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Joseph Messner's organ music: evolution of a style

Julie Powell Rozman

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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JOSEPH MESSNER’S ORGAN MUSIC: EVOLUTION OF A STYLE

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Julie Rozman
B. M., Louisiana State University, 1993
B. M., Universität Mozarteum, Salzburg, Austria, 1999
M. M., Louisiana State University 2005
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS...........................................................................................................iii

LIST OF EXAMPLES...........................................................................................................vi

LIST OF FIGURES.............................................................................................................ix

ABSTRACT...........................................................................................................................x

INTRODUCTION................................................................................................................1

CHAPTER ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY.................................................................3
   The Early Years (1893-1917).......................................................................................3
   Post-World War I (1918-1925)...................................................................................4
   Salzburg Cathedral Musical Life (1926-1932).........................................................5
   Years of Political Difficulty and World War II (1933-1945)......................................6
   Post-World War II Years (1945-1969).....................................................................8

TWO:  IMPROVISATION ÜBER EIN THEMA VON ANTON BRUCKNER, OP. 19...10
   Structural Analysis......................................................................................................11
   Compositional Techniques..........................................................................................18
   Registration and Other Performance Considerations..............................................24

THREE: PARAPHRASE ÜBER DIE ÖSTERREICHISCH-DEUTSCHE
   VOLKSHYMNE, OP. 28 AND ORGELBUCH SETTING.............................................26
   The 1918 Hymnal Setting............................................................................................28
   Structural Analysis......................................................................................................28
   1931 Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne..................................31
   Structural Analysis......................................................................................................32
   Compositional Techniques..........................................................................................37
   Registration and Other Performance Considerations..............................................40

FOUR: SUITE FÜR ORGEL, OP. 33..............................................................................42
   Structural Analysis......................................................................................................42
   Compositional Techniques..........................................................................................47
   Registration and Other Performance Considerations..............................................50

CONCLUSION..................................................................................................................52

BIBLIOGRAPHY...............................................................................................................55
APPENDIX

A: SPECIFICATION OF THE HELDENORGEL ................................................. 58

B: SPECIFICATION OF THE SALZBURG CATHEDRAL ORGAN ............... 59

C: LETTERS OF PERMISSION ................................................................... 60

VITA ............................................................................................................ 63
LIST OF EXAMPLES


mm. 1-5..............................................................................................................................12

mm. 20-29..........................................................................................................................13

mm. 53-56..........................................................................................................................14

mm. 69-70..........................................................................................................................14

mm. 73-76..........................................................................................................................15

mm. 95-100..........................................................................................................................16

mm. 107-109.........................................................................................................................16

mm. 110-116.........................................................................................................................17

mm. 127-130.........................................................................................................................18

mm. 61-64............................................................................................................................19

mm. 69-70............................................................................................................................20

mm. 49-54............................................................................................................................21

mm. 95-100............................................................................................................................22

mm. 114-118........................................................................................................................23


Example 25. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 1-2………………………………………………………………………………………………………………33


Example 27. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 31-33…………………………………………………………………………………………………………34

Example 28. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 69-72…………………………………………………………………………………………………………34

Example 29. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 103-106………………………………………………………………………………………………………35

Example 30. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 140-147…………………………………………………………………………………………………………35

Example 31. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 199-201……………………………………………………………………………………………..36

Example 32. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 217-227……………………………………………………………………………………….....37

Example 33. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 212-216…………………………………………………………………………………………………37

Example 34. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28*, mm. 69-72………………………………………………………………………………………………………38
Example 35. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volksymne, op. 28* mm. 199-201

Example 36. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volksymne, op. 28*, mm. 48-53


Example 40. Joseph Messner, *Suite, op. 33*, “Präludium,” mm. 48-54


LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: *Improvisation über ein Thema von Bruckner*: form and key area chart..................11

Figure 2: *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volks hymne*: form and key area chart.................................................................32
ABSTRACT

Joseph Messner (1893-1969) achieved fame in Europe for his contributions to the sacred concerts of the Salzburg Festspiele following World War II. In his early career, however, Messner earned initial acclaim as a recitalist and renowned improviser on the organ. Messner composed and published several organ works prior to World War II which contain style elements of late-romanticism and an emerging neoclassicism. This paper analyses the works in regards to form, stylistic elements, and performance issues in addition to establishing the historical contexts from which they originated.
The name of Joseph Messner (1893-1969) is unfamiliar to most musicians in the twenty-first century. Messner was famous in Europe in the middle 1930’s as a concert organist, and he enjoyed international renown as an accomplished improviser. He was increasingly successful both as a musician and as a composer, but for many reasons, including the Austrian Anschluss and the subsequent second World War, Messner’s musical direction was forced to change.

Following the war Messner found himself in a position of responsibility for the preservation of the musical cultural heritage of his battered country, and he evolved from a recital soloist to a musical leader vigilant in his task of fostering the future of church music in Austria through projects such as the Salzburg cathedral music program and the sacred concerts of the summer Salzburg Festival. The world Messner had known before the war had disappeared; the organs and cathedrals where he had won fame had been destroyed, and many of the conductors whom he had befriended through his orchestral works had emigrated or perished in the tragedy of the war.

Messner was a prolific composer. In his lifetime he wrote numerous songs, settings for brass ensembles of various sizes, solo piano works, and chamber music for strings, winds, and horns. He composed three symphonies and several works for chorus and orchestra, wrote music for staged theatre productions in Austria, and he composed film music. He composed three operas, eleven Masses, and numerous choral motets and propriums.

Early in his career, Messner was also a composer of organ music; this organ music is similar to the improvisations that made him famous as an organist in Europe. These works reveal stylistic elements absorbed from composers such as Bruckner and Reger who had influenced Messner in his youth. Although only three solo organ works were composed and
printed, these compositions demonstrate a progression of Messner’s developing style; elements of neoclassicism are deftly combined with his beginning stylistic traits, an original late-romantic chromatic style. His organ music is transitional, since it bridges the outgrowth of Austrian late-romantic organ music with post-World War II neoclassicism. Messner’s contributions to the organ literature result in a small body of work that is worthy of more study and consideration.

This study will examine the organ works of Joseph Messner. The organ works include the organ versets from the 1918 version of the hymnal of the archdiocese of Salzburg on the hymn Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze and the subsequent nationalistic Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28 (1931) based on the same hymn. The majestic Improvisation über ein Thema von Anton Bruckner, op. 19 (1924) and the concise Suite for Organ, op. 33 (1932) will also be analyzed.

Joseph Messner’s life and works have been documented by several historians. However, the organ compositions of Messner have not received as much attention. These works provide valuable information about the evolution of Messner’s style as a composer and of Austria’s musical organ language in the early twentieth century.

It is my hope that this paper will be a contribution to the continuing scholarship on Messner and that an increased awareness of him as a composer will lead to his music being performed more often.

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CHAPTER ONE

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

The Early Years (1893-1917)

Joseph Messner was born on February 27, 1893 in the Austrian village of Schwaz. His father was a miner, and his mother worked in the local tobacco factory. Joseph was the second of their three sons. He began singing in the church choir at the age of five and was known for possessing a good voice and perfect pitch. At the age of twelve, Joseph entered the Cathedral choir-boy institute in Salzburg. There he studied voice, violin, piano, organ, and flute. Messner continued his education as a prospective seminarian at the Borromäum Gymnasium, where Latin and Greek were his main subjects. For his elective courses, Joseph studied composition, harmony, and counterpoint with Georg Feichtner.2 By 1913 Messner had finished high school and was serving as assistant organist in the Salzburg cathedral.

Messner matriculated as a full-time student in the k. k. Theologische Facultät., and he began studying theology at the Canisianum seminary with the Jesuits in Innsbruck. During this time, he enjoyed many musical opportunities. Conducting the theological orchestra and choir, he presented works including Wagner’s biblical scene Das Liebesmahl der Apostel. He became known for his brilliant organ improvisations on themes from Mozart and Bruckner. Messner’s introduction to Innsbruck’s music-director, composer, and internationally acclaimed pianist Josef Pembaur marked the beginning of an important professional and personal life-long relationship.3 Pembaur’s familial influence continued to assist Messner in the years after he left Innsbruck.

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2 Gerhart Engelbrecht, Joseph Messner – ein Leben in Musik, 3.

Following his theological studies, on October 7, 1916 Messner was ordained as a priest in the Salzburg cathedral and his first assignment was in the parish of Haering, a village in Tirol.  

**Post-World War I (1918-1925)**

In 1918, at the recommendation of Josef Pembaur’s son Karl Maria, King Friedrich August III of Saxony appointed Messner as court organist in Dresden. However, the defeat of the German empire at the end of World War I resulted in King Friedrich abdicating the throne. As the court dissolved, Messner lost his position.

Another son of Pembaur, also named Josef, taught at the Akademie der Tonkunst in Munich, and he took in young Messner and generously gave him a place to live. Instead of assuming the Dresden position, Messner instead began to study at the academy. His composition teacher there was Professor Friedrich Klose, a pupil of Anton Bruckner’s. Josef Bect, a pupil of Josef Rheinberger, was his organ professor. Messner additionally studied conducting, piano, music history, harmony, and Catholic liturgy.  

The economic difficulties in Europe after World War I almost forced Messner to interrupt his studies and return home to Tirol. Therese Mauerer, an acquaintance of Messner’s mother and a famed medical practitioner in Munich, benevolently allowed both Joseph and his older brother Johannes to live in her home. She paid their tuition, granted them free room and board, and brought them with her to concerts and operas in Munich. Johannes, also an ordained priest, was in graduate school at the University of Munich. Both brothers became fascinated with opera, and in 1921 they worked together on a one-act biblical opera, *Esther*; Johannes wrote the libretto, and Joseph wrote the music.

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4 Engelbrecht, 4.
5 Ibid., 7.
6 Ibid, 8.
Messner was invited in 1922 to an appointment at the prestigious *Sternschen Konservatorium* in Berlin. However, Salzburg’s Archbishop Ignaz Rieder summoned Messner to return to Salzburg. Messner was appointed as the second organist of the cathedral as well as an associate priest in Salzburg.

**Salzburg Cathedral Musical Life (1926-1932)**

After the sudden death of *Domkapellmeister* Franz Xaver Gruber, Messner was appointed as head of the Salzburg cathedral music program in 1926. Messner redesigned the cathedral music program. He reestablished the cathedral choir and began using professional instrumentalists and vocalists instead of the amateurs who had performed in the past. Following his first large-scale church concert in September of 1926, Messner was approached by Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Max Reinhardt, two of the founders of the Salzburg Festival. Messner was invited to coordinate a cathedral concert series run in conjunction with the summer festival. The first concerts began in the 1927 summer season.

Joseph Messner was interested in organ construction. In 1928 he received a patent for an electric *Spielhilfe*, or registration aid, to assist organists when performing on instruments with a heavy key-action. He worked with the Salzburg organ firm Dreher & Flamm, formerly called “Caecilia,” and designed the dispositions of many new organs for churches and concert halls in the area, including the Salzburg Festival building.

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7 *Domkapellmeister* Franz Xaver Gruber (1875-1926) was the grandson of the “Stille Nacht” composer Franz Gruber (1787-1863). Barbara Boisits, “Franz Xaver Gruber,” *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Personenteil*, no. 8 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1994), 108.

8 Engelbrecht, 15.


10 Ingrid Loimer, “Der Organist” (Salzburg, Austria, 2008 Photocopied).
Messner received another job offer in December of 1929, this time as a
*Domkapellmeister* in Berlin. Berlin’s Bishop Christian Schreiber traveled to Salzburg and spoke to the archbishop about the job opportunity. Again, however, Salzburg’s Archbishop Rieder refused the request. Archbishop Rieder increased Messner’s salary, and the matter was closed.¹¹

Joseph Messner began an important personal relationship in 1929 when he met the Viennese singer Eva Klemens. She arrived in Salzburg as the lead operetta singer for the Salzburg theatre, and Messner arranged for her to sing in December as a soloist in the Cathedral. The two became enamored of one another, and in spite of the disapproval of Messner’s choir, their relationship flourished. She and Messner moved to a home together in 1936 in St. Jakob am Thurn, a village a few kilometers outside of Salzburg. The archbishop knew about this relationship, and he allowed it. The archbishop allowed Messner to continue being a priest, but he no longer had pastoral parish duties associated with his position. Eva Klemens remained with Messner until his death, and it is because of her careful record-keeping that so many of Messner’s unpublished works are still extant.¹²

**Years of Political Difficulty and World War II (1933-1945)**

The actions of Messner’s brother Johannes in the transitional time between the world wars are important to the story of the musician Joseph Messner. Johannes Messner became a Professor of Ethics and Social Studies in 1935 at the Theological faculty of the University of Vienna. He approached problems in politics, economy and social problems from the perspective of both a social ethicist and as a priest.¹³ In 1935, two years after Hitler had taken over power in Germany, he wrote a book titled *Dolffuss* about Austria’s assassinated chancellor, Engelbert

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¹¹ Engelbrecht, 19.

¹² Ibid., 20.

¹³ Ibid, 28.
Dollfuss. As a result, he was placed on the Sturmabteilung, or SA, death-list after Austria’s Annexation. He became aware of this three years later in 1938 when SA personnel came to his living quarters and revoked his teaching license. Messner decided to try withdrawing back to Salzburg and back to his small hometown in Schwaz, but upon hearing from his friends that his name had been mentioned over the national radio as included on the death-list, Messner escaped on foot to Switzerland and worked quietly as a priest. By the end of the year he escaped to England, where he lived as an exile for ten years. While there he wrote Das Naturrecht, which was originally published in English in 1949 as Social Ethics.\textsuperscript{14}

The composer Joseph Messner retreated quietly during this politically difficult time to his home in St. Jakob am Thurn. His brother Johannes had been named a traitor, and Eva Klemens, his partner, was half-Jewish through her father’s family. In these extraordinary times, individuals were forced to do dangerous things; Messner, with the help of some friends, collected all of the official documents connecting Eva with her father and destroyed them. The documents included pages removed from church matrimonial records. In 1942 Messner was one of thirteen artistic advisors in Salzburg who lost their jobs and were relegated to meaningless minor work because of their refusal to accept allegiance with the SA party.

On October 16, 1944, Allied forces bombed the Salzburg cathedral. Messner was inside the cathedral at the time, composing in the Archives.\textsuperscript{15} When the cathedral was reconstructed and rededicated fifteen years later, Messner composed a Mass for the occasion, and the Agnus Dei contains a musical remembrance of the bombing; whirring flutes recreate the sound of the approach of the bomb, and timpani recreate the thunder of the explosion just before the choir closes the Mass with the words “dona nobis pacem,” or “grant us peace.”

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 29.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 31.
By the end of World War II Messner’s musical world had irrevocably changed. His days of triumph as an organ virtuoso and burgeoning composer from the 1920’s and 30’s were long over. Messner’s musical life would need to resume in a new direction.

**Post-World War II Years (1945-1969)**

By May of 1945 Messner was offered a contract to begin rebuilding the Mozarteum-Orchestra, to set up concerts in the Festspielhaus, and to coordinate “After the war” festivals held in the Mozarteum for the occupying American soldiers and for Salzburg’s citizens.\(^\text{16}\) As a result of his relationship with the soldiers and their commanders, he was able to obtain supplies and clothing for the musicians. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf performed with him and the Mozarteum orchestra in June for concerts around the Salzburg area, and by August Messner was able to present two sacred music concerts (formerly known as cathedral concerts) for the Salzburg Festival. The Innsbruck concert series presented in December had to be repeated several times because of the high numbers of interested audience members.\(^\text{17}\)

Messner was invited to be head of the music program at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York in 1947, but Salzburg’s Archbishop Andreas Rohracher persuaded him to stay. Messner’s loyalty as a priest kept him settled in Austria.\(^\text{18}\) By the end of World War II, Messner also led the Church Music Institute of Salzburg at the Mozarteum.

Messner’s health began to decline in 1959; he was diagnosed with heart failure. In November 1964 Messner had a heart attack, and he was eventually forced to give up directing the sacred concerts of the summer festival in 1967. His health was good enough for him to travel to the United States in 1968 to be awarded an honorary doctorate in music by Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. He performed an organ recital while he was there, and he enjoyed

\(^{16}\) Gallup, 120.

\(^{17}\) Engelbrecht, 35.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 36
hearing some of his compositions performed. Messner received an honorary doctorate in theology from the Paris-Lodron University of Salzburg in 1968 as well.¹⁹

Messner’s life came to a sudden end on the morning of February 23, 1969. As he was preparing to leave his home on Sunday morning to direct music for the first Sunday of Lent, Messner collapsed and died shortly thereafter. His funeral Mass was held in the Salzburg cathedral on February 27, 1969 on what would have been Messner’s seventy-sixth birthday. His former student Hans Gillesberger conducted the cathedral choir and the orchestra for one of Messner’s most often-conducted and personally favored works, the Mozart Requiem.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 44.
²⁰ Ibid., 46.
CHAPTER TWO

IMPROVISATION ÜBER EIN THEMA VON ANTON BRUCKNER, OP. 19

The Improvisation on a Theme of Anton Bruckner, op. 19 was composed to commemorate the hundredth birthday of Anton Bruckner (1824-1896). Messner premiered the work in Augsburg on September 6, 1924 at the close of a concert featuring Bruckner’s F minor Mass. The theme is derived from the fugue subject et vitam venturi saeculi near the end of Bruckner’s Credo movement. Messner and other organists performed the Improvisation seventeen times in fifteen different cities between the years 1924-1938.21

Bruckner’s F minor Mass was a significant work in the output of his middle period. This setting of the mass was composed on a monumental symphonic scale, and it was written after a period when Bruckner studied composition with Simon Sechter, an Austrian organist, composer, and theorist (1788-1867) who taught at the Vienna Conservatory. Of special significance is the et vitam section from the Credo, a double fugue combining the counterpoint of the principal subject, derived from the beginning phrase of the movement, and a countersubject interrupted throughout by choral statements of “Credo, Credo.”22 The F minor Mass contains the only Credo composed by Bruckner following the classical practice of closing a Credo movement with a fugue.23 After this mass setting, Bruckner turned to composing symphonies, and with the exceptions of the Te Deum and Psalm 150, Bruckner never returned to combined writing for choir and orchestra.24

23 Ibid., 50.
**Structural Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 1-24</th>
<th>mm. 25-43</th>
<th>mm. 44-52</th>
<th>mm. 53-68</th>
<th>mm. 69-73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Introduction</td>
<td>I. Messner theme: fugue</td>
<td>Reprise of Introduction</td>
<td>II. Messner theme: Contrapuntal section</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key: C</td>
<td>$A^b$</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>$B^b, C$</td>
<td>C, $E^b$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 74-76</th>
<th>mm. 77-94</th>
<th>mm. 95-109</th>
<th>mm. 110-122</th>
<th>mm. 123-127</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III. Bruckner theme</td>
<td>Modulatory fragment</td>
<td>IV. Adagio trio</td>
<td>V. Chorale</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key: $A^b$</td>
<td>$G^b, G, D, E$</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C, $A^b, B$</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 128-140</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI. final Messner theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key: C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: *Improvisation über ein Thema von Bruckner*: form and key area chart

Messner’s work contrasts improvisatory sections based upon fragments of the *et vitam* theme found in example 1 with contrapuntal sections containing entire statements of a derived theme composed by Messner.


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24 Ibid, 52.
The introductory material begins with an ambiguous tonal center, as demonstrated in example 2.

Example 2. Joseph Messner, *Improvisation über ein Thema von Bruckner, op.19*  
© Copyright 1924 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien Copyright renewal 1952/UE 7711, mm. 1-5.

The brass-inspired opening flourish is repeated three times; eventually the music moves to an important key-establishing pedal point on G at m. 14 which resolves deceptively to A♭ Major.

The first complete presentation of Messner’s theme occurs at m. 24, where the score is marked “Fuge.” In contrast to the *tutti* organ dynamic at the beginning, this section seen in example 3 on the following page, is quieter with a designated registration of *Holzregister,* or wooden ranks of pipes. Messner uses a fragment of the opening fanfare sixteenth-note motive to decorate the theme, creating a “Messner theme.” His theme differs from the original in several ways. Bruckner’s theme is originally in C Major, but Messner’s version, containing the same notes of the original theme with the 3rd and 6th scale degrees flatted, is reharmonized in A♭ major. Messner’s theme contains more variety in note values and rhythm; instead of Bruckner’s version primarily comprised of quarter and half notes, containing just two eighth notes, Messner’s theme contains sixteenth, eighth, quarter, and half notes with dotted rhythms.
Messner adds a falling motive in m. 26. Messner’s derived theme, with its smaller minor intervals, contains many opportunities for motivic as well as harmonic development.

The fugal structure is unorthodox. The initial exposition is accompanied, and the fugal answer in m. 29 occurs at the subdominant instead of the more usual dominant. The third entry is in the tonic, and the fourth entry in the subdominant elides with the third entry; this stretto effect is accompanied by a crescendo in the music before the fifth entry in the pedal, which occurs in m. 39.

The second clear appearance of the theme begins in the left hand in m. 53, as seen in example 4 on the following page. Again, after the fortissimo flourishes of the opening motive, the theme is very quiet. It is marked piano, and the suggested registration is 8’ and 4’ stops. Messner alters his theme by eliminating the beginning pick-up, and the theme starts on the downbeat. Messner compresses the intervals a second time; the sustained notes B♭, B natural and C in the theme now rise chromatically, instead of the previous stepwise motion from the first
appearance of the theme. The falling gesture in m. 54 now outlines a major chord. The theme is accompanied by right hand figuration. The Messner theme begins in the left hand; subsequent entries of the theme occur in the right hand and in the pedal. The pedal entrance includes the original pick-up note and the beginning half of the theme becomes a fragment that is repeated as the music modulates to A♭ major and repeats the theme a fourth time. As seen in example 5,
Measure 69 is surprising as the compositional style quickly shifts from homophonic writing for
the manuals combined with a running sixteenth-note motive in the pedal to a sudden *mezzo forte*
section with a lighter texture and strings of diminished seventh arpeggios.

The original undecorated Bruckner theme begins quietly in the left hand. The only
alteration from Messner, illustrated in example 6, is that the quarter note pick-up is changed into
an eighth note. A light and virtuosic staccato pedal line accompanies the theme.

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mm.73-76.

The musical response to this theme features increasing dynamics and a return to dense chromatic
homophonic writing with accompanying sixteenth notes in m. 77. The beginning of the Messner
theme is the source of the fragment developed in the following transitional 12 measures.

In the previous three settings of the theme, Messner moved from C major to A♭ major, or
♭VI; in the next presentation of the theme, Messner moves to A major. In the *Adagio*, Messner
sets both themes in trio texture, as seen in example 7 on the following page. An augmented
version of the Bruckner theme softly appears in the pedal, while the left hand contains a
decorated version of the Messner theme. The right hand has a distinctive accompanying pattern with much downward motion, suggesting an inverse of the original ascending theme.


The pedal repeats the Bruckner theme in m. 101 in E major, and the music unexpectedly moves to a $^b$VI C major chord in m. 107. The following three short transitional measures ascend chromatically, as seen in example 8.

The final chord in m. 109 serves as a pivot chord; it is a fully diminished seventh chord. If spelled G♯, B, D, F, as Messner writes it, it is a vii°7 in the *Adagio* key of A major. If spelled enharmonically B, D, F, A♭, it is a vii°7 in the *Improvisation*’s home key of C major, and this is how Messner uses it.

Example 9 demonstrates the fifth appearance of the theme. The Bruckner version of the theme in the key of C major is used; Messner eliminates the beginning pick-up and treats it in four-part chorale-style. The registration at this point is *pianissimo* reed stops, or *Zungenregister*, to be played on the *Fernwerk*, a division of the organ located high in the main case. The theme is repeated in A♭ major on *Holzregister*, wooden stops, in m. 113. It occurs again in m. 116 in B major on the *Hauptwerk*, the main division of the organ, with running sixteenth-notes in the pedal and fragments, which propels the musical intensity until the *fortissimo* passage abruptly ends in m. 122. The arpeggiated chords from m. 69 then return at m. 123.

The sixth appearance of the theme is shown in example 10. Messner’s theme is now harmonized in C major; Bruckner’s theme, also originally in a major key, is embedded in the figuration of the dense manual chords and of the double-pedal in the bass. The closing key area is an unambiguous C major, further emphasized by a three measure pedal point.


The theme is repeated a final time in m. 136 with all of the reeds of the organ, and the melodic skip up of a fourth in m. 137 results in a bright A major chord (VI) as Messner reharmonizes the theme a final time and the *Improvisation* reaches its end.

**Compositional Techniques**

Two composers influencing Messner in his youth were Buckner and Reger. His teacher, Friedrich Klose, had been a pupil of Bruckner’s, whose monumental symphonic style was far-reaching throughout Austria and Germany. The music of Reger was particularly influential upon organists of Messner’s generation who were inspired by his contrapuntal romantic musical style.
Messner’s assimilated style characteristics from these two composers shaped much of the Improvisation.

One technique of Bruckner’s was the use of sequential repetition to build a climax.\textsuperscript{25} Messner adapted this technique in his organ works. As seen in example 11, the Improvisation repeats a fragment of the fugue theme three times in the pedal as the first large section of the work comes to a close.


Example 12, found on the following page, illustrates ascending sequential repetitions of arpeggiated diminished chords, not used as a climax, but instead as a transitional area before the middle section begins with the first exposition of the derived fugue theme in ms. 74. These arpeggiated chords lead to E\textsubscript{b} major, the dominant of the new tonal center of A\textsubscript{b} major.

Messner uses the final portion of the Bruckner theme again in mm. 118-122 as he quickly
heightens the musical dramatic intensity in the closing section by using the fragment in
sequential repetition over a virtuosic chromatic pedal line. The melodic fragment is used five
times.

Aural breaks or pauses were an important element in the symphonies of Bruckner, and
they were meant to increase a sense of anticipation and tension. They also emphasized the
formal structure of the work. Bruckner’s second symphony contained so many examples of this
affect that a member of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra reportedly called it the
Pausensinfonie at the premiere.\(^{26}\) Messner used breaks in the music to draw attention to the
formal structure of his compositions, and he probably also used them for dramatic effect in
cathedrals with long periods of reverberation time. Breaks in the music would also simplify
registration changes. Aurally, however, they produced stunning symphonic effects. Messner
was famous as an improviser, and pauses in the music were a performance practice element;
notated breaks of varying duration in the Improvisation composition retained the spirit of
improvisation present in this work. Messner notated many slashes, for example in m. 5 and m.
16, to indicate to the organist that a break in the sound was necessary, and in fact musically
appropriate. He also used the double slash figure, interpreted as a slightly longer caesura, when

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 73.
highly contrasting musical sections adjoin one another, as illustrated in example 13. These breaks would allow some of the sound in the acoustical space to decay as well as to allow a moment of time for the physical act of changing registers on the organ. The double slash in m. 52 occurs just before the second appearance of Messner’s theme. The Improvisation contains nine uses of the slash. The double slash caesura marking occurs five times and generally indicates the beginning of larger structural sections.


Messner uses a fermata over a rest in m. 109 as the middle section comes to a close.

Messner’s choice of a chorale at the beginning of the closing section reflects assimilation from Bruckner; from his third symphony forward, Bruckner often used chorales in his symphonies. Bruckner’s chorales were either played triumphantly by the full brass section of the orchestra or else appeared in quiet introspective “second group” themes. Messner uses the

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27 Ibid., 73.
chorale in the second sense; he specifies that the reeds on the Fernwerk are to be used, and he uses the chorale for dramatic effect as the work begins its slow crescendo to a powerful close.

Messner may have been inspired by some classical contrapuntal techniques utilized by Bruckner such as augmentation and inversion. Messner uses augmentation and inversion of the theme in the Improvisation Adagio in mm. 95-106 as seen in example 14.

Messner may have also been influenced by Bruckner’s technique of accompanying a solo voice with a florid instrumental line, such as the tenor solo of the et incarnatus est section of the Credo of the F minor mass. The Improvisation Adagio’s left hand melody is lyrically accompanied by the figuration of the right hand. The augmented pedal line functions as a harmonic bass line in this case.

The organ music of Max Reger was another important stylistic influence upon Messner in his formative years. As a recitalist, Messner performed Reger compositions such as the
Rhapsodie, Consolation, and Fuge from op. 65, Moment musicale from op. 69, Romanze in a, and Pastorale in F.\textsuperscript{28} One of Reger’s innovations to Romantic organ literature involved his utilization of revitalized eighteenth-century contrapuntal forms and procedures; he incorporated these elements as a means to create structures supporting chromaticism.\textsuperscript{29} Reger’s heavily chromaticized textures were attractive to Messner’s dramatic improvisatory style. As seen in example 15, mm. 116-122 of the Improvisation contain relatively dense chords in the manuals and a virtuosic and chromatic pedal line.


These textural characteristics are typical of Reger’s writing. The sixth statement of the theme, shown in example 16 on the following page, contains double-pedal writing which is reminiscent of dramatic endings Reger composed for his chorale fantasies.

\textsuperscript{28} Ingrid Loimer, email message to author, Feb. 3, 2009.

Messner studied many works of Reger, and in 1918 he published an article about Reger’s life as well as aspects of his compositional style. Messner especially respected the polyphony of Reger and his attention to “coloristic” elements, such as his care in setting every melody with a corresponding counter-melody. Messner also discussed Reger’s use of harmony, including his ability to quickly modulate through dominant and subdominant chords.

**Registration and Other Performance Considerations**

Messner indicates the desired registrations for the *Improvisation* in several ways. Messner often notes dynamic markings such as “ff” or “pp” to demonstrate the loudness of particular sections. In addition to dynamic markings, Messner sometimes indicates adding or removing specific families of stops; for example, “+Zg.” means to add the reed choruses.

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Several times Messner indicates the addition of ‘16’ or ‘4’ stops without specifying the principal, flute, or reed timbre; in performing this work, the organist must assess what stops work best on an individual basis. Messner specifies the least detail in notating the loud portions of the Improvisation; the quiet sections have more specific registrations.

The technical demands of the Improvisation are fairly high. The writing for the manuals sometimes contains dense four-voice chords that are intended to be played legato. However, in several instances Messner includes specific articulations for the chromatic portions that allow for a non-legato touch, easing the difficulty for the organist. The pedal line contains the most difficult technical demands; Messner composes long passages with sixteenth-note movement in the pedal line that span the entire pedal board. Throughout the piece he also includes sections with double pedal. The pedal is used as a harmonic basis, but often the harmonic basis is deeply embedded within the figuration. Messner was known as an organ virtuoso, and this work demonstrates his formidable technical abilities.
CHAPTER THREE

PARAPHRASE ÜBER DIE ÖSTERREICHISCH-DEUTSCH VOLKSHYMNE, OP. 28
AND ORGELBUCH SETTING

Joseph Messner’s Paraphrase was written for the dedication of the Heldenorgel (hero’s organ), built by the E.F. Walcker company in Kufstein (Tirol). This organ remains the largest open-air organ in the world. Originally designed as a musical memorial for German and Austrian soldiers killed in World War I, it now serves as a memorial for soldiers of both world wars. The organ originally contained twenty-six ranks, approximately 1,813 pipes, and was housed in a tower of the Geroldseck Castle. It has been enlarged, and it is still played daily. Messner premiered the Paraphrase on May 3, 1931 in Kufstein, and it was not played publicly again until seventy years later. Messner scholar Gerhart Engelbrecht suspects that some organists misinterpreted Messner’s political affiliation because of this composition.

By 1931 the melody of the Paraphrase already had strong and mixed nationalistic associations. Joseph Haydn had composed this melody as Austria’s first national anthem in 1797. His Kaiserhymne was set to the text ‘Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser’ (God save Francis the Emperor) by Lorenz Leopold Hashka. The anthem was used as Austria’s national anthem until 1917. After World War I, at the time of the establishment of the Austrian Republic, a new national anthem was chosen, but it had never been wholly accepted by the people. Haydn’s Kaiserhymne was reinstated as the national anthem in 1929, this time with a text by Ottokar Kernstock, ‘Sei gesegnet ohne Ende’ (Blessed be without end).

Germany’s national anthem, from approximately the time of the beginning of the German empire in 1871 until 1922, had been ‘Heil Dir im Siegerkranz’ (Hail to thee in victor’s crown), to the tune of *God Save the King/Queen*. Germany chose to adopt Haydn’s music in 1922, and the melody was this time paired with a text from a poem *Das Lied der Deutschen* by Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798-1874) based on an older text by Walter von der Vogelweide (c. 1170-1230) beginning: ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles’ (Germany, Germany above everything).\(^{34}\)

In 1931 Messner chose to compose his *Paraphrase*, then, on a melody that was already beginning to be highly controversial. After Germany adopted the *Kaiserhymne* in 1922, some Austrians were disturbed by this previously religious song now being used in a secular way with imperialist intent. In using this melody to honor the memory of the fallen soldiers and for their remaining families, Messner was musically stating his opinion that the music should continue to be used in its original way “for God, Emperor, and Fatherland.”\(^{35}\)

A paraphrase is a compositional technique utilizing a pre-existing melody as material for a polyphonic work. This practice was most popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when chant was most often used for such manipulations. In the nineteenth century composers such as Liszt began composing virtuoso works based upon familiar melodies, often from operas, titled “Paraphrase” or “Fantaisie.”\(^{36}\) Messner’s *Paraphrase* follows in the virtuoso tradition of Liszt of creating a patriotic work based on the *Kaiserhymne*, a favorite of the people since the lost “golden days” of the Hapsburg monarchy.

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\(^{35}\)Gerhart Engelbrecht, VII 5.

The 1918 Hymnal Setting

Messner had previously worked with this melody at the age of twenty-four when he was one of five contributors for the 1917/18 organ accompaniment volume to the Gesangbuch hymnal published for the Archdiocese of Salzburg. Messner’s setting, number 130, is located near the end of the hymnal because the hymns were organized in order of technical difficulty. The work is an expanded version of “Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze” intended for congregational use.

Structural Analysis

The setting in E♭ major begins with a twenty-one measure slow introduction, as seen in example 17.


The melody is introduced with an accompaniment of running eighth notes. Five measures from the end, Messner repeats a fragment of the final line of the chorale to finish the prelude, as seen in example 18. Here the harmonization becomes more chromatic, and Messner increases the number of voices.

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37 Other contributors were: Georg Feichtner, prefect and music teacher at the Gymnasium Kollegium Borromäum, where Messner had studied; J.F. Hummel, the director of the Mozarteum; Franz Sauer, cathedral organist and teacher at the Conservatory Mozarteum; and Alfons Schlögl, music teacher at the k. und k. Lehrerbildungsanstalt (teacher-training institute).
“1. Vorspiel,” mm. 16-21.

A shorter eight-measure “second” introduction follows; as seen in example 19, Messner uses the first four notes of the beginning of the chorale as a fanfare motive that is repeated.


The function of two preludes is not clear; since the first prelude is longer and contains all of the melodic content of the chorale, it may have been intended as a chorale prelude in a concert setting. The second prelude, with its fanfare motive, could have been intended as an alternative introduction to establish the key and the tempo of the sung chorale, if performing the previous chorale setting was deemed too long. When performed together, the first prelude establishes a reverent atmosphere, and the second prelude heralds the forthcoming hymn combining patriotic fealty to the emperor with religious devotion.

The hymn tune, with the words included for congregational singing, follows the introductions. The chorale is set to Haydn’s traditional harmonization. “4 Strophen,” or 4 verses, is written below the chorale, as seen in example 20. However, the hymnal only includes the first verse.

A short postlude, shown in example 21, follows; Messner reharmonizes the beginning half of the first line of the chorale and changes the melody of the second half of the chorale line, which he repeats as a fragment. The function of this postlude is unclear; the brevity of the postlude and its arrival at a half cadence indicate that it is perhaps a bridge to the fugue.


A four-voice fugue in E♭ major follows the short postlude. Messner’s setting is highly chromatic and modulatory; near the end of the fugue, he modulates from C major to D major before stopping on a B♭ dominant seventh chord, as seen in example 22.

The fugue leads to a final abbreviated homophonic setting of the chorale with a virtuosic pedal accompaniment seen in example 23.


As seen in example 24, a four-measure postlude based on a fragment of the final line of the chorale completes the work. The fragment is repeated three times, mirroring the repetition used in the second introduction. It is possible that the second “short” postlude is an alternative ending to the fugal version.


**1931 Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne**

The 1931 *Paraphrase* for the *Heldenorgel* is a work that can loosely be described as having a three-part form. The first section features fanfare motives which undergo development. The second section begins with a lyrical Adagio that develops into a Scherzando section. The final section returns to the beginning triumphant fanfare motives.
**Structural Analysis**

The chorale tune is comprised of three separate four-measure melodic lines with the beginning and closing lines usually repeated; the lines are identified as “A,” “B,” and “C” in example 20 on page 30. Hence, the shape of the *Kaiserhymne*, or *Volkshymne*, as Messner described it in his title, is AABCC. Messner ornaments and combines the lines of melodic material in motives throughout the fifteen-page work. The following figure identifies how Messner paraphrases the hymn and indicates important key areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 1-26</th>
<th>mm. 27-38</th>
<th>mm. 39-68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction; fanfare</td>
<td>4-part chorale &amp; chorale in embedded figuration</td>
<td>Transition; Fragments of hymn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hymn line: A</td>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>A + C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key: F</td>
<td>B⁰</td>
<td>modulatory: F, B⁰, D⁰</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 69-102</th>
<th>mm. 103-134</th>
<th>mm. 135-139</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adagio (Trio)</td>
<td>Scherzando</td>
<td>Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hymn line: AABB</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key: D⁰</td>
<td>modulatory: D⁰,G⁰,D</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 140-174</th>
<th>mm. 174-198</th>
<th>mm. 199-210</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glocken anticipation of reprise</td>
<td>Reprise of Introduction</td>
<td>Fugato &amp; Closing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hymn line: A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Imitative counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key: F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A + C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne: form and key area chart*
The beginning of the *Paraphrase* features a distinctive fanfare motive derived from the first measure of the *Volkshymne*. The motive is similar to the motive Messner used in his second introduction (see example 19 on page 29) of the chorale setting *Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze*. The *Paraphrase* version adds a scalar sixteenth note motive, as seen in example 25.


A quiet chromatic four-voice section follows at m. 12 with line A as its melody. As seen in example 26, Messner reharmonizes the chorale.


The beginning fanfare motive follows again in m. 16 with the chorale now reharmonized in d minor. The texture of the manual writing changes as melody line C, heard for the first time, is embedded in sixteenth-note arpeggiated figuration, as found in example 27 on the following page.
Example 27. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkslied*, op. 28 © 1931 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 31-33.

The middle section of the work, seen in example 28, begins in m. 69.


The Volkslied, in slow-moving notes, is in the pedal line. The indicated key signature is $D^b$ major, $bVI$ of the original key of F major. The right hand accompanying motive is derived from the original first bar of the *Volkslied*, but the dotted rhythm also appears in the accompanying motive; a bit of rhythmic displacement adds interest. The left hand accompanying motive consists of running descending eighth-notes that could be considered to be the inverse of the ascending hymn tune. Messner maintains this texture through 28 measures, only changing the left-hand motive in m. 97 to running sixteenth notes as the section cadences in m. 102 in $D^b$. The melody is in the pedal, but the pedal line often functions as harmonic support.

The next section of the work, found in example 29 on the following page, is labeled *Scherzando*, and Messner uses the B line for his thematic material.
Example 29. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28* © 1931 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 103-106.

This section of the work is modulatory as it begins in D♭ major and moves to B♭ minor, E♭ major, G♭ major and returns to D♭ major. At the end of ms. 122 an abrupt G♭ dominant seventh chord functions as a V of B major, which resolves deceptively to D major through the F# common tone. Four measures later Messner harmonizes the chorale in d minor. The B theme becomes a fragment, and the music closes quietly with a fermata on a C dominant seventh chord.

The third and final section begins at m. 140, seen in example 30, and Messner indicates *Glocken*, or bells.


The idea for the “Glocken” section may have originated from Wagner’s use of a bell motive in Act III of *Parsifal*. Messner’s figuration of the right hand suggests the pealing of bells, and the *Heldenorgel* included a Glockenspiel on the first manual. The left hand plays fragments of the beginning of the *Volkshymne A* theme. The registration indicated for the A theme is the trumpet.
Messner returns to the original key of F major, prepared by the long C pedal point at the close of the Glocken section, and the recapitulation is exactly the same in the first eleven measures as the beginning of the Paraphrase until m. 185, which moves immediately to the d minor version of the fanfare motive. Messner eliminates the original four measures of contrasting contrapuntal A theme material that he used in the first section; for the closing he continues using the fanfare motive to increase the musical intensity.

A Fugato. (Cadenza!) marking occurs at m. 199, and the writing, as seen in example 31, is more imitative than actually fugal.

![Example 31. Joseph Messner, Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28 © 1931 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 199-201.](image)

The fugato subject is a diminution of the first eight notes of the A theme. The entries for the voices are irregular; the first two entrances are only a whole step apart, the third entrance is a third higher, and the fourth entrance is a whole step higher. By the seventh measure of the Fugato, Messner repeatedly uses a fragment of the beginning sixteenth note theme.

*Neue Klangfarbe*, or a new color of sound, is requested in m. 212 as Messner quietly repeats the beginning fragment of the chorale and crescendos over a C pedal point. As seen in example 32 on the following page, m. 217 contains the C theme in the right hand, the left hand has running chromatic eighth notes, and the pedal is doubled with the C theme played by the right foot over a pedal point played by the left foot. The final four measures contain a plagal I-
IV-I cadence that functions as an “amen” to Messner’s nationalistic as well as religious setting of the Volkshymne.


**Compositional Techniques**

Just as in the *Improvisation*, the *Paraphrase* reveals the stylistic influence of Bruckner. Messner again uses the concept of sequential repetition as he builds climaxes; in example 33 the first phrase of the theme is stated five times as it ascends in the closing mm. 212-216 over a C pedal point.

Example 33. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28* © 1931 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 212-216.
The *Paraphrase*, too, utilizes the dramatic effect of the pause discussed earlier in regards to Bruckner. The double slash *caesura* marking occurs four times to mark sections. It is used first in m. 15 to signal the return of the opening fanfare motive, and it functions in m. 199 as an unexpected absence of sound as the *Fugato (Cadenza)* section begins. The *caesuras* separate smaller sections within the work. Messner notates actual beats of rest when transitioning to larger sections such as the Adagio; the reprise of the opening fanfare following the “Glocken” section in m. 173 is prepared by a gradual dissolution of the bell theme through rests and fragmentation of the theme.

The *Paraphrase*, like the *Improvisation*, contains a prominent example of augmentation in the *Adagio* section with the pedal playing the augmented chorale theme with the manuals in a trio texture, as seen in example 34. The melody of the right hand diverts attention from the *cantus firmus* setting of the chorale in the pedal line.

Example 34. Joseph Messner, *Paraphrase über die österreichisch-deutsche Volkshymne, op. 28* © 1931 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 69-72.

Diminution is not used frequently in Messner’s organ works, but the *Paraphrase* uses it for the “Fugato” section of mm. 199-209, shown in example 35 on the following page. The beginning of the chorale is condensed into the sixteenth-note group of the fugato-theme. The fugal entries occur once per measure, and Messner creates a feeling of urgency with a stretto effect as a fragment of the already condensed sixteenth notes begins occurring twice per measure in mm. 205-208.
The compositional influence of Reger is again apparent in the Paraphrase, and one particular composition by Reger may have influenced Messner’s decision to use the Kaiserlied. Max Reger’s Variations on the English National Anthem was composed in 1901 upon the occasion of the death of Queen Victoria. The title page for the work includes the English title as well as two German anthems “Heil, unserm König” and “Heil dir im Siegerkranz” that were traditionally set to this melody. “Heil, unserm König” was the national anthem for Bavaria, and the same tune set to the words “Heil dir im Siegerkranz” had been the unofficial national anthem of the German empire. As compared with other chorale fantasies written by Reger at this time, such as Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme or Wie schön leucht’t uns der Morgenstern, this composition is modest in terms of its scale and technical requirements. It is known that Messner performed the Variations in 1916 in Schwaz as part of a concert benefiting the Red Cross and casualties of the war. The Variations and Fugue contains two variations; the second variation features the national anthem presented in the pedal line. The fugue subject is derived from the first line of the anthem.


Registration and Other Performance Considerations

The *Paraphrase* contains fewer specific directions regarding registration than the *Improvisation*. Instead of requesting families of stops such as *Holzregister* or *Streichregister*, as in the *Improvisation*, in the *Paraphrase* Messner most often only indicates dynamics. The specification of the trumpet in the *Glocken* section is one of two instances when specific stops are requested. As Messner prepares the last crescendo in m. 212 to the final statement of the chorale, *neue Klangfarbe*, or “new color of sound,” is written. This work was composed for a specific organ. Because of the modest size of the open-air instrument, perhaps Messner included fewer detailed registrations; the organ with its twenty-six stops would not be capable of fine graduations of orchestral sound.

The technical demands on the organist are higher in the *Paraphrase* than in the *Improvisation*. The *Improvisation* contains three- and four-voice chords and octaves in the manuals; the pedal is full of chromatic sixteenth-note passages and occasionally double pedal octaves. The *Paraphrase* contains longer passages of sixteenth-note octaves in the manuals (mm. 52-59) and more virtuosic writing for the pedal division. The pedal line is often doubled with the right foot adding melodic support as the left foot sustains the harmony. The final eleven measures feature double pedal with m. 223 reaching high F on the pedal board; the organist is required to play at both ends of the long pedal board. One passage, seen in example 36 on the following page, contains a chromatic double-pedal line that spans the entire length of the pedal board. Messner was famous for his virtuosity, and this work was certainly a prime vehicle for him to demonstrate his facility.

The 1918 hymnal setting of “Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze” is technically simpler than both the *Improvisation* and the *Paraphrase* and therefore could be within the reach of young organists. The sectional form of the composition as well as the smaller scale of the movements

provides useful learning opportunities for students first approaching late-romantic literature. Certain areas, such as the closing portion of the fugue with its virtuosic pedal line, could function as etudes for perfecting pedal technique. The brevity of the composition facilitates the possibility of reachable goals for a young organist.
CHAPTER FOUR

SUITE FÜR ORGEL, OP. 33

Messner composed the *Suite* in 1932 and premiered the work in the Salzburg cathedral. The last of his published organ works, the *Suite* demonstrates a different style of composing when compared with Messner’s approach in the other two works. This work, with movements entitled “Präludium,” “Sarabande,” and “Fugato,” suggests a move for Messner from late-romanticism to neoclassicism. Messner performed this work numerous times in cities such as London, Paris, and Zürich during his 1935 concert season. After WWII, Messner performed this work in Kufstein on the *Heldenorgel*, and other organists performed this composition in Europe as well as in America. It is presently Messner’s most-often performed work.\(^{40}\)

Neoclassicism, which had taken root in Europe after World War I, had begun as a reaction against the excesses of Romanticism. Following the war, for economic and social reasons, as well as artistic ones, smaller-scale, less emotional works began to be favored.\(^{41}\) A return to “classically” balanced historic forms, such as dance movements from the traditional suite, was preferred to the romantic large-scale free-fantasy compositions that had been favored in the past.

**Structural Analysis**

The first movement of the *Suite*, entitled “Präludium,” is a brief movement that is only two pages long; it is a simple ABA form. The opening musical material consists of a decorated d minor arpeggio; the first phrase in the introductory material arrives at a cadence on A major, suggesting a half-cadence, but it resolves deceptively to B\(^b\) major in m.4. The beginning section, mm. 1-18, is comprised of a decorated arpeggiated gesture in triplets followed by a rising motive

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in octaves in the manuals and a rising arpeggiated chord motive in the pedal, as shown in example 37. The section ends on a quiet A dominant ninth chord with a $b^5$th and $b^9$th.

Messner’s voicing of the chord, seen in example 38, implies that the C$^#$ and the E$b$ will both resolve to D. The note D provides the fifth of the G major chord beginning the next section.

Example 38. Joseph Messner, *Suite, op. 33 “Präludium,”* © 1932 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 12-18

A contrasting section in four-part chorale style, seen in example 39, follows the introductory material.

Double slashes divide the first three phrases into four-bar phrases; the final phrase is five measures long. This section begins in the key of G major and modulates through common tone resolution chords; many of the chord voicings contain fourths in the right hand, and m. 25 contains the “Tristan chord,” written enharmonically, but containing an augmented fourth, an augmented sixth, and an augmented second. The chordal section ends on octave E’s in the manuals, representing an arrival on the dominant of the dominant: V/V in d minor.

“Tempo I” signals the beginning of the reprise in d minor. It is the same as the first thirteen bars of the initial section. However, at m. 49, Messner adds notes to the accompanying chords, doubles the pedal, and begins the ascending triplet phrase again. The phrase ascends higher than before, to the highest B\textsubscript{b} on the manual, and contains a trill in both hands while the pedal line plays the fanfare motive for the first time in m. 51, as seen in example 40.


Messner provides a note stating that if the organ does not have the range necessary to play the high trill, the organist may play the passage an octave lower. At m. 51 the pedal is doubled, and the right foot plays a trill. The movement ends in D major.

The second movement is titled “Sarabande” with an overall l: a :l: b a’:l form. The phrase structure follows the classical conventions of dance movements; as seen in example 41 on the following page, the beginning phrase is eight measures long, forming a musical sentence.
Example 41, Joseph Messner, Suite, op. 33 “Sarabande,” © 1932 by ANTON BOEHM & SOHN, Augsburg, mm. 1-8.

This movement is in b minor, the relative minor of the previous movement’s final D major chord. The first phrase arrives at a half-cadence in ms. 8, and the phrase is repeated. The next section also contains an 8-measure sentence. Whereas the beginning musical idea featured descending stepwise motion, the second musical idea features ascending arpeggiated chords. Messner repeats the second arpeggiated musical idea with an altered accompaniment primarily in thirds and sixths. “Tempo I” appears at m. 25, and the initial beginning musical idea is repeated exactly the same as in the beginning of the “Sarabande.” Messner uses a fragment of the beginning to close the “Sarabande,” and the final B chord has no third in it. The second movement is a continuous rounded-binary form. The second part of the dance is much longer than the first part, so the movement has an asymmetrical design. Sarabandes are usually in a slow triple meter, and Messner’s dance satisfies this requirement. The second and third beats of the measure are often tied in a sarabande, creating more emphasis on the second beat, but Messner’s version has most of the strong beats occurring on the first beat of the measure.

The third movement “Fugato” is based on a subject, found in example 42 on the following page, comprised of the descending arpeggiated notes of an A dominant-9th chord; the arpeggiated idea originates from the ascending opening flourish in the first movement.
The articulation indicates this is not a typical Baroque fugue subject; Messner’s fugue subject features staccato markings and slurs over the bar line. A more likely Baroque articulation would have removed the first and second slurs because of the intervals between the notes; Messner is purposefully blending elements of the old and the new. An asterisk at the beginning of the movement refers to the footnote suggesting a registration of “a Baroque color, such as *Gedackt 8’* and Cornette 2 2/3.” Messner obscures the placement of the downbeat by beginning the “Fugato” on the upbeat. The answer occurs in the alto voice and spells an E dominant-9th chord; the fugal answer is tonal. Three fugal entries occur in the manuals, and then the fourth entry is heard in the pedal; with the pedal entrance, the contrapuntal texture disintegrates into a homophonic texture featuring a choral accompaniment against the fugue subject.
As seen in example 43 on the previous page, the key signature changes at m. 23 from one flat to two sharps; the fugue subject is now stated in e minor. The dynamic marking changes to “etwas langsamer” or “somewhat more slowly.” The original articulation of the fugue subject is changed; a slur extending over the entire phrase subject and a Gedackt for the accompaniment. When Messner repeats the fugue subject in D major at m. 28, he places staccato markings over the first two repeated notes, and the rest of the subject is legato. The accompaniment to the fugue subject is two voices moving in parallel motion; at m. 28 Messner changes the melodic line from one to two voices.

A recapitulation of the fugue begins in m. 40. The fugue subject is the same, but this time it is immediately accompanied by the left hand. At m. 62 Messner manipulates the descending stepwise portion of the end of the fugue subject; falling octaves in the manuals are continued in the pedal. In m. 67 the pedal line reaches A, the dominant of d minor; Messner cadences to d minor in m. 69. The manuals sustain a d minor chord while the pedal line plays a final statement of the fugue subject. At this point, instead of spelling a dominant 9th chord, the pedal line spells out a d minor chord. A caesura in the pedal line at m. 72 indicates a break in the momentum and sound; Messner finishes his work with double-pedal, and chords in the manuals lack the third of the chord. A major or a minor ending is not clear. Because of the lyrical middle section, the Fugato movement has an ABA ternary form.

**Compositional Techniques**

One distinctive compositional element from the *Improvisation* and the *Paraphrase* is also found in the *Suite*; Messner continues to include his distinctive breaks and caesura markings. The *Suite* contains fewer examples of these pauses than the other two works. The first movement “Präludium” has a long rest in m. 18 at the point where the chorale-like middle section begins and contrasts the opening expansive fanfare exposition. Movement three’s
“Fugato” section has a *caesura* indicated at the end of the lyrical middle section at m. 40 before the reprise of the movement. Sequential repetition, augmentation and diminution are not utilized in the movements of the *Suite*.

The *Suite* is influenced by elements of Neoclassicism in regards to its form. Several composers had composed suites by the time Messner’s work was written in 1932; Debussy’s *Suite bergamasque* (1890-1905) contained a prelude, minuet, and a passepied as well as *Clair de lune*. His composition *Pour le piano* (1896-1901) contained a prelude, sarabande, and toccata. Ravel’s *Le tombeau de Couperin* (1914-1917) contained a prelude, fugue, three dances, and a toccata. Whether or not Messner knew of these French compositions is unknown; however some of the works of Ravel were featured in 1923 at the first festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) held in Salzburg. Messner was a student at this time, but he had also already been named as the second organist of the Salzburg cathedral; it is quite possible that he attended the festival and heard works by other composers including Berg, Schoenberg, Bartok, Krenek, Prokofiev, and Stravinsky. Schoenberg had composed *Suite for piano*, op 25 (1921/23) which contained a prelude and an intermezzo in addition to other dance movements. Bartok had also composed a work related to a suite; *Four orchestral pieces* op. 12 (1921) contained a prelude, scherzo, intermezzo, and funeral march. Additionally, Hindemith had composed a suite for piano in 1922, and it had included movements such as “March,” “Shimmy,” and “Ragtime.” The organ literature contained no works entitled “suite” at this point; however, French organ composers such as Charles-Marie Widor had composed multi-movement works called symphonies as early as 1876. The symphonies contained movements commonly found in orchestral literature, including dance movements such as the minuet. In 1932, the same year as

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Messner composed his *Suite*, Maurice Duruflé composed a suite as well; his three movement *Suite*, op. 5 contained a prelude, sicilienne, and a toccata.

Historically, the border between neoclassicism and expressionism was distinct in the 1920’s, but it began to blur in the 1930’s.\(^{43}\) Musical elements of neoclassicism include concepts such as simplicity, objectivity, and constructive logic;\(^{44}\) Messner’s musical language is perhaps closer to that of expressionism. Some characteristic aspects of expressionism seen in Messner’s *Suite* include wide-reaching spans of themes, pervasive chromaticism, and an intensification of Messner’s subjective personal and free style of writing. Expansive themes can be found in the “Präludium” (see example 37, p. 43), whose opening theme ranges over two octaves and in the “Fugato” movement (see example 42, p. 46), containing a fugue subject spanning the interval of a ninth. Messner’s scale for developing themes had been monumental in the *Improvisation* and the *Paraphrase*, but the homophonic style of writing is replaced with a linear approach that is more capable of expressivity in the *Suite*. The “Präludium” movement avoids key-establishing cadences and utilizes mostly major chords that sustain a feeling of unrest only temporarily relieved in the lyrical middle portion (see example 39, p. 43). The “Fugato” is the most neoclassical of the movements, with its counterpoint, but the middle portion (see example 43, p. 46) shows Messner with expressionist tendencies as he lyrically alters the theme and returns to late-romantic harmony for a moment before returning to the incisive contrapuntal style for the recapitulation.


Registration and Other Performance Considerations

Messner includes few specific registration indications in the *Suite*. He specifies broad fortissimo and pianissimo dynamics, and this style of dynamic graduation is similar to terrace dynamics from the baroque era. In the “Präludium,” Messner specifies an unusual registration of *Vox coelestis* 8’ and *Lieblich Gedackt* 16.’ Celeste stops are usually meant to be paired with a *Salicional* 8’ or a viola da gamba 8’. Messner’s choice of pairing the *Vox coelestis* with a 16’ stopped flute is unusual, but perhaps Messner discovered this registration to be effective in the Salzburg cathedral. The third movement “Fugato” specifies a baroque sound color, such as a stopped flute *Gedackt* 8’ and a mutation stop *Cornette* 2 2/3’, adding two octaves and a fifth to the 8’ foundation stop. According to classical registration practices, a *cornet* would have consisted of the 4’, 2’, flutes and the *Tierce* 1 3/5 in addition to the 8’ foundation stop and the fifth provided by the cornette. Mutation stops had disappeared from organs following the baroque era, but neoclassical instruments began including them again. Messner’s registration does not follow traditional registration conventions; a *Gedackt* and *Cornette* would have usually been used for a solo line in German and Austrian music, not for a contrapuntal fugue. The typical fugue registration would have consisted of the principal stops of 8’, 4’, 2’, and the mixture. The contrapuntal nature of Messner’s “Fugato” is reminiscent of baroque fugues, but the lighter registration and the looser improvisatory structure of the “Fugato” furnish the movement with a modern feeling of vitality. The middle portion of the fugue is unusual with a lyrical accompanied melody played on the oboe and accompanied by a stopped flute.

Out of the three solo organ works, Messner played his *Suite* most often on tour in organ recitals. The general terraced dynamics and ternary forms make the *Suite* easier to play on unfamiliar organs; each movement’s registration could be set on the organ prior to its being played. The crescendo pedal assisted in increasing the dynamics to fortissimo. Messner could
probably handle the changes in registration by himself and did not have to depend on sometimes unreliable registrants while he was traveling.

The Suite is technically easier to play than both the Improvisation and the Paraphrase. Although the first movement does contain octave passages in the “Präludium,” the octaves occur over shorter periods of time than in the previous two works. The “Fugato” contains chordal writing in the closing measures, but they are not as dense as in the Improvisation or the Paraphrase.

While the Improvisation and the Paraphrase are virtuoso bravura pieces, the Suite is composed more modestly. Because of the sectionalized nature of the work, it lies within the grasp of less experienced performers. The Suite is musically demanding, but the technical demands are comparatively less daunting.

Suites were traditionally comprised of dances arranged by key. Messner’s Suite does not end with a dance; the choice of ending with a contrapuntal “Fugato” does not fit the usual form. Messner’s Suite is something new as it combines elements of the suite with elements of the central German middle Baroque toccata form; his combination of präludium, sarabande, and fugato could, however, be viewed as similar to Bach’s BWV 564 C Major Toccata, Adagio and Fugue.
CONCLUSION

Following the publication of the *Suite* in 1932, Messner did not compose or publish any more organ music. He began composing more music for use in the Salzburg cathedral, and he continued to compose music for the concert hall as well. Messner’s responsibilities in the cathedral curtailed his concertizing opportunities; his concerts were primarily in Advent and following January 6th, Epiphany, when the Masses in the cathedral were celebrated in a less ceremonial way. As Messner grew older, his concert repertoire included instrumental organ versions of selections from his Masses, his own organ compositions, and most importantly his highly-regarded improvisations.  

Another factor possibly affecting Messner’s career and the direction it followed was the development of the summer *Festspiele* held in Salzburg. After World War I, Austria was diminished physically as well as culturally; its economic situation was dire, and it searched for new economic impetus.  

Summer music festivals honoring Mozart had been held sporadically in Salzburg since 1877, and the idea of Salzburg eventually becoming the Austrian equivalent of Bayreuth in Germany began then.  

Austria’s cultural heritage, rooted in the Catholic church, and the Holy Roman Empire before that, had created an identity that was partially regained in the establishment of the Festival; Austrians temporarily forgot the shortages and privations following the war when they attended the concerts of the *Festspiele*.  

Messner was asked to arrange “Cathedral Concerts” beginning in 1926; his concerts provided the public with an


47 Ibid., 42.

48 Gallup, 11.

49 Ibid., 13.
opportunity to hear well-known as well as lesser-known masses and other liturgical works of Mozart for the next forty years. Following World War II, Messner’s role of producing the church concerts in the Festspiele had been established, and he continued, albeit in different circumstances. The 1945 concerts, held three months after American soldiers entered the undefended city, were called “Sacred Concerts” instead of “Cathedral Concerts,” because the cathedral had been bombed, and the concerts were held in the university concert hall.

Messner’s duties as Domkapellmeister of the Salzburg cathedral were demanding. He composed for the cathedral music program, but he had less opportunity to practice organ and fewer opportunities to give recitals. As his responsibilities for managing the extensive music program of the cathedral continued, perhaps it was natural that he stopped composing for the organ.

Messner’s music is increasingly performed today, but it is still mostly limited to Austrian and German venues. A large portion of Messner’s output after World War II consisted of masses and propriums; it is possible that Vatican II’s directive to more use of the vernacular in church music is also indirectly responsible for the scarcity of Messner’s performed body of work. The Organ Reform Movement resulted in many of the instruments built after the war returning to baroque aesthetic standards; Messner’s late-romantic quasi-symphonic works are not performed easily on these instruments. As historic interest especially in Austria and Germany turns to romantic instruments, perhaps Messner’s organ works may experience a revival.

Messner’s organ music retains the spirit of improvisation from which it most likely originated. It preserves, in a written form, the style of improvising prevalent in Austria and influenced by Bruckner, whose ephemeral improvisations are lost to the past. The virtuosity in these works perhaps also contributes to the reasons for them being performed less frequently

50 Ibid., 56.
than they should be. It is hoped that more performers will present these organ works in recital so that audience members may again enjoy the appeal of these arresting pieces as well as to experience satisfying music that skillfully merges late-romantic music with music of the modern era.
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APPENDIX A: SPECIFICATION OF THE HELDENORGEL
E.F. Walcker opus 2808, built in 1931

I. Manual, C-g""
   Schweller
   1. Bordun 16’
   2. Principal major 8’
   3. Doppelflöte 8’
   4. Fugara 4’
   5. Kornett 6-10 fach
   6. Cymbel 3-4 fach
   7. Trompette 8’
   8. Glockenspiel

II. Manual, C-g""
   Schweller
   9. Principal 8’
   10. Gamba-Vox coel. 8’
   11. Oktave 4’
   12. Quinte 2 2/3’
   13. Oktave 2’
   14. Mixtur 5-6 fach
   15. Tromba 16’
   16. Helltrompete 8’
   17. Clairon 4’

Pedal, C-f’
   Schweller
   18. Kontrabass 16’
   19. Subbass 16’
   20. Violon 8’
   21. Oktave 4’
   22. Mixtur 5-6 fach
   23. Tuba 16’
   24. Tromba 16’
   25. Helltrompete 8’
   26. Clairon 4’

Koppeln
   1. II an I
   2. Unter II an I
   3. Ober I
   4. Ober II an I
   5. Unter II
   6. Ober II
   7. I an P
   8. II an P
   9. Ober I an P
   10. Ober II an P
   11. Baßkoppel P an I

Registrierhilfen
   1. Handregister
   2. Freie Kombination 1
   3. Freie Kombination 2
   4. Tutti
   5. Crescendowalze
   6. Handregister ab
   7. Walze ab
   8. Zungen ganze Orgel ab
   9. Zungen I.D. Manualen ab
   10. Schweller ganze Orgel
   11. Tremulant 1

Tremulant
## APPENDIX B: SPECIFICATION OF THE SALZBURG CATHEDRAL ORGAN
Matthäus Mauracher 1914 Renovation and Expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Manual (C-a³):</th>
<th>III. Manual (C-a³):</th>
<th>Pedal (C-f¹):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Principal 16', alt</td>
<td>46. Orpheon 16', alt</td>
<td>80 Untersatz 32', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bordun 16', alt</td>
<td>47. Principalino 8', alt</td>
<td>81 Principal 16', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Principal 8', alt</td>
<td>49. Quintaton 8', alt</td>
<td>83 Bordun 16', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Viola baritona 8', alt</td>
<td>50. Dolce 8', neu (teilw. Zink)</td>
<td>84 Subbaß 16', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Doppelflöte 8' alt</td>
<td>52. Traversflöte 4', neu</td>
<td>86 Quinta 10 2/3', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bourdon 8', alt</td>
<td>53. Rohrflöte 4', alt</td>
<td>87 Principal 8', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hornflöte 8', alt</td>
<td>54. Dulciana 4', alt</td>
<td>88 Octavbaß 8', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ripienflöte 8', alt</td>
<td>55. Octave 4', alt</td>
<td>89 Bordun 8', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Cornett 8', teilweise alt</td>
<td>56. Quinte 2 2/3', alt</td>
<td>90 Salicet 8', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Quadrotono 5 1/3', alt</td>
<td>57. Octavino 2', alt</td>
<td>91 Terzbaß 6 2/5', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Octave 4', alt</td>
<td>58. Flauto 2', alt</td>
<td>92 Quintbaß 5 1/3', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Doppelflöte 4', alt</td>
<td>59. Septime 1 1/7', neu</td>
<td>93 Octave 4', alt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Fugara 4', alt</td>
<td>60. Mixtur 2 2/3', alt, neu zusammengez.</td>
<td>94 Pedal-Mixtur 5 1/3', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Cornettino 4', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td>95 Bombarde 32', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Rauschflöte 2 2/3', alt</td>
<td>61. Klarinette 8', neu</td>
<td>96 Posaune 16', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Octave 1', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td>98 Trompete 4', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Mixtur major 2', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td>99 Stilgedackt 16', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Mixtur minor 1 1/3', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 Baßflöte 8', neu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Trompete 16', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td>101 Cello 8', neu, teilw. Zink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Trompete 8', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Nr. 99, 100 und 101 befinden sich im Schwellkasten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Trompete 4', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Manual (C-a³):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Bordunprincipal 16', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Lieblich-Gedackt 16', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Principal 8', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Gamba 8', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Hellflöte 8', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Dolceflöte 8', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Nachthorn 8', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Salicional 8', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Flöte 8', alt</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Nassat 5 1/3', alt</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>35. Flöte 4', alt</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36. Octave 4', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Salicet 4', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Quintflöte 2 2/3', alt</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39. Octave 2', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Terzetflöte 1 3/5', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Cornetto 2 2/3', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Mixtur 2', alt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Fagott 16', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Englisch Horn 8', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Clarino 4', neu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Kombinationen:
1. Pleno organo
2. Fortissimo
3. Forte
4. Mezzoforte
5. Piano
6. Pianissimo
7. Auslöser

### Koppeln:
- II/I, III/I, IV/I, II/II, IV/II, IV/III
- Oberoktav I, II/I, II, IV/III, IV
- Unteroktav I/I, III/II
- Pedalkoppeln I, II, III, IV

### Diverse Einrichtungen:
1. Einmal. „Freie Kombination“ sowohl als „Drücker“ als auch als „Tritt“ einstellbar
2. „Zungenchor“
3. „Streicherchor“
4. Autom. Pedal-Registrierung, nebst Auslöser
5. „Crescendo u. Decrescendo“ als Balanciertritt, nebst Einschalter
7. „Zungen ab“
8. „Forte Pedal“
9. „Tremolo“ für Vox humana 8’
10. 20 Absteller für die Registerstangen
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Aygün Lausch
UNIVERSAL EDITION AG
Bösendorferstrasse 12
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Tel.: + 43 / 1 / 337 23 - 112
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Archiv der Erzdiözese Salzburg
Kapitelplatz 3
A-5020 Salzburg
Fon: +43 (0)662 8047 1500
Fax: +43 (0)662 8047 1509
Email: archiv@archiv.kirchen.net
http://www.kirchen.net/archiv
VITA

Julie Powell Rozman was born in Louisiana and began musical instruction for piano at the age of six. She graduated in 1993 with an undergraduate in piano pedagogy from Louisiana State University. In 1993 she received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship for study in Salzburg, Austria. She remained there following her scholarship year and enrolled at the Universitӓt Salzburg Mozarteum, studying with Professor Gottfried Holzer-Graf and graduating with honors in 1999. In 2005 she completed a Master of Music Degree in organ at LSU. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at LSU in the organ class of Dr. Herndon Spillman. The degree of Doctor of Musical Arts will be conferred at the Summer Commencement 2009.