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**Supplement 12.3. The Choral Fugue “Sicut Erat,” no. 9 from the Magnificat, W. 215, and Its Parody “Herr, Es Ist Dir Keiner Gleich,” no. 8 from the Easter Music for 1784, W. 243**

The table below serves as both an analysis of the original “Sicut erat” fugue in the Magnificat and a comparison with its parody in W. 243, as revised and sent to Princess Anna Amalia. Additional commentary follows.

<u>section</u>	<u>keys</u>	<u>at m. no.</u>		<u>comment (revisions in bold)*</u>
		<i>orig. parody</i>		
<b>(A)</b>				
exposition (subject 1)	D	1	1	
episode	>	31	31	
exposition (subject 1)	e >	39	39	<b>mm. 42–43 replaced by 6 measures that combine upright and inverted entries of subject 1</b>
episode	D	59	63	<b>mm. 52–64 replaced by 13 measures (to improve the entry of subject 1 in m. 55?)</b>
<b>(B)</b>				
exposition (subject 2)	D	65	71	
exposition (subjects combined)	D >	87	93	
episode	b	119	125	
exposition (subjects combined)	b >	125	131	sequential entries of subject 1 in bass (b, A, G) <b>mm. 129–42 replaced by 26 measures that combine upright and inverted entries of subject 2, also including paired entries of subject 1</b>
episode	G >	143	163	
exposition (subjects combined)	e >	152	166	<b>rewritten to include paired entries of subject 2; extended by 4 measures</b>
<b>(C)</b>				
episode	D:V >	175	197	quasi or pseudo-strettos (both subjects)
exposition (subjects combined)	b >	190	212	
stretto (subject 1)	e	198	220	
episode		213	235	
exposition (subjects combined)	D	222	244	
coda	D	226	248	closes with stretto (subject 1) <b>8 measures added to include further (pseudo-) stretto entries</b>

\*Measure numbers in this column are those of the original version

In the original fugue, the two subjects are introduced individually, then combined in a series of double entries, including several in B minor and E minor. This leads to a strong arrival on the dominant that seems to promise a grand stretto, marking the return to the tonic (m. 175). In fact, however, at this point the fugue is only about two-thirds finished, and after several partial or quasi-stretto entries of both subjects the fugue rambles on, with further double entries in the same keys that were previously explored. Bach introduces several additional stretto passages, but no more sophisticated contrapuntal devices than the invertible counterpoint at both octave and twelfth that was already heard when the two subjects were first combined (online example 12.10).

[Example 12.10. Subjects from the chorus “Sicut erat,” no. 9 from the Magnificat, W. 215, with parody text from “Herr, es ist dir keiner gleich,” no. 8 from the Easter Music for 1784, W. 243, \(a\) mm. 91–95 \(mm. 97–101 in the revised parody\), \(b\) mm. 99–103 \(mm. 105–9 in the revised parody\)](#)

The image displays two systems of musical notation, (a) and (b). System (a) is for measures 91-95. It features two staves: a soprano (S) and an alto (A). The soprano part has lyrics: "Herr es ist dir keiner gleich, men,". The alto part has lyrics: "A - men, a - - - - -". Below the alto staff, there is a piano accompaniment part with the lyrics "Hal A - - - - -". System (b) is for measures 99-103. It features two staves: a soprano (S) and an alto (A). The soprano part has lyrics: "Herr es ist dir keiner gleich, men,". The alto part has lyrics: "A - - - - -". Below the alto staff, there is a piano accompaniment part with the lyrics "Hal A - - - - -".

[Example 12.11. Chorus “Herr, es ist dir keiner gleich,” no. 8 from the Easter Music for 1784, W. 243, revised version, mm. 43–47 \(three lower voices only\)](#)

The image displays a musical score for three lower voices: Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score starts at measure 43. The Alto part has lyrics: "Herr es ist dir keiner gleich,". The Tenor part has lyrics: "Herr es ist dir keiner gleich,". The Bass part has lyrics: "[gleich,]". The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C).

In the parody, most of the substance of the original fugue is unaltered. There is no evidence that Bach was concerned by the somewhat over-extended character of the fugue, unless this is what led him to insert several passages that demonstrate further contrapuntal devices, chiefly at the end of each of the fugue's three main divisions. Two of these passages combine each subject with its own inversion (online example 12.11). Another involved what can be called “paired entries,” where one subject is doubled in thirds or sixths; in the present fugue this always occurs in combination with the other subject in a third voice (online example 12.12). Both techniques also occur in Sebastian's works, especially those intended to demonstrate advanced counterpoint. Here the possibility of introducing paired entries was implicit in the type of counterpoint that Emanuel had already worked out in the combination of the two subjects, which is invertible at both the octave and the twelfth. This, as well as the combination of each subject with its own inversion, was facilitated by the brevity of both subjects and their confinement to a narrow range.

Bach's explanation of what he had done in revising the piece was far from complete. Some of his changes look simply like improvements of the original, as in the softening of the grand announcement of what proves to be merely a pseudo-stretto. His changes at that point also reflected the rewriting of the previous passage to incorporate paired entries of the second subject.<sup>1</sup> No such explanation accounts, however, for Bach's rewriting of an earlier passage. He might have been dissatisfied with the preparation for the last entry of subject 1 in the opening section (at measure 55 of the original version). In the parody, that entry is now preceded by a cadence in D, and the soprano rests before entering with the subject in G (online example 12.13). Yet the passage retains awkward details, such as a three-note motive in the alto that was originally sung, irrationally, to “Amen”; now it is used for “Herr wie du.”<sup>2</sup> Perhaps there was no better solution to one of many small problems that arose in the course of trying to make an imperfect work the equal in learning and elegance of his father's, or even Graun's, choral fugues.

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<sup>1</sup> Bach's revisions in the passage leading up to this point (m. 175 in the original version, m. 197 in the revised parody) can be compared with the original in an extended example given by Blanken, “Zur Werk- und Überlieferungsgeschichte des Magnificat Wq 215,” 263–70. The example aligns the two versions incorrectly; measures 143–59 of the original actually correspond with measures 161–77, not 158–74, of the parody.

<sup>2</sup> The meaningless text underlay “a–a–men” is explicit in the autograph (P 341), where Bach drew a horizontal line beneath the second d' in the alto of measure 52 (original version). This is one of several suggestions that the “Sicut erat” text may not, in fact, have been the original one for this movement and that the version of the fugue in the Magnificat was preceded by a lost earlier composition.

Example 12.12. Chorus “Herr, es ist dir keiner gleich,” no. 8 from the Easter Music for 1784, W. 243, revised version, mm. 157–61 (voices only)

157

S  
Herr es ist dir kei - ner gleich,

A  
Herr es ist dir kei - ner gleich,

T  
Hal - - - - - le - lu - ja,

B  
[gleich,] un - - - - - ter den Göt - - - - - tern ist dir kei - - - - - ner

Example 12.13. Corresponding passages in chorus “Sicut erat,” no. 9 from the Magnificat, W. 215, mm. 52–57 (top), and “Herr, es ist dir keiner gleich,” no. 8 from the Easter Music for 1784, W. 243, mm. 56–61 (bottom)

52

S  
sem-per et in sae-cu-la, si-cut e-rat in prin-

A  
a - - men, si-cut e-rat in prin-ci-pi-o,

T  
men, a - - - - - men,

B  
la, sac-cu-lo - - - - - rum, A -

56

S  
tern, kei - - - - - ner, Herr es ist dir kei - ner

A  
Herr wie du, Herr es ist dir kei - ner, kei - ner gleich,

T  
du Herr es ist dir es ist dir kei - ner gleich, es

B  
[gleich,] es ist dir kei - ner gleich, Herr es ist dir