

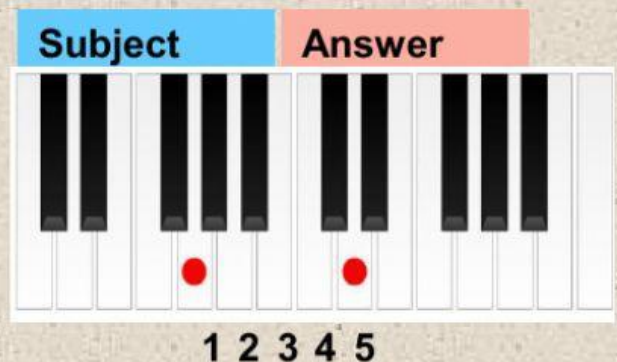
# Fugue

A **FUGUE** is a **polyphonic** and highly imitative piece based on a main theme, called a **SUBJECT**. It is used mainly in Instrumental music but can also be found in Vocal music.

The first section is known as the **EXPOSITION**.  
e.g. Bach *Organ Fugue in G minor*



The subject is then imitated by another part called the **ANSWER**, usually in the dominant (ie a 5<sup>th</sup> higher or a 4<sup>th</sup> lower)



- A **REAL ANSWER** is an accurate note for note repeat of the subject,
- A **TONAL ANSWER** is one where certain notes are altered to fit harmonically with the other parts.

While the **ANSWER** is heard, the **COUNTER SUBJECT**, a new theme, begins in the first part. This overlapping texture creates counterpoint. In between repeats of subject and answer themes are small sections called **EPISODES**.



Subject



A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. The score is written for two staves, likely representing a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the upper staff, featuring a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a prominent triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The title 'The Rose Tree' is written in a decorative, cursive font above the first staff.

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It features two staves, both in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The melody is written on the upper staff, and the accompaniment is on the lower staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the accompaniment uses quarter and eighth notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.



## Episode – downward sequence





[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akPjhsL\\_tRM&t=45s&ab\\_channel=MitchBoucher-Composer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akPjhsL_tRM&t=45s&ab_channel=MitchBoucher-Composer)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEo5YHYWnK8&ab\\_channel=ChristopherPalmer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEo5YHYWnK8&ab_channel=ChristopherPalmer)

• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAFETgpt9PA&ab\\_channel=UnderstandingMusic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAFETgpt9PA&ab_channel=UnderstandingMusic)



Fugal textures can be seen in other types of music.  
Listen to a **vocal** fugue – *And with his stripes* (Messiah)  
NB - Listen out for the leap of a **diminished 7<sup>th</sup>** on the word 'stripes'

Hedwig's Fugue

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-fd8tWN8lw&ab\\_channel=ChristianPerrotta](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-fd8tWN8lw&ab_channel=ChristianPerrotta)

# Stretto

- Statements of the subject pile up in quick succession. One voice begins a subject before the previous voice has finished its own rendition of the subject, thus creating an overlap. This often occurs in the final section of the fugue.

e.g. *Bach Fugue no 1 in C major*

Subject



Now listen to the subject overlapping in stretto

A musical score for the stretto section of Bach's Fugue No. 1 in C major, starting at measure 14. The score is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each voice part is on a separate staff. The subject is repeated in each voice, with each entry overlapping the previous one. Red rectangular boxes are drawn around each instance of the subject to highlight the overlapping nature of the stretto. The subject is a short melodic phrase consisting of a quarter note, an eighth note, a quarter note, an eighth note, a quarter note, and a half note.



# Variations in Fugue Subject

- **Inversion**-each melodic interval is turned upside down
- **Retrograde**-Beginning with the last note and ending with the first
- **Augmentation**-Original time values are lengthened
- **Diminution**-shortened time values

## Bach Fugue in C minor book 2 no2

Subject



Augmented subject



Inverted subject



Retrograde subject



Diminution subject



## Bach Fugue in C# minor – book 2 no3

Subject



Subject inverted



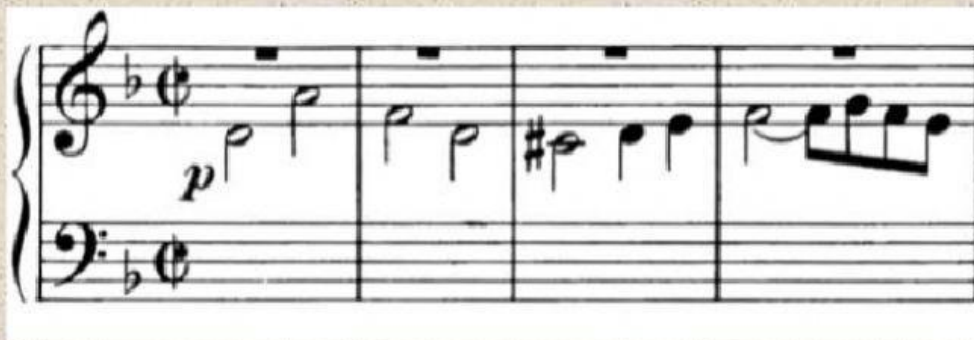
Subject augmented



## Fugue no 9 in Dm - The Art of Fugue

*The Art of Fugue* is collection of fugues and four canons based on this main theme:

Play from 0:00



Fugue No. 9 has it's own distinctive **subject**, beginning with an octave leap:

Play from 26:01



Listen to a recording of this **fugue** played on the harpsichord.

As the **fugue** progresses you will hear the main theme, heard in long notes (**augmentation**), played by solo string instruments, in counterpoint with the **fugue subject**:





## Summary of Fugue

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFt7FAxdaBM&ab\\_channel=PolychoronProductions](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFt7FAxdaBM&ab_channel=PolychoronProductions)