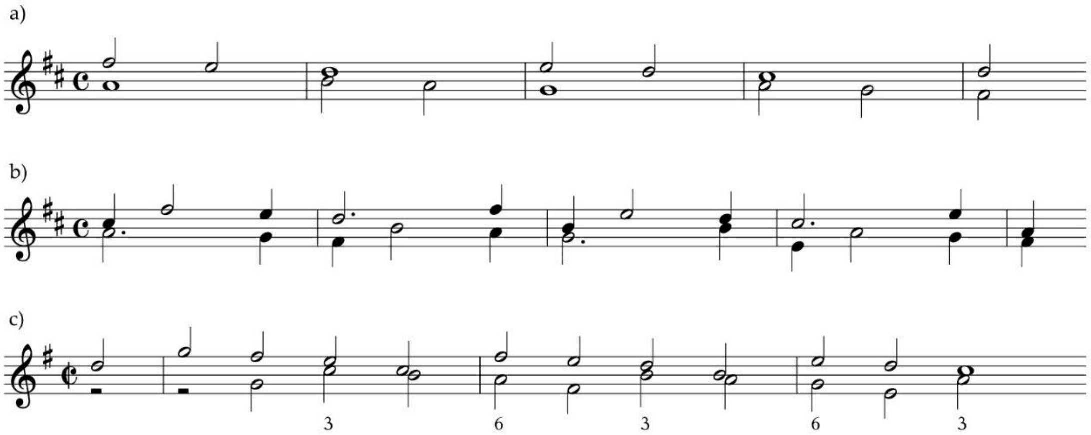
A more traditional approach than Werckmeister's, though not so elaborately worked out, is in the *Conclave thesauri magnae artis musicae* by the Cistercian organist Mauritius Vogt. Vogt has a surprising, if practical, method for decorating a melodic line with standard *figurae*: he recommends banging nails into different shapes, each shape corresponding to a *figura*. You throw the nails down and the order in which they fall is the order of the *figurae* to use in your decoration, an example of the eighteenth-century fascination for *ars combinatoria*.[45] More straightforward is Vogt's method for making fugues out of simple interval alternations, something that goes back to Sancta Maria and beyond. Example 9 gives two of the pages that discuss this method. Vogt's name for an interval pattern is *Phantasia simplex* (he uses the word *Phantasia* to mean a musical idea, a use that again goes back to the time of Josquin).[46] Page 154 shows the very common sequence alternating 3rds and 6ths, with his suggestion for imitative decoration. We are on the same ground here as with Poglietti's *Risposti*.

Page 156 gives other patterns, some of which I have already mentioned. Awareness of these improvisation gambits can yield analytical insights just as Italian partimenti have for the Galant style. I have shown elsewhere that the last formula on Vogt's p. 156 is the link between the chordal first section and the fugato second section of the C sharp major Prelude from the second *Well-tempered Clavier*.[47] The connection is fairly obvious in the earlier, C major, version of the piece, which has the appearance of a written-down improvisation.

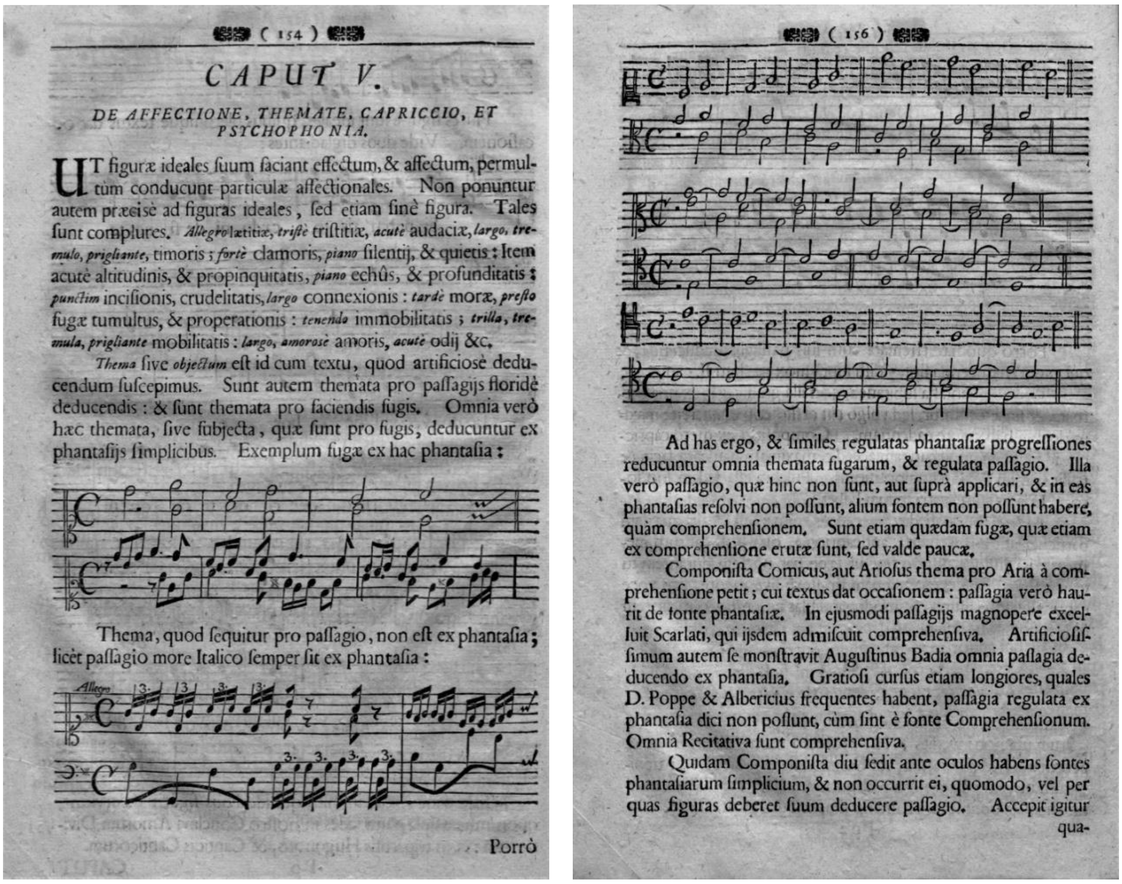
There are innumerable examples of these formulas in Bach's keyboard works. A common version of the alternation of 3rds and 6ths is in Ex. 8a, used by Bach in episodes of the E flat major fugue from the second *Well-tempered Clavier*. Example 8b gives Bach's decoration of it in the earlier, D major version of this fugue, another piece with a decidedly improvised feel. A further common version is in Ex. 8c. This is the basis for the second, fugal section of the Preludio of the Suite in E minor BWV 996 'aufs Lauten Werck' (Ex. 10).



Ex. 7a–c. Ascending scale with interval alternations (a, b); Bach, Cantata 71/1, bb. 16–19 (c).



Exx. 8a–c. Alternation of 3rds and 6ths (a); decorated version abstracted from Fughetta in D major, early version of BWV 876/2, bb. 32–36 (b); another version (c).



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CAPUT V.

DE AFFECTIONE, THEMATE, CAPRICCIO, ET PSYCHOPHONIA.

UT figuræ ideales ſuum faciant effectum, & affectum, permultùm conducunt particulæ affectionales. Non ponuntur autem præcisè ad figuras ideales, ſed etiam ſinè figura. Tales ſunt complures. *Allegro* lætitiæ, *triſtè* triſtitiæ, *acutè* audaciæ, *largo, tremulo, prigliante*, timoris; *fortè* clamoris, *piano* ſilentij, & quietis: Item acutè altitudinis, & propinquitatis, *piano* echûs, & profunditatis: *punctim* inciſionis, crudelitatis, *largo* connexionis: *tardè* moræ, *preſto* fugæ tumultus, & properationis: *tenendo* immobilitatis; *trilla, tremula, prigliante* mobilitatis: *largo, amorosè* amoris, *acutè* odij &c.

Thema ſive *objectum* eſt id cum textu, quod artificiosè deducendum ſuſcepimus. Sunt autem themata pro paſſagijs floridè deducendis: & ſunt themata pro faciendis fugis. Omnia verò hæc themata, ſive ſubjecta, quæ ſunt pro fugis, deducuntur ex phantaſijs ſimplicibus. Exemplum fugæ ex hac phantaſia:

Thema, quod ſequitur pro paſſagio, non eſt ex phantaſia; licèt paſſagio more Italico ſemper ſit ex phantaſia:

Porrò

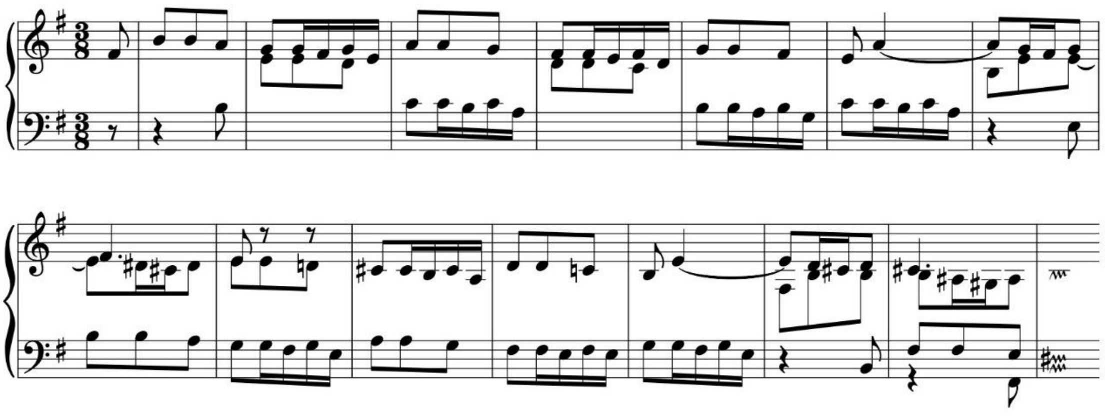
(156)

Ad has ergo, & ſimiles regulatas phantaſiæ progreſſiones reducuntur omnia themata fugarum, & regulata paſſagio. Illa verò paſſagio, quæ hinc non ſunt, aut ſuprà applicari, & in eas phantaſias reſolvi non poſſunt, alium fontem non poſſunt habere, quàm comprehenſionem. Sunt etiam quædam fugæ, quæ etiam ex comprehenſione erutæ ſunt, ſed valde paucæ.

Componiſta Comicus, aut Arioſus thema pro Aria à comprehenſione petit; cui textus dat occaſionem: paſſagia verò haurit de fonte phantaſiæ. In ejusmodi paſſagijs magnoperè excelluit Scarlati, qui ijsdem admiſcuit comprehenſiva. Artificioſiſſimum autem ſe monſtravit Auguſtinus Badia omnia paſſagia deducendo ex phantaſia. Gratioſi curſus etiam longiores, quales D. Poppe & Albericius frequentes habent, paſſagia regulata ex phantaſia dici non poſſunt, cùm ſint è fonte Comprehenſionum. Omnia Recitativa ſunt comprehenſiva.

Quidam Componiſta diu ſedit ante oculos habens fontes phantaſiarum ſimplicium, & non occurrit ei, quomodo, vel per quas figuras deberet ſuum deducere paſſagio. Accepit igitur qua-

Ex. 9. Mauritius Vogt, *Conclave*, pp. 154, 156.



Ex. 10. Bach, Presto from Suite 'aufs Lauten Werck', Preludio (BWV 996/1), bb. 16–31.

This section is in the style of the second, imitative section of a French overture. It seems to be a very basic demonstration of how to improvise a keyboard piece in fugal style, using this common contrapuntal formula. It is a particularly minimal example since the 'fugue' is rarely in more than two real parts, with a lot of repetition at different pitches. When it is in more than two parts the subject is in the bass, with continuo-player's chords over it. The free, first section of the Preludio is in an equally improvised style (rather like Niedt's instruction for improvising a prelude, combined with the manner of an accompanied recitative). The earliest source of this Suite is a copy made by J.G. Walther while Bach was still at Weimar, but there is another important copy made by Heinrich Nicolaus Gerber around 1725 when Gerber was studying with Bach. Gerber's copy groups BWV 996 with a copy the Toccata in E minor BWV 914, whose third, Adagio section is headed 'Praeludium', implying that Bach had originally conceived of the final two sections of the Toccata as a prelude and fugue.[48] BWV 914 and 996 are in Bach's earlier style and one has to ask why he gave them to Gerber to study at a time when Bach had finished putting together a whole series of mature educational works including the Inventions and Sinfonias, the French Suites, and the first *Well-tempered Clavier*, some of which Gerber was also to copy. The answer is surely that they are examples of improvisation. Gerber was by no means a beginner when he came to Bach, and when Bach was interviewing him as a prospective pupil he asked him if 'he had industriously played fugues'.[49] It is likely that by 'played' Bach meant improvised, since that was the most demanding test in auditions for a prime organist's post. As several writers of the time said, fugue is better learnt from 'fleissiger Übung' than from memorising rules.[50] These pieces would be excellent, and very traditional models from which Gerber could learn to develop fluency.

Finally, one has to ask, is it not somewhat artificial to try to separate improvisation from composition? In answering that, one must first acknowledge that it is indeed worth the effort since so much traditional analysis of Bach's works treats them as finished entities handed down, as it were, on tablets of stone, whereas Bach himself had the improviser's approach of constantly revising, polishing, improving every time he looked at a piece. Of course there is much overlap between thoroughbass, improvisation and composition. But it is possible to feel intuitively a spectrum, ranging from composition (in for example Berardi's instructions for genera of counterpoint), to improvisation (in for example Johann Pachelbel's Magnificat fugues). Playing through Pachelbel's Mode I Magnificat fugues, one is immediately struck by their affinity to *The Art of Fugue*.[51] But then one is struck equally forcibly by how much Pachelbel's fugues feel improvised, and how much Bach built on them in terms of sophistication and density of thought. In order to locate things within this spectrum it is essential to know the practical details of the tradition within which they both worked.

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[1] David Ledbetter, 'Fugal Improvisation in the Time of J.S. Bach and Handel', *The Organ Yearbook*, 42 (2013), 53–75.

[2] See the many references in the index of *The New Bach Reader*, ed. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, rev. Christoph Wolff (New York and London, 1998), under Bach, Johann Sebastian – improvisations. The role of improvisation in Bach's functioning as an organist is discussed by Peter Williams in the first two sections of *The Organ Music of J.S. Bach III: A Background* (Cambridge, 1984); in relation to Bach's organ teaching, by George Stauffer, 'J.S. Bach as Organ Pedagogue', *The Organist as Scholar. Essays in Memory of Russell Saunders*, ed. Kerala J. Snyder (Stuyvesant, NY, 1994), 25–44; and from a more general keyboard point of view, by David Schulenberg, 'Composition and Improvisation in the School of J.S. Bach', *Bach Perspectives Volume I* (Lincoln and London, 1995), 1–42. For improvisational practices in Bach's environment in relation to the cello Suites see John Lutterman, '"Cet art est la perfection du talent": Chordal Thoroughbass Realization and Improvised Solo Performance on the Viol and Cello in the Eighteenth Century', *Beyond Notes: Improvisation in Western Music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Rudolf Rasch (Turnhout, 2011), 111–28; for a modern practical tutor that covers basic counterpoint, contrapuntal chorales and fugue see Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra, *Bach & the Art of Improvisation*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor, MI, 2011, 2017).

[3] Johann Mattheson, *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft* (Hamburg, 1737), 24.

[4] *Spiridionis a Monte Carmelo (1615–1685) Nova Instructio*, ed. Edoardo Bellotti, Parts I and II (Colledara, 2/2005), Parts III and IV (Latina, 2008); a listing of *Fundamenta* is in Thomas Christensen, '*Fundamenta Partiturae*: Thorough Bass and Foundations of Eighteenth-Century Pedagogy', *The Work of Music Theory* (Farnham, 2014), Chapter 4; a recently surfaced 'Fundamenta Partiturae' by Johann Michael Stainer, a pupil of Johann Caspar Kerll, evidently stems from Kerll's own teaching materials, Schloss Ebenthal (A-Kse), Goëss MSS, facsimile, *Generalbass-Schule für Maria Anna Goëss*, ed. Albert Reyerman ([Munich], 2019); for Italian published and MS sources in general see Peter van Tour, *Counterpoint and Partimento* (Uppsala, 2015).

[5] Friederich Erhardt Niedt, *Musicalische Handleitung…Erster Theil* (Hamburg, 1700, 2/1710), Cap. X; for the Jena Bach see Christensen, 'Johann Nicolaus Bach as Music Theorist', *The Work of Music Theory*, Chapter 10.

[6] Niedt, ...*Anderer Theil/ Von der* Variation *Des* General-Basses (Hamburg, 1706, 2/1721); Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen Zweiter Theil* (Berlin, 1762), XXXXI. Capitel.

[7] Niedt, ...*Dritter und letzter Theil/ Handelnd vom* Contra-Punct*,* Canon*,* Motetten... (Hamburg, 1714); a translation of all three Parts is in Pamela L. Poulin and Irmgard C. Taylor, *The Musical Guide* (Oxford, 1989).

[8] Jacob Adlung, *Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrtheit* (Erfurt, 1758), 734–5; the MS 'Anweisung' resurfaced in 2010 and is now housed at the Bach-Archiv, Leipzig; it was presented by Michael Maul at a Symposium in the Schola Cantorum, Basel, in 2018; a full presentation of the MS is in Derek Remeš and Michael Maul, 'Jakob Adlung's "Anweisung zum Fantasiren" (*c.*1725–7): edition, translation and introduction', *Early Music*, 49/3 (2021), 429–38; further related articles by Remeš, and two volumes deconstructing improvisational elements in the Preludes of *The Well-tempered Clavier*, are listed at his website <https://derekremes.com/publications/>.

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[9] Michael Johann Friedrich Wiedeburg, *Dritter Theil des sich selbst informirenden Clavier-Spielers, worin gezeigt wird...zum Fantasiren auf der Orgel und dem Clavier, sondern auch...zu Componiren*, (Halle, 1775), facsimile ed. Harald Vogel (Wilhelmshaven, 2007).

[10] See Ledbetter, 'Fugal Improvisation', 63–5.

[11] See Christensen, *The Work of Music Theory*, Chapter 6.

[12] See David Ledbetter, *Bach's* Well-tempered Clavier (New Haven and London, 2002), 352.

[13] Michael R. Dodds, 'Columbus's Egg: Andreas Werckmeister's Teachings on Contrapuntal Improvisation in *Harmonologia Musica* (1702)', *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music*, 12/1 (2006) (<https://www.sscm-jscm.org/jscm/v12/no1/dodds.html>).

[14] The *Kunstbuch* tradition consisted of learned demonstrations of contrapuntal techniques; for details see Paul Mark Walker, *Theories of Fugue from the Age of Josquin to the Age of Bach* (Rochester, NY, 2000), Chapter 7. The ultimate example must be Bach's *The Art of Fugue*.

[15] Andreas Werckmeister, *Harmonologia Musica* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1702), 95.

[16] For Fischer see Ledbetter, 'Fugal Improvisation', 55; David Fuller has related a large anonymous MS collection of fugues dating from the early seventeenth century to a type of improvised *fugue continue* described by Jean Denis (1650), which Denis probably learnt from his teacher Florent Bienvenu (organist of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris from 1597 to 1623), in 'Fifty-Two Fugues from 1618, An Essay on Genre', *Fiori Musicali: Liber Amicorum Alexander Silbiger*, ed. Claire Fontijn and Susan Parisi (Sterling Heights, MI, 2010), 323–415, at 351–4. According to Denis, this type of fugue, totally impregnated with its subject, is an improvisational *tour de force* of which Bienvenu was an unrivalled master. There are notable examples in repertory of the earlier seventeenth century and it was a particular favourite of Thomas Tomkins, for example *Keyboard Music*, ed. Stephen D. Tuttle, rev. John Irving, Musica Britannica, 5 (London, 3/2010), nos. 27 and 30.

[17] The literature is now very extensive; it centres on Robert O. Gjerdingen's *Monuments of Partimenti* website at Northwestern University; Gjerdingen's book *Music in the Galant Style* (New York, 2007) demonstrates the analytical benefits of approaching music from its context in the practice of its time; see also '*Partimenti* Written to Impart a Knowledge of Counterpoint and Composition', *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*, ed. Dirk Moelants and Kathleen Snyers (Leuven, 2010), 43–70; how it might relate to Bach is suggested in Giorgio Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento* (Oxford, 2012), 'Epilogue'. See also Nicholas Baragwanath, *The Solfeggio Tradition: A Forgotten Art of Melody in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2020).

[18] Most of the main documents are surveyed by Bruno Gingras, 'Partimento Fugue in Eighteenth-Century Germany: A Bridge Between Thoroughbass Lessons and Fugal Composition', *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 5/2 (2008), 51–74. To them (Handel, Heinichen, the so-called 'Langloz' manuscript, and the 'Vorschriften' attributed to Bach) should be added Gottfried Kirchhoff, *L'A.B.C. Musical* (Amsterdam, [*c.* 1734]), facsimile with edition and commentary by Anatoly Milka (St Petersburg, 2004). For examples of eighteenth-century realisations see Maxim Serebrennikov, 'On an Unknown Prelude and Fugue of Gottfried Kirchhoff: Recovering Some Lost Pages of his Output', *The Diapason* (9/2011), 20–3; Serebrennikov's Russian doctoral dissertation, 'Solo Keyboard Thoroughbass Fugue of the Baroque Era' (The State Institute of Art Studies, Moscow, 2013) presents a large number of eighteenth-century realisations of thoroughbass fugues of the 'Langloz' type.

[19] Traditional patterns based on 3rds and 6ths seem to date from the rise of triadic harmony in the age of Dunstable, see the tutor ascribed to Leonel Power edited in Sanford B. Meech, 'Three Musical Treatises in English from a Fifteenth-Century Manuscript', *Speculum*, 10/3 (1935), 235–69.

[20] Source details for this and other eighteenth-century Italian improvisation formulas are in Nicholas Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions & Puccini* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2011), 168–9, 261. I am very grateful to Jon Baxendale for setting the music examples in this article.

[21] For Stölzel see Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Anleitung zur…Singkunst* (Berlin, 1763); in the *Übungexempel* Marpurg gives several such canonic formulas; Handel's sketch is from GB-Cfm, MU MS 260, p. 57.

[22] See Donald Burrows and Martha J. Ronish, *A Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs* (Oxford, 1994), 243. Handel wrote 'Sans Madame' in the margin, implying that these were not for Princess Anne; see Alfred Mann, 'Händels Fugenlehre. Ein unveröffentlichtes Manuskript', *Bericht über den Internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongreß Kassel 1962*, ed. Georg Reichert and Martin Just (Kassel etc., 1963), 172–4, and William D. Gudger, 'Skizzen und Entwürfe für den Amen-Chor in Händels "Messias"', *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 26 (1980), 83–114.

[23] Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte* (Hamburg, 1740), ed. Max Schneider (Berlin, 1910), 93–4.

[24] See Alexander J. Fischer, 'Combinatorial Modeling in the Chorus Movement of Cantata 24, *Ein ungefärbt Gemüte*', *About Bach*, ed. Gregory G. Butler, George B. Stauffer and Mary Dalton Greer (Urbana and Chicago, 2008), 38–40.

[25] Robert O. Gjerdingen, '*Partimento, que me veux-tu?*', *Journal of Music Theory*, 51/1 (2007), 85–135, at 124.

[26] For Zarlino on improvised counterpoint see Ernst Ferand, 'Improvised Vocal Counterpoint in the Late Renaissance and Early Baroque', *Annales musicologiques*, 6 (1956), 154–9.

[27] Alessandro Poglietti, 'Compendium oder Kurzer Begriff und Einführung zur *Musica*', Kremsmünster (A-KR) Regenterei L 146, facsimile (Stuttgart, 2007); see Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, *Quellenkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der Musik für Tasteninstrumente* (Munich, 2/1990), 80–3.

[28] See John Playford, 'The Art of Descant', *An Introduction to the Skill of Musick…the Twelfth Edition Corrected and Amended by Mr Henry Purcell* (London, 1694), facsimile ed. Franklin B. Zimmerman (New York, 1972), [158]; also Rebecca Herissone, *Music Theory in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York, 2000), 203.

[29] The *Wegweiser* was often reprinted; the versets are ed. Rudolf Walter (Altötting, 1964); for possible use by Bach see the index entry in Ledbetter, *Bach's* Well-tempered Clavier.

[30] Wilhelm Fischer, 'Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wiener Klassischen Stils', *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, 3 (1915), 24–84; the tripartite shape is as old as oratory itself, going back at least to Aristotle.

[31] For a detailed discussion see David Ledbetter, *Unaccompanied Bach* (New Haven and London, 2009), 80–4.

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[32] Terms used on title-pages of the *Dritter Theil der Clavier Übung…Denen Liebhabern, und besonders denen Kennern von dergleichen Arbeit, zur Gemüths Ergezung* (Leipzig, 1739), and the 1722 autograph of *Das wohltemperirte Clavier*, '…derer in diesem *studio* schon *habil* seyenden besonderem ZeitVertreib'; for further examples of such 'Griffe' in Bach and François Couperin see Ledbetter, 'Fugal Improvisation', 60.

[33] Pieter Dirksen, *Studien zur Kunst der Fuge von Johann Sebastian Bach* (Wilhelmshaven, 1994), 160–81; Gregory G. Butler, 'Scribes, Engravers, and Notational Styles: The Final Disposition of Bach's *Art of Fugue*', *About Bach*, ed. Butler, Stauffer and Greer, 111–23.

[34] Hans-Joachim Schulze (ed.), *Bach-Dokumente…Band III* (Kassel etc.,1984), 289.

[35] For example, *stile antico*/figural style/mannered style (chromatic in Contrapunctus XIV; using the *obligo* of counterpoint regularly aerated by rests in BWV 1076, see *Johann Gottfried Walther. Praecepta der musicalischen Composition* (MS dated 1708, surviving in an anonymous copy), ed. Peter Benary (Leipzig, 1955), 198–200).

[36] Kirsten Beisswenger, *Johann Sebastian Bachs Notenbibliothek* (Kassel etc., 1992), 101–2, II/B/4; Gregory G. Butler, '*Der vollkommene Capellmeister* as a Stimulus to J.S. Bach's Late Fugal Writing', *New Mattheson Studies*, ed. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx (Cambridge, 1983), 293–305. Bach is listed among exponents of Berardi-style counterpoint by the cantor and composer Constantin Bellermann (1696–1758); Bellermann's description of Bach's organ playing is often quoted (*Bach-Dokumente II*, 410–11) but the *Dokumente* do not include the Berardi mention: Bellermann, *Programma* (Erfurt, 1743), 23. The manuscript copy of Berardi's *Documenti* ('angeblich von JSBs Hand') passed via J.C. Kittel and C.F. Zelter to the Berlin Sing-Akademie library, with the catalogue number ZA 8, and thence to the Prussian State Library. Since 1943 the entire collection of theoretical writings ZA has been missing and it is not known where, or if, they were *verlagert*, see Ulrich Leisinger in Wolfram Ensslin and Hans-Joachim Schulze, *Die Bach-Quellen der Sing-Akademie zu Berlin. Katalog* (Hildesheim, 2006), 542–4.

[37] For *fuga major* and *fuga minor* see Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, 'Die zyklische Fugen-Komposition von Froberger bis Albrechtsberger,' *Die süddeutsch-österreichische Orgelmusik im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Walter Salmen (Innsbruck, 1980), 154.

[38] Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), 441.

[39] Johann Mattheson, *Die wohl-klingende Finger-Sprache* (Hamburg, 1735, 1737).

[40] Mattheson's primary interest was in opera; he nonetheless had a thorough training in counterpoint and organ playing and in 1703 was invited, along with Handel, to be considered as a possible successor to Buxtehude in Lübeck, see Beekman C. Cannon, *Johann Mattheson: Spectator in Music* (New Haven, CT, 1947), 20, 28.

[41] Jean Denis, 'Traité des Fugues, & comme il les faut traiter', *Traité de l'accord de l'espinette* (Paris, 2/1650), 28–36; English translation in Vincent J. Panetta, Jr., *Treatise on Harpsichord Tuning by Jean Denis* (Cambridge, 1987), 88–96; see also n. 16 above.

[42] See Alfred Mann, *The Study of Fugue* (London, 1958), 44–6; also Ledbetter, *Bach's* Well-tempered Clavier, 210–12.

[43] By 1728 North found the cycle of 5ths progression with root-position 7th chords 'trite', and alternating 3rds and 6ths 'a good help at need when other invention failes' (*Roger North on Music*, ed. John Wilson (London, 1959), 90); Adlung says that the standard progressions are useful if you have to talk to somebody while playing (*Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrtheit*, 749).

[44] Simple contrapuntal gambits are endemic in works of Bach and his contemporaries. In addition to the two cantatas mentioned one might cite BWV 18/1 bb. 5ff, 70/1 bb. 23ff, 143/1 bb. 8ff, 150/2 bb. 24ff, 172/1 bb. 44ff, 182/2 bb. 28ff.

[45] Mauritius Vogt, *Conclave thesauri magnae artis musicae* (Prague, 1719), 156–7; the result must be something like Monteverdi's brilliant parody of excessive *figurae* in 'Mentre vaga Angioletta', *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi…libro ottavo* (Venice, 1638).

[46] See Gregory G. Butler, 'The Fantasia as Musical Image', *The Musical Quarterly*, 60/1 (1974), 602–15.

[47] Ledbetter, *Bach's* Well-tempered Clavier, 246–7.

[48] Christian Eisert, *Die Clavier-Toccaten BWV 910–916 von Johann Sebastian Bach* (Mainz, 1994), 150–2; on notational grounds Eisert puts Gerber's copies of these pieces early in his study with Bach.

[49] *Bach-Dokumente III*, 476.

[50] See for example Daniel Speer, *Grundrichtiger…Unterricht…oder…Musicalisches Kleeblatt* (Ulm, 2/1697), 281; and the article 'Fuga' in the anonymous *Kurtzgefasstes musicalisches Lexicon* (Chemnitz, 1737, 2/1749).

[51] Edited by Tamás Zászkaliczky, *Johann Pachelbel: Selected Organ Works VII, Magnificat-Fugues, Part I* (Kassel etc., 1982), nos. 1–23.

Thomas Wilson, *Organista Petrensis*

Francis Knights

Thomas Wilson, styled ‘Organista Petrensis’ in the early-seventeenth-century music manuscripts of the Cambridge college where he worked, was in every sense a ‘local’ composer. Educated in Durham then appointed organist of Peterhouse at a very early age, his compositional career appears to have been bounded by the seven years he spent in Cambridge. The evidence of his surviving twenty pieces is of a musician who was young and incompletely trained, and who relied heavily on stylistic models from previous generations. Nevertheless, an examination of his music enables us to build up a picture of his style in the wider context of Anglican church music of the 1630s, and to gain some sense of the choir he was writing for.[1]

Wilson is believed to have been born in 1618, and there is a baptismal record for 15 February for a person of this name, very likely the musician.[2] He was a chorister at Durham Cathedral[3] between the age of nine and 12 (August 1627–September 1630), and probably thereafter in the same or some other capacity (voices could break much later at this date), as cathedral payment records for him running up to 29 September 1634 suggest. Only one year later, when he was just 17, the Durham Prebendary and Archdeacon John Cosin (1594–1672)[4] brought Wilson to Cambridge as his new organist at Peterhouse, where Cosin had been appointed Master and was intent on creating a new choral foundation on the High Church principles promoted by the recently appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud (1573–1645).[5] The chapel has been described as the ‘star exhibit of the new movement’,[6] and clearly attracted much attention locally. Its fame was attested to in 1641:[7]

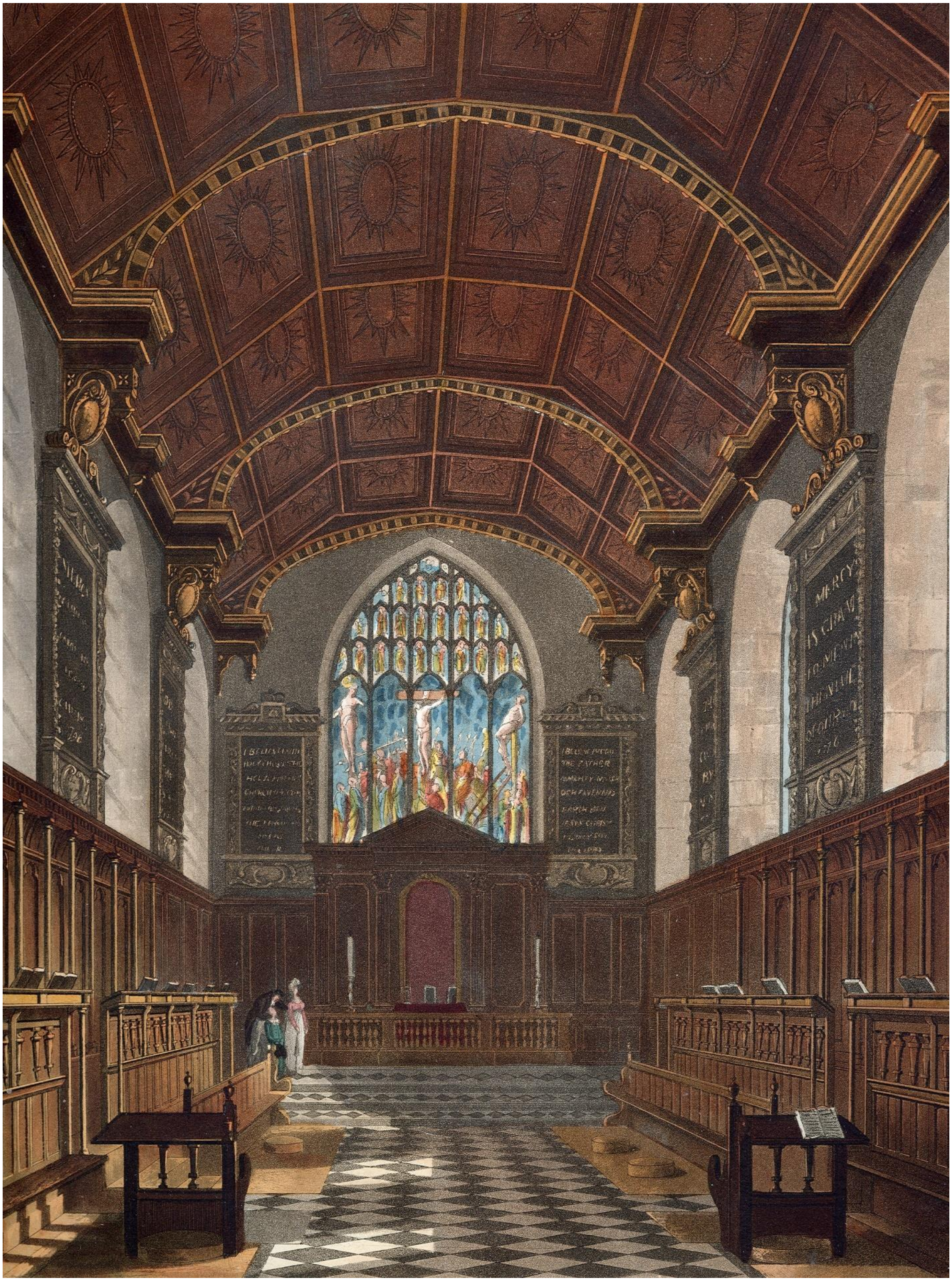
> This Chappell since Dr Cosins was admitted master of ye Colledge hath bene so dressed up and ordered soe Cerimoniously, that it hath become ye gaze of ye University & a greate invitation to strangers.

Perhaps aware that his small musical foundation would require as much support internally as possible, in March 1638 Cosin established four fellowships and four scholarships of the Parke Foundation, and – remarkably – some musical skill was required:

> Item: that every of the said Fellowes and Schollars of the new foundation shall, to the best of their indeavours, acquire to themselves so much knowledge and readynes in song that therby they may be able to performe their parts with others that sing divine service in the Chappell.

This soon led to the complaint that the scholars were ‘exceedingly Imployed to learn pricksong to ye great losse of their time & prejudice of theire studdyes’.[8]

Following construction of the elegant new chapel (Illus. 1) at the front of the college in 1628, consecrated in 1632,[9] the position of Organist – an organ had recently been installed at a cost of £140 –[10] was formally established on 12 November 1635, and Wilson was paid by the college between December 1635 and January 1643. After the political and religious ructions of the Civil War began to bite at the end of that period, the choral foundation was abolished in the spring of 1643,[11] and the organ dismantled on 29 April[12] (Cosin had been deprived of the Mastership on 13 March, and was therefore in no position to defend his chapel). Wilson then returned to Durham as a music teacher (*Musices professor*) where he married one Margaret Colpots on 25 May 1648. His death date is not known, but as he does not appear in any later records it may have occurred soon after 1648.



Illus. 1. An early nineteenth-century engraving of Peterhouse chapel facing east, from Rudolph Ackermann, *History of the University of Cambridge* (1815).

The Peterhouse music manuscripts

Peterhouse is the oldest college in Cambridge, and was founded in 1284 by Hugo de Balsham, Bishop of Ely. Remaining even today one of the smallest colleges in the university, and never having developed the high musical profile of a King's or Trinity, it nevertheless possesses two of the most significant and valuable collections of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sacred music manuscripts: the 'Henrician' set and the two 'Caroline' sets. About a decade ago their 3500-odd pages were conserved, rebound and digitized,[13] and they are now more easily accessible for study.

The earliest set was copied around 1540, possibly in Oxford (the repertoire shows a definite Magdalen College link) and very likely intended for one of Henry VIII's 'New Foundation' cathedrals, such as Canterbury, whose new statutes date from 1541. The most probable copyist is Thomas Bull, a lay clerk and music copyist who left Magdalen College for Canterbury at exactly this time. The set of four partbooks (the tenor is missing) represents the only major English source of Latin church music from between the Forrest-Heyther and Gyffard partbooks, and is the principal repository for the music of Fayrfax, Taverner and Ludford.[14] Its arrival at Peterhouse is a mystery, but it has been in the college library since at least 1856 (and possibly since the early seventeenth century, if it was part of the musical resources gathered for the new choir).

By contrast, the Caroline sets are of definite Peterhouse provenance. The 15 surviving manuscripts, almost certainly copied between 1634 and 1643, represent a substantial portion of the original ten-partbook (the so-called 'Former set', MSS 475–81) and eight-partbook (the 'Latter set', MSS 485–91) groups, plus one of what must have been some dozen organ accompaniment books. There is also a related Book of Common Prayer (printed by Barker in 1634) with music manuscript additions, which has a sister copy now at Christ Church, Oxford. The losses are much to be regretted, as they contained the missing alto parts to a number of pieces of key repertoire, such as Byrd's Responses and Weelkes' Ninth Service. Interestingly, three of the partbooks came to light as recently as 1926, having apparently been hidden at the Civil War, being discovered in a narrow cupboard at the back of the Perne Library at Peterhouse.

The Caroline sets are of importance for many different reasons: they contain rare autograph copies by the composers John Amner, Henry Loosemore, Thomas Wilson, Robert Ramsey, Henry Palmer, John Geeres, William Smith, John Lugge and others; they are representative of the Laudian tendency in chapel music (even including Anglican service music by Gibbons and others that has been translated into Latin);[15] they are textually related to a large group of contemporary partbooks from Durham Cathedral; they contain many significant copies of Jacobean and Caroline sacred music; and they offer an opportunity to study the works of a provincial group of composers. Above all, they offer an unparalleled insight into a brief and remarkably ambitious flowering of choral music in Cambridge just before the Civil War.

Wilson's Cambridge career

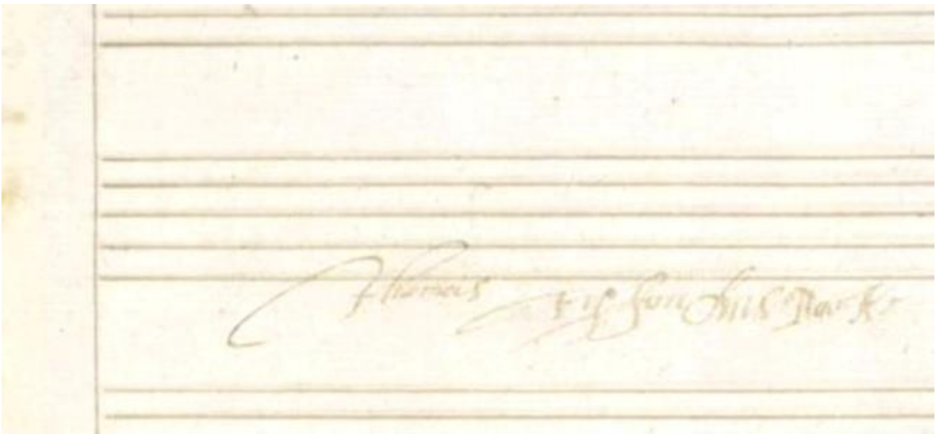
Wilson's appointment by Cosin at such a young age suggests enormous confidence in the recent ex-chorister's administrative and musical abilities; whether his promise was borne out, we do not know. It is by no means unprecedented – in 1635 George Loosemore (1619–82) became organist of nearby Jesus College at a younger age even than Wilson. Certainly, the creation of a choral foundation from nothing for the new chapel would have been a major task for even an experienced musician and expert choir trainer.[16] The assemblage of a suitable repertoire was assisted by close links with Durham musicians such as William Smith[17] and Henry Palmer, and Cosin's own contacts with other institutions are likely to have been critical in acquiring copies, on loan or for use, from other musicians and composers. The final very substantial surviving collection of works – 315 pieces in the two partbook sets – would have done credit to any cathedral library.[18] It included large groups of pieces by the leading Elizabethan and Jacobean composers (William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Morley, Thomas Tallis, Thomas Tomkins, Thomas Weelkes); others of the second rank (John Amner, Adrian Batten, William Child,[19] Michael East, Nathaniel Giles, Edmund Hooper, John Mundy, Robert Parsons of Exeter); and many others of primarily local circulation in Cambridge or Durham (Table 1). Much of the repertoire is undemanding, like Wilson's own music, as would have been suitable for a small newly founded ensemble lacking a choir school or professional lay clerks, but also present in the Peterhouse sources are some of the very grandest liturgical works of the period, such as Byrd's Great Service and Weelkes' Ninth Service (these may have been copied from the Durham sources[20] without certain prospect of performance, requiring as they do a choir in up to ten parts). It is possible that the considerable number of holograph pieces found in the partbooks are in some sense 'commissions', and those pieces by Henry Molle (at nearby King's College), Wilson and doubtless others were likely specially composed for the choir.

Cambridge composers
John Geeres (King's College) (c.1600–42)
Henry Loosemore (King's College) (1607–70)
Henry Molle (King's College) (c.1597–1658)
John Hilton, senior (Trinity College) (c.1565–c.1609)
Thomas Mace (Trinity College) (1612/13–c.1706)
Robert Ramsey (Trinity College) (c.1590–1644)
Thomas Wilkinson (Trinity College)[21]

Durham composers
Gerrard Derrick
John Geeres (also Cambridge)
Richard Hinde
'Hughes'
Richard Hutchinson (1590–1646)
Henry Palmer (c.1595–1640)
Edward Smith (1587–1612)
William Smith (1603–45)
William White (1571–1634)

Table 1. Cambridge and Durham composers in the Peterhouse manuscripts.

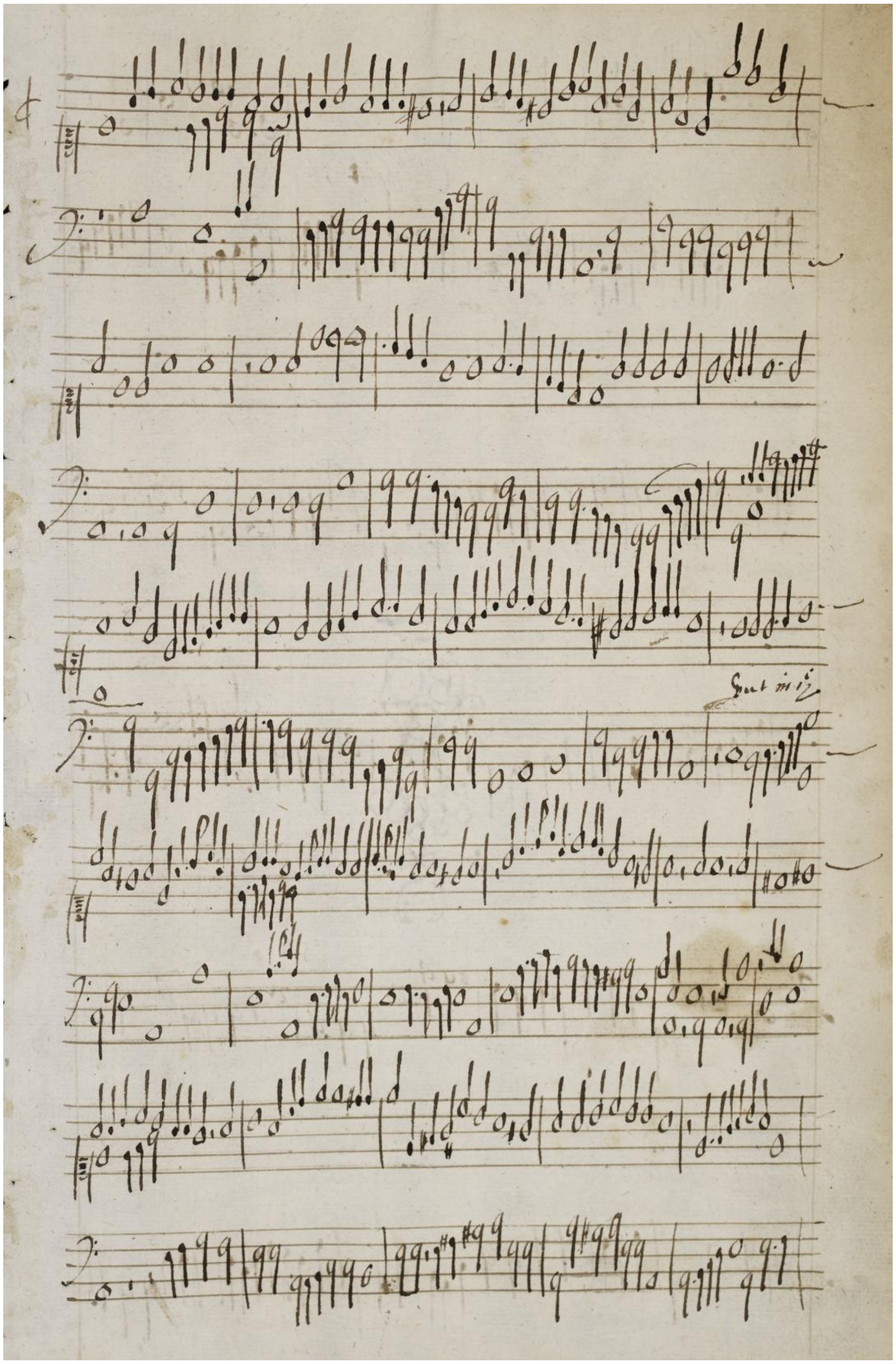
To date, not all the works in Wilson's hand have been identified, although there are numerous examples, including the organ book, MS 46; his name appears at the end of several of his own works. For example, MS 43 f. [2] has a faint note: 'Thomas Wilson hiis Booke' (Illus. 2). Might this mean that he was himself a tenor, or perhaps that he intended to take possession of that volume on the dissolution of the choir? His fair-copy music hand is clean and clear (Ex. 1).



Illus. 2. 'Thomas Wilson his Booke'. Autograph signature from MS 43 f. [2], digitally enhanced.
By kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Peterhouse.

Wilson as composer

Thomas Wilson's surviving corpus divides principally into anthems and services, as would be expected from a musician in his position. All but three of the pieces are found only in the 'Latter set' (the significance of that is uncertain), and only two pieces, a short Sanctus and the anthem 'By the waters of Babylon', appear in other sources, in this case Ely MSS 4 and 28, and Durham MS A3 respectively.[22] A list of Wilson's extant music is shown in Table 2.[23]



Ex. 1. Autograph organ part from Thomas Wilson, 'Christ rising', Peterhouse MS 46, f. 45.
By kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Peterhouse.

Full Anthems (four voices)

Behold how good and joyful
Behold now praise the Lord
Blessed is the man
By the waters of Babylon
Christ rising again
Prevent us O Lord
Thy mercy O Lord
Turn thy face from my sins
[Untitled anthem in G, in MS 46]

Latin service music (Full services, in four voices)

Kyrie and Creed in F
Litany [possibly by Henry Molle]

English service music

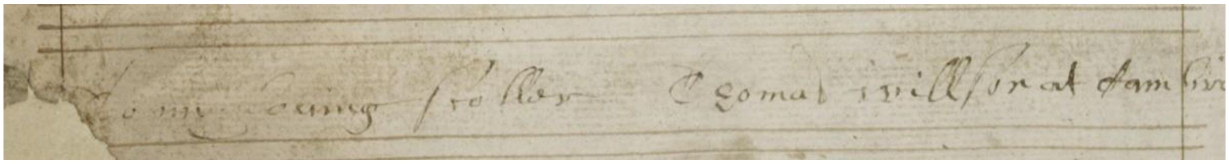
Magnificat & Nunc dimittis in C	Full Service, in four voices
Magnificat & Nunc dimittis in A minor	Verse Service
Venite in C (1636)	Full Service, in four voices
Sanctus in G minor	Full Service, in four voices
Psalm 85 for Christmas Day (morning)	Full Service, in four voices

Collects

Collect for St John Evangelist's Day	Verse setting, two tenors
Collect for the Circumcision	Full setting, in four voices
Collect for the 2nd Sunday in Lent	Verse setting
Collect for the 4th Sunday in Lent	Full setting, in five voices

Table 2. Surviving compositions by Thomas Wilson

Nearly all of these works are in four parts (although the Service in A minor does require SSAATTBB solos, and brief division by sides in the Nunc dimittis). The number of Collect settings from the Book of Common Prayer is surprising. The Peterhouse manuscripts include a considerable number of these (by Ramsey, Tomkins, Wilson and others), and they may well have functioned as ordinary anthems.[24] The slightly later Trinity Collect partbook of 1664 (manuscript R.2.58 in the Wren Library of Trinity College, Cambridge)[25] suggests that the Collects of George Loosemore and Ramsey (both of whom were organists at Trinity) were there used in a para-liturgical manner at feasts: Loosemore's dedicatory title-page reads, 'Graces of the Collects for the day, made to be sung upon Feast dayes in Trinitie Colledge hall in Cambridge by The Clerks and Choristers'. Some relevant information on Wilson's training as a composer can be inferred from these sources. The organ book, MS 46, f. 23v, for example, includes a bound leaf of Tomkins' anthem 'Jesus came when the doors were shut', inscribed 'to my loving scholar Thomas Wilson at Cambridge' (Illus. 3) and thought to be in the hand of William Smith[26] of Durham Cathedral.



to my loving scholler Thomas willson at Cambri

Illus. 3. Note in the hand of William Smith at the end of Tomkins' anthem 'Jesus came when the doors were shut'. By kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Peterhouse.

Elsewhere, there is considerable use of compositional models, including Byrd, Gibbons, Juxon, Weelkes and others.[27] Several Peterhouse pieces in Wilson's hand appear to be working copies, especially from MS 43. There are also compositional revisions in the Nunc dimittis in A minor, where an entire treble verse at 'to be a light' has been replaced. The new verse is probably the best section of this Service, insofar as one can judge without the original organ part being extant. In addition, the numerous music fragments scattered throughout the partbooks which appear to be in Wilson's hand, for example the four-part score jottings at the back of MS 43, are probably the work of a composer experimenting. One wonders at what point Wilson might have used these choir books for such notes – paper cannot have been in that short supply.

If Wilson was taught composition by William Smith, formally or informally, he was evidently sent into the world half-finished. The list of 'Mr Wilson's crudities' (to paraphrase Dr Burney's later dig at John Blow) is long and egregious: basic technical errors, excessive repetition, poor handling of counterpoint and crude voice-leading abound. However, this is of interest in itself: due to the narrow historical location of these works (we have no real reason to suppose any date from his chorister period at Durham or his necessarily 'secular' period after Peterhouse) it may be possible to observe some sense of development in both skill and confidence. Stylistic analysis offers some hints, and one work (the Venite in C)[28] is actually dated 1636.

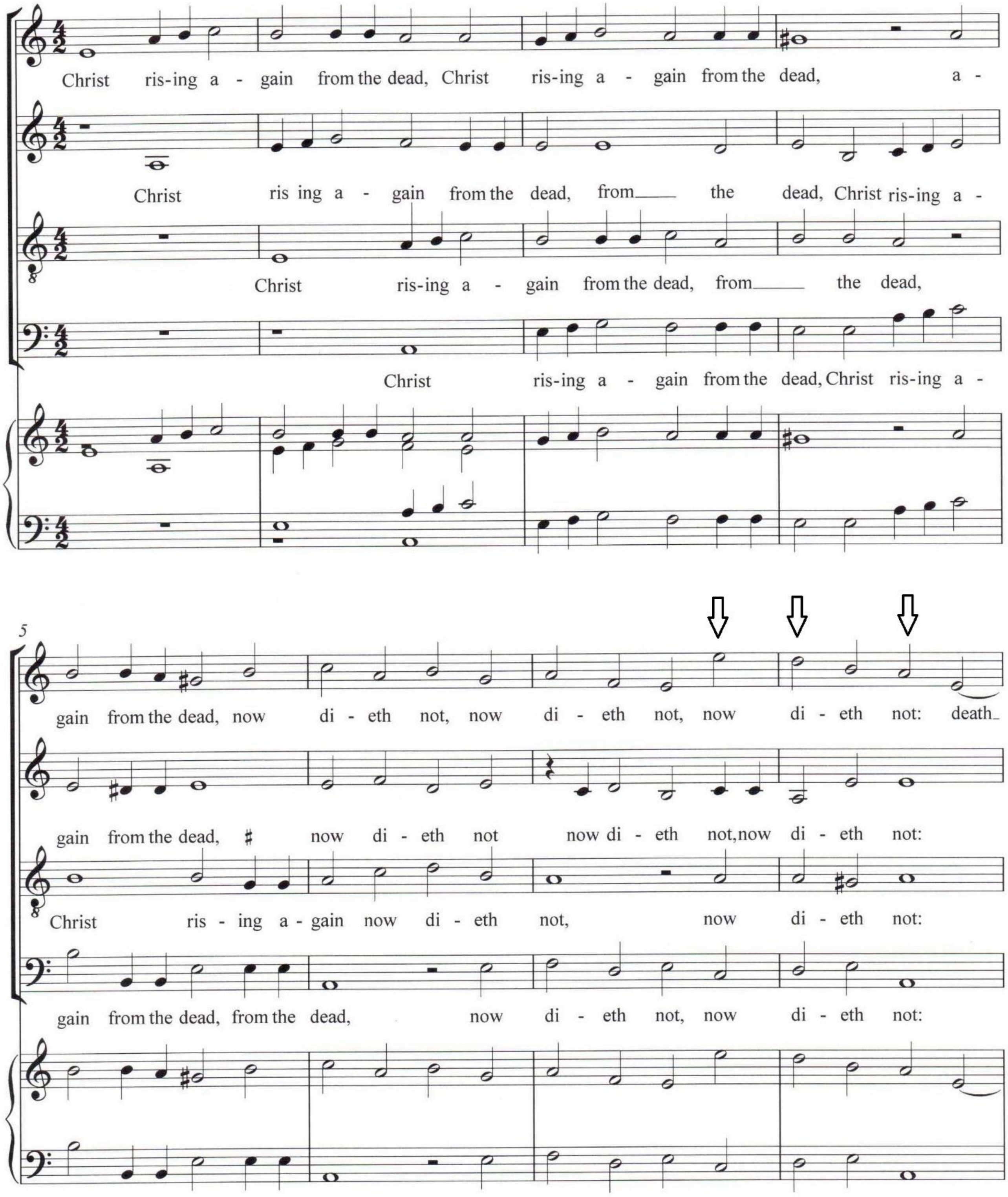
Wilson was evidently heavily indebted to previous composers for models, borrowing an idea here and a theme there; this is no surprise for a composer of his age and this period. A survey suggests, for example, that his 'Christ rising' borrows material from George Juxon's setting, and his 'Prevent us O Lord' copies the distinctive chord sequence that opens Byrd's setting. Elsewhere, the two-bass verse at 'He hath put down' in the A minor Magnificat is likely an idea taken from Gibbons' Second Service; the imitative point at 'so by Christ all men shall be' appears in the Magnificat of Weelkes' Ninth Service at 'For he hath regarded'; and several melodic and harmonic passages in, for example, Weelkes' Short Service are part of Wilson's stock-in-trade (see below). Significantly, all these primary works survive in the Peterhouse partbooks, and were very likely pieces he came across as a chorister singing at Durham.

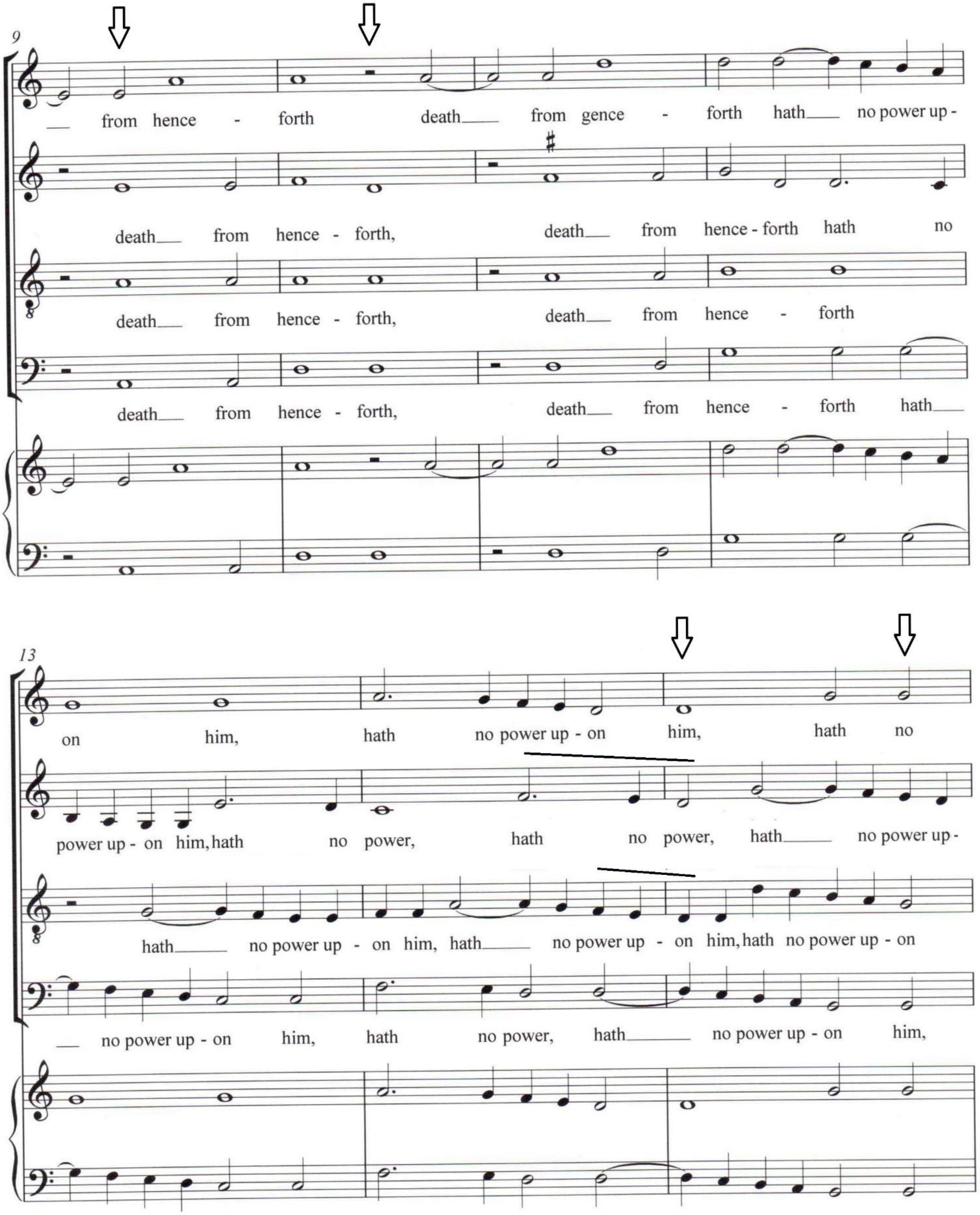
The overall quality of counterpoint in Elizabethan and Stuart choral music ranges from the superlative to, at worst, the merely respectable. It therefore comes as something of a shock to find Wilson's music full of basic grammatical errors, including parallel unisons, fifths and octaves, seemingly random open fifths and poor chord spacing. One might suspect these to be juvenile errors, yet they seem to appear in all his works, in varying quantity. Sometimes, as in the 18 open fifths in full chords that appear in the first part of 'Christ rising' (Ex. 2), a piece only 53 bars in length, one is led to suspect a missing part – the Cantoris alto of the Latter set is not extant – but the sequence of contrapuntal entries at bb. 1–2, 29–31 and 39–41 confirms a basic four-voice texture. The same anthem includes three parallel fifths and six parallel unisons and octaves in its 93 bars. Often, a 'correct' reading is arrived at by such a simple contrapuntal emendation that one marvels the composer did not spot it.

Table 3 lists obvious 'errors' (parallel fifths and parallel unisons/octaves) in five selected works. An asterisk indicates that the sources are in some way incomplete; that is, a voice or part of a voice is missing. In other words, there the error count could have been even higher.

Title	**Scoring**	**Bars**	**Fifths**	**Octaves**
Blessed is the man that feareth	Full a4	38	5	0
Christ rising again*	Full a4	93	3	6
Prevent us O Lord	Full a4	40	4	0
Turn thy face from my sins*	Full a4	41	4	0
Magnificat in A minor*	Verse	99	1	3
Nunc dimittis in A minor*	Verse	47	0	2

Table 3 Grammatical errors in works by Wilson.

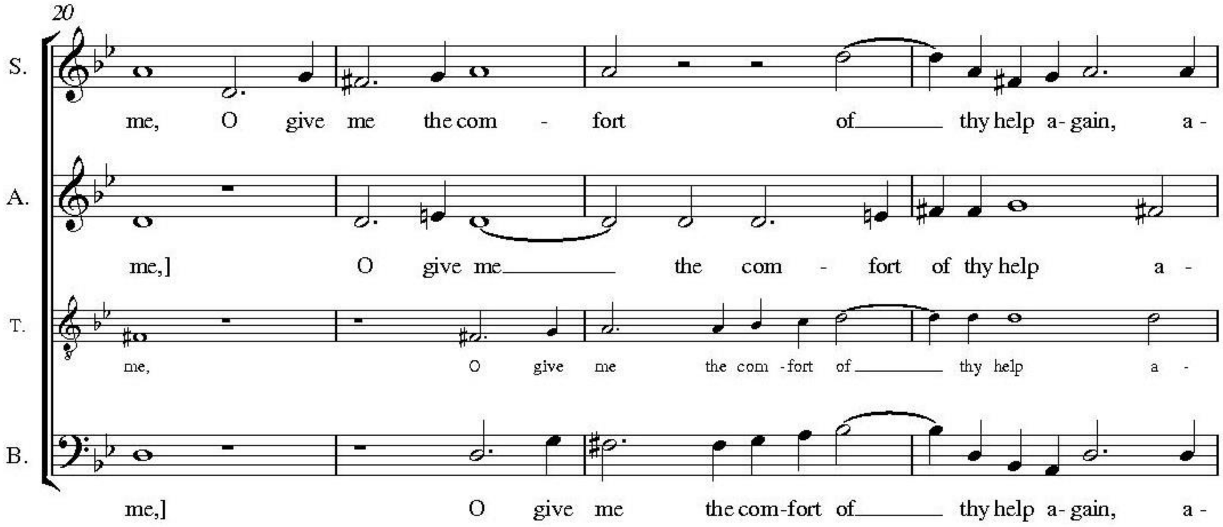

Christ ris-ing a - gain from the dead, Christ ris-ing a - gain from the dead, a -
Christ ris ing a - gain from the dead, from the dead, Christ ris-ing a -
Christ ris-ing a - gain from the dead, from the dead,
Christ ris-ing a - gain from the dead, Christ ris-ing a -
5
gain from the dead, now di - eth not, now di - eth not, now di - eth not: death
gain from the dead, ♯ now di - eth not now di - eth not,now di - eth not:
Christ ris - ing a - gain now di - eth not, now di - eth not:
gain from the dead, from the dead, now di - eth not, now di - eth not:


9
from hence - forth death from gence - forth hath no power up -
death from hence - forth, death from hence - forth hath no
death from hence - forth, death from hence - forth
death from hence - forth, death from hence - forth hath
13
on him, hath no power up - on him, hath no
power up - on him, hath no power, hath no power, hath no power up -
hath no power up - on him, hath no power up - on him, hath no power up - on
no power up - on him, hath no power, hath no power up - on him,

Ex. 2. Thomas Wilson, ‘Christ rising’, SATB and organ (bb. 1–15). Open fifths and octaves are highlighted with arrows and parallel octaves with lines

From this it can be seen that typically one score-bar in ten contains such an error; Wilson's success rate is higher in the verse canticles, which might suggest these are later works (they also in some ways demonstrate more assured handling of the choir, perhaps confirming this point). The difference in number between parallel fifths and octaves between pieces is interesting, even if it is impossible to say in which direction this might represent increasing contrapuntal understanding by the composer.

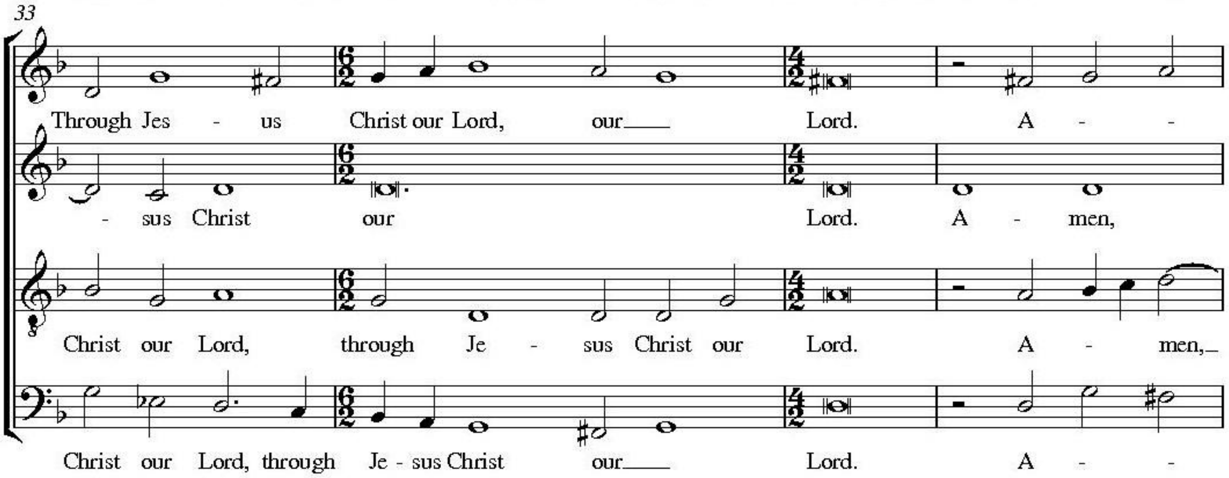
Elsewhere there are examples of garbled writing which defy the editor's red pencil; it is not easy to see what Wilson might have meant with the augmented interval in 'Prevent us', the unprepared minor seventh chord in 'Blessed is the man' or the unresolvable passage at b. 23 of 'Turn thy face' (Ex. 3).


20
S.
me, O give me the com - fort of thy help a-gain, a -
A.
me,] O give me the com - fort of thy help a -
T.
me, O give me the com -fort of thy help a -
B.
me,] O give me the com-fort of thy help a-gain, a -

Ex. 3. Thomas Wilson, 'Turn thy face', SA[T]B (bb. 20–3); tenor part reconstructed by the author[29]

Although the scoring and scope of Weelkes' Short Service and Wilson's Verse Service are rather different, there are some points which invite detailed comparison. At written pitch, both are in the same key, which makes the resemblance more obvious. Firstly, the melodic contour of the Weelkes is narrow and usually moves by step (as in the opening of both Magnificats). The Mean phrases do not stray far from the keynote of A. Second, almost in the manner of psalmody, a combination of crotchets and minims is used to articulate the text in repeated chords. Third, structural cadences follow simple patterns, usually ending on the tonic, but with (in each case) a single example at the dominant. This is a feature of many of Wilson's pieces, which only use a few keys altogether. Weelkes prefers his secondary cadences in D minor rather than Wilson's G major, but otherwise there are considerable similarities of harmonic structure. Also, sections after a tonic perfect cadence almost always begin on A, D minor or C. This is again routine, but routine for service music being composed back in the 1570s and 80s: in other words, Wilson's harmonic style was by the 1630s very old-fashioned. One harmonic feature is common to both: a 'bow' pattern, with outer voices in contrary motion about the tonic. This standard contrapuntal layout is a frequent fingerprint in Wilson (Ex. 4).

Wilson is also very restricted in his use of dissonance. Four–three suspensions are commonplace, but the 146 bars of the Verse Service contain only four 7–6 suspensions, always cadential. This is very similar to the Weelkes, and there are also identical cadence patterns in both Magnificats. Two English cadences appear in the Nunc dimittis of Wilson's Verse Service but they are inelegantly handled, and again old-fashioned (Morley had long ago derided such cadences as hackneyed in his *A plaine and easie introduction to practicall musicke* of 1597). In fact, there is only one minor feature that might be regarded as stylistically progressive: the word-setting of ‘spi-rit’ to crotchet–dotted minim in b. 27 of ‘Turn thy face’. This was a feature that would become common in sacred music from the time of Purcell.

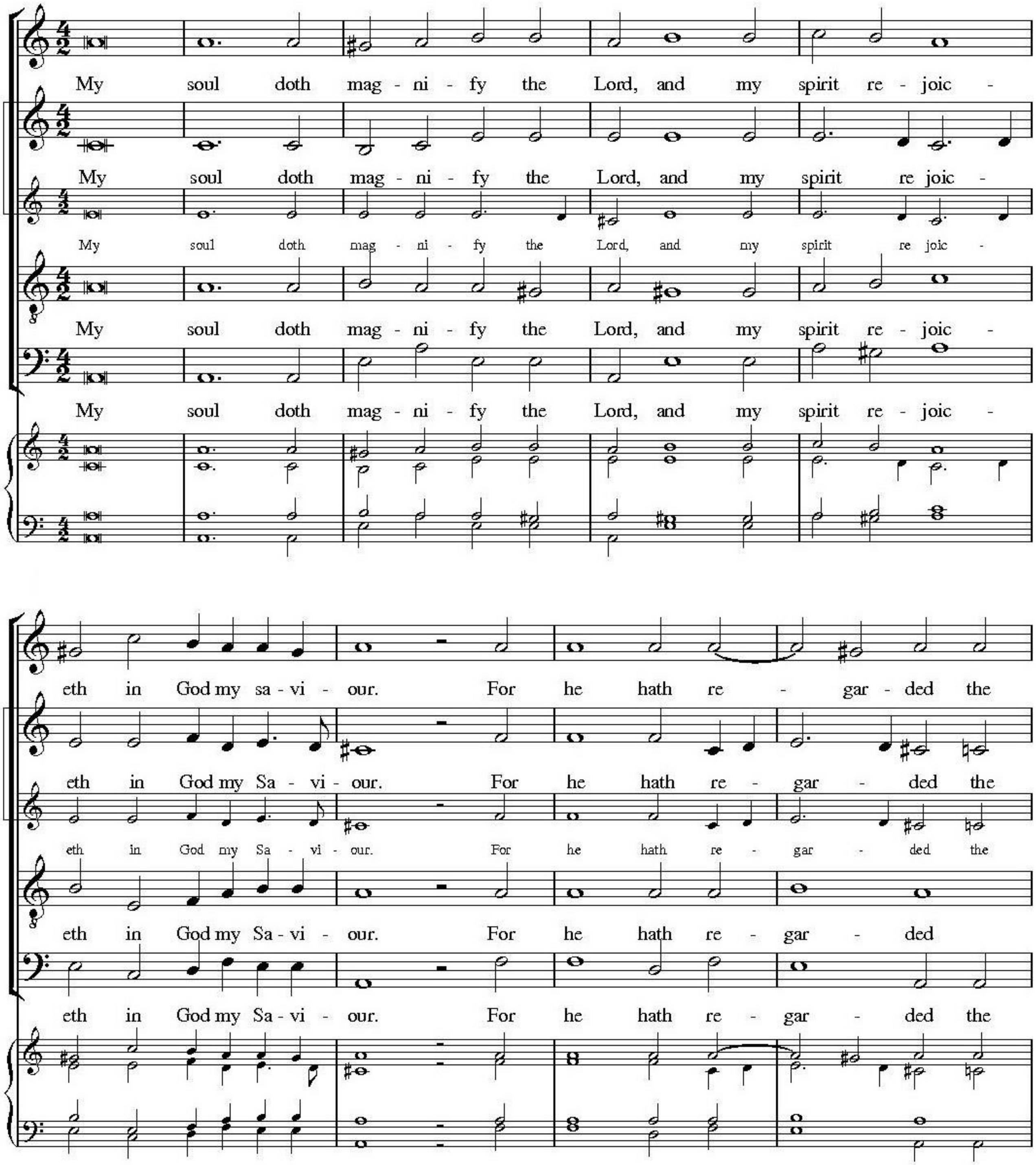

33
Through Jes - us Christ our Lord, our___ Lord. A - -
- sus Christ our Lord. A - men,
Christ our Lord, through Je - sus Christ our Lord. A - men,_
Christ our Lord, through Je - sus Christ our___ Lord. A - -

Ex. 4. Thomas Wilson, ‘Prevent us, O Lord’, bb. 33–6

There is a great deal of harmonic and melodic commonality between the Wilson works used as examples here, which becomes more evident when works are transposed into similar keys for comparison. This raises the issue of text-setting, where it seems that the composer made little direct response to texts in terms of melody, harmony or word-painting. This is not to say that ‘madrigalian’ features typical of the previous Elizabethan era would have been considered desirable in the musical liturgy of this period, but a style in which any music and text might be exchanged between anthems without harm is certainly a neutral one. Elsewhere, one senses that Wilson worked out his compositions at the keyboard, since the logic linking imitative points and text is not strong. For example, the rising bass melody in bb. 9–10 of ‘Turn thy face’ starts with the phrase ‘and renew a right spirit’, which is bowdlerized in the answering Mean as ‘and renew, and renew a right spirit’. Often, extended musical phrases are accompanied by ever-shortening texts (in a manner often mocked by modern scholars as ‘Victorian’), as in the Mean of ‘Prevent us’ at bb. 23–30. Here ‘and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life’ repeats as ‘obtain everlasting life’ and then just ‘everlasting life’, the sub-phrases making increasingly less grammatical sense. The imitative Mean entry of ‘His seed shall be mighty upon earth’ in ‘Blessed is the man’, bb. 18–20, by contrast loses its first two words in order to reach the cadence in time. Comparison with Byrd’s far more polished English anthems, for example, shows that these devices are neither necessary nor ideal as a way of allocating text to music.

Wilson also has difficulty with quite straightforward points of imitation. Here he needed to study his exemplars with more care. The falling-and-rising crotchet figure in ‘Christ rising’ at bb. 84–8 – likely borrowed from Weelkes’ Ninth Service – is not completely obvious in its working, but the falling-fifth scale figure in bb. 67–71 of the same piece is, and one is again left with the impression that in such basic imitative counterpoint Wilson is working at the limits of his training, if not his ability.

Although the harmonic movement of the Verse Service proceeds largely by minims, there are sudden flurries of notes at some cadences, such as the A minor Magnificat, b. 6 (Ex. 5), which stand out and have implications for the performing tempo.


My soul doth mag - ni - fy the Lord, and my spirit re - joic -
eth in God my sa - vi - our. For he hath re - gar - ded the
My soul doth mag - ni - fy the Lord, and my spirit re joic -
eth in God my Sa - vi - our. For he hath re - gar - ded the
My soul doth mag - ni - fy the Lord, and my spirit re joic -
eth in God my Sa - vi - our. For he hath re - gar - ded the
My soul doth mag - ni - fy the Lord, and my spirit re - joic -
eth in God my Sa - vi - our. For he hath re - gar - ded
My soul doth mag - ni - fy the Lord, and my spirit re - joic -
eth in God my Sa - vi - our. For he hath re - gar - ded the

Ex. 5. Thomas Wilson, Verse Service: Magnificat, bb. 1–9. A partially reconstructed second alto part has been supplied by the author, along with an organ part

Similarly, a quick crotchet–minim–crotchet syncopation is a feature found in 'Turn thy face' (at bb. 11 and 38) that seems distinctive to Wilson and is found elsewhere in his music. A scoring curiosity comes in the Venite in C, where an unnecessarily divided cadence note appears in the Cantoris tenor, the lower voice doubling the bass. This also shows that Wilson expected to have more than once voice on this part, suggesting the men's parts in the Peterhouse choir may have included more than one singer per voice on each side.

Despite the critical comments above – and Ian Payne also calls his music 'rather dull and four-square' –[30] Thomas Wilson was not without gifts as a composer, and there are passages in his works which are capable, even appealing. Study of the technical aspects of his music is valuable principally to understand something of his formal musical training, his taste, and the musical requirements of the new Peterhouse foundation. In addition, it is very rare to have a precisely and narrowly dateable seven-year corpus of works by such a young composer, who was still developing his skills. Who knows how he might have progressed had the Civil War not intervened and put an end to Peterhouse's controversial Laudian experiment? Finally, to judge by the straightforward, restrained and simple style of the music that was newly supplied to the Peterhouse choir by Thomas Wilson, Henry Molle and others, it is easy to suspect that a formal musical decorum was expected to be part of their tradition. This is confirmed in spirit by Cosin's statute of 29 August 1635, which states that the choir's contribution was to consist of 'musicae gravitate'.

Ex. 1, Illus. 2 and 3 are published by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Peterhouse.

[1] A future article will consider Wilson's role in building up the Peterhouse choir library, and issues of performance practice.

[2] There were a number of Wilsons involved with Durham Cathedral choir in the seventeenth century, and Thomas may well have come from a local musical family; see Brian Crosby, 'The Choral Foundation of Durham Cathedral, c1530–c1650', Ph.D. thesis (Durham University, 1993), vol. 2.

[3] For music and musicians at Durham in the early seventeenth century, see H. Watkins Shaw, 'Musical Life in Durham Cathedral, 1622–44', *Musical Opinion*, 87 (1963), 35–7, Brian Crosby, 'Durham Cathedral's Liturgical Music Manuscripts, c.1620–c.1640', *Durham University Journal*, 66 (1973–4), 40–51, Brian Crosby, *A Catalogue of Durham Cathedral Music Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1986) and Crosby, 'The Choral Foundation'.

[4] For Cosin and his activities, see George Ornsby, *Bishop Cosin's Correspondence*, 2 vols. (London, 1869, 1872), John G. Hoffmann, 'John Cosin, 1595–1672: Bishop of Durham and Champion of the Caroline Church', Ph.D. diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977), John G. Hoffmann, 'The Puritan Revolution and the "Beauty of Holiness" at Cambridge: The Case of John Cosin, Master of Peterhouse and Vice-Chancellor of the University', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 72 (1984), 93–105, Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590–1640* (Oxford, 1990), A. I. Doyle, 'John Cosin (1595–1672) as a Library Maker', *The Book Collector*, 40 (1991), 335–57, Lothar Bleeker, *Anglikanische Kirchenmusik und Arminianismus, ca. 1625–1640. Eine Untersuchung der im Wirkungsbereich von John Cosin (Durham Cathedral und Peterhouse College, Cambridge) entstandenen Kirchenmusik* (Witterschlick, 1993) and Simon Anderson, 'Excessive Music: A Discussion of Music Inspired by the Ideas of John Cosin Both at Durham Cathedral and at Peterhouse, Cambridge', *Word and Worship*, ed. David M. Loades (Burford, 2005), 146–50. Peter Webster, 'The relationship between religious thought and the theory and practice of church music in England, 1603–c.1640', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2001), chapter 10, argues that Cosin's work at Durham and Peterhouse was unique, even within a Laudian context.

[5] See Trevor Cooper, '"New-divised anthems to make themselve merry"; Choral Evensong in the time of Laud', *Ecclesiology Today*, 28 (May 2002), 2–13.

[6] Graham Parry, 'Art and Authority in the Time of Archbishop Laud', *Caliban*, 17 (2005), a special issue on 'Protestantisme(s) et autorité / Protestantism and authority', 217–21.

[7] Cited in Webster, 'The relationship', 119.

[8] Cited in Webster, 'The relationship', 120.

[9] For the college, its students and chapel, see Robert Willis and John Willis Clark, *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1886), i, 1–76, Thomas A. Walker, *Admissions to Peterhouse or S. Peter's College* (Cambridge, 1912), Thomas A. Walker, *A Peterhouse Bibliography* (Cambridge, 1924), Thomas A. Walker, *A Biographical Register of Peterhouse Men*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1927–30), John and John Archibald Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigensis*, Part I, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1927–22), Part II, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1940–54) and Thomas A. Walker, *Peterhouse* (Cambridge, 1935). An important book about music at Peterhouse during this period – *Music, Politics, and Religion in Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge: The Peterhouse Partbooks in Context*, ed. Scott Mandelbrote – based upon a 2010 Cambridge conference, was announced as forthcoming in 2016 but has not yet appeared

[10] Few details are known; see Nicholas Thistlethwaite, *The Organs of Cambridge* (Oxford, 1983), 62.

[11] Although chapel music was apparently reinstated to some extent at the Restoration, little evidence of its independent functioning has survived, and from the middle of the eighteenth century, college music was in the hands of pluralist organists like John Randall, Pieter Hellendaal, John Pratt and William Amps, most of whom held simultaneous appointments at one or other of the major Cambridge choral foundations.

[12] Parliamentary Commissioner (and image-breaker) William Dowsing made Peterhouse his first port of call in 1643 when inspecting Cambridge; see Charles Henry Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, 1845–53), iii, 364–67 and *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War*, ed. Trevor Cooper (Woodbridge, 2001).

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[13] *Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music* (<https://www.diamm.ac.uk>). They have all also been newly catalogued for *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales* (<https://rism.info>).

[14] Nicholas J. Sandon, 'The Henrician Partbooks at Peterhouse, Cambridge'*, Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 103 (1976–77), 106–40 and Nicholas J. Sandon, 'The Henrician Partbooks Belonging to Peterhouse, Cambridge (Cambridge, University Library, Peterhouse MSS 471–474): A Study, with Restorations of the Incomplete Compositions Contained in Them', Ph.D. thesis (Exeter University, 1983). For a related recording project, see Scott Metcalfe, 'Twenty years of singing music from the Peterhouse partbooks', *National Early Music Association Newsletter*, 3/2 (Autumn 2019), 23–9.

[15] See also Webster, 'The relationship', 165, 167.

[16] For the background to the roles and employment of adult singers in the period, see James Saunders, 'English Cathedral Choirs and Choirmen, 1558 to the Civil War: an Occupational Study', Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 1997).

[17] For Smith, see John Buttrey, 'William Smith of Durham', *Music & Letters*, 43 (1962), 248–54 and Simon Anderson, 'Music by members of the Choral Foundation of Durham Cathedral in the 17th century', Ph.D. thesis (Durham University, 2000); the fascinating relationships between the Durham and Peterhouse sources are discussed in detail in the latter.

[18] For the Peterhouse chapel music manuscripts, see John Jebb, 'Catalogue of Ancient Choir-Books at S. Peter's College, Cambridge', *The Ecclesiologist*, 20 (1859), 163–78, 242–54, Montague R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse* (Cambridge, 1899), Anselm Hughes, *Catalogue of the Musical Manuscripts at Peterhouse Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1953), Sandon (1976–77) and Sandon 'The Henrician Partbooks'.

[19] There are few detailed studies of these composers, but see Christopher Batchelor, 'William Child: An Examination of the Liturgical Sources, and a Critical and Contextual Study of the Church Music', Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 1989).

[20] The hands of no fewer than seven Durham music copyists appear in Peterhouse, and one (Toby Brooking) copied more than 200 pages (Crosby, *A Catalogue*, xiv, 41, 242ff).

[21] Possibly also at King's College. The identification and dates of some of these composers are uncertain.

[22] 'By the waters of Babylon' might be either a pre- or post-Peterhouse work written in Durham, or a Peterhouse piece that has not survived in the Cambridge sources; it does not seem either earlier or later in style than the remaining works. Crosby, 'The Choral Foundation', 217, 234 does however see it as a Durham composition.

[23] See Hughes, *Catalogue of the Musical Manuscripts* and Ralph T. Daniel and Peter Le Huray, *The Sources of English Church Music 1549–1660* (London, 1972). The author has transcribed the complete works, and a number of pieces have also been edited and published by John Morehen, Ian Payne and others.

[24] See Webster, 'The relationship', 168–9; Hannah Rodger, 'Revealing the Complexities that Surrounded Sacred Music Practices, Preferences, and Prejudices in Early Seventeenth-Century England', Ph.D. thesis (University of York, 2021) designates these 'Collect anthems'.

[25] See Francis Knights, 'The historic chapel music manuscripts at Trinity', *Trinity College Annual Report* (2007), 55–9.

[26] Crosby, 'The Choral Foundation', 298, wonders whether the hand is in fact Smith's.

[27] For the background to early seventeenth-century Anglican church music, see Percy Scholes, *The Puritans and Music* (Oxford, 1934), Peter Le Huray, 'The English Anthem, 1603–1660', Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 1959), Peter Le Huray, 'Towards a Definitive Study of Pre-Restoration Anglican Service Music', *Musica Disciplina*, 11 (1960), 167–95, Peter Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549–1660* (London, 1967), Paul Chappell, *Music and Worship in the Anglican Church 1597–1967* (London, 1968), John Morehen, 'The Sources of English Cathedral Music, c.1617–c.1644', Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 1969), John H. Shepherd, 'The changing theological concept of sacrifice, and its implications for the music of the English church c.1500–1640', Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 1984), Peter Phillips, *English Sacred Music, 1549–1649* (Oxford, 1991), Webster, 'The relationship', and Rodger, 'Revealing the Complexities'.

[28] Not two separate pieces, as given in Hughes, *Catalogue of the Musical Manuscripts*.

[29] For a broader discussion of the issues arising in the reconstruction of vocal polyphony, see Francis Knights, Mateo Tonatiuh Rodríguez and Pablo Padilla, 'Reconstructing Renaissance Polyphony: comparing original and replacement', *National Early Music Association Newsletter*, 4/2 (Autumn 2020), 43–51.

[30] Ian Payne, 'Wilson, Thomas (i)', *Oxford Music Online*, ed. Deane Root (<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic>). An appropriate stylistic-quality comparison might be made with Wilson's older contemporary George Marson of Canterbury Cathedral; see Joseph Sargent, 'Revisiting George Marson', *National Early Music Association Newsletter*, 4/2 (November 2020), 97–115.

Peter Holman, *Before the Baton: Musical Direction and Conducting in Stuart and Georgian Britain*

The Boydell Press, 2020; ISBN 978 1 78327 456 7; xxiii + 432 pp.; £50

Graham Cummings

Peter Holman is a musician who is not afraid to voice strong criticisms and objections concerning baton conducting, particularly in the music of Stuart and Georgian Britain. He strongly argues that 'we must guard against the tendency to approach [directing early music] with a set of anachronistic assumptions derived from modern baton conducting. Many writers … find it hard to accept that time-beating before the late eighteenth century was just that: it was concerned solely with the maintenance of good ensemble, not with energising the troops, giving leads, refining the balance or conveying rhythmic and melodic nuances in performance' (p. 2). Holman's provocative dedication ('to all unwilling victims of the baton') also indicates the strength of his personal agenda in this book.

His principal aim is 'to keep [his] focus on the way musical directors exercised control over their musicians; on the choices they had to make at the planning stage, including the size, composition and placing of ensembles; and how these choices reflect changing attitudes to control' (p. xiv).

The types of source materials to which he refers are many and varied, including both manuscript and printed scores and parts, treatises, correspondence and diaries, newspaper reports, descriptions of performances, and iconographic evidence, the latter in the form of 46 illustrations, all of which enhance their related texts. The bibliography is also commendably extensive.

This substantial monograph focuses on musical direction in both choral and theatre music of the period 1603 to 1837, with Handel's choral music, oratorios and operas as the substance of chapters 3 and 6. The book has a clear structure, being divided into two main parts, each consisting of four chapters, with Part I (Chapters 1–4) focusing on the direction of choral music and oratorio, whilst Part II (Chapters 5–8) explores musical direction in opera and theatre performances. These are encased by a 'Prelude', an opening contextual survey of time-beating in Germany, Italy and France up to c.1700, and a final polemical 'Postlude'. In addition, each chapter concludes with a helpful section headed 'Summary & Conclusion' providing distillations of the details in the preceding chapter. Several of the chapters also include absorbing case studies which provide increased clarity and serve as pertinent illustrations.

Although Holman opts for a study that is genre or topic based rather than a simpler chronological approach, one can detect a transition and links between the first four chapters. In Chapter 1 ('Leading Anglican Cathedral Music from the Organ'), the organist, rather than directing his choir 'from the front', remained in the organ loft, 'leading from the organ' by 'doubling or paraphrasing their parts' (p. 68). This, Holman argues, 'was an efficient way of achieving good ensemble, while allowing members of the choir the maximum amount of individual autonomy' (p. 68). The focus then moves in Chapter 2 to 'Large-Scale Choral Music'. Whilst 'leading from the organ' still had a part to play, music involving soloists, choirs and an orchestra clearly required a more visible presence to ensure unanimity. Hence the appearance of a time-beater wielding a roll of paper or parchment. Holman includes a wealth of fascinating detail concerning the direction of music at coronations, court and St Cecelia odes, and choral festivals, including the Festivals for the Sons of Clergy and the Three Choirs' Festivals, commenting on relevant music by Blow, Greene, Handel and Boyce. These London choral festivals also served as models for a growing number of like events in the provinces, where William Hayes, a Handel devotee, was a notable presence.

Early in this book, Holman emphasises that Handel directed both his Italian operas and English oratorios from the keyboard. In Chapter 3 ('Handel and the Direction of his Oratorios') it is clear that this position was not achieved without facing certain difficulties. The principal problem was to find the most efficient means of directing an extended dramatic musical work in a theatre, employing soloists, chorus and instruments. Initially, Handel adopted the solution he had used in his choral music, namely to stand in the midst of his performers beating time with a roll of paper. However, 'it was apparently his dissatisfaction with having to rely on inferiors for the all-important continuo work … that eventually prompted him to come up with a solution that enabled him to play instead of beating time' (p. 140).

This solution, Holman argues, was 'apparently prompted by the example of the [hybrid harpsichord–organ] at Vauxhall Gardens, [involving] what became known as a "long movement" of trackers connecting a harpsichord in the middle of the performing area to the organ at the back' (p. 140). Thus, Handel, seated in the midst of his performers could accompany the recitatives and arias on the harpsichord, 'changing to the organ for the choruses'. This mechanical innovation also enabled the composer to play his organ concertos from the same keyboard. Holman correctly observes that, following *Israel in Egypt* (1739), 'there are no more indications in Handel's oratorio scores for the use of several keyboard players' (p. 140). His discussion of the development and application of long movements, in relation to Handel's direction in his oratorios of the period 1740–52, is important, since it is an area that has been largely ignored by Handel scholars.

In Part II, Chapter 6 centres on the organisation and direction of Italian opera and English theatre music in London between 1707 and c.1750. It strongly demonstrates one of Holman's principal aims, namely to focus on the way musical directors exercised control over their musicians. He stresses that the various companies at the Haymarket Theatre, London's chief opera house 'followed normal Italian practice in the way [they were] organised and directed' (p. 250). However, Holman admits that 'the evidence for the way that Handel deployed his continuo players in opera is frustratingly ambiguous'. As both composer and maestro he would have taken 'the leading role at the first harpsichord, playing from the *Direktionspartitur* (the principal performance copy), presumably with the first cellist reading over his shoulder and perhaps a double bass as well. The second harpsichordist read from the *Cembalopartitur*, probably with another cellist, a lutenist and perhaps another double bass' (p. 251). Having the continuo team divided into two groups 'ensured that the singers could hear the accompaniment anywhere on stage' (p. 250).

Holman incorporates an extended section on 'Italian Opera in London 1720–50', focusing on musical directors, who included, in addition to Handel, Giovanni Bononcini, Attilio Ariosti, Nicola Porpora and Francesco Veracini. There are also instructive passages on the lute and theorbo as continuo instruments (pp. 232–3) and 'Continuo scoring in Handel's operas: who does what, when?' (pp. 235–8).

It is puzzling that no *Cembalopartituren* survive from the Royal Academy years (1719–28). Clausen assumes that 'there existed harpsichord scores for all Handel's operas of the first Academy period, [but since] they were kept together with the instrumental parts, [they] have been lost with them'.[1] However, 16 of the harpsichord scores do survive from the 1730s when Handel had more direct control over his opera company and its music. Holman comments on the contents of one of the most complete of these, that for *Poro, re dell' Indie* (D-Hs, MA/1042a), to indicate the role of the second keyboard player in that opera.

Holman includes an equally detailed section on musical direction in 'The English-Speaking Theatres' centred on the composers and instrumentalists working at London's two patent theatres in Drury Lane and in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

What impresses throughout this monograph is Holman's formidable command of a very wide range of source materials, covering such a variety of topics, without losing sight of his main aim.

In the final polemical chapter ('Postlude'), Holman returns to his central question with evangelistic zeal: 'is the baton and modern conducting technique appropriate for early music'? Given that he regards such practices as 'anachronistic, inappropriate, unnecessary and musically unconvincing' (p. 348) his answer is hardly in doubt! He does list his objections to this modern anathema, and more positively, his solutions for directing in ways that are more sympathetic to the music and its historical contexts. In these closing pages Holman offers several revealing personal reflections that clearly stem from his own positive performance experiences, including: 'Baroque choral and orchestral music comes alive when excessive control is not exercised, so that every singer and instrumentalist is encouraged to contribute to a collective interpretation' (p. 350), and, 'for me the crucial point is that the director should play rather than beat time' (p. 353).

This is an important, but also a challenging book, that should become essential reading for all involved in the performance of early music. That it will engender controversy and debate is, I feel, one of Peter Holman's aims.

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[1] Hans Dieter Clausen, 'The Hamburg Collection', in *Handel Collections and their History*, ed. Terence Best (Oxford, 1993), 19.

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