



Lyric Prelude

Based on music of Alexander Schreiner

G. Franklin Eddings



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Composer's Note

ALEXANDER SCHREINER, 1901-1987, was born in Nürnberg, Germany, and came to the United States in 1912. He studied organ with John J. McClellan, Charles Marie Widor, and Louis Vierne. He served nine years as university organist and lecturer at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, and fifty-five years as Tabernacle Organist in Salt Lake City, where he played thousands of daily organ recitals as well as Sunday broadcasts with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

He earned the FAGO certificate and a PhD in Composition. A prolific composer and arranger, he had over 270 pieces in publication during his lifetime, all by J. Fischer and Brother, which is now with H.W. Gray (Warner Bros.). Except for the "Lyric Prelude," which he didn't write down, most are still in print. His son, John Schreiner, who handles his father's affairs, gave me permission to use this music.

Like his famous "Lyric Interlude," this delightful "Lyric Prelude" is characteristic of the persona and soul of Alexander Schreiner. For many years he was heard in a half-hour recital every Saturday evening over KSL radio. During the 1950's the broadcast could be heard over most of the United States and as far away as the Western Pacific. As he did each week at the beginning of the program, Dr. Schreiner played only the first twenty measures of his theme, which I have entitled "Lyric Prelude," and from program to program he varied slightly its melody and harmony.

I have used these variants to extend it to its present length. After listening to the many recordings I have of his programs, I made a setting of his twenty-measure theme (forty-five seconds) and extended it to sixty-four measures. Most often I had only his melody and bass lines to work with and had to make some assumptions regarding the inner parts (accompaniment) because the sound level for those parts made them difficult to discern. I feel those assumptions are authentic because, as his student and long-time friend, I knew his music, method, and style quite well.

Because he played the piece differently each time, I made a composite using the best thematic elements from several recordings. Doing this was like reliving my early years when he invited me to sit by the console late at night in the Tabernacle as he recorded three programs consecutively.

The program opened in the following way:

Theme Music:

Twenty measures, forty-five seconds

Host, John Barlow (voice over theme):

"Good evening, and welcome to the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City...and the regular weekly organ recital by Alexander Schreiner, nationally known Tabernacle organist. The next voice you hear will be that of Dr. Schreiner who will narrate his own program."

Organist, Alexander Schreiner:

“Good evening friends of radio. This evening I shall begin with...

It was his custom to record three half-hour radio programs at a time. The recording had to be done late at night after visitor tours and symphony concerts in the Tabernacle were over. His scores were on the music rack in the order to be played. With no help for page turns and an eye on the clock, Dr. Schreiner recorded each program without retakes.

He narrated his own program, introducing each piece, commenting on its character, the composer, and other items of interest, played it, and then continued his narrative while placing the next score and setting the stops. He would converse with his unseen audience, play to fill the required time, and end the program with his closing theme. After a few moments to organize the scores and set new registrations, he began recording the next half-hour program. There was only an analog clock, no digital readout to show elapsed time as the new organ console now has, and there was no script. His narration was extemporaneous.

What an extraordinary person!

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Lyric Prelude

I: Flutes 16', 8', 4', 2', Principal 2'
II: String Celeste 8'
Ped: Soft 16', Sw. to Ped.

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Reflectively, freely

I *mp*

II *p*

The musical score is written for three parts: I (Flutes), II (String Celeste), and Ped (Soft 16'). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo/mood is 'Reflectively, freely'. The score consists of three systems of staves. Part I (Flutes) is marked 'mp' and Part II (String Celeste) is marked 'p'. The Ped part is marked 'Soft 16' and 'Sw. to Ped.'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

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