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the
YOUTH *news*

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Masterclass with Dr Jan-Piet Knijff
Wachet Auf: a tricky transcription



Stephen Hough
Practical Practise Tips No 2 and 3



*Organ Scholars Joshua Ryan & Victor Matthews in Oxford,
Cambridge and Haarlem*



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Editor: Godelieve Ghavalas

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Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

A Tricky Transcription: Some Fingerings and Pedallings for BWV 645

Dr Jan-Piet Knijff

The *Sechs Chorale von verschiedener Art* (Six Chorales of Various Kinds), better known as the 'Schübler' Chorales, open with what has been called 'one of Bach's most popular compositions of all' (Werner Breig in his new Breitkopf Edition): the organ transcription of the central movement of Cantata 140, here under the title *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*.

As an organ piece, *Wachet auf* is not at all easy to play! That's all the more annoying because it *sounds* so easy. (I mean, a difficult piece that *sounds* difficult, OK—at least you can impress your audience...) How to go about fingering and pedalling for this tricky little piece? For me, a fingering must firstly be 'in sync' with the music; hopefully, the fingering that 'works' best from a musical perspective is also 'easiest', at least after a bit of work... To begin with, here is the marvellous opening line, with my preferred fingering above the staff and an alternative below.



I'm sure organists have collectively spent years with the end of b. 1. For a while, I played the third beat with 4 5, with the pinkie under—*à la* Chopin—, followed by a 2 on the B-flat. I now try to stay away from that, because to me, it does not really express the slur on the third beat. That means that one has to move one's hand no matter what, and if you move, you may as well move all the way: from 3 on the G to 3 on the B-flat. The alternative fingering below the staff makes the leap a bit smaller, but does not quite eliminate it; and on the balance, I don't like playing the middle of the bar so much with the 'outer' part of my hand.

The second line is not so easy either, especially if one wants to express all the slurs in one's fingering. The short slurs at the beginning of the second bar almost need a special fingering if you want to hear them at all. I use what may seem a very archaic fingering here. Stay very close to the key (superglue on your fingers) and don't 'twist' your fingers out of position. You just keep moving your hand very gently—that's all!



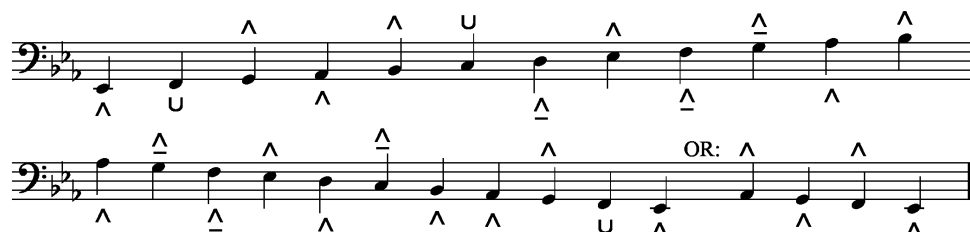
The alternative below the staff is for those who take the different slurring in b. 32 seriously; I sort of like it, but then again, it does ask for different fingering...

Here is my fingering for the third line, with some suggested 'dynamics' (not for the swell box, of course! you just 'think' the decrescendos...):



There is much more to say, but I'm already on my second and last page and have not even mentioned the pedal! For toes-only enthusiasts, this piece is either a nightmare or dead easy; but in the latter case, well, perhaps it won't always sound so good...

The cat's out of the bag: I don't believe in toes-only for this piece. Here's the deal: the earliest textbook source we have on pedal playing is the *Anleitung zur praktischen Musik* (Instruction to Practical Music) by Johann Samuel Petri, first published in 1767. Petri, who claims to have been a student of Friedemann Bach, describes extensive use of the heel; his most fancy examples display *very* virtuoso pedal playing by any standards (including four-part chords!). Here is Petri's pedalling for the E-flat-major scale:

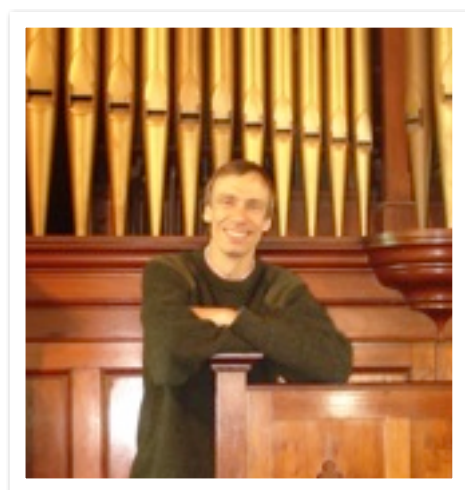


Now if this guy Petri could do this in 1767, you're not telling me that his teacher could not have done the same thing twenty years earlier—at the time that *somebody* (Bach Sr.? Bach Jr.? Herr Schübler?) transcribed BWV 140/4 into BWV 645...

Accepting heels does not (at least in my view) mean that 'anything goes'; I still stay away from substitution, for example. Without further comment (sorry!), here is my current thinking on a few tricky pedal passages for you to try out. Good luck!



Dr Jan-Piet Knijff, DMA, FAGO teaches music as well as Latin and Greek at the University of New England. In February 2012 he will be teaching at the Karol Szymanowski University of Music in Katowice and the Oskar Kolberg School of Music in Radom, Poland.





Stephen Hough

Concert Pianist, Composer and Writer

A resident of London, SH is a visiting professor at the Royal Academy on Music in London and holds the International Chair of Piano Studies at the Royal Northern College in Manchester. "A virtuoso who begins where others leave off."

So, here's the second random tip:

Continuing this series on practising, and following on from the previous tip about not always beginning at the beginning of a piece, **it's not necessary to practise a piece all the way through on one day**. For instance, in a big sonata it can be helpful to practise the first movement on Tuesday and the rest of the piece on Thursday. But even within a single work this can be useful. Let's say you're playing the 4th Ballade of Chopin – a challenge to any pair of pianist's hands – you might want just to practise the last five pages or so of the piece on one day. Take an hour and just home-in on the specific difficulties there, calmly and coolly, then put it aside and work on something else. It stops that feeling of being overwhelmed by how much needs working on; and if you practise that tricky coda carefully, out of context, it should feel more secure to play when the footlights are in full glare and a microphone is poking its nose inside the piano.

Either side of the crack: practice tip no. 3

When you reach a hurdle in a difficult piece and stumble, keep going for a few seconds. Don't stop and go back straightaway, because if you do this too often you will find that it will have become ingrained – you will never have played the passage without this 'stopping and going back'. An example of this is in the final Chopin Prelude. There is a descending run of chromatic double-thirds which often causes problems. I've heard this practised in conservatories over the years ... the student gets to this point, gets in a tangle, stops for a second, and then has another (usually more successful) go. But by the time they come to play the piece in an exam or concert they've actually practised in the mistake. **Not only should you keep going beyond the stumble before going back, but make sure when you do go back that you start a little earlier than the problem moment itself to cover the crack. Very often getting into a passage is more difficult than the passage itself.**

Stephen's practise tips would work just as well for the organ. He kindly gave me permission to reproduce tips for this and our future newsletters.

Playing the organ in Oxford and Cambridge

By **Victor Matthews** ©Victor:-P, 10 September 2011

Playing the organ in Oxford and Cambridge

At the beginning of August I attended the Royal College of Organists' Organ Scholar Experience in Oxford, with Josh Ryan from Sydney and 44 other students - mostly from the UK - but also two from Italy and one from Germany. The course, promoted by the Royal College of Organists and organised by Mr James Parsons, who taught on the Sydney Organ Summer School earlier this year, was from 2 to 6 August and ran every day from about 8.30 am to 9.30 pm.

The tutors, all from prestigious musical posts in England and France, coached us in organ playing and taught us many other things as well including how to accompany choirs, conducting, improvisation, transposition, and sight reading. When we weren't doing these things ourselves, we all formed a choir so we could be conducted or accompanied by the others.

All of us, students and tutors, stayed in the accommodation at St John's College which was founded in 1555. As well as playing and singing in St John's, we also played the organs, heard recitals, sang, and/or had dinner in Baliol, Trinity, New College, Exeter, Hertford,



*Victor Matthews and Josh Ryan in Christ Church,
Oxford. 5 August 2011*



*Students and tutors on The Organ Scholar Experience
2011 in St John's College, Oxford. 7 August 2011.*

Lincoln, Jesus, Brasenose, Wadham, Magdalen, University, Queen's, Keble, Oriel, Merton, Corpus Christi, Pembroke, Christ Church, and the Town Hall - so we all did a lot of walking and got to know the centre of Oxford quite well by the end. Each day was different but, generally, after more individual activities with different tutors in the mornings, we came together in the afternoons and evenings to sing and practice for Evensong or Compline.

The course which is run alternately in Oxford and Cambridge each year is designed to prepare students for an Oxford or Cambridge organ scholarship, and those who are applying this year gave a fantastic recital to everyone on the penultimate day in Christ Church. The rest of us played in two smaller groups to the different tutors who gave us written assessments, and there was a final Evensong at the end of the last day. Although we were so busy, we did have time for punting on the Cherwell, and the social side of the course was great fun.

Thanks to all the tutors for teaching us so much and making us feel so welcome and included: Mr James Parsons (RCO), Mr Simon Williams (RCO), Mr Clive Driskill-Smith (Christ Church, Oxford), Mr David Goode (Eton College), Mr Ronny Krippner (St George's Hanover Square, London), Ms Susan Landale (St Louis des Invalides, Paris), Dr Owen Rees (Queen's College, Oxford), Mr Daniel Hyde (Magdalen College, Oxford), and Dr Katie Pardee, and thanks too to the supervisors: Mr John Miley, Mr Oliver Hancock (Ely Cathedral), Ms Rebecca Taylor (Royal Academy of Music), Mr Thomas Neal, and Mr Douglas Tang. It was also great to see the Sydney organists Mr Philip Swanton and Mr Robert Fox, when they came to visit during the course.



Oliver Brett, Victor Matthews, and Josh Ryan walking on the grass at King's College, Cambridge – a privilege of Old Members.

Oliver had been organ scholar there so we got away with it. 8 August 2011.

Although I was sad to leave Oxford and all the fun I had there, I was lucky to go straight to Cambridge where Oliver Brett, who is now at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, had arranged for Josh and me, as well as Mr Fox and Mr Miley to play on several college organs: Trinity Hall, Selwyn, Jesus, and King's (where he was organ scholar). Our time in Cambridge is another story, but in the organ loft in King's I saw this useful instruction to organists everywhere.



This was actually a poster produced by the British Government in 1939 during the beginning of WWII, intending to raise the morale of the public in the event of invasion. The first to be displayed was 'Your Courage, Your Cheerfulness, Your Resolution Will Bring Us Victory' which appeared everywhere, on bill boards, the sides of buildings, train stations, buses, the London underground, on street walls, in shop windows etc. The poster that bore the (now famous) phrase, 'Keep Calm and Carry On' was never officially put on public display, it was reserved for a 'last case scenario' such as the German invasion of Britain!

Europe and The Organ Scholar Experience Course

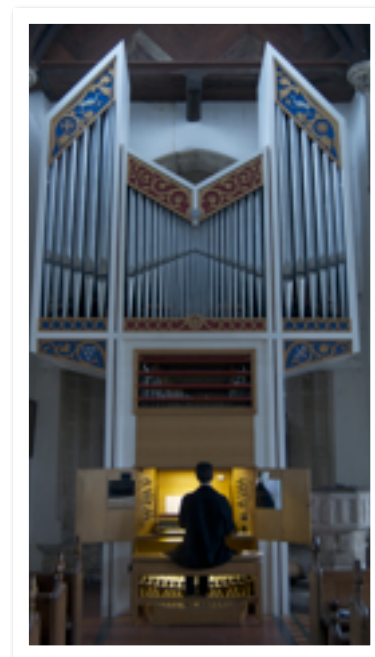
By **Josh Ryan**

I still remember the day that I got off the plane in Heathrow, London. The 25th of July was a very sunny, English morning. I was greeted by a man with a friendly face and a mop of white hair - a certain John Miley. After being whizzed away from the airport (while listening to some recordings of a now Sydney organist, Oliver Brett), we met up with Robert Fox and drove to Woodnewton, Northamptonshire to unload our bags and have a rest for only a few minutes in John's house. John insisted that we visit some of the local churches in the area. These were notably Woodnewton, Fotheringhay and Warmington. Not only did we get to play some very fine small organs on this day, we also got the chance to see some very fine countryside!

The next morning we were joined by Oliver Brett at 11:29 for morning tea before setting off to Durham. In the afternoon we stopped off in York to have afternoon tea at Betty's Teahouse. While there, we also visited the National Rail Museum and went to Evensong in the Minster which was sung by a visiting choir. After Evensong, Oliver, Robert, John and I had a very nice curry in Durham before heading back to Oliver's house.

On Wednesday, we travelled to Hexham to visit the Abbey. We were also joined by Victor Mathews and his family. Victor, Robert and I, all had the opportunity to play the superb organ in the Abbey. On Thursday Oliver had arranged a tour for us at the Harrison & Harrison organ factory just outside Durham. It was a very enlightening experience and I think that all of us learnt something from the visit. In the evening, Victor and I were invited up to the Organ loft while Oliver played a service at Durham Cathedral. After the service finished, we were allowed to play the brilliant Harrison & Harrison organ. This was possibly one of the most amazing nights of my trip over there. We were

in a magnificent cathedral, all alone and playing an absolutely stunning instrument! Sadly the night had to end... This concluded my time in Durham.

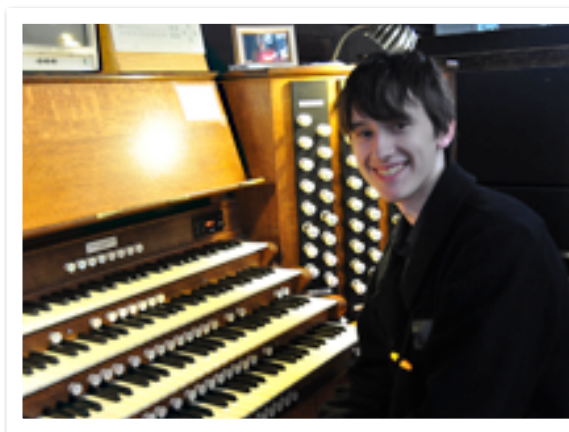


Friday was the day of the joint recital in Warmington, Northamptonshire. The program featured many pieces played by Oliver, Victor and myself including Bach's Toccata & Fugue in D minor played by Oliver, Buxtehude's Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne played by Victor, and Bach's Fugue in G minor played by myself, to name a few. The recital was a stunning success and all of us played exceptionally well. However, the celebrations had to be cut short. In the evening John and I had to pack our bags and travel to London. Awaiting us was a very tight schedule!

Saturday and Sunday were spent in London while we stayed with Oliver's parents in Kent - the garden of England. This statement is very true! Kent is an absolutely lovely part of England. A wonderful place to live! Limited sightseeing was done, but I think that I

covered the raw essentials. On Saturday John and I went to St Paul's, Westminster Abbey, Tower bridge, the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament. All of these sights were just stunning! In the afternoon, John, Victor, Robert and I regrouped and went to Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral. This was such a unique experience as the acoustic was just unbelievable. On Sunday we went to Westminster Abbey where we listened to the organ recital and were then invited up to the organ loft by James McVinnie, while he played for one of the services. Later in the day we headed over to Westminster Cathedral as Oliver had arranged an evening on the organ for Robert, John, Victor and me. (Once again thanks to Oliver) The organ in Westminster Cathedral is absolutely enormous and the sound that it produces is just monstrous! It was such a great privilege to be able to play this instrument; this was one thing that I think we all agreed upon.

On Tuesday the 2nd of August, the Prospective Organ Scholar Course began at Oxford University. I don't think that I had a single bad day during the entire week. Every day was full of new experiences and of course lots of organ playing! The tutors on the course were; Susan Landale, David Goode, Clive Driskill-Smith, Daniel Hyde, Owen Rees, Ronny Crippler and James Parsons. All of them were absolutely wonderful tutors and I was lucky enough to have some private tuition with Susan Landale, James Parsons and David Goode. Besides the repertoire classes, we also had conducting skills classes, choral training classes and musicianship skills classes. Of course, a lot was learnt in these classes by all attendees of the course. Another interesting "activity" that we engaged in was the singing of Choral Compline and Choral Evensong services in the chapels of the colleges: Merton College Chapel, Exeter College Chapel, Keble College Chapel, The Queen's College Chapel and New College Chapel. The singing, playing and conducting of the services by the students brought us all some very valuable experience. All up, the week was a very valuable experience and I have gained many new skills and insights from it! There are also many great memories imprinted into my mind, one being singing in the Compline services at night... Spine chilling stuff!



On the 8th of August, Oliver had organised a day in Cambridge so that Robert, Victor, John and I could see some of the chapels and play some of the organs. The colleges that we went to were Trinity, Jesus, Selwyn and a fourth college... This college was the highlight of the day; King's College. We were given a whole evening's worth of playing time on the Harrison & Harrison of King's College Chapel. It is the stuff that dreams are made of! The organ is amazing to play, the sound is just sublime and the chapel that it is inside is absolutely glorious. All of us had loads of fun that evening, listening to Oliver demonstrate the organ and then playing it ourselves. It was a truly unbelievable experience!



On Wednesday, four of us departed for Holland. These people being, John, Oliver, Tom Etheridge and myself. Tom is currently in his penultimate year at Eton College and will be the captain of the college next year. Along with his almost perfect academic record, he is a very competent organist. While in Holland we would be staying in Hardenberg with some long time friends of John and Oliver. As I found out on my first full day in Holland, the quality of the organs in the local parish churches is just amazing. The two churches that we went to in Hardenberg had great organs, the sound was fresh and clear but not too sharp.

On Thursday Tom gave his recital in the Stephanus Kerk, Hardenberg. I don't think that there was a dull moment. All of his repertoire was played to a very high standard, and the audience enjoyed the program greatly.

In the morning of the 12th we travelled to Amsterdam. While there, we went to the Nieuwe Kerk, and the Oude Kerk. In the afternoon we went to St Bavo's, Haarlem. As Tom and I walked up to the console, John and Oliver reminded us of how many famous organists had played on this organ, including Mozart! To keep it short, this organ was just brilliant. Its sound was awe inspiring, and the case is jaw dropping.

The following day we travelled to Zwolle, where we went to St Michael's. This is the home of an historic Schnitger organ. We all had a great time here, despite the short time that we were allowed on the instrument. Schnitger's are instruments that all organists should play and experience at least once in their lifetimes!



Monday was the day of Oliver's recital in Ommen. Like Tom, Oliver played brilliantly. His program consisted of mainly Bach and all of it was played in the highest standard. The audience was suitably impressed! On Tuesday the 16th, Tom, John and I departed from Holland and headed back to England. Holland had been a very memorable time!

My last day in England was on the 17th. It was very sad to leave, but I am glad to be back home. My trip was absolutely wonderful! I learnt so many new things while traveling around England, Holland and of course by participating in the course in Oxford. I can't thank John and Oliver enough for all the things they organised and did for me over in England and Holland. It was a great experience and one that I will remember for the rest of my life!

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Permission for Photo granted by
Jonathan Scott.

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=wonLE3QZfnI>

Midmer Losh 64ft Dulzian in Boardwalk Hall

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uP5YrADzK4U&feature=related>

CCCC of the Skinner 32' Bombarde

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Charpentier: Te Deum "Prelude" Ian Tracey-Liverpool Cathedral.

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