

**Organ Improvisation
in the Anglican Cathedral Tradition:
A Portfolio of Professional Practice
with Contextual and Critical Commentary**

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Abstract

This thesis is a practice-based study of organ improvisation in the Anglican cathedral tradition in the UK. I combine exercises in the practice of improvisation in a number of musical styles associated with Anglican church music, with documentary and sonic evidence of improvisation in this tradition, and interviews with some key practising improvisers. Context for this study is further provided by a comparative study of the very different improvisation practices prevalent in Germany and France.

In Part 1, Chapter 1, I first identify the French and German traditions of liturgical organ improvisation, from the perspectives of stylistic development, liturgical and pragmatic demands on organists and characteristic types of organ. Chapter 2 outlines the stylistic development of Anglican voluntary improvisations, whilst considering improvisatory aspects in Anglican hymn playing and psalm accompaniment. These comparisons enable me to define certain characteristic features of Anglican liturgical improvisation. Chapter 3 consults sonic evidence of Anglican organ improvisation and elucidates important influences on the development of Anglican liturgical organ improvisation from the later nineteenth century to the present. The conclusions to Part 1 suggest that a distinct Anglican tradition of liturgical organ improvisation does indeed exist. Whilst there are significant differences in the expectation and demands of the organists between Anglican and continental traditions, there are nonetheless many opportunities in Anglican worship where the discipline of stylistic improvisation could beneficially be applied. I conclude that organists in the Anglican tradition could benefit a great deal from the practice of stylistic improvisation.

Part 2 introduces and explains my methods in developing and realising stylistic improvisation using models from the historical traditions of Anglican church music (from Tallis to Mathias). The attached DVD is a means of recording, assessing and disseminating this new-found knowledge. Chapter 4 discusses my own processes in developing and executing historical stylistic improvisation. Chapter 5 presents a portfolio of my own professional practice, which includes the DVD project, in which I apply the continental approach of stylistic improvisation to the Anglican tradition by identifying key formulae and performing improvisations in the style of English organ composers. Whilst some Anglican organists in the UK have been influenced by continental traditions, the lack of extensive formal training in stylistic improvisation in the UK can be compensated by systematic study of composers' styles and the regular practice of improvisation in these styles within Anglican worship.

This is not primarily a historical study of improvisation, but a critical and contextualised examination of improvisation practices in the Anglican tradition since the late nineteenth century, and a practice-based testing of the potential of applying continental methods of preparing and executing stylistic improvisation to the Anglican context as a means of strengthening and enlivening its efficacy. I thus debate questions of value and functionality, finding much of value both in the Anglican tradition of free, modal improvisation, and in the disciplined approaches of French and particularly German improvisers. I note the pedagogical implications of my research, arguing that organ improvisers should develop a consummate musicianship which combines musical disciplines (such as analysis, harmony,

counterpoint and aural training) in the act of improvising as opposed to the compartmentalised approach of teaching these disciplines presently the norm in UK colleges and conservatoires.

In a series of appendices, I show the responses of fifteen British organists in a survey on 'Organ Improvisation in the UK'. Furthermore, I present a list of commercially published organ improvisation CDs by British organists, an outline of English tutor books on organ improvisation, a transcription of my improvised *Ceremonial March* from CD 3, track 1, a list of all the reviews of my DVD/CD *Ex Tempore*, as well as handwritten notes on Anglican improvisation by Martin How, together with other miscellaneous documents.

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CD 1 [compilation]

TRACK

1. Edward Bairstow: Improvisation at the Enthronement Ceremony of Archbishop Cyril Forster Garbett (11th June 1942) [York Minster] (private recording of a ?BBC broadcast)
2. Healey Willan: Improvised Postlude after Evensong (08th January 1967) [St Mary Magdalene, Toronto] from CD *Healey Willan at the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Toronto*, EMI Classics, Historical recordings 1965-67, 7243 5 56600 2 2 EMI Classics, 1997.
3. Healey Willan: Improvised Prelude on 'Lasst uns erfreuen' after High Mass (02nd October 1966) [St Mary Magdalene, Toronto] from CD *Healey Willan at the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Toronto*, EMI Classics, Historical recordings 1965-67, 7243 5 56600 2 2 EMI Classics, 1997.
4. George Thalben-Ball: Improvised Prelude to anthem 'O Emmanuel' (1980) [Temple Church, London] (private recording)
5. Philip Marshall: Improvised 'Extemporization on "Westminster Abbey"' (1993) [Lincoln Cathedral] from CD *Organ Favourites from Lincoln Cathedral*, Cantoris, C2806CD, recorded 1984, released 1993.
6. Roy Massey: Improvised Gospel Fanfare during Sunday Eucharist (Summer 1992) [Hereford Cathedral] (private recording)
7. Roy Massey: Improvised Postlude after Sunday Eucharist (Summer 1992) [Hereford Cathedral] (private recording)
8. Martin Baker: Improvised Postlude after BBC Choral Evensong (December 1996) [Westminster Abbey] (recording retrieved on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcDU-KzpkB8>, retrieved on 09/08/2017)
9. Sean Farrell: Improvised Prelude before Matins (03rd October 1999) [Rochester Cathedral] (private recording)
10. Timothy Noon: Improvised Prelude before Evensong (05th October 1999) [Canterbury Cathedral] (private recording)
11. Organist unknown: Improvised Prelude before Evensong (05th November 2002) [St John's College, Cambridge] (private recording)
12. George Thalben-Ball: Improvised Introduction to *God rest you merry, gentlemen* (December 1961) [Temple Church, London] (private recording)
13. Roy Massey: Improvised Introduction to Offertory hymn *Just as I am* (Summer 1992) [Hereford Cathedral] (private recording)
14. Andrew Millington: Organ accompaniment Psalm 93 & 94 (18th May 2005) [Exeter Cathedral] (private recording)
15. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Postlude in the style of Handel, following BBC Choral Evensong (01st April 2009) [St George's Church, Hanover Square, London] (private recording of BBC broadcast)
16. Ronny Krippner: Sixty-Second Organ Improvisation (22nd March 2010) [St George's Church, Hanover Square, London] from CD *Sixty Interpretations of Sixty Seconds*, David Sait (producer), Association of Improvising Musicians of Toronto, AP-04, 2010.
17. George Thalben-Ball: *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* (Brahms) before Sunday Matins (1980) [Temple Church, London] (private recording)
18. George Thalben-Ball: excerpt from *Pax Vobiscum* (Karg-Elert) before Carol Service (1980) [Temple Church, London] (private recording)

CD 2 [compilation]

TRACK

1. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Ciaconna on a Theme by Kerll; Preliminary Recorded Round, St Albans International Organ Improvisation Competition 2009 [King's College School, Wimbledon] (private recording)
2. Ronny Krippner: Free-form Improvisation on a Theme by Patterson; Preliminary Recorded Round, St Albans International Organ Improvisation Competition 2009 [King's College School, Wimbledon] (private recording)
3. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Variations on *Ave maris stella* – Theme; Quarter-Final Round, St Albans International Organ Improvisation Competition 2009 [St Albans Cathedral, 10th July 2009] (private recording)
4. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Variations on *Ave maris stella* – 1st Variation
5. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Variations on *Ave maris stella* – 2nd Variation
6. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Variations on *Ave maris stella* – 3rd Variation
7. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Variations on *Ave maris stella* – 4th Variation
8. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Variations on *Ave maris stella* – 5th Variation
9. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr* – Theme; Semi-Final Round, St Albans International Organ Improvisation Competition 2009 [St Saviour's Church, St Albans, 13th July 2009] (private recording)
10. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr* – 1st Variation
11. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr* – 2nd Variation
12. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr* – 3rd Variation
13. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr* – 4th Variation
14. Ronny Krippner: Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr* – 5th Variation

CD 3 *Ex Tempore – The Art of Organ Improvisation in England*

(Ronny Krippner, organ; Fugue State Films, FSCVC005, recorded 27th/28th October 2010 and 21st/22nd February 2011, published in 2011)

TRACK

1. Ceremonial March

Organ Verses on 'Ecce Tempus Idoneum' in the style of Tallis:

2. Verse 1: Point

3. Verse 2: Chant (William Morgan, tenor)

4. Verse 3: Organ

5. Verse 4: Chant (William Morgan, tenor)

6. Verse 5: Organ

7. Fantasia in the Style of Byrd

Three pieces in the style of Purcell:

8. a. Trumpet Tune

9. b. Divisions upon a Ground

10. c. Double Voluntary

Organ Concerto in the style of Handel:

11. a. Overture

12. b. Allegro

13. c. Adagio

14. d. Allegro (Partimento Fugue)

Victorian Organ Sonata:

15. a. Allegro (Sonata Form)

16. b. Andante religioso

17. c. Toccata

18. *Theme and Variations (based on a theme by F. J. Sawyer)*

19. *Rhapsody: 'Master Howells's Testament'*

20. *Paeon in the style of Britten*

21. *March in the style of Mathias*

22. *Ostinato in the style of Leighton*

23. *'Changes': Improvisation for Organ and Percussion*
(Sam Walton, percussion)

CD 4 *Orgelmusik aus Böhmen – gespielt auf historischen Orgeln des Egerlandes*
[Organ Music from Bohemia – played on historical organs of the Egerland region]
(Ronny Krippner, organ; Ambiente Audio, ACD-1080, recorded 19th - 21st July
2017, published in 2017)

TRACK

St Anna's Church, Planá/Plana (CZ)
Bohemian Organ Concerto in B flat major (improvisation)

1. Allegro moderato
2. Adagio Pastorale
3. Allegro

Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746)
from *Musikalischer Blumenstrauss*:

4. Suite No. I
5. Suite No. VI

Holy Trinity Church, Kappl (DE)
Josef Ferdinand Norbert Seger (1716-1782)

6. Prelude in C major
7. Fugue in C major
8. Prelude in E minor
9. Fugue in F minor
10. Prelude and Fugue in D major

Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746)
from *Ariadne Musica*:

11. Prelude and Fugue I
12. Prelude and Fugue IV
13. Prelude and Fugue XII
14. Prelude and Fugue XIV
15. Prelude and Fugue XV
16. Prelude and Fugue XIX
17. Prelude and Fugue XX

St Nicholas' Church, Cheb/Eger (CZ)
Six Improvisations on themes by Old Masters from Cheb:

18. 'Heilig bist du, großer Gott'
19. 'Am Ölberg bei nächtlicher Stille'
20. 'Ave Maria zart'
21. Variations on the motet 'Oppressit reducem'
by Jobst vom Brandt (1517-1570)
22. Paraphrase on 'Herr nun lessestu deinen Diener'
by Johannes Hagius Redwitzensis (1530-1596)
23. Paraphrase on 'Neun Stück sindt die ich in meinem Herzen'
by Johannes Hagius Redwitzensis (1530-1596)

DVD listing of disc (1) submitted

DVD *Ex Tempore – The Art of Organ Improvisation in England*

(Ronny Krippner, organist/presenter; Fugue State Films, FSDVD005, 2011)

CHAPTERS

1. Introduction
2. The Tudor Period
3. The Restoration
4. The Baroque Period
5. The Victorian Period
6. The Neoclassical Period
7. The Present

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the end of a fifteen-year research project on Anglican organ improvisation, which began during my student days at Exeter University in 2004. It is thanks to the encouragement of the then Organist of Exeter Cathedral, Paul Morgan, and Prof Richard Langham-Smith that I eventually decided to formally embark on this long journey of critical thinking, artistic reflection and academic rigour.

However, my passion for improvisation goes back much further and I would not have been able to develop my skills as an improviser without the inspiration, motivation and wonderful guidance of my former teacher Prof Franz Josef Stoiber, Organist of Regensburg Cathedral, Germany. He remains a close friend and colleague and I here express my deepest gratitude to him.

My other passion, that of Anglican cathedral music, stems from a course on English organ music that I attended at Konstanz Münster, Germany, when I was sixteen years old. The course director, Roger Sayer (now Organist and Director of Music at the Temple Church, London) introduced me to the organ works of British composers such as Stanford, Parry, Whitlock, Howells and Mathias. The impressions of this week stuck with me, eventually leading to my decision to move to the UK permanently. I am most grateful to Roger.

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Finally, I would like to thank my wife Audrey for putting up with all of my frustrations and periodic doubts. It is her support that helped me complete this PhD and I now look forward to spending more time with her and our little baby daughter Sophie.

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Terminology

Abbreviations

CF:	Cantus Firmus
Gt:	Great division
Sw:	Swell division
Pos:	Positive
Ped:	Pedal
GO:	(French) Grand Orgue
HW:	(German) Hauptwerk

Acronyms

ARCO:	Associate of the Royal College of Organists
FRCO:	Fellow of the Royal College of Organists
RCO:	Royal College of Organists
RTA:	Real Time Analysis
RSCM:	Royal School of Church Music
CNSMDP:	Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris
CNSMDL:	Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon
CRR:	Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional
IOF:	International Organ Festival St Albans

Terminology

Blumenlese:	<i>Blumenlese</i> , literally ‘collecting flowers’ (Adlung, 1953 [1758]: 726), refers in German to the process of identifying and collecting formulae from scores to be used in one’s own improvisation.
Anglican organist:	I use this term throughout this thesis to refer to organists working in the Anglican tradition, without implying allegiance to Anglicanism on their part.
Anglican organ improvisation:	Anglican here refers to the predominant liturgical context in which organ improvisation is used in the UK. It is thus differentiated from the Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions. In this thesis I have not addressed improvisational practices in any of the nonconformist traditions.
English cathedral organ:	I use this term throughout this thesis to refer to the English orchestral organ after the model of Harrison and Harrison organs which attempt to imitate the varied and flexible palette of the nineteenth-century symphony orchestra.

Introduction

The Context for Study

In this thesis, I present a critical study of contemporary stylistic improvisation on the organ, with central focus on practices within the Anglican cathedral tradition. The study takes three forms: textual studies, including data gleaned from interviews with active organists, critical reviews, textbooks on how to improvise, and a small number of scholarly studies; studies of audio recordings of improvisations; and my own extended practical researches into stylistic improvisation in a variety of English styles.

Improvisation embraces a multiplicity of processes, contexts and styles, even on the organ: cinema, free atonal improvisation, the widely divergent practices between denominations in churches, and, within the Anglican church (which includes the equivalent 'Episcopal' traditions around the Anglophone world), the very different environments, facilities and requirements of cathedrals, larger churches and smaller parish churches. This investigation focuses predominantly on Anglican cathedrals in the UK as it is generally accepted that this is where one can find high standards of church music-making in the UK. This is confirmed by Gustav Krieg (2007: 15-16) who claims that the *Kathedralkultur* (cathedral culture) within the Church of England produces high-quality *Kathedralmusik* (cathedral music). In 'cathedral-style' contexts, liturgical organ improvisation serves a particular set of functions intrinsic to the more ceremonial style of worship adopted in these places. It is this tradition I interrogate in Part 1 and, for clarity, I refer to this tradition as the Anglican cathedral tradition, whilst acknowledging that collegiate chapels and many larger parish churches are able to emulate this cathedral tradition.

This thesis is not a historical study of the development and uses of improvisation over the centuries, for its focus is on current practices and how they might be extended or refined by the more formal application of stylistic improvisation. I argue that stylistic improvisation entails not merely an *ex tempore* imitation of a

composer's style, but its careful analysis and formal practical exercise in the development of an improvisation. I critically engage with this process in Chapter 5, where I examine my own researches and practices in relation to a range of English composers from Tallis to Mathias.

The Anglican cathedral tradition of improvisation in the UK differs in interesting ways from that in cathedrals and larger civic churches in France and Germany, each of which have their own, highly influential practices. Traditions in other countries, such as Holland and Scandinavia, tend to be aligned with these more generic traditions, although much more work needs to be done on the distinctive traditions in, say, Catholic Bohemian lands, Spain and Portugal, or the more German-orientated traditions in Northern Europe. As a German-born and -trained organist, now resident and active in the UK, I am in a unique position critically to examine the Anglican tradition in the light of German traditions (both Catholic and Lutheran): the latter highly formalised and tending to focus on polyphonic styles, the former usually (and for some, notoriously) free, but tending to rely on a twentieth-century modal or tonally extended language. The French tradition has exercised some considerable influence on UK practices over the last fifty years, but there is also considerable interest in the more Germanic practices of stylistic improvisation. I analyse this somewhat complex situation by means of three-way comparisons between these three great traditions of liturgical improvisation, which brings to light the distinctive nature of Anglican improvisation and invites informed critique of each of the traditions.

Part 1 of this thesis tries to answer the following first main research question: *what is Anglican liturgical organ improvisation and how does it compare to continental traditions?* The focus of Part 1 is on liturgical organ improvisation from the late nineteenth century onwards. As noted above, this is not an historical study of improvisation, and in this chapter my aim is to sketch some historical context for current practices. The late nineteenth century was a time of significant revival in English cathedral life, with improvements in the choral foundations and a huge expansion in organ building, led by luminary builders such as Henry Willis. Whilst there were significant improvisers from earlier generations, it is the traditions established at that time that sustain practice to this day. There is also a small but

useful literature on organ improvisation from this time, providing substantial evidence of developing practices over the extended twentieth century (e.g. essays published by the Royal College of Organists and Frank Joseph Sawyer's tutor book *Extemporization*). The aim of this investigation is very much about the practice of Anglican liturgical improvisation now and what current organists working in the Anglican cathedral tradition might achieve given a reasonably comprehensive organ. In order to identify the current state of mind regarding Anglican liturgical improvisation, I have interviewed fifteen British organists and I regularly refer to these interviews by putting letters in inverted commas.¹

The chapters of Part 1 bring to light the paucity of formal study of Anglican improvisation within the Anglican cathedral tradition. In Part 2, I attempt to fill this void by presenting an account of an action research project in which I propose and test a method of stylistic improvisation in a range of English styles, from Tallis to Mathias, arguing that the discipline of accuracy to a given style, inculcated in me by my formal German training, could be useful for organists in the very different Anglican cathedral tradition. This account forms the basis of the second main research question discussed in Part 2: *what informs my practice of English historical style improvisation?*

The terms improvisation and extemporisation are often conflated and, in the literature, both tend to signify prepared and unprepared improvisation. Imogene Horsley states that 'the term "extemporisation" is more or less used interchangeably with "improvisation".' (1995: 32) However, Horsley's view is not unanimously shared and 'L' suggests extemporisation to be reserved for free improvisation that is not consistently rooted in a particular stylistic paradigm (Appendix A, 1.2). The use of the terms by the Royal College of Organists (RCO) changed during the twentieth century: 'extemporisation' was last used in FRCO² examinations in July 1963, after which it was replaced by 'improvisation' without changing the nature of the improvisation task itself. The RCO's reasons for making this change are unknown, but it may reflect merely a preference in modern English for 'improvisation' over the Latin expression *ex tempore*. Whilst one could define

¹ The letters refer to the anonymised organists' accounts as transcribed in Appendix A.

² FRCO: Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists.

improvisation without any forethought (for instance, extending a hymn within a liturgical context) as ‘extempore improvisation’ as opposed to ‘prepared improvisation’, I decided to make no distinction between those two terms for the purpose of this thesis as it is impossible to tell how much preparation was involved in the recorded improvisations discussed in Chapter 3.³

The skill of creating music on the organ *ex tempore* has been constantly practised in Europe since the fifteenth century and led to the development of different national schools of organ improvisation: French and German organists, for instance, not only improvise regularly in concert and liturgy, but have also established a firm tradition of teaching improvisation in their respective countries.⁴ It is primarily for these reasons that I consider the organ improvisation traditions from both these countries. Although the Dutch improvisation tradition is not too dissimilar to the German tradition, Protestant hymns being the common denominator, there is a clear emphasis on free improvisation in the Netherlands as opposed to Germany: by this is meant that the former is not intended to be stylistic, but nonetheless follows certain modernist styles, often drawn from experimentalist styles popular in the Netherlands. To this extent they betray an unspoken tendency to follow given styles. The distinctive development of improvisation in the Netherlands deserves close investigation, but in this thesis my focus is on Anglican practices where experimental or avant-garde styles are almost unheard-of.

Although a relatively large number of tutor books on the practical aspect of improvisation is available (Appendix D), there has been, for the major part of the twentieth century, a noticeable lack of research into the national schools of improvisation. It is only within the last two decades or so that the art of organ improvisation has become a focus of attention for both musicologists and organists, resulting in a number of publications regarding the history and characteristics of various continental organ improvisation traditions. Particular

³ Karin Johansson (2008: 94) uses the term ‘extemporisation’ to describe the process of using compositions merely as blueprints, allowing the performing musician to modify the score whilst performing. However, I do not adopt her definition in this thesis.

⁴ In his thesis *Imagination, Form, Movement and Sound – Studies in Musical Improvisation* (2008), Svein Erik Tandberg gives a detailed account of the development and the characteristics of organ improvisation in France and Germany and I regularly refer to Tandberg’s research in this thesis.

progress in the musicological research of organ improvisation was achieved by the performance-practice research project *Changing Processes in North European Organ Art, 1600-1970*, carried out by the *Gothenburg Organ Arts Centre* (Sweden) between 1995 and 2000 (Ruiter-Feenstra, 2011: ii), and the *International Organ Improvisation Research Project* which took place between 2008 and 2011 under the auspices of the *Orgelpark, Amsterdam* (Fidom, 2017: 13).⁵ However, there is as yet little serious study of the Anglican tradition of organ improvisation in the UK at least since 1900, and this thesis attempts to fill this gap.

I first became aware of Anglican cathedral-style organ improvisation during a study trip of Anglican cathedrals in the UK in October 2002. I was taken aback by what I perceived as the most glorious, atmospheric improvisations before Evensong at Exeter Cathedral, played by the then Cathedral Organist Paul Morgan, and I vividly remember the new sound world which unfolded before me. Stylistically, what I heard could not have been more different to what I was used to in Germany: these grand Anglican improvisations were not based on hymns nor any specific themes, and yet they felt absolutely appropriate for the building, the liturgy and the occasion. These improvisations struck me as impressionistic, which is not to identify a close correlation with Debussy's composing style, but a more general aesthetic ideal. Since I judged them to be good improvisations, I was surprised to discover among Anglican organists a tendency to denigrate both their own improvisational skills and the broad tradition of improvisation in Anglican churches and cathedrals. This apparent mismatch between Anglican organists' skills as improvisers and the attitudes of many of them to this art led me to my first main research question: *what is Anglican organ improvisation and how does it compare to continental traditions?* In a sense, this research is ethnographical as I am writing from the perspective of a German improviser, observing my Anglican colleagues and the Anglican tradition of improvisation within its natural habitat. However, I make no assumption that the German approach to organ improvisation

⁵ I am most grateful to Prof Hans Fidom (Professor of Organ Studies at the *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*) for inviting me to contribute to the improvisation research project of the *Orgelpark Amsterdam* (NL), on the subject of English organ improvisation and for giving me the opportunity to present a paper at the *Orgelpark* conference in 2010. Many ideas and concepts presented in this thesis were strongly influenced by members of the *Orgelpark* research team and I would like to thank them for opening up new ways of thinking about music and improvisation to me.

is superior to the Anglican one – it is different, and in this thesis I argue that this difference arises in part from the context of the respective Anglican liturgy. My research question thus demands not only comparative study of actual examples of improvisation in continental and Anglican traditions, but an understanding of the context of the practice.

As is the case in many European countries, there are a number of organists in the UK that have excelled in the discipline of improvisation. The eighteenth-century English music historian Charles Burney (1726-1814) tells us that both Thomas Arne and Michael Christian Festing were dazzled by George Frideric Handel's organ extemporisations at Oxford in 1733 and that 'neither themselves, nor anyone else of their acquaintance, had heard such extempore [...] playing, on that or any other instrument.' (Gudger, 2000: 1) The blind eighteenth-century organist John Stanley (1712-1786) enjoyed an outstanding 'reputation as an extempore performer' (Bicknell, 1996: 191), as did the nineteenth-century organist and composer Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876) and his contemporary Henry Smart (1813-1879). Also, one must not underestimate the impact foreign organists may have had when improvising publicly on their visits to the UK: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) was invited to improvise at St Paul's Cathedral after every Sunday morning service for a whole month in June 1833 and his sketchbooks, containing the themes on which he improvised, are still held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Little, 2010: 97). There are accounts of Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) improvising on the organ of the Royal Albert Hall and Crystal Palace in August 1871, securing for him overnight fame as an organist and improviser (Jacob, 2010: 45-46). Furthermore, there are reports that, at the audition for the post of organist at Durham Cathedral in 1862/63, candidates were asked to extemporise a four-part fugue on a given subject (Barrett, 1993: 186). Improvising fugues does not seem to have been uncommon amongst Anglican organists in the nineteenth century: Peter Hardwick tells us that Hubert Parry (1848-1918) 'during his student days at Eton College [...] excelled at improvisation on the organ, by 1863 improvising fugues at the conclusion of services'. (2003: 4) The Royal College of Organists (RCO), established in 1864 'for the purpose of elevating and advancing' the professional status of organists,⁶ recognised from its

⁶ Accessed at https://www.rco.org.uk/aboutus_our_history.php retrieved on 25th August 2017.

inception the importance of 'extemporisation' and made this a compulsory component of the Fellowship examination.⁷

However, the importance placed by the RCO on improvisation could also be interpreted as a counter-measure against a perceived decline of the ancient art of improvisation that had set in during the course of the nineteenth century, the reasons for which are complex and cannot fully be dealt with within this thesis. Devon Howard (2012: 1) suggests that 'a variety of factors including a lack of formalised instruction in modern schools of music and conservatoires, the abundance of inexpensive printed music, and changing liturgical expectations' may have led to this development. Although organ improvisation in the UK did not die out as such, it is often said to be underdeveloped compared to France or Germany. In Part 1 of my thesis, I give a brief overview of the practice of liturgical improvisation in France and Germany from the later nineteenth century to the present day and look at key characteristics of both traditions respectively. This enables me to contextualise the Anglican tradition and to determine whether the anecdotal assessment of Anglican improvisation by Anglican organists is indeed correct.

In the Anglican tradition, the choir plays a prominent part in leading the worship and in Chapter 2, I examine how the importance of choral music in the UK has impacted on both the role of the Anglican organist and the technical particulars of the English cathedral organ by way of comparison with the situation in France and Germany. The chapter then addresses how the training of Anglican organists differs from France and Germany, helping to establish a more complete view of structural aspects of the profession of Anglican organist, which in turn sheds light on the development of Anglican organ improvisation during the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I then set out to look at the practice of Anglican organ improvisation itself by first consulting written sources (tutor books, essays, transcribed improvisations and 'improvisatory' composed music). In Chapter 3, I complement my investigation of the practice of Anglican organ

⁷ In the first FRCO examination (July 1881), candidates were required to extemporise upon a short phrase for sixteen bars. Today, candidates can choose between the figured bass or improvisation task, a change which was introduced in 1994 (visit of the author to the RCO Library, Perry Barr, Birmingham, 21st October 2008).

improvisation with analytical study of recordings of improvisations, a process which demands a formal method of noting and analysing real-time events with maximum objectivity. I then compare the Anglican tradition with the traditions in France and Germany and discuss the different types of organ improvisation found in Anglican choral services (Sung Eucharist, Matins, Evensong). Whilst the most prominent example of Anglican improvisation is the prelude before Evensong, there are many more opportunities for the organist to engage creatively in instant music-making in a liturgical context.

Chapter 3 also looks at the current state of Anglican improvisation, noting evidence of influence from continental traditions, both French and German. The advent of sound recording technologies, in particular, must be considered a technical innovation of revolutionary proportions: for the first time, it became possible to preserve instant music-making permanently. Thanks to the development of records and tapes, improvisations by organists abroad could now be heard in the UK without the need for travel.

The French tradition became particularly influential on Anglican organists and Pierre Cochereau (1924-1984), the legendary Organist of Notre-Dame in Paris (1955-84), is still revered by many and seen as the summit of improvisation. This raises the question of how Cochereau's style has influenced, if at all, the development of Anglican improvisation. Whilst a less insular perception of improvisation in the UK should of course be embraced, I ask whether the impact increasing globalisation has had on Anglican liturgical improvisation was entirely positive: could it be that this higher level of awareness of what is going on in the world of improvisation had a detrimental effect on what was considered typically Anglican improvisation? Is the Anglican style now being perceived by Anglican organists as inferior to the French style as a consequence?

The launch of the International Organ Festival St Albans (IOF) and its biennial Organ Improvisation Competition in 1963 under the leadership of Peter Hurford (b. 1930) set new standards in organ playing in the UK, not least in encouraging organists in the Anglican tradition to import other styles and traditions of improvisation. One of my interviewees, 'M', expresses the view that 'the

competition was introduced to raise standards' (Appendix A, 1.1), but can that be substantiated? Having been a finalist in the improvisation category of the competition myself in 2009, I was able to gain valuable personal insights into the preparation, participation and assessment process which will assist me in evaluating the impact of the St Albans competition, as well as the International Organ Improvisation Competition in Haarlem (NL), on Anglican organists.

Despite the tendency noted above of English organists beginning to imitate French and, to a lesser extent, German practices, the character of improvisation in the Anglican tradition remains distinct. I explain this distinctiveness firstly as a consequence of the unique style of liturgical and ceremonial practices in Anglican cathedrals; but secondly, I identify the wide gap between the very demands of improvisation within the organ curriculum in French and German conservatoires, and the inferior status of this discipline in English conservatoires. For me as a German-trained organist, this raises an intriguing question: can the skills I developed in developing stylistic improvisation in German styles be applied to distinctive English idioms, and if so, would it be useful for English organ students systematically to acquire such skills? In Part 2, I explore this question from several perspectives. In Chapter 4, I establish a methodology of historical stylistic improvisation, which requires the improviser to develop a 'consummate musicianship' (Ruiter-Feenstra, 2011: ix). Such 'consummate musicianship' is acquired, according to Ruiter-Feenstra, by 'integrating the once unified aspects of musicianship through practical applications.' (2011: ix) This is then tested, in Chapter 5, in an action research project in which I improvise in specific Anglican styles (Tudor, Restoration, Baroque, Victorian, Early Twentieth Century, Neoclassical and Postmodern). The outcome of this action research project has manifested itself in the commercially released DVD/CD *Ex Tempore* (Fugue State Films, 2011) which is attached to this thesis. Whilst the main focus of Chapter 5 is on the DVD project, I also present recordings of three improvisation case studies which complement or contrast the DVD project: St Albans Competition, BBC Choral Evensong and a free-style improvisation. My conclusions are largely positive: there seems no reason why the discipline and study required to improvise a Bach fugue cannot be applied to the study of improvising, say, a Handel organ concerto, or a Howells psalm prelude.

Existing Research and Literature

Although research of organ improvisation has long been neglected, an interest in the subject has emerged amongst musicologists and organists since the 1990s. Derek Bailey's book *Improvisation* (1992) is one of the early investigations in the field of musical improvisation from that period, addressing Indian music, Baroque and organ music, as well as rock and jazz. However, Bailey's chapter on organ improvisation barely touches on the deeper issues of liturgical context and style. This shortcoming is addressed by Svein Erik Tandberg whose PhD thesis *Imagination, Form, Movement and Sound* (2008) not only offers a profound study of organ improvisation in France and Germany, but also looks closely at the processes involved in organ improvisation, such as cognitive and motor models, making this a most useful source for this thesis. Although Tandberg's account of the nineteenth-century French symphonic improvisation tradition, starting with César Franck, is exhaustive, there is a notable absence of a more detailed account of modern representatives of the French school, such as Dupré, Tournemire and Cochereau. Similarly, earlier German traditions are covered well, focusing on both the Protestant school of hymn improvisation and the nineteenth-century Catholic tradition, yet omitting the twentieth-century developments of both Protestant and Catholic improvisation in Germany. However, in order to be able to contextualise Anglican improvisation, it is important to establish at least a working history of the development of French and German schools of improvisation.

Recent Anglican organ improvisation is said to have been strongly influenced by the French organist Pierre Cochereau. In order to understand both Cochereau's style and how it influenced Anglican improvisation, I draw on Anthony Hammond's book *Pierre Cochereau: Organist of Notre-Dame* (2012), which appears to be currently the only book extensively discussing Cochereau's musical language as an improviser. Graham Barber's essay 'The use of organs in English hymnody from the Reformation to the present day' (2008: 47-63) is one of the few written accounts of hymn accompaniment in the UK and provides crucial information on the 'giving-out' of the hymn tune, as well as the art of 'Free Organ Accompaniments', making this an essential publication for establishing the development of Anglican hymn improvisation. Paul Peeter's book *The Haarlem*

Essays (2014), published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the International Organ Festival in Haarlem, offers a variety of essays by leading musicologists and organists on the topic of improvisation, including Peter Planyavsky's essay 'Haarlem, Vienna and the French Connection: the diverse art of improvisation' (2014: 45-56), which elucidates key elements of German Catholic improvisation in the twentieth century. Interviews with leading European organists, such as Anders Bondemann (Sweden), Hans Haselböck (Austria) and André Isoir (France) bring to light personal experiences and share the interviewees' thoughts on the development of organ improvisation during their long careers (Peeters, 2014: 207-228). By outlining the development of improvisation through the ages and investigating current developments, Hans Fidom identifies historical stylistic improvisation as one of the emerging trends in his essay 'Improvisation: the emancipation of an ancient musical skill' (2014: 351-364). Whilst most of the books and essays mentioned thus far include musicological research of organ improvisation in both the German and French tradition, it appears that there is nothing comparable on Anglican improvisation.

The investigation of Anglican styles of improvisation in Chapter 3 of this thesis relies on the analysis of recordings of live improvisations. The process of Real Time Analysis (RTA), as described by Fidom in the *Orgelpark Research Report 3* (2017: 127-166) of the *Orgelpark Amsterdam* (NL), represents a useful tool in transferring recorded improvised music into text form and is regularly applied in this thesis. Where recordings of Anglican improvisation were not available, I consulted compositions by Anglican organists which were either classified as transcriptions of liturgical improvisations (e.g. *Elegy* by George Thalben-Ball or *Lento* by Sidney Campbell) or compositions which reflected the aesthetics of improvisation at the time (e.g. 'Prelude' from *Three Short Preludes* by Edward Bairstow or 'Liturgical Improvisation' from *Three Liturgical Improvisations* by George Oldroyd).

The methodology of historical stylistic improvisation that I apply in the DVD project *Ex Tempore* is outlined in Pamela Ruiters-Feenstra's book *Bach and the Art of Improvisation Vol. 1* (2011: 1-11), which is based on Ruiters-Feenstra's own performance-practice research at the *Gothenburg Organ Art Centre (GOArt)* from

1995 to 2000. In her book, Ruiter-Feenstra formulates an improvisation pedagogy based on sources surrounding J. S. Bach. The resulting 'Construction – Deconstruction – Reconstruction Cycle of Improvisation' (CDRC) is Ruiter-Feenstra's visual summary of Bach's improvisation methodology and forms the basis of my own methodology of stylistic improvisation (Fig. 4.2) which I have tested in practice by improvising in English styles from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Whilst Ruiter-Feenstra also touches briefly on the concept of 'extemporaneous composition' – that is the linking-together of improvisation, composition and basso continuo, it is to Markus Schwenkreis's essay 'Fantasieren als *Compositio Extemporanea*' (2009: 35-48) that I turn for a more detailed account of the process of extracting key formulae from compositions (*Blumenlese*; literally, collecting of flowers) to be applied in stylistic improvisation. Schwenkreis, who teaches 'Improvisation on historical keyboard instruments' at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (Basel, CH) is also member of the 'Research Group for Improvisation Basel' (FBI)⁸ and is regarded as a leading specialist in the field of historical improvisation. His essay supports Ruiter-Feenstra's concept of stylistic improvisation, giving the process of extracting improvisation formulae based on compositions more credit. In his doctoral thesis *Organ Improvisation in Context: Historical and Practical Influences on the Craft of Improvisation at the Organ* (2012), the American organist and improviser Devon Howard applies Schwenkreis's *Blumenlese* process practically by analysing, extracting and assimilating key formulae from the work of composers such as Johann Gottfried Walther, Johann Sebastian Bach, Johannes Brahms and Aaron Copland, and then suggests ways of how to improvise in the style of these respective composers. Whilst Howard offers a fascinating insight into the practical application of *Blumenlese*, mainly to German composers, his thesis does not cover any English styles and it is this research gap which I attempt to fill in my own thesis.

Although there is little serious study of Anglican improvisation available, there are a number of tutor books by English authors addressing practical aspects of improvisation. Thomas Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597) could be regarded as a *vade mecum* of practical Anglican improvisation in Tudor styles: although addressed primarily at singers, Morley's

⁸ Forschungsgruppe Basel für Improvisation.

instructions could equally apply to organists. Jane Flynn's PhD thesis *A Reconsideration of the Mulliner Book: Music Education in Sixteenth-Century England* (1993) expands on the techniques outlined by Morley whilst also pursuing the idea of pedagogy behind the organ pieces found in the *The Mulliner Book*. The Tudor-style improvisations of the DVD project are largely based on Flynn's research and represent the practical testing of some of the improvisation models outlined by her. Christopher Simpson's tutor book *The Division-Viol or the Art of Playing Ex Tempore Upon a Ground*, published in 1665, is not only a treasure trove of ground bass themes for organists to experiment with: it also introduces the reader step by step to improvising melodies (divisions) in different styles above the ground bass which I have found extremely useful in my own attempt to improvise *Divisions upon a Ground* (CD 3, track 9). Roger North's essays on music, written between 1695 and 1728, are a most valuable source of information on various aspects of English music theory and performance practice of that period. His notes on *The Excellent Art of Voluntary* are of particular relevance to this thesis as they not only confirm that the term 'voluntary' was regarded as a synonym for improvisation, but also give a detailed account of the skill set a 'good voluntiere' required. (North in Wilson, 1959: 136) Frank Joseph Sawyer's organ tutor book *Extemporization* (?1890) is a major reference point for Anglican organ improvisation at the end of the nineteenth century: Sawyer not only provides information on what was regarded as good practice in Anglican improvisation at the time, but also offers a multitude of improvisation models, some of which were applied in my Victorian-style improvisations on the attached DVD. Peter Hardwick's book *British Organ Music of the Twentieth Century* (2003) is an exhaustive almanac of organ music written in the British Isles, outlining major styles and composers. Whilst his chapter on Herbert Howells gives a useful overview of Howells's organ works, Hardwick focuses mainly on a descriptive approach of Howells's organ pieces. However, my Howells-style improvisation outlined in Part 2 necessitates a deeper understanding of Howells's complex musical language and Donald Grice's PhD thesis *Rhapsody in the organ works of Herbert Howells* (2008) offers a detailed categorisation of Howells's musical devices. My own attempt at improvising in the style of Herbert Howells represents the practical application and testing of these musical devices.

Recordings Review

The ephemeral nature of improvisation necessitates the use of recordings for the purpose of scholarly research. In this thesis, I draw on a wide variety of sources of recorded improvisations, some live improvisations within a liturgical context, others improvisations recorded specifically for commercial release. These recordings assist me in addressing both main research questions and represent a crucial part of my investigations within both Part 1 and Part 2 of my thesis.

In Part 1, I largely utilise recordings of live improvisations within Anglican liturgical contexts. Whilst a number of early recordings are available via the National Sound Archive (e.g. an improvised voluntary after BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong from Westminster Abbey, 1948), I am very grateful to Stephen Beet for providing private recordings of George Thalben-Ball's improvisations from the Temple Church, recorded between 1961 and 1980. Another important source of live recordings of Anglican improvisation is Healey Willan's improvisations from St Mary Magdalene, Toronto (1965-67), published by EMI Classics and drawn to my attention by the former Organist of Armagh Cathedral, Theodore Saunders. I am also most grateful to Robert Sharpe, currently Director of Music at York Minster, for giving me access to a (?BBC) recording of Edward Bairstow improvising at York Minster at the enthronement ceremony for Archbishop Cyril Forster Garbett in 1942, making this the earliest recording of Anglican liturgical improvisation considered in this thesis. The set of recordings for Part 1 is complemented by my own recordings of improvisations in Anglican cathedrals and Cambridge college chapels, which I made during my study trips to the UK in 1999 (Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals) and 2002 (St John's College Chapel, Cambridge), together with a recording of Andrew Millington's psalm accompaniment for a service of Choral Evensong I directed at Exeter Cathedral, as part of my M.A. assessments with Exeter University (2005).

In Part 2, I discuss a portfolio of my own professional practice as improviser. This portfolio features recordings of my improvisations during the various rounds of the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition (2009): the recording of two improvisations for the 'Preliminary Recorded Round' was made by me on the

Conacher organ in the Great Hall of King's College School, Wimbledon, whilst the other recordings from St Albans were kindly provided to me by a keen amateur organist who recorded all of us competitors and then made these recordings available to us afterwards. My improvised voluntary in the style of Handel at the end of a live broadcast of Choral Evensong from St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, was recorded on the Handel House organ at St George's by BBC Radio 3. In 2010, I recorded a sixty seconds free-style improvisation, again on the Handel House organ. This recording forms part of a global improvisation project and was commercially released on CD by the Association of Improvisation Musicians, Toronto, Canada.

The main focus of Part 2, however, is on my DVD and CD project *Ex Tempore – the Art of Organ Improvisation in England*, which was produced and released in 2011 by Fugue State Films (UK). This project represents the practical approach to preparing an improvisation Schwenkreis identifies as *Blumenlese*, an approach familiar to German stylistic improvisers and worthy, I argue, of adoption for the purpose of preparing stylistic improvisation in the distinctive context of Anglican worship. I apply this technique (described in detail in Chapter 4) in relation to styles of British composers, from Tallis and Byrd through to Howells and Matthias. I also provide further practical evidence of the successful implementation of the *Blumenlese* method by supplying a recording of improvisations in Austro-Bohemian historical styles on the CD *Orgelmusik aus Böhmen, gespielt auf historischen Orgeln des Egerlandes* [Organ Music from Bohemia, played on historical organs in the Egerland region], which was recorded in the Czech Republic and Germany in 2017 and was released in the same year by the German Ambiente-Audio label. In Appendix C, I present a 'List of Commercial Organ Improvisation CD Recordings by British Organists' which serves primarily as a point of reference.

'The organist' is of course not only a listener to recordings but a practising musician in the specific context of Anglican worship. In the following three chapters, I examine this context, considering the role of both the Anglican choir and organist, as well as the key characteristics of the English cathedral organ, by comparison with the French and German traditions. One way of identifying the

unique characteristics of Anglican organ improvisation is to compare it with distinctive continental customs. In Chapter 1, I identify characteristic features of the French and German traditions in order to throw into relief the distinctive features of the Anglican practice in Chapters 2 and 3.

Part 1:

Context of Anglican Liturgical Improvisation

Chapter 1: Liturgical Organ Improvisation on the European Continent

To answer the main research question of this part of the thesis (*what is Anglican improvisation and how does it compare to continental traditions?*), I first present, in this chapter, the context of continental organ improvisation (France, Germany), followed by the context of Anglican organ improvisation in the UK in Chapters 2 and 3, thus to bring out the distinctive situation of the Anglican tradition. In so doing, I focus on the peculiarities of the respective organist career structures and organ building traditions in France, Germany and Britain, as well as the actual musical practice (i.e. the uses and styles) of improvisation in each country respectively.

In this chapter, I first investigate the role of the organist and organ in France (Catholic) and Germany (Lutheran and Catholic), focusing on excellence clusters found in these two countries. It is generally accepted that the Parisian organ scene is the driving force for French organ culture and, deeply rooted in the French Catholic tradition, has produced outstanding organists and improvisers in the past and continues to do so today. The situation in Germany is slightly different in that both Lutheran and Catholic church music traditions have flourished over the centuries and, today, there are places with outstanding Protestant and Catholic church music all over the country. Church music in federal Germany does not have a clearly defined geographical centre of excellence as does France; however, *Kathedralen* (cathedrals) and *Stadtkirchen* (city churches) in major cities are

places with sufficient financial and human resources to perform church music to a high standard. These are the locations considered in this thesis.

I then present a brief overview of the development of liturgical organ improvisation in France and Germany from the later nineteenth century to the present day, highlighting idiosyncrasies of the respective traditions. This then assists me in drawing out the distinctive characteristics of Anglican liturgical improvisation in Chapters 2 and 3.

Before looking at continental traditions of organ improvisation, I first discuss the methodology behind the interviews of British organists which I conducted between 2008 and 2010 and which are printed in Appendix A. In order to substantiate my research with evidence from a representable body of UK organists, I decided to interview fifteen British organists either by phone or email or in person. Each interviewee was given fifteen different questions, addressing the situation of organ improvisation in the UK (such as: have there been any changes in recent years? What would they regard as a good improvisation? Is the training in organ improvisation sufficiently developed in the UK?) as well as their personal approach to improvisation (such as: who inspired you as an improviser? How do you practise improvisation?). Whilst I first intended to select interviewees to reflect a wide spread of different organist backgrounds, such as cathedral organist, school organist, concert organist, younger and more experienced organists and so on, I was in the end entirely dependent on the good will of my colleagues as not everyone I had approached was prepared to take part in this survey. In order to guarantee some level of anonymity, I regularly refer to these interviews by putting letters in inverted commas. The letters refer to the anonymised organists' accounts as transcribed in Appendix A. Throughout this thesis, I mainly use the content of the interviews by referring to quotes by specific interviewees. However, it was sometimes necessary to refer more generally to the whole of Appendix A when a vast majority of interviewees had expressed the same opinion on a certain matter. These interviews have proved invaluable in identifying the current state of mind regarding Anglican liturgical improvisation in the UK.

The French Tradition (Catholic)

In this section, I consider the role and training of organists in France, the French tradition of organ building and design, as well as the practice of Catholic liturgical organ improvisation in France from the later nineteenth century onwards. In so doing, I identify particular aspects that are uniquely French or which contribute significantly to the distinct identity of this tradition.

Organist Positions and Training

Historically, the posts of organist and choirmaster diverged early on in the French Catholic tradition and Orpha Ochse (1994: 132) tells us that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, most major churches in France would have two organs and an organist for each instrument: the *organiste titulaire*, who plays the *grand orgue*, and an *organiste accompagnateur*, who accompanies the choir on the *orgue de chœur*. The choir – in cathedrals often referred to as the *maîtrise* – is trained and directed by the *maître de chapelle* or *maître de musique*. Ochse states that ‘the three-way division of musical responsibilities by the *titulaire*, the *organiste accompagnateur*, and the *maître de chapelle* became the accepted practice in larger churches.’ (1994: 132) For the purpose of this thesis, I focus on the role of the *titulaire*, as he or she is charged traditionally with providing solo organ music only during Mass and Vespers, most of which would be improvised. The *titulaire* plays the organ mostly on weekends (Saturday evening and Sunday morning) and on major feasts during the Catholic church year. Most *titulaire* positions are paid a fee for each service,¹ making the position very much a part-time self-employed activity. To make ends meet, many *titulaire* organists supplement their income by teaching either at the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse* (Paris and Lyon) or at a *Conservatoire à rayonnement régional* (Toulouse, Rueil-Malmaison, Caen, Dijon and Toulon). Playing organ recitals on a national and international level is not only serving the purpose of furthering one’s career and reputation: French *titulaires* are paid good concert fees and accepting regular recital work is a vital source of income for quite a number of French organists. One

¹ In Paris, a standardised fee of €45.00 per service is paid; payment elsewhere is not standardised. (email from Martin Bacot to the author, 14th June 2017).

might ask why organists are happy to accept a low income in exchange for a *titulaire* post at a major French cathedral or church. From conversations with French organists, it is clear that the reputation of being associated with a famous sacred building in France, Notre-Dame de Paris being a prime example, is a major selling point for concert organisers (mostly abroad), leading to a regular supply of concert requests. The position of *titulaire* in France is predominantly an honorary title, which can indirectly further the organist's career in relation to the fame of the cathedral/church he or she is associated with. Whilst this is of course also true for Anglican and German organists, it is of particular importance to French organists. Becoming a *titulaire* is seen as highly desirable by young French organists and the official way to achieving this goal is by studying with an eminent French organ *maître* at the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris* (CNSMDP). According to Bacot,² organists are not officially required to have studied organ at the CNSMDP and to have obtained a qualification there, but in reality it is very important to have done so, as there are so few new organist positions coming up. Studying at the CNSMDP or one of the *Conservatoires à Rayonnement Régional* (CRR) enables young organists to make connections with important senior organists who may ask the most promising young players to become their assistants in a prominent church or cathedral. This is reminiscent of the Anglican organ scholar scheme, although it is less formal in France and focuses on organ playing only.

As shown later in Chapters 2 and 3, creating a smooth organ crescendo forms an important aspect of Anglican improvisation and I therefore look at the different ways that organists in France, Germany and Britain create crescendos without the need for assistance whilst also looking at specific features which might impact on improvisation.

French Organ Building and Improvisation

Hermann Busch and Martin Hercheröder tell us that French organ music 'depends upon the characteristic sound quality and technique of the so-called symphonic organ of Aristide Cavallé-Coll and his contemporary French organ builders'. (2012:

² Email to the author (28th February 2010).

140) According to Will Fraser, Cavaillé-Coll left a legacy of five hundred instruments – an incredible opus. (2012, CD liner notes: 2) Cavaillé-Coll devised a system of mechanical ventilis (*jeux de combination*) which allows the organist to control the wind supply to specific wind chests, thus enabling the organist to activate specific groups of stops separately by pressing down ventil pistons by foot: first, the organist draws all the stops of the organ (except beating stops, such as the *voix céleste*). Then, the organist commences playing on the bottom manual of the organ (*Grand Chœur*) which only operates the *fonds* stops (all 16', 8' and 4' flue stops). By pressing the *anches appel* (reed ventil) of the *Récit* (Swell), all the reeds, mutations and mixtures of the Swell division sound as well. By slowly opening the shutters of the Swell box, a most effective crescendo effect is noticeable, as the shutter doors are relatively thick to enhance the overall crescendo impression when opened. Now, the mixtures and reeds of the II. and then I. manual and pedals are activated, again by pressing the *appels*, gradually culminating in a triumphant organ tutti. Although the *jeux de combination* system allows one organist to change groups of stops without the need for assistance and whilst playing, the crescendo on a Cavaillé-Coll organ is still noticeably terraced compared to the crescendo on an English orchestral organ. Also, the invention of the Barker lever³ enabled organists to couple together all the manuals to achieve a most impressive tutti, whilst still being able to play with a light touch, enabling the organist to combine stops from many different manuals at great ease during an improvisation. With regard to sound, Cavaillé-Coll aimed for a balanced *Grand Chœur* with a perfect blend of foundation stops and reeds. In general, the French *Grand Orgue* is located at the very back of the church, high above on a West end gallery. British organist 'A' tells us that this position leads to a more distant, more atmospheric sound compared to English cathedral instruments (Appendix A, 2.11). Whilst I agree that French instruments can draw on the rich acoustic of the cathedral/church due to their high positioning, in my experience, French instruments overall tend to sound much stronger than their Anglican counterparts – particularly French reeds, known for their brash sound quality. Today, larger French organs often include sequencers which allow the organist to programme different combinations of stops which can then be activated in advancing order by pressing a '+' piston, or, in regressing order, by pressing a '-'

³ Barker lever: 'named after its inventor Charles Barker; a pneumatic device which assisted the key action – particularly on larger instruments', resulting in a light touch, even with coupled manuals.' (Brooks, 1998: 237)

piston. This system gives the organist ultimate control over the organ and allows for a smooth crescendo very similar to an English orchestral organ.

Organ Improvisation within the French Catholic Liturgy

Providing improvised background music – in a positive sense of the word – was a key activity of the French *titulaire* during the *Messe basse* (Low Mass or Organ Mass). According to Pierre Pincemaille (2005, liner notes: 13), ‘the ancient Latin liturgy (called ‘Saint Pius V’) was still in use’ in France during the first half of the twentieth century and the *Messe basse* gave the *titulaire* a particularly wonderful opportunity to improvise continuously (‘except at the moment of the Elevation’), connecting the congregation with the silent liturgical action at the altar via music. ‘The unique role the organ plays in French liturgy as ersatz choir’ (Bowen, 2010: 2) is confirmed by Gaston Litaize in his recollection of his student days:

In those years the eleven o’clock Mass was an organ recital performed while the priest celebrated at the altar, with his back to the congregation and without a microphone, so that his voice did not travel far. [...] Organ lovers were well catered for, as at a recital. Young organists could listen for hours to Louis Vierne, Charles Tournemire, Marcel Dupré, Joseph Bonnet and André Marchal, playing or improvising.⁴ (Planyavsky, 2012: 49)

What is interesting about this comment is not only the pre-Vatican II practice of organ improvisation during the Organ Mass: it also suggests a link between this practice and passing on the art of improvisation to a younger generation by students listening extensively to the various *maîtres*. Together with providing interludes for the *Grand-Messe* (High Mass) and *Vêpres* (Vespers), a French *titulaire* has enjoyed an extraordinary amount of creative freedom. In order to give liturgical relevance (or justification?) to the organist’s improvisation, it became

⁴ ‘In jenen Jahren war die Elf-Uhr-Messe ein Orgelkonzert, das gespielt wurde, während der Priester am Altar, Rücken zur Gemeinde und ohne Mikrofon zelebrierte: Seine Stimme trug also nicht sehr weit. ... Die Orgelliebhaber waren gut bedient, wie im Konzert. So hörten die jungen Organisten ganze Stunden lang Louis Vierne, Charles Tournemire, Marcel Dupré, Joseph Bonnet, André Marchal spielen oder improvisieren.’ (Planyavsky, 2012: 49)

customary to improvise on Gregorian chant applicable for that day. According to Marcel Dupré (1886-1971),

The organist then has the duty to be as much a part of the service as possible, drawing his inspiration from the plainsong pieces the organ replaces. For this, two methods are possible:

1. Play pieces composed on liturgical themes transposing them when necessary.
2. Improvise on the themes of the day's service.

(1974 [1925]: 144)

The use of Gregorian chant in improvisation is also confirmed by Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986), whose teacher Charles Tournemire (1870-1939)

never played from written music on Sunday mass. With the book of Gregorian chant always on the music rack, opened to the liturgical office of the day, he improvised throughout the entire mass, with an interruption only for the reading of the Gospel and the Sermon. (Frazier, 2007: 25)

We already know that French organists improvised almost continuously during the *Messe basse* – but what about the *Grand-Messe*? In his *Traité d'Improvisation à l'Orgue*, published in 1925, Dupré not only gives a clear account on when the organist ought to improvise, but also suggests musical forms he deems to be appropriate for each respective slot. Essentially, the *titulaire* was expected to improvise most of the proper of the mass,⁵ and during the Elevation and the Recessional after the service, resulting in the following six improvisation slots:

1. Entrance (*Entrée – Introit*)
2. Gradual (*Graduale*)
3. Offertory (*Offertoire*)
4. Elevation (*Elévation*)
5. Communion (*Communion*)

⁵ The Alleluia and the Sequence are not covered by the organ.

6. Recessional (*Sortie*)⁶

Within these six improvisation slots, Dupré distinguished between those liturgical moments which lend themselves for some development (entrance, offertory, recessional) and moments which are often short of duration (gradual, elevation and communion):

Longer Improvisations: *Entrance, Offertory, Recessional*

1. At the entrance of the choir, a prelude or a fugue, or a contrapuntal chorale.
2. At the offertory, a prelude, a fugue, or variations, preferably in the passacaglia form, or a piece with two themes, or a chorale in each of the forms we have studied.
3. At the recessional, a prelude, a fugue, a toccata, or a piece with two themes.

Shorter Improvisations: *Gradual, Elevation, Communion*

1. The air, in a slow movement, with a restrained melodic line.
2. The ornamented chorale.
3. The contrapuntal chorale, treated in a reflective mood.
4. The piece with one theme with central development.

(Dupré, 1974 [1925]: 145)

As this thesis focuses on the Anglican tradition of organ improvisation, it is of interest to read Dupré's thoughts on how choral music should be incorporated in the Mass:

Therefore, in order for the organ to be heard, the choir must give up the following:

⁶ Note the correspondence of this scheme with Classical French Organ Masses by de Grigny and Couperin.

Morning, at Mass:

At the entrance of the choir, the response, except the intonation.

At the Kyrie, the odd verses.

At the Gloria, the even verses.

At the Gradual, (if the organ plays it), the Gradual.

At the Offertory, the sung Offertory, although it is almost always very short.

At the Sanctus, the first and third Sanctus.

At the Agnus, the first Agnus.

At the Communion, the third Agnus.

At the *Ite missa est*, the response of the choir.

(Dupré, 1974 [1925]: 144)

It appears that the choir, although presumably singing mostly Gregorian chant, was hardly allowed to sing at all. But Dupré also shows that the French *alternatim* practice – that is choir and organ alternating between the verses of a liturgical chant – has been still in place during the first half of the twentieth century in France, allowing the organist also to perform part of the ordinary of the mass. The resulting limitation of choral singing would have been unthinkable in the UK at the time, let alone today.

The framework for the artistic freedom of French organists was about to change, however, with the outcome of Vatican II in 1963, which abandoned the Tridentine Rite and strongly encouraged congregational participation, i.e. congregational singing. According to Ann Labounsky (2000: 11), the new liturgical movement was spearheaded by two leading French liturgists: Joseph Gelineau and Lucien Deiss. 'Both took part in the Vatican II Concilium on Liturgy and stressed the importance of the congregation in singing the main liturgical chants.' (Labounsky, 2000: 211) Active congregational participation by singing hymns and responsorial psalms would of course impact on the scope of – or even replace – organ improvisations played by the *titulaire* on the *Grand Orgue*. It is therefore no surprise that the new liturgical movement caused real concern within the Parisian organ world and it is interesting to read the response given by the 'subcommission on the organ', which

comprised Gaston Litaize, Jean Langlais, Edouard Souberbielle, Maurice Duruflé and his wife Marie-Madeleine Duruflé. The sense of bitterness French organists must have felt at the time is evident throughout the document:

In conclusion, if one counts the minutes left to the organist of the Grand Orgue during the sung Mass, which lasts usually from fifty to fifty-five minutes, nothing is left for him to do, not only to exercise in a dignified way his function, but simply even to justify his presence [...] And if the role of the organist is so reduced to this sort of humming in the background, in this role of 'hole-filling' between two verses of songs in French and to serve as accompaniment for the eventual new songs, one wonders [...] if it is now necessary to train young organists and to place them in careers that are reduced to such a farce [...] One no longer even sees the necessity to maintain organ classes in our conservatories and schools of music. (Labounsky, 2000: 226)

Thankfully, French churches and cathedrals eventually did find a way of maintaining the wonderful French organ tradition within the liturgy, whilst embracing the changes as set out by Vatican II. According to Pincemaille (2005, liner notes: 14), the *Archiprêtre* of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, Canon Emile Berrar, established a new schedule of services which allowed considerable space for the *titulaire* Pierre Cochereau to improvise liturgically. There were now three Sunday masses with *Grand Orgue*: at 10am, 11.30am and 6.30pm, each granting the *titulaire* the following improvisation slots:

1. Introit (*Entrée*)⁷
2. Offertory (*Offertoire*)
3. Elevation (*Élévation/Consécration*)⁸
4. Communion (*Communion*)
5. Postlude (*Sortie*)

(Pincemaille, 2005, liner notes: 14)

⁷ There is no Introit for the 6.30pm mass as the preceding organ recital takes its place.

⁸ Pincemaille considers music improvised during the *Élévation* as musically less interesting. It was therefore never recorded during Cochereau's time. (Pincemaille, 2005, liner notes: 14)

In addition to the three mass services, the *titulaire* was also requested to improvise during Sunday Vespers at 4pm:

1. Introit (*Entrée*)
2. Four versets (one after each psalm and another after the Magnificat)
3. Postlude (*Sortie*)

(Pincemaille, 2005, liner notes: 14)

The new pattern of organ improvisations was hardly different from the practice described by Dupré, and one assumes that only some congregational singing was included, e.g. during the Gradual, leaving still enough space for organ improvisation. This compromise proved very successful and it enabled Cochereau to continue his artistic mastery until his untimely death in 1984. Duruflé, who fought so fiercely for the rightful place of liturgical organ music in France in 1966, regarded the success of services at Notre-Dame as confirmation of congregations still seeking high quality music-making within the liturgy:

This new music, played with the accompaniment of guitars and drums, which was introduced into our sanctuaries for the express reason of attracting crowds, has done just the opposite. The error in calculations has turned out to be monumental. People have deserted their parishes in order to attend Sunday masses in places that have maintained the cult of beauty, the only one that counts when it comes to glorifying God. Numerous examples could be given from the Parisian churches. The most spectacular is certainly Notre-Dame, where nine or ten thousand worshippers attend the sung masses each Sunday.

(Labounsky, 2000: 231)

Although Notre-Dame is a particularly popular tourist attraction anyway, and tourists might attend mass there regardless of the musical tradition, it is fair to say that the 'Cochereau organ cult' must have added to these impressive numbers of worshippers. Duruflé did confirm that, by 1978, the tradition of French liturgical improvisation had survived in the Parisian churches (Labounsky, 2000: 231), although this might also be true of many other major churches and cathedrals in

France. Whilst the situation at Notre-Dame is indeed encouraging, one must not forget that the practice of other Parisian churches might differ and Naji Hakim (b. 1955), former *titulaire* of La Trinité and successor to Olivier Messiaen, comments rather pessimistically:

No more Gregorian melody, no more polyphony, no more inspired folksong, no more harmony, or modulation – a real desert for the artist and for the Christian aesthete [...] When they [organists] are not expected to accompany hymns, one expects them to give simple background music, like that in supermarkets. (Kolodziej, 2012: 323)

Whilst it must be accepted that the situation of organ music within the liturgy may not be as standardised in all Parisian churches today as it was before Vatican II, it is fair to say that the French tradition of organ improvisation continues to grow strong regardless, with young French organists winning international organ improvisation competitions all over the world. One reason for the continuing success of the French school of improvisation may be the fact that almost every organ composer is also an (improvising) organist – the organist-composer being a particular feature of the French organ school. Hermann Busch and Martin Herchenroeder raise another interesting point regarding the French pedagogical practice: the organ school in France ‘evolved as a continuum with the past. Paris remained the centre of French music education, where the tradition of symphonic organ music was handed down from teachers to pupils.’ (2012: 155)

This strong bond between the organ professor – the *maître* – and his students not only ensures the establishment of a sense of tradition: it also allows the teacher to impose certain key principles in improvisation on his students, steering French improvisation in a certain direction. According to Hans Fidom (2014: 360), the Parisian branch of organ improvisation continued after Franck with Charles Tournemire and Louis Vierne. Marcel Dupré was a particularly influential figure in French organ improvisation of the first half of the twentieth century and his tutor book *Traité d’Improvisation à l’Orgue*, ‘documents how the term “improvisation”, by then increasingly annexed by the world of composition and scores, could hardly be conceived as anything other than on-the-spot composition.’ (Fidom, 2014: 359)

The strictness of Dupré's teaching method produced excellent results and amongst Dupré's students were such eminent names as Pierre Cochereau and Jean Langlais. Today, the Parisian tradition is represented by organists such as Naji Hakim, Olivier Latry and Thierry Escaich, who are inspiring a new generation of French organists. Disciplined teaching, together with the unique role of the French *organiste titulaire*, may be the key to the secret of the Parisian organ style of improvisation, a style which has 'become international, and is considered a zenith in the history of improvisation'. (Fidom, 2012: 360)

The development of the French Style of Organ Improvisation

According to Fidom, 'César Franck (1822-90) and Alfred Lefébure-Wely (1817-69) had played a prominent role in the revival of the art of improvisation in nineteenth-century Paris.' (2014: 360) Franck, affectionally referred to as *Pater Seraphicus* (angelic father) by his students, is generally considered to be the founder of the French symphonic organ tradition and was a prolific composer of organ music. As professor of organ playing at the Paris Conservatoire, Franck allocated, according to Svein Erik Tandberg (2008: 81), the majority of the six hours teaching every week to improvisation, only marginally touching on repertoire. Franck's organ students at the Paris Conservatory were assessed in the following three disciplines and this, in turn, gives us an understanding of the improvisation skill set required by French organists when improvising within a liturgical context:

1. Accompaniment of Gregorian chant in four parts (chorale either in Soprano or Bass)
2. Improvised fugue in four parts
3. Improvisation of a free piece on a given theme in sonata form (*thème libre*)

(Ochse, 1994: 155)

In order to establish a broad understanding of the harmonic style of these improvisations, it is useful to present brief written-out examples for each of the three disciplines (Exx. 1.1-1.4):

Ex. 1.1: Tournemire, *Plain-Chant harmonisé (soit à la Basse)* in the style of Franck (Tournemire, 1936: 105):

Plain-Chant

Ex. 1.2: Tournemire, *Plain-Chant harmonisé (soit au Soprano)* in the style of Franck (Tournemire, 1936: 105):

Plain-Chant

Ex. 1.3: Wachs, *Fugue* in the style of Franck (Wachs, 1878: 26, also in Tandberg, 2008: 85):

FUGUE
CONSTRUITE AVEC LES EXEMPLES DONNÉS CI-DESSUS.

Exposition

Divertissement

Ex. 1.4: Wachs, *Thème libre (Sonate)* in the style of Franck (Wachs, 1878: 10, also in Tandberg, 2008: 89):

SONATE
CONSTITUÉE AVEC LES EXEMPLES DONNÉS CI-DESSUS

Andantino.

It is important to note that Exx. 1.1 and 1.2 are not plain harmonisations of Gregorian chant, but are in a sense contrapuntal developments thereof.

Tournemire tells us that Franck, when harmonising Gregorian chant plainly, would place one chord under each note of the chant, which was by 1936 regarded as bad practice.⁹ The 'breaking-up' of the four-part harmonisation was seen as a useful tool for preparing students for contrapuntal improvisation, culminating in fugue-improvisation.

The next two examples – the fugue (Ex 1.3) and the *thème libre* (Ex. 1.4) – were written out by Franck's student Paul Wachs; only the beginning of each example is printed as this will suffice in giving a taster of the overall style of improvisation. Whilst the fugue is clearly rooted in classical diatonic harmony ('school fugue', Ex. 1.3), Franck embraced chromaticism more openly in his *thème libre* improvisations (Ex. 1.4). One cannot help but notice the similarities between Franck's *thème libre* improvisations and Frank Joseph Sawyer's 'Modern Binary Form' extemporisations (see Chapter 2): both apply sonata form within the boundaries of tonal harmony whilst the themes are based on balanced four-part phrasing. Franck, however, also teaches fugal style of improvisation which is not covered to the same extent by Sawyer's book – does this suggest a preference for homophonic improvisation within Anglican improvisation? This topic is discussed further later on in Chapters 2 and 3.

Franck's focus on teaching improvisation suggests that improvisation already played an important role in France during the second half of the nineteenth century. This is indeed confirmed by the report of Carl Franz, Organist of Berlin Cathedral, who visited Paris between the 13th and 21st May 1880:

The great value and emphasis which is given to improvisation during training proves to be essential here, where this aspect of the art of organ playing is at all times central. Here the first organist has no duties in connection with the accompaniment of the congregation and choir. All these tasks are entrusted to the smaller Choir organ. The

⁹ '[...] nous commettons l'erreur très lourde de placer un accord sous chaque note.' (Tournemire, 1936 : 105)

provision of free interludes and offertory music to enrich the Divine service is the artistic responsibility of the first organist. These musical decorations with their diverse juxtaposition of sounding colours and ingratiating, rhythmically meaningful melody caused me to admire them greatly. This is not least because such musical practice would not be tolerated within the framework for divine worship in our Evangelical Lutheran Church tradition.¹⁰ (Franz, 1880: 145; also Tandberg, 2008: 72)

Franz's account not only confirms the importance of improvisation in nineteenth-century France within teaching and liturgical playing: it also assesses the style of French improvisation from a German Lutheran point of view and considers the French improvisation style – presumably the free interludes were *thème libre* improvisations – to be unsuitable for Lutheran services. For Franz, only polyphony was the appropriate organ improvisation style within a liturgical context and this position was very much in line with the view of German Protestant organists at the time.¹¹ The comparison of organ improvisation within different liturgical traditions – Anglican, Lutheran and Catholic – is a fascinating topic and is discussed further in Chapter 3.

The emphasis on improvisation, however, was not immune to criticism. Franck's successor as professor of organ, Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) made no secret of his disapproval of Franck's organ teaching and, in 1921, remarked that Franck's 'class indeed had little success. As organist, the technique of the instrument troubled him little; he was satisfied to give instruction in free improvisation on an

¹⁰ 'Der grosse Werth, welcher beim Heranbilden auf das Improvisieren gelegt wird, ist, so wichtig dieser Theil der Kunst des Orgelspiels auch überall ist, dort noch ganz besonders geboten, wo der erste Organist mit der Begleitung von Gemeinde und Chor meist nichts zu tun hat. Während diese von der kleinen Chororgel aus besorgt werden, ruht auf ihm nur die Aufgabe, durch freie Zwischenspiele und Offertorien den Gottesdienst künstlerisch zu beleben. Grosse Gewandtheit durch verschiedene Zusammenstellungen von Klangfarben und durch einschmeichelnde, prägnant rhythmisierte Melodie zu wirken, habe ich bei solchen Gelegenheiten bewundert, wenn auch in unserer evangelischen Kirche manches davon als nicht in den Rahmen passend abgelehnt werden müsste.' (Franz, 1880: 145; also Tandberg, 2008: 72)

¹¹ The aspect of aesthetics in the German improvisation tradition are discussed further later on in this chapter.

immutable plan of andante.’¹² (Widor, 1921: 237-38, also Ochse, 1994: 183-84) Whilst Widor’s teaching helped establish Bach’s organ works as core repertoire of French organ training, the shift away from improvisation in teaching was lamented by Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) who, according to Pincemaille, did not see composed music as fit for purpose within a liturgical context:

A few bits of Sebastian Bach and Mendelssohn, repeated ad nauseam; pieces that are assuredly quite lovely, but concert pieces, out of place in a Catholic service, with which they do not agree at all, pieces written for old instruments, which do not apply, or apply poorly, to the resources of the Modern Organ; one thus believes in having made progress. (2005, liner notes: 12)

Saint-Saëns’s comment is remarkable for two reasons: first, he declares improvisation to be more suitable to the modern organ of Cavallé-Coll. Presumably he regarded improvisation as a vehicle that allows the organist to explore the orchestral tone colours in a way that Bach’s œuvre does not. Even more extraordinary, however, is Saint-Saëns’s second point: he regards high-quality concert pieces as out of place in Catholic services and advocates what one might call background music. Saint-Saëns confirms this notion:

A mediocre improvisation is always endurable when the organist is imbued with the idea that music in the church should be in accordance with the office, aiding it in meditation and prayer: and if the organ in this spirit gives out nothing worthy of notation – a harmonious sound rather than well-defined music – it will be as with those old church windows which charm us more than the modern glass, although the figures are scarcely to be distinguished. It would be better, whatever anyone may say, than a fugue by a great master, because that only is

¹² ‘La classe en effet avait peu de succès. Organiste, la technique de l’instrument l’inquiétait peu: il se contentait de faire un cours d’improvisation libre sur un plan immuable d’andante.’ (Widor, 1921: 237-38, also Ochse, 1994: 183-84).

good in art, which is in its place.¹³ (Pincemaille, 2005, liner notes: 12-13)

This suggests that establishing the appropriate atmosphere was seen as a priority in French liturgical organ improvisation at the beginning of the twentieth century, displaying cleverness less so. This approach to liturgical improvisation as primarily being mood music is surprisingly similar to the approach of Anglican organists at the beginning of the twentieth century and is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Whilst Franck's *thème libre* improvisations seem to have included some chromaticism, it was Louis Vierne who brought the use of impressionistic-chromatic harmony to a new level in French improvisation, evoking a sound world not dissimilar to that of his organ works. Ex. 1.5 shows the beginning of a *thème libre* improvisation with harmonisations applied in the style Vierne taught in his improvisation lessons, written out by his student Jean Bouvard in 1983. The dense chromatic harmony in Bouvard's example requires real mastery of keyboard harmony and does not seem to find its equal in Anglican improvisation during Vierne's time. Whilst Vierne explored the possibilities of chromatic harmony, it was his contemporary Charles Tournemire – like Vierne one of Franck's students – who pushed the harmonic boundaries even further, entering the world of modern modal improvisation. Tournemire was not interested in a strict formal approach to improvisation – as opposed to Dupré – and focused almost entirely on the Gregorian Paraphrase,¹⁴ culminating in his compositional magnum opus, *L'orgue mystique* (1927-1932). 'In terms of the symphonic Franck tradition, Tournemire remained committed to the idea of cyclic development' (Busch & Herchenroeder, 2012: 149), which allowed him at least some control over form whilst adapting his playing to the optimal length required by the liturgical action. According to

¹³ 'Une improvisation médiocre est toujours supportable, quand l'organiste est pénétré de cette idée que la musique, à l'église, doit s'accorder avec l'Office, aider au recueillement et à la prière; et si l'Orgue, dans cet esprit, bruit harmonieux plutôt que musique précise, ne fait rien entendre qui soit digne de l'écriture, il en sera de lui comme de ces vieux vitraux dont on a peine à distinguer les figures et qui nous charment plus les beaux vitraux modernes. Cela vaudra mieux, quoi qu'on en dise, qu'une Fugue d'un grand maître, attend qu'il n'y a rien de bon, en art, que ce qui est à sa place.' (Pincemaille, 2005, liner notes: 3)

¹⁴ According to James Frazier, Tournemire's paraphrase compositions would typically be titled *Paraphrases-Carillons, Fantaisies, Chorals, or Guirlandes alleluatiques*. (2007: 26)

Ex. 1.5: Bouvard, *Thème libre* in the style of Vierne, written out by Jean Bouvard, 1983 (Tandberg, 2008: 275):

A) 1^{ère} EXPOSITION (1)
Thème libre de Louis Vierne.

Andantino ♩ = 69

Labounsky, 'he believed that in order to impose music on listeners, one had to create an atmosphere – a mood.' (2000: 68) To create such an atmosphere, Tournemire applied a formula very similar to the arch-form approach so evident in many of Herbert Howells's rhapsodic organ works. Tournemire's student Jean Langlais describes Tournemire's formula for improvising a Gregorian paraphrase:

You must make a large crescendo, and the audience is very much with you – and the audience can no longer breathe. Then play two chords with the full organ. And then the audience feels as if they were dead. And they ask themselves what is going to happen next. What happens

then is a moment of silence. And then you play again the two chords – which are terribly dissonant; and then again – a minute of silence. And finally, open the heavens to your audience with a Voix céleste and a Bourdon 8'. Don't forget that your audience has earned the heaven you have saved for them. You must play quietly in the beginning and at the end [...] this crescendo is for the middle of the improvisation. (Labounsky, 2000: 68)

We are fortunate in that Tournemire himself published a book on improvisation, *Précis d'exécution de registration et d'improvisation à l'Orgue* (1936), promoting his particular style of paraphrasing Gregorian chant in improvisation. Ex. 1.6 gives an indication of the modal harmonies Tournemire must have applied in his improvisations at Sainte-Clotilde in the 1920s and 30s.

In addition to the use of modern modal harmony, the application of long trills is of particular interest as this is also features often in Cochereau's improvisation, as shown in the next subsection. Whilst Tournemire could be regarded as primarily being a harmonist, one could equally label Dupré as a contrapuntalist. Dupré was not only an internationally renowned French concert organist, having performed Bach's entire organ works from memory in ten recitals in 1920 and again in 1921,

he was acknowledged also as the most gifted improviser of his generation, especially in contrapuntal disciplines, where he was no less than a genius. He could improvise lengthy fugues with fully invertible counterpoint, maintaining a regular countersubject correctly at all times. (Hammond, 2012: 35)

Durufié, himself an improvisation student of Dupré, commented on his teacher's strict approach to sonata form improvisation: Marcel Dupré, compared to Eugène Gigout, 'began imposing two themes [rather than just one], and demanding that the countersubject be kept strictly throughout.' (Dufourcq, 1982: 18) Dupré's thorough teaching style is very much evident in his tutor book *Traité d'Improvisation à l'Orgue* and not only codifies French Catholic service playing practices, 'but serving as much as a treatise on harmony, counterpoint, fugue,

Ex. 1.6: Tournemire, extract from *Précis d'exécution de registration et d'improvisation à l'Orgue* (1936: 113):

The image displays a musical score for organ, divided into four systems. The first system is marked 'Assez vif' and 'Fragment du dessin', featuring a 4/4 time signature and a melodic line in the right hand with 'etc.' markings. The second system includes a 'Pedale:' section with a 2/4 time signature and a 3/4 time signature, followed by a section marked 'f' (forte). The third system is labeled 'CHORAL' and 'Tête du dessin', with a tempo marking of quarter note = 58 (♩ = 58) and a 2/4 time signature. The fourth system is marked 'Dessin' and 'staccato', with a tempo marking of quarter note = 84 (♩ = 84) and a 4/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

plainsong, and orchestration as anything else'. (Kolodziej, 2012: 332) The dual link of the French organist, being both composer and improviser, meant that 'traditional compositional techniques on a high level were taught through improvisation.' (Busch & Herchenroeder, 2012: 141) This approach to formal

improvisation is remarkably similar to the teaching practice of *Tonsatz* at German *Hochschulen* and is discussed later on in this chapter.

Having identified the two distinct French improvisation schools – the harmonic approach by Vierne and Tournemire and the contrapuntal approach by Dupré – I now move on to looking more closely at Pierre Cochereau’s improvisation style. Before doing so, I would like to point out that the output of contemporary French improvisers, such as Hakim, Pincemaille and Escaich, would fully deserve a more detailed mention here as well, but the constraints of this thesis make this impossible.

Pierre Cochereau: A Brief Approach to his Style of Improvisation

A number of organists in the UK have suggested that Cochereau’s improvisations had a great impact on Anglican improvisation (see Appendix A). The Anglican organist and improviser Anthony Hammond analysed Cochereau’s improvisation style in detail in his book *Pierre Cochereau: Organist of Notre-Dame* (2012) and it suffices here to summarise Hammond’s conclusions and to pick out examples which are relevant to this thesis. Although Yvette Carbou’s two books *Pierre Cochereau: Témoignages* (Zurfluh, 1999) and *Pierre Cochereau: Un art d’illusioniste* (DelaTour, 2014) also provide some stylistic analysis, it is Hammond who considers the whole gamut of Cochereau’s improvisational and compositional output. The fact that such an in-depth publication was written by an Anglican organist in the UK, and not a French organist as one might expect, is possibly another indicator of the unique status Cochereau enjoys in the UK.

If Dupré and Tournemire dominated French organ improvisation in the first half of the twentieth century, then Pierre Cochereau (1924-1984) most certainly dominated the second half. Cochereau draws on many stylistic and technical resources in his improvisations, which I here briefly identify in order to differentiate between an iconic French style, the characteristic German style and the styles that have tended to be adopted by English organists. Harmonically, Cochereau followed in the modal footsteps of Tournemire, Fleury and Duruflé. Whilst Cochereau uses polytonal chords, clusters, chromaticism, modulations and

bitonality in his improvisations, he remains within the bounds of a more-or-less tonal modernism. With regard to form, Cochereau was a great exponent of the disciplined Dupré school of improvisation in using counterpoint extensively within established musical forms (e.g. symphony, variations), whilst being ‘always subservient to harmony’. (Hammond, 2012: 155) Rhythm is a particularly strong element in Cochereau’s playing and his dance-like gigue rhythms make his style instantly recognisable.

Cochereau’s music is decidedly ‘foreground’ music: it commands the attention of the listener and this is particularly evident in Cochereau’s percussive improvisations on the chamades of Notre-Dame at the end of a Sunday Mass, where ‘there would follow a dazzling display piece, usually in the form of a toccata.’ (Hammond, 2012: 157) This is in stark contrast to the Anglican style of liturgical improvisation before Evensong where organists traditionally play quietly in order to invoke a contemplative atmosphere (see Chapters 2 and 3).

Cochereau’s postlude improvisations, usually titled *Sortie* or *Final*, would be heard by thousands every week, making this Cochereau’s signature style. There, Cochereau would often apply one of his key devices: the *tremolando* chord (Ex. 1.7). According to Hammond, ‘often Cochereau holds certain tones of a chord and trills or arpeggiates others, but on occasion the whole chord is treated in this way.’ (2012: 158) The *tremolando* technique has become a typical French improvisation device and it is not surprising that Anglican improvisers, influenced by the French tradition, regularly apply this particular playing technique. An excellent example for this is Martin Baker’s improvisation on ‘*God rest you merry, gentlemen*’ (Appendix B, Table B10; CD 1, track 8) – the lively accompaniment pattern heard throughout is achieved by a *tremolando à la Cochereau*.

I agree with Hammond who states that ‘these lively and sometimes frivolous improvisations are not highbrow music’ (2012: 188) and it is the blatant showmanship of this style that gave cause for severe criticism by organists from the Germanic tradition of organ improvisation. Anders Bondeman (b. 1937), organist of the Jacobskyrka in Stockholm, tells us that

Cor Kee [Bondeman's teacher in the Netherlands] did not like to hear virtuosity take over in an improvisation. [...] I was a rather obedient student and I shared his reservations with regard to the somewhat superficial improvisation style of those French organists who neglected form and counterpoint. When I heard Pierre Cochereau for the first time in the Notre-Dame in Paris, I also found it rather superficial and almost of poor taste. (Peeters, 2014: 208)

Ex. 1.7: Cochereau, 'Toccatà' from an improvised *Symphony*, Boston, 1956, bars 13-18 (Hammond, 2012: 169):

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically bars 13 through 18. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 13 to 15, and the second system covers bars 16 to 18. The right hand (RH) part features complex, often parallel, chordal textures with many accidentals, while the left hand (LH) part provides a more rhythmic and melodic accompaniment. The notation includes various articulations such as slurs and accents, and the piece concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

From personal experience, I can confirm that during my undergraduate studies in Regensburg (Germany), a similar view was shared amongst the students and teachers at the *Hochschule*: discipline and form had to come before harmonic indulgence. From this perspective, Cochereau's flamboyance can certainly be criticised. However, my personal view has changed over time and I do think it important to maintain a healthy balance between the French harmonic and the German contrapuntal approach. Bondemann also changed his mind over time and now declared that he 'became one of the crowd of admirers who honour his [Cochereau's] memory'. (Peeters, 2014: 208)

In addition to harmony derived from superimposed chords, Cochereau applied other impressionistic devices such as parallel chords. In Chapter 2, we come across

parallelism in George Oldroyd's 'Liturgical Improvisation' from his *Three Liturgical Improvisations for Organ* (1948); however, Cochereau's use of harmony above the tonic pedal is more complex, leaving the boundaries of traditional church modes (Ex. 1.8):

Ex. 1.8: Cochereau, 'Lamento' from *San Francisco Symphony*, 1972, opening (Hammond, 2012: 146):

Solo Krummhorn 8
 R Fonds douces, Celestes 8
 G Fonds 8.4
 P Erzähler Celeste
 Péd Flûtes 16.8

Lento (♩ = c.76)

The musical score is written for a four-staff organ. The top two staves are for the right hand, and the bottom two are for the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Lento' with a quarter note equal to approximately 76 beats per minute. The right hand part begins with a series of chords, mostly in second inversion, marked with a piano 'p' dynamic. A 'Solo' section begins in the right hand with a mezzo-piano 'mp' dynamic. The left hand part consists of a single line with a tonic pedal point, indicated by a long horizontal line with a wavy underline and a 'Péd' marking.

Like Oldroyd, Cochereau avoids parallel movement of root-position triads: in Ex. 1.8, Cochereau shows a preference for second-inversion chords in the right hand, creating a feeling of harmonic openness. The avoidance of root-position chords was also propagated by Tournemire who 'called the first inversion "the most beautiful chord in music" for the freedom that it brings'. (Hammond, 2012: 142)

Cochereau did not invent a new harmonic system, like Messiaen did – he is not original in that sense. What makes Cochereau's playing unique, according to Hammond (2012: 152), is the way he uses 'pre-existing tools' to create music, leading Hammond to conclude: 'Cochereau is Cochereau, and no one else can be.' (2012: 154) Whilst it is clear that Hammond's comment refers to Cochereau's personal, highly effective and instantly recognisable way of using more or less traditional material, I do object to the underlying notion of lifting Cochereau on this high artistic pedestal, proclaiming him undisputed king of improvisers. Hammond is clearly an admirer of Cochereau's work, and that I do accept, but it is surely naïve to think of Cochereau as the all-time golden benchmark of improvisation and to glorify his artistic output in that way. Cochereau did set new standards of improvisation in France and abroad, but it is also important to

remember that Cochereau's style is only one way of improvising amongst others and it would be a shame if Cochereau's popularity were to conceal the work of other great improvisers, such as Tournemire, Franz Lehrndorfer and Loïc Maillé.

The German Tradition (Lutheran and Catholic)

In this section, I first discuss the importance of both the Lutheran and Catholic church music tradition in Germany, before focusing on the organist career structure and organ building in Germany. This is then followed by an investigation of the actual practice of liturgical improvisation in Germany from the later nineteenth century onwards, bringing out the differences between the German Lutheran and Catholic tradition.

The Lutheran and Catholic Traditions in Germany

Liturgical organ improvisation in Germany has played an important role over the centuries and continues to do so today. Whilst the Lutheran music tradition is seen to be the main tradition of German church music (undoubtedly due to the fame of J. S. Bach), there are currently as many Catholic Christians living in Germany as there are Lutheran.¹⁵ Yet, in 2012, there were 1,900 Lutheran church musicians employed as opposed to 1,400 Catholic church musicians (only 10% of each group were full-time church musicians).¹⁶ These figures show that German church music is flourishing in both liturgical traditions, albeit with a slightly stronger Lutheran element, and I need to consider both denominations in my research in order to give a balanced account of the German tradition of improvisation.

¹⁵ According to *Forschungsgruppe Weltanschauungen Deutschland*, 28,9% of Germans were Catholics whilst 27,1% were Lutherans (2015); accessed at <https://fowid.de/meldung/religionszugehoerigkeiten-deutschland-2015> retrieved on 04th May 2017.

¹⁶ *Deutscher Musikrat* (2017); accessed at http://www.miz.org/download/PM_Kirchenmusik_2017_Anhang_Daten_und_Fakten.pdf retrieved on 04th May 2017.

Organist Positions and Training

Both Lutheran and Catholic organists are most commonly referred to as *Kirchenmusiker* (church musicians), reflecting their wide field of responsibilities: organist, choirmaster of several church choirs, concert manager and organ teacher. Having worked both as a Lutheran and Catholic church musician in Germany between 1992 and 2004, I was able to experience the subtle differences between the traditions. Overall, the *Kantoren* (Lutheran church musicians) have a slightly higher social standing within the church as they are primarily answerable to the *Kirchenvorstand* (parochial church council), whilst the Catholic church musicians are directly answerable to the priest and therefore at the mercy of an individual. This may not necessarily present a problem, but it does mean (in my experience) that the Lutheran *Kantor* enjoys somewhat more autonomy in the way he engages musically in the service.

There are currently four different church music diplomas, which differ only slightly between the Lutheran and Catholic strand: *D-Prüfung* (D examination) and *C-Prüfung* (C examination) are aimed at amateur organists working in smaller churches, whilst the *B-Prüfung* (B examination) and *A-Prüfung* (A examination) require students intending to work in bigger churches and cathedrals to enrol full-time. However, due to the *Bologna Process*,¹⁷ an increasing number of German *Musikhochschulen* (music conservatoires) offer a *Bachelor of Arts in Kirchenmusik* (equivalent to the *B-Prüfung*) and a *Master of Arts in Kirchenmusik* (equivalent to the *A-Prüfung*) instead. In comparison to the French and Anglican system, it is important to note that both Lutheran and Catholic organists in Germany must pass these qualifications to become employable by the church. Most German churches employing full-time church musicians do not cater for assistant organists: the organist is managing the execution of the church music alone. However, large *Kathedralen* (cathedrals) or *Stadtkirchen* (city churches) would employ several musicians as the music programme to be delivered is more extensive.

¹⁷ The *Bologna Process* is a collective effort of European universities to introduce a unified three cycle system of study: bachelor/master/doctorate to increase compatibility between different educational systems; accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en retrieved on 04th May 2017.

In Lutheran churches, there does not seem to be a set pattern to the exact nature of the different church music positions: the *Kantor* can, for instance, be in charge of the *Kantorei* (adult choir) and organ playing, whilst the assistant *Kantor* directs the *Kinderchor* (children's choir) and accompanies the *Kantorei*. However, there is always one person mainly in charge of the music, like an Anglican director of music. At Catholic cathedrals in Germany, the system more closely resembles the Anglican arrangement: the *Domkapellmeister* (cathedral director of music) is in charge of all things choral, whilst the *Domorganist* (cathedral organist) is focusing on providing organ music for all church occasions. In comparison to the Anglican cathedral tradition, the position of *Domorganist* is not seen as a junior position and stepping stone to becoming a *Domkapellmeister*: both positions are highly regarded in their own right. The *Domorganist* is much more autonomous compared to an Anglican assistant director of music or assistant organist and does not share the playing with the *Domkapellmeister*. On the other hand, the *Domorganist* is not completely separate from the rest of the music team either: he or she does play solo organ music (repertoire and improvisation) and accompanies hymns and choral works as required – a major difference to the French system, where the *titulaire* is usually not asked to accompany at all. Whilst church music positions in smaller churches are almost always part-time, *Kantoren* of bigger *Stadtkirchen* and *Domorganisten* of *Kathedralen* can be both full-time or part-time. It is common for organists in prominent positions to also teach at German *Musikhochschulen* (music universities/conservatoires) to supplement their income. Some university teaching positions even come with the benefit of a professorship which helps to increase the reputation of the *Kantor* or *Domorganist* holding such a post.

German Organ Building and Improvisation

This paragraph gives a brief account of German organ building from the later nineteenth century to today, with a particular emphasis on methods of changing registration and overall sound qualities as I believe these to be particularly relevant to improvisation. Important German organ builders of Romantic organs include Walcker (Ludwigsburg), Sauer (Frankfurt), Ladegast (Weißenfels) and Steinmeyer (Öttingen). The invention of the *Rollschweller* (stop-crescendo roller)

allows the organist to create a crescendo by pushing forward a pedal roller. Although this system enables the organist to add stops quickly without lifting his hands from the manual, it does not allow for a sensitive control of stop changes and makes the crescendo effect ambiguous. Romantic instruments also had, often in addition to the *Rollschweller*, a system of pre-set combinations called *Feste Kombinationen* (set combinations). These enable the organist to create dynamic shadings such as *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *ff* and tutti across the whole organ by pressing one thumb or toe piston. Alas, many historic German Romantic instruments are lost today – partly due to bombing in WWII, but more so due to replacement with new instruments as part of the *Orgelbewegung* (Organ Reform Movement) which was particularly strong in Germany. Neoclassical instruments were built in huge numbers between 1950 and 1980 and became at one point the predominant organ type in Germany. The characteristics of these instruments are: few 8' stops compared to overall stops, high number of mutations and mixtures and a thinner and more aggressive sound compared to German Romantic organs. These Neoclassical instruments were designed to favour the polyphonic music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although described by organists nowadays as often being 'screechy', these organs allow for a particularly colourful style of organ improvisation which, in my experience, does indeed inspire a more polyphonic approach to improvisation. With the arrival of electricity, German organs saw the introduction of *Freie Kombinationen* (free combinations), a system which allows the organist to choose specific stops on each division by operating small switches above the stop rocker switches. The organist can then activate these combinations by pressing either thumb pistons or toe pistons labelled *Freie Kombination 1*, *Freie Kombination 2* and so on. This system allows the organist greatest freedom of selecting any combination of stops, much more so than the French or English system. German organ improvisers made particular use of this system in improvisations during the 1970s and 1980s, such as the former organist of Munich Cathedral Franz Lehrndorfer (1928-2013), enabling them to access particularly colourful registrations in quick succession. However, this particular system does not allow the organist to create as smooth a crescendo as the English orchestral organ does. Today, German organ building is eclectic in style: in addition to historic Baroque and Romantic organs, as well as Neoclassical instruments, there is a trend of building organs in specific historic styles, focusing

on Neoromantic instruments (Fischer, 2001: 81). Larger instruments, like in France, often have a sequencer system installed which offers the organist great flexibility with changing stops. Organs by the German organ builder Philip Klais (Cologne) are disproportionately well represented in German cathedrals today.

Two Traditions: Lutheran and Catholic Organ Improvisation in Germany

Whilst the French school of organ improvisation is mainly based on Gregorian chant and modal harmony, one could equally say that the German school focuses primarily on chorale melodies and polyphonic textures. These rather general claims deserve, of course, a more detailed examination and in the next two subsections I explore how liturgical improvisation developed in Germany from the later nineteenth century to the present day, whilst identifying its key characteristics. Unfortunately, twentieth-century liturgical improvisation in Germany has not been as thoroughly investigated as the French, and I accordingly draw more freely from my own experience, as well as some published material in order to establish a general overview of the German school of improvisation.

The most striking difference between German liturgical organ improvisation and the French school lies in the parallel traditions of Catholicism and Lutheranism, each with its unique liturgies and practices which had a major impact on the way German organists improvised; and this symbiosis continues today. Around 1900, however, Lutheran and Catholic organists in Germany were still rather separated in their approach to improvisation, and this is confirmed by Peter Planyavsky who states that

in the Lutheran [...] liturgy the 'Germanic' style was cultivated, i.e. predominantly cantus firmus based, with emphasis on the chorale prelude and partita as they have come down to us [...] Roman Catholic organists, on the other hand, cultivated a style based on a sound concept¹⁸ rather than on structure, in accordance with the liturgy of the time [...] (2014: 47)

¹⁸ The term 'sound concept' is used here by Planyavsky in the sense of 'concept of sonority', implying a focus on harmony over polyphony.

As Lutheran and German Catholic organ improvisations seem to be stylistically different – at least at the beginning of the twentieth century – I investigate these two denominations separately.

The German Lutheran Tradition

To gain an understanding of how Lutheran organists improvised at the middle of the nineteenth century, I consulted the *Orgelschule* (organ tutor) written in 1867 by Johann Georg Herzog (1822-1909), which, according to Tandberg, is ‘one of the most important textbooks for church organ playing in Protestant and Evangelical Lutheran circles. In the course of time its use also became widespread in Catholic churches, especially in Germany.’ (2008: 130)¹⁹ Herzog’s tutor book was aimed at the training of future Lutheran church musicians and we can therefore assume that its content reveals what was regarded as good practice of liturgical organ playing within the Lutheran church at the time, covering, amongst others, the following areas:

1. Exercises in chorale-playing (*Übungen im Choralspiel*)
2. Preludes and postludes (*Vor- und Nachspiele*)

These two topics essentially cover the two main areas of organ playing within Lutheran services. According to Herzog,

in Lutheran services, organ playing serves a dual function: a more secondary role by leading and accompanying chorales and a more independent role by providing preludes and postludes. With the latter, the organist represents art. But this art must be completely suitable and worthy for Divine Worship.²⁰ (Herzog, 1871: 96)

¹⁹ Reprints of Herzog’s *Orgelschule* can still be found as late as 1949.

²⁰ ‘Das Orgelspiel nimmt im evangelischen Gottesdienst eine doppelte Stellung ein: eine mehr sekundäre in der Begleitung und Führung des Chorals und eine selbstständige im Vor- und Nachspiel. In letzterer Beziehung vertritt der Organist im wahren Sinn des Worts die Kunst. Aber diese Kunst soll stets eine würdige, der gottesdienstlichen Feier angemessen sein.’ (Herzog, 1871: 96)

Herzog's comment about the suitability of improvisations for worship raises an important question: what exactly makes improvisations suitable within Lutheran worship at the second half of the nineteenth century? Carl Franz provides in 1880 a clear answer to this question:

In the nineteenth century there were differences between the Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Lutheran traditions of organ improvisation. For Protestant church musicians improvisation was often synonymous with extensive use of strict contrapuntal forms. Improvisation over a Lutheran chorale melody was expected to be in a suitable sacred style that was worthy for church usage. For many Catholic organists, Lutheran chorales and the many Baroque arrangements of them were virtually unknown to them. (Franz, 1880: 145; also Tandberg, 2008: 68)

The emphasis on polyphonic textures within the Lutheran tradition of improvisation had a fundamental impact not only on the Lutheran school, but also the German Catholic school, and is discussed further later on.

With regard to chorale playing, Herzog's approach to hymn harmonisation is intriguing as he does not place the melody in the Soprano by default, as would be the case in Anglican hymn playing at the time (see Chapter 2). Instead, he demonstrates different harmonisation techniques, as shown in Ex. 1.9: the top example (*Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*) places the melody in the left-hand Tenor part on an 8' reed, whilst the right hand and pedals provide the accompaniment. The middle example (*Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn*) and bottom example (*Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*), on the other hand, place the cantus firmus in the pedals on a 4' stop, whilst the right hand provides a chordal accompaniment. The Bass part is played by the left hand on a different manual with a 16' registration, making this a rather challenging task for the organist. Whilst there is no equivalent in the Anglican tradition to the practice of placing the melody in parts other than the Soprano, it does somewhat draw parallels to César Franck's teaching of harmonising Gregorian chant with the chant being in the Soprano or Bass. Although we do not have evidence that the Lutheran practice of

placing the chorale melody in different voice parts was used when accompanying congregational hymn singing, it is certainly an excellent way of teaching the organist to control themes and motifs in different voice parts, opening up new technical opportunities in improvisation.

Ex. 1.9: Herzog, examples of chorale harmonisations, from *Orgelschule* (1867: 72):

72

2. Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten –
Godackt und Salicional 8' J. G. H.

3. Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn – (*Melodie als Tenor im Pedal.*)
**) Godackt und Flöte 8' Flöte 4' Oberwerk.*

Bordun 16' Gambe 8' Hauptwerk.

C. F. Clarino und Flötenb. 4'

**) Oeder Oberwerk, Godackt und Salic. 8' für Sopr., Alt und Bass, Ped.: Flötenb. 4' und Oktave 3', letztere mittelst der Pedalocoppel aus dem Hauptm.*

4. Nun komm der Heiden Heiland – (*Melodie als Oberstimme im Pedal.*)
*Lieblüchflöte und Godackt 8' Salic. oder Flöte 4' *)*

C. F. Flötenb. und Oktave 3'

**) Oeder im Oberm. Salicional 8' - im Pedal Flötenb. 4' allein.*

D. 23

Herzog then demonstrates in Ex. 1.10 how to place the cantus firmus in the pedals (*Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König*) – this time with a 16' basis – as well as how to solo-out the chorale in the Soprano part (*Jesus meine Zuversicht*).

In order to support congregational singing of less familiar chorales, Herzog suggests the following playing technique: doubling the melody in octaves in the Soprano part (*Herzliebster Jesu*, Ex. 1.11).

The various chorale harmonisation techniques presented by Herzog suggest a similar creative approach to hymn accompaniment than the 'Free Organ Accompaniment' within the Anglican tradition (see Chapter 2). However, Herzog's examples are all in strict four-part harmonisation (even Ex. 1.11 is in four parts as

Ex. 1.10: Herzog, cantus firmus in the pedals and Soprano part, from *Orgelschule* (1867: 73):

73

5. Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König –
Flöte, Prinzipal, Gambe 8' Oktave 4' J.G.H.

C. F. Subb., Violonb. 16' Oktav. 8' Posaune 16'

b. Choräle mit hervorgehobener Melodie in der Oberstimme.

6. Jesus meine Zuversicht –
C. F. Hauptwerk, Trompete, Gedackt, Prinzipal 8' Oktave 4' J.G.H.

Oberwerk, Geigenprinzipal und Gedackt 8'
Subb., Violonb. 16' Oktav. 8'

*) Das Athemholen beim Schluss einer Verszeile darf der folgenden Note in ihrem Werthe keinen Eintrag thun, sondern hat auf Kosten der Schlussnote zu geschehen z. B.

D. 23

Ex. 1.11: Herzog, octave doubling of Soprano part, from *Orgelschule* (1867: 75):

75

9. Herzliebster Jesu –
Alle 3 flüssigen Labialstimmen in Verbindung mit Oktave 4' Bordun 16' (Oktave 2')

Subb., Violonb. 16' Oktav. 8' Pedalocoppel.

the doubling of the melody in octaves acoustically generates one melody part), whereas the Anglican approach is less strict and embraces free part writing. This similarity between the Anglican and Lutheran style of hymn accompaniment is not surprising: congregations of both denominations traditionally sing all the verses of a hymn (*per omnes versus*). It is therefore reasonable to assume that organists were keen to vary their playing by changing the accompaniment style and registration between verses, reflecting the meaning of the words in each verse. German Catholic congregations, on the other hand, tend to sing a selection of hymn

verses only to adjust the hymn length as close as possible to the duration of the liturgical action it accompanies.

What is not clear from Herzog's tutor book is whether the organist was supposed to apply the techniques suggested whilst using harmonies printed in a hymnal, or whether the organist was expected to harmonise the melody himself at the same time. Tandberg answers that question by stating that

a well-trained church musician did harmonise the chorales 'off the cuff' in accordance with the text and character of the chorale. Remarks in several of the nineteenth-century textbooks suggest that this was common practice that corresponded to and was partially descended from the figured bass tradition. (2008: 144)

It is therefore more than likely that German organists were expected to be able to harmonise chorale melodies themselves, and this practice continues today. From my experience as a German Catholic organist, it is almost seen as a 'musical failure' if a professional organist were to use printed hymn harmonisations instead of making up his own – it is somewhat a question of 'honour' to come up with something original, in the same way that Anglican organists try to vary their psalm accompaniments from verse to verse. This shows how ingrained the tradition of spontaneous hymn harmonisation is in Germany, requiring organists to acquire a certain minimum standard of keyboard harmony. Therein lies a possibly major difference to the Anglican tradition where, on the whole, the organist is not allowed to reharmonise hymn verses, except for the final unison verse, as it would clash with the singing of the choir. If Anglican organists only had the melody line and the choir were to sing hymns in unison throughout, as was my experience as a young organist at the Catholic cathedral in Regensburg, the organists would have to harmonise *ex tempore*. They may have then become more skilled and fluent in harmonisation, and, by extension, in improvisation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the British organist Frank Joseph Sawyer strongly advocated hymn harmonisation with regard to improvisation, stating that the student should 'take the melodies of a thousand hymn tunes, and harmonise them at the piano or organ.

In this way you [he or she] will learn how to use chords. It is this knowledge which is so necessary in extemporising.' (1907: 45)

The *Choralvorspiel* (chorale prelude) plays a particularly important role within the Lutheran church. According to Tandberg, it is 'not only intended to introduce the melody, but also to establish the character and mood of the text that is about to be sung'. (2008: 137) Herzog distinguishes between two types of chorale preludes: those that are based on part or the whole of the chorale melody and those that are entirely free. The following example is based on the chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*: the first *Vorspiel* (prelude) is written in pseudo-fugal style based on the chorale, whilst the second *Vorspiel* mainly picks up the jubilant character of the chorale, stating the first line of the chorale melody in the pedals only (Ex. 1.12).

At the end of the chorale harmonisation, Herzog suggests various musical appendices: the *Schlussverlängerung* (extension) and *Cadenz* (cadence) are both pedal points, based on the last note of the chorale, whilst the *Ueberleitungen* (interludes/bridges) link different verses and finish with an imperfect cadence. Herzog explains this practice, stating that

on the final chord of a verse, one can either play a fermata or a short extension; it is also permissible to play interludes in order to create a bridge to the next verse.²¹ (1867: 71)

The use of extensions and interludes brings the chorale accompaniment style propagated by Herzog ever closer to the through-composed Anglican free organ accompaniment style of hymn playing. However, this practice is, to the best of my knowledge, not commonly found anymore within the German Lutheran church today.

Herzog also sheds light on what he regards to be the most suitable style for liturgical organ improvisation and we can assume that his thoughts stand for the

²¹ 'Beim Schlussakkord eines Verses kann eine längere Fermate oder eine kurze Schlussverlängerung angebracht werden; doch sind hier auch Ueberleitungen zum nächsten Verse (Zwischenspiele) zulässig.' (Herzog, 1867: 71)

Ex. 1.12: Herzog, preludes and chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, from *Orgelschule* (1867: 81-82):

81

Choräle mit quantitirendem Rhythmus.

14. Vorspiel. Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr —
Kräftig. J. G. H.

Vorspiel. Volles Werk J. G. H.

82

Choral.

Schlussverlängerung.

Cadenz.

Ueberleitungen.

54

generally accepted position of Lutheran *Kantoren* (organists) at the second half of the nineteenth century:

With regard to the most suitable style for the organ – at a time when we are overwhelmed by mere sentimentality, or surprising modulations, or by nothing more than pure sound-effects – and when the desperate endeavours for originality so often seem to lead us in the wrong direction, one needs to ascertain the polyphonic style, in which men like Bach, Händel, Krebs, Froberger, Muffat, Pachelbel and others have left us such wonderful examples.²² (1867: 96)

The preference for polyphonic textures in improvisation (and composition) is not only evident within the Lutheran context: both Catholic and Lutheran organists in Germany regard polyphonic improvisations as the ideal organ style throughout the twentieth century, as is shown during the course of this section.

Herzog's example of a *Nachspiel* (postlude), on full organ, is based on the chorale *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten* and confirms the Lutheran preference of polyphonic textures as the proper church style in organ playing (Ex. 1.13). The tight polyphonic texture of Herzog's *Nachspiel* – if this is to serve as a model for improvisation – is impressive and requires extensive knowledge and experience in improvisation on the organist's part. How common was it for Lutheran organists during the second half of the nineteenth century to improvise in that way? According to Herzog, too many organists regularly attempted to improvise without having the appropriate skill set for it:

Regarding improvisation, a field that has unfortunately become a habit for so many organists, it must be emphasised that, from a master organ player, one can expect skills to include the creation of preludes and fugues in free style, or the development of a chorale or a fugue.

²² 'Und fragen wir nach dem Styl, welcher der Orgel am meisten entspricht, so muss gerade in jetziger Zeit, wo die Neigung zur Sentimentalität, zu überraschender Modulation, zu blossen Klangeffecten so vielfach zu finden ist, und das Ringen nach Originalität so häufig nur auf Irrwege zu führen scheint, mit allem Nachdruck auf den polyphonen Styl hingewiesen werden, in welchem Männer wie Bach, Händel, Krebs, Froberger, Muffat, Pachelbel u.s.w. uns so herrliche Muster hinterlassen haben.' (Herzog, 1867: 96)

However, organists who lack the ability or do not have a call for this work have a duty to themselves and others to abstain from so-called 'fantasising' and content themselves with playing good music composed by others [...] On the other hand, to play an evasion, a cadence, or a short Interlude with correct modulation and harmony is an accomplishment that can reasonably be expected from all organists.²³ (1867: 97)

Herzog distinguishes between organists in full-time positions who should be capable of high-quality improvisations (e.g. prelude and fugue) and part-time organists (in many cases teachers who also play the organ at their local church) who should not engage too much in *ex tempore* playing as this was likely to lead to less favourable results. Instead, the organist should play repertoire by established composers to ensure the appropriate standard of music-making is maintained. On the other side of the English Channel, Frank Joseph Sawyer (1857-1908) comes to a similar conclusion:

As a rule do not extemporise [...] There is too much about it of the feeling 'anything will do to play them out with'. Nor does the extemporiser give thought or care to the preparation in his mind of themes of his movement – it is purely a haphazard performance. Therefore I would say for concluding voluntaries select from the great store of printed music the best and most suitable [...] (1908: 42)

Both Herzog's and Sawyer's statements would suggest that they were primarily concerned about maintaining artistic standards. Whether the music played during services was composed or improvised was of secondary importance – which is in stark contrast to the French tradition which decidedly favours liturgical improvisation over repertoire playing.

²³ 'In Bezug auf das improvisieren, das leider zu einer gar üblen Gewohnheit so vieler Organisten geworden ist, muss noch gesagt werden, dass man wohl mit Fug und Recht von einem Meister im Orgelspiel Gewandtheit im freien Präludiren, in der Durchführung eines Chorals, einer Fuge, erwarten kann, dass es aber allen anderen Organisten, welchen der Beruf hierzu fehlt, eine ernste Pflicht sei, das sogenannte Fantasieren gänzlich zu unterlassen, und sich lieber an tüchtige Stücke bewährter Componisten zu halten [...] Eine Ausweichung, eine Cadenz, ein kurzes Zwischen-Präludium modulatorisch und harmonisch richtig machen zu können, ist dagegen eine Anforderung, die billig an alle Organisten sollte gestellt werden können.' (Herzog, 1867: 97)

Ex. 1.13: Herzog, *Nachspiel* on *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*, from *Orgelschule* (1867: 148-49):

148

21. Nachspiel.

Allegro moderato. Volle Orgel.

J.G.H.

Musical score for page 148, measures 1-23. The score is in C major, 4/4 time, and is for full organ. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system includes a 'Th.' (Trumpet) part in the right hand. The second system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The third system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand and a 'Ped.' (Pedal) part in the left hand. The fourth system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The fifth system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The score is marked 'D. 23' at the end of the fifth system.

149

Musical score for page 149, measures 24-37. The score is in C major, 4/4 time, and is for full organ. It consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The second system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The third system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The fourth system includes a 'Th.' part in the right hand. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

Herzog also gives clear guidelines on how best Lutheran organists can engage musically within the service. Although his comments do not specify whether they are intended for composed or improvised music, they still give valuable insights into Lutheran liturgical organ playing at the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century:

Organ Improvisation within a German Lutheran Service:

1. *Eingangspräludium* (Opening Prelude):
to be of general-ecclesiastical character, preparing the congregation for the service which is about to begin.
2. *Prelude to Hauptlied* (Sermon Hymn):
focal point of the service; prelude to be short; strict *Choralvorspiel* most appropriate.
3. Between sermon and final blessing:
short preludes and cadences most appropriate.
4. *Nachspiel* (Postlude):
dignified conclusion to the service – not just covering up noise of congregation leaving; most appropriate forms include: simple and figured chorales, fugues, arrangements of sacred choruses (e.g. Messiah), fantasias.

(1867: 97)

Having investigated the Lutheran practice of organ improvisation in Germany based on Herzog's *Orgelschule*, I now turn to the German Catholic tradition.

The German Catholic Tradition

According to Planyavsky (2014: 48), there were two main types of Catholic Masses which required different approaches to organ improvisation respectively: the *Hochamt* (High Mass) and the *Deutsche Singmesse* (German Congregational Sung Mass). With regard to High Mass, Planyavsky tells us that congregational singing of hymns was forbidden and replaced by Gregorian chant. Referring to regional practices, Planyavsky states that

in South Germany and Austria, there was a long tradition of music composed for choir and orchestra. This left little opportunity for the organ with the result that improvisations during High Mass were restricted to preludes introducing the following section of the Proper or short introductions to the various sections of the Ordinary. Organists played before the Introit – albeit briefly – and after the dismissal, providing the opportunity for the longest improvisation. The situation, therefore, is paradoxical; although the organ was marginalised, a strong emphasis on improvisation in the Catholic countries became common, as the organ music had to be adjustable in length. (2017: 52)

The German Catholic pre-Vatican II situation is therefore in stark contrast to the French tradition: German Catholic organists were merely filling gaps whilst French organists were able to enjoy greater freedom when improvising. Organists from both traditions, however, acknowledged the great importance of the organist's ability to improvise.

Whilst the Lutheran tradition of liturgical organ improvisation at the turn of the nineteenth century naturally focused on the Lutheran chorale, this was less likely to be the case for organists in Catholic churches. It would be logical to assume that, for Catholics, the equivalent of the Lutheran chorale to be Gregorian chant and that the latter was used in Catholic liturgical improvisation. And indeed, the *motu proprio 'Tra Le Sollecitudine'*, issued in 1903 by Pope Pius X, reemphasises the importance of Gregorian chant as the most appropriate type of music in Catholic worship. However, the regional practice in Germany differed somewhat and whilst Gregorian chant was certainly held in high esteem, the *Deutsche Singmesse* enabled German Catholic congregations to sing hymns in their native language (not dissimilar in style to Lutheran chorales). This tradition had been going for quite some time and, according to Planyavsky,

since the eighteenth century, worship has been enhanced by the uninterrupted alternation between congregational singing and organ playing if no choir was present [...] One must remember that during

such services, there was no contact between the priest and congregation; it was therefore possible to sing and play throughout the whole service.²⁴ (2012: 356)

This would suggest that the role of the organ within German Catholic worship was prominent, albeit serving an entirely different purpose compared to the Lutheran tradition: Catholic organists in Germany were required to be considerably more flexible in their playing, making improvisation the only suitable option. This is confirmed by Planyavsky who sums it up by stating: 'The Lutherans played Bach and the Catholics improvised.'²⁵ (2012: 357)

A valuable source of information on how German Catholic organists improvised during the second half of the nineteenth century is Heinrich Oberhoffer's organ tutor book *Schule des katholischen Organisten* from 1874. Oberhoffer not only addresses the accompaniment of Gregorian chant at length, but also states the importance of improvisation within the Catholic rite:

[...] but in addition to the specified competence in plainchant accompaniment one needs to have the competence to quickly modulate to the most remote tonalities and extemporise small introductions and conclusions – any of these will be needed. A player who cannot manage this cannot cope with the duties required of a Catholic organist.²⁶ (Oberhoffer, 1874: Preface; also: Tandberg, 2008: 98)

²⁴ 'Schon ab dem späten 18. Jahrhundert wurden Gottesdienste, bei denen kein Chor mitwirkte, in ununterbrochenem Wechsel von Gemeindegang und Orgelspiel gestaltet [...] Man muss sich in Erinnerung rufen, dass es während einer solchen Messe keinerlei Kontakt zwischen dem Zelebranten und den Anwesenden gab; so konnte durchgesungen und –gespielt werden.' (Planyavsky, 2012: 356)

²⁵ 'Die Evangelischen spielten Bach, und die Katholischen präludierten.' (Planyavsky, 2012: 357)

²⁶ '[...] aber er muss ausser der genannten Fertigkeit in der Choralbegleitung auch noch die Fertigkeit besitzen, rasch und auf dem kürzesten Wege in die entferntesten Tonarten ausweichen zu können, und kleine Vor- und Zwischenspiele, deren er in Masse bedarf, zu extemporieren: sonst taugt er zu einem katholischen Organisten nicht.' (Oberhoffer, 1874: Preface; also: Tandberg, 2008: 98)

Oberhoffer's pedagogical approach to teaching free tonal improvisation²⁷ is particularly interesting. First, he gives a selection of short preludes in different keys (typically only a couple of bars long), asking the student to memorise them. These short preludes were quite common in German organ music collections of the nineteenth century, often entitled *Orgel-Album* or simply *Cadenzen* (Ex. 1.14), and were liturgical *Gebrauchsmusik* for German organists. Oberhoffer then explains that, although students are bound to forget most of these memorised pieces over time, the process of memorising them still gives students a greater fluency of making up melodic phrases and embellishments over plain chordal patterns. This process is illustrated by Ex. 1.15: the plain chords on the top serve as the harmonic basis for the suggested embellishments (such as suspensions and passing notes) outlined underneath.

These short tonal preludes or *Cadenzen* can be compared to the short preludes and interludes in England published by composers such as Kirkman, Keeble, S. Wesley, S. S. Wesley, Thomas Adams, Vincent Novello, Henry Smart and John Goss and are not dissimilar to the collection of short liturgical organ music in *L'Organiste*, composed by César Franck in 1869. Whilst the latter is generally more harmonically daring due to the increased use of chromaticism, both the French and German Catholic practice of improvising free organ pieces seem to have been stylistically quite close to each other during the second half of the nineteenth century. This is not surprising, given that Catholic organists in both countries had to fill all the gaps in the liturgy, only allowing silence during the consecration. This *horror vacui*²⁸ is also evident in the Anglican tradition, although possibly less intensely. Furthermore, Oberhoffer's *Cadenz*-examples seem to confirm Planyavsky's claim that 'the priority for the Catholic organist was harmonic command and timing rather than form and structure'. (2017: 53) The Catholic liturgy is rite-orientated – there is simply no time for German Catholic organists to improvise larger forms, such as the passacaglia, for instance. The Lutheran church, on the other hand, concentrates on word and music, allowing more space for improvisation or repertoire playing.

²⁷ meaning: non-hymn-based improvisation.

²⁸ *horror vacui*: the fear of empty space (Haselböck, 1998: 52).

Ex. 1.14: Oberhoffer, *Cadenzen*, from *Schule des katholischen Organisten* (1874: 9):

No. 1. I. C Dur. No. 2.
 C. S. Meister.
 No. 3. Andante.
 W. Wedemann. H. Oberhoffer.

Ex. 1.15: Oberhoffer, *Cadenzen*, from *Schule des katholischen Organisten* (1874: 70):

a) Einfache nackte Akkordfolge.
 b) Durch Vorhalte, Durchgänge etc. umgebildet.

The preference for polyphonic textures, as encountered in Herzog's *Orgelschule* also began to affect German Catholic organ teaching by the beginning of the twentieth century. The organ tutor book *Orgelschule* by Josef Schildknecht, first published in 1896 in Regensburg, is in every way the Catholic equivalent to Herzog's Lutheran *Orgelschule*. The chapter on organ improvisation within Schildknecht's publication was added in 1909 by Max Springer and shows similarities to Herzog's writing by predominantly focusing on hymn harmonisation whilst placing the cantus firmus in different voice parts. Springer confirms

Herzog's view that high-quality improvisations must possess a polyphonic texture and even gives a number of contrapuntal improvisation exercises for students, leading to motivic *Choralsvorspiele* (chorale preludes) – based, however, on Catholic hymns. Ex. 1.16 is based on the Catholic hymn *Ein Haus voll Glorie schauet* and gives an idea of the style Springer aspired to:

Ex. 1.16: Springer, *Choralsvorspiel 'Ein Haus voll Glorie schauet'*, from *Schildknecht's Orgelschule* (1936: 170):

170
Beispiel 16. *c.f.*

The image shows a musical score for an organ exercise. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has three staves: the top staff is labeled 'Man.' (Manual), the middle staff is labeled 'Ped.' (Pedal), and the bottom staff is labeled 'USW.' (and so on). The music is in 6/8 time and features a polyphonic texture with a prominent melodic line in the upper voice and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voices. The score is marked 'c.f.' (confronta) and is numbered '170' and 'Beispiel 16.'.

Like Herzog, Springer also addresses the topic of free improvisation, i.e. non-chorale-based improvisation. Whilst Herzog's examples clearly use diatonic harmony, Springer pursues modal harmony within four-bar phrases (or *Kadenzen*) instead, continuing the tradition of *Cadenzimprovisation* we encountered in Oberhoffer's tutor book. Springer's choice of harmony is not surprising, given his strong position towards the use of Gregorian chant in Catholic organ improvisation:

He [the student] should pick his melodies from the inexhaustible wealth of Gregorian chant. By doing so, he will not only cultivate his own liturgical taste, but will also spare himself from sentimentality and triviality, those two deadly enemies of good church music.²⁹
 (Springer, in Schildknecht, 1936: 170)

²⁹ 'Es suche sich seine Melodien aus dem unerschöpflichen Born des gregorianischen Gesanges. Er schult damit nicht nur seinen liturgischen Geschmack, sondern bewahrt sich auch vor Sentimentalität und Trivialität, diesen beiden Todfeinden guter Kirchenmusik.' (Springer, in Schildknecht, 1936: 170)

The two examples of modal *Kadenzen* provided by Springer (Ex. 1.17: a, b) are both in a polyphonic-imitative style: the first example (a) is in the Mixolydian mode, whilst the second example (b) is in the Phrygian mode.

Ex. 1.17: Springer, modal *Kadenzen*, from Schildknecht's *Orgelschule* (1936: 171):

The image shows two musical examples, (a) and (b), for organ improvisation. Example (a) is titled 'Beispiel 17a)' and is in Mixolydian mode. It consists of two staves: a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a supporting line. The music is in 4/4 time and features a series of four-bar phrases that build up to a sixteen-bar phrase. Example (b) is in Phrygian mode and also consists of two staves. It follows a similar structure to (a), with a melodic line in the treble and a supporting line in the bass. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, typical of a cadenza.

The style of both these examples seems static compared to the progressive harmonic language and structural freedom of Tournemire's Gregorian paraphrases; Springer's first example, in particular, has quite a Baroque flavour to it and is reminiscent of the style of Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer's *Musikalischer Blumenstrauss*, a collection of modal versets published approximately 300 years earlier (CD 4, tracks 4 and 5). Building on four-bar phrases, Springer then suggests moving towards eight-bar phrases in imitation form, then sixteen-bar phrases in canonical form, before finally reaching a complete fugal exposition. This is as far as Springer would be prepared to go with the average Catholic church organist; more demanding forms, such as fully-fledged fugues, double fugues, toccatas, passacaglias, chorale variations and chorale fantasias should only be pursued by those few who show an extraordinary talent for improvisation.

The final example (Ex. 1.18) from Springer's chapter on Catholic improvisation shows a fugal exposition on the Gregorian chant *Cibavit eos*. Springer explains that the omission of a time signature is intentional, to allow the organist to reflect the free speech-rhythm of the Gregorian chant in his or her own playing. At the same time, Springer also admits that the use of free note lengths adds to the difficulty of improvising in such a style.

Ex. 1.18: Springer, Gregorian fugal exposition on *Cibavit eos*, from Schildknecht's *Orgelschule* (1936: 172):

Beispiel 20.
„Cibavit eos“

The image shows a musical score for an organ piece. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has three staves: the top staff is labeled 'Man.' (Manual) and the bottom two are labeled 'Ped.' (Pedal). The second system has two staves, likely representing the right and left hands of the organ. The music is in a minor key and features a complex, fugal texture with multiple voices and intricate rhythmic patterns.

Although Springer's chapter alludes to larger forms of improvisation, in reality there was no opportunity for the German Catholic organist to indulge in any such improvisations due to the restricted amount of time available within liturgical contexts; even the *Nachspiel* often had to be short so not to clash with the beginning of the following Mass.

Neither the aforementioned *Deutsche Singmesse*, nor the *Betsingmesse* (Pray-and-Sing-Mass)³⁰ allowed a lot of space for improvisation. According to Planyavsky, 'the organist provided a constant pattern of hymns and short improvisations, leading from one hymn to the next. This involved modulation and, in most cases, thematic modulations were expected.' (2017: 53) This may sound like a contradiction to Springer's carefully laid-out instructions on improvisation, which emphasised form and polyphonic textures. However, one must not forget that Springer's improvisation chapter had, first of all, a pedagogical intention and may not necessarily reflect common practice at the time, merely suggesting ideal practice.

³⁰ 'The *Betsingmesse* (Pray-and-Sing-Mass) was a form of Catholic service which allowed for more congregational participation; it arose around 1930, long before active participation became standard through the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1963). As a step beyond the *Singmesse* (in which the priest said Mass silently and the congregation sang appropriate hymns), the congregation said some of the prayers in dialogue with the priest or a "prayer leader"; fewer hymns were sung now, and there was a little less space for improvisation, which formerly had filled in most of the time between the hymns.' (Planyavsky, 2014: 48)

The lack of opportunity to improvise for a more considerable length of time within the *Betsingmesse* was lamented by the more able organists. Anton Heiller confirms the frustrations some organists must have felt occasionally:

As at High Mass, the possibilities for improvisation in the *Betsingmesse* are also decidedly limited. The only real opportunity is when the congregation goes to Communion. For many a keen improviser this may sometimes be a little painful, when – particularly on certain feast days – he really wants to play with all his heart, while the service offers so little possibility. But he ought to bear in mind that the *Betsingmesse* has undoubtedly aroused significantly more liturgical activity among the people, and in the end one must acknowledge this as a positive thing.³¹ (Planyavsky, 2014: 49)

With the *Betsingmesse* being the closest German equivalent to the French Organ Mass, it is interesting to see that organists like Heiller did in fact agree with the concept of congregational participation (although not embracing it emphatically), whilst French organists almost entirely rejected any involvement of congregational and choral singing, fearing an infringement of their status as *titulaires*. It is possible that this 'French resistance' may stem from the lack of a tradition of congregational singing – something which had already been established in German Catholic parishes in the nineteenth century; French organists, therefore, might have feared change, as it was more of an unknown quantity.

The comparison of Herzog's and Schildknecht's organ tutor books has shown that both Lutheran and Catholic organists in Germany regarded polyphonic textures as the true organ style, and this true style needed to feature in both compositions and improvisations if those were to have any artistic value. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Schildknecht's *Orgelschule* had a profound impact on the

³¹ 'Wie beim Amt sind die improvisatorischen Möglichkeiten auch bei der Betsingmesse recht beschränkt. Meist bieten nur die Kommunion der Gläubigen etwas Gelegenheit dazu. Für manchen eifrigen Improvisator mag dies nun manchmal etwas schmerzlich sein, wenn er besonders an gewissen Festtagen sich einmal so richtig alles von Herzen spielen möchte und beim Gottesdienst so wenig Möglichkeiten dazu hat. Er möge aber bedenken, dass doch die Betsingmesse unzweifelhaft eine wesentlich höhere liturgische Aktivität unter dem Volke hervorgerufen hat, und dies muß man schließlich als ganz großes Positivum anerkennen.' (Planyavsky, 2014: 49)

way German Catholic organists improvised and Planyavsky claims that, during the first half of the twentieth century, ‘the stylistic distinctions arising from the confessional background of the improviser must not be underestimated: they largely coincide with different concepts of sound, form and thematic treatment.’ (2014: 53) Planyavsky is therefore keeping in line with Franz’s statement in 1880 regarding the different approaches to improvisation of the Lutheran school compared to the German Catholic tradition. However, it cannot be ignored that polyphony increasingly became a common goal between the two major Christian denominations in Germany, becoming almost an obsession within the overall German organ tradition. Hans Haselböck states that

until the end of the war [WWII] I believe the German organ style was very dominant in our part of the world [Austria]. German organists – that means counterpoint [...] and that anything French was highly suspect. One could compare French organ culture to sweets and tarts, not very serious [...] German organists, that was preludes and fugues and ricercars etc. Hans Klotz said: ‘Any organ music that is valid and lasting must be contrapuntal.’ – When romantic [organ] music came to Germany after WWII, it came with such a surge that every organ built today has a French Swell division. And all of today’s young organists in Germany improvise with French technique, often superficially [...] that is a natural reaction.³² (Planyavsky, 2014: 54)

Haselböck’s statement not only confirms the declaration of polyphony as a key characteristic of the overall German school of improvisation: he also identifies what one could describe as a counter-reaction of a younger generation of German organists embracing the less restrained French school. The development in Germany is similar to the one in the UK, where a younger generation of Anglican

³² ‘Ich denke, dass die deutsche Organistenart bis Ende des Krieges in unserem Bereich sehr dominierend war. Deutsche Organisten, das heißt Kontrapunkt [...] und dass alles Französisches sehr verdächtig war. Die französische Orgelkunst wäre wie Süßigkeiten, Torten, nicht ganz seriös... Deutsche Organisten, das war Präludien und Fugen und Ricercare usw. Von Hans Klotz gibt es ein Wort: “Jede Orgelmusik, die gültig ist und Bestand hat, muss kontrapunktisch sein.“ Wenn die romantische Musik nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg auch nach Deutschland gekommen ist, ist es so eine Welle gewesen, dass jede Orgel die heute gebaut wird, ein französisches Schwellwerk hat. Und jeder von den jungen Leuten heute in Deutschland improvisiert mit französischer Technik, manchmal oberflächlich [...] Das ist eine natürliche Reaktion.’ (Planyavsky, 2014: 54)

organists also started to turn towards Cochereau and the French school of improvisation: German and Anglican organists both felt artistically stuck within their respective national traditions and started to look abroad for new ideas and inspiration. This international approach and the influence of the French school in particular within the Anglican tradition is discussed further in Chapter 3.

The liturgical reforms of Vatican II in 1963 were perceived by French organists as an existential threat and German Catholic contemporaries shared a similar view. Stefan Klöckner tells us that

The established church music [in Germany] at the time of the council was, on the whole, no supporter of the reform. It deliberately slowed down the process and tried systematically to prevent innovations in terms of Pope John XXIII's 'Aggiornamento'.³³ (2012: 354)

However, there was a silver lining: according to Planyavsky (2012: 356), the outcome of Vatican II paved the way for playing organ repertoire within a liturgical context in German Catholic churches: the organ was now to be held in high esteem.³⁴ Performing composed organ music during the service used to be a typical Protestant thing to do – now, the new liturgical instructions explicitly allow instrumental music at the beginning of the service, during the Offertory and at the end, and Catholic priests even started to accept that organ music would sometimes not finish 'on the dot'. The musical gap between Lutheran and German Catholic organists was starting to narrow, and Planyavsky states that

some elements of the Catholic liturgy, particularly congregational singing, have moved slightly closer to Lutheran practice. Gregorian chant has forfeited its predominant position, and new liturgical roles

³³ 'Die etablierte Kirchenmusik war zur Zeit des Konzils weitgehend kein Motor der Reform, sondern saß im Bremshäuschen und versuchte fast systematisch, Neuerungen im Sinne des von Papst Johannes XXIII. geforderten "Aggiornamento" zu verhindern.' (Klöckner, 2012: 354)

³⁴ 'In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendour to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.' (Pope Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 04th December 1963, art. 120)

(lector, cantor, congregation) have yet again reduced the role of improvised transitions. (2014: 53)

Although the liturgical reforms of the 1960s did affect the role of the organ within the German Catholic services, German organists learned to cope with these changes better than organists in France as these reforms opened up new possibilities for solo organ music, therefore strengthening the artistic status of the organ within the German Catholic liturgy.

During the course of the twentieth century, there is a shift within the German school of improvisation towards cultivating historical styles of improvisation. Using compositions as models for improvisation (particularly the works of J. S. Bach) has always played an important role in the past. Yet, this was not necessarily meant to be a deliberate attempt to improvise exactly in the style of a certain composer: compositions were merely used to inspire the improvising organist in a broader sense. Planyavsky confirms this observation and states that 'in Germany, particularly in the Lutheran Church, this [improvising in historical styles] has always played a prominent role.' (2014: 54) This is due, to a large extent, to the endeavours of Lutheran organists during the mid-nineteenth century to restore a genuine church style in organ playing and this meant looking back to the masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The German musicologist and organist Hermann Keller (1885-1967), a student of Karl Straube and Max Reger, published in 1939 an organ tutor book entitled *Schule der Choralimprovisation (Chorale Improvisation Tutor Book)*. Here, Keller gives the student an array of models based on German Baroque chorale preludes in the form of exercises for the student to complete: Example 1.19, for instance, treats the chorale *O Welt, ich muß dich lassen* in the manner of Johann Walther.

Improvising in historical styles became such a strong element in the Lutheran tradition that the German theologian Gustav Krieg even regarded this practice as 'part of the identity of Protestant church music'. (2001: 255) Historical improvisation did not, however, remain a decidedly Lutheran practice for long. Eberhard Kraus (1931-2003), the former Organist of Regensburg Catholic Cathedral, published in 1982 a tutor book on liturgical organ playing, entitled *Techniken des liturgischen Orgelspiels Vol. 1 (Techniques of liturgical organ playing*

Ex. 1.19: Keller, chorale prelude exercise on *O Welt, ich muß dich lassen*, from *Schule der Choralimprovisation* (1939: 70):

O Welt, ich muß dich lassen J. G. Walther

Beispiel III

Vol. 1), where he lists various models of chorale improvisation in the manner of specific Baroque composers. Example 1.20 is taken from this publication and shows how to improvise a *Choralfantasie* in the style of Buxtehude on the Gregorian chant *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

The fact that German Catholic organists started improvising in the style of prominent Lutheran composers shows how close German Lutheran and German Catholic organists have come with regard to improvisation. The concept of historical improvisation was not necessarily seen as a separate discipline within the German Catholic organist's training – it automatically 'just happened' during the course of structured improvisation lessons. According to Planyavsky,

the Catholic organist Konrad Philipp Schuba also argues that 'to a certain degree improvisation is primarily always a style copy.' In reply to a question concerning the first steps in teaching improvisation, he said: 'I always had my students begin with chorale preludes in obbligato, i.e. trio style. The hands on two manuals with the pedal added, to train in obbligato voice texture. This can be steadily improved until themes of one's own can be chosen.' (2014: 54)

Ex. 1.20: Kraus, *Choralfantasie* on *Veni Creator Spiritus*, from *Techniken des liturgischen Orgelspiels 1* (1982: 48):

69

CHORAL FANTASIE

„DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE“

ZWEI- BIS VIERSTIMMIG
SATZ / ECHO / VORIMITATION /
C.F. IM BASS / KADENZ
IM VERSZEILENWECHSEL

HW: 8',4',2',Mixturen
SW: Flöten 8',4',2'
PED: 16',8',4',Posaune

-48-

However, over the years, improvising in historical styles has, in fact, developed into a specialism and some organists within the Germanic school of improvisation entirely focus on Baroque playing, such as Sietze de Vries (Groningen, NL). The Schola Cantorum in Basel (CH) offers specific courses on historical improvisation and is regarded as one of the leading institutions in that field. It is important to note that, in Germany, historical *Stilkopien* (style-copy improvisations) are regarded as a way of paying tribute to masters long gone; there is absolutely no negative connotation attached to it – as opposed to the UK where the term ‘pastiche’ (which is occasionally applied to describe historical improvisations) very much implies a ‘rip-off’ or ‘musical theft’.³⁵

³⁵ Stylistic improvisation also exists in the French improvisation tradition, but operates in a less formalised way. German organists, on the other hand, are particularly famed for their skills in stylistic improvisation.

Looking at a representative collection of published German organ improvisation tutor books, Robert Knappe identifies the following improvisation styles (2002: 42):

1. Gothic
2. Renaissance
3. *Kantionalstil* (harmonising in the style of Schütz)
4. North German Baroque
5. South German Baroque
6. French Baroque
7. Bach Style (chorale preludes in *Orgelbüchlein* style)
8. Viennese Classic
9. German Romantic (Mendelssohn, Brahms, Reger)
10. French Romantic
11. German Modern (composers of the *Orgelbewegung*, avant-garde)
12. French Modern (Messiaen, avant-garde)

Whilst there is a clear emphasis on German and French styles, the lack of any Anglican style is noticeable. This stylistic vacuum is filled by the German organist Sebastian Bange, whose organ improvisation tutor *Apparatus musico-improvisatoricus* (self-published in 2000) does address improvisation in English styles (Ex. 1.21), drawing on contrasting composition models by a variety of British composers. By focusing on English Romantic and Modern periods, Bange identifies the following English styles:

1. Festival Prelude (E. Elgar)
2. Tuba Tune (N. Cocker, C. S. Lang)
3. Chorale Prelude in the style of a Tuba Tune (P. Whitlock)
4. Fanfare (W. Mathias, C. S. Lang)
5. Sortie (N. Gilbert)
6. Carillon (H. Murill)
7. Air
8. Meditations (P. Whitlock, G. Martin)
9. Marche heroïque (H. Brewer)

(2000: 46-47)

Ex. 1.21: Bange, improvising in English Romantic and Modern styles, from *Apparatus musico-improvisatoricus* (2000: 46-47):

Freie Formen der Englischen Romantik und Moderne

Festival Prelude (vgl. E. ELGAR)

- Beginn: Thema 1 (alla marcia)
- Fortführung: Thema 2 (z.B. nur manualiter, sehr bewegt, staccatissimo)
- Überleitung, Thema 3 (dynamisch im pp; getragene Choralmelodie mit Violoncello-Pedalspiel pizzicato)
- Verbindung beider Themen, Zunahme von Effekten (wie z.B. fanfarenartige Einwüfe auf einem Solomanual)
- Dynamische Steigerung
- Thema 3 im ff mit reperkussivem Pedal auf 4teln
- Schlußformel

Tuba Tune

- Tonsprache vgl. NORMAN COCKER, CRAIG SELLAR LANG



- häufig findet auch triolischer Rhythmus Verwendung!
- Folgendes Thema hat eher modalen Charakter:



Choralbearbeitung im Stil eines «Tuba Tunes»

- vgl.: PERCY WHITLOCK, „Darwalls 148th“
- Choralmelodie wird fanfarenartig mit markanten Zungenstimmen gespielt und motivisch eingeleitet und begleitet

Fanfane

Tonsprache WILLIAM MATHIAS

- Tonsprache: WILLIAM MATHIAS (Thema mit Dissonanzen färben), oder in konsonanterer, volksnaher Form in Erinnerung an E. GIGOUT (Grand Chœur Dialogue), dann mit Echoeffekten



Tonsprache C. S. LANG

- Beispiel: Fanfare op. 85

Maestoso

f Tuba

f G!

Sortie

- Beispiel: NORMAN GILBERT, Sortie on „Laus Deo“

Alla marcia $\text{♩} = 69$

f Full Sw.

Carillon

- Tonsprache: H. MURILL
- Motiv mit 16teln in Mixturklangfarbe wird vorgestellt
- späterer Einsatz einer Fanfare (l.H.) mit Zungenstimmen, r.H. Fortsetzung des Carillonmotivs

Air

- Das Thema ist sehr flächig zu begleiten. Weicht man von englisch-romantischer Harmonik ab, so ist auch die Stilistik von FLOR PEETERS eine Anregung zum verarbeiten.

F dm gm am dm F gm bm C⁷

Meditationen

- vgl.: PERCY WHITLOCK, „Folk Tune“
- vgl.: GILBERT MARTIN, „Trumpet Tune“: häufig Terzen- und Sextenparallelen rücken
- A-B-A-Form kann angewendet werden

Marche heroïque

- vgl. HERBERT BREWER
- Thema 1 ist sehr bewegt und bildet Anfang-, Mittel- und Schlußteil; Thema 2 ist choralartig
- Form: Thema 1 (f), Thema 2 (pp) Thema 1 verarbeitet (mf), Thema 2 (ff), Thema 1 (ff), Schluß

Given that Bange outlines improvisation styles that he considers to be of significance, this does suggest that – from a German point of view – the Anglican style of improvisation is pronouncedly ceremonial in character. The strong celebratory element in British organ music is confirmed by Peter Hardwick, who tells us that

at the turn of the century, Edward Elgar’s orchestral Imperial March and the first four Pomp and Circumstance Marches expressed the pride of the British in their worldwide empire [...] Thus began the British pomp-and-circumstance, or more broadly speaking, celebratory, musical genre. By no means all celebratory organ pieces are marches like the Elgar prototypes, nor have they been composed for royal or state occasions, but quite a few do fit those criteria. (2003: 163)

Hardwick also mentions the British invention of the tuba stop – a high-pressure reed stop which was built first time for the organ in Birmingham Town Hall in 1840, stating that ‘the tuba was recognised as a useful tool in the composer’s and improviser’s bag of effects.’ (2003: 163) The majority of models outlined in Bange’s collection of English styles (Ex. 1.21) do require a strong reed stop – either as a solo stop or for chordal fanfares.

Looking at the collection of styles for Anglican voluntary improvisations identified in Chapters 2 and 3, I argue that the ceremonial style in Anglican organ improvisation does not represent an additional style in itself, but is evident – to different degrees – in all four styles of Anglican voluntary improvisation.

Whilst historical (Baroque) improvisation certainly plays an important role within German organ improvisation, one must not forget that organists also started exploring contemporary harmonic languages. According to Franz Josef Stoiber (2018: 5), new areas of harmony include:

1. Impressionism (Ravel, Debussy, Duruflé)
2. Messiaen’s ‘Modes of limited transposition’

3. German Neomodality
4. Free-tonal Improvisation³⁶

Neomodalität (Neomodality) became particularly popular amongst German organ improvisers – the resulting sound world is refreshingly modern, yet ‘digestible’ by the average congregation. This particular harmonic language was originally introduced by the Lutheran organist and composer Hugo Distler (1908-1942), but was soon adopted by German Catholic organists as well. Stoiber gives us a detailed definition of German Neomodality:

Neomodality stands for a new approach of using the old modes (church modes, major, minor) as found in the works by Paul Hindemith, Harald Genzmer or Hermann Schroeder. Although kept within a tonal framework, chords can become quite dissonant (dissonance as a colour without the need to resolve) whilst the compositional technique is based on rational specifications (e.g. mixture technique, ostinato technique). (2018: 135)

Exx. 1.22 and 1.23, taken from Stoiber’s improvisation tutor *Faszination Orgel improvisation* (Fascination Organ Improvisation), give a taster of German Neomodality combined with traditional cantus firmus arrangements:

Ex. 1.22: Stoiber, chorale prelude on *Ist das der Leib*, from *Faszination Orgel improvisation* (2018: 143):

³⁶ Although the term ‘free-tonal’ is used synonymously with the term ‘atonal’, the former term is preferred as atonal implies ‘something entirely inconsistent with the nature of tone’. (Schoenberg, 1978: 432)

Ex. 1.23: Stoiber, chorale prelude on *Komm, Heilger Geist*, from *Faszination Orgelimprovisation* (2018: 144):

Whilst Neomodality as the harmonic basis for improvisation is often used by German organists, it is worth looking briefly at free-tonal improvisation, too, as this is a style Anglican organists are possibly least familiar with and therefore showing a particularly stark contrast. Haselböck's free-tonal theme (Ex. 1.24) epitomises the nature of such themes:

Ex. 1.24: Haselböck, free-tonal theme (Stoiber, 2018: 150):

To improvise over free-tonal themes, Stoiber suggests the improviser to be 'led harmonically and motivically by the theme itself'. (2018: 150) In the case of Haselböck's theme, Stoiber divides the theme into three contrasting motivic sections to be developed afterwards in sonata form (Ex. 1.25).

Ex. 1.25: Stoiber, development of Haselböck's free-tonal theme (2018: 151):

Introduction:

Hauptatz
(1st theme)

Seitensatz
(2nd theme)

Überleitungsmotiv
(linking motif)

According to Stoiber,

this kind of theme provides a pool of motivic material; it is not advisable to treat the theme as a whole and to 'harmonise' it. It is much better to derive single motifs from it and to develop those. (2018: 151)

Although one may not come across free-tonal improvisation within the liturgy very often, this particular style forms a core discipline within the German improvisation syllabus at *Hochschul*-level as well as international organ improvisation competitions (e.g. Haarlem, St Albans) and I elucidate my own approach of improvising on free-tonal themes in Chapter 5 (improvisation on a theme by Patterson).

Before concluding this section, I should point out that the serious study of improvisation in Germany has had a revival during the last couple of decades, which is also confirmed by Krahfors (2005: online). Whilst the French organ tradition is mainly centred around Paris, the development of the German tradition has been fostered by excellence clusters in various locations, forming regional schools of improvisation throughout Germany and Austria: the Berlin School (Wolfgang Seifen), the Regensburg School (Franz Josef Stoiber), the Munich School (Franz Lehrndorfer) and the Viennese School (Anton Heiller, Hans Haselböck, Peter Planyavsky) are but a few examples of the decentralised approach in Germany and Austria. The majority of these organists teach at *Musikhochschulen* and are cathedral organists in their respective cities as well, passing on their knowledge to students in their organ classes. Wolfgang Seifen is a particularly interesting case: regarded as one of the leading German Catholic improvisers today, he is *Titularorganist* at a prominent Lutheran church, the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* in Berlin. This confirms, once again, how close both the Lutheran and German Catholic improvisation schools have become, (almost) merging both traditions into one German school of organ improvisation.

Having discussed the role of both French and German organists, the specifics of the French and German organ, as well as musical practices of liturgical organ improvisation in France and Germany, I am now in a position to compare these

practices with those current in the UK. In Chapter 2, I first examine the role of the Anglican cathedral choir and Anglican cathedral organist, before looking at the practice of Anglican liturgical improvisation by consulting written sources. In Chapter 3, I complement my investigation of the practice of Anglican organ improvisation with analytic study of recordings of improvisations.

Chapter 2: The Anglican Tradition in the UK

In this chapter, I turn to the Anglican cathedral tradition of organ improvisation, seeking to establish and begin to explain its very distinctive character as compared to the continental traditions in France and Germany. I argue that this character arises from a convergence of factors, aesthetic, pragmatic, liturgical and educational. I first investigate the relationship between the presence and the function of the choir and the organist's improvisation within the Anglican cathedral tradition, the training and role of the Anglican cathedral organist, as well as the key characteristics of the English cathedral organ that may impinge on styles of improvisation. I then turn to the practice of Anglican liturgical organ improvisation itself, seeking to explain why organists improvise in the way that they do.

The methodology I apply in answering these questions includes interviews with fifteen Anglican organists I conducted between 2008 and 2010 (Appendix A), as well as live recordings of Anglican liturgical improvisations. As no recordings before 1942 were available to me, other sources of information needed to be consulted in order to gain a better understanding of the style and function of liturgical improvisation between the later nineteenth century and 1942. For that reason, I also consider printed music entitled 'Improvisations' or similar titles by UK organists, as these pieces are either specifically referred to as transcriptions of improvisations (by such composers as George Thalben-Ball or Sidney Campbell) or seem to capture the style of Anglican improvisation as found on recordings or essays on improvisation.

Whilst I investigate actual recordings of Anglican liturgical improvisation in Chapter 3, it is in this chapter that I first consult written sources (tutor books, essays, transcribed improvisations and 'improvisatory' composed music) to compensate the paucity of recorded material and to gain a better understanding of the development and the style of improvised Anglican voluntaries from the later nineteenth century onwards. It is reasonable to distrust the outcome of an investigation on improvisation based on sources other than recordings, but the

ways people describe improvisation, or their recommendations to the student organist, reveal a great deal about the aesthetic and technical demands expected of organists at the time. It is also important to note that whilst composition and improvisation are obviously distinctive practices, there is an evident cross-over between the two, especially evident in the world of English organ music between the wars: many pieces were (and sometimes still are) entitled 'Improvisation', or adopt a style characteristic of such pieces. This tendency is however by no means limited to the Anglican tradition: Olivier Messiaen, for instance, used his recorded improvisations at La Trinité, Paris, as a source of inspiration for his own compositions:

My post as church organist obliges me to improvise; my wife records me and I listen to these improvisations with a very critical ear. One Maundy Thursday evening, [...] I had three minutes to fill with music, and that was when I had a sudden inspiration. [...] I rewrote this piece, I called it 'L'Institution de l'Eucharistie' [The Institution of the Eucharist], and I began to write the *Livre du Saint Sacrement...* (Marti, 1992: 17; also in Dingle, 2016: 46)

Anglican organ improvisations from the earlier twentieth century tended to carry suggestive or descriptive titles, such as 'Improvisation', in which a particular style of writing and use of the organ is indicative of what the composer believed to be 'improvisatory'. In the first half of the twentieth century, there is a preponderance in Anglican organ repertoire of such compositions, usually on some named theme (e.g. George Oldroyd's *Three Liturgical Improvisations* are each based on a bible quote). Evidence suggests that some of these were, at least in part, transcriptions of actual improvisations, or drew on material arising through improvisation (e.g. Sidney Campbell's *Canterbury Improvisations*). The fact that there is no decisive boundary between composition and improvisation is also evidenced by myself, mistaking in the course of this study the performance of a Brahms chorale prelude for improvisation (see Chapter 5). As the situation is vitally fluid, I believe that compositions titled 'Improvisation' can provide clear evidence as to what their composers considered an improvisation to be, in terms of style, structure and use of organ. Whilst this is not to say that the composer actually improvised this music,

or, necessarily, anything like it, it is evidence of what he or she regarded as improvisation at the time of writing.

For the purpose of this thesis, I focus on the three most common traditional Anglican service forms: Evensong, Matins and Sung Eucharist. Of the fifteen Anglican organists I have interviewed for this project, five specifically stated that the improvised prelude before Evensong is the most archetypal form of organ improvisation within the Anglican liturgy (Appendix 2.10). This accords with many informal conversations I have had with organists over the last fifteen years. However, improvised preludes before Evensong only represent one area of Anglican organ improvisation: in addition to other 'free styles' of organ music (such as Gospel fanfares, postludes), I also consider hymn playing (play-overs, last verse re-harmonisations, hymn extensions) and psalm accompaniments, as I believe that all these areas require a creative, improvisatory, approach. My primary focus here is nonetheless the improvised voluntary.

Organists are required to respond in their improvisations to a specific liturgical context and this context differs between buildings and local traditions, liturgies (e.g. Matins versus Communion), style and scope of the organ. Taking a broader, international perspective, even greater differences emerge, as I demonstrate in this chapter and the next: both the Catholic and Lutheran traditions make distinctive demands on the organist, markedly different from those of Anglican cathedral worship. This international perspective is unusual in studies of organ improvisation, but I have found that it brings to light certain aspects of the distinctive traditions that can easily be taken for granted. These 'aspects' may include both positive features, and features that appear limiting or limited from a broader perspective.

The Anglican Cathedral Choir versus the Organ

The choir plays a prominent role within the Anglican cathedral liturgy and leads the worship almost daily. The *Opus Dei* (work of God) offered by the choir in services stems from its monastic Pre-Reformation roots and is still very much

considered a key element of Anglican cathedral worship. But not only the number of sung services is impressive: Evensong, arguably the most archetypal of all Anglican services, consists almost entirely of choral music, interspersed with some short readings and prayers. The quick turnaround of music Anglican cathedral choirs manage within a church year is astonishing compared to their continental counterparts. Due to the strong emphasis on choral music and the prominence of singing within the Anglican liturgy, solo organ music in general plays a lesser part. David Goode remarks that ‘the choral tradition here (happily) continues to flourish so strongly that there is relatively little musical space in the liturgy for the solo organ’. (2015: 83) Whilst the organist is still expected to provide voluntaries at the beginning and at the end of services, it seems there are few opportunities during Evensong for the organist to improvise (this is discussed further in this chapter). British organist ‘G’ even goes as far as describing improvisation as an ‘appendage to the English choral tradition’. (Appendix A, 1.1) Whilst this statement may seem a little too negative, it does reveal an underlying truth: within Anglican worship, the choir takes priority over solo organ music.

The Role of the Anglican Cathedral Organist

The responsibilities of the Anglican cathedral organist are manifold: he or she is organist, choir trainer and director, manager and quite often composer, too. It may come as a surprise that, although still referred to as ‘organist’, he or she does in fact very little playing during the service nowadays.¹ Whilst playing the organ certainly remains one aspect of the cathedral organist’s work, today’s focus is on the training and directing of the choirs and it seems that this shift occurred gradually over the last 200 years or so. Most cathedral organist posts in the UK are full-time or nearly full-time as the organist is required to train and direct the choir almost daily. It is not uncommon for cathedral organists to increase their salary by teaching the organ privately or by tutoring on the many masterclasses such as are

¹ British organist ‘E’ confirms the varied responsibilities of Anglican cathedral organists, stating that they have ‘to take choir practices, recruit the choir, deal with clergy, talk to school parties, teach the piano, persuade parents not to take weekends off, mark up sets of sheet music. After all that, playing the organ is a great pleasure. Being able to play the organ is not a large part of being a... cathedral organist!’ (Appendix A, 2.11)

provided by the Royal College of Organists (RCO) or Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). Regular teaching opportunities at universities and conservatoires exist also, but are rare in number. Many cathedral organists welcome the opportunity to direct the local choral society, making particularly organists of rural cathedrals the driving force for cultural life in smaller cities and towns. Some Anglican cathedral organists do also play organ recitals in the UK and abroad: there is usually no or a small fee for organ recitals in the UK (unless it is part of major cathedral organ recital series), whilst international organ recitals can provide a good source of income. It is, however, difficult for cathedral organists to pursue too many organ recital engagements as organists need to be available at their home cathedral for most of the year.

The staffing of the cathedral music in England from the early nineteenth century through to about 1960 varies considerably from place to place. Barry Rose tells us that, before he 'was appointed to Guildford Cathedral in 1960, organists did what their title suggests – they sat at the console and played the services whilst the choir sang on' (1998: 88), often conducted by a member of the choir, if they were conducted at all.² A unique solution of enabling the organist to conduct the choir from the organ loft can be found at Ripon Cathedral: a carved wooden hand, which was added to the case in 1695, can be operated via a lever at the organ.³ Whilst such mechanical gimmicks were maybe helpful at a time when organists did not have to play pedals, the increasing difficulty of the Anglican choral repertoire and ever higher musical standards of subsequent centuries made the creation of assistant organist posts a necessity. Most organists received their initial training in organ playing at school, especially those at public schools with chapels and this is still true today. Afterwards, 'many cathedral organists learnt their profession by serving as articled pupils to the local cathedral organist' (Barrett, 1993: 185), providing assistance on the organ whenever needed. Many famous Anglican organists learnt their trade as articled pupils: both Herbert Howells and Herbert Sumsion were articled to Herbert Brewer (1865-1928) at Gloucester Cathedral (Grice, 2008: 105) and Edward Bairstow became in 1892 'an articled pupil of Sir

² This is anecdotal information from a number of personal sources (including Prof Peter Johnson).

³ Ripon Cathedral website; accessed at <http://riponcathedral.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Ripon-Cathedral-Organ.pdf> retrieved on 17th August 2017.

Frederick Bridge at Westminster Abbey, having organ lessons from Walter Alcock who was then assistant organist there'. (Jackson, 1986: online) Teaching articulated pupils could mean a significant salary enhancement for cathedral organists: the article contract in Appendix I, for instance, between the parents of the pupil and the organist of Wells Cathedral, guaranteed the cathedral organist a fee of £80 for training the pupil in the profession of organist and choirmaster in 1946. This equates to a total amount of £3,185.19 in 2017.⁴ However, the post of assistant organist became gradually recognised, in addition to the cathedral organist's pool of articulated pupils. According to Philip Barrett, a deputy organist was appointed at Hereford Cathedral in 1835 to assist the cathedral organist with playing for two services a week and 'in 1865, the dean and chapter of Exeter Cathedral agreed to pay £10 towards the stipend of an assistant organist.'⁵ (1993: 185) The trend of employing two (or even three) musicians continued and, today, most Anglican cathedral music departments in the UK employ both a cathedral organist and an assistant organist. Whereas the cathedral organist is quite likely to go upstairs to play a voluntary at the end of a service, the normal expectation at the beginning of the service is that the assistant organist would carry the improvising. This means that the improvising is done by the more junior musician.

During the middle of the twentieth century, the old system of articulated pupils was gradually phased out and replaced by organ scholarships to train young organists in all aspects of the profession by playing for services and helping train the choristers. There are two types of organ scholarships in the UK today: cathedral organ scholarships⁶ and university organ scholarships especially at Oxbridge colleges. In my experience, the latter has now become the most likely pool for cathedral assistant organists. The young Oxbridge college organists have only sporadic lessons throughout their university careers whilst those who opt to study organ at music conservatoires may well study organ repertoire on a weekly basis for three or four years. With regard to improvisation, organists at Oxbridge

⁴ Calculation based on the Bank of England online inflation calculator; accessed at <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation> retrieved on 21st March 2018.

⁵ This equates in 2017 to £1,194.44, according to the Bank of England online inflation calculator; accessed at <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation> retrieved on 21st March 2018.

⁶ This includes organ scholarships at other choral foundations, such as abbeys, minsters and greater parish churches.

colleges have no formal training and the art is learnt by osmosis from those who can improvise. This is confirmed by 'B' who adds that, due to not having had any regular improvisation lessons at Oxbridge, he also found teaching it to others later on challenging. On the other hand, 'M' states that it may not be possible to teach improvisation in lessons anyway and that 'a lot of it is [taught] by osmosis'. (Appendix A, 1.3) Whilst organ students at conservatoires do receive lessons in improvisation (some conservatoires offer lessons more regularly than others), there is no emphasis on it in end of year exams.⁷

In recent times, some cathedrals have begun to offer organ scholarships for students enrolled in local conservatoires or universities. These scholarships provide potential assistant organists with invaluable experience, including improvisation. At cathedrals, organ scholars are usually mentored by the assistant organist, who may give the organ scholar regular organ lessons but will certainly allow the organ scholar to observe him or her whilst accompanying services. This suggests that the art of accompaniment as well as improvisation is therefore learnt mostly by listening to and observing what the assistant organist is doing. This is confirmed by 'B', who states that his improvisations are influenced by what he 'picked up' during his time 'as a chorister, organ scholar and assistant organist'. (Appendix A, 2.1) 'A' also agrees with this notion, adding that Oxford organ scholars during his time as a student 'were trying to mimic people, for instance how do people use certain combination of stops... That's how the tradition is passed on.' (Appendix A, 2.2) To the best of my knowledge, organ scholars are not taught improvisation regularly in specific lessons by their senior colleagues – it is expected that the organ scholar 'somehow' picks up this specific skill by him- or herself. Again, learning by osmosis is key here.

If the organ scholar decides to pursue a career as cathedral organist, he or she would then try and secure an assistant organist position, leading (in most cases) to a cathedral organist appointment further down the line. This career path is tried and tested and ensures a certain continuity of style and craftsmanship within the Anglican cathedral tradition. This continuity – or one could say tradition – is key to

⁷ Organ students at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire are required to attend an improvisation assessment at the end of Year 1, 2 and 3 as part of their technical studies exams.

understanding how Anglican organ improvisation has developed the way it is today. Interestingly, pursuing a cathedral organist career via the practical apprenticeship route from organ scholar to assistant organist to organist is regarded within the profession as almost more valuable than gaining the relevant academic qualifications (although, ideally, the budding organist does both). The golden benchmark qualification for Anglican organists is the FRCO⁸ which encompasses both written examination for a relatively high level, practical keyboard tests (including improvisation) and the presentation of selected organ pieces. Organists are not required to attend a specially designed university course to be able to sit the exam – anyone with the relevant skill set can enter for the exam, provided they have previously passed the ARCO.⁹ Many cathedral organist job specifications would see the FRCO diploma as a most desirable qualification for candidates to have due to its excellent artistic reputation.

The English Cathedral Organ

In Chapter 1, I have looked at both the French and German traditions of organ building from the nineteenth century onwards and how the peculiarities of these respective traditions have impacted on improvisation, particularly with regard to changing registration. In this section, I examine the English tradition. From the perspective of this thesis, it is the development of the English cathedral organ in relation to improvisation which is of particular relevance, starting from the later nineteenth century. Before looking at this specific type of instrument, I give a brief account on English organs from earlier times (Tudor, Restoration, Georgian Age), focusing on issues pertaining to improvisation.

Earlier instruments

No working instrument from the Tudor period has survived and there are hardly any documents on the use of stops available. It is therefore nothing short of a miracle that an original soundboard of a Tudor instrument was found at

⁸ FRCO: Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists.

⁹ ARCO: Associate of the Royal College of Organists.

Wetheringsett in Suffolk: discovered in a farmhouse in 1977, it was identified as an antique organ soundboard by British organ builder Noel Mander. Further research suggests that the Wetheringsett organ was probably made by an English builder with the following characteristics: 'long, fully chromatic key compass, choruses of wooden or metal pipes of the same scale and style, each with its own slider, and a voicing style familiar from seventeenth-century English organs.'¹⁰ Although the use of stops for pre-Reformation organ music is rather speculative, the design of the Wetheringsett instrument, which includes sliders, shows that it was possible to operate stops separately – as opposed to *Blockwerk* organs. Whilst this type of organ allows the organist to change registration, this needs to be done prior to the performance as the sliders can only be operated on the side of the organ and the player needs to stand up and move away from the keyboard in order to reach the sliders. Together with the fact that Tudor organs had one manual only, it would have been impossible for organists to vary the sound during an improvisation, unless they had assistance. Furthermore, the compass of the Wetheringsett organ is from C to a² (46 notes) and the instrument has no pedalboard.

The Civil War and Commonwealth era had a detrimental effect on English organs. 'Very few church or cathedral organs were left standing during the Commonwealth, and it was not until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 that they were heard again.' (Cox 1998: 197-98) According to Stephen Bicknell, the two leading organ builders of the Restoration period were Renatus Harris and Bernard Smith, who both introduced mixtures, reeds and cornets to English instruments. (1996: 128) Although the voluntary represents undoubtedly the most commonly used form of organ music during the Restoration period, other types of organ music were also explored, 'employing specific registrations'. (Cox, 1998: 199) A prominent example are the trumpet tunes which Purcell transcribed for keyboard instruments from his operas. Another new feature of these organs was the addition of a second keyboard – which resulted in the so-called double organ: the main body of pipes was placed on the Great and a couple of softer stops were found on the Choir organ (sometimes also referred to as Chair organ). The introduction of two keyboards, together with imitative stops (e.g. reeds and mutations), allows the organist to solo-out melodies, for instance on the trumpet of the Great, whilst

¹⁰Accessed at www.rco.org.uk/eeop_wetherinsett.php retrieved on 20th February 2012.

accompanying the solo line on the Choir. It also enables the player to use the two manuals in dialogue with each other. Whilst Restoration organs allow organists to change stops whilst being seated at the organ, it is unlikely that he or she would have done so during the performance of an improvisation but would have set the organ up beforehand. These instruments, like their Tudor forebears, had no pedalboards, but an extended manual compass compared to their continental counterparts.¹¹ (Klinda, 1995: 83)

Moving to the Georgian Age, C. Henry Phillips tells us that 'in almost all particulars the organs of the eighteenth century showed no advance in tone or manageability on the Restoration instruments of Father Smith and Renatus Harris.' (1968: 193) However, there were some changes in that large organs now had three manuals: Great, Choir and the newly introduced Swell or Echo. Although the Swell division was enclosed, it was operated by a lever pedal which enabled the organist to open or close the swell box but did not offer enough flexibility in doing so gradually. The eighteenth century also saw the arrival of the first pedalboards in England.¹² These pedalboards had no separate pipes but pulled down the lowest notes of the Great organ. The compass of the Swell manual (g-d³) was shorter than that of the Choir or Great, due to the organists' preference for using the treble range of imitative stops on the Swell division only for soloing-out melodies. Whilst there appears not to have been any standardisation of registration practice in the Tudor and Restoration period, organists in the Georgian Age did follow specific conventions based on the different types of voluntaries they improvised. According to Klinda, the first part of an English eighteenth-century voluntary tends to be a slow movement, played on both Open Diapason and Stopped Diapason. The second, livelier, section is made up of a virtuosic solo on the trumpet or cornet, which is accompanied by softer stops on a different manual. Trumpet voluntaries and cornet voluntaries remained popular in England throughout the eighteenth century. (1995, 86)

¹¹ The Father Smith organ at Adlington Hall has a compass from GG to d³.

¹² Ferdinand Klinda suggests that the first English organ with a pedalboard was built in 1726 by John Harris and John Byfield for St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol (1995: 85).

English Cathedral Organ

As far as this thesis is concerned, the most interesting development in British organ building was the development of the orchestral organ from the mid-nineteenth century. This, with the use of thumb pistons in particular, and incorporation of enclosed swell and choir divisions, provides infinite variety of colour, easily accessible under the improviser's hands.

Organ building in the UK during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been subject to many changes in taste: the sonorous orchestral organ of the Victorian/Edwardian era gradually gave way to Neoclassical ideas, prompted by the Organ Reform Movement in the 1950s and resulting in an eclectic selection of instruments across the country. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in more detail the exact development of the British organ. However, it is interesting to note that the English orchestral organ, which had emerged by around 1900, is still seen by many British organists as the ideal cathedral instrument and, indeed, can still be found in many British cathedrals. The term 'English cathedral organ' refers from now on to this type of organ in this thesis. According to Donald Grice,

features of the organ included diapason tone based on the German 'Prinzipal', but with increased scale and winding and a wider mouth. The result favoured the fundamental over upper harmonics. Other characteristics included the presence of multiple eight-foot ranks for tonal variety rather than traditional chorus work. Upper work did not disappear entirely, but mutations and separate ranks above the two-foot pitch became very rare. Mixtures were voiced more softly, broke back more frequently, and sometimes were voiced as strings. Smooth, high-pressure reeds became standard features. The organs employed high pressure for volume, which became more important [...] than clarity. (2008: 90)

The major difference between the purpose of English and continental organs lies in the need of the former to cater for choral accompaniment, whereas cathedral organs on the continent are either entirely solo instruments (*Grand Orgue* in France) or at least focus mainly on solo playing (*Hauptorgel* in Germany). This also

becomes obvious in the location of the organ: English cathedral instruments are mostly situated in close proximity to the choir stalls – either on the screen (e.g. Exeter Cathedral) or alongside the chancel (e.g. Bristol Cathedral). This minimises the time delay between the organ sound and the choir and helps the visual and oral communication between conductor and organist, allowing for both the choir and the organ to collaborate to the highest artistic standard by merging into a perfectly unified body of musicians. However, the organ itself often does not speak directly into the nave¹³ and therefore is not perceived to be as acoustically present by the congregation as its continental counterparts. British organist ‘H’ regards the English cathedral organ to be ‘in the wrong place’ (Appendix A, 2.10), whereas ‘A’ finds the sound of the English instrument to be ‘more in your face’ (Appendix A, 2.11) than French instruments. It is not clear why ‘A’ ended up at that conclusion, and I can only speculate that he was referring to the relatively close proximity of the English organ to the organist and choir who would perceive the instrument to be much more acoustically present. French and German instruments are mostly placed at the very back of the cathedral, high on a west end gallery, from where they can speak most clearly and directly into the building, due to the West wall acting as an immediate reflector. When organs lack that solid reflector, as is the case with most English cathedral organs, they tend to have a more diffuse, ethereal sound.

Leading British organ builders at the time were, amongst others, William Hill (1789-1870), Henry ‘Father’ Willis (1821-1901) and Arthur Harrison (1868-1936), and it is instruments by these three organ builders which can still be found in many Anglican cathedrals today. The most influential initiator of the new style of English orchestral organ was William Hill who both enlarged the compass of the keyboards and pedal boards (‘German system’), and also included a whole selection of orchestral stops (flutes, conical stops, strings, orchestral reeds). Organs from that period are both large and of high quality and Stephen Bicknell explains that ‘for Cavallé-Coll an organ with a 32’ stop was a landmark instrument. For Willis such an organ was a commonplace, turned out at the rate of one every year or so throughout his life.’ (1996: 257)

¹³ This is also true for instruments built on a screen: certain divisions of the organ will only speak predominantly in one direction – nave or chancel – never both (e.g. Gloucester Cathedral, where East and West divisions are identified).

Henry Willis was, according to Nicholas Thistlethwaite (2001: 96) the first to build organs with pneumatic action (1857) and was also instrumental in developing the design of the organ console to help the organist with the management of large-scale organs. Bicknell (1996: 267) tells us that Willis arranged the stop jambs at a 45-degree angle to the keys, built radiating and concave pedalboards and introduced pneumatic thumb pistons between each row of keys (1851). These pistons allow organists to pre-select different combinations of stops which could then be activated by the touch of a button. Typically arranged in dynamic order, starting from the softest to the loudest, the organist was now in full command of the colours of the instrument and was not only able to quickly change stops, but to create a controlled, smooth orchestral crescendo and diminuendo. The 'English crescendo',¹⁴ as Andrew Millington calls it,¹⁵ is a typical registration practice used in the UK for choral accompaniment as well as improvising before Evensong. The English Swell division – a source of contrasting and powerful tones – played 'a vital part of securing a smooth build-up to the power of full organ and it can be assumed that in use the Swell-to-Great coupler was drawn much of the time'. (Bicknell, 1996: 311) Arthur Harrison was influential in developing this type of Swell division. His instruments are also characterised by impressive principal choruses (including mixtures and mutations) and high-pressure reeds, most commonly known as the tuba. No description of an English Romantic cathedral instrument would be complete without mentioning the tuba, a stop which provides a 'smooth and opaque tone at a level of power that made it audible in single notes through full organ.' (Bicknell, 1994: 311)

Thistlethwaite (2001: 97) tells us that a dramatic change of direction in British organ building occurred in the second half of the twentieth century, starting with the new organ for the Royal Festival Hall (Harrison & Harrison, Durham, 1954). Spearheaded by the English organist and organ designer Ralph Downes (1904-1993), this organ was deeply rooted in the eclectic style: many different influences (German choruses and French reeds) were juxtaposed with an English Swell box and a Solo manual. The 1960s saw the introduction of tracker action and the advent of strict classical designs which were inspired by Northern European

¹⁴ A practical demonstration can be found on the enclosed DVD *Ex Tempore*.

¹⁵ Organist and Director of Music at Exeter Cathedral (1999-2015).

instruments. From 1980 onwards, many organ builders and organists turned back to the ideals of the English Romantic organ.

With regard to improvisation, it is fascinating to consider the possible connection between the sound qualities of the English cathedral organ and its influence on the texture and style of improvisation. The large English diapason does not favour contrapuntal textures, and the Pedal division, typically lacking four-foot stops and mutations, often requires coupling to a manual, which again reduces contrapuntal clarity. British organist 'H' confirms that Victorian and Edwardian instruments lost contrapuntal stature in favour of homophonic textures (Appendix A, 2.10). Based on my experience as improviser and my attempts of improvising on the organ of Bristol Cathedral (J. W. Walker, 1907),¹⁶ I would agree with 'H': I instinctively improvised homophonically, thinking mainly in terms of melody and accompaniment – the thick, dark sound of the organ did not inspire me to explore polyphonic textures. Furthermore, the tendency of Willis or Harrison organs to lack a strong initial attack to the sound (such as the chuff of the 'classical' flute stop) further contributes to my preference of homophonic textures when improvising on English orchestral organs.

The close proximity of English cathedral organs to the choir also affects the way organs are voiced. According to the British organ advisor Ian Bell, the mighty cathedral instruments were becoming too loud by the 1860s and 70s to accompany Anglican cathedral choirs. The organ sound was

reined back – kept under control – which meant it sounded rounded, somewhat muffled – something made worse by the over-packed organ cases, cramped chancel organ chambers, or remote triforium sites. What at first was unavoidably bland and blending, for all these reasons, became what was positively desirable and expected.¹⁷

Whether this particular voicing practice affected Anglican improvisation remains unanswered for now but is discussed further in this and the following chapter.

¹⁶ see DVD *Ex Tempore* (attached); also see Appendix F.

¹⁷ Email from Ian Bell to the author (06th June 2017).

Improvised Anglican Voluntaries: Preludes and Postludes

In this section, I analyse the style of Anglican improvisation from the later nineteenth century onwards, drawing on tutor books on improvisation, compositions either described as *Improvisations* or that are improvisatory in style, and, in Chapter 3, also consulting extant recordings of live improvisation. From this data I identify four distinctive styles, namely:

1. Victorian Style
2. Edwardian Style or Grand Style
3. Anglican Modal Style
4. Modern French Style

Whilst there is a sense of stylistic development, this should not be exaggerated, as organists collectively continue to use all four, and some organists may be versatile enough to use all or many of these styles in their own improvisations.

Most Anglican organ improvisation can be identified as ‘free’, in the sense that it is not based on a hymn, chorale, or chant, as tends to be the case in French and German practices – although examples of improvisations on hymn tunes do exist. I refer to both types of liturgical improvisation (with and without a hymn) as voluntaries. The etymology of this word is fascinating. Harry Alfred Harding tells us that its origin stems from the ‘voluntary musical effusions of the organist’ and that the word ‘soon became an acknowledged title.’ (1907: 50) Roger North, writing in the later seventeenth century, shares this view of the voluntary as an ‘effusion’, but more precisely identifies it with improvisation, or – as he puts it – ‘the consummate office of a musician.’ (noted in Wilson, 1959: 136)

Improvised voluntaries lend themselves ideally for pre-service music-making as the organist has full control over the length of the music, compared to playing composed music, which may explain a certain preference for Anglican organists playing more often *ex tempore* before than after services. Improvised preludes (as I refer from now on to pre-service improvisations) before Evensong and Matins seem to be the most common practice, accompanying the procession of the choir

and clergy to the choir stalls. Organists do improvise preludes before Sung Eucharist services, too, but the local custom differs somewhat; many organists tend to play repertoire before the service, but prefer to use improvisation for the period immediately preceding the entry of the clergy and choir, which of course allows for flexibility of timing. To help establish a holistic view, I discuss both preludes and postludes congruently.

Situation from the 1840s to around 1900

As I mentioned in the Introduction, Samuel Sebastian Wesley was amongst those British organists during the Victorian period who enjoyed a strong reputation as improviser on the organ. Philip Barrett, for instance, points out that Wesley used to play 'extempore voluntaries after the psalms and before the anthem' (1993: 185), a practice which has not survived within the circles of Anglican organists today. Although we do not know what these improvisations sounded like, we do know that S. S. Wesley was capable of improvising contrapuntally and did so by extemporising a fugue at the end of a Sunday evening service at Leeds Parish Church (now Leeds Minster) in 1842. The subject of the fugue was published in *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* in 1900 (Ex. 2.1):

Ex. 2.1: Subject of the fugue improvised by S. S. Wesley in 1842 at Leeds Parish Church (Anon., 1900, p. 373):



Again, no further description about how Wesley improvised on this particular theme is available to us. However, there is a detailed description of Wesley improvising a triple fugue during his organ solo recital at the Birmingham Triennial Festival in 1849 and I think it is safe to assume that the fugue improvisation at Leeds was to a similar standard:

But by far the most interesting part [...] was the extemporaneous *fugue* [...].
A more ingenious and extraordinary improvisation we never listened to.

Dr. Wesley chose an unusually short theme, as though resolved to show how easily he could set contrapuntal difficulties at defiance. After working this with remarkable clearness, he introduced a second subject which he soon brought in conjunction with the first, and subsequently a third; ultimately combining the three, in the *stretto* of the fugue, with the facility of a profound and accomplished master. Dr. Wesley's performance was greeted with uproarious applause [...]. (Horton, 2004: Kindle location 2102)

Although this account refers to an improvisation within a non-liturgical context, it nevertheless allows useful insights into what leading British organists at the time, such as S. S. Wesley, were able to achieve. Another famed British organ improviser of Wesley's generation was Henry Smart (1813-1879). Smart was organist at St Pancras Church, London, and the following report by J. S. Curwen not only tells us when Smart improvised during the service, but also what the character of these improvisations were:

Extemporising is generally formless and lackadaisical, but Mr Smart's was rhythmic and thematic. He kept up whatever time he adopted until he came to a change of rhythm and style. He extemporised three times: before and after service, and before the sermon. The opening voluntary was generally a *cantabile* or slow movement, expressive of sweetness rather than power. The *sortie*, as the French organists call it, was generally marked by spirit and motion, and a sustained development of form that made it hard to believe that it was not premeditated. The voluntary before the sermon filled up the time while the minister was changing his gown, and was of a meditative kind, always ending in the playing over of the hymn-tune that was about to be sung. (J. S. Curwen in Anon., 1902: p. 300)

This account not only states when Anglican organists could improvise during the service (it is unclear whether Curwen's account describes improvisation during a morning or evening service): it also touches on the general standard of liturgical extemporisation in Britain at that time, criticising it as being 'generally formless and lackadaisical'. The lack of form and rhythm in Anglican liturgical improvisation

is a regular point of criticism for many years to come, as I will demonstrate in this section.

The blind organist Alfred Hollins (1865-1942) was another well-known exponent of the art of organ improvisation. At a concert, he was invited to improvise on the following theme (Ex. 2.2), presented to him without notice:¹⁸

Ex. 2.2: Andante theme for an improvisation by Alfred Hollins ('C. V.', 1901: 210):



We have a detailed account of what he played, from one 'C. V.', who noted the following:

The opening was an introduction of a mysterious character in which the theme appeared like a ray of sunlight [...] out of the misty sky, [...] causing the listener to long for its ultimate exposition, which came at last, followed by a short second thought and a repetition. From this point the form of the composition might be described as an air with variations; these variations being welded together by graceful and fanciful episodes. We had the theme varied in the upper part, then it appeared in an inner part with a florid figure for the treble, after this the pedal had the theme with an accompaniment of chromatic harmonies. A new figure made itself heard which might be almost considered a new subject, but into this soon appeared the subject, this variation gradually worked up into an excited Allegro which culminated in a masterly fugue, unto which Mr. Hollins appeared to find special enjoyment. Towards the conclusion the canonic element was very evident, the subject, which had been written without thought, appearing to lend itself to this treatment in a remarkable way. (1901: 210)

¹⁸ The date of the concert is unknown but, given the publication year of the article is January 1901, we can assume that the concert probably took place in 1900.

'C. V.' concludes that Hollins's *ex tempore* offering as a 'truly masterly improvisation' (1901: 210) and it is clear to us that he demonstrated remarkable control and a lively musical imagination. Almost as valuable as the description of Hollins's improvisation is 'C. V.'s comment on what gifts are required by a good improviser:

To improvise well, it is necessary for a performer to have a thorough command of the ordinary technique of organ playing, he must possess a considerable power of imagination, have a good memory, be a skilful contrapuntist and harmonist, combining with these a knowledge of form and have the judgement to suit his improvisations to the need of the moment. (1901: 210)

'C. V.' clearly advocates a consummate musicianship as a prerequisite for good improvising, demanding the improviser to connect compartmentalised knowledge in harmony, counterpoint, musical analysis, aural training and organ technique in order to facilitate a high standard of improvising. I will discuss aspect of consummate musicianship further in Chapter 4 as I believe this to be key to successful improvising.

A key figure in the field of liturgical organ improvisation in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century was Frank Joseph Sawyer (1857-1908, Fig. 4.1). Sawyer

was a student at the Leipzig Conservatorium and, immediately afterwards, became Assistant of Sir Frederick Bridge [at Westminster Abbey] [...] He took the degree of Bachelor of Music at Oxford in 1877 and that of Doctor in 1884: he was also a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists. His only organ appointment was at St Patrick's Church, Hove, which he held [...] for [...] [31] years. He was professor of sight-singing at the Royal College of Music and [...] honorary secretary of the Royal College of Organists. (Anon., 1908: 383)

Sawyer also was 'a composer of several oratorios, [and] his published works include an *Impromptu in F* (1879), *Concertstück in D* for organ and orchestra (1890).' (Henderson, 1999: 525) His two publications – an organ improvisation tutor book entitled *Extemporization* (published around 1890) and a lecture on 'An Organist's Voluntaries, with special reference to those that are extemporized' (published in 1907) – not only comment on the practice of Anglican improvisation at that time, but also reveal much about what was regarded as good or bad practice whilst making recommendations for improvements. I regard Sawyer's tutor book *Extemporization* as a fundamentally important publication regarding the subject of organ improvisation in the UK at the end of the nineteenth century: here, Sawyer outlines what he considers best practice by supplying a detailed curriculum of structured improvisation. Referring to improvised preludes as 'Introductory Voluntaries before the Service' (1907: 30), Sawyer sets out the objectives of such a voluntary:

It strikes the first note of Divine Service, and has thus the opportunity of setting the tone to all that follows. It must therefore be consistent with the sentiment of the service it precedes. (1907: 30)

Fig. 2.1: Frank Joseph Sawyer (1857-1908):¹⁹



¹⁹ Courtesy of The Royal College of Organists.

Whilst Sawyer places great importance on the prelude to 'be fitting and worthy of the service that follows' (1907: 31), he remains vague regarding a particular form or style of the improvised prelude, stating that 'introductory voluntaries when extemporised may take many forms, and it is in the power of the extemporiser more particularly to strike the true note for the whole service.' (1907: 32)

However, Sawyer feels strongly that the formal aspect of improvisation is essential and even goes as far as classifying formless 'rambling about over the keys' as not being improvisation at all (1907: 32). He explains that 'the incoherent ramblings of an organist over the keys, "without form and void", is not music, since that word implies beauty of form and clearness of construction.' (1907: 32)

This 'rambling about' in improvisation was a generally acknowledged problem at the time. Harvey Grace, Organist of Chichester Cathedral (1931-1937), tells us 'what happens at quite fifty per cent of our churches' (1920: 133):

The organist is in the vestry until the last minute or two before the service is due to begin, keeping - or not keeping - order. He then rushes to the console - generally in a state of irritation, adjusting his surplice or hood *en route*, throws his legs over the bench, draws out a few stops (not forgetting the Swell to Great coupler), starts arranging his service music with his left hand, puts his right foot on the Swell pedal, while with the remaining limbs he begins in this style:

[Ex. 2.3 inserted here]

Now why should he inflict this kind of thing on his hearers twice a week? (1920: 133)

Looking at Grace's example of poor-quality improvisation, it is worth noting the following:

1. There is an irregular change of time signature (4/4, 5/4, 2/4, and so on).
2. There is a vague sense of a key (D major), only confirmed by the V-I cadence in the fourth bar.

3. The harmony is tonal and chromatic (Romantic style) and clearly the strongest feature.
4. The texture is homophonic throughout.
5. The melody has no clear structure and is a by-product of the harmonic proceedings.
6. No sense of direction, neither harmonically nor melodically: a new tonal centre (B flat major) is approached rather unexpectedly and for no apparent reason.

Ex. 2.3: Grace, example of bad practice in Anglican improvisation (1920: 133):



Despite Grace's facetious comments, it is interesting to read about the low priority he gives to improvisation amongst the Anglican organist's other tasks.

Having established what was regarded as bad practice at the beginning of the twentieth century, I now turn to what one might call the perfect improvised prelude in the Victorian/Edwardian period. Sawyer tells us that, when improvising, one needs to observe the 'underlying principle in the construction of music' (1907: 31):

The balancing of symmetrically-formed phrases, contrasting with each other, yet in unity of thought. [...] Let the tyro first try to extemporise a four-bar phrase, then an eight-bar phrase, always remembering what he has played. (1907: 32)

Sawyer suggests that one's improvisation should be completely based on a theme and he gives clear instructions how to develop such a theme. In his book *Extemporization*, we find a written-out example of such a voluntary, made up of forty-eight bars with a coda (Ex. 2.4). While there is no evidence that this was originally an improvisation, it does portray what Sawyer regarded as good practice in Anglican voluntary improvisation at the end of the nineteenth century. The overall structure of the prelude is as follows (lower case letters below correlate to letters in Ex. 2.4):

- a. First phrase of 16 bars
- b. Second phrase of 12 bars
- c. Repetition of first phrase
- d. Coda.

In addition to the clear development of the theme, it is possible to identify the following other key elements of this improvisation:

1. The time signature is 2/4 and there is no change of metre.
2. The piece starts off in F major, modulates to C major, and returns to F major.
3. The harmonic language is tonal, with the use of chromatically altered chords.
4. The Tempo is marked as *Moderato*.
5. No suggestions for registration/dynamics are given.

Particularly the aspect of registration practice at that time is of interest. Based on Sawyer's tutor *Extemporization*, preludes towards the end of the nineteenth century were often played on softer stops, whilst postludes were generally louder: examples taken from Chapter V 'Short Preludes' are either marked 'Soft Swell', 'Reed solo' [implying a clarinet or oboe stop], or 'Soft Great', whilst most examples in Chapter VII 'Extemporize Short Postludes' are marked *ff, f*, 'Choir Reeds', 'Full Swell' or even 'Grand Chœur Style'. This suggests that postludes were expected to be of a more marked character and Sawyer confirms this by stating that the 'postlude requires in its extemporisation life, energy, and style'. (?1890: 44)

Ex. 2.4: Sawyer, specimen of an improvised prelude, consisting of a forty-eight-bar phrase (with coda), from *Extemporization* (?1890: 18):

Moderato.

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is marked with a tempo of *Moderato.* and includes the marking '(a)'. The second system includes the marking 'Man.'. The third system includes the markings 'Ped.', 'Ped.', and 'Man.'. The fourth system includes the marking 'Man.'. The fifth system includes the marking '(c)' and 'Man.'. The score concludes with a coda.



Ex. 2.5 shows a theme for a short, improvised postlude which gives a flavour of the energy Sawyer was referring to:

Ex. 2.5: Sawyer, four-bar theme for a short, improvised postlude, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 44):



Grace corroborates Sawyer's practice,²⁰ and it still is largely true today, although it can be very effective to vary the practice where appropriate: a loud prelude before the service on Easter Sunday, or a quiet postlude at the end of Passiontide. Some cathedrals even ask the organist 'to improvise quietly as the choir recesses until the vestry prayer has been said, at which point the voluntary can begin.'²¹

Sawyer's publications suggest that most Anglican improvisation in the early twentieth century was tonal, homophonic (melody and accompaniment) and mainly based on balanced 4-bar phrasing, which might make Anglican organ improvisation of that period appear trivial. However, some organists had a

²⁰ Grace tells us that playing soft organ solo repertoire at the end of a service is 'too quiet to be used as postludes'. (1920: 134)

²¹ From Gloucester Cathedral's *Guide for Visiting Organists*; accessed at <http://www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk/content/pages/documents/1433758945.pdf> retrieved on 17th February 2018.

particularly strong gift for improvisation and brought this activity to an artistic climax at that time. Sawyer describes how Sir John Stainer (1840-1901), Organist at St Paul's Cathedral in London, used to improvise after the service 'a sonata movement in modern binary form'. (1907: 35) Sir Arthur Sullivan confirmed Stainer's reputation as a great improviser, telling his students that he (Sullivan) 'was at St Paul's yesterday, listening to Dr Stainer extemporising. My dear young friends, he is a genius, and I hope you will miss no chance of hearing him.' (Charlton, 1984: 79). Sawyer discusses how to put together a 'Modern Binary Movement' improvisation in Chapter VIII ('To Extemporize Longer Postludes') of his *Extemporization* tutor. In modern English terminology this is commonly referred to rather as sonata form (Fig. 2.2):²²

Fig. 2.2: Sawyer, blueprint of a *Binary Form* improvisation, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 50):

PLAN FOR BINARY FORM.

- (a) Prelude or introduction *ad libitum*.
- (b) Exposition, *i.e.*, first theme, bridge, second theme, coda :|| *N.B.*—In overture first theme immediately repeated.
- (c) Development. Possible introduction of broad theme in semibreves and minims.
- (d) Recapitulation of exposition, but with second theme in tonic; coda.

Sawyer also provides written-out examples for themes to be used in this context (Ex. 2.6).

From an improviser's point of view, Sawyer's themes are most inspirational due to the stark contrast in character, creating instantly a taste of what I would perceive as 'Victorian flair'. Although it is not clear whether many members of the organist elite of that time improvised postludes in that style, we should assume that the overall standard of improvisation at the end of the nineteenth century was not as high. In fact, Harding tells us that 'improvisation in our day is almost a lost art' (1907: 52) and that 'the art of improvisation has become almost obsolete from the

²² Sawyer's use of the term 'binary form' in this context acknowledges the historical development of sonata form, as binary form 'in the traditional historical accounts [...] is often seen as the immediate ancestor' of sonata form. (Rosen, 1988: 18) James Webster also confirms the binary character: 'Sonata form is a synthesis of binary and ternary principles: it integrates three sections into a two-part structure. Sonata form is bipartite.' (1995: 497)

Ex. 2.6: Sawyer, themes for postlude improvisation in 'Modern Binary Movement', from *Extemporization* (? 1890: 51):

fact that we are fast losing sense of musical design and especially that part of it appertaining to melody.' (1907: 53) He alludes to a style of bad improvisation identified above and similar to Grace's example of poor-quality improvisation (Ex. 2.3) where harmony shapes the melody, resulting in meandering *ex tempore* playing.

The mastery of form and style in improvisation, as shown by Stainer and Sawyer, may not have been seen as desirable by all organists at the time. Harding takes a particularly strong position that improvisation should not attract too much attention to itself by being too clever and obtrusive:

The object of improvisation, to the ordinary organist, is to fill up a temporary period in such a manner as not to offend musical susceptibilities by deficiency of musical quality, nor on the other hand

obtrusively to attract attention to itself by startling originality. Improvisation should as a rule create an environment; for instance, an in-going voluntary should not have for its theme one of a very pronounced character, nor indeed should the theme be made unduly prominent. An atmosphere is what is needed: we have come into God's House to worship Him, and the less obtrusive the organ is the better. Reverence is the essential characteristic, not cleverness. A prevailing sense of form is necessary, to prevent extravagant changes of key and a feeling of unrest, but I do not think that of necessity this prelude need be as clearly defined and as absolutely regular in every respect as a matured and finished written composition. (1907: 51)

What Harding is suggesting is a compromise between the two extremes of prominent, well-crafted improvisation and loose, undisciplined playing. His emphasis, particularly with regard to the prelude, is on creating a certain atmosphere, appropriate for the beginning of a service. This may well explain why, today, there is such an emphasis on using predominantly soft stops for preludes (despite the dynamic build-up in the middle).

Situation around 1915

As already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there is a common understanding amongst the interviewed British organists (Appendix A, 2.10) that the style of Herbert Howells's organ compositions best encapsulates the trademarks of pre-Evensong Anglican organ improvisation as we understand it today. Martin Baker tells us that 'if you get out of bed and you don't know what to do, an English organist will often default to Howells.' (DVD *Ex Tempore*, 2011) Howells was not only a prolific composer: he was also a professional organist, holding the position of Sub-Organist at Salisbury Cathedral, albeit briefly, in 1917, and then returning to the organ bench again in 1941 when he deputised as organist for Robin Orr at St John's College, Cambridge. Whilst no recordings of Howells improvising on the organ exist, we do have evidence of his style, as Christopher Palmer gives a detailed description of Howells's improvisations at St John's College: 'free, rhapsodic, difficult-to-grasp formally in a conventional analytical way but enormously satisfying emotionally and in terms of a broad,

spacious, long-spanned design.’ (Palmer, 1996: 173; also Cooke, 2013: 38) Felix Aprahamian gives a similar account, suggesting that Howells’s Cambridge improvisations really had ‘the quality of an improvisation’: they were ‘very difficult to grasp, [...] pretty difficult to analyse, [...] rather free [...] and [they were] rhapsodic.’ (Spicer, 1998: 126) This sense of free, rhapsodic writing is reflected well in Howells’s *Rhapsody No. 1* Op. 17 which he composed in August 1915 and which is an early example of Howells’s use of arch form and the ‘English crescendo’ mentioned earlier in this chapter: a ‘gradual crescendo leading to a climax, followed by a decrescendo and fading away’. (Cooke, 2013: 39) Although the key signature of *Rhapsody No. 1* has five flats, the opening chord is a sustained E flat minor seventh, instantly giving the piece a modal flavour. The quaver movement of the inner parts gives the opening a sense of direction, whilst also ‘blurring’ the underlying harmony (Ex. 2.7):

Ex. 2.7: Howells, *Rhapsody No. 1*, Op. 17 (1915), bars 1-3:

The musical score for the first three bars of Howells's *Rhapsody No. 1*, Op. 17, is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is the right hand (RH) in treble clef, the middle staff is the left hand (LH) in bass clef, and the bottom staff is a continuation of the LH in bass clef. The key signature is three flats (E-flat major), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato, tranquillo'. The RH part consists of a series of parallel second-inversion triads moving in a stepwise fashion, with a dynamic marking of 'ppp' and 'Sw.' (swelling). The LH part consists of a series of parallel first-inversion triads moving in a stepwise fashion, with a dynamic marking of 'assai legato'. A fermata is placed over the final chord of the first three bars, with a note '16 ft. to Sw.' below it.

During the build-up section of the *Rhapsody*, Howells uses idiosyncratic devices such as pedal points and parallel movement of triads. Instead of Sawyer’s clear four-bar-phrasing, Howells applies short motivic work, accompanied by parallel second-inversion chords in the right hand and first-inversion chords in the left hand (Ex. 2.8).

In bar 26 of Ex. 2.9, the expected tonic key of D flat major is reached at the peak of the dynamic climax and is firmly established by means of a pedal point, over which a firework of chordal parallelism (e.g. left hand: parallel first-inversion triads)

unfolds. After a further, short dynamic climax, the *Rhapsody* calmly approaches the final chord of D flat major.

Ex. 2.8: Howells, *Rhapsody No. 1*, Op. 17 (1915), bars 19-21:

The musical score for Ex. 2.8 consists of three systems. The top system features the right hand with a melodic line and a complex chordal accompaniment. The middle system shows the left hand with a bass line and chordal accompaniment. The bottom system shows a continuation of the left hand line. Dynamics include 'poco' and 'crescendo'.

Ex. 2.9: Howells, *Rhapsody No. 1*, Op. 17 (1915), bars 25-27:

The musical score for Ex. 2.9 consists of three systems. The top system shows the right hand with a melodic line and a complex chordal accompaniment. The middle system shows the left hand with a bass line and chordal accompaniment. The bottom system shows a continuation of the left hand line. Dynamics include 'allarg.', 'ff a tempo', and 'con anima'.

Although this style of writing is in complete contrast to the Romantic ideals proclaimed, for instance, in Sawyer's tutor *Extemporization*, Howells's style must not be labelled as typical impressionist either. In fact, Cooke tells us that, shortly after the publication of Howells's *Six Pieces for Organ* (1939-40), 'a reviewer wrote that "the style is best described as a sort of Anglicised impressionism – all of the familiar impressionist devices are used but in moderation and with a fine understanding of their application to the organ."' (2013: 38) Howells's *Rhapsody No. 1* displays all the key characteristics of what I later call the 'Anglican Modal Style':

1. Predominantly homophonic texture
2. Preference of short motivic work over pronounced themes
3. Use of modal harmony
4. 'Harmonic blurring'
5. Parallel chords (first-inversion or second-inversion triads)
6. Pedal points
7. Arch form (soft string and flute stops, 'English crescendo')

It is interesting that Howells's *Organ Sonata No. 1 Op. 2*, written in 1911, still very much bears the characteristics of a Romantic piece, whilst his *Rhapsody No. 1 Op. 17* and *Psalm Prelude No. 1 Op. 32*, both written in 1915, signify a change towards modality which appears to have been influential in the Anglican organ world at the time. Based on the interviews with British organists (Appendix A), Howells's modal style is very often seen today as a synonym for pre-service Anglican improvisation.

Situation around 1920/1930

Francis Jackson's account of Edward Bairstow's prelude improvisations before Evensong at York Minster in the late 1920s and early 1930s provides further evidence of a formally less strict, yet musically convincing approach to Anglican improvisation, thus confirming Harding's position:

Each time we processed into [...] [the Minster for a] service, [...] [Bairstow] improvised, sometimes taking a few notes from one of the chants to be used for the psalm, providing a kind of chorale prelude though not in any strict form. As miniature pieces, they were completely convincing and satisfying and of course a wonderful scene-setting start to the service. They were always as perfect as he was capable of making them and they were always different; not a mere dull repetition of what he had done many times before. Looking back and, inevitably, regretting that today's ever-present recording facility did not exist in Bairstow's day, it is tantalising to think how many gemlike vignettes could have been saved and handed on to future

generations of organists by such a great and imaginative musician.
(Hardwick, 2003: 85-86)

Luckily, it has been possible to obtain part of a recording of Bairstow improvising at York Minster at the enthronement ceremony of Archbishop Cyril Forster Garbett in 1942, making this the earliest recording of Anglican liturgical improvisation I have been able to discover. This recording, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, not only serves as an example of the practice of Anglican voluntary improvisation, but also allows comparisons with Bairstow's first 'Prelude' from his *Three Short Preludes* which, according to Jackson, 'probably originated from Bairstow's gemlike improvisations at York Minster'. (Hardwick, 2003: 85) Looking at the opening bars of the first movement, 'Prelude' (Ex. 2.10), a homophonic texture in D minor unfolds softly on the Swell, featuring a hymn-like melody on top. The movement of the inner voice parts in sixths (Ex. 2.10, bars 1-3, and Ex. 2.13, bar 35) to accompany the melody is similar to the accompaniment style in Vaughan Williams's 'Prelude on *Rhosymedre*' (1920; Ex. 2.11, bars 13-15) and turns out to be a recurring feature in Anglican improvisation throughout the twentieth century, as shown in this chapter. Following a development section, Bairstow's melody is then presented on a Solo stop (Ex. 2.12), accompanied by parallel thirds in the middle voice parts.

Ex. 2.10: Bairstow, 'Prelude', from *Three Short Preludes* (1947), bars 1-6:

The musical score for Ex. 2.10 is presented in two systems. The first system is labeled 'Manual' and 'Pedal'. The Manual part consists of two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The Pedal part is a single bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Andante (♩ = 54 approx.)' and the dynamics are 'p (Sw. 8ft.)'. The key signature is D minor (two flats) and the time signature is 2/2. The score shows the first six bars of the piece, with a melody on the upper staff and accompaniment in sixths on the lower staff. The Pedal part consists of a single bass note in each bar.

Ex. 2.11: Vaughan Williams, 'Prelude on *Rhosymedre*', from *Three Preludes founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes* (1920), bars 13-15:

Ex. 2.12: Bairstow, 'Prelude', from *Three Short Preludes* (1947), bars 10-12:

During the build-up section (Ex. 2.13), the harmonic language becomes increasingly dense and chromatically charged, gradually approaching the higher end of the organ's tessitura. After a quick decrescendo, the opening melody returns on a solo stop.

Bairstow's 'Prelude' follows Howells's arch form style which raises the question whether Howells's use of arch form was based on common practice in Anglican improvisation at the time. Given that Bairstow (almost twenty years older than Howells) used arch form in his improvisations and probably had done so over the course of his whole career, it is likely that the practice of arch form improvisation had already been well established in the UK when Howells began composing his organ works. However, confirmation of this hypothesis would require further research.

Ex. 2.13: Bairstow, 'Prelude', from *Three Short Preludes* (1947), bars 26-37:

Situation around 1940

A complete list of stops to be used for an improvisation can be found in George Thalben-Ball's composition *Elegy* (1944).²³ This piece originated in an improvisation by Thalben-Ball at the Temple Church, allegedly played at the end of a service and transcribed by the organist at the request of one of his choristers.²⁴ Although played as a postlude, the registration and style of the piece is more similar to that of an improvised prelude. The choice of stops suggested by Thalben-Ball reads as follows:

²³ 'Dr George Thalben-Ball (Australia/England. b. 1896; d. 1987). A pupil of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Frederick Bridge and Sir Walter Parratt, he was appointed Organist at the Temple Church, London, in 1919. Curator of the organ in the Royal Albert Hall from 1930, he was also Civic Organist at Birmingham Town Hall from 1949. He achieved widespread fame thanks to his 1927 recording of "Hear my prayer" with soprano Ernest Lough.' (Henderson, 1999: 585)

²⁴ Email from Stephen Beet to the author (10th March 2005).

Sw.	Celeste and Lieblich
Gt.	Small Diapason
Ch. or Solo	Viol, 8ft. Flute and Tremulant
Ped.	Gt. to Ped.

This confirms an established practice at the time of accompanying on the Swell manual (based on the characteristic celeste sound), whilst soloing out the melody on the Choir or Solo manual (8' stops). Interestingly, no 16' stops are allocated to the pedals and the music does not seem to justify the omission of the 16' pitch – maybe a typing error? With regard to form, *Elegy* follows an arch-shape outline, starting softly (*pp*) and building up to a triumphant *tutta forza*, before dying away again to *pianissimo* strings on the Swell with a soft 32' flue stop in the pedals.

Although *Elegy* is still firmly placed within the realms of tonal music and is based on melodic development with occasional chromatic passages, the use of harmony is more progressive. This is particularly evident in the chords and suspensions applied during the *tutta forza* climax of the piece (Ex. 2.14, bars 47–52) which differs significantly from the style suggested by Sawyer and his contemporaries.

Ex. 2.14: Thalben-Ball, *Elegy* (1944), climax, bars 47-52:

The musical score consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system shows a melodic line in the upper treble staff with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) *tutta forza* section. The second system continues this section, marked with 'Diaps.', 'dim.', and 'rit.'

The clear-cut harmonic language advocated by Sawyer is blurred by the use of unprepared suspensions and accented passing notes, whilst still remaining within the language of classical functional harmony. Together with the slow-moving harmonic rhythm and the increased use of first-inversion chords (Ex. 2.14, bar 47, beat 1) and second-inversion chords (Ex. 2.14, bar 47, beat 4), this effectively evokes a sense of grandeur and style. This particular use of harmony moves mostly in stepwise movements and lies well under the hands of the improviser. I refer from now on to this as ‘harmonic blurring’.

Ex. 2.15 shows another feature of *Elegy* which can be seen as a clear departure from Sawyer’s style: the use of a pedal point on F in bars 34-37. The left-hand accompaniment displays first-inversion triads in parallel movement (e.g. first-inversion triads of G minor, A diminished, B flat major), whilst creating occasional clashes above the held pedal F:

Ex. 2.15: Thalben-Ball, *Elegy* (1944), dominant pedal, bars 34-37:

Another example of a quiet liturgical improvisation is provided by George Oldroyd, who published a set of *Three Liturgical Improvisations for Organ* in 1948. The second movement is of particular interest, as it applies the use of parallel chords over a tonic pedal point, a harmonic device so typical for soft Anglican prelude improvisations (Ex. 2.16). Oldroyd’s improvisation clearly shows a tendency of chords moving in parallel movement, albeit not strictly. The right-hand in bar 5, for instance, shows a downward movement of three chords: E minor (second inversion), F sharp minor (first inversion) and E minor (first inversion). This preference of first and second inversion chords is a common denominator of many Anglican improvisations and is even applied by Cochereau, as shown in Chapter 1.

Most importantly: Oldroyd's improvisation is clearly moving within the harmonic sound world of modality, deliberately not confirming any diatonic key. The sense of harmonic openness and flotation due to use of modal harmony is a key feature of so many Anglican prelude improvisations.

Ex. 2.16: Oldroyd, 'Liturgical Improvisation No. 2', from *Three Liturgical Improvisations for Organ* (1948), bars 1-7:

The musical score for 'Liturgical Improvisation No. 2' by Oldroyd is presented in three systems. The first system, for Organ, features a tempo of 'Poco Adagio con molto espressione' and dynamics of 'all Sw.'. It includes staves for 'Manuals' and 'Pedal'. The second system, for Guitar, includes staves for 'Gt.' and 'Choir'. The third system is for Piano, with two staves. The score is in G major and 4/4 time, characterized by modal harmony and a sense of harmonic openness.

Situation around 1960

Sidney Campbell (1909-1974), who was Organist at Canterbury Cathedral from 1956 to 1961, published a set of three *Canterbury Improvisations* in 1960, of which the second movement 'Lento' is of particular interest, as it 'was in fact extemporised and has been transcribed from a recording'. (Campbell, 1960: preface). One can therefore assume that the style displayed in 'Lento' is very close to the type of improvisation one would have heard at Canterbury at that time. Although the overall harmonic language is tonal, the chromatic density is impressive – particularly towards the climax - and requires an improviser with

advanced keyboard skills (Ex. 2.17). Campbell explains, that ‘one who extemporises every day may perhaps be permitted an occasional excursion into the type of harmony here used.’ (1960: preface). The overall form follows the traditional arch form shape found in many Anglican improvisations.

Ex. 2.17: Campbell, ‘Lento’, from *Canterbury Improvisations* (1960), bars 25-28:

With regard to the registration of ‘Lento’, Campbell provides the following recommendation: ‘Couple quiet 8’ stops (flutes, strings, celestes, and soft diapason ad. lib.) on all manuals. Ped. 16’ coupled to manuals. Dynamics refer to the use of Swell pedals.’ (1960: 4) Although it is not clear whether ‘Lento’ was intended to be used as a prelude or postlude, the choice of stops points towards ‘Lento’ being a prelude voluntary: soft 8’ stops to provide a solemn atmosphere. Maybe the ambiguity of the title was deliberate and the style of ‘Lento’ was acceptable before and after Evensong?

Whilst the overall style displayed in ‘Lento’ is within the expected parameters of improvisation in the UK at that time, the other two *Canterbury Improvisations* are not. The first movement, entitled ‘Impromptu’ and based on a French hymn, surprises with a Baroque texture and cycle of fifths at the very beginning (Ex. 2.18). Particularly the independent use of right-hand and left-hand motifs is in stark contrast to the predominant use of homophonic texture usually found in Anglican improvisation up to that point. The structure is that of a German-style chorale prelude, with free sections interspersed with separate lines of the hymn – again, most uncommon for liturgical improvisations in the UK.

Whilst we can only assume that 'Impromptu' stems from an improvisation, we do have confirmation from Campbell himself that the third movement, 'Fugal Epilogue', 'is an expanded and tidied version of an improvisation'. (1960: preface)

Ex. 2.18: Campbell, 'Impromptu', from *Canterbury Improvisations* (1960), bars 1-7:

The musical score for 'Impromptu' is presented in two systems. The first system is labeled 'MANUAL' and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Energico' with a quarter note equal to 84. The dynamic is marked 'ff'. The second system continues the manual part with a first ending bracket (I) and a second ending bracket (II). Below the manual part is a 'PEDAL' part, consisting of a single bass clef staff, marked 'detached throughout'.

Given the lack of polyphonic textures in Anglican improvisation up to that point, Campbell's fugal subject, written in 7/8 time, comes as a real surprise (Ex. 2.19). Not only is the choice of metre surprising: the articulation and registration suggested leads away from the legato playing of the English Romantic organ style, towards the ideals of the Organ Reform Movement, which were starting to filter through into Britain after WWII. A lighter and brighter organ sound was sought to enable the performance of polyphonic Baroque repertoire, particularly the work of Johann Sebastian Bach. The detached style of playing – as opposed to the vocal legato playing of previous generations – was seen as more desirable, and this is evident in the markings found in the first and third movement of Campbell's *Canterbury Improvisations* (see articulations in Ex. 2.19).

Although pedagogical aspects of Anglican organ improvisation are not the main focus in this thesis, Martin How's notes on Anglican improvisation from 2015

Ex. 2.19: Campbell, 'Fugal Epilogue', from *Canterbury Improvisations* (1960), bars 12-16:

(Appendix H) – written for the then Organ Scholar of Croydon Minster – do offer valuable stylistic insights. Martin How (b. 1931) spent most of his career with the Royal School of Church Music, teaching residential and non-residential students various aspects of church music at the RSCM's Headquarters at Addington Palace, near Croydon.²⁵ How's improvisation notes therefore encapsulate decades of teaching experience and from the evidence I have assembled in this section, How's notes can be adopted as representative of the modal practice of twentieth-century Anglican improvisation. In his 'general approach',²⁶ How suggests that improvisation should not be regarded primarily as an intellectual or academic activity: organists should explore first and analyse after. The student is encouraged to build up a repertoire of formulae over a lifetime and I agree with How's view that what is often perceived as magic or complete spontaneity in improvisation is in fact only an illusion. He outlines various building blocks, including:

1. Parallelism (thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, triads)
2. Whole-tone models (thirds, augmented triads)

²⁵ Martin How maintains close links with Croydon Minster where he is 'Composer in Residence' and 'Organist Laureate'. Many of the Minster Organ Scholars regularly seek his advice and it was on such an occasion that Martin wrote his notes on Anglican improvisation (Appendix H).

²⁶ Appendix H, opening.

3. Lydian mode
4. Trumpet tune 'in fourths'
5. 'Filled sixths' (parallel first- inversion and second-inversion triads)
6. Modulations: chromatic/enharmonic 'kaleidoscope'

Although How embraces both diatonic and modal music, he does seem to give preference to modal styles (whole-tone scale, Lydian mode) as diatonic improvisation requires a thorough knowledge of traditional harmony, thus quickly becoming a 'death trap', as he calls it. Parallelism features prominently throughout How's script and confirms its place as a common device in Anglican improvisation (see Oldroyd, Ex. 2.16). The written-out modulation chain How provides reflects the sound world of Anglican 'Grand Style' improvisations as encountered for instance in Simon Preston's improvisation at Westminster Abbey in 1963 (Appendix B, Table B3).

How makes a clear distinction between Anglican liturgical improvisation and concert or recital improvisation: the former primarily considers atmosphere, liturgical mood, occasion and the nature of recipients (i.e. congregation). Like Harding in 1907, How recommends that Anglican improvisation should not draw attention to itself: it should not promote or encourage analysis and should stay in the background. However, How admits that this approach does depend on the context and suggests that more 'formal' improvisation may well be used when extending a hymn by using the hymn tune skilfully and when improvising the final voluntary. How also elucidates the concept of 'mood' within Anglican improvisation, linking specific moods (e.g. mysticism, nobility, foreboding, and so on) with specific clichés (e.g. for mysticism: clusters on Swell strings; for foreboding: bare fifths on full Swell). These moods are designed to help the organist reflect either the mood of a particular Sunday service or of a particular Gospel, thereby elevating liturgical improvisation from a mere filling-in of gaps in the liturgy to giving improvisation a particular purpose. How's honest and critical comments make his notes on improvisation particularly useful to the aspiring improviser. Being aware of the dangers of repeating one's style too often in improvisation, he suggests that playing repertoire might be the better option. He

concludes that traditional Anglican liturgical organ improvisation requires a Romantic organ with symphonic colours to represent the moods in many shades.

The similarity of How's decidedly practical approach and Stoiber's approach to improvisation, as outlined in his book *Faszination Orgelimprovisation* (2018: Chapter 1 'Just Play!'), is particularly noteworthy: both approaches utilise simple, tactile models which do not require great experience in keyboard harmony, therefore not blocking the student's improvisation flow by applying too many rules early on. The idea of using clichés or formulae for improvisation will also form the basis of the action research project in Part 2 of this thesis, in which I attempt to improvise in English historical styles.

It is important to note, in the context of Anglican liturgical organ improvisation, that there is an almost seamless continuum between improvising before and after the service and the routine tasks of accompanying hymns and psalms. This is because organists in the Anglican tradition are often expected to extend the last verse of a hymn *ex tempore*, either for purely ceremonial purposes, or to 'fill in' during movement of the clergy. Examples include the extension of the gradual hymn during a communion service to accompany the movement of clergy towards the congregation for the reading of the Gospel; or the extension of the closing hymn to accompany the regress of the choir, which sometimes morphs into a closing improvisation, or 'sets the scene' for the playing of a composed piece as the voluntary. In the Anglican tradition, improvisatory psalm accompaniment is also highly valued: with a competent choir, the organist is free to decorate the chant, for which the traditional orchestral organ affords multiple possibilities, from high flute descants to growling reeds. The art required for the realisation of such psalm accompaniments differs little from that required for an improvised set of variations on a theme, and much the same can be said of the skills of realising alternative harmonisations of hymn tunes, traditionally used for verses sung in unison by the choir. A brief survey of the pedagogical literature of this tradition will underline the importance attached to these forms of impromptu accompaniment, and their link to free improvisation.

Anglican Hymn Playing

The singing of hymns represents a musical core element of collective Anglican worship which, by extension, means that 'playing hymns is an essential part of the musical lives of most organists.' (Curror, 2009: 18) However, the organ not only merely accompanies the hearty singing of the congregation and the choir: the organist is also expected to engage with the words of each hymn verse and to respond to it in an appropriate manner. This means, apart from phrasing and articulation, that the registration will need to reflect the meaning of the words, and the choice of stops can therefore change quickly even within the same hymn line. Whilst this task, by itself, already demands a high level of flexibility from the organist, bringing it close to the realms of improvisation, I focus on four specific aspects of Anglican hymn playing which do require the organist to improvise to various degrees: the play-over, free organ accompaniments, last verse harmonisations and hymn extensions.

The Play-Over

Before the congregation can start singing the first verse of a hymn, an organ introduction is needed. Referring to the practice developed within the Church of England, Reginald Hunt states that 'there is very seldom any need for an improvisation before a hymn, the almost universal custom being to play the first line of the tune at the speed the hymn is to be sung.' (1968: 31) There is evidence that suggests that the playing-over of hymns can vary in length (one line, first two lines, whole hymn, and so on), depending on how familiar the congregation is with the hymn tune. In most cases, the hymn is played over on the Great manual only and in plain chordal form, avoiding any embellishments or ornaments. Although it is unclear when exactly this format of playing over the hymn was established, we do know that by around 1790, Jonas Blewitt suggests that 'the giving out of a psalm [meaning a hymn] should be played as plain as possible in order that the congregation may become acquainted with the tune they are about to sing.' (Barber, 2008: 50) Although Blewitt's instruction probably refers to a singer ('parish clerk') rather than an organist, it does at least explain why a simple play-over might have been seen as preferable at the end of the eighteenth century:

Anglican hymn tunes and hymn texts are not by default linked together – a hymn text can be sung to different hymn tunes with the same metre (a practice special to Anglican churches and not at all common in Germany, for instance). Therefore, the plain statement of part or all the hymn tune is crucial for announcing the correct tune to the congregation. An early example of the convention of playing over the hymn tune is found in Samuel Sebastian Wesley's *A Selection of Psalm Tunes adapted expressly to the English Organ with Pedals*, compiled around 1832. Wesley's arrangement of the hymn tune *St Stephen* (Ex. 2.20) 'illustrates the giving out of the hymn on the manuals only, the pedals joining in at the first verse, a procedure which later became standard'. (Barber, 2008: 53; Exx. 2.20 and 2.21 are reproduced from this essay.) As the pedal part goes down to AA, this indicates that the German compass pedalboard with C as the lowest note had not been fully established in the UK by the time of Wesley's writing. The practice of improvising interludes, such as the one printed after the first verse, seemed to have developed during the eighteenth century and 'continued long into the nineteenth century'. (Barber, 2008: 52) Although a brief attempt was made by C. W. Pearce in 1927 to revive the tradition of interlude playing in hymns – now called 'organ versets' (Pearce, 1927, in: Barber, 2008: 61) – it did not seem to have had any impact on a national level and I shall therefore not look into it further.

Wesley's written-out play-overs were by no means all restricted to the plain format as laid out in *St Stephen* (Ex. 2.20), and Barber states that

for each psalm tune Wesley gives out the melody in a variety of imaginative ways [...] For the 'giving out' Wesley often writes a short organ prelude in the style of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*. The values employed in the 104th Psalm (Ex. 2.21) – crotchets and quavers elaborating the minim beat theme – give some indication of the probable tempo of the hymn. (2008: 53)

Wesley's collection of hymn arrangements is an impressive testament to the creative possibilities that lie within Anglican hymn playing and is a wonderful source of improvisation templates. It is unclear how widespread the elaborate way of giving out hymn tunes was amongst Victorian organists. Barber tells us that

Ex. 2.20: S. S. Wesley, introduction, first verse and first interlude to *St Stephen*, from *Psalm Tunes* (second edition), in: Barber, 2008: 54:

6

ST STEPHEN. — C. M.

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'by the late 1870s the practice of providing elaborate givings out was all but dead' (2008: 57), although this is not to say that the plain play-over was unanimously seen as ideal practice, as suggested by Sawyer in 1907:

What an irritating and tedious process it often is to have to hear an eight-line tune slowly played through as a piece of music [...] I presume it is 'played over' [...] to give the congregation time to find the place, and to indicate the tune. That being so, why not still 'indicate the tune' by making the opening phrase the start of your prelude, but instead of monotonously playing it all over, extemporise a short artistic prelude, – a little introductory voluntary. (1907: 39)

Sawyer also acknowledges that under no circumstances should a more artistic approach to improvising hymn introductions lead to longer introductions: '[...] it will only take the average person half a minute to find the hymn, you can therefore utilise that half minute as artistically as possible – but no longer.' (1907: 39).

Ex. 2.21: S. S. Wesley, introduction to 104th Psalm, from *Psalm Tunes* (second edition), in: Barber, 2008: 56:

104th PSALM. — P. M. 1

Full Org. without reeds.

KEYS.

PEDALS.

3126

The following two examples (Exx. 2.22 and 2.23), given by Sawyer in the same paper, demonstrate what ‘extemporising a short artistic prelude’ should look like. Both examples are not longer than eight bars in total, confirming Sawyer’s intention to keep the suggested artistic play-over brief. The first example (Ex. 2.22) is a play-over to the hymn *St Albinus (Jesus lives, thy terrors now)*:

Ex. 2.22: Sawyer, prelude to *St Albinus* (1907: 39):

Gt. f

Full Sw.

Gt. piu f

Full Sw.

rit.

Here, Sawyer states the head motif of the hymn (first three notes of the hymn) in unison on the Great, followed by a harmonic reply on the Swell and pedals, confirming the key of A minor. This is then repeated – now in C major – preparing for a start of the first verse of the hymn in the same key.

The second example (Ex. 2.23) shows an entirely different approach: based on the hymn *Eventide* (*Abide with me*), Sawyer states the melody with a solo Clarinet 8' on the Choir (played in the left hand), whilst supplying chordal accompaniment above the melody on the Swell Celeste 8'. In this example, the second half of the hymn melody is quoted with a slight alteration at the end, presumably to match the underlying seventh chord of B flat major, ending the play-over on an imperfect cadence. The ethereal effect of Sawyer's play-over is enhanced by omitting a Pedal part altogether.

Ex. 2.23: Sawyer, prelude to *Eventide* (1907: 40):

Free Organ Accompaniment

Anglican organists today tend to use harmonisations provided in hymn books when accompanying congregational hymn singing. According to Barber, with the publication of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861

and its widespread proliferation thereafter, a significant point of reference for hymn accompaniment on the organ was established. With very few exceptions, it was not deemed necessary to indicate any distinction between four-part choral harmony and the organ part. (2008: 58)

As most Anglican cathedral and church choirs tend to sing hymns to harmony, the organist is required to remain within the framework of the choral harmony provided. However, there are also places of Anglican worship (such as British public schools, Oxbridge college chapels and parish churches without a choir) where a strong tradition of unison singing either still flourishes or at least used to flourish, allowing the organist to embark on 'free accompanying' of the singing, i.e. varying the harmony and texture for each verse as deemed appropriate by the organist. This practice is confirmed by George Wauchope Stewart who writes in 1914 that 'every new verse of the hymn he [the organist] is accompanying may be invested with fresh interest [...] [he] has really got to construct an organ part for himself.' (1914: 193)

Grace suggests that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a 'revival of interest in congregational singing [...] and an increased use of unison singing on the part of the choir.' (1920: 100) Tertius Noble (1867-1953) gives the following interesting account of free organ accompaniment from his student days at Cambridge:

I recall the thrilling effect produced by some seven hundred undergraduates singing in unison at Trinity College, Cambridge, England during the services held there on Sunday evenings. It was not only the unisonal singing that moved one, but also the masterful, free organ accompaniments improvised by Charles Villiers Stanford. (1946: preface)

The tradition of improvising free organ accompaniments continued with Edward Bairstow (1874-1946), organist at York Minster from 1913 to 1946. David Hird, a former pupil of Bairstow, gives the following account:

Sir Edward's free accompaniments to unison verses of hymns were always very fine. When OUP asked him to provide accompaniments for the unison verses of hymns in the English Hymnal some of his improvisations were crystallised and written down. During the time that he was writing these he used to talk about them and play them on the piano. His written accompaniment to *Aeterna Christi Munera* closely resembles what I recollect of his improvised accompaniment to this hymn. (Hird, n.d.: online)

Bairstow's free harmonisation of *Aeterna Christi Munera* (Appendix I) is chromatic in style and includes the use of pedal point harmonisation (verse 2), regular registration changes to create crescendos and decrescendos during verses and a dramatic climax at the end of the final verse.

Whilst Bairstow's collection of free hymn accompaniments still contained different arrangements of particular verses of each hymn, Noble provides free arrangements, or reharmonisations, for final verses only. This would suggest that by 1946 (Noble's publication date) the Victorian tradition of free hymn accompaniments went out of fashion and that final verse reharmonisations became the new standard practice instead. I shall now investigate the latter.

Last Verse Reharmonisations

Reharmonisations of final verses, in many ways relicts of the free organ accompaniment tradition, have been common practice for most of the twentieth century and continue to be an important part of the Anglican organist's tool kit today. As there are many 'Last Verse' publications available, I focus on Tertius Noble's *Free Organ Accompaniments* from 1946 and Noel Rawsthorne's *200 Last Verses* from 1991 to assess whether the style of last verse reharmonisations has changed and if so, how. In order to show potential differences more clearly, I compare two different last verse harmonisations of the same hymn directly with each other (Exx. 2.24 and 2.25 to the tune *Merton*).

Both reharmonisations of *Merton* are tonal and show the use of chromatic harmony, with Rawsthorne slightly more leaning towards chromaticism

Ex. 2.24: Noble, last verse harmonisation for *Merton*, from *Free Organ Accompaniments* (1946: 3):

4 MERTON 8.7.8.7. 3
HARK! A THRILLING VOICE IS SOUNDING
Moderate time William Henry Monk

Ex. 2.25: Rawsthorne, last verse harmonisation for *Merton*, from *200 Last Verses* (1991: 106):

99 MERTON
William Henry Monk (1823-1889)

(chromatic descent of Bass line in penultimate bar). Noble's Bass part is decidedly more active, mostly moving in quavers, whilst Rawsthorne's Bass part is not only moving mostly in crotchets; Rawsthorne also uses pedal point harmonisations twice. Although both composers apply descant writing occasionally, Noble is more indulgent with that technique than Rawsthorne.

Hymn Extensions

Anglican organists are frequently obliged to improvise 'after the hymn has finished, at moments like the Offertory, or during a procession'. (Archer, 1995: 6) 'N' regards hymn extensions, like the preludes before Evensong, as a key discipline of the Anglican improvisation tradition (Appendix A, 1.1) and Sawyer goes even as far as considering hymn extensions as 'the only piece of compulsory extemporisation during Divine Service'. (?1890: 56)

What can make improvising hymn extensions particularly challenging is the fact that the length of time, during which the organist has to improvise, is unknown beforehand. The same could of course be said about Evensong preludes, but the set start time of the service is at least a helpful indicator, enabling the organist to plan ahead the rough structure of his improvisation accordingly. Due to the unpredictability of the length of hymn extensions, 'no definite movement form can be adopted. Yet this by no means implies that the so often heard mooning from chord to chord is necessary.' (Sawyer, ?1890: 56)

The mooning Sawyer refers to has not only been a common problem amongst Anglican organists at the end of the nineteenth century. Alec Rowley writes in 1955, that 'a succession of indeterminate chordal progressions, timeless and tuneless, a mere filling-in of silence' can be frequently heard (Ex. 2.26). Rowley then continues explaining what a good hymn extension should look like (Ex. 2.27), explaining that 'the majority of hymns have some particular and characteristic phrases which may be incorporated with this "coda". By sequential repetition and rhythmic implication, the chosen motif will become a retrospective tail-piece, thus suggesting a unified whole.' (1955: 23)

Ex. 2.26: Rowley, hymn extension to *Rockingham* (bad practice; 1955: 23):

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system is labeled 'Ex.49 a ROCKINGHAM' and 'Tune'. It features a treble clef with a melody and a bass clef with a piano accompaniment. The second system is labeled 'Ex.49 b' and 'Fatuoso!'. It continues the melody and accompaniment with a more expressive, 'Fatuoso' character. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time. The extension in Ex. 49b is marked as 'and so on!'.

Ex. 2.27: Rowley, hymn extension to *Rockingham* (good practice; 1955: 23):

The image shows two systems of musical notation for 'Ex. 50'. The first system is labeled 'Tune' and 'dolce'. It features a treble clef with a melody and a bass clef with a piano accompaniment. The second system is labeled 'rit.' and 'Pedal'. It continues the melody and accompaniment with a 'good practice' extension. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time. The extension is marked with 'p Gt.', 'pp Sw.', and 'Pedal'.

Working with short melodic motifs, extracted from a hymn tune, also represents the key idea in Huskisson Stubington's instructions on hymn extensions from 1940. His advice to organists is to analyse the hymn tune carefully, dividing the melody up in short melodic phrases. Ex. 2.28 shows the tune *Hanover*, annotated by Stubington. Once the motifs have been alphabetically marked up, he then identifies motif 'g' and 'h' as being the most characteristic of the tune, basing his extension entirely on these two motifs (Ex. 2.29). First, motif 'g' is developed sequentially over a tonic pedal point, before engaging in harmonic development, ending the extension with motif 'h'. Whilst Rowley's extension is slightly separated from the last chord of the hymn (although still harmonically linked by the same chord of E flat major), Stubington achieves greater unity between the hymn and the extension by turning the pedal note of the last hymn chord into a tonic pedal point at the beginning of the extension. This strive for unity between the two is confirmed by Hunt who argues that 'extemporisation of this sort should avoid

Ex. 2.28: Stubington, motivic subdivision of the tune *Hanover* (1940: 52):

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff has a bracket labeled 'a' under the first four notes and a bracket labeled 'b' over the last four notes. The second staff has a bracket labeled 'c' under the first four notes and a bracket labeled 'd' over the last four notes. The third staff has a bracket labeled 'c' under the first four notes and a bracket labeled 'f' over the last four notes. The fourth staff has a bracket labeled 'g' under the first four notes and a bracket labeled 'h' under the last four notes.

Ex. 2.29: Stubington, hymn extension on *Hanover* (1940: 56):

The image shows four systems of musical notation. The first system has a treble clef staff with a colon and a bass clef staff with a dotted half note and the text 'A - men.' below it. A bracket labeled 'g' is over the last four notes of the bass staff. The second system has a treble clef staff with a bracket labeled 'g' over the last four notes and a bass clef staff with a 7th fret marking. The third system has a treble clef staff with a 7th fret marking and a bass clef staff with a 6th fret marking. The fourth system has a treble clef staff with the text 'Slow.' and a bracket labeled 'h' over the last four notes, and a bass clef staff with a 6/2 time signature and a 4th fret marking.

giving the impression that a fresh piece of music is beginning: tune and improvisation should sound continuous.' (1968: 31)

Moving to 1987, I now look at the *Quiet Postlude* on the tune *Frankonia* (Ex. 2.30), written by Martin How (b. 1931) for the Royal School of Church Music's 60th Anniversary Lecture (31st October 1987). Although technically not a hymn extension as such, this piece sums up How's own approach to teaching hymn

Ex. 2.30: How, *Quiet Postlude*, RSCM 60th Anniversary Lecture (31st October 1987):

QUIET POSTLUDE

FRANCONIA.
M. I.R.H. 1871/87

USE FOR TUNE GUESSES etc OR b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b

OR b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b

PROVIDE "OPTICAL ILLUSION" OF MELODY!
 I.E. SHAPE OF PHRASE
 "make people think they are hearing
 the actual tune..."

BUILD UP YOUR OWN VOCABULARY OF CHORDS - OVER A LIFETIME!
 CHORDS ARE BRICKS NEEDED BEFORE
 YOU CAN GO FOR SHAPE AND DEPTH.



extensions to RSCM students at Addington Palace and is therefore of great value here. In addition to the expected use of dominant pedals (Ex. 2.30, bar 5 and bar 8) and tonic pedals (Ex. 2.30, bar 1 and bar 13), it is clear that How – like Rowley and Stubington – focuses on the head motif of the hymn tune, never stating the complete melody. He himself describes this technique as providing an ‘optical illusion’ of stating the melody, to ‘make people think they are hearing the actual tune’ (see hand-written comment on the bottom of Ex. 2.30). How also gives advice on harmonising motifs and suggests the use of parallel sixths, fourths or triads over dominant pedals, thus taking away the pressure on the student of focusing too much on diatonic harmony.

Whilst Rowley, Stubington, and How primarily rely on motivic work in their hymn extensions, they address the issue of timing only indirectly: their suggested method certainly lends itself for short extensions (Rowley, Stubington), or medium long extensions (How), but it is unclear whether longer versions would be equally effective. Sawyer’s *Extemporization* tutor (?1890) attempts to rectify this problem by offering five different blueprints, distinguishing between ‘Short Methods’ and ‘Longer Methods’. Although Sawyer’s *Extemporization* tutor predates the other two publications (Rowley, Stubington), Sawyer offers the most varied approach of all. Not only does Sawyer embrace motivic development as part of balanced four-bar phrasing: he also pursues the idea of both sonata form improvisation (‘Andante’, ‘Melodic Intermezzo’) and variation form, allowing the organist to extend a hymn considerably.

Whilst Sawyer’s suggestion of sonata and variation form as a means of extending hymns has had little currency, it is important to note that Sawyer, Stubington and Rowley all agree that successful hymn extensions need to be based on the tune of the preceding hymn for the extension to be musically and artistically successful. This requirement is also confirmed by Curror:

In terms of musical content, focus your thoughts on a few short fragments or phrases (perhaps partly in unison or octaves, or in a different key), extending them in a simple way and then bringing the music to a suitable conclusion. If you lack confidence in this area it can

be reassuring to devise a personal formula that can be transferred from one hymn to another. (2009: 18)

Hymn extensions remain a key pillar of Anglican organ improvisation today and often form part of organ scholarship or organist trials in the UK. The new CRCO exam²⁷ also asks candidates to extend a hymn for 20 or 30 seconds, giving full marks for 'a completely fluent, imaginative, and logical extension' (RCO exam syllabus).²⁸

Anglican Psalm Accompaniment

Another core element of Anglican worship is the singing of psalms to Anglican chants. Although some Anglo-Catholic churches sing psalms to plainsong chants, this is not common practice within the Anglican church and is therefore not further considered for this research project. Unlike hymns, psalms are usually sung by the choir only, enabling organists to engage more creatively in the style of accompaniment. This creative approach is confirmed by Grace who states that 'much of what has been said of the accompaniment of hymns applies to that of the psalms when sung to Anglican chants.' (1920: 103). Here, Grace is referring to the free organ accompaniment style discussed earlier, which includes 'obvious methods of obtaining variety – inversion of parts, soloing, etc.'. (1920: 103)

Being able to vary one's psalm accompaniment was (and still is) regarded as an essential part of the Anglican organist's skill set. Jordan writes in 1908 that 'a man would not be very suitable for the position of a church organist, however well he might be able to play elaborate organ music, if he could not accompany chants and hymns well.' (1908: 184) The importance of psalm accompaniment is further highlighted by the fact that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, this was also part of the FRCO practical examination. The art of Anglican psalm accompaniment lies in the bringing out the meaning of the words by choosing the appropriate form

²⁷ 'Colleague of the Royal College of Organists', formerly 'Certificate'.

²⁸ Accessed at <https://www.rco.org.uk/pdfs/ExamRegulations17-18.pdf#page=8> retrieved on 18th May 2017.

of accompaniment for each verse of the psalm. George Thalben-Ball is a good example of an Anglican organist who took great care in shaping psalms musically and, according to Lewer, accompanied psalms 'with consummate artistry' (1961: 376):

the illustrative touches were [...] unmistakably his: 'Let them consume like a snail' (Ps. 57), 'Why hop ye so, ye high hills?' (Ps. 68), 'Blow up the trumpet in the new moon' (Ps. 81), sforzando chords at the opening of psalms beginning 'The Lord is King', and at other verses showing a change of mood. All these small details gave that individual touch to the Temple psalms appropriate to our choirmaster's maxim: 'Make the congregation sit up, so that even an old Bencher will say to himself, "by Jove, I've never realised before that the psalms were so beautiful or so full of meaning."' (1961: 376)

Having established a basic understanding of what was considered good practice in psalm accompaniment, I now look at an example of psalm accompaniment from 1987, written by Martin How for the same RSCM lecture as previously discussed. How's example formed part of a lecture on 'Organ Accompaniment',²⁹ again, summing up what was regarded as good practice during the second half of the twentieth century (Ex. 2.31). How's psalm arrangement is very detailed, with each line clearly referring to a specific verse of Psalm 23. Also, How seems to avoid stating the melody of the chant in the Soprano part in his arrangement, aiming for contrast in both texture and use of the organ's tessitura. How's flexible treatment of reciting notes is of particular interest: here, he changes the chord inversion on specific words sung to the reciting note, thus adding to a sense of development (e.g. beginning of verse 6). The same effect is achieved by changing the notes of a soloed-out melody on certain words of the reciting note (e.g. 'As it was in the beginning'). The use of rests in How's accompaniment is also fascinating: the end of the doxology 'world without end. Amen' is a particularly good example of his attempt to lighten the chordal texture of the accompaniment to shape the phrasing of the choir. Verse 5 in How's arrangement is of particular interest: instead of providing full chordal accompaniment, the organist plays two high notes of the

²⁹ RSCM 60th Anniversary Lecture (31st October 1987).

Ex. 2.31: How, written out accompaniment for Psalm 23, chant: T. A. Walmisley (1814-1856), RSCM lecture notes (31st October 1987):

Ps 23

ARR. M.H. 1851
WALMISLEY.

1.

Vs 1 THE LORD IS MY SHEP-HERD THEREFORE CAN I LACK NOTHING. HE SHALL FEED ME WITH GREEN PAS-TURE

AND LEAD ME FORTH BE-IDE THE WATERS OF LIFE COMFORT.

Vs 3. HE SHALL CON-VERT MY SOUL AND BANK ME RIGHT FORTH

MP

CANTATA

For HIS NAME'S SAKE

YER ... VALLEY... I WILL FEAR NO EVIL
SHADOW OF DEATH.

SW + IG REED

mf

FOR THOU ART WITH ME, THY ROD AND THY STAFF COMFORT ME

mp

VS 5 THOU SHALT THEM THAT TUMBLE ME; THOU HAST AND MY CUP SHALL BE FULL
PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME, AGAINST ME, AGAINST ME, AGAINST ME

R.H.

VS 6 BUT THY LOVING KINDNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME; ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE AND I WILL DWELL IN THE

GT

SW

ED.

HOUSE OF THE LORD FOR EVER

GIVER... FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY GHOST

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT

END, A MEN

Solo R.H.

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of four systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the lyrics 'HOUSE OF THE LORD FOR EVER'. The second system continues with 'GIVER... FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY GHOST'. The third system features a 'Solo R.H.' section and the lyrics 'AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT'. The fourth system concludes with 'END, A MEN'. The score includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords.

underlying chord only, thus adding a new colour to the singing of the choir whilst also taking out textural weight by avoiding doubling the voice parts.

The evidence collected in Chapters 1 and 2 suggests that Anglican organists have plenty of opportunities to engage in liturgical improvisation, albeit often within strict timeframes: this includes both improvised voluntaries and elements of improvisation linked to the accompaniment of hymns and psalms. The Anglican tradition of free hymn accompaniment brings the Anglican school closer to the German tradition, whilst ‘the practice of improvising in Anglican Churches may have more in common with the mystical Parisian liturgies.’ (Schalk, 1993: 244) Although this may seem like a contradiction at first, a connection between the liturgies of the three sacramental churches – Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican – cannot be denied: all three Christian denominations are ‘centred on proclamation of the Gospel as well as the celebration of the sacraments’ (Kolodziej, 2012: 330). However, each denomination defines the balance in music between Gospel proclamation and sacramental mysticism differently. Luther regards music as the *viva vox evangelii* [living voice of the Gospel], which explains the preference for chorale-based organ improvisations over free mood music in the Lutheran Church. The contrapuntal clarity of Lutheran church music is ‘a vehicle through which the *verbum Dei*, the Word of God, is conveyed.’ (Kolodziej, 2012: 313) Whilst the Lutheran *sola scriptura* [solely the Scripture] approach regards music as a way of preaching the Gospel, ‘the improviser within the Catholic liturgy should view himself as a musician of the “sacramentality” of the Church.’ (Seifen, 2001, in Planyavsky, 2014: 50) The Anglican church, with its ‘refusal to take up extreme positions’ (T. S. Eliot, in Paxman, 2007: 100), managed to find a *via media* [middle way], whereby Anglican organists ‘worked within a culture in which Scripture, tradition, and reason informed the boundaries of liturgical’ improvisation (Kolodziej, 2012: 317).

The discussion in Chapter 2 has been on what people are saying about Anglican liturgical improvisation and the somewhat flaky evidence of various documents. Since recordings exist, Chapter 3 will look specifically at the actual sonic evidence of the practice of Anglican improvisation. In so doing, my investigation aims to identify to what extent the actual practice corresponds to the picture I have

painted in this chapter. This discussion is embedded in a wider consideration of key aspects which influenced Anglican improvisation in the twentieth century.

Chapter 3: The Era of Sound Recording

Having established a basic understanding of Anglican liturgical improvisation in Chapter 2, I now turn to the actual sonic evidence of improvisation, preceded by a brief presentation of the Real Time Analysis (RTA) methodology. Acoustic recordings provide an invaluable source of information about the kinds of improvisations organists would have played at specific moments on a particular organ, but also collectively indicate whether there is an identifiable 'Anglican' style of improvisation, and if so, whether that style has changed over the years. Given that, after WWII, it became much easier for English organists to travel to France and Germany, and so to hear and study the distinctive traditions.

Before I discuss recordings of Anglican liturgical improvisation, I present the concept of RTA an invaluable analytical tool in discussing recorded improvisation. A number of audio recordings have survived from which changing practices during the course of the twentieth century can be identified. The analysis of recorded improvisations as part of academic research does require a specific system that allows the researcher, by means of 'attentive listening' (Cressman, 2012: 193-194), to objectify score-less music and to extract the relevant information. Hans Fidom, leader of the musicological Orgelpark Research Program (Amsterdam) and Professor of Organ Musicology at the *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*, developed an analytical process called RTA, which

aims to provide a description of the music listened to. Key words are *improvising* (the activity of the musician), *listening* (the activity of the listener), and *systems of reference* (the backgrounds against which the activities of musicians, listener and others involved in musical situations occur). (Fidom, 2017: 128)

As listening to live improvisation can only be a one-time ('real time') experience, Fidom argues that, one should ideally listen to recorded improvisations only once (or as close to that as possible) in order to replicate a similarly fresh impression of the music. I have followed through this approach in my own investigations.

RTA is not a strictly objective process in so far as I am recording what I am hearing. Naturally, the outcome of *RTA* is subject to human error and omissions and depending as it does on the listener's level of concentration and musical understanding on the day. Whilst it is possible to do a sonic visualiser analysis, the information this would yield, such as very accurate timings to measure rubato, or subtle changes of balance or synchrony between parts, does not answer the questions posed in the present study. Although I may not be able to hear or be aware of all the technical processes going on (e.g. closing of swell box), I decided that this was acceptable as my main concern was to produce a report of macro-structural aspects of the improvisation, and broad aspects of style and syntactical control. Therefore, what I am hearing from a musician's point of view must at least be regarded as a useful *aide-memoire* in the context of scholarly analysis and it is this sort of information which assists me in addressing three of my research questions: what types of musical form does Anglican organ improvisation include, how has Anglican organ improvisation changed and how does the Anglican tradition compare to continental practices.

The complete process of analysis consists of the analysis of each improvisation, considering:

1. changes in volume, colour, tempo, textures
2. development of form
3. treatment of themes

Whilst the process of *RTA* is not infallible, the advantage offered by *RTA* of representing musical events as text opens up the comparison between recorded improvisation and written music in the style of improvisations, thus providing a broader understanding of stylistic development of Anglican improvisation during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Sound Recording Technologies

The advent of sound recording technologies, starting at the end of the nineteenth century, revolutionised the way we make music and listen to music. For the first time in the history of mankind, it was now possible to preserve improvised music indefinitely and to share recordings of such music with a wider audience. David Beard and Kenneth Gloag confirm that ‘the rise of electronic means of recordings and reproducing sound has had a significant impact on the study and analysis of all non-notated music.’ (2016: 218) Different forms of sound technology developed over the course of the twentieth century: shellac and vinyl records, magnetic audio tapes and digital recordings (such as CDs) constantly refined recording techniques whilst making recordings also more accessible and portable. Walter Benjamin embraced the fact that film, or in this case audio recordings, ‘could reach a wide audience’ (Beard & Gloag, 2016: 219), and also recognised that the recorded ‘item lends itself more readily to analysis because it can be isolated more easily’. (Benjamin, 2015: 229) However, Theodor Adorno was concerned about recordings becoming commodity items: he argues that recordings would have ‘regressive effects on the way we listen to music’ (Beard & Gloag, 2016: 219) as they are primarily made for home use, ‘detaching music from its geographic, social, and visual contexts.’ (Katz, 2010: 83) This might explain why there are hardly any live recordings of Anglican liturgical improvisations available commercially (with the exception of, for instance, Healey Willan’s improvisations at St Mary Magdalene in Toronto): the liturgical and visual aspects of services are crucial in establishing a holistic experience. One could therefore argue that the invisibility of recorded liturgical organ improvisation considerably distorts the live experience of such improvisations, leading to an overall different reception of such music – a fascinating thought which justifies further research.

Live Recordings of Anglican Liturgical Improvisation

Most live recordings of Anglican liturgical improvisations considered in this chapter have either been part of religious radio broadcasts or have been made privately by admirers. This leads to the question why Anglican organists did not attempt to release professional recordings of liturgical organ improvisations and

market these commercially. Whilst Anglican organists have always been busy recording written organ music – the earliest recording going back as far as 1913,¹ the absence of recorded liturgical improvisation might, in addition to the aspect of invisibility outlined above, also suggest that organists held it in low regard. Although it is certainly true that improvisation in the UK was regarded merely as a useful keyboard skill for the majority of the twentieth century, this does not, however, explain entirely the absence of liturgical improvisation recordings. Looking across the English Channel, a similar picture emerges on the French and German side: with the exception of Cochereau's recordings from Notre-Dame, there are almost no commercial live recordings of liturgical improvisations available on the market. Maybe the high level of perfection expected of commercial recordings (see Chapters 4 and 5) is difficult to achieve within a liturgical context as noises from the congregation (e.g. coughs) might diminish the overall quality of the recording? Or maybe the serving role of liturgical improvisation as part of the liturgy is perceived by organists as an infringement of their artistic freedom, therefore not enabling them to perform to the best of their ability, and making a commercial release of recorded live improvisations within a liturgical context less desirable? Whilst clarifying this issue would be helpful, I shall not further pursue these questions in this thesis.

Although there is a marked lack of commercially published recordings of Anglican improvisation in live liturgical contexts, organists in the UK have recorded CDs dedicated to improvisation outside the liturgical context in, what could be called, 'studio conditions' (see list of CD recordings in Appendix C). The earliest commercial organ improvisation recording by an English organist was Arthur Meale's 'Storm', recorded on 30th June 1926 at Westminster Central Hall, London. Although Meale uses the hymn tune *Melita* in the middle of his piece, above which aleatoric outbursts of storm-like keyboard cascades unfold, the overall style of his improvisation points more towards the cinema than church and is therefore not considered further for the discussion of Anglican liturgical improvisation. 58 years later, it was Philip Marshall who, in 1984, commercially recorded two

¹ 'Grand Chœur in E Flat by Alexandre Guilmant', played by Easthope Martin and recorded on 17th January 1913 at the City Road Studio in London. In: *British Organists of the 1920s, Recorded 1913-1936*, Amphion Records (PHI CD 156) [track 18], 2001.

improvisations on Anglican hymn tunes as part of an organ album, which marks the beginning of an era of regular improvisation recordings by Anglican organists. Marshall's recording was followed by Nigel Allcoat's improvisation recordings during the 1990s. Allcoat's improvisation style is an individual blend of elements of the German Baroque, together with a touch of light French modal harmony. Wayne Marshall's jazz-style improvisations on compositions by Gershwin, Bernstein and others (1999) carve a refreshingly new niche; it remains a unique recording as this style was not followed up by any other organist in the UK. These jazz-style improvisations are contrasted by Magnus Williamson's Tudor-style verset improvisations (2015), representing one of the first recordings of Anglican historical style improvisations by a UK organist. The majority of British recordings, however, are stylistically orientated towards the French school of improvisation, as epitomised by Cochereau. Here, the strong influence of the French tradition on Anglican organists is particularly obvious, spearheaded by the English improviser David Briggs. However, all of the commercial improvisation recordings considered in this thesis (again, with the exception of Healey Willan's recordings) have one thing in common: they are all polished performances, based on a clear structure, and giving the impression of being close to composition. There are virtually no mistakes or blips, and hardly any other imperfections, such as late registration changes, which is not necessarily reflecting real life. Improvisations, even if carried out by the most gifted musicians, do vary in quality. Yet, customers buying CD recordings expect the highest quality of performance, regardless whether the performer is playing composed music or improvising. At the same time, performers want the recording to represent the very best they are capable of, due to the permanence of recordings. All of this leads to, what Adorno calls, a 'barbarism of perfection' due to the fact that the 'recording preserves music as a universal, but petrified, form of text.' (Beard & Gloag, 2016: 219) The implications of such perfectionism within commercially recorded improvisations are considered further in Chapter 5.

The Emancipation of Anglican Improvisation

Despite this distortion of true practice, commercially produced non-liturgical organ improvisation CDs nevertheless allow us to gain insight into the personal

style of each performer. If improvisers are also active as cathedral organists, it is safe to assume that the style captured on their CD recordings is somehow reflected in their liturgical playing as well. As in jazz music, recorded organ improvisations help a younger generation of organists to learn and develop their own improvisational skills. As pointed out by Mark Katz, recorded improvisations are 'music of the moment made timeless'. (2010: 88) allowing students to treat improvisation as fixed compositions and to study them as such. Therefore, I would argue that recordings of improvisations are, in fact, crucial in establishing a particular school of improvisation by passing on models of improvisation within the wider organist community. Although focused on jazz, Katz agrees that 'the portable sound recording had an enormous impact on the development of [...] [improvisation]. Records gave budding artists unprecedented access to the music, and without them some might never have pursued their careers.' (2010: 82) The list of improvisation recordings by Anglican organists suggests that, since the 1990s, there has been a shift in the way organ improvisation is perceived in the UK, a move away from the 'useful-keyboard-skill-only' view to accepting improvisation as a legitimate artistic practice, thus justifying recorded improvisation as on par with recordings of written organ music. In other words: recording technologies have greatly helped the cause of emancipation of organ improvisation in the UK at the end of the twentieth century. However, this process of emancipation is not yet complete, and

even today there can be a reticence among audiences to accept improvisation for the highly skilled and intellectually demanding art that it is. The frequently encountered attitude that improvisation is in some way the poor relation to the playing of pieces on which the organist has worked methodically is born of preconceptions and expectations which are the legacy of too many years of 'leaving it to the French'. (Hammond, 2007: 3)

In my own experience, this sceptical view of improvisation is also shared amongst British recording companies: recently produced improvisation-only CDs in the UK have not been selling well, leading to a refusal of producers to engage with any

new improvisation projects. But this could change, particularly if a critical mass of new improvisation recordings were to be reached.

Recorded Anglican Liturgical Improvisations

Recordings of Improvised Anglican Voluntaries: Preludes and Postludes

In Chapter 2, I have looked at written sources regarding Anglican liturgical improvisation to compensate the paucity of recorded material available. I now return to this investigation, focusing on the recorded material available to me. The earliest recording of liturgical improvisation in Britain I was able to retrieve is an improvisation by Edward Bairstow on the organ of York Minster (RTA, Appendix B, Table B1; CD 1, track 1), played at the enthronement ceremony of Archbishop Cyril Forster Garbett on 11th June 1942. Whilst it is unclear at what point of the service this improvisation was performed, we do know that one of its purposes must have been to prepare the choir for the ensuing *Jubilate* (composer unknown) as the opening motif is stated in the improvisation four times. The harmonic language of Bairstow's *ex tempore* offering is tonal throughout, featuring hardly any chromaticism, but using chains of suspensions and pedal points extensively. The texture is almost entirely homophonic and the overall shape of the improvisation is in arch form, starting softly on the Swell flue stops, building up to a mighty *fortissimo* and then calming down again on a soft registration. This is a perfect example of the 'English crescendo' mentioned earlier in Chapter 2,² made possible by the specific technical and tonal design of the English orchestral organ.

The use of pedal points and suspensions seems to have been common practice in improvisation at the time: the RTA of the improvised postlude at the end of a BBC Choral Evensong broadcast from Westminster Abbey (Appendix B, Table B2) on 23rd October 1948 also reveals the use of both devices.³ This improvisation is another splendid example of Anglican ceremonial improvisation, showcasing the colours and technical possibilities of the English cathedral organ in a most

² See also the attached DVD for a demonstration of the 'English crescendo' on the organ of Bristol Cathedral.

³ Due to BBC copyright issues, it was not possible to include this recording in the appendix. The recording is available in the National Sound Archive (BL Reference: 9CL0014626-7).

spectacular way. In addition to the expected homophonic chordal texture, it is fascinating to hear also passage work being applied, evoking an impression similar to the semi-quaver runs in Charles Villiers Stanford's *Toccata and Fantasia in D minor* Op. 57 (1894). The harmonic language is keeping within the conventional late Romantic style, with a clear emphasis on diminished 7th chords on strong beats. Like Bairstow, the organist creates crescendos and diminuendos seamlessly, making this another wonderful example of the 'English crescendo' registration practice. There are also three other features in the Westminster Abbey improvisation from 1948 that are worth pointing out:

1. Whilst playing on full organ, the organist uses the tuba stop to play a short melodic phrase in Alto/Tenor range as a final crescendo step.
2. During the softer section of the improvisation, the melody is soloed out on a Clarinet 8' whilst being accompanied by Swell strings. This confirms that this combination of stops was seen as a standard convention in improvisation.
3. The pedal part moves mostly in steps, enhancing the overall impression of solemnity and occasion.

Whilst new stylistic influences may have found their way into the playing of Anglican organists, the old ceremonial style of tonal Anglican improvisation was still very much alive, as heard on a BBC recording of Simon Preston improvising at Westminster Abbey in 1963⁴ (Appendix B, Table B3).

This 'old school' of Anglican improvisation was not only still *en vogue* in Britain – it was also held in high esteem in other parts of the Commonwealth. Healey Willan (1880-1968), who was born and bred in the UK, emigrated to Canada in 1913 where he eventually became Professor of Music at the University of Toronto, whilst also being Organist and Choirmaster at St Mary Magdalene (Anglican) Church in Toronto. Trained as an organist 'in the late-nineteenth-century English tradition' (Clarke, 1983: 69), his liturgical improvisations were highly regarded,

⁴ Due to BBC copyright issues, it was not possible to include this recording in the appendix. The recording is available in the National Sound Archive (BL Reference: 1LP0167371).

some of which scaled glorious heights. The combination of a fluent technique with an imaginative and highly skilled creative mind allowed him to improvise at a level attainable by few. (Clarke, 1983: 72)

Many of Willan's improvisations at St Mary Magdalene were recorded – a possible indication of the general appreciation of his improvisation style. According to Peter Nikiforuk, Willan's 'extemporisations were absolute masterpieces of the art. [...] they were always "beautifully fit and fittingly beautiful"'. (Nikiforuk, 1997, liner notes: no page numbers)

The RTA of an improvised postlude after Evensong in 1967 (Appendix B, Table B4; CD 1, track 2) features homophonic texture throughout with traditional tonal harmony and long-held suspensions. The atmospheric flavour of this improvisation was not due to any musical limitations on Willan's part. On the contrary: we learn that he was very well capable of improvising 'a full sonata in three movements on themes submitted by the audience following an organ recital in Albany, and the extemporisation of a fugue on a subject comprised of notes suggested by a class of students'. (Clarke, 1983: 73-74) This suggests that Willan deliberately decided to improvise in a soft, devout style and this is confirmed by Nikiforuk, who adds that 'in keeping with the reverential tone of the close of the service, Willan improvises a very quiet and introspective postlude [...] to respond to the mood of the service'. (Nikiforuk, 1997, liner notes: no page numbers)

Whilst Willan's Evensong postlude is decidedly restrained, the opposite is true for his improvised postludes after Mass:

He usually 'lets loose' with the organ in his improvised postlude at the conclusion of High Mass. Starting quite often with a snatch of a melody from the last hymn sung, he gradually builds up the organ into a gigantic mountain of sound, ascends it with one or two majestic modulations, and crowns it with a cadence of such colossal stature that the very walls do tremble. (Thomas Hyland in Clarke, 1983: 74)

Having such a descriptive analysis of Willan's improvisation model for High Mass postludes is of course very helpful as it allows us to compare the theoretical model with the RTA of a live recording (Appendix B, Table B5; CD 1, track 3). Here, Willan applies late-Romantic harmony (highly modulatory) in the tradition of the Anglican ceremonial playing style. Although the title of this postlude suggests an improvisation based on the Hymn *Lasst uns erfreuen*, this is somewhat misleading as Willan only states the first couple of notes of the hymn at the very beginning of his improvisation. Nikiforum confirms this observation, adding that the choice of title

is something of a misnomer. While to a practiced ear, there is a definite relationship between the final hymn and its accompanying postlude, there is more going on than mere paraphrase or creation of a chorale-prelude. (Nikiforum, 1997, liner notes: no page numbers)

Due to the small amount of hymn material being used, Willan's improvised postludes on hymns should therefore be regarded primarily as free organ music and, as such, do serve as wonderful examples of the style of Anglican organ improvisation found at the turn of the century.⁵ Surely, Willan could have made the hymn tune a more central part of his postlude, and the fact that he chose not to makes one speculate whether this would perhaps have been seen as a 'too clever' thing to do, therefore attracting too much attention for artistic rather than religious reasons?

At times, Willan's harmonic language in his postlude comes very close to the style of Romantic German organ composers (such as Rheinberger), which suggests that these composers, in addition to English masters, must have had an influence on Willan during his formative years in the UK. Clarke tells us that 'German and English music accounted for most of the repertoire, with less attention being given to the French and virtually none to other countries.' (1983: 69) It would therefore appear that the modal style of improvisation was not universally adopted in the post-war years, even by celebrated Anglican improvisers and Healey Willan's playing could be regarded as conclusive evidence for such a claim.

⁵ Willan was aged 85 at the time of the recording. Stylistically, his improvisations more closely resemble Bairstow's improvisation style as identified earlier on, indicating that some organists at least still adopted that more traditional style even after WWII.

One might assume that, by 1980, the old Edwardian style of Anglican improvisation before and after services had become outdated and would now incorporate decidedly more recent musical trends. Whilst this may well have been the case, the recorded evidence available to me does not suggest such a development. George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987) was a renowned improviser at the time and the particular arrangement found at the Temple offered many opportunities for creative music making. David Lewer tells us that

because of the great distance apart of the choirstalls, the decani side always 'came across' for the anthem [...] The pause for the procession of decani to the cantoris side provided an opportunity for improvisation on the organ, which was always wonderfully executed by Mr. Ball in the tradition established by both Hopkins and Walford Davies before him. Sometimes a phrase of the anthem to be sung would develop into an intricate pattern woven in a distant key, but always leading back by subtle steps to the opening chord of the work. (Lewer, 1961: 379)

Lewer not only comments on the overall form of such preludes preceding anthems: he also tells us that improvising before the anthem has been a long-established tradition at the Temple Church, going back to the nineteenth century, when such practice had been more of a common custom. Referring to the 1880s, Barrett states that

a feature of services [...] was that of a middle voluntary after the psalms at matins and evensong. S. S. Wesley was celebrated for his extempore voluntaries after the psalms and before the anthem. A long improvisation on the organ before the anthem was a common feature at Sunday evensong at all cathedrals. (1993: 185)

It looks likely that, possibly due to practical reasons, the Victorian tradition of improvised 'middle voluntaries' survived at the Temple Church during Thalben-Ball's tenure. Let us now look at the RTA of a prelude improvised by Thalben-Ball before the anthem *O Emmanuel* (composer unknown), recorded at the Temple Church in 1980 (Appendix B, Table B6; CD 1, track 4). In this improvisation, there

is a strong emphasis again on the use of traditional harmony as found in Anglican organ improvisation of previous generations: thick and dramatic chords in the late-nineteenth-century English style, except perhaps for mediant key relationships. The form of this improvisation is sectional, with clear gaps in between sections. The reason for this could be simply found in the fact that the precise timing of this middle voluntary was more relevant than, for instance, of postludes, and therefore a sectional approach of playing might allow the organist more flexibility in handling the timing.

At the time of the recording, Thalben-Ball was well into his seventies and, although his Romantic style of playing may have been regarded as archaic by younger organists at the time, it is evident that congregations in London in the 1980s could still hear traditional Romantic styles of improvisation. The Romantic tradition remains alive well into the 1990s (as shown further on in this chapter), and possibly still today.

In 1984, Philip Marshall (1921-2005), then organist at Lincoln Cathedral, recorded an improvisation at Lincoln, entitled *Extemporization on 'Westminster Abbey'* which was released in 1993 on the Cantoris label (UK). Although this is not a liturgical improvisation as such, we know that this improvisation was conceived in the spur of the moment:

At the conclusion of several evenings of recording in the closed Cathedral we asked Dr Marshall to improvise while the equipment was still set up. He did not know that we were going to ask for this, so it was completely impromptu, with about thirty seconds notice.⁶

This recording allows fascinating insights into how hymn-tunes can be used in Anglican improvisation, as shown in the RTA of Marshall's improvisation (Appendix B, Table B7; CD 1, track 5). Marshall's tonal improvisation is based on two hymns, *Westminster Abbey* and *Thaxted*, although the statement of the former is considerably more prominent. The idea of using parallel sixths as an

⁶ Statement by the Cantoris label, accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx4lh1OTJHo> retrieved on 19th May 2019.

accompaniment technique on the flutes is applied twice and is similar to the accompaniment technique used by Edward Bairstow in his 'Prelude' from *Three Short Preludes* (1947; Ex. 2.10) and Ralph Vaughan Williams in his 'Prelude on *Rhosymedre*' (1920; Ex. 2.11).

Three different sets of recordings are available from the 1990s: improvisations by Roy Massey from Hereford Cathedral (1992), an improvised postlude by Martin Baker from Westminster Abbey (BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong, 1996) and improvisations before Matins and Evensong from Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals (1999), all covering different approaches to Anglican improvisation.

Roy Massey (b. 1934) was for many years organist at Hereford Cathedral and the recordings used in this thesis were taken from a Sunday Eucharist at Hereford during the summer of 1992, when the cathedral choir was on recess. Without the need to focus on the choir, Massey embraced the opportunity to play the organ throughout the whole service, providing improvisations full of energy and fire.

The first example of Massey's *ex tempore* output is a Gospel fanfare which was improvised right at the end of the Gospel reading (Appendix B, Table B8; CD 1, track 6). This most exciting rendition of a Gospel fanfare still maintains the link to the late-Romantic ceremonial style of Anglican organ improvisation, whilst adding its own flavour to it (such as triplet passage work). The RTA of Massey's second improvisation, a postlude after a Sunday morning service (Appendix B, Table B9; CD 1, track 7) reveals a stark contrast to Willan's and Thalben-Ball's recorded improvisation, in that Massey's style is rather frenetic, teetering on the edge of calamity – quite a contrast to Marshall's improvisation which is measured, controlled and poised in comparison. This is very much 'foreground' music in the tradition of the French *Sortie* and is most exciting to listen to. Contrary to Willan's very brief statement of only a few notes of the preceding final hymn, Massey makes decidedly more use of the hymn tune, placing it in the pedals, on the Solo (tuba) and finally on the Great. The toccata-like figure in the manuals is also a new feature⁷ which adds to the energetic effect of the overall improvisation, as opposed to the more vocal chromatic playing by Willan and Thalben-Ball. Harmonically,

⁷ The toccata-like pattern is similar to Cochereau's *tremolando* technique (see Chapter 1).

Massey's improvisation is very much set in the tonic key with its associated secondary dominants. Although Massey's harmonic language is slightly more chromatically charged compared to Marshall's improvisation, both organists use keyboard runs and toccata-figures in their hymn improvisations. Both Massey and Marshall treat hymns mostly homophonically, stating the melody on solo stops (such as the clarinet or tuba) with chordal accompaniment on a different manual. Also, neither of them explores the possibilities of polyphonic textures.

Moving from 1992 to 1996, I now look at a different example of Anglican postlude improvisation, played by Martin Baker (b. 1967) at the end of a BBC Choral Evensong broadcast from Westminster Abbey (RTA, Appendix B, Table B10; CD 1, track 9). Baker's improvisation is, like Massey's postlude or Marshall's extemporisation, hymn-based (in this case: *God rest you merry, gentlemen* and *While Shepherds watched*). However, both hymn melodies become much more core elements of the whole improvisation. Baker's postlude is similar to Massey's in that both are decidedly 'foreground' pieces due to their respective intense energy levels, with Baker's postlude displaying a particularly clear formal outline. Whilst Baker's improvisation is fast, it never feels frenetic or that it is going to come off the rails, despite a couple of moments of indecision on the Cornet solo and in the parallel sixth flute episode. On the other hand, one of the exciting things about the Massey postlude improvisation is the feeling of being somewhat on the edge and that it could easily go wrong. I personally find this sort of risk-taking exhilarating and wonder whether this is one of the true values of improvisation? Together with the lively accompaniment pattern (which, in Chapter 1, is defined as *tremolando* technique), the extensive use of modern modal harmony and the prominent application of the cornet as a solo stop, Baker's improvisation points strongly towards the French twentieth-century style of improvisation as paradigmatically represented by Pierre Cochereau. This is confirmed by Baker himself, who states that listening to recordings of Cochereau's improvisations from Notre-Dame and other French improvisers are a source of inspiration to him.⁸ Baker remarks on the fact that French improvisation is 'speaking directly to the listener' as opposed to the 'drawn back' style of Anglican improvisations.⁹ Just listening to the opening

⁸ Interview with the author (22nd March 2010).

⁹ *Ibid.*

chords of Baker's improvisation – three brash staccato chords, played on full organ – immediately draws the listener's attention to the narrative of the unfolding improvisation. The skilled use of modal harmony, together with the application of polyphonic textures (such as canon), are particularly impressive and are not usually found in the traditional Anglican style of improvisation. Is Baker's improvisation indeed symptomatic of the beginning of the departure of a younger generation of Anglican organists¹⁰ from the traditional Anglican style of prelude and postlude improvisation towards continental practices?

In order to be able to answer this question, we need to look further on to see how other organists during the latter half of the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century improvised liturgically. The following three recordings of Anglican improvisations were made in 1999 (Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals) and 2002 (St. John's College Chapel, Cambridge) and should help establish a broad understanding of more current trends in Anglican improvisation.

The RTA of the prelude improvisation recorded before Matins at Rochester Cathedral in 1999 (Appendix B, Table B11; CD 1, track 9) features the then Sub-Organist of the Cathedral, Sean Farrell, who belongs to the same generation of organists as Martin Baker. It is interesting to see that not all Anglican organists of the younger generation completely ignored the traits of traditional Anglican improvisation: focusing on chordal playing on a cushion of strings and flutes, creating soft, religious background improvisations¹¹ are still very much key features of the Rochester improvisation.

Listening to an improvised prelude before Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral, played a few days later by the then Sub-Organist Timothy Noon, reveals a similar picture (Appendix B, Table B12; CD 1, track 10). Both the Rochester and Canterbury improvisations keep very much to the traditional characteristics of Anglican-style Pre-Evensong improvisations:

¹⁰ Martin Baker, although Catholic, is here recorded working in an Anglican context.

¹¹ It needs to be pointed out that the term 'background' is not used as a derogative term, commenting on the quality of the improvisation, but merely as a reflective of the undemonstrative characteristics of the style: it does not demand to be listened to.

1. Homophonic texture
2. Use of modal harmony, including suspensions and pedal points
3. Soft registration (strings, flutes)
4. No clear sense of metre
5. No clear sense of structure
6. No recognisable theme/motif

Both organists (Farrell and Noon) featured on the recordings are of a similar age to Martin Baker which suggests that the 'Anglican Modal Style' of improvisation was still very much seen as an acceptable practice at the end of the twentieth century by that generation, whilst an awareness of different improvisation styles – in particular French influences – started to filter through. The Rochester and Canterbury improvisations both display an increased usage of modal harmonies as opposed to improvisations by Willan and Thalben-Ball. It is unclear as to why this development occurred: these modal harmonies could very well have already been used by Anglican organists in the second half of the twentieth century, and it is simply due to the lack of recordings that I was not able to find evidence for that. However, the evidence collected does suggest that parallel traditions in Anglican improvisation exist (Romantic, modal) and that not all organists from one generation played the same way.

The college chapels in Oxford and Cambridge are traditionally seen as breeding grounds for future generations of Anglican organists and it is for that reason that I will now turn to a recording of an improvised prelude before Evensong at St John's College Chapel, Cambridge, from 2002, possibly played by one of the College's organ scholars. This improvisation has more shape than the Rochester and Canterbury improvisations and shows a more organic development, despite some solecisms. The RTA of that improvisation gives helpful insights into what the new generation of Anglican organists at the beginning of 2000 regarded as a desirable style of improvisation within the Anglican liturgy (Appendix B, Table B13; CD 1, track 11). The St John's College improvisation is very much Howellsian in style and does conform to the quintessential 'Anglican' improvisation:

1. Use of modal harmonies (Howellsian)
2. Use of pedal points
3. Use of short motivic work instead of pronounced longer theme
4. Use of stops (soft, restrained crescendo)
5. Improvisations mainly in the 'background'

This example also shows that, despite an enhanced awareness of other styles of improvisation, this young organist at least continues to embrace the modal style of Anglican prelude improvisation. This lends weight to my personal observation that the modal style of Anglican improvisation is still the norm for cathedral Evensong prelude improvisation around the country today, and it would appear that being able to improvise in this style remains a key skill for the young cathedral organist.

Recordings of Anglican Hymn Playing

Although Sawyer's recommendations for more artistic hymn play-overs, as discussed in Chapter 2, did not seem to attract many followers, there are isolated cases of Anglican organists stepping outside the conventional play-over framework. In 1961, George Thalben-Ball improvised an introduction to the carol *God rest you merry, gentlemen* as part of a BBC carol broadcast from the Temple Church, London. The RTA of the recording of this introduction reveals a surprisingly Germanic approach (Table B14; CD 1, track 12), featuring a fugal exposition and quasi-antique use of tonal harmony. Jonathan Rennert tells us that Thalben-Ball did prepare his improvisations for broadcasts beforehand and that 'he would then jot down an outline of what he intended to play.' (1979: 95) The act of improvising with a premeditated blueprint does not, however, automatically render the playing artistically invalid and the recording certainly highlights Thalben-Ball's capability as an improviser and his creative approach to introducing hymns.

A different example of an improvised quasi-antique-style hymn introduction can be found in a recording of Roy Massey playing for a Sunday Eucharist at Hereford Cathedral in 1992 (Table B15; CD 1, track 13). Here, Massey opens with a free,

tonal section based on a cycle of fifths in 4/4 which then merges, rather abruptly, with a traditional hymn play-over in 3/4.

Thalben-Ball and Massey both utilise quasi-antique-style playing as hymn introductions, and yet both approach this task in two very different ways: Thalben-Ball completely bases his improvisation on the hymn tune, whilst Massey merges a free tonal section with a traditional, plain play-over. This comes to show that Anglican organists certainly could raise the artistic level of hymn introductions if they wanted to, without imposing too much on the overall length of the service. Despite various attempts by individual organists, there is no evidence to suggest that the standard pattern of playing over hymns in plain chordal form has changed significantly since the Victorian period. In my own experience as a German organist working in Britain, I have found that playing hymns within a school context allows for a more creative approach to hymn introductions, whilst some Anglican churches decidedly reject any attempts to change the traditional play-over as being 'un-English'. This is possibly due to the fact that artistic hymn improvisation draws too much attention to the organist (ostentation) and adds to the duration of services. Whether the artistic giving-out of hymns will be revived in future on a national level remains to be seen.

Recording of Improvised Anglican Chant Accompaniment

As well as written-out examples of psalm accompaniment, it is also important to consider the RTA of a live recording of psalm accompaniment within the context of an Anglican service in order to gain a more holistic picture. The recording discussed below was made during Evensong at Exeter Cathedral on the 18th May 2005 with Andrew Millington – then Director of Music – accompanying on the organ (RTA Table B16; CD 1, track 14).¹² The psalms appointed for the evening were Psalms 93 and 94.

Whilst Millington approaches the accompaniment of Psalm 93 with restrained artistic licence, playing strictly *colla parte* with the four-part choir and adding

¹² The choir featured on this recording are the 'Mendelssohn Singers', a project choir set up by me as part of the choral module of my M.A. studies at Exeter University.

some registration changes, he does embrace more creative freedom in the accompaniment of Psalm 94. The reason for Millington's restraint in Psalm 93 and enhanced creative approach in Psalm 94 may be purely practical: Psalm 93 is considerably shorter than Psalm 94, therefore potentially making changes in texture (inversions, soloing-out) less of an urgent requirement. In my view, the true value of the Millington recording lies in the fact that it allows us to gain a glimpse of the real-life practice of Anglican psalm accompaniment within a cathedral context: whilst the proposed organ accompaniments by How present a wonderful wealth of creative ideas, they are mainly aimed to be teaching examples and may not necessarily reflect the common practice of psalm accompaniment as found in Anglican choral foundations. The RTA of Millington's accompaniment confirms that accompaniment techniques promoted by How (such as inversion of chords, soloing-out, playing of unison counter-melodies) are indeed part of the Anglican organist's performance practice, but may not necessarily be applied to every single psalm verse within a practical context.

The Impact of Pierre Cochereau and the French School

As indicated before, organ improvisation in the UK has undergone considerable change since the 1990s. Anthony Hammond confirms this observation, stating that

the last few decades have seen a resurgence of interest in the disciplined and structured study of improvisation in English and American music schools and conservatoires. It is now possible to acquire training in this skill without necessarily having to study in France, although many organists who find themselves particularly drawn to the discipline still choose to do that at some stage. (2007: 3)

As mentioned before, this revival of improvisation is partly linked with the fascination of UK organists in the art of Pierre Cochereau. Many of the British organists I interviewed confirmed that David Briggs has been particularly instrumental in both establishing organ improvisation as a proper form of art in

the UK, as well as introducing a wider community in the UK to Cochereau's improvisations. Briggs describes his own musical development as follows:

I became a chorister at St Philip's Cathedral in Birmingham and was mesmerised by the incredible improvisation skills of John Pryer, the Assistant Organist. He introduced me, as a nine-year old, to the recorded improvisations of Pierre Cochereau – and soon I became hooked. At the end of my time as Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, I was fortunate to be awarded a Countess of Munster Scholarship to study with the great Jean Langlais in Paris. I was very much influenced by his wonderful modal harmonies and love of Gregorian chant. I tried to ensure that my lessons coincided with a weekend, and would take pride in hearing as many improvised Sorties (sometimes as many as 5 or 6) in the great Parisian Churches, being transfixed by such great luminaries as Pierre Cochereau at Notre-Dame, Jean-Jacques Grunenwald at St Sulpice, Jean Guillou at St Eustache, Naji Hakim at the Sacré-Cœur and of course Jean Langlais at St Clotilde. (CD *Freedom of Spirit*, liner notes, n.d.: 2)

This account, once again, confirms the importance of recorded improvisations, in addition to live performances, as a means of inspiring and shaping a younger generation of musicians. The relatively short distance between the UK and Paris, together with the improvement of fast transportation systems, has helped establish a strong French influence on Anglican improvisation: for instance, both David Briggs and Colin Walsh have had regular lessons with Jean Langlais in Paris. In comparison, there are no accounts of Anglican organists taking regular organ improvisation lessons in Germany, although excellent teachers are available there as well. Briggs's statement also confirms what one might call one of the true originators of the improvisation revival movement in the UK: John Pryer (b. 1941). Pryer has had a major influence on many UK organists, teaching notable names such as David Dunnett (Norwich Cathedral), and has done much to restore organ improvisation within the liturgy (both Anglican and Catholic). Another important figure in the revival of organ improvisation in the UK is Nigel Allcoat (b. 1950). Although not primarily influenced by Cochereau's style as such, Allcoat is influenced by the French tradition in a broader sense. According to 'F', 'Nigel

Allcoat was the first influential improvisation teacher in the UK' (Appendix A, 1.1) and 'L' confirms that Allcoat 'started a movement, had a big influence on younger organists'. (Appendix A, 1.1) Nigel Allcoat continues to teach regularly organ students at Oxford and elsewhere. Amongst his most successful students is the Australian organ improviser David Drury, who won the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition in 1987.¹³

The importance of the French school of improvisation is also confirmed by a series of broadcasts on organ improvisation which aired on BBC Radio 3 in 2010:¹⁴ most of the examples presented were improvisations either by French organists or in the French style. Cochereau's legacy is further eternalised by countless transcriptions of his improvisations, and British organists are amongst the most prolific transcribers of Cochereau's work. Furthermore, the English organist Anthony Hammond published in 2012 an extensive book about Cochereau's life and work, based on Hammond's PhD research at Bristol University, entitled *Pierre Cochereau: organist of Notre-Dame*, which I already referred to in Chapter 1. One could argue that the fascination of the French school on UK organists is a clear sign of the lack of an equivalently strong Anglican school. Whilst Cochereau has undeniably helped raise the profile of Anglican improvisation, it is good to see that other continental styles (such as Dutch and German traditions) are gradually becoming more known in the UK as well, allowing British organists to see a more holistic picture of improvisation on the organ. Alexander Mason's training in improvisation is representative of such a balanced approach:

With my background of French-style harmony I found Naji Hakim's fusion of the modern French tradition and eastern rhythms the most compelling. However, I was fascinated by the counterpoint of Jos van der Kooy and the motivic ideas of Peter Planyavsky. For me, the future lay here and I decided to spend the next two years studying with Jos van der Kooy, my aim being to make a style growing from the

¹³ Accessed at

<http://www.organfestival.com/St-Albans-International-Organ-Festival/ewExternalFiles/IOF%20Prize%20Winners.pdf> retrieved on 26th August 2017.

¹⁴ The series comprised four episodes which were broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 24th, 25th, 27th and 28th May 2010.

harmony of Cochereau and Messiaen and using the polyphonic methods of the modern Dutch school. (Mason, 2000, liner notes: 5)

Whilst I have been able to show that the revival of improvisation in the UK is partly linked with Pierre Cochereau and the modern French school, one could also argue that the strong influence of French improvisation on the Anglican school has caused a stylistic shift in the latter, allowing for a hegemony of French practice in the UK. Speaking in more general terms, Jeremy Paxman remarks on 'how durable this self-pitying belief that the English will only applaud foreign ability has proven.' (2007: 37) Whilst Paxman's comment may be perceived as somewhat extreme, it is true that the raised awareness of a strong French improvisation tradition in the UK has possibly led to an enhanced level of self-awareness amongst Anglican organists, resulting in an inferiority complex regarding home-grown improvisation styles. This would explain the hostile comments frequently made by Anglican organists about their own improvisation tradition (Appendix A). Increasing access to French (and German) organ improvisation has, in a sense, become a tree of the knowledge of good and evil for Anglican improvisation. Yet, the raised awareness of continental improvisation traditions has not caused a complete loss of identity in Anglican improvisation, on the contrary: whilst Anglican organists do tend to regard their practice of improvisation as inferior to the continental practice, I have noted in my teaching in the UK that there is genuine interest amongst both the younger and older generation of organists to learn the skill of improvising in the Anglican Modal Style of cathedral-pre-Evensong improvisation. The Anglican tradition of liturgical organ improvisation remains distinct and desirable in the UK.

International Organ Improvisation Competitions: Haarlem and St Albans

Organ competitions give the most promising players of a generation the opportunity to launch their professional careers (even if competitors do not win first prize) and to meet outstanding contemporaries as well as leading figures from the organ world. Both organ interpretation competitions and organ improvisation competitions exist and are treated, in most cases, as two separate disciplines. In this section, I discuss aspects relevant to this thesis arising from two organ

improvisation competitions: a continental competition (Haarlem, NL) and an English competition (St Albans). Given the international significance and acceptance of both the Haarlem and St Albans competitions within the classical music world, I investigate whether these competitions have had any influence on Anglican improvisation. Having been a finalist in the St Albans improvisation competition in 2009 myself, I also demonstrate in Chapter 5 a case-study how I approached the tasks during the preliminary recorded round, the quarter-final round and semi-final round of the competition.

The Haarlem International Organ Improvisation Competition

The Haarlem competition is the world's longest-running organ improvisation competition, with the first competition taking place in 1951. It enjoys, like the competition in St Albans, an excellent reputation amongst organists and many of its winners have gone on to great careers. An established competition such as this attracts applications worldwide – although mainly from Europe – and candidates are asked to send in a recording of improvisations on given themes as part of a preliminary round.¹⁵ In 1951, the selection process was very different: being a brand-new competition, candidates were invited directly by the organisers, ensuring a wider spread of nationalities to be represented. Hugo Bakker and Hans Fidom (2014: 31) state that, in addition to candidates from the Netherlands and Switzerland, the British embassy in the Netherlands was approached to recommend suitable candidates from Britain and two names were put forward: Lionel Dakers (1924-2003), who was then Assistant Organist under Sir William Harris at St George's Chapel, Windsor, and Denys Darlow (1921-2015) who was not available to take part at the time. The five candidates of the 1951 competition were given the task of improvising for about 15 minutes, 'with two given themes for a first movement in sonata form, a free intermezzo and another given theme for the finale' (Bakker & Fidom, 2014: 33) on themes by Anthon van der Horst (Ex. 3.1).

The contemporary style implied by these three themes must have been well out of Dakers's Anglican comfort zone or indeed that of any other Anglican cathedral

¹⁵ The public preliminary round was introduced in 1988. (Peeters, 2014: 395)

Ex. 3.1: Themes for the 1951 Haarlem Organ Improvisation Competition (Peeters: 2014: 395):

1951

Sonata in three movements

- Sonata form employing themes I and II
- Intermezzo (free improvisation)
- Finale employing theme III

The image displays three musical themes, labeled I, II, and III, arranged vertically. Each theme is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). Theme I consists of two staves of music, featuring a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes and a bass line with chords and moving lines. Theme II is a single staff of music with a more complex, chromatic melodic line and a bass line with chords. Theme III is a single staff of music with a simpler, more diatonic melodic line and a bass line with chords. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs.

Anthon van der Horst

organist at the time. It is therefore not surprising that Dakers came last in place. However, this does not necessarily reflect poorly on Dakers's ability to improvise: 'the abandonment of tonality in favour of sound experiment' (Hage, 2014: 178) disadvantaged candidates who were brought up in a tradition that did not reflect that style.¹⁶ Hage's comment is mystifying: the given themes (Ex. 3.1) present an expanded kind of tonality ('neotonicity'), as strongly promoted by composers such as Hindemith, and are a world apart from atonal or experimental music. However, these themes are in line with the neo-classicism then popular in the UK (such as Noel Rawsthorne and William Mathias) and it could well be that Dakers himself at times improvised Gospel fanfares utilising neo-classical devices. Perhaps where he fell down was in the development and long-term structural control of the material. On the other hand, the given themes are remarkably specific in terms of style, and do not allow the kind of Anglican modal improvisation Dakers might have felt more comfortable with.

¹⁶ As shown in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, Anglican organists around 1950 were still very much improvising in a tonal/light modal style.

Although the clear preference for modernism in Haarlem could not be more different to the Anglican improvisation tradition, the following organists from the UK have been taking part in the competition since 1951 (Peeters, 2014: 429-433):

1951	Lionel Dakers
1958	Peter Hurford
1962	Peter Hurford
1968	Andrew Davis
1978	Malcolm Hill
1984	Nigel Allcoat
1985	Malcolm Hill
1988	Kerry Beaumont
1990	Kerry Beaumont
1992	Kerry Beaumont
1994	Peter Bannister
1996	Neil Wright
1998	Neil Wright
2000	Neil Wright
2008	David Cowen

The 15 UK entries are significantly outnumbered by the 80 entries from the Netherlands, 63 entries from Germany (FRG/GDR), 25 from France and 22 from Austria. The number of multiple entries by certain British organists is particularly striking, bringing down the total number of different British contestants to eight. British organists have also served as members on the Haarlem jury panel (Peeters, 2014: 438-441):

1965	Ralph Downes
1976	Peter Hurford
1998	Nigel Allcoat
2006	David Briggs
2014	David Briggs

Since the 1960s, the Haarlem judges have strongly favoured the more radical, free atonal style of improvisation that became popular in particular among Dutch

organists. Organists who prefer to improvise in historical styles are to that extent unable to demonstrate their particular skills and, according to Bakker and Fidom, have to change their playing to the modern 'Haarlem style' in order to be able to win (2014: 43). Nonetheless, the Haarlem competition has done much to raise an awareness across Europe of the value and expressive possibilities of improvisation on the organ.

The St Albans International Organ Improvisation Competition

The Interpretation and Improvisation Competitions at St Albans were established in 1963 by Peter Hurford, then Organist and Master of the Music at St Albans, forming the core event of the International Organ Festival at St Albans (IOF). The improvisation strand of the St Albans competition seems to have been inspired by Haarlem, which is not surprising, given that Hurford took part in the Haarlem competition himself in 1958 and 1962. Like Haarlem, St Albans attracts young organists from all over the world to compete against each other every two years,¹⁷ battling their way through different rounds; the overall winner is awarded the Tournemire Medal at St Albans (reinstated in 2011), the English equivalent of the Silver Tulip at Haarlem. However, the number of competitors at St Albans is significantly higher due to the additional interpretation competition, making St Albans 'a byword for excellence in organ performance'¹⁸ in general, not just in improvisation. Like Haarlem, the majority of improvisation competitors at St Albans tend to come from Europe, but not exclusively. Whilst no British competitor has been successful in winning the Haarlem competition so far, the following three organists from the UK have won the St Albans improvisation competition:

1993 David Briggs

1997 Martin Baker; runner-up: Alexander Mason

2003 Robert Houssart¹⁹

¹⁷ Initially, both the Haarlem and St Albans competition were annual events. St Albans introduced the biennial cycle in 1965, Haarlem in 1986.

¹⁸ *Choir & Organ*. July/August 2017: 41.

¹⁹ Robert Houssart is officially listed as a Dutch winner; however, his long residence in the UK during which he held various Anglican cathedral posts does justify including his name on this list.

Out of the three winners, it is David Briggs and Martin Baker who continue to be active as improvisers in concerts and services today. It is difficult to assess how far St Albans has influenced the development of improvisation in the UK. However, British organists winning the St Albans Improvisation Competition have certainly been noted by the organist community in the UK, providing proof that there are also excellent British improvisers, with Briggs and Baker becoming role models. This may have helped spark interest in improvisation amongst a younger generation of Anglican organists. Since 2013, the IOF St Albans has teamed up with the London Organ Improvisation Course (LOIC) – an annual course for organists held at the beginning of July, founded by English organist Gerard Brooks – to promote the art of improvisation in the UK. This course invites guest tutors from France and Germany, in addition to a team of British tutors, to teach British organists of all ages and abilities, whilst also attracting applications from abroad. Having run for over a decade, LOIC has become a well-established platform for teaching improvisation, embracing Anglican, French and German styles. The course leaflet from 2014 (Appendix I) gives further details about the outline of this course.

As well as musical criteria of value, organ improvisation competitions tend to maintain unspoken stylistic traditions. As I will show in Chapter 5, the St Albans competition evidently imposes hidden stylistic criteria: in the year in which I participated, there was nothing in the regulations to suggest that improvisation should be stylistic, but the set exercises implied just this. The Haarlem competition, on the other hand, is known to generally favour free modernist improvisation, so that, for example, an Anglican organist such as Lionel Dakers was unable to succeed in the Haarlem competition in 1951 as the improvisation task ('neotonal' improvisation) was too distant from the Anglican tradition. Although one could therefore argue that Anglican candidates in organ improvisation competitions, such as Haarlem or St Albans, are disadvantaged because continental schools of improvisation are preferred, the same could be said of German organists having to learn how to improvise a French symphony or French organists practising the art of improvising a Bach chorale partita. Although it is not possible to say whether the St Albans competition is largely responsible for raising the

profile of improvisation in the UK, it is reasonable to assume that it contributed to it and has also been influential beyond the UK.

Comparison of the Anglican and Continental Traditions

In Part 1 of this thesis, I have established significant differences between Anglican and continental improvisation, arising from the distinctive customs and practices in Anglican cathedrals, including liturgy, the central role of the choir, the training and hierarchic career structure of organists, and the traditional construction of organs, which together have allowed a distinctive Anglican aesthetic to evolve.

Anglican Liturgical Improvisation

Three main categories of Anglican liturgical improvisation have evolved, each category dividing in various sub-categories:

1. Improvised Voluntaries: preludes, Gospel fanfares, postludes
 - a. Victorian Style (tonal, balanced phrasing) [around 1900]

On the evidence provided by Sawyer, this style focuses on a clear-cut classical harmonic language with a restrained use of chromaticism. There is a clear emphasis on melodic development, which is evident in balanced four-bar-phrasing. Organ masters, such as Sir John Stainer, were able to improvise in prescribed sonata form. Unfortunately, there are no recordings available from that period, so it is unclear how widespread this style of Anglican improvisation was at the time.

- b. Edwardian Style or Grand Style (tonal, increased use of chromaticism)
[1940s onwards, but probably already in existence at around 1900]

Although still based on traditional harmony, this style includes chromaticism to a higher degree than the Victorian Style and has been inspired by the works of British composers such as Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) and Edward Elgar (1857-1934). A particular feature of this Grand Style is the use of suspensions and pedal points, which together with seventh chords and other rich harmonies creates a most impressive ceremonial effect. Earlier examples of this style seem to be

slower and more dignified in style (Westminster Abbey improvisations from 1948 and 1963; Willan), whilst later examples (Massey) seem to be more energetic, faster and perhaps even more rhapsodic in character. The emphasis has now shifted to harmony, without losing sight of some melodic shaping.

c. Anglican Modal Style (motivic work, modal harmony) [1915 onwards]

This style embraces the possibilities of modal harmony, without ever losing touch completely with elements of traditional tonal harmony. The modal flavour has been inspired by the work of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), and includes the use of parallel chords in first and second inversion, together with the use of suspensions and extensive pedal point harmonisation. Perfect cadences are often avoided, contributing to a sense of ethereal timelessness, particular in the pre-service improvisation. This style is perhaps mostly associated with the work of Herbert Howells (1892-1983), whose *Rhapsody No. 1* and *Psalms Prelude No. 1*, both written in 1915, first demonstrate his idiosyncratic organ style. Howells's compositional output for organ is regarded by Anglican organists as a role model for pre-Evensong improvisations.

d. Modern French Style (strict form, both homophonic and polyphonic textures, advanced modal harmony) [1990s onwards]

A younger generation of Anglican organists (typically those born since 1960) seems to have been increasingly influenced by French-style improvisations and the *Organiste titulaire* of Notre-Dame in Paris, Pierre Cochereau (1924-1984) is often cited as having a particularly strong influence on improvisation in the UK. In addition to the use of an advanced modal harmonic language, this style has encouraged some Anglican organists to focus more on formal aspects of music, to use a wider range of different textures (such as canon and fugue) and to base their improvisations on specific themes or hymn tunes. The Modern French Style aims to communicate more directly with the congregation and the music shifts from the background to the foreground.

2. Anglican Hymn Playing:

- a. Play-over (hymn introduction)
- b. Free hymn accompaniment; last verse reharmonisations

c. Hymn extensions

3. Psalm accompaniment of Anglican chant

Anglican Voluntary Improvisation

According to the limited evidence, the four voluntary styles seem to have developed successively, although there need be no doubt that individual variations and idiosyncrasies existed at all times. In fact, the evidence presented in this thesis suggests that all styles of improvisation overlap and coexist today: in the 1990s, for instance, Massey improvised in the late Romantic Grand Style, whilst other organists focus on Anglican Modal Style or Modern French Style improvisations. Although the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the Grand Style developed after the Anglican Modal Style, Anglican organists may well have improvised in the Grand Style at around 1900 as it is closely related to the prevailing musical style of that time.

Looking more closely at all four Anglican voluntary improvisation styles, one cannot help but notice the underlying influence of continental music traditions. The first two Anglican styles (Victorian Style and Edwardian Style) were clearly shaped by tonal German Romantic music, and this is particularly evident in the chromatic improvisations by Willan and Massey. The third and fourth style (Anglican Modal Style and Modern French Style) both turn away from tonality and embrace the new opportunities offered by Impressionism, spearheaded by French composers and organists of the twentieth century but also influenced by the re-awakening of English folksong as part of the English Musical Renaissance. The influence of the Parisian organ world on Anglican organists is particularly noticeable in the latter half of the twentieth century, and whilst organists in the UK do admire the improvisation style of their French colleagues, it is interesting to see young organ scholars in Oxbridge colleges improvising in the Anglican Modal Style, even today. This might suggest that the Anglican Modal Style is still universally regarded as the most fitting style for pre-Evensong improvisations.

How's notes on Anglican improvisation suggest that the idea of 'mood' remains central to traditional Anglican improvisation, greatly assisted by the colours of the English orchestral organ. As many Anglican organists regard the conveying of mood in Anglican improvisation as bad practice (Appendix A), How's open acceptance of mood as being part of the Anglican tradition seems contradictory and needs further explanation. In my view, Anglican organists in general equate mood music with formless, possibly amateurish playing; it is the latter which they criticise, and rightly so. However, How does suggest specific formulae to represent specific moods, requiring both practice and planning on the organist's part. This approach is not dissimilar to continental practice where specific techniques and forms of improvisation are applied for particular parts of the service (e.g. triumphant playing for the *Einzug* [the procession at the start of the service] in the German Catholic liturgy or the soft mysterious *Elévation* during the French Catholic Mass). How also accepts the general background character of Anglican improvisation whilst at the same time acknowledging the need for more formal improvisation at certain points during the service (such as hymn extensions and final voluntary).

Whilst Anglican organists improvise in all three major choral services – Sung Eucharist, Evensong and Matins – it is the prelude before Evensong that is regarded by many as the most typical form of Anglican improvisation. Evensong preludes are usually improvised in the Anglican Modal Style and include the following key elements:

1. Predominantly homophonic texture
2. Preference for short motivic work over pronounced themes
3. Use of modal harmony
4. Suspensions ('harmonic blurring')
5. Parallel chords (first-inversion or second-inversion triads)
6. Pedal points
7. Arch form (soft string and flute stops, 'English crescendo')

It is likely that the particular sound and layout of the English cathedral organ has influenced the style of Anglican improvisation: first, the use of thumb pistons on

each manual enables Anglican organists to create the so-called 'English crescendo' much more effectively than German or French instruments are capable of and this became a characteristic element of Anglican improvisation. Second, the mighty yet somewhat diffused sound of the late-Romantic English cathedral organ may have had an impact on the use of texture in Anglican improvisation: the foundation-stop-heavy English cathedral instrument does not lend itself to clear polyphonic playing, producing more convincing results within the realms of homophony. The richness of palette provided by the big Willis or Harrison organs, together with the tendency to lack a strong initial attack to the sound, is surely a temptation for an impressionistic (or as some would say 'meandering') style of improvisation, such as is often negatively described in my interviews with organists.

Leaving the particular sound qualities of the English cathedral organ aside, one wonders whether improvising polyphonically would make Anglican improvisations appear as 'too clever' and therefore too pronounced in character in the eyes of Anglican congregations and clergy? Cleverness in improvisation was certainly criticised by Harding who saw the purpose of liturgical improvisation to be mainly religious music in the background, avoiding any undue prominence. How also confirms that traditional Anglican improvisation is in the background. Although it is most likely that Sawyer would have strongly disagreed with that view, it does imply that a simplistic character of Anglican improvisations may have been, at least for the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, intentional, thus confirming the Anglican *via media* position between the Lutheran and Catholic approaches.

Many interviewees have stated that Anglican liturgical improvisation often suffers from aimless playing (Appendix A). To be clear: meandering in improvisation, also called 'wallpaper music', is regarded as bad practice within all three traditions – it is not a specifically Anglican phenomenon. The Germans refer to it as *Organistenzwirn* (organist twine), *Orgelwolf* (organ wolf) or *Fantasieren* (fantasising), whilst Dupré calls it *se laisser guider par les doigts* (to be guided by one's fingers). It would be intriguing, in a different context to this thesis, to examine the parallels between the preference in Germany (in both Lutheran and Catholic traditions) and to a lesser degree in France, for improvisation in

rigorously formal styles, as compared to the Anglican preference for a non-formal, flexible and instinctive approach to improvisation, accommodated to the precise circumstance of the event. The Kantian Categorical Imperative²⁰ versus Jamesian Pragmatism,²¹ perhaps? Even Marcel Dupré's extremely detailed and structured approach to teaching improvisation, epitomised in his *Traité d'Improvisation à l'Orgue* (1925), directly explains the value of formal improvisation in terms of the Categorical Imperative. Anglican improvisation, on the other hand, does not adhere to simple, clean and noble principles: the contradictions of real life are incorporated, creating an account of the actual world. In other words: the way Anglicans improvise informs the way Anglican improvisation is defined – not vice versa. This helps to explain why certain aspects of prelude improvisations in the Anglican Modal Style can include elements, such as an excessive use of pedal points, parallel chords and simplistic harmony. If Anglican organists regard these devices as less than ideal, these will nonetheless find their way into their improvisations in the *via media* of the Anglican way. Improvisation that is pragmatic in this Anglican sense need not always sound 'sloppy'.

Particularly noteworthy is the general ceremonial or celebratory character underlying many Anglican improvisations, exemplified by the occasional use of the tuba stop. Is it possible that Anglican organists imitate the ceremonial sound world of royal or military occasions? The question of how far the British monarchy has influenced Anglican improvisation must remain unanswered for now, but given the strong link between the Anglican Church as the Church of the State, and the British monarch as its Head, a connection between monarchy, the military and improvisation would seem likely and requires further investigation.

Anglican Hymn Playing and Anglican Psalm Accompaniment

Having looked at the practice of Anglican hymn playing more closely, it has become clear that there are in fact only three different aspects of hymn playing which require the organist to improvise:

²⁰ Categorical Imperative: 'Act only in accordance with a maxim that you can at the same time will to become a universal law.' (Immanuel Kant in Dupré, 2007: 73)

²¹ Pragmatic Maxim: 'Consider the practical effects of the objects of your conception. Then, your conception of those effects is the whole of your conception of the object.' (Pierce, 1878: 293)

1. The play-over
2. The free organ accompaniment, with last verse harmonisations remaining a modern-day relic of the former
3. The hymn extension

Although play-overs within the Anglican context are traditionally simple and brief, there have been various attempts by individual Anglican organists to raise the artistic standard of the giving out of hymn tunes. Despite these encouraging examples, it appears that artistic hymn introductions are more accepted within a school context, whilst some Anglican places of worship regard them as not desirable. Anglican organists today tend to use harmonisations provided by hymn books, particularly when a four-part choir is present, thus robbing Anglican organists of an opportunity to engage regularly with hymn harmonisation. Continental organists, particularly German organists, are at an advantage here as a greater fluency in keyboard harmony is an important aspect of the improviser's skill set. There seems to have been more freedom in accompanying hymns during the first half of the twentieth century, possibly due to the fact that unison hymn singing appears to have been more common then. Whilst improvising play-overs and last verse harmonisations is somewhat optional, improvising hymn extensions is not. Here, organists usually rely on free developments of motifs from the hymn, rather than following some prescribed formal structure. This may explain why all the examples of hymn extensions discussed earlier on have relied much on motivic work based on the hymn tune rather than full statements of the hymn tune itself.

It has been possible to show that the art of accompanying Anglican chant has been growing strong since the end of the nineteenth century and continues to play an important role today. Psalm accompaniment is, by nature, closely related to the free organ accompaniment of hymns: both areas require the organist to deviate from the given accompaniment and to create something new with the aim to enhance the singing of a congregation or choir. Whilst free organ accompaniment of whole hymns was reduced to last verse harmonisations during the course of the twentieth century, the improvisational element of accompanying psalms remained strong and continues to play an important part of the Anglican organist's toolkit.

The Impact of Sound Recording Technologies on Anglican Improvisation

The invention of sound recording techniques has revolutionised improvisation, subverting the inherently ephemeral nature of improvised music and bringing recorded improvisation closer to the written composition. Together with improvements in transportation and telecommunication, and the introduction of European exchange programmes, organ improvisation has never been more accessible, allowing organists in the UK not only to explore continental styles of improvisation, but also to reflect on their own tradition. This raises the question whether increased accessibility and awareness have had a positive effect on Anglican improvisation. I argue that the overall impact has indeed been positive, enabling the beginning of a transition of Anglican improvisation from a mere keyboard skill to a form of artistic expression. Although this transitional phase is still ongoing, there is evidence that both the teaching and practice of Anglican improvisation is improving. However, there is also the danger of imposing standardised cultural practice due to the greater awareness of continental traditions in the UK: there is a particularly strong admiration for the French style of improvisation, arguably epitomised in Cochereau's work, which is seen by many Anglican organists as the new ideal in liturgical improvisation. Whilst the exploration of different styles in improvisation should be encouraged, one wonders if this greater awareness has given rise to an inferiority complex amongst Anglican organists regarding their own tradition? It is true that Anglican organists remain critical about their improvisation tradition, but this may not be a recent development: in Chapter 2, I was able to show that Anglican organists have been critical about bad practice amongst their colleagues since the late nineteenth century. Maybe it is human nature to expose bad mannerisms instead of documenting good practice? Whilst there is certainly evidence of meandering and stylistically inconsistent improvisation in the UK, it is important to stress that there have also been (and still are) many able improvisers amongst Anglican organists, as shown in Chapter 2 (such as S. S. Wesley and Stainer) and this chapter (such as Marshall and Baker).

International Organ Improvisation Competitions in Haarlem and St Albans

I have been able to show that the International Organ Improvisation Competition at St Albans, and to some extent the International Organ Improvisation Competition at Haarlem, have contributed to raising the profile of organ improvisation in the UK. Although one could argue that the hidden preference for continental styles in both competitions disadvantages contestants from the Anglican cathedral tradition, both competitions have nevertheless exposed Anglican organists from the UK to organ improvisation in various styles.

It has been possible to identify stylistic trademarks within the Anglican practice that seem to have been passed down from one generation to the next, making Anglican improvisation instantly recognisable as such. The improvised prelude before Evensong, as described above, is a prime example for applying customary patterns with regard to harmony, texture, melody, rhythm and registration. This practice has developed within a specific religious-cultural context, on a type of organ specific to the UK and over a certain period of time: it is within this very context that the practice of Anglican improvisation has, in my view, full artistic justification.

So far, my arguments have been based on interviews, textual and contextual material and extant recordings of improvisation, and in Part 2 I turn to my own practice of improvisation. There I interrogate the correlation made in this chapter between Anglican improvisation and the practices of Anglican cathedral worship, by showing that improvisation skills developed with the discipline of the German and French student, but applied to English historical styles, can equally well meet the requirements of Anglican worship – in other words, that ‘pragmatism’ and ‘formalism’ constitutes a false dichotomy when it comes to improvisation on the organ.

Part 2:

Portfolio of Recorded Stylistic Organ Improvisations

Chapter 4: Methodology

In Part 1, I have identified a noticeable void of improvisation in historical styles within the Anglican cathedral tradition in the UK. That is not to say that there is a complete absence of historical style improvisation and some organists in the UK have indeed engaged with this specific area in recent years: Magnus Williamson, for instance, recently published recordings of Tudor-style improvisations¹ and Christopher Tambling published instructions on how to improvise Baroque-style trumpet voluntaries.² Also, one could argue that improvising in a Howellsian style is in fact historical improvisation. Whilst this is certainly true, it is generally accepted that improvising in a variety of English historical styles is not common practice amongst Anglican liturgical organists in the UK. I argue that Anglican liturgical organists would benefit greatly from cultivating historical stylistic improvisation within the Anglican cathedral tradition: this would equip liturgical organists with the skill set necessary to improvise in different styles of different musical periods and not being restricted to only one or two Anglican default styles. Being able to improvise, for instance, in Tudor-style or in the style of William Mathias or Kenneth Leighton enables the organist to adapt his or her playing to the choice of music within the service, achieving greater stylistic unity.

In this part of the thesis, I attempt to make a meaningful contribution to English historical improvisation by presenting a portfolio of improvisations in primarily

¹ Magnus Williamson improvises Tudor-style versets on the CD album *Chorus vel Organa: music from the lost Palace of Westminster* (Delphian, 2015).

² Christopher Tambling: *Improvisation for Organists: A Practical Guide*, Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd., 2010.

(but not exclusively) English historical styles, raising the following question: *what informs my practice of English historical style improvisation?*

In answering this question, I first investigate the methodology of stylistic improvisation in general in this chapter, outlining key strategies as described by various international authorities. I then test these strategies by practical application in Chapter 5, in which I first present and critically discuss a portfolio of my own improvisations. These recordings include four different sets of improvisation: my improvisations at the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition 2009, a Baroque-style improvisation as part of a BBC Radio 3 live broadcast of Choral Evensong at St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, my sixty-seconds improvisation as part of a global improvisation project in 2010 and a recording project of improvisations in English historical styles, covering the styles of relevant composers from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. The practical outcomes of this improvisation project have been recorded, filmed and commercially released on CD and DVD (both attached), under the title *Ex Tempore – The Art of Improvisation in England*, and it is this project which Part 2 of this thesis focuses on. Before reading on, it is essential that the reader watches this DVD. It is hoped that the outcome of this DVD project demonstrates to organists in the UK the power of stylistic improvisation and its usefulness in the Anglican context.

Before I move on to discuss the methodology of historical stylistic improvisation, I give a brief overview of my own development as a practitioner. Born in Germany but resident in the UK since 2004, I am in the unique position of having developed my organ playing in both the German and Anglican choral traditions. I studied organ (repertoire and improvisation) with Prof Franz Josef Stoiber at the *Hochschule für Katholische Kirchenmusik* in Regensburg, Germany, while at the same time working as assistant choirmaster of the *Regensburger Domspatzen*, Regensburg Cathedral's choir of boys and men. After graduating, I went to Exeter University to take my master's degree in 'English Cathedral Music' whilst also singing in Exeter Cathedral Choir as Choral Scholar. Building on these twin foundations, I took up various Anglican organist positions. In 2005, I became Organ Scholar at Bristol Cathedral and Organist at Clifton College. After a period of

working as Assistant Organist at Newport Cathedral, South Wales, I moved to London where I was Organist and Teacher of Music at King's College School, Wimbledon. In addition to my school activities, I also held the post of Assistant Director of Music at the celebrated 'Handel church', St George's Church, Hanover Square, London. Being fascinated from an early age by organ improvisation, I have made this a specialism. I have studied improvisation with Anders Bondeman, David Briggs, Naji Hakim, Hans Haselböck, Jos van der Kooy, Olivier Latry, Loïc Maillé and Daniel Roth and have taken part in many improvisation masterclasses. In April 2009, I was privileged to be allowed by the BBC to improvise live a Handel-style voluntary at the end of a Radio 3 Choral Evensong broadcast from St George's, Hanover Square, which received critical acclaim. Finalist in the prestigious International Organ Improvisation Competition in St Albans in 2009, I won two prizes in the International Organ Improvisation Competition in Biarritz in the same year. From 2010 to 2013, I was Specialist Lecturer for Organ Improvisation at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Trinity Laban Conservatoire, London. In 2013, I was appointed Organist and Director of Choral Music at Whitgift School, South Croydon, and Organist and Director of Music at Croydon Minster where I direct the Minster Choirs (boys, girls and adults) in five weekly choral services during term-time, regularly performing a wide range of the Anglican choral repertoire.

The Concept and Methodology of Stylistic Improvisation

In this section and the next, I focus on my recording project of English historical style improvisation, setting out my objectives, rationale and the methods I adopted in relation to each historical style, whilst also critically evaluating the results of my labours. A first stage was to consult the pedagogical literature and record evidence of stylistic improvisation. However, musical improvisation is a uniquely personal and contextualised activity, such that so-called objective study needs to be complemented by reflection on the internal and external processes by which a particular organist arrives at a particular improvisation. Necessarily, in this project, that particular organist must be myself. At this stage of the research, I thus draw on a long tradition in research communities of self-examination and self-

critique. Here, then, my project adopts the methodology of action research in which the researcher, in developing the project, periodically pauses to engage in formal review and critique, such as will influence the project itself. According to Martyn Denscombe, an action research strategy's purpose is to 'solve a particular problem' and to 'produce guidelines for best practice'. (2010: 6)

Stylistic Improvisation

Before embarking on defining the process of stylistic improvisation, the term 'stylistic improvisation' requires definition. Improvising stylistically is the ability to create music *ex tempore* that conforms to a given historical style of composition. The term 'style' can, of course, refer to musical eras, such as Renaissance and Baroque, as well as specific composers (e.g. Tallis, Handel, Howells). Regardless of how narrow the term 'style' is applied, the process of acquiring the ability to make music instantly using a particular musical language remains in principle the same.

Referring to a letter from 1839 by the great Austrian pianist Carl Czerny, Aaron Berkowitz outlines the following four key elements of learning stylistic improvisation (2010: 16; the quotes refer to passages from Czerny's *Letters to a Young Lady on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte, from the Earliest Rudiments to the Highest Stage of Cultivation*, 1851 [1839]):

1. Knowledge of harmony ('progress in thorough-bass', 'perfect command of all the keys', 'a thorough practical knowledge of harmony').
2. Stylistic formulae ('chords, short melodies, passages, scales, arpeggiated chords').
3. Repertoire ('intimate acquaintance with the compositions of all the great composers').
4. Well-developed technique ('great and highly cultivated facility and rapidity of finger').

Although almost two hundred years have passed since Czerny's letter, I can confirm from my own experience as improviser in historical styles that these four

elements provide the organist, still today, with a sound grounding upon which to develop stylistic improvisation in a range of styles. These elements accordingly form the basis of my process of learning how to improvise in English styles, as to be shown later.

Internalised Objects and Processes in Stylistic Improvisation

Whilst one might expect a thorough knowledge of harmony and a good keyboard technique to be pre-requisites for stylistically idiomatic improvising, Czerny's emphasis on studying repertoire and, by extension, stylistic formulae taken from compositions is surprisingly prescriptive. This process has recently been described as *Blumenlese* by Markus Schwenkreis (2009).³ Schwenkreis here draws on an eighteenth-century usage, as described by the German organist Jacob Adlung (1699-1762):

If a piece is full of lovely ideas, then make it your own by either buying it or making a copy. Other pieces, in which useful flowers occur more rarely, I extract like one would extract the best phrases from a work by a Latin writer.⁴ (Adlung, 1953 [1758]: 726)

The similarity between Czerny's second principle of learning stylistic formulae and Schwenkreis's *Blumenlese* suggests a continuity of practice in Germany from the time of Beethoven down to our own time. But Berkowitz underlines the importance not only of collecting formulae, but internalising them and learning when and how to apply them:

implicit and inarticulable aspects of style can be demonstrated rather than explained, allowing for internalisation of these underlying features [...] An improviser, like the learner of a language, must

³ *Blumenlese* (German): process of collecting musical formulae from scores to be used in one's own improvisation or composition.

⁴ 'Wenn ein Stück durchaus ausgefüllt ist mit schönen Gedanken, so mache ich es mir zu eigen mit Geld, oder durch eine Abschrift. Andere Stücke, worinne die brauchbaren Blumen seltener vorkommen, ziehe ich aus, wie man die besten Redensarten aus einem lateinischen Schriftsteller ziehet.' (Adlung, 1953 [1758]: 726)

acquire not only vocabulary and grammatical rules, but also fluency in their spontaneous use. (2010: 18)

My experience also confirms Berkowitz's claim that the larger the acquired knowledge-base of formulae or clichés is, the more fluent one can improvise in that particular style. The aspect of committing clichés to one's long-term memory, or internalising them, is an important one and must be looked at more closely: the improviser requires more than the mere knowledge or understanding of these phrases; it is about developing 'brains in the fingers',⁵ as Franck Arnold calls it (1931: 892),⁶ through regular rehearsal of these formulae.⁷ One might also refer to it as finger memory, a type of reflex which is based on motor memory and tactile sense.⁸ Svein Erik Tandberg supports the importance of finger memory by stating that 'in order to be able to understand improvisation we should realise that here we are dealing with automatic reflex actions of which we are not normally consciously aware.' (2008: 202) This is not to say that the process of improvising is entirely based on reflexes: in order consciously to perform highly complex cognitive processes (e.g. improvising a fugue), the performer relies on unconscious/automised reflex actions (e.g. placing the theme in the Tenor or Bass, harmonising the theme, and so on.) due to the limited capacity of cognitive processing power at the speeds required by musical performance (Tandberg, 2008: 203).

Once formulae have been internalised, the improviser needs to learn how to combine them during the course of an improvisation. In an attempt to describe this process, Pressing (1984: 355) developed his own terminology, referring to internalised formulae as 'objects' and the linking together of these formulae as 'processes'. Czerny was also very much aware of the importance of practising both

⁵ "'brains in the fingers" [...] a quick and almost automatic response of the muscles'. (Arnold, 1931: 892).

⁶ Although this is an English source, Arnold was referring in his quote to the practice of figured-bass-playing, not Anglican liturgical improvisation.

⁷ Heinrich Oberhoffer uses a similar approach by asking the student to memorise short pieces or *Cadenzen* (see Chapter 1).

⁸ 'The subjective impression of improvisers (and other performers) is certainly that potentially separate yet often interconnected motor, symbolic, and aural forms of memory do exist.' (Pressing, 1988: 138)

formulae as well as formula-combination techniques, asking his students to include the following three aspects to their practice:

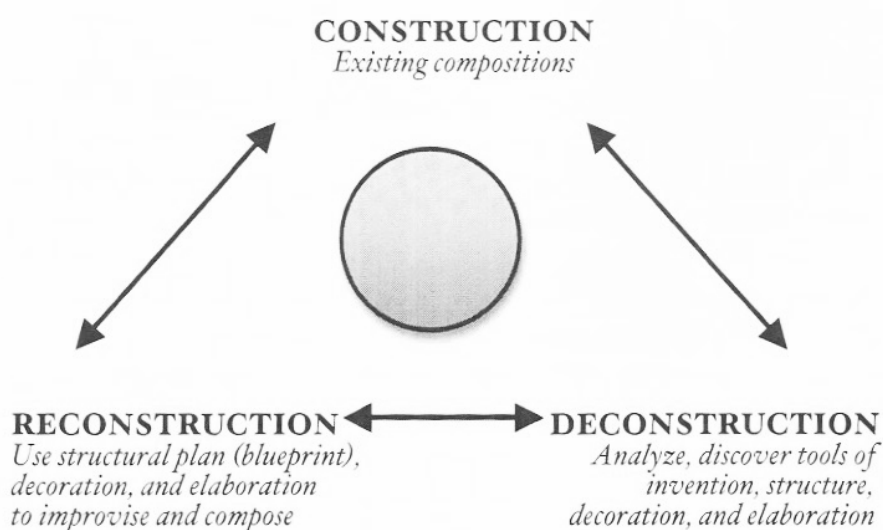
1. Modulation (transposition)
 2. Figuration (variation)
 3. Combination (recombination)
- (Czerny in Berkowitz, 2010: 40)

Having established an understanding of the importance of formulae in historical improvisation, I will now investigate the process of extracting these formulae from compositions.

The Construction – Deconstruction – Reconstruction Cycle (CDRC)

The American organist, improvisation specialist and scholar Pamela Ruiters-Feenstra extensively researched the way J. S. Bach and his students learnt how to improvise and compose. In an effort to sum up that process, she coined the term ‘Construction -Deconstruction - Reconstruction Cycle’ (CDRC) which describes a musicological-pedagogical approach to historical stylistic improvisation (Fig. 4.1):

Fig. 4.1: Construction – Deconstruction – Reconstruction Cycle of improvisation (Ruiters-Feenstra, 2011: 11):



This approach is described by Ruiter-Feenstra as follows:

In the cycle, one begins by studying existing compositions, which is the initial construction phase. Secondly, one deconstructs those compositions to determine their individual concepts of invention, structure, decoration, and elaboration. Thirdly, one reconstructs works based on the inventive tools garnered from the deconstruction. In the reconstruction phase, one frequently returns to the construction and deconstruction phases to help to refine and gain ideas for additional reconstructions. (2011: 10)

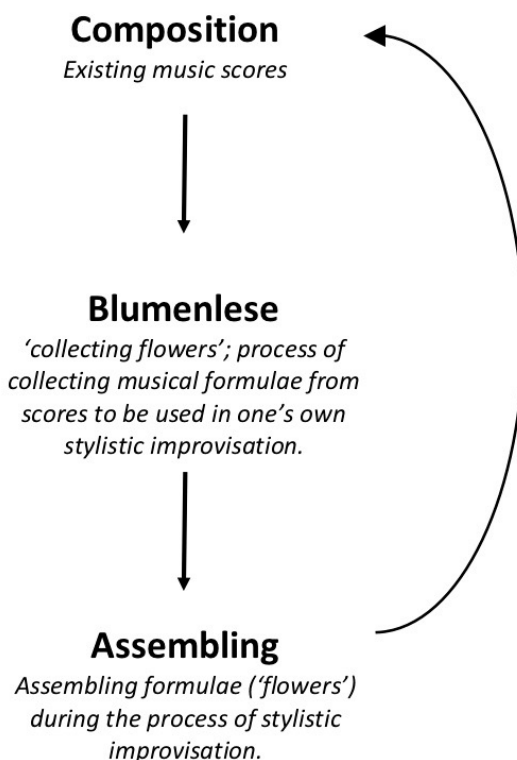
Ruiter-Feenstra's CDRC is on the one hand embodying Pressing's concept of 'objects' and 'processes', whilst on the other hand identifying specific features the improviser should look out for when 'deconstructing' a composition (analyse, discover tools of invention, structure, decoration, elaboration). The idea of continually returning to the construction and deconstruction phase to improve one's stylistic improvisation is an important one.

As the term 'deconstruction' carries a specific meaning in modern philosophy, particularly since Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), I have devised my own diagram of stylistic improvisation, based on Ruiter-Feenstra's improvisation cycle, to avoid confusion and to reflect my own thought process when improvising stylistically (Fig. 4.2), including the following three phases: Composition – *Blumenlese* – Assembling. The methodology outlined by Ruiter-Feenstra and adopted by me is practically tested in the DVD project *Ex Tempore* and is discussed later on in this thesis.

Composition – Interpretation – Improvisation

What makes Ruiter-Feenstra's CDRC concept particularly valuable is its implication of 'resuscitating consummate musicianship' by striving to 'revive a common practice approach of integrating the once unified aspects of musicianship through practical application [...] it contains what we consider today to be theory, performance, history, musicology, and pedagogy.' (Ruiter-Feenstra, 2011: ix)

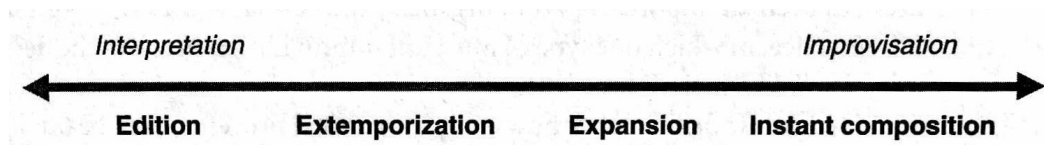
Fig. 4.2: Methodology of stylistic improvisation as applied by myself in the DVD project *Ex Tempore*:



These disciplines have nowadays become divorced in music education, something inconceivable to Bach or Czerny, although there is a movement at German *Musikhochschulen* to reunite the disciplines of aural training skills, harmony, analysis and improvisation in a subject called *Tonsatz*, and I wholeheartedly embrace the idea of a holistic approach of music learning and music-making through improvisation. Through my training and career I have faithfully followed this principle and my studies as an organist in Germany did not conform to the standard practice, particularly found in the Anglo-Saxon world, of compartmentalising the individual disciplines. In other words: in my own professional life, I have resisted the tendency in academic musicology to focus on one particular skill, be it analysis, historical study, performance or theory. However, the CDRC concept is taking us even further: in my opinion, it also advocates breaking down the barrier between the terms *interpretation* and *improvisation* which are usually conceived as oppositional in contemporary classical music practice and pedagogy. Karin Johansson argues that the 'organist's musical practice [...] bridges the usually separated concepts of interpretation and

improvisation and deconstructs the opposition between them.' (2011: 223). The following continuum models Johansson's thesis (Fig. 4.3):

Fig. 4.3: Organists' music-making continuum (Johansson, 2008: 94):



Johansson's terms 'edition', 'extemporisation', 'expansion' and 'instant composition' require further explanation. For example, Anglican organists rarely play all the notes of hymn harmonisations exactly as printed; printed harmonisations are often used as blueprints and organists modify the score *ex tempore* to adapt to specific situations. Going one step further, the same hymn harmonisation can be used as the basis for a simple improvised chorale prelude: the melody of the hymn is soloed out with added ornamentation, whilst the harmonic progression is still followed – the organist is 'extemporising' on the hymn. The 'expansion' approach uses printed compositions as starting points or simply inspirations for improvisations in that style. This approach closely matches the processes outlined by Czerny, Berkowitz and Ruiters-Feenstra and it is this approach that I pursued in my DVD project. Improvising whilst consciously refraining from using memorised models or patterns is referred to by Johansson as 'instant composition' and comes probably closest to what is commonly described as free improvisation, such as has long been popular among Dutch organists. To clarify the special properties of stylistic improvisation, it is instructive to compare it with free improvisation. The International Organ Improvisation Competition at St Bavo's Church, Haarlem (NL), is particularly known for promoting (what was regarded in the 1950s as) modernist styles, such as 'atonality and twelve-tone technique' (Hage, 2014: 186), and an 'urge to discover the music of the day'. (Fidom, 2014: 361) Whilst Haarlem's urge to be free in improvisation, in the sense of avoiding the copying of pre-twentieth-century styles, has certainly helped promote the art of contemporary organ improvisation and composition, this has its problems: in his assessment of the 2012 competition in Haarlem, the Austrian improviser and Haarlem jury member Peter Planyavsky criticises the fact that

most improvisers seem not to focus enough on form and structure, with ‘seventy percent of the work [...] [going] into sound effects and registration.’ (2014: 245) With the element of free improvisation or ‘fantasy’, as Planyavsky calls it, dominating the procedure, it is difficult for the jury to evaluate the artistic quality of such playing, as the traditional criteria of assessment (e.g. using the theme ‘as a source of material’ with ‘inversions or retrogrades’; Planyavsky, 2014: 245) cannot be applied. Planyavsky therefore suggests that the Haarlem Competition be made ‘a bit more conservative’ (2014: 245), meaning that candidates should be encouraged to focus again on the structural aspects of improvisation, rather than sound effects. Is Planyavsky suggesting that too much freedom in improvisation is counterproductive? Or is it that freedom in improvisation does, in fact, not really exist? Tandberg argues that, in improvisation, ‘we are dealing with automatic reflex actions of which we are not normally consciously aware.’ (2008: 202) In my experience as improviser, I do agree with Tandberg’s claim and argue that improvisation can, in fact, never be completely free as it is impossible to consciously turn off one’s memory of clichés, formulae or motor movements (see my sixty-seconds improvisation in Chapter 5). Although the topic of free improvisation cannot be discussed further here, it is an area justifying further research.

Improvisation as Real-Time Composition

If interpretation and improvisation are indeed linked, then it is logical to assume that composition and improvisation are linked as well. We know that Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) sought musical ideas for his compositions by improvising on the piano first:

At eight o’clock Haydn had his breakfast. Immediately afterwards, he sat down at the clavier and improvised until he found some idea to suit his purpose, which he immediately set down on paper. Thus originated the first sketches of his compositions.⁹ (Dies, 1810: 211-212; also in: Diergarten, 2016: 150)

⁹ ‘Um acht Uhr nahm Haydn sein Frühstück. Gleich nachher setzte er sich an das Klavier und phantasirte so lange, bis er zu seiner Absicht dienende Gedanken fand, die er sogleich zu Papiere brachte: So entstanden die ersten Skizzen von seinen Kompositionen.’ (Dies, 1810: 211-212)

However, improvisation not only serves as a source of inspiration for composers: German organist Jakob Adlung (1699-1762) describes 'fantasising' [improvising] itself to be 'a proper composition off the cuff'.¹⁰ This notion is shared by Adlung's contemporary Georg Andreas Sorge (1703-1778) who coined the term '*compositio extemporanea*'. (Schwenkreis, 2009: 39)

Whilst it is clear that eighteenth-century musicians saw a close link between improvisation and composition, the question arises whether organists today still share this thought. The Dutch organist Jan Raas (b. 1952) does indeed confirm the close relationship between composition and improvisation by describing improvisation as real-time composing: 'improvisation is truly composition, with the difference that the process of composing takes the same amount of time as the performance of the improvisation.' (2014: 345-346)

Whilst this strongly suggests that composition and improvisation are very close to each other, there are three major differences. First, the process of creating music itself is different: composers can take as long as they like when creating their piece and can make changes to their work. Improvisers, on the other hand, make music instantly and unchangeably, prompting Adlung to describe improvisation also as 'composition without a rubber'.¹¹ Secondly, the improviser is at the same time the interpreter of the piece, prompting Raas to conclude that 'the improviser must approach his own creation with the same care as he approaches the composed works of others.' (2014: 346) And thirdly, Adlung admits that improvising a fugue with one or many regular counter-subjects 'would be somewhat adventurous; one would require good memory for that'.¹² The issue of improvising strict fugues was also raised by German composer Max Reger (1873-1916) who stated that

it was totally impossible to improvise a complete fugue in its entirety
[...] One can manage a regular exposition, but an entire fugue with
stretti, thematic inversion etc is impossible [...] Anyone who claims

¹⁰ '[...] daß das Fantasiren eine wirkliche Composition sey aus dem Stegreif?' (Adlung, 1953 [1758]: 736)

¹¹ 'Komposition ohne Radiergummi' (Adlung in Schwenkreis, 2009: 39).

¹² '[...] wohl etwas zuviel gewagt; wenigstens gehört ein gut Gedächtnis darzu'. (Adlung, 1953 [1758]: 752)

they can improvise a fugue is an impostor, a charlatan. I really do have the ability to think polyphonically, but I could never manage that.¹³
(Tandberg, 2008: 283)

Reger draws a distinction between competence as an improviser and the viability, in improvisation, of realising the complex procedures he expects of a fully composed fugue. He does not say that the improviser is unable to create the illusion of complexity, but he does make the useful point that the art of improvisation should not be confused with that of composition.

However, this does not mean that composition and improvisation are completely separate either. The notion of stylistic improvisation as a sibling of composition undoubtedly helps raise the credibility of improvisation within the Western music tradition, as the latter still carries a somewhat negative connotation (Johansson, 2008: 13). Equally, stylistic improvisation helps significantly to narrow the gap between composer and interpreter. The investigation above suggests that stylistic improvisation is very much a discipline in music which requires hard work and determination in order to produce convincing results.

Limitations of Stylistic Improvisation

Whilst it is possible to improvise in historical styles in a broader sense, it is important to clarify what improvising in the style of a specific composer actually means or, more importantly, what it does not mean. If we assume, for instance, that an improviser attempts to improvise in the style of George Frideric Handel, the first step would be for him or her to deconstruct Handel's scores, extracting formulae and patterns which he or she regard as relevant. This process already allows for a multitude of different options or decisions which are personal to the improviser and certainly differ from what the composer would have done – the composer's style or intention has already been altered. Improvising in the style of

¹³ '[...] es sei völlig ausgeschlossen, dass jemand eine richtige komplette Fuge improvisierte [...]. Man kann wohl einige Durchführungen regelrecht machen, aber eine ganze Fuge mit Engführungen, Umkehrungen etc. ist unmöglich [...]. Wer behauptet, solche Fuge improvisieren zu können, der schwindelt. Ich kann wirklich polyphon denken, aber das könnte ich nie.' (Fritz Stein, *Tagebuch* 1914 (manuscript), Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung, Karlsruhe, p. 35. In: Tandberg, 2008: 283)

Handel requires that the improviser selects both consciously and subconsciously musical devices based on his or her personal knowledge of the composer and Baroque music. The result is a specific personal outcome, influenced by the way the improviser assembles the formulae he or she has extracted from Handel's composition, by the peculiarities of the organ and by the context of the event. This shows that improvising in the style of a specific composer by including patterns by that composer still requires the improviser to add from his or her own personal musical experience, therefore 'invalidating the Platonic idea' of an authentic stylistic improvisation in the style of a composer. (Fidom, 2012: §33) The improvisation is, in fact, not Handel's and can only be partially in Handel's style as it is, ultimately, impossible for the improviser to know all of Handel's formulae and to leave out his or her own musical instinct in reconnecting these patterns. A further point is that many of Handel's idiomatic patterns may never have been written down in scores but may only have been used by Handel in his own improvisations, resulting in a permanent loss of these patterns. This problem should become more acute in styles more remote from our own time or our own musical experience: the further back one goes in time, the more necessary it is to accept that the composer's world can never exist again – too much of that world has been lost to truly recreate its sound world in an improvisation.

Despite this reservation, I do believe there is value in attempting to improvise in the style of composers, such as Tallis, Purcell or Handel, for the following reasons: firstly, this allows us to access a deeper level of understanding of the works these composers have left behind, a level we may not necessarily be able to reach by simply analysing scores or playing from scores. Secondly, being able to improvise in the style of English composers helps maintain stylistic consistency through the Anglican service (e.g. a Tudor-style Evensong). Thirdly, the ability to improvise in English styles enables the organist to adapt to the type of organ he or she is improvising on: for instance, the traditional modal style of Anglican pre-Evensong improvisation is likely to be less convincing on a small one-manual instrument and is difficult to achieve as the orchestral sonorities are not available, whereas Tudor-style improvisations may help achieve musically more satisfying results. And although the result cannot be a perfect reproduction of what the composer would have played, it is nevertheless possible to achieve convincing results both

musically and in terms of consistency with the wide choral repertoire of Anglican cathedral music.

DVD *Ex Tempore*: Outline of my own Approach to *Blumenlese*

The process of *Blumenlese* represents a crucial part of my DVD project (Chapter 5) as its outcome forms the core material for my English historical style improvisations. The success of my attempts to improvise in different historical styles largely depended therefore on the thoroughness of my *Blumenlese*.¹⁴

Extraction of key formulae

I here describe the processes I adopted in developing the improvisations recorded on the DVD, and subsequently review their more general value for the aspiring improviser. The first step consisted of identifying works by the composers I selected which would be suitable for stylistic imitation through improvisation. During the *Blumenlese* process I noticed that the simpler and clearer the idea presented in a work, the better I was able to transform the idea into an improvisation formula. The word 'simple', however, does not necessarily mean less virtuosic (see Chapter 5, Ex. 5.43): it is the overall artistic concept of a selected section that needed to be simple and distinctive in order for me to be able to extract the key idea as a formula. The other, maybe even more important, criterion for selecting formulae was that the chosen passage of a piece needed to prove musically interesting to me – failing that, it became nearly impossible for me to remember the formula during improvisation, let alone engage with it artistically. The music needed to be catchy to my ears for it to work as formulae in improvisation.¹⁵

¹⁴ A practical demonstration of the methodology I applied throughout this project can be found in the introductory chapter of the DVD *Ex tempore*.

¹⁵ My former teacher Franz Josef Stoiber confirmed this phenomenon, stating that only formulae that one finds musically interesting would be accessible long-term in the improviser's memory (conversation with the author on 25th July 2017).

Analysis, simplification and aural aspect

Once I had chosen representative pieces from each composer or period, I approached the process of *Blumenlese* from three different angles. First, I studied the scores at my desk, marking sections that looked, in my opinion, typical for a specific style. I then played the pieces on the organ, again marking sections that sounded stylistically typical to me. In most cases, sections selected at the desk and at the organ were identical, although occasional exceptions did occur. Having marked up the score, I then copied out the sections most interesting to me on manuscript paper. In doing so, I sometimes simplified examples to capture the key idea for a formula. I noticed that, in order to completely immerse myself in a style, I also needed to regularly listen to music from this period, including both organ music and music with different instrumentations. The aural aspect of the *Blumenlese* phase is an important one: listening sometimes reveals to me stylistic nuances I had not spotted from score-analysis, including performance aspects such as detached or legato phrasing. The importance of listening during the *Blumenlese* phase is also confirmed by Berkowitz, who states that

a musician seeking to internalise a style to the degree to which he or she can improvise in that style must develop a subconscious understanding of countless relationships that cannot possibly be articulated in treatises; many of these relationships will be subconsciously discovered and internalised through listening. (2010: 32)

Regardless of what angle I looked at a composer's style from, the overall task of the *Blumenlese* process was to identify formulae that would encapsulate the composer's key traits with regard to harmony, melody, rhythm, texture and – more broadly speaking – form.

Secondary sources

Whilst scores and recordings of music from a specific period could be regarded as primary sources for the *Blumenlese* phase, I also felt it important to consult secondary sources, such as scholarly writings about this period, as well as

documents and tutor books from the period in order to establish a more holistic picture of the style in general and organ improvisation at that time in particular. Jane Flynn's excellent PhD thesis and article on Tudor music (1993 and 2009), for example, proved invaluable to me in identifying key techniques for improvising verses in the style of Tallis. Similarly, Donald Grice's PhD thesis on the organ works of Herbert Howells (2008) offered great assistance to me in understanding and classifying Howells's complex harmonic language. Other secondary sources on the idiomatic use of organs from each period helped me understand how best to use the instrument of the time in my improvisations. The pragmatics of playing historical instruments is relevant here: it would, for instance, have been impossible on Tudor organs to change registrations without an assistant, as the stop sliders of such instruments are placed alongside the organ, impossible for the organist to reach.

In this chapter, I have set out my objectives, rationale and the methods I adopted in relation to historical stylistic improvisation. I now turn to the practical testing and critical evaluation of my English historical improvisations in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5:

Critical Evaluation of Submitted Recordings

In this chapter, I focus on my own practice of stylistic improvisation by presenting a portfolio of my own improvisations, including: recordings of improvisations I played as competitor in the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition 2009, a recording of a Baroque-style voluntary during a BBC Radio 3 live broadcast (2009), a recording of a free-style improvisation for a global improvisation project (2010), and finally, the pedagogical DVD *Ex Tempore* I made in 2011 as a guide and demonstration of stylistic improvisation in various English historical styles. I critically review the latter in light both of the preceding historical discussion and my personal situation as a German organist engaging with an inherently English tradition.

Whilst the main focus of this chapter is on the content of *Ex Tempore*, I first present recordings of three different case studies which either complement or contrast the DVD project: recordings of my improvisations during the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition in 2009, my improvised voluntary at the end of a BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong live broadcast and my recorded free improvisation for a global improvisation project entitled *Sixty Interpretations of Sixty Seconds by Sixty Solo Improvisers*.

St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition (2009)

In 2009, in order to gain a better understanding of the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition as well as to further my musical abilities, I decided to take part in the competition myself. My former organ teacher in Germany, Prof Franz Josef Stoiber, assisted me in preparing for the various improvisation tasks of the competition, stressing all the way the importance of establishing and practising improvisation blueprints beforehand, catering for a variety of different scenarios (such as chorales in 3/4 or 4/4, in a major or minor key, and so on). According to

Stoiber, it is particularly important in competitions to demonstrate the colours of the organ, as well as showing full control of harmony and form.¹ This approach proved successful, enabling me to qualify for the Final Round, reached by three candidates only. Before each round, candidates were given one hour of practice time on the organ during which registrations could be set up. Improvisation themes were handed to competitors 30 minutes before the allotted performance time and candidates were able to use a piano or keyboard during this period.

The Preliminary Recorded Round

The Preliminary Recorded Round required candidates to play the first movement of J. S. Bach's Concerto in D minor BWV 596 (after Vivaldi) and to improvise two contrasting pieces on the following themes:

1. A ciaconna (maximum of 5 minutes) (CD 2, track 1; Ex. 5.1).
2. A free-form improvisation on the following original theme (maximum of 6 minutes) (CD 2, track 2; Ex. 5.2).

Ex. 5.1: Ciaconna, theme by Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693), Preliminary Recorded Round, St Albans Competition 2009:



Ex. 5.2: Free-form improvisation, theme by Paul Patterson (b. 1947), Preliminary Recorded Round, St Albans Competition 2009:

$\text{♩} = 84$ *Paul Patterson*

¹ Conversation with the author in 2009.

Whilst the style of the first theme suggested a Baroque ciaccona (CD 2, track 1), the second improvisation needed an approach similar to that of the Haarlem competition: extracting a number of characteristic motifs from the theme and creating a narrative based on the efficient development of such motifs, resulting in a progressive harmonic language with invigorating rhythmic elements (CD 2, track 2). My blueprint sheets for both improvisations can be found in Appendix I, including the blueprint sheets for improvisations in the subsequent rounds. These sheets, together with the themes, were the only papers placed on the organ stand during the competition rounds. The jury for the preliminary round included Peter Hurford (GB), Lionel Rogg (CH), David Titterington (GB) and Thomas Trotter (GB).

The Quarter-Final Rounds

Having been accepted as an improvisation candidate, the Quarter-Final Rounds took place on the Harrison & Harrison organ of St Albans Cathedral on the 9th and 10th July 2009. First, candidates were asked to perform Charles Tournemire's *Deuxième Fresque Symphonique sacrée*, after which they were asked to improvise free-style variations on a Gregorian theme for a maximum of 10 minutes. Table 5.1 (see also Appendix I) outlines my improvisation on the Gregorian chant allocated to me, *Ave maris stella* (Ex. 5.3; CD 2, tracks 3–8).

Ex. 5.3: Improvisation theme *Ave maris stella*, St Albans Competition, Quarter-Finals 2009:

Ave maris stella mode i

A - ve ma - ris stel - la, De - i Ma - ter al - ma,
At - que sem - per Vir - go, Fe - lix cae - li por - ta.

Table 5.1: Improvisation blueprint of improvised variations on *Ave maris stella*,
10th July 2009, St Albans Cathedral:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Presentation of the theme:
[CD 2, track 3; 0:54] | theme in Soprano, accompanied by modal chords on foundations 16' + 8' (two chords per Soprano note) |
| 2. 1 st Variation:
[CD 2, track 4; 1:08] | canon between right hand and pedals (<i>first phrase of chant</i>);
right hand: Flute 4' (Great) arpeggios
left hand: Reed 8' (Choir)
Pedal: Octave 8' + 2 2/3' |
| 3. 2 nd Variation:
[CD 2, track 5; 1:21] | chordal playing with lively free motif on top;
left hand: chordal playing (Swell strings)
right hand: 4' + 2 2/3' (Choir) <i>lively free motif</i>
Pedal: Reed 8' (<i>second phrase of chant</i>) |
| 4. 3 rd Variation:
[CD 2, track 6; 0:52] | lively trio with added chromaticism;
left hand: 16' + 4' + 2 2/3' (Great)
right hand: 4' + 2' + 1 1/3' (Choir)
Pedal: Reed 4' |
| 5. 4 th Variation:
[CD 2, track 7; 1:53] | ternary form: slow – polyphonic – slow
left hand: 8' chords (Swell)
right hand: melody in octaves and thirds
(<i>third phrase of chant</i>)
Pedal: 32' + 16' (flue stops) |
| 6. 5 th Variation:
[CD 2, track 8; 2:51] | toccata: fugal exposition of lively motif on foundation stops; mediant harmony; crescendo/build-up to tutti; dialogue of <i>first phrase of chant</i> between Soprano and pedals. |

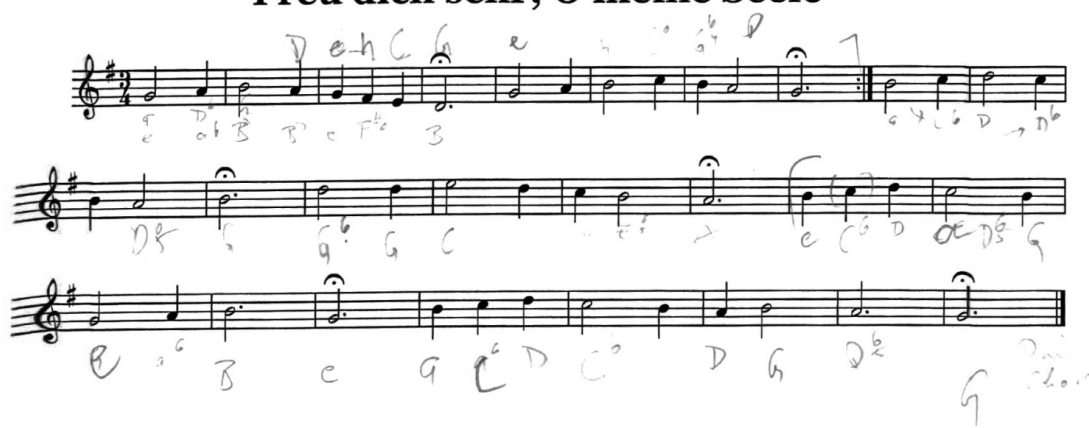
Overall, my set of variations draws harmonically on the Impressionist style of Maurice Duruflé (e.g. mediant chord relationships) without limiting myself to a specific composer. Stoiber's input is particularly noticeable in the tight structure of each variation, enabling me to demonstrate a selection of improvisation-specific techniques favoured by continental composers, such as statement of chorale on a 4' reed stop in the pedals and use of polyphonic textures.

The Semi-Final Rounds

The Semi-Final Rounds were held on the Collins organ at St Saviour's Church, St Albans on 13th July 2009. This organ was built in 1989 in the style of Andreas Silbermann and is a two-manual and pedal instrument with tracker action and a typical French Classical specification.² In addition to playing J. S. Bach's chorale prelude *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 662, candidates were asked to improvise a chorale partita (harmonised theme and five variations) for a maximum of 12 minutes. The chorale allocated to me was *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele* (Ex. 5.4), which I incorporated in the variations blueprint shown in Table 5.2 (see also Appendix I; CD 2, tracks 9-14).

Ex. 5.4: Improvisation theme *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele*, St Albans Competition, Semi-Finals 2009:

Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele



The image shows a handwritten musical score for the chorale 'Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele'. It consists of three staves of music in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The music is written in a simple, clear style with many handwritten annotations in pencil or light ink. Above the first staff, the words 'D e h C h e' are written above the notes. Below the staves, there are numerous handwritten notes, including chords (e.g., C, G, F#, D, B, A, E, G, C, D, G, D, G, D, G), rhythmic markings (e.g., 3, 2, 4), and other performance instructions. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Table 5.2: Improvisation blueprint of improvised variations on *Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele*, 13th July 2009, St Saviour's Church, St Albans:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Chorale harmonisation:
[CD 2, track 9; 0'52"] | CF in Soprano part; chordal texture with passing notes;
GO: 8' 4' 2' (chorus)
Ped: 16' + Gt/Ped coupler |
| 2. 1 st Variation:
[CD 2, track 10; 1'02"] | manuals only (Gt); CF in long note values in Soprano with motivic accompaniment pattern in accompanying voices;
GO: 8' 2' |

² Accessed at: <http://www.organfestival.com/St-Albans-International-Organ-Festival/st-saviours-church-organ.html> retrieved on 15th May 2019.

3. 2nd Variation: *Vorimitation* (free motivic idea fugally presented on softer manual with basso continuo accompaniment in pedals); CF stated on Cromorne 8' in Tenor in sections between *Vorimitation* sections;
 GO: 8' 4' (flutes)
 Pos: Cromorne 8'
 Ped: 16' 8' (flutes)
4. 3rd Variation: Ritornello in Alto, Tenor and Bass (idea taken Bach *Schmücke Dich, O liebe Seele* BWV 654); CF stated on Cornett registration in Soprano;
 GO: 8' 4' Cornett
 Pos: 8' 4' (flutes)
 Ped: 16' 8' (flutes)
5. 4th Variation: Bach-invention-type two-part texture between GO and Pos; CF stated on 4' stop (Alto range) in pedals;
 GO: 16' 8' (flutes)
 Pos: 8' 4' (flutes)
 Ped: Prestant 4'
6. 5th Variation: Chorale concerto (organo pleno): free ritornello on GO and Ped; CF stated in long note values in Tenor range of pedals (right foot) whilst playing Bass part with the left foot on pedals;
 GO: 16' 8' 4' 2 2/3' 2' Fourniture
 Ped: 16' 8' 4' + GO/Ped

This set of improvised choral variations was predominantly inspired by Bach's work (*Orgelbüchlein*, chorale partitas, inventions). Although no style had been specified by the competition organisers, the majority of candidates improvised Baroque-style variations which, again, was implied by the type of theme given, as well as the style of organ. The following Baroque improvisation techniques, which I applied, are typical for the German improvisation school: *Vorimitation*,³ CF in the Tenor, CF on a 4' stop in pedals and double pedalling. Whilst there were two further improvisation tasks (improvisation on literary texts with percussionist; improvisation of a symphony in three movements), I have decided not to discuss these in this thesis as the focus of this chapter is on the DVD project. The jury for all the rounds of the competition in 2009 included James David Christie (US), Jon

³ A new motif derived from the chorale line is introduced imitatively prior the statement of the chorale line in long note values.

Laukvik (NO/DE), Philippe Lefebvre (FR), John Scott (GB/US) and Thomas Trotter (GB).

Artistic self-reflection

Preparing for the St Albans competition gave me an opportunity to both reflect on my improvisation skills and to develop areas which I felt less confident with. The ciaccona and the variations on *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele* are both in Baroque style, and this I was exposed to extensively during my studies in Germany. However, this is not to say that the artistic outcome of my live improvisation on *Freu dich sehr* was my best performance in the competition: listening back to the recording, I noticed how fast I was playing. Whilst I was able to keep to the planned structure of my variations, I did detect an underlying nervousness which surprised me. In comparison, the variations on *Ave maris stella* sound much more relaxed, despite having been less experienced in improvising on Gregorian chant in an Impressionist style. In retrospect, I believe the touch of the keys, the space of the building and the directness of sound have had a significant impact on me as improviser: playing at the console of the large Harrison & Harrison organ at St Albans Cathedral felt more comfortable and, perhaps, less intimidating than improvising on the smaller, tracker-action instrument at St Saviour's Church which felt much more direct and instant. Also, I found the reverberance of St Albans Cathedral inspiring, particularly when I improvised the *fileuse*⁴ on the flute in the first variation (CD 2, track 4), whilst it felt like hard work playing with the acoustic of the comparatively small building of St Saviour's. This experience is in line with a statement made by 'F', who found improvising at Gloucester Cathedral most inspiring because one can hear and play with the acoustic of the building (Appendix A, 2.9). 'A' also confirms that improvising on a large organ in a vast building 'is a different ball game' altogether, implying that it is easier, and that playing on a small organ in a small building 'is the real test' (Appendix A, 2.9). The fact that competitors at St Albans Cathedral are playing in an organ loft hidden away from the audience, whilst candidates are on full display at St Saviour's Church may also have contributed to the fast tempo of my playing at St Saviour's. Stylistically, the Impressionist flavour of my St Albans improvisation is much more

⁴ French 'spinning wheel' technique, typically used by Pierre Cochereau.

forgiving of mistakes than the strict tonal style of my St Saviour's improvisation. I made a number of mistakes at St Albans, yet these are not as obvious to the listener as the loss of focus and the resulting mistakes at St Saviour's, such as the wrong statement of the chorale in the second variation (CD 2, track 11). It is therefore possible that all of these factors have contributed to a much more fluent improvisation on *Ave maris stella* compared to my performance at St Saviour's Church.

The nature of the theme by Paul Patterson suggested a modernist improvisation, with a focus on motivic work and contrasting sounds. I am used to working with modernist improvisation themes from my studies in Regensburg, yet my recorded improvisation still required some prior planning, such as the setting up of generals on the organ. Whilst I am content with the overall result of this improvisation, I have noticed a structural weakness whereby a refreshing change of registration/contrasting section was withheld for too long (CD 2, track 2, 2'37"-3'06"). Although I worked hard at the time ensuring new ideas were introduced in quick succession, I was surprised when listening to the recording later on how obvious it sounded to me when I had started meandering. This has confirmed to me the importance of keeping the structure as tight as possible when improvising in a modernist style.

Looking at the choice of material and possibly the choice of organ, and based on my experience of taking part in the 2009 St Albans competition, it would seem that the St Albans competition implies a stylistic approach without necessarily demanding it. Would the competition jury have been favourably disposed, for example, to a modern-style bitonal chorale partita? Although a partita in this style is of course also stylistic improvisation, it does not represent the style most commonly associated with German chorale partitas, at least not in the UK. As far as I am aware, none of my fellow competitors attempted to improvise a chorale partita other than in a Baroque style, suggesting historical stylistic improvisation to be the most immediately conceived method in approaching the competition tasks. The wide stylistic range embraced by the St Albans competition contrasts rather strikingly with the Haarlem competition which remains entirely committed to 'conservative modernism' (Bakker & Fidom, 2014: 43), which in the UK

translates to 'experimental music'. The adjective 'conservative' may come somewhat as a surprise but is used by Hugo Bakker and Hans Fidom in light of the fact that the Haarlem competition, since its conception, has not included any more recent developments in organ improvisation (such as historically informed improvisation) but strongly remains within a modernist sound world. The stylistically more varied approach to improvisation at the St Albans competition, on the other hand, occasionally raises criticism amongst competitors: one of my interviewees, 'D', competed in the St Albans competition and stated that another competitor criticised him for applying stylistic improvisation, calling it 'pastiche', which was in the eyes of the other competitor not improvisation (Appendix A, 2.4).

The techniques applied in my improvisations were mostly taught to me by Stoiber, based on his own experience of both entering and adjudicating organ improvisation competitions in Europe. I therefore argue that organists with a Germanic or French background should have an advantage at St Albans over their Anglican colleagues, as the given tasks are more part of the continental curriculum (such as chorale partitas, variations on Gregorian chant, symphonic forms) than of conventional Anglican practices. However, the St Albans competition has over the past fifty years aimed to establish a benchmark of stylistic improvisation in the UK and has possibly helped motivate a number of excellent Anglican organists to engage with a wider range of improvisation styles, contributing to the revival of organ improvisation in the UK.⁵ Thanks to the St Albans competition, stylistic improvisation in the UK has certainly gained currency, and in some quarters, respect.⁶

⁵ One of my interviewees, 'N', stated that he did practice exercises in counterpoint when he entered for the St Albans competition (Appendix A, 2.2).

⁶ The RCO have now changed the FRCO improvisation tasks, asking candidates to improvise in more specific styles. In the FRCO Winter Exam 2016, candidates who opted to improvise were asked to either improvise on a traditional modal English folksong, to complete a theme by Rinck in a Classical style, to complete a theme by Lemare in a late Romantic style, or to improvise on a Gregorian chant.

BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong (2009)

Context

On 1st April 2009, BBC Radio 3 broadcast live a service of Choral Evensong from St' George's Church, Hanover Square, London. I was Assistant Director of Music there at the time and it was my suggestion to improvise a postlude in the style of Handel (RTA, Appendix B, Table B17; CD 1, track 15). The main organ was out of action and the whole service needed to be accompanied on the Handel House Organ,⁷ a wonderful one-manual instrument which is kept on permanent loan at St George's Church. My improvised voluntary features a completely different approach to traditional Anglican voluntary improvisation and operates within the boundaries of the English Baroque voluntary.

Blueprint of improvised voluntary

Although Handel composed a small amount of organ music in the English voluntary style, his organ works are mainly in the form of organ concertos. However, I decided to improvise in the traditional English voluntary form as this seemed to work best on the organ available and for the task of improvising at the end of a live broadcast Evensong service. I set out to imitate the style and form of the English eighteenth-century voluntary which consists, at least in most cases, of two movements, an *Andante*: slow & quiet, and an *Allegro*: fast & loud. English organs in the Baroque era rarely had a pedalboard, so that English organ music of the period up to and beyond Handel is almost always for manual only.

The following registration was used for this recording:

1. *Adagio*: Stopped Diapason 8'.
2. *Allegro* fugue: Stopped Diapason 8', Open Diapason 8', Principal 4', Fifteenth 2'.

⁷ The organ was built in 2001 by Goetze & Gwynn on behalf of the Handel House Museum. The organ is based on the chamber organ which belonged to Charles Jennens, the librettist of the Messiah, and has seven stops on one manual. The metal stops are all divided into bass and treble halves at c¹/c^{#1}; accessed at <http://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk/organ/chamber-organ-for-handel-house-museum/>; retrieved on 15th May 2017.

For the *Adagio* section, I improvised on the basic harmonic pattern (as shown in Ex. 5.5) which was derived from Handel's Organ Concerto in G minor Op. 4 No. 1 (bars 1-3).

Ex. 5.5: Improvisation in the style of Handel: *Adagio*, harmonic pattern:

I V₄[#] I⁶ I₃^b IV I₄ V₅[#] I

A common feature of Baroque music in general is the use of the cycle of fifths which lends itself for developing motifs whilst not draining the improviser's concentration too much. In this recording, I used a sequence of seventh chords (Ex. 5.6):

Ex 5.6: Improvisation in the style of Handel: *Adagio*, cycle of fifths (plain version):

I IV⁷ VII⁷ III⁷ VI⁷ II⁷ V₅[#] 7 I

Another typical Handelian feature of *Adagio* movements is to finish on an imperfect cadence (Ex. 5.7):⁸

Ex 5.7: Improvisation in the style of Handel: *Adagio*, imperfect cadence:

I V⁶ IV₃ 6 V[#]

This is then followed by an *Allegro* movement: for this improvisation I decided to attempt an *Allegro* fugue in mostly two parts. The subject of the fugue is not

⁸ See Handel's Organ Concerto in G minor Op. 4 No. 1, *Larghetto, e staccato* movement, bars 112-14.

originally by Handel, but is partly inspired by Handel's chorus 'And he shall purify' from *Messiah* (Ex. 5.8).

Ex 5.8: Improvisation in the style of Handel: *Allegro* fugue, fugal subject:



Whilst practising in this style, I tried out different ways of embellishing cycles of fifths in keys related to G minor. Although I did not use figuration models taken from Handel's work, I came up with something similar in style. The following excerpt is based on Handel's Organ Concerto in G minor Op. 4 No. 1⁹ and gives a good idea of the embellishment I used on the recording (Ex. 5.9):

Ex 5.9: Improvisation in the style of Handel: *Allegro*, embellished cycle of fifths:



Artistic self-reflection

During my preparations for the broadcast, I found that the cycle of fifths lends itself well for modulating to the key of the next subject entry, but can also act as a 'musical filler' to stretch one's improvisation. This turned out to be a real life-saver during the live broadcast, for a digital clock was placed on the organ stand and I was instructed by the producer to stop improvising at a specific time. During the course of the improvisation, it quickly became apparent that the fugue was too short in the way I had planned it in my head, so using more cycles of fifths helped increase the overall duration of the improvisation without a noticeable loss of structural coherence. Finally, in the last major entry of the subject I make use of another typical fugal feature, the stretto. Ex. 5.10 shows the manuscript sheet outlining the blueprint of my improvisation, which was placed on the organ stand, together with the digital clock synchronized with BBC Broadcasting House.

Improvising in English historical styles as part of Anglican organ improvisation

⁹ *Allegro* movement, bars 60-64.

was certainly a new venture for me and one that required intense study. However, it demonstrates to me the value of a disciplined use of stylistic improvisation within the Anglican tradition, and this is discussed in more detail later on in this Chapter.

Ex. 5.10: Improvisation in the style of Handel, improvisation blueprint:

Improvisation BBC 01/April/2009

NOVELLO

Global Improvisation Project (2010)

Context

The increased connectivity of organists worldwide can lead to exciting new projects. In 2010, I was contacted via email by the Canadian experimental improviser David Sait (b. 1972), who had come across my work as an organ improviser via my website.¹⁰ The ensuing collaboration led to a fascinating CD album entitled *Sixty Interpretations of Sixty Seconds by Sixty Solo Improvisers*: sixty musicians from around the world were asked to contribute a sixty-second solo instrumental improvisation with no overdubs. The sixty pieces were then sewn together back-to-back to complete a full sixty-minute piece. This project is described by the critic Andrew Timar as

a reaffirmation of Sait's long-term project: to forge links between performers of experimental and traditional global musical languages. The inclusion of performers from North and South America, Europe and Japan implies a kind of emerging global community of improvising musicians [...] Solos on church organ, 'rubber glove bagpipes', cello, gong, piano, signal processor, oud, Theremin, tar and 'field recordings' are among dozens of different instruments.¹¹

Artistic self-reflection

My own contribution was recorded on the English Baroque-style Handel House organ (Goetze & Gwynn) at St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, and is based on a simple narrative: how would you interpret sixty seconds through an improvisation? I wanted to be as free as possible in my playing, decidedly avoiding any historical stylistic improvisation. The result is an improvisation in what I would describe as my own personal style: minimalistic in structure, with a hint of modality and strong energetic rhythmic elements (CD 1, track 16). The result is

¹⁰ www.ronnykrippner.com

¹¹ Andrew Timar's review of David Sait's album *Sixty Interpretations of Sixty Seconds by Sixty Solo Improvisers*, published online in 2010; accessed at <https://www.thewholenote.com/index.php/booksrecords2/booksrecords2-2/51-current-reviews/jazzaimprovised?limit=16&start=416> retrieved on 21st June 2017.

surprising to me as I specifically wanted to avoid improvising within a particular style, and yet I was clearly unable to escape the sound world of Minimalism. This is probably due to my research on the work of Phillip Glass and Steve Reich at the time of the recording, which involved not only listening to their music but also trying out excerpts from their oeuvre on the piano. This 'finger-knowledge' then surfaced again in my improvisation, making this ultimately a historical style improvisation. I see this as practical confirmation of my thesis in Chapter 4 that it is, ultimately, impossible for the improviser to turn off his or her memory of clichés, formulae or motor movements and that true freedom in improvisation may not exist. The global collaboration of improvising musicians in this project represented an exciting new step towards breaking down barriers between different musical traditions, creating a new perspective on music making. I particularly welcomed the opportunity to take the organ out of its usual church context and to improvise freely for the sake of simply improvising.

DVD *Ex Tempore*: Improvising in English Historical Styles (2011)

In this section, I discuss my approach to the practical testing of key strategies for learning and performing English historical stylistic improvisations in the following four stages:

1. Selection of composers and works
2. Process of identifying key formulae through analysis
3. Practical realisation (e.g. choice of organ, recording process)
4. Critique of entire process, including the DVD itself

The DVD/CD *Ex Tempore* represents the third stage (practical realisation) and forms a central part of this project as it provides an object that can be critiqued. However, the content of the DVD only shows the end result of this action research project. The process of critical reflection to inform further action – which encapsulates the very nature of the action research methodology – took place during and in between practice sessions which have not been recorded in musical

terms. However, I will discuss the processes by which I developed the several styles I have adopted, and the problems I encountered, in this section.

The rationale behind the DVD project was to improvise in a range of English historical styles, from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. Based on this decision, I identified the following seven key periods:

1. The Tudor Period
2. The Restoration
3. The Baroque Period
4. The Victorian Period
5. Early Twentieth-Century
6. The Neoclassical Period
7. The Present

The selection of these periods reflects the commonly accepted classification of British organ music, as outlined in many textbooks. As each of these periods covers a variety of styles, I now describe the process of choosing representative composers and works from each period.

Selection of composers and works

The aim during the process of identifying suitable composers from each period as role models for my improvisations was to consider composers whose work is seen as most characteristic of a particular era. This raises the following question: What criteria did I apply in identifying what is (are) the most characteristic or representative composer(s) from each period? My approach in answering this question was to consult as many textbooks, historical tutor books, PhD theses and essays, as well as printed organ music as possible, covering the whole gamut of British organ music from the sixteenth century to the present. Those composers mentioned most regularly in publications (which might define the most famous organ music composers working in the UK) were selected. However, sometimes I decided to include a particular form of organ music, e.g. the Tudor point or the English organ concerto, and then identified a suitable composer who would

provide examples of this form from which to extract formulae. Although I aimed to make this selection process as objective as possible, I soon realised that an element of subjectivity (What style do I like best? What is interesting to me?) had to be accepted as part of this process and could not be eliminated.

As well as outlining the rationale for identifying specific styles and composers for this project, I will also elucidate my practical approach to the process of *Blumenlese* – the process of identifying and extracting key formulae through analysis. Whilst explaining the process of the *Blumenlese* phase is relatively straightforward, it is far more challenging to describe the methods applied in the Assembling phase, i.e. recombining formulae to create new pieces in improvisation. Having identified formulae, I started out by memorising these by regular practice on the organ. During this experimentation phase, which was about four weeks long, I also transposed formulae to different keys and varied them as I saw fit, making the patterns my own. Daily practice of the formulae was paramount in order for me not only to remember them but to develop ‘brains in my fingers’, the concept discussed earlier. Another important aspect of the Assembling phase was the development of blueprints for the overall structure of the improvisations I intended to record. Once an overall form was established, I began working out linking patterns, allowing me to connect one formula with another. These links were not as thoroughly worked out as the formulae, but became increasingly standardised due to regular practice.

Whilst the content of the DVD formed an important component of my action research project here discussed, it is also intended to meet the pedagogical need for accessible examples of what I hope is good practice in stylistic improvisation.

The Tudor Period I: Tallis

Before the Reformation, English organ music was usually based on a cantus firmus (CF) extracted from Gregorian Chant, a typical example being Tallis’s organ verses composed on the chant-fragment *Felix namque*. Interestingly, this was copied into the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, which although post-reformation, includes many similar examples of organ pieces built upon Catholic chant. These provide a

treasure trove of improvisation patterns and it is these patterns, amongst others, that I have applied in my improvised organ verses (CD 3, tracks 2, 4 and 6). In this subsection, I discuss eight key formulae which I found crucial in enabling me to successfully improvise in that style. Works by other composers from that period have also been considered, such as John Blitheman (c. 1525-1591), John Redford (1486-1547) and William Shelbye (?-1570) and, although this would suggest that I should not identify my organ verses to be in the style of Tallis, I argue that Tallis was writing in a conventional style which was also used by his contemporaries as well as composers of the next generation, such as William Byrd.

The improvised set of Tallis-style verses which I recorded on 22nd February 2011 on the Wetheringsett organ at Holy Trinity, South Kensington, London, is based on the Sarum chant *Ecce tempus idoneum*¹² (Ex. 5.11) and was performed *alternatim* with organ and a solo singer. According to different sources, *Ecce tempus* is either the hymn for First Vespers of the Third Sunday of Lent (Cox, 1986: v) or for Second Vespers of the First Sunday of Lent (Caldwell, 1965: xi).

For my Tallis-style organ verses, I collected the following eight formulae, allocating a descriptive title to each:

1. Point
2. Semiquaver Bass-line
3. Chant figuration: long-short
4. 'Difficult proportions'
5. Canonic section
6. Bouncing Bass
7. Chordal dance
8. Plagal Tudor cadence

Verse 1: Organ (Point)

The 'point' (theme) is derived from the opening notes of the chant, adding metre and note values (Ex. 5.12).

¹² There was no particular reason for choosing this specific chant; I felt it important to improvise my organ verses on a chant taken from the *Sarum Psalter*.

Ex. 5.11: Sarum chant *Ecce Tempus Idoneum* (manuscript as used for recording);
 from *Faber Early Organ Series: Vol. I England*, London: Faber Music, 1986: 30:

ECCE TEMPUS IDONEUM

Ec - ce tem - pus i - do - ne - rum

me - di - ci - na pec - ca - mi - num,

Qui - bus De - um of - fen - di - mus,

Cor - de, ver - bis o - per - i - bus.

Ex. 5.12: Theme of point (improvised):

chant

'point'

In my improvised point, I followed the structure of Tallis's 'A Point' from the *Mulliner Book*,¹³ introducing the theme first in the Soprano and then Alto, Tenor, and Bass part. I observed a strict alternation between those entries starting on G and those starting a fifth higher on D, as this made it easier for me to put the voice parts together. This may be possibly due to my experience in improvising Baroque-style fugal expositions which requires strict alternation of 'subject' and 'answer'. In order to follow Tallis's example of a point, I used one additional entry on D in the Tenor part which was useful in extending the piece slightly. Note the use of the plagal Tudor cadence in the last two bars (Ex. 5.13).

¹³ Thomas Tallis, 'A Point', from *The Mulliner Book* (c. 1560), No 103. British Museum, MS Add. 30513.

Ex. 5.13: Exposition of the point (improvised):

'point' (theme)
Soprano on G

Alto on D

Tenor on G

Bass on D

5

Tenor on D

IV VI I I

Plagal 'Tudor' cadence

Verse 2: Chant Qui pius et propitius
 Nobis pepercit actibus
 Ne nos cum nostris perderet
 Tantis iniquitatibus.
 [William Morgan, Tenor]

Verse 3: Organ

The third verse is made up of two different sections. Section one states the cantus firmus in long note values in the Soprano ('cantus planus'), whilst the left hand provides a semi-quaver Bass line (Ex. 5.14) with 12 semi-quaver notes to one cantus firmus note.¹⁴ When improvising this section, I made sure that my left-hand runs remained mostly scalic and that the Bass note on the first beat of a bar was either the root or third of the underlying triad.

In the second section of the third verse, I applied a different chant figuration technique, based on Tallis's 'Natus est nobis':¹⁵ a rhythmic 'long-short' figuration was superimposed on the plainsong, resulting in a triple metre. (Ex. 5.14, bars 4-6) The Bass part, again, consists of continuous semiquaver runs, whilst the intervals between the Soprano and Bass are mostly thirds and sixths (occasionally fifths or octaves).

¹⁴ See Anon. [Thomas Mulliner?], 'Psalmus: O Lord turn not away' (BL Add. MS 30513, fol. 105-106), from *The Mulliner Book* (c. 1560), No. 109, p. 80.

¹⁵ Tallis, 'Natus est nobis' (BL Add. MS 30513, fol. 12v-13), from *The Mulliner Book* (ca 1560).

Ex. 5.14: Opening bars of third verset (improvised):¹⁶

Verse 4: Chant Ut nos a cunctis sordibus
 purgans ornet virtutibus
 angelicis et cetibus
 coniungat in caelestibus.
 [William Morgan, Tenor]

Verse 5: Organ

The fifth verse is made up of four contrasting sections. The first section (Ex. 5.15) is based on William Shelbye's 'Miserere':¹⁷ The chant, which is stated in the Soprano is figured by repeating each note in even note lengths. This then creates cross-rhythms against the Alto and Bass parts (Table 5.3). According to Jane Flynn, it was Thomas Morley who described these proportions as 'difficult proportions' 3:2 and 9:2, 'sesquialtera' and 'quadrupla sesquialtera' respectively (2009: 13). In her lecture given at the London Organ Forum in 2008,¹⁸ Flynn added that these intricate proportions were typical for English musicians at that time, whereas in

¹⁶ Although the chord descriptions here and elsewhere are anachronistic, they are intended as a useful expedient for the modern player.

¹⁷ Shelbye, 'Miserere' (BL Add. MS 30513, fol. 47v-48v), from *The Mulliner Book* (ca 1560), No. 41, p. 35.

¹⁸ The London Organ Forum took place on Saturday 22nd November 2008 at St Faith's Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral, London.

Ex. 5.15: Opening bars of verse 5 (improvised):

CF (each note repeated)

G major C major G major D major A minor D major G major E minor G major E minor G major E minor

Table 5.3: 'Difficult proportions':

				Proportions:
right hand	Soprano	CF (each note of the chant is repeated)		2
r.h./l.h.	Alto	'harmonic filler'		3
left hand	Bass	quaver runs		9

Germany, for instance, these would have been less frequently encountered in the practical sources.

When improvising in proportional groups of 3:1, the first note in the Bass mostly has the root of the chord, whereas the Alto part has the third. This results, according to Flynn, in a 'root-position chord effect' (2009: 13). The Bass line regularly uses 'broken-chord-patterns' which are very useful in maintaining the triplet movement. Although the middle part is not specifically assigned to any hand in particular, it is technically easier to play it, together with the Soprano part, in the right hand as the left hand is 'freed up' for a more virtuosic Bass line.

The 'difficult proportions' formula was the most fascinating to me as this is a peculiar English technique which applies three different rhythmical proportions at the same time. This is a most challenging task when improvising in this style and during my practice sessions I noticed that the patterns gradually 'played themselves' by reflex, rather than by conscious control. The concept of 'brains in the fingers' became most noticeable here.

The second section of the fifth verse is canonic and follows in design Tallis's 'Felix namque'.¹⁹ Looking at Ex. 5.16, there seem to be similarities with the classic structure of a fugal exposition: all entries either begin on G or on D and there is a sense of modulation between these 'keys' (I use the term 'key' with caution here as the major/minor tonality was not yet fully established at that time). However, subject and answer do not have to alternate; for example, it is possible to have the answer stated twice in a row, but in different voice parts. Also, I applied a short free section between entries (Ex. 5.16, bar 3) which is in line with Tallis's example.

Ex. 5.16: Opening bars of verse 5, section 2 (improvised):

The musical score for Ex. 5.16 is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'contrapuntal opening section' and 'chordal accompaniment', shows the first three bars. The second system, labeled 'consecutive octaves', shows bars 4 through 8. Chord labels are placed below the notes to indicate the harmonic structure.

Chord labels in the first system: A minor, E minor.

Chord labels in the second system: G major, D major, G major, D major, A minor, E minor, D minor, A minor, C major, G major, D major.

In the third section (Ex. 5.17), I applied a technique which I term 'Bouncing Bass', again inspired by Tallis's 'Felix namque'. Here, the plainsong is played in augmentation with chords in the left hand whilst the right hand provides a contrasting and lively accompaniment based on broken chords. According to Willi Apel (1967: 153), Tallis anticipates in his 'Felix namque' settings the arpeggio accompaniment style of later periods. The change from duple to triple metre within a verse makes for a particularly energetic moment.

¹⁹ Tallis, 'Felix namque', from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book Vol. 1* (eds. J. Fuller and W. Barclay Squire, 1963), No. 109, p. 427.

Ex. 5.17: 'Bouncing Bass' in opening bars of verse 5, section 3 (improvised):

3

In the final section of the fifth verse, I applied a poignant rhythmic pattern in the chordal accompaniment (Ex. 5.18):

Ex. 5.18: Opening bars of verse 5, section 4 (improvised):

CF (Cantus Planus)

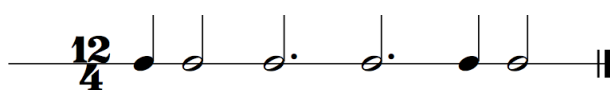
3

Table 5.4 gives a clear overview of the concept behind this 'chordal dance' technique: the cantus firmus is stated in long note values in the Soprano, whilst the other voice parts provide the rhythmic interest. The two Scotch snaps (on the first and ninth crotchet beat) give the music extra excitement and verve (Ex. 5.19)

Table 5.4: Chordal dance:

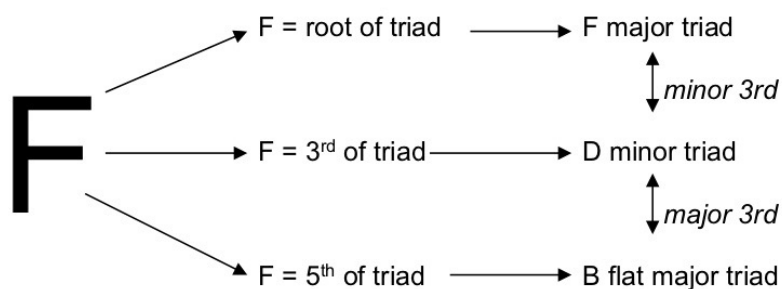
12/4	right hand	chords	CF in upper voice part <i>(cantus planus)</i>
			rhythmic pattern (dance-like)
	left hand	chords	rhythmic pattern (dance-like)

Ex. 5.19: Rhythmic pattern:



Harmonically, I used mediant chord relationships extensively, again following Tallis's example in his 'Felix namque':²⁰ the melody note serves either as root, third or fifth of the underlying chord. The following diagram is based on the melody note 'F' (Fig. 5.1):

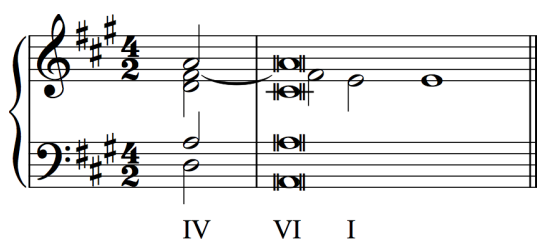
Fig. 5.1: Harmonic diagram:



The final cadence of my Tallis verse improvisation is plagal. However, I decided to follow Robert Parsons's example by suspending one note, thus creating chord VI for a brief moment before settling on the tonic chord (Ex. 5.20).

²⁰ Tallis, 'Felix namque', from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book Vol. 1* (eds. J. Fuller and W. Barclay Squire, 1963), No. 109, p. 430, bars 92-93.

Ex. 5.20: Plagal Tudor cadence; Robert Parsons, *Ave Maria*, from *The Oxford Book of Tudor Anthems*, ed. C. Morris, p. 42, bars 73-74 (transposed up a major third from original mode/key):



Improvising Tallis-style verses based on plainchant is not an easy undertaking, as the musical language is so different from what we are surrounded by today: it is modal music that requires very specific contrapuntal techniques and chord progressions. However, the written verses which have survived serve as excellent models, as shown in my recording (CD 3, tracks 2, 4 and 6). Personally, I have found the 'point' (CD 3, track 2) and the *Verse 3* improvisation (CD 3, track 4) the most challenging as they needed me to think in strict polyphonic lines, as well as applying quick runs. When improvising a steady stream of semiquavers against long held plainchant notes, it does take some practice to anticipate the right consonant interval on the main beats – and to arrive there during a run 'in time'. Also, I found playing on manuals only particularly challenging.

When preparing for the recording session on the Wetheringsett organ, I had not realised that the organ sounded a fourth higher in pitch. Although any improviser should in theory be able to transpose into any key, this did throw me somewhat. It made me realise how much one relies on finger memory in this sort of style: all my experiments with improvising in this style were done in one 'key' technically, the Dorian on D, or Mode 1, and trying to improvise a fourth down did not trigger my motor memory in the same way. Also, trying to play an instrument which sounds a fourth higher really threw my pitch memory (I do not have perfect pitch), which meant that it took me quite a while even to improvise at the pitch I had practised. Another added difficulty was the size of the keys: they were slightly smaller than on a modern organ, resulting in a very different playing experience. All this made me realise how important the improviser's memory is, in particular finger

memory, pitch memory and sensory memory. If those three are in any way blocked, it makes it very hard to keep the flow of an improvisation.

It seems important to me to mention the issue of historical fingering. Jon Laukvik (2000: 41) suggests in his book *Orgelschule zur historischen Aufführungspraxis Vol. 1* that the first, third and fifth finger were regarded by English organists as 'good fingers' and used on 'good notes'. I do not have sufficient experience in using historical fingering in composed music and therefore found it most irritating trying to aim for 'good fingers' whilst, at the same time, improvising good counterpoint against plainchant notes: this soon stopped the musical flow. However, I feel that there may well be ways of combining historical fingering with historical improvisation, and this is something another researcher might want to investigate further.

The Tudor Period II: William Byrd

After the Reformation, the use of Gregorian chant in organ compositions gradually declined and a new form of organ music emerged, based on free themes: the fantasia or fancy. William Byrd (1543-1623) was a prolific composer of English keyboard fantasias and it is predominantly his 'Fantasia [in A]', taken from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, that I adopted as a model for my attempts to improvise in that style (CD 3, track 7). According to Geoffrey Cox (1998: 193), Byrd's fantasias usually fall into several contrasting sections: dance-like passages, brilliant toccatas and purely contrapuntal sections. This served as a good starting point for my own Byrd-style improvisation.

Fantasia in the style of Byrd

My improvised *Fantasia in the style of Byrd* (CD 3, track 7) was recorded on the Wetheringsett organ at Holy Trinity, South Kensington, London, on 22nd February 2011. The underlying structure of this improvisation is as follows:

1. Imitative Section: point A + point B
2. Passage work
3. Dance-like section 1 + 2

4. Syncopations
5. Tudor chord sequence
6. Compound time section 1 + 2
7. Coda

In order to prepare myself for this recorded improvisation, I practised each section separately using a simple ‘trial and error’ method: does this sound convincing to my ears and my understanding of the music of this period? Does a run in the right-hand end at the right time on the right note? Is there enough contrast in each section to maintain musical interest? Although I did not use any memory aid during the recording (e.g. ideas on manuscript paper), I had memorised the best musical phrases from my practice sessions.

1. Imitative Section

The opening section (Ex. 5.21) only contains two imitative entries after which I changed to a simple homophonic, dance-like texture. Note that the second entry is a third lower than the first (not a fourth or fifth), which is arguably something Byrd might not have done (his second entries seem to be either in the subdominant or dominant). The idea of using a second point (Ex. 5.22) is based on Byrd’s ‘Fantasia [in A]’.

Ex. 5.21: Section A (improvised):

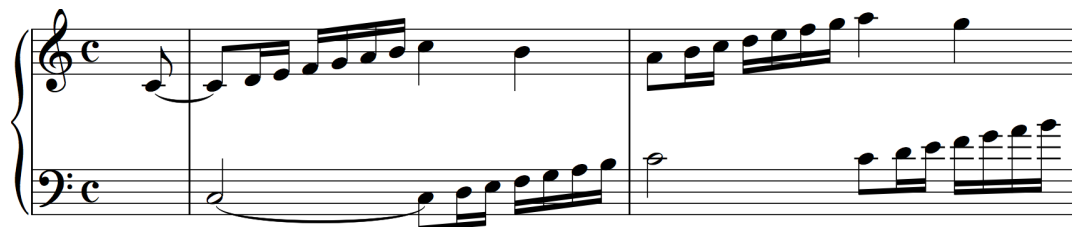
Ex. 5.22: Section B (improvised):

2. Passage Work

Ex. 5.23 shows a toccata pattern which I discovered during one of my practice sessions. Its ‘antiphonal’ use of voice movement combined with virtuosic octave

runs makes for a great effect. Also, most improvisers will probably be able to apply this pattern without much practice, as it lies well under one's fingers. Although this formula is not taken from any of Byrd's keyboard compositions, it nevertheless felt appropriate to include it in my improvisation.

Ex. 5.23: Octave runs (improvised):



3. Dance-like Section

For my dance-like section, I applied two different dance patterns. The first dance pattern (Ex. 5.24) is based on an idea from Byrd's 'Fantasia [in A]'.²¹ Common features are melodic use of broken chords and one-bar phrase lengths. When experimenting with this pattern, I discovered that it lends itself to alternating the 'melody' between the right and left hand, which can be found quite regularly in Byrd's keyboard fantasias.

Ex. 5.24: Dance 1 (improvised):



The second dance pattern (Ex. 5.25) is similar to the previous one (Ex. 5.24) with regard to its one-bar phrase length and broken chord figuration. This time, however, I kept the 'melody' constantly in the right hand and did not use any alternation.

4. Syncopations

Ex. 5.26 shows a highly syncopated section which turned out to be the most challenging part of the recording session as I found it rather difficult to get the

²¹ Byrd, 'LII. Fantasia [in A]', *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book Vol. 1* (eds. J. Fuller and W. Barclay Squire, 1963), p. 192, bars 90-91.

Ex. 5.25: Dance 2 (improvised):

tempo relation right before and after this section. Although it is slightly too slow in the final version, this is probably one of the most exciting features of my Byrd-style improvisation.

Ex. 5.26: Syncopations (improvised):

From an improviser's point of view, the rhythmic difficulty of Byrd's 'syncopations' formula is similar to Tallis's 'difficult proportions' (Table 5.3) and either can only be used successfully in improvisation once their practical application has become second nature.

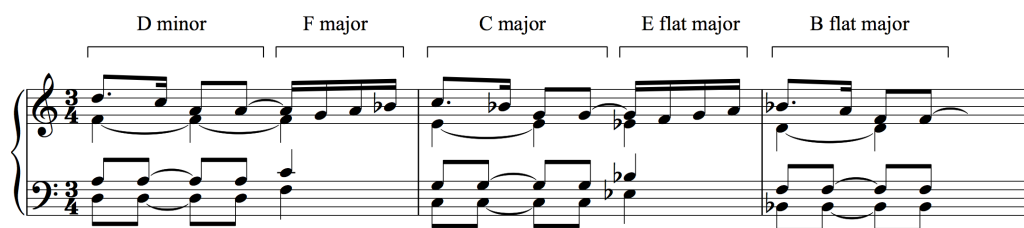
5. Tudor Chord Sequence

Whilst trying out chord progressions which I perceived as 'Tudor', I discovered the chordal pattern as shown in Ex. 5.27. This sequence features a third relation between chords (e.g. D minor to F major) and a false relation between C major and E flat major.²² As I have no evidence of Byrd ever using this sequence in his own music, I originally had not intended including it in my Byrd-style improvisation but automatically launched into the sequence during the recording by error. In hindsight I would regard the application of this sequence in my recording as a stylistic miscalculation. However, this example does underline the very nature of stylistic

²² The acoustic effect of a false relation is created by the E natural of the C major triad, followed by the E flat of the E flat major triad.

improvisation: the stylistic purity is not the first priority – an effective, fluent performance is the ultimate criterion.

Ex. 5.27: Tudor chord sequence (improvised):



6. Compound Time Section

Like Byrd, I decided to change the metre of my fantasia from 4/4 to compound time half-way through the piece. The pattern in Ex. 5.28 is based on a similar section in Byrd's 'Fantasia [in A]'.²³ I was also able to include another idea by Byrd: the repetition of the first four bars one octave lower in order to create an 'echo effect'.

Ex. 5.28: Compound time 1 (improvised):



Ex. 5.29 combines compound time with proportional playing and is, again, based on a similar proportion example in Byrd's 'Fantasia [in A]'.²⁴ Although notated in compound metre (9/4), the rhythmic feel is that of duple metre (2/4).

Ex. 5.29: Compound time 2 (improvised):



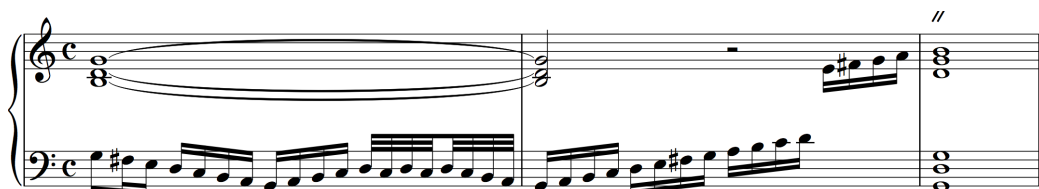
²³ Byrd, 'LII. Fantasia [in A]', from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book Vol. 1* (eds. J. Fuller and W. Barclay Squire, 1963), p. 193, bars 103-106.

²⁴ Byrd, 'LII. Fantasia [in A]', from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book Vol. 1* (eds. J. Fuller and W. Barclay Squire, 1963), p. 194, bars 145-146.

7. Coda

Having had Byrd's flourish on the last chord of his 'Fantasia [in A]' in mind,²⁵ I decided to place the runs in my left hand instead, leading right up to the top note of the right-hand chord (Ex. 5.30).

Ex. 5.30: Improvised coda (improvised):



This improvised Byrd-style fantasia was, in retrospect, possibly the most challenging improvisation for me compared to all the other stylistic improvisations on the CD *Ex Tempore* (CD 3). One of the main reasons for this was that Byrd's music is not tonal but modal²⁶ which placed this type of music well outside my comfort zone as an improviser. Also, I had to learn almost from scratch Tudor stock phrases, chord progressions and, in particular, specific rhythmic proportions to enable me to improvise a convincing piece in that style. This required extensive preparation, as this musical language was almost completely new to me as an improviser. Although Byrd's pieces are written in specific keys, I found it difficult to apply my 'tonal' understanding of keys in my improvisations: the concept of modes in Tudor-style improvisation confused me, particularly when trying to change 'keys'. In the end, I decided to use my musical judgement as an improviser, relying predominantly on experimenting and listening to my own playing. This approach helped maintaining the flow of my playing, whilst also allowing me to take more 'risks'.

My improvised *Fantasia* starts in the key of A minor and finishes in G major. I discovered only recently that, in so doing, I have unintentionally disobeyed one of Morley's rules regarding the fantasia: do not, in the closing, go out of the key, 'which is one of the grosest faults that may be committed.' (1937 [1597]: 146) I would therefore consider this one of the major stylistic inaccuracies of my improvisation.

²⁵ Byrd, 'LII. Fantasia [in A]', from *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book Vol. 1* (eds. J. Fuller and W. Barclay Squire, 1963), p. 195, bars 168-169.

²⁶ I refer here to Tudor modality, as opposed to twentieth-century modality.

Having said that, this key change did not occur to me as a problem at the time and neither the sound engineer nor the various reviewers of *Ex Tempore* (Appendix G) picked up on it.

Overall, I have come to the conclusion that improvising in Tudor styles – both CF-based verses and fantasias – requires an experienced improviser and is not suitable for beginners, despite the absence of pedals. Not only does this style demand a very good keyboard technique (passage work, proportions); it also requires an extensive knowledge of stock phrases and modal chord progressions. However, once one's knowledge-base is extensive enough to allow for a variety of automated motor responses to aid one's playing, I believe improvising in Tudor style to be a most rewarding musical activity and to be particularly useful within the context of Anglican organ improvisation.

The Restoration

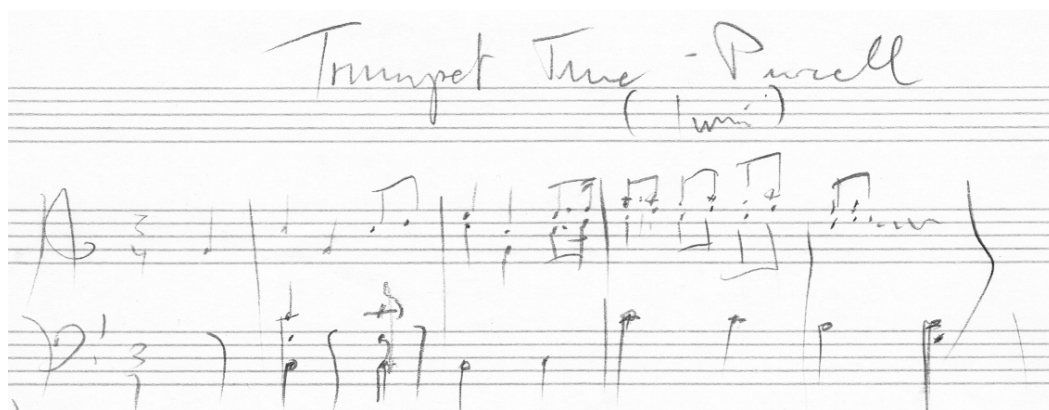
Moving to the later seventeenth century, I turn to Henry Purcell (1659-1695) as the iconic composer of the period. I identified the following three forms of keyboard music which are commonly regarded as typical for that period: the trumpet voluntary, divisions upon a ground and the double voluntary. For my trumpet voluntary improvisation (CD 3, track 8), I primarily considered Purcell's 'Trumpet Tune in C' (Zt. 698) from *A Choice Collection of Lessons* (published posthumously in 1696) as a role model. Since Purcell's 'Trumpet Tune' is his own arrangement of a movement from *The Indian Queen*, I felt justified to look beyond Purcell's limited output of organ music – in this case, Purcell's semi-operas *Dido and Aeneas*, *King Arthur* and *The Indian Queen*. Whilst I am familiar with Baroque ground bass improvisation techniques, the particularly English tradition of improvising divisions upon a ground was new to me. In order to understand the key principles involved, I not only analysed Purcell's 'Ground in C minor' (Zt. 681) from *Ye tuneful Muses* (1686), but also consulted Christopher Simpson's *The Division-Viol or the Art of Playing Ex tempore upon a Ground* (published in 1665), resulting in my own version of *Divisions upon a Ground* (CD 3, track 9). Although drawing on tutor books written for instruments other than the organ may seem strange at first, the distinction between organ music and other keyboard music

was far less rigorous than in modern practice, and by the time of Purcell, the differentiation of secular and sacred music by style had all but collapsed. It is therefore in line with Purcell's own practice of using ground bass techniques throughout his composing career.²⁷ My improvised *Double Voluntary* (CD 3, track 10), on the other hand, was almost entirely inspired by the techniques applied to Purcell's *Double Voluntary in D minor* (Zt. 719) as the multitude of ideas offered gave me plenty of material to work with.

Trumpet Tune

The *Trumpet Tune* improvisation was recorded on Thursday 28th October 2010 in Adlington Hall, Cheshire. In preparing for this recording session, I had sketched out the following opening idea (Ex. 5.31):

Ex. 5.31: Theme for recorded *Trumpet Tune* improvisation:



In these opening bars, I determined the following musical elements:

1. Theme: fanfare-like, broken C major chord
2. Time Signature: 3/4
3. Key: C major
4. Texture: homophonic
5. Type of accompaniment: bare fifths / unison

²⁷ Purcell used ground bass techniques eighty-seven times across all his compositional genres. (Horton, 2009: online)

In order to find convincing ‘Purcellian’ chord progressions, melodic ideas and rhythmic motifs which lend themselves for improvisation, I decided to look at his three semi-operas *Dido and Aeneas*, *King Arthur* and *The Indian Queen*. The following three harmonic features were particularly helpful to me in finding the right stylistic language in my improvisation: false relations, martial chords and the Purcellian perfect cadence.

False Relations:

Purcell’s use of harmony is following by and large conventions typical of the early Baroque period: it is mostly diatonic with a preference for tonic and dominant chords in the more majestic movements. However, there are occasionally modal ‘outbursts’ in Purcell’s compositions as seen in Ex. 5.32:

Ex. 5.32: Purcell, chorus ‘To the Hills and the Vales’, from *Dido and Aeneas*, harmonic blueprint of the opening bars:

The musical score for Ex. 5.32 is in 3/4 time. It shows a harmonic progression across several bars. The first two bars are in C Major, with chords I and V. The third bar is in G Minor, with chords C: II and G: V. The fourth bar is in G Major, with chords I, I⁶, and V. A bracket labeled 'false relation' spans the fourth and fifth bars. The fifth bar is in C Major, with chords C: V and G: I. The sixth bar is also in C Major, with 'etc.' written below it. Below the score, brackets indicate the key signatures: C Major for the first two bars, G Minor / Major for the third and fourth bars, and C Major for the fifth and sixth bars.

When modulating to the dominant major key, Purcell surprises by using the tonic minor chord (G minor) followed by the tonic major chord (G major) in the following bar, thus creating a refreshing false relation. I regard the slight metrical displacement Purcell incorporates here (bars 7-8) as a significant stylistic feature.

Martial chords:

In *King Arthur*, Purcell uses an exciting rhythmic and harmonic pattern similar to the Italian *Stile concitato* to enhance the triumphant feel of the opening symphony to the aria ‘Come if you dare’. I label these as ‘martial chords’ (Ex. 5.33). The key feature of the ‘martial chords’ is the change of chords in a pulsating quaver pattern: this is either achieved by alternating two entirely different chords (V and I) or different inversions of the same chord (first inversion and root position of the dominant chord).

Ex. 5.33: Purcell, symphony to aria 'Come if you dare', from *King Arthur*, bars 8-12:

Purcellian perfect cadence:

Ex. 5.34, taken from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, displays two different features: a modulation from C major to the relative minor, A minor, and a pseudo-perfect cadence which I call 'Purcellian perfect cadence'.

Ex. 5.34: Purcellian perfect cadence; Purcell, chorus 'To the Hills and the Vales', from *Dido and Aeneas*, bars 23-27:

What is fascinating about the final cadence is that it gives the impression of being an ordinary perfect cadence. However, by placing a C in the Soprano part (and not a B as one would anticipate), the overall chord changes from E major (V) to a first inversion augmented triad on C (III) – thus giving the impression of a perfect cadence (V-I). The surprise-factor of this cadence arises from the predominantly diatonic style around it.

Having practised and internalised the three Purcellian harmonic features outlined before, the following improvisation emerged (Ex. 5.35):

Ex. 5.35: Transcription of the improvised *Trumpet Tune* in the style of Purcell:

9

16

23

31

39

Looking closely at the transcription, the following observations can be made:

Structure:

Although this improvisation is simple in its structural outline, it contains more contrasting sections compared to the usual Purcell structure of A – A – B – B. An analysis of the transcription (Ex. 5.35) shows the following order of sections:

Section A:		12 bars	bars 1-12	on the Great	
Section B:	B1	6 bars	bars 12-19	on the Great	B1=B2
	B2	6 bars	bars 19-25	on the Choir	
Section C:	C1	8 bars	bars 26-33	on the Great	last 4 bars of C1 and C2 differ
	C2	8 bars	bars 34-41	on the Choir	
Coda:		4 bars	bars 41-45	on the Great	

Harmony:

The use of harmony is diatonic with a special emphasis on tonic and dominant chords. All chords are mostly used in root position or first inversion. Modulations occur regularly, modulating the following keys: G major (dominant) and A minor (submediant).

The following idiosyncratic harmonic features have been applied:

Martial chords: bars 8-11 alternating between chords V and I
Purcellian perfect cadence: bars 11-13 G minor / G major

During the recording session, I discovered accidentally the following chord progression: a rising sequence based on chords I, V, II, V, I, with a secondary dominant (Ex. 5.36). In retrospect, I realised that this progression is stylistically characteristic ('finger-knowledge').

Melody and Harmony:

The melody in the right hand is always placed in the Soprano part whilst there are either one or two other voice parts to provide harmony in the right hand. In sections where the melody is more agile, the number of voice parts in the right

Ex. 5.36: Purcellian-sounding chord sequence (improvised):

The musical score for Ex. 5.36 is in 3/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a sequence of chords and arpeggios: a C major triad (C-E-G), followed by a D minor triad (D-F-A) with a descending arpeggio, and another C major triad. The left hand (bass clef) plays a simple bass line of root notes: C, D, C, D, C. Brackets below the bass line label the chords as 'C major', ''D minor'', and 'C major'. The piece concludes with 'etc.' in the right hand.

hand is reduced to two voices or to melody only. Equally, in the more static sections, the right hand tends to play full triads.

Left-hand accompaniment:

The left-hand accompaniment is mostly playing the root notes of the outlined chord. Interestingly, I instinctively played most of the left-hand part in octaves. This happened somewhat unintentionally, and I assume this was to boost the Bass part to make up for the missing pedal which, as a performer, I am used to.

Furthermore, I adopted occasionally the bare fifth accompaniment technique found in Byrd's fantasias. Again, this seems to compensate for the missing 16' pedal stop. Section C (Ex. 5.35, bars 26-41) has a more martial character to it due to the hammering G major chords. This forceful use of chords is somewhat similar to Purcell's 'Trumpet Tune in C' (Zt. 689) and give an overall crude impression. According to Cox, this is typical for 'the earliest English trumpet voluntaries in the latter half of the seventeenth century [...] possibly in imitation of ceremonial ensemble music for trumpets and drums, and remotely related to the Iberian battalla.' (1998: 200)

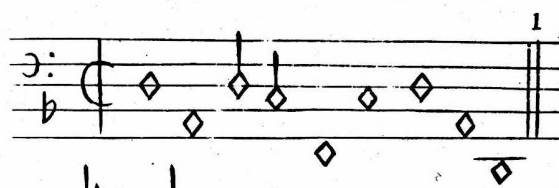
At the beginning of my *Trumpet Tune* improvisation and at certain other points during the piece, I play full chords with arpeggios to give these chords more of a sense of impact. This is certainly not something Purcell demanded in his pieces but it seemed a sensible thing to do on the day of the recording and which I find now, years later, still musically convincing. One could argue that this is a typical harpsichord technique which Purcell may have also transferred to his organ playing but this is speculative.

The most striking difference between my improvised *Trumpet Tune* and Purcell's trumpet voluntaries is in length. Whilst my improvisation is 45 bars long, Purcell's compositions in this style tend to be between 24 and 32 bars. In my view, this is a minor blemish (is it even a blemish?) and seems not to mar the overall impression as none of my colleagues nor any reviewers have commented on it.

Divisions upon a Ground

Whilst I was already familiar with the concept of ground bass improvisation, Purcell's divisions upon a ground required a slightly different approach. Christopher Simpson explains in his *The Division-Viol* (1955 [1665]) the techniques applied in this specific genre: first, the 'ground' needs to be 'broken' (figured by arpeggios). Using Simpson's theme in D minor (Ex. 5.37a), but slightly altered (Ex. 5.37b), the broken ground resulted in a broken-chord harmonisation (Ex. 5.38) as seen in Purcell's *Ground in C minor* (Zt. 681).

Ex. 5.37a: Purcellian *Divisions upon a Ground* (improvisation), theme in D minor by Christopher Simpson (1665):



Ex. 5.37b: Purcellian *Divisions upon a Ground* (improvisation), altered theme in D minor (second note different from Simpson's theme):



Ex. 5.38: Purcellian *Divisions upon a Ground* (improvisation), broken ground:



After the first statement of the broken ground, an improvised descant (a freely improvised countermelody) follows (Ex. 5.39).

Ex. 5.39: Purcellian *Divisions upon a Ground* (improvisation), first descant:



After a couple of contrasting descant statements, mixed divisions are introduced (two or three descants played at the same time; Ex. 5.40). Following Purcell's practice, as shown in his *Ground in C minor* (Zt. 681), I used the broken ground as a ritornello in between descants and mixed divisions.

Ex. 5.40: Purcellian *Divisions upon a Ground* (improvisation), mixed division:



I found improvising this set of *Divisions upon a Ground*, based on Purcell's work as well as Christopher Simpson's tutor book, a relatively straightforward task, as the skill set required to do so differs little from the variation techniques I learnt as an improvisation student in Germany. From a pedagogical point of view, improvising divisions lend themselves perfectly for introducing less experienced organists, such as organ scholars, to improvising in the style of Purcell before or after Evensong, particularly if Restoration music is performed during the service.

Double Voluntary

The double voluntary of the Restoration period is stylistically similar to the Byrd fantasia: both begin with a fugal exposition, followed by toccata-like sections. However, Purcell's *Voluntary for Double Organ* (Z. 719) is intended for a two-manual instrument and uses two contrasting fugal subjects, the style of which I have imitated in creating my own themes: the first subject (Ex. 5.41) is stately and highly ornamented, whilst the second subject (Ex. 5.42) has a dance-like feel to it.

Ex. 5.41: Purcellian *Double Voluntary* (improvisation), first subject:



Ex. 5.42: Purcellian *Double Voluntary* (improvisation), second subject:



When creating the first subject, I attempted applying some ornamentation in a manner typical of Purcell's time by adding forefalls (/) and backfalls (\), as well as Scotch snaps. In the recording, I also added a quick run between the quaver D and crotchet A in the first bar, adding to the overall improvisatory character of the first subject. Both subjects are treated contrapuntally, interspersed by toccata-like outbursts, resulting in the blueprint as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Blueprint of my Purcellian *Double Voluntary* improvisation:

Exposition (first subject) on Chair Organ (A – S – T); Bass entry on Great.

Toccata section: Bass runs (Gt.) with chordal accompaniment (Chair Organ)

Chordal linking section on Chair Organ

Soprano entry (first subject) on Gt. with chordal accompaniment (Chair Organ)

Toccata section: Soprano runs (Gt.) with chordal accompaniment
(Chair Organ)

Chordal linking section on Chair Organ

Bass entry (second subject) on Gt. with chordal accompaniment (Chair Organ)

Chordal linking section on Chair Organ

Soprano entry (second subject) on Gt. with chordal accompaniment (Chair Organ)

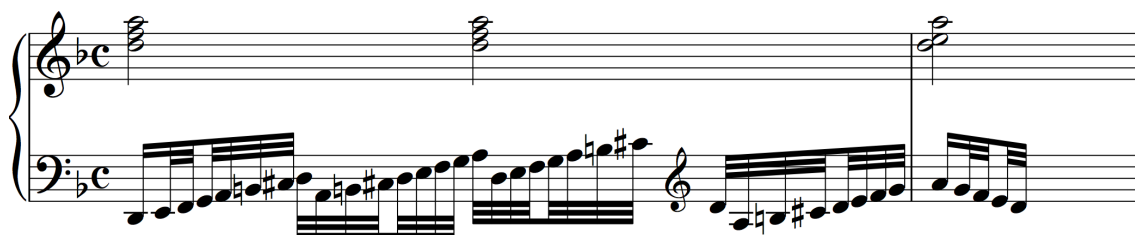
Chordal linking section on Chair Organ

Exposition (second subject) on Gt. (Bass – Soprano, then freely voiced);

Coda.

For the toccata sections, I prepared a number of contrasting formulae, as shown in Ex. 5.43.

Ex. 5.43: Purcellian *Double Voluntary* (improvisation), toccata formula:



Through experimentation, I discovered that toccata passages sounded most convincing in Purcell's style if I observed the following:

1. move mostly stepwise
2. if stuck, use broken chords (only occasionally)
3. avoid cycle of fifths (too Handelian in flavour)
4. include false relations where possible

Whilst I found improvising a Purcellian *Trumpet Tune* or *Divisions upon a Ground* in the style of Purcell not too much of a challenge, my *Double Voluntary* improvisation required me to work in much more detail on specific aspects such as virtuosic runs in the toccata sections. Improvising the two expositions came naturally to me as improvising polyphonically is a key discipline in the German tradition. However, resisting the temptation of launching in a cycle of fifths was difficult and I had to focus hard not to follow my usual German-Baroque formula which would normally make extensive use of cycles of fifths.

Does what I have played sound like authentic Purcell? I personally am pleased with the overall outcome of all three Purcellian improvisations and, listening back to the recordings, I still feel I have been able to apply sufficient key formulae to portray Purcell's style convincingly. However, this raises another question: does it actually matter whether it sounds like authentic Purcellian improvisations? The answer depends on the context. If an organist attempts to improvise in the style of Purcell for the sake of discipline or for developing a better understanding of the key features of Purcell's style, then I would argue that a strict approach is necessary. This is particularly true if an organist advertises the performance as a Purcell-style improvisation within a concert setting or professional CD recording, where the audience is expecting authenticity and where music 'exists as an end in itself'

(Johansson, 2008: 141). However, if the improvisation occurs within a liturgical setting, its function changes in that stylistic questions are not of primary concern, but its liturgical integration is. Therefore, I would say that for many members of the congregation, a broader, less specific portrayal of the Restoration style would be perfectly acceptable and would work as a satisfying piece of improvisation.

The Baroque Period

Although of course not English, George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) exerted a decisive influence on English music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including organ music. The dominant form of organ music at this time was the voluntary as so eloquently executed by English composers such as John Stanley (1712-1786), and it is true to say that the Baroque organ voluntary should have been included in this project. However, I decided against this due to constraints on the DVD and the fact that the Purcellian trumpet voluntary (although not quite the same than Stanley's voluntaries) would be easily adaptable to that of Stanley, for the competent improviser. Also, some aspects of Stanley's voluntaries would have been very similar to aspects of Handel's organ concertos (e.g. cycle of fifths sequences), so that imitating Stanley would not have added much to the overall project. On the other hand, the Handelian organ concerto presented a fresh challenge, and it is known that Handel himself frequently improvised at the organ in the course of his later oratorios (Gudger, 2000: online). Handel's sixteen organ concertos with orchestra are a fascinating blend of composition and improvisation: the orchestral parts are fully composed, but Handel would often improvise the organ solos. Whilst the first three movements of my improvised *Organ Concerto* (CD 3, tracks 11-13) are entirely based on my own recombination of Handelian formulae, the fourth movement (*Allegro*, CD 3, track 14) is a practical realisation of Handel's *Partimento Fugue in G major* which he wrote as a teaching exercise for King George II's daughter Princess Anne who 'was unusually gifted and a lifelong friend of the composer'. (Ledbetter, 1990: 1) This type of fugue relates 'to another tradition, that of the improvised fugue. Here the fugue hardly has a set texture, still less a fixed form, but more an effect [...] The approach is purely practical.' (Ledbetter, 1990: 2)

Improvising a Handelian organ concerto entirely on the organ is, from a historical point of view, wrong as it does not reflect the practice at the time: the orchestra was crucial in providing ritornello sections in contrast to the two-part organ solos. In the absence of an orchestra, I am improvising rather in the style of a Bachian organ arrangement of a Handelian organ concerto, where the ripieno is played on the Great whilst the solo sections are performed on the softer manual (such as the Swell). Therefore, improvising a Handelian organ concerto requires, ideally, a two-manual instrument which allows the organist to create ripieno and concertino sections. Also, in order to make up for the missing orchestra I decided to use pedals as well to give the music a stronger bass line. Pedals were highly unusual in the Britain at Handel's time (and very limited in range), but Donald Burrows confirms on the DVD *Ex Tempore* that Handel did in fact, on one occasion, use an organ with pedals.²⁸

Organ Concerto

The formula for the overture section (Ex. 5.44) of the first movement of my *Organ Concerto in the style of Handel* is based on the opening bars of Handel's Organ Concerto in B flat major Op.4 No.2 and helped me to set the right atmosphere instantly:

Ex. 5.44: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), overture theme:



However, I noticed that Handel applies a specific harmonic formula at the end of his overture sections, finishing on an imperfect cadence (Ex. 5.45; also Ex. 5.7). Without that formula, the contrast of D minor to D major (*Allegro* theme) is too stark.

²⁸ According to Yearsley, Handel 'specifies the use of organ pedals' in his Organ Concerto in B flat major Op. 7 No. 1, HWV 306, which was performed 'in the 1740 season at Lincoln's Inn Theatre'. Yearsley confirms Burrows' point, stating that 'this is virtual tourism, eighteenth-century style: Handel invites his London audience to peek into the organ loft to watch a German play the pedals as no Englishman could.' (Yearsley, 2012: 177)

Ex. 5.45: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), imperfect cadence at the end of the overture:

The musical notation for Ex. 5.45 is in G minor, 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and the second has a bass clef. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic line in the left hand. The piece concludes with a chord of G minor triad (G-Bb-D) in both hands, which is an imperfect cadence.

The *Allegro* theme (second movement) aims to capture a joyful Handelian flair (Ex. 5.46):

Ex. 5.46: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), beginning of *Allegro* theme:

The musical notation for Ex. 5.46 is in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and the second has a bass clef. The piece begins with a series of chords in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern in the left hand. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Exx. 5.47 and 5.48 present two examples of two-part Handelian formulae that I had extracted and practised for the recording: whilst Ex. 5.48 is a literal quote from a Handel organ concerto,²⁹ I discovered the triplet embellishments in Ex. 5.47 by accident during a practice session; they have nothing to do with Handel (although, I am sure, he would have approved of the wonderful virtuosic effect).

Ex. 5.47: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), *Allegro*, cycle of fifths 1:

The musical notation for Ex. 5.47 is in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and the second has a bass clef. The piece features a cycle of fifths in both hands, with triplet embellishments in the right hand. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Similar to the end of the *Overture*, a number of Handel's organ concertos seem to apply a specific closing cadence at the end of the *Allegro* movement. Ex. 5.49 outlines the cross-rhythm between melody and harmony within the cadence

²⁹ George Frideric Handel: *Organ Concerto in G minor Op. 4 No. 1, Allegro* movement (bars 21-22).

Ex. 5.48: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), *Allegro*, cycle of fifths 2:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.48, showing a two-part texture in G major, 4/4 time. The treble clef part features a continuous stream of eighth notes, while the bass clef part provides a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes.

applied at the end of my *Allegro* improvisation:

Ex. 5.49: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), *Allegro*, cross-rhythm cadence:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.49, showing a two-part texture in G major, 4/4 time. The treble clef part features a melodic line with a cross-rhythm cadence, while the bass clef part provides a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes.

Whilst improvising a Handelian organ concerto has been much more within my comfort zone than Tudor-style improvisations, I noticed that the two-part texture of the organ solo sections presented a real challenge: the almost continuous stream of semiquavers required an extensive knowledge base of automated formulae, or else I would run out of ideas very quickly. Whilst the two-part sections of the *Allegro* movement required my particular attention, I noticed that I initially struggled to find a convincing harmonic progression for the slow *Adagio* movement (third movement). After some experimentation, I remembered the harmonic outline of the *Adagio* movement of my BBC Radio 3 Handel-style improvisation (Ex. 5.5) from two years earlier, and this quickly led to a more satisfying outcome (Ex. 5.50):

Ex. 5.50: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), *Adagio* theme:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.50, showing a two-part texture in G major, 4/4 time. The treble clef part features a melodic line with a cross-rhythm cadence, while the bass clef part provides a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes.

Improvising the *Allegro partimento fugue* (fourth movement) was less of a challenge to me as that specific type of improvisation had been part of my curriculum at the *Musikhochschule* in Regensburg, Germany. However, it still required regular practice to achieve greater fluency in improvising a fugue on Handel's fugal subject in G major (Ex. 5.51):

Ex. 5.51: Handelian *Organ Concerto* (improvisation), beginning of the *Partimento Fugue in G major* (Ledbetter, 1990: 50):



The fact that Handel had basically outlined the whole fugue did not make the task any easier, as I found it to be too much of a straitjacket. It did force me, however, to focus on maintaining a disciplined polyphonic texture throughout, which I believe helped improve my overall control in improvisation.

The Victorian Period

For my Victorian improvisations, I drew on a number of late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century composers, such as Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), Charles Hubert Parry (1848-1918) and Edward Elgar (1857-1934). Stanford provided the main source of harmonic and motivic language, but I find his sonatas somewhat long and therefore less suitable for structured improvisation. For the purpose of this exercise, I have produced a more concise form of *Victorian Organ Sonata* (CD 3, tracks 15-17), based on the 'Modern Binary Model' in Frank Joseph Sawyer's improvisation tutor book *Extemporization* (?1890: 50; also see Chapter 2, Fig. 2.2). The themes by Sawyer are excellent as they provide the characteristic contrast so crucial for sonata form compositions or improvisations, and the majority of themes used in my own improvised sonata are taken from Sawyer's tutor book. The improvised *Theme and Variations* (CD 3, track 18), again draws on Sawyer's instructions and suggestions, using the printed beginning of each variation and then completing it in the act of improvising (Ex. 5.61).

Victorian Organ Sonata

As mentioned above, I intended not to imitate a specific composer in my improvised *Victorian Organ Sonata*, but to approach this task from a more general perspective. However, I did find both the themes and the ‘Modern Binary Form’ blueprint in Sawyer’s *Extemporization* tutor book both helpful and inspiring for my own attempts. The first theme in D minor is martial in character (Ex. 5.52), whilst the second theme has more of a fanfare character (Ex. 5.53) to it.

Ex. 5.52: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Allegro* theme by Sawyer, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 51):



Ex. 5.53: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Allegro* theme by Sawyer, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 45):



Although the two *Allegro* themes selected were taken from Sawyer’s tutor book, Sawyer did not pair them up to be used for sonata form improvisation: the second theme (Ex. 5.53), for instance, was taken from the chapter on improvising marches. I picked them because they were musically interesting to me as an improviser. However, my choice of themes also led to what is considered in sonata form a wrong key relationship: with the first theme being in D minor, the second theme should traditionally have been in the relative major (F major). Although Sawyer is not clear in his sonata form blueprint whether the second subject could be in keys other than the dominant or relative major, it is likely the he takes the convention for granted.

Although Sawyer suggests the possible use of a prelude or introduction to the sonata, I decided against it in my own improvisation (although the first theme was intended by Sawyer to be used as such). Furthermore, I did not follow Sawyer's suggestion of broadening the theme during the development section as I did not feel this would work as effectively with the themes selected.

Whilst harmonising the themes in a convincing Romantic style was not so much of a problem to me, I did spend considerable time developing my English Romantic harmonic language by either analysing the organ works by English composers³⁰ from that period or by experimenting at the organ. The four following key ideas were useful guidelines during the process of *Blumenlese*:

1. Chain of diminished seventh chords
2. Chromatic Bass line
3. Arpeggios and appoggiaturas in melodic developments
4. Chromatic harmony

Looking at these four building blocks, the question arises how these devices differ from continental (German) organ music of the mid- to late nineteenth century. It is commonly accepted that in English Victorian music a rather stoic diatonism from S. S. Wesley to Stanford prevails, together with a tendency to stick to a Mendelssohnian harmonic repertoire and a 'Brahmsian attitude towards melody'.³¹ In contrast to the much more chromatic and virtuosic style of Liszt or Karg-Elert, or indeed the richer harmonic world of César Franck in France, by focusing the *Blumenlese*-process on the organ works by Stanford and Sawyer's tutor, I hope to have been able to firmly remain within the more conservative world of Victorian organists. I feel I have been largely successful in imitating the Stanford style, although as an improvisation there will of course be inaccuracies. In particular, it may be argued that my selection of repertoire for the *Blumenlese*-process was too narrow; but from a pedagogical perspective, this selection

³⁰ This includes the Anglicised Irishman Charles Villiers Stanford.

³¹ Preface to C. V. Stanford's *Fantasia and Toccata in D minor* Op. 57, Stainer & Bell Ltd. (1994 edition)

provides a useful grounding upon which more complex harmonic variation may be superimposed.

Ex. 5.54 combines both a chain of diminished seventh chords, together with a chromatically descending Bass line. This formula lends itself particularly well for developing the first theme:

Ex. 5.54: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Allegro*, chain of diminished seventh chords with chromatic Bass line:

The musical notation for Ex. 5.54 is presented in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line consists of a chromatically descending eighth-note sequence: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D, C, B-flat. The treble staff features a series of diminished seventh chords, each marked with a colon (:) above the notes, which are played in a sequence that follows the chromatic descent of the bass line.

Ex. 5.55 is another formula that I found useful for developing themes: this formula is based on broken chords, embellished by an extensive use of appoggiaturas:

Ex. 5.55: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Allegro*, arpeggios and appoggiaturas:

The musical notation for Ex. 5.55 is presented in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The treble staff contains a melodic line with several appoggiaturas (accents) and arpeggiated figures. The bass staff contains broken chords (arpeggios) that correspond to the notes in the treble staff.

During my practice sessions in this style, I soon realised that I needed to focus on increasing my knowledge-base of harmonic formulae in order to avoid extensive repetition of the same formulae. Ex. 5.56 is a good example of a formula that enables me to move around keys quickly, whilst also applying chromatic harmony for dramatic effect (bar 4).

The *Adagio* movement of my improvised sonata is also based on two contrasting themes from Sawyer's tutor book (Exx. 5.57 and 5.58). Whilst many of the harmonic formulae of this movement were similar to those used in the *Allegro* movement, I would like to point out the chromatically altered Victorian-style

cadence formula (Ex. 5.59) which I found particularly helpful when improvising the *Adagio* movement.

Ex. 5.56: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Allegro*, chord sequence for motivic developments:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.56, showing a chord sequence in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notation is presented in grand staff format (treble and bass clefs). The sequence consists of five measures of chords in the right hand and a corresponding bass line in the left hand.

Ex. 5.57: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Adagio*, first theme by Sawyer, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 35):

Musical notation for Ex. 5.57, labeled "128 1st Theme. Con moto." in 3/8 time. The key signature has one sharp (F-sharp). The notation is presented in grand staff format. The first theme is characterized by a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

Ex. 5.58: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Adagio*, second theme by Sawyer, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 35):

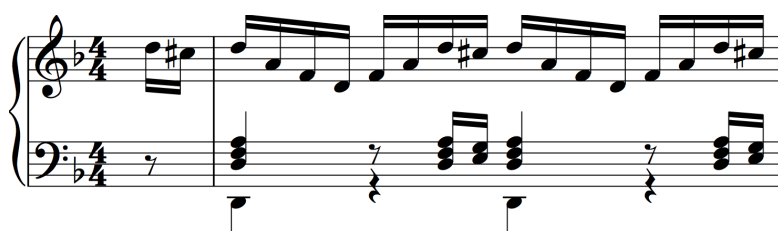
Musical notation for Ex. 5.58, labeled "2nd Theme in Dominant." in 3/8 time. The key signature has two sharps (F-sharp and C-sharp). The notation is presented in grand staff format. The second theme features a melodic line in the right hand with slurs and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

Ex. 5.59: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Adagio*, Victorian cadence:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.59, showing a Victorian cadence in 3/8 time. The key signature has two sharps (F-sharp and C-sharp). The notation is presented in grand staff format, illustrating a typical cadence formula with a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

Whilst the first two movements of my *Victorian Organ Sonata* were both in sonata form, the theme for the final movement *Toccata* (Ex. 5.60) was loosely modelled on the toccata section from Stanford's *Fantasia and Toccata in D minor* Op. 57. The blueprint for this improvisation was less prescriptive compared to the first two movements: after the theme is presented, a highly chromatic and modulatory section ensues, leading to the final statement of the theme. Following Stanford's example, a steady stream of semiquavers was maintained throughout.

Ex. 5.60: *Victorian Organ Sonata* (improvisation), *Toccata*, theme:



Theme and Variations

Whilst improvising the *Victorian Organ Sonata* required an extensive amount of research and practice of formulae, the task of improvising the *Theme and Variations*, based on a theme by Sawyer (Ex. 5.61), was less daunting as it was already very much prescribed by Sawyer: not only was a characteristically harmonised theme provided, but the first two bars of each variation were written out as well. This proved most useful to me when practising improvising these variations, making it relatively easy to complete them.

Early Twentieth Century

Herbert Howells (1892-1983) is one of the most important and influential figures in British musical life during the early twentieth century. In the modern Anglican tradition of improvisation, Howells's style is a prominent influence (see interviews in Appendix A) and for that reason is particularly relevant to this project.

Early in his career, Howells exhibited an interest in rhapsody, and this is evident in many of his organ works. He also had a reputation for being an outstanding improviser himself and used this skill extensively before Evensong during his time as acting Organist at St John's College, Cambridge (Spicer, 1998: 125). With the exception of my Tudor-style improvisations, it is the Howells-style rhapsodic

Ex. 5.61: Theme and Variations (improvised), based on a theme and variation model by Sawyer, from *Extemporization* (?1890: 41):

145 *Andante.*

Var. 1. *Ch.*

Var. 2. *Fl. Solo.*

Var. 3. *Ch. Lento.*
Sw. Solo Reed.

Var. 4. *Più vivo.*
Gt. to Prin. f

Var. 5. *Minor.*
Adagio.
Soft Sw. pp
Man. Ped.

Var. 6.
f

improvisation *Master Howells's Testament* (CD 3, track 19) which required most preparation. The formulae considered in this thesis were predominantly derived from Howells's organ works, but also from the organ accompaniments of his choral repertoire, which provided a wealth of key phrases.

Rhapsody: Master Howells's Testament

As mentioned before, improvising convincingly in the style of Herbert Howells presented a real challenge to me, as Howells's stylistic traits are most specific to him. The fact that Howells primarily works with key motifs, rather than fully-

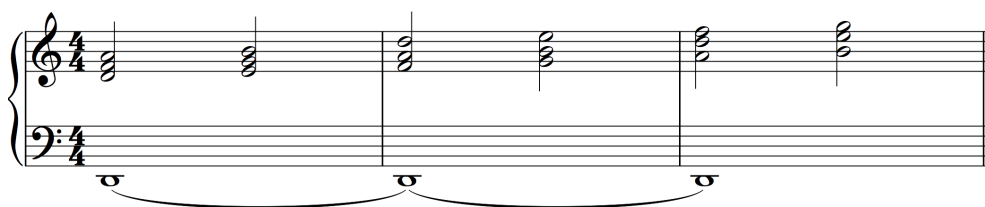
fledged themes, made the task of improvising in his style considerably more difficult as I am used as an improviser to structure my playing based almost entirely on the theme. In order to compensate, I decided to improvise in arch form, starting soft, getting gradually louder and then dying away again, demonstrating the varied tonal palate of the English orchestral organ.

During my practice sessions, I found it helpful to think in tonal centres rather than keys, as the concept of keys is not really applicable to Howells's music. Practising formulae in specific tonal centres meant that I was able to combine them, like building blocks, to create larger units, giving me a point of orientation during the process of improvisation. Although improvising a Howellsian rhapsody would suggest great freedom on the part of the improviser, I realised that in order to improvise convincingly in that style, I had to apply many different key formulae, making this one of the most prescriptive styles within the whole DVD project. The comparatively huge number of specific harmonic and motivic key formulae I applied illustrates the level of detail required in achieving a convincing Howells-style improvisation. These include the following:

1. Modal pedal point (Ex. 5.62)

Howells uses impressionistic devices, such as modal and pentatonic harmony, parallel chords and an avoidance of the leading note. Ex. 5.62 shows the chords of D minor and E minor played alternately in different inversions, indicating the Dorian mode on D.

Ex. 5.62: Modal pedal point:



2. Harmonic blurring (Ex. 5.63)

Looking at the opening bars of Howells's *Psalm Prelude* Op. 32 No. 1, we can see one example of how Howells distorts the clear-cut chord progression: he holds on to some notes of the first chord whilst the other voice parts move on to the notes of

the next chord, thus creating appoggiaturas, suspensions and passing notes, or as I term it: a 'harmonic blur' (Ex. 5.63).

Ex. 5.63: 'Harmonic blurring':

(pedal optional)

3. Phrygian chordal pendulum (Ex. 5.64)

Here an example of a chordal pendulum starting on D with a Phrygian inflection (flattened 2nd):

Ex. 5.64: Phrygian chordal pendulum:

4. Howellsian plagal cadence (Ex. 5.65)

When improvising modally, it is important to avoid leading notes under any circumstances. Hence, the use of Plagal cadences (IV-I) is ideal. What makes the Howellsian plagal cadence so special is the fact that it doesn't start with chord IV but the first inversion of II which then eventually resolves to chord I. However, one perceives it as a Plagal cadence due to its Bass line (notes IV-I).

Ex. 5.65: Howellsian plagal cadence:

5. Howellsian idiomatic melodic phrases (Ex. 5.66)

Here is another version of the Howellsian plagal cadence, together with two options of typical Howellsian melodic phrases placed on top (Ex. 5.66):

Ex. 5.66: Howellsian idiomatic melodic phrases:

The image shows a musical score for two melodic patterns. The top staff is labeled 'Melody Pattern 1' and contains a sequence of notes: a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a half note B4. The bottom staff is labeled 'Melody Pattern 2' and contains a sequence of notes: a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a half note B4. The score is set in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass line consists of a D4 octave pedal point in the first measure, which changes to an E4 octave pedal point in the second measure, creating a plagal cadence.

6. Chain of suspensions (Ex. 5.67)

Ex. 5.67 presents a practical way of creating harmonic textures in a Howellsian manner by playing an ostinato in the left hand as, shown in bar 1, based on the chords of D minor and E minor. The right hand improvises a two-part counterpoint on top of the ostinato: bar 1 contains a simple chain of suspensions whilst the two voices in bars 2-5 are mostly alternating:

Ex. 5.67: Chain of suspensions:

The image shows a musical score for a chain of suspensions. The left hand plays an ostinato based on the chords of D minor and E minor. The right hand improvises a two-part counterpoint. The score is set in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The left hand plays a sequence of chords: Dm, Em, Dm, Em, Dm, Em, Dm, Em, Dm, Em. The right hand plays a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The score is set in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The left hand plays a sequence of chords: Dm, Em, Dm, Em, Dm, Em, Dm, Em, Dm, Em. The right hand plays a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The score is set in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature.

left hand: ostinato

7. Pentatonic harmony (Ex. 5.68)

Pentatonic scales and chords, due to the lack of semitones, create a wonderful floating effect and were used regularly by Howells. I found internalising the pentatonic scales on C, B flat and E flat and experimenting with different inversions of chords based on these scales very useful for my improvisation.

Ex. 5.68: Howells, 'Psalm Prelude No. 3', from *Three Psalm Preludes for Organ (set two)*, bars 51-55:

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Tuba, Swell (Full), and Swell to pedal. The Tuba part is in the treble clef, 3/4 time, and consists of a melodic line with various rhythmic values and accidentals. The Swell (Full) part is in the bass clef, 3/4 time, and consists of a series of chords, some with long notes and some with shorter notes. The Swell to pedal part is also in the bass clef, 3/4 time, and consists of a series of notes, some with long notes and some with shorter notes. The score is for bars 51-55.

8.1. Howells scale (simple version, Ex. 5.69)

Like many other composers of the twentieth century, Howells worked with modal scales and showed a particular preference for what Paul Spicer calls the 'Howells scale'. The simple version of that scale (Ex. 5.69) consists of a major scale modally inflected by a raised 4th ('Lydian') and a flattened 7th ('Mixolydian'):

Ex. 5.69: Howells scale on C (simple version):

The image shows a musical score for the Howells scale on C (simple version). The scale is written in the treble clef, 3/4 time, and consists of the following notes: C, D, E, F#, G, A, Bb, C. The notes F# and Bb are marked with arrows and labeled 'raised 4th' and 'flattened 7th' respectively.

The simple version printed here is the very scale Howells himself wrote out for Paul Spicer during Paul's time as composition student at the RCM.³² Although having termed it as 'Howells scale' within this thesis, it is internationally referred to as the acoustic scale (Gardonyi & Nordhoff, 1990: 135) which composers started to use by the end of the nineteenth century (Franz Liszt, for instance, applied it 1866 in his oratorio *Christus*).


8.2. Howells scale (extended version, Ex. 5.70)

The extended version of the Howells scale also includes the flattened 3rd and sharpened 7th and is often used by Howells in the pedal part at the end of his compositions (Coda Model No. 2; Ex. 5.72).


³² Conversation with the author (04th May 2009).

Ex. 5.70: Extended Howells scale (extended version):

'Howells scale' on C (extended version)



'Howells scale' on C (extended version) as often used in pedal codas



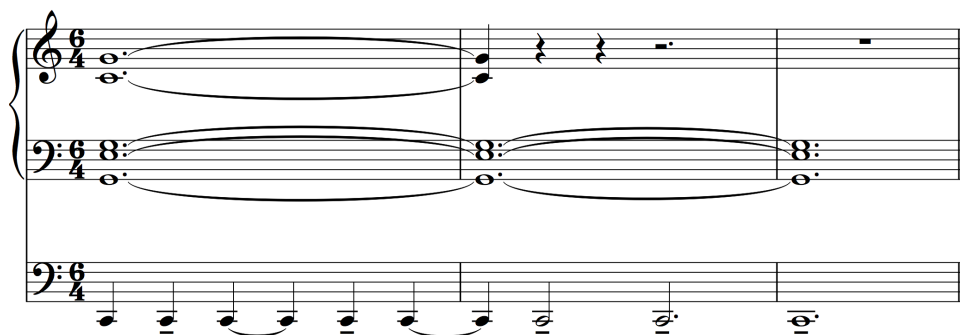
9. Coda Models (Exx. 5.71 and 5.72)

One typical characteristic of a majority of Howells's organ and choral works is a seemingly endless final chord, together with some movement in the pedal. In my improvisation, I have used the following two coda models, giving my Howellsian improvisation the right idiomatic feel of an ending.

9.1. Coda Model No. 1:

Long-held chord on the manual, irregular pulsation of the pedal note (Ex. 5.71):

Ex. 5.71: Howells, 'Psalm Prelude No. 3', from *Three Psalm Preludes for Organ (set one)*, final bars:



9.2. Coda Model No. 2:

Long-held chord on the manual, extended version of syncopated Howells scale (see stage six) in the pedal (Ex. 5.72).

Ex. 5.72: Coda with Howells scale in the pedal:

pedal: 'Howells scale' on C (extended version)

10. Signature chords (Ex. 5.73)

One of Howells's signature chords that is based on the Howells scale (simple version) is the augmented triad on VII. Howells uses this chord the following way (Ex. 5.73):

Ex. 5.73: Augmented triad on B Flat:³³

VII I VII I

11. Signature motifs (Ex. 5.74)

When experimenting with short melodic phrases based on snappy rhythmic motifs, I realised that Howells seems to show a preference for the following intervals: minor 3rd – raised 4th – flattened 7th. Here are a few examples of my practice attempts (Ex. 5.74, a-c):

Ex. 5.74: Rhythmic motifs applied:

a. b. c.

³³ See Howells, 'Psalm Prelude No. 3', from *Three Psalm Preludes for Organ (set two)*, bars 212-214.

12. Pivot notes and false relations (Ex. 5.75)

According to Donald Grice, 'Howells frequently employs third relations in his harmonic shifts throughout the organ works.' (2008: 54) These mediant shifts can easily be achieved by using pivot notes, i.e. the common note between two chords, as shown in Ex. 5.75:

Ex. 5.75: Mediant shifts:



Not only do these harmonic progressions have a refreshing effect on the ear: they are also ideal devices for changing from one tonal centre to another. The excerpt above, for instance, proved very useful to me for modulating from the tonal centre of B flat – the chord of E flat 7 could be interpreted as the subdominant of the tonal centre of B flat – to the tonal centre of G.

13. Structure (Fig. 5.2)

The structure of my Howells-style improvisation is in arch form. According to Grice, 'Howells utilised arch forms in many of his rhapsody-based organ works [...]' Typically, such works begin quietly, build to a powerful climax near the latter half of the piece, and then draw to a quiet close, often fading to virtually nothing in the final measures.' (2008: 41; Fig. 5.2)

Fig. 5.2: Arch form structure:

BACKGROUND	→	FOREGROUND	→	EPILOGUE
(soft)		(loud)		(dying away)

Whilst it is not possible to give a detailed description of my complete Howells-style improvisation, I would like to focus on the middle section of the improvisation (Ex. 5.76): here, the modal harmony is based around the tonal centre of B flat and is following a model taken from Howells's *Sarum Service* (1966). Although I adhered

to the harmonic outline as stated here, I did take some liberty in embellishing or drawing out certain parts of it to suit the sound of the Romantic Walker organ at Bristol Cathedral and the acoustic of the building.

Ex. 5.76: Harmonic outline of the middle section (tonal centre of B flat):

The musical score for Ex. 5.76 is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is B-flat major. The systems are labeled with their respective harmonic outlines:

- System 1 (measures 1-2):** Labeled "'C minor' 'B flat major'". It begins with a 3/4 time signature and includes dynamic markings 'man.' and 'ped.'.
- System 2 (measures 3-4):** Labeled "'A flat major' G minor". It continues with a 3/4 time signature and includes 'man.' and 'ped.' markings.
- System 3 (measures 5-8):** Labeled "'C major/minor' C minor F major A flat major". This system features multiple time signatures: 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 3/4. It includes 'man.' and 'ped.' markings.
- System 4 (measures 10-13):** Labeled "'E flat major' G minor C minor F major". It starts with a 4/4 time signature and ends with a 3/4 time signature. It includes a 'ped.' marking.
- System 5 (measures 14-17):** Labeled "'G minor' 'E flat major' 'B flat major'". It begins with a 3/4 time signature and concludes the section.

Having listened to this improvisation again after many years, I still think this has been a successful attempt of improvising in Howells's style. The only criticism I

have is that I was maybe relying too much at the time on general pistons. In retrospect, it might have been better to explore the use of divisional pistons more, to create smoother build-ups and diminuendos. However, given the restricted preparation time and recording time available, I felt setting up general pistons was a safer approach.

The Neoclassical Period

Whilst improvising in the style of Howells was decidedly outside my comfort zone and necessitated a considerable number of formulae, I found improvising in Neoclassical styles relatively straightforward and therefore required fewer building blocks. However, I did struggle to find composers who would sum up the Neoclassical period in their writing. For want of a better solution, I decided to improvise three contrasting pieces, each reflecting the style of a British twentieth-century organ composer of note. My attempts resulted in a *Paean in the style of Britten* (CD 3, track 20), a *March in the style of Mathias* (CD 3, track 21) and an *Ostinato in the style of Leighton* (CD 3, track 22).

Paean in the style of Britten

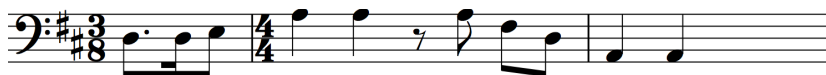
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) has hardly left any organ solo music, with the exception of his *Prelude and Fugue on a Theme of Vittoria*, the style of which did not appeal to me as an improviser. However, the organ part in his *Jubilate Deo in C for choir and organ* (1961) offers a wonderful selection of idiomatic ideas: simple yet distinctive use of harmony and use of short and rhythmically charged motifs. My *Paean* improvisation in the style of Britten was based on a simple figuration idea of a D major triad and was inspired by the beginning of Britten's *Jubilate Deo* (Ex. 5.77):

Ex. 5.77: *Paean in the style of Britten* (improvisation), main theme:

The musical notation shows a two-staff piece in 4/4 time and D major. The right-hand staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C#6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter), F#6 (quarter), G6 (quarter), A6 (quarter), B6 (quarter), C#7 (quarter), D7 (quarter). The left-hand staff (bass clef) contains a simple accompaniment of D major triads: D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter), D2-F#2-A2 (quarter). The first measure is labeled 'tonal centre 'D'' and the second measure is labeled 'tonal centre 'A''.

Again, I found the concept of thinking in tonal centres, rather than keys, most helpful as it allowed me to combine the main theme (Ex. 5.77) with the pedal theme (Ex. 5.78):

Ex. 5.78: *Paean in the style of Britten* (improvisation), pedal theme:



During the development section of *Paean*, I applied a pivot note chord progression, e.g. F major – F sharp minor – A minor (all connected by the note A), as seen in Ex. 5.79:

Ex. 5.79: *Paean in the style of Britten* (improvisation), chord progression:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.79: Chord progression. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The top system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a sustained chord progression. The bottom system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a sustained chord progression. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

In order to achieve contrast, I included a middle section in my improvisation in 7/8 time: based on a simple major triad, I applied a chain of dissonant clashes above (Ex. 5.80):

Ex. 5.80: *Paean in the style of Britten* (improvisation), theme for middle section:

Musical notation for Ex. 5.80: Theme for middle section. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The top system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line. The bottom system shows a bass clef staff with a sustained chord progression. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 7/8.

Although I am now critical of using general pistons extensively in Howells-style improvisations, I do think that the use of generals works very well in my Britten-style improvisation as the priority here is to quickly change between different contrasting sound combinations as opposed to creating smooth crescendos.

March in the style of Mathias

Whilst improvising in the style of Britten required me to focus predominantly on traditional triads, I needed to explore new harmonic techniques in my *March in the style of Mathias*. The percussive effect of Mathias's organ piece *Jubilate* (Op. 67 No. 2), together with the extensive use of quartal harmony, made Mathias's style instantly accessible for improvisation. Based on this piece and Mathias's piece *Processional*, I applied the following key ideas in my own improvisation:

1. Quartal harmony: superimposing fourths.
2. Parallelism (major triads)
3. Chromatically descending fifths
4. Rhythm: use of syncopations

The introduction uses the chamade stop of the Neoclassical Walker organ at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral most effectively, starting the improvisation with a staccato chord, followed by a chain of open fifths on the Swell (Ex. 5.81). I found the brash sound of the chamade reeds, together with the generous acoustic of the cathedral most inspiring when improvising the introduction and the combination of the two encouraged me to experiment with staccato chords.

Ex. 5.81: *March in the style of Mathias* (improvisation), introduction:



This is then followed by a contrasting formula which includes both the use of parallel triads (E flat major, D flat major; Ex. 5.82, second bar) as well as syncopated rhythms (Ex. 5.82, second bar).

Ex. 5.82: *March in the style of Mathias* (improvisation), Rumba-esque motif:

The main theme of my Mathias-style improvisation is based on Mathias's *Processional*, featuring alternating C major and D major triads which add a Lydian flavour (F sharp) to the tonal centre of C (Ex. 5.83). The formula shown in Ex. 5.84 is primarily based on chromatically descending open fifths, above which a chromatically ascending melody unfolds.

Ex. 5.83: *March in the style of Mathias* (improvisation), march motif based on theme of Mathias's *Processional*:

Ex. 5.84: *March in the style of Mathias* (improvisation), chromatically descending fifths:

The formula depicted in Ex. 5.85 gives an example of how quartal harmony can be applied: the right hand plays the quartal chord of the left hand one octave higher, whilst also adding figurations.

Ex. 5.85: *March in the style of Mathias* (improvisation), quartal harmony:



I have found improvising in the style of Mathias very rewarding, as I naturally took to the rhythmical vitality of that style. The harmonic language is close to the German concept of 'Neomodality' (Stoiber, 2018: 135), which may explain why combining the Mathias-style formulae did not cause too much of a problem for me.

Ostinato in the style of Leighton

Although Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988) was a more prolific organ composer than Britten, it was difficult for me to improvise convincingly in Leighton's style. This may be surprising, given that Leighton's personal style offers plenty of formulae for *Blumenlese* (e.g. chromatic figures, use of tritones, and so on). However, I found the recombination of these formulae particularly challenging, possibly due to the fact that Leighton's style did not really resonate with me. Despite his productive output of organ works, Leighton did not take to the organ naturally:

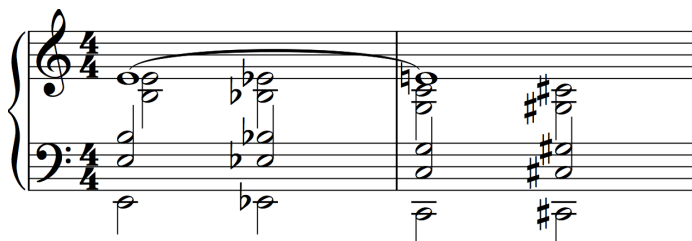
I don't like the organ very much. On this instrument, one can produce magnificent effects but I find it incapable of expressing those fine feelings which are the secret to a truly human music. It is an instrument without a heart. (Kolodziej, 2012: 322)

Yet again, I branched out to the composer's choral works and discovered Leighton's 'Agnus Dei' from his *Communion Service in D* (Op. 45) to sum up key formulae of his chromatic style. The chord progression, taken from bars 2 and 3 of the 'Agnus Dei' formed the basis for the recorded *Ostinato* improvisation (CD 3, track 22).

Whilst rhythm plays an important role in Mathias's style, I realised I needed to take a slightly different approach when improvising my *Ostinato in the style of Leighton*. Overall, Leighton's organ music displays more lyricism compared to

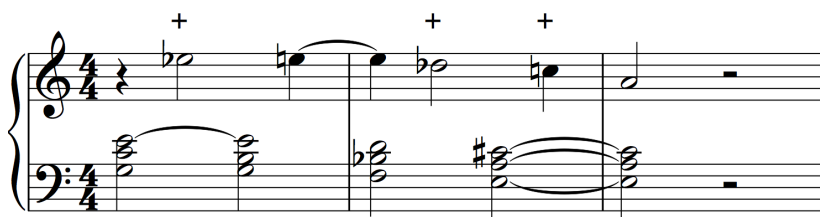
Mathias's works, and it is this aspect of Leighton's style that I decided to focus on in my improvisation. As there is evidence that Leighton was fond of the concept of the passacaglia – he wrote a number of organ passacaglias – I decided to use the chord sequence shown in Ex. 5.86 as an ostinato.

Ex. 5.86: *Ostinato in the style of Leighton* (improvisation), ostinato:



This chord sequence (Ex. 5.86) cleverly unites the concept of parallel fourths with that of parallel triads (E minor – E flat major – C major – C sharp minor). Above this ostinato, I improvised a series of variations which all included what I termed 'soft melodic clashes': false relations, whereby the major and minor third are played at the same time (Ex. 5.87; '+' marks the simultaneous occurrence of major and minor thirds):

Ex. 5.87: *Ostinato in the style of Leighton* (improvisation), false relations played simultaneously:



During the course of the improvisation, each variation gradually becomes louder, culminating in using the full organ. Although not planned as such initially, I used chords based on Messiaen's Second Mode of Limited Transposition for the climax variations during the recording process (Ex. 5.88):

Ex. 5.88: Tetrads based on Messiaen's Second Mode of Limited Transposition (Stoiber, 2018: 129):



I regularly use this chord sequence in concert and (occasionally) liturgical improvisation, so it was part of my long-term memory knowledge-base of formulae. In the heat of the moment it seemed appropriate to increase the intensity of dissonances, highlighting the climatic point within the improvisation.

The Present

The final improvisation (CD 3, track 23) is entitled *Changes*³⁴ and is not only stylistically the most contemporary of all the improvisations: it also embraces group improvisation – in this case, an improvisation with organ and percussion. The idea for this approach was born when I took part in the St Albans Organ Improvisation Competition in 2009, where candidates were asked to improvise with a percussionist on three given texts of poetry. I thoroughly enjoyed working with percussionist Sam Walton (now percussion professor at the Royal College of Music, London) and invited him back for this recording project. There was no specific style I wanted to aspire to: the overall aim was to create a piece of music in collaboration with Sam in, what we considered at the time, a contemporary style. Although it might be surprising to see such a contemporary improvisation on a DVD which focuses on historical styles, I felt it important for *Changes* to be included as it reflects current developments in English improvisation which, in a couple of years, might be regarded as historical as well.

Changes

It is rare to have the privilege to improvise on the organ with another professional musician, so recording *Changes* with Sam was a moment I particularly enjoyed whilst working on this DVD project. Whilst I had prepared a number of key formulae/ideas, the overall structure of the improvisation was briefly discussed with Sam beforehand, identifying structural key points such as loud and soft sections. However, what happened during the course of the recording was largely based on good communication, each of us reacting to ideas we would present to each other.

³⁴ This title reflects the regular metrical change, which forms the core of the improvisation.

As in the Mathias-style improvisation, rhythm was an important key factor in this group improvisation and the opening theme, with its 7/8-time signature, reflects this very well (Ex. 5.89):

Ex. 5.89: *Changes* (improvisation), opening theme:



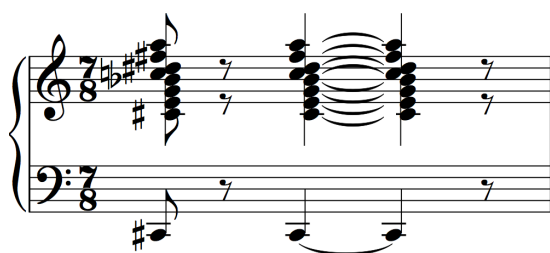
Another recurring idea is the fanfare motif (Ex. 5.90) which can be combined with the opening theme:

Ex. 5.90: *Changes* (improvisation), fanfare motif:



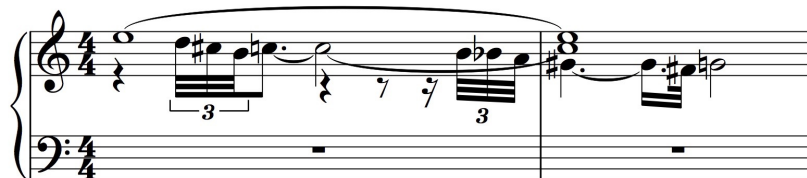
Whilst the harmonic language applied in this improvisation is too varied to discuss in detail, I would like to point out what Zsolt Gardonyi and Hubert Nordhoff refer to as the 'alpha chord' (1990: 180; Ex. 5.91): here, two diminished seventh chords – one starting on C sharp, the other on C natural – are played at the same time one octave apart. The density of this chord (eight notes of the chromatic scale are played simultaneously) makes it a great harmonic device for climatic moments in improvisation:

Ex. 5.91: *Changes* (improvisation), 'alpha chord' as described by Gardonyi & Nordhoff (1990: 180):



The formula applied during the final section of *Changes* is based on the gradual build-up of a C major triad, interspersed with chromatic notes (Ex. 5.92):

Ex. 5.92: *Changes* (improvisation), C major build-up:



Whilst a free group improvisation, such as *Changes*, might suggest that not much preparation is required, both Sam and I realised early in the process that we needed to write down a rough outline of our improvisation, including brief sketches of themes, to avoid meandering. Once we had a written structure in place, it was much easier for us to follow each other's queues, ensuring a good level of focus throughout the performance. Whilst the performance of *Changes* did not have any noticeable effect on my skills in conventional stylistic improvisation, it did expand my awareness of the expressive power of improvisation as I was able to work within a much wider framework which did not necessitate prior analysis of other composers' work. The music-making felt much more instant and exciting as the emphasis had shifted from focusing entirely on my own musical output to reacting to and being inspired by another performer's musical ideas. Combining organ and percussion for the final improvisation on the DVD made for a wonderful climax of a most enjoyable and rewarding improvisation project as it added a strong percussive element to the comparatively mellow tone of the organ.

Ceremonial March

The opening improvisation *Ceremonial March* (CD 3, track 1) on the DVD belongs to the 'Celebratory music genre', as Peter Hardwick terms it (2003: 163). This improvisation has been largely inspired by Herbert Sumsion's *Ceremonial March in D major* which is a fine example of British pomp-and-circumstance without following too closely the chromatically charged Elgar prototype. It is the clear harmonic and formal structure of Sumsion's march which makes it more accessible to improvisation than Elgar's marches. My improvised *Ceremonial March* is a tonal improvisation using the chamade stop of the Walker organ at Liverpool

Metropolitan Cathedral to great effect. I shall not discuss any formulae applied within this thesis, since a fully written-out transcription of the improvisation can be found in Appendix E.

Of all the styles represented on the DVD, I found improvising in Tudor style and Howells style most challenging, as I was least experienced in improvising in these styles. The Baroque and Neoclassical periods, by contrast, felt much more accessible to me as these styles are not too dissimilar from what I was accustomed to in Germany. In order to conquer both Tudor and Howells styles, I needed to extract a larger number of key formulae in order to produce convincing results in my improvisations. Having discussed the musical aspects of my stylistic improvisations, I now look at the practical realisation of these during the recording and filming process.

Practical realisation

In order to achieve greater stylistic consistency, I selected organs appropriate to the historical style of the improvisations played on them. One could of course argue that this does not reflect the practice of Anglican cathedral organists today as not many Anglican cathedrals have one-manual Tudor-style organs, nor two-manual Baroque-style instruments, and that cathedral organists would have to apply stylistic improvisations (e.g. Tudor style) to the instruments available, which, in many cases, would be a large organ in the English orchestral style. Whilst I was aware of this predicament, I decided to go ahead with my initial plan anyway for the sake of discipline and because I was genuinely excited to find out what the application of the formulae I collected would sound like on instruments similar to the ones the composers used.

All Tudor-style improvisations (CD 3, tracks 2, 4, 6 and 7) were recorded on the Wetheringsett organ,³⁵ a reconstruction of a Tudor organ by Goetze & Gwynn

³⁵ The Wetheringsett organ, together with another Tudor instrument ('Wingfield organ') is owned by the Royal College of Organists, 'which maintains a UK-wide programme of residencies. Such residencies allow organisations to use the instruments in liturgy, concert, and in educational work.' [accessed at https://www.rco.org.uk/library_tudor_organ.php retrieved on 13th February 2018] At the time of the recording (22nd February 2011), the Wetheringsett organ was at Holy Trinity Church, South Kensington, London.

(2002) based on an old soundboard found in the village of Wetheringsett in Suffolk. Although the use of stops for pre-Reformation organ music is rather speculative, the design of the Wetheringsett instrument, which includes sliders, shows that it was possible to operate stops separately – as opposed to *Blockwerk* organs. During the recording session, I used different combinations of stops for each verse to achieve good musical contrast. On modern instruments, this would translate to using variations of stops at 8', 4' and 2' pitch. However, I omitted the use of the Regal and Stopped Wood Bass 10' on the Wetheringsett instrument as I found them musically less convincing. Also, I did not change stops during the playing of a verse as this would have been impossible: the sliders cannot be operated when sitting at the console.³⁶

The Purcell-style improvisations (CD 3, tracks 8-10) were played on the organ of Adlington Hall, an instrument probably built by Bernard 'Father' Smith in 1693 – two years before Purcell's death. The registrations used both in the improvised *Trumpet Voluntary* (CD 3, track 8) and *Double Voluntary* (CD 3, track 10) are identical:

Great: Open Diapason 8, Stopped Diapason 8, Trumpet 8

Choir: Stopped Diapason 8, Bassoon 8

There is, of course, no set registration practice for Purcell's double voluntaries, so other major considerations were: Is the balance between the Great and the Choir convincing? Is the sound exciting? As the reeds on the organ at Adlington Hall were astonishingly brash and exuberant, I decided to use them in my improvised *Double Voluntary*, except for the vox humana stop which was badly out of tune - despite various attempts to tune it on the day. In order to achieve some contrast, I used an 8' and 4' chorus registration for my *Divisions upon a Ground* (CD 3, track 9):

Great: Open Diapason 8, Principal 4

Choir: Stopped Diapason 8, Stopped Flute 4

³⁶ The registration for the Fantasia was 5' and Octave throughout (which translates into 8' and 4' stops but sounding a fourth higher), although it was not possible to reconstruct which of the 5' and Octave stops were used in the actual recording.

The Gerard Smith organ from 1717 at St Lawrence, Little Stanmore, was rebuilt by Goetze & Gwynn in 1994 and it is in this church that Handel used to perform for the Duke of Chandos. It therefore seemed only fitting to record all Handel-style improvisations (CD 3, tracks 11-14) there. The J. W. Walker organ at Bristol Cathedral from 1907 is one of the few surviving large English Romantic instruments from that organ builder and is a most suitable instrument for both Victorian and Howellsian improvisations (CD 3, tracks 15-19). The Neoclassical improvisations (CD 3, tracks 20-22) were played on the J. W. Walker organ (1967) at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, whilst the Frobenius organ at Kingston Parish Church (1988) was used for the contemporary improvisation (CD 3, track 23). The specification for each organ can be found in Appendix F.

All recording sessions followed the same format: I arrived during the day at the location and started practising on the organ, selecting suitable stops and setting up pistons/generals where applicable. The film team of Fugue State Films, consisting of the producer and the cameraman, started setting up in the afternoon, with the sound engineer joining them in the early evening. Recording sessions would usually commence at around 6pm and would be finished by 10pm, including packing-up time. Given the high costs for staff and venue, I had to ensure that each day was carefully planned and that no time was wasted. This applied in particular to the improvisations: a precise blueprint for each improvisation had to be prepared beforehand as only a limited amount of recording time was available. Each improvisation was recorded at least twice to generate enough material for the editing process later on as longer improvisations were sometimes edited from different takes. Short improvisations, such as the Tallis verses, were recorded in one take and did not require further editing. Longer improvisations, however, occasionally had to be spliced: the Byrd-style *Fantasia*, for instance, proved challenging to record in one take, as the smaller keyboard of the historical Tudor organ 'felt wrong' and blocked my sensory and motor memory. Also, with the pitch of the Tudor organ being a fourth sharp, it took some time to adjust my ears, as what I played did not 'sound right' and therefore my playing did not 'feel right' either, causing a blockage of the 'brains in the fingers'. However, the structure of the Byrd-style *Fantasia* blueprint allowed for a sectional recording approach and, therefore, splicing sections did not cause too much trouble. The issues arising

from recording improvisation will be discussed further in the following subsection.

Critique of entire process, including the DVD itself

The aim of this chapter was to find out whether the continental approach to stylistic improvisation, as described in my own methodology of stylistic improvisation (Chapter 4, Fig. 4.2), can be transferred to the Anglican scene. In order to answer this question, I developed an action research project which culminated in my own attempts of improvisations in English historical styles being filmed, recorded and commercially released on the DVD/CD *Ex Tempore*. The predominantly positive response of the reviews of *Ex Tempore* in both British and German music magazines (see Appendix G) suggests that both the musical quality of the improvisations and the concept of English historical improvisation itself were generally accepted by the informed listener. In Britain, David Newsholme³⁷ described *Ex Tempore* as a 'phenomenally successful release' (*International Record Review*, December 2011), whilst Oliver Condy³⁸ called it 'revelatory' (*BBC Music Magazine*, December 2011). Michael Quinn's review in *Choir and Organ* (September 2011) reads: 'a fascinating, informative, enjoyable and well-made documentary.' On the German side, reviews were equally positive. Tobias Aehlig³⁹ 'whole-heartedly recommends this DVD/CD to anyone who is seriously interested in improvisation [...] The organist Ronny Krippner [...] sums up the essentials [of each style] in his exemplarily improvised style copies', concluding: 'Very inspiring! Highly recommended!'⁴⁰ *Ex Tempore* received a similarly glowing review from Barbara Stühlmeyer in *Musica Sacra* (October 2011), who describes the DVD/CD as a 'must-have for anyone engaging with organ improvisation'.⁴¹ However, Wolfgang Valerius's review in the German magazine *Organ* (January 2012) is less favourable and I would like to discuss some of the points made in this review.

³⁷ Currently Assistant Organist at Canterbury Cathedral.

³⁸ Currently Editor of *BBC Music Magazine*.

³⁹ Currently Organist at Paderborn Cathedral, Germany.

⁴⁰ 'Jeder der sich ernsthaft mit Improvisation beschäftigt, sei diese DVD-CD wärmstens empfohlen... Der Organist Ronny Krippner [...] fasst mit beispielhaften improvisierten Stilkopien das wesentliche zusammen [...] Sehr inspirierend! Absolut empfehlenswert!' (Tobias Aehlig, in: *Kirchenmusikalische Mitteilungen*, Erzbistum Paderborn, 2/2012).

⁴¹ 'Ein Must-have für alle, die sich mit Orgel improvisation beschäftigen.' (Barbara Stühlmeyer, in: *Musica Sacra*, October 2011).

First, Valerius raises the question ‘why, of all people, [is it] a German [who] had to bestow on us a retrospective of a so-called English style of organ improvisation?’⁴² Here, the reviewer suggests that true artistic viability of this DVD cannot be granted due to the performer’s non-British citizenship. However, Valerius ignores my permanent emigration to the UK in 2004 and, subsequently, my training and career in the Anglican choral tradition, which provided me with the cultural background and context to embark on and realise this project: it is both my German heritage of stylistic improvisation and my many years of experience as organist in the UK that provides the necessary skill-set for this project. Valerius’s argument would, by extension, also render equally invalid a Bach-style improvisation by a French organist, or an improvised Classical *Suite Française* by an English organist.⁴³ Is a Bach prelude played by a German organist artistically more valuable than played by an organist with a different national background? Whilst I cannot deny that, in music, national identity and artistic authenticity are still regarded by some as being connected, I argue that music thrives not in spite of, but because of cultural cross-fertilisation, whilst increasing access to continental traditions and its effect on Anglican liturgical improvisation confirm my argument. Valerius’s final comment on that subject is unclear: ‘England is still most attractive in England.’⁴⁴ Does he mean by this that English music exports badly to the continent and is he thereby exposing his own prejudices against English music?

Second, Valerius criticises the duration of the improvised *Victorian Organ Sonata* which, in his opinion, was too short: ‘in particular the prime discipline “Victorian Organ Sonata”, with its duration of almost 8 minutes, seems more like a grotesque caricature.’⁴⁵ Whilst it is true that organ sonatas by Stanford, for instance, last between 20 and 30 minutes, it was my intention to summarise key formulae of this style and to present the outcome in a concise improvisation. A longer version of my

⁴² ‚Warum also, so möchte man fragen, muss es dann ausgerechnet ein Deutscher sein, der uns mit der vorliegenden Produktion eine Retrospektive einer vermeintlich englischen Art der Orgelimitation beschert?’ (Wolfgang Valerius, in: *Organ*, January 2012)

⁴³ The renowned English organ improviser Nigel Allcoat, who regularly improvises in historical styles, has recently been criticised on social media for his improvisations ‘clearly being pastiche’ and that ‘the Germans are the best at it’ – another example of denying authenticity in organ improvisation on nationalistic grounds.

⁴⁴ ‘England ist halt immer noch in England am attraktivsten!’ (Wolfgang Valerius, in: *Organ*, January 2012)

⁴⁵ ‘[...] so erscheint gerade das Filetstück der “Victorian Organ Sonata” mit knapp acht Minuten Spieldauer eher als groteske Karikatur.’ (Wolfgang Valerius, in: *Organ*, January 2012)

Victorian Organ Sonata – simply for duration’s sake - would not have benefited the realisation of that intention, but would have necessitated the inclusion of more key formulae which, in turn, would have weakened the pedagogical effect on value for improvisers wanting to study that style, due to information overload. Perhaps it could have been made clearer in the DVD liner notes that the recording is intended for pedagogical purposes and that stylistic imitation, as presented on the recording, is a means to an end, not the end itself. Whilst we do not know how Stanford himself improvised at the end of services, we know that John Stainer used to improvise after the service ‘a sonata movement in modern binary form’ (Sawyer, 1907: 35), indicating the structure of his improvisation but not the duration. For me, it is the structural aspect of the Victorian organ sonata that was particularly important. Although there is no evidence confirming the average length of improvised voluntaries in sonata form in the Victorian period, I do accept Valerius’s criticism: in hindsight, it might have been better avoiding the term *Victorian Organ Sonata* on my DVD, maybe calling it *Victorian Organ Extemporisations* instead?

In my stylistic improvisations, I attempted to adhere to and act upon the stylistic conventions of the relevant period, giving my improvisations what I considered to be an authentic voice in the sense of ‘truth and sincerity’. (Beard & Gloag, 2016: 18) In practical terms, I tried to achieve a high level of stylistic conformity by extracting formulae from the works of eminent composers and then recombining these formulae in an improvisation on historical organs. By extension, this leads to the following question: would a stylistic improvisation become more authentic the more elements from the past are included by the improviser? Whilst I believe the concept of *Werktreue* – that is being *treu* (true) to the work or style – to be helpful with regard to stylistic improvisation from a pedagogical point of view, I also think that this must not be confused with *Texttreue*, which is being true to the score only. Focusing on the latter can indeed lead to excessive compliance to the extent that the improviser’s flow is interrupted completely.⁴⁶ If by *Werktreue* we mean authenticity to the letter of the score, then the authenticity of the performance of a written piece can be guaranteed in that sense. If by *Werktreue*, however, we mean

⁴⁶ In his book *Fascination Organ Improvisation*, Stoiber argues that too many rules interrupt the improviser’s flow (2018: 17). This also reflects my own experience as improviser.

being true to the spirit of the piece as the composer might have imagined it, then my stylistic improvisations can be regarded as an attempt to authentically improvise in the style of the composer. In order to avoid confusion, I declare the concepts of *Werktreue* and *Texttreue* irrelevant for the purpose of this thesis and propose instead the notion of *Stiltreue*: pursuing the composer's style in improvisation, based on his or her written works. However, there are limits to *Stiltreue* in stylistic improvisation: the Assembling phase (Chapter 4, Fig. 4.2) of objective stylistic formulae in improvisation requires the improviser to use his subjective musical instinct, therefore making all stylistic improvisation also contemporary improvisation. This leads me to the conclusion that it is ultimately not possible for an improviser to be completely true to the style of a specific musical era or composer, regardless whether he or she performs on historical instruments or extracts key formulae from compositions from that period: truly authentic historical improvisation is impossible. If it is ultimately impossible for an improviser to be completely true to the style of a specific musical era, this is equally true of the performer of a notated score. Richard Taruskin comes to a similar conclusion:

The claim of self-evidence for the value of old instruments, like the claim of self-evidence for the virtue of adhering to a composer's 'intentions', is really nothing but a mystique [...] the naked emperor still parades through the halls where 'authentic' performances are heard. (1995: 74)

If it is impossible to improvise authentically in the style of a composer, then the claim made by me that my improvisations are 'in the style of', for example, Handel could be regarded as being presumptuous. Some of my Anglican colleagues have indeed expressed such criticism and whilst their reaction is understandable in terms of absolutist principles of *Werktreue*, they would, by the same argument, need to disallow any performance of a work on grounds that it cannot be true to the composer's intentions. Their criticism is a misunderstanding of my intention of using stylistic imitation as a method of improvisation.

Although I have argued that authentic historical improvisation is ultimately impossible, this does not, however, render the concept of stylistic improvisation invalid. Vincent Thévenaz argues that

improvisation in pre-defined styles grants organists a set of tricks and models with which to develop their skills and abilities to react; to feel free when playing the organ, with the organ and with [emerging] music. The many habits, conventions and clichés that rule historical improvisation are in fact channels for musical education – just as was the case until the eighteenth century. (2017: 276)

It is this pedagogical aspect which I believe makes my DVD/CD *Ex Tempore* relevant to Anglican liturgical improvisation. Although the DVD makes no specific reference to how to apply the formulae presented to Anglican services, my intention has been to provide models for the aspiring improviser. However, the aspect of timing becomes more relevant within a liturgical context as the organist needs to adapt his improvisation to the flow of the liturgy – an aspect that has not been covered by the DVD. Having a broad repertoire of formulae should, however, enable the improvising organist to reach such a level of flexibility in his or her playing. ‘While it may seem antithetical to popular notions of improvised creativity’, I therefore argue that the perceived constraints presented by stylistic improvisation ultimately allow for greater freedom in liturgical improvisation, as ‘improvisation can only exist in relation to these voluntary constraints.’ (Soules, 2004: 270; also: Ramshaw, 2013: 84) English historical stylistic improvisation similarly allows Anglican organists to respond more competently to the wide range of choral music performed in Anglican services, as it offers organists the appropriate musical vocabulary and grammar to do so: for example, Tudor-style improvisations undoubtedly add to the artistic unity of an all-Tudor Evensong. Although the concept of historical improvisation has not yet been widely accepted amongst Anglican organists (see Appendix A), there is evidence that historical improvisation has never been more popular outside the UK. According to Hans Fidom, ‘trend setting are the organ improvisers of the twenty-first century: the improvisations of [William] Porter, [Rudolf] Lutz, [Sietze] De Vries and others in Baroque-style astonish connoisseurs and devotees of early music.’ (2014: 363) It is

hoped that my collection of English historical style improvisations, as presented on the DVD/CD *Ex Tempore*, adds to the movement described by Fidom, and that it is helping to set a new trend of formal Anglican improvisation in the UK, the fostering of which is very much in the hands of Anglican organists.

Some improvisations on my DVD were edited afterwards, as discussed earlier on. It is possible of course to argue that improvisations should not be edited at all and that mistakes should be 'part of the deal', adding to the uniqueness of making music in the moment. Although I agree that one must embrace risk in improvisation, which includes making mistakes, I also think that this does not apply to all types of improvisation: whilst modal improvisation is generally much more forgiving when unintentional notes are played, it is within Tudor and Baroque music where mistakes are instantly noticeable. Given that all my improvisations were to be commercially released on an album, it is likely that customers would expect the improvisations to be of the same level of accuracy as modern recordings of composed music. One could therefore argue that the act of recording discourages complete freedom in improvisation and that recorded improvisations are closer to composition than to improvisation. The situation is somewhat similar to jazz recordings from the 1920s: Louis Armstrong's 1924 recording of *Copenhagen* was 'improvisatory in spirit, [but][...] features virtually no improvisation'. (Magee, 2005: 80) Although the limited extent of improvisation in Armstrong's case was due to time restrictions of 78rpm records, only allowing for about 3 minutes per side, the effects of the overall recording process on improvisation are remarkably similar to my DVD recording project. Although referring to recorded jazz improvisation, Mark Katz sums up the problems of recording improvisation as follows:

Knowing that time was short and aware of the permanence of recordings, performers [...] would not only choose their best work to commit to shellac but also ensure that all solos stayed within the prescribed time. To do either would require careful planning and thus militate against extensive improvisation. (2010: 85)

Commercially recorded improvisations are undoubtedly subject to what Theodor Adorno calls 'barbarism of perfection' (Adorno in Beard & Gloag, 2016: 219). The

absence of any obvious mistakes or blips in such recordings does not reflect real life, resulting in some improvisers refusing the concept of recording improvisation altogether:

If we really believe that improvisation derives its unique position from the unrepeatability of the moment of creation, as experienced by both player and listener, we can hardly do otherwise than reject any form of recording (not to mention putting an improvisation to paper and having it interpreted by a performer). What is retained in a recording or written copy of an improvisation is no more than the 'mortal remains' [...], a soulless corpse, a music deprived of the experience of that one, unique and magical moment in which player and listener together witness the birth of a real-time composition. (Raas, 2014: 349)

If the unrepeatability of improvisation, as Jan Raas argues, is a defining factor of improvisation, then one could indeed argue that the music recorded on my DVD is not improvisation at all. In fact, this would of course also apply to all other recorded improvisation, including recordings by Pierre Cochereau and so many wonderful jazz musicians. I do accept that making commercial recordings of improvisations, compared to recording live concert improvisations, changes somewhat the nature of improvisation as the former can be edited at a later stage. However, I also argue this is a small sacrifice given that recordings reach a far wider audience and allow students, in particular, to study a certain practice or tradition. Without improvisation recordings, jazz would probably have developed very differently and it is also unlikely that Pierre Cochereau's improvisations would have kick-started the renewed interest in organ improvisation in the UK. My conclusion, therefore, is that for a flourishing tradition of organ improvisation, we do need improvisers to record their playing.

Although there is a broad positive consensus amongst the majority of reviewers with regard to the artistic value of *Ex Tempore*, it is also important personally to reflect on my own improvisations: do I consider my playing to be 'successful'? Having not seen the DVD for eight years, it has been fascinating for me to watch the documentary again as part of the writing-up process of this thesis. Whilst

watching, I was reminded of the disappointment at the time of not having been able to implement historical fingering to my Tudor-style improvisations as it did not come naturally to me, blocking the flow of my improvisations. Another *faux pas* of historically informed performance practice occurred in my Howellsian Rhapsody: this improvisation mostly relies on the use of general pistons and a sequencer, neither of which were available to Howells in his prime-days as organist/composer. In fact, I found the use of thumb pistons proved too risky for recording purposes. Furthermore, applying Messiaen's Second Mode of Limited Transposition to a Leighton-style improvisation was arguably taking too much artistic licence. However, having watched and listened to the DVD again eight years later, all of these details did not mar the overall positive impression: I enjoyed listening to my improvisations and I found each one of them stylistically convincing and even inspiring. I have, since then, recorded a CD with improvisations on historical organs in the Czech Republic and Germany (CD 4),⁴⁷ and I discovered that, for instance, some Howellsian formulae unintentionally appeared in my improvisations on the Romantic Zaus organ at St Nicholas' Church, Cheb/Eger (CZ), adding a more modal flavour to my playing. Also, I noticed that my improvisations embraced regular registration changes as part of an overall arch form – a technique I acquired whilst working on my Howellsian improvisation for *Ex Tempore*. The improvised *Bohemian Organ Concerto in B flat major* (CD 4, tracks 1-3) is another example of stylistic improvisation, applying the process of *Blumenlese* to works by Bohemian composers (such as Johann Baptist Vanhal, Franz Xaver Brixi and Peregrin Poegl), whilst the two paraphrases on Renaissance motets (CD 4, tracks 22 and 23) present a wider, arguably freer, application of modernist-style organ improvisation. I believe the process of working on the DVD/CD *Ex Tempore* as part of my research project to have made me a more rounded and confident improviser, and it is this effect on me that makes the overall research project a personal success.

In this Chapter, I have assessed the success of my English historical improvisations almost exclusively against the criterion of 'authenticity'. However, it is reasonable to look beyond that and ask: what else makes a satisfactory improvisation? For

⁴⁷ The CD's title is *Orgelmusik aus Böhmen – gespielt auf historischen Orgeln des Egerlandes* [Organ Music from Bohemia – played on historical organs of the Egerland region], Ambiente-Audio, Germany (ACD-1080) and was released on 28th October 2017.

instance, should an improvisation be judged as if it were a composed piece? In my survey of Anglican improvisation, I asked all interviewees what makes a good improvisation (Appendix A, 1.2) and the outcome assists me in answering this question. 'M' argues that if 'people are listening and cannot tell the difference between a written piece and an improvisation, then the improvisation was successful.' Another interviewee, 'F', takes a similar position by saying that 'good improvisation should sound like a written piece'. 'I' agrees with the former two, stating that a good improvisation 'is a piece of music which sounds as if it could have been bought from a shop, practised and memorised.' 'A', on the other hand, is more general in his reply, saying that a good improvisation must contain 'form, key, counterpoint, imagination, colour, rhythm', which are of course also qualities of most written pieces. 'E' takes the discussion to a new level by suggesting that the context of an improvisation matters as much as its content: in concerts, 'purely musical criteria apply, but in the liturgical context, there are other considerations – the worshipper, the atmosphere being evoked, and the position within the service.' This is in line with my discussion on context earlier in this Chapter, where I have argued that there are other factors in evaluating a liturgical improvisation than the exclusively musical.

The German organist Max Springer, for instance, regards any Catholic improvisation which is not based on 'the wealth of Gregorian chant' as sentimental and trivial. (Springer, in Schildknecht, 1936: 170) The German Lutheran organist Johann Georg Herzog placed particular importance on strictly polyphonic improvisations based on Lutheran chorales. The position of Anglican organists, however, is not always clear and contradictory. As I have shown in Chapter 2, British organists such as Frank Joseph Sawyer and Harvey Grace were clear opponents of nondescript Anglican liturgical improvisation and demanded the use of clear structure, harmony and melody. In other words, they were advocating a style of improvisation that came close to, or was even identical with, composed music. Harry Alfred Harding agrees that liturgical improvisation should have form and structure, but proposes that the improvisation should not 'attract attention to itself by startling originality.' (1907: 50) Creating an atmosphere was, according to Harding, the priority of liturgical improvisers. He states that 'reference is the essential characteristic, not cleverness... there is no reason why the congregation

should not realise that the organist is improvising.’ (1901: 51) The author ‘C. V.’ follows Harding’s train of thought, saying that ‘a voluntary is not required at a recital, nor is a recital piece desirable as a church voluntary.’ (1901: 210) This not only suggests that, within the context of Anglican liturgical improvisation, a deliberate simplicity is preferable, but also raises further questions about the interdependency of composition and improvisation: are there special features in composed music that seem improvisatory in character? Conversely, are there performative strategies improvisers can use to make certain passages sound composed? In answering the former question, I argue that there are indeed certain types of organ music which display a close affinity to improvisation. The works of composers of the German *Stylus phantasticus* tradition represent a particularly close relationship between improvisation and composition. In his book *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister* (1739), German composer and writer Johann Mattheson describes the *Stylus phantasticus* as follows:

It actually consists not so much in setting or composing with the pen as in singing or playing that comes of free genius or, as is said, *ex tempore*. The Italians call this style *a mente, non a penna*.⁴⁸ (Mattheson in Snyder, 1987: 249)

Mattheson’s definition of *Stylus phantasticus* clearly favours ‘the improvisatory skill of the performer’ (Snyder, 1987: 251) by means of passagework and other ‘improvisatory’ keyboard flourishes, which are so characteristic to the organ works of composers such as Buxtehude. Of course, there are also examples in modern organ compositions which seem particularly improvisatory in nature. In his organ piece *Sahra*, the French composer Jean-Louis Florentz (1947-2004) juxtaposes cascades of fast-moving demisemi-quaver blocks of different rhythmic proportions (6:4, 3:2, 5:4), giving an aleatoric impression when performed (Florentz in Bourcier, 2018: 236-237), which again confirms Mattheson’s point about virtuosic passagework often sounding ‘improvisatory’. If certain compositions are improvisatory in character, are there particular performance strategies required by the performer to make them sound improvised? From my

⁴⁸ ‘Es bestehet eigentlich nicht sowol im Setzen oder Componiren mit der Feder, als in einem Singen und Spielen, das aus freiem Geiste, oder, wie man sagt, *ex tempore* geschiehet. Die Italiener nennen diesen Styl *a mente, non a penna*. (Mattheson, 1739: Zehntes Kapitel, §88)

own experience as organ student in Germany, I remember that the concept of *rubato* played a particularly important role in my organ lessons when bringing out the improvisatory character in works, such as Buxtehude preludes or Liszt's *Fantasy and Fugue on the Name B.A.C.H.*⁴⁹ That is not to say that other organ works did not require any *rubato*, but that the latter is considered a useful tool in giving a written piece an *ex tempore* feel. If done well, it can occasionally be difficult for the listener to distinguish with absolute certainty between the performance of a good improvisation and a composition. This problem arose during my own research, where two of the private recordings I consulted (CD 1, tracks 17 and 18) were allegedly improvisations played by George Thalben-Ball at the Temple Church in 1980, and the style as well as the performance of these pieces did nothing to suggest otherwise. What is presented as an improvisation in track 17 is in fact Brahms's chorale prelude *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* (from *11 Choralvorspiele* op. 122, 1896), and track 18 is clearly dependent upon the latter part of Sigfrid Karg-Elert's *Pax Vobiscum* (from *10 Charakteristische Tonstücke* op. 86, 1911). Whilst one could therefore argue that this shows continuing influence of German music on Anglican liturgical improvisation, not only in the nineteenth century, but continuing well into the twentieth century, it also proves how close the relationship between performing compositions and improvisations can be. Equally, improvisers applying more discipline to their improvisations, using polyphonic textures, strict metre and form, can indeed give the illusion of performing composed music. My English historical improvisations are a case in point and some of my strict stylistic improvisations could probably be mistaken for written compositions. Whilst, according to Johansson, 'in Western tradition, the terms of interpretation [i.e. composition] and improvisation are often opposed' (2008: 13), I very much see composed and improvised music as two sides of the same coin, continuously inspiring each other. It is this holistic approach to consummate music-making which defines the philosophy of my work as improviser and, most importantly, as musician.

⁴⁹ Franz Liszt: *Präludium und Fuge über den Namen B.A.C.H.* (1855/1870).

Conclusion

In Part 1 of this thesis, I have attempted to identify what the current practice of Anglican liturgical organ improvisation is and how it developed from the later nineteenth century to the present day by comparing the Anglican tradition with the French and German schools of improvisation. This has provided the context for an action research project in Part 2, in which I attempted to transfer my own expertise of stylistic improvisation to the Anglican context by improvising in the styles of English organ composers from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

The main research question underpinning Part 1 of this thesis concerned both the nature and the development of Anglican liturgical organ improvisation: *what is Anglican organ improvisation and how does it compare to continental traditions?* In Chapter 1, I decided to focus on the French and German traditions, as both schools are widely acknowledged as the most influential and widely celebrated, and have served to highlight the very different context and practices in the Anglican tradition. From the main research question, the following question arose consequently in Chapter 2: what role do the choir and organist play within the Anglican cathedral tradition and how do both influence Anglican improvisation? Whilst it has been suggested that there may not be the same emphasis on the training of improvisation in the UK compared to France and Germany because of the Anglican focus on choral singing, I have been able to show that the dual role of organist-choirmaster is a common denominator between Anglican and German organists and does therefore render this hypothesis questionable, given that Germany also has a strong improvisation tradition. Instead, I argue that the career ladder specific to Anglican church musicians may have greater implications for improvisation: in particular, when the assistant organist moves away from the organ console on becoming cathedral organist (i.e. primarily choirmaster) at a relatively young age, the development of his or her improvisation skills is effectively curtailed. Another major difference can be found in the type of training Anglican organists receive: although organ improvisation is now offered on the curriculum at many UK conservatoires, the emphasis placed on improvisation at a

conservatoire is much stronger in France and Germany compared to the UK and has been so for many decades, resulting in a more disciplined and formalised teaching tradition of organ improvisation on the continent. This is not to say, however, that there is no distinct tradition of Anglican liturgical improvisation: I have shown how a specific style of pre-Evensong improvisation has been passed down aurally in cathedrals within the articulated pupil and then organ scholar system, characterised by the application of specific clichés (e.g. chordal parallelism, modality, pedal points). Although a number of interviewees referred to pre-Evensong improvisations today as Howellsian in style, only one of the live recordings of liturgical improvisation I analysed could be classified as such. Another trademark of the Anglican improvisation style is the use of regular stop changes to create an ‘English crescendo’, ideally facilitated by the thumb pistons, Swell pedal and the idiosyncratic colours of the English orchestral organ. The peculiar location of the English cathedral organ (e.g. on a screen or in a chancel organ chamber near the choir), as well as the soft intonation of the pipes designed for choir accompaniment, results in an organ sonority which may encourage the homophonic, harmony-driven style of Anglican improvisation compared to the clear polyphonic textures available on the classical German West-end organ, for instance.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I have been able to identify three main categories of Anglican improvisation: improvised Anglican voluntaries, Anglican hymn playing and Anglican psalm accompaniment. With regard to voluntary improvisation, it has been possible to identify four different Anglican improvisation styles, each associated with a particular historical moment: Victorian Style, Edwardian or Grand Style, Anglican Modal Style and Modern French Style. These styles have emerged in succession during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and are still in evidence in the improvisations to be heard today, even though the majority of organists tend to stick to the Anglican Modal Style. Furthermore, there is a general ceremonial or celebratory character underlying many Anglican improvisations, which is particularly well reflected in the Gospel fanfare.

Looking at the development of the three main categories of Anglican improvisation since the later nineteenth century (voluntaries, hymns, psalm accompaniment), the

evidence collected indicates that Anglican organists were generally speaking granted more opportunities to improvise in the first half of the twentieth century, compared to the second half: for instance, free organ accompaniments of hymns seem to have been much more common then. Although there is no data available telling us how common it was for organists to improvise (rather than play from sheet music) free hymn accompaniments at the turn of the twentieth century, today's practice of Anglican choirs singing mostly in harmony restricts the organist's improvisational input usually to last verse reharmonisations, discouraging young Anglican organists from engaging in free hymn harmonisation at the same level as their German contemporaries. By extension, it is likely that this deprives Anglican organists of the regular practice of diatonic harmonisation. It is possible that this limitation of opportunity for Anglican organists, resulting in a lack of improvisational exercise in the playing of diatonic hymns, goes some way to explaining why English organists are mainly adept at modal improvisation which appropriately matches the function of setting the mood before the service begins. The final voluntary of services, by contrast, has become a common place for the performance of a notated composition, where the playing can be shared between the director of music and his or her assistants. Could this explain the Anglican preference for modal improvisation, where the command of strict diatonic harmony is less crucial? There is some evidence, therefore, that the English penchant for modal improvisation has arisen from the peculiar nature of Anglican worship, especially in the week-day services in cathedrals.

I have also argued that the former practice of cathedral organists playing the organ themselves, rather than conducting the choir, may not necessarily have produced better results than today, but it may have had beneficial effect on creating role-models or musical heroes in improvisation (e.g. John Stainer at St Paul's Cathedral) which is particularly important for fostering a national tradition of organ improvisation. Whilst assistant organists can of course also produce high-quality improvisations, the fact that the most senior cathedral musicians tended to stop playing the routine parts of the services, including the pre-service prelude, from the middle of the twentieth century onwards has arguably had a detrimental effect on the overall status of improvisation. However, heroes in Anglican improvisation do exist and it is thanks to organists such as John Pryer, Nigel Allcoat, David Briggs

(former organist of Truro and Gloucester Cathedrals) and Martin Baker (Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral) that a much-needed revival of improvisation in the UK (both liturgical and non-liturgical) has begun, encouraging Anglican organists to engage with improvisation in a more structured way.

In Chapter 3, I have been able to demonstrate the influence of sound recording technologies on Anglican improvisation, which manifests itself on two levels. First, the highly developed French school of improvisation, as exemplified by Pierre Cochereau, has prompted a change of the perception of improvisation amongst Anglican organists, from a mere keyboard skill to an art form. This change of perception is evident, for example, in the introduction of organ improvisation in the curriculum of many UK conservatoires and the increased output of organ improvisation CDs by Anglican organists (Appendix C). Second, typical French improvisation techniques, such as Cochereau's *tremolando* accompaniment pattern and modern modal chord progressions, are now also noticeable in Anglican organ improvisations (such as Baker's improvisation on *God rest you merry, gentlemen* at Westminster Abbey in 1996). Whilst many Anglican organists do admire the brash improvisation style of French or German organists, the background character of pre-Evensong improvisation still prevails, and it is this style of Anglican improvisation that is still regarded as one of the trademarks of traditional Anglican worship. This is the sound world Anglicans expect to hear when entering an English cathedral before Evensong.

An interesting fact to emerge from my historical review of Anglican practices of organ improvisation is that numbers of influential figures since the late nineteenth century have urged organists to improvise with the kinds of discipline and awareness of form and coherence systematically taught in Germany and France, but that this call has been countered by a preference, in Anglican practices, of a more fluid, 'improvisational' style of playing. It is perhaps too easy to dismiss this style as 'undisciplined' (or even 'uneducated'), for, as I have shown, it evidently meets the liturgical requirement of inducing a suitable atmosphere for contemplative worship: in other words, there are aesthetic and contextual aspects to improvisation that cannot be ignored.

I have been able to show that international organ improvisation competitions, such as Haarlem and St Albans, require organists to conform to an aesthetic code specific to certain national schools of improvisation. As Anglican-style improvisation is not featured in any of them, this raises the question whether Anglican organists are automatically disadvantaged in such competitions, explaining the low numbers of winners from the UK. I argue that international organ competitions are nevertheless crucial in raising the bar in organ improvisation globally and that the St Albans competition has effectively promoted stylistic improvisation in the UK, as well as giving organ improvisation a status for the English concert organist comparable to organ repertoire playing. The teaching of stylistic improvisation in the UK is anticipated in the *London Organ Improvisation Course* (LOIC) which since 2014 has offered a curriculum of Anglican and continental styles (see Appendix I).

Having identified stylistic improvisation as a particular approach to improvisation in the German school, I attempted to transfer the concept of historical style improvisation to the Anglican scene in Part 2 of this thesis. This resulted in the second main research question: *what informs my practice of English historical style improvisation?* In Chapter 4, I outlined the methodology of historical stylistic improvisation, based on the writings of German Baroque masters as summed up by Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra and Markus Schwenkreis, which also reflected my own training in Germany: extracting formulae (*Blumenlese*) from composed works and recombining these formulae during the process of stylistic improvisation. This then served as the basis for the portfolio of my own practice, which I presented in Chapter 5. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time an organist has attempted to improvise in such a wide range of English historical styles, making this, I hope, a major contribution to the art of Anglican organ improvisation. Whilst improvising in Baroque, Victorian, Neoclassical and Postmodern styles came quite naturally to me, possibly due to being close to the styles I had already studied in Germany, I did find improvising in the styles of Tallis, Byrd and Howells more challenging as I had no previous experience in these areas. The use of historical source material, such as Jane Flynn's study of Tudor styles (1993) and Donald Grice's detailed analysis of Howells's idiomatic devices (2008) proved invaluable in my attempts to improvise convincingly in these styles, demonstrating that the

eighteenth-century concept of *Blumenlese* can also be applied to styles of earlier and later periods and is thus a useful method for stylistic improvisation generally. Although *Ex Tempore* provides a pedagogical tool, the function of the DVD in this thesis is to present original examples of my practice and the process/methodology used in achieving these outcomes.

A legitimate criticism of my DVD improvisations is that in none of them have I used fingering systems from the period, or the characteristic phrasing associated with them. The main reason for this is that the student studying improvisation should not be encumbered with an entirely alien way of using one's fingers (or, indeed feet on the pedals, where relevant). On the other hand, the student already accustomed to period-fingering will have no difficulty applying it to their improvisations.

Whilst the comments from my English interviewees present a somewhat contradictory picture, there is more consensus in Germany as to the value of historical stylistic improvisation, perhaps because this has long been a compulsory discipline for student organists. But I have argued that there are other criteria in evaluating an improvisation than stylistic authenticity, and some of my English interviewees introduce the question whether a liturgical improvisation ought to sound like a notated composition.

In Chapter 5, the question of evaluation led me to invoke the notion of an 'improvisatory' performance style, relevant to works from the sixteenth-century keyboard passagework, through the Baroque topic or genre of *Stylus phantasticus*, to the Romantic/Modern understanding of virtuosity (e.g. Liszt: *B.A.C.H.*). My work has demonstrated that improvisation, in whatever style, may invoke this topic, not least by performative means, but that it may equally invoke the 'scholarly' trope associated with the composed fugue. In this respect, the question whether an improvisation ought to sound like a finished composition is no more useful than the question whether a composed piece, in performance, ought to sound like an improvisation. Both styles can be invoked in the single event, and perhaps, in most cases, needs to be. Reviewing my own recorded improvisations from this perspective, I now feel that some of my improvisations sound excessively

controlled, perhaps because, in the desire to produce a syntactically perfect piece I lost the 'heat of the moment' tension that characterises the 'improvisation' topic. On the other hand my improvisation *Master Howells's Testament* (CD 3, track 19), which caused me more trouble to present in recordable form, does to my mind have this quality of being 'on the edge', which as a live event can be very exciting; it can clearly be heard, for example, in Roy Massey's live improvisation of a Gospel Fanfare discussed in Chapter 3 (CD 1, track 6).

This thesis has focused on the practice of Anglican organ improvisation from the later nineteenth century onwards. A further question is whether improvisation in British Catholic, or indeed, non-conformist churches has been influenced by Anglican improvisation. Has there been any exchange of influence between traditions comparable to that seen in German Lutheran and German Catholic churches? Also, organ improvisation not only happens within an ecclesiastical context: organ improvisation also played a major role in British cinemas at the beginning of the twentieth century, for instance. Could it be that, rather than improvisation skills steadily improving since the early twentieth century, it actually declined between the wars following the demise of silent movies, only to be re-awakened more recently under the influence of Cochemea recordings, indigenous specialists (such as Nigel Allcoat and David Briggs), the St Albans Improvisation Competition, continental travel study, and a renewed interest in improvised film scores? There certainly is an increasing appetite for, and burgeoning number of, British practitioners of improvised film scores, such as David Briggs, Jonathan Eyre, Darius Battiwalla and Donald MacKenzie.

One of the key points to emerge from this thesis is the importance and value of an integrated system of musical training in which students are required not only to study the scores of the 'masters' (ancient and modern), or even to learn how to compose in their various styles but to improvise as well. Traditional 'theory' teaching in the UK since the 1950s has embraced the first two of these ('analysis' and 'stylistic composition') but has sorely neglected the third, the practical implementation of this 'knowledge' through improvisation. In the German tradition, conversely, 'consummate musicianship' is achieved, as Rüter-Feenstra puts it, through the practical implementation of musical knowledge: it is not

enough merely to know and understand, for example, how Baroque composers developed extended musical phrases by processes of harmonic extension, sequences and the like, but to have this knowledge, as it were, in one's fingers. In other words, the practice of stylistic improvisation is not merely a complement to, or illustration of, musical understanding, but a primary means to this end.

This thesis has brought to light some significant advantages for the organist who has acquired the skills of stylistic improvisation. Firstly, he or she will be better equipped to find a position in the competitive job-market in the cathedral world. But secondly, there is evidence that he or she will become a better musician, with not only analytical and historical appreciation of diverse styles, but a more profound, practical musicianship that transcends knowledge in its usual senses.

Furthermore, this thesis has uncovered a number of indicators that stylistic improvisation was used as a pedagogical tool, even late into the twentieth century, as evidenced by the tutor books instructing on improvisation in, for example, sonata form. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to examine why, in the course of the twentieth century, this practice-based approach has been supplanted in the UK (and elsewhere) by a paper-based pedagogy, and my task here is to urge educators and policy-makers, at all levels to reconsider improvisation as a fundamental (and not optional or peripheral) tool in the education of the organist (and, arguably, every practical musician).

My practice-based research makes a significant contribution to research into historical practices of stylistic improvisation, as well as providing support and inspiration to organists today who wish to develop this fascinating skill. Whilst I have been able to show that Anglican liturgical organ improvisation in the UK is indeed not as developed and varied as liturgical organ improvisation in France and Germany, I do see real potential in the idea of fostering a national school of improvisation in the UK. The celebration of Anglican styles of improvisation, together with an open-minded approach and practice in styles from continental schools would not only make for outstanding improvisers in the UK; I believe that the intense study of improvisation alongside repertoire performance would lead to a new generation of well-rounded liturgical organists in Britain.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Survey 'Improvisation in the UK'

1. ORGAN IMPROVISATION IN THE UK	
1.1 Please comment on the situation of organ improvisation in Britain. Have there been any changes in recent years?	
NAME	COMMENT
'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>There has been lots of improvement during the last 30 years. This is due to interest in French music & improvisation and its availability (audio recordings, video recordings via internet from Mass at Notre-Dame).</i>
'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview	<i>Organ improvisation in Britain is something which is being laughed at. It is regarded as the weak brother of the French tradition. We [in Britain] improvise:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>at the end of hymns (during collections) (Eucharist)</i> • <i>Gospel fanfares (Eucharist)</i> • <i>as the choir walks into Evensong</i> <i>Training in Organ Improvisation has never been formalised.</i>
'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview	<i>The organ in Britain is primarily an accompaniment instrument:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It is positioned next to the choir and not in the West nave where it would sound more dominant.</i> 2. <i>Improvisation only to link the 'choir bits' - no big solo role!</i> <i>There is no focus on improvisation here! And it's not taught properly either. In recent years, people have become more interested in it. There is a strong improvisation tradition in France (now less taught!). In Germany, it might be even stronger, due to the A/B/C diploma training: very strong as a taught discipline!</i>
'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>There has always been a healthy interest in improvisation here in the UK, particularly in Cochereau, as there is more available on disc. There is, in fact, generally more organ improvisation available on disc now which helps promote the art. Organ Students here are either terrified by improvisation or very keen on it!</i>
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>As I see it, there are now two types of improvisation - one for recital, and one for the church service (or degree ceremony).</i>
'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview	<i>There wasn't much before David Briggs (transcribing Cochereau). [added later: Nigel Allcoat was the first influential improvisation teacher in the UK] There have always been good improvisers in the English style. Good improvisers today: Martin Baker and Robert Houssart (again, both influenced by the French style).</i>
'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email	<i>Rather bleak I suspect: there are certainly some who take the art seriously, but it's rather isolated to individual interests. There's no real demand on the English scene for a 'crafted' approach as there has - historically - been in the Catholic and Lutheran traditions in France and Germany. By and large, improvisation has grown in the UK simply as an appendage to the English choral tradition which, of course, has hearteningly flourished for hundreds of years. On the continent, the organ has usually provided - and has been expected to provide - the primary artistic role in the liturgical life. In general, recent liturgical changes across all ecclesiastical denominations have rather served to undermine artistic traditions; the reforms in the C of E have often replaced aspirational choral music with songs/easy-listening and often banal - and supposedly sing-able-by-the-untrained - melodic ditties. This is the same in the Catholic church post-Vatican II. Cultured improvisation is as much a victim as Palestrina/Byrd/Weelkes etc. outside of the cathedral world (i.e. no longer the parish staple diet) and the desire to make everything approachable rather than sacred and aspirational and it is thus rather rare that one hears it done well in the UK.</i>

<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>The situation is difficult. Improvisation is associated with Anglican liturgy:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mood music 2. Cover gaps (filling silence) e.g. after the Offertory hymn, priests panic when there is silence! They need cover from the organist, who needs to extend the hymn. <p><i>In Roman Church, improvisation is based on Gregorian Chant.</i></p> <p><i>With improvisation, people try to get by in the UK. There's a masterclass / workshop here and there but there is no grand scheme.</i></p> <p><i>Many try to 'make a sound', but are not really covering fundamentals. It's about communicating music. It's often a mere demonstration of technical ability, of virtuosity. What is important is to provide the listener with the soul of the player – e.g. play on an 8' Bourdon!</i></p> <p><i>Too many people play the sound and do not comprehend the structure, harmony etc. The sound should only be 'the vehicle'. Fast and loud covers a multitude of sins. Play an Adagio → this shows soul, communicates soul.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>There are people like Ronny Krippner & David Davies who can do it in style. What has happened is this: chiefly through the work of David Briggs (and, I suppose Nigel Allcoat and others), British improvisation has escaped from its traditional chores: ghastly, aimless pre-service filling; Gospel fanfares (ugh); and (worst of all) filling in while the hymn collection finishes. No, actually there is something worse, and that is the hideous embellishment applied to psalm accompaniment; this is always surplus to requirements and should be abolished. E.g.: 'have you heard x doing 'a moth fretting a garment?'' 'No, but maybe he'll grow out of it, and apologise to the singers one day.' Some people now think of improvisation as free-standing music in its own right, which in fact it is. This is a big step forward.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>It would appear that organ improvisation in Britain has become more international in its flavour: first, it was traditionally the preserve of the church rather than the concert hall in this country; second, the style of the improvisation was most probably very English, reflecting perhaps the compositional style of a past era. In recent years, concert improvisation seems more prevalent in this country, and liturgical styles of improvisation are much broader in their stylistic expression than was most likely the case previously.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>There's a great awareness now of concert improvisation, thanks to certain people (Nigel Allcoat and Martin Baker). Improvisers in the UK haven't been encouraged or cultivated. Improvisation wasn't regarded as an art form until recently; now: more awareness of continental practice. Pierre Cochereau, Jacques Grunenwald, Jean Guillou. French organists (primarily) have come over to the UK and have given concerts/masterclasses. They have created a hunger for improvisation. Now there's more awareness of discipline in improvisations. Dr Philip Marshall recorded some improvisations on the Cantoris label at Lincoln Cathedral. In France, there's an expectation of an excellent improvisation. In UK, most organists will say that they don't improvise in concert style. However, there's more exposure now to improvisation in the UK → it is now regarded as an art form! Concert improvisations delight British audiences.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>The situation is rather promising. There's now a serious interest in improvisation as an art form.</i></p> <p><i>When I was young, improvisation was 'gentle art' of pre-Evensong playing. Nigel Allcoat was a fellow student. He was very good in improvising in French style. This opened my eyes. He started a movement, had a big influence on younger organists. He 'started it off', people started to take improvisation seriously.</i></p> <p><i>Also, organ building has developed during the last 30 years. Romantic instruments have been replaced by classical organs.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>People have always been taught organ improvisation in the UK (RCO). Used to be a compulsory part of the FRCO exam. I used to work as an examiner for the RCO: two – three people would be very good, the rest would improvise to a really lamentable standard.</i></p> <p><i>1963: Tournemire Prize was introduced (St Albans Competition for improvisation) Peter Hurford was an excellent improviser in his twenties/thirties (I think he took part in the Haarlem organ competition). → competition introduced to raise standards.</i></p> <p><i>I was first British Winner.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>In recent years, there has been more of an awareness of French and English improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>English improvisation – the tradition until recently:</i> 1. 'nice music' before Evensong 2. improvisation on hymn tunes (extensions) → polite style of music (is it due to the British character?) 'net curtain improvisation'</p> <p><i>Then: Cochereau recordings became available + easy way to travel to Paris → influence on today's improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>Martin: When he has taught improvisation, sometimes students would be able to improvise in Dupré-style (very impressively) but couldn't harmonise a simple hymn.</i></p> <p><i>David Briggs and his work at Truro and Gloucester has raised the reputation of improvisation in the UK.</i></p> <p><i>TODAY: there is a better standard of improvisation in Anglican cathedrals. There are not many Catholic cathedrals with well-established music departments, so it's difficult to compare.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>In recent years, there has been much more interest in improvisation (Briggs) + more access to material abroad.</i></p> <p><i>In the early 1990s, Roy Massey improvised during/after a Sung Eucharist at Hereford Cathedral in a style which was definitely NOT French. It was very good! His playing was based on a hymn. Is this style possibly lost today?</i></p> <p><i>Now: improvisation is very much under French influence.</i></p> <p><i>Briggs brought improvisation to the attention of organists and audiences in Britain. People were not aware of it before.</i></p>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">1. ORGAN IMPROVISATION IN THE UK</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">1.2 What would you regard as a good improvisation? Any criteria?</h3>	
NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Form, key, theme, counterpoint (two, three parts) imagination, colour, rhythm, use of the organ in an orchestral way, percussion (use of pedals: not constant pedal line → French only use pedals when there is a reason).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>It needs a sense of key, structure and a logical sense of harmony.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>A short improvisation is a good improvisation! (Especially in concerts where they can be a bit too long...)</i></p> <p><i>It depends on the context: service or concert?</i></p> <p><i>But in general, a good improvisation should have:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - musical originality (maybe composers who have their own musical voice) - form - secure pulse
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Anything which has a structure (most important!). Structured improvisations are so much more persuasive. People might not even realise it's improvised! I regard structure as 'macro management' and organised rhythm as 'micro-management'.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>With regard to the ability to improvise on a particular theme in a concert, any purely musical criteria apply, but in the liturgical context, there are other considerations – the worshippers, the atmosphere being evoked, and the position within the service.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Good improvisation should sound like a written piece. a good improvisation has spontaneity and creativity, but polished.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Structure, imagination, momentum and an acute sense of timing of harmonic change (at which Cochereau was the master).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Improvisation must be from the soul / heart. It must have meaning. It must communicate. Sincerity! Simple is best! (Aria!)</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation: not rehearsed. many factors have an influence: building, occasion, instrument.</i></p> <p><i>good improvisations can be played on the simplest of instruments.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>A piece of music which sounds as if it could have been bought from a shop, practised and memorised.</i></p> <p><i>There are three roughly equal elements to improvisation: playing technique, compositional technique and having something to say in your improvisation. With full marks in the first two disciplines you still only have 66% of the answer. Cochereau may have caught the odd crab with his cuff-links, or while putting his cigarette or glasses to one side, but he always had something to say and he had an astonishing technique as a player and creator of music. Listen again to the two prefatory movements of the 'Old 100th' work and hear the Olympian music-making unfold. It's a miracle.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Good improvisation: a clear musical intent, the obvious application of compositional process, an avoidance of clichés, control of the instrument, not feeling as though good improvisation is automatically inferior to playing repertoire.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Inspiration! Electricity and creative energy can make improvisations thrilling. And if it has a good form... all the better!</i></p> <p><i>But without inspiration, improvisation is unsuccessful!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Depends on situation.</i></p> <p><i>Good improvisation: there's a sense of structure, harmonic interest, shows lively creative mind, use your musical brain → something that has musical shape.</i></p> <p><i>For me, extemporisation and improvisation are two different things:</i></p> <p><i>Extemporisation: fooling around on the organ</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation: more shape, follows models conscientiously.</i></p> <p><i>Pre-Evensong improvisation: can be dreadful (wandering on stops)</i></p> <p><i>Howells model: can have good structure and good use of organ (if this model is used intelligently).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>When people are listening and cannot tell the difference between a written piece and an improvisation → then improvisation was successful.</i></p> <p><i>Cochereau said improvisation is an illusion. He had improvisations in mind in 5 secs.</i></p> <p><i>Good structure is important: I studied two years with Langlais (1984-86) in Paris. He said: 'Never be static!' → always move - key, texture, modes. The worst crime is being boring!</i></p> <p><i>People sometimes talk negatively about Cochereau: only loud toccatas and incomplete fugues.</i></p> <p><i>But: He never copied himself. I don't think he's a cliché, there's a lot under the surface. He was like Virgil Fox - good connection with audience. Vierne said that you must entertain people.</i></p> <p><i>Cochereau: 'It's just entertainment' - I disagree! In his music, there's a colossal harmonic crescendo, without changing stops (like in Mozart). He was very good at creating tension in harmonic ways.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Something which is right for its context: improvisation in concerts: entertaining. improvisation in church (e.g. during Communion): draws to the right mood.</i></p> <p><i>Good structure (not always possible, as time is unpredictably restricted).</i></p> <p><i>In plain words: an improvisation is good if it communicates with the listener.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Form + structure + strong themes/motifs. Development + sense of direction. audience: fulfilling their expectations + surprise. (In a book on jazz I've read: if there's too much surprise, the listener gets confused!)</i></p>
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<h2>1. ORGAN IMPROVISATION IN THE UK</h2>	
<h3>1.3 Is the training in organ improvisation sufficiently developed in the UK?</h3>	
NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Different from France: there, improvisation comes first! In England: training in improvisation could be better. Need for liturgical improvisation is different here. There aren't opportunities like in French cathedrals for liturgical improvisations. However:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>in Lincoln Cathedral: Elevation improvisation + Elevation fanfare ('Do that in remembrance') started two years ago in Lincoln, very Catholic.</i> • <i>before / after services</i> • <i>Mass: Gospel fanfare</i> • <i>Big hymns (festive services) with processions → improvised versets between verses. Like in France, but Grand Orgue and Choir Organ is one instrument in England!</i> • <i>Censing of the Altar + Offertory (Flute harmonique)</i> • <i>Communion (while Choir takes Communion) based on the theme or style of the anthem.</i> <p><i>In England: there's the opinion 'improvisations have to be in modern French style'. I also try to copy Couperin as well (in services with Byrd etc.)</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Certainly not! I had no training and therefore couldn't teach others. Colin Walsh taught me a bit of improvisation in the French tradition. There was no inspiration in improvisation during my time as organ scholar in Cambridge. However, Nigel Allcoat gave improvisation classes at the time in the UK.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>It has never been developed in the UK! In Germany: A/B/C diplomas require improvisation! in France: it's part of the conservatoires' syllabus.</i></p> <p><i>Nowadays, UK conservatoires bring people in from abroad to teach improvisation. But there isn't any course so rigorous like in Germany.</i></p> <p><i>Other things are more important to British organists, maybe?</i></p> <p><i>Pete Kee said that you can't teach improvisation. I think you can!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>There is not a very highly developed improvisation tradition in the UK. The reason for this is probably that most organists go to colleges (Oxbridge) and not conservatoires. What is needed in the UK is the combination organist (with excellent accompaniment skills) + choir trainer. There is not really a set curriculum for training either, it is more like 'pick it up as you go along'. The church musician training in the UK is more like an apprenticeship with some students being very keen on improvisation and some not.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>I have only once had a serious improvisation lesson, and that was from David Briggs, and that helped me greatly. I am fifty. I wish that I had had the opportunity earlier. There seems to be great emphasis on the loud French tradition – marvellous in certain contexts, but quite out of place in others.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>The interest in organ improvisation in the UK is still new. The teaching of improvisation is not organised nationally. Various people developed their own schemes of how to teach improvisation.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>As above – isolated examples of people seriously committed to doing it well and perhaps 'teaching' it etc. but supply/demand in the UK makes it sporadic, I suspect. Improvisation is something every musician should do but rarely should the serious artist parade it 'on stage'.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Good heavens, no! It's an extra. However, improvisation is fundamental to each musician's training. It's a domain of any musician. I have been teaching improvisation in Oxford / Cambridge for 28 years (masterclasses and individual lessons). → there were many penny-dropping moments for students.</i></p> <p><i>'Improvise a passacaglia'. Variations → simple things (two, three, four part)</i></p> <p><i>Private students:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>David Drury (Australia) won St Alban's Improvisation Competition</i> • <i>James Thomas (St Edmundsbury Cathedral)</i> • <i>Magnus Williamson (Newcastle University)</i> • <i>Robert Hugh Morgan (St John's Cambridge)</i> • <i>Stephen Layton (Polyphony)</i> <p><i>Problem: there's not really enough scope for organists in the UK to develop their improvisation side, so they get involved in other things!</i></p> <p><i>There's no place for long improvisations in the Anglican Church.</i></p> <p><i>English organists do not put their musical knowledge to their improvisations - they just create mindless mishmash.</i></p> <p><i>In England, organists think they have to play for five minutes or more, but it would be better to make it short and play for one minute or even thirty seconds.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I do not know. I reckon decent musicians who want to pursue this craft will do so if they have ears, a brain and a few pointers from their organ teachers.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>It is a lot better than it used to be, but still does not have the same place in the curriculum as it does in many parts of continental Europe and the USA.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>No! People don't realise yet in the UK how exciting improvisation is, how impressive, how worth pursuing. It is not regarded as an artistic discipline yet.</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation has taken off everywhere on the continent, but England has ignored improvisation. Here, it's only walking music.</i></p> <p><i>However, there's a great talent of organists in the UK! In England, most of the outstanding organists have no conservatoire training but hold an academic degree. And yet there are excellent players! Incredible...</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Not sure - only basic, as part of keyboard skills.</i></p> <p><i>Nigel Allcoat is the only one teaching improvisation of the ones I know.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>It's getting better.</i></p> <p><i>Not sure it's possible to teach improvisation - a lot of it is by osmosis.</i></p> <p><i>Langlais: it takes fifteen years to learn improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>Harmony/counterpoint/orchestration/form → some people are more gifted than others.</i></p> <p><i>As a boy: I had four piano teachers by the time I was ten years old. I didn't like scales.</i></p> <p><i>On my iPod, 90% is orchestral music.</i></p> <p><i>Of course, in UK, conservatoires teach improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>In British culture, people don't want to put themselves forward, they want to hide. But in improvisation there's nothing to hide behind!</i></p> <p><i>In America: people are more open. However, organ improvisation there is very underdeveloped. (Two conservatoires offer it?)</i></p> <p><i>Organists from France set with their improvisations the place on fire!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Improvisation is expected to be picked up by doing it (like many things in this country). And that's OK for the natural gifted. Others will need lessons.</i></p> <p><i>In an ideal world, it would need lessons. I don't know how to teach improvisation.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Definitely not! In France, improvisation is part of an organist's training. In UK, improvisation is not part of it at all. In my FRCO examination, improvisation was only a tiny part.</i></p> <p><i>Now: there's the London Organ Improvisation Course (good!). Generally: improvisation is not widely catered for. Good general educationalists do use improvisation, e.g. Paul Harris (clarinettist) → he teaches improvisation as part of general musicianship.</i></p>
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2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.1 Who inspired you as an organ improviser – are there any role models?

NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I was brought up in England in the 1970s; I have heard very good improvisers in England (Simon Preston, Christ Church Oxford; Sidney Campbell, Windsor Castle; Francis Jackson, York Minster – all in English 'Howellsian' style). Improvisation was also quite developed then, but differently!</i></p> <p><i>Life changing moment: heard Cochereau in Notre-Dame in August (Communion + Sortie!). His playing had imagination, risk and flair.</i></p> <p><i>Then I went to Langlais and had lessons with him (both repertoire and improvisation). I sat with him in Sainte-Clotilde, Paris, and watched him improvise. He was very disciplined (more canon / imitation as opposed to Cochereau).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>No specific role models. I do what I picked up during my time as a chorister, organ scholar and assistant organist.</i></p> <p><i>When there is Renaissance music sung in the service, I improvise in the style of e.g. Tomkins.</i></p> <p><i>But my default style (and that of probably many other British organists) is: 'Howellsian'.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>When I was fourteen, I heard Cochereau improvise during a Christmas service on the radio. It 'knocked me over'. I wanted to be able to do that!</i></p> <p><i>I like improvisers who have their own personal language. Pastiche is part of your equipment as improviser, but it's not enough!</i></p> <p><i>e.g. I like Jean Guillou because he is very original, you can recognise his playing instantly! So is Daniel Roth (personal harmonic style). Loïc Mallié is a fabulous improviser.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Christopher Robinson (DoM St John's Cambridge): he made an interesting comment when I improvised at my organ scholarship audition: 'Maybe you could keep up a metre when you improvise next time.'</i></p> <p><i>Martin Baker (DoM Westminster Cathedral): Bigger influence! I have been organ scholar at Westminster Cathedral for two years. Martin's improvisations were the best I've ever heard – he is a genius! I had no formal lessons with him, but we were making music together and I learnt a lot from him. I didn't have any lessons on the continent.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>This is a difficult question: no one in particular; really, it has been a question of <u>having</u> to improvise during services – and this is harder in one respect than in the concert hall, since you often do not know when you will have to finish.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Mark Blatchly (Asst. Organist at Gloucester Cathedral) inspired me when I was a Chorister and Organist student at Gloucester Cathedral. Also, Cochereau tape recordings.</i></p> <p><i>In 1993: I attended the Haarlem Summer School on improvisation. There were three improvisers teaching:</i></p> <p><i>Naji Hakim (He was a revelation! Cochereau-related.)</i></p> <p><i>Peter Planyavsky (I couldn't get a grip at all; harmonising melodies in different ways)</i></p> <p><i>Jos van der Kooy (I was very attracted to his teaching. Counterpoint + fugue together with French-style harmonies).</i></p>

<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Marcel Dupré & Pierre Cochereau.</i> <i>MD for structure, clarity and the ability to create convincing forms!</i> <i>PC for sheer delight, invention and characterful virtuosity.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I fell into the trap of everybody else. My improvisations had no form.</i></p> <p><i>Baroque organ case → form. Everything has a form.</i></p> <p><i>My teachers: André Isoir and Anders Bondeman (both at Haarlem Summer School). The City of Haarlem has paid me to go there.</i></p> <p><i>I played a concert in Paris once. Got a note from Langlais asking me to visit him in his church. Went there and met Naji Hakim. Langlais asked me to play the organ during the service.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Pierre Cochereau: one note on a flute from him was always undoubtedly imbued with more soul than most organists could shake a stick at. Fashionable as it has been to knock him for doing the same thing for thirty years, it was a very good thing – and the 'Symphonie en Improvisation' (December 1963) is the best piece of music for organ created in the whole of the twentieth century... and that is not a matter of opinion, but fact.</i></p> <p><i>I also attended a short course run by Jean Guillou in Oxford (August 1982). Guillou had great playing disciples like Keith John, but his improvisations (whilst they were diverting) were also barking. He had the power of absolute recall: you'd play for five mins, and he (having appeared to take not notice) would say, 'in bar 64 you did this (perfect reproduction of my tripe) ... then you did this...etc. – but you could have done this.' Clever bloke.</i></p> <p><i>Olivier Latry has a nice clip on YouTube entitled 'clarinette' – well worth a listen. When he improvised at the RFH a few years ago I thought, 'so what?' He is a staggeringly fine player – but can he interest me in his world-view? The answer, until I heard that clip, is 'probably not'. I heard him in ND live in 1987 and it was a sterile experience. Now, August 1980 with PC at the controls was something else.</i></p> <p><i>I have heard David Briggs do fantastic Couperin and Stravinsky. Blimey! Brilliant!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>McNeil Robinson: one of the first organ records I had as a child featured an improvisation of his on the organ at Chester Cathedral, and I was utterly transfixed with the creativity and colour of the playing. His improvisation was a formal and thoroughly worked-out suite.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Antoine Reboulot (Quebec) and Pierre Cochereau (CBC always used to broadcast Cochereau recordings in the 1970s).</i></p> <p><i>I went on a three-week summer course in Nice (nine organists). Cochereau was teaching in his house on a three/four-manual organ. Each organist got two/three lessons a week. Cochereau would first give the form, key and theme and would play an example. This could be a two-part invention, a scherzo, a fugato, movements in the style of Vierne, chorale variations, toccata, rondo or prelude etc. Then the student would try, followed by a commentary from Cochereau. The student would then play again.</i></p> <p><i>Biggest mistake improvisers make is playing for too long! Cochereau used to blow into a duck-stop whistle in the second week each time we played on for too long. In the third week he had a revolver! Excellent sense of humour...</i></p> <p><i>Reboulot was a better teacher than Cochereau. He had more contrapuntal awareness. Cochereau would occasionally have these improvisational 'seizures', particularly when he played on the chamades frantically.</i></p> <p><i>Reboulot was teaching species counterpoint and canon!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>My grandfather Harold Spicer (Manchester College Chapel) – he loved to improvise. His playing was colourful, Edwardian. Brilliant use of the organ. There was a fluency of building up and going back.</i></p> <p><i>I'm fascinated by the English school – Howells! I was brought up in the English cathedral system. Pre-Evensong improvisation: if done intelligently – then that's my style!</i></p>

<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>John Pryer (then Asst. Org. at Birmingham Cathedral). He improvised in the English Grand Style. He also made up very good hymn harmonisations (last verses). He also improvised in the Dupré style. John's influence on me was colossal! When I was nine years old, he gave me my first Cochereau LP. I used to play it so often that my dad complained about it! In 1980, I went three times to Notre-Dame Paris to hear Cochereau (I was seventeen). Very profound experience. There were 3,000 people attending Mass. The priest introduced Cochereau. Nobody moved during the Sortie. Huge applause at the end. Cult! As a choir boy, I used to improvise in style of Wesley and Stanford. When I was thirteen/sixteen, I improvised a lot in the diatonic English style (I played a lot of Whitlock at that time). Then French music: from 1986 to 1997 I transcribed Cochereau's improvisations to find out more about his harmonic language (11-year project).</i></p> <p><i>I don't know if Cochereau would have liked that. He said: My improvisations should be heard once and then forgotten. But his daughter told me: He would have loved that someone cared for him and his music so much.</i></p> <p><i>Cochereau: extrovert / cult; underneath: fragile.</i></p> <p><i>Colin Walsh is a fantastic improviser. Go and listen to him at Lincoln Cathedral! He was the one who pointed me in the direction of Langlais.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>I started to improvise when trying to play music which was too hard for me: I then tried to improvise in the style of it.</i></p> <p><i>Another source of inspiration: recordings of Cochereau & listening to French improvisers.</i></p> <p><i>There's a mystique about the Parisian organ loft. And the sound of the Cavaillé-Coll organ adds to it.</i></p> <p><i>French improvisation speaks directly to the listener (not drawn back) → so un-English! Nigel Allcoat: I took part in a masterclass with him.</i></p> <p><i>But Notre-Dame and the atmosphere there was more inspirational for me.</i></p> <p><i>There's not much inspiration in the UK.</i></p> <p><i>When I was organ scholar at Downing College, there was no input on organ improvisation.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I started the organ when I was thirteen in the North East of England, rural area. Main influence through recordings. Book: Arthur Wills - 'first trigger!' - got me interested first.</i></p> <p><i>Then: holidays in Paris. Bought LP with Pierre Cochereau's last improvisations. I was fascinated by it!</i></p> <p><i>Later: I deputised for Sophie-Veronique Cauchefer-Choplin - played choir organ at Saint Sulpice. Listening to the organists there had most influence on me. I had lessons once a month; however, it wasn't a structured course: Bach chorales, prelude-style things, improvisation on plainsong themes and contemporary themes (e.g. twelve-tone), fugue, passacaglia, variations, going through main forms.</i></p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.2 How did you / do you practise organ improvisation – if at all?

NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I take a theme (even writing it down sometimes), think of phrasing (4+4), everything comes from the bassline. I stick to one style per improvisation, not mixing many different styles.</i></p> <p><i>'There is no such thing as improvisation' (J. Langlais)</i></p> <p><i>e.g. in a Byrd motet: I play afterwards a little piece in a similar style, using 8' and 2 2/3' stops.</i></p> <p><i>I was Oxford Christ Church Organ Scholar: we learned things by picking it up as we went along. We were trying to mimic people, e.g. how do people use certain combination of stops etc. ... That's how the tradition is passed on.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>With the building locked! I don't feel 100% comfortable with improvisation. I started off using harmonic formulae, but now not any more. I don't need that any more – I can move freely in terms of harmony. Areas of problem: structure, coherence.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I think it is important to study/practise harmony, figured bass, harmonising melodies, Messiaen's mode II...</i></p> <p><i>It's very important practising ideas, but when you improvise, you need to be able to let it flow...</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I don't practise it. I used to record myself. I tried to replicate what I heard (Cochereau). Baker: 'do two-part counterpoint exercises or little fugues', but I wasn't very interested.</i></p> <p><i>What really helped me was improvising before the services: I tried to imitate the style of music which was sung during the service to come, e.g. Byrd (Tudor-style). I also tried improvising music in all different styles.</i></p> <p><i>Now, I'm focusing on opera accompaniment: Janacek has a big influence on my improvising: vocal music that sounds like natural speech, conversation, no long melismas).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>I have tried practising my improvisations, but I don't feel all that up to it out of service time: probably because my playing is very much an emotional response - not much intellect involved at the time.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I played for school assemblies at Gloucester Cathedral when I was between eleven and seventeen years old. And I always improvised at the end - so I became fairly confident in improvising. I had daily access to that instrument: huge acoustic → easy to improvise as there was more time to think!</i></p> <p><i>And I was free to improvise (nobody objected or insisted on playing printed music). When I studied with Jos van der Kooy, I started to practise forms (e.g. variations).</i></p> <p><i>I subsequently won the improvisation competitions at St Albans in 1997 (runner up), Chartres (semi-final) in 2000 and Biarritz in 2001 (André Marchal prize = first prize).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>In a specifically liturgical context.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>French problem: everyone is pushed in a strait jacket. Dupré → 'you do it this way!'</i></p> <p><i>However, every student is individual. You have to build that, there's got to be some subtleties. It's about individual personalities. Let the students be themselves! However, the teacher can guide them.</i></p> <p><i>I practise improvisation daily, even without a keyboard. Learn to train your imagination. People don't daydream enough!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>At Oxford I practised textures for two hours a day, working out figuration and, from there, harmony (chiefly plainsong-based to start with). I started doing this because the figuration in the Duruflé Requiem struck me as inhumane; later I learnt to play it, but in the meanwhile I could turn out decent cod-Duruflé at no expense.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>I set myself tasks, becoming fluent in standard modulations, trying to parody a style and then analysing what happened when I departed from that style, forcing myself to play canonically, or to play at a higher pitch in the feet while making the left-hand play at 16' pitch.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I do practise improvising, although not as much as I like to (I need to practise new organ compositions, too!) I tend to improvise in half of my organ recitals. If there is a submitted theme, I usually do an A-B-A form (loud, soft, loud) or a passacaglia + fugue, or sonata allegro + toccata, or a siciliano.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I did. I was quite interested in improvisation. For big services: I tried to improvise more seriously. Contrapuntal playing (Kenneth Leighton): create excitement, rhythmic pattern. (I wouldn't always know what would happen).</i></p> <p><i>Still Howellsian dynamic arch shape.</i></p> <p><i>'Introduce the organ gently before a service.' Spiritual space.</i></p> <p><i>I used to improvise always before the service (very important skill) - never after the service (wasn't technically equipped enough)</i></p> <p><i>Michael Fleming (RSCM): 'English Cathedral Window Improvisations' (nebulous).</i></p>

<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I don't practise it any more. I've always improvised to relax. I'm a nervy player of repertoire (cold hands). But I'm not nervous with improvisation → it's me.</i></p> <p><i>Langlais complained that I didn't practise enough. I couldn't manage binary form. But I enjoyed symphonic improvisations: variations and symphonies.</i></p> <p><i>Langlais was a strict teacher: e.g. A major Fantasia (Franck) – he would spend 30 minutes on the first 8 bars (touch, swell box etc.). There was only one way: his way!</i></p> <p><i>You make a choice of what you need. Langlais trained Langlais clones – completely his way!</i></p> <p><i>Good: he taught me to believe in myself. Good teacher! 'You can do it!'</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation is 80% about confidence. As a teacher, you need to be comforting.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>I practise improvisation by improvising.</i></p> <p><i>When I entered the competition at St Albans: I did practise exercises in counterpoint. You can practise improvisation away from the keyboard.</i></p> <p><i>Improvisations are a great way of making music because you can communicate without the hassle of writing it down.</i></p> <p><i>[STREPITUS (loud organ playing before the Gloria during the Easter Vigil)]</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>A: I read as many tutor books as possible + practised the content I liked best: Lionel Rogg's books on improvisation (Vol.1 Bach style, Vol.2 modal style). Also, Arthur Wills's book – particularly minuet (skeleton structure) and developing phrases.</i></p> <p><i>B: by doodling and playing about. Sometimes I would play written pieces and stop half way through and try to carry on improvising in that style.</i></p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.3 Who was – in your opinion - the most important organ improviser and why?

NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Mendelssohn, S. S. Wesley, French School (Vierne, Langlais, Messiaen, Cochereau, Lefebvre, Hakim).</i></p> <p><i>In Germany, the improvised introduction to hymns amazes me! (Paderborn Cathedral: Gereon Krahfurst).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Pierre Cochereau and David Briggs.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Loïc Maillé and Otto Krämer.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Mozart, Bach, Liszt, etc. ... all of those were great improvisers. Messiaen was an important innovator! He redesigned the use of the organ – but his way is one way of many.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Of the people I have heard live, David Briggs. He did a prelude and fugue on 'St. Patrick's Breastplate' in the style of Reger – at a few seconds notice. He's just an exceptional genius, and there is no edge to him.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Cochereau would be the easy answer – he just did so many recordings! His improvisations were at a very high level (particularly his 'Symphonie' on the Phillips label).</i></p>

<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p>PC., as 2.1.</p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p>Grunenwald (St Sulpice). Greatest living improviser: Anders Bondeman. 'aristocratic', most humble person, not a show-off.</p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p>See 2.1 above. What was important about PC was not just that he could create amazing music out of thin air (e.g. 'Treize Versets') but that he made you re-examine altogether the possibilities offered by the instrument. Imagine a pupil who goes from the fussy & enervating stodge of the Mendelssohn sonatas to the dazzling figuration and colour-play of Reubke – well, double it for how PC makes you think of the things that the organ can do (e.g. 'Alouette' Variations), and I'm not just talking about rapid and light figuration (in which the organ seems to fly) but about note lengths: percussive staccatos, melting legatos. PC's touch was extraordinary (try the chamber organ improvisations).</p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p>Very hard to say: the great French school is so hugely influential... perhaps one has to look to people like Franck, whose improvisational style was, according to Olivier Latty, very much that of his own compositions. The value of that, I believe, is that it is so easy to copy other schools and styles, but much more a test of improvisational integrity to produce something uniquely stylistic to the improviser.</p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p>Jean Guillou, a fascinating player! Keith Jarrett: I like his new ways of looking at things. His organ improvisations are inspirational.</p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p>I don't know many. Probably Pierre Cochereau and Charles Tournemire. They had a huge influence on the organ world. French organists in general seem to be good improvisers: their style is instantly recognisable and their harmonies are colourful.</p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p>Cochereau. Dupré – how did he improvise in his twenties/thirties? The recordings we've got sound very academic. Form is more important there than content. Think of his Passion Symphony – fire!!! He was then much more contemporary. Langlais. In this century: I'm nourished by Latty, Levevre, Seifen.</p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p>Cochereau – I don't like it because everybody will probably give that as an answer to that question. The trouble is that everyone wants to improvise in his style. Cochereau was a great communicator! Too many people are now Cochereau clones. It's about communicating, but with their own harmonic language. In the 1990s: Martin Neary (my boss at Westminster Abbey back then) asked me to improvise at the RCO prize-giving ceremony. And everyone expected a sizzling improvisation in the Cochereau style. However, I played in an early nineteenth-century English style (Mendelssohn). Big surprise!!</p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p>Most influential improviser: Cochereau. His style has been adopted by many. Today, there are other organists who are equal to him: e.g. Daniel Roth, Loïc Maillé etc. But I wouldn't like to point one out.</p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.4 Describe your harmonic language when improvising – do you practice any stylistic improvisation?

NAME	COMMENT
'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>Couperin, Howells, Karg-Elert, Reger.</i> <i>What is the Howellsian style: muted, minor key, 'odd style'; crescendo as choir comes in and dim. to nothing.</i>
'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview	<i>When I practise certain pieces on the organ, e.g. Howells, I automatically copy the style. This can be solo organ pieces, but particularly accompaniments.</i>
'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview	<i>I have no personal musical language as I am not a composer.</i> <i>I like to improvise in the French Classical style or French Modern.</i> <i>I use rhythm as a springboard (for modern improvisations) and Messiaen's Mode II, but I wouldn't improvise in concert.</i>
'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>I used to practise Messiaen's Modes II + III with a sheet of modes in front of me.</i> <i>I tried to improvise in all sorts of different styles: Gibbons, Bach, Buxtehude, Haydn, French, Slavic, Bruckner, Sibelius, Mahler...</i> <i>Critique from another competitor at St Albans competition: My playing was not improvising but pastiche!</i> <i>I never thoroughly analysed pieces in order to be able to improvise in that style, e.g. if there was a choral piece by Leighton in the service, I used in my improvisation motives from the pieces to imitate that style.</i> <i>Howells – 'more than a crush in England'. I've improvised in the style of Howells but he wasn't a big influence. Gives you 'nice turns', but there's not a good overall structure in his music. It's easy to fill time with this style! No feeling of accents in time... hard to remember!</i> <i>When Howells was Organist at St John's Cambridge during WWII, he always improvised the voluntaries, never played composed pieces!</i> <i>When Howells heard Jeanne Demessieux improvise in London: couldn't believe she was improvising, because it was so quick (flow of ideas!).</i>
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>Victorian, Edwardian, Inter-War English, Howells (early), Sumsion – all harmony-based. I might do a very quiet 'sound effect' improvisation after communion. I find it hard to practise improvisation, but I do like to experiment with harmony; and also, I like to find out what every pipe on the organ sounds like.</i>
'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview	<i>It's a mixture of old church modes, Messiaen II, and (lately) a bit of jazz.</i> <i>(Note: 'F' mentioned, as part of another answer, that his 'own style' was a mixture between the Dutch School [counterpoint] and the 'fire' of the French school.)</i>
'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email	<i>Improvisation is a soul-baring habit, so inevitably it reflects the sum of one's musical influences. That in my case, I suspect, is Cochereau, Dupré, Hindemith, Leighton and – probably because I'm a dyed-in-the-wool Anglican – Howells.</i>
'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview	<i>Depends on the day, depends whether the sun's shining.</i> <i>Harmonic language is DNA of a composer. I'm just myself.</i>
'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>My harmonic language is cod-Cochereau. I have never bothered with stylistic improvisation: [a] too hard [b] too pointless. Do we need another fugue by Rheinberger/Dusseck/J. S. Bach even? Improvisation must be the expression of an individual's personality or it is just a game, or, to paraphrase Messiaen: 'sincérité d'abord'. This is where some great modern players fall down – all technique and no soul.</i>

<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Yes, I find that it is so easy to fall into a rut, and so I force myself to avoid all my usual patterns. I feel most comfortable in the grotesque scherzo / Vierne-esque style, but find improvising a convincing trio tougher than a fugue. Sometimes the thinner the texture, the harder it is: a five-part fugue isn't too hard because, provided you can keep the exposition clear in your head, the episodic stuff can take care of itself and you can make oblique references to the subject or counter-subject along the way. I make a point of improvising a whole French Classical suite every so often to force myself to come up with short movements with unique characteristics that hang together as a homogenous whole. The one thing I cannot do is improvise a good melody!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I think organ improvisation should be individual. One should work on one's personal formulae!</i></p> <p><i>If there's an organ piece I particularly like, I try improvising in that style. For instance, at the moment I'm trying out 'minimalistic' improvisations.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Mixture of English School: Howells + Leighton (impressive mix of head and heart in style).</i></p> <p><i>Howells: very gifted improviser (St John's Cambridge – Acting Organist) starting softly with motif – building up to climax – calming down.</i></p> <p><i>Howells's style is very different from the French one. French: shortish movements in different styles. Howells: long paragraph of music – harder to sustain!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I like to improvise in different styles. Sometimes: second half of concerts are completely improvised. I start with Renaissance and go up to today (Hakim).</i></p> <p><i>'Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.'</i></p> <p><i>Naji Hakim: doesn't like style copies. Always contemporary + pushing forward.</i></p> <p><i>But I don't: I think it's better to relate to the audience. When I go to a restaurant, I don't want the same three dishes. It's good to keep a good balance!</i></p> <p><i>When I improvise in styles, I haven't done a thorough analysis of pieces by these composers. I know their pieces because I play them and then improvise in their style.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>I do practise stylistic improvisation, but I'm not very disciplined with that.</i></p> <p><i>I've got a good Classical language. I like changing the style to distract people. I love the late nineteenth-century German Strauss/Mahler style + English tradition of Elgar and Baird.</i></p> <p><i>I feel at home with the nineteenth-century style.</i></p> <p><i>I like Wolfgang Seifen's style: I discovered him on YouTube. There were other videos linked to that → good to discover other things!</i></p> <p><i>I would like to put things on YouTube from Westminster Cathedral → to get a tradition going.</i></p> <p><i>Interesting: when I was Sub-Organist at Westminster Abbey, improvisation was much more liked and appreciated. At Westminster Cathedral, there wasn't much improvisation before I came. There, it's something which is seen more of a disturbance of the prayer rather an enhancement of the liturgy.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I like post-romantic + modal.</i></p> <p><i>In the Organ Competition in Haarlem, Escaich said that I used harmonies like Vierne.</i></p> <p><i>I sometimes improvise chorale preludes in the eighteenth-century style on hymns, followed by an Offertory hymn (note: that's in a Catholic church).</i></p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION	
2.5 Music consists of rhythm, melody and harmony. Are there certain priorities in your playing?	
NAME	COMMENT
'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>The three should be there at the same time. But there might be an emphasis on one of those, depending on the style.</i>
'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview	<i>Harmony first - then melody and rhythm equally.</i>
'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview	<i>They are all equally important!</i>
'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>Rhythm! (You have to make a decision) Alain: his pieces focus either on rhythm, melody or harmony.</i>
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>My playing is harmonically based. I am OK with melodies, but could improve rhythmic variety.</i>
'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview	<i>I always improvise on a theme. Harmony: it's the bedrock of improvising (harmonising melodies crucial!). Rhythm: it can be a weapon! I try and make it catchy (e.g. South American Rumba, Bolero). Short motives are better than long melodies (it's easier then to use them to bind the form together).</i>
'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email	<i>Rhythm and colour.</i>
'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview	----
'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>Music. No, seriously: texture first (which must be consistent and sustainable), then rhythmic consistency.</i>
'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email	<i>Rhythm every time!</i>
'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>Rhythm and melody come above harmony. However, I can imagine for most people harmony is the priority.</i>
'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview	<i>No priorities. In a Leighton style: rhythm is maybe more important. Harmony very important → gives sense of development.</i>
'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>You need them all. They can't exist separately to each other. In the twenty-first century: harmony is becoming more important again. John Adams: tonal, polytonal, not random anymore. Beautiful harmonies! Adams is also a minimalist, but harmony plays a big part. Carries on where Mahler's No. 10 stopped. Romanticism. Has an influence on me!</i>

<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>For me: raw communication. It's a combination of all three, however, communication has the priority.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes people play all the right notes but do not communicate.</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation is like a language: sometimes I can't be talking clearly.</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation is about taking somebody on a journey (arch form). Howells is a 'feeling' composer rather than a 'thinking' composer. Mood!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Colin Walsh was my first improvisation teacher. He used to say: 'English organists think of melody first and then harmony. French organists think of harmony first and then melody.'</i></p> <p><i>I start with harmony first and the rest then develops.</i></p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.6 How important is musical form to you? Are there any musical forms in particular which your improvisations are based on?

NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I wish there were. In an ideal world, I would improvise a fugue, passacaglia, symphonic first movement, scherzo (Vierne). Like the organists in Paris!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>I have done variations, passacaglias, simple ternary forms. But never fugues. Also did plenty of improvisations with no form at all.</i></p> <p><i>These were all played before the service. I took a hymn of the liturgical season as a theme.</i></p> <p><i>Never improvised after the service! Did not feel competent enough.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>simple ABA form (makes it more understandable for listeners). I'm not going further than that.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Form is very important!</i></p> <p><i>I use basic sonata form (most important: development of ideas), basic ternary form, some recapitulations, variations, passacaglias.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>I seldom set out with a form in mind, since my playing is liturgical /a musical 'Polyfills'. I might do something like ABA, or ABACABA, since you are never far from home if it is time to stop. I <u>love</u> using a sesquialtera and tremulant – colour-based.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I use mostly variation form. Also, sonata form (not following the Dupré scheme). I used Hakim's improvisation book and also based my workshops on it. For instance, I once did a workshop on improvising on biblical texts.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>In a liturgical context (in my opinion the most appropriate occasion for organists' improvisational creativity), time and structure tend to be dictated by the needs of liturgical action. Attempts at larger forms are thus usually compromised by the needs of the 'extended' cadence!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>[answered elsewhere]</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>[a] not as important as it should be.</i></p> <p><i>[b] no.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Form is crucial. You have to be familiar with all the main forms of different eras and then be able to copy them. Strict canonic processes should become second nature; toccata figurations should be continued without unnatural rhythmic hiccups for long periods of time, and one should always have a sense of time (i.e. how long you are taking to say what it is you want to say). Harmonically, it's an interesting exercise to improvise in the style of a specific composer, say Birstow. That's actually quite tough, I think, because it can morph into Whitlock, or Howells, so easily, possibly because the generic English cathedral type of improvisation tends to nod in the direction of these names, and many others like them, of course. I think it's ok if people say what you have improvised sounds like something else: it's just when they say that it sounds like a number of different things that you might need to review your approach.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Counterpoint is the aim. Improvising with a formal structure is a higher platform than just playing harmonies.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Form is important. If the audience can identify recurring themes → people are aurally anchored. I've tried fugues and imitative pieces. Arch shape is an interesting form (Howells). Technique (Delius, RVW, Howells): 'Complex Mood' (A, B, A, B, ...) Mood/atmosphere used as developmental tool. Subtle alteration of mood. Howells biography (Spicer). Short motives, development through harmony. RVW: 'Pastoral Symphony'. Sounds nebulous. Suddenly changes mood. Some people might say they don't like the 'pastoral style', it's lilting music. Cowpat music – derogatory! I think it's much more hard-hitting music.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Very! It's like a good road map or GPS: you know where you are, alternatives possible. Langlais: it's impossible to improvise improvisation. It needs order – like a good sermon. Good improvisation – good sermon, fine preacher.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Form is very important. I don't think in forms, it's more intuitively. Find a threat, explore different turnings, move towards the end. I have practised sonata form. Theoretical – practical: Bach & Beethoven thought in music, later theory-side came to it.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Depends on context. In concerts: variation form works well. (Maybe not so well in services?) Form is very important to me. I do my own forms, also passacaglia or fugue. I do intend to think in sections as part of an overall structure: crescendo, recitative, combining movements together → to give a feeling of continuity.</i></p>

<h2>2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION</h2>	
<h3>2.7 How do you prepare an improvisation – if at all?</h3>	
<p>NAME</p>	<p>COMMENT</p>
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Improvisations shouldn't be made up on the spot. However, if you are experienced and disciplined enough, then you should be able to improvise 'ad hoc' in a certain style.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>I make sure there is a theme before me, but that's rare! I have no time to think about it – there are too many other things to do.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Just before I play, I'm thinking about how I'm going to start. But being too descriptive can be counterproductive! It is sometimes best to be thrown into the deep end – improvisations can be very good then!</i></p>

'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	---
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>I rarely prepare anything!</i>
'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview	<i>After a few years of practising organ improvisation, I have built up a portfolio of forms/templates. Now, preparation time is almost nil.</i> <i>The 'Wedge' Fugue is a very good improvisation template. I use it as a back burner.</i>
'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email	<i>Perusing the material on which it is to be based (Alleluia-based fanfare? Offertory-motet verset-style filigree? Communion psalm-based contemplative?) and the liturgical context in which it would be set.</i>
'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview	----
'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>By having time & energy to think and create; a bit of time off work really helps.</i>
'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email	<i>Preparation often takes place away from the keyboard, in terms of ideas, but it's useful to force oneself to push the boundaries of one's comfort zone. Sometimes a 'prepared' improvisation (is that a contradiction?) can sound as such, and occasionally these fall very flat. Similarly, one can throw oneself into an improvisation not really knowing what might happen, and the result is actually quite good. I think it's really important never to fall into the same patterns of improvising: we all have 'standard' improvisations in our minds, and it can become tedious if they are always our default.</i>
'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>For services, I might set up pistons and have a written-out theme in front of me.</i> <i>For concerts: I might set up a bank of contrasting timbres. I would do variations (e.g. a paraphrase).</i>
'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview	---
'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>Yes, I do prepare it, but quick!</i> <i>I like things to evolve as I go along. I'm at home with variations.</i> <i>St Albans competition: 14 minutes. in final round. You've got to show what you have to offer. I was on the jury at St Albans in 2004. Also on the jury at Haarlem in 2007.</i>
'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview	<i>Has been answered elsewhere.</i>
'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview	<i>I would plan the form (memorise it or write it out on paper).</i> <i>I would then try out certain textures + registrations, but might not stick to it.</i> <i>I've got a bad memory → this can liberate!</i>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.8 Do you copy certain styles of organ composition (e.g. Suite Française, Howellsian rhapsody, German fugue) or do you follow solely your personal style?

NAME	COMMENT
'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>It's an important discipline to be able to copy certain styles. That's how you learn; they are role models. It's a starting point.</i>
'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview	<i>I follow my personal style. I found Flor Peeters's chorale variations inspiring (very short). I felt confident improvising in that style.</i>
'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview	<i>It is good to copy things. The French Classical suite, for instance, has a very clear plan. Copying styles is a very good discipline.</i>
'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>Improvisation in various styles is important. I recently developed a more personal style.</i>
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>I would like to be able to copy a style, but do not have the ability to follow it through!</i>
'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview	<i>In Lichfield Cathedral, I enjoyed improvising in the style of de Grigny: 'Plein Jeu' on a Sunday morning before the service. Improvising Baroque French suites (tierce en taille etc.). Also, I played pseudo-Walton marches with the melody of hymn in the middle section.</i> <i>Howells: 'pre-service crescendo style'. Howells's organ pieces are written improvisations, slightly programmatic. They show how to use the British organ effectively.</i> <i>I used his 'Psalm Prelude Set 1 No. 1' as a template for improvisations (clarinet ritornello, working the pistons up and down). The form was 'English pre-service crescendo-decrescendo form'; very loose form.</i> <i>Frank Bridge: 'Adagio in E'.</i>
'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email	<i>In general, no; a personal style that mixes a variety of stylistic elements.</i>
'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview	<i>Every person should be able to improvise in certain styles of organ composition.</i> <i>Buxtehude → take any part and use for improvisation. Buxtehude had effect and wonder, something extra special. Made Bach go there twice! His pieces are excellent as role models for improvisations.</i>
'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>Personal style: deplorable!</i>
'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email	<i>I think I have a personal style in some formal areas, but – as I said above – it's hard to copy a style which has a definite identity of its own without the parody being too obvious.</i>

'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>Yes, great fun! I might even take an orchestral / vocal / jazz piece and try things out in my improvisations.</i> <i>I have given workshops: take a French toccata pattern (e.g. 'Dieu Parmi Nous') and do it to anything! Same thing with Gigout's 'Toccatina in B minor'.</i> <i>'Instant toccata: just add water!' 'Toccatina jacket'. So cool....</i>
'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview	<i>I'm moving more towards Leighton. A rhythmical and dissonant approach.</i>
'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>Partially answered before. I hope I have my own style, but can't comment.</i>
'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview	<i>I've tried all of these. It's important to do that. They all influenced my own language.</i>
'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview	<i>I prefer to have my own style. Definitely not Howellsian!</i> <i>I do not play much English music - I play a lot of French music. I listen to different improvisers, but also to orchestral and piano music. And then I always think whether this or that could be used in an organ improvisation.</i>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.9 Is there an organ / a building where you find it particularly easy to improvise?

NAME	COMMENT
'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>Small organ + small building: that's the real test!</i> <i>Big organ + big building: that's a different ball game.</i> <i>Cavaillé-Coll organ: it 'automatically plays for me'.</i> <i>It's much easier to improvise on a big instrument, but for the wrong reasons!</i> <i>One will easily rely on colour and not content... easy trap!</i>
'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview	<i>The more colours and the more pistons the organ has and the bigger the acoustic of the building, the better.</i>
'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview	<i>Organs are very important for an improviser's inspiration.</i> <i>And the building can add to it. Good improvisers are not dependent on the instrument/building: they can always produce great results.</i>
'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>The organs I know best are the best organs:</i> <i>Gloucester Cathedral / Westminster Cathedral.</i> <i>Two-manual organs can be very nice to improvise on!</i>
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>I love improvising on large eclectic organs in generous acoustics: you can play the building as well. My cathedral (Armagh, C of I) is great.</i>

<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Gloucester Cathedral is a great place to improvise (great acoustic!). In St David's and Lichfield Cathedral, improvising (and indeed singing!) is hard work.</i></p> <p><i>Rule of thumb: in dry acoustic, improvising is harder because you have to think faster!</i></p> <p><i>Guildford Cathedral: fantastic organ to improvise on because you hear the organ as the listener (and you hear the acoustic) – with most English organs, you are almost inside the organ!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>No, but colour, resource and acoustic are all important.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p>----</p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Yes (though I am prepared to improvise wherever I am): always the one I play regularly (I make friends with it even if I don't like it – and find things it can do – this is most important), whether that happens to be the amazing Gloucester Cathedral organ, or the otherwise extraordinary H & H in Charterhouse Chapel (which, as long as it is not registered as per the builder's intentions, can be made to sound luminous and enticing... and even to imitate ND de Paris c 1960). Probably most organs, however awful, have a soul which can be discovered with time, patience & imagination.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Sorry to be lame, but not really! Sometimes a building with an acoustic is a huge asset; then again, it's a useful discipline to be able to improvise a partita on a small instrument in a dry room. The 'Mother' Christian Science Church in Boston, Massachusetts, is fantastic, as is the National Cathedral in Washington DC. In this country Westminster Cathedral, of course, is a wonderful instrument for improvisation.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Yes. An organ with a beautiful sound, responsive and immediate touch. Perfect instruments: Coventry Cathedral. Even better: Ripon Cathedral because organ console is right in the middle of organ.</i></p> <p><i>It's nice being able to play the room → all sorts of effects possible. Let the building project your piece!</i></p> <p><i>In a dry room: articulation will be different (more sustained playing).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>The organ definitely plays a role whether the improvisation is successful.</i></p> <p><i>Acoustic also important. I love big resonance (effect) → I find it inspiring, makes me creative!</i></p> <p><i>Rye church (Sussex): I loved this organ. Best improvisations ever! Exeter Cathedral: most successful Leighton-style improvisation. There's a link!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>The organ where I am at the moment. Improvisation enables you to make the organ sound differently. Notre-Dame, Paris: I spend my life trying to make other organs sound like it!</i></p> <p><i>Notre-Dame: it's a life changing experience when you play it. It's the instrument and the building. It's the perfect organ to improvise on. It's mainly the voicing. In Cavaillé-Coll and Willis organs: treble lead, wind pressure rises to the top. I like it for improvising.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Not in Westminster Cathedral! Our organ has very light touch, very short keys, you are 'inside' the organ. Sound is in the face, makes me tense! Too sudden response!</i></p> <p><i>I've enjoyed playing at Westminster Abbey, and I loved Notre-Dame → I wanted to play more there! Also, found the organ at Toulouse Cathedral and in Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, very inspirational.</i></p> <p><i>Good: very nice to have a detachment between console and sound.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I like organs with a lot of colour and buildings with reverberation → it makes improvising easier.</i></p> <p><i>Also: it's better to improvise in liturgical context → better atmosphere and flow.</i></p> <p><i>At my church (Priory), our choir sings Gregorian chant. There's more space for organ improvisation. In the Anglican church, the choir takes main place. For example: in France, the organist improvises during Communion. In the UK, the choir sings an anthem during Communion. There's not so much need for improvisation in the UK. Also, on the continent, hymn books are melody only. In the UK, the harmonies are written out so that the choir can sing in parts. That can be limiting! In Lyon, psalm accompaniments would have different harmonisations each time. In UK, this would not be possible.</i></p>
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<h2 style="text-align: center;">2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION</h2>	
<p>2.10 There are different kind of traditions in organ improvisation. The French school comes to mind first, but also the German approach.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Is there a typical English tradition / way of organ improvisation?</p>	
<p>NAME</p>	<p>COMMENT</p>
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Liturgical sensitivity is very important: e.g. we had a RAF service in Lincoln Cathedral - I chose an appropriate style of improvisation, tried to play something in the style of an Elgar 'Pomp and Circumstance'.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>No, I don't think so. We Brits improvise just before the church service. And this is often very dull - as opposed to the French. We tend to get stuck in keys, very uninspiring playing.</i></p> <p><i>Many organists tend to improvise quietly before the service. However, no-one would tell me off if I'd improvise loudly. But I wasn't confident enough for playing loudly.</i></p> <p><i>There is a lot of scope for improvisation in this country - no one has taken initiative yet!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Atmospheric playing before services in cathedrals in the Howellsian style. But is it a style? Maybe it's just a necessity...</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Howellsian rhapsody (if anything), Stanford, Parry.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>I would like to know more about the German tradition. The English School would <u>appear</u> to be a fairly lowly creature in the eyes of many organists, but it is <u>not</u> unpleasant to the ears.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Question has been answered elsewhere.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>See answer to 1.1: English improvisation has fundamentally grown up as a 'handmaid' of the choral tradition - not really a serious musical statement in and of itself. The innocuous pre-service doodle I usually hear probably rather defines it.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>'Yes, totally! Like custard: sickly sweet and thick. At least 99% of it.'</i></p> <p><i>Problem: Victorian and Edwardian instruments → organs lost contrapuntal stature. Only allowed homophonic chords. Line is lost!</i></p> <p><i>English instruments merely for accompanying the choir.</i></p> <p><i>English organ school → organ is serving to accompany the choir, shadowing it like a private detective!</i></p> <p><i>The best piece by Howells is 'Master Tallis's Testament': it really has a line!</i></p> <p><i>His 'Psalm Preludes' sound a bit like accompaniment parts to his choral pieces. Nothing attracts me to it! I find Baroque organs more interesting. I like early English organs.</i></p> <p><i>On big Victorian instruments: you can't play for very long on one sound.</i></p> <p><i>In England: organs are in the wrong place and then have to be twice as loud.</i></p> <p><i>'Table for two': I love small instruments. Bourdon 8' + Flute 4'.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>Yes, and it used to be quite horrible to hear it done: left foot on bottom C, clarinet accompanied by Swell strings. Things have changed now, but probably what the best British players are doing now has nothing to do with Britishness.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Yes, and these national schools reflect, primarily, the liturgical function of improvisation. In addition to my comments in 1.1, I would say that the style of English improvisation is influenced by the nature of English organs (as is the case in France and Germany too, of course) but it is has generally less impact than, for example, the improvised Offertoire at Notre-Dame in Paris (a huge generalisation, but I think the underlying comparison holds true for much of the time). I once heard Jean Guillou improvise a Mass at St Eustache, and it was by far the most bizarre and outrageous thing I had ever heard (either in concert or liturgy). It was also the most bold and passionate reflection of the liturgical action going on that day that I had ever heard, and perhaps a particularly English characteristic might be one of restraint and a sense of what might be deemed appropriate. Personally, I found that experience useful because I could push the boundaries of what I thought was acceptable. Nobody knows what's coming next in a good improvisation (sometimes not even the improviser...).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>There is an English harmonic language. Walton / Howells / Leighton. They all have the English preference for Lydian / Mixolydian modes (Walton: G major, F major). Also Ralph Vaughan Williams.</i></p> <p><i>Howellsian concept of sliding in the Aeolian mode.</i></p> <p><i>There seem to be two poles: Tudor and 20th century.</i></p> <p><i>Leighton: spicy Lydian mode. Raised fourth. The British love Lydian mode (F to F on white notes); raised fourth as an angular feature.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Leighton: 'Let all the world'. 'Magdalene Service'. Organ parts!</i></p> <p><i>Alex Mason → Lichfield Cathedral (Hill organ). Very loud instrument. He plays in the French tradition. The French tutti is different to the English tutti. For example: reserve 32' reed only for climax moments → the French use it always. The French love episodic improvisation → very colourful use of organ.</i></p> <p><i>Gospel fanfare: Alex has been very original: Celeste in the left hand – 2' in the right hand.</i></p> <p><i>French school: can be too predictable.</i></p>

<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>The 'Grand Style': inspired by Stanford, Parry and Elgar.</i></p> <p><i>The 'Howells Style': I love Herbert Howells's music, but you can hear a lot of poor Howells imitations! These improvisations are often in no specific key and have no pulse. Just pretty effects without any direction. That's a shame!</i></p> <p><i>Pre-Evensong improvisations: often the same, each day the same: 'SW 2', 'Gt 1', Pedal note.</i></p> <p><i>I always tried to improvise in the style of pieces in services.</i></p> <p><i>Cochereau: feet must never touch the pedal board for more than five seconds. (super glue!).</i></p> <p><i>In certain places in the UK, you'll find more styles of improvisation. The envelope is widening! In Holy Week, organists are improvising on passion story. I did that three times during my time in Gloucester, followed by Compline.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>There's a certain polite way of improvising (a British way).</i></p> <p><i>It's beginning to brighten up.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>People in this country tend to improvise before services in a Howellsian style. No structure, religious noise, playing the choir in, not really improvising.</i></p> <p><i>England is a multicultural society, like the English language has been influenced by many different languages. The English have always been open to other influences.</i></p> <p><i>English organists often understate themselves → maybe that's why there's not much improvisation in concerts.</i></p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.11 How does organ improvisation in Britain compare to the practice on the continent or anywhere else in the world?

NAME	COMMENT
<p>'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>In Britain, improvisation is dominated by the liturgy. Also, the position of the organ in the church is crucial: French organs ('Grand Orgue') are on the West Gallery and higher up than English instruments. French organs are more distant compared to the English organ which is more 'in your face'. The French 'Grand Orgue' is an 'atmosphere organ'. (mystery!)</i></p>
<p>'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>Britain lacks a school of improvisation; improvisation is not taught formally. But there is definitely a need for it!</i></p> <p><i>I regret that I was never taught improvisation systematically.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>It's not developed in the same way, but people are now more interested in it. But there isn't the same foundation of improvisation in an organist's training here.</i></p> <p><i>Even in the nineteenth century, improvisation was part of UK recital programmes (Methodist Town Hall: Arthur Meale improvised a 'Storm').</i></p> <p><i>There is not the same teaching depth in improvisation here than on the continent.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>Before services, during Communion, after the Gospel reading.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email</p>	<p><i>I do not know much about what happens overseas. Clearly the Parisian school is fantastic to listen to, but their organists have nothing to do apart from – play the organ. I have to take choir practices, recruit the choir, deal with clergy, talk to school parties, teach the piano, persuade parents not to take weekends off, mark up sets of sheet music. After all that, playing the organ is a great pleasure. Being able to play the organ is not a large part of being a... cathedral organist!</i></p>

<p>'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>England is now in the making of a pretty good tradition of organ improvising. It's part of the teaching in UK conservatoires now!</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation used to be just part of keyboard skills exams (just an exercise!). Now: it's considered as an art form.</i></p> <p><i>In The Hague: Organ Improvisation offered as a postgraduate course.</i></p> <p><i>In the UK: Organ Improvisation only in workshops, e.g. Royal Academy.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>See 1.1. Rather little is demanded of the practice in the UK, so it's not really 'supplied', nurtured or taken that seriously; unless an individual feels they have an ability which they wish to extend; hence, isolated examples of the 'art'. There is no systematic training as there (still – just about!) is at the Paris Conservatoire.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>In Britain, improvisation is not regarded as a proper discipline. They all just want to be like Cochereau! Recordings have done improvisation a disservice. Everyone wants to be like him, not themselves.</i></p> <p><i>It's good to be inspired by others, but not to be them!</i></p> <p><i>There's a lack of teaching improvisation! British organists should take organ literature and create something of the similar style.</i></p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UK: <i>British organists should start at the beginning: What can they do with five notes? Focus on rhythm and articulation. → they always think they need to play a symphony! 'Crafting the art'.</i></p> <p><i>In conservatoires, not enough support for improvisation. Improvisation not equal to literature playing. I left my post as professor of improvisation at the RAM three years ago.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>It may be meaningless to talk of a national style in Britain; there are players you want to hear, and players you do not want to hear. It is largely a matter of individual taste on both sides (player and listener).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email</p>	<p><i>We have some major players, of course: David Briggs and Wayne Marshall for example, and many other very fine artists in the field. I don't think that it's part of our lifeblood as it is in France or Germany or the USA. The US tradition, of course, comes straight from continental Europe, with a little bit of English (e.g. Tertius Noble at St Thomas, Fifth Avenue).</i></p>
<p>'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>In the UK, improvisation is still something frowned on a bit. Britain can't shake off an ex-Puritan loathing for showing-off. British organists are almost embarrassed to let loose before a hymn.</i></p> <p><i>Gospel procession: the organist is encouraged to respond to the Gospel. This can be full of fire, creative and expressive. This is an art form! People like it but smirk. They take it as a bit of a joke.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>In UK: rich choral tradition → organ used in a different way than on the continent.</i></p> <p><i>France: organ improvisation is more central to the art of organ playing.</i> <i>England: spaces taken up by choral music. Improvisation is less important.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>France: 'big push', Paris-centred. Loïc Maillé in Lyon.</i> <i>Holland: Piet Kee, Jan Jongepier.</i> <i>Germany: Wolfgang Seifen.</i> <i>Not in London. England is centred around choir. British choral tradition is world renowned.</i> <i>France is centred around the 'Grand Orgue'.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>British organists are very versatile in styles and they become the same in improvisation.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>In the UK, it's normally not existent.</i></p>

2. YOUR PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGAN IMPROVISATION

2.12 How do you teach your organ students the art of improvisation – if at all?

NAME	COMMENT
'Respondent A' (11/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>I follow strictly the Dupré style of improvisation teaching. 'Here's the tune: put it in the pedals at 8' and put chords above it.' Pedal is not only for bass line! 'Think from the Bass upwards!'</i>
'Respondent B' (08/09/2008) face to face interview	<i>I have taught students improvisation, very basic things. I use a book as reference: Gerre Hancock – first chapter on elaboration of hymn tunes (drone accompaniment, chordal accompaniment).</i>
'Respondent C' (23/10/2008) telephone interview	<i>I'm organising LOIC and teach for the St Giles International Organ School: very basic harmony teaching, how to harmonise melodies etc. You can improvise even if you haven't got a profound harmonic knowledge. Don't show off – don't worry about others.</i>
'Respondent D' (09/09/2008) telephone interview	<i>Unsuccessfully! I have tried to teach improvisation – it's very difficult!</i>
'Respondent E' (26/09/2008) interview via email	<i>I encourage my pupils to study theory and aural, and to either let them go from something simple to something more developed, or, to let them waffle, musically, and then get some shape into it.</i>
'Respondent F' (05/11/2008) telephone interview	<i>In RCO Journal, David Briggs said that improvising at ARCO is an extension of the harmonisation test. My way of teaching improvisation: - find different ways of harmonising the same melody. - transpose the melody up a fifth on a different manual. - go back to main manual (ternary form). - Go on solo manual.</i>
'Respondent G' (15/01/2009) interview via email	<i>I don't teach improvisation specifically. I might help people along the way with developing thoughts (basic things: thematic inversions, retrograde, harmonic style, character), but I don't regard myself as a top-drawer improviser anyway. I never improvise in concert and feel that the listener should be treated to 20 mins thoughtfully devised expression rather than hearing instinctual offerings, good, bad or indifferent. Likewise, there are very few people I'd wish to sit and listen to improvise for 20 mins, and that goes for many of the French exponents too who always seem to improvise ('because it's expected'). Most of what is offered turns out to be musically inferior to the rest of the programme and is often therefore an anti-climax. Improvisation is an important part of musical expression, but outside the liturgy, it is only rarely genuinely successful as a listening experience.</i>
'Respondent H' (07/01/2009) telephone interview	<i>[answered elsewhere]</i>
'Respondent I' (27/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>By discussing all of the above with them and setting them exercises.</i>
'Respondent J' (28/04/2009) interview via email	<i>I teach keyboard harmony first and foremost: without a secure grounding in traditional Western harmony I think it is very difficult to go further. The technique of completing a piece 'in the style of' can be useful, and then I teach contrapuntal techniques to ensure absolute independence of voices using both finger memory and cognition.</i>
'Respondent K' (26/04/2009) telephone interview	<i>I only had two - three improvisation students during my twenty years in the UK. I try to give them a sense of counterpoint. I start with basic things: keyboard harmonisations (chorale improvisation) two-, three-, or four-part counterpoint. This is systematic but draining. → I then use free improvisation to relax at the end of the lesson!</i>

<p>'Respondent L' (04/05/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>[answered elsewhere]</i></p>
<p>'Respondent M' (28/04/2009) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I just teach little tricks. You can give pointers: modality, whole-tone scale, pentatonic, octatonic. Helping students to escape their straightjacket. Analysing Debussy's piano preludes is a good way in. Jehan Alain → octatonic scale.</i></p> <p><i>After one hour: students can take something home. One or two lessons per term are fine for Oxbridge students as they're pretty talented and can work on it.</i></p> <p><i>You need to be able to hear in advance (Dupré).</i></p> <p><i>Long-term thinking – short-term thinking. It's like driving a car. I know where I want to go, but I also have to look on the street.</i></p>
<p>'Respondent N' (22/03/2010) face to face interview</p>	<p><i>I've taught quite a lot and I find it very difficult. It's more about motivating and inspiring the student in a lesson.</i></p> <p><i>The trouble is that people go away and don't practise what they've learnt, so when they come back, they start from square one.</i></p> <p><i>It would be important to start teaching improvisation from very early on: Associated Board, school, conservatoire.</i></p> <p><i>Improvisation should be a whole package: analysis, keyboard harmony etc... it's about a thorough understanding.</i></p> <p><i>But: people want to know tricks and do not want to understand.</i></p> <p><i>I find that students today are less inquisitive. They often think they can already do it. They do not really understand what happens.</i></p> <p><i>When I was 7, I had each Saturday one hour of aural classes at the RNCM: dictation, harmony (augmented sixth chords etc.) And when I was eleven, I started to compose.</i></p> <p><i>I think general musicianship needs to be fostered! And then improvisation can develop very quickly!</i></p>
<p>'Respondent O' (08/03/2010) telephone interview</p>	<p><i>I haven't really had many organ students (more piano). I already had training in harmony and counterpoint before I started improvising. That was easier. It's harder to teach students who have not much experience in those disciplines.</i></p> <p><i>In school: students learn hymns and then learn how to improvise chorale preludes. We take organ pieces as examples: Telemann 'Vater unser' → principle behind to be transferred to other hymns. I only teach three organ students, but they all respond well to improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>Modes!! New sound world – not like Mozart and Bach. Inventing chords and melody. Also, I make simple pieces with gaps in them (Arthur Wills method). Jazz improvisation from scratch (ARSCM) → very similar approach.</i></p>

APPENDIX B:

Real-Time-Analysis (RTA) of Recorded Improvisations

Table B1: RTA – *Improvisation at the Enthronement Ceremony of Archbishop Cyril Forster Garbett*

Recording:	CD 1, track 1
Location:	York Minster
Date:	11 th June 1942
Organist:	Edward Bairstow
RTA:	Improvisation, leading to the choir and organ performing a <i>Jubilate</i> by an unknown composer. It is unclear when this took place during the service of enthronement.
	0'00" Tonal harmony, homophonic texture, played on soft strings/flutes 8' + 4' on the Swell.
	0'10" Swell box opens.
	0'14" Swell box closes.
	0'18" Short solo on diapason (Great) within Tenor range, playing motif of ensuing <i>Jubilate</i> .
	0'37" Stops added to Swell (closed).
	0'39" Solo on trumpet stop over pedal point, playing opening motif of ensuing <i>Jubilate</i> .
	0'53" Mixtures and reeds added to Swell; Swell box opens.
	0'58" Swell box closes.
	1'01" Swell box opens; thick chordal texture.
	1'14" Solo on diapason (Great).
	1'20" Perfect cadence (V ⁷ -I); strong organ registration – climax
	1'22" Chordal playing stops; solo Pedal note moves a whole-tone below the established tonic note.
	1'24" Chordal texture resumes, played on flute/diapason stops.
	1'26" Reeds added to Swell (box closed); chordal playing with Suspensions and stepwise movement of notes in Pedals.
	1'48" Short statement of motif from <i>Jubilate</i> .
	1'58" Noticeable addition of reed stops on Great.
	2'07" Softer registration.
	2'11" Registration even softer.
	2'18" Statement of motif from <i>Jubilate</i> on oboe reed.
	2'22" Chordal texture on Swell, use of suspensions.
	2'28" Stops added to Swell, box opens.
	2'29" Chordal texture over pedal point.
	2'38" Perfect cadence (V ⁷ -I); soft organ registration.
	2'42" Improvisation ends.
	2'45" Organ introduction to <i>Jubilate</i> begins.
Comments:	Homophonic texture with extensive use of suspensions. Use of tonal harmony. Archform improvisation: soft-loud-soft. Recurring statement of <i>Jubilate</i> opening motif. Use of pedal points. Traditional use of tonal harmony. Celebratory cathedral-style improvisation.

Table B2:	RTA – <i>Improvised postlude after Evensong</i>
Recording:	National Sound Archive (BL Reference: 9CL0014626-7)
Location:	Westminster Abbey
Date:	23 rd October 1948 (BBC3 Choral Evensong)
Organist:	anon.
RTA:	Starts with full organ (pedal point, chordal suspensions) – Solemn march in 4/4. 50''-1'00'': Tuba solo in Tenor range, then Great takes over again. 1'16'': Quick diminuendo, Swell: flutes & reeds, chordal, then crescendo. 1'53'': Break, full Great: chordal with passage work (in the style of Stanford's <i>Toccata and Fantasia in D minor</i>). 2'36'': Break, chords in right hand with semiquaver runs in the left hand. <i>Fortissimo</i> . 3'10'': Diminuendo, good use of organ tessitura (low, high). 3'30'': Solo clarinet 8' with Swell strings accompaniment. 3'36'': Fade out.
Comments:	Homophonic texture with occasional passage work. Late Romantic in style – traditional use of tonal harmony. Ceremonial style (Elgar?). Typical use of chords: diminished 7 th chords on strong beats of the bar. Stepwise movement of the pedal part. Extensive use of suspensions (3-4; 9-8). Many modulations/very chromatic. Feels structured: this would be regarded as a successful improvisation at a German improvisation diploma examination (postgraduate).

Table B3:	RTA - <i>Improvised organ prelude at the Wedding of HRH Princess Alexandra</i>
Recording:	National Sound Archive (BL Reference: 1LP0167371)
Location:	Westminster Abbey
Date:	24 th April 1963 (BBC)
Organist:	Simon Preston
RTA:	A detailed analysis was not possible as the organ sound was covered up by a voice-over 0'00'' Full organ: thick chordal texture, with a string of suspensions in the following manner: [Ex. B1 inserted here] 1'01'' Diminuendo – then not quite audible. 1'14'' Finish.
Comments:	Instant impression: a solemn march in the style of Elgar / 'music for a royal occasion'. Homophonic texture throughout – chordal. Extensive use of suspensions – together with diminished chords in the manner of: [Ex. B2 inserted here]

Ex. B1: Chain of suspensions:



Ex. B2: Chain of suspensions and diminished seventh chord:



Table B4:	RTA - <i>Improvised postlude after Evensong</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 2
Location:	St Mary Magdalene, Toronto, Canada
Date:	08 th January 1967
Organist:	Healey Willan
RTA:	0'00" Soft 8' stops on Swell (celeste, strings) chordal, tonal, suspensions, soft Pedal 16' stops.
	0'06" Swell box opens.
	0'14" Downward scale in pedals.
	0'30" Swell box closes.
	0'43" Pedal point harmonisation (until 0'53").
	0'55" Solo melody on Great Flute 8', accompanied by Swell.
	1'55" Solo melody stops, Swell strings & Pedal only.
	3'05" Swell box closes.
	3'43" Finish.

Comments: Ternary form: Swell – solo on Great – Swell.
 Homophonic texture throughout.
 Time signature not clear.
 No change of registrations.
 Traditional tonal harmony with use of long-held suspensions.
 Melody not pronounced in character.
 Overall impression: music stays mostly in the background creating a solemn atmosphere.

Table B5:	RTA - <i>Improvised postlude on 'Lasst uns erfreuen' after High Mass</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 3
Location:	St Mary Magdalene, Toronto, Canada
Date:	02 nd October 1966
Organist:	Healey Willan
RTA:	0'00" <i>mf</i> start: pedal note, then left-hand unison scale on Swell manual 'fanning out' into chordal playing, highlighting the first couple of notes of the hymn.
	0'09" Right-hand: Great enters (<i>f</i> , full chorus including mixtures), stating first line of hymn, melodic development.
	0'14" Beginning of hymn tune stated one octave higher.

0'22"	Free harmonic development, chordal, suspensions.
0'39"	Harmonic freeze on half-diminished seventh chord, voices keep moving within that harmony.
0'50"	Crescendo: reeds drawn; harmony moving again, now very dense and Late-Romantic in style – think texture – suspensions.
1'04"	Imperfect cadence – short gap.
1'05"	Unison start, then straight away chordal again, use of long diminished seventh chord, wonderful harmonic development with thick chromatic harmony.
1'43"	Gap.
1'44"	Strong diminished seventh chord over pedal point, then harmonic development over same pedal point, gradually moving up towards the higher tessitura of the organ.
1'56"	Pedal starts moving again (stepwise downwards).
2'05"	Harmonic language becomes more chromatic – Reger style comes to mind; excessive use of diminished seventh chords.
2'18"	Sense of an approach of a final cadence.
2'23"	Cadence/musical climax is reached, organ point harmonisation (coda).
2'37"	Final <i>fortissimo</i> chord is placed.
2'46"	Finish.

Comments: use of late-Romantic harmony – highly modulatory – Reger comes to Mind.
 Anglican ceremonial style of playing: diminished seventh chords, suspensions.
 Hymn briefly stated at beginning only.

Table B6: RTA - *Improvised prelude to the anthem 'O Emmanuel'*

Recording:	CD 1, track 4
Location:	Temple Church, London
Date:	1980
Organist:	George Thalben-Ball
RTA: 0'00"	Recording begins midway. Organ plays <i>forte</i> , including mixtures. Thick diminished chord resolves to a major triad. Short gap.
0'07"	New section begins (still <i>forte</i>), stating the theme of the anthem, starting in unison but quickly fanning out to full chords again. Clear harmonic development. Short gap.
0'15"	Tuba solo (Tenor range): single notes (does not seem to be derived from theme).
0'18"	Full organ joins Tuba notes.
0'21"	Full organ continues without Tuba; long-held plain chords.
0'27"	Pedal point harmonisation (dominant pedal), diminuendo.
0'35"	Harmony becomes more chromatic.
0'43"	Short, soft, statement of theme in pedals.
0'46"	Manuals join with chordal playing; cadence, then short gap.
1'03"	Statement of theme in unison on manuals, then fanning out to full chords (as before); free chordal development.
1'19"	Short statement of theme in manuals, then in pedals, interspersed with free harmonic sections.
1'34"	Pedal starts moving quickly stepwise downwards; manuals accompany with matching harmony.
1'44"	Pedal becomes more static again; long held chord; harmonic rhythm slows down.
1'58"	Diminuendo; free chordal playing.
2'07"	Soft plain chordal playing on Swell manual (celeste, strings); mediant key relationships; no pedal audible, cadence and short gap.
2'49"	Strong organ sound (reedy), stating the first couple of notes the anthem to alert singers; short gap.

2'52" Plays same notes with same registration, this time joined by the choir; the anthem has started and is accompanied by the organist.

Comments: Very much in the tradition of previous generations of Anglican organists.
Overall, strong and loud organ playing – surprising.

Table B7: RTA - *Improvised 'Extemporization on "Westminster Abbey"*

Recording:	CD 1, track 5
Location:	Lincoln Cathedral
Date:	1984
Organist:	Philip Marshall
RTA: 0'00"	Quick run to first chord (on Great, chorus up to mixtures); ceremonial free (ritornello) theme (used as a ritornello later); classical harmony (no chromaticism); homophonic texture with specific accompaniment pattern.
0'09"	First quick statement of first line of <i>Westminster Abbey</i> (WA); cadence (modulation).
0'16"	Ritornello in new key; short gap.
0'29"	Ritornello in original key (brief); cadence; short gap.
0'42"	Longer run to first chord; first line of WA stated on Great over tonic pedal point; interesting reharmonisation of parts of the melody.
0'52"	Same line of WA stated, now harmonised differently again (more chromaticism and mediant relations); clear cadence; short gap.
1'02"	Soft chordal playing on Swell (flutes) with soft pedal note; cadence; short gap.
1'12"	WA fully stated on clarinet, whilst accompanied by flutes (parallel sixths, in the manner of 'Prelude on <i>Rhosymedre</i> ' by Ralph Vaughan Williams).
2'25"	WA stated on Great diapason, still accompanied by flutes in parallel sixth movement.
2'56"	WA tune altered; crescendo (full Swell added); parallel sixths replaced by chordal movement.
3'08"	WA tune statement continues, full Great principal chorus added (omitting mixtures).
3'23"	Free chordal movement with no distinct sense of direction.
3'31"	Mediant key relationships (up a minor third); statement of ceremonial ritornello theme; clear gap.
3'42"	Run to first chord; WA head motif used sequentially; clear gap.
3'52"	Tuba states first three bars of <i>Thaxted</i> with chordal accompaniment on full organ; last note harmonised with 'surprise chord' (G major instead of G minor).
4'04"	WA partly stated on Great over tonic pedal (G); then free harmonic development.
4'20"	Sudden decrescendo (flutes).
4'26"	Swell strings; static chords.
4'34"	WA partly stated on clarinet with strings accompaniment on the Swell (parallel sixth figure again).
5'05"	Harmonic development on Great; full Swell added; crescendo over pedal point; clear gap.
5'21"	WA stated in pedals (Tuba coupled?); exciting toccata accompaniment figure on Great.
6'14"	Pedal point on the last note of WA tune; short motivic development on tuba.
6'23"	Harmonic development on Great: Pedal in scalic movement downward, toccata-figure on Great.
6'29"	Pedal point; toccata-figure on top (mediant key relationships)
6'38"	Pedal drops out; chromatic chordal shifting downwards on Great.
6'46"	Pedal point enters again; short harmonic development; clear gap.

6'51"	Tuba states first two bars of <i>Thaxted</i> in octaves, with chordal accompaniment on Great; chordal development on Great; clear gap.
7'04"	Tuba states opening notes of WA (first unaccompanied, then accompanied on Great); clear gap.
7'14"	Tuba states next phrase of WA (unaccompanied).
7'18"	Harmonic development on Great; clear cut.
7'21"	Free (?) tuba statement (first unaccompanied, then accompanied on Great); static chords; clear gap.
7'35"	Tuba states repeatedly opening motif of WA in double speed, with chordal accompaniment.
7'42"	Pedal point; harmonic development on Great; mediant key shift; clear gap.
7'48"	Pentatonic passagework on Great; then chordal development.
7'56"	Final cadence; last chord stated twice, then run to final chord.
8'08"	Finish.

Comments: Clear sectional structure.
Predominantly tonal harmony.
Extended use of parallel sixths.
Use of motivic development.

Table B8: RTA - *Improvised Gospel fanfare during Sunday Eucharist*

Recording:	CD 1, track 6
Location:	Hereford Cathedral
Date:	Summer 1992
Organist:	Roy Massey
RTA: 0'03"	Organ accompaniment (<i>forte</i>) for congregational response: 'Praise be to thee, O Christ'.
0'11"	Immediate launch into Gospel fanfare; organ louder; exciting passage work (fast triplets) over pedal point, leading into cascades of highly chromatic harmony (still tonal).
0'26"	Tuba fanfare chords emerge, on top of full Great and pedal point.
0'31"	Strong, chromatic chordal development on Great continues.
0'33"	Quick passage work reappears, over Pedal note.
0'36"	Chromatic harmony development continues.
0'41"	Second Tuba entry with fanfare-type chords over Great and Pedal.
0'48"	Clear perfect cadence (dominant seventh chord – tonic).

Comments: Very exciting to listen to!
Harmonic language still tonal and in late Romantic style (see Willan and Thalben-Ball).
Especially the passage work is impressive.

Table B9: RTA - *Improvised postlude at the end of Sunday Eucharist*

Recording:	CD 1, track 7
Location:	Hereford Cathedral
Date:	Summer 1992
Organist:	Roy Massey
RTA: 0'00"	Final verse of congregational hymn: <i>Mannheim</i> .
0'36"	Instant launch into postlude (full organ) with quick run to first chord; most energetic, chordal playing; pedal part agile; clear harmonic language (less chromatic).
0'49"	Modulation into the dominant key.
0'51"	Right-hand toccata-like figure (quick alternation between notes), then pedal and left-hand entry; change of chord from major to minor; harmonic development whilst maintaining toccata figure.
1'06"	Toccata figure stops, chordal playing continues.
1'12"	Tuba melody enters (left-hand), whilst full Great (right-hand) and pedals continue; melody clear-cut and hymn-like.

1'29"	Tuba stops, chordal playing continues; harmonic development.
1'43"	Toccata figure resumes, pedal pauses and comes back in again.
1'55"	Tonic pedal point; toccata figure on top; then harmonic development.
2'22'	First line of hymn tune <i>Mannheim</i> is stated in pedals (last two notes altered); lively chordal work on Great linking the next statement.
2'38"	Rest of hymn tune is stated in pedals, slightly altered rhythmically.
3'01"	Chordal outburst ensues.
3'12"	Very quick cycle of fifths; then thick texture, chromatic harmonic development, somewhat losing sense of direction.
4'13"	Pedal point harmonisation with theme from the beginning on top.
4'17"	Statement of first two lines of hymn on Tuba (slightly altered, Tenor range, octave coupler).
4'39"	New texture: melody note of hymn played on strong beat, full organ chord follows quickly on weak beat.
4'46"	Coda based on original theme.

Comments: Highly virtuosic playing – exciting to listen to!
Homophonic texture with tonal harmony.
Full organ throughout.
First half of the postlude in free-style, then based on final hymn.

Table B10:	RTA - <i>Improvised postlude; BBC Choral Evensong</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 8
Location:	Westminster Abbey
Date:	December 1996
Organist:	Martin Baker
RTA:	0'00" Three strong chords (Great chorus with mixtures), mediant relation (?).
	0'02" Lively accompaniment figure on full Swell (box shut) whilst the hymn <i>God rest you merry, gentlemen</i> (GRY) is stated on Great (slightly altered), no pedals.
	0'09" Surprise harmonisation at the end of the first hymn line.
	0'20" Surprise harmonisation at the end of the second hymn line.
	0'22" Pedal joins.
	0'32" First complete statement of hymn finished; second statement begins on full Swell; now dotted rhythm; lively accompaniment pattern continues.
	0'36" Surprise harmonisation at the end of the first hymn line.
	0'38" Main motif from theme stated in a different key.
	0'42" Surprising change of harmonic direction.
	0'44" Develops into free motif (whole-tone scale?).
	0'49" Harmony freezes; diminuendo to fluty sound; lively accompaniment pattern continues whilst the hymn <i>While Shepherds watched</i> (WSW) is stated fully in the pedals; accompaniment harmony somewhat impressionistic.
	1'08" First line of WSW is stated as a canon, starting with Great (open diapason) and pedals; second entry altered (only first couple of notes from hymn, then takes different direction).
	1'17" Second line of WSW is stated as a canon.
	1'23" Harmonic development (Swell box shut, then crescendo).
	1'33" GRY stated on Swell, but modally altered (whole-tone scale?).
	1'43" GRY theme modally developed on Swell; lively accompaniment pattern continues; 'Pedal dots'.
	1'50" WSW head motif soloed out on Choir (8', 4', 2 2/3'), then modal development of melody.
	1'56" Echo effect between Choir and Solo (cornet registration), modal development of melody.
	2'05" WSW head motif soloed out on Solo (cornet registration), modal

- development of melody; some coordination problems as commonly found in fast melodic improvisations.
- 2'15" Melodic development on Solo becomes increasingly modal.
- 2'18" Solo melody keeps repeating same note quickly whilst accompaniment stops.
- 2'20" Sudden change of registration to flutes, whilst repeating the same melody note.
- 2'26" Modal development on flutes with lively accompaniment on Swell (soft).
- 2'32" Flute melody splits into thirds (modal scale).
- 2'39" Quick notes in left-hand, quick echo effect with right-hand (flutes); modal development.
- 2'50" *WSW* head motif in sixths on flutes (modal) with lively accompaniment on Swell flutes; modal development.
- 3'05 Reeds added to Swell (box still shut); held chord with lively pattern.
- 3'11" More Swell stops added (box opens slightly); modal development; big crescendo.
- 3'27" Staccato chords on Great (like at the beginning); mediant relationship.
- 3'33" *GRY* statement on Great (full chorus with mixtures), lively accompaniment on Swell (as before).
- 3'39" Different surprise harmonisation at the end of first hymn line.
- 3'45" Different surprise harmonisation at the end of second hymn line.
- 3'48" *GRY* melody not fully stated yet, melody departure in different direction.
- 3'59" Motif in fourths (alternating right and left hand) over pedal point; crescendo.
- 4'11" *WSW* statement in pedal whilst a lively toccata unfolds on the Great; colourful harmonisation.
- 4'21" After *WSW* statement in pedals, head motif developed on Great (modally); harmonic crescendo/build-up.
- 4'43" Solo statement of *WSW* head motif on Solo reeds (no accompaniment), modally altered.
- 4'47" Pedal joins (now: two-part texture), long held note; gap.
- 4'53" Pseudo-exposition (based on *WSW*?) on Great (chorus plus mixtures); polyphonic texture quickly becomes homophonic; crescendo and harmonic development (harmony becomes denser), gradually approaching higher end of keyboard; lively accompaniment.
- 5'43" Sudden shift of harmony; build-up (crescendo, more lively playing); very brief gap.
- 6'10" Stronger reeds added to full organ sound; starting in unison than fanning out into full harmony (motifs from *GRY* recycled).
- 6'16" Sudden increase in liveliness; harmony incredibly blurred (giving the impression of leaving tonality).
- 6'29" Sudden bright final cadence (major triad).
- 6'36" Finish.

Comments: Full of energy and drive.
 Advanced use of modal harmonies (French in taste?).
 Pseudo-sonata form, developing two contrasting themes (minor/major).
 Lively accompaniment figure ongoing throughout for almost the entire improvisation.
 Varied use of textures, including polyphony.
 Varied use of registration; use of cornets for solo melody.

Table B11:	RTA - <i>Improvised prelude before Matins</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 9
Location:	Rochester Cathedral
Date:	03 rd October 1999
Organist:	Sean Farrell (b. 1967)
RTA:	0'00" Recording starts midway; improvisation on Stopped Diapason 8': parallel sixths, then cadence followed by a short gap.
	0'16" Chordal playing on Swell strings and flutes (light modal flavour – mediant relationships), short gap.
	0'44" Thirds on Flute 8' (whole-tone scale), no accompaniment.
	0'50" lower chordal accompaniment joins on softer manual.
	1'03" Pedal points on strings and flutes (long-held augmented triad, then tonal chords on second inversion pedal point); chords moving up the keyboard and then down.
	1'48" Solo Clarinet 8' enters, then accompanied by soft chords on Swell (major seventh chords).
	2'14" Chords on Swell only over pedal point, ending in the right key for the <i>Preces</i> .
	2'53" Finish.
	2'54" Cantor 'O Lord, open Thou our lips' (<i>Preces</i>).
Comments:	'Background' improvisation. Typical use of Anglican style registrations: strings, flutes, solo clarinet. Mostly homophonic texture. Harmony has priority over melody. Use of whole-tone thirds creates interest. No clear sense of metre or structure or recognisable theme/motif.

Table B12:	RTA - <i>Improvised prelude before Evensong</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 10
Location:	Canterbury Cathedral
Date:	05 th October 1999
Organist:	Timothy Noon (b. 1974)
RTA:	0'00" Recording starts midway; chordal playing on soft strings and flutes; Modal harmony with suspensions over pedal points.
	0'31" Thirds on flute join the chordal texture.
	0'59" Sudden drop in volume; chordal playing on Swell strings.
	1'04" Swell box opens quickly.
	1'08" Swell box shuts quickly.
	1'11" Swell box opens quickly.
	1'12" Swell box shuts quickly.
	1'36" Harmonic rhythm slows down.
	1'41" Congregation standing up (choir enters).
	1'56" Chords moving up on the keyboard, no Pedal.
	2'08" Pedal point enters.
	2'15" Swell celeste added.
	2'19" Swell box shuts quickly.
	2'46" Final chord (major).
	2'50" Finish.
	2'59" Cantor sings 'O Lord, open Thou our Lips' (<i>Preces</i>).
Comments:	Use of registration typical of Anglican-style improvisations. Homophonic (chordal) texture dominant. Light modal harmonies. Abrupt use of Swell pedal. Suspensions and pedal points. No clear sense of metre or structure or theme/motif.

Table B13:	RTA - <i>Improvised prelude before Evensong</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 11
Location:	St John's College Chapel, Cambridge
Date:	05 th November 2002
Organist:	Organist unknown (one of the College's organ scholars?)
RTA:	0'00" Modal chords on diapasons; Howellsian in style; pedal point harmonies.
	0'12" Swell reeds added; then Swell box opens and shuts quickly in succession.
	0'26" Pedal points; gap.
	0'33" Slightly softer in sound; same harmonic language on pedal point.
	0'56" New modal centre ('fresh'); mediant relationship.
	1'05" Dominant pedal (Swell box open/shut quickly).
	1'24" New modal centre.
	1'38" Swell reeds off; gap.
	2'07" Modal chords on softer Swell (strings, flutes); pedal point harmonies.
	2'33" Change of registrations: Swell strings only.
	2'49" Congregation standing up – choir processes into choir stalls.
	2'56" Crescendo: diapasons added.
	3'03" Dominant pedal point; crescendo (Swell reeds added).
	3'09" New modal centre (mediant relationship); pedal points; diminuendo.
	3'19" New modal centre; pedal point harmonisation; diminuendo.
	3'24" Sudden diminuendo; pedal points.
	3'29" Further diminuendo; pedal points.
	3'59" Finish.
Comments:	Extensive use of pedal points. Crescendos include Swell reeds. Quick use of Swell pedal. Modal harmony (reminiscent of Howells's organ style). More shape than previous two improvisations (Tables B11 and B12) and more organic development despite some solecisms.

Table B14:	RTA - <i>Improvised introduction to 'God rest you merry, gentlemen'</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 12
Location:	Temple Church, London
Date:	December 1961
Organist:	George Thalben-Ball
Occasion:	BBC Radio 3 broadcast: <i>Carols from the Temple Church</i> .
RTA:	0'01" Full organ; statement of opening bars of carol in the pedals as fugal subject.
	0'04" Second entry (answer) in the Tenor.
	0'07" Third entry (subject) in the Alto.
	0'11" Fourth entry (answer) in the Soprano; then harmonic development (homophonic).
	0'29" Statement of last half of carol ('O tidings of joy') but then altered and harmonically developed.
	0'41" Final cadence approached.
	0'49" Finish.
	0'50" Gentlemen of the choir start singing first verse of the carol.
Comments:	Fugal exposition. Overall surprisingly quasi-antique feel to the use of harmony. First impression: a formal and structured improvisation.

Table B15:	RTA – <i>Improvised introduction to Offertory hymn ‘Just as I am’</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 13
Location:	Hereford Cathedral
Date:	Summer 1992
Organist:	Roy Massey
Occasion:	Sunday Eucharist (choir on holiday)
RTA: 0’00’’	Full Choir (mixtures, no reeds); pedal point; pseudo-polyphonic texture in manuals.
0’04’’	Cycle of fifths; harmonic development in the Baroque style.
0’27’’	Ritardando; finish on dominant chord.
0’30’’	Whole hymn played-over with same registration.
0’57’’	Finish.
0’58’’	Congregation starts singing first verse.
Comments:	Quasi-antique style improvisation at the beginning. This then merges with traditional hymn play-over.

Table B16:	RTA – <i>Psalms 93 and 94</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 14
Location:	Exeter Cathedral
Date:	18 th May 2005
Organist:	Andrew Millington
Occasion:	Evensong
RTA: 0’01’’	<i>Psalm 93</i>
	Verse 1: full Swell (reeds 8’), <i>colla parte</i> . ¹
0’19’’	Verse 2: full Swell, <i>colla parte</i> .
0’28’’	Verse 3: soft, fluty, <i>colla parte</i> .
0’38’’	Verse 4: full Swell (reeds 16’ + 8’), <i>colla parte</i> .
0’51’’	Verse 5: full Swell (reeds 8’ + 4’), <i>colla parte</i> .
1’04’’	Verse 6: softer sound, <i>colla parte</i> .
1’17’’	Doxology: full Swell (like in Verse 1), <i>colla parte</i> .
1’28’’	Great diapasons added, <i>colla parte</i> .
1’46’’	<i>Psalm 94</i>
	Verse 1: strong diapason-based sound (8’, 4’, 2’), <i>colla parte</i> .
1’59’’	Verse 2: Swell reeds 8’ added, <i>colla parte</i> .
2’10’’	Verse 3: Swell only (same registration than in Verse 2, box shut), <i>colla parte</i> .
2’20’’	Verse 4: Registration identical with Verse 3, <i>colla parte</i> .
2’32’’	Verse 5: softer Swell (no reeds), <i>colla parte</i> .
2’40’’	Verse 6: soft diapasons, <i>colla parte</i> .
2’51’’	Verse 7: Clarinet solo, soft Swell accompaniment.
3’04’’	Verse 8: see Verse 7.
3’16’’	Verse 9: Oboe solo, no accompaniment.
3’29’’	Verse 10: see Verse 9.
3’42’’	Verse 11: Diapason stops (8’ + 4’), <i>colla parte</i> .
3’52’’	Verse 12: Flutes 8’ & 4’, <i>colla parte</i> .
4’03’’	Verse 13: see Verse 12, Swell box shut – then opened again, <i>colla parte</i> .
4’17’’	Verse 14: see Verse 12.
4’28’’	Verse 15: soft diapason stops, <i>colla parte</i> .
4’40’’	Verse 16: full Swell (reeds & mixtures), <i>colla parte</i> .
4’53’’	Verse 17: soft flutes, then soft strings, <i>colla parte</i> .
5’05’’	Verse 18: solo Flute 8’, soft Swell accompaniment.
5’16’’	Verse 19: soft Swell strings, <i>colla parte</i> .
5’29’’	Verse 20: soft flutes and strings, <i>colla parte</i> .
5’41’’	Verse 21: louder registration (8’, 4’, 2’; reed 8’), <i>colla parte</i> .

¹ In this context, *colla parte* means the organist accompanies the choir by exactly playing the Anglican chant as written.

5'53"	Verse 22 :	Great diapasons plus full Swell, <i>colla parte</i> .
6'04"	Verse 23:	see Verse 22, louder Swell reeds added, then louder diapasons added, <i>colla parte</i> .
6'21"	Doxology:	Great diapasons plus full Swell (box shut), <i>colla parte</i> .
6'51"	Finish	

Table B17:	RTA – <i>Improvised postlude in the style of Handel</i>
Recording:	CD 1, track 15
Location:	St George's Church, Hanover Square, London
Date:	01 st April 2009
Organist:	Ronny Krippner
Occasion:	BBC Radio 3: Choral Evensong (live broadcast)
RTA:	0'00" Beginning of Adagio movement; melodic development on top of basic harmonic pattern.
	018" Cycle of fifths and interrupted cadence.
	0'36" Melodic variation of basic harmonic pattern.
	0'48" Cycle of fifths; cadence.
	1'02" Handelian imperfect cadence.
	1'14" Beginning of Allegro Fugue: statement of subject (Soprano).
	1'20" Answer (Bass).
	1'28" Subject (Bass); harmonic development.
	1'37" Cycle of fifths; harmonic development.
	1'50" Subject (Soprano).
	1'56" Harmonic turn: major instead of minor; harmonic development.
	2'05" Subject (Bass).
	2'11" Triplet passagework in tenths.
	2'21" Cycle of fifths.
	2'30" Subject (Bass); harmonic development.
	2'41" Cycle of fifths.
	2'58" Stretto: subject (Bass), quickly followed by statement of subject (Soprano); harmonic development.
	3'08" Subject (Bass); harmonic development.
	3'18" Cycle of fifths.
	3'24" Dominant pedal.
	3'30" Approach of final cadence.
	3'40" Finish.
Comments:	Adagio movement mainly homophonic. Allegro movement polyphonic throughout. More left-hand statements of fugal subject than right-hand statements (6:3).

APPENDIX C:

List of Commercial Organ Improvisation CD Recordings by British Organists

The following list is a chronological inventory of commercial improvisation recordings played by British organists. Whilst many recordings have been considered, no claim is made with regard to the completeness of this list.

Title	The Lincoln Cathedral Organ
Organist	Philip Marshall
Label	Cantoris Records
Year	1993
Place	Lincoln Cathedral
Details	Improvisation 'Wedding hymns'; Improvisation 'Westminster Abbey'

Title	Masterclass 1
Organist	Nigel Allcoat
Label	Cantoris Records
Year	1994
Place	Hjerting Kirke, Esbjerg, Denmark
Details	Demonstrates the creation of theme and variations, duos, trios and plainsong hymn versets.

Title	Masterclass 2
Organist	Nigel Allcoat
Label	Cantoris Records
Year	1998
Place	Hjerting Kirke, Esbjerg, Denmark
Details	Guides the player to create preludes, passacaglias, preludes & postludes using hymn tunes, offertories and an organ mass.

Title **King of Kings: an improvised soundtrack to Cecil B de Mille's classic film of 1928**

Organist David Briggs

Label The Company Disc Duplicating Company

Year 1999

Place Gloucester Cathedral

Details improvised soundtrack

Title **Improvisations 2**

Organist Nigel Allcoat

Label Cantoris Records

Year 1999

Place St Catherine, Bitche and St Martin, Verus, France

Tracks *Variations on an original theme* *Suite Champagne* *Introduction and Paraphrase 'Nun danket'*

1. Theme	17. Champagne flute	
2. Plein Jeu	18. In the cellars	
3. Flutes	19. Song of the harvesters	23. Introduction
4. Cornets	20. The blending	24. Paraphrase
5. Priere	21. The maturing	
6. Fileuse	22. Bubbly Toccata	
7. Fonds d'Orgue		
8. Badingage		
9. Musette		
10. Recit		
11. Berceuse		
12. Chant de Paix		
13. Jeux		
14. Chant d'Amour		
15. Trompettes		
16. Final		

Title **Organ Spectacular**

Organist David Briggs

Label Delos International Inc.

Year 1999

Place First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, USA

Details Improvisation: Prelude, Adagio and Chorale Variations on 'Ein Feste Burg', amongst other titles

Title **Improvisations 2**
Organist David Briggs
Label David Briggs
Year n.d.
Place Oratory of St Philip Neri, Birmingham and Gloucester Cathedral
Tracks
1. Variations on 'Baa-Baa, Black Sheep' (1997)
2. Symphony in four movements (1995)
3. Magnificat à l'usage de Notre-Dame de Paris (1997)
4. Improvisation on St Matthew's Gospel (1996)

Title **Wayne Marshall: Organ Improvisations**
Organist Wayne Marshall
Label Delos Records
Year 1999
Place The Lay Family Concert Organ, Meyerson Symphony Center,
Dallas, Texas
Tracks Jazz-style improvisations on the following compositions:
1. I Got Rhythm (Gershwin)
2. I Got Plenty Of Nuttin' (Gershwin)
3. I Loves You, Porgy (Gershwin)
4. Bess, You Is My Woman Now (Gershwin)
5. I'll Build A Stairway To Paradise (Gershwin)
6. Someone To Watch Over Me (Gershwin)
7. Est Side Story Medley (Bernstein)
8. Take The A-Train (Strayhorn)
9. Let It Snow (Styne)
10. Tea for Two (Youmans)

Title **Beyond the Score... Improvisations for Whit Sunday**

Organist Alexander Mason

Label Signum Records

Year 2000

Place Gloucester Cathedral

Tracks

Variations on <i>Veni Creator</i>	Messe de la Pentecôte	Machaut-fantaisie	Suite des Danses
1. Tutti	11. Introit	16. Introduction	20. March
2. Cantus firmus	12. Offertoire	17. Scherzo	21. Sicilienne
3. Scherzo	13. Elévation	18. Adagio	22. Bolero
4. Canon à 2	14. Communion	19. Finale	23. Minuet-Waltz
5. Dialogue	15. Sortie		24. Gigue alla Rumba
6. Trio			
7. Fugato			
8. Tierce en taille			
9. Cornet de Grigny			
10. Grand choeur			

Title **Sounds Spontaneous: Improvisations through the Church's Year**

Organist Malcolm Archer (+) and David Bednall (*)

Label Lammas Records

Year 2004

Place Wells Cathedral

Tracks

1. Advent (Creator alme siderum) *
2. Christmas (Noel nouvelet) +
3. Epiphany (O magi venient) +
4. Candlemas (Ave maris stella) *
5. Lent *
6. Passiontide (Pange lingua) +
7. Maundy Thursday (Ubi Caritas) +
8. Good Friday (Passion Chorale) +
9. Easter (Victimae Pascali) *
10. Ascension (Llanfair) +
11. Pentecost (Veni Creator Spiritus) +
12. Trinity (O Lux Beata) +
13. Corpus Christi (Vexilla Regis) +
14. All Saints (Mount Ephraim) +
15. All Souls (Requiem aeternum and In paradisum) *
16. Christ the King (Te Deum) *

Title **Purple: Improvisations for Holy Week**

Organist Simon Johnson

Label Lammas Records

Year 2004

Place St Albans Cathedral

Tracks

1. Reading: Luke 19.29.-48
2. Meditation 1: Jesus enters Jerusalem
3. Reading: Luke 20.1-8 & 20-26
4. Meditation 2: Jesus is questioned in the temple
5. Reading: Luke 22.7-20
6. Meditation 3: The Last Supper
7. Reading: Luke 22.39-53
8. Meditation 4: Agony in the Garden
9. Reading: Luke 22.54-62
10. Meditation 5: Peter's denial
11. Reading: Luke 23.1-25
12. Meditation 6: Mocking, trial, sentencing
13. Reading: Luke 23.26-27 & 32.47
14. Meditation 7: To Golgotha, Crucifixion
15. Symphony-Passion: Crucifixion
16. Victimae Paschali: Choral-Improvisation

Title **Freedom of Spirit: The Passion of Improvisation**

Organist David Briggs

Label Chestnut Music

Year n.d.

Place various locations in France and the US

Details

Variations on 'Alouette, gentile Alouette':

1. Theme
2. Récit de Cromorne
3. Adagio
4. Trio
5. Fugue
6. Fileuse
7. Final

Improvisations in the style of :

8. J. S. Bach
9. F. Mendelssohn
10. M. Ravel
11. D. Briggs
12. Improvisation on 'My Old Kentucky Home'
13. Improvisation: 'Hommage à Jean Langlais'

Three Liturgical Improvisations from St Sulpice:

14. Offertoire
15. Communion
16. Sortie
17. Improvisation on Ave Maris - 'Lourdes Hymn'

Title	Improvisations for the Church Year		
Organist	Anthony Hammond		
Label	Priory Records		
Year	2009		
Place	St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol		
Tracks	Hommage à Pierre Cochereau: 10 Versets sur <i>Veni Emmanuel</i>	Introduction, Theme and Variation on: <i>Adeste Fidelis</i>	Symphony in Four Movts. on: <i>Victimae Paschali</i>
	1. Introduction	11. Introduction	19. Theme
	2. Fonds 8	12. Theme	20. i. Introduction – Adagio
	3. Mixtures	13. March	21. ii. Scherzo
	4. Scherzando – Flûtes 8	14. Foundation 16, 8, 4	22. iii. Andante
	5. Fugato – Plein Jeu	15. Trio	23. iv. Final
	6. Dialogue	16. Meditation	
	7. Scherzo	17. Toccata	
	8. Fanfare	18. Meditation on Bach's Passion Chorale	
	9. Berceuse		
	10. Final		

Title	David Briggs: Messe pour Notre-Dame		
Organist	David Briggs, together with the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge		
Label	Hyperion		
Year	2010		
Place	Gloucester Cathedral		
Tracks	Messe pour Notre-Dame		
	1. Introït <i>organ improvisation</i>		
	2. Kyrie		
	3. Gloria		
	4. Offertoire <i>organ improvisation</i>		
	5. Ubi caritas et amor		
	6. Sanctus		
	7. Benedictus		
	8. Elévation <i>organ improvisation</i>		
	9. Agnus Dei		
	10. Sortie <i>organ improvisation</i>		
	11. I will lift up mine eyes		
	12. Magnificat		
	13. Nunc Dimittis		
	14. Te Deum laudamus		
	15. Toccata on Te Deum laudamus <i>organ improvisation</i>		
	16. O Lord, support us		

Title **Chorus Vel Organa: Music from the lost Palace of
Westminster**

Organist Magnus Williamson, together with the Choir of Gonville & Caius
College, Cambridge

Label Delphian Records

Year 2015

Place St Laurence's Church, Ludlow

Details Organ Improvisations in Tudor style:
Lady Mass Cycle vi (Friday) – Kyrie: organ versets 3-5
improvised
Lady Mass Cycle iv (Wednesday – Sequence: Laetanbundus:
organ versets improvised
Lady Mass Cycle ii (Monday) – Gloria: organ versets improvised

APPENDIX D:

List of Organ Improvisation Tutor Books in English

The following list is a chronological inventory of organ improvisation tutor books in English. Whilst many sources have been considered, no claim is made with regard to the completeness of this list.

Title	Extemporization – Novello’s Music Primers & Educational Series
Author	Frank Joseph Sawyer
Publisher	London: Novello and Company Ltd.
Year	?1890
Contents	<i>Part I – of Themes:</i> Chapter I: Preliminary Chapter II: to extemporize a theme of eight bars Chapter III: to extemporize a theme of sixteen bars Chapter IV: to extemporize themes of greater length <i>Part II – of Movements:</i> Chapter V: to extemporize short preludes (or voluntaries) Chapter VI: to extemporize longer preludes Chapter VII: to extemporize short postludes Chapter VIII: to extemporize longer postludes Chapter IX: on the use of the hymn-tune in extemporization Chapter X: to extemporize extended fantasias in several movements

Title	Cours Complet d’Improvisation à l’Orgue: Volume 1: Exercices Préparatoires à l’Improvisation libre Complete Course in Organ Improvisation: Volume 1: Preparatory Exercises for free Improvisation (<i>English Translation: Alan Hobbs, 1957</i>)
Author	Marcel Dupré
Publisher	Paris: Alphonse Leduc
Year	1937
Contents:	The Harmonization of the Scales Given Melodies and Harmonized Chorals The Antecedent and the Consequent The Modulating Consequent The Commentary Parenthetical Sections The Binary Exposition, its Form and its Modulations Placement and order of voices parts The Bridge The Development first part The Lyrical Part of the Development – Preparation for the Re-entry (Return) General Plan

Title **Cours Complet d'Improvisation à l'Orgue:
Volume 2: Traité d'Improvisation à l'Orgue**
Complete Course in Organ Improvisation:
Volume 2: Organ Improvisation
(English Translation: John Fenstermaker, 1973)

Author Marcel Dupré

Publisher Paris: Alphonse Leduc

Year 1925

Contents: Organ Technique
Natural Harmony
Theme
Counterpoint and Chorale
The Suite
The Variation – the Tryptique
The Four Symphonic Forms
Free Forms

Title **Extemporization for Music Students**

Author Reginald Hunt

Publisher London: Oxford University Press

Year 1968

Contents Introduction: occasions for extemporization; scope and purpose of the course; other considerations
Chapter I: adding a four-bar non-modulating responsive phrase to a given four-bar statement phrase; exercises
Chapter II: adding a modulating responsive phrase to a given phrase
Chapter III: adding a responsive phrase (continued); opening phrases which modulate; modifying the rhythm in the second phrase; note on how to determine the length of a phrase; exercises
Chapter IV: adding three phrases to a given phrase; modulatory and rhythmic schemes; exercises: (1) two-bar phrases; (2) four-bar phrases; (3) more difficult exercises; (4) phrases of which only the melody is given
Chapter V: extemporizing on a less rigid pattern of four phrases; imitative openings; varying the number of harmonic parts; exercises
Chapter VI: extemporizing a short coda to a hymn tune; exercises
Chapter VII: extemporizing a prelude and coda to a melody in folk-song idiom; exercises (1) preludes and codas to specified folk- and national songs; (2) codas to examples from previous chapters; (3) transposing and then extemporizing on a hymn tune; (4) harmonizing a melody and then extemporizing
Chapter VIII: extemporizing on a theme of less than phrase length; exercises
Chapter IX: extemporizing in ternary form (1) as required in school music diplomas, (2) as required in standard organ diplomas; exercises (1) extemporizations based on complete phrases; (2) extemporizations based on a theme instead of a phrase
Appendix: diploma examination requirements

Title **The Elements of Extemporisation**

Author Sydney H Nicholson

Publisher Croydon: The Royal School of Church Music

Year 1969

Contents Introduction
Rhythm and key
Theme and development
Transposition and sequence
Music form
Developing a subject
Cultivating the art
Some 'don't's'
Summary
List of books
Some albums of interludes or short voluntaries

Title **Organ (Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides)**
Author Arthur Wills
Publisher London: Macdonald & Co (Publishers) Ltd
Year 1984
Contents *Chapters on Organ Improvisation:*
 Part Four *Acquiring the Skills*
 21 An Outline of Instruction
 22 Organ Improvisation I
 23 Organ Improvisation II

Title **Hymn Improvisation**
Author Michele Johns
Publisher Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House
Year 1987
Contents 1 Bicinium
 2 Ostinato
 3 Imitation
 4 Ritornello
 5 Toccata
 6 Free Form Combinations

Title **Improvising: How to Master the Art**
Author Gerre Hancock
Publisher New York: Oxford University Press
Year 1994
Contents Introduction
 1 The Scale
 2 The Phrase
 3 The Interlude
 4 The Hymn
 5 The Ornamented Hymn
 6 The Hymn Prelude
 7 The Song Form
 8 The Toccata
 9 The Canon
 10 The Duo and the Trio
 11 The Fugue
 Coda

Title **Making Music: Improvisation for Organists**
Author Jan Overduin
Publisher New York: Oxford University Press
Year 1998
Contents Introduction
 1 Improvising Melodies
 2 Improvising on one or two chords: Registration and Imagery
 3 Thirds and Sixths
 4 The Pentatonic Mode
 5 Bicinium
 6 I, IV, and V
 7 Harmonizing Melodies
 8 Improvising Hymns/Songs
 9 Binary Form

10	Other Progressions
11	Suspensions and more effective Hymn-Playing
12	Ostinato
13	Harmonizing Scales and Melodies (I)
14	Sequences
15	Chaconne
16	Passacaglia
17	Ornamenting Melodies (I)
18	Ornamenting Melodies (II)
19	Modulation
20	Harmonising Scales and Melodies (II)
21	Reharmonizing Hymns
22	Ornamenting inner voices
23	Cadences
24	Descants
25	Interludes
26	Modulating Interludes
27	Canon
28	Rondo
29	Toccata
30	Partita
31	Three-voice Fugue
32	Hymn-Anthems
	Appendix A: Jean Langlais as Teacher
	Appendix B : Cadenza for Mozart's Epistle Sonata K. 336
	Indes of Hymn Tunes

Title	The Improvisation Companion
Author	Naji Hakim
Publisher	Waltham Abbey: United Music Publishers
Year	2000
Contents	<p>Preface Foreword Acknowledgements Introduction</p> <p><i>Part I</i> PROLOGUE</p> <p>I. Instrumental mastery II. Instinct and reasoning III. Improvisation and composition IV. Essential criteria 1. Balance between unity and diversity 2. Control of dramatic interest 3. Balanced proportions V. Compositional techniques VI. Temporal constraints and mental agility 1. Concentration 2. Ordering 3. Control of time VII. Rhetorical and harmonical control VIII. Pulse IX. Justification of mistakes X. The role of memory XI. Alterations</p> <p><i>Part II</i> THE THEME</p> <p>I. Analysis of the theme 1. Character 2. Melodic structure 3. Melodic contour 4. Rhythm 5. Harmonic Colour 6. Special cases: extra-musical themes a. Literary text b. Graphic or pictorial image (1) Figurative (2) Abstract II. Exposition of the theme – Melodic work</p>

- III. Harmonisation of the theme
 - 1. Harmonic density
 - 2. Harmonic rhythm and harmonic frequency
 - 3. Types of harmonisation
 - a. Bass Harmonisation
 - (1) General case
 - (2) Harmonisation with borrowings
 - (3) Harmonisation without foreign notes
 - (4) Harmonisation with foreign notes
 - (5) Harmonisation over a pedal note
 - (6) Hexachordal harmonisation
 - (7) Harmonisation of a modulating theme
 - b. Soprano harmonisation
 - (1) General case
 - (2) Simultaneous bass and soprano harmonisation
 - (3) Thickening of the melody by doubling in intervals or chords
 - c. Polytonal harmonisation
 - d. Harmonisation by chordal superimpositions
 - e. Atonal harmonisation
 - f. Harmonisation by verticalization of melodic fragments
- IV. Practical applications
 - 1. Traditional song
 - 2. Gregorian chant
 - 3. Chorale
 - 4. Free theme

Part III

DEVELOPMENT

- I. Definition
- II. Melodic development
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Techniques of melodic development
 - 3. Practical advice
- III. Rhythmic development
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Techniques of rhythmic development
- IV. Harmonic development
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Techniques of harmonic development
 - 3. Practical advice
- V. Contrapuntal development
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Techniques of contrapuntal development
 - 3. Practical advice
- VI. Instrumental writing
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Special case: the organ

Part IV

FORMS

- I. General remarks
 - 1. The introduction
 - 2. The exposition
 - 3. The development
 - 4. The digression
 - 5. The recapitulation
 - 6. The transition
 - 7. The coda
- II. Binary forms
 - 1. *Bar* form: AAB
 - 2. Simple binary form: AB
- III. Ternary forms
 - 1. Song form: ABA'
 - 2. Minuet form: AABABA
 - 3. Minuet-trio and scherzo-trio
 - a. AABABA - CCDCDC - ABA
 - b. AABB - CCDD - AB
 - 4. Arch form
- IV. Sonata-form
 - 1. Monothematic sonata-form
 - a. General case
 - b. Special cases
 - (1) Gregorian paraphrase, free theme
 - (2) Prelude, toccata
 - 2. Bithematic sonata-form
- V. Rondo form
- VI. Variation forms

1. General case
 2. Special cases
 - a. Chorale variations
 - b. Ostinato bass variations
 - i. General case
 - ii. Passacaglia
 - c. Symphonic variations
- VII. Free form
1. General case
 2. Special cases
 - a. Fugue
 - b. Rhapsody
 - c. Fantasy
- VII. Works in several movements
1. Prelude and fugue
 2. Passacaglia and fugue
 3. Sonata, symphony
 - a. General case
 - b. Special case: symphony in three movements

CONCLUSION

Appendix I: Harmonisation – Basic Principles

Appendix II: List of Themes

Title	First Improvisation Book
Author	John R Shannon
Publisher	Colfax: Wayne Leupold Editions
Year	2001
Content	<p>Preface</p> <p>Introduction – A ‘must read’ for Students</p> <p><i>Part I – Accompanying a Pre-existing Melody (Hymn Tune)</i></p> <p>Unit One: a little improvisation at the very beginning</p> <p>Unit Two: the pentatonic scale</p> <p>Unit Three: a simple setting of a pentatonic hymn tune</p> <p>Unit Four: enlivening the pentatonic accompaniment</p> <p>Unit Five: other accompanimental patterns and ‘vamping ‘til ready’</p> <p>Unit Six: independent use of the pedal</p> <p>Unit Seven: putting a bass to selected hymn tunes</p> <p>Unit Eight: filling the harmony using the primary triads</p> <p>Unit Nine: applying the primary triads to selected hymn tunes</p> <p>Unit Ten: enlivening the chordal harmony</p> <p><i>Part II – Creating and Accompanying an Original Improvised Melody</i></p> <p>Unit Eleven: simple periodic structure</p> <p>Unit Twelve: using the major scale</p> <p>Unit Thirteen: short periodic melodies</p> <p>Unit Fourteen: cadences and adding harmony to periodic melodies</p> <p>Unit Fifteen: a final project for Volume I</p> <p>Glossary</p>

Title	Praxis der Orgel-Improvisation
	The Practice of Organ Improvisation
Author	Hans Gebhard
Publisher	Frankfurt: C. F. Peters
Year	1987
Content	<p>A. THE HARMONIC SETTING (IN FOUR PARTS)</p> <p>I. The principal triads</p> <p>II. The secondary triads and the 6⁵chord and the subdominant</p> <p>III. The modulation</p> <p>IV. The nonharmonic topes (appoggiaturas, passing notes, cambiatas, anticipations)</p> <p>V. Technique of development</p>

VI. The colouring of the melody
 VII. The art of inventing motifs (part I)
 VIII. Chromaticism
 IX. Chorale prelude – Ritornello – Ostinato
 X. More recent stylistic devices in harmony and rhythm

B. THE LINEAR SETTING

XI. Introduction to the linear two-Part setting
 XII. Voice-leading in fast motion
 XIII. Rhythmic formation of the accompanying voice
 XIV. Formation of sequences
 XV. The art of inventing motifs (part 11)
 XVI. The three-part setting
 XVII. Fugato and canon technique
 XVIII. The trio with voices in different motion

C. LARGE FORMS

XIX. Forms of variations
 XX. The toccata
 XXI. The concerto
 XXII. The fugue
 XXIII. The Large symphonic form

APPENDIX

Title **Improvising in Traditional 17th- and 18th-Century Harmonic Style – Volume I**
Author John R Shannon
Publisher Colfax: Wayne Leupold Editions
Year 2007
Content Introduction / about the author
 Unit One: the primary triads
 Unit Two: some two-part improvisation using consonance
 Unit Three: the dominant-seventh chord
 Unit Four: root-position secondary triads in the major mode
 Unit Five: cadences
 Unit Six: inversions of triads
 Unit Seven: inversions of the dominant-seventh chord
 Unit Eight: non-chord tones – I
 Unit Nine: non-chord tones – II
 Unit Ten: harmonizing hymn melodies
 Unit Eleven: embellishing a melody using Baroque ornamentation
 Unit Twelve: improvising over a pedal point
 Unit Thirteen: improvising pieces using echo
 Unit Fourteen: some general observations about hymn playing
 Unit Fifteen: simple ways to introduce a hymn
 Glossary

Title **Improvising in Traditional 17th- and 18th-Century Harmonic Style – Volume II**
Author John R Shannon
Publisher Colfax: Wayne Leupold Editions
Year 2007
Content Introduction / about the author
 Unit One: expanded use of the dominant-seventh chord and temporary modulation to the dominant
 Unit Two: the minor mode
 Unit Three: three specialized chords: the supertonic six-five, the diminished seventh, and the Neopolitan Sixth
 Unit Four: harmonic sequences
 Unit Five: new considerations about melody

Unit Six: improvising two Baroque dances
 Unit Seven: the use of rhythmic motives
 Unit Eight: the use of keyboard figuration and improvisation on a ground bass
 Unit Nine: introducing counterpoint and improvising a *Bicinium*
 Unit Ten: improvising a short prelude
 Unit Eleven: more advanced ways of introducing a hymn
 Unit Twelve: improvising a chorale motet
 Unit Thirteen: improvising a short fugue
 Unit Fourteen: accompanying hymns
 Unit Fifteen: accompanying anthems
 Glossary
 Appendix I: *Figurenlehre* (Doctrine of the Figures)
 Appendix II: the church modes

Title	Improvisation for Organists: A practical guide
Author	Christopher Tambling
Publisher	Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.
Year	2010
Contents	<p>Introduction</p> <p>1 Harmony at the keyboard 1 – a few basic principles</p> <p>2 Getting started – duos</p> <p>3 Moving on – trios</p> <p>4 Improvising over a chord sequence</p> <p>5 The Baroque chorale prelude</p> <p>6 Harmony at the keyboard 2 – suspensions: a survival guide</p> <p>7 Taking it a step further: other Baroque models</p> <p>8 The Baroque concerto</p> <p>9 The passacaglia</p> <p>10 Harmony at the keyboard 3 – a selection of chromatic chords</p> <p>11 Taking it a step further still – Classical and Romantic models</p> <p>12 The French toccata</p> <p>13 Fugue</p> <p>14 Covering the action</p> <p>15 Setting the mood – an à la carte menu of starters</p> <p>16 Modal improvisation – some different sonorities to explore</p> <p>17 Sending them out – starting points for further improvisations</p> <p>18 Final thoughts</p>

Title	Breaking Free: Finding a Personal Language for Organ Improvisation through 20th-century French Improvisation Techniques
Author	Jeffrey Brillhart
Publisher	Colfax: Wayne Leupold Editions
Year	2011
Contents	<p>Introduction</p> <p>PART I</p> <p>Chapter 1: What is Improvisation?</p> <p>Chapter 2: How to Practice</p> <p>Chapter 3: Analyzing the Theme</p> <p>Chapter 4: Developing the Theme</p> <p>Chapter 5: The Exposition</p> <p>PART II</p> <p>Chapter 6: Harmonization with Perfect Fifths</p> <p>Chapter 7: The Pentatonic Mode</p> <p>Chapter 8: Harmonization with Perfect Fourths</p> <p>Chapter 9: Harmonization with Major Seconds</p> <p>Chapter 10: Harmonization with Major and Minor Thirds</p>

Chapter 11: Harmonization with Major and Minor Sixths
Chapter 12: Harmonization with 6/3's, 6/4's and 6/5's
Chapter 13: Harmonizing a Motive
Chapter 14: Harmonization with Sevenths
Chapter 15: Harmonization with Dominant Sevenths

PART III

Chapter 16: Charles Tournemire
Chapter 17: Ecclesiastical Modes
Chapter 18: Dorian Modes
Chapter 19: Phrygian Modes
Chapter 20: Bartok Mode

PART IV

Chapter 21: Olivier Messiaen's Musica Language and Its Importance in Organ Improvisation
Chapter 22: The Second Mode of Limited Transposition
Chapter 23: The Third Mode of Limited Transposition
Chapter 24: The Chord of the Dominant

PART V

Chapter 25: The Development
Chapter 26: Climax Chords
Chapter 27: Passacaglia
Chapter 28: Song Form
Chapter 29: Louis Vierne's Improvisation Structure
Chapter 30: Scherzo
Chapter 31: Sonata Allegro
Chapter 32: Toccata (Prelude)
Chapter 33: Cochereau Style Variations
Chapter 34: Free Improvisation
Chapter 35: Improvising on a Literary Text

PART VI

Chapter 36: Claude Debussy
Chapter 37: Maurice Ravel

Bibliography

Title	Faszination Orgelimprovisation Fascination Organ Improvisation (<i>English translation: Ronny Krippner, 2018</i>)
Author	Franz Josef Stoiber
Publisher	Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag
Year	2018
Contents	Thoughts on methodology and didactics

1. **'Just play'**
 - 1.1. **White keys – black keys**
 - 1.1.1. Motifs above drones
 - 1.1.2. Ostinato – Motifs – Form
 - 1.1.3. Improvisation above one chord
 - 1.1.4. Playing with intervals
 - 1.1.5. Melody in the RH, LH or in the pedals
 - 1.1.6. Pentatonic harmony
 - 1.1.7. Hexatonic harmony
 - 1.2. **Further ideas**

2. Stylistic period: 17th/18th century

2.1. Harmonic and compositional basics

- 2.1.1. Harmonic pendulum of the fifth
- 2.1.2. Cadences
- 2.1.3. Sequences (tonal)
- 2.1.4. Harmonisation of the scale
 - 2.1.4.1. Scale in the soprano/tenor
 - 2.1.4.2. Scale in the bass
- 2.1.5. Cadences with altered chords
- 2.1.6. Exercises according to C. P. E. Bach
 - 2.1.6.1. Sequencing of cadences
 - 2.1.6.2. Pedal point harmonisation
 - 2.1.6.3. Modulations

2.2. Figuration

- 2.2.1. Figuration pendulum – sequence – pendulum
- 2.2.2. Ground bass figuration
- 2.2.3. Figuration of four-part hymn harmonisations
 - 2.2.3.1. Figuration of the accompaniment
 - 2.2.3.2. Figuration of all four voice parts
 - 2.2.3.3. Figuration of the melody
 - 2.2.3.4. Figuration in the Orgelbüchlein style (Bach)
- 2.2.4. Figuration of sequences
- 2.2.5. Three-part polyphonic textures

2.3. Placing the melody in different voice parts: alto c.f.

2.4. Introduction to musical form

- 2.4.1. Four-part harmony and simple form ideas
- 2.4.2. Figuration/ornamentation of melodies
- 2.4.3. The coda of chorale preludes
- 2.4.4. Ritornello form
- 2.4.5. Imitation form

2.5. Large forms

- 2.5.1. Concerto
- 2.5.2. Fantasia – Prelude – Toccata
 - 2.5.2.1. Prelude in the South German style
 - 2.5.2.2. Prelude in the 'style of Bach'
 - 2.5.2.3. Prelude / Toccata in the North German style
- 2.5.3. Passacaglia
- 2.5.4. Fugue
- 2.5.5. Theme and Variations
- 2.5.6. French suite

3. Stylistic Period: 19th century

3.1. Harmonic and compositional basics II

- 3.1.1. Linear voice leading ('*Dezimensatz*')
- 3.1.2. Harmonic pendulum
- 3.1.3. Cadences
- 3.1.4. Sequences (tonal and real)
- 3.1.5. Dissonance clusters

3.2. Introduction to musical form II

- 3.2.1. Theme and commentary
- 3.2.2. Sonata form
 - 3.2.2.1. Ternary song form – Andante
 - 3.2.2.2. Sonata form – Allegro
 - 3.2.2.3. Scherzo
 - 3.2.2.4. Adagio
 - 3.2.2.5. Finale
- 3.2.3. Chorale preludes
 - 3.2.3.1. Chorale harmonisation in four parts
 - 3.2.3.2. Ritornello form
 - 3.2.3.3. Chorale fantasy
 - 3.2.3.4. Chorale preludes in sonata form
- 3.2.4. Passacaglia
- 3.2.5. Fantasy/Toccata in the style of Max Reger

4. Stylistic Period: 20th/21st centuries

4.1. Post-Romanticism – Impressionism

4.1.1. Harmonic building blocks

- 4.1.1.1. Parallel triads and tetrads (mixtures) moving in different intervallic steps
- 4.1.1.2. Ninth chords (acoustic, minor triad basis, major, minor)
- 4.1.1.3. Eleventh and thirteenth chords, double third chords
- 4.1.1.4. Chord progressions (distance harmony, cycle of fifths)
- 4.1.1.5. Alpha chords
- 4.1.1.6. Scales (pentatonic, whole-tone, acoustic, semitone – whole-tone)

4.1.2. Ideas for improvisation

4.2. Olivier Messiaen

Scales and chord constellations

- 4.2.1. Second mode
- 4.2.2. Third mode
- 4.2.3. Fourth mode
- 4.2.4. Seventh mode
- 4.2.5. Chords not linked to modes: chord on the dominant and chord of resonance

4.3. German Modernism (Hindemith, Genzmer, Schroeder) – Neomodality

4.3.1. Harmonic building blocks

- 4.3.1.1. Triads combined with quartal chords
- 4.3.1.2. Cadence with pentatonic chords
- 4.3.1.3. Pendulum of the fifth with pentatonic chords
- 4.3.1.4. Pendulum of the third with pentatonic chords
- 4.3.1.5. Neomodal cadences
- 4.3.1.6. Approaches to neomodal harmony
- 4.3.1.7. Motifs/figures for chorale preludes and free improvisations
- 4.3.1.8. Chorale preludes

4.3.2. Further ideas for improvisation

4.4. Improvisation themes

4.5. Improvisation on free-tonal themes

APPENDIX E:

King's Fanfare & Ceremonial March

for Organ

*transcribed from an improvisation**
on the occasion of King's College School's
100th year of independence from King's College, London.
(18th June 2011)

♩ = 76 MM

Ronny Krippner (*1980)

Fanfare

ff Solo (Tuba 8)

5

r.h.
l.h.

7

r.h.
l.h.
ff
Gt.
r.h.
l.h.

* "Ceremonial March" from DVD EX TEMPORE (Fugue State Films 2011)

2 Ceremonial March

9

ff

ff

This system contains measures 9 through 12. It features a grand staff with three staves: a treble staff, a piano staff, and a bass staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The piano part has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The bass part also has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The music consists of rhythmic patterns and chords.

13

This system contains measures 13 through 17. The key signature remains two sharps. The piano part continues with rhythmic accompaniment. The bass part features a melodic line with some rests. The time signature changes to 2/4 at the beginning of measure 13.

18

This system contains measures 18 through 21. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#). The piano part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The bass part continues with its melodic line. The time signature changes to 3/4 at the beginning of measure 18.

22

mf

Sw.

This system contains measures 22 through 25. The key signature changes to one flat (Bb). The piano part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The bass part continues with its melodic line. The time signature changes to 2/4 at the beginning of measure 22. The word "Sw." is written above the piano staff in the final measure.

26

sim.

8va

31 (8)

35

f

Gt.

39

rit.

ff

9

a tempo

r.h.

l.h.

ff

43

Solo (Tuba 8')

Solo (Tuba 8')

47

Solo

52

rit.

Gt.

32'

APPENDIX F:

List of Organs used in DVD Project



Photo: Courtesy Goetze & Gwynn.

'Early English Organ Project'

Wetheringsett Organ (c. 1525) *Reconstructed by Goetze & Gwynn (2002)*

- I Short resonator reed Regal 5'
- II Open metal Principal 5' (C C# and D shared with other Principal)
- III Open metal Principal 5' (27 pipes D#-f² in the front)
- IV Open metal Octave (C shared with other Octave)
- V Open metal Octave
- VI Open metal Fifteenth
- VII Stopped wood basses 10' (C to f#⁰, 19 notes)

Key compass: C to a² (46 notes)

Pitch: The nominal pitch is 5', i.e. a fourth above singing pitch.

[CD 3: tracks 2, 4, 6 and 7]



Photo: Courtesy Fugue State Films.

Adlington Hall, Macclesfield

(?) Bernard 'Father' Smith (?1693)
Reconstructed by Noel Mander (1958-9)

GREAT ORGAN (GG – d³)

Opn Diapason 8
St Diapason 8
Principall 4
Twelfth 2b
Flute Bas 2
Fifteenth 2
Ters 1d
Sm Twelfth 1a
Twenty 1
Trumpet 8
Vox Humana 8

CHAIR ORGAN (GG – d³)

St Diapason 8
St Flute 4
Bassoon 8

[CD 3: tracks 8-10]



Photo: Courtesy Fugue State Films.

St Lawrence Church, Edgware

Gerard Smith (1717)

Rebuilt by Goetze & Gwynn (1994)

GREAT

(GG C AA D - d³)

Open Diapason 8
 Stopt Diapason 8
 Principal 4
 Flute 4
 Twelfth 2 2/3
 Fifteenth 2
 Sesquialtera III
 Cornet III (bass + treble)

SWELL

(GG C AA D - d³)

Open Diapason 8
 Stopt Diapason 8
 Principal 4
 Nason Flute 4
 Fifteenth 2
 Cornett (treble c¹ - d³)
 Trumpet 8

PEDAL

(C D - d¹)

Bourdon 16

COUPLERS

Swell to Great
 Great to Pedals
 Swell to Pedals

[CD 3: tracks 11-14]



Photo: Courtesy Fugue State Films.

Bristol Cathedral

J. W. Walker (1907)

GREAT (C - c⁴)

Double Open Diapason 16
 Open Diapason (Large) 8
 Open Diapason (Medium) 8
 Open Diapason (Small) 8
 Wald Flöte 8
 Stopped Diapason 8
 Principal (Large) 4
 Principal (Small) 4
 Flute 4
 Twelfth 2 2/3
 Fifteenth 2
 Mixture 3 rks
 Fourniture 3-5 rks
 Double Trumpet 16
 Trumpet 8
 Clarion 4

Swell to Great
Choir to Great
Solo to Great

CHOIR (C - c⁴)

Double Dulciana 16
 Open Diapason 8
 Stopped Diapason 8
 Viol di Gamba 8
 Dulciana 8
 Gemshorn 4
 Flute 4
 Fifteenth 2
 Piccolo 2
 Sesquialtera 2 rks

Swell to Choir
Solo to Choir

SOLO (C - c⁴)

Harmonic Flute 8
 Gamba 8
 Voix Celeste 8
 Harmonic Flute 4
 Cor Anglais 16
 Clarinet 8
 Orchestral Oboe 8
 Tromba 8

SWELL (C - c⁴)

Bourdon 16
 Horn Diapason 8
 Open Diapason 8
 Stopped Diapason 8
 Dulciana 8
 Vox Angelica 8
 Principal 4
 Harmonic Flute 4
 Twelfth 2 2/3
 Fifteenth 2
 Mixture 3 rks
 Oboe 8
 Vox Humana 8
 Contra Fagotto 16
 Horn 8
 Clarion 4

Suboctave
Unison Off
Tremulant

PEDAL (CC - g¹)

Double Open Diapason 32
 Open Diapason (Wood) 16
 Open Diapason (Metal) 16
 Violone 16
 Contra Gamba 16
 Bourdon 16
 Dulciana 16
 Principal 8
 Cello 8
 Stopped Diapason 8
 Octave Quint 5 1/3
 Fifteenth 4
 Flute 4
 Trombone 16
 Trumpet 8

Swell to Pedal
Choir to Pedal
Solo to Pedal

6 divisional pistons Great, Swell, Choir
5 divisional pistons Solo
6 General pistons - Stepper (64 memory levels)

[CD 3: tracks 15-19]



Photo: Courtesy Fugue State Films.

Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

J. W. Walker (1967)

GREAT (C - c⁴)

Violone 16
Open Diapason 8
Principal 8
Gemshorn 8
Stopped Diapason 8
Octave 4
Chimney Flute 4
Twelfth 2 2/3
Fifteenth 2
Blockflote 2
Mixture 3 rks
Plein Jeu 4 rks
Contra Posaune 16
Trumpet 8
Clarion 4

COUPLERS

Swell to Pedal
Swell to Great
Swell octave
Swell suboctave
Swell unison off
Great to Pedal
Positive to Pedal
Swell Octave to Pedal
Solo to Pedal
Solo Octave to Pedal
Swell to Positive
Positive to Great
Solo to Great
Solo to Positive
Solo to Swell

POSITIVE (C - c⁴)

Gedeckt 8
Spitzflote 4
Koppelflote 4
Nazard 2 2/3
Principal 2
Blockflote 2
Tierce 1 3/5
Larigot 1 1/3
Siffloet 1
Cymbale III
Krummhorn 8
Tremulant
Contra Posaune 16
Trumpet 8
Clarion 4

SOLO (C - c⁴)

Quintaton 16
Orchestral Flute 8
Viola Da Gamba 8
Voix Celeste 8
Lieblich Gedackt 8
Dulciana 8
Suaba Flute 4
Quintadena 4
Nazard 2 2/3
Piccolo 2
Quartane II
Clarinet 8
Tremulant
Tuba 8
Orchestral Trumpet 8
Octave Tuba 4

SWELL (C - c⁴)

Open Diapason 8
Rohrflote 8
Salicional 8
Vox Angelica 8
Principal 4
Gedeckt Flute 4
Twelfth 2 2/3
Super Octave 2
Flageolet 2
Sesquialtera II
Scharf IV
Double Trumpet 16
Bassoon 16
Trumpet 8
Oboe da Caccia 8
Shawm 4
Tremulant

PEDAL (CC - g¹)

Contra Spitzflote 32
Principal 16
Violone 16
Spitzflote 16
Bourdon 16
Quintaton 16
Octave 8
Octave Spitzflote 8
Bass Flute 8
Twelfth 5 1/3
Fifteenth 4
Nachthorn 4
Octave Flute 4
Siffloet 2
Mixture IV
Contra Posaune 32
Bombarde 16
Posaune 16
Bassoon 16
Tromba 8
Rohr Schalmey 4

[CD 3: tracks 1, 20-22]



Photo: Courtesy Fugue State Films.

Kingston Parish Church

Th. Frobenius (1988)

GREAT (C – c⁴)

Bourdon 16
Principal 8
Open-Flute 8
Octave 4
Harmonic Flute 4
Twelfth 2 2/3
Octave 2
Mixture V
Fagot 16
Trumpet 8
Tremolo

Swell to Great
Positiv to Great

POSITIV (C – c⁴)

Gedackt 8
Principal 4
Kobbelflute 4
Blockflute 2
Nazard 2 2/3
Tierce 1 3/5
Scharf IV
Cromorne 8
Tremolo

Swell to Positiv
Zimbelstern

SWELL (C – c⁴)

Rohrflute 8
Gamba 8
Celeste 8 (Tenor C)
Principal 4
Spitzflute 4
Octave 2
Mixture V
Fagot 16
Oboe 8
Trompette 8
Clairon 4
Tremolo

Swell Super Octave
Swell Sub Octave

PEDAL (CC – g¹)

Principal 16
Subbas 16
Quint 10 2/3
Octave 8
Flute 8
Octave 4
Mixture III
Contra-Fagot 32
Bombarde 16
Trumpet 8

Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal
Positiv to Pedal

ACCESSORIES

6 Swell Thumb and Toe Pistons
6 Great Thumb and Toe Pistons
6 Positiv Thumb and Toe Pistons
12 General Pistons
64 General Piston Memories
16 Divisional Piston Memories

[CD 3: track 23]

APPENDIX G:

DVD Reviews

Ex Tempore – The Art of Organ Improvisation in England

1. English Reviews:

BBC Music Magazine – December 2011

Performance ****
Picture & Sound *****

The French teach it. As do the Germans. So why don't we? Organ improvisation is no longer widely taught in the UK even though parish organists are regularly expected to play *ad hoc* during services. Without guidance it's a brave player who launches into a post-gospel fanfare and risks sounding more like Varèse than Vierne.

Thankfully there are a handful of brilliant British improvisers reviving these skills – virtuosos David Briggs and Martin Baker, and the presenter of this film, German organist Ronny Krippner, among them. A phenomenal improviser himself, Krippner's *Ex Tempore – the Art of Organ Improvisation in England*, charts the history of this dark art, from the time of the Tudor composers to the present day. Using a different organ for each major period, he artlessly stitches together bite-size harmonic ideas and figurations to demonstrate how improvisations are constructed, alongside clear and unfussy musical and historical explanations. Howells, he shows, frequently employs a scale that sharpens the fourth and flattens the fifth of a major scale. Adding in a couple of Howell's characteristic melodic gestures, Krippner's introduction to this English composer's soundworld is revelatory – as are his Handelian concerto, played on the wonderful seventeenth-century organ at St Lawrence, Little Stanmore, Victorian march and Tudor fantasia of considerable beauty.

Well-shot, engagingly narrated and beautifully recorded, *Ex Tempore* is a fascinating insight into a neglected art. An accompanying CD features the improvisations from the film. One quibble: Krippner should either look directly at the camera or away from it. Somewhere in between is a little unnerving.

Oliver Condy

Choir and Organ Magazine, September 2011

Since launching in 2007, Fugue State Films has acquired a reputation for producing imaginative and well-made recitals and documentaries. Its latest release is its most ambitious offering yet, as Ronny Krippner takes a tour through 500 years of organ improvisation in England from the early sixteenth century to the present day.

Bavarian-born, London-based, and schooled in both the German and British choral traditions, Krippner has held several organist posts in the UK and proves an articulate guide in a considered and admirably concise analysis of shifts in compositional and improvisational style and what amounts to a potted history of the mechanical and musical developments of organs during the wide timespan under discussion. Recently appointed Specialist Lecturer in Organ Improvisation at the Birmingham Conservatoire, at each historical milestone Krippner illustrates theoretical development by extemporising on a well-chosen selection of instruments that range from a copy of a mid-sixteenth century hand-bellows operated Wetheringsett organ to the imposing modern array of the organ at Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral.

At less than 90 minutes, it's something of a whistle stop tour, but one that never seems rushed or superficial. With contributions from organ builder Dominic Gwynn, and organists David Briggs, Martin Baker and Donald Burrows, Krippner describes the long arc of improvisational styles from the age of Tallis and Byrd, through the turmoil and tumult of the Civil War, Protectorate and Restoration, into the age of Handel and the remarkable renaissance of English organ music in the 19th and 20th centuries (wonderfully represented here by Howells, Leighton, Mathias and others). Despite Krippner's slightly disconcerting off-camera gaze throughout, this is a fascinating, informative, enjoyable and well-made documentary. A bonus CD of all the music featured is also provided.

Michael Quinn

International Record Review, December 2011

'Ex Tempore', we are informed, is a DVD that sets out to 'shed light on how English organists improvised'. It certainly does this and much more in a remarkably lucid fashion. The presentation is stylish and accessible while displaying real substance in the subject matter that will appeal to the expert and casual viewer alike.

Ronny Krippner is a Bavarian-born organist who received his formative training both in Germany, at the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik in Regensburg, and in England, at Exeter University. Since then he has lived and worked in England for a number of years, having developed a passion for the English choral tradition in particular. From an early age he took a special interest in the art of organ improvisation. In 2009 he was a finalist in the prestigious Organ Improvisation Competition at St Alban's and during the same year won two prizes at the International Organ Improvisation Competition in Biarritz. More recently he was appointed Specialist Lecturer for Organ Improvisation at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

This 98-minute film traces the development of improvisation in England from the sixteenth century to the present day. Of course, it is only during the last hundred years or so that it has been possible to capture improvisation as a sound recording: the spontaneous efforts of past masters are lost forever. It is, however, possible to consider historical techniques and approaches to improvisation by studying the extant music of great practitioners. This is exactly how Krippner sets about presenting his programme. He traces the development of composition techniques (and therefore, by extension, those of improvisation) through the work of prominent English musicians, starting with the pre-reformation versets based on plainchant by Thomas Tallis, the fantasias of William Byrd and works by two Baroque organists and composers, Henry Purcell and George Frederick Handel, through to the music of Charles Villiers Stanford and the output of three twentieth-century composers, Herbert Howells, William Mathias and Kenneth Leighton.

Krippner's approach to each section is to take a genre favoured by the composer in question, highlight the essential characteristic elements of their compositions and 'reconstruct' his own piece in the same style, frequently basing his improvisations very clearly on well-known examples by the composer himself. Not only does this give an illuminating view into Krippner's approach to improvisation, it also provides a clear and beautifully expressed appreciation of the development of English organ music. This development is further highlighted by the use of historically appropriate instruments, beginning with the Goetze and Gwynn Wetheringsett organ and continuing with the famous Adlington Hall instrument in Cheshire, the Gerard Smith organ at St Lawrence, Little Stanmore, the Walker organ of Bristol Cathedral and that of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. Through the consideration of these instruments, an overview of the development of the English organ is gained as well.

In addition to the more analytical approaches described above, there is a great deal of historical background given. This is either presented by

Krippner himself or by the insertion of clips of interviews with internationally distinguished figures, including renowned improvisers David Briggs and Martin Baker, organ builder Dominic Gwynn (who was instrumental in the building of one of the organs on this disc and the restoration of another) and the eminent scholar Donald Burrows. The contributions of these experts are absorbing and the points at which they are inserted during the film are extremely well judged and balanced.

Other influences on the development of improvisation are also considered, such as treatises on the subject, as well as the important impact of the Royal College of Organists through the inclusion of strict improvisational requirements in their examinations, essential qualifications for anybody wishing seriously to pursue the organ.

The presentation of this box set is immaculate, with the front cover of the cardboard case adorned tastefully and appropriately with a drawing of Krippner 'playing' blank manuscript staves, as well as the pipework of the Smith organ at Little Stanmore, featured on the recording. The accompanying booklet contains a succinct and approachable introduction to the subject and to the content of the discs, as well as details of the organs played (including colour photographs) and biographical information about the performer.

Of course, a major consideration on a set such as this is the quality of the playing. Krippner is evidently marvellously enthusiastic about his subject as well as dedicated to his study. The performances throughout the DVD reflect this and make the replication of his improvisations on a separate audio disc well worthwhile: they can easily be enjoyed when heard in their own right.

This is a phenomenally successful release which deals with fascinating subject matter in an expert manner. It is therefore highly recommended, not only to organ enthusiasts but to anybody with an interest in music.

David Newsholme

2. German Reviews:

Musica Sacra, October 2011

Das Instrument Orgel ist untrennbar mit der Kunst der Improvisation verknüpft. Ihre Geschichte hat wie die der Komposition regionale Komponenten. In England, dessen Improvisationskunst auf der vorliegenden DVD kunstvoll und kenntnisreich thematisiert wird, war sie so wichtig, dass die Beurteilung eines Organisten sich an seinen Fähigkeiten als Improvisator maß. Leider sind die Produkte des Extemporierens ihrer Natur gemäß vergänglich und werden nur selten nachträglich aufgezeichnet. Für das Erlernen der Improvisation ist aber gerade die Kenntnis der verschiedenen Improvisationsstile unabdingbar wichtig. Deshalb ist die Produktion von Ronny Krippner, der in England den Masterstudiengang „English Cathedral Music“ belegte und nun als Organist der St. George’s Church in London und als Dozent für Orgelimprovisation am Konservatorium in Birmingham wirkt, so wichtig. Denn Krippner führt hier in einer Reihe von Improvisationen durch die englische Geschichte dieses speziellen Zweiges am Baum der Orgelmusik. Faszinierend kenntnis- und facettenreich demonstriert er alle Stilrichtungen von den Anfängen der englischen Alternatim-Praxis bis in die Moderne mit Improvisationen für Orgel und Percussion. Die Instrumente sind passend zur Epoche ausgewählt. Bildmaterial und Dispositionen bietet das informative Booklet. Ein Must have für alle, die sich mit Orgelimprovisation beschäftigen.

Interpretation: *****
Technik: *****
Booklet: *****

Barbara Stühlmeyer

Fonoforum, June 2012

Einen besonderen Querschnitt englischer Orgelkunst bietet Ronny Krippner mit der DVD „Ex tempore“, die beim Speziellabel Fugue State Films erschienen ist. Er demonstriert an sechs historischen und modernen Instrumenten Stilimprovisationen der jeweils passenden Epoche. Dazu lässt er sich im begleitenden Film (englisch, wahlweise mit deutschen Untertiteln) gleichsam über die Schulter blicken: Er erklärt, über welche Stilmittel die Organisten zu ihrer Zeit verfügten und wie ein Improvisator im jeweiligen Stil musizieren kann, sei es der der Tudor-Zeit, des Händel'schen Barock, der Spätromantik oder der Gegenwart. Dabei wird auch deutlich, dass Organisten aller Epochen vor allem eines waren: Improvisatoren. So bietet Krippner auch eine spannende Perspektive auf die Orgelmusik als Gebiet, das mit den überkommenen Kompositionen nicht vollständig zu erfassen ist – und ganz nebenbei sechs Kurzporträts bedeutender Instrumente.

Friedrich Sprondel

Kirchenmusikalische Mitteilungen, Erzbistum Paderborn, 2/2012

Jedem der sich ernsthaft mit Improvisation beschäftigt, sei diese DVD-CD wärmstens empfohlen. Die DVD bietet einen sehr guten Überblick über die stilistische Entwicklung der Orgelmusik in England und stellt von dort ausgehend Rückschlüsse zur Improvisationspraxis her. Der Organist Ronny Krippner führt mit knappen prägnanten Erklärungen durch die Jahrhunderte, weist auf Besonderheiten hin und fasst mit beispielhaften improvisierten Stilkopien das wesentliche zusammen. Jede Epoche wird direkt in Verbindung mit der entsprechenden Orgelbautradition gesetzt. Krippner bedient sich dabei erhaltener historischer Orgeln oder historischer Nachbauten. Interviews mit bekannten englischen Improvisatoren (D. Briggs, N. Allcoat) runden das umfangreiche Angebot der DVD ab. Eine separate CD mit allen gespielten Improvisationen liegt gesondert bei. Die Sprache ist Englisch, aber ein deutscher Untertitel ist vorhanden. Fazit: Sehr inspirierend! Absolut empfehlenswert!

Tobias Aehlig

Organ, January 2012

Der organistische „Mainstream“ hat seinen Blick von Frankreich wieder ein wenig abgewandt und schaut nun zunehmend auch staunend nach England. Die Vielzahl jüngst nach Deutschland translozierter Instrumente belegt diesen Trend ebenso wie der nicht selten kümmerliche Versuch, auf jede noch so „wesensfremde“ Nachkriegs-Orgel der Spaltklang-Epoche quasi posthum nachträglich eine englische Tuba aufzupropfen, um mit den Pretiosen des britischen Repertoires aus der viktorianischen Ära zu glänzen. Mit seiner ambitionierten DVD/ CD-Produktion *Ex Tempore* wandelt Ronny Krippner auf diesen frisch getretenen Pfaden der aktuellen Anglomanie und steuert mit Stilimprovisationen von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart sein Scherflein bei. Krippners Anliegen ist eine Demonstration, wie „Englands berühmteste Organisten und Orgelkomponisten – William Byrd, George Frederic Handel, Charles Villiers Stanford und Herbert Howells – auf der Orgel improvisierten und wie die jeweiligen Orgelbaustile ihr Spiel beeinflussten“.

Wer häufig auf der Insel unterwegs ist und sich die traditionsreichen „Evensongs“ in den Kathedralen nur ungern entgehen lässt, kann mit der Zeit sicherlich eine bestimmte anglikanische Improvisationsmanier ausmachen. Mitnichten aber wird er von einem britischen Organisten ein Stegreifspiel im Stile eines Tallis, Byrd, Purcell oder Britten als Präludium zum Gottesdienst hören. Dazu ist der mit der mit britischem Understatement ausgestattete Engländer zu sehr Pragmatiker. Warum sollte er ein Voluntary im Stile von Purcell improvisieren, wenn es doch entsprechende Originalliteratur gibt? Wer in der großen Tradition der englischen Kathedralmusik groß geworden ist, dem sind Stilimitation oder gar Kopie wesensfremd – weil letztlich anmaßend.

Warum also, so möchte man fragen, muss es dann ausgerechnet ein Deutscher sein, der uns mit der vorliegenden Produktion eine Retrospektive einer vermeintlich englischen Art der Orgelimprovisation beschert? Bei aller durchscheinenden Begeisterung für die englische Orgel(musik) – von einer wirklich geistigen Durchdringung der Materie kann bei Ronny Krippner folglich auch nur bedingt die Rede sein.

Mit dem zu weit gespannten Bogen von 500 Jahren Musikgeschichte erliegt Krippner zwangsläufig der Fülle des Materials, um am Ende doch mit formelhaften Klischees ein weithin undifferenziertes, wenig reflektiertes England-Bild zu zeichnen. Gelingen ihm die formal überschaubaren Renaissance- und Barockkopien noch einigermaßen gut, so erscheint gerade das Filetstück der „Victorian Organ Sonata“ mit knapp acht Minuten Spieldauer eher als groteske Karikatur. Eine irgendwie gelungene Synthese des Form- und Sprachvokabulars dieser Epoche findet man bei dieser Dokumentation leider nicht. Da wäre eine authentische Sonate aus dem reichhaltigen britischen Repertoire allemal interessanter und lehrreicher gewesen. Eine entscheidende Einsicht vermittelt diese Produktion am nachhaltigsten: England ist halt immer noch in England am attraktivsten!

Wolfgang Valerius

APPENDIX H:

Notes on Anglican Improvisation

by Martin How MBE

(November 2015)

IMPROVISATION

Nov 5/2015

GENERAL APPROACH.

BEWARE! NOT PRIMARILY INTELLECTUAL/ACADEMIC
L.H. SIDE BRAIN? SENSUAL/TACTILE.
EXPLORE!

DIFFERENT FROM HARMONY EXERCISES!
— ANALYSE AFTERWARDS.

AIM. BUILD UP OWN CLICHÉ — OVER A LIFE-TIME
NOT MAGIC

NB. SPONTANEITY ONLY AN ILLUSION!

INSPIRATION. (GETTING THE IDEAS) NO ORDER OF PRIORITY.

① 'STOPS' — COLOUR/DIVERSITY.
TONAL RANGE I.E. LOWER/HIGHER
PART OF KEYBOARD.

② MOOD. NOT NECESSARILY YOURS/PERSONAL
MOOD OF OCCASION
ATMOSPHERE

— PART OF SERVICE/LITURGY.
CHURCH SEASON. STYLE/TYPE OF SERVICE

③ WORDS. A) E.G. OF LITURGY — OR PART OF LITURGY
B) ... HYMNS (E.G. GOSPEL)
C) ... PSALMS

EXTENSION TO HYMNS.

NOT NECESSARY TO TREAT HYMNS LITERALLY.
USE/PROVIDE OPTICAL ILLUSION E.G.
BUILD ON 'SHAPE' NOT TUNE!

(2)

① STOPS / REGISTRATION


- 1) FLUTE. E.G. a) Solo : HIGH REGISTER.....
- b) 3rds : WHOLE TONES.
- c) 6ths : R.H. (WHITE TO BLACK NOTES)
- L.H. HELD NOTES.

- 2) SWELL STRINGS : TONE CLUSTRE.....
- HELD - ALTER ONE NOTE AT A TIME
- COMBINE WITH 1) b ABOVE

- 3) Solo STOPS (MP) : R.H. - A FEW NOTES Solo
- GO FOR INTERVALS OR BY STEP NOT TUNE, SO IT FITS :-
- L.H. - HELD CHORDS. + HELD PED.
- MOVE SINGLE NOTES IN L.H. CHORD
- TRY SEMITONES IN R.H. PART
- (DISONANCE WORKS NATURALLY THEN)

- 4) DIAPASONS G².
- a) EXPERIMENT WITH SENORITY ON LOWER COMPASS.
- TRY PARALLEL R.H./L.H. 6ths + 3rd
- ... SHIFT FROM WHITE/BLACK NOTES - SEMITONES (CHROMATIC)
- HELD PEDAL.

INTRODUCE SOME RHYTHM :-

E.G. 

- b) EXPERIMENT WITH 'NOBUENTE' TONE.
- E.G. C MAJOR ?
- NOT 4 PT (HARMONY) BUT ORGAN STYLE
- E.S. OPEN DOUBLING R.H./L.H. TRY MODULATION
- HELD PED. WHITE TO BLACK NOTES.

(5) Full Swell :- (3)
 'ANGER!' BARE 5TH R.H./L.H. SIMILAR
 AGAIN HOLD PED.
 NB. AGAIN! DON'T TRY SIMPLY TO HARMONISE
 YOUR R.H! — LET R.H. HARMONISE
 YOUR PED!!

(6) TUBA. FANFARE. EVERYONE NEEDS A
 FANFARE!

ARPEGGIO/TRIADS - 3RDS
 E.G. D MAJOR — BUT USE [C#
 Bb]
 F#

(7) TOCCATA. ff

TRIADS R.H. TRILL — STATIONARY.
 L.H.

PED. USE FIGURE
 (ARPEGGIO?)
 TOP OF PEDAL BOARD.

(8) CHROMATIC HARMONY.

PED. DESCENDING BY STEP.

USEFUL FOR BUILD-UPS!

MODULATIONS
 ENHARMONIC
 USE OF CHORDS 7TH
 AND 6
 4

(4)

②

MOODS.

EG. MYSTICISM (EUCH?)
NOBILITY/CONFIDENCE
WARNING/FOREBODING
PEACE/TRANQUILITY
GROWING EXCITEMENT
TRIUMPH

SEE ① 2) ABOVE. (CLUSTRE)
② ① A) B) ABOVE
① 5) ABOVE
① 3) ABOVE
① 8) ABOVE
① C) AND 7) ABOVE

3)

WORDS

MUSIC AFTERWARDS?

A) E.G. GOSPEL

B) HYMNS
NB. ARRANGING SET HARMONIES
(FOR CHANGING HARMONIES SEE ELSEWHERE)

C) PSALMS.

CREATIVITY AT THE ^① KEYBOARD.

① VOCALIZING : NB. WITHIN VOCAL RANGE: MODAL ... FREE TIME.

mp

② 2nd - OSCILLATING

③ FWARDS

mp

NB. REPETITION - BUILDS TENSION: CLOTELTY PACKED

④ FWARDS: MORE MELODIC: WHAT SORT OF BASS? FIFTHS - BY STEP?

NB. EFFECT GAINED BY NO 3RDS IN HARMONY.

⑤ BARE 4th's/OCTAVES

mp

Full Sw.

[MENACING]. BARE FIFTHS (OCTAVES) NO THIRDS

⑥ TRICCATTA ('TOUCH') 'THINK' MAJOR WHOLE TONES

MELODY IN LEFT HAND [SIXTHS] - NO BASS AT SUCH

THIRDS - WHOLE TONES

NB. DIFFICULTY OF NOTATION (ACCIDENTALS) AND FINISHING !!

WANDERING LISTLESS (LOST)

AUGMENTED TRIADS IN WHOLE TONES

HOPE

MODULATION VIA COMMON HARMONIC NOTE (ENHARMONIC)

TRUMPET CALL

TRUMPET

TRUMPET TUNE IN FOURTHS

NB. ABOVE: DIATONIC HARMONY EFFECTIVE BEFORE WHOLE TONES OR CLUSTERS

MOVE BY WHOLE TONES

BASS - CHROMATIC?

FILLED SIXTHS

NB. L.H. MIRRORS R.H.

(LYDIAN MODE BECAUSE OF HELD 'C' IN BASS)

N.B. HOLD BASS - HOPE!

SEE 8 ABOVE (AUGMENTED TRIADS)

TR

(SEE 8 ABOVE)

C7

CREATIVITY CON. P. 2. ...

LYDIAN Mode: Avoid MORE DIATONIC SCALES (DEATH TRAP! - NO WAY THROUGH!)

FLATTENED SEVENTH ...

Beware DIATONIC HARMONIES - EXCEPT FOR EFFECT OR CONSCIOUS STYLE.
E.G. VOZAL & PE STYLE.

(SEPARATE BASS ON EVERY NOTE - NOT KEYBOARD STYLE)

FIFTHS

N.B. COMMON NOTES (FIFTHS ON ORGANS) MODAL AUGMENTED

DIATONIC: TUNE IN 6THS

Not THROUGH ETC

DIATONIC: TUNE IN 3RDS. N.B. CLOSE POSITION.

ARRANGING VOZAL PARTS FOR ORGAN

Voices S.A.T.B.

ORGAN

ACCOMPANYING A TUNE

The score is written for piano and consists of several systems of music. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system is annotated with 'Modulations' and includes three distinct harmonic sections: 'Chromatic/ENHARMONIC', 'KAKRODICEIC', and 'KAKRODICEIC'. The third system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The fourth system features a 'Piano' dynamic marking and includes a section with the word 'COMPARE' and a vocal line '[Vocal] WITH [Piano]'. The fifth system is marked '(21) Piano' and shows further melodic and harmonic progression. The score concludes with a final chord marked with a sharp sign.

IMPROVISATION : ①

- ① DIFFERENCE BETWEEN a) CONCERT/RECITAL
AND b) LITURGICAL.
- ② THIS APPROACH = LITURGICAL
- ③ LITURGICAL: CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS.
 - i) CONSIDERS: ATMOSPHERE
LITURGICAL MOOD
OCCASION,
NATURE OF RECIPIENTS
I.E. CONGREGATION.
- ④ DOES NOT DRAW ATTENTION
TO ITSELF.
 - : DOES NOT PROMOTE/ENCOURAGE 'ANALYSIS'
 - : OFTEN IT IS 'BACK GROUND' MUSIC
OR 'MOOD' MUSIC OF FILM MUSIC!
- ⑤ - BUT DEPENDS ON [EXACT PLACE WITHIN
CONTEXT
THE SERVICE.
- ⑥ MORE 'FORMAL' IMPROVISATIONS MAY WELL
BE OF CONTINUATION AFTER HYMN
"FORMAL" = USING HYMN THEME SKILLFULLY.
 - b) FINAL VOLUNTARY IF IMPROVISED:
USING MORE FORMAL MUSICAL SKILLS?

METHOD OF APPROACH⁽²⁾ / BUILDING TECHNIQUE

NB IMPROVISING NOT ALL ABOUT "SPONTANEITY"

BUILD UP 'CLICHES' (OWN CLICHES) OVER A PERIOD OF TIME (LIFE-TIME?)

STIMULUS IN BUILDING CLICHES.

(1) OWN MOODS

(2) COLOUR OF INDIV. ORGAN STOPS OR DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS OF STOPS

(3) GENERAL MOODS OR OCCASIONS.

I.E. TRIUMPHAL MOMENTS E.G. FANFARE
THANKSGIVING.

SADNESS/SYMPATHY
MYSTIC

'JOLLY' MOMENTS.

ANGER ETC

(4) MUSICAL STYLES:-

USE OF:- a) TRIADS

b) 6^{ths}

c) 3^{nds}

d) 4^{ths}

(e) BARE 5^{ths}

NB CADENCES

- EXTENDED

ALSO: FUGUE

~~IMITATION~~

F) MODULATION

G) SEQUENCES

(5) MOODS OF SPECIFIC LITURGICAL OR BIBLICAL CONTEXTS.

E.G. a) REFLECT MOOD OF PARTICULAR
SUNDAY OR DAY WITHIN CHURCH CALENDAR

b) REFLECT MOOD OF GOSPEL

IMPROV. (CONT)

(7) HOW DO YOU LEARN?

By LISTENING TO OTHERS AND LIKING THAT STYLE.
— THEN SPENDING A LIFE-TIME (!) TRYING TO
ANALYSE/DISCOVER WHAT HE/SHE WAS DOING.

SO — CONTINUAL EXPLORING.

BUT NB, NOT THEORY/NOT INTELLECTUAL — MORE
EXPLORATORY/SEARCHING — TACTILE EVEN.

REMEMBER NOT S.A.T.B/VOCAL STYLE
BUT ORGAN STYLE

BUILD OWN CLICHÉ — OVER A LIFE TIME. START NOW!

(8) DANGERS

OWN STYLE CAN BECOME HIGHLY REPETITIVE
BETTER TO PLAY A ~~NEW~~ PIECE.

BEWARE EXPERIMENTING BEFORE CONGREGATION

(9) NB. EXTRA.

TRAD. ENG. LITURGICAL IMPROV. IS FOR ROMANTIC ORG.
(SYMPHONIC COLOURS). MOOD MUSIC ('FILM MUSIC'?!)

APPENDIX I: Miscellaneous Documents

- (i) Contract between an articulated pupil and the Organist of Wells Cathedral
- (ii) Edward Bairstow: Free Organ Accompaniment to *Aeterna Christi Munera*
- (iii) Blueprint of Ciaconna Improvisation on a Theme by Kerll
- (iv) Blueprint of a Free-Form Improvisation on a Theme by Patterson
- (v) Blueprint of Improvised Gregorian Chant Variations on *Ave maris stella*
- (vi) Blueprint of Improvised Chorale Partita on *Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele*
- (vii) London Organ Improvisation Course (LOIC)

APPENDIX I (i):

Contract between an artiled pupil and the Organist of Wells Cathedral (1946)

Courtesy Royal College of Organists.

1. The Pupil with the consent of the Father binds himself apprentice or pupil to be taught and instructed in the art or profession of an organist and choirmaster for the term of two years from the fifteenth day of September One thousand nine hundred and forty six.
2. The Pupil covenants with the Organist as follows:-
 - (a) That he will during the said term well and truly serve the Organist as an apprentice in the art or profession of an organist and choirmaster carried on by him at Wells.
 - (b) That he will diligently attend to the business and concerns of the Organist and will apply himself to all such studies in connection therewith as may be directed by the organist.
 - (c) That he will do no damage or injury to the Organist nor knowingly suffer or permit the same to be done without acquainting the organist thereof.
 - (d) That he will in all respects acquit and demean himself as an honest and faithful Pupil ought to do.
3. In consideration of the premium of EIGHTY POUNDS paid to the Organist in manner following namely:- On the commencement of the first year of the apprenticeship FORTY POUNDS and on the anniversary of the first payment FORTY POUNDS the Organist covenants with the Pupil as follows:-
 - (a) That he will during the said term according to the best

of his power skill and knowledge instruct the Pupil or cause him to be instructed in the art or profession of an Organist and Choirmaster and in all things incidental thereto in such manner as he now practices or at any time hereafter during the said term shall practice the same.

(b) That he will not require the pupil to attend to the business or concerns of the Organist more than eight hours in any one day.

(c) That he will at the expiration of the said term use his best means to procure the Pupil's advancement in the Musical Profession provided that the pupil shall have well and faithfully served the said articles.

IN WITNESS whereof the parties hereto have hereto set their hands and seals the day and year first before written.

APPENDIX I (ii):

Edward Bairstow (1874-1946)

Free Organ Accompaniment to *Aeterna Christi Munera*

from *Organ Accompaniments to the unison verses of 24 hymn tunes*
from the *English Hymnal* (OUP, 1941).

VIII 11

THE ETERNAL GIFTS OF CHRIST THE KING

175 *Aeterna Christi Munera* Melody from GUIDETTI,
'DIRECTORIUM CHORI' 1582

FULL

1. The e-ter-nal gifts of Christ the King, The A-pos-tles'

glo - rious deeds, we sing; And while due hymns of praise we pay,

MEN

Our thank-ful hearts cast grief a - way. 2. The Church in Sw.

mf
Gt. diap.

Sw. to Ped.

these her prin - ces boasts, These vic - tor chiefs of war-rior

The musical score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the vocal melody starting with a 'FULL' dynamic marking. The organ accompaniment is in the right hand, with a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics 'glo - rious deeds, we sing; And while due hymns of praise we pay,'. The organ accompaniment continues with similar patterns. The third system introduces a 'MEN' part with lyrics 'Our thank-ful hearts cast grief a - way.' and a second part '2. The Church in Sw.' with a 'Sw.' (Swell) marking. The organ accompaniment includes a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic and 'Gt. diap.' (Great Diapason) instruction. The fourth system continues the vocal line with lyrics 'these her prin - ces boasts, These vic - tor chiefs of war-rior'. The organ accompaniment concludes with a 'Sw. to Ped.' (Swell to Pedal) instruction.

hosts; The sol-diers of the heaven-ly hall, The light that

Sw. Gt.

Gt. to Ped. *f* Sw. to Ped.

rose on earth for all.

WOMEN AND BOYS

3. 'Twas thus the yearning faith of Saints, Th'un-conquered

p dolce e legato

senza Ped.

hope that nev-er faints, The love of Christ that knows not shame,

The prince of this world ov - er - came.

dim.

P.d.

Detailed description: This system contains a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are "The prince of this world ov - er - came." The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The right hand features a melodic line with some grace notes and a dynamic marking of *dim.* (diminuendo). The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *P.d.* (pianissimo).

FULL

4. In these the Fa - ther's glo - ry shone; In these the

f

Detailed description: This system begins with the word "FULL" in all caps. It contains a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "4. In these the Fa - ther's glo - ry shone; In these the". The piano accompaniment starts with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and features a more active accompaniment in both hands.

will of God the Son; In these ex - ults the Ho - ly Ghost;

f

Detailed description: This system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "will of God the Son; In these ex - ults the Ho - ly Ghost;". The piano accompaniment maintains a consistent texture with dynamic markings of *f* (forte).

Through these re - jice the heaven - ly host.

cresc.

ff

Detailed description: This system concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "Through these re - jice the heaven - ly host." The piano accompaniment features a dynamic marking of *cresc.* (crescendo) and ends with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic marking.

APPENDIX I (iii):

Ronny Krippner

Blueprint of Ciaccona Improvisation

on a Theme by Kerll

Preliminary Recorded Round, St Albans Improvisation Competition 2009

St Albans Preliminary Round 2009 *Broader Compass*

① Ciaccona (on a theme by Kerll)

① d a^b g^b A

② d D⁷ g^b A

Channel 1.

a. l.h. *trill*

b. l.h + r.h. same motive

c. r.h.

d. l.h. all

e. r.h. Syncope

f. l.h. Syncope

f. imitation upwards

g. imitation downwards

2. dotted triplets

3. Pedal Point (Octaves)

3. 3. 3. 3.

c. 3. 3. 3. 3.

d. chordal (Recitative)

3. chordal trills pseudo polyphonic runs of

4. scale / broad + Cadence

Frisch a d D

APPENDIX I (iv):

Ronny Krippner

Blueprint of a Free-Form Improvisation

on a Theme by Patterson

Preliminary Recorded Round, St Albans Improvisation Competition 2009

Improv 2: Theme by Paul Patterson.

Channel 4

1) Gt 4' / RW 16 2 / Ped 8'

2) SW Acc'd / Maccato / Gt 8 4' 2 / Ped 16/8

3) SW 4' / Gt 4' / Ped 8' Oct.

4) RW 8' 16' pp Fläche / Gt 4' 2 2/3' Ten

5) Tutti fugate

APPENDIX I (v):

Ronny Krippner

Blueprint of Improvised Gregorian Chant Variations on Ave maris stella

Quarter-Final Round, St Albans Improvisation Competition 2009


GREGORIAN VARIATIONS

(158)

1 Thema ^{150"}
 Grundstimmen 16'8"
 2:1 Mel. in Sopran
 Motiv am Ende in Pedal

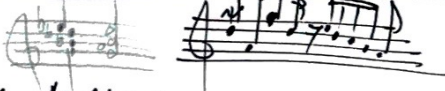
copying → Harmonies

2 Kanon ^{115"}
 l.h. Gt Flute 4
 r.h. Ch. Reed 8' or.
 Ped 8' Oct




Ganztonleiter

3 l.h. SW Schwebung ^{120"}
 r.h. Ch 4 2 2/3 kleines Motiv ^{10"}
 Ped Pos 8'



auch transponiert
 Quirlißes + zurück

4 Trio Quirlich CHROMATIC ^{110"}
 l.h. Gt 16 4 2 2/3
 r.h. Ch 4 2 1 1/3
 Ped Reed 4'



tritone chords.

5 Big & lush 8' ^{120"}
 langsam
 l.h. chords
 r.h. Gt Melodie in Oct. + Thirds
 32' Ped

- Polyphony - then chordal again

6 Toccata ^{130"} Quinten, Kleinterzschwe.
 imitativ. Thema 2x (schräge Variante)
 → 7 → Piston → 8 Tutti
 am Schluss: Beginn des Chorals!

14 Computer
 15 (with Fa fare)

APPENDIX I (vi):

Ronny Krippner

Blueprint of Improvised Chorale Partita

on *Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele*

Semi-Final Round, St Albans Improvisation Competition 2009

BAROQUE PARTITA (max. 12 mins)

① Harmonised Theme
 upper man.

Chorale	top man!	2	GO/Ped
Ped.		4	Man Coupler.
Man 8	4	8	
Sub 16 → Flute 8	8	8	

② Bewegter Bass (man.)
 upper.
 clear

Doublette 2'	c.f.	Schluss.
Bowd 8'	7 7 7 7	
- GO/Ped		

③ Tenor c.f.:
 Begl. upperman. + Flute 8
 Solo lower - Man 8
 sub 16 sub 16

Cromorne 8	Flute 4
	Bowd 8
	- Man. Coupler

④ S. c.f.:
 Solo: upper
 Begl. lower
 + Tremulant.

- Crom.	Flute 4	Rest 4	Cornett
	Sub 16	Bowd 8	Rest 4
			Bowd 8

APPENDIX I (vii):

London Organ Improvisation Course (LOIC)

15th-18th July 2014

LOIC

London Organ Improvisation Course 2014

in association with

St Albans International Organ Festival

TUESDAY 15th – FRIDAY 18th JULY 2014

*‘...useful,
stimulating,
inspiring...’*



Franz Josef
Stoiber



Ronny
Krippner

with

FRANZ JOSEF STOIBER

RONNY KRIPPNER

DUNCAN MIDDLETON

GERARD BROOKS (Course Director)

The **London Organ Improvisation Course** is intended to help organists of all standards to improve their improvising skills for personal musical development, service-playing, concerts and for the examinations of the Royal College of Organists.

We are delighted in 2014 to continue our association with the St. Albans International Organ Festival, and to begin a new partnership with the Royal Academy of Music. One day of the course will take place in St. Albans and will include a concert by our guest tutor, Franz Josef Stoiber, Organist of Regensburg Cathedral, Germany.

www.loic.org.uk

Course content

LOIC 2014 will consist of two strands, one for young aspiring organists, the second for adult amateur and professional organists. All courses will also offer preparation for the improvisation elements in Royal College of Organists examinations.

ASPIRING PROFESSIONAL STRAND

JUNIOR 14-18 for school-age organists of all standards	SENIOR 18+ for prospective organ scholars, conservatoire students, cathedral assistant organists
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harmonisation 2. Figured Bass 3. Short Baroque Forms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. English Voluntaries b. German Prelude c. Variations 4. Hymn Improvisation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creative Playover b. Extension 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Groundbass 2. Chorale Partita 3. Baroque Prelude 4. French Classical Suite 5. Hymn Improvisation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creative Playover b. Last Verse Reharmonisation c. Extension 6. Contemporary Styles <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improvising on Texts b. Gospel Fanfares c. Modal Harmony

ADULT ORGANISTS STRAND

For amateur and professional organists of all standards

MASTERING THE BASICS	HAVING FUN WITH HYMNS	SAVOUR THE STYLE	GLORIOUS GREGORIAN	FREE-STYLE FIESTA!
Intended for those with little or no previous experience of improvisation, this crash course in elementary harmony and counterpoint will enable you to make beautiful improvisations using the simplest of means.	Simple introductions, links and extensions - but that's just the start! Learn how to improvise effective variations, preludes and postludes using the rich and varied language of hymnody.	Learn to improvise simple and effective pieces in the style of Stanley, Couperin, Bach, Buxtehude and others.	Explore the timeless beauty of Gregorian melodies as a basis for improvisation, ranging from the reflective and dreamy to the full-blooded 'Tutti'.	Throw caution to the winds as you explore rhythm and colour to create improvisations in an accessible contemporary style.

www.loic.org.uk

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