

the YOUTH *news*

SPRING 2008 EDITION



Master Class

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✕ Make "MySpace" Your Space ✕

by *Jessica Lim*

As a young organist, I have often felt somewhat lonely when not at organ competitions or concerts. As comforting as the Journal is, there is something distant about print on paper, and reading about other organists, or reading interviews with other organists, leaves me wishing to meet them in person. As a result, I sometimes end up feeling a little sad and isolated in a world that no longer seems to cherish the magnificent pipe organ.

Indeed, among my peers, there are certain misconceptions that organists are a dying breed. It is our duty, my fellow organists, to quell that theory once and for all! It is with our youth that we can bring a fresh face to the noble society of organists. Though the Internet can be a curse when people (such as myself) have too much time, it is also the best means by which we can broadcast our

existence, our passion, and our musical prowess to the world.

As such, I propose that we create a group on Facebook or MySpace, a group where we can discuss the journal online, post announcements for concerts or competitions, upload videos of our favourite performers- or even ourselves- and create a close-knit fellowship between all organists in New South Wales, regardless of where we live, what school we go to, or who our teacher is.

We are the next generation of organists. We are great, we are swell, we are positive, and so much more. We can, with the help of the Internet, unite, and form a long-lasting community, keeping the joy of playing the pipe organ well and truly alive. And this, my friends, is change we can believe in.

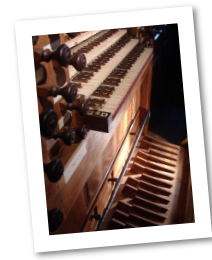
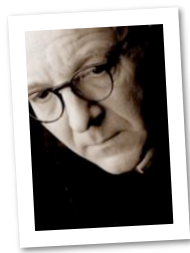


What Pipe is That?!

What pipe is that? See www.organstops.org a very comprehensive dictionary of pipes with sound samples for

some. Can you find the name of the stop made by Cavaille-Coll which "was a pedal which, on depression, drew down successively six or seven notes

from the bottom of the pedal board upwards. The effect, as may well be imagined, is realistic -- particularly when the 32 ft. reed is drawn."



Master Class with Jacques van Oortmerssen



PROFESSOR OF ORGAN, SWEELINCK CONSERVATORY AMSTERDAM

No 12 with Left Hand Fingering

The image shows two systems of musical notation for exercise No 12. The first system has a treble clef with notes and fingerings (3 4 3 4 3 4 5, 3 4 3 4 3 4 5, 3 4 3 4, 1 2 3, 3 2 4 5) and a bass clef with notes and accents (^). The second system has a treble clef with notes and fingerings (3 2 3 2 3, 3 2 3, 3 2 3, 3 2 3 2, 3 2 3, 3 2 3, 3 2 3, 2) and a bass clef with notes and accents (^).

Right Hand Fingering 3232 321 3232 321 3232 132 342 1 3434 343 3434 343 3434 343 323 4

Anne Marsden Thomas, Godelieve Chavalas and Jacques van Oortmerssen

In 1997 I moved to London for two years. What excitement it was to have my Visa stipulating “No work” and that truly meant “all play and no work”. I found the St Giles International Organ School and met Anne Marsden Thomas, the Director of the School (which currently has over 280 organ students) and she became my mentor.

It was Anne who introduced me to 18th Century French Music (no prizes for guessing which composer). From there we started delving into Baroque fingering and pedalling, and so my first introduction to Jacques was through his book *A Guide to duo and trio playing – studies in historical fingering and pedalling for the organ*. I enjoyed this book of exercises, and Anne was most adamant, not only to play the correct fingering, but to listen consciously to the phrasing that became evident through the fingering/pedalling, and the exercise had to be played as if it were a real piece of music, always with musical expression. My playing the organ was now on a totally new level, and every lesson was a further encounter into this “new world”.

This is why I decided to approach Jacques to see if he would write some articles for you on this very important topic. He has given me permission to reproduce some of the exercises, and has kindly written some pointers for you on how to make a start . . .

First though, let's have some background notes on the Professor.

The Dutch organist, Jacques van Oortmerssen studied organ and piano at the Conservatory of Music in Rotterdam.

He continued his organ studies with [Marie-Claire Alain](http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Alain-Marie-Claire.htm) (www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Alain-Marie-Claire.htm) in Paris and was awarded the *Prix d'Excellence* in 1976.

In 1977 he was awarded first prize at the Dutch National Improvisation Competition.

Since 1979 Jacques van Oortmerssen has been Professor of Organ at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, where his organ class attracts students from many different countries.

In 1982 he succeeded [Gustav Leonhardt](http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Leonhardt-Gustav.htm) (www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Leonhardt-Gustav.htm) as Organiste Titulaire of the Waalse Kerk in Amsterdam. He has visited conservatories and universities worldwide as a guest teacher and recitalist. For the academic year 1993-1994 he became the Betts Fellow in Organ Studies at Oxford University.

As a recitalist Jacques van Oortmerssen has appeared in many international festivals. His interpretations of Bach and early music have brought him widespread acclaim.

He is also active as a conductor, composer, and organ consultant.

Jacques van Oortmerssen has made many recordings, including the complete organ works of Brahms and C. P. E. Bach. In 1995 he began recording the complete organ works by J. S. Bach on the most important historical organs in Europe for Challenge Classics; the 9th volume in the series was recently released.

Watch Jacques Play!

Now hop on the computer and watch Jacques play on youtube.com:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jnv8gjbX-0Q

Jacques writes...

I was educated as organist and also as pianist at the Conservatorium in Rotterdam. From my piano teacher, Elly Salomé, I inherited the interest in technique and particularly the relation between technique and expression. During my studies in Paris with Marie-Claire Alain I became extremely interested in period-related applications. (Fingering/peddalling)

In the first decade as a teacher in Amsterdam, I wrote many exercises for my students eventually resulting in the publication "Guide To Duo And Trio Playing". The Guide is written to discover all the advantages of early fingering. For me early fingering relates specifically to certain repertoire before 1950.



Period related applications serves several goals:

In the first place, an ergonomic goal - to use the body, arm and hand in the most natural position, to avoid unnecessary and disturbing stress and tension. A free body means automatically a free mind, free to make music and to communicate emotions.

In the second place, period related applications are designed to support musical expression.

In other words, fingering and pedalling is chosen according to accents (meter) and phrasing.

That is why for instance in exercise 10 of my Guide, the third finger is always placed on the accentuated notes.

No 10 with Right Hand Fingering

No 10 Left Hand Fingering: 34345234 34345234 34345234 34343 32121432 32121432 32121432 32121

All exercises in the first half of the book are as above, so that both hands are treated equally which is needed for trio playing. (You could use this exercise for transposition as well . . .)

While practising this exercise one should try to keep all fingers in contact with the keys at all times, also, or better particularly the fingers which do not play! This should create the necessary relaxation.

If you articulate all the notes and you try at the same time to play nicely *cantabile*, you will notice that the meter accents appear automatically.

Another important characteristic of early fingering is that the specific qualities of the different fingers are exploited as much as possible. This is opposite to the 'modern' system in which every finger is supposed to have the same qualities.

That is why they preferred to play trills in the right hand as much as they could with the third and second finger. For the left hand that was the first and the second finger.

The last remark on No.10 concerns the phrasing of the manual part. It is helpful NOT to cover the jump, which is in fact the phrasing, by spreading the hand. Try to place your hand in the new position and use the travel of the hand to create a natural phrasing. It is however important to take much care of the last note of the previous phrase. Do not make this note too long (no *rubato* in the



Q&A with Peter Jewkes



Sydney organbuilder and organist Peter Jewkes answers questions from younger readers in each edition of The Youth News.

Q: Why does my teacher tell me to leave the Swell box open when I finish practising the organ?

A: The pipes of the stops on the Swell manual (or any other "enclosed" division of an organ) are inside a large wooden box with wooden shutters on the front. The shutters are controlled when you operate the large Swell pedal just above the pedalboard (which usually looks like the huge accelerator pedal you might see on a bus!). On older historic organs the shutters might be controlled by a large metal hitch-down pedal, held down in place by a wooden trigger, so these systems are usually called "trigger swells. The effect is the same with either system – you operate the Swell pedal and the shutters open or close. This produces the wonderful crescendo effects in Romantic organ music and its use is called for by composers such as Vierne, Widor, Elgar, Whitlock and many others. It is also a useful device for ensuring that the balance of registrations on each manual is about the same, so if you are playing a Trio Sonata (for example) you can adjust the volume of the Swell manual to make sure it's about the same as the Great and Pedals. Some Swell pedal mechanisms work by a direct mechanical link from the pedal to the shutters, and others have an electric "Swell engine" to do the work, with electrical contacts connected to the pedal.

The reason we are supposed to leave Swell shutters open when not in use is to help keep the different manuals of the organ in tune with each other, by ensuring the air temperature is about the same inside the Swell box as outside. Apart from reed stops, all organ pipes vary in pitch with changes of temperature. People sometimes wrongly believe that hot weather makes the pipes expand, so the notes get lower, but in fact the opposite is the truth. The hotter the air the faster it vibrates and the higher in pitch the note becomes, and any expansion of the pipes is overwhelmed by this effect. Of course the opposite is also true – the colder the temperature becomes, the flatter the organ will sound.

Now say for example you leave the Swell box closed after practising on a cold evening, and next day the temperature rises - the cold air trapped inside the Swell box will keep the pitch at more or less the same temperature that it was when the box was closed, but in the meantime the warmer air outside the Swell box will make the pitch of the unenclosed manuals rise. When you couple these together, the Swell will sound unpleasantly flat. Of course this eventually evens out (especially if someone comes along and remembers to open the shutters) but in the meantime the organ sounds a whole lot less pleasant than usual! It also makes great difficulty for an organ tuner when he arrives and finds the Swell box closed, as it's difficult for him to tune the 2 manuals together, without measuring all temperatures, which can take a very long time! Some electric Swell pedal actions open the shutters automatically as soon as the blower is turned off, but it's always a good idea to leave them open (with the Swell pedal in the loud position) – just in case!

Q: Are there ever times when this is not the right thing to do?

A: Only if you were playing on a small one-manual organ which was all enclosed in a Swell box. Then it's a good idea to keep the shutters closed when not playing, as this helps keep out dust and rats!

Peter Jewkes is Organist of Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney, and heads one of Australia's busiest organbuilding firms, caring for over 210 organs.

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

**Aug 5th
6pm**

Thomas Trotter (UK)

Great Hall Sydney
University

**Oct 19th
1pm**

Organ Spectacular

Great Hall Sydney
University - A Pipe
Organ Encounter –
bring along some
friends to be
introduced to the pipe
organ.

**Nov 16th
2:45pm**

Daniel Moulton (UK)

Shore School "The
Elusive English
Organ" DVD
presentation with a
recital

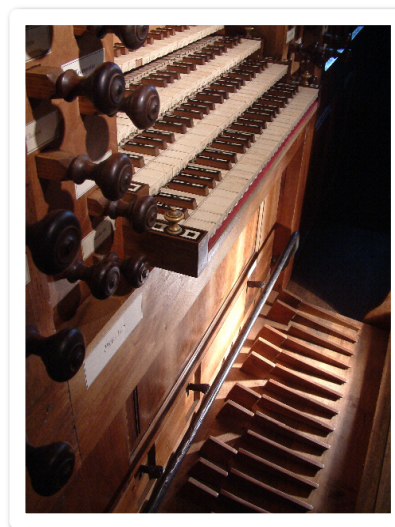
For more info:

www.sydneyorgan.com

*Do You Remember Your
Grade 4 Pedal Exercise?*

Hop on the computer and watch Ton
Koopman play J. S. Bach's BWV 549 on
youtube.com:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-
apIrk5mUw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-apIrk5mUw)



Gottfried Silbermann - France
Photograph by Pastor De Lasala





Australian Organ Music

by Heather Moen-Boyd

How much organ music by Australian composers have you played or heard before? Many of us have played at least some movements from Colin Brumby's "Captain Logan's Fancy, and Graham Koehne's beautifully serene "To his servant Bach...".



Those with an advanced technique might have tackled Koehne's exciting "Gothic Toccata".

Godelieve Ghavalas and I spent a day recently at the Australian Music

Centre, checking out what lesser-known works have been written, anticipating to find some hidden treasure. We came away with an interesting cross-section of composers and styles, after considering where and when each piece might be useful, along with a grading of technical difficulty. We hope that this summary might encourage you to try some for yourself.

A good introduction to contemporary harmonic language (and accessible for a player of Grade 3-4 standard) will be found in the several books of Preludes by Robert Allworth. These interesting miniatures of only 1-3 lines in length were written as liturgical interludes. They are to be played very slowly, and contain unusual time signatures such as 7/16. The more

advanced player could extend them through improvisation.

"Procession for Elisabeth" was written by Lawrence Bartlett for his daughter's wedding. This tuneful piece could be played by someone of Grade 5 standard, and would work well as a postlude. On the final page the melody reappears in the pedal, to good effect. (Bartlett himself championed the cause of lesser-known local composers in his own organ playing.)

"Out There" by Andrew Batterham is a fast and extroverted work, with some flashy pedalling towards the end. Despite its title, it is not too 'out there' harmonically and quite accessible to the listener, suitable for Grade 7-8 level.

"Chorale" by Betty Beath is of Grade 5-6 level and is quieter and more reflective. In 5/4 time it has a free-flowing feel to it, with long melodic phrases and



a few modern harmonic twists. It could be used as a prelude to a service.



Colin Brumby's "Festive Toccata" is an effective and showy work, by one of our country's foremost composers, which a player of Grade 6 standard would find an enjoyable postlude or competition piece.

The rollicking triplets of the beginning and end are separated by an easier section for manuals only.

"Postlude for Carol and Paul" by Eric Gross, is obviously another wedding piece, but certainly useful in other contexts. Of Grade 6 level, it has plenty of rhythmic interest, and gives the opportunity to show off a good Trumpet stop. (On the 'down-side', the ending was rather tame.)

Many of you will know of Dulcie Holland through her Theory and Musicianship workbooks. Much more fun is her "Toccata in the Baroque Style". At Grade 5 level, it needs crisp and clear articulation to achieve a rhythmic performance. It sounds harder than it really is, which is a definite plus!

Donald Hollier was a distinguished teacher of organ and composition in Canberra. His "Improvisations on Veni Emmanuel" is one of several large-scale works of his at the Centre. The hand-written score is technically demanding, but it is a work of real substance and would repay diligent work by a student of diploma standard.

"Moonbi Snows" by Richard Maddox was among the recent prizewinners in a composition competition hosted by the Victorian Society of Organists. Subtitled "Toccata for Organ", it exploits the instrument's full dynamic range and

includes some double pedalling, with some fugal writing in the final section. Suitable for Grades 7-8.

"This One for J.P." refers to Johann Pachelbel (of Canon fame) and was composed by Vivienne Olive, who has worked in Nuremberg, Pachelbel's home city. In neoclassical style, it begins very quietly with a single-line melody, gradually building to dramatic full organ. A Grade 6 student could manage this.

"Gotische Elemente" by Felix Werder is not for the faint-hearted, giving a taste of the avant-garde. On a messy hand-written score - though not excessively demanding technically - it would take a patient but adventurous student to learn it. (Hint: don't try it out on your congregation unless they are very progressive!)

Christopher Willcock is well-known for his effective Psalm settings. "The Magi" shows quite a different side to his writing, freed from the limitations of congregational and parish choir singing. This organ work is colourful, rhapsodic and impressionistic. Of Grade 8 standard, it has



some large stretches in the chordal sections.

The set of "Four Liturgical Impromptus" by Paul Paviour is not held at the Centre (though some of his other works are). Of Grade 6-7 in difficulty, they present interesting rhythmic challenges and touches of humour, and contain brief references

to hymn melodies. Paul's music is published through fagus-music.com.

Rosalie Bonighton composes with the amateur organist particularly in mind. Some of her works incorporate jazz and blues elements. You can find her music quite readily available in several of the Kevin Mayhew collections, along with that of another eminent Melbourne musician, June Nixon.

Unfortunately not all Australian organ composers of significance are represented at the Centre. Sydney City Organist Robert Ampt has contributed several works to the repertoire. My copy of his "Australian Christmas Suite" is getting rather worn, due to its usefulness during the festive season. From the stillness and simplicity of "The Silver Stars" to the ferocious "The North Wind", there is something for a wide level of playing abilities. Robert publishes his music under the title of Biralee Publications.

Brett McKern's "Tocatta" was written for young virtuoso Sarah Kim, but a player of Grade 7 level would find it within their capability. It is quieter and gentler than many other toccatas, but with an effective build-up in the middle. If you enjoy pieces in the late French Romantic style, then give this a try. Check out his pieces at www.australiancomposers.com.au.

Hopefully this has given you a few new ideas. It is just a sample of what is waiting to be played and listened to. I've certainly found some pieces to add to my repertoire. And if you have discovered some good Australian organ music

yourself, please let us know about it too. A concert of such pieces in the near future is definitely worth considering!

The Australian Music Centre is situated at Level 4, 10 Hickson Rd, The Rocks, Sydney. Find out further details at their website,



www.amcoz.com.au, including catalogue listings. Scores can be purchased, or for an annual membership fee you can borrow from the library.



What Do You Think?

If you'd like to receive this newsletter online, please email Godelieve Ghavalas. Please also write to us and tell us what you think of our Youth Newsletter. We'd love to hear your comments and suggestions!

godelieve@notjustnotes.com.au

Learn about the Organ Music Society of Sydney at:

<http://www.sydneorgan.com/aboutus.html>

