

Contents

Foreword	vi
Introduction	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Getting started	x
Introducing the instrument	xii
Practice strategies	xv
Part 1 Ordinary touch with associated style and technique	
1 Air (<i>Henry Purcell</i>)	1
Foundation pitch • Ordinary touch • Articulation • Five-finger hand shape • Position fingering • Open hand shape • Coordinating hands in ordinary touch	
2 Larghetto (<i>Charles Wesley</i>)	12
The four tonal families • Adding higher pitches • Blending tonal families • Relaxed wrists • Changing manuals with relaxed wrists • Closing and opening the Swell • Exposing sustained notes	
3 Verset (<i>Giovanni Battista Martini</i>)	23
Mutation stops • The pedalboard • Playing with the toe • Home position of the feet • Finding pedals by counting from home position • Three middle fingers covering adjacent notes • Part-playing • Trills	
4 Quand Jésus naquit à Noël (<i>Jean-Jacques Beauvarlet-Charpentier</i>)	37
Plein jeu registration • Mobile knees • Independent movement between left hand and feet • Moving the toe between white and black notes • Each foot preparing ahead • Trills in French Baroque music • Silence d'articulation • Appoggiaturas	
5 Chorale Variation on 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele' (<i>Johann Pachelbel</i>)	49
Principal chorus • Singing touch with one finger • Coordinated releases in contrapuntal music • Trill with an early ending • Trill with a turned ending • Using articulation to invigorate a musical line	
6 Prelude in F (<i>attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach</i>)	61
Balancing pedal and manual • Measuring intervals between the feet • Moving a 3rd with each toe • Exchanging toes on a repeated note • Duplets and triplets • Hemiolas • Notes of anticipation • Coordinated releases on three staves • Exposing sustained voices in a multi-voice texture	

- 7 Adagio and Allegro from Concerto in C (*Tomaso Albinoni*) 78
 THE FIRST MOVEMENT: *ADAGIO*: Right-hand solo registration • Independent pedal activity • Releasing early before rests • Rapid hand-position shifts • Adding manual ornaments
 THE SECOND MOVEMENT: *ALLEGRO*: Changing stops in a silence • Releasing early before rests • Rapid hand-position shifts • Adding manual ornaments
- 8 Praeludium in F pro organo pleno (*Johann Ludwig Krebs*) 96
 Organo pleno • Pedal octaves • Crossing toes on adjacent notes • Pivoting, supported by a sustained pedal note
- 9 Fughetta on ‘Gottes Sohn ist kommen’ (*Johann Sebastian Bach*) 109
 Light and clear Baroque registration • Subject, answer, and countersubject • Voice collision • Sharing an inner voice between the hands in ordinary touch • Projecting dissonance
- 10 Rising Passacaglia (*Frederick Stocken*) 121
 Terraced dynamics • Changing stops during a piece • Playing a melody on the pedals • Phrasing independent voices • Staggered releases
- Part 2 Legato touch with associated style and technique
- 11 Elegy (*William Walton*) 134
 Legato touch • Combining Swell pedal and stops to make an extended diminuendo • Sharing an inner voice between the hands in legato touch • Repeated notes in legato music • Tying repeated notes from different voices • Finger substitution • Pulling a finger from a black to an adjacent white note • Phrasing • Slow release of notes
- 12 Quasi Allegro (*César Franck*) 148
 French nineteenth-century registration • Toe to heel on adjacent notes • Covering three or four pedal notes in advance • Thumb devices to extend the hand • Sharing an inner voice without diagonal lines • Passing a voice smoothly between left hand and foot
- 13 Offertoire (*Léon Boëllmann*) 163
 Grading dynamics by changing manuals and using the Swell pedal • Chromatic pedalling using toe and heel • Sliding the heel • Substitution in one foot • Alternating heel and toe in 3rds between a white and a black note • Swell pedal with the right foot while both feet play • Passing a tied note between the hands
- 14 Grand Chœur (*Théodore Salomé*) 178
 Registering a French Grand Chœur • Legato scale passages for the feet • Double pedalling • Detached chords over legato pedals • Illusory legato • Accents made by lengthening notes • Late nineteenth-century trills

15	Trio (<i>Josef Rheinberger</i>)	197
	Trio registration • Navigation points on the pedalboard • Substituting one foot for another on a sustained note • Alternating heel and toe in 3rds between white notes • Tracing legato techniques through a continuous pedal part • Distinguishing between articulation and phrasing	
16	Chorale Prelude on ‘Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren’ (<i>Max Reger</i>)	210
	Registering graded dynamics with stops • Pre-sets • Pedal touch—further considerations • Pivoting in a rest • Combining pedal techniques in quick succession • Combining manual techniques in quick succession	
17	Aria (<i>Brian Solomons</i>)	223
	Gap registration • Extended crescendi and diminuendi with the Swell pedal • Adjusting legato	
Part 3 Further lessons in style and technique		
18	Dialogue (<i>Jean-François Dandrieu</i>)	234
	Cornet • Grand jeu • Positif • Rapid manual changes • French Baroque ornaments • Shortened note values • Notes inégales (‘unequal notes’) • Paired fingering • Tempo guidance for French Baroque style	
19	Lento (<i>Frank Bridge</i>)	250
	Undulating stops • Left foot on the Swell pedal • Structural analysis • Expression through the Swell pedal • Articulation within multi-voiced phrases • Exposing a single voice through multiple voices • Registering gradual dynamic changes	
20	Praeludium in C (first section) (<i>Dietrich Buxtehude</i>)	263
	Adapting Baroque registration for modern organs • Footing options in ordinary touch • Descending scales as a rhetorical gesture • Silence as a rhetorical gesture • Dotted figures as a rhetorical gesture • Strict rhythm within stylus phantasticus	
	Index	276
	List of stops	278

INTRODUCTION

The organ offers unique opportunities for making music, with its distinctive expressive possibilities, its enormous dynamic range, and its long tradition as an instrument for both sacred and secular music. The organ's repertoire is at least five centuries old, ranging from the simplest music to the most complex, and covers a wide range of styles.

The New Oxford Organ Method places this organ repertoire at its centre, using carefully selected pieces as the basis for learning the instrument. It teaches technique through the music so that you can make a direct connection between the pieces you encounter and the techniques which lead to a musical performance.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Most organ methods group aspects of organ playing—technique, style, registration, and practice strategies—into different sections, with pieces as a separate activity. Their structure leaves the student or teacher the constant challenge of selecting and ordering appropriate material from different sections. By contrast, *The New Oxford Organ Method* presents an integrated flow of exercises, which incorporate all these aspects and lead to an engaging piece as the culmination of each chapter.

We recommend using the *Method* with a good teacher, who will be invaluable for monitoring progress and giving tailored, immediate feedback. The *Method* is also suitable as a self-teaching resource. Whether supervised or not, we advise you to work through the *Method* systematically from beginning to end.

The *Method* is designed both for beginners at the organ and for experienced players revising their skills. If you are a beginner, we expect you already have basic keyboard skills, such as being able to read music in treble and bass clefs, to play with both hands together, and to understand musical conventions such as repeat and da capo signs. This book will give you a comprehensive training in all the basic skills of organ playing.

If you are an experienced organist, there are of course no prerequisites, except a willingness to refresh both your technique and your awareness of style in interpretation. The *Method* aims to give you all the tools you need to achieve stylish, confident performances in a variety of repertoire.

Pieces

The first part of *The New Oxford Organ Method* presents ten pieces that use ordinary touch, the not-quite-legato touch familiar to players before the nineteenth century. Because organ tone does not decay, we believe ordinary touch, with its emphasis on timed releases of sound, is the most distinctive new aspect of the instrument for beginners. Ordinary touch trains the hands in position fingering, develops toes-only footing, and trains you how to play an expressive line through manipulation of note-lengths. The second part, comprising seven pieces, introduces the greater complexities of legato touch. We explain that both ordinary

touch and legato touch are subject to a wide array of nuances, and your touch in both categories will develop increasing sophistication as the book continues. Once you have absorbed the basic principles of playing with both ordinary and legato touch, you will arrive at the third part: three pieces that focus on advanced style and technique.

We also direct you to our online companion resource www.oup.com/noom, where you will find other pieces to learn between chapters, and suggestions for further listening to inspire your interpretation.

Technique

Leading to the piece within each chapter there are technical exercises, and these technical exercises always relate directly to the upcoming piece, which gives them a strong sense of purpose. At first the *Method* provides comprehensive fingering and footing, but these markings reduce later, to encourage you to find your own solutions. There is often other fingering and footing which serves the music equally well, but we suggest that students do not change fingering and footing except under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

The pedals are introduced in Chapter 3 with one note per foot. As you progress, you gradually learn to cross the entire pedalboard, and you learn practical location skills so that you can find the pedal notes without looking at your feet. This careful grading of pedal activity prompted us to add a few pedal notes to the piece in Chapter 4 by Beauvarlet-Charpentier, but most other pedal parts are exactly as the composers wrote them. Scales and arpeggios in every major and minor key are also seeded throughout the book, some in traditional format, but many with new twists, incorporating additional pedal notes, for example.

Style

Playing stylistically means respecting the composer's intentions and the traditions of the period. For example, should you use legato or ordinary touch? Do you start a trill on the printed note or the note above? How do you accent a note? How do you shape a phrase? Which stops suit the music? The integrated structure within each chapter answers these questions as they occur, with exercises that frequently blend style and technique.

Registration

Topics involving registration also have their own exercises, not only giving students bite-size information about the subject but also gradually introducing them to organ management. Each chapter begins with an aspect of registration before moving to technical and musical training. For example, the first piece requires just one stop, and each subsequent chapter introduces new registration, covering various traditions according to the tone colours required by the piece.

To maintain our graded approach to training we have made a compromise in Chapter 4, changing the composer's registration from *grand jeu* to *plein jeu*. We introduce the *grand jeu* only towards the end of the *Method*, when the advanced student is more likely to have access to an instrument with suitable stops.

Although we offer specific registration schemes, we also show how to experiment, and at the back of the book there is a list of stops to support this. The aim, ultimately, is to make you resourceful, because each organ, and the acoustic into which it speaks, is unique.

Studies

Each chapter ends with three newly composed studies, sixty in all, which develop core technical features that the chapter has explored. These studies have a flexible use: they can be performed after brief preparation as sight-reading, played after a longer period of preparation as quick studies, or used for extended revision, consolidating technical points learned earlier in the chapter.

Practice

Each chapter trains you in how to practise. In addition, there are twenty practice strategies described at the front of the book (see pages xv–xxi), and each chapter refers you back to these.

FINALLY

This is a practical method based on extensive experience of teaching; consequently, we exercised self-control in not discussing topics of scholarly dispute. We know that expert readers may find some of our statements simplistic, but we believe that learning simple guidelines in the early stages develops confidence. Confidence is an essential foundation for progress, allowing you to develop creativity as you mature as a musician. As Pablo Picasso said, ‘Learn the rules like a pro so you can break them like an artist.’

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to:

Brian Solomons, for his encouragement, clear-headed criticism, and generous help in so many ways. Philip Croydon for commissioning the book, and Jonathan Cunliffe, our editor, for his wisdom, practical advice, and attention to detail. Jerry Black, for the many photographs that supplement the text. The hundreds of students of all ages and stages who have helped us grow as teachers. We particularly thank recent students who valiantly worked through this method, enabling us to test and refine its contents.

Previous writers of organ methods from whom we have learned as students, players, teachers, and now writers: Jacques Lemmens’s ground-breaking *École d’orgue* of 1862, which influenced more than a century of methods; those by Stainer, Alcock, Buck, Gleason, and our distinguished predecessor, C. H. Trevor, with his landmark *Oxford Organ Method* of 1971; later methods, for example by Roger Davies (1985), Ritchie and Stauffer (1992), and Sanger (1993), which incorporated more recent scholarship. We are also indebted to Peter Hurford, whose teaching and whose book *Making Music on the Organ* (OUP, 1988) marked a sea-change in interpretation and technique in the UK.

PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Would you like to learn without making any mistakes?

It may seem impossible, but you need only one thing to achieve it: to choose the practice strategy best suited to each task. We offer twenty proven practice strategies, and later we advise you which ones to use for each piece in the *Method*. The first, **Slow–Staves–Segments**, is the most important and the one to use for almost every piece; the remainder are not presented in any particular order. You can, of course, use any combination of these strategies.

Whatever your chosen strategy, aim for complete accuracy and believe you can achieve it. Of course, you may occasionally misjudge what is possible, or your attention may slip. If you make an error, always correct it immediately, never letting an error become a habit: three of the following strategies are particularly useful for correcting an error—**Stop and think**, **Static focus**, and **Destination practice**.

Practice strategy 1: Slow–Staves–Segments

The basic learning strategy is **Slow–Staves–Segments**. You can apply its three components, **Slow**, **Staves**, and **Segments**, in any order and in any combination.

Slow

Choose a tempo that allows you to be both musical and accurate. That probably means playing more slowly than you think. Playing slowly allows you to be accurate from the start.

Staves

Begin by learning each stave separately. In a three-stave piece, next learn left hand with pedal, then right hand with pedal, and then hands together. Finally, combine the three staves.

Segments

Divide the piece into manageable segments. The segments may be as long as half a piece, or as short as two or three beats. Repeat each segment until you know it thoroughly. When you have learned the whole piece in this way, link the segments together.

CHAPTER 1

Air

HENRY PURCELL (1659–95)

When playing the organ, there are essentially two types of touch: legato and non-legato. Legato means ‘joined-up’, so that there are no gaps between the notes, while non-legato means ‘not joined-up’, so that there are gaps (often very small) between the notes. This chapter introduces non-legato touch—or ‘ordinary touch’, as it became known—which was the standard touch for all organ music until the nineteenth century.

Henry Purcell was the outstanding British musician and composer of the Baroque era. As was the case with many seventeenth-century musicians, Purcell’s career began in the church, first as a chorister at the Chapel Royal, then as organist at Westminster Abbey, a position he held until his death.

Foundation pitch


Gently draw (which means pull out or activate) any stop labelled 8’ (8-foot).

8’ indicates that the stop speaks at foundation pitch, the same pitch as the piano. It is called 8’ because the longest pipe of the 8’ rank (the lowest note, bottom C) is often 8 feet long. Try various foundation-pitch stops (any stop with 8’ on it), listening to their different tone colours and characters—some bold, others less so. Choose an 8’ stop that you like, and at an *mp* dynamic level. Continue to use that stop for the exercises below.

Ordinary touch

Ordinary touch, with its subtle gaps between notes, allows each note to start and end clearly. To create these gaps you need to shave a fraction off the end of each note.

A good way to start is to play repeated notes in time as smoothly as possible, as in the following exercise, starting with the left hand:

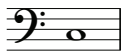
LH 
(based on bb. 12–14)

The pedalboard

Italian organs of this period had just one octave of pedals, which organists used for long notes. This piece is typical, with just one long note for each foot.

Check that you are sitting above the centre of the pedalboard—that usually means E \flat . Most organs position pedal E \flat exactly below the manual E \flat . As you are about to play with your feet, check the advice about posture, organ bench, and organ shoes in ‘Getting Started’ at the front of this *Method*.

Register the pedals with Principal 16'. A note played on a 16' stop sounds an octave lower than written, and 16' is the foundation pitch on the pedals. Look down and play the C just to the left of the central E \flat of the pedalboard with the tip of either shoe:



Couple all the stops you have chosen on the manuals to the pedal.

Locate the following notes, and see below how they are notated:



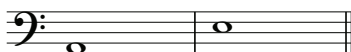
C at bottom of
pedalboard

C in centre of
pedalboard

C near top of
pedalboard



Now look down to find the two pedal notes, A and E, for this piece, the first note with your left foot, the second with your right:



Prelude in F

ATTR. J. S. BACH
(1685–1750)

1 2 1 4

4 2

4 2 4 2

2 1

3 1 2 1 2 1

5 1 2 4 3 3 3 1 3 5 1 2 4

1 3 5 1 2 4 1 3 5

11 1 2 5 4 1 2 3 2 3 2 1

4 3 4 1 3 5 1 2 4 4 2 1 3 5

Fine

CHAPTER 11

Elegy

WILLIAM WALTON (1902–83)

The second part of this *Method* focuses on repertoire using legato touch, the usual touch for Romantic music. Even advanced pianists can find that playing legato successfully on the organ demands new techniques and careful listening.

Walton composed this *Elegy* for the 1955 film *Richard III*, based on Shakespeare's play. Its mournful music for manuals only accompanies Act 2, Scene 1, in which the dying king, Edward IV, learns of his brother's death.

Legato touch

Legato literally means 'bound'. This bound-together touch became standard in the late nineteenth century. It requires a tiny overlap between notes so that the first note masks the start of the next one. Consider how you walk: as you transfer your weight from one foot to another, both feet are briefly on the ground. It is just the same on the keyboard: when one finger moves to another in legato touch, there is a moment when both fingers are depressing keys.

Draw a Principal 8' on both the Swell and the Great, and practise a scale in legato touch. As *Elegy* is in G minor, even though it has no key signature, play the scale of G melodic minor. Control the amount of overlap through careful listening: the overlap should be so brief that the effect is smooth, but without blurring. To help you monitor your touch, place your right hand on the Great and your left hand on the Swell. Then repeat with your right hand on the Swell and your left hand on the Great:

G melodic minor scale, hands together, legato touch

The image shows the G melodic minor scale for both hands, written in G minor (one flat). The right hand is on the treble clef and the left hand is on the bass clef. The scale is written in a single line for each hand, with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-5 above and below the notes. The right hand fingering is: 1 3 1 4 1 3 1 1 3 1 4 1 3. The left hand fingering is: 5 1 3 1 4 1 3 3 1 4 1 3 1.

You may find that you need to adjust the registration. For example, one or more of the Reeds you have chosen might be too loud. You can also add a Mixture if it does not overwhelm the Reeds.

ff on the organ is one of the loudest sounds a musician can produce on any instrument, but it can be wearing on the listener, especially if you practise in a public space. A good practice registration could be just Great 8' and Pedal 16' plus Great to Pedal.

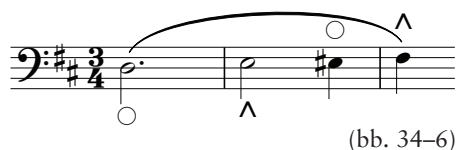
Toe to heel on adjacent notes

When you played in ordinary touch you used only your toes, but legato touch usually needs heels as well as toes. There are three possible signs for a heel in organ music:

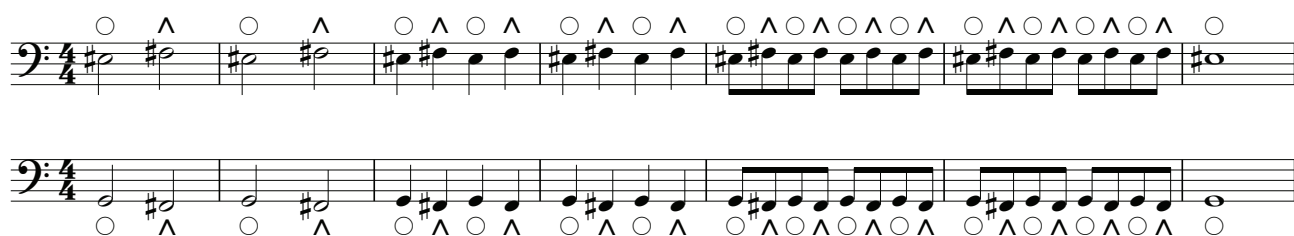
○ U ∩ These signs all have identical meaning. This *Method* always uses the circle.

As with toe signs, those placed above the note indicate the right foot, while those placed below the note indicate the left foot.

To play with your heel, first rest your heel on the surface of a note, then imagine that a string attached to its base tugs it a small distance down, depressing the note. Prepare both feet before playing this:



Always play on the inner edge of the heel. This tilts your foot at the same angle you used for playing with toes. The next two exercises each alternate the toe and heel of one foot, with your toe pointed outwards:



(based on bb. 31–2)

Grand Chœur

THÉODORE SALOMÉ
(1834-96)

Tempo di Marcia ma poco animato

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate organ part. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The organ part features various ornaments, including circles and triangles, and rests. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development, with more complex fingering patterns. The third system concludes the piece with sustained chords and melodic lines. The organ part in the third system shows a sequence of notes with a 2/5 fingering.

Descending scales as a rhetorical gesture

Rhetoric is the art of oratory, and in speech rhetorical gestures add power and clarity to the argument. In a similar way, rhetorical gestures in music add power and clarity to a musical argument.

Descending scales at various speeds—fast, moderate, and slow—feature in this movement for rhetorical effect:

- (a) Fast scales, called *passaggi*, dazzle the listener with virtuosity. Baroque organists played *passaggi* with each hand taking four notes. There are two such scales, each of an octave, in the exercise below. Insert a breath between each scale, and play both scales with the most effective touch for your instrument, remembering that occasional legato touch is effective within a Baroque piece:

(b. 8)

- (b) Moderately paced scales lend solemnity to the movement. Guided by the added commas, play the following example, defining the scale with a break before and after it. This slower scale benefits from ordinary touch, with a slight freedom in the rhythm:

(bb. 23-4)

- (c) Slow scales in this piece combine in dissonant part-writing. Here your right hand has two simultaneous scales, each decorated with repeated notes, diversions, and accidentals. As you play, let your ordinary touch clarify the movement of the voices and their interplay:

(based on bb. 18-21)