

# Henry Martin

## Preludes & Fugues, *Part 2*

Henry Martin, piano

- 1 Praeludium et Fuga XIII in G $\flat$  Major (A Slow Drag) (5:41)  
(combined prelude and fugue as one piece; in the form of a rag)
- 2 Praeludium XIV in F $\sharp$  minor (1:29)
- 3 Fuga XIV in F $\sharp$  minor (2:35)
- 4 Praeludium XV in G Major (3:39)
- 5 Fuga XV in G Major (2:37)
- 6 Praeludium XVI in G minor (1:10)
- 7 Fuga XVI in G minor (1:23)
- 8 Praeludium XVII in A $\flat$  Major (2:02)
- 9 Fuga XVII in A $\flat$  Major (1:59)
- 10 Praeludium XVIII in A $\flat$  minor (3:46)
- 11 Fuga XVIII in A $\flat$  minor (4:17)
- 12 Praeludium XIX in A Major (1:39)

- 13 Fuga XIX in A Major (3:17)
- 14 Praeludium XX in A minor (1:21)
- 15 Fuga XX in A minor (1:23)
- 16 Praeludium XXI in B $\flat$  Major (2:04)
- 17 Fuga XXI in B $\flat$  Major (1:14)
- 18 Praeludium XXII in B $\flat$  minor (1:31)
- 19 Fuga XXII in B $\flat$  minor (4:37)
- 20 Praeludium XXIII in B Major (1:40)
- 21 Fuga XXIII in B Major (2:13)
- 22 Praeludium XXIV in B minor (1:44)
- 23 Fuga XXIV in B minor (7:27)

## Preludes and Fugues, Part 2

Just what are “preludes” and “fugues”? What information do we get from these musical terms? Or what information do we not get? Actually, the negative question turns out to be the more interesting one, for, surprisingly, the terms tell us nothing of the individual character of the pieces to which they are applied—whether they are fast or slow, what emotional affect they may carry (“happy,” “sad”?), what “style” (“serious,” “popular”?), or even what tonal system (if any) they were composed in. Precisely that information can be supplied by the creative imagination, allowing composers to reinvent preludes and fugues in new and interesting ways—to associate relatively permanent principles of musical composition with the passing historical parade of styles and tastes, and the evolution of instrumental and tonal resources.

What the terms do say boils down, in the case of the fugue (which is easier to define), to the idea of a piece consisting of “voices,” or melodic strands (like melodies that a human voice might be able to sing). The first entering voice announces the “subject” (a melody on which the entire piece will be based), the next entering voice its “imitation” (the same tune repeated, but starting on a different note, and thus in a higher or lower register of the human voice or instrument); thus, the texture of the piece gets gradually thicker as more voices are added. In order to avoid an unrelenting succession of such imitations, most fugues also contain periodic, contrasting “episodes,” based on fragments of the subject. The intricate composition of multi-voice (“polyphonic” or “contrapuntal”) music has been a chief hallmark of the Western classical music tradition, and the fugue is its locus classicus. The “prelude,” on the other hand, is not a vocal compositional procedure transplanted to an instrument, but one that is indigenous to instruments that can play chords: keyboard instruments, the guitar and lute. Thus, the simplest preludes amount

to the imposition of a repeated rhythmic pattern on a succession of chords; but things can get considerably more complicated than that, to the extent that it is much more difficult to limit the notion of a prelude than that of a fugue. While there are virtuoso improvisers who can improvise fugues (though even they would no doubt agree that one can write more complex fugues than one can improvise), it is the prelude that is most directly associated with improvisation. The prelude comes first, as its name implies, and acts as a relatively free and open-ended warm-up for the more highly structured fugue to follow.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), the composer principally associated with preludes and fugues, is also the model when it comes to expanding their stylistic purview, as demonstrated in two magisterial collections of 24 preludes and fugues (in each) that he called the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (hereafter WTC I and WTC II: 1722 and 1738-44, though strictly speaking, Bach applied this title only to the first volume). Thus the E Major Fugue of WTC II is on a subject on which Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741) had written a fugue in his famous counterpoint treatise, *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Vienna: 1725). In this respect as well as its slow, stately tempo and “white” notation, the E major fugue is the very model of the stile antico—the “learned” style, and usual home of the fugue, a style that epitomized the craft of counterpoint developed by the master composers of the Renaissance. But the very same Bach could suddenly rouse things up with a fugue that was at the same time a quick gigue (French version of the English “jig”; WTC II, F major fugue), or one of the hotter new dances, like the bourée (WTC I, C# major fugue) or minuet (WTC II, Bb major fugue).<sup>1</sup> Bach likewise drew upon an extraordinary

<sup>1</sup>David Ledbetter, *Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier; the 48 Preludes and Fugues* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 84f. Bach seems to have been particularly interested in demonstrating the stylistic cutting edge in the preludes and fugues he gathered together for Book II, which show a number of examples of the new “Gallant Style.” Ledbetter's excellent book will be of interest to lovers of the WTC, regardless of their musical background.

variety of compositional models for his preludes, from simple, continuous, “mono-rhythmic” forms as described above (for example WTC I, C major prelude, to which Gounod added his *Ave Maria* melody in the nineteenth century), to more elaborate discontinuous forms; one of these, though nominally a prelude, even contains a complete fugue within it (WTC I, Eb major prelude). Hearing or reading through such pieces, Bach’s listeners (his students or a relatively limited circle of initiates—this was not music made for the concert hall of a later era!) could not fail to remark upon the Master’s juxtaposition of learned compositional techniques with colloquial musical styles, and more generally, his amazing synthesis of a broad range of seemingly disparate national styles.

Lovingly-preserved manuscripts of WTC were studied by the Viennese Classic composers, and fugues occasionally reappeared within the sonata form of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and, at least on two occasions, as ideal ending movements of a symphony and a piano sonata (Mozart’s *Jupiter Symphony*; Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier Sonata*). Brahms ends his *Handel Variations* for piano with one of the greatest fugues composed in the nineteenth century, and later symphonists continued to use the fugue as a dramatic high point (end of Bruckner’s *Fifth Symphony*; end of first movement of Mahler’s *Eighth Symphony*). Though the fugue also fell on rather fallow days in the nineteenth-century conservatory (the “school fugue”), it made something of a comeback in the twentieth century: Hindemith’s *Ludus Tonalis* (1942) and Shostakovich’s *24 Preludes and Fugues* (1950-55) were consciously modeled on aspects of WTC. The reader may well have wondered why each volume of WTC consisted of precisely 24 preludes and fugues. In fact, WTC not only demonstrates Bach’s supreme compositional technique and command of style, but also that all twelve major and minor keys (= 24 in all) were usable in the particular tuning of the 12-tone scale that he developed;

thus each volume contains one prelude and one fugue in each key.<sup>2</sup> Shostakovich likewise composes one piece of each type in each key (with some modification of their order), but Hindemith does away with the distinction between major and minor, so that there are only 12 fugues in his *Ludus Tonalis*, ordered according to his theory of tonality.<sup>3</sup> Henry Martin preserves Bach’s original ordering of keys: major, followed by parallel minor, starting on C, and ascending by half step. He divides them into four “groups” of six keys each. Thus, the latter two groups move from Gb Major up to B minor.

The difficulty in pinning down the notion of a “prelude” may in part be the reason for its even more varied and complex history. The repetitive nature of the mono-rhythmic prelude described above allied it with the keyboard technical exercise from early in its history on, and appropriately, it resurfaced in a vastly expanded form with the development of the modern piano in the 1820s and 1830s in the form of the “piano etude,” the most artistically satisfying of which are certainly Chopin’s Op. 10/25 *Etudes*.<sup>4</sup> At the same time that Chopin appropriated one of the prelude’s compositional techniques for his etudes, he took the name “prelude” and applied it, in his Op. 28 *Preludes*, to a collection of what are often called “character pieces” (short, self-contained pieces typical of the nineteenth century, often in two- or three-part forms; e.g. Mendelssohn’s *Songs without Words*, or Schumann’s *Scenes from*

<sup>2</sup>Stuart Isacoff’s *Temperament; How Music Became a Battleground for the Great Minds of Western Civilization* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001) provides a lively and accessible account of the many controversies over tuning, though it has drawn criticism for its overemphasis on 12-tone equal temperament. Bach’s temperament was probably one of many “well-temperaments”—as Bach’s title indicates—in which all keys are usable, but the distances between the various semi-tones of the scale show slight variations.

<sup>3</sup>The order is demonstrated in his “Series I” and “Series II”; see Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, Theoretical Part (Mendel, tr.; New York, NY: Associated Music, 1942).

<sup>4</sup>On the influence of Bach’s preludes on Chopin’s etudes, see my article, “Two Bach Preludes/Two Chopin Etudes, or Toujours travailler Bach—ce sera votre meilleur moyen de progresser,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 24/1 (spring, 2002): 103-20.

*Childhood*); curiously, these are not “preludes” to anything in particular. But certainly Chopin was thinking of WTC: there are 24 of them, one in each major and minor key (though ordered differently from WTC). An extraordinary number of pianist-composers of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed the model of Chopin, composing etudes and preludes indebted to Chopin’s; Debussy, Scriabin and Rachmaninov come to mind immediately, but we might add Szymanowski, Gershwin and Messiaen. Or, we might extend the Debussy-Scriabin-Rachmaninov-Gershwin line to include the American jazz pianist Bill Evans and those influenced by him and by classical sources as well, such as Keith Jarrett or Fred Hersch. It’s becoming clear that lines of development crossing the traditional musical categories have been crucial to the course of late twentieth-century music.

To the creative composer, the situation is ideal: there is a long and rich history to which one might allude, and at the same time, there are new, undiscovered angles. Henry Martin takes full advantage. There is plenty of “new music” here, but, to this listener, the historical allusions also seem richer in Group III,<sup>5</sup> than in the earlier groups. It’s important to add, however, that Martin alludes subtly (consciously or unconsciously), while adding some personal twist. There are no copies of historical models here, so no doubt listeners will disagree with some allusions I allege below, or will find more on their own. That’s part of the fun, for this is music that repays multiple listenings—music to be enjoyed, but also listened to and thought about in the context I’ve attempted to set up. Here, I should also remark that while in the first part of this essay I tried to introduce an audience, regardless of musical background, to the essence of the prelude and fugue, this second section will require progressively more background—and patience—as we move on. If at any point it requires too much, go right to the CD: that’s what this is all about, after all!

As if to prove my point about unusual “takes” on the prelude and fugue,

Martin begins by throwing us his biggest curve, subtitled “A Slow Drag,” which is “a social dance of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries performed by couples to a slow blues with leisurely, sensuous rhythms.”<sup>6</sup> But how can this Joplinesque music live up to its primary title “Praeludium et Fuga XIII”—both apparently compressed into a single piece (Martin, following Bach, uses the Latin titles)? First, it’s useful to know that this is the second installment of Martin’s preludes and fugues, beginning with the thirteenth in the series, and at the interval of a tritone from the opening C of the first installment (both the number 13 and the tritone—called *diabolus in musica* in the middle ages—have long been cause for musical mischief; something strange may be going on here!). Next, we might call to mind eighteenth- and nineteenth-century minuets or scherzi with trios (third movements of symphonies), or even “occasional” pieces of the lighter variety, such as Sousa marches, or Johann Strauss waltzes. They too have a “trio,” often in the subdominant (as Martin’s is), and occasionally it features imitation, in contrast to the main section. The origin of the trio, after all, was that three solo instruments emerged from the orchestra to play a contrasting section. What more appropriate way to feature this small group than to make each instrument a voice of a three-voice fugue—in opposition to the thicker chordal texture of the full orchestra? Of course, this is all rendered by the piano here, but the great textural difference between the rather spare and quiet “Trio” and the rest of the piece, which surrounds it, is quite audible. Suddenly, through a rather long train of thought—but one that I think was worth riding on—the reinterpretation of a “slow drag” as a “prelude and fugue” actually makes sense.

Praeludium and Fuga XIV in F# minor seem to carry a more dramatic

<sup>5</sup>The first two groups are available on GM Recordings (GM2049CD), performed by Sara Davis Buechner.

<sup>6</sup>New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, Barry Kernfield, ed. (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1988/91/94): 1133.

affect, the Praeludium reminiscent (at least in the opening) of Chopin's treatment of the mono-rhythmic prelude technique (perhaps even of his Prelude in the same key), though Martin's work heads in quite a different direction by the middle section. The fugue, in four voices, continues the same mood, opening with a subject that, Martin tells me, was inspired by the angular subject of Bach's A minor Fugue (WTC II). Indeed, the rhythm of the four-note head-motive of each subject is nearly identical, the melodic skips of Martin's sounding like a "stretched-out" version of Bach's. Both subjects continue with quicker-moving motivic material and move directly into countersubjects that move faster still (the "countersubject" is a tune composed to work in counterpoint against the subject; the two are often paired throughout the piece). In Martin's fugue, the countersubject and its inversion (melodic motions that went up, go down, and vice versa) form episodes that take over the work, though entrances of the original subject are still discernible.

Praeludium and Fuga XV, in G Major, bring a calm, even pastorale affect, as would have been expected from a composition in that key during the Baroque era. However, their harmonic language of "stacked thirds" evokes a tonal idiom not unlike that of Debussy's *Preludes*, the fugue sharing stacked-third melodic material with the Praeludium. Martin's performance, with its measured, articulated sixteenth-notes, makes me think of Debussy as interpreted by Bill Evans—and the two are a perfect fit. The fugue, in four voices, also provides an opportunity for me to weigh in on that most controversial of musical terms, "tonality," for it presents one of the clearest examples of Martin's approach to this phenomenon. In characterizing his own music, I suspect he would put it in the category of "twentieth-century modal music," about which he has written recently.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Hindemith, whose music he also places in this category, Martin maintains the distinction between major and minor, though even with more pages at my disposal, I would be hard-pressed to explain just how he does it. The G major fugue presents an unusually clear case.

Even without a score, the listener will be struck that the opening section (the first 54 seconds, to be precise) is based almost entirely upon G major (or "G Ionian," for those who demand a conventional chord grammar for the designation "G major"); except for the first imitation of the subject (the "answer") briefly in the relative minor, there is only one note outside of the G major scale, and G emerges clearly as tonic of that scale. As we move on, imitations of the subject gradually move farther and farther from G major, ultimately winding up with three measures of very high, soft chords, made of Gb scalar material (at 2:00). As these evaporate, the subject returns in a pure G major (at 2:07)—an extraordinary moment—reiterated in "stretto" (entrances of the subject overlapping), reaching down to the lower registers of the piano. Finally, a distant echo of the subject in a remote tonal area is heard in the upper reaches of the piano.

Praeludium XVI, in G minor, reminds one of the Baroque toccata, consisting of a nearly continuous right-hand single-note line (except for occasional brief ritards and pauses), punctuated by left-hand chords. Fuga XVI, in three voices, and marked "Allegro scherzando," proves not to be the high drama that might be expected, but what seems like an ironic comment (dare I say caricature?) of the "typical" Baroque fugue with its tortured chromatic subject and almost mechanical eighth-note/sixteenth-note rhythmic opposition.

Both Praeludium and Fuga XVII use textures and rhythmic ideas associated with jazz piano playing. In contrast to the thin texture of Praeludium XVI, XVII is thick and lush, using a chordal vocabulary that evokes Evans, Jarrett, and company at numerous points. Fuga XVII, in three voices, begins with a subject that sounds like a McCoy Tyner improvised line; once the fugue gets well underway, the piano left hand provides the jazz-style bass line. Martin's spirited performance captures the various

<sup>7</sup>Henry Martin, "Seven Steps to Heaven: A Species Approach to Twentieth-Century Analysis and Composition," *Perspectives of New Music*, 38/1 (winter, 2000): 129-68.

musical idioms of the whole band.

The last pieces of Group III, Praeludium and Fuga XVIII, bring a somber, even "misterioso" mood, as one might expect from Ab minor (much more forbidding-looking notationally in Martin's score than the usual G# minor). The prelude develops a motive that fills out a minor third (principally in descent) in the middle register, interrupted occasionally by an arpeggiated figure in the upper register. That same minor third is picked up and developed further as the subject of the fugue. That subject, as well as the fugue's five-voice texture and later use of the subject in augmentation in the bass recall the "grave" minor fugues of Bach (e.g., WTC I, D# minor, F# minor and Bb minor).

In contrast to the popular opening of Group III, Group IV opens as classically as one can in the world of fugue, with a clear reference to the *stile antico*, in the "bright" key of A Major (after all that Ab minor "darkness"). Once Praeludium XIX really gets underway, it consists of a running scalar figure passed between the hands, supported by long held tones. The texture seems like something out of a seventeenth-century keyboard work, though the pitch language is decidedly late-twentieth century. The subject of Fuga XIX (in four voices), with its skip of a fourth at the opening and tied rhythms over bar lines (seeming to suggest the venerable suspension) is likewise quite *stile antico*. An impressive *stretto* section leads directly to the introduction of the second subject, a running scalar figure similar to that of the prelude. Before long we find that this second subject works in counterpoint with the first subject, and ultimately, even in counterpoint with the *stretto* of the first subject! All of this is typical of the seventeenth-century *stile antico*, and I was not surprised when Martin recently told me that the C# minor fugue (WTC I), which, with its three subjects, is one of Bach's most virtuosic demonstrations of the "learned" style, inspired his second subject.

Praeludium and Fuga XX, in A minor, return to the thin texture and toccata-like style of XVI. But this time, a tune emerges from endlessly repeating notes, occasionally reinforced in octaves, even though the piece is a true *perpetuum mobile*, with no room for a breath. It leads directly into the fugue through rhythmic momentum, but also because of its shared, bluesy-sounding, thematic material. The fugue is in perhaps the thinnest texture possible for a fugue: two parts, a reference to the one two-part fugue in WTC (I, E minor).

Praeludium and Fuga XXI, in Bb major, form a peculiar pair: a tender *adagio*, and an "Allegro scherzando." They also present clear examples of what might be called "tonal clarification." Though it seems far-fetched to speak of allusion, the prelude's harmony (or at least its chordal vocabulary), and especially its use of bass register, is distinctly Debussyan. The opening phrase (first 21 seconds) seems to hover somewhere between F Major/Bb Major, its consequent (following immediately) somewhere between F minor/Bb minor. The first section of the work ends in a flurry of ascending arpeggios, *crescendo*, with pedal down, starting on a bass Cb, and heading to the upper register (1:02-1:11). After this fades away, a brief pick-up (1:12) introduces the opening phrase in the upper register (starting at 1:15) to begin the last section of the piece, but the listener notes that a deep-register Bb and F (resolution of the Cb) have been placed under that opening phrase, clarifying its vague tonality. Indeed, Bb is now well anchored, right to the final lowest Bb on the piano. Fuga XXI returns to the carefree, Neo-Baroque affect of XVI, its opening headmotive (first half of the subject) sounding like it dropped in out of Bach's F Major Invention. Eventually, entrances of the headmotive contrasting with its imitation in inversion produce clever episodes. The tonality of the whole is rather vague until quite a clear (and hence, rather comical) cadence on Bb (at c. 56 seconds; the arrival on Bb is articulated by the inverted headmotive in the bass). Martin has found his

way home after all!

Praeludium and Fuga XXII, in Bb minor, are an imposing couple. The spirited prelude (marked "Allegro") consists of an arpeggiation figure in one hand, from which emerges a longer-breathed, descending melody (the "upper voice" of the arpeggiation), while the other hand has held tones, or a melody in octaves. The hands trade off in double counterpoint, the arpeggiation figure going into the left hand, the octave melody into the right, and then back again many times. Though the piece is a *perpetuum mobile*, exploring a number of tonal areas, the listener may discern a modified repeat of the opening in C major ("forte," at 33 seconds), and in the last quarter of the piece, a clear return first to the dominant of Bb minor (marked "pianissimo," just before 1:04), and then the tonic (marked "fortissimo," at 1:13). The fugue, marked "Adagio" and in six voices (the largest number of any fugue in either group), starts in the lowest register of the instrument, gradually working its way up. For intrepid souls who want to try and track the six entering voices (not an easy task, without a score!), the first four enter in successively higher registers (starting on Bb1, Gb3, Eb4, B4); a brief episode then follows, before the next two entrances, on Db3 and Bbb3). Shortly after halfway through the work (at 2:31), entrances of the subject in inversion may be heard, leading to diminution of the subject in inversion (doubling its speed), against the original subject. This climactic section moves to a tonic pedal, and then winds down to softer, middle-register strettis of original subject against inversion, before one last build-up to the final Bb.

Praeludium and Fuga XXIII, in B major present a relaxing, pastorale entracte between the drama of XXII and the grand finale. The prelude's opening right-hand figure seems, without score, to promise a continuous, undulating 16<sup>th</sup>-note pattern in 6/8 or 9/8 time, typical of the Baroque pastorale. But the listener who tries to beat a constant 6/8 or 9/8 will be frustrated, for beating units dividing triply

often give way to duple units. The rhythmic asymmetry, coupled with an ever-enriched harmonic language, head more in the direction of Debussy's notion of pastorale than Bach's as the piece continues, culminating first on a wonderfully sensuous F# dominant chord exactly three quarters of the way through (just before 1:06), and then a final gesture consisting of an upper-register alternation of I-"VII7"-I (BMaj - Amin7 - BMaj; starting at 1:12). The fugue, in three voices, continues the pastorale affect in 6/8 meter; though an occasional extra beat is added here and there, it is more regular than the prelude. The subject is in an AAB form (or what some have been calling a "sentence"): it presents a motive, and then its transposed repetition, and then a somewhat longer continuation before the imitating voice enters. To fugue connoisseurs, the spaces between the two A motives invite later imitations, and sure enough, much of the rest of the piece is taken up with playful imitations of the A motive, its inversion, or both in alternation, as illustrated succinctly by the very end of the work.

A commission for the San Antonio International Piano Competition (held October, 2000) provided the impetus for the final Praeludium and Fuga, which can stand alone in an imposing manner as contest pieces, but also provide a suitably dramatic conclusion to the cycle as a whole. Martin is certainly not unaware that the final key of B minor resounds with strong keyboard statements: the subject of the last fugue of WTC I is often cited as Bach's "window into the future," since it uses all twelve tones of the chromatic scale, and lovers of the nineteenth-century piano literature will know the Chopin B Minor Sonata (one of only two that he wrote) and the Liszt B minor Sonata (the only piano sonata that he wrote, and one in which a fugue starts the recapitulation of the piece).

Praeludium XXIV explores a single motive all the way through (and as in others we've seen, with hardly pause for a breath). While that motive may remind

us of Bach, the harmony and piano writing suggest Ravel. The exposition begins by presenting the motive in right hand, followed by left hand (at :09). A slight ritardando (at :38) seems to indicate that we will hear the repeat of an "A section," but this quickly turns out to be a false lead: instead, we get a series of buildups, leading first to the dominant of the dominant (just before 1:05), the dominant (1:08), and finally the tonic (beginning at 1:14), articulated by the primary motive in left hand. This starts the final section, all in the tonic. The subject of Fuga XXIV is once again in AAB form, but a rapidly moving counterpoint against it, beginning with the second entrance, allows no space to be filled this time. A continuous spinning-out of this material forms the first part of the piece, leading to a big climax, from which emerges a slow, thickly harmonized presentation of the subject's two A-motives (at 1:50). Suddenly, things get much quieter, and the end of the subject's B-motive occurs in the piano's tenor register (just past two minutes into the work), signaling the slow middle section of the composition. This B-motive is treated throughout the section to many imitations, eventually building up through the introduction of a rapidly ascending arpeggiation-figure derived from the A-motive (starting at 3:54; the motive was first announced as an upper-voice echo between the two harmonized A motives, and heard only sporadically before this point). This leads (at just before 4:35) to an imitative exposition of—of all things—the famous B-A-C-H motive (and its inversion!), while all of the other material continues as well! After this section subsides, a retransition begins (at 5:16), consisting at first of a rather hesitant rumination on all this thematic material, but winding up on the dominant of B minor (starting at 5:45), and building inexorably until arrival on the tonic (at 5:58), which kicks off the bravura coda that concludes the work. Obviously this is hardly a fugue in any conventional sense, but an amalgam of the fugue, sonata, free fantasy (the BACH motive?)—and maybe more.

Finally, in writing unabashedly tonal preludes and fugues for the piano (why, they're even "major and minor"—if not conventionally so!), Henry Martin makes an implicit statement that his music is essentially made of pitches in rhythm—and not the various other "parameters" (registration, mode of attack, dynamic level) that much post-WW II avant-garde music attempted to elevate in importance. Thus, this is music by a composer/pianist that leaves room for the ideas of individual interpreters, Martin even going so far as to write in the score that "the fugues have no expression indications since they seem to overdetermine the interpretation." With Martin's inspiring lead to follow, it is to be hoped that we'll hear many more interpretations of these works.

~ Notes by Robert Wason

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*Preludes and Fugues* won the 1998 Barlow Endowment International Composition Competition from a field of 345 entries from 13 countries. The work also won the National Composers Competition sponsored by the League of Composers - International Society for Contemporary Music in 1991. The first half of the work was issued on compact disc (GM Recordings 2049, 1997) performed by pianist Sara Davis Buechner. *Preludes and Fugues* has been performed extensively throughout the world by such pianists as Buechner, Teresa McCollough, Christopher Oldfather, Robert Weirich, Elizabeth DiFelice, Frank Weinstock,



and Nurit Tilles. The students of Alan Feinberg presented an entire evening of the *Preludes and Fugues* at the Eastman School of Music in October, 1997.

Martin's recent piano music also includes three volumes of *Little Preludes and Fugues* and a group of inventions. Among other works, Martin's tone poem, *Shadows of the Moon*, was premiered by the Hudson Valley Philharmonic in July, 1997, with JoAnn Falletta conducting and Carole Cowan as violin soloist. His recent chamber music includes *Piano Trio in C# Minor* and a series of Sonatas for various instruments: flute/piano, trumpet/piano, violin/piano, cello/piano, solo violin, and solo cello. The works for strings and piano have been performed extensively by the Innisfree Piano Trio. Martin recently completed commissions for the University of North Carolina-Greensboro (*Pippa's Song*, for piano solo) and the San Antonio International Piano Competition (*Praeludium XXIV* and *Fuga XXIV*). During the fall of 1999, he received a fellowship at the Liguria Study Center in Bogliasco, Italy, to work on these commissions.

Martin is the recipient of many grants, including two awards from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music. Both Rutgers University and The New School University have supported his work generously. Martin has been an invited lecturer, composer, or pianist at the Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon, the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation in Salt Lake City, the Eastman School of Music, the Hartt Conservatory of Music, the Mannes College of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music, Goucher College, New York University, the State University of New York-Buffalo, the University of New Mexico, the University of California-Santa Barbara, the University of Colorado, and the University of Chicago. Martin's books include *Jazz: The First 100 Years* (co-authored with Keith Waters; Wadsworth/Schirmer, 2001), *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation* (Scarecrow Press, 1996), and *Enjoying Jazz* (Schirmer Books, 1986). He is Co-Editor of the Annual Review of Jazz Studies and has published articles and reviews in such journals as *Perspectives of New Music*, *In Theory Only*, *Music Theory Spectrum*, *Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie*, *Music and Letters*, and the Annual Review of Jazz Studies. He is also the founder and chair of the Jazz Special Interest Group (of the Society for Music Theory), which is devoted to advancing scholarship in jazz theory.

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Special thanks to the San Antonio International Piano Competition, which commissioned Praeludium XXIV and Fuga XXIV for their 2000 competition, Barbara Fiorella, and all the pianists who have performed these pieces so beautifully. - H.M.

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