

William Selby

*Voluntary*

1767

Edited for organ  
and published by  
John Zielinski

2020

William Selby (1738–1798) was an early American keyboardist, teacher, composer, choirmaster, and concert producer. He was the organist for the London churches of All Hallows Bread Street and St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate, as well as of the Magdalen Hospital Chapel. In 1771, William's older brother John, also an organist and composer, emigrated to New England to take up a post at King's Chapel, Boston. In late 1773, William followed his brother, becoming organist at Trinity Church, Newport. Three years later, William took over the position at King's Chapel, where he organized the first colonial music festival. Selby was the first organist in America to perform and conduct large works of Bach and Handel, and he indirectly laid the foundation for the Handel and Haydn Society. For a brief time, he traded in groceries and liquor – in 1780 he is mentioned in the *Continental Journal* as selling “Port, Teneriffe, Malaga Wines, Tea, Brown and Loaf Sugar, logwood, English soap, etc.” He is reported to have composed choral anthems, organ concertos, sonatas, and a string quartet, but the only extant pieces are a small handful of keyboard works, songs, and hymns.

The publishing custom of the day was to identify a composer by his surname, ie. Mr. Selby, which is unfortunate when you have two brothers that were both composers. It has been suggested that at least a few of the compositions traditionally credited to William could have been written by John. For the purposes of this edition, however, I leave the debate to musicologists and adhere to the traditional attribution. The *Voluntary* was published in London c. 1767, prior to Selby's move to the colonies. In this edition, I have added articulation and dynamics. The piece can be played on either the organ or harpsichord.

---John Zielinski, 11/19/2020

# Voluntary in A

for organ or harpsichord

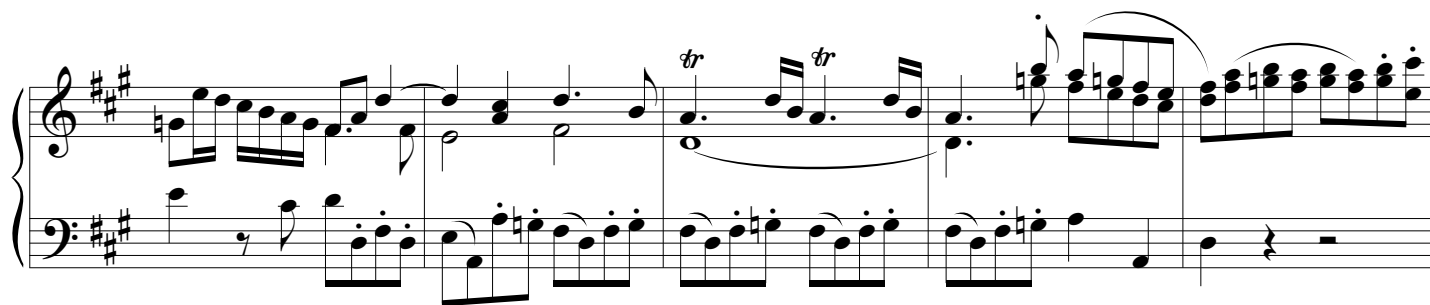
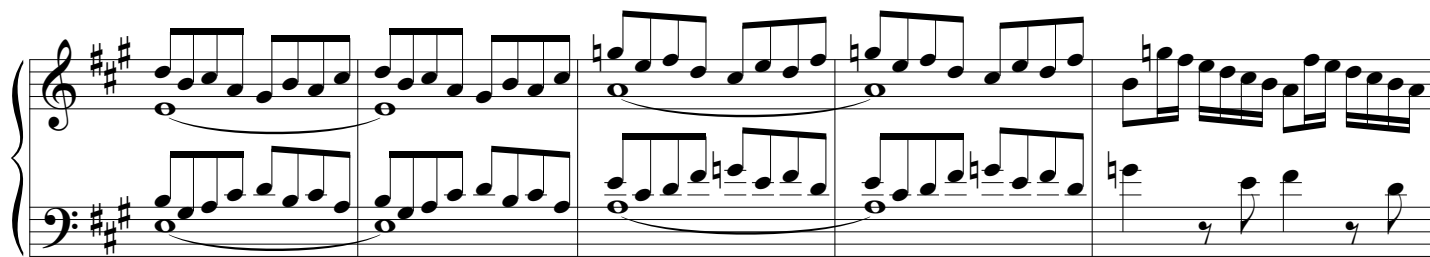
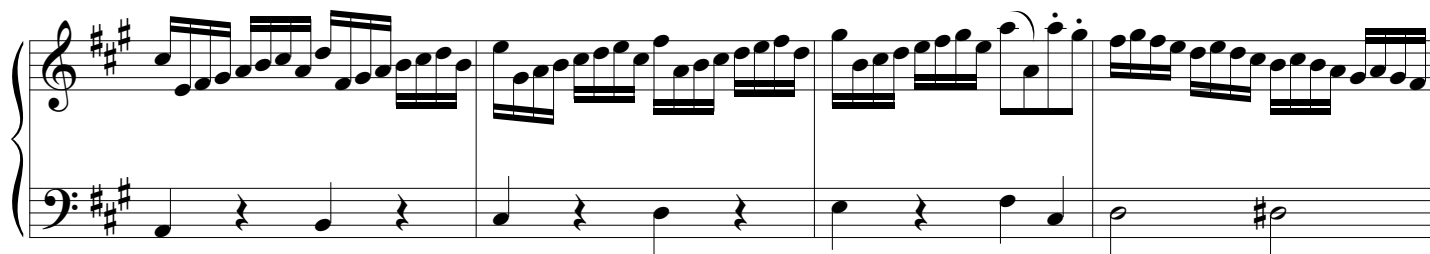
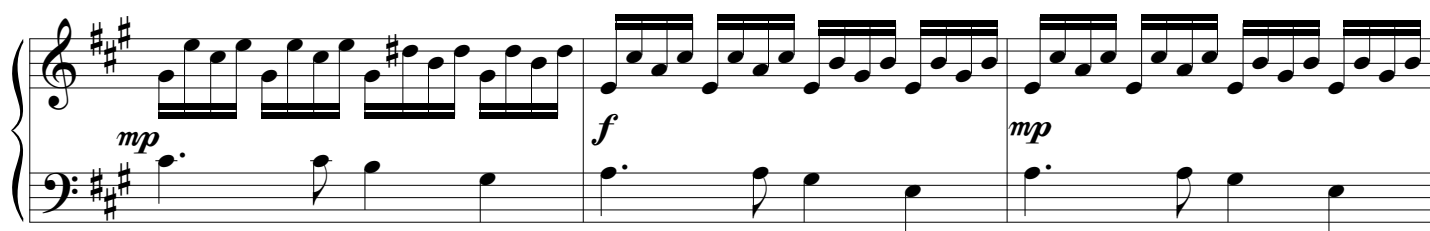
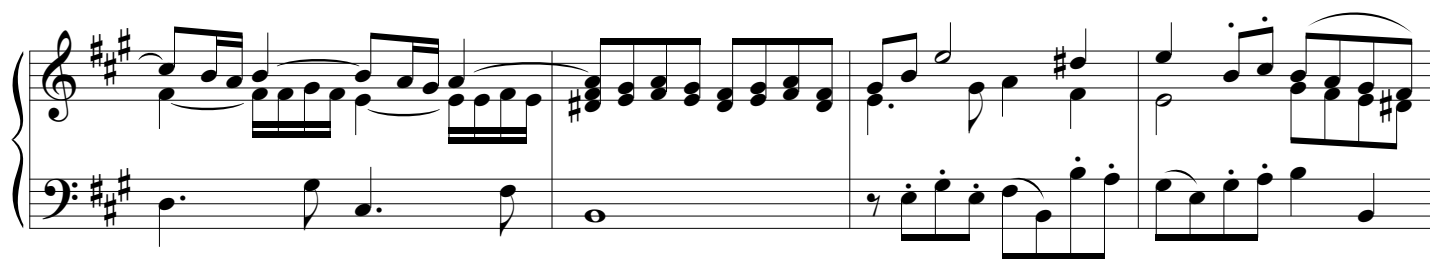
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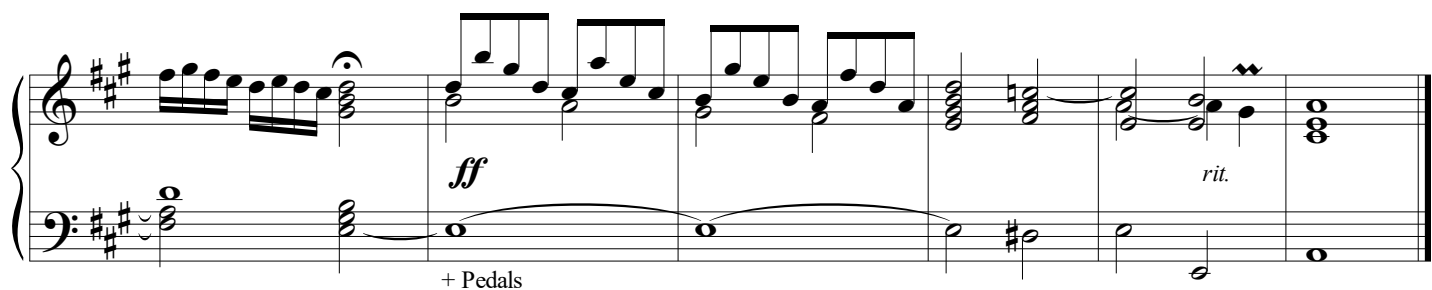
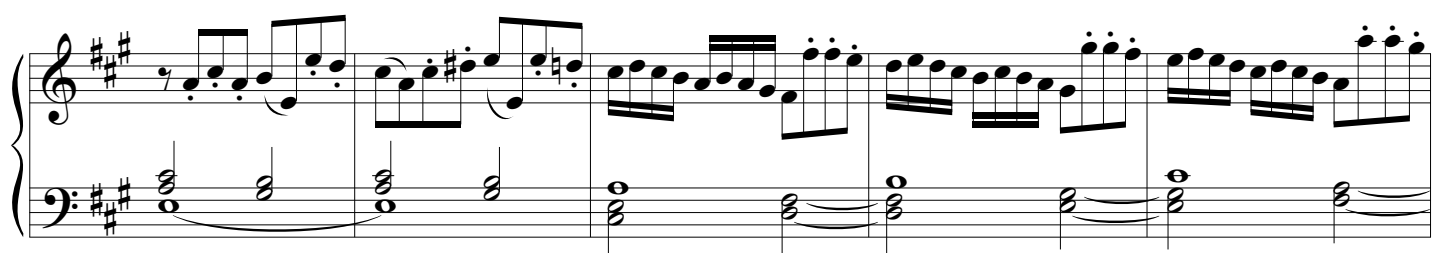
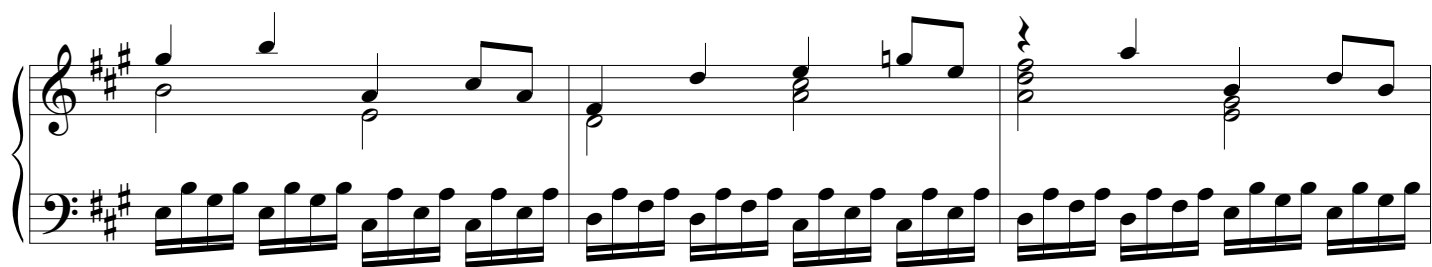
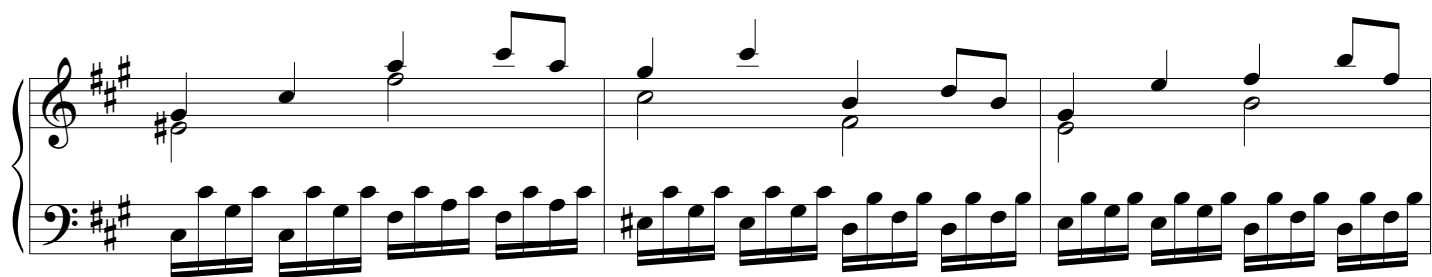
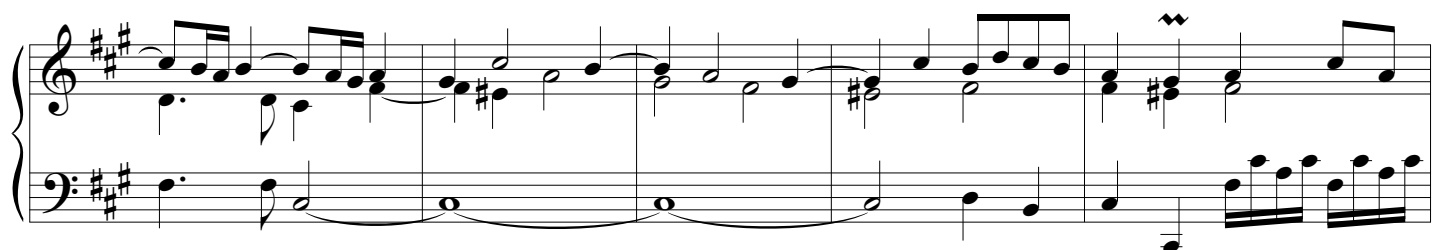
Grave

The 'Grave' section is written for organ or harpsichord in A major (three sharps) and common time. It begins with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The first system shows the right hand with a series of chords and a melodic line, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The second system continues with more complex chordal textures and a more active right hand. The third system features a prominent melodic line in the right hand with a fermata, and the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.

Fuga: Allegro con spirito

The 'Fuga' section is marked 'Allegro con spirito'. It begins with a *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) instruction, followed by a *f* (forte) dynamic. The first system shows the right hand with a complex, rapid melodic line, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The second system continues with the right hand's melodic line, which is more active and features a fermata. The third system shows the right hand with a complex, rapid melodic line, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The fourth system continues with the right hand's melodic line, which is more active and features a fermata.





+ Pedals