

Soprano and Tenor Switch

Sheri Peterson, MM, CAGO

Execution

- RH plays alto part as written and soprano part down an octave
 - It helps to physically move RH down an octave and play alto up an octave
- LH plays entire tenor part (no helping RH out with alto part) an octave higher on another manual
- Feet (pedal) play bass
- Alternative on one manual:
 - LH plays soprano an octave lower
 - RH plays alto where written and tenor an octave higher
 - This is more difficult for most organists

Effect

- Creates the feel of a reharmonization by displacing two parts

When can I use soprano and tenor switch?

- After the congregation has become accustomed to the hymn tune and are singing confidently
- During all or part of a verse
- On an internal verse
- May be used on all or part of the last verse of a hymn

Registration considerations

- If crossing-hands and playing on different manuals the registration may be handled in two ways:
 - Chorus registration (tenor not treated as a solo)
 - Tenor line treated as a solo, following registration guidelines for tenor solo
- If not crossing hands and playing on one manual, use chorus registration

Challenge: It can be difficult to play soprano down an octave while playing tenor up an octave

- Be sure to write in fingering for the RH soprano and alto voices and practice executing it
- Think of the RH as playing alto up an octave but physically playing RH an octave lower (this puts the soprano an octave lower and the alto in its original range)
- It may be beneficial to practice playing the alto up an octave until you are confident with it before moving RH an octave lower
- Practice this technique until you are very confident with it before doing it in church

Manual Only

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Execution

- All four voices played by two hands on one manual

Registration considerations

- Remember to keep at least the minimum requirement of an 8' principal and a 4' principal or flute
- For a little more gravity, consider using a 16' stop

When can I use manual only?

- As part of or for an entire introduction
- For any stanza of a hymn in which a lighter sound is desired
- On any stanza of a prelude or postlude

Challenge: Playing all four voices with a perfect legato on one manual

- Practice playing individual voices alone, then in two-voice combinations
 - Listen for perfect legato
- Consider having a separate score with the manuals only fingering written in

Benefits

- Provides a lighter, contrasting stanza
- No pedals involved
- Can be especially effective in meditative hymns

Alto Up An Octave

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Execution

- LH plays entire tenor part (no helping RH out with alto part)
- Feet (pedal) play bass
- RH plays soprano as written, but with the lower part of the right hand
- RH plays alto part UP ONE OCTAVE higher than written
- LH and RH play on the great manual

Effect

- Alto line becomes like a descant

When can I use alto up an octave?

- When the alto line is interesting
- After the congregation has become accustomed to the hymn tune and are singing confidently
- During all or part of a verse
- At the last part of the last verse of a hymn, especially if the alto voice is climbing

Registration considerations

- Because no voice is soloed out, a special registration is not needed
- Use the same registration you would use if you were not playing alto up an octave
- Use chorus registration

Challenge: Playing alto up an octave straight from the hymnal

- It is helpful to have a separate score with the alto written in an octave higher, as well as applicable fingering
- Remember that if the soprano and alto voices are written in thirds, then when the alto is played an octave higher they will be in sixths, and vice versa
- Practice playing the alto up an octave until you are very confident with it

Soprano Solo

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Execution

- RH plays soprano (as written or down an octave) on one manual
- LH plays tenor and alto on another manual
- Feet (pedal) play bass

The image shows a musical score for a Soprano Solo. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, labeled 'Sw. (solo stop)'. The middle staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, labeled 'Gt.' and contains guitar chords with fingerings: 1 3, -1 2 3, -1 4, 5, 1 5, 1 2-4, 2 4, and 1 3. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, containing a bass line with accents (Λ) and circles (○) under certain notes.

(Parley Belnap, Hymn Studies for Organists, p. 184)

What makes a good solo sound?

- For congregational accompaniment
 - Big reed solo (trompette, trompette with flue support, reed chorus)
 - Big principal chorus
- For organ solo (prelude or postlude)
 - Soft reed solo (trompette with box closed, hautbois, clarinet)
 - Fat principal chorus
 - Cornet used as a basis (various combinations)

Other registration considerations

- If a piston is available, set a general piston with appropriate stops
- If a piston is not available, make changes manually
- The alto, tenor, and bass voices must be supported
 - The manual on which these three voices are played must still have at least an 8' principal and a 4' principal or flute
- The solo must be heard above the alto, tenor, and bass
- The manual playing the solo voice should not be coupled to the manual playing the other three voices

When can I use a soprano solo?

- In an introduction to introduce the melody
- A middle stanza of a congregational hymn
- On the introduction and first stanza of an unfamiliar congregational hymn
- On any stanza of a prelude or postlude
 - In a prelude or postlude, consider playing one stanza with a soprano solo as written and another stanza with the solo down an octave

Tenor Solo

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Execution

- LH plays tenor (as written or up an octave) on one manual
- RH plays soprano and alto on another manual
- Feet (pedal) play bass

The image shows a musical score for a Tenor Solo. It consists of three staves. The top staff is in Treble Clef, labeled 'Gt. 4', and contains a melody with various fingering numbers (2, 4, 2, 5, 2, 4, 3, 2) and dynamic markings (Λ). The middle staff is in Bass Clef, labeled 'Sw. (solo stop) 3', and contains a bass line with fingering numbers (3, 1, 4, 2, 2) and dynamic markings (Λ). The bottom staff is in Bass Clef, labeled 'Λ', and contains a bass line with dynamic markings (Λ, Λ, Λ, Λ, Λ, Λ, Λ, Λ). The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat.

(Parley Belnap, Hymn Studies for Organists, p. 184)

What makes a good solo sound?

- For congregational accompaniment
 - Big reed solo (trompette, trompette with flue support, reed chorus)
 - In normal range: 8' foundation
 - Up an octave: 8' or 16' foundation
- For organ solo (prelude or postlude)
 - Soft reed solo (trompette with box closed, hautbois, clarinet)
 - Fat principal chorus
 - Cornet used as a basis (various combinations)

Other registration considerations

- If a piston is available, set a general piston with appropriate stops
- If a piston is not available, make changes manually
- The soprano, alto, and bass voices must be supported
 - The manual on which these three voices are played must still have at least an 8' principal and a 4' principal or flute
- The solo must be heard above the soprano, alto, and bass
- The manual playing the solo voice should not be coupled to the manual playing the other three voices

When can I use a tenor solo?

- A middle stanza of a congregational hymn, after the melody has been well established
- For a partial or entire stanza of a congregational hymn
- When the tenor line is interesting
- On any stanza of a prelude or postlude