

PREPARING FOR

AGO EXAMS

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EXAMS FOR FUN ? EXAMS FOR FUN !

Nancy L. Phillips, F.A.G.O.

AGO EXAM STUDY . . . just for FUN! Guild exam study fun? One can hear the incredulous voices now, and the equally positive response . . . "But Guild exams are a lot of work . . . it takes years of study, and I, for one, would never have the time or energy to go into all that!" . . . but I'm not talking about *taking* Guild exams. I'm talking about the fun, the excitement of discovering new things in music, and learning to do the old ones better. If you simply dismiss the idea of Guild exam study because you won't ever take the exams you could be cutting yourself out of a real musical treasure hunt.

How do you start? By investing twenty-five cents and an eight cent stamp in obtaining from AGO headquarters the current requirements for the exams plus a copy of the most recent AAGO exam. (The new requirement sheet comes out early in the summer and remains in effect through the exams, the following June.) When you read over the required repertoire and skills, you may feel a bit overwhelmed. Don't be. Most of us, in our non-musical lives, would be appalled if we were told to paint the whole house from top to bottom, but we manage to paint one room at a time, and get great pleasure from the result of our efforts. In the same way, studying for Guild exams doesn't mean you have to immediately plunge into a full time course in 16th century counterpoint or 18th century fugue. You *can*, however, look over the requirements and come up with several directions in which you'd like to head, starting on the level on which you find yourself right now.

NEW PIECES CAN BE INTERESTING

New repertoire would be an interesting place for many of us to begin. The joy of discovering three or four new organ pieces each year, and learning them, keeps many of us from going stale on the job. You will find that almost all the organ compositions listed under the exam requirements can be used in church work. You won't know them at all, and you probably won't like them all, so how do you decide which ones to pick? The simplest solution is to persuade your chapter's program committee to present a performance of the current exam repertoire at an early fall meeting. This could be in live performance, or on records or tapes, or a combination of both. The chapter could purchase the suggested organ music each year to serve as a reference library for members. Many music stores, unfortunately, are not so well stocked that one can rely on their having the music available for you to examine. On the other hand, your public library may be one with an excellent sheet music section. In other cases, members of the chapter who own the music might agree to let fellow members examine it at their home or church. (I don't suggest *lending* the music . . . it is too easy to lose track of it.)

DISCOVERING HOW MUSIC IS PLAYED

Now let's assume that you have heard or seen the suggested music and have picked out three compositions that you don't play but would like to learn. After you have learned the notes, what is the next step? Discovering *how* the music should be played. If you do not plan to study with a good teacher, which is the best idea, there are still things you can do on your own. *Registration*: If the composer has specified the registration that he wants and some of the stops are unfamiliar to you and not among those on the electronic instrument that you are currently playing, look for an organ in your area that *does* have the stops and hear what the intended sound is. Look the stops up in some reference such as Irwin "Dictionary of Pipe Organ Stops." Find recordings of the music in a library, music store or among a friend's collection, and listen to the kind of sound the composer was thinking of. After that you will have to use your imagination in reproducing it with the resources you have. If you are working on an early Italian piece, you will be interested in finding out what kind of organ it was written for. When you discover (in books such as Geer "Organ Registration in Theory and Practice" or Dart "the Interpretation of Music" that Frescobaldi's organ was a one manual instrument with a small coupled pedal board, and pipes that have been described as *silvery* or of *transparent tone color* you will experiment with creating this kind of sound rather than a French or German sound. Perhaps the direction you choose will not be Italian but early French music. Here again the music will come alive for you if you play it with the registration that was intended. The same reference books will tell you about the French organ of that period, and AGO members will find in recent issues of "Music" and in their old files of the "Quarterly" many excellent articles on the subject. Perhaps you'll want to start a notebook with headings such as "early Italian music" or "18th century French music" and insert the helpful articles that appear from time to time. Compositions that you may have played for years with muddy registration will start to sparkle with new sounds you'll try.

If your chief interest for the year is French, you will certainly want to investigate the remark of Couperin that "There are errors in the notation that we use in France. . . . What we see does not correspond with what we hear. . . . The Italians write their music in true time values, but we do not." You'll be fascinated to hear the variety in performance styles when you listen to recordings of the same composition by different concert organists, and you'll want to experiment with the rhythmic variations that Couperin was talking about. You will want to refer to recent articles in "Music" on Baroque performance practices. In addition you may want to purchase for your library one of the books on the interpretation of music of the 17th and 18th century

by Dolmetsch or Donington. These will tell you more than you can probably absorb on first reading, but you can experiment with some of their ideas and go back to the book later for more. You'll be amazed at how creative you'll begin to feel, or maybe we should say recreative, as some of this older music starts to come alive under your fingers for the first time.

If you have gotten involved with Frescobaldi, or Couperin or Clerambault, you may want to spend the entire year exploring this one byway; going on to additional music of the same composer or period.

EXPLORATION OF MUSICAL PERIODS

Goal two—the exploration of a particular period of musical history. Pick some period to delve into. Most public libraries have excellent histories such as Grout, Ferguson, Mellers, available. Many have large stocks of recordings including those that cover the history of music. Don't try to cover the entire history of music in one gulp, but pick off a manageable piece to digest and become better acquainted with it in a leisurely way, playing and listening. Your playing will make the reading come alive and the reading will give you a framework into which to fit your performance.

SIGHTREADING

Goal three—practice in sight reading, something most of us would like to do better. The only solution to this problem is doing it regularly, but what an adventure it can be if you are sightreading with a purpose . . . to become better acquainted with the literature of a given period or composer. If you find sightreading difficult you might want to start with early organ music or vocal music. While sightreading through such material you'll have the pleasure, once in a while, of discovering a perfectly lovely piece that you never knew existed. After a year of this sort of exploration you'll never be satisfied with a book of "chapel voluntaries"!

IMPROVISATION & MODULATION

Do you have enough time and curiosity to go on in several additional directions? If so, how about improvisation and modulation. The two go hand in hand. You can't modulate without improvising, and you can't improvise for any length of time without facing modulation. Perhaps, for years, you have shied away from both because of an exaggerated notion of what is involved. If so, consider the words of a famous European teacher of improvisation who has said that if you sit down at the keyboard and play just one note . . . and then add another, you are starting to improvise. Improvisation doesn't have to mean a big prelude and fugue. If you look at the AAGO exams you will find that they call for a relatively simple kind of improvisation of a type that could well be useful in a church service. You start with a given four measures of simple music and are asked to continue for an unspecified number of measures in the style of the beginning, ending in a new key.

. . . "A new key," you say? "But that's modulation and that is just too much to learn. Why, when you take all those major and minor keys and multiply them by all the possible keys you could modulate to, you come up with an impossible number of harmonic patterns to think about." Don't laugh at this statement. I know of individuals who felt completely defeated by this appalling thought until it was brought to their attention that every conceivable modulation fitted into one of only eleven groups; up a half step, down a half step, up a whole step, down a whole step, up a minor third, down a minor third, up a major third, down a major third, up a fourth, down a fourth, tritone skip.

Do eleven harmonic progressions still seem like too much to think about? Then choose just *one* to learn to do with confidence. If your experience with harmony is not very recent you will find it helpful to pick up one of the harmony textbooks listed on the back of the AAGO exam require-

ment sheet. The inexpensive paperback by Hindemith ("Traditional Harmony," AMP) is especially concise with few rules but lots of melodies, basses (figured and unfigured) and chord progressions to play or write. Play your way through some of them until you are familiar with the basic major and minor chords, and can play cadences in different keys. Now you are ready to plan a modulation. Let's suppose that you have decided to go "down a fourth," for example, from the key of F to C. You will need, in between the beginning tonality of F and the final cadence of C, some chords that, like Janus, look in both directions—relate to both keys. In order to find these, write or play the chords on the scale steps of the key of F.



Now do the same for C.



You will find several chords that fill this purpose.



Play around with them, at the keyboard until you come up with a progression that you like. Perhaps you'll end up with one like this.

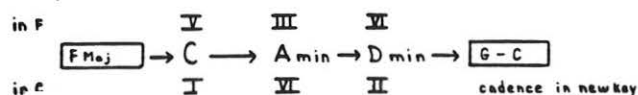


Simple? Uncomplicated? Certainly, but this is exactly what Brahms did in measures 9 and 10 of *Es Ist ein Ros entsprungen* when he modulated from F to C. Have a look, too at Bach's *Orgelbuchlein*, #25. (*We thank Thee, Lord Jesus*). You'll find he used these same, simple chords for his modulation "down a fourth." If, after this short exploration into harmonic materials you find no particular need to use modulation in your work, you will still have acquired the musical dividend on the way . . . the dividend of being able to take a closer look at some of the music you play and discovering how the composer worked.

If you decide to pursue modulation beyond this point you may find the paperback "Basic Principles of Service Playing" by Samuel Walters (Abingdon) useful. This book also has an excellent chapter on improvisation, starting at a level low enough for all of us.

There are many ways of improvising. If you decide to try something similar to that of the AAGO exam, you can

well start with your hymnal. Pick a tune, for example, *monkland* (*Let us with a gladsome mind*) and play the first 2 measures.



Your plan will be "to continue to improvise a few measures in the same style leading to a full close in a specified related key" (to quote the AAGO requirements). The hymn is in Bb, and we'll head for F, using the harmonic pattern we worked out for a modulation "down a fourth." (I-V-III-VI-new cadence). In the key of B flat this will mean

I	V	III	VI	new cadence
Bb	C	D min.	G min.	C-F.

Now what will you do, melodically, over this harmony? Look back at those first 2 measures for some musical ideas. You'll find at least three.

1. The chordal pattern 1-3-5-3- in the first measure
2. The ascending scale pattern in the second measure
3. The rhythmic pattern which can be used with some other melodic line.

Sit down at the piano and try out different ways of using this material over the harmonic pattern you have chosen. Allow plenty of time—and *Enjoy Yourself*. Serious church organists often cut themselves out of the fun they can have in this type of "fooling around" at the keyboard. There is no reason why it can't be part of our musical experience just as it is for musicians of the folk-rock jazz etc. department. It may even lead you to reexamine some of the organ music you are playing to see how the composer handled a similar problem.

Go back to Brahms *Es ist ein Ros* to the measures 8-10 where he modulates. You'll find that the melodic material he used was derived from the first two measures—not exactly the same melody, but the same rhythmic pattern—the same alternating two-notes idea. You don't have to copy a particular composer or composition, but you'll find that you'll be working in two directions. Your attempt to solve a certain musical problem in your own improvisation will get you interested in what some other composer has done, and the ideas you may pick up that way can be put to use by you as you work out improvisation.

We have suggested five possible musical goals for you to consider: Learning three or four new organ pieces, exploring a specific facet of music history, doing a little sight reading on a regular basis, learning at least one modulation, and making a start at simple improvisation.

Maybe you won't want to cover that much. Maybe you'll choose to do more. You might even get involved to the extent of signing up with a local school or teacher for a music course of some sort. . . . But you won't feel any pressure because, after all, you have no intention of *ever* taking the exams. You're just doing what interests you, for fun. You don't even have to stick with the goals you set out with, if a more interesting byway presents itself. But at the end of a year you'll be a better and more interesting and more interested musician because of your musical explorations.

Paperwork...

WHY?



An examination of
an Examination
by John Cook

IT IS A SAD FACT that many more people make a good showing at the organ console, when they present themselves for A.G.O. Examinations, than when faced with their (so-called) Paper Work tests. There must be a large number of people who hold half a Guild certificate. I know one or two personally, and my field of acquaintance is not extensive.

Why do so many organists play their instrument well, yet have difficulty satisfying their examiners in "theory"? Is it their own fault, their teachers' fault, or perhaps the fault of the examination system itself?

One thing must be made clear right away: the Guild does not wish to examine its members merely as organists and choir trainers, but follows the worthy example of its senior colleague, the R.C.O., in giving accreditation to all-round musicians. Playing organ literature well is a very fine thing, but the ability, after many lessons and much practice, to push down the right keys and pedals at the right moment, using suitable registration, is

only a part of being an all-round musician. Other tests have to be designed to search out candidates' ability and experience in wider fields, some of which may seem far removed from the organ loft.

"Paper Work" is a silly expression, and tends to give candidates quite a wrong idea about what is required of them. The Guild's written examinations are not just additional tests "on the side" as the harmony and counterpoint requirements of many Conservatory diplomas seem to be, with the performing side of things of main importance. Some people, who find organ playing fun and paper work a bore, may dislike this, but one cannot expect the Guild to change its long established view that Associates and Fellows must show proof of their knowledge of the world of music outside the limited field of organ performance and work with choirs. As things are, such proof can only be given



through written answers to questions. Candidates' skills and experience have to be judged by what they can put down on paper in a limited time—and therefore usually in a fearful hurry. Beyond question a better judgement of most of these skills could be made through longer and more extensive tests at the console, while other necessary requirements could be much better examined *viva voce*. Such a procedure would surely please both examiners and examinees, and would be much more fair all round (for example, it would make things easier for those who work very slowly on paper)—if it were possible. It is not, for various reasons. For one thing, it would call for a far greater number of competent examiners than is now available, and they would have to be of equal competence and strictness for the examination to be fair, and they would have to be scattered all over the vast geographical area where Guild members are to be found. Even if suitable examiners were available the cost of conducting the entire examination *viva voce* would be prohibitive. Blame the size of the country! As things are, much of the testing has to be conducted in such a way that candidates can answer questions on paper. Their answers are sent to New York and there judged by a team of examiners (also usually in a fearful hurry, by the way) who have no personal knowledge of the individuals who have submitted "paper work." Each paper is marked indepen-

dently by two examiners, and it is very remarkable how often the two examiners give the same paper the same mark. Very rarely do the two opinions differ by more than a few marks, and the final grade is obtained by adding the two sets of marks together and dividing by two. This is as fair and impartial a method as the examination system has been able to come up with so far.

Another current expression, though hallowed by years of uncritical use, which seems to me silly and possibly misleading is the word "Theory." Everything which is not playing an instrument tends to be lumped together as "Theory." What ridiculous and meaningless nonsense! Writing exercises and 'parody' compositions in various composers' styles is an extremely practical activity calling for a thorough understanding of certain essential facts: "Theory" be damned! It's time some one invented a neat, alternative expression; the only other ones I have heard are cumbersome, like "imitative composition," or equally misleading (like "Paper Work"!)

Accepting, therefore, that the Guild wants to bestow its highest certification only on all-round musicians (who specialise in organ and choir work), and that, in the nature of things, much of the examining must be done by means of written answers to questions—what are these questions searching for? Why, in short, Paper Work?

The questions may be grouped as three types: (a) Music History, (b) Practical Experience and General Knowledge, (c) familiarity with and understanding of the music of certain great composers and their contemporaries. Of course there is some overlapping. The realisation of a figured bass, whether at the keyboard or on paper, calls for an understanding of music history as well as the obvious technical skills: similarly imitative composition in the style of Palestrina or Bach is concerned with history too. But the above three groups may serve for now.

No problem about (a) Music History. Obviously a well educated musician must have some understanding of the music of the past, including much that is rarely heard today, and also an appreciation of the development of music through the centuries. The questions are, or should be, designed to elicit facts, not theories and opinions, and candidates will do well to answer them with this in mind. Preparation calls for reading, of course, but study of the music itself is very important, since examiners are concerned with *music* history, not the Lives of the Great Composers. It is interesting, and sad, to know that Schubert died at 32, but much more valuable to know a lot of his music.

(b) It is perfectly reasonable that organists should know at least the essentials of how their instruments are built and maintained and of the qualities that distinguish a good organ from a bad one. Reading helps here too, but half an hour in the organ chamber under the tutelage of an organ builder or service man will help much more (and it's a poor organist who can't fix his own ciphers!) As to organ design, may I implore A.G.O. candidates to think for themselves and avoid extremism? I have met too many young people who refuse to try, or even listen to, an organ that does not have tracker action. There is absolutely nothing wrong in being a "tracker backer"; I think most people would prefer mechanical action on a small organ—but it is possible to go too far! Hopefully the day will come when even the most rabid "back to the past" enthusiast may be willing to admit that there are many organs with electric action that sound very beautiful. A point here: if faced with a question on this or any other controversial matter, candidates *must* answer sincerely and say what they believe. The examiners are not biased either way; they wouldn't be worthy to examine if they were. So don't think, "I *must* say I prefer tracker action (or



open-toe voicing, or whatever) because that is the "in" thing to approve of these days." Say what *you* believe BUT back up your opinion with facts and reasons.

Group (b) also seeks to find out if a candidate has some idea, for example, of how to get the best out of a choir of not very bright or gifted singers. No room for "theory" here—this demands practical experience.

"General Knowledge" is hard to define, and is an over-worked and possibly also slightly silly expression. To examine it makes for a hit-or-miss state of affairs: not very fair to examinees, perhaps. Questions are bound to overlap with Music History occasionally. (I must say that I regard the existing Fellowship String Quartet question as general knowledge as much as anything else—or is it just a test of musical intelligence? To complete a passage, with one part given, by Beethoven or Brahms, say, is one thing: possibilities lie within limits of style and technique which one can study from the composer's work

and so make some preparation for the test. To complete a passage concocted by a contemporary examiner is something else entirely. There are no limits of style, except from the internal evidence of the opening and given part, so that predictions are impossible and only intelligence can help. I have been often surprised how well this question has been answered, but having had to set it myself several times I must say that I am anxious to see it changed.)

Orchestration comes into the general knowledge category. Fellows of the Guild should be able to write for instruments even though they can't play them, and to have developed enough "inner ear" to score a short passage effectively. The difficulty with this question is the time it consumes in the examination room, yet the alternative recently tried (of asking for a reduction of a full score to a playable organ score) doesn't explore the "inner ear" faculty. The only thorough test would be to see *both* questions (I believe the R.C.C.O. does so).

No doubt most of the problems, and the question of the adequacy or otherwise of terms like "Theory" and "Paper Work," must be concerned with Group (c). Why should examinees, most of whom do not expect to take up composition, have to learn to write short pieces in the style of Palestrina or Bach and others? For many people, who play the organ with facility and can cope well with the keyboard tests, the necessary ability is only acquired after lengthy study and much labor. What is it all for?

Well, the study and labor are their own reward (if you can see it this way), but I think the valid answer is that only by showing that they have gone some way towards being able to do it themselves can candidates prove to their examiners that they have indeed come to grips with the great musical styles of the past; have, in fact, become so intimate with the music that it has become part of their own musical personality. Putting it another way, it is not enough to say, "Palestrina wrote Masses and Motets, and Bach wrote Chorale Preludes and Fugues." A fully qualified professional practitioner of music (which is what the Guild would like to think its Fellows and Associates are) should know the tradition and style and technique and grammar—and the aspirations and environments—of these master composers so well that he can, in haste and under examination room conditions, himself compose similar music—or at least fairly accurately fill in the missing parts of such music.

Is this asking too much? Apparently many candidates find it so, although often well equipped for other departments of the examinations. Yet the ap-

proach is a broad one: Palestrina's style is one that can be easily imitated by formulae, and organists should not object to giving a very close study to the work of Bach. Subtleties of scholarship are not asked for (e.g. the ways in which Palestrina's style is different from that of Vittoria or Lassus, or that of Buxtehude from Pachelbel.) The ground bass does not have to be Purcellian (though Purcell is a good model) provided that the working is attractive and shows experience. You don't have to be a Hindemith to make a good show of the Fellowship Quartet, or a Berlioz to submit an effective and interesting orchestration. You don't have to be a Beethoven to write three short variations, or a Bach to compose parts of a fugue. What you *do* have to be is an experienced, well-rounded student of other men's work: competent enough to imitate them, *parody* them, if you like. (The word "parody" carries sinister implications; it shouldn't. One can parody with affection as well as spite.)

Perhaps the whole of this aspect of the "Theory" side of Guild examinations can be summed up in a single word, and that word is *kapellmeister*. The A.G.O. simply wants to make sure that its certification of Associate and Fellow indicates that the rightly proud possessors of these certificates are thoroughly competent to do their jobs—which means being able to turn their hands to coping with all and every situation that may arise, including such emergencies as writing a descant, at short notice, to a hymn tune, or composing a well-made little anthem, or accompanying a new work by someone else at sight—or improvising attractively while the priest goes out to the vestry



to get the wafers which he had forgotten (I have had to do this several times!) Two hundred years ago a *kapellmeister* was a man who could cope, who could keep things going. Today we are all spoiled by the availability of music publishers. If we need something, we walk to the music store and buy it. In those good old days, faced with an emergency, a *kapellmeister* had to do some quick composition, scoring, copying of parts

and swift rehearsal: the show must go on! Music publishers, in most cases, have removed much of the urgency, but is it unreasonable for the Guild to expect, from its accredited members, abilities equivalent to those of the *kapellmeister*? If a man can, quickly, reproduce a piece of Palestrina-like, or Bach-like, music, then he is likely to be well in command of any situation that might call for something of his own. In other words, "Paper Work" tests seek to encourage and endorse the most able kind of practical musicianship other than performance. Yet my experience is (in spite of what I have been saying above) that the "Theory" side of the Fellowship examination is too arduous. It could be that the Fellowship level of competence might be better assessed if the "Paper Work" were shorter and less demanding—but only if the playing side of things, and especially "tests at the organ" were made more demanding to an equivalent extent. This is only a personal opinion, but it would be interesting if guild members would write in and say whether they agree or not. Guild examiners are just as worried about the succession of changes in the requirements as prospective examinees must be. It doesn't seem possible ever to fix a set of requirements that could stay unaltered indefinitely, but perhaps some suggestions from people who are not examiners might help to stabilise things.

Finally, I want to turn the attention of those members who take the A.G.O. examinations, particularly at Fellowship level, really seriously, and who are concerned with the problems of "Theory" etc., with which I have been trying to deal, to a book that I believe will, in the first place, explain the importance and value of "Paper Work" far better than I can, and then (if they really work at it) help them towards acquiring the needed skills for their own examinations. The book is, "The Invention and Composition of Music," by Arthur Hutchings, published by Novello and Co. It's in some ways a difficult book to read, and the suggested exercises may seem very far advanced to the inexperienced. But every paragraph is packed with good sense and information, and anyone who can work those exercises need have no fears of Guild examinations.

PREPARING FOR THE AAGO EXAM

The AAGO examination is one that an individual volunteers to take. It is not mandatory. In order to prepare adequately for it, one must be absolutely convinced that it is worthwhile, because it requires a lot of hard work in advance. The examination is quite challenging, not to be taken lightly. With good background, skills which are sharply honed and the dedication to a goal that one sees as noteworthy, success is definitely possible.

Paper Work Away from the Organ Dictation

This is an area in which an individual who does not have absolute pitch can still do well, since learning to hear well can be an acquired skill. If an individual has difficulty, he must drill himself and be drilled by others on melodic and harmonic intervals and various simple rhythms. Rhythm should not pose a major problem, since a look at a number of examinations of past years shows that rhythms are never complex and that the emphasis is placed elsewhere. One must prepare to hear and retain, perhaps jotting down notes on the staff very quickly as they are played, or else listening to the end, then endeavoring to write down what one has heard. The uncanny ability to hear vertically and horizontally simultaneously must be mastered, since there are only four hearings in the examination. They are spaced, so that the examinee has time to recollect and write. One exercise is in the treble clef, the other in the bass clef. A patient assistant is desirable.

Analysis

A thorough review of theory using a good theory text will greatly assist in the analysis section. In the realm of harmony, particular attention needs to be given to augmented-sixth chords, secondary (applied) dominants, and diminished and nondominant-seventh chords. This is relatively simple and quite easily accomplished, given earlier training. If one feels uncomfortable with other aspects of analysis, a review of the basic forms will help: binary, ternary, rondo and sonata form. The ability to recognize and relate themes, subjects and tonal complexes, modulations, and specific developmental and compositional devices is important. For example, one needs to be aware of the dominant preparation for the return of the tonic in the development section of sonata form, motivic development, imitation at different levels, stretto, manipulations of texture, etc. For individuals who have not been in the classroom as teacher or pupil for a while, review with a respected colleague to zero in on one's needs would be wise. This avoids tedious class situations in which a lot of information is dwelt upon that one already has.

Fugue

In recent years there has invariably been a fugue subject which requires the candidate to write a tonal answer. It would do any candidate well to be thoroughly knowledgeable about the kinds of subjects which most often lend themselves to tonal answers, and to know how to write a good tonal answer. Because of time con-

straints, one would hardly be asked to write an entire fugue. However, one should have the ability to write at least a fugal exposition, very possibly with a regular countersubject (i.e., a countersubject which is in double counterpoint with the subject). Episodes, sequential writing based on motifs from the subject, and strettos are among other topics which might be addressed.

Composition-Harmonization

This section gives the candidate the beginning of a composition, and the individual is asked to write a continuation. The most important thing here is to continue in the style given. If the texture is imitative, then it is unwise to suddenly change to chorale style. If the given measures are tonal, to compose a twelve-tone row for the succeeding measures will not work. All aspects of good compositional technique must be observed. Adequate time is given for this question, as for all sections of the exam; work carefully, not fast.

Musical Knowledge

There is no way to really prepare for this section. There are some definite trends in the kinds of questions asked in recent years, but it is practically impossible to anticipate accurately what will be asked. Almost anything is possible regarding music history, organ literature or organ-building. One who can answer most of the questions on previous examinations is virtually assured of passing this section. If not, perusing past issues of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST and similar publications, and the casual reading of a good paperback music dictionary will suffice. Serious, prolonged study will not be of great benefit since the area is very broad.

Organ Work

Prepared Pieces

The prepared pieces are always announced in the July issue of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST. Secure the compositions right away and begin to learn them immediately! Candidates are advised not to prepare elaborate registrations; simply use sensible, tasteful combinations. Yet, do not draw the principal chorus, simply play all the correct notes on this registration, and expect to receive a high mark.

Playing a Score at Sight

This is a skill which can be acquired. Begin preparation with pieces in four parts, open score and block harmony. Learn to keep going, no matter what happens. For some it is more comfortable to use pedals for the bass part; for others, pedals are better left out. Examiners are instructed to accept either. Slowly one will become more comfortable and confident looking four ways at one time, eventually being able to encompass the four staves as an entity. Later, one must venture into contrapuntal writing and more difficult textures. The musical selection will generally incorporate block and imitative writing, and one can always count on voice-crossing. Be especially prepared for that.

Transposition

What worked remarkably well for this writer was simply to open a book of Bach chorales at random, select a chorale, scan it intensely for 30 seconds, play it at sight, then transpose up and down at least a third. The maximum interval of transposition has now been limited to a major second. It is important to listen very carefully while playing at sight. Observe secondary dominants, inversions, colorful chords, etc. If one does this every day, the skill will come. Much later on, open the book and transpose at sight. This improves the sight-reading skills and sharpens the ability to transpose. After accomplishing this, the examination will be much easier. Very slow practice is counterproductive, since one needs to hear chord progressions and phrases, not chords in isolation. Some limited practice, simply transposing by interval and not paying a great deal of attention to the sounds is desirable, since at examination time, cognition is important. *Please note:* the exam question may be in a style somewhat different from strict chorale style!

Figured Bass

There are many good sources for figured bass; this section must be prepared for with great care. To accomplish quick reading, one must practice at a steady pace. Since the examination proctor will play the melody (on another manual and unobtrusively), maintaining an agreed-upon tempo is vital. Learn to peruse quickly and accurately. Quickly scan all bass notes without figures, or with accidentals only or the figure 6, since these are all root position or first-inversion chords. It must be assumed that they are playable right away. Concentrate on the inversions of seventh chords with accidentals, indications of suspensions and other non-harmonic devices. Be careful to discover whether a chord is a dominant seventh or a diminished seventh; a half step error can wreak havoc. In examinations held so far, figured basses are in the Baroque style, taken from actual compositions.

Bass-Melody Harmonization

This section is difficult. Generally, the melody is given with at least some hint of transient modulation; then the bass is suddenly given. There must be good continuity between the two. It is not advisable to think of melody with accompaniment. Rather, think of chorale style. Immediate perception of possible harmonies is vital. If a sour chord is struck, one must proceed as if nothing happened. Many good sight-singing books have an almost endless supply of melodies and basses. Work very hard on this section.

Modulation

In recent years, modulations asked for on this question have often been up or down in thirds, but be prepared for any eventuality. Develop a definite pattern for various time signatures using your own melodies. Establishment of each key is important; examiners will be listening for this. Remember that good modulations have a gray area in which only you know exactly what is going to happen. Avoid the

ever-present temptation to be impressive, as this usually winds up with a presentation that meanders.

Consistent practice on all these sections will prove to be vital, helpful and enjoyable as time goes on. At the outset, do not become terribly concerned about efforts at the organ sounding as though they are contrived. Above all, do not be discouraged. Look with anticipation to the time of the examination, a time when all will be fresh and new. So-called nervousness can be channeled to give the efforts an alert, alive edge. Moreover, thorough preparation will help to counteract a bad case of nerves.

Securing a number of past examinations from AGO National Headquarters (at a modest cost) is the best possible investment one can make. The July issue of *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST* contains an excellent book list that should prove helpful. If one is convinced that the AAGO certificate is worth pursuing, every conceivable effort must be put forth to do so. It gives one a marvelous feeling of accomplishment to set a lofty goal and achieve it. Thorough preparation is the only way.

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*For AGO Committee on Examination
Preparation and Promotion*

AGO EXAMINATIONS

On Transposition

It is often desirable to play hymns or chants in keys other than the written ones—to cater to the vocal capabilities of a particular congregation, to coordinate the key with those of surrounding liturgical items (i.e., if a choral Amen is in E major, it might be more graceful to follow it with a hymn in A rather than B-flat), and to engage in the popular game of rendering individual stanzas in progressively higher keys. But this application of transposition skills is only the most frequent, the most familiar of many possible uses. In so far as an organist-choirmaster has anything to do with transposing instruments—trumpets, horns, clarinets—he at least has to understand the correspondence between written and concert pitch. He may very well, at some time, have to study and/or direct from a score where the written pitches of transposing instruments are given.

Then there is the occasional need to alter the pitch level of solo vocal or choral music. Here especially we are reminded that transposition is not a tool whose uses are to be found in sophisticated music-making situations only, for it is *more likely*, not less, that singers in comparatively humble quarters would have limitations of range and technique such as to make pitch adjustment highly desirable.

Systematic approaches to transposition generally presuppose one of our traditional seven-note scales. Key signatures are imagined to be other than the written ones; and if one transposes by substituting different clefs, one must add accidentals on certain scale steps. Shortcuts or elegant procedures are all but non-existent for the transposition of heavily chromatic or atonal music. Here a note-by-note process is usually the only answer. Luckily, non-diatonic music is most often tackled in circumstances where human limitations necessitating transposition are not encountered.

Transposition problems in tonal music may be divided into two basic categories. The first and easier category involves moving to a new key center with the same letter-name as the original one—e.g., A to A-flat, C to C-sharp, D-flat to D. In this case, notes would appear on the same lines and spaces (no matter what the clef) in the transposed version as in the original, and only two mental adjustments need be made: 1. the key signature of the new key must be substituted for the old; and 2. all accidentals must be adjusted upward or downward (as the direction of the transposition dictates) by a half-step. To illustrate the second point: in a transposition from A-flat to A, any double-flat becomes a flat, any flat a natural, any natural a sharp, any sharp a double-sharp.

The second category, wherein the letter-names of the original and transposed keys differ from one another, poses considerably greater difficulties. One may proceed simply by imagining all notes to be moved up or down a certain distance on the staff. For example, in the case of upward transposition by a whole step, all notes on the lines are transferred to the next-higher space, all notes in the spaces to the next-higher line. The simplicity of this approach is one of its main recommendations.

One may, on the other hand, imagine no change of position of the notes on the staff, but rather a change of clef. This method, popular in France and other European countries, requires knowledge of C clefs no longer in general use. The following table gives the clef to apply, depending upon the letter-name associated with the bottom line of the staff in the transposed version.

Bottom line gives	Clef
C	soprano (middle C on bottom line)
D	tenor (middle C on second-highest line)
E	treble
F	alto (middle C on middle line)
G	bass
A	mezzo-soprano (middle C on second-lowest line)
B	baritone (middle C on highest line)

In the case of transposition of clefs, an octave adjustment may have to be made for certain staves. For either method of transposition, the correct key signature for the transposed version must be applied, according to the new clef.

Example of transposition by clefs: Suppose that a line of music in A major, appearing in the treble clef, is to be transposed a perfect fourth upwards. *Step 1:* The bottom line in the treble clef is E. E transposed up a perfect fourth is A. Hence, according to our table, the mezzo-soprano clef should be used. *Step 2:* The key center of the transposed version is a fourth higher than A, i.e., D. Hence the key signature should be two sharps, put in the second-highest space (the F space) and on the second-lowest line (the C line), respectively. *Step 3:* The particular G represented by the treble clef is G above middle C. The particular C represented by the mezzo-soprano clef is middle C. For an upward transposition by a fourth (as opposed to a downward transposition by a fifth), the music must therefore be read an octave higher than the level suggested by the mezzo-soprano clef.

Regardless of which method of transposition is employed, accidentals will appear at the same moments in the transposed version as in the original one. Before starting to transpose, it is well to consider what sharp, flat and natural mean in the original key, and what they will mean in the transposed key. Remember: the next-higher accidental than the prevailing one always signifies raising the pitch by a half-step, the next-lower one lowering it by a half-step. Naturals, in particular, can mean either cancellation, raising or lowering, depending upon the scale degree and the key signature. *Example:* Suppose that a transposition from A major to B-flat major must be made. 1. A natural before C in the original version means lowering the pitch by a half-step, since Cs are regularly sharpened in A major. Therefore it must be translated as a flat before D in the new key. 2. A sharp before D in the old key means raising the pitch by a half-step. Therefore it must be translated as a natural before E in the new key, since Es are regularly flattened in B-flat major. 3. After a D-sharp in A major, an ensuing natural before D means cancellation of the sharp, i.e., a return to the normal kind of D in the key of A major.

Hence the natural must be translated as the normal kind of E in the key of B-flat major, i.e., E-flat.

Whether or not clefs are used in transposition, it is helpful to keep certain considerations of harmonic theory in mind. One should be acutely conscious of what the tonic of the transposed version is, and try to cultivate a keen awareness of the correspondence between the original tonic and the transposed one. To a lesser extent one should try to foster a similar awareness regarding the dominant degrees, and perhaps the mediant. In music of the 18th and 19th centuries, phrases generally end with familiar cadential progressions. Recognizing these can help! Also, for pieces in minor, certain accidentals—particularly those for raised sixth and seventh degrees and their cancellations—are bound to occur copiously, so it helps to look out for them.

WALTER HILSE
AGO Committee on Examinations

TRANSPPOSITION THE ORGANIST'S SECRET WEAPON

Arthur H. Christmann

As an organist and a professional player of a transposing woodwind instrument, the writer finds it strange that there is such an inordinate fear of transposition. True, for organists who aspire to AGO certificates, transposition is a necessary part of the examination, and most do plenty of cramming in preparation for this. True also, many organists make simple transpositions of known hymns for congregational unison singing. These are usually done by simple "woodshedding" or by ear-keyboard transposition or by a simple signature change, as when a hymn in sharps is read in flats, or vice versa. In such cases the accidentals must be accommodated. Many of our hymnbooks, including some of the best, have hymns pitched for four parts, resulting in a melody line too high for the comfort of the average congregation.

There is really no fault to be found with the above-mentioned simple transposition, except that the skill does not go far enough; it is not a thorough enough discipline to be used in the give-and-take nature of church music. How many church musicians, for instance, will drop the pitch in rehearsal to take the strain off the voices in an anthem with a high tessitura? How many Hallelujah Choruses, Handel's or Beethoven's, do we hear screeched out on Easter morning when a transposition down would render a far more acceptably-pitched version! Transposition will, of course, bother choir members who have absolute pitch, but this problem will not come up often.

To transpose in a fluent way, the interval of transposition must be so thoroughly mastered that the reading proceeds almost as well as in the original key. The writer, as an orchestral clarinetist, knows that in order to be completely useful, transposition must be *fully automatic*. The successful musician *must* be able, at a minimum, to transpose at first sight one tone higher and one-half tone lower, and to be fully competent, a minor third higher and a minor second lower.

The clue to fluent transposing ability is found in the preceding paragraph. Transpositions, like clefs, are specific; one does not transpose in general. As with C clefs, one does not read them in general. A person may be a master of the alto clef, as viola players must be, and be utterly unable to read other C clefs. One may be a complete master of transposition at one given interval and be unable to perform any other *sight* transposition with anything approaching fluency. It is precisely here that many keyboard harmony teachers make a big mistake in teaching transposition. They try to teach all transpositions simultaneously. The student thus learns the assignment in the original key and transposes it by ear and keyboard sense to a number of different intervals. This can result in dire confusion when confronted by a first-sight-transposition demand and, in this writer's opinion, it is the chief reason that so many find the AGO tests a real ordeal.

Let us go to the orchestral wind section again. The complete clarinet player should master three or four sight transpositions but the French horn or trumpet player must master many more. Early horns and trumpets had no valves but were placed in various keys by the insertion of crooks; thus, the fundamental harmonic series was available in various keys. Horns and trumpets in various keys persisted through the Classic and early Romantic periods, after valves had been introduced, even into the late nineteenth century, as in the works of Brahms and Dvořák. Today, most horn parts are played on the double F horn and most trumpet parts on the B^b trumpet, the player transposing when other keys are specified, although there is a trend toward the regular use of the C trumpet, and modern composers are increasingly writing for this instrument.

What implications does all this have for organist-choirmasters? They should select one transposition and stick to it until that process becomes as automatic as sight reading. The writer, who has taken a special interest in transposition, felt that his transposition of a semitone higher was the weakest. Therefore, he devoted ten or fifteen minutes a day to transposing up a semitone, *every* hymn in the *Hymnal 1940*.

In church work, transpositions up are generally not as useful as transpositions down. However, they may occasionally be used to render a difficult organ work simpler, if only because of an individual passage. The question of whether or not this is justifiable on musical grounds is, of course, a separate one.

Of transpositions down, the semitone seems to be the easiest, since in sharp keys it can be effected merely by changing the signature from sharps to flats and accommodating the accidentals. However, practicality would say that the most useful transposition to be learned first is a whole tone down, since this would take an appreciable amount of strain off voices in works with a high tessitura.

In terms of educational psychology, a transposition is merely the process of attaching a new response to an old stimulus. Thus, *each* individual transposition must be worked upon until the new combination is secure. Anything less than this leads to uncertainty and fear of transposition in general. Trombone players, for instance, have no trouble in reading tenor and alto clefs, because they use these all the time.

Another important caution must be urged: except in the cases of the most difficult music, containing many accidentals, double sharps or double flats, never write out a transposition. Time will be much better used in going over the piece and getting accustomed to the new values, "woodshedding," if you will. This makes one stronger and more confident in the skill; writing it out makes one more depen-

dent, uncertain and fearful in the future.

Organ transpositions may also be made by the use of clefs. Those who have studied conducting thoroughly would also be able to bring clef reading to their aid as a means of transposition. As study material, Morris and Ferguson's *Preparatory Exercises in Score Reading* (Oxford University Press) is a fine aid. Certainly, advanced organists and choral leaders will need to read soprano, alto and tenor clefs fluently if they want to know what they are doing when confronted by the full score of an earlier choral work, where all parts but the bass are in C clefs. The great conservatories of Europe, especially in Latin countries, rely very heavily on clef reading, both for its own sake and as a means of transposition. Similarly to transpositions, clefs cannot all be studied at the same time, but must be mastered one by one if confusion is not to ensue. The writer suggests that the *minimum* time on each clef should be no less than half a year of fairly concentrated study.

Once mastered, the clefs enable one to achieve certain transpositions which come up regularly in orchestral scores. Alto clef gives us D trumpet and D horn readings, most important in late Baroque music in which D major and minor are favorite keys; tenor clef gives B (mainly B^b) readings, as for clarinets, trumpets and B^b horns; soprano clef gives A readings as for A clarinets, A trumpets, A horns, and Bach's favorite oboe d'amore. Of these C clefs, the alto, with middle C on the center line, should be the first to be thoroughly learned, for without it one cannot even read a string quartet or the string choirs of orchestral scores.

For every transposition by interval or by clef, the accidentals must be accommodated. I prefer the expression "factored." Thus the factor will be different for a semitone than for a tone, different for a minor third than for a major third. *Intensive* practice will give not only the interval of the transposition but also the correct factoring of the accidentals.

Diatonic music, having fewer accidentals, will require less transposition effort than highly chromatic, late Romantic music. When the harmonic intent of the chords is quite obvious, the newly transposed values of the accidentals will be sensed quickly, heard in advance, as it were, by the inner ear. If the particular transposition is pursued *thoroughly enough*, the transposed accidentals will begin to take on *absolute values*, (the old story of attaching a new response to an old stimulus). If and when this complete new association occurs, a piece of highly chromatic music, or even one in twelve-tone style will be just as easy to read as in the original key. Fortunately, in church music organists do not often need to cope with this type of music; it is decidedly anti-vocal. However, orchestra musicians do, and the further organists advance in the general skill of transposition, the more easily they will cope with the simpler problems which come up in their regular work, and the more easily they will be able to pass the transposition task on the AGO examinations.

For congregational hymn singing, lowering the pitch a semitone or a full tone should be sufficient to take most of

the vocal strain off many hymns, but should one come up which could profit by even a bit more lowering of pitch, try the following: read the left hand as treble clef and the right hand as soprano clef, factoring the accidentals. This will give intervals of either a minor third or a major third down, depending on the choice. A minor third will usually be indicated, since a major third is almost too great a transposition. For security reasons, a small amount of woodshedding will give greater assurance, but the central theme of this article remains the same: in general, transpositions must be so fully mastered that they will excite no fear, even at *first sight*.

In clef transpositions, all clefs may be used in all sorts of relationships, but register is ignored. It may be exact or many octaves out of its usual position. The name of the note is the important thing.

It would be practical, while on the general subject, to include words of specific advice to those contemplating taking AGO examinations in the foreseeable future. *Begin transposition discipline early*, at least several years before the contemplated date of taking the test, so that a minimum of six months may be devoted to each transposition called for. Two years would be a bare minimum. In the meantime, use the transposition being worked on whenever the smallest opportunity occurs in regular church work, and above all, *have courage*. If properly prepared, transposition is one of the tests the candidate may feel easy about, but it is the writer's opinion that it is usually one of the tests which scares many away from taking the examination at all.

In preparation, choose a hymnal and transpose at *sight* every hymn at the interval being studied and at no other interval at the time. Any hymnal will do, but the *Hymnal 1940* is especially good, for it contains much plainsong, the tonality of which is more exotic and does not help the candidate as much as do the common major and minor. *The English Hymnal* is even better in this regard; there is more plainsong in it, sometimes page after page. Also, many of its tunes are little known to Americans and possibly Canadians. In such cases, the candidate must rely on sight transposition; he cannot expect much help from his ear or memory. After completing a hymnal or two, it would be a good idea to pursue the exercise in Sumsion and Wilkinson's *Transposition Exercises at the Keyboard* (Novello) which gives experience in many fabrics, with plenty of accidentals and with some independent pedal parts as well. The candidate should send to the AGO national office for past examinations, always available while the supply lasts.

Finally, when sitting on the organ bench at the time of the examination, *be sure* to note the original key accurately, and make a *very definite* note of the key and signature being transposed into. Above all, be sure to note accurately whether the example is in major or in minor. This seems very obvious, but under nervous conditions a mistake here can easily occur, and the result will be utter chaos.

Some people are naturally better sight readers than others; they will be able to transpose simpler tasks more quickly than will the slow sight reader. However, make

no mistake about it; transposition is a discipline which must be planted on a very firm foundation. While some may think and read more quickly than others, quick thinking will never do more than make a favorable impression on a limited task. The AGO tests require *first sight* transposition, yet many applicants are trained for keyboard harmony-ear transposition. Were this the type of transposition called for, the examination would give an excerpt, ask that it be played in the original key and then in a number of adjacent keys.

In regard to the title of this article, it can easily be seen why fluent transposing ability will, indeed, be a "secret weapon." Smoother singing will ensue, and nobody—not the members of the congregation, not the minister—will know the reason why. The choir alone may be in on the secret, and perhaps the rare person having a degree of absolute pitch. Such a person will need to learn to transpose!

Arthur H. Christmann graduated from The Julliard School, where he won the Morris Loeb prize and was appointed to the faculty, teaching clarinet. He studied organ with Harold Friedell, passed the AAGO examination and earned the SMD degree in conducting at Union Theological Seminary. In addition to teaching and playing clarinet for thirty-five years, he served as an organist-choirmaster in New York City area churches for over twenty-five years.

AGO EXAMINATIONS *The Fugal Answer*

In preparation for this aspect of the AGO examinations, candidates should become familiar with the answers to the subjects of Bach's organ fugues, and those in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. If you can, memorize them, so that upon hearing the subject you can immediately supply the answer. In this way you will acquire the "feel" of the appropriate answer—a necessity, as in some cases a choice must be made, on purely musical grounds, between two or more possibilities. Remember: In art, there is no escape from judgment, no matter how "protective" rules may be—and rules there *must* be.

Let us now enter the examination room, and with an eye on the clock, examine the first fugal problem: the Answer. In order to avoid confusion and possible consequent panic, take the following steps *one at a time and in this order*:

1. In what key, major or minor, is the given subject?
2. Does it end in the same key, or does it modulate? If it modulates, it will end in the dominant key.

We must divide the procedure as follows: a) applies only to the subject that does not modulate; b) applies to the subject that does modulate. Let us first take a)—the subject that does not modulate. The continuing steps will be:

- 3a. Does the subject commence on the dominant—the fifth of the scale of the key? If so, it must be answered by the tonic, and the remainder of the answer will be in the dominant key.

EXAMPLE 1



EXAMPLE 2



- 4a. Does the subject leap to the dominant near the beginning? If so, that dominant will be answered by the tonic, and the remainder of the answer will be in the dominant key.

EXAMPLE 3



5a. If the subject does not commence on the dominant or leap to it near the beginning and does not modulate, every note of the subject must be answered in the dominant, that is, a perfect fifth above or perfect fourth below each note. It is exact transposition to the dominant key, equally applicable to major or minor.

EXAMPLE 4



We now consider the subject that does not modulate.

- 3b. Does the subject commence on the dominant? If so, it must be answered by the tonic.

EXAMPLE 5



EXAMPLE 6



EXAMPLE 7



EXCEPTIONS

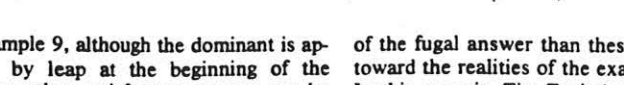
1. Occasionally, the only satisfactory answer to a subject is entirely in the sub-dominant. This occurs when the dominant is prominent throughout the subject.

EXAMPLE 8



It is instructive to try to find another satisfactory answer to this subject; the effort will be more instructive than further comment.

EXAMPLE 9



2. In Example 9, although the dominant is approached by leap at the beginning of the subject, no other satisfactory answer can be found. This is because the dominant in this case outlines the tonic chord, and is an essential feature of the contour of the subject.

Of course, there is much more to the study

as in 3a, after which, at the earliest musical opportunity, it must modulate to the tonic, that is, at the interval of a perfect fourth above or perfect fifth below the subject.

EXAMPLE 5



EXAMPLE 6



of the fugal answer than these hints directed toward the realities of the examination room. In this pursuit, *The Technique and Spirit of Fugue* by Oldroyd (Oxford University Press), listed on the Examination Requirements sheets, is clear, comprehensive and practical.

HAROLD HEEREMANS
AGO Examination Committee

FUGUE FOR AGO EXAMINATIONS

In a recent report on behalf of the Examination Committee, the comment was made that "fugue" (18th-century counterpoint) was one of the most troublesome items on AAGO paperwork. This brief article is written in hope that the mysteries of the relationship between fugue subject and answer will be quickly removed.

Several comments at the outset: 1) this is an introduction to the subject; 2) no attempt is made to deal with the subdominant answer, infrequently required on examinations; 3) the countersubject is beyond the scope of this discussion, although the writer would happily take it up at another time if he thought demand would warrant it; and 4) nothing will be written here that has not been said elsewhere, better, and assuredly more fully. Yet had the writer been exposed to this presentation when a young student first tackling the subject, he believes many hours of unnecessary labor could have been averted. This presentation, simplistic as it is, will not replace work with Kennan, Oldroyd, Prout, and Gedalge; and excellent instruction with a good teacher. Yet had more Associate candidates possessed even the superficial grasp of the subject as herein presented, more AAGO's would have been earned in 1979.

On AGO exams the subject is always given. If an incorrect answer is provided, the resulting exposition is built like the Biblical house, on sand. A few basic principles kept in mind will solve many subject-questions. In recent years the Examination Committee has gone out of its way to avoid giving exotic subjects requiring knowledge of fugal writing in all its subtle nuances.

Subjects call for answers which are *basically or entirely* in the dominant key, a perfect fifth above the subject key (or a fourth below—this will hereafter be taken for granted). Example: a subject in the "people's" key of C will have an answer in G major. (The word *basically* is important here—some modification of answers frequently occurs, as discussion will indicate shortly.) Answers to the following subjects are unaltered in the dominant key, simply because there is no reason for them to be otherwise! These are called *real* answers. Space does not permit numerous quotations—first one by the writer, not to be known for greatness; then one from literature, a random choice from hundreds of possibilities:

Example 1 - Subject



Answer



Example 2 - Subject



Answer



In saying "there is no reason for them to be otherwise," it is understood that such phraseology is meaningless until we turn to subject types in which the answer *must* be modified. Writers on fugue deal with many types or variants thereof. For our purposes these have been summarized under three headings; in each case the answer departs from the perfect fifth or dominant relationship in some respect. Since this modification resolves some harmonic problems, it is called *tonal*. The history of AGO exams indicates that this is the kind usually, although not exclusively, posed by the examiners. The first type: If a subject begins with scale 1-5 or 5-1 (note: scale, not chord), the opposite appears in the answer *before* the answer continues in the dominant key. In Example 3, the subject opens with C G (1-5); therefore the answer opens with G C (5-1) before continuing in G major.

Example 3 - Subject



Answer



Another way (a more common approach) is to say that scale 1 (subject) is answered with 5 (in the answer); 5 (next note in subject) is answered with scale 1 (next note in answer). Same result. But note this adjustment takes place at, or near, the beginning of the answer; "basically," the answer was in G major.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that the C major harmony to G major in the answer has implications for the countersubject, since there is a IV-I relationship in the answer that does not appear in the subject. But that is outside the scope of this article.

Another example:

Example 4 - Subject



Answer



The problem is the same, only the notes are reversed. The subject opens scale 5-1 (G C); therefore the answer must be 1-5 (C G) before completing it in G major. In sum-

mary, if the interval of a fifth, or some more ornate variant thereof, appears at the beginning of the subject, the answer must be tonal.

The next type is a little more challenging. The writer refers to it as the "prominent dominant" or, to be consistent, prominent scale 5 at the beginning of the subject which, unlike type one, does not go to scale 1 directly. Nevertheless, scale 5, if sufficiently characteristic, is answered by scale 1. An example (which may also show why it is more challenging) follows:

Example 5 - Subject

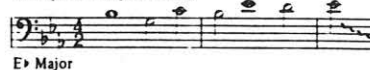


Answer



Here the subject opens with scale 5, the note length perhaps making it prominent (at the asterisk); this to be answered with scale 1 (C) before writing the rest of the answer in G Major. Another example, this from literature:

Example 6 - Subject (Bach)



Answer



In this well-known excerpt, the subject begins on scale 5 (B-flat); it is answered by E-flat, scale 1, before the rest of the answer in the dominant key of B-flat.

The last principal type is that of the subject which modulates to the dominant key. The answer, beginning in the dominant key, must modulate to the tonic key. If it were a *real* answer, with everything written in the answer exactly a fifth higher than the subject, the answer would end in the supertonic key. Again, a simple illustration.

Example 7 - Subject



Answer (if real)

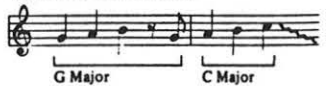


Since a fugue (which normally has a minimum of three voices) must have the subject re-enter in C major in the third voice, an intolerable situation arises—the necessity for a too quick modulation from D Major to C major, keys not sufficiently closely related. Hence the need for a *tonal* response, in which the tonic key of C (subject) is reflected as the dominant key of G (answer), until the modulation occurs in the subject. Then the dominant (G) of the subject is heard in the tonic key (C) in the answer. Thus:

Example 8 - Subject



Answer (correct and tonal)



Exceptions to this in tonal music are almost non-existent, but attention may be called to two examples: Fugue No. 10, E Minor, from the Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I, (which is also a rare example of a two-voice fugue); and the *Fugue* from *Schwanda* by Weinberger.

In type two, the problem is to decide sometimes if the opening scale 5 is sufficiently prominent to receive special treatment; in type three, to know sometimes where the subject modulates. The writer likes this subject from the W.T.C. because it combines both types in one subject.

Example 9 - Subject (Bach)



Answer



The opening B-flat of the subject is considered a "dominant" which must be adjusted with an E-flat in the answer. Thereafter every note of the subject *until* the modulation should be heard in the key of the dominant in the answer (key of B-flat). The modulation in the subject takes place where shown, and is to B-flat; this appears in E-flat major in the answer, or it would end in the supertonic key of F. Types two and three are represented.

One could study an almost endless number of examples from literature. Since this is intended for prospective AGO examination candidates and to show others who may be considering the matter that it is not impossibly difficult, let us now turn attention to certain questions which have appeared in recent years on AGO exams, both Associate and Fellow.

The following was the Fellowship fugue subject for 1979:

Example 10 - Subject



Answer



The subject being in A minor, the answer must be in E minor. However, the scale 1 - 5 movement at the beginning of the subject calls for 5 - 1 at the beginning of the answer, before the answer is continued in the dominant key. Incidentally, the answer is always in the minor dominant in "minor" fugues—not major, as the dominant chord in the minor mode so often is. This is an example of type one.

Next, an example from the fugue Associate question, 1979:

Example 11 - Subject



Answer



This subject in D major must of course have an answer in A major. The opening dominant note, or scale 5, must be adjusted first, however; 5 in the subject is reflected as 1 in the answer. An example of type two. There is the possibility of another correct answer if one considers the opening dominant note as lasting four beats, with B and G merely auxiliary, or neighboring tones around it. The dominant in such a case is prominent indeed! Example 12 contains another possible solution—the writer recalls seeing it on several papers:

Example 12 (alternative answer to subject, Example 11)



Finally, an example of type three (the modulating subject) will be taken from the Fellowship 1978 examination. It will be seen (below, Example 13) that the first measure-and-a-half, together with the anacrusis, is in G major, the first full measure outlining the leading-tone 7th, (or incomplete dominant 9th chord) in that key. The latter half of the second full measure begins the dominant key, in which the subject concludes. The answer must reverse the process, beginning in D major, and concluding in G major. Had this not been done, the answer would have ended in A! Also, like the W.T.C. example, this subject which modulates happens to have a dominant note at the opening which needs adjustment.

Example 13 - Subject



Answer



Sometimes, in order that one may know other parts of the fugue, subject and answer are given, and stretto, the use of pedal point, episodic writing are required. This article is not intended to assist that problem, in which imagination and creativity play a heavy part (often a Fellowship requirement in particular). It is hoped that this discussion, elementary as it is, will serve as a basis to prospective candidates for study or review; that there will be light in darkness; and that a pursuit of the joys of fugal writing will be carried on with renewed vigor. The next article will deal with the keyboard harmony section of the CAGO, known more familiarly as "Part 3—Theory."

HARRY WILKINSON
Chairman, AGO Examination Committee

STILL MORE ON FUGAL ANSWERS

In considering how best to attack the ongoing problems which AGO Associateship and Fellowship candidates (and other people) are having in fashioning fugal answers, I decided that it would be redundant to write yet another article outlining the basic steps involved, when two excellent essays dealing with this topic had appeared in Guild periodicals in the last ten years: Harold Heeremans's "AGO Examinations: The Fugal Answer," in *MUSIC/THE AGO-RCCO MAGAZINE*, March 1978, and Harry Wilkinson's "Fugue for AGO Examinations," in *TAO*, December 1979. Rather, I thought that it might be beneficial to assume these two articles as givens, and to elaborate upon, and provide commentary on, some of the essential points raised in them. In this connection, it gives me pleasure to announce that candidates applying for the AAGO and FAGO examinations this spring may get xerox copies of these articles directly from National Headquarters, gratis, upon request. (All others may obtain copies as they would reprints of any magazine excerpts from years past, by writing to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.)

To begin with, some errata to clear away. The sentence directly below Example 4 in the Heeremans article should read: "We now consider the subject that does modulate." (Delete the word "not.") Second, a most amazing double erratum: Both the Heeremans and Wilkinson articles misquote the answer to Bach's Fugue in E-flat (St. Anne), giving the fourth note as F, when it indisputably is E-flat! Such glitches do, alas, slip into print despite the best combined efforts of stellar authors, editors and proofreaders.

Now down to business. The Heeremans article in particular gives an admirably systematic step-by-step approach to the creation of a fugal answer, in the form of a series of questions that a would-be fugue writer can ask about a given fugue subject. These questions point unmistakably to tonic-dominant relationships as central to the 18th-century concept of fugue—indeed virtually as central as the idea of preserving all essential features of the subject in its various appearances. Below, in talking about tonic and dominant, we will sometimes be referring to the tonic and dominant notes of the home scale, sometimes to the tonic and dominant triads in the home key, and sometimes to the tonic and dominant tonalities, which are the keys of which the tonic and dominant triads are, respectively, the central harmonies. Both the tonic and dominant notes and the similarly named keys will be pivotal to us in our fugal contemplations. (According to common usage, when the phrase "in the tonic" is used, we are talking about the tonic key; when the phrase "on the tonic" is used, about the tonic note or triad.)

Already in Gregorian chant one can see two specific notes in a mode assume the most important and second most important roles in melodic construction: the "final" and "dominant" (reciting tone), respectively. In the ecclesiastical modes the "dominant" was not always the fifth note of the scale; however, it so happened that in both the Aeolian and Ionian modes—the emerging minor and major

systems—the dominant was indeed the fifth step. In points of imitation in 16th-century polyphony (which were called "fugae" by theorists of that century and the next) "tonal answers" were already very common, with adjustments in scale degrees to ensure that dominant and tonic notes corresponded to each other in statement and reply. Apparently these two scale degrees were deemed so superior hierarchically to the remaining five that in many cases each was seen as the only worthy response to the other. Preservation of whole and half steps in the reply was also a *sine qua non*, which in turn dictated the universal preference for fourths and fifths as intervals of imitation.

In the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, as the grammar and syntax of tonal harmony became increasingly well defined and conventional, themes of fugal sections became ever more pregnant with possibilities for harmonization—until, in the Bach period, a fugue subject often seems inseparable from its own built-in harmonic implications. In the high Baroque, unambiguous melodic cadences, either on the tonic or mediant degree of the scale, impart closure to fugue subjects, with V-I or VII-I progressions clearly implied. Note carefully that a considerable percentage of subjects by Bach and Handel make their actual cadences on the mediant degree, usually via the fourth step of the scale—which becomes a secondary leading-tone when appearing in a dominant-function context. More often than not, there even is an invitation to place a subdominant-type harmony (IV or II) before the cadential V or VII.

As we progress into the high Baroque, evolution of harmonic thought goes yet further. The idea of a conflict between two different tonalities within the same musical movement—a principal key which begins and ends the movement, and a second, "pretender-to-the-throne" key which holds sway for sizable stretches in the movement's interior portions—became the overriding concept of larger-scale structure. Many of us are perhaps most keenly aware of this dichotomy in the "sonata-allegro" form, as found in pre-Classical and Classical movements, where the choice of "pretender" key is usually the dominant if the main key is major, and the relative major if the main key is minor. In 18th-century fugue, on the other hand, the conflict, almost always unambiguously delineated in the exposition, is between tonic and dominant keys, whatever the mode of the tonic, and the way fugal answers relate to their subjects seems to underline and dramatize this conflict. Note here Heeremans's vital observation that in fugue, a minor tonic is answered by the dominant minor—not the dominant major. This is altogether reasonable, in view of the greater number of pitches that the two minor scales have in common.

The manner in which a fugal answer is fashioned draws attention to the delicate coexistence between the two contending tonalities. If the subject begins and ends in I, the answer will almost always both begin and end in V, being "basically or entirely" (to quote Wilkinson) in the latter key. (For the only significant exception to this rule, as well as to

some of what was stated in the previous paragraph, see my discussion of the "subdominant answer," found below under number 3.) On the other hand, if a modulation from I to V occurs within the subject, it will almost always be balanced with modulation from V back to I within the answer. Since cadences are so important structurally in 18th-century harmony (and concomitantly, cadential patterns in 18th-century melody), it is understandable that a substantial segment of a fugal answer, looking backward from where the tonic harmony is implied in the cadence (for shorter subjects, usually at least halfway back to the beginning), must be an exact transposition of the corresponding segment of the subject: almost always a perfect fifth higher than the subject (or—what amounts to the same thing harmonically—a perfect fourth lower) if the subject ends in the tonic; a perfect fifth lower than the subject (or a perfect fourth higher) if the subject ends in the dominant, or in the case of the "subdominant answer." This exact correspondence in subject and answer between cadences in I and then V, or vice versa, suggests parity between keys as does nothing else. Also, it is clear that the melodic cadential patterns of subjects are among those essential features which must remain inviolate if and when interval adjustments are to be made.

Peers, maybe; enduring equals, no. The custom of responding to "prominent dominants" at or near the head of the subject (see Wilkinson's article for definition of this term) with tonic notes in the corresponding spots in the answer complicates the contest between tonic and dominant. While on the one hand reaffirming the dual preeminence of the tonic and dominant notes of the home scale, this custom weights things ever so subtly in favor of the tonic key. The supertonic, which is the dominant's own dominant, would, in many contexts, be too strong a support-tone of the dominant key early in the answer, undermining the declaration of the tonic as home key, which had just been made at the head, and perhaps in the cadence, of the subject. When all is said and done, no genuine doubt should exist in a listener, at any time, as to who is really "Number 1" among these two rivals, and in which key the piece is destined to have its denouement.

Next, let us look at some of the exceptions cited by Heeremans and Wilkinson to the principle that early dominant notes in a subject must generate corresponding tonic notes in its answer. Heeremans says in his paragraph 5a: "If the subject does not commence on the dominant or leap to it near the beginning and does not modulate, every note of the subject must be answered in the dominant, that is, a perfect fifth above or perfect fourth below each note." Noteworthy under this heading are instances of completely stepwise movement from an initial tonic note to the dominant note—e.g., the D-minor Fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (henceforth WTC), Book II, or the Fugue in B Minor for organ. In such cases, if a scale-degree adjustment would be attempted at any point in order to match dominant note with tonic, the melodic line would usually be irreparably disfigured—which would run counter to the principle of

faithfully preserving the subject's "essential" identity.

Heeremans also cites Bach's "Little" Fugue in G Minor as an instance where a real, rather than tonal, answer is required, since the dominant note near the beginning "outlines the tonic chord, and is an essential feature of the contour of the subject." But here I have a reservation. The repertoire of Bach fugues, taken as a whole, does *not*, I submit, establish that a dominant tone involved in the outlining of the tonic triad at the head of a subject will necessarily be exempted from tonal adjustment in the answer—witness, for example, the A-flat-major Fugue from WTC, Book I. In fact, I might propose a little experiment with regard to the "Little" G Minor itself: have the second voice enter half a measure earlier, against the subject's cadential note, and above the first voice rather than below (to evade the problem of an unprepared fourth). Now I suggest that adjusting the second note of the answer from A to G is not only within the realm of reason but most welcome, since we probably would like the G minor (tonic) harmony to prevail, unencumbered by distracting dissonances, for at least two quarter beats. Harmonic rhythm, it seems, is an important consideration in our choice here. In line with this, the following generalization might be offered in the case of subjects that cadence in the tonic: that if the second voice enters on the cadential note of the subject (as happens much of the time), the desirability of giving the tonic harmony adequate duration in turn enhances the desirability of making tonal adjustments in replies to "prominent dominant" notes; on the other hand, if the entry of the second voice is delayed by a beat or two after the cadence in the subject (the first voice filling in the space with a connecting "bridge"), then there may be the opportunity to start the answer on the dominant harmony, which in turn might afford the option of responding to early dominant notes (though hardly ever an initial note) with the dominant of the dominant—as happens in the "Little" G Minor. A fugue writer often has a bona fide choice whether to commence the answer on the cadential note of the subject, or to mark time for a beat or two by means of a bridge.

Some further observations with respect to "prominent dominants":

1. Early dominant tones in a subject are not prominent if they are nothing more than ornamental tones. Even being the highest note in a melodic contour may not be good enough for a dominant tone to qualify as "prominent," as is illustrated by the neighbor-note G in the subject of the C-major Fugue, WTC, Book I. If the dominant note is not "prominent," we need not worry about replying to it with a tonic note in the answer.

2. A dominant note occurring somewhat later in a subject may still be "prominent," if it is only separated from an earlier dominant note by clear-cut melodic ornamentation of that dominant pitch (passing tones, neighbor tones, chordal neighbors), or if all previous notes in the subject constitute nothing more than an elaboration of the tonic pitch. The B-flat-major Fugue, from WTC, Book I, provides an example of the former—and the "tonal" response to the second dominant tone in the "St. Anne" may be understood in this light as well. A particularly striking example of the latter case is the fugue subject from Bach's Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C.

3. The most extreme case of "prominent" dominants is that of a dominant tone which persists throughout a subject. As Heeremans illustrates with the fugue subject from the popular Toccata and Fugue in D Minor for organ, this may well force an answer which resides completely in the subdominant key, never making it to the dominant key at all. This relatively rare situation is the only one in 18th-century fugue where the tonic-dominant key dichotomy breaks down at least to some degree. How ironic, however, that it is brought about precisely by the overriding presence of the dominant pitch in the subject! Fugue writers should be cautioned: "subdominant answers" must be resorted to only when persistent dominant notes throughout the subject render the ordinary procedure of mirroring tonic and dominant tonalities all but unworkable.

Focusing now on the second main category of fugue subjects—those which modulate from tonic to dominant—I would point out immediately that such subjects may have "prominent" dominant notes early on, just as subjects cadencing in I may. Much of what has been said above about the treatment of "prominent" dominants applies equally to both categories. Heeremans and Wilkinson both cite the subject from the E-flat-major Fugue, in WTC, Book I, as one which requires two distinct tonal adjustments: one in response to the opening dominant tone, the second one to "re-route" the answer so that it cadences in the tonic key in response to the subject's cadencing in the dominant key. The Wilkinson article provides ample discourse about why tonal adjustment is all but essential in answers to modulating subjects. He even produces the inevitable Bachian exception (there is one to just about everything, isn't there?)—the Fugue in E Minor, WTC, Book I, whose answer blithely ends on V of V (though not in the key of V of V, we should observe).

Heeremans's fertile remark that the answer to a modulating subject must modulate back to I "at the earliest musical opportunity" certainly invites elaboration. In order for the answer—which begins in the dominant key in such cases—to wend its way back to the tonic key successfully, one must depart at some point from an exact transposition of the subject a perfect fifth upward (or perfect fourth downward), dropping the remainder of the answer a major second below this level of transposition. The latter part of the answer will, in other words, be exactly a perfect fourth upward (or perfect fifth downward) from the corresponding part of the subject.

What "musical considerations" come into play in choosing the place for this shifting of transposition levels? As we have already remarked above, the adjustment certainly must be made before the cadence of the subject is broached—i.e., before the articulation of that dominant-function chord in the cadential progression—else the sanctity of this all-important element of melodic and harmonic structure will be violated. Going further backward in the subject, we look for a "least-sensitive" spot in it, where the interval adjustment will cause little or (we hope) no damage to the identity of the subject. If an actual rest occurs in the subjects, as in the E-flat-major Fugue, WTC, Book I, our task is immensely facilitated: such a break in melodic continuity

usually accommodates a tonal adjustment most graciously. If a notated rest is not to be found, one should try to locate a natural "inner phrase break" or caesura, all the while keeping in mind the general tendency of Baroque units of melody to start on the weak parts of beats and go to stronger parts. (See, for example, the points of adjustment in Bach's Fugue in C Major for organ, BWV 547, and in the B-minor Fugue, WTC, Book I.) Other elements of a subject that one might hesitate to "disfigure" through interval adjustment include: particularly striking and/or unusual large intervals (not the common leaps of fourths and fifths found at the heads of subjects!); segments dwelling on the half-step intervals which are found in the scale; chromatic successions of notes; and, of course, repeated notes.

In some cases, a spot for the adjustment may be found prior to an early incidence in the subject of a leading-tone to tonic succession (not the eventual cadential succession!). In the answer, this will result in a brief, though vivid, tonicization of the subdominant. Far from being undesirable, such a "dip into the subdominant," giving as it does a strong articulation of the subdominant harmony, will render the ensuing V-I cadence in the tonic key all the more decisive. (See, for example, the G-sharp-minor Fugue, WTC, Book I.)

Heeremans said it pithily in his article: "In art, there is no escape from judgment." Especially in the matters discussed in the paragraphs immediately preceding, but also to some extent with regard to other aspects of fugal writing touched upon in this essay, there are no neat, universally applicable rules, only various principles to recall, and factors to weigh against one another. Above all in the case of tonal adjustments in answers to modulating subjects, there may be more than one right solution. When you will have finished drawing up your answer to a given subject, return to the subject and compare it, note for note, with the answer. Regardless of the presence or absence of "prominent dominants," and whether or not the subject stays in the tonic key, any note in the answer must be either a perfect fifth or perfect fourth removed from its counterpart in the subject: nothing said above opens up the possibility of transposition of any note by any other interval. If corresponding notes in the subject and your answer do differ from each other by some other interval—say, a third or sixth—rest assured that something has gone haywire.

In studying the topic of fugal answers, it is most helpful, as Heeremans asserts, to become intimately acquainted with the subjects and answers from Bach's fugues. Try fitting choral harmonizations to Bach's subjects as they appear in their original, unaccompanied state, to develop a feel for the harmonic implications inherent in them. Then behold the diverse ways that Bach does proceed to harmonize them. (Again, no unique right answers here!) Ascertain which answers are tonal, which real, and why. Finally, consider whether Bach could have made alternative pitch choices in some of his answers—choices which would also have been valid. In some cases—though not too many—I suspect that the reply to that last question is yes.

WALTER HILSE
Chairman, Professional
Certification Committee

NEW AGO ASSOCIATESHIP EAR TESTS SAMPLE QUESTIONS

As announced in the requirement sheet for the 1988 certification examinations (TAO, July 1987 issue), the Associateship ear tests will be somewhat different this year from what they have been for the last few years. There will again be two dictation questions, but the first item to be dictated will now be a single melodic line, rather than a two-part passage. This single line will be a little more sophisticated or complex (and possibly a bit longer) than the lines in the traditional two-part passages had been. The second dictation question will, as before, be a two-part passage, but now the top voice will be in the range of the treble clef, the lower one in the range of the bass clef. To aid candidates in preparing for this spring's test, we are hereby giving a sample question for each of these dictations. (As before, each test will be played four times; the key and time signature of each test will be announced, and the tonic chord played.)

WALTER HILSE, Chairman
AGO Professional Certification Committee

Sample Single-Line Dictation:



Sample Two-Part Dictation:

THE ASSOCIATESHIP HARMONIZATION-COMPOSITION QUESTION

The harmonization-composition question on the Associateship examination (A10), in which one is to "continue and bring to a conclusion a passage for organ whose opening is given," tests several areas of the candidate's musicianship. It is, first of all, an exercise in actual composition. The candidate is given a completely free hand, limited only by the musico-stylistic constraints implied by the given material, and by a prescribed time span (an approximate number of measures usually being recommended in the instructions). Secondly, it tests the candidate's theoretical acumen, in that he must be able to identify salient stylistic features of the opening, and then have the skill to fashion a continuation compatible with and growing smoothly out of that beginning.

Thirdly, it examines the candidate's knowledge of his instrument—his ability to write something that will sound well on the organ, and be readily playable. Lastly, whatever improvisational cunning he may have acquired might also be consulted to good effect here. The time that can be devoted to this task, though conceivably the bulk of that three-hour paperwork session (the only other item in that session is the set of short-answer questions), remains relatively brief, so spontaneous impulse and intuition can be valuable assets.

In view of the attention paid to elements of 18th-century style in other parts of the Associateship examination (the fugue and figured-bass questions), it has become customary in this exercise to give openings steering the candidate toward more recent idioms. The harmonic dialect, while guaranteed to be tonal, will probably be either markedly chromatic or pandiatonic—perhaps even distinctly modal in the 20th-century sense of, say, Vaughan Williams. Whatever the opening's musical vocabulary and syntax, the candidate must continue in a consistent manner. Thus, for the decidedly chromatic opening given on the 1984 exam (beginning of the musical example given below, through the third eighth note of measure 2), it would surely be hard to imagine a successful sequel devoid of accidentals.

Looking at the 1984 opening, let us further enumerate some of its attributes and features.

1. The element of the melodic fourth (first two notes of the soprano): this is seen to be a key-defining device, stating the dominant and tonic scale degrees. Let us not overlook the simple rhythmic motif of two eighths in upbeat-downbeat formation.
2. Tonic pedal points, both in soprano and bass; these are so prominent as to assume thematic importance—one is invited to regard them as actual protagonists in the musical discourse.
3. The relatively quick harmonic motion: do not be lulled by the pedal points into thinking that chord changes occur at a slow rate. Instead, remember that the harmonic structure over a pedal point is quick to lead a life of its own. In the 1984 opening the harmonies may be analyzed as follows:

I V, iv₆ (t-b) (III₆) vii₆/iv

♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

It is also possible to hear a dominant-function harmony on beat 4 of measure 1—a form of vii₆. 4. Raised leading tones or melodic neighbors, clearly conceived in terms of functional harmony: note the F-sharp and C-sharp in measure 1 resolving to G and D, respectively. After these resolutions, it is difficult to imagine the F-sharps in measure 2 heading anywhere other than to a chord with G in it. Simply launching into a V-I cadence in D minor, without first resolving the F-sharps, will not do. 5. The quasi-Baroque 16th-note motif introduced in the soprano: this is perhaps the most promising element to seize upon for developmental purposes. Further on, we will cite ample manipulations of it in the given solution. 6. Other characteristics of a more general sort: the texture of the opening is four-part and continuous—no rests are found in any voice after its entry; melodic motion is overwhelmingly stepwise; and different voices tend to move at different speeds. While none of these traits seem too binding (and preservation of a texture of a certain number of voices

is not required in this exercise), they do rule out some ways of proceeding. Thus, sequels which sport a succession of short phrases separated by rests, which thin out to two voices (or less) for lengthy stretches, which have jagged lines with big skips going hither and yon, or which lapse into group motion, would be incongruous.

Let us now look at the sample continuation given in the 1984 Examination Solution Booklet (remainder of the example found below). We see that the 16th-note motif is pervasive. It is employed in a parallel-sixths setting (measure 4), in inverted form (measures 4-6 and 8), and mirrored against itself (measures 4 and 6). In measure 5, the 16th-note motif (inverted) is combined with other material—the melodic fourth and stepwise 8th-note motion—to generate a sequence which essentially delineates a downward circle-of-fifths progression.

Measure 3 exhibits much of the fabric of measure 1, but reproduced a step lower with the soprano pedal point transferred to the bass.

Andante espressivo

(Certain solutions offered by candidates last spring contained other successful rearrangements of this material in double counterpoint.) Measure 7 demonstrates that a dominant pedal point may also reside quite nicely underneath the upper three voices as given in measure 1, and serve to set up a final cadence with genuine authority.

Note that the chord dispositions toward the end of the given opening (beginning of measure 2) were becoming decidedly distended, with their big gaps between alto and tenor, and the concomitant bunching together of tenor and bass. To permit these voices to drift still further in the directions in which they were headed, or even to maintain such tenuous spacing much longer would be unwise: unless voice leading has a Bachian urgency and rightness, prolonged stretches with voices bunched this way simply do not come off on the organ, which tends to favor the proverbial "choral disposition," with the biggest intervals generally located between tenor and bass. In the given continuation, the centrifugal motion is quickly rounded off; the tenor, in particular, immediately regains higher ground.

Observe that the given opening did not contain any imitation, or strongly point to its necessity or desirability in the sequel; hence the composer of the given continuation could feel justified in not introducing this at all. It is entirely possible, however, to conceive of other sequels to this opening which prominently display imitative episodes involving the 16th-note motif and/or the upbeat-downbeat melodic fourth.

As the Associateship candidate approaches the opening given on the 1985 exam, he or she should do so with as much openness as possible—both to the creative possibilities afforded by the musical substance, and to the limitations imposed thereby. The specific melodic ideas and harmonic progressions found in that opening may be entirely different from those in the 1984 exercise, but there will again be things to seize upon, with evident potential for development. The musical language may be more or less chromatic than in 1984—perhaps even purely diatonic. Whatever it is, the stylistic flexibility and adaptability of the candidate will be put to the test.

Some parting shots:

1. Move that bass! Simply shuttling back and forth between tonic and dominant is not only boring, but it even precludes a reasonable fleshing out of the key one is in. In the 1984 opening, the stepwise motion in the bass should certainly have suggested a desire for melodic fulfillment on the part of the bass.
2. Do not disdain sequences: Bach didn't! A survey of opening ritornelli in Bach's cantata arias and his longer chorale preludes reveals the master's regular reliance on this simple device—which also gives the composer respite from creating essentially new material every beat of every measure—to spin out the middle portions (non-cadential portions) of phrases.

If the candidate is not intimidated by the given material (and the task), but instead sets out to take full advantage of the possibilities presented, he or she should score well on this question.

WALTER HILSE
Chairman, Examination Committee

THE FELLOWSHIP COMPOSITION QUESTION

The purpose of the Fellowship composition question is to test the candidate's skill and imagination in creatively dealing with the tools and craft of the art of composition. In this question, the candidate is asked to compose a short piece for unaccompanied mixed voices on a given text. The approximate length is specified in the question and is generally between ten and twelve measures. Since a measure may be large or small and contain much or little music, it should be kept in mind that the desired piece should be brief but substantial. Conciseness is a virtue in this case.

Traditionally, it has been assumed by the Examination Committee and candidates that the medium for this question is four mixed voices (SATB). A minimum of four mixed voices is preferable, though the division of parts into more voices is certainly acceptable. This medium is a familiar one to most organists and should be a comfortable one for composing.

The examination requirement prior to 1983 read as follows:

To write a composition for unaccompanied voices, length to be specified, on a given text. Imitation and other aspects of good composition will be expected.

The Examination Committee decided last year to change the wording of the requirement for this question since it was felt to be restrictive. The phrase "imitation and other aspects of good composition" by implication suggests a certain style of writing, albeit the style of twentieth-century composition with which most church musicians prefer to deal.

In that *creative* composition is expected, and in that the twentieth century is pluralistic with regard to musical style, and since many composers today do not compose in a tonal idiom (or, at least, a preserial tonal idiom), the wording of the requirement has been changed as follows:

Write a composition for unaccompanied voices on a given text. The length will be specified. Imaginative use of the tools of composition will be expected.

It is hoped that this change will allow candidates greater freedom with regard to the style employed, although, of course, a traditional tonal idiom is still acceptable. Candidates are encouraged to explore other styles. With respect to musical language, the twentieth century has been particularly rich. The most influential schools of composition in the first half of the century were neoclassicism (Stravinsky and Hindemith), serialism (Schoenberg, Webern and Berg), and music based on a national folk-song idiom (Bartók and Vaughan Williams). The latter half of the century has seen an even greater proliferation of musical languages, ranging from the advanced serialism of Boulez

Allegro

mf

Soprano: All ye His an - gels, wor - ship

Alto: Wor - ship Him, all ye His an -

Tenor: Wor - ship Him, all ye His an - gels:

Bass: Wor - ship Him.

Him: Zi - on heard and was glad. Zi - on

gels: Zi - on heard and was glad. Zi - on

Zi - on heard and was glad, Zi - on heard and was glad, and was

all ye His an - gels: Zi - on heard and was glad. Zi - on heard and was

heard and was glad, and was glad. Zi - on heard and was glad

heard and was glad, Zi - on heard and was glad. Zi - on heard and was glad.

glad. Zi - on heard and was glad.

glad. and was glad.

Example 1: suggested solution

Maestoso

f

Wor - ship Him, all ye His an - gels:

f

Example 2: unacceptable solution

and Wuorinen, to the chance music of John Cage, from the harmonically and rhythmically complex music of Elliot Carter to the textural music of George Crumb and Krzysztof Penderecki. The solution booklet for the 1983 examinations will reflect this possible diversity by providing three solutions in different styles. (Of course, a given "solution" in this case shows only one of an infinite number of possibilities.)

Masterpieces of choral literature are not expected and, indeed, an examination setting is not conducive to great strokes of inspiration. The candidate is expected, though, to demonstrate facility in dealing with harmony and rhythm, both on the local level and in terms of the overall shape. Contrapuntal skill in some sense is expected, as is dynamic shape. The candidate should demonstrate facility in writing for voices both with respect to individual lines and the combination of parts, much as the candidate is asked to show facility in dealing with instruments in the orchestration question. Sensitivity to the text is expected, though "word-painting" is not necessary or, in many cases, desirable. In short, the candidate is expected to write a successful piece of music.

It is difficult to deal with this question with much greater specificity since prescriptions for composing are not sound artistically, and since it would be impractical, if not impossible, to provide a treatise on the art of composition. Neither would it be practical to provide here a catalog of twentieth-century styles and techniques. Nonetheless, two examples may prove instructive to the potential candidate.

The text provided for the 1982 question was: "Worship Him, all ye His angels: Zion heard and was glad." The solution provided in the solution booklet is a piece in the traditional tonal style:

(See Example 1)

The piece captures the spirit of the text. The two parts of the text are delineated musically while clearly being two parts of a larger piece. The piece demonstrates contrapuntal facility and economy of material and means. There is harmonic interest (without chromatic alterations) and a coherent harmonic shape. The lines are singable.

It would be possible, of course, to set this text in many ways other than the contrapuntal manner employed, though it must be emphasized that a composition of substance is desired. At the risk of seeming obvious, the following example of the first four measures of a piece on the same text would be regarded as unacceptable:

(See Example 2)

Candidates are discouraged from dealing with clichés, regardless of the musical language employed. Compositions employing aleatoric devices, improvisation, or open form (such as are found in Richard Felciano's *Cosmic Festival*, William Albright's *An Alleluia Super-Round*, or the music of Earle Brown) are not encour-

aged. The joint effort of the composer and performer that is required for the realization of the detail, or even the actual form of this music, makes it unsuitable for examination purposes. Another style which does not lend itself well to examinations is the pandiatonic style in which any diatonic dissonance is acceptable, and becomes undifferentiated, producing music without harmonic interest or direction.

Space does not allow the inclusion of examples of other twentieth-century styles. A short list of works in various styles suitable for the examination question is provided below.

Benjamin Britten: *A Boy Was Born* (Boosey & Hawkes)

Peter Maxwell Davies: *Ave Maria* (Novello); *Westerlings* (Boosey & Hawkes)

Luigi Nono: *Il Canto sospeso* (Ars Viva Verlag)

Krzysztof Penderecki: *Psalms of David* (PWM Edition) (Movement II: Psalm XXX)

Igor Stravinsky: *Anthem: A Dove Descending* (Boosey & Hawkes)

Anton Webern: *II. Kantate* (Op. 31) (Universal)

Michael Tippett: *Nunc dimittis* (Collegium Sancti Johannis Cantabrigiense) (Schott)

Though some of the above pieces have texts in languages other than English, similar principles of composition and text setting may be applied to English.

DAVID SHULER
AGO Examination Committee

AN APPROACH TO IMPROVISATION

Robert Train Adams

Improvisation has long been considered an important tool for the organist—a tool that has become steadily less common in this century, as may be witnessed by the increasing availability of books offering alternate hymn harmonizations or instant modulations.

A symphonic or fugal improvisation requires training and practice that many of us are not able to achieve for one reason or another. More modest techniques, however, can allow us to customize creatively the instrumental music in our services.

In this article, the focus is on the partita or variation set, using a hymn tune as a theme. This provides a rich set of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic ideas which may be developed or modified, since a theme is the sum of *all* the musical activity in the passage.

A formal structure is also provided. The phrase structure of the hymn tune may be used as a structural basis for the individual variation. Similarities among the various variations (such as the presence of the hymn melody) provide unity for the variation set.

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING

To start the process, select a hymn tune. A good theme should have some significant features: an interesting melodic contour, a striking harmonic progression, notable rhythmic detail or some combination of these. A successful improvisation depends as much, however, on the alertness and mood of the organist, aided by some study of the theme and some pre-performance experimentation (yes, improvisation requires practice). It is important to jot down interesting ideas and plan the course of the improvisation.

BASIC GUIDELINES, OR KEEP IT SIMPLE

1. *Limit your options.* Many people seem to think that improvisation should represent some sort of stream of consciousness of unique musical material. The problem is, rather, to provide ourselves with limitations within which, paradoxically, we are free. In the examples that follow, suggested variations on "Hanover" are presented. In each case one procedure was chosen and then used with some modifications throughout the variation.

Figure 1. A first variation on "Hanover"



a Pattern (a' plus a') is derived from hymn tune (a). The a' segment, a retrograde of a', overlaps a' at each end

2. *Extract a pattern.* In figure 1a, a repeated pattern in the left hand was derived from the opening right-hand melody. Once developed, it was simply played against the melody. It worked fairly well, but created a few "interesting" sonorities along the way and didn't convey the strong move to V in the middle of the tune.



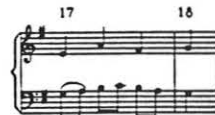
b Pattern is modified by displacing bracketed fragment one step. First-beat imitation is shown by "•", octave imitation by "••".

3. *Experiment and modify.* A simple modification, shown in figure 1b, was developed by experimentation. It solved the problem in a way that was both harmonically and melodically consistent with the tune. The pattern moves to V, and the first tone in the left hand in measures 7, 8 and 9 echo the stepwise descent of the right hand in measure 7. Serendipity contributed by providing an even stronger echo at the octave with the second beat of measures 7, 8 and 9 (left hand).



c Ending is strengthened by use of modified pattern. Imitation is indicated by "••"

This modification also provided a stronger ending to the variation (figure 1c) with again some hidden imitation (right hand, m. 15, and left hand, first tone, mm. 15, 16 and 17). Some might prefer to further modify the accompanying figuration (see figure 1d), although that occurred to me after writing down the variation.



d Alternative ending

Notice that there is little concern for the various dreaded parallel or consecutive intervals of harmony and counterpoint classes. A pattern is established, modified as needed, and presented simply.

WORK FOR CONTRAST

Musical material may repeat previous material, vary it or provide contrast. In variation sets these operations are carried out on the variation level as well as within it.

Figure 2. A contrasting variation



a From the melodic fourth in the right hand emerged the opening chord (brackets). The six-four chords developed after further experimentation

Figure 2a presents the start of a variation that is quieter, more chordal in nature and rhythmically less active. The initial harmony was derived from the first interval in the right hand. With further experimentation, the parallel six-four chord idea emerged.

An additional limitation was developed by requiring that the chords move primarily with stepwise motion. While this can result in some strong dissonances, the stepwise movement more easily allows tension to be resolved, or at least lessened.



b. The ending maintains the chordal counter melody.

Note in figure 2b that the pattern stays true to the end, although there is a temptation to add the tonic in the pedal. I did not, because I had a further variation in mind and liked the open feeling provided by the ending.

LET IT GO WHERE IT WILL

Figure 3. Quodlibet with "Hanover" and "Amazing Grace"



Figure 3 started out to be quite different. The left-hand material was intended to be somewhat sinuous, perhaps even chromatic (by this time, my right hand was on automatic pilot). At some point I decided to add the pedal, noticed the opening fourth, and before I realized it had launched into "Amazing Grace."

The technique of quodlibet is quite useful. You can pursue it deliberately with the aid of the metrical index in your hymnal (it is helpful if the melodies are the same length). Similar harmonic structure is nice, although a free voice (here, the left hand) can often work to minimize awkward intervals. It may be necessary to transpose one hymn tune.

Notice the limitations in this variation. The right hand has the now familiar tune. The pedals play "Amazing Grace." The left hand again moves mainly by step, and with single tones rather than thicker textures.

TWO FREER EXAMPLES

Figure 4. The hymn melody itself is varied



In the previous examples, the hymn melody was clearly stated in opposition to various elaborations. Figure 4 has a varied statement of the tune in the left hand, and parallel

major triads in the right. This disguises the hymn melody to some extent and requires concentration to stay on the track of the melody. As with the other variations, both hands are given limited freedom.

The left hand every once in a while simply extends a tone, giving the right hand a chance to play. The right hand creates a bitonal feeling, at the beginning centered on B major (B was the first tone held in the left hand), later moving toward G major. The triads tend to move either stepwise (as in earlier variations) or by thirds ("keep it simple").

Figure 5. A free realization of "St. Denio," based on an expansion of the opening two triads of the tune



The beginning of a free realization of "St. Denio" is given in Figure 5. It developed as an expansion of the opening two melodic triads. The pattern: play a triad, move a third and play another. The modification: return to part of the tune, continuing the eighth-note motion with primarily third movement. Limitations: primarily one-voice texture, eighth-note motion, strong reliance on the interval of a third.

IN CLOSING

Pick a hymn (preferably one to be used in the service) with some interesting features. Deliberately strive for simplicity. Develop one facet at a time. Use pattern repetition and modification. Keep the basic melody in sight. Limit the universe of possibilities.

At first, practice your improvisations and write down the patterns you are going to use. As you develop facility, you may find you need fewer reminders. Also with facility may come the ability to do freer works in which the tune is less readily apparent.

Little has been said here about style. Clearly these examples show my approach, which has a strong linear bias, in part because of the tonally limited instruments I have had to play. It is wiser to strive for coherent one- or two-voice structures than thicker, mushier textures that have less focus.

One brief aside: my own feeling for improvisation stems in large part from my involvement as a youth in jazz and commercial music. Organists should be fluent with both figured bass and contemporary jazz/rock chord notation—schools of music could do worse than require their organ students to play in a band!

Improvisation allows one to explore more directly some of the creative aspects of music in worship. It adds unity to the service, provides a means of introducing new material, and gives structure and substance to that which too often becomes organistic "noodling."

Robert Train Adams is an associate professor of music at Southeastern Massachusetts University and organist-choir director at Grace Episcopal Church, North Attleboro, Mass. He is the author of *Electronic Music Composition for Beginners*, published by Wm. C. Brown.

AGO COMMITTEE FOR SHARING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

The Chords of the Augmented Sixth in Modulation

The chords of the augmented sixth are useful in modulation because each of them is "common ground" and resolves easily into any one of seven keys.

The theoretical derivation of the augmented sixth chords is as follows:

ITALIAN SIXTH (always major third and augmented sixth from bass—not root.) Triad on fourth step of minor scale, with root chromatically raised, in first inversion.

GERMAN SIXTH (always major third, perfect fifth, and augmented sixth from bass.) Seventh chord on fourth step of minor scale, with root chromatically raised, in first inversion.

FRENCH SIXTH (always major third, augmented fourth, and augmented sixth from bass.) Seventh chord on second step of minor scale, with third chromatically raised, in second inversion.

The keys into which each may resolve are as follows:

1. The major key whose tonic is a minor sixth below the bass (*not* root) of the augmented chord.
2. The minor key whose tonic is a minor sixth below the bass of the augmented chord.
3. The major key whose tonic is a minor second below the bass of the augmented chord.
4. The minor key whose tonic is a minor second below the bass of the augmented chord.
5. The major key whose tonic is a perfect fourth below the bass of the augmented chord.
6. The major key whose tonic is a perfect fifth below the bass of the augmented chord (with the augmented sixth enharmonically changed to a minor seventh).
7. The minor key whose tonic is a perfect fifth below the bass of the augmented chord (with the augmented sixth enharmonically changed to a minor seventh).

By way of example, a French sixth is here shown with each of the above-named resolutions.

1. A Major

To A: 6+ I₆ V I
4+ 4
3

2. A Minor

To a: 6+ I₆ V I
4+ 4
3

3. E Major

To E: 6+ 4 --- 3
4+ 4 --- 3
3 I

4. E Minor

To e: 6+ 4 -- 3
4+ 4 -- 3
3 I

5. C Major

6+ 6+ I
4+ 5
3

6. B-flat Major

To B-flat: 6+ V⁷ I
4+
3

7. B-flat Minor

6+ V⁷ I
4+
3

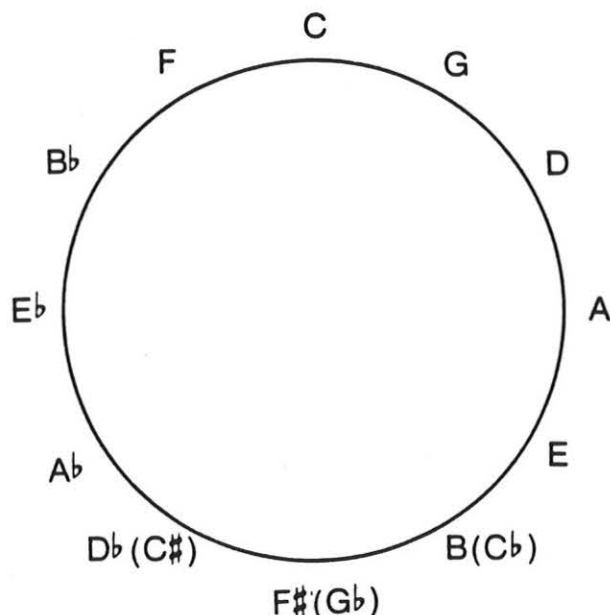
—Harry E. Cooper, FAGO

A FIRST STEP IN KEYBOARD MODULATION

It is my intention in this article to set definite boundaries and limitations on the approach to modulation. This is deliberate. The numbers of ways of modulating—going smoothly from one key to another—are almost endless. The goal will be to create a musical phrase of four bars in length using one harmony per bar. The harmonic materials will be limited to major and minor triads, the dominant seventh chord, a sense of voice leading and the ability to handle IV, V, I correctly. We will use two formulas, the first variable in its second chord, the second constant in application. These patterns will take us, with slight modifications, equally well from major to major, minor to minor, minor to major, or major to minor.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The first consideration will be the relationship between the tonic on which we begin and the tonic to which we wish to modulate. Referring to the circle-of-fifths diagram below, we define "in the direction of sharps" and "in the direction of flats" as follows: the new tonic is *in the direction of sharps* from the old tonic if the shortest path along the circle of fifths from one to the other is by ascending fifths (clockwise in the diagram). On the other hand, the new tonic is *in the direction of flats* from the old tonic if the shortest path along the circle of fifths from one to the other is by descending fifths (counterclockwise in the diagram). Tonics a tritone removed from one another are equidistant on the circle in both directions and will be dealt with as a special case.



At the keyboard, the tonics in the direction of sharps from a given tonic can be ascertained very readily. Ask yourself whether the new tonic appears in the *major scale* which can be built on the old tonic. If the answer is yes, then the new tonic is in the direction of sharps, *unless* it happens to be the fourth degree of that scale. It is indeed most convenient that all five tonics which lie in the direction of sharps happen to be part of the major scale of the old tonic. On the other hand, tones not found in that scale (except for the tritone) all happen to lie in the direction of flats, as does the fourth degree of the scale. When the original tonic happens to be C, then the five tonics lying in the direction of sharps turn out to be those tones whose major scales carry key signatures of one to five sharps:



Similarly, the five tonics lying in the direction of flats turn out to be those tones whose major scales carry key signatures of one to five flats, thence the origin of our terminology.

The definitions for "in the direction of sharps" and "in the direction of flats" will apply regardless of whether the actual keys constructed upon the two tonics in question are major or minor (in any combination). Thus, for example, D will be regarded as lying in the direction of sharps from C even if we are going from C major to D minor. Similarly, the definitions will apply regardless of enharmonic alterations. Thus, G^b to A will move in the direction of flats in spite of the apparent shift to sharps, since A does not lie within the major scale built on G^b (F[#]).

Consider the following until the process is second nature:

Old Tonic	New Tonic	Direction	Reason
C	A ^b	b's	A ^b not in C major scale
C	D ^b	b's	D ^b not in C major scale
C	A	#'s	A lies in C major scale, and is not fourth degree
G	B ^b	b's	B ^b not in G major scale
G	E ^b	b's	E ^b not in G major scale
G	B	#'s	B lies in G major scale, and is not fourth degree
A ^b	B ^b	#'s	B ^b lies in A ^b -major scale, and is not fourth degree
A ^b	C	#'s	C lies in A ^b -major scale, and is not fourth degree
A ^b	G ^b	b's	G ^b not in A ^b -major scale
F	D	#'s	D lies in F major scale, and is not fourth degree
F	E ^b	b's	E ^b not in F major scale
E	A	b's	A is fourth degree in E major scale

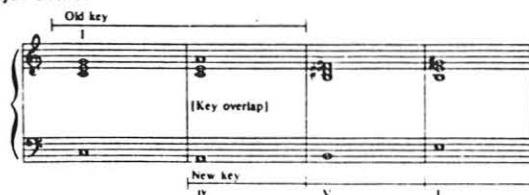
If this has become clear, the hardest theoretical part is over. In fact, dealing with the practice of what has been said will in all likelihood be easier than dealing with the words required to describe it. Now to construct our phrase for keys in the direction of sharps.

MODULATION IN THE DIRECTION OF SHARPS

Our underlying pattern will be the following:

		For going to keys in the direction of sharps			
Old Key	1	1	2	3	4
New Key	—	—	IV or iv	V ⁷	I

In each case it will be the second chord which will concern us. We will move directly from the tonic of the old key to IV, V, I of the new key. The modality of the second chord—major, minor or occasionally altered—will be suggested by the accidentals of the old key. We generally wish this harmony to include as many notes of the original scale as possible. For example, in going from C major to E major we choose A minor rather than A major for our second chord because C[#] (rather than C^{natural}) is in the C major scale:



In going from C minor to E major, a diminished triad on A is a possibility, since E^b is part of the C-minor scale:

In the above we might have even considered borrowing the A^b which the C minor scale offers us, but that would not have given us the required strong IV, V, I in the bass line.

Let us now try modulating up a major seventh, the most distant relationship in the direction of sharps:

If we choose to go from G major to F# minor all is well; however, if we elect G minor to F# minor, we will be better off to live with the slight chromaticism involved in the G minor-B minor progression in the first two bars, since a B^b in the bass line would destroy our new key's IV, V, I progression. Try it and see. It is not impossible, but less smooth for traditional styles:

In the one case of modulating from C to G, up a fifth, our formula will give two C major chords in succession. Do not panic, just use them.

MODULATION IN THE DIRECTION OF FLATS

The formula for flats remains constant:

For going to keys in the direction of flats

Old Key	1	2	3	4
New Key	I	iv	V ⁷	I

Let us go from C major to A^b major:

Shifts in modality affect this formula not at all. Preceding the minor IV by a minor tonic will always be smooth, and preceding the final new tonic, major or minor, with the V⁷ will be convincing. Play the above example moving from C minor to A^b minor.

In going up a half step, inversions in the bass part add to the smoothness:

The modulation up a minor seventh will produce a slight, but convincingly strong chromaticism:

We have now the resources for any move except to the fourth degree. Of course, in moving to the latter, we already stand in a V-I relationship. If something more is felt to be needed, the following may suffice:

THE TRITONE RELATIONSHIP

The raised fourth degree, being equidistant in both directions, may be reached by either pattern, though some special voice leading problems occur in the sharp formula. The smoothest is to start with the third doubled in the old tonic:

Here the voice leading, connecting two major triads a half step apart, is momentarily borrowed from E minor where the progression occurs naturally. Other possibilities not requiring this doubling may be experimented with.

The flat key formula gives us:

ELABORATION

We have, as in a chess game, reckoned our possible moves. As soon as some comfort is attained in going from any key to any other key, the next step will be the fleshing out into music by the addition of melody and rhythm. In service playing, some characteristic rhythmic pattern needs to be borrowed and incorporated into the modulation from the compositions which either precede or follow. The following table of rhythmic patterns may prove useful for practice:

By way of illustration, let us construct melodies of broken chords, passing tones and so forth which employ some of the rhythms listed above. Our basic modulation will be from A^b to B^b. We will work the odd-numbered patterns; four parts need not always be employed.

A^b-B^b Basic Modulation



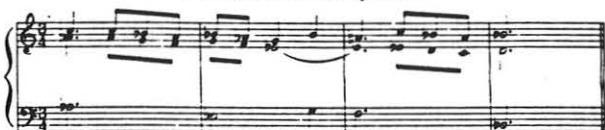
Elaboration with rhythm 1



Elaboration with rhythm 3



Elaboration with rhythm 5



Elaboration with rhythm 7



Elaboration with rhythm 9



Let us now try our hand at the modulation problem posed in the Associateship Examination for 1982:

- A 6. (10 points) Improvise an eight-measure period consisting of two four-measure phrases. Begin in D^b major, modulate to F minor at the end of the first phrase and then to G^b major. Both of the latter keys must be clearly established, by the end of the first and second phrases, respectively.



We will need to have two four-bar phrases. F minor's tonic lies in the major scale of D^b: use the sharp formula; G^b's tonic does not lie in the major scale on F: use the flat formula. Our results, then, might be:



PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

Work first with the sharp formula until some fluency is obtained in constructing the basic progressions. Repeat the process with flats. Select any tonic note as a point for departure and modulate to all possible keys. When this has become second nature, begin again with the addition of melodies constructed on prescribed rhythmic patterns. After some mastery is obtained this approach may be easily expanded by additional methods of modulating. Any standard harmony text will give ideas. A little practice and some quick mental calculations should remove the more frightening aspects of modulation for the beginner.

MAX B. MILLER

AGO Committee on Examination
Preparation and Promotion

French Improvisation— An Approach

Richard Forrest Woods

INTRODUCTION

The art of improvisation is exciting and rewarding. Its influence enlightens all other areas of music study and performance. Improvisation has the power to free the mind and the spirit and, if the approach is correct, to improve the technique and ear. It has an important place in the worship service as well as in the concert program. Improvisation is a difficult art, yet not an impossible one. The difficulty depends upon the goal that is set.

To understand all that goes into an improvisation is to understand all that is essential to making music. The secret of improvisation, beyond mere technique, lies buried in the areas of theory, history and aesthetics of music.

DEFINITIONS OF IMPROVISATION

There are several definitions of improvisation. One is "to prepare or provide offhand or hastily . . . to compose on the spur of the moment . . . something made without previous preparations." Another is "the art of performing music as a simultaneous reproduction of immediate mental processes." There is also a more restricted sense with which we are familiar; that is the art of introducing improvised details into a previously written composition. Ornaments, cadenzas and the *inégal* playing of music from the French Classical Period are all forms of improvisation.

FRENCH IMPROVISATION

How do we distinguish French from other styles of improvisation? Basically French improvisation is impressionistic—colors are created harmonically and tonally. Coloristic effects characterize contemporary French improvisation. It is therefore a direct descendant of the French impressionist school of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In a broad sense the contemporary style may also be considered an extension of the style of the French Classical Period during which the characteristic tone colors of the instrument governed the texture and form of the composition. The names of the sections of the *Masses* of Couperin and de Grigny, for example, suggest to us that the tone colorings of the organ were an inseparable part of the music and influenced to a large extent the type of texture. In François Couperin's *Mass for the Parishes* the fourth couplet of the Kyrie is entitled "Dialogue sur la Trompette et le Chromhorne," the fifth couplet of the Gloria, "Trio à 2 dessus de Chromhorne et la basse de Tierce." In the *Premier Livre d'Orgue* of Nicolas de Grigny there occurs the famous "Récit de Tierce en Taille."

Richard Forrest Woods, organist and choirmaster of St. John the Divine Episcopal Church, Houston, Tex., was formerly professor of church music at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Tex. His organ study in France with Mlle. Nadia Boulanger, Jean Langlais and André Marchal led to his receiving the Diploma of the Schola Cantorum in 1964. Graduating with distinction in organ playing and improvisation, he was one of the first four Americans to receive this diploma.

Meg Platé, organist-choirmaster of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Houston, assisted Mr. Woods in preparing for publication this material which he presented in lecture-demonstration form at the 1974 Midwinter Conclave.

In comparing German improvisation with the French style, we discover that German improvisation is usually based on a chorale or hymn tune. The harmony is often suggested by the melodic line, is primarily angular with sharp and distinctive chord movement and a great many contrapuntal devices. French improvisation, however, may be based on a theme or none at all. A plainchant melody, a folk tune, an original theme, clusters of sound, or rhythmic motifs are all possibilities in forming the germ of a French improvisation which is strict in form and style, yet freer than the German.

UNDERSTANDING THE FORCES AT PLAY

In order to develop the art of improvisation one must understand the forces at play. It is not necessary to follow an academic course, like four years at a *conservatoire*. Some sort of individual or group study is essential; in any case, a progressive plan must be followed.

First of all, it is essential to understand the instrument being used and its tonal resources. Then one must understand the deficiencies and strengths of one's own technique and how to develop it.

Examination of a large amount of written music is absolutely necessary. Even the most advanced players are sometimes tempted to approach a piece of music without examining its elements. Careful analysis is of great benefit. Study a piece of music away from the keyboard. See how it looks on paper, analyze it and then play it to discover how it sounds. Melody, harmony, rhythm, style, texture and color are all factors to be considered. First of all, understand what the melody is, then what the harmony does in relationship to the melody, rhythm, style, texture and color of a piece. All of these aspects are essential in the study of any kind of music, but even more so in improvisation. It is interesting to note that much of the music written for organ is improvisatory in style and origin.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

One of the most useful sources for the improviser is Vincent Persichetti's *Twentieth Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practice* (New York: Norton, 1961). Although written for students of modern harmony, this book is a most useful source for improvisation. Since the style of French improvisation is more or less contemporary in nature through expansion of the impressionist idiom, study of this text coupled with analysis of written works of the 20th century will help the aspirant understand the techniques most often used.

Works of high caliber are plentiful in the 20th century. The rich mixture of materials and styles is made up of many ingredients: rhythmic energy, vivid harmonic fabric, melodic color, fresh linear writing. There are bold statements and delicate embellishments, moments of fancy, and developmental forces that refuse to be bound by a severe formal plan. There are daringly experimental and strongly traditional forces which bring divergent materials together. . . . The various harmonic devices do not, in themselves, account for creative writing. Only when theory and technique are combined with imagination and talent do works of importance result. Nevertheless, a practical knowledge of 20th-century harmonic resources is a requirement for both performer and composer. . . ." (Persichetti, pp. 9-10.)

We might add, for the improviser as well! Other instructional materials on improvisation are listed at the end of this article.

PROPER MENTAL ATTITUDE AND COURAGE

Having reviewed some of the theoretical background for our study, we now turn to the practical side and discuss what happens when one actually sits at the organ console and embarks on this seemingly impossible journey into the unknown reaches of spontaneous French impressionism.

The most important rule to remember and the one that is the most difficult to observe is: once an improvisation is started, no stopping is permitted. This takes courage. If we are not mentally prepared for the possibility, a wrong note or chord may catch us so much by surprise that we stop playing. This is not allowed. A sour note is as much a part of an improvisation as any of the others. So-called mistakes can be incorporated into the music and

become meaningful additions. A great deal of growth in technique will develop if one learns to keep going no matter what happens.

One's improvisation will be, of course, the product of his ability, background and personality. It is a highly individual matter for which one should not be ashamed. A great deal of hard work and practice, however, can transform even the unskilled into a proficient improviser. The striving towards perfection in this difficult art is no different from the devotion and attention to detail that occurs in the study and performance of written music.

THE PREPARATION

Knowing that one may not stop once having begun, we set a relatively simple goal at first in the form of preparatory exercises. The following exercises come out of my own experience and approach. It is not necessarily the method used by the French, but it is based on my own feeling that the primary human response to the artistic impulse, whether in music, speech or art, is rhythmical. These exercises allow the individual to lose his inhibitions. They produce freedom in which to concentrate on the more strict elements of harmony and style to which we have referred. They may be viewed as initial shortcuts in order to get into the material quickly. In the long run, however, there are no real shortcuts if the art of improvising is to grow. It is important to develop one's individual approach without sacrificing the elements that go into a satisfactory improvisation.

The recommended time for practicing the preparation is approximately 30 minutes. The registration should be soft 8' and 4' stops in the manuals with 16' and 8' in the pedal. Do not change the registration in the preparation. It is important not to be overwhelmed by the color of the instrument at first, so that one may concentrate on the rhythm.

The first exercise consists of random notes which are harmonically free yet occur in a definite meter. One may practice this exercise with the metronome set in the vicinity of 54 so that one may count the beats and measures while practicing. Beginning with quarter notes, play the pedals alone, allowing the notes to fall where they will without regard for melody and harmony.



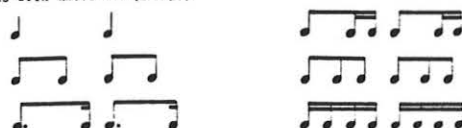
Following that, play the right hand alone in the same manner, then the left hand. Having established a monophonic routine, one may then add parts sequentially, still without concern for melody, tonality or harmony. Play the right hand with pedal, left hand with pedal, hands together without pedal and then hands together with pedal. This routine follows the order of normal practice at the organ. This is an example in the sequence, that of right hand with pedal:



No attempt should be made to stay within a scale or tonal center at this point. Dissonance makes no difference. Any note is perfectly acceptable as long as the rhythm of the meter is maintained. One may practice the quarter notes in duple, triple and quadruple meters. It is best to remain within one meter, however, during one entire sequence of pedals alone, through each hand alone, and then to hands and feet together.

We may now progress from slow quarter notes to more refined rhythmic devices: eighth notes, dotted quarters followed by eighths, triplets and sixteenth notes. This is the progression of rhythms to be used:

Patterns with Metronome ($\text{♩} = 54$)



Practice each rhythmic device, playing harmonically free random notes, as a separate exercise. As in the initial exercise, the progression from monophonic style to the addition of parts by playing hands and feet individually and then together in a progressive order should be followed.

We have so far experimented with a style that is primarily homophonic. A more sophisticated element can now be introduced by combining the rhythmic patterns used so far, changing them from beat to beat as desired.

Having established the rhythmic approach, we proceed to harmonic considerations. Melodic, harmonic and intervallic structures will inevitably have appeared in the preceding exercises, but they were secondary phenomena. At this point we begin to think of actual chord structures and keys. Harmonic application to the same rhythmic patterns described before takes us a step further in the development of skills in improvisation. Using those rhythmic exercises and progressing from monophony to many voices, keep in mind scales and chords; think in advance about the harmonies and keys.

The next step is greater freedom of voice movement within the now familiar patterns of rhythmic organization. One may consider this the step into polyphony. During the introduction of contrapuntal devices such as two against one and three against one, we must seemingly regress and set aside for a while the harmonic factors we have just considered. So again, without regard for chord structures or tonal centers, we play random notes in an effort to concentrate on rhythm. The very first exercise of the whole series may be repeated briefly in order to gain orientation to the next phase. It will be noticed that this is note against note. We may proceed then to two against one. Eighth notes occur in the right hand against quarter notes in the pedal.



The process is then reversed with the quarters in the right hand and eighths in the pedal. We repeat the procedure with the left hand and pedal, then both hands together without pedal and, finally, both hands with pedal. One should then progress through the different species of counterpoint, and practice the same sequence in three against one, four against one, and, finally, mixed patterns.

Having developed some proficiency in atonal counterpoint, the student should now repeat the whole process described in the preceding paragraph within the framework of harmony. Tonal centers must be established. Chords of different varieties appear. The horizontal and vertical considerations are integrated.

After some degree of practice of these polyphonic devices, greater freedom of movement follows. Liberties in part movement are coupled with more variety in the use of hands and feet. Voices may drop out and be added. There should be some resting of voices and an occasional thinning of the texture. Not all voices move at the same time all of the time.



It is important to pay some attention to the inner voices in order to make them interesting. Much of the fascinating quality of French improvisation derives from the variety of texture and the movement of the inner parts.

MELODY

We have begun with rhythm as the motivating source of our improvisation. Harmony was added as a second step. The third condition of improvisation is melody. Persichetti (page 13) gives a free definition of melody:

Any tone can succeed any other tone, any tone can sound simultaneously with any other tone or tones, and any group of tones can be followed by any other group of tones, just as any degree of tension or nuance can occur in any medium under any kind of stress or duration. Successful projection will depend upon the contextual and formal conditions that prevail, and upon the skill and the soul of the composer.

To undertake the understanding of melody, examine a given example. Consider carefully what it suggests in regard to the other elements—rhythm, harmony, color, texture and style. First of all, any note can be followed by any other note.



Next, any group of notes can be followed by any other group of notes.



Any tension or nuance can take place under any condition.



Finally, practice melodic extension of a given theme. Here are some possibilities of thematic extension:



Themes from existing music of the 19th and 20th centuries include use of the tritone. This interval is very important in French improvisation. It is essential to experiment with the possibilities of the tritone so that it can be included in one's own improvisational techniques. A theme which includes the tritone is by Mussorgsky from the first act of *Boris Godunov*.

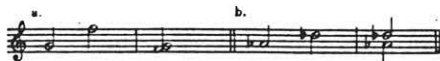


An extension of that theme follows.



HARMONY

Whatever harmonic skills already possessed by the individual have been utilized in the foregoing exercises. Examination of these skills is necessary in order to evaluate style and consider the need for extension of resources. Many of us are comfortable with triadic formations fleshed onto the skeleton of tonality. To stop at this point leaves us at least a century behind the harmonic practices of the French impressionists who formed the basic harmonic vocabulary of modern improvisation in France. Rather than attempt to progress historically ourselves (if we do not already play in an impressionist idiom) and proceed through the addition of chromaticism, unusual key changes and exotic chords, it is possible to approach our harmonic practice from the opposite end of the spectrum. Two notes played simultaneously or separately produce a harmonic structure.



Triads further develop this kind of structure.



Extension of these triads and use of polychords—tonal or atonal—further enhance the coherence.



The building of triads upon one another and the use of polychords are characteristic techniques for the creation of color harmonically and tonally. These types of harmonic devices may be practiced to provide inspiration for further development.

The whole harmonic practice of the French impressionist school cannot be taught in this short article. The purpose is to open up new possibilities and suggest ways in which the reader may embark on his own exploration.

One cannot discuss improvisation, impressionism, or French style without encountering the use of dissonance. Courage is needed here also, for the use of dissonance must be engaged. Consonant sounds are needed in our improvisations, but too much consonance is dull. Dissonance and consonance are relative to the amount of intensity desired. They are dependent not only on harmony, but on the texture and the underlying rhythm as well.

Under certain conditions what at first seems a striking dissonance may become the consonant or resolving factor in a progression of chords. Persichetti (page 195) states, "The consonant-dissonant relationship may be reversed by starting and ending with a dissonant chord as the norm; and the consonance may then resolve to dissonance."



Harmonic direction also affects the result of chord progressions. Harmony is a moving force; it can be guided in any kind of direction that we want. The outer extremes are the controlling agents in harmonic motion, of course, and the inner voices should support this movement surrounding them. A succession of chords in root movement may occur. Contrapuntal lines may appear within that movement. Blocks of sound may evolve from the basic idea.

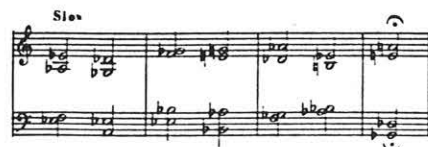
The amount of intensity and the consonant-dissonant relationship are largely dependent upon harmonic rhythm.

Harmony is always felt in its relation to rhythmic structure, and not until chords evolve in a rhythmic form does harmony become wholly articulate. Harmonic rhythm is the underlying rhythm that plays a large part in controlling and stabilizing musical flow. If the harmonic changes are quick, there is an undercurrent of restlessness; if widely spaced, there is breadth. Various combinations of fluctuating melodic and harmonic rhythms give the composer a creative rhythmic potential. (Persichetti, page 212)

Harmonic rhythm is strongly affected by tempo. Simple chords at a fast tempo produce quite a complex sound.



Complicated chords at a slow tempo can evoke peacefulness.



The harmonic rhythm is stabilized by a sense of meter. Meter, as stated in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, is a "basic scheme of notes and accents which remains unaltered throughout a composition or a section thereof and which serves as a skeleton for this rhythm. . . ." This rhythmic skeleton is greatly shattered

when strong and weak beats appear in conflict with the meter. An example of this is a fragment taken from "Postlude pour l'Office de Complies" by Jehan Alain.

Notice that the underlying rhythm is 4/4 time, but there is a plainchant melody running through the right hand at times; it can have any number of notes as compared to the left hand. Alain himself says that the plainchant takes precedence over the quarter notes that underlie. Terrific shattering of the beat occurs.

It is hoped that the aspirant will now be so inspired that he will rush right to the keyboard to begin practical application of the elements we have been discussing. Using the note values given in the very first exercise, he may practice harmonic changes within the limits of the rhythmic patterns. The rhythm is now the familiar, unfailing endeavor; harmonic experimentation can take place in those well-known confines. As the rhythmic patterns become more free, the harmonic extensions will have been developed so that growth is more or less stepwise.

COLOR

One of the most fascinating areas of French improvisation for an organist is the use of color and texture. The coloristic potential of the organ, particularly with an instrument of any dimension, is greater than any other single instrument. The preliminary studies we have outlined have deliberately ignored various possibilities in registration in order to give emphasis to the development of basic skills. It is true that coloristic effects can in themselves provide ideas for musical material, but there is danger for the novice in becoming dependent on coloristic devices. Musical growth may be impeded by such dependence.

Rhythm, melody and harmony all fuse together into an impression of texture, and to the extent that texture lends color to a passage of music, we have been considering color all along. All the factors that go into an improvisation occur simultaneously. Color, however, must be mentioned separately.

Certain registrations suggest certain ideas—rhythmically, melodically and harmonically. Musical literature of the French Classical Period is evidence of the inspiration composers can derive from the colorings of various stops on the organ. One can experiment with the various ranks of pipes in much the same fashion without, however, imitating the rhythmic and melodic styles of that period. Individual taste can develop through use and experimentation.

The colors of the instrument and the structures of the chords interweave to produce an idiom which may last as little or as long as the performer desires or as the occasion demands. One can never ignore the importance of understanding chord structures and the way they lend character to the textural context. Analysis of existing music is a constant and continuing discipline for any musician and is no less significant in the expansion of skills in improvisation. Once we understand the rules which govern a harmonic idiom, however, it is necessary to be free from following formulas and to allow chord to follow chord in a way governed by the context of the texture and the color together.

FORM

The forms used in French improvisation vary from large to small. The suite, sonata and symphonic forms are the large ones which may comprise nearly a concert in themselves. Of the smaller forms, there are the triptych, variation, chorale prelude, fugue, toccata, paraphrase and free forms. These may be used within a worship service as preludes, postludes or short interludes and modulations.

These forms are familiar to most organists. The two that are not commonly used are the triptych and the paraphrase. A triptych, as the title implies, is composed of three sections. A cantus firmus may be selected for use in one or more of the sections. Consider a triptych using the Advent plainchant theme, "Creator alme siderum."

A free introduction opens the work, followed by a bridge into the theme itself. The theme may be played as written at first, then ornamented and varied in the middle section of the triptych. A conclusion incorporates material from the introduction and from the theme in such a way as to comprise the final section of the opus.

The tune may be written out for reference and some decisions may be made in advance regarding the appropriate place and manner for introducing the theme at the beginning of the middle portion of the triptych. The theme may enter again after an interlude, this time with elaboration or ornamentation. This is called the *choral orné*. Some variation in texture and color is necessary to maintain interest and develop musical ideas. Not all the voices should play all the time. A restatement of the theme is good at the end of the middle section to help draw that part to a close before the final summing up of the conclusion.

The French paraphrase can be a much more ambitious improvisation. Several themes from various sources may be used. They may be original, but they do not have to be. The sections of an extended paraphrase are Introduction, Exposition of the themes or theme, Development, Recapitulation and Conclusion. The form is much like the sonata, but by not following the harmonic dictates and exact formal sequence of the classical sonata, the paraphrase is much more free.

CONCLUSION

All of this may seem like an inordinate amount of work to develop a musical skill which is inherently spontaneous and free. But it is impossible to improve in improvisation without a lot of practice. The prerequisite of preparation is essential in this art just as much as it is in performance or composition.

Many philosophers have said that art unifies our lives. Music is such an art, and improvisation partakes of this unifying quality no less than any other branch of music. The unification is not achieved without a great deal of hard work and soul searching on the part of each individual, whether he be performer, creator or listener. If the need lies within us to create, then there must follow an irresistible urge to share this creativity with others. There is a tremendous satisfaction, Stravinsky says, that comes from sharing with others something that has taken form through our own action. An improvisation is this kind of action that comes from within, is communicated to others and thereby flows towards its source. In the *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), page 146, Stravinsky states: "The cycle then is closed. And that is how music comes to reveal itself as a form of communion with our fellow man and with the Supreme Being."

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN IMPROVISATION

- Marcel Dupré, *Complete Course in Organ Improvisation, Vols. 1 and 2*. Paris: Leduc, 1957.
- Marcel Dupré, *Cours Complet de Fugue en Deux Volumes*. Paris: Leduc, 1938.
- Marcel Dupré, *Cours de Contrepoint*. Paris: Leduc, 1938.
- Marcel Dupré, *Manuel d'Accompagnement du Plain Chant Grégorien*. Paris: Leduc, 1937.
- Marcel Dupré, *Cours d'Harmonie Analytique, 2 vols.* Paris: Leduc, 1960.
- Gerhard Krapf, *Organ Improvisation: A Practical Approach to Chorale Elaborations for the Service*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1967.
- Olivier Messiaen, *Technique de Mon Langage Musical, 2 vols.* Paris: Leduc, 1944.
- Clarence Watters, *Improvisation, Parts I and II*. MUSIC, May and June 1973.

IMPROVISATION

HARALD VOGEL

English Translation by Ted Gibboney and Greg Crowell

Contemporary organ playing is marked as never before by an interest in the interpretation of music of the past. This is an unusual phenomenon of the 20th century, for, in earlier times, the emphasis of the musical activity of organists was not on interpretation, but improvisation. The reports of the playing of the great organists from Conrad Paumann to Marcel Dupré always convey the strong effect of their improvisations. It is as if their improvisations made stronger impressions than interpretations of their own works or compositions by others.

The early sources of organ music very often begin with an introduction to playing and improvisation, as for example the comprehensive *Fundamentum* by Hans Buchner from the beginning of the 16th century.¹ At the beginning of the first chapter, four rules of fingering are given, based on the following figures built on four notes:



These four models of figurations originate from the Paumann tradition of the 15th century and form the basis for the figuration in the famous *Fundamentum organisandi* of Conrad Paumann (1452):²

ascensus simplex



The *Fundamentum organisandi* of Paumann is a method of composing or improvising figurations for a discant voice, which moves over a tenor cantus firmus. In this case it concerns an abstract cantus firmus (diatonic, including intervals of the 3rd, 4th and 5th) with a range of a major tenth c-e', consisting of the overlapping hexachords c-a and g-e'. The included figurations are based almost exclusively on the four models that Buchner placed at the beginning of his *Fundamentum* shortly after 1500.³

Buchner's playing method, which contains the first known fingerings for keyboard instruments, is at the same time a method of improvising figurations. The fact that the figuration models and the fingerings are always the same is striking.

The second chapter of Buchner is entitled "The Method of Transforming Vocal Pieces into Tablature." We call this method intabulation, and possess many examples from the 16th century with precise performance instructions.⁴ The intabulation could be enriched by the addition of improvised figurations. Most of the organ music in the 16th century was based on the intabulation of vocal compositions, with or without added figurations or "colorations."⁵

Buchner's third chapter gives instructions "to work out a two-, three- or four-voice accompaniment for any single melody." It concerns the method for finding a correct counterpoint to a plainchant melody, inventing an imitation (*ars fugandi*), and, finally, "coloring" a simple contrapuntal texture.

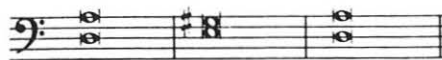
With this method an ornamented polyphonic organ verse can be improvised to each cantus firmus. Such a movement can be pieced together like a puzzle, and thereby exemplifies a clear contrapuntal structure, a high degree of musical complexity and always correct voice leading. At the end of the *Fundamentum* is a table with canonic counterpoints (*Tabula fugandi artem complectens*).

Buchner's *Fundamentum* is the most complete source for the high level of organ playing and improvisation around 1500. Six areas are illustrated:

1. Figuration—in all voices
2. Intabulation—of vocal settings
3. Counterpoint—to a cantus firmus
4. Imitation—using the beginning of sections of a plainchant melody
5. Ornamentation—"coloring" a polyphonic setting
6. Canon—using short melodic segments

All six areas of the organ art exhibit a craftsmanlike conversance with the elements of the late Gothic organ idiom, as it had developed in the second half of the 15th century. In other words, the possibilities of the limited melodic and harmonic material in this style are fully exhausted, with a result of high musical complexity. Because of this degree of complexity and the always correct and often refined voice leading, the listener is not aware of the simplicity of the material. It is possible in this style to improvise in strict polyphony on the basis of any cantus firmus.

The examples of completely free improvisations in this period are rare. The *Praeambula* from the *Tablature of Adam Ileborgh* from the year 1448 belong to the earliest free improvisation models.⁶ The fourth prelude at the beginning of this tablature is based on three intervals:



over which expressive figurations appear:



To summarize: Until the end of the 16th century, polyphonic improvisation was central to the art of organ playing; however, free improvisation did not have a secure place in the frame of the antiphonal/responsorial liturgy and played, therefore, a small role in the written sources.

The "regolamento" for the selection of organists at St. Marks in Venice is an interesting document concerning requirements in a city with a "professional" cultivation of organ music:⁷

Customary examination for testing organists who profess to aspire to the organ in the Church of St. Mark, Venice.

First—One opens the choirbook and selects at random the beginning of a Kyrie or motet which one copies and gives to the competing organist. On the very organ which is vacant, he must improvise on that subject in an orderly manner, not confusing the parts, as if four singers were singing.

Second—One opens the book of plainchant, also at random, and copies a *cantus firmus* of either an Introit or another chant and gives it to the said organist. He must improvise on it in three parts, once by putting the said *cantus* in the bass, another time in the tenor, then in the alto and soprano. In orderly fashion, he must work out imitations and not simple accompaniments.

Third—One has the singers of the chapel execute some brief passage of a composition which is not too well known. The organist must imitate and answer it as it is, and in transposition. When done extempore, these things give a clear indication of the worth of the organist if he does them well.

In the 17th century, an expressive and free organ style was cultivated next to the strict, liturgically oriented organ polyphony, which, in regard to expressive musical gestures, can be characterized as genuinely "baroque." The social background and the instruments in the large trade cities of Northern Europe furnished an ideal framework: the foundation was prepared for a free, autonomous organ style, which was not limited to the liturgy, but was heard in a concert setting.

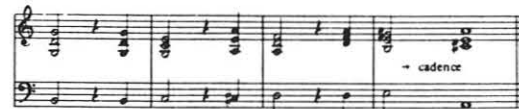
The monumental toccatas and preludes of Buxtehude, Bruhns and their contemporaries display an interesting combination of free, improvisatory writing, and strict, refined counterpoint in the fugal sections. Some North German works of the late 17th century can be viewed as carefully thought-out compositions with clear thematic relationships between the various sections and an identifiable *dipositio*.

They stand out from the repertoire of free improvisation models that existed during this time in countless examples because of their degree of musical complexity which is not attainable in improvisation. These improvisation models, though they may at times appear to be restricted from the standpoint of harmonic and motivic development, have come down to us in some cases even from the hand of important composers—for example, the *Praeludium* in A Minor by Georg Böhm.

The opening of the Prelude consists of broken chords in a simple toccata style:



The harmonic progression is also quite simple, and can be easily memorized:



Here Böhm reduced the toccata style to the elementary components of simple broken chords and harmony progressions. Every player who possesses a certain measure of finger dexterity can also improvise on the pattern shown in this work. Personally, I have used this model in many improvisation courses. Experimenting with the musical gesture given in the first measure of Böhm's model plays an important role in improvising in this style. This gesture gains in intensity when given the following agogic treatment:



This agogic shaping (slow-fast-slow) helps to give the gesture an expressive quality. It is particularly important here to maintain absolute regularity in the articulation (i.e., without a trace of *inegalité!*) and in the modifications of the tempo (*accelerando* and *ritardando*). Later in the piece, this shaping of the musical gesture is repeated as the harmony changes from one chord to another. The player can discover here an essential element of the expressive Baroque playing manner. The interpretation of similar passages in the literature is thereby enhanced, and the player gains security in the performance of the idiom of the time. The only requirement for this type of work with an improvisation model is to memorize the basic harmonic and melodic material. This material can con-

sequently be pieced together like a puzzle, as it was done in the polyphonic improvisation techniques of the 16th century. With an expressive rendering of the individual musical gestures, the listener, who is unaware of the simplicity of the improvisation model, receives the impression of great musical spontaneity. This impression can be achieved in any style, as long as the improviser is able to reproduce effectively the harmonic and melodic material of a given idiom.

In each historic period we find simple pieces which can serve as improvisation models. For example, the typical cadence formulas given below⁸ convey to the listener the impression of the classical French organ style:

The image displays six systems of musical notation, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. These systems represent typical cadence formulas for the classical French organ style. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano). The systems show different ways of concluding a piece, often with a final chord or a specific melodic flourish.

The 18th century is strongly characterized by an expressive improvisatory style, where new stylistic trends, such as the "galant" style, were constantly incorporated. The organists accompanying a congregation were generally very careful to try to reflect the meaning of the hymn text in their harmonizations of the melody. Jacob Wilhelm Lustig, who was the organist of the Martinikerk in Groningen from 1728 to 1796, wrote the following message for the benefit of his successor into the psalm book used in the Martinikerk:

Though he may exceed me in free improvisation (*Fantasieren*), variations (*Variieren*), and fugues (*Fugieren*), he should try to exceed me, if he can even equal me, in expressive and affective psalm-playing.

Lustig hereby mentions the most important duties of the organist of the 18th century in the Protestant countries: *Fantasieren* (free improvisation), *Variieren* (motivic and figural additions to a basic chord structure in variations and choral

preludes), *Fugieren* (strict counterpoint), and the expressive (i.e., text-expressive) accompanying of the psalms and hymns.

Around 1800, the influence of Abbé Vogler brought into fashion a style of programmatic improvisation, in which natural occurrences such as thunderstorms were imitated. At this time, the style of extemporaneous playing was also bound to the musical idiom of the age, and attracted the interest of both organists and audiences alike. This situation gradually changed during the course of the 19th century, however, as the organ works of J.S. Bach became more popular. For the first time in the history of organ music, a discrepancy arose between improvisation and repertoire, because of the fact that a part of the repertoire (the organ works of J.S. Bach) belonged to a different musical idiom than the contemporary style. Furthermore, the organ works of J.S. Bach were seen as compositions of unattainable mastery, whose quality could neither be reflected nor achieved by any improvisation. This problem became more acute in the 20th century, as interest in Bach's organ works increased and the absence of a generally accepted contemporary style evolved. Therefore, the practice of improvisation in the musical language of the time gradually lost ground. In its place came the discovery of the organ works of Bach's predecessors, and the development of an authentic performance style of this literature.

In Europe, the tradition of improvisation remained intact, not only as a necessary part of service playing, but also as the very best way to "try out" organs of any period. The general absence of improvisation in American organ playing—in contrast to the various European traditions still active—constitutes a musical deficiency which should not be allowed to continue. The awareness of this deficiency may make it possible to overcome a misunderstanding which hinders the development of improvisatory skills for many musicians: namely, the erroneous view that improvisation is an innate musical faculty acquired at birth which cannot be learned.

A close look at the old treatises concerned with the playing of keyboard instruments reveals that in all periods, methods were developed for teaching improvisation. The trick was always to reduce the musical material to an absolute minimum, to maintain a specific musical idiom, and to care for correct voice leading. With these guidelines every interested player can learn to improvise in any style.

In my work with students of various backgrounds and ages (including teenagers), I have come to realize that the best starting point for the beginning improviser is the style of the 17th century, in which only the simplest harmonies (root position and first inversion triads) are employed. In this style, the various possibilities for the harmonization of a melody do not seem quite so endless to the beginner, and one is easily able to achieve the basic skills in a relatively short time. With the use of simple figuration models, the student is then able to learn how to embellish a melody in a short time. This general basis for the teaching of improvisation is what I would like to introduce at the AGO National Convention in Detroit. A workbook with many improvisation models will be available.

A glance at the history of improvisation reveals the richly varied forms that it assumed and functions that it carried out during different epochs of music history. Contrapuntal versets, variations, chorale preludes and fugues were improvised, as well as free, virtuosic toccatas, program music and expressive hymn accompaniments. The form of an improvisation was closely related to its function, either in a church setting, or as a means of teaching music. This pedagogical function is fascinating and significant. It is reflected in the theoretical treatises, such as the *Fundamentum* by Buchner.

A large part of the existing organ literature consists of written improvisation models. After acquiring the skills of improvisation in a certain style it is much easier to distinguish the input of the composer from the conventions and routines of the used idiom. Interpretation, both from an analytical and

a practical standpoint, should be complemented by improvisation in a given style. Otherwise there is a danger that interpretation, especially the attempts of "authentic" interpretation, could be a one-way road.

Today, the practice of organ improvisation, because of the absence of a widely accepted contemporary musical idiom and the prevalence of interpretive and historical pedagogy, has fallen to a deplorable low point. At the same time, the potential for improvisation is boundless and exciting. The plausible functions of improvisation include liturgical roles it has played for centuries, the study and testing of organs, and its use as a way to teach the elements of style, technique and interpretation in organ performance. With our current knowledge of the vast repertoire, styles, organs and performance practices, improvisation can be a key to unlocking the secrets of interpretation, and moreover, when a player successfully controls the elements of harmony, figuration and rhythm in an improvisation, regardless of the technical level, he or she flirts with the possibilities of musical creativity—a happy moment in any musical language.

NOTES

1. Hans Buchner, *Sämtliche Orgelwerke, Teil I, Das Erbe deutscher Musik*, Vol. 54, Frankfurt, 1974.
2. Published in *Keyboard Music of the 14th and 15th Centuries*, ed. Willi Apel, *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, Vol. 1, 1963.
3. The historical connection between the *Fundamenta* of Paumann and Buchner is discussed further by the author in the notes to his recording of Late Gothic Organ Music in Rysum/Ostfriesland: see ORGANA 3001, *Die Spätgotische Orgelkunst*.
4. The most complete instructions for intabulation techniques are found in *Il Transilvano* by Girolamo Diruta; see Edward John Soehnen, "Diruta on the art of keyboard playing . . ." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Michigan, 1975, p. 223ff.
5. A comprehensive overview of the motet intabulations is found in Cleveland Johnson, "Keyboard Intabulations Preserved in German Tablatures 1550-1650." Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford University, 1984.
6. See Note 2.
7. See Soehnen, pp. 10-11.
8. From the Ms. Paris B Ste. Genevieve, Ms. 2348, published in *L'organiste liturgique*, Vol. 31.

IMPROVISATION

Part I

Clarence Watters

THE GROWING INTEREST in the study of improvisation I have witnessed for some time in the United States has given me great pleasure. The encouragement lately provided by the American Guild of Organists will certainly contribute to increase that interest. I feel confident that the results will be most satisfying.

Thus the article written by Clarence Watters will be released at the right time. It has been conceived so as to make it possible for any organist who has previously mastered his technique and studied harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and the forms of music, to start studying the art of improvisation. The graduated exercises he suggests open the way to the first steps in this art, and religious services will greatly benefit by the enlarged musical possibilities of organists.

The National Conservatory of Music in Paris has given an important place to improvisation in the organ class. Besides the performance from memory of one of the great works of the organ repertory, the candidates to organ examinations have to improvise successively a chorale prelude in a Gregorian mode, a four-voice fugue and a symphonic movement. One realizes that such discipline makes it easy for organists to improvise during religious services, for the important point is to avoid meandering without any definite plan.

Therefore, I consider that the preliminary exercises presented by Clarence Watters will prove most helpful in enforcing that discipline.



RENEWED INTEREST

A phenomenon hardly to be anticipated fifteen years ago is the fascination of American organists with the art of improvisation, earlier considered the province of French organists. A number of articles have appeared in professional organ journals, organ students have begun to buy treatises on improvisation, and to ask for study in the technique of extemporaneous playing as part of their organ lessons. Guild chapters have devoted meetings to the art, guild conventions have featured competitions in improvisation.

At the same time the study of improvisation remains the most neglected discipline in the curriculum of the American conservatory, of the music departments of the universities, of the work of private teachers of organ.

In virtuoso performances of prepared pieces our best players have won the respect of audiences throughout Europe. A few of our more gifted church musicians improvise regularly during church services in *free style*. Extended improvisation, strictly in form, by American organists, is very rare.

For the organist, improvisation falls into two categories: improvisation for the church and improvisation for the concert. The first is not of lesser importance, for it is required of all organists to provide short introductions, interludes, *musical carpets* in their weekly task of providing music for church services. In Europe, where the highest standards of improvisation have been maintained to the present, the main concern of improvising organists is their work in church services. One of the chief glories of the churches of France, Germany, and Holland is the improvisatory work of the best organists, in antiphons, chorale preludes, processions, postludes. Here improvisation for church services is indeed not a lowly art, as anyone can testify who has attended services in the great churches of Paris, Haarlem, Berlin, Frankfurt.

This article is therefore intended for those who would learn to embellish their own services with appropriate improvised music, who would learn to create, by the development of fragments from music programmed in the service, a unified, an artistic whole. It is not a treatise, for treatises are not needed since the monumental *Traité d'Improvisation à l'Orgue* by Marcel Dupré, that treats the whole study of improvisation at the organ in its many forms. Instead it is a guide for the methodical study of an art too often diffuse, meandering, undisciplined, and for its practical use in American church services.

It should hardly be necessary to remind the reader that a practical knowledge of harmony, counterpoint, and musical form is assumed as a prerequisite to the study of improvising in orderly, grammatical style, as well as an organ technique adequate for the instant execution of his musical ideas.

For study beyond the scope of this book one is referred to the Dupré treatise published by Leduc of Paris, and is urged to carry out the study with a qualified instructor.

IMPROVISATION FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE PRESENT

From the perspective of several hundred years one discovers the art of the organist to have been mainly concerned with improvisation, from the earliest days of the organ as a perfected instrument. Although there has been preserved a large repertory of organ music for the church from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, by far the greatest amount of organ music actually heard by congregations in the Renaissance and the Baroque periods is forever lost, for it was improvised. At almost every point in the service the organist's art was improvisatory. In France in the 20th century the improvised music of important organists exceeds the published work of these men by at least fifty times. In Germany today the output of organ composition is meager,

while literally thousands of organ pieces are extemporized every year.

Before the Reformation the principal forms of organ composition were the *verset* and the organ mass. In the larger churches certain canticles and hymns, even parts of the mass were often performed with verses alternating between the choir and the organ, as the polyphonic hymns of Tallis, Palestrina and others alternated between verses of plainsong and verses of polyphony. The organ verses employed the plainsong of the canticle or hymn, either in *cantus firmus* style or in imitative counterpoint. From this practice true liturgical organ music developed. Outstanding among composers active in this form of expression was the French organist Jean Titelouze (1563-1633), choirmaster of Rouen cathedral.

After the Reformation composition based upon plainsong melody gave way in Germany before the popularity of the Lutheran chorale, but the organ verse not only retained its place of importance in church services, but in the hands of Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) and others, developed into the true chorale prelude. During the 17th and 18th centuries the chorale prelude became one of the major forms of organ composition in Germany, a form congenial to organists of the time and susceptible of great variety of treatment: harmonic, contrapuntal, expressive, symbolic.

For two centuries and a half liturgical organ music assumed an importance in the history of organ composition not generally understood even today. Patterned after the polyphonic hymn, the motet, the *ricercare*, it led to the chorale variations, the fantasia, and most important of all, to the fugue of J. S. Bach. All these were basically contrapuntal, in part because they were developed in a period that was until 1750 predominantly contrapuntal, in part because the essentially contrapuntal nature of the organ was thoroughly comprehended by musicians before 1800. All these were improvised by the organists of France, Holland, and Germany, who were as much composers as they were executants.

By the time of the classical period the harmonic style developed by composers of early Italian opera dominated all musical composition. The piano and the orchestra succeeded to the position of rank once held by the organ, that could not compete with them in the homophonic style. Very few composers of the period wrote for the organ that had so recently been *king of instruments*. As the polyphonic art declined, the popularity of the organ faded with it. The orchestra, that once had supported the choir and embellished it, became the dominating force in the Viennese masses of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Musical art, that once had been a special glory of the church, now moved gradually into the field of the public concert, and in turn infected church music with a secular quality that has remained to the present day.

Until 1750 nearly all composers of importance devoted a large measure of their work to the church. After that turning point in music history comparatively few composers of distinction have been closely associated with church music. For over a hundred years the organist, who in earlier days had been prince among musicians, was eclipsed by conductors, violinists and pianists. As the importance of the organ declined, a diminishing number of musicians perfected themselves in the art of the organist. It has been said that very few organists could be found in Paris during César Franck's time at St. Clothilde who could play a Bach fugue.

During the 19th century two factors contributed to the decline of improvisation as a major interest among performers and their audiences. The Romantic period, intent upon highly personalized expression at the expense of form, held little regard for the working-out of contrapuntal com-

plexities and for the beautifully balanced forms that had so delighted both musician and public in the 18th century. The fatal disease of specialization, that brought about the spectacle of composers, even great composers, unable to play or to improvise, and performers who were not composers, completed the banishment of improvisation from the public scene.

Though banished, the art was not dead. A few composers who were accomplished *improvisateurs* kept the art alive with their performances. Among them were Mendelssohn, Franck, Saint-Saëns, Bruckner.

The importance of the Paris Conservatoire from the second half of the 19th century cannot be overemphasized, for the importance given by that great school to thorough and rigorous training in improvisation is perhaps the greatest single factor in the renaissance of the art during the past hundred years. The group of men active in the first two decades of the present century, who have influenced the present generation of *improvisateurs*, is both large and distinguished: Guilmant, Dubois, Gigout, Vierne, Tournemire, Dupré. Perhaps no group of men since the days of Bach has had a more profound effect upon the great and traditional art of the organist.

Today in Paris the art is maintained brilliantly by the pupils of Marcel Dupré. Among these last are Falcinelli at Sacré-Couer, Langlais at St. Clothilde, Cochereau at Nôtre-Dame.

The re-birth of improvisation in Germany today appears to be not so much the result of the activity of any particular school of music, but a by-product of the liturgical movement that is evident in the Lutheran church today, in Europe and in the United States. Contributing to the movement, and indeed a part of it, is the awakened reverence of the German people for artistic, religious, musical treasures inherited from the centuries of the Renaissance and the Baroque. Throughout the country one finds in cities and in small towns historic organs of the great masters of the 16th and 17th centuries, carefully, even reverently restored to their original sound and working-order. Artists, after untold research, have restored furniture and decoration in the old churches. The liturgical aspect of church services, especially in the direction of restoration of old forms, is widely discussed and debated by the German clergy.

The awakening of the organist to historic treasures has been no less fruitful. In all the cities and in countless towns, the organ has again taken its place as an important adjunct to worship. Nowhere in the world today is the organist more highly respected than in Germany. The organ verse and the chorale prelude are again a vital concern of organists, who quite commonly improvise all the liturgical organ music of their services.

As the result of influences many and profound, the art of liturgical improvisation has been restored to those countries that gave it birth. There is every opportunity for the organist of the 20th century to evolve a new art, even as the Baroque masters at their keyboards developed a style that has influenced instrumental music for two centuries. If that opportunity is realized, the work of Scheidt and Titelouze will not have been in vain.

Admiration for improvisation in secular forms knew no bounds in earlier days. Reports of brilliant *extempore* playing fill many pages of the music histories. Even in the 14th century the fame of Francesco Landino was established by his brilliant extemporaneous playing. In the 16th century the great De Cabezón astonished the court of Philip II of Spain by his performances in the same field. The continental fame of the 16th century English composer, John Bull, rested largely upon his great powers of improvisation. In the 18th century the great masters of the day delighted their audiences by improvisations in strict form and often competed with each other in this display of

musicianship. The masterful working out of themes by Bach as he played for Reincken and for Frederick the Great is a popular story in music histories. A feature of Handel's oratorio performances was the composer's improvising between parts of his oratorios. The exploits of Mozart as a boy and as a man form an important part of the Mozart biographies. For sheer brilliance and for wealth of ideas Beethoven is said to have surpassed all rivals.

Although the art of improvisation gradually declined in the 19th century, for reasons already outlined, some few important composers mentioned earlier were masters of the art. All of them were in some way church-connected and all were organists. The work of Mendelssohn and Bruckner, who thrilled English audiences on their travels, was outstanding, as was that of Saint-Saëns in his concert tours.

It will be remembered that the improvised cadenza of the concerto was eagerly anticipated by audiences from the time of Handel to that of Brahms, who as late as 1879 provided for it in his violin concerto of that date. But as the authority of the composer increasingly asserted itself the opportunity for improvisation by the performer became sharply curtailed, until by the end of the 19th century the improvised cadenza had largely become a thing of the past.

The process had begun as early as the 18th century in the work of Bach, who indicated in full the ornamentation of his melodies and provided completely elaborated parts for the players, who, as a consequence, could no longer indulge themselves in fancies inconsistent with the style of the composer. Mozart and others of his generation continued the process in aria and concerto. By the end of the 19th century improvisation no longer played any slight rôle in the performance of written composition.

In our time, and indeed in all the 20th century, improvisation in the concert has become almost exclusively the art of the organist. As practiced by brilliant organists of the century it evokes the admiration and incredulity of music-lovers and musicians alike. The finest organists of the day improvise in form, from the simple movements of the suite to complete sonatas, even fugues. International competitions in improvisation, vying with the now famous contest in Haarlem, are springing up throughout the world.

The United States was perhaps first awakened to the improvisatory powers of the European organists by the brilliant concerts of Alexandre Guilmant. Then, in 1921, for the conclusion of his début recital in the United States, at the Wanamaker organ in New York, Marcel Dupré astonished an audience of musicians by the improvisation of a complete symphony in four movements upon themes submitted by six prominent musicians. The stunned disbelief of the audience will long be remembered by all who were fortunate enough to be invited guests of Wanamaker's. On the following day the *New York Times* hailed the improvisation "a musical miracle."

After this sensational début there began a great series of Dupré tours in the United States. The number of concerts in 1922 was 94; in 1923 it mounted to the incredible number of 110. At each concert an improvisation in a major form was a feature eagerly anticipated by the audience.

Several weeks after his New York début Dupré improvised during a concert on the great organ of Wanamaker's Philadelphia store a "Symphonie-Passion" upon Gregorian themes. With incredible memory he retained the work in all important details for three years, setting it down in final form for the inauguration of the organ in Westminster Cathedral in London in 1924.

In the long list of Dupré recitals devoted entirely to improvisation, two events of magnitude are important to recall. In 1946, at the University of Chicago, the following was improvised upon submitted themes:

- I Prelude and Double Fugue (5 voices)
- II Five Chorale-Preludes (All upon the same theme)
 - 1. Harmonic (4 voices)
 - 2. Contrapuntal (3 voices)
 - 3. Ornate (4 voices)
 - 4. Canonic (4 voices)
 - 5. Fugal (5 voices)
- III Trio-Sonata in Three Movements
- IV Tryptique
 - Passacaglia
 - Aria
 - Toccata
- V Symphony in Four Movements

For the *Radio-Diffusion Française*, in 1959, Dupré improvised in eight concerts a formidable list of pieces in all forms and styles, creating, in effect, a study of all the important musical forms. The programs of these broadcasts are important to all who are vitally interested in the history of the art of improvisation.

From 1934 to 1971, Marcel Dupré was *titulaire* at St. Sulpice in Paris, succeeding his own teacher, Widor, who served that same church for sixty-four years. Hearing Dupré for the first time during mass at St. Sulpice, one might have been reminded of the brilliant and colorful Franz Liszt, who later became the Abbé Liszt, for here, after a long and brilliant career as the most sensational organ virtuoso and *improvisateur* of modern times, Dupré wore the mantle of Widor with a seriousness as convincing as it was inspiring. In St. Sulpice one heard nothing that recalled the colorful *scherzos*, the pyrotechnical *toccatas*, the tender *berceuses*, the orchestral *finals* of Dupré the great virtuoso who everywhere left his audiences stupefied. Into the rôle of *organiste liturgique* Dupré concentrated the talent, the perceptiveness developed during fifty-five years of his musical life. At St. Sulpice all was focused upon the adornment of the service, and that without the least thought of personal display or even of achievement.

Even as Widor before him expressed the conviction that the organ is essentially a liturgical instrument, Dupré, by the selection of musical forms, by the conservative harmonic coloring reserved for them, by the use of the proper plain-song for his themes, appeared to have dedicated himself to the ideals of his own teacher.

The forms themselves are truly *magistrale*, like the forms of the great Bach as he improvised in later life for Frederick the Great. Few indeed were the services that did not include a *ricercare* in six real voice-parts. For the postlude (*sortie*) the form was invariably double fugue in five voices. In their effect upon the listener these great forms, under the hands of a master, as they first recall and then develop the liturgical melodies of the mass, were overwhelming, never interrupting the mass, but illuminating it, giving it the perfect continuity that the language of music alone can give.

The great Bach himself considered music in its highest rôle to be the apparatus of worship. Again, after two hundred years, Dupré restored the art of the organist in its loftiest development to that rôle.

What lies ahead in this great art of the organist? That is the challenge of the present generation of organists, in Europe and in the United States.

HYMN ACCOMPANIMENTS AND INTERLUDES

Elaboration of hymn accompaniments affords the beginner in improvisation practical study in keyboard harmony and counterpoint. This study, invaluable for gaining freedom in the manipulation of given melodies, is the very basis of artistic variety in hymn accompaniment. Following a fixed *cantus*, it early develops habits of methodical improvisation, and by requiring concentration upon the un-

alterable melody of the hymn, discourages meandering and formless fantasy. Pursued rigorously, it quickly provides the organist with technique for service-playing that is stimulating to choir and congregation alike.

The presupposition stated earlier is here repeated: a working-knowledge of harmony and counterpoint.

Hymn-melodies as basses.

Ein' Feste Burg

C.W.



Continue *in style* to the end of the hymn.

From a hymnal harmonize the soprano melodies of the following hymns as basses, according to the example given: Walsall, Dundee, Winchester New, Sleepers, Wake, Vom Himmel Hoch, St. Thomas, Puer Nobis, St. Flavian, Tallis' Ordinal, St. Anne.

Hymn-melodies as tenors.

Ein' Feste Burg

C.W.



Continue to the end of the hymn.

In the same disposition harmonize the soprano melodies of the following hymns as tenors: Innsbruck, In Babilone, The First Nowell, Easter Hymn, London New, Quem Pastores, Breslau, Coronation, Munich, Irby.

Counterpoints above given melodies.

Ein' Feste Burg

C.W.



Continue as in previous exercises.

Use hymns from the first two categories.

Counterpoints below given melodies.

Ein' Feste Burg



Continue as in previous exercises.

Use hymns from the first two groups.

Canonic treatment of hymn-melodies.

It will be apparent that canonic response must be fragmentary, or variable in either the interval of time or that of pitch, to melodies not originally designed as canons. Nevertheless, the student is urged to search every melody for intervals of pitch and of time that will form strict canon before accepting altered response as inevitable. The following two fragments demonstrate typical alterations of responses.

Ein' Feste Burg

) C.W.



1. Alteration of time values in response.

Vulpus

C.W.



1. Alteration of interval of pitch.

2. Alteration of time values.

Complete *Ein' Feste Burg* and *Vulpus*.

Form canons, strict or free, upon the following tunes:

Divinum Mysterium, The First Nowell, In Dulci Jubilo, Puer Nobis, Salzburg, St. Theodulph, Darwell, Vigiles et Sancti, Bangor, Passion Chorale, O Filii et Filliae.

The canons should be formed in several dispositions:

1. Antecedent in the r.h.
Consequent in the l.h.
2. Antecedent in the l.h.
Consequent in the r.h.
3. Antecedent in the r.h.
Consequent in the l.h.
Free counterpoint in the pedals.
4. Antecedent in the r.h.
Consequent in the pedals.
Free counterpoint in the l.h.
5. Antecedent in the pedals.
Consequent in the l.h.
Free counterpoint in the r.h.
6. Antecedent in the pedals.
Consequent in the r.h.
Free counterpoint in the l.h.
7. Antecedent in the l.h.
Consequent in the r.h.
Free counterpoint in the pedals.
8. Antecedent in the l.h.
Consequent in the pedals.
Free counterpoint in the r.h.

NOTE: Variants should be made in Nos. 3-8 for practice in the use of the pedals as *tenor*. The disposition will be:

Soprano in the r.h.

Bass in the l.h.

Tenor in the pedals.

INTERLUDES

Many an organist, after gaining facility in harmony and counterpoint from exercises in contrapuntal hymn-accompaniments, will wish to use his skill in more pretentious forms. The interlude between hymn verses, though modest in scope, allows free rein for imagination, even at times, for a degree of brilliance. Often employed in the Episcopal church to "stretch out" a processional hymn, it may be found useful in all churches at times such as Christmas or Easter for unusually long processions.

THE FUGAL EXPOSITION

The advantages of this form of hymn interlude are threefold: it can be long or brief, it has a framework that insures unity, it reiterates the hymn-tune to the congregation awaiting the succeeding verse.

Tunes written in the 16th and 17th centuries, especially those of Lutheran origin, are most likely to form the best fugue subjects. Upon these tunes the Baroque masters wrote and improvised fugues and fugal chorale preludes in never-ending variety.

Ein' Feste Burg

C. W.

Develop similarly the following tunes: Vom Himmel Hoch, The First Nowell, O Filii et Filiae, Duke Street, Praise to the Lord, Vigiles et Sancti.

OTHER HYMN-INTERLUDES

In these little pieces the variety of style, of harmony, of counterpoint, is limited only by the skill and the imagination of the organist.

Adeste Fideles

C. W.

Sine Nomine

C. W.

THE CHORALE PRELUDE

In the American church the chorale prelude loses its identity as a liturgical form. To the writer's knowledge the Lutheran church in the United States, involved though it is in the study of liturgical reform, has not restored this musico-liturgical form as an ordered part of the service. In the Lutheran countries of Europe the chorale prelude as a liturgical piece has again become an important form of organists. In America it serves a purely musical purpose in providing for the improvising organist perfected forms for the development of hymns and chorales, forms that offer inexhaustible opportunity for expression.

By common practice a number of types were evolved by the Baroque masters. The most important of these were the canonic, the contrapuntal, the ornate (coloratura), the fugal. These forms are practical designs for the improvising organist and stepping-stones to extended composition at the keyboard. They should be studied first in three voices and then in four voices.

Examples of the first three types may be found in the *Orgelbüchlein* of J. S. Bach: *Gottes Sohn Ist Kommen*, (canonic); *Durch Adam's Fall*, (contrapuntal); *Wenn Wir Im Höchsten Nöthen Sein*, (ornate).

An example of the fugal type may be found in Peters Edition, Volume VII: *Wenn Wir Im Höchsten Nöthen Sein* (the last work of Bach).

All these examples should be analyzed carefully, and many others from the work of Bach. Practical application of the chorale prelude to service playing will be found later.

The observation in the previous chapter concerning the quality of the old hymn-tunes is pertinent to the chorale prelude, especially in the canonic form. Modern hymns encourage the free forms. The great treasury of plainsong melody, that even today is the inspiration and the thematic library of the French organist, will be found invaluable.

THE CANONIC CHORALE PRELUDE

The student who has mastered the canonic exercise in hymn accompaniments faces no further technical problems in the practice of canonic chorale preludes. As regards texture, there is no difference between the two forms: each has two voices in canon and two voices of accompaniment. The distinguishing feature of the canonic chorale prelude as compared with the contrapuntal hymn accompaniment lies in the nature of the accompanying parts. These parts, by the mood they create, should be expressive of the text of the hymn.

Typical design of the accompaniment and adjustment of the canonic consequent are illustrated in the following fragment. Although the disposition of the parts in canon is that most commonly found, other dispositions should be studied:

1. Two parts in canon in the right hand.
2. Canonic antecedent in the pedals. Consequent in the right hand.

Passion Chorale

C. W.

(Completion of the canon)

Complete the accompaniment to the end of the chorale.

Use the following melodies for canonic chorale preludes: *Divinum Mysterium*, *Vom Himmel Hoch*, *In Dulci Jubilo*, *Puer Nobis*, *Sine Nomine*, *Vigiles et Sancti*, *Vulpus, Veni*, *Creator Spiritus*.

CLARENCE WATTERS, a student of the great Marcel Dupré, is Professor Emeritus at Trinity College, having served on its faculty from 1932 to 1968. He is an artist known to most parts of the United States, to Canada, and to Europe through his tours, concerts, and recordings. Since 1952 he has served as organist and choirmaster of St. John's Church in West Hartford.

Beginning his organ study at the age of 15, he was a seasoned virtuoso with his first concert tour behind him at 19. A pupil of Dupré in organ and in improvisation, he is considered the leading authority on French organ music in this country. His LP recordings include the complete organ work of César Franck.

Professor Watters (with Richard Piper, tonal director of the Austin firm) was responsible for the design of the great new Austin organ in the Trinity College Chapel, and played the inaugural recital on that instrument in January of this year.

(To be concluded next month.)



Improvisation

Part II

Clarence Watters

THE CONTRAPUNTAL CHORALE PRELUDE

The usual disposition of voices and the working-out of the imitations that characterize the form are clearly demonstrated in the *Orgelbüchlein* prelude *Christ Lag In Todesbanden*. Typical of the pieces that comprise this volume is a figure designed not only as a fragment for imitation, but further as a *motif* symbolizing the text. This figure is found as the first five notes of the left hand part.

The use of a symbolic figure, although often desirable, is not a requirement of the form. The figure designed for imitation may be derived from the first phrase of the hymn-melody, or it may be symbolic. A fascinating and beautiful example of the contrapuntal chorale prelude is found in the chorale *Durch Adam's Fall Ist Ganz Verderbt* in the *Orgelbüchlein* of J. S. Bach. In this prelude Bach portrays the "... fall of Adam" in the plunging sevenths of the pedal part, and the sinuous deception of the serpent in bewildering tonalities of the alto voice, all in veritable triumph of art over artifice. Many of Bach's forerunners and contemporaries found their motives for imitation from the chorale melody itself. At times the motive continued throughout the work; in many cases it changed with each phrase of the chorale melody.

Several dispositions should be studied:

1. Chorale in the soprano, with three other voices in imitative counterpoint. One manual.
2. Chorale in the pedal, with three other voices in imitative counterpoint on one manual.

3. Chorale in the tenor on a solo manual. Two voices in the right hand on a manual of accompaniment and a third in the pedal, all in imitative counterpoint.

Other dispositions will be found in the works of Baroque composers, but the above have in common the virtues of simplicity and clear enunciation of the chorale melody.

Vom Himmel Hoch

C. W.



1. The musical figure for imitation, derived from the first phrase of the chorale.
2. Imitation of that figure.
3. The symbolic figure.

Develop similarly the following: In Dulci Jubilo, Vigiles et Sancti, Passion Chorale, Darwall, Ein' Feste Burg, Bangor.

THE ORNATE CHORALE PRELUDE

The alchemy of the ornate chorale prelude of Bach remains even today one of the wonders of musical history. From the base metals of early *coloration* and the brilliant, ornamental *coloratura* of early Italian opera was transmuted the pure gold of *O Mensch, Bewein' Dein' Sünde Gross* and *Schmücke Dich, O Liebe Seele*.

With few exceptions (such as *Allein Gott in Der Höh Sei Ehr'*) Bach appears to have reserved his most elaborate *coloratura* for moments of the greatest poignancy.

Preliminary to actual practice in this form the student should analyze a number of examples by Bach, observing not alone the skill shown in the elaboration of the chorale melody, but as well the depth of emotion that often approaches yet never becomes sentimentality. A more perfect balance of intellect and emotion could not easily be imagined.

Das Alte Jahr (the chorale and the Bach ornamentation)



The student should now practice the form in the style of Bach. After some work in traditional harmony, he should attempt examples in more modern harmony, in a style both expressive and personal. A beautiful example of the suggested treatment may be found in the *Choral orné dans le style de J. S. Bach* in the versets on *Ave Maris Stella* by Marcel Dupré.

Passion Chorale

C. W.



Develop also the following: Mainz, Herzliebster Jesu, Heinlein, Old Hundred Twelfth, Dies Irae, Rochelle.

THE FUGAL CHORALE PRELUDE

Vital to a clear understanding of the fugal chorale prelude is some discussion of the term *fugal*, that had different meanings in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

The fugue of the 16th century is found in the polyphonic motet of Palestrina, Byrd, and others. In instrumental music it appears in the *ricercare* and the *canzona*. To consider it a primitive form of the 18th century fugue so magnificently wrought and balanced by Bach, is to discredit the great Renaissance composers who brought it to perfection with incredible contrapuntal technique and expressiveness, and to confuse types with forms.

The early Renaissance fugue is essentially a choral form. Using the modern fugue as a term of reference, it is scarcely more than a series of fugal expositions, often irregular in harmonic interval of responses. There is no single subject that characterizes and dominates the whole fugue, but a number of subjects that in turn are used to form *fughettos* characterizing portions of the words of the text. Occasionally a "rounded" effect is achieved by the use of the first subject in the final exposition. The strict discipline of answer, as found in the treatises of Prout and Gédalge is not observed. At times the answer is inverted, at times retrograde, seldom in consistent pattern. The whole form is sectional, corresponding to the divisions of the text. Each of the subjects derives something of both rhythm and form from the words of its section.

As the Baroque period approaches, the *ricercare* gradually acquires a style of melody more characteristic of instruments and loses its sectional form. To a lesser degree the *canzona* moves in the same direction, i.e., toward the one-theme form so characteristic of Baroque composition.

True instrumental style emerges in the 17th century fugue: in the contours and the rhythms of the subjects, in the musical contrast among subjects, in the wider vertical spread of the harmony. Contrast still obtains more from variety in material than from variety of treatment, although the sectional form, still persisting with some composers, tends towards sections of new treatment rather than sections with new themes.

The 18th century fugue of the mature Bach establishes at the beginning of the piece the mood of the whole work by a characteristic subject that is then relentlessly pursued by variety of treatment and variety of counterpoints.

The fugal chorale prelude appears in two distinct forms. In the first only a fragment of the chorale melody is used, this as the subject of a short fugue. The form considered in the present study is an adaptation of the fugal motet of the Renaissance.

In form this chorale prelude is sectional, after the form of the motet, the number of sections corresponding to the number of phrases in the chorale melody. Each phrase becomes in turn the subject of a fugal exposition. In four-voice examples the fourth voice becomes the *chorale* by the device of *augmentation*. The strict order of tonic-dominant is not mandatory.

Study carefully the example quoted earlier. Notice the informality of response in the first exposition: 1st entry in the tonic; 2nd entry, by inversion, in the tonic; 3rd entry in the dominant; 4th entry in the tonic, (the *chorale*).

Puer Nobis

C. W.

Other tunes suitable for this form: Ein' Feste Burg, Duke Street, Old Hundredth, Frankfurt, St. Anne, Steadfast, Rouen, Vom Himmel Hoch.

EXTENDED FORMS

For the forms studied earlier the process of development, of expansion of a motive, has not been considered. Hymn accompaniments, chorale preludes, even fugal expositions, are built upon a previously completed melody. Analysis of fragments of a theme with a view toward their subsequent rôle in an extended melody of phrases and periods has not been necessary. For a study of the rondo and other extended forms of considerable duration in time, it is required that some skill be acquired in the expanding of a motive or phrase into an extended, balanced melody.

Even a casual examination of a typical long melody of Mozart or Beethoven will disclose features of design so carefully balanced, so intricately wrought, that the whole appears to be both natural and spontaneous. That these great melodies were not always conceived in a moment is plain to all who have examined the sketch-books of Beethoven. Famous for its great beauty and spontaneous air is the theme of the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony of that composer, a melody that brought the composer some anguish in its shaping and re-shaping into final perfect form.

If the student has not previously analyzed the extended melodies of great composers in a school or college course, he should examine them at once, in considerable number and in detail. The slow movements of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms offer a wealth of extended melodies of balanced and highly organized form. From a study of the methods employed in the designing of these themes one will gain both technique and inspiration.

For the preparation of the long improvisation during Communion the following exercise offers a study in the derivation of a theme from a traditional melody and the ternary exposition of the theme in the classical manner. For practical purposes the melody selected is a familiar one: the *Agnus Dei* from the Communion service by John Merbecke, a service used not only in the Episcopal Church, but in many other churches in America.

O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sins of the world,
have mer-cy up-on us. O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way
the sins of the world, have mer-cy up-on us. O Lamb of God,
that tak-est a-way the sins of the world, Grant us Thy peace.

From phrases of the *Agnus Dei* a modern theme is easily realized:

Antecedent (Part Two of the *Agnus Dei*, marked *A*)
Consequent
Reprise of the Theme etc., ending at Fine.
Fine
Commentary (Part One of the *Agnus*, marked *b*)

Similarly, from other fragments of the *Agnus Dei*:

(Phrase c) "Grant us Thy peace"
(Adaptation of first phrase)

(Phrase d) "Have mercy upon us."

A second exercise, on the beautiful melody *Rendez à Dieu* by Louis Bourgeois, employs a modern modification of method of the ornate chorale prelude.

Theme developed from the opening phrases of *Rendez à Dieu*.

APPLICATION OF THE STUDIES TO THE SERVICE

The rôle of the organ in American churches is entirely non-liturgical. Even in the liturgical churches, preludes and postludes, although traditional, are not required parts of any liturgy.

The musical forms mentioned earlier will be found to furnish the essential framework for improvisation in churches of all denominations. In almost every situation improvisation may enhance the church service:

THE PRELUDE

It is plainly beyond the scope of an article to consider the extended service prelude of ten to fifteen minutes duration, and indeed beyond the scope of all but the highly gifted to extemporize *in form* a single movement lasting from ten to fifteen minutes in *moderato* or *allegro* tempo. Movements of these proportions call for genuine mastery of the symphonic forms (the sonatina, the sonata-allegro, the rondos, the variations), for extraordinary powers of invention, for musical memory of the quality associated with the genius.

The problem is mainly that of pace. The extended improvisation at Communion, while requiring skill in development and genuine ease in the working-out of the larger forms, by its *andante* or *largo* tempo allows time for contemplation and for the memorizing of the first sections in preparation for their *reprise*. In fast tempo both memorizing and working-out must be done at incredible speed.

The prelude therefore to be considered might be a prelude to the opening (or processional) hymn, as a link between the program of prepared pieces and the first hymn. In function it serves to prepare the congregation for the hymn immediately to follow. Its theme will be derived from the melody of that hymn, and its mood will be dictated by both the tune and the text of the hymn. The choice of the musical form will be determined in large measure by the time allotted the improvised prelude. According to the character of the prepared pieces and that of the hymn to follow, its extent in time might be as little as a minute and a half or as great as four or five minutes.

The forms of the chorale prelude, perfected for the development of hymn or chorale melodies, in their original designs, or in modern adaptations, afford convenient and appropriate framework for the improvisation here considered. For short pieces the contrapuntal and the canonic forms may be found useful; more extended improvisations may be built upon the fugal and the ornate forms.

The forms themselves may be modified, without loss of essential structure, for special requirements of time or of expression. If, for example, the fugal form should be found to be too long for some occasion, the augmented entry could be replaced by an entry in note values of the first entry. The complete piece, somewhat shorter than a true fugal chorale prelude, would thus be a series of short fugal expositions, after the form of the Renaissance motet.

The coloratura form, usually reserved by Bach for expressions of the deepest poignancy, may well assume, in *moderato* or *allegro* tempo, a joyful character. Examples of the form adapted to the expression of rejoicing may be found in the works of contemporaries of Bach, including Walther and Buxtehude.

By the very nature of its design, the canonic chorale prelude is ill-adapted to any "stretching-out," except by brief interludes between canonic sections.

Each of the foregoing forms presents the full melody of the hymn only once. As a rule, the inspiration for the mood of the piece is found in a short phrase, even in a word, from the text of the first stanza of the hymn. If the full text of the hymn becomes the basis of a series of short, connected chorale preludes (usually in *contrapuntal* style), the whole becomes the form called by Albert Schweitzer the "Picturesque Chorale-Prelude," that portrays, or "pictures" the text of the whole hymn. By this treatment, the melody of a hymn may be developed in good form for a period of five or six minutes. A superb example of the form, perhaps unrivalled in Baroque literature, is that of J. S. Bach on the hymn *O Guiltless Lamb of God*.

For development of hymns of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, the forms of the chorale prelude are unequalled, even today. Modern hymn tunes (as suggested in earlier pages), invoke forms of the Classical and the Romantic periods. Conceived in those periods that saw the decline of polyphony and the rise of harmony as an element of form and of color, their melodies lack the contrapuntal implications of the early hymn-tunes.

THE OFFERTORY INTERLUDE

In buildings of moderate size, the interlude between the Offertory anthem and the Doxology (or other musical item at the presentation of the alms) will scarcely exceed thirty or thirty-five seconds. The brevity of the interlude imposes upon the organist the necessity for being clear, direct, and unfaltering. Some important fragment of the anthem will serve best for this link. The modulation involved will lead from the key of the anthem (or from its dominant) to the key of the music for the presentation, or to its dominant. Examples are given from fragments of two well-known anthems.

Ride On In Majesty by T. H. Candlyn

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by J. S. Bach

C. W.

THE IMPROVISATION DURING COMMUNION

In recent years many organists in this country have turned to improvised music (as opposed to prepared programs of organ music) for the music required by churches of all denominations during the receiving of Communion. If the improvisation at this solemn point in the service is a highly artistic development of significant melodies of the service it may very well be the greatest musical adornment of the service.

The plan and the musical forms will be dictated by the situation existing in a particular church. In some churches the time required for the receiving of Communion may be as little as five minutes, while in others as great as half an hour. According to the average time required in his own church, the organist must prepare the plan and the forms of the improvisation, if mere meandering is not to result. Too often one hears in our churches, small or great, Communion improvisations that are little more than musical doodling.

Consider first the improvisation of five to seven minutes. A simple form for this short work is the set of organ verses (*versets*) that might be improvised upon the Communion hymn. Some hymn-tunes might suggest *chorale prelude* treatment, either *coloratura* or *fugal*. Finally, the form of a short *rondo* or *sonatina* might be chosen, the themes derived from hymn or anthem, as discussed earlier.

At the writer's church the plan below has become standard:

1. The *Agnus Dei*, sung by the choir.
2. Improvisation upon a fragment of the *Agnus Dei*, for about four or five minutes, usually in the form of a four-voiced fugue.

Example of a subject used. (Merbecke *Agnus Dei* on page _____.)

This leads to

3. A hymn by the choir. (One of the great hymns, such as *Pange Lingua*, *Lauda Sion*, *Adoro Devote*, *Picardy*, *Rendez à Dieu*. Each verse of the hymn is followed by an organ *verset*.)
4. Improvisation (according to time available) upon a fragment of the hymn.
5. A second hymn of like quality, performed in similar manner.
6. Improvisation upon a fragment of the second hymn, ending with the return of the acolytes to the altar.

The flexibility of the plan, as it meets varying requirements in time is plain. Items 2, 4, 6 may be of any length. The hymn verses may be sung in pairs, each pair followed by an organ verse, or one of the hymns might be omitted.

All the above is offered as a practical plan for the development of Communion music. At Christmas, Easter, or

other great feasts, some similar large-scale is especially important, when great numbers of communicants throng the churches and extend the time for Communion as much as fifteen or twenty minutes. With a broad plan, well conceived and well executed, thirty minutes of continuous music can hold the attention of worshippers to the last cadence.

THE POSTLUDE

To this writer, the peak in improvised liturgical music is reached in the great postludes of Marcel Dupré at St. Sulpice in Paris. In these pieces a goal is set forth that is not likely to be equalled for generations to come. Developed upon themes of the service they become part of the service itself, true postludes rather than *terminal pieces*. Five-voiced double fugues, they stand frustratingly beyond the ability of all but the genius, yet remaining a challenge and an inspiration to those of lesser talent. In these improvisations Dupré expressed not only the conviction that organ music for the church should be built upon melodies of the church, but equally that the essential idiom of the organ is contrapuntal. That this writer shares the conviction of Dupré has already been made manifest by the prejudices for contrapuntal studies expressed earlier in this book.

The "facts of life" mentioned in the first two paragraphs of the section on the prelude must again be faced as one considers the improvisation of a complete fugue for the postlude, yet it is sincerely to be hoped that organists of talent and good training might work to perfect themselves in the improvisation of simple four-voiced fugues, for this form, built upon a fragment of some music of the service (best of all, perhaps, on the final hymn) offers a conclusion hardly to be improved upon.

A fugue need not be complicated by *countersubject* or by *stretto* in order to be an excellent fugue, as many of the works of Bach clearly demonstrate. The student who has gained some facility in working out short fugal expositions as interludes between stanzas of hymns, and chorale preludes of the fugal type should have little difficulty with a simple, complete fugue. The following plan might serve for the first essays. Exposition: Four entries, ending with a short modulation, possibly to the relative. Free fantasy: Episode in the new key; Perhaps two entries; Episode leading, perhaps, to the subdominant; A pair of entries; Episode modulating to the tonic. The Final Section: Two, three, or four entries.

The form might be lengthened by the addition of a *counter-exposition*, by a brief *stretto* in the final section, over a dominant *pedal point*. A study of the fugues in the *Well-Tempered Clavier* will disclose a multitude of methods of varying this severe, yet flexible musical form.

For the first studies the student will no doubt find the melodies of hymns written in contrapuntal periods more easily adapted to fugal treatment. The tunes listed under interludes might be found especially good. After the treatment of a large number of the old tunes, the student will gradually gain facility in extracting from more modern tunes, even those that appear to be the most unlikely material for fugal treatment, interesting and workable subjects. An interesting subject, out of the writer's experience, was the following, drawn from the unpromising tune *Lancashire*:



Many similar surprises could be related; many more will be encountered by the alert student of improvisation.

It is suggested to teachers that a valuable exercise might be contrived by requiring his students to derive acceptable fugue subjects from hymn-tunes of mediocre quality. The derivations should be made unhesitatingly.

Short postludes of two to four minutes length offer no problems as regards form, largely because many short forms exist. The chorale prelude once more heads the list of forms in appropriateness and in practical design. Modern examples of the form, by Brahms, Karg-Elert, Carl McKinley, Leo Sowerby and some of the English composers show some interesting treatments of familiar tunes.

Many excellent models for short pieces may be found in the book of versets by Marcel Dupré published by Leduc of Paris. In texture, in harmonic color, in perfection of form in short pieces, in development of musical ideas, these little pieces deserve careful study.

Needless to say, the talented organist-improviser will not be content to remain within the framework of the old forms, nor will he disdain the harmonic methods of the 20th century. In the postlude he will find his greatest opportunity for extemporization in free style.

CONCLUSION

In Europe improvisation is an essential part of the organist's training, beginning at an early age and continuing through the most advanced studies. At the Paris Conservatory the study is a requirement for the organist, who cannot win his diploma for organ without passing his finals in improvisation. In French churches improvisation is the most important work of the *organists du grand-orgue* at mass and at vespers. Indeed, improvisation is of greater importance than virtuosity in prepared pieces.

The importance of improvisation in other parts of Europe is shown by the competitions springing up in Holland and Germany and England. In the Lutheran churches of Holland and Germany most organists are responsible for improvised chorale-preludes at a number of points in church services.

In the United States improvisation has not been accepted as an essential part of musical training, as a vital discipline, either in music school or in college. Except for a few notable exceptions, private teachers do not encourage it. Due, perhaps, to the fact that it is so seldom developed in this country, American musicians generally consider it a freak of birth, a skill that cannot be acquired. Europeans, especially European organists, long accustomed to improvisation of the required organ solos of church services, hold the art in high regard, and rate their organists according to their accomplishments in improvisation.

In all fairness to our own organists, it must be said that the achievements of continental organists are the direct result of the *necessity* for improvisation imposed by the requirements of the Roman Catholic service in France and in Belgium, and by those of the Lutheran service in Germany and in Holland. Since American organists are not required to improvise, it is not strange that the art has been allowed to languish in this country. In all places, in all times, the development of art, or of science, has been in direct proportion to the demand for the art or for the science. At the same time, the men who became great in their time were prepared for the great rôles demanded of them. If in our time we permit improvisation to become an historical or a foreign art, we are guilty of forfeiting our own birth-right.

Tradition, over the years, can become requirement. One generation of organists who recognize the importance of improvisation in church services can create a demand for organist-improvisors in the United States that will restore improvisation to a position of vital importance in the training of organists. Could it not also restore the organist to the rank of "prince of musicians"?

IMPROVISING CANTUS FIRMUS TOCCATAS

A BEGINNING APPROACH

Jerry Davidson

There are few things an organist can possess that will cause so much positive comment as the ability to improvise a toccata-like piece on a given hymn tune. In practice, this is so much like a "parlor trick" that almost anyone who is willing to invest a few practice hours can learn to do it.

Historically, improvisational skills have always been a part of the organist's technique. Early toccatas were almost always either written-down improvisations or compositions imitating the results of improvisation. The great tradition of French toccatas grew from the sometimes heroic improvisational skills of the organists.

Very few church services will not occasionally benefit from a brief interlude, a modulatory passage or other liturgico-musical "glue," and most organists can provide at least some rudimentary improvisations for these situations. By using hymn tunes and simple forms some sense of order can be provided. Vernon De Tar, one of my teachers, said that he would not call most of what he heard "improvisation"; he called it "groping." A little planning and some mental organization can prevent aimless meandering.

There is an uncomplicated procedure which will produce simple but satisfying toccatas: use a cantus firmus (hymn tune) in the pedal, use a recurring, easily played figure for the accompaniment in the hands, and use a rounded binary form to contain it. Lynnwood Farnam's *Toccata on O Filii et Filiae* is an excellent model and a wonderful piece that sounds extremely flashy but is actually a very repetitive and simply constructed work. He first uses the final four measures of the tune against cascading arpeggios, contrasts with the opening four measures against chords and tremolando eighths, then returns to reprise the opening with slightly varied harmony, and concludes with block chords—simple and highly effective.

To include this improvisatory skill as a part of your technique you must first become facile and comfortable with an accompanying figure—one you can use over and over. This figure must be playable in all keys and you must be in sufficient control that you are always rhythmically secure with it.

The figuration I find most useful was discovered in a *Toccata on Veni Creator* by Dom Paul Benoit (see Example 1). Other figures I like to use include those from the Final of Louis Vierne's First Symphony (Example 2) and the *Toccata* from Boëllmann's Gothic Symphony (Example 3)—or you might like to make up your own.

Example 1: Benoit: *Toccata on Veni Creator*



Example 2: Vierne: *Symphony I, Final*



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Example 3: Boëllmann: *Suite Gothique, Toccata*

...can become...

...or, better yet...

The cantus firmus, which may be virtually any hymn tune or a tune from any other source, is probably easiest used in slow note values. This slows not only the tune but also the harmonic rhythm, which means that you will have to contend with fewer chord changes and can use more repetition of figures. I like to use the cantus in a key differing from that of the original source, especially if it is from a hymnal. Toccatas are frequently improvised as postludes; continuing the same key from four or five verses of the sung hymn into the toccata is just too much of one key.

Transposition can be highly simplified by direct reading in a different clef. By reading the soprano melody from the hymnal (in treble clef) and substituting the bass clef, a transposition of a third is immediately made (Example 4). This, incidentally, is a good technique to cultivate for any improvisation using hymn tunes—key contrast usually gives a fresh sound better than any other change.

Example 4: Transposition by clef substitution

Tune: Nicene ... becomes...

Tune: St. Anne ... becomes...

...or even...

Perhaps the biggest challenge is the harmonization of the cantus. You may, of course, keep the chords from the hymnal harmonization but this will sometimes produce problems when the chord changes come too rapidly. It is usually easier to keep the changes of chords to a minimum (i.e., keep a slow harmonic rhythm). If the chord choices are too complex, it may prove difficult to sustain the accompanimental pattern; if the chord choices are too few or too much tonic-dominant, then the toccata may be boring. To combat the I-V-I syndrome that seems to pervade most improvisations, a

good alternative seems to be to use the tonic and the supertonic-seventh. One doesn't have to listen to much rock and/or pop music to discover that this combination often supplants the more "classical" tonic-dominant relationship. The supertonic-seventh will also give a satisfying substitution for the subdominant chord, thus providing substitutions for the three primary triads in only two hand positions (Example 5).

Example 5: Tonic and Supertonic-Seventh positions



Using tonic-supertonic-seventh combinations as the norm will allow for more conventional tonic-dominant combinations at cadences for satisfying phrases.

Of course, other diatonic chords and even chromatic chords may be used, resulting in a more active harmony and a more interesting toccata. Use of highly coloristic chords, such as augmented sixths, the Neapolitan sixth and others, may be added as opportunities and taste dictate. What is important here is the bare essential: a brief improvised toccata with only tonic and supertonic-seventh with dominants at the cadences can be a very satisfying improvisation.

In determining the harmonies outlined by the accompanimental figurations, the technique of pandiatonicism is helpful. In pandiatonic harmony each note in the scale is considered to be equally consonant; i.e., in pandiatonic C major the B (leading tone) is just as consonant in combination as is the G (dominant). In improvisation this concept will result in many seventh, ninth and eleventh chords (either real or implied) that will add a piquant "contemporary" sound and help to cover blatant errors in voice leading. By staying within the pitches of the tonic key the scale degrees may be used in almost any combination, provided the cadences use either supertonic-seventh-to-tonic or dominant-to-tonic to close the phrases. A fifth scale degree to tonic scale degree as the lowest notes of the figurations will do wonders to establish this.

Once you can get the accompanimental figure going well and can add the tune in your feet, it is time to think about an overall form. The most usable has to be the Rounded Binary. You probably remember this from a class in form:

Tonic	—	Contrasting		Contrasting	—	Tonic
Key		Key		Key		Key
		(frequently dominant)				

We can use the cantus through once or twice ending in a new key as the initial A section, improvising a brief contrasting section (possibly made up of fragments of the cantus) and then return for one more statement of the cantus in the original key, plus a short "tag" ending for a convincing close.

Note that this constricts the binary form somewhat: the two "contrasting key" parts are combined into one section. While this may look like a ternary (A-B-A) form, it really isn't, as there is insufficient B and final A section—it is really a rounded binary. Ternary form, with its full-blown As and Bs, is really too long a form to use to construct a reasonably brief piece. If your improvisation gets too long it can easily become boringly repetitive to your listeners.

There are generally two types of improvisers: those who freely admit that they sometimes have trouble keeping the piece going at all times and those who lie. Everybody gets stuck occasionally. Searle Wright's improvisation classes at Union Seminary stressed the best advice: KEEP ON GOING! Even if you are suddenly amazed to find yourself in the key of R-sharp major you must keep the accompanimental figurations going at all costs, start moving toward the original supertonic-seventh, use a pedal point on the dominant, and then you're back home free. Who cares if your contrasting section only lasted six measures!

SOME TIPS FOR BEGINNING

Get started by practicing the accompanimental figure you choose until you can do it completely automatically (and practically in your sleep). Don't worry about using this same pattern over and over; if you change the cantus and vary the contrasting section it will be a new piece to your listeners every time. In the seven years I served my last congregation I must have used the "Benoit" figure for at least two dozen hymn tunes—no one ever mentioned my being repetitious.

After you are comfortable with the accompaniment then try basic pedal scales in various rhythms and in various keys to get used to the coordination of hands and feet with no music to rely upon. Vary the harmonization of the scale using more adventurous chords as you get more proficient. Practice improvisation as often and as diligently as you practice the standard literature.

As examples, see the two toccatas at the end of this article which have been noted down from my improvisations. You can easily see that the same basic figuration is used for both and how easily the figurations can be adapted to varying time signatures. That both of these are in D major is a fluke; "Let all the world" is usually sung in that key but was not sung at the time this improvisation was created. "Deus tuorum militum" is in B-flat major in *The Hymnal 1982* and this improvisation, which immediately followed the singing of the hymn, was in D major so that the hymnal cantus could be read with a simple treble-to-bass-clef transposition.

Once the most basic techniques have been acquired and some proficiency has been gained, you may want to branch out a bit. Other possibilities for extending these rudimentary ideas include playing the cantus in canon (Example 6) or in simultaneous augmentation and diminution as in measures 17-19 of "Let all the world" or even with an improvised countermelody in the soprano voice (Example 7).

Example 6: Tune in canon with itself ("Slane")



Example 7: Cantus in bass with countermelody in soprano ("Hanover")



It must be stressed that these are not really compositions; they are written-down improvisations, two very different skills in my mind. While these two pieces are here "frozen in notation," in actuality they never sound exactly the same each time I reconstruct them.

Toccatas such as these are really great "on the road" when you're a guest or substitute and they are equally good at home, provided

you don't do them too often. As in sonata-allegro form, the outline, content and form of this idea is sufficiently flexible that it will adapt itself to many, many tunes and many, many situations. All it takes is a little practice to master these techniques and then on to the greatest improvisational challenge of all: the Fugue.

IMPROVISATION ON LET ALL THE WORLD
for Organ

Reconstructed from an Imprecisation
May 22, 1988

JERRY F. DAVIDSON

GT: *ff* with
mixtures.
SW: *ff* with
roofs 16' 8' 4'

Pedal *ff* with
Roofs

Musical notation for measures 1-3. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

Musical notation for measures 4-6. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

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Arrangement c. 1988, Jerry F. Davidson.

2

Musical notation for measures 7-9. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

Musical notation for measures 10-12. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

3

Musical notation for measures 13-15. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

Musical notation for measures 16-18. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

4

Musical notation for measures 19-21. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

Musical notation for measures 22-24. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

5

Musical notation for measures 25-27. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

Musical notation for measures 28-30. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

6

Musical notation for measures 31-33. The top staff (GT) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff (SW) contains a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff (Pedal) contains a single eighth note.

IMPROVISATION ON "BESS TOUSSAINT MILITARY"
for Organ

reconstructed from an improvisation
by JERRY DAVIDSON
June 11, 1969

GT: Full Organ
without reeds

PD: Full with
reeds

Musical notation for the first system on the left page, featuring a treble clef with a complex melodic line and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment.

Musical notation for the second system on the left page, continuing the melodic and accompaniment lines.

Musical notation for the third system on the left page, including the instruction *rallentando* in the bass staff.

Musical notation for the fourth system on the left page, including instructions *Full Organ ff*, *A Tempo*, and *Full Pedal*.

Musical notation for the first system on the right page, featuring a treble clef with a complex melodic line and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment.

Musical notation for the second system on the right page, continuing the melodic and accompaniment lines.

Musical notation for the third system on the right page, continuing the melodic and accompaniment lines.

Musical notation for the fourth system on the right page, including instructions *Allargando*, *Fanfare mode*, and *fff*.

IMPROVISING ON CHANT THEMES

The decision to change the requirements for the AAGO improvisation question for 1984 was the result of the combined thinking of the Examination Committee and their general agreement that the CAGO improvisation question (the short ABA form) was more difficult than the AAGO improvisation question, which was in reality just a modulation exercise. As a result, three options for the 1984 AAGO improvisation question were agreed upon: the ground bass option, the chorale prelude (see Walter Hilse's article in TAO, Nov., p. 40) and the chant prelude option. The rationale for the three choices is to afford the widest possible latitude in choosing a format for improvisation that suits the candidate's abilities and preferences. A number of people have expressed enthusiasm for improvising on Gregorian chant themes because of their experience with the chant in its liturgical setting.

As Dr. Hilse described in his article on the chorale prelude option, the chant theme will be given in its entirety in modern notation with no accompaniment. The candidate may first play through the theme and then will be given the standard one-minute reflection period before beginning a brief improvised prelude on the chant. The following guidelines may help the candidate prepare for this part of the improvisation:

1. The chant should be recognizable.
2. Some development of the chant is expected. A simple statement of the chant with accompaniment is generally unacceptable.
3. The modal tendencies of the chant should be retained in the use of harmony. Avoid leading tones and major thirds in modes I and II, for example. Practicing harmonization of the modes using modal harmony is particularly helpful.
4. The length should be between 1 and 3 minutes.
5. Although no specific form is required, a form should be made apparent to the listener. There should be a feeling of pulse within the free rhythm of the chant, and the improvisation should begin and end in the mode of the given chant.
6. The character of the chant should be reflected in the type of improvisation, i.e., chants of a meditative, prayerful character such as "Pange lingua" should be given a different setting than chants of a declamatory nature such as "Hosanna Filio David."

Gregorian chant provided the basis for most liturgical music from the Middle Ages until the Reformation. The French Classical school contributed some of the richest examples of chant-based works: grand entrance pieces with the chant in long note values in the tenor, fugues based on the opening motives of each phrase of the chant, ornamented preludes, etc. Even Bach wrote chorales fashioned after these forms. In the nineteenth century, chant was largely ignored in favor of secular works of a programmatic or symphonic nature, and chorale forms in Germany grew to greater proportions. However, in the twentieth century, models for chant improvisation can be found particularly among the French composers Dupré, Falcinelli, Demessieux, Durufé, Tournemire and Langlais.

The forms for chant improvisation may also be viewed historically according to the abilities and preferences of the candidate. A fugal treatment on a smaller scale than Bach used for the chant in the three large Kyrie settings from the *Clavierübung III* (Kyrie "Fons Bonitatis") can state the chant in long note values in the soprano, tenor and pedal for successive invocations. The initial notes of the chant can serve as a *Vorimitation*. This form is similar to the treatment in the Buxtehudian chorale-prelude arrangement described in the Hilse article, with the omission of ornamentation in the chorale (there is no reason that would preclude the Buxtehudian chorale-prelude treatment for a chant theme as well). A simpler setting with the chant in augmentation in the tenor or bass range such as was used for the chant versets by Titelouze, Couperin and de Grigny could

also be explored. And several notes from the opening of each phrase of the chant can be used fugally in the style of the French Classical masters.

Twentieth-century models provide great resources for variety of form and style. Tournemire's monumental *L'Orgue Mystique* offers one of the richest models for chant improvisation. He reflected the essence of the religious and spiritual elements of the chant in the 51 offices of his liturgical and musical legacy. Often part of the chant is heard alone on an 8' or 4' stop in the manuals or pedal. Brief motives sometimes comprised of only three notes are repeated in sequence or as ostinato figures in rapid succession. Rarely is all of a given chant used for any of the movements. Tournemire used these techniques in slow, meditative movements, as well as in the toccata figures for the final movements of *L'Orgue Mystique*.

Langlais employs chant more extensively than any other living composer as a basis for his works. His best models in preparing for this question, in terms of length and variety of form and style, are the following pieces: "Paraphrase sur le Salve Regina," *Vingt-quatre Pièces*, Vol. I; "Improvisation," *Suite Médiévale*; "Communión" and "Élévation," *Hommage à Frescobaldi*; and six chant-based pieces in the *Livre Oecuménique*. The *Offrande à Marie* and the "In Paradisum" from the *Triptyque Grégorien* give excellent examples from his more recent works.

Langlais's special genius as an improviser is well known both here and abroad. A review of a new recording of his improvisations at Ste-Clotilde on the Motette label was reviewed in the July TAO. However, less is known about him as a teacher of improvisation except by the students who studied improvisation with him. When I was in Paris during the early sixties, I studied improvisation first very briefly with Dupré, and then with Suzanne Chaisemartin and Langlais. Langlais was my greatest inspiration for improvisation. Marchal once said that Langlais was so fine a teacher as to make stones improvise. We saw this proverbial story brought to life more than once during the improvisation classes he taught at the Schola Cantorum.

Langlais used nothing but chant themes to teach improvisation, and rarely did he use more than the complete opening phrase of a chant. What follows here are three basic types of preludes he taught to beginning improvisation students, loosely categorized as "Gregorian paraphrases." Langlais studied improvisation with Tournemire in the early thirties and was greatly influenced by him in his use of the chant. It is, however, in the broad genre of the "Gregorian paraphrase" that we see most strongly Tournemire's influence on Langlais.

The first two types of "paraphrase" were classified as "contemplative preludes" and the third as a toccata. Either of the first two types could be followed by a toccata. For the first type of prelude, the form was a short ABA based on three sonorities (soft foundations for the accompaniment, a solo stop—reed or cornet, and a solo flute): introduction on accompanying foundations; chant in soprano with no alterations; interlude modulating away from main key; chant repeated with free ornamentation (complementary phrase); short development taking a motive from the chant (see my article in TAO, April 1983); recapitulation confined to simple sustained chords in the manual with the theme in the pedal at 4'. A short coda would conclude the prelude if the toccata were not added.

The second type of contemplative prelude has no development: introduction; theme played twice in the home key, the second time varied; theme played a third time in the dominant; final statement of the chant in the main key.

The third type was a toccata in which a fragment of the theme's functions as a rapidly articulated figure between the hands. The pedal first carries the chant, then it is heard in the treble. A development is optional. Sometimes the toccata ends with the chant in canon between the treble and the bass.

Taking the chant Kyrie "Orbis factor," the following illustrations show examples of the first and third type of Gregorian paraphrase.

Whether or not you plan to take the AAGO exam this year, this is a good time to consider where your inner creativities for improvisation lie. A study of improvisation based on Gregorian chant frees one from the predictable seesawing of Vivaldi-type cadences in various keys that eventually lead (we hope!) to the Doxology. Part of the process is simply one of getting started and not being afraid of making a mistake, for with improvisation, only you can know what was really a mistake. If at first your at-

tempts seem ludicrous, remember another good piece of advice from the one who makes stones improvise: "The tape recorder is your best teacher!" Listen carefully to what you record and be guided by what you hear as you are detached from the actual playing.

ANN LABOUNSKY
AGO Examination Committee

Ex. 1 - Chant theme: Kyrie "Orbis factor"

Ex. 2 - Contemplative prelude: introduction and initial chant statement

Ex. 3 - Interlude after first phrase, modulating on soft foundation stops

Ex. 4 - Complementary second phrase on solo flute stop, in same key

Ex. 5 - Motive for development; other possibilities show by broken lines

Ex. 6 - Development with chant motive, using three key levels

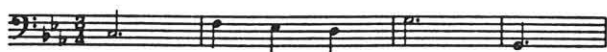
Ex. 7 - Recapitulation

Ex. 8 - Toccata - moderato, full registration

IMPROVISING ON A GROUND BASS

Improvising on a ground bass is the third option in the improvisation requirement of the 1984 AAGO examination. The ground, a variation technique utilizing the ostinato principle, is an almost universal organizing device in music. The music scholar will find it in primitive as well as highly sophisticated works. The definition as given by Willi Apel in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* states clearly that it is "a short melodic phrase (normally from four to eight measures) which is repeated over and over again as a bass line with varying superstructures (melodies, harmonies) added each time in the upper parts. . . . The contrast between the fixed framework of the bass and the free display of imagination in the upper parts constitutes the peculiar charm of this form."

It is the purpose of this short article to define clearly what is expected of the AAGO applicant and to suggest a few ways of approaching the study and performance of this form. For instance, here is a plan for a practice session with the following ground bass:



Step I.a) Study the melodic pattern, a sample of the kind of motive that may be given in an exam. Note that it is in a minor key, in triple meter and is four measures in length. Before attempting to play variations above this melody, practice thinking quickly of the implied basic harmonies. Whenever possible, choose one harmony to a measure, in this case, I, IV (II⁹), I⁶, V. b) Practice playing the chords in various positions above the bass line.

Step II. With the harmonic basis well established, generate melodic motives in varying rhythms which would increase in interest from variation to variation. For example, Variation I could feature eighth notes, Variation II triplets, Variation III sixteenth notes, and so on. Write some of the ideas down on staff paper and plan the order in which you will use them.

Step III. Having experimented with melodic or harmonic ideas, try playing four or five variations based on them. Bring the form to a close with a tonic pedal point over which the whole or a fragment of the ground bass melody could appear in the top or middle voice.

If your first experience is frustrating, try again on the same ground bass. Analyze your difficulty. Did you forget the basic harmonies? Did you lose the feeling of pulse? Go through all three steps again and again. To develop fluency try thinking and writing examples away from an instrument. In performance or writing, pay particular attention to the cadence measures. Do not stop the movement in the upper voices at these measures. An inner propulsion should carry the melodic lines from the last measure of any variation to the beginning of the next so that the musical expression is continuous.

The following realizations are offered as examples of the form described above. Number one features the basic, simple harmonies with a variety of rhythmic patterns.

Example 1.

Number two begins in three voices and builds to a climax in the third variation with four voices. Chromatic changes and suspensions also add harmonic coloring in the last two variations.

Example 2.

Number three is conceived in longer contrapuntal lines with changes in the implied harmonies in the second and final variation. As can be noted, there will be as many varieties of expression as there are individuals. These are intended as guidelines.

Example 3.

More study suggestions: Look up some of the excellent examples of the ostinato principle in Baroque literature, the chaconnes and passacaglias of Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Handel and Bach. Study the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic patterns of the variations. Write down some of the rhythmic patterns and apply them in your own attempts. Use the tape recorder, as my colleague, Ann Labounsky, recommended in her December article, to listen, learn and evaluate.

The variation technique, even after centuries of use, remains as one of the most useful tools of musical creativity. Practiced regularly, facility in this form can be yours. Preparing for the AAGO examination can be challenging, stimulating and rewarding. Don't miss the opportunity!

SISTER THEOPHANE HYTREK
AGO Examination Committee

ON IMPROVISING A CHORALE PRELUDE

The chorale prelude (or chorale improvisation), seemingly a "closed book" after the death of Johan Sebastian Bach in 1750, had a stirring revival in the mid- and late-1800s under Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms and Max Reger, and has remained very much alive in our own century in the hands of composers such as Marcel Dupré, Paul Manz and William Bolcom. Through the ages this type of piece—presenting a hymn tune in a new surrounding or "dressed-up" guise—has assumed an astounding variety of formal plans, textures and ornamental procedures.

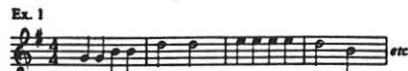
One of the main attractions, and challenges, of the chorale-prelude option on next year's new Associateship improvisation question A6—one of three improvisation exercises from which the candidate may choose at the actual moment of the exam—may, accordingly, be its very open-endedness. Consistent with recent Examination Committee policy of encouraging maximal stylistic freedom in creative tasks (such as in the choral composition question in the Fellowship Examination), we will permit candidates to choose their style and procedure, passing judgment principally on how *well* things are done according to the premises adopted. One of the most enjoyable and enlightening aspects of studying for this question might be the actual searching out of models from the literature—and, in the process, undertaking a sweeping historical review of the genre from Sweelinck and Scheidt through Buxtehude and Pachelbel, through Bach's innumerable varieties, up to its many modern manifestations. Besides the old masters mentioned, Paul Manz's ten volumes of written-out chorale improvisations will offer particularly helpful, practical insights.

"What kind of chorale-elaboration best suits my musical outlook, my temperament and my particular skills?" In answering this question, don't be afraid to opt for the strikingly modern: a jazz or gospel approach is one possibility! For someone who has mastered fugal technique, a chorale fugue based on the opening chorale phrase is something to consider—although this improvisation will, of course, be judged according to the more rigorous contrapuntal and formal standards of fugue. The committee would discourage the following types, however:

1. simple note-against-note (re)harmonizations of hymns without noteworthy ornamental content in either melody or accompaniment—there simply isn't much improvising going on here;
2. prolonged chorale-fantasia-like presentations of more than three or four minutes—undesirable mainly because of time constraints in the giving of the exams;
3. fanfares bearing little or no motivic relationship to the *cantus firmus*, framing ultra-simple chordal presentations of the tune—unsatisfactory because no significant development of material from the chorale itself takes place.

Recognizing the ground-breaking, somewhat experimental nature of the chorale-prelude option, the Examination Committee is observing special limitations concerning the type of tune it will choose for the first two years (not necessarily forever!): we will only pick hymn tunes in a straightforward major tonality, without unusual modulations or harmonic implications. Complex rhythms (syncopations, hemiolas and changing meters) will also be avoided. This, we hope, will allow for the greatest possible range of stylistic approaches, and also tend to offer harmonic and motivic matter which will be relatively easy to handle on short notice. On the test sheet, the hymn will be printed in the trappings of a simple chordal accompaniment, between the ground bass and Gregorian chant options. The candidate will first be given a minute to choose from among the three options. If the hymn is chosen the candidate will then be permitted to play through the tune, either unaccompanied or with the chordal accompaniment, and thereafter will also have the standard one-minute reflection period which is customary for all at-sight questions. Use of pedals will be optional; however, the possibility of entrusting the tune to the feet, be it at 16', 8' or 4' level, should be investigated!

Though the choices of design and style are almost boundless, I thought it would be instructive to show how to proceed according to one possible plan: a simplified version of Buxtehude's treble-dominated type of prelude. Let us use the familiar tune "Nicaea" ("Holy, Holy, Holy"):



In this format, the right hand is entrusted with the main presentation of the tune on a prominent solo registration, the left hand plays two accompanying voices on a second manual with a modest 8' (or 8' and 4') combination, and the pedals, if used, will employ soft 8' and 16' stops matching the left hand. Each phrase of the hymn tune is dealt with in turn, with the lower voices usually giving previews of the phrase in an imitative arrangement, and the soprano then giving a definitive rendition. Standard Baroque devices of ornamentation are a key aspect of the improvisatory process here—especially in the soprano, to a lesser degree in the accompanying voices. Such devices include passing and neighbor tones, *appoggiaturas*, measured or unmeasured trills, chordal neighbors and arpeggios, dotted rhythms and sixteenth-note runs. Traditionally, the imitation found among the accompanying voices is of the fugal sort: if you know your tonal answers for the AAGO paperwork, you can also flaunt them here! In the projected beginning of a prelude on "Nicaea" given below (Ex. 2), the tenor gives a tonal answer to the alto at the head of the first phrase, and an inverted answer to the alto at the head of the second! I have circled the actual notes of the original hymn, as distinct from the ornamental garb, in both alto and soprano: notice that the basic underlying rhythm of the melody has not been violated.

Ex. 2

Other things to observe in the above example are:

1. that the harmonic choices in the prelude derive directly from the harmony of the hymn itself (although the candidate may essay departures from the given hymn harmonization);
2. that the inner voices become less active whenever the soprano states a phrase, settling for chordal filler and some motion in parallel thirds (or sixths).

In this simplified form of Buxtehude's type of prelude, I have chosen to keep the feet out of the imitative interplay of the accompanying voices, giving them only the simplest possible underpinnings. One may, of course, include the bass in the conversation as well (as Buxtehude usually does), or dispense with the pedals altogether, opting for a three-voice manualiter approach. If the tune contains recurring musical phrases (as "Nicaea," for example, does) you may take advantage of this by deliberately repeating all or much of what you did the first time around, although further ornamental variants would probably be more interesting. At the close, a plagal extension over a tonic pedal point is one graceful way to wrap things up (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3

This Buxtehude-style prelude is, perhaps, one of the easiest to handle for anyone relatively uninitiated in this field, for the texture is relatively simple and transparent, and the form is almost completely additive—i.e., the phrases are treated one after another, with few references to previous motives or harmonic progressions required. But, by all means, investigate a wide range of possible procedures. Anticipating various responses to this article from readers, I will reserve space for a follow-up article on this topic in March or April. Comments and questions are welcome!

WALTER HILSE, CHAIRMAN
 AGO Examination Committee

AGO COMMITTEE FOR SHARING SKILLS AND RESOURCES

Play Something—Quick!

Wihla Hutson realized the inexperienced organist's problem in getting from one key to another and having to improvise after the offertory anthem while the ushers finish their job. The result is that Harold Flammer, Inc. (Delaware Water Gap, Pa. 18327) has published her helpful book, *Play Something—Quick!* (HF-5076, \$3.50). The most important set of modulations is entitled "This Way to the Doxology," but modulations to anywhere from anywhere are also included.

"Play Anything!"—the last section of Miss Hutson's thin volume—is a series of 16-measure pieces in both major and minor keys. If one "filler" doesn't do the job, you can move to the parallel major or minor, or you can move on the same page to a closely related key. The last page is devoted to "Helpful How-To's" for service playing.

Developing the ability to fill in a bare spot in the service demands practice and not a little courage for the novice. If written out or printed "interludes" need to be practiced before using them (and they should be), how much more practice is necessary if you are going to *improvise* them in public!

You might begin by practicing in all keys a basic formula such as I, IV, V with pedal and left hand in whole notes while the right hand plays on another manual quarter-notes except for half-notes at the cadence. The melodic law must be obeyed. Over the bar-line the melody should be a harmony note unless you are creating a suspension or an appoggiatura.

A short piece can be created by playing four measures in the key of C, a middle section of four measures in the key of G, and then repeating the first section. The example below shows the form with an improvised melody. To lengthen the improvisation, simply play the first four measures twice before going to the G-major section or play this same section two times at the end. This creates the musical form AABA or ABAA.

Section A

Ped. I IV V I

Section B

D. C. al fine

I IV V I

After you have had the courage to do this as a filler in the service, you can use a larger musical sentence by playing an ascending scale in whole notes on the pedals, the left hand filling in the harmony and the right hand improvising a melody on another manual, as follows:

Ped. I 6 6 IV

V 6 6 I

If a longer interlude is required, consider what has just been played as section "A" and improvise a second eight-measure phrase (section "B") by giving the pedal an ascending stepwise pattern in whole notes. Begin on the seventh degree of the key you are in, employing a different color registration on the solo and using the chord figuration shown below.

6 I 6 6 IV

V 6 6 6 6 I

Alternate Ending

Perhaps you could venture to play the harmony in the right hand and let the left hand play the solo in the tenor range. Section "A" would then be repeated to complete the ABA form. Should you want to end before repeating section "A," squeeze the last two measures into one measure, as shown in the alternate ending of the third example, and finish with a C-major chord. Good luck!

—D. DeWitt Wasson

QUICK! PLAY SOMETHING!

The AGO Fellowship Improvisation Question Isn't Just for Fellows

Improvise in ternary form on the given motive. Supply a recognizable contrasting motive for the middle section. The improvisation should last approximately two minutes.

Thus were the candidates taking the 1982 Fellowship exam instructed in Question F5, testing their skills as improvisers. In 1981, eight candidates took this part of the FAGO exam; five of the eight passed.


Improvise a short piece in A-B-A form in any style congenial, on two brief motives supplied.

The 1982 Colleague exam instructed the candidates for Colleague accordingly. As in the Fellowship question, a ternary form was required. The difference between the two questions is two-fold: the FAGO question requires a slightly more extended piece, and the candidate is required to supply his own contrasting "B" motive.


If interest in the improviser's art were limited to those few people taking the FAGO exam—or even just extended to those who are AAGO or CAGO candidates—there might be little excuse for devoting an article in *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST* to it. Improvisation, however, is a skill which can be practiced and learned by all. It is included in the exams precisely because it is a skill basic to the practice of the church organist. Consider how many places in the services of your denomination would be enhanced by a short improvised piece, related thematically, for example, to a hymn which the congregation has just sung.

The short ternary form consists of three sections of approximately equal length: the main musical idea is presented in a self-contained section (A); the second motive is developed in a contrasting manner, beginning in a key closely related to the first (B); and the main musical idea returns (A) or may be somewhat altered (A'). A coda is optional. This ternary form may be practiced by using any hymn tune, taking two motives from it, and expanding them into three self-contained sections. The following hymn examples are taken from the AGO Examination Hymn Booklet, which was prepared by the Examination Committee for use in the Service Playing and Colleague exams. Two motives may be extracted from each tune by taking part of their first and third lines:

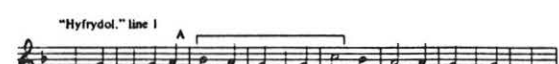
"Aberystwyth," line 1



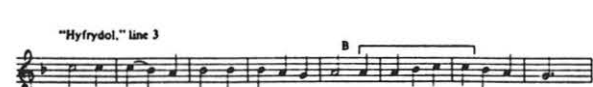
"Aberystwyth," line 3



"Hyfrydol," line 1



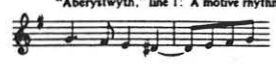
"Hyfrydol," line 3



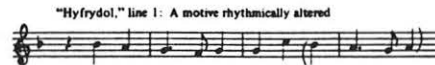
The opening measure could, of course, be taken for the first motive, but in doing so, one might be tempted to continue playing the hymn tune through unchanged. A motive taken from the interior of the opening line gives greater melodic variety and ties the piece together thematically without consciously reminding the listener of the beginning of the hymn. A fragment from the third line of a four-line hymn serves well for the B motive, especially in hymn tunes that are in AABA form. By changing the rhythm of either of the motives and repeating some of the notes, more variety is possible, as is shown in the

following examples, based on motives from the same hymn tunes:

"Aberystwyth," line 1: A motive rhythmically altered



"Hyfrydol," line 1: A motive rhythmically altered



The B motive may also be derived from the A motive. For a piece in major, the B section frequently begins in the relative minor key. If the A motive is in a minor key, the B section often begins in the relative major key. The same hymn tunes may illustrate this procedure:

"Aberystwyth," line 3:



G major

"Hyfrydol," line 3:



D minor

Notice how the same technique can be used with motives from the FAGO improvisation question. The following illustrations from past FAGO questions show the derivation of the B motive from the given A motive, with its adaptation to the relative key and rhythmic alterations.

1977 A B motive



D major B minor

1980 A



D major

B motive



B minor or

1982 A



E major

B motive



C minor or or

Another useful device for the derivation of the B motive is that of retrograde, in which the A motive is read backwards.

1978 A B motive



D minor F major

A more complicated device that is less apparent to the ear is that of inversion, in which the ascending intervals of the derived motive become descending intervals and vice versa, as shown in the following example.



Part of the fascination of improvisation lies in the expansion of a very small amount of given thematic material into a piece of greater length, from approximately one minute for the Colleague question or two minutes for the FAGO question, to whatever length is desired and/or appropriate. Consider the variety of works based on four notes such as B-A-C-H, or what Beethoven did with the opening motive in his Fifth Symphony. The shorter the theme, the more possibilities exist for the improviser to expand the ternary form, one of the most versatile and popular of all musical forms. It is immensely satisfying both artistically and psychologically to present a musical idea; then to give contrast, relieving the sameness of the first idea; perhaps to present the idea in another way, as in a development section; and finally to return to the opening idea in its original form. For organists at all stages of development, the ternary form offers endless possibilities for improvisation in the church or synagogue.

ANN LABOUNSKY
 AGO Examination Committee

THE ORGANIST AND PIANO ACCOMPANIMENTS: SOLVING TRANSCRIPTION PROBLEMS

Mary Gifford Matthys

Sooner or later most organists will be presented with a piano accompaniment and be asked to play it on the organ. Since the two instruments are very different, playing piano music on the organ can present a number of difficulties. The ability to transcribe music intended for the piano idiomatically for the organ will serve the church organist well.

Piano and organ keyboards appear quite similar and, although most organs have a pedalboard, this does not constitute one of the major acoustical differences between the two. The first, most apparent difference is that the organ has no sostenuto (damper) pedal, which on the piano removes the dampers from the strings, allowing sustained tones. This is particularly useful when the hands must be lifted in order to play subsequent figures; with its aid, many figures can be performed effectively, without compromising the linear flow of the music. This sostenuto effect is not possible on the organ.

Secondly, the piano produces its sound by a hammer hitting the strings, thus creating a sharp, percussive sound that rapidly decays. The organ produces its sound by opening an air channel beneath a pipe, allowing air to flow through the pipe, causing it to sound. A note played on the organ is either "on" at a steady volume, or "off." There is no decay of the sound and, with the exception of certain voicing excesses, there is no percussive attack.

Thirdly, the piano is only an 8', concert-pitch instrument. The organ can produce, with a single key, tones ranging from two octaves below the 8' pitch to three or more octaves above it. This includes not only octave duplication, but partials such as $2\frac{2}{3}'$, $1\frac{3}{5}'$, and the mixtures. The piano can achieve harmonic duplication only by having individual keys for each pitch depressed.

Organ technique books generally include lengthy, detailed discussions of the inherent differences between the piano and organ. Although Oswald G. Ragatz, as well as Mildred Andrews and Pauline Riddle, in their respective methods discuss hymn playing in great detail, they do not specifically address the problems of transcribing piano accompaniments. Everett Jay Hilty presents a few basic rules and considerations for transcription techniques in his method. However, the most extensive treatment of adapting piano accompaniments to the organ can be found in Harold Gleason's method.

Gleason recommends that all widely spaced chords, notes and octaves be brought in to the middle range of the instrument. Proper registration, including 4' and possibly 2' stops results, in a light, clear texture. Heavy reeds, partials and hybrids are best avoided. Mixtures can occasionally add brilliance but should be used judiciously. The textures of chords should also be thinned somewhat, especially in the lower ranges of the instrument, since low, thick chords produce a muddy sound. Rules for tying common tones, as in hymn playing, should be observed.

For example:

Piano becomes Organ

The diagram shows two musical staves. The left staff, labeled 'Piano', shows a series of chords with wide intervals between notes. The right staff, labeled 'Organ', shows the same chords transposed into a more compact, middle-range register, with some notes tied across measures to maintain the harmonic structure.

The organist should observe the indicated written markings and note values of the piano score as much as possible.

Phrasing should be consistent with the original score and dynamics should be observed. Dynamic changes can be effected by use of the swell pedal, registration changes or manual changes.

It is essential to maintain the rhythmic motion of the piece. Organists trained in the 19th-century tradition of legato playing tend to tie all, or almost all, common tones. When a piano score contains a series of repeated chords, this technique would result in long, sustained block chords and would rob the piece of its inherent motion. Although specific note values may be altered, the overall rhythmic effect of the piece must be maintained. A compromise that will allow for both sustained sound and continued rhythmic motion follows:

Piano becomes Organ

The diagram shows two musical staves. The left staff, labeled 'Piano', shows a series of repeated chords. The right staff, labeled 'Organ', shows the same chords adapted for organ, with note values and phrasing adjusted to maintain the piece's inherent motion while sustaining the sound.

Tremolos should be treated in a similar manner.

Piano becomes Organ

The diagram shows two musical staves. The left staff, labeled 'Piano', shows a tremolo effect. The right staff, labeled 'Organ', shows the tremolo adapted for organ, with note values and phrasing adjusted to maintain the rhythmic motion.

Gleason recommends playing a very rapid bass line on the manuals with the 16' pedal only on the accented beat; if the bass line is simple and well defined, it may be played entirely on the pedals. Where a bass line is written in octaves, draw the 16' pedal stop and play only the upper notes of the line. The 16' adds the lower sound indicated on the piano score, and the technique of playing only the upper line will avoid voice-leading problems and the need to suddenly transpose up an octave. When accompanying a very light voice, it is advisable to dispense with the 16' pedal stops entirely and use a light, clear registration, assuming at least a 4' flute, to support the voice. If at all possible, avoid doubling the vocal line; this is critical with a light, small voice, since doubling the voice can cover it.

Arpeggios, which are common in piano music, are especially problematic when transcribed for organ. If they are played exactly as written, they result in a thin texture unlike the effect that could be achieved on the piano with its sostenuto pedal. A compromise is appropriate. Gleason recommends the use of 8', 4', 2' in the right hand, 8', 4' in the left, with the left coupled to the pedal.

Piano becomes Organ

The diagram shows two musical staves. The left staff, labeled 'Piano', shows arpeggiated chords. The right staff, labeled 'Organ', shows the arpeggios adapted for organ, with registration and phrasing adjustments to maintain the texture.

Another possibility:

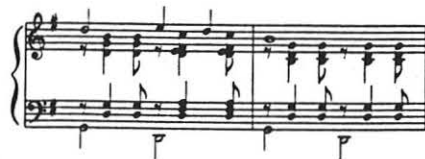


Or, for a somewhat lighter sound:



Occasionally an organist is confronted with a popular song to be accompanied at the organ. Such piano accompaniments are usually transcriptions of the original parts for guitar, bass, drum and so forth. Often the accompaniment will double the vocal line in the right hand over chordal-type accompaniments in the left. In these instances, it is useful to assess the harmonic structure of the piece (typically, the basic guitar chords are printed above the piano part) and use that as the basis for the accompaniment. If the singer has a strong voice, a 16' pedal stop can be used; otherwise, use only an 8' bass. Thus, the bass line can be played on the pedal and the chords on the manuals. Do not double the vocal line—this rule is even more important when accompanying a popular song than a classical one, since piano transcriptions sometimes only vaguely resemble the rhythm of the original. If the singer has learned the song by ear, he or she will almost certainly not be singing the written rhythms, and sometimes not even the written notes. An example of the transcribed accompaniment for a popular song follows:

Piano



becomes

Organ



The foregoing techniques should enhance the organist's ability to transcribe piano accompaniments into music more idiomatically for the organ without compromising the basic style. With practice, these techniques become increasingly automatic and can be applied to a wide range of musical styles.

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GREGORIAN CHANT NOTATION

A CHANT AUTHORITY TELLS HOW TO TRANSCRIBE THE ORIGINAL INTO CONTEMPORARY NOTATION

Theodore Marler

An organist or choirmaster who wishes to explore the monophonic church music of the Middle Ages, popularly known as Gregorian Chant, should acquire a few basic tools with which to uncover the melodies hidden in the music notation of the time. Indeed, a large corpus of these ancient chants continues to be printed in the old notation even today, edited in such chant books for the Roman Rite as the *Antiphonale Monasticum*, *Graduale Romanum*, and the *Liber Cantualis*. (The *Liber Usualis*, undoubtedly the best-known of the chant collections, is currently out-of-print. A new *Liber* is being considered by the editors and will be prepared in the foreseeable future.)

It is my purpose in this article to suggest a few techniques whereby those who are concerned with performing these ancient chants from the earlier notation can translate the unfamiliar visual images into the more familiar modern notation signs, and thus make the sound images of the early music more readily accessible to themselves and to their singers. I have resisted the temptation to explore many of the interesting, though for the purposes of this article irrelevant, historical underpinnings of the old notation in favor of the issues of performance practicality. Thus, only such basic topics are considered here as will assist the inquirer to locate the pitches on the staff; to interpret the *neumes*, that is, translate the pitch-meaning of the various notation signs used in such currently available editions of the chant as those mentioned above; and to catch a brief glimpse into the implications of these signs with relation to the musical rhythm of the chant.

THE DO AND FA CLEFS

In conventional music notation a key signature is given at the head of a composition so that the reader can determine the pitch relationships of the notes written down. In the older chant notation a clef, or key, is also given with which to unlock the melody. For example, at the extreme left of the four-line staff will be found a sign called the DO or FA clef.



Like the C, F or G clefs of modern notation, the DO and FA clefs of the chant notation help us to locate a particular pitch of the scale from which all other pitches can be derived. There is, however, a difference. Whereas the modern clefs locate for us *fixed* pitches on the staff according to an international system of tuning, the DO and FA clefs of the chant indicate only the *relative* pitches of the tones of a scale. These relative pitches must then be shown in a given key that can be played on a fixed-pitch instrument. What we are considering, then, is the transcription of the pitches of the movable-DO system, often-times called the Tonic SOL-FA system of notation, to specific pitches of the fixed pitch system.

The DO clef, then, tells us where DO of the major scale is located on the staff. The actual pitch represented by this clef will be determined by the choirmaster who will select the most comfortable pitch for his singers. The same is true for the FA

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This article is published with the endorsement of the AGO Committee for Exam Preparation and Promotion. The 1981 Choir Master Examination has a question on Gregorian Chant in the Paper Work Tests.

The rhythmic signs of the chants are reproduced from the *Graduale Romanum* by kind permission of Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, Sables-sur-Sarthe, France.

clef. The place of the DO clef on the staff does not give us a clue as to the mode in which the chant is composed. Its function is to provide for the location of the entire melody of the chant on the four lines of the staff without having to resort to leger lines.

Having located DO on the top line of the staff, for example, the major scale-line of DO falls into place:



Pronounced: DO Dough TI Tee LA Lah SOL Soul FA Fah MI Mee RE Ray DO Dough

(For the derivation of the Latin names of the pitches of the scale, see any music dictionary under "Guido's Scale.")

The same is true of the FA clef. The clef tells us where FA is located. All the remaining tones of the major scale then fall into place above and below it.



The following examples will illustrate how the DO clef and the FA clef can be transcribed into modern notation. Randomly selected keys are shown for each of the three conventional positions of the DO clef, and the two conventional positions of the FA clef.



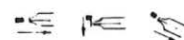
It will be noted that all of the transcriptions have been made using the G clef. This has been done deliberately in view of the fact that the G clef is the most common clef for singers whether intended for treble, tenor or bass voices.

NOTATION EQUIVALENTS

A single pitch of the chant is shown in any one of the following three forms:

the punctum ■; the virga ▮; the neuma ◊

Each of these is considered as having the same pitch function as a solid round note of conventional notation. The particular square or diamond-shape of these notes derives from the art of music calligraphy. A blunt-pointed calligrapher's pen, for example, will produce a square note if drawn from left to right with the blade of the pen held in a perpendicular position. Holding the pen at a 45° angle and drawing it down, also at a 45° angle, will produce a diamond-shaped figure. The stem of the *virga* is thin and is written by drawing the pen down at an angle parallel to the edge of the paper.



With a little practice and with the proper pen, these notes can be drawn with ease, and speed. It seems to have been an efficient way—in fact the only way—of copying the pages of the chant books in the Middle Ages long before the invention of printing presses.

When there are two or more eighth-note pitches over one syllable in modern notation, there is usually a beam to connect them:

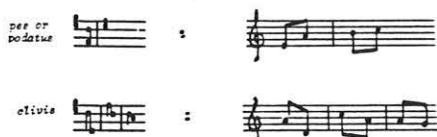


In the chant notation these pitches over one syllable of the text are grouped together in clusters made up of the single pitches shown above. (The visual image of these tone clusters often suggests an arrangement of flowers and hence the term “florid” chant.) These notation signs are sometimes called *neumes* and are given special names such as *punctum*, *virga*, *podatus*, etc. A summary of the principal *neumes* is given below with their modern notation equivalents. All have been transcribed into the key of C for the purpose of simplification.

Single notes. Always read note-groups from left to right.



Groups of two notes.



Groups of three notes.



Groups of more than three notes.



Special groups.

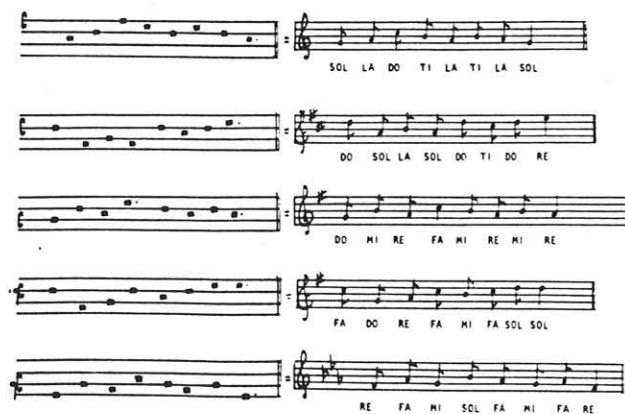


Musical pitches neither exist in a vacuum nor as unrelated sounds. When they are arranged in an ordered sequence, the resulting sound image has some kind of rhythmic pulse. This pulse is the result of the juxtaposition of relative intensities of loud and soft, of varying pitches of high and low, or of varying lengths of short and long. When such sound patterns are produced in regular recurring patterns of loud-soft, high-low or long-short, with or without textual underlay, the music is said to be “metrical.” When the sound sequences are not arranged in a regular recurring series of intensities, pitches or lengths, the resulting rhythm is said to be “free.” It is the prevailing concept of the rhythmic interpretation of Gregorian Chant today that the melodies are “free” in the sense of having random rhythmic pulsations. Therefore the modern notation signs that are used in chant transcriptions ought to convey as accurately as possible this notion of the rhythmic “freedom” of these melodies.

If we accept the prevailing “equalist” theory of chant interpretation, that is, considering all single-note units as having one pulse each, the eighth-note modern notation transcription equivalents seem to be practical and easily assimilated. For example: the note-groups over a single syllable can be beamed; the notes that are doubled in length can be shown as quarter notes; and slurs can be used to connect a series of note-groups in a long “florid” passage. Keep in mind that the dot beside a square note does not add one-half the time value to the note. Instead, a note is doubled in length by the presence of the dot beside it.

To these few preliminary observations are added below a few typical examples of transcriptions. The modern notation transcriptions are shown in a variety of key signatures, chosen at random. The chants selected for the transcriptions are taken from the *Graduale Romanum*, published by the Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, France, 1974. The page numbers given for each example refer to this edition.

Syllabic Chants—one note to a syllable of text.



Neumatic Chants—simple groupings.



p. 742

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus

p. 817

Mememento, Domine, David.

p. 848

Veni Creator Spiritus, Mentes tuorum visitans:

Melismatic (Florid) Chants.

p. 252

Alleluia

p. 715

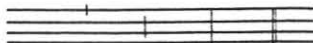
Kyrie eleison.

p. 743

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus

ADDENDA

The quarter-bar, full-bar and double-bar, found in the chant editions currently in use, are, in effect, musical punctuation marks indicating cadential subdivisions of the musical text.



The special sign known as the *quillisma*, the jagged "toothed" note, is generally transcribed with an *episema* above or below the note that precedes it. The vocal interpretation of this special sign has been — and still is — the subject of much conjecture on the part of musicologists.

p. 707

Asperges me, Domine.

As in modern notation, the flat sign is used in the old notation to indicate the lowering of the pitch $\text{T}1$ by a half-step. The effect of the flat remains for the duration of the word over which it appears, or until the next quarter-bar, or half-bar, whichever comes first. When transcribing the flat sign (the lowered $\text{T}1$), if the key signature contains sharps, the cancel sign will have to be used. Incidentally, the flat sign is only used for lowering the pitch $\text{T}1$. The modern sharp sign is never used nor is any other pitch altered other than $\text{T}1$.

p. 748

Kyrie eleison.

The cancel sign (⌘) has the same effect as in modern notation.

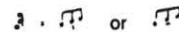
p. 847

The *pressus* is formed when two notes appear on one pitch whether as single notes or at the point where two groups are joined together, i.e., "fused," on the same pitch. This "fusion" may be transcribed as follows:

p. 689

Aquilam aeternam

The *salicus* is an ascending group of notes with a vertical *episema* placed beneath the next-to-last note. It is transcribed:



(See above excerpt from *Missa pro defunctis* on the syllable *ae* of *aeternam*.)

The note-groups referred to as *liquescent* show the last note of the group with a special shape. This last note is smaller in shape than the others of the group and, in the descending groups, is turned inward. In the transcriptions an eighth-note with a smaller head is generally used to indicate this *neume*. (Note the transcriptions of these groups given in the summary above.) The special shape of the note at the end of the *liquescent neume* serves to call attention to the presence of a double vowel (diphthong) or double consonant in the text. It reminds the singer that both sounds must be articulated when sung.

p. 750

Sanctus, Sanctus,

The vertical *episema* (↑)

as shown in the editions of Gregorian Chant prepared by the Benedictine Monks of the Abbey of Solesmes, France, marks the down-pulse of the musical rhythm. It is more commonly known as the rhythmic *ictus*. This sign has no effect on the realization of Gregorian notation in terms of contemporary notation. Examples of this will be observed in the transcriptions of chants given above.

The added "rests" to modern notation transcriptions of chants are given as helps to the singers and organists. They do not appear in the old notation but are understood to be present. The quarter-rest before a full-bar or double-bar indicates a two-pulse pause at the end of a musical sentence. (See *Gloria* above.)

The eighth-rest at the beginning of a phrase is shown to indicate the up-pulse beginning of the melody. (See *Kyrie eleison*, p. 715, and *Pange lingua* above.)

HYMNODY ON AGO CHOIRMASTER EXAM

The 1984 Choirmaster exam for the first time will include a separate set of questions on the subject of hymnody. While in the past there have been general questions pertaining to hymns on the exam, there will now be a complete question devoted to this important topic. In Walter Hilse's article, "1984 AGO Examinations — New Features" (THE AMERICAN ORGANIST, July 1983), he, speaking for the Examination Committee, states that "we have increased the point-weights for hymn-related questions in general, responding to observations from many quarters as to the centrality of hymn-related work in present-day church situations." As hymns certainly must be included among the most important music we use on a regular basis in our church positions, the introduction of a hymnody question on the Choirmaster exam seems most appropriate.

With a change in the number of items on Section II, certain adjustments became necessary in the allocation of points for each question. Although this information is given in detail in Examination Requirements for 1984, it might be helpful to remind prospective candidates of the present content of Section II, together with the new point distribution:

- Ch 3. (15 points) Ear tests
- Ch 4. (15 points) Theory-analysis
- Ch 5. (15 points) Questions on Gregorian chant
- Ch 6. (15 points) Questions on liturgy and contemporary liturgical trends
- Ch 7. (15 points) Questions on hymnody
- Ch 8. (25 points) Questions on general musical knowledge, choir training, repertoire and the history of choral music

Since hymnody is the new item on the Choirmaster exam, a few general comments are offered to prospective candidates as a guide in their preparation for this question.

A subject as broad as hymnody may obviously be approached in many different ways. As hymnody itself closely follows the history of the Christian church, the historical approach seems the best way to begin. In order to focus our study, we might think of hymnody as falling into six general categories: 1. music of the early church; 2. the Lutheran chorale; 3. psalmody; 4. English hymnody; 5. American hymnody; and 6. contemporary hymnody. The first category would include pre-Christian/Hebrew use of music through the Middle Ages. Here would be included psalms, early liturgical music, canticles, Greek and Latin hymns. The second category would include the hymnody of the Protestant Reformation and center around the Lutheran church. Within this category, German hymns and chorales fall into three subdivisions: a. those of the period of Luther, b. those expressing the difficulties of the Thirty-Years War, and c. those of the Pietist reaction. The third category includes the development of the metrical psalm in Geneva, and its use in France, England and Scotland. The fourth category considers the transition from psalmody to hymnody in England in the seventeenth century and beyond. Within this

category would come the work of Isaac Watts, the Wesleys and the Oxford Movement. The fifth category begins with English imports of psalmody. It would also include early American hymnody as well as later developments of the American hymn. The sixth category embraces a general consideration of contemporary hymnody.

Throughout the historical study of hymnody the names of principal writers and composers (e.g., Watts, Gerhardt) should be carefully noted, together with pertinent information concerning their contributions. Several examples of their work should be kept in mind, as well as knowledge of the content of important collections of hymnody.

In considering contemporary hymnody, perhaps the best source of information would be the examination of several recent hymnals or hymnal supplements of the leading denominations. If handbooks or companions to these hymnals are available, they also could provide useful material. In addition, two series of articles have appeared in recent past issues of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST, one entitled *Hymn Writers of Today*, the other, a series about denominational hymnody in North America. Both series were provided by the Hymn Society of America. For further historical information on hymnody, the candidate is referred to the following sources, in addition to the books listed in the bibliography of the examination requirements:

The Oxford Companion to Music, "Hymns and Hymn Tunes (including Metrical Psalms)," Percy A. Scholes. London: Oxford University Press, Tenth edition, 1977.

A Survey of Christian Hymnody, William Jensen Reynolds. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963.

The Hymnal 1940 Companion, third edition, revised. New York: The Church Pension Fund, 1956.

Any study of hymnody must also consider criteria for the evaluation of both hymn texts and tunes. It is, of course, essential that any hymn text be theologically sound. Other textual points to be considered include: scriptural relationship, doctrinal teaching, literary quality, phraseology, seasonal value or particular use, mood created and degree of universality, to mention only a few. On the musical side, consideration must be given to the following: singability, range and character of melody, harmony, melodic interest in lower voices, rhythm and vitality. The relationship of words and music, including the agreement between the meter of the words and that of the music, is of vital importance. Complete compatibility must exist between text and tune. Much helpful information on the use, treatment and evaluation of hymns may be found in *A Manual for Clergy and Church Musicians* by Marion J. Hatchett (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1980).

If the candidate takes the initiative to outline and follow a systematic course of hymnological study, either along the lines of the above, or another preferred plan, not only is success on the examination likely

to ensue, but intense fascination and pleasure as well.

ROBERT L. MAHAFFEY
AGO Examination Committee

PREPARATION GUIDES FOR AGO CHOIR MASTER EXAM

The following comments on the Choir Master Exam are offered to prospective candidates as guidance in a very general sense. Attempt has been made to pinpoint and clarify several areas of the exam which have caused problems to candidates in recent years.

Section 1 consists of two parts. Ch1 asks the candidate to rehearse and direct the choir in the performance of three choral works and Ch2 asks the candidate to demonstrate several keyboard skills at sight.

The three choral works for the 1982 exam are:

1. Bach—Thou very God and David's Son, chorale-last movement from Cantata No. 23
2. Sweelinck—Sing to the Lord (English text) (Concordia 98-2222)
3. Friedell—Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life (H. W. Gray-Belwin Mills)

Attention is directed to the notice in THE AMERICAN ORGANIST of October 1981 regarding the Bach composition. It states that G. Schirmer has ceased to print the last movement of Bach's Cantata 23, nor is it any longer printing the full cantata. If this edition is not available in a given Region, candidates are asked to use either the Kalmus edition of the cantata (#9294) or the Bärenreiter (#7023). It may be necessary to rehearse the anthem in German.

Candidates are reminded that an accompanist will be available for Ch1 if they do not wish to play their own accompaniments. The option is theirs.

The exam asks the candidate to rehearse and direct the choir in the performance of the three pieces. The candidate is also expected to demonstrate with the choir methods of breathing, tone production, purity of vowels and clear enunciation. It should be understood that the candidate is expected actually to rehearse the choir and not just lead them through the pieces. Mistakes should be corrected on the spot and elements of interpretation dealt with. The pieces should be approached with a thorough knowledge of their structure and proper performance practices applied. Such assurance on the part of the candidate will undoubtedly do much to establish convincing rapport with the singers. It would certainly be advisable to perform the pieces with one's own choir several times before the exam, if at

all possible.

Ch2 asks for the harmonization of a melody using primary chords. A general knowledge of diatonic harmony which can be applied to the keyboard is here quite essential. Before harmonizing the melody, the candidate should mentally scan the melody deciding upon the chords and also which notes should be treated as non-essential material. The playing of cadences and the reading of a hymn tune should cause little difficulty.

In Section 2, Ch3 tests the candidate's knowledge of theory through analysis of a short piece of music or a harmonization. Recently this question has taken the form of the analysis of a hymn tune. The hymn often contains modulations and chromatically altered chords so that a good background in harmony is needed. Embellishing tones often play an important role in this analysis.

Ch4's question on Gregorian chant often causes problems for many candidates. One must understand the ecclesiastical modes, including their structure, names, finals and dominants. Candidates must be able to read Gregorian notation in order to transcribe the example from Gregorian into modern notation as well as answer the related questions. In the past, the *Liber Usualis* has been the usual source for all this material. For some time this volume has been out of print and unavailable. If it cannot be obtained from a library, the candidate is referred to an excellent article published in THE AMERICAN ORGANIST (April 1981, p. 45) by Theodore Marier entitled "Gregorian Chant Notation." This article, if carefully studied, should provide the necessary material for answering this question.

Ch5, questions on liturgy and other contemporary liturgical trends and composers who are attempting to fill new musical requirements, seems to be where candidates need the most help. It would be helpful if the candidate carefully examined a new prayer or service book of at least one, and preferably several, of the major liturgical denominations (i.e., Episcopal, Lutheran, Roman Catholic) and made a comparison with a previous edition. Candidates should have some acquaintance with the newer translations of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), especially those relating to the musical portions of the mass and canticles. The position of these items in a par-

ticular liturgy should also be kept in mind. Some knowledge of musical settings of these portions would also seem desirable. Any general trends or liturgical procedures common to several denominations should not be overlooked, nor should any rubrics which pertain to music.

Ch6. For the general historical questions there is little substitute for a good background in the history of music. Although many of the questions are of a general nature, there are almost always some which deal with choral music and more especially, sacred choral music. Identification of choral works and composers requires a general knowledge of the larger choral works of all periods. The candidate might find it useful to make a survey of such choral works and compile a list for study and ready reference. The questions on choir training deal mainly with choral techniques, choir organization and the structure of choral music. It is perhaps here that the sum total of one's study and experience is called upon.

Ch7, Ear Tests. It would seem obvious that one who considers himself a competent choirmaster should be able to acutely hear every detail of the music he is creating. There are two ear tests in the Choir Master exam. The first consists of writing down a short passage of two-part music after hearing it four times. This may be either treble or bass clef. For the second test the candidate is given a copy of a passage in hymn tune style. This is played by the examiner with some deliberate wrong notes. Candidates are required to identify the intentional alterations by circling them on the examination paper. It is suggested that in this test the candidate pay particular attention to the position of the inner parts.

As an added guide for future candidates, it is expected that solutions to the Choir Master exam will be incorporated into the published Examination Booklet this year for the first time. This should be available immediately after the 1982 exams. The books specified by ChM in the Book List included with the exam requirements are all excellent and should be read as a regular part of the candidate's preparation.

ROBERT L. MAHAFFEY
AGO Examination Committee

AGO COLLEAGUE EXAMINATION THEORY—COMPOSITION

Some have asked why it is necessary for a candidate to supply chords for a folk-style melody. Is this a part of service routine? For many of our members, the answer must be an emphatic yes, at least on an occasional basis. More churches are depending on homemade liturgy books and hymnals to supplement or replace official published hymnals. Certain publishing firms have sold large quantities of paperback folk-hymn collections with little more than guitar symbols for harmonic indications. These symbols are not always in the same key as the notated melody. An attempt to simulate some of this material is made by including a rather simple melody of this type in the examinations. In the relative seclusion of a room provided for thirty minutes, how can one arrive at a solution quickly?

Certain assumptions are made by the Examination Committee, and should be by the candidate. The ability to play primary chords with inversions (I-IV-V), and dominant seventh types (sometimes occurring on other than the fifth degree of the scale) is expected in the easier keys. If the candidate is not facile with them, this is where practice can begin. A misunderstanding arises over the permissive rubric that the "candidate is to play these [melodies, accompanied] at the organ, using his notes if desired." One person wrote that thirty minutes was insufficient time to write an accompaniment. Such is not the intent. "Notes" may mean something akin to guitar symbols, standard theory nomenclature, or the candidate's own self-helps. Examine Example 1.

Example 1.

(to B minor)

(to G major)

As has been often stated, the Colleague examination is still evolving. Although this is also true of the other examinations—continual review and updating is always desirable—the Colleague exam, as the latest addition to the family, will in early stages be most susceptible to suggestions from many sources in an effort to make it a useful tool in examining those things which many feel are desirable attributes in the non-academically minded, but nevertheless competent, church organist. Demands on a player have greatly increased in variety in the renewed church. This examination should include elements on the non-traditional, as well as the more common expectations of the service accompanist. The ability to play a

limited repertoire, to arrange accompaniments for organ from those frequently found in vocal scores for piano, to play hymns—these are usual obligations. Many have little trouble with them. It is Part 3, Theory-Composition, containing as it does some unusual demands on musicianship, which is less routine than the rest. The exact questions and material to be tested in the Colleague exam, *excepting* Part 3, can be prepared as much as one year in advance. Part 3 must be prepared, however, *thirty minutes in advance*. Correspondence would indicate it to be the most misunderstood part.

Actually, this is a little harder than those given to date. (See p. 4 for ordering past examinations, solutions and requirement sheets.) The melody divides into four phrases, each with a definable cadence implying different key centers. Some candidates in the past have never taken modulation into consideration. G major, B minor, G major, and again G major, are the cadence keys in that order. With practice, thoughtful decisions of that sort can be made in not more than two readings of the melody. In modulating, the mere holding of a chord in a new key does not constitute a key change; to the contrary, it must be confirmed by some activity within the new key, notably by introducing a dominant function. At the *second* cadence (measure 8) the final B-minor chord should be preceded by its dominant function; a major triad on F-sharp (with a 7th). Play this V⁷ to i in B minor until thoroughly used to the feel and sound. Your pencilled notes could read F#⁷, or V⁷, or the like. Even those possessing an elementary knowledge of theory have heard of the cadential I₆—this could be played at the beginning of the cadence measure, before the melodic A#, with its dominant already discussed.

Re-examination of the melody will reveal certain contours or figures implying harmonies. Keep in mind that harmonic movement of folk melodies is likely to be slow (meaning: do not change the harmony on every beat), as contrasted with hymns. Remembering that alternate analyses are possible, the following is suggested: Measure 1, beat 3, D-C in melody implies a brief V⁷; measure 2,

melody outlines G major, tonic triad; measure 3, beats 1 and 2 imply A minor, beat 3 implies D⁷, or ii to V; measures 4 and 5, tonic chord; measure 6, possibly E minor serving as a common chord in modulation (vi in G major, iv in B minor); to the cadence in B minor already described. Measure 9, the melody outlines an E⁷ chord (C is non-harmonic); measure 10, on A minor; measure 11 on D⁷, which will be recognized as VI⁷-ii-V⁷. Using this method, it should not be hard to continue to the end.

Cumbersome and time-consuming to explain and read, it is easy to do; practice should reduce the time for one of these to about five minutes. An example of what a candidate's rough notes might look like may be found as Example 2. It is workable

Example 2.

G V⁷ G ii V⁷ I
(a) (D)

E minor B minor

E⁷ A minor D⁷ (V⁷)

D⁷ I ii V⁷

and usable; is this not all that matters? Accompaniment patterns may be drawn from the Frackenhohl test from the requirement sheet's recommended book list, along with further practice in this idiom. Do not be awestruck by the title to this section—Theory-Composition. "Keyboard Skills" would be more accurate. The skills described herein are those we have all seen certain friends exercise in party surroundings when asked to accompany group singing. Perhaps the candidate has done it, and not realized it was a transferable ability.

HARRY WILKINSON, Chairman
AGO Committee on Examinations

CAGO BRIDGES

What the new Colleague requirement option on modulation does is legitimize, recognize and give value to the lowly bridge: something most of us use, at one point or another in service playing, every week. Question C8b says: "In a passage of approximately 30 seconds' length, provide a bridge or modulatory passage between two hymns (in different keys) from the *Examination Hymn Booklet*. The hymns will be specified on the examination sheet." Twenty minutes are allowed for C6, C7 and C8 taken together—the candidate may use notes if desired.

It is impossible to say, in any exact sense, how one should build a bridge, and the examiners will not be able to foresee what approach you choose to use. There is little of the "ought to" involved—except getting from the one key to the other in a musical manner. Let us consider, though, some possible options.

First, without using a stopwatch, how long is 30 seconds? The "approximately" in the requirement is intentional. Let us note that at a metronome marking of 60, 30 seconds will give us $7\frac{1}{2}$ bars of 4/4 time. This gives us, for planning, a rough idea that eight bars at a quite slow tempo are sufficient, while 16 bars or more at a relatively faster tempo, for bars with fewer beats, will be found normative, roughly the length of an average hymn tune.

Perhaps the old bridal jingle gives us the best clue of what we might aim for: "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue." Omitting the blue, we might have: (a) themes or phrases from both the first hymn tune and the second; (b) phrases or motives from either the first or second alone; or (c) neither of the above, but using free, new material. Theoretically, the options are in a hierarchical order of preference, but in practice that may become more questionable (especially in 30 seconds) because of irreconcilable stylistic problems, rate of harmonic flow, metric variants and so forth.

One of the advantages of selecting this option is that you are able to plan and work with a known, limited body of musical material well in advance—everything being taken from the *Examination Hymn Booklet*. This gives you plenty of time before you get to the examination center to mark phrases and motives (rhythmic and melodic) which may be utilized. Within the 15 hymns, you will find only eight keys used, and five metric possibilities: 4/4 (4/2); 3/4 (3/2); 6/4; 9/8; and free rhythms. Everything you do to increase your skills will have practical application for service playing.

Let us try, for example, to bridge the hymns on pages 1 and 2: *Aberystwyth* and *Assurance*. (Note that all page numbers and titles refer to the *American Guild of Organists Examination Hymn Booklet*, available free of charge from AGO National Headquarters, 815 Second Avenue, Suite 318, New York, NY 10017.) We will see how economical (unoriginal) we can be. Following the cardinal rule for modulation, which is to place the tonic chord you are leaving mentally into the key at which you wish to arrive (e.g., from F[♯] major to C major, the F[♯]-major chord should be thought of as a raised fourth degree in the key of C), we will see that we are already on the supertonic. Thus our harmonic connection will be easy. But, what of the rhythmic problem: 4/2 to 9/8? Let's have some fun. We'll convert *Aberystwyth* into a 6/8. It will make it more interesting and say to the listener, "This is the same, but going somewhere."

Example 1: *Aberystwyth* to *Assurance*

The first two lines of *Aberystwyth* are quoted almost literally with the meter changed. The first bar, motive a, is used for making the actual transition from E minor to D major by way of a secondary dominant leading right into the third line of *Assurance*. The refrain of *Assurance* is quoted, but abridged somewhat. We may note several times, in this and the following examples, a sort of visual jar between notational styles and actual tactus. By that I mean that a 6/4 would have "read" better for the first half of the bridge coming after *Aberystwyth's* 4/2 notation, but the 6/8 meshes better with the 9/8 of the second half. We really need not worry too much about that, since these written meters are the opposite of children—meant to be heard and not seen.

A different sort of problem will be met if we try joining *Christ Receiveth Sinful Men* and *Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein*. The Sunday School style and the chorale's stateliness seem unmixable. Our keys are a half-step apart. Let us plan to move from the D major to the minor subdominant, G minor, and from there to C minor (VI of E^b) and we're there.

Example 2: *Christ Receiveth Sinful Men* to *Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein*

The first two bars of the refrain from *Christ Receiveth Sinful Men* are used to lead us in. From *Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein* we have borrowed the last two bars of the second line, transposed them to G minor, slowed the harmonic rhythm to keep it more in line with our opening style. Then by picking up *Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein* just as it is, at the second half of the second line (minus the final E-natural), we are able to slow into the last two lines of the chorale.

The idea of trying to bridge the Black spiritual, *Let Us Break Bread*, to *Pange lingua gloriosi* seems not to yield to the approaches we have used so far. It is fortunate that the plainsong has no characteristic, identifying harmony—just melodic ideas. Let us borrow the opening line twice, and close with the final line. Taking the first line of the plainsong melody, it outlines melodically an A-minor seventh-chord except for the F and D. We can glue that on ad lib at the phrase endings of the spiritual as a cadential extension.

Example 3: *Let Us Break Bread to Pange lingua gloriosi*MAX MILLER
AGO Examination Committee

For further treatment of bridges between hymns, see Corliss Arnold's "CAGO Study Guidelines" and Max Miller's article "A First Step in Keyboard Modulation," THE AMERICAN ORGANIST, October 1982.

WALTER HILSE

The musical score consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'Sw:' and 'Teadly'. The second system is marked 'Sw:'. The third system is marked 'p. Solo.' and 'Teadly'. The fourth system is marked 'p.' and 'Piu Mos.to'. The score shows a modulation from G common to E-flat harmony and C-major chord.

The first phrase of the spiritual is quoted, then the first phrase of the plainsong. The modulation, such as it is, is made by reusing the G common to the E-flat harmony and the C-major chord. It works, and we may exploit the organ's resources along the way by using a strongly characteristic solo stop. Again we observe that the underlying pulse of the spiritual is for a half note, necessitating quarter notes for the plainsong, giving a paper appearance that we may not quite like!

For a last example let us take *When the Treetops Whisper* and use it to lead us to *How Great Thou Art*. *When the Treetops Whisper* is such a simple, lovely folk tune that we will want to preserve its simplicity. The first phrase has a handy pedal on D. From D minor to B^b we can circle fifths, d-g-C-F, ending on V of B^b. The second line is a transposition of the first, while the third and the fourth lines borrow from the fourth phrase of the tune. The original form is preserved. Of course, it could equally well end on the tonic of B^b with a clean break before *How Great Thou Art*.

Example 4: *When the Treetops Whisper* to *How Great Thou Art*

The musical score consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'p.' and 'And.te'. The second system is marked 'p.'. The third system is marked 'p.'. The fourth system is marked 'mf.' and 'Grazioso'. The fifth system is marked 'mf.'. The sixth system is marked 'mf.' and 'do alternate ending:'. The score shows a modulation from D minor to B-flat major.

Countless other possibilities are there, waiting for us to bring them to life.

Two Recent Additions to *Preparing for AGO EXAMS*

Regular Countersubjects in Fugue – Walter Hilse

The Fugal Answer – Walter Hilse

REGULAR COUNTERSUBJECTS IN FUGUE

Walter Hilse, FAGO

Ex. 1a.

Musical notation for Ex. 1a. The top staff shows an answer in treble clef, and the bottom staff shows a regular countersubject in bass clef. Both are in 3/4 time and G major. The answer begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and a half note D5. The regular countersubject begins with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, C4, and a half note D4.

Ex. 1b.

Musical notation for Ex. 1b. The top staff shows a regular countersubject in treble clef, and the bottom staff shows a third entry of the subject in bass clef. Both are in 3/4 time and G major. The regular countersubject begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and a half note D5. The third entry of the subject begins with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, C4, and a half note D4.

Ex. 2.

Musical notation for Ex. 2. The top staff shows an initial tonal adjustment in answer in treble clef, a regular countersubject in treble clef, and a third entry of subject in bass clef. The bottom staff shows a third entry of subject in bass clef. Both are in 4/4 time and G major. The initial tonal adjustment in answer begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and a half note D5. The regular countersubject begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and a half note D5. The third entry of the subject begins with a half note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, C4, and a half note D4.

THIS ARTICLE is designed to be a sequel to my essay, "The Fugal Answer," found in the April 2006 issue of TAO. Refer back to that article for definitions of, and discussions on, "tonal" and "real" answers and "initial" and "terminal" tonal adjustments (and please correct the unfortunate musical typo in Example 1 of that article: the clef of the lower system should be a transposed tenor clef, not a bass clef!). If you do not have access to this article, please refer to a standard text on fugal composition. I will, however, restate the definitions of "initial" and "terminal" tonal adjustments here. In a fugal answer, an "initial" tonal adjustment is the alteration of one or more pitches near the beginning of the fugue subject to highlight the relationship between the tonic and dominant pitches in the home scale, and/or the keys built on those pitches; in the answer of a fugue with a modulating subject, a "terminal" tonal adjustment is a pitch adjustment, gen-

erally toward the end of the subject, designed to steer the answer back to the tonic key (after it had commenced in the dominant).

A "countersubject" is, as the word suggests, a melodic idea—any melodic idea, whether or not it recurs—which appears as a counterpoint to the subject of a fugue. A countersubject is "regular" if, after being introduced during the second statement of the subject (i.e., the answer), it reappears during all subsequent subject entries in the exposition section of the fugue, and during a clear majority of later statements (not necessarily every statement) of the subject. It acts, in effect, like a steady companion or shadow of the subject. In the exposition, it always will appear in the voice that had just stated the subject previously. Thus, Voice 1 will present the regular countersubject while Voice 2 states the subject; Voice 2 will then present the regular countersubject while Voice 3 states the subject; if there is a fourth voice,

Voice 3 will present the regular countersubject while Voice 4 states the subject; etc.

A regular countersubject, in order to be a law-abiding element in the polyphonic fabric, must obey all traditional rules of counterpoint (the 18th-century variety, since we look, above all, to Bach's fugues as models): parallel octaves, fifths, and unisons with the subject (or any other voice) must be eschewed, dissonances properly prepared and resolved according to late-Baroque guidelines, and the total range covered by the melody should be modest, generally not exceeding a twelfth. To enjoy a profile sufficiently independent of the fugue subject, the countersubject should offer significant contrast to the subject in matters such as rhythms featured, pitch contour, and melodic interval content. More often than not, it should run in contrary or oblique motion relative to the subject. While not necessarily as distinctive or memorable a melodic

Ex. 3a.

answer

initial tonal adjustment in answer

regular countersubject

Ex. 3b.

regular countersubject

third entry of subject

Ex. 4a.

regular countersubject

answer

splice point in subject

Ex. 4b.

regular countersubject

splice point in countersubject

third entry of subject

conception as the subject, it should nonetheless be easily recognizable. In addition, since, during the course of the fugue, the regular countersubject will inevitably have occasion to appear both above and below the subject, it must obey the traditional laws of double (“invertible”) counterpoint, in order to behave acceptably in both vertical arrangements. Thirds, sixths, octaves, unisons, and their octave compounds may be employed as consonances as always, since their intervallic inversions within the octave are also consonant; seconds, sevenths, ninths, diminished and augmented intervals, and their octave compounds can also be used, as long as they follow traditional behavior as dissonances (i.e., are properly prepared and resolved). Perfect fifths, on the other hand, must be avoided, unless prepared and resolved as if they were *dissonances*, since their inversions are fourths—dissonances in 18th-century language. (Please note: I am re-

stricting my discussion to double counterpoint *at the octave*, which is only one, though by far the most common, of three traditional species of double counterpoint. The other two species, double counterpoint at the twelfth and at the tenth, are rarely found in fugues—Fugues 9 and 10 of Bach’s *The Art of Fugue* are notable exceptions. In those other two species of double counterpoint, different vertical intervals must be avoided or given special care.)

If the answer to a fugue subject is “real,” rather than “tonal,” finding the correct form of a regular countersubject in its later appearances poses no problem. It will simply be an exact transposition of its original form:

See Example 1a and 1b

Since the regular countersubject is first encountered during the second presentation of the subject, it will usually be mainly in the

dominant key area at that point. The next appearance of the regular countersubject will, however, be back in the tonic key, during the time the third voice has its crack at the subject. Thus, the second presentation of the regular countersubject will essentially be a transposition of the first presentation down a fifth or up a fourth.

If the fugue subject is non-modulating, but its answer contains an initial tonal adjustment (cf. my April 2006 article), an exact transposition of the first presentation of the countersubject down a fifth or up a fourth still usually fills the bill. A survey of regular countersubjects in Bach’s *Well-tempered Clavier* reveals, surprisingly, that many of them do not begin their pattern of recurrence until at least one beat after the start of the subject. (Note, for example, the regular countersubject in Example 1 above.) In the pattern of recurrence, the most important aspect of the relationship between the two voices is

apparently not how they begin but rather their interaction as the cadence at the end of the subject is approached. Since most initial tonal adjustments involve only the first or second note of the subject, these adjustments are therefore often completed before the countersubject begins. Consider, for example, the second and third entries in the *Fugue in C-sharp Major*, Book I:

See Example 2

In other cases of initial tonal adjustments, Bach finds it possible to preserve an exact transposition of the regular countersubject even though there is an overlap between the beginning of the countersubject (i.e., its pattern of recurrence) and the initial tonal adjustment: this can happen if a note in the countersubject on an important part of a beat functions as a consonance in the first appearance of the countersubject, then as a properly behaving dissonance in the next appearance (or vice versa). Consider, in the following example, the 16th note appearing in the countersubject against the fourth note of the subject:

See Example 3a and 3b

It is a sixth in its first appearance, but a ninth (accented passing tone) in the next. If the fugue subject modulates to the dominant key, then things tend to be a bit more

complicated. The regular countersubject usually must undergo a tonal adjustment corresponding to the terminal tonal adjustment found in the answer. (An exception occurs when the terminal adjustment is very early in the subject—e.g., in the *Fugue in G-sharp Minor*, *Well-tempered Clavier*, Book I—in which case the situation is similar to a quickly executed initial adjustment.) Fitted to the tonal-answer form of the subject in its first appearance, the regular countersubject must now be fitted to the *original* form of the subject. To accomplish this, one must look for a “splice-point” in the countersubject coinciding (or almost coinciding) with the splice-point in the answer. At the splice-point you have chosen, begin to state all subsequent pitches *one scale-step higher* than they would have been in an exact transposition, in order to wind up in the dominant key (as the subject does in its third entry) rather than the subdominant:

See Example 4a and 4b

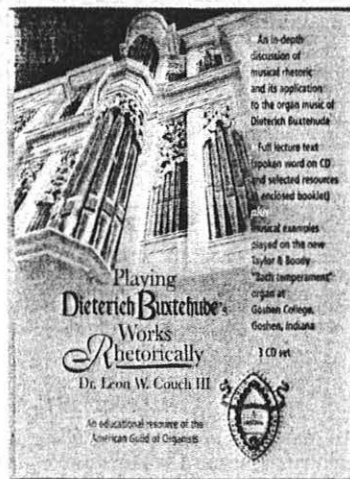
Regular countersubjects are not found in all fugues—in fact, among the 48 fugues of the two books of the *Well-tempered Clavier*, over 20 (i.e., close to 50%) do not have them. While an attractive regular countersubject is often a major asset for a fugue, the absence of one is not necessarily a shortcoming, and indeed, some of Bach’s most masterly fugues do not have them.

In particular, regular countersubjects tend not to be found in fugues in which “special tricks” such as stretto, augmentation, and melodic inversion are extensively featured, because the implementation of these devices deprives the countersubject of the contrapuntal space needed for its presentation, or else alters the rhythmic or harmonic environment of the subject, making survival of the countersubject impossible. Also, double and triple fugues almost never possess regular countersubjects, because the second (and third) subjects themselves function, in effect, as glorified regular countersubjects when combined with the opening subject. One beautiful exception is the *Fugue in F Major* for organ (from the *Tocatta and Fugue in F Major*), a double fugue that does offer a regular countersubject to its opening subject for all instances where it is not combined with the second subject, though it then yields the stage when the two main subjects are combined.

Since a regular countersubject is clearly not a universal requirement for successful fugue writing, it may well be asked why it has become such a hard-and-fast tradition to ask for one on the fugue questions of the Guild’s advanced certification examinations. Our response must surely be that it is because this requirement tests, in admirably short space, the candidate’s grasp and mastery of so many fundamental contrapuntal and harmonic aspects of our tonal language.

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THE FUGAL ANSWER

Walter Hulse, FAGO

IN FUGAL writing, the “answer” is the presentation of the fuge subject by the second voice to enter. The answer is “real” if this presentation is an exact transposition of the statement by the opening voice (every note a fifth upward or a fourth downward from the original), “tonal” if not exact. In traditional fugal writing, there are two principal types of tonal adjustment that may occur in the answer—one near the beginning of the subject (I will call this kind of adjustment “initial”), one later on (I will call this kind “terminal”). We will look at these in turn.

The diatonic scales, upon which the church modes as well as our modern major-minor tonal system are based, have an uneven number of pitches (pitch-classes) per octave: seven. This has had manifold consequences for Western music, one of the most important being that no pitch in a diatonic scale will divide an octave equally. A choice must always be made between a note significantly below the midpoint of the octave (the subdominant degree) and one significantly above (the dominant). The overtone series given us by Nature, with its array of ever-decreasing interval sizes between successive partials as we ascend, inevitably militated in favor of the dominant as the principal dividing note of the octave—witness 12th-century organum and the 13th-century motet. Triadic language, operating in both the melodic and harmonic dimensions, became prevalent by the later 15th century, and gave a further boost to the fifth scale degree, since that degree (and not the fourth degree) is a member of the tonic triad.

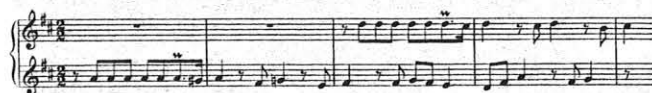
By the 16th century, vocal polyphony generally settled on densities of four to six voices. Each voice had, roughly speaking, a half-octave to call its own turf—with neighboring voices to either side—and thus would most often imitate neighboring voices at the fourth or fifth. Already in this repertory we frequently see “tonal” adjustments in points of imitation. As in Baroque fugues, the objective apparently was to translate the two most important tones of the scale—tonic and dominant—into each other, thereby reinforcing the home tonality and its principal sonority. In the following example, the four-note motifs introduced by the two entering voices are not treated as *different* melodies (because of the differences in melodic interval), but as variants of the *same* melodic idea, and are interpreted by us as such:

Ex. 1. Byrd, *Look downe, O Lord*



By the late 17th century, fugal expositions regularly featured “initial” tonal adjustments. While the answer as a whole would be a transposition of the subject up a fifth or down a fourth, a dominant degree found early in the opening statement of the subject would usually become the tonic degree (rather than the supertonic) in the answer. Often melodic neighboring notes surrounding that dominant note in the subject would be adjusted as well, to preserve melodic identity and elegance:

Ex. 2. Buxtehude, *Praeludium in D*

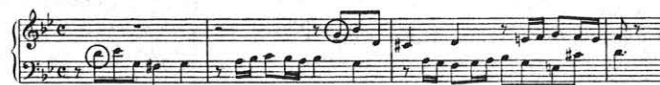


(Tonal adjustment involves the first eight pitches here.)

In the above example from Buxtehude, you may note that the answer is “harmonized” by the continuing opening voice with the opening tonic key in mind: there is no hint of a modulation to the dominant key of A major. Lack of a genuine modulation to V in the answer was still the case more often than not at that time. All that would change in the next generation—particularly in the fugues of J.S. Bach. Eighteenth-century harmony was gradually moving in the direction of the idea of tonal dichotomy—two keys vying with each other for supremacy throughout a movement—a concept that was to receive its ultimate expression in the classical “sonata-allegro”

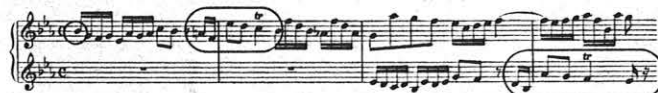
form. In the first two entries of a Bach fugue subject, we usually see this competition between tonic and dominant played out in microcosm. Not only is there a balancing act between the tonic and dominant *degrees* of the tonic scale (along with the triads based on those degrees), but also a contest between the rival *keys* based on these tonic and dominant notes. If the subject stays in the home key throughout (as most subjects do), ending with a melodic progression suggesting a V–I cadence in the tonic key, the answer will, to a large extent, be harmonized *in the key of V*, a mini-modulation to that key having taken place. (The third voice to enter will present the subject an octave higher or lower than the opening voice had, back in the home key of I. A fourth voice, if there is one, would again present the answer form of the subject, an octave higher or lower than the second voice, once more largely in V.) Within the context of this tension between keys, an “initial” tonal adjustment in the answer—in the form of the substitution of the tonic degree of the original scale for the supertonic—represents a subtle tipping of the scales in favor of the tonic key from the outset, foreshadowing the eventual outcome of this key struggle, which is *always* a victory for I! Harmonically, the “initial” adjustment also facilitates the ensuing modulation to the dominant key, by permitting the same harmony—I of I, which will now be reinterpreted as IV of V—to serve as a pivot chord:

Ex. 3. Bach, Fugue in G Minor, *Well-tempered Clavier*, Book I



If, on the other hand, the subject modulates within itself from the original tonic key to the dominant key, ending with a cadential V–I gesture in the latter, a different sort of tonal adjustment (which I call “terminal”) is needed in the latter stages of the answer, in order to steer that answer back to I. (A “real” answer to a modulating subject would lead us to the key of the supertonic at its end, thereby initiating a potential open-ended spiral of keys up the circle of fifths, further and further away from the original tonic!) This “terminal” adjustment consists of moving the latter stages of the answer one scale-degree downward—relative to the level on which the answer had begun—starting at some melodically congenial point. How to find such a congenial point? There is, alas, no ready, hard-and-fast formula here, but in order not to disfigure the subject, it is best to look for a caesura or natural “splice-point” in the melody. Two illustrations follow from Bach’s *Well-tempered Clavier*:

Ex. 4. Bach, Fugue in E-flat Major, *Well-tempered Clavier*, Book I



Ex. 5. Bach, Fugue in G-sharp Minor, *Well-tempered Clavier*, Book I



(“Terminal” adjustment starts on second note!)

I will now propose a relatively straightforward, systematic procedure to determine an answer to a fuge subject, based on the concepts outlined above. On a piece of scrap paper, write the subject in its original form on one staff. On the staff directly underneath, write an exact transposition of the subject up a perfect fifth or down a perfect fourth. Line up corresponding notes of these two versions carefully on top of each other. The latter version, which I shall call “Transposition A,” constitutes a real answer to this subject; and if the subject stays in the tonic key and there are no prominent dominant notes early in the subject, this real answer will be the appropriate one. If, however, there is a prominent dominant note early in the subject (or more than one such), and/or the subject modulates within itself to the dominant key, write a second transposed version of the subject (“Transposition B”) on the staff directly below Transposition A—this one up a perfect fourth or down a perfect fifth. The tonal answer we seek will be a combination of notes from Transpositions A and B—and *only* from these two transposed versions, except for possible chromatic changes.

If there, indeed, is a prominent dominant pitch early in the subject, consider the pitches corresponding to this note in Transpositions A and B: We find the supertonic degree of the home scale in Transposition A, the tonic degree of the home scale in Transposition B. Clearly, we should opt for Transposition B here. Furthermore, adjoining notes should be taken from Transposition B insofar as melodic beauty or integrity suggests that this is desirable. The remaining notes of the answer should, on the other hand, follow Transposition A:

Ex. 6. Bach, Fugue in C Minor, Well-tempered Clavier, Book I

The musical notation for Ex. 6 consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Subject' and shows a melodic line in C minor. The middle staff is labeled 'Trans. A' and shows the subject transposed to the supertonic (D-flat major), with a circled section indicating a splice-point. The bottom staff is labeled 'Trans. B' and shows the subject transposed to the tonic (C minor). Arrows indicate the flow of notes from Trans. A to Trans. B.

(As you can see, the entire answer is from Trans. A, except for one note.)

If the subject modulates within itself to the dominant key, Transposition B will offer the suitable ending to the answer, since this version will cadence in the tonic key (rather than the supertonic). The earlier part of the answer is usually best obtained from Transposition A, however, since we do want a taste of the dominant key at that time (except for a possible "initial" tonal adjustment). To find a melodically congenial spot to transfer from Transposition A to Transposition B, go back carefully from the final cadence as far as necessary. The "splice-point" you choose constitutes the desired "terminal" tonal adjustment:

Ex. 7. From a recent AAGO exam

The musical notation for Ex. 7 consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Subject' and shows a melodic line in a key with one flat. The middle staff is labeled 'Trans. A' and shows the subject transposed to the supertonic, with a circled section indicating a splice-point. The bottom staff is labeled 'Trans. B' and shows the subject transposed to the tonic. Arrows indicate the flow of notes from Trans. A to Trans. B.

(The "initial" adjustment involves the first note; the "terminal" adjustment the last two notes.)

A few concluding thoughts and observations

1. As seen in the answer to Bach's *G-sharp-minor Fugue, Well-tempered Clavier*, Book One (Ex. 5 above), the "terminal" adjustment may occasionally occur *very* early in the subject, in which case a substantial part of the answer may subside in the subdominant key, before modulating to the tonic key.

2. Occasionally a sharped or flatted version of a pitch from Transposition A or B may be chosen, because of harmonic considerations. Bach regularly permitted himself to make chromatic changes while operating within contrapuntal constraints (not only in the realm of statements of fugue subjects but in canons and quotations of *cantus firmi*). Thus, for example, in the *Fugue in B-flat Minor, Well-tempered Clavier*, Book Two, we note the A-naturals at the end of the answer, responding to the D-flats at the end of the subject.

3. Having delineated procedures for constructing tonal answers that may be regarded as guiding principles in this matter, we must nonetheless acknowledge that Bach himself did not always opt for the "initial" tonal adjustment where the above remarks suggest that he should have. (In fact, Herr Bach broke every would-be "rule" at one time or another!) In the popular "*Little Fugue in G Minor*, for example, he obviously deemed the preservation of the triad, as outlined by the first three pitches, to be more important than the need for an "initial" adjustment.

4. Finally, the remarkable fact remains that we *all* (I am not aware of any dissenter) regard the subject of a fugue and aptly adjusted answer thereto to be essentially the *same* melodic idea. We actually identify one with the other. In learning fugues from the *Well-tempered Clavier* or any of Bach's organ fugues, how often have we even paused to acknowledge that the melodic interval content of the answer may differ from that of the subject? This all but automatic identification of one form of the subject with another is, above all, an eloquent testimony to the overriding importance of the tonic-dominant relationship in our traditional tonal system—first of the two scale degrees pure and simple, then the two triads generated by these degrees, and finally the two keys based on them.



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