

## Samuel Wesley(1766-1837), English Organist, Composer and Scholar

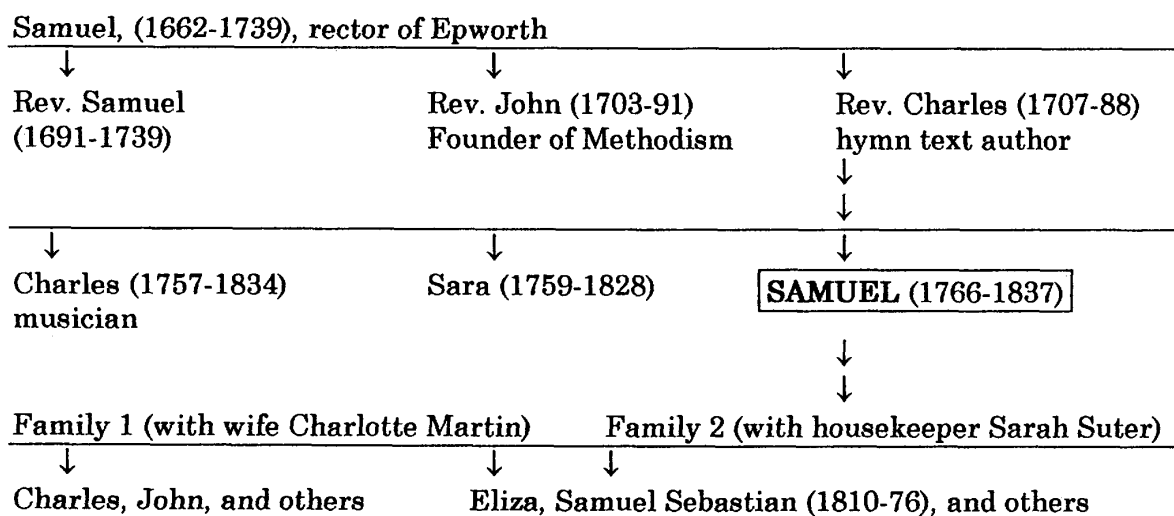
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To Methodists the world over, mention of the name Wesley invokes images of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. John is certainly the most famous member of the illustrious Wesley family, but there were also several important musicians. In the musical world of early 19th-century England, the name Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) was synonymous with excellence in composition, organ performance and musicological scholarship. He has been widely cited as the last important composer in the field of early English organ music, the greatest British organist of the day, and as having been instrumental in bringing about a revival of the works of J. S. Bach in England. Since a full study of the life and works of Samuel Wesley would necessarily be book-length, this paper will focus on just two aspects of his life. The first of these will be an examination of Wesley's role in the introduction of the works of J. S. Bach to England. The second will be a study of the organ world of early 19th century England and Wesley's place in it. Descriptions of the type of organ being built at the time, the music written for it, and Wesley's own compositions for the organ will be included. An analysis of his *Voluntary* Opus 6, No.10 will conclude the study.

### Biography of Samuel Wesley

The Wesley family tree includes 4 important family members with the first name of Samuel, thus, one needs to be aware of which generation the subject of this paper falls in. Not only this, but the names John and Charles were also used several times.

### Wesley Family Tree



Samuel's grandfather, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, was rector of Epworth, county Lincoln. He was a poet and defender of sacred music, contending that it was "one of the parts of learning which required to be well studied."<sup>1</sup> This Samuel's son was the famed founder of Methodism, the Rev. John Wesley. Samuel's other two sons were also clergymen - The Rev. Samuel and the Rev. Charles Wesley. John Wesley was a "lover of good music, both vocal and instrumental," and published two collections of hymns (1742 and 1765) for use by Methodists.<sup>2</sup> He also authored a treatise called "The Power of Music" in which he gave his congregations the following instructions concerning their communal singing: "Sing all, sing lustily, sing modestly, sing in time, sing spiritually."<sup>3</sup> John's brother Charles was the father of the brothers Charles and Samuel, musicians. He was known as a Methodist preacher, as a writer of hymn texts, and for the series of subscription concerts held in his London home that featured his two sons.

Musicians Samuel and Charles were both child prodigies, beginning to play the harpsichord by age three. Charles could play tunes together with the bass part by age two, and was given lessons by William Boyce, eventually becoming the private organist to George III.<sup>4</sup> His career took him to posts at Surrey Chapel, which became important to Samuel Wesley later, and St. Marylebone. Routh calls him a minor composer whose early talent failed to develop, and states that "his few organ compositions are derivative of Handel and uninteresting."<sup>5</sup>

The final generation of notable Wesleys includes Samuel Wesley's daughter Eliza, who preserved many of his manuscripts and letters, and his son Samuel Sebastian, who was a noted composer and organist in his own right. Samuel Sebastian and his father are

often mistaken for one another.

Samuel Wesley learned to play the harpsichord and violin as a child. By the time he was eight he had written out an oratorio called "Ruth", which he is said to have composed when only six years old. At ten he was an accomplished harpsichordist, being able to sight-read and improvise at the instrument.<sup>6</sup> By the age of twelve he was playing services on the organ at Bath Abbey. After the Wesley family moved to London in 1778, Samuel and Charles presented a series of concerts spanning the six years from 1779 to 1785 in the music room of their house, which "contained two chamber organs, a harpsichord, ten music desks, and enough space to seat an audience of some fifty-six people."<sup>7</sup> The concerts were attended by important members of London society, including the Lord Mayor and the Archbishop of Canterbury, among others.

At age eighteen Samuel converted to Roman Catholicism, apparently more for musical than doctrinal reasons. His conversion blocked him from ever working in the Anglican church, and, as a result, he did not hold a regular church position until very late in life. He apparently disassociated himself with Roman Catholicism later, for in 1788 he became a freemason, and in 1793 he married Charlotte Louisa Martin in an Anglican service.

In 1787 Wesley fell into a builder's excavation and severely injured his head. Some writers point to this as the cause of his lifelong attacks of debilitating depression, which were the worst for two seven-year periods (1787-94 and 1817-1825). Others also cite his failed marriage<sup>8</sup> and the burden of "regular payments to support his wife, though he himself had no adequate source of income."<sup>9</sup> Though he taught piano for 25 years at an establishment called the Oxford house, published music, lectured and performed, Wesley was always in financial trouble, going so far as to write his friend Vincent Novello begging for music-copying jobs, and spending time in debtor's prison. Later in life, Wesley regretted the fact that his father had ever allowed him to become a musician. "The music trade," he wrote, "is a trivial and degrading business to any man of spirit or any abilities."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps his personal problems gave him reason to behave in a manner described by the wife of a personal friend in this way.

I know him unfortunately, too well. Pious catholic, raving atheist; mad, reasonable; drunk and sober. The dread of all wives and regular families. A Warm friend, a bitter foe; a satirical talker; a flatterer at times of those he cynically traduced at others; a blasphemer at times, a purling Methodist at others.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these troubles, Wesley was celebrated as the greatest organist and improviser of his day, and is now considered by some to have been the best English composer of the early 19th-century.<sup>12</sup> Not only this, but his work as a scholar was extremely influential in the musical world of early 19th-century London. Wesley pursued all the activities that today are usually undertaken in the setting of schools of music: researching older music, lecturing, publishing music, and performing.

### **Wesley and J. S. Bach<sup>13</sup>**

Aside from his own music making, Wesley was tremendously important as the first Englishman to champion the works of J. S. Bach (1685-1750). England in the early 19th-century was a country where the music of Handel was revered while that of Bach was unknown. By mid-century, however, a full-fledged revival of Bach's works had taken place in England. Evidence of this is given by the founding of the Bach Society (1849) and Bach Choir (1875). The revival that took place over these 50 years cannot be attributed entirely to Samuel Wesley, yet in the field of Bach's music for the keyboard, he stands far above all others.

Before examining Wesley's role in the Bach revival, however, one should be aware of the state of English music in the early 19th century. As was stated above, the works of Bach were unknown in England in 1800. One might well wonder why his music took so long to gain popularity with the English public. This is especially so when one considers that Bach's exact contemporary and fellow German, G. F. Handel, was popular in England not only during his lifetime, but for a century or more after his death. Though he died in 1759, Handel's music was still influential during Wesley's lifetime. Part of the reason for this stems from the acceptance by the English of him as one of their own, rather than as a foreign composer. Handel moved to London in 1710, and became an English citizen thereafter. Particularly in the field of organ music, Handel had many English admirers, and, indeed, imitators. One example was Matthew Camidge, organist of York Minster (1764-1844), who stated that when he wrote his own organ concertos of 1815, he had "endeavored to imitate the particular style of music which has been so long admired, namely that of Handel and Corelli."<sup>14</sup> Bach, however, never worked outside his native Central Germany, and does not appear to have had English contacts during his lifetime.

An important factor in the English Bach revival was the overall atmosphere of the country during the late 18th to early 19th centuries. King George III (1738-1820) was not

only ruler of England, but also held the position of elector of Hannover, Germany, from 1760 to 1815, and later, king of Hannover from 1815-1820. Descended from a line of German royalty but born and educated as an Englishman, he helped to maintain strong links between Germany and England during the period. As a result, a German Lutheran Chapel Royal was maintained at St. James' Palace, London, and German musicians were welcomed in England.

While it is true that German musicians who traveled to England were initially responsible for introducing the works of J. S. Bach to the English, it must also be stated that the cooperation of English musicians was essential in gaining their wide-spread acceptance. Samuel Wesley was the leader of a group of Bach supporters who called themselves "Our Sebastian Squad," or the "Bach Hunto."<sup>15</sup> Through the letters he wrote to his friends on the topic, it is easy to see that he was tireless in his efforts to promote Bach's works in England. So serious was Wesley that he frequently referred to the composer as "Saint Sebastian." Due to the continuing prestige of Handel, however, his efforts were often blocked. Prominent Handelians included Wesley's brother Charles, as well as the aged historian Charles Burney. Both are frequently mentioned in the Bach Letters as being on Handel's side.

Wesley's Bach letters were published after his death by his daughter Eliza. They are available in a modern reprint, and are most enlightening. Written to Benjamin Jacobs, they show the great effort Wesley made in order to bring Bach's work into the public view. The letters make interesting reading, especially when they disparage Handel's reputation. Wesley wrote the following in a letter dated October 19, 1809.<sup>16</sup>

We all know how he [Handel] has pilfered from all manner of Authors whence he could filch anything like a thought worth embodying; and although it is certain that what he had taken he has generally improved on (not when robbed the Golden Treasury of Sebastian, by the way), yet there is such meanness in putting even his own subjects in so many different Works over and over again...

When writing about J. S. Bach, however, Wesley used only superlatives. His letter of September 17, 1808 to Benjamin Jacobs is a good example. Here Wesley called Bach "the great and matchless Genius," as well as "the greatest Master of Harmony in any Age or Country," and "our Sacred Musician." Of Bach's works, Wesley wrote that they are "a musical Bible unrivaled and inimitable."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to writing and lecturing on the topic of Bach's works, Wesley worked for

his cause through organ performances and publications. Though he had been performing in public since early childhood, he probably saw his first Bach works in 1800 when George Pinto showed him several fugues. From then on his public recitals often included works by Bach. Because of the lack of a full pedal board, however, he had to either perform the organ works as duets, or play only manual pieces. Wesley and members of his group performed the music of Bach often, at first as a closing voluntary to the services of the various chapels around London. In 1808, Wesley performed Bach pieces on the organ in a series of public concerts at the Hannover Square Concert Room. Later in 1808 the concerts continued with the assistance of William Crotch and others at the Surrey Chapel, London. These recitals often lasted for four hours and included 40 to 50 separate pieces. Though the Surrey Chapel had an organ of only 13 stops and 1 1/2 octaves of pedals, the 2,000-seat chapel was frequently full. Wesley's last performance on the organ came just a month before his death, when he went to hear the 28-year-old Mendelssohn playing at Christ Church in Newgate Street. Invited to play for Mendelssohn, Wesley performed his own *B Minor Fugue*.

In the sphere of music publishing, Samuel Wesley was instrumental in bringing forth certain keyboard pieces of J. S. Bach. With K. F. Horn, he arranged (for piano duet) and published Bach's six organ trio sonatas in 1809. Wesley apparently envied German organ technique and construction, for in the preface he described the way in which organ trios were originally performed. Wesley wrote that the sonatas were "performed by the matchless Author [J. S. Bach] in a very extraordinary manner. The first and second Treble parts were played with both Hands on two Sets of Keys, and the Base (wonderful as it appears) he executed entirely upon Pedals, without assistance."<sup>18</sup> Though the performance of organ works with full pedal parts seems quite natural to modern organists, it was perceived as something of a miracle in the England of Wesley's day.

Wesley collaborated again with K. F. Horn in publishing *Das wohltemperierte Clavier* in installments from 1810 to 1813. His work as editor demonstrates Wesley's scholarly abilities, since his edition of pieces was more authentic than any of the three German editions then available.<sup>19</sup>

Without Wesley's tireless efforts over a span of some 30 years, it might have taken far longer for the English public to become aware of J. S. Bach's works for keyboard. Though severely limited by the type of organ available in England at the time, Wesley performed and published numerous of the composer's works. With the help of a small group of supporters, he was able to overcome the domination of Handel's music in

contemporary English circles.

### **English Organs at the Time of Samuel Wesley**

Organ music, like most instrumental music, has always been something of a product of the instrument available at the time of composition. Composers have naturally written their music to best exploit the instruments available. When the organ in a given tradition (be it regional, historical, or other) stayed within certain stylistic boundaries for any length of time, a style of composition usually came to be associated with it. This was certainly the case in the mid-18th to the early 19th-century in England, where organ builders one basic type of instrument, the main difference from organ to organ being one of size. An understanding of the music of Samuel Wesley and his contemporaries can only be obtained if one has an idea of the sound of the instrument they were written for.

By the mid-18th century, something of a boom in organ building was taking place in England. Though the numbers of instruments had not recovered entirely to their pre-Commonwealth strength, most well-off parishes had a sizable organ.<sup>20</sup> These organs were remarkably standardized in terms of overall sound, numbers of keyboards, layout of the instrument, and types of stops.

Unlike the European continent, where numerous organs have been preserved in more or less original state, very few English examples have survived intact to the present. While wars, revolutions, political and ecclesiastical changes all took their toll, much of the blame can be placed on the revolution in organ building that took place in England in the 1840's and later. It was at this time that the actual purpose of the instrument changed, instantly outdating older organs. Until roughly the mid-19th century, an English church organ had just two purposes. In local churches it had to accompany the congregation in their singing of metrical psalms and to perform voluntaries before and after the service. The works of J. S. Bach and other composers who wrote for German-style organs were either unknown or not in style, so the English organ of the day served its purpose quite adequately. In cathedrals, the organ's purpose was to accompany the choir as it performed the sung service. It was not necessary to fill the church with sound. Thus, whereas a continental cathedral organ was most often a very large instrument capable of filling immense spaces with sound, an English cathedral organ differed very little from a normal parish church organ. In fact, Bicknell calls the English organ of this period "perhaps amongst the quietest organs in the world."<sup>21</sup> This in no way denigrates the instrument, for in addition to their reticence, these organs were famed for their

refined sound. For example, George Pike England's extant 1794 organ for Blandford Forum Parish church in Dorset has been described as "gentle but sparkling, and notable for its impeccable blend. In its obvious understatement it mirrors English aesthetics in architecture and design."<sup>22</sup> Charles Burney (1726-1814), English composer, organist, and music historian, was one of the few organists who actually heard or played continental organs, and thus, had a basis for a comparison between the two types. He wrote,

It is extraordinary that the swell, which has been introduced in to the English organ more than fifty years, and which is so capable of expression and of pleasing effects, that it may be called the greatest and most important invention that ever was made on any keyed instrument, should be still utterly unknown in Italy... I must observe that most of the organs which I have met with on the Continent seem to be inferior to ours built by Father Smith, Byfield, or Snetzler, in everything but size. As the churches there are often immense, so are the organs; the tone is indeed somewhat softened by space and distance; but when heard near, it is intolerably coarse and noisy..<sup>23</sup>

Such refinement apparently did not please all listeners, however. Sir John Sutton, writing in the 1840's, noted the delicacy of builder Samuel Green's pipe voicing, but went on to say, "One would suppose that Green was anxious in his instruments to emulate the tone of a musical snuff box, rather than that of an Organ."<sup>24</sup>

By the time of Samuel Wesley's birth, the standard English organ had three manuals, or keyboards, each controlling an independent division of pipes. Unlike the Northern European organs with their robust pedal divisions, English organs at this time had either no pedals at all, or were equipped with just a few pedal keys (usually spanning an octave or slightly more) that controlled no pipework of their own. This fact alone made it impossible to perform most of the works of J. S. Bach without an assistant. Not until the 1790's was an organ built in England that had independent pedal pipes, and not until the mid 19th-century did they become common.<sup>25</sup> The pedals in use until then were simply pull-downs connected to the bottom few notes of the Great manual. These pull-down pedals allowed the organist to play the lowest notes of a piece with his feet if the stretch was too large for the left hand. The compass of the Great organ extended about a fourth lower than the lowest C of modern organs (or of contemporary German organs), thus, having the assistance of the pedals might have been important. Even a cursory look at the organ music of the day shows that English composers wrote no independent pedal lines, so this limited type of pedal keyboard was apparently sufficient for their musical needs.



Another difference between the English organs of the 18th century and those of the continent was the inclusion of a Swell division. The so-called Swell organ was invented in 1712, and by 1730 all English instruments of average size included them.<sup>26</sup> As the name implies, the presence of a Swell division allowed an organist to control the volume of sound issuing from this division. The pipes of the Swell organ were placed inside a thick-walled wooden box fitted with movable shutters on the front side that were controlled by a pedal near the organist's foot. The occasional crescendo or decrescendo mark that can be found in Wesley's music shows that he probably wanted the effect to be used.<sup>27</sup>

As was noted above, the range of the keyboards of English organs of this period were not the standardized range found in German organs. Though the top end of a keyboard might contain a note more or less than the usual, a German organ keyboard of the period invariably had C as its lowest note. This was true of the pedal keyboard as well as the manual keyboards. Much more variety existed in England, however. The Great keyboard (first manual) generally extended down to the G a fourth below the German C. Keyboards extending as low as F were not unusual. While the Great and Choir (second manual) keyboards had a longer compass than present-day standards; the third manual, the Swell manual, was quite a bit shorter. It usually stopped at tenor G (a fourth above the standard bottom C).

The stops one could find on an early-19th century English organ were also quite standardized. Johann Snetzler's 1769 organ for Beverly Minster serves well as an example of a typical stop list. Though it was built in the mid-18th century, a comparison with an early-19th century organ would show few differences.

### **Organ of Beverly Minster, Johann Snetzler, builder (1769)**

GREAT (compass GG-e2)		CHOIR (compass GG-e2)		SWELL	
Open Diapason	8'	Open Diapason	8'	Open Diapason	8'
Open Diapason	8'	Stop'd Diapason	8'	Stop't Diapason	8'
Stopt Diapason	8'	Principal	4'	Principal	4'
Principal	4'	Flute	4'	Cornet	III
Twelfth	2 2/3'	Fifteenth	2'	Hautbois	8'
Fifteenth	2'	Sesquialtera	III	Trumpet	8'
Tierce	1 3/5'	Bassoon	8'		
Sesquialter	III	Vox Humana	8'		
Furniture	IV				
Cornet (from middle C)	V				
Trumpet	8'				
Clarion	4'				

PEDAL: pull downs only, no pipes

As can be seen, each division is supported by a Diapason 8' (the Great has two) and a Principal 4'. The largest division, the Great, continues through the Fifteenth and Mixture to form a complete Principal chorus. The chorus of the Choir is slightly smaller, extending up only as far as the Fifteenth, while the Swell chorus consists of only the two foundation stops. Solo stops include either a Cornet or Sesquialtera on each manual (the Great has both). For either power or color, each manual also includes 2 reed stops. Completing the stop list are the flutes - one on the Great, two on the Choir, and one on the Swell. There are no String stops.

A smaller organ of the period might have only two manuals, but the same basic layout of stops would be observed. The use of the same stop types on each manual made for a fairly narrow choice of sound when registering pieces. This refined, quiet, and somewhat limited sound palate is that for which Samuel Wesley composed his many organ works.

### **Wesley's Place in the English Voluntary Tradition**

Writers discussing Wesley's place in the English voluntary tradition are in general agreement over his importance. Francis Routh, Nicholas Temperley, and John Caldwell all point to him as the last important composer of the early English organ tradition. As Routh puts it when introducing Wesley, "The final phase of the early English organ tradition was, as it happened, a glorious one, and was focused on the work of one composer."<sup>28</sup> Caldwell narrows the focus when he states that the period was dominated by Wesley, "composer of the splendid but little-known nine [sic] Voluntaries...Op. 6. and several duets, amongst them the masterly work in 3 movements dated 24 may 1812."<sup>29</sup> It is through an analysis of the voluntaries of opus 6 and the "Duet in C" that the following conclusions have been reached. Voluntaries numbers 1, 3, 6, 9, and 10 have been checked for evidence of Wesley's compositional style, and numbers 9 and 10 have been fully analyzed for formal organization, use of harmony and counterpoint, and for influences from other composers and traditions. Voluntary number 10 will be the source of most of the following examples, since this writer considers it to be the best of the voluntaries analyzed.

Before proceeding with an analysis, however, a brief explanation of the term voluntary is in order. In the tradition inherited by Wesley, the most common type of organ piece was the two-movement form known as voluntary. The genre extends back in time to the voluntaries of the Mulliner book (1550-70). Over 400 were published during

the 18th century, and, during this time, the genre came to be codified as to style and registration (one's choice of stops used in performance). Voluntaries were generally used in the Anglican service between the first lesson and the psalm, as well as before and after the service. The first movement was usually slow, and marked either "Diapasons" or "Full organ" to indicate the type of registration desired by the composer. The types of second movement included fugues for full organ or pieces that exploited the color possibilities of the organ.

The voluntary tradition in England had stagnated by the time Wesley began writing in the genre. According to Routh, the voluntary of Wesley's time merely recycled material first composed by Handel, Greene, and Stanley; so much so that he calls John Keeble (1711-86) and William Boyce (1710-79) the only two composers of note in England between Handel and Wesley.<sup>30</sup> The standard 18th-century voluntary was composed in two movements, usually with the first being slower, shorter, and in a more homophonic style than the second. The second movement was generally fugal, or at least made use of imitative counterpoint. A typical example of this form can be seen in William Boyce's "Voluntary in D Minor." In this piece, the slow first movement is 17 measures long, and ends on the dominant of the piece, A major. The second movement is a fugue of 42 measures that begins and ends on the tonic of the piece, D minor. The entire work is only 59 measures in length.

Wesley's voluntaries (see Fig. 1) are nearly three times the length of the Boyce example. Various numbers of movements are used, but the total length is about the same for each piece. All of the above pieces begin, as Boyce's work does, with a slow movement and proceed to a fast one. Number ten alternates slow-fast-slow-fast. In a sense, this piece operates like two voluntaries that have been joined together, since each half begins with a slow movement that ends on the dominant of the following fast contrapuntal movement (see Fig. 2).

### **Stylistic Analysis of Wesley's Voluntary Opus 6, No. 10**

The twelve voluntaries of opus 6 were issued individually beginning in 1805. Numbers 1-6 were published as a set in 1808, and in 1819 the entire group of twelve voluntaries was issued by William Hodsoll. The pieces were originally published at extended intervals; the time between number 9 and number 10 being as much as six years.<sup>31</sup> Because of this, it is tempting to search through these pieces for evidence of development from the voluntary style toward some other genre. This is particularly true in the case of number

10, where the number of movements has increased to four. Since Wesley was 43 years old when Haydn died (1809), and since he also wrote sonatinas for the piano, it seems natural that Wesley would have known the sonata form quite well. His voluntaries contain some of the features of a sonata, namely, four movements of varying character, form, and key. However, none of the Wesley voluntary movements examined are in sonata form. The first movement of Voluntary 10 is dominated by three main rhythmic motives (see Fig. 3). It opens with a two-part texture, the upper voice containing most of the moving notes. The lower voice functions primarily as a harmonic bass and most often proceeds in eighth notes, although it occasionally answers the 32nd-note figures of the upper voice. A contrasting section begins in measure five. Here, the primary rhythmic value is the 16th-note, and a third voice has been added. In measure eight the original material returns in C minor, and is developed melodically and harmonically. From measure twelve to the end of the texture gradually thickens to four voices, and the two main rhythmic types of the opening (32nd notes and 16th notes) are freely mixed.

Because of the 32nd-note figuration in the right hand, this movement bears a resemblance to the slow movements of J. S. Bach's trio sonatas for organ, and particularly to that of the third trio sonata (BWV 527). Both pieces are in F major and are dominated by 32nd-note motion. Most of the motion is found in the upper voice(s), which is supported by a walking bass in 8th notes that occasionally takes the 32nd-note rhythm. Both pieces have contrasting sections in longer note values for relief from the 32nd-note passages, although in the Bach work this type of section also begins the movement. The first contrasting section in each piece occurs at about the same time (m. 8 in Wesley, m. 9 in Bach) and is in C (C minor for Wesley, C major for Bach). The Bach piece retains the same trio texture to the end of the work, while Wesley's texture gradually thickens, but the overall effect of the two pieces is quite similar. As was shown above, Wesley knew the trios of Bach well, so the similarities are probably not coincidental.

The second movement of Voluntary 10 begins like a two-part invention. The subject outlining the tonic key is answered in measure four by the subject in the sub-dominant key. The piece proceeds in free two-part counterpoint until the eleventh measure, when a third voice enters. In measure 23 the subject enters in the relative minor key and is answered in measure 26 by the subject in the dominant of the relative minor (A major: V of vi). The last pair of entrances occurs in measures 37 and 40 in the keys of G minor (ii of F) and C major (V of F). A device that often appears in Wesley's voluntaries is the

extension of a diminished harmony over time. An example of this can be found in mm. 58-62. Two diminished-seventh chords are used in this passage, helping to propel the mostly chromatic ascent of a fourth in the bass (see Fig. 4).

Movement three is a short piece in binary form that comes as a needed respite from the driving rhythms of the first two movements. It begins in the relative minor, and includes two measures of modulating material at the end that, by closing on the dominant (D major) prepare the way for the following movement, which is in the tonic key. In this movement the quarter note predominates, making it the only movement of the voluntary not to be written in 16th or 32nd notes. The melodic line is a combination of step-wise motion and skips that outline triads. Accented passing tones (m. 6, beat 2, soprano) and suspensions (m. 4, beat 1, soprano) in the line serve to add interest. The use of occasional applied dominant chords (m. 3, beat 3), does not disguise the fact that the harmonization is rather simple, with changes of chords occurring on nearly each half note (see Fig. 5).

Unlike the first and second movements, this movement seems to have more in common with Haydn than Bach. An individual *Andante* for piano in G minor by Haydn, Hoboken XVI:11<sup>11</sup>, and the Wesley slow movement share certain traits.<sup>32</sup> Though considerably longer than Wesley's *Lento*, the Haydn example is in binary form, with each half repeated. Its melodic line is also a combination of step-wise motion and triadic arpeggiations. The harmonization is rather simple, yet Haydn also writes occasional melodic dissonances on the first beats of measures (m. 1, beat 1: accented passing tone; m. 8, beat 1: suspension). An overall feeling of calm pervades both composer's slow movements, serving as a foil to surrounding movements.

The final movement of the tenth voluntary is a tightly constructed fugue in the tonic key (F major). The framework of the subject is fleshed out with descending and ascending skips of a diminished fifth. The subject and motives derived from it provide almost all the material for the movement (see Fig. 6). That Wesley looked to the past again for inspiration in the composition of this movement is made clear by the nature of the fugue subject. Descending (and ascending) chromatic subjects were certainly common in the Baroque and earlier, and the chromatic descent of a fourth seems to have been a particular favorite of earlier composers. Tarquino Merula (1590-1665) used a descending chromatic fourth as the subject of his "*Ricercare cromatico per Organo*," as did numerous others. In Wesley's own time, Georg Michael Telemann (1748-1831) used the chromatically ascending fourth as the subject for his "*Fuga Cromatica*." J. S. Bach also

used chromatic subjects, as is the case of the 24th fugue from *Das wohltemperierte Clavier*, volume 1. This subject does not outline a fourth, but is somewhat similar to Wesley's in shape (see Fig. 7).

Wesley ties this 73-measure fugue very tightly together with frequent entries of the subject and related motives. The subject sounds in 47 of the 73 measures of the piece, or 64% of the time. Measures not containing a subject entry very often contain motive x1, x2 (see Fig. 6), or the interval of an augmented fourth or diminished fifth, which recalls the jumps in the original subject. Measures without either of these elements that can truly be called episodes are only three in number (mm. 138-142, 145-152, 163-168). The longest episode demonstrates a trademark of Wesley that was noted above - the extension of a diminished harmony over time. As was the case in movement two, the diminished harmony in mm. 148-49 is prolonged by use of rapid left hand passage work. This episode prepares the way for the return of the tonic key by directing the harmony to the dominant, which is emphasized by the two-measure dominant pedal in measures 153-54. The most disappointing thing about this otherwise well-written fugue is the ending. After the final episode (mm. 163-168), Wesley completes the movement with two consecutive statements of the subject, both complete and in the tonic. Because of the static harmony (the last subject entry occurs over a tonic pedal) there is no sense of a drive to the cadence. The last statement of the subject thus appears merely as a restatement of the previous entry, and does not help carry the ear to the final cadence. If the penultimate entry had been over a dominant pedal, the resulting tension might have helped the fugue conclude more convincingly. Through the placement of a fermata, Wesley does indicate that a cadenza is to be played between the penultimate and final chords, however, so it is possible that a well constructed improvisation would give the movement a stronger close.

The tenth voluntary of opus 6 is a piece that takes inspiration from earlier composers in general, and J. S. Bach in particular. It includes many of the elements also found in Wesley's other voluntaries, including the extension of diminished harmonies, the harmonization of descending chromatic lines, the use of pedal points and unison lines in fugues, and the use of chains of suspensions. When compared to the much smaller and less tightly constructed earlier English voluntary, it can be seen that Wesley did indeed take the genre to its peak.

### Conclusion

It is clear from the historical evidence that Wesley was the culmination of the early English organ tradition, as well as instrumental in starting the English Bach revival. For these reasons alone it is important to know of him and his place in the organ tradition. While his organ pieces may not fall into the category of "great works" on the scale of those of J. S. Bach, the voluntaries are well written and worthy of performance. This is particularly true given the general dearth of Classical period music written for the organ. It is suggested, therefore, that the better organ works of Samuel Wesley be included in any description of the organ tradition between the close of the Baroque period and the beginning of the Romantic era.

### Examples

Fig. 1

**Boyce: *Voluntary in D Minor***

movement	number of measures	total length
1. <i>Not fast</i>	17 mm	
2. <i>Fugue</i>	42 mm	57 mm

**Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 1***

1. <i>Adagio</i>	26 mm	
2. <i>Allegro moderato</i>	90 mm	
3. <i>Spiritoso</i>	83 mm	199 mm

**Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 3***

1. <i>Largo</i>	43 mm	
2. <i>Moderato</i>	136 mm	178 mm

**Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 10***

1. <i>Andante larghetto</i>	20 mm	
2. <i>Moderato</i>	68 mm	
3. <i>Lento</i>	13 mm	
4. <i>Allegretto</i>	73 mm	174 mm

Fig. 2

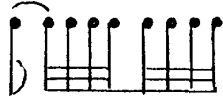
**Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 10***

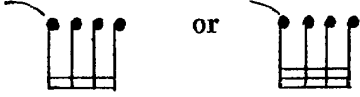
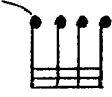
movement and key areas: | I: FM - CM | II: FM | III: dm - CM | IV: FM |  
 overall key relations (F Major): I ----V-----I-----vi-----V-----I

Fig. 3


Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 10*

movement I is dominated by three main rhythmic figures:

1. 

2.  or 

(32 appearances)

3. 

(11 appearances)

Fig. 4

Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 10*: extension of two diminished harmonies

*measure 58*



ascent of a 4th



Fig. 5

Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 10*, movement III: pacing of harmony changes

measure 1

$$\begin{matrix} 4 & - & 6 \\ V & 3 & - & 5 \end{matrix}$$

$i - - - | vi^6 \quad VI \quad iv \quad V^7 | VI \quad iv^6 \quad iv - | iv \quad V \quad VI \quad It^6 | V$

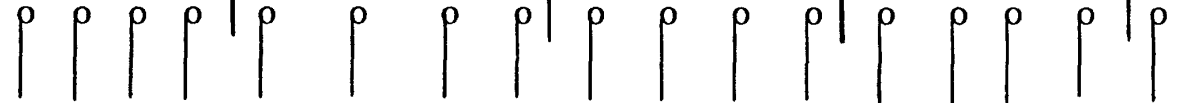




Fig. 6

Wesley: *Voluntary Op. 6, No. 10*, movement IV: fugue subject and motives contained in it

Chromatic descent of a 4th

The musical notation for Fig. 6 consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled "subject:" and shows a melodic line in 3/4 time. A dashed box highlights a "Chromatic descent of a 4th" from G4 to D4. Below this section, intervals are marked as °5, °5, 4+, °5, 4+, °5, and °4. A bracket labeled "motive x1" spans the final two measures of the subject. The bottom staff is labeled "measure 7" and shows a specific rhythmic pattern with a bracket labeled "motive x2".

Fig. 7

J. S. Bach: *Das wohltemperierte Clavier*, book 1, Fugue No. 24

The musical notation for Fig. 7 consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled "subject" and shows a melodic line in 3/4 time with a long arrow above it indicating the subject's extent. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with a bracket above it, likely representing a motive derived from the subject.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> W. Winters, *An Account of the Remarkable Musical Talents of Several Members of the Wesley Family, Collected From Original Manuscripts* (London: F. Davis, 1874), p. 9.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>4</sup> Francis Routh, *Early English Organ Music from the Middle Ages to 1837* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973), p. 219.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220,
- <sup>6</sup> W. Winters, *An Account*, p. 40.
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Chappell, *Dr. S. S. Wesley (1810-1876)* (Great Wakering Essex: Mayhew-McCrimmon, 1977), p. 4.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>9</sup> *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s. v. "Wesley, Samuel."
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Jean Sealey, "An Eccentric of Eccentrics," *Musical Opinion* October 1987, p. 308.
- <sup>12</sup> Nicholas Temperley, ed., *The Romantic Age, 1800-1914* (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), p. 440.
- <sup>13</sup> The material in this section, "Wesley and J. S. Bach," was originally published by the author in an expanded version in *Organ-Kenkyu, Annual Report of the Japan Organ Society*, Vol. XXIV, 1996. The original title was "Samuel Wesley and the Bach Revival in Early-19th-Century England."
- <sup>14</sup> *New Grove Dictionary*, s. v. "Camidge, Matthew."
- <sup>15</sup> Paul Chappell, *Dr. S. S. Wesley*, p. 7.
- <sup>16</sup> Samuel Wesley, *The Bach Letters of Samuel Wesley* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1981), pp. 9-10.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>18</sup> Nicholas Temperley, ed., *The Romantic Age*, p. 435.
- <sup>19</sup> *New Grove Dictionary*, s. v. Wesley, Samuel."
- <sup>20</sup> Stephen Bicknell, *The History of the English Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 172.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>26</sup>Barbara Owen and Peter Williams, *The Organ*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988, reprinted and enlarged from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, p. 116.

<sup>27</sup>Samuel Wesley, *Fourteen Short Pieces for Organ*, ed. Robin Langley (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 7.

<sup>28</sup>Francis Routh, *Early English*, p. 215.

<sup>29</sup>John Caldwell, *English Keyboard Music Before the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973), p. 232.

<sup>30</sup>Francis Routh, *Early English*, p. 206.

<sup>31</sup>Samuel Wesley, *Six Voluntaries and Fugues for Organ*, ed. Robin Langley (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), "Notes on the individual pieces."

<sup>32</sup>Joseph Haydn, *Werke*, ed. Georg Feder, series XVIII, vol. 1, *Klaviersonaten* (Munich: G. Henle, 1970), p. 181.

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