

Suggestions for Performance

The three compositions gathered into this collection are art music written for an organ with three manuals and pedals but are also entirely playable on a two manual instrument. For a skilled organist they are of average difficulty and call for legato technique punctuated with other types of touch where indicated in the score or when deemed appropriate by the performer. These compositions make use of animated counterpoint, chromatic harmonies, a bit of the unexpected, and demonstrate imagination quick enough to capture and hold the interest of listeners. They would make for effective lesson and recital material and are also appropriate for use during the worship service (Op. 35) or possibly for encores (Op. 36).

In performing these works it will be incumbent upon the performer to make mental adjustments if necessary to the score so the music makes it for the listener. As with any organ music some experimentation can be expected in order to bring out best what's written on the page. In very wet acoustics the organist will need to play a little slower and more detached to keep things clear. In dry acoustics the rests between detached chords may need to be shortened more and the chords held longer than their written values. The fundamental pulse is to be retained, but variations in tempo can and should be introduced at appropriate places to nuance the music and keep it from sounding mechanical. These places have been marked in the scores.

Tempo marks corresponding to beats per minute also have been included, with the crotchet (quarter note) receiving one beat and descriptive terms written in the universal musical language of Italian. These are relative only and should be understood as broad approximations to be used as a guide which, like all tempo marks, may not be appropriate in every circumstance due to the personal interpretations of performers, the way the instrument at hand responds, and especially, the way its sound lingers in its own acoustical environment. The feeling aroused by the harmonic structure of the music will be the true source of correct tempo in any given situation, thus performers are apt to find their tempo mark in the composition itself rather than in the instructions at the beginning.

Markings for tempi appear as follows:

Quarter note = 162-182	-- Vivace
142-161	-- Allegro molto
120-141	-- Allegro
100-119	-- Allegretto
80-99	-- Moderato
60-79	-- Andante
42-59	-- Adagio
30-41	-- Lento

The mostly 4 part writing found in these pieces is in standard organ score (3 staff) notated with treble and bass clefs. Voice ranges in these pieces are never exceeded, and voice lines are never permitted to cross. These works stay within the following voice ranges:

Top (treble) staff:

Soprano voice – tenor A to high A (1st line above staff)

Alto voice – tenor G to D (4th line)

Middle (bass) staff:

Tenor voice – Tenor C to middle G

Bottom (bass) staff:

Bass voice – Bass (low) C to middle E

In this music the compass of the bass voice is extended downward to low C. In passages of 5 part writing an additional high bass, or baritone, voice is supplied being notated on the middle staff below the tenor line using upward stems for the tenor and downward stems for the baritone. The stretch for the hands is kept at an octave or less, and registration suggestions along with indications for hand division are included with the score. The choices of stops and couplers will depend upon personal taste and require more or less adjustment depending upon the resources of the instrument at hand.

This collection leads off with the C Major Op. 35 Processional March. This work is based upon a 16-bar theme composed of 4 equal phrases of 4 bars each. The theme begins with an ascending dominant tetrachord which in the course of the work due to its frequent repetition takes on the character of a leitmotif. The exposition of the theme in 4 voices in the home key is followed by a modulatory passage of 4 bars during 4-voice texture continues. Here the music quotes only the theme's 1st phrase as it passes through the related keys

of a minor and d minor. The first 2 phrases of the theme then reenter in the mediant key (E major) and are shared between the hands in 3-voice texture during which the pedal line continues in mostly scalar movement against middle voices which divide an animated arpeggiated figure. This leads to a passage in A Major where 4 voice texture is restored and the first 2 phrases of the theme are inverted and treated as a 2-voice canon at the octave with the bass following the soprano at an interval of a single bar. After another modulatory passage of 4 bars the 1st phrase of the theme enters in the related key of e minor. This is followed by a short stretto passage in the dominant key (G Major) where the 1st phrase of the theme is again reiterated. The entire theme then reenters in the home key during which the theme's third phrase is harmonized utilizing chromatic planing. The music quotes the leitmotif tetrachord in the coda where a 5th (high bass, or baritone) voice is added to the texture. Here the forward movement pauses briefly on a subdominant minor chord before finishing in 6 voices on a big tonic chord exploiting to the fullest the downward sonorities of the instrument.

The G Major Op. 6 Carillon on a Birthday Song which follows is dedicated to the composer's many friends and relatives on their birthdays. It was created from various improvisational ideas which the composer blended and personalized into an improvisation of his own and then committed to notation finally at the request of his friends. This piece in French Romantic style is short, non-modulating, and begins with 2-voice reiterated bell-like figuration in the right hand against which the very recognizable Happy Birthday song tune appears as a 3rd voice in the left hand. This leads to a transitional 3-voice passage incorporating a descending arpeggio on a tonic major 6th chord after which the tune reappears in the bass in a passage for 5 voices in the home key during which both hands are occupied with the reiterated bell-like figuration. After a pause on a 1st inversion spread chord in 7 voices on a subdominant minor 6th chord the tune concludes with an increase in dynamic level, a return to 3-voice texture, and a repeat of the same descending arpeggio on a tonic major 6th chord. The coda echoes the last phrase of the tune in subdominant major 6th harmony during which the texture expands to 6 voices. The music concludes with 3 reiterated tonic major 6th chords employing a double pedal which expand the texture first to 9 and then to 10 voices. Not surprisingly, this useful and effective little piece is very likely to be very well received and appreciated at those times when anyone in the audience is celebrating their birthday.

The Db Major Op. 37 Meditation is a monothematic 4-voice work written in 5 short sections in what might be called modiating rondo form. It is rondo-related in that the refrain (A) is composed of a single 10-bar period which keeps returning after alternating with two episodes (B), but the refrains fail to reappear in the home key, hence the term “modiating.” This piece is also unusual in that both of the episodes in this work are derived by inverting the melody in the refrain, the form being ABABA rondo. Both episodes also are in different keys, and the home key does not return until the coda. The refrains are stated first in the tonic key, then the mediant major (F Major) and subdominant (Gb Major) keys, respectively. The episodes appear in the relative minor (Bb minor) and dominant (Ab Major) keys, respectively. In the first refrain the theme is presented in its entirety in the pedal in 4-voice harmony. In the first episode the inverted melody switches to the soprano line and is restated in 3-part texture without pedal. In the second refrain 4-voice texture returns with the melody presented right side up again as a 3-part canon at the octave at the distance of one bar. In the second episode the inverted melody reappears in the soprano line against a running counterpoint in the tenor and a reduction in texture to only 2 voices. Finally in the third refrain the melody is divided between all four moving lines in pyramid form beginning with two voices, then adding a third, then the fourth, then gradually reducing down again to only two lines. The coda includes some spicy harmonies and chromatic planing that brings this work to a quiet close in 6 voices with a double pedal. Secondary manuals are to be used for this piece, starting with soft foundation stops, switching to a String Celeste with tremmed Vox Humana for the final refrain and coda.

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