

Playing the Church Organ

Book 3

Using Voice Palette™ Stops

Roland & Rodgers
Church Organs

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Frog Music Press

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Using Book 3

In Book 1, we learned how to use pistons to select registrations, matched up with music that suits them. These registrations use all the stops in the organ - the ones listed on the stop controls, the Voice Palette™ stops accessed by pressing these controls and turning the Value knob and the USER or Library Access stops selected from the Display Window.

Book 2 covered using those registrations as a basis for creating more registrations, using more preset Voice Palette™ stops and USER or Library Access stops.

Book 3 teaches how to select and use all the Voice Palette™ stops yourself. We also explore putting rhythm into your playing and how to alter your touch to be more effective as an organist.

As we progress through Book 3 we begin to drop using numbers to identify Voice Palette stops and just use their names.

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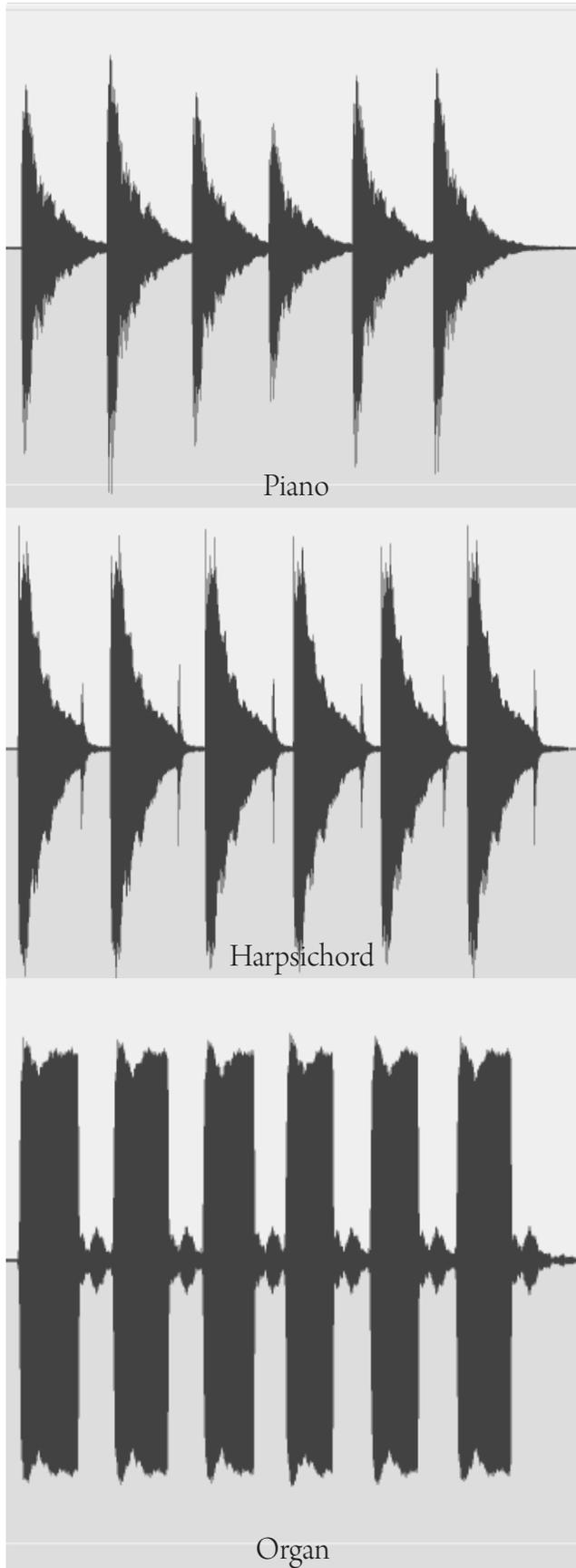
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“A note of music gains significance from the silence on either side.”

Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Writer, Aviator



Playing repeated notes on the organ.

In this book we are going to explore three things that can drastically improve the sound of your playing. I am saying this because I have learned these things over the last 6 months and I feel much more confident when I play now. They are easy things to do.

First, we concentrate on one problem area that really shouldn't be and after we get through this book it won't be for you anymore.

On the left are three waveshapes of me playing the same note 6 times on piano, harpsichord and then the organ.

When playing repeated notes on the piano, you press down, hold the key, let it up and play it again. As you can see on the top picture, the sound of the piano begins to die away right after the hammer strikes the String. It's easy to just play the note over again.

You'd think the harpsichord would be easy to play, being a very simple instrument with very few moving parts. However, all those moving parts and felt padding in the piano solved problems that harpsichordists deal with every time they play a note. See that little spike at the end of each note? That's the sound of the quill that plucked the String coming back down and touching the String just as bit as it pivots back down into playing position. Then a felt damper drops on it and silences the String.

Harpsichordists have to control the beginning and the end of notes on the harpsichord so that this noise does not interfere with the music. Have another look at the wave shape picture. We will be coming back to this later in the book.

Look at the bottom frame and see what an organ pipe does that's different. All organ stops play from beginning to end and do not "die away". Since the organ produces continuous tone, you, the organist, must carefully control the beginning and the end of the note. The organist here carefully leaves space between each repeated note, otherwise the wave shape would be one solid black block, not what the composer intended and not very interesting to listen to.

Inserting silence between repeated notes is not hard to do and once you begin thinking about it, playing repeated notes can be a lot of fun. By leaving air space between repeated notes, harpsichordists and organists both add a lot of rhythm to the music, rhythm the composer intended.

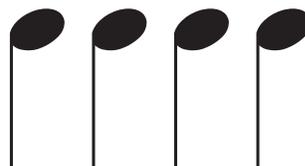
What this boils down to is simple. The harpsichordist and organist cannot play the same note over and over again like the pianist does by re-energizing the String. Instead the organist has to shut down the pipe and then admit air to it once again. Doing it sloppily sounds sloppy. Playing an exact division of note | note | note when repeated notes set up an exact, flowing rhythm. The organist must also listen and control the beginning and end of each note

Adding style to your playing.

How long is this note?



But on the organ when the same note is repeated:



It may be played like this:



The rest indicates silence. It's an unwritten rule, but one that is necessary for the part to be heard against other parts.

Now that you know the rule about shortening repeated notes, let's play some pieces while inserting the little silences. Before long you'll be comfortable doing this and I'm sure you will gain new confidence about your playing.

RH

How do composers for the organ indicate that you are to articulate by placing silence between repeated notes? This sounds strange, but they do it by telling you when not to articulate. Slurs are used to remind you when not to articulate.

When playing this you will find that it is a challenge at first to do this in one hand. Practicing hands apart at the organ is a very useful tool as each hand learns what it is to do.

Learning the stops.

Organ stops all have a beginning sound, a constant sound and an ending sound.

Within each of the four tone families, we pick stops based upon these three characteristics.

For example, try playing this melody with the stops listed, listening to the attack, constant and cut off sounds.



G2 PRINCIPAL 8*
S2 SPITZ GEIGEN 8

They sound alike at first, but listen again - hear the difference in the constant?

Now do this, play it again, turning the VALUE knob after pressing the stop tab to hear the three other stops behind these two stops.

G2	PRINCIPAL 8	Principal
G2.1	Open Diapason 8	Principal
G2.2	Montre 8	Principal
G2.3	Prinzpal 8	Principal
S2	SPITZ GEIGEN 8	Principal
S2.1	Geigen Diapason 8	Principal

Which of these do you prefer for this phrase?

Now, begin to play the piece on the next page, trying each of these stops.

Start out playing just the Right Hand (RH) part, working on connecting all the notes that move to different pitches and articulating the repeated notes with air space.

Then, add G12, the Swell to Great Coupler, and combine your choice on the Swell with your choice on the Great. Do you prefer this sound, the combination of two stops from different divisions of the same tone family, or prefer just playing one stop for this piece? Do you find it feels more precise to play repeated notes on stops with String beginning articulation?

Remember, you may choose one of the four stops accessed by the rocker tab stops to play. Your stop combination choice may then be saved a piston set aside as a “work section” - I use memory bank 20 for this - for recall at any time.

When playing the Offertorio and pieces that follow, make sure that you hold all notes except repeated notes to their entire length.

*All capital letters are a reminder that this stop is the default stop with its name engraved on the stop tab, lower case are stops that are one of the three Voice Palette™ stops behind these stops.

64. Offertorio

DEL SECONDO TONO

Giovanni Francesco Dandrieu

6

12

18

24

tr

rit.