

MICHAEL TALBOT

VIVALDI AND FUGUE

Contrary to common belief, which has always seen him as a leader in the «flight from counterpoint» that eventually ushered in the Classical period, Antonio Vivaldi was not only a capable composer of fugues but also a keen and inventive practitioner of the fugal arts, even if there were certain periods in his life and specific genres in which fugal writing was practised more actively than in others. This well-illustrated historical and analytical study is the first to identify and discuss critically, within the context of the compositional practice of Vivaldi's time, the numerous and varied instances of fugal writing in his music,



which sometimes occur in the least expected places. Different types of fugue or fugal passage are distinguished, and the many ways in which Vivaldi demonstrates originality in them and relates them to their specific musical context are examined. Many comparisons are made with composers contemporary with him and with writers of fugues from different periods. The study aims not only to increase our general understanding of Vivaldi's music but also to make a contribution to the literature on fugue and fugal terminology and, more widely, to the history of musical form. It reminds us that Vivaldi and his works still hold many surprises.

Rispetto a quanto comunemente si crede, Vivaldi fu un acuto e creativo specialista della fuga. Questo studio storico-analitico, ben illustrato, è il primo a esaminare e distinguere i molti differenti modi – alcuni estremamente originali – in cui Vivaldi applicò la tecnica della fuga alla sua musica, e vuole – oltre che incrementare la comprensione della musica vivaldiana – contribuire alla letteratura sulla fuga, alla sua terminologia e, più in generale, alla storia della morfologia musicale.

MICHAEL TALBOT, born in 1943, is known internationally for his studies of Vivaldi and this composer's Italian, especially Venetian, contemporaries, and for his editions of their music. Among the other composers on whom he has written monographs are Tomaso Albinoni and Benedetto Vinaccesi. His interests within this area are wide and include biography, history, analysis and textual criticism. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and a Corresponding Member of the Ateneo Veneto. For many years he has been a collaborator of the Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi, and he is currently a co-editor of the Institute's yearbook «Studi vivaldiani».

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