

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 Him 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 ~~repeats~~ 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.

(Ob 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. mf

II

Ped. mf



II

*Slowly, with movement*

I  
Man.

II

Ped.



The first system consists of three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff is in treble clef and contains a harmonic accompaniment. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

The second system also consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line from the first system. The middle and bottom staves continue the harmonic and bass accompaniment respectively. The system concludes with a double bar line.

Three empty musical staves, each consisting of five lines, are arranged vertically. The Roman numeral 'III' is centered between the second and third staves.

III

Lively, with spirit

This section contains four staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'I' and is in treble clef. The second staff is labeled 'Man' and is in bass clef. The third staff is labeled 'II' and is in bass clef. The bottom staff is labeled 'Ped.' and is in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The 'Man' and 'Ped.' parts feature rhythmic patterns with accents and slurs.



The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with quarter and eighth notes, some beamed together. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes.

The second system continues the musical piece. It features two staves. The upper staff has a few notes followed by a double bar line. The lower staff continues with notes. A section labeled "IV" is indicated below the staves, likely referring to a specific measure or chord.

Moderate Tempo

The third system is labeled "I Man. II" on the left side. It consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with quarter notes. Pedal points are indicated by "Ped." and a circle with a cross symbol below the bass staff.

The fourth system continues the piece with two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with quarter and eighth notes. The lower staff has a bass line with quarter notes. A "Ped." marking with a circle and cross symbol is present below the bass staff.

Two empty musical staves, one in treble clef and one in bass clef, are provided at the bottom of the page for additional notation.



Majestic, with joy

Full Organ

Handwritten musical notation for the first system, featuring three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef. The music is marked with a forte dynamic 'ff'.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, continuing the piece with three staves in the same clefs and key signature as the first system.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system, continuing the piece with three staves in the same clefs and key signature.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system, concluding the piece with three staves. The key signature changes to one flat (B-flat) in the final measure.

Dedicated to Mom and Dad  
for your  
25th Wedding Anniversary

God's Blessings  
Aug. 1, 1956

*Joseph C. Schultz*