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Ferrabosco

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Fantasias by Musica Britannica #
 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |

Fantasias by Meyer #
 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |

Ferrabosco Fantasias - Stylistic Observations Bruce Bellingham

Fantasia 22 (Meyer nos. 10 and 11) - On the Hexachord (ut re mi fa sol la)

This Hexachord Fantasia (in 2 sections, Ascending and Descending) is cited in the literature as one of the most spectacular feats of Late Renaissance composition—surpassing the much simpler John Bull keyboard hexachord. Edward Lowinsky erroneously attributed it to one "Alfonso della Viola" of Ferrara in the mid-16th century, and was at pains to explain its appearance in English viol consort manuscripts along with most of the Ferrabosco 4-part fantasias. This composition exists also in a 5-part version, apparently re-worked by Ferrabosco by adding a Treble part above the Cantus Firmus, but making other revisions to the Alto part as well. See *Musica Britannica* vol. 81, Textual Commentary, p.227.

Perhaps because of the Cantus Firmus texture, Ferrabosco's imitative style differs in this piece, which manifests less consistent maintaining of only a few motives. Instead, each appearance of the Hexachord, entering by semitone, generates a new texture: Points of imitation, variable in melodic profile, rhythm, and harmonic context, sometimes anticipate the Hexachord entry and drive past its end into the single bar that separates each appearance. However, in the first section, the imitative figures from **5ab** onwards seem to be variants of the same basic shapes, and the second section uses similar procedures from **5ab** onwards. Cadences are mainly passing, so that the contrapuntal texture is maintained consistently. In spite of the Cantus Firmus texture, Alfonso mainly avoids obvious sequential repetition; even in Descending, m.42-45, with passing cadences on D, E, f#, G. With the Hexachord Fantasia, Ferrabosco managed to create a work that is more than a freak, but rather stands as the summation of his series of 4-part fantasias.

View the complete analysis [here](#) *.

Listen to examples[†] of the motives:

Ascending Cantus Firmus (in Treble)

Motives 1a, 1b:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 1b:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 1c:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 2a:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 2b:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 2c:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 2d:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 2e:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 3a:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 3b:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>
Motive 4a:		<input type="button" value="Play"/>

Motive 4b:  Play

Motive 5a:  Play

Motive 5b:  Play

Motive 6a:  Play

Motive 6b:  Play

Motive 7a:  Play

Motive 8a:  Play

Motive 8b:  Play

Descending Cantus Firmus (in Treble)

Motives 1a, 1b:  Play

Motive 2a:  Play

Motive 2b:  Play

Motive 2c:  Play

Motive 3a:  Play

Motive 4a:  Play

Motive 5a:  Play

Motive 5b:  Play

Motive 5c:  Play

Motive 6a:  Play

Motive 6b:  Play

Motive 7a:  Play

Motive 8a:  Play

m. 110A:  Play

* You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer to view the analysis. In addition, you will need JavaScript and popups enabled for this link to function. If you prefer, you can click [here](#) to see the analysis in this browser window.

†Sound clips are from the VdGSA New England Chapter's CD "Alfonso Ferrabosco II: Four-part Fantasias". Reproduced by permission.

