

Adapting Piano Accompaniments to the Organ

Basic Principles by Harold Gleason

1. The arrangements of piano scores must be idiomatically effective on the organ.
2. Widely separated notes, octaves, and chords should be brought into the middle range of the keyboard. Avoid thick chords in low registers.
3. Observe the musical values of the piano score. These include rhythm, phrasing, character-istic figurations, accents, and written instructions.
4. Preserve the motion of the music, and do not reduce all pianistic devices to chords.
5. Rapid bass passages may be played on the manuals with the 16' pedal playing only the accented beats.
6. Passages with a clearly defined bass line may be played with 16' pedal and even 32' when appropriate.
7. When playing a bass line written in octaves, it is usually better to play the upper note. This will preserve the integrity of the bass line and will prevent the monotony of all notes sounding in the lower octave.
8. Avoid heavy, dull 8' and 4' stops on the manuals and the continual use of 16' stops in the pedal. Flute tone is most effective in higher pitches and will usually make the doubling of chords unnecessary.
9. The registration should be bright, clear, well balanced, and appropriate to the style of the music.
10. Solo and chorus reeds, mutations, and even célestes have their use when they are suitable to the character and style of the music.

Gleason, Harold. *Method of Organ Playing*. 8th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996. Ed. Catharine Crozier Gleason Eighth Edition

Alena's Tips

1- Eliminate (cross out) notes which will not be played. The following notes can be eliminated:

Notes that are in extreme registers.



played



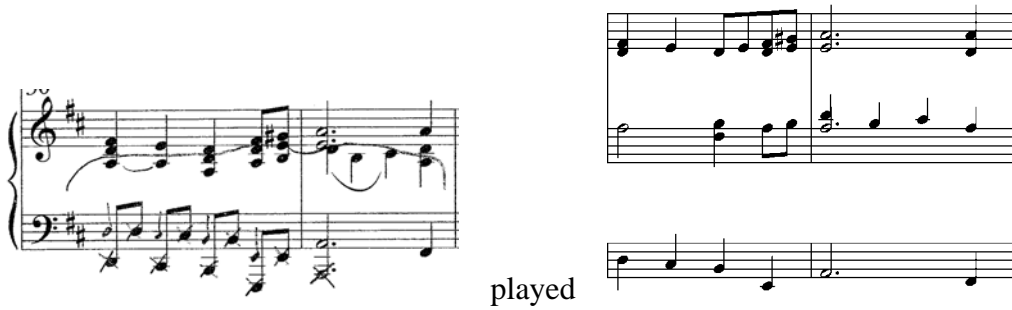
Notes that are played elsewhere in the chord (avoid thick chords).



played



Notes that aren't essential and when eliminated make fingering and playing easier.



The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, with several notes in the right hand crossed out with an 'X'. The bottom staff is a simplified version of the same accompaniment, with only the essential notes remaining. The word "played" is written between the two staves.

2-Clearly mark which hand plays certain notes.



The image shows a musical staff with arrows pointing to specific notes. Some arrows point to notes in the right hand, and others point to notes in the left hand, indicating which hand plays each note.

3-Identify pedal notes.



The image shows a musical staff with several notes in the bass line circled. These circled notes are likely pedal notes, which are sustained notes that provide a harmonic foundation for the piece.

4-Identify possible solo lines, especially during introductions and/or interludes. Consider counter-melodies found in the upper voice of the accompaniment.



The image shows a musical score with a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "I be true." and "women | mf The". The piano accompaniment has a "SOLO LINE" annotation above it, indicating a possible solo line. The score is in G major and 2/4 time.

5-Write in fingering & pedaling.

6-Select registration carefully and mark the score clearly (expression pedals, stop changes, manual changes).

7-SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY

8-Consider writing an organ part (by hand, in Finale, etc). It may be time consuming but you will learn much during the process. It also is much easier to read and learn.