How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Introductions

1) Use the written score.

This is the most straightforward option. Though it is not a challenge in creativity, there are some aspects you need to consider:

- The hymn’s length of verse
- The congregation’s familiarity with the hymn
- The hymn’s tempo

- The Length
When relying fully on the written score, if the hymn is short in verse length (no more than 8 measures), use the entire hymn as an introduction (such as with the example below).

St. Columba

John B. Dykes (1823-1876)
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

- The Length

If the hymn’s verse is longer, for example 16 measures, consider introducing the hymn via the following:

- Use the 1st half as an intro.
- Use the 2nd half as an intro.
- Use a combination of 1st and 2nd half as an intro.

For example, with the hymn tune Hyfrydol, you may introduce it by using the 1st 8 measures:
- The Length

Another option when introducing hymns of longer verse length is to use the 2nd half of the hymn as an intro:

Again, please note that these apply only to introductions where the organist relies fully on the score for the introduction. Departing from the original score is touched upon in the Interludes section where some of the concepts can be applied to introductions as well. However, a full guide on creating your own exciting introductions will be provided in the complete REHARMONIZE course. There is one more method to consider when introducing a longer hymn:
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

- The Length

Use the opening of the 1st half and combine it with the closing of the 2nd half:

This is an effective method as it gives the listener a reminder of the opening melody but still has that finality associated with the end of the verse.
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

-The congregation’s familiarity with the hymn

Regardless of the length of verse, the congregation’s familiarity with the hymn needs to be taken into account.

If the congregation is singing a hymn for the first time, play the entire verse through as an introduction to help them familiarize themselves with the hymn.

-The hymn’s tempo

In cases where the hymn’s tempo is not suggested in the printed score, read the text aloud to help you decide.

There are two objectives achieved from reading the text aloud:

First you internalize the subject matter. If the hymn text references reflective topics normally associated with a sombre tone, you know that the tempo will not be on the fast side, however, be careful not to drag the tempo of such hymns. There is an ongoing joke that some organists play funeral hymns so slowly that the congregation feel like they are going to pass out from exhaustion and join the deceased. Avoid this at all costs.

Second, you get a feel for the natural tempo. When you read the text aloud, if you take a natural pace in your reading, it should not be too far off from the tempo you will take in the end. This is obviously not a hard and fast rule but it will help you.

Also, it is a good idea to sing along with the hymn when rehearsing to see how it feels to sing. If you find that you are easily running out of breath before the ends of phrases, this may be a sign that you are taking too slow a tempo. On the other hand, if you find that you do not have a chance to catch a good breath before the next phrase, you may be going too fast.

The aim is for the hymn to feel comfortable to sing for the congregation. Their focus should be on God and glorifying Him, not on how difficult the hymn is to sing.
Hymn Interludes

- The Segue

Always begin a hymn interlude on the last note of the verse. This avoids any confusion in the congregation’s mind about what is happening next.

If your interlude does not begin on the last note of the verse, you run the risk of the congregation beginning to sing the next verse at the wrong time. Below is an example of where the interlude would begin in the hymn tune Llanfair.

Begin interlude here on this note!
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Interludes

- The 8 measure interlude

If you are new to the practice of inserting interludes between verses, focus first on creating 8 measure interludes. To do this, you must have a clear idea of the harmonic progression through the 8 measures.

Important tips to consider about the interlude:

- If you are planning to modulate to a higher key for the last verse, establish that new key early on in the interlude.
- Be careful to ensure that the progression is clearly moving towards chord V or chord I and aim to get there by the last measure of the interlude.

So for example, if you want your interlude to end on the dominant, that is chord V of the hymn’s key, the end of your interlude would have a progression such as in the example below of the hymn tune “Llanfair” in G major.
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Interludes

- The 8 measure interlude

If you want your interlude to end on the tonic, that is chord I of the hymn’s key, the closing measures of your interlude should progress in a similar manner to the following example, again using the tune “Llanfair” in G major.

Note that what is important here is the clarity of the progression. If your progression has clear direction, there will be no doubt in the congregation’s mind as to when they are to resume singing.
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Interludes

- Creating your own 8 measure interludes

As you begin to experiment with interludes, create a bass line that progresses logically from the end of one verse to the next. Then use your harmonization skills to devise an effective harmonic progression that takes the interlude towards chord V or I.

Following are examples of an interlude for “Llanfair” with bass line only, followed by a harmonization in the style of a fanfare.

Interlude ending on chord V:
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Interludes

- Creating your own 8 measure interludes

Interlude ending on chord V with fanfare harmonization:
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Hymn Interludes

- Creating your own 8 measure interludes

Interlude ending on chord I - bass line only:

\[ \text{Org.} \]

\[ 13 \]

\[ 17 \]

\[ 21 \]
How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Interludes

- Creating your own 8 measure interludes

Interlude ending on chord I with fanfare harmonization:

```
13
Org.
```

```
17
Org.
```

```
21
Org.
```

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How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Hymn Introductions & Interludes

- Exercises
1) Introduce this hymn in the 3 ways outlined on page 2 of this tutorial:

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286 Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
PSALM 87

1 Glorius things of thee are spoken, Zion, cit y of our God.
2 See, the streams of liv ing wa ters, spring ing from et er nal love,
3 Round each hab i ta tion hov er ing, see the cloud and fire ap pear.
4 Sav i or, since of Zi on's cit y I through grace a mem ber am,

He, whose word can not be bro ken formed thee for his own a bode,
well sup ply thy sons and daugh ters and all fear of want re move.
for a glo ry and a cov er ing, show ing that the Lord is near.
let the world de ride or pit y, I will glo ry in your name.

On the Rock of A ges found ed, what can shake thy sure re pose?
Who can faint while such a riv er ev er flows their thirst to as suage?
Thus de riv ing from their ban ner light by night and shade by day,
Fad ing are the world's best plea sures, all its boast ed pomp and show;

With sal va tion's walls sur round ed, thou may 'st smile at all thy foes.
Grace, which like the Lord, the giv er, nev er falls from age to age.
safe they feed up on the man na which God gives them
on their way,
sol id joys and last ing trea sures none but Zi on's chil dren know.
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Words: John Newton, 1779, alt., P.D.
Music: (AUSTRIAN HYMN 8.7.8.7 D) Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), 1797, P.D.
Hymn Introductions & Interludes

- Exercises

2) Harmonize the given bass progression towards chord V in this interlude:
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Hymn Introductions & Interludes

- Exercises

3) Create your own bass progression towards chord V or I in the blank measures provided:

![Music Notation: Moscow by Felice de Giardini]

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How To Create Hymn Intros and Interludes

Conclusion

We have so far looked at some methods of reharmonizing a hymn and how to form basic introductions and interludes.

As you develop these skills, you will soon be able to apply them to creating introductions and interludes, which will be covered in the final tutorial.

Note that there is much more to reharmonizing and creating intros, interludes, preludes and postludes than is possible to cover in these introductory videos.

The good news is that I am preparing a course which takes you step by step through the learning process. The course is to be taken in small portions so you will develop one skill at a time and not be overwhelmed with all there is to master.

If you are interested in being informed when the course becomes available, be sure to sign up at https://blog.seanjacksonmusic.com/reharmonize-course-launch-video-1/reharmonize-course-optin-page/