

Reviews

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the tune soloed on an 8' and Nazard against counterpoint on an 8' flute; his setting of BERGLUND, which solos out the tune on an oboe with gentle interludes; and a lyrical meditation on TOPLADY.

Variations abound in the ever-popular LOBE DEN HERREN, set as a prelude in 9/8 time followed by a trio, fugato, meditation, and a dance-like *Paeon* in mixed meters. Five variations on MATERNA include a pedal solo and a rousing finale. Finally, three variations on AR HYD Y NOS form an attractive suite, beginning with a piquant trio using 8' and 2' flutes against the tune on an 8' reed in the tenor, followed by an *Aria* using a decorated cornet solo, and concluding with a fugue-like finale.

A simple meditation on the Native American tune LAC QUI PARLE begins and ends with an 8' flute playing in a Native-American style. JESU, DULCIS MEMORIA comprises four reflections, three with the chant played as a solo voice, and the last as chords played on celestes.

More rousing sounds emanate from a festive postlude on Holst's THAXTED, which begins in C and concludes triumphantly in D, and from two settings of WESTMINSTER ABBEY, set once as a fanfare and once as a trumpet tune. Either of these brief settings would serve nicely as a hymn introduction or postlude.

Charles Callahan, *O God Beyond All Praising: Seven Pieces for Organ on English Hymntunes*. MorningStar Music Publishers, 10-799, \$16.00.

Another Massachusetts native, Charles Callahan (b. 1951) has produced yet another top pick. Although every organist certainly already plays one if not several works of Callahan, this album is a "must-have." Not only has Dr. Callahan chosen seven of the most beloved British tunes of our time, but he has also arranged them in an immediately appealing style. THAXTED, KING'S LYNN, TERRA BEATA, REPTON, and JERUSALEM are all contemplative, whereas AGINCOURT HYMN and THORNBURY are robust. All of the settings are playable on the most modest to the largest organ. Only general registrations are printed to suit the dynamics. Highly recommended.

—Kenneth Udy
University of Utah, Salt Lake City

New Handbell Music

A Time for Joy, arranged for 3–6 octaves of handbells by Cynthia Dobrinski. Agape (a division of Hope Publishing Company), Code No. 2595, \$4.50, Level 1+ (E+).

This original composition, level 1+, is written in such a way that it sounds

much more difficult to play than it is. A delightful rondo, it is easily learned and uses a variety of special effects—shakes, thumb damping, swinging, martellatos, martellato lifts, brush damping, and mallets. This is a great addition to any handbell library.

Steal Away, arranged for 3, 4, 5, or 6 octaves of handbells with optional 3, 4, or 5 octaves of handchimes, by Sandra Eithun. Choristers Guild, CGB775, \$4.50, Level 2+ (M).

This popular African-American spiritual is well arranged to bring the text to light. The harmonic spectrum is broad and brings several special effects into play, which add to the effectiveness of the piece. Written in the key of E-flat, this piece will be a worthwhile challenge for any player.

O God Beyond All Praising, arranged for 3–5 octaves of handbells by Lloyd Larson. Agape (a division of Hope Publishing Company), Code No. 2632, \$4.50, Level 2 (M).

Gustav Holst's beautiful melody, *Thaxted*, excerpted from his orchestral suite, *The Planets*, has been coupled with Michael Perry's text and has been included in hymnals and sung in worship in a multitude of denominations. The arranger has captured the spirit of this tune and provided a fresh, festive piece.

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, arranged for 3–6 octaves of handbells with optional 3 octaves of handchimes and C or B-flat instrument, by Valerie W. Stephenson. Agape (a division of Hope Publishing Company), Code No. 2601, \$4.95, C or B-flat trumpet part, 2601P, \$2.50, Level 3 (D).

The beloved reformation hymn by Martin Luther is written for bells in a festive, celebratory style that complements the tune from beginning to end. Adding the trumpet fanfare segment would only add to the success of this piece. Highly recommended.

Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior, arranged for 2–3 octaves of handbells, arranged by Cathy Moklebust. Choristers Guild, CGB372, \$3.95, also arranged for 3, 4, or 5 octaves of handbells, CGB714, Level 1+ (E).

Here is a lovely meditation on the 17th-century French tune *Adoro Te Devote*. Two verses are arranged in a gentle, flowing mood from beginning to end. The two editions are compatible for massed ringing.

—Leon Nelson

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On Teaching

Organ Method X

This follows directly from the end of last month's column.

Take the same approach and follow the same procedures with these additional exercises. These are also four-finger exercises that allow for choices of fingering (2-3-4-5 and 1-2-3-4) and therefore for comparing the feel of different fingerings. They add different, slightly more complicated, note patterns (Examples 1 and 2).

Each of these can also be moved to different positions on the keyboard: moving to a different C as a starting place gives you a chance to practice the feel of the same patterns with different arm angles. When you start on other pitches, change the key signature in such a way as to keep the melodies the same. This will give you a chance to experience different physical shapes with these exercises. Try each of the eight short exercises starting on F, with B-flats, and starting on D, with F-sharps. These flats and sharps may very well change the feel of some of the alternate fingerings, perhaps making some of them distinctly uncomfortable—be on the lookout for this.

You can also start any of the exercises described so far on a raised key. For example, try starting on F#, with the full F# major key signature. Again, be aware of difference in the feel of the fingerings. Keep everything light and relaxed, and remember all of the points listed above.

As you move these exercises to different places on the keyboard, whether by octave or by transposing into another key, make a clear decision as to whether you should write out the new notes, or whether you can effect those changes at sight and by memory. There is nothing wrong with either approach: it is important, however, that you not be distracted from the playing and practicing by worrying about the notes. If the transposing at sight is even a little bit distracting, please go ahead and write things out. (This is absolutely crucial for a student who is new to keyboard playing, and should be done without fail at this stage in the learning process.) The same applies to trying different fingerings: write them in for now. You cannot practice a variety of fingerings effectively if you—even some of the time—don't quite remember what fingering you are using. Again, if you are beginning your keyboard study with this work on organ, *thinking about* fingering is something that you can do—for yourself, in large part—even from the very beginning. *Remembering* your fingerings, especially different ones for the same passage, is tricky at first, though both necessary and completely feasible in the long run.

The following exercises expand the scope of the notes that you are playing: that is, the notes range a little bit farther over the keyboard (Examples 3 and 4). Each of these eight exercises suggests a



Example 1



Example 2

slightly different approach to fingering. For example, the second and sixth exercises can be played simply by positioning the five fingers above the five different notes, and then playing those notes. (This gives, for the second exercise in the right hand the fingering 1-3-5-4-2-3-2-1; and for the seventh of these exercises—in the left hand—the fingering 5-3-1-2-4-3-4-5.) The first exercise, for the right hand, and the corresponding fifth, for the left hand, are the first pair that we have seen in which the fingerings in the two hands cannot mirror each other. This fingering works very naturally in the right hand: 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1-2-1-3-5. In the left hand the closest corresponding fingering—which would start out 5-4-3-2-1—ends up getting us into trouble (try it and see). Other fingerings will work, for example 4-3-2-1-2-1-2-3-4-5-4-2-1.

Playing scales

The last of these exercises for each hand is a scale. (In the physical act of playing, a scale is just a stepwise pattern that spans an octave. It is not intrinsically different from other stepwise patterns.) You should try playing this scale with a number of different fingerings. For example:

R.H.: 1-2-3-1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1-3-2-1

L.H.: 5-4-3-2-1-3-2-1-2-3-1-2-3-4-5

R.H.: 1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4-3-2-1-4-3-2-1

L.H.: 4-3-2-1-4-3-2-1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4

R.H.: 3-4-3-4-3-4-3-4-3-2-3-2-3-2-3

(quite detached: basically eighth notes with eighth-note rests in between; light and relaxed)

L.H.: 3-2-3-2-3-2-3-2-3-4-3-4-3-4-3

(likewise)

The first of these in each hand is the standard (piano) scale fingering. The second is a variant of that, which might be appropriate in some situations, but is included here simply to afford more practice with a variety of fingerings. The third is a version of the sort of scale fingering that was prevalent before about 1700.

You should also try this scale—and any transpositions of it that you want to

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Example 3



Example 4

make—playing *every note with the same finger*. The three middle fingers are more natural for this than the thumb or the fifth finger. In doing this, you should expect the notes to be detached—but just enough that the motion from one note to the next is smooth, no “lurching”. You should also keep it slow—again so that the motion can be smooth. (It would indeed be quite unusual to play a long stepwise passage all with one finger, however, playing two or more notes in a row with one finger is common, and this is a good systematic way to practice it.)

The third and seventh of these exercises are the first ones in which you are asked to spread the fingers in such a way that adjacent fingers do not necessarily play adjacent notes, though this happens only briefly. The first three notes of exercise two or six and the first three notes of exercise three or seven are the same: C, E, G. However, the exercises go on to different places, which suggests different fingerings. Exercises two and six can start like this:

Right hand: 1-3-5 [-4]

Left hand: 5-3-1 [-2]

However, exercises three and seven should probably start like this:

Right hand: 1-2-3[-5]

Left hand: 5-4-2 [-1]

The latter two measures of the third exercise—right hand—could be played with the “standard” scale fingering 5-4-3-2-1-3-2-1, or, just to practice a different feel, a variant: for example, 5-4-1-4-3-2-1-3.

Thoughts on fingering

It should be clear by now that I am asking you, the student, to think about the fingering of these fairly simple exercises for yourself, albeit with some guidance. This is, of course, on purpose. *Learning to devise your own fingerings* is one of the most important aspects of your learning to play organ—or any keyboard instrument. The primary purpose of these exercises is to help you begin to explore the touch and sound of the instrument. However, while you are doing that, you can begin to gain experience thinking about fingering—rather than just implementing fingerings devised by someone else. This may take more time now, but it will save you a lot of time later on.

For the beginner

If you are a beginner—having more or less never touched a keyboard instrument before—you should nonetheless have been able to do everything that you have encountered so far, if you have taken it slowly and carefully, and paid attention to the suggestions and instructions. It is extremely important that you

feel very comfortable with everything that you have encountered so far before you go on. There is no harm in spending extra time with these beginning steps.

Articulation

There can be a very direct relationship in organ playing in particular between fingering and articulation. Simply put, if a fingering does not allow you to keep holding one note in a passage while you start to play the next note, then going from that first note to that next note will be *detached* rather than *legato*. This is simply a fact, not a judgment or even a suggestion about what to do in any situation. There are many places in the organ repertoire where a fingering that actually requires a detached articulation and makes legato impossible—that is, a *disjunct fingering*—is appropriate or necessary or good. There are also many places where a legato fingering is a good idea or necessary, though there are indeed places where a legato fingering is impossible. The clearest example of disjunct fingering is, of course, playing successive notes with the same finger. Note that if a fingering allows legato, it usually does not require legato: you can release notes early.

If you neither need nor want legato in a particular situation, it is not necessary

to create a legato fingering. A legato fingering is often—though certainly not always—more difficult than a disjunct fingering. A disjunct—non-legato—fingering that is comfortable will allow you to create a wide variety of articulations, short of full legato.

Other considerations

Physical comfort and logistic convenience are crucially important first principles of fingering. When you are trying to come up with a fingering for a passage—whether it is fairly simple, like the exercises above, or as complicated as the repertoire gets—the first step is to examine where the hand most naturally lies, what is the most comfortable hand position, what has the fewest steps and can thus be most easily remembered. This does not give all of the answers to all of the fingering questions, but is a good place to start.

All else being equal, it is useful to plan fingering based on what is going to come next. (For example, that is the point of the different fingerings for the notes C-E-G in exercises three and seven.) Of course, fingering is also about where you have just come from, but the more you can plan fingering based on where you are going, the better.

When either hand is playing only one note at a time, fingering choices are usually very flexible. The more notes or voices a hand is playing, the more constrained the fingering will be. It is often better to change fingers on repeated notes—that is, to play successive notes that are the same as one another with different fingers. This is important enough that I will discuss it at some length later on.

For the experienced player

If you are coming to the organ having already studied and played another keyboard instrument, and if you have previously played pieces that are in two voices—that is, pieces in which there is indeed only one note at a time in each hand—find such a piece that you already know and bring it to the organ now. Work out fingering that is comfortable and in accordance with the discussion above, as much as possible. (This may be largely the same as the fingering that you



have used for the piece previously on piano or harpsichord; it may differ from it somewhat.) Then practice the piece hands separately, slowly and carefully. Look at the keyboard as little as possible; an occasional glance is fine, but by and large keep your eyes on the music. As with the exercises above, you should listen carefully for articulation, and you should listen to the sonority.

Try out different registrations. Do not assume in advance that a certain kind of sound will be right for the piece and other sounds wrong; try things and listen. A strictly two-voice piece is always a candidate to play on two manuals. Try your piece out that way, in all sorts of different configurations. Does it feel more comfortable or natural to have the right hand on a higher manual than the left or the other way around? Or are they both equally comfortable?

(The next section, which will constitute next month's excerpt, consists of a short two-voice piece by Samuel Scheidt, with a discussion about fingering it and practicing it. It is geared towards those students who have little or no prior keyboard experience but who have gone through the exercises and practicing described so far. That is followed by exercises in which each hand plays more than one note at a time, with further discussion about how to make fingering choices and how to practice.)

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