



Listening Guide

Bach: Contrapunctus 1, from *The Art of Fugue*

DATE: Completed 1749; published posthumously 1751

MEDIUM: Keyboard (organ or harpsichord)

FORM: Fugue (4 voices)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR: Repeated entries of main theme (*subject* on D, *answer* on A), in different registers (see “Examples of Contrapuntal Devices,” p. 000, for themes). Opening *exposition* has 4 voice entries without gaps. Alternation of subject (and answer) with connecting sections (*episodes*). Anticipation of subject statements and overlapping of subject (*stretto*). Final statement over sustained pedal note. Overall minor harmony but closing major chord.



EXPOSITION

4 entries of subject (answer) in alternation:

alto (subject)

soprano (answer)

bass (subject)

tenor (answer)

Episode 1—ends exposition (6 measures).

MIDDLE ENTRIES

Subject stated 2 times:

alto

soprano (transposed to A)

Answer in bass (overlaps soprano in stretto).

Episode 2 (4 measures).

Answer in tenor.

Episode 3 (5 measures).

Answer heard; anticipated in alto, then full statement in soprano.

CLOSING SECTION

Subject in bass (but anticipated in soprano).

Episode 4.

Pedal point in bass.

Rhetorical pauses.

Answer—final statement over sustained pedal on tonic.

Ends with major chord.