

Compositional Techniques in the Bush Hymn Settings

Objectives

- To provide a hymn-based repertory for LDS organists comparable in harmonic language and technical difficulty to Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*
- To write literature that would be of interest to organists and that would similarly "speak" to congregations
- To capture the spirit of the hymn(s), so that the music would embody those characteristics and traits that members of the Church (and members of other denominations) relate to

Musical Preparation

- Study music theory and part writing, so that those "rules" have become part of my own musical language
- Study of the 371 Bach chorales—part writing, melodic qualities of every voice part
- Careful study of the compositional techniques used by the "masters" of organ composition—their forms, styles, uses of harmony, counterpoint, etc.
- Carefully study the harmonic and melodic foundations of the hymn

Various Techniques Employed

- **Two-Part Writing:** Reverently, Quietly; Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise (this demands melodic interest and independence—related to the *bicinia* frequently found in the organ partitas of Georg Böhm, J. S. Bach, Hugo Distler, etc.)
- **Ornamentation/Embellishment of the Melodic Line:** Teach Me to Walk in the Light; Children of Our Heavenly Father; Behold, the Great Redeemer Die; Sweet is the Work
- **Rhythmic Ostinato:** We Bow Our Heads; Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd; Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth
- **Trio:** Tell Me, Dear Lord; Father, We Will Quiet Be; Children of Our Heavenly Father; All Creatures of Our God and King; Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise
- **Foreimitation:** Father, We Will Quiet Be; Lord, We Come Before Thee Now; Sweet is the Work (ornamented chorale settings)
- **"Bach Chorale" style:** Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing; In Humility, Our Savior; Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer; Come, We That Love the Lord; Sweet is the Work (á 5)
- **Fugue/Fughetta:** Come, Come, Ye Saints; Lord, We Come Before Thee Now
- **Melodic Inversion:** Abide With Me; How Great Thou Art
- **Materials Derived from the Hymn Melodies:** I Need Thee Every Hour (G major); Press, Forward Saints

consistent effort to write
Continuing study of Bach, Brahms, ^{George Handel} Mendelssohn, etc.
jot notes w/ melodic motives, ideas
listen to comments about what is meaningful abt. hymns
make notes about what speaks to me as I
sing/play hymns
trying new ideas (for me) - some work well,
others are less satisfying & those I
abandon

"don't write if you have nothing of interest to say"
push myself to learn (& digest) techniques