

BWV 131a Fugue in G minor

Copies *via* J. C. Kittel (P 320 etc.)

This is a transcription of the last forty-five bars of the final chorus of Cantata 131 (1707), whose opening and closing movements are, unusually, a prelude and fugue, the latter a permutation fugue of three subjects (Example 1). This conforms to the tradition of choral permutation fugues (Krüger 1970 p. 11), as in other early works: Cantata 196, the Capriccio in B \flat major. Perhaps the model is Reinken's sonatas and through them ultimately Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali*. Unlike the Passacaglia fugue, BWV 131a has no interludes, and its many tonic cadences are typical of such fugues. After Frescobaldi, one line in a permutation fugue was often chromatic, with influential examples in Kuhnau's *Clavierübung II* (Leipzig, 1692) and also Pachelbel's *Magnificat primi toni*, v. 19 (1701–5?), which has a chromatic fourth subject and countersubject much like b. 3 of Example 1.

J. S. Bach is usually thought not to be the arranger (Spitta I p. 451), and as with BWV 539, details make it unlikely to be authentic: the sources (many, but from a common route), certain unidiomatic moments, omission or alteration of fugal parts, and little in common with the authentic early fugues BWV 531, 549a. Lines impossible for two hands are omitted and the bass simplified. The succinct ending, though also vocal, need not be Bach's (as Bartels 2001 suggests), but could be the work of an arranger such as Kittel. The cantata's ending was surely the original, i.e. with a gradual buildup from two to five parts.

Example 1

Example 1 shows three subjects (a, b, c) in G minor. Subject a is in treble clef, subject b is in bass clef, and subject c is in treble clef. The notation includes a key signature of two flats and a common time signature.

BWV 525–530 Six Sonatas

Autograph: a section of the MS P 271. No title-page (fol. 1r left blank, BWV 525 begins fol. 1v); each sonata headed ‘Sonata 1.[etc.]’; perhaps only subsequently. Three staves. At end: ‘Il Fine dei Sonate’. A title-page was written by G. Poelchau (1773–1836): *Sechs Orgel-Trios für zwei Manuale mit dem obligaten Pedal* (‘Six Organ Trios for two manuals with obbligato pedal’).

Sources

The first section of P 271 gives the earliest complete set of the Sonatas (Kilian 1978 p. 65), a special compilation of *c.* 1730 (Dadelsen 1958 p. 104) or, allowing for the date-range of the watermark, *c.* 1727–30 (Spitta II pp. 692, 797). In this manuscript as now constituted, the Sonatas, the chorales BWV 651–668 and the Canonic Variations all originally began with a page left blank, each presumably for a full title?

Such a set of sonatas might have been compiled for publication, corresponding to the set of harpsichord partitas issued in 1731, matching the progressive chamber music of the late 1720s for the *Collegium musicum*, and even employing up-to-date notation (three staves, tempo marks, some slurs and dots). Both Partitas and Sonatas use the treble G-clef, although earlier versions of movements in both sets had used the soprano C-clef: a change made perhaps for the sake of publication. P 271 has more convenient page-turns than other copies and may have been intended as printer’s fair copy to be used in the engraving process itself. (Was the Six Partitas autograph lost because it was so used? The advertisement for No. 5, in Dok II p. 202, spoke of a seventh partita, which would have made a volume comparable to Kuhnau’s *Clavierübung*: were the organ sonatas to have been the original *Clavierübung II*, replaced, perhaps because they were too difficult, by the present *Clavierübung* which included the or a seventh partita?)

The fascicle structure of P 271 – two bifolia, a gathering of five sheets, a gathering of three, a bifolium, a gathering of three (see Goldhan 1987) – need not mean that work on compiling/revising so many earlier movements was still in progress at the time of writing, but it might. From the makeup it seems that BWV 525, probably the last to be copied, was at one point meant to follow BWV 529, thus giving the order BWV 526, 527, 528, 529, 525, 530.

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Another feasible order is BWV 526, 527, 528, 525, 530, 529. Makeup and rastrum-types suggest that BWV 530 was a separate work, perhaps the first to be written down in this form, with its own gathering and (like BWV 525) a blank first side – on which the last section of BWV 529 was copied in making up the set. The keys of the Six Sonatas do not compel one order rather than another, and the composer seems not to have numbered them at first, either in P 271 or even when he wrote some headings in P 272.

P 272 is a copy made by W. F. Bach as far as b. 15 of Sonata No. 4 (pp. 1–36 probably direct from P 271), and the rest much more spaciously by Anna Magdalena Bach (pp. 37–86, certainly direct from P 271). To judge from page-numbers, Anna Magdalena's copy was complete but her first forty-eight pages were replaced by Friedemann; why is not known (Emery 1957 p. 20). Watermarks are those of vocal works copied 1732–35, implying that her pages had soon been 'lost' (KB pp. 23, 31). It seems the composer participated in, supervised, revised or at least knew about this second copy: the headings of Anna Magdalena's Nos. 5 and 6 are autograph, as probably are movement headings, Italian terms and – importantly – most ornaments and articulation signs (Butt 1990). Perhaps P 271 was complete when W. F. Bach entered the University of Leipzig as a law student (5 March 1729), and P 272 when he moved to Dresden as organist of the Sophienkirche (summer 1733). Had Friedemann used his copy much it might show more signs of use – damage, added slurs – but probably all such fair copies were re-copied for practical purposes.

Perhaps tempo marks were entered in the autograph only after they were in Anna Magdalena's copy, leaving the first movement of No. 1 without a tempo mark in either copy. Or all six first movements of the Sonatas in P 271 originally had no tempo-mark, thus joining the *Italian Concerto* and most of the harpsichord transcriptions BWV 972–987 in consciously reflecting one particular Italian usage. Another Italian detail would be the appearance of movements in 2/4: a new time-signature found also in the contemporary Six Partitas (but not in earlier harpsichord suites) for movements with Italian names, Capriccio, Scherzo and Aria.

The compilation was not certainly copied again complete before the composer's death, even by students such as Kellner, Agricola, Kirnberger or Kittel, the last of whom probably made at least partial copies (see KB p. 56). Copies of individual movements, by J. G. Walther or J. T. Krebs, can be much earlier than P 271. Later copies made directly or indirectly from P 271 include Am.B.51 (for Princess Anna Amalia in Berlin); Vienna Cod. 15528 (J. C. Oley, after 1762?); and Nägeli's print (Zurich, 1827). Others appear to come from P 272, partly through Forkel or Baron van Swieten (string trios ascribed to Mozart, K 404a), somehow reaching London for the Wesley–Horn print

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of 1809–10. Oley's MS shows signs of revision, authorized or not, as if being prepared for circulation or even printing (KB p. 95). Some copies made in the decades around 1800 still preserve the early or variant versions of movements in Nos. 1, 4 and 5.

Origin and purpose

Although the history of the set of six 'begins only with the writing down of P 271' (KB p. 15), some movements exist in previous versions while others may not be original organ works, judging by compass or tessitura. From corrections in movements known to be adaptations of music from the Weimar period, P 271 suggests that the composer was collecting or at least revising them there and then. A general survey gives the following picture (Eppstein 1969; Emery 1957; KB p. 66):

	<i>composed for the compilation</i>	<i>composed previously</i>			
		<i>for organ</i>	<i>as transcription</i>	<i>uncertain</i>	<i>later</i>
525	ii	i? iii?		iii?	
526			i? ii?	i?, iii?	
527		i? ii?		i	iii ii?
528		ii iii	i		
529	i iii?	ii	iii?		
530	i ii	iii			

According to such surveys, no two originated in the same way, and only No. 6 was composed throughout as an organ sonata. Several movements show signs of being altered to fit the classic organ-compass CD–d'–c''' (see KB pp. 64–5). No significance in the present order of keys has yet been found beyond a 'tones-and-triads' sequence: C minor, D minor, E minor, C major, Eb major, G major (Kilian 1978 p. 66) or C minor, D minor, E minor, Eb major, G major, C major (Butt 1988 p. 89). Comparing Bach's 'sets of six' suggests that the idea of key-sequence gradually evolved: a few years earlier the Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord had no clear cycle of keys, while the newer Partitas for Harpsichord did.

The Sonatas' purpose and even period were clear to Forkel (1802 p. 60):

Bach hat sie für seinen ältesten Sohn, Wilh. Friedemann, aufgesetzt, welcher sich damit zu dem grossen Orgelspieler vorbereiten musste, der er nachher geworden ist . . . Sie sind in dem reifsten Alter des Verfassers gemacht, und können als das Hauptwerk desselben in dieser Art angesehen werden.

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Bach drew them up for his eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann [b. 1710], who must have prepared himself by this means to be the great organ-player he later became . . . They were made during the composer's most mature age and can be looked upon as his chief work of this kind.

Perhaps Friedemann himself told Forkel this, having been involved in keyboard works that did get published, including the variations Forkel confidently associated with J. G. Goldberg. Whether the Sonatas were more than practice music can only be guessed: instrumental trios were played during Communion in some northern churches (Riedel 1960 p. 180), but organ trios are not reported. Nor was Mattheson thinking of them when he wrote that preludes could take the form of 'little sonatas or sonatinas' (1739 p. 472). Similarly, nothing is known of organ trios said by Forkel to have been composed by Handel while a boy (see Kinsky 1936 p. 160).

Though no doubt some organists practised on other instruments with pedals, Forkel included the Sonatas as 'Organ Pieces', as did the Obituary, and he did not say 'composed' for W. F. Bach but 'set' ('aufgesetzt').* Both the words 'Trio' and 'for organ' were usual in references to them, as in the Obituary, and though nineteenth-century commentators began to equate 'Clavier' with clavichord and speculate that the Sonatas and Passacaglia were for domestic music-making (Peters I, 1844), *2 Clav. & Pedal* did not denote pedal clavichord or harpsichord. By c. 1730, a C-c''' compass implied organ exclusively, as was not so in c. 1710.

One curious detail is that since neither hand goes below tenor c, the pieces 'can be studied on organs of only one manual and pedal', with 4' stop and lh down an octave (Klotz 1975 p. 377). This is equally so for the chorale-trios BWV 655a, 664a (earlier) and BWV 676 (later), and commonly for trios by younger composers in the same tradition. (A 4' stop for left hand on its own manual, played an octave lower than notated, is suggested several times in Kauffmann's *Harmonische Seelenlust*, Leipzig, 1733.) The two techniques – tenor compass, octave-transposing left hand – may together reflect how trios were often played.

Several references, such as this of c. 1777, are full of admiration:

so schön, so neu, erfindungsreich sind, dass sie nie veralten sondern alle Moderevolutionen in der Musik überleben werden. (Dok III p. 313)

so beautiful, so new and rich in invention, they will never age but will outlive all changes of fashion in music.

Pupils writing trios include Friedemann himself (on 'Allein Gott') and, in the 1730s, H. N. Gerber. Though J. L. Krebs is not known to have made a copy of the Six Sonatas, his own sonatas are the works most obviously based

* Forkel's word 'aufgesetzt' may have come from Friedemann and 'obviously means "composed"' (KB p. 15). But Forkel's usual words for 'composed' were 'componirt', 'gemacht', 'ausgearbeitet'.

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on them: all except his C major Fugue movement are under their influence, and were even perhaps student assignments in writing both traditional and more *galant* invertible counterpoint.

Trio types in organ music

While no 'direct models for these Sonatas . . . have been discovered' (Emery 1957 p. 204), their form and texture were known in the Weimar period. Organ chorales à 3 are more feasible than organ fugues à 3, and are found in different forms by c. 1700.

Parallel to German chorales were the *trios*, *trios en dialogue* and *trios à trois claviers* of various 'good old French organists' admired by J. S. Bach (Dok III p. 288). Most examples by Lebègue, Grigny, Raison, Boyvin and Clérambault have two manual parts above a continuo pedal, sometimes imitative, but with a lot of parallel thirds etc. The Six Sonatas' binary and ritornello forms are as good as unknown. Quite distinct from the baroque tinkles fashionable in the twentieth century are the French registrations based on three 8' lines: manual I with mutation (e.g. Cornet), manual II with reed (e.g. Cromorne) or 8'+4', pedal 8' Flûte, all of which were possible on Friedemann's Silbermann organ in Dresden. Sometimes the Sonatas seem to confirm that pedal was at 16' (e.g. BWV 527.iii, bb. 61–6), as the basso continuo had also probably been in the cantata movement transcribed as BWV 528.i.

Formally, however, French trios cannot have contributed much to the Six Sonatas. Much closer is the invertible counterpoint of Italian sonatas for two violins, already turned to good use above a chorale *cantus firmus* by Buxtehude, e.g. Vers 3 of 'Nun lob, mein Seel', a chorale known in Thuringia. Here the imitation is only partial, as in Italian trio-sonatas. Meanwhile, the chorale-trio technique of a modest composer of Central Germany such as Andreas Armsdorff (1670–99) relied very much on parallel thirds and sixths, seldom with much drama. A trio such as 'Allein Gott' BWV 664a is one kind of successor to this, with a *cantus firmus*, a chorale paraphrase and an independent bass, of nearly one hundred idiomatic bars.

Dating BWV 664a to the later Weimar years and the slow movement of BWV 528 to the earlier gives some idea of how quickly Bach developed form. (Also, BWV 664a shows a creative leap from Cantata 4.iv, one that cannot be matched in the work of other composers.) The Sonata has a *basso continuo* pedal and two alternating themes, with two-bar phrases of immense charm but arbitrary continuity; BWV 664a has a thematic bass, a full ritornello shape and episodes with broken chords. But of itself, the octave imitation of BWV 528.ii is no more an 'early' sign than is the opening homophony of

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No. 2. On the contrary, the non-fugal openings to Nos. 2, 5 and 6 are a later kind of music than the fugal opening of others.

While it is generally true that the three movements are like those of a concerto, and the three parts those of an instrumental sonata, the music is clearly geared to manuals and pedals. Irrespective of compass, the upper parts would rarely be mistaken for violin or even flute lines. Moreover, as Emery observed (1957 p. 207), passages in the concertos that may resemble some of those in the sonatas (compare Concerto BWV 594.i, bb. 93ff. with Sonata BWV 530.i, bb. 37ff.) are typical of neither. If the organ concertos had any influence on the sonatas it would be more in their form and types of episode.

Trio types in instrumental sonatas

The closest parallel to the Six Sonatas is works for solo instrument and obbligato harpsichord. But though they all contain at least one fugal Allegro, the instrumental sonatas differ in important details. The organ's compass – rh $f\sharp-c'''$ (mostly $c'-c'''$) and lh $c-c'''$ (mostly c'') – is obviously planned for the convenience of two hands, and, as any would-be arranger soon learns, the lines are not easily adaptable to other instruments. The upper parts are always in dialogue, whereas in the chamber sonatas the rh is sometimes like a continuo accompaniment. At times the pedal-lines look like a *basso continuo*, and indeed the distinction is not clear-cut. Whoever made the arrangement BWV 1027a did not merely simplify the bass line of the Gamba Sonata BWV 1027; each version of the bass line has independent qualities. A common point between organ and chamber sonata is that no movement begins with the theme in the bass.

Though the variety makes a summary difficult, the organ sonatas' first movements have developed a more concerto-like shape than the violin sonatas, while the violin sonatas tend to have a more active bass line, with rhythmic complexities not expected in an organ sonata. Yet they do point in the direction of the organ sonatas, and together, the two genres survey all trio techniques, forms and textures:

- slow first movements (not in organ sonatas)
- changes of tempo and form within a movement (BWV 528, 1030)
- ritornello movements of several lengths and sections, fast or slow
- ABA-ritornello movements, fast or slow, with or without fugally answered subject, with clear or disguised return to A2
- binary slow and fast movements, with or without full reprise of first theme
- ritornello subjects homophonic or imitative (at the octave or fifth), with or without subject in bass

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movements in four or more parts, the keyboard homophonic or contrapuntal (not in organ sonatas)
 the three parts in various areas of the compass (organ sonatas less varied)
 bass line imitative, or with countersubjects, or ostinato, or thinly written (last two not in organ sonatas)
 simple proportions (e.g. 1 : 1 in BWV 525.iii and 3 : 4 : 3 in BWV 527.i)

The three-movement structure is not the obvious ancestor of any classical sonata-type but rather, in Nos. 5, 2 and 6, like that of Bach concertos with fugal finales. The most important parallel between the *Six Sonatas* and classical Sonata Form itself is undoubtedly the development-like nature of some middle sections, or the treatment given the subject of No. 2's first movement. Typical of the fast movements is the three-section plan in which the middle section modulates and becomes 'unstable'.

The comprehensive variety of the eighteen or (counting BWV 528.i as two) nineteen movements seems to be planned to show the medium's scope. The *Six Sonatas* are very concise, clear in form, less diffuse in texture than the instrumental sonatas. They are almost miniatures and yet take the principle of equality of parts so far that the opening unisons of No. 6 are not a sign of immaturity but the opposite: a concerto-like tutti, its unisons one more trio effect.

Some further characteristics

Though without looking like organ music, Telemann's *Six Concerts et Six Suites* (c. 1715–20?) do at times point towards BWV 525–530. J. L. Krebs's *galant* melody and simple harmony also bow to Telemann – as the throbbing bass of Example 3 (Krebs' Trio in B flat) suggests when compared with Example 2. Any tendency for upper parts in Bach's Sonatas to become a duet above continuo, as at the beginning of No. 2, looks new and up-to-date because simpler, indeed *galant*. Many turns of phrase in the Sonatas have no part in the language of organ chorales or fugues; the slow movement of No. 3 is quite at home in an arrangement from Mozart's period, and all of them make feasible duets for harpsichord (KB IV/7 p. 15).

In their short phrases and question-and-answer openings, Nos. 2 and 5 have an unmistakable chamber-like or concerto-like quality. Telemann's or Fasch's chamber works can occasionally aspire to a similar idiom, as is clear from the transcriptions BWV 586 and 585, where it is the working-out and the sequences that betray their origin. Although occasionally, as in the last movement of No. 6, lines resemble a chorale paraphrase, mostly the chamber-like melody is sparkling, charming, either witty or plaintive,

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Example 2

BWV 527.iii



strangely free of the conventional associations there are between words and themes in the organ-chorales. Some slow movements encouraged a species of melancholy admired by the younger composers such as J. L. Krebs (see Example 4, BWV Anh. 46). This was part of the idealized italianism pervading the *Six Sonatas*, from their themes (Vivace = more energetic than Allegro) to their actual terminology ('Sonata', 'Il Fine dei Sonate' – compare the 'Il fine' at the end of the *Italian Concerto*, published 1735).

Example 3



Example 4



The *Sonatas* make a world of their own, as distinctive and accomplished as the first movements of Leipzig cantatas or the preludes and fugues of *WTC1*. The two hands are not merely imitative but so planned as to give a curious satisfaction to the player, with phrases answering each other and syncopations dancing from hand to hand, palpable in a way not quite known even to two violinists. Melodies are bright or subdued, long or short, jolly or plaintive, instantly recognizable for what they are, and so made (as the ear soon senses) to be invertible. Probably the technical demands on the player also contribute to their unique aura.

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BWV 525 Sonata No. 1 in E \flat major

Further sources: published by A. F. C. Kollmann in *An Essay in Practical Musical Composition* (London, 1799), plates 58–67; first movement with pedal only to *c'*, in doubtful copies, e.g. P 597 (a copyist for C. P. E. Bach?); St 345, arrangement in C major of movements i and iii, for strings (c. 1750).

Headed in P 271 'J. J. Sonata 1. à 2 Clav: et Pedal'; second movement 'Adagio', third 'Allegro'. For 'J. J.' (*Jesu Juva*, 'Jesus help') see BWV 651, also in P 271.

The likelihood that this originated as a chamber trio in B \flat major (KB p. 67) has led to a hypothesis that there were four versions: (a) a chamber work in B \flat , (b) an organ trio of one or more movements, also in B \flat , (c) a 'Concerto' or string trio version as in St 345 and (d) BWV 525, with new middle movement (Hofmann 1999). Any preponderance of short phrases in versions (a) and (b) implies that they were much earlier than (d). Despite its title, the outer movements of (c) have the same bass lines as those in P 271, which seem made for organ pedals; the scoring of violin, cello and bass is surely an *ad hoc* arrangement, with added slurs (see KB p. 73).

The form of BWV 525.i – as if binary, with some recapitulation in the second half – could mean that the movement is relatively late. In form and figuration the outer movements are so contrasted, while their opening harmony and melody are so similar, as to suggest that the composer carefully paired them, perhaps for some didactic purpose. On the possibility that this Sonata was a late addition to the set, see above, p. 2.

First movement

The form may be outlined as:

- A 1–11 tonic, lh opens
- B 11–22 to dominant, rh opens
- A 22–36 to F minor, rh opens; inverts parts from A, extends to 15 bars (to include pedal entry b. 29)
- B 36–51 to tonic, lh opens
- A 51–8 pedal opens; b. 53(halfway)–b. 58(beginning) = bb. 6–11

The effect is that of a ritornello movement with a second half beginning clearly at b. 22, and the final A ending like the first A. However, there is no clear solo/tutti contrast in the movement, since motif *a* – Example 5 (i) – runs through all sections *inversus* or extended or diminished, combining both with scale (ii) and arpeggio figures (iii), the latter of which has the