



# Combining Organ Stops

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This is the second video in a series about organ stops. The first video was about understanding organ stop names. In that video I described the **four families of organ sounds**:

1. Principals or Diapasons, 2. Flutes, 3. Strings, & 4. Reeds.

I also spoke about Mixtures, Mutations, Couplers and the Tremulant.

This video is about some ways of combining organ stops.

## CHORUS

**One way to combine stops is in a chorus, which means putting together stops of various speaking lengths in the same family.** It's like bringing together a choir of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses.

A Principal chorus is made up of a number of Principal or Diapason stops, for example: Principal 8', Octave 4', and Fifteenth 2'. Listen as I build up the Principal chorus.

A Flute chorus is made up of a number of Flute stops, for example: Lieblich Gedact 8', Suabe Flute 4', and Piccolo 2'. Listen as I build up the Flute chorus.

A Reed chorus is made up of a number of Reed stops, for example Cornopean 8' and Clarion 4'. Listen as I build up a Reed chorus.

Notice that both hands are on the same manual.

Also, note that not many pipe organs have enough string stops to form a String chorus.

## SOLO & ACCOMPANIMENT

**Another way to combine organ stops is with a solo melody on one manual and the accompaniment on another manual.**

Solo stops are used individually to highlight a melody. There are soft solo stops e.g. Clarinet, Krumhorn or Oboe, and there are loud solo stops such as a Trumpet or Tuba.

Listen to some soft solo stops – Swell Oboe & Choir Clarinet.

Now, listen to some loud solo stops – Swell Trompette, Choir Spanish Trumpet

Note that the melody is played by one hand, usually the right hand.

The solo needs an accompaniment, which is played on a different manual.

If the solo stop is soft (Clarinet or Oboe) use quiet flutes or strings as the accompaniment.

If the pedals are required, use soft pedals stops e.g. Bourdon 16' and Bass Flute 8'.

Listen as I demonstrate a soft solo stop on one manual with a quiet accompaniment on another manual, plus the pedals.

If the solo stop is loud e.g. Trumpet or Tuba, the accompaniment could be some principals. If the pedals are required, use substantial pedals stops e.g. Principal 16' and Octave 8'.

Listen as I demonstrate a loud solo stop on one manual with the accompaniment on another, plus the pedals.

Make sure that there's a good balance between the solo and the accompaniment. One division should not overpower the others. If there are not many Pedal stops on your organ, a pedal coupler can be added to make the bass part clearer (e.g. Swell to Pedal, or Great to Pedal).

This is just the beginning of the art of combining organ stops. Spend time at the console of your organ at church or home experimenting with combinations starting with the guidelines above. You can progress from there. The more time you invest in experimenting, the more useful combinations you will discover.