An Old Look at Schumann's Organ Works

Robert August

This is a work that has occupied me for the whole of the previous year in an effort to make it worthy of the lofty name it bears. It is also a work which, I believe, is likely to outlive my other creations the longest."[1] This was Schumann's description of the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH*, op. 60, in a letter to his publisher, after completion of the final fugue. Schumann took great care and pride in the six fugues, but his prediction could not have been more off target as the fugues are rarely performed anymore. Rather, they have become the topic of ongoing discussions about Schumann's mental state in relation to the quality of his output.

The notion that the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* are of lesser quality than the majority of Schumann's oeuvre seems to be based on largely subjective analyses. Such subjectivism is not uncommon in art and music, as is evident in Albert Schweitzer's discussion of J.S. Bach's *Passacaglia in C Minor*, BWV 582: "He [Bach] saw clearly, however, that on the whole the incoherency of this kind of work was not suitable to the greatest organ music, and he ventures upon the experiment only with this colossal theme."[2] In Schweitzer's opinion, the *Passacaglia* was a compositional failure that did not compare to Bach's other organ works.

Robert Schumann was of a different opinion: "After a pause, these [organ compositions] were followed by the Passecaille in C Minor (with 21 variations, intertwined so ingeniously that one can never cease to be amazed) admirably handled in the choice of registers by Mendelssohn."[3] Schweitzer's and Schumann's remarks, published roughly sixty years apart, could not be more contradictory.

Why is it that the *Passacaglia* can render such opposing views, especially by two men known for their deep respect and understanding of Bach's music?[4] With regard to Schweitzer, we cannot be sure if his comments were the result of a somewhat subjective analysis, but he undoubtedly would not have published his findings unless he believed them to be correct.[5] Schumann's opposing remarks are fascinating as well. They not only provide us with his opinion of the *Passacaglia* but also unveil his often-overlooked understanding of the organ.

Tragically, Schumann's organ works, the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH*, op. 60, have often been deemed 'unworthy' and are repeatedly criticized or, perhaps worse, omitted from Schumann biographies. Op. 60 is systematically neglected and misinterpreted, often as a result of careless research. It is undoubtedly the most disputed cycle Schumann ever composed. Despite a number of favorable articles, a flow of negative writings remains consistent.[6] Numerous articles on the six fugues are based on flawed research and, in some cases, pre-existing articles. Biographers often use Schumann's mental condition to explain the lack of quality in the six fugues, conveniently ignoring the fact that Schumann produced some of his best works during the same period, including the *Symphony in C Major* and the *Piano Concerto in A Minor*.[7]

A musical cure

A general misconception of Schumann's organ works seems to have carried well into the 20th and 21st centuries, as several of even the most recent Schumann biographers merely reference the fugues rather than opening up a dialogue or deeper discussion. Schumann's organ works are neglected in several "comprehensive" Schumann biographies. Alan Walker, e.g., speaks favorably of the 1845/46 compositions in general, but omits op. 60 altogether.[8] George Dadelsen describes the six fugues as "appallingly monotonous" while trying to compete with Bach's *Art of Fugue*.[9] Other biographers carelessly mislabel op. 60; Marcel Brion describes the *Four Fugues on the name of Bach*, op. 72,[10] while John Worthen writes: "In April he began writing his *Six Fugues for Organ on B-A-C-H* (op. 60), a sequence interrupted only by the arrival of a rented pedal-piano which allowed him to write works for keyboard and pedal which did not require an organ."[11] Schumann, in fact, did not interrupt his fugal writing. Instead, a pedal attachment for the piano was hired to practice organ.[12] Eric Jensen makes a similar mistake: "Schumann rented a pedal piano—a piano fitted with pedals for the feet like an organ—in order to become familiar with the technique involved."[13]

Although Schumann was by no means an accomplished organist like Mendelssohn, he did have a deep understanding of the instrument, as is evident in numerous sources.[14] Robert Schauffler claims that the fugues were mere play: "To Schumann at the height of his career, such exercises [contrapuntal studies] were mere play. While diverting him, they used up so little of his true creative power that, with the approach of warm weather, he was able to throw himself into making two of his chief masterpieces: the Piano Concerto and the C Major Symphony."[15] Schauffler continues:

> Schumann must have felt in his bones that fugal writing was not in his line; for not until 1839 did he compose his first published attempt, that unsuccessful experiment, the *Fughette*, op. 32, no. 4. He gave out nothing more of the sort until the nervous collapse of 1845, during which he wrote works that look passing strange in a catalogue of his music.[16]

After a short description of Schumann's contrapuntal works of 1845, Schauffler writes:

> The composer's nervous collapse had been aggravated by the too intense labor and excitement of his years of song, symphony, and chamber music. One suspects that when, as he wrote Mendelssohn on July 17th, 1845, 'an onslaught of terrifying thoughts' had brought him to try his hand at fugal writing, very much as we of today would cajole a nervous invalid into doing crossword puzzles, to take his mind from his troubles. The very fact that Schumann's intensely subjective nature made it almost impossible for him to give of his best in this formal, objective style allowed him to play with these contrapuntal forms without expending too much energy.[17]

Peter Ostwald too, believes that the contrapuntal works of 1845 were exercises to improve the composer's mental condition:

> Despite his physical and psychological complaints, Schumann was beginning to do some composing again, but it was mainly the sort of counterpoint exercises he had relied on, as a way of settling his mind, during earlier depressive episodes. He rented a special musical instrument, called a pedal piano, that "has an extra set of strings and hammers, making it easier to play fugues, and worked on Bach for a while."[18]

While Ostwald does not stand alone in his opinion of Schumann's mental state in relation to the compositions of the contrapuntal year of 1845, one cannot but wonder why they, in particular the organ works, have methodically been deemed inferior. Ostwald also writes:

> Before the trip with Clara, in August 1845, Schumann had composed several fugues based on the name BACH, and he published an impressive amount of contrapuntal work later that year and the next. The six BACH Fugues in particular must have required enormous concentration, since not only are they based on a musical relationship between Bach's name and the notes of each fugue subject, but they also incorporate an intricate mathematical system, the so-called Bach numbers, which Bach himself had used to provide cohesion in his contrapuntal work.[19]

With all due respect to Mr. Ostwald, his findings are based on pre-existing, flawed research. Though Schumann indeed incorporated certain Baroque principles in his organ works, Peterson's attempt to attribute "Bach numbers" to the fugues holds no ground. Similar misguided assumptions have been applied to Bach's music as well, claiming for example, that Bach had left clues in his music in regards to his own date of death.[20] Despite his intrigue with Bach numbers, Peterson's opinion of the fugues as a whole is less than favorable: "Schumann's fugal writing seems, in spite of his studies, to have been a contrivance which he discarded when he felt hampered by it, even in a work entitled 'fugue'."[21] Stephen Walsh provides us with a similar statement: "Even in the finest passages of op. 60 one is aware of a certain impersonal quality about the writing."[22]

A recent biography by John Worthen reads: "This [study of counterpoint] was, after all, a musical cure; one that involved creating music on the page, after the enforced dry period of the autumn of 1844."[23] Worthen continues with some blatant assumptions:

> Such music insisted on structure and pattern, rather than on the harnessing and expression of emotion and melody which had made the work on *Faust* so exhausting. The fugal music could be worked out logically and tunefully, within its own very narrow confines. Its very limitations offered freedom from excitement.[24]

What Worthen exactly means by 'tunefully' remains uncertain. As an analysis of the fugues will demonstrate, his claim that the fugues are confined or free from excitement could not be farther removed from the truth. Worthen's next statement too, is completely false: "At any rate, the 'quiet' neo-Baroque music that engaged Schumann in the spring and early summer of 1845 may have been a rather narrowly focused sequence of works to occupy the composer of the *Finale zu Faust*, but it had served the purpose of getting him back into composing."[25] As we will see in the following discussion, the perception of Schumann's contrapuntal studies as mere therapeutic tools has remained a common yet flawed assumption for over a century.

Schumann and Bach

An aversion to the organ works is routinely linked to Schumann's mental illness, while some scholars maintain that Schumann simply was not a real contrapuntist, and that his knowledge of counterpoint was quite moderate. Though the number of unfavorable commentaries seems perhaps overwhelming, it is interesting to make the comparison with—at least as many—complimentary testimonials. Schumann's studies in counterpoint commenced well before composing the six fugues. The numerous entries in the diaries and household books depict Schumann as a prodigious student of Bach works and contrapuntal techniques (see Appendix 1). Schumann seems to have taken a natural liking to Bach's music, perhaps enhanced by the Bach revival of the early 19th century. Leon Plantinga writes:

> He [Schumann] subscribed to a rather deterministic view of history in which a central tradition in music could be expected to develop in certain orderly and predictable ways. For him this tradition, for all practical purposes, had its beginning in Bach, the first in a series of monumental composers whose personal contributions comprised the locus of an inevitable line of progress leading to his own time. This line extended through Beethoven and Schubert to Schumann's own contemporaries.[26]

Appendix 1. Selective outline of Schumann's contrapuntal excercises and studies

1817. Piano studies with Gottfried Kuntsch, organist at St. Mary's, Zwickau. The *Well-Tempered Clavier* was part of these studies.
18 February 1829. ". . . Bach preludes with Glok."
9 June 1829. ". . . Bach à la mode."
1831–32. Counterpoint studies with Heinrich Dorn. These studies resulted in several exercise books, dealing with harmony and counterpoint.[87]
April 1832. Studies in Marpurg's *Abhandlung von der Fuge*, as well as the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. "The advantage of this [analysis] is great, and seems to have a strengthening moral effect upon one's whole system; for Bach was a thorough man, all over, there is nothing sickly or stunted about him, and his works seem written for eternity."
14 May 1832. "Johann Sebastian Bach did everything—he was a man through and through."
29 May 1832. Schumann describes Bach's influence in the Impromptus op. 5.
27 July 1832. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* had become Schumann's "grammar."
1837. Studies in the *Art of Fugue* and Marpurg's "dry as dust" *Abhandlung von der Fuge*.
October 1838. Review of Marpurg's treatise on fugue. Analysis of Bach's organ fugues.
2 November 1838. "Fugue passion."
1839–1841. Schumann published six organ works by Bach in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.
September–October 1840. Studies in the fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.
21 September 1840. "Robert indicates the places where the theme enters . . . and reprimanded me [Clara] firmly because I had doubled one passage in octaves, thereby erroneously adding a fifth voice to the four-part texture."
July 1841. "Heard the excellent Silbermann organ."
Fall 1841. Clara and Robert began playing Bach's organ works *on the organ*. Schumann describes their struggles with the organ (Oct. 24): ". . . but we want to try it again soon; the instrument really is just too magnificent."
March 1842. Exercises in counterpoint and fugue.
April 1842. ". . . this royal instrument [organ]."
8 July 1844. "First organ lesson."
24 April 1845. ". . . we obtained on hire a pedal to be attached below the pianoforte, and from this we received great pleasure. Our chief object was to practice organ playing. But Robert soon found a higher interest in the instrument and composed some Studies and Sketches for it, which are sure to find favor as something quite new."[88]
21 February 1845. "Fugue passion."
1845. Contrapuntal studies resulting in *Four Fugues for the Piano* (op. 72); *Studies for the Pedal Piano*, first part (op. 56); *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH*, for the organ (op. 60); *Sketches for the Pedal Piano* (op. 58); sketch of orchestral *Symphony in C major*.
3 March 1846. "Revision of the BACH-Fugues."
20 April 1846. "Finally ended the revision of the BACH-Fugues."
Mid-1840s. Schumann wrote a brief *Textbook of Counterpoint* for his student, Karl Ritter, largely based on Cherubini's work. In the introduction to his method, Cherubini points out that "It is essential to subject the learner to strict rules, in order that subsequently, when composing in free style, he may be aware of why his talent, if he has any, often compels him to break free of the severity of the basic primary rules, to transcend them, if you will."[89]

This 'extended line' manifests itself in the organ fugues as Schumann reaches back to older forms while engaging in a new kind of fugal writing. Though Schumann was not the first composer to incorporate the famous BACH theme, the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* comprise the first significant cycle of organ works of its kind, soon to be followed by Liszt, Reger, and many more. For Schumann, studies in the *Art of Fugue* were crucial in the genesis of the organ fugues. As Gerhard Weinberger writes:

> The overall conception, the thematic material and the extremely high quality of the writing all derive from Bach; this fugue cycle represents the end of a developmental phase which culminated in Schumann's study of Bach's music (the six fugues may be viewed directly as modeled in the *Art of Fugue*) and of the fugue per se.[27]

Weinberger continues: "Nevertheless, the fugues are by no means derivative stylistic copies, but effective 'character fugues' in the romantic vein."[28] An interesting detail is the fact that Schumann, despite his admiration of Bach, deemed the *Art of Fugue* too intellectual. His view in this matter may be explained by his famous quote:

> The best fugue will always be the one that the public takes for a Strauss waltz; in other words, a fugue where the structural underpinnings are no more visible than the roots that nourish the flower. Thus a reasonably knowledgeable music-lover once took a Bach fugue for a Chopin etude—to the credit of both! Thus, too, one could play for many a maiden the last part of one of the Mendelssohn fugues and call it one of the *Lieder ohne Worte*. The charm and tenderness of the figures are such that she would never be reminded of churches and fugues.[29]

This last comment is fascinating. "Never be reminded of churches" is a telling statement that says a lot about the *Zeitgeist*, since churches and fugues are so strongly connected here, and in such a harsh way.

Schumann's interest in the organ was steeped in a deep admiration for Bach. In the April 1842 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* he wrote: " . . . At our next meeting, a volume of well-executed fugues would please us more than another one full of sketches. At this royal instrument, the composer must have learned the value of clearly defined artistic form, such as that given to us by Bach in the largest as well as smallest works."[30] Three years earlier Schumann wrote: "But it is only at his organ that he [Bach] appears to be at his most sublime, most audacious, in his own element. Here he knows neither limits nor goal and works for centuries to come."[31] Schumann's organ fugues, thus, are not a byproduct of mental exercises. They are carefully crafted works, based on a long tradition.

Approaching fugal composition from a new (Romantic) perspective, Schumann felt that he had created works that were truly unique. Like Bach himself, Schumann united the old and new, resulting in six spectacular character pieces. After all, according to Schumann, "Most of Bach's fugues are character pieces of the highest kind; in part truly poetic creations,"[32] and Schumann's fugues were no different. In the diaries Schumann refers to Bach's compositions repeatedly. He seemed to be concerned with preserving and reviving Bach's legacy, which, according to Hans T. David, ". . . by invoking the name of Bach again and again, helped gain for Bach's work a secure place in the minds of educated musicians."[33] In addition to the Bach legacy, Schumann was concerned with preserving his own legacy. His preferred medium in this—the fugue—is easily explained by his lifelong admiration of Bach's keyboard fugues. Charles Rosen gives a second reason for Schumann's choice: "In the nineteenth century, the fugue had become a demonstration of conventional mastery, a proof of craftsmanship. Besides competing with Beethoven, Schumann conforms to the standard pattern of fugue laid down by Cherubini."[34]

In addition to Bach's keyboard fugues, at least two more sources play an important role in Schumann's contrapuntal output: Marpurg's *Abhandlung von der Fuge* (1753) and Cherubini's *Cours de Contrepoint et de Fugue* (1835). Federhofer and Nauhaus write:

> The composer's concern with counterpoint began during his 'apprenticeship' with Heinrich Dorn (1804-1892) in the years 1831/32, and bore its first fruits in his exercise books. Schumann subsequently turned his attention to F.W. Marpurg's *Abhandlung von der Fuge* [Treatise on Fugue], parts of which he studied again, albeit reluctantly, in the autumn of 1837, along with Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. This independent study is reflected, in an artistically transmuted form, in the book of *Fugengeschichten* [Fugal matters] (November 1837) which is at present held at the Robert Schumann Haus in Zwickau.[35]

According to the *Haushaltbücher*, the Schumanns' studies of Cherubini's treatise commenced April 6, 1845, the same month Robert finished the first two organ fugues. *Cours de Contrepoint et de Fugue* is largely based on Bach works and clearly serves as a point of departure for Schumann's organ fugues. Two and a half weeks later, on April 24, Clara describes the rented pedal board for their piano: ". . . we obtained on hire a pedal to be attached below the pianoforte, and from this we received great pleasure. Our chief object was to practice organ playing."[36] Both Robert and Clara enjoyed the organ, but it seems that the intent was to study organ rather than becoming concert organists like Mendelssohn. Clara by then was a renowned concert pianist, while Robert had given up keyboard playing some fifteen years earlier, due to his numb finger.

A combination of counterpoint studies, a deep admiration for Bach, and a great appreciation for the organ finally resulted in the counterpoint episodes of 1845. In regards to Schumann's organ compositions, Joachim Draheim writes, "The exceptional importance and originality of these fugues were long insufficiently appreciated, although they belong to the very few truly distinctive organ compositions from the first half of the 19th century, together with Mendelssohn's Organ Sonatas, op. 65, to which they owe certain impulses."[37] Besides generating an artistic legacy, Schumann may have anticipated commercial success from his contrapuntal output; works for pedal piano were hardly available, and Schumann made sure he was among the first to write for the instrument, ensuring a 'head start' in any possible financial gain. The six fugues were, like Mendelssohn's organ sonatas, among the very few serious organ compositions of their time, and the first large cycle of organ fugues on the name of BACH. And as Schumann himself points out, the organ fugues can also easily be performed on piano (four hands). Schumann cleverly published opp. 56, 58 and 60 as works for pedal piano *or* organ, most likely to enhance sales. However, the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* lacked (financial) success, and remain Schumann's only attempt at organ composition. Schumann, however, was very pleased with his contrapuntal endeavors. A letter of 8 February 1847 to his friend Carl Ferdinand Becker illustrates Schumann's satisfaction with the six fugues: "I have never polished and worked so long on any composition of mine as on this one in order to make it worthy of the illustrious name which it bears."[38]

Mendelssohn

Like Mendelssohn, Schumann favored a modern fugal type steeped in the Bach tradition, yet combined with a poetic flavor. As Plantinga points out: "It was the particular genius of Mendelssohn, Schumann said, to show that successful fugues could still be written in a style that was fresh and yet faithful to its Bachian and Handelian models; these fugues hold to the form of Bach, he felt, though their melody marks them as modern."[39] Already a famous conductor, composer and organist, Mendelssohn wrote his *Three Preludes and Fugues*, op. 37 in 1836–37. Later, in 1844–45, he wrote the *Six Sonatas*, op. 65. As Klaus-Peter Richter points out, the motivic resemblances between Mendelssohn's and Schumann's organ works are more than obvious.[40] In reference to Mendelssohn's fugues of the six sonatas,[41] Schumann writes: "I do not wish to indulge in blind praise, and I know perfectly well that Bach made fugues of quite a different sort. But if he were to rise from the grave today, he would, I am sure—having delivered himself of some opinions about the state of music in general—rejoice to find at least flowers where he had planted giant-limbed oak forests."[42]

Mendelssohn's organ works were well received by critics[43] and may have generated Schumann's contrapuntal aspirations, though Schumann may have chosen a slightly different path to avoid comparison with Mendelssohn's compositions; in addition to writing the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* he wrote a set of canons and sketches for the pedal piano.[44] Schumann hoped to be among the first to publish works for this relatively new instrument, ensuring financial and artistic gain. Including the piano as an optional instrument for performance of the fugues, sketches, and canons aided Schumann in several ways; it bypassed the archaic reputation of the organ while marketing the music for the most widely used keyboard instrument of that time. An advertisement in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* states:

> Some *Studies and Sketches* for the pianoforte with pedal will shortly be published from Robert Schumann. We would like to remind our readers that in our opinion, when once this combining of instruments finds general acceptance, performers will have the opportunity not only to return to the earlier art and bring classical organ works into private homes, but also discover many different uses for the pedal piano and accomplish new effects.[45]

Alas, the pedal piano never became the widely used instrument Schumann was hoping for, and none of the contrapuntal studies of 1845 were a financial success.

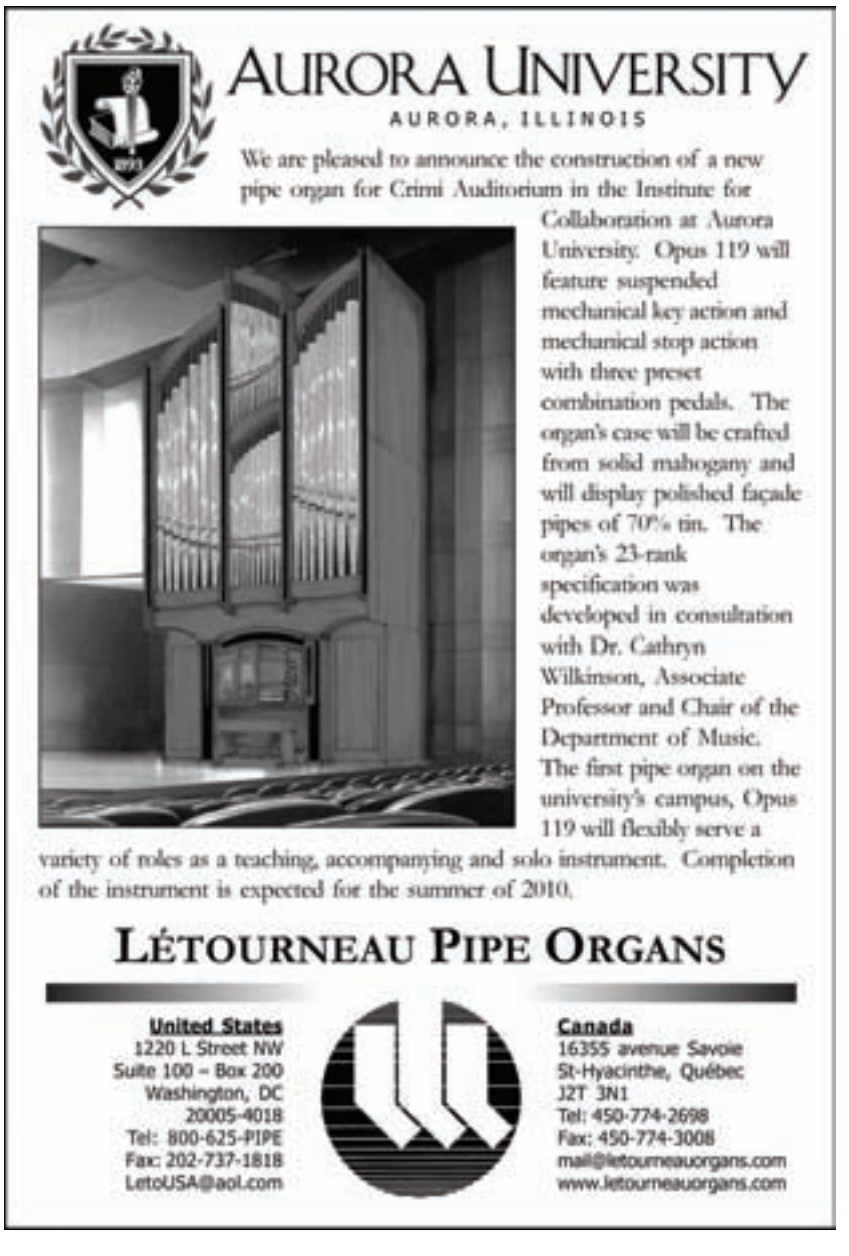
Schumann and the organ

The rise of the Enlightenment caused a great shift in the use of instruments in churches, the court, and at home. The new, *galant* style called for instruments capable of immediate and subtle changes in timbre and dynamics; hence, the piano became the new keyboard instrument of choice. The organ, as Schumann wrote, reminded people of "churches and fugues," and was considered an archaic and static instrument. Despite its tainted status, Schumann proceeded to compose for the instrument, a decision that may be partially attributed to a long tradition; many post-Renaissance composers wrote larger works to preserve their name in history. Several of Bach's sacred compositions, for example, were simply too long to be included in church services.[46] Similarly, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Schumann were not employed by the church, yet their output includes a large quantity of sacred works.[47]

Scholars have often blamed Schumann's limited knowledge of the organ for the so-called poor quality of the organ works. However, Schumann knew the organ well, and his understanding of the instrument was in fact greater than most of his contemporaries. Russell Stinson recently uncovered an important document in regards to Schumann's perception of Bach, as well as the organ. The *Clara Schumann Bach Book* offers a detailed list of Bach keyboard works from Schumann's library and contains numerous detailed markings (corrections, registrations, etc.) in Schumann's hand (see Appendices 2 and 3 on page 26).

The source is very specific and provides us with a list of Bach's keyboard works that Schumann owned before the contrapuntal year of 1845. In one particular example Stinson points out: "In the case of the *Clavierübung* setting of 'Vater unser, im Himmelreich,' Schumann bracketed every phrase of the canon on the chorale melody, similar to how he analyzed fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*."[48] The *Vater unser* chorale prelude is a compositional *tour de force* and one of Bach's most complex organ works. Based on the many markings, this work must have had a great impact on Schumann. Schumann also corrected typographical errors and gave detailed descriptions about the use of stops, manual changes, as well as pitch designation, all of which demonstrate more than basic knowledge of the organ.[49] As Stinson points out:

> Just consider how Schumann annotated, from Part 3 of the *Clavierübung*, the *manualiter* setting of "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir," a work in which Bach subjects each phrase of the chorale tune to a complex fugal exposition before stating the melody in augmentation in the soprano voice. Following Bach's constant use of inversion and



Appendix 2. Bach organ works in Schumann's library

Title given by Schumann	Contents according to BWV number
44 kleine Choralvorspiele für die Orgel, hg. Von Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy	BWV 599-630, 632–44 (*Orgelbüchlein*)
15 grosse Choral-Vorspiele für die Orgel, hrsg. Von Felix Mendelssohn	BWV 651–63, 667, 740 (Great Eighteen Chorales)
Choralvorspiele für die Orgel, 4 Hefte	BWV 614, 633–34, 645–50, 664b, 675–84, 691–93, 697–701, 704–8, 710–11, 748, 759, 769a
Orgelkompositionen, hrsg. Von Adolf Bernhard Marx, 3 Hefte	BWV 532, 533, 539, 542, 550, 565, 566, 569
Praeludien und Fugen für Orgel, 3 Bde.	unknown
Klavierübung Teil III	Teil III contains BWV 522, 669-89, and 802-5
Toccata und Fuge für Orgel, Nr. 2 und 3	Nr. 2 = BWV 540; Nr. 3 = BWV 538
Fantasie für Orgel	BWV 562/1[90]

Appendix 3. The contents of Clara Schumann's Bach Book

Contents of print	Title of print	Date of print
Goldberg Variations, BWV 988 (Clavierübung, Part 4	Exercises pour le clavecin par J. S. Bach, Oeuv. II.	1820
Clavierübung, Part 3 (BWV 552/1, 669–89, 552/2)	Exercises pour le clavecin par J. S. Bach, Oeuv. III.	ca. 1815
Prelude in A Minor, BWV 551	Prelude et fugue pour l'orgue ou le piano-forte composée par J. S. Bach. No. I.	ca. 1832
Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 541	Prelude et fugue pour l'orgue ou le piano-forte composée par J. S. Bach. No. II.	ca. 1832
Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 535	Prelude et fugue pour l'orgue ou le piano-forte composée par J. S. Bach. No. III.	ca. 1832
Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, BWV 903	Chromatische Fantasie für das Pianoforte von Johann Sebastian Bach.	1820
Fantasy in C Minor, BWV 906	Fantaisie pour le clavecin composée par J. S. Bach No. I.	ca. 1815
Fantasy in G Major, BWV 572	Fantaisie pour l'orgue ou le pianoforte composée par J. S. Bach No. II.	1832–33
Toccata in D Minor, BWV 913	Toccata per clavecimbalo composta dal Signore Giov. Sebast. Bach. No. [I].	ca. 1815
Toccata and Fugue in F Major, BWV 540	Toccata et fugue pour l'orgue ou le piano-forte composée par J. S. Bach No. II.	ca. 1832
Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, ("Dorian") BWV 538	Toccata et fugue pour l'orgue ou le piano-forte composée par J. S. Bach No. III.[91]	ca. 1832

stretto, Schumann bracketed, in addition to each phrase of the chorale proper, every one of the roughly forty fugal statements.[50]

The *Clara Schumann Bach Book* is an invaluable source, and for once and for all does away with the general misconception of Schumann's limited knowledge of the organ. The evidence in Schumann's personal library discloses both his interest and knowledge of Bach, the organ and counterpoint.

A new approach

Schumann was known to compose rather fast, but it took him from April to November to write the fugues. In the Diaries, Schumann writes:

> I used to write most, practically all of my shorter pieces in [the heat of] inspiration; many compositions [were completed] with unbelievable swiftness, for instance, my First Symphony in B-flat Major [was written] in four days, as was a *Liederkreis* of twenty pieces [*Dichterliebe*]; the *Peri* too was composed in a relatively short time. Only from the year 1845 on, when I began to invent and work out everything in my head, did a completely new manner of composing begin to develop.[51]

This new manner of composing resulted in works that were based on a thorough, perhaps more intellectual approach. Schumann's keyboard compositions of 1845 are often said to be more objective than his earlier compositions.[52] That in itself is a subjective statement, and should be taken with a grain of salt. Traits of the younger Schumann can be found in any of the collections written in 1845, but they also expose a maturing composer. These are indeed contrapuntal works based on models by Bach, Marpurg, and Cherubini, but Schumann remained true to himself as a person and artist by combining the new with the old. The fugues exhibit a blend of sentiment (third fugue), restriction (fifth fugue), and excitement (second and sixth fugues). Schumann, as Weinberger says, "demonstrates the highest skill in contrapuntal writing, using all sorts of complicated polyphony culminating in the concluding double fugue. But at the same time he produced expressive compositions which he himself termed *character pieces, but in the strict style*."[53] Charles Rosen was right when he wrote, "Throughout his short musical life, Schumann produced his most striking works not by developing and extending Classical procedures and forms, but by subverting them, sometimes undermining their functions and even making them momentarily unintelligible."[54]

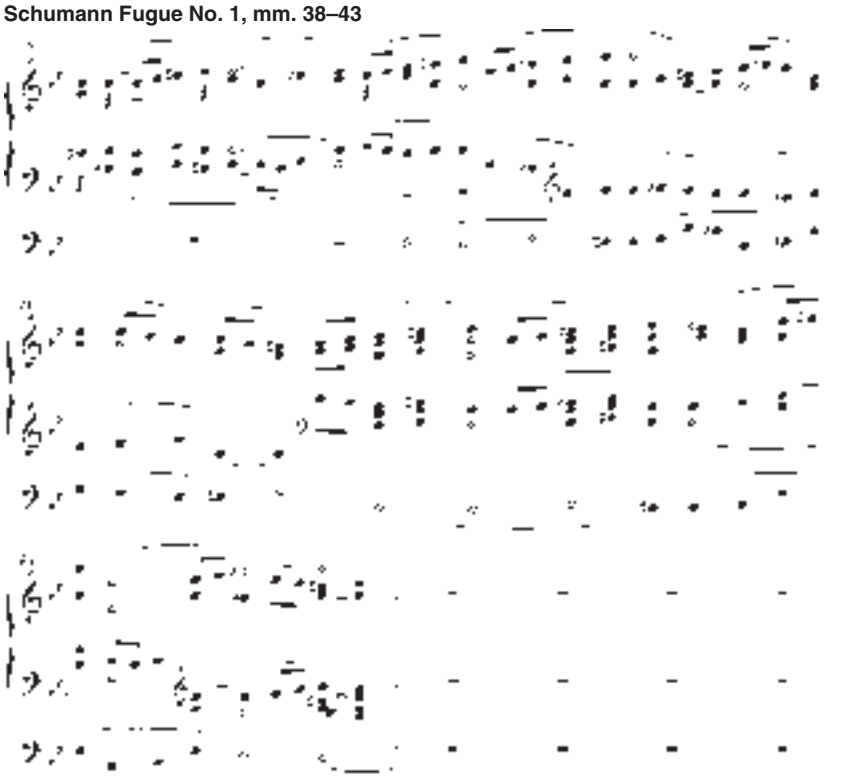
The six fugues remain among the most unique works in the organ repertoire, and Schumann was well aware that these compositions differed from his earlier output. Having given up his old habit of composing at the piano, Schumann felt liberated. Daverio sheds more light on Schumann's new manner of composing: ". . . it is perhaps better understood as a logical outgrowth of his approach to large-scale instrumental composition in the earlier 1840s rather than as a radical break."[55] Scholars have maintained the notion that Schumann's oeuvre reflects several distinctly different compositional periods. Daverio's opposing view, however, "explains" the six fugues in a nutshell:

> Perhaps Schumann intermingled 'subjective' and 'objective' qualities throughout his career, but with varying degrees of emphasis, a hypothesis implying that the passage from a 'subjective' to an 'objective' phase was hardly abrupt. To insist on a hard and fast demarcation of style-periods in time is to miss the point, namely, that Schumann's *oeuvre* unfolds in a series of sometimes parallel and sometimes overlapping phases. The products of his imagination may thus be viewed as points where divergent or complementary trends intersect.[56]

Von Wasilewski agrees with this view, pointing out the combination of strict form and a Romantic, poetic spirit:

> Of the two sets of fugues (ops. 72 and 60), the latter, consisting of six fugues on the name of Bach, is of extraordinary merit. The first five fugues especially display so firm and masterly a treatment of the most difficult forms of art, that Schumann might from these alone lay claim to the title of a profound contrapuntist. They show variety of plastic power with four notes only. The tone of feeling varies in all six pieces, and is always poetic, which, in connection with a command of form, is the main point in composition. These are serious character pieces.[57]

Schumann Fugue No. 1, mm. 38–43



Though the *Canons* and *Sketches* display a more intimate, subjective side of Schumann, the six fugues demonstrate a stronger balance between head (Eusebius) and heart (Florestan). Daverio's and Von Wasilewski's points of view are supported by the great variety of character in Schumann's mid-1840s compositions.

Six Fugues on the Name of BACH

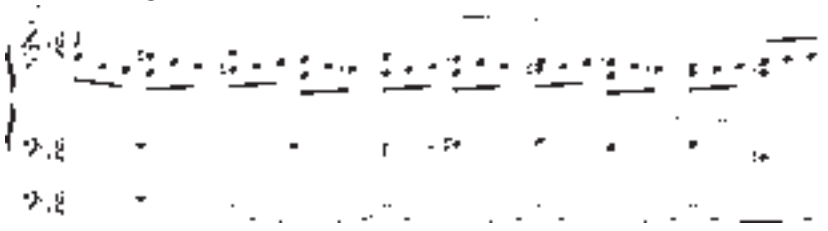
Schumann's *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* are the product of a carefully planned blueprint. Modeled after Bach's examples, one might expect various Baroque elements in these pieces. Indeed, the fugues were conceived as a set of six, similar to many of Bach's cycles (including many of his organ works).[58] Such systematic arrangement of cycles containing six pieces was common in the Baroque era and, as Piet Kee points out, is rooted in numerology that goes back as far as Pythagoras.[59] The use of number symbolism in music diminished substantially after the rise of the age of the Enlightenment, and despite Schumann's use of ciphers (on several occasions) there is no evidence that points to the composer's knowledge or intentional use of number symbolism. Schumann's fugues, however, do reveal a consistent observance of the Golden Ratio. This number (0.6180339887…) is found in nature, music and art.[60] Schumann's knowledge of the Golden Ratio is not recorded anywhere, but based on the many examples found in his and his contemporaries' music, it seems plausible that he was familiar with the concept. The use of the Golden Ratio though, so closely related to nature, seems to have prevailed through the Romantic period into our time.[61] A close examination of the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* unveils Golden Ratio (G.R.) proportions (often multiple times) in each of the six fugues. These examples are often found within a measure of the exact G.R. When applying the G.R. to the number of measures in each fugue we see the following outcome:

Fugue I. The first fugue totals 64 measures. When we apply the G.R. to these 64 measures, we come to 64 x 0.61 = 39, or measure 39. This measure contains two consecutive subject entries in the pedals. A 'reversed' G.R. (counting 39 measures from the end) is found in m. 25, located between two more subject entries (the second being a false entry) in the pedals. NB: this fugue only contains two such double-pedal entries, each clearly defined by the Golden Ratio. In addition, the apex (c3) is reached first in m. 40 (one measure after G.R measure 39).[62]

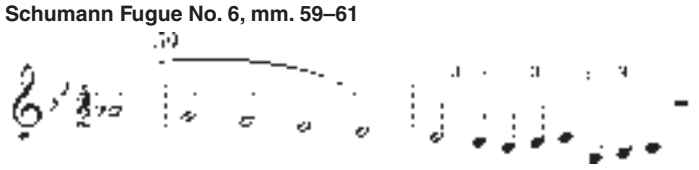
Fugue II. The second fugue is 174 measures long; 174 x 0.61 = 106. In m. 106 new material is presented (ascending octaves/scales). A reversed G.R. leads us to m. 68, where the subject appears in the pedals (in its entirety) for the first time. Like several Bach compositions, this fugue contains Golden Ratios *within* Golden Ratios. The second fugue can be separated into three separate divisions:

Great musicians need extraordinary instruments to deliver magnificent performances.
Schantz
P.O. Box 156 • Orrville, Ohio 44667 • P 800.416.7426 • F 330.683.2274 • www.schantzorgan.com

Schumann Fugue No. 5, mm. 103–107



Schumann Fugue No. 6, mm. 59–61



Schumann Fugue No. 6, mm. 95–97

At m. 74 we see a clear separation in the music; there is a sudden dynamic change (from *forte* to *piano*), while the texture changes from chordal homophony to strict polyphony with the BACH motive in stretto. An inverted G.R. within that section highlights m. 29, where the exposition is stirred up by a repeat of the subject in the alto voice. This entry starts on B-flat, similar to the very first entry (slightly modified for harmonic purposes), but then suddenly shifts from a *dux* to a *comes* entity; the first four notes of the subject appear in *dux* form, while the remainder of the entry is presented in *comes* fashion. It is the only fugue in the cycle where Schumann applied (uniform) dynamic markings to each voice entry in the exposition, as to point out the exposition's irregularity. Federhofer and Nauhaus point out that ". . . Schumann probably regarded the treatment of the 'comes' (different in each case) as depending on the character of the subject."[63] Mm. 75–121 mark the second division of the fugue, totaling 47 measures; 47 x 0.61 = 29 = m. 102, which is marked *marcato* while presenting new material. The fugue's third division comprises mm. 123–174, totaling 53 measures. This section contains a reversed G.R. (counting 32 backwards) at m. 143. The score reveals a significant change in m. 143 as the music changes from a thin, three-part polyphonic to a full, chordal and homophonic texture.

Fugue III. The third fugue is the shortest one of the cycle, counting only 59 measures; 59 x 0.61 = 36. The G.R. is found in m. 36, where the music moves to the sub-mediant, E-flat major. A reversed G.R. points to m. 23; the end of the exposition. This five-voice fugue does not combine all five voices until close to the end, after the third (and final) pedal entry. Schumann uses the pedals to single out the Golden Ratio.

Fugue IV. The fourth fugue is 116 measures long; 116 x 0.61 = 71. M. 72 is marked *fortissimo*, the loudest dynamic marking in the fugue. Here the music also has a strong sense of forward motion (see endnote 64). The drastic change at m. 72 divides the piece into two sections. The second division, totaling 45 measures, unveils one more reversed G.R. at m. 92, where the music changes from a homophonic to a polyphonic texture.

Fugue V. The fifth fugue in the cycle totals 124 measures; 124 x 0.61 = 76, the beginning of the pedal tone F. When looking at that first section separately (mm. 1–76), we find yet another striking place; 76 x 0.61 = 46; in m. 46 the subject appears in the middle voice, while the BACH theme (in sustained note values) are presented—in stretto—in the bass and soprano voices. NB: this is the only time the BACH theme is played in the pedals. The fugue's second part (mm. 76–124) contains one more G.R.; 49 (number of remaining measures) x 0.61 = 30, which appears exactly at the pedal point in m. 104. Additionally, the original subject appears in retrograde.

Fugue VI. 155 x 0.61 = 95. Measure 95 presents a clear statement of the subject in the pedals. A reversed Golden Ratio (95 from the end, rather than the beginning) leads us to m. 60. Schumann writes a clear break in the music at measure 59, immediately before introducing the second subject of this double fugue; the fugue's two sections are separated by a quarter note rest and a double bar line, as well as a dynamic increase (*più f*). In addition, Schumann writes *lebhafter* (livelier). When we apply the G.R. formula to the first part of the fugue (the first 58 measures) we come to 58 x 0.61 = 35. One measure earlier the subject is first introduced in the relative minor key (G minor). Similar Golden Ratio divisions are found in the second part of the fugue (97 measures long): 97 x 0.61 = 59 (m. 117). In m. 116, just one measure earlier, Schumann clearly defines the break in the music after two (!) four-measure pedal points, when the BACH motive is re-introduced—this time in block chords. A reversed G.R. is found at mm. 95/96. In m. 95, after a three-measure pedal point, the fugue's first subject appears first in the second part of the (double) fugue. Other changes involve a dynamic increase and the introduction of both subjects simultaneously.

Appendix 4. Symmetry in the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH*

Fugue	Time Signature	Number of Measures	Tempo/Dynamics	Other
I	C (4/2, Stile Antico)	64	Langsam, *mf*	5-part. "Nach und nach Schneller und Stärker," starting at m. 34
II	3/4	174	Lebhaft, *f*	Dynamic changes
III	C	59	Mit sanften Stimmen, *p*	No Tempo/dynamic changes
IV	C	116	Mäßig, doch nicht zu schnell, *mf*	Dynamic changes
V	6/8	124	Lebhaft, *mf*	1 *sf* marking (m. 73) to indicate the theme in contrary motion
VI	C (4/2, Stile Antico)	155	Mäßig, nach und nach schneller, *mf*	5-part. Break at m. 59: Lebhafter, più *f*, dynamic changes (increasingly louder towards the end). Same order of entries as fugue no. 1.

The number of Golden Ratios in Schumann's fugues is overwhelming, yet the question remains if they were intentionally 'placed' or if they are a mere compositional byproduct. Schumann's organ compositions are an unusual blend of styles, which could easily generate an over-analytical approach. Peterson's and van Houten's previously mentioned findings are prime examples of such "determined research," and one needs to be careful not to attribute music's every single detail to a genius mind. In regards to Golden Ratio, perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Regardless of Schumann's intentions, the number of G.R.s is remarkable and cannot be denied.

Styles

Schumann's organization of the cycle reveals a fascinating blend of Baroque and Romantic principles. Burkhard Meischein points out the cycle's sonata-like layout:

Fugue 1: Slow introduction
Fugue 2: Faster section
Fugues 3 and 4: Cantabile, slower section
Fugue 5: Scherzo
Fugue 6: Exciting, intensely growing finale[64]

Interestingly, Schumann's Classic outline is not unlike Bach's symmetrical organization of larger collections.[65] Notice, for example, the symmetry in time signature, tempo, dynamics and texture (see Appendix 4).

The six fugues are based on the famous BACH theme that Bach himself had used in the final (incomplete) fugue of *The Art of Fugue*. As Daverio points out, "Though all the fugues incorporate the BACH theme, some of them use this theme merely as a starting point for a larger subject (see the subject of the second and fifth fugues)."[66] Stinson discusses the many motivic similarities between Schumann's opp. 56 and 60 and Bach's organ works. The second fugue on BACH, for example, has occasionally been ridiculed for its elongated subject, but is analogous to BWV 575, which was published by Schumann in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in February 1839.[67] In *Abhandlung von der Fuge,* Marpurg discusses the proper treatment of fugue subjects:

> I myself once heard him [Bach], when during my stay in Leipzig I was discussing with him certain matters concerning the fugue, pronounce the works of an old and hardworking contrapuntist *dry and wooden*, and certain fugues by a more modern and no less great contrapuntist—that is the form in which they are arranged for clavier—*pedantic*; the first because the composer stuck continuously to his principal

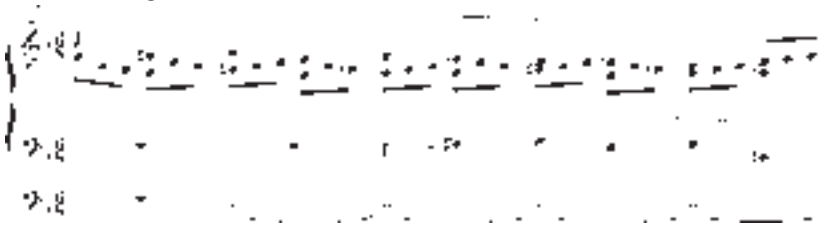
The new pipe-digital combination organ at Masland Methodist Church in Sibu, Malaysia draws all eyes to the central cross, where the surrounding pipes are arranged like uplifted hands. Rodgers Instruments Corporation was honored to partner with Modern Pipe Organ Solutions of the U.K. on the installation.

See more pictures at www.rodgersinstruments.com. For more information about Rodgers pipe-digital combination organs, contact Sales Manager Rick Anderson at 503-681-0483.

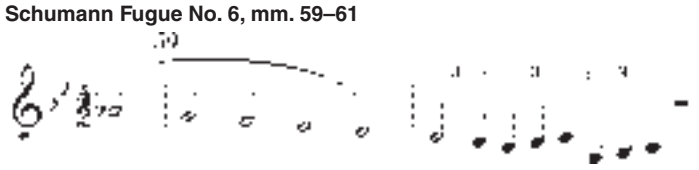
RODGERS

www.rodgersinstruments.com

Schumann Fugue No. 5, mm. 103–107



Schumann Fugue No. 6, mm. 59–61



Schumann Fugue No. 6, mm. 95–97

At m. 74 we see a clear separation in the music; there is a sudden dynamic change (from *forte* to *piano*), while the texture changes from chordal homophony to strict polyphony with the BACH motive in stretto. An inverted G.R. within that section highlights m. 29, where the exposition is stirred up by a repeat of the subject in the alto voice. This entry starts on B-flat, similar to the very first entry (slightly modified for harmonic purposes), but then suddenly shifts from a *dux* to a *comes* entity; the first four notes of the subject appear in *dux* form, while the remainder of the entry is presented in *comes* fashion. It is the only fugue in the cycle where Schumann applied (uniform) dynamic markings to each voice entry in the exposition, as to point out the exposition's irregularity. Federhofer and Nauhaus point out that ". . . Schumann probably regarded the treatment of the 'comes' (different in each case) as depending on the character of the subject."[63] Mm. 75–121 mark the second division of the fugue, totaling 47 measures; 47 x 0.61 = 29 = m. 102, which is marked *marcato* while presenting new material. The fugue's third division comprises mm. 123–174, totaling 53 measures. This section contains a reversed G.R. (counting 32 backwards) at m. 143. The score reveals a significant change in m. 143 as the music changes from a thin, three-part polyphonic to a full, chordal and homophonic texture.

Fugue III. The third fugue is the shortest one of the cycle, counting only 59 measures; 59 x 0.61 = 36. The G.R. is found in m. 36, where the music moves to the sub-mediant, E-flat major. A reversed G.R. points to m. 23; the end of the exposition. This five-voice fugue does not combine all five voices until close to the end, after the third (and final) pedal entry. Schumann uses the pedals to single out the Golden Ratio.

Fugue IV. The fourth fugue is 116 measures long; 116 x 0.61 = 71. M. 72 is marked *fortissimo*, the loudest dynamic marking in the fugue. Here the music also has a strong sense of forward motion (see endnote 64). The drastic change at m. 72 divides the piece into two sections. The second division, totaling 45 measures, unveils one more reversed G.R. at m. 92, where the music changes from a homophonic to a polyphonic texture.

Fugue V. The fifth fugue in the cycle totals 124 measures; 124 x 0.61 = 76, the beginning of the pedal tone F. When looking at that first section separately (mm. 1–76), we find yet another striking place; 76 x 0.61 = 46; in m. 46 the subject appears in the middle voice, while the BACH theme (in sustained note values) are presented—in stretto—in the bass and soprano voices. NB: this is the only time the BACH theme is played in the pedals. The fugue's second part (mm. 76–124) contains one more G.R.; 49 (number of remaining measures) x 0.61 = 30, which appears exactly at the pedal point in m. 104. Additionally, the original subject appears in retrograde.

Fugue VI. 155 x 0.61 = 95. Measure 95 presents a clear statement of the subject in the pedals. A reversed Golden Ratio (95 from the end, rather than the beginning) leads us to m. 60. Schumann writes a clear break in the music at measure 59, immediately before introducing the second subject of this double fugue; the fugue's two sections are separated by a quarter note rest and a double bar line, as well as a dynamic increase (*più f*). In addition, Schumann writes *lebhafter* (livelier). When we apply the G.R. formula to the first part of the fugue (the first 58 measures) we come to 58 x 0.61 = 35. One measure earlier the subject is first introduced in the relative minor key (G minor). Similar Golden Ratio divisions are found in the second part of the fugue (97 measures long): 97 x 0.61 = 59 (m. 117). In m. 116, just one measure earlier, Schumann clearly defines the break in the music after two (!) four-measure pedal points, when the BACH motive is re-introduced—this time in block chords. A reversed G.R. is found at mm. 95/96. In m. 95, after a three-measure pedal point, the fugue's first subject appears first in the second part of the (double) fugue. Other changes involve a dynamic increase and the introduction of both subjects simultaneously.

Appendix 4. Symmetry in the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH*

Fugue	Time Signature	Number of Measures	Tempo/Dynamics	Other
I	C (4/2, Stile Antico)	64	Langsam, *mf*	5-part. "Nach und nach Schneller und Stärker," starting at m. 34
II	3/4	174	Lebhaft, *f*	Dynamic changes
III	C	59	Mit sanften Stimmen, *p*	No Tempo/dynamic changes
IV	C	116	Mäßig, doch nicht zu schnell, *mf*	Dynamic changes
V	6/8	124	Lebhaft, *mf*	1 *sf* marking (m. 73) to indicate the theme in contrary motion
VI	C (4/2, Stile Antico)	155	Mäßig, nach und nach schneller, *mf*	5-part. Break at m. 59: Lebhafter, più *f*, dynamic changes (increasingly louder towards the end). Same order of entries as fugue no. 1.

The number of Golden Ratios in Schumann's fugues is overwhelming, yet the question remains if they were intentionally 'placed' or if they are a mere compositional byproduct. Schumann's organ compositions are an unusual blend of styles, which could easily generate an over-analytical approach. Peterson's and van Houten's previously mentioned findings are prime examples of such "determined research," and one needs to be careful not to attribute music's every single detail to a genius mind. In regards to Golden Ratio, perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Regardless of Schumann's intentions, the number of G.R.s is remarkable and cannot be denied.

Styles

Schumann's organization of the cycle reveals a fascinating blend of Baroque and Romantic principles. Burkhard Meischein points out the cycle's sonata-like layout:

Fugue 1: Slow introduction
Fugue 2: Faster section
Fugues 3 and 4: Cantabile, slower section
Fugue 5: Scherzo
Fugue 6: Exciting, intensely growing finale[64]

Interestingly, Schumann's Classic outline is not unlike Bach's symmetrical organization of larger collections.[65] Notice, for example, the symmetry in time signature, tempo, dynamics and texture (see Appendix 4).

The six fugues are based on the famous BACH theme that Bach himself had used in the final (incomplete) fugue of *The Art of Fugue*. As Daverio points out, "Though all the fugues incorporate the BACH theme, some of them use this theme merely as a starting point for a larger subject (see the subject of the second and fifth fugues)."[66] Stinson discusses the many motivic similarities between Schumann's opp. 56 and 60 and Bach's organ works. The second fugue on BACH, for example, has occasionally been ridiculed for its elongated subject, but is analogous to BWV 575, which was published by Schumann in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in February 1839.[67] In *Abhandlung von der Fuge,* Marpurg discusses the proper treatment of fugue subjects:

> I myself once heard him [Bach], when during my stay in Leipzig I was discussing with him certain matters concerning the fugue, pronounce the works of an old and hardworking contrapuntist *dry and wooden*, and certain fugues by a more modern and no less great contrapuntist—that is the form in which they are arranged for clavier—*pedantic*; the first because the composer stuck continuously to his principal

The new pipe-digital combination organ at Masland Methodist Church in Sibu, Malaysia draws all eyes to the central cross, where the surrounding pipes are arranged like uplifted hands. Rodgers Instruments Corporation was honored to partner with Modern Pipe Organ Solutions of the U.K. on the installation.

See more pictures at www.rodgersinstruments.com. For more information about Rodgers pipe-digital combination organs, contact Sales Manager Rick Anderson at 503-681-0483.

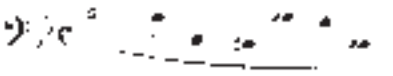
RODGERS

www.rodgersinstruments.com

Schumann Fugue No. 2, mm. 48–51

subject, without any change; and the second because, at least in the fugues under discussion, he had not shown enough fire to reanimate the theme by interludes.[68]

Schumann Fugue No. 4, mm. 1–2



While some of the subjects are indeed rather lengthy, Schumann seems to adhere to Bach's examples, avoiding redundant (complete) repeats of fugue subjects. Similarly, rather than following conventional compositional techniques, Schumann used existing forms as a starting point for a more modern idiom. Thus, the amalgamation of old and new techniques generated compositions that were (and still are) anomalies in the organ repertoire, and may in part explain their unfortunate fate. A closer examination of the fugues reveals some very interesting patterns:

Fugue I. The first fugue initially follows the conventional exposition pattern, as each of the voices is introduced in the right order. However, when the fifth voice is introduced in m.12 (in the pedals), the alto part drops out, leaving a four-part texture before finishing the exposition. In fact, the five voices never appear together in contrapuntal passages. Schumann, undoubtedly aware of this atypical approach, applied the idiosyncrasy in five of the six fugues (the fifth being the exception). Throughout the cycle, both the core subject (the BACH motive) and the complete subjects appear in many different forms. Klaus Jürgen Sachs points out the repeatedly changing order of emphasized notes of the BACH motive.[69] In the first fugue, for example, the motive appears straightforward in four half notes, with B-flat and C being the emphasized notes (B-flat and C appear on beats one and three in a 4/2 time signature). In m. 5 the same motive is presented in the alto voice, starting on the second beat rather than the first. This metrical displacement is typical of Schumann and is employed throughout the cycle.

Fugue II. In the second fugue we see a continuation of metrical shifts; starting in m. 3, the running sixteenth notes suggest a duple (2/4) rhythm in a 3/4 time signature. In m. 48 the *first* fugue's subject is introduced in the pedals, combined with the second fugue's main subject in the manuals. Schumann takes great liberty in the intervallic relationship between the first and second parts of the subject. The first part of the subject (BACH) starts on B-flat, while the second part (continuous sixteenth notes) follows at the sixth, on G. This relationship remains consistent until m. 30, where Schumann separates the two motives by abandoning the intervallic connection. The two motives still appear together throughout the fugue, but the second part of the subject (its starting pitch) is modified for harmonic purposes.[70]

Fugue III. The third fugue appears to be a double fugue, but the second subject is never fully developed. Derived from the main subject, it might be conceived as a melodically and rhythmically weak countersubject. 'Undermining' the second subject may have been intentional, as Schumann's focus seems to be mainly on the principal subject. Whereas the first two fugues were written in the key of B-flat major, the third is written in G minor. Bound by the initial BACH motive (centered around B-flat), Schumann may have used the countersubject as a means to establish the fugue's tonality. This thought also explains the countersubject's lack of development, as Schumann's focus is on the principal subject. Of the six fugues, the third maintains the strictest counterpoint throughout, and never resorts to a homophonic texture.

Fugue IV. In the fourth fugue Schumann for the first time deviates from the established BACH motive. Though still citing the same motive, the notes are ordered in a new manner, incorporating the interval of a sixth. There are a number of similarities between the fourth fugue and Schumann's second symphony, which was written 1845–1846. The symphony's *Adagio* exhibits chromatic elements similar to the BACH motive used in the six fugues,[71] and even incorporates a (semi) exposition, starting at m. 62, using two subjects. The *Adagio*'s harmonic progression of m. 82 also appears in m. 100 of the fugue. Schumann must have been fond of the chord progression, repeating it several times (consecutively) in both pieces. Like the fugue, the *Adagio* reveals a striking G.R. (130 measures x 0.61 = 80) at m. 82, where the music—marked by a double bar line—suddenly shifts from C minor to C major.

Fugue V. The fifth fugue, the *scherzo* of the cycle, maintains a strictly polyphonic texture. The independent voice leading, combined with fast-moving eighth notes, makes for some daring harmonies. Similar writing is found in the second *Duetto* of Bach's *Clavierübung III*, of which Schumann owned a copy. Schumann again takes some liberties in the exposition, as the fourth entry of the exposition starts on E-flat rather than F. In addition, the pedal entry consists of two short, repeated motives rather than the entire subject.

Fugue VI. Schumann ends the cycle with a majestic, five-part double fugue. Simultaneous use of duple and triple meter, combined with a gradual buildup of tension and grandeur, creates a strong sense of completion. Stinson claims that the fugue is based on Bach's *Fugue in E-flat Major*, BWV 552, pointing out the similarities between the two fugues.[72] Schumann, however, once again deviates from the Bach models and moves towards a thinner texture before the end of the exposition. In the second exposition (starting at m. 59), Schumann's approach is unconventional too, but not without reason. As the second theme is introduced, Schumann holds off on the expected pedal entry of m. 67. Instead, he omits the pedals until much later, in m. 92, where a three-measure pedal point adds gradual tension, leading to the first pedal statement of the fugue's first subject. As the pedals introduce the first subject, the second subject is played in the manuals, thus combining the fugue's two themes. Towards the end of the fugue, starting at m. 116, the fugue shifts suddenly from a polyphonic to a homophonic texture. Daverio points out the motivic resemblance in Schumann's second symphony: "Culminating in a chordal peroration on the B-A-C-H theme, the fugue's coda at the same time prefigures a climactic passage in the Final (mm. 343ff.) of the second symphony."[73] Just like the first fugue, the final fugue concludes with a coda. In the first fugue, at m. 34, Schumann indicated: "gradually faster and louder." In the final fugue he specified: "Moderate, gradually faster." While a thinning in the texture of the first fugue's coda seems to suggest a sudden quieting down of the music, the sixth fugue's coda undoubtedly calls for full organ, ending the cycle in a grand, majestic manner.

Schumann and the pedal piano

As discussed earlier, Schumann's main purpose for hiring a pedalboard was to practice playing the organ. He found, however, that the pedal piano had much potential and that it might develop as an independent instrument. It seems plausible, then, that Schumann's output of 1845 was conceived for pedal piano, organ, or both. Though opp. 56 and 58 are clearly written for the pedal piano (*Studies for the Pedal Piano* and *Sketches for the Pedal Piano*, respectively), there seems to be a discrepancy in regards to op. 60, which is labeled *Six Fugues on the Name of B-A-C-H* without any further specification in regards to the instrument of choice. The cover of the 1986 Henle *Urtext* edition of opp. 56, 58 and 60 reads *Works for Organ or Pedal Piano* without any further specification. In its preface, Gerhard Weinberger explains that in the first publication op. 60 is referred to as an organ work.

Interestingly, in the 2006 Schott edition the three cycles are published as *Schumann Organ Works*. In the preface, the editor, internationally renowned organist Jean Guillou, writes: "Schumann composed these masterpieces as a pianist and he wrote them for the piano, allowing for the possibility that they might be performed on the organ, but not really envisaging the precise manner in which an organist might 'translate' them for the instrument."[74] Guillou's edition provides the performer with registration and tempo markings that go well beyond the original. As useful as a performer's edition may seem, one needs to keep in mind that such is the interpretation of one person, and one needs to be mindful of the composer's intentions. Notwithstanding the usefulness of such an edition, Guillou seems to have overlooked a most important issue; unlike the *Studies* and *Sketches*, the *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* were written for the organ, not for the piano.

In the preface of the Henle edition Weinberger explains that the first edition refers to the six fugues as organ works.[75] As we will see, the fugues are stylistically quite different than the other cycles. They lack, for example, the very pianistic approach, as found in the second and third canonic studies. Also, there is a drastic difference in the use of dynamics. Rather than the pianistic crescendos and decrescendos of opp. 56 and 58 (see the beginning of the fourth sketch), Schumann employs practical dynamic changes, easily realized through registration or manual changes.[76] A compelling piece of evidence lies in the treatment of pedal points; Schumann frequently employs pedal points in both the piano and organ cycles. In the piano cycles Schumann repeats the pedal points every so often to ensure a continuous sounding of the bass note. Pedal points are never sustained longer than two measures.[77] In the organ fugues Schumann writes pedal points for as long as twelve measures.[78] Also, unlike opp. 56 and 58, op. 60 never exceeds the compass of the typical German Baroque organ, which may give us an idea of Schumann's favored organ type. Hermann J. Busch points out that Mendelssohn preferred older organ types. For his first performance of the *Six Sonatas for Organ,* Mendelssohn chose an older instrument (Franz and Johann Michael II Stumm, 1779), while a modern instrument (a large Walcker organ) was available.[79] Mendelssohn's influence on Schumann as a composer and organist suggests that Schumann too may have favored older organ types, as is evidenced in Schumann's comments in the diaries.[80] Busch also points out that the majority of the organs known to Schumann were from the 18th century. These instruments were generally not equipped with a swell box. Crescendos therefore were realized by manual changes and/or adding stops.

Schumann the organist

It is obvious that Schumann took great pride in the six fugues. Rooted in a long tradition, stemming from his primary example, Bach, Schumann felt that he had contributed an important work that could stand the test of time. As Larry Todd points out: "Thus, Bach was memorialized in Schumann's penchant for learned counterpoint, culminating in that erudite fugal compendium for organ, the *Six Fugues on BACH*, Op. 60 (1845)."[81] How ironic then, that the cycle he had worked on for so long was received with such little approval. Perhaps Schumann would have been more successful if he, like Mendelssohn, had written organ sonatas rather than fugues. Rejcha perhaps explains the early 19th-century *Zeitgeist* best, saying "Since Handel and Corelli's time, everything in music has changed two or three times, both in inner, as well as outer form. Only the fugue remains unaltered; and therefore—nobody wants to hear one."[82] Schumann, who "maintained with equal conviction that slavish imitation of older models was to be avoided,"[83] must have thought that his organ works were indeed a breath of fresh air, as he expected them to outlive his other creations the longest.[84] Notwithstanding their unfortunate fate, Schumann masterfully combined the old with the new. As Heinrich Reimann writes:

> . . . the best proof of how deeply Schumann had penetrated, in thought and feeling, into the spirit of the Old Master. Everywhere the fundamental contrapuntal principles of Sebastian Bach are recognizable. They rise up like mighty pillars; but the luxuriant tendrils, leaves, and blossoms of a romantic spirit twine about them, partly concealing the mighty edifice, partly enlivening it by splendour of colour and varied contrast and bringing it nearer to modern taste. The most obvious proofs of this are:—The second fugue with the characteristic Schumann rhythmic displacement (2/4 time in triple rhythm); the fifth, with its subject on quite modern lines; and the last, with its romantically treated counter-subject.[85]

Though Schumann is perhaps remembered foremost as a composer of homophonic music, it is no coincidence that, as Nauhaus and Federhofer point out, Werner Krützfeld used two examples of Schumann's *Kreisleriana* in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* as examples of counterpoint.[86] The *Six Fugues on the Name of BACH* mark an artistic high point in Schumann's career, and one can only hope that these erudite compositions will eventually become part of the standard repertoire. A deeper understanding will perhaps spark a renewed interest in these wonderful pieces. ■

Notes

1. Robert Schumann, *Werke für Orgel oder Pedalklavier*, with a preface by Gerhard Weinberger (Munich: Henle, 1986), viii.
2. Albert Schweitzer, *J. S. Bach*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911; reprint with English translation by Ernest Newman, New York: Dover, 1966), 280.
3. Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, 5th ed., ed. Martin Kreisig, transl. by Fanny Raymond Ritter (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1914); quoted in Hans Theodore David, Arthur Mendel, Christoph Wolff, ed., *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Life and Letters* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 503.
4. In a discussion (ca. 1995) about the *Passacaglia*, a fellow organist from Germany expressed that German organists consider this a *holy* ('heilig') piece.
5. Schweitzer and Widor published the complete organ works of Bach in 1912–14, including detailed analyses and performance suggestions. While Schweitzer occasionally identified musical qualities in the preludes and fugues (several of which were published in the same volume as the *Passacaglia*), he never seems to have warmed up to the *Passacaglia*, as is evidenced in the lack of positive feedback in the performance suggestions.
6. Compare, for example, articles and biographies by Robert Schauffler, Peter Ostwald, John Worthen, and Georg von Dadelsen. A lack of quality in Schumann's 1845 output is attributed to a variety of faulty assumptions. A more detailed discussion will be offered below.
7. Robert Haven Schauffler, *Florestan: The Life and Works of Robert Schumann* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1945), 188.
8. Alan Walker, ed., *Robert Schumann: The Man and His Music* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 1–40.
9. Georg von Dadelsen, "Schumann und die Musik Bachs," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 14 (1957): 56.
10. Marcel Brion, *Schumann and the Romantic Age*, trans. Geoffrey Sainsbury (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956), 146.
11. John Worthen, *Robert Schumann: Life and Death of a Musician* (New Haven and London: Yale university Press, 2007), 260.
12. Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life*, translated by Grace E. Hadow, 2. vols. (London: McMillan and Company, 1913), I:403.
13. Eric Frederick Jensen, *Schumann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 285.
14. See Russell Stinson, *The Reception of Bach's Organ Works from Mendelssohn to Brahms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 76–101.
15. Schauffler, *Florestan*, 188.
16. Ibid., 348–9.
17. Ibid., 349–50.
18. Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 200.
19. Ibid.
20. Kees van Houten and Marinus Kasbergen, *Bach en het Getal* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1985), 194–209.
21. John David Peterson, "Schumann's Fugues on B-A-C-H: A Secret Tribute," The Diapason 73 (May 1982): 12.
22. Stephen Walsh, "Schumann and the Organ," *Musical Times* 111 (July 1970): 743.
23. Worthen, *Robert Schumann*, 260.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 262.
26. Leon Plantinga, "Schumann's Critical Reaction to Mendelssohn" in *Mendelssohn and Schumann*, ed. Jon Finson and R. Larry Todd (Durham: Duke University Press: 1984), 17.
27. Gerhard Weinberger, preface to Robert Schumann, *Werke für Orgel oder Pedalklavier*, viii.
28. Ibid.
29. Robert Schumann, *A Selection of the Writings*, trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 124–25.
30. Robert Schumann, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 16, no. 28 (April 1842): 115–16; quoted in Stinson, *Reception*, 86.
31. Robert Schumann, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 10, no. 39 (May 1839): 153–54; quoted in Stinson, *Reception*, 82.
32. Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1914), 5th ed., vol. 1, 354.
33. Hans T. David, Arthur Mendel, and Christoph Wolff, eds., *The Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 501.
34. Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 665.
35. Robert Schumann: *Sämtlicher Werke*, ed. Akio Mayeda and Klaus Wolfgang Niemöller, series VII, group 3, vol. 5 (Mainz: Schott, 2003), X.
36. Litzmann, *Clara Schumann*, I:403.
37. Robert Schumann, *Complete Works for Pedal Piano/Organ*, Andreas Rothkopf, Audite 368.411, 1988, CD, liner notes, 7.
38. Ibid.
39. Plantinga, "Schumann's Critical Reaction," 13.
40. Klaus-Peter Richter, *Musik Konzepte Sonderband: Robert Schumann* (München: Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, 1981), 181–82.
41. Mendelssohn's *Six Sonatas for Organ* do not replicate the conventional sonata allegro form. Instead, they were conceived as sets of individual, stand-alone movements (voluntaries), while several of the sonatas include fugues (which are fugal expositions rather than conventional fugues).
42. Schumann, *Selection of the Writings*, 124.
43. August Gottfried Ritter, review of *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Six Sonatas for Organ*, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (February 1856); quoted in John W. Stansell, *An Expressive Approach to the Organ Sonatas of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy* (Ph.D. diss., Juilliard School, 1983), Appendix II.

Henry John Gauntlett, "Mendelssohn as an Organist," *The Musical World* (15 September 1837); quoted in Stansell, *Expressive Approach*, Appendix II.

Robert Schumann, "Mendelssohn's Organ Recital," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (12 August 1840); quoted in Stansell, *Expressive Approach*, Appendix III.

44. *Six Studies for the Pedal Piano*, op. 56 and *Sketches for the Pedal Piano*, op. 58.
45. Gustav Jensen, ed., *Robert Schumanns Briefe* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904), 540.
46. The *Clavier Übung III*, for example, contains numerous organ pieces (i.e., *Vater unser, im Himmelreich*, BWV 682) for which liturgical use has been questioned. Scholars suggest that the collection, as the title page suggests, was written for compositional educational purposes rather than for church use.
47. At this time a significant change in concert life occurred; in the age of the Enlightenment sacred music was performed more and more in concert halls, rather than at houses of worship.
48. Stinson, *Reception*, 78.
49. Russell Stinson, "Clara Schumann's Bach Book: A Neglected Document of the Bach Revival," *Bach* 39 (July 2008): 6–7.
50. Ibid.
51. Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher, Band II: 1836–1854*, ed. Gerd Nauhaus (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1987), 402; quoted in John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a New Poetic Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 305.
52. Franz Brendel, "Robert Schumann," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 25 (1846), 181; quoted in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 12.
53. Gerhard Weinberger, preface to Schumann, *Werke für Orgel oder Pedalklavier*, viii.
54. Rosen, *Romantic Generation*, 655.
55. Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 13.
56. Ibid.
57. Joseph Wilhelm Von Wasilewski, *Life of Robert Schumann*, trans. A. L. Alger (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1871; reprint, Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976), 149.
58. I.e., the Brandenburg Concertos, Trio Sonatas for Organ, the Cello Suites, the English and French Suites for Harpsichord, the Six Partitas for Harpsichord.
59. Piet Kee, "Number and Symbolism in the Passacaglia and Ciaconna: A Forgotten and Hidden Dimension," *Loosemore Occasional Papers*, vol. 2. (Cambridge: Tavistock Press, 1988), 2–4, 6. In this article Kee discusses the importance of the number six. According to the Bible, for example, the earth was created in six days. Kee also writes: "The number six is a so-called "perfect" number; a perfect number is equal to the sum of its factors; 6=3+2+1. It is also the sum of the trinity. NB: There are only four perfect numbers under 33,000,000 (6, 28, 496, 8218)."
60. For a detailed discussion of the Golden Ratio, I refer the reader to the numerous books available on this topic, such as Richard A. Dunlap, *The Golden Ratio and Fibonacci Numbers* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 1997) and Scott Olsen, *The Golden Section: Nature's Greatest Secret* (New York: Wooden Books, 2006).
61. Chopin, highly admired by Schumann, frequently used the Golden Ratio in his 24 Preludes. See Kenneth Patrick Kirk, "The Golden Ratio in Chopin's Preludes, Opus 28" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1987), abstract. The abstract reads: "Each of the 24 preludes, op. 28, exhibits a turning point (TP) after which musical motion is better characterized as 'toward the end' than 'away from the beginning'. Statistical analysis shows that the proportional placement of the 24 TPs cluster around the Golden ratio (.618). The clustering of the TPs around this point and other approximately Golden Sections of the preludes are important to the form and aesthetic of the pieces."
62. The typical compass of German Baroque organ keyboards is C–c3 (Helmholtz notation). The pedal board typically spans from C–c1 or C–d1.
63. Schumann, *Sämtlicher Werke*, 342–3.
64. Burkhard Meischein, *Robert Schumanns Werke für Orgel oder Pedalklavier*, Studien zur Orgelmusik: Zur Deutschen Orgelmusik des 19. Jahrhunderts, ed. Hermann J. Busch and Michael Heinemann (St. Augustin: Dr. J. Butz Musikverlag, 2006), 180.
65. I.e., the *Clavier Übung III*.
66. Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 309.
67. Stinson, *Reception*, 92–3.
68. Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Abhandlung von der Fuge nach den Grundsätzen und Exempeln der besten deutschen und ausländischen Meistern* (Berlin, 1753); quoted in Hans T. David, Arthur Mendel, and Christoph Wolff, eds., *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998), 363.
69. Klaus-Jürgen Sachs, "Robert Schumanns Fugen über den Namen BACH (Op. 60)" in *Johann Sebastian Bach und seine Ausstrahlung auf die nachfolgende Jahrhunderte*: 55. *Bachfest der Neuen Bachgesellschaft*, ed. Hellmann (Mainz, 1980), 160–1.
70. See for example mm. 48–49, 54–55.
71. See for example mm. 36–44.
72. Stinson, *Reception*, 94.
73. Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 309.
74. Jean Guillou, preface to Robert Schumann, *Werke für Orgel* (Mainz: Schott, 2006), i.
75. Weinberger, preface to Schumann, *Werke für Orgel oder Pedalklavier*, viii.
76. See fugue no. 6, mm. 59, 95, and 116.
77. In the third movement of the sketches (mm. 17–19 and 125–127) a pedal point is held for three measures. Schumann avoids the fading out by adding a second pedal point (one octave higher) in the next measure.
78. Fugue no. 2, mm. 163–174.
79. Hermann J. Busch, "Die Orgeln Mendelssohns, Liszts und Brahms," in *Proceedings of the Göteborg International Organ Academy 1994*, ed. Hans Davidsson and Sverker Jullander (Göteborg: Göteborg University, 1995), 236–7.
80. Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher, Band II: 1836–1854*, ed. Gerd Nauhaus (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1987), 174.
81. R. Larry Todd, ed., *On Quotation in Schumann's Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 96.
82. Antonín Rejcha, "Philosophisch-Practische Anmerkungen zu den practischen Beispielen," Ms. Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Sign. Ms 2510, [ca. 1803], 24; quoted in Michael Heinemann, *Bach und die Nachwelt* vol. I (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1997), 143.
83. Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 248.
84. Schumann, *Werke für Orgel*, viii.
85. Heinrich Reimann, *Robert Schumanns Leben und Werke* (Leipzig: Peters, 1887), cited in Frederick Niecks, *Robert Schumann* (London & Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1925), 242.
86. *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, s.v. "Kontrapunkt," quoted in Robert Schumann: *Sämtlicher Werke*, ed. Robert Schumann Gesellschaft by Akio Mayeda and Klaus Wolfgang Niemöller, series VII, group 3, vol. 5 (Mainz: Schott, 2003), 343.
87. Cf. Matthias Wendt, "Zu Robert Schumanns Kompositionsstudien," in *Atti del Congresso della società internazionale di musicologia*, Bologna/Ferrara/Parma 1987, III Free Papers, 793–803; quoted in Schumann: *Sämtlicher Werke*, series VII, group 3, vol. 5, X.
88. Litzmann, *Clara Schumann*, I:403.
89. Luigi Cherubini, *Theorie des Contrapunctes und der Fuge* (Leipzig, 1835), 1; quoted in Robert Schumann: *Sämtlicher Werke*, ed. Robert Schumann Gesellschaft by Akio Mayeda and Klaus Wolfgang Niemöller, series VII, group 3, vol. 5 (Mainz: Schott, 2003), 337.
90. Stinson, *Reception*, 99.
91. Stinson, "Clara Schumann's Bach Book," 5.

Robert August is director of music/organist at First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, Texas. Previously he was assistant university organist and choirmaster at The Memorial Church at Harvard University, during doctoral studies at the New England Conservatory of Music. A native of the Netherlands, he has an extensive background in historical performance.

August has served as carillonneur at Brigham Young University, and as organist and conductor at churches in the Netherlands and the United States. In addition to collaboration with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Christopher Hogwood, and Simon Carrington, he has performed in Europe and the United States as a solo artist and accompanist, including tours and CD recordings with the Harvard University Choir and the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra. Robert and his wife, flutist Dolores August, often collaborate on modern and period instruments.

Wicks
Organ Company
1100 5th St.
Highland IL 62249
877-654-2191
www.wicks.com