

Shostakovich in Memoriam

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Shostakovich and Bach: On the fugue subjects of omnitonal macrocycles

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Abstract. Opus 87 was composed by Shostakovich in the mid-twentieth century under the profound impression of Bach's music. On the one hand, it demonstrates an aspiration to strictly adhere to the traditions and norms of the Baroque—primarily Bachian—fugue; on the other hand, it reveals that the intention to “do as Bach did” is usually realized in a fundamentally non-Bachian manner.

While the fugues in the two volumes of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* are constructed in different ways, those in Shostakovich's Op. 87 are built according to a single compositional type, even though the fugue subjects across all three macrocycles are highly varied. The reasons for this should be sought in the specific features of musical language and compositional technique. This paper offers a comparative study of the fugue subjects in all three macrocycles. The analysis reveals notable discrepancies across several parameters. The first group of differences concerns the temporal sphere: in Shostakovich's fugues, the subjects are associated with relatively rigid meters—simple and non-traditional odd (asymmetric) time signatures ($\frac{7}{4}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{8}$), whereas Bach's fugues lean toward compound meters (with common time C predominating). Among melodic transformations, Shostakovich prioritizes tempororhythmic ones: strict and free augmentation/diminution, including proportional canons. In terms of pitch ranges (ambitus) and modal structures, Shostakovich's subjects exhibit greater diversity than those of Bach. The interaction of harmony and syntax in Shostakovich's subjects frequently causes them to terminate on a weak beat, thereby rendering the issue of tonal answer irrelevant. Most importantly, the conclusion of a fugue subject on a strong or weak metric position can indicate opposing concepts of the subject, the fugue, and the overall artistic meaning of the musical form. The convincingly self-contained subject of a Bach fugue remains resistant to transformation and, after various trials, can be reaffirmed in its primary form. Conversely, the subject of a Shostakovich fugue, being open to the vicissitudes of the context, often undergoes significant eventual modifications.

Keywords: Dmitri Shostakovich, Johann Sebastian Bach, Op. 87, *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (WTC), 24 Preludes and Fugues, compositional type of fugue, fugue subject, transformations of the fugue subject

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== Памяти Д. Д. Шостаковича ==

Научная статья

**Шостакович и Бах:
о темах фуг всетональных макроциклов**

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Аннотация. Опус 87 создан Шостаковичем в середине XX столетия под ярчайшим впечатлением от музыки Баха и, с одной стороны, демонстрирует стремление максимально соблюсти традиции и нормы барочной — прежде всего баховской — фуги, с другой же стороны, обнаруживает, что намерение «делать, как Бах» обычно реализуется отнюдь не по-баховски. В двух томах ХТК Баха фуги строятся различно, а в ор. 87 Шостаковича — однотипно, причем темы фуг во всех трех макроциклах весьма разнообразны. Причины такого положения нужно искать в конкретных особенностях музыкального языка и композиторской техники. Предлагаемая работа посвящена сравнительному исследованию тем фуг во всех трех макроциклах. Анализ показал заметные расхождения по ряду параметров. Первые связаны с временной сферой: в фугах Шостаковича темы настроены на относительно жесткие тактовые размеры — простые и нетрадиционные нечетные ($\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{7}{4}$), а в фугах Баха —

на сложные (преобладает размер **с**). Среди мелодических преобразований у Шостаковича лидируют темпоритмические — строгое и свободное увеличение/уменьшение, включая пропорциональные каноны. В отношении диапазонов (амбитусов) и ладозвукорядных (модальных) структур темы Шостаковича разнообразнее баховских. Взаимодействие гармонии и синтаксиса в темах Шостаковича нередко приводит к окончанию их на слабом времени, вследствие чего становится неактуальна проблема тонального ответа. Главное: завершение темы фуги на сильной или слабой метрической позиции может быть признаком противоположных концепций темы, фуги и вообще художественного смысла музыкальной формы. Убедительно замкнутая тема баховской фуги устойчива к преобразованиям и после всяческих испытаний может быть утверждена в своем основном виде. Тема же фуги Шостаковича, открытая превратностям контекста, нередко претерпевает в итоге значимые изменения.

Ключевые слова: Д. Шостакович, И. С. Бах, ор. 87, Хорошо темперированный клавир (ХТК), 24 прелюдии и фуги, композиционный тип фуги, тема фуги, преобразования темы в фуге

Благодарности. Настоящая статья, как и легшая в ее основу лекция на VI Международной конференции «Техника музыкальной композиции: теория и практика», посвященной памяти Д. Д. Шостаковича (Российская академия музыки имени Гнесиных, 2025), состоялись благодаря неуголимой любознательности и неусыпной дружеской опеке Аллы Ирменовны Янкус. Ей, в прошлом моей ученице, а ныне коллеге и соратнику, — первейшая моя благодарность. Благодарю также от всей души Марию Львовну Монич — тоже в прошлом мою ученицу, а ныне надежную помощницу в работе, деликатную и чуткую собеседницу, в обсуждениях с которой так хорошо обдумывается и оттачивается мысль, внимательную и дотошную читательницу новых текстов. Сердечно благодарю Петра Рейновича Лаула — музыканта от Господа Бога, выдающегося пианиста, внука моего Учителя А. Н. Должанского — за предоставленную возможность разбираться в его бумагах, связанных с диссертацией и предполагавшейся брошюрой о фугах Баха. За безотказную и оперативную помощь в оформлении нотных примеров, порой очень сложном для меня, от всей души благодарю Петра Юрьевича Трубинова, знатока и замечательного мастера нотного и книжного набора, и Яну Валерьевну Горбатовскую, бывшую мою студентку и давно уже незаменимую помощницу.

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Introduction

To begin, I will quote my own article, “On the Evolution of the Artistic Meaning of Polyphonic Composition”:

While Bach’s fugues are distinguished by the typological richness of both their material and compositional structures, Shostakovich’s fugues, which continue the Bachian tradition, are characterized by the typological diversity of their material and the uniformity of their compositional structures. Although the similarities and differences in the material of the fugues are easily explained as a consequence of the evolution of musical language, such an explanation is insufficient for the variety or uniformity of their compositional frameworks. Apparently, the reasons for such a sharp divergence are of a different, functional nature [1, p. 34].

This article was published forty years ago and reprinted twenty years later in the author’s two-volume collection. At that time, such a vision of the relationship between the fugues of Shostakovich and Bach seemed both valid and satisfactory. However, the publication of Shostakovich’s Op. 87 by DSCH Publishers (2015), based on a meticulous analysis of the autographs, compels us to revisit the issues of the composer’s musical language and compositional technique. Furthermore, Alexander N. Dolzhansky’s study on the subjects of Bach’s instrumental fugues has only recently become widely available.¹ Apparently, it is time to re-examine the similarities and differences in the material of Shostakovich’s and Bach’s fugues from a new perspective. This is the precise focus of the present paper.

The following conventional abbreviations are used in this article:

1) Each fugue is identified by two parameters: *the key* (in Latin letters, with major keys capitalized and minor keys in lowercase) and *the macrocycle* (for Bach, the volume number of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (hereafter *WTC*) is indicated by a Roman numeral; for Shostakovich, by the opus number). For example, C_I denotes the *C major* fugue from Volume I of the *WTC*; fis_{II} denotes the *F-sharp minor* fugue from Volume II; and h_{87} denotes the *B minor* fugue from Op. 87. [In the fugue designations adopted in this study, H/h refer to *B major/B minor*, whereas B/b refer to *B-flat major/B-flat minor*, in accordance with German, French, or Italian pitch nomenclature. Elsewhere, key names are given in English notation].

¹ Dolzhansky, A. N. (1942). *O nekotorykh kompozitsionnykh osobennostyakh instrumental’nykh fug Bakha* [On some compositional features of Bach’s instrumental fugues] [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Leningradskaya gos. konservatoriya [Leningrad State Conservatory]. (In Russ.).

2) Since this study analyzes exclusively fugue subjects, abbreviated designations are used instead of full phrasings (e.g., “the subject of such-and-such a fugue”)—for instance, “the such-and-such subject.” Subjects of double or triple fugues are indicated by a superscript index to the left of the key signature. For example, subject E_{II} refers to the subject of the *E major* fugue from *WTC II*; subject Fis_{87} refers to the subject of the *F-sharp major* fugue from Op. 87; subject $^1fis_{II}$ denotes the first subject of the *F-sharp minor* fugue from *WTC II*; and the subject $^2e_{87}$ denotes the second subject of the *E minor* fugue from Op. 87.

Preliminary Reflections

Discussing the fugues and their subjects in Dmitri Shostakovich’s *24 Preludes and Fugues* without comparing them to the fugues and subjects of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *WTC* would be counterproductive. This is not only because Bach’s fugues existed in the auditory consciousness of humanity for more than three centuries and involuntarily enter into a dialogue with any polyphonic material—all the more so since the two volumes of the *WTC* serve as an unquestionable benchmark for fugal writing. Crucially, Shostakovich composed his Op. 87 following the 1950 Leipzig bicentennial celebrations, under the direct and vivid impression of Bach’s music and the profound impact of his mastery. Shostakovich’s friend, Isaak D. Glikman, wrote:

In the summer of 1950, Dmitri Dmitrievich and I met frequently in Komarovo, where he was renting a *dacha*, so there was no need for correspondence. At that time, he was deeply impressed by the Bach celebrations he had recently attended in Leipzig. Shostakovich spoke to me tirelessly and with passionate affection about Bach, describing him as an extraordinary man, a phenomenal craftsman—precisely a craftsman—and a composer of genius. ... Thus, it was during this summer of 1950 that Dmitri Dmitrievich conceived the idea for the *24 Preludes and Fugues*.²

The rigor with which traditional relationships between the pieces within the minicycle (*prelude and fugue*) and the structural rules of the fugue are either observed or violated in this work demonstrates the composer’s awareness of historically established norms and his desire to adhere to them as closely as possible—without, of course, abandoning his own artistic principles.

The first thing that strikes about the fugues of Opus 87 is that they are all built according to a single compositional plan.

² Glikman, I. D. (Ed.). (1993). *Pis'ma k drugu: Pis'ma D. D. Shostakovicha k I. D. Glikmanu* [*Letters to a Friend: Letters from D. D. Shostakovich to I. D. Glikman*]. DSCH [Moscow] – Kompozitor Publ. [St. Petersburg]. (In Russ.).

In all twenty-four fugues, the compositional scheme—which is quite simple and traditional—remains practically identical: a strict exposition where the regular countersubjects form, together with the subject, a ‘primary thematic complex’; a developmental section featuring tonal expansion governed by a uniform principle (beginning with ‘closely related keys of different modes, followed by distant ones’); mandatory episodes that are also regular, featuring recurring vocal material, among which a central role is occupied by a climactic developmental episode just prior to the final section; and this final section itself, which invariably contains strettos and, as a rule, opens with one. In the two double fugues (No. 4 in *E minor* and No. 24 in *D minor*), this exact same principle is implemented on a more monumental scale.

This self-restriction was, apparently, natural for Shostakovich; however, it is difficult to find another cycle, even one with a significantly smaller number of fugues, that completely lacks the idea of innovating and complexifying polyphonic technique. Shostakovich’s Op. 87 is a kind of *Art of Fugue*, where it is not the subject that remains constant, but the construction itself. In this regard, the preludes, characterized by a diversity of compositional designs, stand in contrast to the fugues [2, p. 253].

The described fugal scheme is so natural and logical that it appears entirely conventional and traditional. If one disregards the details that testify to a high level of compositional mastery (the accumulation and retention of sets of regular countersubjects, the polyphonic density of the episodes, the construction of diverse strettos, expansive tonal motion, and a structurally justified climax), the layout corresponds to a typical *fugue d’école* [3]. However, if these details are taken into account, along with the compelling intonational connection of the countersubjects and episodes to the subject, as well as its diverse structural and melodic development, the result is an ideal strict fugue—a crafted, masterly fugue, or a *fuga ricercata* according to Marpurg:

Die eigentliche Fuge ist in Ansehung der Durcharbeitung des Fugensatzes zweyerley, strenge oder frey. a) Eine strenge Fuge, fuga obligata, heißt diejenige, wo in dem ganzen Stücke mit nichts anderm als dem Hauptsatze gearbeitet wird, d.i. wo derselbe nach der ersten Durchführung, wo nicht allezeit ganz, doch zum Theil, so zu sagen Satz auf Satz zum Vorschein kömmt, und wo folglich aus dem Hauptsatze oder der bey der ersten Wiederhohlung desselben dem Gefährten entgegen gesetzten Harmonie alle übrigen Gegenharmonien und Zwischensätze vermittelst der Zergliederung, Vergrößerung, Verkleinerung, der unterschiednen Bewegung u. d. g. hergenommen, diese aber vermittelst der Nachahmung in einer bündigen und gründlichen Harmonie unter sich verknüpft werden. Wenn eine solche strenge

Fuge weitläufig ausgearbeitet wird, und noch allerhand andere Kunststücke, wozu die vielerley übrigen Gattungen der Nachahmung, des doppelten Contrapuncts, des Canons und der Tonwechselung Gelegenheit geben, damit vergesellschaftet werden: so nennet man ein solches Stück alsdenn mit einem italienischen Nahmen ein *Ricercare* oder eine *Ricercata*, eine Kunstfuge, eine Meisterfuge. So sind die meisten Fugen vom seel. Herrn Capellmeister Bach beschaffen.³

If Marpurg viewed such a fugue, fully elaborated in all its components, as ideal, then for him, the ideal architect of fugues was Johann Sebastian Bach, with his exceptionally rich fugual legacy. The precious core of this legacy is formed by the two volumes of the *WTC*, which have brought light and joy to humanity—the first for over three centuries, and the second lagging behind it by only two decades.

Remarkably, however, the fugual model just described occupies neither a defining nor a significant place within the *WTC*. To demonstrate this convincingly, let us consider a few facts.

A *simple exposition* is found in fewer than half of the fugues in the *WTC* (nine fugues in Volume I and ten in Volume II).⁴ In the remaining fugues (which include two double fugues and one triple fugue, bringing the total number of expositions to twenty-eight rather than twenty-four), the expositions are expanded by one or more additional entries, or by a counterexposition. Thus, within the *WTC*, a simple exposition does not constitute the norm.

Regular countersubjects also appear by no means in every fugue by Bach and, naturally, not necessarily in large numbers. As analytical experience shows, it is sufficient for a Bach subject to have stable support from a single counterpoint, whether it be a regular countersubject or a *risposta* subject in a stretto (see [4]). The same applies to *episodes*: their number, size, placement, similarity, or regular retention vary widely. Consequently, the number and regular retention of countersubjects and episodes do not constitute the norm for a fugue.

Shostakovich, indeed, exhibits an undeniable tendency to retain all regular countersubjects accumulated within the exposition (and in Fugue No. 13 in *F-sharp*

³ [Marpurg, F. W.] (1753). *Abhandlung von der Fuge...* (Vol. 1). A. Haude und J. C. Spener, p. 19–20.

⁴ In the *WTC*, simple expositions are found in the following fugues: *C_I*, *c_I*, *d_I*, *e_I*, *fis_I*, *G_I*, *g_I*, *a_I*, *b_I*, *C_{II}*, *D_{II}*, *Es_{II}*, *dis_{II}*, *E_{II}*, *e_{II}*, *f_{II}*, *G_{II}*, *a_{II}*, *b_{II}*.

major, even this maximum is exceeded), as well as a uniform, systematic development of the material from the very first two-voice episode following the answer.⁵

The remaining section of a fugue in the WTC may contain only a single entry in a related key of a different mode (as in the fugues c_I , Fis_I and H_I) or dispense with such entries altogether (as in the fugues d_I and fis_I , d_{II} , Es_{II} , etc.). On the other hand, it can be constructed on various transformations of the subject, sometimes even in combination with a regular countersubject (as in the fugues G_I and b_{II}), or on its stretto development (as in the fugues C_I , F_I and a_I , D_{II} and Es_{II}), and so forth. Thus, the methods of thematic development in the free section of a fugue and its compositional type are unregulated; traditions, however, remain a separate and multifaceted issue.

As for the ternary model (exposition–development–final section) characteristic of Shostakovich's fugues, it aligns poorly with Baroque compositional and overall aesthetic ideals and stereotypes⁶; in any case, it contradicts the binary nature of such highly representative Bach fugues as C_I and d_I , c_{II} , D_{II} , d_{II} , Es_{II} etc.⁷

In terms of the number of voices, Op. 87 follows the model of the WTC, featuring one two-voice and one five-voice fugue, while the rest are equally divided between three-voice and four-voice ones. Regular countersubjects and episodes are retained until the final section with a changing amount of voices in vertical permutations. For instance, in the four-voice fugue in *A-flat major*, two quadruple invertible counterpoints are formed: one within the subject entries⁸ and another within the episodes.⁹ Strettos may be based on various parameters and incorporate different tempo-rhythmic

⁵ It is for this very reason that Alexander N. Dolzhansky introduced the concept of the *core thematic structure* [5, p. 217], while Larisa L. Gerver had to decipher the numerical configurations within the manuscripts of Op. 87 [6, p. 287; 7, pp. 71–79].

⁶ This point was raised half a century ago by Yakov I. Milstein and Alexander G. Chugaev [8, p. 16; 9, p. 7], and at the beginning of the present century by Anatoly P. Milka [10, pp. 197–202].

⁷ It is also noteworthy that in these fugues, the second half (the second part) opens with entries in the tonic key.

⁸ Subject and three regular countersubjects (bars 15–18 and 25–28).

⁹ Cf. bars 19–20 and bars 29–30. In the next fugue—the one in *F minor*—two four-voice complexes are likewise formed: the subject with three countersubjects, and a four-voice episode. However, the most complex permutations of both complexes (the entry in B Aeolian from bar 114, and the initial phase of the fifth episode from bar 122) turn out to be four- and five-pairs of voices permutations: ✕, ✕

and intonational transformations. Contrary motion appears to play a rather modest role in Op. 87: it is employed systematically only in the two-voice Fugue No. 9 in *E major*.¹⁰ In any case, alterations in polyphonic technique are primarily tied to thematic development and can transpire within the development section without altering the overall structural blueprint of the fugue.

The compositional model of Shostakovich's fugue represents a *generalization and a synthesis of various fugal blueprints*: primarily those of Bach, both recently absorbed and long familiar, as well as those assimilated during his student years. As a student, Mitya Shostakovich studied with immense fervor; in fact, he virtually begged for lessons in counterpoint and fugue, never allowing his pedagogue, Nikolai A. Sokolov, to shirk his teaching duties. Furthermore, Shostakovich possessed an exhaustive memory for a vast amount of music spanning different historical eras. Underlying this model is intensive intellectual labor—the cognitive processing of immensely diverse, long-accumulated data alongside a wealth of fresh musical impressions.

While a simple exposition is sufficient to satisfy tradition, a subject requires substantial intonational and structural resources to generate a set of regular countersubjects, and even greater ones for subsequent melodic alterations and stretto entries. Unlike in Bach's music, a stretto for Shostakovich's subject represents discomfort, and often sheer stress. The fact that the model under discussion formed the basis of all the fugues in the macrocycle turned it into a norm, a frame of reference. However, an established norm is usually perceived as something dully conventional, as merely a starting point. It can be hypothesized that the composer's ultimate goal was not to achieve diversity or originality in more or less complex structural solutions and contrapuntal devices, but rather to find precisely such a structural model that would prove suitable for all types of thematic development, regardless of the character and structure of the subjects.

Analyzing the composer's appointment diaries, Olga V. Dombrovskaya writes: "It is precisely the invariance of techniques and the strict adherence to once-and-for-all chosen methods of notation—uniformity in formulations and stable abbreviations—that often helps in complex cases" [11, p. 68]. It seems that such

¹⁰ Here, a pair of entries in the free section in *B major* and *E major* (bars 21–26) transforms both the subject and the countersubject in inversion; similarly, in the first three-bar unit of the third episode, the material from the second episode is in mirror inversion—cf. bars 17–20 and bars 37–39.

a commitment to maintaining a discovered principle manifested itself in the uniform composition of Shostakovich's fugues, all the more so since he had already tested some of its significant components in his early fugues. This can be explained from the perspective of energy conservation and comfortable working conditions. However, another aspect is discernible here—one that is deeper and far more subtle.

In conversations about Shostakovich, Dolzhansky repeatedly recalled how, when questioned about the unusual tonal plan of the first movement of the Tenth Symphony, the composer replied that he had wanted to write a classical sonata form—an explanation that many considered paradoxical. In his article *From observations on Shostakovich's Style*, Dolzhansky convincingly demonstrated that this intention was realized through the resources of the composer's own modal-tonal system [12, pp. 77–83]. It appears that the fugues of Op. 87 were likewise crafted according to certain generalized Bachian “blueprints” that crystallized in Shostakovich's mind during the Leipzig celebrations. Listeners—primarily professional musicians, it would seem—still tend to react strongly to those aspects in which Shostakovich deviates from classical models, whereas in reality, he was likely adhering to them precisely to the extent that his personal style and musical language permitted.

It is equally important that by October 1950, when Shostakovich began working on the collection, only three fugues were listed among his published works: the *E minor Prelude*, Op. 34; the second movement of the Piano Quintet; and the finale of the oratorio *The Song of the Forests*. This circumstance is highlighted by Dolzhansky:

The two volumes of the *WTC* contain approximately one-tenth of the fugues composed by Bach over his entire lifetime. By contrast, Shostakovich's collection includes roughly *ten times more* fugues than are found in all his previous works combined. The very same creative task, which for Bach was natural—albeit complex and difficult—proved to be an absolute exception for Shostakovich [5, p. 206].

This objectively true comparison is not entirely free from a psychologically subtle substitution: it contrasts Shostakovich's experience at the moment of creating Op. 87 with Bach's entire artistic legacy. For the sake of fairness, it must be acknowledged, first, that by the time he was working on the first volume of the *WTC* (1722), the thirty-seven-year-old Bach had composed far more than three fugues,¹¹ and second, that the total number of fugues in Shostakovich's output (roughly double the number found in Op. 87) in no way diminishes the ratios presented by Dolzhansky.

¹¹ Judging by modern catalogs, Shostakovich had also composed a greater number of fugues by the time he began work on the cycle.

Initially, the composer intended merely to test himself by undertaking a specific technical challenge. He had already undertaken similar work in 1934, following the completion of a collection of preludes in all keys.

However, the problems surrounding the staging of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and its aftermath completely removed this undertaking from the composer's agenda. Now, however, filled with creative enthusiasm, he very quickly realized that he had set for himself not a narrow technical exercise, but a highly serious artistic task, and he worked on Op. 87 virtually without interruption. Brief trips and the parallel composition of the *Ten Poems for A Cappella Choir* did not significantly affect the pace of his writing.¹² The entire collection was completed in just four and a half months.¹³

Tonal Arcs

The macrocycles and their components reveal both similarities and differences, primarily the most convincingly “tangible” ones: tonal relationships.

The Preludes in C major and F-sharp major. First and foremost, the preludes—and, broadly speaking, the minicycles that open each half of Op. 87—echo the character and mood of the preludes and fugues from Volume I of the *WTC* in the same keys. The *C major* cycles of both Shostakovich and Bach are imbued with a sense of the beginning of something new and radiant: a bright day, a good deed, or a benevolent stage in life (*Example 1 a, b*).¹⁴

¹² Elizabeth Wilson [13, pp. 255–256] writes about the parallel work on the Tenth Symphony. The dating of the composition of the Tenth Symphony is discussed in this edition on the basis of a number of studies [13, p. 261–262].

¹³ Work on the cycle began on October 10, 1950, with the composition of the *Prelude in C major* [2, p. 217]. Shostakovich reported the completion of the collection on February 25, 1951, in a letter to Isaak D. Glikman (Glikman, 1993, p. 92).

¹⁴ Examples from Op. 87 are cited from: D. D. Shostakovich. (2015). *New Collected Works. Vol. 113: 24 Preludes and Fugues*. DSCH. Examples from the *WTC* are cited from: Joh. Seb. Bach. (n.d.). *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*. (E.-G. Heinemann, Ed., Vol. I) G. Henle Verlag; Joh. Seb. Bach. (n.d.). *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*. (O. von Irmer, Ed., Vol. II) G. Henle Verlag.



Example 1. Dmitri Shostakovich. Prelude C_{87} , bars 1–7 (a);
Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude C_7 , bars 1–2 (b)

A similar atmosphere characterizes the *F-sharp major* preludes (Example 2 a, b); however, they are also linked by a more specific, genre-based kinship: these are the most clearly defined pastorales within the monumental polyphonic collections of Shostakovich and Bach.¹⁵

The “Irregular” subjects in *F-sharp minor*. Tonal similarity or contrast also links the subjects of certain fugues. For instance, the only subjects that depart from historically established norms are found in the *F-sharp minor* cycles of Op. 87 and Volume II of the *WTC* (Example 3 a, b; in Bach’s case—Example 3 b—it is the second subject of a triple fugue).¹⁶ In both instances, the subjects begin on the mediant rather than the tonic or the dominant.

¹⁵ Levon O. Hakobian also mentions the pastoral traits in the *F-sharp major* Prelude [14, p. 301]. Beyond the undeniably perceptible character of the music, both preludes exhibit a certain proximity to the pastorales of the Baroque era. As Yuri S. Bocharov writes, the imagery of the pastorale “was primarily linked to Christmas themes ... The ‘genre style’ of the pastorale is characterized by a leisurely tempo, the rhythm of a siciliana, $6/8$ or $12/8$ time signatures, the melodic movement of the upper voices in parallel thirds, and ‘bagpipe-like’ drone basses. The mode is, as a rule, major; the preferred (though not mandatory) keys are *F major*, *G major*, and *C major*” [15, p. 129].

¹⁶ The first section of the *fis_{II}* fugue concludes with a cadence in *A major*, which prompts and justifies the non-standard beginning of the second subject.

Moderato con moto ♩. = 66

a

b

Example 2. Dmitri Shostakovich. Prelude Fis_{87} , bars 1–3 (*a*);
Johann Sebastian Bach. Prelude Fis_I , bars 1–3 (*b*)

Andante

a

b (20)

Example 3. Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject fis_{87} (*a*);
Johann Sebastian Bach. 2nd Subject fis_{II} (*b*)

The subjects in G major. Shostakovich's *G major* subject evokes strong associations with the subjects of both *G major* fugues from the *WTC* (Example 4 a, b, c).



Example 4. Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject G_{87} (a);
Johann Sebastian Bach. Subjects G_I (b) and G_{II} (c)

In this case, however, the similarity is not limited merely to the two subjects from the *WTC*. This lineage also encompasses the subjects of the *G major* Invention and Sinfonia, the third Duet from *Clavier-Übung III* (BWV 804), the gigue from the Fifth French Suite (BWV 816), the Fifth Keyboard Partita (BWV 829), and the First Cello Suite (BWV 1007), as well as the *Allegro* from the Keyboard Toccata (BWV 916), and so forth. Most of these subjects (and the fugues based on them) are, as a rule, in triple meter and are saturated with various configurations of circular motion.¹⁷ The explanation here is simple: they are all modeled after the chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'*—the Lutheran Gloria (see Example 5).

The third edition of the Schmieder catalogue (BWV³) lists ten organ settings of this chorale (excluding early versions): three settings in the *Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes* from the Leipzig autograph manuscript (BWV 662–664) and three in *Clavier-Übung III* (BWV 675–677) form multi-key cycles (*A–G–A major* and *F–G–A major*, respectively); all the remaining ones (BWV 711, 715–717, as well as the *Variations on Allein Gott...* BWV 771, which might have been composed by Andreas Nikolaus Vetter rather than Bach) are in *G major*.¹⁸

¹⁷ These features appear to be inherent to *G major* and find reflection in the music of non-German authors as well. This point is noted, for instance, by Alla I. Yankus [16, p. 495].

¹⁸ See Blanken, Ch., Wolff, Ch., & Peter Wollny, P. (Eds.). (2022). *BWV3—Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke von Johann Sebastian Bach. Dritte, erweiterte Neuauflage*. Breitkopf & Härtel, p. XLIV, pp. 451, 453, 461, 463, 486.



Example 5. Das Gloria in excelsis (*Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*)

These examples demonstrate the genesis and context of Bach's *G major* subjects; however, the G_{87} subject (*Example 4a*) most likely had no such predecessors. From Bach's G_I subject, it inherited the key, time signature, tempo, and character of movement, while also taking up an unexpected intonational idea and developing it in a characteristically individual manner.

In the G_I subject, reaching the melodic apex is linked to the chaining of two sevenths with a tendency to resolve to the first and third scale degrees—that is, to the tonic third, since both sevenths belong to a single dominant harmony. The G_{87} subject is likewise based on the interlocking of two sevenths, but within the parameters of the fourth-seventh construction so favored by the composer.

Consequently, in Bach's subject, first, the positions of the tonic regularly appearing in the odd-numbered (accented) bars are so weightily established that the final fifth scale degree of the subject is confidently perceived as the fifth of the tonic.¹⁹ Second, in the G_I subject, two consecutive bars open with the same motion outlining the tonic third, which makes it necessary to omit one of these bars in strettos.²⁰

The G_{87} subject, by contrast, is modulating (the only such subject in the macrocycle) and is constructed from a symmetrical interlocking of two sevenths. Each seventh—effectively the core of a melodic phase—opens its respective half of the subject with its own structural setting: the first is the tonic setting (the first and seventh scale degrees in *G major*), while the second is the “peri-tonic” setting (the seventh and sixth scale degrees in *D major*).²¹

¹⁹ In the d_I and As_I subjects, the clear sequence of the tonic and subdominant scale degrees prompts the perception of the final fifth scale degree as the dominant, although it does not contradict hearing it as the fifth of the tonic harmony.

²⁰ In the strettos of this fugue, the coordinates of entry are an octave displacement (the upper octave in the first stretto, and the lower octave in the second) and a distance of one bar; if the subject is stated in its entirety in both voices, parallel octaves will emerge in bar 3 of the stretto.

²¹ Regarding the first seventh, Dolzhansky writes: “The strong resolution on the seventh scale degree imparts an unusual stability to this degree, giving it the significance of an ‘upper tonic’ ” [5, p. 25].

The first seventh is formed by a scale passage—the longest stepwise run among the subjects of the Op. 87 fugues. The second seventh is taken in a single leap, which is also the widest skip among the subjects of the collection, occurring elsewhere only in the *B-flat major* subject. Following such differently constructed openings, the deployment phases are likewise organized in opposite manners: the scale-core is accompanied by uniformly narrowing, multidirectional leaps, whereas the leap-core is followed almost exclusively by a stepwise, winding, and sequential motion. Both deployments form similar zigzags, and both melodic phases cadence on the third scale degrees of their respective—tonic and dominant—keys.

Consequently, the syntactic structure of the subject can be viewed as either a simple periodic structure or a pair of periodic structures—yet, in any event, these periodic structures are of a contrasting nature.

*Melodic Similarity and Contrast.
Antagonistic Subjects*

The subjects of the fugues in the second minicycles: a₈₇ and c_I. The second minicycles (*prelude and fugue*) in both Op. 87 and the *WTC* essentially fulfill the same overarching function: each cycle declares the modal-tonal organization of its respective macrocycle. In the *WTC*, the parallel key to the opening major one shifts the focus toward the modal mastery of the pitches within the chromatic scale.²² In Op. 87, the relative key (especially following the preludes of Chopin and Scriabin, not to mention Shostakovich's own Op. 34) signals the comprehensive encompassing of the major-minor system along the circle of fifths (see *Examples 6 a, b*).

The opposing orientation of the related rhythmic structures in the *c_I* and *a₈₇* subjects (see the rhythmic diagram in *Example 6c*) is perceived as a demonstration of a fundamental otherness. In Bach's work, the structure of summation rushes forward toward the accent—it is an anapest extended by an iamb; in Shostakovich's work, it begins directly with the accent—it is a dactyl supported by a trochee.

The subjects are polar opposites in every respect. Bach's subject is born within an compound time **C**, inside its multilevel expands a rhythmic core of the subject  condenses from sub-motivic structures, out of which the overall structure is fluidly formed as a summation of a higher order. Implied two-voice texture is created by the tonic, figured with neighboring-tone figurations, and the metrically

²² By comparison, only fifteen keys were in common use during the High Baroque period, as seen, for example, in Bach's *Inventions* and *Sinfonias*.



Example 6. Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject a_{87} (a), Johann Sebastian Bach. Subject c_I (b) and two metric interpretations of the rhythmic formula of the fugue subject common to these subjects (c)

anchored linear framework (hereafter abbreviated as MALF) from the sixth to the third scale degree. Shostakovich's subject, by contrast, is initially constrained by the rigid conditions of a simple time $\frac{2}{4}$ and a four-bar phrase structure, into which it simply cannot fit. It also features implied two-voice texture, but both voices move—seemingly in parallel (akin to the deployment in the Cis_I subject)—yet, in reality, with “stumbles,” with the result that the subject's final cadence falls an octave below the register established at its opening.

It is noteworthy that the a_{87} fugue is the only one among the three completed in 1934 that Shostakovich used more than a decade and a half later. Although the author was thoroughly dissatisfied with the fugues written at that time, as previously mentioned, he slightly revised the *A minor* fugue almost immediately for a subsequent operatic project that ultimately remained unrealized.²³ It was in this revised form (albeit arranged for piano) that he included it in Op. 87.

The subjects of the fugues in parallel keys from the fifth pairs of minicycles: E_{87} and e_I . The tonal plans of the macrocycles are based on different intervallic steps from one pair of minicycles to the next (an ascending semitone in the *WTC* versus an ascending fifth in Op. 87) and on different tonal relationships

²³ This is described by Olga G. Digonskaya [17, p. 49].

between the major and minor cycles at adjacent odd and even positions (parallel keys in the *WTC* versus relative keys in Op. 87). Consequently, tonal correspondences arise only between the minicycles—specifically, the major cycle and its parallel minor in the *WTC*—in every third pair (a whole step higher): C/c_{WTC} , D/d_{WTC} , E/e_{WTC} , $F\text{-sharp}/f\text{-sharp}_{WTC}$, $A\text{-flat}/a\text{-flat}_{WTC}$, and $B\text{-flat}/b\text{-flat}_{WTC}$.

The fugues of the fifth pair of cycles under the adjacent numbers IX–X, sharing a common tonal center of *E* (*major* and *minor*), are in parallel keys—that is, in different modes; their comparison is prompted by the fact that both are two-voice fugues, each being unique within its respective omnitonal macrocycle (*Examples 7 a, b*).



Example 7. Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject of E_{87} (a);
Johann Sebastian Bach. Subject e_I (b)

Both subjects exhibit an implied two-voice texture: a recurring sustained tone (not figured, as in the c_I subject, but pulsating) and a metrically anchored linear framework (MALF), with their relationship reversed in the two subjects. In Shostakovich's work, the sustained voice is the lower one, from which the upper voice ascends; in Bach's subject, the stationary voice is the upper one, from which the lower voice descends. In Shostakovich's subject, all statements of the tonic fall on accented and relatively accented (odd-numbered) beats, whereas in Bach's subject, they occur on the weakest (even-numbered) beats. In Shostakovich's subject, the upper voice ascends along diatonic steps, while in Bach's work, the lower voice descends along chromatic steps, with both managing to take an identical number of steps (except that the *E major* line lags slightly just before reaching the peak).

Subjects of the Same Type

Cantus Firmus-type subjects: Fis_{87} and E_{II} . Dolzhansky noted that in Shostakovich's Collection, "there are no cantus firmus-type subjects" [5, p. 215], an assertion that requires no explanation today. Nine years later (on the eve of the reissue of Dolzhansky's book), Vsevolod V. Zaderatsky observed that the subject of Fis_{87} "resembles the subject of the *E major* fugue from Volume II of Bach's *WTC* in its 'ascetic' sound and laconic expression" [18, p. 194]. Laconism, restraint, and the absence of details are qualities frequently inherent in cantus firmus-type melodies; in the *WTC*, such subjects include cis_I , E_{II} , H_{II} , as well as f_I , despite the chromatic filling of almost the entire lower (fifth) modal segment.²⁴ In Shostakovich's Collection, the only *cantus firmus*-type subject is Fis_{87} .

Subjects of Fis_{87} and E_{II} (Examples 8 a, b) not only fit within a major tetrachord but also share intonational similarities. In both subjects, the fourth degree is reached via an ascending leap from the second degree, so that the subsequent descent to the third degree transforms the entire turn—at least for an ear attuned to the major-minor system—into an neighboring-tone figure around the tonic. Furthermore, in Shostakovich's subject, this is the longest held note, which enhances its melodic significance.



Example 8. Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject Fis_{87} (a);
Johann Sebastian Bach. Subject E_{II} (b)

For Bach, however, such an interpretation of the *E-major* subject was hardly the only one. Most likely, he adopted the subject from J. C. F. Fischer's *Ariadne Musica*, but he could (and indeed must) have been familiar with its other settings, such as those by J. J. Froberger and J. A. Reincken. The very sequence of the initial ascending steps

²⁴ The upper tetrachord is the conventional zone for scale chromaticization. It accommodates the unstable sixth and seventh degrees, and altering their pitch yields and changing their height leads to mode variations. It is likely in this connection that the effect of detailed musical expression arises. The Subject of f_I , however, seems to be the only one in Bach's instrumental fugal heritage where the lower—and *primary*—segment of the modal scale undergoes chromatic elaboration, which is perceived as an essential characteristic of the thematic material.

(a trichord within a fourth) corresponds to the *initia* of three of the eight Gregorian modes, aimed at establishing the achieved pitch as a *repercussio* and a melodic apex.²⁵ This is precisely what occurs in the fugue (bars 23–26), where the subject is embellished in a pair of strettos—first in the upper voices and then in the lower ones. In *Example 9*, this is indicated by horizontal brackets, resembling a ornamented chorale: the leap of a third is filled in, and the rhythm becomes irregular.

Naturally, connections extend from the *E_{II}* subject to the *cis_I* subject owing both to their shared chorale-like nature and the narrowness of their ranges. The *C-sharp minor* subject, even more compressed, densely minor, and intensely framed by an ascending *saltus duriusculus* with downward-pulling semitone intonations, contrasts sharply with the diatonically placid *E major* subject. While the *C-sharp minor* fugue, with its epic sweep of 115 bars, forms a kind of instrumental passion, the *E major* fugue, with its forceful and, one might say, swift unfolding of stretto events,²⁶ is structured as a compact *Credo* and spans 43 bars, corresponding to the gematria of this word.²⁷

Unsurprisingly, the *Fis₈₇* fugue, despite the cantabile quality and naive simplicity of its major subject, shares common features with both aforementioned Bach fugues. Like the *C-sharp minor* fugue, it is cast on an exceptionally grand scale (163 bars),

²⁵ *Liber Usualis: Missæ et Officii pro Dominicis et Festis duplicibus cum cantu gregoriano* (No. 567). (1904). S. Sedis Apostolicæ et S. Rit. Congregationis Typographi, pp. 59–60, 62. The *initia* of the plagal second mode (*c–d–f*; with *f* as the *repercussio*), the authentic third mode, and the plagal eighth mode (*g–a–c*; with *c* as the *repercussio*) are also based on a trichord within a fourth (*Liber Usualis*, 1904, pp. 59–60, 62).

²⁶ In the *E_{II}*, only the exposition (bars 1–9) is free of strettos; conversely, the entire remaining section (bars 9–43) can be viewed as a smaller-scale stretto fugue embedded within a larger one. The expositional section of this smaller fugue forms a chain of strettos structured according to the plan of a strict counterexposition (bars 9–16); the final section of the fugue (bars 35–43) is also built on this same material, expanding powerfully. For a more detailed discussion of fugues constructed on the “nesting doll” (matryoshka) principle, and specifically regarding the *E_{II}* fugue, see [19].

²⁷ On musical symbolism, gematria, numerical alphabets, etc., see, for example, [20, pp. 329–400]. It is possible that during his work on Book I of the *WTC*, Bach was not as deeply and seriously interested in the problems of musical symbolism and gematric calculations as he was in later years. Nevertheless, the length of the *cis_I* fugue (115 bars) almost coincides with the gematria of the word *Kruzifix* (crucifix/depiction of the cross): based on the natural Latin numerical alphabet, the gematria of *Kruzifix* totals 117.



Example 9. Johann Sebastian Bach. Fugue *EII*, bars 23–26: Strettos

features five voices, and rich in regular countersubjects.²⁸ Its thematic development, however, resonates more closely with the diverse stretto transformations of the *E-major* fugue, including rhythmic ones (such as the diminution of the subject set against its original form functioning as a *cantus firmus*), as well as doublings.²⁹ The *Fis*₈₇ fugue culminates in a 57-bar final section containing three double stretto entries of the subject in its original and diminished forms. These are framed within an arch of two entries that are texturally the most prominent, rhythmically the most supple, and yet the most secretively hushed: the first in doubling and with deceleration, and the second—at the fugue's conclusion—supported by a stretto.

Chorale-like and song-like subjects: *C*₈₇ and *1fis*_{II}. This time, the comparison of the subjects is related neither to the keys of the fugues, nor to their

²⁸ The two regular countersubjects in the middle and, partly, the final (up to bar 94) sections of the *cis*_I fugue contrast so sharply with the subject that they are often mistaken for a second and third subject (although they possess neither individual expositions nor a combined one). In the *Fis*₈₇ fugue, the five regular countersubjects—which are non-contrasting, particularly under the conditions of a simple time $\frac{3}{4}$ and a relatively narrow range of rhythmic values—are grouped into two sets: either the first three (the third being a rhythmically sharpened and extended variant of the subject) or all of them excluding the third.

²⁹ Tempo-rhythmic transformations of the subject are very rare in Bach's works, whereas Shostakovich employs them more frequently than others and in various situations, including strettos—primarily within proportional canons (the fugues in *B major*, *F-sharp major*, *D-flat major*, and *C minor*), adding to them various specific technical tasks, such as textural ones (in the *D-flat major* fugue) or large-scale syntactic ones (in the *A-flat major* fugue). Strettos that contrast the subject in diminution against its rectus form functioning as a *cantus firmus* reveal a specific expressive and semantic affinity between the *Fis*₈₇ and *EII* fugues.

Moderato ♩ = 92

a

pp legato sempre

b

V T V T T

Bach's subject opens with a descent through the tones of the triad from the fifth to the first degree; both fall on the weakest beats of the bar, with the MALF originating

34

from the former, and the dialogue of tonics from the latter. The MALF moves broadly and freely from the sixth to the first degree, embellishing each degree alternately with stepwise motion and leaps: stepwise, through the figured resolution of syncopated suspensions, and with leaps, by springing from the tonic alternately from below and from above. Each touch of the tonic engenders a new phase of melodic development.

As the motion progresses, the span of the leaps diminishes, but the primary significance lies elsewhere. The time interval between the appearances of the tonic, which consistently fall on the weakest beats, also progressively decreases: from the first statement in the lower register to the second in the upper register, there are four quarter notes; from the second to the, back in the lower register, there are three; and to the final appearance of the subject, there are two. This almost imperceptible yet subliminally felt regular compression initially finds a partial outlet in the truncations and modulatory turns of the subject (in bars 12–14, an entry in *A major* and an incomplete turn to *C-sharp minor*), followed by a simplified and shortened entry modulating from *C-sharp minor* to *F-sharp minor* (bars 14–16). However, in bar 20, the second subject appears (see *Example 3 b* above)—energetic, straightforward, brief, and incomplete. Like a powerful uncoiling spring, it is presented in stretto by overlapping voices, and moves unhindered—continuing a sequence—from the exposition into the remaining section (*f-sharp–b–e–A*), where it finally arrives at a cadence (bars 23–25), combines with the first subject (bars 28–31), and prepares the entry of the subject (bar 36).

Profound Intonational Connections

Between the subjects of Op. 87 and the *WTC*, which possess completely different signs of the genre and character traits — to say nothing of their time signatures—one can detect a hidden similarity and even an affinity. This kind of closeness is generated by purely internal, strictly structural impulses that shape not the melody itself in all its living concreteness, but rather the general directions of its movement—its *melotype*, so to speak.

Subjects of g₈₇ and D_I (Example 11 a, b)

The first half of Shostakovich's elegiac, somewhat waltzing *G minor* subject—a brief, steep ascent followed by a long, decelerated return—strikingly coincides almost exactly with Bach's subject from the *D_I*. Its swift, tirata-like ascent and hovering descent constitute, in the words of Wanda Landowska, "... it is a gorgeous and dazzling *ouverture à la française*. In playing it one must exaggerate the sharpness



Example 11 a–b. Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject g_{87} (a);
Johann Sebastian Bach. Subject D_I (b)

of its dotted rhythm according to the French tradition of that period” [21, p. 184]. Heinrich Bessler, discussing the similarity between the *D-major* fugue and a French overture, notes the special role of the initial *tirata*, which imparts a “ricercar-like” character to the subject:

... im Wohltemperierten Klavier folgt beispielsweise die D-dur-Fuge (BWV 850) dem Vorbild der französischen Ouvertüre. Ihr Hauptrhythmus in punktierten Achteln wird durch eine Zweiunddreißigstel-Spielfigur kontrastierend ergänzt, so daß man von einem „Ricercarthema mit Charakter“ sprechen darf [22, p. 17].

The shared components of the initial fragments in both subjects constitute their most intonationally active elements. In Bach’s subject, it is precisely the *tirata* that undergoes development within the episodes: here, a tense non-polyphonic dialogue repeatedly emerges between the full *tirata* and its second half in augmentation, with alternating invertible counterpoint and the “unison” support of the inner voices. Conversely, in Shostakovich’s subject, it is the initial embellishment of the tonic that provokes imitative responses among the voices as early as the exposition (see bar 15); indeed, all thematic development within the fugue seems geared toward building a full-voice stretto, which ultimately remains unfulfilled.

Subjects of H_I , E_I and F_{87} (Example 12 a, b, c)

A combination of two fourths, either straight or jaggedly broken, underlies the subjects of F_{87} , B_{87} and f_{87} . In Bach’s subject, similar structures—moving stepwise but retaining the metric positions of the structural pitches— occur both in the initial fragments and in the continuations. Moreover, sequences of quartal steps are often designed to highlight these pitches, as in the subjects of C_I , A_I and g_{II} . In the H_I subject cited here, the run across the structural pitches starts from the end

of the motive, which will be altered in the answer.³¹ In the E_I subject, the continuation consists of filling in and concluding a sequence of fourths.



Example 12. Johann Sebastian Bach. Subjects H_I (a) and E_I (b);
Dmitri Shostakovich. Beginning of Fugue F_{87} (c)

Subjects of D_{87} , C_{II} and dis_{II} (Example 13 a, b, c)

Underlying many subjects of the WTC is the tonic fifth paired with an upper neighbor sixth degree. In fact, the traditional requirement to begin a fugue subject on either the first or the fifth degree, combined with the necessity of clearly establishing the principal key, ensures the presence of the tonic fifth and its neighboring-tone elaboration across numerous fugue subjects—arranged in a wide variety of orders and combinations.

The cited example convincingly demonstrates, we believe, just how broad the spectrum of tempo, genre, and emotional interpretations of this specific melodic idea can be. This is only natural: the Baroque norm was sustained through the techniques of economical melodic voice-leading:

Bach achieves the highest degree of certainty and logical coherence right at the very beginning of the subject by immediately establishing the *tonality*, followed by the mode.

³¹ As a reminder: although the B major subject (WTC , Book I) does not strictly require a tonal answer, Bach nevertheless constructed one. He accomplished this by isolating the second through fifth notes as a “dominant motive” and lowering them by a second. Notably, an identical tonal answer is employed in the *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-flat major*, BWV 998 (BWV3, p. 567), which features a subject with the exact same contour but moving in uniform eighth notes and concluding on the first beat of the second bar.



Example 13. Johann Sebastian Bach. Subjects C_{II} (a) and dis_I (c);
Dmitri Shostakovich. Subject D_{87} (b)

Consequently (one might say, *for this very purpose*), the vast majority of the subjects under consideration (approximately two-thirds) begin on the tonic, which immediately sets the tonal center. ...

Therefore, if a subject begins on the dominant, then for the sake of tonal clarity in the subsequent motion, it becomes necessary to demonstrate that this is precisely the dominant and not the tonic. Bach accomplishes this immediately through various means. The most effective pitch for this purpose following the initial dominant is the fourth degree. ... Another method involves touching upon the sixth degree in minor keys. ... The same (touching upon the sixth degree) is also possible in major keys, but it is insufficient, ... Therefore, in major keys, Bach immediately touches upon both the sixth and the fourth degrees in *all such instances without exception*³² (my italics in the quote replace uppercase text in the original print.—K. Yu.).

Zaderatsky writes on the same subject, though from the perspective of expressive effect and specifically in relation to Shostakovich's fugue subjects:

A favorite intonation that frequently underlines Shostakovich's lyrical melodies is a fifth-motion from the dominant to the tonic (or vice versa), provided that the dominant is melodically encircled by the sixth modal degree as a neighboring tone. Such a melodic turn sounds tense and mournful in minor keys, whereas in major keys, it generates a clear, bright, and tranquil image. This characteristic motive can be found in Shostakovich's thematic material not only within the preludes and fugues but also across many other works [18, p. 187].

³² Dolzhansky, A. N. (1942), pp. 23–24.

Resume

The strikingly vivid, as well as hidden structural and intonation-melodic connections, similarities and contrasts between the themes of Op. 87 and the two volumes of the *WTC* discussed here primarily attract the attention of listeners, performers, and scholars. However, despite the compelling and undeniable historical, stylistic, and linguistic differences between Shostakovich's and Bach's fugues, such an investigation provides no answer regarding at least one—albeit narrow but concrete, strictly technical—domain wherein these distinctions are generated. This situation can be attributed, first, to the fact that the fugue subjects in all three macro-cycles belong to a single, centuries-old tradition of fugal composition. Second, a significant role in this context is likely played by the conventional analytical frameworks attuned to the tonal-harmonic perception and comprehension of eighteenth- to twentieth-century music.

It appears necessary to direct this search into a different channel—one that is culturally, historically, and aurally broader, as well as less predictable. The second part of this study will focus primarily on the modal properties of the fugue subjects—naturally, first and foremost, those of Shostakovich, given that the modal component is significantly more pronounced in his polyphony than in that of Bach.

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