

TWO ADDITIONAL SERVICE PLAYING TEST ANTHEMS

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As Truly as God Is Our Father (William Mathias, 1934–1992). This anthem was commissioned by and first sung for the Friends of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, in 1987, with their patron, England’s Queen Mother, in attendance. The remarkable text is by the 14th-century mystic, Lady Julian of Norwich. After the title the words continue, “so just as truly is he our Mother.”

The interpreter must decide whether the tempos—suggested for performance in the cathedral acoustics of St. Paul’s (Tempo I, “*Slowly and tenderly*,” quarter at c. 66; the change of tempo at m. 51, quarter at c. 76–80; the gradual return to Tempo I at m. 98)—should be slightly adapted for a less resonant room. Maintaining the selected tempos with precision for long stretches involves a major technical challenge. Suggested practice techniques include the use of the metronome, working with a conductor (and choir if possible), singing and counting aloud, and, especially, frequently recording one’s playing of the anthem and checking the tempos.

The introduction, repeated elsewhere, requires left-hand sharing of right-hand chord notes (e.g., the lower E’s in m. 1) and careful treatment of repeated notes in order to achieve a smooth legato. The slurs and *tenuto* marks must be observed throughout as well, not sharply executed, as in Mathias’s anthem, “Lift Up Your Heads, O

Ye Gates” (CAGO, 2000), or in the organ work, *Processional* (CAGO, 1996). Here the slurs are much more subtle and vocal in quality, while providing needed variety of touch. Prepare the first pedal note (m. 7) before starting to play. The organist should mentally shape the initial phrase to the first beat in m. 3, without, however, allowing an *accelerando* to m. 3 or any *ritardando* at all in mm. 4–8 before the men’s choir enters.

Considering the difference in range from the first bars to the tenor and bass choir entry, m. 8, draw only soft, clear 8’ stops on the Swell, starting with the expression pedal closed. Prepare an *mf* Great combination, with the Swell coupled to the Great, and soft 16’ and 8’ stops in the Pedal. The swell box opens about halfway in m. 17, and completely in m. 29, closing in m. 33. Go to the Great at m. 47, adding the Great to Pedal coupler, which is removed in m. 65. The Swell may be increased for the *forte* in m. 82, returning to the initial Swell setting at m. 91, with a return to the Swell in m. 92.

Deciding how to treat the four pauses in the organ part may cause anxiety, particularly at slower tempos. For the exam, the candidate may opt to play the choral parts in those places, moving to the choir part at a convenient time, for instance, on beat one, m. 39, and back to the organ part in m. 47 by adapting the

whole note in the choir part as a quarter note and quarter rest. Since the organist is often asked to play the choir parts in rehearsal, this is good practice.

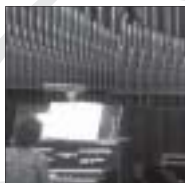
Adam Lay Ybouden from Two Carols (Gerald Near, b. 1942). This delightful setting of an early text (c. 15th century), useful for Lessons and Carols services, includes a handy pronunciation guide. The choir parts feature alternating men’s and women’s choirs, mostly in unison, with some two-part writing and a few chords in four parts (mm. 50, 53). The organ part is vital, providing contrast in dynamics and touch.

There is a tempo misprint in m.12 of the printed version that the composer has corrected (via telephone and with a confirming e-mail). At the opening *Moderato* (Tempo I), the quarter note should be played at about 84 as marked. At Tempo II, m.12, one should *not* also take the quarter at 84 as printed, but at about 120 (“A nice allegro”—Gerald Near).

The registration is a simple scheme, with the manual changes specified by the composer. Begin on the Swell, with mellow but focused 8’ stops, with the expression pedal half closed and the Swell coupled to the Great, set at *mf*, with fuller flutes, strings, and possibly a light 4’ flute. The Pedal requires light, agile 16’ and 8’ stops that speak promptly. The swell opens and closes from m. 8 to m. 11. Increase the swell at m. 12, opening the swell partly at mm. 12–13, and fully at m. 17. Go to the Great at m. 22, adding Great to Pedal, with the right hand if possible, on beat two. The Great to Pedal is removed at the rest in m. 25. The process is repeated in the second half of the anthem. Precision with the choir is important at the tempo changes in the last four measures. The full swell may be added at the *allegro* at m. 54. Observe the Pedal slurs in the last three measures. If the crescendo pedal works smoothly, it can be useful here, especially on the last four accented chords. There is no *ritard* at the end, and the last chord is only an eighth note.

Tempo I, at the beginning and at m. 28, features simple two-part harmony in the manuals over an initial pedal point at the beginning. Notice the pedal hemiola at mm. 28–29. At Tempo II, the manual staccatos should not be played too sharply, but lightly, and with great attention to precision with the Pedal. Observe both eighth rests at mm. 25–26. This piece is perfectly suited for conducting from the console, except on exam day!

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