

Organ Symphony No. 2

on Gregorian Easter Chants

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Alexander Kirsch

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Organ Symphony No. 2 on Gregorian Easter Chants

A preface by the composer.

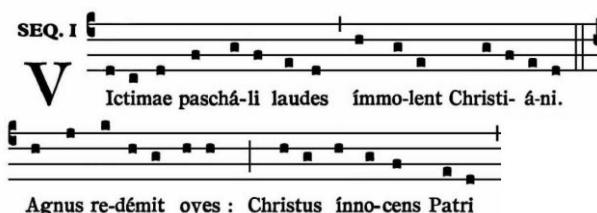
* * *

This latest instalment in the development of single-movement sonata forms has most of its thematic material in common with the tenth, and last, of Charles Marie Widor's great organ symphonies, the "Symphonie Romane", op. 73. However, as is generally the case with the late romantic French organ symphonies, Widor's piece is more akin to the Baroque suite than to the symphonic formal principles of the Classical age and beyond, as there is little connection across its four movements (Moderato; Choral; Cantilène; Finale), nor are these movements in any way related to the traditional symphonic arrangement (Sonata Allegro; Andante/Adagio; Minuet/Scherzo; Finale).

The author's *Organ Symphony No. 2 on Gregorian Easter Chants*, on the other hand, can be understood as a four movement symphony (Sonata movement; Scherzo; Slow movement; Rondo-Finale) which is contained within a traditional sonata form (Exposition with 1st & 2nd Subject groups; Development; Recapitulation and Coda), and it should be relatively easy to perceive this duality when listening to the work.¹

The Gregorian chorales chosen as the main thematic material in this Organ Symphony No. 2, as well as in Widor's "Symphonie Romane" - and amongst numerous other works from the Middle Ages until today - , are some of the most popular tunes indeed which formed part of the monastic liturgies of both the Holy Week and the Easter Holidays.² Here, in the Organ Symphony No. 2, they are initially being presented in the following, distinct manners:

- Victimae Paschalis Laudes



appears in the style of a Siciliano:

¹ For a more detailed essay on the genesis - and the problematic - of the single-movement sonata form, past and present, visit this blog post by the author: [Developing the Single-movement Sonata Form](#)

² Several of the Gregorian chants have been, following the Reformation, incorporated into the Protestant Hymn books, such as *Victimae Paschalis Laudes* which has become, albeit in a much altered form, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, by Martin Luther in 1524.

Allegro non troppo

6

R.

mp

P.

p

10

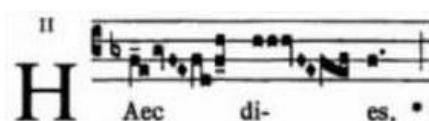
mp

Ped., P.

p

* * *

- Haec Dies



as a Ricercare:

25

a tempo

{ P., R. p

Ped., P., R.

p

29

• Alleluia Pascha Nostrum

Alleluia
VII

i Cor 5: 7

as a Fuga:

110 II. Vivace

{ *P.* *p*

114

* * *

• Vexilla Regis

Hymn. 1

Exílla Ré- gis pród- e-unt : Fúlget Crú-cis mysté- ri- um,

as an Arioso (in the Tenor):

F Andante ed espressivo

P. 8' *pp*

mp R. Voix Humaine

pp

* * *

The diagram below serves to illustrate - in place of a full verbal analysis - the formal sections of the Organ Symphony No. 2 and how the themes fit into its general scheme:³

I. Sonata movement	II. Scherzo	III. Slow movement	IV. Rondo-Finale - Coda	
<i>Exposition</i>		<i>Development</i>	<i>Recapitulation</i>	<i>Coda</i>
1st Subject Group	2nd Subject Group			
<i>d Minor</i> bar: 1	<i>Bb Major</i> 110	<i>a Minor/modulatory</i> 208	<i>d Minor</i> 260	<i>D Major</i> 444
Exposition: Motto* 1. Subj. <i>Victimae Paschalis</i> - d 2. Subj. <i>Haec Dies/Codetta</i> - F Motto/Development/Motto Recapitulation: 1. Subj. - d 2. Subj - D Motto/Codetta/Transition	Fuga Alleluia Pascha - Bb Trio Vexilla Regis - f# Fuga - Bb Trio - d Fuga - Bb Motto/Codetta/Transition	A (all themes) B (Development) A' Re-transition	Motto 1. Subj. - d 2. Subj. - D 1. Subj./Motto - d Fuga (Development)/ <i>Vexilla Regis</i> - F Motto/1. Subj - D/g 2. Subj. - D Interlude (1. Subj. <i>Lento</i> /Motto) - D	Toccata - D (all themes) Motto

*Motto: The first six notes of *Victimae Paschalis* (beginning of the first phrase), followed by a cadential figure (end of the second phrase).⁴

The Organ Symphony No. 2 shows much improvement in respect of the overall flow and coherence of the individual sections, as well as the way the themes are being juxtaposed and combined. With just under 20 minutes of performing time, or 479 bars of music, it is also a fair bit shorter than its predecessor.

For a colour-coded explanation of the contrapuntal connections throughout all of this work, which are quintessential to the thematic development on one side, and the understanding of the formal logic on the other, the author has prepared this YouTube video:

[Organ Symphony No 2 on Gregorian Easter Chants \(A. Kirsch\) - MIDI - YouTube](#)

Alexander Kirsch

Blackpool, in December 2020

³ see above footnote ¹; also the preface to the [Organ Symphony No.1 - on Lutheran Christmas Chorales](#)

⁴ Interestingly, notes 1-3 form at the same time their retrograde; notes 4-6 the inversion, as well as the retrograde inversion, of notes 1-3. This matter is being of some importance throughout the polyphonic settings of the Organ Symphony No. 2.

Duration: approx. 19'30"

Sections:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| I. Maestoso | p. 1 |
| II. Vivace | p. 9 |
| III. Molto adagio | p. 18 |
| IV. Tempo I | p. 23 |

Organ Symphony No. 2

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P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

Alexander Kirsch

I. Maestoso

Musical score for the first movement, I. Maestoso. The score consists of three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature is one flat. The tempo is marked 'Maestoso'. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *poco rit.*. The bassoon part is marked *Ped., G., P., R.* at the end of the section. Measure numbers 1 through 5 are present above the staves.

Allegro non troppo

Musical score for the second movement, Allegro non troppo. The score consists of three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature changes to one flat. The tempo is marked 'R.'. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, and *p*. Measure number 6 is indicated above the staves.

Musical score for the second movement, continuing from measure 6. The score consists of three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature changes to one flat. The tempo is marked 'R.'. Dynamics include *mp*, *Ped., P.*, and *p*. Measure number 10 is indicated above the staves.

14

Ped., R. 4'

mp

18

mf { G.

Ped., G.

mf

22

rit.

A

25

$\text{J.} = \text{o}$ *a tempo*

{ *P., R.* *p*

Ped., P., R.

p

Measures 25-28 of the musical score for piano. The score is in common time, key signature of one flat. The right hand plays eighth-note patterns, while the left hand provides harmonic support. Measure 25 starts with a dynamic { P., R. p } followed by a tempo marking J. = o a tempo. The right hand has eighth-note patterns, and the left hand has sustained notes. Measure 26 continues with eighth-note patterns. Measure 27 begins with Ped., P., R. and ends with a dynamic p. Measure 28 concludes the section with eighth-note patterns.

29

Measures 29-32 of the musical score for piano. The score is in common time, key signature of one flat. The right hand plays eighth-note patterns, and the left hand provides harmonic support. Measures 30-32 show a continuation of this pattern.

33

scherzando

Measures 33-36 of the musical score for piano. The score is in common time, key signature changes to one sharp. The right hand plays eighth-note patterns, and the left hand provides harmonic support. Measures 35-36 show a continuation of this pattern.

37

41 **B**

45

49

Ped. 8'

mp

53

{ *P. mp*

{ *G.*

58

Tempo 1

ff { *G., P., R.*

Ped., G., P., R.

ff

$\frac{6}{8}$

$\frac{6}{8}$

$\frac{6}{8}$

C Allegro non troppo

63

{ G. *f*

Ped., G.

f

67

P. mp

Ped., P.

mp

71

P.

mp

G. f

75

Ped., G.

G.

f { G.

D

80

{ P., R. p

Ped., P., R.

p

84

88

poco rit.

a tempo

f {*G., P.*}

Ped., G., P.

92

scherzando $\overbrace{3}$

96

101

105 *rit.*

P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' / Voix Humaine - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

110 E II. Vivace

{*P. p*

114

Ped., P.

p

118

v

122

126

Musical score page 126. The score consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of $\dot{\nu}$. The middle and bottom staves have a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The music features various note patterns and rests.

130

Musical score page 130. The score consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and dynamic markings *mf*, *{P., R.}*, and *{G., P. f}*. The middle staff has a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and dynamic markings *Ped., P., R.* and *Ped., G., P.*. The bottom staff has a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic marking *mf*. The music includes various note patterns and rests.

F Andante ed espressivo

135

Musical score page 135. The score consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and dynamic markings *poco ritardando*, *mf*, and *{P.}*. The middle staff has a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and dynamic markings *P. 8'*, *pp*, and *mp*. The bottom staff has a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and dynamic markings *Ped. 16'*, *p*, and *pp*. The music includes various note patterns and rests.

138

Three staves of piano music. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature is two sharps. Measures 138-141 show a pattern of eighth-note chords in the treble and bass staves, with sixteenth-note patterns in the bass staff.

142

Three staves of piano music. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature is two sharps. Measures 142-145 show a continuation of the musical pattern from the previous page, with eighth-note chords and sixteenth-note bass patterns.

146

Three staves of piano music. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature is two sharps. Measures 146-149 show a continuation of the musical pattern, with eighth-note chords and sixteenth-note bass patterns.

G

150 *poco ritardando* Vivace

{ *P.* *pp*

+ *P.*

pp *mf*

Ped., P., R.

154

{ *P., R.* *mf*

158

G., P.

f

162

{G., P.,}

Ped., G., P.

166

170

H Andante

mp R. Voix Humaine

P.

pp

Ped. 16'

pp

174

178

accel. ----- **Vivace**

{ *P.* } *f* { *G., P.* }

Ped., G., P.

f

182

187

rit.

Ped., G.,
P., R.

ff

191

I **Tempo 1***ff* {G., P., R.}

195

199

Three staves in common time, key signature one flat. Treble staff: eighth note followed by sixteenth-note pairs. Bass staff: eighth note followed by sixteenth-note pairs. Pedal staff: quarter note followed by eighth note.

203

rit.

Three staves in common time, key signature one flat. Treble staff: chords. Bass staff: eighth-note pairs. Pedal staff: quarter notes. Measure 203 ends with a repeat sign and begins with a bass clef and a 3/4 time signature.

P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' / Gemshorn - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

J

III. Molto adagio

208

{P. Flute 8'
pp

Ped. 16'
pp

212

R. Gemshorn 4'

216

K

219

P.

{G. f

Ped., G.

f

223

pp { P. Flute 8'

Gemshorn 4' mp

227

mp { P., R.

Ped., P., R. mp

231

mf

cresc.

cresc.

animando

234

ff { *P. Flute 8'* *mp* *rit.*

{P. Flute 8' *mp* *rit.*

ff

Ped., G., P., R.

L

238

a tempo

pp

pp

Ped. 16'

R. Gemshorn 4'

242

246

249

Ped., G.

+ P., R.

p

ff

252

{G. p}

cresc.

Ped., G.

p *cresc.*

256 *accelerando*

f

f

P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

M IV. Tempo 1

260

poco rit.

{G.,P.,R.}

Ped.,G.,P.R.

ff

3/4

265 Allegro non troppo

{ G. f }

Ped., G.

f

3/8

4/8

269

3/8

4/8

273

Musical score page 273. The score consists of three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff uses a bass clef, and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The music includes various chords and rhythmic patterns.

277

Musical score page 277. The score consists of three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff uses a bass clef, and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The music includes various chords and rhythmic patterns.

282

N

Musical score page 282. The score consists of three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff uses a bass clef, and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The music includes various chords and rhythmic patterns. Dynamic markings include *p*, *{P., R.}*, and *Ped, P., R.*

287

This section consists of four measures. The treble staff features eighth-note patterns with grace notes and slurs. The bass staff has sustained notes with occasional eighth-note grace notes. The pedal staff provides harmonic support with sustained notes.

291

This section consists of four measures. The treble staff begins with a sustained note followed by eighth-note pairs. The bass staff features eighth-note patterns with grace notes. The pedal staff provides harmonic support.

295

scherzando

mf

This section begins with a melodic line in the treble staff. Measures 2-4 feature eighth-note chords in the treble staff, with dynamic markings *mf*. Measures 2-4 also include sixteenth-note patterns in the bass staff. The pedal staff provides harmonic support.

mf

303

{*P.*} *p*

Ped., P.

rit.

6
8

311

Treble staff: eighth-note chords (G, A, C#) with a fermata. Bass staves: eighth-note patterns.

314

Treble staff: sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staves: eighth-note patterns. Dynamics: *ff*, *f*, *P., R.*, *Ped., G., P.*

317

Treble staff: sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staves: eighth-note patterns.

A musical score for piano, featuring three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. Measure 320 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern in the treble staff, followed by eighth-note chords in the bass staves. Measures 321-325 continue this pattern, with measure 325 concluding with a single eighth note in the bass staff.

323

poco rit.

{ *P. mp*

Ped. 8'

4

C

4

C

326

Tempo 1

{ G. f

ff { G., P., R.

Ped., G.

Ped., G. P. R.

Ped. 8'

P
331 **Allegro vivace**

331

{ *P. p*

334

337

R.

mp

R.

mp

Ped., R.

mp

341

{ G.
mf
Ped., G.
mf

344

{ G.
mf
Ped., G.
mf

347

rit.
rit.
mf

Q Largamente
350

pp
{ G. Bourdon 8'

Ped. 16'

ppp

accel.

355 Allegro vivace

{ *G.*, *P.* *mf*

A musical score page showing three staves of music for a piano. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a B-flat key signature. The middle and bottom staves use bass clefs and have A-flat key signatures. Measure 358 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern in the treble staff. The bass staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.

361

364

Ped., G.

p

367

f

rit.

ff

Tempo 1

ff

{ G., P., R.

Ped., G., P., R.

f

371

poco rit.

3

3

3

374

Allegro non troppo

G.

p

Ped., G.

p

378

382

mp

mp

386

390

dolce

pp

{ *R. Sesquialtera*

394

398

mp

402

poco rit.

p

S

406

d. = d a tempo

{ G. *f*

Ped., G. 8'

f

410

414

+ 16'

418

scherzando

p { *P.*, *R.* }

Ped., *P.*, *R.*

p

422

mf

mf

426

poco rit.

p

p

T

Lento

431

pp

{ R. Voix Celeste

435

Ped. 8'

pp

439

G. mf

Ped., G.

mf

U

Allegro energico

444

A musical score page featuring three staves. The top staff is treble clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains six measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The middle staff is bass clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains six measures of eighth-note chords. The bottom staff is bass clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains three measures of rests. Dynamics include a dynamic marking 'f' and a rehearsal mark '{G., P., R.'.

447

A musical score page featuring three staves. The top staff is treble clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains six measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The middle staff is bass clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains six measures of eighth-note chords. The bottom staff is bass clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains three measures of eighth-note chords. Dynamics include a dynamic marking 'f' and a rehearsal mark 'Ped., G., P., R.'.

450

A musical score page featuring three staves. The top staff is treble clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains six measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The middle staff is bass clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains six measures of eighth-note chords. The bottom staff is bass clef, G major, 9/8 time. It contains three measures of eighth-note chords.

453

453

456

{P.
mp}

Ped. 8', P. #

mp

456

V

459

f {G., P., R.}

Ped., G., P., R.

ff

459

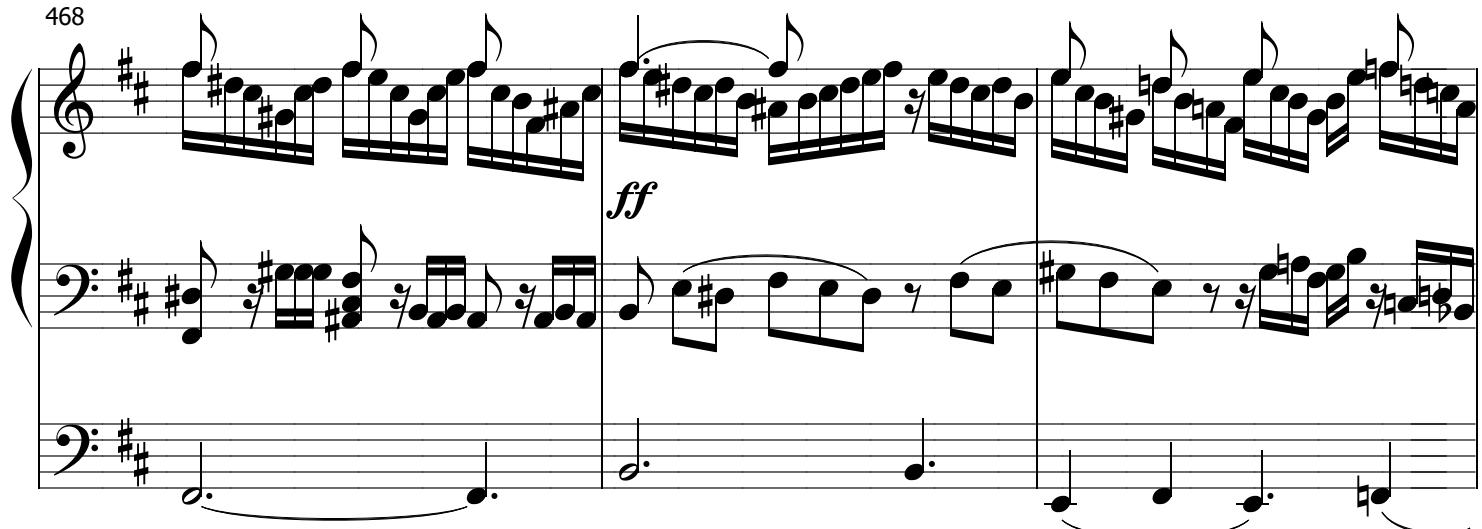
462



465



468



471

473 *ad lib.*

sf

Tempo 1

fff

476 *rit. molto*