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PREVIEW

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Daniel Gottlob Turk's *Concerning the Chief Responsibilities of an Organist*, translation and commentary

Woolard, Margot Ann Greenlimb, D.M.A.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1987

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PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

DANIEL GOTTLOB TÜRK'S CONCERNING THE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES
OF AN ORGANIST, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

by

Margot Ann Greenlimb Woolard

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Major: Music

Under the Supervision of Professor Raymond Haggh

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 1987

TITLE

DANIEL GOTTLob TURK'S CONCERNING THE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES
OF AN ORGANIST, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY

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APPROVED

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PREVIEW

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DANIEL GOTTLOB TÜRK'S CONCERNING THE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES
OF AN ORGANIST, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

Margot Ann Greenlimb Woolard, D.M.A.

University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1987

Adviser: Raymond Haggh

In 1787, Türk wrote Concerning the Chief Responsibilities of an Organist, the first of many theoretical works which occupied a large part of his life and established his reputation as a scholar. His purpose in writing was to improve the musical liturgy, a topic of considerable interest in view of the increasing decline in the importance of ecclesiastical matters, especially church music, at the end of the eighteenth century.

Türk wrote this book specifically for the beginning organist or one with limited skills. The main requirements of a good organist, the ability to 1) play congregational song well, 2) play a good, suitable prelude, 3) skillfully accompany a musical work, and 4) maintain the organ in good condition, are carefully delineated in separate chapters, as well as the means whereby these skills can be acquired.

The first chapter is devoted to hymn playing and includes details on organ registration, choosing the appropriate key for the hymn, suggestions for the composition of interludes, which were frequently played

between the lines of a hymn, and ways in which the organist can encourage devotion and edification through hymn playing. Directions for playing the prelude as well as information on smooth modulations from one key to another are included in the second chapter. In the third chapter there are guidelines for accompanying musical works, as well as practical suggestions for pedaling, using both heel and toe. The last chapter describes the basic parts of an organ, gives information on tuning the instrument, and tells how to remedy such problems as cyphers and sticking notes.

Türk was well read and drew liberally from other writers, such as Mattheson, Adlung, Sulzer, Werkmeister and C.P.E. Bach. In addition, he refers his reader to over fifty other sources for more detailed information on particular topics. These sources were consulted and are the basis for the annotations which follow the translation. This book is important because it not only contains practical advice for the organist, but it is also an excellent source of information about the practice of eighteenth century Protestant church music in smaller German cities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has occupied a large portion of my time for more than two years. Yet, from the beginning, I have not been alone in my efforts but have been aided by many people, to whom I wish to acknowledge my gratitude at this time:

Raymond Haggh, for the standards of excellence and scholarship set by his translation of Daniel Gottlob Türk School of Clavier Playing. His love of learning and skill in teaching played an important role in my own personal development.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, which awarded me a Maude Hammond Fling Dissertation Travel Grant; this award enabled me to gain access to materials necessary to complete this book.

Quentin Faulkner, for his suggestion that I translate this book and his unwavering belief in my ability to do so.

Gene Bedient, for his helpful comments on the fourth chapter and his concise explanation of organ building practices.

Inge Worth, for her fine editorial skills and meticulous attention to detail. Words cannot describe the importance of her contribution to this translation.

Gloria Jatczak, for the many hours she spent reading and typing the manuscript.

My husband, Richard, for his support, comfort, and

willingness to sacrifice so that I could complete the translation. Also to my children, Mark, Amy and Tim, who kept me in touch with reality.

PREVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In 1787, Daniel Gottlob Türk wrote Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten, the first of many theoretical works which occupied a large part of his life and established his reputation as a scholar. His purpose in writing was to improve the musical liturgy, a topic of considerable interest in view of the decreasing decline in the importance of ecclesiastical matters, especially church music, at the end of the eighteenth century. My ultimate purpose in translating Türk's book was to compare the duties of eighteenth and twentieth century church organists.

Türk's book, which is concerned with church music from the time of Bach up to the decline of thoroughbass, is unique. To be sure, other writers, such as Adlung and Petri, devoted portions of their instruction books to the role of the organ in the worship service. However, Türk was the first to treat this subject completely and thoroughly in an independent work.

The book is written specifically for the beginning organist or an organist with limited formal training. Türk felt there were four main requirements of a good organist. He must 1) play congregational song well, 2) play a good, suitable prelude, 3) skillfully accompany a musical work, and 4) maintain the organ in good condition. Each of the four chapters is concerned with one of these duties, and

treats in detail the means whereby these skills can be acquired.

The first chapter is concerned with hymn playing and includes information on organ registration, choosing the appropriate key for the hymn, suggestions for the composition of interludes, often played between the lines of a hymn, and ways in which the organist could encourage devotion and edification through hymn playing. Directions for playing the prelude and postlude, as well as information on expedient modulations from one key to another are included in the second chapter. In the third chapter, Türk offers precepts for the accompaniment of musical works, as well as practical suggestions for pedaling which use both heel and toe. The last chapter describes the basic parts of an organ, gives information on tuning the instrument, and discusses remedies for such problems as cyphers, leakage of air, and notes that stick.

To my knowledge, there has been no previous translation of this work. A facsimile of the original, edited by Bernhard Billeter, was published in 1966 by Frits Knuf, Hilversum. In 1838, Türk's pupil, Johann Friedrich Naue, published a revised edition of Türk's book. This edition omitted the concept of thoroughbass and included some of Naue's research on altar music. In 1849 Naue published another work, Über den sogenannten quantitierend-

rhythmischen Choral, a work he described as being a supplement to Türk's original book.

Türk (1750-1813) was trained at an early age for his father's hosiery business. He studied music under G. A. Homilius at the Dresden Kreuzschule. When he entered the University of Leipzig some years later, he continued his musical training under the guidance of J. A. Hiller. He also studied the clavichord with J. W. Hassler.

In 1774 Türk was appointed Kantor at the Ulrichskirche in Halle, and one of the requirements of this position was that he teach general subjects at the Lutheran Gymnasium. In 1779 he became the director of music at Halle University. In 1787 he was appointed organist and musical director for the Liebfrauen Kirche, the main church in Halle. This position allowed him to give up his teaching responsibilities at the Gymnasium and devote his full time to his musical work. The book, Von der wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten, was followed by the Clavierschule in 1789, two teaching manuals on thoroughbass in 1791 and 1800, as well as his Anleitung zu Temperaturberechnungen, in 1806. For more information on Türk's life and works, see the article in the New Grove Dictionary of Music, Volume 19, pages 266-67; Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Volume 13: 947-53, and Raymond Haggh's introduction to The School of Clavier Playing by Daniel Gottlob Türk.

Türk was well read and drew liberally from other writers, such as Mattheson, Adlung, Sulzer, Werkmeister and C.P.E. Bach. His library was an extensive one and contained most of the additional fifty sources to which he refers the reader in Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten. These sources were consulted by the translator and are the basis for most of the annotations which follow the translation.

Most of the musical examples which were indicated by alphabet letters in the text, were written out by Türk in his Appendix. These are also included in the translation; however, for ease of reading, I have added bar lines to the examples, as well as changed the clefs. Türk's footnotes are indicated by numbers and are incorporated in the main body of the text. The translator's notes are marked with brackets and can be found following Türk's Appendix.

This short work occupies an important place in music history for several reasons. It is the first book to deal exclusively with the role of the organist in worship. Except for the material on thoroughbass, all of the information can be adapted for use by the organist in the twentieth century. Finally, it is an excellent source of information about the practice of eighteenth century Protestant church music in the smaller cities of Germany.

Von den
wichtigsten Pflichten
eines
O r g a n i s t e n.

Ein Vortrag
zur Verbesserung
der
musikalischen Liturgie
von
D. G. Türk.

Halle,
auf Kosten des Verfassers;
in Kommission bey Schwickert zu Leipzig,
und in der Hemmerdeschen Buchhandlung zu Halle.
1 7 8 7.

Concerning the Chief Responsibilities of

an Organist

A Contribution to the Improvement

of the Musical Liturgy

by D. G. Türk

Halle, at the expense of the author, distributed by
Schwickert in Leipzig, and by the Hemmerde Bookshop at
Halle. 1787

FOREWORD

If ever I had wished for a work of mine to reach the hands of many, this would be the one, as it might possibly have some influence on improving the musical liturgy. My goal was, first of all, to write for beginning organists and village school teachers,[1] but now and then I thought that by showing how the musical portion of the service might encourage devotion, I could render some small service also to church colleagues, clergymen, etc. I permit myself the hope that they will deem the thoughts expressed in this work worthy of careful consideration, and that they will attempt, in their own sphere of influence, to make more widely known whatever they find good and useful.

On many points I might have written in far more detail if I had not been most anxious to have these pages purchased also by organists who cannot expend much on books. What was consequently omitted by me will perhaps be added by a musician with more extensive knowledge, out of zeal for a good cause. If this were not to come about, I myself might eventually write an addendum, or extend later what is only briefly sketched here. For now, I have attempted to remedy this deficiency by referring on occasion to books with which I am familiar, where this or that point is treated in greater detail. Despite all my concerted efforts at

brevity, I nevertheless could not completely avoid mentioning some subjects two or more times because it seemed to me that certain topics serve more than one purpose.

It is remarkable, by the way, that in recent times so little has been written on organ playing, while so much that is favorable has been said about far less important musical subjects. I hope that through these suggestions I can make a contribution towards the furthering of devotion!

Halle, May, 1787

INTRODUCTION

Regarding the question: what is demanded of a good organist? In essence, I believe it comes down to the following four points: He must

- 1) Play congregational song well, and consequently have a comprehensive knowledge of thoroughbass;
- 2) Play a good, suitable prelude;
- 3) Be adept in accompanying a musical work and be able to play in the more unusual keys;
- 4) Have knowledge of organ building, and try to maintain his instrument in good condition.

These are the four points which I want to develop here in more detail.

FIRST CHAPTER

First Section

I do not need to prove the point that, for Protestants, the most important duty of the organist is to accompany congregational song; it is common knowledge that a large part of our worship service consists of the singing of hymns which are accompanied by the organ. The organist must accordingly observe two things: 1) he should keep the congregation on pitch, and 2) attempt to enhance devotion and edification by his playing, or seek to intensify the sentiment inherent in the hymn.

There are various ways to fulfill the first of these two duties. In my opinion, they require that one

- a) Draw the number of stops suitable to the circumstances,
- b) Choose the most appropriate key,
- c) Always listen to the congregation, and
- d) Introduce into the interlude the melody and harmony of the following line.[2]

The organist can contribute much to keeping the congregation on pitch by the number of stops which he draws for the hymns. It would be completely out of place to draw only a few weak stops for a large congregation and, in contrast, draw all the stops on the organ for a small assembly. In the first instance, how can the congregation

be kept on pitch? and in the second, of what use is the full organ? As the congregation gradually increases or decreases, the organist must likewise employ more or fewer stops.

For unfamiliar melodies the organ can be strongly registered, because in such instances the full organ can accomplish infinitely more by itself than would be possible with only a few stops. Also, if a congregation pulls down the pitch noticeably, particularly in minor keys, the organist must use more stops in order to gain the upper hand. This would be particularly advisable in summer, because I have observed that most singers will sing flat much more often during great heat than during the winter. Without a doubt, the weather affects our nerves and makes them weary in the warmest time of the year, so that the voice gradually tires and then, unnoticed, the singing drops in pitch.

In some communities organists are accustomed to accompanying only every other strophe.¹[3] I do not know where this practice originated, but experience has taught that this bad habit does not permit the congregation to stay on pitch. Also, it sounds very unpleasant when the organ

¹ The term "verse" is commonly used incorrectly. In hymns, every line is a verse, for example, Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, but six lines together, which in the aforementioned hymn comprise one section, are called a strophe.