

FERRABOSCO FANTASIAS – STYLISTIC OBSERVATIONS

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[Numbering follows Lbl Madrigal Society Mss.G.37-42,
major source for Musica Britannica vol. 62:
Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger: Four-Part Fantasias (1992)]
(Bracketed numberings are VdGS/Meyer order)

FANTASIA 20 (22)

g (b)

2 sections: *monothematic*

1) m.1- 16 motive **1a** canzona-like, cadential figure (with B^b to C/c, f[#] to g/G)



1b Tenor, m.2 ¼ ♯♯ modal E^b [b^{6th}] in g dorian



*tonal
fluidity*

Overlapping rising line permeates, suggesting parallel entries (m.6, 7)
and (with chromatic alterations) fluid tonal resolutions (eg., m.7-9)

passing cadences: 3g 6g 7G 10d 11B^b 12c

broadening to Bb

- pedal 14B on D(V) – above: *stretti* **1a** A/S; **1b** Tenor ¼ ♯ ¼ ♯

Full cadence on g/G

m.16

2) m.16-42 (end) **1c** counterpoint, Alto – contrasting: descending 4th, “Lachrymae” + Tenor **1a**



*motivic
connection*

1c = **1b** ¼ ♯♯ transformed with *ficta* inflection

passing cadences: 19d B^b/G

m.19: **1a** augmented, Bass / Alto

m.22: **1a** augmented, Bass; over each note: **1a** fragment in Sopr., sequential
- *ficta* inflections lead through harmonic sequences, m.21-24:

F(Vof)-B^b/G(V), A(V)-d/G^{6/3}-c-F-B^b-f-G(V)-c

Cadence on c m.24

*chromatic
harmonic
motion*

m.24: **1a** augmented, Bass C to A^b; upper voices: **1c**

ficta inflections lead further to remote flat areas, m.25-30:

c/C-f/F G-A^b-D^b-E^b(V⁷)-A^b, C-f-c-E^b(V⁷)-A^b

*distant tonal
area
arrival at A^b*

m.27: **1c** paired entries S/A, m.28: T/B

Cadence on A^b m.30

m.29-30: **1a/1c stretti** S/A (high A^b)

trio texture [*Villanella*] S/A/T, desc. sequential, then Bass **1a**, S/A paired

passing cadences: 33D(V)-g/E^b (deceptive) 34A(V)-d/ B^b/g

return to g

m.35: continuing combinations of **1c**, **1a**: **1a** high a” m.36A

1c paired entries m.36 T/B; m.39 S/B

passing cadences: 37A(V of, elided to v)-D^{6/3}-g 39B^b

descending sequences **1c** m.38-41

m.42: Full cadence on G(I+) – coda:

- pedals: 42A on G(I) [3 m.] 43B on G(I) [1+ m.]

- motive recalls: 42T: **1a** [cf m.1]

42S: **1c** [cf m.16] – shifted counterpoint

43S/T: 4/3, 6/5 turn also from **1c**

Final cadence: c(iv)-G(I+) – plagal

m.43

{The summation of Ferrabosco's achievements, short of the chromatic Hexachord fantasias:

- the principal imitative subject comprises a cadential alteration in its very first measure, causing some uncertainty about its modal centre: g? G? c?
- the alterations derive from conventional ficta uses ('una nota sopra la semper est canendum fa' and 'mi/fa' cadential formulas), soon carried to a point of expressive exploitation of cross-relations, "clashes" (see m.12 S/T, m.18 S/A, m.41 A/T), and $x2^{nd}s$, $o5^{th}s/x4^{th}s$, $o4^{ths}$
- harmonic ambiguity allows for excursions to remote tonal areas, as far as A^b in the basic g dorian mode
- accented passing tones resolve as suspensions over Bass, in 9-8, 7-6 motion (besides 4-3) (esp.m.25-8)
- contrapuntal voice-leading with such fluidity lead through highly original harmonic resolutions, rapidly travelling though expected areas, altered by new sequences and unexpected turns, to deceptive and otherwise elided cadences. The heightened cadence formulas at m.22-3 over an augmented Bass are especially remarkable, and derive from S, m.1: $A-B^b-A B^{\natural}-C-B^{\natural}$ (mi-fa modal conventions)
- finally, all of the above are combined with motivic mastery, utilizing what amounts to a monothematic texture, with recapitulatory and climactic recalls of initial thematic materials.

See also: Bruce Bellingham, "Harmonic Excursions in the English Early-Seventeenth-Century Four-Part Fantasias of Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger", Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America, vol XLI (2004), pp.36-64}