

Preface

Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741) worked primarily for the Austrian emperor at the Viennese court where he held the positions of court composer and capellmeister for many years. His numerous students included personages such as J. D. Zelenka, G. Muffat and G. Chr. Wagenseil, as well as the viol virtuoso Ernst Christian Hesse. He was an exceptionally prolific composer, producing sacred vocal music (masses, psalms, other liturgical forms, and oratorios), operas, and instrumental music (sonatas, overtures). In 1725 he published his celebrated Latin treatise on the art of counterpoint „Gradus ad parnassum“, which was later translated into German, Italian, English, and French. He was without a doubt the most important composer and music theorist in Austria and southern Germany during the first half of the 18th century.

The present new edition of Fux's canon is based on two manuscripts housed in the University/Federal Library of Darmstadt:

Q1 – D-DS mus. ms 327 with the title „Canon / a 2. Viole di Gamba / e Continuo / Compos: del Signore / Giov: Giuseppe Fux“, Score

Q2 – D-DS mus. ms 327a with the title „Canon. a. 2. Viole di Gamba. Del Sig: Fux“, Score

The two are practically identical. There is some indication that Q2 is a copy of Q1. Both manuscripts were executed by Darmstadt musicians sometime around 1740. It is assumed that they served as an exercise for learning counterpoint.¹

The form is that of a three-movement Italian trio sonata and has the tempo markings fast-slow-fast. The two upper voices follow each other in the manner of a canon and are set over a contrapuntal bass. In the source material it is indicated in the upper voice where the second voice should begin (S) and end (A and S). These indications are however redundant as both parts are written out in the score.

Our edition is an almost exact reproduction of the source material. The few accidentals that we added have been set in parentheses. Twice we adjusted the length of the final note in the second part to match the first part (1st and 3rd movement). In the manuscript the viol parts are notated in alto clef; in our edition we set the melody voices in the score in octavated treble clef.

Because the viol parts have only a moderate pitch range and practically no double-stops, the piece is equally suitable for violins or flutes (played an octave higher than written). Performance by a high and a low instrument is also possible. To facilitate such options we have notated the upper voices in both alto and treble clef.

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 Translation by Lynn Dickinson

¹ Fred Flassig, *Die solistische Gambenmusik in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1998, p. 78