Born in 1792, Gioachino Rossini was not famous for composing sacred works, he was much better known for his operas. However, late in his life he composed “Petite Messe Solennelle”, a mass. In the “Et resurrexit” section of the work, the chorus sings a fugue-like section on the phrase “et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.” This section has several characteristics of a Baroque fugue, despite being written later, including its structure, texture, modulation and contrapuntal rules.

The main characteristic of the fugue is its form. This section of the mass follows this beginning with the exposition followed by the development and a recapitulation. This pattern continues until the end of the section. The subject enters in the soprano voice in measure 1 in E major. In the second measure, counter-subject I enters in one of the other important aspects of the fugue is its polyphonic texture. This section of the mass is polyphonic in terms of the choral voices and therefore accomplishes this. Because fugues are contrapuntal, the voices must be interdependent but also independent. The primary theme of a fugue is called the subject.

The tenor voice. These both end on the first beat of the eighth measure. At the same time the subject enters again, this time in the alto voice in E major’s dominant key, B flat major. This modulation from tonic to dominant is very common in fugues. In the ninth measure, counter-subject I enters, this time in the bass.