Learn This Piece in 10 Days or Less While Playing Only 30 Minutes a Day

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685-1750)

JESU, JOY OF MAN’S DESIRING
BWV 147/10

FOR ORGAN

A Step-by-Step Practice Score for Study Without an Instructor

Edited by
VIDAS PINKEVICIUS

BASIC LEVEL

SECRETS OF ORGAN PLAYING PUBLICATIONS
www.organduo.lt
Introduction

One of the most popular movements from the cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) is the famous "Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring". This work was originally composed as a choral part from the Cantata No. 147 sung at the end of parts I and II of this cantata. Many organists love to play this work for weddings and other joyful occasions. Because of the popularity of this work, there are so many organ versions available which are not necessarily perfect for you.

This present organ arrangement for organ in 3 voices will sound very well and will be comfortable to play. Before you begin practicing this piece, it is good to become familiar with the orchestral instrumentation.
If we take a look at the original scoring, we will discover that this work is notated in 9 staves. The harmonized chorale tune is performed by the 4-part SATB choir which in Bach's time might have been sung by the 4 soloists, too. The top soprano voice is also reinforced by the Trumpet in C:
Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring by J.S. Bach (Practice Score) – ed. Vidas Pinkevicius

The bass line is performed by at least 5 people: vocal bass, cellist, harpsichordist (or organist), the double bass, and perhaps the bassoonist as well. The vocal bass joins in choral phrases. We can imagine Bach himself playing the harpsichord or the organ and conducting at the same time. He would have been playing the bass line in the left hand and adding chords or another fully worked out solo voice from the basso continuo notation with the right hand. The double bass player would be playing the cello part one octave lower (at 16’ pitch level).

The 3 instrumental parts are meant for two violins, viola, and also 2 oboes doubling the violin I part. The viola player would have to play from the alto clef. Note that the meter of the violin I part is 9/8 while other voices are notated in 3/4 meter. This is probably done to avoid triplets in the violin I part. As you can see, it must have been quite an ensemble of at least 14 people.

Now that you are familiar with the original orchestral scoring, we have to decide which parts are the most important because naturally we can’t play every part on the organ at the same time. Obviously, there are 3 most important lines in this composition – (1) the chorale tune, (2) the violin I part playing orchestral interludes (ritornellos), and (3) the cello part giving the harmonic foundation.

By playing these parts on three separate divisions, we will have a very nice and satisfactory organ version in a trio texture. The 3-part arrangement of Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring will sound very well on the organ and it will not be too difficult to learn.

This practice score is fully edited and intended for instructional purposes with complete fingering and pedaling, and suggestions for various performance practice issues, such as articulation, tempo, and registration. In addition, you will find precise step-by-step instructions for everyday practice. Therefore, this score is perfect for study without an instructor.

**Fingering**

The general rule for the Renaissance and early Baroque music is to avoid using the thumb (especially in sharp keys). Note, that using the early keyboard fingering in this work helps to achieve the proper articulation naturally. As you play this piece with the correct fingering, try not to use tension in the hand and reach various keys. Instead, shift the entire hand into different positions as required. Also remember to play on the edges of the keys (not too deep).

This practice comes from the traditional way of playing the clavichord, a stringed keyboard instrument which was the main practice instrument at that time in Northern Europe. If played too far on the keys, the clavichord would make a squeaking sound. Use the large shoulder muscles for depressing the keys with some natural weight of the relaxed arm.

© Vidas Pinkevicius, 2012. All rights reserved worldwide.

For more training materials, visit [http://www.organduo.lt](http://www.organduo.lt) Secrets of Organ Playing – down-to-earth tips and advice about how to play the organ.
Pedaling
As in most Baroque compositions, apply toes-only pedaling in this piece. Because of the triple meter, it will not always be possible to use alternate toe technique. Play with the same foot notes that are repeated and notes with change of direction.

Make sure you depress the pedals with the inside of your feet. Try not to lift the feet off the pedal board. Instead, slide them from one key to another keeping in contact with the pedals at all times. Also use the motion from the knee and not the ankle to depress pedals in this type of music.

This technique also comes from playing the pedals on the clavichord. Using large muscles of the relaxed leg corresponds to the use of shoulder muscles while playing with fingers and makes a full, vocal sound on the clavichord.

Articulation
The general traditional touch for music which was composed before 1800s is articulated legato. It is also applicable for this composition. Writers of the Baroque period used a term “Ordinary Touch” to describe such an articulation. As a general rule of thumb you might think of articulated legato as having small distances between the notes. It is not non legato because the spaces between the notes are very delicate which does not make the music sound choppy. Actually, this playing manner is quite vocal and various authors from the period refer to it as “Cantabile” or singing manner.

The authors of the Baroque period called this touch “Ordinary” because it was widely accepted and there was no need to indicate it in the music score. For this very reason you will rarely see any articulation markings in early music. But you should not assume that although the score is clean, you should play everything legato, which some organists still do even nowadays. The habit of playing legato comes from our background of piano playing. Actually, people who have experience with articulated legato touch use it for playing early music even on the piano.

This touch has many similarities to the tonguing of wind instruments and bowing of the strings. For example, when a violinist uses up and down strokes of the bow we barely hear the articulation. Nevertheless, we can clearly hear that the notes are not slurred. The same is with articulate legato on the organ. Although there are small distances between the notes, we may not even be aware of them unless we pay attention. The ordinary touch can easily be tested if you play a scale with only one finger but as connected as possible. Then try to copy the same sound with the usual fingering.
Emphasize the Meter

Although the ordinary touch is very important for early music, you need something more to make this piece come alive. You need to emphasize the meter and the strong and weak beats of the measure. Because the organ pipes cannot sound louder or softer depending on the level of strength that you are using with your hands, there are three primary ways to make accents in organ playing. First, you can make the strong beat longer which will have the impression of accent on the listener. Second, you can make the weak beat shorter which will have the opposite effect. Finally, you can come in a little late on the strong beat which will make it even more accented.

As you can see, not all the notes have the same length in early music. Some notes are longer or shorter than the others depending on the beat of the measure. In syncopation, the weak beat becomes accented. Therefore, make the weak beat longer and the downbeat shorter. The correct articulation helps to emphasize the independence of different parts.

Tempo

Practice at a tempo which allows you to play without mistakes. It could be very slow (40-50 beats per minute for the quarter note). However, as your performance gradually becomes better and better, try to play at the concert tempo which also should not be fast. The suggested concert tempo for this piece is 80 beats per minute for the quarter note. The most important thing to remember about choosing the right tempo is this: pick such a tempo in which you can comfortably count all four beats in a measure and feel the alternation of strong and weak beats. Make larger breaks before the stronger beats which will allow you to emphasize the meter.

Registration

Although for practicing purposes this piece can easily be played using one manual, to perform it in public you will need two manuals with different sound colors. A gentle solo reed, such as the oboe, clarinet or krummhorn (with or without the flute 8’) works well for the left hand part. Another option would be to play it on a cornet, or some other flute combination with mutations. Even a principal 8’ and/or 4’ with a vocal quality may sound very good. A gentle tremulant might add to the expressive power of this composition. Play the bass part with 16’ and 8’ flutes in the pedals. The right hand part could be played using 8’ and 4’ flute combinations in the right hand.
Learning Process
For the best results practice every fragment with correct fingerings and articulation in the following 7 dispositions:

1. Right hand
2. Left hand
3. Pedals
4. Right hand and left hand
5. Right hand and pedals
6. Left hand and pedals
7. Right hand, left hand, and pedals combined.

DAY 1: Learn Fragment A.
DAY 2: Repeat Fragment A, learn Fragment B.
DAY 3: Repeat Fragments AB, learn Fragment C.
DAY 4: Repeat Fragments ABC, learn Fragment D.
DAY 5: Repeat Fragments ABCD, learn Fragment E.
DAY 6: Repeat Fragments ABCDE, learn Fragment F.
DAY 7: Repeat Fragment ABCDEF, learn Fragment G.
DAY 8: Play Fragments AB, CD, and EF, and G without stopping.
DAY 9: Play Fragments ABCD, and EFG without stopping.
DAY 10: Play the entire piece without stopping.

NOTE: The minimum time required for practice is about 30 minutes a day. The results may vary according to the technical level of the individual. Some people may have to practice longer than 10 days to master this piece.

It is best not to advance to the next combination until you can play the current one at least 3 times in a row correctly with the precise articulation, fingering, and pedaling.

For people who have excellent sight-reading skills and an extensive experience in pedal playing it might be possible to play a smaller number of combinations and to progress faster. However, always be very strict with mistakes. Always correct them at least 3 times in a row. If a particular combination seems too advanced for you, go back to the previous one.
Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring by J.S. Bach (Practice Score) – ed. Vidas Pinkevicius
Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring by J.S.Bach (Practice Score) – ed. Vidas Pinkevicius
Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring by J.S.Bach (Practice Score) – ed. Vidas Pinkevicius
CONCLUSION

Congratulations! I hope you have successfully reached the end of this step-by-step guide and mastered this splendid work according to my suggestions. During this process, your pedal technique and hand and feet coordination have surely advanced to the next level. To reap even more benefits, you can memorize this piece. Then you will know it inside out. I recommend memorization of short fragments first and doubling them in size later.

If you liked practicing this composition, you might enjoy my other practice guides and scores from www.organduo.lt/shop.html. As always, my practice scores are fully edited and intended for instructional purposes with complete fingering and pedaling, and suggestions for various performance practice issues, such as articulation, tempo, and registration. The precise step-by-step instructions in these scores make them perfect for study without an instructor.

To your success in organ playing,
Vidas Pinkevicius
www.organduo.lt