

Josef
RHEINBERGER

SONATA No. 9

Opus 142
In B flat Minor

FOR ORGAN

K 03795

Sonata No. 9

NOTES

The first movement is unusually rich in material: there are three lengthy subjects in addition to the opening *Grave*. The form is *a-b-c-a-b-c-a*, with a portion of the *Grave* used as Coda. Admirable though the Prelude be, there is some risk of monotony, owing to the large part played by five-flat tonality, the charming little tune on page 5 being in D flat, the same key as the second subject, and the relative major of the first subject. Moreover, there is less contrast in movement between the first and second subjects than appears on the surface, the change from quavers to semiquavers being partly negated by the direction *poco meno mosso*. The player must be on his guard against this danger of monotony. It may be advisable, for example, to quicken slightly the middle of the sections beginning on pages 4 and 7, always remembering, however, that the flowing theme calls for breadth. In the two closing bars of page 3 the *rit.* must be *very slight*; no harm will be done if the direction is disregarded, as the change from quavers to minims and semibreves provides ample retardation.

The left hand accompaniment to the chief subject loses much of its difficulty if an occasional note is taken over by the right hand, as indicated; and the passage becomes still less exacting when played *non legato*—the most effective method on many organs. No fingering is given for this passage. It is impossible to devise a method that will suit both large and small hands playing sixths mainly on the black keys.

In the Romance no Solo stops are indicated by the composer, but the final section lends itself well to soloing, and is laid out accordingly. (The first section, too, can easily be soloed, but the effect is best held in reserve.)

Bars 16-23 on page 13 present an opportunity for some charming antiphony between Solo stops on two or three manuals.

In the Fantasia the composer's abstention from such directions as *appassionato*, *agitato*, etc., must not prevent the player from realising the vivid contrast between the free rhapsodical passages and the broad and dignified *adagios*. The one-dimensional passages often call for *recitativo* treatment; and there is scope for far more variation of pace and power than may be conveniently indicated. *Quasi Improvisazione* would perhaps be the best direction to apply to the movement.

The Fugue is one of the finest and most attractive of organ works in this form. This is due partly to its harmonic richness and the wide range of modulation, but even more perhaps to the skill with which the fiery non-fugal matter from the first movement is worked in. Like most of the Sonata fugues, it contains very little scientific writing of the conventional fugal type; it is, in fact, an outstanding example of Rheinberger's unusual aptitude for being free and spontaneous in the very form that is popularly regarded as calling for calculation rather than imagination.


TEXTUAL EMENDATIONS.

Page 5, line 2, bar 1: ♯ has been added to the second C in R.H. The C♯ in L.H. and Ped. seem to indicate that the ♯ was inadvertently omitted from the original edition, though C♮ is a possible reading.

Page 7, line 5, bar 3: In the original edition the second semiquaver in R.H. has no accidental. As the F♮ in the preceding bar suggests the possibility of this note being ♮, a ♯ is added for safety, and as the more probable reading.

Page 14, last bar; and page 17, line 3, last bar: There is no ♮ to the A in the R.H. in the original edition. The A♯ in the preceding bar leads us to expect A♯ again; but as A♮ is at least as likely, the text must be followed. For safety, therefore, the ♮ has been added.

JOSEF RHEINBERGER (b. 1839, d. 1901) was a prolific composer in almost every field, but he found in the organ the medium best fitted to his genius and temperament. This seems to be proved by the fact that his reputation as an organ composer has grown and is now firmly established, whereas his position in other branches has declined. His twenty sonatas and his numerous shorter pieces (about a hundred) make up one of the most important contributions to the organ repertory. It may indeed be claimed that in the maintenance of a high level of quality and interest throughout a long series of works of both large and small scale, his position as an organ composer is second only to that of Bach.

The present edition of the sonatas is an endeavour to make good as many as possible of the deficiencies of the original version. Rheinberger gave very few indications as to variety of power or tone, primarily, no doubt, because his own organ was lacking in aids to registration. (It hadn't even a Swell pedal; hence the curious circumstance that the sign  occurs only once in the whole of the sonatas!) But his sparing use of expression marks may have been due partly to the fact that his music, being in the main polyphonic, demands continuity rather than contrast. The interest of the sonatas lies chiefly in their texture (as a contrapuntist Rheinberger ranks with the best of any period), their admirable construction (he was particularly successful, for example, in combining the fugue with other forms), and their wealth of melodic ideas of a broad and dignified character. These are qualities that depend little on registration, though they are less able to dispense with it than Rheinberger seems to have imagined.

In regard to registration, this edition attempts to provide a scheme that can be managed on the great majority of organs without breaking the flow of the music, and that may be used as a basis when a more elaborate method is possible or desirable. Players on organs with ample resources, however, must not forget that the effect of continuity in polyphonic music may be impaired by too much contrast, no matter how fluently applied. (Those who desire elaborate registration for these works will find detailed schemes for every movement in Dr. M. P. Conway's book "Rheinberger's Organ Sonatas: Suggestions for Registration, etc.," published by *Musical Opinion*.)

Many of the phrase-marks in the original edition are obviously misplaced; a large number—e.g., those attached to short groups of notes preceded and followed by rests—are unnecessary; and some that were applied to middle parts are ineffective. These faults have, it is hoped, been remedied; but phrase-marks have not been lavishly used, as it was desirable that the score should be left as clear and open as possible.

Although *legato* is the foundation of part-playing technique, it needs frequent modification in organ music, especially when the instrument is large, or slow of speech, and the building very resonant. Departures from *legato* are only sparingly suggested in this edition; but as a general principle it may be observed that the *non legato* or *mezzo staccato* touch is frequently called for in rapid left-hand passages that are apt to be obscured by the pedal below or by the manual parts above.

In playing works of a lengthy and solid character that, from their nature, are independent of elaborate registration, it is necessary to remember that even an organ of moderate size can provide a variety of *fortes*, e.g., that of the Great diapasons alone (sometimes of a single open diapason), the Swell reeds (*tutti* or in part), the Swell diapasons with box open, full Choir (with or without Swell), the Great fluework, and so on; and, *mutatis mutandis*, this applies to *mp*, *mf*, and, on large organs, even to *ff*. The risk of heaviness and monotony in Rheinberger's longer movements may be avoided by a judicious use of this type of variety, which of course involves a less slavish dependence on pistons than is customary. The indication *ff* in this edition usually indicates Full Great, without reeds, and with full, or almost full, Swell coupled; Full Organ=everything except Solo Tuba, which may sometimes be added for the final bars, or even at a climax of a special character; *mf* and *mp*=a few stops, or a single stop, on any manual; *più forte* may call for no more than the addition of a single stop (not necessarily one of 8-ft. pitch, by the way) or a fixing open, or partly open, of the Swell box. Absence of a suggestion to the contrary implies that the Swell should be coupled to the Great. As enclosed Choirs are still in the minority, Swell solo stops are usually suggested for quiet expressive purposes; it need hardly be said that enclosed Choir stops should sometimes be substituted. When no 8-ft. pedal stop is available, the accompanying manual should be coupled to the pedal (this direction ought not to be necessary, but there are still many players who use a soft 16-ft. pedal alone, the result being a bass so woolly as to bring about an occasional dislocation of the harmony, the left hand producing the effect of a real bass). Solo stops are not specified as a rule; the choice is best left to the player.

Fingering is a highly individual matter, and organ fingering is to a considerable extent dependent on the depth and weight of touch; even the position and degree of sensitiveness of manual pistons (by making risky a too forward position of the fingers) may limit the use of the thumb on the black keys. Pedalling is an even more arbitrary affair, owing to the variety of pedal boards still in use; and the unadjustable bench is also a factor. The fingering and footing marked, therefore, have less than the usual claims to finality. They may serve as a basis, however, and the player who grudges neither time nor thought in modifying them to suit his needs will learn much in the process.

Some of the original time-signatures and notation have been changed, in accordance with the now generally accepted principle that the crotchet is the most convenient unit.

In the original edition very little was done to indicate the sharing of the parts between the hands—a vital matter in polyphonic music. In this edition the division is made clear. Passages that are beyond the grasp of normal hands are given in a re-cast form in the Notes to the sonata in which they occur. Doubtful textual points are also dealt with in the Notes.

The composer's directions as to pace and power have been retained; editorial suggestions as to their modifications are given in brackets.

SONATA N° 9

PRELUDE

Josef Rheinberger,
Op. 142

Grave $\text{♩} = 72$

First system of musical notation for the prelude, marked *Grave* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 72$. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff has a *tr* (trill) marking. The second staff has a *Gt ff* marking. The third staff has a *Gt to Ped.* and *ff* marking.

Second system of musical notation. It consists of three staves. The first staff has a *Full* marking. The second staff has a *3* (triple) marking. The third staff has a *3* (triple) marking.

Third system of musical notation. It consists of three staves. The first staff has a *3* (triple) marking. The second staff has a *3* (triple) marking. The third staff has a *3* (triple) marking. The system concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking.

Allegro moderato $\text{♩} = 84$

Fourth system of musical notation, marked *Allegro moderato* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 84$. It consists of three staves. The first staff has a *f* (forte) marking. The second staff has a *f* (forte) marking. The third staff has a *f* (forte) marking. The system concludes with a *simile* marking.