WHAT THE FUGUE?

An exploration of musical form featuring Bach’s Fugue in G minor

Presented by Alex Pierson and Logan Tolman

Performance by the Caine Brass Quintet
What exactly is a fugue? (fyōog)

A fugue is a contrapuntal* composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts.

*Counterpoint: The art or technique of setting, writing, or playing a melody or melodies in conjunction with another, according to fixed rules.

Image credit: Crystal Broderick
**Counterpoint**

- Music that focuses on individual and independent lines of music that interplay with each other.
- Focuses on musical lines rather than chords or chord progressions
- Artfully moves from dissonant intervals to consonant intervals between the separate lines.
Subject

- The main theme
- Introduced by the first voice/player
- This is what will repeat and vary slightly throughout the piece
Fugue in G minor

The Subject

JS Bach/arr. Neil Balm
Answer

- A response to the subject based off of the same musical theme
- May or may not use the same intervals as the theme
- Always starts on a different pitch than the subject
Counter Subject

- A secondary theme, like the subject, that gets passed around between voices/parts and is developed throughout the piece
- Usually appears when a voice is beginning an answer
Fugue in G minor

The Counter Subject

JS Bach/arr. Neil Balm
Episode

• Sections of the piece after all the voices/parts have been introduced where no part of the subject is present

• All the voices are interplaying and developing other ideas that have been presented

• Alternates with Entries throughout the rest of the piece
I don’t see the Subject....
Entry

- Parts of the piece after all the voices have entered where the Subject or part of the Subject is present in one or more voices.
- Doesn’t usually last as long as the Subject does at the beginning when the voices/parts are introduced.
- In these sections, the Subject may not be exactly the same as in the beginning.
There's a little bit of the Subject!!!
• SUBJECT (BLUE)

• ANSWER (RED)

• COUNTER SUBJECT (GREEN)