

BSO and Tanglewood Festival Chorus in Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony at 8:00. Holy cow! And this from a man who missed much of last season because of serious illness. Hey Jimmy, what do you want to do tomorrow?

There's nothing to it

The thing about virtuosity is that it takes infinite effort to make it look easy. And when it can look easy it sounds good. A student musician might tackle a great masterwork and exult that he "got through it" when the performance was finally over. "Getting through it" is not the apex of the musical or artistic experience.

I think it's correct to say that a virtuoso is born. Unless one is endowed with particular gifts, one cannot become a virtuoso. But he who is born with those gifts and doesn't embrace them by dedicating his life to nurturing and developing them squanders what he has been given. The musician who plays scales and arpeggios by the hour achieves the appearance of effortlessness. The musician whose power of thought, concentration, and memory allows him to absorb and recall countless dizzying scores achieves the ability to knock off performances of multiple masterworks in a single day. Have you ever stopped to wonder at the spectacle of the great performer having to "cancel due to illness," only to be replaced at the last minute by an artist who dashes across the country, roars from the airport to the concert hall, combs his hair, washes his hands, and walks on stage to play a concerto with a strange conductor, a strange orchestra, and a strange piano? There's nothing to it.

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I feel privileged that my work brings me in contact with some of our greatest instruments and therefore, some of our greatest players. These thoughts on virtuosity are fed by the many thrilling moments I've had chatting with a great player at the console of a legendary organ. He draws a stop or pushes a piston and rattles off a passage, tries it on another combination, tries it with different phrasing or inflection. His conversation reveals that he is always thinking, always questioning, always searching for the actual essence of the music. There's a depth of understanding of the relationship between the instrument and the acoustics of the room, between the intentions of the composer of the will of the re-creative performer.

Wendy and I have just gotten back to our sublet apartment in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. This afternoon we heard Ken Cowan play the dedicatory recital of the large new Schoenstein organ at St. James' Episcopal Church on Madison Avenue at 71st Street. There was a large-screen video monitor set up on the chancel steps showing Ken's work at the console with three different angles. There's a great debate about whether or not this detracts from the experience. I love it. The organ is alone in its concealment of its players. Excepting the relatively few concert venues where the console is placed on the stage, most organists are completely hidden from view when they play. The extreme is the organ with Rückpositiv in a rear gallery. (I remember one concert where the organist was sitting on the bench before the doors were opened and announced

he was about to start by playing a simple chord on a Principal. The audience never even laid eyes on him before he started. I can understand the desire to allow the music to speak for itself, but isn't the performance of music a human endeavor and a human achievement?)

It's great fun to watch an artist like Ken work the console, and seeing it on a clear screen adds greatly to the experience in my opinion. And of course, if you don't like it, you don't have to watch! The orchestration of Ken's playing is the point. And of course, the Schoenstein organ is symphonic in design and intention—a great marriage between artist and instrument. It was a wonderful concert—fascinating programming and great artistry in a beautiful church building.

§

This little string of remembrances, inspired by Joan Sutherland's obituary, seems to be about the humanness of music-making. Some great musicians are haughty and unapproachable. I was once eating in a restaurant at the same time (not the same table) as Lorin Maazel, then conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra. He stood out because he stood up—when the waiter was ready to take his order he stood and announced the orders of everyone in his party. I don't know if they knew beforehand what they would be eating. It seemed to me to be the performance of "a very great man." I doubt he would have graced the Sunday School class of a suburban Episcopal church.

When a great virtuoso connects with the audience as a human being everyone learns a lot. As Horowitz said, it's about communicating feelings. ■

On Teaching

by Gavin Black



Boëllmann Suite Gothique Part 3: Menuet Gothique

This month's column focuses on the *Menuet Gothique*, the second movement of Boëllmann's *Suite Gothique*.

The *Menuet Gothique* is an extraordinarily tuneful piece of music. It has always been right at the top of my list of pieces which, when I am teaching them or otherwise have them on my mind, tend to run through my head as I am walking along the street or relaxing. I believe that this—although it is just a subjective

reaction on my part—provides a clue about some effective ways to practice the piece, as I will discuss below. I will start out, however, with a few thoughts about the overall shape and structure of the *Menuet*.

Structure

The form of the piece starts out as that of a classic minuet. That is, it is in triple time, neither very fast nor very slow, and it begins with two phrases, each of which is repeated. (In this piece, the first time through a phrase and its "repeat" are not identical, but I am treating them as identical for this brief analysis. I will also discuss this below.) The lengths of the two phrases are in a traditional, classic proportion: the first phrase eight measures, the second sixteen. Furthermore, the opening of the second phrase is a variant of the second half of the opening phrase, or perhaps a kind of answer to it. This way of linking the two halves of a binary keyboard dance—minuet or any other—was common at least from the time of Froberger, that is, from the mid-seventeenth century.

The next section of the piece—beginning with the upbeat to m. 49—continues the classical minuet structure, at least at first. Since it is in the same triple time, but presents different thematic material, it has the feeling of the traditional trio section of the classic "minuet and trio" form. (This was a form in which one minuet was followed by another, which in turn was followed by a literal repeat of the first minuet. This was one solution to the issue—always present in music—of the balance between contrast and continuity, or between the familiar and the new. Typical examples of a minuet and trio can be found, for example, in the first "French Suite" or the fourth "English Suite" of Bach. And this form was commonly used in the Classical period, in symphonies and other orchestral music as well as in keyboard music. Because the third section in this form is exactly the same as the first, it can also be thought of as a rondo or ritornello form.) The section beginning at m. 49, which I am considering evocative of the "trio" of the minuet and trio form, opens with another eight-bar phrase, which is, like the opening phrase of the piece, then repeated. This in turn is followed by a new eight-bar phrase. According to the model that we are developing, that is, according to the way that phrases have been dealt with in the piece so far, this phrase—mm. 65–72—should also be repeated. If Boëllmann had repeated these measures and then directed the player to return to the beginning and play to measure 48, ending the piece there, then the whole work would have been in the most traditional, old-fashioned, minuet and trio form.

(I suspect that the classic structure of the beginning of this piece, something not by any means found in all minuets written in the late nineteenth century, reflects the composer's intention to write a piece that deserves to be called "Gothique". Of course, the minuet was a Baroque rather than Gothic form, but this is, at least at the beginning, an old-fashioned piece, evocative of old-fashioned style.)

However, Boëllmann does not repeat the second half of the "trio" or return to the beginning just yet. Instead of the repeat of mm. 65–72, the composer gives us new material loosely based on what has come just before it. The next 40 or

so measures of the piece consist of material derived from what I am considering the "trio" section, interrupted occasionally—three times—by short bursts of material derived from the opening theme. This also makes a sort of rondo or ritornello form. It sets up a final return of the opening theme, without the repeats that characterized its appearance in mm. 1–48, but otherwise essentially the same. This "da capo"—mm. 113–136—brings the piece to a close.

(To me the penultimate section of this piece, mm. 73–110, is strangely reminiscent of the middle section of the fugue from Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in E Minor*, BWV 548. In that [much longer] section, rather free-sounding passage-work is also occasionally interrupted by brief, almost abrupt-sounding, statements of the opening theme.)

The passages that I have been calling "repeats" are, as I suggested above, not actually identical to the passages being repeated (or, so to speak, not quite repeated). They differ in the following ways: the bass lines migrate from manuals to pedal, or vice versa; the right hand parts, bearing the treble melodies, change octaves; and left hand parts, essentially doubling the right hand in octaves, come and go. Meanwhile, the treble melodies and the bass lines remain, as far as the note patterns are concerned—octaves aside—identical. These note changes on the repeats are accompanied by changes in the suggested registrations, and all of the changes work in sync with one another. The phrases in which the treble is higher, the bass is in the pedals, and the texture is thicker are also the passages in which the registrations are louder, that is *Grande Orgue* with couplers, marked *ff*. The manuals-only phrases—treble lower, texture thinner—are marked to be played on the *Récit*, *p* or *pp*. Either the changes in registration alone or the changes in the note picture alone would create a noticeable *forte/piano* contrast in the repeats. Together they reinforce one another and make that contrast stronger. To me it makes sense to think of the changes in the note picture in these repeats to be a change in registration rather than a change in the music. I am pretty sure that listeners hear it that way.

Tunefulness

The tunefulness of this piece derives from two things, I believe. First of all, the melody in the upper voice is memorable and easy to sing or hum or whistle. It is a tune that would probably make a good hymn (more so, I would say, than the melody of the first movement of the suite, even though that movement is marked "Choral"). Second, the bass line is—like a quintessential continuo line from the late Baroque, say of Handel or Telemann—a line that combines convincing melodic direction with strong unambiguous underlining of the harmony. It is a line that exists to support and bring out the melodic strength of the upper voice. In this respect it also resembles the bass line of many hymns, though it covers a much wider range. Also, the piece is—except for the interaction between the treble and the bass, and that only in parts of the piece—unambiguously non-contrapuntal. The inner voices are important, but their importance is in the way that they provide harmonic support for primarily the melody and secondarily the bass line, and in the ways that they influence volume through the changes in texture

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Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



described above. There is no moment in this piece when the listener's attention is meant to focus primarily on an inner voice or when that attention is meant to perform the feat of dividing itself among several voices in a way that shortchanges none of them. There is always a principal melody, and, with the exception of a couple of measures around m. 78, it is always in the top voice.

are written over two-note groupings, the first two quarter-notes of a measure. This happens in the quarter-note bass line at the beginning (Example 1). And in the treble elsewhere (Example 2).

Staccato dots are used mostly in two of the ways shown in the examples above: either on a third beat quarter-note following a pair of slurred quarter-notes or in the four-beat eighth-note upbeat pat-

tern that is characteristic of what I have been calling the trio sections.

What is the purpose of all this articulation? Of course it is not particularly ambiguous what it means. The slurs mean real, perhaps even overlapping, legato; the dots mean very short notes, perhaps as short as they can be without losing pitch sense and sonority. Non-legato, which would seem to apply to notes that have neither of the other markings, is somewhere in between. There can be, within the meaning of the terms, some variation in legato and staccato and a lot of variation in non-legato. However, what is it all in aid of? This is a question that does not ever necessarily have—or require—an answer. But if it does have an answer, that answer might help the student/performer make specific decisions about how to carry out the articulations, and might make it easier for those articulations to come out sounding natural and convincing. I suspect that in this case there is an answer or two to that kind of question.

The slurs over pairs of quarter-notes sometimes occur when the rest of the notes in the texture are half-notes (Example 3) and otherwise occur, when they are in the treble as in Example 2 above, in such a way as to join a second beat to a downbeat and emphasize that downbeat. Both of these uses of the slur seem to be designed to create or to bring out the kind of *lilt* associated with the minuet.

This is a triple-meter rhythm that is better represented by this:



than by this:



I would say that interpreting these slurs as saying “feel and express a lilting motion” rather than as anything more technical than that would be the best guide to playing them naturally and flexibly.

When the bass line moves to the pedal, beginning in m. 8 and then throughout, the articulation marks are absent. There are no articulation marks anywhere in the pedal part. Does this mean that the bass line should not express the same articulation when it is in the pedal that it has when it is in the left hand? Or does it mean that the composer has assumed that the player will take the articulation given in the left hand as a guide for how that line is meant to be played? I am not sure that it is possible to decide this by rigorous logic. To me the second possibility makes more artistic sense. The concept that I outlined above—articulation in service of the minuet-like lilt—can guide the ears and feet in shaping the pedal line. That is, the specifics of legato and staccato—how much overlap, or how

Practicing

This suggests a starting point for practicing the piece. The equivalent for this piece to playing and learning separate voices in a contrapuntal work is first to play and learn the soprano melody. That is, by playing it all by itself, without the rest of the right hand part: playing it as naturally and easily as possible, letting it become second nature, a tune that will go through your head when you least expect it. For this purpose the repeats, with changed octaves and thicker texture, don't matter. The next step is to practice the bass line, in the left hand, enough to get comfortable with it, and then put the bass and the melody together, still without the inner-voice chords. This is a straightforward enough procedure that it doesn't really need a formal protocol, but if it had one, it might look like this:

- 1) play the melody from mm. 1–8 a dozen times
- 2) do the same with the melody from mm. 17–32
- 3) play the left-hand part from mm. 1–8 a dozen times
- 4) do the same with the left hand part from mm. 17–32
- 5) put #1 and #3 together about a dozen times
- 6) put #2 and #4 together about a dozen times

(Then do the same thing with any other measures where new material is introduced, such as mm. 49–52 or 73–78.)

The purpose of this is the same as that of practicing each voice in a fugue and then putting those voices together in pairs. It is to get the ears to follow the most important melodic and rhythmic elements of the piece so naturally, so instinctively, so strongly, that it will be nearly impossible not to bring those elements out convincingly in performance, even when the complication of playing all the notes is added back in.

Articulation

At this stage it is time to think about the meaning of the various indications for articulation given by the composer. Such signs are almost entirely absent from both the first and the last movements of the *Suite Gothique*. They are found throughout the third movement, the *Prière à Notre-Dame*, but only to do one thing, namely to delineate long phrases with slurs. In this movement, articulation is used at several levels. First of all, the entire piece is marked *non-legato*. That is, the marking occurs at the very beginning and is never contradicted. Non-legato articulation is the context for the whole piece. However, within that context, a certain number of notes are marked either with slurs or with staccato dots. The vast majority of the slurs

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Fifteenth	2	Tierce	13/5	Temperament: Kellner	
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short certain notes can be or need to be to get the right effect—will be different with the deeper sounds of the pedal, but the concept can be the same.

Fingering and pedaling

When it comes to the practical side of working on this movement—that is, working out fingerings and pedalings—the (practical) truth is that the overall non-legato articulation creates great flexibility and choice. It makes things just plain easier than they would be if the long chains of chords had to be played legato. Legato in that case would have to mean legato as to non-repeated notes, with the many repeated notes as close to legato as possible. This would be entirely doable, with lots of substitution: there would not be a lot of different ways to do it. As it is, planning on an overall non-legato, each player can pretty much look at each chord separately and decide what fingering fits that chord shape the most comfortably. As usual, hand position is the main guide. Then non-legato transitions from one chord to another can be made in a way that is physically comfortable.

There are two important things to remember about this process. First, non-legato passages, whether single-note lines or chords, end up sounding more natural, closer to *cantabile*, less choppy, the more comfortable and relaxed the hands and feet are. This is because choppiness and a lack of *cantabile* are caused not by space between notes but by choppy releases and physically tense attacks. The second thing concerns the physical or technical act of putting spaces between notes or chords. If the player, having worked out a fingering or pedaling, practices at first with so much space between notes that it is easy—blissfully, unambiguously easy—to move from one note to the next, then, when those fingering or pedaling patterns are well learned, it will never be difficult to reduce the amount of space between the notes.

In the case of this *Menuet*, the act of playing the simple treble melody until it is a familiar old friend—as suggested above—will guide your ears in shaping the articulation in a way that expresses the lilting minuet-like feeling of the piece. The act of practicing the notes and chords without, at first, trying to make them anything other than very detached will create the physical, technical basis for projecting that feeling when playing all of the notes.

Next month we will look at the *Prière à Notre-Dame*. In the case of that movement, the major technical concern is indeed the shaping of long legato lines, some with one note at a time, some with more complicated textures, and therefore with more involved fingering problems.

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Music for voices and organ

by James McCray

The anchor: general anthems

It is proof of high culture to say the greatest matters in the simplest way.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Architect Louis Sullivan said that “form follows function.” For church choir directors, it is the general anthem (form) that most often functions as the weekly contribution to worship services throughout America. If directors review their repertoire selections from the past twelve months, and identify the genre of

music chosen, in most situations they will find that their unabashed musical anchor is the general anthem. These standard works have texts based on Psalms, poetry, and other similar writing, and are adaptable to most Christian worship services, especially Protestant. Instead of relating directly to the specific message of the day as determined by the lectionary, musicians have come to rely on a more general message. These texts and music are emblematic of the values that shape the lives of the congregations.

An anthem is a single-movement choral work that evolved in the late sixteenth century as a development from the Latin motet. Erik Routley, the religious historian and author, suggests that anthems are “designed to comment topically as it were, on the worship, providing a scriptural bridge between the words of the service and common life for people whose common life was entirely ruled by the church seasons.” These first anthems were composed by Tallis and Tye when the religious changes in England dictated that there should be music with English rather than Latin texts. In the early days texts were to come from the Scriptures, but today an anthem text may come from a wide variety of sources. This relaxing of text source has been a contributing factor to the increased use of “general” anthems. It should be noted, however, that church bulletins rarely identify text sources, and directors may want to consider doing that in the future. This will bring the music chosen into a greater focus within the service.

Church choral libraries are filled with musical works that are usually four to eight pages in length, accompanied, and set to texts of praise, strength, love, or other similar characteristic that is general in nature. These universal messages shed insight while bringing a feeling of inspiration through the music. They can be used most times of the year, especially in the weeks after Pentecost, which typically last almost six months of the year. Furthermore, in more specific seasons of the year, such as Lent, a general anthem usually fits comfortably into the service.

It has been said that “God speaks to us through His or Her Holy Spirit.” The chancel choir most often speaks to its congregation through the general anthem. The reviews this month feature that form and are a mixture of Scriptural and non-Scriptural texts.

Ambassadors for Christ, Austin Lovelace. SAB and keyboard, GIA Publications, G-6013, \$1.40 (E).

This setting, based on Second Corinthians 5:20, has five short verses but none use a full three-part choral texture. This primarily unison setting is sung above an easy keyboard part that is on two staves.

The Kingdom of God, Robert J. Powell. SATB and organ, Paraclete Press, PPM 01035, \$1.60 (E).

This through-composed anthem has some unison passages; when in parts, it moves syllabically, usually with similar rhythms. It is a very functional general anthem that keeps the emphasis on the text. The organ part is on two staves and is not soloistic, often doubling the voice lines.

Come, Now Is the Time to Worship, Arnold B. Sherman. SATB and keyboard with optional 3–5 handbells and rhythm instruments, Hope Publishing Co., C 5539, \$2.05 (M).

The keyboard part is very busy with running eighth-notes in the right hand; later these transfer to the left hand as pulsating octave pedal tones. The choral parts, on two staves, are syllabic, chordal, and have similar rhythms throughout. Additional instrumental parts are available from the publisher; they are not indicated in the choral score.

O Come to the House of the Lord, Roy Hopp. SATB and organ, Augsburg Fortress, 978-0-8066-9816, \$1.60 (M).

This fast and happy anthem dances along rhythmically in 6/8, then later more slowly as an unaccompanied contrast. The organ part is on two staves and helps drive the music. Each of the three sections begins with the text of the title, then continues with additional texts “to sing, to repent, and to receive help.” A delightful setting.

His Eye Is on the Sparrow, Robert Moore. SSATBB and organ, GIA Publications, G-6834, \$1.50 (M-).

Although listed SSATBB, the amount of actual divisi is very limited. After an eight-measure organ introduction, the keyboard part only doubles the voices and there is no separate music for it. The expressive choral harmony moves through frequent tempo and dynamic changes. The music is sensitive and by doubling the choral parts will be suitable for most church choirs.

Blessed Are the Peacemakers, Anne Krentz Organ. SATB and piano, Augsburg Fortress, 978-0-8306-6434-3, \$1.75 (M).

Using Matthew 5:0 as its foundation, the composer begins the setting with a four-part, accompanied setting of the text *Dona nobis pacem*; that Latin phrase is then inserted between various phrases of the title phrase. The keyboard part is busy but not difficult, and has short interlude passages between the title and Latin statements. The anthem closes with a quiet plea for peace.

Proclamation of Praise, Lloyd Larson. SATB and keyboard with optional brass and percussion, Harold Flammer Music of Shawnee Press, 35027077, \$1.80 (M).

This majestic setting has two sections. The opening is a bravura-type style with bold, regal chords that later dissolve into a flowing background. After returning to the opening material, the music changes to a bold arrangement of the popular hymn, “O God Our Help in Ages Past.” The brass and percussion parts are available as 35037078. This is a sure winner that will be used many times, and is highly recommended.

Let Praise Resound, Earlene Rentz. SATB and piano, MorningStar Music Publishers, MSM 50-3067, \$1.70 (M).

In ABA format, the outer two A sections are set in a joyful, bouncy 6/8 meter. The contrasting B section is slower in tempo and rhythmic drive. There are some brief chords, but generally the choral parts are diatonic with the same rhythms. The keyboard accompaniment is not difficult and adds to the robust spirit of the music.

Blessed, Paul Weber. SATB or unison choir and organ with optional assembly, MorningStar Music Publishers, MSM-50-0565, \$1.70 (E).

Based on Matthew 5:3, this setting is all in unison until the last section, which has some divisi. The organ often has long notes that serve as an anchor for the choir, which sings melismas on the text “blessed”. The back two pages have music for the congregation and they sing throughout the entire anthem.

New Recordings

Krazy 'Bout Kotschmar! Thomas Heywood. Pro Organo CD 7236, \$17.98 plus shipping; <www.ProOrgano.com>.

Polonaise (from *Lyric Scenes to Eugene Onégin*), Tchaikovsky; *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor*, BWV 582, J. S. Bach; *Marche Moderne*, op. 2, Lemare; *Lyric Suite*, op. 54, Grieg; *Rondo* (from *Horn Concerto No. 4*, K. 495), Mozart; *First Sonata*, op. 42, Guilman; and *Tritsch-Tratsch-Polka*, op. 214, Johann Strauss, Jr. Except for the Lemare, all works were transcribed or arranged by Thomas Heywood.

The masterful playing on this recording brings out the best features of the famous Kotschmar organ at Merrill Auditorium in Portland, Maine. The artist highlights themes and achieves orchestral effects through the fluent use of multiple enclosed divisions and fast, effortless manual changes. One finds only a few stark contrasts of registration called for in the music; rather, Heywood excels at smooth crescendi and decrescendi through both registration and the swell boxes. Only occasionally did I experience the seasick feeling one finds with lesser players trying to do this. Heywood conveys a good sense of texture and, other than in the Guilman, generally maintains a light effect with plenty of bounce.

Of course, none of this would be possible without such a superb “orchestral” instrument with plenty of tonal resources. Located in the municipal auditorium, the 101-rank Austin organ boasts numerous 8' stops. This allows Heywood to employ a variety of luscious string sounds, characteristic solo and chorus reeds, and a wonderful orchestral flute to give the impression of a well-appointed orchestra. Although it nicely bolsters a full-organ sound, the Great Mixture added in 2003 seems to break the illusion of a full orchestra in some works. The organ has several enclosed divisions, with Antiphonal and Echo located above the auditorium. On the recording, I was unaware of the location of these divisions, but rather got the sense of a well-unified symphonic effect with good orchestration.

Tchaikovsky's *Polonaise* opens the CD with great dignity and energy. The transcription remains faithful to the symphonic score, while giving a sense of instrumental groupings and nuance. In those few places where the orchestral texture exceeds human ability, one hardly notices when Heywood eliminates a musical idea. The contrasting soft section, for instance, presents four things going on at once, each desiring a separate division (a string texture, melody, countermelody, and a bass line). In these passages, Heywood depends upon the perception of a well-established string texture and drops it for one measure to emphasize a countermelody—one gets the impression that the strings continue. In the contrasting quiet sections, the wispy string parts are particularly convincing. As expected, Heywood interjects reeds on a separate manual to emphasize brass entrances at choice points.

These days, one rarely finds recordings of Bach on an instrument so ill-suited for a period Baroque performance. Due to modern scholarship, and recordings performed on fine Baroque and neo-Baroque instruments, listeners expect the timbres and registrations Bach may have known. Furthermore, a knowledgeable audience would rightly expect a recently trained artist to use up-to-date historical performance techniques. Sensitive to the instrument, in contrast, Heywood brings a serious new reading to Bach's *Passacaglia* in full-blown symphonic fashion—he employs all the techniques, registrations, and expression of a masterful orchestral arranger. Instrumental groupings and solos highlight the textures implied by the music, including some echo and antiphonal effects that had never occurred to me. Whenever possible, Heywood splits the hands between keyboards to highlight countermelodies; in other places he em-

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