

Lesson 5: Hymn Playing in Shortcut Mode—Playing Hymns Right Now

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See www.organ.byu.edu

Materials needed: Hymn Registration Shortcuts; Hymn 3 (*Hymnbook*)

This is The New LDS Organist Lesson 5: Hymn Playing in Shortcut Mode – Playing hymns right now.

Learning to play the organ is a process which requires consistent practice over an extended time. Even if you are comfortable playing the piano, the organ is a new instrument. When you are called to play the organ you may not have enough time to acquire and polish the skills you need to learn new four-part hymns each week. Developing these skills is vital to your success in your calling, but you should be able to play confidently using the skills you already have. This course will cover two methods of learning and playing hymns. We will call the first method “shortcut mode” and the second method “polish mode.” Use both of these two modes to meet your immediate and long-term needs as organist. Work toward playing less in shortcut mode and more in polish mode.

[Shortcut mode]

Shortcut mode means to play the hymns as well as you can right now. This mode can be useful when you are asked to play a hymn beyond your current skill level, or while you are learning other hymns in polish mode. If you are playing multiple hymns for a single service, you might pick one or more hymns to learn in polish mode and learn the others in shortcut mode. This can help focus your practice time to develop your skills more quickly while still fulfilling your calling as organist. Here are several ideas for playing in shortcut mode. For each hymn you play in this mode, decide how you wish to practice and play it.

1. Play the Soprano line only.
2. Play the Soprano line in octaves.
3. Play the Soprano line and one other line (Alto, Tenor, or Bass.)
4. Play a simplified three- or four-part version of the hymn, such as the ones provided with this course.
5. Play all four voices on the Great manual.
6. Play all four voices on the Great manual with the bass coupler activated.
7. Play the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor lines on the Great, and play the Bass on the pedal. Do your best to maintain legato lines.

[Registering in shortcut mode]

To play in shortcut mode, first pick a registration appropriate to your hymn. If the hymn is joyful, pick a registration which will match that mood. A principal chorus is a basic registration for a joyful hymn. To engage the principal chorus, find the Great division and pull the stops marked “Diapason 8’, Octave 4’, Super Octave 2’, and Mixture.” This is a basic principal chorus. It gives clarity and brilliance to your

hymn. For example, a principal chorus on the hymn “Now Let Us Rejoice” sounds like this (I will play all four parts on the Great manual):

*** Now Let Us Rejoice, 1 phrase, 4 parts, no pedal

Now that you have engaged the principal chorus on your organ, stop the recording and play “Now Let Us Rejoice” in shortcut mode, with all four parts on the Great manual.

Many organs have a bass coupler, which you may use to bring out the bass line without playing it with the pedals. With the bass coupler engaged, the lowest notes you play on the manual sound with the stops you have engaged on the pedal division. To use the bass coupler, go the pedal division and pull the Principal 16’ and Octave 8’ stops. Next, find and engage the rocker tab or thumb piston marked “Bass.” It is usually situated to the right of the other stops or pistons. With the bass coupler activated, play “Now Let Us Rejoice” with all four parts on the manuals. Notice the difference in the sound of the bass line. It will sound like this:

***Now Let Us Rejoice, 1 phrase with bass coupler

In shortcut mode you may be able to play more voices than you will when you begin polish mode. However, do not stop using the polish mode just because you can play all the notes. Polish mode will help you learn to play musical lines with better clarity and confidence than you play in shortcut mode. This may mean that you play fewer lines or what appear to be simpler arrangements at first. As you do so, listen carefully for the differences in the way you play in shortcut and polish modes. For example, your “polished” hymns will have consistent legato touch, while your “shortcut” hymns may break the legato touch in order to play all of the notes.

You have now finished Lesson 5 – Hymn-playing in shortcut mode. To begin learning about polish mode, continue to lesson 6. To continue the lessons in shortcut mode, skip to lesson 10. Return to lessons 6-9 when you are ready to begin polish mode. As you learn more hymns, Remember that you can learn one hymn in shortcut mode while you are learning another in polish mode.

Hymn Registration Shortcuts

Following is an easy-to-use “shortcut” plan for selecting stops in either meditative or jubilant hymns for congregational singing. It can be used with most pipe or electronic church organs.

A FEW OF THE MOST IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1. **Support** the congregation with confidence, but do not overpower
2. Let the **text** guide the registrational plan for the hymn
3. Begin with stops from the **principal chorus**, especially at the 8’ level
4. **8’ and 4’ pitches** are minimum for the manual; 16’ and 8’ are minimum for the pedal
5. In **meditative hymns**, substitute flutes for principals at 4’ and 2’ levels as needed to reduce sharpness
6. Use **changes of registration** between verses and/or between verse and chorus

BASIC HYMN REGISTRATION

MEDITATIVE HYMNS: Begin with this basic combination

Great: Principals 8’ and 4’ (the stops may be called Principal, Diapason, Octave, or Prestant)

Pedal: The main 16’ stop (may be called Principal, Subbass, Bourdon, or Gedackt), and Great to Pedal

JUBILANT HYMNS: Add the 2’ principal on the Great to the meditative hymn combination, resulting in—

Great: Principals 8’ 4’ and 2’ (the 2’ stop may be called Super Octave, Fifteenth, or Doublette)

Pedal: The main 16’ stop, and Great to Pedal

FOR A SINGLE CHANGE OF REGISTRATION BETWEEN VERSES

MEDITATIVE HYMNS: Couple the Swell chorus 8’ 4’ 2’ to the Great

Begin with the Basic Hymn Registration for Meditative Hymns (above). Also, prepare the following:

Swell: flutes or principals 8’ and 4’, and flute 2’, resulting in—

an 8’ stop (Bourdon, Gedackt, Geigen Prinzival, or Diapason)

a 4’ stop (Flute, Nachthorn, Spitzprinzival, Octave, Prestant, or Klappelflöte)

the available 2’ stop (Piccolo, Blockflöte, Flute à bec)

Later, between verses or between a verse and the chorus, add the Swell to Great coupler

JUBILANT HYMNS: Add the Great chorus mixture

Begin with the Basic Hymn Registration for Jubilant Hymns (see above)

Later, between verses or between a verse and the chorus, add the Great chorus mixture (usually called Mixtur[e], and always followed by a Roman numeral)

For yet another change, you might add a chorus reed 8’ on the Great or Swell (Trumpet, Trompette, Tromba, or Fagott)

Now Let Us Rejoice

Cheerfully ♩ = 100-120

1. Now let us re-joice in the day of sal - va - tion. No lon - ger as
 2. We'll love one an - oth - er and nev - er dis - sem - ble, But cease to do
 3. In faith we'll re - ly on the arm of Je - ho - vah To guide thru these

stran - gers on earth need we roam. Good tid - ings are sound - ing to
 e - vil and ev - er be one. And when the un - god - ly are
 last days of trou - ble and gloom, And af - ter the scour - ges and

us and each na - tion, And short - ly the hour of re - demp - tion will come,
 fear - ing and trem - ble, We'll watch for the day when the Sav - ior will come,
 har - vest are o - ver, We'll rise with the just when the Sav - ior doth come.

When all that was prom - ised the Saints will be giv - en, And none will mo -
 When all that was prom - ised the Saints will be giv - en, And none will mo -
 Then all that was prom - ised the Saints will be giv - en, And they will be

lest them from morn un - til ev'n, And earth will ap - pear as the
 lest them from morn un - til ev'n, And earth will ap - pear as the
 crown'd with the an - gels of heav'n, And earth will ap - pear as the

Gar - den of E - den, And Je - sus will say to all Is - rael, "Come home."
 Gar - den of E - den, And Je - sus will say to all Is - rael, "Come home."
 Gar - den of E - den, And Christ and his peo - ple will ev - er be one.

Text: William W. Phelps, 1792–1872. Included in the first LDS hymnbook, 1835.

Music: Henry Tucker, 1826–1882

Moses 7:61–67
 Tenth Article of Faith