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# STYLISTIC AND EXPRESSIVE OBSERVATIONS IN THREE ORGAN WORKS BY JACOBUS KLOPPERS,

Published as part of  
SAKOV's  
*Erediensmusiek Series*  
(2010 And 2013)

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Martina Viljoen & Nicol Viljoen

## ABSTRACT

Though the composer, organist, pedagogue, and scholar Jacobus Kloppers left South Africa during the 1970s with his family to relocate to Edmonton, Canada, he actively contributed to advancing Reformed liturgical music in South Africa over the past decades. As an honorary member of the Suider-Afrikaanse Kerk- en Konsertorrelistervereniging (The Southern African Church and Concert Organist Society or SACOS), he has published in *Vir die Musiekleier/To the Director of Music*, while a few of his liturgical compositions for organ form part of SAKOV's *Erediensmusiek (Worship Music)* project.

In this article, three of these compositions are discussed, namely the *Toccata on Genevan Psalm 84* (1974), "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" (1: *Scherzando*), and "Joy to the world", the latter two works forming part of Kloppers's *Four Christmas Carol Settings* (1985-87). Our choice of works is based on the different stylistic and expressive aspects of each of these works and how they may function within Reformed liturgy. Our discussion proceeds from Christiaan Carstens's (1995) annotations comprised in his master's dissertation on Kloppers's organ works and then elucidates distinct stylistic aspects of the works. Finally, we briefly consider their liturgical functioning.

While Kloppers's organ compositions studied in this article illustrate different religious and musical origins and traditions, in terms of their potential for liturgical functionality, they serve the purpose of musical "sermons". As aesthetic, religious expressions, they eloquently contribute to the domain of non-verbal liturgical meaning-making. In that sense, each idiom discussed does not merely represent a specific compositional



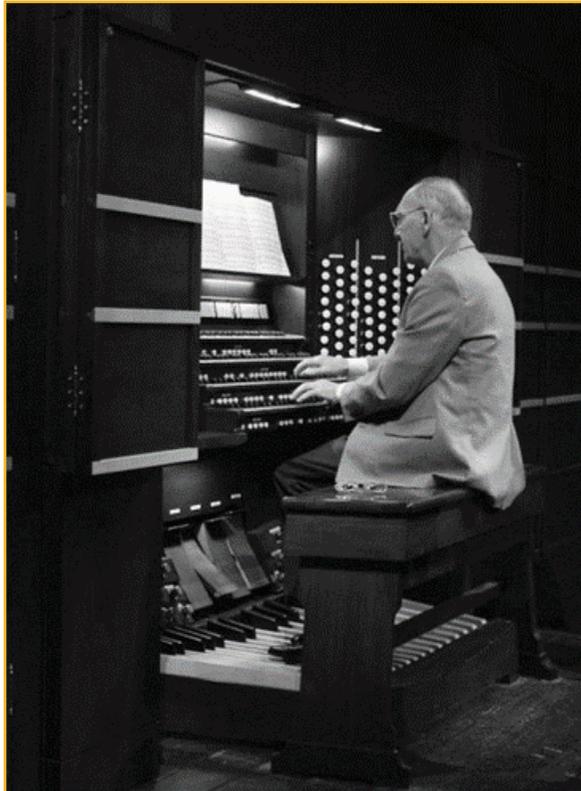
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practice, traceable to Kloppers's religious roots and the various compositional and worship traditions to which he was exposed throughout his life but may also act as the transporter of ritual expectations and material, spiritual experience.

**Keywords:** Jacobus Kloppers; organ compositions; worship music; stylistic analysis; Psalm 84; "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"; "Joy to the world"



*Figure 1: Jacobus Kloppers at the Winspear Organ console, Edmonton, Canada<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced with the composer's permission.

## INTRODUCTION

In protest against apartheid policies and practices, the composer, organist, pedagogue and scholar, Jacobus Kloppers, left South Africa during the 1970s with his family to relocate to Edmonton, Canada. Yet, over the past decades, he still contributed to advancing Reformed liturgical music in South Africa. As an honorary member of the Suider-Afrikaanse Kerk- en Konsertorrelistevereniging (SAKOV) (The Southern African Church and Concert Organist Society or SACOS) he has published on the topics of Bach interpretation, rhetoric, and approaches towards church music in *Vir die Musiekleier/To the Director of Music* (Kloppers, 1986; 2000; 2015). Additionally, a selection of his liturgical compositions for organ forms part of SAKOV's *Erediensmusiek* ('worship music') project, edited by Gerrit Jordaan and Daleen Kruger, in volumes published during 2010, 2011, and 2013.

In this article, we wish to focus on three of these compositions, the *Toccata on Genevan Psalm 84* (1974), "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" (1: *Scherzando*), and "Joy to the world", the latter two works forming part of Kloppers's *Four Christmas Carol Settings* (1985-87). While these were published in *Erediensmusiek Volume 1* (2010), the *Toccata on Psalm 84* formed part of *Volume 3* in the series (2013). Our choice of works is based on the different stylistic and expressive aspects represented in each, and their liturgical potentiality.

Kloppers's liturgical works, including those discussed here, bear the mark of diverse compositional, intellectual, and religious traditions. Despite these apparent shifts of direction, they are grounded within a deep, lifelong Christian commitment of faith. Indeed, as the composer testifies (Kloppers, personal conversation, 2017), "religiosity is a central aspect of my oeuvre". From this perspective, the works studied in this article may be understood to represent a sentient "dialogue" with the composer's Reformed faith, and the various contextual and musical origins of his oeuvre.

Thus, the works to be discussed in this article will be observed within the settings of both Reformed and Anglican worship traditions, as well as relevant stylistic and artistic influences traceable to Kloppers's exposure to, and experiences of traditions and influences over decades, starting with his Reformed upbringing and early exposure to Reformed liturgical music, and his experience of the German Reformed liturgical context, culminating in his involvement with the Anglican Church in Canada. We will then address the question of how the design and expressive potentialities of the works discussed may speak to specific liturgical moments and meanings. It is our hope that observations thus offered could direct liturgical organists in their selection,

interpretation, and execution of the works in question.

Kloppers's life story has been documented elsewhere (Carstens, 1995; Du Plooy, 2013; Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020). Therefore, this article considers only those contexts that directly relate to stylistic and expressive aspects of the works discussed. Our brief biographical sketch draws primarily on research by Du Plooy and Viljoen (2020), of which the primary source is Kloppers's personal testimony and written reflection.

Jacobus Joubert Krige Kloppers was born in the mining town of Krugersdorp on 27 November 1937. He grew up in a Christian Afrikaner family devoted to the Reformed faith, where the singing of Afrikaans hymns and regular church attendance formed part of the family's religious observance (cf. Viljoen, Viljoen & Beukes, 2020:219). As an organ student, first under the Dutch-born organ pedagogue Willem Mathlener and then Prof Maarten Roode (Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:19-20), he was exposed both to Mathlener's Dutch/European background and Roode's grounding in the English Romantic tradition of organ building, playing and pedagogy (Kloppers in Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:46). After emigrating to Canada English and French church music influences became more apparent in his work. Yet, Kloppers retained elements of the "highly disciplined structural aspects of the German organ tradition, especially Bach" (Kloppers in Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:47), particularly as based on his organ studies in Germany under the renowned Helmut Walcha, together with his academic study of the historical and stylistic aspects of Bach's organ music (1960-1966) (Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:79).

After emigration to Canada, in 1979, Kloppers became a founding faculty member of an institution for Christian Higher Education in Edmonton, The King's University College. Here, over time, the emphasis of his intellectual output shifted to composition (Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:59). Within his substantive compositional oeuvre, works for solo organ came to dominate. Among these, the majority were composed for liturgical purposes (Viljoen et al., 2020:118).

## **A DISCUSSION OF THREE WORKS FROM SAKOV'S EREDIENSMUSIEK SERIES**

Our discussion of the works mentioned above proceeds from Christiaan Carstens's (1995) annotations in his master's dissertation on Kloppers's organ works. As the only existing analysis of these works up to date, Carstens's meticulous observations, cited here in relative detail, are meant to give the reader an overview of the essential content of each work. Our further exploration of the works will then elucidate distinct

stylistic and religious influences and briefly situate each within an applicable liturgical context. We will also touch on the complexity of Kloppers's musical materials, a distinctive aspect of the composer's work that relates to the expressive character of the works discussed and their technical and performance implications.

Works included in the *Erediensmusiek* volumes were selected according to two strategies: First, composers were approached to compose or submit works regarding specific liturgical needs, and second, they could offer their own choice of compositions. In the case of the works discussed in this article, both approaches were followed. Concerning the *Toccata on Psalm 84*, the psalm had been on the list submitted for composers' consideration, while Kloppers, on his account, offered his *Four Christmas Carols* for inclusion in the series.<sup>2</sup> These works answer well to the aim of the various *Erediensmusiek* volumes that is to make available arrangements of hymns and psalms that are usable within a liturgical milieu, serving a broad spectrum of needs and contexts. Moreover, they ultimately speak to the editor of the series, Gerrit Jordaan's expectation as expressed in the *SAKOV 30: Feesbundel* (2010:3) that arrangements featured in the series would give "new life to over-familiar melodies".

### ***Toccata on Genevan Psalm 84***

The first work considered in our discussion is Kloppers's *Toccata on Genevan Psalm 84*, composed around 1974,<sup>3</sup> dedicated to the late German organist and choral conductor, Karl Hochreiter. The melody for the psalm was written by Maitre Pierre (Pierre Davantes) and was first published in the Genevan Psalter of 1562 (Hymnary.org, n.d.).

Despite the melody's late medieval origins, Kloppers's setting shows contemporary traits already in its manner of notation. Instead of conventional bar lines, the composition contains dotted lines suggesting rhythmic divisions. In terms of the melody's medieval roots, it should be noted that early music with its yet partial establishment of traditional major/minor tonality due to the prominence of modality has been an essential instigator in the advent of new tonal expressions since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Al Bakri, 2014:44ff.; Burkholder, Grout & Palisca, 2009:838ff.). This concerns the phenomenon of neo-tonality, which became especially prevalent in church music where musical responses to liturgical moments backed by improvisational organ

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<sup>2</sup> This information was communicated by Dr Gerrit Jordaan during a telephone conversation, 26 July 2021 and confirmed by Prof Jacobus Kloppers in email correspondence, 19 August 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Email correspondence, August 2021.

practices opened new and distinct ways of tonal expression (Krippner, 2018:17ff.).

Neo-tonality is an essential element of Kloppers's organ oeuvre - and certainly forms part of the works discussed in this article. In a personal conversation, cited in Viljoen et al. (2020:215), Kloppers indicated that, even in his early *Pastorale on Psalm 23* (1970), he "wished to introduce an element of neo-tonality, and thus, a twentieth-century atmosphere". This correlates with the propensity for neo-tonal colouring in 20<sup>th</sup>-century liturgical works mentioned above. Indeed, the composer's later organ compositions, written in Canada, increasingly departed from his earlier more conventional tonal orientation.

The *Toccata on Genevan Psalm 84* opens with a brief fanfare-like introduction on the Great. In the right-hand part, there is a short motif, built on two leaps of a fifth (D-A) derived from the opening phrase of the Psalm melody. It is noticeable that leaps of a fifth, and parallel fifth motions, are a constant feature of the work (Carstens, 1995:70). This strategy, we see as related to the importance of the interval of a fifth in early music, signifying both tonal stability and purity. Its exploitation in Kloppers's setting may suggest an attempt to express and highlight the strength of true faith and the purity of adoration found in God's dwelling place.

An important aspect of the opening of the *Toccata* is the stepwise descending motion in the left-hand part over two and a half octaves, later repeated in the contrasting episode ("bars" 15-18), played on the swell (Carstens, 1995:70). Again, we understand this gesture as underscoring the ecstatic jubilant character of the work, resulting in a grandiose and majestic effect. In "bars" 5-6 a rhythmically altered version of the opening phrase of the psalm melody is introduced in the pedals through double pedal playing to bring the melody to the fore in a majestic manner (Carstens, 1995:70). At the same time, the left-hand part presents parallel moving fifths, 6/3 chords, and triads in root position. Together with the low voices of the right-hand part, the result becomes the formation of seventh and ninth chords (Carstens, 1995:70). A speculative interpretation of these sonorities is that they enhance the majestic quality and effect of the psalm melody in the pedal as can be seen in Example 1:

Manuale: Prestante, Miksture,  
Koppelaars, Tr 8'

Feestelik [♩ = ♪]  
♩ = 152-160

Pedaal: Prestante, Miksture, Tonge 16' 8' 4' Hw/Peda. *fff*

*Example 1: Jacobus Kloppers, Toccata on Genevan Psalm 84, "bars" 1-14*

In the contrasting episode ("bars" 15-18), there is a change to the swell manual in an enclosed position with the melody appearing rhythmically altered in the soprano line, accompanied by a free contrapuntal middle voice against the descending diatonic scale passage in the lowest part of the left hand (Carstens, 1995:71). In our

interpretation this musical gesture indicates the importance of linear or horizontal motion instead of the seeming prevalence of vertical sonorities in the *Tocatta*. We would, in fact, argue that the rapid succession of surface sonorities in the work is created through these linear motions, which also hark back to medieval music where sonorities were predominantly the products of voice leading, rather than functional tonal roles; compare Example 2:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, titled '(Swelkas toe)', consists of a treble and bass clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It features a dynamic marking of *mf* and a 'Sw' (Swell) marking. The second system, titled '(Swelkas oop)', also has a treble and bass clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It includes a dynamic marking of *f* and a 'Hw ff' (Harmonium fortissimo) marking. The notation shows intricate melodic and rhythmic patterns, with some measures containing complex chords and rapid passages.

Example 2: *Jacobus Kloppers, Tocatta on Genevan Psalm 84, "bars" 15-19*

From "bar" 20 onwards, fugal entries appear on the Great. The psalm melody is now concealed by the underlying voices in the right-hand part, while a motive based on the sixth phrase of the melody appears in the bottom voice of the double pedal part, followed by its inversion in the upper voice. The fugal entries are derived from the seventh phrase of the psalm melody (Carstens, 1995:72). In this respect, it may be

conjectured that the presence of fugal entries and motivic manipulations are part of Baroque organ writing traditions, which strongly influenced Kloppers in his early works for organ. In the *Tocatta*, these strategies ensure both unity and variety to the structure of the composition thereby enhancing its expressive capacities and structural coherence, as can be seen in Example 3:

Example 3: Jacobus Kloppers, *Tocatta on Genevan Psalm 84*, “bars” 20-32

A final feature is a predominantly contrasting movement between the two hands (Carstens, 1995:73), portraying the *toccata* character of the work in a highly effective manner. The work concludes with the first section of the psalm melody's final phrase strengthened by powerful chords and the addition of 16' registers and, according to the composer's instructions, a *Quintadena* 16 on the pedal, which lends the work a magisterial yet sublime close.

Kloppers's *Toccata on Psalm 84*, through the compositional strategies and devices highlighted above, represents a clear example of the modernist organ style of composition as advanced by prominent twentieth-century organ composers such as Helmut Walcha and Hugo Distler. However, as the composer explains (Kloppers, email correspondence, August 2021),

The work was a departure from my earlier style of chorale preludes, which had been moulded very much on the model of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*. The *Toccata* is in free meter and modal with harmonic clusters. I might have been influenced by the Neo-Classic style of composers like Willem Mudde and Cor Kee (his second style period). As a nudge to Bach's way of writing: Clusters are already found in Bach's own writing. The *Toccata* also follows an old German Baroque practice of preparing each chorale line in a kind of mosaic fashion, though the writing is far freer in style. The last chorale line is treated in a free *toccata* style based on the work's opening motifs.

The *Toccata on Psalm 84*, in addition to its tonal and rhythmic complexities, thus reveals anticipatory references to fragments of the *cantus firmus*, which are presented in imitative fashion in the upper voice before its various "broken up" entries in the pedal, a procedure typical of Baroque compositional practices, referred to by the composer as a kind of mosaic effect. This compositional strategy relates not only to the objective of unification, but also to typical Baroque improvisational strategies. Again, his use of this type of procedure illustrates Kloppers's affinity towards the music of Bach, which, to this day, continues to be embedded in both his musical and intellectual thought processes.

Looking at the *Toccata* from the viewpoint of liturgical meaning, functionality, and application, the work represents the start of a vital element evident in Kloppers's liturgical organ output, namely improvisation. Although he does not profess to be a practising improviser, during his period of study in Germany, Kloppers did receive private instruction in improvisation from Karl Köhler (Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:55). Simultaneously, he was exposed to Walcha's improvisations during services at the

*Dreikönigskirche*, Frankfurt am Main, which, in the composer's words, exhibited "an accomplished contrapuntal style" (Kloppers in Du Plooy & Viljoen, 2020:67).

The art of improvisation has been a cornerstone in the development of musicianship pertaining to composition and performance, especially during the Baroque and Classical periods, and has again been resurrected as a vital element in music-making from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most notably in jazz and in German, Dutch, Belgian and French liturgical organ music. Notably, in Catholic France a unique relationship with plainsong was cultivated during the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the contributions of great organist-composers such as Guilmant, Dupré, Langlais, Duruflé, and Messiaen - a contribution based in artistic liturgical improvisation as an indispensable element of the Catholic Mass (Zimmerman & Archbold, 1995:202). Krippner (2018:80ff.) elucidates the important influence of this tradition on the development of Anglican liturgical organ improvisation from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The value of improvisation for liturgical music is inestimable in that it has always allowed for a spontaneous, flexible musical response, which is at the heart of liturgical music requirements. Within structured liturgical activity - such as is practised in the Anglican cathedral tradition (Krippner, 2018:80ff.) - music plays a cardinal role in enhancing specific liturgical moments and actions for which spontaneous creativity or well-planned musical choices are expected from the organist. Therefore, the free yet disciplined nature of well-crafted improvisations, which in numerous instances have also led to them being notated as compositions is crucial to liturgical organ playing since it allows for creative flexibility in meeting the needs of a particular liturgical situation.

In the case of the *Toccata on Psalm 84*, the element of improvisation in the sense of a fantasy-like portrayal of a particular liturgical event is palpable throughout the composer's imaginative, intellectual and artistic thought processes in this piece. From this perspective, the *Toccata* is a remarkable example of improvisational thinking in the free yet coherent construct of its tone material, in line with the powerful spiritual content of the psalm on which it is based.

Concerning liturgical functioning, the work is particularly suitable either as an introit before or postlude after a service. Its performance does, however, require a highly skilled organist due to the complexity of its material and for doing justice to its musical meaning and message. Fortunately, as is the case in all his organ works, Kloppers provides the organist with detailed performance instructions pertaining to articulation, registration, and expression.

Concerning the liturgical meaning of the *Toccatà*, the work may be seen as a quintessential example of Martin Luther's well-known dictum that a liturgical composition should be a *predicatio sonora*, or "musical sermon" (cf. Kloppers, 1986:137). As a festive introit before the service or a postlude, this work, in picturing the blessedness of dwelling in the House of the Lord through its magisterial structure and jubilant character, reminds the congregation that the house of God is a symbol of the heavenly dwellings that God has prepared for them. Through an amalgamation of a carefully constructed unity yet joyful improvisatory character, the composition powerfully proclaims the message of Genesis 1 and 2: that the congregation is temples built in the image of God. From the perspective of an "embodied theology" (cf. McGann, 2002:17), the *Toccatà's* message may therefore be interpreted as follows: God created humanity to dwell with him and bear his image in the world. There could hardly be a more powerful "lesson" with which to start or end Christian devotion.

### "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" (1: *Scherzando*)

Though the two carol settings featuring in our discussion are smaller in conception and compositional dimension, they are no less expressive in stylistic content or liturgical significance.

Kloppers's setting of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" discussed here is the first of two arrangements of the carol forming part of his *Four Carol Settings for Organ*, composed in 1986 and dedicated to the Canadian organist and choral director Ann Grant. The melody of this carol, one of the most beloved of all time, was composed by Felix Mendelssohn in 1840 as part of his choral cantata *Festgesang* and was later adapted by the English composer William H. Cummings. Originally sung to a different melody, the text was written by Charles Wesley in 1739 and rewritten by George Whitefield in 1754 (Watson & Hornby, 2013).

Kloppers's use of a 4' flute plus *Tremolo* on the swell, where the melody appears, lends the work a delicate yet celebratory character. Marked *Scherzando* "it is a stylized dance with some imitative counterpoint in the left hand and two-note octave motives in the pedal" (Kloppers, 2019:1). Accompanying materials relate rhythmically and melodically to the *cantus firmus*, mainly in the upper voice, except for bars 5<sup>2</sup>-6<sup>1</sup> (Carstens, 1995:98). The melody appears in its original rhythmic setting, excluding bar 3<sup>1</sup> and 6<sup>2</sup> where an extra beat is added and bars 11 and 12, where the values of the last three notes of the melody are adapted. This passage serves as a bridge to the codetta in the final three bars (Carstens, 1995:98).

Kloppers's delicate choice of registration can be attributed to German pastoral organ music, where the flute register may be associated with idealised images of nature. The celebratory character of the piece referred to by Carstens does not necessarily relate to register use, but rather to rhythmic activity and contrapuntal "sparkle" provided by a two-part imitative counterpoint throughout the piece, laid on a bed of sustained harmonies. This combined linear/vertical textural arrangement, together with the choice of registration, is responsible for the subtle mixture of delicacy and celebration in this refined composition.

The left-hand part, calling for 8' registers, lends harmonic solid support for the right-hand part. As an accompaniment, the left-hand part, both rhythmically and melodically, draws on motifs derived from the carol itself (Carstens, 1995:99). The pedal part consists mainly of octave skips, although intervals of a twelfth (bar 5<sup>1</sup>-5<sup>2</sup>), a fourteenth (bar 9<sup>3</sup>-9<sup>4</sup>), and a fifteenth (bars 10 and 11) also occur. In the last three bars, the pedal line is doubled and is, like the accompanying voice parts, derived from the opening of the carol's melody (Carstens, 1995:100).

I: Fluit 8' Sal. 8'  
 II: Fluit 4' (+Trem)  
 Ped: Fluit 8'

**1. SCHERZANDO**

$\text{♩} = 66$

The image displays a musical score for three parts: Flute I (8' Sal. 8'), Flute II (4' with Tremolo), and Pedal (8'). The tempo is marked '1. SCHERZANDO' with a quarter note equal to 66. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The second and third systems continue the musical notation for the first five bars of the piece.

Example 4: Jacobus Kloppers, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing", bars 1-5

Fourth and fifth intervals play an essential motivic role and, together with rhythmic motives, lend a tight unity to the chorale prelude (Carstens, 1995:100-101). The codetta (bar 12 and further) in the right-hand part refers mainly to rhythmic and melodic materials derived from the opening bars of the carol. The accompanying left-hand part strengthens the final cadence with chromatically descending fourth intervals up to the tonic. As Carstens (1995: 101) notes, this may be seen as a symbolic reference to the text “Hy daal tot die sondaars neer” (He descends to the sinners) found in “Lied 20” (Song 20) in the Afrikaans hymn book “Sing onder Mekaar” (1988) (Sing among each other).



Example 5: Jacobus Kloppers, “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”, final bars

The re-affirmation of the motivic importance of fourth and fifth intervals already observed in the *Toccata on Psalm 84* testifies both to the continued importance and utilisation of these interval constructs in the chorale prelude currently discussed, affirming the continued influence of the modernist organ music style in which these intervals are prevalent.

Kloppers often incorporates 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> chords as applied in this work on the dominant scale step. Chromatic passing notes in bars 2, 9 and 13 lend sparkle to the lively rhythm and colourful harmonies. Again, his application of, for instance, 7<sup>th</sup> chords, has its origin in the modern German organ style. Still, in this chorale prelude, the chords mentioned above, and the interjected chromatic passing tones play a distinctly colouristic role in creating an ethereal atmosphere. This emphasis on the colouristic function of harmonies points to Kloppers’s exposure to Canadian/French influences following his relocation to Canada and his subsequent involvement in Anglican worship as the organist at St. John’s Anglican Church in Edmonton.

According to Carstens (1995:101), the opening of the chorale prelude is remarkable

in that it begins on a tonic  $6/4$  chord instead of the expected root position tonic chord, caused by a dominant pedal point in the pedal line, which dominates throughout the composition.<sup>4</sup> This is a noteworthy tonal strategy in that the function of any pedal point is to present a static harmonic situation, that is, to capture the tonality within a single harmonic function. This means that, for the duration of the pedal point, all subsequent harmonies are under its control and therefore lose their harmonic independence. As a result, these harmonies present various levels of tension or dissonance against the controlling dominant. In turn, this leads to multiple manifestations of tone colouring. Furthermore, since the dominant, despite its prolonged presence, cannot assert its power over the main tonic as the piece's tonal centre, its continued prolongation by way of the pedal point presents a distinctive effect, namely an expectation of a final rest on the tonic. This is because the carol melody, on its own, clearly portrays the tonic tonality from the beginning except for a momentary modulating movement to the dominant in bar 8. Harmonically, this effect can be interpreted as a tonal symbol of the expectation in the hearts of the shepherds having received the message sung by the herald angels, proclaiming the glory of the new-born King as they hastily made their way to Bethlehem to see the child in the manger.

Imitation as a contrapuntal device has been referred to by Kloppers (2019:1) in his explanatory note to the *Four Carol Settings*. Here, one can readily detect the influence of Bach, which especially relates to the imitations being on different distances instead of strictly in unison. One can only call to mind the imitative procedures in Bach's majestic *Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her"*, BWV 769 for organ – also based on a Christmas hymn – or his famous *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988 to speculatively make connections with Bach's historical model.

Indeed, as the composer states (Kloppers, personal correspondence, October 2021),

Bach was for me an essential example [...]: not only concerning various contrapuntal techniques, but specifically regarding the use of imitation and strict canon. The latter was used not only in his *Canonic Variations* but, among others, also in his *Orgelbüchlein* (among others "Erschienen ist der herrliche

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<sup>4</sup> Carstens's designation of a tonic second inversion harmony at the beginning of this chorale prelude forms part of the conventional theoretical interpretation of this designation as an inversion of tonic instead of its more ideal interpretation as a dominant, suspended through a  $6/4$  voice-leading configuration above its root. (The only instances in tonal music where a tonic chord in second inversion may be classified as such occur when it either functions as a passing harmony or - in isolated instances, where it does not resolve to tonic harmony, such as in the opening and closing harmonies in the second movement of Beethoven's seventh symphony).

Tag", "O Lamm Gottes", "Jesu meine Zuversicht") and in his famous *Tocatta in F*. Furthermore, he uses imitation in most of his works for instance fugues, cantatas, the *B Minor Mass*, the *Passions*, and the *Brandenburg Concertos*. Within these contexts, the use of canon and imitation is often also allegoric or symbolic.

In my own works imitation (in following Bach) did not always have a symbolic function, but, in my chorale preludes for organ, a structural one (among others, "Aan U, o God my dankgesange", "Psalm 66", *Three Plainsong Settings*, and in "Spirit divine, attend our prayers" from the volume *9 Chorale Preludes on Lutheran Hymn Tunes*. Direct canon was used in my *Triptych on Vaughan-Williams Hymn Tunes*.

In "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" (Scherzando) there is no conscious use of symbolism in the dense, imitative patterns, but in the sense of the "joyous message" the effect of an "excited imitation/discourse" is created in the voice leading.

Concerning liturgical meaning, functionality, and application, the ethereal pastoral nature of this carol setting by Kloppers expresses the portrayal of shepherds receiving the good news from the angel chorus vividly and most convincingly. Within the liturgy, this quiet yet celebratory work is ideal to be performed in a Christmas service either during the collection or, within an Anglican setting, during communion. Although Kloppers (2019:1) suggests that "the work is in a medium range of difficulty", though seemingly undemanding, it poses complex requirements for the organist concerning accuracy and mood portrayal.

As musically embodied belief, the composition forms part of the broader liturgical "dialogue" on Christmas day, intermediating the congregation's celebration of the birth of their Saviour (cf. Wikström, 1993:94). A peaceful meditation, the work is suggestive of the warm embrace of the Spirit and a stillness before God that fills the congregation with its power, depth, beauty, and strength.

### "Joy to the world"

This festive chorale prelude, composed in 1986 as part of the *Four Carol Settings for Organ*, is dedicated to the Canadian pianist and erstwhile colleague of Kloppers, Joachim Segger. The melody of this popular Christmas carol, 'Antioch' was composed by George Frideric Handel, and arranged by Lowell Mason in 1836. The words were written by Isaac Watts, based on Psalm 98:11-12 and Genesis 3:17-18 (Hymnary.org. n.d.).

II: Prestante, Miksture, Trompet 8'  
 I: Prestante, Miksture, II/I  
**Feestelik** ♩ = 72-76

\* Met die Engelse Kerslied "Joy to the World" in gedagte.

Example 6: Jacobus Kloppers, "Joy to the World", bars 1-15

Carstens (1995:122) finds that, at first glance, the carol's melody is not easily recognisable in Kloppers's setting since, for the first 16 bars, it is comprised within the inner voices of this brief, multi-voiced composition. The *cantus firmus*, which appears

in the pedal part in bars 3-4<sup>1</sup>, is first announced within a fanfare-like statement in the lowest voice of the left-hand part. After that, it is continued in the lowest voice of the left-hand part, bars 4<sup>1</sup>-10<sup>1</sup> – this time against a pedal point in the pedal part. The melody continues in the uppermost voice of the left-hand part, whereafter follows a short ascending link passage on the swell (Carstens, 1995:122).

At this point, the *cantus firmus* is set in the upper voice of the right-hand part. In this regard, the sustained scale degree 1 in the upper voice of the right-hand part acts as a covering tone over the tonal structure since it has no harmonic implications.

In bars 17<sup>2</sup>-21, the *cantus firmus* briefly appears in the upper melodic voice. However, typical of Kloppers's compositional complexity, on the fourth beat of bar 21, B in the *cantus firmus* is no longer in the upper voice but in the voice below it. After that, it again shifts to the left-hand part, ending triumphantly in the pedal part (Carstens, 1995:124).

In his closing remarks on “Joy to the World”, Carstens (1995:125) makes mention of the entry of the first phrase of the *cantus firmus* in the pedal at the end of the prelude mentioning its significance regarding the words associated with it: “Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” and the repetition of its melodic and rhythmic content in rounding off the prelude as a triumphant unity. We wish to add the observation that, after the shift of the yet incomplete *cantus firmus* back to the left hand in bar 22, its conclusion in the pedal corresponds with the end of its opening phrase. Thereby Kloppers brought in the opening of the *cantus firmus* simultaneously with its conclusion – an ingenious manoeuvre to further emphasise the work's victorious close.

Example 7: Jacobus Kloppers, “Joy to the World”, bars 21 to the end of the prelude

Considering the strikingly different approach to the compositional organisation in “Joy to the World” compared to the previously discussed works, it is evident that the *Toccata on Psalm 84*, and to a certain extent “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”, were clearly influenced by Kloppers’s Protestant roots and his subsequent application of the elements of Protestant German liturgical organ music with its emphasis on counterpoint, particularly the models provided by Bach, and, as the composer indicated, the neo-tonal style of 20<sup>th</sup>-century organ composers. However, with the broadening of his musical horizon upon his relocation to Canada, and his joining the Anglican church as organist, he also came to embrace the Anglican tradition of worship. This gave rise to his affinity for modern French liturgical organ style, with its emphasis on colourisation, as well as for the English organ tradition with its sense of grandeur and ceremony (Viljoen et al., 2020:253).

In the case of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”, the presence of colouristic elements may be detected, although the music still demonstrates a continuing quest for formal unity and disciplined coherence as manifest in its motivic and contrapuntal content. With the sound pallet of Kloppers’s suggested registration, the prelude also exhibits a more sober sonic character associated with German Protestant organ music.

In “Joy to the World”, however, we observe a surprising departure from the norms and principals of modernist Protestant organ music and the Bach footprint, which is absent here. This departure from strategies adopted in earlier and some later works may be understood from a liturgical perspective in that this brief composition is meant to function within the Anglican liturgy, which, traditionally, requires more atmospheric, at times even dramatic musical expression. Different, for instance, to the festive grandeur of the *Toccata on Psalm 84*, the grandness in “Joy to the World” derives from Anglican church music splendour with its ceremonial feel portrayed by way of an overriding fanfare character, effected through rhythmic vitality and dense harmonic constructs, rather than contrapuntal and textural complexities. Thus, in this composition we find greater tonal and textural simplicity, notwithstanding moments of imaginative harmonic progression, which lends its harmonic content a vertical rather than a linear (horizontal) character, as is the case in the previously discussed compositions. The only glimpses of more complex compositional processing in “Joy to the World” are found in its unusual presentation of the carol melody being continuously assigned to different voice parts throughout the piece, and the ever-present motivic activity and unification. The directness of expression in this piece, effected through its greater tonal and textural simplicity, also results in its greater accessibility concerning reception and playing difficulties.

Despite it being designated by the composer as a chorale prelude, "Joy to the World", apart from its obvious suitability as a fanfare-type introit piece, befitting especially to the Anglican Christmas liturgy, is also appropriate as a postlude to any Christmas worship service. This brief exhortation typifies exultant religious joy, expressed in a condensed, aestheticised form (cf. Watts, 2006:96). As "liturgy experienced", it embodies the communication of the profound wonderment, gratitude, and praise associated with Christ's birth.

## IN CONCLUSION

The three chorale settings, as published in SAKOV's *Erediensmusiek* series discussed in this article, each demonstrates different stylistic and expressive aspects of Kloppers's compositional practice. In the *Toccata on Psalm 84*, the modality of the psalm melody on which the composition is based lent itself to neo-tonal treatment. Specific musical gestures, including leaps of a fifth and parallel fifth motions; stepwise descending motions; the application of seventh and ninth chords, and repeated fugal entries as well as motivic manipulations, created an effect of majestic and ecstatic jubilant expression. As a clear example of the modernist organ style of composition, structural coherence and motivic "building" devices applied in this work contributed towards our understanding of the composition as symbolising the "temple" as the dwelling place of God.

In contrast, Kloppers's atmospheric setting of "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing", through the composer's delicate choice of registration, together with combined linear/vertical textural arrangement results in a subtle mixture of delicacy and celebration in this refined composition. Again, the stylistic influence of 20<sup>th</sup>-century organ music styles could be observed, though Kloppers's incorporation of 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> chords on the dominant scale step, coupled with interjected chromatic passing tones, in this work underlined distinctly colouristic aspects as derived from Canadian/French influences.

The festive chorale prelude "Joy to the world" was found to speak of the grandeur and splendour of Anglican church music, brought about through rhythmic vitality and dense harmonic constructs, rather than contrapuntal and textural complexities. This work, we interpreted as the liturgical embodiment of the admiration, gratitude, and praise associated with Christ's birth.

Kloppers's organ compositions studied in this article may thus be understood to illustrate different religious and musical origins and traditions. However, in terms of

their liturgical function and meaning, they all serve the purpose of musical “sermons”. As aesthetic, religious expression, they eloquently contribute to the domain of non-verbal liturgical meaning-making. In that sense, each idiom discussed does not merely represent a specific compositional practice but also acts as the transporter of ritual expectations and spiritual experience. Though, as was argued in our consideration of the three works discussed, Kloppers consistently introduced Bach strategies within a different and novel (neo-tonal) idiom, he still adhered to Bach’s dictum that the setting of the chorale would stand in direct relation to its exegesis. However, our examination of the works also confirmed the composer’s statement that “the expressive context of each of my liturgical compositions would also be determined by the purpose for which it was written” (personal communication, Kloppers, August 2017).

As McGann (2002:17) observes, from the perspective of liturgical theology, “Music and the expressive arts [...] are not embellishments but constitutive of what takes place in the liturgy”. Therefore, they are “extremely important in shaping the whole continuum of liturgical action” (McGann, 2002:17). Similarly, Wikström (1993:95) believes that, regarding liturgical interaction between God and the congregation, where it concerns music ministry, it is “not just a question of talking *about* God but also *with* God”. Following our reading of the three works discussed in this article, we believe that these are indeed, in the words of Watts (2006:3), “an upholding of Spirit-filled tradition, and a way of giving glory to God”, as in their exquisite musical design they all “contribute to human transformation” and “lift people towards God”.



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