

Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Score

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

Bach presented the canons in *The Musical Offering* variously, often in far from performance setting, often in playful forms; puzzles, perpetual (no cadence), constantly modulating, multi-voiced written on one staff with unexpected signatures and clefs, in other words, full of tricks. These six canons were chosen from the ten available because they seem to conform to range and other opportunities offered by the viola. Each of these arrangements strives to present the melodic and imitative material in each viola part so that the contrapuntal procedures so masterfully presented will be clear to every player. In order to present performable pieces, and to accommodate orchestration, small liberties have been taken. We hope they are justified by making these artful, beautiful, and remarkable canons available to a larger audience.

Fine coverage of Bach's Potsdam visit is found in *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, by Christoph Wolff (W. W. Norton, New York, 2000) pages 426-430. A more complete study is *Bach's Musical Offering --- History, Interpretation, Analysis* by Hans T. David (Dover Publications, New York, 1972, paperback).

Thomas Hall
Orange, California

Table of Contents

Canon a 2, Cancrizans	1
Canon a 2, in Unisono	2
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium	4
Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu	7
Canon a 2 (Puzzle, Contrary Motion)	11
Canon a 4	14

Canon a 2, Cancrizans

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

This canon was originally presented on a single staff with c-clefs at both beginning and ending measures; one line played simultaneously forward and backward, combines to make a duet.

Moderato ♩ = 100

Viola I

Viola II

Measures 1-6 of the canon. The score is in G minor (two flats) and 4/4 time. The key signature is two flats (Bb, Eb). The tempo is Moderato with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with Viola I playing a melodic line and Viola II playing a rhythmic accompaniment.

Vla. I

Vla. II

Measures 7-12. The melodic line in Viola I continues, while Viola II maintains its rhythmic pattern. Measure 7 is marked with a '7' above the staff.

Vla. I

Vla. II

Measures 13-18. The melodic line in Viola I continues, while Viola II maintains its rhythmic pattern. Measure 13 is marked with a '13' above the staff.

And now, backwards!

Vla. I

Vla. II

Measures 19-24. The piece is now played backwards. The melodic line in Viola I is the reverse of the previous section, and Viola II plays the reverse of its previous accompaniment. Measure 19 is marked with a '19' above the staff.

Vla. I

Vla. II

Measures 25-30. The piece continues to be played backwards. Measure 25 is marked with a '25' above the staff.

Vla. I

Vla. II

Measures 31-36. The piece concludes with the final measures of the backward canon. Measure 31 is marked with a '31' above the staff.

Canon a 2, in Unisono

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Moderato ♩ = 84

Viola I

Viola II

Viola III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2, in Unisono

14

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Viola II

19

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

23

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Larghetto ♩ = 56

Viola I

The King's theme

Viola II

Viola III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

A counterpoint to the King's theme

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

13

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

16

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

That counterpoint in contrary motion

19

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

22

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

25

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

All combined

27

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

30

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Largo ♩ = 56

Viola I

Viola II

Viola III

The King's theme, elaborated

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Viola II

A new melody to go with the elaboration

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

17

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

21

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

23

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Viola III

25

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

That new melody in contrary motion, augmented

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

All combined !

30

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

Viola II

This system contains measures 30 through 33. It features three staves for Violins I, II, and III, and a staff for Viola II. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 12/8. The music is written in a contrapuntal style with various articulations and dynamics. The instruction 'All combined !' is positioned above the staves.

34

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

This system contains measures 34 through 36. It features three staves for Violins I, II, and III. The musical notation continues with complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

37

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

This system contains measures 37 through 39. It features three staves for Violins I, II, and III. The music shows further development of the contrapuntal themes.

40

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

This system contains measures 40 through 42. It features three staves for Violins I, II, and III. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the third system.

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

43

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

46

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Canon a 2

(Puzzle Canon, Contrary Motion)

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Allegro ♩ = 120

Viola I

Viola II

The King's theme. elaborated

Vla. I

Vla. II

7

Vla. I

Vla. II

12

Vla II

Each interval the same as in the original, but moves in the opposite direction

Vla. I

Vla. II

18

Vla. I

Vla. II

24

Vla I

Canon a 2

30

Vla. I

Vla. II

36

Vla. I

Vla. II

41

Vla. I

Vla. II

47

Vla. I

Vla. II

52

Vla. I

Vla. II

57

Vla. I

Vla. II

Canon a 2

63

Vla. I

Vla. II

This system contains measures 63 through 67. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 63 starts with a *tr* (trill) on the first note of the first staff. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various slurs and ties.

68

Vla. I

Vla. II

This system contains measures 68 through 72. The music continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some rests and slurs. A *tr* (trill) is present in measure 70.

73

Vla. I

Vla. II

This system contains measures 73 through 78. Measure 73 begins with a whole rest in the first staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and ties. A *tr* (trill) is marked in measure 78.

79

Vla. I

Vla. II

This system contains measures 79 through 83. The music concludes with a final cadence in measure 83, featuring a whole note chord in the first staff and a whole note in the second staff.

Canon a 4

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80

Viola I

Viola II

Viola III

Viola IV

6

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Vla. IV

Viola I

10

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Vla. IV

Canon a 4

14

Vla. I

Vla. II

Viola I

Vla. III

Vla. IV

18

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Viola I

Vla. IV

22

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

Viola I

Vla. IV

Canon a 4

26

Violin I (Vla. I) staff: Starts with a quarter rest, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin II (Vla. II) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin III (Vla. III) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin IV (Vla. IV) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

30

Violin I (Vla. I) staff: Starts with a quarter rest, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin II (Vla. II) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin III (Vla. III) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin IV (Vla. IV) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

34

Violin I (Vla. I) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin II (Vla. II) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin III (Vla. III) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Violin IV (Vla. IV) staff: Starts with a quarter note, followed by a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign on the second measure.

Canon a 4

38

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

This system contains measures 38 through 41. The music is in 2/4 time and features four violas. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first violin part (Vla. I) has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second violin part (Vla. II) has a more active line with many sixteenth notes. The third violin part (Vla. III) has a simpler line with quarter and eighth notes. The fourth violin part (Vla. IV) has a line with quarter notes and rests.

42

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

This system contains measures 42 through 45. The music continues in 2/4 time. The first violin part (Vla. I) has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second violin part (Vla. II) has a more active line with many sixteenth notes. The third violin part (Vla. III) has a simpler line with quarter and eighth notes. The fourth violin part (Vla. IV) has a line with quarter notes and rests.

46

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

This system contains measures 46 through 49. The music continues in 2/4 time. The first violin part (Vla. I) has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second violin part (Vla. II) has a more active line with many sixteenth notes. The third violin part (Vla. III) has a simpler line with quarter and eighth notes. The fourth violin part (Vla. IV) has a line with quarter notes and rests.

Canon a 4

50

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

This system contains measures 50 through 53. The music is in 3/8 time and B-flat major. The four violas play a canon. In measure 50, Vla. I has a dotted quarter note, Vla. II has an eighth note, Vla. III has a quarter note, and Vla. IV has a quarter note. The pattern continues with eighth and quarter notes in subsequent measures, with Vla. I having a whole rest in measure 53.

54

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

This system contains measures 54 through 57. The canon continues. In measure 54, Vla. I has a quarter note, Vla. II has an eighth note, Vla. III has a quarter note, and Vla. IV has a quarter note. The pattern continues with eighth and quarter notes in subsequent measures, with Vla. I having a whole rest in measure 57.

58

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

This system contains measures 58 through 61. The canon continues. In measure 58, Vla. I has a whole rest, Vla. II has a quarter note, Vla. III has a quarter note, and Vla. IV has a quarter note. The pattern continues with eighth and quarter notes in subsequent measures, with Vla. I having a whole rest in measure 61.

Canon a 4

62

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

67

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

72

Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola I

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

Bach presented the canons in *The Musical Offering* variously, often in far from performance setting, often in playful forms; puzzles, perpetual (no cadence), constantly modulating, multi-voiced written on one staff with unexpected signatures and clefs, in other words, full of tricks. These six canons were chosen from the ten available because they seem to conform to range and other opportunities offered by the viola. Each of these arrangements strives to present the melodic and imitative material in each viola part so that the contrapuntal procedures so masterfully presented will be clear to every player. In order to present performable pieces, and to accommodate orchestration, small liberties have been taken. We hope they are justified by making these artful, beautiful, and remarkable canons available to a larger audience.

Fine coverage of Bach's Potsdam visit is found in *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, by Christoph Wolff (W. W. Norton, New York, 2000) pages 426-430. A more complete study is *Bach's Musical Offering --- History, Interpretation, Analysis* by Hans T. David (Dover Publications, New York, 1972, paperback).

Thomas Hall
Orange, California

Table of Contents

Canon a 2, Cancrizans	1
Canon a 2, in Unisono	2
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium	3
Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu	4
Canon a 2 (Puzzle, Contrary Motion)	5
Canon a 4	7

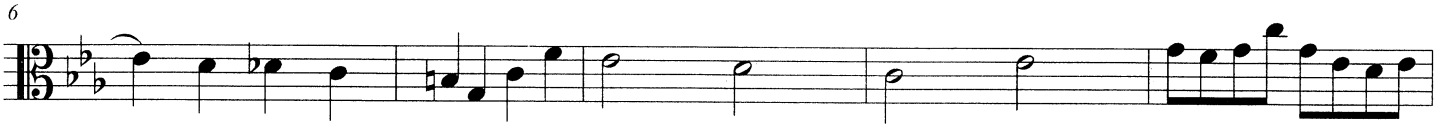
Canon a 2, Cancrizans

from *The Musical Offering*

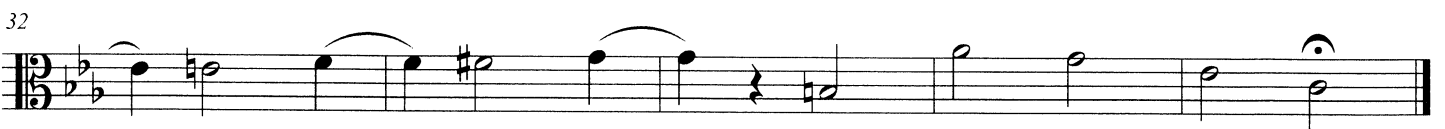
Viola I

Moderato ♩ = 100

J. S. Bach



And now, backwards.



Canon a 2, in Unisono

Viola I

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Moderato $\text{♩} = 84$

5

leader

King's theme

11

17

Viola II

follower

22

Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola I

Larghetto ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach

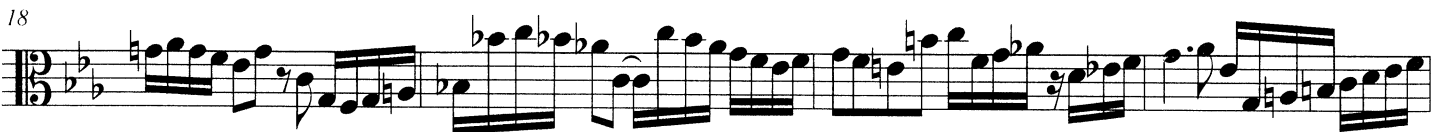


The King's theme



Viola III

That counterpoint in contrary motion



Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola I

J. S. Bach

Largo ♩ = 56

8 8 7 Viola III

That new melody in contrary motion, augmented

All combined!

Canon a 2

(Puzzle Canon, Contrary Motion)

Viola I

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Allegro ♩ = 120

11

Vla II

The King's theme elaborated,

16

but each interval moves in the opposite direction from the original

21

26

31

36

41

46

Canon a 2

51



56



61

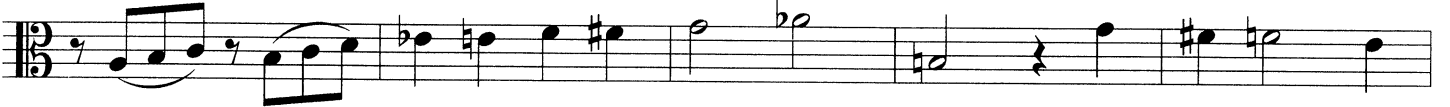


Vla I

66



71



76



81



Canon a 4

Viola I

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80



Canon a 4

34



38



42



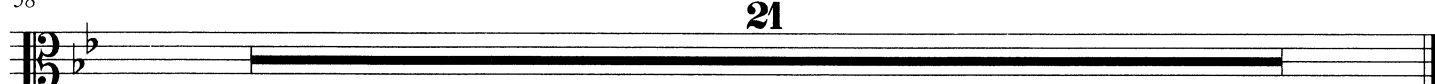
47



52



58



21

Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola II

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Table of Contents

Canon a 2, Cancrizans	1
Canon a 2, in Unisono	2
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium	3
Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu	4
Canon a 2 (Puzzle, Contrary Motion)	6
Canon a 4	8

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

Bach presented the canons in *The Musical Offering* variously, often in far from performance setting, often in playful forms; puzzles, perpetual (no cadence), constantly modulating, multi-voiced written on one staff with unexpected signatures and clefs, in other words, full of tricks. These six canons were chosen from the ten available because they seem to conform to range and other opportunities offered by the viola. Each of these arrangements strives to present the melodic and imitative material in each viola part so that the contrapuntal procedures so masterfully presented will be clear to every player. In order to present performable pieces, and to accommodate orchestration, small liberties have been taken. We hope they are justified by making these artful, beautiful, and remarkable canons available to a larger audience.

Fine coverage of Bach's Potsdam visit is found in *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, by Christoph Wolff (W. W. Norton, New York, 2000) pages 426-430. A more complete study is *Bach's Musical Offering --- History, Interpretation, Analysis* by Hans T. David (Dover Publications, New York, 1972, paperback).

Thomas Hall
Orange, California

Canon a 2, Cancrizans

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Viola II

Moderato ♩ = 100



Canon a 2, in Unisono

Viola II from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Moderato ♩ = 84

Viola I follower

5

10 follower

15 King;s theme

21

Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola II

Larghetto ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach

The musical score for Viola II is presented in six systems. The first system (measures 1-10) is in treble clef, 4/4 time, and features a 7-measure rest followed by a melodic line with trills. The second system (measures 11-20) continues the melodic line. The third system (measures 21-30) includes a 6-measure rest and a section labeled 'Viola I'. The fourth system (measures 31-40) is in bass clef and labeled 'original counterpoint'. The fifth system (measures 41-50) continues the counterpoint. The sixth system (measures 51-60) concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase.

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola II

Largo ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach



The King's theme, elaborated



Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

33 All combined

Musical staff 1, measures 33-40. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. A fermata is placed over the final measure (40).

Musical staff 2, measures 37-44. This staff continues the musical line from the previous one. It includes several measures with a fermata, and the notation continues with intricate rhythmic figures.

Musical staff 3, measures 41-48. This staff shows further development of the musical theme, maintaining the complex rhythmic structure and the two-flat key signature.

Musical staff 4, measures 45-52. This is the final staff on the page, concluding the musical passage with a fermata over the final measure (52).

Canon a 2

(Puzzle Canon, Contrary Motion)

Viola II

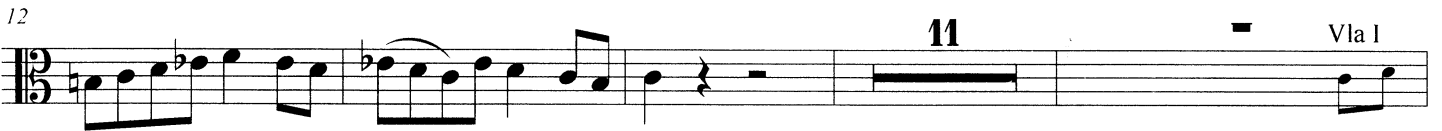
from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Allegro ♩ = 120



The King's theme, elaborated



Canon a 2

55



61



67



72



78



Canon a 4

Viola II

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80

6

Viola I

Musical notation for measures 1-6 of the Viola II part. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. Measure 1 contains a whole rest. Measures 2-6 show the beginning of the canon, with notes for Viola I and Viola II. The music is in a slow, steady tempo.

11

Musical notation for measures 7-11 of the Viola II part. The staff continues with the canon, showing the interaction between the two violas. The notes are written in a clear, legible style with appropriate phrasing.

15

Musical notation for measures 12-15 of the Viola II part. The canon continues with a variety of rhythmic patterns and intervals, maintaining the characteristic four-part texture.

18

Musical notation for measures 16-18 of the Viola II part. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, creating a rhythmic flow.

22

Musical notation for measures 19-22 of the Viola II part. The canon continues with a focus on harmonic clarity and rhythmic precision.

27

Musical notation for measures 23-27 of the Viola II part. The music includes some more complex rhythmic figures and rests, typical of the piece's intricate texture.

32

Musical notation for measures 28-32 of the Viola II part. The canon continues with a steady progression of notes and rests.

37

Musical notation for measures 33-37 of the Viola II part. The music concludes with a final cadence, bringing the canon to a peaceful end.

Canon a 4

41



45



49



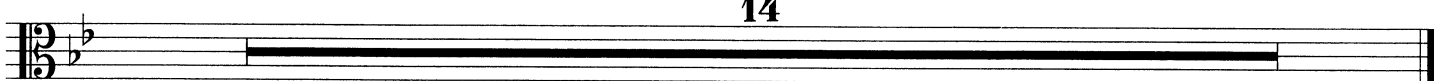
54



59



65



14

Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola III

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

Bach presented the canons in *The Musical Offering* variously, often in far from performance setting, often in playful forms; puzzles, perpetual (no cadence), constantly modulating, multi-voiced written on one staff with unexpected signatures and clefs, in other words, full of tricks. These six canons were chosen from the ten available because they seem to conform to range and other opportunities offered by the viola. Each of these arrangements strives to present the melodic and imitative material in each viola part so that the contrapuntal procedures so masterfully presented will be clear to every player. In order to present performable pieces, and to accommodate orchestration, small liberties have been taken. We hope they are justified by making these artful, beautiful, and remarkable canons available to a larger audience.

Fine coverage of Bach's Potsdam visit is found in *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, by Christoph Wolff (W. W. Norton, New York, 2000) pages 426-430. A more complete study is *Bach's Musical Offering --- History, Interpretation, Analysis* by Hans T. David (Dover Publications, New York, 1972, paperback).

Thomas Hall
Orange, California

Table of Contents

Canon a 2, in Unisono	1
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium	2
Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu	3
Canon a 4	5

Canon a 2, Unisono

Viola III from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Moderato ♩ = 84



King's theme



leader



follower



Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola III

Larghetto ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach

7

Viola I

tr

A counterpoint to the King's theme

10

13

16

20

24

27

30

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

J. S. Bach

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola III

Largo ♩ = 56

7

Viola II

A new melody to go with the elaboration

11

15

18

22

25

6

Viola II

All combined

34

38

Canon in Augmentation and Contrary Motion

41

Musical notation for measures 41-44. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure 41 begins with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and a quarter note B2. Measure 42 continues with a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note E3. Measure 43 features a quarter note F3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note A3. Measure 44 concludes with a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4.

45

Musical notation for measures 45-47. Measure 45 starts with a half note E3, followed by a quarter note F3, and a quarter note G3. Measure 46 continues with a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note C4. Measure 47 features a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4.

48

Musical notation for measures 48-50. Measure 48 begins with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. Measure 49 continues with a quarter note C4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note E4. Measure 50 concludes with a quarter note F4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note A4.

Canon a 4

Viola III

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante $\text{♩} = 80$

13

Viola I

Musical staff 13, starting with a measure rest. The staff contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and concludes with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 18, beginning with a measure rest. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 22, starting with a measure rest. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 25, beginning with a measure rest. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 29, starting with a measure rest. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 34, beginning with a measure rest. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 39, starting with a measure rest. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Musical staff 44, beginning with a measure rest. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes, and ends with a whole note chord.

Canon a 4

48



52



56



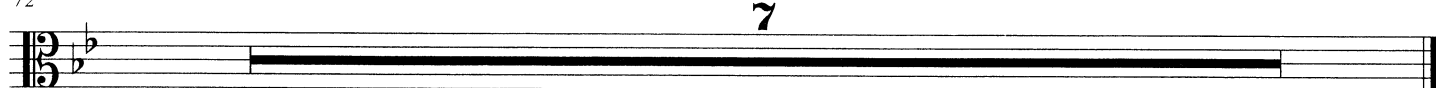
61



66



72



Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola IV

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

Bach presented the canons in *The Musical Offering* variously, often in far from performance setting, often in playful forms; puzzles, perpetual (no cadence), constantly modulating, multi-voiced written on one staff with unexpected signatures and clefs, in other words, full of tricks. These six canons were chosen from the ten available because they seem to conform to range and other opportunities offered by the viola. Each of these arrangements strives to present the melodic and imitative material in each viola part so that the contrapuntal procedures so masterfully presented will be clear to every player. In order to present performable pieces, and to accommodate orchestration, small liberties have been taken. We hope they are justified by making these artful, beautiful, and remarkable canons available to a larger audience.

Fine coverage of Bach's Potsdam visit is found in *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, by Christoph Wolff (W. W. Norton, New York, 2000) pages 426-430. A more complete study is *Bach's Musical Offering --- History, Interpretation, Analysis* by Hans T. David (Dover Publications, New York, 1972, paperback).

Thomas Hall
Orange, California

Table of Contents

Canon a 4	1
-----------------	---

Canon a 4

Viola IV

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80

20

Viola I -

Musical notation for measures 1-20 of the Viola IV part. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The music begins with a whole rest for 20 measures, followed by a melodic line starting on G2, moving through various intervals and accidentals.

25

Musical notation for measures 21-25 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

29

Musical notation for measures 26-29 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

32

Musical notation for measures 30-32 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

36

Musical notation for measures 33-36 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

41

Musical notation for measures 37-41 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

46

Musical notation for measures 42-46 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

51

Musical notation for measures 47-51 of the Viola IV part. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring several slurs and accidentals.

Canon a 4

56



60



64



69



74

