SOME ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH ORGAN SYMPHONY, CULMINATING IN THE
SYMPHONIE-PASSION OF MARCEL DUPRÉ, TOGETHER WITH THREE
RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS OF D. BUXTHEUDE,
J. S. BACH, N. DELLO JOIO, P. HINDEMITH,
S. KARG-ELERT, J. LANGLAIS, W. LATHAM,
P. LISZT, N. LOCKWOOD, F. MARTIN,
D. PINKHAM, L. SOWERBY,
AND L. VIERNE

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

By

Patricia June Kean, B. M., M. M.
Denton, Texas
August, 1973

The lecture recital was given July 10, 1973. The Symphonie-Passion by Marcel Dupré was performed following a lecture on various factors that influenced the development of the organ symphony in France.

In addition to the lecture recital, three other public recitals were performed, including solo compositions for the organ and three chamber works for organ and instruments.

The first solo recital, including works of J. S. Bach, P. Hindemith, L. Sowerby, and L. Vierne, was performed on June 4, 1969.

On April 17, 1970 the second solo recital was performed. Compositions by J. S. Bach, D. Buxtehude, M. Dupré, N. Dello Joio, S. Karg-Elert, and J. Langlais were included in the program.
On January 25, 1971, a program of organ chamber works by N. Lockwood, D. Pinkham, and F. Martin, as well as solo works by F. Liszt, W. Latham, and Marcel Dupré, was performed. The four programs were recorded on magnetic tape and are filed with the written version of the lecture as a part of the dissertation.
Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation are on deposit in the North Texas State University Library.
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NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

JUNE KEAN

in

Graduate Organ Recital

Wednesday, June 4, 1969    8:15 p.m.    Main Auditorium
PROGRAM

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

Sonate I
Massig schnell
Sehr langsam
Phantasie; frei
Ruhig bewegt

Paul Hindemith proved to be one of the most influential forces in contemporary music as performer, composer, and teacher. He toured Europe as a concert artist and revived much of the literature for the baroque instrument, viola d' amore. He first came to America in 1937, and in 1940 he became professor of composition at Yale University.

Hindemith has composed music in every form and for virtually every instrument. He has written important solo compositions for instruments usually neglected by other composers, such as the trombone, tuba, and bassoon, as well as for the usual solo instruments.

The only works for organ by the composer are three sonatas and a concerto. These are skillfully written with linear treatment and terraced dynamics. Usually the harmonic rhythm does not change rapidly, and Hindemith avoids the top register of the organ. Contrasting tone colors are implied, and there is great rhythmic drive in the unfolding of themes.

The choice of registration is left to the performer, as only one indication is given concerning registration in this sonata, this being a suggested four-foot solo stop in the right hand in the last movement.

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Sonata IV
Adagio; Vivace
Andante
Un poco Allegro

The Trio Sonatas were most likely written sometime between 1723 and 1727 in Leipzig. It is believed that they were intended for Bach's son and pupil, Friedemann. Forkel, Bach's first biographer, who was also acquainted with his sons, states that Friedemann owed his finished organ technique to these sonatas. Today the sonatas are considered indispensable for every organist in developing clarity of line and touch.

The sonata follows the Italian concerto form of three movements—a fast opening movement, a slower, lyrical middle section, and a faster closing movement.

J. S. Bach

Passacaglia and Fugue

Originally, Passacaglia was the name of a Spanish dance in three-four time (Passacalle, meaning literally "passing along the street"). In music the term came to mean a work built over a repeated bass theme.

It is believed that the Passacaglia and Fugue was written for the pedal harpsichord, but the usual medium of performance today is the organ. The opening theme was not original with Bach, but was borrowed from the Trio en Passacaille by the French composer André Raison.

The passacaglia theme is eight measures in length, first presented in the pedal alone, and is followed by twenty variations above it. The first four measures of the theme are used for the fugue subject. This masterful fugue is a fitting climax to the entire work.

INTERMISSION
Louis Vierne ............ Allegro Vivace (from first Symphony)
1870-1937

Andantino from Suite No. i

Louis Vierne inherited the French tradition, having studied with Franck and Widor at the Paris Conservatoire. He continued the development of the symphonic or concert style of writing for the organ.

The French organ-builder, Cavaillé-Coll, enriched the classical organ with stops of orchestral color, and this had its effect on the French composers of organ music in the last half of the nineteenth century. Vierne was certainly inspired by the Cavaillé-Coll organ of the Notre Dame Cathedral over which he presided.

He wrote six symphonies, which are long, and the movements are most frequently played separately today. From the First Symphony comes the Allegro Vivace with the characteristics of a scherzo. The tuneful middle section of the three-part form is canonie and an effective contrast to the first part.

Vierne wrote about sixty smaller pieces contained in suites. The Andantino appears in the Pièces de Fantaisie, Suite No. 1. In his later works Vierne came under the influence of Impressionism, and the Andantino reflects this, with its use of augmented chords, ninth chords, parallelisms and color in registration. The first theme is heard five times, each varied with change of harmony or mode.

Romantic and reflective in mood, the Andantino reveals the composer's mastery of lyrical music.

Leo Sowerby ............ Fast and Sinister (from Symphony in G)
(1895-1968)

The American composer, Leo Sowerby had a varied musical background as an army bandmaster in World War I, concert pianist, organist, and choirmaster.

He spent many years in Chicago as church organist and head of the composition department of the American Conservatory of Music; and later, he served as Director of the College for Church Musicians at National Cathedral in Washington D.C.

Fast and Sinister is an exciting, virtuoso movement in five-four meter. It shows jazz influence in its rhythmic groupings and harmony where it often oscillates between the use of major and minor third of the triad, idiomatic of the "blues" effect. The work abounds in 9th and 13th chords in open spacing, octave passages and pedal runs.

Sowerby understood the resources of the organ and used them effectively in this composition.

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts
NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

JUNE KEAN

in

Graduate Organ Recital

Friday, April 17, 1970  8:15 p.m.  Main Auditorium

PROGRAM

Fête .......................................................... Jean Langlais
(1907-)

Legend, Op. 141, No. 1 .............................. Sigfrid Karg-Elert
(1877-1933)

Prelude and Fugue in B Minor, B.W.V. 544 .............. J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

INTERMISSION

Prelude and Fugue in G Minor (Hedar II, 24)  Dietrich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

Laudation ................................................. Norman Dello Joio
(1913-)

Variations sur un Noël ................................. Marcel Dupré
(1886-)

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts
NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
presents

JUNE KEAN

in a

Graduate Organ Recital

Monday, January 25, 1971
8:15 p.m.
Main Auditorium

PROGRAM

Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H .................. Franz Liszt

Sonata da Chiesa for Flute and Organ ............. Frank Martin
  I. Andante -- II. Allegretto alla Francese -- III. Adagio

Improvisation on “Salve Festa Dies” .............. William Latham

Prelude and Fugue in G Minor .................. Marcel Dupré

INTERMISSION

Concertante for Organ, Celesta and Percussion .... Daniel Pinkham
  I. Aria -- II. Scherzo -- III. Elegy

Concerto for Organ and Brasses ................. Normand Lockwood
  I. Andante con moto -- II. Larghetto -- III. Allegro

Assisted by:

Carol Farrar, Flute
Donald Dame, celesta
Lynn Glassock, percussion
Larry Ault, percussion
David Lowry, conductor

Max Morley, trumpet
Sam Trimble, trumpet
Dennis Plank, trombone
Jack Cobb, trombone

This program is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.
NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESENTS
JUNE KEAN, ORGANIST
IN A
LECTURE RECITAL
TUESDAY, 10 JULY 1973
8:15 P.M.
MAIN AUDITORIUM

SOME ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH ORGAN SYMPHONY
CULMINATING IN THE SYMPHONIE – PASSION OF MARCEL DUPRÉ

SYMPHONIE – PASSION, OPUS 23  MARCEL DUPRÉ (1886-1971)
I LE MONDE DANS L'ATTENTE DU SAUVEUR
II NATIVITÉ
III CRUCIFIXION
IV RÉSURRECTION

PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS
SOME ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH ORGAN SYMPHONY,
CULMINATING IN THE SYMPHONIE-
PASSION OF MARCEL DUPRÉ

Introduction

The organ has primarily been an instrument used in the church, and for this reason its music has been largely functional. Traditionally the organ has accompanied the choir and the soloists, and introduced the hymns that were to be sung by the congregation. The organ accompanied the singing of hymns, and was played at the time of communion and offertory, and during processionals.

In earlier times there were organ recitals given at festive occasions, such as during Advent or on other high holy days, or even daily in the larger churches. There were competitions and "curious duels between organists of which the public was so fond (in 1588, Titelouze against Toussaint Lefebvre, for the position of organist in the cathedral of Rouen; in 1608, Frescobaldi against the Chevalier Costantini, etc.), sometimes involving hundreds of choristers and instrumentalists."¹

There were also organs in the courts and in some private homes. Primarily, however, the organ has been a church instrument, and for this reason organ music has been predominantly geared to the church's needs.

During the nineteenth century the organ continued to develop as a concert instrument, and several factors contributed to this development. One factor was the change in design from the classical French organ to the romantic symphonic instrument.

Another factor in this period was that of emphasis on the colossal and grandiose. Just as the symphony orchestra grew in size from the classic orchestra of about twenty or thirty players, at times attaining epic proportions with such composers as Berlioz and Mahler, so the organ also was enlarged as to the number of speaking stops and the compass of the manuals and pedals. In the nineteenth century the organ at St. Sulpice in Paris had 5 manuals and 100 speaking stops; the great Wanamaker organ of Philadelphia eventually had 451 stops.

A third influence on the development of organs and organ music was the increasing popularity of the symphony orchestra, which affected keyboard players. Pianists made arrangements of symphonies and believed these transcriptions appropriate to keyboard instruments. It was in France, particularly, that the concept of the organ symphony emerged as a composition in three or more movements using contrasting
motives and exploiting the orchestral possibilities of the organ.

The term "symphonic" in relation to organ music refers to compositions exploiting the tonal color of the instrument and calling for many registrational changes. In its formal construction the organ symphony emphasizes thematic development similar to its orchestral counterpart, but it is not necessarily in sonata-allegro form. Charles-Marie Widor, the first composer to entitle his organ works as "symphonies," rarely used the sonata-allegro form, whereas Vierne and Dupre employed this form.

In the organ symphony homophonic textures prevail, but composers never abandoned fully the polyphonic influence, which is so idiomatic to the organ, continuing to write fugal and canonic sections.

During the last half of the eighteenth century the quality of organ music declined, shifting from serious to lighter types of music. French organ music in the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century reflected the secular spirit in France, and music that was used during Mass was not necessarily liturgical. Patriotic marches, dances, imitations of storms, birds, bells, and descriptive pieces, such as The Fall of Jericho, were very popular and were played in the church. Michel Corrette (1709-1795)
wrote descriptive pieces, including *Enchanted Lovers*, *April Showers*, *Seven League Boots*, and *Stars*.

This same composer explained how to make thunder and a storm by using the trumpet and bombarde stops and placing a board across the lower octave of the pedals.

In the turmoil of 1789 and the years following, many organs were unused or dismantled. The churches were used for Temples of Reason, while the organists played hymns of liberty, the *Marseillaise* or trivialities.

An account of 1793 describes the following occurrence to the organist of Notre Dame, Nicolas Sejan:

... The revolutionists held high carnival in the church of Notre Dame; a dancer from the opera, one Demoiselle Candeille, was installed upon the altar as the Goddess of Reason, while Laharpe made an address abolishing all religion. ... To wind up the orgies a ball was given, and Sejan was compelled to play dance music upon the great organ, while the mob danced and howled popular songs.²

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French Organ Music in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century

Organ music in France perhaps reached its lowest ebb at this time. Superficial, trite compositions were the norm. However, several organists seem to have risen above their contemporaries. One such composer is Alexandre Boëly (1785-1858). Although Boëly's compositions are not popular

today, through his teaching and excellence of purpose he has earned a respectable place in music history. Boëly has been described as follows:

[He is] a most definite link between two periods in the history of the organ— that of the older Classical School and that of the Romantic School. But his works are, with the exception of a few items, almost unknown, having never been published in their entirety.  

Boëly's greatest attributes were his high standards in teaching, and seriousness of purpose. Most important were his efforts to revive interest in the works of J. S. Bach. Inspired by the works of Frescobaldi, Bach, and Clementi, Boely endeavored to "fuse organ and piano writing." This "fusing of organ and piano writing" was, in the hands of the French composers, a predominant factor in the organ symphony.

Boely composed in the older forms, such as the suite, toccatas, and preludes and fugues. He also wrote preludes on Gregorian themes, treating them "with the full and sonorous harmony of J. S. Bach, whose essence he . . . assimilated to an extraordinary degree."  

Boëly invented new plainchants, placing the melodies in the upper voice and harmonizing them after the manner of

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4Ibid., 338.

5Ibid., 339.
Bach. This method had not been used previously in France. So successfully did he imitate J. S. Bach that Camille Saint-Saëns called him "the French Bach."

Apparently Boëly had no great fund of invention as the works in which he is either imitating or treating other composers' themes show him so much at his best.6

The pedal piano enjoyed a brief popularity during the nineteenth century. From 1817 Boëly wrote for the new pedal piano, an instrument which also attracted Schumann and Alkan. Concerning Boëly the following has been said:

He was then perhaps the only Frenchman to own an example of the instrument. Boëly gave the pedal part, in the playing of which he excelled, an importance and a fullness theretofore unknown in the French School. He transcribed these pieces for the organ himself, intending them as much for one instrument as for the other.7

Many of Boëly's earliest works, like those of his French predecessors, had an optional pedal part, or perhaps no pedal part. The organs in France at that time permitted a legato bass only in slow tempo.

In France Boëly was the first to urge the construction of "German-style" pedal-keyboards, and set an example when he had the pedal-keyboard of the organ of St. Germain-l'Auxerrois rebuilt and completed.8

It would thus appear that Boëly made great contributions to the development of French organ music in aspects other

7Gastoué, op. cit., p. 338.
than that of his actual musical works, including the incorporation of the German-style pedalboard, increased use of the pedal, performance of Bach's works, and his standards of teaching.

Two other significant personalities in the development of French organ music are Louis J. Lefébure-Wély (1817-1869) and Antoine Édouard Batiste (1820-1876). Both were educated at the Paris Conservatory, as was Boely.

The virtuoso Lefébure-Wély composed, in addition to his organ works, piano pieces, orchestral symphonies, masses, chamber music, and other works. Most of his published organ pieces are of a superficial type, not possessing enduring musical qualities. Judging from contemporary accounts, however, his improvisations were outstanding.

One type of piece that was very popular during the nineteenth century was the representation on the organ of a thunderstorm. Many composers wrote or improvised such compositions, including Lefébure-Wély and Batiste. The storm of the latter organist is described as follows:

His is rather the better of two particularly bad specimens of a bad form. He begins to call for the "Thunder pedal," at the twelfth bar, and gives us a rumble with the final pp chord, so the meteorological interest is well maintained.

Both Lefébure-Wély and Batiste are characterized as having written music with trivial rhythms, repeated chords, figurations that are commonplace, and uninteresting harmony.

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Such was the degradation of the organ in France over a century. Not until the middle of the nineteenth century did the organ regain some of its integrity through the unappreciated efforts of Boëly and later through the compositions of men such as Franck and Saint-Saëns.10

Developments in Organ Design

The romantic, symphonic style of writing and playing could not have developed had there not been changes in the design of the organ. Aristide Cavallé-Coll (1811–1899) is given credit for revolutionizing organ building in France and creating an instrument that inspired this symphonic school of organ composers.

After the 1830 Revolution in France it was decided to rebuild the organ at the Abbey of St. Denis. Aristide Cavallé-Coll received the contract for its rebuilding; and this organ, completed in 1841, was acclaimed as his early masterpiece. Napoleon III, desiring favor with the church, ordered the cathedral organs in France to be rebuilt, suggesting Cavallé-Coll as the builder. He received a government contract to rebuild many of these organs, thereby creating instruments for a new romantic symphonic literature for the organ.

The symphony orchestra was the dominating force in music of the romantic period, and had its influence on the

development of the organ. Organ builders began to emulate the colors of the orchestra, as well as its ability to produce a gradual crescendo and diminuendo. Although invented a century before, the swell pedal was included in more organs for this effect.

Aristide Cavaille-Coll was probably the greatest of the French organ builders. His changes were many, and affected organ building in every country.

In the organ at St. Denis he used tracker-pneumatic action for the first time. The Barker pneumatic levers permitted the use of increased wind pressures necessary for the harmonic and reed pipes that he built. He at times varied the wind-pressures in different parts of the compass of each stop.

Cavaille-Coll used the divided wind-chests, each division of the organ then having the foundation pipes on one wind-chest and the reed and the mixture pipes placed on the second wind-chest. This arrangement allowed the reeds to be at higher wind pressures, and thus more powerful in tone.

The manual compass was extended from about forty-eight notes to sixty notes, eventually. Cavaille-Coll also invented the pédales d'accouplement, a method of coupling operated by the foot, which supplanted the older method of pulling the whole keyboard forward. Intermanual couplers
were used, and often sub-octave and super-octave couplers were added.

The récit was enclosed and the number of stops on that division increased. In 1875 the positif\(^\text{11}\) was enclosed, providing a second expressive division.

Most important were the reed choruses, sixteen, eight, and four feet on each manual and pedal. Reeds were often placed *en chamade*, that is, horizontally, after the Spanish custom.

Cavaille-Coll incorporated more orchestral stops, such as the salicional, viole, oboe, bassoon and clarinet in the organ. He improved other stops, including the metal flute *harmonique*. The septième, the seventh harmonic of the thirty-two-foot fundamental, was apparently first included by Cavaille-Coll as a part of the pedal.

There were many changes made in creating the symphonic type of organ, but none was more significant than the new and enlarged pedal department which emerged. The classical French pedal had included only one or two open flutes and a trompette at eight feet, with no sixteen-foot stop present. The pedal of the classical French organ was used to double notes of the bass of the left hand or to play the *cantus firmus*; at times the pedal was used in short trios.

\(^{11}\)The positif was first enclosed on the organ in the Palace of Industry at Amsterdam.
Generally, however, the left hand played the bass harmony, the sixteen-foot sound appearing in the pedal only through coupling down a manual division to the pedal.

Cavaille-Coll enlarged the pedal division to include flues at sixteen and thirty-two feet on some organs. Reeds were also present at sixteen, eight, and four feet.

This type of organ, which utilized stops of imitative orchestral color, blazing reed choruses on every manual and pedal, an expressive swell division and lighter action of the manuals, allowing facility and ease in performance, became known as the romantic symphonic organ.

The organs of Cavaille-Coll inaugurated a school of symphonic organ playing and composition marked at the outset by the works of Cesar Franck, Camille Saint-Saëns and followed by Charles-Marie Widor, Alexandre Guilmant, Louis Vierne, Eugène Gigout, Théodore Dubois and others.12

The French Organ Symphony

With the development of the Cavaille-Coll organ there was now an instrument on which to perform the organ symphony. It was César Franck who first gave an organ piece symphonic proportions, with the Grand Pièce Symphonique,13 written in 1860-62.


13The Grand Pièce Symphonique was dedicated to C. V. Alkan, who had previously written a Symphonie for piano, presumably the first keyboard piece to be entitled "symphony."
César Franck (1822-1890), a Belgian by birth but French by education and adoption, was perhaps the greatest organ composer of the French school in the nineteenth century. Succeeding Benoist in 1872 as organ professor at the Paris Conservatory, he exerted a great influence on the development of organ music through his musical works and his impact on students. His organ compositions were written with the Cavaille-Coll organ at Ste. Clotilde in mind.

The Grand Pièce Symphonique had an important place in the development of the organ symphony, as is evident in Vincent d'Indy's comment:

In the Grande Pièce Symphonique, we find ourselves confronted, for the first time... with a true sonata or rather a symphony, since it is the custom to describe in this way a sonata coloured by various timbres of an organ by Cavaille-Coll. This is the first of all those organ symphonies which have since enriched modern music... His Grande Pièce, in F sharp minor, is really a symphony in three movements, and displays all the characteristics of this form of composition: the first movement is built on two ideas in sonata-form, preceded by an introduction which reappears in the course of the development; the Andante is in Lied-form, the second section of which, by reason of its rapid tempo, may be regarded as taking the place of a Scherzo; ... the Finale is led up to by a recapitulation of the chief ideas which have been exposed... The whole work is connected by one leading idea.14

In Franck's organ works the pedal is employed to a greater degree than in music of his predecessors; however,

in many of them the pedal is not independent but merely doubles the bass of the left hand. Virtuosity in writing for the pedals characterizes the later symphonies by other composer, but it is not a part of Franck's style of writing. His music, however, abounds in rich harmonies, chromaticism, canonic writing, and pedal points, which were features of the later symphonies.

Another Belgian significant in the development of the French symphony was Jacques Lemmens, who has received the most credit for laying the foundation of modern organ playing. In 1839 Lemmens (1823-1881) entered the Brussels Conservatory, which he attended briefly. Later, at government expense, he was sent to Breslau, where he studied organ under Adolph Hesse (1808-1863). Hesse traced his musical lineage back to J. S. Bach, himself, through his teacher, Johann C. H. Rinck (1770-1846), who had studied under one of Bach's last students, J. C. Kittel. Thus both Hesse and Lemmens claimed to be heirs to the organ traditions of J. S. Bach.

In 1845 Lemmens became organ professor at Brussels where many students, including Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911) and Charles-Marie Widor (1845-1937), were attracted to his teaching.

His influence was far-reaching, for not only had he a large number of brilliant pupils, . . . but his "Organ School" was officially used at the
conservatories at Brussels, Paris, Madrid, and other centers, besides being translated and adapted to English organs.\footnote{15}

A significant feature present in the organ symphony was the element of virtuosity, which was present in Lemmens' playing. Virtuosity on the organ includes an understanding of the instrument and technical facility, including the technic of the manuals and pedals. In 1852, when Jacques Lemmens played in Paris, the music world was astounded by his virtuoso playing of the pedals, which included double octaves, rapid scale passages, and trills.

It was maintained that no one in Belgium knew pedal technic until Lemmens taught it. He was also credited with teaching finger substitution, which was supposedly unknown at that time.\footnote{16} Through Lemmens' teaching, the heritage of German organ technic, including that of the pedal, became a part of the French style of organ playing.

One of Lemmens' pupils, Felix Alexandre Guilmant, was a noted recitalist, and although his works are omitted from modern recital repertoire, he contributed much to the development of the organ symphony. He was renowned as a teacher of such outstanding organists as Marcel Dupré, Louis Vierne, Joseph Bonnet and Nadia Boulanger. Guilmant

\footnote{15}Grace, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

\footnote{16}Camil Van Hulse, "Jaak Lemmens, Who Founded the Belgian School of Playing," The Diapason, 46 (February, 1955), 4.
was organist of La Trinité, Paris, for thirty years, and in 1896 he was appointed organ professor at the Paris Conservatory.

Among Guilmant's organ pieces are eight organ sonatas, the first of which was originally a symphony for organ and orchestra. Some of the movements are in sonata-allegro form; others are in song form or are freely developed.

It is in the field of registration of stops that color on the organ is achieved, and in this vein Guilmant demonstrated his mastery. "A Colorist of the first water" is how Vierne described him. 17

As mentioned earlier, the first composer to entitle an organ solo as "symphony" was Charles-Marie Widor, a student of Fétis and Lemmens, who wrote ten organ symphonies and one symphony for organ and orchestra.

Widor was also acclaimed as a fine organist and teacher, succeeding Franck as organ professor at the Conservatory in 1890. He raised the level of organ performance, insisting upon clarity and a sound organ technic. Evidently Widor's methods of playing were not widely known in France at that time. Vierne described Widor's principles and methods of teaching a particular student in the class:

Widor made him begin each measure twenty times over, explaining everything with pitiless logic,

passing to the next one only after an absolutely perfect rendition "to the hair," as one would say nowadays. Firm legato in all the parts, precise articulation of repeated notes, liaison of common tones, punctuation, respiration, phrasing, shading in levels, all were dissected, commented upon, justified with marvelous clarity.

We were flabbergasted . . . for we saw clearly that we were completely ignorant of all these technical details, relying upon luck to guide us.18

Widor revealed the source of his principles of organ technic when he explained why he had agreed to accept the organ post at the Conservatory upon Franck's death:

I finally decided to do it with the determination to restore organistic performance in general, and in particular to revive the authentic tradition in the interpretation of the works of Bach. It was bequeathed to me by my teacher, Lemmens, who had it from Hesse of Breslau, who had received it from Forkel, pupil and biographer of the old cantor.19

Through Widor's playing and teaching, the basis was laid for the romantic symphonic style of organ playing, as Vierne testified:

The great reform brought by Widor to organ instruction dealt especially with performance. That reform . . . was to give birth in our country to the most brilliant school of organists in the world.20

19 Ibid., 10.
20 Ibid., 10.
In his symphonies, written between 1876 and 1900, Widor exploited the tonal resources of the organ, contrasting sonorities and changing manuals for dramatic effect. These compositions are more in the form of a suite, employing such forms as variations, marches, intermezzos, scherzos, a chorale, pastorales, and toccatas. A toccata is included in most of the symphonies, often as the closing movement. The number of movements in the symphonies ranges from four to seven movements, five or six movements being the norm.

In the treatment of themes, Widor often depends upon figuration and harmonic changes rather than true development of the subjects, especially in his earlier symphonies. Frequently the movements do not have a second subject. The works are symphonic in scope and style in their use of contrasted motives, orchestral resources of the organ, and their demand for brilliant technic from the performer.

Of the first four symphonies that comprise Op. 13, the fourth is perhaps the best-written and most popular of the set. The second group of four symphonies, Op. 42, contains music of greater maturity and musical inventiveness. The movements of these symphonies are considered to contain Widor's finest organ music, and they are often played separately, due to the greater length of the works.

Widor's style includes the use of pedal point and inverted pedal point, double pedalling, and staccato touch. His harmonies were traditional, lacking the dissonance of

The outstanding organ symphonists of the twentieth century are Louis Vierne and Marcel Dupré. Vierne (1870-1937) in his six symphonies for organ was influenced musically by his teachers Franck and Widor, but his music is far more chromatic and his harmonies are richer than those of his predecessors. The symphonies of this composer are progressively more chromatic; and, especially in the third and later symphonies is this chromaticism evident. Several sections in his fifth and sixth symphonies are so dissonant that they approach non-tonality. In contrast, Widor had written melodies that were more diatonic, harmonizing them in a chromatic manner. Vierne's writing demonstrates a mastery of counterpoint, and, like Franck, he was fond of writing short canons.

The cyclic idea, in which a theme is used in several movements of a work, had been employed by orchestral composers of the romantic period. This device was also used by Vierne in his organ symphonies. Unlike Widor, he showed a predilection for sonata-allegro form, which he used in one or more movements of all the symphonies.

Other structures used in Vierne's symphonies are the passacaglia, rondo, variation, fugue, sonatina, three-part,
four-part, and free forms, Vierne's compositions demonstrate a solidity of design and mastery of form.

The six organ symphonies of Vierne bring to the organ repertory both the classic sonata-allegro form and the romantic spirit and color of the 19th century orchestral symphony. . . . In all the French symphonic organ literature, Vierne's six organ symphonies most successfully bring the 19th-century symphonic ideal over to the medium of the organ.21

The Role of Improvisation

All the composers of the organ symphonies were adept at improvisation, which has been defined as "the art of performing music spontaneously, without the aid of manuscript, sketches, or memory."22 For centuries organists have been expected to be able to improvise in the course of a church service, and in the sixteenth century the organist was required to extemporize in fugal style to receive an appointment.

The training of organists at the Paris Conservatory emphasized the art of improvisation as an essential part of its curriculum.

Five of the six weekly hours of Franck's organ classes were devoted to improvisation, for Franck assumed that his pupils already had received considerable instruction in organ technique.23

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23 Long, op. cit., 23.
The Paris Conservatory, which has educated many French organists, requires examination in performance and in improvisation for the First Prize in organ.

Marcel Dupré, himself a student and later a professor at the institution, declared:

One could say that the program of organ competitions fixed by César Franck has hardly changed at all.

Here is the order of the examinations:

1) On a prescribed Gregorian theme, improvisation of a contrapuntal chorale in the manner of the chorale preludes of Bach.

2) Improvisation of a strict four-voiced fugue on a prescribed subject. The candidate works out the counter-subject in a few moments of thought and, in the course of the fugue, retains it for each entrance of the subject.

3) So-called "free" improvisation in the form of an Andante movement of a sonata with center development section. The term "free" indicates the harmonic idiom is less strictly contrapuntal than for the fugue.24

In addition to the improvisations, the candidates were required to play a major work of the student's choice and a composition written especially for the competition.

In 1916 the eminent French composer and organist Camille Saint-Saëns gave his views on the importance of improvisation:

Formerly, improvisation was the basis of the organist's talent; his virtuosity was slight—music written for organ with *concertante* pedal was beyond his powers. As a compensation, we had improvisations of the highest order. Little by little our organists have bent themselves to acquire the virtuosity which they lacked, and the Fugue with obligato pedal has become familiar to them; but at the same time, under the influence of the German school, improvisation has fallen into disrepute. It is impossible for me not to deplore this needless decadence. Without speaking of the monotony which results from it—for all organists have very nearly the same repertory—it is improvisation alone which permits one to employ all the resources of a large instrument, and to adapt one's self to the infinite variety of organs; only improvisation can follow the service perfectly, the pieces written for this purpose being almost always too short or too slow. Finally, the practice of improvisation develops faculties of invention which, without it, would have remained latent. I have just spoken of Lefébure-Wély, whose published works for organ possess such scant interest, and who was a marvelous improviser. . . . Necessity, and the inspiring character of the instrument, sometimes accomplish what meditation is unable to achieve. . . .

The most beautiful things are beautiful only in their place. And so, how can a fugue or a toccata by Johann Sebastian Bach make its way into an offertory? They are concert pieces which bear no relation whatsoever to a Mass, and which inspire neither a meditative nor a prayerful mood; . . . A virtuoso hardened to every difficulty, an ingenious improviser—such should the perfect organist be. It is to form such organists that they are laboring in the organ class at the Conservatory of Paris, where execution and improvisation receive an equal meed of honor.25

M. Duppé

Virtuosity was a significant element present in the French organ school of the romantic period. A virtuoso is

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defined as "a person who has acquired exceptional mastery in the playing of some musical instrument or in the use of the human voice for singing." There has always been present in the realm of music a degree of virtuosity; however, the nineteenth century was a time when technical proficiency was emphasized and cultivated.

An outstanding virtuoso organ recitalist was Marcel Dupré (1886-1971). His technic was phenomenal, and his pupil Olivier Messiaen once described Dupré as "the modern Liszt."

Dupré was the third generation of a family of Rouen musicians. His grandfather, Aimable Dupré, was an organist and friend of Cavaille-Coll; his father, also, was an organist, and a pupil of Guilmant.

When Dupré was seven years old his father began teaching him music, and he devoted one full hour each day to his son's lessons. Virtually every outstanding organist has been proficient on the piano as well, and Dupré was no exception. He claimed that he had been thoroughly grounded in piano technic. As a boy, less than one-third of his practice hours were given to the organ, for he himself asserted that the skill of the organist depends upon his skill as a pianist. "Even the great pedal technic that was so admired here in the United States is derived from principles of piano technic."26

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One of Dupré's piano teachers blamed him in his youth of 'depriving the world of its finest pianist' by dedicating himself to the organ.27

At the Paris Conservatory, where he studied with Guilmant and Widor, he won first prizes for piano, organ, fugue, and composition. Dupré had excellent musical instruction, having studied with Guilmant for ten years and with Widor for eight years. He was also a pupil of Vierne and his assistant at Notre Dame.

He began to concertize in 1920, his tours taking him all over the world, including England, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Holland, Germany, and North America. His memory was phenomenal, and he played all his recitals without music. In 1920, at the age of thirty-four, Dupré performed an unprecedented feat at the Paris Conservatory—he performed in a series of ten recitals the entire organ works of Bach, over 200 compositions, by memory.

On January 31, 1958, at the age of seventy-two, he played his 2,000th recital, and this was not his final performance. In addition to recitals he played regularly at his organ post at St. Sulpice. No doubt Dupré concertized more than any other organist in history.

Dupré in 1926 was appointed professor of organ at the Paris Conservatory, succeeding Eugene Gigout. He became director of the Conservatory in 1954.

27 Ibid., p. 1.
A noted interpreter of Bach, Dupré edited his complete works; in addition he wrote an organ method book and a treatise on improvisation. He wrote many significant works for organ, some of them originating as improvisations.

Although Dupré's organ recitals consisted of repertoire of the masters, his tour de force was improvisation on themes.

Most of his organ works are products of original improvisations (in which he is unexcelled in modern times for spontaneity and perfection of contrapuntal, fugal and formal development.28

His extemporizations were masterful, and one of his pupils eulogized:

What can one say about Marcel Dupré, improvisateur, to those who did not hear him improvise in this country between 1921 and 1950? . . . And what can one say about the teacher who memorized his pupils' improvisations and then played them back with improvements, while carrying on a rapid discussion of the pupil's work?29

When at a concert in Fontainebleau Dupré was given three themes, one of which he was to choose as the basis for a prelude and double fugue, he astounded the audience. He extemporized a triple fugue with choral, with inversion of quadruple counterpoint in the final section.30

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29 Watters, op. cit., p. 2.
30 Watters, op. cit., p. 2.
When Dupré improvised at St. Sulpice his postludes were frequently in the form of a five-voice double fugue. Undoubtedly, he was unsurpassed as an improviser.

As a feature of many of his concerts, Dupré improvised a major composition. The Symphonie-Passion was first improvised at the Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia on December 8, 1921. Dupré used all six of the themes submitted to him by musicians. After the concert he went to his hotel room, where he made a few notes on his improvisation, writing it out fully at a much later date. He played it in its final written version on October 9, 1924.

The Symphonie-Passion

The Symphonie-Passion, in four movements, depicts the life of Christ, each movement representing an important event. Marcel Dupré musically portrays this drama effectively, capturing the prevailing mood of the titles. Although each section is based on a plainsong melody, this composition is programmatic rather than liturgical.

The first movement, Le Monde dans l'attente du Sauveur (The World Awaiting the Saviour), is in the form ABA with coda. The composer, in depicting the restlessness and agitation of the world awaiting redemption, uses irregular and frequent changes of meter. The most frequently used meters are 5/8 and 7/8. The writing is pianistic, with octave doublings in manual and pedal, and calling for wide
stretches for the hands, including intervals up to a tenth. The principal compositional technics of this section include repetition of notes and measures, and the use of sequential development.

At *Plus lent*, the second or B section appears, based on the plainsong *Christe redemptor omnium*. The *cantus firmus*, at first stated simply, is developed by imitation and sequence, using double pedals. After a transitory passage, the A section reappears in altered form.

The coda includes the *cantus firmus*, *Christe redemptor omnium*.

The second movement, entitled *Nativité*, portrays in three sections the shepherds, the journey of the wisemen, and the adoration of Christ. Through the composer's skillful registration and utilization of melody, harmonization, texture, and color, the *programme* of *Nativité* is quite evident.

The form is ABC, or three-part, with introduction and coda. Dupré's registration indicates an oboe and a flute solo for the shepherds' melody in the first section. At *Tempo di marcia moderato*, the second section begins with an octave pedal point; *Adeste fidelis* is the *cantus firmus* for the third section, the adoration of Christ.

Beginning simply with an octave melody over an *ostinato bass*, the *Crucifixion*, in the form of a chaconne,
builds in intensity to full organ. A syncopated rhythm is used as a ground bass, depicting the dragging steps of Jesus as he staggers beneath the cross. Against the ostinato there is a melody which is at times altered, extended, or contracted in length.

At the end of the Crucifixion the emphasis shifts to Mary's grief, with the Stabat mater as cantus firmus.

The fourth movement depicts the triumph of the resurrection. The composition begins pianissimo in the lower and middle register of the organ, gradually building to a fortissimo. The cantus firmus, Adoro te devote, first appearing in the pedal, is present in complete form, or almost completely, nine times, while fragments of the theme appear throughout the composition, in augmentation, diminution, or altering of intervals. Stretto between the two outer voices is a frequent device used by Dupré.

Résurrection is in three sections with coda. In both the first, and third sections the Adoro te devote theme is clearly recognizable. The middle section provides a contrast, as it is chordal, chromatic and highly dissonant, having no full statement of the plainsong melody.

The coda is reminiscent of the closing of the first movement of the symphony, with full chords and registered for full organ.

Dupré's utilization of plainchant in this work shows the influence of Widor's last two symphonies, which are
also based on Gregorian chant. Like Vierne, the composer evidences more harmonic interest, employing chromaticism and dissonance, yet maintaining tonality. In this symphony there is more rhythmic flexibility and interest, especially in the first movement, than in most organ symphonies of the nineteenth century.

There is a degree of restraint in this symphony, however, due to its religious association, in that there is no scherzo, the movements being dependent upon the programme for development.

The *Symphonie Passion*, by Marcel Dupré, graphically represents the culmination of an important development in French organ music, the organ symphony.
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