

# The Italian Keyboard Canzona and Its Migration North

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## ABSTRACT

The birth of the Italian *canzona* occurred at about the same time as Petrucci's first printing of music by moveable type at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Initially the *canzona* involved the intabulation of secular French chansons, but it soon became an independent musical genre. The factors that led to the spread of the *canzona* genre throughout Europe included the wide dissemination of Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali*, the regular pilgrimages by young musicians to study in Italy, and the spread of Italian musicians throughout European courts and churches during the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods.

This document compares the development and characteristics of the *canzona* in the Venetian school with the Neapolitan school in a period from 1523 to about 1700. It also examines the ways in which northern European composers embraced the *canzona* while adapting to the requirements of producing both secular concert works and liturgical music.

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## **Introduction**

In this presentation I will examine the approximately 175-year lifespan of the Italian *canzona*. That history began with the four pieces printed by Marco Antonio da Bologna in 1523.<sup>1</sup> By the time the young Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) wrote Canzona BWV 588 around 1700, the *canzona* had faded as a popular genre for composers.

Regional differences in Italy and the impact of the Protestant Reformation on music influenced the types of *canzone* composed in other parts of Europe. In considering the evolution of this genre, rather than employing a strictly chronological or geographical approach, I will consider individually the common characteristics of the *canzona* as a way of focusing on the changes that occurred. These characteristics include: genre designation, intabulation, notational formats, tempo and meter, categories of *canzona* forms, standard subject types, contrapuntal characteristics, liturgical considerations, and dissemination.

## **Genre and Title**

*Canzone* began as intabulations of the French chanson. At this early stage of development the terms *canzona* and *canzona francese* were interchangeable. Intabulation is the process of consolidating into a single score the instrumental or vocal parts of works by earlier composers that were previously contained only in separate part-books. In these resulting works the title sometimes made reference to the specific chanson upon which the *canzona* was based. As the trend for newly-composed *canzone* instead of intabulated chansons became more common, the term *canzona francese* gradually disappeared.

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<sup>1</sup> Willi Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, trans. by Hans Tischler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 197.

What did the title “canzona” imply for the sixteenth century musician? There was much ambiguity and numerous contradictions in how terms such as *fantasia*, *ricercare* and *canzona* were used. Polyphony, including points of imitation, was a common stylistic trait of early *canzone* and *ricercare*. While many pieces shared this characteristic feature, they did not share the same names. Indeed, there were published collections of music where a piece would be called a *ricercare* in the table of contents but labeled as a *canzona* at the head of the piece, and vice versa. Later in the life of the *canzona*, especially in the Alpine regions of Italy and Austria, these works would sometimes be called *fuga*. This was related but not equivalent to the fugue of the seventeenth century as practiced by the North German composers. To further confuse matters, in some parts of Austria and Southern Germany the term *fuga* still carried its late medieval/early renaissance meaning of mensuration canon, whereas in the sixteenth century the term *fuga* began to be applied to sectional pieces that utilized this combination of imitative entries of voices and lively rhythms. One significant example of the ambiguity in titling these pieces involves the twelve *canzone* of Dieterich Buxtehude (1637 - 1707) that are variously labeled as *canzon*, *canzonetta*, and *fuga* with no significant difference among them in content. This problem follows the pattern of haphazard genre designations for many types of Renaissance and Baroque instrumental music.

## **Intabulation**

The beginnings of the Italian keyboard *canzona* followed very quickly the technological innovations that allowed the first printing of music using moveable type. Gutenberg’s introduction of moveable type around 1450 was followed about fifty years later by

Octavio Petrucci's first printing of music using moveable type. His first publication was *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton* (1504), a collection of a hundred French chansons.<sup>2</sup>

These were secular, polyphonic, vocal pieces of music. At this point in music history, instrumental music, including keyboard music, was a derivative art. Fame and prestige came to those celebrated for the excellence of their vocal music. The early history of keyboard music is usually a story of vocal music being adapted for the keyboard, not an account of new compositions created specifically for a keyboard instrument.

Many of the early intabulations were almost literal transcriptions of the vocal source, sometimes with ornamentation added. A sample page from the *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton* (1504) (Ex.1) containing the *superius* and *tenor* parts illustrates how impractical it would be for an organist or harpsichordist to play from the part-book when the parts are not aligned in a score, but scattered across several pages or multiple books.

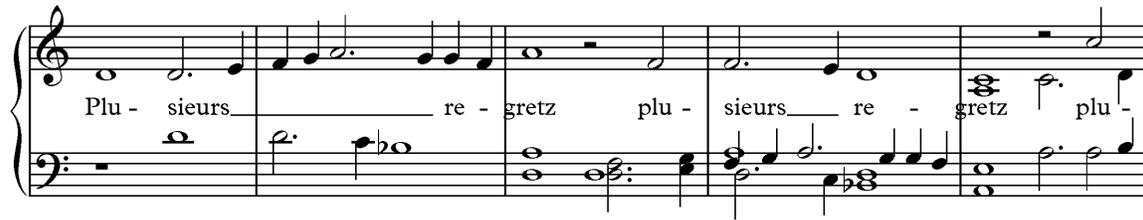
Ex. 1 Josquin des Prez, "De tous biens playne", *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton* (1504)



<sup>2</sup> Ottaviano Petrucci, *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton* (1504) (New York: Broude Bros.), 101.

Soon composers began to be more creative with this process. An early example of this is the 1523 intabulation by Marco Antonio Cavazzoni (c.1490 – c.1560) of a chanson by Josquin, “Plusieurs regretz” (Ex.2).<sup>3</sup> The resulting canzona (Ex.3) is titled “Plus ne regres”.<sup>4</sup>

Ex. 2. Josquin Des Prez, “Plusieurs regretz”. mm. 1 – 5. Reduction of the five voice chanson.



Ex. 3. Marco Antonio Cavazzoni, “Plus ne regres”. mm. 1 - 5



In these two examples the first five measures of both the chanson and the canzona are displayed next to each other. The keyboard version begins as an adaptation for two voices of the five-voice chanson, altering some supporting voices and adding basic ornamentation to the melody. However, after a few measures, Cavazzoni diverges from the vocal model by repeating the opening motives, this time an octave higher, before returning to the next part of Josquin’s chanson. Here the creative and inventive arranger/composer avoids settling for a literal note-for-note transmission of the vocal model, but displays the improvisational skills of an organist accustomed to adopting and

<sup>3</sup> Josquin des Prez, *New Josquin Edition*, v.29, ed. Willem Elders, Lawrence F. Bernstein and W. I. M. Elders (Utrecht: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1987), 56.

<sup>4</sup> Marco Antonio Cavazzoni, *Recerchari Motetti Canzoni Libro Primo (1523)*, ed. Liuwe Tamminga (Venice: Istituto dell’Organo Storico Italiano, 2009), 30.

elaborating motets and chansons for the keyboard. In the following decade Marco's son, Girolamo Cavazzoni (c. 1525 - after 1577), perfected this art of building a new work from selected motives in a French chanson.

In the mid-sixteenth century, intabulations by composers such as Claudio Merulo (1533 – 1604) generated a large volume of musical works for keyboard with little adaptation other than the addition of generic ornamentation. These pieces are usually of less interest to present-day musicians. By the time of the 1593 prints of the Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1554/1557 – 1612) keyboard works, intabulation was a fading practice; most canzone were newly created works.

## **Notation**

Because most French chansons were preserved only in separate part books, it was necessary for the work to be converted to a format readable by a single keyboard player. To accomplish this task, composers, copyists, and printers used two primary formats: Italian keyboard score and *partitura*. Works that were copied by hand almost always used some version of the Italian keyboard score, i.e., a two-staff score, even when the works were contrapuntal, such as a *ricercare* or *canzona*. Although modern authors sometimes refer to these scores as “Italian keyboard tablature,” the Italians did not adopt letter systems such as the Germans did in their tablature notation, or numbers like the Spanish used in their tablature system; the Italian format was always lined staves, varying from five to eight lines. Because sixteenth-century organs and harpsichords had a limited compass of about four octaves, this system avoided frequent use of ledger lines. The staves often had compound clefs, indicating the placement both of the lowest C and of G or F. A third staff for organ pedal was never used in the Italian keyboard score until late

in the seventeenth century. Sometimes the pedal notes would be labeled as such in the keyboard score, but this was not done consistently. However, for printed music, both when using moveable type and when using engraved plates, the two staff keyboard score was employed for toccatas, intonations, dance movements, and partitas. *Partitura*, i.e. a four-stave open score format, was almost always used for contrapuntal works. This example (Ex.4) shows the opening four measures of a Frescobaldi canzona in *partitura*.<sup>5</sup> The *partitura* format allowed the player to follow the voice leadings more clearly while retaining the commercial advantage that non-keyboard instrumentalists could also use the printed music.

Ex. 4. Girolamo Frescobaldi, “Canzon Seconda”, *Recercari e Canzoni* (1615). mm. 1 - 4



## Tempo and Meter

Various authors, including Michael Praetorius in *Syntagma Musicum* (1614-19), note that one significant difference between a ricercare and a canzona is that ricercari are

<sup>5</sup> Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Orgel- Und Clavierwerke*, bk.1, t.1, ed. Christopher Stembridge and Kenneth Gilbert (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009), 40.

written primarily in white (long) notes while canzone feature black (short) notes.<sup>6</sup> This highlights the correlation with the vocal material that served as the source for these canzone, as well as suggesting a potential difference in the tempo of the respective pieces. The early *ricercare* had as its model the vocal motet, involving *stile antico* polyphony with a sacred text, a serious manner, and a slower tempo. The *canzona* also had vocal polyphony as its model, but it was based on the French *chanson*, in a much livelier style with a secular text. The *canzona* came into existence during the transition from the Renaissance to the early Baroque styles. Initially its rhythmic roots were influenced by the ideas of *tactus* and *mensuration*, incorporating proportional note values. Its harmonic structure still adhered to the church modes resulting from the hexachord systems, although this was rapidly changing by the time of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583 – 1643). The key indicators of tempo were the combination of meter, note values, and the rhythmic subdivisions.

It was the Neapolitan composers who began the practice of incorporating triple-meter sections into their canzone. As early as 1586, Giovanni de Macque published canzone that had triple-meter sections.<sup>7</sup> A generation later, Frescobaldi's Ferrara contemporary, Ercole Pasquini, wrote a collection of canzone including a well-known work, "Canzona 16," which used a form of duple – triple – duple sections.<sup>8</sup>

The most common arrangement, particularly among the Neapolitan composers, was either a three-section (duple-triple-duple) or a five-section (duple-triple-duple-triple-

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum*, part 3, ed. Wilibald Gurlitt (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1959), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Giovanni de Macque, *Opere Per Tastiera, Vol. I: Capricci – Stravaganze – Canzoni etc*, ed. Liuwe Tamminga (Colledara: Istituto dell'Organo Storico, Italiano, 2013), 20.

<sup>8</sup> Ercole Pasquini, *Collected Keyboard Works in Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, vol. 12, ed. W. Richard Shindle (N.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1966), 38.

duple) structure. The metrical architecture of the canzona became one of the primary indicators of its formal structure. The more advanced of the Neapolitan composers would often create subsections within these major sections.

## Categories of Canzone

### The Intabulated Canzona

I have identified five categories of *canzone*.<sup>9</sup> The first category is the *intabulated* canzona, with or without ornamentation. These examples are primarily drawn from the sixteenth century. Their ornamentation tends to be of the florid variety described by Diruta and Sancta Maria in their treatises. The canzone by Claudio Merulo are typical of this ornamented type. In his canzone “La Zambecara” (Ex. 5) the virtuosity of the ornamentation overshadows the counterpoint of the underlying canzona subjects.<sup>10</sup>

Ex. 5. Claudio Merulo, *La Zambecara*. mm. 1 - 2

Canzon à 4, dita  
» La Zambecara «

The image shows a musical score for Claudio Merulo's 'La Zambecara'. It is a two-staff piece in 4/4 time, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The upper staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments, including mordents and grace notes. The lower staff contains a bass line with a similar ornate texture. The piece is marked 'Canzon à 4, dita' and '» La Zambecara «'. The first two measures are shown, with a double bar line after the second measure.

There are points of imitation using the subject, but no countersubjects; the texture often becomes homophonic and devoid of suspensions. These Merulo canzone tend to be through-composed without any clearly defined sections.

<sup>9</sup> For identification of the categories *contrast canzona* and *variation canzona* see Willi Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, 455.

<sup>10</sup> Claudio Merulo, *Canzonas (1592) for Organ*, ed. Pierre Pidoux (Boca Raton, FL: Masters Music Publications, Inc, 1941), 8.

## The Parody Canzona

The second canzona category is the *parody canzona*<sup>11</sup>, wherein snippets of the original source become points of imitation in a new composition. Consider Girolamo Cavazzoni's adaptation of the famous five-part Josquin chanson "Faulte d'argent" (Ex. 6).<sup>12</sup> The vocal work opens with a canon between the *Bassus* and *Altus* and is filled with canonic entrances. For his canzona Cavazzoni selected the following three motives from the work:

Ex. 6. Josquin Des Prez, "Faulte d'argent". mm. 1 – 3; 24 - 25

The image shows three musical motives from Josquin's "Faulte d'argent". Motive S.a is in bass clef, G-clef, and common time, with lyrics "Faul - te d'ar - gent \_\_\_\_\_ c'est dou - leur non pa - reil - le". Motive S.b is also in bass clef, G-clef, and common time, with lyrics "c'est dou - leur non pa - reil - le". Motive S.c is in treble clef, F-clef, and common time, with lyrics "Se je le dis,".

Cavazzoni's resulting piece is not merely a transcription for keyboard of a vocal piece but an even more creative reworking of the vocal material. Retaining the ABA form of the original chanson, Girolamo Cavazzoni extracts three segments from Josquin's chanson, using each as an imitative subject; he then adds two new subjects of his own creation. He recombines these subjects, retaining the ABA form of the original chanson in his "Canzon sopra Fault d'argens" (Ex. 7).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Parody canzona as a category was suggested in: Martin Picker, "A Josquin Parody by Marco Antonio Cavazzoni." *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 22 no.3 (1972): 157-159.

<sup>12</sup> Josquin des Prez, *New Josquin Edition*, vol.29, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Girolamo Cavazzoni, *Orgelwerke*, ed. Oscar Mischiati (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne. 1959), 22.



Ex.7. Girolamo Cavazzoni, “Canzon sopra ‘Falt D’Argens’”. mm. 1 - 13

This is one of the first examples of the *parody canzona*.

## The Canzona da Sonare

The *canzona da sonare*, unlike the previous categories, is not a keyboard category. Rather, it implies a canzona for an instrumental ensemble such as a brass group, a string ensemble, or a mixed consort. During the seventeenth century it developed its own unique style, and evolved into the early sonata. In 1628 Frescobaldi published a set of thirty-eight *canzona da sonare* for various groupings of two, three, and four instruments. Frescobaldi subsequently rewrote several of these for keyboard; they are included in a 1645 posthumous publication.

## The Contrast Canzona

At St. Mark’s Basilica the brilliant antiphonal use of *canzone da sonare* for brass ensembles became famous far beyond Venice. The imitation of this Venetian brass music resulted in a similar type of keyboard work that is called *contrast canzona*. This is the category used by the Venetian school of Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli and their

followers in Southern Germany. These pieces had multiple sections with clearly defined cadences. Each section has an exposition, brief development, and ornamented cadence; the succeeding sections each have a new subject that contrasts with that of the previous section. In the majority of these pieces the Venetian composers used a single duple meter for the entire work.

In the Venetian school there are more similarities between instrumental ensemble and keyboard canzone than are found in southern Italy. One common feature is the use of paired voices in dialogue with each other in the manner of antiphonal choirs at St. Mark’s Basilica. An excerpt from “Canzon II” (Ex. 8) by Giovanni Gabrieli illustrates this practice:<sup>14</sup>

Ex. 8. Giovanni Gabrieli, “Canzon II”. mm 1 - 3



Within a few decades, Heinrich Scheidemann (c. 1595 – 1663) in Hamburg integrated these same echo features that he learned from his teacher Sweelinck into his *Canzona in G*, contrasting the *Oberwerk* division with the *Rückpositif*, first by rapidly switching hands between the two manuals, and then by alternating the right hand between the two manuals.

Although the origin of the contrast canzona was in Venice, this category was common also among the Neapolitan composers. The “Canzona Franzesa Quarta” (Ex.9) by Giovanni Maria Trabaci (1575 – 1647) is a good example of the sectional contrast

<sup>14</sup> Giovanni Gabrieli, *Composizioni Per Organo* (Milano: Ricordi, 1957), 51.

canzona as practiced by the Neapolitan school.<sup>15</sup> It is in five sections, each demarcated by a change in meter and a change in subject. It is one of the first examples of a canzona with a slow introductory section, a practice that became more common in Naples.

**Ex. 9. Giovanni Maria Trabaci, “Canzona Franzesa Quarta”, *Libro primo* (1603)**

Canzona Subjects

S.a (mm. 9 - 10)

S.b (mm. 16 - 18)

S.c (m. 21)

S.d (m. 38)

S.e (m.45)

It alternates strict polyphonic material with homophonic sections and toccata *passaggi* as described in Table 1. The entire opening duple-meter section is chordal, with written-out ornamentation in almost every measure and a slower tempo than is normal for an canzona.

**Table 1. Formal structure of Trabaci’s “Canzona Franzesa Quarta”**

Giovanni Maria Trabaci, “Canzona Franzesa Quarta”, <i>Libro primo</i> (1603) : <i>Ricercate, Canzone Franzese, Capricci etc.</i>					
	Duple	Triple	Duple	Triple	Duple
Texture:	Homophony	Polyphony / Homophony	Polyphony	Homophony /Polyphony	Polyphony / Toccata
Subject:		S.a S.b	S.c	S.b <sup>1</sup>	S.d S.e
mm.	1-8	9-20	21-29	30-45	45-64

<sup>15</sup> Giovanni Maria Trabaci, *Libro Primo* (1603): *Ricercate, Canzone Franzese, Capricci etc.*, ed. Armando Carideo (Latina: Il Levante Libreria Editrice, 2010), 40.

Only at the beginning of the first triple-meter section do we find the initial set of polyphonic entries. In the next duple-meter section rhythmic activity is accelerated by introducing a new subject with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second triple-meter section begins with a homophonic passage similar to the conclusion of the previous triple-meter section but then an inverted version of the first subject, S.b<sup>1</sup>, is briefly introduced and imitated. The character of the section is sedate compared to the proceeding and succeeding sections. The final duple-meter section has three subsections. First a new four-note subject, S.d, is presented in stretto, rapidly jumping between voices; in five measures there are twelve presentations of the subject. The next subsection, still in duple-meter, introduces the last new subject, S.e. It is rhythmically identical, but melodically different from subject S.b. Imitation occurs after the downbeat of every measure, but instead of being written at the octave and the fifth, it occurs at the octave and the third. The final twelve measures consist of toccata-like *passaggi* with a mix of dotted rhythms in rather unpredictable patterns that were heard previously in the earlier section.

## **The Variation Canzona**

The origins of the *variation canzona* come from two regions that had close political and musical links in the early sixteenth century: Naples and Ferrara. The musical link between the two cities was strengthened by regular visits to the court of the Duke of Ferrara by Don Carlo Gesualdo and an entourage of Neapolitan composers. A two-year residence in Ferrara led to the marriage of this nobleman composer, famous for his madrigals, to the Duke's daughter. Neapolitan organists, including Giovanni de Macque and his pupil Ascanio Mayone, brought early examples of the canzona as

practiced in Naples to the thriving musical culture in Ferrara. De Macque was Netherlandish by birth but spent almost all of his life in Naples. He was a student of Gesualdo and absorbed Gesualdo's chromatism into his own music, which included a prolific output of madrigals, but also many canzone, ricercari, and capricci that display this chromatism. To this Neapolitan school of composers we must add Ercole Pasquini (c.1560 – after 1608) and Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583 – 1643) who were contemporaries in Ferrara, and who both studied organ with one of the most illustrious organists at the time, Luzzasco Luzzaschi. They both eventually became organists at St. Peter's in Rome, with Frescobaldi succeeding Pasquini in that post.

The variation canzona is a monothematic canzona in which the various sections of the canzona retain aspects of the primary theme but vary its appearance by changes in meter, rhythm, and ornamentation. Consider a work by Ercole Pasquini. In his *Canzona 16a* (Ex.10), changes in note values generate the variants on the primary subject.<sup>16</sup> To derive the second subject, note values are doubled, and five notes in the middle of the primary subject are deleted in the second subject. The third subject converts the second subject to shorter note values, eliminating the first two repeated notes and the final two notes. The difference between the G# in the first subject and the G ♮ in the two variant subjects is due to *musica ficta* in the harmonic context.

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<sup>16</sup> Ercole Pasquini, *Collected Keyboard Works*, 38.

Ex. 10. Ercole Pasquini, “Canzona 16a” Subjects

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different subject from Ercole Pasquini's "Canzona 16a".

- S.a (mm. 1 - 3):** A treble clef staff in common time (C). It begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note C4.
- S.b (mm. 32 - 33):** A treble clef staff in 3/2 time. It begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note C4.
- S.c (mm. 51 - 52):** A treble clef staff in common time (C). It begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note C4.

In 1615, while still in Ferrara, Frescobaldi published a book of six ricercari and five canzone. In this collection his “Canzona Seconda” introduced a new level of sophistication.<sup>17</sup> There was complexity to the form that moved beyond mere alternation of duple and triple meters. There are eight subjects and three countersubjects in the canzona. All of them are derived from the initial subject. The modifications of the opening subject now included melodic variation, not just rhythmic. There are thematic relationships between the subject and their countersubjects. The rhythmic activity increases as the canzona progresses. There is frequent experimentation with the metrical placement of entries, contrasting upbeat entries with downbeat entries. These new canzone merge the lighthearted quality of the canzone with the intellectual rigor found in the counterpoint of the ricercare.

When the subjects of the “Canzona Seconda” (Ex.11) are examined, several observations can be made: (1) the underlying basis of the subject is a simple melodic contour rising a perfect fourth and then descending back to the starting note. (2) The

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<sup>17</sup> Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Recercari, et Canzoni franzese (Rom, Zannetti, 1615, 2/1618)* in *Organ and Keyboard Works*, bd.1 t.1, ed. Christopher Stenbridge and Kenneth Gilbert (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009), 40.

subject is symmetrical and the second half of the subject is a mirror image of the first half. (3) Contrast between the two halves is created by the *musica ficta* that gives an F# on the ascent but an F ♮ on the descent.

Ex. 11. Girolamo Frescobaldi, “Canzona Seconda”, *Recercari et Canzoni franzese* (1615)

Subjects and Countersubjects

The image displays ten staves of musical notation, each representing a different subject or countersubject. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The subjects are labeled S.a through S.h, and the countersubjects are labeled CS.d through CS.f. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and accidentals (sharps and naturals). The subjects and countersubjects are arranged in a sequence, with S.a and S.b being the most prominent. The notation is presented in a clear, black-and-white format, suitable for educational or analytical purposes.

In creating the eight different versions of the subject in this canzona, Frescobaldi enhances the rhythmic variation by changing the melodic shape, dividing the subject into shorter motives, adding or subtracting notes to the subject, and moving the position of the leap in the subject to its beginning.

**Table 2. Formal Structure of Frescobaldi’s “Canzona Seconda”**

	Girolamo Frescobaldi, “Canzona Seconda” (1615) Formal structure							
	Duple		Triple	Duple			Triple	Duple
Subject and Counter-subject	S.a	S.b	S.c	S.d	S.e	S.f	S.g	S.h
mm.	1-11	11-21	22-31	CS.d	CS.e	CS.f		
				32-40	40-45	45-52	53-59	60-66

Although the “Canzona Seconda” is still based on the modal hexachord system carried over from the Renaissance, Frescobaldi creates a clear demarcation between sections and subsections by using a cadence, including a major third, at the end of each section. In the first duple-meter section, he increases rhythmic activity by shortening the interval of stretto entries and changing the opening half notes to two repeated quarter notes. This technique of changing the rhythmic values of the opening notes is one of the most common rhythmic variants encountered throughout the canzona literature.

In the long duple-meter central section of the “Canzona Seconda” Frescobaldi creates three subsections; each subject has its own countersubject that is derived from the initial subject. This is typical of Frescobaldi. A major difference between his counterpoint and that of his contemporaries is that they often write countersubjects that are independent of the initial subject, and they are less consistent about preserving them when they have been introduced. In this canzona the countersubject CS.d is a three-note pickup that comes to dominate the section. In the next subsection CS.e, Frescobaldi

employs eighth notes in the first half of the subject and countersubject to increase intensity in the texture. In the next countersubject CS.f, he creates a new three-note pickup figure, adds sixteenth-notes to the mix for the first time in the piece, extends the range of the countersubject to an octave, expands the range, and moves the metrical placement of the leap.

Unlike some genres such as the fantasia, which he abandoned after a period of exploration and experimentation, Frescobaldi wrote, revised, and published canzone throughout his entire career. His published collections in 1615, 1627, and 1637, each contain a group of canzone. Around 1628 he published a set of *canzone da sonare* for various instrumental ensembles, subsequently revising and rewriting some of these for keyboard. He left a legacy of at least twenty-seven additional canzone for keyboard instruments in manuscript form.

The compositional output of Frescobaldi's most famous student, Johann Jacob Froberger (1616 – 1667), clearly reflects their mutual interest in the canzona form. Although Froberger is best known for his keyboard suites and toccatas, the six *canzone* that he gathered in his 1649 *Libro Secondo* match the craftsmanship, complexity, and variety of those by his teacher. The example selected for this discussion, Froberger's "Canzona II," is also of the variation type and features a striking descending chromatic subject that is identifiable to the listener in all of its permutations.<sup>18</sup> Ex. 12 displays the three variants of the chromatic theme.

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<sup>18</sup> Johann Jacob Froberger, *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Clavier- und Orgelwerke*, bd 1, ed. Siegbert Rampe (Kassel: Bärenreiter 1993), 50.

Ex. 12a. Johann Jacob Froberger, "Canzon II", Libro Secondo, Terza Parte (1649). m.1



Ex. 12b. Johann Jacob Froberger, "Canzon II", Libro Secondo, Terza Parte. mm. 21-22



Ex. 12c. Johann Jacob Froberger, "Canzon II", Libro Secondo, Terza Parte. mm. 47 - 48



The next canzona to be considered also contains a similar chromatic countersubject. It is a very early effort by Johann Sebastian Bach, his *Canzona* BWV 588.<sup>19</sup> Robert Hill has discussed Bach's early studies of German organ tablature; many of the works he studied were only available in tablature.<sup>20</sup> Hill thinks that Bach may have composed in tablature both in order to master the notation and to absorb the music of his North German predecessors. Christoph Wolff has suggested that this piece was written

<sup>19</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach, *Johann Sebastian Bach's Compositionen für die Orgel*, vol. 4, ed. Friedrich Conrad Griepenkerl and Friedrich August Roitzsch (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, 1947), 58.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Hill, "Tablature versus Staff Notation," in *Church, Studio, and Stage: Music in its Contexts in Seventeenth Century Germany*, ed. Paul M. Walker (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990), 349-359.

sometime before the Lüneburg period, when Bach was less than fifteen years old.<sup>21</sup> This is a period in Bach's education where the influence of Johann Adam Reincken (1643 – 1722) in nearby Hamburg played an important role in introducing Bach to the North German organ style. Although no examples of canzone by Reincken are known, Reincken was probably familiar with examples by Samuel Scheidt (1587 - 1654), Heinrich Scheidemann (1595 - 1663), and Franz Tunder (1614 - 1667). In any case, Bach is known to have made a complete copy by hand of Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali*.<sup>22</sup> Various authors have pointed out the similarities both of subjects and formal structure between Bach's canzone and "Canzon dopo l'Epistola" from "Messa della Madonna" in the *Fiori Musicali*.<sup>23</sup> Bach's theme (Ex. 23) is similar to Frescobaldi's countersubject (Ex.24).

Ex. 23. J. S. Bach, "Canzona", BWV 588. mm. 15 - 21



Ex. 24. Girolamo Frescobaldi, "Canzon dopo l'Epistola", *Messa della Madonna*. mm. 1 - 4

<sup>21</sup> Christoph Wolff, "Johann Adam Reincken and Johann Sebastian Bach: On the Context of Bach's Early Works," in *J.S. Bach as Organist: His Instruments, Music and Performance Practices*, ed. Ernest May (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 110.

<sup>22</sup> Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Fiori musicali: (Venezia 1635) per organo*, ed. Andrea Macinanti and Francesco Tasini (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2001), 70.

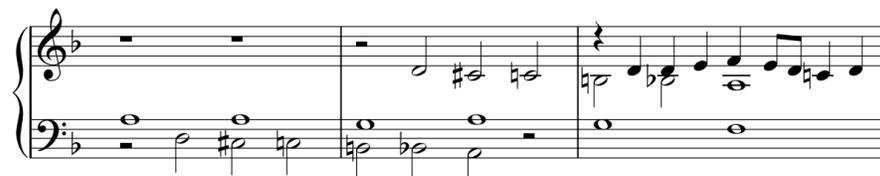
<sup>23</sup> Peter Williams, *The Organ Music of J. S. Bach*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192.

Also, Bach's descending chromatic countersubject (Ex. 25) is similar to the second "Christe" setting from Frescobaldi's "Messa Delli Apostoli" in *Fiori Musicali* (Ex. 26).

Ex. 25. J. S. Bach, "Canzona", BWV 588. mm. 48 – 55



Ex. 26. Girolamo Frescobaldi, "Christe", *Messa Delli Apostoli* mm. 1 - 3



This chromatic countersubject also bears a strong resemblance to the subject examined earlier in the Froberger "Canzona II."

BWV 588 is of the Italian variation type, where all of the subjects are derived from the initial subject. However, the piece does not use the three- or five-section structures typical of canzone composed by Frescobaldi. The first half of the piece is in duple meter, the second half is in triple meter. In the duple-meter section, the exposition in four voices is followed by an episode that explores the chromatic countersubject before concluding with a second exposition. In the second section, after the exposition of the triple-meter variants of the subject and countersubject, there are episodes that modulate to the supertonic and subdominant regions. After a series of entries that return to the tonic there is a coda, with the last statement of the subject in the tenor voice over a dominant pedal point.

## Standard Subject Types

There is a general impression that most canzone begin with a duple dactyl rhythm of repeated notes similar to the subject in an example (Ex. 27) by Giovanni Paolo Cima.<sup>24</sup>

Ex. 27. Giovanni Paolo Cima, “La Marosa – Canzon 1”. mm. 1-2



In a review of about 160 canzone I formed a different impression, and realized that such a conclusion is an over-generalization. First, there are clear differences between the composers affiliated with Venice and those connected with the Ferrara – Naples circle. The Venetian composers started their canzone with a repeated note dactyl rhythm in about 50 percent of the examples surveyed (Table 3). For the Neapolitan circle only about 30 percent utilize this type of subject (Table 4). Overall, roughly 40 percent of canzone reviewed use this kind of dactyl opening. A related observation is that composers active in the early seventeenth century were much more likely to use this kind of stereotyped subject than those active in the later part of the century.

Table 3.

Venetian Circle				
Composer	Major post	# Canzone reviewed	# with dactyl repeated note subject	% with dactyl repeated note subject
Andrea Gabrieli	Venice	13	6	
Giovanni Gabrieli	Venice	5	4	
Sperindo Bertoldi	Padua	4	2	

<sup>24</sup> Giovanni Paolo Cima, *Partito de Ricercari & Canzoni alla Francese (1606)* in *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, vol. 20 (N.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1969), 26.

Claudio Merulo	Venice	9	6	
Christian Erbach	Augsburg	23	13	
Simon Lohet	Stuttgart	21	6	
Giovani Paolo Cima	Milan	14	7	
TOTAL		89	44	49%

**Table 4.**

Neapolitan Circle (Ferrara / Naples / Rome)				
Composer	Major post	# Canzone reviewed	# with dactyl repeated note subject	% with dactyl repeated note subject
Ascanio Mayone	Naples	8	6	
Ippolito	Naples	2	1	
Scipione Stella	Naples	3	1	
Rinaldo	Naples	1	0	
Fabrizio Fillimarino	Naples	1	0	
Carlo Gesualdo	Ferrara	1	0	
Ercole Pasquini	Ferrara & Rome	7	2	
G. Maria Trabaci	Naples	7	2	
Giovanni Salvatore	Naples	4	1	
G. Frescobaldi – published canzone	Ferrara & Rome	15	4	
G. Frescobaldi – manuscript canzone	Rome	20	6	
TOTALS		69	23	33%

Another characteristic of canzone subjects is their tendency to be very limited in range. They often move in diatonic steps with few leaps of larger intervals. Many subjects only cover the compass of a perfect fifth or major sixth. The earlier canzone in particular tend to have vocal subjects that clearly relate to the tradition of intabulation of French chansons. German composers trained in Italy began to expand the range of the subject. Johann Kasper Kerll (1627 – 1693) and Matthias Weckmann (1616 - 1674) wrote pieces that had a range of a major tenth for their subjects, and some Buxtehude canzone

had even larger ranges. Another trend was for subjects to become more instrumental, imitating the style of the violin or some other instrument rather than the human voice. The long subjects full of sixteenth notes favored by Weckman and Buxtehude are often labeled *spielfugen*, and reflect the influence of stringed instruments.

Particularly for the composers working in the Neapolitan region, an important influence was the chromaticism exploited in Gesualdo's madrigals. Another influence was the many experiments by Neapolitan composers in the generation before Frescobaldi with *durezza e ligature* style, that is, a style using extensive harmonic dissonance and suspension for expressive purposes. This style is most commonly observed in the organ toccatas, but influenced the canzona as well. Fabrizio Fillimarino (fl. 1594) and Trabaci both wrote early examples of canzone with chromatic subjects, a type that was developed more extensively by Frescobaldi and his student Froberger. As noted above, Bach's sole exercise in the canzona genre combines a chromatic countersubject taken from Frescobaldi with a subject also borrowed from Frescobaldi.

## **Contrapuntal Characteristics**

Contrapuntal texture is a basic characteristic of the canzona. The most distinctive contrapuntal feature is the use of points of imitation, in which voices enter successively using the same subject, just as they do in the beginning of a fugue.

So how does a canzona differ from the style of fugues that Bach and many other Baroque composers wrote so prolifically in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? There are a number of differences that are useful to consider. First of all, fugues were usually not sectional and did not use alternating meters. Expectations for counterpoint were stricter in fugues, especially involving the use of countersubjects. The fugue had a

more extensive development section, and more modulation to contrasting tonal regions. Both genres used contrapuntal devices such as stretto, inversion of subjects, diminution and augmentation, but the fugue tended to employ these techniques much more frequently. Unlike conventional fugues, canzone also employed stretto entries as part of the initial presentation of the subject.

Almost all canzone begin with a point of imitation, but what occurs after the initial exposition varies considerably. Often composers proceed without introducing any countersubject. In many works the counterpoint is free of repetition and reuse of material aside from the subject itself. At the other extreme, Frescobaldi generally retains his countersubjects with minimal alteration throughout an entire section.

In some of the early Neapolitan canzone the counterpoint disappears at times and is replaced by homophony. In this excerpt from a Salvatore canzone (Ex. 28), the counterpoint is interrupted by four measures of chords before a new subject is introduced and the polyphony resumes.<sup>25</sup>

Ex. 28. Giovanni Salvatore, “Canzona Francese Seconda”. mm. 21 - 25



In other Neapolitan canzone the subject enters at various pitch levels, creating a sense of points of imitation, but there is no counterpoint, only a series of chords accompanying the entries. Particularly with the Neapolitan composers, there is a tendency to substitute pedal

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<sup>25</sup> Giovanni Salvatore, *Collected Keyboard Works in Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, vol. 3, ed. Barton Hudson (N.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1964), 38.

tones or chords during secondary entries of subjects rather than maintaining a countersubject or a second independent polyphonic line.

The influence of other keyboard genres, especially the Italian toccata and organ intonations, can be noted in many of the Neapolitan canzone. In addition to inserting homophonic sections into their compositions, Neapolitan composers were fond of beginning a canzone with a slow introductory section, such as the one found in Trabaci's "Canzona Franzese Quarta" discussed earlier, or concluding an entire section with toccata-like flourishes which that have little resemblance to the preceding canzona subjects.

### **Liturgical Considerations**

In spite of its secular roots, the canzona became an integral part of the organ repertoire used in the Catholic liturgies, including celebration of the Mass. An edict from the Council of Trent suppressing use of profane music within the Mass stated: "In those Masses where measured music and organ are customary, nothing profane should be intermingled, but only hymns and divine praises."<sup>26</sup> The ruling of the Council of Trent concerning the reforms needed for liturgical music was soon followed by the 1600 codification of musical practice in the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*.

As organist at St. Peter's in Rome, a post he held from 1608 until his death in 1643, Frescobaldi would surely have been aware of the guidelines. But the guidelines were vague enough to allow latitude for a wide range of music, and the responsibility for implementing the new liturgical guidelines lay with each individual diocese. Thus,

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<sup>26</sup> Philippe Vendrix, *Music and the Renaissance: "Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation"* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 495.

following the publication of the *Caeremoniale* there was a flood of manuals and collections supplying musical resources for organists to use in the practice of *alternatim* in compliance with the new guidelines. Collections by Adriano Banchieri, Costanzo Antegnati, and Girolamo Diruta, among others, were soon available as models for organists. Frescobaldi's 1635 publication of *Fiori Musicali* was the culmination of this trend.<sup>27</sup> Its title page states that it was written specifically for organists involved in answering the choir and imitating singers. In *Fiori Musicali* the "Messa Della Domenica," the "Messa Della Apostoli," and the "Messa Della Madonna" each contain toccatas and ricercares suitable for *alternatim* usage during the ordinary portions of the Mass. At its core were versets based on the Gregorian chant for the Kyrie of three Masses typically treated in *alternatim*. Frescobaldi expanded the selections beyond chant-based versets to include four canzone and two pieces based on popular melodies, "Bergamasca" and "Capriccio sopra la Girolmeta," and indicates their suitability for use after the epistle and for the postcommunion. Similarly, Catholic liturgies in southern Germany also incorporated the canzona.

During the initial phases of the Reformation, various Protestant writers such as Christoph Demantius mention the use of motets and canzone in the Protestant service.<sup>28</sup> But soon the chorale came to dominate the worship of the Lutheran services, and psalm settings became the only music employed in the Calvinist services. Consequently, in Calvinist regions such as the Netherlands where the organ was used only before and after services for concerts, the canzona became part of the programming for those secular concerts. Likewise, in the Lutheran liturgy, the logical use of the canzona was in the

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<sup>27</sup> Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Fiori musicali: (Venezia 1635) per organo*.

<sup>28</sup> Hans Heinrich Eggenbrecht, "Ein Musiklexicon von Christoph Demantius." *Die Musikforschung* 10 (1957), 52.

prelude prior to the service, sometimes as a freestanding canzona, but more frequently integrated into a larger praeludium or toccata.

## Dissemination

The spread of the canzona to the rest of Europe occurred fairly rapidly. A primary reason for this was the rapid dissemination of Frescobaldi's published works, particularly *Fiori Musicali*. It is hard to think of a more influential publication on the development of seventeenth-century organists. Buxtehude, Bach, and Sweelinck are all part of a long lineage of organists who knew and studied Frescobaldi's published works, which circulated widely throughout Europe.

The case of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562 – 1621) is instructive. His primary teachers were his father and grandfather. He did not travel to England or to Italy, yet he clearly absorbed the music of both the Elizabethan virginalists and the Italian organists because we can find elements of both spheres in his toccatas. Although Sweelinck did not write any freestanding canzone, he did write four toccatas that contain central imitative sections of a standard canzona type.

Sweelinck's *Toccatà in d* (Ex. 29) opens with canonic writing in three voices over a basso continuo line; after ten measures it transitions into sixteenth-note toccata

Ex. 29. Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, "Toccatà in d". mm.38 - 45

The image displays a musical score for a section of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck's "Toccatà in d". The score is presented in two systems. The first system, measures 38-45, shows a canonic section with three voices (treble, alto, and bass) and a basso continuo line. The second system, measures 41-45, shows a transition into a sixteenth-note toccata section. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks.

*passaggi*.<sup>29</sup> However the florid lines are interrupted and Sweelinck then begins a central imitative section very much in the manner of a canzone, this time with the bass line also participating in the canonic activity.

A distinctive feature of these Sweelinck toccatas is the manner in which he would overlap the conclusion of the canzona section with the resumption of the toccata figuration. One of the most famous pieces of his student Heinrich Scheidemann (c. 1595 – 1663), the *Toccata in G* (H43), combines toccata, canzone, echo and monody using these same techniques. Like the other north German composers who wrote canzone, Scheidemann had at his disposal a much larger instrument than the typical Italian organ. In seventeenth century Italy, organs were almost always single manual instruments with a limited pull-down pedal. His “Canzona in G” utilizes the resources of an organ with multiple divisions and keyboards, a generous selection of color stops, and a plenum in each division; this work is an example of a canzona that is no longer restricted to a single manual, but contrasts the voices between the rückpositif, oberwerk and pedal division.<sup>30</sup>

Another reason for the spread of the canzona was the steady stream of students traveling from across the continent to study in Venice with Gabrieli and in Rome with Frescobaldi. Many of Frescobaldi’s Italian students are now forgotten, but one prominent student, Johann Jacob Froberger, a native of Stuttgart, played an important role in the spread of the canzona across Europe. Like Frescobaldi, Froberger devoted himself almost exclusively to the composition of keyboard music. For fourteen years he moved between

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<sup>29</sup> Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, ed. Gustav Leonhardt, Alfons Annegarn and Frits Noske (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziek geschiedenis, 1968), 90.

<sup>30</sup> Heinrich Scheidemann, *Orgelwerke. Band III : Praeambeln, Fugen, Fantasien, Canzonen Und Toccaten*, ed. Werner Breig (Kassel: Barenreiter, 1971).

Vienna and Rome, studying with Frescobaldi for four years, serving as singer in the imperial court in Vienna, and writing his second book of keyboard works, which he presented to the Emperor. Subsequently he traveled across Europe, presumably in search of a better position, visiting musical establishments in Paris, Brussels, Dresden, Antwerp, and Cologne. In Dresden he began a long friendship with the musician Matthias Weckmann, and in Paris with Louis Couperin and other Parisian organists.<sup>31</sup>

New innovations came with the spread of this genre. Froberger himself introduced a more rhapsodic style to the canzona, incorporating interludes and codas into the structure. Johann Caspar Kerll knew Froberger from student days in Rome. He held important organist positions in Vienna, Brussels, and Munich. His innovative canzona subjects (Ex.30) are distinctively instrumental, with a penchant for repeated notes, triad-based subjects, and heightened contrast between sectional subjects. In Kerll's "Canzona Terza" there is a more mature baroque style that uses harmonic sequences incorporating an extended series of 4-3 suspensions.<sup>32</sup> This differs from the Italian examples of canzona in which it is difficult to find examples of extended harmonic sequences.

Ex. 30a. Johann Casper Kerll, *Canzona Terza*. mm. 1-3



<sup>31</sup> George J. Buelow, "Johann Jacob Froberger," in *The New Grove North European Baroque Masters: Schütz, Froberger, Buxtehude, Purcell, Telemann* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 153-57.

<sup>32</sup> Johann Caspar Kerll, *Sämtliche Werke Für Tasteninstrumente*, ed. John O'Donnell (Wien: Doblinger, 1994), 27.



Ex. 31. Matthias Weckmann, Canzon Dall istesso Tuono [I] in C

Duple section subject (mm. 1-2)



Triple section subject (mm. 19 - 20)



voices, the works are often written in two-voice textures throughout, especially in the triple-meter section where the focus is on the interplay between two rapid sixteenth-note passages.

Six of Buxtehude's twelve canzone are variation canzone. Three have concise subjects in a vocal style and more contrapuntal development. Most of the remaining canzone have *spielfugen* subjects featuring livelier and longer sixteenth-note subjects, less contrapuntal development, more homophonic textures, and the absence of contrapuntal devices such as contrary motion, countersubjects, and stretto. The Buxtehude authority Kerala Snyder views these as modest works, perhaps intended for instruction in performance and less contrapuntal than the fugues contained within the *praeludia* of Buxtehude.<sup>35</sup>

The Buxtehude "Canzona in C" (BuxWV 166) is a triparte canzona using *spielfugen* subjects (Ex. 32). The initial subject consists entirely of sixteenth notes, and is three measures long. It is a four-voice canzona with tonal answers. The countersubject is not maintained consistently after its initial entry; instead a continuo type of harmonization is added over the lower voice entry. At the conclusion of the four-voice exposition, an episode using fragments of the subject in parallel thirds leads to a passage of hocket-like figures, ending with a flourish in the style of a toccata. The countersubject

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<sup>35</sup> Snyder, Kerala J., *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck*. Eastman Studies in Music., Rev. ed. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 232-238.

**Ex. 32. Dieterich Buxtehude, “Canzona in C”, BuxWV166.**

S1 (mm. 1-3)

S2 (mm. 41-43)

S3 (mm. 74-75)

is not maintained consistently after its initial entry; instead a continuo type of harmonization is added over the lower voice entry. At the conclusion of the four-voice exposition, an episode using fragments of the subject in parallel thirds leads to a passage of hocket-like figures, ending with a flourish in the style of a toccata. The triple section is a gigue with a subject built around a sequence of perfect fourths. The concluding 2/2 section has another sixteenth-note subject that is built with some of the motives from the opening subject. It is reminiscent of the ways in which Sweelinck used micro-sized motives recombined in new ways to develop his toccata passagework.

## **Conclusion**

In the last century there have been sporadic attempts to resurrect the canzona, primarily by composers writing for chamber ensemble, concert bands, or woodwind ensemble. For the organ, there have been only a few forays into the genre: the “Canzona” in Jean Langlais’ *Folkloric Suite*, the “Canzona” in Louis Vierne’s *24 Pièces en style libre*, and an organ piece titled “Canzona” by Alexandre Guilmant. Aside from a few minor composers with an antiquarian inclination there has been little interest from composers for the keyboard instruments.

Over the course of two centuries the canzona evolved from an Italian genre with fairly specific parameters to a compositional technique that composers integrated into other types of works. In seventeenth-century Italy an examination of the keyboard works of almost any composer for organ reveals that the toccata, the ricecare, and the canzone represent the core of their output. Even after the golden era of Frescobaldi, the canzona continued to interest composers, particularly in Rome and southern Italy. The ongoing migration of Italian musicians to northern Europe fostered a network of musicians who adapted the canzona to new kinds of instruments, passed the genre on to their students, and began integrating the canzona into the toccata and the prelude. As musical culture changed, the canzona, although still heard in Catholic liturgies, also had a role in the public organ recitals at the Dutch and German Protestant churches, and as music for domestic music making. Eventually, as musical tastes changed in the transitions from the Baroque to the pre-classical period, the importance of the canzona diminished. Despite its eventual demise, the prime examples left to us, especially those by Frescobaldi, Froberger, and the German inheritors of the genre, continue to be rewarding avenues of study and listening.

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