




## Sound Enhanced

Hear a MIDI file of the example marked  in the Members Only section of the PAS Web site, [www.pas.org](http://www.pas.org)

# Fugue for Drumset

BY MICHAEL PETIFORD

**A** fugue is a polyphonic composition based on canonic imitation. In other words, it comprises multiple melodic lines that are played simultaneously, with a leading voice that states a melodic subject and following voices that enter later and imitate the subject.

As with a canon, the voices in a fugue enter in succession and may apply variations to the subject; however the fugue provides even greater opportunity for musical expression by allowing the participating voices to introduce secondary melodic material, and by imposing structural elements that allow the individual voices to behave more independently. Unlike a canon, in which the following voices are imitations of the subject, in a fugue all of the voices participate on a relatively equal level.

The term “fugue” comes from the Latin word *fuga*, which means “to run away from or to flee.” In a fugue, two or more voices or parts play simultaneously as a short melodic subject jumps from voice to voice and is subjected to constant reiteration and reinterpretation. It is often described as a kind of musical conversation in which a musical subject is tossed about, embellished, and explored.

## ELEMENTS OF A FUGUE

A fugue has a basic structure with specific elements that each serve an important purpose. Following is a list of the required elements and some of the most commonly used optional elements.

**Exposition** (required). This is the opening section of a fugue, in which the initial musical statement and supporting musical material are introduced. This statement, called the *subject* (required), is typically a short, easily recognizable melody consisting of only a few notes or measures. The exposition is the portion of a fugue in which the subject is exposed in each of the participating voices. The leading voice plays the subject and additional voices enter in succession.

As subsequent voices enter the fugue they are referred to as *answers* (at least one answer is required), and they always enter later than the subject. They restate the subject at a higher or lower interval, or pitch. Technically, the exposition is a form of *free canon*, called such because only the specific subject melody is necessarily imitated in the following voices.

**Development** (required). This is the body of a fugue. In this section the participating voices take turns restating the subject or manipulating it by reinterpreting it through variations such as augmentation, diminution, inversion, and retrograde. During the development, each voice may be allowed to complete some version of the subject before another voice takes it up, or the voices may develop in *stretto*. In addition to this, the development may contain any number of *episodes*.

A fugue must have an *exposition* with at least one *subject* and at least one *answer*, and some type of *development*.

## OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

**Inversion.** In an inversion, the melody is turned upside down.

Thus, an ascending phrase becomes a descending phrase, and vice versa. Low notes and high notes swap places.

**Augmentation.** In augmentation the note values of the subject are increased uniformly, extending the overall length of the melody. For instance, doubling the value of each note will double the overall length of the melody. A two-measure subject would thus become a four-measure variation.

**Diminution.** In diminution the overall note values of the subject are decreased, shortening the length of the melody. For instance, halving the value of each note would cut the overall length of the melody in half. In this case, a two-measure subject would become a one-measure variation.

**Retrograde.** Retrograde means “backwards.” A subject in retrograde has been reversed. A composer may simply reverse the order of the notes in the melody, or the composer may reverse the rhythmic structure of the melody as well.

**Stretto.** This is a portion of a fugue in which a kind of musical compression occurs. Here the voices take turns expressing the subject and applying variations; however, at this point the subjects begin to overlap one another. One voice takes up the subject in some form and before it’s finished, another voice jumps in on top of it. A stretto is not a required feature of a fugue. Some fugues dispense with the stretto completely, others develop entirely in stretto, some may use only tiny passages of stretto.

**Countersubject.** When one of the various voices, or parts, of the fugue is not playing the subject or a variation thereof, it may play additional melodic material. If this material is recurrent throughout the fugue and is intended to play specifically against the subject, it is referred to as a countersubject. Again, this is not a required feature of a fugue. Some fugues have no countersubject, others have one or many.

**Episode.** An episode consists of music other than the subject/variation or countersubject. As said earlier, a fugue allows for any of the voices to introduce additional melodic material. This material may contain fragments of the subject or countersubject. There may even be extended episodes in which no trace of the subject is present at all.

**Sequence.** An episode is often composed of sequences—small melodic figures that are repeated several times. Sequences are often fragments of the subject, and they generally step up or down a given interval with each repetition.

**Codetta.** A codetta is a brief episode used to conclude a section of a fugue, such as an exposition or developmental episode. A codetta may appear within an exposition between the entrance of voices.

**Coda.** This is the closing section of a fugue; it literally means “tail.” There are no specific rules applied to a coda. It may be an episode, a recapitulation of the subject, a re-exposition of all the voices, a repetition of the countersubject(s)—it is simply where the composer settles on a satisfying conclusion.

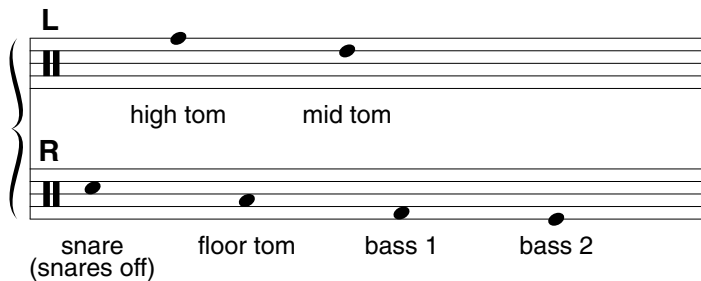
These optional elements are generally used to construct the development of a fugue. Note that a fugue is not limited to one exposition and development, nor to one subject. A fugal subject

may be re-exposed and developed after an initial exposition and development. Additional fugal subjects may be exposed and developed as well. More than one subject may even be introduced simultaneously. Fugues with more than one subject are referred to as double or triple (etc.) fugues.

The fugue is a very old musical concept. It is considered by many to be the most important musical contribution of the Baroque period of the 17th century, the period of Bach and Handel. If you are unfamiliar with the concept of fugue, it would be beneficial to research the topics of *polyphonic composition* in general and *canonic imitation* specifically. Familiarizing yourself with some of Bach's more popular fugues may help you to understand this topic more readily.

### NOTATION

In the following fugue, two staves are used. The upper staff is labeled L for left hand and the bottom staff is labeled R for right hand. Bass drums are noted on the bottom of the lower staff, with the stems down so that they can be seen as a separate voice. The following key illustrates the left/right division of the drumset as well as the configuration of the staves.



### THREE-PART FUGUE FOR DRUMSET

To produce a fugue on the drumset I have used six drums to create three parts, or voices. Voice one is a snare drum (snares off) and a floor tom. Voice two is a high tom and a low tom. Voice three is a pair of bass drums, the left tuned slightly higher than the right. This gives me three zones: high (toms), medium (snare/floor tom), and low (bass drums). Each zone consists of a relative high pitch and a low pitch. The high and low toms are played with the left hand, the snare drum and floor tom are played with the right hand, the high bass drum is played with the left foot and the low bass drum is played with the right foot.

The *exposition* begins with the right hand playing a two-measure *subject* followed by a two-measure *ostinato*, or repeating figure, which serves as a *countersubject*. Throughout the fugue, whenever the right hand is not playing the subject or a variation, it will revert to this ostinato. At this point (measure 5) the left hand answers, restating the subject in a higher register, as the right hand continues its ostinato.

After stating the two-measure subject, the left hand begins a two-measure ostinato of its own, which is distinct from the first ostinato (measure 7). As with the right hand, throughout the fugue, whenever the left hand is not playing the subject or variation it will revert to this second countersubject ostinato.

As the left and right hands are playing their separate repeating figures simultaneously, the bass drums answer with the two-measure subject in the lower register (measure 9), followed by a

# Instrument Insurance

The Largest Insurance Firm  
Dedicated Solely To The Needs  
Of Musicians Worldwide.

- Same Day Coverage
- Insuring Over 14,000 Musicians, Studios, Dealers & Orchestras Worldwide
- Superior Coverage & Rates With No Deductibles
- Expedient Claim Settlements
- Now Offering Business Interruption Coverage
- Low-Cost, All Risk Equipment Insurance For Recording Studios

ASSOCIATES, INC.  
**CLARION**  
MUSICAL INSTRUMENT INSURANCE  
www.clarionins.com  
1-800-VIVALDI • FAX: 631-423-2821

third distinct two-measure ostinato (measure 11). Whenever they are not playing the subject or variation, the bass drums will revert to this third countersubject ostinato. At this point the right hand, the left hand, and the feet are playing three separate ostinati simultaneously. This completes the exposition.

The *development* begins at measure 15 with the leading voice (right hand) playing the subject in retrograde, as voices two and three play their respective countersubjects. Upon completion of the variation, voice one plays countersubject one, and voice two begins the subject in inversion. Throughout the development, the voices take turns playing either a variation or a restatement of the subject, and then reverting to their respective countersubjects. Each variation is allowed to be played in its entirety before subsequent variations are introduced.

The *stretto* begins at measure 33 when the leading voice restates the subject, and before it is finished, voice two begins the subject in augmentation. From this point on the numerous variations overlap one another until measure 46.

The *coda* begins at measure 46, at which point the countersubjects all come together. At measure 48 the subject recapitulates in the original voice, and the fugue concludes at measure 52.

The material covered in this article is in no way intended as a comprehensive explanation of fugue. In fact, I have deliberately avoided certain topics that I felt were not directly applicable due to the tonal limitations of the drumset. Nonetheless, the instrument is indeed capable of producing fugues. The primary goal of this work has been to demonstrate that this musical form can be applied to the drumset and that doing so will, hopefully, expand the repertoire of drumset theory, composition, and technique.

# THREE-PART FUGUE FOR DRUMSET

BY MICHAEL PETIFORD

**EXPOSITION**

1 L

R

Subject

Countersubject 1

5 Answer

Countersubject 2

9 Answer

Countersubject 3

**DEVELOPMENT**

13

Retrograde

16 Inversion

20

Augmented

24

Subject

Retrograde Inversion

28

Inversion

32

STRETTO

Subject

Retrograde

Augmented

36

Inversion

Augmented Inversion

40 Retrograde Inversion Subject

Retrograde

Augmented Retrograde Inversion

44 CODA

48 Subject

Copyright © 2001 Michael Petiford

**Michael Petiford** received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Arizona State University, where he graduated *summa cum laude*. He has performed in college marching band, concert band, stage band, and orchestra, and has played drumset in numerous club acts, church bands, and community theater productions. PN

Vaughncraft's composite/high-density head mallets for playing woodblocks and suspended cymbals.

Vaughncraft  
R. Vaughn  
VAUGHNCRAFT  
U.S.A.

Hear the pure sound of your instruments! (Birch or rattan shafts)

P.O. Box 3886 Lawrence, KS. 66046 Tel. (913) 255-4500 Fax. (913) 255-4573

### PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

The Percussive Arts Society wishes to express its deepest gratitude to the following businesses and individuals who have given generous gifts and contributions to PAS over the years.

**\$500,000 or more**

McMAHON FOUNDATION

**\$100,000 or more**

FRED GRUBER • ZILDJIAN FAMILY

**\$50,000 or more**

GORDON B. PETERS • EMIL RICHARDS

MICKEY TOPERZER

**\$25,000 or more**

CAROLL BRATMAN • NANCY & PERRY D. PREUSCH

REMO, INC. • SABIAN, LTD. • THOMAS SIWE

# PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY

## 2003 SOLO MARIMBA CONTEST

**PURPOSE:** To encourage the highest level of artistic expression in the art of performance and literature for solo marimba. The contest is designed to select four finalists to compete at the 2003 PASIC. An exciting new feature of the contest will include cash awards for the finalists as well as matching grants to their respective percussion programs, as follows:

- First Place:** \$1000 plus a matching grant of \$1000
- Second Place:** \$ 750 plus a matching grant of \$ 750
- Third Place:** \$ 500 plus a matching grant of \$ 500
- Fourth Place:** \$ 250 plus a matching grant of \$ 250

The matching grants will be awarded to the institutions represented by the four finalists, and can be used for scholarships, equipment needs or repairs, guest clinicians/performers, or other percussion area needs.

**PROCEDURES:** The contest is for college level students who are current Percussive Arts Society members, ages 18-25 years of age at the time of entry. Each performer must submit a CD plus 4 copies (5 total) to PAS. The CD must be no longer than 15 minutes in length. All entries will be numbered to insure anonymity and will then be evaluated by a panel of judges. Each finalist chosen to compete at PASIC 2003 will be expected to assume all costs pertaining to the event including travel, room-board, etc. Finalists will be required to verify age.

Selections on the CD must be from the following: The first work must be a complete work or movement, and an additional selection may be edited to stay within the 15-minute restriction.

|            |       |                                    |
|------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| J. S. Bach | ..... | Partitas and Sonatas               |
| Thomas     | ..... | Merlin                             |
| Tanaka     | ..... | Two Movements                      |
| Druckman   | ..... | Reflections on the Nature of Water |
| Stout      | ..... | Two Mexican Dances                 |
| Abe        | ..... | Wind in the Bamboo Grove           |
| Klatzow    | ..... | Dances of Earth & Fire             |

**Application Fee: \$25 per entry payable to PAS**

**Send CD's to: PAS, 701 NW Ferris Ave., Lawton, OK 73507**

**Deadline for entries is May 1, 2003**

Performer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ PAS Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP or Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

School enrolled \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_