

thermore, one becomes accustomed to giving each piece its proper expression, since each kind of dance melody has its own characteristic measure and note values.<sup>11</sup>

Kirnberger's instructions, written almost 100 years after the publication of the masses, indicate that familiarity with Baroque dances had already disappeared among many musicians. How much more difficult, then, is it for modern performers two centuries removed from Kirnberger to "give each piece its proper expression"? Meredith Ellis Little suggests that:

The rhythmic vitality of the music can be heightened if the qualities of the original dance are kept in mind; performers can articulate to form their phrases as if to accompany dancers. . . . Temporal qualities, including metric structure and the rhythmic patterns with their characteristic lengths and points of arrival, may be slightly exaggerated for the sake of clarity. . . .<sup>12</sup>

In Couperin's masses, this rhythmic awareness can be used to preserve the integrity of the basic two-measure step-units of the menuet-like versets, the four-measure phrases of the gavotte-like movements with their important thesis points on beats four and eight, and the stressed second beat of the sarabande-inspired pieces. Knowing the prevalence of hemiola in menuets, sarabandes, and gigue, performers may confidently expect similar appearances of this rhythmic device in dance-related versets.

The difficult question of tempo remains. Space does not permit a discussion of the subject here.<sup>13</sup> Of particular interest to musicians, however, are dance scholar Wendy Hilton's tempo interpretations because they are the result of a working knowledge of French Baroque dance choreography.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately musicians must cultivate a knowledge of the characteristics of each dance-type as well as an understanding of the physical association between dance and music—what Couperin and his contemporaries would have called *sensibilité*.

## NOTES

1. A thorough discussion of this topic may be found in Chapter 1 of the author's DMA dissertation, "Seventeenth-Century Dance Characteristics in the Organ Masses of François Couperin (1668–1733)" (University of Kansas, 1985).
2. Wendy Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theatre: The French Noble Style 1690–1725* (Princeton: Princeton Book Company, 1981), pp. 212–45.
3. Almonte C. Howell Jr., *The French Organ Mass in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1958), pp. 80–106.
4. Pierre Rameau, *Le maître à danser* (Paris: n.p., 1725; trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, London: C.W. Beaumont, 1931), pp. 52, 55.
5. Hughes, "Dance Characteristics," p. 75.
6. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Sarabande," by Richard Hudson.
7. Meredith Ellis Little, "The Dances of J.B. Lully" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1967), p. 63.
8. James Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau*, rev. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p. 282.
9. See rather Hughes, "Dance Characteristics," Chapters 8 and 9.
10. Other musical influences on Couperin's organ masses are discussed in Chapters 3–9 of the author's dissertation.
11. Newman Powell, "Kirnberger on Dance Rhythms, Fugues, and Characterization," *Festschrift Theodore Hoelty-Nickel* (Valparaiso, Ind.: Valparaiso University Press, 1967), p. 67.
12. Meredith Ellis Little, "The Contribution of Dance Steps to Musical Analysis and Performance: La Bourgogne," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 28:1 (Spring 1975), p. 118.
13. For a summary of metronomic equivalents of 18th-century dance tempi by 20th-century musicologists, see Judith Caswell, "Rhythmic Inequality and Tempo in French Music between 1650 and 1740" (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1973), and Erich Schwandt, "L'Affilard on the French Court Dances," *The Musical Quarterly* 60:3 (July 1974), pp. 389–400.
14. Hilton, *Dance*, p. 266.

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## THE NEW ORGANIST HYMN-BASED IMPROVISATIONS

Margot Ann Greenlimb Woolard, AAGO

Have you ever needed a prelude based on the hymn of the day or one to fit a family's request for a funeral and found you had no suitable music on hand? Are you hard-pressed to learn a sufficient variety of music for the weekly service?

The purpose of this article is to suggest some solutions to these problems and to stimulate your imagination to discover others. The following ideas can be used to improvise a prelude on hymns, as well as to provide some alternative ways of hymn playing. They are not really intended for congregational singing, however, although it is possible to adapt them to fit that situation.

An improvised prelude on the hymn "Children of the heavenly Father" (Tryggare kan ingen vara), might follow this plan.

**Stanza 1, solo melody:** Use the chimes, an oboe, or an 8' flute.

**Stanza 2, two parts:** Play the bass and soprano lines on one keyboard (no pedals), perhaps with 8' and 4' flutes, or the principal/diapason 8'.

**Stanza 3, in minor:** To do this easily, simply change the key signature of the hymn in your mind. The key signature for D minor includes a B<sup>b</sup> and the seventh degree of the scale is raised (C<sup>#</sup>). Play the notes exactly as written, only with the new accidentals.

**Interlude:** An interlude between the third and fourth stanzas makes a smoother transition from minor to major. Repeat the last phrase of the hymn in minor but change the final chord to major (D, F<sup>#</sup>, A).

**Stanza 4, hymn as written:** The last stanza is a triumphant one. Use the principals 8', 4', and 2' and play all four parts, either on the keyboard alone or with the pedals, using Principals 16', 8', and 4'.

Consider the possibilities with the hymn "Of the Father's love begotten" (Divinum mysterium). This Christmas hymn is a plain-song melody and adapts well to the following plan.

**Stanza 1, melody alone,** using either an 8' flute played one octave higher, or a 4' flute played as written. (The melody will then sound one octave higher.)

**Stanza 2, melody with a drone bass.** If the hymn is written in E-flat, the drone in the left hand consists of the lowest E<sup>b</sup> and the note a fifth above it (B<sup>b</sup>). Use an 8' flute for the drone. Play the melody on another keyboard at the pitch written, using a Krummhorn 8' or flutes 8' or 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ '.

**Stanza 3, all parts of the hymn as written.** Try the celeste (viola 8', viola celeste 8') on the manuals only, with the swell box closed.

**Final stanza, hymn melody in fourths or fifths over a pedal point.** Hold the lowest E<sup>b</sup> in the pedal (with an 8' flute stop), and play the melody in fourths or fifths on the keyboard. That is, play the melody as written with the right hand. Count down either four or five notes from the melody notes, and play this part with the left hand on the same manual. For example, the first line of the melody is: E<sup>b</sup>, f, g, A<sup>b</sup>, g, f, g, f, E<sup>b</sup>;

a fourth below the melody notes would include: B<sup>b</sup>, c, d, E<sup>b</sup>, d, c, d, c, B<sup>b</sup>. The fourths provide an effect quite suitable to the character of the hymn.

In creating your own preludes you are only limited by your imagination. Let the text be your guide when varying the stanzas. It is a good idea to sketch out your plan, either on the hymn book page or on a separate piece of paper, and then practice it thoroughly and carefully during the preceding week before you play it for worship. This way you will know exactly what to do and you will also be able to save the format for use at a future date.

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