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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

presents

BRUCE BORDEN STEVENS, Organist

.

HONORS RECITAL

Mein junges Leben hat ein End

Jan P. Sweelinck
(1562-1621)

Sonata in C major (BWV 529)

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor (BWV 542)

Bach

Intermission

Sonata in D minor (Op. 65, No. 6)

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Three pieces for musical clock

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Andantino in F major

Minuet in C major

Presto in C major

Dieu Parmi Nous (from La Nativité du Seigneur)

Olivier Messiaen
(b. 1908)

Cannon Memorial Chapel

May 16, 1969

8:30 P.M.

PHILOSOPHY AND EXPLICATION
OF AN HONORS ORGAN
RECITAL

by

Bruce B. Stevens

Honors Paper

May, 1969

Franz Liszt is credited with the first application of the term "recital" to a performance of solo music: in 1840 he advertized a program of "recitals" of the piano of a number of pieces.¹ Afterwards the word was appropriated for designation of the performance of a whole program, as opposed to the performance of an individual work. This is how it is used today---the performance by one or two performers of a group of solo pieces. *players --- is said to much perform---*

In forming and executing a recital the performer has the responsibility of planning intelligently as well as performing the music in the best manner possible. Among the many preliminary considerations, the purpose and the structure of a recital are theoretical questions to be taken into account, whereas several more practical and specific considerations also demand attention. These latter include several aspects which are peculiar to the nature of the organ recital and which must be given thought by the organist.

The fundamental purpose of an organ recital, and in fact any musical performance, should always be to provide some measure of [entertainment] for the listeners. The element of enjoyment is inseparable from music, especially instrumental music. Aside from this basic function, an organ recital can have several other definite purposes. Education should be one of these. The recitalist can attempt to educate by

*I'd prefer a word like
pleasure or something other than this
one that smacks too much of
commercialism in music -*

demonstrating familiar works in a "new" (often the "old-authentic") way. A completely authentic performance of any organ music written before the present century is usually impossible since such a performance would require the instrument for which the work was written as well as a competent performer with a perfect knowledge of performance practices of the time of composition. However, artistic justice to the intentions of the composer does not necessitate complete authenticity. The impossibility of such authenticity should never be thought to preclude a very possible and often neglected relative-authenticity which can do much toward educating an audience to the way in which a work "should" sound. Another mode of education is to perform unfamiliar works which the recitalist judges worthy of an audience's attention. The repertoire of "standard" organ literature will never grow if organists do not attempt to present much of the excellent unplayed and even unpublished literature to the public. This applies to works written in our own day as well as to the great body of organ music composed in past centuries.

as well as every detail of the composer's intentions which is all but impossible.

In addition to fulfilling these very general and theoretical purposes, a recital can serve in a more specific way to demonstrate the accomplishments of the organist. This purpose is obviously dependent on a practical consideration---the occasion of the recital---and is most valid for student recitals which are held primarily to show the results of study and practice.

A recital can, of course, have several of these purposes

simultaneously, depending largely on the reasons for giving it. It is incumbent upon the organist to formulate these reasons, recognize the consequent aims of the performance, and give due regard to these purposes in selecting the music.

When choosing the pieces to be played, the recitalist must above all maintain his artistic integrity by selecting only works which he deems highly worthwhile. The pieces must first of all be excellent music in his opinion and, secondly, effective and exciting for the audience.~~in the proposed context.~~ In order to be effective, the works must certainly be idiomatic to the organ. "Both the instrument and the music which has been composed for it have inherent limitations. The organ will not play certain styles of composition well, and certain textures and techniques do not sound well when performed on it, because they do not suit its nature."² Three broad techniques are indigenous to organ composition and can often be used as guidelines in judging the appropriateness of a piece: counterpoint, terraced dynamics, and aria-like melody over accompaniment. Besides being good "organ music", the pieces chosen should be suited to the particular instrument at hand. This brings up a great many practical considerations to be discussed later.

It is also imperative that the organist have some definite plan for relating the various works on the program. Too often organ recitals consist of a hodgepodge of pieces and completely lack any semblance of form. Program form may be

a relatively obscure concept, but it should not be overlooked as a forceful means of demonstrating similarities and contrasts of various aspects between different works. The interrelationships and continuities of all organ literature is an idea that is not stressed strongly or frequently enough.

Several schemes could be used to achieve an overall plan for a recital. The program could be a rather comprehensive one of the music of one composer---e.g. and all-Bach recital is certainly a valid idea. A program of music from one style period in one or more countries is a second possibility. A broader plan could be a recital including works from two or three style periods in one or more countries. Lastly a program which gives a sample of music from all the important style periods in one or more countries could fulfill several "recital-purposes". It is possible, perhaps even desirable at times to combine and modify any one of these schemes and still obtain a very precise plan. The important thing is, however, that every recital have such a prethought plan and thus have a degree of order and reason behind it.

Finally, once all the pieces have been selected on the basis of a preconceived purpose and a relational plan, the organist must arrange the pieces in a reasonable order. Of course this process often occurs simultaneously with and even influences the selection since a piece is frequently picked to fit a particular spot on the program. Nevertheless, whether the arranging follows the selection or not, the organist must carry it out with some thought once again to design. Fre -

quently a chronological arrangement covering several style periods is the best method of achieving order. At other times this is tempered or completely superseded by a stylistic arrangement of the works. Certainly they should be ordered stylistically for variety. Often such arrangement is useful for reasons of effect---e.g. begin and end a recital with particular pieces in order to gain attention, set a mood, sum up, impress, etc.

Along with these somewhat theoretical aspects of planning an organ recital go a number of very practical and specific considerations. Perhaps the most immediate consideration in forming a program is the instrument available and its acoustical setting. This is a unique problem for organists. Unlike other instrumentalists who do not carry their own instruments, an organist encounters instruments that are significantly different from each other both in design and in setting. This immense variety must have its effects on both the selection of music and the manner of playing. If such influence is not conceded from the start, compromises in the interpretations of the pieces will be necessary which may often be unfortunate. For example, a Baroque piece may have to sound Romantic if played on a very Romantic organ, and vice versa. This necessity of adapting a program to a particular organ is an important one and should not be ignored.

Several other concrete factors figure directly in structuring an organ recital. The ability of the performer and the time

in which he has to prepare the program is obviously influential. The kind of audience expected, whether it be other organists, other musicians, a college group, young people, a church congregation, etc., should affect the choice of music as well as the purpose of the recital and its relational plan and arrangement. Finally, the occasion of the recital plays an important part in its purpose, selection, and design.

II

The present "Honors Organ Recital" was conceived as part of my honors work for the purpose of demonstrating my accomplishments at the end of four years of study. The occasion is a "student recital", which has a definite influence on the purpose or aim of the program. Aside from demonstrating abilities, this aim is also influenced by the type of audience in attendance---other organ students, other musicians, and non-musician friends. Accordingly, it includes both entertainment and a measure of education in interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar works.

Unlike a senior recital, this recital is composed primarily of music from my past repertoire---not prepared especially for the occasion. Consequently the occasion does play a part in the programming. It and the projected audience also affect the program's structure in another way: since the recital is a comprehensive ~~comprehensive~~ demonstration of my interpretive skills to a rather "enlightened" audience, I decided to form a program which includes a relatively

standard work from each major style period. This serves both to point out my grasp of styles as well as to be instructive to the listeners. Two Bach works are included for several reasons. As the greatest composer for the instrument, he deserves special attention. However, a more practical reason is the desire to perform both a standard "big Bach work" as well as a trio sonata---one of the final tests of an organist's ability. The latter also serves to demonstrate the great master's expansive genius, for with its light, Italianate characteristics, it is diametrically opposed to the massive fantasia and fugue of North German orientation. Finally, the instrument has a direct influence on the programming, for as a typical late-Baroque, North German organ, it is especially suited to Bach. Even the late Renaissance music of the Northern master Sweelinck and the early Classical clock pieces by Haydn work especially well on this instrument: between 1600 and 1750 organs in Europe differed more in resources than in sound quality---in kind and number of stops rather than in sound of pipes.³ Works representative of the Romantic and Modern eras were more difficult to choose since starting about 1800, composers began writing for organs that were drastically different from the Baroque-like Beckerath I am playing. The Mendelssohn work is a happy compromise since it is more "Baroque" in texture than the more typical French Romantic organ music, and yet it is thoroughly Romantic in expression and effect. The Messiaen piece is certainly as representative of this century as possible and is success-

ful on this instrument. The intended tone colors are of course compromised, but less so than with many other modern works. Also the total effect is, I believe, true to the composer's intentions.

In order to point out some currents of connection and relation between the pieces as well as to shape a sketchy development of organ style, I decided to arrange the program as chronologically as possible starting with Sweelinck, one of the fathers and real sources of German organ composition. This is modified by inserting the winsome Haydn pieces between the virtuoso climax of the Mendelssohn and the tremendous outpourings of sound in the Messiaen. This alteration is important to create a light "sound-texture relief" between two massive works. Also the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, though written before the trio sonata, is placed after it in order to end the first half of the program with a flourish.

To gain a definite conception of the formal structure and the unifying factors of a work, one must analyze it by studying its distinctive structural features. This is especially obligatory for the performer in order to play the piece intelligently. Therefore each selection on the recital will be examined from the point of view of structural analysis as well as of historical background for the purpose of gaining a more complete understanding of each work than merely "knowing what it sounds like" affords.

Jan P. Sweelinck (1562-1621) was the son of the organist

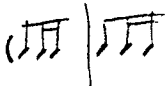
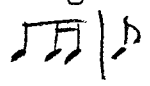
at the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. He succeeded his father there and held the organist's post for 44 years. Despite the stories of his studying with Zarlino in Venice, it is now seriously doubted if he ever left the Low Countries.⁴ He became famous as both a composer and a teacher and has been called the "maker of German organists" for his role in training many important German organists (Scheidt being the most important) who became musical leaders of North Germany in the seventeenth century. Bach and Handel came under the influence of this North German organ school and were thus indirectly influenced by Sweelinck.

With his keyboard music Sweelinck signaled the beginning of the seventeenth century as Monteverdi did in vocal music. His style of harmony is a mixture of the modal system and tonal or "classical" cadences and functions---i.e. it is in a period of transition to major-minor tonality. He had close ties with and was influenced by the music both of the English virginalists such as Bull and of the Italian keyboard composers of the Venetian school. Thus his clavier-organ works are largely a combination of Italian and English keyboard developments. A large number of his keyboard works are variations either on sacred melodies such as chorales or on secular songs and dances. As founder of the chorale variation⁵ he began a form which was later utilized even in the Romantic era by Mendelssohn in his sixth organ sonata.

The secular variations, especially, utilize the figurative techniques of the English virginalists, but the melodies never lose their identities, and the motives are more regular

than those of the virginalists.⁶ The pieces were written as recital pieces to please visitors to the Amsterdam church. Out of the seven sets of variations on secular songs, those on "Mein junges Leben hat ein End" are the best known and "figure among the dozen of the greatest masterworks in this genre."⁷ (!) They are outstanding for musical ingenuity. Sweelinck was a master of detail, not form, and he was unable to fill out large forms with significant content. The variation form afforded him the necessary structure to infuse with imaginative invention. The "Mein junges Leben" variations show an astonishing variety and freshness of ideas coupled with an infectious theme.

This theme, from which the variations derive so much of their melancholy serenity and appeal is based essentially on a descending F major scale. The wavering between the key of F major and the "real tonic" of D minor-major gives the basically unchanging harmonic progressions a most effective modal aspect. Structurally, the piece is a series of six variations each of which increases in motion and intensity, except for the last which functions like a recapitulation of the first in texture and effect. The first variation is simply a harmonization of the melody and sets the pattern for the division of the melody into two parts, each followed by a varied repeat of that part. It also establishes the basic harmonic progressions which are used for the most part in each variation. The second variation is more contrapuntal and flowing, but the tune is still preserved in the soprano

largely in its original form, except for m 38-39 where it moves briefly to the tenor. The cascading figures in the last measures prepare for the running sixteenth notes of the following variations. The third is more of a patterned variation in which the melody, though always present, is buried within ornate figuration. Nevertheless, the harmony is not significantly changed and the harmonic and melodic rhythms are virtually constant. The fourth variation demonstrates Sweelinck's vivid imagination, for it contains four distinct ideas: the "jumping" figure (m 62-65), the chords juxtaposed with running sixteenths (m 66-69), the dotted figure (m 70-71 and modified in m 72-73), and the triplets in m 76-81. Here the melody persists throughout against the same harmonic rhythm, but now its rhythm has been slightly changed in spots to conform to the figuration (e.g. m 67, upbeat). The climax of the piece is the fifth variation where sixteenth notes hammer with driving force throughout. The opening figure is rhythmically like the opening of the fourth variation () but lacks the leaping character. Many of the ideas used before in conjunction with sixteenth notes are brought together here in a tightly knit manner. This variation also contains the most alteration of the melody itself, for it almost disappears in m 84 and m 88-89. The last variation returns to the simple texture of the opening except for brief figuration in m 106-108 in the popular  rhythm. Also here for the first time, the repeat of the second half of the melody is a completely literal one. In order to preserve the ever changing character of each variation and to obtain a dying-out effect in harmony with the musical structure and the text of the tune, this repeat (m 116-end) is played on the softer 8' Holtzgedackt in contrast to the louder 8' Rohrflöte used

for the beginning of this variation (m 101-115). Of additional note is the migration of the melody to the tenor (m 112-115 and 118-end), a procedure similar to its brief appearance in the tenor in variation two.

Although it is somewhat unusual to begin a recital with such an unpretentious, quiet piece, I felt that the instant accessibility and charm of the work would gain the audience's favor as well as some virtuoso flourish. Certainly its merit as one of the very greatest Renaissance organ works is enough to win it special attention.

From Sweelinck to Bach is a long skip, but as pointed out above, there are threads of connection so that Sweelinck's music was indirectly a part of Bach's musical heritage. I have chosen two Bach works simply because "Bach's organ music is the great glory of the instrument and the proud and peculiar possession of the organist....For all organists Bach is the supreme master."⁸ He assimilated North-Central and Southern German, French, Italian, Dutch, and English, and Catholic as well as Protestant impulses in his music, and in many ways summed up the heterogeneous elements of Baroque composition.

The six trio sonatas for organ are among the most entertaining of Bach's compositions, for they transplant the cheerful idiom of the Italian ensemble trio sonata of the middle and late Baroque to an instrument for one performer only. Thus the old form is used in a new and exciting way.⁹ They were written in Leipzig between 1723 and 1729 for the instruction of Bach's eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann. It has not been

definitely established whether they were intended for the two-manual organ or a two-manual harpsichord or clavichord with pedal. W. Schrammek in "Die musikgeschichtliche Stellung der Orgeltriosonaten von Johann Sebastian Bach" expresses the belief that they are for organ since "for two claviers and pedal" (the original designation in the sonatas) is used also in many of the large organ chorale arrangements of the *Clavier-Übung*, part III.¹⁰ Moreover, several of the slow movements were inserted by Bach into other organ works such as between preludes and fugues. However, since the pedal clavier was often used by Baroque organists for practice, these works were probably played successfully on both the harpsichord and the organ.

Stylistically, they were influenced by the Italian concerto grosso form of three movements (fast-slow-fast) as well as by the Italian violin style of the trio sonata. The three-part texture of two imitative, equal upper voices over a lesser-moving bass is strictly maintained. They are midway in style between organ and chamber music and are hence a great contribution to secular "chamber music" for the organ.

Each movement is generated by one principal idea which is used throughout the movement in a variety of different keys and manners, especially fragmentation. The movements begin and end with impressive statements in the tonic while the middle of each movement wanders through a number of related keys. Contrasting episodes connect the entrances of the main ideas.

The magnificent fifth sonata in C major is a merry, high-spirited work resembling the Fourth Brandenburg Concerto. Spitta says the middle movement or Largo had previously been inserted between the Prelude and Fugue in C major (BWV 545) and probably dates from the Weimar or Cöthen period. The first movement (Allegro) is in clear-cut, three-part ABA form. The A section or "exposition" (m 1-51) presents almost all of the material used in the movement. It is in C major except for a brief section in G major (m 17-23) and a shorter passage in F major (m 35-38). One of the main compositional techniques used to extend and "spin out" is the sequence of two to four measures. The B section (m 51-104) develops the material of the A section in addition to adding new material (m 51-67). Here the keys of C major, G major, D minor, A minor, F major, and E minor are utilized to some extent in a juxtaposition of the new "B" material and the principal "A" theme both in its complete form and in fragmentation (m 68-104). The final section (m 105-end) is a literal repeat of the first section. Thus the movement demonstrates similarities to both the later "Sonata-Allegro form" (exposition-development-recapitulation) and the da capo aria form (section A-contrasting section B-repeat of A).

The slow second movement is in the relative minor key (here A minor), a typical procedure for the time. It too is in three-part form with a repeat of the first section at the end. The main thematic idea is a long one (m 1-4) and enters imitatively in the manner of a fugue in the two upper voices, the second voice being in the dominant minor, E minor. The

B section (m 13-40) introduces a new idea (m 13) in which the lower voice almost disappears. In this middle section also, the main theme appears in C major and G major. One interesting point is that m 35-38 parallel m 9-12 except that the upper two voices are reversed. The V-I cadence in D minor at m 39 introduces a two-measure episode which modulates back to A minor for the recapitulation of the A section. This time the initial entrance of the theme in the upper voice is accompanied by counterpoint in the middle voice derived from the countersubject to the second, middle-voice entrance of the theme. The V-I concluding cadence in A minor comes at m 53, and the last two measures serve as an afterthought or extension to end the movement on the dominant (E major) and connect it to the final Allegro.

This last movement, again in C major, is in less definite three-part form although there is a semblance of recapitulation from m141 to the end. Once more the main theme enters in fugal manner in the two upper parts at the beginning. The "answer" is tonal, however, in that the opening interval is transformed from a minor third to a minor second. As always, imitation between the two upper voices, sequence patterns, and fragmentation of the opening theme are important ingredients of the compositional technique. At m 29 the texture becomes two-part for four measures, and definitely new material is introduced. This second or B section (m 29-72) includes appearances of the theme in A minor and in E minor as well as an interesting piling up of the voices in consecutive-entry

stretto fashion (m 59-61). The cadence in G major at m 73 signals the beginning of a third section in which the main theme is used, often in abbreviated form, in a variety of keys. The three successive entries of the theme in m 89, 93, and 97 are noteworthy in that they are all in D minor and are canonic. At m 105 new material is introduced while m 119 initiates an altered or different form of m 29-72 as a theoretical recapitulation which becomes apparent only at m 141. The form of the movement seems roughly: A (m 1-12), a (m 13-20), a' (m 21-28); B (m 29-52), b (m 53-62), (a) (m 63-72); C (m 73-96), (a') (m 97-104); D (m 105-118); (B) (m 119-140), b (m 141-152), a (m 153-end). The large "sections" labeled with capital letters really include the small-letter passages that follow them, and the areas indicated in parentheses are altered forms of the material that they parallel. The vivacious rhythm and persistent theme mark this movement with special force and drive.

By Bach's time the terms "prelude", "toccata", and "fantasia" were used fairly interchangeably, and many compositions called "preludes" in one source are designated "toccatas" or "fantasias" in others. The preludes (fantasias, toccatas) and fugues of Bach are large organ works featuring both the typical toccata style as it arose in Italy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the keyboard fugue which developed from the monothematic keyboard *ricercare* and *canzona*. The toccatas of Andrea Gabrieli, Claudio Merulo, and Frescobaldi,

which mix improvisatory sections of chords, runs, and trills with brief imitative sections, and the ricercari and canzonas of Frescobaldi, Froberger, Sweelinck, and Scheidt all influenced North German masters such as Buxtehude and Reincken to write dramatic, sectional toccatas with fugue-like central sections and toccata-like outer sections. Thus the distinction between the "prelude" and the "fugue" was not significant at first. In Austria the next step was taken of omitting the final improvisatory section and of severing the relation between the initial toccata section and the central fugal one. After 1716 the tendency was to separate the prelude from the fugue in every way and to expand each in size and complexity.¹¹

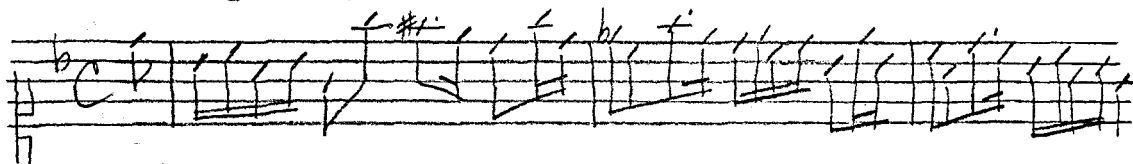
The Fantasia and Fugue in G minor (BWV 542) is a rather early production of Bach and is one of the most powerful. It was composed at Cöthen about 1717-1720 and was used by the composer for his visit to Hamburg in 1720 to audition for the organist position at the Jakobi-Kirche. It continues the trend begun in Weimar of making both parts longer and independent.

The Fantasia is the consummation of the rhapsodic type of North German toccata and is based on Buxtehude's models with which Bach was well acquainted. It alternates virtuoso solo recitatives, bold modulations, stirring chord progressions and torrents of ornaments with quiet, imitative passages. Structurally it is organized into five major sections. Section A (m 1-8) consists solely of a "free" solo recitative over several powerful tutti chords and, later, a tonic pedal point. This section is more nearly related than any other to

the Frescobaldi type of toccata. Section B (m 9-13) is the first of two quiet sections in "sonata a quattro"¹² style--- i.e. three equal, imitative voices over a supporting bass line. At m 14 the massive recitative begins again in a central C section. However, new ingredients are added: m 14-15, 15-16, and 17 introduce the first taste of thundering, dissonant chord progressions, and the modulations become extremely daring and even startling through the effective use of chromaticism and diminished seventh chords. Beginning on an A major chord in m 14, the keys of B minor, C minor, G minor, and D major are heard before the arrival of one of the most arresting modulations in the piece (m 20-21): from D major, Bach modulates up a half step to E^b minor in one short flourish. From here the bass moves up six more half steps before falling an augmented fifth to an F minor chord (m 24). A quiet passage similar to section B follows (m 25-30). The final, improvisatory section follows, preceded by a majestic and boldly modulatory four-measure interlude (m 31-34). The relentlessly descending bass marches down through C minor, B^b minor, and A^b minor before coming to rest on a diminished seventh chord built on G. From there the toccata-like last section begins with a modulatory figure similar to that in m 20-21 and with massive and "crushingly" dissonant chord progressions over a chromatic bass. The virtuoso recitative returns once again (m 41-end) using figures from the central C section.

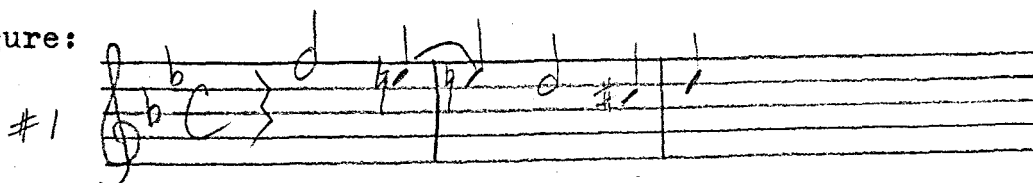
The Fugue is based on a theme which was universally known at the time and used at previous and at later times by others such as Mattheson, Reincken (Sonata V in Hortus Musi-

cus)¹³, Zachow, and Pachebel. It is a gay melody closely related to an old Dutch folksong¹⁴ and was used around 1730, probably in the following form, to test candidates for organist positions in fugal improvisation:¹⁵

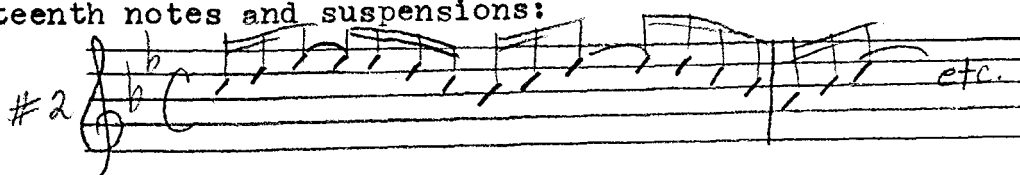


As can be seen, Bach altered the theme when he composed his fugue (or in a later revision?)¹⁶ to make it less angular and halting. In this form it makes a long elaborate subject which employs sequence patterns in a manner basic to its generation so that it evolves out of itself.

The fugue that was finally spun out is a grand, ever moving, long, intricate, and vigorous one which is a fitting partner to the monumental Fantasia that precedes it. The two answers in this four-voice fugue are tonal ones, for they commence with the interval of a major second (m 4 and m 14) instead of the major third used in the subject entrances. Within the exposition there are two free, nonfugal episodes which nevertheless employ thematic material related to the subject (m 7-9 and m 13-14). Of special interest is Bach's use of two countersubjects fairly consistently throughout the fugue. The first (m 5, soprano) is a half-note suspension figure:



while the second (m 11, soprano) is characterized mainly by sixteenth notes and suspensions:



One or both of these are usually employed whenever the subject appears. The resulting triple counterpoint is certainly a difficult mental exercise, but it is nonetheless infused with spontaneity and imagination and flows evenly and easily.

The exposition is completed at m 18, and there follows a four-measure episode before a second exposition section (m 22-31) in which all of the voices except the tenor participate in re-exposing the theme. A "false" answer is begun in the pedal in m 32 but quickly dissolves into cascades of sixteenth notes. The tenor finally gets the subject at m 37, but it is now in B^b major, and the "development" section has begun (m 37-93). The texture is reduced here from four to three voices, and at m 43 it reduces further to two voices. In m 44 the subject, in D minor, minus the first seven notes, is heard in the soprano while at m 51 the lower voice (the alto) has the whole subject in D minor. The pedal has the subject in F major at m 55 while the other two voices (alto and soprano) have the countersubjects #1 and 2 respectively. Of note is the alteration of the second countersubject at m 56-57 to include leaps of a seventh. The passage (m 57-63) which follows immediately is a virtuoso one with torrents of sixteenth notes in the pedal which are later matched in the two manual-voices. Another "false" subject starts the melody in the soprano at m 63, but the whole subject is not heard until the tenor entrance in G minor at m 65. The soprano has the subject once more (in C minor, m 72) and the alto once more (in E^b major, m 80) as the texture alternates

between two, three, and four voices before the "recapitulation" section begins in m 94. The two-part texture and even the material of the "development" beginning is used again here in conjunction with the entrances of the subject in the soprano (m 94) and the tenor (m 101). The end of the tenor subject becomes the beginning of the alto subject in a clever dovetailing in m 103. Finally the pedal brings in the final entrance of the melody (m 110), and the fugue ends with two measures of hammering chords over a running bass pattern. The most unusual feature of the "recapitulation" or final return to the original key is that all four of the subject statements are in G minor---there are no "answers" in the dominant key.

Geiringer says that the happy and powerful character of this fugue shows "the exuberance of a genius in its early manhood."¹⁷ Indeed, it combines at once an incessant driving force with a lofty and deep contentment and an intense appeal to the emotions not often found even in Bach. Spitta proclaims that "no other fugue appears to stand above it."¹⁸ {

The Six Sonatas for Organ by Felix Mendelssohn were composed in 1844-45 at the commission of an English publisher. They were originally planned as Three Voluntaries, but Mendelssohn asked permission to change the title to Sonatas and then furnished six compositions. He made many changes in them between original composition and publication and was evidently quite careful with and proud of them. In a letter to the publisher dated May 26, 1845, he writes, "I attach much

importance to these sonatas (if I may say so of any work of mine), and accordingly wish them to be brought out as correctly as possible."¹⁹

They are large forms, but the schemes employed, other than the division into several movements, have no connection with the Classical "sonata-form" of the piano sonata or symphony. They are rather like voluntaries in form if not in name---English concert organ music for use in church before the services---and could even more appropriately be called organ suites. They have been criticized as being too much like piano music: "klaviermässig". This is true to some extent, for not all parts of all the sonatas are equally successful on the organ. However, they do make liberal use of true Baroque organ techniques such as fugue, toccata style, chorale melodies in cantus firmus treatment, and above all counterpoint. Eric Werner defends them by saying:

The organ, the polyphonic instrument par excellence, demands an intimate familiarity with the contrapuntal style not only from the organist but also from the composer. Without this, organ works easily degenerate into the empty and pompous, as we can see in several impressionistic or "free" works of the nineteenth century. From his childhood, Mendelssohn had that familiarity with polyphony;...a specific organ technique which is miles removed from that of the piano.²⁰

Each sonata is different in form, effect, and quality. Four are chorale arrangements on a large scale, and two are forms in which the fugue is a predominant technique. The fugues, however, are strangely enough Mendelssohn's least effective organ pieces; they contain too much harmony and too

little genuine counterpoint, and they suffer from awkward and uninspired subjects.

The sixth sonata is certainly one of the best if not the best work. It was finished in January, 1845---two years before Mendelssohn's death---and was in satisfactory form from the beginning, for unlike all the others, this sonata received virtually no alteration.²¹ The first movement is a set of five variations on the chorale "Vater unser im Himmelreich," and it is most successful on a Baroque instrument. Naturally some compromises have to be made which deviate from the composer's intentions, but these compromises are less drastic with this particular work than with almost any other Romantic selection I could have chosen. Actually, both Brahms and Mendelssohn wrote for mechanical-action instruments much more similar to those of Bach than to electric-action organs with eclectic dispositions. In order to render their organ music authentically, one should not use "romanticized" registrations and effects. The second movement, a fugue using the chorale theme, and the third movement, a quiet, lyrical "Finale" in D major reminiscent of the beginning of the Elijah aria "O rest in the Lord", will not be played on the present recital for various reasons. Both are of dubious merit as concert music, the fugue being especially weak, and both are anticlimactic to the grand variations that come before. Also the last movement does demand a more Romantic treatment than the Beckerath can provide. Finally, it has become quite acceptable to perform only the first movement as a self-contained set of chorale variations.

This initial movement, in D minor, continues the long tradition of the chorale variation or chorale partita. The form stems back to Sweelinck's variations on chorales in which the cantus firmus appears in long notes which are unchanged in each variation while changing rhythmic and figural patterns surround the chorale statements. The first variation is a simple, chordal harmonization of the melody in hymn style with the melody in the top voice. In the second variation the melody again appears intact in the soprano over an accompaniment of running sixteenths in the middle voice and an unobtrusive, harmonically supporting pedal registered with a soft 8' only. The third variation brings a change to $\frac{12}{8}$ time. The melody appears fairly straightforwardly in the top voice of chords on the manuals as staccato triplets run against it in the pedal. Toward the end of the variation, the manuals take up the triplets too, making use of suspensions and anticipations. Variation four is a beautiful four-part recitation of the melody in the tenor like a French "recit en taille". As in the second variation the pedal functions only as harmonic support (indeed, it has no line but only detached notes), and the right hand murmurs largely in soft parallel thirds and sixths. The last variation is a bold toccata-like section with the complete chorale melody appearing twice against rushing, dissonant passage work. The first statement is in the pedal while the hands are busy with furious arpeggios and three brief chordal sections. The repetition of the melody begins in the soprano but soon alternates in phrases

between the top and middle voices while the arpeggios continue with unrelenting drive. This rushing, forward thrust is heightened by the lack of episodes between the melodic phrases. After the completion of the melody, a "melodic coda" begins immediately which consists ultimately of a chromatically rising line derived from the last phrase of the chorale and heard climbing over the continued arpeggios. This arpeggiated figuration ends abruptly after swirling upward on a diminished seventh chord, and following a "grand pause", a real coda, consisting of the first and last chorale phrases set chordally like the first variation, conclude the piece.

Following this impressive work the Haydn clock pieces come as light "comic relief". All of the great Classical masters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries neglected the organ as a medium of expression (perhaps due in part to the incipient degeneration of the instrument). However, miniature organs activated by clock mechanisms seemed to hold a special fascination for these composers, and Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven wrote pieces especially for them.²²

Prince Eszterházy's librarian Pater Primitivus Niemecz was an expert in constructing mechanical organs. He built three clocks with diminutive organs in 1772, 1792, and 1793 respectively. For these he used only the music of Haydn, his friend and teacher at the Eszterházy palace. These clocks are still in existence and still play the Haydn pieces in their original form.²³ Ernst Fritz Schmid edited the pieces for

the first time, transcribing them for keyboard partly from Haydn autographs, partly from other old manuscript, and partly from the renditions that can still be heard from the clock-organs. Both of the later clocks played some pieces that had previously been used in the 1772 organ as well as some new ones. They both played a total of twelve pieces each---one every hour.

All of the pieces are very short, charming works whose proportions match those of the organs that played them. The Andantino in F major (No. 15) comes from the Flötenuhr of 1772 and is in simple three-part ABB' form, each section closing with the same V-I cadence and "coo-coo" figure in the left hand. The melody is in the soprano throughout. The Menuett in C major (No. 11) is found in both the 1772 and 1792 clock-organs and was even slightly changed and used for the minuet of Haydn's string quartet, Op. 54, No. 2. (1789).²⁴ It too is in three-part form, but here the form is like a tiny Classical sonata: A, A repeated, B, A'. The "tune" moves to the left hand under a right-hand trill for the first four measures of the middle section (m 9-12). The "recapitulation" is a slightly more elaborate version of the original A section. The Presto in C major (No. 12) was written for the Flötenuhr of 1792 and is especially graceful. Its form is loosely ABA'B' with the B and B' sections beginning at m 17 and m 43 respectively. The B' passage is really a freely developed form of B using inversion of the melodic motive.

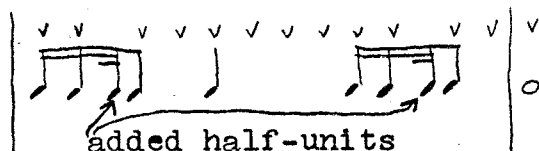
All these tiny pieces are not completely inconsequential: they point to Beethoven's Bagatelles, Schubert's Moments Musicaux, and all short nineteenth century piano works.²⁵

Initially, Olivier Messiaen was a member of "Le jeune France", a group which rebelled against the contemporary galant of "Les Six" and which insisted upon the expressive and "Romantic" value of music: they sought "re-humanization" of music in France.²⁶ Messiaen's Romantic conception of music was projected in several ways during the 1930's: he believed that there is a correspondance between musical sound and religious elements; he made use of "chromatic" rhythms---additions to or alterations of conventional "diatonic" metric relationships; and he used not only the whole-tone scale of Debussy, but also Gregorian modes and new divisions of the octave created by himself.²⁷ This period in his career is the one under consideration since "La Nativité du Seigneur" was written in 1935.

Messiaen's works written before World War II are rather traditional in conception especially when compared with his more recent compositions. The Nativité suite is no exception. A series of nine Christmas "meditations" it is among his best organ works and demonstrates several aspects of his style---striking melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic innovations, and a keen sense of tone color.

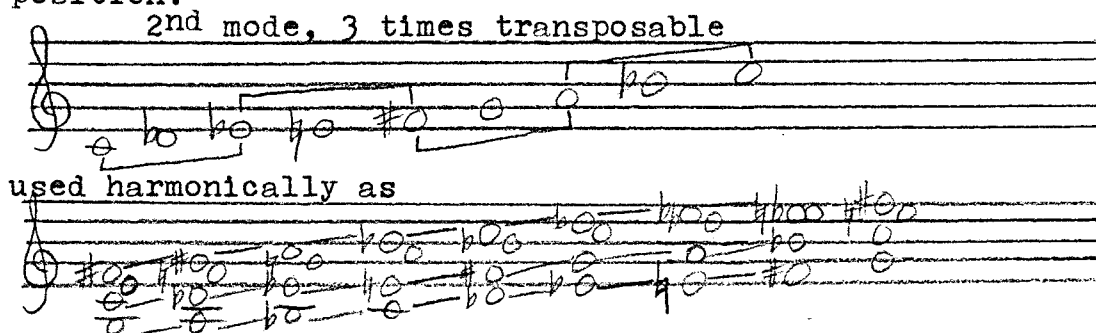
The subject of "La Nativité du Seigneur" is treated from a triple point of view: theologically, instrumentally, and musically.²⁸ Theologically, for instance, "Dieu Parmi Nous"

portrays God living in the midst of us chiefly through a leaping, descending motive which pervades the entire piece. Instrumentally, Messiaen makes effective use of "economy of timbres"---unusual tone colors and densities such as reeds alone, principals alone, and other, stranger combinations. The pedal loses its customary role of the bass and is often registered (not in "Dieu Parmi Nous") with upper-work alone as an upper line of special effect. Musically, there are five principal means of expression: (1) modes of limited transposition---chromatic octave species used for harmonic purposes; (2) pedal points, expanded embellishments, and appoggiaturas; (3) added half-units of rhythmic value such as in the opening figure of "Dieu Parmi Nous";

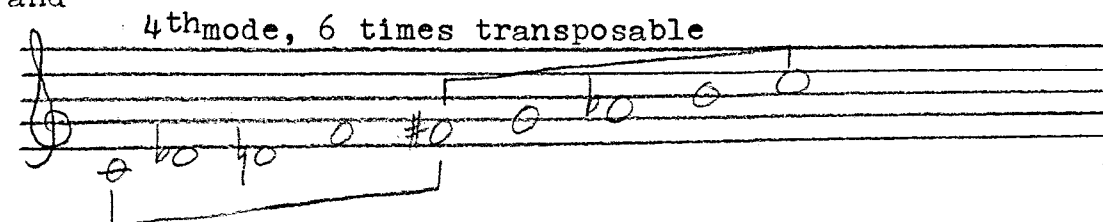


(4) progressive augmentation of intervals; and (5) chords of the dominant.

In applying these principles to the ninth meditation "Dieu Parmi Nous", Messiaen uses two modes of limited transposition:



and



Structurally, the piece is rather free in form, contrasting widely differing and sometimes repeated ideas in very definite sections. The notion of descent, both chromatically and by leaps, is introduced in the first two measures and is one of the factors that unifies the work. The melody introduced in the slow, quiet passage (m 4-7) is used throughout the large central section (m 31-54). The E major chords at the beginning of and the powerful pedal "lines" within the third big section (m 59-107) are especially exciting. What the composer is striving for in this work is an effect, an emotion, a sincerity which serves the dogmas of the Christian (and more specifically Roman Catholic) Church. He succeeds in creating a bravura work of towering proportion.

I believe this recital achieves its primary purposes as outlined above. The selections are worthy and interesting ones, and they give me an opportunity to display my understanding of each musical period as well as my technical facility and musical nature. The analysis of the works, however cursory, is indispensable in gaining a reasonable comprehension of their "meaning".

*Well done paper
and recital!
A*

FOOTNOTES

¹"Recital," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (5th ed.), vol. VII, p. 72.

²John Fespermann, The Organ as Musical Medium (New York, Coleman-Ross Co., Inc., 1962), p. 26.

³Ibid., p. 30.

⁴"Sweelinck," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (5th ed.), vol. VIII, p. 201.

⁵Ibid., p. 202.

⁶Manfred F. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1949), p. 75.

⁷Willi Apel, Masters of the Keyboard (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 76.

⁸"Organ Playing," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (5th ed.), vol. VI, p. 346-347.

⁹Bach's sources for all his sonatas were of course the great masters of the form such as Legrenzi, Corelli, Albinoni, Marcello, Kühnel, Kuhnau, J.J. Walter, Krieger, Vivaldi, Biber, Reincken, Rosenmüller, Buxtehude, Abaco, Telemann, Purcell, and Couperin. Although he was preceded in writing trio sonatas for the organ by Strozzi and C. Ritter, his were the first successful and important ones. See: William S. Newman, The Sonata in the Baroque Era (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 265. ! yuk

¹⁰Cited in: Karl Geiringer, Johann Sebastian Bach; The Culmination of an Era (New York, Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 239.

¹¹F. E. Kirby, A Short History of Keyboard Music (New York, The Free Press, 1966), p. 119.

¹²Ibid., p. 124.

¹³Geiringer, Bach, p. 226. Also: Philipp Spitta, Johann Sebastian Bach trans. by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (London, Novello & Co., Ltd., 1951), vol. II, p. 24.

¹⁴Geiringer, Bach, p. 226.

¹⁵Spitta, vol. II, p. 22.

¹⁶Ibid., vol. II, p. 24.

¹⁷Geiringer, Bach, p. 226.

¹⁸Spitta, vol. II, p. 25.

¹⁹Quoted in: F. G. Edwards, "Mendelssohn's Organ Sonatas," in Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, 21st Session, 1894-95 (Vaduz, Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1966), p. 3.

²⁰Eric Werner, Mendelssohn; A New Image of the Composer and his Age trans. by Dika Newlin (London, Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1963), p. 427.

²¹Edwards, p. 3.

²²Even Mozart's two great fantasias were written for a small, mechanical clock-organ!

²³Haydn gave the 1772 clock to the wife of a friend, and it is still treasured in the same family (1946). It has a weak but very clear, transparent tone. See: Karl Geiringer, Haydn; A Creative Life in Music (New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1946), p. 226.

²⁴Ibid., p. 227.

²⁵Ibid., p. 275.

²⁶Kirby, p. 459.

²⁷Ibid., p. 459.

²⁸The following observations come from: Olivier Messiaen, "Note de l'Auteur"---La préface au premier fascicule de La Nativité du Seigneur (Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1935).

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3. Bukofzer, Manfred F., Music in the Baroque Era, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1949, pp. 75-77, 278-279, 298.
4. Edwards, F. G., "Mendelssohn's Organ Sonatas," Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, Twenty-First Session (1894-1895), Vaduz, Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1966, pp. 1-16.
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8. Hathaway, Joseph W., An Analysis of Mendelssohn's Organ Works, London, William Reeves, 1898, pp. 1-6, 69-82.
9. Kirby, F. E., A Short History of Keyboard Music, New York, The Free Press, 1966, pp. 60-61, 118-127, 258-259, 459-461.
10. "Mendelssohn: The Composer," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., vol. V, pp. 698.
11. "Messiaen," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., vol. V, pp. 722-725.
12. Messiaen, Olivier, "Note de l'Auteur:" La préface au premier fascicule de La Nativité du Seigneur, Paris, Alphonse Leduc.
13. Newman, William S., The Sonata in the Baroque Era, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1959, pp. 271-272, 265-266.
14. "Organ Playing," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., vol. VI, pp. 346-347.
15. "Recital," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., vol. VII, p. 72.

16. Schmid, Ernst Fritz, Vorwort zur Neuauflage (1954) der Flötenuhrstücke von Joseph Haydn, übertragen von E. F. Schmid, Kassel, Nagels Verlag, 1953.
17. Spitta Philipp, Johann Sebastian Bach, trans. by Clara Bell and J.A.Fuller-Maitland, London, Novello & Co., Ltd., 1951 (original: 1873, 1880), vol. III-pp.211-212, vol. II-pp.22-25.
18. "Sweelinck," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., vol. VIII, pp. 201-203.
19. Werner, Eric, Mendelssohn; A New Image of the Composer and His Age, trans. by Dika Newlin, London, Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1963, pp. 424-428.
20. Williams, Charles F. Abdy, The Story of Organ Music, London, The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1905.