OH, BLEST THE HOUSE, WHATE'ER BEFALL

This composition is a Partita on the chorale "Wo Gott zum Haus" the text of which is based on Luke 2:41-52. The partita form of variations on a theme was developed during the 17th century by such men as Pachelbel and Walther. The organist could use this form to demonstrate his ability to improvise on a hymn tune. These pieces were then used to intone the hymn or between the verses. I have tried to capture the spirit of each stanza with a particular setting.

I.

Oh blest the house whate'er befall, where Jesus Christ is all in all
Yea if he were not dwelling there, How dark and poor and void it were.

This verse speaks of Christ as a Spirit dwelling in the home. Although He is not confined to a human body such as ours, we have the assurance of His omnipresence. To suggest this idea of the freedom of Christ's Spirit, I have selected the five beat rhythm to somewhat eliminate the prominent bar line. I believe that this adds a certain free-flowing quality to the music. The theme in a varied rhythmic pattern appears in the pedal at measures 1-3, and the manuals at measures 5 and 6.

II.

Oh blest the house where faith ye find, and all within have set their mind
To trust their God and serve Himm still and do in all His holy will.

The essence of verse two is the line, "Oh blest the house where faith ye find." For that reason I have used the notes of the theme which correspond to these words as the basis for the second variation. The notes of the theme appear as the first note of every other measure. The counter melody in the manuals ~~represent~~ repeats the first two measures of the right hand in the last two measures of the left hand.

III.

Oh blest the parents who give heed unto their children's foremost need
And weary not of care or cost! May none to them and heaven be lost.

The third verse speaks of the christian influence which parents are to have on their children. The adventurous path of the children through life must be guided by the stable influence of christian parents. To picture this idea, I have selected a rather sprightly three beat rhythm for the theme which is accompanied by a free canon at the third imitating the theme. The steadying influence of the parents appears in a two beat pattern emphasizing the strong tonal center, which at times provides syncopation to the theme but is finally resolved in the last measure.

IV.

Blest such a house it prospers well, in peace and joy the parents dwell,
And in their children's lot is shown how richly God can bless His own.

"In peace and joy the parents dwell." The concept of peace in a christian home is suggested in this rather subdued setting. The harmonies which occur are intended to be a reflection of peace. For the first time in the composition a third has been employed in the final cadence thus pointing out the emphasis on harmony in this setting.

(Oh Blest the House, cont.)

V.

Then there will I and mine today a solemn covenant make and say:
Though all the world forsake Thy Word, I and my house will serve the Lord.

"I and my house will serve the Lord." This powerful statement carries the message of the entire chorale. A statement such as this could only be made in a happy christian home. I chose to make the setting for this verse as positive as possible. The theme is suggested in a florid melodic line over strong,definitive harmonies. The final resolution to the tonal center of E Flat is purposely delayed to create added interest by beginning this setting in c minor. The last line of the text was important enough to be repeated. The final cadence is varied by doubling the theme in octaves, and making the leading tone flat. This device suggests a strong modal feeling to this final cadence of the composition.

Ralph C. Schultz
Aug. 1, 1956

Oh, Blest the House, Whate'er Befall

Partita

I

Moderate Tempo

I

Man.

II

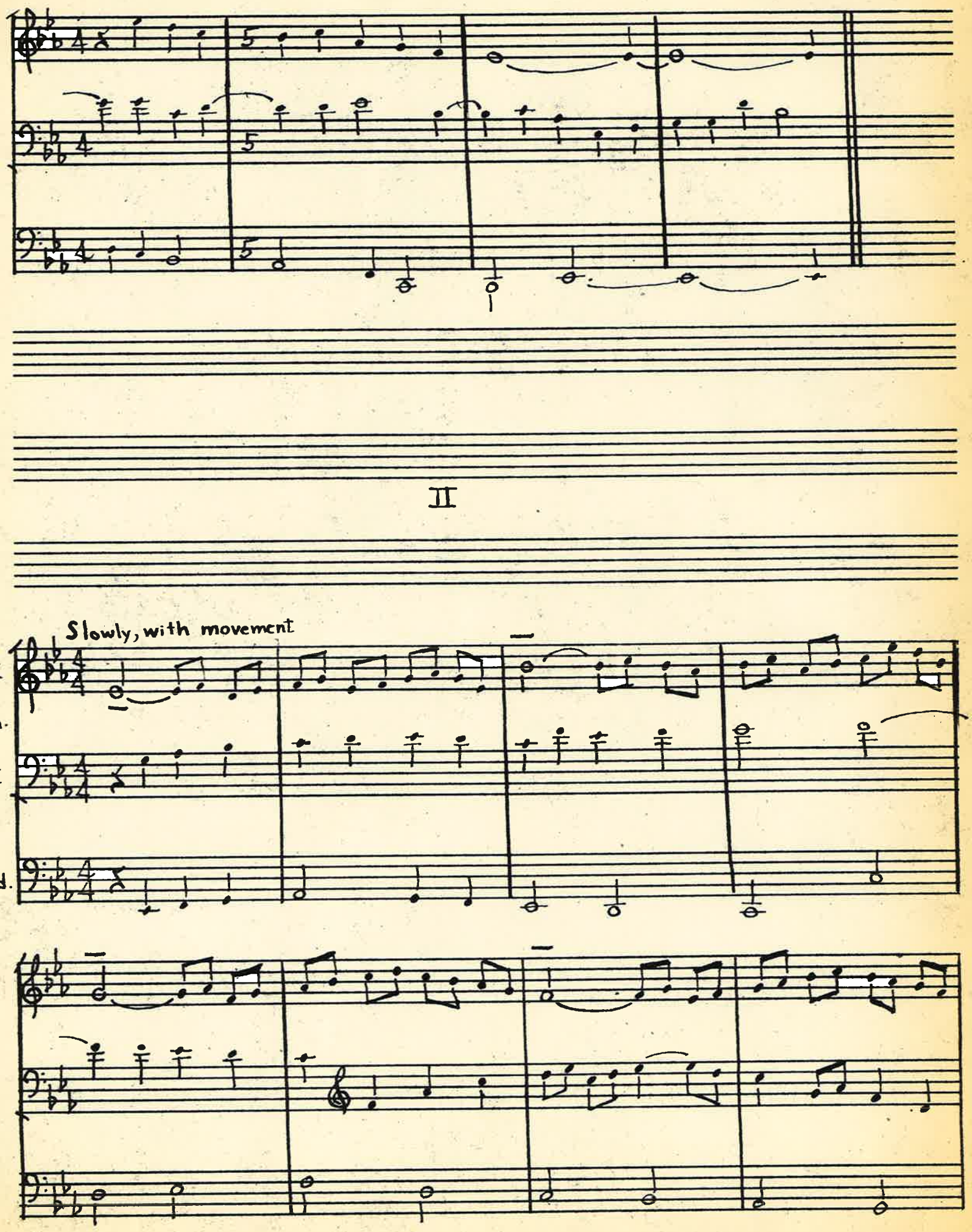
Ped.

mf

mf

mf

INDEPENDENT MUSIC PUBLISHERS



INDEPENDENT
MUSIC PUBLISHERS

III

Lively, with spirit

I

Man

II

Ped.

INDEPENDENT MUSIC PUBLISHERS

IV

Moderate Tempo

I

Man.

II

Ped.

Ped.

INDEPENDENT MUSIC PUBLISHERS

V.

Majestic, with joy

Full Organ

fff

fff

Dedicated to Mom and Dad
for your
25th Wedding Anniversary

God's Blessings

Aug. 1, 1956

Ralph C. Seberg

No. 115 12-PLAIN

INDEPENDENT MUSIC PUBLISHERS