

variations

Literaturzeitschrift der Universität Zürich

Nr. 20 · 2012

Redaktion:

Florian Bissig, Georg Escher, Stefanie Heine, Clemens Özelt,
Christa Schönfelder, Franziska Struzek-Krähenbühl, Reto Zöllner

Beiträge und Rezensionen bitte an die Redaktion senden:

Variations, Deutsches Seminar der Universität Zürich,
Schönberggasse 9, CH-8001 Zürich. variations@rom.uzh.ch,
<http://www.variations.uzh.ch>

Erscheint demnächst / À paraître / Upcoming:

21/2013:

Formeln / Formules / Formulae

Abonnement/Einzelnummern:

Variations erscheint jährlich. Jahresabonnement (Fr. 40.–)
und Einzelhefte (Fr. 45.–) können beim
Verlag Peter Lang, Moosstrasse 1, Postfach 350, CH-2542 Pieterlen bestellt werden.
Tel: +41 (0)32 376 17 17. Fax: +41 (0)32 376 17 27. www.peterlang.net



PETER LANG

Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · Frankfurt am Main · New York · Oxford · Wien

Musik und Literatur Musique et littérature Music and Literature

20/2012

Herausgegeben von

Florian Bissig
Georg Escher
Franziska Struzek-Krähenbühl



PETER LANG

Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · Frankfurt am Main · New York · Oxford · Wien

Musik und Literatur / Musique et littérature / Music and Literature

Editorial	9
Mallarmé über Sprache und Musik <i>Hans-Jost Frey</i>	17
Écrire la musique. Baudelaire face à Wagner <i>Arnaud Buchs</i>	29
Schwestern oder Rivalinnen? Musik und Poesie in Gerard Manley Hopkins' Gedicht „Henry Purcell“ <i>Monika Kasper</i>	43
„Da schwebt hervor Musik mit Engelsschwingen“ Das Verhältnis von Dichtung und Musik in Goethes <i>Trilogie der Leidenschaft</i> <i>Sebastian Kaufmann</i>	61
“How Shall We Find the Concord of this Discord?” Music, Magic and Ideology in <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Johannes Riquet</i>	77
Schiller und das <i>crescendo</i> Eine musikalische Dynamik als Figur der dramatischen Steigerung in den <i>Räubern</i> <i>Janine Firges</i>	93
Die italienische Oper Giuseppe Verdis als wirkungsästhetisches Prinzip in Franz Werfels Poetologie <i>Amanda Baghdassarians</i>	109

Variations ist ein Forum für alle Angehörigen der Universität Zürich und fördert den Austausch im Bereich der Literaturwissenschaft.

Variations dankt folgenden Institutionen für die finanzielle Unterstützung:

Universität Zürich, Rektoratsdienste
Seminar für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, Universität Zürich
Deutsches Seminar, Universität Zürich
Englisches Seminar, Universität Zürich

ISSN 1424-7631

© Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, Bern 2012
Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Schweiz
info@peterlang.com, www.peterlang.com

Alle Rechte vorbehalten.

Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt.
Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes
ist ohne Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar. Das gilt
insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und
die Einspeicherung und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen.

Printed in Switzerland

Variations 20 (2012)

Musikschreiben oder Das musikalische Versatzstück und die Kunst des Scheiterns Beobachtungen zu einem Motivkomplex bei Thomas Bernhard <i>Clemens Götze</i> _____	123
Fugue et identité Effets iconiques de la forme musicale en littérature <i>Marcin Stawiarski</i> _____	137
The Sound of "Sirens" Joyce's <i>Fuga Per Canonem</i> and Absolute Music <i>Michelle Witen</i> _____	157
 Forum	
Übersetzung als Sprachpraxis und Denkform Überlegungen zur Theorie des interkulturellen Dialogs von François Jullien <i>Marco Baschera</i> _____	173
„Repeat that, repeat“ Der Zauber der Wiederholung bei Herder und Hopkins <i>Franziska Struzek-Krähenbühl</i> _____	187
 Literarische und künstlerische Beiträge	
En lisière <i>Édouard Choffat</i> _____	205
Not(iz)en <i>Joseph Joubert, aus dem Französischen von Ariane Lüthi</i> _____	215
Poems <i>Gregory Leadbetter</i> _____	223
Gedichte <i>Andreas Heise</i> _____	229

VLKY <i>Alessio Cimoli</i> _____	233
Gedichte <i>Manfred Pricha</i> _____	243
La Mandragore <i>Luisa Campanile</i> _____	245
Hasengesicht oder Anais soll etwas sagen <i>Julia Weber</i> _____	255
Faltenwürfe <i>Urs Kurth</i> _____	265
 Rezensionen _____	281
Franca BRUERA et Barbara MEAZZI (dir.), <i>Plurilinguisme et Avant-gardes</i> (Adriana Copaciu) • Franz Josef CZERNIN, <i>Das telepathische Lamm</i> (Marco Baschera) • Arno CAMENISCH, <i>Ustrinkata</i> (Christian Villiger) • Tim MILNES, <i>The Truth about Romanticism</i> (Florian Bissig) • Enrico MONTI et Peter SCHNYDER (éds.), <i>Autour de la retraduction</i> (Reto Zöllner) • David ESPINET (Hg.), <i>Schreiben Dichten Denken. Zu Heideggers Sprachbegriff</i> (Franziska Struzek-Krähenbühl) • Johann Hermann RIEDESEL, <i>Reise durch Sicilien und Großgriechenland</i> (Reto Zöllner) • Daniel TIFFANY, <i>Infidel poetics</i> (Stefanie Heine) • Wilfried F. SCHOELLER, <i>Alfred Döblin</i> (Clemens Özelt) • Suman GUPTA, <i>Contemporary Literature</i> (Christa Schönfelder) • Irina DJASSEMY, <i>Die verfolgende Unschuld</i> (Christian van der Steeg) • Simone HELLER-ANDRIST, <i>The Friction of the Frame</i> (Rahel Rivera) • Peter RÜEDI, <i>Dürrenmatt oder die Ahnung vom Ganzen</i> (Mathias Kundert) • DANTE, <i>Divina Commedia</i> (Marc Caduff) • Patricia RIGG, <i>Julia Augusta Webster</i> (Penny Papparunas) • Chantal AKERMAN, <i>Die Gefangene</i> (Urs Urban) • George STEINER, <i>The Poetry of Thought</i> (Christian Villiger)	

The Sound of "Sirens" Joyce's *Fuga Per Canonem* and Absolute Music

Michelle Witen

In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, written on August 6, 1919, James Joyce famously claimed that the eleventh episode of *Ulysses*, colloquially known as "Sirens", contained "all the eight regular parts of a *fuga per canonem*: and [that he] did not know in what other way to describe the seductions of music beyond which Ulysses travels".¹ This was not the only instance in which Joyce advertised the fugal structure of "Sirens": in both the Gilbert-Gorman and Linati schemas of the episode, Joyce similarly proclaimed his intention of incorporating fugal technique. Additionally, the National Library of Ireland's (NLI) 2002 acquisition contains a notebook with a later partial draft of "Sirens", on whose cover Joyce has listed eight parts under the heading "FUGA PER CANONEM"², demonstrating that, not only was he committed to writing "Sirens" as a fugue, but he was also very clear in how this fugue was structured.

Upon initial inspection, Joyce's choice of the fugue appears to be a strange one. Why was he so specific that the fugue was the only way of expressing Bloom's agony during the hour of 4pm (a pivotal hour in the book, as it is the moment in which Bloom actively chooses to stay in the Ormond Hotel rather than return home and prevent his wife, Molly Bloom, from committing adultery with Blazes Boylan)? Why this particular musical structure? Furthermore, this article raises the question of whether it is possible to write a literary piece as a fugue and how Joyce succeeds at doing so. The purpose of this inquiry is two-fold. First, it seeks to answer these much-debated questions by examining the literary history of the fugue through its designation as the highest form of absolute music in the early twentieth century, when Joyce was writing "Sirens". Then, moving through a historical analysis of musical trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this article

1 James JOYCE, *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. 1, ed. Stuart Gilbert, New York: Viking Press, 1957, 129.

2 James JOYCE, "Sirens," MS 36, 639/9, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

assesses how Joyce's appropriation and implementation of the fugue in "Sirens" is consistent with a Modernist understanding of absolute music.

The nineteenth century was a period that saw significant changes in musical understanding. The Industrial Revolution brought with it the "means to create cheaper and more responsive musical instruments, with technical improvements that strongly influenced the sound of Romantic music".³ New wind instruments such as the tuba and the saxophone were developed; valves were added to brass instruments, making them more versatile, "so that composers like Wagner and Tchaikovsky could write melodies for the horn that would have been unplayable in the time of Haydn and Mozart". (270) Improved manufacturing techniques led to the piano acquiring "cast-iron and thicker strings, giving it a deeper and more brilliant tone" (270), in addition to hitherto unknown dynamic capabilities. These improvements caused changes in the sound of the music: the *piano* (soft) and *forte* (loud) dynamic range of eighteenth-century music was expanded into the "heaven-storming *crescendos* and the violent contrasts of loud (*fff*) and soft (*ppp*), which lend such drama to the music of the Romantics". (270) As such, a Beethoven symphony had a drastically different sound from a Haydn symphony; and a Wagner opera had completely different acoustic capabilities than one by Mozart.

All of these developments led to a completely different terminology for the composer and for the listener: instructions such as *dolce* (sweetly), *cantabile* (songful), *dolente* (weeping), *mesto* (sad), *maestoso* (majestic), *gioioso* (joyous), and *con amore* (with love, tenderly) were introduced into musical scores and became standardized musical vocabulary for instruments as well as for the voice. Until this point in time, the only musical instrument capable of achieving these effects would have been the human voice; as such, the critical focus had always revolved around vocal music. Significantly, however, the dynamic range normally attached to the voice now became applicable to instruments. Thus, these terms demonstrated the heightened belief in the potential of instrumental music to encapsulate a range of emotions as well as illustrating greater versatility in the composer's intentions (both in its realization and in the intentions themselves), which became ever more explicit in

3 Joseph MACHLIS and Kristine FORNEY, *The Enjoyment of Music. An Introduction to Perceptive Listening* (8th Ed., Shorter Version), New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1999, 270.

the type of music being composed and the composer's accompanying notes.⁴ These expectations were also reflected in the ways of talking about music: musical reviews changed, as did the written treatment of music in the philosophical writings of the time, a striking example being E. T. A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5*.

The unsigned review initially appeared in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, after the Leipzig performance of Beethoven's *Fifth* in June of 1810. Hoffmann's review was extremely innovative: for the first time a reviewer did not simply announce that a composer's piece had been performed in x venue by y orchestra, and featured abc soloists. Rather than focusing on the event itself, Hoffmann combined the emotions evoked by the music with its historical relevance, a technique that would later be emulated by Walter Pater in his description of *La Gioconda* in "Leonardo Da Vinci". Not only did Hoffmann's text become a landmark in styles of reviewing music, "establish[ing] a new standard for written discourse about music by integrating emotional response and technical analysis in unprecedented detail"⁵, but it also, for the first time, articulated the presence of a debate surrounding instrumental music and the hierarchies within music.

In his review, Hoffmann writes: "When music is spoken of as an independent art the term can [only] properly apply to instrumental music, which scorns all aid, all admixture of other arts, and gives pure expression to its own peculiar nature."⁶ Honing in on the independence of music from words, Hoffmann argues that "music could express that which lay beyond the grasp of conventional language", thus allowing listeners access to "the realm of the infinite"⁷, and appointing instrumental music as the highest of all musical forms. By elevating instrumental music over other forms of music, Hoffmann both channelled and was the first to articulate an argument that had been starting to gain significance in nineteenth-

4 For example, the use of program music – "instrumental music that has literary or pictorial associations, the nature of which is indicated by the title of the piece or the 'program' supplied by the composer" (Machlis/Forney, *Enjoyment of Music*, 298) – became more widely spread.

5 Mark Evan BONDS, *Music as Thought. Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, 6.

6 E. T. A. HOFFMANN, "Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony" (1810), *Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 234–251, 236. This statement was repeated when Hoffmann revised and compiled his review into *Kreisleriana* in 1814.

7 Bonds, *Listening*, 8.

century philosophical writings – namely, the superiority of instrumental music over vocal music.

Until the turn of the nineteenth century, instrumental music had been considered “a deficient type or mere shadow of what music actually is”⁸, as the Platonic paradigm of *harmonia*, *rhythmos*, and *logos* was still widely accepted as the standard for the value of music.⁹ However, during the nineteenth century, instrumental music – or absolute music – became an increasingly valid form of musical expression. The term “absolute music” first appeared in Richard Wagner’s 1846 programmatic compilation of Beethoven’s *Symphony no. 9* as a label for the “endless and imprecise expressiveness” (18) that he ascribed as unique to pure, instrumental music.¹⁰ As Carl Dahlhaus, the most noted critic of “absolute music” and contributor to the development of the field of musicology as presently practiced, argues, absolute music was prioritized because of the “conviction that instrumental music purely and clearly expresses the true nature of music by its very lack of concept, object, and purpose”. (7) He writes: “Instrumental music, as pure ‘structure’, represents itself. Detached from the affections and feelings of the real world, it forms a ‘separate world for itself’”. (7) As such, absolute music can be considered “an autonomous art, justified aesthetically by this very autonomy”.¹¹ Thus, instrumental music was freed from the stigma of “a ‘pleasant noise’ beneath language” and deemed “a language above language”¹². Rather than seeing words as an elucidator of music, the absence of a “prescribed story or text to hold the music together” meant that “the story is the music itself”.¹³ Thus, the emphasis shifted away from the symbiosis of music and text towards musical structure.¹⁴

8 Carl DAHLHAUS, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 8.

9 Dahlhaus summarizes this paradigm in *The Idea of Absolute Music*. “*Harmonia* meant regular, rationally systematized relationships among tones; *rhythmos*, the system of musical time, which in ancient times included dance and organized motion; and *logos*, language as the expression of human reason” (IAM, 8).

10 Wagner’s later application of the phrase in his 1849 essay, *The Artwork of the Future*, changed from praise of the imprecision of Beethoven’s instrumentation into praise of his use of Schiller’s poetry to redeem pure instrumental music’s endless expressiveness, making his interpretation less positive.

11 Matei CALINESCU, *Five Faces of Modernity. Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1987, 190.

12 Dahlhaus, *Absolute Music*, 9.

13 Machlis/Forney, *Enjoyment of Music*, 197.

14 Conversely, in vocal music, the Romantic emphasis shifted away from Classical, vocal virtuosity, towards the equal value of voice and accompaniment. For example, compare

As a result, a new musical hierarchy developed, juxtaposing absolute music, or “music that is purported to operate on the basis of pure configurations untainted by words, stories, or even affect”¹⁵, against music that required text.

Viennese music critic and academic, Eduard Hanslick¹⁶, further defined this conflict between vocal and instrumental music. In his 1854 treatise, *On the Musically Beautiful (Vom Musikalisch-Schönen)*, Hanslick’s main contention is that words contaminate the effects of instrumental music. He describes the “specifically dictated content” of opera as a “musical monstrosity” wherein “the union of poetry with music and opera is a morganatic marriage”.¹⁷ Nor does Hanslick stop with opera: his critique also extends to program music, or music that needs a title, program, or artistic association for elucidation. He argues that attaching a title or image to music shapes a connection so “loose and arbitrary that nobody hearing the music would have thought of its putative subject if the composer had not from the outset prompted our imagination through explicit designation of the piece”. (75) Furthermore, providing a program or title to any piece designates “the representation of a specific content” (35) and, instead of being heard simply as music, the composition is “unintelligible without the program”. (35) Thus, Hanslick justifies his application of musical aesthetics to non-representational, instrumental music alone:

Of what *instrumental music* cannot do, it ought never be said that *music* can do it, because only instrumental music is music purely and

Mozart’s “Queen of the Night” aria to the tuneful, simpler *lieder* of Schubert or Schumann, where the piano accompaniment carries as much weight as the vocal line.

15 Susan MCCLARY, quoting Roger Scruton, “Narrative Agendas In ‘Absolute’ Music: Identity and Difference in Brahms’s Third Symphony”, in: Ruth A. Solie (ed.), *Musicology and Difference. Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, Berkeley: University of California Press Ltd., 1993, 326–344, 326.

16 Hanslick was known as Wagner’s most vehement antagonist, and *On the Musically Beautiful* could be seen as his defence of instrumental music. Hanslick was originally enthusiastic about Wagner’s works around the time of the Dresden premiere of *Tannhäuser* (1845), when he published a favourable review of the opera in the *Wiener Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*. However, his interest in the agenda of the Weimar School (featuring the creeds of composers such as Wagner and Liszt) waned, as demonstrated by his scathing review of *Lohengrin* (1858), his 1876 correspondence regarding *The Ring*, and his essays on *Parsifal* (1883), where he highlights the symptoms of cultural decay later expounded upon by Nietzsche. Nor was the acrimony between Hanslick and Wagner one-sided: Wagner famously based the pedantic Meistersinger, Beckmesser (originally named Veit Hanslich), on Hanslick. See the entries on “Hanslick,” “Die Meistersinger,” and “Wagner” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Eric Blom, London: Macmillan, 1954–1961.

17 Eduard HANSLICK, *On the Musically Beautiful. A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986, 25–26.

absolutely [...]. In a piece of vocal music, the effectiveness of tones can never be so precisely separated from that of words, action, and ornamentation as to allow strict sorting of the musical from the poetical. Where it is a matter of 'content' of music, we must reject even pieces with specific titles or programs. (15)

In so doing, he clearly expresses the dichotomy between absolute music and music that requires the elucidation of words, be it vocal or program music. Hanslick rejects the idea of verbally dictated content and instead elevates instrumental music as a language above language, with musical tones as its only content.

The notion of musical content becomes particularly important to an understanding of 'absolute music' (in the sense that the term was derived from Wagner). It is not that music is contentless or endlessly expressive, as was argued by philosophers such as Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel, but rather that the content of absolute music is contained in the structure itself. Hanslick summarizes:

[I]n music, we see content and form, material and configuration, image and idea, fused in an obscure, inseparable unity. This peculiarity of music, that it possesses form and content inseparably, opposes it absolutely to the literary and visual arts, which can represent the aforementioned thoughts and events in a variety of forms [...]. In music there is no content as opposed to form, because music has no form other than the content. (80)

The tones that contain the language or content of music are also the musical patterns that inform the structure of music.

The fugue, in particular, becomes a telling example of how the form of the music is matched by its content: coming from the Latin *fuga*, meaning "flight of fancy"¹⁸, the musical structure of the fugue is intended to induce flight and disorientation in its listener, and thus its form is inseparable from its effect. The appeal of the term 'fugue' – which, in its initial usage, held "the curious double meaning of texture and form or genre" – was revitalized during the vogue of absolute music.¹⁹ Correspondingly, it was during the nineteenth century that the fugues of Bach were being rediscovered, and contrapuntal techniques were being reclaimed from the Baroque by nineteenth-century composers and philosophers, and elevated as the highest form of absolute music. By the end of the

18 Machlis/Forney, *Enjoyment of Music*, 183.

19 Alfred MANN, *The Study of Fugue*, London: Faber and Faber, 1958, 5.

nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, composers had returned to the earlier textbooks of Giambattista Martini, Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg and their peers, and to the compositions of J. S. Bach and G. F. Händel, in order to standardize forms and definitions, making the analysis of fugues necessary to a composer's training. Under the banner of absolute music, the fugue was lauded as the highest combination of calculated structure and subjective content: "music for the eye" as well as for the ear.²⁰ In musico-literary spheres, treatises were published by eminent theoreticians such as Sir Donald Tovey and Hugo Riemann to illuminate the formulas and techniques behind Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* and *The Art of Fugue*; respected composers such as Federico Busoni attempted continuations of Bach's unfinished fugue (Contrapunto XIV of *Die Kunst der Fuge*); and handbooks detailing the art of counterpoint and fugue were compiled, culminating in the standardization of the *fugue d'école*²¹ in two Parisian treatises from 1901: Théodore Dubois's *Traité de contrepoint et de fugue* and André Gédalge's *Traité de la fugue*.²²

By the early twentieth century, forms such as quartets and fugues, along with devices such as counterpoint, had already been established as the pinnacle of 'absolute music', and modernist authors were beginning to express their intentions of incorporating these forms into their writing. Although attempts at literary versions of absolute music would seem counterintuitive to the very motivation of these wordless forms, authors such as Ezra Pound, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot and Aldous Huxley were experimenting with the organizational component of the structures of

20 Aldous HUXLEY, "Busoni, Dr. Burney, and Others", *The Weekly Westminster Gazette*, February 25, 1922, *Complete Essays*, eds. Robert S. Baker and James Sexton, Vol. 1, 1920–1925, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000, 229–230, 229.

21 Gédalge outlines the eight essential parts of the *fugue d'école* as: "1° le sujet; / 2° la réponse; / 3° un ou plusieurs contre-sujets; / 4° l'exposition; / 5° la contre-exposition; / 6° les développements ou divertissements servant de transition aux différentes tonalités dans lesquelles on fait entendre le sujet et la réponse; / 7° le stretto; / 8° la pédale" (André GÉDALGE, *Traité de la fugue*, Paris: Enoch & Co, 1901, 8). A basic translation of this would be the subject; the response/answer; one or more countersubjects; the exposition; the counterexposition; developments or *divertissements* (the technical term) serving as transition into different tonalities in which we hear the subject and the answer – later designated by the term Episodes; the stretto; the pedal point. Prior to the discovery of NLI 36, 639/9, wherein Joyce enumerates a different list of eight parts, Gudrun BUDE traces Joyce's claim of an eight-part fugue to this list in "Fuge als literarische Form? Zum Sirenen Kapitel aus 'Ulysses' von James Joyce", in: Albert Gier and Gerold W. Gruber (eds.), *Musik und Literatur. Komparatistische Studien zur Strukturverwandtschaft*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995, 195–213.

22 Imogene HORSLEY, *Fugue, History and Practice*, New York: Free Press, 1966, 108.

absolute music to see if its non-referentiality could be harnessed in literature.

For example, Philip Quarles, the author-figure in Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, records his desire for musicalized fiction in a structural sense:

The musicalization of fiction. Not in the symbolist way, by subordinating sense to sound [...] But on a large scale, in the construction [...] A theme stated, then developed, pushed out of shape, imperceptibly deformed, until, though still recognizably the same, it has become quite different [...] Get this into a novel. How?²³

Here, Quarles stipulates that he has no interest in "subordinating sense to sound" in the way that "Symbolist poets [...] tried to fuse musical and poetic effects"²⁴, but is instead concerned with "the construction". (384) The notebook entry continues with an elaboration of how to achieve this counterpoint, and, although its application is somewhat problematic, the parallel remains. Huxley even goes so far as to use the Bach's *Suite in B minor* (with an emphasis on the fugue) and Beethoven's *String Quartet no. 15* as a framing device for *Point Counter Point*, effectively situating the novel in the discourse of absolute music.

Along similar lines, Ezra Pound makes his much disputed analogy between the structure of *The Cantos* and the fugue: [it is] "[r]ather like, or unlike subject and response and counter subject in fugue".²⁵ In her 1921 short story "The String Quartet", Virginia Woolf incorporates the quartet in her title and structure, while demonstrating "the ideal of the listener's wandering imagination" in the face of non-representational music.²⁶ Similarly, T. S. Eliot references the quartet form in the collective title he adopted for his last four significant poems, *Four Quartets*, while insisting in his essay "The Music of Poetry", that a "'musical poem' is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and that these

two patterns are indissoluble and one"²⁷ (i.e. the patterns of structure and meaning are inseparable).

Thus, rather than a "hoax or superficial identification"²⁸ intended to confound his readers, Joyce's fugal intentions for "Sirens" become part of the debate already probing the boundaries between absolute music and literature. However, Joyce's use of the fugue is considerably more nuanced than that of his peers, as befits Joyce's musical training.²⁹ His allocation of "Sirens" as containing "eight regular parts" demonstrates an elaborate knowledge of the type of fugue he wanted to create.³⁰ Furthermore, his description of the fugal arrangement as an expression of "the seductions of music beyond which Ulysses [must] travel" also addresses its effects or its content: the nature of this fugue, or flight, encompasses "the seductions of music", manifesting as Leopold Bloom's desire to flee self-awareness and forget everything except the twining of the music. Thus, Joyce's deployment of the fugue demonstrates an understanding of structure and effect that not only transcends that of his peers, but also shows his comprehension of how his fugue fit into the discourse about absolute music.

Whether or not Joyce manages to achieve this fugal structure has been much debated by musically-minded Joyceans. Those who dismiss Joyce's attempts at fugal structure tend to acknowledge the musicality of the episode, and then liberally interpret Joyce's use of musical terminology as both permission and springboard to apply other musical metaphors or forms to the episode, such as sonata, leitmotif, opera, atonalism, and musical comedies.³¹ Meanwhile, critics claiming to subscribe more faithfully to Joyce's fugal aspirations tend to indulge in hydra-headed discussions that raise more questions than they answer. The usual interpretation of Joyce's fugal formula involves the sixty or so themes that form the beginning

27 T. S. ELIOT, "The Music of Poetry" (1942), *On Poets and Poetry*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1956, 26–38, 33.

28 Daniel FERRER, "What Song the Sirens Sang... Is No Longer Beyond All Conjecture. A Preliminary Description of the New 'Proteus' and 'Sirens' Manuscripts", *James Joyce Quarterly* 39, No. 1 (Fall 2001), 53–78, 62.

29 Joyce himself was an accomplished musician, who began singing at the age of six, and even considered a career as a professional tenor. Cf. Richard ELLMANN, *James Joyce*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959, 27. Apart from singing, he also played the piano and the guitar, in addition to writing and arranging musical settings.

30 Joyce, *Letters*, 129.

31 For a more detailed critique on the types of work done on Joyce, "Sirens," and fugue, see my article, "The Mystery of the *Fuga per Canonem* Reopened?", *Genetic Joyce Studies*, no. 10 (Spring 2010), < http://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/GJS10/GJS10_MichelleWiten.htm >, accessed 10 July 2012.

23 Aldous HUXLEY, *Point Counter Point* (1928), ed. David Bradshaw, London: Vintage, 2004, 384.

24 A. Walton LITZ, *The Art of James Joyce. Method and Design in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, 64.

25 Ezra POUND, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige, London: Faber and Faber, 1971, 210.

26 Joyce E. KELLEY, "Virginia Woolf and Music", in: Maggie Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, 417–436, 425.

of the episode (i.e. the opening of "Sirens," beginning with "Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steelyringing"³², and ending with "Begin!").³³ These opening lines have been problematically labelled an "overture"³⁴, or, more plausibly, a prelude, and most critics trace the reappearance of these lines in the rest of the episode as a way of explaining how the fugue unfolds. However, with the recovery of the NLI manuscripts one must realize that the opening segments were not added to the episode until much later in the drafting process and certainly after Joyce had conceived of the episode as a fugue. The later draft of "Sirens", contained in the NLI manuscript MS 36, 639/9, is a version of "Sirens" that does not include the opening segments but *does* contain a handwritten list of eight parts on the back of the notebook's front cover, meaning that the fugue is to be found in the episode and not the preamble.

My transcription of this list reads as follows:

FUGA PER CANONEM

- 1) soggetto
- 2) contrasoggetto
(reale in altro
tono: in
raccorciamento)
- 3) soggetto + contrasoggetto
in contrapunto
- 4) esposizione
(proposto - codetta)
- 5) contra esposizione
(nuovi rapporti fra
i detti: parecchi) (divertimenti)
- 6) Tela Contrappuntistica
(episodi)
- 7) Stretto maestiale
(blocalis d'armonia /
narricum antesi)
- 8) Pedale³⁵

³² James JOYCE, *Ulysses*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler, Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior, New York: Vintage Books, 1986, 11.1 [=U].

³³ U, 11.63. See for example, Heath LEES, "The Introduction to 'Sirens' and the 'Fuga per Canonem'", *JJQ* 22.1 (Fall 1984), 39-54, and Margaret ROGERS, "Mining the Ore of 'Sirens': an Investigation of Structural Component", in: Sebastian Knowles (ed.), *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999, 263-274.

³⁴ Andreas FISCHER, "Strange Words, Strange Music. The Verbal Music of 'Sirens'", in: Sebastian Knowles (ed.), *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999, 245-262, 249.

³⁵ James JOYCE, "Sirens", MS 36, 639/9, Image 09-002, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Although the list has been dismissed as "obscure, untranslatable terminology"³⁶, it actually demonstrates Joyce's expert understanding of the fugue and its component parts. In this case, the fugue that Joyce has outlined follows the pattern of a double fugue, as it would have been understood at the beginning of the twentieth century through the lens of the esteemed Italian teacher of fugues, Giambattista Martini. The delineation of the subject (*soggetto*) and countersubject (*contrasoggetto*)³⁷ and the exposition (*esposizione*) and counterexposition (*contra esposizione*) indicate that there are two equally weighted themes that are operating simultaneously. Martini's prototype for the double fugue includes "a counter-subject appearing first against the answer, in the continuation of the subject, [then] written in double counterpoint against it".³⁸ This is specified on Joyce's list as *contrasoggetto (reale in altro tono: in raccorciamento)* followed by *soggetto + contra soggetto in contrapunto*. Once both subject and countersubject are introduced, followed by their development in their respective exposition and counterexposition, the fugue enters a stage of free modulation (*Tela Contrappuntistica* or contrapuntal fabric), in which shortened segments of the two themes are repeated against the backdrop of the *episodi* - in this case, the episodes are organized around T. Cooke's *Love and War* duet, the arias *All is Lost Now* from *La Sonnambula* and *M'appari* from Flotow's *Martha*, the *Intermezzo* that frames the silent roar of the shell, and William McBurney's ballad, *The Croppy Boy*. Finally, the double fugue ends with the concluding statements subject and countersubject. Joyce chooses to end his fugue with a *Stretto*, which means that he treats the themes as a canon. That is to say, before one voice has finished, another enters. This, along with pedal point (*Pedale*), is intended to increase the intensity of the fugue, while anticipating its conclusion.

The subjects and countersubjects of Joyce's fugue have a spatial component: the subject material occurs with the Ormond Hotel (the bar, the saloon, and the dining room), while the counter-subject is all movement outside the bar. "Sirens" begins in the

³⁶ Susan BROWN, "The Mystery of the *Fuga per Canonem* Solved", *Genetic Joyce Studies*, no. 7 (Spring 2007), < <http://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/GJS7/GJS7brown.html> >, accessed 10 July 2012.

³⁷ In 21st-century understandings of the fugue, the countersubject has "come to mean a subject of secondary or subordinate character that fits in invertible counterpoint with the main subject" (Horsley, *Fugue, History and Practice*, 358). However, in a double fugue, it carries equal importance and is therefore "not just a countersubject, but a real second subject" (358).

³⁸ Horsley, *Fugue, History and Practice*, 358.

Ormond bar: "Bronze by gold, miss Douce's head by miss Kennedy's head, over the crossblind of the Ormond bar heard the viceregal hoofs go by, ringing steel" (U, 11.64–65), establishing a contrast between the stationary aspect of the location of the bar and the movement that occurs outside, which is sustained throughout the chapter. The countersubject is all movement outside the bar, as established by the physical movements of Leopold Bloom and Blazes Boylan as they progress down the quays into various parts of Dublin. The exposition and counterexposition close with a confirmation that all of the characters have taken their positions for the contrapuntal fabric to come: Bloom, Richie Goulding, and Pat the waiter are in the dining room; Father Cowley, Simon Dedalus and Ben Dollard are in the saloon; the barmaids are in the bar; and Blazes Boylan has launched into jingling movement outside the bar. The *Tela Contrappuntistica* comes to an end when Bloom again launches into movement as he leaves the Ormond during the singing of *The Croppy Boy*, reproducing the original subject as he also manufactures noise in the form of his gas while passing out of the danger of stasis, in stratified combination with the blind tuner who has entered into the Ormond and loses his senses: "Tip. An unseeing stripling stood in the door. He saw not bronze. He saw not gold. Nor Ben nor Bob nor Tom nor Si nor George nor tanks nor Richie nor Pat. Hee hee hee hee. He did not see". (U, 11.1281–1283)

While "Sirens" operates structurally as a fugue, it is important to realize that effects are also achieved fugally. While listening to the music, Bloom experiences a loss of self that enables him to disassociate from his current position. For example, while listening to Dedalus sing Lionel's aria, *M'appari*, Bloom is completely consumed by the music:

It soared, a bird it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long long breath he breath long life, soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in effulgence, symbolistic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around the all, the endlessnessnessness.....

Siopold! ...

Consumed (U, 11.745–753)

This narrativization of Bloom's mental fugue is represented by the amalgamation of self (Leopold), Simon (singer), and Lionel (char-

acter): "Siopold". (U, 11.752) Even when the song finishes, Bloom is paralyzed, incapable of thought or action: "Lionel Simon, singer, laughed. Father Bob Cowley played. Mina Kennedy served. Second gentleman paid. Tom Kernan strutted in. Lydia admired, admired. But Bloom sang dumb." (U, 11.774–776) While business continues within the Ormond, Bloom has been rendered silent, his identity suspended in the singer and character.

Joyce's employment of the fugue in "Sirens" incorporates the nature of absolute music: the episode is structured as a fugue even as Bloom experiences the condition of the fugue (flight, forgetting).³⁹ The fugue therefore becomes Joyce's way of demonstrating the seductions of music in eight regular parts, where the structure of the fugue acts as scaffolding for its effects: Bloom's desire to become lost in the music and flee thoughts of his wife's infidelity is mirrored in the narrative means through which this is conveyed. Furthermore, this literary aspiration towards absolute music is not a random choice. As demonstrated by the musical intentions of other modernist authors, such as Huxley, Pound, Eliot, and Woolf, the awareness of absolute music, the philosophical discourse of pure instrumental music, and the narrative possibilities of appropriating musical structure into literary forms, establish Joyce's nuanced musical intentions for "Sirens" as being in keeping with a Modernist literary paradigm.

Michelle Witen studied English Language and Literature at St John's College, Oxford University and has almost completed her doctoral dissertation on James Joyce and music under the supervision of Prof Ronald Bush.

Abstract

Beginning with an historical analysis of the fugue and its place in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century musicology, this article examines James Joyce's claims of having written the "Sirens" episode of *Ulysses* as a *fuga per canonem*. Keeping in mind that the fugue was considered to be the highest form of absolute music at the time that Joyce was writing "Sirens," this article establishes that Joyce's implementation of the fugue is in keeping with the spirit of absolute music in that structure and effect are granted equal importance.

³⁹ This deserves to be explored more fully, but for the purposes of this article, my focus has been the roots of the fugue in absolute music and the Modernist appropriation of its possibilities, as exemplified by Joyce's deployment of the fugue.