Die Kunst der Fuge

von Jos. Seb. Bach

(in eigenhändiger Partitur)
THE ART OF FUGUE

Johann Sebastian Bach's last work, The Art of Fugue, is now widely regarded as one of the crowning achievements in the culmination of a polyphonic art that had flourished in the fertile soil of the Franco-Flemish Renaissance, reaching to their primal source in the vocal music of the Later Middle Ages; yet it has not always been so esteemed, nor was it long been so.

Unlike the "Goldberg" Variations, published in 1742, and composed for Count von Kundal, who rewarded Bach with one hundred Louis d'Or, the "Art of Fugue" Variations on the Christmas Oratorio, published in late 1746, are not as well known and composed as a candidate's exercise upon admission to the prestigious Society of Musical Sciences. Originally published 1747, and dedicated to King Frederick, then the great, to whom Bach owed the inspiration for the "Art of Fugue," it was reprinted and republished within thirty months, due to its overwhelming success. The Art of Fugue was first published in open score in 1750 (but in what should even then have been manifest disorder), within a year after Bach's death, and published, with a new title page and a special "Preface" by the music theorist, Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, at the time of the great composer's funeral.

By the beginning of the 19th century, when both Czerny and Liszt were to popularize and expand upon this work with their own piano scores of The Art of Fugue, Bach's star had already passed its zenith and was waning. Although his last work remained a closed book, to all except extremely gifted musicians—composers such as Mozart and Beethoven, who studied it, as well as the Well-Tempered Clavier, closely; by 1845, when Siegfried Dehn, curator for the Berlin Library, acquired the Original Autograph of the work, with which the First Edition was in profound disagreement as to the number and the order of its parts, he was little moved to study the issue thoroughly, except to state (erroneously, as became evident from research undertaken a full century later, immediately after the Second World War) that a

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE OF PITTSBURG
Department of Music

presents

COLLEGIUM MUSICUM

on

the last work of

Johann Sebastian Bach
(21 March 1685 – 28 July 1750)

his

Die Kunst der Fuga
or

The Art of Fugue

at

8:00 p.m.,

the anniversary of his death,

Wednesday, 28 July 1971,
in

Room 211
McCray Hall

a lecture-demonstration

by

Eric Vaughn
THE ART OF FUGUE

Johann Sebastian Bach's last work, The Art of Fugue, is now widely regarded as his greatest fugal composition, the culmination of a polyphonic art whose roots, deeply imbedded in the fertile soil of the Franco-Flemish Renaissance, reach to their primal source in the vocal music of the later Middle Ages: yet it has not always been so esteemed, nor has it long been so.

Unlike the "Goldberg" Variations, published in 1742, and composed for Count von Kayserling, who rewarded Bach with one hundred Louis d'Or, the Canonic Variations on the Christmas Hymn, published in late 1746 or early 1747, and composed as a candidate's exercise upon admission to Lorenz Mizler's prestigious Society of Musical Sciences, or the Musical Offering, published 7th July 1747, and dedicated to King Frederick the Great, to whom Bach owed the inspiration for the work (as well as for the later Art of Fugue), and republished within thirty months, due to its overwhelming success, The Art of Fugue, first published in open score (but in what should even then have been manifest disorder), within a year after Bach's death, and republished, with a new title page and a special "Preface" by the famed theorist, Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, at the Easter Fair 1752, was a virtual failure, having sold scarcely more than thirty copies by September 1756, when Karl Philipp Emmanuel offered the engraved copper plates for sale.

By the beginning of the new century, when both Czerny and Nägeli had sought to popularize the work with their own piano scores of The Art of Fugue, Bach's star had already passed its zenith and was waning rapidly, so that his last work remained a closed book, to all except unusually gifted musicians—composers such as Mozart and Beethoven, both of whom studied it, as well as The Well-Tempered Clavier, closely; by 1845, when Siegfried Dehn, curator for the Berlin Library, acquired the Original Autograph of the work, with which the First Edition was in profound disagreement as to the number and the order of its parts, he was little moved to study the issue thoroughly, except to state (erroneously, as became evident from research undertaken a full century later, immediately after the Second World War) that a
supposed "proof corrections list," in Bach's own hand, appeared on the reverse of the last page of the autograph of the last, "unfinished" fugue, which list seemed to confirm the order of the First Edition at least through its eleventh section.

In 1875, Wilhelm Rust, editor of the work for the Bach Gesellschaft, accepted Dehn's statement without question, and prepared his text of The Art of Fugue entirely in agreement with the First Edition; yet he, as well as Spitta, felt it necessary to concede that the order of the First Edition offered, at best, but only in part, a catalog or dictionary order of fugal technique, a Baroque collection, not a unified whole, and could make no claim to possessing that musical—that quintessentially temporal architecture characteristic of Bach's greatest works.

In 1924, Wolfgang Größer, not yet twenty and fated to die before reaching twenty-five, prepared his edition for the Neue Bach Gesellschaft, a conservative text based on the First Edition through its eleventh part, but departing from it markedly thereafter; at the same time, Hans Theodor David was preparing his radically new edition, based on a return to the order of the Autograph, but he made no serious attempt to analyse the creative process involved in Bach's expansion of his original design, from the first eight sections of the Autograph, to the final design of twenty sections; by 1929, Hermann Diener, a practicing musician and conductor, who had founded the Collegium Musicum in Berlin, and, later, editor of the Bärenreiter edition (1956), had prepared a concert version of the work with an order based on that of the Autograph, but revising it to include all twenty parts, in the order of increasing complexity; in 1930, Sir Donald Francis Tovey did the musical world a rare disservice by publishing his work, A Companion to the Art of Fugue, a slender volume which, unfortunately, claimed to be an exhaustively researched study, when Tovey had not had direct access to the Autograph, so that he offered little more than his conservative, and second-hand, judgment in support of Rust and Spitta, regarding the work as a dictionary of fugue to be studied, not primarily a magnificent piece of music meant to be heard.

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In 1941, I myself began a study of the work: at that time, little research material was available to me, for little had been written (the intellectual discipline of musicology was then in its infancy or adolescence, at least in America), and what there was was either in German or out of print (or both), or stored in the flooded basement of the Berlin Library: consequently, I became thoroughly acquainted with no more than the Harris-Norton score for string quartet and E. Power Biggs' organ recording (though neither included the four canons); but, finally, in 1948, with the war over, I successfully concluded negotiations with Dr. Virneisel of the Berlin Library to obtain microfilm copies of The Art of Fugue, in Original Autograph and Second Edition, as well as a number of earlier related works, some hitherto unpublished, which made the completion of my study possible.

The first performances of my new order for The Art of Fugue, based upon the Autograph, but thoroughly revised (as my analyses have led me to believe that Bach himself must have revised it), were by a pianist, William Corbett Jones, in San Francisco, 1956; the second group of performances, by pianist Leta Spira, in Berkeley, San Francisco, and San Jose, in 1958; and the first harpsichord performances, by Margaret Fabrizio, in San Francisco, January and February, 1966, and in New York City, October 1967.

I have hereinafter appended several chronologies: 1) of works which may legitimately be considered "Baroque collections," 2) of the few works published during Bach's lifetime, 3) of the works which either led up to or are closely related to the last four sets of variations, and 4) of significant events from the period of the last four sets of variations; also appended are outlines of 1) the "Goldberg" Variations, 2) the Canonie Variations, 3) the Musical Offering, and 4) The Art of Fugue; furthermore, most of the works provided me on microfilm by the Berlin Library, as well as a number of analytic or graphic charts, will be shown in projection—all to assist in answering, or attempting to answer, a number of significant questions concerning the work, before presenting the derivation of the new order:

1. Is the title Die Kunst der Fuga Bach's?
2. Did Bach originally intend to make the canons puzzle canons?
3. Did his son-in-law, Altnikol, take down the three sections which do not appear in the Autograph by dictation, as well as notes for revisions, which were extensive in at least four sections of the Autograph?

4. Was the unfinished fugue unfinished because of illness or death (as Karl Philipp Emmanuel claims), or because Bach meant to leave it for the student or music lover to finish? Perhaps he thought, "Frederick gave me, Bach, the subject: I have now shown you what I can do with it in fugal composition; and I have signed my name to this legacy, the most valuable bequest I have to make; now you, my son, Johann Christian, must show me what you have learned, by finishing this fugue according to the principles embodied in the rest of the work!"

5. Did Bach plan the publication?

6. Did one of Bach's sons engrave the first twenty-odd pages of the Autograph for publication during the last twelve to fifteen months of Bach's life?

7. Are the titles for the various sections Bach's?

8. At least the title Contrapunctus?

9. Is the supposed "proof corrections list" in Bach's hand?

10. Is it really a "proof corrections list"!??

11. Is The Art of Fugue a "Baroque collection," or, rather, a unified whole?

12. Is it intended as a keyboard work, and, if so, for what keyboard?
Chronology of works (17) in autograph or authentic fair copy/s, with titles suggesting that the work was conceived or intended as an anthology or collection of diverse pieces, that is, a selection, not a unified whole, not an architectural ordering (BWV = Bach Werke Verzeichnis, that is, Schmieder's Catalog of Bach's Works; BWV A = the same, Addenda):

1) 1708-17 Little Organ Book for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (BWV 599-644), an unfinished compendium of chorale preludes for the entire church year, the autograph probably dating from 1717-23

2) 1720 Little Clavier Book for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, begun in Köthen, 22 January, a source manuscript

3) 1720 Six Solos for Violin, unaccompanied in the Bass: Book I (BWV 1001-06), the "Sonatas and Partitas"

4) 1720? Six Sonatas for Harpsichord and Violin Solo, accompanied in the Bass by the Viola da Gamba: Book II? (BWV 1014-19)

5) 1720? Six Suites for Violoncello or Viola pomposa solo (BWV 1007-12)

6) 1720-21? Six Concerti for Many Instruments, dedicated to His Royal Highness, Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg (BWV 1046-51)

7) 1722 Little Clavier Book for Anna Magdalena Bach, a source manuscript, in part not of Bach's composition

8) 1722 The Well-Tempered Clavier, or Preludes and Fugues through all the tones and semitones (BWV 846-69), first of two such collections, some parts of which are taken from the Little Clavier Book for W. F.

9) 1723 Proper Instruction 1) to learn to play [the Clavier] clearly in two voices, and 2) with three obligato parts, ... Inventions (BWV 772-801), all taken from the Little Clavier Book for W. F. Bach

10) 1723 Six Suites for Clavier (BWV 812-15/818-19), now called "French Suites," but with two different suites (BWV 812-17), taken in part (BWV 812-16, 812-14 unfinished) from the Little Clavier Book for A. M. Bach
11) 1723  Six Suites for Clavier (BWV 806-11), now called "English Suites," but only in authentic fair copy, without title

12) 1723-27  Six Sonatas for two Manuals and Pedal (BWV 525-530), now called "Six Sonatas for Organ," but as likely for pedal-harpsichord

13) 1725  Second Little Clavier Book for Anna Magdalena Bach, a source manuscript

14) 1726-31  Keyboard Practice: Six Partitas, Opus I (BWV 825-830), of which the third and sixth are taken from the second Little Clavier Book for A. M. Bach (see Works published during his lifetime, items 4 through 8, hereinafter)

15) 1744?  The Well-Tempered Clavier: Second Part . . . Preludes and Fugues through all the tones and semitones (BWV 870-95), collected during the twenty-year period following the first part (1722)

16) 1746  Six Chorale Preludes in Diverse Styles, for organ with two Manuals and Pedal (BWV 645-50), composed 1730-35 (see Works published during his lifetime, item 15)

17) 1746-50  Eighteen Chorale Preludes in Diverse Styles, for organ with two Manuals and Pedal (BWV 651-68), a continuation of the previous item

Chronology of works (18) published by Bach or for Bach during his lifetime (bracketed works were published without Bach's incentive or direct participation):

1) 1708  [Church cantata: Gott ist mein König (BWV 71), a ceremonial publication]

2) 1723  [New Year's cantata (BWV A8), a ceremonial publication, lost]

3) 1725  [Wedding cantata: Sein Segen fließt (BWV A14), a ceremonial publication, lost]

4) 1726  Keyboard Practice: Partita I . . . published at Leipzig by the Author (BWV 825)

5) 1727  Keyboard Practice: Partitas II and III . . . published at Leipzig, etc. (BWV 826-27)
6) 1728 Keyboard Practice: Partita IV, published at Leipzig, etc. (BWV 828).

7) 1730 Keyboard Practice: Partitas V and VI, published at Leipzig, etc. (BWV 829-30).

8) 1731 Keyboard Practice: Six Partitas, Opus I, published at Leipzig, etc. (BWV 825-30), the previous four items collectively published at Leipzig.

9) 1732 [Thomas' school cantata: Früher Tag, verlangt Stunden (BWV A18), ceremonial publication, lost.]

10) 1734 [Thomas' school cantata: Thoman soss an der heißen trübt (BWV A19), ceremonial publication, lost.]

11) 1735 Second Part of the Keyboard Practice: Concerto, after the Italian Taste and Overlaid in the French Style, for Harpsichord with two manuals, published at Nürnberg by Christoph Weigel for (BWV 851/971), at the Leipzig Easter Fair, autograph of concerto lost, overture in C minor.

12) 1736 [Musical Song Books: 964 Spiritual Songs and Arias, edited by Georg Christian Scherwitz, published at Leipzig by Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, authorship unidentified, but unquestionably Bach's; not a project requiring his participation.]

13) 1739 Third Part of the Keyboard Practice: Diverse Preludes on the Catechism, for Organ, pleno and manualiter, published by the Author (BWV 552/659/889/802-05), including the "St. Anne" Prelude and Fugue (Postlude), Greater and Lesser German Organ Mass, and Four Duets, autograph lost!

14) 1742 Keyboard Practice: Aria with Diverse (30) Variations, for Harpsichord with two manuals, published at Nürnberg by Balthasar Schmid (BWV 968), the "Goldberg Variations" for Count von Keyserling, autograph lost!

15) 1746 Six Chorale Preludes in Diverse Styles, for Organ with two manuals and pedal, published at Zella in the Thuringian Forest by Johann G. Schübler, Jr. (BWV 645-50), composed 1750-55.
following the success of this publication, Bach began collecting another eighteen chorale preludes from among his previous works, to be published by Schübler, a project not quite completed at Bach's death.

16) 1746-7 Several (5) Canonic Variations on the Christmas Hymn: Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her, for Organ with two manuals and pedal, ... published at Nürnberg by Balthasar Schmid (BWV 769), autograph disagrees with published order!

17) 1747 Musical Offering to His Royal Majesty in Prussia [Frederick the Great], ... published at Zella in the Thuringian Forest by Joh. G. Schübler, Jr. (BWV 1079), Leipzig, 7th July, only two months in composition and publication, two ricercari, a trio sonata, and ten canons, autograph lost except for the Ricercar a6!

18) 1751 The Art of Fugue, ... published at Zella, etc., by Joh. G. Schübler, Jr. (BWV 1080), posthumous, title page replaced, and extended Preface by Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg added for republication at Leipzig Easter Fair 1752, minor part of autograph lost!

Chronology of works (18) which either led up to or are closely related to the last four sets of variations, the "Goldberg" Variations, the Canonic Variations, the Musical Offering, and The Art of Fugue (twenty additional lettered items are either of questionable authorship—BWV Addenda—or of only incidental nature, such as the occasional canons):

A. ?
Chorale Partite: Befiehl du deine Wege (BWV A79), 2 verses, F Major

1. ?
Chorale Partite: O Vater, almächtiger Gott (BWV 758), 4 verses, G Major

B. ?
Chorale Partite: Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein (BWV A78), 7 verses, G Major

2. 1700
Chorale Partite: Christ, der du bist der helle Tag (BWV 766), 7 verses, F Minor

C. ?
Chorale Partite: Herr Christ, der einig' Gottessohn (BWV A77), 8 verses, F Major
3. 1700? Chorale Partite: O Gott, du frommer Gott (BWV 767), 9 verses, C Minor
4. 1700-02 Chorale Partite: Ach, was soll' ich Sünder machen? (BWV 770), 10 verses, E Minor
5. 1700-17 Chorale Partite: Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig (BWV 768), 12 verses, G Minor, several versions
6. 1705 Chorale Partite: Allein Gott in der HÖh sei Ehr' (BWV 771), 17 verses, G Major
7. 1708-25 Chorale Partite: Christ ist erstanden (BWV 627), 3 verses, A Minor
8. 1708-23 Chorale Partite: O Lamm Gottes unschuldig (BWV 656), 3 verses, A Major
9. 1709? Canzona, for organ (BWV 588), D Minor
10. 1709? Allabreve, for organ (BWV 589), D Major
11. 1709? Fugue, for organ (BWV 580), D Major
12. 1709? Aria variata alla maniera italiana, for harpsichord (BWV 990), 11 variations, A Minor
13. 1709? Sarabande con Partite, for harpsichord or organ (BWV 989), 16 variations, C Major
14. 1713 Canon a 4, 2nd August (BWV 1073), C Major
15. 1716-23 Passacaglia, for pedal harpsichord (BWV 582), C Minor, with "thema fugato" closing section to the theme and twenty variations
E. ? Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H (BWV A107), C Major, lost
F. ? Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H (BWV A108), C Major, lost
G. ? Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H (BWV A110), C Minor
H. ? Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H (BWV A109), G Minor
I. ? Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H (BWV A45), B Flat Major
15. 1717 Prelude and Fugue on the Name B-A-C-H (BWV 898), B Flat Major
J. ? Ciacona, for clavier (BWV A82), B Flat Major
K. ? Ciacona, for clavier (BWV A83), A Major
L. ? Ciacona, for clavier (BWV A84), G Major
16. 1720 Partita [with final Chaconne], for violin solo, 64 permutations of a four-measure bass, 53 in D Minor, 19 in D Major, and 12 more in D Minor
17. 1722  Air with Variations, for clavier (BWV 991), fragment
18. 1724  Easter cantata (Feria Paschalis): Christ lag in Todesbanden (BWV 4), 6 verses, E Minor, Bach's only cantata in chorale partita style
M. 1725  Canon, Leipzig, 2 November, lost
N. 1727  Canon a4, to Monsieur Houdemann, before 18 August (BWV 1074), C Major
O. 1734  Canon a2, . . . Leipzig, 10 January (BWV 1075), C Major
P. 1746  Canon triplex a6 (BWV 1076), G Major, on the "Goldberg" bass, composed for Mizler's Society of Musical Sciences
Q. 1747  Canon doppio sopra il Soggetto, . . . Leipzig, 15 October 1747 (BWV 1077), G Major, on the "Goldberg" bass again, but chromatic, for J. G. Fulde
R. ?  Canon a8: Trias Harmonica (BWV 1072), C Major, composed for F. W. Marpurg sometime in the late 1740s, as an erudite joke
S. ?  Canon [a2]: Concordia discors, C Major, composed for J. P. Kirnberger (?) sometime in the late 1740s, as a joke
T. 1749  Canon super Fa Mi a 7, post Tempus Musicum, . . . Leipzig, 1 March 1749 (BWV 1078), F Major, on the Name F-A-B-E-Repetatur, the latinization of Schmid, perhaps most likely Balthasar Schmid, one of Bach's publishers

Chronology of significant events from the period of the last four sets of variations, the "Goldberg" Variations, the Canonic Variations, the Musical Offering, and The Art of Fugue:

1742  Bach completes collection of earlier preludes and fugues to form The Well-Tempered Clavier: Second Part, apparently with publication of the first and second parts in mind

Bach composes, Balthasar Schmid publishes at Nürnberg, the Keyboard Practice: Aria with Divers (30) Variations for Harpsichord with two manuals, the aria taken from the Little Clavier Book for A. M. B., the work intended for Count von Kayserling and

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his court musician, Bach's finest harpsichord student, Johann Theophilus Goldberg (1720–died young), for which Kayserling rewards Bach with 100 Louis d'Or, an impressively large sum.

1746 7 August, Bach reports on his examination of the new organ at Zschorlau. September, Bach reports on his examination of the rebuilt organ at St. Wenceslas' Church in Naumburg. Bach selects six chorale preludes from those composed 1730–55, and Johann Georg Schübler, Jr., publishes them at Zella in the Thuringian Forest.

Bach composes Several (5) Canonic Variations on the Christmas Hymn, as well as a Canon tripexus à 6, on the Goldberg bass, and, with the canon in hand, has his portrait painted by Elias Gottlieb Haussmann, all in preparation for his admission to Lorenz Mizler's Society of Musical Sciences.

1747 Following the success of Schübler's publication, Bach begins preparation of eighteen more chorale preludes for publication, a project unfinished at his death.

Balthasar Schmid publishes at Nürnberg the Several Canonic Variations.

Sunday, 7 May, Bach, at Karl Philipp Emanuel's suggestion, and with Wilhelm Friedemann as a travelling companion, visits King Frederick the Great at Potsdam; examines the King's collection of new pianofortes by Silbermann; at the King's request, executes, with some difficulty, a three-voice fugue, but fails to execute a six-voice fugue, on a theme propounded by the King; executes a six-voice fugue on a theme of his own, but promises to fulfil the King's request and have it engraved on copper, an event which inspires Bach to compose as well his last work, The Art of Fugue, on themes derived from the King's.

25 May, Bach writes a testimonial for Johann Christoph Altnikol, an exceptional clavier student, violinist, violoncellist, but mostly vocal bass, who
later becomes Bach's son-in-law

June, Bach becomes a member of the Society of Musical Sciences

7 July, Bach writes his dedication of the Musical Offering to Frederick the Great, has it engraved and printed on special paper, sends the dedication copy to the king, and begins to distribute the remaining 100 copies among his family and friends, and members of the Society of Musical Sciences

5 October, Bach receives one thaler, eight groschen from Ignatz Rath, steward to Count von Würbén, for the loan of a clavier

15 October, Bach composes a puzzle Canon doppio sopra il Soggetto in G Minor, on the Goldberg bass, for J. G. Fulde

Bach composes a Canon a8: Trias Harmonica, in C Major, an erudite joke, for F. W. Marpurg

Bach composes a Canon [a2]: Concordia discord, in C Major, a musical joke, apparently for J. P. Kirnberger

1748

24 July, Bach writes a letter of recommendation for J. C. Altnikol to the Town Council of Naumburg

31 July, Bach writes a letter of gratitude to the Town Council of Naumburg for their assurance that Altnikol will be appointed, and includes Altnikol's own letter declaring his interest in the position, in which he is soon confirmed

6 October, Bach writes a letter to his cousin, Johann Elias Bach, informing him that the first edition of the Prussian fugue (the Musical Offering) is that very day exhausted, but that a second edition will be published within two months

2 November, Bach again writes a letter to J. E. Bach, thanking him for a gift of wine, and informing him of the impending marriage of his daughter Elisabeth Juliana Friderica to Altnikol

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January, Altnikol and Elisabeth Juliana Friderica are married.

1 March, Bach composes a Canon super Fa Mi ä7, post Tempus Musicum, in F Major, on the name Faber, the latinization of Schmid, perhaps most likely Balthasar Schmid; the canon bears a close relationship to the Ricercar a6 of the Musical Offering and to the first four sections of The Art of Fugue (autograph).

Sometime during March or, more probably, April, Bach is stricken with a severe illness, the exact nature of which is unknown, but which apparently seriously afflicts his eyesight, terminating work on The Art of Fugue at a point in its progress where Bach has already completed a first version of eight sections of 680 measures, exclusively in four voices, only to immediately expand the scope of the work to include twenty (or twenty-one, according to the definition of the last) sections, of nearly 2100 measures, with the twentieth, a triple fugue of 239 measures, breaking off at the end of the first entrance of all three themes in their original expository positions, already the longest of all Bach's fugues.

12 May, Magister Biedermann, rector in Freiburg, publishes his Programma de Vita musica, which Bach feels called upon to refute, but which, because of his illness and blindness, he can not undertake, instead sending a copy of it to C. G. Schröter, organist in Nordhausen and fellow-member of the Society of Musical Sciences, so that Schröter may review it and refute it, a task Schröter immediately undertakes.

2 June, Graf von Brühl of Dresden presumes to send a letter of introduction and recommendation for his court musician, Gottlob Harrer, to Vice Chancellor Born of the Leipzig Town Council, as a successor to Bach, who remains severely ill and blind.
8 June, Gottlob Harrer gives a trial performance for the Leipzig Town Council, winning their approval, in the event of Bach's death.

10 December, Bach writes a letter (or has it written for him) to G. F. Einike, cantor and music director at Frankenhausen, praising Schröter's criticism of Biedermann, and indicating that he looks forward to its publication, the only evidence that Bach may have recovered his eyesight to some degree at any time after March-April 1749.

28-29 March, Bach un-successfully undergoes an operation in his eyes by Chevalier Taylor, a well-known English oculist (who later, as un-successfully operates on G. F. Handel), so that his whole system, which is otherwise thoroughly healthy, is completely overthrown by the operation and by the addition of harmful medicaments.

26 May, Bach again has a letter written to G. F. Einike, concerning Schröter's refutation of Biedermann, and disclaiming any responsibility for gross alterations to Schröter's text in publication.

5 June, Schröter replies to Einike, rejecting Bach's disclaimer, which Einike, in turn, reports to Bach, who is now too ill to reply in any way.

Sometime before 25 June, perhaps as early as 4-8 April, but more likely after 23 April, Bach again un-successfuly undergoes an operation in his eyes by Taylor, and is left even further weakened.

18 July, Bach's eyesight suddenly and unexpectedly improves, "so that one morning he can see quite well again, and can also again endure the light; but, a few hours later, he suffers a stroke, which is followed by a raging fever, as a victim of which, despite every possible care given by two of the most skilful physicians of Leipzig,"

Tuesday, 28 July, "a little after a quarter to nine in the evening," Bach quietly and peacefully dies.

(quotes from the Obituary)
Keyboard Practice: Aria with Divers Variations (Goldberg)

Aria, al clav, G, 3/4, Sarabanda (from Little Clavier Book)

1, al clav, G, 5/4
2, al clav, G, 2/4
3, al clav, G, 12/8 (4/4), Canone all' Unisona
4, al clav, G, 3/8
5, al ovvero 2 clav, G, 3/4
6, al clav, G, 3/8, Canone alla Seconda
7, al ovvero 2 clav, G, 6/8 (2/4)
8, a2 clav, G, 3/4
9, al clav, G, 4/4, Canone alla Terza
10, al clav, G, 2/2, Fughetta (!)
11, a2 clav, G, 12/16 (4/8)
12, G, 3/4, Canone alla Quarta (lower, by inversion) (!)
13, a2 clav, G, 5/4
14, a2 clav, G, 5/4
15, al clav, G, 2/4, Andante, Canone alla Quinta (by inversion) (!)
16, al clav, G, 2/2, Ouverture (!)
17, G, 5/8
18, a2 clav, G, 3/4
19, al clav, G, 2/2, Canone alla Sesta
20, a2 clav, G, 3/4
21, G, 4/4, Canone alla Settima (!)
22, al clav, G, 2/2, Allabreve (fughetta) (!)
23, a2 clav, G, 5/4
24, al clav, G, 9/8, Canone all' Ottava (!)
25, a2 clav, G, 5/4, Sarabanda (!) - the climax of the work
26, a2 clav, G, 18/16 (3/4)
27, a2 clav, G, 6/8, Canone alla Nonna
28, a2 clav, G, 3/4
29, al ovvero 2 clav, G, 3/4
30, al clav, G, 4/4, Quodlibet (!)

Aria, al clav, G, 3/4, Sarabanda (da capo)

Note: the Aria is in binary form, each of the variants is in binary form, the work as a whole is in binary form — Aria and Variations 1 through 15 balancing Variations 16 (the two-part Ouverture to the second part) through 30, with the Aria da capo signalizing that the circle is closed, the gestalt complete.
Several Canonic Variations on the Christmas Hymn

Original design (Autograph):
1. In canone all' Ottava
2. In canone alla Quinta
3. L'altra sorte del Canone al rovescio
   a) alla Sesta
   b) alla Terza
   c) alla Seconda
   d) alla Nona
   e) per Diminuzione e alla Stretta
4. In canone alla Settima
5. In canone all' Ottava, per Augmentationem

Final design (First Edition):
1. In canone all' Ottava
2. In canone alla Quinta
3. In canone alla Settima
4. In canone all' Ottava, per Augmentationem
5. L'altra sorte del Canone al rovescio
   a) alla Sesta
   b) alla Terza
   c) alla Seconda
   d) alla Nona
   e) per Diminuzione e alla Stretta

Note: the original design is seemingly more symmetrical than the final design, with the irregular section in the middle, a kind of two-plus-one-plus-two pattern, roughly A-B-A, but the final design is based upon a far more complex idea: four sections of canon by similar or parallel motion are climaxed by augmentation, followed by a fifth section, which, in itself, contains four sections of canon by inversion, climaxed by diminution, the entirety climaxed by close stretti of all four parts of the hymn tune.
Original Design (8 sections):

1) Ricercar a5
2) Canon a2, all' Unisona, motus retrogradus (on the theme)
3) Canon a2, all' Unisona (over the theme)
4) Canon a2, alla Quinta, motus inversus (over the theme)
5) Canon a2, alla Quinta, motus inversus et in augmentationem (over the theme)
6) Canon a2, alla Quinta, per modulationem (over the theme)
7) Canon a2, alla Quinta: fuga canonica a5 (on the theme)
8) Ricercar a6

Final Design (derived from analysis of the First Edition)

1) Ricercar a5 [01]
2) Sonata a5: Largo, Sarabande (Supplement E)
3) Allegro, Double Fugue (over the theme)
4) Andante, in E Flat Major
5) Allegro, Single Fugue, Gigue (on the theme)
6) Canon a2, all' Unisona (over the theme) [03]
7) Canon a2, alla Quinta, motus inversus (diminution) [04]
8) Canon a2, alla Dupla Ottava (diminution, Supplement A)
9) Canon a2, alla Quinta, motus inversus et in augmentationem [05]
10) Canon a2, alla Quinta, per modulationem [06]
11) Canon a2, all' Unisona, motus retrogradus (on the theme) [02]
12) Canon a2, alla Settima, motus inversus (Supplement B)
13) Canon a2, alla Dupla Ottava, in G Minor (Supplement C)
14) Canon a2, alla Quinta, motus inversus (Supplement D)
15) Canon a2, alla Quinta: fuga canonica a5 [07]
16) Ricercar a6 [08]

Note: the original design is seemingly more symmetrical than the final design, which includes twice the number of sections, with the addition of a complete Sonata a5 of four movements, and the four new canons (Supplements A-D); but the final design is more nearly so TEMPORALLY: the two ricercari are of equal length, the sonata a5 is virtually identical in length to the two sets of canons, the first set corresponding to the Double Fugue (3), the second corresponding to the Single Fugue (5), and each of the sets, 1) Ricercar a5 and Sonata a5, 2) Canons over the theme, and 3) Canons on the theme, are in the pattern A-B-A-B-A
The Art of Fugue

Original design (8 sections):

1. Simple fugue a4, 4/2 (2/2), 37 (74) measures—Rectus, ASBT
2. Simple fugue a4, 4/2 (2/2), 35 (70) measures—Inversus, TSAB, dominant-tonic exposition
3. Simple fugue a4, 4/2 (2/2), 39 (78) measures—Rectus, BTAS
4. Stretti fugue a4, 2/2, 90 measures—Inversus and Rectus, ABST, coda in tonic major
5. Double fugue a4, 4/4, 65 measures—Rectus, ASBT
6. Double fugue a4, 4/4, 49 measures—Inversus, STBA
7. Stretti fugue a4, 4/4, 79 measures—Rectus and Inversus, per diminutionem
8. Stretti fugue a4, 4/4, 61 measures—Inversus and Rectus, per augmentationem et diminutionem, exposition of augmentations, BTAS