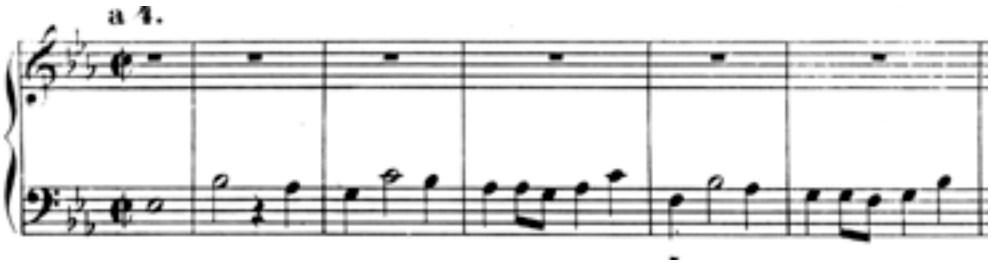
Bard Conservatory Seminar

Fugue Segment

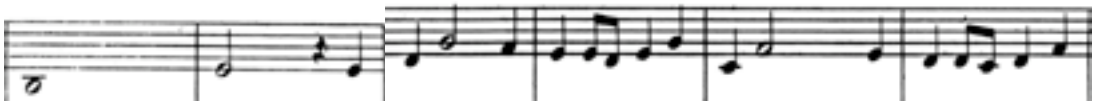
Analysis of Eb fugue WTC book II and identification of key terms

The **Fugal Exposition** consists of all voices of the fugue which enter with a statement of the **subject**.
The **subject** first appears in the tenor :

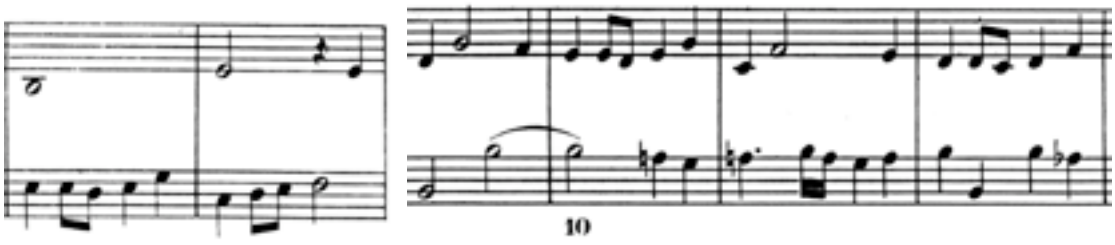


The statement of the subject in the second voice always occurs in transposition-usually beginning a perfect fifth above or a perfect fourth below the original. To indicate the distinction, the altered version of the subject is called an **answer.** On rare occasions when the transposition is exact-maintaining the original intervals of the original without alteration it is called a **real answer.**

More commonly, the answer requires alteration of the subject so as to fit a prevailing dominant rather than tonic harmony. An answer which incorporates these alterations is calle a **tonal answer**. The fugue we are concerned contains a tonal answer.

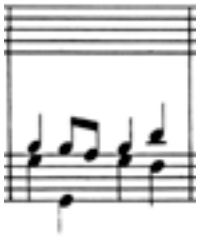


Material accompanying the answer is called the **counter subjec**t. In some fugues, the counter-subject is treated very strictly, coupled with all appearances of the subject (or answer.)

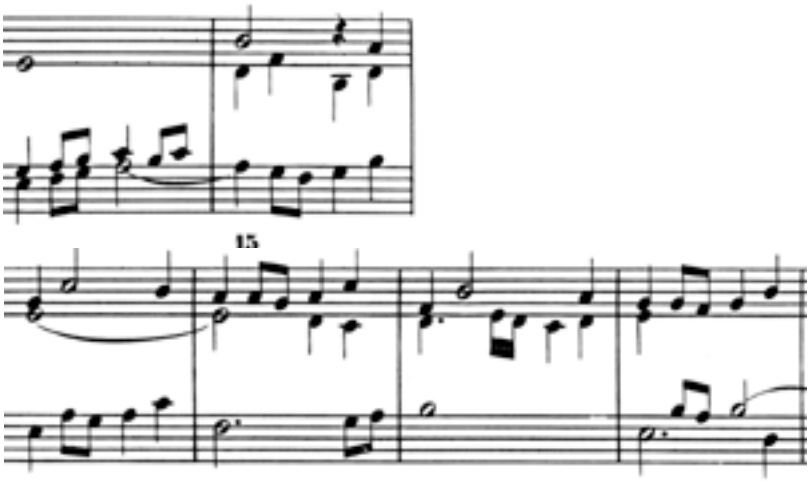


In this fugue, there is no definable countersubject i.e. one which recurs consistently throughout the fugue.

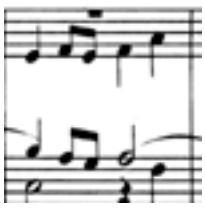
Generally, the subsequent appearance of the subject does not occur immediately following the conclusion of the answer. A brief transitional passage called a **bridge** usually separates the answer and the next appearance of the subject. In this fugue, the bridge is one measure long:



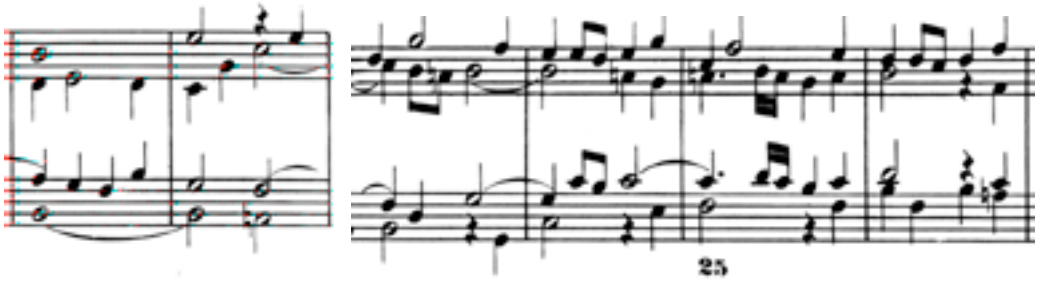
This prepares the entrance of subject in the alto voice:



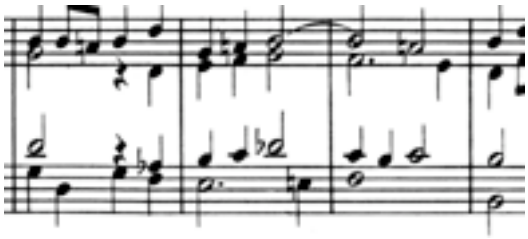
A second bridge passage then follows



which leads to the entrance of subject in the soprano in answer form:



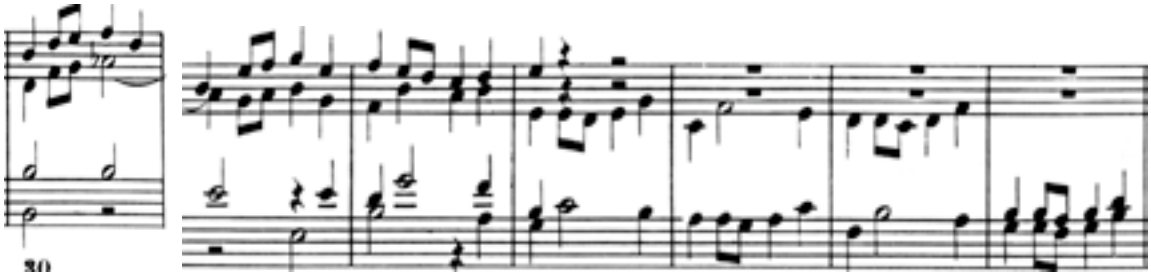
The exposition is now complete all voices having stated the subject (or answer). In this particular fugue, a final bridge passage follows which leads to the first **episode.**



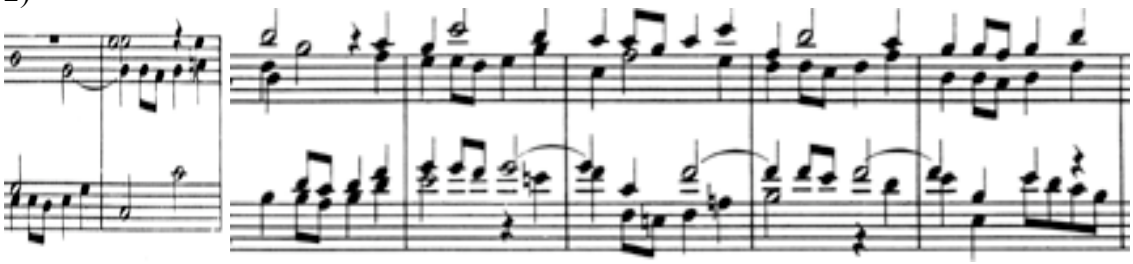
Question: What is the harmonic function of this bridge passage within the larger form?

Fugal Episodes: The exposition is followed by a series of **episodes.** Episodes are created out of transformations of the subject or fragments of the subject. In this fugue, the first episode is created by a technique called **stretto**. A stretto results from staggered entrances of the subject, that is, complete statements of the subject in different voices offset from one another by some interval of time-usually one or two beats. The first episode contains two instances of stretto:

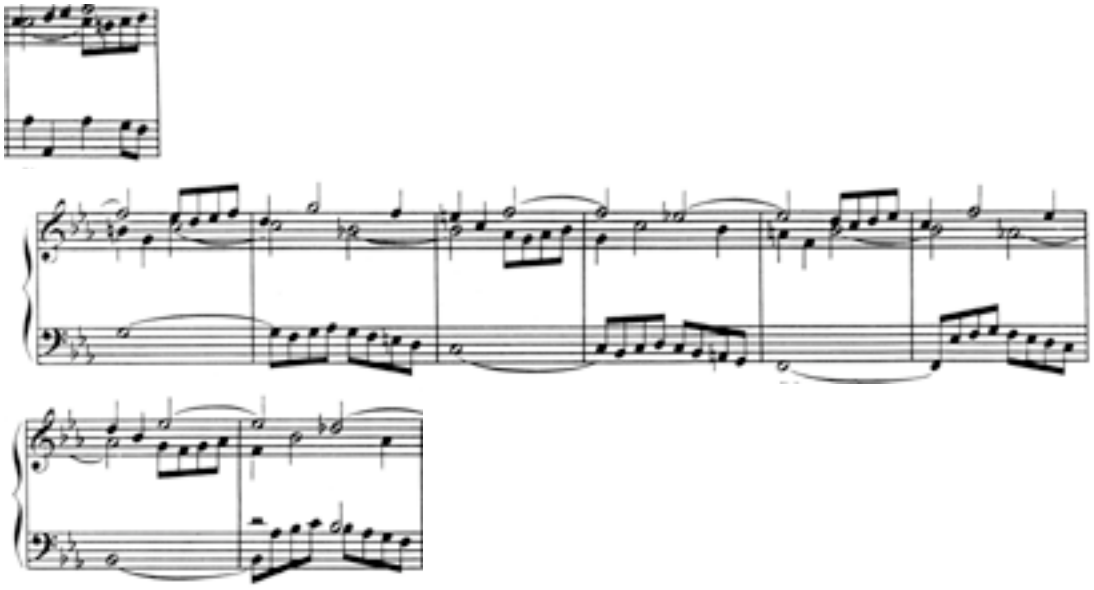
1)



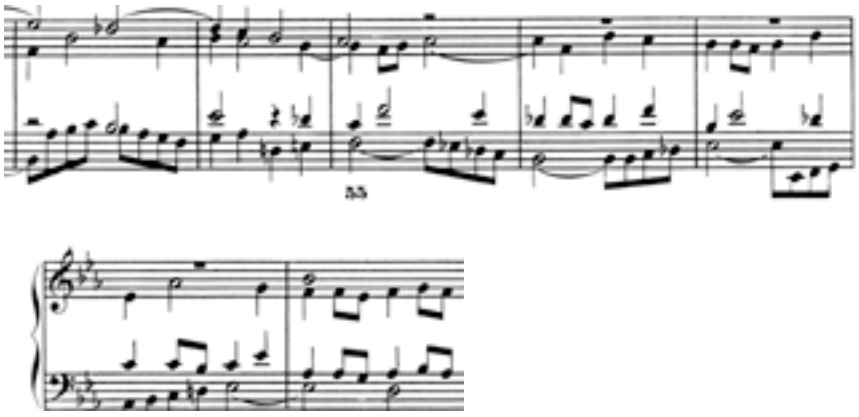
2)



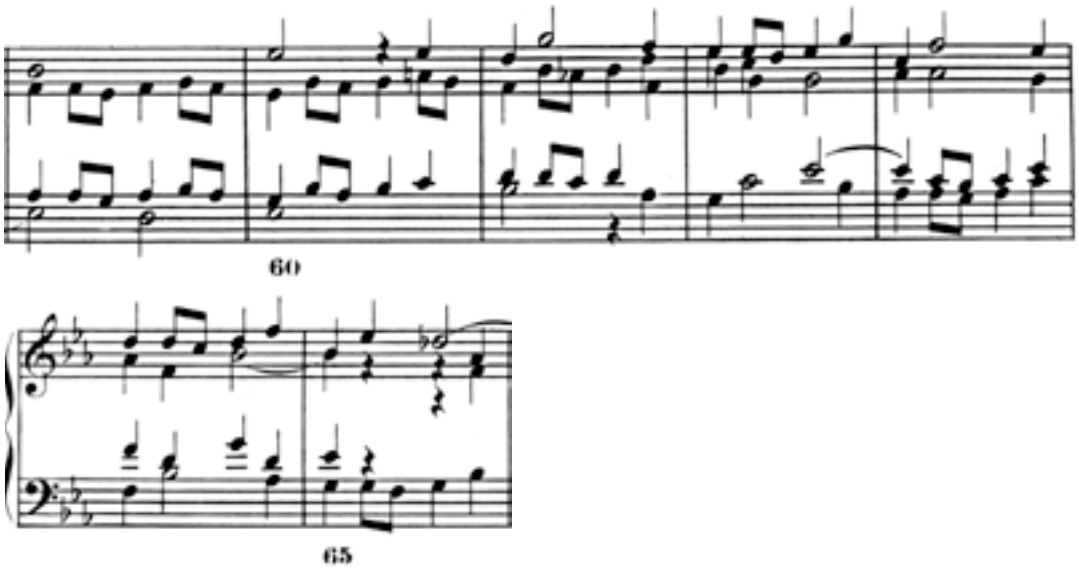
The next episode is obliquely (if at all) related to the subject:



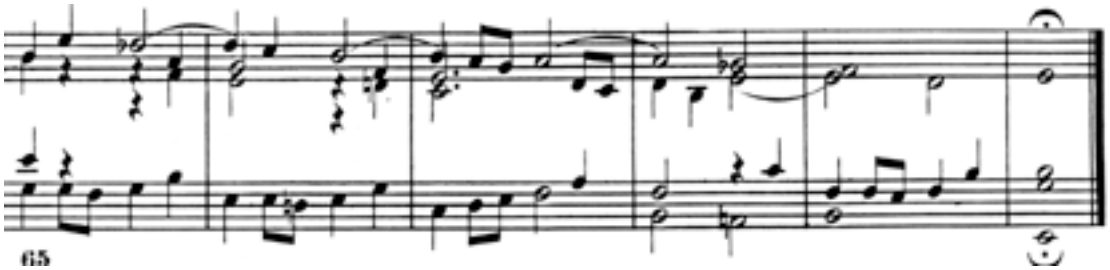
The next appearance of the subject occurs in answer form in the tenor.



The fugue then concludes with **final statement** of the subject in stretto between the soprano (in answer form) and the bass:

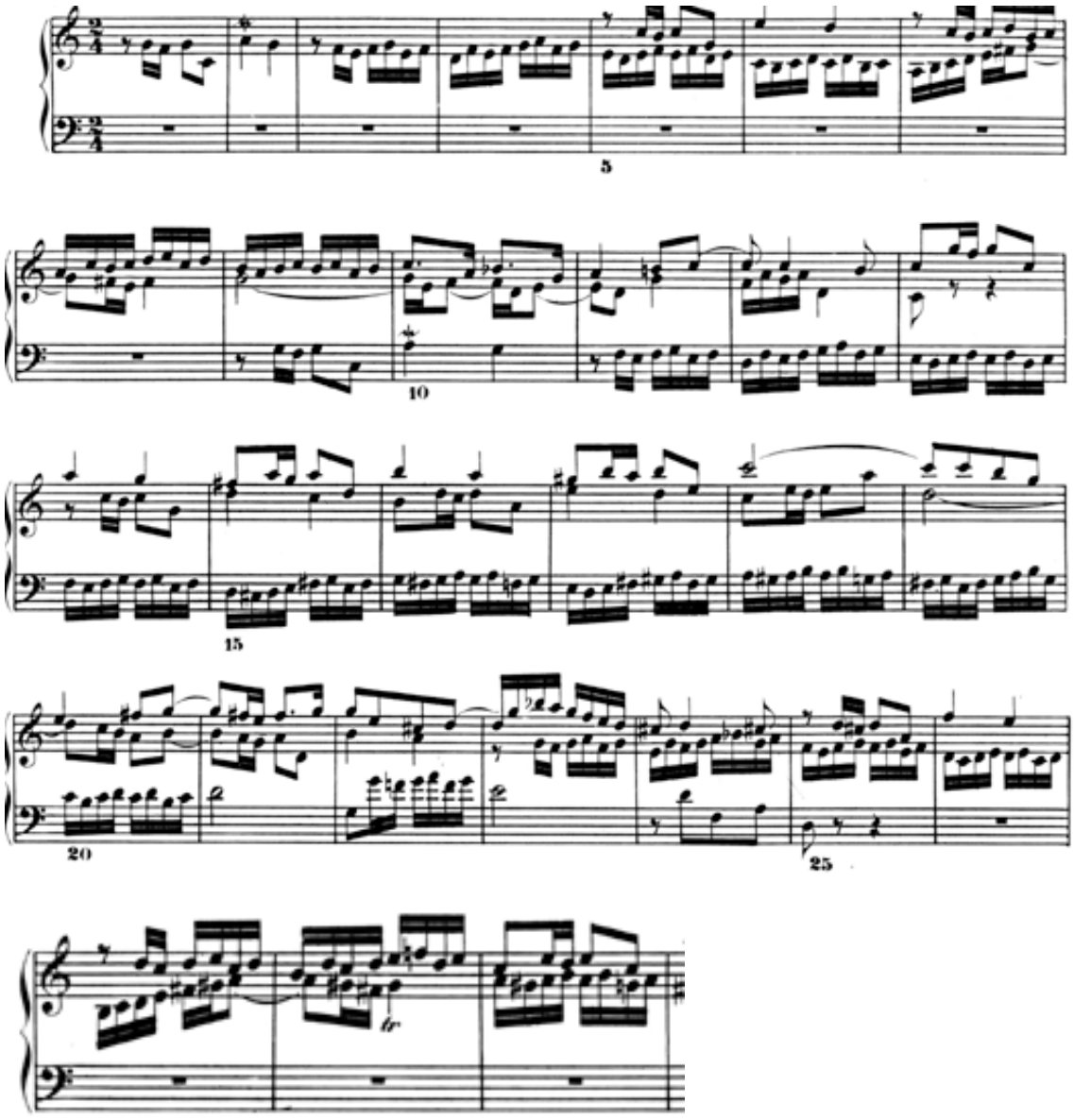


This is followed by a **coda** which briefly tonicizes IV and V by means of secondary dominants:



Assignment (for 10/24):

In the following passage in the Bach C major fugue, WTC book II:



Indicate all appearances of subject by S.

Indicate the answer by A.

Is the answer real or tonal? If the latter, what intervals of the original are altered and why?

Is there a countersubject? If so indicate by CS.

Indicate conclusion of exposition.

Indicate beginning of first episode. How would you characterize the relationship of the structure of the episode to the subject?

Where is the conclusion of the episode? Why is the conclusion heard in this location?

Indicate first restatement of the subject. In what key does it appear?