John Marsh: Eighteen Voluntaries for the Organ … to which is prefix’d an Explanation of the different Stops of the Organ & of the several combinations that may be made thereof …, London [1791], Preface p. I-VIII.

PREFACE.

Having been frequently applied to by young Practitioners on the Organ, to lend the following Pieces in MS. and also to recommend Voluntaries of the same kind, requiring but a moderate degree of Execution, most of those already published being too difficult for young Performers readily to execute; and those Pieces denominated Easy Voluntaries, being generally of too light and trivial nature for the Church Service; and having observed that for want of such easy Voluntaries in a proper Style for the Church, Scraps of Harpsichord Lessons, Minuets, Marches, &c. are frequently substituted as such; with a view therefore of accommodating young Performers in this respect, I have been induced to publish the following Pieces, and shall, at the same time, take the opportunity of explaining to the inexperienced Organist, the nature of the Stops of the Organ, with the several Mixtures and Combinations that may be made thereof, to which I shall add a few thoughts on the proper style of touching the different Stops, for want of understanding which, the Organ is frequently exhibited to a disadvantage it does not deserve, and the effect of good Music is marred, though in other respects properly executed.

A complete Organ has usually Three Sets of Keys, of which the middle One is for the Great Organ, the lowest for the Choir Organ, and the uppermost (which seldom extends lower than F or G below middle C) for the Swell.

The principal Stops in the Great Organ are, the Diapasons; the Principal having been originally so called, as I should apprehend, not by Organ Players, but Organ Builders, who, finding it convenient to make this their standard for tuning the other Stops by, (it being a mean between the Diapasons and the 15th Sesquialtera, &c.) might give it that Name. The Diapasons may therefore be considered as the Two Unisons and foundation of the whole Mixture, and must always be drawn, no other Stops being to be used without being joined with them, though they may themselves be used alone.

The Open Diapason (1) so called from the Pipes being open at the Tops, is the loudest of the Two, but the Bass Pipes being generally slow in speaking, it is usual, as well to assist it in that Respect, as to strengthen it, to join

The Stop Diapason (2) with it, the Pipes of which are generally stopt with wooden Plugs at the Tops, on which Account they are softer toned, and but half the length of those of the Open Diapason.

The Principal (3) is tuned an Octave above the Diapasons, and is occasionally joined to them, as well to strengthen, as to render them more brilliant.

The Twelfth (4) so called from being tuned 12 Notes above the Diapasons, (or a 5th to the Principal) must never be drawn without the Three foregoing Stops, and also

The Fifteenth (5) with it, which being higher than the Twelfth, the effect of the Succession of Fifths, (between the Principal and Twelfth), which would be intolerable without the Fifteenth above, is therby qualified, the Octaves being greatly dominant, whilst at the same time the Twelfth enriches the Mixture, so that neither of these Two Stops should be drawn without the other.
These Five Stops form a proper Mixture, to accompany the Choral Parts of the Services in Cathedrals in common, and to accompany a small Congregation in the Psalms in Parish Churches. – The next Stop to be described is

The **Sesquialtera** (6) which is a Compound Stop, consisting of Three, Four, or Five Pipes, (according to the Size and Scheme of the Organ) to each Note, tuned in 3ds, 5ths, and 8ths, so that every Note is a common Chord; to prevent any mischievous Effect from which this Stop must never be used without the Five preceding Stops, or at least the Diapasons and Principal to qualify it. This Mixture is sufficient whenever the **Full Organ** is directed to be used, and to accompany the Choral Parts of Services and Anthems in Cathedrals on Sundays, or a Common Congregation in the Psalms in a Parish Church. Where however the Church or Congregation is pretty large, the Chorus may be made one degree louder by drawing

The **Mixture or Furniture** (7) which also consists of Two or more ranks of Pipes, but shriller than those of the Sesquialtera, so that it should only be used in addition to that Stop. The next degree of augmentation is made by using

The **Trumpet** (8) instead of the Furniture. This Stop, when it does not render the Organ too powerful for the Voices, always improves as well as increases the Chorus, as by being in unison with the Diapasons, it strengthens the foundation, and thereby qualifies the 3ds and 5ths in the Sesquialtera, &c. by rendering them less predominant. – This Mixture should however only be used to accompany Voices in Cathedrals, in the Chorusses of *Verse* Services or Anthems (which should be very full in order to make the greater Contrast to the *Verse*) and in Gloria Patri’s, Hallelujahs, &c. where the drowning of the words is of no great consequence; and in Parish Churches, only for a single Verse or two by way of contrast; or where the Congregation and Church are very large; or where some Score of Charity Children add their voices to the Chorus, when the deep and powerful Bass of the Trumpet serves to qualify the shrillness of the Children’s Voices; – the whole therefore forming as grand and as powerful a Chorus as can be made without the help of other Instruments: This may however be further augmented and also improved, (where the magnitude of the Church and Congregation permits) by the addition of the Furniture also; to which the only increase that can be made, is by adding

The **Clarion** (9) or Octave Trumpet, which also, where the Church and Congregation are very large, improves the Chorus by rendering it more brilliant. This Stop however must never be used but in addition to all the foregoing, the force of which altogether, will be too great to accompany Voices even in Gloria Patri’s, &c. except on particular festivals or times when the Church is much crowded, or the Voices exceedingly numerous, for which purpose it should be reserved.

So that there may be five different kinds of the full Organ used, viz. The Sesquialtera (with the five preceding Stops) – 2d. The Furniture added to the Sesquialtera. – 3d. The Trumpet added instead of the Furniture. – 4th. The Trumpet and Furniture both added. – And 5th. The Clarion added to the whole.

I have been the more particular in mentioning these gradations, because in Scores and Organ parts of Church Music, it being usual to put only in general terms, the Words **Full Organ**, too much is left to the discretion of the Organist, many of whom (especially young people) are apt to be too ambitious of being distinguished above the voices, thereby making the Organ a Principal instead of an Accompaniment.

There are two other Stops in many Organs, which can only be properly used in the Full Organ, viz. the **Tierce** (10) or sharp Third to the Fifteenth, and **Larigot** (11) or Octave Twelfth. These Stops I look upon to be put in by Organ-Builders, merely to make a shew of Stops to draw, at a small Expense, as they only incumber an Organ, and consume wind to little or no purpose. – The only Stop remaining in the Great Organ (in modern Organs) is
The Cornet (12) which is also a compound Stop, having Five Pipes to a Note, tuned something like the Sesquialtera, but as it is only a half, or treble Stop, it ought never to be used in the Full Organ, but only with the Diapasons, in Voluntaries, giving out Psalm Tunes, Symphonies of Anthems, &c.

Before I conclude as to the Great Organ, it may be proper to mention, that when the Trumpet is used as imitative of the real Trumpet, it is then only joined with the Diapasons.

The Choir Organ (vulgarly called the Chair Organ) usually consists of the following Stops, viz.

The Stopt Diapasons, (1) which for want of an Open Diapason to draw with it (the Bass pipes of which are too large and powerful for a Choir Organ) may be joined with

The Dulciana, (2) which though the Pipes are also open, and in unison with it, is yet much smaller and softer than the Open Diapason; it is however seldom carried down lower than Gamut. This Stop (as it's name implies) has a peculiar sweetness of tone, and may be used quite alone.

The Principal, (3) with the two preceding Stops, makes the proper Accompaniment in full Services, where the Sides sing alternately, and not together (when the Full Organ should be used) or during the Chanting on week days, to which may also be added (especially if there be no Dulciana)

The Flute, (4) of which the Pipes are stopt, and in unison with the Principal, but softer. This is also frequently used alone, (as an imitation of the common Flute or Flageolet) but is more properly joined with the Diapason, which Two Stops (with the Dulciana at pleasure) are the proper accompaniment in Solo or Verse parts of Anthems, the Principal being too loud for that purpose, except where the Voices are unsteady, and require to be led.

The Twelfth (5) and Fifteenth (6) may be added to the foregoing Stops to accompany the Chants on a Sunday, and in full Services (except when the two sides sing together) when the Congregation is large, or the Singers numerous; and also in Parish Churches in some of the middle Verses of a plain Psalm tune by way of relief; to which, and for the same Purposes, may occasionally be added

The Bassoon, (7) which is in unison with the Diapason and Dulciana, with which only it must be joined, when used as a fancy Stop in Voluntaries.

Some Organs have a Vox Humane, or Cremona, or Cromhorn, as it is sometimes called, instead of a Bassoon, which Stops should only be used with the Diapason, (with which they are also in unison) and not in the full Choir Organ, as the Bassoon may; the Bass of the other two being very rough and disagreeable.

The only Part of the Organ remaining to be described, is the Swell, the usual Stops in which are

The two Diapasons, (1, 2) which when used alone produce much the same effect as the Dulciana in the Choir Organ; they are therefore generally joined at least with

The Principal. (3) The most beautiful Stops however in the Swell are

The Hautboy, (4) and Trumpet (5) which being in unison together, may be used either singly or both together, but always with the Diapasons. To the whole of which may be added

The Cornet, (6) which altogether makes what is called the Full Swell.
The Swell is frequently used in accompanying Voices instead of the Treble of the Choir Organ, for which it may be sometimes more convenient, as the Sound may be increased or diminished so as to accommodate such Voices as may require such assistance; but it's principal use is in Voluntaries, giving out psalm Tunes, &c.

Having now described the several Stops of the Organ, it may not be amiss to observe, that the Trumpet, Clarion, Bassoon, Hautboy, Vox Humane, and Cremona, are called Reed Stops, on account of the Wind passing into them through a small Brass Tube (called the Reed) to which is fixed a thin piece of Brass called the Tongue, by the vibration of which their peculiarity of tone is occasioned. These Stops are the most liable of any to get out of tune, (particularly the Clarion, Vox Humane, and Cremona) of which the Performer should be aware, when he fixes upon his Voluntary, especially in the Country, where the Organs are in general very much neglected.

I shall now subjoin a few directions to the inexperienced Organ Player, as to Voluntary playing and accompanying the Psalms. – In the first place he should totally divest himself of the idea of setting down merely to entertain, or exhibit his Skill to an audience, as at a Concert; instead of which it would be much more to his credit to make Style the object of his ambition, rather than Execution, considering at the same time the solemnity of the service, of which Voluntary playing forms, if not an essential, yet an ornamental part. Voluntaries during the time of service, should therefore be grave, but yet with a sufficient degree of Air and Expression in them to excite Attention in the audience, which is most likely to be effected by Contrast, varying the Stop, and a proper attention to the different Style of touching each. And though in most printed Voluntaries particular directions are given as to the managements of the Stops, yet the judgement of the performers may be sufficiently exercised, or put to the test, in the proper selection of them, of which so great a variety is published; chusing Diapason pieces, or Adagios on the Swell, for Sacrament Sundays, and those of a more brilliant nature than ordinary for Festivals; shortening such as exceed five or six minutes in length, and rejecting all such as are of a thin, light, or trivial nature, particularly many of the Cornet and Flute Pieces in Major Keys, which are fitter for the Harpsichord than the Organ. – But besides the several Voluntaries published as such, many of the Airs and Chorusses from Handel’s sacred Oratorios, may, with a little alteration and contrivance, be adapted for that purpose, and to particular seasons. For instance, the Pastoral Symphony in the Messiah (on the Diapasons and Swell) „He shall feed his flock,” shortened by leaving out some of the repetitions (the Symphonies on the Diapasons, and Voice part on the Swell) and any of the Chorusses in the first part for the full Organ, will make very suitable Voluntaries at Christmas. Also „He was despised” (on the Diapasons and Swell) – „But thou didst not leave” (on the Cornet, and Swell, or Choir Organ) – „I know that my Redeemer liveth.” – „The Trumpet shall sound,” with a little alteration (as a Trumpet Voluntary) with the grand Hallelujah, and any of the Chorusses in the 2d and 3d parts, will be very proper for the season of Easter. In like manner, select parts of Handel’s Funeral Anthem on the death of Queen Caroline, may be played on solemn occasions, and the Coronation Anthem „God save the King,” on the King’s birth-day, the Accession, or Coronation day. – These kind of Voluntaries, if played with expression, have this advantage, that the particular ideas conveyed by the words to which they have been usually sung, are very likely to be excited by the Music alone.

There are also many other requisites to a good performer, which cannot be exactly and explicitly communicated in musical characters, and in which he must be left to his own judgment; for instance, as to what concerns Accent, and Expression, and what is commonly known or conceived by a good Touch; towards which however the following hints may be of use.

First, it should be considered that no Music can be expressive that is not accented, marked, or enforced at proper intervals, as at the beginning, and sometimes (in common time) in the middle of a Bar. This may be in a great measure effected on the Swell of the Organ, by the management of the pedal, especially in Slow Movements, (which are most proper for the Swell) but on the other parts of the Organ, must be done by other means, such as Appoggiaturas, and by occasionally doubling the Bass note at the accented parts, by
taking the Octave. For this purpose it is proper in passages where one bass note is repeated in Crotchets or Quavers, for several Bars together, not to strike the Octave below to every note, but only at the beginning of the Bar, and hold it out to the end. Also where a Bass note, and it's Octave are repeated alternately in Quavers, it is better, on the Organ, to hold the lower Note, and strike the upper one successively, in Quavers. – Before I quit the subject of Octaves, I must just caution the young performer against the too common practice of taking Octaves in different notes, in succession with the left hand in quick passages, as however they may succeed on the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte, they cannot but have a bad effect on the Organ by making the Bass too staccato. – Also it may be observed that where a Clarion is drawn (that being in itself a powerful Octave) the effect of Octaves in the Bass (in quick passages where they cannot conveniently be taken on the Keys) may be produced by playing an Octave lower than the Music is written, (if the compass of the Organ will admit of it) the Notes in the lowest Octave having a very grand effect where there is a Clarion, which also renders the lower Bass notes very distinct. To execute however quick passages on this requires a very strong finger.

Next to Voluntary playing, a few hints on the manner of giving out, and accompanying the Psalms (which in fact is more material to be attended to) may not be useless to the young Organist.

All Tunes of a lively and joyful nature, may be given out on the Cornet, and those of a plaintive kind on the Diapasons or Swell; and though the modern practice seems to be, to give out the whole on one Stop, yet I must own, I think the old custom of playing the alternate lines of plain Psalm Tunes on different Stops (using the Swell for the 2d and 4th lines) has it's use, especially in tunes that are not universally known, as it more easily enables the unlearned to adapt the Tune to the Metre. For the same reason they should be given out quite plain, or with no other graces or embellishments than a good Singer would naturally apply; except at a Close, when a short, neat Cadence on the Swell, may not be improper.

Having already treated of the accompaniment of the Voices, in describing the Stops of the Organ, and different mixtures of them, nothing farther remains to be observed on this subject, as I shall speak of Interludes between the verses in the next Section, under the head of Extempore playing, to which they more properly belong.

The Organ being, of all Instruments, the best calculated (on account of the variety it contains) for Extempore play (the effect of which by skilful Masters is far superior to that of Music precomposed for it) on which subject, as I do not recollect to have ever heard of any practical Treatise, I shall, before I conclude, subjoin a few hints thereon, and on Style in general; in order to attain which, it will be first necessary to understand the proper method of touching the different Stops (as the style of playing varies considerably on each;) secondly, the proper selection of them for Voluntaries, and lastly, something of the art of Modulation, without a little knowledge of which, a very small progress can be made in Extempore performance. As to Fancy and Invention I shall say nothing on that head, they being gifts of nature, and not to be acquired, but of which some small share at least is also necessary.

For the Diapasons, the style should be grave, and of the Sostenuto kind, gliding from note to note, or chord to chord, with almost always holding note, either in the Treble, Tenor, or Bass of the Organ. – If the Principal be added, the style may be more brilliant, the fingering more staccato, and quicker passages may be executed with better effect than on the Diapasons alone. The Bass also being rendered more distinct by the Principal, it is usual (as well as to avoid the shrillness of the upper notes) to keep both hands lower down, than when the Principal is not drawn.

For the Trumpet, the style should also be grave, and majestic, playing chiefly in the key of C, or D, and keeping nearly to the natural compass of the real Trumpet, on which rapid and chromatic passages not being to be executed, they must of course be improperly used in an imitation of it. Double notes in the manner of two Trumpets may occasionally be used, and a long holding note on the 5th or Key note, with a 2d part
moving, has a good effect. The Bass should chiefly be played on the Diapason, Dulciana, Principal, and Flute of the Choir Organ, except now and then by way of Contrast, particularly toward a grand Close, when the Trumpet Bass (qualified by the Principal) or Full Organ, may be introduced with great effect.

For the **Cornet**, quick Music, in a brilliant style without double notes or Chords, is proper. This Stop, though frequently used in Voluntaries before the first Lesson, is yet, I think, of too light and airy a nature for the Church; I should therefore recommend it’s being used sparingly in Voluntaries, and only in the Minor key, except on Festivals and joyful occasions, for which it may properly be reserved. – The Bass to it may be played on the same set of Keys, provided the left hand is kept below middle C.

The **Flute** may be played in much the same style as the Cornet, except that the Bass may be played on the same Stop, which being an octave one, there may be more execution with the left hand than usual on the Organ. This also being of too light and trifling a nature to be much used in Churches, I think entire Flute pieces should be avoided, and the Flute only used as an echo, or by way of relief to the more noble parts of the Organ.

The **Dulciano** may be touched something like the Diapasons, except that it being seldom or never carried throughout the Bass, the left hand should be kept higher up. A tender soothing style, without the least degree of execution (which this stop is too delicately voiced to bear) is proper for it.

The **Swell** requires more judgment than any other part of the Organ, as by a judicious management of the Pedal, the human voice may be much better imitated than by the Vox Humane; the Cantabile style is therefore also proper for it, though it is capable of a considerable degree of execution, particularly when the Cornet is drawn. – Double notes and Chords judiciously swelled and diminished have a good effect – The Bass may generally be played on the Stopt Diapason and Flute of the Choir Organ (with or without the Principal, according to the number of Stops drawn of the Swell) or where the compass of the Swell extends below middle C, both hands may occasionally be employed thereon. – The Swell is frequently used as an echo to the Trumpet, Cornet, &c. – The finest Mixture in which is, that of the Diapasons and Hautboy, with the Trumpet to strengthen it, if required. The Principal should not be drawn, without both the Reed Stops, as the octave will otherwise be too predominant, and destroy the effect of the Sostenuto passages. – The **Cornet** in the Swell should, I think, never be used as such, it being necessarily so very inferior to the great Cornet (which consists of more ranks of pipes, and has the great Diapasons to qualify it) but only used with the other Stops to make a full Swell, as an echo to the full Organ. It is however frequently used as an echo to the great Cornet, and strictly so, in repeating the two or three last notes of it, it may be proper, but in repeating whole passages after the great Cornet, it has but a mean effect.

In making Cadences on the Swell, they, being of an episodical nature, (if I may so express myself) and not essential to the subject (especially in giving out Psalm tunes) should be introduced or prepared loud, sustaining the Note at the Pause till the Pedal is gradually raised (or the sound diminished) after which the Cadence should be continued soft till the close of it, when the Cadence should be gradually increased again. By this means the Cadence (or Episode) may be kept (as in a Parenthesis) distinct from the main subject. The
holding down the 4th below the Key note, on the Bass of the Choir Organ, during a Cadence, has a good effect, as it confines the Cadence to one Key, and thereby prevents unnatural excursions, and also helps to distinguish it from the original subject. As to the peculiar advantage and effect of the Swell in expressing the Pianos, Fortes, Crescendos, and Diminuendos; the performer must there be left to his own judgment, as no particular rules can be given in extempore performance. He should however consider that the mere seesawing the Pedal up and down at random, and without meaning, can have no better effect than what is produced by a peal of Bells ringing on a windy day.

For the Full Organ, Choral Music, Fugues, &c. are most proper. Upon the Treble, rapid passages may be executed, but Arpeggios and quick passages of accompaniment in the Bass, such as are common in Harpsichord lessons, should be avoided, the Bass of the Organ being too powerful for accompaniment. Where however the Bass is made Principal, and the Treble only a kind of Thorough Bass to it, Execution for the left hand may have a fine effect. – Chords held down in the Treble, with the Bass moving in Quavers (in the style of many of Corelli’s Basses) have a good effect, but Chords in the Bass should seldom or never be used, though a 5th to the Fundamental or Key Note may occasionally be added. – As to Extempore Fugues (a very common style of play for the full Organ) though I am far from denying that there have been and are now many, who by dint of study and practice, have attained to great proficiency therein; yet most of those commonly played as such, do not appear to me strictly to deserve that appellation, as I cannot help suspecting them (especially where they are coherent and well worked up) to have been studied before, though they may not have been actually written down; and where that is not the case, the air in the Treble when the Bass takes the subject, is seldom superior to that of common Thorough Bass.

After knowing the proper method of touching the different Stops, the next thing to be attended to is the proper selection of them for Voluntaries, of which those before the first lesson should be generally introduced with the Diapasons, or Swell, after which the Trumpet, Vox Humane or Bassoon may be used with intermediate passages (for the sake of variety and contrast) on the Swell or Choir Organ. As the real Trumpet is not capable of modulating into different keys (without which music soon becomes tiresome and insipid) Trumpet pieces should therefore be very short; or else, instead of adopting a style for the trumpet Stop, not natural to that of the Instrument of which it is a professed imitation, a transition had better be made for that purpose to the Flute, (in a minor key) the Swell or Choir Organ, after which a return may be made to the Trumpet.

The Cornet I have said before should be but sparingly used, especially in the Major key; when however it is introduced, I think it should always be succeeded (if but for a few bars) by the Diapasons or Swell, so as for the Voluntary not finally to conclude with the Cornet.

Nothing however produces a more striking and grand effect than a few touches of the full Organ, after gliding for some time on the Swell or Diapasons, after which a return to the soft parts of the Organ is enjoyed with greater relish than before. The judicious Organist will therefore (when he has a fine Organ, and three sets of keys at command) not make it his constant practice to sit thrumming for five or six minutes upon the Diapasons, or confine himself entirely to the Swell or full Organ; but will, if he exceeds two or three minutes in his Voluntary, occasionally change the Stop; and not give up one very eminent advantage which the Organ possesses above all other Instruments, viz. that of Contrast and Variety, which are as much the life and soul of Music as light and shade are of Painting.

[...]

Voluntary I:
Adagio: Diap. & Principal;
Largo: Diapasons / Swell
Voluntary II:
Preludio Largo: Diapasons & Principal;

Voluntary III:
Largo: Diapasons & Principal [abwechselnd mit] Swell oder Swell [† Begleitung] Choir Organ;
¾: Diapasons [abwechselnd mit] Eccho [oder] Swell both hands

Voluntary IV:
Largo: [Choir Organ] St. Diap. & Flute, Swell;
Allegro: Ch. Org.: St. Diap. & Principal [abwechselnd mit] Swell

Voluntary V:

Voluntary VI:
[1.] Dulciana or Swell Diap. both hands [abwechselnd mit] Gt. Diaps.
Andante: Gt. Org.: Diapasons & Principal, 2d. time: Ch. Org.: St. Diap. & Prin. / Swell

Voluntary VII:
Andante Largo: Diapasons

Voluntary VIII:
Preludio Largo: Diapasons & Principal

Voluntary IX:
Largo: Swell both hands [später Begleitung:] Ch. Org.
Allegro Moderato: Ch. Org.: St. Diap. & Prin. [abwechselnd mit] Full Organ with the Trumpet; [später:] Swell both hands

Voluntary X:
Andante: Full Org.

Voluntary XI:
Largo: Full Organ

Voluntary XII:

Voluntary XIII:

Voluntary XIV:
Largo: Full Org.

Voluntary XV:
Vivace: Full Org.
Voluntary XVI:
Vivace: Full Org.

Voluntary XVII:
Andante: Full Org. [Beischrift Baßsolo:] Play this an Octave lower when the Clarion is drawn

Voluntary XVIII:
Vivace: Full Org.

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