Johann Seb. Bach

DAS LAUTENWERK IM URTEXT
BAND 4

SPIELVERSION FÜR Gitarre

Präludium, Fuge & Allegro
D-Dur BWV 998

Prelude, Fugue & Allegro
D major BWV 998

Bearbeitung/Revision
von/by
Tilman Hoppstock

Claudio Ahumada P.
2003

PRIM - MUSIKVERLAG DARMSTADT
Nr. 14 750
The unusual sequence of movements (Praeludium, Fuge and Allegro) – believed by Herrmann Keller, the editor of the Peters edition "Die Klavierwerke Bachs" to be a fragment of a lost, larger suite (with the Allegro taking the place of the Corrente) – is indeed entirely unique in Bach’s instrumental works. In contrast to the unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas which are similar in nature, this work lacks a slow movement to precede the Allegro. In the foreword of his edition for guitar, Eliot Fisk very aptly compares this work to a triptych, with the fugue as the centrepiece of the symmetrical architecture.

The formal structure of the dacapo fugue (the first section being recapitulated at the end) is indeed a rare species in Bach’s oeuvre. There are at best a handful full of similarly structured works (one each for harpsichord, lute and organ, and two fugues in the violin sonatas). The centre section with its prelude-like character, where the main motive of the theme frequently takes on the role of a figured bass line, is unparalleled in Bach’s polyphonic works.

It is fortunate that an original manuscript of this work has been preserved, providing a complete and authentic source for the musical text while revealing some interesting details about the composer’s working strategies. The unconventional way in which Bach, whether for lack of space or for reasons of economy, wrote part of the final movement in German organ tablature notation, spaced so tightly that the notes can hardly be deciphered, appears to suggest that the composer was barely able to keep pace with his own inspiration.

The present practical edition for guitar is based upon the scientific urtext edition by the same publisher (PRIM 1750-G or PRIM 17 504). It is the result of a painstaking effort to accommodate ease of playing while remaining as faithful as possible to the original handwriting by Bach. All deviations from the manuscript have been marked in the music.

For ease of playing, the work at hand has been transposed from E flat major to D major. It may be played in the original key by placing a capotasto on the first fret.

We should like to mention one instance where the reading offered by all prior editions deserves to be reconsidered. In measure 46 of the Praeludium, the quaver on the seventh beat in the middle voice cannot be clearly deciphered in the manuscript. However, it would appear sensible to replace the d, as found in other editions, by an e. Not only does this interpretation avoid the parallel fifths which are, after all, hard to justify in this situation, but the resulting harmonic progression to the e minor sixth chord appears more typical for Bach than the plain transition to G major.

The Fuge contains two additional noteworthy items for the editor: in measure 19, the last quaver in the descant; and in measure 66, the third quaver in the bass. Particularly the latter, emphasising an interesting cross relation involving a seventh chord with a major (II) ninth, has been misinterpreted repeatedly in previous editions by replacing d# with d.

Fingerings have mostly been omitted to avoid obstructing general readability. However, some fingering suggestions were added for technically demanding passages. All phrasing marks have been retained as found in the manuscripts. No further ascending/descending ties can be found in this edition, except in those few places where the editor added fingering suggestions.

Notes or ornaments that are either technically highly problematic or simply impossible to implement were put in fine print or fine print plus parentheses. Notes and ornaments added by the editor are in square brackets.

Tilman Hoppstock, September 1999
(Transl. by Andreas Kührer)
Präludium, Fuge und Allegro D-Dur BWV 998
orig. für Laute oder Cembalo in Es-Dur

Prelude, Fugue and Allegro D major BWV 998
orig. for lute or harpsichord in E flat major

Johann Sch. Bach
(1685-1750)