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The Influence of Plainchant on French Organ Music after the Revolution

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music

Dublin Institute of Technology
Conservatory of Music and Drama

Supervisor: Dr David Mooney
Conservatory of Music and Drama

August 2013

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Abstract

The period after the 1789 French Revolution was one of turbulence, musically, socially, culturally and politically. The violence against both people and property meant that the nineteenth century was a time of renewal and regrowth. At all times this was uncertain as numerous political upheavals took place as the French attempted to define their future direction.

As with all aspects of culture, organ music experienced a slow regrowth over the course of the long nineteenth century, perhaps being at a particular disadvantage due to its role in the church, an institution which also went through a period of difficulty from the anticlericalism of the revolutionary period to the separation of church and state in 1905.

This dissertation examines the role that the early music of the church (namely Gregorian chant) played in shaping organ music in France during the past two centuries in particular. As an almost constant presence in French organ music, either through the organ masses of the classical era, the improvisations of the virtuosic organists of the Cavallé-Coll period or the chant-based music of the revival, chant has been a presence in the music of the French organist-composer. This work aims to explore this role.

In some cases a composer's work is examined analytically, although this is not an analysis thesis. In other instances, the philosophies and motivations of key composers are discussed. This includes consideration of the role of chant not only as it is quoted directly, but also the impact of its modal and rhythmic style on these composers.

Author's Notes

There are a number of points which should be clarified at the outset of this dissertation.

The terms 'chant', 'plainchant', 'Gregorian chant' and 'plainsong' are used interchangeably. Whilst acknowledging that there may be subtle distinctions between these terms, in this work all will be used to refer to the ritual music of the Western church. Any distinctions will be highlighted where necessary.

Capitals are used in the instance of referring to a particular institution or church. For example: the Church of Sainte-Clotilde or the Paris Conservatoire. In other instances lower case is used. The same convention applies to the French Revolution.

The term 'severe' is used quite extensively throughout this dissertation. For clarity, it refers to music in a more contrapuntal style, music which was regarded by the more serious players later in the nineteenth century as being of a higher standard to the bombastic improvisory music prevalent in the period after the revolution.

List of Abbreviations

AO	<i>The American Organist</i>
Archbold (1995)	Lawrence Archbold: 'Widor's <i>Symphonie romane</i> ', <i>French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor</i> , eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998)
CO	<i>Choir & Organ</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EM	<i>Early Music</i>
GR	<i>Graduale Romanum</i> (1974 edn)
IRASM	<i>International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music</i>
JAMS	<i>Journal of the American Musicological Society</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
LU	<i>Liber Usualis</i> (1950 edn)
ML	<i>Music and Letters</i>
MQ	<i>The Musical Quarterly</i>
MT	<i>Musical Times</i>
NCM	<i>Nineteenth-Century Music</i>
OUP	Oxford University Press
OY	<i>The Organ Yearbook</i>
PMA	<i>Proceedings of the Musical Association</i>
PRMA	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association</i>

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Introduction

Gregorian chant holds an historic place not only as the music of the church, but also for its role in the development of Western music. The scale of its repertoire is linked indelibly to its role as music of worship, composed by anonymous monks whose lives revolved around the texts of the psalms and canticles. The development of the organ as a liturgical instrument is such that, historically, the link between chant and organ was inevitable. For decades, improvisors and composers have drawn inspiration both from the chant melodies and the texts which they transmit.

The use of pre-existing melodies within compositions is not at all unusual; folk tunes, Lutheran chorales and indeed melodies written by other composers are commonplace in all musical media. While the chorale would provide the inspiration for organ composers in Protestant Germany, the more Catholic France would (though not uniquely or consistently) have a relationship with Gregorian chant.

This dissertation will examine the relationship between chant and music written for the organ in France. For clarity it is divided into two sections. Part A deals with the background and context to the lengthier Part B, which is more specific in dealing with the use of chant in post-revolutionary organ music. The first chapter will briefly examine and summarise the development of Gregorian chant. Such a topic is in itself worthy of many dissertations and much work has been and continues to be done in this area. While the primary focus of this dissertation is on the music written after the French Revolution, chapter 2 provides a look at the development of the chant-based organ repertoire before 1789, with the aim of creating a context for this relationship between chant and the organ. Chapter 3 explores the musical 'landscape' after the revolution and on how perceptions of the organ came to be lowered. Chapters 4 to 7 examine the development of the chant-based repertoire from the revolution into the twentieth century.

From the outset, three questions frame the discussion:

- Why was chant used?
- How was the chant treated?

- How does the chant impact on the music and indeed how is the chant situated within the musical language of the composer in question.

In some cases a composer's work is examined analytically, although this is not the focus of the thesis. In other instances, the philosophies and motivations of key composers are discussed. This includes consideration of the role of chant not only as it is quoted directly, but also the impact of its modal and rhythmic style on these composers. In many cases a composer's background is examined insofar as it relates to the reasons for their use of chant.

The social, cultural and political developments in church music and church-state relations, when of relevance, are included, though not explored extensively.

The overall purpose of this thesis is to explore how linked the history of French organ music is with the Gregorian repertoire, and how the attitudes to liturgy, improvisation and repertoire evolved over the past two hundred years.

To date studies in this area have either focused on a particular composer or a particular work. This dissertation draws together for the first time various strands, charting the overall development of chant-based French organ music and drawing on research done in this area.

Much work has been done by ground-breaking scholars on various aspects of this material. In many cases literature in the French language is difficult to find and therefore the work of a number of English language scholars is heavily referenced. Orpha Ochse's pivotal book *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* provides an excellent narrative which is frequently referenced and *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor* assists with more focused detail in its set of topical essays. Most of the composers featured are remembered mainly by organists and studies of their lives and work are rare. There are some exceptions such as Franck and Dupré, whose overall contributions have been celebrated (often by pupils and devotees), but it is difficult to find musicologists who have taken an interest in composers such as Tournemire, Duruflé and Guilmant. Therefore the work of Robert Sutherland Lord, James Frazier, Ann Labounsky and

John R. Near (to name a few) has been beneficial in drawing together the various strands in this discussion.

Chapter 1

Gregorian Chant: Development, Corruption and Restoration

1.1: Introduction

Before any discussion on the relationship between chant and organ music in France, it is useful to provide a brief history of what is referred to as 'Gregorian chant', 'plainchant' or 'plainsong'.¹ Such a subject must come with awareness that the origins, development and indeed interpretation of chant have been contentious topics and continue to be to this day.

The concept of religious chant has existed for millennia, with Christian singing having its origins in Jewish ritual chanting.² There is evidence of vast repertoires of chant from Russian to Celtic to Byzantine to Jewish, all of which share the common characteristic of being purely melodic with an absence of either counterpoint or supportive accompaniment.³ Christian chant in western Europe itself has various repertoires (Ambrosian, Gallican, Mozarabic, etc.) which are further characterised by the use of Latin text, however this discussion will focus on so-called 'Gregorian chant', which became predominant between the sixth and tenth centuries.⁴

In the early centuries of the Common Era, differing chant repertoires developed independently in various regions such as Italy, Gaul and Spain, all of which had as their basis the ancient chants of the church of Jerusalem.⁵ As such, before the middle of the eighth century, there existed little liturgical unanimity within the Western church.⁶ However, the rise of the Carolingian dynasty during the reigns

¹ Throughout this dissertation, these terms are used interchangeably, though it is acknowledged that they can have slightly different meanings.

² Willi Apel: *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), 3

³ *Ibid*, 4; Richard L. Crocker: *An Introduction to Gregorian Chant* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), 64

⁴ Apel (1958), 3–5 *passim*

⁵ Helmut Huckle: 'Toward a New Historical View of Gregorian Chant', *JAMS*, xxxiii/3 (Autumn 1980), 437–438

⁶ John A. Emerson, David Hiley and Kenneth Levy: 'Plainchant', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan,

of Pippin the Short (751–768), and Charlemagne (768–814) led to an important period in the development of the standardised Christian repertoire.⁷ The Carolingians sought to create a Holy Roman Empire to fill the power vacuum in the West, and viewed a common Christian religion as a means to achieve this unity. Charlemagne’s coronation as emperor by Pope Leo III (795–816) in 800 was a personal fulfilment of destiny, and provided him with a mandate to create a Christian kingdom in the West, to sit alongside the still-strong Eastern Empire controlled from Constantinople.⁸

Nevertheless, the origins of the Gregorian-Carolingian chant repertoire, one of the tools of standardisation, are far from clear. Charlemagne’s *Adminito generalis* (789) sought to enforce Roman chants throughout Francia,⁹ and while the spreading of the relevant texts was straightforward, the dissemination of a vast melodic repertoire was less so.¹⁰ The texts of these chants exist in manuscripts from c900 alongside information which sought to associate the repertoire with Rome in order to add weight to its enforcement throughout the Frankish lands.¹¹ Indeed the Carolingians believed that their melodies had been composed by Pope Gregory I (590–604), a story that actually spread to Rome by the middle of the ninth century.¹² The manuscript *St Gall 359* was long regarded as, at the very least, a copy of Gregory’s original antiphoner.¹³ However, it is most likely that the chant which we refer to as ‘Gregorian’ is the result of a fusion of Roman and Frankish elements in the eighth and ninth

2001), xix, 827; David Hiley: *Western Plainchant, A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 514–515

⁷ David Hiley: ‘Plainchant’, *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. David Arnold (Oxford/New York: OUP, 1983), ii, 1448

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ Francia refers to the Kingdom of the Franks from the third to tenth centuries, the area roughly covering modern-day France.

¹⁰ Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 828–829

¹¹ Crocker (2000), 64–72

¹² Gregory is likely to have played a role in the planning of a Roman repertoire, however some aspects of the project predate him and it did not come to fruition until after his death. Apel (1958), 4; That the composition of the chants is attributed to him has been fuelled by images of him, in such manuscripts as the ‘Hautker Antiphoner’, receiving music from the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and passing it on to a scribe. Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 829; Kenneth Levy: *Gregorian Chant and the Carolingians* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 4

¹³ Huckle (1980), 439

centuries.¹⁴ It was not simply a case of suppressing the Old Gallican chant with a repertoire imported from Rome.¹⁵ This music may have been intentionally altered during transmission by Romans who wished to keep the ‘true music’ in the ‘eternal city’; however it is not unfair to state that Gregorian chant could be viewed as the final stage in the development of a repertoire which began thousands of years before.¹⁶

The presence of Roman manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries containing different versions of the melodies confirms that the ‘Gregorian’ repertoire was distinct from that now referred to as ‘Old Roman chant’, and indeed that ‘Carolingian’ or ‘Frankish’ chant would be a much more accurate title.¹⁷

1.2: Gregorian chant and the corruption of the sixteenth century

The Gregorian repertoire had firmly established itself in the Frankish lands by 800 and the Carolingians, as well as standardising the repertoire, also made a number of additions to it.¹⁸ The sixteenth century was to be important in the history of this repertoire, as the actions of the church during this period led to a distortion of the melodies which was in turn to have an impact for hundreds of years.¹⁹

While the reform of the Gregorian repertoire had been attempted by some between the ninth century and the sixteenth century, particularly by religious orders, it was not until the Council of Trent that any lasting alterations were to take effect.²⁰ The Council of Trent (1545–1563), the council of the Counter-

¹⁴ Apel (1958), 79

¹⁵ This applies both to the details of melodies common to Old Roman and Gregorian repertoires, and to individual chants in the Gregorian repertoire, which have no Roman counterpart and therefore must have been of Gallican origin. Kenneth Leavy ‘Charlemagne’s Archetype of Gregorian Chant’, *JAMS*, xl/1 (Spring 1987), 11–14

¹⁶ Apel (1958), 82; Hiley (1983), 1448

¹⁷ Hucke (1980), 442; Leavy, Emerson & Hiley (2001), 830; Leavy (1998), 8–10

¹⁸ Hiley (1983), 1450

¹⁹ Apel (1958), 3

²⁰ Hiley (1983), 1450

Reformation, was convened in order to clarify and reform the doctrines and disciplines of the Catholic Church in response to the Protestant reformation. On 17 September 1562, its decrees pertaining to church music were published. While considering the banning of all music other than chant in a liturgical context, it instead left most of control with the provincial synods whose job it was to exclude music considered 'lascivious or impure'.²¹ It also rejected a lot of the Carolingian additions to the repertoire, leading to the compilation of new chant books.²²

Throughout the course of the following centuries, various attempts were made to introduce a revised form of the office and mass. This work, initially carried out during the pontificates of Pius IV (1559–1565) and Pius V (1566–1572), led to the publication of a Roman breviary (1568), and missal (1570), regarded as mandatory in all dioceses.²³ The Palestrina-Zoilo commission of 1577 was established by Gregory XIII (1572–1585) to adapt chant melodies to the new texts. However its mission was left incomplete and it wasn't until the publication of the two volumes of the so-called Anerio-Soriano Medicean Edition in 1614 and 1615 that the Council's directives were met. The Medicean chant books, far from improving the sacred music of the church, reworked the repertoire to suit the prevailing style of the sixteenth century. In order to make the melodies more attractive, notes were altered to adhere to contemporary tonal sensibilities, texts reflected the humanist ideas of the era and new ideas regarding the number of notes on accented and unaccented syllables were implemented, essentially destroying the character of these melodies and leading to what may be viewed as a period when 'corrupt' plainchant was sung.²⁴

²¹ Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 849–850

²² Hiley (1983), 1450

²³ *Ibid*, 615–616.

²⁴ Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 851; Hiley (1993), 616

1.3: Gallicanism and plainchant in nineteenth-century France

In order to examine the effect of the plainchant restoration on organ composition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is first of importance to survey how the natural home of these chant melodies, the liturgy, was a battleground during the course of the nineteenth century in particular.

There was a long history of independence in the French Church. The politics of Gallicanism sought to maintain French control over religious matters and resisted Rome as a potentially dangerous controlling force. This resulted in the unique liturgical practices which existed in the Church of Gaul since the end of the fourth century. In the eighth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, various attempts had been made at uniformity, but these had a limited effect since compliance was never strictly enforced. As such, the directives of the Council of Trent were not accepted in France and an increase in anti-Roman sentiment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to the reinforcement of Gallican independence. The dioceses created their own liturgies, based on the ancient Gallican rites, during what could be regarded as a successful period for the French Church.²⁵

In 1600, the authoritative document for the Tridentine rite, the *Caermoniale Episcoporum* or 'Bishops' Ceremonial', was published by the Vatican in a further attempt to define good liturgical practice and clarify some of the points raised at the Council of Trent.²⁶ This document officially endorsed certain musical practices which had been outlawed by regional synods after the council.²⁷ While the *Caermoniale Episcoporum* was seen as the authoritative Roman document on rite, it was not accepted in France where dioceses and religious orders chose to write and publish their own documents. Between 1604 and 1670, various published ceremonials show the prevalence of *alternatim*²⁸ in France, but indicate the variations regarding the occasions and liturgies during which the

²⁵ Austin Gough: 'The Roman Liturgy, Gregorian Plainchant and the Gallican Church', *JRH*, xi/4 (12/1981), 536

²⁶ Edward Higginbottom: 'Organ Music and the Liturgy', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 133–134

²⁷ Benjamin van Wye: 'Ritual use of the Organ in France', *JAMS*, xxxiii/2 (Summer 1980), 301

²⁸ See chapter 2, section 2.1

organist played.²⁹ The most influential of these was the *Caeremoniale Parisiense* (1662), which applied to the diocese of Paris.

The changes in French liturgy and church music led to new breviaries and graduals in Paris and other French dioceses and by the end of eighteenth century, ninety out of the 139 French dioceses were using non-Roman books. The Parisian books were the most popular and influential and were in use in fifty dioceses.³⁰ Archbishop François de Harlay's breviary (1680) and Archbishop Charles de Vintmille's breviary and missal (1736 and 1738) provide examples of the Parisian books.³¹ Alongside these books of texts, however stand the French Neo-Gallican chant books, which combined newly-composed chant with revisions of Gregorian melodies. These revisions took the form of further tonal adaption of the melodies of the Roman rites, as well as regrouping of the various elements. However, new types of church chanting were gaining strength with *plainchant-musical* (*plainchant figure*)³² and *chant sur le livre* (*fleuretis*)³³ leading France further away from the Roman model. It wasn't until the middle part of the nineteenth century that the first calls for reform and reunification came.³⁴

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the pressure on the Catholic Church caused by the Revolution and Enlightenment began to ease.³⁵ The 1801 concordat between Pope Pius VII and Napoleon gave the Catholic Church legal status in France after the secular post-revolutionary period, but it subjected the church to a strong state control. Within his diocese the bishop had absolute control over his clergy, however the state nominated the bishops and as part of

²⁹ Higginbottom (1998), 133–141

³⁰ Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 852; Hiley (1993), 619; The most commonly-used books were the Parisian breviary and missal, in use in fifty dioceses.

³¹ van Wye (1995), 20

³² *Plainchant musical* or *chant figure*: Measured ornamented style of chant sung by a soloist with choir sections accompanied by organ harmonies or serpent. Hiley (1993), 620

³³ *Chant sur le livre* or *fleuretis*: improvisation of florid counterpoint over a chant performed in rhythm by a choir with serpent accompaniment. *Ibid*

³⁴ Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 852–854; Hiley (1993), 619–620

³⁵ Emerson, Levy & Hiley (2001), 853–854

the agreement, the Vatican gave up its claim to church property lost during the Revolution.³⁶

After the concordat the French dioceses were redrawn, and the problem of liturgical diversity became apparent, with some bishops inheriting six to nine rites within their new diocese.³⁷ Seeking national unity, Napoleon favoured a single liturgical practice. But the problem of what that should be would hamper the efforts over the course of the following fifty years. The romantic idealisation of the past and a desire to reject the excesses of the previous century led to calls for unity with the Roman liturgy, though it was not altogether clear what this meant, with some rejecting the idea of rejoining a corrupt system.³⁸ The majority of French bishops found the Roman rite to be undesirable, not least because it implied the primacy of Rome and the Holy See.³⁹ During the Empire and Restoration periods, eighteen of the eighty new dioceses adopted the Roman rite, thirty-five created their own, and the remaining twenty-seven chose to follow the liturgy of a particularly distinguished diocese, such as Chartres or Paris.⁴⁰ The Ultras, a political force which gained pre-eminence after the 1815 elections, argued strongly that a monarchy with Roman ties was the only route to salvation for the French.⁴¹ Indeed Gallicanism was dying out by 1815; both the restored monarch Louis XVIII and the French clergy tended toward it instinctively, but its central plank, fear of Roman domination, was losing its potency due to the progressive weakening of the Papacy. An additional factor was the decline of religion as a force in the lives of the middle and lower classes. Most of the bourgeoisie had become progressively less interested in religion, as Enlightenment skepticism spread in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

³⁶ J.P.T. Bury: *France 1814–1940* (London: Routledge, 2003), 12–13; Gordon Wright: *France in Modern Times* (New York/London: Norton, 1987), 69

³⁷ Gough (1981), 537

³⁸ Hiley (1983), 1450

³⁹ Gough (1981), 537, *passim*

⁴⁰ The creation of the new liturgies involved the synthesis of elements of those left in the diocese after the concordat. *Ibid*, 538

⁴¹ Bury (2003), 21

The trend was different among the aristocracy who believed in the monarchy and the church as the ruling forces in society.⁴²

The 1830 'July Revolution' led to the displacement of the Bourbon dynasty and the elevation of Louis Philippe, the former Duc d'Orleans. During his rule as the last 'King of the French', the 'alliance of the throne and the altar' came to an abrupt end. The regime took on a mildly anticlerical outlook and the king, a Voltairean, only attended church as a social duty. Roman Catholicism became recognised merely as the religion of the 'majority of Frenchmen', certain religious orders were expelled and the funds to the ministry of public worship were cut.⁴³ The persecution of the church, though painless in some ways, may have aided it, as the pope, aware perhaps of the benefits of good propaganda, encouraged the clergy to remain loyal to the king.⁴⁴ It was quite likely that this rejection by the king aided a return to ultramontaine⁴⁵ ideas. There were those who moved towards neo-Catholicism during the Orleanist period, a Catholicism which could be reconciled with the modern ideas of political liberalism and democracy. The figure of Félicité Lamennais, founder in 1830 of *l'Avenir*, the first Catholic daily newspaper in Europe, represents this strain of modern Catholicism.⁴⁶ For him and his followers, Catholicism required unity, that the Gallican kings and bishops were compelled to serve the pope, the figure to unite and regenerate human society. However, his ideas on the church as a political democracy met with so much opposition in the French hierarchy that the Vatican was compelled to reject him and forced him to recant in 1834.⁴⁷ His efforts were not totally in vain, and were reflected in some of the most important political movements in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, anticipating the Christian socialism inherent in *Rerum Novarum*, the papal encyclical of 1891. His failure did not mean a return to a reactionary mood, as many continued the task of adapting the church to

⁴² Wright (1987), 107

⁴³ Bury (2003), 48; Wright (1987), 121

⁴⁴ Wright (1987), 121

⁴⁵ The term 'ultramontaine' literally means 'over the mountains' and refers to a desire to look for leadership on the other side of the Alps in Rome.

⁴⁶ Wright (1987), 122

⁴⁷ *Ibid*; Gough (1981), 536

meet the demands of the new society. From the 1830s on, ultramontaine doctrines gained in strength until the end of the century when Gallicanism was all but wiped out.⁴⁸

The Society of St Peter, presided over by Lamennais, met in Brittany in the 1830s, with the ideology of Roman primacy, a rock amid the turbulent waters of social and revolutionary change.⁴⁹ The liturgical member Dom Prosper-Louis Guéranger (later founder-abbot of Solesmes) was commissioned to prove that the Roman liturgy was the correct ancient form to which all national churches should revert. However, even Rome realised that the abolition of the local liturgies would cause difficulty in some cases. Pius IX, seeking to be realistic, saw liturgical variation as being a small problem compared to differences in canon law and ecclesiology. As late as 1842, Gregory XVI actively dissuaded Cardinal Gousset.⁵⁰ from abolishing the Rheims liturgy, because of the potential damage caused by the uprooting of tradition.⁵¹

Guéranger firmly believed that the liturgies drawn up by the French bishops were corrupt and that the texts were too humanistic. There was, in his opinion, an unhealthy sense of casual informality in the treatment of God and that in the Paris breviary the Virgin Mary 'looked like a lady with whom one could strike up a conversation'.⁵² Guéranger continued to court controversy and in 1840 he published the first volume of his *Institutions liturgiques*, dealing with the Roman liturgy. His devotion to all things Roman was regarded as heretical by the French bishops, and was further emphasised by the criticism of the French liturgies in the second and third volumes (1850 and 1851).⁵³ The opposition of three-quarters of the eighty French bishops to his Roman reforms seemed too much

⁴⁸ Wright (1987), 232

⁴⁹ The society was a group of clerics and laymen who 'represented the quintessence of French Catholic romanticism'. Gough (1981), 538

⁵⁰ Thomas-Marie-Joseph Gousset (1792–1866)

⁵¹ Gough (1981), 542

⁵² *Ibid*, 540

⁵³ *Ibid*, 539

for Guéranger until he attracted the support of Louis Veuillot⁵⁴, editor of *L'Univers* and a strong ultramontaine.⁵⁵

The relentless political maneuvering by Guéranger and Monsignor Fornari (the Parisian Nuncio) and the presence on a number of Roman congregations of a few key French ultramontaines aided in the move further in the direction of Rome.⁵⁶ The gradual adoption of the Roman rite continued to be promoted by Guéranger and others, and it may have been the defection of the influential diocese of Paris which dealt a fatal blow to Gallican rites.⁵⁷

1.4: The restoration of chant

Alongside the efforts to reinstate the Roman rite were those to restore the ancient chant to its original form, a movement which was not confined to France alone. The deplorable state of Gregorian chant was recognised across Europe from the middle of the nineteenth century, but there was no uniform view on how to approach its improvement. In 1848, the Congregation of Sacred Rites approved an edition of chant by Alfieri, but did not grant it sole authority. There was an opinion that church music would be better served by attempts to reform polyphony, but this was rejected in France by those who sought to stamp out such classicism in favour of the original ancient music of the church.⁵⁸ The main source of concern was that Gregorian chant, in its purest form, was much more difficult to perform than the work of Mozart and Haydn. The attempts to reintroduce the chants were also met with resistance by those seeking more musical entertainment. As late as 1906, Maurice Emmanuel was removed as *maître de chapelle* at the Church of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris for promoting reformed plainchant.⁵⁹ Where chant was introduced, it shared the programme

⁵⁴ Louis Veuillot (1813–1883), journalist and author.

⁵⁵ Gough (1981), 541

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 543

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 546–547

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 551

⁵⁹ Robert Orledge: 'Emmanuel, (Marie François) Maurice', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), viii, 186–187

with modern music of such varying standards as to require the explicit banning of semi-secular music by the Congregation of Sacred Rites in 1884, and indeed there was much confusion about which version of chant to use.⁶⁰

Some believed that the musical source most suitable to the needs of the Western church was the Medicean Gradual. Thus it became the basis for the Regensburg Gradual, edited by Franz Haberl and published by Pustet in 1871. Despite some weak attempts at partial revision, the melodies contained in these books were basically those of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, not of the tenth.⁶¹ The Regensburg Antiphoner which followed in 1878 used as its source the antiphoners of Venice (1585) and Antwerp (1611).⁶² These books were approved by the Vatican and remained the official Roman editions until the turn of the twentieth century. Pustet was granted a thirty-year monopoly and benefitted not only from this, but from association with the revered figure of Palestrina.⁶³

Others disagreed on the manner of the plainchant restoration, and believed it necessary to return to the earliest sources to get the oldest most authentic versions of the ancient melodies. The influence of figures such as Félix Danjou (1812–1866) fuelled efforts at restoration in the 1840s. Danjou, organist in several parishes and organ teacher in the Notre Dame *maîtrise*, was a campaigner for better organ music, whose aim was 'to train a new school of organists who would be capable of reviving the great traditions of the past'.⁶⁴ His discovery of the tonary of Saint-Bénigne de Dijon (eleventh century) and its use to create the Rheims-Cambrai Gradual in 1851 was to pave the way for concerted efforts to return the melodies to their correct form and undo the damage caused during the previous three decades.

⁶⁰ Gough (1981), 552

⁶¹ Mary Berry: 'Gregorian Chant: The Restoration of the Chant and Seventy-Five Years of Recording', *EM*, vii/ 2 (4/1979), 199

⁶² Hiley (1993), 620–624

⁶³ Berry (1979), 199

⁶⁴ Siobhán Kilkelly: *Alexandre Pierre François Boëly, 'Portrait of a Pioneer'*, unpublished MMus diss. (Dublin Institute of Technology, 2006), 8

However, the most significant work in the area of plainchant restoration must be attributed to the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of Solesmes. The purchase and re-establishment of the abbey by Guéranger was the first step to its restoration in 1837 with Guéranger as abbot. Ever a source of friction, Guéranger's first volume of *Institutions liturgiques* firmly linked the abbey with the restoration of unity and liturgical excellence.⁶⁵ While work on chant in the abbey can be traced back to the 1850s, it was Dom Joseph Pothier who made the first significant advances with the publication of his *Mémoires grégoriennes* (1880) and *Liber gradualis* (1883). The Solesmes chant had no fixed note value, and involved singing in a natural non-metrical style where the words had pre-eminence. This is the opposite of the stiff metrical chant which was common during the period, and served as the basis for the *chant sur le livre*.⁶⁶ It was the uniform monotonous singing of the melodies which had such an effect on the reception of chant during the previous centuries. Its reinterpretation by the Solesmes monks as something wholly different and full of melodic subtlety was to cast it in a new light. Pothier is accredited with the interpretation of the neumes of the ancient manuscripts and the fixing of the role of the Latin accents.⁶⁷ It was Pothier's colleague Dom André Mocquereau who put forward the idea of *Paléographie musicale*, the publication of facsimiles of manuscripts, the first of which appeared in 1889.⁶⁸ Solesmes books continued to appear with the *Liber antiphonarius* (1891), *Processionale monasticum* (1893), *Liber responsorialis* (1895), *Liber gradualis* (1895) and *Liber usualis* (1903).

While the Gregorian congress of Arezzo (1882) officially recognised the work of Solesmes, it was rejected by Leo XIII (1878–1903), who confirmed the pre-eminence of the Haberl edition in 1883. This was a further blow to the efforts of Solesmes. The abbot's stubbornness in privately publishing their *Liber Gradualis*

⁶⁵ Gough (1981), 539

⁶⁶ Prim (1961), 39

⁶⁷ Andre Coeury: 'Present Tendencies of Sacred Music in France', *MQ*, xiii/4 (10/1927), 591

⁶⁸ Berry (1979), discusses the impact of the camera on this scholarship. 198–199

and presenting a copy to the pontiff would seem to have been a brave folly. The pope, writing in 1884, and thanking him for his gift, was to send a second brief reminding him of the privilege of Pustet.⁶⁹

While in Rome on a tour of Italy in 1890, Mocquereau met a young Jesuit musician Angelo Santi, who having some influence as the music critic of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, became convinced of the quality of the Solesmes research and began to work on its behalf in Rome. By 1894, whilst maintaining the primacy of Ratisbon, the pope conceded the right of bishops to choose their own edition. In 1899, he suppressed the decree *Romanorum Pontificum sollicitudo* and in 1901 he wrote to Solesmes approving of their editions. The Pustet thirty-year monopoly expired in 1901 and was not renewed.⁷⁰ Pope Leo died in 1903 and was replaced by Pope Pius X, a figure forever associated with chant reform.

In 1904, a commission was established to edit new Vatican editions in Solesmes, resulting in the *Vatican Kyriale* (1905), *Graduale Romanum* (1908) and *Antiphonale Romanum* (1912).⁷¹ The universal adoption of this chant was not immediate and the further developments in semiology continued in Solesmes throughout the twentieth century

The journey towards the return of Roman rites and the parallel restoration of Gregorian chant as the natural music of these rites was the result of centuries of activism on the part of figures such as Lamennais and Guéranger. The return to pre-eminence of these ancient melodies in their true form was to not only have a huge impact on worship, but on musical composition over the course of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 199

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 200–201

⁷¹ Hiley (1993), 624–627

Chapter 2

Chant and Organ in France: An Introduction to Pre-revolutionary Practices

The chief use of [the organ], was to play over the chant before it was sung, all through the psalms. Upon enquiring of a young abbé, whom I took with me as a nomenclator, what this was called? *C'est proser*, 'Tis prosing', he said. And it would seem as if our word 'prosing' came from this dull and heavy manner of recital.¹

2.1: Introduction – The development of *alternatim*

The use of the organ in churches is recorded as early as the tenth century and more than any instrument, its history and development is linked to its symbiotic relationship with the church. The repertoire of the instrument has evolved during the last millennium through the need to fulfil a function within the liturgy and it is not surprising that its music has interacted with and often been founded on plainchant, the ancient music of that church. This section aims to track the development of organ repertoire, particularly in France, in relation to its role in the liturgy and its interaction with chant melodies.

Over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, after 'Gregorian' chant became standard, attempts were made to vary the music used in the liturgy. Thus developed the practice of *alternatim*, where some sections of the text were portrayed by a medium other than the simple chant, be it vocal or instrumental. *Alternatim* had its origins in the antiphonal psalm singing of the early Western church, which involved a soloist alternating with the choir.² Whilst having its basis in liturgical texts which were responsorial, it was by no means confined to these. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the practice evolved of setting the solo sections polyphonically, sung by a small group, but maintaining the chant as an important element of this more musically-intricate style.³ This was achieved through the placement of the chant in long notes in the lowest part of a two or three-voice texture, with more elaborate upper parts designed to decorate

¹ Charles Burney: *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1771), and reprinted as *An Eighteenth-Century Musical Tour in France and Italy*, ed. Percy Scholes (London: OUP, 1959), 15

² Edward Higginbottom: 'Alternatim', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), i, 426

³ Benjamin van Wye: 'Ritual Use of the Organ in France', *JAMS*, xxxiii/2 (Summer 1980), 288

the source melody. This practice made the musical experience in the liturgy more varied when compared to a strict delivery of the unmolested chant, but it must be noted that the chant was ever present in the texture and in its unadorned form, remained the only recognised music of the church until after the Council of Trent (1545–1563).⁴ The concept of *alternatim* spread to other media, not just chant and polyphony, but chant against fauxbourdon,⁵ or chant against organ.⁶ It is from this tradition that the earliest chant-based organ compositions emerged.

The practice of chant and organ *alternatim* may have originated with the positive organ⁷ prevalent in churches during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Though confined to simple contributions, it was quite likely employed to perform the melodies in *alternatim* with the sung chant, as well as to reinforce the *cantus firmus* within organum or polyphony. While this is not entirely clear due to the lack of any surviving music from the period, the *Faenza Codex* (c1400) serves to provide some illumination. The presence in this Italian manuscript of a number of short pieces for use with the chants of the *Missa Cunctipotens Deus* (Mass IV)⁸, confirms the practice of organ *alternatim* during this period.⁹ The versets of the *Faenza Codex* involve the presentation of the chant in the left hand with an elaborate descant in the right hand above. The polyphonic nature of these pieces implies that they were written to be played on the positive organ.¹⁰

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ 'Literally 'false bass': A way of singing improvised polyphony in fifteenth-century music particularly that by Burgundian composers. Plainsong melody in treble is accompanied by two lower parts, one in parallel sixths, the other a fourth below melody. *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Kenney, 251, 'Fauxbourdon'

⁶ Higginbottom (2001), 426

⁷ Type of small organ which could be placed on floor or table, *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Kenney, 590, 'Positive Organ'

⁸ This chant mass recurs again and again throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was the most popular for *alternatim* use up until the end of the eighteenth century. The organisation of the chant cycles which we know happened relatively recently (after the sixteenth century). The current Mass IV is the only one preserved without change from the thirteenth century. Willi Apel: *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, transl. Hans Tischler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 106

⁹ Edward Higginbottom: 'Organ Music and the Liturgy', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 130–131

¹⁰ *Ibid*, For more details on the *Faenza Codex* see: Dragan Plamenac: 'Keyboard Music of the Fourteenth Century in Codex Faenza 117', *JAMS*, i/3 (Fall 1951), 179–188

While these short, simple pieces demonstrate the limitations of the positive organ, it seems logical that the appearance of larger organs in the thirteenth century facilitated the performance of more elaborate alternating pieces. These pieces were most likely improvised and much in the style of the vocal polyphony also in development at the time. Indeed the earliest extant organ compositions show this to be the case, as the organist presents the chant in long notes at the bottom of a texture which has more intricate counterpoint above.¹¹

Before further discussion on the development of *alternatim*, it must be acknowledged that, while it may appear peculiar to compromise the text in order to provide organ versets, the organ was not seen as providing interludes and causing the text to be incomplete, but was a partner adorning the chant and engaging in the laudable practice of liturgical enhancement. It also served to prevent the fatigue which was the inevitable result of the monotonous chanting of the entire rite.¹²

In the earliest days of *alternatim* usage, the division between chant and organ varied greatly. While strophic items such as hymns were divided by verse, the splitting of non-strophic items was more varied. It is fairly clear however, that *alternatim* was applied to the ordinary, gradual, alleluia and offertory of the mass, and the canticles, hymns, antiphons, responsorial chants and *Te Deum* of the office.¹³

Throughout the fifteenth century, *alternatim* became more common, both in its vocal and instrumental forms, largely due to dissatisfaction in some quarters with the quality of plainsong performance. Chant with polyphony remained the most popular combination due to the ability of the singers to retain the text, however practices including the singing of the *cantus firmus* with the organ or the

¹¹ van Wye (1980), 289

¹² Higginbottom (1998), 133

¹³ *Ibid*, 132

speaking of the text meant that the organ verset was surviving especially in situations where no skilled singers were available. There was also a requirement for the organist to actively reflect the text he was replacing.

There are two main reasons why no fifteenth-century music of this type survives. The first is a lack of interest in this utilitarian musical form, which may have produced a large, but possibly monotonous repertoire. However, the other reason is that it is quite likely that versets were improvised by organists or singers who were capable of extemporizing over a *cantus firmus* on the organ as well as they were vocally.¹⁴ It is in fact more interesting that published collections were appearing at all due to this. It seems plausible that they were a result of the development of the organ itself, with the increase in the size and intricacies of the instrument stimulating an interest in composition. The more widespread presence of organs in churches fuelled the skilled organist-improvisers who sought to demonstrate the forms in which they were required to improvise.¹⁵ In any case, by the sixteenth century, *alternatim* had gained widespread acceptance.¹⁶

The earliest surviving French organ volumes, published (but not written) by Pierre Attaingnant¹⁷ in 1531, demonstrate how *alternatim* was practised in France. The books contain versets for the mass (mainly using Mass IV, but also some of Mass II, *Kyrie fons bonitatis*), *Magnificat* and *Te Deum*. Example 2.1 provides one of these versets with the chant presented in longer notes before the speed and texture increase towards the end.

¹⁴ van Wye (1980), 293

¹⁵ Higginbottom (1998), 140

¹⁶ van Wye (1980), 294

¹⁷ Pierre Attaingnant (c1494–late 1551 or 1552). French music printer, publisher, bookseller, punchcutter and typesetter, Daniel Hertz and Laurent Guillo: 'Attaingnant, Pierre', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), ii, 146–149

2.2: *Alternatim* and the Council of Trent

The Counter Reformation found its voice in the official publications of the Council of Trent which, as previously discussed, considered the banning of all music other than chant.¹⁸

While the Gallican movement, supported by the French Government, continued to resist the Roman influence inherent in the Tridentine reforms, a number of regional councils, such as those held at Rheims (1564) and Cambrai (1565) led to reforms in these jurisdictions. The shadow of Trent still hung over the French liturgy to a certain extent, as reflected in the absence of mass versets in the two volumes of Titleouze. Rather the composer's emphasis is on hymns (*Hymnes de l'Église pour toucher sur l'orgue, avec les fugues et recherches sur leur plain-chant*, 1623) and the *Magnificat* (*Le Magnificat, ou cantique de la Vierge pour toucher sur l'orgue, suivant les huit tons de l'Église*, 1626).¹⁹

In 1600, the authoritative document for the Tridentine Rite, the *Caermoniale Episcoporum* or 'Bishops' Ceremonial' was published in a further attempt to define good liturgical practice.²⁰ This document officially endorsed certain *alternatim* practices which had been disallowed by regional synods after the Council of Trent.²¹ These included *alternatim* with organ for the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* of the mass, and for hymns and canticles at solemn vespers. It also forbade the replacement of certain verses in the hymns and canticles (such as the first and last), and expressly required the intelligible spoken delivery of the missing text during the organ playing.²² This document

¹⁸ van Wye (1980), 300–301; also see chapter 1

¹⁹ Almonte Howell and Albert Cohen: 'Titelouze, Jehan', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxv, 528

Gale Kramer: 'The Prefaces to the Organ Works of Jean Titelouze', OY, ix (1978), 2–10

²⁰ Higginbottom (1998), 133–134

²¹ van Wye (1980), 301–302

²² *Ibid*

seems to imply the presence of chant in the versets but doesn't specifically refer to it, probably assuming that this was already recognised as best practice.²³

While the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* was seen as the authoritative Roman document on rite, it was not accepted in France where dioceses and religious orders chose to write and publish their own documents. Between 1604 and 1670, various published ceremonials show the prevalence of *alternatim* in France, but indicate the variations regarding the occasions and liturgies during which the organist played.²⁴ Despite this the influence of the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* is to be seen to a certain extent in the organ versets of Titelouze. While progressive in terms of language, they remain rather restrained. They fall into two main categories: *cantus firmus* (either in the pedal or migrating between parts) and fugal paraphrase (Examples 2.2 and 2.3).

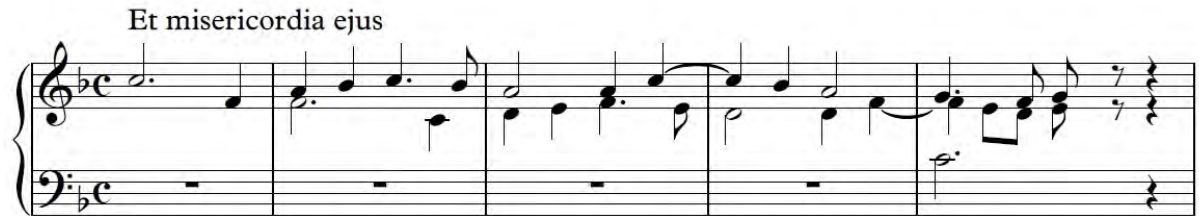
Ex. 2.2: Titelouze: Hymn: *Ad coenam Agni providi*, bars 1–7

Ad coenam
4 Agni providi

²³ The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* forbade instruments other than the organ, however this was universally disregarded, even in Rome. Joseph Dyer: 'Roman Catholic Church Music', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxi, 554

²⁴ Higginbottom (1998), 133–141

Ex. 2.3: Titelouze: *Magnificat quinti toni*, bars 1–5



The attempt to integrate even a part of the Roman desire for solemnity into the verset is reflected in the austerity of these pieces, however Titelouze's ability to achieve musical inventiveness within the constraints imposed is reflected in Higginbottom's description of them as keyboard fantasias 'in everything but name'.²⁵ The use of a *cantus firmus* with florid counterpoint follows on neatly from the *Faenza Codex* and the *Attaignant* books. They do exceed the rules set forth in the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* with regard to the sections of text being replaced, but may reflect the limited respect in France for the Bishops' document itself. Titelouze also may have actively sought to reflect the texts being replaced, in terms of melodic contour and phrase length and may have seen the versets as vocal music transcribed for the organ.²⁶

The desire for French control in the face of Roman regulation continued through the latter half of the seventeenth century. Between 1600 and 1800, no less than twenty-six ceremonials were published which refer to the use of organ in the liturgy ranging from dioceses to religious orders and individual cathedrals.²⁷ In the 1660s the policies of Gallican control over liturgy were codified. These granted temporal control over the French church to the newly-crowned Louis

²⁵ Edward Higginbottom: 'Jehan Titelouze', *MT*, cxxiv/1687 (1983), 571

²⁶ Edward Higginbottom: 'Ecclesiastical Prescription and Musical Style in French Classical Organ Music', *OY*, xii (1981), 32

²⁷ Edward Higginbottom: 'French Classical Organ Music and the Liturgy', *PRMA*, ccciii (1976), 19–40

XIV.²⁸ In 1662, the Archbishop of Paris approved the *Caeremoniale Parisiense*, a document which sought to control the liturgical customs of the diocese of Paris and the 'Four Gallican Articles' proclaiming independence were issued in 1682. Archbishop François de Harlay de Champvallon published a Paris Breviary (1680), Paris Missal (1684) and Paris Gradual (1689) and these were superseded by the breviary and missal of Archbishop Charles de Vintimille du Lac (1736 and 1738). The chant books to accompany the de Vintimille liturgy were compiled by Abbé Lebeuf and published in 1737 and 1738.²⁹ By the end of the eighteenth century, the Paris chant books were in use in over fifty French dioceses.³⁰

The *Caeremoniale Parisiense* allowed for more extensive use of the organ in general, but placed the emphasis on avoiding frivolity at all costs. It required chant to be present in only a few versets of a cycle, contrasting with the Roman document, which not mentioning chant *per se*, implied its presence in all versets. In fact since the late sixteenth century, the use of chant in versets had been in decline, particularly in Italy. By the time of the Parisian ceremonial, *alternatim* was in decline everywhere but in France, where this document attested to its endurance.³¹

2.3: The French classical school and *Le grand siècle*

The 1660s marked the beginning of the golden era of the French classical organ school. It is worth noting that parallel to this, the German baroque of Buxtehude and Bach with its larger-scale forms such as the *præludium* (as well as the shorter chorale preludes) was reaching a peak at the same time as the *grand siècle* continued to emphasise shorter forms.

²⁸ Benjamin van Wye: 'Organ Music in the Mass of the Parisian Rite to 1850 with Emphasis on the Contributions of *Boëly*', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 19, *passim*

²⁹ John A. Emerson, Kenneth Levy and David Hiley: 'Plainchant', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xix, 852; van Wye (1995), 20

³⁰ David Hiley: *Western Plainchant, A Handbook* (Oxford/New York: OUP, 1993), 619

³¹ van Wye (1980), 317

The codification of the French liturgical control of the 1660s led to the increased popularity of the alternative Neo-Gallican liturgies. From 1660 to 1740, a large number of *livres d'orgue* appeared, consisting of short pieces, including versets characteristic of the period. Some of these books were quite extensive, for example those of Guillaume Gabriel Nivers (c1632–1714) and Nicolas Lebègue (1631–1702) contain fifty to a hundred pieces each.³² This body of music, as mentioned before, is a testament to the survival of the *alternatim* tradition in France in a period when it was in decline elsewhere. The published *livres d'orgue* show huge variants in terms of their compliance with the regulations laid out in the official documents.³³ Chant-based versets do maintain a presence in some collections, for example the *Messe à l'usage ordinaire des paroisses* (1690)³⁴ by François Couperin (1668–1732). One of the best-known of these masses, it contains versets based on the familiar Mass IV, still the most popular setting used in the Louisquatorzian³⁵ organ masses. Indeed, the genre of organ mass and organ hymn reached a pinnacle in terms of sheer musical inventiveness with the work of Couperin and Nicolas deGrigny (1672–1703).³⁶ The use of chant in these versets is fairly predictable and occurs in two familiar forms. The first is the *cantus firmus* verset with the chant either *en taille* (in the tenor) or *en basse* (in the bass) in long notes, normally on a separate manual or in the pedal with reed registration to give prominence (Example 2.4).

³² van Wye (1995), 20

³³ Taken from Higginbottom 'The French Classical Organ School', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 177

³⁴ This work will henceforth be referred to as 'Mass for the Parishes'

³⁵ 'Louisquatorzian' is a term referring to the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715).

³⁶ Higginbottom (1998), 178–179

Ex. 2.4: Couperin: 'Mass for the Parishes': *Plein-chant du premier Kyrie en taille*

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is in C major and 3/4 time. The first system shows a simple harmonic setting of the chant. The second system introduces a trill in the right hand. The third system features a more complex harmonic texture with chromaticism. The fourth system has a long melodic line in the right hand. The fifth system concludes with a final cadence.

The other popular practice involved either using a fragment of the chant for imitative treatment (Example 2.5) or the creation of a lyrical *récit* from a transformation of the chant (Example 2.6).³⁷

³⁷ van Wye (1980), 321-322

particular, disliking the poorly-edited or performed chants frequently favoured the so-called *plainchant-musical* settings, especially for feasts, due to their greater simplicity and more modern style. Couperin's *Messe propre pour les couvents*³⁹ provides examples of neutral versets for use with these settings, the requirements of religious orders not seeking specific use of chant.⁴⁰

This means that upon a more detailed examination of the *livres d'orgue*, there is a large quantity of versets not designated to a certain chant but grouped by *ton d'église* to allow for versatility. The work of such composers as André Raison (1650–1719) is a case in point. His first book contains twenty-one versets for each mass which are usable as three seven-verse *Magnificats*.⁴¹

The mass repertoire was not confined to the Paris Gradual, but that the *plainchant-musical* settings were gaining prominence during the late eighteenth century. Mass IV is virtually the only plainchant mass present in the organ masses of French classical era.⁴² Plainsong-based pieces such as those in the style of Titelouze were not the favoured genre and such thoroughly contrapuntal writing had given way to more homophonic and tonally-orientated secular styles.⁴³ This occurred despite many ceremonials insisting that church music should not have any resemblance to secular music.⁴⁴

By the end of the century, the organist and his art were under increasing threat from the forces of the revolution. While the Parisian rite was only to survive until the middle of the nineteenth century, the end of the French classical era marked the beginning of a decline in both organ literature and the liturgical organ.

³⁹ This will be henceforth referred to as 'Mass for the Convents'.

⁴⁰ van Wye (1995), 22

⁴¹ Higginbottom (1995), 139

⁴² van Wye (1995), 20

⁴³ van Wye (1980), 321

⁴⁴ Higginbottom (1981), 32

Chapter 3

From Revolution to Revival: An Overview of Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France

3.1: Introduction: Post-revolutionary survival

During the nineteenth century, fuelled by the Enlightenment and decreasing power of the church, the organ began to acquire roles which took it beyond its traditional place within the liturgy. In France, the forces of revolution and restoration helped to stimulate desire for a secular repertoire for the instrument and the general decline in the solemnity and austerity of liturgical organ music created an appetite for a literature with more drama and expression. This chapter will chart the decline and subsequent rise of the instrument and discuss how perceptions of the organ and its repertoire evolved over the course of the nineteenth century.

The *grand siècle* which had produced Couperin, de Grigny and Marchand came to an abrupt end in 1789, with the storming of the Bastille and the outbreak of the revolution. The Constituent Assembly which followed abolished the privileges previously afforded to the clergy and in attempts to resolve the problem of national debt, proceeded to confiscate the land wealth of the church. The vocation of priesthood became a branch of the government bureaucracy and priests and bishops became employees of the state, paid according to a fixed scale.¹ This was to be just the beginning of over a hundred years of turbulence in the relationship between church and state, which would not be resolved until full separation came about in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The ensuing 'reign of terror' cost countless lives and caused the destruction many cultural assets in favour of more triumphalism and pompous fare of lesser artistic merit. It was also a period of great turbulence for organs and organists. Statistics on the number of organs sold or destroyed provide stark

¹ Gordon Wright: *France in Modern Times* (New York/London: Norton, 1987), 48

empirical evidence of this.² Organists, long held in the patronage of the church, found themselves having to adapt to new demands.

There was a general decline in the standard of playing and in the standard of available instruments.³ The foundation of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique⁴ in 1795, while improving musical standards, nurtured a sense of musical liberation and increased the emphasis on opera and other secular forms. This marked a further decline in the prevalence of solemn church music.⁵

While the composition of pieces in 'severe' styles was still relatively common, public taste tended toward bombastic performances of pieces or improvisations based on the depiction of storms or on the texts of the *Te Deum*, in particular the *Judex crederis* (we believe that thou shalt come to be our judge). In order for organists to continue to survive, it became necessary for them to adapt to reflect the tastes of the period.

It would be either naïve or dishonest in the context of praising the developments of serious organ music later in the century to claim that the higher-quality music of César Franck and his successors was totally removed from the world of the storm or the *Te Deum*. Echoes of these effects remained in the works of the later serious composers, but in the context of a firmer grounding in counterpoint and a firmer respect for harmony. The influence of these bombastic tendencies lived on and became a component part of the music of the late-century masters, indeed further fuelled in part by the possibilities inherent in the orchestral organs of Cavallé-Coll and his

² Orpha Ochse: *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 3, *passim*. There were around 2000 organs in France in 1789, 522 were put up for auction of which 418 perished and 104 survived because they were repurchased cheaply by parishes. These figures are attributed to François Sabatier.

There is further on this in Kimberly Marshall and William J. Peterson: 'Evolutionary Schemes: Organists and Their Revolutionary Music', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 3, *passim*

³ Ochse (1994), 4; There is further on this in Marshall and Peterson (1995), 3, *passim*

⁴ This institution will hereafter be referred to as the Paris Conservatoire or the conservatoire.

⁵ Gerard Brooks: 'French and Belgian Organ Music after 1800', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 263

contemporaries (Cavaillé-Coll included a *tonnerre* lever on many organs which produced the effect of the old custom whereby a plank of wood was placed on the bottom octave of the pedal to simulate thunder).⁶

There were a number of organists of note who managed to maintain their careers during this period. Nicolas Séjan (1745–1819), appointed in 1772 as one of the four organists of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris,⁷ first came to public attention with his improvisation of a *Te Deum* at age thirteen in the presence of Louis-Claude Daquin (1694–1772). Daquin was regarded as one of the finest exponents of the *Te Deum* improvisation, summed up in the quotation:

All has changed at the moment I write this. Ariettes and sarabandes are played during the Elevation of the Host and the chalice; and for the *Te Deum* and vespers, hunting pieces, minuets, romances and rigaudons. Where is that admirable Daquin, who thrilled me so many times? He died in 1772, and the organ with him.⁸

Séjan held organ positions at a number of other key Parisian churches including Saint-Séverin, Saint-Sulpice and the Royal Chapel and was the first professor of organ at both the *École royale de chant* (1789) and the Paris Conservatoire (1795–1802).⁹ Like many of his colleagues, he lost all of his positions during the revolution, but he successfully saved many organs from destruction. As was common during the period, these organs were spared by their new role in providing triumphalist music for republican events and Séjan was one of those who took part in this practice. He returned to position in the Royal Chapel after the restoration¹⁰ in 1814.¹¹ He was described by

⁶ Brooks (1998), 264

⁷ This henceforth will be referred to as Notre Dame. All other schools, cathedrals or institutions containing 'Notre Dame' will be individually identified.

⁸ As quoted in Marshall and Peterson (1995), 12

⁹ The full foundation of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795 included the personnel from the *École royale de chant*. The organ position was discontinued in 1802.

¹⁰ The period which saw the return of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne of France; excepting 'The Hundred Days', this lasted from 1814 to 1830.

¹¹ Eileen Morris Guenther and Herbert C. Turrentine: 'Séjan, Nicolas', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxiii, 53–54

Alexandre Choron¹² as the only great organist left after ‘the disastrous times when there was no longer hope that the art of the organ would be useful’.¹³

Guillaume Lasceux (1740–1831), was best known as a virtuosic organist and one of the men who preserved the art of the *Te Deum*. Like Séjan, he lost his positions and during the ensuing period played for services at the church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont for the Theophilanthropists, who had renamed it *Le Temple de la Piété-filiale*.¹⁴

There are numerous other figures: Claude-Bénigne Balbastre (1727–1799), Jacques-Marie Beauvarlet-Charpentier (1766–1834) who survived some or all of the period by providing music for the secularists.¹⁵ Marshall and Peterson cite an example of Nicolas-Jean Méreaux (1745–1797) and his son Jean-Nicolas playing patriotic melodies in the outdoor festivities to accompany passing parades.¹⁶ This practice of improvising was maintained during the revolutionary years, and sat alongside some composition of fugues and noëls.¹⁷

3.12: The beginnings of a revival

The situation began to improve from the beginning of the nineteenth century. As well as seeing the political benefits of music for propaganda, Napoléon Bonaparte had a personal fondness for music and as such supported the institutions which were improving the cultural life of the empire.¹⁸ Not a religious man, he also saw the value in stabilising the religious system, and that the turbulence of the period after 1789 had caused disruption in people’s lives. On 16 July 1801, he accepted a concordat (which was proclaimed in 1802) recognising Catholicism as the religion of the majority of French people, though not as the state religion. This agreement, drafted by state and church

¹² See section 3.2

¹³ Quoted from Marshall and Peterson (1995), 6–7

¹⁴ Eileen Morris Guenther: ‘Lasceux Guillaume’, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xiv, 291

¹⁵ Marshall and Peterson (1995), 6–7

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 14, *passim*

¹⁸ David Charlton and Elizabeth C. Bartlett: ‘Napoleon I, Emperor of France’, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xvii, 630–633

authorities in Paris and Rome, placed churches and church buildings in the care of bishops (appointed jointly by Roman and French state authorities) and brought bishops and priests onto the state payroll. Rome accepted the revolutionary sale of lands and the political changes and recognised the civil marriages and birth records which arose during the secular revolutionary period. While this concordat received a mixed reaction, it was, in the long term, a shrewd move by Bonaparte, as it increased his popularity and effectively made the church subservient to the French state.¹⁹ A symbol of this *détente* may be found in the presence of the Pope Pius VII (1800–1823) at Napoleon’s coronation in Notre Dame on 2 December 1804.²⁰

The concordat between Napoléon and Pius VII allowed freedom for Catholicism, but this was merely a first step in the restoration of solemn music. Churches were impoverished and reports indicate that in the early decades of the century, there were people avoiding services due to the poor quality of the music, where jigs and other dances were common.²¹ While it is possible to maintain a revisionist stance on the music of the eighteenth century, dance rhythms permeate the music of the *grand siècle*, showing that even before the revolution there was no consensus on the distinction between the relative styles of church and secular music.²²

Later in the century, the primary cause of concern for reformers was the use of excerpts from popular operas, reflecting the public desire for entertainment in the more fashionable wealthier churches.²³ Where there was good music, it was not in the ‘severe’ contrapuntal style, but was rather in a secular militaristic style. An ample demonstration of this is to be seen as early as the coronation of Napoleon in 1804, which included a mass by Giovanni Paisiello²⁴ for two choirs, two orchestras and seventy-seven military

¹⁹ James J. Cooke: *France 1789–1962* (Devon: David and Charles, Connecticut: Archon, 1975), 78–9

²⁰ Wright (1987), 71

²¹ Ochse (1994), 121–126

²² Edward Higginbottom: ‘Ecclesiastical Prescription and Musical Style in French Classical Organ Music’, *OY*, xii (1981), 32–33

²³ Ochse (1994), 125–126

²⁴ Giovanni Paisello (1740–1816): Italian opera composer, appointed organist and director of music at the Royal Chapel in 1801

musicians.²⁵ In fact, the appointment of Paisello (an Italian opera composer) to the position of music director at the Royal Chapel may have been a catalyst which resulted in the increase of secular elements, rather than assisting in the overall improvement in the quality of church music.

The music for the coronation can be seen in the context of the need for church musicians to feed the appetites of the upper classes in their desire for entertainment, an appetite which was to shape liturgical, as well as concert music over the course of the century. To its credit, the concordat did lead to the reopening of churches and the return of organists. The recovery was to be a slow one however, as the impoverished churches did not have the resources to pay organists. As late as 1814, there was a sense of indifference on the part of Napoleon's government to the plight of the churches, many of which had scarcely the resources to repair the damage caused by the Revolution.²⁶

3.2: Developments in organ building

The emergence of the symphonic tradition of organ playing in France owes much to a number of important builders, most notably Aristide Cavallé-Coll, whose instruments were so tightly bound up with the major organist figures of the nineteenth century. There were other firms such as Merklin, Ducroquet and Daublaine-Callinet, but Cavallé-Coll's instruments are those most closely identified with the shift toward a more romantic school.²⁷

Indeed no less a figure than Widor summed it up in the statement: 'Our school owes its creation – I say it without reservation – to the special, magical sound of these instruments'.²⁸ The aesthetic of Cavallé-Coll's organs was much more romantic and orchestral than those up until that point, harnessing new technologies and devices. Of course these advances were not universally accepted, with purist figures such as Félix Danjou referring to the compromising of the organ's integrity and the creation of a secularly-oriented

²⁵ Charlton and Bartlett (2001), 632

²⁶ Ochse (1994), 121

²⁷ Michael Murray: *French Masters of the Organ* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998), 19–20

²⁸ From the preface to the 1932 Widor-Schweitzer Bach edition and quoted in Brooks (1998), 267

instrument.²⁹ The fact is that the post-revolutionary period saw a move towards a more secular view of the organ, while the Cavaillé-Coll instruments allowed both for the 'storms' and colourful effects so beloved of composers such as Lefébure-Wély and for the more 'severe' playing of technical and artistic performers such as Lemmens and later Franck, Guilmant and Widor, amongst others. While they are to be regarded as a catalyst for the creation of the new school, it is important to note that they were a product of the time, responding to the prevalent musical taste.

Cavaillé-Coll arrived in Paris in 1833 and made his mark almost immediately, designing and building what Peter Williams refers to as 'without doubt, the great epoch-marking organ of the nineteenth-century', that of the Abbey of Saint-Denis near Paris.³⁰ At the age of just twenty-two when the contract was awarded, the eight years which elapsed before its completion in 1841 represent a period of formation for the builder, both in terms of his skill and approach and also in terms of his aesthetic views. From the original plan to restore the largely classical Clicquot/Lefèvre organ, there emerged instead a more advanced instrument. The changes from the original plan included the reduction in the number of flutes and mutations, the removal of the free reeds and the inclusion of more strings and overblowing stops.³¹ While the Saint-Denis organ represents a turning point, many stronger examples of Cavaillé-Coll organs followed, most notably at Sainte-Clotilde, Saint-Sulpice, the Madeleine, Notre Dame and the Palais du Trocadéro. By the time of his retirement, he had completed nearly 500 instruments across Western Europe and South America.³²

The basic characteristics of a Cavaillé-Coll organ revolved around the provision of stops of similar power and colour on each manual, which allowed for a gradual crescendo through successive coupling. Each manual would

²⁹ Ochse (1994), 29

³⁰ Peter Williams: *A New History of the Organ: From the Greeks to the Present Day* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1980), 171–2

³¹ *Ibid*; Brooks (1998), 267–270

³² Hans Klotz and Kurt Lueders: 'Cavaillé-Coll, Aristide', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), v, 295–297

have a number of foundation stops, some upperwork with fewer mutations than a standard French classical instrument and reeds at 4', 8' and possibly 16' pitch. The number of solo reeds was reduced, replaced rather with chorus reeds. The pedal consisted of foundations and strong reeds, with little emphasis on upperwork. Because the manuals and pedals each had a similar specification, there was little in terms of contrasts and independent pedal as in German baroque, but on the gradual crescendo through the coupling of manuals.³³ While these instruments were to contribute to vulgar taste by providing further resources for the exploitation of the dramatic improvisers, they were also to provide a way forward; their colours and romantic possibilities inspired Franck and his successors. However, it would first be necessary to redress the balance between improvisation and repertoire and to create a new appreciation for the works of the earlier masters. As noted by Andrew Thomson, this emphasis on colour and virtuosity was to distract from some good quality writing produced as the nineteenth century unfolded.³⁴

3.3: Music education from the revolution to the Schola Cantorum

As with so many aspects of French history, the revolution serves as an important punctuation point in the evolution and development of music education and church-music education in particular. Prior to the Revolution, the most important vehicle for musical formation was the *maîtrise* or choir school in which young male students received an education in theory, singing, plainchant, harmony, composition and organ (as well as possibly other instruments). The association with cathedrals or collegiate churches was advantageous until the revolution closed these churches, and therefore the schools also ceased to exist. The extent of this loss is best elucidated by the fact that it is estimated that there were as many as 500 of these schools operating by the time of the revolution. These institutions were by no means perfect, being deficient in the training of singers for opera and instrumentalists for orchestras. There was also a vast mix of standards across such a large

³³ John S. McIntosh: *The Organ Music of Maurice Duruflé*, unpublished DMA diss. (University of Rochester, 1973), 145–6

³⁴ Andrew Thomson: 'Some Wider Perspectives in French Romantic Music', *OY*, xxxiv (2001), 133

number of regional schools. The recognition of these problems, as well as the lack of a similar musical education for female students beyond private instruction or entry into a private school, led to the establishment of the *École royale de chant* in 1784, directed by François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829). This school laid the groundwork for the Paris Conservatoire. It had its roots in a military band organised in 1789 by Bernard Sarrette (1765–1858), which expanded firstly into the *École de musique militaire* and then an *Institut national de musique*. In 1795, the Convention converted this into a national conservatoire. Closed in 1814 due to the restoration of the monarchy and the beginning of the reign of Louis XIII (1814–1824), the school was reorganised as the *École royale de musique et de declamation* (reopened April 1816). It had the effect of centralising musical education in Paris, as opposed to the network of regional *maî trises* that had been in place before the revolution. However, it was no substitute for the *maî trises* in the area of church music. The collective number of applicants registered for admission to all the classes to which admission is granted by way of examination grew from 280 in 1851 to 903 by 1891 and 1000 by 1914.³⁵

According to Jane Fulcher, it was a functional institution, which aimed to train professionals to serve the state's various musical institutions and theatrical needs, with several republican values, suspicious of tradition and authorities, and a rigorous belief in a meritocracy based on the system of exams.³⁶ There was little emphasis on music history or musicology, an omission exploited by the *Schola Cantorum*³⁷ at the end of the nineteenth century.

Isidor Philipp writes:

The Paris Conservatoire is usually looked upon by the public as some kind of professional school. The idea is that one may embark on an artistic career just as one chooses some manual vocation, technical preparation or artistic aptitude being unnecessary. The Paris Conservatoire, however, is a superior school of learning, into which none are admitted until after they have proved themselves possessed of technical attainments in a degree increasing continually with the artistic worth of the postulant.³⁸

³⁵ Isidor Philipp: 'The French National Conservatory of Music', *MT*, vi/2 (4/1920), 215

³⁶ Jane F. Fulcher: *French Cultural Politics and Music from the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York/Oxford: OUP, 1999), 26

³⁷ See later in this section for further information on the *Schola Cantorum*

³⁸ Philipp (1920), 214

The original plans for the school had included provision for an organ professor, a post held initially by Nicolas Séjan until his dismissal as part of a major reduction in numbers of professors in 1802. Organ training was not resumed at the conservatoire until 1819, when François Benoist (1794–1878) was appointed.³⁹ Benoist had himself been a student at the conservatoire, winning prizes in harmony and piano, as well as the *Prix de Rome* in 1815. According to François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871), he ‘was the only organist in France able to hold his own with the Germans’.⁴⁰ In his fifty-three years as organ professor (1819–1872), he had trained many generations of Paris’s finest musicians many of whom had careers beyond the confines of the gallery including Saint-Saëns, Franck, Bizet, Delibes, Alkan, Dubois, Lefébure-Wély and Massenet.⁴¹

There was little emphasis on organ repertoire in the class of Benoist, or of his successor César Franck. Rather, it was effectively a class in keyboard improvisation which happened to take place at an organ.⁴² The conservatoire competition requirements were unknown in the early years, but by the 1830s, the tests included the improvisation of a four-part accompaniment to a chant, and a four-part fugue on a given subject.⁴³ The emphasis on improvisation was further shown by the addition of a free-theme extemporisation in 1843, and it wasn’t until 1852 that prescribed repertoire was added to the syllabus. The style of the chant accompaniment, modified in 1851 to state that the chant be successively in the soprano and the tenor, shows that despite the efforts of the restorationists a *cantus firmus*-based, chordally-accompanied chant tradition was enduring, and being promoted by the most important musical institution in the land.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ochse (1999), 143–145

⁴⁰ Rollin Smith: *Saint-Saëns and the Organ* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1992), 4 and taken from Félix Danjou: ‘Chronique départementale’, Toulouse: l’Inauguration de l’orgue de Saint-Sernon, *Revue et Gazette musicale*, (13/7/1845), 232

⁴¹ It was joked that ‘three republics and two empires had lived and died under him’, Ochse (1994), 148

⁴² Smith (1992), 5

⁴³ Ochse (1994), 149

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, *passim*

As the conservatoire was focused on more secular musical forms, a number of attempts were made by various figures to improve the quality of church music, which had declined due to the closing of the *maî trises* in the wake of the revolution.⁴⁵ From 1813, attempts were made to re-establish the *maî trises* in some dioceses, but they were not placed on a sound financial footing.⁴⁶ The task of reorganising the schools fell to Alexandre Choron (1771–1834), a prominent figure in the areas of chant and organ music, who had been nominated to revitalise the music in the Royal Chapel and the French cathedrals after the Bourbon restoration.⁴⁷ In 1811, Choron had been charged with re-founding the *maî trises* and had a limited amount of success in this area, it seems, since the rise of the conservatoire and the increase in the number of secular musical careers made these *maî trises* less prestigious than their eighteenth-century equivalents.⁴⁸ Of course by this time competent organists were almost non-existent and churches were being forced to rely on badly-sung chant. As late as 1845, a visitor to Clermont-Ferrand was quoted as saying:

I wanted to go attend High Mass here; but the dreadful organ, the organist, the serpent, that terrible animal which still seeks to ruin music, having ruined the first woman, the singers and priests who rival one another as to who will sing the most out of tune, all that forced me to flee.⁴⁹

Some of the *maî trises* in the major dioceses were given state funding from 1813, but this was insufficient to establish their programmes.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ David Charlton, John Trevitt and Guy Gosselin: 'Paris, 1789–1870, Education', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xix, 109–110

⁴⁶ The prime example being the high-profile school at Notre Dame which basically struggled after it was re-founded. Ochse (1999), 204

⁴⁷ Arthur Hutchings and Hervé Audéon: 'Choron, Alexandre (-Etienne)', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), v, 766

The Bourbon restoration refers to the period between 1814 and 1830, when, after the end of the first republic of Napoleon I, power was returned to the house of Bourbon under Louis XVIII and Charles X. There was one brief period (20 March 1815–29 June 1815) when Napoleon returned from exile, referred to as 'The Hundred Days'. J.P.T. Bury: *France 1814–1940*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 21; Wright (New York/London: Norton 1987), 97–107

⁴⁸ Andre Coeury: 'Present Tendencies of Sacred Music in France', *MQ*, xiii/4 (10/1927), 587; Ochse (1999), 204

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 132

⁵⁰ Jimmy Jess Anthony: *Charles-Marie Widor's Symphonies pour Orgue: Their Artistic Context and Cultural Antecedents*, unpublished DMA diss. (Rochester, Eastman University, 1986), 42

As with many of his contemporaries, Choron was also involved in opera and in his mind the sacred music was an art, which was not totally distinct from secular art.⁵¹ According to Sophie Augustine Leo:

Choron, the director of the institution, was an able teacher, far-sighted and well-grounded, a truly remarkable and most unusual old musician. He was familiar with every important accomplishment in his field, and, wandering among the towering, dust-covered piles of music in his dilapidated old house in the out-of-the-way *Rue de Vaugirard*, he seemed like a walking dictionary of music, interesting and instructive to those who knew how to consult him.⁵²

Choron's greatest contribution however came in the form of his Institution Royal de Musique Classique et Religieuse, founded in 1818.⁵³ This school, which was expanded in 1825, had 150 students by 1830, before financial problems led to its decline.⁵⁴ Leo's memoirs indicate that the generosity of the Duchesse de Berry played a role in the founding of the Choron School, to train children who wished to devote their lives to music. The title, which Leo suggests was chosen to secure state support in the event of political anticlericalism, seems to have been accurate however, as secular music was also taught, reflecting Choron's interests in opera.⁵⁵ Distinct from the *maî trises*, both sexes were taught, and music performed by students included oratorios of Handel, Mozart's *Requiem* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*.⁵⁶ While choral singing was an important feature, organ was taught using the Rinck and Werner organ methods.⁵⁷ Choron had some success in securing funding from the state between 1826 and 1830 however it became victim of Louis-Philippe's⁵⁸ desire to discontinue all expenditure associated with royal privilege.⁵⁹

⁵¹ Coeruy (1927), 587

⁵² Sophie Augustine Leo: 'Musical Life in Paris (1817–1848): A Chapter from the Memoirs of Sophie Augustine Leo', transl. W. Oliver Strunk, *MQ*, xvii/ 3 (7/1931), 389

⁵³ Hutchings and Audéon (2001), 766; Coeruy (1927), 587

⁵⁴ Ochse (1994), 204

⁵⁵ Leo (1931), 389

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ These were organ methods by Johann Christian Rinck (1770–1846) and Johann Gottlieb Werner (1777–1822), edited and translated into French by Choron as *L'école pratique d'orgue* and *Méthode élémentaire pour l'orgue* respectively, Ochse (1999), 205

⁵⁸ Louis Philippe (1773–1850) was 'King of the French' from 1830 to 1848 during the period called the 'July Monarchy'

⁵⁹ Hutchings and Audeon (2001), 766

The anticlerical bias brought about by the July Revolution in 1830 led to the ending of the so-called 'alliance of the throne and altar'. Roman Catholicism was designated the religion of the 'majority of Frenchmen', certain religious orders were expelled, and money to the ministry of public worship was cut.⁶⁰ Choron's school, despite including secular music, was a victim of this movement, and the institution died with its founder.

In the twenty years after Choron's death, there existed no school comparable to his. There were a number of figures whose efforts make the public more aware of and receptive to a more austere sacred music who deserve to be acknowledged here. It is also worth noting here that these efforts at education extend beyond the provision of classrooms and a syllabus. It should also include those figures who educated by exposing the people to music of a greater quality. The 1896 foundation of the Schola Cantorum was a pivotal event, though it came about through the opinion-forming actions of a number of earlier figures.

One such important figure was Charles Gounod (1818–1893).⁶¹ His exposure to the works of Palestrina and Bach during his *Prix de Rome* years, led to the introduction of these composers into the services at the Église des Missions Étrangères in 1845.⁶² He was a revolutionary figure and a firm advocate of Bach and Palestrina many years before the work of Bordes and the *Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais*. Gounod was profoundly religious and an ardent critic of the prevailing musical taste of his day. Friendships with Pauline Viardot⁶³ and Fanny Hensel⁶⁴ exposed him to Bach, Beethoven,

⁶⁰ Bury (2003), 48

⁶¹ That much of his reputation lies in his adaptation of the Bach Prelude No. 1 (*Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, BWV 846) in the form of an *Ave Maria* is unfortunate, especially given the nature of its inception. The piece was originally a setting of lines by Alphonse Lamartine (1790–1869) intended as a gift for a young lady, Rosalie Philidor. The lady's mother, fearing trouble, substituted in the *Ave Maria* for the text and returned it to Gounod, who retouched it himself. Coeruy (1927), 583–4

⁶² Martin Cooper: 'Charles Gounod and his Influence on French Music', *ML*, xxi/1 (1/1940), 50–52

⁶³ Pauline Viardot (1821–1910), French singer and composer of Spanish origin, who was a muse for a host of composers. Beatrix Borcard: 'Viardot, [née García], (Michelle Ferdinande)' Pauline, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxvi, 519–521

Mendelssohn and the writings of Goethe.⁶⁵ The introduction of Bach and Palestrina to the congregations in his church caused much shock and consternation.⁶⁶ He attended the first *Semaine Sainte de Saint-Gervais* in 1893 and wrote to Bordes encouraging him in his endeavours:

It is time in our churches that the flag of liturgical art replaced that of the secular cantilena, and that 'musical fresco' banishes all the marshmallows of romance and all the sugary piety which have spoiled our stomachs for too long. Palestrina and Bach made art music; are thus for us the Fathers of the Church: it is important to remain their sons and I thank you to help me in this.⁶⁷

3.31: The École Niedermeyer

In the 1830s François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871) presented a series of historical concerts in Paris and in 1843 Joseph-Napoleon Ney (1803–1857) founded the *Société de musique religieuse et classique* to perform early choral music.⁶⁸ The key figures who sought to revive and restore church music recognised that this goal needed to include a return to study of the music of the past, one of the features of the École de Musique Religieuse Classique, founded by Louis Niedermeyer (1802–1861) in 1853.⁶⁹ Niedermeyer was a Swiss composer who had gained recognition for music in secular genres. Having studied opera with Rossini in Naples, he was best known for his setting of texts by Hugo and Lamartine. Indeed, it is reported that he used some of the royalties earned from his popular setting of Lamartine's *Le Lac* to establish his school.⁷⁰ After a period in the Papal Chapel, Niedermeyer became devoted to the revival of early music and founded the short-lived

⁶⁴ Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn (1805–1847), German pianist, composer and conductor; sister of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy; Marcia J. Citron: Mendelssohn(-Bartholdy) [Hensel], Fanny (Cäcilie), *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xvi, 388–389

⁶⁵ Cooper (1940), 50–1

⁶⁶ Martin Cooper: *French Music from the Death of Berlioz to the Death of Fauré* (Oxford: OUP, 1951), 12

⁶⁷ Cooper (1940), 59; *Il est temps que le drapeau de l'art liturgique remplace dans nos églises celui de la cantilena profane et que la fresque musicale proscrive toutes les guimauves de la romance et toutes les sucreries de la piété qui ont trop longtemps gâté nos estomacs. Palestrina et Bach ont fait l'art musical, en sont pour nous les Pères de l'Église: il importe que nous restions leurs fils et je vous remercie de nous y aider.*

⁶⁸ Ochse (1999), 205

⁶⁹ Niedermeyer was associated with Ney's society. *Ibid*

⁷⁰ Jessica Duchon: *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), 15–16; James Harding: *Saint-Saëns and His Circle* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1965), 85

Société de musique vocale religieuse et classique.⁷¹ By a decree dated 26 November 1853, a certain number of free scholarships were offered to talented students, nominated by the episcopate.⁷²

The École Niedermeyer, which aimed to train church musicians and to fight against the presence of theatrical music in the liturgy, began with a group of thirty students.⁷³ Religion had an important role, with the students required to attend nightly religious readings and go to mass every Thursday and Sunday.⁷⁴

The restoration of plainchant to its role in the church was Niedermeyer's primary interest and in the school, students were instructed in plainchant and its accompaniment, as well as the elements of music: *sofège*, singing, choral singing, chant, organ accompaniment, figured bass, harmony, fugue, counterpoint, composition, instrumentation and music history.⁷⁵ The emphases were on practical musicianship through tuition on organ and piano. Bach and Mendelssohn formed the nucleus of the organ syllabus, which was taught on two instruments: *pédalier*⁷⁶ and a small twelve-stop organ.⁷⁷ As well as in music, the weekly timetable (preserved as part of a report by Niedermeyer in 1854) includes French (three lessons), Latin (two lessons), arithmetic (one lesson), geography (one lesson), history and literature to which was later added some Italian (one lesson). The classes for this residential school were taught by the clergy of Saint-Louis-d'Antin, who also attended to the students' moral and religious education.⁷⁸

⁷¹ Robert Orledge: *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenberg, 1979), 6–7

⁷² Coeruy (1927), 587–588; Duchon (2000), 15

⁷³ Duchon (2000), 16; Coeruy (1927), 587

⁷⁴ Carlo Caballero: *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 176

⁷⁵ Guy Ferchault and Jaqueline Gachet: '(Niedermeyer, Abraham) Louis', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xvii, 883; Coeruy (1927), 587–589

⁷⁶ *Pédalier*: a piano with pedal board

⁷⁷ Jean-Michel Nectoux: *Gabriel Fauré: His Life through his Letters* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1984), 14–15

⁷⁸ *Ibid*; Coeruy (1927), 587

The school also had an emphasis on choral singing with thrice weekly sessions, directed by Louis Dietsch, choir master at the Madeleine.⁷⁹ The music included was mainly by Josquin, Palestrina, Bach and Victoria, and Gabriel Fauré (arguably one of the school's most famous and successful student) went so far to comment in an interview many years later that at the school, a choir of students performed everything that the *Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais* were to perform thirty-forty years later.⁸⁰

Regardless, the École Niedermeyer gained a reputation as a forward-looking institution, whose ethos seemed so at odds with that of the Paris Conservatoire as to make it attractive to many important teachers including Saint-Saëns. It was the staff who helped to build a broader curriculum around the antiquarian views of the school's founder.⁸¹ His views on music education are summed up by the following quotation: 'for plainchant, we say: Saint Gregory; for sacred music: Palestrina; for the organ J.S. Bach'.⁸² Indeed, despite the fact that the two institutions were never in competition and had different orientations, Bach was an important part of the musical life of the École Niedermeyer long before it was a regular feature at the conservatoire. Unusually for a man whose first interests seem to have been opera and secular music, Niedermeyer spent the remainder of his life promoting church music. His attempts to spread good practice with regard to liturgy and music led to the foundation, with Joseph d'Ortigue, of *La maî trise*, a periodical published from 1857 to 1861. The École Niedermeyer brought organist-composers into contact with the ongoing efforts of the plainchant restoration, at a time when unlike with Choron's school, interest was growing in church music. Niedermeyer himself must be credited with the establishment of a new form of plainchant accompaniment, in which the melody was presented in the top of the texture. The presence of the chant in the upper part, and use of only suitable modal harmonies were the cornerstones of Niedermeyer's *Traité*

⁷⁹ Nectoux (1984), 14

⁸⁰ Caballero (2001), 179; Fauré may be lamenting an injustice whereby Bordes' group got most of the credit for the early music revival.

⁸¹ Stephen Studd: *Saint-Saëns, A Critical Biography* (London: Cygnus Arts, 1999), 47–48

⁸² As cited in Ochse (1994), 208

théorique et pratique de l'accompagnement du plain-chant, prepared in collaboration with d'Ortigue in 1855.⁸³

Due to the efforts of Niedermeyer and his students, his method of accompanying chant became very popular during the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, its influence extended further than that. Niedermeyer's method was seminal in the recognition of the modal nature of chant and made composers understand that in order to properly utilise the Gregorian melodies within an organ composition, it was necessary to recognise that these ancient melodies should not be treated in a tonal context, but rather within a modal language. The organ compositions of the nineteenth century, thus far, had been influenced by the poor performance of the corrupt chants, by low male voices in long notes, with adaptations to make them fit a more diatonic and tonal language. It was both this chant and the predominance of secular styles which were controlling organ composition at the time.⁸⁴ However, with the restoration under way, and interest in church music growing, the time was ripe for a new type of organ composition. This new type of verset was developed by Eugène Gigout (1844–1925) who wrote 650 short modal pieces. Gigout, a student and teacher at the Niedermeyer School, left to establish his own, *École d'orgue, d'improvisation et de plainchant* in 1885, with emphasis on improvisation and chant accompaniment.⁸⁵ It lasted until 1911 when Gigout became professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire. Gigout's school had the skills of the church organist as its primary focus, but as well as improvisation and plainchant accompaniment, there was also a lot of attention given to repertoire.⁸⁶ This school was lauded for its teaching during its short lifetime.

Despite, its success in achieving its goals, the graduates of the *École Niedermeyer* (including Fauré and Gigout) were often treated as outsiders, something which, for example, went against Fauré at the time of his appointment as director of the conservatoire in 1905 and as professor of

⁸³ *Ibid*, 205–207

⁸⁴ van Wye (1974), 5–6

⁸⁵ Ochse (1994), 216–218

⁸⁶ More on this school and its curriculum in Ochse (1994), 214, *passim*

composition before that.⁸⁷ Indeed, the advocates of the organ classes of Widor and Guilmant neglect to mention that Clement Loret (1833–1909), organ teacher at the École Niedermeyer from 1858 had also studied in Brussels with Lemmens.⁸⁸

In 1885, the École Niedermeyer moved under the authority of the Ministry of Fine Arts. This move, along with the renaming to École de musique classique and the discontinuation of the diplomas *maitre de chapelle* and *organiste* led to the school losing its position at the cold-face of church music reform, despite organ and church music remaining the curriculum.⁸⁹

3.32: The Schola Cantorum

The efforts of Choron and Niedermeyer notwithstanding, the most important development in sacred music education in the late nineteenth century came in the form of the Schola Cantorum founded by Charles Bordes (1863–1909), Vincent d'Indy (1851–1931) and Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911). Although d'Indy was to become the seminal figure in the years that followed, he himself acknowledged that Bordes was the founding father:

It is of set purpose that I bestow on Bordes the title of founder of the *Schola*, for, although he was pleased to do the master Alexandre Guilmant and myself the honour of associating us with his work, it is to him, and to him alone, that credit is due for the conception and happy realisation of the idea – the creation of a school in which respect for the art should be the sole spring of action, and where all should be devoted to the service of music, and not, as in most conservatories, with music at the service of all.⁹⁰

Bordes had become *maître* at Saint-Gervais in 1890, after which he founded the *Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais*, an ensemble with which to battle for a superior quality of church music grounded in the past.⁹¹ On 6 June 1894, he held a meeting of individuals (including Guilmant and d'Indy) in order to further the goal of performing early music. The resulting society, *Schola*

⁸⁷ Duchon (2000), 153

⁸⁸ See section 3.6 for more on the influence of Lemmens as a teacher.

⁸⁹ Ochse (1994), 207

⁹⁰ d'Indy as quoted in Coeruy (1927), 590

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 588–9

Cantorum was born, with the four objectives of restoring plainchant executed according to the Gregorian tradition, the return to honour of the music of the Palestrina style, the creation of a modern repertoire inspired by Gregorian and Palestrinian traditions, and the improvement of organ repertoire with relation to chant and liturgy.⁹² *Le ménestrel* on 8 July 1894 reported on a recent meeting held at Saint-Gervais laying out the first three of the above objectives.⁹³ The society founded a new magazine, *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, to further these goals. It included articles on Palestrina, chant and music history, as well as reports on Schola activities and articles about early organ music.⁹⁴

While the society utilised the magazine to spread their goals, they turned to a more ambitious means by which to further do so. In 1896 the Schola Cantorum, École de chant liturgique et de musique religieuse accepted its first students. The school in some ways marks the culmination of a century's work in the improvement of liturgical music, and was viewed by some as the revival of the ancient Schola of Saint Gregory.⁹⁵ d'Indy summed it up:

All, singers and instrumentalists, as well as composers, will be expected to study more or less profoundly, and at least be familiar with, Gregorian chant, the medieval liturgical melodies, and the religious works of the epoch of vocal polyphony.⁹⁶

The competitions of the conservatoire model were absent, and further activities such as field trips to Solesmes to study chant performance made the Schola Cantorum an important institution in terms of Gregorian chant and its relationship with the organ. At the beginning of its life the school offered two courses: free elementary classes and more advanced fee-paying tuition. Amongst the free classes were *solfège*, Gregorian chant, keyboard and vocal ensemble, while the fee-paying students could study history and palaeography, organ, harmony, counterpoint and composition. The initial hope that the free classes would attract singers from the churches thus improving

⁹² Ochse (1994), 220; Coeruy (1927), 590

⁹³ Nectoux (1984), 227 footnote and from *Le ménestrel* (8/7/1894), 216

⁹⁴ Ochse (1994), 220

⁹⁵ Ochse (1994), 219–223; Coeruy (1927), 589–593

⁹⁶ Coeruy (1927), 591

the standards were disappointed, but the fee-paying classes prospered.⁹⁷ Despite the change in title to *École supérieure de musique*⁹⁸ in 1900 and the expansion to include studies other than church music, it remained influential throughout the twentieth century.⁹⁹

In terms of its impact on composition, the Schola's influence was slightly more direct than that of the *École Niedermeyer*. In the works of the Niedermeyer graduates, the fingerprints of chant are felt in the use of modal language and in the production of melodies with a Gregorian 'flavour'. Among the Schola Cantorum composers, the goal was to use the actual chants and integrate them into original music. Indeed some, including d'Indy saw the use of these chants as a symbolic element,¹⁰⁰ using them in otherwise secular works.¹⁰¹

The Schola Cantorum was to have a profound impact not only in terms of its musical outlook but also in terms of its position in the political scene. (This complex topic is explored in great detail by scholars such as Jane Fulcher suffice it to say that the Schola and the Paris Conservatoire were seen as having two rival positions.) The Schola, under the direction of the politically active d'Indy, sought to challenge the state control of education through the conservatoire.¹⁰² d'Indy was a fervent anti-Dreyfusard¹⁰³ and anti-Semite, who tried always to create a modern social art, based on Catholic values, through educational reform.¹⁰⁴ The Schola leaders sought to increase the authority of the Roman church in the third republic, and saw their institute as a means by which to serve faith and music of the faith together, intertwining Catholicism and art.¹⁰⁵ In the words of Andrew Thomson:

d'Indy saw his task in terms of education and propaganda, founding the Schola Cantorum with Bordes and Guilmant, and bringing the artistic heritage of Catholic civilisation out of its beleaguered fortress into the modern world.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ Ochse (1994), 221

⁹⁸ Coeruy (1927) has this name too, 590

⁹⁹ Ochse (1994), 221–222

¹⁰⁰ This concept will be revisited later particularly in relation to Olivier Messiaen.

¹⁰¹ Caballero (2001), 179

¹⁰² Fulcher (1999), 6–30

¹⁰³ The term 'anti-Dreyfusard' refers to the side taken in the case of Alfred Dreyfus, who was wrongly convicted of being a German spy in 1894. The subsequent cover up and scandal was a polarising influence in France at the turn of the century.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Thomson: 'Man of Action', *MT*, cxxxviii/1848 (2/1997), 18–19

¹⁰⁵ Caballero (2001), 180

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Thomson: 'Forgotten Frenchmen: Widor and d'Indy', *MT*, cxxxv/1812 (2/1994), 81

It did have an impact on the curriculum of the Paris Conservatoire, its determination to studying the great music of the past finally forcing the older institution to take more notice of the area of historical musicology. The inclusion of music theory and history in the curriculum of the University of Paris may also be due to the influence of the Schola.¹⁰⁷

It would also be remiss in this section not to remark on the existence of the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles, founded by Valentin Haüy in 1784, as the Institution Royale des Jeunes Aveugles. Counting Louis Braille among its alumni, its first organ class opened in 1826, it was largely responsible for the fact that by 1833, fourteen Parisian churches had blind organists and by 1835, there was a further twenty throughout France. Still in existence, it contributed to the formation of Jean Langlais and Gaston Litaize, to name but two.¹⁰⁸

3.4: Improvisation in the early nineteenth century

By 1840 the emphasis in France was still on improvised music with organists having little or no interest in composed repertoire.¹⁰⁹ This was exacerbated by the emphasis on improvisation in Benoist's organ class at the conservatoire. The reinstatement of this class in 1817 marked the beginning of a long journey to improve both technical playing and the perceptions of the organ and its repertoire. Classes involved plainchant improvisation of fugue on a given subject, improvisation of a piece in sonata form on a free theme and performance from memory of a piece of organ repertoire.¹¹⁰ Saint-Saëns noted that he was 'a very mediocre organist but an admirable teacher and a veritable galaxy of talent left his class.'¹¹¹ The grouping of the organ class with composition and harmony during the reorganisation of 1848 is summed up in Constant Pierre's quote 'the study of this instrument, which exists principally for improvisation, is inextricably bound to the study of harmony and

¹⁰⁷ Charles B. Paul: 'Rameau, d'Indy and French Nationalism, *MQ*, lviii/1 (1/1972), 55

¹⁰⁸ Ann Labounsky: *Jean Langlais, The Man and His Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2000), 30–32

¹⁰⁹ Ochse (1994), 31

¹¹⁰ Smith (1992), 5–6

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 4

composition, both indispensable to the organist'.¹¹² The historical significance of this is dealt with earlier in this work; however the post-revolutionary triumphalism coupled with secularisation led to both religious and secular events being full of colourful improvisation at the expense of serious, composed repertoire.

Secular public performances were increasing as the practice of organ inauguration gave impetus to the use of the organ outside of the liturgy. However, these events were initially designed to demonstrate the instruments through colourful improvisation and had little room for the performance of 'severe' repertoire.¹¹³

The public enthusiasm for these events, which were quite often in poor taste, reflected the desire for music in a frivolous style. The talent of performers such as Louis-James-Alfred Lefébure-Wély (1817–1869) contributed to this. Of the figures to emerge from Benoist's class, Lefébure-Wély in particular was a figure of some interest, not least in that his populist style of playing was reminiscent of the poor taste prevalent after the revolution. He was first prize winner in Benoist's class in 1835, and went on to have a successful career as organist of the Madeleine (1847–1857) and Saint-Sulpice (1863–1869). He had considerable skill as a performer with an exceptional pedal technique, which attracted the dedications for Alkan's *Douze études pour les pieds seulement* and Franck's *Final*. Despite being stereotyped as not serious, he was a composer of some fine, if rather light, music.¹¹⁴

As Harvey Grace acknowledged in the early part of the twentieth century:

Lefébure-Wély and Batiste, two men whose compositions show but few traces of their undoubted gifts, left things rather worse than they found them, though we may place to their credit the tact that their cheerful strains did much to popularise the instrument itself, and so paved the way for better things.¹¹⁵

¹¹² *Ibid*, 5–6 and taken from Constant Pierre: *La Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900), 358

¹¹³ Ochse (1994), 7–11

¹¹⁴ Rollin Smith: *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 169

¹¹⁵ Harvey Grace: 'Modern French Organ Music' *PMA*, 44th Sess. (1917–1918), 153–166

3.5: The re-emergence of repertoire

By the middle of the century, the 'modern' serious organ repertoire, emerging throughout Europe was not being mirrored in France. On the contrary, organists such as Boëly attempting to publish some works in the 1840s (preludes, fugues and chorale-prelude style pieces) found a lack of interest in serious music. Boëly, the successor to the French classicists such as François Couperin on one hand and the 'French Bach' on the other, was one of the first serious organ composers in France after the revolution. In 1834, he was named provisional organist of Saint-Gervais (the Couperin church), a post which he held for four years. In 1840 he was appointed to the Church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.¹¹⁶ He was one of the first in France to play Bach and indeed it is possible that his organ in Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois was one of the first organs in Paris capable of a realisation of German baroque music. This classically-minded musician was described by Joseph Ortique as one of the few French organists who could play Bach, 'with an ease of fingering, a purity of style and a severity of harmony worthy of Bach'.¹¹⁷ He was admired by those who refused to have their artistic integrity compromised by the poor taste of the day and his position as a rare neo-classicist in this era endeared him to later composers such as Franck and Saint-Saëns.¹¹⁸ His preludes, fugues, and chorale-prelude style works were the first of their kind to be written by a French composer and mark him out as a pioneer. The efforts of Boëly, however, suffered from a lack of interest in the serious organ repertoire, and they reflect the increasingly secular views of those who were to listen to his music.

As well as in the emerging non-liturgical organ world, the organ music of the religious service was not immune from frivolity, with waltzes and adapted operatic arias being popular.¹¹⁹ The exploitation of the new organs to satisfy

¹¹⁶ Craig Cramer: Boëly's *Quatorze Préludes sur des cantiques de Denizot*, op.15, and the Creation of a French "Christmas" Orgelbüchlein', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 37–41

¹¹⁷ As quoted in Smith (1992), 2–3

¹¹⁸ Brigitte François-Sappey: 'Boëly, Alexandre Pierre François', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), iii, 780

¹¹⁹ Brian Rees: *Camille Saint-Saëns, A Life* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999), 64

the vulgar tastes of the French elite was summed up by Louis Vierne many years later:

Disregarding the meaning of the texts which they set to music, the composers wantonly distorted them, enlivening certain prayers with tunes of drinking songs, embellishing hymns of serene joy with tra-la-las worthy of a roadside inn...¹²⁰

There were those who sought to elevate the role of the organist and church musician into that of an artist, however in many cases this was not easy due to the need for organists to satisfy those who were paying their salaries.

Orpha Ochse places this in context:

Although Fétis, Danjou and Niedermeyer urged incorporating more contrapuntal music (especially German contrapuntal music) into the organ repertoire, no one objected to a good songlike melody, a sprightly rhythm or an energetic march. It was the direct quotation from the opera, the too-obvious hunting song, the excessive dramatic descriptive improvisation that went beyond the limits of the acceptable

3.6: Revival: Lemmens and Bach

The revival of interest in Bach throughout Europe in the early decades of the nineteenth century was the catalyst for the renewal of the instrument in general. The Enlightenment in Germany had changed the relationship between church and society and after the Napoleonic wars the chorale regained its place in the Lutheran liturgy, in a manner not entirely dissimilar to the way chant was to return to the Catholic churches.¹²¹ Despite the increased interest in Bach from the 1820s onward, the first publication of his organ music by Peters (1845–1847) was barely noted in France, except by two figures: the unappreciated Boëly and the reclusive Charles-Valetin Alkan (1813–1888).¹²² Alkan is better known for his contributions to piano repertoire and he was a *premier prix* winner (1834) in Benoist's organ class. Referred to by Franck as 'poet of the piano'¹²³, his 'organ' pieces were primarily written for the *pédalier*, an instrument he believed would improve awareness of Bach and provide a contribution to the organ and the standing

¹²⁰ Louis Vierne as quoted in Rollin Smith: *Louis Vierne: Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1999), 225

¹²¹ Graham Barber: 'German Organ Music after 1800', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 250–253

¹²² Andrew Thomson: *The Life and Times of Charles-Marie Widor: 1844–1937* (Oxford: OUP, 1989), 1

¹²³ Rollin Smith: *Playing the Organ Works of Franck* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1997), 81

of its repertoire. It was Alkan's contention that French organists were not particularly concerned with (nor skilled in) the clarity required to perform the works of Bach and that hearing the intricacies of the counterpoint on the *pédalier* would improve their popularity.¹²⁴ This in some ways suggests that Alkan believed that the French public and indeed French organist appreciation of Bach was influenced by a lack of exposure to a clear playing of the counterpoint.

It is fitting that one of the great influences on the perception of Bach occurred in the 1850s with the visit to Paris of the influential Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens (1823–1881).

Born in Belgium, Lemmens studied with his father, before working with Christian Girschner and Fétis in Brussels.¹²⁵ This preceded his period in Breslau (1846–1847), where he studied with Adolph Hesse (1808–1863). Lemmens traced his lineage from Bach's student Johann Christian Kittel (1732–1809), who taught Johann Christian Rinck (1770–1856), who taught Adolph Friedrich Hesse (1808–1863). Lemmens spent several months with Hesse in Breslau (1846–1847) however it is unclear how much influence Hesse had on him, having developed a dislike for the young Belgian. His appointment as professor of organ at the Brussels Conservatoire in 1849 was the culmination of the efforts of Fétis in his quest to improve the standard of organ playing in Belgium. Despite settling in London in 1869, he returned to found the *École de Musique Religieuse* in 1878 (now the Lemmens Institute in Mechelen), further contributing to church music through his co-founding of the *Société de Saint-Grégoire* with Canon Van Demme.¹²⁶

In the 1850s Lemmens' visits to Paris marked an important point in the development of serious organ playing. At the inauguration of the organ of

¹²⁴ William Alexander Eddie: *Charles Valentin Alkan, His Life and His Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 143 *passim*

¹²⁵ François Sabatier: 'Lemmens, Jaak Nikolaas [Jacques Nicolas]', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xiv, 541–542

¹²⁶ *Ibid*

Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in 1852, his playing of Bach astounded those present.

One Parisian journalist wrote:

This is sheer gymnastics; toe-and-heel work, leaps and slides, double octaves, repeated chords and arpeggios, rapid scale-passages, arpeggios and trills – all executed with an attack and a certainty of touch that many an organist here would like to achieve with his hands.¹²⁷

Benoist, at that stage professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire, commented:

What has struck me above all, is this calm and religious grandeur and this purity of style which is so fitting to the majesty of the temple of God.¹²⁸

In 1927 Widor himself recalled that 'not one of those who heard Lemmens could forget the clarity, the power, the grandeur of his playing'.¹²⁹ Cavaillé-Coll for his part believed that he 'laid the foundation of the true art of the organ',¹³⁰ and insisted that he had discovered in Lemmens a player who could properly exploit his instruments. In Widor's words:

For Cavaillé, this was the light. He found in the style of the master virtuoso the general rules he had missed until then, the principles which are essential.¹³¹

Cavaillé-Coll followed up on this admiration by encouraging Widor, Guilmant and Loret to travel to Brussels to study with Lemmens, laying the foundations for the new serious French organ school.¹³² He had initially hoped to lure Lemmens to Paris, specifically to the organ position at Saint-Sulpice, however when he was unsuccessful in this endeavour, he began sponsoring young organists of talent to go to Belgium to study instead, believing that there was no comparable figure in France.

¹²⁷ As quoted in Léon Vallas: *César Franck* (London: Harrap and Co. 1951), 103

¹²⁸ Rees (1999), 65; John R. Near: *The Life and Work of Charles-Marie Widor*, unpublished DMA diss. (Boston University, 1985), 21

¹²⁹ As quoted in William J. Peterson: 'Lemmens, His *École d'orgue* and Nineteenth-Century Organ Methods', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 51, *passim*

¹³⁰ Thomson (1989), 3

¹³¹ Near (1985), 21

¹³² Thomson (1989), 3

Lemmens was one of the first composers to encourage the use of plainchant melodies in organ composition, and did so in a number of works.¹³³ He himself was very critical of the French post-revolutionary style having written:

Our old cathedrals become indignant when one turns them giddy with these um pah pahs,...these tunes, excerpts, strains, and trite notions,...Now when will French organists understand that their instrument demands only majestic ideas, a broad style, grandiose effects, exalted melodies, rich harmony, and solemn execution? Mr Lefébure-Wély is very young; he can still acquire what is lacking in his talent; we urge him to study, to imitate the two fine models that he has before him, Messr. Boely, organist of Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois, and Benoist, professor at the conservatory; these are the two great artists who know how to respect their art, and who do not prostitute our organs with the barcarolle, contra dance, gallop, waltz, and polka.¹³⁴

While Cavallé-Coll had used the skills and popularity of Lefébure-Wély on a number of occasions to inaugurate his instruments, he came to realise that it would be through the Lemmens tradition that the art of organ playing could renew itself. His sponsorship of Widor and others was part of that plan.

Lemmens's claim to be an heir to the true Bach style from his work with Hesse must be treated carefully. His advocacy of pure legato in the playing of baroque music, for example, is something which we would have little regard for today. However, what is not in doubt is his legacy, both as a teacher and also for the influence which he had on those organists of the mid-nineteenth century (Franck, Fessy, Benoist, Alkan, Saint-Saëns et al.), who learned from his playing just what could be achieved through a disciplined learning of technique and repertoire rather than merely through flamboyant improvisation. Cavallé-Coll's part in exposing the Parisian organists to Lemmens deserves recognition also.

3.7: Saint-Saëns and Franck: the classicist versus the romantic

The organ, by its breadth of tone and its incomparable calm, lends itself admirable to religious music, but it was not invented for the latter.¹³⁵

Among those present to hear Lemmens in 1852 in Saint-Vincent-de-Paul were two important and influential figures in French musical life, both of whom

¹³³ Ochse (1994), 138

¹³⁴ Near (1985), 18–19; Near dates this from a letter of 1877 from Lemmens to Cavallé-Coll, which seems unlikely as Lefébure-Wély died in 1869.

¹³⁵ Saint-Saëns (1916), 2

were not exclusively organists/organ composers, but whose connections with the instrument were important, albeit in different ways.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) had been a student of Boëly and Benoist and indeed it was the former's devotion to classical forms which would have an effect stretching beyond his association with the organ. He entered Benoist's class at the conservatoire in 1848, describing his teacher years later as 'a very mediocre organist but an admirable teacher'.¹³⁶ In 1853, he became the organist at the Église de Saint-Merri and in 1857, he was appointed to the fashionable church of the Madeleine, in succession to Lefébure-Wély. While undoubtedly an honour for someone of his age, it was to be the sheer contrast in style and taste between him and his predecessor which was to lead to his departure from the post in 1877. Like his teacher Boëly, he strived for a higher standard of music and he grew frustrated at the reaction of the clergy who believed that the wealthy parishioners' musical tastes needed to be indulged.¹³⁷

The Madeleine was the official church of the Second Empire and it was this status which gave it prestige among the churches of Paris.¹³⁸ With its vast Cavaillé-Coll (the second largest after Saint-Sulpice), it was a popular church for the upper classes of Paris. Saint-Saëns' 'severe' style of playing, when compared to that of Lefébure-Wély, caused numerous disputes with the clergy. Many references are to be found to various clerics requesting music which was less serious and more fitting the tastes of the opera-going public.¹³⁹ Indeed, it was in part this disillusionment which contributed to his departure in 1877.

Another time, after I had played at a wedding the delightful *Saint Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds* of Liszt, the officiating priest called me into the sacristy to tell me that 'it sounded as if I were tuning the organ and if I went on

¹³⁶ Smith (1992), 4–5

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 104–6

¹³⁸ Rees (1999), 87–88

¹³⁹ An amusing tale told by Saint-Saëns speaks of his presence being requested by a cleric to complain about the 'severity' of the music played, which lacked the drama and entertainment value of that played by his predecessor Lefébure-Wély. Saint-Saëns' reply went as follows: 'M. l'Abbé, whenever I shall hear the dialogue of *Opéra-Comique* spoken in the pulpit, I will play music appropriate to it; until then I will continue as hitherto'. Camille Saint-Saëns: 'Music in the Church', *MQ*, ii/1 (1/1916), 7

that way they would engage another organist'. 'I will go whenever it may be desired,' was my answer. But I did not go until I myself desired.¹⁴⁰

This was to be his final titular post, although he was made honorary organist of Saint-Séverin in 1897, at the request of his pupil Albert Perilhou.¹⁴¹

Remarkably Saint-Saëns composed a mere four works: the *Fantaisie in E flat*, the *Trois rhapsodies sur des cantiques Bretons*, *Élévation ou communion* and *Benediction nuptiale* during his twenty-five year career as a liturgical organist. The delineation between church and concert organ music was beginning to become apparent. While the *Élévation ou communion* (included in a collection of sacred music), and the *Benediction nuptiale* are liturgical as their titles suggest, the *Fantaisie* is a show piece, which was however described by Henri Blanchard as 'serious, elegant and religious'.¹⁴²

The *Rhapsodies* were to feature in the composer's recital in the Trocadéro in September 1878 alongside Bach and Liszt reflecting the secular aesthetic of the series there.¹⁴³ The devotion to Bach was also a factor, however Saint-Saëns didn't consider Bach suitable for the Catholic liturgy, believing that the music was too Lutheran.¹⁴⁴ He also refers to pre-composed music creating a sense of sameness between different churches, since organists have a lot of common repertoire. It is believed that he did play some written music at Saint-Merry, mainly Bach, but that the virtuosity was inclined to compromise the ability of the preludes and fugues to enhance worship. This is indeed an interesting point as it implies that the distinction between sacred and secular music was growing.¹⁴⁵ However he also maintained that it was impossible to totally distinguish secular and sacred art.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁴¹ Smith (1992), 140

¹⁴² As quoted in Smith (1995), 35

¹⁴³ This was the first performance in outside of Germany of Liszt's *Ad nos, ad salutarem undam*, Smith (1992), 115.

Rollin Smith: 'The Organ of the Trocadéro and its Players', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 294

¹⁴⁴ Smith (1992), 59

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁶ Saint-Saëns (1916), 1

Despite being younger than César Franck, Saint-Saëns was a composer who represented the older traditions based on classical forms. He took as his primary models the music of the baroque and classical masters, and maintained his devotion to form over emotion throughout a long life which began when the seeds of romanticism were being sown in the 1830s, and endured through to the third decade of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁷ His musical output stretches across all of the prevalent forms of this era, as did his views on a variety of topics from literature to philosophy and music. Due to his success in the genre of symphony and to a certain extent opera and also to the non-innovative nature of his output for the instrument, his place as an organ composer tends to be forgotten.

At first glance, there are many similarities between Saint-Saëns and Franck. Both were regarded as serious performers, as distinct from more populist characters like Lefébure-Wely. Both were renowned as improvisers, and for both, organ performance was secondary to composition.¹⁴⁸ Franck's list of works attests to this, having only written a dozen significant organ pieces. These works however, are markedly different in style and aesthetic to those of Saint-Saëns. The terms *symphonique* and *héroïque* help to imply this, and although Franck did have great admiration for Bach, his *Pastorale* owes less to the baroque keyboard form and more to the nineteenth-century 'storm' piece.¹⁴⁹ They are all regarded as 'severe' in the same way as those of Saint-Saëns and they combine Bach and Beethoven in a new style which lacks the wit and gaiety typical of French music.¹⁵⁰ The *Final* may indeed have the Second-Empire bombast which was characteristic of its dedicatee Lefébure-Wely, but these pieces represent a milestone in the development of a new repertoire.

It is acknowledged that all of Franck's larger organ works were conceived for concert performance, although there are some figures (d'Indy included) who

¹⁴⁷ Scott Fruehwald: 'Saint-Saëns's Views on Music and Musicians', *IRASM*, xv/2 (12/1984), 159

¹⁴⁸ Ochse (1994), 58–59

¹⁴⁹ Lawrence Archbold: 'Franck's Organ Music and its Legacy', *NCM*, xii/1 (Summer 1988), 56

¹⁵⁰ W. Wright Roberts: 'César Franck', *ML*, iii/4 (10/1922), 317–318

refer to the first collection (*Six pièces*) as being a representation of the *sorties* which he improvised at Sainte-Clotilde.¹⁵¹ The *Trois pièces* were composed for the series at the Trocadéro in 1878 and the scale of the *Trois chorales* implies a secular venue. Vallas asserts that upon his appointment to Sainte-Clotilde in 1858 ‘the time had arrived in his career for him to be no longer satisfied with the ordinary organist’s repertoire and those improvisations which, along with accompanying the plainchant, seem to have been the limit of his liturgical duties’.¹⁵² This appointment, along with the impact of the performances of Lemmens in the 1850s inspired him to become a more diligent performer, and his technique improved sufficiently to make Bach a regular occurrence at Sainte-Clotilde. The period from 1860 to 1862 produced the *Six pièces*, important works in the development of the French romantic style.

In terms of the later scope of this work, the key important work is the *Grand pièce symphonique*, due to its influence on the development of the French symphonic tradition. This piece, a composition on a large scale, could be seen as a step towards the expansive organ symphonies of Widor and Guilmant.¹⁵³ Tournemire calls this piece a ‘romantic sonata’ and d’Indy agrees, characterising the organ symphony retrospectively as having grown from the notion of a sonata with timbres.¹⁵⁴ The dedication to Charles Alkan confirms that the latter’s symphony for solo piano had an impact on this piece, and of course, Franck’s comments on the orchestral nature of the Cavallé-Coll organ are well known. It is a natural successor to the sonatas of Mendelssohn, the fantasy and fugue of Liszt and Reubke’s sonata and represents a further step on the way to the romantic symphony.¹⁵⁵

Despite the organ’s relationship with the church, the *Six pièces* should not be seen as religious works. They are of huge importance for the quality and seriousness of their content, described by Vallas as the ‘best pieces in an era

¹⁵¹ Archbold (1988), 55

¹⁵² Vallas (1951), 113

¹⁵³ Vallas (1951), 120

¹⁵⁴ d’Indy in 1922 cited by Tournemire and quoted in Smith (1997), 82

¹⁵⁵ Smith (1997), 79–80

of the worst possible taste quote'.¹⁵⁶ The growth of serious organ playing was strengthened by Franck's status as a concert organist during his employment by Cavallé-Coll.

Fifteen years separated the publication of the *Six pièces* and his second important collection of organ music, the *Trois pièces* in 1883. The fact that these pieces were written for and first performed during the recital series to mark the inauguration of the organ of the Trocadéro is the proof of their secular nature. Indeed it is with this event that, the organ finally could finally be seen to break out of its dependency on the church. The thirteenth of the fifteen recitals comprised Frank's *Trois pièces*, *Grand pièce symphonique* and two improvisations on secular themes. A glance at the fifteen programmes reveals that the secular organ recital had matured; the free concerts included works by Liszt, Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, the first performance of Widor's sixth symphony and music by all the well-regarded French organists.¹⁵⁷ It should be borne in mind that by the late 1870s, Paris had grown from a place of cultural vulgarity to a vibrant serious centre for organ playing.

While the religious nature of Franck's twelve large organ pieces is debated, the secular nature of them is hard to disguise. Andre Coeruy's statement that 'they attain a height of religious fervour akin to that of his oratorios'¹⁵⁸ provides an example of the overstatement common amongst those intent on promoting the 'Franckian legend'. The 'inherent seriousness' referred to by Michael Murray accurately sums up the impact of these pieces on a musical culture beset by poor musical taste.¹⁵⁹ Franck managed to confound the belief that French composers were unable to write symphonic or absolute music.¹⁶⁰

As well as the direct influence of his compositions, one cannot underestimate the impact of Franck's teaching, particularly 'the spiritual, mystical motivation for composition and for organ improvisation' which he bestowed upon his

¹⁵⁶ Vallas (1951), 121

¹⁵⁷ Smith (1995), 275–308

¹⁵⁸ Coeruy (1927), 585

¹⁵⁹ Murray (1998), 81

¹⁶⁰ Thomson (2001), 133

students.¹⁶¹ This will be examined later especially with reference to Charles Tournemire.

3.8: Conclusion

By the death of Franck in 1890, just over one hundred years after the beginning of the revolution which shaped so much, the landscape of French organ playing had been transformed. The instrument had undergone a gradual transformation from the pre-revolution organ to the Cavallé-Coll style orchestral instrument. The cross fertilisation of the bombast of the post revolutionary period with the influence of Bach and Lemmens and the determination to create a written repertoire changed the views of the instrument. The fluctuating power and influence of the church forced the re-evaluation of the organ as an instrument beyond the confines of the stained-glass and incense-flavoured churches, cathedrals and basilicas. The building of the first concert hall organ in France in the Palais du Trocadéro marked a watershed and the secular recitals which filled the hall from 1878 brought new dimensions to the views of the organ. The symphonic school as summed up by Franck and Cavallé-Coll was to prove to be just a seed which was to grow and prosper with Widor, Vierne and Dupré.

¹⁶¹ Nicholas Kaye: 'Tournemire, Charles (Arnould)', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxv, 656

Chapter 4

Liturgy I: Gigout and Guilmant

4.1: Introduction

In continuation of the discussion regarding the practices and politics of Gallicanism in chapter 1, this chapter will trace some of the developments in the use of chant in smaller forms, specifically forms connected to the organ's relationship with the liturgy. This discussion will focus on how the treatment of versets and other smaller forms evolved over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century rather than on the versions of the chant melodies used.

As we saw in chapter 2, *Missa cunctipotens* (Mass IV), was almost the only chant mass utilised in the organ masses of the Louisquatorzian composers. However, a glance at the organ masses written between 1750 and 1850 shows that it was one of several. Alongside these organ works based on traditional plainchant, there were an increasing number which utilized the popular *plainchant-musical*¹ settings such as the *Messe du premier ton* by Henri Dumont which combined elements of plainchant with contemporary tonal sensibilities.² These simpler settings were very popular especially among religious orders and contributed to the tendency towards non chant-based versets; more neutral suites of pieces based on a particular tonality were in the majority.³ This was by no means a new development in the nineteenth century and Couperin's *Messe pour les couvents* provides one high-profile example from before the revolution.⁴

While the independence of the French dioceses meant that there were multiple liturgies in use across France until the middle of the nineteenth century, only that of the Parisian rite survives. In addition, only a small corpus of music lasts from this century, most likely due to the popularity of

¹ See chapter 2, section 2.3

² Benjamin van Wye: 'Organ Music in the Mass of the Parisian Rite to 1850 with Emphasis on the Contributions of Boëly', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 20–22

³ *Ibid*, 22

⁴ See chapter 2, section 2.3

improvisation. It is also likely that these published masses were aimed at the less-skilled organists from the non-Parisian dioceses which employed the Parisian rite. Most of these masses followed the pre-revolutionary practice whereby there were a mix of plainchant-based and free composed versets as required by the *Caermoniale Parisiense*.⁵ Naturally, the quality of versets based on chant was directly related to the prevalent style of chant singing. For the most part, the chant was sung slowly in long notes and accompanied by a serpent,⁶ ophicleide⁷ or double bass. The plainchant in the bass (*en basse*) versets of Corrette, Fessy and Lasceaux imitated the character of this monotonous singing and the directionless, unstructured counterpoint which they often placed above the *cantus firmus* had echoes of the poor quality *chant sur le livre*, discussed in chapter 2.⁸

4.2: Alexandre Pierre François Boëly – pioneer?

Before the emergence of Alexandre Pierre François Boëly as a key figure, the quality of organ playing at services had descended to a very poor level.⁹ Rather than engage in the meandering counterpoint of his peers in his *plainchant en basse* settings, Boëly's versets are of a markedly higher quality, and closer to the *grand siècle* masters.

When M. Boëly gives out the intonation of a plainsong he places the melody in the bass as do all his colleagues, but faithful to sound traditions, he avoids playing above that melody the monotonous succession of sixths which tire the most robust ear. Under his fingers the chant serves as a foundation for simple but magnificent combinations of fugal counterpoint.¹⁰

⁵ van Wye (1995), 23, *passim*

⁶ Obsolete bass member of *cornett* family, 8' long and roughly S-shaped, hence the name. Made of wood, sometimes of metal; had six fingerholes and sometimes keys. First introduced in France towards end of sixteenth century, where it was used in church to double male voices. Became popular military-band instrument and was in use in English church bands to mid-nineteenth century. *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Kennessy, 587, 'Serpent'

⁷ Obsolete keyed brass instrument of conical bore and played with cup mouthpiece. Was a development of the serpent and existed in alto, bass, and double-bass sizes, but only the bass was much used. Was used in military bands and is also included in early scores of Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Verdi and Wagner. Superseded by the bass tuba, *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Kennessy, 465, 'Ophicleide'

⁸ van Wye (1995), 31

⁹ Orpha Ochse: *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 121

¹⁰ As quoted in van Wye (1995), 32 and from Joseph d'Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plainchant et de musique d'église au moyen âge et dans les temps modernes* (New York: Da Capo, 1854/1971), col. 78

Boëly could be regarded the most important composer for the organ between the time of the revolution and the time of Franck.¹¹ He was the first French composer to make significant use of the pedals, having had a 'German' pedal board installed on the organ of Saint Germain-L'Auxerrois in 1838. This allowed him the 'luxury' of playing Bach and contributed to his dismissal in 1851, by clergy who considered this music to be 'too serious'.¹² He even went as far as to attempt to emulate *Das Orgelbüchlein* of Bach by using French melodies in his *Quatorze préludes sur des cantiques de Denizot*, (op.15). His position as a unique neo-classicist of the era endeared him to later composers such as Franck and Saint-Saëns.¹³

Boëly could be credited with attempting to revitalise the organ repertoire, both from a musical and a liturgical standpoint. In the preface to the *Quatorze préludes*, Saint-Saëns stated:

He applied, often successfully, the same compositional devices to Gregorian melodies that Sebastian Bach employed with the Gregorian chorales. The result was that a great many pieces perfectly adapted to the Catholic liturgy¹⁴

Boëly's first four collections of organ music (op. 9–12) comprise mainly versets and other mass items.¹⁵ His earliest masses, containing free and *cantus firmus* versets for use with the familiar *Missa cunctipotens* have the work of Couperin as their main inspiration, no doubt influenced by Boëly's position as deputy organist at Couperin's own church of Saint-Gervais in the 1830s.¹⁶ Indeed it is his ability to recapture the integrity of the liturgical organ and the *cantus firmus* verset in particular which marks him out in this period.

¹¹ Craig Cramer: 'Boëly's *Quatorze Préludes sur des cantiques de Denizot*, op. 15, and the Creation of a French "Christmas" *Orgelbüchlein*', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 37, *passim*

¹² Rollin Smith *Saint-Saëns and the Organ*, (New York: Pendragon Press, 1992), 2–3; Gerard Brooks: 'French and Belgian Organ Music after 1800', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 266; While this is the best-known story regarding his dismissal, Rollin Smith suggests that he was let go for economic reasons. Smith (1992), 3

¹³ Brigitte François-Sappey: 'Boëly, Alexandre Pierre François', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), iii, 780

¹⁴ Smith (1992), 199 and taken from Camille Saint-Saëns: 'Preface', *Recueil de Noël's, Op. 15, Fourteen Preludes or Pieces for Organ composed by A.P.F. Boëly on the Cantiques of N. Denizot* (Paris: Costallat, 1902), 1

¹⁵ Cramer (1995), 38

¹⁶ van Wye (1995), 31

The criticism of organist-composers such as Corrette and Fessy is that their *plainchant en basse* settings are merely instrumental versions of *chant sur le livre*. In the work of Boëly, the counterpoint above the chant is returned to the model of Couperin and de Grigny. In the later work of the 1840s, he places the Parisian chants in the upper voice of the texture and harmonises in the style of Bach, as referred to by Saint-Saëns in the above quotation.¹⁷ A similar technique is employed in the *Quatorze préludes*.

...he derived the invention of new *plainchants*, treated in a fashion that had been unknown in France, with the melody in the treble, after the manner of the cantor of Leipzig.¹⁸

Contrary to the above quotation, he was not the first organ composer to do this as the placement of the chant in the upper voice occurs as early as the Attaignant collection.¹⁹

While the contribution of Boëly is redoubtable, his use of the corrupt versions of the chants did not afford him the ability to create a new genuinely modal genre of chant-based organ composition. His efforts suffered for two main reasons: firstly that by the 1850s the Parisian rite was almost extinct, therefore inhibiting the publication of his works for it; secondly his efforts to return solemnity and dignity to liturgical organ music were more than often met with hostility, due to a fondness for the more vulgar tendencies of the post-revolutionary period.

Boëly can also be seen as an important figure in terms of his impact on composers such as Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911). His Bach-sighted outlook however was not necessarily compatible with the moves towards the restoration of authentic chant performance.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 32–34

¹⁸ Amédée Gastoué: 'A Great French Organist, Alexandre Boëly and his Works', *MQ*, xxx/3 (7/1944), 339

¹⁹ Benjamin van Wye: *The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration on the Growth and Development of the Modern French Liturgical Organ School*, unpublished DMA diss. (University of Illinois, 1970), 42

4.3: Towards a new chant style and a new organ music

As the middle of the nineteenth century approached, there were chant reformers who were interested in the improvement of the organ repertoire. One such figure was Félix Danjou (1812–1866), who was well known for his discovery of the Codex H.159 (the Montepellier antiphonary) in 1847. This eleventh-century tonary of Saint-Bénigne de Dijon was used to compile the Reims-Cambrai *Graduale romanum complectens missas* (published in 1851), one of the early significant publications of the restoration.²⁰ Danjou was also editor of the monthly *Revue de la musique religieuse populaire et classique* (1845–1849), a publication which had the plainsong restoration in France as its primary concern. A number of his contributions to the *Revue* contain recommendations for the marriage of plainchant and organ music. Writing in 1846, Danjou stated:

I believe that the careful study of ecclesiastical tonality and its connections with harmony is the basis of all organ teaching; and as long as organists will not follow this path, that instrument will remain the echo of the orchestra and of futile music, or the refuge of pedants.²¹

Liturgical organ music based on plainsong had been in decline since the emergence of independent secular keyboard genres during the seventeenth century.²² Danjou lamented this in the same article:

Most often, in the versets of hymns, *Kyrie* [and] *Gloria*, plainsong is preferable to any melody improvised by the organist. Plainsong might be presented on the organ in a hundred different ways, either with the aid of harmonic resources, or by registrational variety; and if organists would identify themselves with the genre and nature of the ecclesiastical chant, working diligently at reproducing it often and with different accompaniments, they would progressively come to appreciate its beauty.²³

This goes further than a call for more use of chant in the *cantus firmus*, but rather to use the language and beauty of the chant to create a new repertoire. While undoubtedly the work of Boëly was an important step in this direction, the treatment of the chant themes in the style and harmonic ‘sensibilities’ of

²⁰ Kenneth Levy et al: ‘Plainchant’, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xix, 854

²¹ Benjamin van Wye: ‘Gregorian influences in French Organ Music before the “Motu proprio”’, *JAMS*, xxvii/1, (Spring 1974), 2 and taken from Danjou: ‘Revue critique: Dea praktische Organist von Herzog’, *Revue*, ii (7/1846), 254–55

²² *Ibid*, 7

²³ *Ibid*, 2 and taken from Danjou: ‘Revue critique: Dea praktische Organist von Herzog’, *Revue*, ii (7/1846), 255

Bach was contrary in a way to the view of chant emerging during the restoration. However as we have seen, even Boëly's model was not making an impact. As late as 1830 Fétis wrote:

In Italy, Catholic Germany, in the Netherlands and in the north of France, the organ accompanies the singers, and the organist plays the plainsong with his right hand on the soft stops which are called the *jeux de fond*, [accompanied] with pure and simple harmonies. But in Paris, and in several provinces of France, the choir alone sings the plainsong in a stiff and repulsive manner, the disagreeable effect of which is augmented by the serpent.....The choir and the organ execute the versets alternatively; the organ puts the chant in the bass, and accompanies it in a more or less incorrect way, using only the reed stops, the only merit of which is strength.²⁴

An obvious reason for this stiff integration of the chants was the method for singing the melodies as previously described. This was certainly not the type of chant that Danjou referred to in his 1846 article mentioned above.²⁵ Benjamin van Wye notes an article in *Revue de musique ancienne et moderne* (published in 1856) which showed that ten years on from Danjou's article things were still slow to improve:

...although it should not be considered a secondary object in a church, the organ nevertheless dominates in all the services; but only rarely does it cause the pure plainsong to be heard, and the reason for this is simple: *the artist is not acquainted with it*. In the processional responses, as soon as the chorister intones the first word the procession begins, silent and mute, to the sounds of a waltz, a polka, or another equally edifying piece, according to the organist's fancy...²⁶

The apparent lack of musical taste and a misunderstanding of the possibilities of the organ in the liturgical setting (as well as the concert setting) can be easily identified as reasons for the appalling standard of both chant singing and chant-based composition.

The outstanding organist-composers of the second half of the nineteenth century were by no means united in their approaches to chant-based composition. Two pivotal figures, Saint-Saëns and Franck, provided virtually nothing to the propagation of chant-based repertoire, despite the fact that both were active church musicians.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 5 and from Fétis: *Curiosités historiques de la musique, complément nécessaire de la musique mise à la portée de tout le monde* (Paris: Janet et Cotellet, 1830), 407–8

²⁵ *Ibid*, 6

²⁶ *Ibid*, 7 and from *Revue de musique ancienne et moderne* (8/1856), 113–114

Saint-Saëns was also a critic of the flippant nature of the prevalent forms of church music. Organist of the Église de Saint-Merri and later the Madeleine, his service music revolved around improvisation and he wrote in 1916: 'only improvisation can follow the service perfectly, the pieces written for this purpose being almost always too short or too slow'.²⁷ Widor commented that he developed chant themes in service improvisations,²⁸ despite the fact that he had no appreciation for the ancient chant repertoire.

As with all of the students in Benoist's organ class, he engaged in the note-for-note accompaniment of plainchant and it may have been this earliest experience of these melodies, sung in their labored fashion which led to his dislike of chant. He believed that it was over-repetitious and, comparing it to a dead language, thought that any attempts to rediscover its true form would be fruitless.²⁹ He was critical of the 1903 *motu proprio* as he believed that modern music had as much a place in the liturgy as chant, and he was a tireless champion of the classicists like Mozart and Haydn.³⁰ He had also, however, acknowledged the value of the Niedermeyer approach to chant accompaniment as important, and recognized that the use of chant melodies and modes could provide richness to organ music.³¹ He was professor of piano at the École Niedermeyer from 1861.³²

Saint-Saëns provides us with one instance of the use of plainchant in his organ works, in the *Sept improvisations* (1916). These pieces are the composer's first organ compositions in ten years and his first use of chant since the 'Six Duos for Harmonium and Piano' (op 8, 1858), which state the German chorale version of the *Tonus Peregrinus*.³³

²⁷ Camille Saint-Saëns: 'Music in the Church', *MQ*, ii/1 (1/1916), 8

²⁸ Charles-Marie Widor and quoted in Smith (1992), 59

²⁹ Scott Fruehwald: Saint-Saëns's Views on Music and Musicians', *IRASM*, xv/2 (12/1984), 164

³⁰ 'Every epoch has the right to express the religious sentiment in its own way'. Saint-Saëns (1916), 6

³¹ Saint-Saëns (1916), 3

³² Smith (1992), 63

³³ *Ibid*, 63, 173–4

Table 4.1: Saint-Saëns: *Sept improvisations*³⁴

	Title	Chant origin	Chant text	Translation
II	<i>Feria Pentecostes</i>	the first hymn for lauds at Pentecost	<i>Beata nobis gaudi</i>	Round roll the weeks our hearts to greet,
V	<i>Pro Martyribus</i>	Offertory of the mass of a martyr not a bishop	<i>Gloria et honore coronasti eum</i>	thou hast crowned him with glory and honour: and hast set him over the works of thy hands.
VI	<i>Pro Defunctis</i>	Offertory from requiem mass	<i>Domine Jesu Christe</i>	Lord Jesus Christ

By the time of their composition, Saint-Saëns had not been a practicing liturgical organist for many years. Though the pieces are dedicated to Eugène Gigout, one of the main proponents of organ music in a modal language, they do not appear to be written for liturgical use and indeed were premiered in a theatre (*Théâtre des Nations* in Marseilles) in 1917.³⁵ It is unclear why he chose to dedicate three movements to Pentecost, martyrs and the dead in such a way, when none of the other four movements are titled. The language of the chant-based movements is modal, which is forward looking for the relatively conservative Saint-Saëns and seems to have the influence of the dedicatee that was prolific in his use of modality.

Apart from an obvious dislike for plainchant, there is a broader reason for Saint-Saëns' lack of interest in the use of these melodies in his organ compositions. He was a believer in art for art's sake; that music could exist for enjoyment, without any further purpose, a philosophy espoused by Théophile Gautier (1811–1872) and the Parnassianist movement. This in itself is important in the development of a secular repertoire: up until this point many still believed that organ music had a mundane purpose.³⁶ He was opposed to d'Indy's view that music was of religious origin, claiming rather

³⁴ *Ibid*, 174; Harvey Grace: 'Church and Organ Music: Saint-Saëns' New Organ Works', *MT*, lviii/896 (10/1917), 448–449

³⁵ Smith (1992), 175

³⁶ Fruehwald (1984), 160

that singing grew from the 'savage cries' of 'primitive men'.³⁷ He was also critical of the view of Palestrinian music stating that it shuns melody and that one could interchange the words of a secular madrigal with a motet to demonstrate that it has no claim as the true repertoire of the church.³⁸

In terms of church music, Saint-Saëns opinions are quite clear: it must be serious and solemn, but it cannot be confined to a single repertoire. The true organ music of the church is in the form of improvisation, in a suitable style, but he also acknowledged that there is no religious art which is totally distinguishable from secular art.³⁹ He disapproved of the neglect of improvisation in the romantic school and while approving of the goals of the Schola Cantorum, disliked its methods.

Like Saint-Saëns, the contribution of Franck to the chant-based liturgical repertoire is non-existent. He did compose some liturgical music, which although in a more credible 'severe' style, was very different to that envisaged by Danjou. His only published contribution to the liturgical organ tradition came with the posthumous collection *L'organiste, 59 pièces pour harmonium*. These versets for the *magnificat* provide an example of the type of versicle improvised by Franck at Sainte-Clotilde, but most importantly they are not based on chant, rather on folk tunes, noëls and original themes. This indicates that even one of the most prominent church organists in Paris, when provided with an opportunity, did not see chant as a possible component of organ music. Their genesis lies in a request by a publisher for a hundred pieces, a task left unfinished by his death.⁴⁰ d'Indy, as is his nature, attempts to over-emphasise the religious nature of these pieces, while Coeruy, perhaps trying to justify his assertion that Franck was 'the most religious of modern

³⁷ Fruehwald (1984), 164

³⁸ Saint-Saëns (1916), 4

³⁹ *Ibid*, 1

⁴⁰ Vincent d'Indy: *César Franck*, transl. Rosa Newmarch, (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 177. The project is described by d'Indy, but other sources describe the plan for ninety-one pieces, seven for each of the thirteen chromatic keys. John Trevitt and J.M. Facquet, 'César Franck', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), ix, 179

creators', refers to the collection as one 'wherein true Christian faith finds expression'.⁴¹

Despite the requirements of his organ and teaching posts, Franck (for the most part) had no apparent interest in restored plainchant and certainly did not see the merit in the creation of a chant-based organ repertoire.⁴² He did, however, provide accompaniments (note-for-note) for transcriptions of chants to modern notation by Father Louis Lambillotte (1796–1855), a Jesuit active in the movement to reintroduce plainsong to French churches.⁴³ In the preface to the work, Franck comments on the need to 'impart to Gregorian chant its own tonality and, consequentially, preserve its character'.⁴⁴ His duties as organist required the accompaniment of religious melodies and the improvisation of service music where necessary. However, the nature of the accompaniments in *Chant grégorien* is sufficient to substantiate d'Indy's claim that Franck wasn't even aware of the work of Solesmes: 'He knew nothing about the erudite and definitive researches of the Benedictines into the subject of chant'.⁴⁵ These fifty-nine short tonal pieces sit with Gigout's *Album grégorien* and *L'orgue d'église* as examples of short *alternatim* pieces which are not based on chants.⁴⁶

Much of our knowledge of Franck has been passed down in two works on the composer, both by devoted disciples, Vincent d'Indy and Charles Tournemire. The attempts by Tournemire to over-emphasise the religious nature of Franck's music in order to suggest that the Belgian had a divine mandate are obvious in such descriptions as that of the *Final* 'as a sonorous pyramid

⁴¹ Andre Coeury: 'Present Tendencies of Sacred Music in France', *MQ*, xiii/4 (10/1927), 585–593

⁴² Gerard Brooks: 'French and Belgian Organ Music after 1800', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 273–274

⁴³ *Chant Grégorien: restauré par R.P. Lambillotte; accompagnement par César Franck* was published after Lambillotte's death in 1855. Rollin Smith: *Playing the Organ Works of César Franck* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1997), 16–19

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 17

⁴⁵ van Wye (1974), 7; d'Indy (1965), 130

⁴⁶ Edward Zimmerman and Lawrence Archbold: "'Why Should We Not Do the Same with Our Catholic Melodies?": Guilman's *L'Organiste liturgiste*, op.65', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 209

reaching toward the Eternal's glorification'.⁴⁷ However, as articulated by no less than Charles Bordes, Franck's religious music (masses and motets) was not liturgical, and indeed the co-founder of the Schola Cantorum goes so far as to suggest that Franck did not appreciate the religious value of the music of Palestrina, with which he had some contact.⁴⁸ d'Indy asserts that due to financial constraints in the church, Franck had to hastily write music for the ceremonies at Sainte-Clotilde, contributing to its poor quality.⁴⁹ There exists also the theory that Franck was unable to find inspiration in the rigid religious texts and to find the manifestation of Franck's spirituality, one must look toward his organ works and oratorios. Coeruy even suggests that the religious fervour of the oratorio *Les Béatitudes* is assisted by the presence of Gregorian 'tonalities'.⁵⁰ One also must recall that there was still an inherent desire in many churches for sacred music that was enjoyable and Gregorian chant and Palestrinian polyphony were considered far from the model. The removal of Maurice Emmanuel from his position as *maître de chapelle* at Sainte-Clotilde for promoting restored plainchant and polyphony sixteen years after Franck's death illustrates this very clearly.⁵¹ Franck's main contribution to religious music was most likely in the form of improvisation, as testified by d'Indy, Tournemire and others.⁵²

When Franck became organ professor at the conservatoire in 1872, the move towards composed, concert repertoire for the organ was gathering momentum. However, the organ classes of Franck gained notoriety for their obsession with improvisation. At this stage there was still a limited place for plainchant, mainly confined to accompaniment note-for-note with the chant on

⁴⁷ As quoted in Rollin Smith: *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of Franck* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 79 and taken from Charles Tournemire: *César Franck* (1931), 25

⁴⁸ d'Indy (1965), 130–131

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 132; Coeruy (1927), 585

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 584–585

⁵¹ Robert Orledge: 'Emmanuel, (Marie François) Maurice', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), viii, 186–187

⁵² The tale of Liszt departing Sainte-Clotilde on 3 April 1866, comparing the improvisations of Franck to Bach is reported by d'Indy, but it is quite possibly an overstatement. d'Indy (1965), 44; Coeruy (1927), 586

top and in the bass with florid contrapuntal accompaniment.⁵³ Vierne explained:

Note-for-note accompaniment of a liturgical chant in the upper voice, the chant then became the bass in whole notes, not transposed, accompanied by three upper parts in a sort of academic florid counterpoint. The whole notes then passed into the top voice, transposed a fourth higher, receiving in their turn a 'florid' academic counterpoint.⁵⁴

There is little doubt that during the second half of the nineteenth century, the standard of playing improved and the world of liturgical composition began to feel the effects of the new ideas on plainchant. The general increase in interest for the music of the past centuries also played a part. To quote Benjamin van Wye:

A great portion of the incentive for the creation of a new and uniquely liturgical organ style must be attributed to the French church's growing acceptance after 1850 for the plainsong restoration and the Palestrina revival and its consequent desire to bring liturgical organ music into conformity with the restored liturgical monody and polyphony. Indeed these early sacred vocal works were an important source of inspiration in the creation of the new style of liturgical organ music.⁵⁵

4.4: The renewed use of a modal language: Eugène Gigout

It is evident therefore that the move to create a new credible chant-based organ school for liturgical use was not aided to any great extent by the large figures of Saint-Saëns and Franck. To find the true agents of progress in this area we must look to Eugène Gigout and Alexandre Guilmant, less lauded for their compositions, but more credible figures as performers and liturgical composers.

Eugène Gigout deserves some discussion for his influence on the propagation of chant-based music in the second half of the nineteenth century. His playing technique is reported to have been excellent though (unlike Widor and Guilmant) he did not travel to study. Born on 23 March 1844, he was a product of the Nancy Cathedral Choir School and more significantly the École Niedermeyer which he entered in 1857. During his period of study there, he

⁵³ Ochse (1994), 155–157

⁵⁴ Rollin Smith: *Louis Vierne, Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1999), 41

⁵⁵ van Wye (1970), 67

was a student of Loret (organ) and Saint-Saëns (piano).⁵⁶ Loret had gone to Brussels to study with Lemmens in 1851 (receiving a *premier prix* in 1853) and therefore also could claim knowledge of the Lemmens-Bach tradition.⁵⁷ In 1891, Widor's appointment to the Paris Conservatoire brought the Lemmens methods of pedagogy and technique into the organ class of the most important school in Paris, and therefore into the mainstream. Loret, however, was using this method as early as the 1850s in the *École Niedermeyer*.⁵⁸ Of his two keyboard teachers however, Saint-Saëns had probably a more profound influence; Gigout's neo-classical aesthetic developed from his piano instructor.⁵⁹ As was a common feature of the *École Niedermeyer*, Gigout remained on as a teacher of chant and *sofège* after his graduation in 1863, adding instruction in harmony, counterpoint, fugue and piano to this portfolio later on.⁶⁰ Among his students was Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), who in 1911, as director of the Paris Conservatoire, was to appoint Gigout to the post of organ professor against political pressure from Widor and others.⁶¹

Gigout's teaching career was to advance over the period. In 1885, he opened his own school, *École d'orgue, d'improvisation et de plainchant* in 1885, with emphasis on improvisation and chant accompaniment.⁶² It lasted until 1911 when Gigout became professor at the conservatoire. Gigout's school had the skills of the church organist as its primary focus, but as well as improvisation

⁵⁶ Gigout remained a favourite of Saint-Saëns throughout his career. As a pupil, he referred to him affectionately as my little *Cent-six* after he had risen to the challenge of playing Beethoven's 'Hammerklavier' Sonata (op.106) by heart. Smith (1992), 64

⁵⁷ Clement Loret (1833–1909) came to Paris with a letter of introduction to Cavallé-Coll in 1855. Cavallé-Coll took a dislike to him, finding him unattractive, however he achieved success as a player and teacher in particular, publishing volumes on organ method; Ochse (1994), 50–52, 210–212

⁵⁸ Daniel Roth: 'Some Thoughts on the Interpretation of the Organ Works of Franck, on His Organ, and on the Lemmens Tradition', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 193

⁵⁹ Ochse (1994), 73

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 214

⁶¹ Jean-Michel Nectoux: *Gabriel Fauré, A Musical life*, transl: Roger Nichols (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 7; Andrew Thomson: *The Life and Times of Charles-Marie Widor* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), 62; Widor had wanted Vierne to get the post, but Fauré was keen on his fellow *École Niedermeyer* colleague. According to Vierne, Widor attacked Fauré on the issue in front of some mutual friends, a bad move on Widor's part as it led to Fauré enlisting Saint-Saëns to persuade Gigout to stand in retaliation.

⁶² Ochse (1994), 216–218

and plainchant accompaniment, there was also a lot of attention given to repertoire.⁶³ This school was lauded for its teaching and was subsidised during a part of its twenty-six-year existence. Students in the Gigout school were given frequent opportunities to perform in marked contrast to the conservatoire where student recitals were ignored in favour of competitions.⁶⁴ Gigout's teaching is reported to have been 'strict, thorough and conscientious' and the best of his students during his career included André Marchal (1894–1980), Léon Boëllmann (1862–1897)⁶⁵, Gabriel Fauré and Albert Roussel (1869–1937).⁶⁶ He lobbied to be Franck's successor in 1890, writing a letter on 9 November 1890 to Saint-Saëns enlisting his assistance, merely a day after Franck had died.⁶⁷ He also managed to play the organ at Franck's funeral, when many believed that the organ should have been silent. Vierne was critical of this performance for being 'too fast and without expression'.⁶⁸ (Such sentiments could perhaps be viewed as suspect as Vierne may have felt annoyed at losing out to Gigout in 1911). The reasons for his lack of success in 1890 seem to have been similar those of Guilmant. Both men were considered to have been too associated with Franck for conservatoire director Ambroise Thomas (1811–1896), who openly detested the deceased professor.⁶⁹ Both campaigns for the professorship support the assertion that he was a politically astute man, although in the case of this particular job, it took longer than he had hoped to secure it. Of course, besides Widor's desire for Vierne to succeed Guilmant out of affection, Gigout's appointment was a blow to Widor's pride. It highlighted the fact that Loret and therefore Gigout had as much claim to the Lemmens-Bach tradition as he and his former pupil and assistant Vierne.⁷⁰

⁶³ More on this school and its curriculum in Ochse (1994), 214, *passim*

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 217

⁶⁵ Boëllmann was married to Gigout's niece

⁶⁶ François Sabatier 'Gigout, Eugène', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), ix, 848–849; Ochse (1994), 101, 214

⁶⁷ Smith (1992), 128

⁶⁸ Quoted in Smith (1997), 50

⁶⁹ Thomson (1987), 46

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 62

As a performer, Gigout did not have as successful a career as Guilmant. He made his first tour of England in 1882 and returned there each year between 1886 and 1890.⁷¹ He is reported to have had a clean style of playing⁷² and Albert Schweitzer notes that 'Gigout stands all alone in his school. He is a classicist, who has attained a pure organ style. He has something of Handel's manner. His influence as a teacher is outstanding and his playing superb'.⁷³ During the period of his appointment to the conservatoire, Saint-Saëns wrote a letter of recommendation to Fauré on 1 May 1991. Although we know that Saint-Saëns and he were close and that it may contain the usual hyperbole which might be expected of a reference, its language is strong.

...I regard him as the greatest organist I have ever known. He has the finest technique but, moreover, he is a marvellous improviser and, with him, the fine art of improvisation, so French and, in my opinion, so necessary, will not be jeopardized.⁷⁴

Saint-Saëns here makes reference to Gigout's skills as an improviser. It is reported that he had an eclectic style of improvisation which pointed towards classicism. This matches the Saint-Saëns aesthetic which was mentioned earlier and is reflected in his pieces which combine a classical style with some of the less subtle symphonic effects of the period.⁷⁵

For the purposes of this study, our primary concern with Gigout is his relationship with liturgical organ composition and more directly the impact of the world of modal plainchant on his musical outlook as well as his influence on the world of liturgical composition. The École Niedermeyer had a strong impact on Gigout and his views on chant. One of Niedermeyer's primary contributions to the discipline, as outlined in chapter 3, came in the form of his new approach to accompanying chant. As noted earlier, the whole difficulty with chant accompaniment first occurred with the introduction of harmonia to replace the low-pitched serpent or double bass in the chancel areas of the churches in the 1830s. While previously, the accompaniment was merely

⁷¹ Ochse (1994), 101

⁷² Sabatier (2001), 848–849

⁷³ Albert Schweitzer: *Music in the Life of Albert Schweitzer*, ed. Charles R. Joy (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 161

⁷⁴ Quoted in Smith (1992), 175; Saint-Saëns dedicated the Prelude and Fugue (op.99, no.3) and the *Sept Improvisations* to Gigout,

⁷⁵ Sabatier (2001), 848–9

melodic, the harmonium's introduction led to the need for harmonic support. The tonal accompaniments which were used during this period were in line with the corrupt altered versions of the chants being sung. However, Niedermeyer's *Traité théorique et pratique de l'accompagnement du plainchant* (1857) set out a method for correct accompaniment of the correct modal versions of the chant:

- The exclusive use, in each mode, of the sounds of the scale.
- The frequent use in each mode of chords determined by the final and the dominant.
- The exclusive use of harmonic formulas that are proper to the cadences of each mode.
- All chords, other than the common chord and its first inversion, must be excluded from the accompaniment of plainsong.
- The laws that govern the plainsong melody should be observed in each voice of the accompaniment.
- Plainsong, being essentially a melody, should always be placed in the upper part.⁷⁶

Gigout through his period of study and teaching became an expert in this new method of chant accompaniment.⁷⁷ It seems that there was to follow a logical progression towards applying the same principles to the production of chant-based organ music. Gigout himself was not slow to acknowledge the impact of Niedermeyer on the development of this repertoire.

while...thanks to the work of Niedermeyer, modal tonality serves generally today as the basis of plainsong accompaniment, it unfortunately is still not current usage to execute purely Gregorian pieces on the organ. In the dialogues which have been established between the choir and the organ, the latter seems to have taken cognizance only of the major and minor modes whereas the primitive modes are sung by the choir.⁷⁸

Gigout's contribution to the liturgical repertoire is summed up by Henderson.

Gigout is one of the most charming and courteous of men. He is a capital classic player, and has special readiness and pleasure in improvising on the old modes. His gift in this direction has found expression in the two volumes

⁷⁶ van Wye (1974), 9

⁷⁷ Ochse (1994), 216

⁷⁸ van Wye (1970), 68 and from Éugène Gigout: *Album Grégorien* (preface) (Paris: 1895)

of short pieces in the Gregorian tones, published by Leduc, and in a new volume shortly to be issued by Chester.⁷⁹

These '*pièces grégoriennes*' number 650 were published between 1889 and 1922 as:⁸⁰

- *Cent pièces brèves dans la tonalité du plainchant*, (Paris: Heugel, 1889)⁸¹
- *Albums grégoriens*, 2 volumes (Paris: Leduc, 1895)
- *L'orgue d'église*, 2 volumes (Paris: Enoch, 1902)⁸²
- *Soixante-dix pièces dans les tons les plus usités* (Paris: Leduc, 1912)⁸³
- *Cent pièces nouvelles* (London: Chester, 1922)

Alongside the shorter pieces, these later collections contain longer works outside of the modal language for use in circumstances, such as *offertoires*, *entrées*, *sorties* etc, where the need to match chant was less important.⁸⁴ The modal pieces are there for use in *alternatim* or to sit alongside the chants. Harvey Grace, writing during the second decade of the century tells us:

Generally, however, this modal writing is found in pieces written for use as interludes to the *Magnificat*, or in connection with plain-song hymns, or to fill in gaps during the services. Gigout has written over three hundred of such little pieces, many of extraordinary interest considering their brevity. Some of the best examples of this useful kind of writing are found, appropriately, in the publications of the Schola Cantorum.⁸⁵

Despite the importance of Gigout to this discussion, it remains that of the 650 pieces published in the collections mentioned above only two are based in actual plainchants. This may be due to the desire of the composer to provide generic pieces for the unskilled organist, thus making neutral, but modal pieces more worthwhile. The two chants used (*Ave Maris Stella* and *Veni Creator Spiritus*) are common enough to make versets based on them useful. These pieces however, bear little resemblance to the traditional *plainchant en*

⁷⁹ A.M. Henderson 'Organs and Organists at Paris', *MT*, lxii/943 (1/9/1921), 631–632

⁸⁰ Data from van Wye (1974), 9 (footnote); Sabatier (2001), 849

⁸¹ Sabatier (2001) dates this as 1888, 849. This author is taking this to mean that van Wye has the publication dates and Sabatier the composition dates.

⁸² *Ibid*, dates this as 1904

⁸³ *Ibid*, dates this as 1991

⁸⁴ van Wye (1970), 68

⁸⁵ Harvey Grace: 'Modern French Organ Music', *PMA*, 44th Session (1917–1918), 161

basse or to the Lutheran chorale, with a lyrical contrapuntal treatment of the melody.⁸⁶

Gigout's legacy lies in his chant-related modal writing, rather than chant-based *verset per se*. As it is true to say that the return to authentic chant performance relied on improvements in the two areas of rhythmic freedom (based on the texts) and the return to the ancient modes, it is also possible to say that the credibility of any new organ repertoire to sit beside this chant rested on the reflection of the new perceptions of these factors. In this case, the contribution of Gigout is vital. He embodies the influence of the *École Niedermeyer* on the perception and understanding of the relationship between chant and organ music, extending Niedermeyer's method of accompaniment beyond a mere support, to the basis for a new repertoire.

4.5: Alexandre Guilmant and the development of liturgical repertoire

While Gigout increased the non-chant-specific modal repertoire considerably, it was Alexandre Guilmant who utilized the actual chant melodies. Through his engagement with chants and use of them in his liturgical compositions throughout the second half of the century, we can get a picture of the changing perceptions of chant and its associated organ pieces.

Guilmant was an influential figure in the development of the French organ school. He was the outstanding organist of his time and his tours of Europe and America made him an important name in the propagation of organ repertoire, both liturgical and secular. He devoted much more time to the practice of the organ recital than his younger colleague Widor. Born in Boulogne-sur-Mer, he discovered an early devotion to the organ, and with the support of Cavallé-Coll, he made the trip to Belgium in 1860 to study with Lemmens.⁸⁷ As noted elsewhere, Lemmens claimed to have descended from a direct line of Bach students and therefore claimed to be a vessel for the true

⁸⁶ van Wye (1970), 69; van Wye (1974), 9–10

⁸⁷ Andrew Thomson: 'Guilmant, (Félix) Alexandre', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), x, 539–540; Smith (1992), 67

Bach method.⁸⁸ While there, he had daily lessons with Lemmens, spending six to eight hours per day practising.⁸⁹ He stayed a month in Belgium before returning home to succeed his father in the Church of Saint-Nicolas in his home town.⁹⁰

Subsequently Guilmant's performance career blossomed and he became involved in the inaugurations of a number of important organs by Cavallé-Coll, most notably Saint-Sulpice (1862) and Notre Dame (1868),⁹¹ before taking up the post of organist at La Trinité in 1871 in succession to Alexis Chauvet.⁹² The additional post of resident organist at the Palais du Trocadéro was granted to him in 1878. Built for the 1878 Universal Exposition, the Trocadéro was a huge Moorish-pseudo Byzantine structure, which contained an enormous 5000-seat auditorium called the *Salles des Fêtes*.⁹³ On the stage of the hall, Cavallé-Coll installed a four-manual, 66-stop organ, the first large concert hall organ in France.⁹⁴ This development is of great importance as it led to the first series of organ concerts in a French concert hall between August and October 1878.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Interestingly Guilmant and Widor traced the line differently. Guilmant claimed it to be Bach-Kittel-Rinck-Hesse-Lemmens while Widor believed it to be Bach-Forkel-Hesse-Lemmens. Vierende, as noted in the translation of his memoirs in Smith (1999), 58

Of course both are possible and not mutually exclusive.

⁸⁹ Rollin Smith: 'Alexandre Guilmant, Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of his Birth', *AO*, xxi/3, (3/1987), 50–51. Smith notes that after a rigorous month, Lemmens told him 'From now on, you are on your own'.

⁹⁰ Smith (1999), 54

⁹¹ Notre Dame was jointly inaugurated by Saint-Saëns, Chauvet, Loret, Widor and the resident Sargent on 8 March 1868, Vallas (1951), 124–5

On the Notre Dame de Paris inauguration: Marie Escudier: 'We don't believe we will offend the eight talented organists by stating that the general consensus was that Chauvet, Saint-Saëns and Alwx. Guilmant had the most taste', Smith (1992), 89–90 and from ME:

'Actualités', *La France musicale* (15 /3/1868), 83

⁹² Thomson (2001), 539–540; Smith (1997), 165; His appointment was announced in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* on 8 October 1871, Ochse (1994), 199

Alexis Chauvet (1837–1871) was first organist of La Trinité; the organ was inaugurated 16 March 1869. Nicknamed '*Le petit père Bach*', Chauvet died of tuberculosis in January 1871 aged 33; Smith (1987), 52

François Sabatier: 'Chauvet, Alexis', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), v, 543

⁹³ Rollin Smith: 'The Organ of the Trocadéro and its Players', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 275–277

⁹⁴ Smith (1987), 52

⁹⁵ Ochse (1994), 94, *passim*; The first recital on the new organ was given by Guilmant on 7 August 1878, Smith (1997), 165; These concerts drew crowds of 1500–2000, partially as this was the only time that the general public could get in free to see the hall. These were the

In 1890, Guilmant played for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle and in 1893 he made his first concert tour of the United States.⁹⁶ His second and third tours took place in 1897–1898 and 1904, and in 1899 William C. Carl opened the Guilmant Organ School in New York to offer instruction based on Guilmant's methods.⁹⁷ During his 1904 American tour, Guilmant gave thirty-nine recitals⁹⁸ over a six-week spell at the Saint Louis World's Fair, on the five-manual, 140-stop instrument which was the largest in the world.⁹⁹

All accounts are clear that Guilmant's playing was of an extraordinarily high standard. Henderson states: 'Never before had I heard organ playing so finished, so accurate, so alive, and above all, so musical'.¹⁰⁰ Smith states however that:

It is obvious from his music that although Guilmant had a 'classical' background and had studied with the great Lemmens, his playing had a distinctly popular appeal, standing firmly between that of Lefébure-Wély, the most popular organists of the day, and the *style sévère* of César Franck and Camille Saint-Saëns.¹⁰¹

Thus, by the time of his appointment to succeed Widor as organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire in 1896, he was the best-known organist in the world.¹⁰² His name had been mentioned along with Widor, Gigout and Henri Dallier¹⁰³ to replace Franck in 1890, however as with Gigout, his association

biggest audiences of any of the music events at the hall during the Exposition. Smith (1987), 52

⁹⁶ Ochse (1994), 195

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 202–3

⁹⁸ He was engaged to give thirty-six, but due to demand he gave an extra three, Smith (1987), 56; Michael Murray puts this figure at forty, based on the accounts of Alexander Russell. Michael Murray: *Marcel Dupré, The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 74

⁹⁹ After the fair was over this organ was dismantled and held in storage until it was purchased by John Wanamaker, installed in his department store in Philadelphia and first heard there on 22 June 1911. It grew to become one of the most famous instruments in the world. By 1917, it had been enlarged to 232 stops and by 1930, it had grown to a 451-stop, six manual organ with over 30,000 pipes. Smith (1987), 56; Murray (1985), 74 *passim*

¹⁰⁰ A.M. Henderson 'Memories of Some Distinguished French Organists: Guilmant', *MT*, lxxviii/1137 (11/1937), 978

¹⁰¹ Smith (1987), 51

¹⁰² Ochse (1994), 195

¹⁰³ Henri Dallier (1849–1934): a Franck student, he held the posts of organists at Saint-Eustache (1879–1905) and the Madeleine, where he succeeded Fauré in 1905. He taught harmony at the conservatoire from 1908–1928. He had a reputation for improvisation and he produced a wide-ranging output of compositions. Félix Raugel and David Charlton: 'Dallier,

with Franck went against him.¹⁰⁴ Again like Gigout, he was eventually to hold the position, being appointed after Widor's elevation to professor of composition in 1896. He was also president of the Schola Cantorum society, whose school was just opening in 1896.¹⁰⁵

Guilmant's teaching, like that of Widor, was grounded in the Lemmens method, published in Lemmens's *École d'orgue basse sur le plain-chant romain* (1862). By the time of Guilmant's appointment, the ideas of Lemmens had already been propagated by Widor and subsequently Vierne, Dupré and Schweitzer to name but a few. This had assisted in making his method of legato performance well established.¹⁰⁶

By all accounts, Guilmant was an inspiring teacher. Marcel Dupré (1886–1971), who studied with him for ten years (and whose father had also done so for seven) said of him:

He was a wonderful *maître*, being extremely severe in seeking perfection, but having such patience and gentleness that, child that I was, I never minded being stopped (sometimes at each measure) for the slightest detail. A wrong note was followed by a 'put on your glasses, Marcel', which made me pay closer attention. The lesson lasted two hours – piano, organ, harmony, counterpoint, and improvisation – but it seemed very short.¹⁰⁷

While Widor's teaching focused on Bach and on a small sample of well-known nineteenth-century music, Guilmant's additional work as an editor meant that he had an extraordinary knowledge of music of all styles and periods, much more so than any other French organist. While his devotion to Bach was no less than that of his predecessor, he exposed his pupils to a much broader range of styles across all periods.¹⁰⁸ Indeed of Bach he said:

Henri (Edouard)', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), vi, 863–864

¹⁰⁴ Thomson (1987), 46

¹⁰⁵ Ochse (1994), 195

¹⁰⁶ Kimberly Marshall: 'The Fundamentals of Organ Playing', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 102–103

¹⁰⁷ Marcel Dupré: *Recollections*, transl. Ralph Kneeream (New York: Belwin Mills, 1975), 34; Dupré also notes that for ten years Guilmant never charged for a lesson

¹⁰⁸ Ochse (1994), 196

My admiration for Bach is unbounded. I consider that Bach is music. Everything else in music has come from him; and if all music, excepting Bach's were to be destroyed, music would still be preserved.¹⁰⁹

He was passionate about the music of the past and as Michael Murray rightly points out, this was often overlooked by the anti-romantics of the twentieth century in deference to Guilman's studious revival of music of past masters and promotion of genuine 'informed' performance practice.¹¹⁰ While Dupré was his student, he was collaborating with Pirro in publishing early music, and over the previous twenty years had regular concerts at the Trocadéro featuring music by Walther, Krebs, Buxtehude, Brühns, Martini, Frescobaldi and Mercello as well as composers of the *grand siècle*.¹¹¹ According to Vierne, he was one of the very few along with Franck, Widor and Saint-Saëns who was familiar with Bach chorale preludes.¹¹²

After an inquiry made at the time among my young colleagues, I can safely state that except for Saint Saëns, Gigout, and Guilman, no one suspected the existence of those incomparable pages, the most original, the most daring, the most miraculously conceived of all of the works produced by the creative genius of the Cantor.¹¹³

His knowledge of the organ repertoire contributed to his being more effective than Widor in educating his students on the use of different stop combinations. To quote Vierne: 'Certainly, the greatest thing he did was to draw our attention to the study and rational use of the different timbres'¹¹⁴

While many of his peers were well-known as organ composers, Guilman stands as the most prolific, penning more music than Franck, Widor, Saint-Saëns and Vierne combined. His devotion to the organ meant that his output is almost exclusively for the instrument, unlike Saint-Saëns, Franck and Widor, who were not considered primarily to be organ composers (not least by themselves).¹¹⁵ Within this output, we clearly see the two sides to Guilman

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Ochse (1994), 196

¹¹⁰ Murray (1985), 38–39

¹¹¹ *Ibid*

¹¹² Thomson (1987), 62

¹¹³ Vierne as translated in Smith (1999), 103

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 121

¹¹⁵ His output consists of eight sonatas, 18 volumes of *Pièces dans différents styles* (66 pieces), 12 volumes of *L'organiste pratique* (56 pieces), four volumes of *noëls* (18 variations, *offertoires* and elevations), *L'organiste liturgiste* (10 volumes), 18 *Pièces nouvelles*, 30 transcriptions of works by nineteenth-century composers as well as of several of his own

the composer: Guilmant the concert organist-composer and Guilmant the liturgical organist-composer. The eight sonatas, while less innovative, are related to Widor's symphonies for organ by scale, while the collections of liturgical music in *L'organiste pratique* and *L'organiste liturgiste* were a resource of repertoire for organists who still had little or no access to printed editions of music from the past.¹¹⁶ His concert pieces reflect his place as a serious performer with a popular side. However, they are often weakened by banal themes although this is condemned as but one problem by Harvey Grace:

Many parts would have turned out 'acceptable' if the composer had not managed to bungle them almost wantonly with trite modulations, abominable redundancies, trivial buildups, pompous cadences and elephantine codas¹¹⁷

Vierne asserts that Guilmant's imagination was less fertile than that of Widor¹¹⁸ and indeed whereas Widor was more forward looking in his approach, Guilmant looked to the past and could be accused of lacking in originality.¹¹⁹ Of course, the standard argument that within such a large output there will always be some poor work is valid (this could be said about so many composers throughout history). Grace makes his feelings known on this subject:

A critical examination of his works leaves one with a feeling that the composer owes much to the world-famous recitalist. Even allowing for the proportion of inferior work that is more or less inevitable in the case of such a busy writer, one cannot help thinking that Guilmant has been overrated. Out of the long list of his miscellaneous works it would be difficult to select more than a dozen as being destined for a long life.¹²⁰

It is interesting to contrast him with Widor whose aesthetic and language can be traced through his symphonies (see chapter 5) and who made use of free rhythms and modality in his later life. On the other hand, Guilmant's

works, ten original harmonium pieces and several miscellaneous works, some organ works arranged for organ and orchestra, piano solo, harmonium, harmonium and piano duo, and various instrumental ensembles and vocal music including three masses, solos motets choruses and cantatas. Data from Smith (1987), 56–57

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid* and from Harvey Grace: *French Organ Music, Past and Present* (New York: H.W. Gray, 1919), 109; Gerald Brooks asserts on the other hand that 'His concert music is vigorous in style combining a lightness of touch with a keen ear for popular taste, often creating exciting music from modest themes', Brooks (1998), 275

¹¹⁸ Vierne and translated in Smith (1999), 117

¹¹⁹ Brooks (1998), 275

¹²⁰ Smith (1987), 57 and from Grace (1919), 108

preoccupation with the music of the past meant that his writing remained there for the most part.¹²¹ According to the reviewer of the 1862 inauguration of the organ at Saint-Sulpice, the performance of his own *Méditation* 'recalled the naïve grace of Haydn' and combined an 'expressive style with the most elevated erudition'.¹²² This backward-looking style was to remain throughout his creative life.

Reports of Guilmant's skills as an improviser can assist in assessing his contribution to creative musicianship. Accounts suggest that he was much better as an improviser than as a composer, which brings to mind another great figure in liturgical composition/improvisation, Charles Tournemire, whose work will be discussed in chapter 6. William Carl, founder of the Guilmant School in New York tells us of this, however his well-known devotion to his *maitre* may suggest a slight toning down is necessary.

Marvellous as was his work at the organ, Guilmant will, without a doubt, be remembered and take his place in history for his improvisations. In his *ex tempore* playing he stood alone. For twenty years he studied the subject diligently. Neither his father nor Jacques Lemmens, who taught him, could begin to compete with his wonderful art, which everywhere held audiences spellbound. The spontaneity and earnestness with which he would take a theme and develop it, making a complete musical composition, frequently ending with a double fugue, was without equal. His improvisations were always in perfect form, with the character of the theme never lost to sight, and the whole perfectly rounded and finished.¹²³

This claim of greatness is backed up, however by two further figures:

Guilmant improvised in concert only to inaugurate an organ: on such an occasion, he excelled at demonstrating successively the loveliest timbres of the instrument and would most often end with a fugue, a form he treated with absolute mastery.¹²⁴

His improvisations were greater than his compositions. I recall one Christmas Eve...when he played for at least an hour. He began with Bach's *Pastorale*, the choir had sung 'Adeste fideles' and he ended with a stupendous fugue of the theme of 'Adeste fideles' using the last movement of the Bach *Pastorale* as the counter theme.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Smith (1987), 57

¹²² Smith (1992), 66–67 and from Louis Roger, 'Inauguration du Grand Orgue de Saint-Sulpice', *Revue de musique sacrée ancienne et moderne* (11/5/1862), 155–156

¹²³ Murray (1985), 38 and from William C. Carl: 'Light on Career and Ideals of Guilmant', *The Diapason* (1/7/1932), 26

¹²⁴ Murray (1985), 104 and from Robert Delestre: *L'Oeuvre de Marcel Dupré* (1952), 19–21

¹²⁵ Quoted in Smith (1987), 54 and from Clarence Dickenson 'Dr Dickenson Reminisces', *The Diapason* (3/1962), 38

In a marked contrast to Tournemire, who when improvising at a service claimed to almost feel his fingers taking control, Guilmant had a very different view of, and approach to the art of improvisation. In teaching Marcel Dupré, he maintained that the mere term 'improvisation', implies a 'looseness and unordered spontaneity' and does not take into account the discipline and skill required. Mental effort and hard work were to the forefront, though having mastered the basic skills of harmony, fugue and counterpoint and the rudiments of composition, the challenge lay in using these to make music and extract all possible potential from a theme.¹²⁶

This is also reflected in his teaching of improvisation, his inherent conservatism leading him to a rigid adherence to prescribed forms, much as in his written pieces. To students used to Widor (such as Vierne) this seemed more old-fashioned.¹²⁷ It is also interesting to note that Guilmant differed from Lemmens who disliked improvised liturgical music.¹²⁸ On the contradiction between Guilmant the composer and Guilmant the improviser, Rollin Smith sums up well:

It was not that he was not adept with the tools of his craft, he merely lacked the inspiration and genius to apply them. His talents lay in improvisation – inspiration fled, as it did with so many others, when he attempted to compose his own themes or work them out on paper.¹²⁹

To assess the impact of Alexandre Guilmant, it is necessary to acknowledge that he was a multifaceted individual. Dedicated to the organ, his work on the promotion of the concert organ through his performances and perseverance at the Trocadéro remain one of his most lasting legacies. In his role as a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire and the Schola Cantorum as well as privately, he helped to fortify the new approaches to technique and repertoire introduced by Widor and continue the more serious approach. His knowledge of timbres and of repertoire nourished his students also. Though his compositional output has weaknesses, he helped with the evolution of a

¹²⁶ Murray (1985), 38

¹²⁷ Smith (1987), 55

¹²⁸ van Wye (1970), 79

¹²⁹ Smith (1987), 57

serious French school, even though his backward-looking viewpoint marked him from Widor and meant that his music went out of fashion very easily.

One of the most important parts of his legacy emanates from his work as an editor. He had a great interest in the music of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and was an early advocate of the use of appropriate performance practice and accurate registration. He collaborated with André Pirro¹³⁰ in publishing new scores and his Trocadéro recitals included music by Walther, Krebs, Buxtehude,¹³¹ Bruhns, Martini, Frescobaldi, Marcello, Corelli alongside Bach and the French classicists.¹³² Modern editions of works by Titelouze, Raison, Daquin, De Mage, Marchand, Clérambault, de Grigny, Couperin, Gigault and Roberday all appeared thanks to his efforts and his non-French editing stretched to the first modern edition of Handel's 'Eleven Fugues'.¹³³ Guilmant's commitment to early music was, as Michael Murray has noted, largely overlooked by the anti-romantic period in the middle fifty years of the twentieth century, the neo-classicists choosing to ignore the efforts made by him. Indeed their inability to see the benefits of romanticism would have disappointed him as would allowing the obsession with early music lead to the destruction of many fine romantic instruments.¹³⁴

Lawrence Davis notes:

A first-class organist, he is ranked among the successors of Benoist, yet his talents had remained those of a nineteenth-century musician. As a composer, he left a fair quantity of work for his own instrument, but he will be better remembered for his scholarly *École classique de l'orgue* and for the *Archive des maîtres de l'orgue* which he edited along with his colleague Pirro.¹³⁵

This quotation seems to be an accurate assessment of Guilmant and it echoes the sentiments of Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965):

¹³⁰ Andre Pirro (1869–1943) was a French musicologist and indeed one of the pioneers of French musicology. His most lasting legacies were the establishment of the first practical music university course in France as professor of music history at the Sorbonne, and the publication of a number of books. G.B Sharp and Jean Gribenski: 'Pirro, André (-Gabriel-Edme)', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xix, 778–9

¹³¹ Smith notes that on 5 June 1879, he gave what was probably the first French performance of a work by Buxtehude, Smith (1987), 53

¹³² Murray (1985), 39

¹³³ Smith (1987), 57

¹³⁴ Murray (1985), 38–39

¹³⁵ Davies (1970), 288

Guilmant is now not only one of the leading musicians, but at the same time the most universal teacher, with outstanding pedagogical talent and musical historical culture. He is the one who has made known in France the old organ music from the era preceding Bach. How much German organ music can learn from his works concerning form and construction has been constantly emphasized for years in German critical circles.¹³⁶

Going back to the 1930s, Henderson writes:

A man of wide knowledge and culture, of elevated mind and life, he was indeed an ornament of our art and profession.¹³⁷

While Guilmant had a distinguished career as a concert organist, it is his contribution as liturgical organist which is more interesting in the context of this discussion. His service playing during his thirty years at La Trinité (1871–1901)¹³⁸ attracted considerable positive attention, improvising the prelude, offertory, postlude and incidental music during the mass and the interludes and set pieces at vespers.¹³⁹ As noted by Wallace Goodrich, Guilmant, like so many organists, provided a different style of improvisation on church melodies to those of better-known or popular tunes during recitals:

In the Roman Catholic church in France artistic improvisation is not only cultivated, but is indispensable and for many years Guilmant's improvisations have been noted. We heard examples of his power in this line in the various concerts that he gave in this country [US], although it must be acknowledged that the themes on which he was asked to improvise were often of a type less fitted to display his best qualities than the ecclesiastical melodies upon which it was his habit to improvise in the regular church services in Paris.¹⁴⁰

To quote Amédée Gastoué, writing in the year of Guilmant's death: 'if he was less brilliant in his compositions, he was also more liturgical'¹⁴¹ Much of Guilmant's liturgical organ music had its genesis in pieces improvised during services at La Trinité. His decision to notate these pieces and produce this

¹³⁶ Schweitzer (1953), 162

¹³⁷ Henderson (1937), 978

¹³⁸ The manner of his departure is a well-known story. By 1901, the organ was in need of some repair and improvement, with work to be carried out by Charles Mutin/Cavaillé-Coll. The work was to begin after Guilmant's return from a tour, however when he got back, he found the work had been completed by the firm of Merklin at the request of the pastor. The organ was deemed ruined by Guilmant and he and the church parted company. Smith (1987), 56

¹³⁹ Zimmerbold and Archbold (1995), 202, on the evidence of William C. Carl: 'Alexandre Guilmant; Noted Figure Viewed 25 Years After Death', *The Diapason*, xxvii (6/1936), 4

¹⁴⁰ Zimmerbold and Archbold (1995), 202, and taken from Wallace Goodrich: 'Alexandre Guilmant and His Methods', *Jacob's Orchestra Monthly*, ii (5/1911), 594

¹⁴¹ Zimmerbold and Archbold (1995), 201, and taken from Amedee Gastoué: 'Al. Guilmant organiste liturgique', *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, 17 *numero special* (1911), 15

vast corpus seems to have been motivated by the realisation that there were many organists who could not improvise as he could.¹⁴²

In terms of pedagogy, the organ class, on his assumption of the position, still contained the outdated note-for-note harmonisation of chant. One of the changes made by Guilmant during his time was to substitute this for a style in which there would only be chords on the main notes, allowing the restored Solesmes chant the freedom it needed.¹⁴³ Vierne, who was his assistant, tells us that he was invited to home with Guilmant the day after the examination of his first class:

...we agreed upon the following: the hybrid, stereotyped counterpoint...should be dropped and replaced by a commentary on the liturgical chant, no longer accompaniment note-for-note as in church, but in a broader style, admitting melodic ornaments, such as embellishments and passing notes, chords being reserved for the principal notes¹⁴⁴

Guilmant's association with the Schola Cantorum was an important influence on this; it was a society and institution which he helped to found with Vincent d'Indy and Charles Bordes.¹⁴⁵ This institution has been discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, but it serves here to note Guilmant's specific musical and pedagogical motivations.

The Schola Cantorum was to be free from the perceived dogmatism and secular spirit of the Paris Conservatoire. The purpose of the school was to study great composers of the distant past, a philosophy echoed by Alexandre Guilmant, who in the inaugural address for the Schola Cantorum, recommended that students have 'faith' in art and remain unselfish within the music profession.¹⁴⁶

While the École Niedermeyer almost inadvertently improved the standard of liturgical composition (the Niedermeyer method being a reason for the modal liturgical pieces of Gigout), one of the aims of the Schola Cantorum was to improve organ music, particularly with regard to its relationship with Gregorian chant.

¹⁴² van Wye (1970), 79–80

¹⁴³ Ochse (1994), 196–197

¹⁴⁴ Vierne as translated in Smith (1999), 121–123

¹⁴⁵ See education section, chapter 3

¹⁴⁶ Robert F. Waters: *Déodat de Severac: Musical Identity in Fin de Siècle France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 20

Guilmant's reasoning for this is summed up in an article in *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais* (the publication of the Schola) in 1895:

In our services, the *grand-orgue* is called upon generally to make itself heard in alternation with the choir: at mass, at the *Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*; at vespers, after the psalms; at the hymn, at the *Magnificat*. A certain numbers of organists have the habit...of playing small pieces [in *alternatim*] which have nothing in common with that which the choir chants and that seems to me bad from a musical point of view because the melody ought to follow [the chant] in its rhythm and tonality...It is necessary that, in the pieces which alternate, the organist play the Gregorian melody, or at least some versets which are based on these themes. I think that there are some very interesting things to write in the polyphonic style with the ancient tonalities [modes], and on these chants which are so beautiful. The German organists have composed some pieces based on the melody of chorales, forming a literature for organ which is particularly rich; why should we not do the same with our Catholic melodies?¹⁴⁷

As we have seen, Guilmant was not the first to suggest that the Catholic chant themes come be the source a liturgical repertoire; Fétis, Danjou and Lemmens had all done so earlier in the century.

While the eight sonatas continue to be among his best-known works for the organ, it is in the shorter works for the liturgical organist that Guilmant is in some ways at his best. Writing in the year of his death, an anonymous author, claiming to be a student of his stated:

It must be frankly stated that Guilmant wrote too much for his abiding reputation. Some of his finer compositions are seldom played and his harmonic and contrapuntal skill are perhaps best displayed in compositions based on plainsong and designed chiefly for use in the service of the church – in which he worshipped devoutly.¹⁴⁸

Guilmant's contribution to chant-based organ music spans the period from the 1860s to the turn of the century. This is the period of the greatest advancement of the plainchant restoration. These pieces provide an insight into the changing perception of chant, distinguishing it from the metrical chorale and leading to a different approach to these freer melodies. Writing in *La Tribune* in 1895, Father A. Lhoumeau discussed the difficulties of

¹⁴⁷ Zimmerman and Archbold (1995), 203, and from Alexandre Guilmant: 'Du role de l'orgue dans les offices liturgiques', *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, i (9/1895), 11–12

¹⁴⁸ Zimmerbold and Archbold (1995), 203, and from an anonymous editorial in *The New Music Review and Church Music Review*, x (1911), 301–30, claiming to be by a student of Guilmant.

incorporating chant melodies in their true form. Noting that note-for-note metrical presentation was acceptable for syllabic hymns, he states:

the rest of the Gregorian melodies are conceived in free rhythm, and therefore the question is how to use a theme which leads to composing with a mixture and an irregular succession of various meters.¹⁴⁹

Predictably he goes on to suggest two valid approaches, altering the time signatures or incorporating triplets and other devices to change the rhythm of the chant. It is through the works of Guilmant that we see a gradual shift towards greater awareness of Solesmes ideas, when incorporating chant melodies. This will be discussed further on pages 90–94.

While Guilmant's best-known organ works are his sonatas, though the focus here will be on his smaller works. These pieces are not as well known, due to their unsuitability for concert use and the extinction of the liturgical practices which allowed for their use. Evidence has suggested that many of these pieces were based on, or directly originated from service improvisation and the titles of the collections emphasise that Guilmant was answering his own call for a Catholic repertoire to mirror the Lutheran chorale preludes. While there are some chant-based pieces in *Pièces d'orgue dans différents styles* and *L'organiste pratique* (six pieces in the former and four in the latter according to van Wye), the majority of the chant-based pieces occur in the ten volumes of *L'organiste liturgiste*.¹⁵⁰ It is also noteworthy that while *L'organiste pratique* and *Pièces dans différents styles* were published earlier than *L'organiste liturgiste* for the most part, the publication of *L'organiste liturgiste* was not chronological; the first composed piece in *L'organiste liturgiste* is published in the fifth volume and the second in the eighth volume. Also, while the chant-based pieces are dotted around *L'organiste pratique* and *Pièces dans différents styles* (in *L'organiste pratique* they occur in volumes, 3, 8, 12 and op 56 and in *Pièces dans différents styles* in volumes 2, 3, 4, 11 and 12), there is increased grouping of the date-specific chant-based pieces in *L'organiste liturgiste*, separating them from the more generic church pieces.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ van Wye (1970), 78 and from R.P.A. Lhoumeau: 'Le plain-chant à l'orgue', *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais*, i/10 (10/1895), 9–12 and i/12 (12/1895), 5–7

¹⁵⁰ van Wye (1970), 131–136

¹⁵¹ Zimmerman and Archbold (1995), 203–4

Considering the chants used, as compiled by Benjamin van Wye, the range of chants employed by the composer is striking. From the outset, the choices are not glaringly obvious; the first chant-based piece is based on the office hymn for vespers on the feast of the Epiphany, a very specific chant. The second is based on a fragment of the Alleluia for Low Sunday. These choices add credence to the theory of origins in the improvisations at La Trinité, as it indicates that while utilizing these melodies, he found in them something he could use or perhaps found those extemporizations in particular to have a merit or charm which he wished to record. The earliest pieces from the 1860s are short versets, rather than longer pieces, reflecting the prevailing practices of *alternatim*. While the majority of the utilized chants are to be found in the *Liber Usualis* (though not necessarily in exactly the same version), there is a widespread use of Gallican office hymns, right through the period of composition. Overall however, the chants employed for pieces in *Pièces dans différents styles* and *L'organiste pratique* are more generic; alongside the two above, we have pieces based on hymns of the fourth mode, *Iste Confessor* (thrice),¹⁵² *Ecce sacerdos magnus*,¹⁵³ *Ave Maris Stella*,¹⁵⁴ *Salustis humanae sator*,¹⁵⁵ *Ecce panis angelorum*,¹⁵⁶ and *Te rogamus audi nos*.¹⁵⁷ In the biggest collection, *L'organiste liturgiste*, he makes much more extensive use of chant across sixty items written between 1865 and 1899, specifying the service or services for which the pieces are suitable, and therefore being a precursor in a way to Tournemire's *L'orgue mystique*, with its collections of pieces only having use on a few days in the liturgical year.¹⁵⁸

In the case of the pieces written earlier, the chants are presented metrically. Of course a large number of these are hymns, either Gallican office hymns or corrupted Gregorian hymns, so a metrical presentation is not surprising.

¹⁵² 'He whose confession God of Old accepted': Vespers hymn Common of a Confessor Bishop

¹⁵³ 'Behold a great priest': Vespers antiphon Common of a Confessor Bishop

¹⁵⁴ 'Hail, Star of the Sea': Marian Vespers hymn

¹⁵⁵ 'Hail Redeemer of humanity': Vespers hymn for Ascension

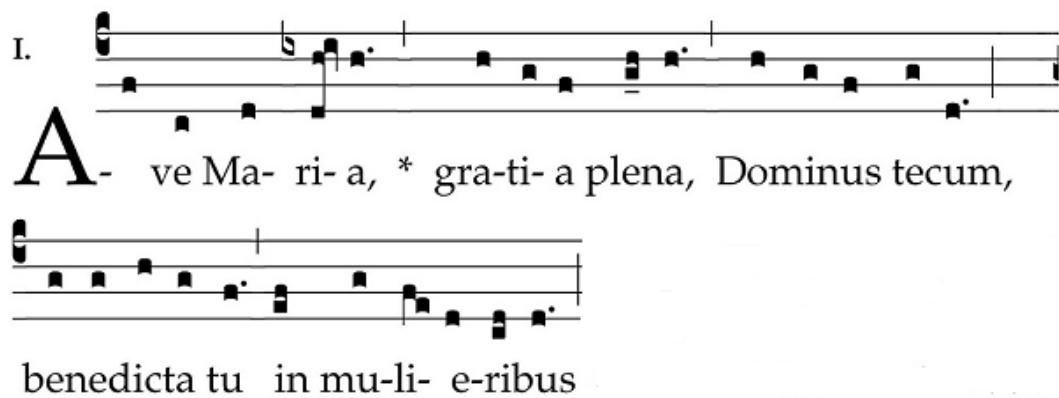
¹⁵⁶ 'Behold the Bread of Angels': Verse 21, Corpus Christi sequence

¹⁵⁷ 'We beseech thee to hear us O Lord': Litany of the Saints

¹⁵⁸ Zimmerman and Archbold (1995), 204

Ex. 4.1a: *Ave Maria* (exc.)

I.



A- ve Ma- ri- a, * gra-ti- a plena, Dominus tecum,
benedicta tu in mu-li- e-ribus

Ex. 4.1b: Guilmant: *L'organiste liturgiste*, Book 1, *Ave Maria*, bars 1–19

Andante sostenuto (♩ = 69)

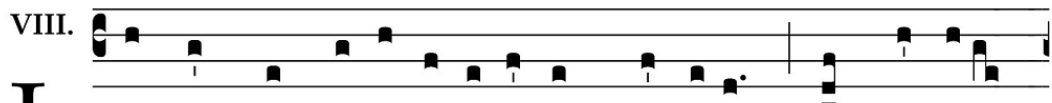


A - ve - Ma - ri - a, gra - ti a ple - na Do - mi - nus te -
Plain-chant
Recit. p rit. pp A tempo
Recit.
cum be - ne - dic - ta tu in mu - li er - i - bus,

Example 4.2 treats the chant *Lumen ad Revelationem Gentium* fugally.

Ex. 4.2a: *Lumen ad Revelationem Gentium*

VIII.



L Umen * ad reve-la-ti- onem genti-um : et glo-ri-am

Ex. 4.2b: Guilmant: *L'Organiste liturgiste*, Book 1, Fugue, bars 1–9

Allegro Moderato (♩ = 84)



MAN.

Example 4.3 is based on *Ave Maris Stella*

Ex. 4.3a: *Ave Maris Stella*

I.



A- ve ma-ris stella, De- i Ma-ter alma. Atque
semper Virgo, Fe-lix cæ-li porta.

Ex. 4.3b: Guilmant: *L'organiste liturgiste*, Book 2, *Sortie*, bars 1–14

Allegro Vivace (♩. = 80)

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegro Vivace' with a quarter note equal to 80 beats per minute. The first measure of the first system has a forte dynamic marking 'ff'. Below the first system, there are two pedal markings: 'S. PED.' under the first measure and 'PED.' under the second measure. The second system continues the piece with similar notation and includes 'S. PED.' and 'PED.' markings below it.

In contrast to these examples is the strikingly different approach taken in *Jesu Corona Virginum* from the *Vêpres de la fête de Sainte-Cécile*, written in the 1890s and included in volume 7 of *L'organiste liturgiste*. In this, the chant is treated much more freely in terms of the rhythm, reflecting the changing approach to chant performance, exemplified by Solesmes.

Ex. 4.4: Guilmant: *L'organiste liturgiste*, *Jesu virginum corona*, bars 1–4

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The first measure of the first system has a forte dynamic marking 'f'. The notation consists of a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a supporting line. The second system continues the piece with similar notation.

The articles and thesis of Benjamin van Wye and Edward Zimmerman and Lawrence Archibold's chapter in *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor* all provide more detailed studies of *L'organiste liturgiste* and on the evolution of Guilmant's liturgical style and approach to chant melodies throughout the forty-year period that he produced the collection (and indeed *Pièces dans différents styles* and *L'organiste pratique*). These volumes provide an insight into the changing attitudes to chant performance, liturgical playing, and indeed that relationship between chant and the repertoire which is so strongly enshrined in the mission statement of the Schola Cantorum. The dedicated efforts of Gigout and Guilmant towards initially a modal repertoire to stand alongside the chant and eventually a chant-based repertoire to adorn the Catholic liturgy are evident. By the end of the century, the journey from the versets of Corrette and Lasceaux to Boëly and eventually to Guilmant would be part of a greater goal. These efforts would culminate in the 1903 *motu proprio* with its new pronouncements on chant and the organ.

Guilmant lived until 1911 but his career as a liturgical organist finished in 1901. It is no coincidence that his output of liturgical organ music stopped at the turn of the century as his focus moved elsewhere. The obscurity of the repertoire he produced for the liturgy is not based necessarily on quality, but on the new ethos of the 1903 *motu proprio*, which made the verset largely obsolete. He did however produce a worthy tool for the liturgical organist and this mission to create a Catholic repertoire would be taken on during the twentieth century by others, most notably Charles Tournemire.

Chapter 5

Chant and the Organ Symphony: Widor and Dupré

5.1: Introduction

Chapter 3 traced the development of organ literature and the perception of the organ over the course of the nineteenth century. This occurred in parallel with an increasing awareness that in order for the organ to flourish outside of the liturgy, it would require an investment in serious composition. Chapter 4 outlined how the relationship between organ music and the liturgy evolved during this period. This chapter will trace how the chant revival, the influence of sacred texts, the developing interest in early music and the rise of the symphonic school coalesced to influence the compositional processes of Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937) and Marcel Dupré (1886–1971).

Over the course of the nineteenth century as we have seen, there existed a movement towards the improvement of performance and perceptions of chant, liturgical organ music and concert organ music. The relationship between chant and organ music improved through an increasing awareness of a need for modal chant accompaniments and chant-based repertoire. This was in no small way aided by the work of the *École Niedermeyer* and the *Schola Cantorum* as discussed in chapter 4. Equally, the emphasis on repertoire and the development of a French school of composition (as opposed to improvisation) led by Franck was to find a natural apex in the new genre which was to emerge, that of the ‘symphony’ for organ.

5.2: Charles-Marie Widor and his influences

In 1890, the death of Franck led to the appointment of Charles-Marie Widor to the post of organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire. In Widor the school found a teacher with a different style to Franck, more logical and grounded and much stricter in terms of technique, largely due to the influence of his musical lineage.¹ Born in Lyon in 1844, Widor first studied with his father. His family maintained a strong relationship with Aristide Cavallé-Coll and in 1863, on the organ builder’s recommendation, he was sent to study with Lemmens

¹ Michael Murray: *French Masters of the Organ* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998), 97

in Brussels. Throughout his career, he would claim that his musical ancestry stretched back to Bach.² As mentioned previously, Cavallé-Coll was trying to find organists who could best manipulate the possibilities inherent in his new, more orchestral instruments. Widor, along with Guilmant and Loret, was among those who were to benefit from this patronage.³

While under the guidance of Lemmens, Widor also studied composition with Fétis who was regarded as one of the most influential figures in nineteenth-century Europe as a teacher, musicologist and concert organiser. He provided Widor with a strict grounding in traditional compositional forms and endowed him with the sense of discipline and appreciation for the past which would endure for life.⁴ He is credited with introducing Lemmens to the music of Bach and by his own account acquired from the Ministry of the Interior, the money needed for Lemmens to travel to study with Hesse in Breslau. This was for Fétis part of a quest to develop a Belgian organ school, a task he believed fulfilled in the hands of Lemmens. He was a vociferous critic of the poor quality of organ music and indeed the prevalent tastes, which were exemplified by the figure of Lefébure-Wély. This was summed up in his 1856 essay *L'orgue mondaine et la musique erotique a l'église* ('Worldly Organs and Erotic Music in Church').⁵ If the influence of Fétis on Lemmens was great, so too was the influence of both men on Widor, for that period in

² William J. Peterson: 'Lemmens, His *école d'orgue*, and Nineteenth-Century Organ Methods', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 51, *passim*; Orpha Ochse: *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 174, *passim*; John R. Near: *The Life and Work of Charles-Marie Widor*, unpublished DMA diss. (Boston University, 1985), 9, *passim*; Rollin Smith: *Louis Vierne, Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1999), 58; Andrew Thomson: *The Life and Times of Charles-Marie Widor: 1844–1937* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), 7; Murray (1998), 92–95

³ Near (1985), 11–12

⁴ Born near Liège, Fétis had studied at the Paris Conservatoire, winning the second prize in the competition which was to later become the *Prix de Rome*. He was a frequent reviewer and lecturer, holding a number of teaching positions and organising concerts before his appointment, in 1833, as director of the Brussels Conservatoire and *maître de chapelle* to King Leopold I (1790–1865). In Brussels, he resumed his organisation of early music concerts and continued to publish. His influence extended beyond his compositions to various musicological writings and the publication of a number of treatises. Katharine Ellis et al: 'Fétis, François-Joseph', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), viii, 746–749

⁵ Peterson (1995), 54–61

Brussels laid the foundations of the tradition of organ playing and composition which was to be espoused by Widor as professor.

In his organ class, Widor quickly initiated a different approach to his predecessor. While Franck emphasised improvisation and composition more than repertoire and technique, Widor's aims were different. He believed that French organ playing was suffering from an overdependence on improvisation: 'In France we have neglected performance much too much in favour of improvisation. This is not only wrong, it is nonsense'.⁶ Students in his class received strict instruction in skills and stylistic awareness necessary to play the organ music of Bach, which the professor considered to be perfect: 'I shall cite only that incomparable miracle, the organ works of Bach, the greatest musician of all time'.⁷ If we are to view Franck as the founding father of the French romantic organ school, it must be acknowledged that the Belgian's ideals were his main influence, while Widor taught the next generation of players how best to physically manipulate the instrument. Franck's best-known students, such as Vincent d'Indy, gained renown as composers, while Widor's became the great organists.⁸ Charles Tournemire, regarded as a successor to Franck for his devotion to improvisation, is an interesting combination of the two professors, having admitted that it was not from Franck that he learned much of his organ technique, but rather from Widor.⁹

Widor considered technical proficiency as vital, that the organist could not realise his/her spiritual insights or communicate these spiritual ideals without

⁶ As quoted in Smith (1999), 55; contrary to this, Louis Vierne also acknowledged that Widor 'improvised with splendid craftsmanship and a fertile imagination'. As translated in Smith (1999), 65

⁷ *Ibid*, 59

⁸ Andrew Thomson: 'C.M. Widor: A Revaluation', *MT*, cxv/1693 (3/1984), 169; Vierne also acknowledged in his memoirs that 'the great reform brought by Widor to organ instruction dealt especially with performance. That reform, which was to give birth in our country to the most brilliant school of organists in the world, will not be the *maître's* least claim to fame in the eyes of posterity'. As quoted in Smith (1999), 69

⁹ This sentiment was echoed by Vierne another pupil of both Franck and Widor and friend and fellow student of Tournemire. Léon Vallas: *César Franck* (London: Harrap and Co., 1951), 255

a solid technical ability.¹⁰ Louis Vierne (1870–1937), his devoted disciple and successor as a symphonist, tells us that he was an excellent improviser, but different to Franck, substituting melodic invention, elegance and subtlety for construction and logical development.¹¹ Despite his obvious differences to his predecessor, Widor held Franck in quite high regard.¹² The Belgian's music did not feature frequently in the competition programmes of his students and he himself did not play Franck in public.¹³ He did however acknowledge Franck's skills as an improviser, on show at the inauguration of La Trinité in 1869, an event at which Widor also played:

the themes, the development, the formal completeness are all equally to be admired: in fact he has never written down any better music than he played today.¹⁴

He was puzzled by Franck's imbalance between playing repertoire and improvisation.¹⁵

In 1869, upon the death of Lefébure-Wély, Cavallé-Coll saw the opportunity to position Widor at the helm of his largest organ, that of the church of Saint-Sulpice. Franck put forth his candidacy for the job and despite his position in Sainte-Clotilde and his seniority, he was overlooked due to the lobbying of Cavallé-Coll.¹⁶ Though Widor was young upon taking over the post in January 1870, he was acknowledged as a skilled organist and performer, whose main interests were Bach, Mendelssohn, Boëly and Lemmens, as well as his own music.¹⁷ Franck was known as the master improviser who had been backed by Cavallé-Coll in the past, but now the organ builder saw in Widor the serious technician who could renew organ performance.¹⁸

¹⁰ Jimmy Jess Anthony: *Charles-Marie Widor's Symphonies pour Orgue: Their Artistic Context and Cultural Antecedents*, unpublished DMA diss. (Rochester, Eastman 1986), 241

¹¹ Ruth Sisson: *The Symphonic Organ Works of Charles Arnould Tournemire*, unpublished PhD diss. (Florida State University, 1984), 40

¹² Near (1985), 43

¹³ Thomson (1987), 50

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 15–16, 47

¹⁵ Murray (1998), 99

¹⁶ Near (1985), 47

¹⁷ Due to opposition on account of his age and education, he was appointed acting organist, a post he was to hold for sixty-four years. Murray (1998), 100–101

¹⁸ Near (1985), 47

The 1870s was a decade of great upheaval as the Parisian organ world and saw the deaths of Alexis Chauvet (*titulaire* at La Trinité) and Lefébure-Wély, who died on the last day on 1869. The replacement of these two figures with Guilmant and Widor respectively signalled the beginning of a new era in the profession.¹⁹ It was also a period of great musical importance, as serious artistic endeavour was being compromised by the desire for entertainment, the result of a society dominated by commercial interests.²⁰ Throughout the decade the organ outgrew its role within the church and developed as a concert instrument, not only in France but both in Britain and on the continent. In 1871, William T. Best inaugurated the new Willis organ at the Royal Albert Hall in London, the first of many such instruments.²¹ Serious recitals became more common in Paris and the efforts of the members of the organ community were rewarded in 1878, with the inauguration of the organ at the Palais du Trocadéro, initiating a series of recitals which established the secular organ performance.²² In the series which followed, the presence of works by Handel, Bach and Mendelssohn indicated that new attitudes to serious organ playing had arrived.²³ The placement of the organ at the Trocadéro had not been an easy achievement. As early as 1850, Cavallé-Coll saw that this would be a utility of profound importance if the performance of secular organ works was to grow in France:

What you seek for music in Belgium would be no less useful in France: a cathedral organ for use on public occasions, on which organists of all nations could play the works of the great masters, which are not appropriate in church. This is done in Germany and England, and it would be a great asset to music in general, as well as a powerful stimulus for our young organists.²⁴

Widor, despite his position at Saint-Sulpice, was not as prolific an organ recitalist as his colleague Guilmant. Yet his contribution to the series at the Trocadéro saw the first performance of his sixth symphony, confirming the

¹⁹ Ochse (1994), 88

²⁰ Thomson (1984), 169

²¹ Ochse (1994), 89–94

²² *Ibid*, 94

²³ Further details on the programmes are available in Rollin Smith: 'The Organ of the Trocadéro and its Players'. *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 275–30

²⁴ Near (1985), 39 and taken from a letter to Fétis

secular nature of the concert hall organ.²⁵ Indeed, the presence of music by a number of French organists, (including the première of the *Trois pièces* of Franck) confirms the emergence of a serious French school. Widor the organist was still a common presence at the inauguration of any new Cavallé-Coll organ, however he was better known, in the press at least, as a conductor or composer of music for other media.²⁶

Widor was regarded as a most diplomatic and politically astute person.²⁷

In some ways an outsider (not having trained in the Paris Conservatoire), he remained neutral in the 'war' between the 'Franckists' (d'Indy et al), and the composers of the Société Nationale such as Délibes and Massenet. Very few French composers appeared on his programmes when he did perform, with the exception of Boëly, whose seriousness and aptitude with traditional forms appealed to him.²⁸ He gained from Lemmens a great devotion to Bach, a composer who, despite the best efforts of a few devotees such as Alkan and Boëly, was not as much of an influence in France as in Germany. The source of technical inspiration to the serious composers like Saint-Saëns, Bach was regarded by some (including Fauré) as quite dull. Widor's interest in Bach was fuelled by his association with Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965), who studied with him from 1893. Through Schweitzer he became more aware of the importance of the text in the interpretation of the chorale preludes.²⁹

Like Saint-Saëns, Widor can be said to have belonged to a 'lost generation'. Born in 1844, he was caught between the romantic upsurge of Chopin, Schumann and Liszt and the sensational impressionist and modernist movements. Living so long, until 1937, he just has joined Saint-Saëns in feeling like 'scrap-iron', regarded by his youngest students as a reactionary.³⁰

This assessment by Andrew Thomson of Widor's position serves to highlight the limited impact of Widor's other music on the musical world at large.³¹ As

²⁵ This piece is described on the programme as *Cinquième symphonie*, however, the movement titles suggest that it was what was published as the Sixth Symphony in G minor, but the order reversed to preserve the rising key relationships. Smith (1995), 289–290

²⁶ Ochse (1994), 99–101

²⁷ Isidor Philipp: 'Charles-Marie Widor: A Portrait', *MQ*, xxx/2 (4/1944), 127

²⁸ Thomson (1987), 12; Smith (1995), 289–290

²⁹ Thomson (1984), 169; Albert Schweitzer: *Music in the Life of Albert Schweitzer*, ed. Charles R. Joy (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), 23, *passim*

³⁰ Thomson (1984), 170

³¹ Isidor Phillip (1944) has more to say on this topic

well as being an organist-composer, he was also achieved success in opera, ballet, chamber and orchestral music.³² In the early years of the twentieth century, his music appeared dated in a world familiar with the Debussy, Ravel, Strauss and Stravinsky.³³ His two greatest influences were as a teacher and as the father of the 'organ symphony', a genre which is to serve as an important part of this discussion

5.3: Widor and the 'organ symphony'

Such is the modern organ, essentially symphonic. To the new instrument a new language, an ideal different from that of scholastic polyphony...It is also obvious to what extent the organ symphony differs from the orchestral symphony. There is no fear of blurring the distinctions. One will never write in the same way for the orchestra and the organ, but henceforth the same care will have to be taken in the combination of timbres in an organ composition as in the orchestral work.³⁴

The symphony for organ emerged from the combination of a number of elements. First was the Cavallé-Coll organ, a debt summed up by Widor: 'Our school owes its creation – I say it without reservation – to the special magical sound of these instruments'.³⁵

As referred to above, his family had a friendly relationship with Cavallé-Coll and Charles-Marie would maintain this, crediting the organ builder with being decisive in the development of the romantic literature stating: 'without him [nineteenth century] French organ literature would not exist'.³⁶

His personal compositional debt to Cavallé-Coll's organs was summed up as follows:

If I had not felt the seduction of these timbres, the mystic spell of this wave of sound, I would not have written any organ music.³⁷

³² By the time he succeeded Franck in 1870, Widor had in excess of sixty-four opus numbers in his compositional catalogue, including songs, piano pieces, motets, a mass, two orchestral symphonies, overtures, a ballet and an opera. Smith (1999), 57

³³ Thomson (1987), 59–60

³⁴ Charles-Marie Widor: 'Foreword to Symphonies 1–8, Opp.13 and 42', *Charles-Marie Widor, Complete Organ Symphonies, Series 1, Symphonies 1–5* (New York: Dover, 1991), p xi–xii

³⁵ From the preface to the Widor/Schweitzer Bach editions and quoted in Gerard Brooks: 'French and Belgian Organ Music after 1800', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, eds. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 267

³⁶ Near (1985), 62

³⁷ *Ibid*, 61

The organ is, in reality, an orchestra of wind instruments. An organ of thirty, forty, fifty stops is an orchestra of thirty, forty, fifty musicians.³⁸

While Widor makes reference to the organ as similar to an orchestra, the quotation which heads this section makes it clear that writing for the orchestra and the orchestral organ were distinct. Likewise Franck, an advocate of the possibilities of the orchestral organ, saw fit to use the term 'symphonique' to describe his *Grande pièce symphonique*, a piece which surely had an influence on his younger contemporary.

Widor's early symphonies involved the creation of suites from separately-composed pieces. As we know there was little tradition of pieces on this scale in French organ history, however this was not to remain the case. That is not to say that sonatas were unknown in France in the earlier half of the century, but even by the 1860s, those being played were either German or German-orientated.³⁹

Interestingly for a composer who was so devoted to the use of chant in organ music, Guilmant's sonatas are grounded in the classical tradition and contain no chant fragments. This is easily explained since his use of chant is grounded in a determination to create a repertoire for liturgical use, not as a source of inspiration for the concert hall.⁴⁰ Lemmens, partially responsible for the emergence of the school, composed three multi-movement sonatas which include overt references to chant. Widor's symphonies, on the other hand, can be seen as a natural result of the combination of the sonata tradition with the new orchestral organ, a conclusion supported by d'Indy's description of them as essentially sonatas with timbre. They also draw from Alkan's symphony for solo piano and Franck's *Grand pièce symphonique*, the latter having been described as a 'romantic sonata' by Charles Tournemire. Widor's first performance at Saint-Sulpice in 1863 included a 'Sonata (Andante)' attributed to him, a movement which may have survived into the op.13

³⁸ *Ibid*, 67

³⁹ Anthony (1986), 206–207

⁴⁰ See chapter 4, section 4.5

If one is to regard the bombastic music of the early-nineteenth century as an inevitable consequence of the marriage of post-revolutionary France, and the organs of Cavallé-Coll and his contemporaries, it could be accurate to see in the 'organ symphony' a vehicle by which 'serious' French organ music could develop.

While the quotations which head this section explain Widor's views on the organ and the orchestra, it is safe to say that he does create an orchestral effect using Cavallé-Coll's sound world, restoring the nobility of an instrument damaged by frivolity.⁴¹ His combination of the sonic potential of the romantic organ with the style of nineteenth-century piano and organ music led to the birth of this new genre.⁴² Thomson notes that the austerity of Lutheran values influenced by his association with Schweitzer served as a counterweight to the Catholic exorbitance and allowed a greater balance within Widor's symphonies.⁴³

5.31: The symphonies

The organ symphonies of Widor can be divided into three groups. Nos 1–4 (op.13, 1872), bear more resemblance to suites than 'symphonies'.⁴⁴ Many of these movements were written for use in services and recitals and grouped retrospectively. It is this fact which accounts for their eclecticism, with movements in baroque, classical and romantic forms.⁴⁵ The influence of Fétis is to be seen, with fugal and contrapuntal movements present in each of these symphonies, reflecting his age (twenty-eight) when they were published.⁴⁶ Widor essentially drew together several earlier pieces and arranged them into these suites, tonally unified and in a descending key order from C to F. Some of the pieces may even date back to his days with Fétis, although his penchant for revisions would suggest that any works of that age were quite

⁴¹ Brooks (1998), 275

⁴² Félix Raugel and Andrew Thomson: 'Widor, Charles-Marie', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxvii, 360

⁴³ Andrew Thomson: 'Some Wider Perspectives in French Romantic Music', *OY*, xxxiv (2001), 133

⁴⁴ Raugel and Thomson (2001), 360; Murray (1998), 102

⁴⁵ Thomson (1984), 169–170

⁴⁶ Thomson (1987), 11–12

likely subject to surgery prior to inclusion. The argument that they are suites not symphonies is supported by the fact that Widor himself was known to perform selections as well as complete works, adding weight to the idea that they are not particularly unified.⁴⁷

The second set (op. 42, 1887), published fifteen years after the first display stronger unity and in that sense are more fitting the designation 'symphony'. Indeed, it is possible to discern a higher level of musical coherence within these large structures, through motific unity and 'cogent musical argument'.⁴⁸ Indeed the seventh and eighth symphonies are works of great strength, but due to their length and their technical demands they are often neglected by performers.⁴⁹ However, they are more suited to the concert event, where the full strength of their coherence could be exploited.⁵⁰

The period between the publication of the op. 42 symphonies in 1887 and the composition of the ninth and tenth symphonies in 1895 and 1900, saw a change in the composer's attitudes. Consequentially the *Symphonie gothique* and the *Symphonie romane*, linked by their titular allusion to architecture and their use of plainchant melodies, mark somewhat of a departure for the composer. This will be dealt with further later in this chapter.

Despite the significant contribution of Widor to the 'serious' secular organ school in nineteenth-century France, it must be acknowledged that he did not succeed totally in shedding the frivolity of the past. There is a reference to a crowd-pleasing improvised fantasy on Christmas carols⁵¹ and it cannot be denied that, particularly in his finales, he is open to accusations of being overtly bombastic. Some of the charges of vulgarity could be attributed to poor performances of his work by eager enthusiasts, but there is a basis to the criticism.⁵²

⁴⁷ Near (1985), 109

⁴⁸ Thomson (1987), 21–22, 38; Raugel and Thomson (2001), 360

⁴⁹ Raugel and Thomson (2001), 360

⁵⁰ Thomson (1987), 21–22

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 20

⁵² Thomson (1984), 169

Paul Lang's *Music in Western Civilisation* bears only a singular reference to the efforts of Charles-Marie Widor, referring to his symphonies as 'contrapuntally belaboured products of a flat and scant imagination, the bastard nature of which is evident from the title alone'.⁵³ This rather cynical view neglects to take into account the vast amount of creativity inherent in these works, as well as the insistence of the composer himself that while there was now a need to consider colour during organ composition, the organ was not an orchestra. The use of the title 'symphony' admittedly does imply this. From the point of view of Widor's music, he manages to unite the parts of the Cavallé-Coll organ much in the way one would with an orchestra, without either attempting to emulate an orchestra or losing the nobility of the instrument to the style of bombast associated with the early-nineteenth-century.⁵⁴

5.4: Marcel Dupré and the *Symphonie-Passion*

Marcel Dupré, Widor's successor at Saint-Sulpice stands as one of the most important figures in the development of organ performance and composition during the twentieth century. Despite the fact that his compositional style was not *avant-garde* in a Paris that was home to many composers who were engaging in more experimentation, Dupré is nonetheless important as he represents in some way the fusion of a number of the important elements of his teachers and his forefathers in the French school.

He was born in Rouen in 1886 into a musical family. His father Albert studied organ with Guilmant from 1883 and had, during a period of study in Paris, befriended Aristide Cavallé-Coll.⁵⁵ The organ builder remained a good family friend and had a great influence on the young Dupré.⁵⁶ His father's abilities were not confined however to music and he was also skilled in science, medical diagnosis, painting, oratory, architecture and mathematics.⁵⁷ One of young Marcel's earliest memories was the visit of Widor to Rouen in 1890 to

⁵³ Paul Henry Lang: *Music in Western Civilisation* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1942), 995

⁵⁴ Thomson (1984), 269; Brooks (1998), 275

⁵⁵ John Mason Pagett: *The Music of Marcel Dupré*, unpublished DSM diss. (Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1975), 2

⁵⁶ Marcel Dupré: *Recollections*, transl. Ralph Kneeream (New York: Belwin Mills, 1975), 15

⁵⁷ Pagett (1975), 3, he also notes remarkably that his father couldn't memorise music.

play the *Symphonie gothique*.⁵⁸ He showed musical ability from an early age and began organ studies with his father. He made his first public appearance in June 1894 at age 8, when he played the Bach Prelude and Fugue in E minor for a service to inaugurate the chancel organ in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Elbeuf.⁵⁹ On 20 October 1897, he was appointed the organist of Saint-Vivien de Rouen.⁶⁰

Dupré was taught by both Guilmant and Widor, entering the former's organ class in 1906, having studied privately with him since 1897.⁶¹ He won the *premier prix* in 1907.⁶² He entered Widor's fugue and composition class in October 1907 and was awarded the *Prix de Rome* in 1914. Despite this, he never went to Rome due to the outbreak of the First World War.⁶³ He was Widor's deputy at Saint-Sulpice from 1906, substituted for Vierne at Notre Dame from 1916 to 1920 and succeeded Guilmant at the conservatoire in 1926, before taking over at Saint-Sulpice in 1934.⁶⁴ He was director of the conservatoire from 1954 to 1956. As a performer who gave 2178 recitals worldwide, he seems to have inherited the mantle of Guilmant and his compositional style reflects both the discipline and flamboyance of both Widor and Guilmant. His initial fame as a player came from his performance in 1920 of the complete organ works of Bach from memory, a feat he repeated in 1921 at the Trocadéro. Both Guilmant and Widor saw in him the continuation of their 'true Bach tradition' that he could bring the regeneration of French organ playing forward after their deaths.

5.5: Dupré the improviser

Dupré the composer is inexorably connected to Dupré the improviser. He was universally regarded as a master in this skill, both in the organ loft and in

⁵⁸ Dupré (1975), 8–9

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 22–23

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 34; Pagett (1975), 10

⁶¹ Pagett (1975), 10

⁶² *Ibid*, 15

⁶³ *Ibid*, 16

⁶⁴ François Sabatier: 'Dupré, Marcel', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), vii, 729–730. It is also an amusing fact that technically he succeeded Lefébure-Wély who died in 1869. Widor was 'acting organist', as he had never been fully appointed.

the concert hall. A number of his compositions had their genesis as improvisations and his short pieces provide an insight into the type of music he improvised during the liturgy. The requirement of the organist to compose versets was still present in the French liturgy.

He [the French *titulaire*] 'interrupts' to some purpose and in accordance with long and inflexible tradition. For instance, at the Office of Vespers, five psalms are sung in the choir, each psalm having its own antiphon. The liturgical chanters sing the antiphon at the beginning of each psalm and then sing the psalm itself, both antiphon and psalm being sung in plainsong and accompanied on the small organ. But as soon as the psalm is finished the grand organ plays the antiphon as a solo piece, and although this organ 'verset' may be an extended composition on quite modern lines, it never forgets the traditional plainchant theme of the antiphon-melody which it represents. Similarly, the alternate verses of the plainsong office hymn are not sung by the choir, but are played on the grand organ. They may be, and often are, played in a free style, but the plainchant is there all the time just as truly as it is in Palestrina's vocal 'versets'. This explains the *raison d'être* of a great deal of French organ music. It is founded upon plainchant themes not because of any poverty of ideas on the part of the composer, but because it is intended to be used in the manner described above.⁶⁵

Indeed it was this tradition which attracted the Englishman Claude Johnson, who was present for a vespers service at Notre Dame on 15 August 1919. During this period Dupré was substituting for Vierne, who had gone to Switzerland to receive treatment for his deteriorating sight.⁶⁶

Dupré's versets, commenting on the texts as permitted by the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, were well received by Johnson. He requested a copy of the pieces which he assumed were written down, and having learned that they were improvisations, commissioned Dupré to compose such a set for publication by Novello, resulting in the *15 Versets pour les vêpres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte-Vierge* (op.18).⁶⁷ Johnson also promoted him in England to the extent that his debut at the Royal Albert Hall was attended by some nine thousand people including the Prince of Wales, (later Edward

⁶⁵ B: 'Marcel Dupré: The Man and His Music', *MT*, lxi/934 (1/12/1920), 815

⁶⁶ During this four-year period many began to view Dupré as the *titulaire* and events related to this caused Vierne and Dupré to have a bad falling out during the period following his return. More detail is available in Smith (1999), 330–343

⁶⁷ Novello paid 1500f for the pieces, Dupré (1975), 68; Pagett (1975) points out that various sources have different titles for this collection namely: *Versets sur les vêpres*, 'Fifteen Versets', 'Fifteen Pieces for Organ founded on Antiphons' (which is inaccurate as only some are based on chants), *Fifteen Versets sur les vêpres de la Vierge*, *Vêpres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte-Vierge*. Pagett (1975), 198

VIII).⁶⁸ The Gregorian Association of London (600 boys and men) were involved in the performance of this versets alongside the intended chants. These antiphons were not to be Dupré's last engagement with Gregorian themes in small-scale compositions and throughout his career he produced a number of further collections, including 'Eight Short Preludes on Gregorian Themes' (op.45), *Six antiennes pour les temps de Noël* (op.48), and *Le tombeau de Titelouze* (op.38), drawing from a wide range of Gregorian melodies. In fact, one quarter of his vast output for the organ is based upon Gregorian melodies, the majority of which has a liturgical usefulness and all composed before the Second Vatican Council.⁶⁹

5.6: Religion, plainchant and improvisation in the music of Marcel Dupré

Dupré, like many church organists had a great personal faith, despite encountering difficulties with the clergy: in the words of Madame Dupré, 'He loved the Church, but he did not always love the clergy'.⁷⁰ From Widor (and indeed from his father) he would have inherited exalted views of the role of the liturgical organist. In his output for the organ, this is expressed both in pieces suitable for liturgical use (often with a pedagogical element) and concert pieces, some based on chant, but others with a religious element.⁷¹

As well as the works based specifically on plainchant melodies, there is a religious fervour to be found in a number of other works. *Le chemin de la croix* (op.29). *Offrande à la Vierge* (op.40), *Trois élévations* (op.32), *Angélus* (op.34, No.2), *Vision* (op. 44), *Psaume XVII* (op.47), *Annonciation* (op.56), *Trois hymnes* (op.58), 'Two Chorales' (op.59) and *Évocation* (op.37), all have religious connotations, though Dupré continued to blur boundaries between the sacred and the secular. These works, not liturgical, but sacred in nature, include symphonic suites and symphonic poems, inspired by the Blessed

⁶⁸ Murray (1985), 67–69; Graham Steed: *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1999), 12

Edward VIII would become the most controversial English monarch of the twentieth century, reigning only from January to December 1936 and abdicating in order to marry the American divorcee Wallis Simpson. He was never crowned.

⁶⁹ Steed (1999), 11–12

⁷⁰ *Ibid*

⁷¹ It should be noted that Olivier Messiaen was a student of Dupré and may have been influenced by these spiritual works.

Virgin (*Annonciation, Offrande à la Vierge, Angelus*), and scripture (*Vision, Psaume XVII*). *Le chemin de la Croix* began life as a concert improvisation (albeit a planned one) given in the Brussels Conservatory in 1931. However the composer was known to use it during Passiontide services at Saint-Sulpice. As a work, its fourteen meditations on the Stations of the Cross foreshadow the various organ suites of Messiaen.⁷² A review of the improvisation, which involved meditations interspersed with poetry stated:

M. Dupré has, in his improvised commentaries, managed to illustrate the poem, and to faithfully convey its profane and religious character. The musician has revealed there all the diversity of his talent and made apparent all the music's evocative force. What emotion was concentrated in the commentary on 'Jesus on the Cross' and what an over-flowing faith in the burial of Jesus! By means of this poetic thought, the musician gave a paraphrase full of grandeur...⁷³

The *Offrande à la Vierge* whose movements are entitled *Virgo Mater, Mater dolorosa* and *Virgo mediatrix*, would seem like an ideal opportunity to use chant melodies as the composer had in Marian works in the past, although the melody of the first movement bears some resemblance to a Gregorian chant.⁷⁴ *Annonciation* (op. 56), inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the same name, once again would seem a likely place to include chant melodies, but Dupré's two meditations are programmatic and improvisory in style, but not using the same technique as the *Symphonie-Passion*.⁷⁵ As with the pedagogical 'Seventy-Nine Chorales' (op. 28), Dupré returns to the Lutheran hymn repertoire for the 'Two Chorales' (op. 59), based on *Freu' dich sehr, o meine Seele* and *Liebster Immanuel, Hertzog der Frommen*, both used by Bach.⁷⁶ The *Trois hymnes* (op.58), though not based on liturgical melodies, use hymn or chant-like melodies and a connection can therefore be traced between these works and the pioneering *Trois chorales* of César Franck.⁷⁷

⁷² Michael Murray: *French Masters of the Organ* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1998), 150–152; Steed (1999), 57–73

⁷³ Translated and cited in Pagett (1975), 259 and from *Le Courrier Musical et Théâtral*, (1/5/1931)

⁷⁴ Pagett (1975), 352

⁷⁵ Steed (1999), 174–177; Pagett, 402–404

⁷⁶ Steed (1999), 184–187; Pagett (1975), 41

⁷⁷ Pagett (1975), 408; Steed (1999), 180–184

David Gammie, writing in 1996, commented on Dupre's amazing ability to inspire loyalty in both students and audiences, referring to the need, inherent in all objective biographical work to separate truth from legend:

It (his music) reveals a highly complex personality, and one starts to wonder if he is perhaps an even more profound and interesting composer than his many admirers have so far allowed. What dark night of the soul, one wonders, forged the bleak vision of Crucifixion in the *Symphonie-Passion*, or the ferocious desperation of works like the extraordinary Second Symphony or the *Final*, op.27? ...Dupré may have delighted in exploiting to the limit the sheer power of the modern organ, but his belief in the power of music was perhaps more truly enshrined in this simple declaration: 'Music should be like a gentle caress for the ear'⁷⁸

As acknowledged elsewhere in this dissertation, the discipline of improvisation remained an important part of the organist's task well into the twentieth century. As the primary work to be discussed in this section, the *Symphonie-Passion*, originated in a set of improvisations and because chant was such a frequent inspiration for improvisation both within and independently of the liturgy, Dupré's views on the nature of this art will now be briefly explored in order to assist in the understanding of the composer and his approach to chant-based composition.

The point of origin for Dupré's approach to improvisation came from the philosophies espoused by his teacher Guilmant. As outlined in chapter 4, Guilmant had very definite views on the approach to improvisation. To him, the term 'improvisation' suggested a looseness and spontaneity which was characteristic of Franck and Tournemire yet, to him this idea undermined the skill required.⁷⁹ This philosophy was transmitted to Dupré, who had an astounding capacity for improvisation and believed that all looseness and spontaneity should give way to skill, discipline and mental effort.⁸⁰ Many of his recitals contained improvisations, although he did not seem to view concert and liturgical improvisation as distinct (unlike Messaien and Tournemire). He was never known to rehearse an improvisation, having the capacity to allow organised musical ideas and forms to flow with ease.⁸¹

⁷⁸ David Gammie: 'A Gentle Caress', *CO*, vi/3 (5-6/1998), 16-17

⁷⁹ Murray (1985), 38

⁸⁰ *Ibid*

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 80; In 1906, Widor summoned him to Saint-Sulpice to play for a wedding and required that he only improvise. Remaining in the nave during the service, Widor related to Vierne

A review of a concert of his first American tour appeared in the *New York Times* on 13 December 1921 stating that Dupré ‘...has in special degree the gift of absorbing and giving out in musical form such themes as chance offers’.⁸² While Dupré continued to excel in the art, finishing tour programmes with improvised preludes and fugues, chaconnes, trio sonatas or symphonies, it is often stated that the improvisations of his Notre Dame years (1916–1920) which were most inspired due to the awesome power of the building.⁸³ This implies that despite the emphasis on skill, there may have been spirituality in his playing, though it is unclear as to whether this was drawn from a fervent belief or from the influence of the architecture. Some writers, such as Edward Shippen Barnes, went so far as to write that while Dupré’s American concerts were universally acclaimed, it was not for the performance of repertoire, as many American organists could have done as well, but rather solely for the virtuosity and musical inventiveness inherent in his improvisations.⁸⁴

The *Symphonie-Passion* is by no means Dupré’s only contribution to chant-based organ repertoire. Following from the example of Guilmant as discussed in chapter 4, he produced a number of collections of pieces on a smaller scale suitable for use in the liturgy. What is most striking about the majority of these works is the strict use of devices such as canon, chant *en taille*, *cantus firmus*, fugato etc. These devices are to be seen further in the use of chant in the *Symphonie-Passion* and point to a stylistic consistency and a link to the past as opposed to the more free impressionistic use of the melodies which will be discussed in chapter 6 with reference to Charles Tournemire.

As well as liturgy, pedagogy plays an important role in these small collections. His ‘handbook’ on how to vary chorales (‘Seventy-Nine Chorales’, op.28), *Le*

afterward that he was not convinced that the pieces were not written down, Murray (1985), 41; For his first organ exam in 1906, he improvised on the chant as canon between soprano and bass at a fourth with the inner parts in third species counterpoint. According to Vierre his fugue seemed written down. Murray (1998), 142

⁸² Pagett (1975), 38

⁸³ Murray (1985), 66; Murray (1998), 149

⁸⁴ One example cited by Pagett (1975) is Shippen Barnes in *The Diapason* (1/1922), Pagett (1975), 40–41. Others are also referred to.

Tombeau de Titelouze (op.38), 'Eight Short Preludes on Gregorian Modes' (op.45), and *Six antiennes pour le temps de Noël*, aim to show the less skilled improviser how to approach the verset, whilst providing useful material for the non-improviser. Chant is also used in pieces of a larger scale, the 'Paraphrase on Te Deum' (op.43) and the *Choral et fugue* (op.57) both represent specific stand-alone pieces composed for a purpose, in the case of the former, to celebrate the liberation of France and the latter to mark the 100th anniversary of the organ at Saint-Sulpice.

While the composition of short chant-based works marks Dupré as the successor of Guilmant and Gigout, it is his op. 23 work, the *Symphonie-Passion* which allows us to identify him with Widor, and more specifically with the continuation of the relationship between the symphony and chant developed in Widor's final works in the genre.

5.7: 'Gothique', 'Romane' and 'Passion' – conception and development

On 17 April 1890 at the inauguration of the new Cavallé-Coll organ in the Church of Saint-Ouen in Rouen, Widor played a number of movements from a *Symphonie gothique* written for the occasion. It seems that after the performance, the *curé* asked him to write a work dedicated to the church, a task which, due to time pressure was not begun until 1894.⁸⁵ While the completed version of the first three movements was first performed by Vierne in March 1895, the final symphony was not presented until April of that same year (by the composer) in the church of Saint-Ouen which had been the initial source of inspiration for the work.⁸⁶ The late completion of the final movement, a set of variations on the Christmas introit *Puer natus est*, marks it out as a new departure from the traditional symphonic model, developed by Widor and summed up in the bombastic finales from many of the earlier symphonies. This final movement is a more subtle and considered movement, which stands out from the rest of the symphony for its archaic

⁸⁵ Anthony (1986), 244–6

⁸⁶ Ben van Oosten: 'Symphony No.9 in c minor 'Gothique', opus 70, notes for MD+G L3404 (Detmold: MD+G, 1993), 43 pages

simplicity in places. According to John Near, author of the first comprehensive biography of Widor,

This work ushered in a new style and ideal in organ music, not only by its unique employment of Gregorian melody, but also by its spiritual transcendency. Some of the composer's most profound inspiration fills its pages.⁸⁷

The symphony, on Widor's part, signalled a new outlook regarding the nature of organ music. This was fuelled by an increasingly fervent religious faith. He told Schweitzer organ music had become 'a special kind of music, a music of the eternal, awakening thoughts of immortality.'⁸⁸ It reached a point where Widor regarded chant and organ music as indivisible. According to Edward Shippen Barnes, he usually used Gregorian themes in his sacred improvisations and finding a new mystical side to organ composition lead to the creation of the *Symphonie gothique*.⁸⁹ A decade before the 1903 *motu proprio*, he came to the conclusion that:

Except for Bach's preludes and fugues, or rather certain preludes and fugues, I can no longer consider any organ music sacred unless it is consecrated by themes from chorales or Gregorian chants.⁹⁰

Thus, the *gothique* became in part a Christmas symphony, with the aim of bringing together concert and liturgical styles.

..the organ represents the *rapprochement* of the human spirit to the eternal, imperishable spirit, and it is estranged from its nature and its place as soon as it becomes the expression of the subjective spirit.⁹¹

According to the reviewer of the first performance:

It was between Vespers and solemn Benediction that this first performance of the *Symphonie gothique* took place; listened to in the most religious silence, not a detail, not a note was lost for the audience. All came forth with an absolute clarity. The impression was profound.⁹²

Despite the positive views of the work, and the fact that (judging from his recital programmes) it was Widor's favourite symphony, there has not been universal praise for the work. Clarence Eddy (1851–1937), the noted American organist referred to it as 'overladen...with contrapuntal design. It is full of canon and fugue and all that sort of thing, exceedingly difficult and not

⁸⁷ Near (1985), 190

⁸⁸ As cited in Near (1985), 191

⁸⁹ Anthony (1986), 249

⁹⁰ Charles Marie Widor as quoted in Ochse (1994), 139

⁹¹ As cited in Near (1985), 191

⁹² *Ibid*, 194–195

particularly interesting.⁹³ According to Near, the first two movements of the *Symphonie gothique* are supposed have been inspired by the interior and exterior of the church of Saint-Ouen and it is not until the third movement that the chant makes its appearance.

In some ways the new heightened religious style, which is evident in the *Symphonie gothique*, published in 1895, came to full fruition in the *Symphonie romane* (1900). While the *Symphonie gothique* has a backward looking archaic style, the same could not be said of the *Symphonie romane*, Widor's last symphonic work for the organ (save for the *Suite latine* which while symphonic in some respects does not use the title 'symphony'). In this work we see a more impressionistic Widor. While the ninth symphony has two movements associated with the chant, the tenth uses the Easter gradual *Haec dies quam fecit Dominus* (this day was made by the Lord) as the source for three of the movements and incorporates the sequence *Victimae paschali laudes* into the *Cantilène* (movement III). Archbold suggests a debt to the *Offertoire pascal* of Guy Ropartz written in 1889 and published in a volume *L'orgue moderne*, the student publication edited by Widor in 1894.⁹⁴

As well as the two final symphonies of Widor, it would be remiss not to mention that there is one instance of chant being employed in an earlier symphony with a movement entitled *Salve Regina* included in Symphony No.2. This would make this work seem like an obvious point to begin a discussion on the use of chant by Widor; however this movement was inserted into the symphony in 1901 and replaces the *Scherzo* from the 1872 original version and the 1887 revision.⁹⁵ Thus it postdates the ninth and tenth symphonies.

The Dupré work for discussion in this chapter came into being some twenty years after the completion of the *Symphonie romane* and its genesis is in

⁹³ As cited in Near (1985), 195

⁹⁴ Lawrence Archbold: 'Widor's *Symphonie romane*', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 256

⁹⁵ The first movement title also changed from *Prélude* to *Praeludium circulare* in the 1901 version.

some ways a summation of the legend of Dupré as the master touring musician and the master improviser. The inclusion of a large-scale improvised organ piece at the end of Dupré's recital on 8 December 1921 at the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia was by no means a unique experiment on the part of Dupré and records indicate that his second American tour, for example, from September 1922 to March 1923, contained no less than fifty four-movement symphonies over ninety-six concerts.⁹⁶

Having received a collection of themes from Addicks, Maxon, Miller, Montani, Rich and Wool (who we can only postulate were prominent musicians in Philadelphia)⁹⁷, he picked out four chant melodies: *Jesu Redemptor omnium*, *Adeste fideles*, *Stabat mater* and *Adoro te devote*, and proceeded to improvise a four movement symphony.

I shall never forget the evening of the 8 December 1921, when, having been given several plainsong themes – *Jesu Redemptor*, *Adeste fideles*, *Stabat mater* and *Adoro te* – I decided, in a flash, to improvise an organ symphony in four movements which would depict the life of Jesus...As my scheme was announced to the audience, everyone stood up. Encouraged by this enthusiasm, I improvised, feeling as I had never felt before.⁹⁸

Having begun its life as an improvisation, the *Symphonie-Passion* was eventually reconstructed in the summer of 1924, premiered at Westminster Cathedral on 9 October 1924 and published by Alphonse Leduc in 1925.⁹⁹ A review of its performance at the Wanamaker in New York in November 1924 stated:

Apart from the marvellous technical construction of this work, one senses throughout a profound imagination, a creative sense of unusual order, and many episodes of a strange, almost inexplicable beauty. This symphony is something quite new in organ literature, and opens the way to new possibilities in the technique of organ composition. The work is not easily grasped at the first hearing, but its sincerity and imagination made an instant impression on the audience.¹⁰⁰

Cast in four movements, it shows a marked tendency towards sectionalism, a trait common to Dupré's works of what Pagett styles his second group of early

⁹⁶ Pagett (1975), 45

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 226

⁹⁸ David Gammie: 'Programme notes for the Complete Organ Works of Marcel Dupré' as performed by Jeremy Filsell, (London: 6–7/1998), n.p.

⁹⁹ Graham Steed: 'Dupré's Passion Symphony', *MT*, cxii/1538 (4/1971), 805; Pagett (1975), 226

¹⁰⁰ From *The Diapason* and quoted in Pagett (1975), 227

organ works, works which continue in the harmonic style of the earlier works, show more chromatic tendencies and represent a transition to a more advanced style.¹⁰¹

5.8: The use of chants in the organ symphonies

This section will examine and compare some of the procedures and patterns which occur across the symphonies in question and discuss the differing roles of the Gregorian melodies and their impact on the compositional processes. This will be discussed through techniques or concepts that are prevalent in these pieces.

In summary, the chants used are noted below, along with their designation or chant form.

Table 5.1: Chants used in the symphonies of Widor and Dupré

Symphony	Chant	Chant Form
Widor		
Symphony No. 2	<i>Salve Regina</i>	Marian antiphon
<i>Symphonie gothique</i>	<i>Puer natus est nobis</i>	Introit (Christmas)
<i>Symphonie romane</i>	<i>Haec dies quam fecit Dominus</i>	Gradual (Easter)
	<i>Victimae paschali laudes</i>	Sequence (Easter)
Dupré		
<i>Symphonie-Passion</i>	<i>Jesu redemptor omnium</i>	Hymn (Christmastide)
	<i>Adeste fideles</i>	Hymn (Christmastide)
	<i>Stabat mater dolorosa</i>	Hymn (Passiontide)
	<i>Adoro te devote</i>	Hymn (Eucharistic)

The use of proper mass texts by Widor in the final two symphonies is one interesting point. This is opposed to the four hymns employed by Dupré, however to dwell on the relative choice seems unnecessary as in Dupré's case he was constrained by melodies provided for improvisation. We know that Widor, on the other hand, set out to write a symphony based on the *Haec*

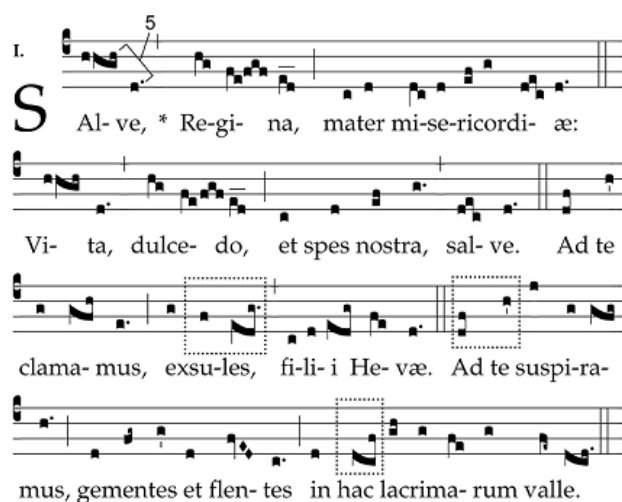
¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 234

dies, as he admitted spending a substantial amount of time trying to work out how to do so.

5.81: Fragmentation

The initial question which arises in this discussion revolves around the amount of the chant melody which is used, in other words, is the complete melody featured in the work, and if not, how much is used and why. A few points may be made about the amount of chant used. Unusually, given the length and beauty of the chants in question, the full chant is never employed. Instead fragments and motifs are used as the basis for new material and in some instances interspersed with non chant-based episodes. The approach of Widor to the *Salve Regina* (Symphony No.2) will help to illustrate this. This short sectional movement is essentially a neo-baroque fantasia in which brisk figurative passages are interrupted by short meditative contrapuntal episodes. The chant motifs permeate the movement as a whole, providing more examples of fragmentation than are worthy of this discussion. However, a few brief examples will demonstrate the general processes involved. Example 5.1 highlights some of the key motifs used from the chant.

Ex. 5.1: *Salve Regina* (exc.)



The image shows a musical score for a vocal line, likely a soprano, from the *Salve Regina*. The score is written on four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B-flat4, and a quarter note C5. A fermata is placed over the C5 note, and a '5' is written above it, indicating a fifth finger fingering. The lyrics are: "Al-ve, * Re-gi- na, mater mi-se-ricordi- æ: Vi- ta, dulce- do, et spes nostra, sal- ve. Ad te clama- mus, exsu-les, fi-li- i He- væ. Ad te suspi-ra- mus, gementes et flen- tes in hac lacrima- rum valle." The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. There are also some dotted boxes around certain notes in the lower staves, possibly indicating specific motifs or fragments.

Example 5.2 shows the initial entry of the chant material. In this entry, he states the full first phrase of the chant (with a few chromatic additions and a flattening out of the rhythm).

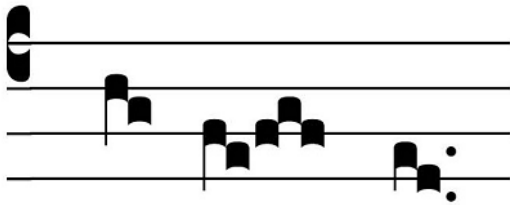
Ex. 5.2: Widor: Symphony No. 4, IV, *Salve Regina*, bars 1–11

Allegro

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with three staves (treble, bass, and a lower bass staff). The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' and the dynamic is 'p'. The melody in the upper voice starts with a quarter rest followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system continues this melodic line. The third system features a prominent falling fifth interval in the upper voice. The fourth system shows a more complex melodic passage. The fifth system concludes with a 'Ped. R' marking. The score is written for piano with treble and bass clefs.

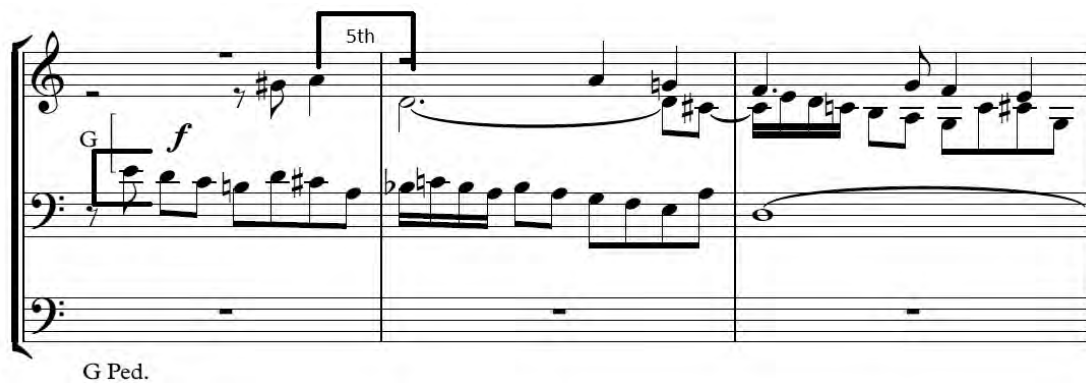
The central section draws from fragments of the chant, the contour of the *Regina* melisma (Example 5.3) being evident in Example 5.4, as well as the characteristic fragment of a falling fifth from the chant incipit.

Ex. 5.3: *Salve Regina*, Regina melisma



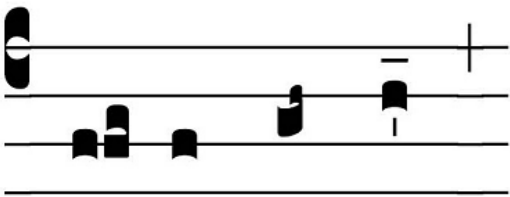
Re-gi- na

Ex 5.4: Widor: Symphony No. 4, IV, *Salve Regina*, bars 18–20



Example 5.5 provides one further example.

Ex. 5.5a: *Salve Regina*, Eia Ergo



E- ia ergo,

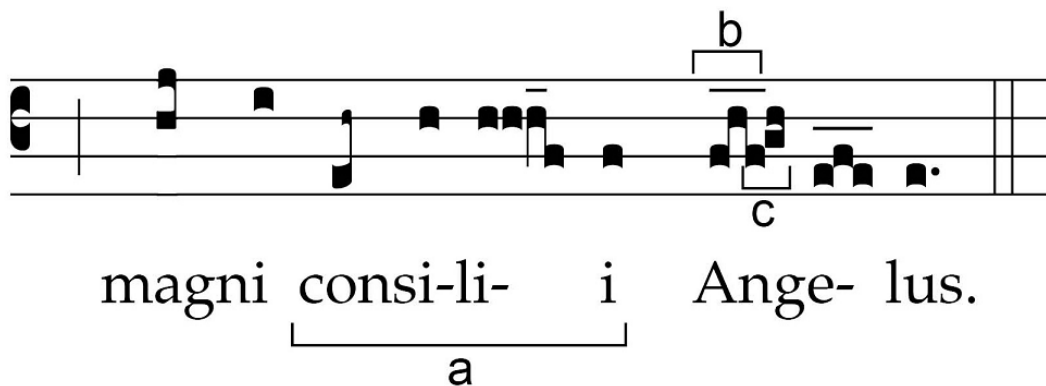
Ex. 5.5b: Widor: Symphony No. 4, IV *Salve Regina*, bars 22–25



As we can see, in the case of the *Salve Regina* the quite lengthy chant is barely used at all beyond a couple of key motifs such as the characteristic falling fifth at the opening. It would not be incorrect therefore to state that as well as stating the chant obviously in the passages of figuration, he attempts through the use of these small fragments, to integrate the contours of the chant in such a way that the source melody permeates the entire movement and makes a triumphant pedal entry at towards the climax. This is not always the case in other instances; as we will see, Dupré is inclined towards simply stating and developing the chants rather than using them as a point of departure for all aspects of the piece.

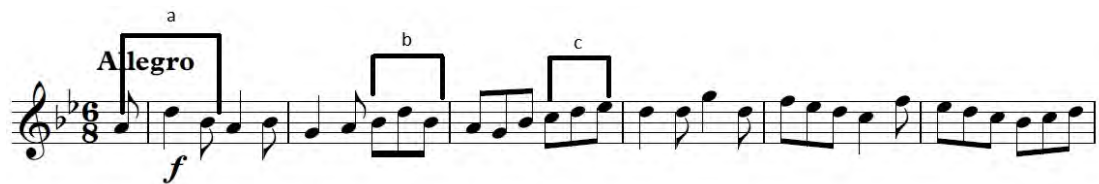
In the *Symphonie gothique*, the economy of material is very similar. In the case of the third movement, the fugal subject may have been drawn from a few key melodic cells in the final phrase of the chant (Example 5.6).¹⁰²

Ex. 5.6a: *Puer natus est Nobis*, final phrase



¹⁰² This is identified in van Oosten (1993), 19

Ex. 5.6b: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, III, fugue subject



The extraction of these intervals from the final phrase of the chant may seem odd and it is of course possible to question the validity of the assertion that this is how he constructs the fugue subject. However the intention may not have been deliberate, rather it may have been a semi-conscious act. Just as the *Salve* movement is infused with the chant, so too the fugue subject developed in the mind of the composer as a result of exposure to the chant.

As is common across the symphonies in this discussion, the emphasis in the *Symphonie gothique* is placed on the most recognisable element of the chant, namely the first phrase, the characteristic falling fifth of which recurs with different words as is common in this type of a chant.

Ex. 5.7: *Puer natus est nobis*

VII. ^{5th}

P U-er * na- tus est no- bis, et fi- li- us da- tus est

no- bis : cu- jus impe- ri- um super hu- me- rum e-

jus : et voca- bi- tur no- men e- jus, magni consi-

li- i Ange- lus.

In the case of this symphony, it makes a dramatic first entry as a *pedal cantus firmus* (Example 5.8).

Ex. 5.8: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, III, first pedal entry, bars 63–84

The image displays a musical score for the first pedal entry of the third movement of Maurice Ravel's *Symphonie gothique*. The score is arranged in five systems, each containing three staves: a top staff in treble clef, a middle staff in bass clef, and a bottom staff in bass clef. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The music features a complex texture with multiple voices. The top staff contains a melodic line with frequent chromaticism and accidentals. The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The overall mood is dramatic and somber, characteristic of the 'pedal cantus firmus' technique.

This lengthening out of the first phrase bears more than a passing resemblance to the technique used in the *Salve Regina*. The chant phrase is stated three times, the second of which is chromatically altered.

After the single first phrase of chant has made its initial appearance in the third movement, it becomes the focus of the final movement in the form of a set of variations. He also introduces one further fragment, that of the *cujus imperium* (bracketed in Example 5.7 and seen below in Example 5.9)

Ex. 5.9: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 121–126

Moderato

The musical score for Example 5.9 is presented in two systems. The first system consists of three staves: two treble clefs and one bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is empty. The third staff begins with a bass clef and a dynamic marking of 'f'. The second system consists of three staves: one treble clef and two bass clefs. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The second staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The third staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music features a variety of note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'f'.

A similar process of fragmentation is used by Dupré in the *Symphonie-Passion*, with each of the movements utilising only a small amount of the chant. The first movement uses only the first phrase of *Jesu redemptor omnium*, the second movement only the first phrase of *Adeste fideles*, the third movement just a fragment of the *Stabat Mater dolorosa* and the fourth movement just the first phrase of *Adoro te devote*. The obvious distinction between *Symphonie gothique* and *Symphonie-Passion* is that in Widor's case

there is only one chant appearing in two movements, while Dupré introduces a different one for each movement, propelling the story forward.

In the *Symphonie gothique*, the few fragments appear on a number of occasions, the incipit being used in a set of variations. With Dupré however, there is a different fragment for each movement and while the outer two movements make a little more use of them, the inner movements make much less use of the material. The *Symphonie romane*, however, surpasses both the other two works in this regard. Here, as he sets out in the foreword, there is an almost constant repetition of a small fragment. This fragment is subjected to a vast array of rhythmic variations. With the *Symphonie-Passion*, the taking of a small fragment of the chant is the common technique, though as there is a different chant for each movement, there are fewer requirements for an exhaustive treatment as in the two Widor symphonies. The use of the first phrase of each of the four chants is transparent (also referred elsewhere) with the only obvious example of interesting development of the fragment being the exploitation of the opening arpeggio of the chant in Example 5.10.

Ex. 5.10: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 94–98

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 94-98) consists of three staves: a treble clef staff with a melodic line of eighth and sixteenth notes, a bass clef staff with a simple accompaniment, and a grand staff with a single bass note. The second system (bars 99-102) also consists of three staves: a treble clef staff with a melodic line of eighth and sixteenth notes, a bass clef staff with a simple accompaniment, and a grand staff with a single bass note. The second system also features a large oval marking over the treble staff in the second measure, indicating a specific rhythmic or melodic feature.

5.82: Alteration, distortion, derivation and transformation

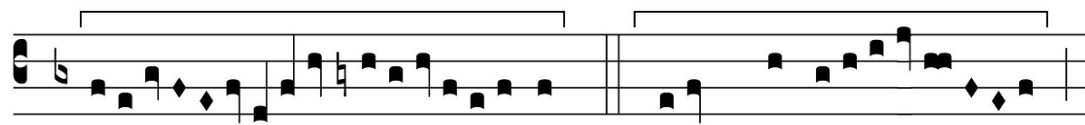
As was the tradition of the French organist, both Dupré and Widor were skilled organ improvisers even if they both held composed repertoire in an equal if not higher regard than some of their more flamboyant contemporaries and predecessors. While Dupré was very firmly established as a brilliant concert improviser and had some very firm views on what should the term should mean both of these men were of course linked intrinsically to the practice of liturgical improvisation.

It is difficult not to see some of the common practices of liturgical improvisation present in the symphonies here. One such practice can involve the gradual distortion of a familiar liturgical melody or incipit, a technique employed with great frequency by both Widor and Dupré. This technique can be used to a more extreme level in these chant-based works due in no small part to the likely public familiarity with the source melody. The alteration of the chant melodies and their presentation in various forms occurs both in the form of rhythmic alteration and through a distortion of the chant or an element of the chant. One simple example will support this. We have already identified the rising fifth which characterises the beginning of the *Puer natus est* used in the Widor *Symphonie gothique*. After the chant makes its first recognisable appearance in the pedals, Widor immediately presents it in a chromatically altered fashion to accommodate a key shift. Crucially, the characteristic opening fifth is reduced to a fourth, immediately undermining one of the key features of the source melody. This is ameliorated by the provision of a correct version of the incipit before the end of the movement. It is because the chant melody is familiar and because the fifth is such a strong recognisable feature that Widor is successful in this alteration.

Ex. 5.11: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, III, bars 93–128

The most extreme examples of distortion occur in the *Symphonie romane*. Widor's own self-proclaimed desire to impress the melody on the ear through repetition, leads to the chant being subjected to a vast array of rhythmic variations across the three movements which employ it. The two most common fragments are the opening *Haec dies* and the *quam fecit*. Both of these melismas are repeated in various forms while the *dies* melisma has in itself a separate existence in a number of places.

Ex. 5.12: *Haec dies*, opening as in *Paroissien romain*¹⁰³



Haec di - es, quam fe- cit

The image shows a single line of musical notation on a five-line staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are two bracketed sections above the staff, indicating specific rhythmic or melodic phrases. The lyrics 'Haec di - es, quam fe- cit' are written below the staff, with hyphens under 'di' and 'fe- cit'.

From the outset, the opening is presented in one rhythmic form.

Ex. 5.13: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 1–8



Moderato (♩ = 76)

f

Quasi recitativo, espressivo

a piacere.

3

5

7

3

The image displays the first eight bars of a piano piece. It is written for piano in 12/8 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 76 beats per minute. The first two bars are marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The third bar is marked 'a piacere.' and features a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth bar is marked 'Quasi recitativo, espressivo' and contains a melodic line with a slur. The fifth bar continues the melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The sixth bar features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The seventh bar continues the melodic line with a slur. The eighth bar concludes with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The piece is in a single system with four staves (treble and bass clefs for both hands).

¹⁰³ Archbold (1995), 254

It appears as a *cantus firmus* in the pedal in the first movement (Example 5.14) and in the second movement (Example 5.15)

Ex. 5.14: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 12–14

(♩=56)

P *tranquillamente*

The musical score for Ex. 5.14, Widor's *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 12–14, is presented in three systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 56, and the dynamics are *P* (piano) and *tranquillamente*. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a tempo marking of quarter note = 56 and the instruction *P tranquillamente*. The second and third systems continue the piece with various melodic and harmonic textures. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves.

Ex. 5.15: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, bars 41–43

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. It features a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a fermata. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking, containing a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a single bass clef line with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking, showing a simple harmonic accompaniment.

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a melodic line featuring slurs and a fermata. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a single bass clef line with a simple harmonic accompaniment.

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a melodic line featuring slurs and a fermata. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a single bass clef line with a simple harmonic accompaniment.

It also occurs in a number of other places with further variation, still recognisable.

Widor also makes use of the *dies* figure illustrated above, making it a recurring theme. At one point in the first movement, he presents it in a distorted fashion, widening the third to a fourth, presumably to maintain the harmonic status at this point, centred as it is on the C sharp major chord

Ex. 5.16: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 21–24

The musical score for Ex. 5.16, Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 21–24, is presented in two systems. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system covers bars 21 and 22. In bar 21, the right hand plays a half note chord (C4, E4, G4) and the left hand plays a half note chord (C3, E3, G3). In bar 22, the right hand plays a half note chord (C4, E4, G4) and the left hand plays a half note chord (C3, E3, G3). The second system covers bars 23 and 24. In bar 23, the right hand plays a half note chord (C4, E4, G4) and the left hand plays a half note chord (C3, E3, G3). In bar 24, the right hand plays a half note chord (C4, E4, G4) and the left hand plays a half note chord (C3, E3, G3). A tempo marking of quarter note = 72 is present in the first system.

Returned to its original form, he uses it as a repeating figure, initially in the left hand/tenor part and laterally in the top voice.

Ex. 5.17: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 65–68

The musical score for Ex. 5.17, Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 65–68, is presented in four systems. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 12/8. The first two systems show a melodic line in the right hand with a grace note and a triplet, and a bass line in the left hand. The third system shows a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns. The fourth system shows a similar right hand pattern with a triplet in the bass line.

In the second movement, the chant is presented from the beginning in the form of a four-part chorale, a further rhythmic variant. Despite this tighter rhythmic structure, the tied notes and the grace and smaller value notes still manage to evoke the free arabesque mood which is such a feature of this work as a whole.

Ex. 5.18: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, bars 1–4

Adagio (♩ = 80)

3

cresc. *p*

Widor also fashions a second freer-floating melody from the *quam fecit* melisma (Example 5.19).

Ex. 5.19: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, bars 17–19

p

In the *Final*, the incipit receives a further rhythmic alteration, presented from the beginning as a single line in quavers with some curious use of dotted rhythm (Example 5.20).

Ex. 5.20: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 1–5

The musical score for Ex. 5.20 consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system is marked 'Allegro' and 'fff'. The right-hand staff (treble clef) contains a fast, repetitive quaver-based figure. The left-hand staves (treble and bass clefs) are empty, indicating a silent left hand. The second system continues the same figure in the right hand, with the left hand still silent.

This fast quaver-based figuration is a recurring feature in the *Final*, and receives a number of distortions (Example 5.21)

Ex. 5.21: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 45–47

The musical score for Ex. 5.21 consists of three systems of three staves each. The right-hand staff (treble clef) plays a distorted version of the quaver-based figure, with some notes beamed together and others separated. The left-hand staves (treble and bass clefs) play a slower-moving pedal line, with notes held for several measures. The score is marked 'cresc.' and includes a fermata over the final note of the right hand in the third system.

It is also combined with a further example of a slower-moving pedal line (Example 5.22), and also the *quam fecit* figure occurring as *cantus firmus* (Example 5.23).

Ex. 5.22: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 72–77

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The key signature is two sharps (D major) and the time signature is 12/8. The first system begins with a forte (*fff*) dynamic marking. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system continues the melodic line with some chromaticism and includes a *fff* dynamic marking. The third system shows a continuation of the melodic line with some rests in the left hand. The fourth system concludes the passage with a final melodic flourish in the right hand and a steady accompaniment in the left hand.

Ex. 5.23: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, Bars 30–35

The musical score for Ex. 5.23 is presented in three systems. Each system contains three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The time signature is 12/8. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system features a piano dynamic marking (*p*) and a more complex melodic line. The third system continues the melodic and rhythmic development.

The fragment receives significant distortion (Example 5.24) in order to fit with the chromatic material in this section.

Ex. 5.24: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 54–56

The musical score for Ex. 5.24 is presented in three systems. Each system contains three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The time signature is common time (C). The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand with triplets and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system features a piano dynamic marking (*p*) and a more complex melodic line. The third system continues the melodic and rhythmic development.

The climax of the work provides examples of the further transformation of the incipit (heard chordally) and the *dies* (which assumes its earlier role as a repeating figure (Example 5.25).

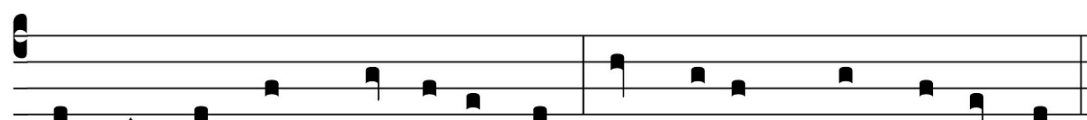
Ex 5.25: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 122–133, [just some instances marked]

The musical score consists of five systems, each with three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The music is in D major and 3/4 time. The first system shows a complex texture with many notes and rests, including some marked with 'v'. The second system features a more rhythmic pattern with eighth notes. The third system continues with similar rhythmic patterns. The fourth system has a dense texture with many notes and rests, including some marked with 'v'. The fifth system shows a more complex texture with many notes and rests, including some marked with 'v' and 'sf'.

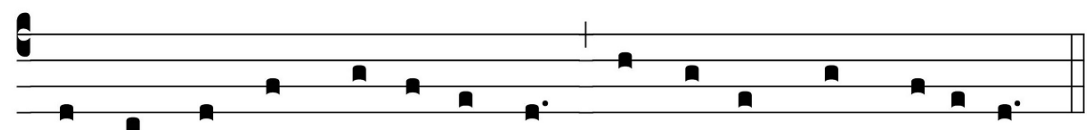
This is by no means an exhaustive list of the rhythmic distortions and melodic alterations which occur during the three movements of the *Symphonie romane* which employ the *Haec dies*. It serves to give us a range of the methods used by Widor to allow him follow his goal of impressing the chant melody on the ear of the listener through repetition. Despite all of the various versions to which the listener is exposed, the basic chant is constantly recognisable to the ear due in no small part to the strength of the opening melisma.

The approach to the *Victimae paschali laudes* (sequence for Easter Sunday) in the middle movement is slightly different. The opening of the chant is rhythmically altered to fit the 9/8 time signature and one could be forgiven for missing its presence given that Widor makes no mention of it in the preface and its first note is displaced by an octave.

Ex. 5.26a: *Victimae paschali laudes*¹⁰⁴ as in the *Paroissien romain* and in the *Liber Usualis*



Vi-cti-mæ Pas-cha-li laudes Immolent Chri-sti-a-ni.



Vi-cti-mæ Pas-cha-li laudes * immolent Chri-sti-a-ni.

¹⁰⁴ Archbold (1995), 263

Ex. 5.26b: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, III, bars 10–15

The musical score for Ex. 5.26b is presented in two systems. The first system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The time signature is 9/8. The first staff begins with a piano introduction marked *pp* and *cresc.*. The second system also consists of three staves. The top staff has a melodic line with a *dimin.* marking. The bottom two staves provide accompaniment. At the end of the second system, the time signature changes to 12/8, indicated by a double bar line and the new time signature.

The *Agnus redemit oves* fragment noted in the above example is drawn from a piece of the chant (Example 5.27a). This is a recurring element in the chant sequence.

Ex. 5.27a: *Victimae paschali laudes: Agnus redemit oves*

The musical notation for Ex. 5.27a shows a fragment of the chant 'Agnus redemit oves' on a four-line staff. The notation consists of a series of square neumes on a four-line staff, representing the pitch contour of the chant. The notes are: a half note on the second line, a quarter note on the first space, a quarter note on the second line, a quarter note on the second space, a quarter note on the first space, a quarter note on the first line, a quarter note on the first space, and a quarter note on the first line with a dot above it.

Agnus redemit oves :

This small phrase becomes a vehicle for repetition and distortion (Examples 5.27b and 5.27c).

Ex. 5.27b: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, III, bars 19–22

The musical score for Ex. 5.27b is in 9/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows bars 19 and 20, with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The second system shows bars 21 and 22. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, with a large slur over the melodic phrase.

Ex. 5.27c: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, III, bars 39–41

The musical score for Ex. 5.27c is in 12/8 time and consists of three systems. The first system shows bars 39 and 40, with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system shows bar 40 and the beginning of bar 41, with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The third system shows the end of bar 41, with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic marking. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, with a large slur over the melodic phrase.

As with the *romane*, the final movement of the *gothique* provides abundant examples of rhythmic alteration of the chant, presented as a chorale-like tune,

a *cantus firmus*, in canon in long notes and an andante in 6/8 (Examples 5.28–5.31).

Ex. 5.28: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars /1–18

Moderato

p

poco a poco cresc.

f

p

Ex. 5.29: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 13–24

Musical score for Ex. 5.29, Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 13–24. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 13-18) features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include forte (f) and piano (p). The second system (bars 19-24) continues the melodic line in the treble and has a middle staff with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The piece concludes with a flat sign in the final measure.

Ex. 5.30: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 46–57

Musical score for Ex. 5.30, Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 46–57. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 46-51) features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include forte (f). The second system (bars 52-57) continues the melodic line in the treble and has a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. A "Ped." marking is present at the beginning of the second system. The piece concludes with a flat sign in the final measure.

Ex. 5.31: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 150–154

Andante

Ped.

He also develops a fragment of a later line of the chant, but distorts it rhythmically (Example 5.32).

Ex. 5.32a: *Puer natus Est Nobis, cujus imperium*

no- bis : cu-jus impe- ri- um super hu- me-rum e-

Ex. 5.32b: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 121–126

Moderato

Ped.

While in each case, the chant is recognisable, the more interesting process which is taking place is the process of derivation and evolution of a fragment. This fragment, which is presented in Example 5.32a above, recurs as a single line after a number of the variations (Example 5.33).

Ex. 5.33a: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 88–93



This line (more evidently in Example 5.33a), is related to the fugue subject of the third movement, which itself is drawn from elements of the chant.

Ex. 5.33b: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, III, fugue subject



It is also linked to the canon material in variation 3 (Example 5.33c) and provides a theme for the final variation (Example 5.33d)

Ex. 5.33c: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 94–96



Example 5.33d: Widor: *Symphonie gothique*, IV, bars 183–191

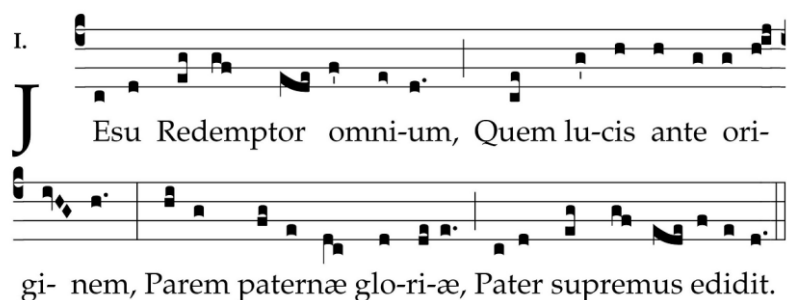
The image displays four systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. Each system consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The notation is complex, featuring dense sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and more rhythmic, often dotted or eighth-note patterns in the left hand. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand with a fermata over a measure. The second system includes a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) in the left hand. The third system continues the intricate rhythmic patterns. The fourth system features a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in the right hand, indicating a gradual increase in volume. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic, characteristic of the late Romantic style.

Due perhaps to the less expansive use of the chant melodies in the *Symphonie-Passion*, there is less use of the distortive techniques referred to above. There is generally less obvious rhythmic variation as the more metrical nature of the hymns (as opposed to the gradual *Haec dies* for example) makes their presentation generally more straightforward. Dupré is

not attempting to see how many different variants he can present across three movements, but rather presenting a recognisable melody to assist in conjuring the image.

Nonetheless distortion does take place. The most common alteration which he makes involves the changing of the melody to suit the extensive use of sequence which is common throughout the work. Example 5.34 provides an instance of this from the first movement. The chant appears imitatively on numerous pitches with related alterations of pitch and mode whilst maintaining the recognisable profile of the melody.

Ex. 5.34a: *Jesu redemptor omnium*, verse 1 as in the *Liber Usualis*



I.
 J
 Esu Redemptor omni-um, Quem lu-cis ante ori-
 gi- nem, Parem paternæ glo-ri-æ, Pater supremus edidit.

Ex. 5.34b: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 87–102



This comprises the middle section of the work, serving as a second subject to the pounding irregular chord patterns of the first section. In the return of the first section material, Dupré, as would be expected, attempts to combine the ideas of both sections. This leads to the most distorted versions of the chant theme, initially in the pedals.

Ex. 5.35: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 128–135

It grows from a distorted E-F#-G-Bb to A-B-C-E and eventually to the more authentic A-B-C#-E (Example 5.36).

Ex. 5.36: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 191–205

The image displays four systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment, spanning bars 191 to 205. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The first system (bars 191-194) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a complex, distorted chordal texture. The second system (bars 195-198) features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a more rhythmic accompaniment. The third system (bars 199-202) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The fourth system (bars 203-205) concludes the passage with a final melodic phrase in the treble and a rhythmic accompaniment in the bass. Performance markings such as *legato* and *stacc.* are present in the second system.

In all of the examples the rhythm of the chant is freely adapted to fit the needs of the other freely-composed material. Eventually the chant emerges in pounding crotchets.

Ex. 5.37: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 230–246

The musical score for Ex. 5.37, Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 230–246, is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 230–234) begins in 6/8 time, then changes to 7/4, 5/4, and 7/4. The second system (bars 235–239) features 7/4, 5/4, 7/4, and 5/4. The third system (bars 240–244) features 5/4, 6/4, and 6/4. The fourth system (bars 245–246) is marked *Allarg.* and features a common time signature (C). The score includes piano, treble, and bass staves with various musical notations such as chords, arpeggios, and dynamic markings.

The use of the *Adoro te devote* in the final movement, in some respects mirrors the use of *Jesu redemptor* in the first movement. It is however more prominent from the outset, but its characteristic opening arpeggio is a constant presence, changing pitch at will. As with movement I, the rhythmic

nuance of the chant is disregarded in favour of its use, initially as a *cantus firmus*, but later in the upper parts (Example 5.39).

Ex. 5.38: *Adoro te devote*

V.



A Doro te devo-te, la-tens De- i- tas, Quæ sub his
 figu-ris ve-re la-ti-tas : Ti-bi se cor me-um to-tum subji-
 cit Qui-a te contemplans to-tum de- fi- cit.

Ex. 5.39: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 1–13

Allegro moderato (♩=96)



Ex. 5.40: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 94–98

Further on in the finale, as with movement I, the chant incipit presented as a fragment is subjected to a degree of alteration. It is reflective of the more dissonant nature of the section in question, which is identified by Graham Steed as a representation of Christ's descent into hell and which allows for the triumph of the resurrection to appear at the piece's climax (Example 5.41).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Steed (1999), 36–37

Ex. 5.41: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 118–131

Again, drawing parallels with the first movement, Dupré ends up with a version of the chant incipit as a set of crashing chords (Example 5.42).

Ex. 5.42: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 216–238

The musical score consists of five systems of notation. The first system includes a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass line. Dynamics include *fff* and *simili*. The second system features a grand staff with a first ending bracket and a *fff* dynamic. The third system is a grand staff with a *fff* dynamic. The fourth system is a grand staff with a *fff* dynamic. The fifth system is a grand staff with a *fff* dynamic and a *simili* marking. The score concludes with a double bar line.

5.83: Selected general points on rhythmic approaches

Section 5.82 describes but a few of the processes of distortion utilised by both Dupré and Widor in these three symphonies. In the case of both composers, a number of these alterations are purely rhythmical and it seems apposite to briefly examine general approaches to rhythm by both composers. This of course is related to the chant melodies used. In the case of the *Symphonie-Passion*, the four chants used all fall into the category of hymns, which by their nature would make them more syllabic and possibly more metrical. As Hiley confirms, rhythmic regularity is one of the two features of hymns, along with strophic form.¹⁰⁶ Dupré, in this symphony, and throughout his chant-based output, treats the melodies in the style of a metrical chorale. The methods of introducing triplets or changing time signatures are not present and he tends to alter chant at will to fit with the other material in the piece. The approach to rhythm in the *Symphonie gothique* is quite similar. In the third movement, the *cantus firmus* augments the chant notes. In the *Final*, the various versions of the chant outlined above all involve rhythmic versions of the source melody, but all treated in a strict fashion. This is the principal difference between the *Romane* and the other two Widor symphonies in their approach to the chant and it reflects Widor's realisation, as outlined in the foreword, that the *Haec dies* is a very different type of chant to the *Puer natus est*.

The *Puer natus est*, with its very pure lines and solid construction, lends itself ideally to polyphonic development; it is an excellent subject for treatment. Utterly different is the *Haec dies*, an elegant arabesque embellishing a text of a few words - about ten notes per syllable - a vocalise as elusive as a bird's song, a sort of pedal-point passage conceived for an uninhibited virtuoso. There is only one way to impress on a listener's memory a theme so fluid: that is to repeat it constantly.¹⁰⁷

Therefore the symphony with the most interesting and innovative approach to the question of rhythm is undoubtedly the *Symphonie romane*. Here Widor's approach is very different, engaging in a repetition of the *Haec dies* theme. In fact, the two sources of all melodic interest are the opening *Haec dies* flourish, and the shorter *quam fecit Dominus*.

¹⁰⁶ David Hiley: *Western Plainchant, A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 141

¹⁰⁷ Charles-Marie Widor: *Complete Organ Symphonies, Series II* (New York: Dover, 1991), 196

Unlike the *Symphonie gothique*, the rhythmic alteration of the chant is more subtle and considered as outlined in the foreword by Widor:

The rhythmic independence of Gregorian chant ill accords with the absolutism of our metronomic beat. Is there anything more ticklish than transcribing into modern notation the vocalises of a *Gradual* or an *Alleluia*? One is reduced to verbal explanations and comments: *quasi recitativo, rubato, espressivo, a piacere*, etc.....It is unnecessary to add that when this theme occurs in the symphonic texture and becomes an integral part of the polyphony it should be executed in strict time without *rubato* of any kind, calmly and grandly. In such passages it is no longer free: it has become the property of the composer who chose it.

These instructions establish the means by which the composer expects the chant to be used: when it occurs as a solo line, it is to be treated freely. However when it is within a multi-layered texture, it is necessary to be much stricter in order to maintain the integrity of the other voices. This is to be seen in the various versions of the chant above. Widor's admitted tactic of impressing the chant on the ear through repetition allows him the luxury of rhythmically altering it as he sees fit, relying on the distinctive contour of the melody to make it recognisable in all its various rhythmic forms. He also identifies in the above quotation, the problems with notating this and also with maintaining one free line in a busy contrapuntal texture. This he solves by creating and maintaining two approaches, the first being to note the free rhythmic sections with verbal explanations (most dramatically the opening statement of the chant which is marked *Quasi recitativo, espressivo, a piacere*). The other is to acknowledge that this idea, while admirable, will not work in the more complex textures and therefore the *rubato* must be removed where this is the case. This can be seen for example in the excerpts above which make use of *cantus firmus* throughout the work. However, it is the acknowledgement of the need to respect the free flowing nature of the source chant that distinguishes this work.

Another interesting point is that after engaging with chant in a much more free-flowing way, the older neo-classical approach reasserts itself in the inserted movement of the second symphony, which was added after the *Romane* was published. This is also much closer to the *Symphonie-Passion* and although it is not a symphony, there are examples of this metrical

approach to be found in the *Suite latine* (1927), which was written significantly later than the *Symphonie romane*. Three of its movements are based on chant melodies.

Table 5.2: Chants of the *Suite latine*

<i>Suite latine</i>	<i>Beatus vir</i>	Psalm
	<i>Ave Maris Stella</i>	Marian Antiphon
	<i>Lauda Sion</i>	Sequence

One example will serve to illustrate this. Taken from the movement entitled *Ave Maris Stella*, it converts the chant into a 'gigue' and treats it contrapuntally in a manner similar to the *Symphonie gothique*.

Ex. 5.43: Widor: *Suite latine*, IV, *Ave Maris Stella*, bars 14–18

The musical score for Ex. 5.43 is presented in two systems, each with three staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 6/8. The first system begins with a right-hand part (RH) featuring a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a left-hand part (LH) with a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte). A 'Ped.' (pedal) marking is present. The second system continues the piece with similar contrapuntal textures, including a *p* (piano) dynamic marking.

5.44: Widor: *Suite latine*, IV, *Ave Maris Stella*, bars 38–49

The image displays a musical score for the organ piece 'Ave Maris Stella' by Louis Vierni, from the 'Suite latine' by Charles Widor. The score is presented in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The first system (bars 38-41) shows a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (bars 42-45) features a melodic line in the right hand with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The third system (bars 46-49) includes a melodic line in the right hand with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The score is written in a clear, legible font with standard musical notation.

There are numerous further examples in the other chant-based organ works of Dupré of similar chorale-like presentation of chants. Again, the predominant preference for chant melodies which have more metrical bias, over the more elaborate graduals like *Haec dies* contributes to this, as does Dupré's preference for traditional compositional devices.

5.84: Use of traditional forms

While the three symphonies in question are all 'romantic' in some way or another and are all pieces conceived during the period of the French Third Republic, they are notable for their widespread use of neo-baroque or neo-classical forms and devices. There are a number of points that can be made about this before providing illustrations. The first of these concerns lineage and teaching. As noted earlier in this chapter Widor's period of study in Belgium with Lemmens also included study of techniques under the tutelage of Fétis. This imbued Widor with a knowledge and respect for the

compositional techniques of earlier periods. Indeed the early symphonies in particular bear testament to this. Dupré or Widor were not the only organists to make use of these techniques, Franck's organ music makes bountiful use of imitation and canon and Saint-Saëns composed preludes and fugues in an unapologetically 'old' style. As already noted, Clarence Eddy's reaction to the *Symphonie gothique* was to note its overdependence on counterpoint.

Within the fabric of the *Symphonie gothique* in particular we see examples of fugue, canon and trio and although the *Symphonie romane* is much more forward looking, it still finds room for *cantus firmus* treatment of the chant themes. The *Salve Regina* from the second symphony is essentially a short neo-baroque fantasia. The more forward looking and less rigid approach of the *Symphonie romane* is continued in the later *Suite latine*, where the five movements give a greater impression of being freer rhapsodies, relieved from the restraints of strict 'old' forms.

To a greater extent we see the use of canon and imitation as an integral part of the *Symphonie-Passion*. While Dupré was an unapologetic romantic composer, who pushed the orchestral organ to its aesthetic and technical limits (that is until Messiaen took it in a new direction), he did have a marked fondness for established forms, choosing to make his chromatic language live through the prism of canons, fugues etc. There are of course the more expansive tone poem-like works. These works, not liturgical, but sacred in nature, include symphonic suites and symphonic poems, inspired by the Blessed Virgin (*Annonciation, Offrande à la Vierge, Angelus*) and scripture (*Vision, Psaume XVII*). One can however see from a cursory glance down Dupré's work list that there is a fondness for the more technical preludes, fugues, variations, antiennes, inventions, chorales, canzonas, etc.

This is borne out in the use of the chant themes in the *Symphonie-Passion*. In three of the four movements (the third being the exception), he subjects the chant melody to some degree of imitation. Example 5.45 below provides one such instance of this.

Ex 5.45: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 87–102

Ped.R.
SW. to Ped.

pp

pp

6/4

6/4

add Subbass 16

In the above example, the characteristic inflection is altered in pitch and mode in order to create harmonic momentum. The excerpts below provide further examples from later in the movement and from other points throughout the work.

Ex. 5.46: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 210–229

The musical score for Ex. 5.46 consists of three systems, each with three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The first system is marked "Ritard." and "Poco meno vivo" with "legato" and "stacc." markings. The second system has a "fff" marking. The third system continues the melodic and harmonic development.

Ex. 5.47: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, II, bars 103–111

Musical score for Ex. 5.47, Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, II, bars 103–111. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with eighth notes and the left hand providing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic development. The third system features a "Subbass 16" marking in the left hand, indicating a low register. The key signature has four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Ex. 5.48: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 166–175

Musical score for Ex. 5.48, Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, IV, bars 166–175. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with eighth notes and the left hand providing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic development. The third system features a "Subbass 16" marking in the left hand, indicating a low register. The key signature has four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#) and the time signature is 3/4.

As discussed with relation to the distortion of the chants, these free modifications work due to the clear presentation of the characteristic first phrase from the outset and may have been aided in the initial (and indeed subsequent) performances by the audience's knowledge of the themes in question.

5.85: Textures: polyphonic, monophonic, figuration, sequence

Further to the examination on the use of sequence, it bears briefly considering the varieties of textures in which the Gregorian melodies appear in the symphonies in question.

In the case of Widor, as acknowledged by him, the point of inspiration for all of his organ symphonies was the Cavallé-Coll organ and particularly the organ of Saint-Sulpice. Dupré's case, however, may be rather different. While of course he had a profound familiarity with the Cavallé-Coll organs in Paris, Rouen and beyond, the *Symphonie-Passion* was improvised on the much bigger Wanamaker organ and its first performance was on the Willis organ at Westminster Cathedral. It is difficult to speculate on the relative importance of these organs to the development of the textures and sonorities of the work as a whole.

The variety of sonorities and textures present in the various manifestations of the chant in all of the symphonies in question is related to the general method of composition. It is also related to the ethos involved in the intended presentation of the source material. In the case of the *Salve Regina*, he places the chant in a severely contrapuntal texture, but clearly given from the outset, while the fragments drawn from later parts of the chant permeate the more meditative episodes.

The prevalence of counterpoint is the most striking textural point about the *Symphonie gothique*. As we have noted already, there is exposition of the chant in *cantus firmus* below fugal texture, imitatively in canon and trio, in a

more severe chorale-like texture and elements appear in the more traditional French toccata-like texture.

After the powerful chords of the first section movement I of the *Symphonie-Passion*, the simplicity of the chant appearing against a soft rocking, syncopated figure on strings is of a marked contrast, and it seems that the composer is using this contrast to reflect the chant text *Jesu redemptor omnium* (Jesus redeemer of all), emerging from the chaos. Through the canonic material which follows, the texture remains relatively simple, the various lines interweaving around the syncopated figure (Example 5.49).

Ex. 5.49: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 87–99

The musical score for Example 5.49, Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, I, bars 87–99, is presented in four systems. The first system shows a complex chordal texture in the right hand and a syncopated bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the texture with a prominent syncopated figure in the bass. The third system features a change in time signature to 6/4 and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The fourth system includes the instruction "add Subbass 16" and continues the syncopated bass line.

As noted earlier, he proceeds to combine the rhythmic opening material with the chant. In the second movement the chant is again presented in a simple fashion, in combination with earlier material.

Ex. 5.50: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, II, bars 94–98

The musical score for Example 5.50 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 94-96) features a right hand with a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, and a left hand with a simpler pattern of eighth notes. The second system (bars 97-98) shows the right hand continuing with a similar rhythmic pattern, while the left hand plays a more sustained, chordal accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

Typically for Dupré the melody is treated canonically (Example 5.51).

Ex. 5.51: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, II, bars 103–111

The musical score for Example 5.51 consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 103-105) features a right hand with a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, and a left hand with a simpler pattern of eighth notes. The second system (bars 106-108) shows the right hand continuing with a similar rhythmic pattern, while the left hand plays a more sustained, chordal accompaniment. The third system (bars 109-111) shows the right hand continuing with a similar rhythmic pattern, while the left hand plays a more sustained, chordal accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

As in the central section of movement I, this is a relatively simple texture; however this is further outdone by the simple, almost bare texture which surrounds the *Stabat mater dolorosa* in the third movement (Example 5.52).

Ex. 5.52: Dupré: *Symphonie-Passion*, III, bars 90–105

The musical score for Example 5.52 is presented in three systems. The first system shows a piano introduction in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, with a *pp* dynamic marking. The second system shows the beginning of the chant melody in the bass clef, also marked *pp*. The third system shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment.

The final movement provides for the usual toccata texture with the chant in mostly long notes, before the homophonic chordal page which ends the piece.

This brief summary provides some of the textural variations which occur through the course of the *Symphonie gothique* and *Symphonie-Passion*. For the most part they are pretty standard expected contexts in which to place the chant melody according to the aesthetic features of both works. More interesting however is the more expansive range of textures which exist within the more impressionistic world of the *Symphonie romane*. The chant appears in almost every possible register. In the words of Charles Quef: ‘the initial

theme returns in different rhythms, with the most diverse sonorities, low, high...¹⁰⁸

Ex. 5.53: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 11–14

The musical score for Ex. 5.53 consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand with a 'ritard.' marking. The second system includes a tempo marking '(♩=56)' and 'P tranquillamente'. The subsequent systems show complex rhythmic patterns and textures in both hands.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Archbold (1995), 264

Ex. 5.54: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, bars 48–49

The musical score for Ex. 5.54 consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line in the upper staff with a melodic phrase, and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff with a dense, rhythmic texture of chords. The second system continues the vocal line with a long, sustained note, while the piano accompaniment maintains its rhythmic pattern. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

Ex. 5.55: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 100–103

The musical score for Ex. 5.55 consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line in the upper staff with a melodic phrase, and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff with a dense, rhythmic texture of chords. The second system continues the vocal line with a long, sustained note, while the piano accompaniment maintains its rhythmic pattern. The score is written in a key with two sharps and a 12/8 time signature, and includes a *pp* dynamic marking.

Examples 5.54 and 5.55 also demonstrate instances of big gaps in the texture between high placement of the chant and a much lower accompaniment, creating an ethereal effect especially due to the figuration and the arabesque

nature of the upper melody. A few further instances of this wide range are to be seen below (Examples 5.56 and 5.57).

Ex. 5.56: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, bars 41–43

The musical score for Example 5.56 consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system features a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third system continues the piece. The score is written for piano and includes treble and bass staves with various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 5.57: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, bars 17–19

The musical score for Example 5.57 shows piano accompaniment for three bars. The first system is in 2/4 time and features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system is in 4/4 time. The third system is in 4/4 time and features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score is written for piano and includes treble and bass staves with various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In addition to the more complicated contrapuntal and homophonic sections, Widor also provides some examples of thinner textures most notably the expressive, free opening of the first movement (Example 5.58) and the driven monophonic opening of the finale (Example 5.59).

Ex. 5.58: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 1–8

Moderato (♩ = 76)

f

Quasi recitativo, espressivo

ff

3

a piacere.

5

7

Ex. 5.59: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, IV, bars 1–5

Allegro (♩ = 112)

fff

In both of these instances the priority is the clear presentation of the recognisable chant melody, in movement I introducing it, and in movement IV bringing it back after a movement without it and signalling the intent of Widor to return to the process of repetition used in movements I and II.

There are a number of points in the work where he does engage in a strict chorale-like texture, most notably in the second section of movement I and the opening of movement II. In both cases the sense of freedom is maintained despite the requirements of the texture.

Ex. 5.60: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, I, bars 21–24

♩ = 72

Ex. 5.61: Widor: *Symphonie romane*, II, Bars /1–4

The musical score for Ex. 5.61 is presented in two systems. The first system is in common time (C) and is marked 'Adagio (♩ = 80)'. It features a piano accompaniment with rapid figuration in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The second system is in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings 'cresc.' and 'p'. The score is divided into two measures per system, with a repeat sign in the second measure of each system.

It is clear that there is frequent use of rapid figuration throughout the work, which sustains interest in passages where the rate of harmonic change is low.

5.86: The impact of chant on the tonality of the works

It is beyond the scope of this project to engage in a detailed examination of the harmonic processes which are taking place in each of these three lengthy and complex organ symphonies. Nevertheless, it is fitting to make a few brief general points on the impact if any that the modal nature of the chant melodies has on the harmonic language of these pieces. The table below summarises the chants used and their modality as defined in the *Liber Usualis*.

Table 5.2: Chants and their modes

<i>Salve Regina</i>	Mode I (Dorian)
<i>Puer natus est</i>	Mode VII (mixolydian)
<i>Haec dies</i>	Mode II (Hypodorian) Or Mode V (Lydian)
<i>Victimae paschali laudes</i>	Mode I (Dorian)
<i>Jesu redemptor omnium</i>	Mode I (Dorian)
<i>Adeste fideles</i>	Mode VI (Hypolydian)
<i>Stabat mater</i>	Mode VI (Hypolydian)
<i>Adoro te devote</i>	Mode V (Lydian)

The best starting point in this discussion is the *Symphonie-Passion*, due to its particular method of using the chants. Unlike the *Symphonie romane* for example, the chant melody and the modal world in which it resides does not permeate the full work. On the contrary, the chant appears episodically in each movement of the piece: as a second subject in the first movement (albeit combined with the first subject later in the piece), likewise in the second movement, as a melody which emerges in the third section of the third movement. It does appear at the outset of the third movement and is present constantly, however the nature of *Adoro te devote* as a Lydian chant that uses the Bb, means that it is essentially using the modern major scale. This makes the final movement essentially tonal rather than modal. The chant has a limited impact on the harmonic language. The same could be said for the second movement, while the fleeting appearance of the *Stabat mater dolorosa* in the third movement does not cause any great impact.

The first movement in some ways provides the most interesting example. The source chant, *Jesu redemptor omnium*, is a mode I, or Dorian, melody with the following notes: D E F G A B C. The chant fragment used transposed to end note D only uses the notes C D E F G

Ex. 5.62: *Jesu redemptor omnium*, verse 1 as in the *Liber Usualis*

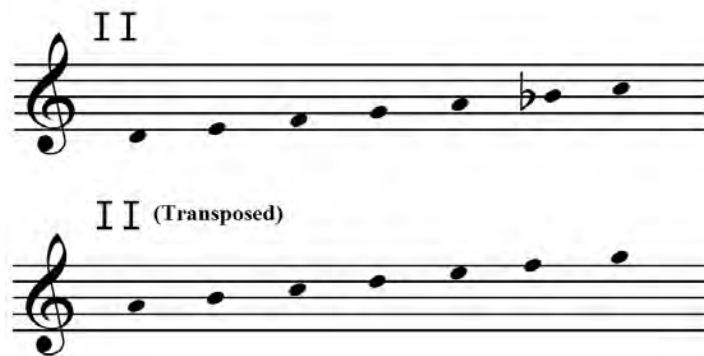
The image shows a musical score for the chant 'Jesu Redemptor omnium, Quem lucis ante originem, Patrem paternae gloriae, Pater supremus edidit.' The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is written in a square-note style. The lyrics are written below the staff, with a large initial 'J' for the first line. The text is: 'I. Jesu Redemptor omnium, Quem lucis ante originem, Patrem paternae gloriae, Pater supremus edidit.'

Therefore, by emphasising the starting note of the chant, rather than the final (which is used to define the mode) and by not using the later sections of the chant which use the B natural and end on the D, he is in actuality treating this as a melody in the major key. This not only means that the chant has not impacted on the harmonic language of the movement, but that the modal spirit of the chant has been compromised by the need to service the material around it. This is caused fundamentally by the possible criticism that these movements are misrepresented as 'improvisations on submitted themes' whereas it would be more accurate to label them 'improvisations which include or incorporate submitted themes'. The fact that these are chant melodies has little bearing on the work. Dupré could just as easily have inserted any melody, new or borrowed, into this structure and come out with almost the same piece, albeit without the programme provided by the themes.

In the case of the *Symphonie gothique*, the chant used, *Puer natus est nobis*, is a chant of the seventh mode (end note G). For the most part, the effect of this is negligible. The Mixolydian mode, being almost the same as the major scale (with a lowered seventh), is barely noticeable due to the fact that the composer only emphasises the opening phrase which does not feature the seventh. The arrival of the chant theme in the context of a minor key fugue means that when it arrives in *cantus firmus*, it has an immediate impact, shifting the emphasis towards the relative major of B flat.

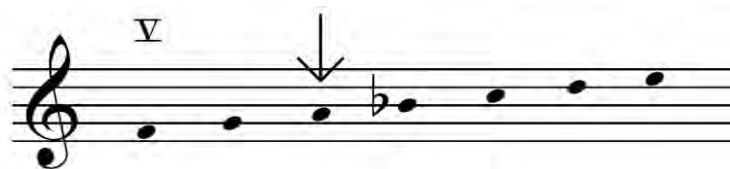
The *Haec dies* in the *Liber Usualis* and the *Paroissien romane* is classified as a mode II chant, transposed up a fifth, so that the end note is A instead of D (Example 5.63).

Ex 5.63: Mode II, at pitch and transposed



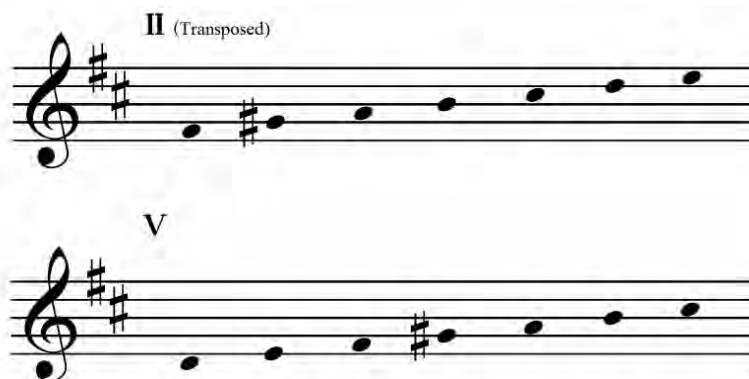
Dom Pothier, however, in an article published in 1896, claimed that the chant was in fact of the fifth mode, but not ending on the final as would be customary, but rather on the mediant (Example 5.64).¹⁰⁹

Ex. 5.64: Mode V



Taking, as Widor does, the chant down to a starting note of F sharp, the ambiguity shifts, so that its Mode II identity implies the key of F sharp minor, while the Mode V identity implies the key of D major (Example 65).

Ex. 5.65: Modes II and V



¹⁰⁹ Archbold (1995), 254

This ambiguity is present in a number of instances in the *Symphonie romane*, most notably the first movement, which uses this battle between the opposing forces of D and F sharp as a device.

5.9: Conclusion: sacred or secular? illustrative or symbolic?

As we have seen, throughout the nineteenth century, organ music developed from its traditional domain within the liturgy to attain a new identity in the secular world of the organ recital. Notional lines therefore exist between the organ music worthy for the solemnity of the church and that which would 'inflame the senses' in the context of the secular concert. In terms of the relative secularity of these symphonies, one could question whether their natural home is the concert hall or the church.

As already noted, these lines were blurred in the aftermath of the revolution by the more colourful figures such as Lefébure-Wély, however as the serious organ profession was maturing, it became possible to note the relative differences between liturgical and concert intent.

It is possible to speculate at great length about the relative secularity of Widor's compositions for the organ. The composer's views on the sacred and secular can help to inform this. It should be acknowledged that for Widor the point of departure in terms of the organ literature was Bach, and differing from Lemmens and Fétis, he did not see the inherent problem in the use of Bach in Catholic France, in contrast with the views of such men as Saint-Saëns:

What speaks through his works is pure religious emotion; and this is one and the same in all men, in spite of the national and religious partitions in which we are born and bred.¹¹⁰

The lack of French music in his own recital programmes suggests that he realised that there was no equivalent to Bach's music in France and accounts for his introduction of Bach chorales, with their Lutheran subtext, into the syllabus at the conservatoire after his appointment in 1890. However, it was his relationship with the German musicologist Albert Schweitzer, which

¹¹⁰ Widor, as quoted in Ochse (1994), 190 and taken from the preface to the 1911 Schweitzer Bach Edition

brought into focus the nature of these chorales from the point of view of the music-text relationship.¹¹¹

The music of Bach expresses the emotion of the infinite and the exalted, for which words are always an inadequate expression, and which can find proper utterance only in art.¹¹²

Unlike Guilman and Gigout, he did not seem to see the value of creating a repertoire of similar-style pieces based on Catholic melodies. This is despite the fact that he did see the playing and listening to the organ as an intrinsically spiritual experience, referring to organ music as ‘a special kind of music, the music of the eternal, awakening thoughts of immortality’.¹¹³ He came to realise that traditional religious sentiments were vital in the communication of art, and the final two symphonies are a reflection of this new post-symbolist aesthetic.¹¹⁴

Widor’s approach to composition and improvisation, in contrast to Franck’s may also serve to elucidate his views. As noted, in Franck’s improvisations, expression and emotion were of primary importance, in a way not dissimilar to Charles Tournemire a little later. For Widor however, this could imply indiscipline; continuing the teaching of improvisation, he advocated logic in terms of form and construction, gaining control and less guided by spiritual or mystical elements.¹¹⁵ Yet there is a difference in terms of his symphonies and the question remains whether they are sacred or secular in nature.¹¹⁶ The designation ‘symphony’ does indeed imply a secularity to these works and makes them an important part of the increasing interest in the organ as a concert instrument from the 1870s onward. These pieces also have no obvious purpose within the liturgy, except as voluntaries and indeed the fact that Widor was comfortable using them both in church and in the concert hall may make any such designation arbitrary. Like his student Dupré, he may have seen all art as an approach to God, contrasting with Saint-Saëns’ views of art for art’s sake. Indeed this is supported by the use of generic titles

¹¹¹ Ochse (1994), 189–190

¹¹² Murray (1985), 51 and taken from Schweitzer: *Bach*, volume 1

¹¹³ Schweitzer (1953), 23

¹¹⁴ Anthony (1986), 4

¹¹⁵ Ochse (1994), 190

¹¹⁶ Symphonies 1–8 must surely be treated separately to the final two, which are much more transparent.

relating to tempo or mood in the earlier symphonies.¹¹⁷ The more unified character of the second series (with their larger scale) implies an even more secular mandate and the premiering of the sixth in the Trocadéro provides for the organ the chance to have an intrinsically concert form for such a venue. The titles 'Pastorale', 'Scherzo', 'March' etc also reveal a secularity in the works. With the exception of the works of Franck, the symphonies of Widor are the first large body of organ music written in France which was destined to be played in the concert hall instead of the church. Indeed he was often criticised for his attitude to service playing, with the low mass at Saint-Sulpice reputed to resemble a concert. If it does seem that some of the movements from the symphonies were unsuitable for service playing, at least they assisted in the banishment of theatrical and operatic improvisation whilst aiding in the establishment of a concert organ repertoire.¹¹⁸ In the words of Eugène Gigout:

If it difficult to deny that mediocre organ music still meets with some approvers, it is impossible not to recognise that the works of real value are succeeding in gaining acceptance everywhere today. No doubt that after the two new symphonies so remarkable of Mr Ch-M Widor,....organists will try to make some polished compositions appreciated.¹¹⁹

Michael Murray suggests the difference between Franck and Widor was that both wrote 'secular music' but they differ: both devised music deeply spiritual and intensely felt, but Widor's has much more intellectual discipline than Franck's. He remains more detached. As such his objectivity leaves his symphonies 'ardent, stern, passionate and disinterested'.¹²⁰ As his life continued, his religious faith strengthened and sacred themes and concepts became his preoccupation, beyond the organ, his *Symphonie antique* for orchestra also employs Gregorian themes, and the *Sinfonia sacra* is founded on the chorale *Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland*.¹²¹

As a composer whose training from Lemmens was grounded in the strict execution and dissemination of the Bach tradition, Widor's point of view as a

¹¹⁷ Murray (1985), 106–107

¹¹⁸ Near (1985), 82–86

¹¹⁹ As cited in Near (1985), 15

¹²⁰ Murray (1985), 101–102

¹²¹ Dupré in his *Recollections* suggests that the idea for the *Sinfonia sacra* came from Schweitzer. Dupré (1975), 54

composer initially seems to have been much more secular and if there is to have been inspiration from sacred melodies, German chorales seem to be a more likely candidate. The presence of a movement in the second symphony based on the solemn *Salve Regina* is misleading, having been added in a 1901 revision and not the original of 1876.

Nevertheless, it was later in life that Widor became interested in the value of plainchant, gaining an increased awareness of the use of these melodies and the possibility of a more sacred element to his large-scale models.¹²² The interest of his colleague Guilmant in the creation of a Catholic chorale-like repertoire may have been a factor, as well as the chant-based output of his student Dupré.

An increasing use of chant in his service improvisations in the late-nineteenth century may even suggest a deepening of religious faith on his part, and led to his revisiting of the symphonic genre, one which he seemed to have exhausted with the monumental seventh and eighth symphonies.¹²³ Unlike a number of his colleagues, he was not as inspired by the work of the Benedictines of Solesmes, viewing their scholarship, while admirable, as not being critical enough.¹²⁴ Towards the end of the century his interest in the plainchant restoration was undeniable however, and he wrote an extensive article entitled *La musique grecque et les chants de l'église latine*. It attempts to link Gregorian chant to Greek music, a theory also espoused by Peter Wagner (1865–1931) and François Gevaert (1828–1908), but largely discredited today.¹²⁵ He came to believe:

Except for Bach's preludes and fugues, or rather certain preludes and fugues, I can no longer consider any organ music sacred unless it is consecrated by themes from chorales or Gregorian chants.¹²⁶

Schweitzer's views on the indivisibility of text and melody in the chorales seem to have permeated his chant-based improvisations, as he began to

¹²² Murray (1985), 106

¹²³ Thomson (1987), 65

¹²⁴ James Frazier: *Maurice Durufle, The Man and His Music* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 152

¹²⁵ This article appeared in *Revue des Deux Mondes* on 1 October 1895. Near (1985) 196–198

¹²⁶ Widor as quoted in Ochse (1994), 139

reflect the texts more in his improvisations, looking forward to Tournemire's *L'orgue mystique*.¹²⁷

His final two symphonies represent an important step in the history of chant-based composition, as they created a new spiritual and musical genre in which 'the earlier ethos of secular humanism now gave way to a spiritual inwardness and sense of mystery'.¹²⁸ Employing chant according to the cyclical principles of Franck, Widor created new possibilities for the sacred Catholic melodies:

And when one May Sunday, still striving with technical problems, he played for the first time in Saint-Sulpice the *Symphonie romane*, I felt with him that in this work the French art of organ playing had entered sacred art, and had experienced that death and that resurrection that every art of organ playing must experience when it wishes to create something enduring.¹²⁹

It is these works which paved the way for the *Symphonie-Passion* of Dupré, and combined the sacred and secular in a new and spiritually fulfilling way, drawing inspiration from the texts and from the architecture, in one case gothic, with its more archaic forms and the other romanesque. In 1906, Schweitzer, noted the quality of 'the austere that Widor brings back to sacred art in his last two symphonies'¹³⁰,

As we have seen, the *Symphonie gothique* and *Symphonie romane* exist as, in some ways, the final point in a process of the evolution of the 'Widor organ symphony'. It is indeed possible to group these ten works into three categories by date and opus number. It becomes obvious therefore, that the first four are collections of pieces, in the same vein as the early Mendelssohn sonatas. The second set are much more uniformly conceived, as of course are the the final two. Almost paradoxically this means that the first four have more liturgical use than the second set, more than a few seemingly having grown from pieces improvised or prewritten as *sorties*, *offertories*, *communions* etc. It is possible to see the value inherent in each individual

¹²⁷ Thomson (1987), 24

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 65

¹²⁹ Albert Schweitzer as quoted in Archbold (1995), 269

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 249

piece as well as the suites or symphonies as a whole. Indeed we know that Widor was known to 'mix and match' movements when fashioning programmes. It is possible and indeed desirable to use these movements liturgically and the final from Symphony No.5 and the opening movement of Symphony No.6 provide examples of the more popular and independently performed single movements. It is this uniformity which makes the concert hall or secular recital a more suitable home for them. Their composition coincides with the period of growth in the organ recital and the seminal inauguration of the Trocadéro organ in 1878. Indeed, the programme for the fifth concert in the first series of organ events at the new organ includes the first performance of Widor's sixth symphony.

So what of the final two works, composed as they were after a fallow period of organ composition for the composer? It may be surmised that after the gigantic seventh and eighth symphonies, Widor felt that he had taken the genre as far as he could and turned his attention back to music for other media. It should be remembered that by his own confession, he had never expected to be an organ composer and his output bears this out with a much wider variety of media than his organ-centred colleague Guilmant. These final two works are reflective of the changing attitudes to organ composition as espoused by Guilmant in his role in the Schola Cantorum. But whereas Guilmant chose to focus his chant-based composing on smaller liturgical works, aimed at creating the Catholic Bach equivalent for which he expressed a desire, Widor chose to integrate the chants cyclically into the genre he himself created. Related as his symphonies are to the sonatas of Guilmant, the latter never saw fit, despite his consumption by the desire for a chant-based organ repertoire, to use any chants or even refer to chants in his larger-scale works. Widor's final symphonies are borne out of his new opinion that chant and organ music were indivisible. Therefore, he creates these large canvasses marrying the concert and liturgical elements, a significant move technically and aesthetically, given that this would evolve eventually in the direction of the vast concert liturgies to be written by Olivier Messiaen. For Widor, this reached its apex in the *Symphonie romane*, in simple terms it is concert music with a sacred soul. Like with the eighth symphony, it was to be

his last organ work, but again he returned to the instrument with the *Suite latine* in 1927, a work which in some respects continues this sober spirituality with its own, though less extensive, use of chant melodies.

It is difficult to appreciate the same liturgical or spiritual side to the *Symphonie-Passion*. Although he noted that he ‘improvised, feeling as I had never felt before’,¹³¹ it is an intrinsically concert work, conceived in a concert hall and first performed in a concert hall (although the premier of the written version took place in Westminster Cathedral). The chants, while the submitted themes on which the work was to be based, are not as an intrinsic part of the fabric of the overall work as discussed above. They do not exist here for programmatic purposes rather than to fulfil any symbolic, spiritual function. They are intended to be recognised by the audience, to fulfil the task of illustrating this programme set out by Dupré from the outset. This can be no more different to the later symbolic approach by Messiaen, where the chants are present but altered beyond recognition. Indeed there is a sense from the work that the chants have been inserted into a pre-planned structure and are elements that do not shape the work. As stated by Abbé Delestre, Dupré’s biographer:

This work marks a principal turning point in the aesthetic evolution of Marcel Dupré, and in the history of organ literature. The virtuoso possesses the definitive mastery of his instrument; for the first time he attempts to translate a religious drama into a symphonic form.¹³²

These symphonies represent the differing and complementary approaches to incorporating chant into the organ symphony. By the 1920s, the organ symphony was in decline, the twentieth century neo-classical aesthetic gradually moving away in some respects from the gigantic sounds associated with the orchestral organ. Louis Vierne, Widor’s chief successor as a symphonist wrote six symphonies between 1898 and 1930, but none of these were influenced by chant. While Dupré continued to use chant extensively in other works of varying forms and sizes, his second symphony for organ (op. 26, 1929) did not continue the pattern begun by the *Symphonie-Passion*.

¹³¹ Gammie (1998), n.p.

¹³² Translated and quoted in Pagett (1975), 227

Chapter 6: Liturgy II: Chant, Improvisation and 'The Sainte-Clotilde Tradition'

6.1: Introduction

The Neo-Gothic Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris was built between 1846 and 1857 and was one of a number of churches built to serve the educated upper classes that had been growing in number since the revolution. Its 46-stop organ was completed in 1859. The organ was not Cavallé-Coll's largest and was small in comparison with the 100-stop instrument of Saint-Sulpice and the 86-stop organ of Notre Dame Cathedral, but was regarded as one of his favourites. Franck, who was appointed organist in 1858 prior to the completion of the organ proclaimed it to be an orchestra. Dufourq described it as follows:

It is unquestionably the constructor's masterpiece up to this time, on account of the beauty of its foundation stops, the mysterious remoteness of the swell organ, the poetic quality of the clarinet stop on the choir organ, the limpidity of the trumpet stop that is not to be met with elsewhere, the clarity, lightness and precision of the full organ.¹

An extensive rebuild was undertaken in 1933.²

While the previous chapters have dealt in some detail with the use of plainchant in relatively secular concert works, it is impossible to have any discussion on the relationship between plainchant and the French organ without an examination of the so-called 'Sainte-Clotilde tradition' as defined by Robert Sutherland Lord. Such a term, may seem unusual, however for the purposes of this discussion, it will be used to refer to the common links which bind three figures associated with the organ at this Parisian church from the mid nineteenth to the late twentieth century, namely César Franck, Charles Tournemire and Jean Langlais.³ With the exception of a few gaps, which were caused by the politics of succession common to most positions of note, these

¹ Léon Vallas: *César Franck* (London: Harrap & Co., 1951), 112, and taken from Norbert Dufourq: *La musique d'orgue française*

² Rollin Smith: *Towards an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 153-155; Ann Labounsky: *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2000), 124, *passim*; Robert Sutherland Lord: 'The 1933 Rebuilding of the Cavallé-Coll Organ in the Basilica of Ste-Clotilde, Paris: Tournemire's Blueprint for the Console', *OY*, xxx (2001), 181-188

³ Robert Sutherland Lord: 'The Sainte-Clotilde Tradition: Toward a Definition', *AO*, xvi/2 (2/1982), 38-40

three men were, in turn, organist of Sainte-Clotilde throughout this period and they shared a common philosophy regarding the role of church organist. This was to lead to the creation of a tradition of music composition and improvisation which would provide some of the most mystical and spiritual repertoire for the organ and eventually provide the ultimate in synthesis between organ music and plainchant.

While this discussion does have the church as its centrepiece, it is important to note from the outset that the music produced by these three composers was far from exclusively liturgical, but as we can see, was imbued with a deep-seated spirituality, which meant that even in the concert hall it still retained a mystical strength. Franck's contribution has been dealt with in an earlier chapter; therefore the emphasis here will be on the work of Tournemire and Langlais, evaluating how they found a common link with their Belgian predecessor.

6.2: Context: liturgical and political upheaval at the turn of the century

As the beginning of the nineteenth century marked a period of political and religious upheaval, the beginning of the twentieth century was no different.

On 5 December 1905, legislation officially separated church and state in France. This event was the culmination of a number of measures by the Third Republic, following the 1882 secularisation of primary education and the 1902 closure of all Catholic parochial schools. It marked the beginning of an era of turmoil in the French church and ensured that *Tra le sollecitudini* (the 1903 *motu proprio*), while an important step, would not be the end of the long battle for high-quality church music. Subsidies to church-orientated institutions such as the École Niedermeyer were stopped and the removal of organists, priests and bishops from the national payroll led to quite a large amount of poverty.⁴ As already noted, the fight against secular music in the church had been ongoing during the previous century. As the church and state grew apart and the church became increasingly at odds with the secularity of the Third Republic,

⁴ François Lesure: 'France: 19th century art music', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), ix, 155, *passim*

attempts were being made to increase music contrary to secular and republican values into the Catholic worship.⁵ The Third Republic for its part understood the importance of music and had been promoting it in schools since 1872 in an attempt to instil republican values.⁶ The tension between the French establishment and the church created some difficulty for those who served both but, despite this, music traditionally associated with the church (namely chant and polyphony) enjoyed a revival in the first half of the twentieth century. Ironically, the Vichy government in the 1940s saw this music as beneficial to culture as well as worship and encouraged its use.⁷

6.3: The 1903 *motu proprio* – an overview of its content and impact

Much of the approach to church music in the early twentieth century was defined by the *motu proprio: Tra le sollecitudini*, issued by Pope Pius X in 1903.⁸ This document was a culmination of decades of work by reformers who were attempting to improve the quality of church music and create a clear distinction between the sacred and the secular. Much of this is discussed in chapter 4 with relation to the Schola Cantorum and other educational institutes and societies.

Pius X is regarded as a reforming pope. In 1893 (whilst still Cardinal Sarto), he proposed a motion about reform of church music to the Congregation of Rites. This action was a consequence of growing evidence of the inappropriate use of orchestral and operatic music in churches. While his primary focus was Italy, this concern was no less relevant in France. Sarto's document, prepared by Fr A. De Santi, with the assistance of some Solesmes monks, was the basis for the 1903 *motu*, and although it related specifically to music, it extended further into liturgy, emphasising the belief that music and liturgy were indelibly linked. The text of the *motu* simply sought to outline what was meant by good church music and ban anything which violated these principles. It held up Gregorian chant as the model: 'A church composition is

⁵ James Frazier: *Maurice Duruflé: The Man and his Music* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 3

⁶ Frazier (2007), 11

⁷ *Ibid*, 3

⁸ Pius X (Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto) was pope from 1903 to 1914.

more ecclesiastical and liturgical when it approaches Gregorian chant in its composition, its spirit and its inner attitude; on the other hand, the more it deviates from this model, the less it is worthy of the house of God'.⁹ It is worth noting that he did not seek to ban all else but chant. This move was advocated by some, but regarded by Pius X as a form of extremism. He did allow for local and national customs to remain and for polyphony to be used, but at all times adhering to the principles laid out. He entrusted the preparation of the Vatican editions to the monks of Solesmes in 1904 as outlined in chapter 1. In contrast to the decadence of the preceding century, Pope Pius sought to reawaken a love for solemn prayer and liturgy and the *motu* served as just a single example of the further liturgical reforms which became the legacy of his pontificate.¹⁰

There was not universal praise for the return of chant as the accepted staple of the church and Sainte-Clotilde serves as a good example of this. In 1904 Maurice Emmanuel¹¹ assumed the role of *maître de chapelle* and set about reforming the choir, managing to create an ensemble for the performance of chant. However due to the hostile reaction to this, he left his post in 1906.¹² This exposure to chant was to pave the way for the emergence of the aesthetic of Charles Tournemire in the same church.

6.4: Charles Tournemire

One can hardly use the themes of plainchant more and better than
Charles Tournemire in his *L'orgue mystique*¹³

Charles Tournemire was born in Bordeaux in 1870, the same year as Louis Vierne. He is, in a sense, one of the more neglected of the second generation of great French organist-composers. He was raised in a devout Catholic

⁹ As quoted in Roger Aubert: 'The Reform Work of Pius X', *History of the Church*, ix, eds: Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (Burns and Oates: London, 1981), 408

¹⁰ Aubert (1981), 407–410

¹¹ Maurice Emmanuel (1862–1938), composer and musicologist, Robert Orledge: 'Emmanuel, (Marie François) Maurice', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), viii, 186–187; Ronald Stevenson: 'Maurice Emmanuel: A Belated Apologia', *ML*, xxx/2 (4/1959), 154–165

¹² Stevenson (1959) states that he resigned, while Orledge notes that he was dismissed, Rollin Smith states that he was director until 1907. Smith (1983), 168

¹³ Andrew Thomson: 'A Composer of Genius'

<http://www.mvdaily.com/articles/1999/10/messiaen.htm>, accessed 20/7/2005 and taken from Olivier Messiaen: *Technique de mon langage musical* (1941)

family and came to Paris by means of a scholarship to study piano with Charles de Bériot.¹⁴ He studied organ with both Franck and Widor at the Paris Conservatoire and was awarded the *premier prix* in 1891.¹⁵ A number of less-important positions preceded his appointment in 1898 as *titulaire* of Sainte-Clotilde. He was not Franck's immediate successor; that honour fell to Gabriel Pierné (1863–1937), who held the position from 1890 to 1898.¹⁶ The reasons for the appointment of Pierné rather than Tournemire will be discussed later in the chapter.

Sainte-Clotilde was to become a sanctuary for Tournemire, a shield from the world, in which the composer's mysticism would manifest itself in the music he improvised for the religious services. In the preface to his reconstruction of the *Cinq improvisations*, Maurice Duruflé stated that,

Without doubt, Charles Tournemire had found in the magnificent Cavallé-Coll at Sainte-Clotilde the ideal instrument, the one which would respond marvellously to his demands, to the flights of his imagination, by turns poetic, picturesque, capricious, then impassioned, tumultuous, infuried, then soothed, mystical, ecstatic...The privileged listeners who have been witnesses to these improvisations, who have heard, who have seem at the keyboard this prodigious man, will never be able to forget the emotions he aroused in them.¹⁷

On two occasions he applied for the post of organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire and though failing both times, was appointed professor of the instrumental ensemble class in 1919.¹⁸ He was also active as a private organ teacher, although he did not teach technique, rather taking on students who

¹⁴ Nicholas Kaye: 'Tournemire, Charles (Arnould)', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xxv, 656; Andrew Thomson: 'Vierne and Tournemire', *CO*, iii/5 (10/1995), 23–25

¹⁵ Thomson (1995), 23–25

¹⁶ Smith (1983), 170; Pierné, like Joseph Ermend-Bonnal (who was organist between Tournemire and Langlais) does not have a place in the Sainte-Clotilde tradition, save as a peripheral figure. Pierné's fame died with him, but during his life he was revered as an organist, conductor and composer. He did not follow the path of dedicated church organist, and left a huge oeuvre for media other than the organ, including a *Prix de Rome* winning cantata *Edith*. Lawrence Davis: *César Franck and his Circle* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), 324–328; The *New Grove* selective list of works notes only a handful of organ pieces: a Fugue in G, *Trois pièces*, and *Entrée*, all written before about 1900; Georges Masson: 'Pierné, (Henri Constant) Gabriel', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xix, 726–727

¹⁷ From the Preface to the *Cinq Improvisations* and translated by Ruth Sisson: *The Symphonic Organ Works of Charles Arnold Tournemire*, unpublished PhD diss. (Florida State University, 1984), 2–3

¹⁸ He lost out to both Eugène Gigout (1911) and Marcel Dupré (1925)

really interested him on a no-fees basis. Like Franck, his emphasis was on improvisation and its poetry and therefore grounding in technique was needed in advance.¹⁹ Duruflé recalled Tournemire the teacher as being full of jovial humour, yet nervous and liable to sudden mood changes and also that he was quite highly strung and disliked teaching.²⁰ He also noted that he was impulsive and attributed it as a characteristic of the Mediterranean people.²¹ However, the respect which the next generation of organist-composers had for Tournemire was evident on 25 August 1932, when excerpts from *L'orgue mystique* were performed by a stellar cast which included Olivier Messiaen, Maurice Duruflé, Jean Langlais and Gaston Litaize.²²

Following his return from military service, Tournemire rediscovered himself in the revival of mysticism after the First World War and the exalted Catholic ideals laid out in the writings of such men as Ernest Hello²³ and Léon Bloy²⁴ had a great effect on him. In fact, he was related through marriage to Sâr Joséphin Péladan,²⁵ the great mystic and re-founder of the Rosicrucian order. He was fascinated by the concepts of the divine redemption of man which fuelled his imagination as an improviser and composer.²⁶

From the late 1920s, Tournemire retreated largely from the world, spending long periods composing in a windmill on the small island of Quessant and reading the materials of Hello, Huysmans²⁷ and other French mystical

¹⁹ Labounsky (2000), 67–8

²⁰ Thomson (1995), 23–25, *passim*, taken from Maurice Duruflé: 'Mes souvenirs sur Tournemire et Vierne', *L'Orgue*, (1977); James Frazier: 'In Gregorian Mode', *Maurice Duruflé 1902–1986, The Last Impressionist* (London: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 9

²¹ Maurice Duruflé: 'My Recollections of Tournemire and Vierne', transl. Ralph Kneeream, *AO*, ix/11, (11/1980), 54

²² Thomson (1995), 23–25

²³ Ernest Hello (1828–1885): French critic and writer and philosopher, whose works are deeply religious.

²⁴ Léon Bloy (1846–1917): French novelist, essayist, pamphleteer and poet, whose works reflect devotion to the Catholic Church.

²⁵ Joséphin Péladan (1858–1918): French martinist, who founded a new order of the Rose and Cross or Rosicrucian Order, after the early-seventeenth-century orders of the same name.

²⁶ Thomson (1995), 23–25

²⁷ Charles-Marie-Georges Huysmans (1848–1907): French novelist, regarded as the most important *fin de siècle* writer in France. His books contain the recurring theme of man's attempt to find meaning in life.

writers.²⁸ His body was discovered on 3 November 1939, having been missing since going for a walk two days earlier. It is unclear as to what happened and there were rumours of both suicide and drowning. The closure of Sainte-Clotilde due to the Second World War robbed him of a formal funeral and he was buried in haste in Arcachon on 5 November, his wife Alice insisting that the war necessitated her swift return to Paris.²⁹ Ten years later Jean Langlais would write:

On 4 November 1939, the news of Charles Tournemire's death struck the musical world. It was then, the day of his feast, that this great master, whose message was so in advance of our conception of art, left us. But thanks to his work, he lives....He erected a monument, a religious and artistic summation, in his *L'orgue mystique*, which makes him one of the greatest servants of Christian art and even of art in general. Such an anniversary must deeply grieve all who are attached to Sainte-Clotilde, which he served with passion and with a feeling so common to many great men, that of not being understood except by a small number of devotees.³⁰

6.5: Tournemire, Franck and improvisation

Tournemire's entry into the organ class of César Franck at the Paris Conservatoire in 1889 was to be a defining moment, in spite of the fact that Franck's death in 1890 made their personal relationship so short. As part of the Belgian's final class, he was heavily influenced by Franck's love for the mystical elements of composition and improvisation, both of which were emphasised above organ technique.³¹ According to Robert Sutherland Lord, the young Tournemire was immediately drawn to Franck upon arrival in Paris, seeking him at home and visiting without appointment.³²

As recounted elsewhere in this dissertation, improvisation had been an important part of the organ class in the conservatoire since long before Franck's appointment, including the extemporisation of counterpoint to

²⁸ Kaye (2001), 656

²⁹ Frazier (2002), 26; Labounsky (2000), 105

³⁰ Labounsky (2000), 106

³¹ Franck was unsuccessful in two attempts to secure a post as a professor of composition in 1880, on the deaths of Victor Massé and Napoléon-Henri Reber. The Belgian was short-listed both times only to see the posts go to Ernest Reyer and Léo Delibes, Vallas (1951), 259–261

³² Lord (1982), 38

plainsong *cantus firmus*.³³ Tournemire excelled in the conservatoire organ class. Franck described him as ‘an excellent pupil, gifted and a worker’.³⁴ Vierne recounted that Franck liked Tournemire very much and that his fellow students were disappointed that he was not awarded the *premier prix* in his first year of study.³⁵ He also commented that Tournemire was regarded as the ‘eagle’ of Franck’s class in 1890 due to his amazing ability at developing the simplest of themes.³⁶ It would be unfair to state that Franck did not value the organ literature at all, having said ‘A true composer must know everything about his art...all the contributions which have enriched the art of sound since its birth’.³⁷ Franck’s improvisations, as stated previously, were legendary. As Tournemire put it himself, ‘there was never a question of any one formula or gimmick, but only poetry, emotion, imaginative richness. Never cliché, but ideas’.³⁸ His favourite form for improvisation was the *grand variation* or *grand fantaisie*, a form adopted by Tournemire and used both in his improvisations and written compositions.³⁹

While Franck had an enormous impact on Tournemire, as on many of his students, he was not renowned for producing virtuosic organists and Tournemire, like Vierne, benefited from the instruction of Widor, who took over the post of professor of organ upon Franck’s death in 1890.⁴⁰ Widor’s refocusing of the curriculum is discussed elsewhere in this work; it is sufficient to state here that technical development regained pre-eminence over improvisation. Tournemire improved his organ technique under Widor and was rewarded with the *premier prix* in 1891.⁴¹ Ruth Sisson contrasts the impact of the two teachers on Tournemire. She states that from Franck, he gained a strong foundation in counterpoint and musical principles of emphasis on detail and German techniques of chromatic harmony, cyclical construction

³³ Sisson (1984), 38–9 has further detail as do numerous other sources on the exact examination syllabus.

³⁴ Thomson (1999)

³⁵ Rollin Smith: *Louis Vierne, Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral* (1999), 47

³⁶ *Ibid*, 63

³⁷ As quoted in Sisson (1984), 40 and taken from Louis Vierne: *Memoirs* (1938), 7

³⁸ Sisson (1984), 40

³⁹ *Ibid*, 40

⁴⁰ This sentiment was echoed by Vierne, Vallas (1951), 255

⁴¹ Thomson (1995), 23–25

and thematic variation, all learned through improvisation. On the other hand, Widor endowed him with a superior playing technique, knowledge of the repertoire and how to interpret it, a knowledge and analysis of the symphonic forms of the master composers, awareness of registrations and an emphasis on form and logical development. In her opinion, both also gave great attention to the methods of thematic development and transformation.⁴² It serves as an interesting exercise, perhaps, to contrast the careers and techniques of Tournemire and his exact contemporary Vierne, who also spent only a year with Franck and was a member of Widor's class (being appointed his assistant and substitute after achieving his *premier prix* in 1894). In his career as an organist and composer, Vierne was closer in character to Widor than Franck. In the words of Duruflé: 'his was a more classic, more rational mind'⁴³

While Tournemire, like Duruflé and many others, is a composer whose reputation lies almost solely in his compositions for organ, his early works for the instrument (influenced by Franck and Widor) were less successful than those of his friend Vierne. It wasn't until the late 1920s with the composition of *L'orgue mystique* that he began to achieve success as an organ composer. The period 1900–1927 saw Tournemire place his compositional emphasis on operatic and orchestral music, using this medium to develop his harmonic language and musical sensibilities. Between 1900 and 1924, he composed eight orchestral symphonies, the sixth and seventh of which are 'of a truly Mahlerian scope and philosophical aspiration'.⁴⁴

6.6: Tournemire, religion and improvisation

On 2 June 1937, Louis Vierne died during his 1750th organ recital at Notre Dame Cathedral. In one of the five funeral orations Tournemire commented that 'Art is a reminder of God's universal presence'.⁴⁵ To students throughout his career he emphasised that 'all music not grounded in the glorification of

⁴² Sisson (1984), 43–44

⁴³ Duruflé (1980), 56

⁴⁴ Thomson (1999), n.p.

⁴⁵ The other four were given by Armand Vivet, Louis de Serres, Albert Mahaut and Béranger de Miramon Fitz-James. Smith (1999), 426–427

God is useless'. (This is quoted by Lord as *La musique d'orgue d'ou Dieu est absent, est un corps sans âme*: Organ music where God is absent is a body without a soul.)⁴⁶ He had little patience for those who did not share his convictions and showed disdain for organists who engaged in self-promotion.⁴⁷ An intensely religious man throughout his life, Tournemire's studies with Franck served to provide him with a musical vehicle for the expression of his mystical belief by means of improvisation. Like Franck and his eventual successor, Jean Langlais, Tournemire saw the role of the liturgical organist as distinct from the concert organist and that the service was not just an opportunity to play, but rather to enrich worship by playing music based on the appropriate texts.⁴⁸ He consistently favoured those organists whom he regarded as liturgical; Langlais an ideal example because of his devotion to chant in his music, whereas André Marchal⁴⁹ was a concert organist.⁵⁰ Indeed, he emphasised this in his unpublished book, *De la haute mission de l'organiste à l'église*.⁵¹ It is this philosophy which underlays the concept of the Sainte-Clotilde tradition. The twin beliefs in religious expression through the 'highly-developed art of liturgical improvisation' lie at the heart of the tradition.⁵²

By the end of the nineteenth century when Tournemire was beginning his career as a liturgical organist (appointed to Sainte-Clotilde in 1898), the Solesmes method was gaining prominence. He was reported to be one of the first French organists to visit Solesmes and to interpret the chant according to their method.⁵³ Indeed, the flexible nature of Solesmes chant not only influenced his chant-based compositions, but also his later symphonic works,

⁴⁶ Andrew Thomson: 'Lofty Endeavours', *MT*, cxxxvi/1825, (3/1995), 137; Lord (1982), 40

⁴⁷ Sisson (1984), 24

⁴⁸ Labounsky (2000), 125

⁴⁹ André Marchal (1894–1980): blind French organist, whose concert career spanned the century, regarded as a key figure in the twentieth-century classical organ revival

⁵⁰ Labounsky (2000), 107

⁵¹ *On the High Mission of the Church Organist*, Frazier (2007), 26; Weidner informs us that the manuscript was in the possession of Madame Tournemire at the time of his research. Raymond Franck Weidner: *The Improvisational Techniques of Charles Tournemire as extracted from his Five Reconstructed Organ Improvisations*, unpublished PhD diss. (Michigan State University, 1984), 7

⁵² Lord (1982), 40

⁵³ Frazier (2007), 150

which have the modality and rhythmic flexibility inherent in chant.⁵⁴ Tournemire's *L'orgue mystique* is, in some ways, a continuation and development of the traditions established by Guilmant and the Schola Cantorum (see chapter 4).⁵⁵

By the end of the century, Widor had demonstrated how chant could be integrated into larger-scale structures and the impressionism inherent in the *Symphonie romane* in particular is developed by Tournemire. Tournemire's late symphonies do not follow the pattern of Vierne and Widor and are more in the style of symphonic poems.

As a composer, Tournemire's limited success in the areas of secular music was due largely to his belief that music's only purpose was the praise of God.⁵⁶ He found refuge from the world in the Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde and at his country house where he spent long periods composing and studying the philosophical works of many of the great French mystics. While in this reclusive state, he gained musical inspiration from the Bible and other religious texts as well as from nature. Indeed his love of nature as the visible face of God and his use of birdsong and Hindu rhythms render him comparable to Messiaen.⁵⁷

For some, Tournemire was an improviser without peer, to the extent that his reputation as an extemporiser has overshadowed his actual written compositions. This is demonstrated by the fact that the best-known pieces of his output are the *Cinq improvisations*, transcribed by his student Duruflé from

⁵⁴ Sisson (1984), 46

⁵⁵ For further details see: Edward Zimmerman and Lawrence Archbold: "Why Should We Not Do the Same with Our Catholic Melodies?": Guilmant's *L'Organiste liturgiste*, op.65', *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor*, eds. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995) and Benjamin van Wye: *The Influence of the Plainsong Restoration on the Growth and Development of the Modern French Liturgical Organ School*, unpublished DMA diss. (University of Illinois, 1970)

⁵⁶ This reflects in some ways the activities of Alkan, whose reclusive mysticism led to a quantity of high-quality music which he never sought to have performed., Wilfrid Mellers: 'Tournemire and L'Orgue Romantique', *CO*, i/1 (2/1993)

⁵⁷ Thomson (1999), n.p.

recordings made at Sainte-Clotilde in the 1930s.⁵⁸ Facquet, in his *Catalogue de l'oeuvre de Charles Tournemire*, speculates that 'moreover, the fiercely independent attitude he adopted in pursuit of his artistic and spiritual ideal led him to avoid the influential musical circles where his last major symphonic and choral works could have been heard.'⁵⁹ This emphasis on improvisation led to his life-long obsession with the art, as laid out in his method book. The importance of this branch of organ-playing is such that it can be said that the organist who, in spite of great technical agility of the hands and feet, is struck 'paralysed', so to speak, in his ability to improvise, can be only considered half an organist.⁶⁰ That Tournemire inherited the Franck skill for improvisation is beyond doubt. As Duruflé recalls from a lesson:

after a few measures of improvisation by this poor pupil, he pushed me aside to take my place. For a full twenty minutes, using the same captivating theme he had given me, he embarked upon one of those inspired improvisations whose secrets he alone possessed. Form was irrelevant; pure music flowed up from the deep springs of his being.⁶¹

In his improvisations, Tournemire personified the ideal that inspiration, while being rational to a certain extent, is also governed by a sense of imaginative impulse. In his biography of Franck, he comments on experiencing 'flashes' in which 'one feels remarkably that one is listening to somebody else. The subconscious takes over'.⁶² He even goes so far as to imply that he is not entirely in control of his actions: that his fingers become autonomous, fulfilling the will of the Divine, a mysterious force which makes him discover beautiful music.⁶³ Duruflé commented: 'Carried away by the music which flowed spontaneously from his fingers, he could not control his reflexes. He had departed elsewhere'.⁶⁴ His dependence on the sacred space to inspire his free-form improvisations is emphasised by Messiaen who was a great admirer of his:

⁵⁸ Charles Tournemire: *Cinq improvisations pour orgue reconstituées par Maurice Duruflé* (Paris: Durand, 1958); Thomson suggests that these 'improvisations' may have been more preplanned than may originally be thought, Thomson (1995), 138

⁵⁹ Joël-Marie Fauquet: *Catalogue de l'Oeuvre de Charles Tournemire* (1979), 8, as quoted in Sisson (1984), 5

⁶⁰ As quoted in Sisson (1984), 38–39

⁶¹ Duruflé (1980), 54

⁶² Andrew Cyprian Love: *Musical Improvisation, Heidegger, and the Liturgy* (Wales: The Edwin Melvin Press, 2003), 286, and taken from Tournemire: *Franck* (1931), 49–50

⁶³ *Ibid*, 287, *passim*

⁶⁴ As quoted in Thomson (1995), 137

My only organ teacher was Marcel Dupré, for whom I had the greatest admiration and a very great and respectful affection. But I went occasionally to hear the improvisations of Charles Tournemire (a composer of genius, and a marvellous improviser). When Tournemire improvised at a concert, it was good. But the improvisations were much more beautiful during masses at Sainte-Clotilde, when he had the Blessed Sacrement (*sic*) in front of him. I think I resemble him somewhat in this respect. I improvise much better during a service, on my organ at the Trinité. In a concert my gifts desert me, and my imagination disappears.⁶⁵

As identified by Andrew Thomson, Henri Bergson's⁶⁶ philosophies of *élan vital*, concerning the creative impulse of man, prized impulse over rational planning and so in the early decades of the twentieth century, improvisation was regaining stature over composition.⁶⁷ Tournemire clearly felt that liturgical improvisation needed to be spontaneous and unplanned, so that the spirit should control the actions of the organist. It is interesting to compare this philosophy with that of Marcel Dupré, who believed that all looseness and spontaneity should give way to skill, discipline and mental effort.⁶⁸ Improvisation was the most important facet of Tournemire's service playing, and the Gregorian themes of the day were the source of this music:

Tournemire never played from written music at Sunday mass. With the book of Gregorian chant always on the music rack, opened to the liturgical office of the day, he improvised throughout the entire mass, with an interruption only for the reading of the gospel and the sermon. That amounted to a half hour of music. I hasten to add that this half hour of music was always inspired by the Gregorian themes of the day and reflected the different portions of the service. It was not a concert, but a genuine musical commentary on the liturgy.⁶⁹

The pre-eminence of impulse over form, was a preoccupation of his, particularly with regard to liturgical improvisation. He gave to his student Jean Langlais the following advice about concert improvisation:

First you create an atmosphere...then you introduce a theme. This is followed by a massive crescendo, reaching a climax in a large, dissonant chord on full

⁶⁵ As quoted in Nigel Simeone: *Cher Maître Tournemire – Charles Tournemire's Correspondence with Felix Aprahamian and his Visit to London in 1936* (Bangor: University of Wales, 2003), 49

⁶⁶ Henri Bregson (1859–1941): French philosopher, influential in the first half of the twentieth century.

⁶⁷ Thomson (1995), 136

⁶⁸ Michael Murray: *Marcel Dupré, The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 38

⁶⁹ Frazier (2007), 25–6 and from Duruflé, (1980); it must be noted that this refers to music for the 'Low Mass', a service not regarded as ideal by the *motu proprio* of 1903

organ, followed by a long silence, followed by a second dissonant chord (to frighten the audience!). Then one concludes quietly on the *voix celeste*.⁷⁰

This idea is provided in more florid language in Ann Labounsky's book on Langlais:

You must make a large crescendo, and the audience is very much with you – and the audience can no longer breathe. Then play two chords with the full organ. And then the audience feels as if they were dead. And they ask themselves what is going to happen next. What happens then is a moment of silence. And then you play again the two chords – which are terribly dissonant; and then again – a minute of silence. And finally, open the heavens to your audience with a *voix celeste* and a *bourdon* 8. Don't forget that your audience has earned the heaven you have saved for them. You must play quietly in the beginning and at the end...this crescendo is for the middle of the improvisation.⁷¹

The importance of musical and mystical expression in Tournemire's organ works was identified by others, including Béranger Miramon Fitz-James, who described him as an 'Impressionist Christian'.⁷² Indeed, within *L'orgue mystique*, the presence of this impressionism is evident, as he often attempts to create atmosphere before the delivery of the chant.

He rarely finished his postludes on full organ and Duruflé provides a tale to illustrate this:

Many organists must know the following anecdote: Tournemire, one Sunday, terminated his postlude very quietly on a swell *bourdon*. One of his guests, trying to be helpful, discreetly whispered in his ear, '*Maitre*, it is the *sortie*.' The *Maitre* suddenly glanced at him and calmly replied, 'Well, my good fellow, *sortez*'⁷³

6.7: *L'orgue mystique* (1927–1932) – an overview

In 1921, Joseph Bonnet presented Tournemire with the fifteen volumes of *L'Année liturgique*, a vast commentary on the liturgy for the Sundays and feasts of the Church year written by Dom Guéranger of Solesmes. In the years just before this Bonnet himself had been a Benedictine oblate in Solesmes and had been a student of the writings of Guéranger.⁷⁴ Bonnet's motive for this gift seems to have been a desire to stimulate the composition of chant-based music suitable for the liturgy to assist those unable to

⁷⁰ Frazier (2002), 9

⁷¹ Labounsky (2000), 68

⁷² Frazier (2002), 9

⁷³ Duruflé (1980), 54

⁷⁴ Labounsky (2000), 132

improvise. The result of this was originally called *L'orgue glorieux* and later became *L'orgue mystique*.⁷⁵

L'orgue mystique stands as the largest plainchant-based composition in the repertoire. Consisting of fifty-one suites, the work lasts for fifteen hours and its source is the appropriate plainchant both in pure and paraphrased form.⁷⁶

As stated in the preface:

Plainsong which is truly at inexhaustible source of mysterious and splendid lines, plainsong, triumph of modal art, is freely paraphrased for each piece.⁷⁷

The fifty-one offices are grouped into three larger cycles: 'The Cycle of Christmas' (1–11), 'The Cycle of Easter' (12–25) and 'The Cycle of Pentecost' (26–51). This reflected the layout of the liturgical year, while omitting those seasons, such as lent and advent, when the organ was to remain silent. Each of the offices consists of five movements: four for use within the liturgy (prelude on the introit, offertory, elevation, and communion) and one more expansive piece which serves as a postlude. As with Gregorian chant itself where the meaning of a text determines the musical expression, so also in Tournemire's music the particular movement seeks to illuminate the textual ideas. Indeed when the composer himself performed any of these movements in recital, he reproduced the text of the corresponding chant in the concert programme in order to assist the audience in understanding the commentary provided by the movement.⁷⁸ With the exception of the postludes, the movements of each office are quite restrained and serve as background music to enhance the spiritual experience, not to impinge upon it.

There was a widespread belief outside of France that the movements of a given *L'orgue mystique* suite were meant to be played during the Low Mass, commenting on the prayers spoken silently by the priest; however, it was for the High Mass that Tournemire intended these pieces, in which context they

⁷⁵ Robert Sutherland Lord: 'Liturgy and Gregorian Chant in *L'orgue mystique* of Charles Tournemire', *OY*, xv, (12/1984), 62–97

⁷⁶ Kaye (2001), xxv, 656; Thomson (1999), n.p.

⁷⁷ Sisson (1984), 46

⁷⁸ An example of this was to be seen in Tournemire's only English recital in St Alban's, Holburn in 1936. The text of the Alleluia verse on which the 'Alleluia' movement of Cycle 33 is founded was reproduced in the programme. Simeone (2003), 59

would complement the sung propers.⁷⁹ The placement of the specific movements within this context is also worth exploring. The High Mass traditionally began with the singing of the *Asperges me* chant. Following this, there was a space in which the celebrant vested before proceeding to the altar for the singing of the introit. It was during this space that the prelude of the appropriate office occurred, allowing the chant itself to grow out of the organ music, which set the scene for the singing. The elevation movement occurred after the elevation of the chalice, filling in a short period of silence. The communion preceded the singing of the communion chant and the offertory movement occurred after the choir had sung.⁸⁰

Tournemire combines both restraint and imagination in his use of plainchant themes in *L'orgue mystique*. In some instances he utilises the entire chant, in others he picks a number of key phrases and freely paraphrases the chant, gaining inspiration from the text and using it to shape a musical commentary. He drew from two volumes of chant: the *Liber Antiphonalis*, from which he took material for the third and final movements, and the *Liber Usualis* where he sourced the introits, offertories and communions for the relevant offices.⁸¹

A necessary first step in this study involves an examination of the chants which Tournemire uses for the various movements of each office. In general movements I (prelude on the introit), II (offertory) and IV (communion) are quite self-explanatory, employing the relevant chant. It is also noteworthy that in the original plan, Tournemire intended using the gradual chant as the source for the offertory movement saving the offertory itself for use in the elevation movement.⁸² As the offertory tended to be a more elaborate liturgical event, movement II is (in general) the longest of the four short movements. In movement III (for the elevation), the source tends to be an antiphon from the office of the day, however occasionally Tournemire uses other sources: Office no.26 (Trinity Sunday) employs the alleluia *Benedictus est* from the mass of the feast, Office no.2 (Feast of the Immaculate

⁷⁹ Lord (1984), 61

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 61–62

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 65, *passim*

⁸² *Ibid*

Conception) uses a portion of the gradual *Benedicta es tu*, and Office nos 4, 21 & 23 each utilise a short responsory. In each case, the chant is quite short and Tournemire is able to use almost all of it within these brief movements.

The expansive final movements, however, provide even more variety in their use of themes. The suites for Sundays employ one or more of the antiphons from the office of the day or the alleluia from the mass; for example the postlude from Office no.24 (Sunday after Ascension) is founded upon the alleluia *Regnavit Dominus*, while for feast days Tournemire uses a hymn or sequence, as in the Triptyque of Office no.26 (Trinity Sunday) which is based upon the hymn *Jam sol recedit igneus*, sung at second vespers on the Feast of the Holy Trinity. The final movements may draw together fragments of some or all of the chants utilised in a given office as well as having one or more primary melodic sources. The main chant theme used for the 'Paraphrase-Carillon' of Office no.35 (Feast of the Assumption) is the solemn antiphon *Salve Regina*, while *Ave Maris Stella* (the hymn for the feast) is also quoted quite extensively. In drawing chants from the Divine Office as well as the mass for any given Sunday or feast-day Tournemire manages to turn the movements of *L'orgue mystique* into not only musical 'space-fillers' but into a broader commentary on the themes for the day.

The entire *L'orgue mystique* employs over three hundred different chants, but unity is achieved through the recurrence of a number of these. One example of this is the hymn, *Ave Maris Stella*, which is present in the final movements of each of the three big Marian feasts: the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. This is due, quite obviously to the relevance of this hymn (and its text) to all three feasts. However, there are two other less obvious recurring chants. The *Venite exultemus* Easter chant is used not only in the Easter Office (no.17), but also in the suites for Pentecost (no.25), Epiphany I (no.8), Sacred Heart (no.28) and Assumption (no.35). An even more dramatic example is that of the antiphon *Ego dormivi*, which appears in no less than eleven suites including

Christmas (no.3), Easter (no.17), Epiphany (no.7) and Holy Saturday (no.16).⁸³

Regardless of the material used, the music draws its inspiration from the text, as well as from the chant itself. How this is done varies from movement to movement and indeed from movement type to movement type. There are a number of general practices which are characteristic of Tournemire's paraphrasing techniques such as the conversion of repeated notes into long notes and the omission of repeated notes or groups of notes which may not make a big contribution to the overall line.⁸⁴ While the changing of individual notes in a melody tends to be accompanied by an intact statement of the melody in its true form elsewhere, these alterations may have resulted from misreading the chant.⁸⁵ (This seems unlikely to this author, who believes that this paraphrasing is much more considered.) Despite the broad range of chants used and movements written, there is a sense of coherence particularly within the various movement types. The more noteworthy aspect of the work as a whole is the exhaustive use of the chants. Tournemire does not confine himself to the melodies and texts from the mass, which would be easily identifiable as the chants themselves would also be presented. Instead he draws from the Divine Office to create a more subtle sense of the themes of the day, to make *L'orgue mystique* a truly religious and spiritual experience.

6.8: *L'orgue mystique*: selected features of chant in an improvisatory style

The scale of *L'orgue mystique* is so immense as to make a detailed examination of all of its 250+ movements beyond the scope of this study. This section takes a sample of suites from the work and by examining them according to the movements, aims to cast some light on the processes used by the composer.

⁸³ *Ibid*, catalogues these chants quite extensively, 67–97

⁸⁴ Weidner (1984), 17, *passim*

⁸⁵ Lord (1984), 75

I Prélude sur l'introit

The prelude movements in general, provide fine examples of a rather explicit presentation of the chant, as the sung introit was to grow out of the prelude not unlike the style of a German chorale prelude. The textures of these movements are quite sparse and secondary materials tend to be drawn from the actual chant. A representative example of this is the prelude of Office no.26 (Trinity Sunday). Here the chant is represented almost literally, but interspersed with a three-note chordal figure and accompanied by a constant pedal note. Example 6.1a illustrates the second and third phrases of the chant, while Example 6.1b shows how Tournemire presents them.

Ex. 6.1a: Introit: *Benedicta sit*, second and third phrases



san-cta Tri- ni- tas, at- que indi- vi- sa U- ni- tas.

Ex. 6.1b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, I, bar 4, hands only

environ ♩=88 *senza rigore*



The alteration of the chant is kept to a minimum, as is the amount of extra material introduced throughout the movement

The prelude from Office no.24 (Sunday after the Ascension) is also a representative example of the form. Here only a selection of the introit *Exaudi Domine, vocem meam* (Hear Lord, my voice) is used, namely of the first sentence and of the final alleluias. While the right hand is made up exclusively of the chant in a pure form, the left hand plays a countermelody

Ex. 6.3b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.35, I, bars 1–5

♩=56 **senza rigore**

Boite ouverte Boite fermée

Boite mi-ouverte

The reason for this slightly different approach is undoubtedly the text of the chant which inspires the movement:

*Gaudeamus omnes in Domino,
diem festum celebrantes
sub honore Mariae Virginis:
de cuius Assumptione
gaudent angeli,
et collaudant Filium Dei.*

Rejoice all in the Lord,
and celebrate this day
in honour of the Virgin Mary:
at whose assumption
angels rejoice,
praising the Son of God.

This is a much more jubilant text than either *Exaudi Domine vocem meum* (Hear Lord my voice) or *Benedicta sit sancta Trinitas* (Blessed are you Holy Trinity). The former of these invokes hope, while the latter is prayerful yet mysterious, reflecting the Trinity as one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith.

II Offertory

The offertory movements tend to be much more subtle in their use of the chant. Firstly, they are considerably longer than the preludes, elevations or communions and they also tend to be multi-sectional, with the material presented in blocks. The reason for this is that the offertory as a liturgical

event would be quite lengthy during the high mass, incorporating a procession and incensation. One must remember that Tournemire was working from years of experience as a liturgical improviser. He was more than aware of the length required for each organ commentary.

An example of a more expansive offertory movement is to be found in Office no.35 (Feast of the Assumption) where the chant is presented as a solo melody in three instalments. These are interspersed with densely textured interludes, which evoke the impression of the assumption and the angelic forces involved. In each case, this gradually dies away, leaving just the people on earth singing the chant (*Assumpta est Maria*, Mary has ascended) as a solo melody (Example 6.4).

Ex. 6.4: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.35, II, bars 19–23, second chant entry

The image displays a musical score for Example 6.4. The top section consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The grand staff contains long, sustained chords and melodic lines, while the bass staff features a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. The bottom section shows a solo melody in a single treble staff. It begins with the instruction 'Ad libitum' and features a series of eighth-note runs. The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes, a section marked 'rall.' (rallentando), and another triplet of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

In Office no.26 (Trinity Sunday), there is more development of the actual chant melody. Only one section of chant is quoted literally (Example 6.5).

Ex. 6.5a: Offertory: *Benedictus sit Deus*, opening phrase

III.

B Ene- di- ctus sit * De- us Pa- ter,

Ex. 6.5b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, II, bars 7–8

This is interspersed initially with material derived from the chant, which utilises fragments of the Gregorian melody within a much thicker texture (Example 6.6).

Ex. 6.6: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, II, bars 1–7

$\text{♩} = 80$ *senza rigore*

cre - scen -

poco rit. a Tempo

do

X

3

Following the one intact statement, Tournemire continues to develop fragments of chant in the same fashion as the opening (which is illustrated in Example 6b).

The two final sections of the movement quote the last phrase of chant using two accompaniments of different styles. The tempo also slows and this, along with the textural change reflects the words of the chant phrase: 'according to his mercy'. Example 6.7a quotes this chant, while Examples 6.7b and 6.7c illustrate the two ways in which Tournemire presents it.

Ex. 6.7a: Offertory: *Benedictus sit Deus*, final phrase

mi- se- ri- cordi- am su- am.

Ex. 6.7b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, II, bars 20–23

Ex. 6.7c: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, II, bars 28–32

Più lento

poco a poco crescendo

III Elevation

The Elevation of the Host during the service provides the place for the shortest movement of each office. This movement serves to add to the prayerful atmosphere created by the elevation and the use of chant reflects this.

In France, since the Council of Trent, there was a tradition of playing softly during the elevation. In 1894, the Congregation for Sacred Rites forbade singing at this point; however, no mention was made of organ playing. This was largely at the discretion of the priest in question. Thus the tradition which

is present in the classical French organ mass remains as an important part of Tournemire's cycles. For some it is the pivotal point in the Eucharist.⁸⁶

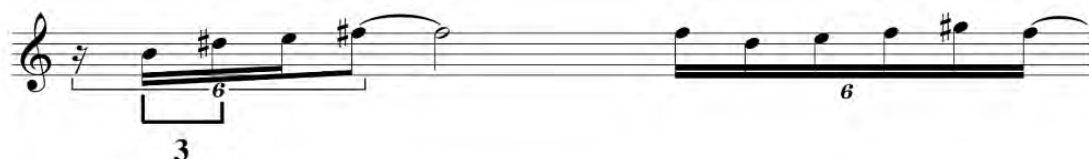
A representative example of this movement type is to be found in Office no.35 (Feast of the Assumption). The source chant is the antiphon *Assumpta est Maria*, which is the first antiphon at second vespers on the feast. The chant is heavily paraphrased, the beauty of the assumption being represented by the florid decoration of the source melody. In fact the chant is only recognisable by a few key intervals, for example the initial major third (Example 6.8).

Ex. 6.8a: Antiphon: *Assumpta est Maria*, opening phrase

I. 

A Ssumpta est Ma-ri- a in cæ- lum : *

Ex. 6.8b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.35, III, bar 2, top line



It is however, more the essence of the Gregorian melody which is ever present. The chant paraphrase is accompanied by two other elements: the pedal plays a constant one-bar phrase in parallel fifths at 8' pitch (manual III coupled to pedal), while the left hand plays a one bar ostinato figure (Example 6.9).

Ex. 6.9: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.35, III, bars 1–2.

⁸⁶ Smith (1999), 528

$\text{♩} = 38$ senza rigore

There is a slight possibility that the recurring left-hand figure is drawn from the chant *Beatam me dicent*, the secret for the feast. Its opening phrase resembles the contour of Tournemire's short figure though this is compromised by the opening interval of a fourth (a third in the chant) (Example 6.10).

Ex. 6.10a: Communion: *Beatam me dicent*, opening phrase

VI.

B E- a- tam me di- cent *

Ex. 6.10b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.35, III, bar 1, left hand ostinato.

The chant itself weaves around these accompanying elements.

Tournemire succeeds in painting a vivid picture in this movement, a picture which draws from the text of the chant.

*Assumpta est Maria in caelum:
Gaudent Angeli,
laudantes benedicunt Dominum.*

Mary has ascended into Heaven:
Angels rejoice,
and sing blessings to the Lord.


It could be considered that the florid chant paraphrase as representing Mary's ascent into the heavens, while the left-hand figure represents the angels singing her praises. This strengthens the idea that the left-hand figure is drawn from the second chant: the angels are singing: 'all generations will call me blessed', a line from the *magnificat* (Example 6.11).

Ex. 6.11: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.35, III, bars 8–11


The musical score for Example 6.11 consists of two systems. The first system contains three staves. The top two staves are a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The top staff has a melodic line with sixteenth-note runs, marked with a '6' (sixteenth notes) and a '5' (fifteenth notes). The middle staff has a lower line with chords and sixteenth-note patterns, marked with a '5' and a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The bottom staff is a single bass staff with chords. The second system contains a grand staff with a long, sustained chord in the bass clef and a treble clef staff with a long, sustained chord. The dynamic is marked 'pp' (pianissimo). A 'rall.' (rallentando) marking is present in the first system.

The elevation movement of Office no.24 (Sunday after the Ascension) provides another good example of this type of movement. In it, Tournemire takes the *magnificat* antiphon, *Haec locutus sum vobis*, and treats it contrapuntally, with the entire chant being presented spread across the various voices. Example 12 illustrates this.


Example 6.12a: *Haec locutus sum vobis*

VIII. 

HÆC lo-cutus sum vobis, * ut cum vene-rit ho-ra



e-orum, remi-niscami-ni qui-a ego dixit vobis



Alle-lu-ia. E u o u a e.

Example 6.12b: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.24, III, complete



$\text{♩} = 48$ senza rigore

P

Q

3 7 7 3 3

3 3

rall.

IV – Communion

The communion movements of *L'orgue mystique* resemble in many ways the offertory movements. The source chants are as expected, and as well as presenting these melodies, Tournemire also creates new material drawing on distinctive elements of the chant. The movement from office no.26 (Trinity Sunday) provides a fine example of the form. The chant is presented in full (though rhythmically altered) in the pedal at 8' pitch. This is accompanied by chords and figures which bring to mind birdsong (Example 6.13).

Example 6.13: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, IV, bars 24–28

The musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The time signature is 3/8. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#). The top two staves feature a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs. The bottom two staves feature a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets in the bass line. The score is divided into four measures, with bar lines clearly marked.

An examination of the text may assist in interpreting the musical elements.

*Benedicimus Deum caeli,
et coram omnibus viventibus
confitebimur ei:
quia fecit nobiscum
misericordiam suam*

Let us bless the Lord of Heaven,
and utter his praises before
all who live:
for he has dealt with us
according to his mercy.

It must be remembered that Tournemire, like Messiaen, had a great belief in nature as the face of God. The opening of the movement, however, involves the presentation of material derived from the chant. The opening four bars are drawn from the initial notes on the word *Deum* (Lord), as illustrated in Example 6.14.

these vary from the generic 'Postlude' to more defining names such as *Paraphrase-Carillon* (no.35), *Alleluia* (no.29, no.33), *Triptyque* (no.26) and *Choral* (no.38). The majority of these *pièces terminales* are based on more than one chant and some utilise three or four related chants. It is noteworthy that Tournemire was not inclined to use the term *sortie* to describe these movements. He did not see them as music to accompany a noisy exit, but rather as a summation of the important liturgical themes of the day, to allow a final period of reflection before departure. In this way these pieces are still a part of the liturgy.

***Triptyque* (Office no.26)**

The final movement of the Office for the Feast of the Holy Trinity serves as a representative example of Tournemire's handling of larger structures. The primary chants are the hymn, *Jam sol recedit igneus* and the antiphon, *Benedicta sit creatrix*. The opening of the movement takes the form of a toccata with the hymn tune presented as *cantus firmus* alternately in the left-hand and pedals (Example 16).

Ex. 6.16: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique*, no.26, V, bars 1–5

The musical score for Example 6.16 is presented in two systems, each with three staves: right hand (treble clef), left hand (treble clef), and pedals (bass clef). The time signature is 4/4. The first system begins with a sixteenth-note figure in the right hand, marked with a forte fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic. The left hand and pedals play a simple cantus firmus consisting of a sequence of quarter notes. The second system continues the toccata with similar sixteenth-note figures in the right hand and pedals, while the left hand continues the cantus firmus. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

The inspiration for this intensity is undoubtedly the hymn text:

*Jam sol recedit igneus:
Tu lux perennis Unitas,
Nostris, beata Trinitas,
Infunde amorem cordibus.*

Now the fiery sun recedes:
You are the everlasting light and unity,
Holy Trinity,
pour love into our hearts.

*Te mane laudum carmine,
Te deprecamus vespere:
Digneris ut te supplices
Laudemus inter caelites.*

In a morning song of praise,
and in the evening we entreat you:
enable us as supplicants
to praise you with those in heaven.

*Patri simulque Filio,
Tibique Sancte Spiritus,
Sicut fuit, sit jugiter
Saeclum per omne Gloria.
Amen.*

To the Father with the Son,
And to you Holy Spirit,
As it was let there always be
constant glory to you forever.
Amen.

The opening verse is quite evident in the toccata style of this opening. The almost metrical nature of the hymn assists in its placement within a time signature.

The introduction of the second chant prompts a change in the mood as the movement gradually winds down from this point on, with the registration lessening in volume and power. This is undoubtedly due to the more prayerful nature of the antiphon, which is a short ode to the Holy Trinity. The strictly metrical nature of the toccata yields to rhythmic freedom. The direction *ad libitum*, so common in *L'orgue mystique*, occurs with frequency, as the unaccompanied chant appears episodically (Example 6.17).

Ex. 6.17: Tournemire: *L'orgue mystique* , no.26, V, Bars 59–60

ad libitum

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line starting with a half note, followed by a series of eighth notes, all under a slur. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef and contain whole rests. The time signature is 2/4, shown at the beginning and end of each staff.

The registration continues to soften as the sense of meditation increases. We see Tournemire's trademark usage of stops such as *cor de nuit*, *flûte douce* and *gambe* and *celeste* combined. The tempo slows as the movement moves to reflective conclusion. This soft conclusion to a postlude could be considered by many to be quite unusual, however his student Langlais referred to the master's preference for 'a quiet rapturous conclusion' to the service where appropriate.⁸⁷

6.9: Summary: chant, liturgy and improvisation

It can be seen that despite the broad range of chants used and movements written, there is a sense of coherence particularly within the various movement types. The more noteworthy aspect of the work as a whole is the exhaustive use of the chants. Tournemire does not confine himself to the melodies and texts from the mass of the day. These melodies would be easily recognised as the chants would be present in the service. Instead he draws from the Divine Office to create a more subtle sense of the themes of the day, to make *L'orgue mystique* a truly religious and spiritual experience.

The language ranges from the simplicity of the fifteenth century (in terms of the organ) right up to polytonality – and sometimes anticipates the very modern 'marriage' of sonorities.⁸⁸

It is interesting perhaps to compare the language of *L'orgue mystique* (1927–1932), with that of the *Cinq improvisations* (1931–1932) as transcribed by Duruflé. These pieces, although contemporaneous, have a number of fundamental differences in their harmonic language. Both have the mark of Tournemire; however in the improvisations the influence of Franck-style chromaticism prevails more than in *L'orgue mystique*, where the language is more modal in orientation. This demonstrates the impact of Franck as a teacher of improvisation and that his style prevailed in Tournemire's improvised music, even as his composed style became more individual. It is also interesting to note that it is in the final movements that the chromatic

⁸⁷ Frazier (2002), 9

⁸⁸ Simeone (2003) from a letter to Felix Aprahamian (12/12/1933)

language is more prevalent, as Tournemire was more inclined to revert to his teacher's style when handling a larger structure

Another aspect that requires a little exploration is Tournemire's own view of the work. Much is made by commentators of the piece being an idealistic project, one which Tournemire felt driven to complete in order to enhance liturgy.⁸⁹ However, there is a certain amount of error in the notion that Tournemire did not seek fame as a composer or player, but intended only to write for the glorification of Catholicism. His correspondence with Felix Aprahamian in the 1930s contradicts this. Firstly, he seemed keen to further his career through the recital and BBC broadcast being arranged by Aprahamian and secondly, he argued strenuously for a higher fee than that being offered for these engagements. An English publisher for some of his pieces also concerned him and the inclusion of parts of *L'orgue mystique* in his programmes adds substance to the theory that while the project began as an idealistic one, it did have a more mundane purpose. *L'orgue mystique* is music which fits in the French liturgy quite well and its dependence on the colour and style of the French organ would make it less effective in England. It would not make the same impact on the services and would be only usable in recitals. Although his visits to Tournemire's side in Sainte-Clotilde in 1919 and 1920 preceded the composition of *L'orgue mystique*, Duruflé noted that the master never played repertoire during a service, preferring to improvise on the chants.

The proposal by Bonnet which led to *L'orgue mystique* stemmed from a belief that there were many organists of insufficient skill to successfully improvise on the Gregorian themes.⁹⁰ In France up until the 1930s, and much later, tuition in improvisation was a sizable part of any organist's formation. Franck, Guilmant, Dupré and to a lesser extent Widor and Gigout all taught improvisation at the conservatoire and an ability to improvise was hugely important if one was to gain success in the conservatoire examinations. Therefore, it would not be unfair to suggest that an organist incapable of

⁸⁹ Thomson (1999), n.p.

⁹⁰ Lord (1984), 64, *passim*

improvisation on any level was not a very good organist. On glancing at any office of *L'orgue mystique* this becomes significant. Much of this music is quite technically and interpretatively challenging, often spread over four or more staves. An organist of inferior ability would surely be incapable of playing these pieces and at the very least would be unable to competently learn the whole fifteen hours of music. It would be safe to say, therefore, that *L'orgue mystique* better serves the amateur or semi-skilled organist as a study, a work to examine in order to learn how best to develop their own improvisations. It is more feasible to suggest that the organist use the work to see how a skilled improviser would best use the Gregorian themes. The offices of *L'orgue mystique* were, according to Daniel-Lesur a means of instructing the public in the chants.⁹¹

Archibold Farmer's review of Tournemire's London performance of 1936 states:

The weakness of the Tournemire pieces, it seems to me, is their alikeness. It is true that examination reveals the consistent use of a theme; but the themes themselves are alike, having first been flattened out to the same degree of timelessness...to me his pieces are indistinguishable from one another, and they might be taken as expressing almost anything equally as well as their accredited programme.⁹²

He also comments on 'how easy they are to write', a criticism often levelled at the movements of *L'orgue mystique*. These comments by an Englishman on what is essentially French Catholic music might be viewed as those of a person not immersed in the colours and traditions of the French school. Yet, there is validity to these statements which must be considered. It would not be unfair to say that there are similarities between some of the pieces in the work. There are a number of ways to account for this. Firstly, there is Tournemire's fondness for certain registrational patterns. These recurring stop combinations evoke a certain sound world which can serve to make

⁹¹ Labounsky (2000), 132; She relates that Daniel-Lesur told her this personally on 11 June 1994.

⁹² Taken from Archibold Farmer's review in the April 1936 issue of *MT* and reproduced in Simeone (2003), 53

It is also worth noting that Farmer dismissed Messiaen as wholeheartedly in the occasion of his visit to St Alban's in 1938. Christopher Dingle: *The Life of Messiaen* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 58

some movements sound very similar. The overwhelming reason, however, for this sense of sameness between movements of the work is actually alluded to by Farmer in the above quote. It concerns the themes themselves. By their nature, Gregorian themes are quite alike, to a certain extent. Within the system of modes, there exist patterns and formulae which recur in many chants of the same mode. This, of course, is due to the oral nature of chant history, recurring patterns served to aid rapid learning. For some commentators such as Farmer, the fact that many of the movements are similar is a weakness of *L'orgue mystique*, however the argument could be made that it is in fact a strength that Tournemire achieves consistency across a large work. There are a number of forms which he uses frequently and which aid in the creation of an overall coherent cycle.

Notwithstanding all of these points, the compositional work that is *L'orgue mystique* has a huge significance liturgically and as recital music. The language and sentiments of Tournemire's music represent an important link between French romanticism and later generations

Despite his relative obscurity, the music of Tournemire is an important part of the organ repertoire and his exhaustive use of Gregorian themes in a work aimed at enhancing the organ in the liturgy must stand as one of the great projects in the history of the Catholic church organ. *L'orgue mystique* attempts to create a collection of fitting pieces for the liturgy, drawing on the ancient Gregorian repertoire, the Catholic melody. It is a piece born of the beliefs of its composer and, as the name suggests, it endeavours to touch the spirit. Its place in the canon is increasingly acknowledged as parts of it appear more frequently in recital programmes. As Tournemire's large oeuvre of unknown music is gaining increasing exposure, it is interesting to reflect on his lack of relative success beyond the confines of Sainte-Clotilde. Unlike Langlais, who had a profile as a prolific and frequently-performed composer for many media, Tournemire's orchestral and choral music is relatively unknown and seldom performed. His sixth symphony, a work on a large

scale,⁹³ the splendour of which is matched by the weight of philosophy under which it labours, was first performed in 1995, probably due to its size. There would not necessarily have been an objection to performance of such large-scale works. Fauquet sums up why a lot of his music lay in obscurity for so long:

...the fiercely independent attitude he adopted in pursuit of his artistic and spiritual ideal led him to avoid the influential musical circles where his last major symphonic and choral works could have been heard.⁹⁴

Throughout the early twentieth century, there was a constant battle to improve the standard of sacred music in French churches. The 1903 *motu proprio*, encouraged the return of restored Solesmes plainchant, regarded as overly austere by the congregations. Exacerbating this were the increasing divisions between church and state, and the refusal by such eminent figures as Widor to endorse the work of Solesmes in the early years.⁹⁵ The efforts of Maurice Emmanuel at Sainte-Clotilde had made the use of chant and chant-based improvisation easier for Tournemire and his stature and his reputation as an improviser is sure to have granted him some levity. Pre-composed music was still preferred by many organists, whether through lack of ability, or through a desire to perform, in the services, what amounted to a sacred concert independent of the sacred rites occurring. Saint-Saëns, writing in 1916, lamented this fact: 'only improvisation can follow the service perfectly, the pieces written for this purpose being almost always too short or too slow'.⁹⁶ With the movements of *L'orgue mystique*, Tournemire attempted to provide a middle ground between unsuitable pre-composed music (Saint-Saëns refers to Bach fugues or toccatas) and actual improvisation. The work is an attempt to express his own liturgical belief, that organ music for services should be inspired by the presence of God in the liturgy and as such form is less important to him than the expressive flow of the music.⁹⁷ Duruflé commented

⁹³Symphony No.6 is scored for two flutes, three piccolos, three oboes, cor anglais, five clarinets, three bassoons, double bassoon, six horns, seven trumpets, four trombones, bass tuba, double-bass tuba, timpani, percussion, glockenspiel, celeste, bells, four harps, strings, organ, tenor solo and six-part choir.

⁹⁴ Sisson (1984), 5 and taken from Joël-Marie Fauquet: *Catalogue de l'Oeuvre de Charles Tournemire* (Geneva; Editions Minkoff 1979), 8

⁹⁵ Frazier (2007), 152

⁹⁶ Camille Saint-Saëns: 'Music in the Church', *MQ*, ii/1 (1/1916), 1-8

⁹⁷ Frazier (2002), 9

that there was a significant difference between Tournemire's improvisations and the movements of *L'orgue mystique*. According to him, Tournemire's improvisations had a sense of freedom and spontaneity missing in his composed works. He said that *L'orgue mystique* 'smacks of labor (*sic*)...One senses the work at the desk'.⁹⁸ This of course matches the assertion that for Tournemire the liturgy and chants should inspire the organ music. While the Sainte-Clotilde tradition is founded on spontaneity and religious belief, *L'orgue mystique* has been criticised as intellectual music, bereft of the spontaneity which was such a hallmark of Tournemire the improviser.⁹⁹

Vierne also improvised in the style of his written compositions. Tournemire was very different in this respect. His written compositions were very different from his improvisations. I am not saying I do not like *L'orgue mystique*, but there was spontaneity, an impulse in his improvisations, that is not found in *L'orgue mystique*. *L'orgue mystique* is music that gives the impression of being worked out at the desk,¹⁰⁰

6.10: Jean Langlais

Whilst the three musicians associated with the Sainte-Clotilde tradition shared a common philosophy on the role of a church organist, each came from a very different geographical area: Franck from Liège in Belgium, Tournemire from Bordeaux in the South West, Jean Langlais from Brittany. Born in La Fontenelle on 15 February 1907, he was blind by the age of two for reasons that have never been firmly established.¹⁰¹ As with many of his colleague organists, he was brought up in the faith that was to remain with him throughout his life. He entered the *Institut national des jeunes aveugles* by scholarship in 1917, by which time it had grown into a school of over 230 students.¹⁰² He studied piano with Maurice Blazy¹⁰³ and organ with André Marchal as well as *sofège*, harmony and violin.¹⁰⁴ Just as Duruflé's exposure to chant came from his spell in the choir school, it was in the institute chapel that Langlais received his major exposure to the Gregorian repertoire. The

⁹⁸ As quoted in Frazier (2007), 26

⁹⁹ Lord (1982), 39

¹⁰⁰ George Baker: 'An Interview with Maurice Duruflé', AO, xiv/11 (11/1980), 58

¹⁰¹ He was told that he could see for the early years of his life and he had a vague memory of seeing some flowers. It seems most likely that glaucoma was the cause of his blindness. Labounsky (2000), 20–23

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 31–33

¹⁰³ Maurice Blazy (1873–1933), blind pianist

¹⁰⁴ Labounsky (2000), 37, *passim*

student population sang the propers for high mass on Sundays and psalms for vespers and occasional compline.¹⁰⁵ He entered the organ class of Marcel Dupré as an auditor in 1927, a class which included Messiaen and Gaston Litaize, his friend and sometime rival from the institute. He was devoted to Dupré during his period at the conservatoire and despite a first prize in 1930 he continued to study with him on a private basis until 1933.¹⁰⁶ While, he undoubtedly learned a great deal from both Marchal and Dupré, the beginning of his association with Tournemire is as significant as Tournemire's with Franck. As noted earlier in the chapter, Tournemire was not a particularly willing private teacher, and the wealth gained from his first marriage allowed him the luxury of giving unpaid lessons, but only to those who interested him and would share his vision. On 11 May 1930, he wrote to Langlais offering to teach him, and lessons began in repertoire and in improvisation.¹⁰⁷ As we have seen, Tournemire and Dupré had very different approaches to improvisation and Langlais received the best of both sides. In 1930, after the death of Adolphe Marty¹⁰⁸, he became untenured organ teacher at the *Institut* and was tenured in 1939.¹⁰⁹ In 1931, he married his first wife Jeannette, and he held subsequent organ posts in Notre-Dame-de-la-Croix (1931) and Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge. From 1935 until Tournemire's death in 1939, he occasionally deputised for his teacher at Sainte-Clotilde, also being one of the organists who played in the *L'orgue mystique* concert of 1932 mentioned above.¹¹⁰ He auditioned to study composition with Dukas, who offered only to teach him orchestration and Dukas's aversion to the use of forms mastered by composers of the past was instilled in him as it was in Maurice Duruflé.¹¹¹

In 1939, when Tournemire died, Langlais was passed over for the position of organist at Sainte-Clotilde in somewhat controversial circumstances that will

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 46

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 52–62 *passim*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 62

¹⁰⁸ Adolphe Marty (1865–1942) was an organ teacher and choirmaster at the Institute. Labounsky states that it was Marty's death in 1930 that caused the succession, but all other sources say he lived until 1942.

¹⁰⁹ He also took Marty's job as a choir master with a choir of fifty-nine singing a broad range of music including chant. Labounsky (2000), 63–64

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 71–80

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 95

be explored later; however on the sixth anniversary of Tournemire's death, 4 November 1945, he took up the post of *titulaire* in succession to Joseph Ermend-Bonnal (1880–1944).¹¹² Like many of his forbears and contemporaries, Langlais's reputation spread far beyond the France and Europe and on 1952, he embarked an American tour, the first of eight two-month sojourns to the US and Canada.¹¹³ In 1961, he was appointed to the staff of the Schola Cantorum, causing a rapid expansion in student numbers.¹¹⁴ Like Tournemire and Franck, he became known for his teaching of improvisation, especially around chant and a continuation of the Gregorian paraphrase as espoused by his teacher. He allowed students to develop their own style.¹¹⁵

As Tournemire was a figure grappling with the world of church and organ music in the years after the *motu proprio* of 1903, so it was Langlais (and also Duruflé and others) who had to come to terms with the changes implemented by Second Vatican Council, which impacted heavily on the church in the 1960s. While upholding the traditional chant and polyphony as treasured parts of the tradition of the church, it stated that the faithful should be led to that 'full conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations'. Article 30 stated: 'To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of the acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes'.¹¹⁶ Despite his bitter opposition to the findings of the council, he did, unlike Messiaen and Duruflé, provide a large body of congregational music to fit the new guidelines.¹¹⁷ In 1968, he retired from the institute and in 1976 he resigned from the Schola Cantorum in a protest over pay.¹¹⁸ He suffered a heart attack in 1973, a stroke in 1980 and he died in 1992.

6.11: Langlais: character, influences and inspiration

¹¹² *Ibid*, 108–119

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 149, *passim*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 185

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, talks at length about this, 186–7

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 219

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 232, *passim*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 270 and 292

Central to a discussion on 'the Sainte-Clotilde tradition' is an exploration of the characters of the individuals involved in order to establish the philosophy underpinning this tradition.

Very early on in her monograph of Jean Langlais, Ann Labounsky makes a simple statement about her former teacher (and indeed suitor). She states that he was a complex man, but denied it.¹¹⁹ We can draw conclusions on the character of Langlais from his relationships with family, other composers, his religion, women and indeed himself, in order to get a clearer vision of him as a composer.

A good starting point in this exploration would be his relationship with his family and indeed his general personal relationships. Married from 1931, he is reputed to have engaged in frequent extra martial affairs (apparently with the knowledge of Jeannette) and justified this by a belief that he needed women to 'prime his compositional creativity'.¹²⁰ As a self-centred artist, he was happiest as the centre of attention and naively believed that women were immediately drawn to him despite his small stature and disability. Numerous younger women were the objects of his desire to varying degrees of success (including his second wife), however these and many other stories are recounted at length in Ann Labounsky's book and have only a fleeting relevance to this discussion.¹²¹ One can get a general sense of the disconnect that he had from reality through his belief that he had the power as a healer and that his abilities in the area of ESP made him a deity-like figure.¹²² It was this that made him special as a composer and made him irresistible to the many young women who he needed for inspiration. It is unclear if there are any other composers mentioned over the course of this study who harboured such illusions of grandeur. Many indeed were in possession of powerful egos, Messiaen comes to mind at once, but to hold oneself as not just a musical visionary but as a gift to mankind seems extraordinary.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 14

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 148

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 147–148

¹²² *Ibid*, 189

His friendships with his contemporary composers are also relevant to an extent in how it helped shape his own writing. On initial examination, it would seem that for a person with a highly-evolved ego that he was easily threatened. Having entered the institute in 1917, he was joined in 1919 by Gaston Litaize and while they initially had a firm friendship, it changed over time as Langlais came to regard him as a rival.¹²³ His relationship with the foremost organ composer of the century, Olivier Messiaen seems equally interesting. Colleagues in the organ class of Marcel Dupré, he noted:

Messiaen, born in 1908, was one year younger than I – and already showed his genius. When he improvised it was splendid. He improvised as well on a *trompette* that was abominable and out of tune as if it had been a marvellous *salicional* or a *flûte* from Sainte-Clotilde. Finally Messiaen did not hear what he was doing. He was above all natural contingencies: an out-of-tune *trompette* was beautiful to him even if it was ugly and out of tune¹²⁴

However, despite this seeming admiration, Langlais became frustrated by a belief (or realisation) that Messiaen was better.¹²⁵ He had a similar rivalry with André Marchal, his onetime teacher, partially stemming from Marchal's possible role in the affair which denied him the organist position in Sainte-Clotilde in 1939.¹²⁶

His relationship with Marcel Dupré was strained. He found Dupré's approach to the art of the organist to be sterile and rigid, in contrast to Tournemire. Murray goes so far as to characterise his opinion of Dupré as 'an interpreter who was a slave to method, an automaton, an icy intellect'.¹²⁷ This relationship, like so many others was disrupted by a political matter, the choice of Vierne as inaugural organist when Langlais was *titulaire* at St Pierre-de-Montrouge, regarded by Dupré as an affront.¹²⁸ The relationship between Dupré and Vierne had completely broken down by this point due to a disagreement over Dupré's title when he substituted for Vierne at Notre

¹²³ *Ibid*, 36–7

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 106

¹²⁵ Janet Krellwitz: *The Use of Gregorian Chant in the Organ Works of Jean Langlais: Analysis and Recital*, unpublished Ed.D diss. (Columbia University, 1981), 75

¹²⁶ Labounsky (2000), 52

¹²⁷ Michael Murray: *French Masters of the Organ* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998), 165–6

¹²⁸ Labounsky (2000), 79

Dame.¹²⁹ Langlais' closest friendships seem to have been due to an attraction to people of a similar mindset and guided by a mystical and religious sense; he identified most closely with Messiaen, Tournemire, Mahaut and a number of clerics who shared his perceptions.¹³⁰ He even claimed to have received from a priest a blanket absolution to continue his extra-marital activities on the basis that it assisted his inspiration and therefore service to the church.¹³¹

Tournemire will be discussed below with a view to his influence on Langlais especially in the area of chant, however it is worth noting that Dupré would have also been an influence in this area, albeit a very different one. The *Symphonie-Passion* and a number of other chant-based works by Dupré were in existence by the time of their association, although Langlais was not fully in favour of the symphony, stating that it had a weak ending.¹³² As with Tournemire, he went directly to the source, spending some time studying chant with P Galard of Solesmes.¹³³

Like many of his contemporaries, Langlais' religious belief, inherited from his family, was a cornerstone of his philosophy as a church musician and liturgical organist. His devotion to the Virgin Mary is reflected in many of his organ works.

The 1960s were a period of liturgical change, change which was not universally accepted. Conservative traditionalists believed that God existed on a mystical plane set apart from the mundane and that worship should reflect that. For the new liturgists, God was in everything and worship was a communal event. Therefore the music for worship was not an aesthetically beautiful art form, but something more accessible. Langlais' belief in the mystical, as Tournemire's, was in contrast to this, that music had to bring prayer onto this mystical plane. In 1962, he wrote 'I believe that the organ

¹²⁹ Murray (1985), 108, *passim*

¹³⁰ Labounsky (2000), 134; Father Vigour from Rennes, Father Lefauqueur from the Paris Oratory and Archbishop Jules Orrière from Dol-de-Bretagne

¹³¹ Labounsky (2000), 156, *passim*

¹³² Krellwitz (1981), 3; Labounsky (2000), 190

¹³³ Krellwitz (1981), 3–4

has a precisely liturgical purpose, as a vehicle for prayer, in order to carry prayer beyond words, as high as possible'.¹³⁴

In some ways this quotation embodies the nature of the Sainte-Clotilde tradition. The mind cannot help but be drawn back to the words of Saint-Saëns writing in 1916: 'The organ, by its breadth of tone and its incomparable calm, lends itself admirable to religious music, but it was not invented for the latter'.¹³⁵ Langlais' thoughts as to the value of beautiful art in adorning the visions of the higher plane must have found a parallel with those of Father Jaylès, the organiser of his first recital, which was given on 10 August 1930 in Toulouse. In a lecture on architecture and music, he referred to Pius X statement that religious services and other events should result in 'prayer surrounded by beauty'. This notion of music as a 'window on the transcendental' was to have a profound effect on the Langlais approach to the organist as a church musician.¹³⁶

6.12: Langlais and Tournemire

Anything related to the relationships and inspirations of Jean Langlais exists in the context of a discussion on probably the most important relationship of his early life, that with his predecessor Charles Tournemire.

As noted above, it was Tournemire who initiated the relationship with Langlais, having acted as a member of the jury for his conservatory qualifying exam.¹³⁷ Some of Langlais' details of his teaching of improvisation may serve to highlight some of the traits of the Sainte-Clotilde tradition. Langlais began studying with Tournemire in autumn 1930, with the goal of the annual improvisation competition sponsored by *Les amis de l'orgue*, a competition he won in spring 1931.¹³⁸ Langlais tells us that the emphasis in Tournemire's teaching was on the Gregorian paraphrase, a practice which recurs throughout *L'orgue mystique*, and which is evident in the *Cinq improvisations*.

¹³⁴ Labounsky (2000), 222–3, *passim*

¹³⁵ Saint-Saëns (1916), 2

¹³⁶ Labounsky (2000), 67

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 62, Tournemire wrote to him on 11 May 1930

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 68–9

Unlike Guilmant and Dupré, who insisted on adherence to a structure and who believed that the word 'improvisation' was misleading, Tournemire believed in capturing attention by the creation of atmosphere, a factor in Béranger Miramon Fitz-James' description of him as an 'Impressionist Christian'.¹³⁹ These free-form improvisations were at the centre of the Sainte-Clotilde tradition. Tournemire also taught the stricter forms such as fugue, but was more concerned with creating musical poetry through imagery and the inventive use of sonorities.¹⁴⁰

As Langlais recognised in himself a growing pull toward sacred music, he saw Charles Tournemire the best of what a church musician could be. He represented the antithesis of the technical austerity of Widor and Dupré; in him Langlais found a teacher with a sense of poetry and lyricism that recalled the qualities of his other Franck-trained teachers at the Institute. He also found himself drawn to Tournemire's unique style of improvisation and composition based on Gregorian chant.¹⁴¹

The instilling of chant-infused organ composition was Tournemire's gift to Langlais. To him Langlais was his obvious successor and according to Langlais, Tournemire summoned him in June 1939 to anoint him his successor, on the condition it remain a secret until Tournemire's death. Despite being present, Tournemire's wife denied this encounter had taken place, and denied it was written in Tournemire's will.¹⁴² He was passed over for the position in favour of Joseph Ermend Bonnal (1880–1944), who like Tournemire's predecessor, was not known well for his religious compositions with the exception of his *Symphonie d'après media vita*. His role in the Sainte-Clotilde tradition is of no consequence. Despite holding the position, he rarely played as the organ was not used during the occupation of Paris. After the war, Langlais was appointed without competition to the post.¹⁴³

6.13: Langlais: Some general points on style

Over the course of his substantial life, Langlais composed a vast amount of music for the organ. However, distinct from the Widor-Vierne approach, he

¹³⁹ Frazier (2002), 9

¹⁴⁰ Labounsky (2000), 69

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 67 direct quote

¹⁴² Mrs Tournemire and Langlais had a mutual dislike for each other. He found her deceitful and manipulative, and she found him to be rude because, for example, he spoke to her while smoking. *Ibid*, 106

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 106–8

wrote very little on a large scale. The majority of his works for the instrument are in the form of collections or suites of pieces, which draws obvious parallels with the French classical period. Many of his works inhabit this same world and attempt to draw direct parallels. He expanded and built on these older forms, injecting a modern style and allowing a little more formal freedom, even employing some jazz elements in pieces like *Fête*.¹⁴⁴ The major exception to this is the *Première symphonie*, written 1941–1942, which was his only significant attempt at a larger form work and despite the groundwork laid by Widor and Dupré and his usual predilections, is not based on chant. This is significant, in that this work is like the later symphonic works of Tournemire in this regard. The symphony was to both men, a secular form in no need of adornment with liturgical themes. Interestingly, Langlais moved further again in his 1976 *Deuxième symphonie*, which at five minutes represents a Langlais interpretation of minimalist techniques.¹⁴⁵

There are, as with any composer, a number of constant, if evolving characteristics of the 'Langlais style'. Richard Corliss-Arnold writes:

Many of his works have the characteristics of bright colourful registration, through-composed pieces with sharply contrasting sections, irregular rhythms and metre changes, poetic and directly appealing melodies, rich harmonies (frequent use of harmonic progressions employing chromatic mediants), virtuoso pedal work, bitonality, incorporation of plainsong themes and early forms treated in contemporary styles.¹⁴⁶

His overall approach to the organ has been coloured by a number of influences, but his music is mostly tonal, enriched with extensive use of chromaticism. His reverence for early music allows for use of devices such as parallel fifths and fourths, free forms, canon, motivic development, free rhythms and multimetres and parallel octaves, however his use of registration does not replicate the *grand jeu*, *plein jeu* and cornet registrations of the classical period, but resembles more Tournemire's fondness for more colouristic use of flutes, *bourdons* and strings.¹⁴⁷ According to Ann Labounsky, he had an 'ingrained harmonic language' which he did not have to

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 135

¹⁴⁵ Susan Kirkland: 'Quelle Surprise', *MT*, cxxxvi/1830 (8/1995), 446–447

¹⁴⁶ Corliss Richard Arnold, *Organ Literature, A Comprehensive Survey* (New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1973), i, 233

¹⁴⁷ Krellwitz (1981), 2–3

think about, rather that it flowed from him.¹⁴⁸ His *oeuvre* displays multiple examples of octave writing, parallel octaves, fifths and fourths, canon, superimposition of themes and motivic and sequential writing, with the free sectional rhapsodic writing that is so associated with Tournemire.¹⁴⁹

Gregorian chant permeates Langlais' organ music, not only through its place in a large number of works, but also through the presence of modality throughout his output. This does not make him unique, as can be seen not only from other organ composers included in this study, but also from a cursory glance at the other French composers of the era, an era where the reaction to Wagner and the rise of Solesmes were both exerting an influence.¹⁵⁰

Of course, it would be inaccurate to attribute all of his style and outlook to his time with Tournemire. Langlais had the benefit of studies with a number of other teachers, some of whom Mahaut, Marty and Boulay, would have passed on some of their own memories of studies with Franck, perhaps less weighed down by Tournemire's preoccupations. His music is generally more dissonant than that of Tournemire, which is no surprise, considering the prevailing music of twentieth-century Paris. Patrick Giraud writes:

By the extensive use of chromaticism, Langlais succeeds in creating a modal ambiguity which is further heightened by the fact that there is a constant displacement of tonality. He employs chords of the seventh or ninth which are not resolved and these aggregations are not always based on the mode in which the melody is written. He is truly a colourist with impressionistic tastes.¹⁵¹

6.14: Langlais and chant

Like Tournemire, Langlais' output for the organ is very extensive, and the use of chant permeates throughout the length of his *oeuvre*. From the shortest to the longest pieces chant is present; his longest work *Le Passion* at one hour is bound together by the *Ave Maria* and *Vexilla Regis*.¹⁵² This poses an interesting challenge to any discussion of Langlais' relationship with chant in

¹⁴⁸ Labounsky (2000), 186

¹⁴⁹ Krellwitz (1981), 84–87

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 77–78

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 84 and from Patrick Giraud: 'Le thème grégorien dans les oeuvres pour orgue de Jean Langlais', *J'Orgue* (1967), 229

¹⁵² Labounsky (2000), 164, *passim*

his organ output, due to the range of forms and styles in which it is employed. While it has been possible to take a small number of *L'orgue mystique* suites in order to get an overall picture, this is not possible with Langlais given the breadth and range of the material. There are, of course, a number of recurring elements of style and the next sections will involve a general discussion on the cause and impact of these traits and techniques.

6.15: Choice of chants in Langlais

One of the most striking aspects of the use of chant themes by Langlais is the sheer breath of styles and chant forms which appear in his pieces.¹⁵³ While Widor and Dupré focused on well-known chants, Langlais takes his inspiration from Tournemire, who in *L'orgue mystique* uses not only proper chants but office antiphons and other chants to assist in the creation of a true commentary on the themes of the Sunday or feast.

In Langlais' case a number of points stand out. Firstly, there is a strong representation of Marian chants:

Table 6.1: A sample of Marian chant usage in the organ works of Langlais¹⁵⁴

<i>Ave maria</i>	<i>Trois paraphrases grégoriennes</i> <i>Cinq soleils</i>
<i>Ave Maris Stella</i>	<i>Trois paraphrase grégoriennes</i> 'Boys Town, Place of Peace' <i>Livre oecuménique</i>
<i>Salve Regina</i>	'24 Pieces for Organ without Pedal' <i>Mosaïque</i> <i>Tryptique grégorien</i> <i>Talitha koum</i> <i>Suite in simplicité</i> <i>Trois offertoires</i>
<i>Rosa Mystica</i>	<i>Tryptique grégorien</i>

¹⁵³ The lists have been compiled through studies of Labounsky (2000) and Krellwitz (1984).

¹⁵⁴ This may not be entirely comprehensive, but a good representation

<i>Mater admirabilim</i> <i>Conslatrix afflictorum</i> <i>Regina angelorum</i> <i>Regina pacis</i> <i>Mater Christi</i> <i>Maria mater gratiae</i>	<i>Offrande à Marie</i>
<i>Regina Coeli</i>	<i>Talitha Koum</i> <i>Mort et resurrection</i>
<i>Ave Regina Coelorum</i>	<i>Douze versets</i>

The list of Marian chants ranges from office antiphons to Marian antiphons to hymns.

The second observation that can be made is to the range of other chant forms present. While many of his contemporaries stuck solely to the popular well-known chants (many of which are in the Marian list above), Langlais uses psalm tones, parts of ordinaries (*kyrie, sanctus* etc...even the *credo*), incantations such as the *Lumen Christi* and hymns and antiphons from a broad collection of feasts and seasons. Of course the use and perception of chant in the liturgy had changed so much since Widor that it is likely that Langlais was exposed to more and different chants and we have seen that Tournemire's range in *L'orgue mystique* stretches beyond the usual to create a musical fresque.

There are a broad number of reasons for the selection of these chants. In some cases, unlike Widor for example, the chant is used illustratively. In *Les rameaux* from *Trois poèmes évangéliques*, for example, he uses the chant in the manuals to represent the jubilant crowds leading Jesus into Jerusalem, while it also occurs as a depiction of the majestic King in the pedal in long notes.¹⁵⁵ He seems to have a predilection for mode I chants, perhaps for their relationship to the natural minor scale.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Krellwitz (1981), 54–55; Labounsky (2000), 73–77

¹⁵⁶ Roger Nyquist: *The Use of Gregorian Chant in the Organ Music of Jean Langlais*, unpublished D.Mus diss. (Indiana University, 1968), 25

In the case of the *Incantation pour un jour saint* or *Dominica in palmis*, the use of familiar chants such as the *Lumen Christi* and the *Gloria laus* obviously serves to evoke the feast in question.

This thematic linkage is evident in the multi-movement collections and pieces which have more than one chant: 'The Poem of Happiness' uses two linked chants (*Gaudeamus* and *Gaudete*), *Offrande à une âme* creates a theme through the use of chants from the requiem mass and burial service and *Offrande à Marie* uses six Marian chants for obvious reasons. These provide just a few examples.

Of course, it would be rather much to suggest explicit or implicit connections in every choice of chant through six decades of creativity. There are undoubtedly a number of cases of Langlais simply liking a particular chant melody, finding an affinity with a certain text, or finding that a chant matched a particular sound world which a piece was creating.

What would appear to be an immediate feature of Langlais chant choices however is the frequent use of mass ordinaries as well as propers. *Deuxo*, *Suite medievale*, *Hommage à Frescobaldi*, 'Poem of Peace', *Livre oecuménique*, 'Contrasts' and *Talitha Koum*, all provide examples of the use of mass ordinaries. The most obvious reason for this would be Langlais' devotion to music of past centuries as seen in his use of parallel writing and organum for example. This could be seen as homage to the organ masses of the pre-revolutionary period, with their chant-based *alternatim* versets. Some of the earliest examples of published organ music, as we have seen, include versets on the ordinary of *missa cunctipotens Deus*.¹⁵⁷ Of course the proliferation of more chant masses and Langlais' frequent exposure to these melodies in Sainte-Clotilde would account for his more frequent use of them in comparison to his predecessors.

¹⁵⁷ See chapter 2

As well as the obvious use of well-known chants for illustrative purposes, Langlais' takes a few steps into the more symbolic theological world which would become more associated with his friend Olivier Messiaen. The *Trois méditations sur la Sainte Trinité* also combine chants with a Breton folk tune. In the first movement, the Father in heaven has his themes, in movement 2 the Son is represented by an earthy folk tune, before all three are combined in the final movement with the *Veni creator spiritus* evoking God the Spirit.¹⁵⁸ This technique is not original of course, as it evokes the Bach Prelude and Fugue in E flat (BWV 552) with its triple fugue. Indeed there are a number of occasions where chants are combined or superimposed, a characteristic of the fresque-rhapsodic sorties which finish many suites of *L'orgue mystique*

6.16: Some techniques used for development of the chants in Langlais

Krellwitz and Niquist both have extensive studies on the use of chant in the organ works of Langlais, although in both cases they are restricted by time period. Nyquist, writing in 1968, notes that there are four formal procedures:

- 1 The chant is exposed throughout the work without interruption and the theme is the focal point of the piece.
- 2 The complete melody is exposed in short phrases, interrupted with phrases of free composition.
- 3 The melody is revealed in episodic treatment, but rarely is all of it used.
- 4 Several chants are used in the same work.¹⁵⁹

These four techniques are by no means surprising; the third for example is derived from or at least similar to the standard German chorale prelude of Bach, *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, being one such example. In each case, he uses enough of the chant as to make it obvious which chant it is. The Messiaenic tendency to hide the chant is not present here.

As with any of the composer or works discussed in this study, it is impossible to assess the implications of the use of chant in a single piece or across an *oeuvre* without looking at the impact of chant rhythm on the rhythmic profile of the piece. As we have seen this has involved multiple techniques which

¹⁵⁸ Labounsky (2000), 199

¹⁵⁹ Nyquist (1968), 39, *passim*

evolved over time in parallel with the changing views caused by Solesmes advances in semiology. Langlais early works show little or no knowledge of these advances. His first work to use chant, *Trois poèmes évangéliques*, which is among the best known of his output makes use of chant in a classical *cantus firmus* as well as figuration based on a short chant motif (eight notes of *Hosanna filio David*).

Ex. 6.18a: Langlais: *Les Rameaux, cantus firmus*



Ex. 6.18b: Langlais: *Figuration* from *Les Rameaux*, bars 1-4



Like many composers before him, he grappled with a method of incorporating a non-metrical chant within the framework of a time signature and as with many before him, he turned to the adoption of triplets to fit the liturgical melody. This is common practice in the *Trois paraphrases gregoriennes* and the '24 Pieces', both early works. According to Krellwitz, this technique was used in these works because they were written before 1942, when his choral duties at the institute would have afforded him more exposure to chant singing. Apparently, he realised then that the triplet merely served to interrupt the flow and calm of the melodic line and therefore was not a good solution to the problem.¹⁶⁰ From then on he employed free metres to attempt to capture the essence of the liturgical melodies.

Trois poèmes évangéliques also provide an example of the free paraphrasing of chant so familiar from *L'orgue mystique*, the omission of notes and neumes whilst maintaining the overall melodic profile of the chant melody, and

¹⁶⁰ Krellwitz (1981), 62–68

therefore allowing it to be recognised. This will be observed in chapter 7, makes his chant use very different to that of Messiaen, who by transposing the chant into one of his 'modes of limited transposition' and freely adapting it creates a situation whereby the chant is almost indistinguishable.

In addition to the use of *cantus firmus*, a number of further techniques permeate the chant-based works of Langlais. Noted in an earlier section, he maintained a fondness for the use of parallel fifths, octaves and fourths. The chant is presented in octaves, in canon of various types, through use of ostinato and use of sequence. He is also partial to motivic development of themes, using recurring themes and motifs to bind together what are generally speaking, free sectional pieces. While all of these devices are standard techniques, it is his personal blend of 'neomodality' which blends the modal home of the chants with a more personal chromatic idiom, taking Tournemire's modal language a little further.¹⁶¹

6.17: Conclusion: A Sainte-Clotilde tradition?

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of his appointment Langlais wrote:

Dear master, for twenty-five years I have gone up to the organ loft that César Franck, that you yourself have made famous. Not a single Sunday has passed that I have not felt the awesome presence of these two great shadows: reason for my fervent admiration and thoughtful humility¹⁶²

It is tempting to regard the 'Sainte-Clotilde tradition' as a school of composition or a style of writing, however as we have seen, it represents rather an approach to the organ, a philosophy concerning role of the organist and an uncompromising desire to carry out a mission by which the organ could reach the peaks of a mystical plane. Each of the three men had their own personal style of composition borne out by Tournemire's observation that 'César Franck advised us never to imitate, but to search'.¹⁶³

Other Parisian churches are of course known for their line of organists, Sainte-Sulpice for Widor, Dupré, Falconelli for example, Notre Dame for the

¹⁶¹ Nyquist (1968), 24–29

¹⁶² Labounsky (2000), 119

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 132

line from Vierne, Cochereau, Latry amongst others. However, the lines of succession in these big churches inhabit a different aesthetic to that enjoyed by the much more modest church of Sainte-Clotilde. Perhaps due to the fact that its history is not as deep as some of the other major Parisian churches (completed in 1857), its tradition emanated from the ideals of Franck. Whilst in the avenues and streets of central Paris, the bombastic decadence of the post-revolutionary period managed to persist it was in the relatively quiet Sainte-Clotilde that the Cavaillé-Coll found another home, as an instrument of mystical colour. The organ seems small at 46 stops in comparison to the 100 at Sainte-Sulpice, but Cavaillé-Coll himself acknowledged it as one of his best and it served as muse to all three of the main organists who sought refuge on its bench.

César Franck, Charles Tournemire and Jean Langlais had in common certain, religious, mystical and liturgical practices and a veneration of Mary. Though each was imbued with a volatile, fiercely independent temperament, they admired their colleagues and tried to be modest men. They, unlike many Parisian organists for whom the mass and offices were but an excuse to perform concert music, based their music on liturgical texts. They also shared a poetic freedom of interpretation and an extraordinary skill in improvisation, both of which guided their teaching. Tournemire and Langlais each built upon the legacy of Franck and enlarged the scope of his tradition according to their own personalities.¹⁶⁴

Far from his association with the organ, Franck's influence stretched out in to all aspects of Parisian musical society, his more fervent disciplines such as d'Indy seeing him as a leader of a movement to rescue French music from mediocrity towards a sister of the ideals of the Beethoven/Germanic tradition. He was seen as a developer of symphonic forms and a developer of harmonies. These views and their relative validity are well beyond the scope of this study and have been and will continue to be explored by others.

Franck held his organist's profession in too high an honour to allow him to descend into the easy-going habits of so many of his colleagues. A sincere Christian, but no devotee, no regular observer of his religious duties, he believed the organist's function to be to assist the priest in worship. His ambition was to devote his artistic abilities to the service of the church, and to raise the souls of the congregation to a higher plane of religious meditation. To this end he had no need to pursue virtuosity for its own sake, no desire to tickle the ears of the congregation with banal but seductive commonplaces.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 125

¹⁶⁵ Vallas (1951), 113

The Sainte-Clotilde tradition, on the other hand, a legacy of Franck, is well summed up in many of the quotes which run through this chapter.

While it can lay a claim to having inherited the interpretation of the Franck organ works (no small thing considering that the alternative interpretations were advocated by Guilmant and Dupré), it is less a school of composition and more a philosophy of what a church organist was to be.

Franck, Tournemire, and Langlais had in common certain religious, mystical, and liturgical practices and a veneration of Mary. They unlike many Parisian organists for whom mass and the offices were but an excuse to perform concert, based their music on liturgical texts. They also enjoyed a poetic freedom of interpretation and an extraordinary skill in improvisation,¹⁶⁶

Each of the three composers wrote in different (though in some ways interlinked) styles, but each was imbued in their work as church organists by a sense of their role. While Franck's era saw little in value in the creation of a chant-based organ repertoire, either through the larger-scale structures of Widor and Dupré or through the Guilmant desire for a Catholic repertoire to match Bach, Tournemire is in this author's view the summation of the goal set forth by Guilmant to do the same as Bach for plainchant. Tournemire's arrival at Sainte-Clotilde, the Solesmes advances, the efforts of Maurice Emmanuel; all of these elements are woven into the tapestry of Sainte-Clotilde. Plainchant became a medium through which Tournemire and Langlais could express the philosophies of the tradition.

Improvisation has an important role to play in the Sainte-Clotilde tradition, all three figures were acknowledged as improvisers and teachers of improvisation and this art served as a vehicle for mystical expression. As has been emphasised repeatedly, this free improvisory approach which was at the heart of the Sainte-Clotilde tradition was in stark contrast to the conception of Guilmant and Dupré, in particular, who were both players and improvisers of note, but saw the skill in improvisation which was ordered and planned rather than spontaneous.

¹⁶⁶ Lord (1982), 125

Regardless, the three organists in question left an indelible mark on the French organ world and in particular on relationship between organ and chant, and on how the role of the church organist is to be perceived.

'True organists consecrate their life to the study of their instrument'.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Labounsky (2000), 223

Chapter 7: Difference and Divergence: Towards a Twentieth-Century Assimilation of Chant and Organ Music

7.1: Introduction

In the early decades of the twentieth century, organ music in Paris continued to grow in popularity. The older organists including Widor, Vierne and Saint-Saëns maintained considerable influence, both musically and politically and the cult of the virtuosic touring organist (first explored in a worldwide context by Guilmant) found its pinnacle in Dupré, Marchal and Langlais. While there was a reaction to the Cavallé-Coll organ as a tool of romanticism, there was room for a diversity of styles in organ composition, from conservatism to more modern and primitive techniques. Nonetheless, improvisation remained to the fore of the tradition of the organist-composer and therefore the place of plainchant was retained as a necessary skill of the liturgical organist. As has been noted in chapter 6, some composers (such as Langlais and Tournemire) had healthy performing careers but viewed their primary vocation as liturgical organists. Some were primarily concert performers, while there were those who transcended both, increasingly blurring the distinction between the two and indeed expanding the traditional notion of 'liturgical organ music'. This chapter will examine two contemporaries whose styles of composition could not have been more dissimilar, both of whom used plainchant in different ways. The purpose of this is to show the two opposite ends of the spectrum with regard to organ composition in the twentieth century.

Maurice Duruflé (1902–1986) was a conservative composer who married plainchant with an impressionistic language in his meagre output for the organ, whilst Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) was a colossus as a composer and innovator in all genres of composition. In exploring and comparing these two individuals, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the place of plainchant within the diverging styles and musical philosophies of the twentieth century.

7.2: Maurice Duruflé: the conservative

It was, rather, so much the pith of his existence that he raised plainchant to an exalted place in the secular harmonies of modern French music, advancing the plainsong revival to its ultimate stage. Duruflé was not only a composer, in other words, but a reformer.¹

Whilst small in comparison with that of Dupré and Tournemire, the chant-based output of Maurice Duruflé is of immense importance for its beauty and durability. Born in Louviers on 11 January 1902, his life time spans the great period of upheaval in the nature of chant and church music from the 1903 *motu proprio* until the late twentieth century. A reclusive man, he was relentlessly self-critical, conducting only his own works and tending to revise his compositions.

His early life included a good deal of liturgical formation, having been enrolled in the *Maîtrise Saint-Évode* in Rouen on Easter Sunday 1912.² Due to the church-state turmoil referred to in chapter 6, it was virtually the only Catholic school left in Rouen by this time. By 1914 a choir of men and boys at this *maîtrise* was singing chant and polyphony as part of school services, alongside older classics by Haydn and Beethoven and newer composers such as Franck and Gounod.³ As such, Duruflé was exposed to the restored Solesmes chant and absorbed it throughout his early years until it became an influence in his later musical life. Indeed the details of his youth include that he would return from mass at a young age and proceed to play the chants he heard on the family *harmoniflûte*.⁴ While at the choir school, he was further influenced by the grandeur and dignity of the Catholic ceremony, as well as by the importance of architecture in the shaping of one's feelings on music.⁵

¹ James Frazier: *Maurice Duruflé: The Man and His Music* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 143; It should be acknowledged at this point that very little of value has been written about Maurice Duruflé, therefore there may be an over reliance on the writings of Roland Ebrecht and James Frazier. The work of the latter in particular exceeds all others and therefore is referenced very heavily in this section.

² This *maîtrise* dated back to 1377, but was closed during the revolution, before reopening in 1802. It closed in 1977. Frazier (2007), 15, 23; James Frazier: 'In Gregorian Mode', *Maurice Duruflé 1902–1986: The Last Impressionist*, ed. Ronald Ebrecht (London: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 2–4

³ Frazier (2007), 18; Frazier (2002), 5

⁴ Frazier (2007), 10; Chants include the plainchant musical setting of the *Credo* by Henri Dumont

⁵ Frazier (2007), 2–3, 18–19; Frazier (2002), 6

The influence of chant on Duruflé continued to grow through lessons with Tournemire, organised by Maurice Emmanuel, one-time *maître du chapelle* at Sainte-Clotilde (see chapter 6). With Tournemire, he studied chant accompaniment and chant-based improvisation, gaining an admiration for the older man's improvisations, in particular those free-form improvisations which form the cornerstone of *L'orgue mystique*.⁶ Despite a tumultuous relationship with Tournemire, Duruflé later stated 'I have never forgotten anything that I learned from my cherished master, Charles Tournemire'.⁷ When Tournemire terminated the lessons in 1920, he turned to Vierne. Duruflé was Vierne's substitute until 1930, when he was dismissed by the clergy who did not like his 'modern music'.⁸ In contrast to his exact contemporary Tournemire, Vierne never heard the singing of the Solesmes monks, but had a great respect for the Gregorian repertoire.⁹

He entered Gigout's class in the Paris Conservatoire in 1919, but continued to study with Vierne, having little regard for Gigout as a player or teacher. He was a member of Widor's composition class (which he denied) from 1925, and studied with Paul Dukas when he took over in 1927.¹⁰ Dukas instilled in him further the sense of order and form, which he had begun with Vierne and which was in contrast to Tournemire.¹¹ Duruflé's time as a student was distinguished. He won prizes in organ and improvisation, harmony, fugue, piano accompaniment and composition. He took up the position of organist at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont in 1930.¹² In 1942, he substituted for Dupré during an American tour and in 1943 he was appointed professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatoire, a post he left in 1970.¹³

⁶ Frazier (2007), 24–28; Frazier (2002), 9

⁷ As quoted in Frazier (2007), 28 and taken from Maurice Duruflé: 'My Recollections of Tournemire and Vierne', transl. Ralph Kneeream, *AO*, ix/11 (11/1980), 54-57

⁸ He may have been a victim of Vierne's steadily declining relationship with the clergy, Frazier (2007), 35

⁹ *Ibid*, 33–35

¹⁰ At this stage Widor had little interest in chant revival in his pieces and improvisations. Frazier (2007), 40–41; 'I knew Widor the last year that he was professor of composition at the conservatoire. I was not his student; I was a student of Paul Dukas who was his successor'.

¹¹ Frazier (2007), 37–43

¹² Peter G. Jarjisan: *The Influence of Gregorian Chant on Maurice Duruflé's Requiem, Op. 9*, unpublished DMA diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991), 45

¹³ Frazier (2007), 76–80; 'he left "the result, in part, of his disenchantment with the new directions taken by the conservatoire in the harmony curriculum"'.

7.3: Duruflé, religion and Gregorian chant

As I have always been under the spell of Gregorian chant, I might say myself that it has sometimes even appeared somewhat tyrannical. Even as it puts one under its spell, it can be perhaps a little too confining, a little – how can I express it – too limiting of my harmonic field, if one could put it that way. But really, I don't want to say anything negative against Gregorian chant, just the opposite. I am very grateful because it has given me great joy in my career as an organist and composer.¹⁴

From the beginning of his career, chant held a central role in the compositions of Duruflé, to the extent that its modality also had a presence in his compositions not based on the Gregorian melodies. The characteristics of chant permeate all of his compositions, even those of a secular nature. From his first compositions, the *Pièce pour orgue sur le thème du Credo* (1926), and the *Triptych: Fantaisie sur les thèmes grégoriennes* (1927, revised 1943 and unpublished) for piano, chant has been a central element of his small output. His career was flourishing at a time when the struggle between the secular state and the church was at its height, and chant was, with renaissance polyphony, being used as a force to define church music in an increasingly secular world. As a composer, Duruflé is often credited with aiding the restoration by fusing the secular concert sound with the sacred aesthetic to create a new sound world for church, not at odds with the French tradition.¹⁵ Composers such as Debussy, Ravel, Fauré and Satie had all been influenced in one way or another by the modality of chant and some prominent figures went so far as to quote chants in their otherwise secular compositions.

It is difficult and embarrassing to speak about my personal aesthetic. But without doubt, because I am an organist and because I live in the Gregorian atmosphere, I certainly have a marked penchant for the modal style. Even in a work which has nothing to do with Gregorian [chant], such as the 'Three Dances for Orchestra', I quite often let myself be attracted by the ancient modes. I believe that there is in these medieval scales, thanks to the absence of leading tone and to their great variety, a diversity of colours and of infinitely fascinating expressions.¹⁶

The marriage of chant with the harmonic world of Debussy and Ravel created a new outlet for this music. This was a culmination of the movement towards

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 98 from an interview with Pierre Cochereau

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 143–144

¹⁶ John S. McIntosh: *The Organ Music of Maurice Duruflé*, unpublished DMA diss. (University of Rochester, 1973) 8–9 and taken from Pierre Denis: 'Les organistes français d'aujourd'hui', *l'Orgue*, no.50, (1949)

a music that was sacred in quality and occurred during the last revival of a religious aesthetic after the revolution.¹⁷ The work of past composers and institutions in preparing for this is discussed in the previous chapters. Indeed by the 1930s, the chapter of Notre Dame Cathedral was critical of Vierne for his too-infrequent use of chant.¹⁸ Duruflé published some writings on the nature of liturgical music and plainsong. The dependence on chant in his language caused his compositions to be conservative at a time when France and Europe in general was embracing new ideas. His *magnum opus*, the *Requiem*, which uses chant for its source material was composed between 1945 and 1947, after the careers of the Second Viennese composers had ended and Paris had experienced the ballet scores of Stravinsky. Frazier hypothesises that it was this radicalisation of composition that was responsible for Duruflé's small output, that he saw little reason to write anymore in a language which was obsolete.¹⁹ While his vocal and organ compositions, the *Requiem*, *Messe cum júbilo*, *Quatre motets*, *Prélude, adagio and choral variée sur le Veni Creator* and *Prélude sur l'introit d'Épiphanie* are concert works, they are liturgical in aesthetic, bound to their Catholicism, and yet more liturgically-minded and less theologically-planned than the works of Messiaen, the other great 'Catholic' organ composer of the twentieth century.²⁰ That is to say that, unlike the 'concert liturgies' presented by Messiaen's larger scale works, Duruflé's pieces display a greater sensitivity. They are the work of a Catholic with a deep appreciation for the liturgy of the church, however they do not display the same theological depth as that which we will see in Messiaen's cycles.

As noted by Philippe Ronzon:

Duruflé's writing has 'the modal aspect peculiar to French works since the end of the nineteenth century as a solution to post-Wagnerianism and the aspect of plainsong, the beginning of Western music in the middle ages. Through this tradition, he realizes a synthesis combining the alpha and omega of music in France.'²¹

¹⁷ Frazier (2007), 144, 108–9

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 147–150

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 142

²⁰ *Ibid*, 108

²¹ *Ibid*, 109

The reforms in church music, initiated in the nineteenth century (incorporating the plainchant restoration) reached an apex in 1963 with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. These made one hundred years of work obsolete, but not before it permeated the work of Debussy, Satie, d'Indy, Dukas and Lili Boulanger among others.²²

7.4: Duruflé, chant and improvisation

Duruflé, like almost all the major organists of his day, was skilled in the art of improvisation. On occasion, he was known to improvise in concert; however he frequently improvised during the religious services at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, believing it to be an indispensable skill for a liturgical organist. Like Tournemire, he almost exclusively used Gregorian themes, but he was distinct from his master in that his improvisations were said to have been indistinguishable from his written compositions.²³ This leads us to lament that he did not record any of these improvisations or realise any of them as written pieces. It seems interesting also that someone with, what his wife termed *une âme gregorienne*, had not the same level of belief as Tournemire. Frazier insists that he was a less devout believer than his wife and that his 'life-long association with the church must not be equated or confused with his personal life of faith'.²⁴ He and Messiaen developed from Tournemire along different lines, in Duruflé's case one liturgical in character and in Messiaen's more mystically diverse and embracing chant, birdsong, eastern rhythms and other influences.²⁵

7.5: Chant and the organ works of Maurice Duruflé: an overview

Duruflé's small *oeuvre* contrasts heavily with Dupré, Langlais, Messiaen, and even the sort-lived career of Jehan Alain, all of whom produced numerous works for the organ.²⁶ On the four main works, Jesse Eschbach commented shortly after his death:

²² *Ibid*, 154

²³ *Ibid*, 206

²⁴ *Ibid*, 242

²⁵ Andrew Thomson: 'Pure Invention', *CO*, x/4 (7–8/2002), 50–52

²⁶ Duruflé's output for organ is confined to four major works: *Scherzo* (op. 2), *Prélude, adagio et choral varié sur le thème du 'Veni Creator'* (op. 4), *Suite* (op. 5), *Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'Alain* (op. 7). There are also a number of smaller contributions of lesser scale, but no

The four principal works for organ written between 1926 and 1942 enriched twentieth-century organ repertoire with some of the most intense music ever to issue forth from that seemingly fathomless mine of Gallic inspiration. Built solidly on the tonal and harmonic accomplishments of Franck, Tournemire and Vierne, Duruflé's style augmented this compositional palette with techniques borrowed from impressionism, modality and the emerging neo-classical aesthetic in composition and organ building in France.²⁷

The two principal works which concern this particular study are the *Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Épiphanie* (op. 13) and the *Prélude, adagio et choral varié sur le thème du Veni Creator* (op. 4), both interesting in terms of their contrasting scale and complexity. Op. 13 (some 53 bars and two and a half minutes long) was published in 1961 in volume 48 of the series *Orgue et Liturgie* (edited by Norbert Dufourq) and reprinted in *The American Organist*.²⁸ While it is short, it is four times the length of Charles Tournemire's similarly-styled piece from Suite No.7 of *L'orgue mystique* and has the same basic purpose, to introduce the chant *Ecce Advenit Dominator Dominum* (Behold the Lord the Ruler is come). While Tournemire was undoubtedly an influence on this work (as on the other compositions of Duruflé and many of his contemporaries) it is necessary at this point to acknowledge the primary difference which separates the works of Tournemire and others. The timeless, often formless improvisory style inherent in Tournemire is not present in Duruflé, who from Dukas gained a stricter formal discipline.²⁹ As such Duruflé's op. 13, while in the liturgical spirit of Tournemire, is of a much tighter construction. While a *L'orgue mystique* first movement usually attempts to create atmosphere through use of registrational colour, Duruflé's piece, with its heavier sound world and almost relentless rhythmic drive, marks it out. Only at three points is there a relaxation of the speed, twice before the return of the opening chant theme and the one which finishes the work. Changing time signatures, not markings such as *rubato*, *expressivo* and *a piacere* are the means by which Duruflé captures the rhythmic nuances of the chant melody. This technique, used here in a small work, gives a snapshot of the paraphrase techniques used in the three major chant-based choral works of Duruflé. Whilst not

lesser quality: *Fugue sur le thème du carillon des heures de la cathédrale de Soissons* (op. 12), *Prélude sur l'introit de l'Épiphanie* (op. 13), *Méditation* (op.posth.) (based on the *Agnus Dei Cum Jublio*) and *Hommage à Jean Gallon*.

²⁷ Jesse Eschbach, 'In Memoriam Maurice Duruflé: 1902–1986', *AO*, xxi/7 (7/1987), 44

²⁸ Frazier (2007) 132; The reprint occurs in *AO*, xi/7 (7/1977), 36–7

²⁹ Thomson (2002), 50–52

allowing the freedom of Tournemire, the colour and shape of the Gregorian melody is captured with subtle skill and finesse.

7.6: Fragmentation and variation: op.4

Despite the simple effectiveness of op. 13, the primary focus of this discussion will be the larger *Prélude, adagio et choral varié sur le thème du Veni Creator* (op. 4). As with op.13, it involves the development of fragments, though on a larger scale. This work is dedicated to Louis Vierne, with whom he studied and assisted at Notre Dame. Duruflé was in fact assisting his *maître* at the organ on the night in 1937 when Vierne died at the console.

It seems unclear as to whether or not this work was conceived as a whole, supported by the fact that the third section seems weaker than the first two, indicating that it is from an earlier date. A piece entitled *Variations sur l'hymne Veni Creator* was first performed by Duruflé at Louvier on 18 October 1926, however when entering a competition hosted by *Les amis de l'orgue* in 1930, he used the earlier set of variations as the final movement of the *tryptique*.³⁰ Like the two masses, this piece is liturgical in character, the use of chant and the atmosphere it evokes links it to *L'orgue mystique*, but it is undoubtedly a recital work, even though some performances intersperse the variations with sung verses of the chant hymn. It is interesting that a chant-based work on this scale be dedicated to Vierne who was less interested in chant, part of the reason being that Duruflé had already dedicated the *Scherzo* (op.2) to his first *maître* Tournemire. The piece however owes little to Vierne's symphonic style.³¹

Veni Creator Spiritus is one of the most popular hymns in the Gregorian repertoire and first occurs in tenth-century manuscripts. The melody seems likely to predate the text and to be of Ambrosian origin. Having been attributed to Saint Gregory, Saint Ambrose and Charlemagne, it now seems more plausible that the source of the text is one Hrabanus Maurus (776–856). Its invocation of the Holy Spirit makes it suitable for occasions other than the

³⁰ The guidelines for the competition required a three-movement work. Frazier (2007), 132

³¹ Thomson (2002), 50–52

Pentecost season, and it has been the source of multiple masses, French classical organ hymns and (in its German version *Komm Gott Schöpfer*) Lutheran chorale preludes. One of its first appearances in a keyboard work is in the Buxheim organbook (c1470) and since then has been the source of organ works by composers such as Titelouze and de Grigny in France and Scheidt, Pachelbel and Bach in Germany.³² Tournemire utilises the melody in his Pentecost Sunday suite with the melody appearing in canon-like duet in the final movement entitled *Fantaisie-Chorale*.³³ Dupré uses the *Veni Creator* as a *cantus firmus* in *Le Tombeau de Titelouze* and *Komm Gott Schöpfer* is included in the ‘Seventy-Nine Chorales’. Into the twentieth century the chant remained popular in *Cinque versets sur Veni Creator* (1964) of Raffi Ourgandjian and ‘Partita on *Veni Creator*’ by Herman Schroeder (b1904). In all, the hymn acts as the basis for more than 100 organ works spanning the last five centuries.³⁴

Table 7.1: *Veni Creator Spiritus*, text and melody of verse 1

Veni, Creator Spiritus, mentes tuorum visita, imple superna gratia quae tu creasti pectora.	Come, Holy Spirit, Creator blest, and in our souls take up Thy rest; come with Thy grace and heavenly aid to fill the hearts which Thou hast made.
Qui diceris Paraclitus, altissimi donum Dei, fons vivus, ignis, caritas, et spiritalis unctio.	O comforter, to Thee we cry, O heavenly gift of God Most High, O fount of life and fire of love, and sweet anointing from above.
Tu, septiformis munere, digitus paternae dexteræ, Tu rite promissum Patris, sermone ditans guttura.	Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts are known; Thou, finger of God's hand we own; Thou, promise of the Father, Thou Who dost the tongue with power imbue.

³² Leanne Hempill Fazio: *Selected Organ Settings of Veni Creator Spiritus from 1470–1964: A Historical Perspective*, unpublished DMA diss. (University of Alabama, 1990), 5, *passim*


³³ Fazio (1990), 25

³⁴ Fazio (1990), 38

<p>Accende lumen sensibus: infunde amorem cordibus: infirma nostri corporis virtute firmans perpeti.</p>	<p>Kindle our sense from above, and make our hearts o'erflow with love; with patience firm and virtue high the weakness of our flesh supply.</p>
<p>Hostem repellas longius, pacemque dones protinus: ductore sic te praevis vitemus omne noxium.</p>	<p>Far from us drive the foe we dread, and grant us Thy peace instead; so shall we not, with Thee for guide, turn from the path of life aside.</p>
<p>Per te sciamus da Patrem, noscamus atque Filium; Teque utriusque Spiritum credamus omni tempore.</p>	<p>Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow the Father and the Son to know; and Thee, through endless times confessed, of both the eternal Spirit blest.</p>
<p>Deo Patri sit gloria, et Filio, qui a mortuis surrexit, ac Paraclito, in saeculorum saecula. Amen.</p>	<p>Now to the Father and the Son, Who rose from death, be glory given, with Thou, O Holy Comforter, henceforth by all in earth and heaven. Amen.</p>

VIII. 

V E-ni Cre- a-tor Spi-ri-tus, Men-tes tu- o-rum vi-si-ta :



Im-ple su-per-na gra-ti-a Quæ tu cre- asti pec-tora.

While it is more common to state the source theme at the beginning of a piece of music, what is interesting about the *Prélude, adagio et choral varié sur le thème du Veni Creator* is that in the first two movements Duruflé merely alludes to the main theme, using motific fragments. It is not until the variations (some fourteen minutes into the piece) that the chant is explicitly stated. As Andrew Thomson points out, it bears formal resemblance to d'Indy's *Istar*, a set of orchestral variations in reverse order where the theme appears at the end.³⁵ This of course is not an uncommon compositional principle, but one deployed so well by Duruflé precisely because of the popularity of the source melody.

The overall structure of the piece is ABAB with a coda.³⁶

Duruflé's describes how these sections form the basis for this:

The *Prélude* is in rondo form with three refrains and two couplets. It uses two fragments from the Pentecost hymn which, here, is but discreetly suggested.³⁷

The first fragment is derived from the third phrase of the chant, the first seven notes of the phrase being mirrored by the initial triplet figures (figure I). In fact, during the movement (with its 2/2 time signature) there is almost constant triplet movement, and it is these arabesques which drive the movement forward.³⁸ The three-note figure also emerges elongated in an inner part at bar 9 (Example 7.1). While the key signature is of three sharps and the initial fragment (D E F# transposed from C D E with the chant endnote G) assists with this, there is a sense of E major with a flattened seventh, perhaps due to the character of the mode VIII (Hypomixolydian) chant.

³⁵ Thomson (2002), 50–52

³⁶ McIntosh's references to the B sections as 'digressions' seems to suggest they are incidental, which seems wrong to the current author. McIntosh (1973), 33

³⁷ As cited in McIntosh (1973), 32 and taken from Duruflé, notes on record jacket *Duruflé Organ Works*, (Aeolian-Skinner Company AS 322)

³⁸ McIntosh (1973), 33–34

Ex. 7.1: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Prélude*, bars 1–11

Allegro, ma non troppo ♩=72

The musical score is written for piano in 2/2 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 1-3) features a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes (F#4, G4, A4) marked *pp* and *legato*, and a bass clef with a half note (F#3). The second system (bars 4-6) continues the treble line with a half note (B4) and eighth notes (C5, B4, A4), while the bass clef has a half note (G3). The third system (bars 7-9) shows the treble line with eighth notes (G4, F#4, E4, D4) and a half note (C4), with the bass clef having a half note (F#3). The fourth system (bars 10-11) features a treble line with eighth notes (B4, A4, G4, F#4) and a half note (E4), with the bass clef having a half note (D3). The tempo is *Allegro, ma non troppo* with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute.

The initial six notes of this figure I are further highlighted (though altered) in bars 13 and 14, given prominence by the movement to a louder manual (Example 7.2).

Ex. 7.2: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Prélude*, bars 12–14

Musical score for Example 7.2, bars 12–14. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The melody in the treble clef begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The bass clef accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the second measure.

The longer figure I which occurs in Example 7.1 (in bars 9–11) continues to recur at various pitches and placements in the texture in free imitation, which expands many of the intervals (Example 7.3). Visually this impact is not strong, but it is very evident to the ear.

Ex. 7.3: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Prélude*, bars 15–25

Musical score for Example 7.3, bars 15–25. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The score is divided into four systems. The first system (bars 15–17) includes a *dim.* marking. The second system (bars 18–20) includes a *p espressivo* marking. The third system (bars 21–23) includes a *cresc.* marking. The fourth system (bars 24–25) includes *sempre cresc.* and *f* markings, and ends with an *espressivo* marking. The melody in the treble clef is highly rhythmic and melodic, while the bass clef accompaniment provides a steady harmonic foundation.

The second section of the *Prélude* involves a statement and development in the pedal of the first four notes of the second chant phrase (figure k). As with the lengthened figure l in the first section, he freely augments the intervals, maintaining the arabesque-like feeling from the first section (Example 7.4).

Ex. 7.4: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Prélude*, bars 47–52

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. Each system has three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass clef staff for the pedal. The first system (bars 47-48) is marked *p cantabile* and is in 6/4 time. The second system (bars 49-50) is marked *espressivo* and *poco cresc.*, with a time signature change to 9/4. The third system (bars 51-52) is marked *- mf* and returns to 6/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

This second motif is the source of longer more flowing lines than the initial section and tends to appear in a contrasting tone colour.

It seems that by using only fragments of later chant phrases other than the easier to recognise incipit, Duruflé is slowly revealing the source. Within the fast moving texture of triplets, one catches the merest glimpses of the chant and seeks an explicit statement to confirm the suspicions about the themes origin. The statement however does not emerge during the *Prélude* and these two motifs serve as the basis for the movement. It ends with a coda which uses material from the B section in a hymn-like texture.

The *Prélude* and *Adagio* are separated by a seven-bar interlude marked *lento*, *quasi recitativo*, which has the effect of acting as a bridge between the feverish fast-moving *Prélude* and the more relaxed *Adagio*.

The opening of the *lento* is a three-note figure (B C# D, figure m) which is derived from the opening of figure l and which will serve as the basis for the B section of the *Adagio*. (Example 7.5)

Ex. 7.5: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Lento*, bars 1–6

The musical score for Example 7.5 is presented in two systems. The first system, titled "Lento, quasi recitativo", spans bars 1-3. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic in the right hand and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in the left hand. The second system, titled "Animando", spans bars 4-6. It starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, followed by a section marked "sempre cresc." (sempre crescendo) with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Duruflé describes the form of the *Adagio*:

A short recitative leads into the *Adagio* where the first notes of the *Veni Creator* gradually take form. They are presented in two consecutive

expositions on the *voix celeste*. A long crescendo follows these two statements.³⁹

This is a rather simple analysis of a movement essentially in ternary form, with an expanded third section which has the *crescendo* mentioned in the above quote. The *Adagio* begins by introducing the first phrase of the chant (incomplete), but almost immediately diverting to develop the material. The second phrase of the *Adagio* is similarly based on the third chant phrase, again diverting to develop. The contour and character of the texture matches that of the Gregorian melody and the modal harmonies and registration of *voix celestes* mark it as a contrast to the more frantic *Prélude* (Example 7.6).

Ex. 7.6: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Adagio*, bars 1–8

Adagio ♩=60
VE - NI CRE - - A - (TOR)

pp *sempre pp*

dolcissimo e sostenuto

This matches the style of writing to be seen in the *Prélude sur l'introit d'Epiphanie*.

³⁹ As cited in McIntosh (1973), 46 and taken from Duruflé, notes on record jacket, *Duruflé Organ Works*, Aeolian-Skinner Company AS 322)

The B section appears darker in character and returns to the opening fragment (figure m transposed), altered in the *lento* stated from the outset (Example 7.7) and developed (Example 7.8).

Ex. 7.7: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Adagio*, bars 31–34

Poco meno lento ♩=69

p

M

a piacere

Ex. 7.8: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Adagio*, bars 42–48

Tempo

p

ten.

M

cedendo

Tempo

Rit. ♩=100

mf

pp

f

3

The A section returns in the key of B flat minor, with the addition of some triplet figures in the lower voices. However as it progresses, there is an acceleration in the figuration and an increase in dissonance and volume propels it forward to its conclusion. McIntosh refers to this as a ‘free fantasia’, and chant fragments are present (Example 7.9).

Ex. 7.9: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Adagio*, bars 78–80

The musical score for Example 7.9 consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is B-flat minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a melodic line in the upper voice and a more rhythmic, triplet-based line in the lower voices. A piano (*p*) dynamic marking is present. A bracketed section at the bottom of the score is labeled "Chant incipit".

There is also a preponderance of rising semitones in the texture, an allusion to the final chant phrase, as yet unused (Example 7.10).

Ex. 7.10: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Adagio*, bars 90–95

The musical score for Example 7.10 is divided into two systems, each with three staves. The key signature is B-flat minor and the time signature is 3/4. The first system includes a *sempre cresc.* marking. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sextuplets, and a strong emphasis on rising semitone intervals. The notation includes various articulations and dynamic markings.

The title of the third movement gives us a hint of Duruflé’s intentions towards the chant melody. However, despite his devotion to the style of chant, he does little to distinguish this chant hymn from a chorale melody. He states it from the outset in five-part harmony in a crotchet and quaver rhythm with no room for rhythmic freedom. He does not follow the Bach convention of resting all voices on the final of each phrase, but rather provides ample opportunity for the lower voices to continue.

Veni Creator is a hymn, characterised by Hiley as having strophic form and metrical regularity.⁴⁰ This distinguishes it from freer chants such as the gradual *Haec dies* discussed in relation to Widor.

⁴⁰ David Hiley: *Western Plainchant, A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 141

Nelson refers to this opening chorale statement with key signature A major beginning and ending on a chord of the dominant (E major), however it is difficult not to view this rather as a harmonisation to match the Hypomixolydian character of the chant melody, ie E major with a flattened seventh.⁴¹ The variations proceed as follows:

- I melody in the pedal at 8 foot pitch, right hand plays melody based on the third chant phrase, left hand has triplet accompaniment (Example 7.11).

Ex. 7.11: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, i*, bars 1–6

Poco meno lento. ♩=80

- II Manuals only, theme on top with triplet and duplet accompaniment (Example 7.12)

⁴¹ Robert Kent Nelson: 'The Organ Works of Maurice Duruflé', *AO*, xi/7 (7/1977), 34; This is supported by John O'Keeffe: *An Analytical Survey of the Organ Music of Maurice Duruflé 1902–1986*, unpublished MA diss. (St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1988), 8, 13

Ex. 7.12: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, ii*, bars 1–5

Musical score for Ex. 7.12, bars 1–5. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It consists of two systems of piano music. The first system has two staves (treble and bass) with a grand staff bracket. The second system has three staves (treble, middle, and bass) with a grand staff bracket. The music features a melody in the treble staff with triplets and a piano accompaniment in the middle and bass staves. Dynamics include *pp* in the first system and *p* in the second system.

III Canon at a fourth between top and bottom of texture (Example 7.13)

Ex. 7.13: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, iii*, bars 1–6

Andante espressivo ♩=66

Musical score for Ex. 7.13, bars 1–6. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It consists of two systems of piano music. The first system has three staves (treble, middle, and bass) with a grand staff bracket. The second system has three staves (treble, middle, and bass) with a grand staff bracket. The music is marked *Andante espressivo* with a tempo of ♩=66. The first system features a melody in the treble staff and a piano accompaniment in the middle and bass staves. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. Dynamics include *p* in the first system and *poco* in the second system.

IV *Final*

In the *Final*, the chant is presented initially detached over an A pedal (Example 7.14).

Ex. 7.14: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié*, iv, bars 1–6

Allegro ♩=80

Then from bar 7 there is a canon at a fifth featuring the entire chant melody. The pedal line, the consequent, following the top voice, is mainly in minims and crotchets; however the antecedent voice has more rhythmic variation

Ex. 7.15: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, iv*, bars 7–14

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system covers bars 7-14. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and a dynamic marking of *legato*. The music features a complex texture with overlapping lines and a prominent triplet figure in the right hand.

The following passage presents various elements of the chant, initially two fragments of the opening phrase (bars 29–32), then a chordal harmonisation of the third phrase under triplet figuration (bars 33–36). The pedal presents the opening of the first phrase at bars 36 and 40 while the third phrase appears on top at bar 37 (Example 7.16).

Ex. 7.16: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, iv*, bars 29–41

The image shows a single system of musical notation for piano, covering bars 29-41. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a dynamic marking of *f*. It features a triplet of chords in the first two bars and a triplet of chords in the third bar. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. The music includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. A *sempre cresc.* marking is present above the triplet in the third bar.

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of four systems of music. Each system is written for both the right and left hands. The first system begins with the tempo marking "Poco rit." and the dynamic marking "ff". The second system is marked "Tempo". The music features intricate rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and overlapping melodic lines. The key signature is B major, indicated by two sharps (F# and C#). The score shows a transition from a slower, more expressive section to a faster, more rhythmic section.

This overlapping of the elements continues and the subsequent section in B flat major increases the tension and momentum with use of elements of both first and third phrases and also the opening three-note figure from the *Prélude* (Example 7.17).

Ex. 7.17: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, iv*, bars 45–55

Tempo

brillante

p

cresc.

The final section involves a process of expansion: the pedal reiterates the opening phrase of the chant expanding the intervals, while the same pattern occurs in the left hand in minims. These four notes, while resembling the opening of the chant, are also those of the *Amen* printed at the end of the

chant in the *Liber Usualis*.⁴² The right hand distorts the third chant phrase (Example 7.18).

Ex. 7.18: Duruflé: *Prélude, adagio et choral varié, Choral varié, iv*, bars 56–71

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system includes the tempo marking "a piacere" and the dynamic "10". The second system includes the tempo marking "Largamente" and the dynamic "fff". The third system includes the tempo marking "Poco rit." and "Tempo poco più vivo, ♩=72". The fourth system includes the tempo marking "Rit.". The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs, and dynamic markings such as "ff" and "p".

⁴² McIntosh (1973), 71

This *Final* uses canon and imitation as its main devices, combining elements of the first and third chant phrases and manages to reintroduce elements of the *Prélude* albeit not as successfully as in the opening movement. The creative maturity of the opening two movements is somewhat lacking in the *Choral varié*, which although likely to be a student composition, still represents quite an achievement. It would be fair to state that it is only weaker by comparison to the skill of the other two movements in the opinion of this author. If the work is to be related to Tournemire's liturgical commentaries, the rapid triplet movement of the *Prélude* could be seen as an attempt to depict the wind of the Holy Spirit as in Bach's *Pièce d'orgue* and Messiaen's *Le vent de l'esprit* from *Messe de la pentecôte*. The gradual unfolding of the theme in the midst of this leads to the winding down of the movement.

7.7: Duruflé and chant: organ works versus choral works

It is interesting to briefly note some differences between the use of chant melodies in the *Veni Creator* and two masses since the same Gregorian spirit is evident in all of these works.

The rhythmic freedom and paraphrasing of the chant melodies within changing time signatures in the *Prélude sur l'Introit d'Epiphanie* find a larger canvas in the *Requiem* and the *Messe cum jubilo*. The *Prélude, adagio et choral varié* is in a different style and the chant is treated more metrically. In the *Requiem*, the chant is sometimes fully quoted with commentary in the accompaniment, it may be ornamented and in other cases it is harmonised within a suitable rhythm.

Duruflé uses the Solesmes two and three-note units to construct much of the works and the rhythmic pulse and metre are dependant upon these units.⁴³ The opening of the *Requiem* is a good example: he maintains the chant rhythm by constantly changing the time signature. The *Pie Jesu* resembles the *Adagio* in that the chant incipit alone is used and freely paraphrased. In

⁴³ There is much more detail to be found in Frazier (2007), 167, *passim* and in Jarjisian (1991)

the words of David Bleazard, he retains the 'spiritual parameters' of the original chant *Missa pro Defunctis*.⁴⁴

My Requiem is built entirely from the Gregorian themes of the 'Mass of the Dead'. At times the text is paramount, and therefore the orchestra intervenes only to sustain or to comment; at other times an original musical fabric, inspired by the text takes over completely – notably in the *Domine Jesu Christe*, the *Sanctus* and the *Libera me*. In general, I have attempted to penetrate to the essence of Gregorian style, and have tried to reconcile as far as possible the very flexible Gregorian rhythms as established by the Benedictines of Solesmes with the exigencies of modern notation. As to the musical form of each of the pieces, it is dictated simply by the form of the liturgy itself. Then organ plays a merely episodic role: it intervenes not to support the chorus but to underline certain rhythms, or to soften momentarily the too human orchestral sonorities. It represents the idea of comfort, of faith and of hope.⁴⁵

While the text is of profound importance in the masses and motets, it is obviously absent in the *Prélude, adagio et choral varié*. It is unclear whether, like Tournemire, he sought to portray any of the text or themes of the chant, although the constant triplet movement, as mentioned before, has allusions to the Holy Spirit. If there were seven variations, to mirror the seven verses of the hymn, it would seem likely, however this final movement seems to be more a scholastic rather than a mystical exercise. The use of characteristic fragments of a chant is of course not unique to Duruflé, we see it, for example, in Widor in the later nineteenth century (see chapter 5).

7.8: Duruflé: some conclusions

It is a frustration to a great many organists that Duruflé, a composer of such sublime music for the organ, and such a unique voice amongst his peers should have produced so little music for the instrument. His wife explained why:

He composed slowly, with extraordinary awareness, not letting anything pass. And when a work was finished, he revised it again and again, meticulously...he was very busy with his career as a concert artist, as professor at the conservatoire, and as organist at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont and, during the summer at the American Conservatory of Fontainebleau.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Bleazard (1986), 85

⁴⁵ As quoted in Jarjisian (1991), 36 and taken from liner notes to Duruflé: *Requiem*, Epic 1256 (n.d.) reissued as musical heritage society 1509

⁴⁶ As cited in Frazier (2007), 141

His attitudes may reflect his conscientious character and unwillingness to be what his wife referred to as a 'production line composer'.⁴⁷ He was certainly unwilling to publish anything he considered below the standard which he set for himself. In John McIntosh's correspondence, the biographer requested a copy of the *Triptych: Fantasia sur les thèmes grégoriennes*, which he had written in 1927, only to be told that 'The piece is not published for it does not merit publication'.⁴⁸ In Felix Aprahamian's words:

Almost obsessive conscientiousness makes Duruflé one of the least prolific composers...for him musical creation is the result of long laborious perseverance, although his works do not lack spontaneity on that account. He writes with difficulty and is prone to revise and rewrite his works many times before publishing them.⁴⁹

He also confined himself to certain types of pieces and was more predisposed towards music for the organ or orchestra, due to the palette of colours available. He also seemed to be conscious of his place in the repertoire; he felt that he could not contribute to the works available for string quartet or piano for example.⁵⁰ Of course, the relative conservatism of his work was also a factor, in the words of Felix Aprahamian:

Duruflé's timidity and an extreme concern about what he sets down on paper, rather than painstaking researches in a new musical language, are responsible for so modest an output.⁵¹

As Frazier points out, it may have been this conservatism that made him conscious of his style of composition and did not see the need to bring more of these pieces into existence. Of course, it is possible that as the 1903 *motu proprio* and the plainchant revival were so important in the development of the composer and in the works that he did compose, so also the Vatican II directives served as a negative, removing from the liturgy that which inspired him. Writing in the 1940s, Pierre Denis states:

Following the example of his teachers Vierne, Tournemire and Dukas, M. Duruflé has remained aloof from the fashions and affections of the time, pursuing slowly and surely his creative labours and giving us but one regret: that of being an overly conscientious composer and of not producing except

⁴⁷ Taken from Frazier (2007), 142

⁴⁸ McIntosh (1973), 188

⁴⁹ Felix Aprahamian: 'Maurice Duruflé', *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th edn, ed Eric Blom (London: Macmillan Press, 1954), ii, 823–4

⁵⁰ McIntosh (1973), 7–8

⁵¹ Cited in Frazier (2007), 142 and taken from Felix Aprahamian: 'Maurice Duruflé and his Requiem', *Listener*, (11/4/1957), 613

at rare intervals these finally chiselled pages of which the long period of gestation guarantees a certain future.⁵²

His work has received widespread acclaim, both in France and beyond, and in 1961 he received the title 'Commander of Saint Gregory the Great' for his religious compositions amongst other awards. However there are those who see less value in his work. The American composer Ned Rorem referred to the *Requiem* as 'soundtracky', 'music that doesn't merit attention' and 'Gregorian chant in thirds', adding that its weakness is that it is slow and soft for the majority of the time.⁵³ Such negativity fails to take into account the level of sublime inventiveness inherent in the work, its subtlety, and its sense of ethereal beauty. It has survived the test of time to become an enduring part of the canon. Indeed a testament to its universality is the quotation of Robert's Shaw's 1987 recording of the *Pie Jesu* in Michael Jackson's *HIStory* album of 1995, at the beginning of a track entitled *Little Susie*, an appearance which would not have been appreciated by the austere composer.

Edward Pendleton once said 'Maurice Duruflé has won renown through the sheer merit of his work'.⁵⁴ His conservatism was not a conscious decision: 'He did not seek to innovate: he was searching only to be sincere with himself'.⁵⁵

7.9: Olivier Messiaen: innovator

Olivier Messiaen was born in Avignon on 10 December 1908, son of Pierre, a renowned translator of English literature, and Cécile Sauvage, a poet. The influence of both his parents on his artistic development is said to have been profound; from his father he gained an appreciation of Shakespeare and other literary figures and from his mother a love of poetry.⁵⁶ Roger Nichols goes so far as to suggest that Messiaen 'the artist' predated Messiaen the child due to

⁵² As cited in McIntosh (1973) and from Pierre Denis: 'Les Organistes français d'aujourd'hui', *l'Orgue*, no.50, (1949)

⁵³ Frazier (2007), 99

⁵⁴ As cited in McIntosh (1973) and taken from Edmund Pendleton: 'France: New Compositions Hold Center Stage in Paris', *MA*, lxxx, (1950), 27

⁵⁵ Marie-Claire Alain quoted in Frazier (2007), 97–98

⁵⁶ 'Shakespeare is an author who develops the imagination powerfully', as quoted in Claude Samuel: *Conversations with Olivier Messiaen*, transl. Felix Aprahamian (London: Stainer and Bell, 1976), original French (Editions Pierre Belfond, 1967), 6–7

the composition by his mother of *L'âme en bourgeon*, a series of poems dedicated to her unborn child.⁵⁷ He began to teach himself the piano in Grenoble whilst his father was serving in the First World War and in 1918, moving to Nantes, he began formal piano and harmony lessons. The presentation by his harmony teacher of a score for Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* when he was ten that was to have a profound effect on him. In his own words: 'a real bomb...probably the most decisive influence I have been subject to'.⁵⁸ In 1919, he entered the Paris Conservatoire and studied with Jean Gallon (harmony), Marcel Dupré (organ), Maurice Emmanuel (music history), Joseph Baggers (percussion), Georges Caussade (counterpoint and fugue), Georges Falkenburg and Paul Dukas (composition), winning five first prizes including organ and improvisation (1929) and composition (1930).⁵⁹ One of the more important influences gleaned from his time at the conservatoire was through his study of Indian rhythms, Greek rhythms, plainchant, folk music, duration and philosophies of time.⁶⁰

In 1931, at an unusually young age, he succeeded Charles Quef as organist in Guilmant's former church of La Trinité in Paris and became a professor at both L'École Normale de Musique and the Schola Cantorum. In the same year, he married the violinist Claire Delbos and joined with André Jolivet, Daniel Lesur and Ives Baudrier to form *La Jeune France*, an alliance determined to restore to French music a greater sense of human spirituality and seriousness.⁶¹ The fruits of this alliance were to be seen almost immediately in his first song cycle *Poèmes pour Mi* (1936), which explore the spiritual side of marriage.⁶²

⁵⁷ 'The Flowering Soul', Roger Nichols: *Messiaen* (Oxford: OUP, 1975), 7

⁵⁸ Samuel (1967/1976), 69

⁵⁹ Robert Sherlaw Johnson: *Messiaen* (London: J.M. Dent, 1975), 10; Paul Griffiths: 'Messiaen, Olivier (Eugène Prosper Charles)', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London/New York: Macmillan, 2001), xvi, 493

⁶⁰ Johnson (1975), 10

⁶¹ Johnson (1975), 10; Further information on the activities and influence of the group is to be found in in Nigel Simeone: 'La Spirale and La Jeune France: Group Identities', *MT*, cixiii/1880 (Autumn 2002), 10–36

⁶² *Mi* was the pet name which Messiaen gave to his wife. The poems number nine, the same figure as movements in *la Nativité* (1935), Nichols (1975), 25

After joining the army on the outbreak of the Second World War, Messiaen spent two years in a prison camp during which time he wrote the seminal *Quatuor pour le fin des temps*. In 1942, he was appointed professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatoire and began to give private composition lessons. It was during this time that he instructed Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez. He was made professor of analysis, aesthetics and rhythm in 1947 and a professor of composition in 1966.

During the latter half of the century, he indulged his devotion to nature, manifest in his music particularly through the quotation of birdsong from around the world, notated during his extensive travels. The death of his first wife was followed by his second marriage, to his long-time friend Yvonne Loriod in 1962. He died in 1992, having witnessed the dedication of 'Mount Messiaen' in Utah before his death.⁶³

7.10: A brief synopsis of Messiaen's music language

The features of Messiaen's early musical language are discussed in his *Technique de mon langage musical*, his technical treatise published in 1942.⁶⁴ Many of the techniques laid out in this work are familiar, so it will serve here to summarise them as we will see later how he applied them to his use of chant. It is clear from Messiaen's writings that the traditional ideas of progressive harmony and the creation of tension and resolution are not relevant as much as non-functional decorative harmony. This harmonic writing is vertical and static by nature, in part to reflect the eternal nature of his religious subject matter. He employs added-note harmony including notes beyond the traditional sixth, seventh or ninth to encompass other notes. In his words 'in the resonance of a low C, a very acute ear perceives an F sharp. Therefore we are authorised to treat this F sharp as an added note in the perfect chord, already provided with an added sixth'.⁶⁵ The movement of these added notes is not as we would expect of our understanding of a 'resolution' and therefore the idea of progression becomes perfunctory at best. The Messiaenic device

⁶³ Griffiths (2001), 494

⁶⁴ Johnson (1975), 13

⁶⁵ Olivier Messiaen: *Technique de mon langage musical*, transl. John Satterfield (Paris: Leduc, 1942), 47

of the 'chord on the dominant' is also mentioned, where multiple added appoggiaturas create a situation whereby a dissonant chord becomes the resolution of a more complex dissonance. This aids in the creation of the stasis referred to above.⁶⁶

Much of Messiaen's harmonic and melodic writing is based around his modes of limited transposition, which divide the octave into two, three or four equal intervals creating a system of seven scales or modes which have a finite number of transpositions before returning to a set of notes used before. The result of these modes and the 'chords of resonance' and 'chord of fourths' serves to unite harmony and timbre and emphasise Messiaen's preoccupation with colour; that instead of a melody being harmonised in what we might regard as a conventional sense, it is instead coloured: 'when I hear a score or read it, hearing it in my mind, I also see in my mind's eye corresponding colours'.⁶⁷ This quote confirms that Messiaen had a form of synaesthesia. Melody plays an important role in Messiaen's output and tends to be derived from sources such as chant and birdsong, features which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

In terms of rhythm, Messiaen became more imaginative early in his career, due to exposure to the field of ancient Greek rhythms, and Indian *deçî-tâlas*.⁶⁸ His principles of added small notes, rather than subdivision of a beat, were the innovation of *La nativité*. Here are some of his thoughts on rhythmic construction:

More rhythms made monotonous by their squareness? We want to breathe freely! Let us leave to one side vague (and simple polytonalities and rediscover sumptuous modality, which generates a warm and vibrant atmosphere in keeping with the supple and sinuous rhythms and free-flowing imagination, unhindered by 'metre'.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Johnson (1975), 15

⁶⁷ Samuel (1967/1976), 14

⁶⁸ Johnson (1975), 32; Nichols (1975), 21

A full table of the 120 Indian *deçî-tâlas* is printed in Johnson (1975), 194–198

⁶⁹ Stephen Broad 'Messiaen and Cocteau', *Messiaen: Music, Art, Literature*, eds. Christopher Dingle and Nigel Simeone (London: Ashgate, 2007), 6 and taken from Messiaen: 'La Transmutation des enthousiasmes', *La Page musicale* (16/4/1936), 1

It is this desire to break from the conventional ideas of division of rhythm which, whilst not necessarily being immediately obvious, would seem to create a natural resonance with some of the more important elements of his musical language, not least non-western rhythmic, structures, birdsong and plainchant.

7.11: Messiaen the organist

In 1931, Messiaen was appointed as *organiste titulaire* of the prestigious church of La Trinité in Paris. This was an extraordinary event, given that Messiaen started the organ relatively late, being nineteen when he entered Dupré's class but awarded a *premier prix* after only two years. He had served as a regular understudy to the ailing Charles Quef from 1929 and following Quef's death the support of Widor and the interventions of Dupré, Emmanuel, Marchal and Tournemire led to his appointment (initially on a trial basis) as *titulaire*.⁷⁰ Despite some initial misgivings on the behalf of the clergy about the language of his music and improvisations, he served this position with dignity for many decades.

Messiaen, although not primarily an organ composer, has an extensive output for the instrument.⁷¹ In all, it totals sixty-three pieces which 'which make up one of the most ineffable sanctuaries of sound in the history of music, all to the glory of God'.⁷² Unlike Widor, Dupré, or even late Tournemire, there are no pieces entitled 'symphony', 'sonata', *fantaisie* or 'fugue' although such forms are implicit in some pieces. Rather he created conceptual pieces depicting theological concepts, a topic which will be discussed in greater

⁷⁰ Apparently, a chance encounter on a train between Quef and Dupré led to this. Quef asked Dupré to recommend a student to be a deputy and eventual successor. Dupré recommended Messiaen and the two became friends. Nigel Simeone: 'Chez Messiaen, tout est prière': Messiaen's Appointment at the Trinité', *MT*, civx/1889 (Winter 2004),37

⁷¹ *Esquisse modale* (1927, unpubd), *Le banquet céleste* (1928, rev. 1960), *L'hôte aimable des âmes* (1928, unpubd), *Variations écossaises* (1928, unpubd), *Offrande au Saint-Sacrement c1930–35*, unpubd), *Diptyque, essai sur la vie terrestre et l'éternité bienheureuse* (1930), *Apparition de l'église éternelle* (1932), *L'ascension* (after orch. work, 1933–4), *La nativité du seigneur*, neuf méditations (1935), *Les corps glorieux, sept visions brèves de la vie des ressuscités* (1939), *Messe de la pentecôte* (1949–50), *Livre d'orgue* (1951), *Verset pour la fête de la dédicace* (1960), *Monodie* (1963), *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité* (1969), *Livre du Saint Sacrement* (1984), *Prélude* (unpubd)

⁷² Pere Jean-Rodolphe Kars: 'The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy', *Messiaen: Music, Art, Literature*, eds. Christopher Dingle and Nigel Simeone (London: Ashgate, 2007), 324

depth later on in this chapter. It is also difficult to distinguish any major style or language differences between the organ works and any other contemporaneous works. This works in both directions, however, for example there is extensive use of plainchant in his non-organ works, which was not a common practice. This again will be discussed later, suffice it to state that this points to Messiaen's lack of distinction between the church and the concert hall, rather that 'liturgy' as a concept could occur anywhere. His works are not exclusively religious, but at no point is the religious aspect absent.⁷³

7.12: Religion and organ works of Messiaen

A comprehensive discussion of religious belief and its impact on the music of Messiaen is potentially of a vast proportion and well beyond the scope of this study. There have been a multitude of such discussions by both musicologists and theologians such is the interest in the complex theological and religious beliefs of this creative artist. This is of course assisted by the existence of numerous interviews and quotations from the author. It will serve, however, to make some general comments and provide some examples which will have relevance when dealing with reasons for the use of chant in his organ works.

Messiaen's music revolves around three key concepts: nature, the theme of human love and the theological aspects of the Catholic faith. His output is devoted exclusively to themes associated with religious faith and divinity. He noted:

I've the good fortune to be born a Catholic. I was born a believer...that is the first aspect of my work, the noblest and, doubtless, the most useful and valuable; perhaps the only one which I won't regret at the hour of my death.⁷⁴

At the time of his appointment to La Trinité, Tournemire, in a letter dated 22 July, wrote to Curé Laurent describing him as 'a pure Christian, whose

⁷³ Kars (2007), 325

⁷⁴ Samuel (1967/1976), 2

mysticism is well balanced'.⁷⁵ Up to eighty per cent of his work draws explicitly from Catholic doctrine.⁷⁶

The musical expression of this faith falls into a number of categories: the character of Christ and his divinity (his nativity, transfiguration, resurrection and ascension), the Eucharist and the mystery of the Holy Trinity. All of these themes deal with the meeting of the Divine with the Human and much create a sense of the gulf that exists between God and Man.⁷⁷ Devices such as *ostinati*, reversal of events and insertion of time values assist in evoking the eternal or the immeasurable.⁷⁸

As noted by Siglind Bruhn:

Influenced by mystics like Saint John of the Cross and Saint Thérèse de Lisieux, his spirituality permeates all his works from the explicitly sacred to the allegedly secular.⁷⁹

However, there is a distinction between Messiaen's music and that of Tournemire for example. In the words of Sherlaw Johnson

Messiaen himself always claimed to write theological music as opposed to mystical music, which he insists is not his affair.⁸⁰

In his own words:

Catholic religion is a real fairy-story- with this difference, it is all true. I have therefore, in the words of Ernest Hello, tried to produce 'a music that touches all things without ceasing to touch God'. But, if my music is a spontaneous act of faith, without premeditation, it is by no means a mystical music.⁸¹

There are a number of techniques employed throughout Messiaen's output as he attempted to express the eternal; as we have noted earlier, the stasis of *Le banquet celeste* is an expression of eternity. In a slightly more subtle way, the use of non-retrogradable rhythms provide another example of this, the irreversibility of time and the fact of having a central note which is the present

⁷⁵ Simeone (2004), 40

⁷⁶ Robert Fabbi: 'Theological Implications of Restrictions on Messiaen's Compositional Processes', *Messiaen's Language of Mystical Love*, ed. Siglind Bruhn, (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1998), 72

⁷⁷ This idea of the mystical was touched on in chapter 6 with regard to the relationship between liturgical music pre and post Vatican II).

⁷⁸ Griffiths (2001), 495

⁷⁹ Siglind Bruhn in the preface to ed. Bruhn (1998), pg vii

⁸⁰ Johnson, 45

⁸¹ Olivier Messiaen and Bernard Gavoty: 'Who Are You, Olivier Messiaen?', *Tempo*, no.58 (Summer 1961), 34

but not the past or future, showing again how deeply ingrained his theological concepts were in the music.⁸² The theological preparation was almost on par with the writing of the music in his eyes.⁸³

7.13: Chant in the organ music of Messiaen

Only plainchant possesses at once the purity, the joy, the lightness necessary for the soul to take off towards the Truth.⁸⁴

As noted within Messiaen's language and indeed his musical and philosophical outlook, there exist a number of important elements that serve to unite in the creation of his music. A number of initial points must be made at this juncture.

Firstly, unlike a number of the figures featured over the course of this study, it is much more difficult to use the term 'chant-based', in relation to any of his organ works. In each case where chant is used, it is of varying degrees of importance, however in general it serves as one factor within an overall group of elements and techniques. Unlike the music of Tournemire for example, where the chant is the driving force, in Messiaen it is, for the most part, one (albeit often important) element. A corollary of this is that it is difficult to identify the pieces which owe a debt to chant in a definitive way and to isolate them and their religious slant from the more secular pieces.

Messiaen's story about the conception of the *Messe de la pentecôte* notes that its completion led to his abandonment of improvisation. However as a practical organist, this was not to continue:

I am particularly attached to my post as Sunday organist. I am, at that moment in complete harmony with that which is going on at the altar, almost like a priest...During the service I participate in the unfolding mystery, that which is held in the bread and the wine, that which is transubstantiation. The

⁸² Jean Marie Wu: 'Mystical Symbols of Faith: Olivier Messiaen's Charm of Impossibilities', *Messiaen's Language of Mystical Love*, ed. Siglind Bruhn (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1998), 85–120

⁸³ Jean Boivin: 'Messiaen's Teaching at the Paris Conservatoire: A Humanist's Legacy', *Messiaen's Language of Mystical Love*, ed. Siglind Bruhn (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1998), 19

⁸⁴ Kars (2007), 327 and taken from a 1977 speech at Notre Dame published in *Conférence de Notre Dame* by Alphonse Leduc in 1978

Holy Sacrament is present as I improvise and I know that in this situation, what I do is better here than in concert.⁸⁵

As with all of its forebears and contemporaries, this art was necessary for him to fulfil his duties at La Trinité.

While, many of the figures associated with this study have plainly had their harmonic language affected by the modal world of plainchant, in Messiaen's case his own modal language was such a strong feature of his style that church modes did not have a place in his work. This is made clear in his *Technique*. As with birdsong, the nuances of the modes and the character of the medieval chants were a prevalent force.⁸⁶ There is an obvious parallel between the free rhythmic philosophies of Messiaen and the increasing consensus as to the free nature of chant transmission.

It would be unwise to approach the use of chant in terms of the search for *cantus firmus* and many of the other techniques which have been discussed in the earlier chapters of this work. The chants occur in a relatively small number of guises, either adapted into a mode, presented monophonically or fragment on top of, or within a texture. When he quotes from a plainchant source, it is altered through the transmission into his modes (never church modes) and therefore only the contour of the melody is maintained.⁸⁷ This creates the difficulty of recognising the chant melodies which have been altered through the 'prism of his language'. Therefore it can be hard to ascertain whether these are adapted chant melodies or simply modal melodies in a similar style. David Nelson limits his study (within the organ music) to specific places where Messiaen labels the chant. Rather astonishingly, this is confined to merely three organ works: *Verset pour la fête de la dédicace*, *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité* and *Livre du Saint Sacrement*.⁸⁸ In each of the cases, the chant is labelled and its

⁸⁵ Kars (2007), 326 and taken from *Caecilia* (1993)

⁸⁶ Griffiths (1985), 149

⁸⁷ Fabbi (1998), 68

⁸⁸ David Lowell Nelson: *An Analysis of Olivier Messiaen's Chant Paraphrases*, unpublished PhD diss. (Northwestern University Illinois, 1992), 7, *passim*; he notes that in total there are five published works where the chant is labelled, the others being *Couleurs de la cité celeste* and *et exspecto*

reasoning is discussed by Messiaen. For example, the *Verset pour la fête de la dédicace* makes use of two chants from the feast in question

Table 5.2: A list of chants in the organ music of Messiaen

<i>Verset pour la fête de la dédicace</i>	<i>Alleluia</i> for the Feast of the Dedication of a Church (two settings)
<i>Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité</i>	II <i>Alleluia</i> for the Feast of the Dedication of a Church VI Offertory for Epiphany Gradual for Epiphany <i>Alleluia</i> for Epiphany VIII <i>Alleluia</i> for All Saints Day
<i>Livre du Sainte Sacrament</i>	<i>Alleluia</i> de la Fete Dieu Introit: Puer natus est Communion de la Fete Dieu Sequence Lauda Sion Graduale for Epiphany

Below are some examples of the adaptation of chant which occurs in the aforementioned pieces:

Ex. 7.19a: *Alleluia* for the Feast of the Dedication of a Church

VII.

A L-le- lu- ia. * *ij.* Ψ. Ad-
 o -ra- bo ad templum san- ctum tu-

Ex. 7.19b: Messiaen: *Verset pour la fête de la Dédicace*, bars 16–20

[Chant distorted in the pedal]

Lent, berceur (Alleluia de la Dédicace)
legato p

f

Ex. 7.19c: Messiaen: *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité*, II, bars

1–9

ff *f*


ff *f* *ff*

ff *mf* *p*


rall. - - - - - molto

We see in the above example and in Example 7.20b, the use of monody in the presentation of the chant. In each case, the presentation in octaves strengthens the chant, whilst, Example 7.20b, while obviously derived from the *Reges Tharsis*, relishes the use of repeated notes in the chant, so similar to some of the birdsong which Messiaen would have encountered.


Ex. 7.20a: *Reges Tharsis* (Offertory for the Epiphany)

v. 

R Egēs Tharsis * et in- su- lae mu-
 ne- ra of- fe- rent : reges A- ra- bum et Sa-
 ba- do- na ad-du- cent :



Ex. 7.20b: Messiaen: *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité*, VI, bars 1–4



Un peu vif pressez vif un peu vif rall. molto

Un peu vif rall. rall. molto Lent

ff

f legato

legato f *pp*

Example 7.21 presents the Gradual for the same feast in a more intense texture and distorted in fifths in the upper parts.

Ex. 7.21a: *Omnes de Sabavenient*, verse

Surge,

et illumina- re Jeru- sa- lem

qui-a glo- ri-a Do- mi-ni su- per te * or- ta

est.

Ex. 7.21b: Messiaen: *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité*, VI, bars 15–18

Un peu vif

f

mf legato

Movement VIII provides both monophonic and homophonic parts of the *Alleluia* for All Saints Day

Ex. 7.22a: *Alleluia* for All Saints Day,

VIII.

A L- le- lu- ia. * ij.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'VIII.' and contains a monophonic line of music with lyrics 'A L- le- lu- ia. * ij.' written below it. The bottom staff contains a homophonic accompaniment for the same text. The music is in a simple, rhythmic style with a clear melodic line and a supporting bass line.

Ex. 7.22b: Messiaen: *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité*, VIII,
bars 1–5

(Alleluia de la Toussaint) (Dieu est simple)

Un peu vif

f

poco rall.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'Un peu vif' and a dynamic marking '*f*'. The second staff ends with the tempo marking 'poco rall.'. The music consists of a single melodic line with various rhythmic patterns and phrasing.

Ex. 7.22c: Messiaen: *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte-Trinité*, VIII, bars 47–55

Un peu vif (Alleluia de la Toussaint)

In its eighteen movements *Livre du Saint Sacrement* has four movements which utilise five chants as seen above. The processes are broadly similar: use of monody (Example 7.23b, Example 7.24), use of homophonic presentation (Example 7.23c, Example 7.25). Some of the examples below demonstrate this.

Ex. 7.23a: *Puer natus est*,

VII. 

P U-er * na- tus est no- bis, et fi- li- us da- tus est



no- bis : cu- jus impe- ri- um super hu- me- rum e-



jus : et voca- bi- tur nomen e- jus, magni consi-



li- i Ange- lus.

Ex. 7.23b: Messiaen: *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, V, bar 11

f

un peu rall.

Ex. 7.23c: Messiaen: *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, V, bars 62–67

Un peu lent Lent Très lent

mf *mf*

legato pp (*pp*)

legato pp (*pp*)

Ex. 7.24: Messiaen: *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, III, bars 1–2

Modéré, un peu vif (*Alleluia de la Fete Dieu*)

legato mf

legato mf

Ex. 7.25: Messiaen: *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, XII, bars 101–105

These above examples provide the quantifiable instances of chant occurring in Messiaen's organ works, quite simply due to his labelling of the melodies. However, despite the brevity of this list, it is possible to note the presence of chant in other instances in the organ works, despite the lack of a label by the composer. Here we will see a number of examples, in order to avoid the trap of differentiating between actual chant and chant-like melody.

The earliest implied use of chant in Messiaen's organ music seem to occur in *L'ascension*, when the opening modal melody suggests a chant, most likely *Pater manifestavi tuam* which is the magnificat antiphon for the first vespers of the Ascension. The pattern and contour of the melody would seem to exhibit some similarities to the chant, however such a connection can be by no means certain (Example 7.26).

Ex. 7.26a: *Pater manifestavi tuam*

VI.

P A-ter, * ma-ni-festavi nomen tu-um homi-ni-bus
 quos dedisti mi- hi : nunc autem pro e- is ro- go, non
 pro mundo, qui- a ad te va- do, alle-lu-ia.

Ex. 7.26b: Messiaen: *L'ascension*, I, bars 1–5

Très lent et majestueux
 Very slow and maestoso

legato
pp *mf* *pp* *mf*

Again the nature of the melody at the beginning of movement 2, which is monadic and free in character, indicates that it may have come from a plainchant source. Griffiths suggests this, whilst not identifying the source.

Ex. 7.27: Messiaen: *L'ascension*, II, bars /1–7

Pas trop modéré, et clair
Not too moderate, and clear

Further such inferences occur in *La nativité*; Griffiths notes a reference to *Puer natus est nobis* in the first movement, that one theme of the final movement is a Magnificat and also a reference to the Easter *Victimae paschali laudes* in *Le verbe* (Example 7.28).⁸⁹

Ex. 7.28a: *Victimae Paschali Laudes*

Vi-cti-mæ Pas-cha-li laudes * immolent Christi-a-ni.

⁸⁹ Griffiths (1985), 54–62

Ex. 7.28b: Messiaen: *La nativité du Seigneur*, IV, bars 48–53

Extrêmement lent et solennel

mf legato

pp

pp legato

The latter would seem to be thematically unlikely (unless acting to foresee Christ's eventual fate) though there are definite similarities in contour between the two, aligned with a reluctance to dismiss any subtle symbolic act which Messiaen may have embarked upon. Of course, on the other hand, both *L'ascension* and *La nativité* were written in the 1930s, so therefore, it seems unusual that he was never asked or indeed volunteered to confirm or deny these possible connections over the course of the following sixty years. Other possible chant themes do impress upon the ear more obviously. The monophonic first movement of *Les corps glorieux* bears a striking resemblance to the *Salve Regina* (the same chant used by Widor in his second symphony (see chapter 5).

Ex. 7.29: Messiaen: *Les corps glorieux*, I, bars 1–5

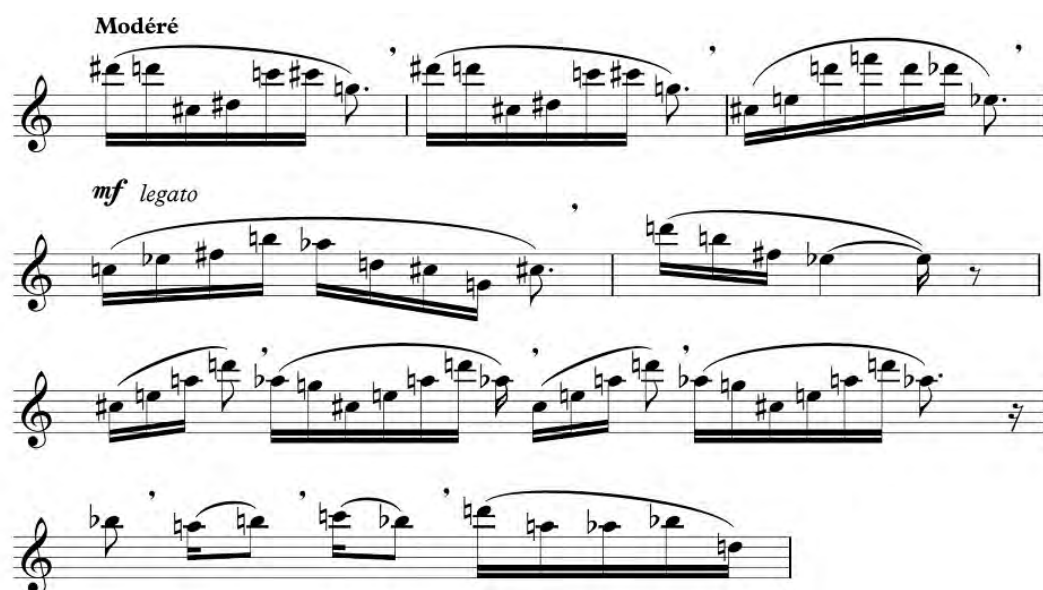
Bien modéré



The *Messe de la pentecôte*, with its five movement structure, mirroring the endeavours of Tournemire before him to create a liturgical suite, is, as noted earlier, one of only two examples of music written specifically for use in the liturgy of the church. We do know that the piece originated in improvisation and also that Messiaen, like his colleagues, would have been used to improvising on plainsong. However, Messiaen, who has put numerous labels on the score (for example: *rythmes grecs*, *rythmes hindous*, *interversions sur 5 durées chromatiques*), does not provide us with any hard evidence of a specific chant which he employs. There are some passages of monody present, though none marked with a specific chant seemingly more like birdsong than chant (Example 7.30).

Ex. 7.30: Messiaen: *Messe de la pentecôte*, II, bars 11–21

Modéré



In the third movement however, there is a passage marked *neumes plainchantesques* (Example 7.31), which elects not to be specific as to the chant which may be in mind.

Ex. 7.31: Messiaen: *Messe de la pentecôte*, III, bars 3–5



music. The choices of chant in the organ works discussed above are generally obvious, reflecting the themes of the pieces. His fondness for attaching biblical quotes to the beginnings of his movements can also shed some light as to his train of thought. An example to be seen is from his orchestral work *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*. The fourth movement, entitled in the score as ‘They shall be raised in glory, with a new name, when the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy’⁹¹, and contains a labelled (altered) quotation from the Introit of Easter (from bar 1) and the *Alleluia* of Easter. In both cases, recognition of these quotations is not easy; however, the symbolism is of paramount importance to the composer.

Ex. 7.32a: *Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum* (Introit for Easter)

iv.

R Esur-rexi, * et adhuc tecum sum, al- le-

lu- ia: po- su- i-sti su- per me ma- num tu- am,

al- le- lu- ia: mi-ra- bi-lis fa- cta est sci- en-

Ex. 7.32b: Messiaen: *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*, IV, bars 4–8

Bien modéré (♩=84)

mf

mf

mf

f

⁹¹ *Ils ressusciteront, glorieux, avec un nom nouveau dans le concert joyeux des étoiles et les acclamations des fils du ciel*, 1 Paul 15:43, Apocalypse of John 2: 17, Job 38:7, and taken from the score Olivier Messiaen: *et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1964), 43

This does not make him unique. A number of the composers in this study have engaged in some form of symbolism. For Messiaen, however, this goes beyond the mere quoting of an obvious chant in a Christmas-related piece. Widor and Dupré, for example used chant for different reasons (see chapter 5), Dupré in particular seeking to use the four chants of the *Symphonie-Passion* in an unsubtle way, whilst not necessarily making their characteristics as chants an important part of the harmonic, rhythmic and structural language of the work. In Messiaen, this is different and the chants hold as much a symbolic angle as a structural one. As noted by Jason Hardink, the only direct chant paraphrase in *Vingt regards* (a Christmas-themed work) is from the Easter mass.⁹² As David Lowell Nelson notes, chant was not as much an inspiration but a means by which to convey a religious message. The ability to identify the chant melody was irrelevant to this.⁹³ In this way chant is another form of *langage communicable*.

7.15: Concert music versus liturgical music in Messiaen's works

One of the themes which permeate this study relates to the distinction between liturgical and concert music. It is difficult to fully define terms such as 'liturgical', 'sacred' and 'secular', and they at best lead to the creation of arbitrary lines. Nevertheless Messiaen provides an interesting study on this topic. As we have seen, the 'sacredness' of music for use in church was in a constant state of flux throughout the period discussed here. The various early documents on the use of chant specified criteria which would prevent secular music from 'invading' the church. The *grand siècle* was a period of great achievement with regard to organ music; however the gallant dances of the French court are a phantom presence in the work of François Couperin and his contemporaries. Throughout the period of renewal in the nineteenth century, this blurred line existed and has been documented and discussed. For some, the need to purge the church of secular sounds was a mission which culminated in the 1903 *motu proprio*. Of course, the difficulty in maintaining a true style of Church music was not unique to this period and as

⁹² Jason Hardink: *Messiaen and Plainchant*, unpublished DMA diss. (Rice University, 2007), 3

⁹³ Nelson (1992), 165

we have seen was present as early as the time of Couperin and indeed may be regarded as existing to the present day. With the work of Messiaen, however, the argument moved in a different direction. While the previous problem involved the insertion of non-liturgical or music not of a religious origin into the church, Messiaen takes the sacred out of the religious setting (whereby I mean the mass or office).

In an interview with *Du coterd de la Trinité: le journal de la paroisse* in 1991, Messiaen is asked about liturgical renewal. Although the question was more likely asked to illicit opinions on post-Vatican II liturgical music, the answer provided gives us some insight into why in the vast output of a man who had been a church musician for sixty years there exists only two pieces meant for use within the mass.

Q: What do you think about the current renewal of the liturgy?

A: Quite frankly, I think there is only one worthwhile kind of liturgical music: plainchant. There has never been, and never will be, anything better. Firstly, it is monodic music, composed at a time when the complications of chords and harmonies were unknown. The second reason fills me with admiration: plainchant is not by a composer, but was written by anonymous monks. That seems extraordinary! I can't imagine a twentieth-century composer declining to sign his work.⁹⁴

For Messiaen, the term 'liturgical' itself provides some difficulty. While seeing all music as sacred, liturgy extended beyond the barriers of the religious service. In him, we encounter the maturation of a new idea: that of the 'concert liturgy'. For him, there was no distinction between religious music and secular music, therefore the natural line between 'church' liturgy and 'concert' liturgy was, to him, arbitrary at best. *La messe de la pentecôte* and *O sacrum convivium* (a choral work), stand alone as works intended for use during the traditional church liturgy.⁹⁵ The vast late organ cycles were not written to have a presence during the services at La Trinité, but offered a different way of viewing liturgy. It would be wrong to say that this is unique to Messiaen. We see in the larger religious organ works of Dupré for example,

⁹⁴ Taken from 'Le musicien de la joie: Entretien avec Olivier Messiaen 60 années à la Trinité', in *Du coterd de la Trinité: le journal de la paroisse* (3/1991), 1–2 and quoted in Simeone (2004), 53

⁹⁵ Griffiths (1985), 156

such a rethinking of the power of the organ as a religious force. In practical terms, for the conclusion of this study, it means that as Messiaen viewed all music on equal terms with regard to religiosity plainchant occurs throughout his oeuvre, in organ music, concert orchestral music and beyond.

I intended to accomplish a liturgical act, that is to say to bring a kind of office, a kind of organised act of praise, into the concert hall. This was original because I removed the idea of the Catholic liturgy from the stone edifices intended for worship and installed it in buildings not meant for this type of music but which, ultimately, accommodate it quite well.⁹⁶

In the conversations with Claude Samuel, the interviewer asks Messiaen about the relationship between his liturgical and secular writing:

CS: When you're writing a liturgical work yourself, do you use the same language as for a secular work?

OM: Near enough. This of course scandalises some people. To me it seems ridiculous and detrimental to contradict one's style and adopt different aesthetics under the pretext that the subject and idea to be expressed have changed.⁹⁷

He expands further on this idea:

I've imposed the truths of the faith on the concert room, but in a liturgical sense. Proof of this is that my main religious concert works is called *Trois petites liturgies*. I didn't choose this title idly. I thought of performing a liturgical act, that is to say, transporting a kind of office, a kind of organised act of praise into the concert room⁹⁸

7.16: Conclusion: Duruflé versus Messiaen and the twentieth century

While other performance media were becoming more and more radical during the experimental first half of the twentieth century, the organ remained either in romantic mode or in a movement towards a revival in classical building techniques. Organ composers tended towards the more conservative or romantic. The title 'twentieth century composer' applies to some extent in the case of almost all of the figures mentioned in the preceding three chapters. Dupré, Widor and Guilmant were surely still romantics, Tournemire and Duruflé could be labelled impressionists, while in Langlais and more so Messiaen we see a more radical approach.

⁹⁶ Olivier Messiaen: *Music and Colour, Conversations with Claude Samuel* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1994), 22

⁹⁷ Samuel (1967/1976), 3

⁹⁸ Samuel (1967/1976), 3–4

The last two composers excepted, it is difficult to analyse the view of the organ as an instrument in the twentieth century, Some would say that it had the capacity to be irrelevant, that the a second pinnacle in its artistic evolution had been reached with the romantic organ, that the only way to match this was to attempt a return to the organs of the first pinnacle of the *grand siècle*, a view which led to the destruction of some of Cavallé-Coll's organs in the pursuit of a neo-classical aesthetic.

In Duruflé and Messiaen, we see two very contrasting approaches, both to composition and specifically to the role of chant. In Duruflé, we have a composer who had a remarkably conservative outlook. Described by Ebrecht as 'The Last Impressionist', his output is small and inextricably linked to restored chant. His 'Gregorian soul' meant that his music is infused with the modal flavour and melodic shape of chant. As noted above, his music could be viewed as having a positive role in the Solesmes revival, that it proved that chant had a place in the impressionistic world of Debussy and Ravel and that both the chant and the impressionistic language could maintain their integrity and survive the dilution of their character after combination. In Messiaen however, we see something quite different. In him, we see a composer whose innovations and forward thinking allowed the organ to remain relevant in a musical world which was thirsting for advancement. Credit for this must also be apportioned to Langlais and Alain, the former having engaged in some experimentation (the second organ symphony as an example) and the latter having died tragically at an early age. It would seem that one of the reasons for Messiaen's success in bringing the organ into what he might loosely call the artistic twentieth century is that he did not distinguish between the organ and other compositional media. He had certain credibility as a composer in all genres and was not merely another organist who wrote for his own instrument. The incorporation of his innovative techniques into his organ music (as we have noted there were periods when he did not write at all for the organ) allowed the organ to move forward as an instrument. In the case of chant, it was a feature which was present throughout his non-organ repertoire as well.

It would be incorrect to say that there are no similarities between Duruflé and Messiaen. Both grew up in and worked in the same Paris and were exposed to the same musical influences. In both their organ outputs we see that chant was a much stronger influence than amongst other composers. We also see that the application of their organ music to the religious service was not an overriding concern. Neither composer was attempting to emulate the liturgical feat of Tournemire. Duruflé's *Prelude, adagio et choral varié* has little function in the liturgy, save as a voluntary and no evidence exists that it was written for this purpose. With the exception of the *La messe de la pentecôte*, none of Messiaen's organ music was conceived with the mass or office in mind. Instead, he expands our notion of what liturgy is and continually blurs the distinctions between religious, theological, mystical, sacred and liturgical music. The music to be heard in the recital or concert was not to be different to that heard in the church, however unlike the situation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the secular invaded the church, in Messiaen the religious themes and chant melodies invade all manner of compositions not only for the organ.

That chant remained a vibrant element in music of the twentieth century is testament to the durability of the melodies and the value of synthesis between old and new. Through, these ancient melodies (in their various forms), we see an integrity which allowed them to continue to find a place into the twentieth century.

Conclusion

There are a number of central issues and questions which arise from the preceding seven chapters. As we have seen, the Gregorian repertoire has maintained a role, not only in the music of the Catholic Church, but also as an important part of the history of Western music. As we saw in chapter 1, this centrality is evident from the often rancorous relationship between those who believed that they were the custodians of the genuine tradition. As noted, the oral nature of these melodies and the inability to identify the anonymous composers have played a role in this.

However a central question remains. Why have composers for at least five hundred years felt the need to incorporate these ancient melodies into their compositions for organ and indeed other media? The reasons for this are identified throughout this work, primarily concerning the symbiosis which has existed between the 'troika' of organ, chant and the church. We have seen how this relationship has changed and evolved due to political, liturgical and other changes in style and outlook.

The role of improvisation must be acknowledged, either for good (for example in providing a repertoire based on the chants) or for bad (many composers felt disinclined to compose). The activities of the post-revolution composers with their bombastic improvisations created a negative impression of the organ in many quarters, a perception that survives (albeit to a small extent) to this day. The role of improvisation from the fifteenth century through to Messiaen's *Messe de la pentecôte* permeates this study.

Central too has been the question of why certain composers used particular chants, from the very frequent use of Mass IV in the pre-revolutionary period, to the more extensive use of ordinaries and propers from masses and offices by the composers explored towards the end of this dissertation. The reasons for these choices have been highlighted and fall into a number of categories.

- Thematic reasons. Chants used to be programmatic, the most obvious example being the *Symphonie-Passion* where the chants illustrate a narrative. In these instances, it is the texts of the chants and their associations that are the reasons for their inclusion.

- Liturgical reasons. For example, the use of Mass IV is practical as it would have been performed during the liturgy. *L'orguemystique* was written as a liturgical exercise. Guilmant sought to create a Catholic repertoire to match the Lutheran chorale-based work of Bach and his contemporaries. Here the composers sought to create pieces with a practical use.
- Spiritual reasons. In the work of Widor, we see a deepening of faith and a desire to create more spiritual repertoire for the organ. Expression of religious faith through music or any art form is not a unique concept. Here the chants act as an 'ingredient' in this.
- Symbolic/theological reasons. The works of Messiaen provide the perfect example of symbolic use of chant, often unrecognisable. The importance of subtle inclusion of source material is of importance.
- Pedagogical reasons. In cases, there are indications that chants were incorporated in order to reintroduce to the congregations, as well as in works (by Dupré as an example) which could be used to train organists both in technique and in improvisation.

These are just some of the threads which have emerged through this study.

As well as specifically quoting chant, figures such as Langlais and Duruflé admitted that chant was such an important part of their lives that the use of it in their compositions was a logical step. Indeed in case of these two composers the modality and rhythmic flexibility of chant is present in many works which do not specifically include Gregorian melodies.

The use of the chants and their relative impact on a work is also an important theme. Each composer provides his own way of doing this. Guilmant saw chant as being almost purely liturgical, seeking to create a Catholic repertoire to match the Lutheran chorale repertoire. His use of chant and its impact on his musical language evolved in parallel to the increasing awareness of the modal and free-rhythmic nature of the Gregorian repertoire. Tournemire expanded greatly on this idea of creating a chant repertoire for liturgical use. In *L'orguemystique* the language of chant is present throughout. The case of four of the 'twentieth-century' composers provides an

interesting contrast. By his own admission, chant has had an enormous effect on the language of Durufle's works and Langlais found a way to create a new 'neo-modal' style where chant modality in particular plays a central role. In the work of Dupré, the language of his chant-based and non-chant-based works is very similar, while Messiaen integrated chant into his own language, never using church modes, but rather adapting chant to his own modes.

Finally, there is the area of relative secularity and whether or not works based on chant can or should be confined to the church building and whether the use of a sacred melody gave a piece a sacred mandate. Tournemire and Guilmant used chants only in their liturgical music. Langlais and Dupré were less concerned and wrote chant-based music for the concert hall. Widor, having come to the notion of integrating chant in his work quite late, chose only to write large chant-based pieces, mostly unsuitable for the liturgy, but endowed with spirituality and fervour. In some ways, the large fresques of Messiaen represent the logical evolution of this idea. Messiaen freely admitted that he wrote in the same style for the church as the concert hall and saw 'liturgy' as a very loose term. Two of the biggest figures in Franck and Saint-Saëns, for various reasons, saw little merit in chant-based composition.

The political and cultural reasons for this are also of importance and a line of thought can be traced in this area. Gallican and Roman politics dictated the situation regarding appropriate music for worship (as laid out in chapter 2). While this was not always clear, by the time of the revolution there was already a blurring of the distinction between suitable church music for the organ and the gallant dances of the French *grand siècle*. The reason for this is that the same composers worked in both areas. Organists dependent on the upper classes and nobility for financial security would have felt the constant need to please. The revolution and period which followed meant that music for church and organ almost became extinct and even when church restrictions were lifted, the culture of storming improvisations, coupled with transcriptions and operatic airs was, in some ways, a continuation of the largesse of the pre-revolutionary period. This is evident from Saint-Saëns' comments on the Madeleine and the *Opéra Comique*. While the situation with regard to secular music in the church was to improve very slowly through the nineteenth

century, it is interesting to note that parallel to this, the development of the organ recital (in church or in a concert hall) meant that music of a sacred nature was being performed in secular concerts. As mentioned, Widor could not have intended his last two symphonies to be performed during any type of religious service and we are aware that Tournemire programmed *L'orgue mystique* in recitals. Dupré's *Vêpres* for Claude Johnson (with chant) were first performed in the Albert Hall, London (see chapter 5) and his *Symphonie-Passion*, though containing chant is not motivated by it. It seeks to tell a story with the Gregorian melody as a musical narrator. To mirror the lack of distinction between sacred and secular in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the attitude of the fervently religious Messiaen returns to a blurring of this distinction, albeit in the opposite direction, with his advocacy of 'concert liturgies'.

Whilst this dissertation has given prominence to some of the best-known figures in the French and Belgian organ worlds, there are countless others who have and continue to both improvise and compose both basing their work on chants and integrating chants into their tonal languages. These traditions are very much alive.

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