

BYU Traveling Organ Workshop

DEVELOPING YOUR PEDAL TECHNIQUE:

LEARNING TO PLAY
MUSIC WITH YOUR FEET

presented by Amber Dahlberg



ORGAN SHOES

Qualities

- heel (about 1 to 1 ½ inches high, 1 ½ inches wide)
- sole (thin, slides easily, not wider than shoe)
- arch (no bridge between heel and sole)
- upper (snug fit, flexible)



organmastershoes.com

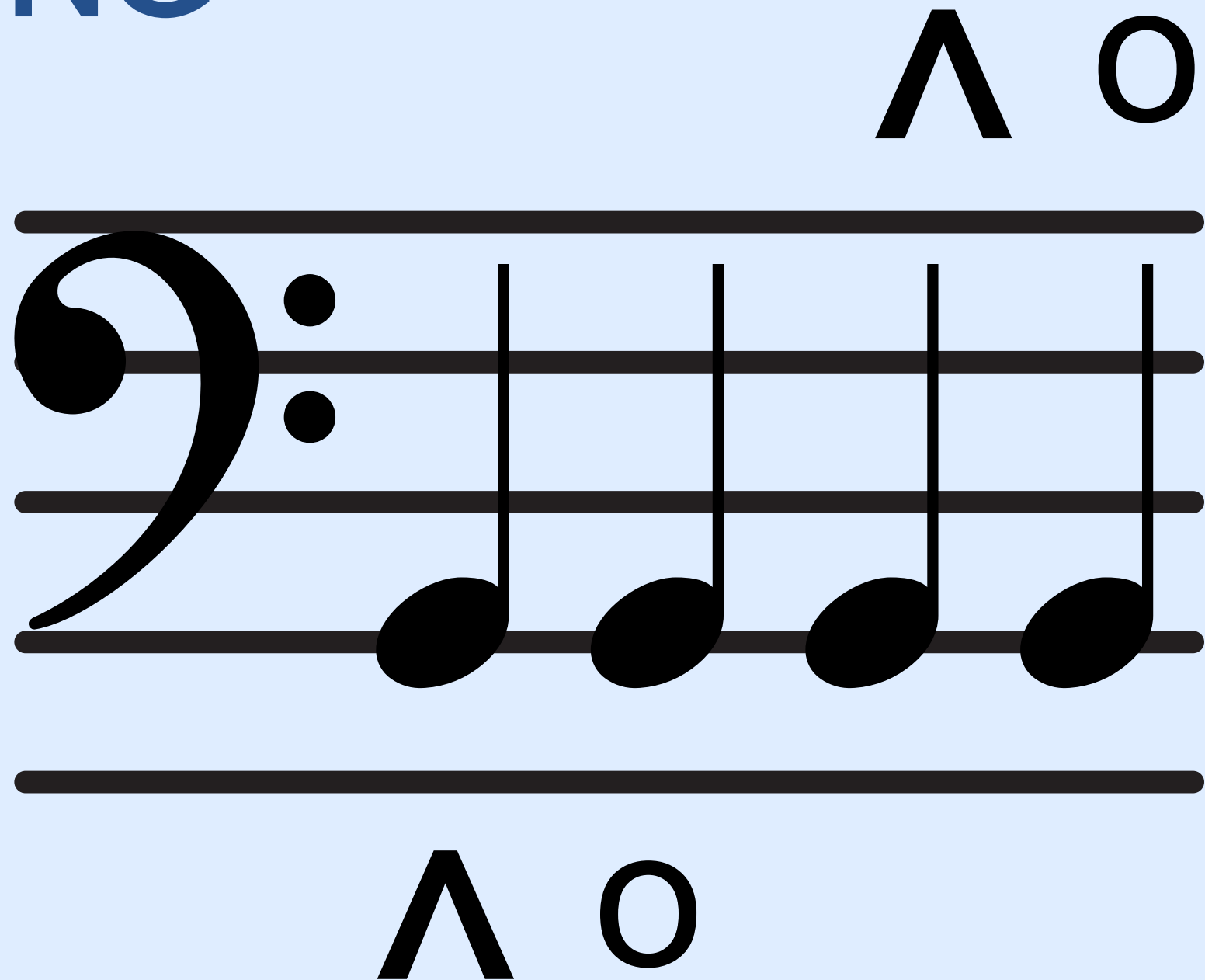
MARKING PEDALING

Λ = toe

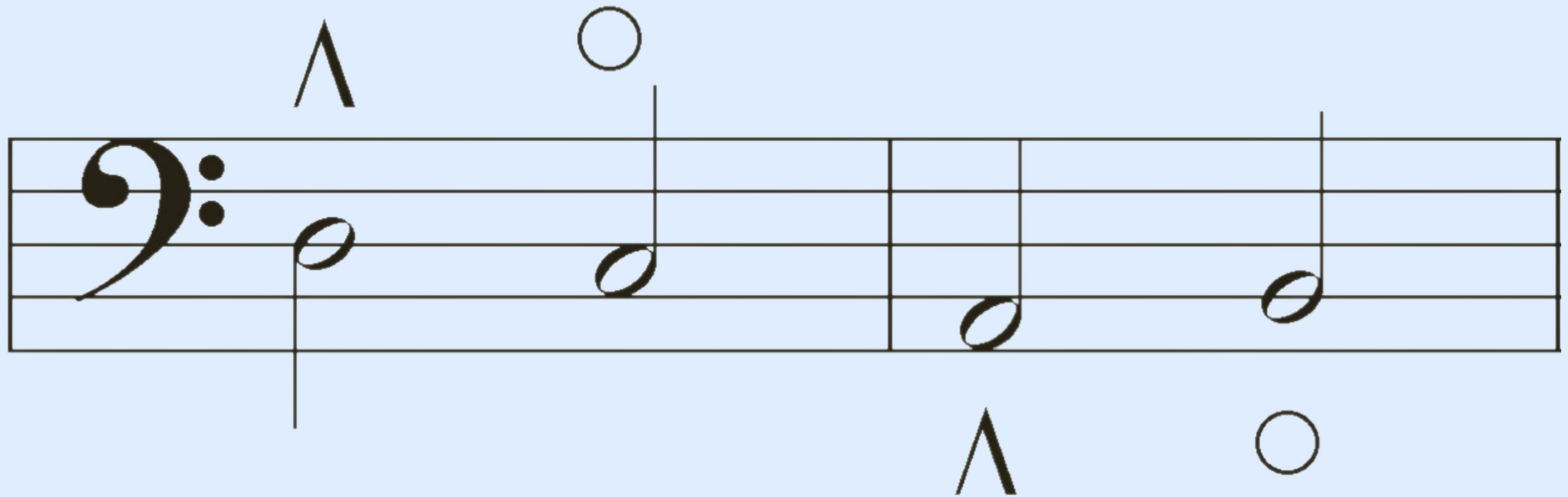
○ = heel

above the note = right foot

below the note = left foot



EXAMPLE PEDALING



right toe, right heel

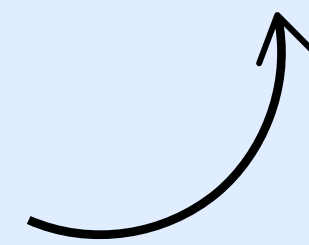
left toe, left heel

YOUR POSITION AT THE ORGAN

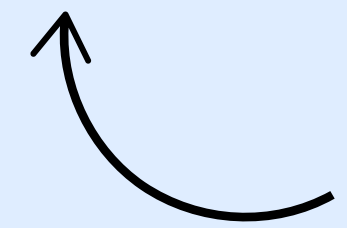
- Left & right
- Forward & Back (bench and person placement)
- Up & Down



center
yourself
here



middle
C



KNEES AND ANKLES

- Knees comfortably together
- Only use ankle motion when playing toes (knee does not move up and down)



PEDAL CHECKPOINTS

- When playing sharps, cover no more than half the sharp key
- Play with the inside (big toe side) of the foot, not flat-footed
- When playing naturals, play just clear of the sharps

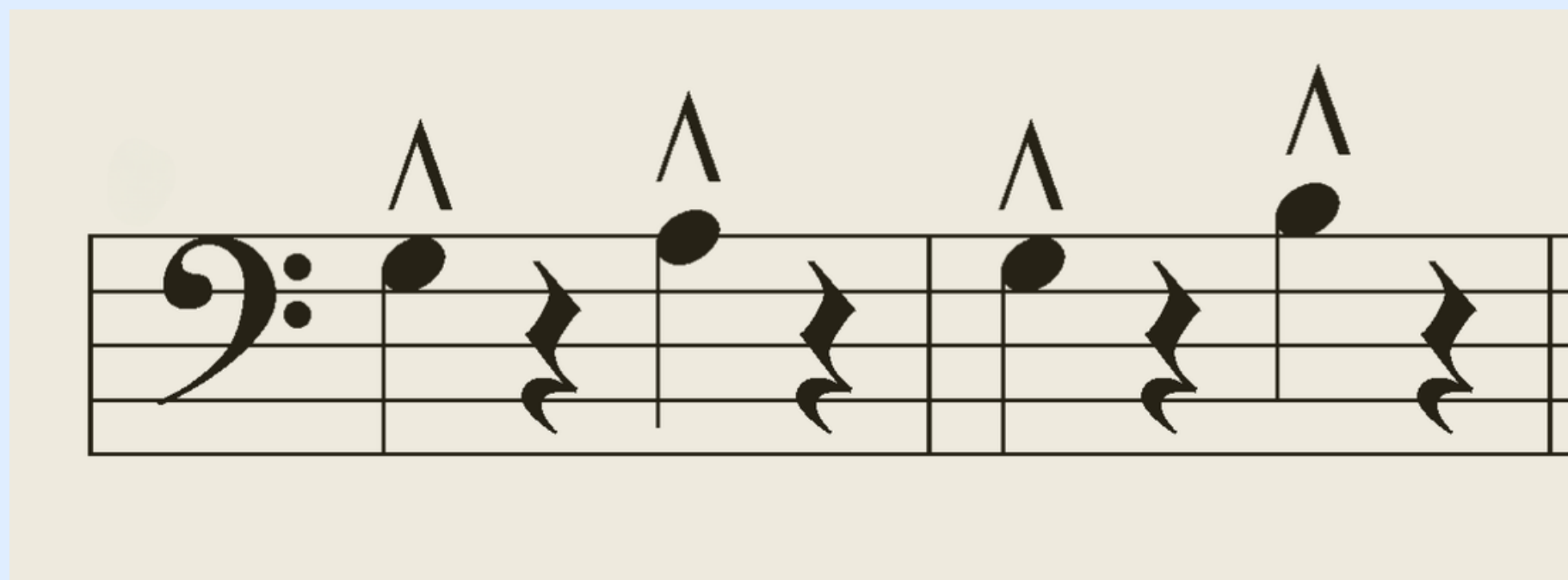


LEGATO PEDAL TECHNIQUES

Refer to package pg. 26

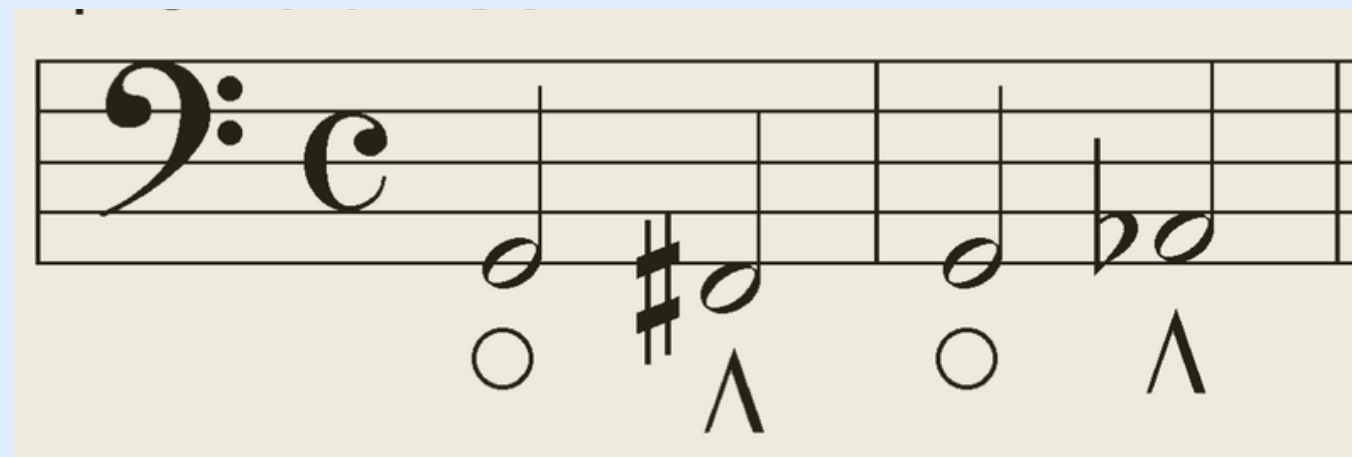
1) GLIDING

- Single foot glides from key to key, feeling, but not playing, each key until arriving at the next note to be played



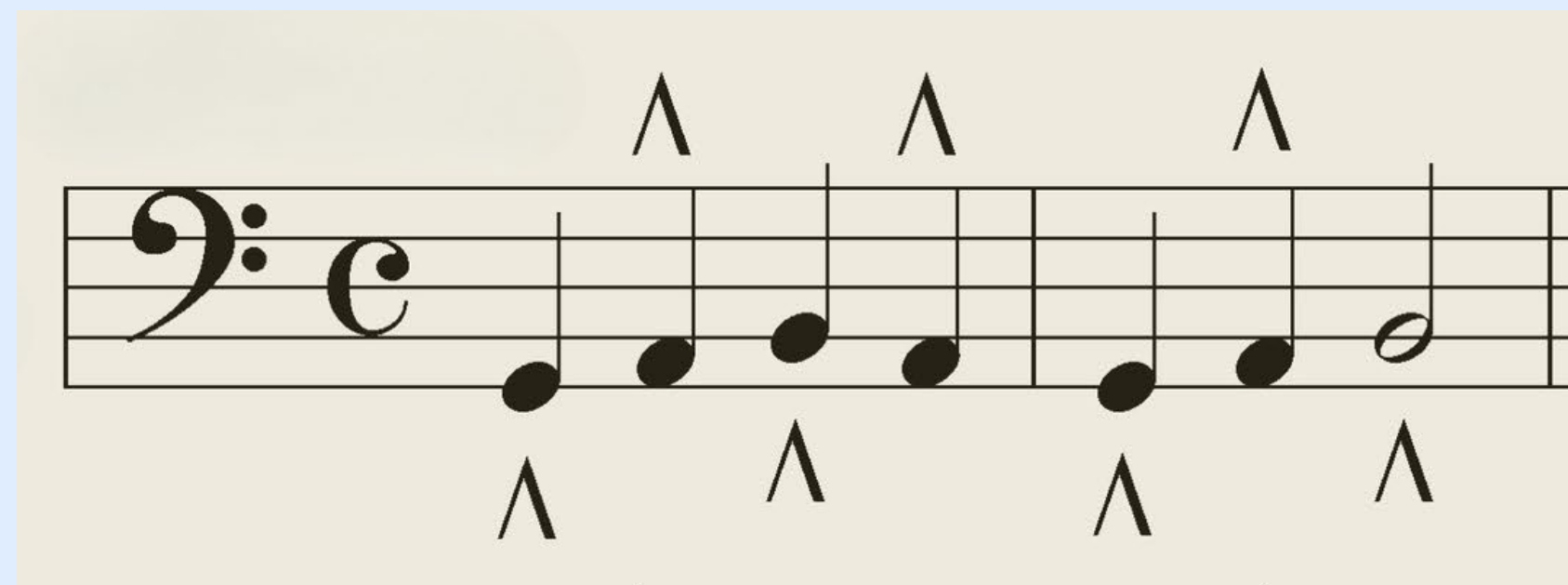
3) HEEL/TOE

- Play on the ball or inside (big toe side) of the foot. Center heel on the pedal key. When pivoting on heel be careful to keep heel centered on pedal key



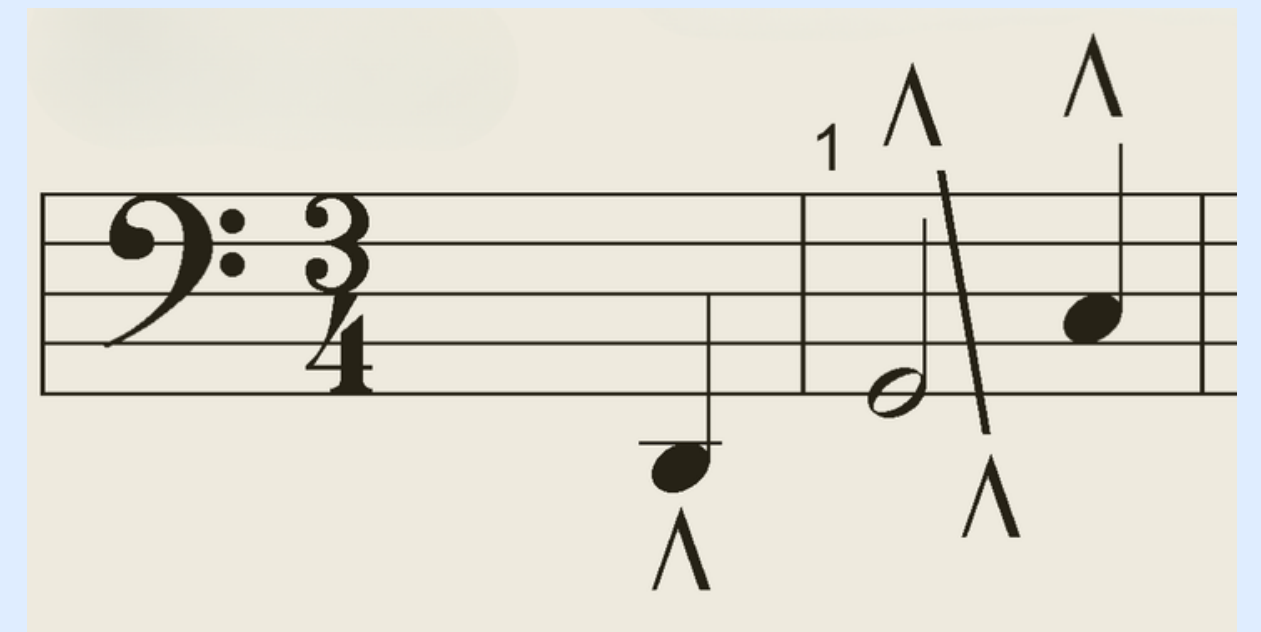
4) PEDAL CROSSING

- A foot can cross in front or in back of the other foot. Shift the position of the non-crossing foot, forward or back, to make room for the other foot to cross in front or behind



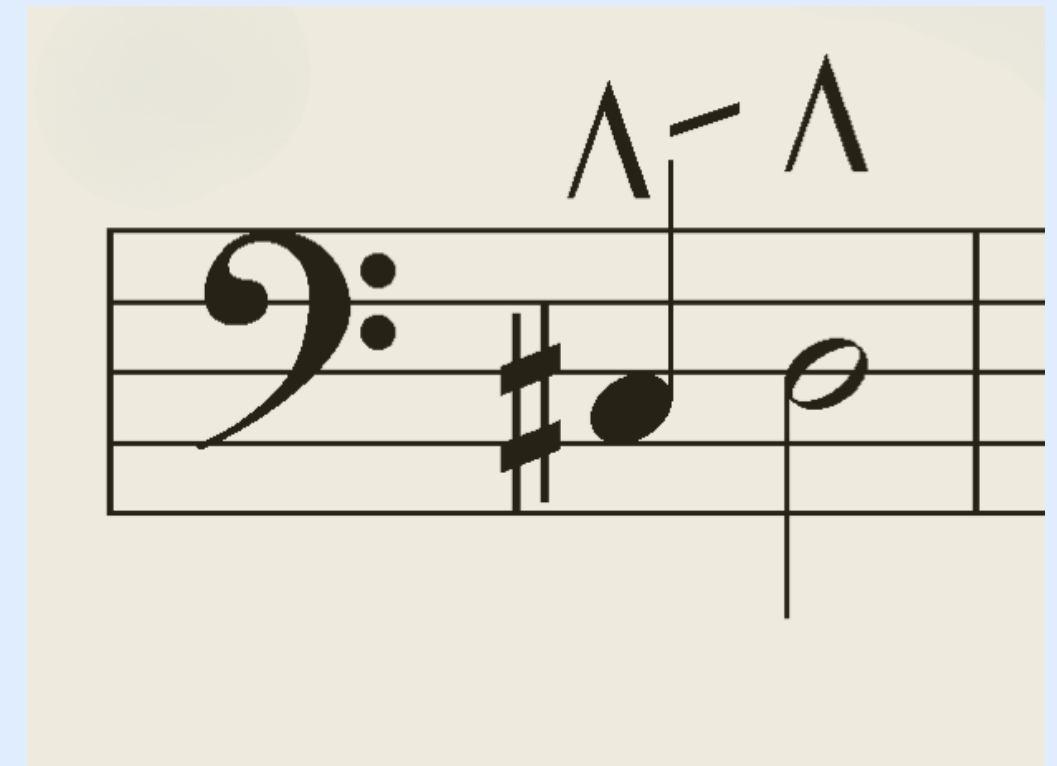
5) SUBSTITUTION

- Substitution is when the organist changes feet on a single note without releasing the note
- The substituting foot can go over or under the first foot



6) TOE GLISSANDO

- Glissando means “sliding”
- The toe can slide from a sharp to an adjacent natural or from a sharp to an adjacent sharp



7) PRE -LOCATION

- Prepare any free foot over the next key to be played as soon as possible
- This technique creates peace of mind and prevents sudden lurching for a note at the last second

DEVELOPING PEDAL TECHNIQUE

- Pedal exercises
- Learning hymn
pedal lines

PEDAL PLAYING SHORTCUTS

1. Simplify the pedal line. Use your ear, or have another musician help you modify
2. Play all four manual parts, plant your feet on two commonly played keys, and play them when called for
3. Play all four parts on one manual only
4. Play all four parts on the Great manual and use the bass coupler

EXAMPLE HYMN

Nearer My God, to Thee

Packet pg. 12 & 15 (simplified)

IF YOU ARE PLAYING FOR CHURCH WHILE STILL LEARNING...

1 Do the best you can, using shortcuts as needed to get the job done!

2 Always keep one hymn coming along in “polish mode”. Learn the pedal part well, and learn the manuals with good legato and independence of line

PEDAL PLAYING CHALLENGE

1 Get some shoes

2 Begin playing pedals as soon as possible

3 Build a reference system. Use the “Pedal Technique Checkpoints” handout to help internalize the basics

4 Begin working on some pedal exercises to build your technique

5 Learn each exercise to the point of ease, and not having to look at your feet
