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2007 BYU ORGAN WORKSHOP

# HYMN PLAYING: THE UNUSUAL HYMNS

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Organist who can play any hymn in the sustained legato style can provide consistent, powerful leadership in the worship service. However, some hymns lend themselves well to alternative playing styles — such as a more detached touch in one or more parts. This handout will match several of those “unusual” hymns with alternative playing styles.

For the purposes of this class, an “unusual” hymn is any hymn tune harmonization that is not clearly recognizable as continuous 4-part vocal polyphony, or that has any otherwise unusual features.

## PLAYING STYLES RELATED TO ENUNCIATION IN SINGING

Humming = perfect legato with all repeated notes tied  
La-la-la = “Sustained legato style” with repeated notes barely broken  
Da-da-da = “Sustained legato style” with repeated notes clearly broken  
Ta-ta-ta = Detached (non-legato)

Always consider the general mood of the hymn text (which may vary from verse to verse). Also be aware of the natural sound of the words being sung. Using Hymn #3 as an example: “Now let us rejoice...” has stronger sounding consonants than does “Love one another ...”

## ASPECTS OF “UNUSUAL” HYMNS TO CONSIDER, AND SUGGESTED TREATMENTS

**EXCESSIVE REPEATED NOTES** Identify the “big beat” (once per measure? twice?) and beginning with the bass voice and working up through tenor and alto, tie everything until the next big beat, until you achieve a good balance between compelling rhythm and a singing style. Generally, inner voices do not need to be tied as much as the bass, Example: Hymn #3: Bass = dotted half notes; alto = half note, quarter note. March-like hymns call for stronger accents, meaning more detached (more like “Ta-ta-ta” than “La-la-la”).

### Not march-like

44 Beautiful Zion, Built Above  
103 Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer  
107 Lord, Accept Our True Devotion  
131 More Holiness Give Me  
152 God Be with You Till we Meet Again  
163 Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing  
165 Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide  
177 'Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love  
235 Should You Feel Inclined to Censure  
270 I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go

271 Oh, Holy Words of Truth and Love  
281 Help Me Teach with Inspiration  
285 God Moves in a Mysterious Way  
292 O My Father  
294 Love at Home

### Somewhat march-like

21 Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice  
223 Have I Done Any Good?  
226 Improve the Shining Movements  
237 Do What Is Right  
266 The Time Is Far Spent

274 The Iron Rod  
278 Thanks for the Sabbath School  
286 Oh, What Songs of the Heart

### Very march-like

3 Now Let Us Rejoice  
105 Master, the Tempest Is Raging  
228 You Can Make the Pathway Bright  
229 Today, While the Sun Shines  
239 Choose the Right  
249 Called to Serve  
250 We Are All Enlisted

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## PROMINENT DOTTED RHYTHM

As a general rule, articulating dotted rhythms in the pedal is counter-productive. Either tie them or simply omit the shorter notes. These hymns tend to be very march-like (see above). A heavier-than-usual pedal registration may be appropriate.

19 We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet  
27 Praise to the Man  
60 Battle Hymn of the Republic  
227 There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today  
230 Scatter Sunshine

243 Let Us All Press On  
244 Come Along, Come Along  
248 Up, Awake, Ye Defenders of Zion  
250 We Are All Enlisted  
252 Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel

272 Oh Say, What Is Truth?  
280 Welcome, Welcome, Sabbath Morning  
307 In Our Lovely Deseret

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## COMPLEX ANACRUSIS AND OTHER RHYTHMIC CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

Some of these hymns are tricky to get started, and some need “rhythmic maintenance” along the way.

86 How Great Thou Art  
97 Lead, Kindly Light

124 Be Still, My Soul  
157 Thy Spirit, Lord, Has Stirred Our Souls

240 Know This, That Every Soul Is Free  
294 Love At Home

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## Hymn Playing: The Unusual Hymns

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### OFFSET RHYTHM BETWEEN MELODY AND ONE OR MORE OTHER PARTS

These contrasting rhythms between voice parts are meant to be heard, not suppressed. They serve to provide extra rhythmic drive. Therefore, articulate every repeated note, with the possible exception of short notes in the pedal (see especially #89 and #230). Consider doubling the bass in the manual, where shorter notes can be more effectively articulated, using the pedal to accent the basic beat.

5 High on the Mountain Top	89 The Lord Is My Light	230 Scatter Sunshine
52 The Day Dawn Is Breaking	144 Secret Prayer	241 Count Your Blessing
59 Come, O Thou King of Kings	158 Before Thee, Lord, I Bow My Head	276 Come Away to the Sunday School

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### TEXTURE AND/OR METER CHANGES

These often call for a manual change or registration change. Perhaps just a change in articulation is all that is needed — or perhaps nothing at all.

13 An Angel from on High	136 I Know That My Redeemer Lives	233 Nay, Speak No Ill
52 The Day Dawn Is Breaking	193 I Stand All Amazed	251 Behold! A Royal Army
102 Jesus, Lover of My Soul	212 Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains	255 Carry On
118 Ye Simple Souls Who Stray (no special treatment)	221 Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd	273 Truth Reflects upon Our Senses
	232 Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words	

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### TACET PHRASES IN ONE OR MORE VOICES

Double in the other hand? Add a pedal point? Consult with the conductor. Remember that the object is to support congregational singing.

1 The Morning Breaks	96 Dearest Children, God Is Near You	185 Reverently and Meekly Now
10 Come, Sing to the Lord	122 Though Deepening Trials	186 Again We Meet Around the Board
11 What Was Witnessed in the Heavens?	140 Did You Think to Pray?	191 Behold the Great Redeemer Die
44 Beautiful Zion, Built Above	142 Sweet Hour of Prayer	192 He Died! The Great Redeemer Died
50 Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise	178 O Lord of Hosts	201 Joy to the World
74 Praise Ye the Lord	183 In Remembrance of Thy Suffering	202 Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

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### SONG STYLE

Most of these hymns lend themselves to solo-accompaniment style — if they don't practically demand it — rather than traditional four-part playing. Here are several opportunities to "think outside the box."

29 A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief	219 Because I Have Been Given Much	303 Keep the Commandments
49 Adam-ondi-Ahman	221 Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd	304 Teach Me to Walk in the Light
88 Great God, Attend While Zion Sings	232 Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words	308 Love One Another
102 Jesus, Lover of My Soul	273 Truth Reflects Upon Our Senses	
149 As the Dew from Heaven Distilling	300 Families Can Be Together Forever	

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### OTHER FEATURES INVITING SPECIAL TREATMENT OR CONSIDERATION

We will explore each of the following as class time permits, according to interest. Place any requests on the first day!

37 The Wintry Day, Descending to Its Close	108 The Lord Is My Shepherd	260 Who's on the Lord's Side?
78 God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand	146 Gently Raise the Sacred Strain	302 I Know My Father Lives
82 For All the Saints	254 True to the Faith	309 - 337 (Women's / Men's)
	256 As Zion's Youth in Latter Days	

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### DISTINCT VOICE PARTS IN UNISON

The following hymns have four distinct voice parts in unison in some places. Please do not exclude the bass voice by omitting the pedal in those places!

10 Come, Sing to the Lord	41 Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise	175 O God, the Eternal Father
25 Now We'll Sing with One Accord	66 Rejoice, the Lord Is King!	196 Jesus, Once of Humble Birth
27 Praise to the Man	67 Glory to God on High	221 Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd
28 Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah	91 Father, Thy Children to Thee Now	258 O Thou Rock of Our Salvation
35 For the Strength of the Hills	Raise	259 Hope of Israel
40 Arise, O Glorious Zion	106 God Speed the Right	338 America the Beautiful

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