

ALCM -- 2013 Biennial National Conference
June 30 – July 3
Valparaiso University

Session 1
Simple(r) Organ Solutions

Donald Rotermund, *presenter*

Workshop Synopsis -

This workshop is especially designed to assist organists who are comfortable playing hymns but do not improvise, improvise a little, or who teach service-playing, to expand this area of resourcefulness. Simple tips and extemporization techniques will use mainly hymnal harmonizations to develop modest hymn introductions, alternate accompaniments, thematic interludes, organ stanzas, versets, or small partitas.

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Improvisation (some basic expectations)

- knowledge of music theory / keyboard harmony
- commitment to regular (daily) practice
- expects some creativity / imagination
- play with minimal, or no printed score
- knowledge of organ repertoire
- mentor/coach/teacher/facilitator

Extemporization (basic expectations)

- play hymnal settings comfortably
- capable of using two manuals, with Pedal
- familiarity with **Off the Page** techniques
- willingness to experiment

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+ **Techniques provide a skeletal plan** +

1. **ECHO PHRASES – (EP)** (Ch. 2) - **idea:** _____

- *notes of hymnal harmonization*
- *basic echo options:* -- single; -- double; -- combinations; -- full phrase; -- partial phrase
- *multiple ways to infuse variety:* re: length; timbre; volume;
- *other options:*
- adaptable to almost *any traditional type hymn tune and harmonization*
- **uses:** (see **Practical Applications**, in **Off the Page** at end of Chapter 2; & **Appendices** in back of book)

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2. **RHYTHMIC SUBDIVISION OF BASS NOTES (SBN)** (Ch. 3) - **idea:** _____

- *notes of hymnal harmonization;*
- commence with “steadier” note values; changing Bass pitches/harmony
- *tempo* is significant: usually slower than hymn tempo
- *rhythmic combinations:* eighths in pairs; in fours; (octave skips) triplets (several variations)
- *guided by:* text; season; type of Service (funeral; Ash Wed.; Good Fri.);
and/or for variety/contrast
- **uses:** (see **Practical Applications** at end of Chapter 3; and, **Appendices** in back of book)

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3. ALTERNATING INNER VOICES (AIV) (Ch. 4) - idea: _____

- commence with *hymnal notes*, and a plan for a full phrase; then, feel freer;
- consider *tying at least some repeating*, i.e. successive notes of the two inner voices
- *tempo*: generally slower (= more expressive) than for singing a hymn;
- an option: a way to extend the length of a basic setting
- **uses**: (see **Practical Applications** at end of chapter 3; and, **Appendices** in back of book)

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4. Mini TOCCATAS (mT) (Ch. 13) - idea: _____

examples from *OFF the PAGE* CD

- *hymnal notes*; commence with more even note values; adjusting dotted notes; “stationary” movement on longer note values (halves, dotted halves; wholes)
- different *rhythmic combinations*: triplets R.H. only, or . . .
(w/o; or with Pedal) four sixteenths; six sixteenths
- *direction*: usually soprano down; sometimes bass up
- *tempo*: controlled; movement, but not rushed; *aim for linear interest and clarity*
- *registrations*: timbres / volume: 4’ Flute; 8’, 2’; bigger/fuller/richer: foundations 8’, 4’ plus mixture, and possibly reeds)
- **uses**: (see **Practical Applications** at end of Chapter 13; and, **Appendices** in back of book)

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Coordinated Symbols; basic / auxiliary (options)

- for use in your “organist’s hymnal”
- for additional / flexible retention, consider developing a complementary card file

Combining techniques to enrich and / or extend a setting -:

- *in the same setting* (e.g. *Echo Phrases* using a different meter)
- *in partnership*: ABA; Versets / petite Partitas
- *Examples*: CODA settings in *Off the Page*

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Keep in mind -

- “organist’s hymnal”; use ET ideas to augment; using hymn tunes helps worshipper focus and “connect” .
- *Gebrauchsmusik*; think of sharing with H.S. organists; colleagues who are non-professionals / “part timers”; etc.
- Suggestion: use 5 minutes or so when you go to the organ to experiment; combine/enrich;
- you determine your own pace!
- *experiment* ... have fun... add your own touches ...
- let these Techniques be “starters”

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OFF THE PAGE: Tips and Techniques for Creating Hymn-Based Organ Settings
MorningStar Music Pub. 2007

- Chapter organization; sequence; not necessarily sequential; a variety of helpful **Appendices**
- Designed for independent self-study; self-pacing;
- CD features include: coordinated narrative with examples from text
- *CODA* examples: nine versets on the same tune, each illustrates one or more techniques;
- A Supplementary teaching resource.