The Organ Works of

Moritz Brosig:

Contributions of a German Catholic Composer

in the Romantic Era

By

Thomas Andrews

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Chair: Dr. Michael Bauer

Dr. James Higdon

Dr. Roberta Schwartz

Dr. Alan Street

Dr. Lorie Vanchena

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The dissertation committee for Thomas Andrews
certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

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Abstract

Moritz Brosig was a professor of theory and organ at the University of Breslau, and served as Domkapellmeister at the Breslau Cathedral from 1853–1884. A participant in the 19th century Bach revival, Brosig’s study of the works of Mendelssohn and Bach inspired him to compose chorale-based works himself. Peculiar to the chorale-based works of Brosig is his Catholic faith; the chorale prelude was primarily a Protestant genre, yet Brosig composed thirty-one chorale preludes.

Brosig’s career is overshadowed by his contemporary Adolf Friedrich Hesse, a noted organ virtuoso who traveled Europe giving performances. Brosig’s development of the chorale prelude foreshadows those of perhaps the greatest German Romantic organist of all time, Max Reger. In fact, a line of influence can be traced between Mendelssohn’s organ music and that Brosig, and subsequently from Brosig to Reger through Heinrich Reimann and Karl Straube.

This research document also details the Cecilianist movement and its positive and negative influence on Brosig and German Romantic composers of the time. Brosig’s gradual dismissal of the Cecilianists, as well as his growing distaste for its founder, Franz Xaver Witt, is noted.

Brosig’s improvisational prowess is displayed in his chorale fantasie, his chorale preludes, and his free works. Moritz Brosig is largely unheard of in North America. This study argues that his sizable musical output deserves more exposure.
To my family, thank you for all of your support along the way. *Ich liebe euch.*
Acknowledgements

I must first recognize my mother for getting me started on this project back in 2010. What started out as a term paper at the University of Notre Dame has blossomed into a much larger product than I ever expected.

Ben Justis has been an incredible help along the way. His skills at Finale are to be commended. Without his engravings most of the Brosig scores would not exist in this paper.

My first encounter with Dr. Otto Depenheuer was through his 1992 edition of Brosig’s organ works while learning the first Fantaisie, Op. 55. After some email correspondence several years ago, he was so generous as to offer me some of his latest modern editions of Brosig’s music. His work in creating modern editions of nearly all of Brosig’s organ music must be recognized.

Dr. Michael Bauer has done so much in helping me with through this research project. His constant encouragement in organ lessons, his breadth of organ knowledge, and ability to make revisions to this paper have been saving graces to my research.

I must thank my committee as well for their input while reading this paper, including their unanimous approval to travel to Europe to seek Brosig’s manuscripts at some point. Their fluency in doctoral research guidelines have been a phenomenal help.

Lastly, I cannot thank my wife Amanda enough for helping me with this paper. She took care of William while I practiced, researched, and wrote, understood the demanding life I led being fully employed, traveling between Lawrence and Omaha every month, and trying to be the best father and husband I can be; without her by my side none of this would have been possible.
Preface

Moritz Brosig and his music are of personal importance to me. When doing some genealogical research, my mother discovered that by way of her maternal grandmother, Maria Kieslich (née Brosig), who was Brosig’s granddaughter, we are related to the Brosigs. This effectively makes Moritz Brosig my great-great-great grandfather. Further research revealed that both the Brosigs and Kieslichs were very musical families, most often in piano, voice, and composition. Knowing that Moritz Brosig was an organist, a music professor, and a church musician has been inspiring to me as I pursue these same life goals.
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Chorale Settings and the Bach Revival

Following the era of Johann Sebastian Bach, the quality of the chorale prelude declined. While his pupils Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, Johann Friedrich Agricola, and Johann Kirnberger all wrote works in this genre that were stylistically similar to Bach, and some central German figures like Gottfried August Homilius and Johann Peter Kellner also composed chorale preludes, the tradition had fallen to its nadir and stayed that way until the early nineteenth-century.¹ Robert Marshall describes church music at the turn of the nineteenth-century as “a deliberately neutral and totally utilitarian church style [that] was cultivated, characterized by chordal texture, moderate tempos and stereotyped cadences, modulations and rhythms. Chorale preludes, too, whether based on the cantus firmus tune or not, were generally composed in this style throughout much of the century.”²

In the 1820s the chorale received new attention as a result of the “Bach Renaissance.” Composers looked to the works of J. S. Bach for guidance and direction in their musical style. Of particular importance was Felix Mendelssohn, who became a leading figure in the revival of Bach’s works. His performance of the St. Matthew Passion in 1829, when he was only twenty years old, fostered interest in the works of Bach among musicians and members of the German literati including Goethe and Hegel. Mendelssohn went on to incorporate both counterpoint (the Three Preludes and Fugues, Op. 37), and the chorale (Six Sonatas for organ, Op. 65, Nos. 1, 3, and 6) into his organ works.

² Ibid.
Not to be overlooked was the Bach Renaissance in Breslau, which is present-day Wrocław, Poland. Wrocław remains the largest city in Silesia to this day. Breslau had a long tradition of civic musical life. Operas were performed there in the 1720s and 1730s under Antonio Bioni. Franz Beinlich directed oratorios by Handel and Dittersdorf in the 1750s. Johann Adam Hiller organized multiple concerts of German and Italian vocal works and was the first to perform Handel’s “Messiah” in Breslau. When Hiller left for the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, musical life in Breslau suffered. It was not until Johann Ignaz Schnabel became Kapellmeister in 1805 that the city’s musical life was rejuvenated.

Breslau was well-known for its concert life: Chopin, Paganini, and Spohr all gave performances there. In his memoirs, Louis Spohr wrote: “Breslau, always one of the most musical cities in Germany, had at that time so many outstanding concerts that almost every weekday one took place.” This musically rich atmosphere created a favorable environment in which to revive Bach’s works. The chief figure in this revival in Breslau was Johann Theodor Mosewius (1788-1858). In 1825 he established the Breslau Singakademie, and in 1829 he and Joseph Ignaz Schnabel (1767-1831), Director of Music at the University of Breslau, attended Mendelssohn’s performance of the St. Matthew Passion. The very next year Mosewius followed Mendelssohn’s lead and performed the St. Matthew Passion himself. From 1835–1850 Mosewius also performed fifteen Bach cantatas, numerous motets and choral works, and the Christmas Oratorio.

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3 Silesia is located in present-day Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic.
6 Ibid.
7 Rudolf Walter, Moritz Brosig: Sämtliche Choralvorspiele für Orgel, (Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag, 1999), vi.
Moritz Brosig’s compositions were products of the Bach revival. Brosig was born January 24, 1815 in Fuchswinkel (now part of the rural community of Patschkau, Poland) as the fifth of five children. His first documented musical education was with Bernhard Hahn, Domkapellmeister at the Breslau Cathedral, in 1831 at the Matthias-Gymnasium. It was here that his studies of the piano works of Schubert motivated him to take his study of music more seriously. He was also well-versed in guitar, violin, and cello. Brosig studied organ with Franz Joseph Wolf from 1835–38 at the University of Breslau. Wolf taught his university students the works of Rinck, Fischer, Kittel, Seeger, Albrechtsberger, and Bach, of whom Wolf was a “zealous admirer.” Brosig was not a prodigy, rather, he developed his organ technique through

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“industrious” practicing. Brosig’s first church position was at St. Adalbert in 1838, playing under the direction of his teacher Wolf. Upon Wolf’s death in 1843 Brosig assumed the position of Kapellmeister, and in December 1853, after Bernhard Hahn’s death, he became Domkapellmeister at the Breslau Cathedral.

Brosig spent much of his career at Breslau Cathedral (now Wrocław Cathedral or the Cathedral of John the Baptist). The cathedral was completed in 1272; however, much rebuilding occurred after two fires in 1540 and 1759. The interior of the church was renovated in a neo-gothic style from 1873–75, but was badly damaged during the Soviet Siege of Breslau in May 1945. The cathedral organ that Brosig knew was built in 1805 by Johann Christian Benjamin Müller and had 60 stops. A stoplist for the organ is provided in Appendix Two. It was replaced

![Example 2: Breslau Cathedral ca. 18th century.](image)

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11 Walter, Moritz Brosig, 7.
12 Walter, Moritz Brosig: Sämtliche Choralvorspiele für Orgel, 59.
with an organ by E. F. Walcker in 1913, a project begun by Karl Straube, which is still the largest organ in Poland. The cathedral was the center of German Catholic church music in Breslau from the nineteenth-century until 1945.\textsuperscript{13}

From 1767 – 1969 Breslau Cathedral had seven \textit{Domkapellmeister} who constituted the so-called “Breslau School”: Joseph Schnabel (1767–1831), Bernhard Hahn (1780–1852), Moritz Brosig (1815–1887), Adolf Greulich (1840–1903), Max Filke (1855–1911), Siegfried Cichy (1865–1925), and Paul Blaschke (1885–1969).\textsuperscript{14} Most were the teachers of their successor.

Brosig’s virtuosity grew gradually, and with it came the respect of contemporaries such as Carl Freudenberg, Franz Dirschke, and Adolf Hesse. When comparing the playing of Hesse and Brosig, Freudenberg remarks that while Hesse plays Bach and Spohr better at the organ, Brosig is far more gifted at improvising an organ fantasy.\textsuperscript{15} Franz Dirschke writes in the \textit{Zeitschrift für katholische Kirchenmusik} (1869) that Brosig was able to appeal to both the musical connoisseurs and the ignorant through his playing. He goes on to say that, “one can only regret that all those splendid and accomplished improvisations which [Brosig] created as a cathedral organist during the service are only a nice memory for those who heard them. One can argue that Brosig, as far as the free prelude to the organ is concerned, did not have his equal.”\textsuperscript{16}

All of Brosig’s music was intended for the church. In 1842 Brosig writes, “It has always been my endeavor to follow the example of my immortal teacher [Wolf] and to awaken and maintain religious feelings through simple play, and, God willing, it will continue to be so in the future.”\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{13} Hoffman-Erbrecht, \textit{Musikgeschichte Schlesiens}, 117.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. 7-8.
\end{flushleft}
Brosig had an affinity for older forms of song, namely Gregorian chant and the chorale. In 1863 he published an essay in the Luxembourgian church music magazine *Cecilia* on how to harmonize chant. His affinity for the chorale stood in contrast to his Roman Catholic contemporaries Johann Evangelist Habert and Joseph Rheinberger, who despite their prolific careers as composers, wrote virtually no chorale-based works.¹⁸

At the University of Breslau Brosig was a professor of theory and organ from 1871 to 1884, as well as a lecturer for the university’s institute for church music.¹⁹ His organ pupils included Emmanuel Adler, Emil Nikel, and Heinrich Reimann,²⁰ while his most famous theory student was Salomon Jadassohn. Brosig published a modulation treatise in 1865 and a harmony treatise in 1874. He earned his doctorate with the dissertation “On the Ancient Church Compositions of the 16th and 17th Centuries and Their Reintroduction to Catholic Worship (1880).” He also published his own hymn book in 1850 (*Gesangbuch für den katholischen Gottesdienst*). Many of the tunes contained therein are set by Brosig in his thirty-one chorale preludes. Throughout his career, he travelled throughout the region giving organ demonstrations as an employee of the Diocese of Breslau. This time commitment inhibited his ability to travel more widely in Europe as did his contemporary Hesse, who had a successful concert touring career.²¹

Brosig suffered from a leg ailment most of his life, which further limited his ability to travel. In 1863 he took long breaks for spa treatments to treat his legs. By 1881 he was no longer able to walk up the stairs to the organ loft, and his assistant Adolf Greulich took over organ duties at the cathedral. He died January 27, 1887, leaving behind a wife and son.

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¹⁸ The only exception is Rheinberger’s chorale prelude on *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*.
¹⁹ Walter, Moritz Brosig, 32.
²⁰ Walter, Moritz Brosig: *Sämtliche Choralvorspiele für Orgel*, vii.
²¹ Walter, Moritz Brosig, 29.
Brosig's musical output is sizable. Providing new music for the cathedral repertoire had been part of the duties of the cathedral musician since the time of Schnabel.\textsuperscript{22} During his career, Brosig wrote nine Masses, three offertories and three graduals for choir and orchestra, forty motets on Mass propers, sixteen office motets, seven hymns, two Marian antiphons, and one responsory.\textsuperscript{23} In regard to his organ output (listed in Appendix One), Brosig composed thirty-one chorale preludes, a chorale fantasy on \textit{Christ ist erstanden}, and over one hundred free works, including preludes and fugues, postludes, character pieces, and fantasies.\textsuperscript{24} Brosig’s organ works are listed in Appendix one. While he claimed that his music was sacred, he did write some secular pieces.\textsuperscript{25} These include five songs for bass, two nocturnes for violin, two serenades for violin or cello, and three pieces for violin or cello, all with piano accompaniment.\textsuperscript{26}

\textit{Cecilianism}

Cecilianism was an important development during Brosig’s time. It was a German Catholic musical reform movement that sought a return to intelligibility of text in church music. Its spirit was largely reactionary, seeking to combat the musical ideals of the Enlightenment. Adherents of the movement complained in particular about orchestral accompaniment to church music, the performance of secular songs, and arias from operas set to liturgical texts.\textsuperscript{27} Similar to Johann Joseph Fux a century earlier, Cecilianists looked to the great composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as models for composition. In particular, Cecilianists held Palestrina in highest regard. True Cecilian music was ideally \textit{a capella}, and the organ was the only instrument

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 46-50.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 52-58.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 58-59.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 58-59.
\textsuperscript{27} Hoffman-Erbrecht, \textit{Musikgeschichte Schlesiens}, 118.
\end{footnotes}
suitable for worship. Exaggerated word painting, excessive modulations, and the overuse of chromaticism were all avoided.²⁸

The leading Cecilian reformer of the second half of the nineteenth-century was Franz Xaver Witt (1834–1888). In 1865 he called for a reform of church music, and in 1868 founded the Allgemeiner Deutscher Cäcilienverein.²⁹ Various journals were published regarding the new Cecilian music, including the 1870 edition of the Cäcilienkalender, which was the first to catalogue music appropriate for church use. The Cecilian movement believed that Gregorian chant was the preferred form of acceptable music,³⁰ followed by *a capella* polyphony, organ music, and then hymns.³¹ An extension of the Cecilian movement involved preparing a new chant edition (the Regensburg edition) for which Franz Xaver Haberl (1840–1910) was a guiding force. At this time, Rome was still using the Medicean edition of 1614. While approved for use by Rome, the Regensburg edition was eventually superseded by the Editio Vaticana published by Dom Prosper Gueranger and Paul Jausion at Solesmes.³²

Standard repertory for use by the assembly was slow to emerge in the Cecilian movement. In 1860 Witt published a hymnal entitled *Dreihundert der schönsten geistlichen Lieder älterer Zeit* (Three hundred of the most beautiful hymns of the past), but the first standardized Cecilian hymnal was not published until 1916, and included a mere twenty-three hymns.

²⁹ Ibid.
³⁰ This is mostly in line with some of the regulations of the Council of Trent, which sought to eliminate secular songs as the basis of sacred composition. While Pope Pius X’s *Motu proprio* (1903) was written over 30 years after the Cecilian movement began, Pius’ beliefs that chant as the basis for church music, as well as prohibiting profane and theatrical music from the church, were similar to the Cecilianist stance on acceptable church music.
³¹ Ibid.
³² Ibid.
The Cecilian movement engendered many controversies. The strict adherence to old forms isolated Catholic church music from new musical innovations. Witt emphasized liturgical correctness over artistic quality. Polyphonic music created by Cecilian composers was “artistically rather unassuming.” They dismissed leading composers such as Liszt, Bruckner, and Rheinberger, who rejected all or most Cecilian ideas. A counter-movement emerged in Austria in 1875 that was more receptive to new musical innovations, which included musicians such as Brosig (who had previously been a Cecilianist) and his followers in Breslau.

Brosig’s reasons for leaving the movement were that Cecilianists wanted only sixteenth-century music or modern imitations of this music, and rejected orchestral music outright. This was a divisive issue for him, since seven of his nine choral Masses include orchestral accompaniment. Brosig’s orchestral Masses and Vesper settings outraged Witt so much that they were censored and left out of the Cecilia catalogue in 1870, while Brosig’s motets, hymns, and organ works were still retained in the publication. In a letter to Father Basilius Breitenbacher, Brosig denounced the music of the Cecilianists as “monotonous, scholarly work,” claiming that it did not give him the “warm feelings” he sought in his own music. Further, in his dissertation “On the Ancient Church Compositions of the 16th and 17th Centuries and Their Reintroduction to Catholic Worship” (1880), Brosig considered the Cecilian movement too elitist: “As a result of the great progress in the fields of melody, harmony, and rhythm our musical thought and feeling have changed, so that we are no longer able to sympathise completely with the thought and feeling of such a bygone age, even though that age forms the starting-point for the development

34 Gmeinwieser. “Cecilian movement.”
35 Walter, Moritz Brosig, 38-39.
of the art.” It appears that Brosig also had a long hatred of Franz Xaver Witt. As evidenced by Brosig’s correspondence with Johann Evangelist Habert over the period 1868–1884, Brosig denounced the music put forth by the Cecilian catalogue and Witt’s selections as “nonsense.” Brosig appreciated orchestral Masses of classical composers like Mozart, Haydn, and Dittersdorff, but gradually replaced them with contemporary orchestral Masses such as his own.

**Musical Influences**

While the influence of Bach and Mendelssohn can be seen in Brosig’s chorale-based works, their example applies more broadly to Brosig’s total organ output as well. The sonatas of Mendelssohn impacted Brosig in two ways: first, through the formal plans of his Fantasies, which mirror the structure of Mendelssohn’s sonatas, and second, through the similar approaches to the sequencing of melodic material. Mendelssohn’s influence can also be seen in the fact that all of Brosig’s Fantasies alternate between fast and slow movements. Comparisons between Mendelssohn’s and Brosig’s fugue subjects can be seen in Examples 2-4.

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38 Habert’s *Zeitschrift für katholische Kirchenmusik* was the catalog for the more moderate Austrian Cecilian movement (which allowed orchestral music such as Brosig’s), and was the cause of enmity between Habert and Witt.
39 Köhler, 195-203.
40 Ibid.
Example 4: Examples of Sequential writing in Fugue subjects b) Mendelssohn Sonata III, Op. 65 (mm. 26–31).

Some closer imitation of Mendelssohn’s themes may occur in Brosig’s music, such as in the andante con moto section of his Third Fantasie (1883; see Example 7), which closely resembles the fugue subject in Mendelssohn’s Third sonata (Example 6). Interestingly, as influential as Mendelssohn’s organ sonatas were on Brosig, Brosig wrote no sonatas himself. Rather, the influence of the Mendelssohn’s sonatas is manifested in Brosig’s organ fantasies, which was another popular genre in the mid-nineteenth-century.\(^{42}\) Thematic development did not play a major role in these compositions.\(^{43}\) This is true in Brosig’s fantasies too, as well as his longer

\(^{42}\) Walter, Moritz Brosig, 28.

\(^{43}\) Ibid.
chorale preludes: the development sections are either quite short or wander aimlessly. While he considered his fantasies (except his chorale fantasia on *Christ ist erstanden*) too extensive for a church service, Brosig gave some movements alternate endings so that they could be treated as individual character pieces more suitable for use at services (Example 8). This is the case in his third Fantasie, where the second movement is given a lengthy alternate ending.\(^{44}\)

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Example 8: Brosig Fantasie III, Op. 55 – alternate ending marked by +

As a professor of church music at the University of Breslau, Brosig taught the works of Bach to his students with his own performance interpretation.\textsuperscript{45} His appreciation of other contemporary Bach interpretations was not always enthusiastic. In a letter written by Karl

\textsuperscript{45} Walter, \textit{Moritz Brosig}, 30.
Straube in 1950 concerning his teacher Heinrich Reimann (a pupil of Brosig), Straube states that Brosig was opposed to the strict Berlin Bach style of the time. Brosig’s performance practices of Bach were exemplified in the playing of his student Reimann, who preferred dynamic contrasts as opposed to fortissimo playing throughout. The miniature preludes found in the Orgelbüchlein, with their adherence to liturgical seasons, illustrate Bach’s influence on Brosig, and are discussed below.

Origins of the Chorale Settings Employed by Moritz Brosig

Brosig employed a number of different methods for the setting of chorales in his organ works. The first is the chorale motet, which sets every line of a chorale melody as a point of imitation. Leading seventeenth-century composers of chorale motets were Michael Praetorius and Jacob Praetorius.

46 Walter, Moritz Brosig, 30. This is not to be confused with the style and keyboard performance practices of Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach, the “Berlin Bach,” but rather the way J. S. Bach’s organ music was performed in Berlin during Brosig’s life.

Another genre prevalent in the seventeenth-century was the chorale partita, influenced by the English virginalists and subsequently developed by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck and his students. The virginal style utilized keyboard figurations in the contrapuntal voices and often employed sequences. The chorale melody is often stated as a *cantus firmus* in long notes.

![Example 9: Sweelinck – Keyboard figurations from *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* (mm. 25–37).](image)

An emerging style in the generation after Sweelinck was the chorale fantasia: a freer, toccata-like form that features individual phrases of chorales that are sometimes set multiple times. It was first created by Heinrich Scheidemann in his chorale fantasia on *Jesus Christus unser Heiland*, but was further developed by Franz Tunder. The *cantus firmus* can appear plain or embellished.
Buxtehude wrote many chorale-based works, often featuring ornamented *cantus firmus* pieces written in imitation of coloratura vocal lines. Additionally, Buxtehude’s embellishments of the *cantus firmus* illuminate particular moods, such as in his setting of *Durch Adams Fall*, where the *cantus firmus* reflects the somber text of how through Adam’s fall human nature was corrupted:

Example 10: Franz Tunder - Chorale Fantasia on *Herr Gott dich loben wir* (mm. 1–12).

Example 11: Buxtehude – *Durch Adams Fall* (mm. 7–18)
An important technique in chorale preludes dating back to Samuel Scheidt is *vorimitation*, wherein lines of the chorale melody are anticipated by imitation in the other voices before the chorale is stated as a *cantus firmus*. This is often seen in the chorales of Buxtehude and Johann Pachelbel.

Example 12: Pachelbel - Chorale Prelude on *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (mm. 1–13).

All of these styles culminated in the chorale settings of J. S. Bach. Bach also introduced a new genre of chorale writing, the chorale trio.

Example 13: Bach – Chorale Trio on *Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend’*, BWV 655 (mm. 1–7).
The Chorale Preludes of Brosig

While the chorale prelude was traditionally a Protestant genre, there were two distinct sources of chorale preludes in Breslau during the nineteenth-century. Protestant chorale preludes were represented by the works of Adolf Friedrich Hesse (1809–1863), a pupil of Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770–1846), who in turn was a pupil of Johann Christian Kittel (1732–1809), who was himself a pupil of J. S. Bach. The new Catholic interpretation of chorale preludes was represented by Moritz Brosig. Franz Joseph Wolf (1802–1842), a pupil of Bach-revivalist Johann Ignaz Schnabel, who became Moritz Brosig’s organ teacher at the University of Breslau, exposed Brosig to the works of Bach and Mendelssohn. Hesse was more well-known in Europe, given his touring career as a noted virtuoso. By contrast, Brosig’s seclusion in Breslau restricted his exposure to the wider European organ culture. His chorale preludes show influences of Hesse, Mendelssohn, and Bach; their technical and lyrical features make them especially worthy of further study.

Why did Brosig compose chorale preludes, a primarily Protestant genre? Catholic composers of the time did not ordinarily compose chorale preludes: Liszt wrote none, Rheinberger just one (O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden, Op. 162, 6), and Regensburg cathedral organists Joseph Hanisch and Joseph Renner wrote only a few, none of them notable. Due to the intense cultivation of Bach beginning with Schnabel, and further exposure to Bach’s chorales through his teacher Wolf, Brosig must have been strongly influenced by the chorales of the Thomaskantor. Additionally, Mendelssohn’s chorale arrangements in his sonatas influenced both Brosig’s chorale preludes and his chorale fantasia on Christ ist erstanden. It is also apparent

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48 Ibid., 6.
49 Liszt’s wrote a prelude and variation on theme from Bach’s cantata Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, BWV 12.
50 Walter, Moritz Brosig: Sämtliche Choralvorspiele für Orgel, vii.
from his treatises on harmony and modulation, his dissertation on church music from the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, his writing on how to accompany chant, and his own
Gesangbuch that Brosig considered chorales and chant to be important forms of music. His
chorale preludes exhibit the compositional devices found in Johann Joseph Fux’s counterpoint
treatise Gradus ad Parnassum (1725): a firm grounding in the older styles, adapted to modern
performance practice.

There are thirty-one extant chorale preludes: a complete list can be found in Appendix
One. It is safe to assume that with his improvisational ability Brosig performed many other
chorale-based works during his career. Given Brosig’s penchant for chant, it is interesting to note
that there are no extant chant-based organ works from his pen.51

Perhaps in homage to Bach’s Orgelbüchlein, eleven of the twenty-one chorale preludes in
Brosig’s Op. 8 (1850) feature chorales for the liturgical year. While there is no overt liturgical
ordering, as in the Orgelbüchlein, Rudolf Walter writes that “it seems incomprehensible that a
cathedral organist… did not organize the pieces in accordance with the Church year.”52 Four
preludes are meant for Lent and Passiontide, two for Easter, one for Christmas, one for
Pentecost, one for Trinity Sunday, and two for feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary.53 If the
chorales of the other collections are considered, the total increases to fourteen chorale preludes
related to seasons or feasts of the liturgical year. The chorales in Op. 8 are entitled Kurze
Vorspiele zu Predigtliedern, or short preludes before the sermon song, meaning that they were
conceived as music for church services (Gebrauchsmusik) and not concert pieces. During the

51 Ibid. 25.
52 Walter, Moritz Brosig: Sämtliche Choralvorspiele für Orgel, vi.
53 1850 is the same year Brosig’s Gesangbuch was published, and all twenty-one chorales of Op. 8 appear in his
Gesangbuch (The Gesangbuch is included in Op. 8 is labeled as 8a, and the twenty-one chorale preludes as 8b).
1850 was also the 100th anniversary of Bach’s death and the year of the founding of the Bach Gesellschaft in
Leipzig. While no documentation of intentionally publishing chorale preludes around the centennial of Bach’s death
exists, the coincidence is interesting.
nineteenth-century, the sermon came before the start of Mass,\(^{54}\) so the chorale prelude and successive chorales sung by the people set the tone for the theme of the sermon, giving them a para-liturgical function. The chorales of Op. 8 were met with high praise from August Gottfried Ritter in the 1850 edition of *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*; who says “they belong in form and content to the best products of the present.”\(^{55}\)

The chorales of Op. 8 are indeed small preludes. Except for the preludes of *Jesus, Heiland aller Sünder* (No. 15) and *Anbetung werde Gott gebracht* (No. 6), the Op. 8 chorales are no more than thirty-one measures in length, and the chorale statements generally have short interludes. They are similar to the *Orgelbüchlein* in that they are liturgically-inspired miniature chorale preludes, but distinct by virtue of the presence of interludes between the lines of the chorale.

It appears that Brosig was trying to “catholicize” the chorale prelude. The inclusion of Marian hymns *Ave Maria klare* (No. 15) and *Reinste Jungfrau, nimm von Sündern* (No. 19), as well as tunes by Catholic Silesian composers Johann Franz Otto (Nos. 6 and 8) and Bernhard Hahn (No. 9) show the composer stepping outside the bounds of strict Lutheran chorale tunes. Additionally, nearly half of the chorale preludes had their texts altered to suit Catholic worship. For example, *Allein auf Gottes wort will ich* is renamed *In Gott des Vaters und des Sohns*, which eliminates the Lutheran *sola scriptura* theme in the former’s text.

Given the dates of publication, it can be assumed that Brosig wrote chorale preludes throughout most of his life. Five preludes in Op. 4 (1845) are dedicated to Brosig’s


\(^{55}\) Ibid.
contemporary Carl Freudenberg\textsuperscript{56}. There are twenty-one chorales in Op. 8 (1850), one in Op. 12 (1854), two in Op. 52 (1882), and two in Op. 58 (1885).

Of the thirty-one chorale preludes, seventeen quote the chorale, either fully or partly, in the soprano line. Thirteen of the chorales quote the chorale either completely or mostly without embellishment. Of the remainder that do not quote the chorale in the soprano, four place it in the tenor. Only two preludes quote the chorale in the bass; they do not state the chorale in full; chorale 21 has a canon at the octave between bass and soprano (Example 15). Six of the chorales employ \textit{vorimitation} (chorales No. 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, and 30) (Example 16).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example14.png}
\caption{Example 14: Brosig – \textit{Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele} – use of canon (mm. 1–13).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. 9. Brosig made it a habit to dedicate his music to fellow musicians and politicians.
Example 15: Brosig – *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* – Use of *vorimitation* (mm. 1–10).

Brosig’s virtuosity is demonstrated in chorales No. 2, 4, 5, 17, 18, 22, and 25; they make use of demanding pedaling, whether it is the use of double pedal (Nos. 4, 5, 25) or quick pedal passages (Nos. 2, 17, 18, 22) (Example 17).

Example 16: Brosig – *Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her* – Use of fast pedaling (mm. 1–14).
Compared to the chorales of Op. 8, the majority of chorales in Op. 4 are lengthy and undergo more development. Longer episodes between statements of the chorale melody are common, such as in *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (Example 16). There is a full introduction in *Aus tiefer Not* (Example 18), followed by a lilting accompaniment in the left hand and pedal for the first line of the chorale.
The use of double pedal in octaves and an introduction are also similar to Hesse’s version of the same chorale (Example 19). The second line of the chorale has a thicker texture and flowing double pedal lines; the final phrase of the chorale reiterates the previous lilting accompaniment. *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (Op. 4, No. 5) utilizes lengthy episodes of *vorimitation* throughout for each entrance of the *cantus firmus*. It is also the only prelude that has two independent pedal parts (Example 16).

The single chorale prelude of Op. 12, *O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid*, is one of four organ pieces Brosig dedicated to Louis Spohr, whom Brosig met in Breslau in 1850 through the assistance of Spohr’s friend Hesse.\(^5^7\) The chorale is bookended by a sighing ritornello theme. Fragments from the opening measures appear as accompaniment to the chorale tune when it is stated in the tenor line.

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\(^5^7\) Ibid., 24.
The two chorales of both Op. 52 (1882) and Op. 58 (1885) were published nearly thirty years after Brosig’s influential Op. 8, and they are also chorale miniatures. All four of these chorales quote the tune in the soprano without embellishment. In *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (Op. 52, No. 11), an imitative three-voice texture precedes each entrance of the chorale tune (Example 21). Peculiar to the chorales in Op. 52 and Op. 58 (see Example 22, *Komm heiliger Geist* of Op. 58) is the challenging pedalwork. It is striking that Brosig composed them in 1881 at a stage of his career when he was suffering from leg problems that prevented him from walking up stairs. It is possible that he composed these preludes and other organ works, such as his Fantasies, earlier in his life, and only revised them much later for publication.
Example 20: Brosig – *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* (mm. 1–10).

Example 21: Brosig – *Komm, heiliger Geist* (mm. 1–8).
Three preludes, *Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her* (Op. 8, No. 13), *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (Op. 8, No. 18), and *Auf meinen lieben Gott* (Op. 4, No. 2) feature trio textures, which Brosig often used in other organ works. The pedal line of *Vom Himmel hoch* is challenging and a good representation of the demanding pedal virtuosity Brosig often incorporated into his compositions (Example 15).

**Brosig’s Chorale Fantasia**

The chorale fantasie on *Christ ist erstanden* is perhaps Brosig’s most impressive chorale-based work. It is subtitled “Fantasie for Easter morning.” The chorale is in barform (AAB) plus an Alleluia. The fantasie is in four sections: The first section, in d minor, is a typical seventeenth-century chorale prelude with each line of the chorale contrapuntally developed using vorimitation (Example 23). The second movement is a lively fugue in G minor. While the subject has no clear connection with the chorale, it has motives that seem to relate to the chorale tune (Example 24).

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58 The inclusion of chorale trios into Op. 8, a genre widely associated with Bach, lends additional credence to the notion of a connection between this date and the 100th anniversary of Bach’s death.
60 Ibid., 25.
The fugue modulates to D minor, where it is preceded by a lengthy pedal tone on A before a cadence in D minor. This sets the key for the third movement, which is a partial statement of the chorale in simple homophony: The chorale is stated with neither a repeat of the A section nor the
Alleluia (Example 25). The final *poco animato* section uses *vorimitation* on the Alleluia of the chorale, which is boldly stated in octaves in the right hand, building to a large final cadence.

Example 24: *Christ ist erstanden* - Statement of chorale and beginning of final section.
The Chorale-Based Works of Brosig’s Pupils

Brosig’s contributions to German organ culture include the beneficiaries of his teaching at the University of Breslau. His most important pupils were Heinrich Reimann (1850–1906), Emmanuel Adler (1845–1926) and Emil Nikel (1851–1921). Following in their teacher’s footsteps, all wrote a number of chorale-based works. Nikel’s chorale preludes are included in his 100 Orgelvorspiele, Op. 56 (1918). He sets some of the more common chorales, such as O Traurigkeit, but also more Catholic hymns than Brosig, as well as arrangements of common Latin chants like Pange lingua, Te deum laudamus, and Veni creator spiritus, often using simple modal accompaniment. Vorimitation and fugal entrances of voices are not used in Nikel’s work; he tends instead to prefer brief two- to four- measure introductions. The chorale melody is almost never decorated, and the vast majority of his preludes are in 4/4 time. The chorales are quite short, often no more than twenty measures. Nikel states in the preface to the collection that his preludes are meant to be easy to moderately difficult hymn introductions, hence their brevity.

It should be noted that Nikel and Brosig were not averse to modal composition, which was not common during the romantic era. Six of Brosig’s chorale preludes are modal, and the first fifteen of Nikel’s chorale preludes (settings of Latin chants) are modal as well.

Emil Nikel, 100 Orgel-Vorspiele, (Breslau: Franz Goerlich-Verlag, 1918), 1.
Emmanuel Adler composed twelve chorale preludes for his Op. 37, and two additional chorale preludes in his Op. 1. The two chorales from Op. 1, *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*, and *Nun triumphieret Gottes Sohn*, include clear homages to Brosig (Examples 21, 29–31). Adler’s *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* has references to two of Brosig’s chorale preludes: the descending scale opening the piece is similar to Brosig’s *Nun komm*, and the pedal arpeggio at the final cadence are reminiscent of Brosig’s arrangement of *Vom Himmel hoch*. From the eighth notes in the pedal to the iambic rhythm of the chorale melody, Adler’s setting of *Nun triumphieret* is principally an imitation of Brosig’s arrangement of the same tune.
Example 28: Brosig – Beginning of *Nun triumphieret Gottes Sohn* (mm. 1–4).

Example 29: Emmanuel Adler – Beginning of *Nun triumphieret* (mm. 1–20).
Example 30: Emmanuel Adler – Beginning of *Es ist ein Ros’ entsprungen* (mm. 1–18).

Brosig’s chorale Fantasia on *Christ ist erstanden* (Op. 6) was influential on his most famous student Heinrich Reimann, who used it as a model for multi-section form in his chorale fantasy *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (1895). Reimann in turn influenced Max Reger by way of his writings about sonata form and also sharing his arrangement of *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* with Reger (which the latter adopted as a model for his own chorale fantasias). He also served as one of the first organ teachers of noted Reger interpreter Karl Straube.

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64 Anderson, 64.
Straube included Brosig’s chorale fantasia on *Christ ist erstanden* and D major prelude (Op. 46) in some of his organ recital programs in the late 1890s.65

**Conclusion**

The chorale-based works of Moritz Brosig are a significant body of organ literature from mid-nineteenth-century Germany. Of historical interest, they represent the beginning of serious Catholic interpretation of the chorale. They were not mere compositions for study and performance; rather, they were intended to address the need for improved liturgical *Gebrauchsmusik* in the Catholic Mass at the time, and possibly to help promote his own *Gesangbuch*. The influence of Bach and Mendelssohn are apparent not just in Brosig’s chorale preludes, but in his larger works as well. While overshadowed by his contemporary Adolf Hesse, Moritz Brosig’s organ works deserve more exposure in the current organ literature. The works of his students as well show a particular attraction with chorales and chants and how they can be used in late-Romantic organ styles.

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65 Ibid., 354-358.
Bibliography


Appendix 1: Brosig's Organ Compositions

Op. 1 – 1844
3 preludes and fugues (e, C, f#)
Current edition: Revised reprint of original Leuckart, ca. 2017 (Bodensee Musikversand)

Op. 3 (Dedicated to Adolf Hesse)
4 preludes (f, G, b, G)
1 prelude and fugue (g)
Current edition: Reprint of original Leuckart, ca. 2010 (Bodensee Musikversand)
Current edition of prelude No. 2: 2010, ed. by Udo Wessiepe (Stretta Music)

Op. 4 (Dedicated to Carl Freudenberg) – n.d.
5 chorale preludes
1. Nun sich der Tag geendet hat (g)
2. Auf meinen lieben Gott (f)
3. Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier (G)
4. Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir (E phrygian)
5. O Haupt, voll Blut und Wunden (E phrygian)
Current edition: Modern edition 1999, ed. by Rudolf Walther (Carus Verlag)

Op. 6 (1 chorale fantasy) – 1864
1. Christ ist erstanden (d)

Op. 8a (Chorale book) – 1850

Op. 8b (21 chorale preludes for the sermon song) – 1850
1. O Herr Jesu, gib, daß wir (G)
2. Wie groß ist des Allmächt'gen Güte (Eb)
3. In Gott des Vaters und des Sohns (G)
4. Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten (a)
5. Willkommen, heil’ge Stunde (Eb)
6. Anbetung werde Gott gebracht (A)
7. O Christen, schaut zum Kreuz hinan (e)
8. Komm, o komm, du Geist des Lebens (F)
9. Laßt uns mit gerührtem Herzen (Ab)
10. Jesus, Heiland aller Sünder (C)
11. Als Jesus sich am Kreuz befand (E phrygian)
12. Nun triumphiert Gottes Sohn (b)
13. Vom Himmel kommt der starke Held (C)
14. Es ist ein Gott, o fühl es, Herz (B)
15. Gegrüßt seist du, Maria (C)
16. Nicht nur straiten, überwinden (G)
17. Gott in der Höh sei Her allein (G)
18. O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden (E phrygian)
19. Reinst Jungfrau, nimm von Sündern (a)
20. Erfreue dich, o Christenheit (D mixolydian)
21. Du, güt’ger Heiland, mögest sehn (f)
  *Current edition: Modern edition 1999, ed. by Rudolf Walter (Carus Verlag)*

**Op. 9 – 1853**

- Fantasie (g)

**Op. 10**

- 3 postludes (d, Eb, C)

**Op. 11**

- 3 preludes (F, C, Eb)
- 2 postludes (f, C)
  *Current edition: Modern edition, ca. 2009 (Musica Rinata)*

**Op. 12 (4 Orgelstücke, dedicated to Louis Spohr) – 1854**

1. Prelude (G)
2. O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid (f)
3. Prelude and Fugue (a)
4. Prelude (Ab)
  *Current edition: Modern Edition 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Preludes only – Butz Verlag)*
  *Current edition: Modern Edition 1999, ed. by Rudolf Walter (Chorale prelude only – Carus Verlag)*

**Op. 13**

- Postlude (D)
- 2 preludes (A, C)
- Fantasie (Ab)
  *Current edition: Modern Edition 2017, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Edition Bon(n)orgue)*

**Op. 14**

- 2 preludes (G, F)
- 2 postludes (c, G)
- 2 trios (f, Ab)
- Fantasie (C)
  *Current edition: Modern Edition 2017, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Edition Bon(n)orgue)*
Op. 15

2 preludes (A, F)
Fantasie (D)

Op. 19 (Dedicated to Carl Mettner)

6 character pieces (C, c, E, g, F, A)

Op. 21

5 preludes (f, B, B, A, G)
Fantasie (e)

Op. 24

4 Andantes (F, Eb, B, d)

Op. 32 - 1865

Modulation treatise (100+ original musical examples)

Op. 43

9 organ pieces of differing character
1. Allegro (C)
2. Andante (Ab)
3. Fugue (g)
4. Lento (b)
5. Allegro (c)
6. Larghetto (E)
7. Trio (F)
8. Larghetto (Eb)
9. Larghetto (e)

Op. 46 - 1879

8 organ pieces of differing character
1. 7 preludes (D, f, G, C, c, D, g)
2. 1 prelude and fugue (Eb)
   *Current edition: Modern edition 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Butz Verlag)*

**Op. 47 – 1879**

5 organ pieces

1. 3 Andantes (B, A, Ab)
2. 1 prelude (A)
3. 1 postlude (D)

*Current edition: Modern edition 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Butz Verlag)*

**Op. 49 – 1880**

5 organ pieces

1. Fantasie (c)
2. 3 Andantes (a, E, F)
3. Adagio (Ab)

*Current edition: Modern edition 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Butz Verlag)*

**Op. 52 – 1882**

10 organ pieces of differing character and 2 chorale preludes

1. 7 preludes (C, Eb, a, d, F, e, c)
2. 2 postludes (c, a)
3. 1 postlude and fugue (f#)
4. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (g)
5. Ach bleib mit deiner Gnade (Eb)

*Current edition: Revised reprint 1983, ed. by Bert Wisgerhof (Preludes and postludes only - Harmonia)*

*Current edition: Modern edition 1999, ed. by Rudolf Walter (Chorale preludes only - Carus Verlag)*

**Op. 53 (Dedicated to Gustav Merkel) – 1882**

Fantasie No. 1 (f)

*Current edition: Modern edition, 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Butz Verlag)*

**Op. 54 – 1882**

Fantasie No. 2 (Eb)

*Current edition: Modern edition, 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Butz Verlag)*

**Op. 55 – 1883**

Fantasie No. 3 (d)

*Current edition: Modern edition, 1992, ed. by Otto Depenheuer (Butz Verlag)*
Op. 58 – 1885

6 organ pieces and 2 chorale preludes

1. 2 preludes (e, C)
2. 2 postludes (f, d)
3. 2 trios (E, G)
4. Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn (Eb)
5. Komm, Gott Schöpfer, heiliger Geist (G mixolydian)

Current edition: Revised reprint of Leuckart edition, ca. 2010 (6 organ pieces only - Bodensee Musikverband)
Current edition: Modern edition, 1999, ed. by Rudolf Walter (Chorale preludes only – Carus Verlag)

Op. 60 – 1886

6 preludes and fugues (Eb, c, E, a, D, c#)

Current edition: Revised reprint of Leuckart edition, ca. 2010 (2 volumes - Bodensee Musikverband)

Op. 61

1. 5 preludes (C, g, Eb, d, D)
2. 2 postludes (F, a)
3. 1 prelude and fugue (c)

Current edition: Revised reprint of Leuckart edition, ca. 2010 (2 volumes - Bodensee Musikverband)


4 preludes (keys not listed)

Current edition: None found

WoO

Prelude (D) – 1870
Fantasie (Ab) – 1883
Prelude from Ritter-Album für Orgel
Offertory from Christ ist erstanden (Op. 6)
Fantasie (Eb) – 1885

Current edition: Modern edition ca. 1980s, ed. by Anne Marlene Gurgel (Prelude from Ritter-Album only - Butz Verlag)
Appendix 2: Disposition of the 1810 Müller Organ in the Breslau Cathedral (60 stops)

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5 ventils, 2 manual couplers, Pedal-Mittelwerk coupler.
Originally pitched in Chorton. Ca. 1833-1836 repitched to Kammerton.
Prior to 1833-1836:
- Rückpositiv: Quintatön 8’ instead of Vox angelica 8’.
- Hauptwerk: Mixtur VIII instead of Mixtur VII.
- Mittelwerk: Salizet 4’ instead of Portunal 8’.
- Pedal: Portunal 8’ instead of Gambe 16’, Quinta 6’ instead of Cornett III.

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67 Walter, Moritz Brosig: Sämtliche Choralvorspiele für Orgel, 59.