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Max Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73:

Issues of musical structure, performance practice and interpretation

by

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Abstract

The thesis investigates Max Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73, demonstrates the refinement of Reger's composition, and underlines his connection to the great performer Karl Straube. His musical language, dynamic markings and technical problems regarding the tempo, registration and acoustics will be examined by an actual performance in Canterbury Cathedral. Several issues such as cathedral acoustics, mechanical or pneumatic actions and choice of tempi have underpinned this study. Within each variation, the characteristics and techniques of Reger's compositions express his exceptional connection with the art of fugue and, of course, the use of variation technique in the rest of his organ works. The long Introduction falls into five clear sections and is, followed by the wistful mood and resignation of the Original Theme, where the great role of the third bar is often quoted in the course of the variations. Due to the all-pervading chromaticism Op. 73 gives the impression of being completely pantonal. Canterbury Cathedral organ's electro-pneumatic action and acoustics are close to the Leipzig Sauer instrument, and it seems well capable of meeting the challenges of control, polyphonic harmony, mystery and chromatic moods of Op. 73. Approaching the interpretation of Reger's highly demanding Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73 through formal analysis and the complicated background of early twentieth century performance practice will be the final goal of the live performance.

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Chapter 1

MAX REGER'S RECEPTION AND DISCUSSION OF PERFORMANCE AESTHETICS ISSUES

I. JOURNEY INTO RESEARCH

Discussion of the authoritative interpretation of a musical work combines the interpreter's individual dispositions, performance constructs and the conventions of the work's time, which in turn are demarcated by present-day style, insight and the anxieties of the recitalist's repertoire. It all began when I was studying on the organ of the Athens Concert Hall, 'Megaron Moussikis', in the long hot summer of 2009. I was looking for a virtuoso piece that made special demands on the performer, to play at concerts and future recording sessions. My teacher Nicolas Kynaston without a second's hesitation suggested Reger's Op. 73. As I practised the piece, in August 2009 in the empty Megaron Moussikis, I got interested in researching the sources and the performance history of Op. 73. I wanted to get my enthusiasm and bursting emotions, the freshness of discovering the clarity of Reger's phrases and chromaticism down on paper. My ultimate aim would be, not a conventional concert or recital, but a descriptive account of the journey into researching, analysing and performing Reger's Op. 73; During my PhD journey I explored primary and secondary sources in order to strengthen instinct and spontaneity and via analysis to inspire a convincing performance. It so happened that I completed this research and performed a live recital of Op. 73 on Reger's centenary in 2016.

This thesis evaluates the components that have an impact on a contemporary interpretation of Max Reger's large-scale organ works under the scope of current performance practice and the practical constraints of modern organs and performance circumstances.¹ In particular, it investigates Max Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73, in

¹ Unlike harpsichordists, for example, organists cannot take the appropriate instrument with us from venue to venue.

the light of its historical roots, the performance practice of Reger's time, and the piece's demand for technical dexterity and accuracy. It also discusses how the work was realised on the instruments available in Reger's time and how it might be realised on a relatively contemporary symphonic instrument.

Every organist of the twenty-first century interested in achieving an 'historically informed performance' has to engage with a number of technical and interpretative issues.² Musical interpretation ensues from the dovetailing of the performer's subjective approach leading to the implementation of their own imagination and hermeneutic interpretation, and the information given on the musical score (in this case *Variations Op. 73*), which represents something of a portal to the composer's soul and mind at that particular time. Therefore, the question of a [more] accurate rendition of a piece is unavoidably raised in conjunction with the need to discern the factors that determine the final outcome. A constant challenge that performers face relates to their notion of fidelity to a musical score and the extent to which any score can be considered as the mediator of the composer's intentions. Moreover, performers often come up against conflicting editions and the subsequent need to decipher and trace the reasons that will ultimately lead to an authoritative performance, dealing with the question of whether an edition aid would make the work more approachable for an organist-performer.

The notion of a precise and faithful conveyance of a composer's work arose historically when the performer stopped being necessarily the composer of the respective work.³ The various interpreters' approach to Reger's work, as regards this matter, should be a valuable tool towards deciphering and conceptualizing the composer's intentions and ultimately shaping my

² Hermann Danuser, ed., 'Musikalische Interpretation' *Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft* 11 (1997): 35. Danuser defines three modes of musical interpretation, the most recent of which, the historically reconstructive mode, describes the aims and practices of HIP performers, footnote by Joachim Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches to Max Reger's *Fantasia and Fugue D minor op.135*, A study in 21st-century performance practice,' (Mmus 2 diss., RAM, 2011), 1.

³ Danuser, 'Musikalische Interpretation,' 35 and Schwander, 2.

performance preparation.⁴ Looking back at the ways in which Reger interpreters have responded to textual fidelity and faithfulness to the composer's intentions might offer a synopsis of the performing history of the composer's organ music and initiate some of the particulars that have stimulated my performance preparation.⁵ Undoubtedly, there is one exceptional difficulty: there are no Straube recordings of Reger's works, and Reger himself did not (or could not) record his own major organ works and avoided in most cases talking about himself and his compositions.⁶ Evolving organ performance practices can be traced through the first half of the twentieth century.⁷ It is particularly striking the early recording sessions of the Op. 73 Variations by Rosalinde Haas lack accuracy, fantasy, pathos, elan and clarity.⁸ There are intricate interrelations among the difficult notation and the technical demands of its performance; and between the extreme and exaggerative metronome markings, as opposed in general to the elasticity, freedom, clarity, virtuosity and suppleness of Reger's organ music genres. In short, those early recordings project a rather mechanical approach that would have been foreign to Reger's own approach to the work.

Wilske recognised that many difficulties of the reception for Reger's music in its time were due to the misunderstanding by organ performers of Reger's instructions.⁹ For these performers Reger's music was conceived more as rigid quantities of sound and not as the

⁴ Joachim Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches to Max Reger's Fantasia and Fugue D minor op.135, A study in 21st-century performance practice,' (PhD diss., RAM, 2001), 2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ As mentioned on the following chapter, Reger had recorded some of his miniatures on Welte organ.

⁷ Due to there being no source of electricity, the organists of the eighteenth century mostly practised at the pedal clavichord or the harpsichord. From about the turn of the nineteenth century onwards, organists could practise on the organ as a daily routine. Unluckily for organists of the eighteenth century, they mostly had to study at the pedal clavichord or the harpsichord.

⁸ Haas, Rosalinde. Max Reger, The Great Organ Works, The Organ of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Memorial Church, Berlin, Organ by Schuke 1962, 62 stops. Mechanical Action, recorded in 1969 and Max Reger Complete Organ Works, 12 Discs, (1988), Musikhaus Dabringhaus + Grimm MDG 315 0350-2 to 315 0361-2.

⁹ As it is indicated in the Preface of Max Reger, *Sämtliche Orgelwerke* (Complete Organ Works), ed. Martin Weyer, edition Breitkopf 8492, vol. 2, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1987), regarding the tempo in Reger's organ music: What Reger wrote to the Duke of Meiningen in 1912 regarding a performance of Brahms' Fourth Symphony fully applies to the interpretation of his own organ works: 'The tempo of a piece is not determined solely by the indications provided by the composer, but also by the density of the harmony, the polyphony, the hall in which the piece is performed and the principle of the greatest possible clarity,' quoted after Heinz Lohmann, *Bemerkungen zur Interpretation der Orgelwerke von Max Reger*, (s.l: s.n, 1973), 226.

release of imaginative processes.¹⁰ However, some listeners of Reger's organ music do seem to react to the sublimity of the ethereal harmonies and chromatic motifs: rather, they feel besieged by a dread of the unknown, the torrent of tone-colours and the majesty of the sound of the symphonic organ. Some others resist the unintelligible and complicated, reacting negatively to a new experience and language in sound. And yet, it is so simple; after getting involved with a first, second and third piece by Reger (for example Fantasy and Fugue on the name BACH Op. 46, Second Sonata in D minor Op. 60, Twelve pieces Op. 59 and Op. 65), his musical language becomes more familiar and less cryptographic, and the technical problems regarding the tempo, registration and acoustics become easier to resolve. Reger's organ compositions helped him to identify his feelings about what he cared most about such as freedom of phrasing direction, but also musical architecture and clarity.¹¹

II. PERFORMER-ANALYST

When I embarked on my difficult but enthralling journey of research, analysis and performance, I was cognizant of the fact that according to the regulations of Canterbury Christ Church University, my final performance in Canterbury Cathedral would carry a higher percentage of the total marks (60%) than the text of my doctoral thesis (40%). Fortunately, this did not put any further pressure and stress on my final recital. Indeed, my research enabled me to understand the music in depth and to present it during the recital and viva in a way that

¹⁰ Hermann Wilske, *Max Reger: Zur Rezeption in seiner Zeit*, Schriftenreihe des Max Reger- Instituts, vol. 11, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1995), 58.

¹¹ Max Reger, *Sämtliche Orgelwerke* (Complete Organ Works), ed. Martin Weyer, edition Breitkopf 8492, vol. 2, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf&Härtel, 1987), 8.

combined my technical performance skills and expressiveness with my analytical skills of deconstructing the complexity in Op. 73.

The historical roots of Reger's compositional style can cast some light on the interpretation of Reger's organ works, which are quite distinct from his other compositions. There is certainly a combination of factors that have helped shape modern performances of Op. 73; these layers and evidence will be peeled back and reveal how these practices emerged and evolved.

Straube, perhaps his closest musical collaborator, asserted that Reger was influenced in particular by Bach, arguing the importance of such past masters:

No Master has ever fallen out of the sky, and the history of those masters 'from yesterday' is a shining example for us 'from today', to treat the heritage, the sheer unmistakable heritage passed to us, with freshness and freedom, full of devotion to the genius of those 'from yesterday'. Let us proceed with prudence, strength, and courage to the honour of those 'from yesterday'!¹²

The performance practice associated with Reger's work was itself influenced by Straube, who effectively introduced Reger to the public, giving first performances of most of his organ works. Straube premiered the majority of Reger's organ works from 1898 until the composer's death in 1916, except the Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73.¹³ Reger went on to establish a performance tradition centred on the Leipzig Conservatory and St Thomas, reacting against the early twentieth century Organ Reform Movement (*Orgelbewegung*),¹⁴ which emphasised the expurgation of Romantic performance indications from early music scores.¹⁵ Straube, on the other hand, through performing and teaching, maintained the Romantic tradition, adapting and editing Reger's scores and cementing their place in the organ

¹² Karl Straube, *Alte Meister: eine Sammlung deutscher Orgelkompositionen aus dem XVII und XVIII Jahrhundert für den praktischen Gebrauch* (New York: C.F. Peters, 1904), 2-4.

¹³ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 99.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33, 39, 233–234.

¹⁵ As it is going to be underpinned further in this study, the early modernists liked the expurgation of performance detail from early music, for they saw early music as a kind of anti-romanticism, as a sort of 'absolute music.'

repertory.¹⁶ Arguably, Straube was thus elevated to the position of co-composer (Mitkomponist), and this gives rise to particular problems for the modern interpreter.¹⁷ In addition, a consideration of the psychological profiles of the two men suggests that they were not always in perfect accord; Straube expressed his mistrust in Reger's ability to set down clearly his indications on paper, and he implied that his own performance and registration suggestions always found the composer's approval.¹⁸

Several basic issues face the modern performer of Reger's organ music. First, the selection of the appropriate edition: on the one hand there is Reger's autograph first edition of his organ works and on the other hand the authorised Straube edition, or a newer edition?¹⁹ It is generally difficult for someone looking at the score to know which tempo indications were inserted by the composer and which were Straube's suggestions.²⁰ Second, Straube did not record Reger's organ music, or there is also the possibility that his recordings of Reger's organ works were lost in the First World War. Reger's recordings of his Op. 56, 59, 65, 80 and 85 sound rather 'clumsy', that is to say, the manuals and pedals not sounding entirely together—and he died in 1916 before the aesthetic revolutions of modernism set in.²¹ Reger poises between the end of Romanticism and the dawn of Modernism (Frisch sets the boundaries of Modernism from around Wagner's death onwards until World War I).²² Buchanan defines Romanticism in his Cambridge lecture as 'the name given to the movement which flourished in the Arts at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth century whereby human

¹⁶ Johannes Geffert, Personal interview via e-mail, 2012 and C.S. Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 162.

¹⁷ For Mitkomponist refer to Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 3, 58, 98. Horowitz had rewritten whole sections of Liszt's *Vallée d' Obermann* in a performance in 1966, released on Columbia M2L 357, cited in C.S. Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition of organ pedagogy, 1898-1948,' (PhD diss., Ph. D. Duke University, 1999), 71.

¹⁸ Christoph Held and Ingrid Held, *Karl Straube: Wirken u. Wirkung* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 9-23. Also documented in Schwander, 8.

¹⁹ As mentioned further on the thesis, there is no Straube authorised edition for Op. 73.

²⁰ Idea documented in Schwander, 8.

²¹ Best documented in Hermann Wilske, *Max Reger: Zur Rezeption in seiner Zeit*, *Schriftenreihe des Max Reger-Instituts*, vol. 11, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1995). Documented also in Schwander, 8.

²² Modernism boundaries referred also as dates (from about 1885 until 1915) in Walter Frisch, 'Reger's Bach and Historicist Modernism.' *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2-3 (Fall/Spring, 2002): 296.

emotions began to be explicitly represented by the deliberate breaking of the rules which previously ordered the Arts in the preceding Classical Period.²³ Elements of Romanticism are evident in Reger's slow and rapid passages, expressive and rhythmic elasticity and the relation of dynamics with tempo modification. Reger appears to reveal the sounds that induce direct feeling by teetering on the limits of the tonal system in search of new expressive possibilities, despite trying at the same time to remain tonal.²⁴ Modernism was an art movement that emerged c. 1910, which rejected the past and embraced innovation. Albright states that Modernism made the past new as well as the present (in Op. 73, past is represented by the strict variations and present with the more improvisatory ones) and was motivated by a desire to counter the tendency of recent philosophy and science to deny the existence of walls (if we could draw a parallel between the denial towards the existence of walls and the rejection of bar lines.²⁵ He continues by defining the Modernism as the testing of the limits of aesthetic construction, whereas Modernists tried to find volatility of emotion (expressionism), stability and inexpressiveness (the new objectivity), accuracy of representation (hyperrealism), purity of form (neoclassicism), and cultivation of historic past.²⁶ Therefore, a genuine (in the sense of Romantic) Regerian performing tradition could unfortunately not be established during his lifetime before 1916, mostly owing to the forthcoming German Organ Reform Movement.²⁷

²³ Bruce Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902' (lecture St. John's College, Cambridge, July 1993), 2.

²⁴ Idea documented in Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2000: 55.

²⁵ Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts*, (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 7, 31.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29. (Daniel Albright refers on page 143 that we are used to hearing that 20th century is characterized more by polyphonic than homophonic music, in which old triadic harmony is emphatically rejected).

²⁷ Schwander, 8. Organist Paul Gerhardt tried to defend Reger's organ music against the developments of the Organ Reform Movement (C. S. Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 193). Undoubtedly, from 1915, Straube turned out to be implicated in the exploit of the forthcoming Organ Reform Movement, the 'Orgelbewegung', which meant the revival of baroque music and integration of baroque- style elements into contemporary compositions [Marcel Punt, 'Max Reger's Opus 135b and the Role of Karl Straube: A Study of the Intense Friendship between a Composer and Performer That Had Potentially Dangerous Consequences Upon the Genesis of Reger's Work,' *Svensk Tidskrift För Musik forskning* (1994/95): 105-117, 109]. It seems, from source work, that Straube was the most respectable authority regarding Reger's organ pieces' research and performance practice issues at least until the 1920s.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many composers tended not to write in detail about their own compositions. Therefore, it appears challenging in Reger's time to explore music during an era when composers—including Reger himself—increasingly felt obliged and even coerced to discuss about their own compositions. Undeniably, objectivity is for Reger 'the last thing of which he would wish to be accused'. 'The objective is to make this music understandable to actual audiences.'²⁸

From the outset it should be understood that there is no such thing as a single correct interpretation of Reger's music. Although Reger's own interpretations might provide valuable clues for the modern player, Straube was driven by the best of intentions in accordance with his personal aesthetics and historical context. Stockmeier argues that the respect for Straube's accomplishment as a Reger interpreter could be based on false expectations.²⁹ Eventually, Straube and his students played a vital part in bringing Reger into the limelight, but this does not necessarily make their performance approach the right one to be adopted by all performers for all time. What is more demanding, due to the nature of the organ tone, is the amalgam of the performer's ability to register, balance, articulate and breathe. Therefore, achieving optimal cohesion, transparency and clarity when performing on the organ is not an easy task; consequently, achieving the above is very much dependent on the type of organ used.

In exploring the case of Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73 an analysis of the composition itself sheds further light on the approaches to interpretation available to the modern performer. The analysis needs to be placed in the context of related genres, including Reger's own large-scale Chorale Fantasias, his Hiller Variations Op. 100, Beethoven's Diabelli Variations Op. 120, Bach's Goldberg Variations BWV 988 and Schoenberg's

²⁸ Christopher Anderson, *Selected writings of Max Reger* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 7–8.

²⁹ Wolfgang Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' in *Max Reger 1873–1973: Ein Symposium*, ed. Klaus Röhrig (Wiesbaden, 1974), 21–29.

Variations on a Recitative, among others.³⁰ Analysis of the score helps to establish the ways in which the Op. 73 Variations' formal structure informs performance and this can mean that individual performances, based on different concepts of the overall structure, will vary in interpretation. Within each variation, the characteristics and techniques of the composition demonstrate the refinement of Reger's exceptional connection with the art of fugue and of course the use of variation technique in the rest of his organ works.

The performance aspect of Op. 73 Variations —a favourite aspect of pure musicological research —reveals the subtlety of Reger's compositional technique and traces the source of his expression.³¹ The Variations are seldom played and are unfortunately missing from the repertoire list of most virtuoso interpreters —probably as a result of the overall length (nearly 40 minutes), the technical exertion required, and the complicated registration scheme. This study examines Op. 73 Variations analytically in the context of Reger's autographs and letters, Straube's letters, the registration structure by the latter or his students, the discography of the second half of the twentieth century, and correspondence with the Max Reger Institute in Karlsruhe. This in-depth study of Op. 73 Variations aims not only to establish a performance approach to the piece, including a possible solution to the ambiguous metronome and dynamic indications, but also to present Reger's music according to his own requirements: to make the difficult notation sound simple, clear, pure and truthful, and to highlight the importance of freedom, elasticity, control and technical precision in performing Reger's works.

Approaching the interpretation of Reger through its historical roots, formal analysis, discography and the complicated background of early twentieth century performance practice,

³⁰ John David Peterson, 'Max Reger's Variation and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73,' Philadelphia Chapter (May 1990): 286.

³¹ Two dissertations of pure musicological research of Reger's Op. 73 are of Daniel Harrison, 'A Theory of Harmonic and Motivic Structure for the Music of Max Reger,' (PhD diss., Yale University, 1986), and Christian Schmeiser, 'Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40. Betrachtungen über das Verhältnis Regers zur frühen Atonalität Schönbergs – exemplifiziert anhand einer Analyse der 'Variationen fis-Moll Op. 73' von Max Reger,' (Examensarbeit, Hochschule für Musik Frankfurt a. M., 1990).

has indeed been a fascinating and rewarding project.³² Elements such as cathedral acoustics, mechanical or pneumatic actions and choice of tempi have underpinned this study. The second chapter presents a brief chronicle of Reger's life and organ *œuvre*, and of his profound friendship, complete trust and collaboration with Berliner performer Karl Straube leading to the creation of Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73. Chapters three and five reconcile intuition with research, as well as the tension of performance between traditional practices of Reger's own time and Reger's indirect contribution to developing, improving and expanding the art of organ building. In the fourth chapter, a musical analysis of Reger's harmonic language and variation technique in Op. 73 Variations is undertaken. The live performance in Canterbury Cathedral will be presented to the public in the same way as the composer required in his autographs.

Reger's commitment to perfection and his predilection for the production of a rich range of tone-colours spawned a complex simplicity whose magnitude contrasted his short life span. The final goal of this thesis is the reconciling of tuition with research and the tension of performance tradition practice of Reger's own time as well as his contribution to developing, improving and expanding the art of organ building.

Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian Reger's career, like his life, was exceptionally brief, and thus the 'complex simplicity' of his music and his achievement in sound become all the more remarkable. His devotion to producing a zenith of expression, endowed as he was with melodic fecundity and consummate dynamism, says all that one could wish to say, for it leaves the listening public in a state of intense enthusiasm.

³² For discography of Op. 73 see section III.

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Chapter 2

CHRONICLE OF COMPOSER'S LIFE AND THE GENESIS OF OP. 73

I. BRIEF CHRONICLE OF REGER'S LIFE AND COMPOSITIONS

Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian Reger (1873-1916), son of a school teacher and amateur musician, became adept at the variation technique through his duties as an organist at the Simultankirche in Weiden, which involved familiarising himself with the Lutheran chorale form, the art of improvisation and the various strophic forms, and ultimately discovering a treasure which he believed was overlooked by the Protestants.³³ The outcomes of this preoccupation were his well-known chorale fantasias and later the most important sets in the history of the Theme and Variation, his Op. 81 Bach Variations for piano and his Op. 73 Variations on an Original Theme. According to Lindner's biography of Reger —his first music teacher —Reger's variation technique was influenced by Riemann's approach to the treatment of the chorale. This approach meant that the chorale was not merely dealt with as a *cantus firmus*, but rather as an expressive means of unveiling the text.³⁴

Max Reger transcribed an astonishing number of works by J.S. Bach: 428 that we know of. This bears witness to Reger's profound, even obsessive, dependence on J.S. Bach. Through his music, J.S. Bach appeared to act as an essential consoler and companion for a composer who had been tormented in body and spirit by alcoholism and depression. These transcriptions first reveal both sides of J.S. Bach in Reger's own aspect of the chorale tunes: on the one hand, Bach, the ideal (and idealised) composer of contrapuntal instrumental works and on the other hand, Bach the composer of sacred vocal music. Despite his enthusiasm for Bach, the gulf between Reger and the past is evident in the importance he placed on counterpoint leading to

³³ Adalbert Lindner, *Max Reger: Ein Bild seines Jugendlebens und Künstlerischen Werdens* (Stuttgart: J. Engelhorn's Nachf, 1922), 25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

an intended dissonance that discomforts the listener (rather than the more traditional tension-release model). This discomfort seems clearly intentional in Reger's revolutionary compositional art. Reger manages to reveal his historicist modernism clearly by linking the techniques and compositional ideas of three composers, J.S. Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, whose variation techniques must have had a profound impact on the composer in such an important stage of his career.³⁵ Brief as Reger's life was, his oeuvre as a composer was exceptionally large and in it, his organ music of the years 1891–1904 holds pride of place.

At the dawn of the twentieth century the organ was firmly linked to the church and the various forms of liturgy. Reger came from a village in Catholic Bavaria, having Adalbert Lindner and Hugo Riemann for his teachers. Sadly, his works achieved little popularity before 1900, but in 1898 he was to make the acquaintance of the Berlin organist Karl Straube.³⁶ Both men were young, 25 years of age, and a novel friendship developed between them; a unique bond of composer and executant, almost like that between Beethoven and Czerny or between Franck and Tournamire —not contemporaries, though. Straube was an organist of ambition and believed that nineteenth-century music for organ was in ruin, and that Reger's demanding and technically challenging music could give impetus to his own career by showing off his technique and by underlining his own musicality. Their friendship and collaboration lasted until Reger's death in 1916 and Reger devoted most of his 1898-1903 works for organ to Straube's requirements as a concert organist and virtuoso.³⁷ Straube's part in Reger's music is equally important, for it was Straube who shed light on practical matters such as articulation,

³⁵ Walter Frisch, 'Reger's Bach and Historicist Modernism,' *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2-3: 298–299, 307. Reger wrote to Straube that his Bach Variations Op. 81 for piano was the best piece he ever wrote, (*ibid.*, 308, originally in Max Reger, *Max Reger: Briefe an Karl Straube*, ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn: Dümmler, 1986), 61, 63.

³⁶ Referring to the difficult years of Reger's severe alcoholism and depression, when he moved back to his parents' house. Reger started recovering from depression, when Straube showed admirable interest in Reger's organ compositions. As mentioned in the preface of Max Reger, *Sämtliche Orgelwerke* (Complete Organ Works), there was gradual improvement in his financial situation from 1902 with income from teaching and accompanying.

³⁷ In Wesel, Straube had to pay 1/10 of his salary to the church authorities to compensate for his organ practicing; the amount shows the number of daily practising time! This Sauer organ didn't possess electric blowers until 1912.(C. S. Anderson, 'Reger, Straube,' 53).

phrasing and pedalling; and who initially handed down a tradition and an aesthetic of performance practice for Reger's organ works. Both Reger and Straube taught at the Leipzig Conservatory. Reger was appointed professor of composition, harmony and counterpoint in 1903, while Straube was professor of organ from 1907.³⁸ In all their musical and social differences, the two young men were the objects of study by numerous contemporary observers.

For example, Gustav Tornow compares the two men:

The Bavarian [Reger is] a potent genius essentially related to his time only through music and the intimate experiences of youthful years filled with disappointment. The north German [Straube is] a scholarly intelligence, capable of every type of objective and logical thought; he is comprehensively educated, primarily as an historian, but not only with respect to art[...] Straube, who sees immediately the wealth of possibilities via experiment and reflection, is always struggling with his own self-criticism. Even with regard to accomplishments of great integrity, he is ready at the drop of a hat to reject all his work in favour of a new idea that suddenly suggests itself to his restless mind [...]³⁹

Almost a hundred years before Reger and Straube, the aesthetic boundaries defining interpretation were virtually preset performances: music had to be flexible in rhythm and emphasise the main melodic lines, laying principal weight on the expressive content. These were the characteristics of the typical products of the core repertoire of Brahms, Schumann or Franck.⁴⁰ Table 1 below sets the scenery of compositions at the dawn of the twentieth century.

³⁸ C.S. Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube: Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition*, (United States: Ashgate Aldershot 2003), 4.

³⁹ G.Tornow, *Max Reger und Karl Straube* (Göttingen: Otto Hapke, 1907), 24–25, translated by Anderson, in *Max Reger and Karl Straube: Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition*, 11.

⁴⁰ Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 1.

II. REGER AND STRAUBE

According to the 2012 Max Reger Institute [MRI] Carus edition, ‘Berliner Karl Straube was not only one of Reger’s closest friends, but he was also his most important adviser on artistic matters and on matters related to performance practice.’⁴¹ Reger occasionally discussed plans for compositions with him and together they searched for texts suitable for setting to music.’⁴² From the time Straube moved to Leipzig in 1907, Reger used to review manuscripts he was working on with Straube, and discuss recent works irrespective of their genre.

In the twenty-first century and with the aid of the principles of historically informed performance current practice is no longer tied to the aesthetic strings of Modernism.⁴³ There is a wide range of choice, musical styles and freedom of movement. ‘Historically Informed Performance’ is not so much an ‘aesthetic movement’ or a set of rules, as a ‘mode of interpretation.’⁴⁴ In an effort to deal with the numerous complications regarding the fidelity to Reger’s own interpretative indications, Danuser puts forward the ‘historically reconstructive mode’ in the context of describing the goals and practice methods of Historically Informed Performance (HIP).

⁴¹ Reger Hybrid-Edition, (Carus-Verlag: Stuttgart and Max-Reger-Institut: Karlsruhe, 2012), Carus 52.803. (Copy kindly offered by Max Reger Institute in Karlsruhe).

⁴² Susanne Popp and Thomas Seedorf, Max Reger: Werkausgabe MRI Carus edition: ‘Straube’s influence on Reger’s major organ works,’ 2012, p.33

⁴³ Hermann Danuser, ‘Musikalische Interpretation,’ 13–17. Also documented in Schwander, 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

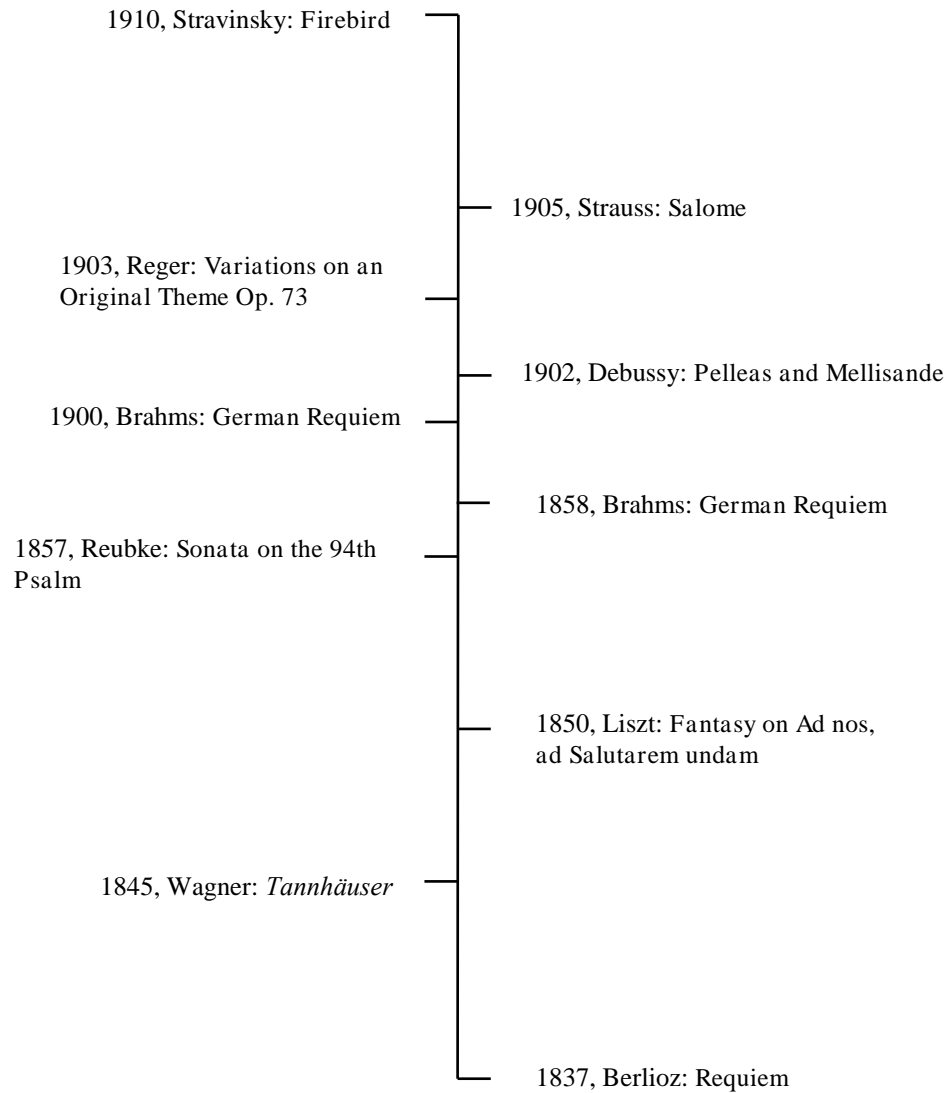


Figure 2.1: Indicative compositions in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century

The lack of information regarding the actual amount of influence of Straube on the final shape of Reger's work on such occasions has left much space for speculation. On the one hand, important parts of the relevant correspondence are missing, and on the other hand, discussions, at least from 1907, took place mainly in person.⁴⁵ Precisely because reliable statements by Reger or Straube on their direct circle are missing, the musical sources have a special

⁴⁵ Anderson, Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition, 99.

importance.⁴⁶ Straube was involved in at least the early stages of the composition of the Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73, in so far as he provided the impetus for this work and also suggested its form.⁴⁷ Susanne Popp assumes that changes and deletions in the original manuscript are owed to guidelines sent by letter from Reger to Straube on the 16th July 1904.⁴⁸

In his 1904 collection *Old Masters of Organ Playing*, and in his *Chorale Preludes by Old Masters*, Straube attempted to set out as much guidance for articulation and execution on the organ as he could.⁴⁹ (Straube's 1913 edition of *Bach Orgelwerke Band III* and the *School of Trio Playing on the 15 two-part Inventions by J.S.Bach*, transcribed by Max Reger and edited by Straube, are the only editions to preserve Straube's fingering and pedalling marks).⁵⁰ He does not of course ask every organist of any date to faithfully follow and copy all the indications he presents.⁵¹ We could claim that there is always the performer's freedom, space and own voice, and indisputable right to agree or oppose. Straube himself reported that he was very influenced by Bach's articulation in his vocal pieces and trio sonatas and constantly explored the possibilities of using it in organ polyphony:

In Bach's vocal pieces I found that articulation was for the most part already indicated by the individual relationship of each musical line to the text. How Bach here drew legato slurs over a syllable covering several notes, how he effected upbeat lines and syncopated accents through word division, this allowed me to draw various conclusions about the possibilities of articulation in Bach's organ polyphony.⁵²

⁴⁶ Of the major organ works composed between 1898 and 1900, Reger prepared two fair copies of each, one that was sent to Straube and the other served as the engraver's copy. The manuscript had a considerable number of entries by Straube and Reger, which were incorporated into the final version of the work (MRI, Carus edition, 2012, p. 33).

⁴⁷ MRI, Carus edition, 2012, 33.

⁴⁸ Reger to Straube, 16 July 1904, *Briefe an Karl Straube*, 60.

⁴⁹ Karl Straube, *Alte Meister des Orgelspiels* (first Edition of 1904 and revised edition of 1929) and Karl Straube, *Choralvorspiele Alter Meister* (*Choral Preludes of Old Masters*): Orgel. New York: C.F. Peters, 1907.

⁵⁰ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube: Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition*, 64, 111.

⁵¹ Karl Straube, *Alte Meister des Orgelspiels*, 1904. Documented in Anderson, *Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition*, 70, 165.

⁵² Karl Straube 1950, in *Karl Straube: Briefe eines Thomaskantors*, ed. Willibald Gurlitt and Hans-Olaf Hudemann (Stuttgart: Koehler, 1952), 87–88.

It is truly astonishing to the scholar of the twenty-first century how even accomplished contemporary organists interpret Reger today. The result is often frigid, perhaps even chaotic, unromantic and heartless. As a performer I continue to wonder if there is a single-correct way of performing Reger's Romantic music. Metronome markings, as Reger pointed out on several occasions, are not binding instructions. Numerous organists today faithfully follow Reger's markings, and the result is an excessive, chaotic and uncontrollable tempo, instead of a controlled rubato. A faithful rendering depends on personal desires, the composer's instinct, and the tendencies of the time: to perform any musical text presupposes making decisions, and requires frequent sacrifices, and knowledge and critical appreciation of the sources. As far as registration is concerned, a registration based on sharp Mixtures will always lead to a muddy sound with reduced clarity of inner voices both on the manuals and the pedals. An 'orchestral' registration strengthens the inner lines and sparingly brings in, first the Reeds and then the well-rounded Mixtures. This reinforces and points up the clear structure and texture of the piece, particularly in a majestic acoustic. Reger's maximum volume of sound is related only to the maximum dynamic of the organ at his time and the sound-palette, for the piece needs to be proportionate to the space and to the organ's specification. The word 'correct' falls with a dull thud and often leaves a false impression. Any performer-scholar has a duty to go back to whatever sources, diaries, critiques and articles there may be in the quest for knowledge about what people of that day thought and felt about music. The most important thing is to endeavour to catch the spirit of the age when the piece was composed; this perhaps could be the way for us to approach interpretation. Interpretation is the most obvious weak link in the concept of authenticity. For twentieth and twenty-first century performers in search of the original and authentic spirit, there is irony in the fact that Reger himself was more interested in previous editions of his last organ works. Up to the first decade of the twentieth century, and to the very end of his life in 1916, his Mitkomponist had to adjust the texts of the music to the needs of the

composer.⁵³ Straube took Reger's beliefs and wishes to heart. Straube's editions reflect concepts that do not belong exclusively to the composer, and this was something that Reger himself admitted in public, stating that he trusted Straube and followed him blindly.⁵⁴ Straube frequently referred to his close friendship with Reger, believing that his suggestions had found Reger's full support;⁵⁵ it seems that Reger was straightforwardly convinced by the strong-minded Straube. Furthermore Reger's unconventional personality led him to exaggerations and ambiguous statements and therefore there is difficulty in defining what his original intentions were.

III. HANS GEFFERT AND KARL STRAUBE AS INTERPRETERS OF REGER'S ORGAN MUSIC

Though, not himself a member of Straube's circle, Hans Geffert (1921–1990) shared the same attitude as Straube. As organist and organiser of Reger concerts at the Kreuzkirche, Geffert was a worthy disciple of the composer. He defended Reger's dynamic markings and annotations, and argued that the listener ought to take part in the act of performance.⁵⁶ He published articles in collaboration with Max Reger Institut in Bonn and co-organised a Max-Reger festival in 1973. Geffert insists that expressive and rhythmic elasticity seem essential for Reger's music and that they can most easily be achieved on an organ with modern aids and facilities linked to the technology of the times, but also on a plain neoclassical organ of perhaps smaller range.⁵⁷ Geffert laid great importance in being faithful to Reger's intentions and his contribution to the shaping of a Regerian performance is grounded on a highly personalized motive for an accurate and informed rendition of Reger's works; the issue of elasticity will be

⁵³ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 1–2.

⁵⁴ Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 8.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Hans Geffert, 'Zur Dynamik der Regerschen Orgelwerke,' in *Mitteilungen des Max-Reger-Institutes* 17 (1968): 2. Best documented and translated in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

documented in the performance practice chapter. Moreover, he kept up a friendship with the composer's widow, Elsa and the director of MRI in Bonn.⁵⁸ He performed almost all major Reger organ works. His son, Johannes Geffert, Head of the Organ Department at Cologne Musikhochschule, is an advocate of Reger's romantic performing tradition and assisted in all the concert series in the Kreuzkirche, Bonn.

Wolfgang Stockmeier's essay for the Reger Centenary casts light on numerous details of Reger's annotations, tempo markings and dynamic indications.⁵⁹ Stockmeier is not in agreement with some of Straube's opinions; he maintains, for instance, that by paying too much attention to detail, Straube veered from the gist of Reger's music.⁶⁰ For Stockmeier, Straube's approach to Reger's work is sometimes problematic resulting from his focusing on a plethora of details that ultimately conceal the overall framework, or the modification of the traditional registration which established a distorted recording tradition.⁶¹

Nevertheless, Straube represents a reference point in the performance history of Reger's organ compositions, in terms of information and historical details about the late Romantic period and the performance of organ music in general. However, Hermann Busch opposes the authoritative nature of Straube's interpretations and advocates their significance as a general Reger-style guide. He goes on to invoke the performer's understanding and intuition, where Straube's and Reger's interpretation seem to clash.⁶²

It was only to be expected that there would be variations and difficulties in the tradition and style of interpreting Reger's works. This is a phenomenon common to many periods and domains of musical performance.⁶³ In 1910, when addressing the Annual General Meeting of

⁵⁸ Personal interview in 2012 with his son, Johannes Geffert, Head of Church Music at Cologne Hochschule.

⁵⁹ Best documented and translated in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 12. Original Source by Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' 21–29.

⁶⁰ Schwander, 13 and Stockmeier, 24.

⁶¹ Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube,' 22, 24.

⁶² Hermann J. Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers* (Wiesbaden:Merseburger, 2007), 51–63.

⁶³ R.U Nelson, *The technique of variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), 90.

Organists in Westphalia, Walter Fischer gave some practical advice about playing Reger's organ music.⁶⁴ Fischer once more praises Straube's ideal of performing and registering/orchestrating ability, having the following to say about complex registrations:

[T]he guiding principle in the art of registering Reger is simplicity. We have admired this in the playing of the distinguished Leipzig Professor Karl Straube. How simply and grandly was everything presented! How completely free from pretentious display and so-called registration tricks! How completely clear was the complicated fugue in the Fantasy on 'Hallelujah, Gott zu loben bleibe meine Seelenfreud' [op. 52/3]! [...] Basically, Reger's registrations are very simple: a tender string-based pianissimo registration (Ged.8', Aeolian 8', Viola 4' and corresponding Pedal); a penetrating 8' stop; a sonorous principal-based mezzoforte; a well-made crescendo to full organ, and a few 'marcato' stops in fortissimo passages will in essence deal with the whole of Reger.⁶⁵

Straube's acceptance of the new movement towards 'objectivity' seems to have been rather sudden. From 1920 onwards, he pursued romantic interpretations of Bach and Reger. Whereas Karl Matthaei was a faithful follower of the Romantic aesthetic, Helmut Walcha rejected it, along with all Reger's compositions.⁶⁶ The beginnings of the movement known as *Orgelbewegung* was founded on the difference between the classical organ sound and the modern organ sound, a theoretical position which also held fast in composition.⁶⁷ Techniques are borrowed from the past without necessarily any attempt to revive the past itself; and all this in an age of socio-political, cultural and aesthetic chaos. For the more conventional Matthaei, his notion of availability and use of the crescendo pedal, as a primary factor for authentic performance for this kind of music, seemed abandoned because of the German Organ Reform

⁶⁴ Walter Fischer, 'Über die Wiedergabe der Orgel - Kompositionen Max Regers,' in Vortrag *für* die Generalversammlung *Westfälischer* Organisten zu Dortmund im Mai 1910 (Cologne:Tischer und Jagenberg, 1910, 10-11 (Best documented in Anderson, Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition, pp. 110f and in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 16). Anderson in his 'Walter Fischer's Comments on the Playing of Reger's Organ Music,' *The Organ Yearbook* 25 (1995), 123-136, refers to Fischer's comment concerning 'marcato stops' explaining that Fischer implied 'marcato stops' more about registration than about articulation.

⁶⁵ Fischer, 10-11, and Anderson pp.110f.

⁶⁶ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 163.

⁶⁷ Around the time of 1930 Modernist interpretation resulted in a non mechanical interpretation and rubato happened in both hands simultaneously.

Movement. However both Keller and Matthaei provided information for a correct rendition and practising technique of Reger's works. Keller mistrusted the contemporary practice of adhering to the excessive tempo markings and provided important information and analysis of Op. 73; Matthaei focused on the issue of the dynamic indications, and has contributed significantly to the matter; he also gave the premiere of Reger's *Fantasia and Fugue in D minor* Op. 135b in the Markuskirche Stuttgart; this was Reger's last organ piece and the world premiere took place on 7 June 1916, after the composer's death. He had, by contrast, useful suggestions to make about linking up dynamic markings and about the use of the crescendo pedal [*Rollschweller*] at a given moment when crescendo and diminuendo favour its use.⁶⁸

IV. DYNAMIC AND RHYTHMIC INDICATIONS

For German romantic organs it is normal for dynamic markings and instructions for the use of registration to be made clear, and these are achieved by the use of the German crescendo pedal, which, we should note, can be prepared in advance of a performance, depending on what kind of crescendo the performer wants. If the same piece is played on a neoclassical organ or an instrument of a period other than the German late Romantic, without the aid of prepared memories, stops and a crescendo pedal, then when the performer finds an indication such as '*alle Register im III Manual*', 'Almost all Stops on Manual Three'—as it is indicated on bar 36 towards the end of the Introduction to Op. 73, or at the end of the twelfth Variation — she or he needs to be especially careful about balancing the registration and keeping the movement of the tone-colour going at a very simple level. To return to the significance of rhythmic indications in Reger's organ works, the danger that confronts performers is that if they follow

⁶⁸ Documented in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 16. Original source by Karl Matthaei, *Vom Orgelspiel: eine kurzgefasste Würdigung der künstlerisch orgelgemässen Interpretationsweise und ihrer klanglichen Ausdrucksmittel*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1949), 256.

a strict metronome tempo, they are as a rule driven to extremes of stodginess and monotony.

Reger's organ music is tightly bound with rhythm and variation of sound. This is especially true of the Op. 73 Variations. A crescendo is always accompanied by an *accelerando*, and vice versa, as Reger's mentor, Hugo Riemann observed. The priorities here are forward movement, emphasis on upbeat phrasing patterns, flexibility and clarity. Imperceptible details of the characteristic movement of the parts need particular caution. Thus what the music calls for is a fairly free treatment of rhythm so as to ensure an elastic transition from quavers to triplet quavers, and from triplet quavers to hemidemisemi-quavers.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Idea documented in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 26.

Chapter 3

THE WORLD OF THE ORGANS IN 1900s

I. MAX REGER'S FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ORGAN CONSULTANCY

The evolution of organ building in the nineteenth and early 20 century in Britain, France, and Germany transformed the organ from a type that was admired by Bach to an instrument tonally and mechanically able to meet the standards of the complex symphonic-organ music of Max Reger, a transformation that mirrored the emancipation of the arts from the mandates of classicism. Tone-colour became an indispensable device equal to the use of dynamics in an effort to augment the expressive arsenal, vent raw passion and create dramatic effect. Moreover, industrialism and imperialism supported a technological and population boom during this period. The vastly increased production of iron and coal in combination with the influx of the German population to new urban centers marked a steep rise in the production of organs. Between 1853 and 1863, Bechstein had produced 400 pianos and by 1913 production had leapt to 5000 annually.⁷⁰ The industrial and mechanised organ-building firms of the next generation did far better. The Walcker firm produced 1000 organs within 81 years commencing in 1821; Steinmeyer reached opus 1000 in 61 years commencing in 1848, and the same milestone was reached by Sauer in 50 years commencing in 1857.⁷¹

Nearly thirty years after this incessantly ascending development, Lindner reports in his biography about the young Max Reger's first encounters with the organ and about his father's influence on Reger's knowledge of organ building:⁷² Lindner describes the fervour with which the Regers, father and son, transformed the old decommissioned organ of the Royal Preparatory school into a perfectly working house organ for the practicing needs of the young Reger. He

⁷⁰ Bruce Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846–1902' (lecture St. Johns College, Cambridge, July 1993), 3.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Lindner: Max Reger, 36 (translated by Alexandra Tsakona). Documented in Hermann Busch, 'Die Orgelwelt Max Regers,' 6

goes on to assert that this procedure served as the basis of Reger's deep knowledge of organ building.⁷³

The old Preparatory School organ seemed to be the most important organ in Reger's primary organ tuition, although it seemed like half organ, half harmonium.⁷⁴ Firstly, father and son Reger had worked towards the 'rebuild' of the organ-harmonium instrument together. Secondly, Reger attempted on this instrument his first pedal steps and studied the manualiter and easy pedal works of the Old Masters, Pachelbel and Bach. What followed this Preparatory School old organ was a Steinmeyer instrument (op. 251), on which Reger had practised as a school pupil since 1886. This organ possessed a mechanical action over Gedeckt 8' and Salicional 8' in the manuals and Bourdon Bass 16' including pedal coupler (master of organbuilding F. Steinmeyer, Oettingen, 23.3.1981).⁷⁵

Organs surviving from that period typically possess heavy action and unequal manual touch, probably due to the difficulties presented by the high wind pressure; these undesirable features became more complicated as numbers of manuals and stops increased. Aldabert Lindner, Reger's first teacher and early mentor, stressed that his young pupil could demonstrate his organ qualities in public despite the challenges that the mechanical organ presented him with. Heavy tracker action due to the difficulty of excessive wind pressures seemed to be a common fear amongst organists, but Reger had possessed a confident effortless manual and pedal technique from his early school years. Reger occasionally deputized for Aldabert Lindner on the old organ of Michaeliskirche in Weiden, rebuilt in 1848 with slider chests. Lindner reveals that he had to assist Reger during Sunday and holiday services in registering at some critical points in order to overcome certain technical difficulties concerning the organ in

⁷³ Lindner: Max Reger, 36 (translated by Alexandra Tsakona).

⁷⁴ Busch, Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers, 6 (translated by Alexandra Tsakona). Original source by Ernst Stark, 'Reger's Hausorgel,' in Mitteilungen des Max Reger-Gesellschaft 3, (1923): 9.

⁷⁵ Busch, Zur Interpretation, 7.

Reger's home-town church.⁷⁶ Lindner also explained that his pupil's engagement with Wagner's tone world lifted his honed-to-perfection improvisatory skills to a new unprecedented level of chromaticism, dissonance and tone-colour, challenging the technical limits of his old-bellows organ.⁷⁷

II. THE THIRD PRACTICE ORGAN IN REGER'S STUDENT LIFE IN WIESBADEN 1890–1898

Following these first very important three years of organ lessons as school pupil, Reger started his studies in earnest spring 1890 under Hugo Riemann who taught him the piano, organ and composition at Fürstlichen Konservatorium, Sonderhausen in Thüringen. Reger served as a student in Wiesbaden Conservatoire between 1890-93 and then as a teacher until 1898. According to Lindner, Riemann used an organ with a small stop list as a practicing instrument.⁷⁸ (See table 3.1).

It is likely that Reger absorbed many fundamental ideas from the organist of the Wiesbadener Marktkirche, Adolph Wald, and from his instrument, the specification of which is given below in Table 3.2. Reger practiced on the 53-stop and 3-manual organ of Marktkirche during his student years. The pedal was too narrow, but what grows inevitable importance was its crescendo pedal device.⁷⁹ This proved to be the first truly inspirational instrument for Reger, especially for his large Chorale Fantasies and hatched the idea of a symphonic sound in his organ compositions. This special instrument was built in 1863 by Eberhard Friedrich Walcker, and it had a mechanical action.⁸⁰ There have been discussions about the existing stop-control

⁷⁶ Adalbert Lindner, *Max Reger: ein Bild seines Jugendlebens und künstlerischen Werdens* (Stuttgart: J. Engelhorn's Nachf., 1922), 36 (Reger rarely played the organ after 1898). Also documented in Busch, 8.

⁷⁷ Best documented in Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 8. (Original Source: Lindner, *Max Reger*, 37).

⁷⁸ Lindner, *Max Reger*, 65.

⁷⁹ Peter Palmer, 'Reger and the Organ: A 125th Birthday Offering,' *The Organist's Review* (November 1998): 302

⁸⁰ Best documented in Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 9.

devices (playing aids), their functions and their practical and musical significance in relation to Reger's compositions.⁸¹ As it is presented in the Preface of Breitkopf Editions, Reger's conception of the organ's sound was undoubtedly influenced by this particular instrument; Adalbert Lindner stated, 'Reger unabashedly repeatedly expressed his enthusiasm for modern organs with their devices for obtaining the fastest and most intense dynamic contrast effects.'⁸²

Table 3.1: The specification of Reger's third practice organ in Sonderhausen

HAUPTWERK		SCHWELLWERK	
Quintatön	16'	Lieulich Gedackt	16'
Bordun	16'	Geigen prinzipal	16'
Prinzipal	8'	Lieulich Gedackt	8'
Hohlflöte	8'	Flauto traverso	8'
Gedackt	8'	Salizional	8'
Gamba	8'	Fugara	8'
Oktave	4'	Zartflöte	4'
Portunalflöte	4'	Spitzflötenquinte	4'
Quinte	2 ² / ₃ '	Oktave	2 ² / ₃ '
Oktave	2'	Oboe	2'
Mixtur 5fach	1 ¹ / ₃ '		
Cymbel 3fach	1'		
Trompete	8'		
PEDAL			
Principalbaß	16'		
Violon	16'		
Subbaß	16'		
Quintenbaß	10 ² / ₃ '		
Oktavenbaß	8'		
Violon	8'		
Gedacktbaß	8'		
Oktavenbaß	4'		
Posaune	16'		
Couplers: II/I, I/P; Mechanical Action			

Walcker reports that the four foot-pistons facilitated the change of registration during performance relieving the hands of the pulling of individual stops. He goes on to advocate

⁸¹ Hermann Busch, 'Max Reger und die Orgel seiner Zeit,' 64-67. Busch states that Reger's registration indications in the Phantasie über den Choral 'Ein' feste Burg ist inser Gott' Op. 27 might have derived from the Wiesbaden Marktkirche organ .

⁸² Lindner, Max Reger, 208.

that his contrived aid to crescendo and decrescendo constitute the basic elements of an unrivaled instrument.⁸³

The organ in Marktkirche was the decisive foundation of creativity for Reger regarding his colossal works, even after he left Wiesbaden. In 1900 the action was pneumatised by the Walcker firm and in 1929, the Wilhelm Sauer firm did a fundamental conversion giving the organ an electrical action and a considerably changed disposition with 69 speaking stops that spread on four manuals;⁸⁴ in 1939, the Walcker firm reconstructed the organ according to the Organ Reform Movement.⁸⁵

Table 3.2: The specification of Wiesbadener organ in Marktkirche rebuilt by Walcker in 1863

I. MANUAL C-f ³		II. MANUAL C-f ³		III. MANUAL C-f ³ (im Schweller)		PEDAL C-d ¹	
Principal	16'	Gedackt	16'	Geiger	8'	Grand	32'
Bourdon	16'	Principal	8'	principal		Bourdon	
Principal	8'	Flöte	8'	Gedackt	8'	Principalbaß	16'
Gedackt	8'	Gedackt	8'	Dolce	8'	Violonbaß	16'
Doppelflöte	8'	Salicional	8'	Aeoline	8'	Subbaß	16'
Viola di	8'	Octav	4'	Traverslöte	4'	Quintbaß	10 ² / ₃ '
Gamba				Spitzflöte	4'	Octavbaß	8'
Gemshorn	8'	Flüte d'amour	4'	Waldflöte	2'	Violoncell	8'
Quint	5 ¹ / ₃ '	Rohrflöte	4'	Fagott/Oboe	8'	Gedacktkbaß	8'
Oktav	4'	Quint	2'			Aeoline	8'
Flöte	4'	Octav	2 ² / ₃ '			Flötenbaß	4'
Salicional	4'	Mixtur 4fach	2'			Posaunenbaß	16'
Quint	2 ² / ₃ '	Corno	8'			Trompete	8'
Octave	2'	Vox humana	8'			Cornettino	4'
Mixtur 5fach	2'	(Tremolo zur Voxhumana)				Couplers	
Scharff 3fach	1'					II/I, III/I, III/II, I/P, II/P	
Fagott	16'						
Trompete	8'						
Clarinet	8'						
Clarino	4'						

⁸³ Werner Walcker-Meyer, 'Die Orgel der Reger-Zeit,' in Max Reger 1873–1973, Ein Symposium, ed. Klaus Röhrling, 31-54 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1974), 35, translated by Alexandra Tsakona for personal reference.

⁸⁴ Busch, Zur Interpretation, 10.

⁸⁵ Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846–1902,' 13-20. (The Marktkirche Organ has been rebuilt several times since then and only 20 of the original ranks remain). Also documented in Busch, Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers, 10.

III. SAUER FIRM AND THE FIRST CONNECTION WITH REGER-STRAUBE

Heinrich Reimann, the director of the famous organ firm Wilhelm Sauer, stood ‘on top of the whole art of organ building of our time’ (late nineteenth and early twentieth century).⁸⁶ In 1895, Reimann accepted a post as an organist at the newly erected Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Church and its Sauer Organ (op. 660, IV/80). Karl Straube, his student, became his successor.⁸⁷ Some months before Straube’s appointment, Wilhelm Sauer had finished an organ of the same size in Willibrordi Cathedral in Wesel, as shown in the organ specification of Table 3.3, where Straube became the organist on 1st June 1897, one year before his first meeting with Reger. In the following five years, Straube played the majority of Reger’s large organ works on this instrument, including the premieres of Op. 27, 29, 30, 40 No.1, 46 and 52 No.1.⁸⁸ (See chronology of organ works after chapter 6).

⁸⁶ Hermann Busch, ‘Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusic Max Regers’, 12.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Table 3.3: The specification of Willibrordi Cathedral organ in Wesel built by Sauer firm

I. MANUAL C-f ³		II. MANUAL C-f ³		III. MANUAL C-f ³ (Schwellwerk)		PEDAL C-d ¹	
Principal	16'	Geigen principal	16'	Salicional	16'	Contrabaß	32'
Bordun	16'	Bordun	16'	Liebl. Gedackt	16'	Untersatz	32'
Gamba	16'	Principal	16'	Principal	8'	Principal	16'
Principal	8'	Rohrflöte	8'	Konzertflöte	8'	Violon	16'
Hohlflöte	8'	Salicional	8'	Schalmei	8'	Subbaß	16'
Viola di Gamba	8'	Flûte harmonique	8'	Liebl. Gedackt	8'	Gemshorn	16'
Doppelflöte	8'	Spitzflöte	8'	Aeoline	8'	Baßflöte	16'
Gemshorn	8'	Harmonika	8'	Voix celeste	8'	Quintbaß	10 ² / ₃ '
Traversflöte	8'	Gedackt	8'	Dulciana	8'	Oktavbaß	8'
Quintatön	8'	Dolce	8'	Praestant	4'	Violoncello	8'
Geigen principal	8'	Octave	4'	Traversflöte	4'	Gedackt	8'
Gecackt	8'	Flöte	4'	Violine	4'	Viola d'amour	8'
Quinte	5 ¹ / ₃	Gemshorn	4'	Gemshornquinte	2 ² / ₃ '	Flöte	4'
Octave	4'	Flauto dolce	4'	Flautino	4'	Cornett 3fach	
Spitzflöte	4'	Rauschquinte	2 ² / ₃ , 2'	Harm. aetherea 3fach		Contraposaune	32'
Fugara	4'	Mixtur 4fach	2'	Clarinetten	8'	Posaune	16'
Rohrflöte	4'	Cornett 4fach	4'	Vox humana	8'	Trompete	8'
Piccolo	2'	Fagott	16'			Clairon	4'
Rauschquinte	2 ² / ₃ , 2'	Tuba	8'				
Groß-Cymbel	2 ² / ₇ , 2'	Oboe	8'				
Mixtur 5fach							
Scharf 5fach							
Cornett 3-5fach	3- 2 ² / ₃ '						
Trompete	16'						
Trompete	8'						

The organ had been built inside the old casework of 1645 with pneumatic action for two manuals and pedal, as well as mechanical action for manual III and the recital series by Straube

was exceptionally important, being the premiere performance of Reger's organ music on his native soil.⁸⁹

IV. THE SAUER FIRM

From 1890 onwards, the organ-building firm of Sauer began adopting new techniques such as pneumatic action and ancillary pistons for changes of registration.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the organ built by Sauer for the Willibrordi Cathedral at Wesel, in 1896, was markedly conservative. Not only was this swell division entirely mechanical, but there were no free combination pistons for preparing complex registrations and the air was supplied manually. The keyboard range only went up to f³ and the pedal range only up to d¹. This limitation would pose no additional problem in performing even the largest-scale organ works of Reger; his organ music was written for the centre of the keyboard and went above f³ only once, in the Chorale Fantasia *Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme*, Op. 52/2, where he asks for f³# and g³#.⁹¹

Choosing the right tempo on this organ would not have been easy, given that it has tracker action on Manual III and pneumatic action on the other manuals. Tracker action generally makes the choice of a quick tempo more difficult, but the gradation of tone via the finger-articulation, is more accurate and natural, and suitable for the diatonic intervals and rigorous coherence of the third manual. Straube's preference for restrained tempi was mainly due to the features of organs at the time; an excessively quick tempo would have sounded weird and the result would have been anything but crystal-clear, owing to the character of the organ's

⁸⁹ According to Karl Dreimüller, 'Karl Straube Sauer-Orgel in Wesel,' in *Studien zur Musikgeschichte des Rheinlandes II: Karl Gustav Fellerer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Herbert Drux, Klaus Wolfgang Niemöller and Walter Thoene, 55-70. *Beiträge zur rheinischen Musikgeschichte* no. 52. Cologne: Arno Volk, 1962), 69; specification and combinations according to: *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau* (Journal for the building of instruments); Amended description by Busch, 'Max Reger und die Orgel seiner Zeit,' 67.

⁹⁰ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 63-68.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

pneumatic transmission.⁹² Straube's choice of tempo was a matter of selecting the right registration to go with Reger's harmonic language. In particular, with the Organo Pleno on a Sauer instrument, heavy chords and harmonically complex passages would have sounded muddy in the reverberant acoustics of the building if a quick speed was chosen.⁹³

Unfortunately, some important organs of the time, such as the instrument of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Church in Berlin, the cathedral organ at Wesel, the Sauer organs at the Alte Garnisonkirche in Berlin—where Fischer firstly performed the premiere of Op. 73—and the Walcker-Sauer organ at the former Leipzig Conservatory, were destroyed during the Second World War. As a result, we are unable to have direct access to the organs Reger used during this crucial period, and must resort to other research methods to find answers about issues of performance. The extant indications related to the use of light or heavy registration, as written by Reger on the initial score, probably echo Straube's approach to performance. When the organ of St Thomas Church in Leipzig was restored in 1908, not only was a new console provided but also the following stops were added: an independent Octave 2' on Manual I, a low 3 1/5 Mixture, 16' and 8' Principals on the Pedal, and new heavy reeds on Manuals II and III. The full complement is thus 88 stops, contained in only three manuals. It is worth noting that on German organs of that time Manual I was not the Positiv but the Hauptwerk or G.O., as it was regarded as the main keyboard. If a fourth manual had been added to the St Thomas organ, then stops would have had to have been taken out of the other manual departments in order to make up its number.⁹⁴ There seems to be a certain number of stops for each manual and generally for every organ in an important analogy with the church's surface area, the manual compass and the wind pressure.⁹⁵ At an average of 22 stops for each manual

⁹² Wolfgang Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' 23-24.

⁹³ Organo Pleno: Full Organ otherwise, or simply Tutti.

⁹⁴ Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902,' 16.

⁹⁵ As German organ-builders began to build larger, more 'romantic' instruments, the number of the ranks required increased anyway, regardless of the size of the buildings they were in. This is because many imitative ranks were added, instead of the ones that would build up the plenum on a 'classical' instrument.

with the addition of a fourth manual, the manuals would have had approximately only 16 stops each. There are 59 manual flue ranks, of which 47 per cent are at 8', and 18 pedal flue stops, of which 39 per cent are 16'. Every department, from manual to pedal, has an open and a closed double 16' on the manuals and a 32' on the pedals.⁹⁶ The successful build, or rather rebuild, by Wilhelm Sauer, who died in the same year as Reger in 1916, opened the way to the dynamics required in Reger's works, by making them look reasonable and indispensable. The 1889 St. Thomas Sauer organ, after its enlargement in 1908 under Straube's instructions, had 11 reeds. In general the foundation stops represent a tone base of the registration and the remaining 4ft, 2ft and mixture stops are strengthening-enriching the 8ft and 16ft harmonics German manual reeds were used for colouring a forte or fortissimo passage more than building it up.⁹⁷

For large-scale organs such as the ones at St Thomas Church in Berlin, or the cathedral in Wesel, the Sauer firm used a state-of-the-art mechanism known as a Rollschweller (or Walze); other terms for it were General Crescendo and Crescendo Pedal. This was effectively a wheel, at least at the start of the twentieth century; a cylindrical piece of machinery operated by the player's foot and providing small successive additions of stops.⁹⁸ The smoothness of the increase or decrease of stops depended on the individual organ-builder and also, of course, on the way the performer managed the wheel. By using this mechanism every registration would of course be similar, in as much as it would have the same predetermined crescendo and diminuendo. In some examples the Walze was duplicated by a wheel or lever on the console, which could be turned on or off by the assistant.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902,' 15-16.

⁹⁷ Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902,' 23.

⁹⁸ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 94-97.

⁹⁹ The register crescendo mechanism was probably invented in 1839 by the German organ builder E.F. Walcker (Walcker-Meyer, 'Die Orgel der Reger-Zeit,' 31-54; see also Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition of organ pedagogy,' 44). The whole idea goes back to the performances of Abbé Vogler, who used the organ to imitate an orchestra crescendo and diminuendo (documented in Michael Schneider, *Die Orgelspieltechnik des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland, dargestellt an den Orgelschulen der Zeit* (Regensburg: G. Bosse, 1941), 56, Anderson, *ibid.*

In all of Reger's organ music there is only a single crescendo pedal marking, in bar 20 and the similar phrases in the Choral Fantasy Op. 52/2, where he more often preferred the *Walze* instead of crescendo markings. Straube, when interpreting Reger's organ works as a performer, played on baroque or classical organs, without the use of the *Rollschweller*.¹⁰⁰ The fact that he chose to play Reger on the classical organ is evidence that the Romantic palette of orchestral colours or for the extended dynamic of an orchestra of gradual range is not essential to perform Reger's organ music successfully. The kind of stops used by Straube, are preserved not from acoustic sources, but his edition of *Alte Meister*. In his 1904 preface of the first volume of *Alte Meister*, Straube wrote about modern performances of 'old masters', referring to a colour chord, *Farbenakkord*, as an explanation of the music. Reger's registration indications frequently designate the contrast of light and dark colours. And it is in the terms of tone colour that one can make the best sense of the idea of the 'German organ', as it was known to Reger.¹⁰¹

a. Organ of the Leipzig Conservatory (1887, 1909 and 1927) by Walcker-Sauer

The Leipzig Conservatory is an important component in the careers of both Straube and Reger. The oldest of the Walcker firm's organs at the Conservatory, dating from 1887, was rebuilt in 1909 and extended by the Sauer firm in 1927, when mechanical cone chests and a pneumatic mechanism for Manual I (*Hauptwerk*) were added.¹⁰² Even in the 1909 extension, several of the Walcker pipes were retained; the rebuilt organ consisted of 53 speaking stops, six free combinations and a new Cornet on the *Hauptwerk*; the *Ruckpositiv* was replaced by the Quintbass $5 \frac{1}{3}$ and a two-rank *Rauschquinte* $2 \frac{2}{3}$ (two ranks), with the Cornet on the *Ruckpositiv* being turned into a three-rank Mixture.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Bernhard Haas, 'Regers Werktexte als Interpretationsansatz,' 37-38, translated by Gerasimos Katsiris.

¹⁰¹ Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902,' 25.

¹⁰² Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 220.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 229. Generally, the introduction of non-mechanical actions seems to have occurred at the same rate as it did in United Kingdom. As Buchanan mentions in his lecture, Walcker first used a form of Barker lever at

Reger was appointed Professor of composition in 1903 at Leipzig Conservatory and Straube Professor of organ in 1907.¹⁰⁴ There one could see the dawn of a new interpretative tradition. There were new performers, and a new intake of Straube pupils at the Leipzig Conservatory, the 1909-1927 generation, which included names such as Hermann Keller and Karl Matthaei in the 1920s.¹⁰⁵

V. REGER'S MUNICH PERIOD 1901-1907

Reger's monumental organ compositions were created between 1901 and 1907, whilst he was in Munich. After Joseph Reger's retirement, the Reger family moved to Munich for the benefit of Max Reger's performing and composing career. His earlier depression and alcoholism had been virtually 'cured' since he met Straube and since he became financially independent from his teaching and accompaniment work.¹⁰⁶ After a long period of inactivity at Weiden, Reger wrote to Theodore Kroyder on 1 November 1902, saying that he was availed of the opportunity to play in the Catholic Johanniskirche in Haidhausen in a couple of instances, but he was denied any further performances as they would be uncondusive to people's concentration.¹⁰⁷ Loud practicing of Reger's organ music—related to a continuous crescendo is a common problem amongst daily organists' practicing in churches and halls, while venues are busy due to tours

Ulm Cathedral in 1852, and a tubular pneumatic system in 1889. Ladegast first used a Baker lever at St Nicholas Leipzig in 1857 and a tubular system in 1891. This means that the large organs built in the 1830s and 1940s were hard-going tracker action (Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ,' 16-17).

¹⁰⁴ Bruce Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902,' 15. It seems that the break between Reger and Professor Riemann occurred at the period when Reger was appointed Professor of Organ at the University (Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 247, 26f.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson: Max Reger and Karl Straube, 203.

¹⁰⁶ The Weiden-period was a very difficult and unhappy time for Reger, as his heavy drinking problem along with the depression made him very ill. He went back to live with his parents for that period.

¹⁰⁷ Best documented in: Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 14. (Original Source: Helmut Niemann, 'Max Reger in München,' in: *Max Reger zum 50. Todestag. Eine Gedenkschrift*, ed. Ottmar Schreiber (Bonn: Dümmler, 1966), 120.

or praying. The organ of Johanniskirche, built by the Munich church organ-building firm of Maerz, was replaced with a brand-new organ in 1965.¹⁰⁸

Reger continued to seek new and exciting opportunities to perform the organ. On 7 March 1903 he tried out a newly-built organ in Weiden, at what had been known as the Simultankirche until 1901, when it became the Evangelical Church of St. Michael (Michaeliskirche).¹⁰⁹ During the summer of 1907, Reger played the concert in Kohlberg Cathedral, where he gained the admiration of Georg Sbach when he improvised the Introduction and Passacaglia.¹¹⁰

Because of the fact that Reger could not practise daily due to lack of time, every newly introduced organ posed a challenge to him playing his own works. Furthermore, it is important to consider that the acoustic potential of symphonic organs via their gradation of tone-colour and dynamics might have shaped Reger's view about the ways he expected his organ pieces to sound. It might also be considered that some of these instruments required Reger's approval as a consultant-seeker of new sounds, and an adventurous, introvert organ composer, who showed himself in these circumstances, still quite able to try these instruments, even though his practice time was incredibly limited.¹¹¹ Although Reger seemed to express his disapproval towards small-scale organs, every instrument that he practised on, or expressed interest in, and approved of could play a role in decoding elements and combinations in the composer's registration decisions of his own organ music.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 14.

¹⁰⁹ Best documented in Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 14.

¹¹⁰ Peter Palmer, 'Reger and the Organ: A 125th Birthday Offering,' *The Organist's Review* (November 1998): 303

¹¹¹ Elsa Reger, *Mein Leben mit und für Max Reger: Erinnerungen* (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1930), 39.

¹¹² Reger wrote to Straube about the Schützenhaus organ in Meiningen: 'The organ [...] is small according to our standards [...] For my BACH the organ is barely *adequate*' (Documented in Bernhard Haas, 'Regers Werktexte als Interpretationsansatz,' 40, translated by Gerasimos Katsiris).

VI. REGER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ART OF ORGAN BUILDING AND THE ROLE OF SAUER ORGANS AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

During his four-year residence in Leipzig, Reger maintained close contact with Straube. Straube's fame and prestige as an organist enabled him to claim and acquire a number of privileges when he was invited to succeed Heinrich Reimann in 1905 at the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche in Berlin, in the wake of Reimann's death. Amongst these privileges was the requirement that the instrument in the Thomaskirche be rebuilt and extended, and the membership at the Bachverein, the Bach society of which Straube was at that time the chairman, be mandatory for all Cantors of the Thomaskirche. Furthermore, he requested that his salary be raised by 5,000 marks per annum, and that he be awarded the title of the Professor. He thus succeeded in being the first non-composer Cantor of the church, whose committee proclaimed that 'Straube [was] one of the great living executants in the world.'¹¹³ The fact that Straube was the first non composer Cantor could be indicative of the shift away from the composer-performer paradigm that dominated organ life for centuries. He practiced and performed a vast quantity of music on the Sauer Organs of Wesel and Leipzig.

The Sauer organ at the Thomaskirche was reconstructed to meet Straube's specifications and when it was finished in 1908 it possessed most of the desiderata for the technical and expressive rendition of Reger's organ works. In July 1908, Straube was conferred on the title of Professor by the government of Saxony.¹¹⁴

On 17 September 1908, Straube wrote in his official report that as a whole the new organ retained the previous homogeneity (Geschlossenheit) but rendered a broader sound, thus endowing the Thomaskirche of Leipzig with a worthy instrument.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Best documented in Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 17. (Original Source: Held, *Wirken und Wirkung*, 140.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Held, *Wirken und Wirkung*, 141. Also documented in Busch, 17.

The organ, built by Wilhelm Sauer, had 63 stops on three manuals.¹¹⁶ The same firm rebuilt it in 1902, replacing tracker action with pneumatic action and adding another two stops (see specification in Table 3.4 representing the state of the instrument before 1902 and Appendix I for the subsequent rebuilt of 1902). The work done according to Straube's specifications brought in 23 new stops and an extension of the manuals from f³ to a³.

Even if Reger, as a composer, did not have the newly created St Thomas organ in mind, the instrument's specifications can be attributed to him, because Straube's editions of Reger's organ works were based on that instrument. Moreover, the St Thomas organ, as shown in its specification in Table 3.4, has become one of the few genuinely unaltered large Sauer instruments, and recordings on it can be regarded as largely authentic. The history of Reger's organ music is inseparable from the history of his organs, their playing aids and stop-lists. It is worth noting that since the last decades of twentieth century organs, whenever there is a crescendo pedal fitted, it can be adjusted via the builder, or even the organist. So if there are three crescendo indications on the screen like A, B and C, a recitalist may adjust to be 'Romantic,' 'Classical' or 'Baroque-type' Crescendos accordingly.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ As it was mentioned earlier on, German manual chorus reeds were used more for colouring a forte or fortissimo passage rather than adding volume and depth in to (Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ,' 23). These 8ft reeds are used in strengthening a piano 8ft stops passage, best for choral accompanying, or accompanying a solo line accordingly in Reger's organ passages.

¹¹⁷ On the St Thomas Leipzig, the main and last Reger organ—the one that he developed to know more—the cylinder Walze is pushed round by the foot and grading from quadruple pianissimo to quadruple fortissimo. On the fascia over the keys is a dial that indicates in divisions from 0 to 12 the level the organist has reached, with number 12 being the full organ (stated in Buchanan's written lecture in Cambridge, pp. 21-22).

Table 3.4: The specification of St. Thomas Sauer organ before its rebuilt in 1902

I. MANUAL C-a ³		II. MANUAL		III. MANUAL (Schwellwerk)		PEDAL C-f ¹	
Principal	16'	Gedackt	16'	Liebl. Gedackt	16'	Majorbaß	32'
Bordun	16'	Salicional	16'	Gamba	16'	Untersatz	32'
Principal	8'	Principal	8'	Principal	8'	Principal	16'
Geigenprincipal	8'	Concertflöte	8'	Spitzflöte	8'	Contrabaß	16'
Doppelflöte	8'	Rohrflöte	8'	Flüte d' amour	8'	Subbaß	16'
Flüte harmonique	8'	Flüte harmonique	8'	Gedackt	8'	Violon	16'
Flauto dolce	8'	Gedackt	8'	Gemshorn	8'	Liebl. Gedackt	16'
Gedackt	8'	Salicional	8'	Quintatön	8'	Gemshorn	16'
Gemshorn	8'	Schalmei	8'	Viola	8'	Salicetbaß	16'
Gamba	8'	Harmonica	8'	Aeoline	8'	Quintbaß	10 ^{2/3} '
Dulciana	8'	Dolce	8'	Voix celeste	8'	Principal	8'
Quintatön	8'	Oktave	4'	Prästant	4'	Offenbaß	8'
Quinte	5 ^{1/3} '	Flauto dolce	4'	Traversflöte	4'	Baßflöte	8'
Oktave	4'	Salicional	4'	Fugara	4'	Cello	8'
Rohrflöte	4'	Quinte	2 ^{2/3} '	Quinte	2 ^{2/3} '	Dulciana	8'
Gemshorn	4'	Piccolo	3'	Flautino	2'	Gemshorn	8'
Violine	4'	Mixtur 4fach	3'	Harmonia aetherea 2-3f.	2 ^{2/3} '	Oktave	4
Rauschquinte	2 ^{2/3} , 2'	Cymbel 3fach	1'	Trompette harmonique	8'	Flauto dolce	4'
		Cornett 3fach	4'	Oboe	8'	Cotraposaune	32'
		Tuba	8'			Posaune	16'
		Clarinette	8'			Fagott	16'
						Trompete	8'
						Clarine	4'

Building consultant for the neo-gothic renovation of the Thomaskirche was Prof. Constantin Lipsius and presumably the designer of the organ casing, as Sauer reports to a sketch of Lipsius in a letter of 3 July 1887.¹¹⁸ Although with all the changes the Sauer specification lost some of its characteristic features, particularly in the area of the string stops, the large Sauer Organ can, with these minor reservations, be regarded as a typical example of what Karl Straube had at his disposal at Wesel, Berlin and Leipzig for playing ‘symphonic’ Reger.¹¹⁹

VII. MICHAELISKIRCHE – HAMBURG

Michaeliskirche poses as one of the most significant symphonic instruments in Hamburg and congruent to the understanding of Reger’s organ world. His counterpoint vacillates between loud and soft, swaying at the same time between swiftness and calmness. The inaugural concert on the newly-built organ of the Michaelischekirche in Hamburg took place on 26 October 1912. The builder was Walcker of Ludwigsburg, and the instrument, with 163 stops on four manuals, was the largest organ in Germany at that time.¹²⁰ The specification in Table 3.5 is from Walcker and the four free combinations allowed the organist to preset a group of stops in each combination.¹²¹ A vital part in this project may have been played by Hans von Ohlendorff, for it was probably he who invited Reger to come to Hamburg to try this large-scale symphonic instrument.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Best documented in: *Die Sauer-Orgel in Der Thomaskirche zu Leipzig*, Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Kirchenvorstandes der Thomas-Matthäi-Gemeinde Leipzig von Ullrich Böhme, Leipzig 1991 (See Appendix II for more data and pictures, translated by Gerasimos Katsiris).

¹¹⁹ Meaning by the term ‘symphonic’, the large-scale organ works. For all specifications of rebuilt refer to Appendix I.

¹²⁰ For more Walcker organ cases suitable for Reger’s Op. 73 refer to Appendix II.

¹²¹ Oscar Walcker, *Erinnerungen eines Orgelbauers* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1948): 93-95.

¹²² Documented in Walcker, *ibid.* 92-93 and in Hermann Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, 14-16.

Table 3.5: The specification of the newly built organ of Michaeliskirche in Hamburg (1912)¹²³

Manual I (C-c ⁴)	Manual II (C-c ⁴)	Manual III (C-c ⁴ , schwellbar)	Manual IV (C-c ⁴ , schwellbar)	Hauptpedal (C-g ¹)
Oktave 16'	Prästant 8'	Lieulich Gedackt 16'	Prinzival 8'	Großprinzivalbaß 32'
Prinzival 16'	Metallprinzival 8'	Schwellprinzival 8'	Viola 8'	Großgedacktbaß 32'
Großgedackt 16'	Gambe 8'	Geigenprinzival 8'	Salicional 8'	Untersatz 32'
Oktave 8'	Bordun 8'	Gemshorn 8'	Unda maris 8'	Prinzivalbaß 16'
Prinzival 8'	Nachthorn 8'	Aeoline 8'	Doppelgedackt 8'	Kontrabaß 16'
Schweizerpfeife 8'	Hohlflöte 8'	Vox coelestis 8'	Jubalflöte 8'	Geigenbaß 16'
Gemshorn 8'	Spitzflöte 8'	Gedackt 8'	Deutsche Flöte 8'	(Schweller IV)
Dulciana 8'	Rohrflöte 8'	Quintatön 8'	Kleinprinzival 4'	Gemshornbaß 16'
Großgedackt 8'	Oktave 4'	Portunalflöte 8'	Oktavflöte 4'	Salicetbaß 16'
Doppelflöte 8'	Prästant 4'	Oktave 4'	Orchestergeige 4'	(Schweller IV)
Konzertflöte 8'	Viola 4'	Fugara 4'	Kleingedackt 4'	Flötenbaß 16'
Oktave 4'	Quintatön 4'	Liebesgeige 4'	Waldflöte 2'	Subbaß I 16'
Prinzival 4'	Spitzflöte 4'	Querflöte 4'	Siffelöte 2'	Subbaß II 16'
Gemshorn 4'	Fugara 2'	Oktave 2'	Sesquialter 5 1/3' 3 1/3'	(Schweller IV)
Orchesterflöte 4'	Feldflöte 2'	Rauschpfeife 2 2/3' 2'	Nasat 2 2/3'	Gedacktbaß 16'
Rohrflöte 4'	Gemshornquinte 2 2/3'	Großkornett 3-7-fach	Gemshornterz 1 1/3'	Rohrflöte 16'
Oktave 2'	Terz 1 1/3'	Mixtur 5-fach	Kleinkornett	(Schweller III)
Quinte 5 1/3'	Septime 1 1/3'	Helikon 16'	3-4-fach (4')	Rohrquinte 10 2/3'
Quinte 2 2/3'	Kornettmixtur 4-6-fach	Tuba mirabilis 8'	Mixtur 5-fach	Oktave 8'
Kornett 4-5-fach (8')	Scharff 3-4-fach (2')	Horn 8'	Cymbel 4-fach	Prinzival 8'
Großmixtur 7-fach	Bassethorn 16'	Oboe 8'	Fagott 16'	(Schweller III)
Cymbel 3-fach	Flügelhorn 8'	Hohe Trompete 4'	Solotrompete 8'	Cello 8'
Posaune 16'	Krummhorn 8'	Klarine 2'	Klarinette 8'	Geigenbaß I 8'
Trompete 8'	Englisch Horn 4'	Bordun 16'	Vox humana 8'	(Schweller IV)
Klarine 4'	Glockenspiel I (49 Töne)	Nachthorn 16'	Soloklarine 4'	Gedackt 8'
Rohrgedackt 16'	Gambe 16'	Synthematophon 8'	Glockenspiel II (37 Töne)	(Schweller IV)
Fernorgel				Baßflöte 8'
Manual V (C-c ⁵ , schwellbar)				(Schweller III)
Pedal ^[F1] (C-g ¹ , schwellbar)				Choralbaß 4'
Quintatön 16'	Gemshorn 4'	Kontraharmonikabaß	Violine (Schweller III)	4'
Prinzival 8'	Bauernflöte 2'	Subbaß IV offen 16'	Oktave	2'
Fugara 8'	Quinte 2 2/3'	Subbaß III gedeckt 16'	Salicet	2'
Echogambe 8'	Glockenton 4-fach	Geigenbaß II 8'	Flachflöte	1'
Vox angelica 8'	Mixtur 4-fach	Posaune 16'	Terz	6 2/3'
Gemshorn 8'	Trompete 8'		Quinte (Schweller IV)	5 1/3'
Bordun 8'	Vox humana 8'		Terz	3 1/3'
Hornflöte 8'	Schalmei 4'		Septime (Schweller IV)	2 2/3'
Oktave 4'	Schwebung		Kornett 4-fach (16')	
Normalkoppeln: II/I, III/I, IV/I, V/I, III/II, IV/II, IV/III, I/P, II/P, III/P, IV/P, V/P ^[F1]				(Schweller IV)
Superoktavkoppeln: III, IV, V, III/I, IV/I, III/P, IV/P, V/P ^[F1] (Manuale IV und V ausgebaut bis c ⁵)				Mixtur 6-fach
Melodiekoppel I; Suboktavkoppeln: III, IV, V, III/I, IV/I				Bombarde 32'
Feste und 4 freie Kombinationen; Rollschweller				Basstuba 16'
				Posaune 16'
				Tuba 8'
				Trompete 8'
				Klarine 4'
				Horn 4'
				(Schweller IV)

¹²³ Reger Hybrid-Edition, (Carus-Verlag: Stuttgart and Max-Reger-Institut: Karlsruhe, 2012), Carus 52.803. (Copy kindly offered by Max Reger Institute in Karlsruhe).

VIII. REGER'S CONSULTANCY FOR THE NEWLY BUILT ORGAN IN MEININGEN

When in 1911 Reger moved to Thüringen, he was booked on continuous tours with the orchestra. On 30 January 1913, Herzog Georg II (Duke George of Saxony-Meiningen) entrusted Reger with a commission for an organ costing in the order of 20,000 marks for the newly built Schützenhaussaal in Meiningen.¹²⁴ During Reger's tenure as Music Director at Meiningen he considered it important for the instrument to have a movable console by Steimeyer of Oetingen for practical performing-accompanying reasons.¹²⁵ Sadly he collapsed from nervous exhaustion which led to his resignation. Reger had escaped military duties in World War I due to his medical condition.¹²⁶ The contrapuntal aspect of Reger's music brings about the question of the proper selection of stopping lists and colouring. The clear attack of the pipe which introduces the voicing needs to be supported by the sustaining of a clear sound which elucidates the movement of the voicing and prevents it from being lost in a constellation of sounds of different pitches. The ranks of most of the German organs of Reger's time in combination with the electro-pneumatic action of some of them fall much behind these requirements, thus leading to the logical assumption by the majority of the organ builders that Reger's counterpoint is the means that leads to the real essence of his music which is the contrast in colour and dynamics.¹²⁷

IX. NEWLY INTRODUCED AIDS AND THE WELTE FIRM

Every organ witnesses the history of composers, works and performance practice. There are a few recordings of Reger's contemporaries available and the existing ones date principally

¹²⁴ Hermann Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusic Max Regers*, 24.

¹²⁵ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube: Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition*, 58 and Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusic Max Regers*, 24.

¹²⁶ Peter Palmer, 'Reger and the Organ: A 125th Birthday Offering,' *The Organist's Review* (November 1998): 304.

¹²⁷ Buchanan, 'Aspects of the German Organ 1846-1902,' 26-27.

between the 1920s through and the 1950s. Virtually no useful recording of a leading organist in his prime before 1926 survives, with the exception of Welte rolls.¹²⁸ ‘Rolls offer a vastly increased pool of works from which to draw. They can also offer precise information on performance practices.’¹²⁹ The Welte firm had developed a process for enabling keyboard organs to be played by pneumatic action by means of a pierced cylinder. The process involved a cylinder, with holes in it, on which a strip of paper is fixed. Welte produced a popular ‘player piano’ equipped with precisely this mechanism: the ‘Welte-Mignon-Flügel.’¹³⁰ Reger recorded 16 organ compositions of his own, but music is not consistently played in accordance with his manuscripts or published editions.¹³¹

One might venture that less than satisfactory impression left by Reger’s Welte recordings is due not so much to his abilities as an organist, but rather to the inadequacy of the organs used, the rolls themselves or the reproduction equipment.¹³² Furthermore, the speed that rolls were playing was inconsistent and mainly too slow.¹³³ As a result, Reger plays the slow movements according to his own requirements (expressive and ethereal, as he pleases), whereas in faster movements he restrains increasingly the indicated original tempo (getting slower and slower) probably also due to lack of consistent practising since 1898.¹³⁴ There is evidence for these early recordings that the Welte firm designed the pedal notes to sound a

¹²⁸ Notes of the CD, *The Britannic Organ, Die Welte Philharmonie- Orgel in Museum für Musikautomaten Seewen*, Vol. 8, CH, p.12. LPs present a limited choice of organists and repertoire between 1910 and 1930 (ibid.)

¹²⁹ Hermann Busch, *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusic Max Regers*, 24.

¹³⁰ Kurt Binninger, ‘Die Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel,’ *Acta Organologica* 19 (1986): 179-207. Also documented in Busch, 26.

¹³¹ Reger’s inconsistent interpretation goes beyond the fact that no composer follows his notation so strictly. Nevertheless, the Magdeburg organist Georg Sbach admired Herr Reger for his compositional and performance techniques, as he rarely looked at manuals and pedals while playing (G.Sbach, *Max Reger im Kolberger Dom*, MMRG vol 3 (1923), .8-9).

¹³² The following are the organ works that Reger recorded: Op. 56, Nr. 3 Fuge; Op. 59, Nr 9 + 11; Op. 65, Nr. 9; Op. 67, Nr. 20, 23, 33, 45, 50, 52; Op. 69 Nr 4; Op. 80, Nr. 8; and Op. 85, Nr 3, Praeludium.

¹³³ Liner Notes of the CD, *The Britannic Organ, Die Welte Philharmonie- Orgel in Museum für Musikautomaten Seewen*, CH, p.18.

¹³⁴ Notes of the CD, *The Britannic Organ, Die Welte Philharmonie- Orgel in Museum für Musikautomaten Seewen*, Vol. 8, CH, pp.14-22. Reasons for Reger’s restrained tempi might have been the unreliable underpowered Welte pneumatic motors which created problems to the wind-pressures. Reger’s organ and piano playing will be best documented in the performance practice chapter.

fraction earlier than the manuals; ¹³⁵ alternatively this could be an explanatory reason for the inconsistency of Reger's pedalling and exaggeration of tempi; it could either mean that his extreme tempi were born in his excitement of creation. Another explanation for delaying the notes could be the way of augmenting expressiveness and clarity together with the combination of stops as a performance technique of the time. Distinguishing the line between slow and fast, Reger's slow pieces could be played faster and fast-piece passages slower, but not faster than indicated.¹³⁶

As a motivated musician and performer, Reger showed interest to every unique historic or modern instrument even if any seemed 'unsuitable' for his large-scale organ works. Reger's consent to Straube's interpretation on the old mechanical-action organ of Basel was given in written form with the composition and dedication of Op. 73. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that an organ built according to the classical standards is capable of fulfilling the expectations of a demanding listener of Op. 73, despite its lack of the tone-colour range and the dynamic possibilities of the romantic orchestra. This can be achieved by opting for a simple and clear registration based on creating vivid dynamic contrasts of tone-colour.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Documented in Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' 23. More information regarding tempi, interpretation and which tempo Reger is playing is provided in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF REGER'S VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON AN ORIGINAL THEME

INTRODUCTION

In working toward an analysis and performance of Reger's Op. 73 Variations, the interpreter receives little help from the composer himself. Reger was famously reluctant to discuss his work in such terms and neither Reger nor Straube seems to have left any more specific information than the 'melancholy measure' quote.¹³⁷ Regarding the analysis and performance of the Op. 73 Variations, a number of contemporary writers did comment on the nature of this work, particularly in terms of its sense of tonality. In at least two of the critical appreciations written after the first performance of Reger's Op. 73, the term 'atonal' appears. In 1906, Roderich von Mojsisovics —Austrian composer, (1877-1953)—spoke of the 'atonal spheres of the Introdutione'.¹³⁸ Two years later, Arthur Liebscher described the theme as 'harmonically on stilts', defining the Variations that follow as being 'atonal in character'.¹³⁹ Although Reger himself did not comment on this in relation to the Op. 73 Variations, some indication of his attitude might be taken from his *On the Theory of Modulation* (1903)—his only published book—in which it appeared that he remained faithful to tonality, as it seems on the simple way of harmonising progression that he indicates. Although the book is perhaps more of a manual for student composers and theorists than an explanation of Reger's own composing, the title itself would seem to demonstrate the centrality of tonality in Reger's thinking. His explanations are supported by examples of simple and logical modulations, intended to provide 'insight into

¹³⁷ Reger wrote to Straube with the dedication of the work: 'Das Werk selbst ist aus einer recht wehmütigen Stimmung herausgeboren; das Thema in seiner Resignation gibt alles an; eine große Rolle spielt im ganzen Werk der *'melancholische'* Takt 3 aus dem Thema *selbst*'. Reger to Karl Straube, 25 June 1904, in Max Reger. Briefe an Karl Straube, ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn: Dümmler, 1986), 58 (Veröffentlichung des Max-Reger-Institutes, Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Bd. 10).

¹³⁸ Roderick von Mojsisovics, *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 37th year, no. 41 (11 October 1906): 706.

¹³⁹ Liebscher, 'Die Variationenform als Ausdrucksmittel bei Max Reger,' 332.

the subject and absolute clearness in grasping and understanding even the most complicated modulation, harmony and counterpoint.’¹⁴⁰

A contradiction seems to emerge between the opinions of the modern reviewers and Reger’s own attitude to tonality. The organist Allan Mahnke casts some light on this when he claims that ‘while for Reger all pitches have equal importance as tonal centres, for serialists all pitches have equal unimportance as tonal centres’.¹⁴¹ The Introduction to Reger’s Op. 73 Variations would seem to illustrate this point; the all-pervading chromaticism gives the impression of being completely pantonal, venturing further into the territory of suspended tonality than, for example, Schoenberg in his Variations on a Recitative (Arnold Schoenbergs, *Variationen über Recitative* Op. 40, 1941).¹⁴² It often seems that all pitches in Reger are indeed of equal importance, but even where they are not, the vivid tempo in connection with disjunctive motion almost creates the same effect. The functional relations between the chords and harmonic sequences concur with the continuous chromatic passages and auxiliary notes. Table 4.1 summarises the bar numbers, overall structure, characteristics and tonal relations of Introduction (V sections), Variations and Fugue.

¹⁴⁰ Max Reger, *On the Theory of Modulation*, (Stuttgart: Carus -Verlag, 1948), 4.

¹⁴¹ Allan Mahnke, ‘Max Reger’s Introduction, Variations and Fugue in F-sharp minor’ *The American Organist* 17, no. 4, (1983), 47.

¹⁴² This example is chosen purposefully, because there are just comparisons to be made between Reger and Schoenberg Variations. Schoenberg considered Reger to be a genius—as we witness from Schoenberg’s letters – and although he does not return to Reger’s harmonic language, he develops it further in his own work (Arnold Schoenberg, *Letters*, ed. E. Stein, trans. E. Wilkins and E. Kaiser (London: Faber and Faber), 90. Schoenberg’s Variations on a Recitative Op. 40 is similar to Reger’s Op. 73, for instance in having a fugal conclusion, the character of some variations and in the general treatment of the theme and its motifs. The sequence of BACH, which is present in Reger’s Op. 73 both in the Introduction and in some of the Variations, appears also in the fugue of Schoenberg’s Variation set Op. 40.

Table 4.1 shows the overall structure and tonal relations of Op. 73

<u>Bars/Sections</u>	<u>Structure/characteristics</u>	<u>Tonal Relations</u>
Introduction: Section 1: bb. 1–18/1	Motifs a, b and c Quiet and loud segments/dialogue effect	F# minor
Section 2: bb. 18/2 –23/1	Virtuosic gestures, sequences and thicker texture	F# minor – G minor
Section 3: 23/2 – 25	Short, quiet and quasi imitative section	G minor –finishing on a chord of F# major
Section 4: 26 – 30/1	Again thick texture as Section 2/ Auxiliary notes, strong chromaticism and demisemiquaver triplets on the pedal line	F# minor containing a sequence of diminished 7 th chords
Section 5: 30/2 – 41/1	Recapitulated material of Section 1 in bars 35 – 41	F# minor
Original Theme: bb. 1–15	Two-phrases/Choral-like/ typical of the ‘melancholic thirds’ and the exact recapitulation of bars 7-8 of the Introduction	F# minor – (V in bar 12) – F# minor
Variation I: bb. 15/2–30/1	Conserves structure and mainly the melodic line of the Theme, but ornamentated/15 bar-scheme adopted	F# minor
Variation II: bb. 30/2–45/1	Conserves structure and expands versions of melodic line of the Theme (with embellishments)/15 bar-scheme adopted	F# minor
Variation III: bb. 45/2–60/1	Tocatta-like movement/dialogue of duet and trio sections appearing twice/15 bar-scheme adopted	D minor – (V ⁷ – V of E major) – D minor
Variation IV: bb. 60/2–86/1	Choral-like/Theme based Variation/dynamic range-constant use of the swell box	(Up beat D major chord) – F# minor – (Unsolved V ⁷ of bar 68—double dominant–V of C#–V of F# minor—reoccurs in bar 75—dominant of subdominant) – F# minor
Variation V: bb. 86/2–101	Tocatta- like variation/ brings Cantus Firmus (Theme) on the pedals- Theme drifts on the right hand part in bars 89 and 98-99	F# minor
Variation VI: bb. 116/2 – 130	Two section variation- movement/ thicker texture/contrapunctal writing/nearly 15 bar-scheme adopted	First section (116-125): A minor and C major. Second section (126-130) concludes in diminished 7 th of A minor at bar 130.
Variation VII: bb. 130/2 – 146/1	Brings pitches of the Theme either in a compressed rhythm in manual-pedals or splinters of the Theme	A minor – D minor.
Variation VIII: bb. 146/2 – 155	Brings Theme on pedals in a compressed rhythm/short variation- movement	D minor – F# minor
Variation IX: bb. 155/2 – 163/1	Short variation-movement /Virtuosic and rhapsodic intermezzo/peak of dynamics/similarities to introduction	D minor – D minor
Variation X: bb. 163/2 – 177	Character of the Theme both harmonically and melodically/nearly 15 bars-scheme	D minor – F# major
Variation XI: bb. 177/2 – 191	Brings splinters of the Theme/distinctive the twice repeated Ostinato figure on the left hand.	G major
Variation XII: bb. 191/2 – 206	Conserves structure and mainly the melodic line of the Theme/in two sections connected with the same pedal entry/ rhapsodic and improvisatory	F# minor
Variation XIII: bb. 206/2 – 225	Choral- like-Theme based Variation/nearly 15 bar-scheme adopted with a four and a half - bar coda and the ostinato figure on the left hand (as Variation XI)	F# major– (B minor) – F# major
Fugue: bb. 1– 100	4 part- fugue/2 expositions, 1 counter exposition, 6 episodes, 3 stretti, subject is appearing 8 times	F# – (B minor – E minor) – F# major

I. THE INTRODUCTION of Op. 73: bars 1-41

According to Gerd Zacher, the Introduction represents a colon leading to the Variations themselves and certainly it would seem to endorse Mahnke's claim that all pitches in Reger have equal importance as tonal centres, as it presents a kaleidoscopic fragmentation of tonality.¹⁴³ Harmonically, the Introduction seems anything but restful.¹⁴⁴ There is no perfect cadence in the tonic key through the 41 bars in F-sharp minor. Much of the Introduction is improvisatory in nature, highly chromatic and emotionally complicated.¹⁴⁵

The overall impression of fragmentation is emphasised by the fact that the Introduction, although only 41 bars in length, falls into five clear sections. These sections are balanced according to tempo, dynamics and style. Sections I, III and V are marked Adagio; sections III and V are quasi-imitative.¹⁴⁶ Sections II and IV are flashier and freer in structure and more virtuosic. At the same time, the sections are clearly defined by the use of recurring motifs that hold the introductory narrative together and will function with even greater importance in the forthcoming Original Theme and the 13 Variations. Even in his Second Chorale Fantasia Op. 52, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme!* (1900) Reger uses the introductory cells all through the entire work. The five sections of the Op. 73 Introduction are summarised in Table 4.2.

¹⁴³ Gerd Zacher, Heins Klaus Metzger, and Rainer Riehn, *Max Reger zum Orgelwerk* (Munich: Richard Boorberg Verlag, 2002): 40-49. (Translated by Gerasimos Katsiris).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Reger composed the organ work of Op. 73 on the piano, during the holiday period of July–September 1903 (Haupt, *Max Regers Orgelvariationen*, 26). This perhaps casts light on some of the improvisatory, vivid and flexible manual passages, as distinct from the direct and virtuosic pedal line.

¹⁴⁶ Marco Aurélio Lisch dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variações e Fuga sobre um Originaltema para Órgão Op. 73- aspectos técnico-virtuosísticos similares na obra para piano e órgão' (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R. Ladders, 1997), 124.

Table 4.2: Summary of sections in the Introduction

Section	Bar numbers	Notes on tonality
1	1 – 18/1	F# – F# minor
2	18/2 – 23/1	F# minor – G minor
3	23/2 – 25	G minor – finishing on a chord of F# major
4	26 – 30/1	F# minor – bars 26 and 27 containing a sequence of diminished 7 th chords
5	30/2 – 41/1	F# minor – F# minor

The Introduction may be subdivided into segments that alternate with contrasting dynamics: one is always softer (*piano*, *pianissimo*) and the other stronger (*forte*, *fortissimo*). This creates a dialogue-like effect and reminds us the contrast of *Plein Jeu* and *Petit Jeu* of a typical French classical organ mass.¹⁴⁷ In Reger’s Introduction, the stronger comment is in general shorter than the softer one. From the start of the second section (b.18/2) the stronger comment becomes more flexible and virtuosic, and all of the segments begin to lengthen.

The segments may be subdivided into gestures, which typically end on V⁹ harmony. In all, there are 11 gestures that end on V⁹ chords, in different keys, and we might almost claim that there is a dynamic contrast after every one or two such cadences, as may be seen in Table 4.3. Of these, nine are concluded with an *Adagio*—the cadences in bars 23 and 30 are the only exceptions—and this aspect highlights the fragmentary character of the Introduction.

¹⁴⁷ A principle similar to the ‘segmented’ scheme – alternating loud and soft segments – may be found in the *Livre d’Orgue* of earlier French composers, such as de Grigny (*Livre d’Orgue*: *Veni Creator*, *Dialogue*, *Pange Lingua*, *Ave Maris Stella*), Clerambault (*Livre d’Orgue*: *Suite du Premier Ton*), and Raison (*Livre d’Orgue*: *Gloria*, *Messe du Deuzieme Ton*, *Messe du Troisieme Ton*). The same principle as the Op. 73 set, the (Grand) *Plein Jeu* and *Petit Jeu verset*, is followed by a *fugue*.

Table 4.3: Summary of the V⁹ cadence chords mapped against the five sections of the

Introduction

Section	Bars	Chord	Tonal centres / dynamic range	Context
1	4	V ⁹	G minor/pp	The first strong segment comes to its end
	7	V ⁹	F# minor/fff	A chromatic ascending movement follows
	9	V ⁹	C minor/ppp	A short pause precedes the recapitulation of the opening material
	15	V ⁹ /altered	D minor/pp	A concise pause establishing the Adagio indication follows
	17	V ⁹ /without the fundamental note	F major/pp	The end of the first section
2	23	V ⁹	G minor/fff	A triumphal climax finalizing the second section
4	30	V ⁹ /without the fundamental note	E minor/fff	Organo pleno V ⁹ marking the end of the fourth section
5	34	V ⁹	F# minor/ppp	Quiet conclusion preceding motif b
	38	V ⁹ /altered	D minor/ppp	Followed by a brisk pause and the exact restatement of bar 15/the Original Theme starts being prepared
	39	V ⁹ /without the fundamental note	E major/ppp	Followed by exact recapitulation of bar 16/the original theme is approaching shortly after
	40	V ⁹ /without the fundamental note	F major/ppp	The last ppp V ⁹ chord of the Introduction and an exact restatement of bar 17

Section 1: Bars 1–18

The first section of the Introduction seems ‘utterly pantonal;’ cadences occur often, presumably in order to explore every tonal expectation.¹⁴⁸ The opening consists of a two-bar quiet segment, which encapsulates its most important material and suggests three main melodic concepts or

¹⁴⁸ Marco Aurélio Lischt Dos Santos, ‘Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73- aspectos técnico-virtuosísticos similares na obra para piano e órgão’ (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Ladders, 1997), 123.

motifs in the upper part. It is worth examining these in some detail, not only because they give coherence to the Introduction but also because they recur later in the work. The three motifs are labelled in Figure 4.1.

V⁹ of G minor

Figure 4.1: Introduction, Section 1, bb.1–6, showing the three main motifs

The three motifs open the work in close succession, forming the first quiet segment, which Mahnke describes as a ‘wistfully sounding question’.¹⁴⁹ Motif ‘a’ is the descending diminished fifth, $f^{\sharp} - b^{\sharp}$ motif ‘b’ is the diatonically ascending demisemiquavers $c^{\sharp} - d^{\sharp} - e^{\sharp}$; and finally motif ‘c’ is the descending semitone $a^{\flat} - g^{\sharp}$.

Although motifs ‘a’ and ‘b’ together might belong to a chromatic version of the tonic minor F sharp, motif ‘c’ functions parenthetically as a 4/3 appoggiatura on V⁹ of the relative A major. In Figure 4.1 the opening gesture is concluded in the second bar with material that is

¹⁴⁹ Mahnke, ‘Max Reger's Introduction, Variations and Fugue in F-sharp minor,’ 46.

going to be recalled later in the Introduction; the demisemiquaver figuration $b^4-d^5-c^5\#$, rhythmically derived from motif ‘b’, devolves to a descending minor second in quavers, or motif ‘c’; and the following chromatically descending passage, $e^4-d^4\#-c^4\#$, rises from the inversion of motif ‘b’. In this way, the first two-bar segment is rounded by the ascending and descending juxtapositions of demisemiquaver motif ‘b’ and its inversion. Although the motivic connections may seem subtle, a careful listener should be able to observe that there is a consistency deriving from this economy of material. This opening, quiet segment is answered by the first loud segment, in bar 3; the contrast is highlighted by a change of tempo (*un poco piu mosso*), but some continuity is maintained through the use of the motif ‘b’ rhythm, in imitative entries.

The second quiet segment (bars 4–5), like the first, begins by moving toward the dominant of the relative major A, but this is cut off by the second loud segment (bars 5–7). Significantly, bar 5 refers to motif ‘b’ and thus recalls the opening material of the Introduction – the ‘wistfully sounding question’.¹⁵⁰ A noteworthy element of bars 6–7 is the chromatically ascending movement in the five-voice figuration, which reaches triumphantly the V^9 of F# minor; for the first time in the piece the dynamic mark *fff* makes its appearance. As will be further examined in the dynamics and registration content, tempo and dynamics are inextricably connected—a crescendo is accompanied by an *accelerando* and vice versa. It is fascinating that Reger keeps in balance the continuous crescendo with the imposing chromatic voice leading.

The material of the three motifs— ‘a’, ‘b’ and ‘c’—continues to be used economically, as shown in Figure 4.2. Following the triumphal V^9 of F# minor, there are melodic intervals of descending thirds of the right hand in bb. 7 and 8, $a^5-f^5\#$ in bar 7 and g^5-e^5 in bar 8; the repeated ending of motif ‘b’ (semiquaver triplet) creates once more a ‘melancholic-sounding’

¹⁵⁰ Mahnke, ‘Max Regers Introduction,’ 46.

antagonist.¹⁵¹ Again, like the beginning of the Introduction in the first two quavers of bar 1, the tritone motif (f⁵#–b⁴#–motif ‘a’) appears in bar 10 and the demisemiquaver motif (motif ‘b’) appears in the same bar (see Figure 4.2).

From the next loud segment in bars 10–14, the motifs appear more subtly in the texture. In bar 11, the tritone movement in the tenor line reiterates the falling diminished fifth of motif ‘a’. As Haupt (1973, p.31) and Weyer (1975, p. 105) suggest, the quavers in the pedal voice of B²–B²#–C³# in bar 11 remind the listener vaguely of motif ‘b’.

The image shows a musical score for the Introduction, Section 1, bars 7-16. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 7-10) is marked 'Tempo primo' and includes dynamics like 'ff' and 'pp'. The second system (bars 11-14) is marked 'Piu mosso' and includes dynamics like 'mf' and 'pp'. The third system (bars 15-16) is marked 'Adagio' and includes dynamics like 'p' and 'pp'. Red boxes highlight specific motifs: 'V of F# minor' in bar 10, 'V9 of C minor' in bar 11, 'V of F# minor' in bar 12, 'attract Bb major' in bar 15, and 'V of D minor' in bar 16. A 'Pedal Sequence' is also indicated in bar 11. Motifs 'a', 'b', and 'c' are labeled in red.

Figure 4.2: Introduction, Section 1, bb. 7–16, showing the tritone motif (f⁵#–b⁴#)–motif ‘a’ and main motifs ‘b’ and ‘c’.

¹⁵¹ Schmeiser, ‘Vergleichende Analyse,’ 10.

The semiquaver triplet at the beginning of bar 14 may easily be considered a reference to motif 'b', though rhythmically altered; similarly the simple semiquavers of the same bars 11 and 14 demonstrate motif 'c', however rhythmically diminutive.¹⁵² The distinctive descending chromatic line of e^b-d-d^b-c on the lower voice of the left-hand part (bars 14–16) is followed by the altered motif 'b' in a semiquaver triplet at the end of bar 16, as earlier in bar 15. These semiquavers of the soprano line in bar 11 are not particularly related to the main three motifs under discussion, and may not seem particularly distinguished at all. However, it has been suggested that this material of bar 11 of the Introduction anticipates the countersubject of the final fugue;¹⁵³ the next bar (b.12) returns clearly to emphasize the dominant of F# minor. The semiquavers occurring in the alto and tenor lines and the broken chords on the pedal line in bars 13 and 14 effect the chromatic expectation before the forthcoming Adagio. Predominantly distinctive is the chromatic line of the left hand, which through its rhythmic modification resembles a moment of recitative. There are irregularly spaced pauses that fall between bars 14 and 17 and these add to this figuration a sense of asymmetry, perhaps as a destined intention to disrupt rhythmic patterns or flow. From this point, the first section progressively fades out and dies away with two descending fifths played by the left hand in bars 17–18. This is recapitulated in bars 40/2–41, where once again it ends the section and indeed the Introduction as a whole.

¹⁵² Schmeiser, 'Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,' 12, translated by Gerasimos Katsiris.

¹⁵³ Haupt, 'Max Regers Orgelvariationen, Op. 73,' 31; Martin Weyer, 'Aktuelle Probleme des Regerspiels, dargestellt an der Choralphantasie Op. 30,' *Ars Organi* 23 (1975): 105.

Section 2: Bars 18/2–23

The mood and tempo change after the first section. After the gentle descending ending of bars 17–18, there is a brisk loud pedal entry marked *piu mosso assai*, which gives rise to a new section, rather free in construction. Section 2 is characterized by impressive, virtuosic gestures and an intensification of character. The new material of bars 18–23, as shown in Figure 4.3 below, is emphasizing the reference to later variations; it is characterized by Bagier as a gradually increasing motion, whose sole support is the belated bass.¹⁵⁴

Figure 4.3: Introduction, end of Section 1 and beginning of Section 2, bb. 17–20.

The demisemiquaver figure in the pedal line of bar 18 is of impressive technical difficulty, reminding the performer of the pedal line of bars 155-156 and 159 of Variation IX.

¹⁵⁴ Guido Bagier, Max Reger (Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1923), 143.

The beginning of the second section of the Introduction aims once again toward the dominant of F sharp.

The first four bars of the second section are louder, more apocalyptic, virtuosic and rhythmically flexible. The left-hand part of unfolded demisemiquaver triplets, together with the *Piu mosso assai* indication and the hemidemisemiquavers appearing in bar 18, enriches the sound picture and thickens the texture. The impressive, characterful and fierce gesture of the pedal part in bar 18, which is combined with the continuation of the triplet rhythm of bars 21 and 22, leads to a dynamic intensification. The demisemiquaver triplets of bars 18-22 develop the harmonic progression – either in semitones on the top line or in intervals of a third on the lower voices, for the first time developing this harmonic progression—to multiply and add velocity. The ascending and continuous chromaticism of bars 20-22 increases in volume, drama and speed of musical motion. This is exceptionally virtuosic in terms of both the difficulty and clarity; in a texture of up to five voices, an extended figuration (bars 21–22) of demisemiquaver triplets leaves the listener in a chaotic mist of melodic and rhythmic subdivisions, moreover after a sonic effect, rather than a ‘musical’ one.

More tension is added with the single-line improvisatory ascending passage in the middle of bar 22. The harmonic conclusion seems unreachable—with the sequences of diminished 7th chords of bar 23 and the climax of V⁹ of G minor at bar 23—so that the concert audience is overwhelmed by this organ storm.¹⁵⁵ The thicker texture, intense chromaticism and diminished seventh chords are shown in Figure 4.4. After a semiquaver pause in bar 22/2, a single-line hemidemisemiquaver movement begins, which becomes a dramatic three-voice texture in bars 22–23 marking the end of the second section.

¹⁵⁵ Idea documented in Schmeiser, ‘Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,’ 13.

Section 3: Bars 23/2–25

The Adagio con moto indication marks the dawn of the new quiet and quasi-imitative section; in an entirely different mood the third section ensures a densification of expression that plays the role of a concise middle tranquil figure—when performing—within the five sections of the Introduction.

Thicker texture – more chromaticism – freedom – flexibility of movement

The image shows a musical score for Section 3, bars 23/2-25. The score is written for piano and includes three systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the section with a thick texture. The second system features a single line passage in the right hand, annotated with "more tension added with the single line passage". The third system shows a climax with a "triumph of the diminished 7th chords" and a "V₉ of G minor" (This is a very important statement by Reger). The score also includes markings for "I Man (Gt.)", "Adagio (con moto)", and "III Man (Gt.) III intro".

Figure 4.4: Introduction Section 2, bb. 21–23, showing the strong chromaticism and the harmonic progression of the demisemiquaver triplets.

Section 4: Bars 26–30/1

The fourth section of the Introduction beginning in bar 26/2 scripts the return to the vibrant rhetoric of the second section as introduced in Figure 4.5 below, retaining a fragile link between the rising thirds outline of the pedal part in bar 29. Auxiliary notes enhance the forceful chromaticism. Pedal demisemiquaver triplet leaps provide even more tension and texture. The

vastly dissolute harmonic sequences of bars 26–29 make it challenging for the listener to track the harmonic relations or even trace a tonal centre.¹⁵⁶ Thus, bars 26–29 unfold a new differently created element, although it is still similar in terms of form, impression and effect. The slower-in-tempo demisemiquaver movement internalises the preceding extrovert gesture as it approaches E minor towards the end of the fourth section.¹⁵⁷

Diminished 7th of G minor again

C minor (IV of G minor)

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 24-27. The score is in G minor. Annotations include: 'Diminished 7th sequence' in orange, 'V of V of G' in red, 'Again more tension with the single line passage' in red, 'One line ascending passage / more tension added' in blue, and 'Thicker texture' in red. Performance markings include 'poco', 'rit. (quasi vivacissimo)', 'ppp', 'ff', 'I. Man. (ot.)', 'sempre I. Man. (ot.)', 'sempre vivacissimo', 'piu. ff sempre cre.', and 'ben marc. sempre cre.'

Figure 4.5: End of the third section of the Introduction and beginning of the fourth, bb. 24–27, showing the return to, and connection with, Section 2.

¹⁵⁶ Idea documented in Schmeiser, 'Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,' 18.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 19.

Section 5: Bars 30/2–41

The fifth and final section, following the diminished seventh chord of E minor, as shown in Figure 4.6, plays the repetitive role of the initial material: as motif 'a' is stimulated at bar 33/4 and in the same way the closing bars 36–37 are almost a particular recurrence of the closing bars of the first section of bars 13–14, accordingly bar 38 brings a resemblance to bar 15 and 39 to 16.

Bars 40 and 41 function as a preparation for the forthcoming Original Theme with the repeated falling diminished fifths of bars 40–41, which initially appeared in bars 17–18 on the left-hand line. The smooth, quieter final bars of the Introduction relieve the listener from the fantasy- and capriccio-like gestures, ascending, chromatic, improvisatory passages and auxiliary notes.

The image displays a musical score for Section 5, Bars 30/2–41. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the piano part with a red box highlighting a sequence of notes in the bass line. The second system shows the piano part with a red box highlighting a sequence of notes in the bass line. The third system shows the organ part with a red box highlighting a sequence of notes in the bass line. Annotations include "Pedal leaps on the dominant sequence / tension and texture strengthened" in red text, "Diminished7th of E minor" in red text, and "V intro" in blue text. The organ part includes the instruction "II. Man. (Sw.)" and "poco cre.".

Figure 4.6 shows the beginning of Section V of the Introduction after the ending of the previous section on the diminished seventh of E minor.

a. Discussion: Implications for interpretation

The Introduction has a more significant meaning than just a fantasy introduction. In it, the principle of the motivic variation manifests itself, which is decisive for the actual variation cycle.¹⁵⁸ Hence, in the fourth section, auxiliary notes enhance the forceful chromaticism, and via the sequence of diminished seventh chord-tonic poles, the key of E minor is approached by the end of this section. Pedal demisemiquaver triplet leaps seem to provide even more tension and texture. The vastly dissolute harmonic sequences of bars 26–29 make it complicated for the listener to track the harmonic relations or even trace a tonal centre.¹⁵⁹

The ‘wistful-sounding question’ recapitulates in bars 35 and 36; similarly to the first third of the Introduction, the whole Introduction closes with a gesture of silence—fading out to a *ppp*, before the entrance of the Original Theme.¹⁶⁰ The even quieter final bars of the Introduction relieve the listener from the fantasy, capriccio-like gestures, ascending, chromatic, improvisatory passages and auxiliary notes. This closing fifth section achieves a reserved reconciled conclusion with the repetition of already known material.

The very long Introduction of the Op. 73 Variations’ set involves the sounds of the orchestra—via the amalgam of flute and string stops—and Reger’s smooth, flowing transitions and dynamic shadings. It is true that the recreation of the Op. 73 set combines the organist’s individual processes, performance constructs and the aesthetics of her time, personal insight and the anxieties about the moment of the recital. Although preparing a musical performance can be a personal and even emotional undertaking for the performer, it would be naïve to imagine that a successful and authentic performance can be produced only by spontaneity, inspiration or any random instinct. The relationship between the analysis and the performance

¹⁵⁸ Hermann Keller, *Reger und die Orgel*, (München: Halbreiter, 1923), 55.

¹⁵⁹ Idea documented in Schmeiser, ‘Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,’ 18.

¹⁶⁰ Mahnke refers to the wistful-sounding question on page 46 of his *Analysis of Reger’s Op. 73 Variations*. (Original Source by Max Heheman, *Max Reger-Eine Studie über modern Musik*, (München: Piper-Verlag, 1911), 28.

of Reger's Op. 73 Introduction is not a competitive one; it is rather a relation of shared interdependence. Every respectful performer spends myriads of hours developing her skills and reconsidering her own personal performance. Most of us spend time—far too much—caring for technical precision and realisation of the script. To inspire a convincing performance of Op. 73, deliberate thought is necessary. The interpretation of music requires decisions; even simple material—Rink cites a scale or perfect cadence—will be shaped according to the performer's understanding.¹⁶¹

In general, organists have to understand what they play and they should not fear losing their spontaneity and elasticity when employing analytical methods. On the contrary, organists can strengthen and establish their control and technical accuracy. There seems to be no single or right performance, as there is not only one listener—an antithesis could be a utopia. In order to understand Reger in depth, analysis is part of a performing process. We cannot conceive an intact interpretation of Op. 73 if we do not know the whole truth, the identification of formal divisions and basic tonal plan, the understanding of syntax and analysis of melodic shape, or even rhythmic patterning. Especially in Op. 73, we need to set up flexibility-freedom, but also organize control. The leading voice, key relations and registration schemes are all inevitable issues solved and answered differently within each interpretation. Perhaps it is not that performers hear what we see, or even that they want to tell stories different from ours. Different performers can tell the same story in different ways and perhaps it is not our analysis (plot) that is wrong, but how we eitherwise construct the performance story. Accordingly, demanding passages become easier in Op. 73, especially on the eighth variation—which is extremely virtuosic and technically demanding—if the organist knows exactly what she is playing and where she is directing the composite of the composer's harmonies; it is the organist's goal to

¹⁶¹ John Rink, *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 35 investigates the conscious and unconscious processes involved, and proposes 'a mode of analysis which might benefit rather than constrain performers'.

discover the music's shape, as opposed to structure. Any analytical element must be considered in terms of style, genre, performance tradition, and technical preparation, instruments then and now. In other words, performers' analysis primarily takes place as an interpretation, is formulated and subsequently re-evaluated, but without allowing the knowledge to dominate the impulsive aspect of the performance; interpretation is consequently influenced by analysis, with regard also to dynamic levels of registration, different kinds of articulation, agogic interpretation, stylistic tradition, sustaining on specific notes and so on.

Following the Germani-Kynaston pedal method for Reger's pedal virtuosic passages, the organist has 'to exercise the pedals in a relaxed way whereby the ankle is as supple as the wrist. Suppleness comes from strength and strength is gained through exercise. Perfect control comes from the combination of suppleness and strength during individual practising.'¹⁶²

Finally, the preparation of a rhythmic reduction while learning the variation set—such as considering the quaver as a counting unit—may reveal the simplicity, control and clarity, which are important for the Op. 73 Introduction and within the Variations. We cannot be certain whether Reger adopted this structural plan when composing Op. 73, but we know for definite from written sources that Straube used the quaver as a counting unit when performing Reger's works. His slurs, dynamics and articulation markings might well justify the above-mentioned possibility. *Crescendo* and *accelerando*, *diminuendo* and *ritenuto* are all linked together; conviction starts after a correct reading, hence a successful performance could be an amalgam of its analytical act and theory, historical fidelity, technical accuracy and clarity, and maybe of emotional sharing between performer and listener.

¹⁶² Nicolas Kynaston, 'Fernando Germani', *Organist's Review* (November 1998): 309.

II. THE ORIGINAL THEME: Bars 1-15

The transformation from the chaos of the Introduction to the gaunt sophistication of the elegiac Theme is one of many mystical moments in Op. 73. As Coenen described so elegantly, this variation theme refers to archaic aesthetics more or less in accordance with the Old Dutch Masters; this aesthetic sense of the theme comes as an antithesis to the romantic innervations of the Introduction.¹⁶³ Likewise, Reger uses the French chorales, an Original Theme of his own, as a conveyer and arbitrator of his individual spirit.¹⁶⁴

Harmut Haupt states that number three pervades the entire work like a red thread; it infuses proportion and structure to the plethora of single events, it determines the tempo, influences the rhythm, and it functions as a structural element in larger or smaller segments up to the size of a theme or a motif and finally impregnates the architecture of the entire work. The process of transformation takes place in three big steps, at the end of each one of them the calm center and the original idea of the theme surfaces again.¹⁶⁵

The Original Theme of Siciliano style consists of three melodic fragments: A: bars 1–2, B: 3–5 and C: 6–11.¹⁶⁶ In contrast to the Introduction, the Theme embraces a conventional approach to tonality, though mulled—as might be expected—with the typical Regerian chromaticism: its 15 bars include 11 notes of the chromatic scale. Regardless of its deceptively plain harmonic texture, however, there are numerous motivic references to be examined further on.

The Theme is delicate and lingering, and is initiated by a mysterious two-bar phrase, which is divided in two segments (the first characterized by a descending tone followed by two ascending intervals and the second by dotted rhythmic motif), as indicated in Figure 4.7. This

¹⁶³ Paul Coenen, 'Max Regers Variationenschaffen,' (Phil. Diss., Berlin, 1935), 33. Also documented in Schmeiser, 25.

¹⁶⁴ Idea documented in Schmeiser, 29-30.

¹⁶⁵ Haupt, 'Max Regers Orgelvariationen Op. 73,' 26-33.

¹⁶⁶ Mahnke, 'Max Reger's Introduction, Variations and Fugue in F-sharp minor.' 47.

is the ‘melancholy third measure’ (of the third bar) that Reger had mentioned in his letter to Straube and it forms part of a three-bar idea (bars 3–5) that is exactly recapitulated at the end of the Theme in bars 12–15 (over again the melancholy of the third measure).¹⁶⁷ The melancholy mood and role of the Theme are also described in Reger’s letter of June 25th, 1904.¹⁶⁸ Conventionally, themes for variations are brief, expressively impartial, harmonically to some extent humble and have simple memorable melodies.¹⁶⁹ The Original Theme of Op. 73 represents a quiet *Andante* movement, more like a relief following the ruminating, highly chromatic, improvisatory, long Introduction.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the Introduction of Op. 73. The first system is marked 'Andante' and features a 'Two bar phrase' highlighted in blue. A specific measure in bar 3 is circled in red and labeled 'melancholic third'. The second system continues the piece, with another measure circled in red and labeled 'falling thirds'. The third system shows further musical development, including dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'p'. Annotations include '(8' 4' u 16', falls ein äußerst schwach intonierter 16' vorhanden)', '(nur Coppel sum 3. Man.)', and '(+16')'. Performance instructions such as 'espress.', 'molto', and 'pizz' are also present.

Figure 4.7 shows the melancholy third measure in bar 3 and the exact recapitulation of Introduction bars 7-8

¹⁶⁷ Letter to Karl Straube on the 25th of June, 1904, in Max Reger. Briefe an Karl Straube, ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn: Dümmler, 1986), 58 (Veröffentlichung des Max-Reger-Institutes, Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Bd. 10).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Mahnke, ‘Max Reger’s Introduction,’ 47.

Within the Theme we can distinguish two analogous phrases: the nearly three-bar phrase ‘a’ with its ascending direction precedes the equally three-bar phrase ‘b’. Phrase ‘b’ starts on the tonic and phrase ‘b’ rises with the downward interval of the major second ($c^5\#-b^4$) and authorizes, through the cadence, the long-expected dominant in bar 4.¹⁷⁰ Subsequently, phrase ‘a’ —the first main idea—is separated into three motifs: $c^5\#-b^4-e^5$ (motif ‘a’), $c^5\#-g^5\#-a^5$ (motif ‘b’) and motif ‘c’ with the dotted rhythmic element ($c^5-d^5-f^5$). The same principle applies to phrase ‘b’. The second main idea, phrase ‘b’, is also varied in motif ‘b’ via the descending line of $e^5-d^5\#-c^5\#$, and the distinctive falling third of $b^4-g^4\#$ acts as motif ‘c’. The quaver rest at the end of bar 10 divides the melodic line in two and therefore announces a brisk breath before recalling phrase ‘b’ (bars 3, 4 and 5).¹⁷¹ In bars 5-6 the modulation to E major returns to the tonic of F# minor in bar 8 with the pedal entry via parenthetical chords and Reger finally concludes with the dominant in bar 12.

Bar 15 reaches the tonic F# minor. It is these last bars of the Original Theme that contribute to specific variations: numbers 4, 11 and 13 begin with this phrase and the theme itself recapitulates only in bars 3–5. It is worth mentioning that the fifth, sixth and seventh notes of the Introduction are inverted to develop into the fourth, fifth and sixth notes of the Original Theme.¹⁷² Moreover, the tritone motif of the first section of the Introduction is a herald to the second bar of the Original Theme, where the melodic and rhythmic profiles are evidently matched. Reger uses the five sections of the introductory set as a cell map for all subsequent developments in the following script. The Introduction anticipates fundamentals of the Original Theme and in addition creates connections to single variations. While looking onward and synoptically, the analysis of the set, and Variations 1, 2, 5 and 12 conserve the structure and, mainly, the melody of the Theme. Hence, Variations 4, 10 and 13 extend recognizable phrases

¹⁷⁰ Idea documented in Schmeiser, 27

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 29.

¹⁷² Peterson, ‘Max Reger’s Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73,’ 284.

of the theme, while Variations 3, 6, 7, 9 and 11 develop smaller motifs.¹⁷³ Variation 8 presents the pitches of the whole Theme in the same order but in a more compressed rhythm. Although some variations don't bring the Theme, there seems to be a powerful relationship with other elements, which form the Theme.¹⁷⁴

III. IN CONNECTION WITH BACH'S GOLDBERG VARIATIONS AND SCHOENBERG'S VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE Op. 40

As previously mentioned on Chapter 1, page 11, Reger models were Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* Op. 120, Brahms's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* Op. 24, and of course the most significant of all those, Bach's *Goldberg Variations* BWV 988.¹⁷⁵ The 13 Reger Variations are not numbered. They are separated from one another by double bar lines, or they jump from one to the other defining the remarkable unity of the Op. 73 set.¹⁷⁶

Reger changes the variations he writes from keeping the 'original melodic and harmonic structure, to free-fantasy, improvisatory variations'.¹⁷⁷ Likewise, Bach's *Goldberg* and Reger's Op. 73 feature a variety of rhythms, time signatures and the constant demand of the different melodic lines for clarity and sensitivity. In both sets of variations (both *Goldberg* and Op. 73), some variations are short and some longer. The first set demands pianistic virtuosity; the second, although composed on the piano, is 'organistic'. The symbolism and its connection to religion are abundant in both pieces, although it is understandable that symbolism cannot serve as a guide to interpretation and furthermore to the enjoyment of music. Hence the 41 sections of the

¹⁷³ Peterson, 'Max Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73,' 284.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Gwilym Beechey compares the final fugue of Op. 73 with the one of Brahms Variations on a Theme of Handel, Op.24, stating that both fugues are an inevitable and natural outcome and resolution of the variations (Gwilym Beechey, 'The Organ Music of Max Reger,' *The Organ Journal* 4, no. 219 (1976):105. All the above works' connection to Reger's variation composition is also mentioned in Peterson and Mahnke.

¹⁷⁶ The same principle applies to Schoenberg's Variation on a Recitative and Reger Bach's Variations Op. 81.

¹⁷⁷ Walter Frisch, (2002): 'Reger's Bach and Historicist Modernism,' *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2-3 (Fall/Spring 2001-02): 296-312.

first part of Bach's *Clavierübung*, also balanced by the 14 plus 27 of the second and third part, in total 41, give the impression of an intellectual link to Reger's very long 41-bar Introduction of the Op. 73. There is also a danger once applying symbolism of diverting concentration from the acoustic music. Jansen states the following in the St Matthews Passion regarding Bach's number symbolism: 'the whole series consists of a quaver and twelve semiquavers, which symbolize Christ and the disciples.'¹⁷⁸ This speculated symbolism might also stand for Bach's *Goldberg Variation* I, bars 11–13 and 18–19 in the right hand, Variation III in bar 3 of the left hand and Variation XII in bars 18–19 in the tenor line and 20–21 of the right hand. The hypothesis of the above symbolism of Christ and the 12 disciples as a quaver followed by 12 semiquavers may be applied to Reger's Op. 73 Fugue on bars 20–21, 32–33, 72–73 and 80–81, as referred in Figure 4.8.¹⁷⁹



Figure 4.8: Christ and twelve disciples symbolism motif, related to Jansen's theory.

Symbolism and numbers are omnipresent on Bach and they might have influenced Reger, too. In addition, rhythmical or melodic motives are frequently linked with assorted emotions. Bach's musical signature can be found in *Goldberg's* sixth Variation in bars 11–13, and Schoenberg's *Variations on a Recitative* Op. 40 in bars 194–195 at the climax of the Fugue on the pedal part.¹⁸⁰ Bach's sequence signature could also be found in Reger's Op. 73 set: in Variation I (bars 24–25 on the left hand), Variation II (bar 37 b^4b-a^4 on the right hand and c^4-

¹⁷⁸ Martin Jansen, 'Bachs Zahlensymbolik, an seinen Passionen untersucht,' *Bach – Jahrbuch* 34 (1937): 109.

¹⁷⁹ This is not the only connection of Reger to Bach's St. Matthews Passion, as Reger makes use of 'Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir' Chorale in his Organ Suite Op. 16.

¹⁸⁰ Michael Radulescu, 'Arnold Schoenbergs Variationen über Recitative Op. 40,' *Royal College of Organists Journal*, (1982): 60.

b³ on the left hand and also in bars 38–39 on the pedal line), Variation IV (bars 66–67 on the top line of the right hand and bars 75–76 b⁴b–a³ on the top line of the left hand and c⁵–b⁴ on the bottom line of the right hand).

Reger's Variation I bears similarities to Bach's *Goldberg Variation* No. 13 in the sense that they are both ornamented variations preserving the structure and the melody of the Theme, whereas passing notes enrich the various lines of each set's Theme. These variations are extremely clear, involving both chords and the bass line. The instrumentation of the two particular variations could be presented with the solo line played either on a flute or string stop, as the accompaniment on the left hand and pedal on 'plucked string instruments' stops. Reger's third Variation could be compared to Bach's eleventh Variation. Although the performer has indications to play both variations *presto possibile* in Bach and *quasi prestissimo* in Reger, the scalar and leaping semiquavers in Bach's Variation 11 and the chromatic sextuplets of Reger's third Variation serve the Theme when this appears on the pedals and when the melody lies on the top line, whilst the sextuplets decorate it.

Finally, Reger has been influenced in his eighth Variation by Bach's *Goldberg Variation* No. 29. The common elements that appear in both variations include alternating manuals and crossed hands, arpeggios and implausible jumps, and lines with challenging hand positioning for the pianist-organist. In both variations the Theme remains on the bass line. In Reger's Op. 73 the Theme appears on the pedal line in a compressed rhythm. Both variations reveal the composer's keyboard dexterity. In the *Goldberg Variations*, the fourth part of *Clavierübung* means keyboard practice; it is an étude-like exercise, in order to become a better harpsichordist and organist. In the same concept Reger composed the Op. 73 set to serve the demand for the virtuosity, rising reputation and technical talent of the performer Karl Straube. Both Straube

and Reger had learned to value the great musical Bachian past.¹⁸¹

Keyboard practice consisting of Preludes, Allemandes, Courant, Sarabandes, Giges, Minuets and other galanteries. Prepared for the soul's delight of music lovers by Johann Sebastian Bach, at present Kapellmeister to His Highness the Prince of Saxe-Weissenfels and Director of the Choristers, Leipzig. Opus I. Published by the author, 1731.

[...] 'Since Study and Variation have always tended to circle around each other, it is not surprising that many composers cast their variations in the form of studies.'¹⁸²

Radulescu stresses that 'Schoenberg's variation cycle represents, like his predecessor Reger, a synthesis between the simple technique of ornamental or character-variation on the one hand and of the technique of classical sonata elaboration on the other'.¹⁸³ This kind of compositional technique results in a dynamic form that relies on the dialects of Reger's early 1900 organ works and reveals both complexity and magnificence, in the whole unity. Newlin elaborates that Schoenberg makes a great distinction between this modern counterpoint—the same as Reger's and the older one; the first says that modern contrapuntal art consists of combining two or more themes together in as many ways as possible, and is thematic, whereas the older counterpoint makes a point of deriving all the free counterpoint as much as possible from the given strict motive, and so is motivial.¹⁸⁴

At this point Schoenberg does not entirely adopt the harmonic language of Reger, but rather extends it and recognizes it, relying on his deep understanding of dodecaphony. As Reger in his Op. 73 and Schoenberg in his Op. 40 present, 'the leading-note harmonic principle is that the chords are no more exclusively composed of thirds'.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Reger wrote to the composer Joseph Renner: [...] 'All organ music which is not inwardly related to Bach is impossible.' Naturally, this statement may not be understood and used pedantically. But our French and English organ composers are the purest 'antipodes' of Bach, and I must completely reject their organ music! (Reger to Renner, 26 November 1900, in *Briefe eines deutschen Meisters*, ed. Elsa von Hase-Koehler (Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang, 1928), 83–84, translated by Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 201.

¹⁸² H. Truscott, 'Max Reger,' *The Music Review* 17 (1956): 139.

¹⁸³ Radulescu, 'Arnold Schoenbergs Variationen,' 55.

¹⁸⁴ Deka Newlin, *Schoenberg Remembered* (New York: Pendagon Press, 1980), 194.

¹⁸⁵ Radulescu, 'Arnold Schoenberg's Variation,' 58. For the score of Schoenberg's Variations refer to Appendix III.

IV. VARIATIONS I-XIII AND VARIATION TECHNIQUES

Reger's Variation I, bars: 15/2–30/1¹⁸⁶

a tempo (quasi un poco più mosso)

f *più f*

nur Koppel II

diminuendo *p*

pp *delicato* *molto*

+16' *pp* *molto*

crescendo *f* *p*

crescendo *f* *p*

p *molto crescendo* *f* *sempre*

nur Koppel II

p *molto crescendo* *f* *sempre*

poco ritardando

diminuendo *pp*

diminuendo *pp*

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¹⁸⁶ Complete Reger Organ Works by Breitkopf&Härtel Edition.

Variation II, bars: 30/2–45/1

120 *a tempo (quasi allegretto con moto)*

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122 *sempre ben legato*

122

44

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Reger adopts a progressive scheme of variations strengthening the solidity of the set. The first two variations constitute conventional illustrations of Reger's ability to vary a theme in a Bachian manner.¹⁸⁷ Variations I and II seem exceptionally expanded versions of the melody, with trills and written out appoggiaturas and mordents, featuring a soft beginning and gradual increase of volume and speed and conserving the harmony—almost integrally—in the pedal part. According to Allan Mahnke's analysis, Reger connects the past with the present: the past is represented by the theme and the more strict variations and the present is represented by the freer variations.¹⁸⁸

The first variation remains faithful to the archetype where the thematic and harmonic framework is entirely maintained.¹⁸⁹ Schoenberg applies the same principle in his *Variations on a Recitative* Op. 40, whereas the notes of the Recitative are circulated amongst the manual inner parts of Schoenberg's Variation I.¹⁹⁰ Reger's Variation I ornaments the Theme with passing and neighbour notes, while in Variation II the varied texture reinforces the melody, harmony and tonality of the Theme. The first three notes of Variation II foreshadow the subject of the Fugue.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, in Schoenberg's Variation II, the notes of the Recitative rise in the bass line apart from at bar 27 and the beginning of bar 28, where they emerge in the tenor line.

According to Paul Coenen, Reger's first Variation furnishes an exact thematic and harmonic rendition of the Original Theme accompanied with triplets and demisemiquavers, in which it figuratively disintegrates.¹⁹² In the middle section of the first Variation the *cantus*

¹⁸⁷ Alan Street, 'The Rhetorico-musical structure,' 89-131. Also documented in Marco Aurélio Lischt Dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73- aspectos técnico-virtuosísticos similares na obra para piano e órgão'(Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 125.

¹⁸⁸ Mahnke, 'Max Reger's Introduction,' 46-47.

¹⁸⁹ Schmeiser, 'Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,' 30.

¹⁹⁰ For Schoenberg's score of *Variations on a Recitative*, refer to Appendix III.

¹⁹¹ Best documented in Peterson, 'Max Reger's Variation and Fugue,' 285.

¹⁹² Coenen, 'Max Regers Variationen schaffen,' 34. Also documented in Schmeiser, 30.

firmus is nearly complete via the ornamentation of duplets and triplets.¹⁹³ The harmony remains similar, as the triplets have been introduced and the theme is still obvious even from the first three bars ($c^4\#-b^4-e^5-c^5\#-g^5\#-a^5-c^5-d^5-f^5$). The circulation of the duplets and triplets differs continuously; hence, the idea of a free-floating rhythm is introduced.¹⁹⁴

In the first Variation the Theme has to be played forte with the couplers included and yet the texture and chromaticism are still strengthened with a clear harmony, subdominants and long pedal notes. Figure 4.9 indicates the ornamented style of the first of the Variations and the reappearance of BACH sequence.

Var I ornamentated

Figure 4.9 is showing the ornamentated first variation and reappearance of BACH sequence

¹⁹³ Cohen really stresses the triplets' connection to phrase 'b' at the beginning of the Introduction, 'Max Regers Variationen schaffen,' 34.

¹⁹⁴ Schmeiser, 'Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,' 31, translated by Gerasimos Katsiris.

The second Variation ‘still relies wholly on the basic pattern of the Theme.’¹⁹⁵ The basic key is retained, and the harmonic perception varies only to some extent, but the Original Theme looks predominantly harder to trace than in the succeeding variation, depending on the metric reduction of the melody line.¹⁹⁶ The second Variation brings such enriched embellishments that the original line cannot be easily distinguished¹⁹⁷ (The Original Theme-line is ushered by the first note of each written out mordent on the right hand on bars 30 and 31). A secondary motif appears on the left hand of bar 30 consisting of the leading note e²# and the tonic f²# and e³#–f³# in semiquavers, moving subsequently to the pedal line in bar 31. The first five melody notes remain on the stressed beats, even though they are now diminished to demisemiquavers.¹⁹⁸ Reger makes an important statement with trills on the left hand in bar 31 (This statement will be repeated later in Variations VI, XII and the Fugue). The rhythmic and melodic outline of the head motif is already hosted in the Introduction as a written out mordent (bars 32 and 34). Moreover, towards the end of the Op. 73 composition, the head motif recurs in an augmented version, as the first motivic pebble of the Fugue’s subject (This will be examined later in this chapter). This head motif is crucial for the second Variation, as an example of how a rhythmic motivic variation works; if we were going through a metric reduction, it wouldn’t cast as a melodic variation.¹⁹⁹

After bar 36 the melody voice is partly sustained and without any rhythmic changes. The pedal voice is also barely changed. The virtuosic challenging demisemiquaver passages of bar 39 formulate efficiently the melodic high point.²⁰⁰ In contrast, the head motif is intended as connective material in a rather diverse rhythmical form. The ascending triplet semiquavers of

¹⁹⁵ At the same time as the last one: Weyer, *Die Orgelwerke Max Regers*, 97. Best documented in Schmeiser, 32.

¹⁹⁶ The Original Theme remains almost note faithful to the external basic points of the melody voice (Coenen, ‘Max Regers Variationenschaffen’ 34. Also documented in Schmeiser, 32.

¹⁹⁷ Bagier, *Max Reger*, 144.

¹⁹⁸ Schmeiser, ‘Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,’ 35.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

the first half of bar 40 appear as passing notes. In the next bar the ascending melancholic quaver movement $d^5-c^5\#-a^4-g^4\#$ is clearly audible. Motif ‘b’ of the Introduction is again introduced on the right hand of bar 42 after the hemidemisemi-quaver rest. In conclusion, a new scenery is introduced, with the loosening of the Original Theme structure and the addition of elements, like the free figurations, derived from the head motif, and the shift to smaller note values, which create a more relaxed and free atmosphere.²⁰¹ In the next three tables there is a gradual increase of velocity and dynamics throughout every table-set, which ends in an ethereal and delicate tone. In general the Theme-based variations provide a distinct relief from the frantic activity of the gradually loud and intense variations.

Table 4.4: The gradual crescendo and speed within the first three variations and the soft end of the fourth variation

Variation I	Variation II	Variation III	Variation IV
Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/f-diminuendo - p	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/f-diminuendo - p	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/fff-f-ff-non diminuendo	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/-ppp-molto crescendo-f-p
pp-molto crescendo-diminuendo- p	f-diminuendo-p	p-diminuendo-pp	ppp-pp-ppp
p- molto crescendo-f	crescendo-ff	crescendo- fff- ppp	pppp- ppp
Sempre diminuendo-p/end of variation	ff diminuendo-ppp/end of variation	ff-f-ff-non diminuendo zenith of the first three variations	pppp-ppp/End of first act of the Variations
		p-diminuendo-ppp	

²⁰¹ Best documented in Scmeiser, 39.

VARIATION III, bars: 45/2–60/1

quasi prestissimo

(45) *ff* *f* *mf*

47 *ff*

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(49) *ff* *ff* *non diminuendo*

(54) *ff* (III) *sempre diminuendo*

(50) *p* III

(56) *pp* *ff* *f*

(51) *p* III

(57) *ff* *non diminuendo (ff)*

(53) *pp* (III) *crescendo*

(59) *p sempre diminuendo* III

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There is greater freedom in Variation No. 3. The style of the third Variation fluctuates dramatically, bringing something new and reminding us of an agile monophonic toccata movement in d minor with the constant interchange of the three manuals. Definite fractions of the original demonstration of the Theme are still conserved: 15 bars in total, and also the entire base line parallels to the Original Theme (on the alto line). Both demisemiquaver sextuplets release this variation with their distinctive intervallic steps and realize formal unity.²⁰² Bars 45 and 46 (the beginning of the third Variation) bring the transposed Theme in D minor. A floating reference to bar 10 of the Original Theme is presented at bar 55, in the manual part.²⁰³ Although the Original Theme seems non-traceable in this variation, they both have the same number of bars and the fragmentation of gestures is strengthened in the whole movement.

At bar 57 a return to the idea of bar 48 is restated. Reger intentionally dispels connections with the Original Theme in this variation, predominantly concerning the longer phrase lengths and the repeated manual changes. The texture is transparent and now comparable to a trio sonata structure. The tempo indication is increased to a *quasi prestissimo* and the 6/8 bar changes to a 2/4 time signature on bar 45. There is an amalgam of triplets and sextuplets and pedal motifs of quavers and triplets. The passages alternate to each other; the toccata-like motif (bars 45–49 and 53–58) alternates with the trio motif (bars 50–52 and 59–60). The dialogue is encouraged between the manual parts and there is an obvious distinction between the toccata and trio motifs amidst the different manuals. This contrast of extrovert and introvert figurations allows for ‘breathing in the sequence of movement and rest, expansion and contraction, lightness and monumental concentration of power’ (*Atmen in Ablauf zwischen Bewegung und Ruhe, Entfaltung und Zusammenziehung, Leichtigkeit und monumentale Kraftballung*).²⁰⁴

²⁰² Idea documented in Schmeiser, 40.

²⁰³ Marco Aurélio Lischt Dos Santos, ‘Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73- aspectos técnico-virtuosísticos similares na obra para piano e órgão’ (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Ladders, 1997), 125a.

²⁰⁴ Hartmut Haupt, ‘Max Regers letztes Orgelwerk Op. 135b’ in *Mitteilungen des Max-Reger-Institutes*, 17. (Bonn: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1968): 9-10 (translation by Schwander: ‘Experimenting with contrasting approaches,’ 20.

The g# at the beginning of the first sextuplet in bar 46 seems a peculiar ending of the first bar of the variation and at the beginning of the second; if we bear in mind the Lisztian and Regerian pronouncement that ‘every chord can follow any other chord’, thus we distinguish the harmonic sequence of bars 46-49 as a fast surpassing from the basic tonality of d minor to the dominant seventh chord (bar 47) via the double dominant of E major (bar 49).²⁰⁵ However, the four demisemiquaver sextuplets succeeding the head motif and their repetition prove to have no melodic relation to it.²⁰⁶ Bars 46-49 conclude in E major, same as phrase ‘b’(bars 3-5) of the Original Theme. The semiquavers of the left hand in bars 51 and 52 remind us of the top line of the left hand of bars 6 and 7 of the Original Theme.

In bars 53–54 only the fourth sextuplet comprises thematic material. Bar 59 is utterly undistinguishable from bar 50 and the concluding cadence of bar 60 bears once again the chromatic descending movement in minor seconds.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Schmeiser, ‘Vergleichende Analyse von Regers Op. 73 und Schönbergs Op. 40,’ 40. Reger had indirectly admitted in 17 July 1902 that he is following the Liszt’s principle that ‘any chord can follow any chord’, Letter originally missing, quoted in Max Reger, *Briefe eines Deutschen Meisters*, ed. Elsa von Hase-Koehler (Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang, 1928), 94.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Schmeiser, 42.

Variation IV, bars: 60/2–86/1

quasi tempo primo (andante) ma con moto
(etwas schneller als das Tempo des Themas)

60 *ppp* (111) *molto* *p* *pp*

64 *ppp* *molto crescendo quasi f*

68 *p* *ppp* *poco* *p*

71 *pp* *ppp*

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74 *molto* *pppp* *ppp*

77 *poco crescendo* *sempre diminuendo*

80 *ppp* *molto crescendo* *f sempre diminuendo*

83 *pppp* *molto* *ppp*

M.R.17

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The fourth variation is 26 bars long. It returns to F sharp minor and to a sense of tranquility between the two toccata movements of the third and fifth variations. The choral-style fourth Variation maintains the note values of the Theme, though based much less on the Theme's thematic prototype and harmonic framework. The development of the first three variations seems to intend the fading of the Theme in a mischievous dexterity enriched by a colour palette and figuration; the ornamentation of the first three variations is interrupted by the return of the Theme note values in the fourth Variation.

The Original Theme (initially of phrase 'b') appears in the soprano part and the four-voice variation acts in the original tonality of F# and the key signature of 6/8. Furthermore, the

original plan is prolonged to 26 bars, and Reger employs most of the initial material by reorganising the order of bars; accordingly bars 3–4 of the Original Theme convert to 61–63, and 6–7 develop to be 64–65. The first three bars of the variation recall the melodic line of bars 20/2–23 (Variation I). Guido Bagier argues that the fourth Variation represents an *Andante* based on the second motif of the Theme.²⁰⁸ The relation of this motif to the whole middle part of the prototype and to a certain extent to phrase ‘a’ beyond phrase ‘b’ poses a challenge to his argument.

Bars 68 and 75 create a reference to the unsolved dominant sevenths of the first section of the Introduction. Unsolved V^7 of bar 68 (double dominant– V of $C\sharp$ – V of $F\sharp$ minor) reoccurs in bar 75 (dominant of subdominant). Subtle changes, but with constantly altered the dynamic level, necessitate consistent use of the swell box.

We may characterise the fourth Variation as a meditation to the whole set and, as Martin Weyer comments, this variation performs the role of a melancholic visualisation of the Theme.²⁰⁹ The above statement is furthermore verified by a letter from Karl Straube to Hans Klotz, in which Straube explains that ‘Everything you say regarding the formal structure is right’, as Klotz characterises the fourth variation as a ‘paraphrase.’²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Bagier, Max Reger, 144.

²⁰⁹ Weyer, Die Orgelwerke Max Regers, 97.

²¹⁰ Weyer, Die Orgelwerke Max Regers, 99.

Variation V, bars: 86/2–101/1

(86) *quasi prestissimo*

f ben marcato e crescendo

(88)

(89) *ff*

(90)

(91) *poco ritardando*
più ff non diminuendo (ff)

a tempo

(92) *crescendo*

(93) *più f e crescendo*

(94)

95 *ff* (1) *sempre*
ff

96 *crescendo*

97 *fff* *f e crescendo*
ff crescendo *fff*

98 (11)

99 *poco ritenuto* *fff*
fff

100 *a tempo* *keine Pause* *mf sempre diminuendo*
p sempre diminuendo

101 *sempre ritardando* *pp*
pp

The toccata-like fifth variation is a mixture of cantus firmus (which is represented by the Original Theme on the pedal line) and versatile passage work, recalling the virtuosity of the third variation. The sextuplets of the quasi prestissimo accompany the Original Theme melody when it is represented by the pedal line in bars 87-90 (phrase 'a' of the Original Theme in bars 87-88 and both phrases 'a' and 'b' are conjunct in bars 89-90) and 98/2-99 on the pedal part (a section of phrase 'b'- bars 3-5 of the Theme), concluding in both times with the melancholic third (bb. 1-5 and 12-15 of the Original Theme). Subsequently, splinters of the Theme drifts to the top right-hand part, in bars 89 and 93-96. The second time that pedal line bears demisemiquaver triplets arises in bar 93 (First time occurred on the fourth section of Introduction). After bar 99, Theme fragments seem lost in the composite texture played by the right hand. Hence the Theme's exploration is reintroduced at bar 98.²¹¹ In parallel with Schoenberg's Variations on a Recitative Op. 40, the notes of the Recitative in Reger's Variation 5 appear in the pedal line.

²¹¹ The Op. 73 Variation set was first published in 1904 by Lauterbach & Kuhn. Refer to the appendix III for a copy of the first edition. Hence, some differences appear between the first edition and the New Carus Edition and the Breitkopf & Härtel – another short variation appears in both the Complete Works by Breitkopf & Härtel and New Carus Edition between Variations V and VI. As Peterson states, it is a quite pianistic individual movement similar in motion to Variation V. Reger omitted this variation from the first autograph edition (Peterson, 'Max Reger's Variation and Fugue,' 247).

Optional Variation, bars 101/2–116/1 (between V and VI—brings Reger’s deleted

marks on the copy of the manuscript)



* Tak 102–116 fehlt im Originaldruck. / Bar 102–116 is missing in the original print.

page 1 of optional Variation



page 2 of optional Variation



page 3 of optional Variation

Reger uses previously recapitulated rhythmic and chromatic material on this quite static variation movement. The demisemiquaver triplets of Variation V lead to semiquaver triplets of the optional variation by an exact rhythmic augmentation on the right hand of the fifth variation. We don't know if this variation movement is incomplete or if Reger was planning initially to complete it and changed his mind before sending it to the publishers. It rather seems to spoil the flow and continuity of the variations despite its calm. The phrases seem very long, not finished, or perfected and bring similarities to the eleventh variation in the sense of syncopation. The left hand is more primitive and the tonic of F# is appearing mostly on the strong beat. The very delayed pedal entry conveys elements of the Theme (G-C-B) and recall the third variation on the idea of the trio element. The E major chord on the right hand of bar 107 is attracting the pole of a major, relative to the tonic F# minor. Pedal semiquaver triplets of bars 109-110 (recapitulated material on the fourth section of Introduction and on the fifth variation) suddenly stop. The simple 'optional variation,' quite rhapsodic in character starts and ends in F#, remains firm in tonality of F#, relieves the listener's ear of the 'loud' toccata of the fifth variation and prepares for the calm of variation VI. The deleted variation has been performed by Fernando Germani on a concert in 1979, recorded by Isabelle Demers and David Goode among others, and has been omitted by the first edition of Lauterbach and Kuhn.

Variation VI, bars: 116/2–131/1

sostenuto
pp
un poco crescendo
pp un poco crescendo

page 1 of Variation VI

diminuendo
pp
sempre poco a poco crescendo
pp
sempre poco a poco crescendo
quasi ff
pp

page 2 of Variation VI

sempre crescendo
pp
sempre crescendo
ff
poco stringendo ritardando
fff e sempre crescendo
ff e sempre crescendo
sostenuto sempre poco a poco ritardando
Org P1 iii p
pp sempre diminuendo
pp sempre diminuendo
pp

page 3 of Variation VI

Although the sixth Variation has no key signature, it seems to flirt with that of A minor. It consists of three sections. The opening bars (116–120), bear significant resemblances to bars 3-5 of the Theme. The same happens also for bars 122–124, whereas, despite the references to the original motifs of bars 6-8 of the Theme, Reger allows for more motivic development. The entire variation seems exceptionally modulated. The appearance of the trills on the left hand in bars 123-124, which embellishes the already complex melodic line is noteworthy. The Theme here is obvious within the texture of the right-hand figuration. Regardless of the rhapsodic nature of bars 126-127 the character of the initial figuration seems re-established.²¹² The opening pedal motif (semiquaver of a and quavers of d#-e) is a recalling of notes 4, 5 and 6 of the Theme. The harmonic sequence in manuals and pedals in bar 126 and 127-128 (manuals only) influences harmony and enhances tension. Descending thirds (bars 126 and 129) in the pedals later derive from the Theme and the descending scales of the left hand in bars 128 and 129 may recall Variation III. The three sections of the sixth variation are summarised as: the quiet *Sostenuto*, the loud *Più mosso assai* in the same way Variation III conveys the trio and duet sections, and the return of the opening material (*Sostenuto*). Even though the initial scheme of 15 bars (Original Theme) is adopted, the second section (bars 126-130/1) leads to the dynamic peak of the ninth variation; after *Più Mosso* in bar 126, dexterity is strengthened, preparing the texture for the ninth and twelfth variation. Basic elements of the second section include chromaticism, hemidemisemiquavers, texture influencing harmony, syncopations and sequence of bars 126-130 in both manuals and pedal parts.

The opening first two bars of the variation is represented by new material in this variation. Figuration ‘a’ (a⁵-f⁵#-e⁵#-e⁵) is converted to Figuration ‘b’ (c6#-a5-g5#-g5-f5#). Figuration ‘a’ appears as pedal entry at the beginning of the twelfth variation (a third lower, F3#-D3-C2#). Figuration ‘b’ reappears with the dynamic indication of *piu f* dynamics in bar 126 on the pedal line. Following these prelude two bars, the melody of the Theme in bars 3/2–4 appears re-harmonized in the right hand.²¹³ Bar 121 also brings the initial figuration ‘a’ of bar 116 in a sequence on the left hand. The amalgamation of these figurations is heard twice in bars 126-

²¹² Lischt Dos Santos, ‘Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73,’ (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 126.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 127.

129, which is faithfully equal to an analogous arrival of A (bars 3–4 of the Introduction). First section of bars 116-125 concludes in C Major. Bars 126 and 127 of this variation recall the Adagio third section of the Introduction. Second section of bars 126-130 concludes in diminished seventh of A minor at bar 130/1. The chromatic line of the pedal prompts the appearance of secondary dominants mainly in bars 127-128 and in different versions: diminished 7th, dominant 7th, dominant 9th without fundamental note. The sixth variation concludes with the exact recapitulation of the opening material.

Variation VII, bars 130/2–146/1

The musical score for Variation VII, bars 130/2–146/1, is presented in a standard piano score format. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system is a prelude to the main section, starting with a 'vibracissimo' marking. The main section begins at bar 132. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'ff' and 'vibracissimo', and fingering numbers (I, II, III) for the left hand. The score concludes with a double bar line and the marking 'M. R. 17'.

page 1 of Variation VII

page 2 of Variation VII

Variation 7 leads more towards the growth of fragmentary motifs and engages the 15-bar scheme of the Original Theme. The current variation presents pitches of the Original Theme in the same order but in a compressed rhythm; the ascending triplet motif in the pedal recalls the gesture of notes 4, 5 and 6 of the Theme. We may also refer to cells or fragments of the Theme, which are exceptionally fragile: the first three notes (bar 131, E⁴– G⁴ – A⁴)—leading to D minor—start a sequence of fragmentary similar motifs, either ascending or descending. The falling thirds in the pedal line derive also from the Theme, while the melancholic third bar of the latter is also heard in bars 141-143 within a three-note motif. Concerning the pedal line, bar 131 starts with a resolute and crucial pedal figure, presenting the interval of a diminished seventh in bar 132. The consequent manual changes from bar 132 strengthen the fragmentation

of motifs. Nonetheless, the rhythmic confusion formed by the asymmetrical outline of manual changes inevitably seems to disorder the fundamental pulse of this particular 2/4 movement.²¹⁴

Table 4.5 below presents the dynamic range of the second part of variations; there is a extensive climax in variation VI, but this set ends the some as the others in a peaceful elegiac tone.

Table 4.5: The dynamic range of the second part of variations

Variation V	Variation VI	Variation VII	Variation VIII
Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/f-crescendo - ff	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/pp-ppp-p-crescendo – ppp	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/p-diminuendo–pp-ppp	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/f-crescendo – fff
Piu ff-non diminuendo	ppp-crescendo-fff-pp	ff in different manuals	sempre diminuendo-ppp/End of Variation
p-crescendo-f-fff	f-crescendo-fff-organo pleno/End of Variation	diminuendo-pp/End of Variation	
mf-pp/End of Variation			

²¹⁴ Lischt Dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73,' (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 127a.

Variation VIII, bars 146/2–155

vivacissimo
f e sempre crescendo
sempre ben legato
f e sempre crescendo

148

150

152

154

sempre diminuendo
sempre diminuendo
sempre ritardando
ppp
ppp

M. R. 17

The musical score for Variation VIII, bars 146/2–155, is presented in a multi-stemmed format. It begins with a tempo marking of *vivacissimo* and a dynamic of *f e sempre crescendo*. The score is divided into four systems, each starting with a bar number (148, 150, 152, 154). The notation includes various articulations such as *sempre ben legato*, *sempre diminuendo*, and *sempre ritardando*. The piece concludes with a *ppp* (pianississimo) dynamic marking. A rehearsal mark 'M. R. 17' is located at the bottom of the page.

The eighth Variation is in the same tempo as the seventh and is separated from the previous variation only by a demisemiquaver rest. As Peterson states, although the manual parts modulate from D minor back to F# minor as in the previous variation (such as in bar 137), the

notes of the pedal melody are the notes of the Theme in its original key, with only incidental oversights and embellishments. The Theme in this variation is preserved effectively integral in the pedal part at the first two bars of the variation; nonetheless the rhythm is reduced for all notes of the Theme's melody to semiquavers.²¹⁵ Hence, modified phrase lengths and cadences derive from the general extent of this technically challenging nine-bar variation. The manual line is a rhythmical and staccato toccata-like figure, a rather rhetorical and free style passage with several subsections. It is worth pointing out that this is a modulation method that Reger used. The composer brings the pedal line out of D minor into the tonic F# minor in bar 149 and through alternating chromatic staccato chords concludes in the tonic in bar 155 (firstly on pedals F# and shortly after on manuals, F# minor chord).

²¹⁵ Marco Aurélio Lischt Dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73- aspectos técnico-virtuosísticos similares na obra para piano e órgão' (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Ladders, 1997), 127a.

Variation IX, bars 155/2–163/1

(155) *grave* *ff* *quasi prestissimo* *(ff)*

(156) *(ff)*

(157) *sempre ff e crescendo* *sempre ff e crescendo*

158

M.R. 17

159

160

più fff e sempre crescendo

più fff e sempre crescendo

161

molto agitato

162

Org P1 (*fff*)

Org P1 (*fff*)

III

The ninth variation, only seven-and-a-half-bars, scarcely establishes a unified variation, but rather acts as a rapturous interlude that is constructed predominantly upon figures firstly heard in the Introduction, but this time on the key of D minor in 6/8 time signature and with a tonally

unstable end.²¹⁶ There is a reminiscence of the tritone motif on the pedals in bar 157. The virtuosic and improvisatory figure in bar 156 is an almost a recapitulation of bar 22 in the Introduction. The sequence of descending diminished fifths (pedal line, bar 158) in combination with continuous crescendo adds tension and concludes in G. The figuration of the middle part of bar 161, starting after the hemidemisemiquaver rest on the right hand, bears similarities to the second part of the Introduction in bar 18/2. Reger concludes in the middle of bar 161 with a secondary diminished 7th of D, which leads to subdominant- G minor. Variation IX serves as the capstone of the variation movement. As the tension is extended through the dexterity of pedal line in bars 157, 160 and 161, the short variation movement reaches its final peak in bar 163 with a diminished 7th chord of F minor and the Organo Pleno of *ffff* leading to the next variation without any pause.

²¹⁶ Lisch Dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73,' (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 127a.

Variation X, Bars: 163/2–177

andante
p

164 *ppp* *ppp*

166 *ppp* *ppp* *molto crescendo* *quasi f*

172 *pp sempre poco a poco diminuendo*
pp sempre poco a poco diminuendo

176 *ritardando* *ppp*

The tenth Variation retains much of the general serenity of the Original Theme. The Pedal line abandons the intense activity and virtuosity of previous variations. Variation movement starts with bars 3 and 4 of the Original Theme, this time on the key of F minor and slightly varied. Bars 166 and 167 recall parts of 6-7 of the Original Theme, while bars 170 and 171 recapitulate exactly bars 3-4 of the Theme. Bars 173-177 act as a kind of postlude with the

exchanged pedal figures of $A^2-G^2\#-F^2\#$ and $A^2-G^2-F^2\#$ and the recalling motif 'c' of the Introduction, as shown in Figure 4.10. Interposed between phrases of the Theme in a soft character, Reger's proclivity for using fundamental notes in order to link non-related chords is noticeable.²¹⁷ Variation VI of Schoenberg's Variations on a Recitative Op. 40 bears a lot of similarities to Variation X of Reger's Op. 73 in terms of the general treatment of the Theme and its motifs. This Variation movement concludes in $F\#$ major on a fermata followed by the fresh G major tonality of the ethereal eleventh Variation.

26

The image shows a musical score for Variation X of Reger's Op. 73. It consists of three systems of music. The first system is labeled '26' and contains measures 26-28. The second system contains measures 29-31. The third system contains measures 32-34. The score is written for piano and voice. The piano part is in the upper staves, and the voice part is in the lower staves. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *molto cresc*, *quasi f*, and *pp sempre poco a poco*. The text 'motif c of the Introduction' is written in red below the first system. The lyrics 'di - mi - nu - en - do' are written below the vocal line in the third system. Red circles highlight specific motifs in the piano and bass staves.

Figure 4.10: The recall of the Theme in Variation X and motifs from the Introduction

²¹⁷ Lischt Dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73,' (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 128.

Variation XI, bars: 177/2–191

andantino

III *ppp*

die Sechzehntel in fließender Bewegung

II *ppp* 16' 8'

179

182

186 (III)

14' 8' 4' *pppp*

(III)

pppp

M. R. 17

142

189

poco a poco ritardando

pppp

(*pppp*)

The eleventh Variation acts like another intermezzo— idyllic in character—which is a-thematic, combining the element of syncopation and off beat. Its ground plan verges on the Theme; it is 14 bars long and there is some kind of ‘interior recapitulation’ of the Original

Theme:²¹⁸ Bars 178–180 resemble bars 187–189, bar 11 of the Theme is chromatically altered and in ascending motion of the left hand, while the falling thirds of bars 4–5 (Theme) appear in horizontal motion with passing tones as ostinato figure (chromatically, bars 1–3 and diatonically, bars 4–5). Additionally the right hand sequences in bars 178-180 and 187-189 are combined with the strict-rhythm ostinato on the left hand and long pedal G. Nevertheless, there is no dynamic peak. The dynamic range covers ppp to pppp and it seems to work as a contrast to Variation IX, where the dynamic range covers from sudden ff to ffff. The sustained pedal point and ostinato figuration of the left hand is inclined to strengthen the fundamental G major tonality of bars 178–180 and 187–191, as shown in Figure 11. Fresh material of bars 181-186 stands in the middle of the twice heard ostinato figurations.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for an organ piece. The first system shows a bass line with a repeating eighth-note pattern circled in orange, labeled 'ostinato figure of Theme elements on the left hand'. Above it, the right hand has complex chordal textures. The second system continues this texture with dynamic markings like pppp and 'sempre III Man. (Ch.)'. The third system shows a change in the right hand's texture with markings like 'poco a poco rit.' and 'Viuacissimo', ending with a forte (ff) dynamic. The overall texture is dense and polyphonic.

Figure 4.11: The ostinato figuration and Theme elements on the left hand

²¹⁸ Licht Dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73,' (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 128.

Variation XII, bars: 191/2–206

(191) *vivacissimo*
ff *ben marcato*

193

194 *sempre ff e crescendo*
sempre ff e crescendo

195 *fff*
ff

196 *Reine Pause*
p

197 *pp* *molto* *sempre crescendo*
pp

198 *Reine Pause*
fff *in III alle Register* *ff e sempre crescendo*
crescendo *ff e sempre crescendo*

M. R. 17

199

200

201

202

poco ritenuto

203

a tempo (crescendissimo)

204

205

206

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Variation 12. The first system, starting at measure 205, includes a treble and bass staff. Above the treble staff, it says "keine Pause". The treble staff has a dynamic marking of *p* and later *fff*. The bass staff has a dynamic marking of *p* and later *f*. There are triplets in both hands. The second system, starting at measure 206, also has treble and bass staves. Above the treble staff, it says "sempre crescendo". The treble staff has a dynamic marking of *fff*. The bass staff has a dynamic marking of *fff e crescendo*. There are triplets in both hands. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings.

The highly chromatic twelfth variation starts after the pedal triplet with a 6/8 time signature and a return to the tonic of F# minor (As mentioned earlier, the pedal entry of F3#-D-C2# recalls figuration ‘a’ of the sixth variation, a third lower). The twelfth variation is nearly 15 bars long and summons an array of fervent and nimble passage work along with a fusion of processes revised in previous variations. The first four bars take an improvisatory role with an ostinato figuration on the pedal line in bars 192-195. Reger concludes on the dominant of F# minor in bar 195 and via a continuous crescendo moves to the Vivacissimo passage. The virtuosic melody part of bars 196 and 205 of the twelfth variation along with the dynamic scheme may recall bars 5 and 11 of the Theme. A very sudden harmonic modulation to F major in second inversion is combined with a decrescendo. The bass part from bars 199-200 presents an invariable quotation of bars 134–135 of Variation 7. Bars 199 recall the sense of the left hand trills, previously stated in the sixth variation. Vivacissimo starting in bar 202 shares nearly the same pedal entry as its beginning and the ascending virtuosic manual sequence is complemented with staccato passages in bar 204. The same sudden harmonic modulation, as previously heard in bar 196, is stated in bar 205 concluding on the secondary diminished 7th of E.

The variation closes with a toccata-like manual figure of bars 205–206, which recalls bars 197-198.

Variation XIII – The Return of the Theme, bars: 206/2–225

andante

p

207 *con moto* *p* *pp*

210 *pp* *ppp*

213 *pp* *f* *p* *sempre ben legato*

216 *pp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp*

219 *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *sempre ben legato* *ppp* *sempre* *molto* *ppp* *ppp*

222 *ritardando* *diminuendo* *pppp* *pppp* *pppp*

M. R. 17

This last variation is based on the second line of the Original Theme by recalling some original harmonies: The Theme's transparent phrases are exiled, several recapitulated and the texture of the right hand is mainly chordal. The thirteenth variation involves 19 bars — a four-and-a-half-bar coda in addition to the 15 bars of the Original Theme's initial plan. As in variations 4 and 10, Reger accomplishes varied harmonic tasks: bars 209 and 210 bear bars 3–4 of the Theme in the F# major. Figure 4.12 indicates that bars 212 and 213 of the thirteenth variation recall bars 6 and 7 of the Theme in the key of F major. Bars 213/2–215/1 may repeat bars 7–8 of the Theme in the key of B minor. Finally, bars 217/2–219 remind us of the third and fourth bar of the Theme in B minor again. There is an interesting harmonic sequence in bar 219 (I-V/V-F# major). Those last four and a half -coda bars (221/2–225 in F# major) are demarcated by a change to 2/4. The rising four-note figure initiated in the left hand of bars 221 and 222 recapitulates the ostinato figuration first presented in the eleventh Variation (again on the left hand) in bars 178–180 and 187–191. With a diminished 7th chord on the tonic pedal in bar 224 Reger concludes to F# major. The variation movement fades out completely at the end of the coda, marks the end of the variation-circle and prepares the entrance of the lively fugue. Dynamic table 4.6 below sets the range of the last five variations, whereas only in Variation IX and XII the ending reaches an Organo Pleno.

31

con moto.

III. Man. (Ch.) pp

sempre p

sempre II. Man.(sw.)

III. Man.(ch.) sempre pp

III. Man.(ch.)

pp

ppp

II. Man.(sw.)

pp

exact rhythmical figuration of the Theme slips to the B minor

sempre III. Man.(ch.)

pp

ppp

II. Man.(sw.)

pp

ppp

III. Man. (Ch.)

sempre bon legato

F# major

ppp

sempre di...

mi - nu - eu - do

ppp

III. Man.(ch.)

molto

ostinato figure again - as the left hand of Var 11

ppp

sempre di...

mi - nu - en - do

ppp

tonic on the pedal

end of variations - preparation for the fugue

Figure 4.12: Reference to the Theme, the ostinato motif and preparation of the end of the variations

Table 4.6: The dynamic range throughout the last five variations

Variation IX	Variation X	Variation XI	Variation XI	Variation XIII/Return of the Theme
Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/ff-crescendo - fff	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/p-diminuendo - ppp	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/ppp-diminuendo - pppp	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/ff-crescendo - fff	Dynamic Range: Beginning of variation/p-pp - ppp
piu fff-sempre crescendo	ppp-molto crescendo-f	Sempre pppp/End of Variation	p-molto crescendo fff	pp-f-ppp
Organo pleno-ffff- first time in the set/End of Variation	pp-sempre diminuendo-ppp/End of Variation		ff-fff-diminuendo-pp	ppp- sempre diminuendo-pppp/End of Variations
			sempre ff-p-fff- sempre crescendo- Organo Pleno/End of Variation-follows the Return of the Theme	

V. THE FUGUE

Bars: 1–100

We could even speculate that the Fugue might be cast as the fourteenth Variation (or even fifteenth if we count the optional variation). The typical form of fugue seems to be the rational conclusion of the 13 variations. Despite the extreme chromaticism of the subject, in its overall structure ‘this is one of Reger’s finest fugues, being a model of concision, simplicity, precision and classical balance.’²¹⁹

The structure of the Fugue

The fugue subject seems more complex tonally than the variations and rhythmically and is divided into three units separated by rests leading to hemiola in the last bar.²²⁰ The subject of the fugue is rather long (nearly three bars and a half, as shown in Figure 4.13) and it consists of the head motif, which is characterised by ascending and descending semitones in the first three bars, concluding at bar 4 on the middle C sharp on the left hand (starts and finishes on the dominant C sharp and continues with a tonal answer on the soprano line in bar 4). The subject lies in the tenor line in bar 7 and appears in pedals for the first time, in bar 11. The countersubject is non-fixed throughout the fugue. The rhythmical motif of falling semiquavers following the Theme is distinctive and imitative of this part of the subject. The chromatic figurations and trill appear on the left hand in bars 13-15 and strengthen the texture. The first exposition in bars 1-16 concludes with the tonic of F sharp minor on a perfect cadence. The Fugue is related to the Introduction and the Theme, in the same way as the falling thirds of the second half of bar 2 of the fugue with the descending semiquavers relate to bars 4 and 5 of the

²¹⁹ Lischt dos Santos, ‘Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73, (Diss. Rio de Janeiro 1993, trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 130.

²²⁰ Peterson, ‘Max Reger’s Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73,’ 286.

Theme. Moreover, the notes on the strong semiquavers reveal a connection to the Original Theme (Fugue, bar 2 on the right hand: E⁵-D⁵-C⁵#-B⁴ recalls the Theme, bars 3-4: E⁵-D⁵#-C⁵#-B⁴-G⁴#). The subject notably uses eight of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, but in contrast to the incoherent subjects of Reger's earlier organ works, this particular one spawns intense drama and agony through its chromaticism, rhythmic diversity, descending intervals of third and the crotchet-quaver rests.²²¹

The image displays three systems of musical notation for an organ piece. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the instruction 'Vivacissimo' and 'II. Man. (sw.)'. A blue box highlights the first few notes, labeled 'subject of the fugue head motif starts and finishes on the dominant of F#'. An orange box highlights a later passage, labeled 'undveloped Bach's signature'. The second system continues the piece, with 'I. Man. (gl.)' and 'II. Man. (sw.)' markings. The third system shows the piece continuing with 'II. Man. (sw.)' and 'sempre II. Man. (sw.) sempre' markings. A blue box at the bottom of the third system is labeled 'subject on the pedal starts and finishes on the dominant of F#'.

Figure 4.13: The long subject of the Fugue and the head motif

The first episode introduced in bar 16/2 utilises the motif of subject's semiquavers, which is developed in an ascending motion (dynamic range is softer in the first episode). This motif acts as a free countersubject in bar 21, where the new re-exposition starts. Within the

²²¹ Lischt dos Santos, 'Max Reger – Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema für Orgel Op. 73, (trans. Mario P.C.R Lodders, 1997), 131.

exposition, the rhythmical motif of falling thirds of semiquavers in bars 2, 9 and 13 is expanded and altered with different intervals. After the end of exposition in bar 36, another episode makes a start on a semiquaver motif deriving from the last two bars of the subject in both manuals and pedal line. The episode is developed in a longer and thicker structure; chromaticism is enriched, the rhythmical motif of falling thirds is thicker. The head motif stands in bar 39 without completing the subject, although left hand and pedal are continuing with semiquaver motif. The episode ends in bar 40/2 and a re-exposition starts with complete subject, different countersubject, but combines though the semiquaver motif as before. This re-exposition concludes in the tonic in the middle of bar 49. A new episode starts in bar 49/2 and a new exposition is stated in bars 54-66/1 appearing on the pedals (F³#-G³-F³#). At bar 57/2 a long episode bears a head motif sequence in both manuals and pedal line. There is an interesting sequence of the head motif in the pedals in bars 60–62, whereas the head motif continues with leaps of the subject up to bar 65 in the pedals. The new episode in bar 70 reveals again subject elements and the very important rhythmical motif of semiquavers. The recapitulation of the subject by the pedal line at the end of bar 80 is followed by an altered answer on the right hand of bar 81. Following a long-lasting pedal point on the dominant of F#, after the end of last stretto, Reger concludes with the dominant of the dominant without a fundamental note in bar 99.

Karl Straube described the fugue in a letter to Hans Klotz:

Quietly flowing eighth notes give the tempo of the fugue. The dynamic level of the final movement is in sounds of medium volume and softer, since there is a floating, not forceful feeling in this fugue. Only in the last third does the intensification start, perhaps not until the last fourth (I do not have the notes in front of me). The close then leads to full organ in a broad tempo.²²²

²²² Straube to Klotz, in *Briefe eines Thomaskantors*, 162.

The elegant quavers of the fugue set a vivid, but not yet rushed tempo; at the last three pages there is gradual continuous crescendo leading from the trio passages to the magnificence of a large symphonic organ. As mentioned earlier on, the Op. 73 fugue unfolds to a certain extent classically with a four-voice exposition in bars 1–16, followed by an inclusive counter exposition of bars 21–36. In his analysis of the Op. 73 fugue Peterson claims that these two formal units occupy almost exactly one-third of this 100-bar fugue and are complemented at the end by two strettos in bars 66–69 in E minor ($B^2-C^2-B^2$ on the pedals- continuing as a duet between soprano and pedal line) and in bars 84–88 starting on the pedal line $C^3\sharp-D^3-C^3\sharp$ and continuing as a three-voice stretto (as shown in Table 4.7). The first of these begins in bar 66 and balances the end of the counter exposition.²²³ The last, as shown in Figure 4.14 begins in bar 88, marks the beginning of the coda, the last appearance of the subject and leads into the end of the highly intellectual and passionate fugue. The final fugue of Op. 73 balances in time the long Introduction and there seems to be a mathematical symmetry between the two poles of the work.

Table 4.7: The expositions, episodes, strettos and subject measurement

Expositions	Episodes	Stretti	Subject	
bb. 1-16	bb. 16/2-20		bb.1-4	
			bb.8-11	
bb. 21-36 counter exposition	bb. 36-42		bb.20-36	
bb. 42/2-49/1 re exposition	bb. 49/2-54/1		bb.42/2-45	
			bb. 46-49	
bb. 54-66/1 exposition	bb. 57/2			
	bb. 69-77		bb. 66-69	bb. 77-81
	bb. 81-84		bb. 84-88	bb. 89-91
	bb. 92-94	bb. 88-93	bb. 95-100	

²²³ Peterson, 'Max Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73,' 286.

The image shows a musical score for a piece in F# major, likely a fugue. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with the instruction "Man. (Gt.)" and piano accompaniment. The second system features a vocal line with "do" lyrics and piano accompaniment. The third system includes a vocal line with "do" lyrics and piano accompaniment, ending with "Al Fine".

Annotations in the score include:

- subject again**: A blue bracket highlights a melodic phrase in the vocal line of the first system.
- inverted beginning of the fugue**: A red circle highlights a specific chordal texture in the piano accompaniment of the second system.
- last appearance of the subject**: A red circle highlights a melodic phrase in the vocal line of the second system.
- end of stretto leading to coda**: A blue bracket highlights the final measures of the piano accompaniment in the second system.
- V⁹/V of F# major without fundamental note**: A red box highlights a specific chord in the piano accompaniment of the third system.

Other markings in the score include "sempre *ff* e cre", "rit.", "Al Fine", and "Org P".

Figure 4.14: The end of second stretto leading in to coda and the last appearance of the subject

Chapter 5

A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF Op.73

I. REGER'S NOTES ON OP. 73 AND STRAUBE'S PERFORMANCE NOTES OF REGER'S WORKS

The period 1898-1902 was one of ceaseless and intensive composing, in which Reger completed most of his major organ works. His real *annus mirabilis* was 1902, when, having been resident in Munich for a year and after two unsuccessful attempts, to finally married Elsa von Bercken. The couple adopted two orphans; Reger adored children, but unfortunately could not have any of his own. From the very day of his appointment as Professor of composition at the Leipzig Conservatory, he started a marathon effort of composing, teaching and performing throughout Europe, in countries including the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Russia and England.

In general, what predominates in Reger's approach to composition is the 'leading note principle'.²²⁴ Also, the harmonies mainly if not exclusively are based on thirds. His harmonic structure is bound up with the complementary 'relationship of tonic and dominant, and of principal and secondary degrees and traditional modulations'.²²⁵ Especially in the theme-and-variations form, Reger in his Op. 73, like Schoenberg in his Op. 40, composed his variations for organ at the piano, which explains the complexity and richness of their manual parts. In 10 May 1940 Schoenberg wrote a letter to the Berlin musicologist Werner David explaining that his approach to composing for the organ focuses solely on the idea of writing for a keyboard instrument.²²⁶ He goes on to advocate the redundancy of the multiple colours of an organ, as

²²⁴ Michael Radulescu, 'Arnold Schoenbergs Variationen über Recitative Op. 40,' 58.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Willi Reich, Arnold *Schönberg* oder der conservative *Revolutionär*, 269.

clarity of sound can only be achieved and determined by the dynamics and the dynamic range of an instrument.²²⁷

a. Tone colours and registrations

In their approaches to organ composition both Reger and Schoenberg had in mind when [working on their organ variations] was the sound of the German ‘orchestral’ organ at the start of the twentieth century, where the tone-colour of the stops expressed simply the concept of motif and theme, and (one must allow) the clarity of structure. In Reger’s Op. 73 Variations, the clarity and transparency of the motifs, and the thematic concept of expression and of the work’s character, can as a rule, be realised by appropriate articulation.²²⁸ Affected articulation can be achieved as crescendo-and-diminuendo, whether on manuals or pedals, if there is no time to add or lose stops, the use of a sequencer or the crescendo pedal. In Reger’s Op. 73, there is nothing that specially indicates what registration should be used, or even whether not to use the crescendo pedal. This is how Schoenberg, in a letter of July 31, 1930 to the conductor Fritz Stiedry, describes that the quality of phrasing is the element that delivers clarity of sound and transparency as opposed to the impression created by the mere consonance of intricate parts.²²⁹

It could therefore be argued that a successful choice of registration for Reger’s Op.73 can be based on 8-foot stops, and for the ethereal passages some solo stops.²³⁰ One can then add, within reason, reeds according to tonal style, followed—very sparingly and discreetly—by mixtures, particularly when the performer is nearing the fortissimo close of the Variations. One source of inspiration for colouristic registration might be the colours and expressive quality in

²²⁷ Willi Reich, Arnold *Schönberg* oder der conservative *Revolutionär*, 269.

²²⁸ Radulescu, ‘Arnold Schoenberg’s Variation on a Recitative Op. 40,’ 62.

²²⁹ Reich, Arnold *Schönberg* oder der conservative *Revolutionär*, 185.

²³⁰ Organ registration matters will be dealt with in more detail later in the dissertation.

the paintings of the Swiss symbolist Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) and the German, Max Klinger, (Feb 1857-July 1920), whose work seems to be at a peace with Reger's own art of composition. Arnold Böcklin's painting 'The Isle of the Dead' is represented on four poems: 'sound pictures' by Max Reger. Max Klinger was the creator of the famous marble Beethoven statue, played the piano and was a friend of Max Reger and Johannes Brahms, for whom he made the Brahmsphantaisie etchings. He drew in 1916 the portrait of Max Reger on his death bed. When Reger refers to 'light' and 'dark' colours, he urges the performer to choose registration as in tone-painting.²³¹

As it is stressed in the Preface of Breitkopf Organ Editions 'the only thing that Reger wanted to obtain with his excess of dynamic markings was an 'emotionally stirring interpretation,' meaning that every dynamic marking influences the tempo relationships in a work'.²³² Throughout the work, there need be no strict maintenance of tempo; it must be adjusted flowingly, in accordance with expressivity.

b. The performer's role as a co-composer

Especially in Reger's keyboard music, there is a long tradition of 'undernotating' music: our modern, positivistic view of notation wrongly believes that the score should precisely match what one hears in performance. Contrariwise, performers of earlier repertoire fully acknowledge the distance between score and performance, offering a useful approach to Reger's Op. 73—which itself owes a debt to earlier repertoires. Performers, organists and composers feel they have lost valuable time and must manage to get their efforts and

²³¹ Anderson argues that the juxtaposition of transparent registrations at 8' and 4' with darker combinations at 16' and 8' represent the ultimate displacement of darkness by light, as the advent of Christ in earth, the victory of good over evil. He continues that subjective tone painting is in some sense overcome by objective, scholarly counterpoint (Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 47-48).

²³² Karl Straube, Stuttgart 1952, in *Briefe eines Thomaskantors*, 174.

intellectual energy down on paper quickly, beyond the call of duty. All too often, however, their efforts have a constricting effect.

Almost all music is dependent on the manner of its performance, and is entirely bound up with it; and performance is the outcome of the decisions taken by any given performers. In certain repertoires—especially keyboard music, more generally—the performer often amounts to a sort of co-composer; she or he does not merely regurgitate at the composer’s prompting, but is an engaged actor, entirely creative and vividly spontaneous.²³³ Benjamin Britten acclaimed the trilogy composer, performer, listener ‘Holy Trinity.’²³⁴ The performer breathes life into the spirit of the piece, as we can see from the Straube-Reger synergy. Reger, of course knew this and accepted it.²³⁵ He had a blind trust in Straube’s judgment as performer, relying on his registration schemes, his seamless crescendo and diminuendi and—as many organists do—he altered his viewpoint, as is only natural and to be expected.²³⁶

c. Rhythmic measurements

Performance aesthetics in 1900 treated the quaver as the unit of rhythmic measurement.²³⁷ This seems to have been the ruling principle in Straube’s performances, for the Op.73 Variations, according to the marking in the manuscript, is timed at over forty minutes.²³⁸ The quaver, as a basic metrical unit in Op. 73, is an essential factor of study at most points: the five sections of the Introduction, the Original Theme itself, and all Variations (except sections one and three of Variation VI and Variation XI, where semiquaver is the counting unit), whether virtuosic or

²³³ Stockmeier, Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret, 21, originally in Hartmann: Aesthetic, Berlin 1953, p.123. (Straube had all Reger’s first premiere works, except Op.73 first performed by Fischer, 40, No.2 by Otto Burkert and 135b by Hermann Keller).

²³⁴ Address on receiving the first Aspen Award (Faber, 1964).

²³⁵ Sometimes Reger had given even unfinished manuscripts to Straube, with good trust that his co-composer will directly participate in the genesis of a piece [Max Reger: ‘Max Reger- Briefe an Karl Straube’, ed. Susanne Popp, (Bonn: Dümmler, 1986), 213].

²³⁶ Wolfgang Stockmeier, Stockmeier, Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret, 21-22.

²³⁷ Ibid., 23.

²³⁸ See copy of manuscript in Appendix III.

not. For the organist follows the music; is guided by the movement of the voices and the modulations and by the flexibility of sections and chromatic paths. Karl Montgomery Rufus Siegfried Straube, as editor and co-composer, he appears the ideal performer of the work.

d. Performance preparation and counting units

With reference to the tempi of his organ works, Reger said, in a letter to Gerard Bunk, that they should not be followed strictly, and that the faster indication was meant to show a lively, clear tempo.²³⁹ Therefore, slow passages in his works could be performed in a more flowing manner.²⁴⁰ Conversely, fast passages should never be taken any faster than marked. There seems to be no hint either in Reger's letters, or in his postcards to other composers that his 'slow' organ works could be played still slower. According to Klotz, Straube regularly scaled down Reger's metronome markings by about a third, and often by more than half.²⁴¹ The composer's own marking for his D major Fugue is minim = 56; Straube altered this to quaver = 92.²⁴² In a similar instance, the Op. 59 D minor Toccata, the vivace marking was rendered by Straube as quaver = 120, which Stockmeier, in the notes to his edition of this work, calls 'criminal interference.'²⁴³ Straube seems to have given great attention to detail and clarity, but perhaps because of his preference to slower tempi he was losing something of the totality of the piece and turning it, to use Stockmeier's phrase, into 'pieces of a mosaic.'²⁴⁴ Rather than the listener perceiving a larger form, we are left with loosely connected fragments.

²³⁹ Gerard Bunk, *Liebe zur Orgel: Erinnerungen aus einem Musikerleben* (Dortmund: Ardey, 1958), 74.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' 23.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

e. Harmonic and chromatic language

After the first or second practising of a Reger organ piece, it proves to be easier to decode the composer's harmonic and chromatic language and efficiently apply reading and performing techniques to his large scale organ works; in the effort to proceed in understanding Reger's architecture, one might use the various tonal areas as points of gravitation towards or away from which the music flows.²⁴⁵ Therefore, creating a constant interplay between stable and unstable passages, chromatic or not, tempo-expansions or contractions, seems to be an exciting but inevitable journey.

f. Is there a single 'correct' Reger interpretation?

A recording was issued in the 1980s with the title 'Max Reger plays his own music'.²⁴⁶ The recording contained Ops. 56, 59, 65, 67, 80 and 85, which are slow and single-movement works. For Hermann Unger (1886-1958), Reger is a 'slapdash' organist, concentrating on fast tempi, which even the composer himself does not follow and is continually slowing down. The implication of this description is that Reger's limited competence and dexterity at the organ, which he had not played since he left Weiden, may have compelled him to adopt slower tempi. Unger adds that it was Reger himself who, because of his heightened emotion, passion, and creative oestrus, would indicate faster tempi.²⁴⁷

As Peter Kivy comments, a 'very good' performance is yet one more form of art.²⁴⁸ He pinpoints the double faceted nature of music; its written form on one hand and the outcome of

²⁴⁵ As it is well known, Reger composed in black ink, later superimposing performance directives in red ink (Anderson: Max Reger and Karl Straube, 71).

²⁴⁶ See Discography III, Various Artists Welte-Philharmonie-Organ: Max Reger, Eugene Gigout, Joseph Bonnet, Marcel Dupré, organ, 1CD (1988), Intercord INT LP 160.857.

²⁴⁷ H. Unger: Max Reger ; Darstellung seines Lebens, Wesens und Schaffens (Munich: Drei masken Verlag, 1921), 32. Reger is also described as a 'clumsy' organist in Hermann, Max Reger: Zur Rezeption in seiner Zeit.

²⁴⁸ Peter Kivy, Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 278.

the actual performance on the other.²⁴⁹ Nicholas Cook similarly claims that the transformation from the musical discourse as written to its development as reproduction of sound not only contains positive rewards but harbours unsuspected dangers.²⁵⁰ Written text and sound are two parameters of each organist-performer's personal study, their common outcome being the listener.²⁵¹ Kivy objects to the latter, and insists on the gap that is to be expected between the text and the performer,²⁵² embracing Taruskin's views about the limits of authenticity and performance on period instruments.²⁵³

Discussions of performance practice have moved on since Taruskin. So if an organist is giving a 'correct' or 'authentic' performance, the performer's role becomes negligible; she or he sacrifices, on the altar of authenticity, the inalienable right to a personal breadth of interpretation. The concept of a composition might be the creative result of the composer's intentions together with the interpreter's reading and performance, in accordance always with the composer's vision and the listener's overall perception of the text as performance. Of course we can never predict with certainty exactly what percentage of the composer's original intentions will remain after a particular performance and a particular hearing. We must also consider that the size of the venue is surely vital; in general, bigger venues entail longer delays and hence slower tempi. Kivy identifies the idea of a musical work as a separate entity, different from score or performance, and raises it to a more abstract and complex historical construct.²⁵⁴

Stockmeier sees Straube as losing the visionary quality of Reger's Op. 59 D minor Toccata, as regards dynamics, phrasing, and voices-leading, a condemnation of the motives of any organist (he means Straube) who has the nerve to produce his own edition alongside the

²⁴⁹ Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance*, 278.

²⁵⁰ Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 58-59.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² Kivy, *Authenticities*, 272.

²⁵³ Taruskin, *Introduction to Essays: Text and Act*, 5-11. What it has retained from Modernism's 'performance practice' are frankness and accuracy, fidelity to the text and rhythmic flexibility (Taruskin, *ibid.*, pp. 164-172).

²⁵⁴ See Peter Johnson, 'Exploring the Idea of the Two Musics,' *Musical Times* (August 1997): 6.

composer's original, in the secret belief that he is making the composer's text more intelligible, more accessible and more pointed.²⁵⁵ Stockmeier recognises very clearly the part played by Straube in rescuing Reger's organ works during the Orgelbewegung, but at the same time he convicts Straube of the lack of talent for composing which led him into mistaken performance decisions. (Straube's lack of experience with composing was a hindrance to his work as a performer). Reger, for his part, does not seem to have recognized Straube as an invasive force; he always trusted the Berliner implicitly, blindly even, giving his approval to promptings and changes of all kinds.²⁵⁶ He felt only an overwhelming gratitude, for it was Straube who brought Reger's works before the public, as Cantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. The truth is of course that many of Straube's 'corrections' were due to the application of the various kinds of mechanical or pneumatic-action stops on the early-twentieth-century organ.

g. How to judge a performance

Our first point of departure might be the degree of transparency in reading and expressing the music's text, a process requiring many hours of practice. Next might follow the decision about tempi, a personal matter; proper use of rubato; corresponding tone-colours and choices of registration; and a matching imagination and restlessness of spirit. For the specific case of Reger's Op. 73, a good suggestion is the one made by Ronald Woodley, who underlines the aspect of irony in the compositional process as for instance the interplay between chromaticism and diatonism.²⁵⁷

Straube made no recordings of Reger's organ works, and it was mainly he who gave them their first performance. This being so, how should one best approach his method of performance?

²⁵⁵ Straube to Fritz Stein, 29 November, 1946, in *Briefe eines Thomaskantors*.

²⁵⁶ Reger possibly felt less confident of himself as an organist than as a composer.

²⁵⁷ Ronald Woodley, 'The First Printed Musical Dictionary,' review of *Diffinitorium musicae: Un dizionario di musica per Beatrice d' Aragona*, by Johannes Tinctoris, ed. Cecilia Panti, *Early Music* 34, no. 3 (August 2006): 479.

Straube's three editions of Reger, for *Alte Meister* and in general, shed much light on performance, articulation, phrasing, and choice of registration for the works of Bach and Reger. In Straube's 1938 version of Op. 27 we find notes on pedalling and fingering, as the publications from 1912 Op. 59/7-9 and 1919—Preludes and Fugues from opera 59, 65, 80 and 85 contain only registration, articulation and tempi indications. In his foreword to the first volume of *Alte Meister* (1908), when speaking of (contemporary) performances of composers of the past, Straube refers to a special tone-colour, which he calls *Farbenakkord*, that gives a work light and meaning.²⁵⁸ So we can understand why Reger should have referred, in his notes on registration, to 'light' and 'dark' tone-colours, from as early as 1912 onward, Straube was producing performing editions of Reger's works. In his foreword to his 1938 edition of Reger's Op. 27 *Fantasia on the Chorale 'Ein Feste burg'*, of 1898, Straube explains away any mistrust towards his edition attributing the incongruence with the original expression indications to the different technical standards of an organ built according to the classical tradition as opposed to the tone-colour requirements set by the romantic period. Moreover, he makes clear that his edition bears the verbal and written consent of the composer. As a result of Max Reger's works being included in my own concert programs, a feeling of 'lift-off', the unworldly, the sublime, has sometimes permeated the ethereal harmonies and chromatic motifs; the great number of dissonances, the torrent of tone-colours and the pathos give way to calmness and eventually to catharsis.

Indeed, the sense of absolute concentration, what you feel when you are completely outside your body and are riding and directing the sound, is beyond price. You feel as if you are controlling the music entirely at your fingertips, that you can present it and teach it, can share it with the listeners. Reger's dark and light colours are the materials of which the final performance is made.

²⁵⁸ Straube does not include fingering or pedaling indications in Reger's *Alte Meister*.

h. Preparation of Registration

It is true that majority of organ compositions are spiritually designed for one particular organ. With the above way of thinking about what registration to use, the result is that one would never be able to plan a varied programme for every organ recital; each piece would have to be played on a separate instrument. It is achievable, for example, for one play to carry a recorder, a single-key transverse flute, a classical flute, a wooden boehm flute and a modern flute and cover about four hundred years of repertoire. This is utterly unachievable for organists, so perhaps, more than any other instrument which spans the previous centuries, organists must make compromises relating to instruments if programmes are to include repertoire from outside the era they were built. Any organ is the outcome of proper study and planning by advisers and organ-builders so as to fill a specific space with sound. Straube had stressed that a Reger composition could be performed on a smaller organ of the Classical period with limited tone-colours as the Haas organ in Basel—on a two-manual instrument, even—provided there was well-balanced use of stops to ensure successive crescendo and diminuendo, and of varied tonal contrasts and solo tone-colours.

Straube's lack of intervention in the process of publication raises further questions to which there are unfortunately no good answers. In *Op. 73* Reger only provided instructions about registration for his Theme (or the Theme-based Variations), as regards the stops' tonal style and the use of couplers and nothing more; his publishers, Lauterbach and Kuhn, followed his wishes to the letter. There are just a few imperceptible differences between the autograph score and the first edition (as can be seen in Appendix III). The autograph contains a variation for thirteen and a half bars that follows Variation V. This Variation strongly reminds the listener of variation V and appears a sort of long 'sequence' to the original variation; Reger had deleted it—probably because it acted as a long continuation of Variation V—and Kuhn does not include it in the first edition. In the second half of Variation V bar 92 Reger 'arranges' the

voices with vertical lines (See copy of manuscript in Appendix III). The second time when Reger provides suggestions for registration is in Variation XI and here again it is the Theme which he takes as his basis (see Appendix III).

Throughout Op. 73, there are no markings for the use of the crescendo-pedal. This looks to have been by now an emergency solution rather than a musical one, for use only when there was not enough time to prepare a registration. In bar 79 of the Fugue, Reger again ‘stacks’ the voices, between the pedal and the left hand. The Fugue, in classic form and balanced to perfection, is perhaps the most difficult part of Op. 73 to prepare for a live performance on a relatively ‘modern’ organ, as the Mander Organ in Canterbury Cathedral . Time is needed for the Trio sections to balance themselves, and for the acoustic result to be ‘effortless,’ transparent and pure. Once more there are no registration markings by Reger; instead he leaves the decision to the discretion of the organist (in this case, Straube). This is not the case, however, with the composers of the French School such as Duruflé, Messiaen and Poulenc who all gave detailed instructions about registration for every chromatic change (see figure 5.1 for analytical index of composers-compositions around Reger’s era). This happens probably because Reger was never an official organist to any specific church and he rarely played the organ after he left Wiesbaden in 1901, or because he leaves this freedom to the organist depending on the organ specification. Op. 73 is pervaded by a calm strength; the power, clarity and insightfulness of the polyphony in Reger’s previous large-scale organ works and registration scheme support the chromaticism and the transparency of the dramatic melodic line.

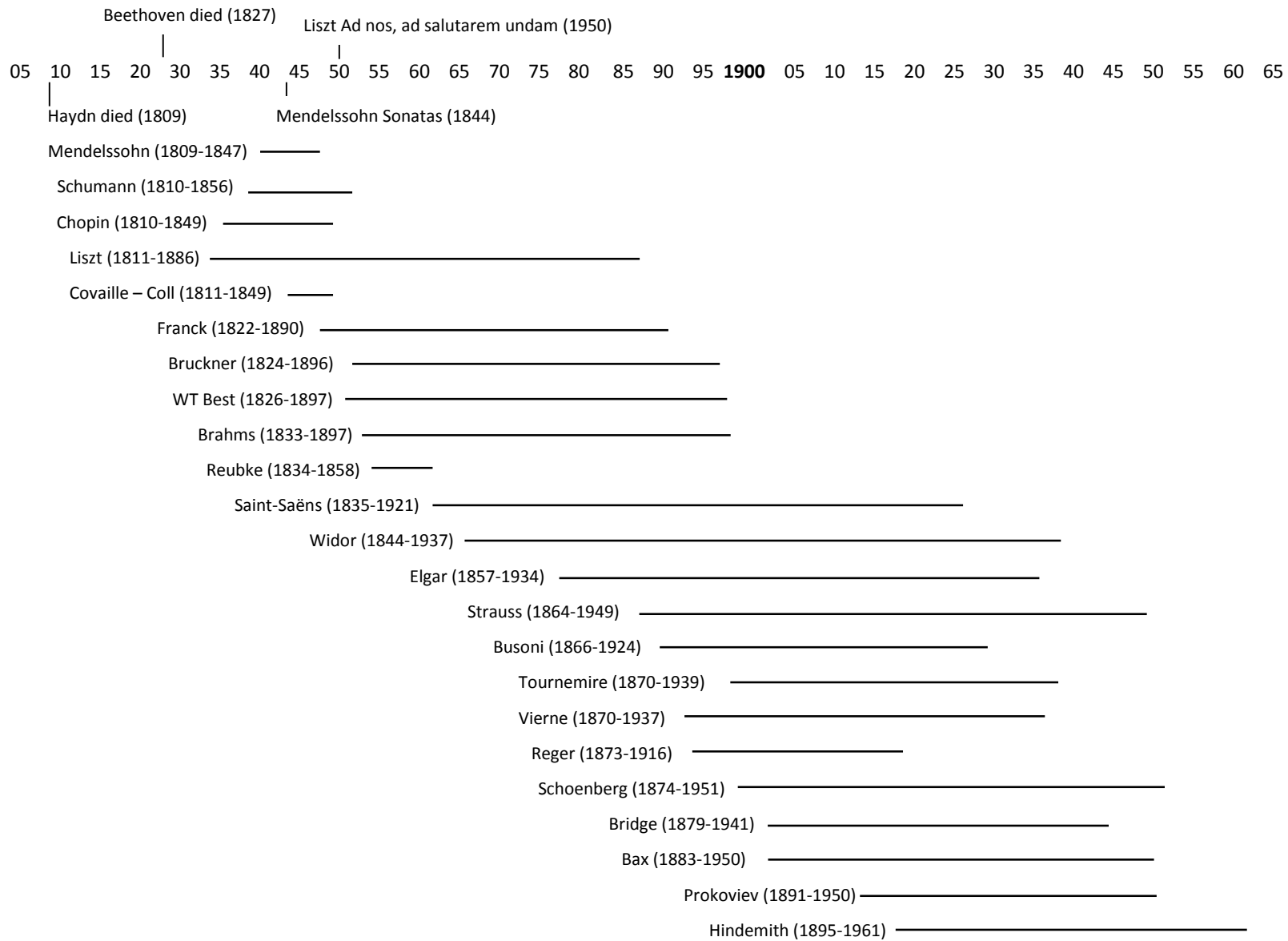


Figure 5.1: Timeline of composers that lived around Reger's era

II. REVIEWS OF STRAUBE'S PERFORMANCES OF OP.73 AND DISCUSSION OF RECORDINGS AND DISSERTATIONS

Of Straube's debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 7 October 1909, Eugen Segnitz wrote:

The distinguished artist's eminent ability is sufficiently well known and constantly affirmed, especially his inexhaustible art of registration. Nevertheless, in the performance of [Johann] Sebastian Bach's C major Toccata, Adagio and Fugue [BWV 564] he unquestionably presented too much of what is good and interesting. The slow middle movement, for example, sounded magnificent, but thoroughly un-Bach-like, completely modern. As a result of the effort to proceed from modest beginnings through great crescendo, the Fugue appeared in part too fragmented, in part too paltry overall.²⁵⁹

Kurt Hermann had much the same to say in his review of Straube's Bachverein concert in Leipzig in 1 March 1911:

It seemed somewhat surprising that Professor Karl Straube played the Fugue of the 'Dorian' Toccata [BWV 538] fairly slowly from the beginning, that he conceived the piece weakly, and that, after a constant crescendo, he again took up the opening dynamic halfway through, thus disturbing the effect and unity of the whole.²⁶⁰

Despite some negative comments regarding Straube's flexibility of rhythm, it was he himself, in 1950, and undoubtedly with reference to planning of registration and delicate gradation of sound, who claimed to have discovered 'the Romantic Bach,' and who went on to say, that a big crescendo is followed by an expected, uninterrupted, passionate accelerando, as a result of which the tempo at the end seems like almost double the tempo at the start.²⁶¹ His mentor teacher, Heinrich Reimann, pursued the same principle of performance practice, where a Bach fugue was executed on a gradual crescendo integrated with an accelerando.²⁶² Hence, Straube praises in his description all the exquisite traits, such as the lively counterpoint or the elaborate polyphonic texture, that enhance the artistic outcome and structural cohesion as well

²⁵⁹ Eugen Segnitz, *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 36, (15 October 1909): 791.

²⁶⁰ Kurt Hermann, *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 38, no. 10, (10 March 1911): 285.

²⁶¹ Karl Straube, 'Rückblick und Bekenntnis,' *Musik der Kirche* 20, no. 3 (1950): 86-87.

²⁶² Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition of organ pedagogy.' 46.

as provide an opportune expressive means for the organ.²⁶³ Despite all this, one of Straube's pupils, Fritz Stein, bears witness to Straube's excessive use of rubato and his inability to maintain a steady tempo, especially when playing Bach. Stein refers with particular sarcasm to Straube's inability to play even one short phrase in the same tempo. Straube's acceptance of this criticism led him to begin continuous study using a metronome.²⁶⁴

a. Reger's performances and performance indications

Although Reger composed his Op. 73 at the piano during the summer months, he seems to have had a comprehensive understanding of the problems with which the acoustics of a church present the organ-builder. Hambraeus asserts that Reger was fully aware of the idiomatic language of the organ and the piano and could ably attune his tempo indications to the structural instrumental characteristics and the particular hall and church acoustics.²⁶⁵ There is evidence for how Reger himself played the piano and the organ, and how he conducted, in his own 1905 and 1913 recordings for the Welte firm; and also in the notices of his concerts.²⁶⁶

Since we are trying to define how Reger himself intended his organ works (due to lack of recordings) and since the only evidence at our disposal is that which refers to early twentieth century performance practices, it is really Straube who looks as if he is our main research source, even though he never himself recorded any of Reger's organ works. Hermann J. Busch

²⁶³ Stein, 'Erinnerungen an Karl Straube,' *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 114/3 (March 1953): 139-148. (Also in Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition of organ pedagogy,' 125: 'Straube's tendency to prefer slower tempi over faster ones is doubtless based in both the tonal characteristics of organs from the period and the nature of Reger's harmonic language itself. Tempo was, for him a function of registration, at least in so far as the weighty full organ of Sauer tends to obscure dense, harmonically complex passages'. This principle would have been followed ideally for the performance of Op. 73.

²⁶⁴ Documented in Christopher Anderson, 'Karl Straube as Organist: Defining and Evaluating the Evidence,' *The Royal College of Organists Yearbook*, (2000): 135.

²⁶⁵ Hambraeus, Bengt, 'Karl Straube, Old Masters, and Max Reger: A Study in 20th-century Performance Practice' *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning* 10 (1987): 37-73; reprint with revisions in *Reger-Studien 5: Beiträge zur Regerforschung*, Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, 10 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1993), p. 55f.

²⁶⁶ Documented in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 18. Original Source by Wilske, Hermann, *Max Reger: Zur Rezeption seiner Zeit*, Wiesbaden, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1995.

discusses the problematic nature of defining Reger's will through Straube's intervention, which involves the latter being a point of reference in terms of Reger interpretations on the one hand and the contradictory performance indications on the other, ultimately necessitating the performer's intuition.²⁶⁷

b. First performance and critical responses of Op. 73

The creative idea of an Original Theme serves as the foundation for the grand construction of the following 13 variations and fugue. In Reger's variations the unity of the basic mood is retained; he speaks of a wistful mood and resignation which should serve as a general characteristic, where the great role of the third bar is often quoted in the course of the variations. The Op. 73 genesis began with Karl Straube's organ recital on 14 June 1903. Straube had asked Reger to write him a work to perform on this occasion, a composition that was to have no connection with the Protestant liturgy and the Lutheran Chorales, unlike Reger's Chorale Fantasias hitherto, and that was to be based on a theme of the composer's own.²⁶⁸ Reger accepted Straube's proposal, and the piece was composed at Berchtesgaden. Completed by the end of the two-month summer holidays, it was then sent for publication to Lauterbach and Kuhn, on 26 September 1903.²⁶⁹ Of the Original Theme and its creation, Reger noted to Straube:

[...] yes, what should I say? The work itself was born out of a truly melancholy mood; in its resignation the theme says everything; the 'melancholy' third measure of the theme itself plays a major role throughout the work: I think that will probably be enough, you know I am so

²⁶⁷ Busch, Hermann J., 'Einige Probleme des Regerspiels,' in *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, ed. Busch, Hermann J. (Wiesbaden: Merseburger, 2007), 68.

²⁶⁸ Peterson, 'Max Reger's Variation and Fugue,' 284.

²⁶⁹ Hans Klotz, 'The Organ of Max Reger: An Interpretation', translated by Mark Venning, *The Organ Yearbook* 5, (1974): 69.

reluctant to talk about it, because I feel it is ‘posing’ to ‘show off’ about one’s moods and emotions.²⁷⁰

Reger stressed to the editors that he was responsible for every detail in this composition; he wrote back to the editors on the 29 of September:

In case you and the honorable experts don’t like my opera 71, 72 and 73, please return the manuscripts as soon as possible, as I have received particularly for these works unusually good offers! I mean, I have the feeling that my opera 71, 72 and 73 are not to your liking, and the last thing I would like is to impose this on you. I assure you in no way will you make me angry if you send the opera 71, 72 and 73 back, as I would not be able to challenge the wisdom of the honorable experts, for I am a very bad musician!²⁷¹

The publishers had previously sought advice from Karl Straube regarding some of Reger’s works and apparently managed to calm down the composer by writing a long reconciliation letter two months later. Reger sent Straube a copy of the corrected manuscript in December 1903, for the virtuoso to play in his last concert of the season.²⁷² Communication between Reger and Straube seems to have been almost severed from 1903 until at least 1904.²⁷³ Straube would later insist that he had nothing to do with the performance markings in the Op. 73 Variations.²⁷⁴ When the Op. 73 Variations were first published, in February 1904, the critics’ reactions and views were divided between ‘polemic and apologia.’²⁷⁵

Walter Fischer, a Berliner and organist at the Neue Garnisonkirche, was a warm supporter of the new Variations.²⁷⁶ It was he who undertook the first premiere of the work, stating that Reger was ‘at the peak of his indescribably brilliant creative output.’²⁷⁷ The organist

²⁷⁰ Popp, Max Reger: Briefe an Karl Straube, 58.

²⁷¹ Max Reger to Lauterbach and Kuhn, Munich, 29 September 1903, in Max Reger an seine Verleger Lauterbach and Kuhn, ed. Susanne Popp and Herta Müller (Bonn: Dümmler, 1993), 213(translated by Katsiris).

²⁷² Reger used the proofs to refine his compositions, either by correcting the few mistakes reproduced by the editor or to improve parts of music with which he was no longer satisfied (Punt, ‘Max Reger’s Opus 135,’ 108).

²⁷³ See Reger to Straube, 30 December 1903, in Max Reger an seine Verleger, 252.

²⁷⁴ Straube to Hans Klotz, 25th February 1944, in Christoph and Ingrid Held, Karl Straube: Wirken und Wirkung, 104.

²⁷⁵ Susanne Popp points out in her article on Reger, in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1994–2007, Personenteil, Vol. 13, col. 1426).

²⁷⁶ For the organ specification refer to Appendix I.

²⁷⁷ Fischer, *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 31, no. 9 (1904): 166.

Gustav Beckmann, in a detailed article on Reger's organ works, published in 1905, describes Bach's organ works as 'the Old Testament of the art for us' and Reger's organ works as 'the New Testament.'²⁷⁸ Beckmann indicated 5 parts consisting of the Original Theme —though only 4 bars out of the 15 are in 5 parts —and claimed of 16 Variations instead of 13.²⁷⁹

Two years later, Arthur Liebscher stated that:

One can be a genuine admirer of Reger and yet have to admit that his Opus 73, despite the masterly concluding fugue, is one of those works which cannot satisfy aesthetically. [...] And so, in this respect, Opus 73 shows a structural tendency when, after digression into the infinite distance, the material of the theme regularly enters into a kind of visionary musical contemplation, without in any way expanding, illuminating or deepening the inherent content of the theme through this change.²⁸⁰

Liebscher continues in the same way stating that Reger's purpose is in the 'content of the theme', not the 'structure'. In his variations the 'unity of the basic mood is retained,' while at the same time 'the physiognomy of the theme is only furtively present. Only one facet of the emotional complex encased in the theme is at any time reeled off, in the same way the classical masters forged every variation according to a unique variation principle.' For this reason, Liebscher daubs Reger's variation works as 'variations of the content,' emotional variations.²⁸¹ Liebscher seems to imply that Reger's-on stilts based- harmony is unsuitable for variation.²⁸² This critique is at another point repeated and completed: 'the theme proceeds 'harmonically' for a trained ear 'like it is based on stilts,' a sense that prevails throughout the course of the variation and dissipates with the entry of the fugue [...]'²⁸³

The musical and technical conundrums posed by Op. 73 to the performers should explain the long 18-month time gap (1903-1905) between the date of its composition and its actual

²⁷⁸ Gustav Beckmann, 'Max Reger als Orgelkomponist,' *Die Musik* 4, no. 22 (1905): 271.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Arthur Liebscher, 'Die Variationen form als Ausdrucksmittel bei Max Reger,' *Die Musik* 8 (1908–1909): 331.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* 323.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 327.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

performance.²⁸⁴ Karl Straube, who had a copy of the manuscript by December 1903, postponed his performance of the work at least twice. He was to have it played at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig on 4 March and at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on 19 November 1904. This is confirmed in a letter from Reger to Straube on 8 February 1904, in which he wrote ‘as for the new Variations Op. 73, I am naturally of the same opinion as you regarding performance next year; I am delighted that you like the work.’²⁸⁵

We shall never know for certain what exactly occurred between the start of 1904 and March 1905 and why Fischer and not Straube premiered the Op. 73 Variations, for there are numerous gaps in the correspondence between Reger and Straube for this period; perhaps letters have been lost. Table 5.1 presents an outline of Op. 73 from its genesis until the day of its first performances. When Straube did finally present the work, at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, just two days after Fischer, he played it twice —once at the start of his recital, and again at the end. It was common practice with some German organists to start their recital with a composer’s Prelude, Fantasia and Toccata and to end the recital with the same composer’s Fugue, thus delimiting the start and end of a work or a concert, although the reason for Straube’s double performance was clearly pedagogical. Reger expressed his worry about the reception of a piece of music with no metronome markings and lasting for anything from 26 to 40 minutes by an ordinary public to Straube in a postcard dated on 25 February 1905.²⁸⁶ The day before, Reger had urgently asked his publishers, Lauterbach & Kuhn, to make Straube change his plans:

If Straube plays my Op. 73 twice he will make himself and me a mass of new enemies without good reason! Please support me in this matter with Straube [...] It must be avoided that the

²⁸⁴ Walter Fischer, ‘Max Reger als Orgelkomponist,’ *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 32/33 (1905): 527.

²⁸⁵ Reger, *Briefe an Karl Straube* Popp, ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn: Dümmler, 1986), 49.

²⁸⁶ Reger, in *Briefe an Karl Straube*, 81.

fellows who are already in a ‘disgraceful rage’ with me because I’ve risen to the top so fast will be even more irritated and will spout forth even more rage!²⁸⁷

As it was expected from Straube’s strong performer’s will, he failed to consent.²⁸⁸

Despite Reger’s constant fears regarding the double performance of the work, Straube’s efforts were recognized in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Arnold Schering wrote in his critic about the Leipzig Concert:

His example of repeating abstruse works on the same evening should be followed... Namely, as far as Regerian Music is concerned the importance of a repeated serious study and frequent listening cannot be stressed enough.²⁸⁹

Reger wrote to Straube on the 19 March 1905 that his performance impressed him genuinely:

Dearest Carl... I owe you a million whole-hearted thank you...for the perfect interpretation of my Op. 73. ...Please forgive me for writing my sincere thanks only today. You have my cordial thanks and most sincere admiration for your perfect from every aspect rendition of my op. 73!²⁹⁰

At the 1903 Festival of the German Allgemeinen in Basel, Karl Straube had played two works by Reger, the Op. 27 Fantasia on Ein Feste Burg and the Op. 57 Symphonic Fantasia and Fugue.²⁹¹ The latter work’s nickname, ‘Inferno’, was added after the event and was perhaps due to a notice by Von Götziger in the *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft* 4/10, who wrote that the influence of Dante’s Inferno was evident as one listened to Op. 57.²⁹² It was this recital that marked a turning-point in Reger’s career, which was by then in chaos.²⁹³

²⁸⁷ Reger, in *Briefe and die Verleger Lauterbach & Kuhn*, ed. Susanne Popp and Herta Müller (Bonn: Dümmler, 1993), 451 (translated by Gerasimos Katsiris).

²⁸⁸ Reger, in *Briefe an Karl Straube*, 81-82.

²⁸⁹ Arnold Schering, review of concert performance by Karl Straube, Leipzig/Thomaskirche, 3 March 1905, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 72 (1905): 226. Although in his critic he does not go beyond stating the high requirements of the work and comment about the quality of the piece.

²⁹⁰ Reger to Straube, München, 26 December 1904, in: *Max Reger: Briefe an Karl Straube*, 75.

²⁹¹ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 363

²⁹² Von Götziger in the *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft* 4, no. 10 (1903): 615.

²⁹³ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 1-2.

Table 5.1: Op. 73 work from its first genesis to the publishing and performances

Correspondence between Reger-Straube-Lauterbach and Kuhn regarding Op. 73 composition/publication	Fischer's and Straube's performances of Op. 73	General Remarks and critiques
The work was sent on the 26 September 1903 to the publishers	Fischer performed the premiere on 1 March 1905	Beckmann characterized Bach's works as Old Testament and Reger's as New Testament
On 29 September 1903 Reger sent another letter to imply that there were other publishers to make an offer	Straube only performed on 3 March 1905 and played the work twice	Beckmann refers to 5 parts of the Theme, though only four bars out of the fifteen are in five parts and 16 Variations instead of 13
In December 1903 the publishers sent a reconciliation letter	Reger had sent a letter of admiration to Straube on the 19 March 1905 for his perfect rendition of Op. 73	Liebscher claims that although the unity of the basic mood is retained, at the same time the physiognomy of the theme is only furtively present
Straube received the corrected manuscript in December 1903	Goering studied Op. 73 with Straube on the baroque auditorium organ of Leipzig Conservatory	Reger made constantly sure that his Op. 73 would be discussed in the music press and induced Lauterbach and Kuhn to send newly printed scores to <i>Die Musik</i> , <i>Klavierlehrer</i> , <i>Sächsischen</i> , etc

The notices for the concert were warm and Straube's dexterity reached its apogee. Von Götziger, for instance, wrote that one should have great respect for Reger's oeuvre, since the two works of his referred to call for a technique that few organists possessed, and that in the recital Straube had opened up new techniques, beyond comprehension.²⁹⁴ This was extraordinary, since the organ of Basel Cathedral, with its antiquated very heavy tracker action that made it quite impossible to perform a large work in full, was a 'holy terror' to Swiss organists.²⁹⁵ If we refer to the specification of Haas organ in Appendix I, we will observe that there is no coupler of the III or IV manual to Positive, Great Organ or Pedal. There was still though an excessive wind pressure, making it a horrific job for the organist to balance and execute clearly demanding repertoire.

²⁹⁴ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 1-2.

²⁹⁵ Reger to Theodor Kröger, 24th June 1903, Postkarten, Staatliche Bibliothek of Regensburg.

In contrast, Ernst Schiess describes the Haas organ in Basel stating that it might have been appropriate for Mendelssohn's and Rheinberger's music, maybe even Reger's music:

According to the taste of that time, the disposition was based heavily on fundamental tone, and the sound was of an extraordinary breadth. It was even somewhat massive because far too few bright mixtures were available to complement the overabundant inventory of fundamental stops. The various manuals were not, as with classical organ, independent divisions. Rather, they constituted a dynamic progression from a strong and sounding great organ down to the fourth manual with only a few delicate stops.²⁹⁶

Reger apparently would not renounced from performing his music on a non orchestral and with a heavy mechanical action organ like the one in Basel; the most immediate effect of Straube's performance in 14 June 1903 was the composition of Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op. 73. Anderson indicates that out of the five large –scale organ works dedicated to Straube (Opp. 2, 30, 52/2, 73 and 127), only Op. 73 is attached to a particular concert occasion.²⁹⁷

Straube's performances in general were described by Fischer as worthy of their subject. Fischer expressed admiration for Straube's detailed phrasing, the significance he gave to even the smallest detail, his secondary semiquaver notes, his accompanying lines, and his crystal-clear touch and incomparable virtuosity: 'By means of Straube's phrasing, the music becomes clear, precise, plastic and understandable to everyone.'²⁹⁸ Straube settled for a 'fairly moderate Allegro' in the Op. 73 Fugue with the indication *Vivacissimo*, and as for the rest he strives to render 'a clear structuring of the aimed liberties' in the performance.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Ernst Schiess, 'Die Neue Orgel im Münster zu Basel,' in *Die Orgel im Basler Münster*, (Basel: Schudel, 1956): 5-6 (For the specification of the organ refer to Appendix I).

²⁹⁷ Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition,' 137.

²⁹⁸ Fischer, 'Über die Wiedergabe der Orgelkompositionen Max Regers,' 345.

²⁹⁹ V. Lederer, 'Theater und Musik – Orgelvorträge von Karl Straube,' *Leipzige neueste Nachrichten*, March 4, 1905.

Fischer wrote still longer articles about the preparation, performance and composition of Op. 73, making a comparison between this work and Reger's Chorale Fantasias. He even quoted the verbal text of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in order to express the magnitude of Reger's achievement:³⁰⁰ 'Joyously, as his suns speed; Through Heaven's noble order; Hasten, brethren, on your way; like a knight in victory.'³⁰¹

Fischer's declaration is in direct conflict with Straube's original commission from Reger for a work that should not be based on Lutheran chorales and could therefore be played extensively in Catholic cities.³⁰² Fischer justified the long period between Op. 73 publication and first public performance due to 'completely new problems to solve both technically and musically'.³⁰³ For Leichentritt, Fischer is 'one of the most competent Reger-interpreters, who manages to transform the notes, which seem so confusing on the paper, into vivid sonic patterns'.³⁰⁴

He gave the premiere of the work on 1 March 1905 in the Neue Garnisonkirche and stressed his enthusiasm 'for the great diversity of the tone-colours which [he] elicited from the organ, that has just two manuals and is not very large.'³⁰⁵ Fischer warns against the tendency for a quick tempo in Reger's works. He maintains that despite the fact that the pieces create a sense of forward propulsion, the key to a successful rendition lies in the choice of a controlled playing. He additionally pinpoints that things get even more complicated when subjectivity comes into play, expressed in the way the performer perceives the metronome indications or the actual psychological state of the composer at the time of the conception of the tempo markings. It is difficult to find traces of what the composer himself thought, other than his

³⁰⁰ Walter Fischer, 'Max Regers Orgelvariationen Op. 73,' *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 31 (1904), 166.

³⁰¹ 'Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen; Durch des Himmels Pracht'gen Plan; Wandelt Brüder, eine Bahn; Freudig, wieein Held zum Siegen.' (English translation by Dr. Witt for personal reference).

³⁰² As Gwilym Beechey also states in 'The Organ Music of Max Reger,' *The Organ Journal* 4, No 219 (1976), 106, the idiom of the Chorale Fantasies Op. 30 and Op. 40 is much the same as that of the Variations Op. 73.

³⁰³ Fischer, 'Max Reger als Orgelkomponist,' *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 32/33 (1905), 527.

³⁰⁴ H. Leichentritt, 'Oper und Konzert (Berlin),' *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 72 no. 11 (1905), 226.

³⁰⁵ Paul Schnyder, review of the concert performance by Walter Fischer, Berlin, Neue Garnisonkirche, 1 March 1905, *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 32, no. 10, (March 1905): 190 (Carus Reger Edition, 2012, page 35, ft. 120).

original dedication of the work: ‘To Karl Straube, in remembrance of June 14, 1903.’ According to Rudolph Louis—Reger’s most unpleasant critic—in a notice written on 14 June 1903, Reger’s music was a terrifying departure from the existing organ tradition, deliberately creating new paths.³⁰⁶ Although originally intended for Brahms, Nietzsche’s comment seems appropriate for Reger: ‘Das macht keine notwendige Musik, das macht von allem zu viel Musik!’³⁰⁷ Trade journals fail to see Reger’s development as he introduces the most subtle dynamic and sonic nuances of the previous smaller organ works as differentiating factors within a larger work, or the new treatment of the Variation, in which the alteration of the Original Theme recedes for the benefit of a new pithy mood.³⁰⁸

All Reger’s large-scale organ works have little in common with the rest of his compositions. According to Harrison, Reger created with Op. 73 an ‘expressionistic musical landscape populated with violent dynamic gradations, cryptic themes, power dissonances, and obscure harmonic logics,’ appealing to expressionism amongst modernists.³⁰⁹ As Reger wrote to W. Fischer, the set of Variations Op. 73 is ‘a tough nut, which contains passages of unique beauty, conceived of chromatic passages of semi and demisemi-quaver’³¹⁰ and ‘all music passes from extreme to extreme.’³¹¹ Written during the most revolutionary period of Reger’s life and one of his last large sets of organ works—all the choral fantasies came earlier (Fantasia on the name BACH Op. 46, Symphonic Fantasia and Fugue Op. 57, and others)—it presents a number of cellular and melodic fragments that assume a great importance for the Theme and Variations, finding common aspects regarding the inversion, augmentation, stretto and climax at the end

³⁰⁶ Rudolph Louis, review of concert performance by Karl Straube, *Müncher Neueste Nachrichten*, 23 June 1903, as reprinted in Ottmar Schreiber and Ingeborg Schreiber, *Max Reger in seinen Konzerten*, Vol. 3/7 Rezensionen, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Institutes, Elsa-Reger-Stiftung, ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn:Dümmler, 1981): 34-35.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, ‘This does not create necessary music; this creates, above all, too much music!’ Friedrich Nietzsche and Ivo Frenzel, *Werke: in zwei Bänden*. (München: Hanser, 1973), 2:316. Nietzsche was here referring to Brahms

³⁰⁸ Herman Wilske: *Max Reger- Zur Rezeption in seiner Zeit*, 180-182.

³⁰⁹ Harrison, Daniel, ‘Max Reger’s Motivic Technique: Harmonic Innovations at the Borders of Atonality,’ *Journal of Music Theory* 35, (1991): 61-92.

³¹⁰ Haupt, ‘Max Regers Orgelvariationen Op. 73,’ 26.

³¹¹ Brent-Smith, A.: ‘Max Reger’, *The Musical Times* 66, no. 988 (1925), 449.

of the fugue. Considering that the organ played by Straube, at Basel in 1903, was a classical type with mechanical action and without devices for expression, such as a swell box or Rollschweller, it might be assumed that Reger approved of performances of his works on organs of this type. Heinrich Fleischer actually described the organ not a neoclassic one, but a Romantic organ with mechanical action and without a Rollschweller.³¹² Nearly 30 years after Reger's death, Straube wrote to Hans Klotz concerning the Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme, Op. 73 that he studied the piece with one of his pupils, Goering from Eisleben, 'when the auditorium instrument of the Conservatory was a compromise organ, which certainly would have been detested and damned by Hans Klotz'.³¹³ He continued: 'The tonal effects afforded by the instrument were convincing, and they did justice to the variety of dynamics demanded by the composer. For a number of years, since about 1938, they have had in the auditorium a baroque organ built according to the strict principles of the Orgelbewegung;' Straube did not try out Op. 73 on this instrument.³¹⁴

³¹² Reger Hybrid-Edition, (Carus-Verlag: Stuttgart and Max-Reger-Institut: Karlsruhe, 2012), Carus 52.803. (Copy kindly offered by Max Reger Institute in Karlsruhe).

³¹³ Straube to Hans Klotz, 25th February 1944, in Straube, Briefe eines Thomaskantors, 173–174.

³¹⁴ Ibid.



(Reger, composing in 1913)³¹⁵

c. Op. 73 by Rosalinde Haas, 1969

Both Bernhard Haas and Rosalinde Haas have recorded Reger's Op. 73. I have used their two recordings in order to show two opposite poles of performance. Bernhard Haas' version, on a fairly more modern mechanical instrument, adopts a comparatively leisurely tempo, with limited rhythmic elasticity. This contrasts with Rosalinde Haas' version, earlier but fairly quick, performed without any controlled depth of feeling and lacking in clean phrasing. Listening to recordings and analysing them is only one side of the coin and there is always the danger of a deceptive understanding of performance history and interpretation. What follows are brief critiques of an older recording by Rosalinde Haas and a relatively modern recording by Bernhard Haas of Reger's Op. 73 in light of what we know from Reger himself and the performance practices of those who worked closely with him, as well as information from their

³¹⁵ Reger Hybrid-Edition, (Carus-Verlag: Stuttgart and Max-Reger-Institut: Karlsruhe, 2012), Carus 52.803. (Photo material kindly given by Max Reger Institute of Karlsruhe).

critics. The final goal of the performance at Canterbury Cathedral is not to point out errors or perceived errors of particular performers, but rather to highlight those areas where a more informed type of performance practice for the work might result in a different set of decisions and a new variety of potential outputs that better place the work in its musical, organological and cultural context.

Rosalinde Haas, one the great virtuoso organists of the twentieth century, made a recording of the work in 1969 on the Schuke Organ of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin (See Discography III). In the second bar of the Introduction she starts out on a new tempo far removed, so it would seem, from the *Un poco più mosso* that follows the Adagio and with a quaver beat of ♩ = 120. We might express it by saying that there is a lack of agogic interpretation, and that the touch is not that which Reger himself would have used. Particularly in the Quasi vivacissimo in section IV of the Introduction, the quaver beat reaches ♩ = 132, understandably making it hard to hear the detail clearly. Conversely, the Introduction's quiet slow sections (III, V) and the Variations (IV, X, XI, XIII) —which bring back the latter—are performed with the suggested tempo marking, neither slower nor faster. In Variation II, though, the term 'quasi' seems to have been ignored as the scherzando mood is quite lost; while the Quasi prestissimo of Variation V is closer to a Molto prestissimo, again causing some loss of clarity in picking up the dissonances and the tensions they produce. Virtuosity and technical ease are certainly evident throughout, but what the performance lacks is the feeling (pathos), the Angst, and in Variation VIII the dialogue between the manuals plus the expressive appearance of the theme on the pedals. So the performance lacks a climax of the voices, the 'leading voice', and the organ sounds as if it is having difficulty drawing breath! Every time a Vivacissimo occurs, it is translated into a Prestissimo. The mechanical action and probably the excessive wind pressure of the 1962 Schuke organ used in the recording may be to blame for the occasional marcato playing. We would have expected, as the logical result of all the above,

an exceptionally quick performance of the Fugue, but again due to the action of the Schuke organ, the Duo and Trio passages are excellently transparent, at a quaver beat of ♩ = 180. On another recording of Reger's Op. 135b of the same organ performer, due to the metronomic stringency of the basic pulse in Haas' execution, the demisemiquavers become extremely fast and therefore the acoustic result chaotic; the musical details become imperceptible, specifically in the overwhelming acoustics of the Mutter vom Guten Rat Church in Frankfurt-Niederrad, where the recording session took place.³¹⁶

d. Op. 73 by Bernhard Haas, 1996 (Rieger Organ of the Vienna Concert Hall)

Bernhard Haas, Reger scholar and Professor of Organ at the Academy in Stuttgart, in his relatively modern recording on Rieger's 1913 mechanical organ with its Walze or line of couplers, devises a very expressive registration, notably with the use of the Voix Celeste stop at the end of the first bar of the Introduction. Although this performance borders on the slow, and has little adrenaline and angst, with a rather fast preparation of the stringendo, the legato passages are appropriately structured, and there is use of agogic interpretation. The fifth and last section of the Introduction seems slower than the Andante (con moto) marking, and the Theme's *Andante*—walking pace—too slow for elasticity of the lines to be achieved.

The expressivity and choice of registration are superb, but we lose the *Un poco più mosso* in Variation I, and the Quasi allegretto con moto in Variation II; while Variation III as played by Haas can hardly be termed a toccata. When he gets to the second half of Variation VI, he succeeds in obtaining a very pleasing contrast of speed with the leisurely first half of the work. Variation VIII has excellent clarity, but lacks a lively tempo. The agogic interpretation returns

³¹⁶ Best documented in Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches to Max Reger's Fantasia and Fugue D minor Op. 153, 13.

in Variations IX and XII. The Fugue is secure, decisive and crystal-clear, with a quaver beat of ♩ = 120; the choice of registration is never muddy.

Feeling and freedom (within limits), touch, the unexpected, the agogic interpretation, the outburst: these seem to be what there none of, in this performance that is. Of course even a well-manicured recording is not the same thing as a live performance and lacks its immediacy. There may be occasions when the organist does not have the same fluency as when practising or when playing in church on her or his own. Moreover, preparing a piece of music, from the very first read-through, is a morphological cycle. In a strange fashion, the performer is ‘conducting’ the piece, making it intelligible to the listener. Wilske pinpoints the tendency in Reger’s music towards dissolution and ambiguity, which create an environment conducive to the listener’s imagination.³¹⁷ Writing specifically about Reger’s Op. 73 Variations, which some have described as ‘athematic’, Hermann Keller, one of Straube’s circle, calls them ‘pure fantasy-variations’.³¹⁸ Both Rosalinde Haas and Bernhard Haas seem to ignore some of the tempo markings, and there is a lack of spontaneity and adrenalin. There is no way I could criticise, follow, state that the best process is to proceed to perform the work based on modern recordings, or dispute their artistic choices for their recordings; I could only agree or disagree, as I shall explain in more detail below. Both Rosalinde and Bernhard thought best to take certain performance decisions at a given moment for a given instrument. No organist could commit to a rounded view, be it in writing or in performance, without having a selection of sound-documents in their possession. Indeed, how else could one achieve clean playing of the motifs in the chromatic motion, smooth preparing of registration, and disciplined rhythm, if unaware of existing recordings of the past century? Enough to say that having heard Rosalinde Haas,

³¹⁷ Busch, Hermann J., ‘Einige Probleme des Regerspiels,’ 68.

³¹⁸ Hermann Keller, ‘Reger und die Orgel,’ in: Max Reger: eine Sammlung von Studien aus dem Kreise seiner *persönlichen Schüler*, ed. Richard Würz (München, Otto Halbreiter Musik-Verlag, 1923), 264.

Bernhard Haas, I can merge this knowledge and the experience of hearing with my own personal instinct and feeling, freedom of movement and elasticity, yet without this insistence resulting in acoustic anarchy in the piece.

e. Op. 73 by Isabelle Demers, 2010 (Marcussen organ of Tonbridge School)

I should also like to mention a recent performance by the organist Isabelle Demers whom I have met through various competitions and concerts. In my view, she unfolds the piece's music just as it should be – 'things as they are,' to quote Aristotle's famous judgment on the plays of Sophocles. Her version of Op. 73, played on the superb Marcussen organ of Tonbridge School—where I had been Organist- in- Residence between 2005 and 2007. She is playing from New Reger Edition Carus-Verlag of Stuttgart.

Demers starts the lengthy Introduction with ethereal registration, leading it to the sudden forte in bar 3. There follows a smooth accelerando and crescendo in bars 6-7, continued up to fff and repeated in bars 11-12. The second and fourth sections of the Introduction are performed with crystal-clear articulation: tempo, deep feeling and forward movement are in ideal balance, the voice leading is crisp, and the Introduction's five sections never sound as though they fit badly together. Demers' perfect execution of the pedal demisemiquavers in the fourth section is impressive.

In Variation I she takes off from the ethereal theme using a registration of innocent gentleness. Her choice of tempo and her continuing use of the swell-box make for clarity of sound and expressiveness at the very outset of the Variations. She starts Variation II using 2' and Mutation stops for the written-out mordents. The sound range of the three manuals is exploited to enrich effect, with a delightful and ethereal acoustic surprise on the Swell in bar 44. Next comes the transparent toccata of Variations III and V. Here Demers uses mutation

stops for the duet sections in Variation III, and a light Reed stop for the pedal part of Variation V, to point up the line of the cantus firmus. The Marcussen organ's table of stops is particularly helpful for exposing the diaphanous line of the Theme and the Variations that spring directly from it (IV, X and XII) and for expressing the pathos and intensity of the most dynamic of the Variations. The switching of the couplers, lends persuasiveness to Demers' interpretation of Reger's 'symphonic' pieces. A more urgent tempo for the *più mosso* of Variation VI, and for the dialogue between manuals and pedal in Variation VII, might perhaps have been more effective. In any case, the sound balance between manuals and pedal in Variations VII and VIII is excellent. The pathos and improvisatory mood of Variation IX, the high point of the Variations, is caught perfectly. Every note is played cleanly, exactly as Reger himself wanted, and Demers goes on to Variation XII in the same style. It should be noted that the previous Variation's striking ostinato figure for the left hand, an important melodic line, disappears from sight in a number of the recordings.

In the Fugue, though Demers sets a tempo that is fast in the extreme ($\text{♩}=160$), her articulation is splendidly clean and the registration is well balanced, its transparentness enabling her to make the most of the dialogue between Swell and Choir in bar 16. This is followed by a smooth crescendo that leads this short Fugue to its epic catharsis in bars 91-100.

III. A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTUAL FIDELITY AND FAITHFULNESS TO REGER'S PERFORMANCE INDICATIONS

Our understanding of Reger's performance practice is based on flawed understandings of it, stemming largely from Reger's friend Straube—an organist to whom Reger was apparently in awe. Although the source materials are sparse, a variety of approaches help to peel back a century of performance approaches to Reger's Op. 73 in the hope of enabling the modern organist to deal more directly—with less intervention from suspect acolytes of Straube—with Reger's monumental masterpiece as a vital step in current efforts to create a historically-informed approach to performing Reger's organ music. Reger's organ music is tightly bound up with rhythm and variation of sound. This is especially true of the Op. 73 Variations, as it was mentioned earlier on, where a crescendo is always accompanied by an *accelerando*, and vice versa. That Straube did it and Reger didn't object means that it is a possibility for the modern organist to adopt (because Reger trusted Straube to unfold his own compositional aspirations); Straube on the other hand tried to present a comprehensible idea of the way that Reger's organ music could be interpreted, since there is no clear picture of the flexibility notation in Reger's scores. The priorities here are forward movement, flexibility and clarity. Imperceptible details of the characteristic movement of the parts need particular caution. Thus, what the music calls for is a fairly free treatment of rhythm so as to ensure an elastic transition from quavers to triplet quavers, and from triplet quavers to semiquavers.³¹⁹ Understanding Reger's intentions requires knowledge of period performance practice, consultation of secondary sources such as the composer's statements, letters, or ear witnesses, and use of appropriate instruments. Such substantial material would be the foundation for establishing a Regerian stamp of authority on the performer's/organist's individual selection of style.

The composer's own performance style seems to be notably free and accommodating,

³¹⁹ Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 26.

often ignoring some of his own rhythmic and dynamic markings.³²⁰ Straube's remarks on Reger's contrasting practice regarding rhythmic elasticity and level of freedom are noted by Wilske (1995):

Straube's verdict, according to which Reger was not capable of communicating his imaginings via the usual text, has in the organ music resulted in the renunciation of interpretative values related to flexible tempi. Such levelling, which has consequences mainly for the atmospheric effect of Reger's music, has persisted with astonishing stubbornness in the Straube School.³²¹

a. Flexibility of rhythm, the gist in performances of Reger's organ music

Surprisingly enough, when Reger joined the Leipzig University faculty in 1907 he wrote to Fritz Stein in 1909: 'My goals differ so fundamentally from Riemann's that we will never find common ground artistically.'³²² This letter reveals Riemann's conflicting theory toward academia and scholarship and declares Reger's independence from his principal mentor. Undoubtedly, Reger took Riemann's portrayal of scores that 'avoid natural simplicity' as a clear disapproval of his own music;³²³ the extreme, exaggerated and more detailed agogic liberties in terms of Riemann's performance instructions came to conflict even with those of his own pupil. Reger, in an ironic sense, implied that:

Dr. Riemann felt nostalgically about the past accomplishments of E. Grieg, M. Bruch, H. Hofmann, Friedrich Kiel and Joseph Rheinberger without recognising the fact that the successes of these composers had so quickly faded out, because they did not achieve *enough individuality* and they were obviously dependent on older generations [Reger's emphasis].

Reger continued in a more antagonistic manner stating that 'mental capacity emanating from an individual is the guarantee of immortality'.³²⁴

³²⁰ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 83.

³²¹ Wilske, Hermann, Max Reger: Zur Rezeption seiner Zeit, Wiesbaden, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1995, 58.

³²² Reger to Fritz Stein, in *Briefe an Fritz Stein*, ed. Popp (Bonn: Dümmler, 1982): 59 (Veröffentlichungen des Max Reger-Institutes, No.8).

³²³ *Ibid.*, 42.

³²⁴ Max Reger, Selected Writings of Max Reger, 47.

Educated in the ancient Greek philosophers and poets, Reger looked back to his artistic predecessors for guidance and inspiration.³²⁵

Especially in Reger's Weiden works between 1898 and 1901 and particularly in his colossal organ works Ops. 27, 29, 30, 33, 40, 46, 57, 60 and the Preludes and Fugues for solo violin Ops. 117 and 131a, Bach's influence is overtly discernible.³²⁶

b. Textual Fidelity and the first topics of Orgelbewegung

Faithfulness to the musical work has been a controversial issue since the early twentieth century. Its fundamental premise was the historical separation of the composer from the performer.³²⁷ Much of the earliest instrumental music is minimally notated, suggesting that the role of the performer to improvise and elaborate upon what is notated was common right up into the nineteenth century. The slight dissonance between the twin goals of faithfulness to composer's intentions is bound with the demand of creative performance—from the sixteenth right through to the nineteenth (or later) centuries.

Textual fidelity served to restore early music scores from the hyperbolic Romantic dynamics and performance indications considering them out of date; performances were to sound sober, straight, clear, rhythmical and expressively distant.³²⁸ Early twentieth century players stripped romantic editions of early music of their romantic annotations of dynamics, tempo, articulations, but instead of replacing those with contemporaneous HIP, they simply played them without any expression. Straube's new editions of the *Alte Meister des Orgelspiels*

³²⁵ Gustave Beckmann gives Reger's organ work overview in Gustav Beckmann 'Max Reger als Orgelkomponist, 271, coining the expression at the end: Bach's organ compositions constitute for us the Old Testament, the ones of Max Reger, the New! Regarding Reger's organ works from *Monologen* and later he writes: 'Reger's own language becomes more idiosyncratic. Far away from rutty lines of musical productivity, he increasingly manages to carve out his own way. A way not every practising artist can follow' (ibid., 270-271, translated by Gerasimos Katsiris).

³²⁶ Walter Frisch, 'Reger's Bach and Historicist Modernism,' 301.

³²⁷ Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 2.

³²⁸ Ibid. 4.

(1929) and Reger's Op.27 Chorale Fantasia 'Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott' (1938) are free from exaggerated markings of dynamics, expression, phrase articulation, fingering, and pedal indications. They thus conform to the principle of the new style, the German Organ Reform Movement. The requirements for an 'objective' performance are strict rhythm and absence of emotion. Thus every professional organist and organ teacher has to be familiar with the conventions of Baroque and Romantic performance, in order to be able to transmit a gripping performance to the public at large and to organ students. Concerning Romantic-period scores, the perception of textual fidelity becomes harder to define, as Romantic music is characterised by non-objective interpretation.³²⁹ Following Reger's death and under the rising sun of the Organ Reform Movement, Straube acted as an indispensable reference regarding the romantic past and the direct present.³³⁰ This situation was evidently clarified, when Straube had prophetically questioned in his letter to Fritz Stein [...] 'we do not know if in the year 1986 the German Organ Movement will be seen as just a Historismus, and if the last word at that time would be that we must return to the values of the romantic organ. And what would then happen to my practical Reger edition?'[...]³³¹ With the awareness that the musical text may not always reveal the composer's intentions of his own work, Straube published practical editions of Reger's music and was criticized by Stockmeier for 'applying double standards with Bach and Reger.'³³² Reger was primarily a faithful disciple of the Hugo Riemann tradition in slurring and registering, a tradition with which Straube was himself also very familiar.³³³ Riemann, a believer in creative intervals, variable ostinati and twelve-tone music, stands in between Wagner, Schoenberg and Webern. His particular phrasing technique calls for flexibility of

³²⁹ Schwander, 'Experimenting with contrasting approaches,' 5.

³³⁰ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube: Perspectives on an organ performing tradition, 5. Even the first 'reform' organs retained their basic romantic foundation stops, while including baroque sharp mixtures, as the 1927 instrument in Leipzig Musikhochschule.

³³¹ Straube to Fritz Stein, 29 November (1946), in Briefe eines Thomaskantors, 216 (translated in Anderson, Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition of organ pedagogy, 70).

³³² Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' 24.

³³³ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 27.

rhythm, in the form of rubato and of course complete legato, which was typical of performances in Straube's time. The organ, by virtue of its construction, has limited capacity for 'natural' expression. Clarity of sound and articulation are achieved by independent phrasing and clear rendition of polyphonic lines, at a tempo suited to the movement of the parts and to the musical texture in general.³³⁴ Reger was an advocate of absolute clarity of sound in his own compositions, regardless of the speed and however complicated and fantasia-like the pieces might be.³³⁵

c. Non-objective Reger and non-objective performance

Reger spent less time speaking about himself and his own music and more time trying to verify 'what both words and compositions are attempting to defend and to defend against'.³³⁶ Reger believed that the objective is to make this music understandable to actual audiences.³³⁷ He had commented that:

I alone know what I have striven for, what I have accomplished, and what I have failed to achieve, and this interests the sensation-seeking masses far too little. Whoever wants to know what I am and who I am—that person should examine what I have thus far composed. If he is not enlightened by this, if he does not understand it, the fault is not mine!³³⁸

It seems even more difficult to establish a performance tradition of Reger's organ works when the composer avoided talking about himself and the performing ways of his own compositions.

Both before and after Reger's lifetime many composers had not—or might not—relish

³³⁴ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 81.

³³⁵ Explained in a more detailed way in his renowned letter to Bunk regarding clarity (Bunk, Gerhard 'Begegnung mit Max Reger,' 27.

³³⁶ Anderson, Selected Writings of Max Reger, 30.

³³⁷ Ibid., 7-8.

³³⁸ Haupt, 'Max Regers Orgelvariationen Op. 73,' 26. (is written initially in Reger's open letter for Die Musik, 1906 and translated in English by Christopher Anderson in Selected Writings of Max Reger, 30.)

talking about what they do. This poses a remarkably challenging way of exploring music during an era where composers progressively felt obliged and coerced to talk about their own compositions. Similarly, organists may give more than one meanings to Reger's musical language, reconsider their performances and challenge or strengthen the insight of Reger's intentions according to the instrument or venue. Every performer (performance)—like every listener—is unique. Whether we are performers, or members of an audience—we are not entirely sure what we shall get, as music is a 'risk, for everyone all the time.'³³⁹ The transformation from Reger's printed notation to the act of hearing his music makes for both negative and positive results. What the performer has achieved and what the listeners actually hear do not necessarily coincide.

d. Tempi and performance

The initial examination of Reger's tempo indications and metronomic markings needs to be underpinned by a systematic knowledge and awareness of the overall structure of the organ work being performed. Consequently, the composer's complex harmonic modulations, hyperchromatic language and dynamics need to inform the performer's choice of tempi. Reger gives no clear metronome markings to his Variations or indications of registration during each variation (except registration indications at the return of the main Theme).

The point Dika Newlin, pianist, professor, musicologist and composer, makes about the performance of the Schoenberg Variations (composed between 25 August and 12 October 1941) also applies to Reger. Newlin argues that Schoenberg has a tendency of indicating faster tempi than he means, because the manner of performance, in keeping with the data of the start of each century, is exceedingly slow. Newlin writes that Schoenberg believes in the flexibility

³³⁹ Jonathan Dunsby, *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 14.

of the size of the bar, by broadening or shortening certain beats, which spawns deception and irregularity.³⁴⁰

Emanuel Gatscher—a former Reger student, who performed Op. 73 and earned a PhD in studying Reger’s fugal technique (University of Bonn, *Die Fugentechnik Max Regers in ihrer Entwicklung*)—contemplates the necessity of having a perfect piano technique, in order to be proficient enough to perform Reger’s most challenging virtuoso organ works.³⁴¹ Nearly thirteen years later Günter Ramin remarks that the contemporary performer ‘should not forget furthermore that the playing of Reger’s organ works offer a wealth of problems and ideas in relation to technique and tonal architecture, the overcoming and assimilation of which represents considerable progress in technical and musical studies altogether’.³⁴² Reger was an accomplished pianist of great distinction performing and conducting throughout Europe. With regard to Reger’s ability as a performer, Heinrich Lang wrote:

Anyone who can compose such difficult music must be able to play it. I do not know whether Herr Reger is an organist of note, but I would tend to assume so, because his compositions offer the performing artist seemingly unsurpassable difficulties.³⁴³

With regard to expressive interpretation of Reger’s works, Wilske comments the following:

In Reger’s imaginative playing, there is always the tendency towards dissolution.... Again and again, it is the unusual, ambiguous, mystical element, the Music of the Spheres, though which Reger captures the listener’s attention.³⁴⁴

Wilske refers to the imaginative and intellectual of Reger as a performer, despite his negative comments regarding Reger’s technical inaccuracies on the recordings of Welte rolls.

³⁴⁰ Dika Newlin, *Schoenberg Remembered*, New York: Pendragon Press, 1980, Op.cit., p.152.

³⁴¹ Article in November 1924 issue of *MMRG*.

³⁴² Ramin, 1937, p.214-215.

³⁴³ Heinrich Lang, review of *Drei Phantasien für Orgel Op. 52, Zwölf Orgelstücke Op. 59, Variationen und Fuge über, ‘Heil Dir im Siegerkranz,’* and other compositions by Max Reger, *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 28, 800.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

From the very fresh start of reading the scores of Reger's immense organ works, we cannot stop dealing with numerous questions regarding the composer's extreme tempi changes nor his or Straube's indications. Emanuel Gatscher mentions in the same article of November 1924 that tempo indications inserted by Reger like *vivacissimo* or *adagissimo* have less to do with real tempi than with the character of the work in question.³⁴⁵ Likewise, *crescendo*, *stringendo*, *diminuendo* and *rallentando* refer mostly to a general tempo rubato within a large overall structure than to an exaggeration of contrasts: the large structure must always be clearly rendered and the performer should convey the idea of a 'basic melos.'³⁴⁶

Gatscher's annotations about Reger's organ music appear to have a lot in common with what Straube referred to in the introduction of *Alte Meister* regarding his exploration for the 'right' emotions in each one of the fourteen selected baroque compositions.³⁴⁷ Furthermore, Hambræus states in his initial dissertation: 'In some way, Straube has become a culprit because he wanted to reveal in detail what was more or less a common practice.'³⁴⁸ The tempo indication in the autograph of the Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue Op. 57—well-known regarding the technical difficulties *Inferno—Vivacissimo ed agitato assai e molto espressivo*, which draws a link between the vivid and agitated tempo and the *fff* dynamics, adding to the portrait a dramatic eruption. Likewise, in the BACH Fugue Op. 46, Reger has indicated a continuous *accelerando*, together with a *crescendo* from *ppp* to *fff*; this general idea is also supported in Op. 73. Reger adds excessive indications in the music itself expecting that only in such minor cases when a modern instrument, with a wider range, would be able to render a certain motive more clearly.³⁴⁹ Regarding his piano music and especially the Bach Variations

³⁴⁵ Emanuel Gatscher, 'Einige Bemerkungen zum Studium Regerscher Orgelwerke,' *Mitteilungen des Max-Reger-Instituts* 4 (1924): 2-8.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ Hambræus, Bengt (1993): 'Karl Straube, Old Masters and Max Reger. A Study in 20th Century Performance Practice.' In: *Reger-Studien 5. Beiträge zur Reger Forschung*, edited by Susanne Shigihara, 41-72 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1993), 55.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

³⁴⁹ Reger has stated that he has [...] only added such dynamic signs, *marcato*, *espressivo*, *agitato*, etc. etc. in the orchestra parts, ie. such things which the composers themselves too seldom do [...] Reger would be most grateful

Op. 81, Reger's comments that the original tempi indicated in the fast passages are 'maximum limits [...] the music must always be clearly rendered' (meaning via touch and registration).³⁵⁰

As Gatscher has pointed out:

one should not even try to apply identical performance practices to different pieces in the same genre (neither are all phantasies alike, nor all the fugues); rather it is necessary to find the appropriate character in each work; monumental compositions require a monumental interpretation.³⁵¹

The danger that confronts us is that if we follow strict metronome tempo, we are as a rule driven to extremes of stodginess and monotony. Reger claims that 'confusion in music' has been caused by the excessive use of the words by musical scholars rather than the discussed works themselves.³⁵² He continues in the same vein:

The great composers are martyred, condemned as 'heretics and antichrists', an elect that has 'committed grave sins' against the 'holy rules' of textbooks.³⁵³

e. Performance against scholarship

Edward Cone proposed that in order for the interpreter to rise above the limitations of an over-personalised response, his performance should be informed by a combination of academic musical scholarship and secure technical analysis.³⁵⁴ Cone claimed in the same essay that whilst such analysis and scholarship were essential, they would never be adequate unless they were part of a 'convincing' performance - one which projected a profound, personalised, conceptual understanding of the music— rather than one which was merely 'correct'.³⁵⁵ Reger

if an important composer would like to present his works more effectively; his own minor revisions are always most carefully considered. The composer's style must under all circumstances remain intact! (Johannes Lorenzen: Max Reger als Bearbeiter Bachs (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1982), 215.

³⁵⁰ Max Reger, *Selected Writings of Max Reger*, 7-42.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 28-29.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, essay 6 (*Degeneration and Regeneration in Music*, 1907).

³⁵⁴ Edward T. Cone, 'The pianist as critic,' in *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. Rink (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 244.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

feels more confident about the idea of his compositions as ‘sound objects’ rather than scores that contain everything about the ‘work’. He feels that analysing scores might result missing the point and his comments imply that he regards the performance of his works as the public revelation of his ideas, not the printing of them. That approach strengthens the overall points about realising the inner-strengths of Op. 73 in performance; Reger’s approach to the organ requires a certain kind of performance in order to even come to know the piece.

Reger’s hostility towards scholars and critics was rather obvious. There is very limited analysis from the composer himself, as he preferred to let the music speak first, to listen to the magic before copying, analysing, judging and writing. For Reger, the questions posed by analysis make sense after playing the music. Reger’s adverse approach toward scholarship became especially distinct and sarcastic in his (‘Open Letter of 1907’).

Who should write about music at all? And you naturally reply, ‘Composers, too, above all!’
Oh, no! Composers will always compose, but they will leave the writing about music to the scholars. These people no doubt understand this much, much better than do we professional musicians- or we composers- (the ones who indeed ‘make’ music)’ (Essay No.4, 1907).³⁵⁶

f. Rubato

Nicolas Kynaston —former Professor at Royal Academy of Music, Organist of the Athens Concert Hall and performer of Reger’s organ music—in his lessons draws a parallel between this rubato and the flame of a candle by an open window. When there is a breeze, it sets the flame in motion; afterwards the flame steadies again. This analogy seems to capture a very close affinity with acceleration and deceleration in passages of music. Each change of rhythm should not be sudden and unexpected; the organist ought to prepare the listener even for the

³⁵⁶ Reger, Selected Writings of Max Reger , 28.

fantasy and freedom of action.³⁵⁷ In the same way, a storm in nature—as evoked in Beethoven’s sixth symphony, for example—is heralded by specific physical colours and sounds are followed afterwards by calm colours that lead to a catharsis. Caroline Palmer of Ohio State University (Department of Psychology), indicates rubato or changes in timing as general characteristics of expressive playing, stressing that ‘each performer has distinctive patterns of expression that contribute to listeners’ preferences for different artists’.³⁵⁸ Busoni has advised that the bar line is only for the eye.³⁵⁹ The progress of the musical structure is prompted by the unfolding of the Theme, the shaping and directing of the melodic line, and incidental changes of tonality. Interpretation is founded on emphasizing the agogic accents and specific important notes that form the structure, maintaining a basic tempo throughout and employing a many-faceted rubato. This tempo rubato frees up the strict values by means either of the agogic accents or decelerando and accelerando in certain passages in the piece. The balanced rubato is mainly founded on the theory of note-emphasis, and more specifically on Op. 73’s most free and elastic Variations, namely III, V, VI, XII, IX, XI. (In the last of these the right hand follows a freer horizontal line, whereas the left hand is accompanying with more strictly weighted time values.) Whenever I made an accelerando in the notes of a particular passage, I always returned subsequently to the original tempo by making a decelerando in the notes that followed. The time that you offer up on the altar of rubato, you must always take back afterwards. This is how the accelerando-decelerando factor lends energy to the freest Variations and emphasis to important details of the piece.

³⁵⁷ Leonard Meyer states in *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) that: ‘Although melodic stretchings occur in some of the Classical repertory, in Romantic music such stretchings are typically left unfilled, thus building long-range tension towards ‘statistical climax’, followed by abatement, which substitutes for the syntactic closure characteristic of early music.’

³⁵⁸ Caroline Palmer, ‘Anatomy of a Performance: Sources of Musical Expression,’ *Music Perception* 13, no. 3 (Spring, 1996): 438, 442.

³⁵⁹ Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900-1950* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 42. If we are allowed to misquote Busoni’s words: ‘In playing, as in reading a poem, the scanning must be subordinate to the declamation; you must speak the organ’ (Henry Theophilus Finck and Ignace Jan Paderewski, *Success in Music and How It Is Won* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1909), 300.

g. Nature of the organ-performance

The composer's ideal symphonic organ calls for heavy diapasons, flutes, strings, reeds and mixtures, some good solo stops and a pedal organ of overwhelming power; of course his tempo and dynamic markings can only be approached with caution, as they are too overstated to be followed mathematically. Again Straube has, through his Peters Editions, shed light on this very important matter: dragging tempi and the extreme dynamics could be a result of Reger's way of composing during the Weiden period, which was generally accomplished by means of the piano rather than the organ. We may interpret Reger's and Straube's indications or performances in endless ways. To quote Taruskin's comments regarding Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which may apply to Reger's Op. 73: 'Resilient rhythms, flying tempi, energy, activity, actuality, clarity, concision; the metronome tells one part of the story.'³⁶⁰ Since Reger is a late romantic composer, it was easier to follow my romantic instinct on the performance of Op. 73 and apply rhythmic flexibility, energy and legato expressiveness on the chromatic voice-leading and yet ever note to be discerned.

Compared to the organ, the restricted dynamic range and more limited tonal palette of the piano were challenging to the expression of Reger's 'out of control' temperament.³⁶¹ The percussive direct sound of the piano and its enormous dexterity potentially justifies the complex manual organ parts; thus the piano practicing might be recommended as a remedy for the most demanding Reger's large scale organ works. From my personal engagement with the Inferno Fantasy and Fugue Op. 57, the Second Sonata Op. 60 and the Fantasia and Fugue in D minor Op. 135b, the need for applying piano practising seems quite obvious; there will always be an unbreakable link to the technical background of the piano.

³⁶⁰ Taruskin, *Essays on Music and Performance*, 72.

³⁶¹ Anderson, *Max Reger and Karl Straube*, 160.

On the organ, the pianistic chords, the hyper-chromatic language in the fast harmonic rhythm, the unresolved suspensions, the extensive modulations, the unplayable and complicated can sound simple and natural. In the overwhelming acoustics with an eight-to-ten-second delay, a very fast, or very slow performance may easily lead to musical misunderstanding, as the music falls into mosaic pieces. The modern performer must find a way of presenting the extremes of his writing and make the difficult sound simple. Music, as any language, is alive. Reger's organ music is frequently characterised by a pluralistic juxtaposition between the approaches of his late and early works.

The eccentric Reger, who joins and complicates the tragic with the comic, the agreeable with the abhorrent and the heroic with the frantic, stresses, in his major organ works and especially the Op. 73 set, the demands for clarity and dexterity from the performer. In May 1910, Reger wrote to the organist Gerard Bunk: 'Young man, don't play my pieces too fast' [...] play everything quite calmly, even when it says to play faster.'³⁶² Moreover, Straube's preference of slower tempi over faster ones was based on the tonal effects of every different organ and of course simplifying Reger's harmonic language.³⁶³ Karl Straube regarding Reger's tempo eccentricity expressed that 'The use as an express-train speed is a crime against his art.'³⁶⁴

A rushed and unclear performance of the Op. 73 Variations and generally of Reger's large scaled works may lead to a misunderstanding and mishearing of his music.

³⁶² Bunk, 'Begegnung mit Max Reger,' 27.

³⁶³ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 86.

³⁶⁴ Straube, Stuttgart 1952, in Briefe eines Thomaskantors, 174.

h. Straube's interferences

The composer's weakness to express himself clearly is also evidenced in Reger's writings to the Duke of Meiningen; it seems that Reger might have occasionally failed to state his musical intentions, thus blindly and well justified trusted Straube and expected that the latter would indirectly express the composer's voice. Such an observation is potentially illuminating when approaching Reger's idiosyncratic musical language and it offers a perspective from which one might achieve a convincing reading of the accompanying essays as well.³⁶⁵ Nevertheless Straube's editions reflect concepts that do not belong exclusively to the composer.³⁶⁶

Straube has given light to eccentric's Reger requests and as a Mitkomponist expressed Reger's voice in a pedagogical and artistic way; his performances and teaching methods tend to be a reliable analytical source for Reger's clear and simple complexity.³⁶⁷ Straube's interferences led to significant cutting or modification of Reger's compositional material such as in the first Sonata in F sharp minor Op. 33, or in the Kyrie, Gloria and Benedictus from the Op. 59 collection. To my interview question: 'How faithful or 'intrusive' were Straube's interferences to Reger's original text', Johannes Geffert, Head of Church Music Studies at Cologne Hochschule, son of Hans Geffert, truthful to Straube's performance tradition and very close to Reger's family, commented the following:

Straube was Reger's performer and thus a person of much more practical thoughts. He would cut out a part of a composition because he thought it was too long (e.g. op. 135 b 2nd fugue). He 'arranged' (= in registering) Reger's music for performances on various organs, including instruments not ideal for that music! He was influenced by the 'Orgelbewegung', which started after the composer's death. This movement tried to go back from a highly orchestral organ sound and lots of technical playing aids at the console to a pure, even pre-baroque ideal of the organ. Naturally he tried to adjust Reger's scores for performances on these 'new' instruments. And as an educative, strict teacher he passed his 'solutions' on to a whole generation of young

³⁶⁵ Reger, Selected Writings of Max Reger, 26.

³⁶⁶ Anderson, Max Reger and Karl Straube, 63.

³⁶⁷ As already mentioned, Straube's recordings of Reger music do not reach us today. We may realise the kind of tempo rubato and musical movement he adopted from his recordings of Bach's works (Best documented in Anderson, Max reger and Karl Straube: Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition, 52.

non experienced musicians, who then later passed on the ideas of their great master to another generation (unfortunately this has left us with a knowledge gap in HIP of Reger's organ music). Straube was faithful to Reger in continuing to perform and teach his music after the musical taste of the organ world had changed. And he was not 'intrusive,' but did, what seemed right to him in his time—a practical thinking performer.³⁶⁸

To my next interview questions regarding the Crescendo Pedal: Does it apply to any of the Op. 73 passages? Which Reger pieces, if any, do you think 'require' the use of the 'Walze'?

Johannes Geffert replied as follows:

If talking about the crescendo pedal, we must realise that the organs of Reger's time were designed tonally (specification and voicing) in favour of huge dynamic possibilities and an absolutely smooth crescendo/decrescendo. The crescendo pedal was often not only a pedal to be used by the organist, it was sometimes mechanically connected to a handle at the edge of the console, which could be operated by the assistant. These two basics—the tonal design towards smooth dynamical change and the possibility to handle the crescendo pedal easily and in different ways—indicate a constant use of it in Reger's music. That he marks in his music. Best examples are the 'little' pieces of Op. 129: Nr. 1 Toccata starts with *fff* and goes down to *mp* within only 3 bars! Nr. 3 Kanon—although composed like a baroque Trio he demands a *sempre poco a poco crescendo* from *p* to *f* (bar 14-18). Nr. 5 Capriccio appears full of indications demanding long stretched *sempre poco a poco crescendi* and *decrescendi*.

So to me these words in the score seem always an indication for the use of the 'Walze'!

The use of the swell box —which on the German organs of Reger's time was only of little effect, nothing in comparison to British swell boxes! —was indicated in the music with the brackets <and>.

³⁶⁸ Good advice was given to me by Johannes Geffert, Head of Church Music at the Köln Hochschule and son of Elsa Reger's family friend, Hans Geffert. Johannes Geffert advised against the addition of certain elements in my playing solely as a means of expedience, and he underlined the importance of prioritizing the excellence in my aim and the rejection of egoism in my approach to the study of the piece.

IV. DRAWING A REGISTRATION SCHEME FOR REGER'S OP.73 ON CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL ORGAN: A CASE STUDY

Reger's Op. 73 Variations make exceptional demands on both performer and instrument. I have already argued above that organists do not have the luxury of being able to swap instruments in a mixed recital and must develop, over time, an approach to works that will be realised differently with different instruments. Performance of Reger's organ music on a historically appropriate instrument is not so easily achieved, for example, as it might be for a performer of Mozart's piano music. Here I will outline my empirical approach to the Op. 73 Variations on the Canterbury Cathedral organ. While I have an historically-informed approach, I must also test those against the abilities and limitations of this particular instrument in this particular space. This approach is intended to serve as the practical end of a scholarly approach. This is the resulting experience of taking my Reger research and my arguments based on historical materials into the organ loft. The whole process transformed my approach and will hopefully serve as a basis for other organists to approach this magnificent work performed on a different organ from Canterbury Cathedral organ. In the organ literature, the Op. 73 Variations are a notorious and fascinating challenge to the performer's virtuosity, and for that reason they rarely feature in an organist's repertoire.

The central planks of my new approach, taking on board the results of my research, resulted in completely new approaches to areas of registration, articulation and choice of rubato and speed. With Reger's comments about clarity being paramount, I started my first read-through of the piece with just one 8' Flute stop on the manuals and a 16' Subbass and an 8' Flute on the pedals, so as to obtain clarity of the voices and good balance. I began my practice in the organ of the Athens Concert Hall using as basis the quaver.³⁶⁹ Right from the very start, I saw that I would need to deepen my study of the piece through extensive practice and

³⁶⁹ Refer to Appendix I for specification of the Athens Concert Hall main organ.

historical insight. The fact that Fernando Germani could play Op. 73 from memory within a week was the main challenge—a spur and an inspiration to keep going.³⁷⁰

Each time I practised, I faithfully followed the instructions about rhythm and dynamics, continuing to incorporate still more of Reger's works into upcoming concerts. I could discern some obvious similarities, especially between his second Sonata Op. 60 and his Fugue on the Name BACH, but I had to search out the written-recorded sources and the expressive limits of Op. 73, so that I could set the basis for an authoritative approach. My aim was flexibility of rhythm, vivid rendition of the curves of the big phrases and matching use of articulation in passages that need a crescendo or a diminuendo even where there is neither time nor space for a change of registration. In this way, a part of a piece where the marking indicates a continuous crescendo can be matched with the right legato articulation. Furthermore, the staccato markings in the Fugue achieve the lively tempo and the clarity and balance in the Trio passages, without any necessitation of an excessively fast tempo.

The long Introduction of Op. 73 is mentioned on the title page of the score and in any edition of the work.³⁷¹ It is merely an opening marking at the start of the piece. Dejmek describes the Introduction as a lengthy independent variation.³⁷² On the contrary, David Goode, recognises three (probably meaning Section I: 1-18, Section II: bars 18-30 and Section III: bars 30-41), rather than five sections in the Introduction of Op. 73, which was recorded on the Klais organ at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham U.K.³⁷³

When I began planning my registration for the Introduction of Op. 73 on the Canterbury Cathedral organ, I stored the following stops (10 memory channels in total X 8 combinations

³⁷⁰ Nicolas Kynaston, 'Fernando Germani,' *Organist's Review* (November 1998): 308.

³⁷¹ It is referred on composer's autograph manuscript, on the Lauterbach&Kuhn first edition and the re-edition by Bote & Bock.

³⁷² Dejmek, Gaston, 'Der Variations Zyklus bei Max Reger,' (Dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität Bonn, 1930) p. 6

³⁷³ Goode, David: Reger Organ Works, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, April 2013, Signum Classics. Best documented on the notes of David Goode.

per channel in the initial memory [80.1]: Stopped Diapason 8', Dulciana 8' on the Choir Manual, and coupler to Lieblich Gedackt and Salicional 8' on the Swell, in order to achieve the marked ppp of the swell manual and unfold the dynamic balance of the three manuals (III: very soft, distant and ethereal, II: relatively soft and I: strong). Then I went on to reinforce the piece's architecture in the style of an orchestra, in terms of dynamics. For forte passages I reinforced the 8' foundation stops with 4' and 2', and with stops on the Swell such as the Hautboy 8', Trumpet 8' and Double Trumpet 16', coupled to the Great. On the second combination [80.2] at bar 2, I saved Double Diapason 16' Open Diapason I and II, Stopped Diapason 8' Principal 4', Fifteenth 2' on the Great, Swell/Great Coupler and every stop on the swell except Vox Angelica 8' Clarion 4' and Octave. On the pedal organ I saved everything (+ Swell/Pedal) except Contra Posaune 32', Posaune 8' and Claion 4' (I reserved these stops for the later Organo Pleno). A sudden pp in bar 4 requires combination [80.3]: Salicional 8' is combined with Vox Angelica 8' on the Swell and soft 16' and 8' stops on the Pedal, as Violone 16', Bourdon 16' and Flute 8' with Swell coupled in. Combination [80.4] in bar 5 is similar to combination [80.2] without the Double Trumpet 16' and Sharp Mixture V on the Swell and Ophicleide and Mixture IV on the pedal; these are added at at the beginning of bar 7 on a divisional piston. The second part of bar 7 brings mf with the [80.5 combination] on Stopped Diapason 8', Dulciana 8', Chimney Flute 4' (on the Choir), (on the Swell) Lieblich Gedackt 8', Salicional 8', Open Flute 4', Swell/Choir and (on the Pedal) Violone 16', Bourdon 16' Flute 8', Octave 8' and Swell/Pedal. Combination [80.6] on the Swell deducts 4' Open Flute on the Swell and Open Diapason 16' and Octave 8' on the pedals from the previous combination, in order to achieve pp>ppp at bar 8. Next combination is similar to combination [80.4] with the use of swell box to accomplish f<fff>diminuendo. Bar 14 prepares the ending of Section 1 of Introduction on pp>pppp on the swell with very soft Flute 8', Vox Angelica on Swell and soft 16' and 8' on the Pedals. The start of the Introduction's second and fourth sections section (at

bars 18 and 26) appeared to be suitable for manual couplers, I/II, III/II, pedal couplers, Great/Pedal, Swell/Pedal, and independent Pedal reeds, such as the Ophicleide 16', Fagott 16' and Posaune 8'. The sufficient quantity of foundation stops and mixtures, reed pipes blend together with the fluework; accordingly the three manuals of the Mander Organ will allow the desired orchestral sound on the second and fourth sections of Introduction. Vice versa, with a wrong choice of stops we are in danger of making unclear the voice leading, instead of emphasising the climactic nature of passages via a lucid crescendo and Organo Pleno. It could be said that the most demanding parts of the whole piece are the second and fourth sections of the Introduction, as the first requirement for the performer is virtuosic technique and clarity. The study of these sections at the piano is a great help in achieving clear articulation and sound and in some ways, re-enacts the mode of composition. Some initial degree of nervousness is inevitably essential in order to reach our ultimate performing level and the use of the semiquaver as a counting unit for the second and fourth sections of the Introduction is vital. With regard to the ppp marking for the Swell, (on the third and fifth sections of Introduction) the Lieblich Gedackt 8' and Vox Angelica 8' could generally be enriched with the Salicional 8' together with the use of the Swell Box, as this organ's construction means that a registration's most powerful result is on the console side, and not below, where the public is. Reger's dynamic indications on the swell manual over the slow phrases are quite detailed. It is possible to differentiate on the Mander Organ dynamic progressions from each other like mp < quasi f > p and p < f > pp.³⁷⁴ These required differentiations are also possible in to any other manual, preceding the coupling of the third manual. Especially at bar 35 and in order to achieve ff (alle Register im 3 Man), we need to add to the swell (coupled to the Pedal) following three combination steps: 1) add light Hautboy 8', Principal 4', Open Flute 4' with swell box

³⁷⁴ Original idea from Bernhard Haas, 'Regers Werktexte als Interpretationsansatz,' in Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers, ed. Hermann Busch, (Kassel: Merseburger, 1998), 37-41.

completely closed at the beginning of bar 35, 2) strengthen with 2' and Trumpet 8' on the A^{4#} of the Right Hand and 3) enriching at the beginning of bar 36 with Trumpet 16' and Mixtures, opening completely the swell box in bar 36 and closing it gradually in bar 37. Fischer praised Straube's significant phrasing and marked and marked the complicated interdependence between the importance of the precise rendition of an organ work in terms of phrasing and the compromise occasioned by the church's acoustics.³⁷⁵



Figure 5.2: Bars 4-5 of the delicate Original Theme recapitulate bars 7-8 of the Introduction

The delicate and diaphanous Theme as shown above in Figure 5.2, which makes its appearance after the preparatory Introduction (Bars 4 and 5 of the Theme recapitulate Bars 7-8 of the Introduction with the descending thirds of the right hand), has a registration schema suggested by Reger himself (Reserving on the Swell : Double Diapason 16', Lieblich Gedackt 8' and Open flute 4' and Swell coupled to Pedal). Therefore, the Original Theme arises transparent with the combination of dark colours such as Double Diapason 16'.

³⁷⁵ Fischer refers to Straube's edition of Liszt's works from 1904, Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig school's tradition of organ pedagogy,' 63-64, 93.

Variation I (83.1) unfolds through a gentle registration for the Theme. Despite the marking *f*, a gentle combination on the Choir is indicated (82.1): Stopped Diapason 8', Dulciana 8', Blockflöte 8', Chimney flute 4', Principal 4', Swell coupled to Choir with the registration with the following stops: Open Diapason 8', Lieblich Gedackt 8', Salicional 8', Principal 4', Open Flute 4'; and for the Pedal just the coupler Swell/ Pedal, Octave 8' and Flute 8', adding Bourdon 16' in bar 16 and taking it out again in bar 26. The swell-box is to be used continuously to achieve dynamic movement.

Variation II has quite a number of fluctuations of sound. I started the written-out mordents with a clean registration on the Swell and Choir, without coupling and without 16' reeds and mixtures. For the combination (82.5) I strengthened the Great by coupling Choir to Great and Swell to Great, reinforcing this at bar 32 with Trumpets 8' and 16' on the Swell. In bar 44 the Swell needs to be reduced, by removing all the reed stops and Mixtures I mentioned, leaving just Lieblich Gedackt 8', Salicional 8', Open Diapason 8', and Open Flute 4', with gentle 16' and 8' pedal stops and coupling Swell to Pedal. In general, the Pedal will sound softer away from the organ console and where the public are sitting if it is not reinforced by the manuals.

Variation III, marked *prestissimo*, is represented by a virtuoso Toccata—not an extremely fast one—with a clear and elastic articulation of movement in the Duet (loud— with reeds 8' and 16' from the Swell coupled in to Great and Choir) and Trio passages (without any soft or loud reeds on the Swell, using the Fifteenth Mixture III for brightness and of course soft pedal stops up to the 4' pitch for the whole variation movement), as indicated in Figure 5.3 below. Every note matters, which is why careful articulation of the manual parts is considered by every recitalist essential for performance on the Canterbury organ.

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quasi Prestissimo

The image shows a musical score for three manuals and a pedal. The tempo is marked *quasi Prestissimo*. The score is in 2/4 time. The first system shows Manual I (Gt.) and Manual II (Sw.) playing the upper voices, while Manual III (Ch.) plays the lower voices. The second system shows Manual I (Gt.) and Manual II (Sw.) playing the upper voices, while Manual III (Ch.) plays the lower voices. The third system shows Manual I (Gt.) and Manual II (Sw.) playing the upper voices, while Manual III (Ch.) plays the lower voices. The pedal part enters in the third variation. Dynamics include *ff*, *(non dim.)*, and *p*. The score is divided into three systems.

Figure 5.3: The freer virtuoso manual passages and the trio parts with the pedal entry of the third variation

After Variation IV, with the reappearance of the Original Theme (similar registration-scheme as on the Original Theme with constant use of the swell box and stops as of *Lieblich Gedackt 8'*– *Salicional 8'* and *Vox Angelica 8'* for an ethereal effect in bars 75-76) as shown in Figure 5.4, the curtain falls with the first part of the piece.

16 *Tempo primo (Andante) ma con moto. (Etwas schneller als das Tempo des Themas.)*

The image shows a page of musical notation for Variation 4. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment, each with a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Tempo primo (Andante) ma con moto. (Etwas schneller als das Tempo des Themas.)'. The score includes various dynamic markings: 'molto', 'p', 'pp', 'ppp', 'quasi f', 'poco', 'molto cresc.', and 'sempre III. Man. (ch.)'. A blue box highlights a section labeled 'Introduction' with the marking 'II. Man. (sw.) sempre ppp'.

Figure 5.4: Variation 4 - the peaceful exact reference to the initial Original Theme / end of first act of the variation circle

a. Second Part of the Op. 73 set

Variation V's writing for the hands, which undulates in much the same style as in the Toccata of Variation III, accompanies the Original Theme, which this time is heard on the pedals as shown in Figure 5.5. Here there is an obvious requirement that the organists should do their relevant homework at the piano; and also adopt a lively, but not too quick, tempo for a crystal-clear acoustic result. Variation V (84.8) brings back the toccata flavor of Variation III, with a louder registration on Choir and Great coupled to Swell and the two manuals. The cantus firmus of the initial (Original) Theme is given out on the Pedal with Ophicleide 16'. A new soft ending combination, without any reeds and Mixtures at all, is needed on the Swell in bars 92 and 100-101.

Variation 5 – Toccata-like with Theme in pedals

Figure 5.5: The dexterity of the manual part- another Toccata-like variation

The D minor Variations VII-VIII are separated by the smallest possible pause, a hemidemisemiquaver rest; the effect is one of a dialogue, with seamless alternations of the manuals. It is essential to use semiquaver as a counting unit for Variations VI (only for sections I and III) and XI and the quaver for the five sections of the Introduction and Variations I, II, III, IV, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII and Fugue. Variation VI is one of the most angelic and ethereal of the Variations. It emerges little by little, using just two stops, Lieblich Gedackt 8' and Vox Angelica 8' in bar 121, and adding only the Salicional 8' at the start of the next bar. The crescendo that follows must be achieved entirely by the use of the swell-box and not by adding other stops. The second half of Variation VI starts really forcefully with a loud Pedal solo. All the couplers, plus 8' and 16' reeds and 4' on the Swell, are concentrated on Pedal, Choir and Great. The Pedal is also strengthened with Fagott 16', Ophicleide 16', and Mixture. In bars 129-

130 we have the option, on the Canterbury Cathedral organ, of using the Tutti piston in order to get Full Organ. Variation VI ends with much the same registration of its beginning.

Variation VII unfolds in a vigorous dialogue between the three manuals and the Pedal. All the reed stops on the Swell, except the 4', are used and are coupled to Great, Choir and Pedal. We could even risk Trumpet 8' on the Great, and Fagotto 16' for the melodic line in the Pedals. Regarding Variation VII Bernhard Haas has stated that *ff* is required in three differently coloured manuals, continuing that the various manual changes must be perceptible, thus the manuals should be differentiated. Against a dynamic differentiation speaks on the one hand about the consistence of the pedal voice and on the other hand the similar weight of the particle, which becomes quantifiably bent.³⁷⁶ Variation VIII in particular, with its echo of Variation XXIX of Bach's Goldberg Variations, admittedly presented a great deal of difficulty perhaps due to the rapid alternation of manuals in combination with the Theme and the condensed playing on the pedals, as indicated below in Figure 5.6.

The image shows a musical score for Variation VII, likely from a Bach organ work. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has three staves for manuals (I, II, III) and a fourth staff for the pedal. The bottom system also has three staves for manuals and a fourth for the pedal. The score includes various dynamic markings and manual change instructions. Blue annotations highlight specific sections: 'almost recapitulation of the two bars opening' and 'reprise of the opening'.

Figure 5.6: The dialogue-effect of the manuals combined with the Theme in the pedals

³⁷⁶ Haas, 'Regers Werktexte als Interpretationsansatz,' 39- 40 (translated by Gerasimos Katsiris).

In Variation VIII we add the Swell Mixtures to the Great and Choir, and Posaune 8' on the Pedal, taking out the Pedal couplers, the Pedal reeds, Swell Mixtures, and Trumpet 8' and 16' in bars 154-155.

From Variation IX onwards, for *ff* and *fff* passages, one can add the use of the Mixture stop, starting initially from the Swell (Mixture III ranks and Sharp Mixture V ranks) coupled to the Great and enhancing also with Double Trumpet 16' and Trumpet 8' on Great and Clarion 4' on Swell-Great, Tuba 8' on the Choir and 8, 16' and 32' reeds on the Pedal, in order to achieve Organo Pleno in bars 162-163. Variation XI, where the Theme is combined with an ostinato in the left hand resembles the ethereal harmonies of Reger's Op. 59 Benedictus. On the Canterbury Cathedral organ we need to swap Choir manual indication with Great organ (just for this combination) to reveal the left hand ostinato figure with the stops of Double Open Diapason 16' and Stopped Diapason 8'. Variation X preserves the sonority and calmness of the Theme with a Lieblich Gedackt 8' and Vox Angelica on the Swell, Stopped Diapason 8' and Claribel Flute 8' on the Great, Stopped Diapason 8' and Dulciana on the Choir, Swell/Pedal and light 16'-8' Pedal stops. Variation XII, where the dynamics reach their zenith, gathers material from previous Variations. Here the performer can add the Mixtures on the Great and the reeds - Clarion 4' on the Swell, Trombone 16', Trumpet 8' and Clarion 4' on the Great – while reserving the Choir Organ 8' and 4' Tubas and the insertion of the Nave Organ for the climax of the Fugue. Since the Nave Organ has a connection to the main Mander Organ, I would be prepared to add it towards the end for the maximum effect.³⁷⁷ Variation XII again brings to mind material in earlier works by Reger, such as the first movement of the Op. 60 Second Organ Sonata, and some of the Op. 46 BACH Fantasia with regard to the working out of the syncopations in the manual parts. The feeling (pathos), the dynamic and the host of other

³⁷⁷ The Nave Organ is a descendant of the medieval portative organs. Whereas organs and other instrumental music are banned from Orthodox churches, in the Great Palace at Constantinople, the Emperor, or rather his 'demes', had their own silver and gold organs for court ceremonial!

mingled emotions span two centuries, from the Baroque to the Late Romantic; while depending on the past, they herald the future. Improvisation, fantasy, elasticity and creative freedom mark this Variation. And as with every circle of form, the original theme returns, as in Variation XIII. After the storm and the Angst there is calm and catharsis. The final Variation XIII puts us in mind, once again, of a similar registration for the Theme in previous Variations, particularly Variation XI, with the ostinato in the final five bars of the cycle. After Variation XIII, the piece is nearing the close, and this is a foretelling of the final flight.

The lively Fugue should not be played quicker than $\text{♩} = 140$, because of the electro-pneumatic nature of the Canterbury organ and the delay in seconds overwhelming acoustics. The Fugue requires balance and a registration that is clear, transparent, and classical, while at the same time simple. Steady, and faithful to its original tempo, the Fugue contains points of elasticity in the manual duet parts on the second, fourth and seventh pages. Once more, the crescendo can be achieved, in passages where there is no breathing space for a change of registration, by legato playing. Here I must not fail to acknowledge the generous help of my second supervisor, Dr. Maria Varvarigou, both with the Fugue and with Op. 73 as a whole. Without her guidance, I wouldn't have been able, in the absence of a stepper-sequencer, to manage the Fugue's fluctuations of sound.

I began the Fugue with a clean registration, using 8', 4' and 2' foundation stops on the Swell, Great and Choir, and couplers for the manuals and Pedals. In bar 16 we take out the 2' and the 4' Principals on the Swell and Choir, so as to achieve the transparent texture of the duet sections on the manuals. There follows a continuous crescendo, reinforcing the stops at bars 29, 40, 52, 66, 76, 85, 88, and 93, and finishing up with the Full Organ apotheosis and catharsis in bar 100.

Straube on the contrary approached differently the Op. 73 Fugue, whereas he made his pupil Wunderlich believe of a symphonic performance of the Fugue would be rather

authentic.³⁷⁸ Such an approach could limit the clarity of the trio passages, as a symphonic approach is only climaxing towards the last two pages of the Fugue.

Ton Koopman mentioned, that as a student, he had decided to include Reger's Op. 135b Fantasia and Fugue in D minor in his final recital. But once he saw the look of the piece, he realised, even before a week was out, that he could not afford the time needed to learn it.³⁷⁹ So the concept, of changing the way it was notated—to have the rhythmic values downgraded, that is, and subdivided with the semiquaver as the biggest—seems an unwarranted interference in the composer's work perhaps a border one shouldn't cross. Koopman was not the only person to have this idea for the quaver subdivision; other scholars joined him, for instance Gwilym Beechey (organist, pianist, harpsichordist, lecturer and composer), pointed out that it is only in Reger's compositions for organ that this complex notation occurs.³⁸⁰ As the realisation of the score's layout is a matter of the composer himself, the performer's duty is to decode it, using the quaver only as our basis for practice, or also, perhaps, in certain passages of the performance. But we cannot intervene by changing the way the work looks and is published. We could either share Howat's thought that performers might 'read back through notation so as to capture the sound-world of the composer and recreate his vision.'³⁸¹

My personal way of practising centres on understanding the movement of the voices, the balance and the technique is the quaver, and the maintaining of tempo with the corresponding natural use of rubato to make harmonic relationships comprehensible to the public. It seemed perfectly natural to me to prepare what might be called a romantic performance of the work on a virtually contemporary organ, the one in Canterbury Cathedral, with electro-pneumatic action, with stops amenable to the romantic period, and with my instincts to guide me. The

³⁷⁸ Anderson, 'Reger, Straube, and the Leipzig School's Tradition of Organ Pedagogy,' 63.

³⁷⁹ Ton Koopman and Antony Bye, 'Brain, Heart and Interpretation,' *The Musical Times* 131, no.1774 (December 1990): 679.

³⁸⁰ Beechey, 'The Organ Music of Max Reger,' 55.

³⁸¹ Roy Howat, 'What Do We Perform?' in *The Practice of Performance*, ed. John Rink, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 3-20.

extremely limited rehearsal time in the Cathedral made the whole process somewhat difficult, as a result of which I had to commit to memory changes of registration, changes of stops if one is not using a sequencer or Walze, and varied combinations on the manuals. This organ, as opposed in Table's 5.1 specification, gives a big palette of sound and like every instrument has its own basic registration.³⁸²

When I practised on the Sauer organ in the Thomaskirche in Leipzig I was in awe of its power and history that extended over two and a half centuries of musical creation. At one end, in front of the sanctuary, was the tomb where Johann Sebastian Bach, thanks to Mendelssohn's advocacy, is buried. At the other, was Reger's and Straube's Sauer organ, with its pneumatic action and functional Walze. This is an early regulated-sound storage system - particularly for passages and combinations that the Walze cannot cover, with comfortable pedalling. Such an organ naturally justifies Straube's rather slow performances —however fast the hands may move—the acoustic result has a particularly leisurely flow. The writing for manuals in Op. 73 is rather reminiscent of Liszt's virtuoso chromatic writings and voice-leading. When I gave my recital on the mechanical Rieger organ in Bergen Cathedral, despite the fact that the heavy mechanical action of the couplers had its effect on the keys, I found that Op.73 was admirably suited to the instrument's specification and style. Moreover on this particular organ one can play a repertoire from three centuries with great success. As for the organ in Westminster Cathedral, this is acoustically closer to the Sauer organ in the Thomaskirche in Leipzig.³⁸³ There seems to be no end to the possibilities for combining its sound-palette of Flutes with the Reeds, and its articulation is a resultant of romantic phrasing. (For the specifications of the

³⁸² Bernhard Haas argues that the swell box effect is poor and not possible to carry out the required differentiations. In some situations two swell boxes are required, as in the second movement of the Second Sonata Op. 60, where the dynamic range required initially for the third and later for the second manual is very large. Thus we should rule out the possibility that the second manual acquires its potential for augmentation from the coupling of the third manual, as it should always be 8' registered, while the third always 8' and 4'. Haas, 'Regers Werktexte als Interpretationsansatz,' 40 (translated By Gerasimos Katsiris).

³⁸³ Due to the acoustics and action of the Westminster Cathedral organ, the recording time is slightly longer than the Bergen Cathedral one. Mp3 recordings are also attached.

organs at Bergen and Westminster Cathedrals, see Appendix I. CDs with relevant recordings are included in hard bound copy).

From an initial quick reconnaissance of the Canterbury Cathedral organ, it seems to accord with the Sturm phenomenon of the symphonic organ in the Thomas-Kirche. The Canterbury instrument's electro-pneumatic action and acoustics are fairly close to the Leipzig instrument, and it seems well capable of meeting the challenges of polyphonic harmony— Op. 73's mastery and range of chromatic moods and transformations. Reger no fewer than eight times uses the Latinate *quasi* to mean 'not so very (fast)', and twice more to mean 'not so very (loud)', in order to avoid hasty or cumbersome tempi. The choice of the right tempo and acoustic coordinate, particularly when playing on full organ, and in parts where the harmony is difficult to grasp, is one of the organ's basic abstract registrations.

Table 5.2 shows the specification of the current main Canterbury Cathedral organ built by Mander

Specification of Canterbury Cathedral Organ/N.P. Mander from 1978³⁸⁴						
Compass of Manuals: CC to A 58 notes						
Compass of Pedals: CCC to F 30 notes						
Great Organ – 15 Stops				Swell Organ – 14 stops		
Double Open Diapason	16	1886	Double Diapason	16	1784/1886	
Open Diapason I	8	1886	Open Diapason	8	1886	
Open Diapason II	8	1784	Lieblich Gedackt	8	1886	
Claribel Flute	8	1886	Salicional	8	1886	
Stopped Diapason	8	1886	Vox Angelica TC	8	1886	
Principal	4	1886	Principal	4	1886	
Flute Harmonique	4	1886	Flute Triangulaire/Open Flute	4	1949	
Twelfth	2 ² / ₃	1886	Flageolet built as Fifteenth Mixture 17.19.22	2 III	1886 1886	
Fifteenth	2	1886	Sharp Mixture 15.19.22.26.29	V	1979	
Piccolo	2	1979	Hautboy	8	1886	
Mixture 15.17.19.22	IV	1886	Double Trumpet	16	1886	
Fourniture 19.22.26.29	IV-VI	1979	Trumpet	8	1886	
Trombone	16	1886	Clarion	4	1886	
Trumpet	8	1886	Octave			
Clarion	4	1886				
Pedal Organ – 13 stops				Choir Organ – 12 stops		
Open Diapason	16	1949	Stopped Diapason	8	1979	
Violone	16	1905	Dulciana	8	1784	
Bourdon	16	1886	Principal	4	1979	
Octave	8	1979	Chimney Flute	4	1979	
Flute	8	1949	Nazard	2 ² / ₃	1979	
Superoctave	4	1979	Blockflute	8	1979	
Open Flute	4	1979	Tierce	1 ³ / ₅	1979	
Mixture 19.22.26.29	IV	1979	Larigot	1 ¹ / ₃	1979	
Contra Posaune	32	1949	Mixture 22.26.29.33	IV	1979	
Ophicleide	16	1886	Cremona	8	1886	
Fagotto	16	1979	Tremulant			

³⁸⁴ For more specifications of Canterbury Cathedral organs refer to Appendix 1; best documented in Toby Huitson, *The Organs of Canterbury Cathedral* (Canterbury: Cathedral Enterprises Ltd., 2001).

Posaune	8	1905	Tuba from former Solo Organ	8	1886	
Clarion	4	1979	Tuba Clarion from former Solo Organ	4	1886	
Pedal Couplers Choir to Pedal			Coupler Swell to Choir			
Great to Pedal						
Swell to Pedal						
Nave Organ – played from Great manual			Accessories			
Open Diapason	8	1979	Draw stops to control			
Stopped Diapason	8	1979	Full organ adjustable by capture system (1992)			
Octave	4	1979	8 pistons to each manual			
Superoctave	2	1979	8 Toe pistons to each manual			
Mixture 19.22.26.29	IV	1979	8 Toe pistons to Pedal Organ			
Pedal Sub Bass	16	1979	8 Toe Pistons duplicating Swell or General Pistons			
			8 General Pistons			
			Reversible Pistons to	Choir to Pedal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Duplicated by Toe Pistons
				Great to Pedal	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				Swell to Pedal	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				Swell to Great	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Setter Piston						
General cancel Piston						

Chapter 6

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When interpreting Max Reger's organ works, there are numerous challenges involving fidelity to the composer's own interpretative indications, as well as forthrightness, accuracy and rhythmic flexibility. Reger places high importance on counterpoint by involving techniques and compositional ideas of three composers, J.S. Bach, Beethoven and Brahms.

If we concern the quaver as the unit of rhythmic measurement according to sources of Stockmeier, we will consent to the ruling principle of Straube's Op. 73 performance (according to the sources)—there are no timing indications in the manuscript of approximately forty minutes. In the modern recordings and live performances the total duration is between 30 and 35 minutes. As a basic metrical unit in Op. 73, the quaver is an essential factor of study at all stages of the work, with regard to pure and painstaking study: in the five sections of the Introduction, the Theme itself, and in all Variations and Fugue (Except I and III sections of Variation VI and XI).

So, in the case that the organist merely gives a correct and accurate performance, then the performer's role becomes insignificant; she or he sacrifices, on the altar of authenticity, the arguable right to a personal level of interpretation, which inevitably very often blurs the boundaries between the composer's intentions and the performer's intuition.

In preparing Op. 73, the performer should make decision about tempi, the use of rubato, spontaneity-imagination and choices of registration. From the stimulating start of reading the scores of Reger's vast organ works, both performers and scholars are dealing with several questions regarding the composer's excessive tempi changes and his or co-composer's indications-corrections. Crescendo, stringendo, diminuendo and rallentando are mostly consigned to a general flexible tempo within a large overall phrasing structure than to a hyperbole of contrasts. Even though preparing a musical performance is a personal and even

emotional responsibility for the performer, it would not be reasonable to consider a performance to be successful based exclusively on spontaneity, inspiration, or instinct. The need for a relationship between the analysis and the performance of Reger's Op. 73 is rather a relation of shared interdependence. Dunsby and Schenker stress that interpretation depends on a correct reading of the script, in the mean of technical accuracy.³⁸⁵ A typical and respectful performer spends myriads of hours developing her skills, caring for technical precision and evaluating her own personal performance. On the whole, organists have to include initial deliberate thought and ought to assimilate the works they perform and avoid losing their spontaneity and elasticity when employing analytical methods. Taking into account only one single and right performance would be a utopia, as there is not only one listener (In order to understand Reger in depth, analysis could be a performing process). One cannot conceptualise a consummate interpretation of Op. 73, if we do not previously investigate the accessible evidential sources and discography, the analysis of syntax and melodic shape. Especially in Op. 73, organization of freedom and control is necessary. The leading voice, key relations and registration schemes are all inevitable issues to be resolved and answered differently within each organist's interpretation. Accordingly, demanding passages become easier in Op. 73, especially on the second and forth sections of the Introduction and the extremely virtuosic and technically demanding eighth variation as well, if the organist demonstrates an informed background and ability to fathom the composer's harmonic and chromatic language; it is the organist's goal to discover with passionate scrutiny the music's shape, the theoretical and analytical background, the zenith of the phrasing with reference to structure. Any analytical constituent applied by scholar-performers must be initially considered in terms of style, genre, performance tradition, and of course scholastic technical preparation, dynamic levelling of

³⁸⁵ Peter Johnson, 'Musical Works, Musical Performances.' *Musical Times* 138, no. 1854 (August 1997): 4-11.

registration, different kinds of articulation, agogic interpretation, sustaining of specific notes and so on.

The Original Theme of Op. 73 represents a quiet *Andante* movement, or a calm Siciliano, more like a relief following the ruminating, highly chromatic improvisatory long Introduction. As it has been already mentioned in the Introduction and the analysis chapters, Reger's models were Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* Op. 120, Brahms's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* Op. 24 and of course the most significant of all those, Bach's *Goldberg Variations* BWV 988; Goldberg's connection to the Op. 73 variation set seems to be missing from other scholars' dissertations, such as Schmeiser, or Harrison and Lischt Dos Santos.

Straube's absence of intervention in the process of Op. 73 publication raises further questions to which there are unfortunately no good answers. For Stockmeier, the traditional registration of Reger's works was contaminated under Straube's possession. It may be that Reger's ideas have been disoriented and that recording traditions of all kinds have strayed from the point.³⁸⁶ It was only to be expected that there would be variations and difficulties in the tradition and style of interpreting Reger's works. The part played by Straube in the performance history of Reger's organ works was highly significant, for it was he who supplied information and historical details about the late Romantic period, the emergence and influence of *Orgelbewegung* and the performance of organ music in general.

The exaggerating tempi and the extreme dynamics could be a result of Reger's way of composing on the piano rather than the organ. Compared to the organ, the restricted dynamic range, the percussive direct sound of the piano and its enormous dexterity potentially justifies Reger's complex manual and pedal organ parts. Hence, the modern performer could use piano practising as a conciliatory way of unveiling the extremes of his writing and making the difficult sound simple. Consequently, and as flexibility of tempo was a common principle of

³⁸⁶ Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret.' 22.

practice over Romantic Era, Reger probably imagined that his organ works could be treated by modern performers, without any further need for clarifying indications.

The scholars of the twenty-first century are astonished by the result of the contemporary interpreters of Reger's organ music; it is frigid, quite often chaotic, un-romantic, and heartless. As a performer I started to wonder if there is an 'authentic' way of performing Reger's Romantic music; the word 'authentic' is a misleading term. One of the highest risks involved is that if the performers follow strict metronome tempo, they are as a rule driven to extremes of stodginess and monotony. Reger's Op. 73 is tightly bound up with rhythm and variation of sound; a crescendo is constantly followed by an *accelerando*, and vice versa. The main concerns are technical accuracy flexibility and clarity. Thus what the music calls for is a fairly free treatment of rhythm so as to ensure an elastic transition from quavers to triplet quavers, and from triplet quavers to hemidemisemi-quavers. Applying the Germani pedal method for Reger's pedal virtuosic passages, the organist has to exercise the pedals in a relaxed way whereby the ankle is as supple as the wrist. Affected articulation can be understood as *crescendo-and-diminuendo*, whether on manuals or pedals, and, if there is no time to add or lose stops, by the use of a sequencer or the *crescendo* pedal. After the first or second practising of a short Reger organ piece, such as Ops 59, 65, or 80, it proves to be easier to decode the composer's harmonic and chromatic language and efficiently apply reading and performing techniques to the Op. 73 Variations.

We shall never know for certain what exactly occurred in Reger and Straube's correspondence, the gaps between the start of 1904 and March 1905, nor why Fischer and not Straube premiered the Op. 73 Variations. Perhaps some letters have been lost. When Straube did finally present the work, at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, just two days after Fischer, he played it twice—once at the start of his recital, and once at the end. Reger's own markings, on the initial score of Op. 73 and further editions, on the use of light or heavy registration with

some names of stops—can be speculated at this specific time, to not represent Straube's own ideas for practice and for performance.

Tracker action generally makes the choice of a quick tempo more difficult and the articulation harder to achieve. Straube's preference for restrained tempi was mainly due to the features of organs at the time—an excessively quick tempo would have sounded blurry, owed to the organ's pneumatic character.³⁸⁷ Straube's choice of tempo was a matter of selecting the right registration to go with Reger's harmonic language. In particular, the registration choice for Straube was influenced by the acoustics; on a Sauer instrument, heavy chords and harmonically complex passages would have sounded muddy if a very vivid speed was chosen. There seems to be no reference at all in Reger's works for a crescendo pedal marking, while Straube, when interpreting Reger's organ works as a performer, played on Baroque or classical organs, without the use of the *Rollschweller*. By using *Walze*, every registration would of course be similar by producing the same predetermined (non-musical) crescendo and diminuendo.

The kind of stops Straube used can be deduced, unfortunately not from acoustic sources, but his edition of *Alte Meister zum Orgelspiels*, in 1904. It could therefore be argued that a successful choice of registration for Reger's Op. 73 can be based on 8-foot-foundation stops, and also, for the work's ethereal passages, solo stops. Reeds may follow according to tonal style with the sparing and discreet strengthening of mixtures, particularly when we are nearing the fortissimo close of the Variations VII, VIII and XII.

Every organ is designed through proper study and planning by advisers and organ-builders so as to fill a specific space with sound. The balanced to perfection Op. 73 Fugue is perhaps the most difficult part of Op. 73 to prepare on the Canterbury organ. A certain amount of practising time is needed before the Trio sections can sound balanced and the acoustic result

³⁸⁷ Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger- Interpret,' 23-24.

betrays effortlessness, transparency and purity. Once more there are no registration markings by Reger in the Fugue (on the copy of Manuscript), except for the Theme, or the Variations that develop from the Theme. Probably he left it to the discretion of the organist, hopefully Straube, his co-composer and dedicator of the set.

Moreover, preparing a piece of music through research, from the very first read-through, constitutes a morphological cycle. Adrenaline and Angst can act as positive feelings in our performance. The performer should not worry about ‘educating’ the audience on Op. 73, as Staube did in his performance of the piece in 1905. Knowledge of period performance practice, consultation of secondary sources such as the composer’s statements, letters, or ear witnesses and use of appropriate-similar action/acoustics instruments would be the foundation for establishing a Regerian stamp of authority on the organist’s individual selection of style.³⁸⁸

The indicated approximate duration on the manuscript is 40 minutes long, although contemporary organists perform the set in about 30-35 minutes; this difference could be attributed to the slower pneumatic action or insufficient wind pressure of older organs. Organists may give more than one meaning to Reger’s musical language, and reconsider their performances and challenge the insight of Reger’s intentions according to anxiety, adrenaline, or the instrument and venue. The transformation from Reger’s printed notation to the act of hearing his music makes for both negative and positive reviews. Therefore we cannot principally intervene by changing the way the work looks and is published.

The fact that Straube himself made no recordings of Reger’s organ works make it more difficult to approach his method of performance, although it was most of the time he who gave

³⁸⁸ Reger used to destroy correspondence sent to him, after he had dealt with it; for that reason all his letters and postcards to Straube have survived incomplete and in copies; Straube has acted accordingly with Reger’s agreement. The only information given by Straube to third parties was regarding Opp. 33 and 40 No. 1 organ works, as these were the only Weiden works he had any influence during the manuscript stage. (Carus Reger Edition: Straube’s influence on Reger’s major organ works, 2012, ft 95, p. 33)

them their first performance. Straube's editions of Reger, for Alte Meister, shed much light on performance, articulation, phrasing, and choice of registration for the works of Bach and Reger.

Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme stands as a fascinating challenge to the performer's virtuosity, and for that reason they seldom feature in an organist's repertoire. My aim for flexibility of rhythm is combined with the right legato of the long phrases and apposite use of articulation in passages that need a crescendo or a diminuendo, especially where time and space for a new set of registration constitute a luxury. In this way, a part of a piece where the marking indicates a continuous crescendo can be matched with the right legato articulation in both manuals and pedals. Furthermore, the staccato markings in the Fugue achieve the lively tempo and the clarity and balance in the Trio passages, without any necessitation of an excessively fast tempo, as in the recording of Rosalinde Haas, or on a non-vivid tempo as in that of Bernhard Haas. The Fugue requires balance and a registration that is clear, transparent, classical and kept simple; it could be perceived as an emancipation from the heavy emotional introductory and variation set. Steady, highly controlled and faithful to its original tempo, the Fugue contains points of elasticity in the manual duet parts on the second, fourth and seventh pages. My personal way of understanding the movement of the voices, the balance and the technique is the quaver-counting unit and the maintaining of tempo with the corresponding natural use of rubato to make harmonic relationships comprehensible to the audience.

The learning process will lead to a romantic performance of the work on a virtually contemporary organ, the one in Canterbury Cathedral, with an electro-pneumatic action, although in absence of the sequencer piston and Walze and with speaking stops amenable to the romantic period; one could make a connection to St. Thomas Leipzig Sauer organ from the aspect of the action and romantic direction of stop lists. It seems complex to find an instrument to fulfill Reger's large works' demands. The Mander Organ at Canterbury Cathedral possesses the utmost potential range of mainly soft tone colours to which the foundation stop list, the

reeds and well-rounded mixtures, followed by the sharper ones, can be added. Therefore this particular organ seems proper for the study of Reger's suggested registrations, the expression of the single solo stops and the importance of the natural legato conveying the voice leading.

Reger's Op. 73 *Variations* as Bach's *Goldberg Variations* feature a variety of time signatures, and the constant demand of the different melodic lines for clarity and sensitivity. There seems to be no connection between Bach's *Goldberg* and Reger's Op. 73 or quote in Reger's symbolism in the evidential scholars' research or any article published analysis. The symbolism and its connection to religion are omnipresent in both pieces; although it is understandable that symbolism cannot serve as a guide to interpretation, but only in numerology and analysis of a piece. Hence the 41 sections of the first part of Bach's *Clavierübung* also balanced by the 14 plus 27 of the second and third part in total 41, give the impression of an intellectual link to Reger's very long forty-one-bar Introduction of the Op. 73. The Christ-and-Twelve-Disciples symbolism identified by Jansen in the *St. Matthew Passion* could also be applicable to Bach's Goldberg Variations 1, 3 and 12. This hypothetical symbolism of Christ and the Twelve Disciples—a quaver followed by twelve semiquavers—could also be applied to Reger's Op. 73 Fugue. Symbolism and numerology have influenced Bach and they could possibly have influenced Reger, although this is not mentioned in existing sources or letter communication. Bach's musical signature can be found in *Goldberg* sixth variation, Schoenberg's *Variations on a Recitative* Op. 40 at the climax of the fugue and couldn't be missing from Reger's Op. 73 variation set.

David Goode refers to the 14 variations and a fugue, counting the optional-deleted variation.³⁸⁹ Lionel Rogg states 12 Variations followed by the Fugue.³⁹⁰ Regarding one of the most demanding long sections of the set, the forty-one-bar long Introduction, Dejmek describes

³⁸⁹ Goode, David, Reger Organ Works, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, April 2013, Signum Classics. It is best documented in the notes of David Goode.

³⁹⁰ Joyce, Donald, Donald Joyce plays Reger on the great organ of Norwich Cathedral, O.M. Records International, 1991 OM80236DDD. Notes on the CD brochure are written by Lionel Rogg.

it as a lengthy independent variation.³⁹¹ On the contrary, both David Goode (in the notes of his Op. 73 recording on the Klais organ of Birmingham Symphony Hall) and Schmeiser (in his Op. 73 analysis) recognize three, rather than five – sections in the Introduction.³⁹²

The ultimate goal is the reconciliation of intuition with research as well as the tension of performance practice of Reger's own time and the consideration of the organ as a major-class concert instrument. The kind of clarity, treatment of phrasing-articulation, absolute legato and choice of stops are often mentioned in Reger's notes and reviews of Straube's performances. The performance focuses in the style and musical technique, all combined with the adrenaline and emotional feeling-sharing of the live recital. Passages of great beauty, the quietest sections, the elegiac of Reger's quality and varied rhythmical textures combined with the Toccata rhetorical movements are all brought together with the recreation of Op. 73 on the Canterbury-Cathedral organ. The final Fugue, a catharsis following mood changing and the pinnacle of the variations' tempest produces a natural and inevitable simplicity against the hyper-chromatic and immensely strong harmonic language.

³⁹¹ Dejmek, Gaston, 'Der Variationszyklus bei Max Reger,' (PhD. diss., Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität, 1930), 6.

³⁹² See Discography & Appendix I.

CHRONOLOGY OF REGER'S ORGAN WORKS

1890

Triple fugue WoO IV/1 (lost)

1892

Three Pieces op. 7

1893

Chorale Prelude 'O Traurigkeit, o Hezeleid' Wo IV/2

Chorale Prelude 'Komm, süßertod!' WoO IV/3

1894-1895

Suite in E minor op. 16

ca. 1896

Fantasia in C sharp minor WoO IV/4 (lost)

1898

Chorale Fantasia 'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott' Op. 27

Fantasia and Fugue in C minor op. 29

Chorale Fantasia 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele!' Op. 30

Funeral March WoO III/5 (lost)

Liebestraum WoO III/7

1899

Sonata in F sharp minor Op. 33

Two Chorale Fantasias Op. 40

No. 1 'Wie schön leucht't uns der Morgenstern'

No. 2 'Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn!'

Suite in C sharp minor WoO IV/5 (draft. Lost)

Introduction and Passacaglia in D minor WoO IV/6

1900

Fantasia and Fugue on B-A-C-H Op. 46

Six Trios op. 47

Three Chorale Fantasias Op. 52

No. 1 'Alle Menschen müssen sterben'

No. 2 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme!'

No. 3 'Halleluja! Gott zu loben, bleibe meine Seelen freud!'

2 Chorale Preludes (1902 as Nos. 15 and 48 in Opus 67)

Variations and Fugue on 'Heil unser König Heil' WoO IV/7

Praelude in C minor WoO VIII/6

1901

Symphonic Fantasia and Fugue Op. 57

Twelve Pieces Op. 59

Sonata in D minor Op. 60

13 Chorale Preludes (1904 as Opus 79 b)

Fugue in C minor WoO IV/8

Chorale Prelude 'Christ ist erstanden von dem Tod' WoO IV/9

1902

Monologe Op. 63

Twelve Pieces Op. 65
Fifty-two Easy Chorale Preludes Op. 67
3 Pieces (1904 as No. 2, 4 and 6 in Opus 80)
Prelude and Fugue in D minor WoO IV/10

1902-1903

Ten Pieces Op. 69

1903

Five Easy Preludes and Fugues Op. 56
Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op.73

1904

Twelve Pieces Op. 80
Four Preludes and Fugues Op. 85
Romanza in A minor WoO IV/11
Postlude in D minor WoO IV/12

1905

Chorale Prelude 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden' WoO IV/13
Chorale Prelude 'Es kommt ein Schiff geladen' WoO/14

1905/1906

Suite in G minor Op. 92

1906

Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor WoO IV/15

Ca. 1908/1909

Chorale Prelude 'Wie schön leucht't uns der Morgenstern WoO IV/16

1912

Prelude and Fugue in F sharp minor Op. 82, Vol. IV Nos. 1 and 2, version for organ

1913

Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue in E minor Op. 127

1914

Thirty Little Chorale Preludes Op. 135a.

1915

Fantasia and Fugue in D minor Op. 135b
Alt niederländisches Dankgebet WoO IV/17

1915-1916

Organ Pieces Op. 145

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