To get to the “tracker console” of the Disney organ, you walk between a forest of façade pipes. Their toes are on the stage floor around the console—wind coming from who-knows-where through the floor.

Looking at the façade from inside the organ is a little like getting a backstage glimpse at the Met—you can see the clever structure that supports the façade: each pipe is curved, each pipe faces in a different direction, and there’s no apparent order to them that can be derived from musical scales, tuning systems, or chest order, as with virtually every other organ with an architectural presence. So much for obedience. (Notice that I didn’t bother to mention symmetry!)

In one sense this mighty organ represents a logical evolutionary step. In the past couple decades we’ve celebrated the design and construction of quite a few tremendous new concert hall organs. Each one has design features that build on its predecessors. A terrific amount of work has been devoted to understanding how to move enough air through an organ to produce pleasing and musical tones that can take a listener from whisper to volcano. It’s a grand achievement for a pipe organ to “stand up to” a modern symphony orchestra, which is capable of bewildering volumes of sound. To achieve that with modest wind pressures and slider chests is especially impressive.

There’s nothing quite like the bass response of a symphony orchestra. No great conductor is willing to wait a nanosecond for a bass note to develop. The bottom notes from the orchestra’s tuba, trombone, contrabassoon, cellos and basses, and timpani are in the listener’s ears *right now*. Having spent a lifetime working to make organs sound their best, I can remember myriad struggles with bass response. Think of that low note in the Pedal Bourdon that yodels a little around the second partial before it settles on its pitch, or the note in the Contra Bombarde that offers a half-second of *pfffff* before you hear a note. No way. The organs that play with modern orchestras have to perform with their orchestral neighbors. On the Disney organ it’s possible to draw a dozen or stops at 32- and 16-foot pitch and play staccato notes in the bottom octaves—surreal.

§

On the score of his massive *Grande Messe des morts* (*Requiem*), Berlioz notes, “The number [of performers] indicated is only relative. If space permits, the chorus may be doubled or tripled, and the orchestra be proportionally increased. But in the event of an exceptionally large chorus, say 700 to 800 voices, the entire chorus should only be used for the *Dies Irae*, the *Tuba Mirum*, and the *Lacrymosa*, the rest of the movements being restricted to 400 voices.”

The score calls for 4 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 English horns, 4 clarinets, 8 bassoons, 12 horns, 4 cornets and 4 tubas (in the orchestra), 4 brass choirs [Choir 1 to the north: 4 cornets, 4 trombones, 2 tubas; Choir 2 to the east: 4 trumpets, 4 trombones; Choir 3 to the west: 4 trumpets, 4 trombones; Choir 4 to the south: 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 4 ophicleides (usually substituted by tubas)], a battery of percussionists, 16 timpani played by 10 timpanists, 2 bass drums, 4 tamtams, 10 pairs of cymbals, 25 first violins, 25 second violins, 20 violas, 20 violoncellos, 18 double basses, 80 women’s voices (divided between sopranos and altos), 60 tenors, 70 basses, and tenor soloist.

Alas, no organ. And he thought it would be a grand performance.

But the nearly equally ambitious (minus the four spatial brass choirs) *Te Deum* is scored for 4 flutes, 4 oboes (one doubling on cor anglais), 4 clarinets (one doubling on bass clarinet), 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 cornets, 6 trombones, 2 ophicleides/tubas, timpani, 4 tenor drums, bass drum, cymbals, tenor solo, 2 large 3-part (STB) mixed choirs, 1 large unison children’s choir, strings, and (yes, Virginia) organ.

I’d love to hear that piece performed in Disney Hall. Given available space, they’d probably have to settle for about 300 singers, but that’d do. In the hall’s spectacular acoustics I’m sure I’d be able to hear every “K”, every “T”—and while most vowels would be clear, I’m afraid barely “O’s.” (Sorry, Hector.) ■

Notes

1. ps. *Where the sons raise meat.*

On Teaching
by Gavin Black

Repeated notes

The playing of repeated notes on organ and harpsichord has always been an issue unto itself. If two notes in a row are the same, they cannot be treated like two notes in a row that are not the same. The reason for this is simple: in order to repeat a note that you are holding, you must first release it. This seems so obvious to those of us who play only these instruments that it is worth noting that this is not true in all kinds of musical performance. It is not true at the piano, except in situations that rule out the use of the damper pedal. It is not true with plucked string instruments. In singing, the repeated note phenomenon is only rarely an issue in itself. With bowed string instruments and most wind instruments, the relationships among articulation, technique, and pitch are complicated, with repeated notes as such only sometimes being a special concern.

One way to describe the situation with repeated notes at the organ or harpsichord is this: in general, any pattern of notes that doesn’t involve repeated notes can be played legato (though of course it doesn’t have to be), but repeated notes actually *cannot* be played legato. Therefore, patterns of non-repeated notes have, in theory, the full range of articulation available to them, from “as short as physically possible” to a full overlapping legato. Repeated notes have most but not all of that range of articulations available.

Since repeated notes cannot be (fully) legato, the more legato the overall style of a given performance is—whether because of the performer’s preference, or because of something that is known about the composer’s own style—the more any repeated notes are in danger of standing out, of sounding different at the very least and maybe stylistically wrong, and in any case amounting to a problem to be solved.

This, in turn, may be one reason that repeated notes have often been considered a problem—or again at least a particular issue that needs to be addressed—in hymn playing, since there is a strong tradition of playing hymns legato. Repeated notes are sometimes seen as a source of a disruptive choppiness in hymns, and thus, for some players in some circumstances, are considered worthy of being eliminated through tying.

In addition to obvious repeated notes—instances of the same note occurring two or more times in a row in one melody or one voice—there are various kinds of hidden repeated notes. These arise from voices crossing or from one voice playing a note that was just played by another voice or that is being held by another voice. They can also arise because of ornaments—when there is no repeated note printed on the page, but one arises from the notes implied by the ornament sign.

Of course, repeated notes occur in all sorts of rhythmic contexts. Sometimes the first note is an upbeat and the second a downbeat, sometimes the other way around; sometimes they are two successive weak or light beats, sometimes two successive downbeats. (Of course there are chains of more than two repeated notes in which more than one of the above may occur in succession.) Repeated notes can be fast or slow.

In all of these circumstances the same underlying fact applies: it is necessary to release the first note before playing the next one. It is certainly possible, and often necessary or a good idea, for a student or other player to think analytically about how long or short to make any note that is about to be repeated and to think about how the articulation and timing allows it to fit in to the rest of the music. This has been the subject of extensive discussion, analysis, and debate by teachers and players over many years. For example, David N. Johnson has a detailed and interesting discussion in his *Instruction Book for Beginning Organists*. Marcel Dupré is famous for having described a very clear-cut system for counting out the amount by which notes should be reduced prior to being repeated. (Perhaps I should say “infamous” since his system is widely considered to be *too* cut-and-dried to be artistically valid. However, it is worth remembering that he almost certainly intended his guidelines to be a stage in learning, not an end result.)

Rather than suggesting specific musical answers to repeated note issues, I would prefer to begin by helping students to do two things: first, to develop the greatest, most comfortable, and most reliable technical control over the physical act of playing repeated notes; and second, to develop the habit of listening closely to every part of any repeated note transaction—the articulation prior to the first note, the beginning, middle, and end of the first note, the space between the notes, the beginning, middle, and end of the second note, and so on. Once a student has made good progress on these things, then he or she will be able to make choices about how to play repeated notes in various different contexts, and these choices will be able to reflect the whole range of possibilities.

There is, I believe, a simple key to developing the greatest possible technical command of the playing of repeated notes: *play them with different fingers, one from the other*. That is, if you have played the first note with finger *x* and are holding it with finger *x*, then it is appropriate to play the second note (that is, the repetition) with any finger other than *x*. It is not OK to play it with *x*. This means that a note repeated more than once can be played with fingers *x-y-x-y* etc., or with fingers *x-y-z-a-b-c* etc., until the fingers run out, but not, again, *x-x-x-x* etc.

When a player repeats a note with the same finger that is holding it, that finger must travel both up, off the key, and back down, to play the note again, in the

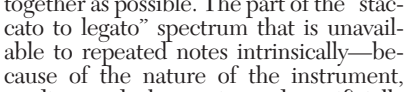
time that makes up the space between the two notes. This sets up a conflict between making that space short—playing the notes *close* to legato, at least—and executing the gesture comfortably. If the physical gesture involved is not comfortable, then the musical gesture will almost certainly sound awkward; playing a repeated note with the same finger greatly reduces the extent to which the gesture can come across as musically continuous. That is, either the repetition will have a large enough space between the notes to sound significantly disconnected, or it will have an awkward "hiccup" quality caused by an effort to push the two notes as close together as possible. The part of the "staccato to legato" spectrum that is unavailable to repeated notes intrinsically—because of the nature of the instrument, as discussed above—is made artificially greater by playing the notes with the same finger, and the range of possible, successful, articulations is narrowed.

It is also true that the act of moving one finger up and then back down is, among all of the gestures we make at the keyboard, one of the ones that is most likely to create tension in the hand. The "u-turn" that the finger makes at the top of that arc is a motion that is prone to tension. If it is not dealt with in some way, this tension can build up and, since essentially every passage of music has some repeated notes in it, this can lead to tense playing overall, even for a player who is consciously trying to play in a relaxed, light way.

In repeating a note with a different finger, the player can prepare the new finger in advance, and then release the initial finger smoothly while bringing the new finger into position to play the note and then playing the note. This is an intrinsically smooth, relaxed gesture, and it can actually serve to reduce tension that might have begun to accumulate in the hand.

François Couperin wrote in his *L'Art de Toucher le Claveçin* that he could tell by ear alone the difference between a note repeated with the same finger and one repeated with different fingers. (This was in the context of the playing of ornaments, which I will discuss briefly below.) When I first read that claim, years ago, I thought it was more or less impossible: that it was probably an exaggerated boast by someone whose eminence was great enough to permit him to get away with it. I would now make that same claim: I believe that, except in rare circumstances, I can detect that difference just by listening.

Once any teacher, student, or other player begins to be able to hear that difference, the motivation to work on playing repeated notes with different fingers follows automatically. Fortunately, it is an extremely easy thing to do. It is no harder, by and large, than playing those notes with the same finger. In fact, once it becomes second nature, then the fact that it is *easier*—that is, smoother, more natural—physiologically, makes it seem easier as a practical (and psychological) matter.



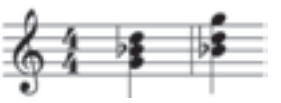
Example 1

For a student to get accustomed to the feel and sound of repeated notes played this way, the best exercises are simple enough that they scarcely need to be written out (see Example 1). In this example, the student can play the notes at a variety of different tempos and with a variety of different fingerings: all the notes with any one finger (for comparison); pairs such as 2-3, 3-2, 3-4, 4-3, 3-1, or any others; or chains of fingers such as 2-3-4-5, 1-3-4-3, etc. The student should also experiment with repeating the same note but changing the rhythmic grouping. This can be done such that rhythmic groupings correspond to fingering patterns (that is, a duple grouping with a paired fingering such as 3-2, or a four-finger pattern such as 2-3-4-5; and a triple grouping with a three-finger pattern such as 4-3-2 or a six-finger pattern such as 2-3-4-5-4-3). Or it can be done with rhythmic groupings that are different from the fingering groups, such as a triple grouping with a paired fingering. In this case, the downbeat of each group shifts a finger from one time to the next.

It is very important to remember that repeating a note with a new finger does not mean slipping the new finger onto the note silently while still holding it and then repeating it with that (new) finger, which is now holding the note. This is a temptation—probably subconscious—that many students experience. Of course this is identical to repeating the note with the same finger: the supposedly new finger has become the incumbent finger.

Example 2

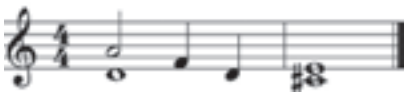
Further exercises can put the experience into a musical context. These can begin with something simple, such as Example 2. This can be fingered in a number of ways, such as 2-3-4-5-4-3-4-3-2-3, or 3-4-5-4-3-2-3-2-3-4, or (again, for comparison) 2-3-4-4-3-2-2-1-1-2. The student should remember to keep everything as light, relaxed, and supple as possible. (It is possible to lose the advantages of using different fingers on repeated notes by playing with stiffness or tension.) The student should try different articulations: for example, making all of the non-repeated notes legato, and the repeated notes as smooth as possible; or making everything lightly detached so that the repeated notes are not articulated any differently from the rest of the line.



Example 3

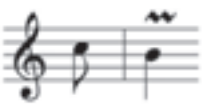
A chord pattern such as that in Example 3 can be tried with various fingerings, such as RH: 1,3,5/2,3,5, or LH: 5,3,1/4,2,1, and, for comparison, RH: 1,2,3/2,3,5, and LH: 5,3,2/3,2,1.

In Example 4 there is a hidden repeated note. If the two middle-Ds are played with the same finger, it will be difficult or impossible to make the two voices clear. The final quarter-note of the first measure will sound like a released and repeated note in the lower voice. A fingering such as 5,2/3/1//4,2 or 5,1/3/2//5,3 will make it possible for the middle-D to sound like it arises from the upper voice. This comes about because the necessary early release of the whole-note D can be smooth and unobtrusive. In this example, it would also work well for the left hand—any finger—to play the whole note, and for the right hand to play all of the other notes.



Example 4

In many ornament situations such as this common one in Example 5, there are hidden repeated notes (assuming that the trill starts on C). A prudent way to work out a fingering here is to decide first of all which fingers should play the trill—say 3/2—and then to make sure that the note immediately before the trill is played with a different finger, say 4 or 2. Many problems that students (and others!) have playing ornaments are in fact problems with setting the ornaments up correctly. If, in this example, the student plays the C with the third finger and then repeats the C with that same finger as the first note of the trill, the attempt to play the trill will be undermined by tension before it has even begun. If the eighth-note C is played with 2, and the C that begins the trill is played with 3, then the trill will get off to a lighter, more fluent start.



Example 5

Students and teachers can invent exercises to try different repeated-note fingerings, and can extract repeated-note situations from repertoire to use as exercises, before going on to finger and

practice such passages in their original contexts. It is important to try different fingering, including those same-note fingerings that I would not recommend, in order to learn what the differences are between them. After a while, if a student finds the approach described here convincing it, becomes second nature, and, if anything, extra thought is required to play a repeated note with the *same* finger. (I sometimes need to do this as a demonstration, and I often fail to do so, out of habit!)

Sometimes a note pattern is such that it is actually impossible to change fingers on repeated notes. This is because the relevant fingers are doing something else. When this happens, then a student can draw on what he or she has learned through practicing the technique described here to be aware of what the goal is—in both feeling and sound—for those repeated notes. That awareness gives the student the best chance of coming close to achieving that sound or feeling even when the best technique for achieving it is not available. This can involve first isolating the repeated notes from the rest of the texture and practicing them separately with a good different-fingered fingering. After this, with all of the notes back in place, the memory of what the repeated notes would ideally sound like—and a generally very relaxed, smooth touch—will enable the student to get the best results under the circumstances. ■

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Music for Voices and organ

by James McCray

Pre-Easter: Lent and More

> A musician cannot move others unless he himself is moved.
> —*Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach Essay (1753)*

Lent quietly stands between two periods of seasonal joy, Epiphany and Easter. It begins with Ash Wednesday, which in 2009 occurs on February 25, and lasts through the return of Daylight Savings Time (March 8), the beginning of spring (March 20), Palm Sunday (April 5), and Holy Week, which leads into Easter (April 12). Generally, the church music of Lent tends to be slow, contemplative, and serious, yet the secular events mentioned, as well as the return of the baseball season and month-long drive toward basketball's Final Four offers great contrasts.

Yet, the weather may be the greatest influence on singers' attitudes toward weekly attendance at rehearsals and services; although it is said that "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb," that is not universally true in many areas of the country, especially during Holy Week (April 5–12). During this time of the year, poor weather may bring disappointments for church choir directors. Let's all hope for a mild early spring in 2009.

In many churches, the weeks leading to Easter involve the performance of a cantata. Traditional churches often use a Baroque work, perhaps by Bach or Buxtehude; with careful planning in choosing a work with an appropriate text for the day, integrating this into a weekly service retains liturgical cohesiveness. More common, however, is the use of a generic contemporary work, and generally the congregation is more receptive to this music. The music has a more familiar style, often with very memorable melodies and simple harmonies; for choir directors this usually is safer and probably results in more external support. Typical choir members are even more comfortable with this less sophisticated music, so it is easy to see why publishers produce such extensive numbers of publications each season. As Sir Ernest Newman (1868-1959) pointed out in *A Music Critic's Holiday*, "A man responds or fails to respond to certain music by virtue not only of what the music is, but of what he is."

Music that is appropriate to the season is sometimes provided in a concert setting rather than as part of the service. Performing a *Requiem* such as those by Fauré, Rutter, or Mozart is common during Holy Week. Having several churches join in such a production is a valuable contribution to the community. There are many advantages to these endeavors such as reductions in cost, larger choirs and audience, and generally a more accomplished musical experience for everyone. Concerts provide an opportunity for choirs to expand and elevate their weekly music contributions and usually rejuvenate choir members. Performing an extended work is a worthy experience that should not be underestimated in terms of group benefits.

So, in these dark days of Lent, music productions, weather, and secular events may be significant contributing factors to the success of the life of the church. Our job as choir directors is to focus on making worship be more meaningful, and we should manage our rehearsals to keep spirits high while working on music that may have oppressive texts. As Boethius (480?–524?) observed, "Music is a part of us, and either ennobles or degrades our behavior."

***Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley*, arr. Ken Berg. SATB unaccompanied, Choristers Guild, CMA 979, $1.60 (M+)**.

This traditional spiritual begins with a long vocal solo (male or female) above sustained choral humming. The familiar melody continues in the soprano section above syllabic choral chords. Later the melody shifts to the bass section and the humming returns. There is some divisi in the loud dramatic final section, which builds to a climax that is followed by a quiet coda in a return of the soloist above the choir.

***I See His Blood upon the Rose*, Michael Bedford. SATB unaccompanied, GIA Publications, G-6420, $1.50 (M).**

Using the poetry of late 19th-century Irish poet Joseph Plunkett, Bedford's setting is in an ABA format for the three verses. The middle verse is faster and more contrapuntal. The general mood of this anthem, however, is calm and quiet.

***O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus*, arr. Jack Schrader. SATB and piano, Hope Publishing Co., C 5508, $1.70 (M-).**

Based on the tune BUNESSAN, Schrader's arrangement has a flowing accompaniment for most of the four verses. The first verse is in unison and could be sung by soloists. The music is not difficult, with the choral parts on two staves. Easy enough for small choirs.

***Merciful God*, arr. Craig Courtney. SATB, keyboard, with optional flute or violin solo, Alfred Music, 29378, $1.95 (M-).**

This sensitive work is also available in SAB or with additional strings although this edition includes the solo flute or violin part on the back cover. The choral parts are on two staves with only about 30% in true four-part arrangement. Simple and somewhat repetitive, but a work that will be well received by the choir and congregation.

***A Song at the Crossroads*, Larry Shackley. SATB, piano, and optional violin, Beckenhorst Press, Inc., BP 1823-2, $1.60 (M-).**

Using a text based on Jeremiah 29, this easy anthem is on two staves for the choir, often with phrases in unison or parallel thirds. The piano part has flowing arpeggios; the violin is indicated by cue-sized, smaller notes integrated into the keyboard part, and a separate part will be needed for performance since it is not included with the score (BP 1823A, $2.50).

***Ave Verum Corpus*, Francis Jackson. SATB unaccompanied, Paraclete Press, PPM 00848, $1.60 (M).**

Only a Latin text is provided for this contrapuntal motet. The work is well crafted with interesting developments of ideas. Sensitive, beautiful music on a text for Good Friday. Highly recommended.

***Were You There?*, Joel Raney. SATB with optional prepared rhythm, Hope Publishing Co., C 5503, $1.90 (M).**

There are two optional items for purchase with this setting. There is a rehearsal/performance CD (5503C, $24.95), plus one for additional rhythm parts (C 5503R, $20.00), which brings a new dimension to this African-American spiritual. The mood indicated is "Slow Gospel Groove," and the accompaniment is filled with jazzy chords in syncopation. The choral parts are on two staves. After an extended introduction with short choral statements, the familiar melody is sung by the men with gospel responses from the women. Although not everyone may like the style of the setting, it has an interesting character and contrasts with the usual version of this melody.

***My Song Is Love Unknown*, John Leavitt. SATB, SA soli, 2 flutes, string quintet and organ or organ alone, Augsburg Fortress, 9780800649852, $3.75 (M).**

This Lenten cantata has seven movements, with the first a five-page instrumental sinfonia. Two of the movements are for the soloists. The choral parts are on two staves, with some mild dissonances. Two movements are entitled "Hymn" and are based on the music of John Ireland; the first is in a choral unison. This would be a solid addition to a church's Lenten repertoire.

***Requiem*, Mack Wilberg. SATB, mezzo-soprano and baritone soli, and large orchestra, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-380454-8, vocal score, $11.95 (D-).**

This impressive 40-minute work uses both English and Latin texts. There are seven movements, which mix traditional and contemporary texts appropriate to the setting. The orchestral parts are only on rental from Oxford, but the accompaniment could be played by piano or organ. The choral parts are on two staves with a mixture of homophonic and polyphonic styles; they are not technically difficult and the setting is designed so