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St. Olaf College

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LEADING DIVERSE CONGREGATIONAL SONG FROM THE ORGAN

CALVIN COLLEGE – JANUARY 2014

John Ferguson

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St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN**

I. Primary responsibility

II. Concepts

- A. Vocal music – transcription (improvisation)
- B. Breathe!
- D. Tactus and tempo
- C. Repeated notes

III. The Trust Factor - Consistency

IV. Hymn - Liturgy Playing

- A. Play text - Hymn is Text
 - 1. Music as rhetoric
 - 2. Organist as exegete

B. Registration

- 1. Respect your instrument
- 2. Use ears - listen away from organ
- 3. Hymn registrations different from literature
- 4. Think ensemble
- 5. Three basic combinations
- 6. Other possibilities
- 7. How to use
 - a. Chart for each hymn
 - b. Cresc. throughout
 - c. Dim. throughout
 - d. Climax in middle
 - e. *F*, down, *ff* (most common)
 - f. Few special, unique

C. Alternation

- 1. Women and children - men
- 2. Harmony - unison
- 3. Unaccompanied (run and hide)
- 4. Descanting
- 5. Published reharmonizations and intrada

D. Simple elaborations

1. Fill in thirds
2. Solo out tune
3. Expand above concepts – combine above
 - a. Fill in larger intervals
 - b. Keeping things going
4. Tune in other voices
5. Pedal point
6. Unison beginning
7. Alternation - unison & harmony
8. Paul Manz kick - off beat accent
9. Ferguson crunch - complex sonorities with solo tune
10. Reharmonizations – cautions – less is more

V. Introductions – intonations - intradas

A. Hymns

1. Pitch
2. Spirit
3. Time to find page
4. Tune and tempo

B. Improvisation of the above - being freed from the page

1. Memorize tune
2. Motive, motive, where are you
3. Study examples - use them as patterns

VI. Comments on Practice

A. Manuscript Paper

B. Record Yourself

C. Play for others

VII. Global Song at the Organ

A. Folk Song – regional accents – adapt, not adopt

B. Similarities

1. Theatre Organ
 - a. RH tune (16' tone)
 - b. LH accompaniment
 - c. Ped. tactus, counterpoint
2. Be where they are not
3. Registrations

C. Examples

1. Folk song
2. Spiritual
3. Gospel
4. Native American
5. Israeli
6. Jamican Folk
7. African
8. Confession Time

VIII. Resources

Hymn Playing: A Modern Colloquium, Stuart Forster, Morningstar, 90-44

Let the People Sing! A Keyboardist's Creative and Practical Guide to Engaging God's People in Meaningful Song, David Cherwien, Concordia, ISBN 0-570-01354-2

Leading the Church's Song, Robert Buckley Farlee, general editor (includes CD demonstration tracks), Augsburg, ISBN 0-8066-3591-6

Manual on Hymn Playing: A Handbook for organists, David Heller, GIA, ISBN 741050-31-9

Music Manuscript Paper

Many and Great: Introductions and Accompaniments for Global Hymns, John Ferguson, Morningstar MSM-10-767

Festival Hymns (Vol. 1-8), John Ferguson (organ 4 brass and optional tympanon), GIA

Hymn Harmonizations for Organ (Vol. 1-5), John Ferguson, GIA

CD Recordings St. Olaf Choir – *Great Hymns of Faith*, Vols I, II & III

Christmas in Boe Memorial Chapel, John Ferguson, organ and instrumentalists

(St. Olaf CD recordings all available through St. Olaf Records 1-800-363-5487)

St. Olaf Cantorei – *Songs of Grateful Praise* – A sing for Joy Hymn Festival

St. Olaf Cantorei – *Hidden in Humbleness*, GIA CD-594 *A Thousand Ages*, GIA CD-474, *Te Deum*, GIA CD-321

Sweet Manna (Alice Parker and Melodious Accord), GIA CD-434

Take Me to the Water (Alice Parker, Pamela Warrick-Smith and Melodious Accord), GIA CD-329