

INTRODUCTORY LDS ORGANIST TRAINING COURSE

A Five-Session course using *The New LDS Organist* as the text

Course Objectives, Class Format, and Weekly Assignments

Plan by Don Cook and Shinji Inagi, Fall 2007

Course objectives (general and specific):

- Inspire participants towards ongoing training and service as an organist
 - Spark and fuel an artistic awareness
 - Inform about opportunities for continued training and involvement
 - Explore ways to invite others (including young people) into the organ world
- Teach the role of music in serving the church
 - The organist's great potential to invite the Spirit into the sacrament service
 - How to work as a team with church leaders and the music director
- Teach how to use the organ console
 - Power up, orientation, devices (stops, expression pedals, crescendo pedal, pistons/toe studs, memory levels, etc.)
- Identify effective practice techniques
- Introduce and begin to develop the basic organ playing skills necessary to play congregational hymns, prelude, and postlude in legato style
 - The six fingering techniques
 - Precise releases (especially as applied between repeated notes)
 - Independence of line
 - Pedal skills
- Teach basic principles of organ registration, as needed in hymn playing, prelude, and postlude
 - Pitches (8, 4, 2, mixtures, 16, 32, mutations, cornet)
 - Families (reed, principal, flute, string)
 - Non-speaking stops (couplers, tremulant)
 - Basic hymn registration (principal chorus, jubilant/meditative hymns)
 - Solo (solo/accompaniment registration, celeste, tremulant)
- Teach how to prepare the score
 - hymn playing (text, phrasing, repeated notes, fingering, registration)
 - prelude and postlude (fingering, registration)

Enroll participants:

LDS church organist training is to be conducted under priesthood direction. Participants for these classes can be sought out through stake and ward Priesthood Executive Committees. Those who desire to participate might contact the instructor and enroll with the intent of either participating actively or auditing. Using an [enrollment form like this one](#) has proven very successful in helping both types of participant feel welcome and accommodating their needs.

Class session format (90 minutes each):

Class session 1 will include orientation, presentation, demonstration, and hands-on experience. During class sessions 1-4 the participants will receive a [weekly study and practice assignment](#), primarily from *The New LDS Organist* (podcasts and packet available free online--www.organ.byu.edu/newldsorganist). The first 30-45 minutes of class sessions 2-5 will consist of active participants playing their assignments and receiving instructor feedback. The remaining 45-60 minutes will consist of instructor presentation and demonstration, primarily applying concepts in the study assignment from the previous week.

Session 1:

- As they come in: greet, give copies of [the packet](#)
- [17 minutes] Welcome and motivation (packet: About Your Calling)
 - [3] Introduction by stake leader
 - [4] Opening hymn and prayer
 - [2] Introduce the instructors
 - [5] Introduce the participants (name, ward, previous organ experience or training)
 - [3] Brief motivational talk about playing the organ in church
- Course details
 - Making the most of the course (lesson 1)
 - Decide to take full advantage of this course and become an active participant every week if possible. I'll explain what it takes in a moment.
 - [8] This five-week course uses *The New LDS Organist*, which consists of a set of 12 lessons (podcasts) and a packet of supporting materials. Each session we listen to some of you play and offer feedback, and present some important topics. The active participants will study and practice assigned lessons from *The New LDS Organist* at the organ console between sessions, and possibly play during the next class session. Keep the 12 lessons from *The New LDS Organist* separate in your mind from the 5 sessions in this course. We will cover 2 to 3 *New LDS Organist* lessons in each class session.
 - Brief description of *The New LDS Organist* course
 - How to get the lessons and packet
 - How many have ready access to an iPod or other mp3 player and a high-speed Internet connection? Follow the instructions on the front page of the packet.
 - Options for the rest of you:
 - Download the lessons onto a laptop and study them at the organ
 - Buy an mp3 player (They are also available preloaded with the lessons for around \$35 through the website)
 - Download them onto a desktop computer and study them away from the organ (not ideal, but possible)
 - Print a transcript of the lessons (see the link at www.organ.byu.edu/newldsorganist). This is least ideal, because the audio examples cannot be heard in this printed format. But the printed transcript used in combination with the audio lessons may be helpful.
 - (packet: Cover page)
 - (packet: Table of Contents)
 - (packet: Materials Needed for Each Lesson)
 - [4] Active participants and auditors
 - Active participants
 - Commit to at least three practice and study sessions each week (study the audio lessons and practice as instructed)
 - Prepare 2 or 3 items to possibly play during the next class (encouraged but not required)
 - Will receive a key to their practice chapel if needed (indicate on [enrollment list](#))
 - Auditors are welcome each week, and we challenge them to apply the lesson items

- Find out who will be active (pass around the enrollment list)
- [12] Introducing Pedal playing (packet: Pedal Orientation) (lesson 2)
 - Organ shoes (encourage to find and practice with a pair of shoes that meet as many of these criteria as possible)
 - Pedal markings (briefly illustrate)
 - Positioning yourself at the organ (use a volunteer, working through all 3 dimensions)
 - Playing legato lines with alternate toes, and with alternating toes and heels (Mention knees together, tipping inward, covering only half the sharp key. Use Pedal Orientation and impromptu exercises, having volunteer play and others play on floor.)
 - Pedal practice hints (see end of lesson 2)
- [25] Introducing organ registration
 - [5] How to use the organ console (power up, keyboards, devices [stops, expression pedals, crescendo pedal, pistons/toe studs]) (packet: The Organ Console) (lesson 1)
 - Backbone sounds of the organ (lesson 1)
 - Stops/stop tabs/rocker tabs/drawknobs, principals/diapasons 8 4, Great/Swell/Pedal (packet: Common Stop Names Listed by Pipe Category and Family of Organ Tone)
 - Pitches (8, 4, 2, 16) (lesson 2)
 - Chorus registration (principal chorus including chorus mixture [lesson 6], clarity) (lesson 2)
- [4] Choosing between polish mode and shortcut mode (lesson 1, 6)
- [10] Introducing single lines in legato style: the three listening skills (lesson 6)
 - Perfect legato, and
 - Precise (well-defined) releases between repeated notes and at phrase breaks
 - Independence of line (briefly introduce the concept, but it is not needed with single lines)
 - Practice techniques for
 - Single lines (simply listen for perfect legato, precise releases. Demonstrate problem lines and ask participants to identify the problems)
 - Combining three lines (very briefly—to learn hymn 100 [simplified] in lesson 1)
- Study assignment (69 min.): *The New LDS Organist* lessons 1 (welcome, 35 min.), 2 (pedal, 13 min.), and 6 (single lines, legato fingering techniques, 21 min.)
 - (packet: Internet Resources for Organists) You may be interested in browsing interesting organ-related resources on the Internet.
- Playing assignment: follow the practice instructions in the lesson, and we encourage you to choose 2 or 3 items to possibly play during the next class. Choose items for which you have questions or need feedback, or that you just want to demonstrate. This week's main focus: applying perfect legato and precise releases in single lines, and exploring the six legato fingering techniques.
- [5] Three commitments (polish too, be content, continue organ study) (lesson 1)

Session 2:

- Have all participants fill out [the roll](#) as they come in—get to know participants
- [5] Opening hymn and prayer
 - Opening hymn using building for clarity (pr 8 4, 8 4 2)
- [10] First-week follow-up
 - Keys—make sure all who need them have them, or have arrangements to get them
 - The New LDS Organist lessons—do all have access to them who want them?
 - Practice experiences: observations, new learning, challenges
 - Suggestions for the course
- [30] Participants play and instructors offer feedback
- [15] Introducing two independent legato lines (lesson 7) (hymn 98, simplified)
 - Perfect legato, and
 - Precise (well-defined) releases between repeated notes and at phrase breaks, and
 - Independence of line (important, now that we are playing two lines)
 - The most common mistakes: breaks where there should be legato, and sustained tone where there should be a break
 - Common tones
 - Soprano/alto ascending, descending
 - Inner parts
 - Choosing which two parts to play
 - Sop/alt, sop/ten, sop/bass. Pick a hymn and demonstrate the better combinations.
 - Practice techniques
 - Three-step method
 - For problems with independence of line, use the freezing technique
- [10] Registration
 - Building for clarity (lesson 2)
 - Chorus mixture (follow-up from lesson 6)
 - Combination action, memory levels (follow-up from lesson 1)
- [10] Legato fingering techniques (demonstrate each briefly; have someone at the console, and others playing the examples on their laps; direct, crossing, substitution, redistribution, finger/thumb glissando) (packet: The Six Legato Organ Fingering Techniques) (follow-up from lesson 6)
- Study assignment (44 min.): NLDSO lesson 4 (hymn playing, 11 min.), 7 (two lines, 28 min.), and 5 (shortcut, 5 min.)
- Playing assignment: follow the practice instructions in the lesson, and we encourage you to choose 2 or 3 items to possibly play during the next class. Choose items for which you have questions or need feedback, or that you just want to demonstrate. This week's main focus: applying perfect legato, precise releases, and independence of line in two-part music.
- [3] Three commitments (polish too, be content, continue organ study) (lesson 1)

Session 3:

- Have all participants fill out the roll as they come in—get to know participants
- [5] Opening hymn and prayer
 - Opening hymn using building for richness (using pitches 8,8,4; or 8,8,8,4,4,2)
- [1] Housekeeping items
 - Keys (we can do this after the class)—make sure all who need them have them, or have arrangements to get them. This week we have the keys to the stake center chapel to give to those who need them. *Be sure to write the key number by the name on the roll of those that are checked out.*
- [30] Participants play and instructors offer feedback
- [20] Hymn playing basics
 - Hymn playing as (lesson 4) (packet: About Your Calling):
 - A means of encouraging the Spirit in a worship setting
 - An art form
 - Basic concepts (lesson 4):
 - Legato is widely accepted as the standard touch for most hymn playing; listen for perfect legato
 - Repeated notes require special consideration; listen for a clear separation
 - Independence of line is a great challenge but a worthwhile goal, and is the purpose for lessons 6-9. This skill is a “must have” for a well-trained organist
 - Play sop/alt/ten on Great, bass in Pedal
 - Basic hymn registration (packet: Hymn Registration Shortcuts) (lesson 4)
 - Choose one meditative and one jubilant hymn to work through the handout
 - Include introduction of manual/pedal balance, couplers (lesson 8)
 - Hymn playing in shortcut mode (lesson 5). Demonstrate these options on one hymn as they sing:
 - Play the Soprano line only
 - Play the Soprano line in octaves
 - Play the Soprano line and one other line (alto, tenor, or bass.)
 - Play a simplified three- or four-part version of the hymn, such as the ones provided with this course
 - Play all four voices on the Great manual.
 - Play all four voices on the Great manual with the bass coupler activated
 - Play the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor lines on the Great, and play the Bass on the pedal. Do your best to maintain legato lines.
 - Add ties to simplify (to be covered in a later session)
 - Bass coupler
 - Balancing shortcut and polish mode (lesson 5)
 - Don't be afraid to play simpler forms well as you build your ability to play four parts with true independence of line.
- [10] Registration
 - Building for richness (lesson 4)
 - Introducing flutes, strings, and mutations (lesson 3)
 - Chorus reeds (lesson 7)

- [5] How to work with the director and other priesthood leaders (lesson 4)
 - Pass out a copy of the *Music* section of *Church Handbook of Instructions* (or visit www.lds.org/cm/display/0,17631,4987-1,00.html), going over a couple of highlights. Challenge each to become familiar with those passages pertinent to the organist.
- [10] Introducing three independent legato lines (lesson 7)
 - Perfect legato, well-defined breaks between repeated notes and at phrase breaks, and independence of line
 - Practice techniques (packet: How to Learn Three-Part Hymns and Pieces)
 - Work through the steps on the handout
 - For problems with independence of line, use the freezing technique
 - Choosing which three of the four parts to play
 - Soprano/alto/bass or soprano/tenor/bass combinations from a four-part hymn. Use the alto line with soprano and bass if it does a better job of completing the harmony than does the tenor. Pick a hymn and demonstrate the better combinations.
- Study assignment (61 min.): NLDSO lesson 3 (prelude, 13 min.), 11 (postlude, 17 min.), and 8 (three lines, 31 min.)
- Playing assignment: follow the practice instructions in the lesson, and we encourage you to choose 2 or 3 items to possibly play during the next class. Choose items for which you have questions or need feedback, or that you just want to demonstrate. This week's main focus: applying perfect legato, precise releases, and independence of line in three-part music.

Session 4:

- Opening hymn using solo/accompaniment registration, and prayer
- [30 min.] Participants play and instructors offer feedback
- [15] Introducing four independent legato lines
 - The main “leap” when going from three to four parts: two independent parts in the right hand (and sometimes in the left)
 - Redistribution of the inner (alto) part is particularly useful
 - Continue to listen for perfect legato, well-defined breaks between repeated notes and at phrase breaks, and independence of line
 - Practice techniques (packet: Three-Stage Plan for Learning Hymns or Other Four-Part Pieces)
 - Work through the steps on the handout in the packet
 - For problems with independence of line, use the freezing technique
- [10] Introducing score preparation (packet: Redeemer of Israel—Example of Fully-Prepared Score; Sample from *Hymns from the L.D.S. Hymnal Marked for the Organ* by Carol Dean)
 - Deal with the text (meaning, phrasing)
 - Deal with repeated notes (introduce briefly now, more detail in lesson 10 and in class next week)
 - Add fingering & pedaling
 - Registration plan
- [8] Prelude and postlude (lessons 3, 11)
 - Summarize *Church Handbook* statements pertinent to prelude and postlude (get copies of *Music* section of *Church Handbook* for all participants, or visit www.lds.org/cm/display/0,17631,4987-1,00.html)
 - Finding prelude and postlude music (packet: Resources: Easy Prelude and Postlude)
- [15] Registration (lesson 8)
 - (Make sure the topics from last week were covered)
 - Manual/pedal balance (without couplers; in the pedal build either to within one octave of or match the highest manual pitch)
 - Couplers
 - Used for manual/pedal balance
 - Used to enrich the Great combination
 - Super/sub couplers (very briefly introduce)
 - Registration in solo/accompaniment (lessons 3, 11)
 - Solo=“prominence”—examples of useful solo stops or combinations
 - Accompaniment=chorus-type combination, to support the solo
 - Balance the pedal to the accompaniment
 - Registration in trios (lessons 3, 11)
 - The true trio: three parts of equal intensity but distinct color (examples)
 - Pedal is commonly 16 and 8 (typical organ bass line) or 8 only (“cello” line)
 - Three-part solo and accompaniments: close to the trio, but one part has a degree of prominence (it is a challenge to draw a clear line between these two types)
- Study assignment (63 min.): NLDSO lesson 9 (four lines, 38 min.), and 10 (repeated notes, 25 min.)
- Playing assignment: follow the practice instructions in the lesson, and we encourage you to choose 2 or 3 items to possibly play during the next class. Choose items for which you have questions or need

feedback, or that you just want to demonstrate. This week's main focus: applying perfect legato, precise releases, and independence of line in four-part music.

- Additional assignment (recommended): lesson 12 and think over whether or not you are able to continue your organ training, and if so, in what form. Next week we will discuss the possibility of continuing sessions every 2-4 weeks beginning next month for those interested.

Session 5:

- Hand out course evaluation
- [30-45] Participants play and instructors offer feedback
- [5] Opening hymn using changes of registration, and prayer
- [10] Registration—demonstrate:
 - Making registration changes between verses
 - By hand
 - Using the combination action
- Ask for topics that they would like us to cover today
- [10] Dealing with repeated notes
 - Adding ties to simplify the hymn (packet: Sample of a Hymn Marked in Shortcut Mode)
 - Demonstrate the various methods of dealing with them:
 - The simplest way: either play the repeated notes as written (some hymns are just fine that way); or play from a score that is arranged for organ
 - A second, more complex way: apply a few “rules” or guidelines derived by someone else in making your own decisions
 - *Main principles:*
 - Clarify the soprano line (this is most important)
 - It should reflect the relative strength of the beats within the measure
 - Your treatment of repeated notes should achieve an appropriate balance between rhythm and flow. And:
 - It should reflect the textual phrasing.
 - *Main rules:*
 - Repeated notes *between two soprano notes* are always repeated (that is, never tied)
 - Repeated notes that occur *over a phrase break* (in either the text or the music) are usually repeated
 - *Common tones between soprano and alto* when soprano ascends are tied, and when soprano descends are usually repeated.
 - *A few guidelines:*
 - **The Bar Line.** Repeated notes over a bar line are *usually repeated*. Exceptions might be considered occasionally in the bass.
 - **Strong to weak.** Repeated notes from strong to weak beats are *usually tied*. The strong beats in 4/4 measures are 1 and 3; in 3/4 it is beat 1; in 6/8 it is the first and fourth pulses. The last beat of the measure, the “upbeat,” can also be rather strong.
 - **Weak to strong.** Repeated notes from weak to strong beats are *usually repeated*.
 - **Three or four voices.** When repeated notes occur in three or four voices and some tying is desirable, tie in one or two of the lower voices (often the bass, bass and alto, or the inner voices).
 - **Two voices.** When repeated notes occur in two voices and some tying is desirable, tie in one voice.

- **One voice.** When repeated notes occur in only one voice, usually no tying is needed.
 - **Drumbeat or drone effects.** If your decisions create a “drumbeat effect”—a pattern that repeats too much, or a “drone effect”—an excessively smooth passage, *break up or change the pattern*.
 - Mention a third way: learn the musical results of various ways to treat repeated notes, listen as you apply them in the hymns, and use the one that seems most appropriate in a given situation (refer to OrganTutor lesson, “Hymn Playing—Repeated Notes,” and two sections in the workbook).
- [10] Creative hymn playing techniques (introduction)
 - Why be creative in hymn playing?
 - Registrational variety
 - Two standard approaches: buildup, and softer inner verses
 - Tenor solo
 - Soprano solo
 - Manual only
 - Alto up an octave
- [5] Course review (read through the course objectives, listed in session 1)
- [10] Continuing your organ training (lesson 12, not assigned) (packet: Organ Training Resources Available through Brigham Young University)
 - Explore ways to invite others into the organ world (including younger people)
- Possibilities for continuing training in our stake
- Closing prayer
- Collect course evaluations

COURSE EVALUATION

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: In November 2007 we completed a 5-week stake organ training course in the Spanish Fork East Stake, using The New LDS Organist (podcasts) as “the text.” We received 13 evaluations (100% of the 13 participants who completed the course), with the results tabulated below.

- Instructors: Don Cook and Shinji Inagi.
 - Five 90-minute sessions taught on Tuesday evenings, November 2007.
 - 15 participants in first session, 13 in the last session.
 - Course outline as given above.
 - Used a TV monitor and cheap camera trained on the console during every session.
 - A long-term stake training course will begin in late January. This will involve monthly or semi-monthly class sessions taught by Cook, and some semi-private instruction using Cook and one other instructor in the stake between class sessions.
1. For how many years have you served as a church *organist* (not pianist)? (circle one)
zero **5** up to 2 years **0** 2 to 10 years **3** over 10 years **5**
Note the polarity
 2. How many years of *formal training* have you had in piano **8.8 avg** organ **0 (8), .5, 1, 2, 5, 6 (1.1 avg)**
Note the polarity
 3. There were five sessions in this course. Please circle those that you were able to attend:
1 2 3 4 5 (today)
all (5), 4 (3), 3 (1), 2 (2), 1 (2), average 3.4
Good retention; 15 in class 1, 13 in class 5
 4. For how many of those weeks were you able to prepare as an active participant (3 or more practice sessions prior to the class session)? **4 (2), 3 (4), 2 (2), 1 (1), 0 (4), avg 1.9**
8 were active half the time or more; 5 were essentially auditors
 5. Approximately how many of the twelve *New LDS Organist* lessons did you listen to? **12 (2), 11 (1), 10 (2), 9, 6, 5, 3, 1, 0 (3), avg 6**
6 of them listened to 9 or more lessons; 7 of them listened to 6 or less
 6. If it is offered, would you continue with stake organ training in 2008? (circle one)
certainly **6** probably **7** probably not **0**
Very positive results in terms of motivation to continue training
 7. This course used a combination of audio lessons and hands-on practice during the week, playing and comment during the class time, and teacher presentation. In your opinion, how effective was this format?
not effective at all somewhat ineffective neutral **1** somewhat effective **3** very effective **9**
The average leans in the very effective direction

Based on your experience with this course, please respond to each item below on a scale of 1 to 5:

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 agree
- 5 strongly agree

8. **4.7 avg** This course served to inspire me towards ongoing training and service as an organist
9. **4.4 avg** This course helped me better understand the role of music in serving the church
10. **4.5 avg** This course taught me how to make better use of the organ console
11. **4.5 avg** This course identified effective practice techniques **1 participant was neutral**
12. **4.7 avg** This course introduced and began to develop in me the basic organ playing skills necessary to play congregational hymns, prelude, and postlude in legato style
13. **4.7 avg** This course taught me basic principles of organ registration, as needed in hymn playing, prelude, and postlude
14. **4.2 avg** This course taught me how to prepare the score **1 participant was neutral**

Please include below and/or on the back any suggestions for improvements in the way this course was presented:

- Use mike, especially to talk over the organ
- Talk slower
- Show stops more so that we can write them down
- Done well
- Motivated and equipped to begin serious study
- Longer sessions so that we can avoid rushing through things