

Chorale Prelude

“Aus tiefer Not schrei’ ich zu dir”

P. I. Ross-Ross



In memoriam Alasdair James McMillan (2000-2012)

A Note to the Gentle Performer

Registration and dynamics

The registration given is quite precise, but is to be used as a suggestion as to the kinds of timbre that will be suitable. The Author is well aware of the variability of organ construction, so, unless you are lucky enough to play the Silbermann organ in Freiburg Dom, he thoroughly expects that your registration will be different. It is probably a good idea to choose a registration that is somewhere in the mp-mf range, and lean enough that the inner voices don't get entirely buried in the sound. (Don't overdose on mixtures, in other words.) The manuals used and the Pedal division should all roughly balance around the same dynamic levels; it is probably a good idea that the manuals be sufficiently differentiated in timbre that the top voices in the final verset stand out, but not so differentiated that the two occasions when the left hand's manual fills in an alto note (ms. 36 & 39) seem to present gaps in the line. Of course, if you can handle tenths in one hand as well as handle any resulting finger muddle, then, by all means, play these notes in the right hand.

The piece has been written for a two-manual Baroque or neo-Baroque instrument with pedals, but without a Swell division, as a kind of lowest common denominator. It can probably be played successfully on a single-manual instrument, but the pedal line is a must - a Positive is out. The compass of the manuals and pedals is feasible on most Baroque instruments.

Ornaments and phrasing

There are only three ornaments, a Pralltrill in the alto in m. 5, a turn in the descant in m. 12, and a mordent in the 2nd tenor in m. 31, all using the standard symbols. The Pralltrill can be dropped if it causes too much finger muddle (which it might, considering what the right hand is doing at that point), but will sound good if you can pull it off. It should be started on the upper auxiliary if used. The turn used is a delayed one - it is necessary to the line, so please do not omit it. The mordent is also necessary. The Author doesn't expect these last two to cause much difficulty, however.

Slurs are used (sparingly) very much in the Baroque fashion: the first note under the slur is slightly accented (a slight agogic accent on this particular class of instrument); the last note is shorter than notated, and (where applicable) detached from what follows. The normal touch for this piece should be a functional legato: not necessarily without "air" between notes, but giving the impression of an unbroken line.

Tempo and meter

The changes in tempo should be, for the most part, barely perceptible, changes of roughly 2-3 BPM. The listener should get an impression of an increase in intensity rather than a noticeable speed-up. There is a meter change at the start of the final verset (m. 33ff): this is a "geared" change, in that a quaver in the new meter has the value of a triplet quaver in the previous section. The piece reverts back to the original meter and tempo at m. 42ff, although the ground in triplet quavers continues in the tenor. It seemed to the Author that the notation based on writing the triplet quavers as straight quavers was clearer when the foreground material revolved around their value (with triplets of triplets on top of them), but that writing them as triplets made sense when the original subject returned to the foreground in its original metric values. In the section commencing at m. 33, the beaming defines the groupings of these quavers; at m. 42ff, slurs take over that duty (as a matter of legibility). The quavers in the tenor from m. 33 on should be played portamento, not staccato. (Actually, they should be as sustained as you can manage for repeated notes.)

The chorale in the Pedals maintains the same pace in crochets throughout, even when written as dotted crochets (in ms. 33-41). The pedal line should not be too prominent; neither should it be too retiring. The remarks in the section on registration and dynamics apply.

Generalities

This piece is not really intended for students, but if you, gentle reader, as a seasoned organist find there are difficulties in executing certain passages, please feel free to let the Author know by leaving a message at his SoundCloud account (he is under the name "P. I. Ross-Ross" there as well): he is not averse to writing *ossia* passages where called for. It gives the Author pleasure to write music; it should give the executant pleasure to play it.

Vale.

P. I. Ross-Ross
Ottawa, 28 March 2014.

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Oberwerk: Quintadena 8', Rohrflöte 4', Superoctav 2'
Brustwerk: Gedakt 8', Nassat 2-2/3', Quinta 1-1/3', Mixtur III
Pedal: Untersatz 32', Principalbaß 16', Octavbaß 8', Octavbaß 4'

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Lento ♩=40

OW

Poco più mosso (Tempo II)

poco ritenuto a tempo II

poco rit. a tempo

poco accel. *poco rall.* *Tempo primo* BW

27

35

molto rall.

41