

All Hymns are Not Created Equal

Playing the Difficult Hymns

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Playing “difficult” hymns is exactly the same as playing “easy” hymns, as long as you can find a way to break it down into a series of smaller problems.

Agenda

- Challenging Pedal Parts
- Meter
- Tacet Phrases
- Repeated Notes and Tying
- Song-Style Hymns
- Other issues?

Challenging Pedal Parts

- Use basic techniques to solve “advanced” problems
- Choose pedaling that effectively solves the problem at hand:
 - Limit motion where possible
 - Use efficient techniques and limit use of less efficient techniques where possible
 - Practice pedal alone until you have *mastered* it (i.e., until it is easy)

Example: *O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown*

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown" in bass clef, 2/4 time, and the key of D major. The score is presented in three staves. Several passages are highlighted with red rounded rectangular callouts:

- Staff 1: Measures 5-6 (F#4, G4, A4, B4).
- Staff 2: Measures 2-3 (F#4, G4, A4, B4) and measures 4-5 (F#4, G4, A4, B4).
- Staff 3: Measures 1-4 (F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, B4, A4, G4) and measures 7-8 (F#4, G4, A4, B4).

Example: O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown" in bass clef, G major, and common time. The score is presented in three staves. Several passages are highlighted with red rounded rectangular callouts:

- Staff 1: Measures 4-5, featuring a melodic line with eighth notes and a dotted quarter note.
- Staff 2: Measures 2-3 and 5-6, featuring similar melodic lines with eighth notes and a dotted quarter note.
- Staff 3: Measures 1-4 and 7-8, featuring melodic lines with eighth notes and a dotted quarter note.

Example: *O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown*

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown" in bass clef, 2/4 time, and the key of D major (two sharps). The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains five measures, with the third measure highlighted in a light green box. The second system contains five measures, with the second measure highlighted in a light green box and the fourth measure highlighted in a light red box. The third system contains five measures, with the first measure highlighted in a light red box and the fourth measure highlighted in a light red box. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and accidentals (sharps and naturals). The highlighted sections focus on specific melodic and harmonic patterns within the piece.

Example: *O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown*

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown" in bass clef, G major, and common time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, with the second measure highlighted in green. The second system contains measures 5 through 8, with the fifth and sixth measures highlighted in green. The third system contains measures 9 through 12, with the ninth and tenth measures highlighted in red. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Example: *O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown*

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown" in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The score is presented in three staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 6. The second staff contains measures 7 through 10. The third staff contains measures 11 through 14. Several measures are highlighted with colored boxes: measures 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 are highlighted in green, while measure 13 is highlighted in red. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and half notes, with various articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

Compound Meters

- Meter: a regular pattern of strong and weak beats
- Simple meter: a meter in which the beat is divided into two equal parts (2/4, 3/4, 4/4)
- Compound meter: a meter in which the beat is divided into three equal parts (Example: 6/8, 9/8, 12/8)

Compound Meters

- The 1985 Edition of the Hymnal eliminated almost all use of compound meters
- This change poses a few interesting (but rare) problems
- Example: *O My Father*

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O My Father

Fervently ♩ = 42-56

1. O my Fa - ther, thou that dwell - est In the high and
 2. For a wise and glo - rious pur - pose Thou hast placed me
 3. I had learned to call thee Fa - ther, Thru thy Spir - it
 4. When I leave this frail ex - is - tence, When I lay this

glo - rious place, When shall I re - gain thy pres - ence
 here on earth And with - held the rec - ol - lec - tion
 from on high, But, un - til the key of knowl - edge
 mor - tal by, Fa - ther, Moth - er, may I meet you

Tacet Phrases

- Many hymns feature phrases where the lower voices drop out temporarily.
- Since many people sing the melody rather than parts, some organists consider it good practice to double the melody in the left hand to provide support for men singing during these phrases.

daugh - ters wept a - round. A sol - emn dark - ness
 groaned be - neath your load; He shed a thou - sand
 glo - ry died for men. But lo! what sud - den
 tomb for - bade him rise. Che - ru - bic le - gions

veiled the sky; A sud - den trem - bling shook the ground.
 drops for you, A thou - sand drops of pre - cious blood.
 joys were heard! The Lord, though dead, re - vived a - gain.
 guard him home And shout him wel - come to the skies.

Repeated Notes and Tying

- Problem: Hymns are *vocal* music, and rendering them successfully on the organ requires skillful adaptation
- Solution: Tying *some* repeated notes helps create a sustained, idiomatic organ sound

Repeated Notes and Tying

- Don't tie repeated notes in the soprano
 - Exception: Soprano/Alto common tones
- Repeated notes in the lower three voices may be either tied or repeated
- Tie from strong beats into weak beats, rather than weak into strong
- Avoid the “drumbeat” effect by occasionally changing the pattern of ties

Jesus, Once of Humble Birth

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Solemnly ♩ = 76-88

1. Je - sus, once of hum - ble birth, Now in glo - ry
2. Once a meek and low - ly Lamb, Now the Lord, the
3. Once he groaned in blood and tears; Now in glo - ry
4. Once for - sak - en, left a - lone, Now ex - alt - ed

comes to earth. Once he suf - fered grief and pain; Now he
great I Am. Once up - on the cross he bowed; Now his
he ap - pears. Once re - ject - ed by his own, Now their
to a throne. Once all things he meek - ly bore, But he

Song Style

- Song-style hymns present a particular challenge to organists
- These hymns often feature many repeated notes as well as pervasive dotted rhythms
- Rendering these hymns effectively on the organ requires careful thought and preparation

Put your shoul - der to the wheel; push a - long, push a - long.

Do your du - ty with a heart full of song, full of song.

Questions?

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