

# Midnight Toccatas



organ solo

Aaron Travers



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This composition is the winner of the 2021 Composition Competition  
sponsored by the Ruth and Clarence Mader Memorial Scholarship Fund,  
celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

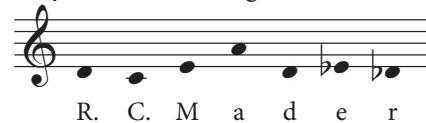


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Registrations are provided in the score and pertain to a three-manual organ, though a two-manual organ may work as well. The registrations are only suggestions, and the organist is encouraged to find other possibilities that suit the quality of the music.

## Program Note

*Midnight Toccatas* is based on the names of Ruth and Clarence Mader, in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Mader Fund. The motto used in the piece is this:



Rather than using the motto in a thematic way (although the sequence of pitches does appear toward the very end of the piece in the pedals), I decided to use it to develop a range of motives, chords and arabesque-like passages that operate throughout the piece. One way I did this was to develop rotational arrays, so that all of the pitches used were derived serially from the motto. In this way, the motto is integrated into the fabric of the piece on every conceivable level.

The piece is arranged as a series of short toccatas, all held together by the consistency of the materials. Sometimes they are connected by running passages; at other times they stop abruptly and begin a contrasting section. Throughout it all, material recurs in ever-changing but still recognizable ways. The piece is split into three larger sections (fast-slow-fast), though each section contains several toccatas. The fast parts are breakneck, jittery, fragmented even, using the full register of the instrument. The middle slow section is almost meditative, with long, highly ornamented, melismatic strands of melody in the right hand over slower moving voices.

Concerning the title: When I attended Oberlin in the mid-1990s, it was a regular tradition among the organ students to hold a monthly ad hoc recital at midnight on a Friday. These recitals were called the “Friday Night Organ Pump,” and it is a tradition that continues even today. At the time, I flirted with writing a toccata for one of these concerts, though I knew so little about the organ at the time that I didn’t feel confident enough to write anything worthwhile. With *Midnight Toccatas*, I was finally able to manifest that idea into a challenging but, I hope, fun work for solo organ.

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Gt.: 8' 4' 2' Pr., Reeds, Mixt.  
Ped.: 16' 8' Pr., Reeds, Mixt.

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 13, measures 1-10. The score consists of three systems of music. The top system shows the piano part in treble and bass staves, with dynamic markings "Gt. ff" and "ff". The middle system shows the piano part in treble and bass staves, with various time signatures (7, 2, 5, 8, 4) and key changes. The bottom system shows the piano part in treble and bass staves, with time signatures (4, 2, 5, 8, 2, 5, 4). The score is set in 4/4 time throughout.



Musical score page 20. The score consists of three staves. The top two staves are treble clef and the bottom staff is bass clef. Measure 20 starts with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 5/8 section with various rhythmic patterns, and then returns to 4/4. The bass staff is mostly silent. A dynamic marking *ff* is present at the end of the measure.



Musical score page 26. The top two staves are treble clef and the bottom staff is bass clef. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and changing time signatures (4/4, 3/4, 2/4). The bass staff provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords.



Musical score page 30. The top two staves are treble clef and the bottom staff is bass clef. The score continues with intricate melodic lines and harmonic textures. The bass staff remains active throughout the measure.

97

3/4

101

2/4

105

8/8

199

$\text{♩} = 160$

$\text{ff}$

202

$\text{ff}$

206

$\text{ff}$

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 11, measures 210-211. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the orchestra, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 5/8 time signature. It features a series of eighth-note chords. The middle staff is for the piano, also in treble clef and 5/8 time, with a key signature of one sharp. It shows eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff is for the piano, in bass clef and 5/8 time, with a key signature of one sharp. It includes a sustained note with a fermata and a dynamic instruction.

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 11, measures 215-216. The score consists of three staves: Treble clef (measures 1-4), Treble clef (measures 5-8), and Bass clef (measures 9-12). The key signature changes frequently, indicated by a brace and measure numbers. Measure 215 starts in 7/8, moves to 2/4, then 3/4, then 4/4, ending in 6/8. Measure 216 starts in 7/8, moves to 2/4, then 3/4, then 4/4, ending in 6/8. The piano part features eighth-note chords and sixteenth-note patterns.

A musical score for piano, featuring three staves. The top two staves are in treble clef and 6/8 time, while the bottom staff is in bass clef and 6/8 time. The key signature for the top two staves is B-flat major (two flats), indicated by a brace grouping them together. The bass staff has its own key signature, which is B-flat major (two flats). The score consists of two measures, numbered 219 and 220. Measure 219 begins with a B-flat major chord in the treble clef staves, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measure 220 begins with a B-flat major chord in the treble clef staves, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The bass staff shows eighth-note chords and sixteenth-note patterns throughout both measures.

313

*ss*

8 7

316

*accel.* - - -

321

*d=188*

G.P.

Sw.: 8' 4' Fl. only

Ch.: 16' 8' Reeds

G.P.

324

$\text{♩} = 80$

*pp*

*mp*

328

$\text{♩} = 172$

G.P. Full organ

*fff*

G.P.

*fff*

[ca. 9'00"]





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