From ancient to avant-garde: The evolution of the organ in Ireland and a performer's analysis of five Irish contemporary pieces for solo organ

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Finally, to my partner John who not only had to live with me while I was writing this thesis, but had to live with me during a pandemic while writing this thesis. I am not sure which of us is more delighted that I am finally finished.

I began playing the organ because my father played it in the local church in Newcastle, Co. Dublin. Already a student of the piano, I was keenly interested in being able to play an instrument with my feet, an aspect I might never have been aware of had I not had the opportunity to watch my father so closely. While in secondary school, I went on to study part time at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama under a diocesan church music scholarship which was established by Fr Pat O' Donoghue in conjunction with DIT. The aim of this scholarship was to

promote the playing of the organ, especially amongst girls, and it was there that I began many years of organ study with Una Russell. The fact that I was being taught organ by a woman in such a prestigious position, very much shaped my understanding and perception of the instrument. While I was learning an instrument that was predominantly associated with men, I was very much surrounded by women in my formative years.

This thesis is dedicated to my much missed friend and mentor, Una Russell.

Abstract

The organ is an instrument with a lengthy and diverse history. Woven into the very fabric of the venues in which they are situated, organs envelop listeners in a world of sound and resonance. Much has been written on the history of the organ and its development by such scholars as Nicholas Thistlethwaite, Peter Williams and Stephen Bicknell. This historical knowledge has given vital insight into the beginnings of the organ and the various traits in different countries with regard to the progression of the instrument. This historicism, as well as the inexorable link between the organ and religion, has had both advantages and disadvantages for the perception of the instrument. This thesis explores these resulting perceptions and provides context for the subsequent critical investigation of five solo organ compositions by Irish composers.

These five contemporary pieces – *Toccata L'Homme Armé* by Jonathan Nangle, *The Secret Rose* by Eric Sweeney, *Karanfilo Mome* by Fergus Johnston, *2019.7* by Sebastian Adams, and *Strength* by Rose Connolly – are examined in detail with a focus on the challenges each piece presents and the approaches that can be taken to overcome these difficulties. The extended techniques utilised in these pieces use the organ in new and innovative ways, while the compositional styles highlight the capabilities of the instrument as well as the possibilities it can offer the composer. Sound recordings of all pieces are included, a world premiere performance in the case of *Strength* by Rose Connolly, to enhance the discussion of these pieces and to serve as research artefacts.

The evolving role of the organ is the central focus of this dissertation. This examination of a selection of contemporary pieces for solo organ, within the context of the history of the organ in Ireland, demonstrates the full potential this unique instrument offers to composer, audience, and performer.

Introduction

Nestled into the architecture of a building, organs merge with the design and construction of the venue. Steeped in history, they can be viewed as historical artefacts, direct links to the past. They were built hundreds of years ago in a completely different world from todays and in some cases, the very same pipes that were played when the organ was first built are still sounding. The idea of passing time and new trends, which can be applied to many genres and indeed many instruments, is particularly relevant when considering the organ.

At this very moment in a church in Halberstadt, Germany, a piece called *As Slow As Possible* (Organ^2/ASLSP) by John Cage, is being performed on the organ.[1] It began in 2001 and, in its current version, will conclude in 2640.[2] There are many details about the conception and performance of this piece which could be explored, but the idea of the passing of time is fundamental to the focus of this thesis. This work will last for 639 years on an organ, which is not the instrument it was originally written for, but which it is ideally suited for. It will have sounded for the duration of a pandemic, and long after it has passed. Throughout it all, the organ remains a constant while the world around it shifts and changes. This instrument adapts and continues to inspire both composer and performer, in spite of certain perceptions.

> Pipe organs are often perceived as musically reactionary sites, housed in churches, town halls or major performance centres under the auspices of conservative structures. Contrary to this perception, over the last six hundred years, there have always been composers using the instrument as a vehicle for musically "avant-garde" expression.[3]

[1] *Deutsche Welle*, 'Germany: 639-year-long organ piece changes chord after seven years', <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-639-year-long-organ-piece-changes-chord-after-7-years/a-54827395> [accessed 2 January 2021].
[2] Ibid.
[3] Dr Andrew Blackburn, 'The pipe organ and real-time digital signal processing (DSP): A performer's perspective', (DMA dissertation, Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2011), 2.

The history of the organ, which spans many countries and years, has been widely discussed by numerous scholars. One well-known book on this topic, *A New History Of the Organ* by Peter Williams, opens with

> The history of the organ is a huge subject and a singularly complex one—so much so that most books on it have confined themselves to one period, one area or even one country … Dr Williams's invaluable new book covers the subject comprehensively and in detail from the earliest times up to the present in all countries where organs have been developed to a high degree of sophistication.[4]

While this book covers an extensive range of material, it was first published in 1980 and there have been numerous changes and developments since then. Much is still relevant, such as the origins of the organ and the developments from medieval times up to the nineteenth century, but this was as much as could be covered by Williams at the time. Interestingly, Ireland and Irish organs do not make an appearance in this volume.

Another seminal work which draws on the knowledge of numerous experts in the field, *The Cambridge Companion To The Organ*,[5] examines the instrument, the player and the repertoire. Part one focuses on the instrument with chapters covering such topics as the origins and development of the organ (Nicholas Thistlethwaite), temperament and pitch (Christopher Kent), and organ building today (Stephen Bicknell). Part two covers the fundamentals of organ playing (Kimberly Marshall), a survey of historical performance practices (Marshall), and organ music and the liturgy (Edward Higginbottom). Part three focuses on repertoire from various countries, which once again does not cover Ireland or venture into the realm of contemporary organ music.

[4] Peter Williams, *A New History of The Organ From the Greeks to the Present Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), sleeve notes.
[5] N. Thistlethwaite and G. Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Edward Higginbottom's insightful chapter on organ music and the liturgy covers the innerworkings of this relationship without delving into the perceptions that can arise from this connection. While there is a wealth of information in this book, it was the absence of specific material which helped to define the direction of this thesis.

The most pertinent writing to this thesis in relation to perception is found in *Twentieth-Century Organ Music*, edited by Christopher S. Anderson. This is a collection of writings by world-renowned organists and scholars which 'explores twentieth-century organ music through in-depth studies of the principal centers of composition, the most significant composers and their works, and the evolving role of the instrument and its music'.[6] It was the writings on the evolving role of the instrument and its music which inspired the focus of this thesis. Alongside Higginbottoms' aforementioned chapter on organ music and the liturgy, Benjamin A. Kolodziej's chapter on twentieth-century organ music in the Christian liturgy provided essential reading when considering the relationship between the organ and religion.[7]

Some writings of importance when considering the organ in Ireland are Paul McKeever's thesis 'Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, referencing White, Telford, and Post-Emancipation Choral Practice',[8] Mary Deacy's dissertation 'Continental Organists and Catholic Church Music in Ireland, 1860-1960',[9] and Denise Neary's writing on 'Music in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Dublin churches'.[10] In relation to the organs of Northern

[6] Christopher S. Anderson, 'Foreword', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), opening page.
[7] Benjamin A. Kolodziej, 'Twentieth-Century Organ Music in the Christian Liturgy', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
[8] Paul McKeever, 'Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, referencing White, Telford, and Post-Emancipation Choral Practice' (PhD dissertation, University of Limerick, 2012).
[9] Mary Regina Deacy, 'Continental Organists and Catholic Church Music in Ireland, 1860-1960' (M.Litt. dissertation, Maynooth university, 2005).
[10] Denise Neary, 'Music in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Dublin churches' (MA dissertation, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1995).

Ireland, Joseph McKee's thesis 'The Organ in Ulster, a survey' covers this topic extensively.[11] These works combined with such literature as *Music and the Church* (Gerard Gillen) helped greatly in forming a detailed picture of music in Ireland from as early as the sixteenth century.[12] It also highlighted a lack of discourse with regard to Irish contemporary organ music.

This thesis explores the role of the organ in Ireland to date as well as examining its function and relevance in society as a result of perceptions of the instrument. Crucially, it examines five contemporary pieces written for solo organ, through the eyes of a performer, in light of this previous discussion. These five contemporary pieces are the embodiment of what this instrument is capable of and demonstrate how effectively it can be used. Sound recordings of all the works are included to elevate the written analysis.

Chapter one traces the origins of the organ and its first appearance in Ireland, the phenomenon of the influx of Belgian and German organists to Ireland in the nineteenth century (focusing on Roman Catholic churches as opposed to Church of Ireland), and the role of the cinema organ in Ireland.

Once this background has been examined, chapter two explores the relationship between the organ and religion as well as opinions that can form as a result of this religious connection. The difficulties facing the modern organist, in terms of access to an instrument as well as more practical problems, are also highlighted, with possible solutions presented. Advocates for the organ in Ireland are then considered.

[11] Joseph McKee, 'The Organ in Ulster, a survey' (PhD dissertation, Queen's University Belfast, 1991).
[12] Gerard Gillen, Irish Musical Studies 2: Music and the Church (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 1989).

Chapter three shifts focus to composition and innovation by presenting an overview of some Irish composers and their works for organ, both historical and modern, and includes an up-to-date list of pieces written for solo organ by Irish composers. The topic of women and the organ is also addressed within this chapter with specific reference to four women of note.

Chapter four is the main focus of this dissertation. This chapter examines *Toccata L'homme armé* by Jonathan Nangle, *The Secret Rose* by Eric Sweeney, *Karanfilo Mome* by Fergus Johnston, *2019.7* by Sebastian Adams and *Strength* by Rose Connolly. These five solo organ pieces written by Irish composers showcase the true range and capabilities of the instrument, having been placed within the context of the history of the organ in Ireland.

Chapter One

History of the organ in Ireland

1.1 Origins of the organ and Irish heritage

In its earliest known appearances, the term *organon* was used by such writers as Plato and Aristotle to denote not a musical instrument as such but a tool or 'instrument' in the more general sense: *organon* is a tool with which to do a job of work or *ergon*.[1] Both *ergon* and *organon* are traced to the root uerg-, leading to two branches *uerg-ergon-Werk-work* and *uerg-ergon-organon-organ.*[2] In Plato's *Republic* and in the work of later writers, *organon* denotes all kinds of musical instrument, tool or contrivance; to none of them does it mean 'pipe organ' of any particular kind.[3] The earliest known organ is believed to be the hydraulis of the third century BCE, a rudimentary Greek invention, with the wind regulated by water pressure.[4] The ancient water organ (an Aerophone) was an important musical instrument of later classical antiquity and the direct ancestor of the modern pipe organ.[5] It is to be distinguished from the hydraulic or water organ. In the latter the wind supply comes from air compressed by continuously flowing water.[6] The hydraulis is bellows blown (by hand or by windmill), but water is used to stabilise the wind pressure. In the later periods of classical and early patristic Latin, the various terms *organum*, *organa* and *organis* gradually move from the general usages found in classical Greek to something more specific in which the context shows there to have been a musical connection of some sort.[7] A modern definition of the organ states that

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[1] Peter Williams, *A New History of The Organ From the Greeks to the Present Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 19.
[2] Ibid., 19.
[3] Ibid., 19.
[4] The editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Organ Musical Instrument', <https://www.britannica.com/art/organ-musical-instrument> [accessed 30 March 2021].
[5] James W. McKinnon, 'Hydraulis' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13639> [accessed 30 March 2021].
[6] Ibid.
[7] Williams, *A New History of The Organ From the Greeks to the Present Day*, 19.

> The organ's basic principles of operation remain substantially unchanged from when they were discovered more than 2,000 years ago. Conventional pipe organs consist of four main parts: a keyboard or keyboards and other controls, pipes to produce the tone, a device to supply wind under pressure, and a mechanism connected to the keys for admitting wind to the pipes. The most basic instrument consists of a single set, or rank, of pipes with each pipe corresponding to one key on the keyboard, or manual. Organs usually possess several sets of pipes (also known as stops, or registers), however, playable from several keyboards and a pedal board. Under their control are the various ranks of wooden and metal pipes of differing length and shape.[8]

The oldest playable pipe organ in the world today is located at the Basilica of Valère in Sion, Switzerland. Edmond Voeffray, the official organist at Sion cathedral, says that 'The organ in Valère is unique because the essential elements of its parts and mechanism were actually built in the Middle Ages. There are whole pipes that are original, which in itself is unique in the world'.[9] It is possible to date the organ back to 1430 through the decorations painted on the organ, as Patrick Elsig of the Valais Museum of History explained: 'From the murals in the church … We know that they were commissioned in 1435 and the same person painted the decorations on this instrument. This fact, which is well documented, allowed us to date the organ accurately'.[10] Figure 1.1 shows the façade of this historic instrument.

[8] The editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 'Organ Musical Instrument', [accessed 1 April 2021].
[9] Edmond voeffray, 'A magic sound across the centuries', <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/a-magic-sound-across-the-centuries/7897614> [accessed 1 April 2021].
[10] Ibid.

Figure 1.1: The organ of the Basilica of Valère in Sion, Switzerland [11]

In Ireland, there is very little evidence of the presence of a pipe organ prior to the fifteenth century. Since Irish annals from the ninth century record the destruction of church organs, it may be assumed that the singing in early Irish ecclesiastical centres was accompanied, or that instrumental music was utilised in at least some locations in Ireland.[12] There have been some exciting archaeological discoveries that could have an impact on the understanding of the origins of the organ. Referred to as 'The Wicklow Pipes' (Figure 1.2), these artefacts were found in 2003 by Bernice Molly in Greystones, County Wicklow.

[11] Classic FM, 'The world's oldest playable pipe organ', <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/latest/organs/valere-sion-switzerland-organ/> [accessed 1 April 2021].
[12] Patrick Brannon, 'The Search for the Celtic Rite', in *Music and the Church*, Irish Musical Studies ii: Gerard Gillen and Harry White (eds.), (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1992), 15.

> It consists of six carefully worked wooden pipes, which represent the world's oldest surviving wooden musical instrument. They were discovered in a waterlogged trough belonging to an Early Bronze Age burnt mound (c. 2120-2085 BC). Fashioned out of yew wood, the pipes were found lying side by side, in descending order. They ranged in size from 57cm to 29 cm long, although not all were complete. Internally they had been hollowed out, with the resultant internal diameters being approximately 2 cm across. However, there was no evidence for finger holes. Instead, the ends of some of the pipes had been worked to a stepped taper, suggesting that this end was originally contained within an organic fitting. This may indicate that the pipes formed part of a composite wind instrument, such as an organ fed by a bag, or else a complex pan-pipe like device.[13]

Organologist Peter Holmes expressed his opinion that 'the pipes were probably part of an early organ' and Simon O'Dwyer, a collector and player of prehistoric instruments in Ireland, concluded that 'A Music tradition that was thought to originate in the classical area around the Mediterranean may have been alive in Ireland many centuries earlier.'[14]

[13] Colm Moriarty, 'Five Ancient Musical Instruments from Ireland', <http://irisharchaeology.ie/2014/03/five-ancient-musical-instruments-from-ireland/> [accessed 5 January 2021].
[14] Simon O'Dwyer, *Prehistoric Music of Ireland* (Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2004), 142; quoted in Paul McKeever, 'Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, referencing White, Telford, and Post-Emancipation Choral Practice' (PhD dissertation, University of Limerick, 2012), 8.

Figure 1.2: The Wicklow Pipes [15]

As religion was the main reason that the organ first appeared in Ireland, the various occurrences within the history of religion and politics in Ireland inevitably impacted on the instrument. In 1980, a reference that was unfounded and unverified was made to organ-building at Glendalough monastery: 'The Irish Nation can be proud that as far back as [AD] 600 organ building was taught at St. Kevin's Monastic Settlement in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. This is one of the earliest traditions of organ building in Western Europe.'[16] These claims are, however, unsubstantiated. The first reputable mention of an organ in Ireland dates from 1330 when Archbishop Walter le Rede granted tithes to a group of vicars choral in Cashel.[17] Robert Wyse Jackson, dean of Cashel from 1946 to 1960, wrote of the college of Vicars Choral in 1330 that it

[15] Moriarty, 'Five Ancient Musical Instruments from Ireland' [accessed 5 January 2021]
[16] Derek Verso, 'The craft of Organ building', *Dublin International Organ Festival,* Souvenir Programme (Dublin, 1980), 7; quoted in McKeever, 'Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century', 11.
[17] McKeever, 'Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century', 18.

was: ‘a corporate body consisting of eight vicars choral, an organist, a sexton and a steward, all of whose function it was to assist in the chanting of the Cathedral Services.’[18] A copy of the Seal of the Vicars Choral at Cashel clearly depicts eight singers and an organist (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Copy of the Seal of Vicars Choral at Cashel [19]

While Cashel was not the only or the first cathedral to have mentioned having a college of vicars choral, it is the only to make mention of an organ from the fourteenth century in Ireland.[20] This once again confirms and highlights the connection between religion and the organ. The fifteenth century in Ireland saw the introduction of organs to Christ Church and St Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin, as well as St Mary’s in Limerick.[21] While it is difficult to confirm the exact year that

[18] Robert Wyse Jackson, ‘The Music Books of the Cashel Diocesan Library’, in Aloys Fleischmann, (ed.), *Music in Ireland*: *A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press 1952), 333.
[19] McKeever, ‘Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century’, 19.
[20] Ibid., 19.
[21] Grattan Flood, W, H, ‘Irish Organ-builder from the Eighth to the Close of the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* (30 September 1910), 231.

organs were placed in these cathedrals, in the early fifteenth century they were becoming more widespread, especially with the use of small organs in Lady chapels.[22] By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries organs were widespread not only in cathedrals in Britain but also in parish churches, so it can be deduced that cathedrals of equal importance in Ireland are likely to have had at least one instrument.

> The use of a small organ at St Patrick's cathedral can be confirmed in 1471 when Archbishop Michael Tregury of Dublin left in his will his own "pair of organs" for the celebration of the divine office in the Lady chapel. The earliest evidence for organs at Christ Church which can presently be confirmed remains 1539 when the duties of the master of the choristers were to include those of organist.[23]

Politics also impacted on the use of organs in Ireland and elsewhere. Denise Neary depicts the results of this impact on the use of organs in churches. She states that

> The opposition to organs in churches was proved without doubt when on 9 May 1644 Parliament issued: "Two ordinances of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament for the speedy demolishing of all organs, images and all matters of superstitious monuments in all Cathedrals, and Collegiate or Parish - Churches and Chapels, throughout the Kingdom of England and the Dominion of Wales; the better to remove all offences and things illegal in the worship of God." Although this ordinance specified only the "Kingdom of England and the Dominion of Wales" we know that it also applied to Ireland. The civil war had broken out in Ireland in 1641. This marked the cessation of organ playing at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Benjamin Rogers had been appointed to the post of organist in 1639 but his tenure was short-lived, for, on the outbreak of the Irish rebellion in 1641, he fled back to his native England and became a lay-clerk

[22] Barra Boydell, *A History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), 23-24.
[23] Ibid., 24.

> at Windsor. In St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, Randal (or Randolf) Jewett had been organist from c1630 until 1643. There were no further appointments of organists at either cathedral until after the Restoration.[24]

While it is important to make reference to the first known arrival of an organ in Ireland, as well as any subsequent advancement or declension to its progression within the country, this thesis does not focus on all of the historical developments of the instrument within a religious setting in Ireland. Much has been written accounting these details alongside comprehensive studies of the mechanical evolution of the specific types of organs relevant to Ireland. Rather, a brief overview is given to highlight the importance of this religious connection in bringing the organ to Ireland. Subsequent years from the fifteenth century onwards mainly focused on tonal and technological refinements as all the essential elements of the instrument had by then been developed.

1.2 Belgian and German organists

The nineteenth century in Ireland presented another interesting phenomenon within the organ realm: the appointment of Belgian and German organists to Irish Catholic cathedrals and churches.[25]

> In the course of the nineteenth century, Catholics became more exposed to and influenced by the flurry of musical activity in Dublin. Since the early eighteenth century, the capital had been witnessing the period of the so called 'protestant ascendancy' when political and social sway was held by the wealthy merchants, professional classes and landed gentry. Dublin, second only in importance at that time to London, enjoyed its 'golden age', with the arts benefiting from a highly cultivated society. Theatre and concert going became an essential feature for the fashionable public and in spite of its geographical isolation on the edge of Europe, Dublin gained a reputation as a centre for the arts. It consequently became one of the most

[24] Denise Neary, 'Music in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Dublin churches' (MA dissertation, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1995), 13.
[25] See chapter two, page 26.

> musically active cities in Europe, attracting for residency many foreign composers, musicians and teachers.[26]

To counterbalance this 'protestant ascendancy', the emerging Irish catholic church took steps to appoint its first professional church musician, and was unfortunately met with a shortage of educated Irish catholic organists:

> Put plainly, the impoverished condition of Roman Catholics in Ireland between 1500 and 1800 excluded the possibility of a high culture of sacred music. The consequences of this exclusion for the development of church music after emancipation were ruinous: a vast population without any culture base consonant with the prevailing aesthetic of church music as high art.[27]

It was this lack of a developed sacred music tradition that prompted the appointment of foreign musicians who had by then become an integral part of musical life in urban Ireland.[28] 1825 saw the appointment of Haydn Corri, who came from London to Dublin in 1821, as organist and choirmaster in St Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin.[29] This marked the beginning of a move by the Irish catholic church to establish structures regarding music and liturgy in its services.

> All indicators were pointing to a new development in Irish catholic music that would see it linked to a continental church music tradition rather than to a native mode of expression. Haydn Corri's appointment set a precedent within the Irish church, which would see members of the Irish catholic hierarchy continuing to turn to the continent for musicians to fill the role of organist and choirmaster in their new cathedrals and churches.[30]

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[26] Mary Regina Deacy, 'Continental Organists and Catholic Church Music in Ireland, 1860-1960' (M.Litt. dissertation, Maynooth university, 2005), 8.
[27] Harry White, 'Church Music and Musicology in Ireland: An Afterword', in Gerard Gillen and Harry White (eds.), *Music and the Church,* Irish Musical Studies ii (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 333; quoted in Deacy 'Continental Organists', 10.
[28] Deacy, 'Continental Organists', 10.
[29] Ibid., 10.
[30] Ibid., 12.

During the nineteenth century, a catholic church music reform movement known as the Cecilian movement was founded in Europe.[31] It was during the years of the Cecilian movement in Ireland that Heinrich Bewerunge, from Westphalia, Germany, was appointed to the newly-created chair of 'Church Music and Organ' at Ireland's national seminary, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, in 1888.

> It was no wonder that in the current climate of continental influence on Irish catholic music, the role fell to a German priest, musician and scholar. The cecilian movement in Ireland with its German origins had set the scene for the arrival of a German church music scholar who would take charge of sacred music at the highest level in the Irish catholic church.[32]

The appointment of Bewerunge to such a prestigious position, paved the way for further 'foreign musicians' to fill the available positions in Irish cathedrals and churches in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Bewerunge contributed significantly to scholarly life in Ireland, especially to the study of church music. Bewerunge's appointment has often been regarded as the beginning of a movement of foreign musicians to Ireland but for over twenty years prior to his arrival in Ireland, there was a number of continental organists resident and working in Irish catholic churches and cathedrals.[33] Mary Deacy divides her studies of continental organists in Ireland into three groups; the organists from 1860 to 1888, from 1888 to 1920, and from 1920 to 1960.

These early continental organists (1860-1888) helped to pave the way for the future generations of foreign organists to Ireland, by laying the foundation for a development in Irish catholic sacred music that would see it associated with continental practice for a further one hundred years.[34]

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[31] Ibid.,15-27.
[32] Ibid., 27.
[33] Ibid., 35
[34] Ibid., 55.

The later continental organists, from 1888 to 1920, arrived during a time of decline in cecilianism in Ireland. Many of the organists who arrived during this phase were German so it is probable that Bewerunge was influential in their appointments.[35]

The organists from Deacy's final group, entitled the Second Generation of Organists 1920 to 1960, were predominantly Belgian.[36]

The phenomenon of this influx of Belgium and German organists to Ireland, which started as far back as far back as 1860 and continued for another hundred years, had an immense influence on the Irish musical scene. In his chapter on this topic, Paul Collins quotes an article from the Irish Independent written in 1930: 'In Belgium it is believed that the best musicians migrate to Ireland on account of the wonderfully melodious old organs and because Irish audiences are very appreciative of their efforts.'[37] He then quotes a letter from 'Marcato' to the editor of the *Limerick Leader*, also in 1930, which asks why these positions are being filled by foreign organists.

> Is the 'Land of Song', with its great traditions and rich inheritance of national music, not capable of teaching aspiring musicians to play the organ, or to train a choir competent to render the music for the ceremonies in our churches? Has not the Feis Ceoil for many years been bringing promising young organists to light? What has become of these? … It is sad to think that, in view of the limited number of [church organist] positions, and in face of the amount of unemployment at present in the musical profession, foreigners are brought over when a vacancy occurs.[38]

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[35] Ibid., 56-104.
[36] Ibid., 180-185.
[37] 'Ireland, Land of Belgian organists—remarkable facts', *Irish Independenet*, 22 August 1930; quoted in Paul Collins, 'Strange Voices in the "Land of Song": Belgian and German organist appointments to Catholic cathedrals and churches in Ireland, 1859-1916', in M. Murphy and J. Smaczny (eds.), *Music in nineteenth-century Ireland*, Irish Musical Studies ix (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 114.
[38] Letter from 'Marcato' to the Editor, *Limerick Leader*, 6 September 1930; quoted in Collins, 'Strange Voices in the "Land of Song"', 114.

These German and Belgian organists moved to Ireland and immensely enhanced the musical life of each parish, but it was as a direct result of a lack of proper training in liturgical music for Irish organists. 'These musicians provided musical leadership in a Church that had repeatedly failed to afford its native musicians the opportunity to avail of proper training in liturgical music in Ireland … it was not until 1970, with the establishment of the *Schola Cantorum* at St Finian's College in Mullingar, that an Irish episcopacy began to remedy the situation. Until then, successive generations of continental organists would continue to render their services to the Irish Church.'[39] There were many advantages to these appointments within each parish: local musicians received training from these skilled organists who made significant contributions to cultural life through concerts and lessons.

> In addition to teaching harmonium, piano and singing, [Monsieur Nono] directed the Ennis Amateur Band during the 1860s, imported musical instruments, and tuned and repaired pianos. His "grand concerts", held at such venues as Ennis town hall and Tulla courthouse, were greatly appreciated and frequently featured Madame Nono (Wexford born Ellen O'Byrne) and "the Mesdemoiselles Nono' as vocalists.[40]

Many of them also started choirs in their parishes, a tradition that continued for numerous years, and introduced new and unknown music to the parish through these choirs. 'Fleischmann established a fine choir of about fifty boys and forty men who sang primarily Gregorian chant and the sixteenth-century repertoire. He also introduced modern sacred compositions by German composers such as Fritz Goller (a fellow student in Munich) and Josef Rheinberger'[41] and these choirs even went on to receive international acclaim:

[39] Collins, 'Strange Voices in the "Land of Song"', 129.
[40] Ibid., 116.
[41] Deacy, 'Continental organists', 71.

> While acting as adjudicator at the Easter Feis in the most hospitable city of Cork, I had the opportunity of listening to the Choir of the Roman Catholic Cathedral. They sang for about an hour-Plain Chant, rendered with devotional feeling and the works of Orlando di Lasso and other composers of the difficult and complicated sixteenth-century polyphony. These performances were a revelation to me for I had no idea that Ireland, up to the present time could show anything indicative of such a high degree of musical culture. I was told that the singers were very tired after the arduous work during Holy Week and that at ordinary times they could do even better, but what I heard convinced me that this Cork Choir could hold its own in Competition with any organisation devoted to rendering similar music in any part of these islands. Particularly noticeable was the sweet and velvety tone of the boy sopranos. There was none of that slight out-of-tuness which has always seemed to me to be an unavoidable defect in boys' voices. The greatest honour is due to Herr Aloys Fleischmann, the organist at the cathedral and trainer of the Choir. This gentleman is a very fine all-round musician and would be an inspiring influence in any musical circle in which he might be placed.[42]

While holding these positions in Irish churches and cathedrals, the organists maintained and often improved upon the organs in each parish, using both Irish organ builders and also their continental connections. Bewerunge commissioned the German builder Stahlhuth to provide the newly-built chapel in Maynooth with a magnificent instrument in 1891 and Fleishmann acquired a pipe organ for Cork cathedral which was built by a firm in Germany and installed by German engineers.[43] They also gave regular organ recitals, introducing audiences to new repertoire and demonstrating the possibilities of the instrument. Ultimately, these organists were an excellent addition to parish musical life in Ireland, ostensibly as a result of the lack of training for Irish organists. Once the practice of appointing a foreign organist became the norm, it became something of a mark of prestige for a parish to have one in its church or cathedral. Succeeding organists were often also foreign as one would recommend another for the available posts, thus

[42] Arnold Bax, *London Daily Telegraph*, 15 May, 1929; quoted in Deacy, 'Continental Organists', 74.
[43] Deacy, 'Continental organists', 75.

continuing the cycle. The anomaly of the appointment of continental organists to positions within Ireland is often forgotten or overlooked but the legacy of these organists can be seen through the influence their teachings had on subsequent Irish organists.[44]

1.3 The cinema organ

Another often overlooked aspect of the role of the organ in Ireland is the use of cinema organs in Dublin theatres. This facet of the organ's history is particularly noteworthy because, for the first time, this instrument was being used in a secular role to entertain large audiences. The organs used in this setting were completely different from the types of organs typically found in a church or cathedral. The theatre organ was

> A type of pipe organ built between 1911 and 1940 specifically for the accompaniment of silent films and the performance of popular music in the magnificent movie palaces that arose during the first four decades of the 20th century. Used at first to substitute for the house orchestra during breaks, the theater organ eventually superseded the orchestra, for a single organist could improvise a more flexible accompaniment to the action on the screen. In the United States the term "theater organ" is preferred; in the UK "cinema organ" is used … Given an equal number of pipes, a theater organ tends to be louder than a traditional organ, because its pipes are built to larger scales and are blown on higher wind pressure … A distinctive feature of theater organs is the use of a strongly fluctuating tremulant mechanism which causes the pipes to speak with an exaggerated vibrato. Theater organs were provided with numerous percussion stops such as drums, cymbals, castanets, chimes, and xylophones, as well as various sound effects including bird calls, hoof-beats, police sirens, train whistles, ocean waves, and crashing sounds. These sound-effect stops are often referred to as the "traps" or "toy counter." Other featured stops included those that closely imitated orchestral instruments. Color-coded stop control tabs were arranged in an arc above the manuals in what became known as the "horseshoe" console. The elaborately decorated consoles were usually on elevators,

[44] See chapter two, page 55.

> and entertained audiences as they dramatically rose from the orchestra pit to a thundering fanfare and brilliant illumination.[45]

The cinema organ was used in Ireland during the upsurge of the entertainment form known as 'cine-variety'. The term cine-variety described a kind of hybrid entertainment form involving a stage show and a film, typically housed in cinemas.[46] There were a few venues of this type to be found in Dublin during the early twentieth century: the Capitol Theatre on Princes Street, the Savoy Cinema on O'Connell Street and the Theatre Royal on Hawkins Street. The Capitol Theatre originally opened in 1920 as La Scala Theatre.[47] In 1927 Paramount (the Hollywood movie company) took over the lease and renamed it 'The Capitol'.[48] Their interest was to have an outlet for their movies in the centre of Dublin and, as in all the other Theatres that they leased, Paramount introduced stage shows. The Savoy Cinema opened in 1929 on the east side of upper O'Connell street on the site of the old Granville Hotel.[49] Most of the buildings in this area had been destroyed in the civil war of 1921 to 1922 and city developers were keen to modernise venues on this historic street.[50] The Savoy Cinema saw the introduction of the Compton theatre organ[51] to Ireland and the organist, Gordon Spicer, gave regular recitals before the shows started and during the intervals.[52] The site of the Theatre Royal on Hawkins Street had quite a comprehensive history. The 'first' Theatre Royal which opened in 1821 and was destroyed by fire in 1880, the Leinster Hall (built in 1886) and the Theatre Royal Hippodrome which was

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[45] David H. Fox, revised by David L. Junchen, 'Theatre organ [cinema organ]' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford university Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2252521> [accessed 5 January 2021].
[46] David Devitt, 'The Theatre Royal, A Palace of Cine-Variety', *History Ireland*, 21 (2013), 36.
[47] Des Kerins, 'The Capitol Theatre, Princes Street, Dublin', <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Dublin/CapitolTheatreDublin.htm> [accessed 5 April 2021].
[48] Ibid.
[49] Des Kerins, 'The Savoy Cinema, Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin', <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Dublin/SavoyCinemaDublin.htm> [accessed 5 April 2021].
[50] Ibid.
[51] Devitt, 'The Theatre Royal, A Palace of Cine-Variety', 36.
[52] Kerins, 'The Savoy Cinema, Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin' [accessed 5 April 2021].

demolished in 1934.[53] The 'cine-variety' Theatre Royal reopened in 1935 and, with seating for 3850, was the largest theatre at the time in Ireland and one of the biggest in Europe. An excerpt taken from a Souvenir Programme for the opening of the new Theatre Royal on 23 September, 1935 describes both the organist and organ of the Theatre Royal:

> Mr. H. Alban Chambers, who will preside at the console of the superb Compton Organ, has had a distinguished musical career, his first appointment being official organist to Leeds Cathedral at the age of eleven in 1913. In 1919 he joined the music staff of Stonyhurst College where he remained until 1924, when he accepted an appointment as organist at the New Kinema, Leeds. Always an earnest student of music, he continued his studies which culminated in the degree of Bachelor of Music in 1925, followed by Associateship of the Royal College of Music in 1926, and Fellow of the Royal College of Organists in 1927-a three years' record! … The remarkable instrument which Mr. Chambers will control is the largest and most modern theatre organ yet built. It has an extraordinary range, and is equipped with the Electrone - the most advanced device in musical scientific research. The Electrone does not rely in the production of its tone upon pipes, bells or any kind of musical device hitherto used, it is purely electrical … Besides the carillons, chimes and other special effects obtainable in this way, the organ includes almost every kind of musical sound known to the ear. All that is visible to the audience of this gigantic instrument is the specially designed, beautifully decorated and illuminated glass covered console, which has four manuals or keyboards. From this keyboard the organist controls his vast resources. As he selects stops or depresses keys to give him the tones he wants, electrical connections are made which are carried by the main cable to the organ chambers, of which there are two over the stage. The credit for building the great Theatre Royal Organ must go to John Compton, head of the greatest firm of organ builders in the world.[54]

Well-known Irish organist George Hewson was also involved in this form of entertainment. Hewson was organist of the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle (1906), organist of St Patrick's (Church of Ireland) Cathedral, Armagh (1917-1920), St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (1920-1960) and

[53] Devitt, 'The Theatre Royal, A Palace of Cine-Variety', 36.
[54] Ibid.

Trinity College Chapel (1927-1961).[55] Hewson was adept at playing transcriptions of orchestral favourites and, alongside his various organist positions, Hewson would play at the Bohemian Cinema in Phibsborough.[56] He also championed the music of his contemporary organ composers, introducing Irish audiences to the music of Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Louis Vierne and Marcel Dupré.[57] The cine-variety form of entertainment was eventually superseded by the modern form of cinema, leaving no place for organists. These venues had been a unique outlet for the organ in Ireland, illustrating what was possible on the instrument outside of a religious context and widening the range of audiences who came into contact with the organ. With its distinctive sound and dramatic staging, the Compton theatre organ conveyed a more playful and theatrical side, helping to shift perceptions of what the instrument was capable of.[58] Once the use of these organs in Ireland ceased, the main role of the instrument was once again in a liturgical setting.

[55] Andrew Johnstone, 'Hewson, George Henry Philips', in Harry White and Barra Boydell (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, I (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), 485.
[56] Ibid., 485.
[57] Ibid., 485.
[58] See chapter two, page 45.

Figure 1.6: Tommy Dandy, the last organist at the Theatre Royal [59]

Organ players

Of the Theatre Royal's organ-players (Alban Chambers, Gordon Spicer, Norman Metcalfe and Tommy Dando), Norman Metcalfe's career spanned a trajectory from church organ to cine-variety to television, where he worked on the RTÉ quiz show *Quicksilver*. The prototype for that quiz, *Double or Nothing*, was first staged at the Theatre Royal in 1942. The Englishman Tommy Dando, best known for his signature tune *Keep Your Sunny Side Up*, was the last organist to work at the theatre. His colleague Jimmy Campbell, from Durham, was a popular conductor of the Theatre Royal orchestra for most of its 27 years.

Left: **Tommy Dando—the last organist to work at the theatre.** (David Knaggs)

1.4 Conclusion

The trajectory of the organ, both in terms of development and progression in Ireland, is a vital component in gaining a full understanding of this instrument. The origins of the organ, from the very first use of the word to the first known versions of the instrument, depict an historical instrument that could go back as far as the Early Bronze Age. These early artefacts that portray the use of an organ in Ireland, give insight into life at the time as well as the religious links that remain to this day.

An exploration of some of the more noteworthy aspects of the history of the organ in Ireland, provides a fully-rounded picture of the ancestry of this instrument. The influx of Belgian and German organists to Irish cathedrals and churches, diversified and enriched musical life within

[59] Devitt, 'The Theatre Royal, A Palace of Cine-Variety', 37.

parishes around the country. The organ was the catalyst for this phenomenon which had a far-reaching impact on music in Ireland.

Having uncovered the religious ties which brought the organ to Ireland, an exploration of the use of the organ in a secular role counterbalances this aspect. Cine-variety and the role of the cinema-organ are often forgotten when considering the history of the organ in Ireland. By highlighting this facet, a different perspective of the instrument emerges which can prove essential in changing and shaping attitudes about the organ.

Chapter Two

Perceptions of the organ

2.1 The organ and religion

The organ has always been inextricably linked with religion. Edward Higginbottom writes that

> The construction of organs in the churches of Western Christendom, and their use in its liturgies, is the phenomenon to which is owed the existence of most of our organ liturgy. Our critical appreciation of organ music is deeply coloured by a knowledge of the context of its composition and performance, including inevitably the liturgical conditions which gave it purpose and shape. Without such knowledge some of the repertory can be unintelligible and much of it less rich in significance.[1]

This link with religion proved invaluable in terms of musical output for the canon of organ repertoire, with many organ compositions being based on or inspired by religious feast days or concepts. Examples of this can be seen from as early as the compositions of François Couperin, Messe pour les Paroisses and Messe pour les Couvents (1690), up to the Gregorian chant based works of Charles Tournemire (1870-1939). Many organ compositions were written with the sole purpose of marking a specific event within the liturgical year. An understanding of this religious significance gives meaning to these pieces and without it, can render the music 'unintelligible' and 'much less rich in significance' as relayed by Higginbottom.

> There are obvious reasons why the organ was developed within the context of liturgical buildings and liturgical purpose. In the history of Western civilisation it was the only single instrument capable of providing an adequate level and diversity of sound in large and sometimes acoustically intractable buildings. This is still true today, if we except electro-acoustic options. To produce the mass of sound, it had the advantage of relative ease of operation though not of construction. Its place in ecclesiastical buildings was underwritten by scriptural authority, notably Psalm 150 with its reference to 'laudate eum in chordis et

[1] Edward Higginbottom, 'Organ music and the liturgy', in N. Thistlethwaite and G. Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 130.

> organo', whatever the significance of the vulgate term 'organo' is against the Hebrew original. As to its desirable effect on the faithful, Cardinal Bona had little doubt: "the sound of the organ", he wrote in his *De divina psalmodia* (Paris, 1663), "brings joy to the sorrowful soul, evokes the happiness of the heavenly city, rouses the lazy, refreshes the watchful, induces love in the just, and brings the sinner to repentance".[2]

With the first allusion to the organ in Ireland relating to the Vicars Choral at Cashel,[3] this religious connection is undoubtedly the predominant reason for the first arrival of the organ in Ireland. The interconnectedness of these instruments to the venues that house them can also be viewed from an architectural standpoint. A large organ has the ability to fill the most cavernous of spaces while adding to the sense of majesty through its often awe-inspiring appearance. Higginbottom goes on to make the comparison that 'in the same way as gothic architecture, stained glass, vestments and ceremony elaborated liturgy, the organ added its decorative voice'[4] and Benjamin Kolodziej takes this a step further when he says

> The persistent tendency of twentieth-century liturgical organ music to take as its starting point the texts and melodies of the liturgy … points to another hallmark of the repertoire, namely the potential for the organ to "preach", an idea not limited to Roman Catholic circles.[5]

While the church was held in high regard and regularly attended, the organ remained relevant and had its place in society, but with the decline of religion and a drop in congregation numbers, it has become difficult for this instrument to continue to thrive and be perceived as relevant and contemporary. Likewise with organists, the players of these instruments who typically find themselves involved in liturgical music. Christopher S. Anderson says that 'a persistent myth presents an old-fashioned picture of the organist-composer, peering indifferently from the loft

[2] Ibid., 130.
[3] See chapter one, page 10.
[4] Ibid., 133.
[5] Benjamin A. Kolodziej, 'Twentieth-Century Organ Music in the Christian Liturgy', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 312.

and producing music irrelevant to the world outside the church's impermeable walls.'[6] The organ has shifted through many different perceptions: from one of awe and reverence, through the sinister, to the ridiculous. This can even be recounted through poetry. In Emily Dickinson's poem from the 1860s she says

> I've heard an Organ talk, sometimes
> In a Cathedral Aisle,
> And understood no word it said—
> Yet held my breath, the while—
> And risen up—and gone away,
> A more Bernardine Girl—
> Yet – know not what was done to me
> In that old Chapel Aisle.[7]

The language used in this depiction of the organ creates a sense of reverence that has moved the poet on a deeper level. Progressing forward, the organ became synonymous with the sinister, being used in films such as *Nosferatu* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. This trope has become well established over time, to the extent that Count Dracula and the organ are intertwined. In his parade of music and verse for organ and narrator entitled *The King of the Instruments*, William Albright paints quite a different picture from the previous one presented by Dickinson:

> Over the keys his fingers dance.
> Across the pedals his tootsies prance.
> He huffs and puffs; he frets and sweats.
> Up and down the bench he slides
> As over the beastie he presides.
> He rips his seams; his girdle pops.
> At last, he's pulled out all the stops.[8]

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[6] Christopher S. Anderson, 'Preface', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), xv.
[7] Poem 183 in Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1955), 87.
[8] Christopher S. Anderson, 'Introduction', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 9.

The twentieth century witnessed the evolution of the organ, both as machine and musical instrument, in directions not experienced in previous centuries[9] and yet this connection and association with the ecclesiastical still remained.

> By the nineteenth century, the Church, long the social, artistic, and musical center of a community, found itself displaced by the technologically driven offerings of the Industrial Revolution and the developing structure of capitalism required to sustain both producers and consumers. With the Church no longer in an ascendant position, organ music, for centuries inexorably linked to its spiritual host, would continue to evolve in ways parallel to its secular, orchestral counterparts. By the early twentieth century, the pipe organ—the nefarious "unit orchestra"—would come to supplant the cumbersome orchestra in the theatre.[10]

This religious connection has fuelled and inspired composers of organ music through the years and has provided some of the most substantial works in the repertoire. The sacred rituals associated with the church have resulted in a need for specific essential techniques, most notably the skill of improvising. The tradition of improvisation developed through the generations, with particular styles emerging in each country. An example from the fifteenth century is the 'organ verse' or 'verset' which was improvised in place of a verse of a hymn, for example Johann Caspar Kerll's *Modulatio Organica* (1686).[11] In later years, composers adapted and developed organ improvisations to their specific style and taste, as was the case with Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). Messiaen belonged to the French lineage of composers and his contemporaries included Maurice Duruflé, Jehan Alain, Jean Langlais and Gaston Litaize. The influence of religion was very much prevalent in Messiaen's compositions, and it is his 'unusually broad

[9] Kolodziej, 'Twentieth-Century Organ Music in the Christian Liturgy', 308.
[10] Ibid., 321.
[11] Patrick Russill 'Catholic Germany and Austria 1648—c1800', in N. Thistlethwaite and G. Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 207.

understanding of "sacred music"' that distinguishes Messiaen'.[12] His improvisations, however, could sometimes clash with other musicians' particular tastes.

> In 1949, a composer with as open a mind as Aaron Copland wondered in his diary why the Roman Catholic Church permitted Olivier Messiaen's improvisations at the Église de la Sainte-Trinité, with their "Radio City Music Hall harmonies in the treble" and " the 'devil' in the bass."[13]

Nonetheless, the skill of organ improvisation, which is a core technique of the well-rounded organist, essentially began in an ecclesiastical setting and has developed from there.

2.2 Impressions of the organ

Consideration must now be given to attitudes towards the organ within society as a result of this heritage and connection to religious venues. In an international context, perceptions of the organ and organ music shifted alongside developments within the organ-building world. As the instruments began to advance and evolve, so too did the compositions. In 1845, Félix Danjou, the director of the French firm of organ builders Daublaine-Callinet, commented that 'In Germany, not a step has been taken since Seb. Bach'.[14] After the Napoleonic Wars, liturgical reform led to the reinstatement of the Protestant chorale which assumed an increasingly central role in the development of German organ music, this time as the vehicle for fantasy, emotion and mystic vision.[15]

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[12] Peter Bannister, 'Olivier Messiaen (1908—1992)', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 173.
[13] Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise. Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 446; quoted in Christopher S. Anderson, 'Introduction', in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 4.
[14] Graham Barber, 'German organ music after 1800', in N. Thistlethwaite and G. Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 250.
[15] Ibid., 253.

Similar to the Baroque period, two types of composition evolved in parallel: the short, liturgical work, Choralvorspiel, and the long, complex Choralfantasie.[16] The Choralfantasie built on the idea of using a chorale setting but incorporated romantic concepts and programmatic qualities. They were virtuosic works that showcased the orchestral qualities of the organ on a large scale, and highlighted the capabilities of these instruments in a concert setting. The chorale fantasia reached its zenith in the seven chorale fantasia of Max Reger, written 1898-1900.[17] After Reger, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Heinrich Kaminski and Karl Hoyer also composed chorale fantasia. In France, the organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811-1899) produced new instruments with a completely unique sound which influenced all French organ composers of the romantic period, from Franck through Widor and Vierne, and beyond.[18] The British organ world of the second half of the nineteenth century displayed its changes through organs based on continental principles, through the availability of German and French organ music, and through works of inspiration to the British by Mendelssohn, Hesse, Merkel and Rheinberger.[19] All of these developments in organ composition within various countries were dependent on the developments and progression within the organ building world, and it was no different in Ireland. These new instruments opened up a range of possibilities for composers that in turn helped to change the perception of the instrument.

Preconceptions about these buildings can impact on how the organ, as a solo instrument with a vast canon of repertoire composed for it, is regarded in society.[20] Embedded in the history and conventions of these venues, new innovative compositions and technologies are helping to

[16] Ibid., 253.
[17] Ibid., 255.
[18] Gerard Brooks, 'French and Belgian organ music after 1800', in N. Thistlethwaite and G. Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 272.
[19] Andrew McCrea 'British organ music after 1800', in N. Thistlethwaite and G. Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 285.
[20] See chapter one, page 20.

present the organ in a contemporary and exciting perspective, as an instrument with a breadth of compositional and performance possibilities. Nicholas Thistlethwaite summarises

> At its most basic, the organ is a simple wind instrument. It consists of a grooved chest supporting a set of pipes, bellows to supply wind to the pipes, and some sort of mechanism to cause the pipes to sound. Though such simplicity is now rare it perfectly well describes the sort of organ depicted in medieval illuminated manuscripts. The path from such modest instruments to giant modern organs boasting four or five keyboards, 32' pipes, dozens of registers, sophisticated stop controls and electrical blowing apparatus encompasses a complex and fascinating process of development in which music, technology, architecture, liturgy, industrial organisation and changing taste all play a part.[21]

Having considered the development of the organ from the beginning instruments to the modern contemporary organ, an understanding of the functions it has played thus far have emerged. It is only natural that certain preconceptions surrounding the church as an establishment can have a bearing on attitudes towards the organ. Opinions often seem to centre around the organ solely being used for Church music, without an awareness of the range of solo repertoire available for the instrument, outside of a religious context. Attitudes can vary from one of total surprise at the idea of non-religious repertoire having being written for the organ to a complete misunderstanding of the possibilities and range of the instrument, as well as the palettes of colour that are available to the organist. Often only heard in the setting of a church service where the organist is limited in terms of the sounds that can be explored, the full scope of the instrument is not grasped. The positioning of the instrument within the venue can also play a major role in this. Usually hidden in an organ loft, out of sight of the congregation or audience, little is known about the extent of the technical requirements demanded of the organist. The use of feet when performing often goes unnoticed unless discussed or if the organ happens to be located within

[21] Nicholas Thistlethwaite, 'Origins and development of the organ', in Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

view. This visual perspective has a major impact on the understanding and even the popularity of the organ as a solo instrument. While it can often be interesting to experiment with the placement of instruments in a venue during a performance, the organ is one of, if not the only instrument, which cannot be afforded this liberty. The lack of visibility during an organ performance can be a real hindrance, in terms of a fundamental understanding of the instrument as previously mentioned, but also from an audience enjoyment perspective. The organ can often seem like an obscure, uninviting instrument of which little is known.

Technology has played a major part in alleviating this particular problem. Cameras can be placed within the organ loft and this image can be projected onto a screen for the audience to view, as is the case in recent years at recitals in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, as well as the Galway Cathedral recitals. Options include a fixed camera that stays on one particular angle of the performer or a split camera that can move between the manuals and the pedals, depending on the point of interest at any given time in the music. This development has opened up the experience of an organ recital for the audience and indeed for the performer. Often an organist can feel very cut off from the audience during a recital, as if battling against the odds trying to hold the attention of an audience who can potentially be sitting a great distance away from where the performance is happening. While the benefits of sound and acoustics are integral to a performance, this visual element can only be a bonus for both listener and performer. Carlo Curley (1952—2012), referred to this when he wrote:

> Keith Hearnshaw provides an inimitable golden enhancement to performer and listener alike by bringing the vital visuals to join forces with the thrilling sonics of the master-equation provided by a well-presented organ event. The use of state-of-the-art equipment is elevated by Keith's being a first-class

> organist/musician in his own right, ensuring that the end result is artistic, crystal-clear and never bereft of integrity.[22]

Once the streaming of organ recitals became commonplace, it became typical to see opinions expressing how interesting it was to be able to actually see the organist perform as well as what was involved in playing the organ. By 'opening up' the organ loft to the public, opinions and understanding of the range and capabilities of the instrument have grown and developed.

The particular difficulties facing modern organists that do not apply to other instrumentalists, further highlight the unique issues associated with the organ. Access to an instrument can be an immense problem, at all stages. Typically found in a church, the organist has to rely on the clergy associated with each venue to grant permission for access to the instrument. This presents more of a problem in recent years with new rules surrounding health and safety and insurance. The difficulty in terms of access can seriously hinder the popularity of the instrument in terms of the number of people willing to begin studying the organ. Once access has been granted, venues are often very cold or poorly heated which can make for very difficult practice sessions. The luxury afforded most instrumentalists in terms of a comfortable practice space is unfortunately not always the case for organists. Quality of instrument is another aspect that is typically out of control of the organist. Relying completely upon external influences, the organist has very little say in the upkeep of the organ. While many invaluable suggestions can be made, it is ultimately the church, college or concert hall that will be paying for the maintenance of the instrument. The financial status of each venue, as well as how highly they prioritise the role of the organ, can often lead to a situation where an organist is working with a sub-par instrument. This issue

[22] Carlo Curley, 'video presentations', <http://www.keithhearnshaw.co.uk/video-equipment.htm> [accessed 22 April 2019].

undoubtedly ties in with perceptions of the instrument as, very often, audiences and congregations are not hearing an organ play at its full potential. Connections and associations with the venue again come to the fore as the organist has very little opportunity to perform a concert outside of a sacred setting. While these venues are acoustically the most suitable for the organ, opinions on religion and the church can impinge on any organ recitals given within these venues. It often excludes a vast number of people who either are not aware of recitals taking place, as much of the advertising is done within the churches, or who do not wish to enter a religious setting for whatever reason. On a most basic level, churches and cathedrals do not offer the same level of comfort that can be found in a concert hall or auditorium setting and audiences can often be quite physically uncomfortable by the end of a full length recital. Combined with the lack of visual stimulus, these elements are often reflected in the number of attendees at an organ recital. The organ is inextricably linked with the venue and its inherent associations and problems, often to the detriment of the popularity of the instrument.

Having looked at the various problems and difficulties for the modern organist, issues which are not faced by the majority of instrumentalists, consideration can now be given to the work being done to overcome these obstacles. Due to the size and complexity of this instrument, the topic of venue will always be prevalent. These instruments need to be housed in large buildings, both spatially and acoustically, and aside from a concert hall or university, organs will undoubtedly always be found in some form of religious setting. One of the main innovations to this area in recent years has been the possibility of having an instrument at home. While digital organs have been an option for a number of years, the sound quality of these instruments, as well as the touch of the keyboard, is often not favoured by organists. In terms of space, digital organs can be quite sizable and are also quite expensive for a house instrument. A company called Hauptwerk are working on remedying this problem for the organist:

> Hauptwerk is the latest technology in at home organ design. Hauptwerk is an advanced computer organ system - a virtual pipe organ that takes full advantage of the enormous processing power of the latest computers to provide very complex pipe organ modeling and per-pipe sound shaping, while maintaining the enormous polyphony necessary to model a pipe organ successfully. At its core, Hauptwerk is a powerful and high-performance specialist software sampler, specifically designed and optimized for modeling pipe organs through the use of MIDI.[23]

Another positive element to the Hauptwerk organ is the cost. Organs are expensive instruments that usually tend to take up a large amount of space. Hauptwerk have different prices depending on the size instrument you can afford and have the space for. They can also be built to look like bookcases and other pieces of furniture that would not be out of place in the home.

> We like to think that Hauptwerk provides the best sounding organs at one of the most competitive prices on the market today. The versatility of the software approach allows customers to either build up their virtual organ over time as their budget allows, or to get a full console from the beginning.[24]

This Hauptwerk technology has afforded the organist the possibility of having an instrument at home without making sacrifices when it comes to quality of sound or touch. Here is an example of how a Hauptwerk organ can fit into a home just as easily as a piano:

[23] Hauptwerk, 'Product FAQ', <https://www.hauptwerk.com/faq/product/> [accessed 25 April 2019].
[24] Ibid.

Figure 2.1: Phillip O’Reilly home Hauptwerk organ

Hauptwerk is just one example of a company bringing the possibility of a house organ to fruition but thankfully there are many other options available. The benefits this affords today's organists are immense and should hopefully, in the future, serve to increase accessibility to the organ for students, teachers and performers alike.

2.3 Advocates for the organ in Ireland

Irish Organ Builders

The development of the organ in Ireland would not have progressed to its current level without the expertise and skill of a particular group of people: organ builders. The building and maintaining of organs is a very specialised field and one which requires a certain degree of admiration for, and dedication to, these magnificent instruments. There is a rich history of organ building in Ireland spanning from as far back as the seventeenth century up to the present.

Telford

Born in Warwickshire in 1809, William Telford established himself as an organ builder in 1830, under the name William Telford, Organ Builder.[25] The name of the firm changed over the course of the years, first to Telford & Telford in 1847 and then to Telford & Sons in 1870.[26] Figure 2.2 shows a picture of the Telford & Telford inscription which remains to this day on the organ of the Parish of St. Columbanus, St. Gall and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Milltown, Co. Dublin.

[25] Barbara Owen, revised Anne Leahy, 'Telford, William' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), < https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.44313> [accessed 2 February 2022].
[26] Ibid.

Figure 2.2: Telford & Telford inscription

The firm built a number of organs during this period, from the 47-stop instrument for St Peter's College, Radley, to small church barrel organs.[27] Other important organs include those for Trinity College, Dublin, Killala Cathedral, Co. Mayo, the church of St Malachy, Belfast, and St Eugene's Cathedral, Londonderry.[28] While most of his work centred around Ireland, Telford was very well known and respected in England and abroad. He was a close personal friend of the French organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, having attended the inauguration of the organ of Ste Marie-Madeleine in Paris in 1847.[29] Two organs were built by Telford for churches in New Zealand and he was also awarded the gold medal of the Royal Dublin Society in 1847 for his work.[30] In 1851 he was one of the adjudicators of musical instruments at the Great Exhibition held at the Crystal Palace, where the first prize was awarded to the young and talented organ builder Henry Willis.[31] Telford died in Dublin in 1885. After his death, the firm continued on and was managed by his

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

sons, William and Edward.[32] Edward sat on the council of the Royal Irish Academy of Music along with Robert Stewart Prescott in 1879 and it was during this year that the Academy procured a new Telford & Telford instrument.[33] Over the course of the following years, the firm changed name and ownership, before going into liquidation in 1950 and re-emerging as R. E. Meates & Son.[34]

White

Unlike the Telford firm, the White family did not achieve the same status in Ireland or in England and therefore, less interest was generated in their historical relevance.[35] John White was born in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford in 1809, the same birthyear as William Telford.[36] As with Telford it is not certain where White served his apprenticeship but probably did so in Dublin. By 1839 both he and his wife, Mary Kennedy, moved to the parish of St Nicholas where he founded his business in 1844.[37] John White took over from Mitchell Kennedy and John Rooney's coach and wheel manufactory at 17, Bishop Street, Dublin in 1846 and would remain there for the duration of his life.[38] He must have made an impression on the church authorities as, less than four years after setting up on his own, he had five new organs to his credit.[39] Indeed, by the end of 1847 the firm had built two substantial organs: twenty-four stops for the Carmelite Church, Whitefriar Street, and twenty-six stops for Naas Catholic church.[40] Their output of instruments grew considerably in the next two years, such that after five years manufacturing they had completed over twenty

[32] Paul McKeever, 'Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, referencing White, Telford, and Post-Emancipation Choral Practice' (PhD dissertation, University of Limerick, 2012), 49.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 52.
[36] Ibid., 52.
[37] Ibid., 53.
[38] Ibid., 53.
[39] Ibid., 53.
[40] Ibid., 53.

new instruments.[41] Like Telford, White exhibited their instruments at the manufactory and held recitals there. John White died in his sleep on 17 September 1859, at his residence on Bishop Street, at the age of fifty.[42] Of all the family organ-building firms that set up in Ireland, Telford gained the most significant reputation, both here and abroad, as testified by the number of exports.[43] However, it would be reasonable to assume that had White lived to a greater age, his company would have gone on to achieve even further acclaim in the field. After his death, his sons began trading under their own names. It is not known whether the family split acrimoniously.[44]

Kenneth Jones

Born in Longford in 1936, Kenneth Ludlow Jones contributed on a global scale to the organ building profession. Having studied civil engineering in Trinity College Dublin, Jones moved to West Africa where he worked as a civil engineer for sixteen years.[45] During this time he also honed his skills as an organ builder and designer, a passion that most likely formed in childhood while attending services with his father who was a Church of Ireland priest.[46] Jones returned to Ireland in the 1970s, setting up his own firm in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow in 1973 before transferring to Bray, Co. Wicklow and forming the company of Kenneth Jones Pipe Organs LTD in 1979.[47] Jones' company has installed instruments in every continent except Antarctica, with some Irish instruments of note including Holy Cross Church, Dundrum (1982), St Mel's

[41] Ibid., 54.
[42] Ibid., 55.
[43] Ibid., 73.
[44] Ibid., 56.
[45] Gerard Gillen, 'Jones, Kenneth Ludlow', in Harry White and Barra Boydell (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, II (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), 547.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Kenneth Jones, 'Founder', <https://www.kennethjonespipeorgans.com/about> [accessed 20 February 2022].

Cathedral, Longford (1983), Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (1984) and the National Concert Hall (1991).[48] In 2006 the firm Kenneth Jones and Associates was taken over by Derek Byrne.[49]

Trevor Crowe

Born in Dublin in 1947, Trevor Crowe is an organ builder of meticulous craftmanship. After studying engineering in Trinity College Dublin, he went on to study for a music teaching diploma at University College Dublin, before returning to TCD for a degree in music.[50] He has worked as a music teacher, chorister and organist, including the role of assistant organist at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.[51] He joined the organ-building firm of Kenneth Jones as an associate which enabled him to primarily focus on the making and voicing of organs, before leaving to set up his own firm of organ builders trading as Trevor Crowe Organbuilders.[52] He is greatly sought after throughout Ireland and abroad and is a stalwart of the Irish organ-building tradition.

Having examined the role of organ builders as advocates for the instrument, consideration must now be given to the promotion of the organ in Ireland.

Pipeworks

The promotion of the organ in Ireland has been greatly aided by the founding of the Pipeworks Organ Festival which was established in 1980, under the original title of Dublin International Organ Festival. Pipeworks' slogan is 'Celebrating the organ, its music and its players, Highlighting Ireland's heritage of fine instruments, Promoting and enabling Irish organists.'[53]

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[48] Gerard Gillen, 'Jones, Kenneth Ludlow', 547.
[49] Ibid., 547.
[50] Gerard Gillen, 'Crowe, Trevor', in Harry White and Barra Boydell (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, I (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), 268.
[51] Ibid., 268.
[52] Ibid., 268.
[53] Pipeworks, 'About Us', <https://www.pipeworks.ie/about-us-1> [accessed 9 April 2021].

> From its beginnings in 1980 as the Dublin International Organ Festival, Pipeworks has brought to Irish audiences a diverse programme of music-making with the organ at its centre, fully exploiting not only the wonderful range of instruments to be found in Ireland, but the splendid cathedrals, churches and concert halls which house them.
>
> Since 1980 Pipeworks has mounted sixteen major festivals, centred on the International Organ Competition which attracts young virtuosi from every corner of the world. These festivals have secured Ireland a respected position in the international organ-playing scene and enhanced the appreciation of Irish audiences for the King of Instruments, its unique and thrilling repertoire and the extraordinary talent of its players.
>
> In recent years Pipeworks has expanded its remit to explore Ireland's organ heritage, and developed an education and outreach programme designed to introduce people to the organ, nurture young talent and help local communities in identifying and promoting their own instruments. Pipeworks has also presented ground-breaking series of complete works, including those of J.S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Dieterich Buxtehude and Olivier Messiaen, as well as the complete organ symphonies of Louis Vierne, all given by organists resident in Ireland.[54]

The importance of the work being done by Pipeworks to promote the organ in Ireland cannot be overemphasised. They have highlighted the extent of the wealth of instruments available in Ireland, to both the people of Ireland and those from abroad, as well as demonstrating the array of talent amongst Irish organists. The International Organ Competition which draws organists from all over the world has helped to reform opinions and perceptions on the status of the organ in Ireland as well as cultivating an appreciation for the organ with Irish audiences. The education and outreach facet focuses on promoting the organ amongst a younger audience as well as enriching the organ studies of the younger organists in Ireland. One example of this educational outreach was the Winds and Pipes music education programme which was co-developed by Pipeworks and St Patrick's Cathedral.

[54] Ibid.

> WINDS AND PIPES is a fun music education programme aimed at primary and secondary schools co-developed by Pipeworks and Saint Patrick's Cathedral featuring the WOOFYT (Wooden One-octave Organ For Young Technologists), a piece of equipment that includes a pump, blower, and several pipes.
> It is interactive, whereby the children push on the pump and blowers, whilst creating music on the individual pipes. The WOOFYT allows the children to perform on this scaled down and simplified version of an organ and at the same time teaches them the science behind the mechanisms, uncovering some of the mysteries that lie behind the pipes of an organ. The workshops also include singing, bringing an awareness and focus to the physiology of the bellows function of the children's lungs. These sessions can be described as workshops where science meets the arts and are a fun way of learning both.[55]

This hands on and fun approach to learning about how the organ works, in the surroundings of a cathedral which houses one of the largest pipe organs in the country, has proven very popular with children of all ages. It has opened an avenue to an instrument that previously may have seemed quite inaccessible to the younger audience.[56] Alongside educational outreach programmes like this, Pipeworks offers many opportunities to the young Irish organist. Masterclasses with some of the top organists in the world have become a staple of the Festival programme as well as the opportunity to perform on some of the best organs in the country. This development of an appreciation for the organ with the younger generation is vital for the future of the organ in Ireland.

As part of the 2020 Festival 'Pipeworks From the Organ Loft', Gerard Gillen gave a detailed account of the very beginnings of the Festival in 1980. He began by painting a picture of the Ireland of 1980:

> The origins of the first Dublin international organ festival in 1980 are to be found in a series of artistic developments that took place in Ireland in the preceding two decades, as the still young newly independent

[55] Pipeworks, 'Education & Outreach', <https://www.pipeworks.ie/education-outreach> [accessed 10 April 2021].
[56] For more information on WOOFYT see <https://www.woofyt.org>.

> state gradually grew in confidence as economic prosperity slowly began to take hold, and the state began to look outwards rather than inwards as it attempted to define its place culturally among the international pantheon of nations. This it had done with spectacular success in the field of literature with names such as Shaw, Joyce and Beckett, being acknowledged as towering figures of literary achievement, but in the world of classical music our splash in the international pond was of much lesser impact.[57]

In order to understand the need for the development of an organ festival, Gillen depicted the organ situation in Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s which provided background as to how the groundwork was laid for the first Dublin International Organ Festival:

> So as the 1970s proceeded there developed before our eyes, as it were, an organ scenario totally different in personnel and instruments, to that which pertained, say in 1960.
>
> We now had a first class local organ builder, new and greatly refurbished instruments, and three new organists – two of whom were in their 20s and the third in his 30s – in charge of the instruments in the city's three cathedrals. Collectively we were full of energy and bursting with ideas as to how we might collaborate and dispel the fuddy-duddy image which so many people had of the organ, and demonstrate to the general public the great range of musical purposes to which the organ might be put, and to show outsiders that Dublin possessed a range of instruments, new and old, on which the organ's marvellous 500-year range of repertoire could be interpreted faithfully and well. In a word we wanted to present the organ as a fully franchised musical instrument.[58]

This account gives vital insight into the perception of the organ at this time in Ireland, especially through the phrase 'fuddy-duddy image'. The belief that the organ was a 'liturgical' instrument which only had one stereotypical role to play in society was evidently prevalent at this time, to

[57] Gerard Gillen, 'Reflections on the origins of the first Dublin International Organ Festival of 1980 and a look at some of the highlights of the first five festivals', paper presented for Pipeworks from the Organ Loft Festival, 17-21 June 2020, 1.
[58] Ibid., 3.

the extent that something had to be developed to demonstrate and showcase the full scope of the instrument.

> The 1960s and 70s saw the exponential growth of the international summer music festival phenomenon throughout Europe, many of which had instrumental competitions as a core element. This growth was most evident in relation to the organ: I think of the Bruges International Organ Festival and Competition which started in 1964 and of which I was lucky enough to be a prizewinner in that year, I also think of the Manchester International Organ Competition which flourished from 1978 to 1986, of which Peter Sweeney was a prizewinner in 1978, and then I think of the St Alban's Competition which flourishes to this day, and was first held in 1963, with the distinguished Dame Gillian Weir winning first prize in 1964. I might mention that Dame Gillian was a frequent recital visitor to Ireland over her long stellar career, and was, in fact, a member of the jury of our second international competition in 1982.
>
> So when John Dexter, Peter Sweeney and myself met to talk about possible collaborations, our thoughts turned almost immediately to a Dublin International Organ Festival which would involve the three cathedrals and their choirs, various instruments of note throughout the city, with an international organ playing competition as its epicentre.[59]

The first Dublin International Organ Festival was a great success and brought competitors and world-renowned organists from all corners of the globe.

> What an extraordinary first festival we had: Visiting choirs of international repute, especially commissioned works by two composers, recitals by four eminent organists who were members of our competition jury, a concert in suburban Dublin with the RTÉ Symphony orchestra involving major use of the organ, the inauguration of a number of significant new instruments, one whole recital devoted to the music of contemporary Irish composers, a craft exhibition, and, of course, an international organ playing competition.[60]

[59] Ibid., 3.
[60] Ibid., 9.

The festival may have undergone some name changes throughout its tenure but the promotion of the organ has always been at its core. Pipeworks have placed Ireland on an international standing in terms of quality of instruments and have brought some of the most expert organists to the country. They continue to educate and develop the next generation of Irish organists and are always striving to transform impressions of the capacity of this instrument and its place in current society.

Dún Laoghaire Organ Series

Referring back to the importance of the visual aspect at an organ recital, one longstanding Irish recital series demonstrates the relevance of this facet: the Dún Laoghaire Organ Concerts. Situated in St Michael's Church, this series has the unique benefit of having the organ placed within the body of the church, providing the audience with a clear view of all the elements involved in giving a performance at the organ. Gerard Gillen gives a detailed account of how this recital series came about:

> It was early in 1973 that Sean Rothery of Pearse MacKenna Architects approached me requesting my advice on acquiring a pipe organ for the new church, then at an advanced stage of completion … The result was the fine 26-stop two manual and pedals instrument which presently so imposingly and strikingly adorns the interior of the church … From its commissioning I saw that here we had the possibility for a really substantial annual series of recitals. The location of the church and instrument in the well-established and much favoured holiday resort of Dun Laoghaire presented an opportunity that could not be missed. Thus was born the annual series of weekly summer concerts. The inaugural recital was given by the distinguished Belgian organist, composer and teacher, Baron Flor Peeters in June 1974. Since then the series has run weekly for the three summer months of June, July and August, playing host to many of the greatest world names in organ playing, while providing a regular platform for the best of Ireland's own organ talent. There has been no doubt that the series has promoted interest in the 'king of instruments' among the widest possible circle of music lovers and stimulated interest in studying the instrument among some who have

> gone on to distinguished membership of the profession … The series is Ireland's longest running organ recital series and one of the longest running concert series in Ireland's musical diary.[61]

Another interesting aspect of this fine instrument is the lack of electronic aids available to the organist. Many organs have been updated and enhanced over the years with piston systems and electronic sequencers which can aid the organist with registration choices. Registration (which essentially refers to the choice of stops/sounds) is a key element of organ performance and these electronic aids can make it much easier for the organist to change the stops by simply pressing a button. This element can further enhance the visual enjoyment of an organ recital as the audience watches the organist play with hands and feet while at the same time pressing buttons that cause the stops to change. The Rieger organ in Dún Laoghaire requires the use of registrants, depending on the programme, who change the stops for the organist during the recital. The importance of the relationship between organist and registrant comes to the fore here, which is something that might not be considered by an audience until witnessed in this manner. The registrant needs to have an understanding of the music being played and rehearsing with the organist beforehand is essential to ensure a successful performance. Likewise the organist needs to make it very evident to the registrant when the stops are to be changed, by having it marked clearly in the score and by signalling through a movement or even just a breath. It can become very obvious very quickly when either or both of these elements are lacking.

The Dún Laoghaire recital series has provided an audience with a clear view of the innerworkings of an organ recital every summer since 1974 and has provided organists with a unique space in which to perform on such a fine Rieger organ. The series was initially directed by Gerard Gillen

[61] Gerard Gillen, 'History', <https://www.dunlaoghaireorganconcerts.ie/about/history> [accessed 12 April 2021].

followed by Anne Leahy, David Connolly from 2006 until his untimely death in 2020, and Carole O'Connor from 2021. 2020 was the first year since its founding that the summer series could not go ahead but it returned in 2021 with a mixture of live and streamed performances.[62]

2.4 Conclusion

The organ is synonymous with the church and religion. This connection has cultivated a rich choral tradition, with the organ at the centre, and has resulted in some of the most established pieces of the organ repertoire. This link should not be broken in order for the organ to prosper but should be explored in a different way. From an architectural standpoint, these venues are usually awe-inspiring with acoustics to match, both of which serve to enhance the experience of listening to the organ.

The role technology plays in the advancement of the organ, both in terms of a recital experience in a cathedral or church, and in the case of the freedom presented through the possibility of owning a house organ, is essential. These two elements alone will do much for the progression of the organ in Ireland by increasing accessibility to the instrument and revealing the full extent of what is involved in playing the organ.

Advocates for the organ in Ireland do much to raise awareness and highlight the vast array of high-quality instruments on offer throughout the country. The examples mentioned in this chapter have been established for a number of years, and have brought world-class organists to Ireland to showcase the wealth of instruments. The majority of these organs have been built and/or maintained over the years by Irish organ builders. They also play an important part in promoting

[62] The series could not go ahead as audiences were not permitted to gather in person during the early stage of the Covid 19 pandemic which began in early 2020.

the organ to the younger generation through masterclasses, and by providing access to organs that might otherwise be off-limits to a younger organist.

Chapter Three

Composition and Innovation

3.1 Innovation and the organ

Having considered the perception of the organ in Ireland as a result of the religious connections as well as the various problems and difficulties facing the modern organist, issues which are not faced by the majority of instrumentalists, consideration can now be given to the work being done to overcome these obstacles.

Due to the size and complexity of this instrument, the topic of venue will always be prevalent. Changing the perception of the venue is too far outside the scope of what can be done, but changing perceptions of the instrument and the many possibilities it presents for the musician is very much within the sphere of possibility. New recordings and compositions, which are completely independent from a religious or liturgical context, are presenting the organ in a new perspective by utilising the very individual qualities of each instrument. The acoustics of these venues are being explored and a new understanding of the opportunities they present to performer and composer are emerging. One such example is by Robert Curgenven. Robert Curgenven is an Ireland-based, Australian-born artist producing albums, performances and installations.[1]
In an interview, Curgenven explained his approach to composing for the organ in a way that completely envelopes and involves the audience in the experience:

[1] Robert Curgenven's work emphasises physicality, embodied response to sound and its correspondence to location, air, weather and architecture. His recorded output includes SIRÈNE, pipe organ works, for his Recorded Fields Editions; Oltre and Built Through for LINE imprint; and Climata, recorded in 15 of James Turrell's Skyspaces across 9 countries. Curgenven has produced works and installations for National Gallery of Australia, Warsaw Centre for Contemporary Art, Palazzo Grassi (Venice), Transmediale (Berlin) and the National Film and Sound Archive (Australia). He has presented live performances at festivals including Sydney Festival (Sydney Town Hall), Maerzmusik (Kraftwerk Berlin), TodaysArt (The Hague), Sonic Acts (Amsterdam), Ultrahang (Budapest), Gamma (St Petersburg), Cork Midsummer and was an artist for the EU's SHAPE (Sound, Heterogeneous Art and Performance in Europe) platform in 2019. Robert Curgenven, 'bio', <http://www.recordedfields.net/bio/> [accessed 22 April 2019].

> I'm an organist originally, starting over 35 years ago, and a pipe organ is essentially about moving big columns of air … I'm currently finishing composing a new piece for the pipe organ which will have its premiere at Cork Midsummer Festival on June 20 and 21 [2018] at St Fin Barre's Cathedral. The piece draws on the route 5000 years ago that traders and sea-farers would have travelled from the Aegean Sea, across the Mediterranean Sea to Bronze Age Ireland. It's called *Tailte cré-umha / Bronze Lands* and it's essentially a piece written for two pipe organs, each with different tunings. I'll be playing the recently refurbished and modernised pipe organ in the Cathedral and also installing a big sound system in the Cathedral for the two concerts, which will be set up around the audience. This will be playing the other half of the piece made on some special old pipe organs recorded around Cork and rural Cornwall where I could actually change the tuning as I played. The two different tunings on the different types of pipe organ come together and make the Cathedral's architecture become the central instrument — the sound is all around you, you can feel the air moving. It's really quite special.[2]

This new and innovative approach to organ performance draws on what could be seen as some of the problematic aspects facing the organist (tuning issues, unmaintained instruments, a large, unintimate venue) and uses them as a strength. The tuning is experimented with, the space in the venue is taken advantage of acoustically while the use of sound systems draws the audience in and makes them feel like part of the performance. The architecture of the building is used as an integral part of this performance. A review of the same work performed in Sydney captures the audience involvement and most importantly, the role of the organ in creating this experience:

> Pipe organs are interesting, yet largely under-utilised beasts. Built into the grand expanse of the building, the organ at Sydney Town Hall is not an instrument in itself but rather turns the entire building into one. Ireland-based Australian composer and artist Robert Curgenven utilised this to its full extent in his immersive production: Bronze Lands (Tailte Cré-Umha). The work is performed while the bulk of the audience is lying down on the floor of Centennial Hall.

[2] Robert Curgenven, <https://twitter.com/robertcurgenven/status/1007197436929069057> [accessed 22 April 2019].

> What immediately becomes apparent while lying on the floor is one's inability to watch the performance unfold. Rather, you are forced to take in the full expanse of the beautiful ornate roof of the building; where lighting was set to complement the work.
>
> A tribute to his Cornish ancestry and tribal trade routes during the bronze age, Curgenven creates a soundscape with a focus on texture over melody. Pushing the instrument to its full scope, the sounds vibrate through you, conjuring imagery and meditation. It is a visceral experience. One that allows the audience to drift and focus at one's own will.
>
> Clocking in at an hour, it's the perfect length for this kind of work. At times the themes were similar throughout and lacked some colour, but when the organ sang, so did our whole bodies.[3]

From this account it becomes clear that this work draws on the aural, architectural and physical. The organ is at the centre of the work, engulfing the listener in vibrations and colours, creating a completely individual experience for each member of the audience. *Tailte Cré-Umha* explores the acoustic intricacies of each venue in which it is performed as well as the idiosyncrasies of each organ used.

Another work which exemplifies this idea of using the individual traits of each organ is *Eidolon* by Ian Wilson. Ian Wilson was born in Belfast and began composing while at university. He has written over one hundred and fifty works, including chamber operas, concertos, string quartets, a range of orchestral and chamber music and multi-media pieces. His compositions have been performed and broadcast on six continents, and presented at festivals including the BBC Proms, Venice Biennale and Frankfurt Bookfair and at venues such as New York's Carnegie Hall, London's Royal Albert and Wigmore Halls, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw, Vienna's Musikverein and Tokyo's Suntory Hall. Wilson has in recent years worked with jazz

[3] Julian Ramudi, 'Sydney Festival Review: Robert Curgenven's Bronze Lands (Tailte Cré-Umha) is building and body as instrument', <https://www.theaureview.com/arts/sydney-festival-review-robert-curgenvens-bronze-lands-tailte-cre-umha-is-building-and-body-as-instrument/> [accessed 12 April 2021].

musicians, Asian tabla and Chinese pipa players and traditional Irish singers; he has also collaborated with choreographers, theatre directors and electroacoustic and computer music composers.[4] *Eidolon* drew on an unmaintained instrument in Cork and used the unusual sounds and qualities it produced as a compositional tool:

> 'Eidolon' (2018) was written to celebrate 300 years since the laying of the foundation stone in the present Christchurch building, although there has been a Christchurch on the same spot going all the way back to the year 1050. Over the centuries a number of important events have been held or witnessed here – the coronation of Perkin Warbeck as King Richard IV in 1497, the marriage of Edmund Spenser to Elizabeth Boyle in 1594, the siege of Cork in 1690, to name but a few.
>
> The TC Lewis organ was installed in 1878. It is presently in need of repair but in actuality its condition has given rise to a number of unusual characteristics, not least the fact that notes sound when they shouldn't (i.e. when all the stops are closed) – these notes have an ethereal, ghostly feel to them and this is the basis of the work's concept, that there are echoes and resonances of past events in the building, which this new organ work teases out into the open. The main focus of the piece is on sound – the unusual sounds this organ makes, how best to present those, how to construct some kind of musical narrative using them. To that end, the piece requires some focussed listening from the audience to catch those details that are the fulcrum for the work's character.[5]

In an interview with the Contemporary Music Centre in November 2018, Wilson was questioned about the extent to which the organ of Triskel Christchurch informed the piece and he explained

> Eidolon will probably only ever be fully realized on the TC Lewis organ in Triskel, and as such will be an interesting document of both the place and the organ at this particular point in time. Funded by a Cork City Council Arts Project grant, the work seeks to celebrate 300 years since the laying of the (most recent) foundation stone of Triskel Christchurch by echoing ideas related to important events witnessed there in the past. But, even more importantly, it is a 25-minute exploration of the organ in its present state (i.e. a state of

[4] Contemporary Music Centre, 'Ian Wilson', <https://www.cmc.ie/composers/ian-wilson> [accessed 9 April 2021].
[5] Triskel Arts Centre, 'Eidolon – Premiere of a new commission for Christchurch to mark its 300th anniversary', <https://triskelartscentre.ie/events/267/eidolon-premiere-of-a-new-commission-for-christchurch-to-mark-its-300th-anniversary/> [accessed 12 April 2021].

> disrepair). The organ is playable but needs to be restored. However, its condition has given rise to some very unusual characteristics in terms of the sounds it can make (which it normally shouldn't) and so I have tried to fully exploit those.[6]

This work is an example of how a composer can take the obstacles and difficulties presented by using an organ in a state of disrepair and turn them into a creative part of the performance and composition process. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the condition of the organ is often something that cannot be controlled by organists as they are not financially responsible for the instrument, but this work clearly illustrates how this facet can be used to an advantage in certain circumstances. This can only help to show another side to the organ in terms of the possibilities it presents to the composer and musician, even if the instrument is not in prime condition. It can be noted that *Eidolon* does not feature on the list of solo organ music written by Irish composers which follows, taken from the Contemporary Music Centre, as it is a piece of music that can only be performed on the one organ it was written for. It uses the quirks and individual features of that particular instrument and, as the composer himself stated, will only ever be fully realised on the T. C. Lewis organ in Triskel.

3.2 List of Irish compositions for solo organ

The table in Appendix A features solo organ works written by Irish composers as listed by the Contemporary Music Centre.[7] This table highlights some interesting topics. It shows the years that composition of solo repertoire for organ by Irish composers began, as well as the years that the regularity of these compositions increased. It is also extremely useful in framing Irish organ compositions within the international literature. Aside from the music of Charles Villiers Stanford, the earliest composition on the list was written in 1973. To put that year in context,

[6] Contemporary Music Centre, 'Q & A with Ian Wilson',<https://www.cmc.ie/features/q-ian-wilson> [accessed 23 April 2019].
[7] See Appendix A.

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) was alive and composing in France, Herbert Howells (1892-1983) would continue to live and compose in England for another ten years, and György Ligeti (1923-2006), who is hailed as one of the most important avant-garde composers in the latter half of the twentieth century, was only fifty years old. It establishes which composers have contributed more to this genre of composition while also demonstrating the wealth of material available in this category. It also identifies an imbalance in the ratio of male to female composers writing for organ, perhaps as a result of previous preconceptions that the organ was more suited to men. Coupled with the mysterious nature of the innerworkings of this instrument, the organ can seem somewhat unapproachable to the composer.

3.3 Early Irish organ composers

Thomas Roseingrave

The Roseingrave family are renowned for their involvement in Dublin musical life, from the arrival of Daniel Roseingrave to Dublin in 1698 until the death of Thomas Roseingrave in 1766.[8] Of the three Roseingraves, Thomas was the most accomplished composer, writing vocal music as well as numerous instrumental works.[9] He was said to have a deep admiration for Palestrina's style, and his accomplished fugal improvisations were no doubt the result of this enthusiasm for contrapuntal textures.[10] He acquired an outstanding reputation as organist and composer, with Burney writing that he 'had a power of seizing the parts and spirits of a score and executing the most difficult music at sight beyond any musician in Europe'.[11] His organ music is closer to the

[8] Peter Holman, Gerald Gifford and Richard Platt, 'Roseingrave Family', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23835> [accessed 30 January 2022].
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

earlier English tradition of Blow and Purcell than to his continental contemporaries, and consists of voluntaries and fugues, six double fugues, and an allemande.[12]

Robert Prescott Stewart

A musician who made a significant contribution to Ireland's musical life, Robert Prescott Stewart was a composer, conductor, university professor, promoter and writer on music, and an organist.[13] The importance of Stewart within the Dublin musical scene can be evidenced by the dedication of a statue to his name, erected in Dublin in 1898,[14] just four years after his death.[15] Stewart was born in Dublin in 1825 and died in Dublin in 1894.[16] He joined the Christ Church Cathedral choir school in 1833 and it was there that he received training in both piano and organ.[17] In 1844 he succeeded John Robinson as organist at Christ Church, a position he held from the age of 19 until his death, and at St Patrick's Cathedral from 1852 to 1861.[18] He also succeeded John Robinson as organist in the chapel of Trinity College which meant that, for a time, Stewart's typical Sunday schedule would involve the 11.15am service in Trinity College, Christ Church Cathedral in the early afternoon and St Patrick's Cathedral at three o'clock.[19] Stewart received the degrees of MusB and MusD from Trinity College Dublin in April 1851 and was appointed professor of music there in 1862.[20] From 1869 he was professor of piano, organ, harmony and composition at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and was in charge of chamber music from 1880 to 1888.[21] Stewart taught many students over the course of his career including

[12] Ibid.
[13] Lisa Parker, 'Stewart, Robert Prescott', in Harry White and Barra Boydell (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, II (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), 961.
[14] The statue was situated on Leinster Lawns, on the grounds of Ireland's government buildings in Dublin.
[15] Lisa Parker, 'Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894): A Victorian Musician In Dublin' (PhD Dissertation, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2009), iv.
[16] Parker, 'Stewart, Robert Prescott', *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, 961.
[17] Parker, 'Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894): A Victorian Musician In Dublin', 26.
[18] Parker, 'Stewart, Robert Prescott', *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, 961.
[19] Parker, 'Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894): A Victorian Musician In Dublin', 27.
[20] Parker, 'Stewart, Robert Prescott', *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, 961.
[21] Ibid., 961.

Annie Patterson, Annie Curwen, Margaret O'Hea, Edith Boxwell, John Millington Synge and Charles Villiers Stanford.[22] As a composer he concentrated mainly on the genres of cantata, ode and partsong, avoiding the more typical styles of the nineteenth century such as the symphony, concerto or sonata.[23] He also wrote small-scale pieces for the piano and organ.[24] Stewart's contribution to Ireland's musical life covered many different areas, a prime example of the typical all-rounded and versatile musician of Victorian era Dublin.

Charles Villiers Stanford

One of the most prolific of Irish composers, Charles Villiers Stanford wrote a considerable amount of music for the organ. Stanford wrote both liturgical music which featured the organ in an accompanying role as well as solo organ pieces. Born in Dublin in 1852, Stanford was the son of one of Dublin's most eminent lawyers, John James Stanford, and Mary, (neé Henn), who also originated from a distinguished Irish legal family.[25]

> Stanford grew up in a highly stimulating cultural and intellectual environment made up of his father's friends, most of whom emanated from the ecclesiastical, medical or judicial professions. His home, at 2 Herbert Street, was the meeting-place of numerous amateur and professional musicians – his father, a capable singer and cellist, among them – and on various occasions celebrities such as Joachim came to the house. At Henry Tilney Bassett's school Stanford's education was firmly rooted in the classics (which later formed the basis of his degree at Cambridge), while his musical training consisted of tuition on the violin, piano and organ. In composition Stanford showed early promise and came under the influence of Dublin's most prominent musicians: Robert Stewart, Joseph Robinson and Michael Quarry (a pupil of Moscheles). In the province of church and organ music he learnt much from the example of Stewart; he admired the

[22] Parker, 'Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894): A Victorian Musician In Dublin', 165.
[23] Parker, 'Stewart, Robert Prescott', *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, 962.
[24] Ibid., 962.
[25] Jeremy Dibble, 'Stanford, Sir Charles Villiers' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.26549> [accessed 16 April 2021].

> conducting skills of Robinson; and from Quarry he gained an invaluable insight into the music of Bach, Schumann and Brahms which supplemented his already wide knowledge of Handel and Mendelssohn.[26]

Stanford went on to pursue a career in music and in 1870 won an organ scholarship at Queen's College Cambridge, followed by a classical scholarship in 1871, before moving on to Trinity College in 1873 where he was later appointed organist:

> As organist at Trinity he was equally active, though, as he claimed later (in a paper to the Church Congress in 1899), more constrained by clerical authority. He undertook to continue the regular series of organ recitals (initiated by Hopkins) and raised their profile through the invitation of important performers such as Walter Parratt, Basil Harwood, Frederick Bridge and C.H. Lloyd. The standard of the chapel choir also rose markedly, a fact underlined by the production of some highly distinctive church music such as the Service in B♭ (op.10), the anthem The Lord is my shepherd (1886) and the motet Justorum animae (1888).[27]

Stanford received great notoriety for his contribution to church music but felt that other mediums of composition needed to be explored in order to gain full recognition as a composer and musician.

> Stanford is best known for his contribution to Anglican liturgical music and particularly for the symphonic and cyclic dimensions he brought to the familiar morning and evening canticles and communion texts. His Service in B♭ was widely sung soon after its publication in 1879, as was the orchestrally conceived Evening Service in A, op.12, written for the 1880 Festival of the Sons of the Clergy in St Paul's Cathedral. These, and the inventive later settings, in G and in C, proved to be highly influential models for others such as Charles Wood, Brewer, Noble, Dyson and Howells. Yet although Stanford undoubtedly enjoyed his success as a composer of church music, he was equally aware of the national limits of its appeal. As is clear from his letters and writings, he believed that international recognition would be earned only through the more universal forms of symphony, concerto, string quartet and opera.[28]

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

Stanford died in London in 1924 at the age of 72, leaving behind a vast canon of repertoire that included large choral pieces, sacred music, music for the stage, orchestral music, chamber music, piano solo pieces, organ solo pieces, partsongs, solo and unison songs, and duets.

3.4 Women and the organ

Often perceived as an instrument associated with men, female players of the organ have typically always been fewer than their male counterparts. One possible reason behind this discrepancy lies with the idea of exposure to the instrument. Organ students often take to the instrument upon hearing them in use in cathedrals, usually while a member of the choir, and until quite recently most cathedral choirs were predominantly male. In St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, The Palestrina Choir, which is a choir consisting of boys and men, was established in 1903. Conversely, the Pro-Cathedral's Girls' Choir was not established until 2009.[29] St Patrick's Cathedral, arguably the oldest musical establishment in Ireland with the choir school dating from 1432, consisted entirely of a choir of men and boys, until the girls' choir was founded in 2000.[30] Thus it can be deduced that young girls and women were not coming into contact with the organ as frequently as young boys and men. The Society of Women Organists in the UK states that only 10% of the permanent Directors of Music and Organists in English and Welsh Cathedrals are female[31] and looking at the past and current organists of both St Patrick's and Christ Church cathedrals reveals a similar situation in Ireland.[32] St Patrick's Cathedral is yet to have a female organist and director of music while the first female organist and director of music in Christ Church cathedral was Judy Martin in 2003. Consideration will now be given to two prominent

[29] David O'Shea, 'Church Music in the Republic of Ireland', *The American Organist*, 49 (2015), 59.
[30] Ibid., 59.
[31] Society of Women Organists, 'Statistics', <https://www.societyofwomenorganists.co.uk/statistics>, [accessed 17 April 2021].
[32] See Appendix B.

Irish female organists: Annie Patterson and Una Russell, with a focus on their relationship with the instrument as well as their successes within the field of music.

Annie Patterson

Annie Patterson was born in Lurgan, Co. Armagh in 1868 and became a student at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1875 at the age of seven.[33] She took elementary harmony lessons with Sir Robert Stewart, with whom she later went on to study organ. In her article on the Royal Irish Academy of Music for the *Weekly Times* in 1900, she states that one of her most precious possessions was six organ voluntaries in manuscript form that Stewart originally composed for her.[34] In 1887 Patterson was awarded one of the Academy's first organ scholarships and went on to study for a BA and Doctorate in Music, sitting her exams with the Royal University of Ireland. She graduated with a BA in 1887 and a Mus Doc in 1889, making her the first woman to receive a doctorate of music in Ireland and, indeed, in all of the British Isles.[35] She remained the only woman to hold a doctorate in music in the country until well into the twentieth century.[36] From 1887 to 1897 she worked in Dublin as an organist, conductor and music examiner. She founded the Dublin Choral Union in 1891 and was conductor for that year which was unusual for a woman at that time.[37] In 1897 she organized the first Feis Ceoil festival of Irish music and in the same year acted as music adviser for the first Oireachtas, the national Irish-language festival.[38] She composed a large number of works, ranging from oratorios and operas to piano music, all

[33] Jennifer O' Connor, 'The Role of Women in music in Nineteenth-Century Dublin' (PhD dissertation, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2010), 116.
[34] Ibid., 117.
[35] Ibid., 117.
[36] In England the vast majority of musicians who earned degrees in music were church musicians and male, particularly in the early nineteenth century. However, in Ireland, the number of musicians with degrees in music was still relatively low. This was a remarkable achievement, in particular when measured against the normal expectations for women in nineteenth-century Irish society. Ibid., 117.
[37] Ibid., 118.
[38] William H. Grattan Flood, revised by Patrick F. Devine, 'Patterson, Annie (Wilson)' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.21088> [accessed 18 April 2021].

based on Irish themes and folklore.[39] In all areas of music in which she was involved, Annie Patterson aimed to promote and increase interest in Irish music and to encourage others to create a new style of Irish music relevant to the musical scene of that time, while also increasing awareness and interest in the music of the past.[40] Annie Patterson died in Cork in 1934.[41]

Anne Leahy

Anne Leahy was an organist, musicologist and scholar. She studied music and mathematics in UCD at an undergraduate level, graduating with a distinction in both.[42] During these early years, the study of the organ was her main focus and on graduating, she moved from Dublin to The Hague to study with the distinguished Dutch organist Ben Van Oosten.[43] This period of study in the Netherlands led to musicological studies at the University of Utrecht, where she gained her PhD for writing a study on the theological and numerological aspects of one of J. S. Bach's great collections of choral preludes for organ.[44] After her death, her thesis was converted into a book entitled *J. S. Bach's 'Leipzig' Chorale Preludes*, edited by renowned Bach scholar Robin A. Leaver. In Dublin, Anne worked in a number of churches before becoming organist and director of music at St Michael's, Dun Laoghaire, a position she held for 20 years. She performed regularly in the well-established annual summer series of organ concerts for which the church is so well known, and eventually took over their direction.[45] She also taught at both NUI, Maynooth, and the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, and was eventually appointed to a

[39] O' Connor, 'The Role of Women in music in Nineteenth-Century Dublin', 119.
[40] Ibid., 119.
[41] William H. Grattan Flood, revised by Patrick F. Devine, 'Patterson, Annie (Wilson)' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.21088> [accessed 18 April 2021].
[42] Gerard Gillen, 'In Memoriam', Booklet to accompany the celebration of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Bach scholar, Anne Leahy (unpublished, 2017), 6-9.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] See chapter two, page 50.

full-time position in the latter institution where she became a key member of the academic staff, pivotal in the development of DIT's musicological profile.[46]

Her academic achievements included a Fulbright fellowship, a visiting professorship at the University of Louisville, and numerous invitations to deliver papers at academic conferences throughout Europe and America. The range of peer-reviewed international journals which featured her research work is testimony to her standing among the elite of contemporary Bach scholars.[47] Anne Leahy died at the young age of 46 in 2007. Her extensive contribution to the musicological expansion of the conservatory at DIT led to the development of a Post-Graduate Travel Award in her name, ensuring that scholarly studies continue to flourish in her memory.

Una Russell

Una Russell was born and raised in Dundalk, Co. Louth, and it was here that she encountered the legendary Flemish-born organist Michael Van Dessel, who was the organist of St Patrick's Church, Dundalk at the time.[48] Una went on to study music at UCD upon finishing school and, during this time, she received organ lessons from William Sydney Grieg. After graduating from UCD, Una moved to Belgium where she continued her studies at Antwerps's Royal Flemish Conservatoire, under the organ professor at the time, Stanislas Deriemaeker. She graduated with a Premier Prix avec grande distinction. Una then returned to Ireland and embarked on a master's in musicology at Queen's University, Belfast. In 1983 she returned to Dublin and took up the position of lecturer in organ and academic studies at DIT, a position she held for 31 years.[49]

[46] Ibid., 50.
[47] Ibid., 50.
[48] See chapter one, page 13.
[49] Gerard Gillen, 'Una Russell, an Appreciation', *Irish Times*, 22 June 2015.

Una Russell died after a long battle with cancer in May 2015, leaving behind a legacy of organ students with a lifelong appreciation for, and understanding of, this unique instrument.

Catherine Ennis

Daughter of renowned Irish musician Séamus Ennis, Catherine Ennis was born in England in 1955.[50] In the early stages of her career, Ennis was organ scholar at St Hugh's College, Oxford, before serving as Assistant Organist of Christ Church Cathedral, the first woman to be appointed to this post.[51] She joined the Royal College of Organists in 1978 and established an international organ recital career, with tours taking her throughout Europe and the USA, and concerts in major UK venues including the Proms and the Royal Festival Hall series.[52] In 1985 Catherine was appointed Organist and Director of Music at the church of St Lawrence Jewry, where she established a popular series of Tuesday lunchtime recitals.[53] Her recordings include a Guilmant disc for EMI at St. Marylebone Parish Church, London, a disc of English Romantic organ music for IFO from Muenster Cathedral in Germany, and J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations for Mollterz at St Lawrence Jewry.[54] Catherine Ennis taught at Trinity College of Music, London, Oundle International Festival, Edinburgh Organ Academy and Eton Summer School. She was also the catalyst behind three major instruments in London, St Marylebone in 1987, at St Lawrence in 2001, and the William Drake organ for Trinity College of Music, Greenwich, installed in 2003.[55] In 1994, Ennis founded the London Organ Concerts Guide, which sought to persuade a wider audience that the organ can be of more than minority interest.[56] She was President of the

[50] Bach Cantatas Website, 'Catherine Ennis (organ)',<https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Ennis-Catherine.htm> [accessed 5 February 2022].
[51] Anne Marsden Thomas, 'Obituary: Catherine Ennis', <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/22-january/gazette/obituaries/obituary-catherine-ennis> [accessed 10 February 2022].
[52] Bach Cantatas, 'Catherine Ennis (organ)', [accessed 5 February 2022].
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

Incorporated Association of Organists (2003-2005), a Trustee of the Nicholas Danby Trust for student organists, President of the RCO (2013-2015), only the second female President in the college's history, and wrote for various musical journals.[57] Catherine Ennis died on 24 December 2020, leaving an immeasurable impact on the organ profession.

3.5 Conclusion

Presenting some of the innovations within organ performance and composition gives vital insight into the new directions in which this instrument can be taken, and indeed the possibilities that can arise from using an instrument that may not be in prime condition. These performances and compositions present the organ in a new light, even if they are still to be found in a familiar setting. They show the inventive ways these instruments can be used and offer a new perspective to the public.

Finally, taking note of some of the more eminent Irish organ composers and teachers, both male and female, reveals the extremely rich tradition which has been cultivated in Ireland.

[57] Ibid.

Chapter Four

Five contemporary Irish solo organ pieces

4.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis focuses on contemporary music written for solo organ by Irish composers, placed within the context of the history of the organ in Ireland. The importance of this historical context cannot be over emphasised because it creates a deeper understanding of the role of the organ in Ireland to date as well as the many perceptions surrounding religion and the organ, organists themselves, and organ compositions. By tracing the journey of the organ in Ireland from the very beginnings right up to the present, the relevance and significance of these solo compositions becomes the focal point of this thesis. Compositions of this nature have the potential to help the organ achieve autonomy and be recognised as an individual instrument, separate from the history and opinions surrounding the venues in which they are found. Five pieces have been chosen for the purpose of this study:

Toccata L'homme armé by Jonathan Nangle

The Secret Rose by Eric Sweeney

Karenfilo Mome (from Three Bulgarian Dances for organ) by Fergus Johnston

2019.7 by Sebastian Adams

Strength by Rose Connolly

Each of these pieces showcase a different aspect of organ writing through the unique compositional style of each individual composer.[1]

[1] The pieces by Jonathan Nangle, Eric Sweeney, Sebastian Adams and Fergus Johnston are all listed on the Contemporary Music Centre catalogue while the work by Rose Connolly is not. *Strength* is the newest composition for organ solo written by a female Irish composer and does not yet feature in the CMC archives.

Background information on each composer is given to provide some context to these works within their compositional and musical activity.

4.2 *Toccata L'homme armé*

> Jonathan Nangle is a composer whose work explores many diverse fields ranging from notated acoustic and electro-acoustic composition, through live and spatially distributed electronics, to video, field recording, interactive sound installation and electronic improvisation. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, he studied composition under Donnacha Dennehy and Rob Canning and Electro-Acoustic composition with Roger Doyle. Since 2008 he has continued to study privately with composer Kevin Volans.
>
> His work has been commissioned and performed internationally by, amongst others, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Crash Ensemble, Ensemble Scratch the Surface, The Dublin Guitar Quartet, The Chatham Saxophone Quartet, Ergodos Orchestra, New Dublin Voices, Irish Youth Choir, the Spatial Music Collective, violinist Darragh Morgan and pianist Thérèse Fahy … His work has been released by the Ergodos, Diatribe, RTÉ Lyric FM, Contemporary Music Centre Ireland and Metier Divine Art Record Labels, featured at numerous festivals, been choreographed for film and stage, and has been broadcast internationally both on radio and television … Jonathan is a lecturer in Music Technology and Electro-Acoustic Composition at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.[2]

Toccata L'homme armé was written for, and performed by, Irish organist David Adams in St Michael's Church, Dún Laoghaire, September 2014.[3] A brief description given by Adams illustrates the inspiration behind the work:

> In many depictions of St. Michael he is represented as an angelic warrior, fully armed with helmet, sword and shield. St. Michael was associated with the 'armed man' secular tune from at least the time of the Renaissance, during which period it was used as the basis of over 40 Masses. The kaleidoscopic procession

[2] Jonathan Nangle, 'Biography', <http://www.jonathannangle.com/biography/> [accessed 19 April 2021].
[3] See chapter two, page 42.

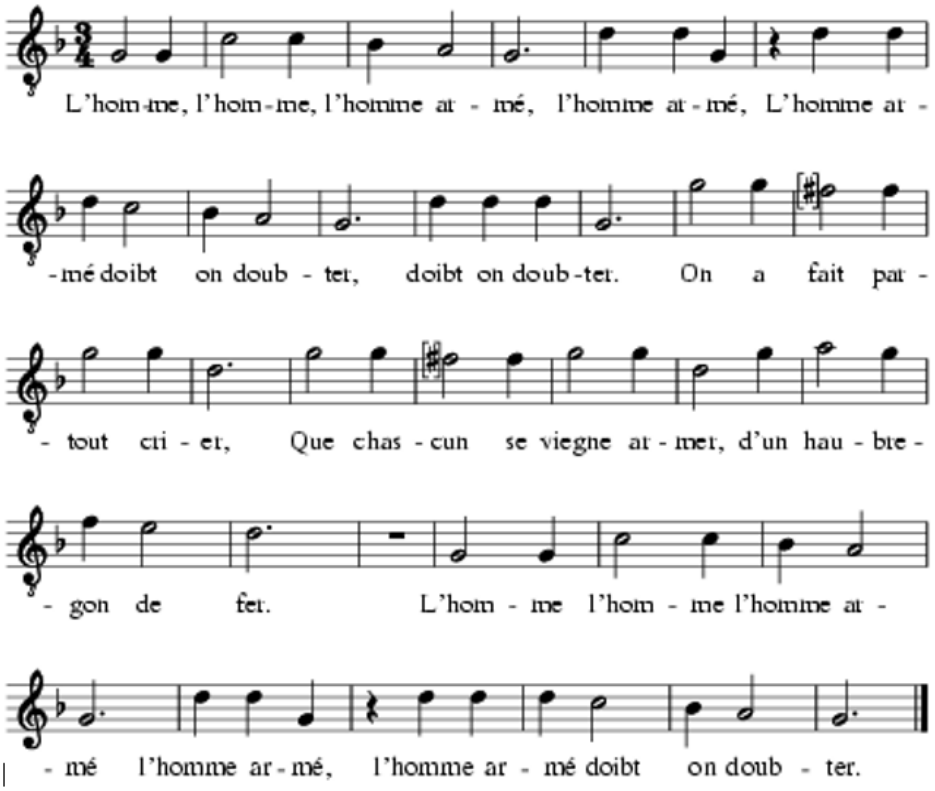
> of ideas in Jonathan Nangle's Toccata 'L'homme armé' leads to a brief chordal presentation of the opening of this tune.

Here Nangle takes the venue in which this piece was first being performed, the aforementioned St Michael's of Dun Laoghaire, and uses it as an influential feature in the conception of *Toccata L'homme armé*. The connection between religion and the organ is once again reflected in the fact that Nangle was a boy chorister in St Patrick's Cathedral[4] and would have been exposed to the organ while singing at the daily religious services.[5] The connection of St Michael to the 'armed man' secular tune brings about a particular section of the work which features this melody embedded within the chords.

> (L'homme armé) is a melody used as the tenor of over 40 mass cycles between about 1450 and the end of the 17th century … The melody and its text survive only in the Naples manuscript (example 4.2.1), though much of the material is endorsed by its use in a combinative chanson (perhaps of around 1463) perhaps by Robert Morton. Since no two masses contain precisely the same form of the melody, it is reasonable to assume that it had an unwritten origin and was monophonic. But its tripartite division makes it singularly well suited for use as the cantus firmus in a mass cycle. Other useful features include: the move into a higher register for the middle section coupled with the high A giving a sense of a different tonal centre; the leaps of a 4th and a 5th combined with falling lines at the ends of sections; and the motivic economy of the melody.[6]

[4] In conversation with Dr Kerry Houston.
[5] See chapter two, page 26.
[6] David Fallows, 'L'homme armé' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.16553> [accessed 19 April 2021].

Example 4.2.1: L'homme armé melody [7]



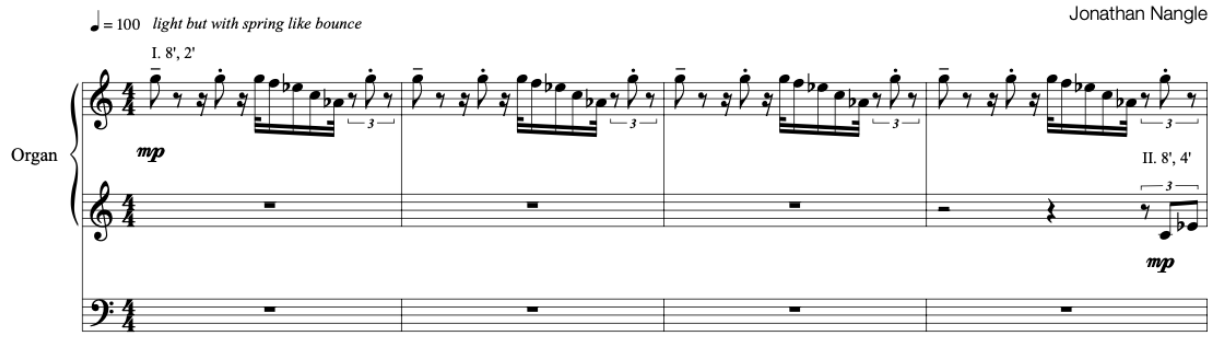
Toccata L'homme armé is quite sectional in nature and moving seamlessly from one section to another creates quite a challenge in this composition. It is the combining of each of these individual sections that results in a very unified work. The overall character of this piece is quite idiosyncratic, and the compositional language could be compared to another contemporary composer of organ music, Ad Wammes (1953). Wammes is a Dutch composer who studied composition with Ton de Leeuw, Theo Loevendie and Klaas de Vries, piano with Edith Lateiner-Grosz and electronic music with Ton Bruynèl.[8] He has written music for Dutch Sesame Street but over the years has focused more on solo compositions.[9] One of his most well-known pieces for organ is entitled *Miroir* (1989) and it was this piece which came to mind upon first hearing *Toccata L'homme armé*. Both

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ad Wammes, 'Biography', https://www.adwammes.com [accessed 12 January 2022]
[9] Ibid.

composers manage to convey a more light-hearted side to the organ, which can too often be considered a very serious instrument.

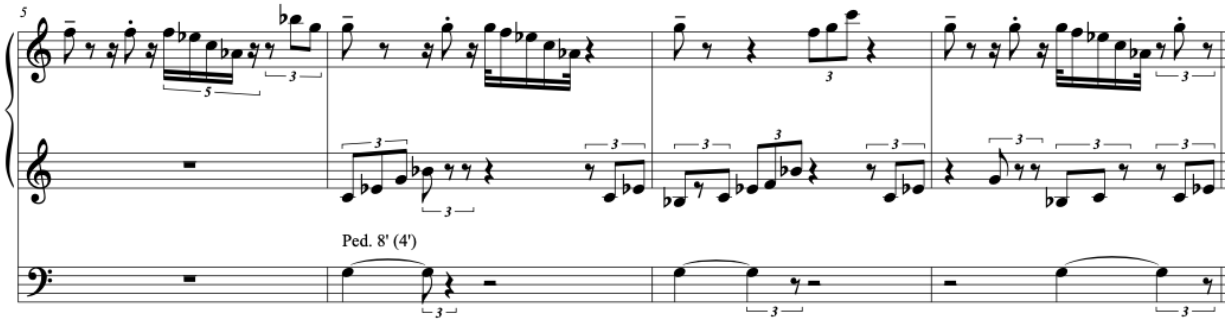
The work opens with a single line repeating rhythmic feature, heard four times in the right hand, before a second line joins in the left hand (example 4.2.2).

Example 4.2.2: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 1-4



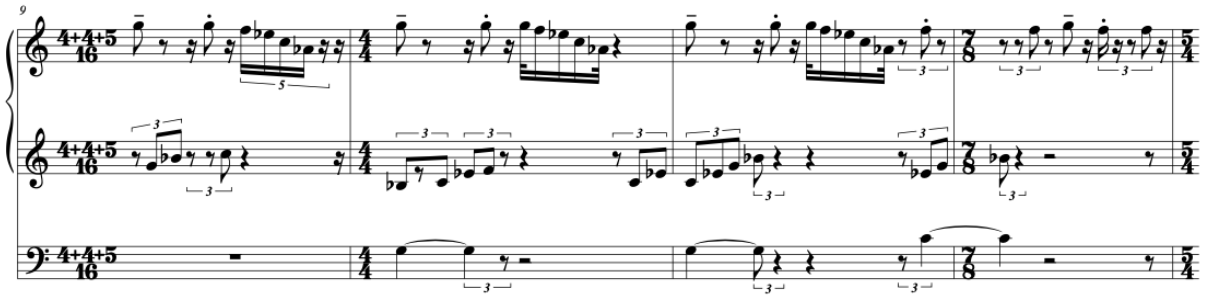
Once more material is added in the left hand and pedal line, the right hand rhythmic figure begins to change and adapt (example 4.2.3). Maintaining the speed and rhythmic precision of this pattern becomes more challenging as more material is added.

Example 4.2.3: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 5-8



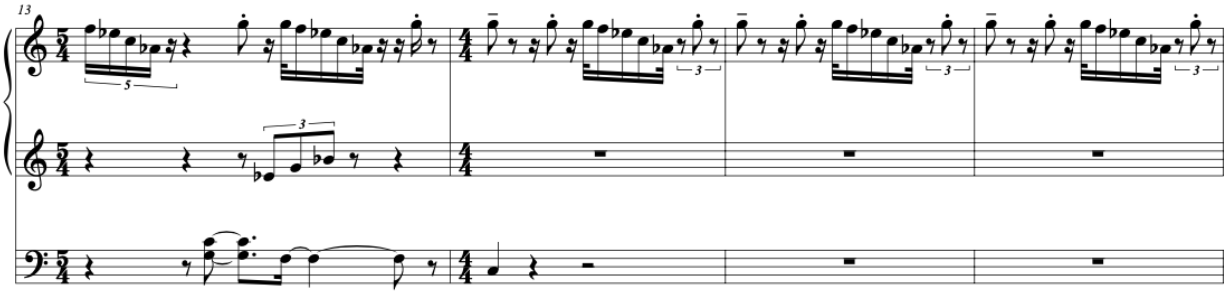
As shown in example 4.2.3, each line joins with an independent rhythm and it is the combining of these rhythms as they expand and develop that creates one of the greatest challenges in this work. Bars 9 to 12 contain changing rhythmic patterns, shifting time signatures and three completely independent lines, all introduced within the opening two pages of this work (example 4.2.4).

Example 4.2.4: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 9-12



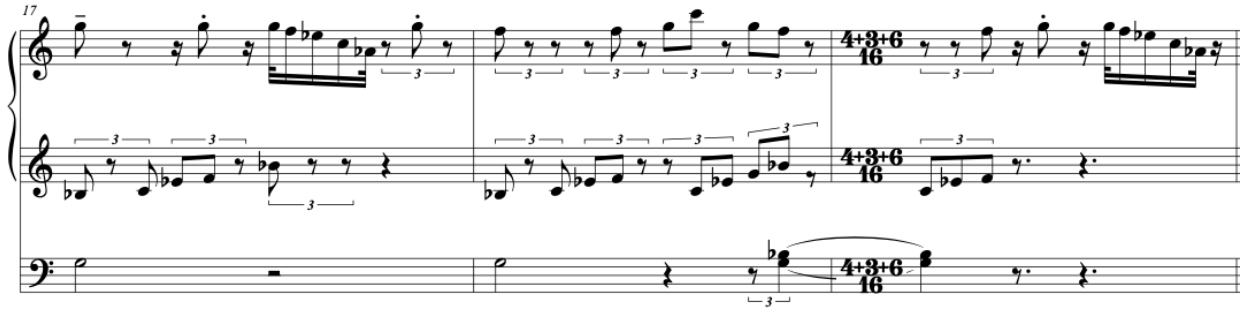
The first instance of double pedalling in this work occurs briefly in bar 13, before a three bar return to the opening repeating rhythmic motif.

Example 4.2.5: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 13-16



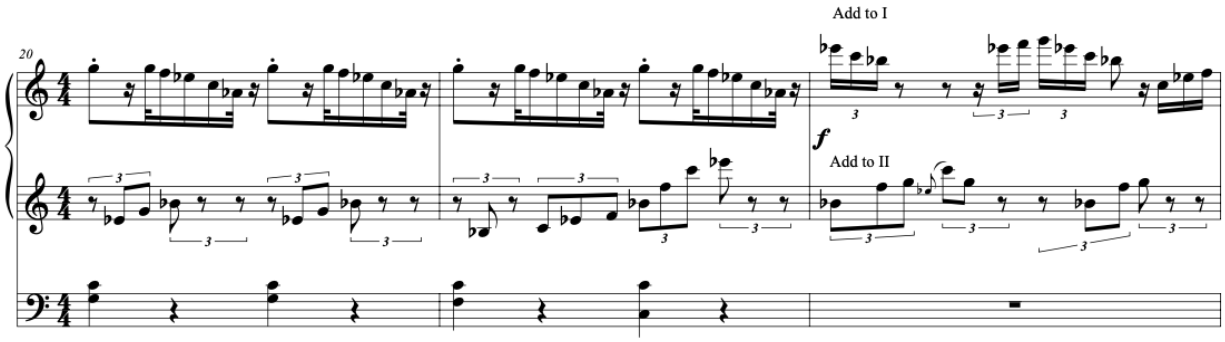
These three bars (bars 14 to 16) are an important and necessary part of this work as, from bar 17 onwards, the music shifts and changes quickly from section to section. Example 4.2.6 shows how the music begins to develop and increase in texture once again from bar 17.

Example 4.2.6: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 17-19



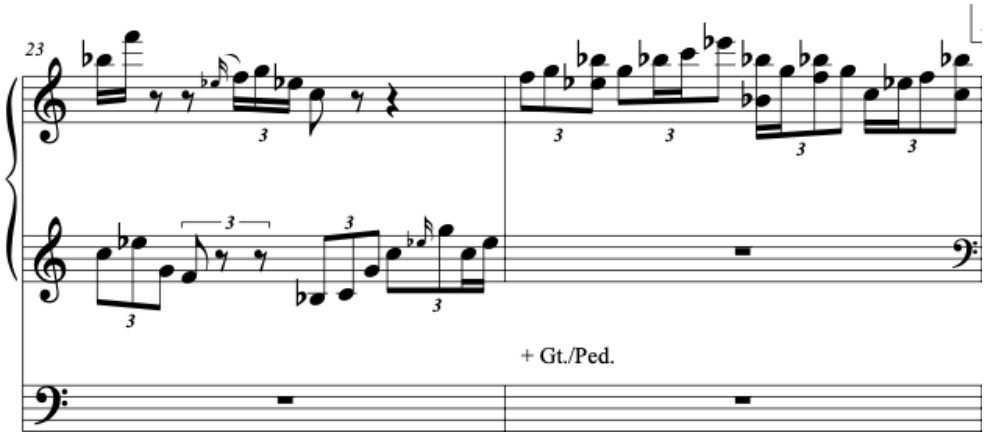
The two bars preceding a change to new material in bar 22 are the most dense and busy of this opening section, involving the rhythmic pattern in the right hand, a differing triplet rhythm in the left hand and a double pedal line (example 4.2.7).

Example 4.2.7: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 20-22



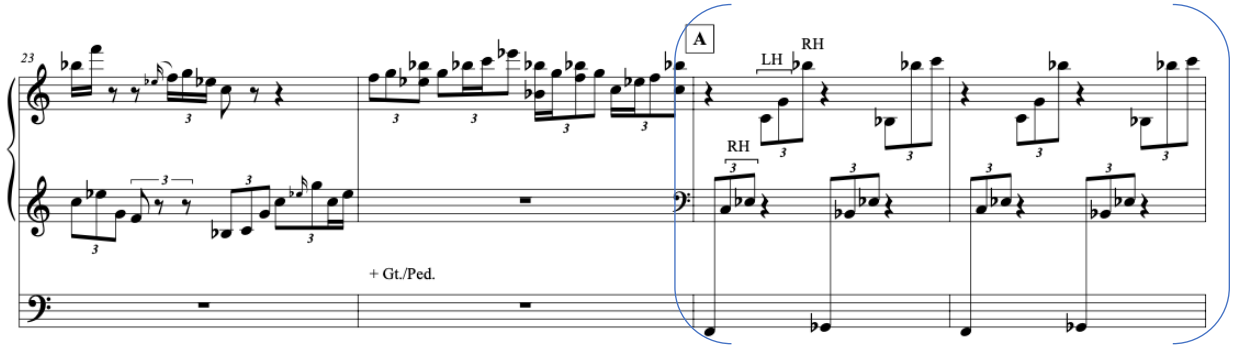
Bar 22 marks a change to a new rhythmic pattern that requires an immediate change in character. The left hand triplets act as a sort of anchor between adjacent patterns (from bar 21 to 22), while the right hand introduces a completely new idea that alternates between semiquavers and semiquaver triplets.

Example 4.2.8: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 23 and 24



The busyness of bar 22 leads directly into the first labelled section of the work, section A (example 4.2.9). The remainder of the work is divided into clearly labelled sections marked by letters A-F.

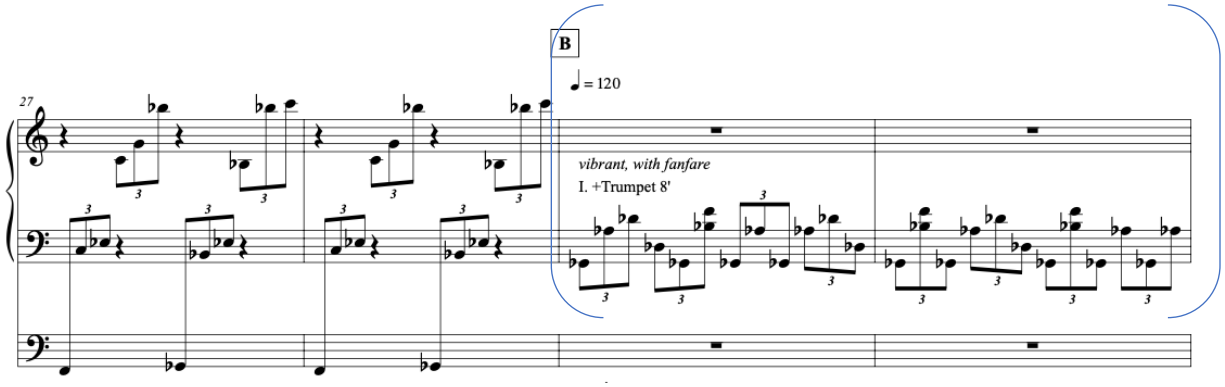
Example 4.2.9: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 23-26



Section A consists of an undulating triplet figure where the hands have to quickly cross over each other. The pedal plays the lowest note written on the bottom stave while the hands share the manual figurations as marked. At the beginning of the score Nangle says that "registration, fingerings and hand-crossings are merely suggestions in the score and need not be strictly adhered to." The suggested hand-crossings result in a very successful and precise performance of these bars. Section A consists of just four bars, with bars 27 and 28 being an exact repeat of the previous two bars.

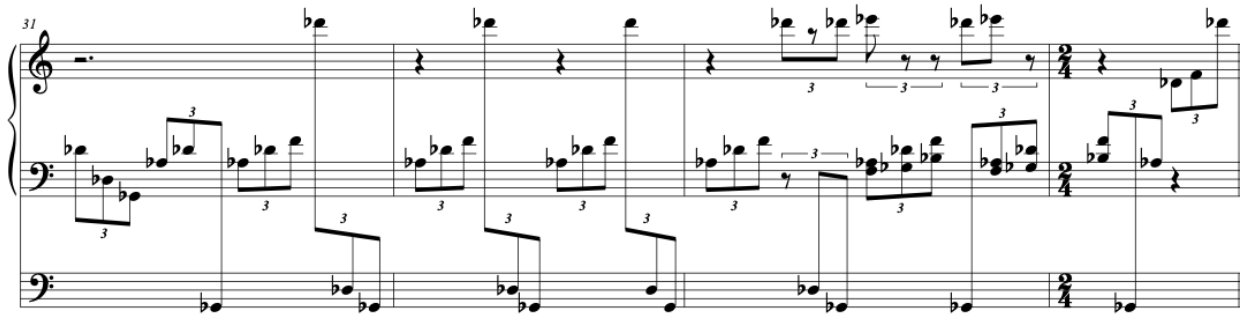
The B section, while also featuring a triplet rhythm, changes in character with a marking of 'vibrant, with fanfare'. There is also a marked change of tempo which adds to the growing feeling of intensity in this section (example 4.2.10).

Example 4.2.10: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 27-30



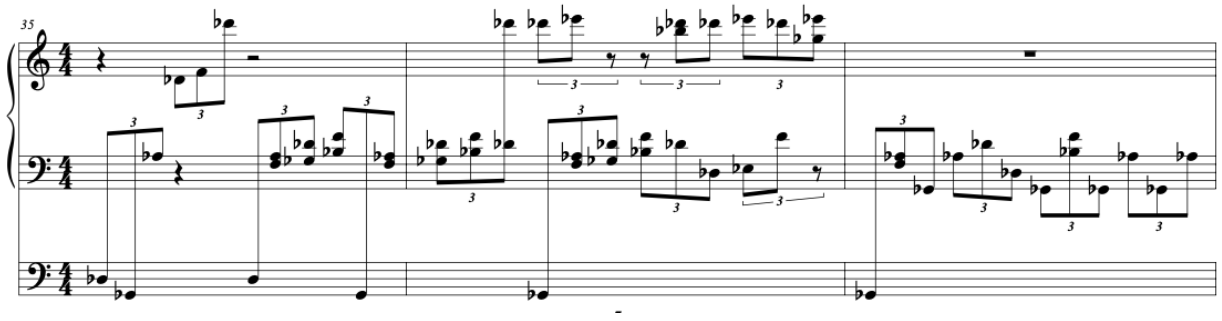
Section B spans twelve bars, from bar 29 to bar 40. Nangle suggests a trumpet registration which really captures the intended vibrancy of this section. Bars 29 and 30 remain in the middle register of the organ, with no lower pedal notes or higher placed notes as had been seen in section A. While written as if to be played by only the left hand, these bars can be divided between the hands to facilitate accuracy of notes. In bars 31 and 32, Nangle begins to introduce a higher register note in the right hand while the pedal now takes some of the material previously played in the left hand (example 4.2.11). The music is now divided between both hands and feet.

Example 4.2.11: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 31-34



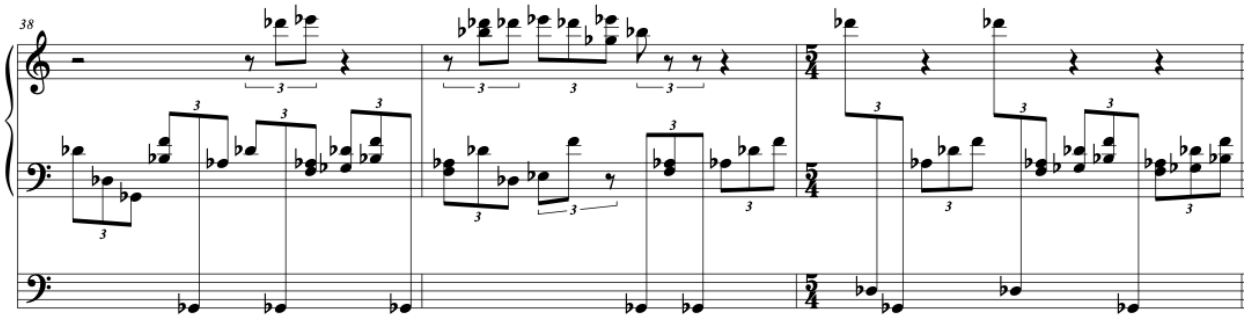
The intensity builds as each progressive bar becomes busier, with added syncopated high register notes in the right hand and the rippling middle-register triplet figure divided between the left hand and feet. This continues from bar 31 to bar 36 before the music makes a sudden return to the same material from the opening bar of section B (example 4.2.12).

Example 4.2.12: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 35-37



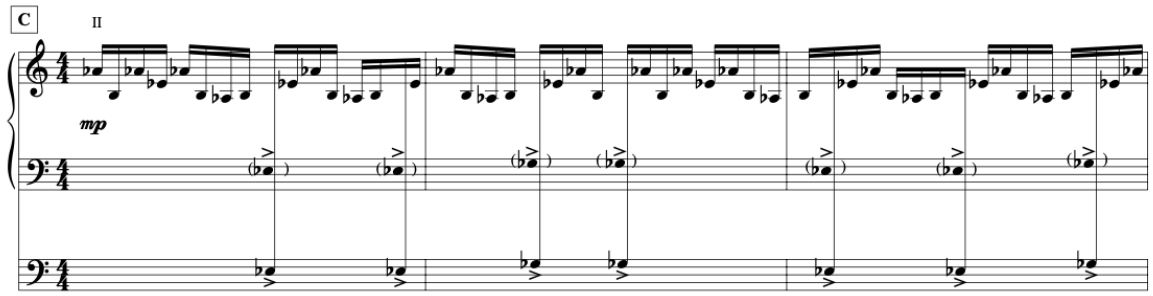
This moves swiftly into a return to the more complicated division of parts, with the right hand playing the higher register syncopated rhythm against the left hand and pedal triplet line (example 4.2.13).

Example 4.2.13: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 38-40



Section C, which begins in bar 40, also features a syncopated rhythm, this time in the pedal line. The music runs straight from the end of the B section into the sudden semiquaver flurry of section C (example 4.2.14).

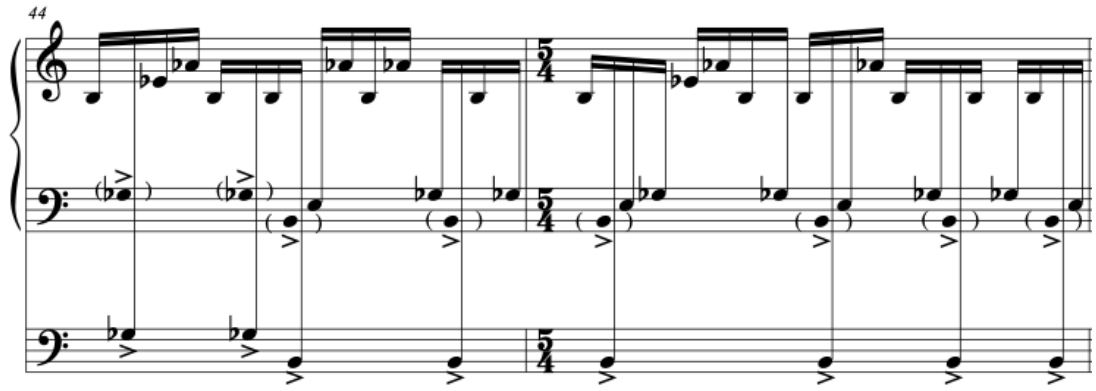
Example 4.2.14: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 41-43



Given that the majority of the work so far has revolved around triplet rhythms in some form, this sudden shift to semiquavers can be quite jarring and exciting. It acts as a sort of *accelerando*, picking up the momentum even further. The regularity with which these pedal accents occur shifts and changes from bar to bar, creating a very unique and idiosyncratic effect.

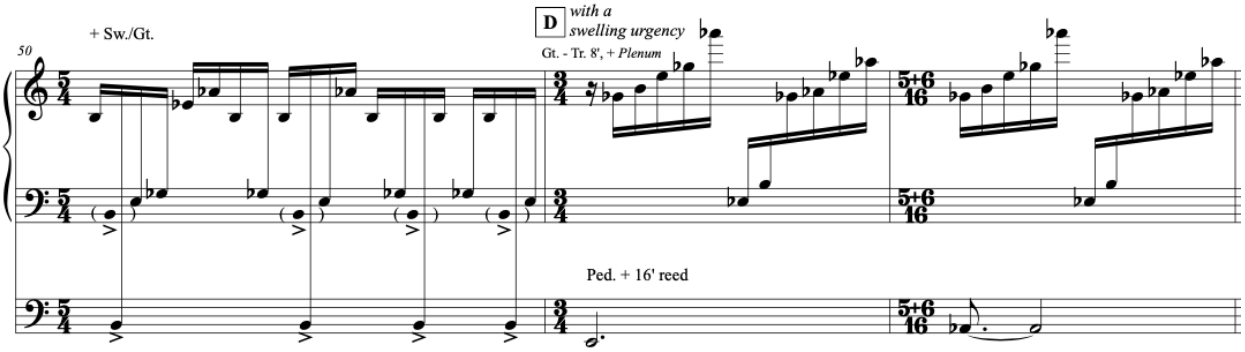
Nangle has suggested mirroring the offbeat pedal notes in the left hand, as shown by the notes in brackets. The frequency of these offbeat notes increases with each passing bar, reaching a climax in bars 44 and 45 (example 4.2.15), before an exact repeat of these first five bars of section C from bar 46 to bar 50.

Example 4.2.15: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 44 and 45



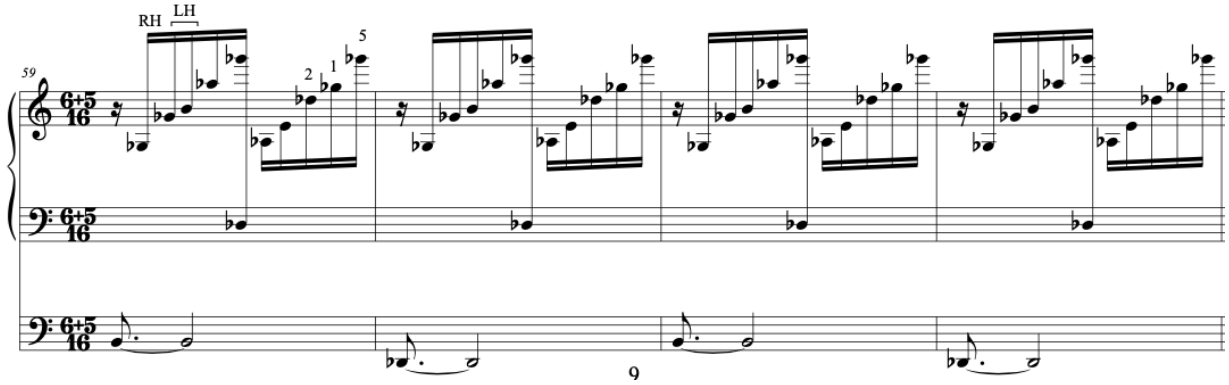
Section D which begins in bar 51 (example 4.2.16) involves a rhythmic pattern that alters with the changing time signatures across bar lines. Once again, Nangle moves straight from section C into the new material of section D which adds to the sense of urgency and forward momentum of the piece.

Example 4.2.16: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 50-52



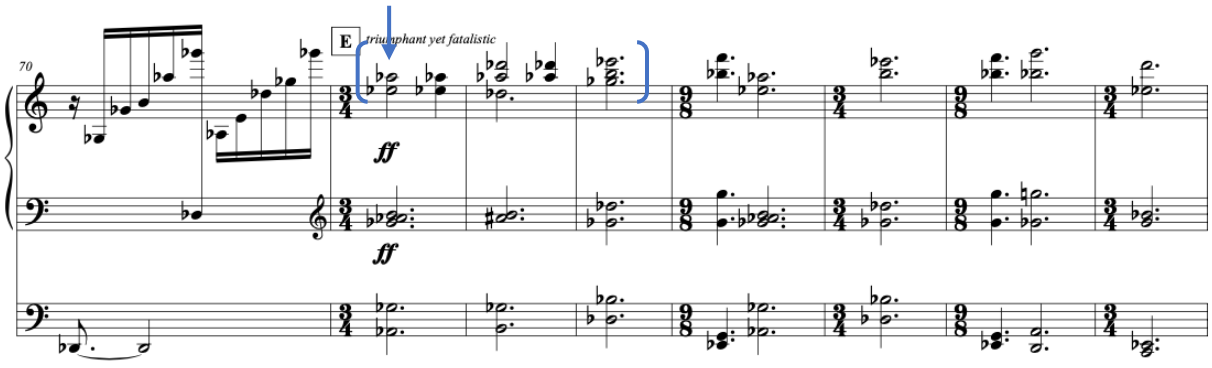
Once the player has settled into this pattern, it adapts and reforms from bar 59 to 62 (example 4.2.17), intensifying in difficulty, with the remainder of this twenty bar section alternating between these two patterns.

Example 4.2.17: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 59-62



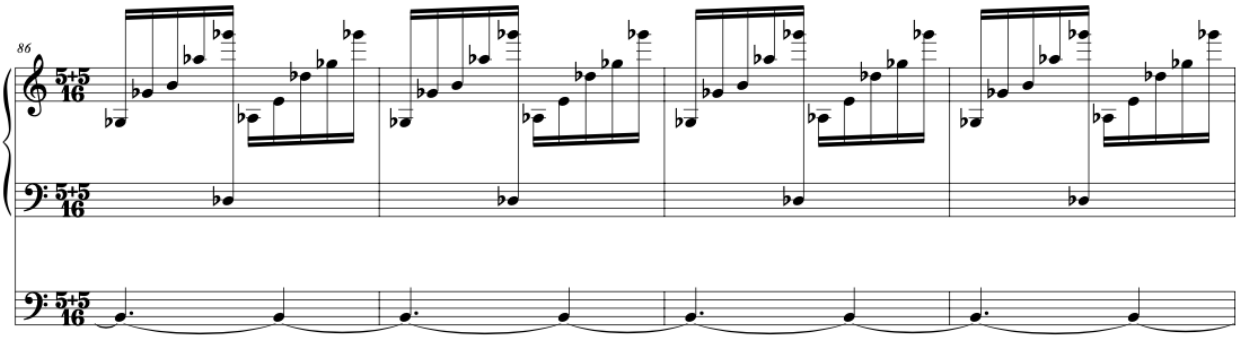
The intensity and drama builds as section D, the longest of all the sections in this work, progresses. Once the listener has begun to settle into the hypnotic repeating patterns of section D, Nangle shifts and immediately changes to the starkly contrasting material of section E. This section feels like a triumphant arrival at what is the first and only chordal passage of the whole work. Changing the texture in such a sudden and dramatic way highlights the importance and relevance of this section which contains the melody of *L'homme armé* within the chords (example 4.2.18).

Example 4.2.18: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 70-77



The work ends with Section F which is a reprise of the material from section D (example 4.2.17), with a subtle change in the placement of the figure on the downbeat of the bar, as shown in example 4.2.19.

Example 4.2.19: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 86-89



As an organist, it was the diversity and range of material in *Toccata L'homme armé* that stood out. Full of rhythmic complexities and different motifs which presented the possibility to show a variety of different colours on the organ, this work captured the full potential of the instrument. While there is a brief chordal moment (Section E), it was refreshing to perform a work that did not rely solely on this style of compositional writing, with which the organ can often be associated. This was also felt with Sebastian Adams's work, *2019.7*. The vibrancy within these two works translated into the way these composers presented the organ.

Nangle gives the following account of the compositional process of *Toccata L'homme armé*:

> Toccata L'homme armé was written as a musical gift for my brother Andrew and his partner Joe to mark a celebration. The idea for the piece sprung from the opening material, something I happened upon at the piano one day and recorded. My efforts to smooth out the rhythmic irregularities of the material resulted in a dissatisfying aural result. Instead, the irregular, animated aspect of the gesture remains and becomes like an ostinato in the opening section. This is varied with additions in the lower voices before ascending into the

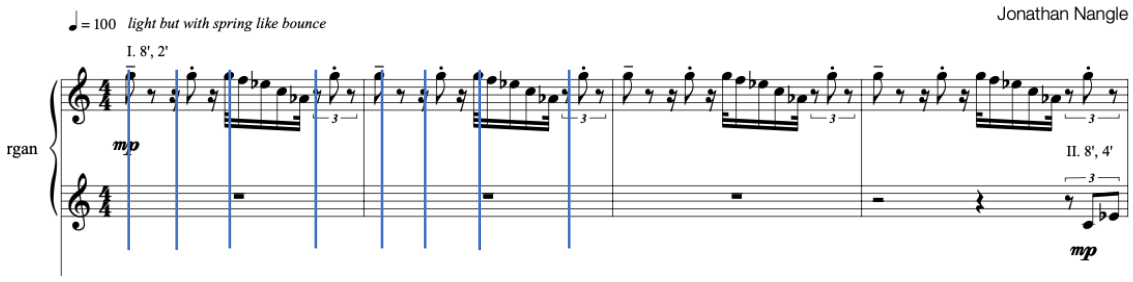
upper register, leading to an arpeggio section going from low to high oscillating between two chords. As the piece was envisioned to be celebratory in nature, I wanted this material to evolve into a fanfare-like section which it duly does, increasing the tempo and taking on an almost electronic like sound. This is followed by a rapid, close-packed section in 16th notes, punctuated by the lower voices, leading to a swelling texture of rising arpeggios in groups of five and six while the pedals rock back and forth, alternating a rising major 3rd and falling minor 7th. A triumphant chordal section with a veiled reference to the L'homme armé tune brings the piece towards a final repeat of the rising arpeggios in groupings of five and six while the Cimbelstern (where available) rings out ecstatically like the bells on a Sunday morning.

I am indebted to David Adams, who commissioned the piece along with the Dun Laoghaire Organ Concerts and the late David Connolly. David gave the premiere in September 2014 in the closing concert of the festival season, and it is his registration markings that adorn the score.[10]

Preparation notes

Initially, one of the most daunting components of this work is the precision of the opening rhythmic motifs which begin in bar 1 and continue until bar 21. An understanding of where the main beats of the bar fall is vital and helps with comprehending where to play the motifs in relation to these. A method as simple as drawing four lines showing where the main beats in each bar fall will unlock this opening passage and make it more easily accessible (example 4.2.20).

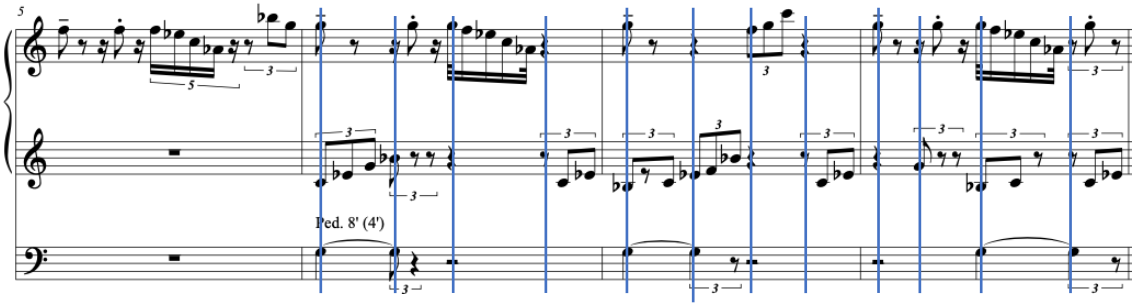
Example 4.2.20: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 1-4



[10] In conversation with Jonathan Nangle.

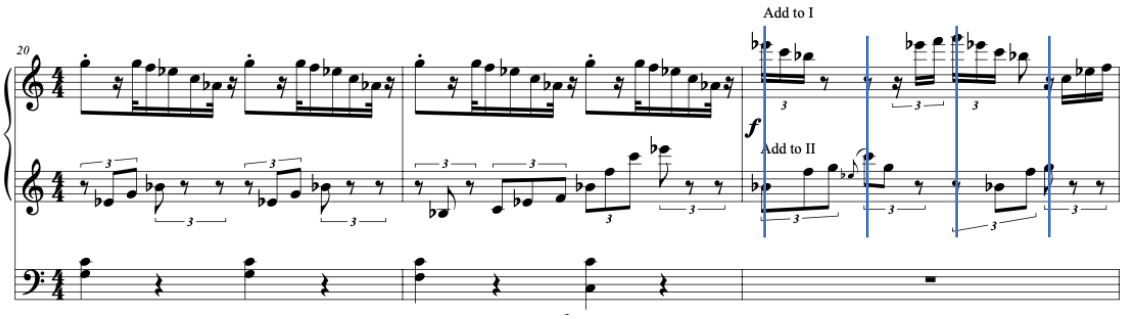
Once the left hand enters in bar 4, it can become challenging to achieve the precise placement of each of these two separate rhythmical lines within the bar, but, again, drawing lines on the main beats highlights where each motif relates to the beats (example 4.2.21) The pedal line in this opening section remains quite simple with all of the technical difficulties occurring in the manuals.

Example 4.2.21: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 5-8



This method works very effectively throughout the work, especially in bars that are more rhythmically intricate than others (example 4.2.22).

Example 4.2.22: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 20-22

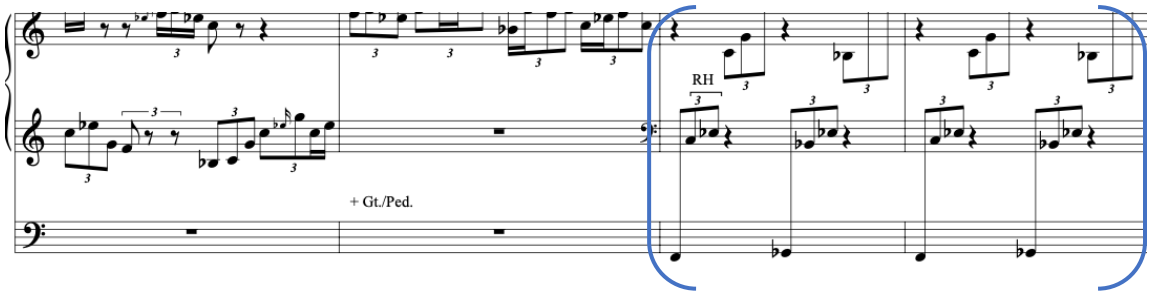


Practising each hand on its own with the metronome will secure each rhythm. When putting these bars together, it can be helpful to play one hand at a time on a louder stop and focus on that line while fitting the other around it. In this way each line becomes very clear to the organist and any deviations from the correct version should stand out when everything is put together on the same

registration. Once the piece enters sections A-E, the rhythms becomes much less complicated and the technical difficulties shift to other musical elements.

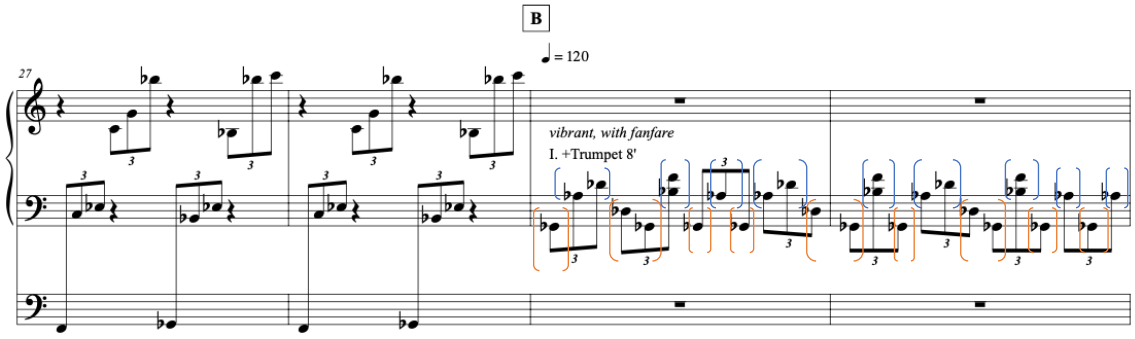
Section A features rising triplets that jump between the pedals and manuals. The rhythm is much more straightforward in this section with the first of each triplet group landing on the beat. Practising the hand-crossing movement without actually playing the higher register notes would be an effective way to tackle this section (example 4.2.23). Practice landing on the notes and securing the movement before finally adding the notes back in.

Example 4.2.23: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 23-25



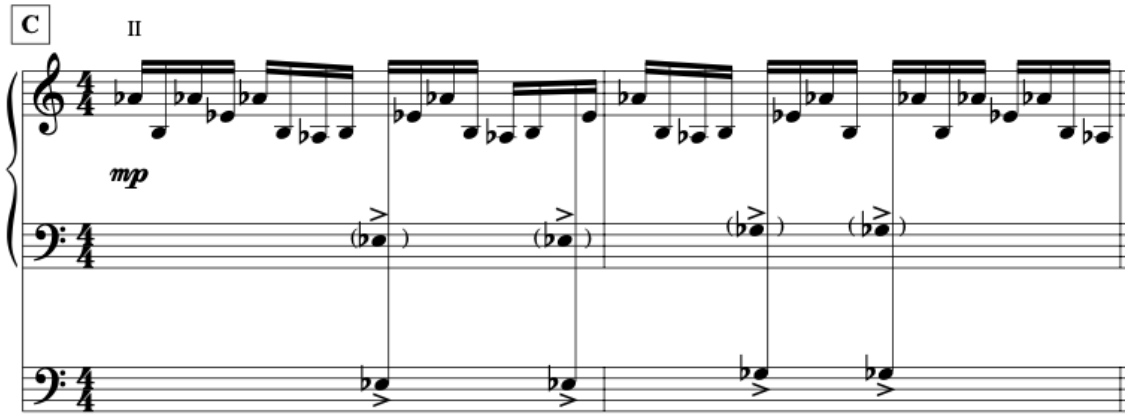
Section B consists of another triplet figuration and features some offbeat rhythms that can be difficult to time correctly. This particular section requires plenty of slow practice to learn the sequence of notes correctly. Once the section can be played slowly with no mistakes, gradually speed it up and repeat until there are no mistakes at the new speed. Work in this manner up to full speed. The opening two bars of this section, while written in the left hand stave, should be divided between the hands (example 4.2.24. The left hand is marked in orange and right hand in blue).

Example 4.2.24: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 27-30



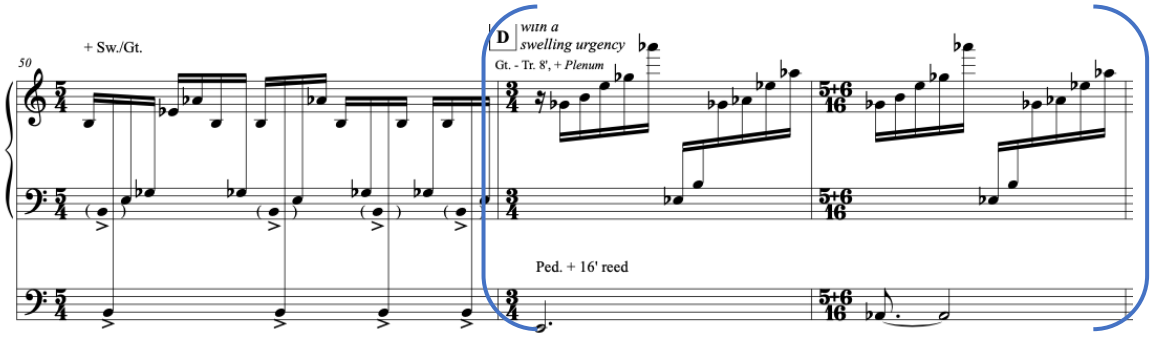
Section C features moving semiquavers that contain offbeat accents, which can be played in both manuals and pedal for a particularly idiosyncratic effect. This should again be practised slowly and then worked up to full speed (example 4.2.25).

Example 4.2.25: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 41-42

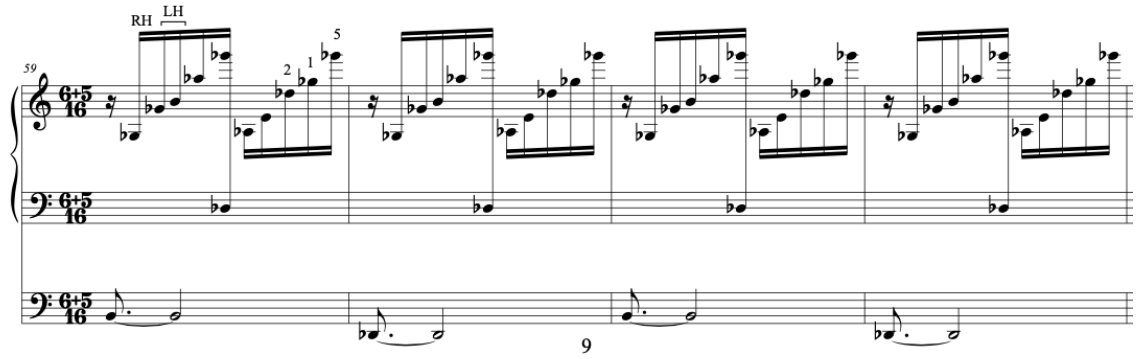


Section D contains busy manual figurations within changing time signatures (example 4.2.26). At full pace, these figurations are moving very quickly so it can be best to memorise these patterns. The figurations change from bars 59-62 (example 4.2.27), presenting a new pattern that is most successfully played by crossing the hands. Again, it is best to memorise this pattern so the organist can shift from one pattern to the next without stopping or faltering.

Example 4.2.26: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 50-52

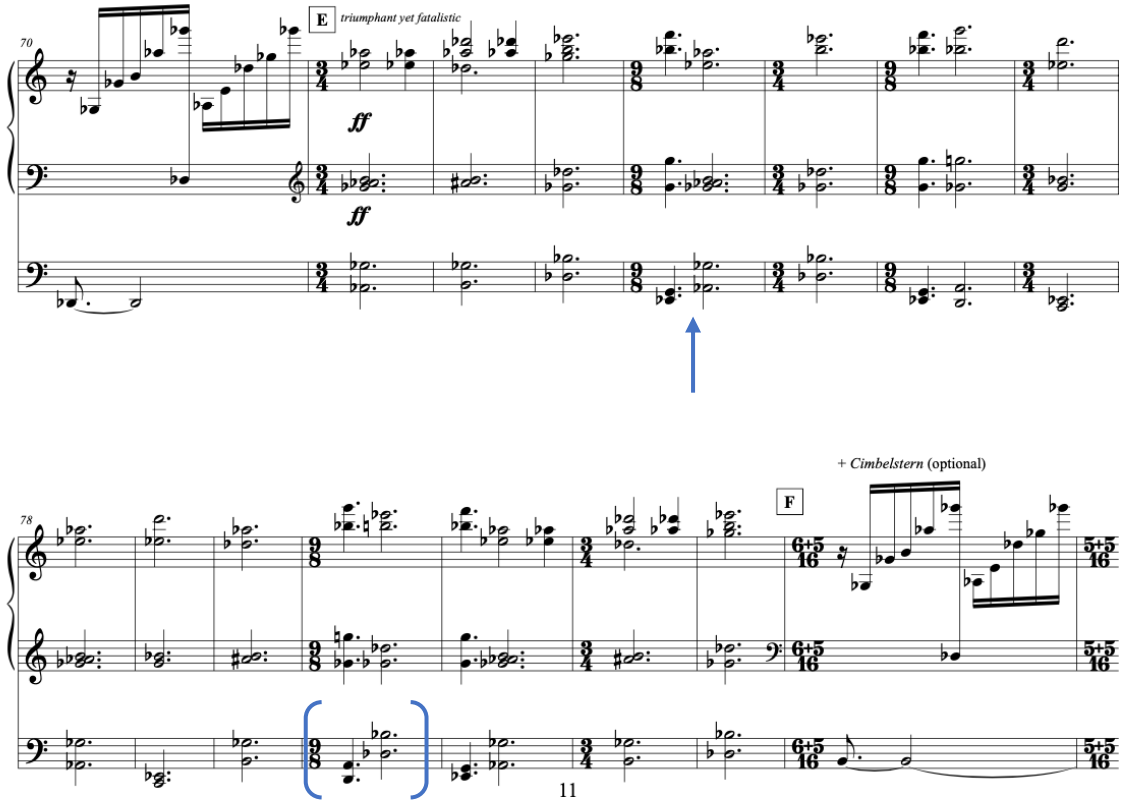


Example 4.2.27: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 59-62



Section E involves a dramatic change to chordal playing, combined with double pedalling. The structure of these chords can take some time to learn and slow practice of each individual part is once again required. Practising the pedal line on its own is essential to ascertain the best choice of pedalling and to cover some of the larger jumps, for example, from bar 73-74 and bar 81 (example 4.2.28). Once the manual chords are familiar, separate hand practice with the pedal line should be covered, before slowly putting all parts together and working it up to speed.

Example 4.2.28: Jonathan Nangle, *Toccata L'homme armé*, Bars 70-85



Section F sees a return to the familiar figurations from the latter half of section D. The final challenge of this work once each section has been learnt, is creating a flow that does not become interrupted when moving between these sections.

Muscle memory is an essential element of this piece, an aspect that is shared with *2019.7* by Sebastian Adams. Once the performer has settled into a pattern, the music changes rapidly to something completely different and then, once again, lulls the performer into a somewhat hypnotic state in another pattern before shifting and changing again. This trait is mesmerising to both performer and listener. The majority of the patterns within this work are flowing in texture, consisting predominantly of either triplets or semiquavers. The sudden jarring change to the chordal writing of section E literally stops the music in its tracks in order to proclaim the opening of the

L'homme armé melody, which appears in the higher register of the organ before vanishing and submerging into the proceeding chords. The return to the flowing material of section F feels like a fitting ending to this work and creates a strong sense of unity.

Practising the links from the end of one section into the beginning of the next is crucial in order to achieve a flow throughout the work, particularly from the end of section D into the chords of section E. This abrupt change can catch out the performer and impede a safe landing on the first chord of section E which contains the melody note of *L'homme armé*. Once these transitions have been mastered, the full architecture of the piece becomes apparent to listener and performer.

4.3 *The Secret Rose*

> Dedicated to his art, Eric Sweeney, who died on 21 July, aged 72, was an Irish musician who rose to international prominence. Besides being a leading organist, he was a distinguished composer, academic, and choral conductor. He helped to mould the creative personalities of many of Ireland's leading practitioners, and brought countless vocal ensembles to a level of excellence that had few equals … A chorister, together with his brother Peter, at St Patrick's Cathedral, Eric received his first organ lessons there from Sidney Greig. He refined his technique further with Flor Peeters in Belgium and at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, in Siena, with Fernando Germani. Having studied at Trinity College, Dublin, subsequently returning there as a lecturer, Sweeney also taught at the Conservatory of Music. From 1981 until 2010, he served as a senior lecturer at Waterford Institute of Technology … For 27 years, when organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford, he maintained a committed and consistent vocal ensemble whose resources he came to use with much imagination and skill … It was this style that so often pervaded his output for the organ, not least "The Widening Gyre", a nine-minute moto perpetuo that builds to a brilliant toccata-like finale, very much in the manner of his mentor Peeters. This, like many of his pieces, not least the hugely challenging Introduction and Passacaglia, was created for and championed by his late brother, Peter, Organist of Christ Cathedral, Dublin. Peter also gave the first performance of "Le Cercle de Lumière",

> inspired by the corona seen during a solar eclipse, as well as "The Secret Rose", minimalism garnished with a French dressing.[11]

One of the most prolific Irish composers, as evidenced from the CMC list (Appendix A)**,** Eric Sweeney wrote extensively for organ throughout his career. Both Eric and his brother Peter were renowned Irish organists who did much to enhance both the repertoire and the perception of the instrument. Peter Sweeney was an extremely energetic and flamboyant performer who brought a vivaciousness to his organ performances that was incredibly infectious. A highly skilled musician, Peter was able to exhibit the full capacity of the organ to a wide audience, throughout Ireland and the world. He once said that 'organists are the most unappreciated of musicians … but the local organist is often acknowledged by professional musicians as their earliest source of inspiration',[12] and it is widely acknowledged that his comedic personality did much to alleviate the perceived seriousness of the organ. Eric Sweeney, while also a skilled organist, focused heavily on composition, producing an expansive catalogue of music that ranges from choral and orchestral to solo instrumental. *The Secret Rose* was composed for solo organ in 2002. Through the minimalist style with which Sweeney became associated, this work captures the reflective, serene side of the organ. The title itself conjures up an idea of delicacy and intimacy, and the compositional writing very much embodies this. The registration suggested for this work (example 4.3.1) consists of a flute stop on the Great, a soft 8' stop on the Swell and a 16' in the pedal coupled through to the Swell. This leaves the organist with some choice as to what particular 8' sound he/she would like to have on the Swell. To contrast against the Great 8' flute, the organist could choose a string stop, such as a salicional 8', to add a change of colour and

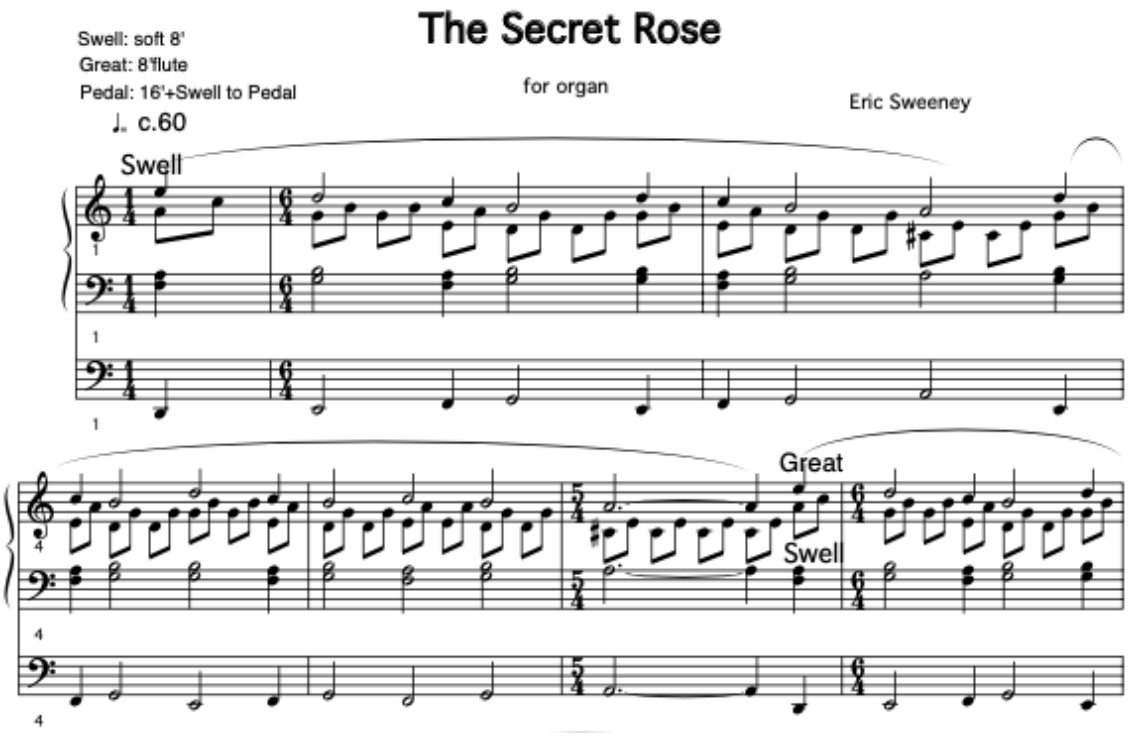
[11] Kenneth Shenton, 'Obituary: Eric Sweeney', <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/4-september/gazette/obituaries/obituary-eric-sweeney> [accessed 3 May 2021].
[12] The Irish Times, 'Gifted musician, flamboyant recitalist and enthusiastic music teacher', <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/gifted-musician-flamboyant-recitalist-and-enthusiastic-music-teacher-1.3459812> [accessed 3 May 2021].

texture. The overall dynamic of the work does not extend beyond or vary from this opening registration; a simplistic sound to capture the simplicity of this secret rose.

Example 4.3.1: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Opening registration

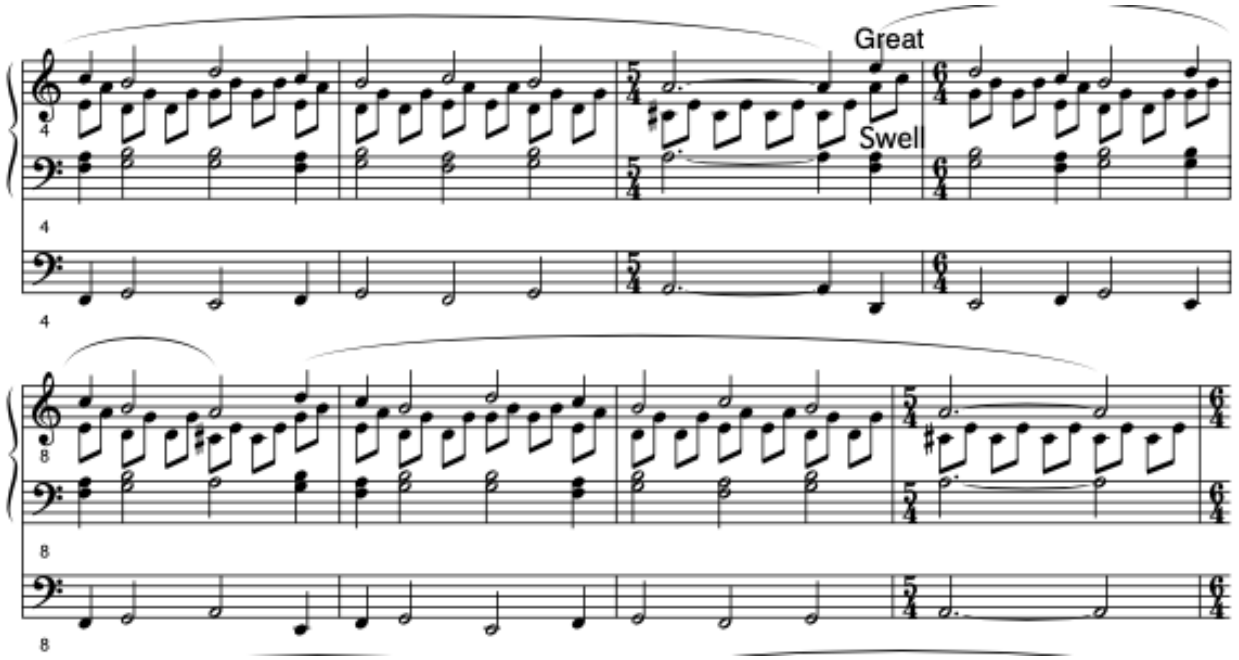
The tonal centre of *The Secret Rose* is ambiguous, which builds on the feeling of unpredictability throughout the work. The piece opens with both hands playing on the Swell manual, accompanied by a single pedal line which mirrors the rhythm of the upper melodic line of the right hand while moving in contrary motion (example 4.3.2). The lower part of the right hand plays continuous quavers which help to create a sense of movement in this piece while also adding to the overall harmonic structure.

Example 4.3.2: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 1-7



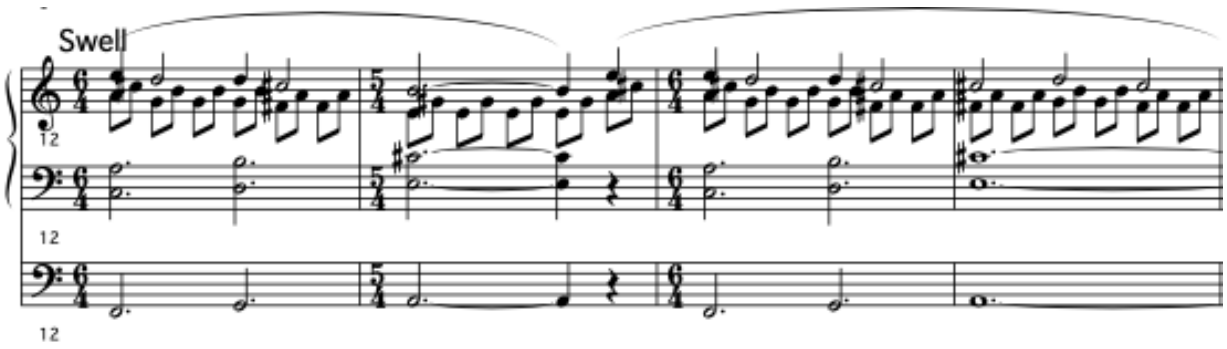
There are a few points of interest worth noting in these opening bars. Interestingly, instead of framing the opening chord as an upbeat, it is depicted as a full bar in itself. This idea permeates the whole work and many of the phrases begin at the end of a previous bar. This trait, combined with the changing time signatures, prevents the music from becoming static and predictable. Dotted throughout the work are bars with a more balanced rhythm (for example, bar 5) which provide a momentary sense of regularity and space and create the feel of a *meno mosso*. After this introduction to the opening 6 bar theme, the music is repeated, this time with the right hand playing on the Great, which increases the volume of the melody line. The pedal line is an exact repeat of the opening bars, rhythmically mirroring this upper melody (example 4.3.3).

Example 4.3.3: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 4-11



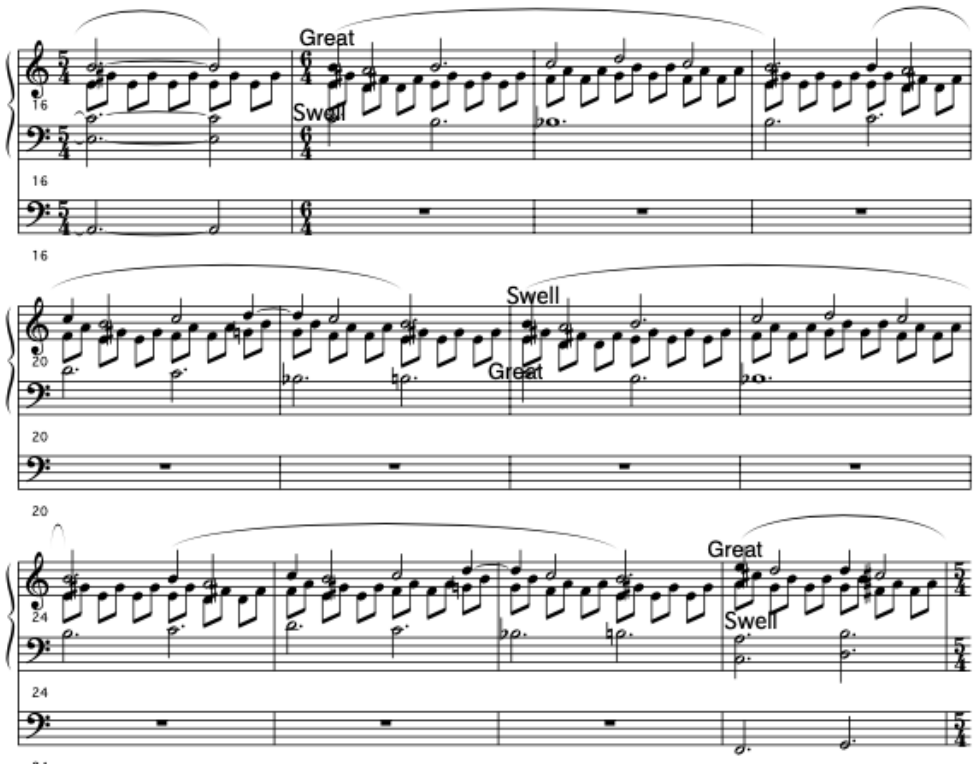
Shifting time signatures are a feature of this work and the opening page alone sees the music move through 1/4, 6/4, 5/4, 6/4, 5/4, 6/5, 5/4, 6/4. While it can seem as if the music is quite simplistic in nature, the shifting time signatures add a sense of uncertainty, for both performer and listener. Bar 12 sees the pedal line depart from mirroring the melody line and the harmonic language diversifies, not settling on one particular harmony for too long (example 4.3.4). Both hands also return to playing on the Swell so there is a change in volume at this point as well.

Example 4.3.4: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 12-15



The texture reduces from bars 17-26 with the pedal line dropping out while the harmonic language continues to develop and fluctuate. Sweeney continues to experiment with the sound as the piece continues by swapping between the manuals. This technique of swapping manuals can utilise alternate pipes from different parts of the organ, and creates a very unique layering effect that once again helps to keep the attention of the listener (example 4.3.5).

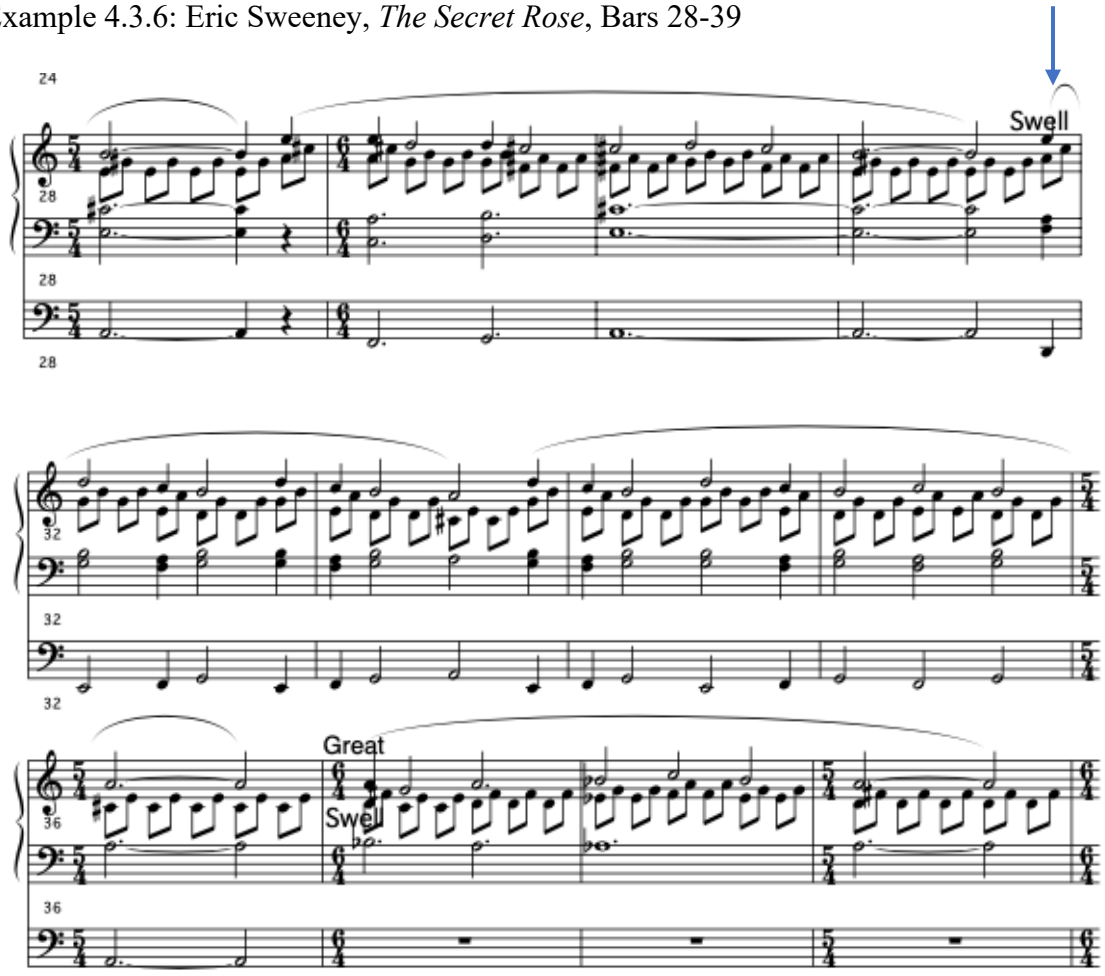
Example 4.3.5: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 16-27



The end of bar 31 sees a return of the opening theme, with the pedal once again mirroring the upper melody line. After the harmonic uncertainty of the middle section, this comes as a welcome return. The theme is only played on the Swell this time, instead of the Swell followed by the Great, as it was in the beginning. Instead, the statement of the theme is now followed by a shorter

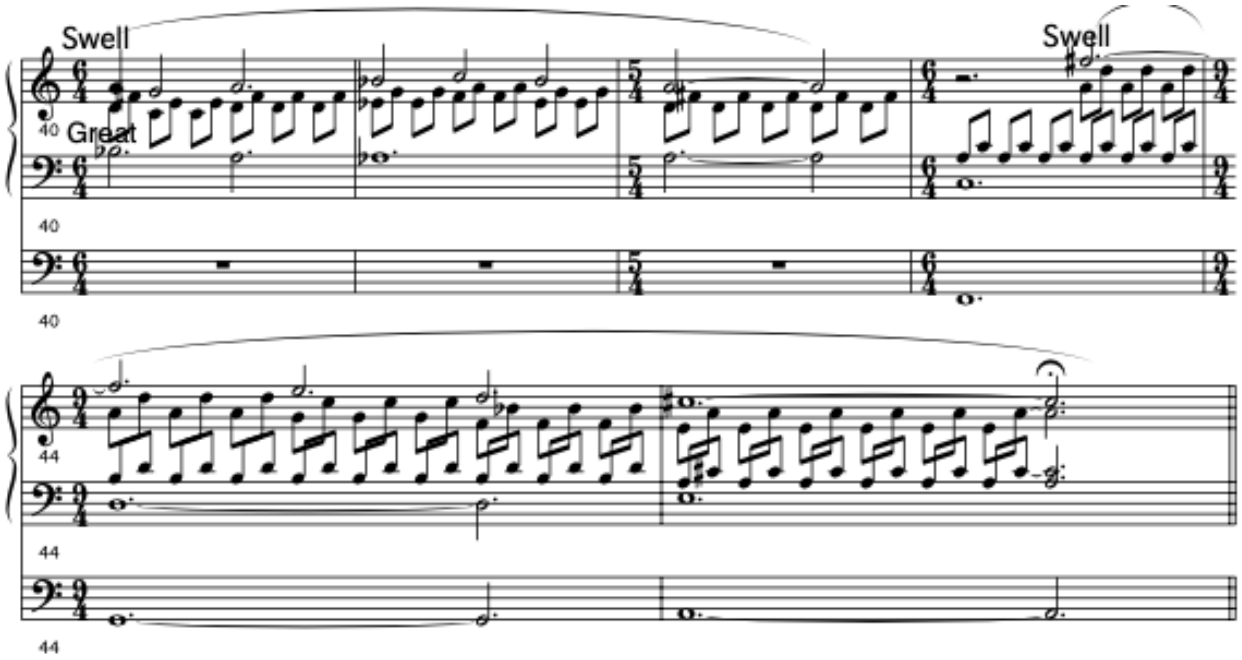
passage of material (bars 37-42) based on the middle section (bars 17-26), where Sweeney once again alternates and swaps the hands (example 4.3.6).

Example 4.3.6: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 28-39



The shifting time signatures continue until the end of the work where Sweeney changes to 9/4 for the final two bars, adding a sense of elongation and finality. The harmonies also continue to change, before finally settling on the chord of A major in the last bar (example 4.3.7).

Example 4.3.7: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 40-45



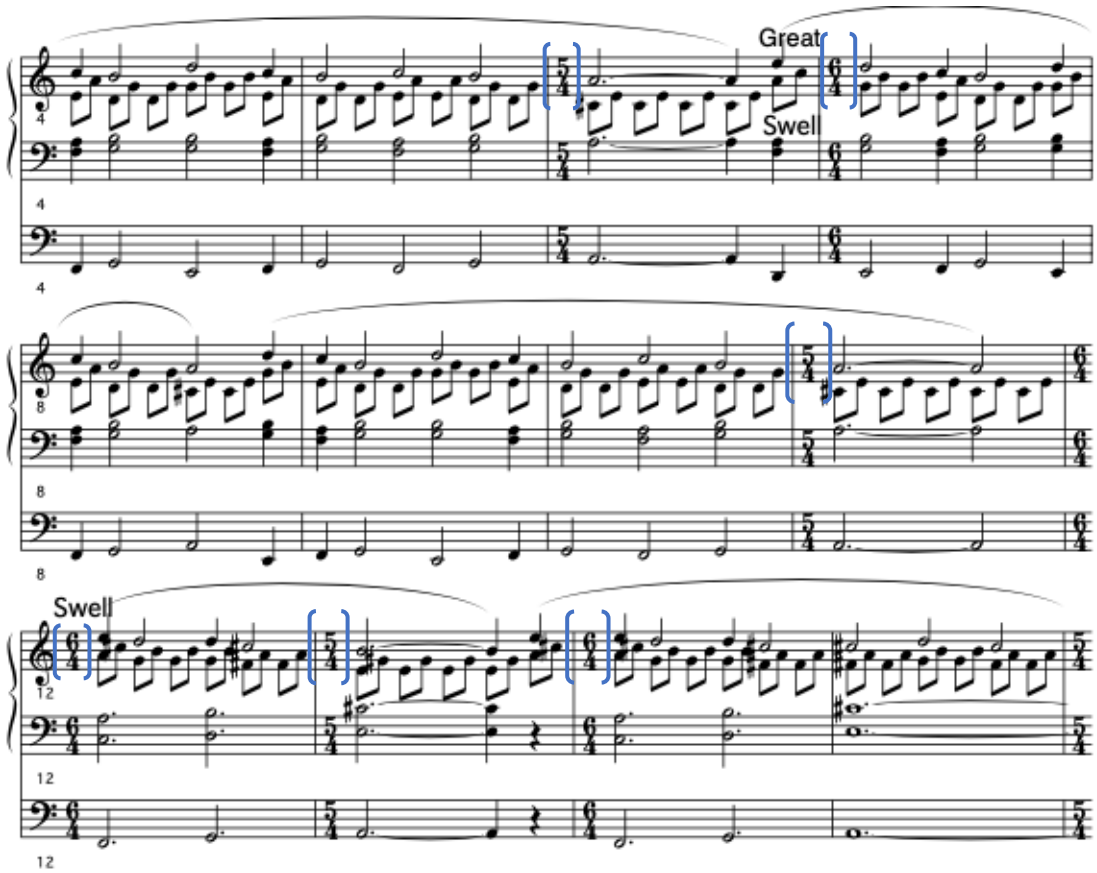
In *The Secret Rose*, Eric Sweeney manages to combine the uncertain, reflected through the changing time signatures and harmonic language, with the familiar, which he captures through minimalist registration and compositional writing. The minimalist nature of this composition brings to mind another contemporary composer for organ, Toon Hagen (1959). Hagen who hails from the Netherlands, is active as a concert organist, has a private organ practice and works as a composer of organ and church music. He self-publishes his compositions and is organist at the Grote of Sint-Michaëlskerk in Zwolle.[13] His work *Shalom* (1998) for solo organ employs a similar use of minimalist writing. However, the predominant atmosphere of this work is of an ethereal nature, and is, to this writer, reminiscent of another great organ work, *Le jardin suspendu* (1934) by Jehan Alain (1911-1940).

[13] Toon Hagen, 'Biography', <https://www.toonhagen.nl/biografie/> [accessed 22 January 2022].

Preparation notes

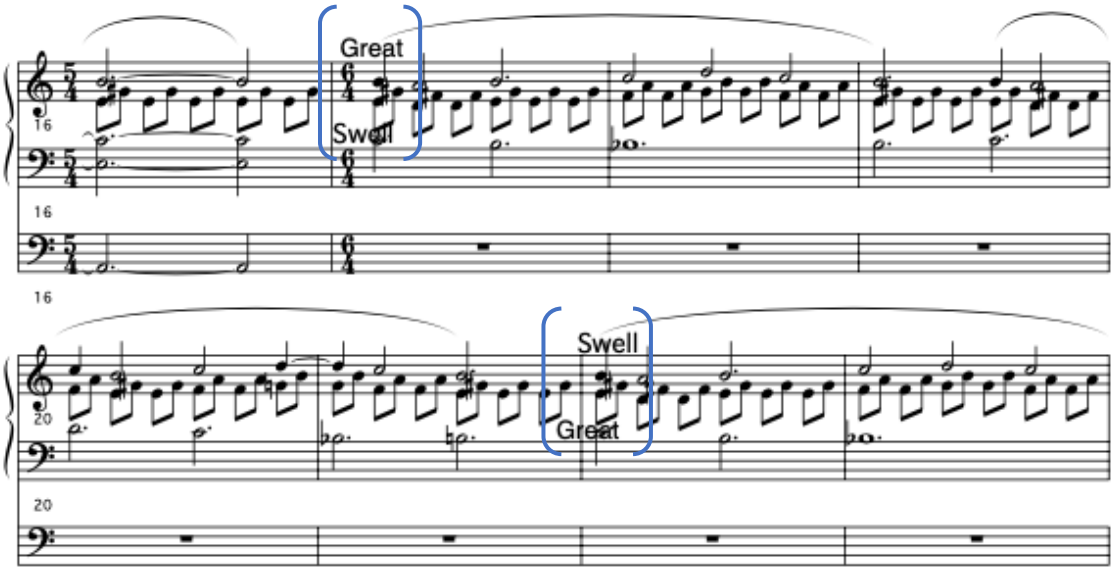
It would be easy to assume that *The Secret Rose* is a work that could be sightread by an organist and therefore requires little preparation, but in order to realise a successful performance of this piece some initial groundwork is important. Firstly, the changing time signatures need to be considered and highlighted (example 4.3.8). With such regularly shifting signatures it can be easy to forget how many beats are in a bar and, when combined with the minimalist style of writing, a sense of uncertainty can begin to creep in. It can also inhibit the overall flow of the piece as the organist becomes too engrossed in the inner details instead of the outer structure. Writing in where the main beats fall in any uncertain bars that appear after an initial playthrough would be helpful and would prevent any further repetitions of incorrect counting.

Example 4.3.8: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 4-15



Leaving out the upper melody line and playing though the accompaniment gives a grounding in the harmonic language as well as strengthening the time signature shifts. Having done that a few times, singing the melody line while playing everything else will help with the flow and structure of the piece. Any changes of manual need to be practised to guarantee a smooth transition that does not interrupt the flow of this compositional writing (example 4.3.9).

Example 4.3.9: Eric Sweeney, *The Secret Rose*, Bars 16-23



Finally, a sense of forward momentum is necessary throughout this work so that listener and performer do not become disengaged.

4.4 *Karanfilo Mome*

Another work that shows the softer, more reflective side of the organ, *Karanfilo Mome* was written by Fergus Johnston in 2007.

> Dr. Fergus Johnston (1959-) is an Irish-born composer. He graduated from Trinity College Dublin with an Honours degree in Music in 1982. In 1999 he completed a Masters Degree in Music and Media Technology at TCD (1999), and in 2011 he received a PhD from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. As a result of his contribution to Irish culture he was elected to membership of Aosdána, Ireland's state-supported artistic academy, in 1992, and was a board member of the National Concert Hall, Dublin from 1996 until 2001. He has been active as a composer since 1981, and his works have been widely performed both in Ireland and abroad … He has been lecturer in composition in the School of Music in Trinity College Dublin for a number of periods. He divides his time between Dublin, Ireland, and Ruse, Bulgaria.[14]

Karanfilo Mome, or Carnation Girl, was originally arranged by Johnston for accordion, violin, bass and clarinet. It was the second of three arranged pieces of Bulgarian Folk Music, commissioned by RTÉ Lyric FM,[15] which he later arranged for organ and titled *Three Bulgarian Dances.* The titles of all three works are *Daichovo, Karanfilo Mome* and *Malka Mama.* This work brings two interesting elements to the fore: arrangements or transcriptions for the organ, and the particular traits and characteristics of Bulgarian folk music which Johnston adapts for organ. Transcriptions are another sphere in which it is possible to portray the organ in a contemporary manner while exploring the sound world available at each particular instrument. While the canon of music written for the organ is extensive and varied, transcriptions offer another opportunity to bring this instrument to the awareness of other musicians and a wider audience.

> In the heyday of organ transcriptions in the 1920s, comparatively infrequent opportunities to hear live orchestral performances and primitive recording capabilities fostered the idea of transcription of orchestral music to the organ (often performed in municipal settings) as a satisfying alternative to "the real thing" … In his excellent treatise of 1922, *The Art of Transcribing for the Organ,* Herbert Ellingford makes a case for

[14] 'Fergus Johnston', <https://www.babelscores.com/FergusJohnston> [accessed 3 May 2021].
[15] Fergus Johnston, 'Karanfilo Mome', <https://soundcloud.com/fergusjohnston/2-karanfilo-mome?in=fergusjohnston/sets/3-bulgarian-pieces> [accessed 6 May 2021].

> a different goal: "The chief aim should be to endeavour to make that [music] which is arranged for the organ sound as though it had originally been written for it."[16]

This description of the 'heyday of organ transcriptions' refers back to the tradition of theatre and cinema organs and the role they played in popularising the organ with the public.[17] Seen outside of a sacred setting, the use of these organs to play orchestral reductions or transcriptions very much helped to change the perception of the organ in society at the time. However, with the decline in this tradition, this particular facet of organ performance was lost over time. The re-emergence of organ transcriptions can only serve to once again popularise the instrument within society.

In the case of this work, *Karanfilo Mome*, Johnston has taken an arrangement of a Bulgarian folk melody, which he originally wrote for a combination of instruments, and transcribed it for organ. This piece provides the organist with the opportunity to explore the registrational colours that might suit this work, according to the options available on each particular organ, having only heard the previous arrangement for accordion, violin, bass and clarinet. Some of the characteristics of Bulgarian folk music are also evident in this work. 'In the Bulgarian folk music are well represented also the chromatic modal structures, which include an augmented second … A typical phenomenon in the Bulgarian musical folk art is the non-measured melody, which has no metric pulsation and the rhythmic ratios are approximately fulfilled.'[18]

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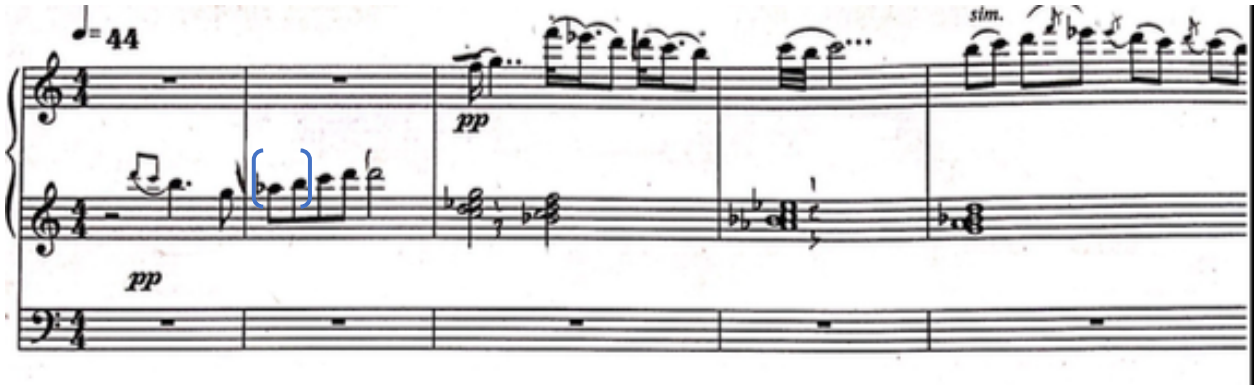
[16] Peter Sykes, forward to *The Planets, Op.32 by Gustav Holst,* transcribed for organ by Peter Sykes (Wayne Leupold Editions, 1998).
[17] See chapter one, page 20.
[18] Penka Pencheva Mincheva, 'Characteristics of Bulgarian folk music', *International Journal of Literature and Arts*, 2 (2014), 40.

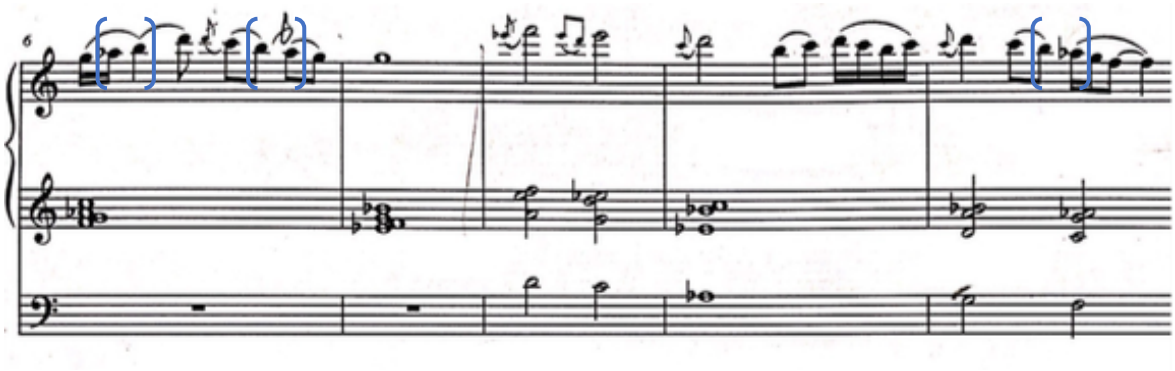
The interval of an augmented second pervades throughout the melodic line of this piece and it is this feature which really captures the folk song quality. The augmented second features in the opening two introductory bars as well as throughout the melodic line which is played by the right hand (example 4.4.1).

Example 4.4.1: Fergus Johnston, *Karanfilo Mome*, Bars 1-5



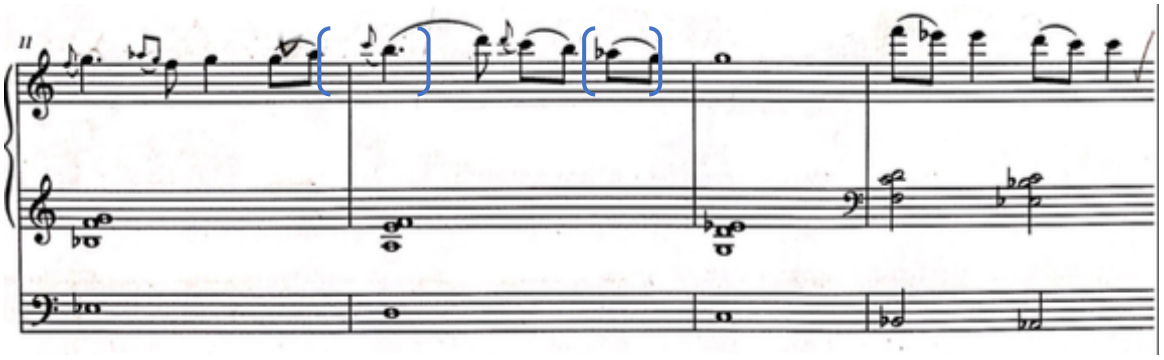
The opening two bars act as an introduction to the melodic line before it is taken over by the right hand in bar 3. Indeed, it would be very plausible to play these opening two bars with the right hand for continuity. There are no registrational suggestions provided by the composer as again, this can differ from organ to organ, so the type of solo sound is left to the taste of the organist, but must remain within the notated dynamic marking of *pp*. While this work does have a time signature and bar lines, the melodic line is very free in style, achieved through the combination of appoggiaturas, acciaccaturas and grace notes. These elements, combined with the rhythms notated by Johnston, help to achieve the 'non-measured' feel to the melodic line. From bar 3, the left hand plays a chordal accompanying role until the closing bars of the work. The pedal line which enters for the first time in bar 8, serves to add a further bass to this accompaniment as the work develops (example 4.4.2).

Example 4.4.2: Fergus Johnston, *Karanfilo Mome*, Bars 6-10



The haunting quality of this work is captured by the sparsity of the accompaniment combined with the intervallic and ornamental architecture of the melody line. The accompaniment, played by the left hand and pedals, offers harmonic depth and a sense of rhythmic stability through minim and semibreve chords, which conversely allows the melody line to have a sense of freedom and irregularity. The melody line is set in a high register throughout, with some bars having far less movement than others, for example bar 7. These bars allow the harmonies to resonate without the distraction of the melody line. From bar 8 where the pedal enters, both the left hand accompaniment and the pedal line gradually move lower and lower (example 4.4.3).

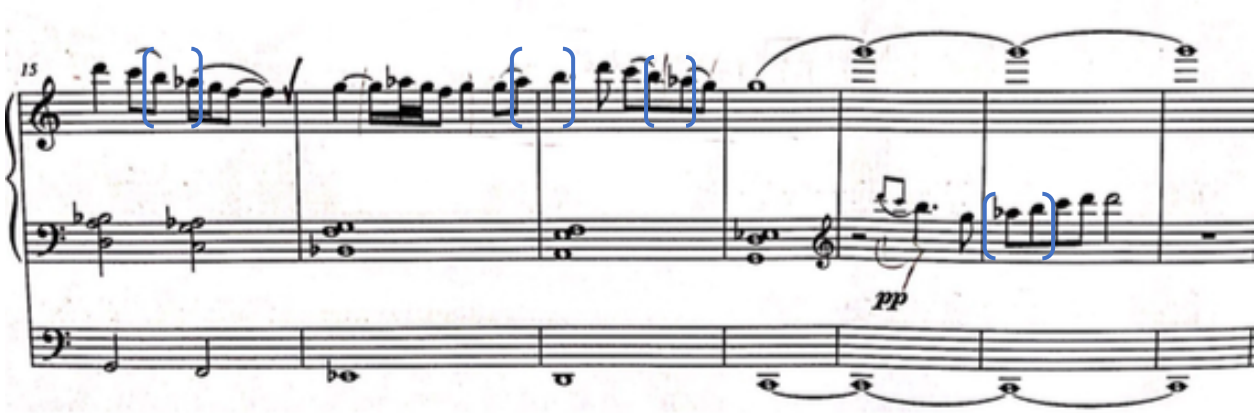
Example 4.4.3: Fergus Johnston, *Karanfilo Mome*, Bars 11-14



Bar 13, which contains the same melody note as bar 7, is now accompanied by different harmonies which create a new and different quality. The accompaniment continues to move

lower while conversely, the melody line moves towards the highest point of the whole work (example 4.4.4).

Example 4.4.4: Fergus Johnston, *Karanfilo Mome*, Bars 15-21



The work finishes with an exact statement of the opening two bars, resulting in a sense of symmetry and completion. The combination of all of these features results in a singular work ideally suited to the organ.

Johnston gives some background information on the composition of this work:

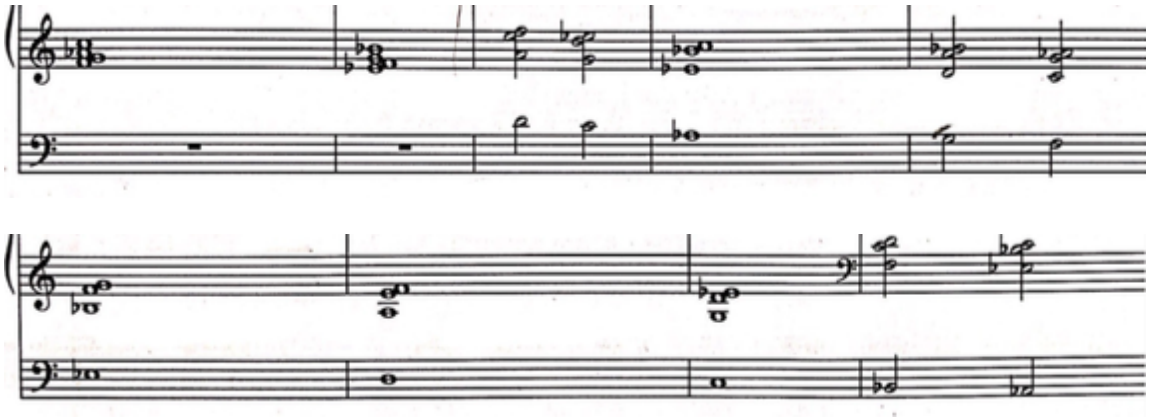
> The first thing you need to know is that Karanfilo Mome is not an original composition, but an arrangement of a Bulgarian folksong. I have a collection of these. I arranged the first one for violinist Yosif Radianov and pianist Zornitsa Damianova, and subsequently orchestrated it for small ensemble of doublebass, accordion, violin and percussion for an RTÉ LyricFM commission. The Organ arrangement came after that - it's an arrangement of an arrangement of an arrangement of a bulgarian folksong.
>
> Secondly, it is just one of three pieces arranged for organ, the other two being a Daichovo dance, and another song, Malko Mome … there was no compositional process, but a simple process of arranging the piece for the organ in a way which best reflected the arrangements for the previous ensembles. The original

arrangements were for a thin, high, and transparent slow cascade of one harmonic identity. This is framed at each end by an inversion of a fragment of the original folk melody.[19]

Preparation Notes

Paradoxically, one way to help achieve the freedom of the melody line in this work, is to solidify the regularity of the accompaniment. Practising the left hand chords on their own is advisable for two reasons: to fully understand the structure of each chord so that there will be no delay moving from one to the next, and to ground the performer in the inner tactus of this work. Therefore spending time on just the left hand and pedal line is advised (example 4.4.5).

Example 4.4.5: Fergus Johnston, *Karanfilo Mome*, Left hand and pedals only, Bars 6-14

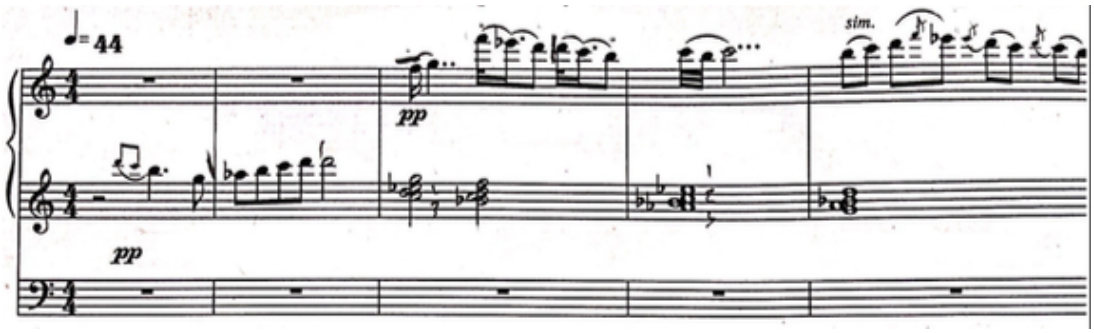


Once this accompaniment has become familiar to the organist, the shaping of the melody line can be considered. If possible, singing through the right hand melody while playing the accompaniment would help with ideas for shaping and rubato, listening to the ways in which the voice naturally articulates and where it takes time. This also helps with gaining a rhythmical understanding of the melody line without having the 'distraction' of having to play the notes.

[19] In conversation with Fergus Johnston.

Fingering that helps with the desired shaping of this melodic line, for example the pairings in bar 5 and 6, can then be chosen (example 4.4.6).

Example 4.4.6: Fergus Johnston, *Karanfilo Mome*, Bars 1-5



Listening to the previous arrangement of this work for small ensemble also helps the performer to step away from the organ and consider how another instrument would shape this melody line. The organist must then choose a suitable registration for this melody line that would capture its haunting qualities without becoming too overpowering for the *pp* dynamic suggestion. Recording different registrations and listening back for balance between the accompaniment and melody line would be advised here.

4.5 *2019.7*

> Sebastian Adams (b. 1991) is an Irish composer, performer and artistic director with wide-ranging interests that include experimental text pieces, early music and artificial intelligence.
>
> Recent commissions include the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Music Network, both RTÉ orchestras, and the Beckett Chamber Music and East Cork Early Music festivals. His music is performed regularly by leading Irish musicians … He was Composer in Residence for RTÉ lyric fm in 2016/17. In 2017 he represented Ireland in the International Rostrum of Composers.
>
> A significant aspect of Sebastian's creative output is as an organiser, curator and advocate of new music. His ensemble Kirkos has become a leading light of the Irish scene, providing a vital arena for the most exciting young composers in the country and exploring the gamut of the most experimental and striking music written in our time. Projects include Dublin's first Fluxus Happening, multi-sensory concerts in total darkness, and

> many Irish premieres of important international works. He is also Co-director of Fishamble Sinfonia, specializing in baroque and early classic repertoire, and former Chair of the Irish Composers Collective. He has organised the premieres of well over 400 pieces … Sebastian studied in Dublin (Kevin O'Connell & Jonathan Nangle) and Vienna (Karlheinz Essl). His most recent viola teacher was Simon Aspell (The Vanbrugh).[20]

Sebastian Adams's piece is entitled 2019.7 because it was his seventh composition in the year 2019. At the beginning of the score some performance notes are given:

> Diamond noteheads indicate notes played in time-based tempo (indicated in seconds).
>
> These chords should generally be played with a "fascinating", pedal-heavy sound, and each time a chord like this appears a new sound should be found. Some suggestions are given in the score, but the player should feel free to ignore and use their imagination. The notes in these chords can also be modified as long as the bass note is kept.
>
> The basic structure of the piece pits the breathless overtone arpeggios (etc.) against gradually shorter, ascending diamond-note chords. The structural integrity of the piece relies on the listener being aware of this A/B alternation–hence the directions above.
>
> The breathless material should have a gleaming sound, with changes of registration allowed but mostly not specified.

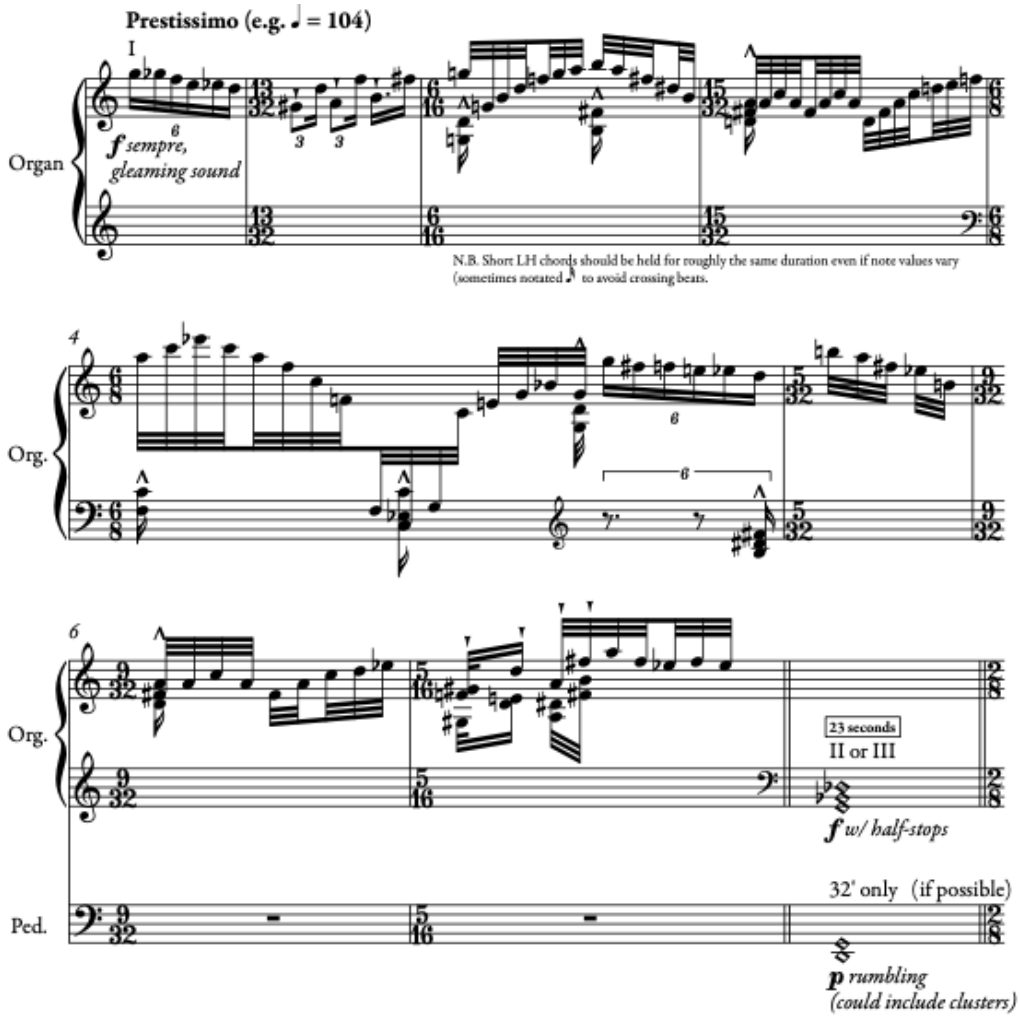
When first presented with this work, it can seem somewhat daunting. There is a multitude of notes on each page and it can be difficult to know where to begin. The structure of the piece is not easily identifiable until the whole work can be played. The secret to unlocking this work is to take it a section at a time, using the longer diamond notehead chords as a marker for each new section. Once these sections can then be pieced together, a true understanding of the work emerges.

There are various motifs that appear throughout this piece and one of the challenges presented is how these motifs are mixed and rearranged. It is the recurrence of these motifs that provides this

[20] Sebastian Adams, 'Bio', <https://irishcomposerscollective.com/composers/sebastian-adams> [accessed 19 April 2021].

work with a sense of unity, similar to *Toccata L'homme armé*. The opening page of the score presents the majority of these motifs which then reappear throughout the rest of the work (example 4.5.1)

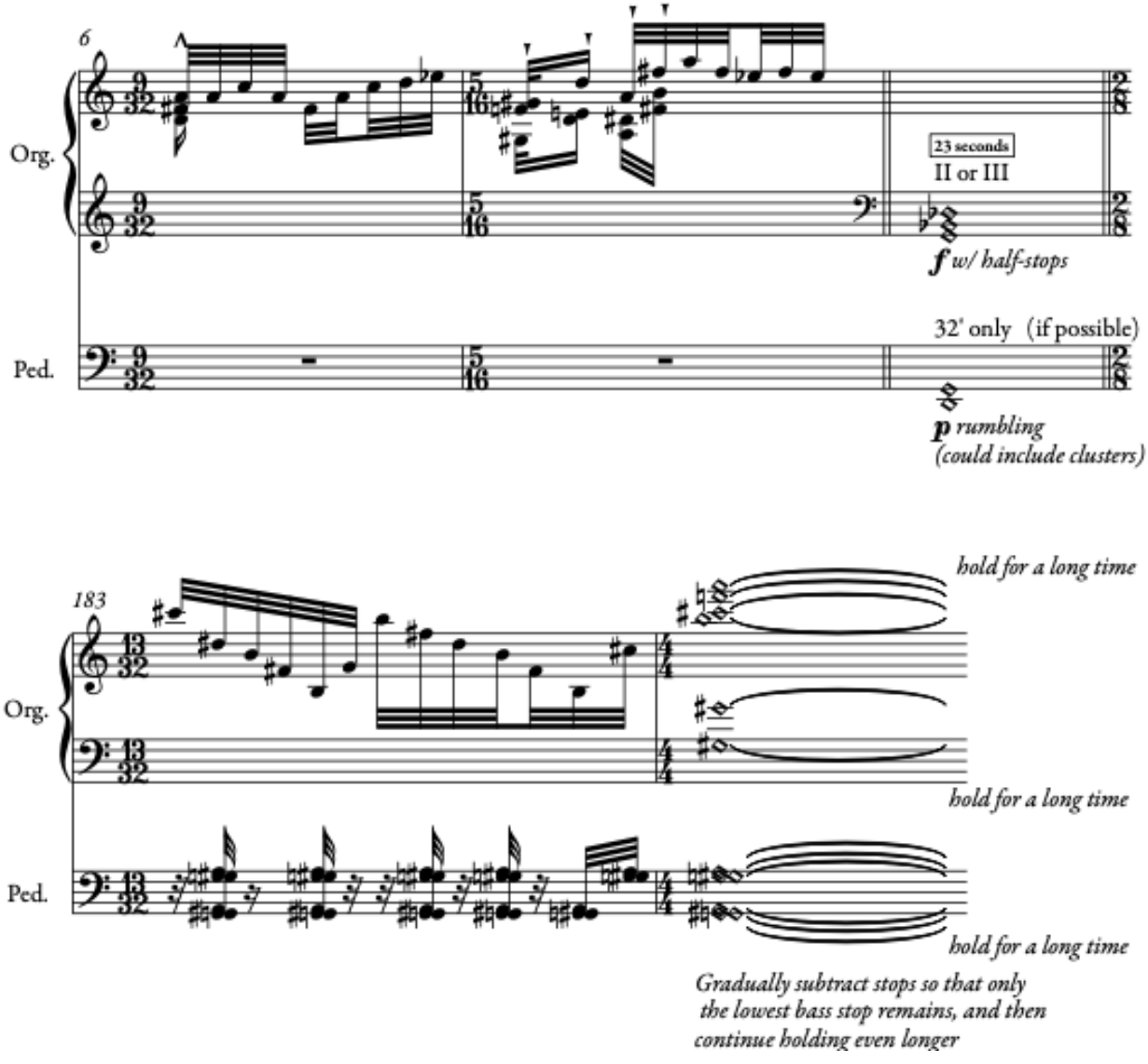
Example 4.5.1: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 1-8



Each bar presents an idea that is then developed and explored throughout *2019.7*. Even within this first page there is some repetition of ideas. The opening sextuplet can be seen again towards the end of bar 4 and it can be challenging to ensure that the sextuplet of bar 4 remains the same speed as it was in the opening, after settling into the demisemiquaver pattern of the intervening

bars. The latter half of bar 2 can again be seen in bar 5, with some subtle enharmonic changes, and is this time followed by the start of the same motif from bar 3 which develops into new material. The first diamond notehead chord of the work appears in bar 8 alongside various suggestions of extended techniques. Pedal clusters involve playing any combination of notes that can be played at once with the foot, similar to chord clusters on a keyboard that would be played with the hand. At 23 seconds, this is the longest timed chord of the work, until the final chord which does not have a specified timespan (example 4.5.2).

Example 4.5.2: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 6-8 and Bars 183-184

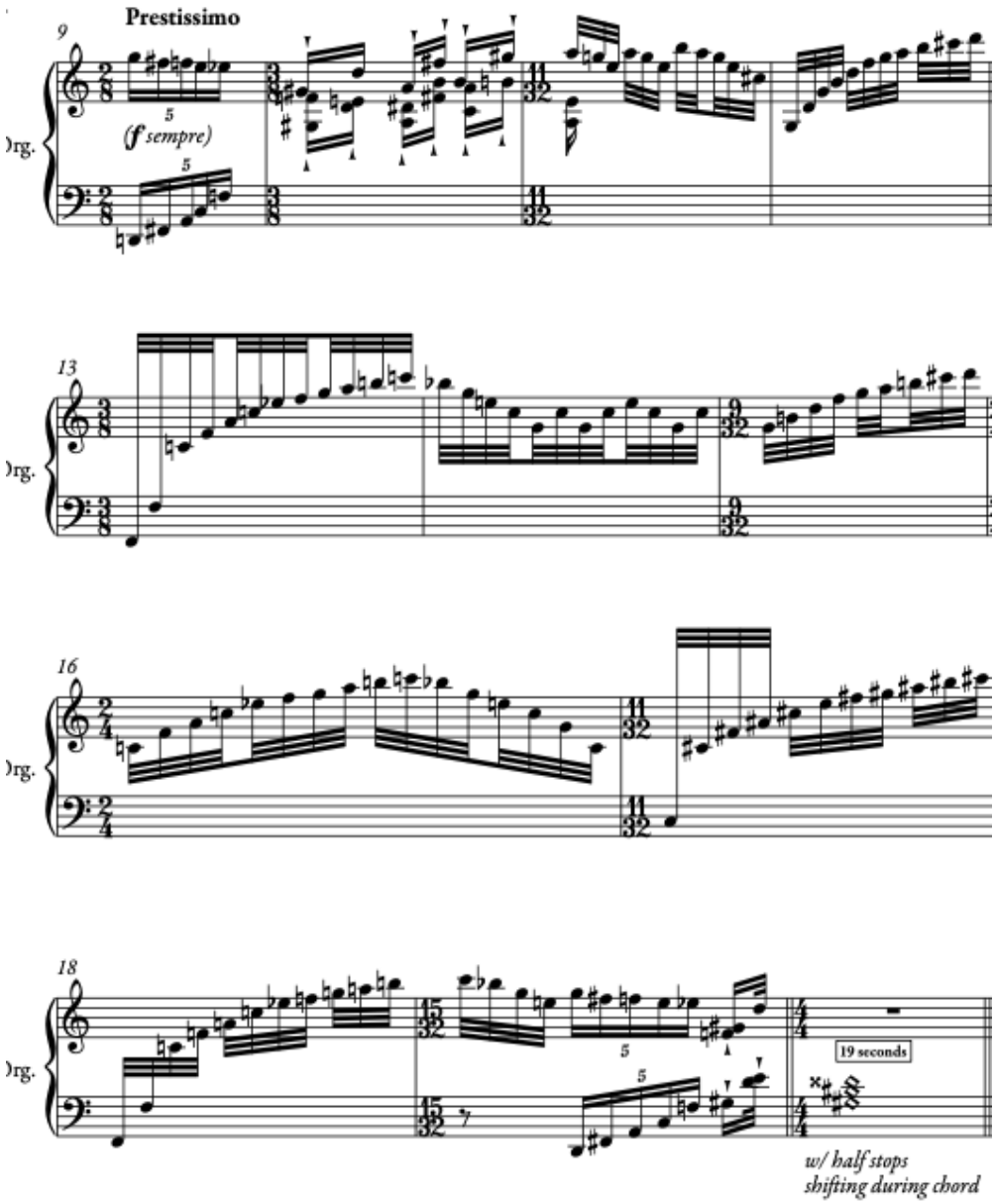


This first held chord can initially feel quite disconcerting to both performer and listener after having been introduced to the busyness of the opening seven bars, but the effect of stopping suddenly for this duration is a unique trait of this work. As the composer states at the beginning of the work, 'the basic structure of the piece pits the breathless overtone arpeggios (etc.) against gradually shorter, ascending diamond-note chords. The structural integrity of the piece relies on the listener being aware of the A/B alteration'.

All of the motifs and ideas introduced in these opening eight bars can be found throughout the entire work but rarely in the same form as played previously. It is this jumbling and mixing of material that presents one of the greatest challenges in this work. Muscle memory is an integral part of the approach to the learning of this composition. It can feel as if the player is really starting to progress with the piece once recognition of the motifs and patterns begins and muscle memory starts to take hold. However, this approach is challenged and explored through the juxtaposition of different thematic materials. Having become accustomed to one particular combination of motifs, Adams mixes and combines different ideas that had previously been used in a specific pattern. It can at times be frustrating but also intriguing to see how the composer reforms and expands these ideas. This idea can also be seen to a lesser extent in Nangle's work, but the sectional nature of *Toccata L'homme armé* makes the transitions between patterns easier. *2019.7* is far less sectional in nature meaning the motivic shifts are rapid and frequent.

Bars 9-20 (example 4.5.3) feature some of the motifs from the opening eight bars as well as some new running demisemiquaver figures.

Example 4.5.3: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 9-20

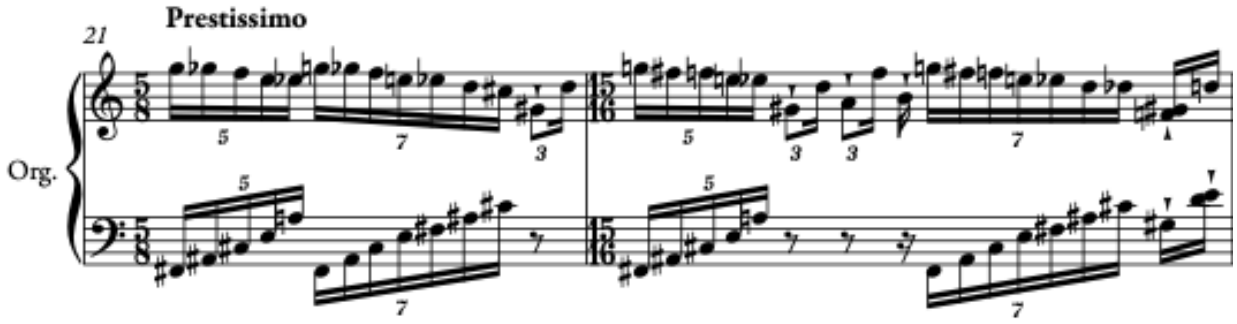


Bar 9 contains the opening sextuplet which is now a quintuplet with accompanying left hand. Bar 10 features the right hand motivic material of bar 2 but with changed rhythm and accompanying left hand. Bars 11-18 consist of fast-flowing demisemiquavers, which also feature some repetition (bar 13 and bar 18), before a return to the familiar in bar 19. Bar 20 contains another diamond notehead chord, for the slightly shorter duration of 19 seconds, which once again

utilises half-stops. The use of half-stops involves experimenting with the flow of air to the organ pipes. By not drawing the stops out fully, the flow of air to the pipes is restricted and what results is a very unique and sometimes eerie sound. Adams makes use of this technique in two places, bar 8 and bar 20, both near the beginning of this work, which excellently demonstrates one of the more diverse extended techniques available to the organist. It is also interesting to note that as these diamond notehead chords reduce in duration, they typically start to increase in texture and density.

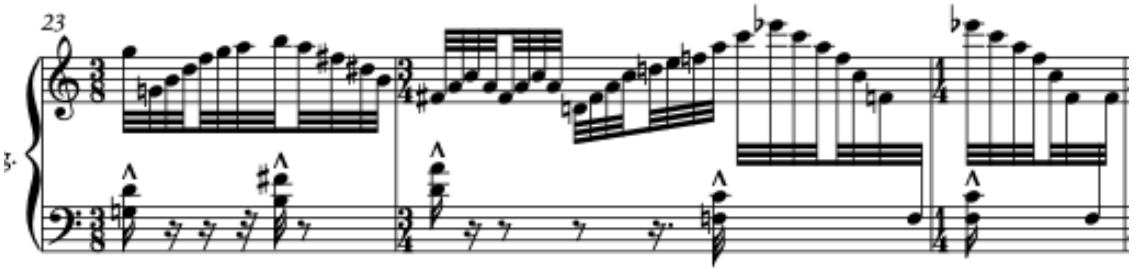
Bars 21 and 22 explore and expand the opening sextuplet motif, reworking it from a quintuplet to a septuplet and back again (example 4.5.4).

Example 4.5.4: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 21 and 22



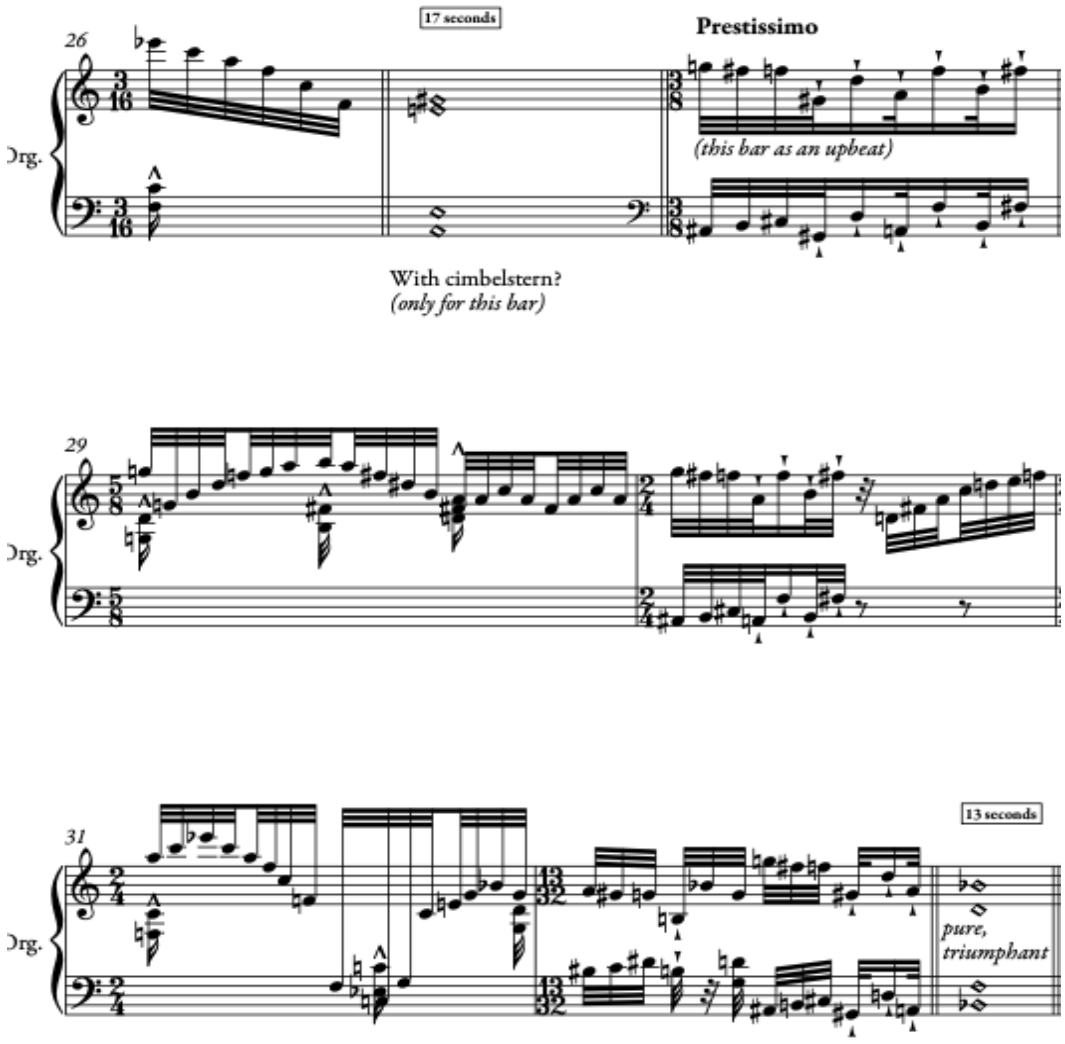
Bars 23 and 24 feature the same motives as the opening bars 2, 3 and 4 but it is now extended and developed, resulting in a sense of recognition which is then immediately questioned (example 4.5.5).

Example 4.5.5: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 23-25



The interweaving of these ideas continues throughout the opening pages. The diamond notehead chords provide the organist with some moments for pause but even during these, the performer has to remain alert to continue counting. Adams contrasts the flowing demisemiquaver material with a more disjointed figure from bar 26 (example 4.5.6), which is reminiscent of the disjointed rhythmic motif introduced in bar 1 of the work.

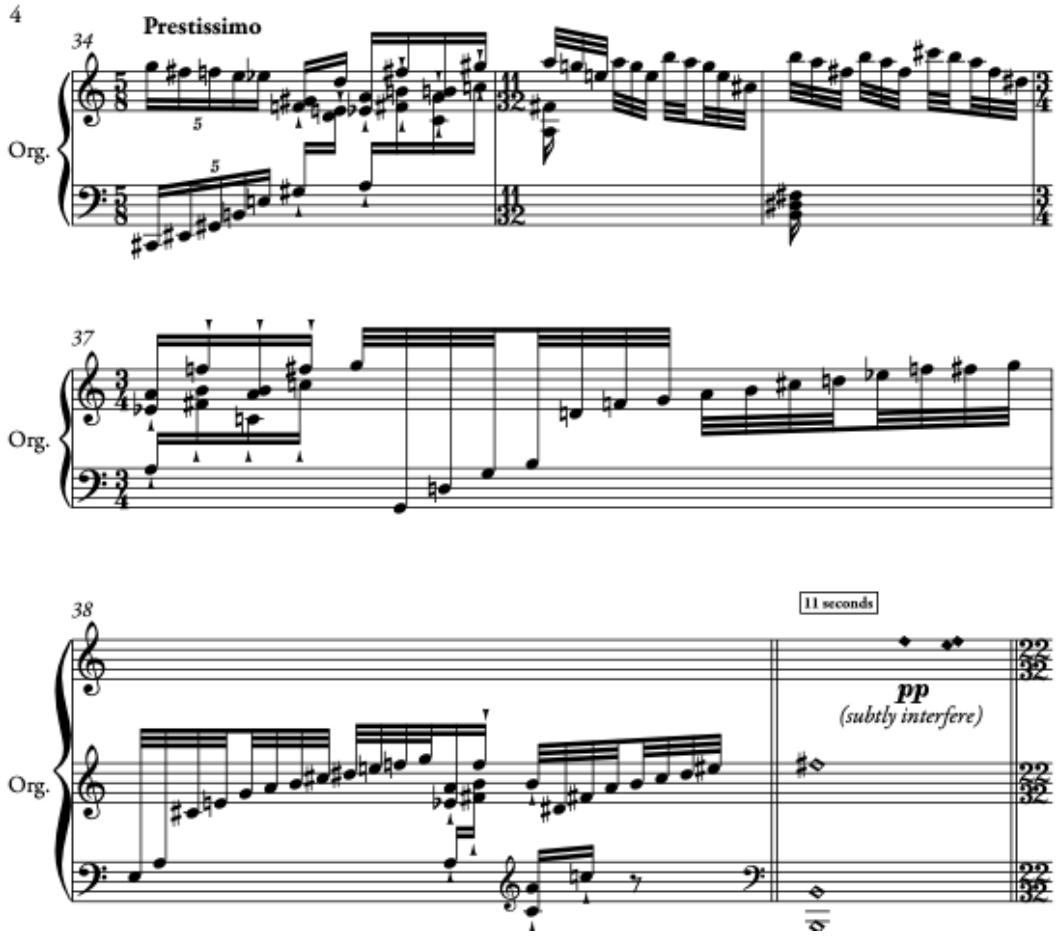
Example 4.5.6: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 26-33



The familiar material of bars 29 and 31 is interrupted by this new, disjointed idea, before a triumphant arrival on the B flat major chord in bar 13. The chords heard in bars 27 and 33 are the first chords in the work to be heard without the use of half-stops, and the resulting clarity is very striking. The suggestion of cimbelstern in bar 27 is left to the choice of the performer. A cimbelstern is a wooden or metal star which rotates and rings a bell when a certain stop is pulled or button is pressed on the organ. Only a few organs have a cimbelstern so this would not be

possible on every instrument. Bars 34-40 (example 4.5.7) return to familiar material, previously seen in bars 9 and 10, which is once again extended and developed.

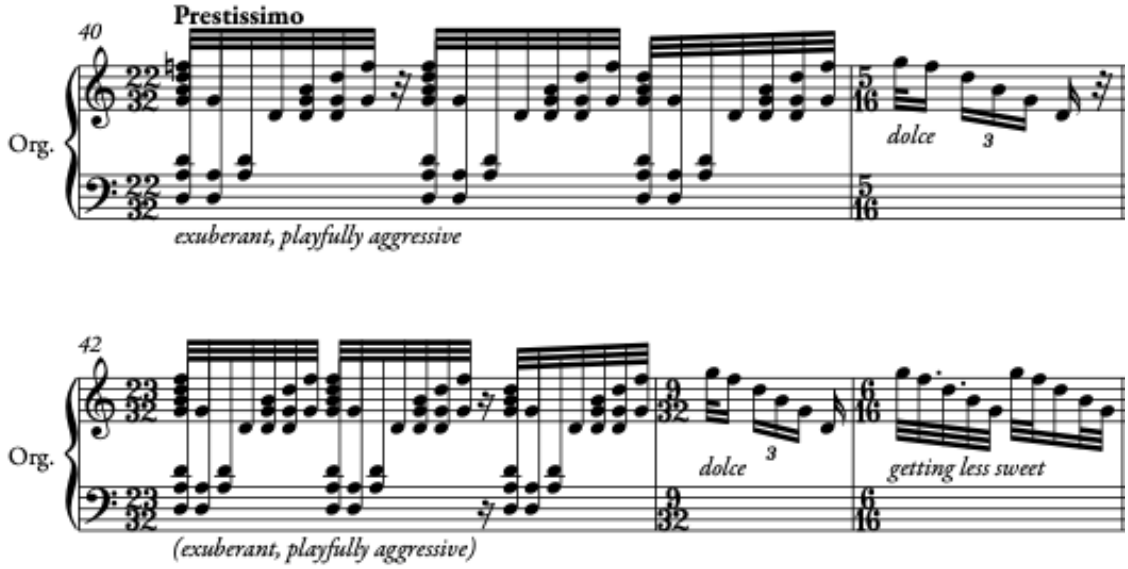
Example 4.5.7: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 34-40



The subtle interference of the darker diamond noteheads, while holding the chord in bar 39, once again provides the performer with the opportunity to experiment as appropriate.

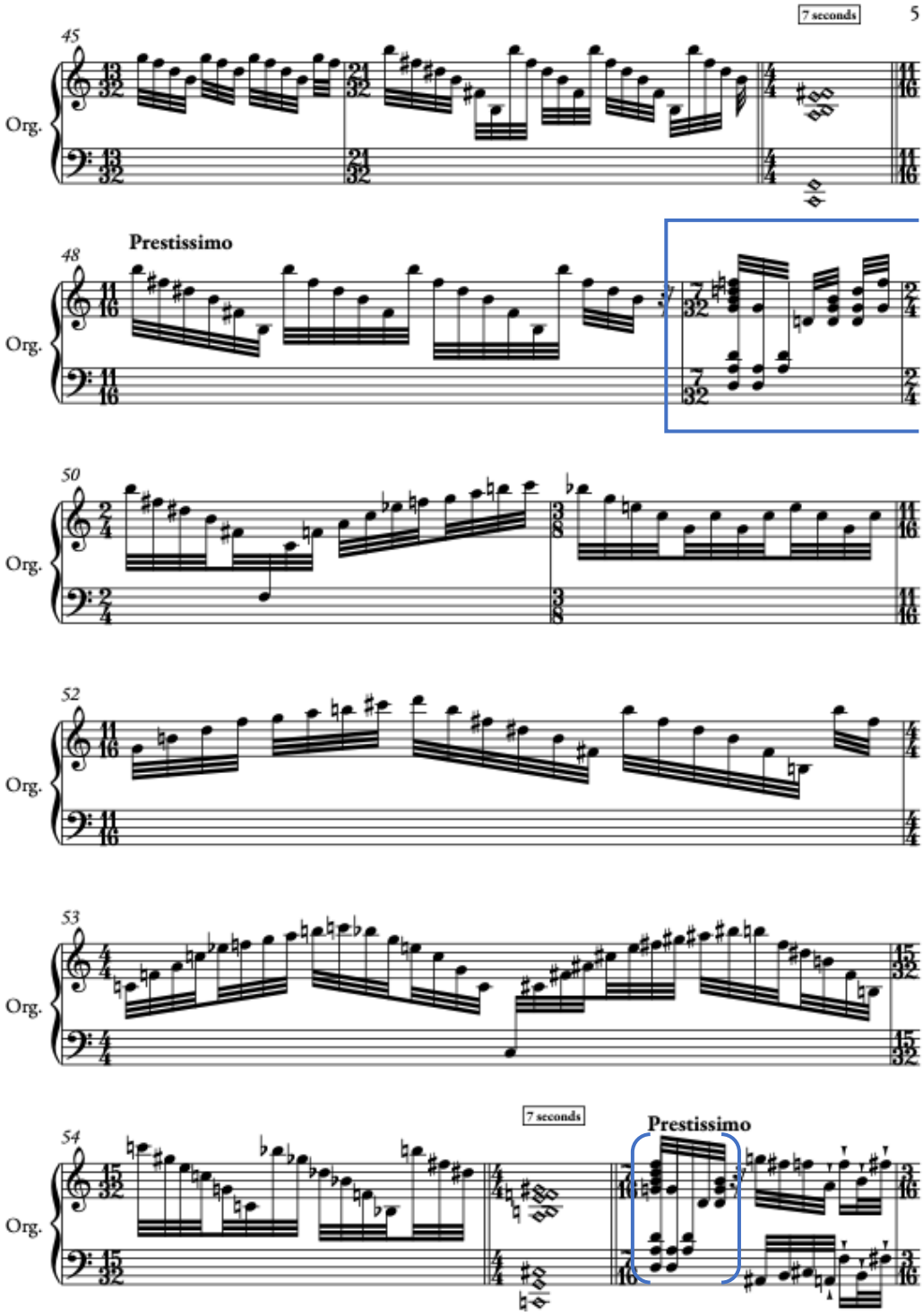
Bar 40 marks a change from the flowing, demisemiquaver material to a more dense, chordal texture, immediately followed by a return to the incessantly moving demisemiquavers (example 4.5.8).

Example 4.5.8: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 40-44



With a marking of 'exuberant, playfully aggressive', this change in texture and character adds to the sense of excitement and forward momentum in the piece. Adams continues to intersperse this new chordal motif with previously familiar motifs which moves the music forward with an ever-increasing urgency. Example 4.5.9 shows this interaction between the flowing demisemiquavers and brief glimpses of this new chordal motif.

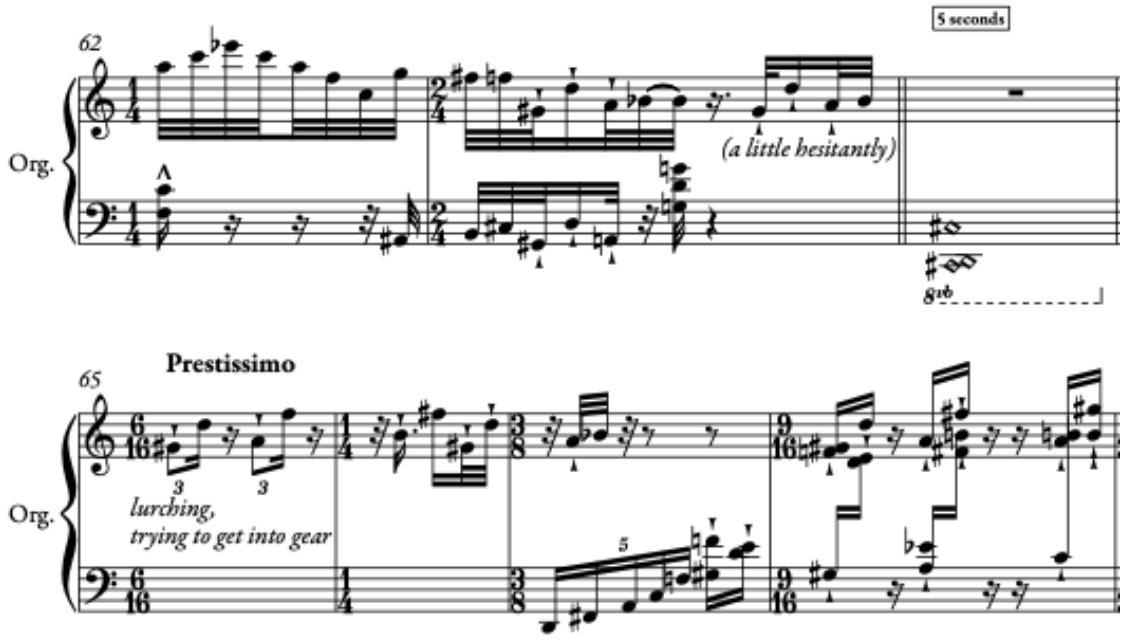
Example 4.5.9: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 45-56



This hurried prestissimo playing continues until a sudden moment of hesitation in bar 63 (example 4.5.10) which leads into another diamond notehead chord. The music following this

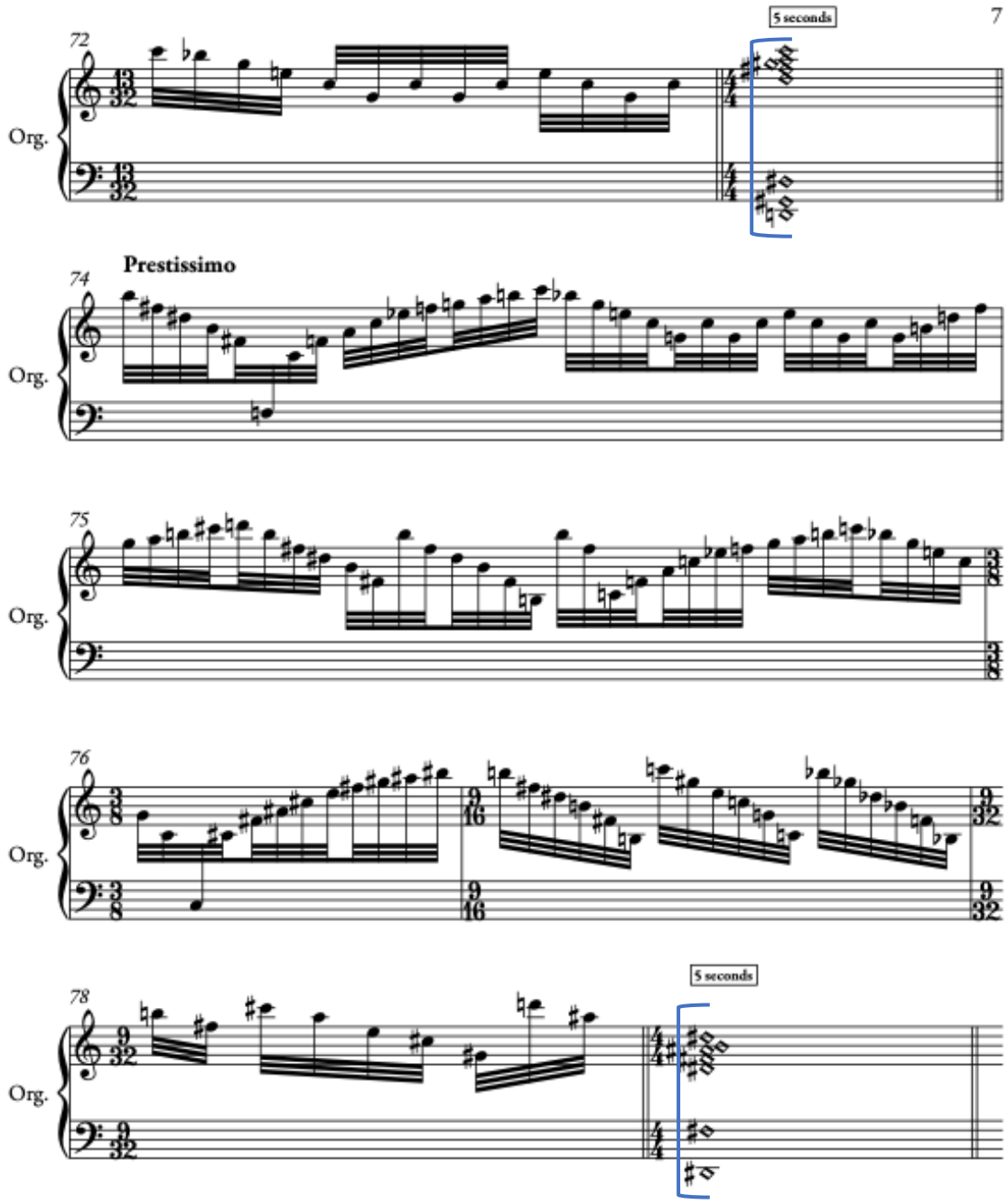
chord also starts in a hesitant manner, marked ‘lurching, trying to get into gear’, which results in a brief sense of space.

Example 4.5.10 Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 62-68



Bars 66-68 continue with this idea of ‘trying to get into gear’ by gradually returning to the flowing material, this time interspersed with rests, which adds to the sense of disjointed, angular movement. This is the last point in the work where it feels as if the music comes to a rest. From here on, the piece continues in a hurried frenzy towards the culmination of the work. Even the diamond notehead bars do not create a feeling of pausing as they are now very short in length and the character of each chord begins to build. The chord in bar 64 (example 4.5.10) is quite low in register and does not contain very many notes. The chords which follow from this point intensify as the music progresses. Example 4.5.11 shows the two chords which follow from this point in bar 64.

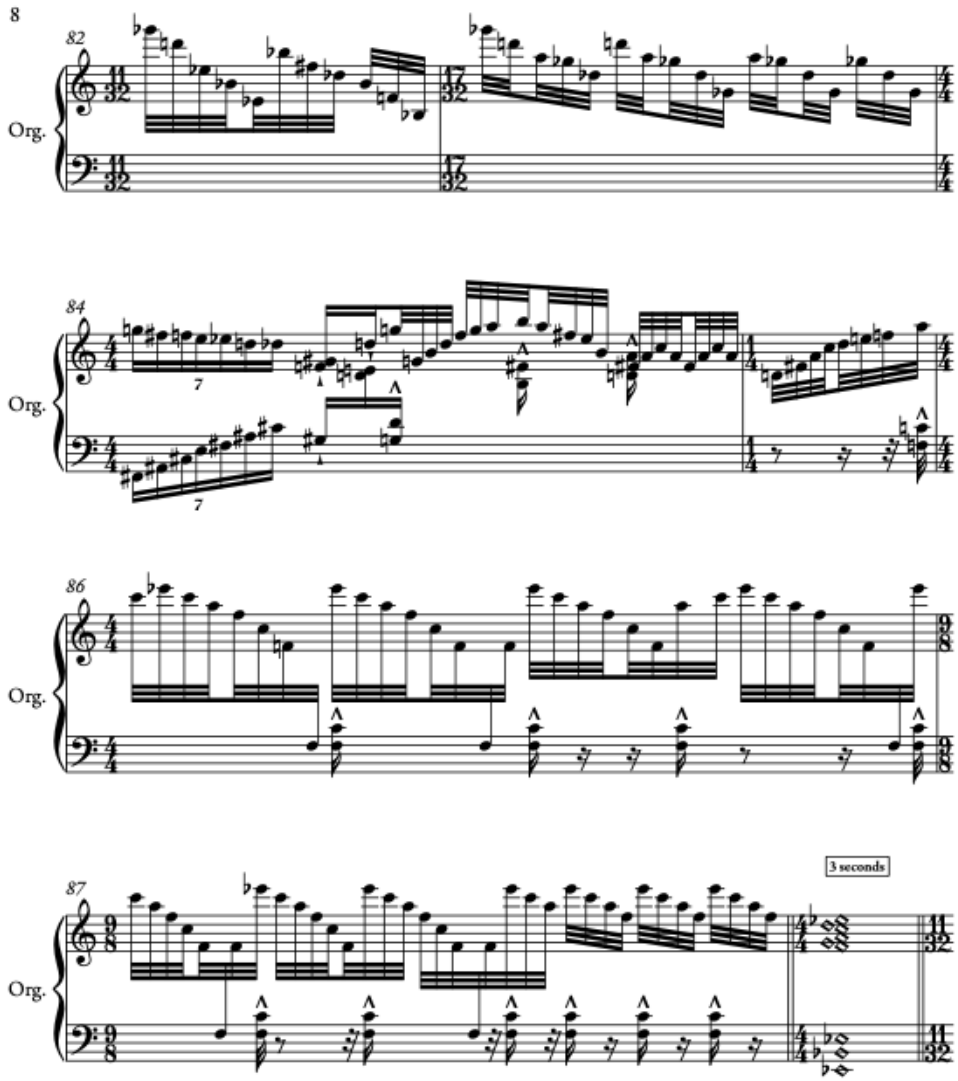
Example 4.5.11: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 72-79



The chords in bars 73 and 79 are much denser and in a higher register. The registration at this point has also built and continues to grow in volume as the music continues. The interjections of these chords becomes quite a jarring and exciting feature. The music continues to flow through

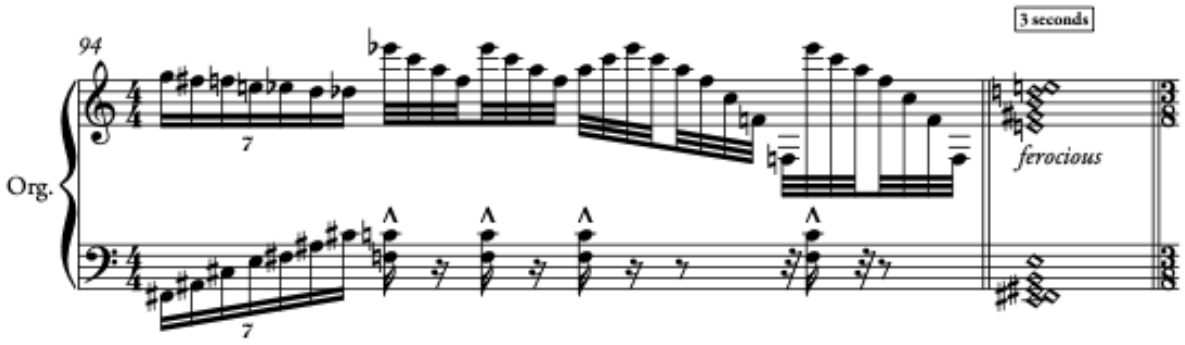
new demisemiquaver material as well as the recognisable motifs from earlier in the work, while these chords briefly interject along the way (example 4.5.12).

Example 4.5.12: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 82-88



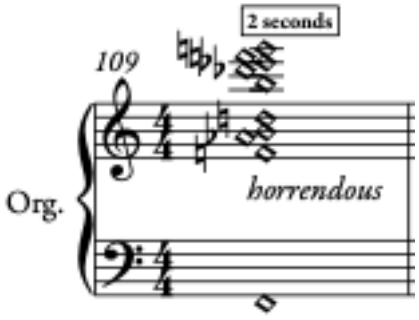
The diamond notehead chords have now decreased in duration to three seconds and as the work progresses, Adams begins to mark the character of the chords. Example 4.5.13 shows the first point where this happens in the work.

Example 4.5.13: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 94-95



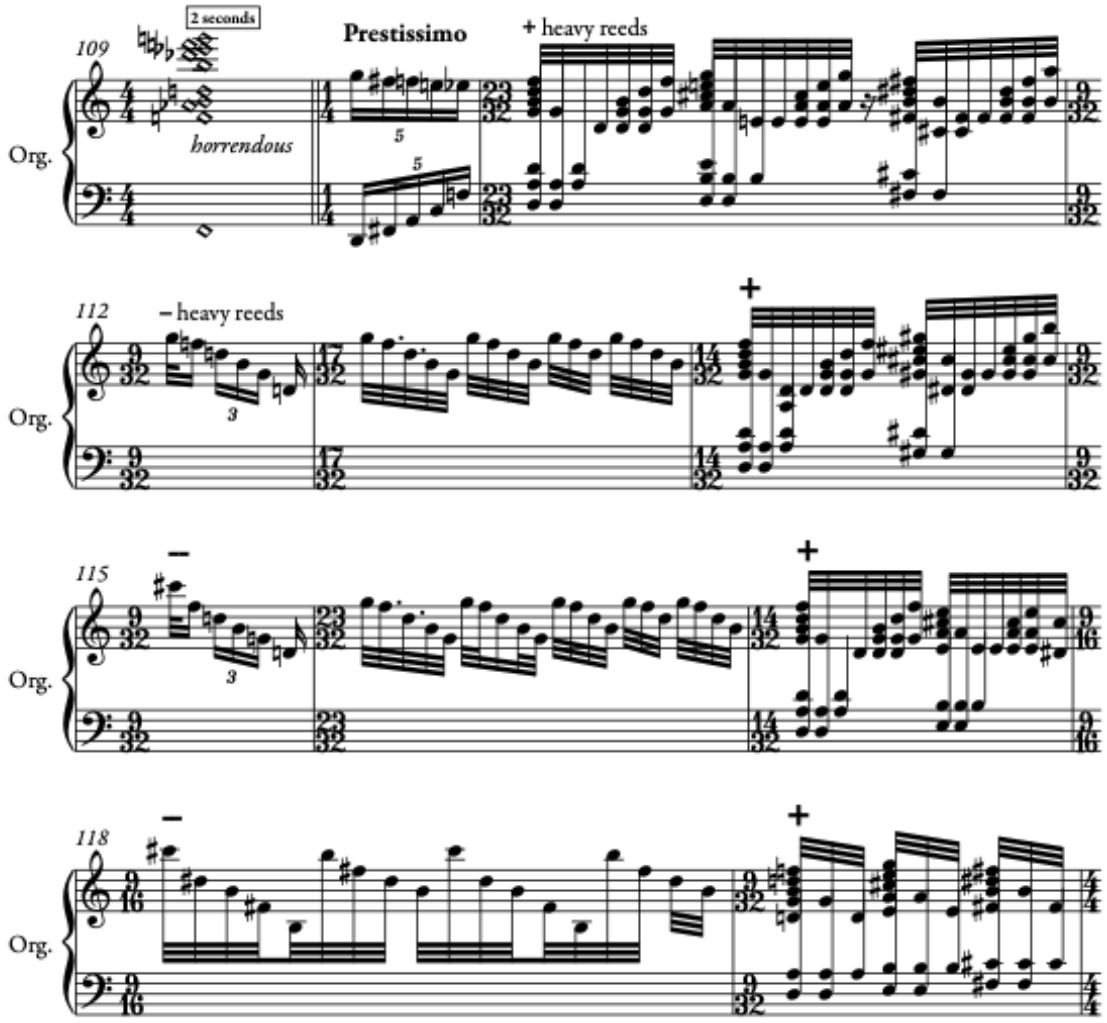
This has an implication for both the manner in which the chord should be played as well as the registrational choices. The second point at which this happens is bar 109 (example 4.5.14), a short 14 bars after the first marking. Adams fills these 14 bars with prestissimo demisemiquavers which feature some of the recognisable motifs, before landing dramatically on this large chord marked 'horrendous'.

Example 4.5.14: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bar 109



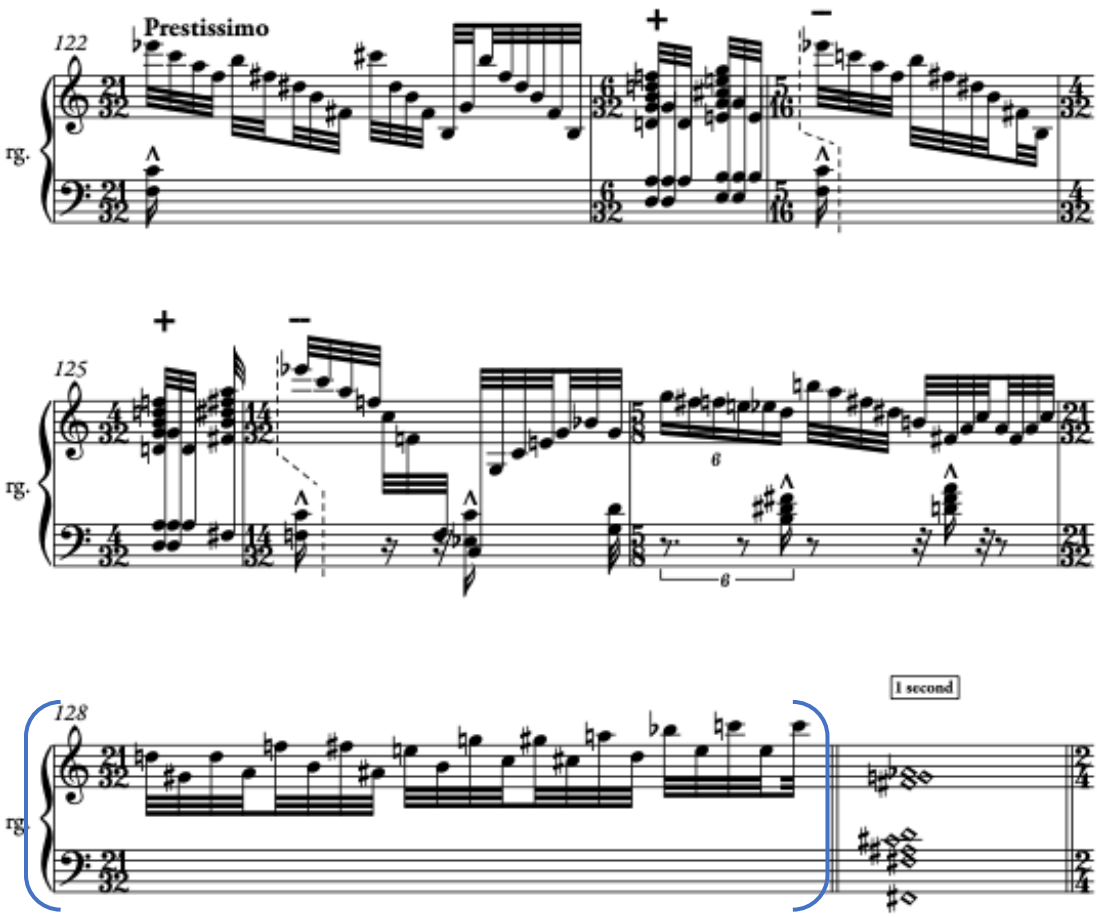
The high register of this chord as well as the clustering of the notes accentuates the drama at this point in the piece. Following on from here, Adams marks in the only registrational changes (example 4.5.15) which feature in the entire work, clearly showing that the composer had a particular sound in mind here. These registrational changes occur alongside a return to the denser, chordal material previously seen in bar 40.

Example 4.5.15: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 109-119



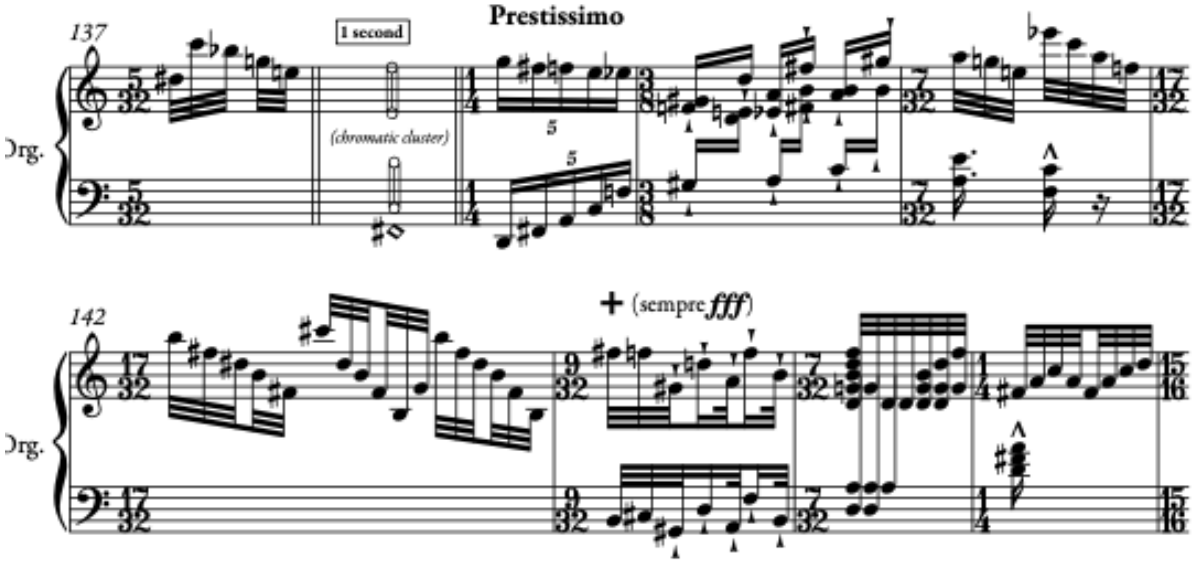
The changes are signified by the + and – markings in the score, with the heavy reeds being added each time the dense chordal motif returns. This further highlights the contrasting characters within the music, the more flowing demisemiquaver material and the robust chordal sections. Bar 128 (example 4.5.16) features a rising chromatic idea which Adams uses twice in this work, both within the final few pages, to increase the intensity and drama.

Example 4.5.16: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 122-129



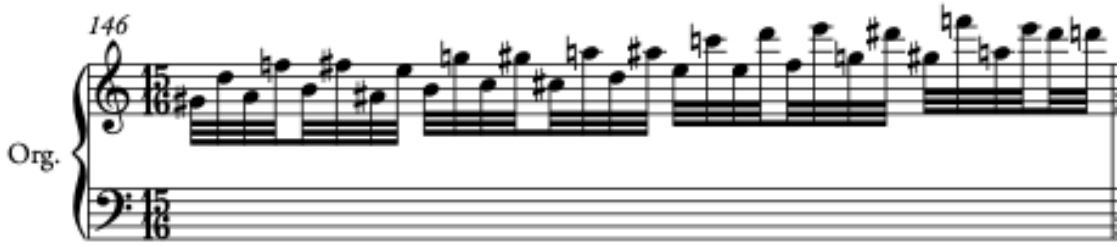
The diamond notehead chords have now decreased in duration to one second. Bar 138 consists of a chromatic cluster chord with no suggested notation given in the manuals, leaving it entirely up to the organist (example 4.5.17). Bar 143 shows another + marking, indicating that the reeds are to remain on for the rest of the work.

Example 4.5.17: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 137-145



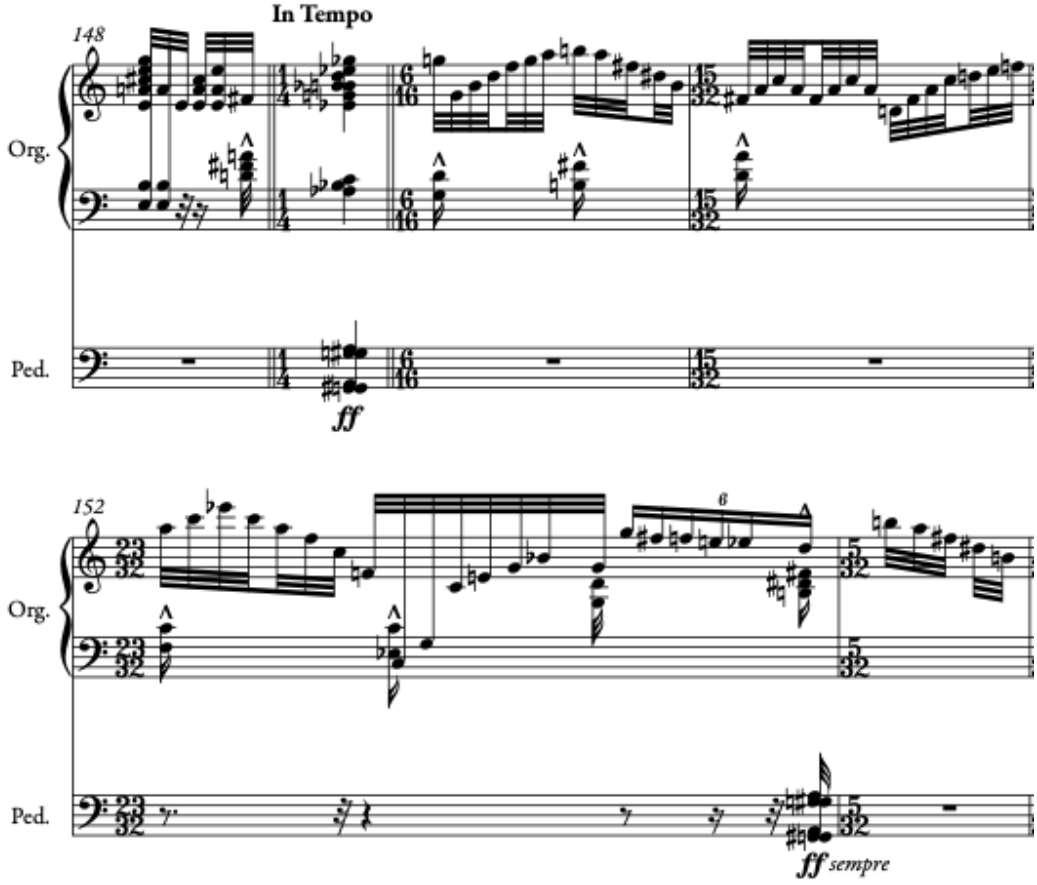
The second rising chromatic figure appears in bar 146, now extended and developed (example 4.5.18).

Example 4.5.18: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bar 146



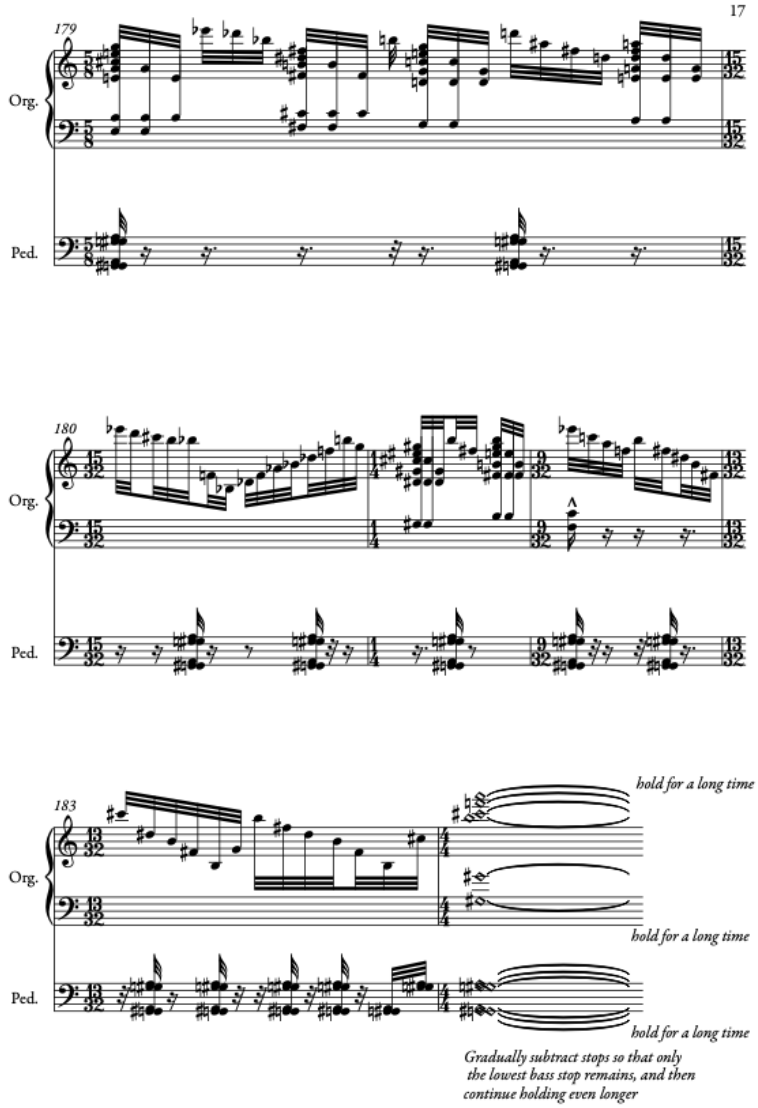
The work culminates in a frenzy of flowing demisemiquaver material, accompanied by pedal chord clusters, and interspersed with the dense, chordal motif. The pedal clusters begin in bar 149 and gradually increase in frequency throughout the final pages of the work. These are some of the most difficult pages of *2019.7* as the music shifts between the various motifs and the organist has to time the syncopated pedal clusters (example 4.5.19).

Example 4.5.19: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 148-153



The final six bars of *2019.7* (example 4.5.20) consists of the flowing demisemiquaver motif, the dense chordal material and the pedal clusters, all in a race to the final chord of the work. This chord once again sees Adams experimenting with another unique technique specific to the organ. While holding the final chord, marked ‘hold for a long time’, the stops are gradually subtracted until the lowest pitch stop remains, ‘and then continue holding even longer’.

Example 4.5.20: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 179-184



Similar to the effect achieved by experimenting with the flow of air to the pipes, the subtraction of stops while holding a chord creates an eerie reduction in sound, reminiscent of an object deflating until no air remains. *2019.7* had its inaugural performance in St Michael's, Dun Laoghaire, in the summer of 2019.[21] It was once again performed as part of the 2020 Pipeworks 'From the loft' festival in St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, which boasts a large screen from which the audience can view the performer in the organ loft.[22] A review of this performance stated that

[21] The first performance of this work was given by David Adams.
[22] See chapter two, page 37.

> (*2019.7*) proved to be the highlight of the concert, the first half alternating rapidly between bright tocatta-style passages and long sustained tones as if a radio was being flicked back and forth between two stations. Being able to see the performer proved a particular bonus allowing us to see the way the switches in manual matched the shifting material and how the concluding diminuendo was achieved by the reduction of organ stops.[23]

As with *Toccata L'homme armé*, the style of writing in this work reflects a very different side to the organ. While the overall structure of *2019.7* is less sectional than *Toccata L'homme armé*, the sense of momentum and progression in both pieces is very much aided by the precise rhythmic patterns and flowing arpeggio/scalic patterns utilised by both composers. The individual styles of writing are contrasting and the resulting works inhabit very different sound-worlds, but both works give a new and unique compositional voice to the organ. When considering Sebastian Adams' compositional style, another modern composer of organ music, Naji Hakim (1955) came to mind. While Hakim's compositional output for the organ is considerably greater, it could be said that both composers dare to show off the more unusual elements of the organ within their writing. As Adams says in the following extract about the compositional process behind *2019.7*, he wanted to write something fun, exciting, and a little weird too.

> 2019.7 is part of a series of pieces which all use block-like structures that alternate strictly between material types. In this case, the palette is limited to two material types: a gleaming toccata texture made of simple scalic and arpeggiated phrases, and static sections composed of a single chord where each chord is intended to sound strange and otherworldly.
>
> The structures in all of these pieces contain an inherent trajectory and tension: in this case, the gleaming sections stay roughly the same length throughout the piece and the static sections move from a starting point of 23 seconds long down to nothing. The intended effect is a kind of structural phasing, where the static sections initially sound like structural blocks, before gradually shifting into motific punctuations of the toccata material. The moment where this happens is impossible to pinpoint, so it becomes a psychoacoustic trick.

[23] Mark Fitzgerald, 'Pipeworks from the organ loft-2020's online festival reviewed', <https://www.totallydublin.ie/gig-reviews/pipeworks-from-the-organ-loft-2020s-online-festival-reviewed/> [accessed 1 May 2021].

Within the toccata material, the harmonic development is very limited (roughly staying in G, with material based on overtone series chords), but the static material modulates (assuming the bass note is the root of the chord) each time it appears. The static chords followed a systematic procedure for their order (gradually honing in on G) but also get roughly more complex and dissonant as they get shorter. The tonality of the static material generates harmonic trajectory (first through the extreme shifts into ecstatic tonal material, later through gradual intensification) in the toccata material despite its internal stability.

The static material event reaches a zero-point at bar 138, where it is both extremely short and chromatically saturated. This and bar 149 act as a mirror point in the piece, as the direction and configuration of the static material is flipped: now the notes are staccato pedal clusters, and they come underneath the toccata material instead of opposing it. Beginning far apart, they gradually get closer together and even as the toccata material reaches a climactic point the pedal clusters consume and dominate it. So the Coda (b. 150 onwards) is a small-scale structural copy of the rest of the piece.

Throughout the pieces, various structural relationships are made of sequential Fibonacci numbers (e.g. the distances between the final pedal clusters, the duration in seconds of the static sections). There is no particular reason for this other than that these proportions create audibly different ascending or descending time durations. Prime numbers would have served the same purpose, although perhaps less romantically!

Compositionally, the goal of all this pre-defined structural decision-making is to allow me to start with a grid into which I can freely compose. Taking various parameters as a given means I can focus on finding good solutions using the motifs in my material banks. I tend to develop iteratively on material during the composition process, so that within the later structural blocks there is a kind of progression of logic within the material. A second goal is a fascination with switching blockily between very oppositional material within a piece, and in trying to find a way to make this work. Finally, I really wanted to write a fun, exciting toccata, but I wanted it to be weird too, and to find a way to explore the incredible beating effects possible in slow organ music.[24]

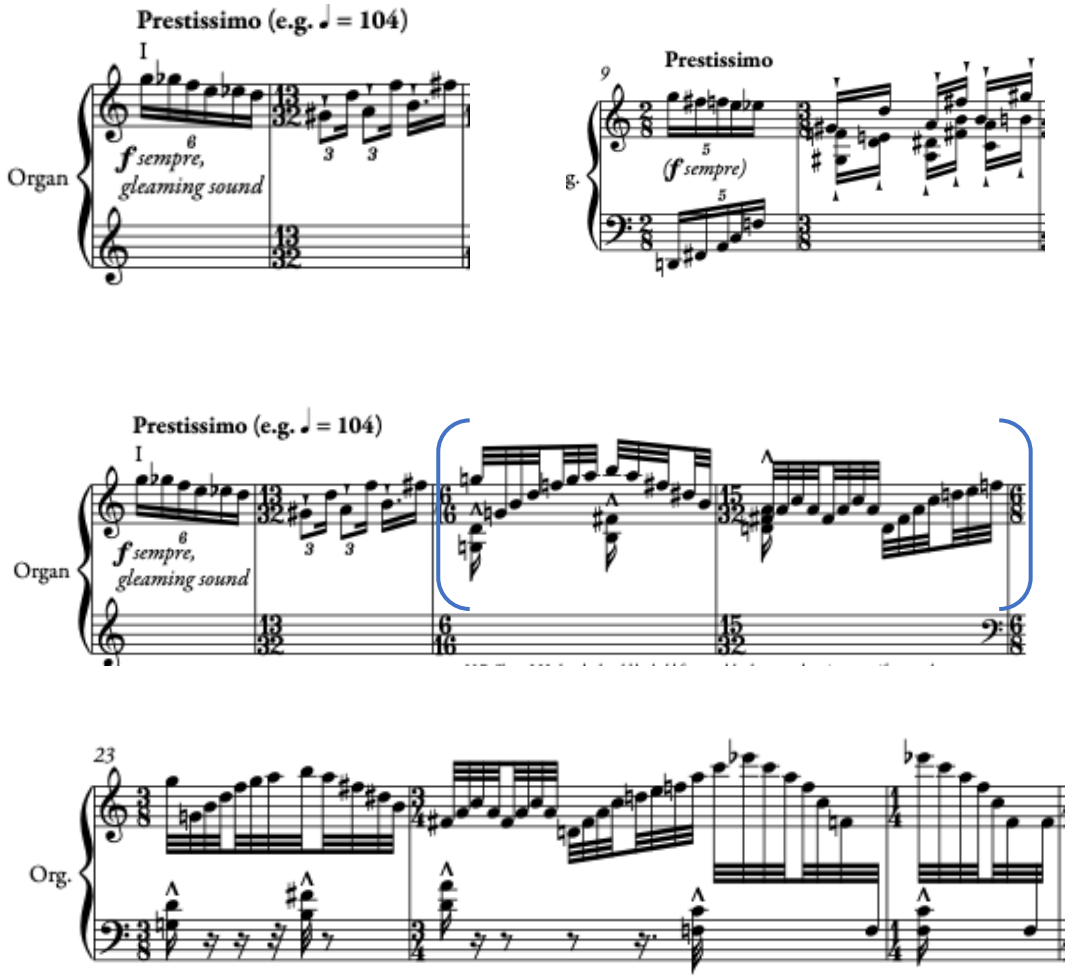
Preparation Notes

Due to the constantly changing motivic structure of this piece, one of the first approaches that can be taken is to identify the various forms these motifs come in and learn each combination. Once these motifs become familiar to the player, it is easier to mix the sequence and order in which

[24] In conversation with Sebastian Adams.

they occur. Example 4.5.21 shows one way in which these motifs can be taken out and practised but there are numerous versions to be found throughout the work.

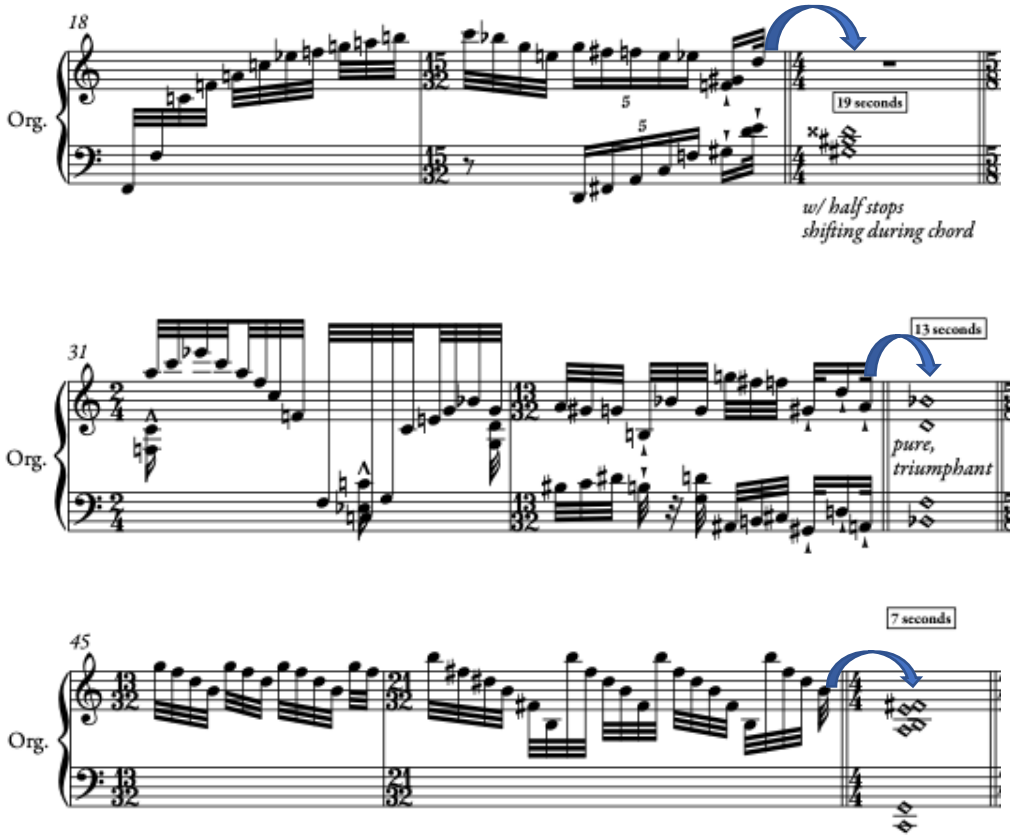
Example 4.5.21: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bar 1, 9-10, 1-4, 23-25



The opening bar and upbeat of *2019.7* are difficult to time out of context so it can be helpful to settle into the timing and rhythm of the demisemiquaver bars which follow and subsequently relate these to the opening bar. Slow practice is essential for this entire work and taking small sections at a time proves more successful than larger portions.

Taking the bars between each diamond notehead chord as a section and working on slow repetitions of these sections is advisable. Once these sections have been worked up to speed, the move from flowing demisemiquavers to the longer chords needs to be practised. While Adams does say that 'the notes in these chords can also be modified as long as the bass note is kept', the change from such fast material to abrupt, static chords needs to be covered repeatedly (example 4.5.22).

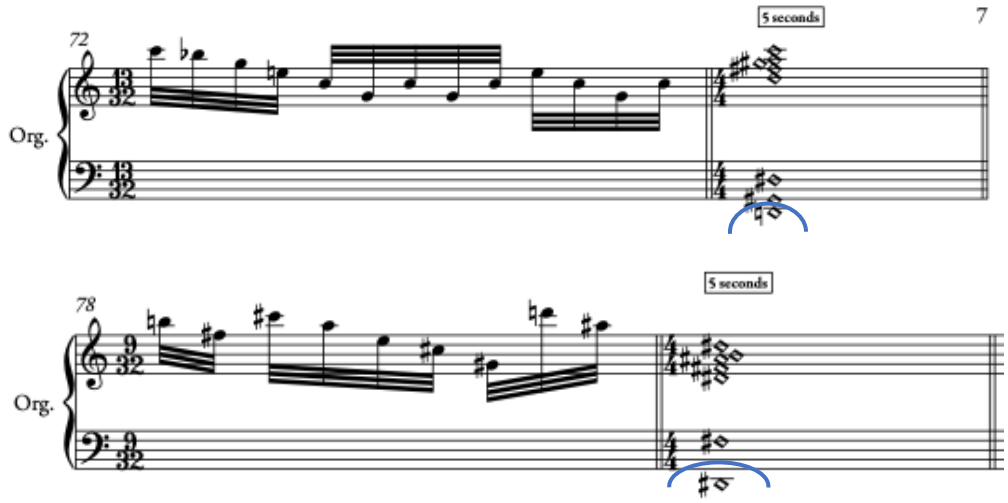
Example 4.5.22: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 18-20, 31-33, 45-47



The chords themselves prove a challenge in terms of the duration of each chord. The organist should not assume that it will be easy to judge how long 23 or 19 or 17 seconds feels while performing this work. These timings also need to be practised beforehand to gain an awareness of

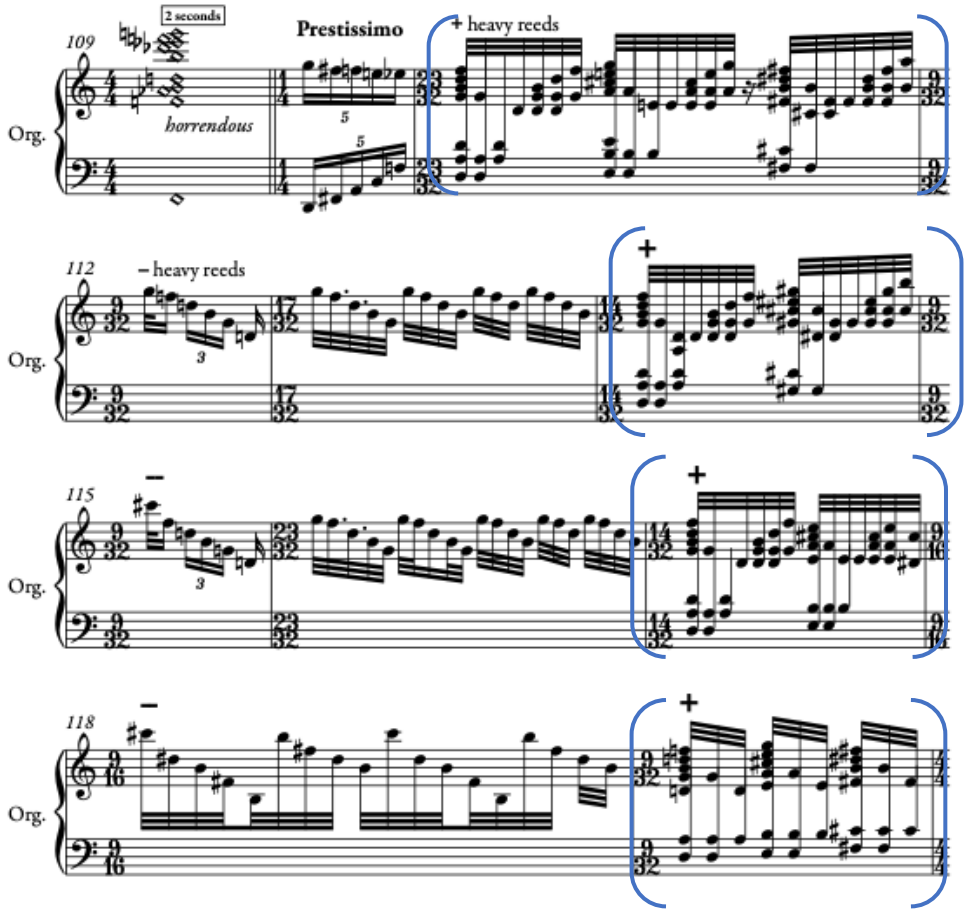
just how long 23 seconds can feel after the speed of the opening section. Some of these diamond notehead chords require the lowest note to be taken in the pedal so these chords should be identified and marked to stand out to the organist (example 4.5.23).

Example 4.5.23: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 72-73, 78-79



The new chordal material which begins in bar 40 requires slow practice and it is important to find a suitable fingering that will allow this motif to be played at speed. All iterations of this motif should be taken out and practised slowly. Taking some of the lower notes in the left hand instead of the right hand makes these bars much more accessible. Example 4.5.24 shows the most difficult section containing this motif, with the pattern shifting and changing.

Example 4.5.24: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 109-119

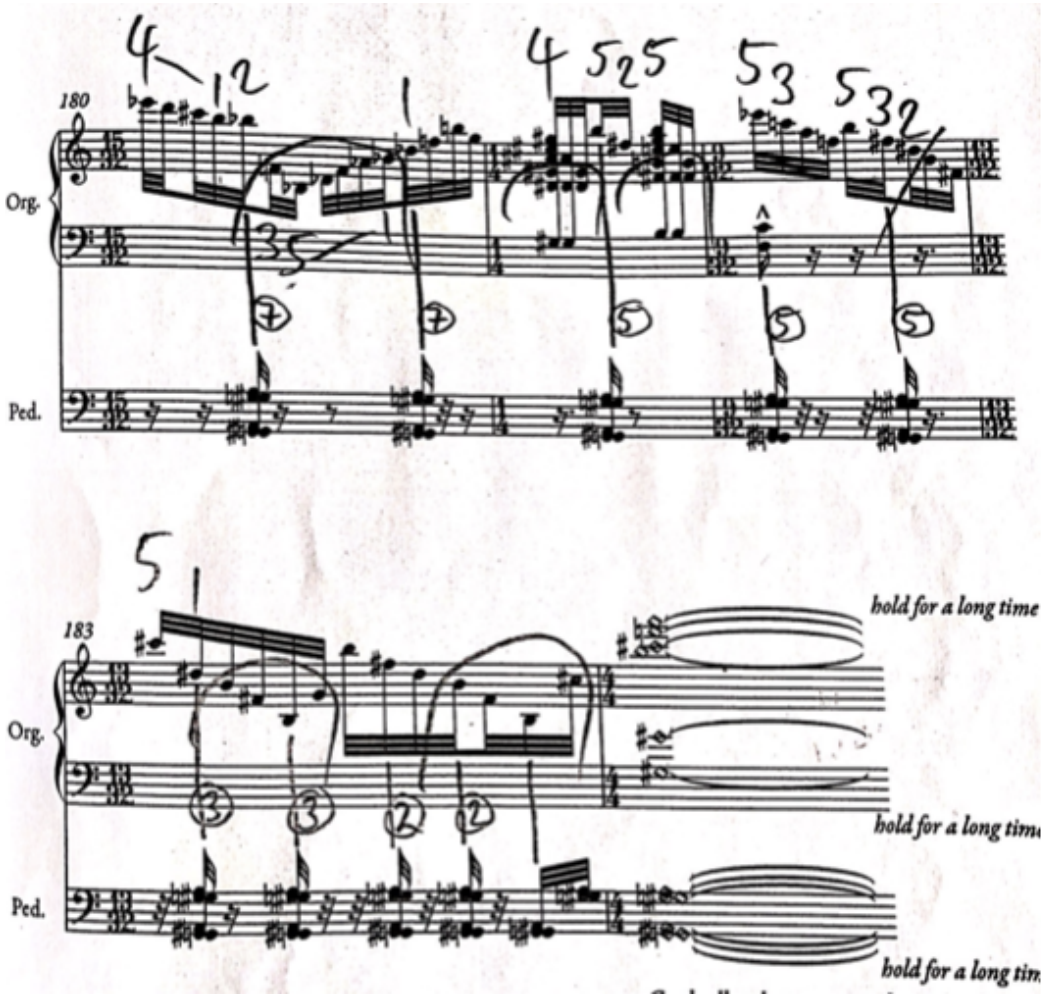


Once the pedal chord clusters begin in bar 149, it can be helpful to draw a line from where these chords occur up to the notes in the manual, so the organist can easily see at what stage in the manual figurations these pedal chords need to interject (example 4.5.25).

Example 4.5.25: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bars 160-162

The final two pages of the entire piece require many repetitions to be able to successfully combine the fast-changing manual motifs with the pedal chord clusters which are now happening with increased speed. Bars 180-184, the culmination of the work, feature numerous offbeat chord clusters. If the organist ‘rebars’ this section according to the counting shown in example 4.5.26, these clusters will then feel as if they fall on a downbeat and this closing section becomes much more straightforward to play.

Example 4.5.25: Sebastian Adams, *2019.7*, Bar 180-184



4.6 *Strength*

Strength is the newest of the five pieces and is written by Rose Connolly.

> Composer, Performer and multi-instrumentalist Rose Connolly was born in County Fermanagh. Her body of work includes ensemble, large-scale and small-scale works, solo pieces, electronic solo/ensemble pieces and short film/multi-media works also. Her unique sound is an idiosyncratic combination of modernist and contemporary music with inflections of Irish traditional music, folk and Jazz. As an accomplished multi-instrumentalist in the Classical and traditional music field, Rose studies Music Composition in The Royal Irish Academy of Music under the direction of Jonathan Nangle. However currently she is studying with Yannis Kyriakides and Guus Janssen at The Royal Conservatory The Hague … Connolly also got commissioned to write a Fanfare for the closing concert of Dublin Brass Week 2019, a highly popular brass

> event that invited esteemed brass performers such as Adam Rapa and Alan Thomas. A more outstanding achievement was winning the Finding A Voice Composition Competition for Emerging Women Composers. Dr Anne-Marie O'Farrell selected the piece and performed the harp solo as part of the festival in Clonmel. Rose also recently received the Young Musicians Platform award NI in which she received a sizeable grant to record an album. With this, Rose will be heard across Irish radio performing and composing for the Ulster Orchestra and The Residentie Orchestra in 2022.[25]

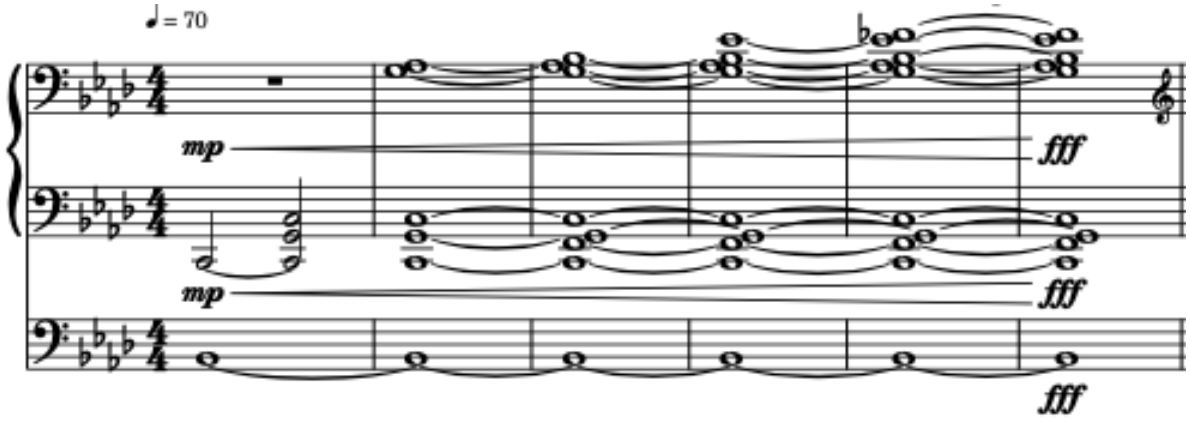
The composition of *Strength* came about when I approached Connolly and asked her to write a new piece for organ. Having never written for organ before, this was a new and exciting challenge for Connolly. As it was being written for a concert that would also contain the other works, *Toccata L'homme armé* and *2019.7*, Connolly familiarised herself with these works in order to create a piece that was contrasting with these two pieces. It was interesting to see how Connolly approached this challenge of composing for the organ while incorporating her unique compositional voice. It also felt incredibly inspiring to have initiated the composition of a brand new work for solo organ by a young, female, Irish composer. These links between performer and composer will be vital in ensuring the progression of the organ in society as well as tackling any preconceived perceptions of the instrument. In regard to the composition of this work, Connolly said that the derivation of the title *Strength* came from how motivated and excited she was to be writing for, and asked by, another woman in music. Hopefully, by forging links with female composers who may never have previously considered writing for the organ, the volume of female composers of organ music will increase. *Strength* featured as a premiere in the Dún Laoghaire organ summer recital series, 2021.

The music itself contains three sections, a powerful chordal opening section, a rapid flowing demisemiquaver middle section and a final shorter chordal section. The work opens with a slowly

[25] Biography provided by Rose Connolly.

building chord which grows in dynamic as the texture of the chord becomes more dense (example 4.6.1).

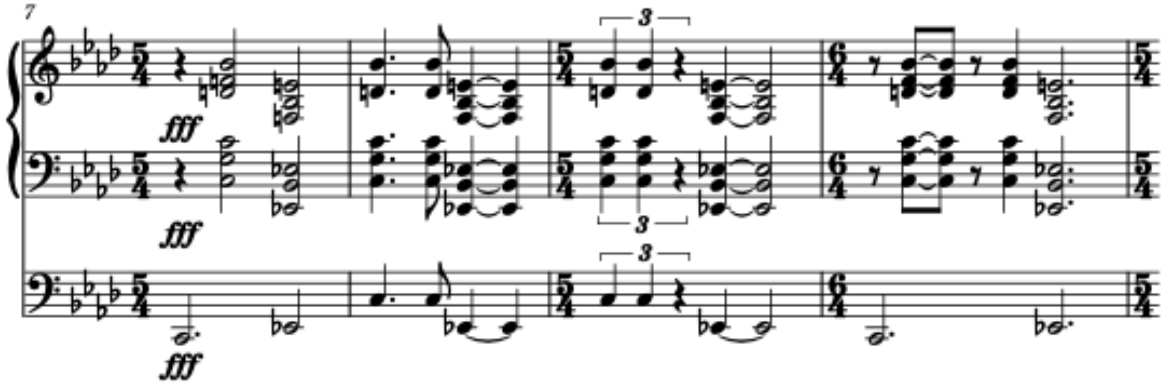
Example 4.6.1: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 1-6



With regard to the choice of key signature, Connolly says that 'It was an intuitive choice from improvising on piano and practising trial and error to see what key felt more courageous or strong'.[26] The influence of jazz, which is an aspect that features in Connolly's compositions, is most evident in this opening section. The majority of the section is made up of chordal playing in the manuals. These chords often clash chromatically between the hands, for example in bar 7 (example 4.6.2), where we see the right hand play a chord containing E naturals against the left hand chord and pedal which contain E flats.

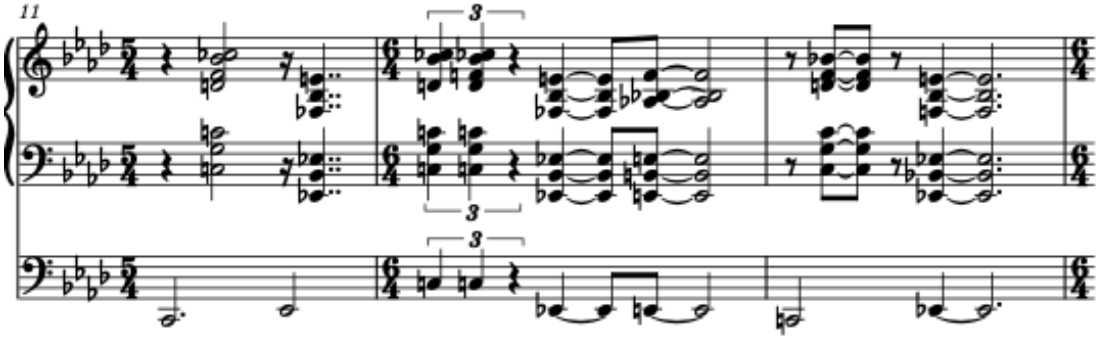
[26] In conversation with Rose Connolly.

Example 4.6.2: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 7-10



These clashes heighten the tension and drama of this opening section, while at the same time providing a somewhat hypnotic repetition that continues until a move to a new chord in bar 12. The rhythms constantly change with each passing bar, requiring a great deal of concentration from the performer. In this entire opening section, there are no two consecutive bars that contain the same rhythmic patterns. Example 4.6.3 shows these shifting rhythmic patterns.

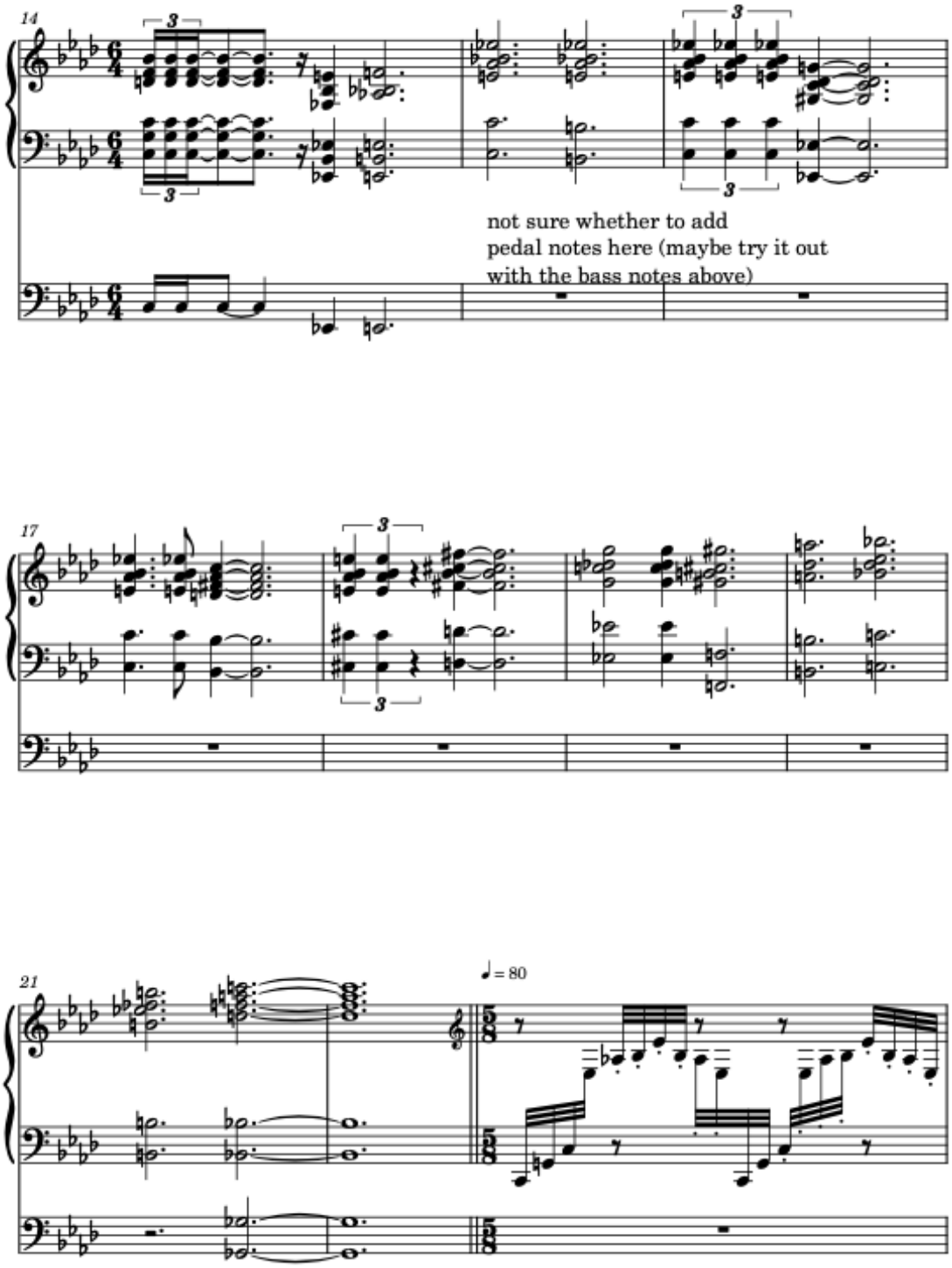
Example 4.6.3: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 11-13



From bar 15 the texture of the music changes and the pedal line drops out, giving the listener an auditory break after the powerful and prolonged volume of the opening 14 bars. As can be seen in example 4.6.4, Connolly makes a note about being unsure of whether to have a pedal line in these

particular bars. This provided a key moment of interaction between composer and organist. As the performer, it was possible to give feedback to Connolly about overall volume levels and acoustics within the performance venue, and how it would be more effective to leave out the pedals at this point. This insight was not something Connolly could have been expected to know, and really highlighted the benefits of communication between organist and composer when creating a new work for organ. The result of this absence of pedals is a sense of space, and also a feeling of growing towards a high point, which is reached in bar 21 (example 4.6.4) before entering the middle section and a complete change in texture.

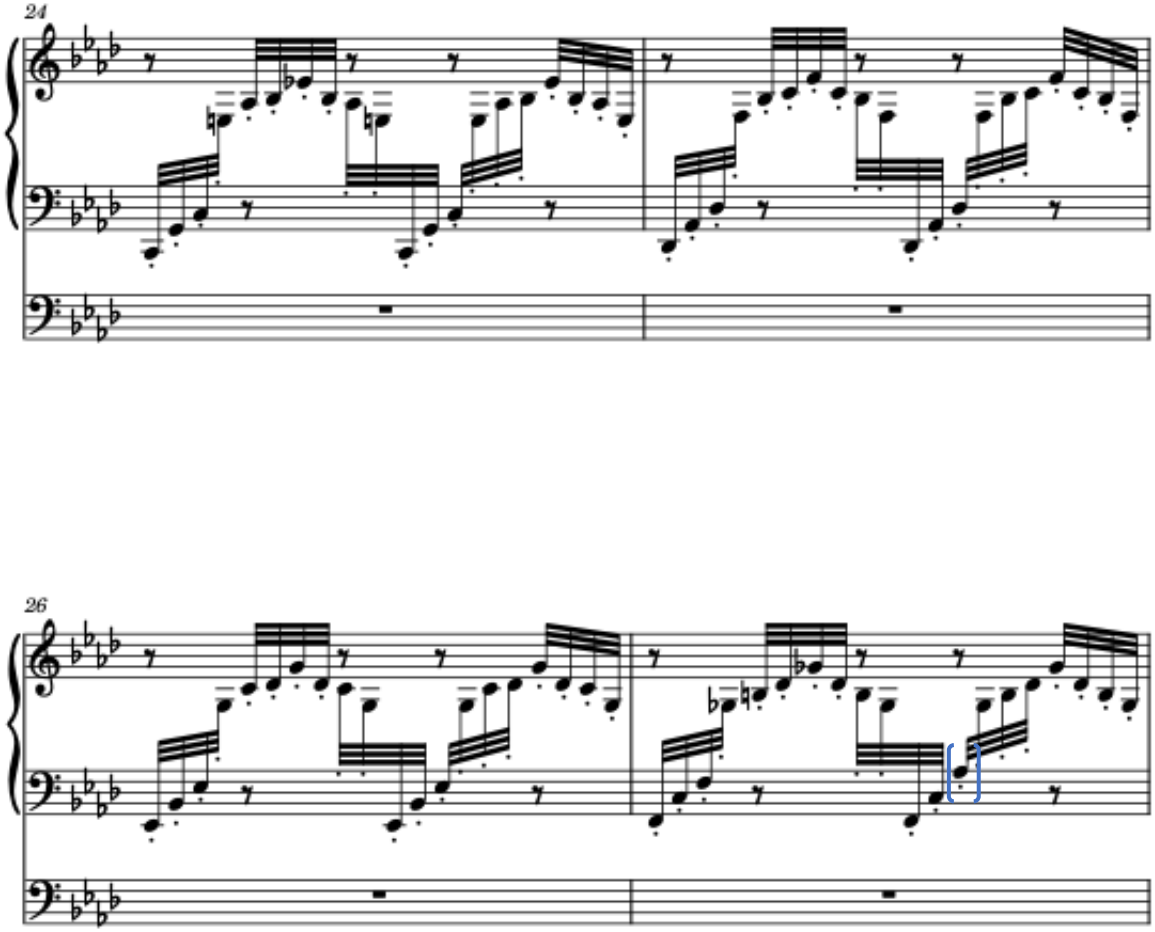
Example 4.6.4: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 14-23



The middle section begins in bar 23, directly after the culmination of this densely textured chord in a high register at bar 22. This section moves at a slightly quicker pace, with a suggested

metronome marking of crotchet = 80, but the sudden change to demisemiquavers creates the illusion of speeding up significantly. The writing becomes much more disjointed in this section, featuring staccato demisemiquavers in repeated patterns. Initially, these patterns change from bar to bar, but gradually the patterns begin to subtly change within each bar. Example 4.6.5 shows this rate of change within the patterns and highlights the change of pattern within bar 27.

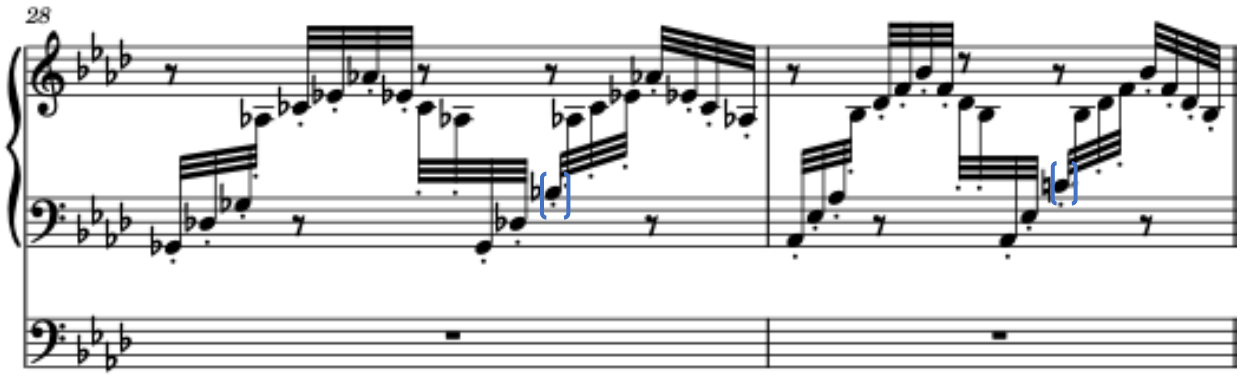
Example 4.6.5: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 24-27



As the music progresses, these arpeggio figurations shift and change, becoming more complex and adding to the sense of building intensity and drama. Another moment for feedback between composer and performer occurred in bar 28 where some unnecessary accidentals occurred as a result of the software used to write the score. These stood out when playing through the music

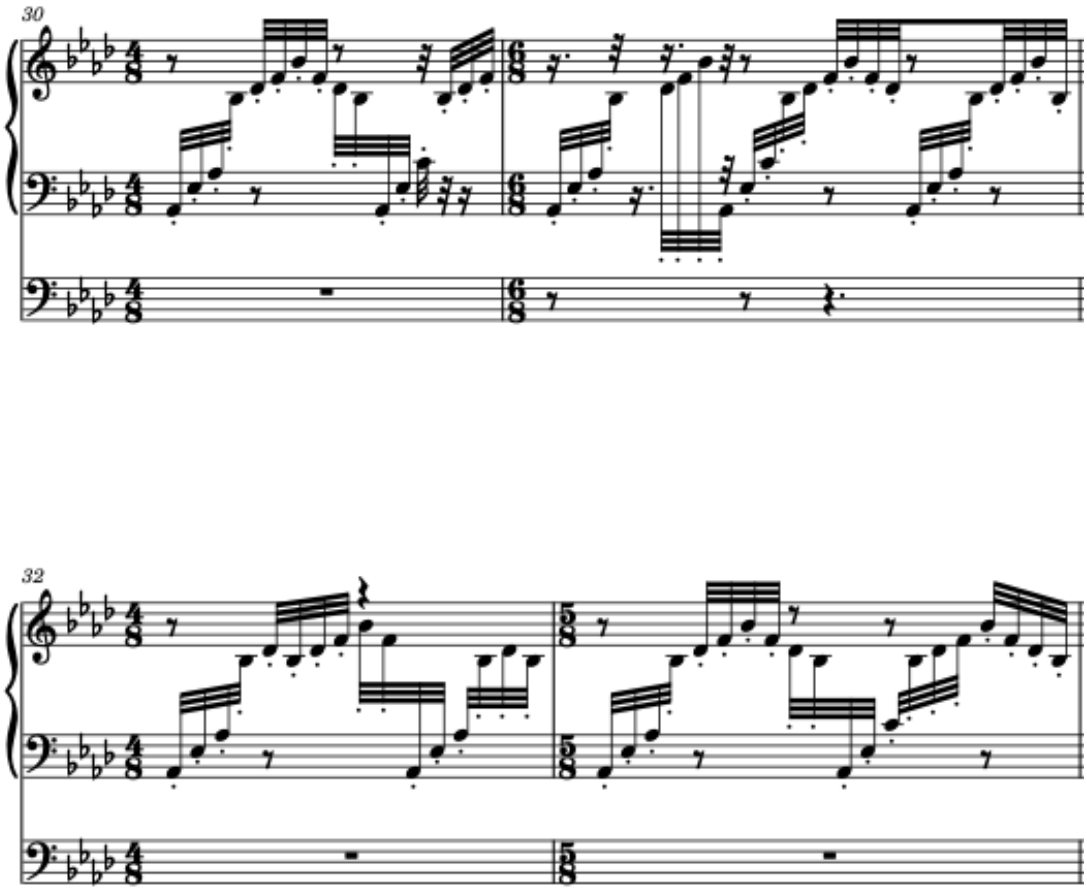
but would not necessarily have been evident to the composer when reading through the score. The patterns continue to change within each bar (example 4.6.6).

Example 4.6.6: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 28-29



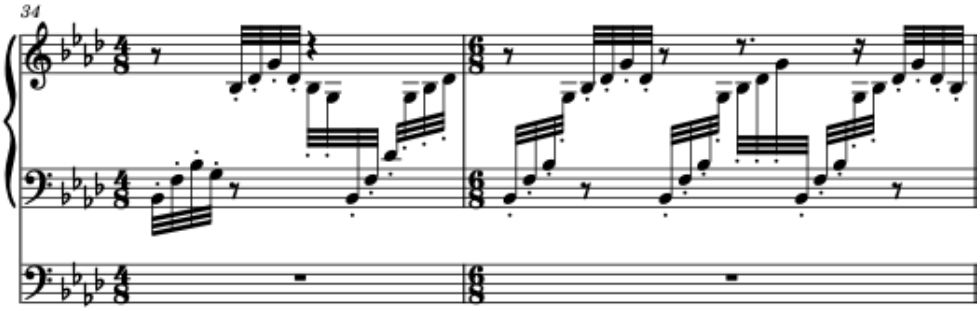
From bar 30 onwards, the arpeggio figurations focus for a longer period on a specific note range, but the patterns are rarely the same and change more frequently within the bar. This requires even more concentration and focus from the organist as it can become easy to get lost within the patterns. Example 4.6.7 shows this four-bar figuration.

Example 4.6.7: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 30-33

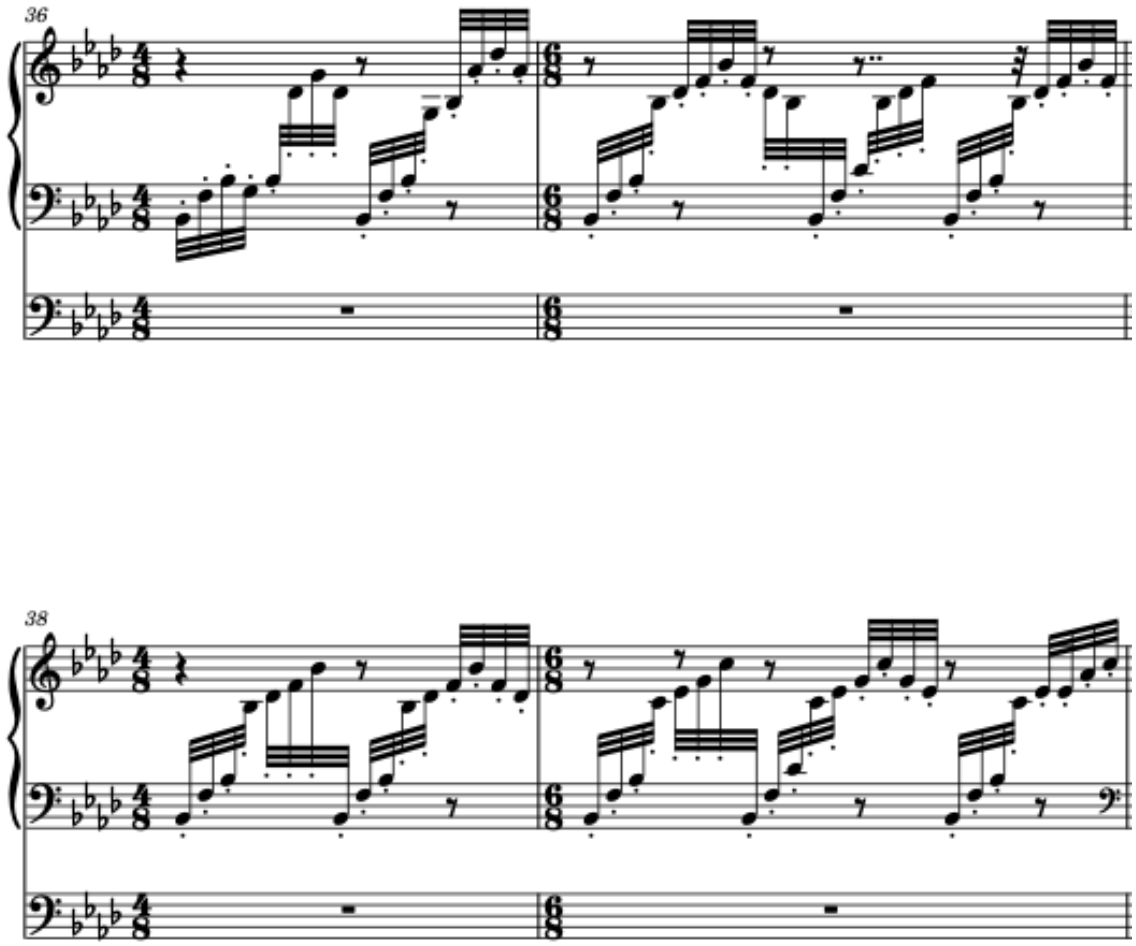


The next six bars follow a similar pattern, but this time using a different set of notes and extended over more bars (example 4.6.8).

Example 4.6.8: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 34-35

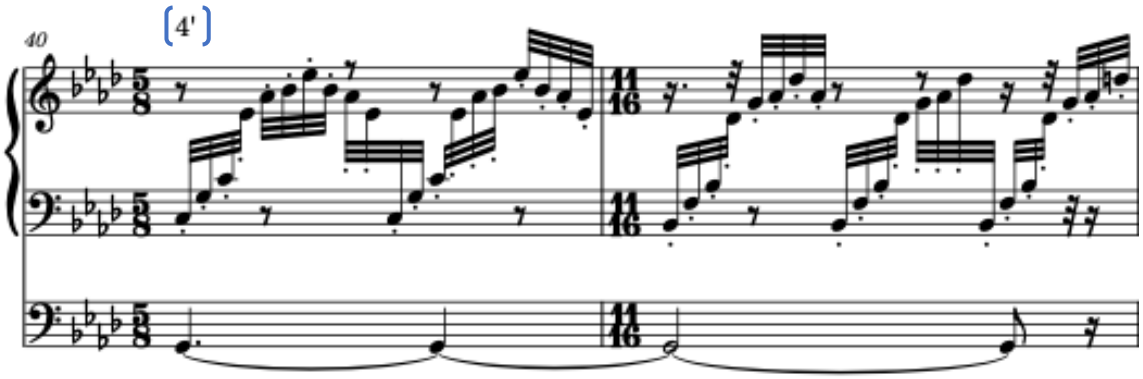


Example 4.6.8: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 36-39



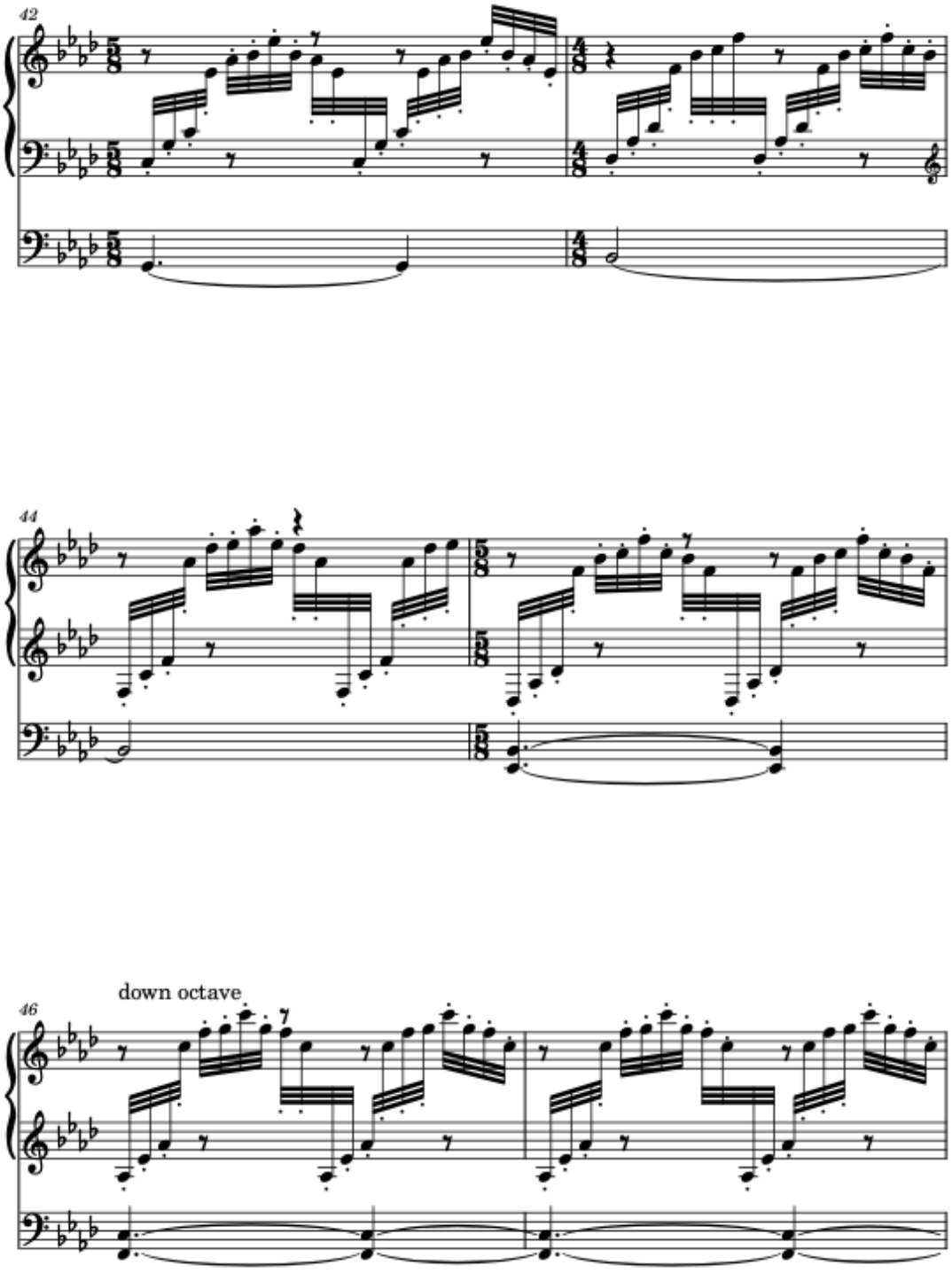
The pedal line, which has not been seen since the very end of the opening section, appears in bar 40. At this same point, the manual figurations move up an octave, notated in the music by a 4' written above the stave (example 4.6.9).

Example 4.6.9: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 40-41



The contrast between the low pedal line and higher register manuals creates an all-encompassing sound that once again heightens the excitement of this quick-moving middle section. The manual figurations change more frequently, with pattern changes within each bar and note changes from bar to bar. A double pedal line begins in bar 45 (example 4.6.10) and continues until the end of the middle section. The manual figurations return to pitch in bar 46, as notated in the score.

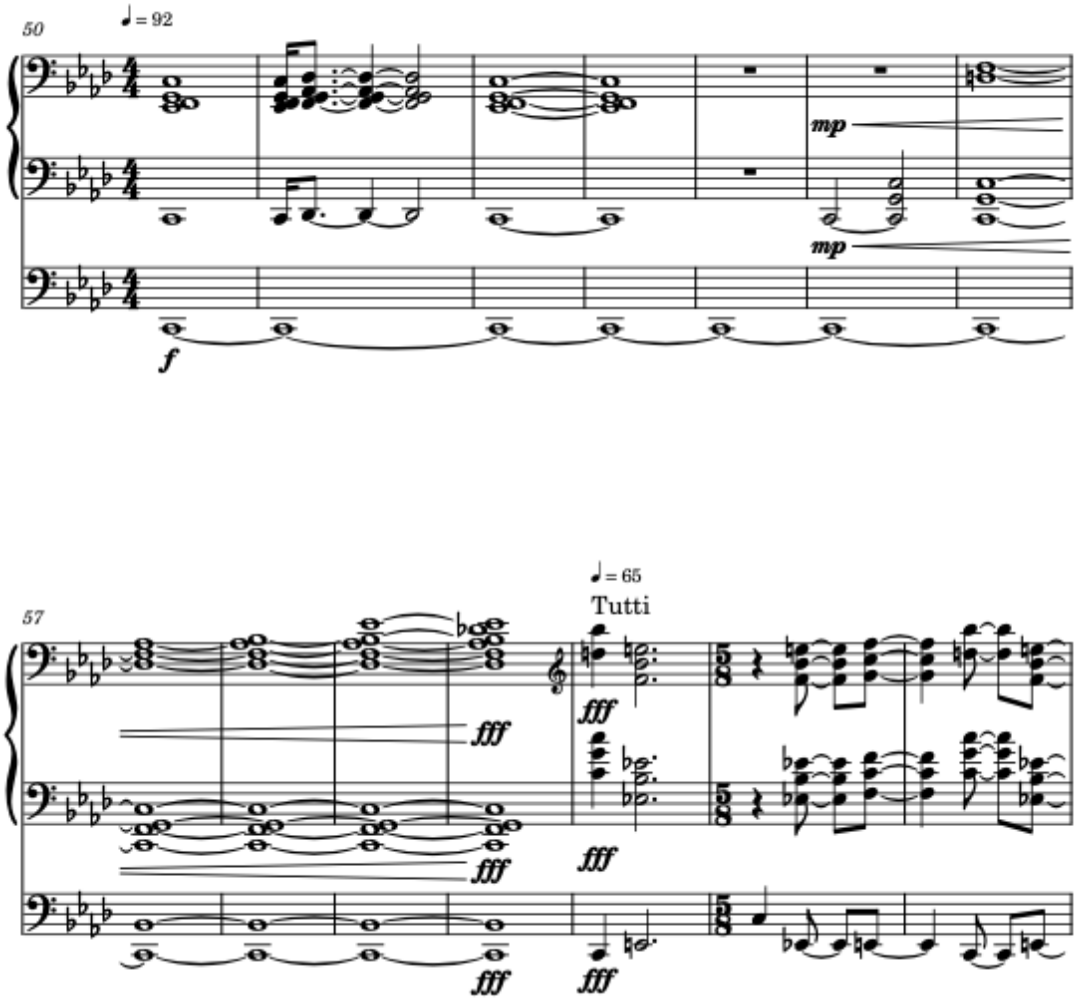
Example 4.6.10: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 42-47



The middle section ends abruptly and leads immediately into the closing section, which is based on the compositional style of the opening section. With a metronome marking of crotchet = 92,

this loud chordal section moves faster than the opening and is based on the opening idea of a building chord (example 4.6.11).

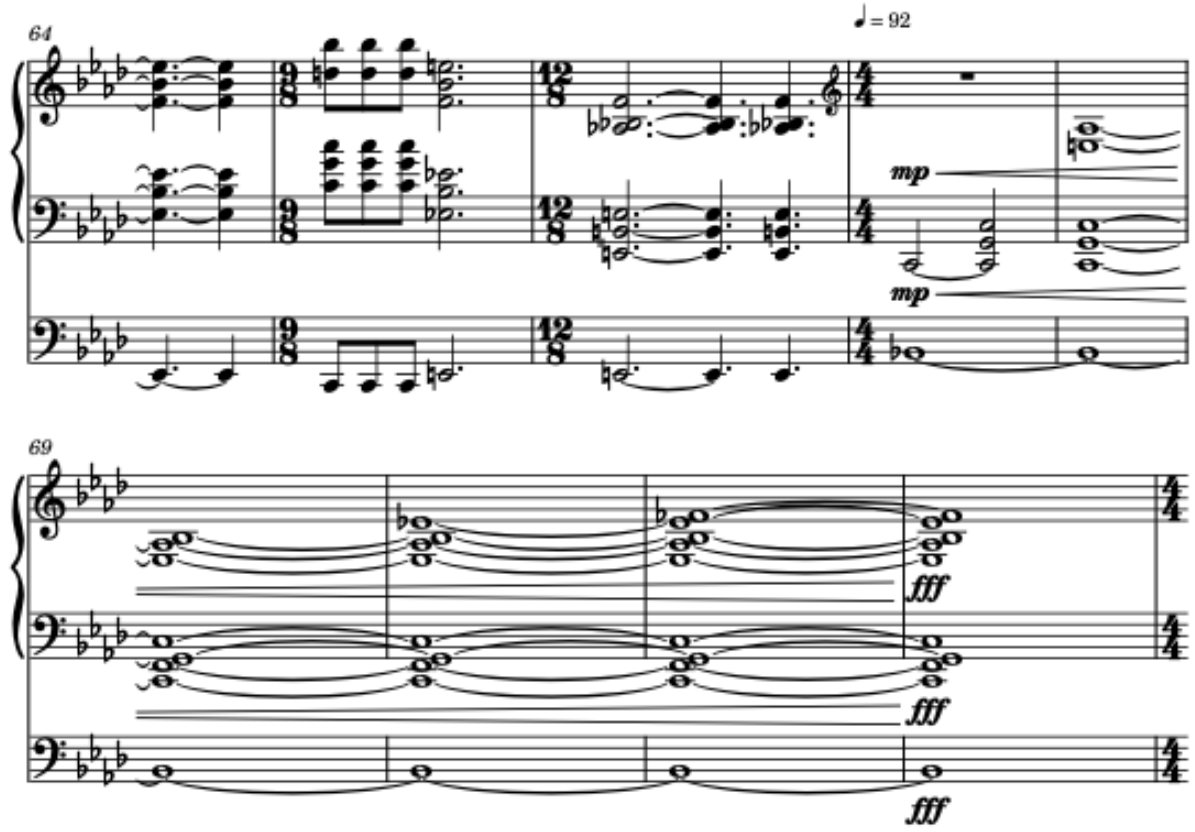
Example 4.6.11: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 50-63



From bar 63, Connolly introduces some moving chords that contain clashing notes, e.g. bar 62 where the E natural in the manuals clashes with the E flat in the pedal. This also occurs in the manuals such as in bar 63 where the E naturals in the right hand are played against the E flats in the left hand. This creates a very jarring effect to the listener, especially considering the particularly loud volume marking of *fff* at this point. The work once again ends with a slowly

building chord (example 4.6.12), identical to the one it began with, which provides a wonderful sense of symmetry within the work and affords *Strength* the suitably powerful ending it deserves.

Example 4.6.12: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 64-72



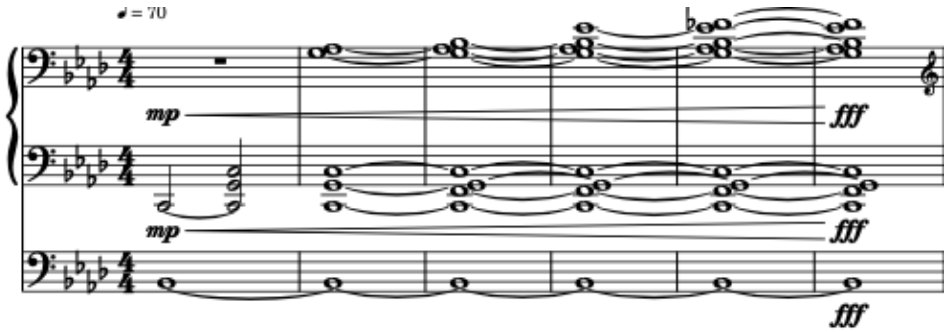
Strength required a very different approach to any of the other pieces mentioned in this chapter. The composition of the work was one which grew and developed between composer and organist. Changes were made along the way as a result of various factors, such as suggestions that were intuitive to an organist upon playing the piece as well as Connolly's own compositional preferences on hearing the work played on an organ for the first time. Connolly's unique compositional language could be said to be reminiscent of some of the compositions of Judith Weir (1954). Like Connolly, Weir has composed for many different mediums and while her

output for solo organ is not extensive, the harmonic language used in *Strength* brought to mind Weir's piece for organ *Ettrick Banks* (1985).

Preparation notes

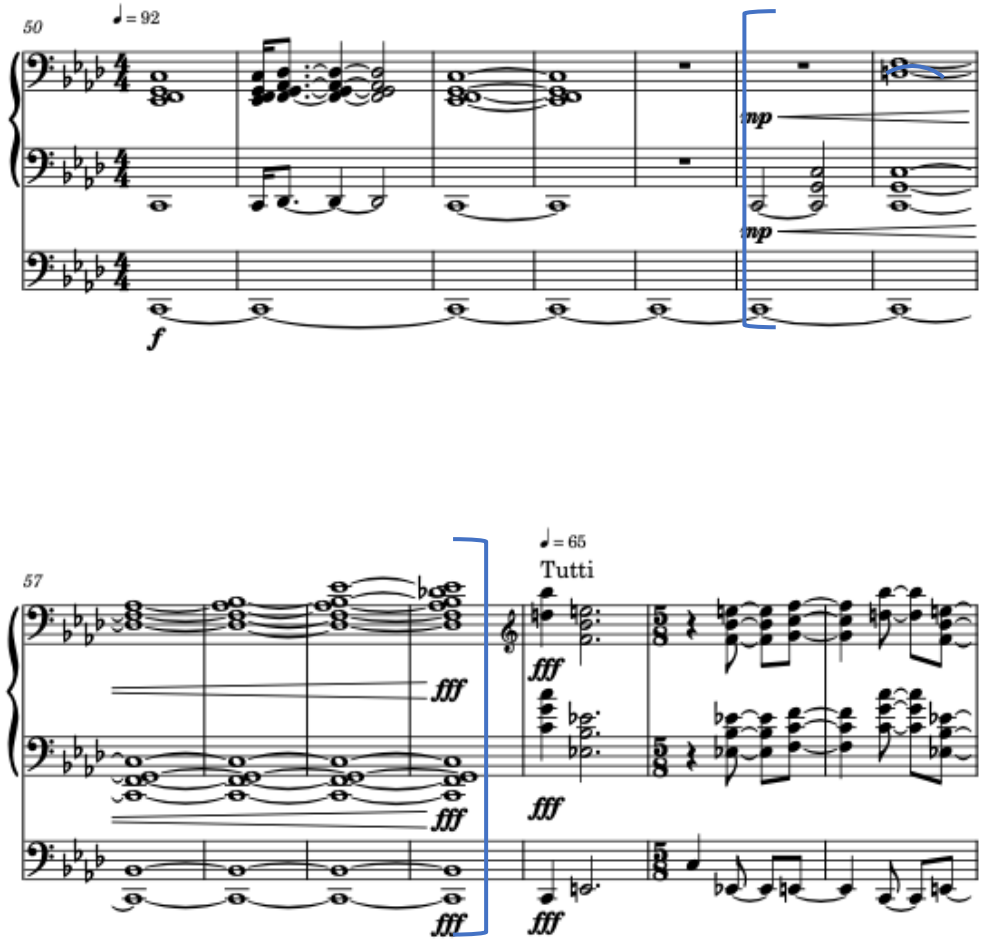
One of the first challenges presented in *Strength* is the wide span of some of the dramatic 'building' chords. The opening chord spans an octave in the left hand, from a C to a C, with an added F and G in between, which should be easily accessible to all performers. The right hand chord is a little more involved, spanning from a G to an F flat, with added notes in between. The addition of an A flat, B flat, and E flat in this right hand chord creates a bit more of a challenge to the smaller handed organist (example 4.6.13). Hand placement on the keyboard comes into consideration here, with the chord being much more easily accessible when played towards the edge of the black notes/flats.

Example 4.6.13: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 1-6



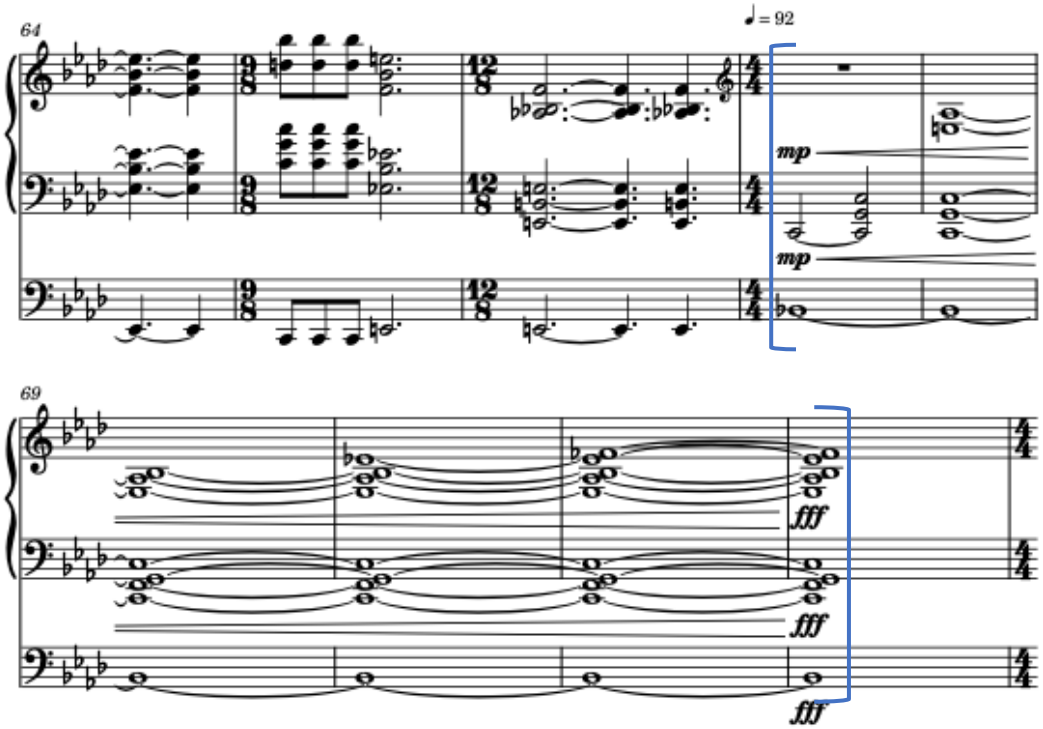
The 'building' chords that occur at the end of the work are more of a challenge, again predominantly for the right hand.

Example 4.6.14: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 50-63



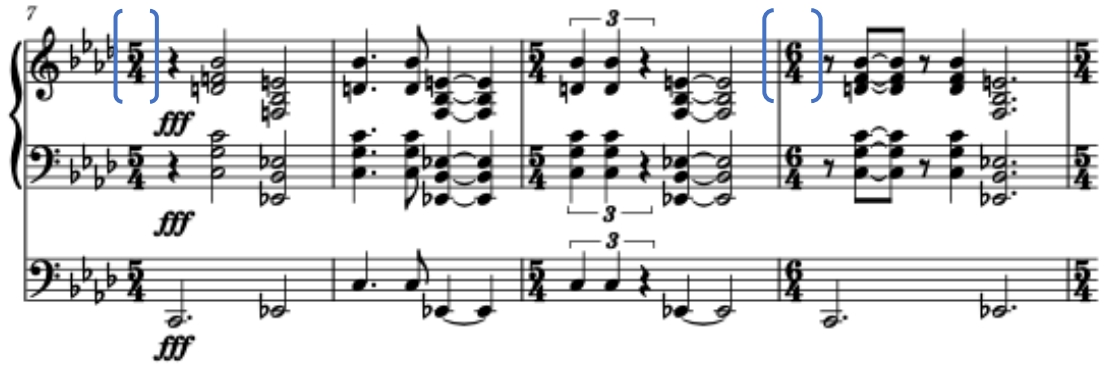
Here the chord spans a range of just over an octave, from a D natural to an E flat, with the greater challenge being the number of notes played in the final version of the chord (six). An easy way for the organist to approach this chord is to take the bottom note of the right hand chord with the left hand thumb, thereby playing both the C and the D with the thumb, and leaving the right hand free to play the remaining five notes of the chord. The final 'building' chord at the very end of the work has a span of an octave in each hand and can therefore be played as is written, but once again it would be advisable to play towards the edge of the black notes (example 4.6.15).

Example 4.6.15: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 64-72



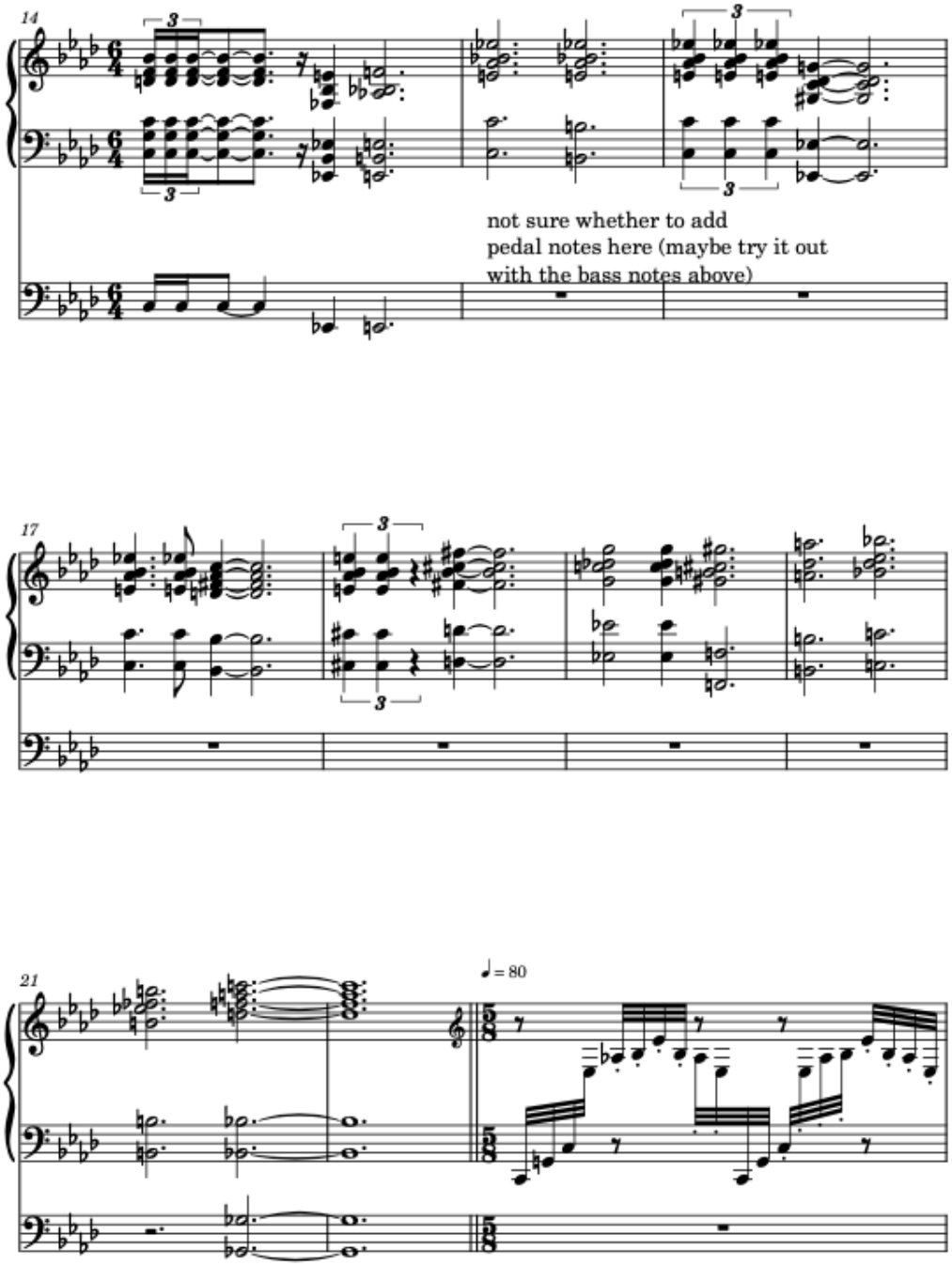
The rest of the chords featured in the opening and closing section do not prove a challenge in terms of hand-span, but the unusual combination of some of the notes do require repetition in order for them to fall naturally under the hand. Bars 7-10 consist of the same chords in differing rhythms so metronome practice is essential here in order to ensure that these rhythms are precise. It is also important to take note of the changing time signatures in this passage (example 4.6.16).

Example 4.6.16: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 7-10



The pedal line is not too challenging in these bars, again just requiring metronome practice to make sure all of the parts fit together. Taking the pedal line on its own would solidify the bass line and the manuals could then be brought in against that. From bars 16-21 the majority of the practice needs to focus on the right hand chords as some of the unusual combination of notes in these chords requires repetition. The left hand octaves do not create too much of a problem but it is advisable to practice any of the bigger jumps in this section (example 4.6.17).

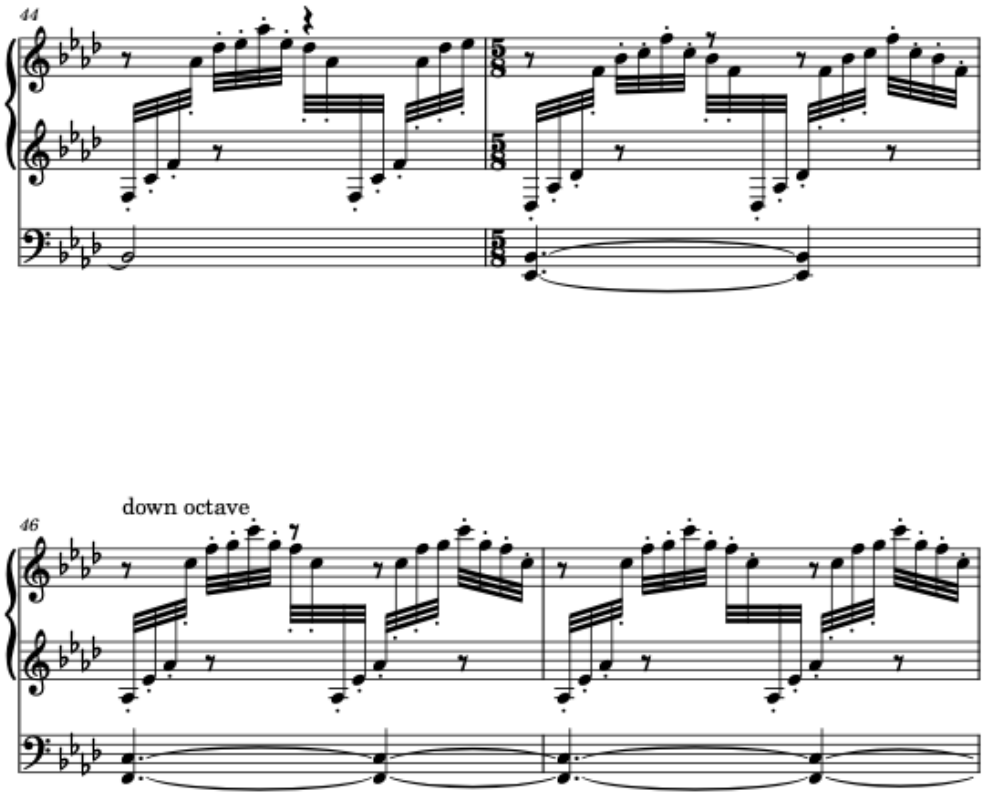
Example 4.6.17: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 14-23



The middle section features arpeggio figurations in the manuals that are played staccato and at a quicker speed. The pedal line drops out for the majority of this section, returning in bar 40 with a long pedal note. Most of the practice for this section should focus on the manual figurations, doing slow practice to gain an understanding of the notes and highlighting any changes in the

figurations. The groups of four demisemiquavers in each bar can also be played as chords to identify which hand will play the notes in each group. Extra practice should be given to the bars where the pedal line makes a return in order to add a sense of independence to both the manual figurations and the pedal fifths (example 4.6.18).

Example 4.6.18: Rose Connolly, *Strength*, Bars 44-47



The closing section requires the same techniques as the beginning of the work. Finally, the changes from one section to another needs to be considered so that the organist does not feel 'caught out' by the sudden shift to new material. Practising these links would be very important and would ensure a seamless transition that would help with the overall shape and flow of the work.

4.7 Conclusion

These contemporary pieces for solo organ demonstrate the range and capabilities of the instrument through varying compositional styles. Each piece is contrasting, capturing the individual character of each composer's musical language while highlighting particular features of the organ. The in-depth analysis provided from a performer's perspective gives crucial insight into the difficulty level of each piece and the preparation notes give vital assistance in how to approach the works.

Jonathan Nangle's *Toccata L'homme armé* is a first-rate example of the contemporary compositions being written for solo organ by the younger generation of Irish composers. *Toccata L'homme armé* conveys a vibrant and playful side to the organ through some intensely difficult rhythmic patterns. The swift rhythmic and motivic changes between each section provide the organist with a wealth of opportunity to explore registrational changes that suit the various characters contained within the music. Coming in at three minutes duration, this work moves quickly through a wide range of material which keeps both performer and listener engaged throughout.

The Secret Rose very successfully conveys the softer, more subdued side of the organ. One common preconception is that the organ cannot play softly, mostly due to the fact that these are substantial instruments which usually take up a lot of space. In this work, Eric Sweeney not only manages to keep the softer tone for the entire piece but he also manages to maintain attention and engagement through the hypnotic rhythms and harmonic language. *The Secret Rose*, while not too demanding technically, is skilfully simplistic in its approach and masterfully executed.

Karanfilo Mome represents the adaptability of the organ and the flexibility it offers to composer and performer when approaching a transcription or work originally written for another medium.

To hear something as unusual as a Bulgarian dance, so far-removed from what many believe is the norm when it comes to music for the organ, highlights the possibility the organ can offer. Fergus Johnston expertly arranges and adapts this haunting piece, while still leaving room for registrational exploration, making it very accessible for the organist.

In *2019.7* Sebastian Adams adeptly demonstrates how the organ can be taken to the extreme in a performance. By using the extended techniques which are unique to this instrument, he brings the organist on a thrilling journey and showcases a completely unique composition. The various motifs that appear throughout the work offer both a sense of recognition and bemusement as ideas are reshaped and transformed. The contrast between the relentless pace of the demisemiquavers and the abrupt stationary chords keeps the listener engaged throughout. This is another work written by the younger generation of Irish composers and really signifies the exciting direction this instrument can be taken in the future. While this is an extremely difficult piece that requires a great amount of time and work, the reward in terms of performance enjoyment far outweighs the effort. *Strength* embodies a number of elements that are crucial to the future of the organ. It was written by a young composer who had no previous knowledge of this instrument and was willing to try writing for the unknown. Understandably, composers can be hesitant to write for an instrument that they may never have encountered or do not have easy access to. This is where the onus lies on the organist to promote and indeed approach composers with a view to composing for this exciting instrument. This link between organist and composer is imperative in forging a rich and varied repertory of organ compositions. Just as it is important to unveil the inner-workings of the organ to the audience, it is also necessary to present this instrument to composers as an appealing and significant prospect. *Strength* is the result of this connection between organist and composer, a work that would not exist without this willingness to promote, explore and take a chance.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The organ is an instrument which is often misunderstood and misrepresented. While on the surface it can appear that this is an instrument with only one stereotypical religious role to play in society, the future of the organ and the different roles it can play are extremely varied and diverse. To gain an understanding of the evolving nature of this complex instrument, a knowledge of its origins as well as its history in Ireland is essential. This thesis draws on these historical components to contextualise the organ of present-day Ireland, as well as the five selected solo compositions by Irish composers.

Whether the origins of the organ date back to the hydraulis of the Third century BCE or extend even further back to the Wicklow Pipes of the Early Bronze Age, the historicism of this instrument is very much a part of its individuality. This thesis starts at the first beginnings of the organ in Ireland and unfolds from there, tracing the extraordinary journey from the vicars choral in Cashel, through theatre organs, to modern innovations and compositions. All these elements weave together to form a rich and engaging lineage that is unique to this instrument.

The organ will always be synonymous with religion and the church, and an exploration of the attitudes surrounding this affiliation is crucial when considering the perception of this instrument. Many believe that the future success of the organ relies upon it achieving autonomy from religion, but as demonstrated in this thesis, this connection has proven immeasurable in relation to the development of the instrument. Organs are a part of the architecture of these venues and this connection cannot be extinguished. Changing the perception of the organ is not dependent on

changing the attitudes surrounding religion and the church, but on cultivating a true appreciation for the facility of this instrument.

An important part of the history of the organ in Ireland is the people who contributed to its heritage, and a select few are mentioned in this thesis. From the Belgian and German organists who enhanced numerous Irish parishes with their skillset, to the Irish organists who cultivated a deeper understanding of the instrument; these people are as much a part of the story as the instruments themselves.

The advent of recordings and the streaming of concerts from the organ loft have transformed perceptions of the instrument and lifted the veil on the innerworkings of the organ. Contemporary pieces that utilise the full scope of this instrument, through compositional writing that avoids some of the more clichéd styles typically associated with organ music, are heightening awareness of what this unique instrument has to offer. This thesis focuses on the wealth of compositions written for organ by Irish composers, leaving a record of the works to date. This is an instrument that has advanced from ancient beginnings to the most avant-garde compositions and will continue to thrive for many more years to come.

> ‘The organ is in truth the grandest, the most daring, the most magnificent of all instruments invented by human genius.
> It is a whole orchestra in itself.
> It can express anything in response to a skilled touch.’ Honoré de Balzac

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WOOFYT see < https://www.woofyt.org>

Appendix A: List of Irish Solo Organ Compositions

Composer	Work	Year
Sebastian Adams	Madam Dial Was Livid	2010 rev. 2011
Sebastian Adams	Work for Organ	2013
Derek Ball	Sunday Morning	2009
David Bremner	Sweelinck Fractal	2014
John Buckley	At the Round Earths Imagin'd Corners	1985
John Buckley	Carillon	2003
Gerald Barry	The Chair	1994
Gerald Barry	Sur les Pointes	1981 Walter
Beckett	Organ Voluntary	1985
Melanie Brown	Cantus Firmus and Three Reflections upon the art of the Master	2000
Irene Buckley	Suaimhneas	2009
David Byers	Partita: Jesu, Meine Freude	1968 rev. 1976
David Byers	Cherries in the Round	1975
David Byers	The Harp that once…	1976
David Byers	Pibroch: Dunfermling Rune	1978
David Byers	Dragons	1979
David Byers	Verses	1980-1982
David Byers	A pipe Tune for Ann	1982
David Byers	Magnificat	1983-1985
David Byers	Tuba Mirum	1984
David Coonan	Choral Phantasie	2014
Rhona Clarke	Prelude	2010 rev. 2012

Frank Corcoran	Sonata for Organ	1973
Jerome de Bromhead	Moto Impetuo	1977
Raymond Deane	Idols	1971 rev. 1996
Raymond Deane	Agalma	1978
Raymond Deane	Two Silhouettes	1988
Raymond Deane	Apostille	1993
Donnacha Dennehy	Work for Organ	1992 rev. 1998
Donnacha Dennehy	Mad, Avid, Sad	2000
Eoghan Desmond	4 Simple Chorale Preludes	2016
Eoghan Desmond	In the Timbrels and Dances	2018
Roger Doyle	Suite from Ignotum per Ignotius	1982
Eibhlís Farrell	Study	1985
Eibhlís Farrell	Play	1985
Eibhlís Farrell	Dancing	1988
Paul Flynn	Sporapheum	2001
John Gibson	Prayer of Thanksgiving	1977-1978
John Gibson	A Fanfare for Organ	2006
John Gibson	Triskel Toccata	2010
John Godfrey	‘for David Adams’	2003
Paul Hayes	Coda	1975
Philip Hammond	Sonata for Organ	1983
Fergus Johnston	Three Bulgarian Dances	2007
Mary Kelly	Brug	1990
Colin Mawby	Triptych for Organ	1996
Colin Mawby	Organ Sonata No. 1	2000

Colin Mawby	Toccata Festiva	n.d.
Patrick McCormack	Organ Fantasy	2011
Ben McHugh	Eto	2012
Ben McHugh	Chromatos	2014
John McLachlan	Here be Dragons	2001 rev. 2003
John McLachlan	Soft Landing	2009
John McLachlan	Under the Flagstones	2018
Scott McLaughlin	Music in Two Dimensions No. 2a	2009
Daniel McNulty	Reverie	1955
Daniel McNulty	Variations and Fugue on a Celtic Ave Verum	1955
Alan Mills	Variation on a theme of Couperin	1997
Alan Mills	A Wedding Postlude	1981 rev. 2001
Ryan Molloy	For a Lone Piper	2012
Jonathan Nangle	BACH est mort	2002
Jonathan Nangle	Toccata L'homme armé	2014
Kevin O'Connell	Chorale, Toccata and Fugue	2001
Eoin O'Keeffe	Seasca 4	2019
Martin O'Leary	In Memoriam	1981
Martin O'Leary	Sonata for Organ	1981 rev. 1986
Martin O'Leary	Divisions	1988
Eric Skytterholm Egan	Through the Barbacans	2014
Eric Sweeney	Movement for Organ	1977
Eric Sweeney	Processions	1981
Eric Sweeney	Introduction and Passacaglia	1988

Eric Sweeney	The Bright Seraphim	1992 rev. 1994
Eric Sweeney	Adventus	1998
Eric Sweeney	Le Cercle de Lumiere	1999
Eric Sweeney	The Secret Rose	2002
Eric Sweeney	The Widening Gyre	2003
Eric Sweeney	Sinfonia	2006
Eric Sweeney	Abendlied	2006
Eric Sweeney	Three Movements for Organ from the mass of St Patrick	2006
Andrew Synnott	Lúb	1992
Andrew Synnott	Composition on Three Staves	1997
Charles Villiers Stanford	Numerous works for organ	n.d.
Gerard Victory	Resurrection Voluntary	1979
Gerard Victory	Recessional Prelude	1982
Gerard Victory	A Lyric Prelude	1985
James Wilson	Music for Mechanical Organ	1985
Ian Wilson	History is Vanity	1999
John Wolf Brennan	Yet another different train	n.d.
John Wolf Brennan	Pandämonium	1995

Appendix B: List of former organists of St Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedrals

St Patrick's Cathedral Organists:[1]

1509 William Herbit

1555 William Browne

1606 Anthony Willis

1631 Randal Jewett

1661 John Hawkshaw

1686 Thomas Godfrey

1689 Thomas Finell

1691 William Isaac

1695 Robert Hodge

1698 Daniel Roseingrave

1727 Ralph Roseingrave

1748 Richard Broadway

1761 George Walsh

1765 Henry Walsh

1769 Michael Sandys

1773 Samuel Murphy

1780 Philip Cogan

1806 John Mathews

1827 William Warren

1828 Francis Robinson

1830 John Robinson

1844 Richard Cherry

1845 William Henry White

1852 Sir Robert P. Stewart

1861 William Murphy

1879 Charles George Marchant

1920 George H P Hewson

1960 William Sydney Grieg

1977 John Dexter

2002 Peter Barley

2010 Stuart Nicholson

Christ Church Cathedral Organists:[2]

1595 John Fermor

1608 Thomas Bateson

1631 Randal Jewett

1639 Benjamin Rogers

1646 John Hawkshaw

1688 Thomas Godfrey

1689 Thomas Morgan

1692 Peter Isaac

1694 Thomas Finell

1698 Daniel Roseingrave

[1] 'St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin', <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Patrick%27s_Cathedral,_Dublin> [accessed 4 May 2021]

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1727 Ralph Roseingrave

1747 George Walsh

1765 Richard Woodward

1777 Samuel Murphy

1780 Langrishe Doyle

1805 William Warren

1816 Francis Robinson

1834 John Robinson

1844 Sir Robert Prescott Stewart

1894 John Horan

1906 James Fitzgerald

1913 Charles Herbert Kitson

1920 Thomas Henry Weaving

1950 Leslie Henry Bret Reed

1955 Arnold Thomas McKiernan

1980 Peter Sweeney

1992 Mark Duley

2003 Judy Martin

2010 Judith Gannon (Locum)

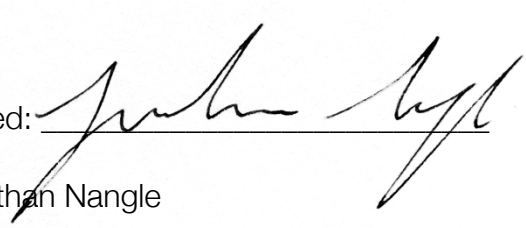
2012 Ian Keatley

2020 Tom Little

28th June 2022

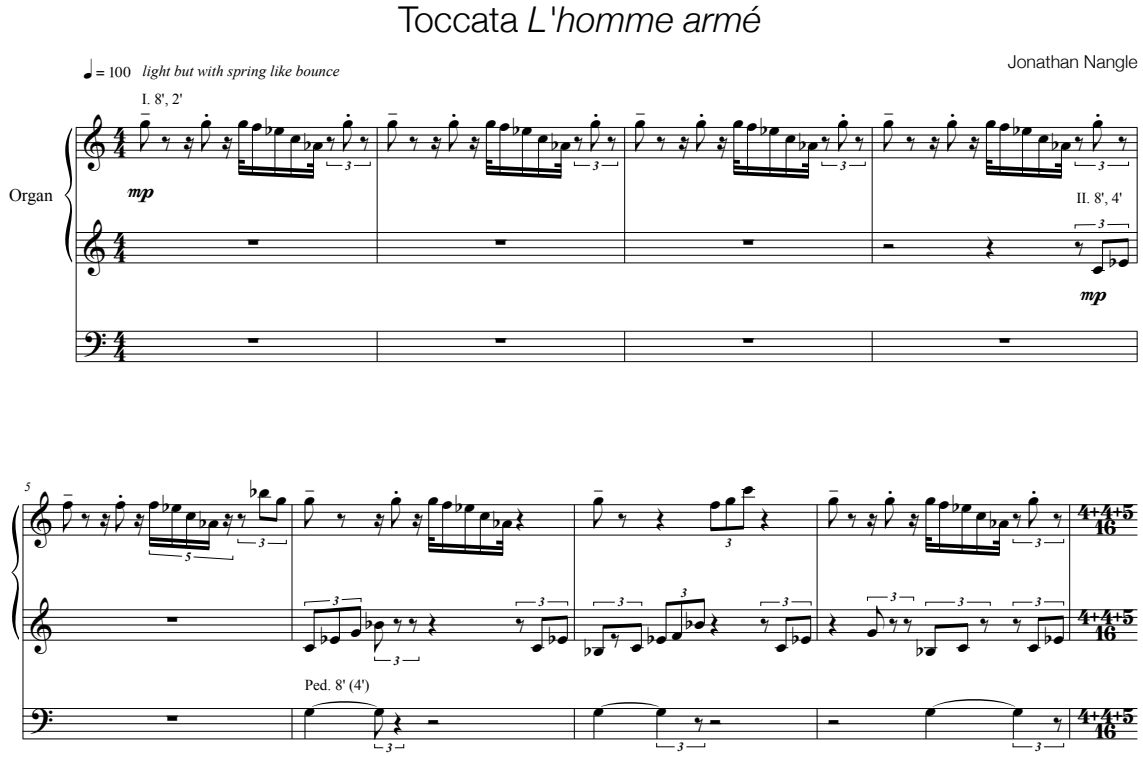
To Whom It May Concern:

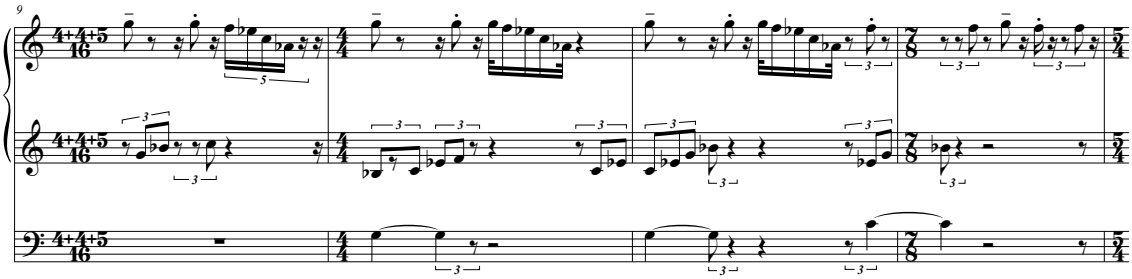
I hereby give permission for my score, *Toccata L'homme armé* (2014) for Organ, to be included in the print and digital copies of Patrice Keegan's thesis submitted to the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Please note that this is for research purposes only. Should an individual wish to perform the piece, a performance copy can be purchased from the Contemporary Music Centre Ireland by following the web URL https://www.cmc.ie/music/toccata-lhomme-arme.

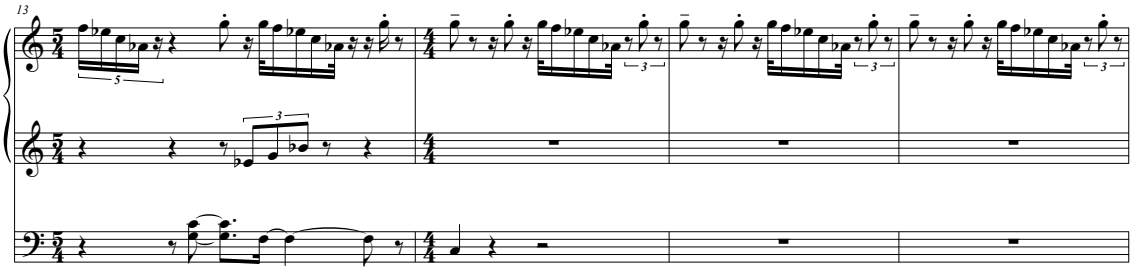
Signed: 

Jonathan Nangle

Appendix C: Scores







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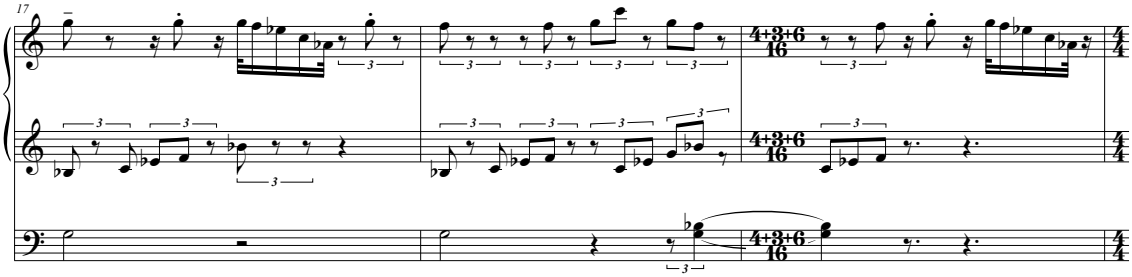

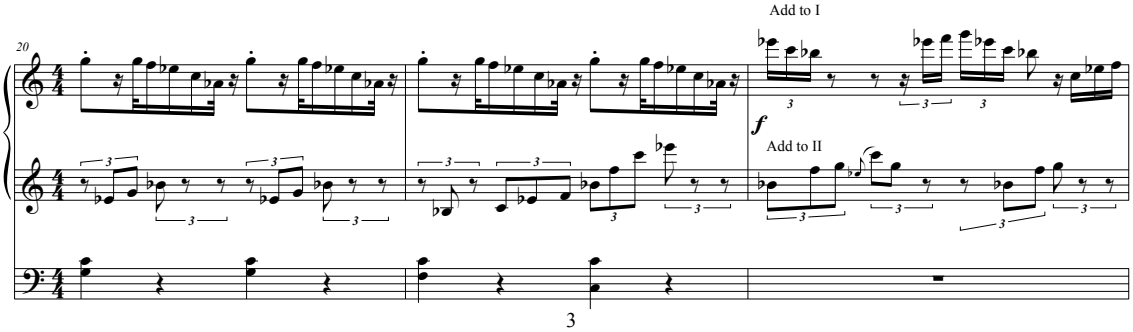

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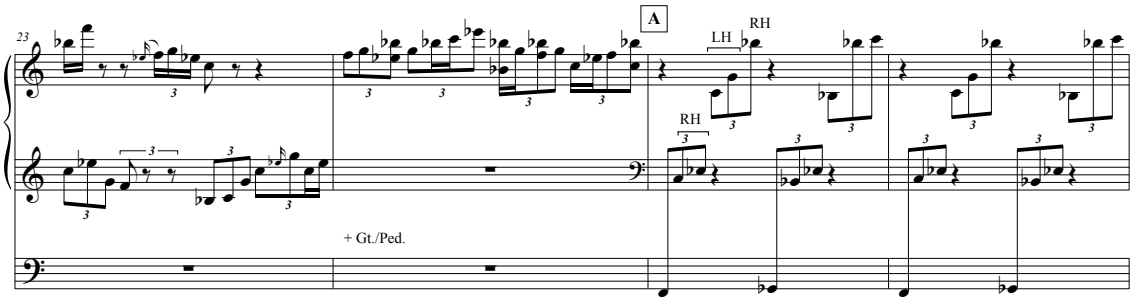
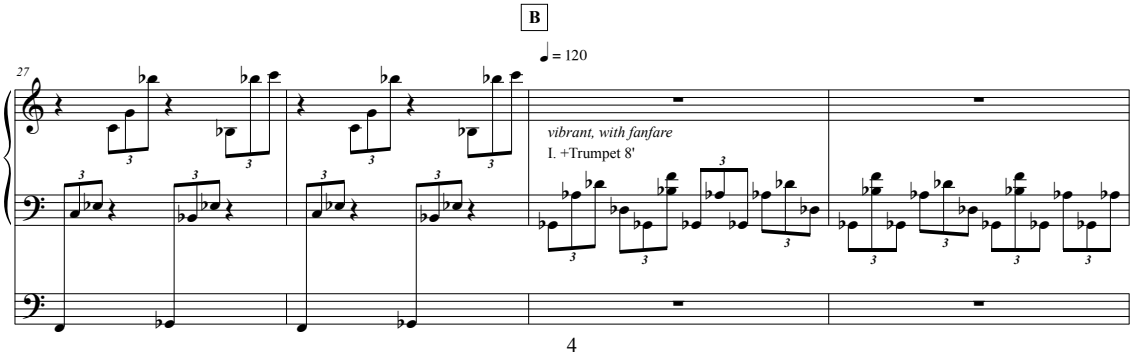
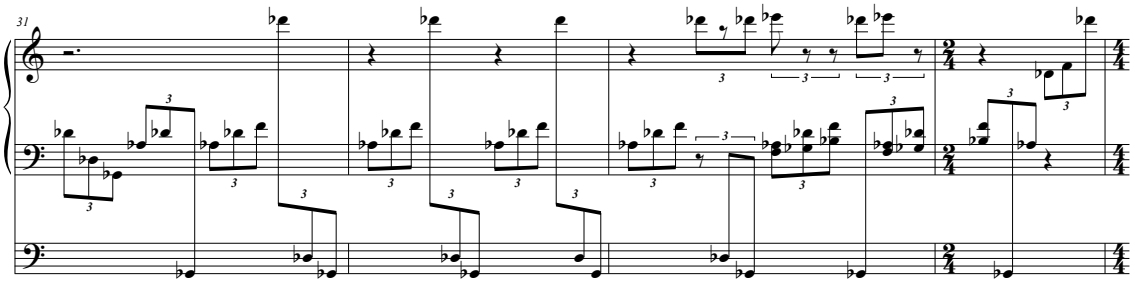
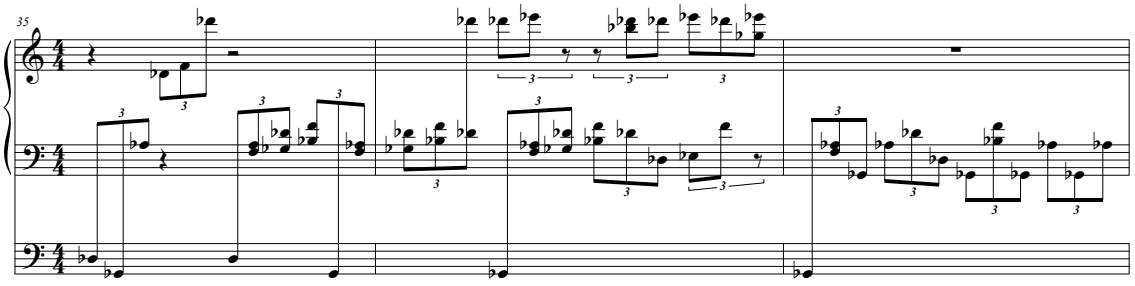

A
23
LH
RH
RH
+ Gt./Ped.

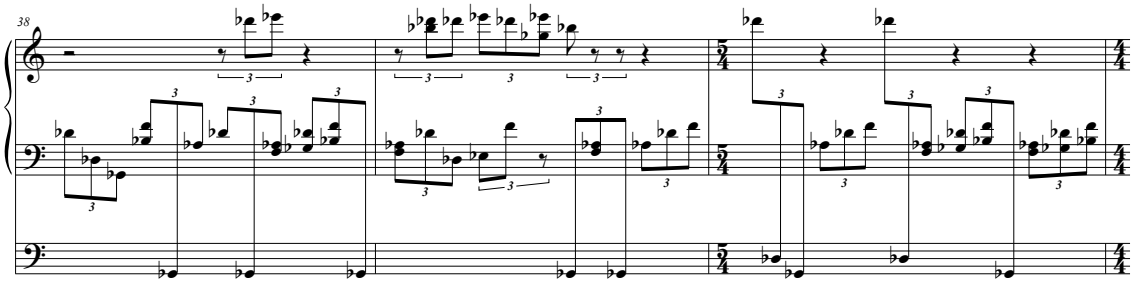

B
27
♩ = 120
vibrant, with fanfare
I. +Trumpet 8'

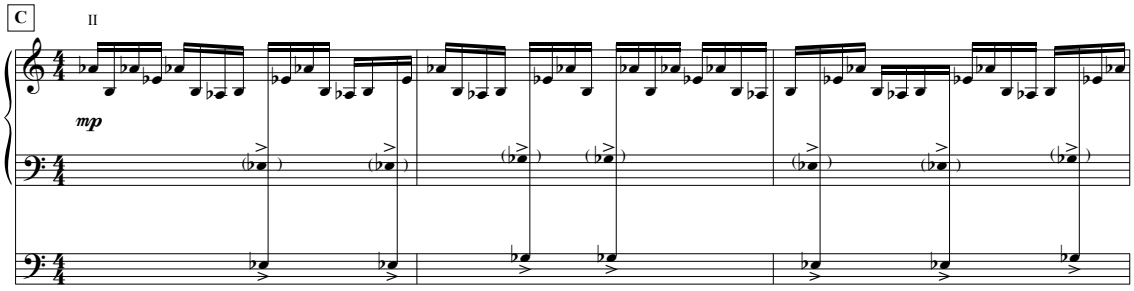
4


31


35

5





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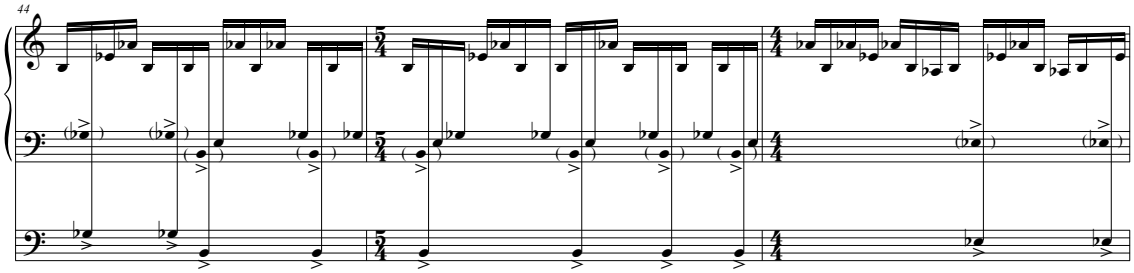

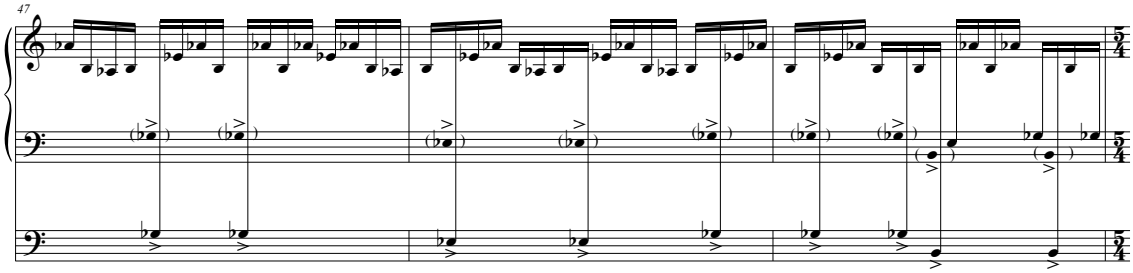

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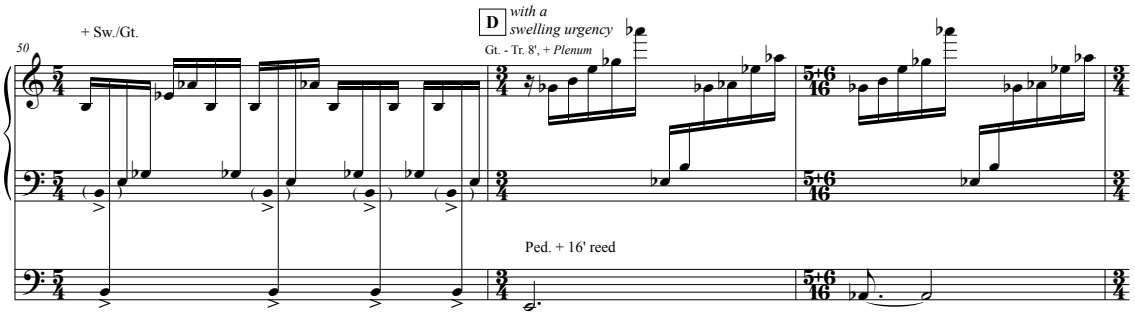
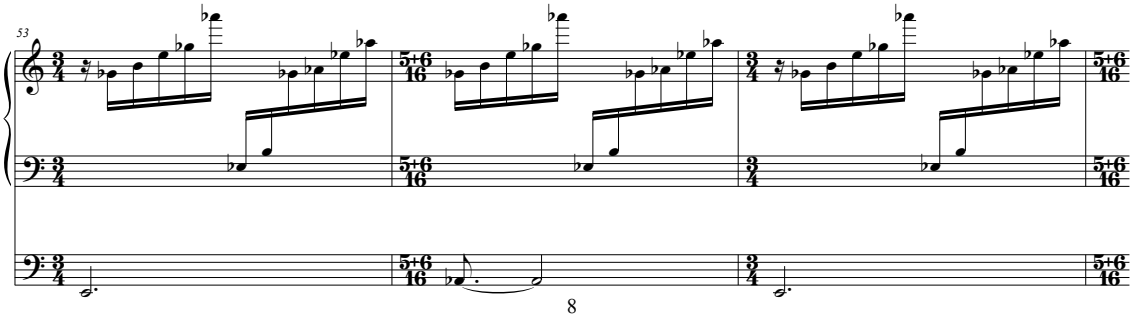

+ Sw./Gt.
50
D
with a
swelling urgency
Gt. - Tr. 8', + Plenum
Ped. + 16' reed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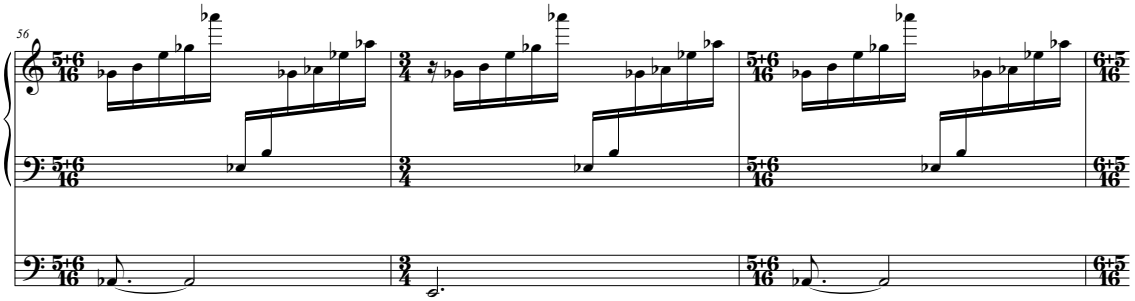
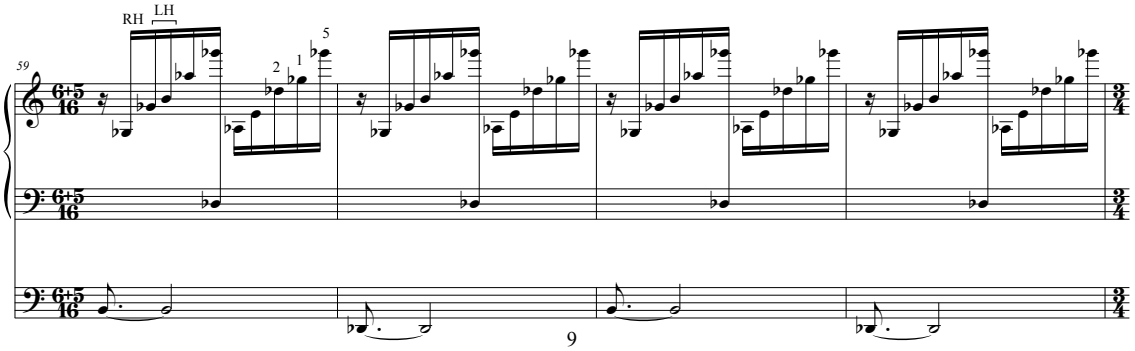
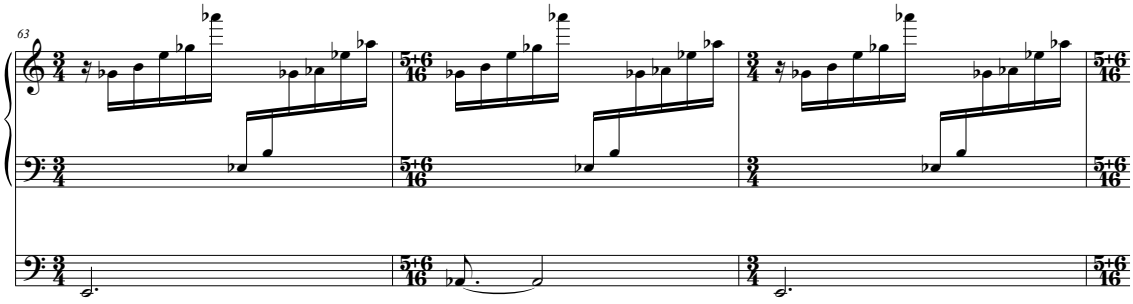
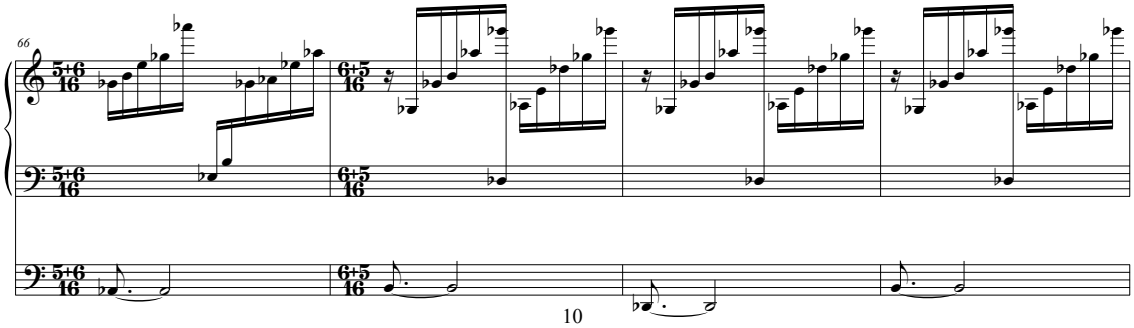
8


56


59
RH
LH
5
2
1

9





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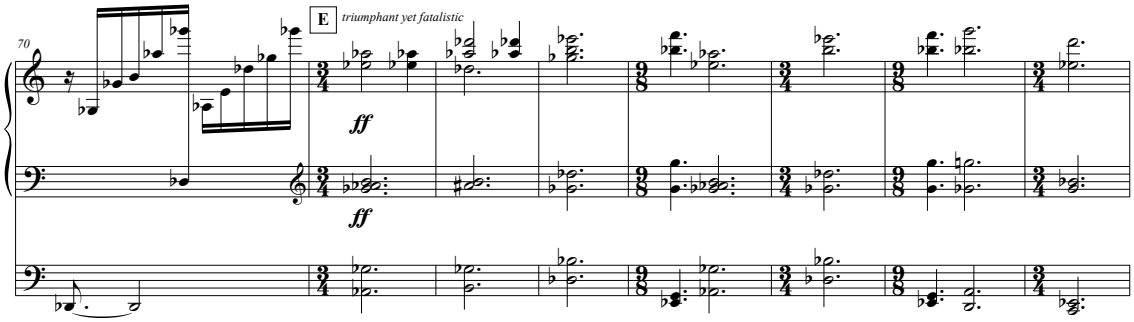

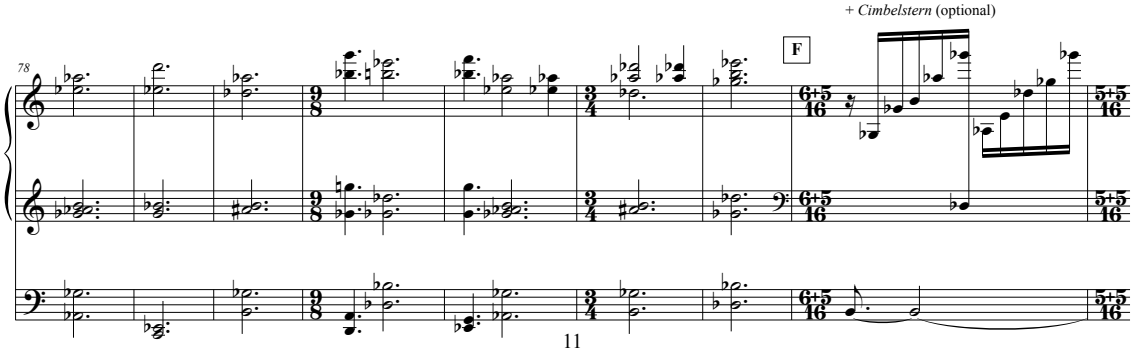

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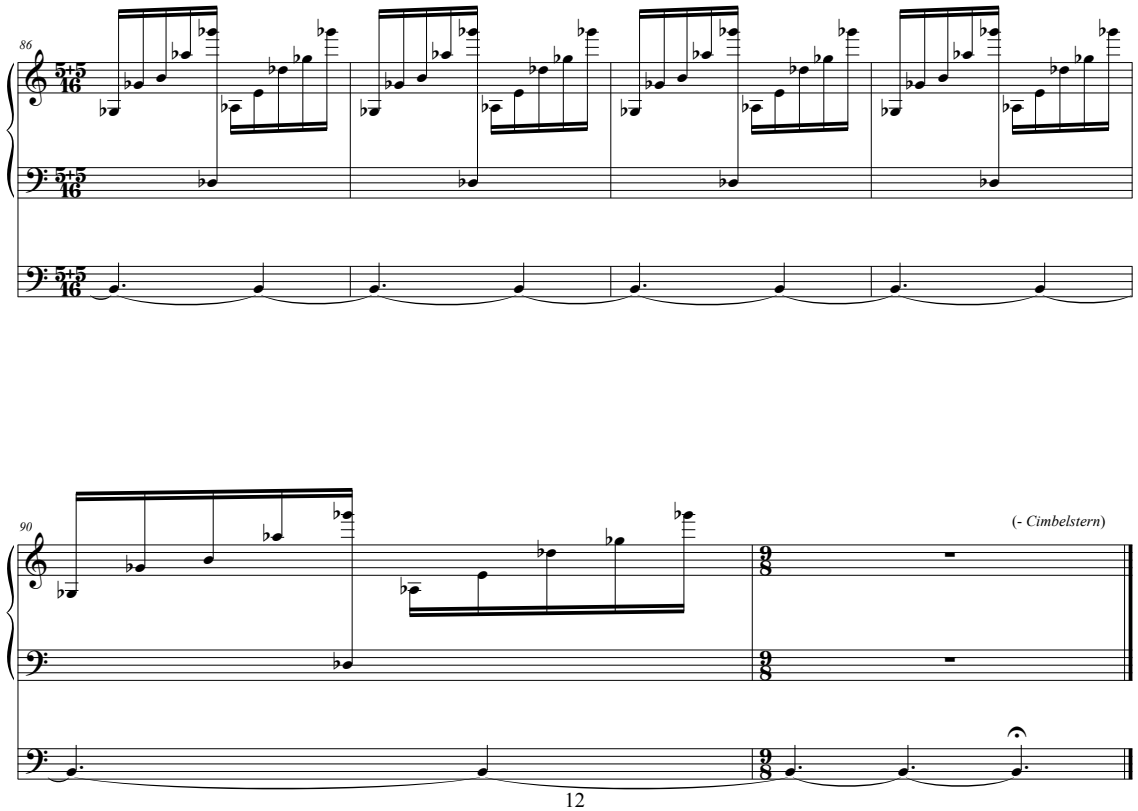


12

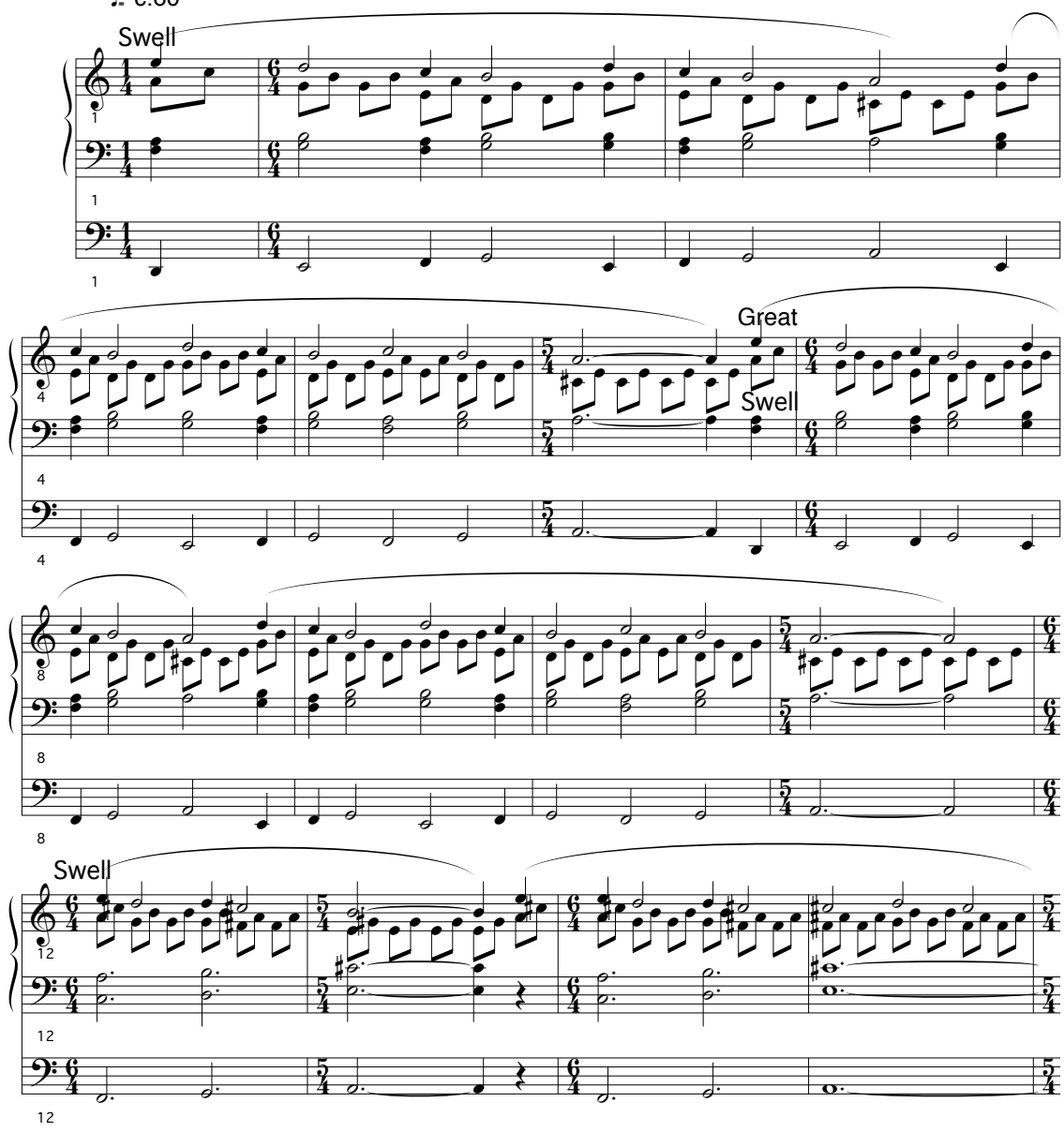
The Secret Rose

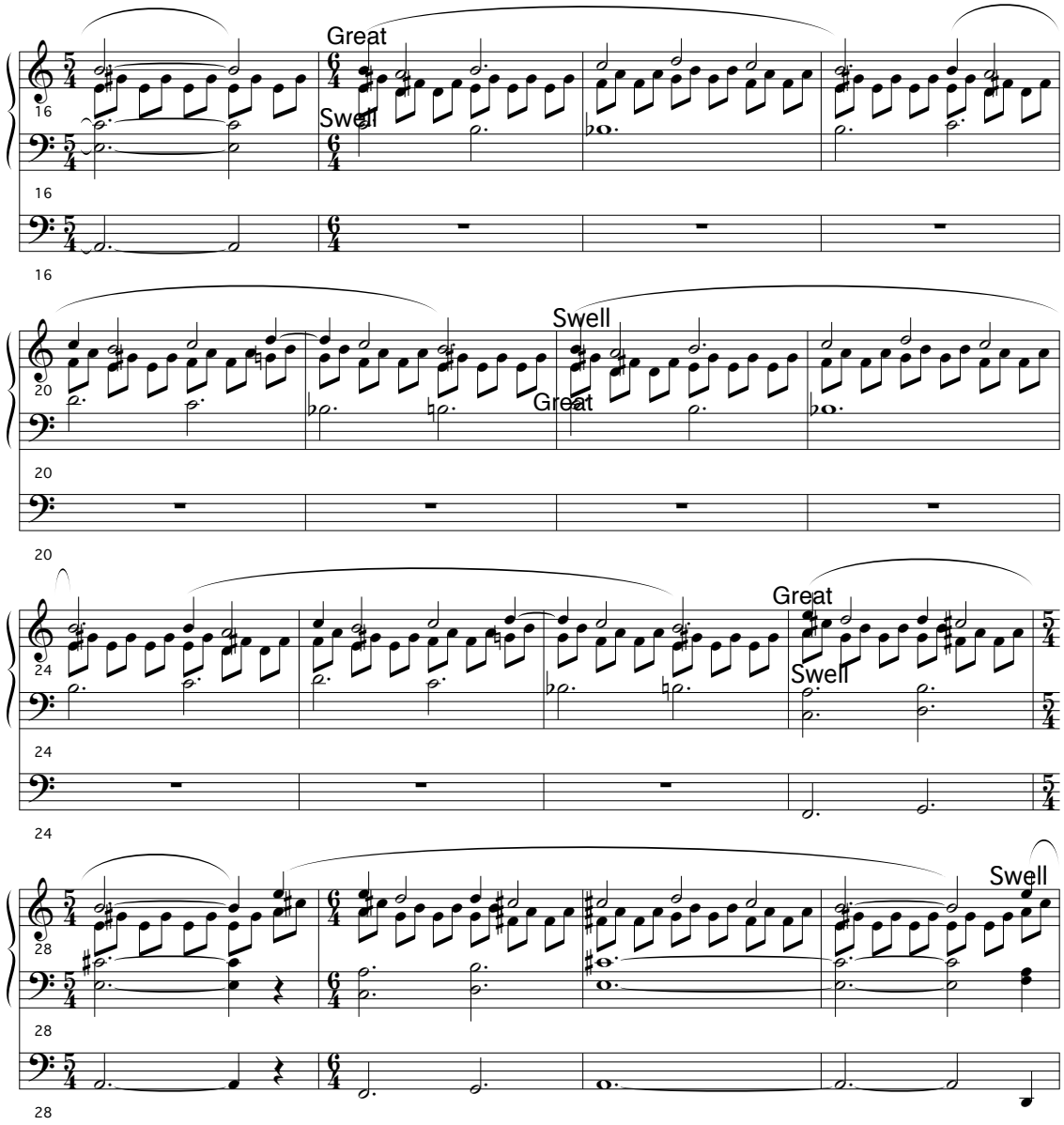
Swell: soft 8'
Great: 8'flute
Pedal: 16'+Swell to Pedal

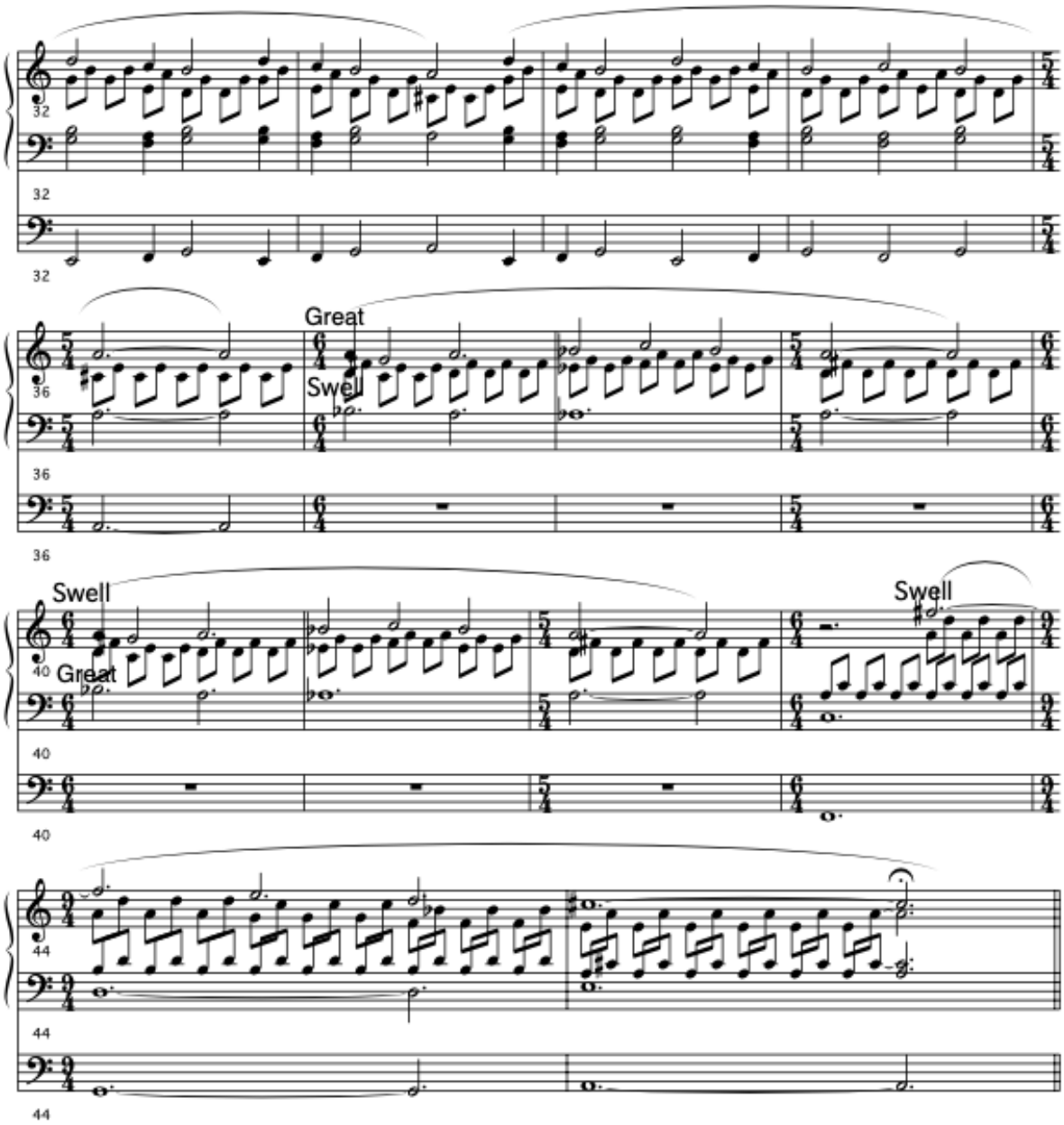
for organ

Eric Sweeney

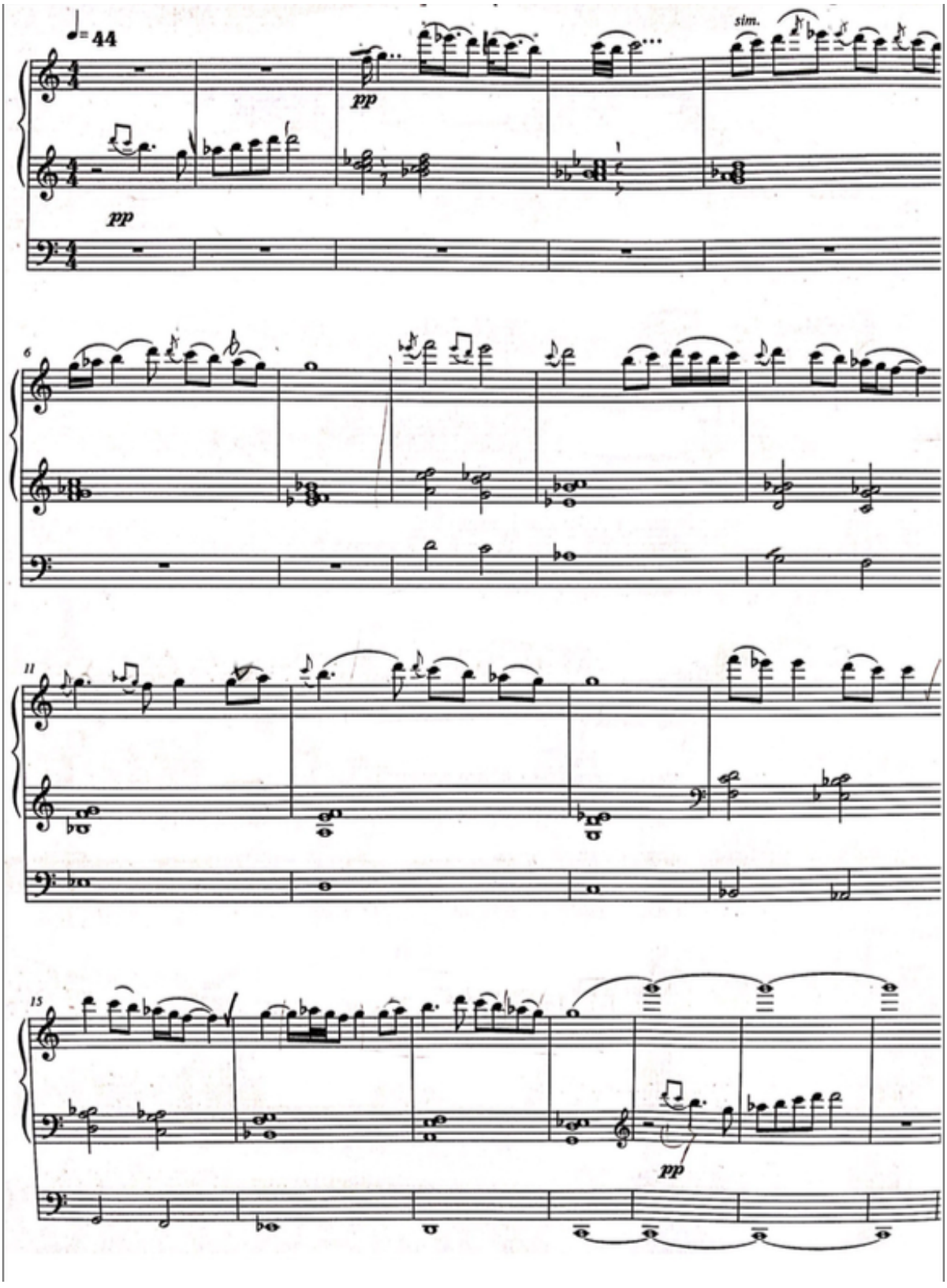
♩. c.60




Great
Swell
Swell
Great
Great
Swell
Swell



Karanfilo Mome


♩= 44
pp
pp
sim.
6
11
15
pp

Commissioned by David and Mary Adams

2019.7

sketch: 14/2/19; started in sib 24/6/19 S. Adams (v: 12/06/2020)

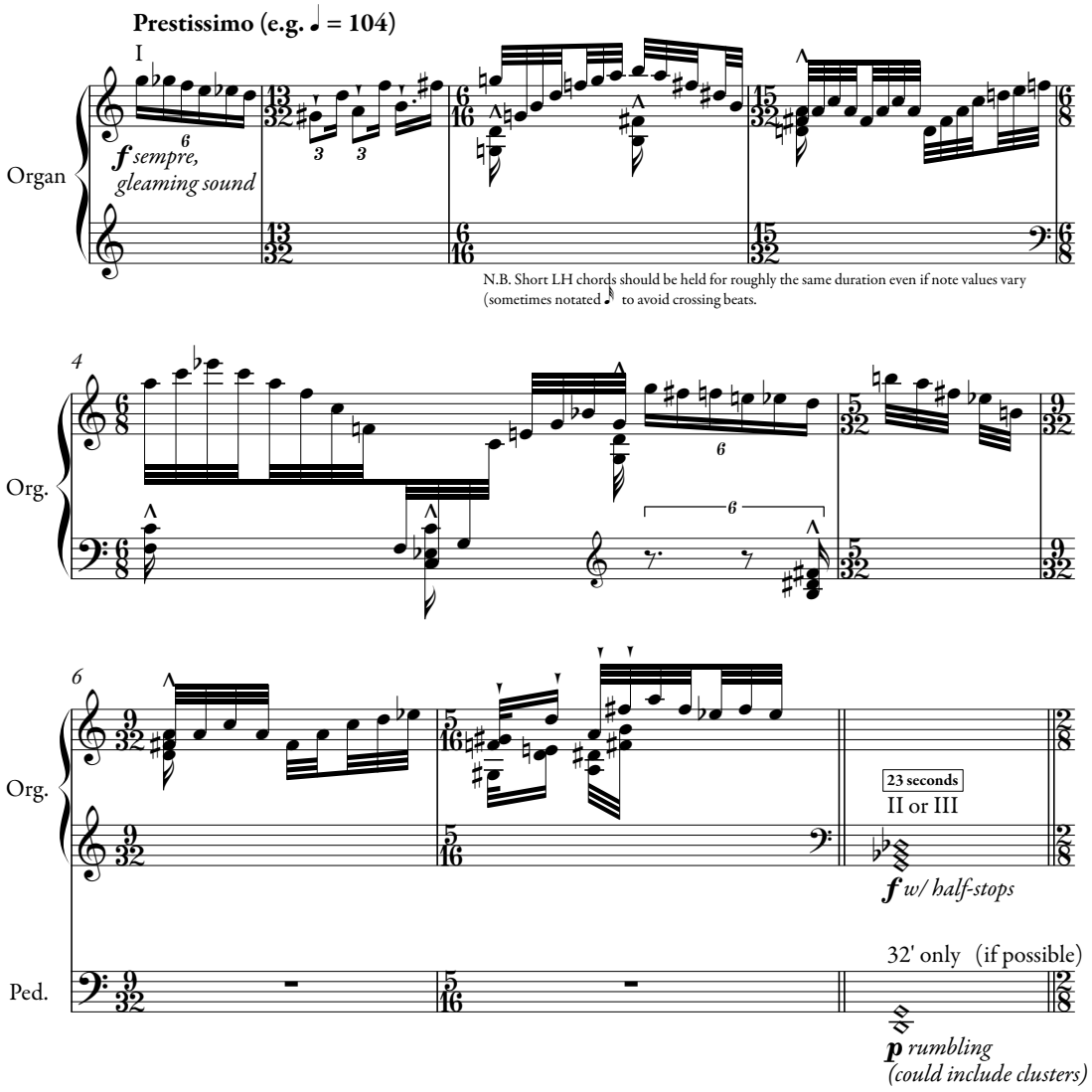
Performance Notes:

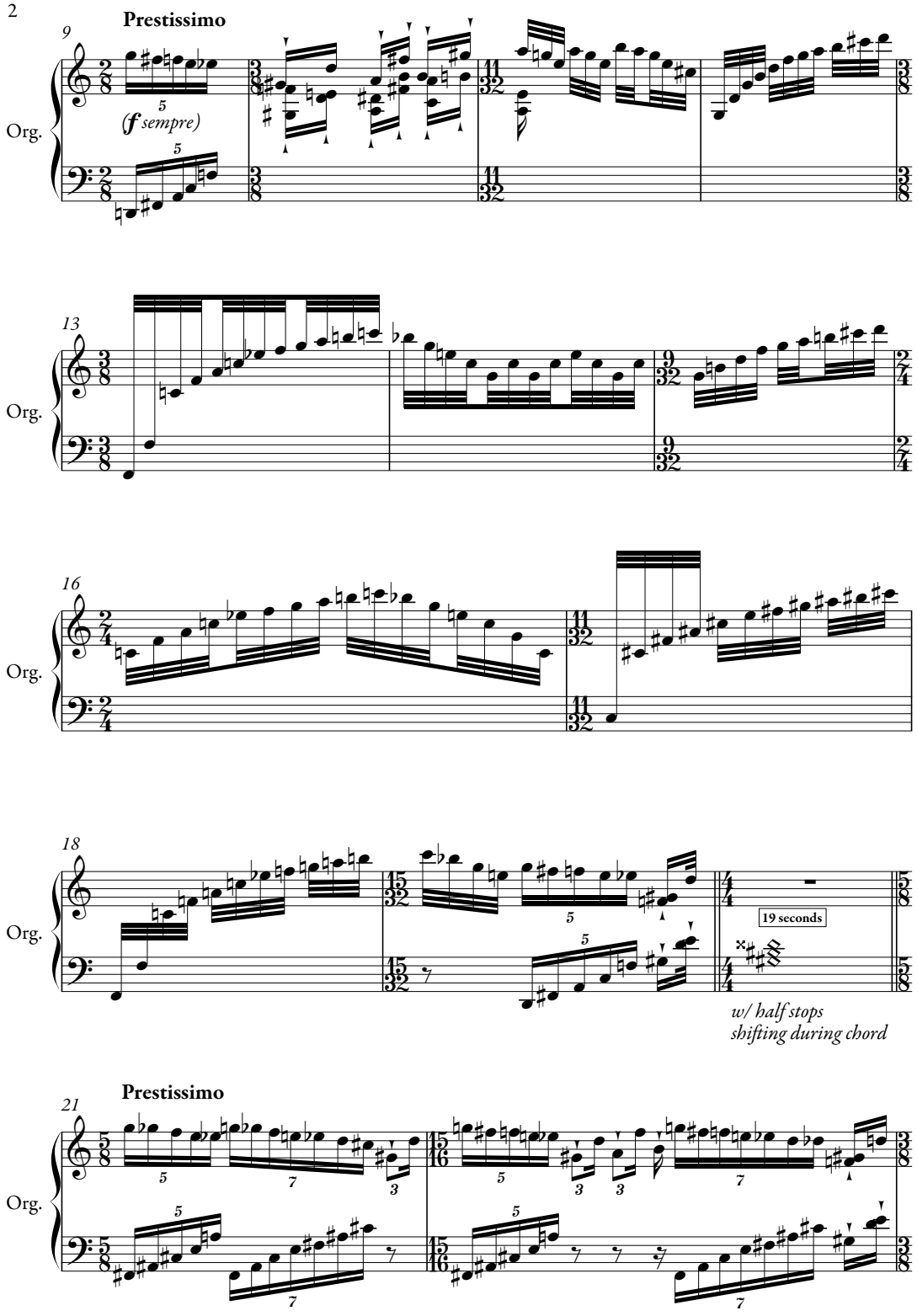
Diamond noteheads (𝅝) indicate notes played in time-based tempo (indicated in seconds).

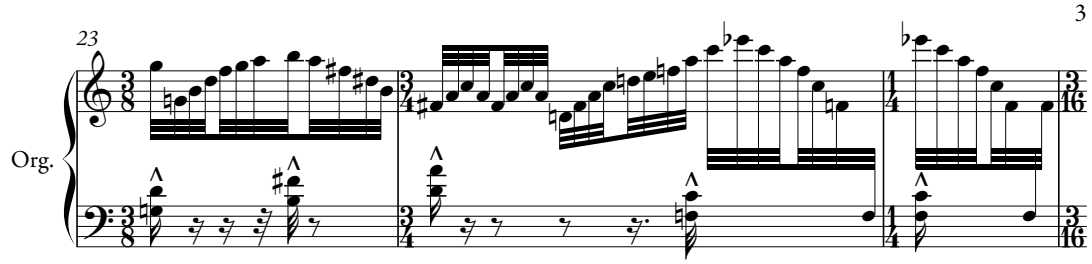
These chords should generally be played with a "fascinating", pedal-heavy sound, and each time a chord like this appears a new sound should be found. Some suggestions are given in the score, but the player should feel free to ignore and use their imagination. The notes in these chords can also be modified as long as the bass note is kept.

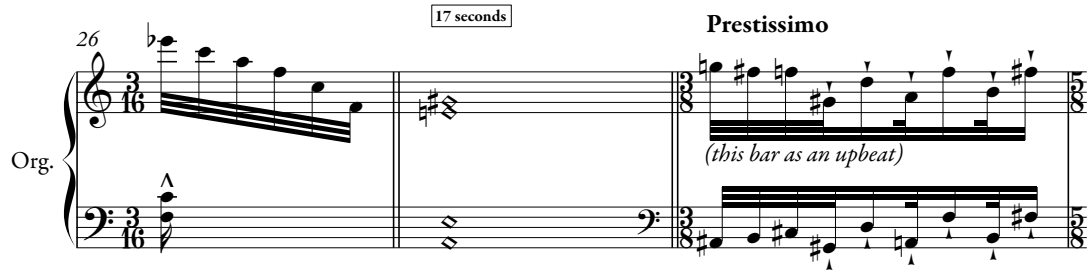
The basic structure of the piece pits the breathless overtone arpeggios (etc.) against gradually shorter, ascending diamond-note chords. The structural integrity of the piece relies on the listener being aware of this A/B alternation - hence the directions above.

The breathless material should have a gleaming sound (mixtures), with changes of registration allowed but mostly not specified.

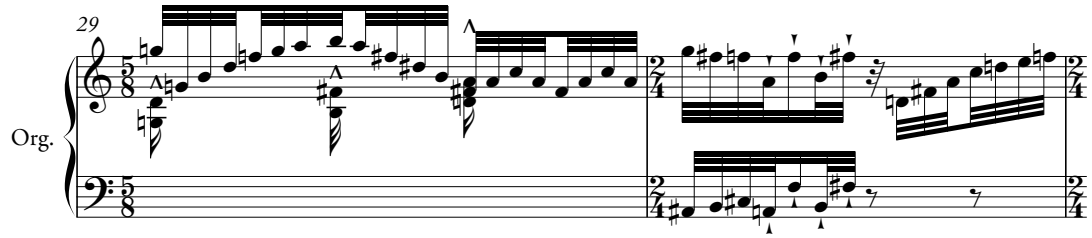


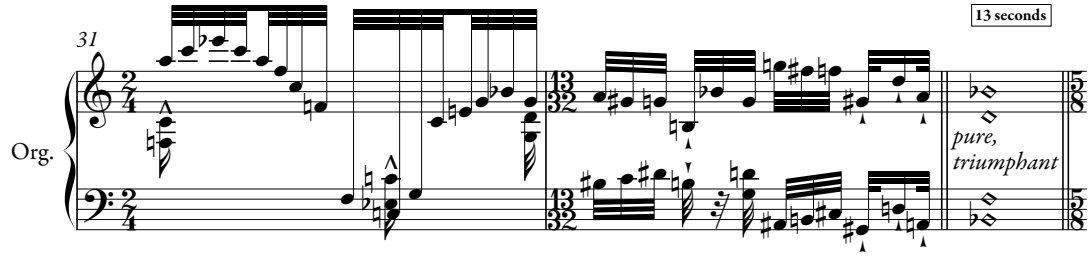

Prestissimo
9
Org.
(f sempre)
13
16
18
19 seconds
w/ half stops
shifting during chord
Prestissimo
21

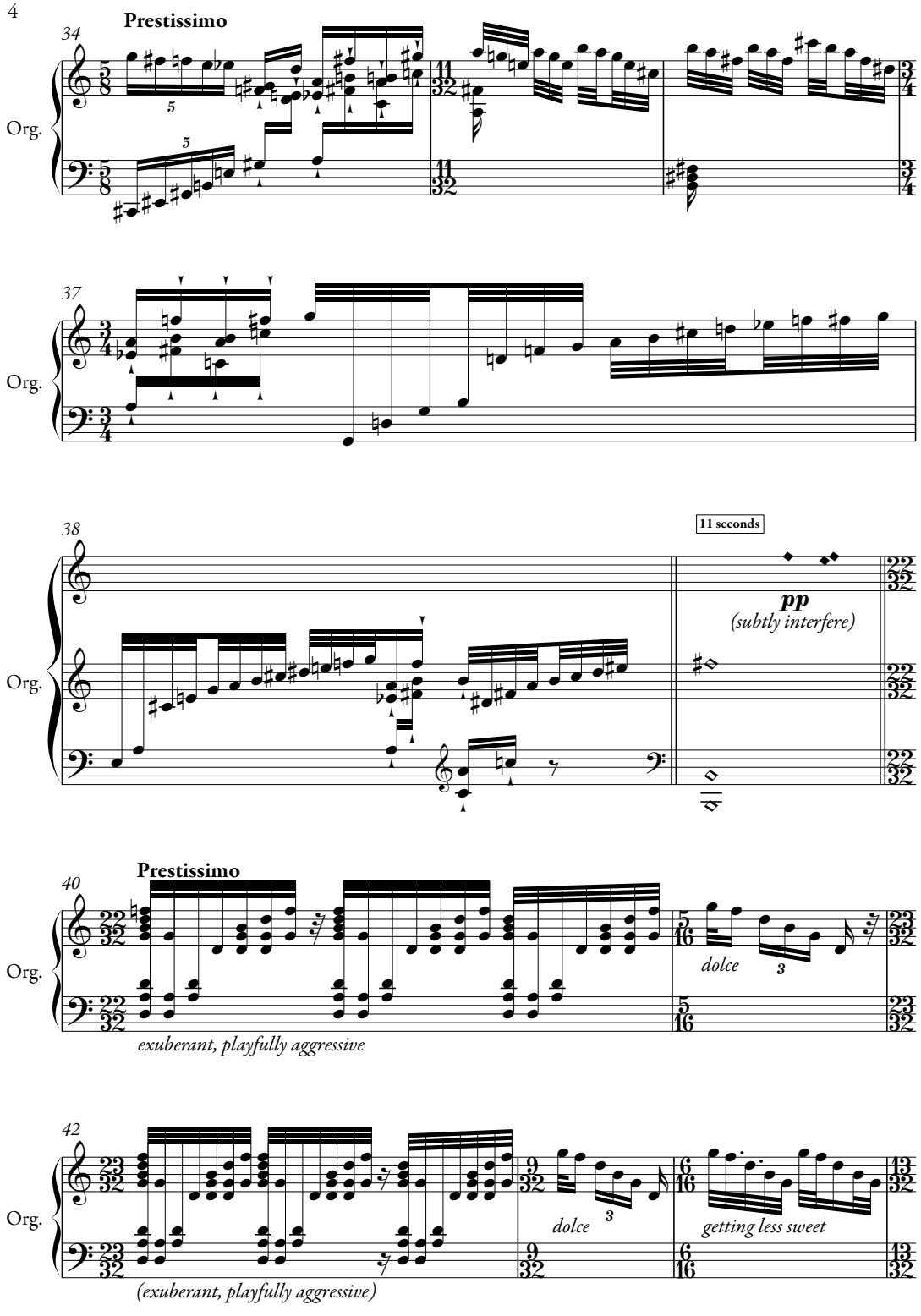


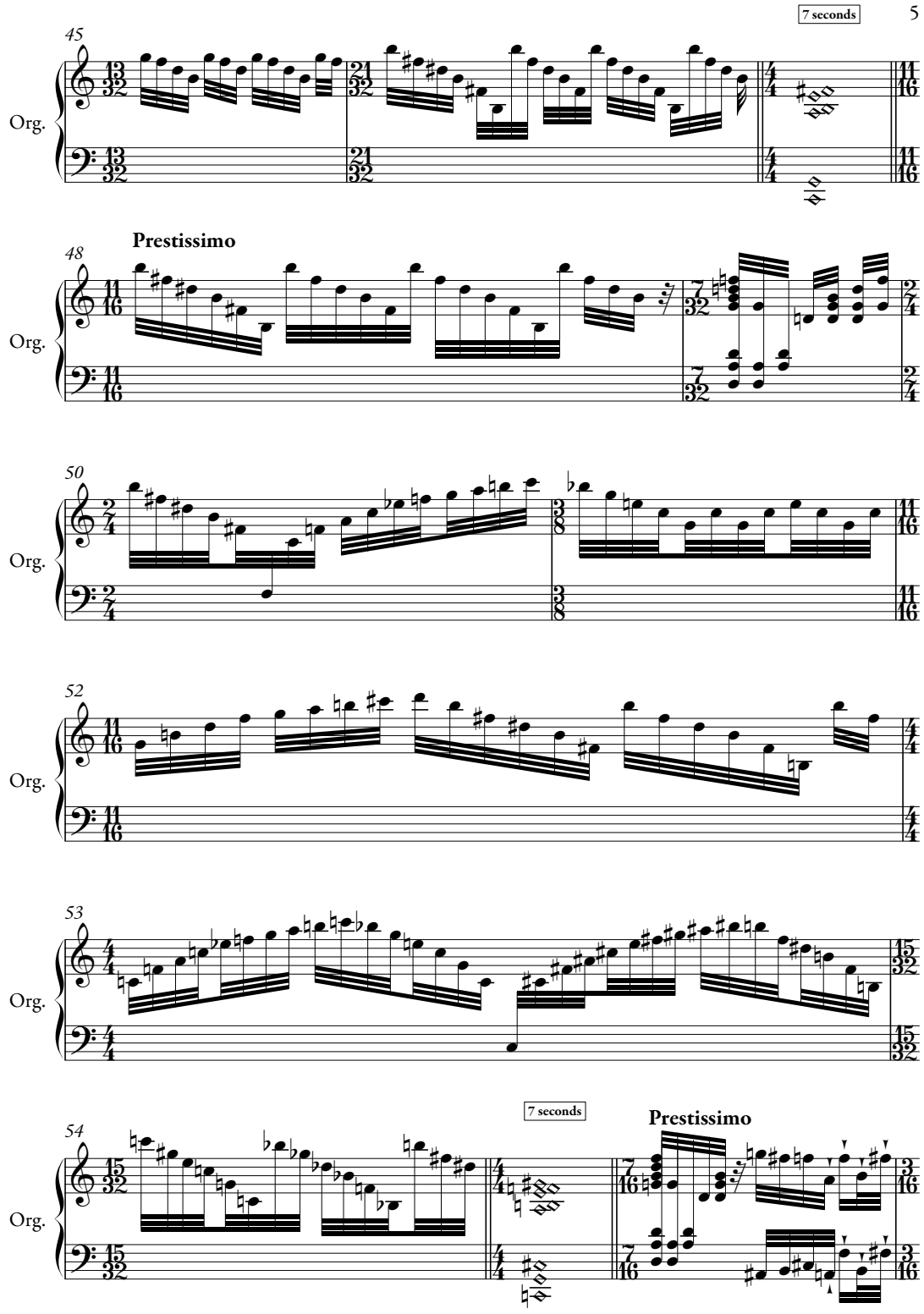


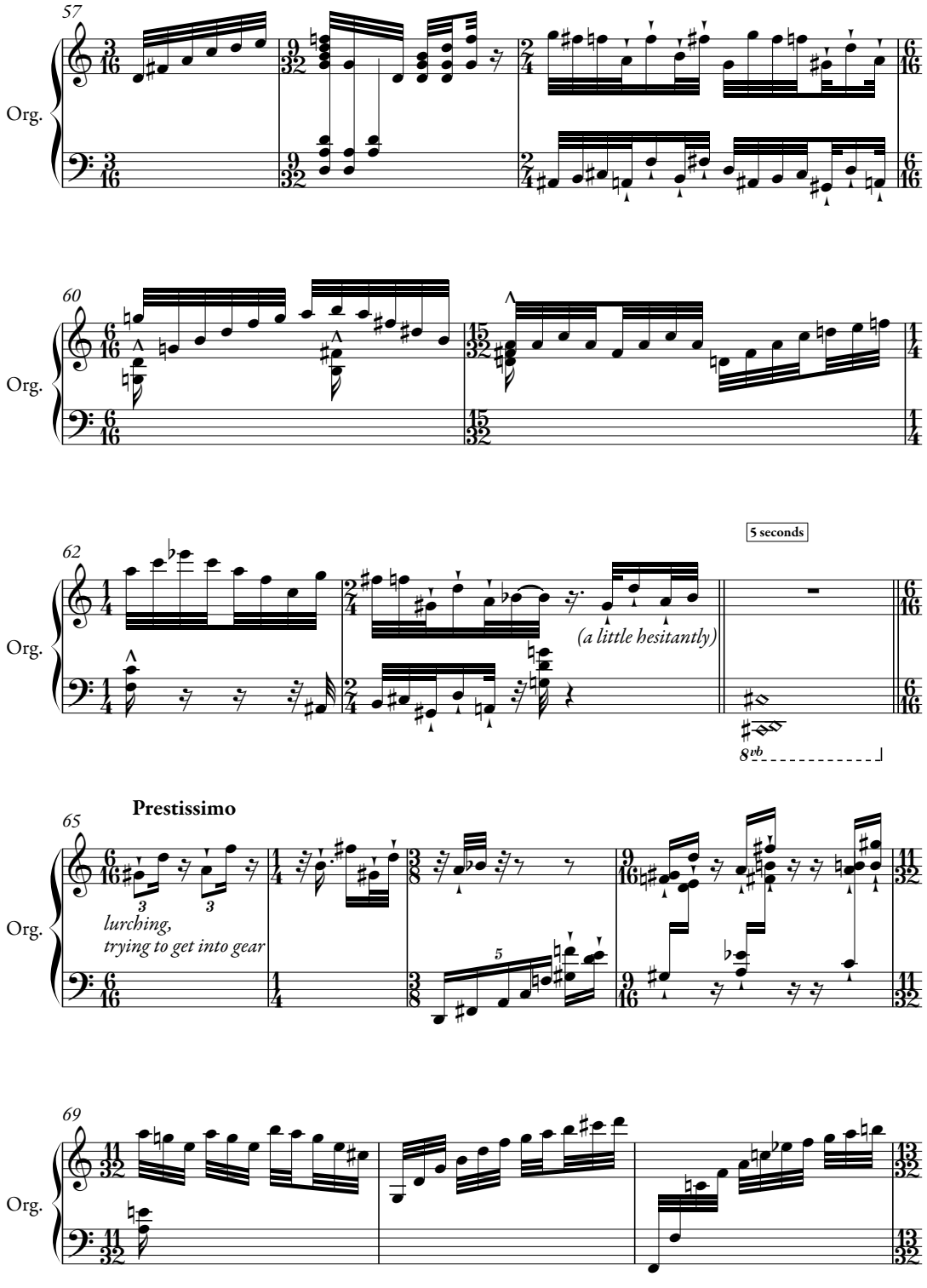
With cimbelstern?
(only for this bar)

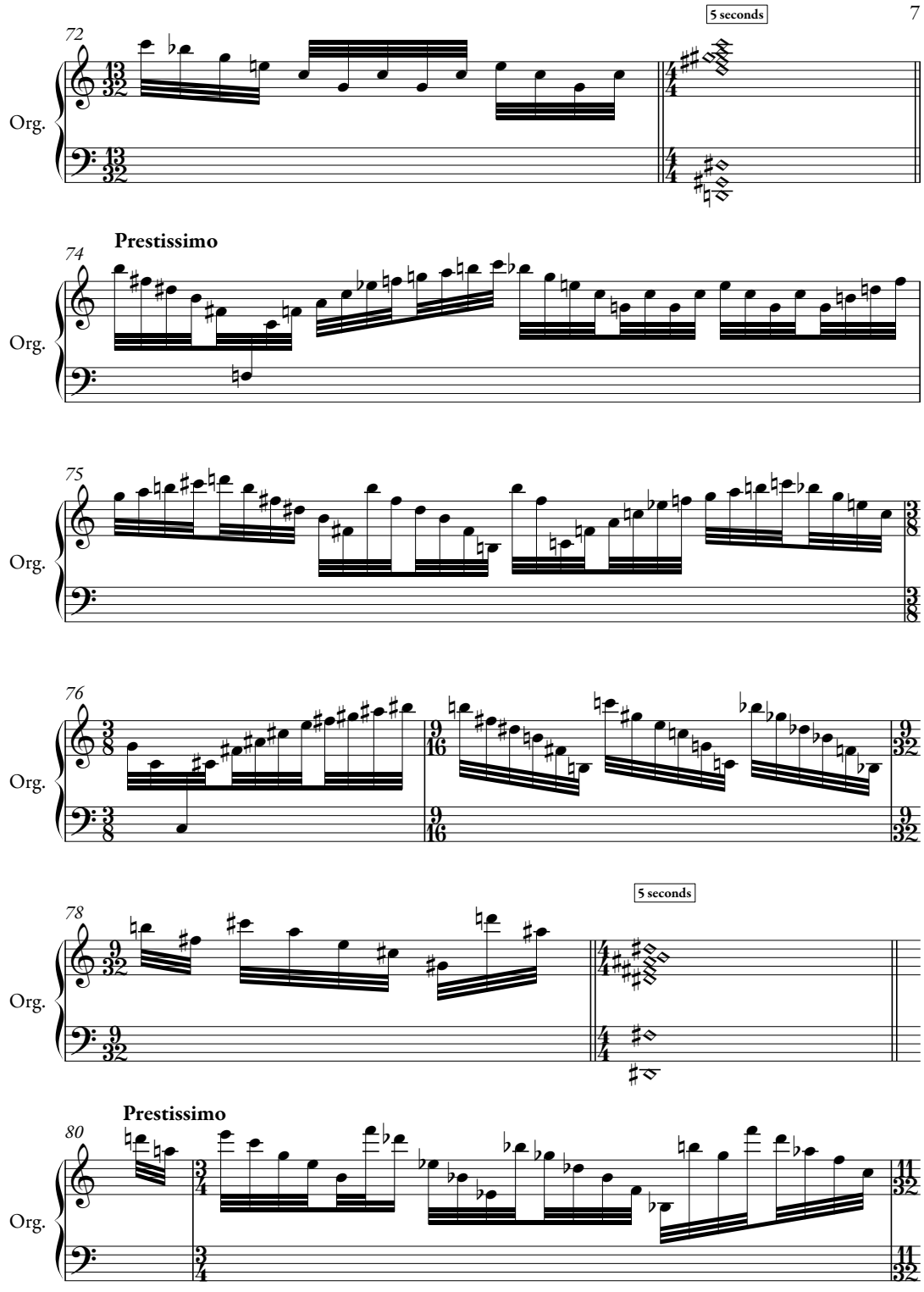


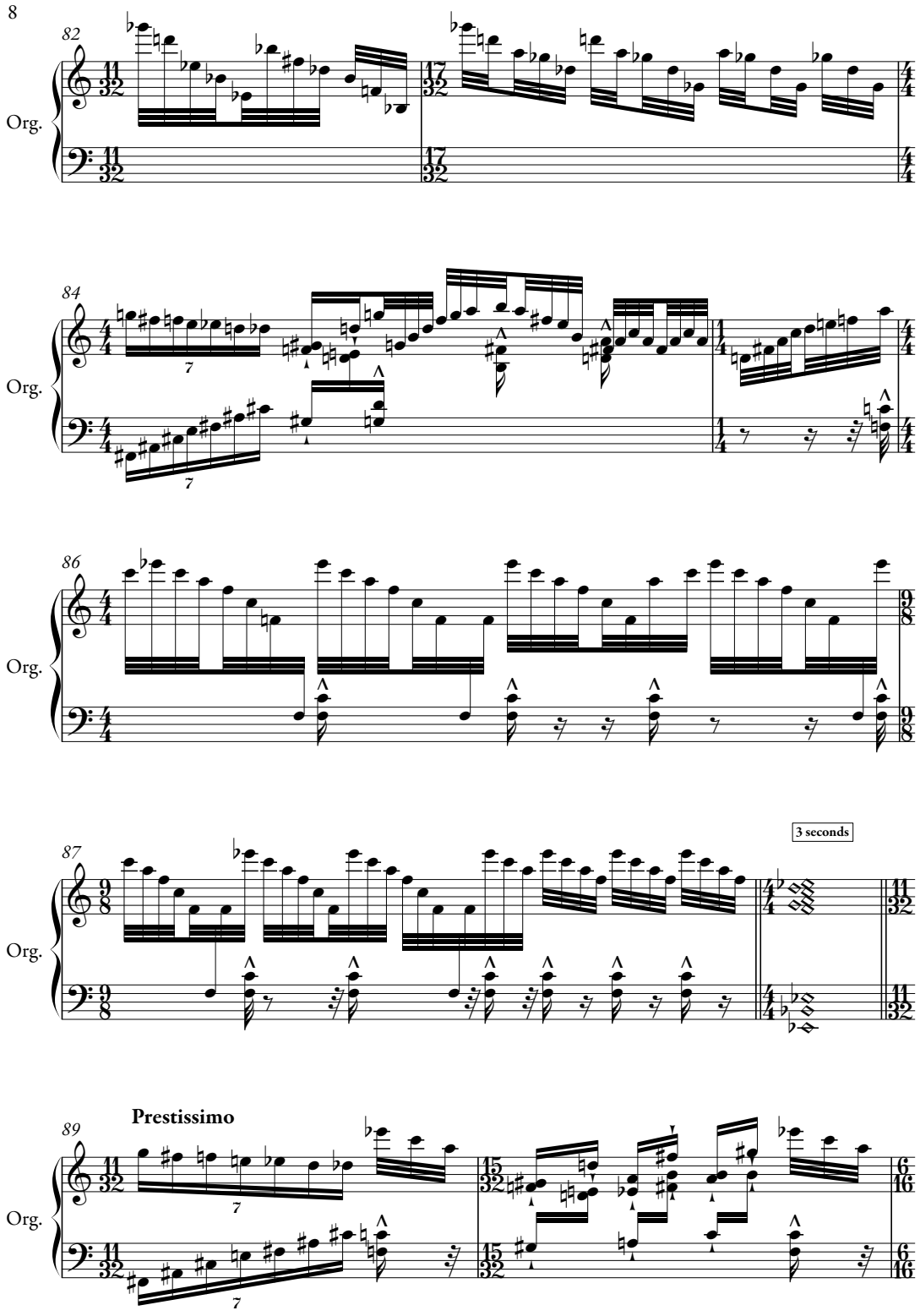


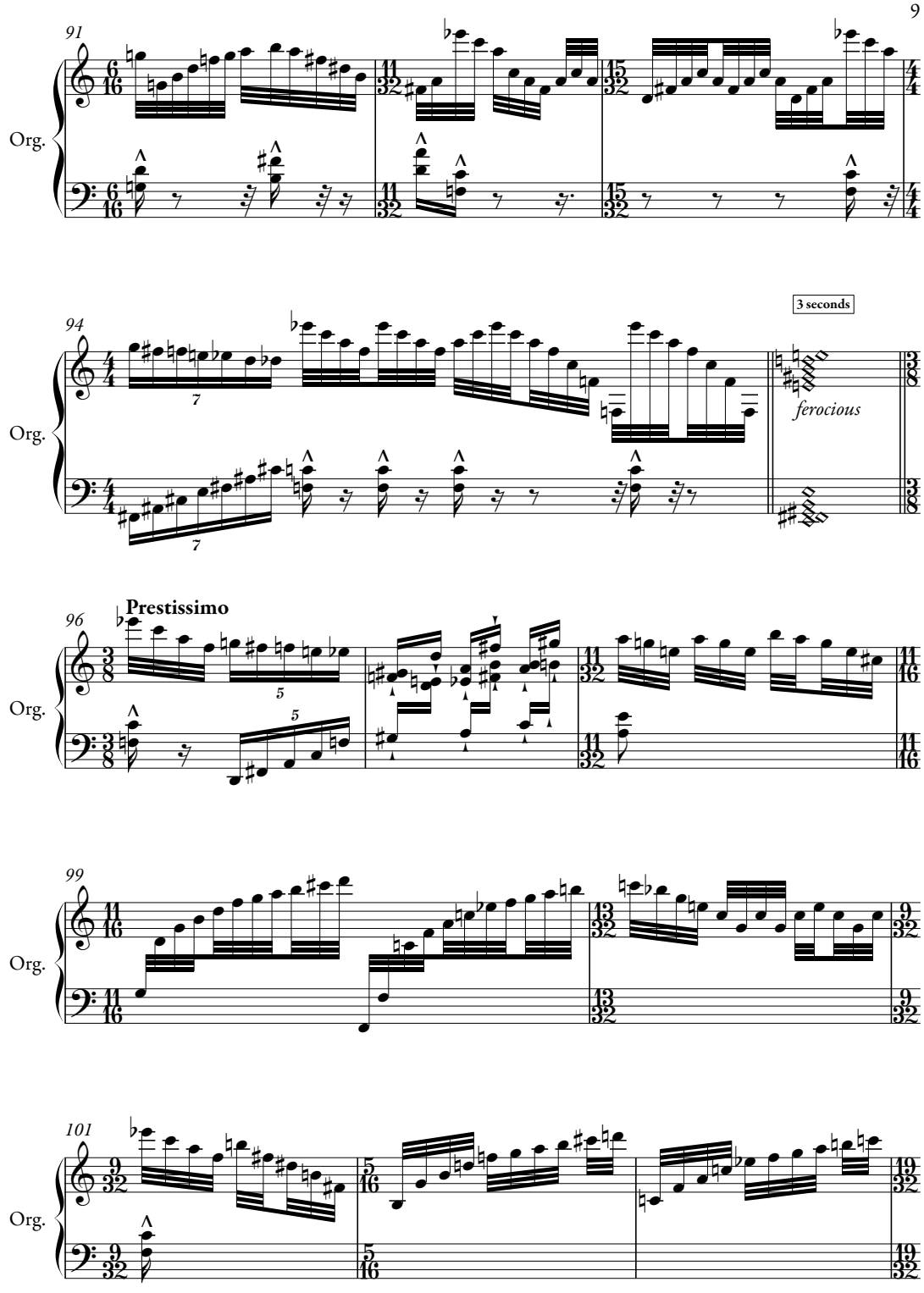

Prestissimo
34
Org.
37
38
11 seconds
pp
(subtly interfere)
40
Prestissimo
dolce
exuberant, playfully aggressive
42
dolce
getting less sweet
(exuberant, playfully aggressive)

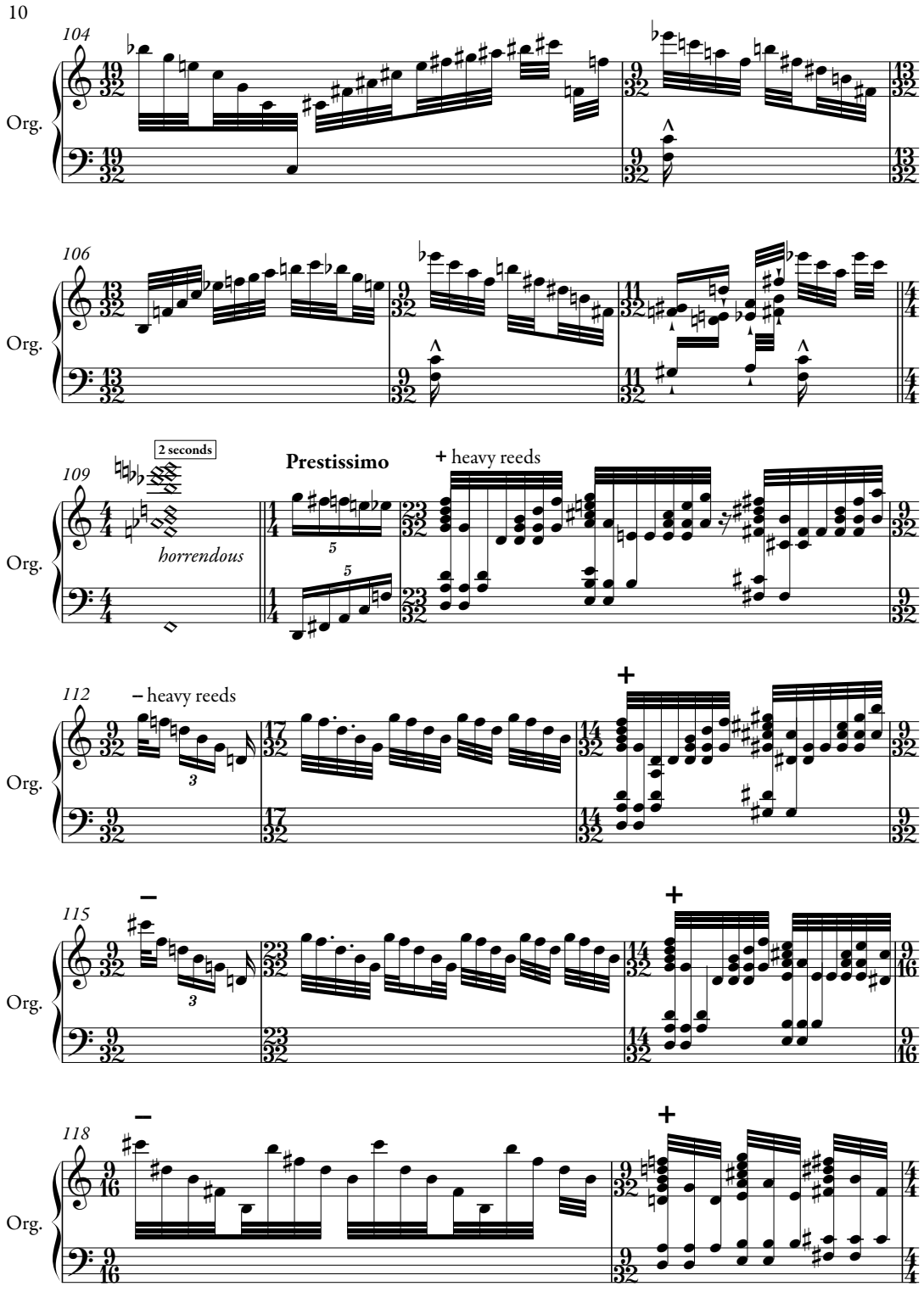

7 seconds
5
45
Org.
Prestissimo
48
Org.
50
Org.
52
Org.
53
Org.
7 seconds
Prestissimo
54
Org.

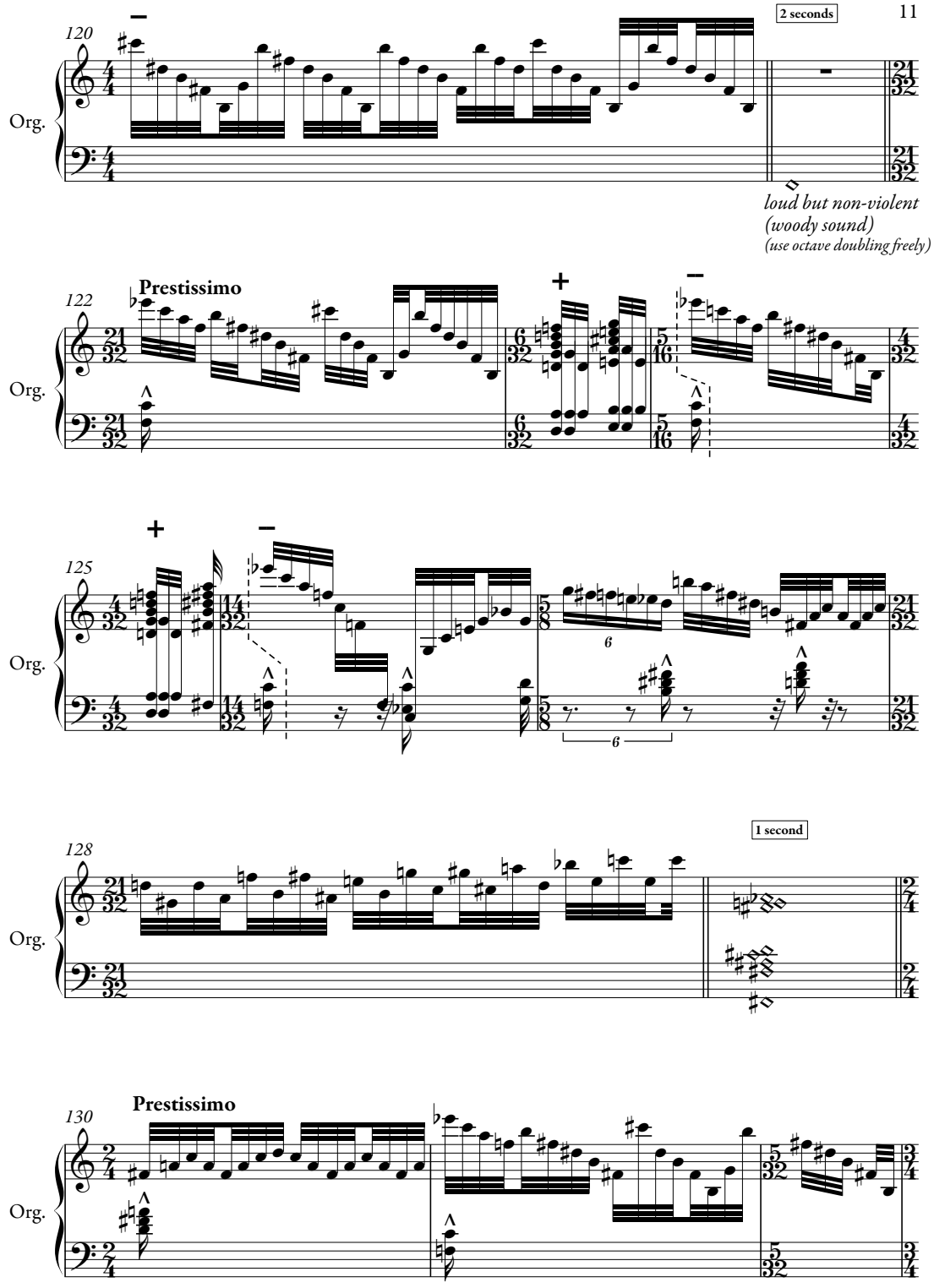

57
Org.
60
Org.
62
Org.
5 seconds
(a little hesitantly)
8vb
65
Prestissimo
Org.
lurching,
trying to get into gear
69
Org.

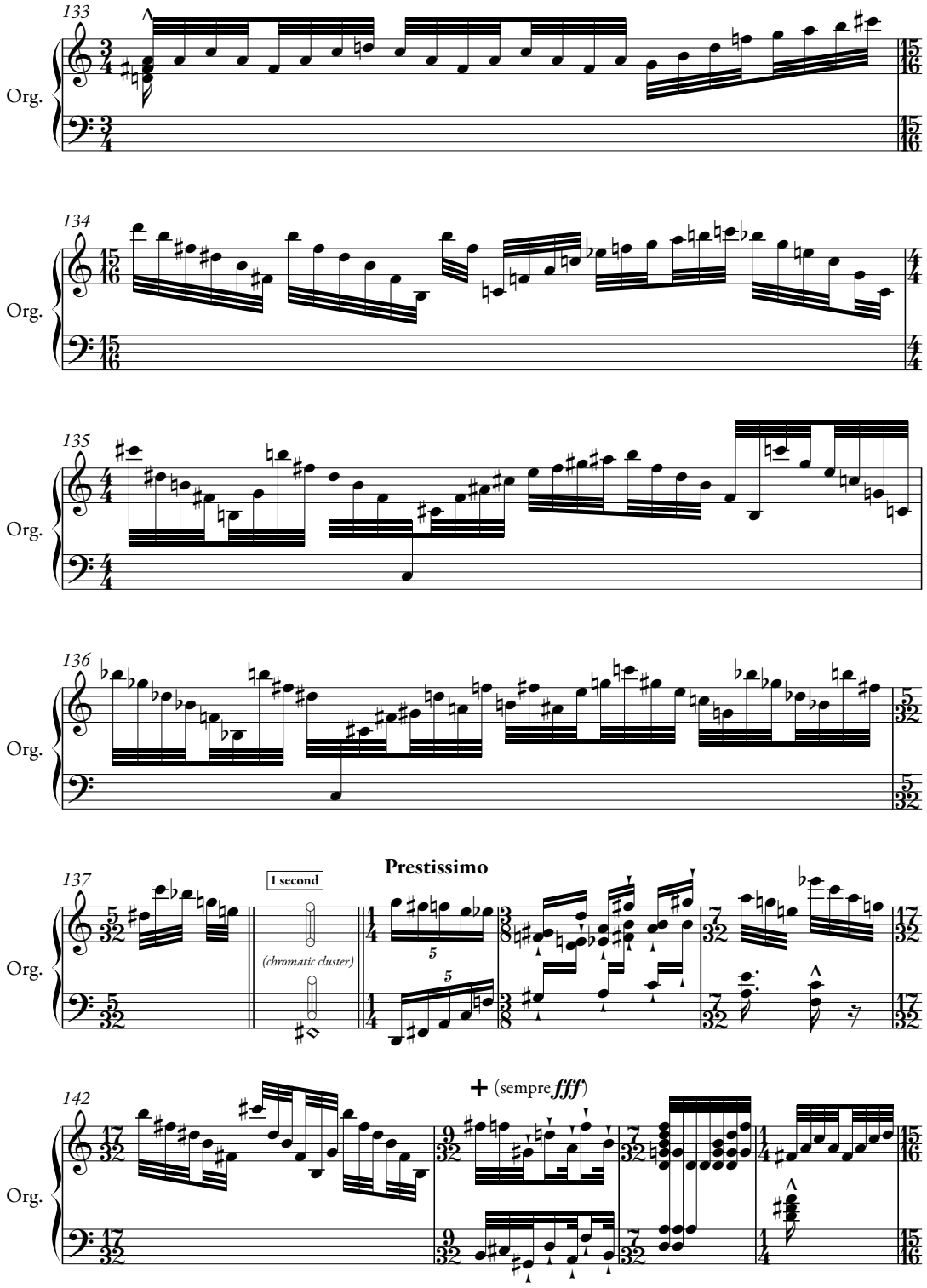

5 seconds
72
Org.
Prestissimo
74
Org.
75
Org.
76
Org.
5 seconds
78
Org.
Prestissimo
80
Org.

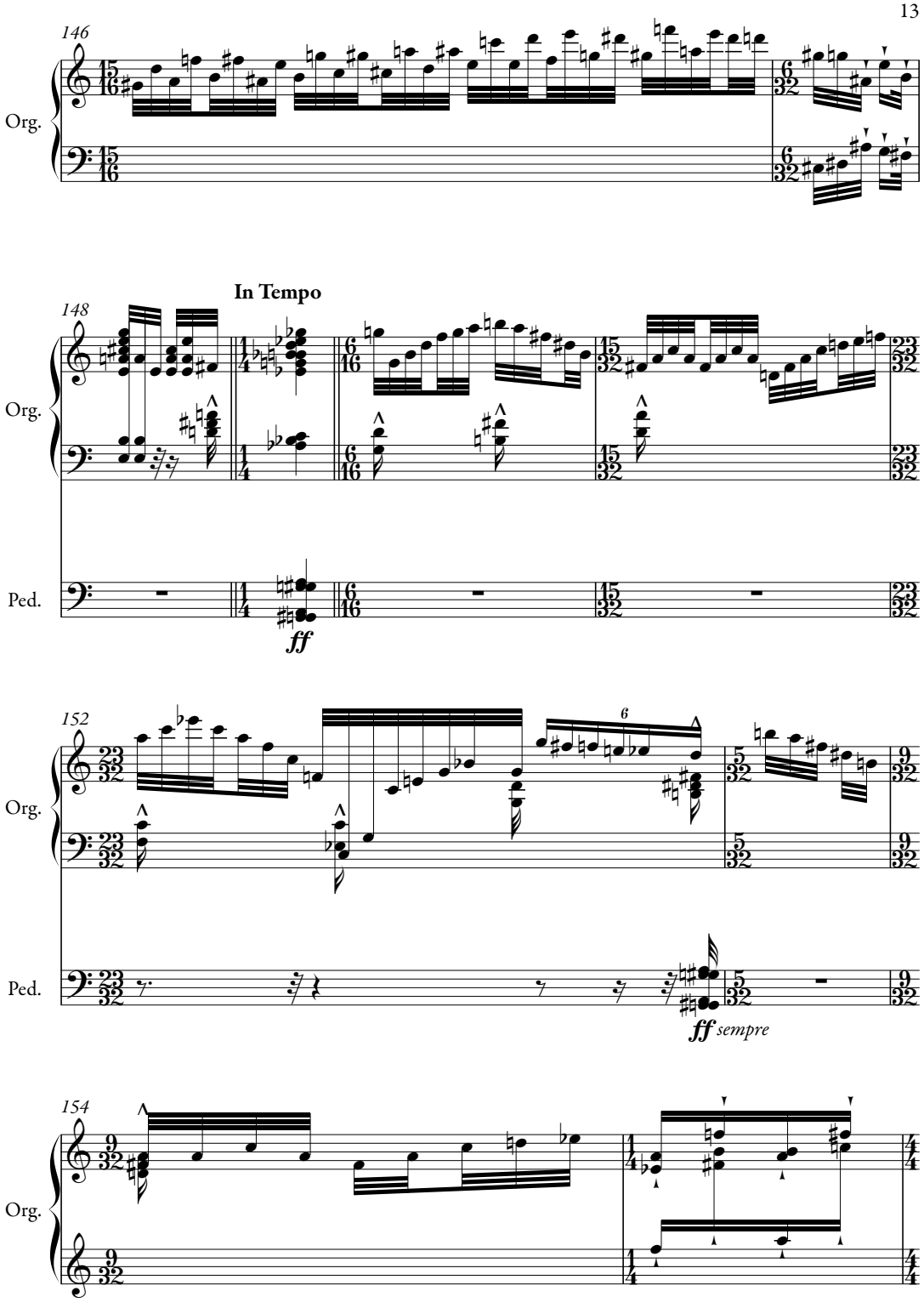

8
82
Org.
84
Org.
86
Org.
87
Org.
3 seconds
89
Prestissimo
Org.

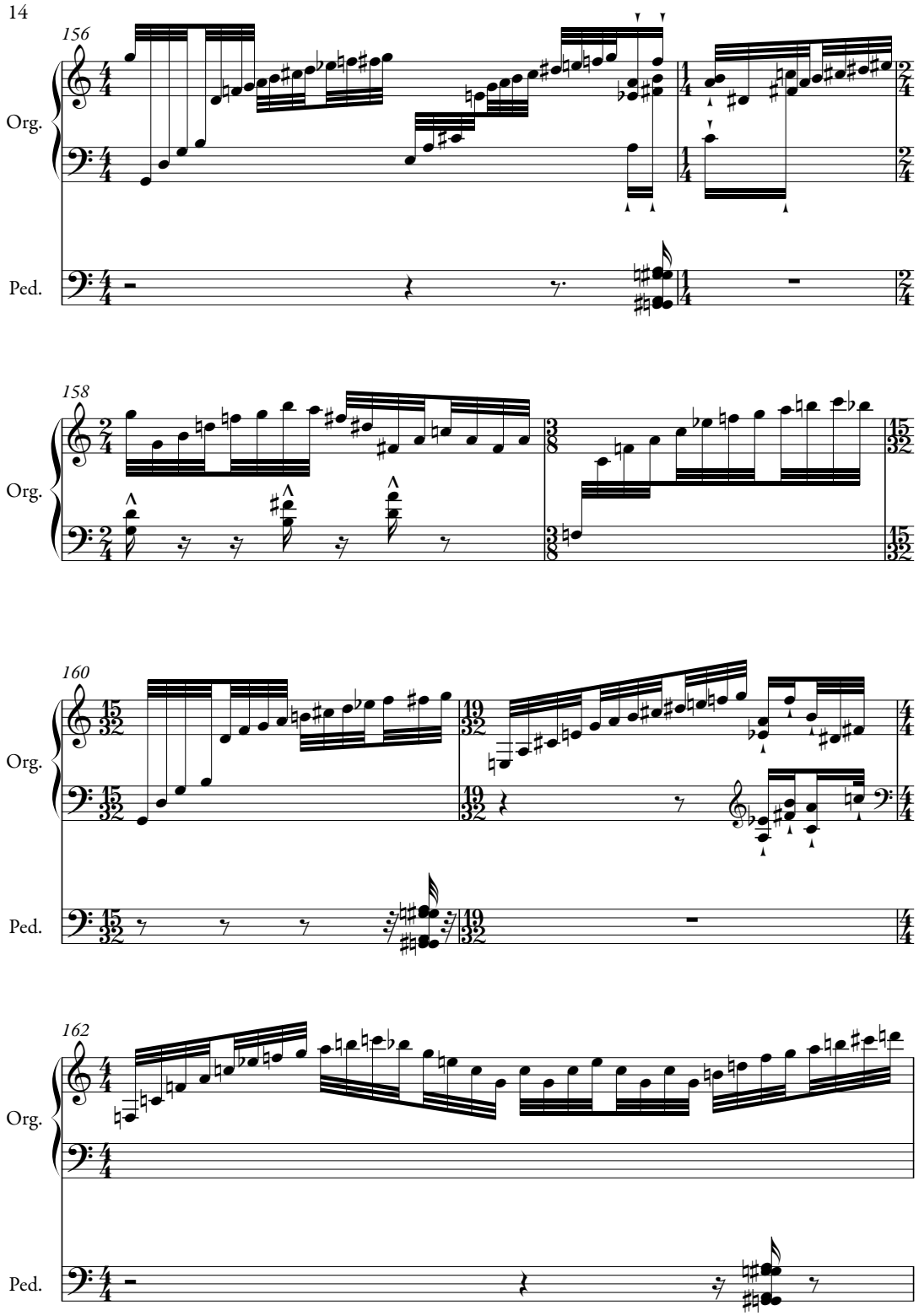

91
Org.
94
Org.
3 seconds
ferocious
Prestissimo
96
Org.
99
Org.
101
Org.

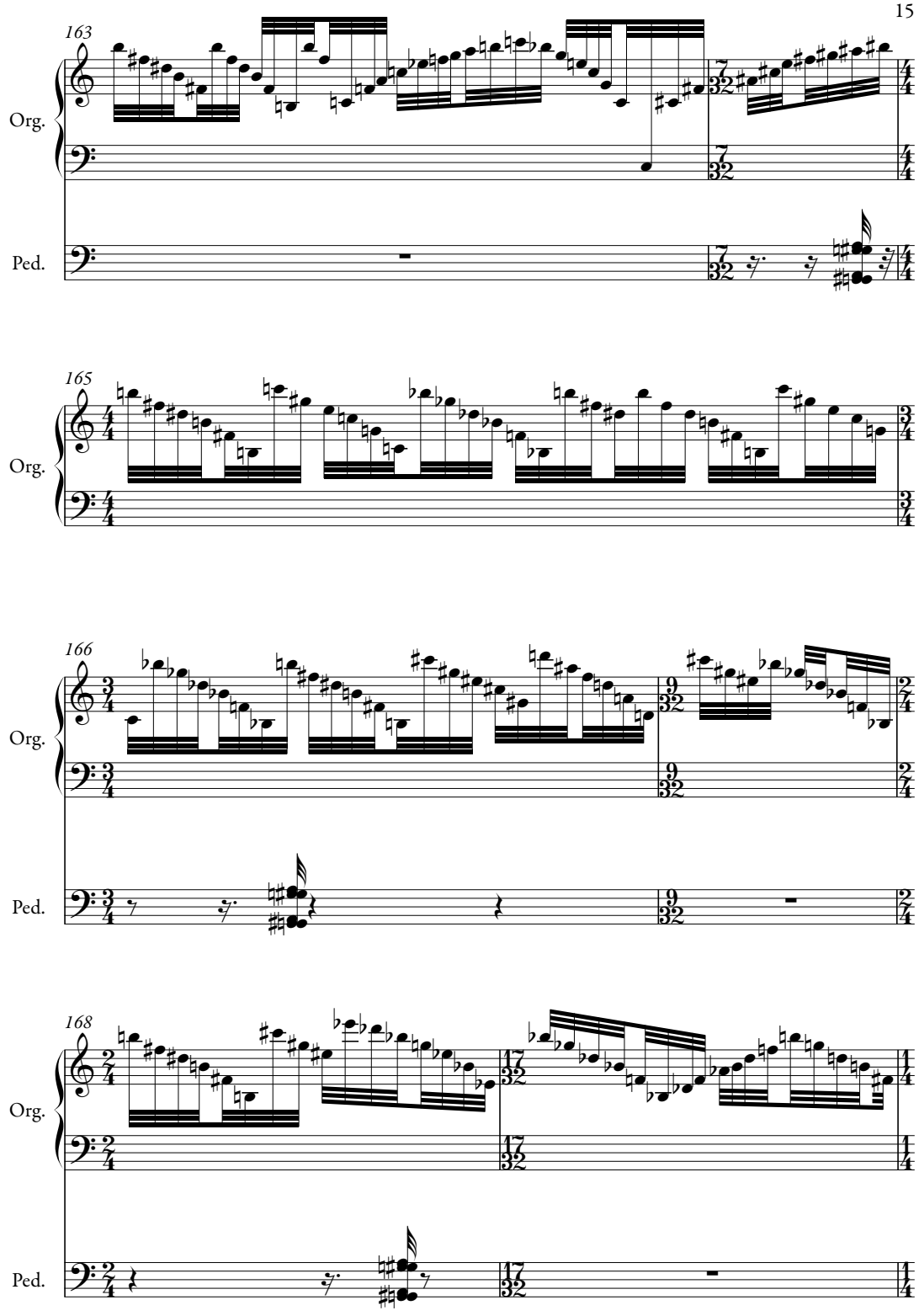

10
104
Org.
106
Org.
109
2 seconds
horrendous
Prestissimo
+ heavy reeds
Org.
112
– heavy reeds
Org.
115
Org.
118
Org.

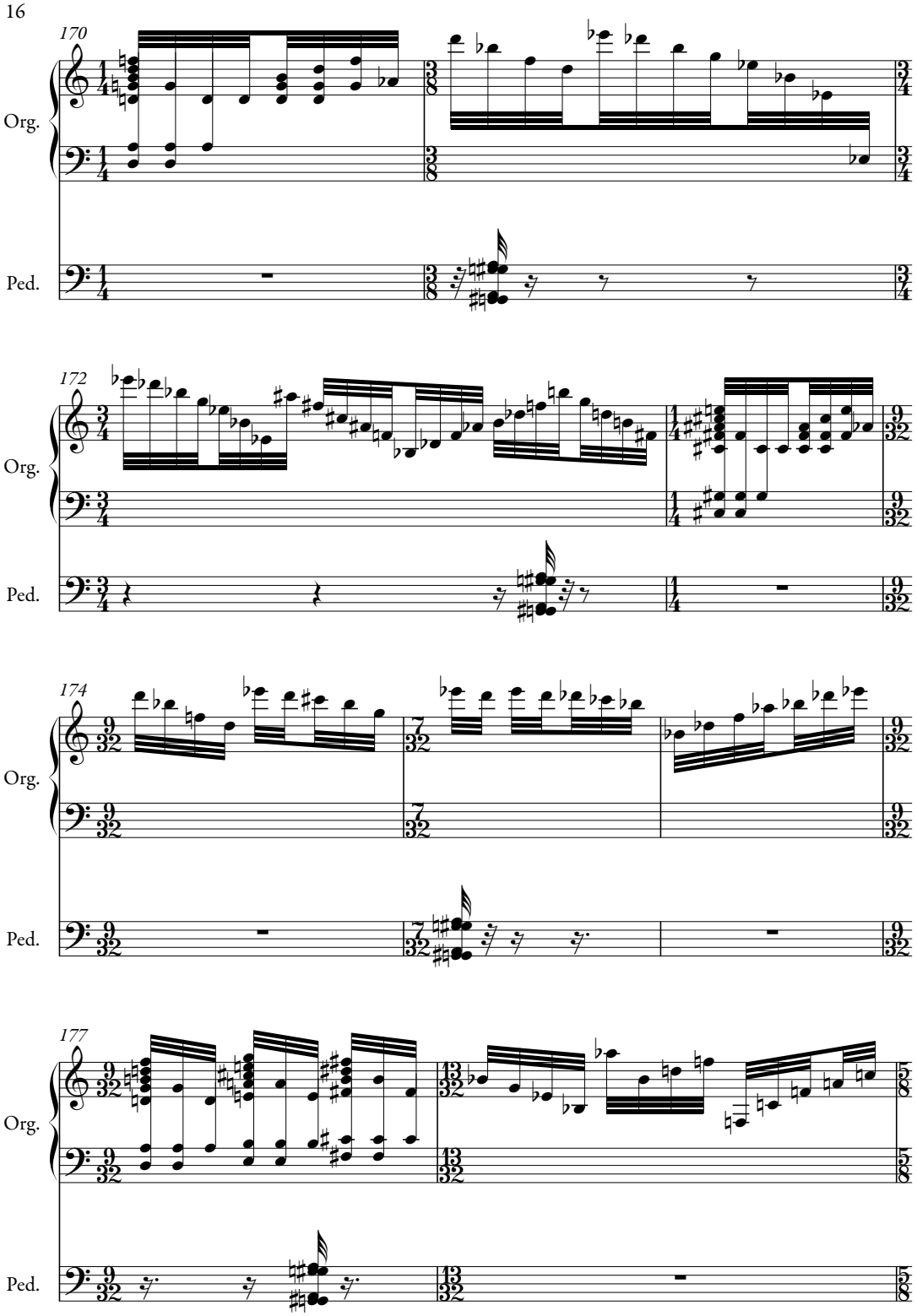

120
Org.
2 seconds
loud but non-violent
(woody sound)
(use octave doubling freely)
122
Prestissimo
Org.
125
Org.
128
1 second
Org.
130
Prestissimo
Org.

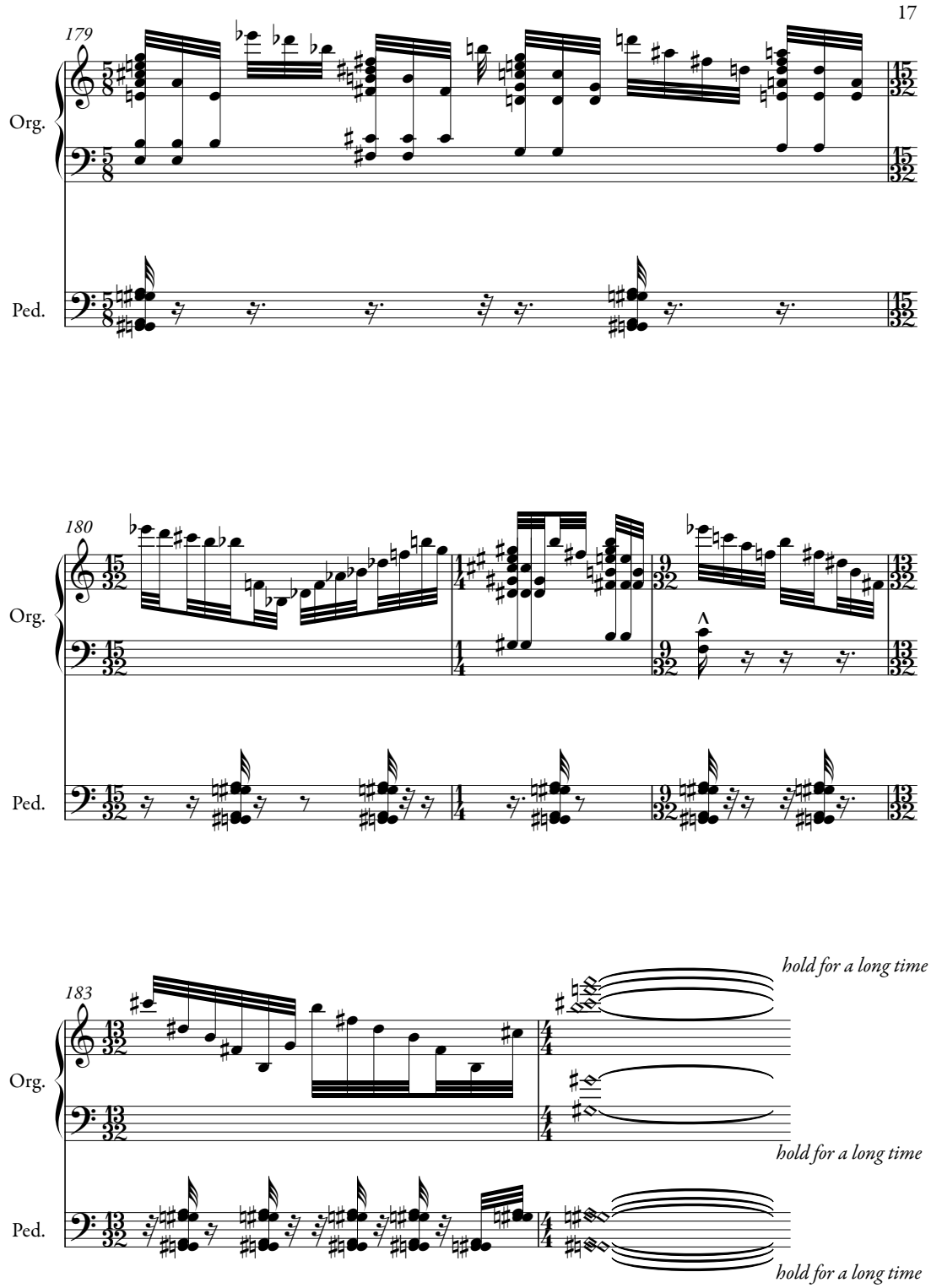

133
Org.
134
Org.
135
Org.
136
Org.
137
Org.
1 second
(chromatic cluster)
Prestissimo
142
Org.
+ (sempre fff)


146
Org.
148
In Tempo
Org.
Ped.
ff
152
6
Org.
Ped.
ff sempre
154
Org.

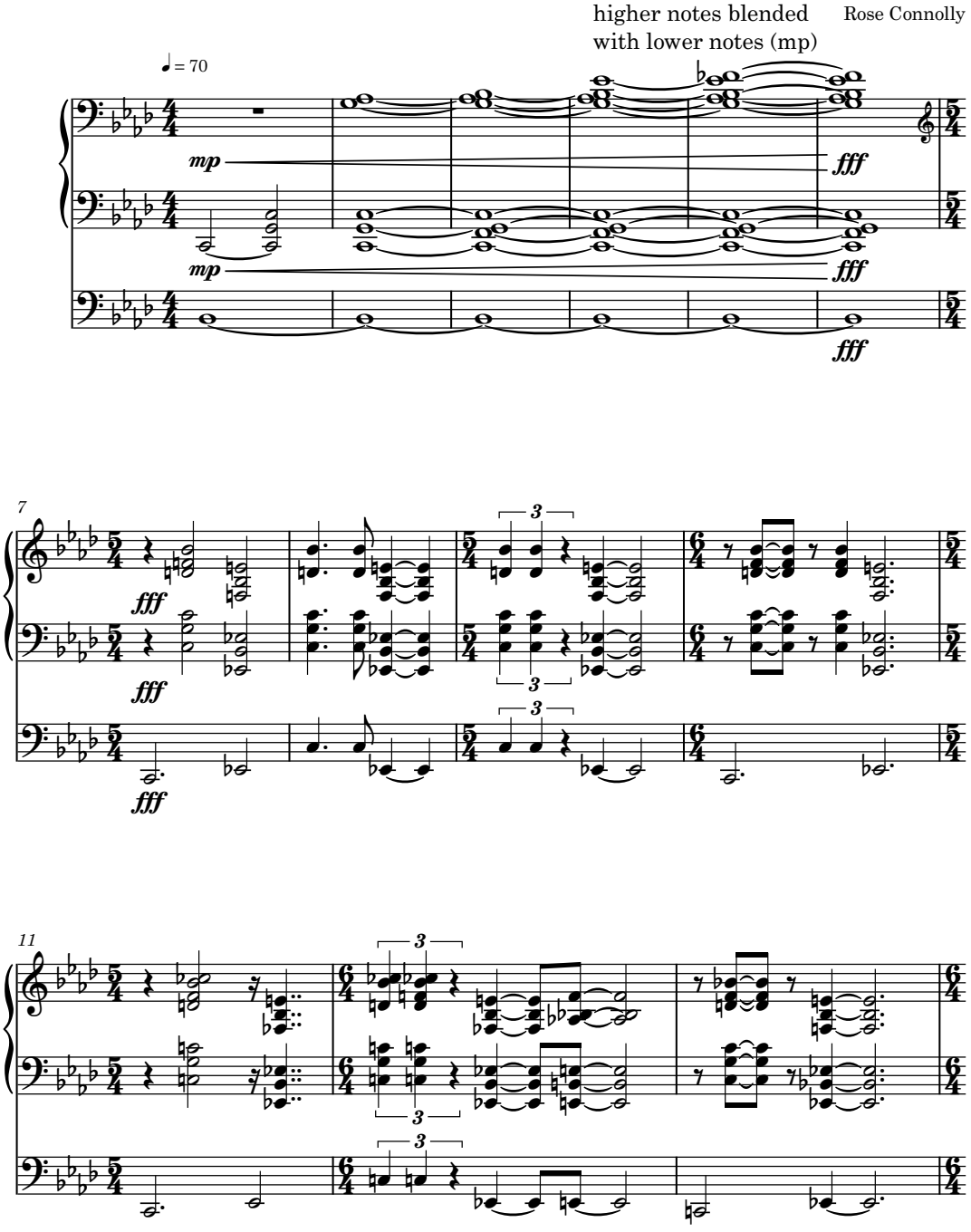

14
156
Org.
Ped.
158
Org.
160
Org.
Ped.
162
Org.
Ped.

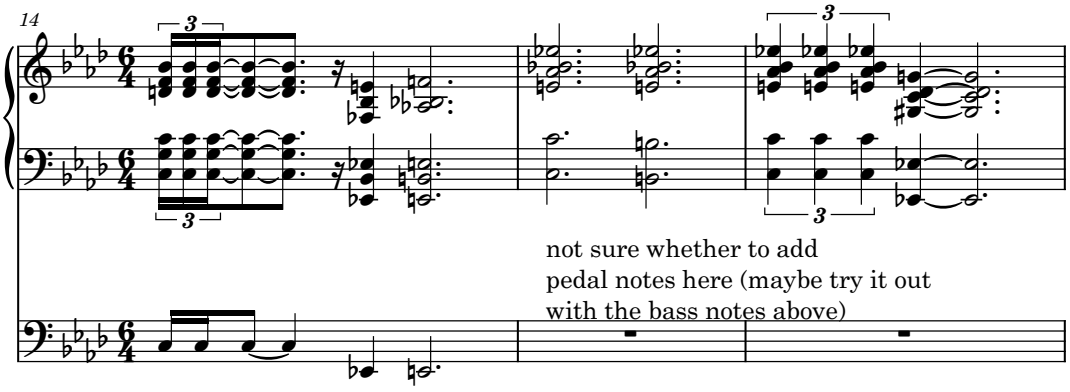

163
Org.
Ped.
165
Org.
166
Org.
Ped.
168
Org.
Ped.

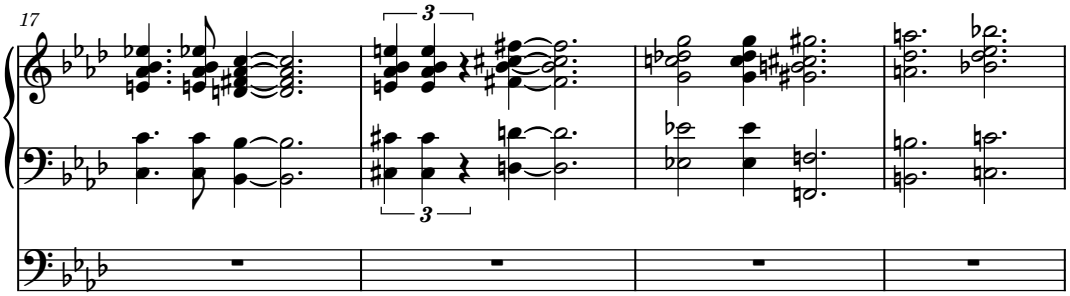

170
Org.
Ped.
172
Org.
Ped.
174
Org.
Ped.
177
Org.
Ped.

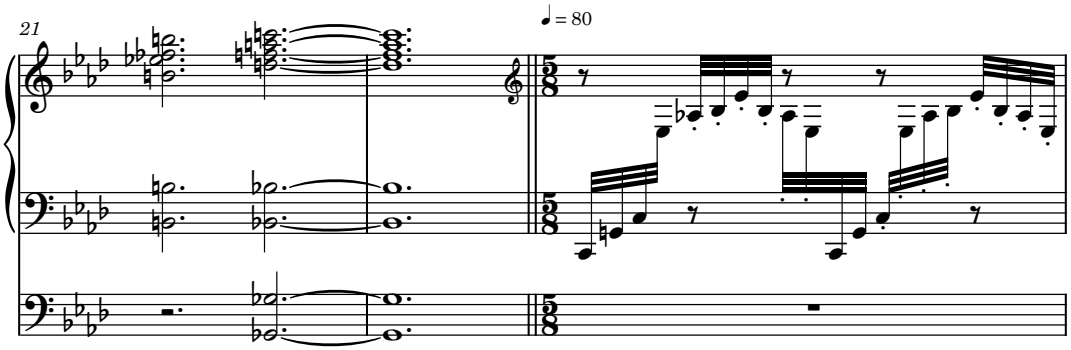

179
Org.
Ped.
180
Org.
Ped.
183
Org.
Ped.
hold for a long time
hold for a long time
hold for a long time
Gradually subtract stops so that only
the lowest bass stop remains, and then
continue holding even longer

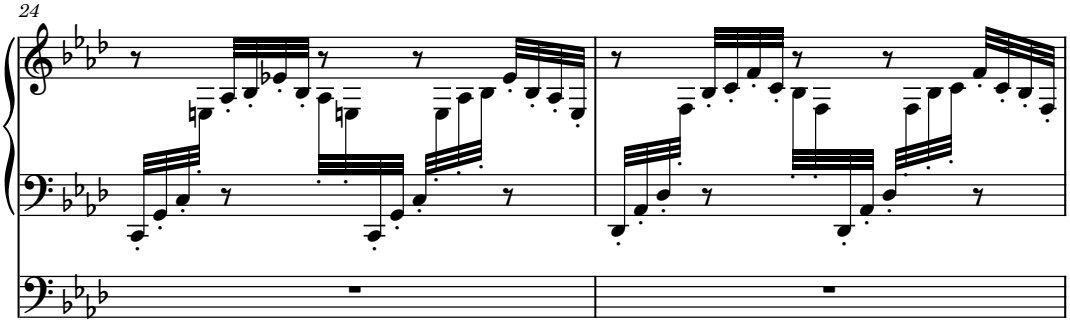
Strength

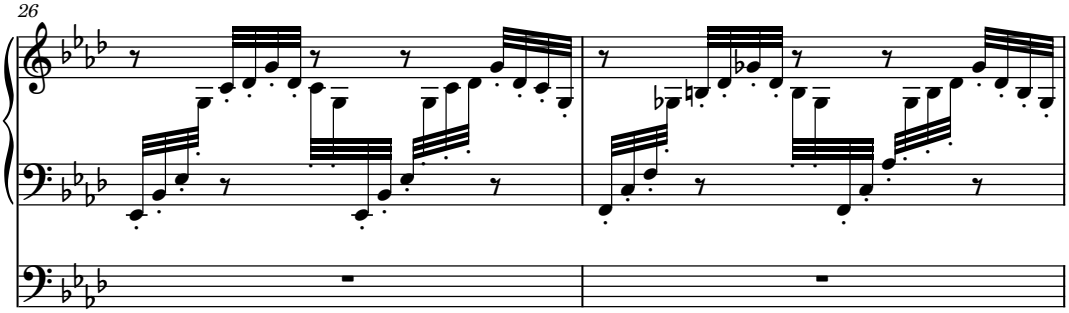

higher notes blended
with lower notes (mp)
Rose Connolly
♩ = 70
mp
fff
mp
fff
fff
7
fff
fff
fff
3
3
3
11
3
3
3

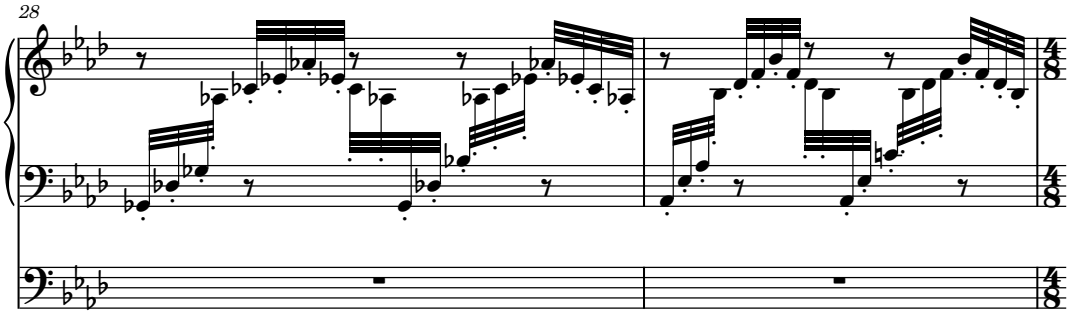

14
not sure whether to add
pedal notes here (maybe try it out
with the bass notes above)

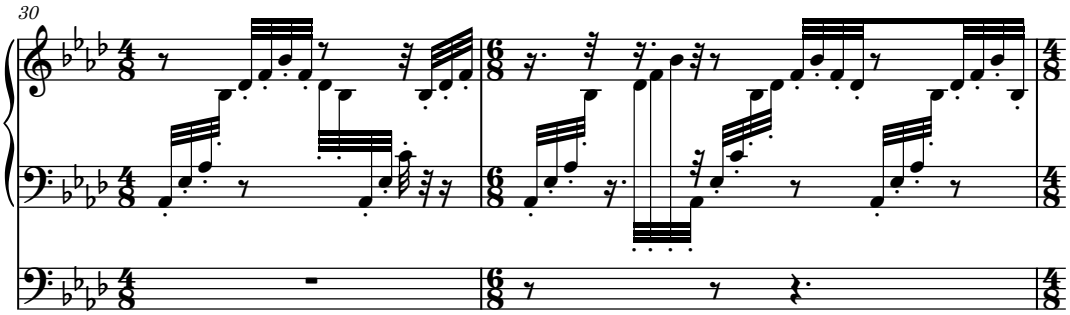

17

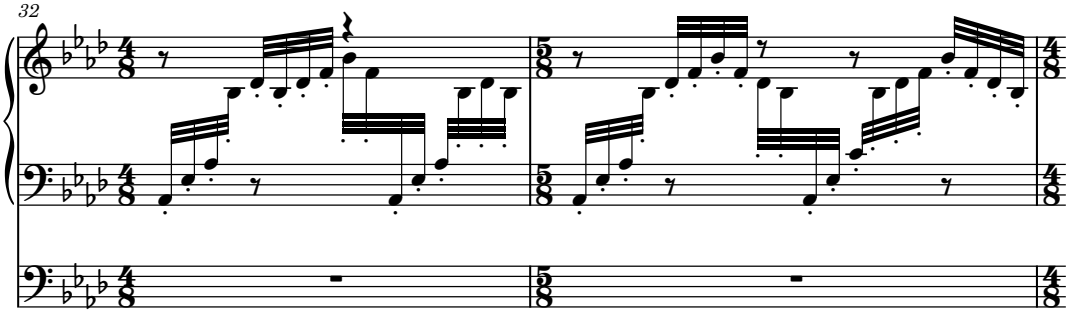

21
♩ = 80

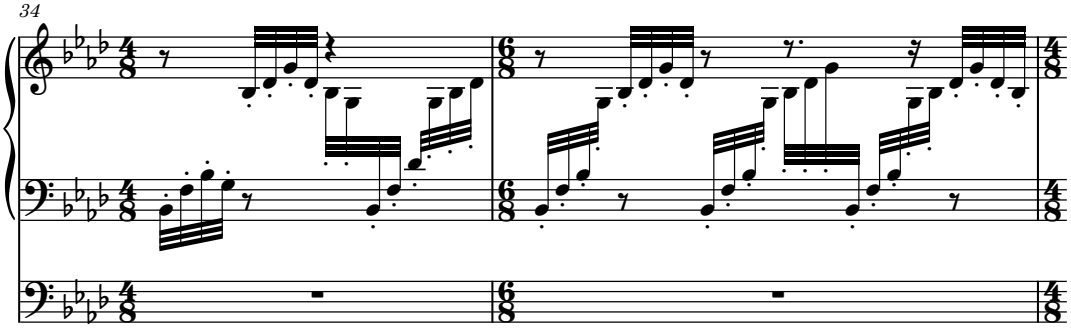

24

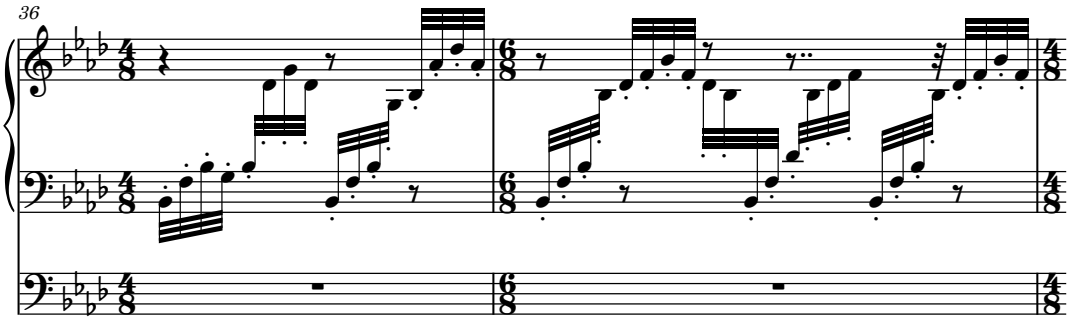

26

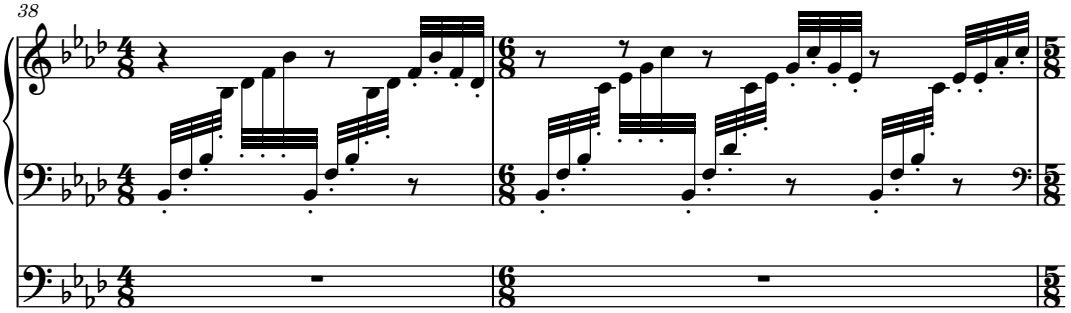

28

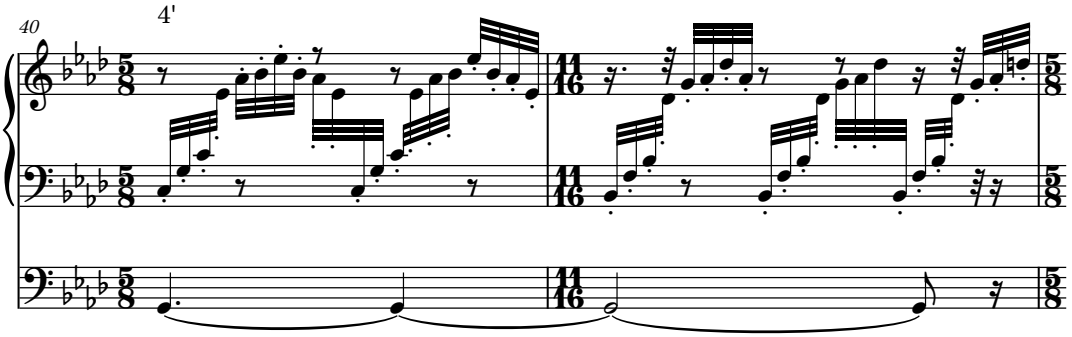

30


32

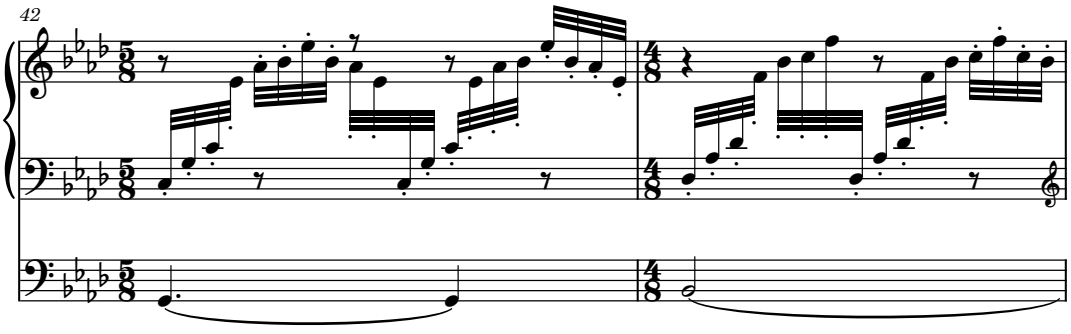

34


36

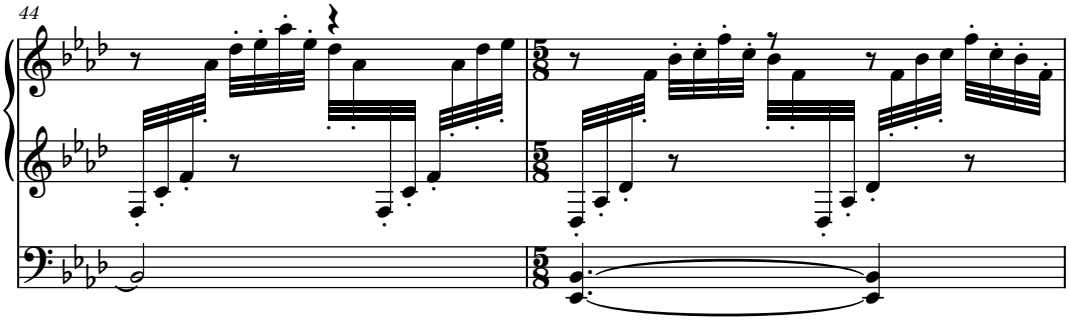

38


40
4'

42

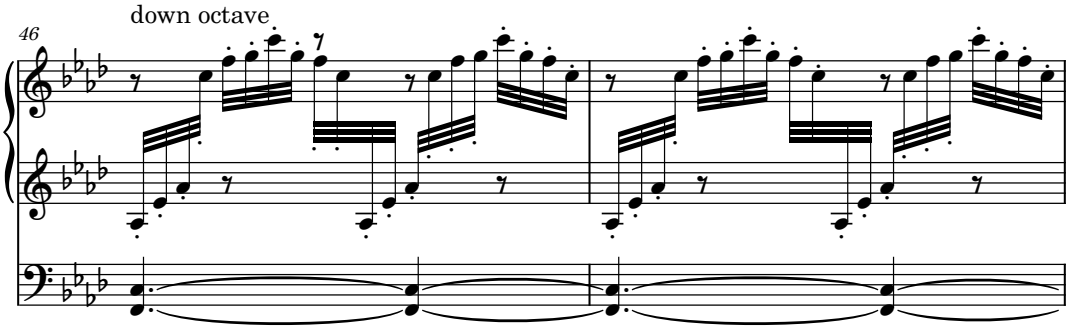


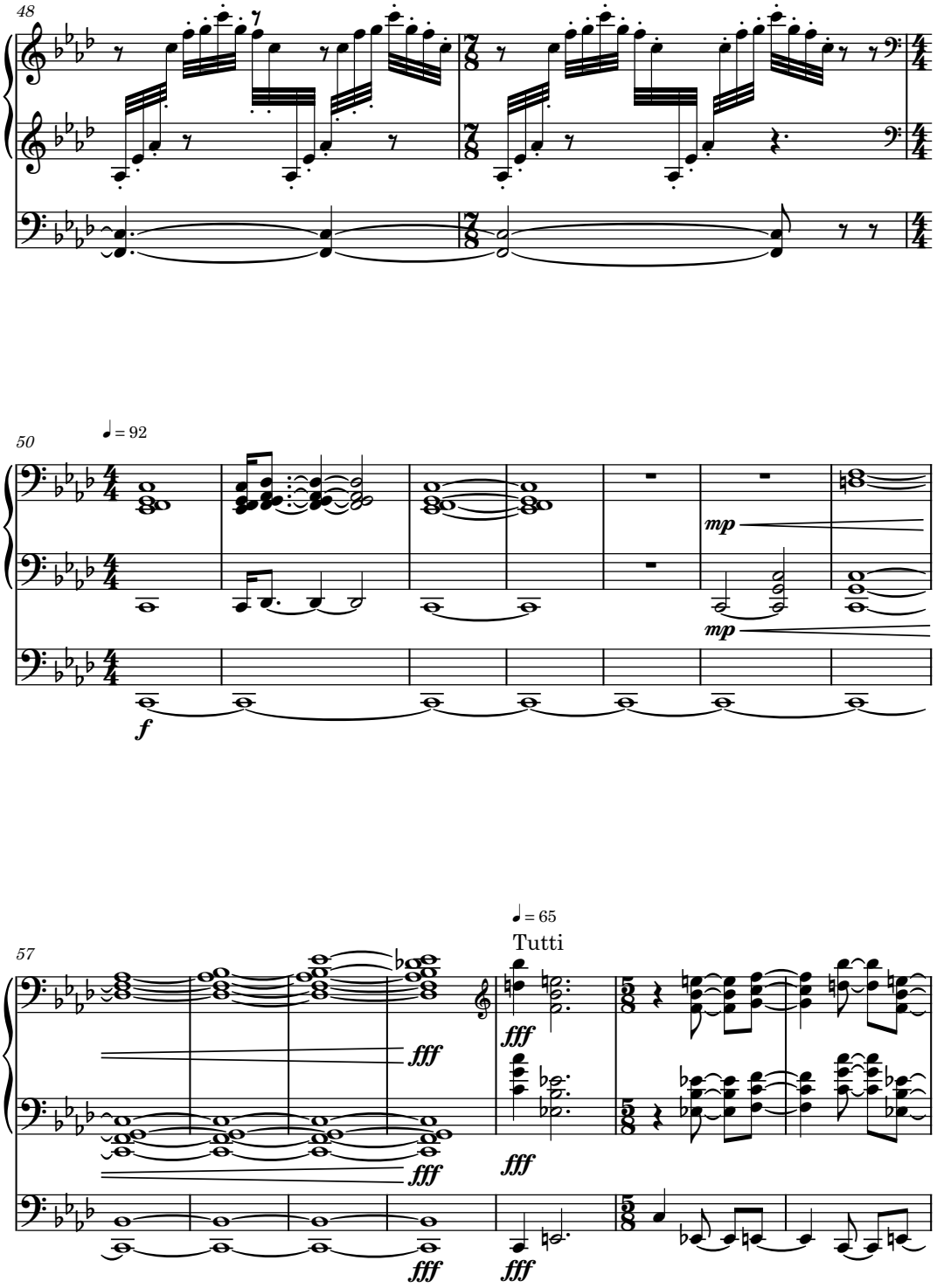
44

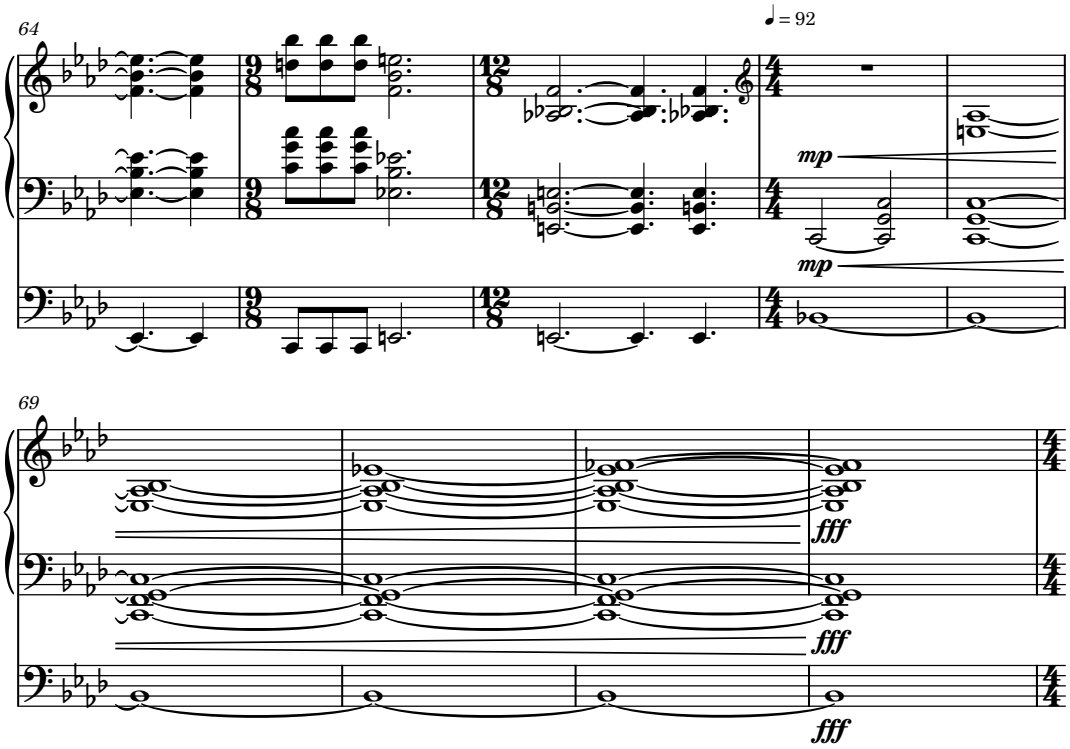


46

down octave




48
50
♩ = 92
mp
mp
f
57
♩ = 65
Tutti
fff
fff
fff
fff
fff
fff


64
♩ = 92
mp
mp
69
fff
fff
fff