

## NOTES ON FUGUES

These dances were devised as 'demonstration dances, for the enjoyment of an audience, but I hope they will also provide pleasure for the dancers and that some of them may find their way into ballroom programmes.

Devising Scottish Country Dances in the form of fugues is, I believe, a new experiment and may be one in which others would like to join. If they do they should follow, however far behind, the example of J. S. Bach, who in his 48 Preludes and Fugues, used fugal ideas to make music, and not that of those lesser composers who used musical ideas to make fugues.

These notes assume that the reader knows something about Scottish Country Dancing, but nothing about fugues. The musical terms will be defined and their application to dancing illustrated by references to the dances in this book. An understanding of the terms should not only help devisers of dances, but also make it easier for dancers to memorise these dances.

**Counterpoint:** In music this means the singing or playing of two or more tunes simultaneously. In dancing it means any simultaneous dancing that is not in unison. A reel of three, for instance, is in three-part counterpoint: the three dancers vary their movements according to where they start. Rights and lefts is in two-part counterpoint, those starting in opposite corners dancing the same 'parts.' A soloist may dance reel steps in counterpoint with a chorus circling round him. All the dances in this book provide further examples of counterpoint.

**Fugue:** In music this is a composition in counterpoint which starts with a short, easily recognised theme announced by one part only. Other parts, in turn, then imitate this theme, which will be woven into the counterpoint many times over, sometimes straight and sometimes modified, but not beyond recognition. The same idea was used in devising these dances.

**Voice:** Even when the fugue is a composition for the piano each part is referred to as a 'voice.' A four-part fugue, for instance, would have treble, alto, tenor and bass 'voices.' Voices are allowed to rest from time to time, but no additional voices may be introduced. Of Bach's 48 fugues one is in two parts, 26 in three parts, 19 in four parts and 2 in five parts. In these dances a voice is one or more dancers. In No. 1 each voice is three dancers, in No. 2 a single dancer, in No. 4 two dancers who are not partners. In the rest each voice is a couple. Nos. 1, 3 and 4 are two-part fugues, No. 5 is three-part and the rest four-part. There is no difference, except perhaps in No. 1, corresponding to the difference between a high treble and low bass. Each voice has an unlimited range, but in some cases dancers move up to the top (or down to the bottom) before starting, in others they start from home.

**Subject and Answer:** In music the subject is the first theme, announced solo by any one of the voices. It is usually followed by the answer, given by another voice, while the first continues with something else. The answer is the same, or nearly the same, as the subject, but in another key, usually the dominant (e.g. if the subject is in C the answer will be in G). In a four-part fugue the third voice will probably repeat the subject an octave above or below and the fourth voice the answer an octave above or below the first answer. In these dances each voice begins by dancing the subject or at least, in Nos. 7 and 8, the first part of it. There is no exact equivalent of an answer, but in some of the dances the second appearance of the subject differs slightly from the first and could be called an answer, e.g. in Nos. 7 and 11 a figure of eight round the couple below is answered by one round the couple above. In No. 12 a figure of eight at the side below is answered by one at the side above. In Bach's 48 the length of the subject varies from half a bar (four notes only) to over 6 bars. In these dances the range is much more limited: four bars in Nos. 2, 4, 5 and 6; 8 bars in the rest.

**Counter-subject:** In music this is a theme used in counterpoint with the subject or answer. For instance, as the second voice enters with the answer the first may accompany it with the counter-subject. To earn its name a counter-subject must occur several times. A fugue need not have one (18 of Bach's 48 don't) or it can have more than one. In these dances the counter-subject is a figure which is danced in counterpoint with the subject and is often danced by the first voice while the second is entering with the subject. There are no counter-subjects in Nos. 2, 7, 8, or 10. Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11 have one each and Nos. 1 and 12 two each. In No. 6 the counter-subject (figure of eight) is delayed until the third voice enters with the subject and in No. 3 the counter-subject (half figure of eight) does not combine with the subject (down the middle and up) until near the end.

**Exposition:** In music, and in these dances, the exposition is the opening section during which all the voices enter with the subject or answer. They can enter in any order and at any intervals.

**Development:** It has been said of Bach's fugues that after the exposition almost anything may—and frequently does—happen. The subject and counter-subject, linked by 'episodes,' are repeated at various intervals, in various keys, and combined in various ways. They may also be 'inverted,' 'augmented,' 'diminished' or used in 'stretto.'

**Episode:** In music, and in these dances, episodes are the passages between the appearances of the subject or counter-subject. Frequently the material used for them is derived from the subject, counter-subject or fragments thereof.

**Inversion:** In music this means turning the melody upside down: where the original goes up the inversion goes down and vice versa. There is no exact equivalent in dancing, but a figure can be modified in various ways and still be recognisably the same. A figure of eight round the couple below can be modified into a figure of eight round the couple above, as in Nos. 7 and 11, or even into a figure of eight on the sides, as in No. 7. Or a figure of eight across, begun by crossing over, can be modified into one begun by casting off, as in No. 7. In No. 6 the counter-subject, figure of eight on the sides, reappears as a figure of eight across the dance.

**Augmentation:** In music this means increasing the note values, e.g., by changing crotchets into minims. In these dances it means taking longer over a figure, e.g., by changing set for 2 bars, turn for 2 bars into set for 4 bars, turn for 4 bars, as in No. 6, or into set for 4 bars and four hands round for 4 bars, as in No. 10. In No. 12 a half reel of three is augmented to 6 bars (bars 49-54).

**Diminution:** This is the opposite of augmentation. In music, for instance, crotchets are turned into quavers. In these dances there are diminutions in Nos. 3 and 4.

**Stretto:** In music, and in these dances, a stretto occurs when there is an overlap caused by one voice joining in, with the subject, say, just behind another. Bach sometimes has four voices coming in with the subject one after another so closely that the last has started before the first has finished. In these dances there are (far less ambitious) stretti, of the subject, in Nos. 8, 9, and 10, and of the counter-subject in No. 11 (bars 43-48) and of the second counter-subject in No. 12 (bars 41-46).

**Recapitulation:** Many fugues, and other musical compositions, can be divided into three sections: exposition, development, recapitulation. Recapitulating material from the exposition acts as a sort of summing up to finish with. In these dances No. 11 has this form: 32 bars of exposition, 16 bars of development, 16 bars of recapitulation. No. 9 ends by recapitulating the first 4 bars of the subject. But most of these dances do not end with any form of recapitulation.

In making country-dance fugues, there are two methods that could be followed. The first would be to have exposition, development, recapitulation, as in a musical fugue, with plenty of repetitions of the subject, counter-subjects, etc., but each time in a different context. The second method, which has been used for these dances, is to utilise the normal country-dance repetitions due to 1st couple repeating, having passed a couple, or to a new top couple starting. This method has the advantage of being easier for dancers to memorise and perhaps also easier for an audience to follow. For a demonstration 4 x 32 bars, 3 x 48 bars or 2 x 64 bars would probably be enough, but this would depend on the patience and percipience of those watching.

The first method obviously has possibilities worth exploring. Or a combined method might be used with, say, a 32-bar dance done four times over, each time with a new top couple, and rounded off with a 16-bar recapitulation.

As will be realised from these notes, the dance fugues in this book follow a long way behind musical fugues, both in the amount of variety they can show and in the pleasure they can give. But a beginning has been made and other dance devisers may like to help narrow the gap. Anyone wishing to devise dance fugues will find pleasure and profit listening to musical fugues, particularly those of Bach, and studying books on the subject, but the vital point, as in all creative activity, is to look for ideas to use rather than for laws to obey.