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# *French Trumpet Concertos*

Henri Tomasi, Robert Planel,  
André Jolivet, Alfred Desenclos

*John Holt, Trumpet*



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**John Holt, Trumpet**

**Slovak Radio Orchestra • Kirk Trevor, Conductor**

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pub. by Éditions Musicales  
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Recording Engineer: Hubert  
Geschwandtner  
Sound Director: Emil Niznansky  
Mastering: Ron Meyer  
Photograph: Natalia Bolshakova  
Folder design: Peter Christ

John Holt recorded these works using a  
“Chicago” Yamaha C trumpet as well as a  
Harmon and TrumCor lyric, straight, and  
cup mutes. Holt is a Yamaha Performing  
Artist and a consultant for TrumCor mutes.

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*Program Notes by Priscilla Holt, Ph.D.*

Three major 20th century French concertos for C trumpet composed during the decade following WWII are contained on this recording. The fourth selection is by an individual who was dedicated to the promotion of musical training in post-war Paris. Each work is a feast for the sensibilities as well as the intelligentsia: lyrical or dramatically expressive; rhythmically or harmonically nodding to the popularity of jazz and its American trumpeters performing in Paris before, during, and after WWII; reflective of the masterpieces of modern chamber music and symphonic music first heard in Paris in the 1920s; or expressing new ideologies.

Each composer took advantage of the variety of trumpet mutes available to change timbres, and scored muted passages, even movements for muted trumpet; each composer varied the size and instrumentation of the orchestra, ranging from full to chamber, with or without winds and brass, *and* with or without strings; and all four composers were winners of the Prix de Rome, men who returned from Rome and war to forge ahead as leaders of the future.

**Henri Tomasi** (bn. August 17, 1901, Marseilles; d. January 13, 1971 Paris) led a dual career of conductor and composer until 1955 at which time he devoted himself fully to composition. He was the son of Xavier Tomasi, an amateur flutist, band director, and collector of Corsican folk songs. Xavier enrolled his son at the Conservatory in Marseilles when Henri was eight years old. By age 18, Henri was enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire where he studied counterpoint with Georges Caussade, composition with Paul Vidal and Paul Dukas, and conducting with Vincent d'Indy and Philippe Gaubert. In 1922, Henri Tomasi joined the avant-garde group, *Le Triton*, which was established to promote creativity and performance of contemporary music. From 1930-1935, Tomasi was the music director of the colonial radio station in French Indochina. He served in the French Army from 1939-1940 and was stationed at the fort of Villefranche-sur-Mer where he was named Head of the Marching Band. From 1946-1950, Tomasi served as the director of the Monte Carlo Opera and throughout his life he retained his love for the Côte d'Azur, exotic subjects, and

rhythms and impressionistic colors. During his career, he received several prestigious awards including: the Halphen Prize in 1925, the Grand Prix de Rome in 1927, the Prix des Beaux-Arts in 1929, the Grand French Music Prize in 1953, and the Grand City of Paris Prize in 1960.

***Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra*** (1948) has become the most popular of the 16 instrumental concertos Tomasi composed. Evoking the music of Debussy and Ravel, the score is colorfully exotic, atmospheric, and impressionistic. The concerto is primarily lyrical, combining diatonic melodies with chromaticism and is technically and physically demanding for the soloist. The concerto's opening trumpet motive appears in a variety of permutations throughout the three loosely structured movements. The opening motive and a muted lyrical melody at half tempo drive the first movement forward to its climactic cadenza underscored by snare drum. The second movement, Nocturne, is scored for cup mute, straight mute, and open trumpet. The final movement suggests the mood of a French cabaret or jazz club. Tomasi, considered by many as a brilliant orchestrator, scored

the concerto for three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trombones, tuba, timpani, large percussion, celeste, harps, and strings. The concerto was premiered on April 7, 1949 under the baton of the composer with dedicatee, Ludovic Vaillant and the National Orchestra.

**Robert Planel** (bn. January 2, 1908, Montélimar; d. May 25, 1994 Paris), a French composer, is also remembered as a remarkable administrator and is responsible for the creation of municipal academies, both in Paris and the suburbs. He was the son of Alphonse Planel (1869-1847), a composer and founder of the school of music of Montélimar (south of Lyon). Recognizing his son's exceptional musical abilities including absolute pitch, his father began his son's musical studies at an early age. From 1922 until 1933, Planel studied at the Paris Conservatoire: violin with Firmin Touche; harmony with Jean Gallon; counterpoint with Georges Cussade and composition with Henri Busser and Paul Vidal. In 1933, he won the Prix de Rome and spent the next three years composing and  
***(continued on other side: Notes)***

**John Holt**, trumpet, has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras throughout the United States and gives frequent solo recitals throughout Europe. He began studying trumpet at the age of 12 with Richard Giangulio, former principal trumpet of the Dallas Symphony, and continued his studies at the University of Miami with Gilbert D. Johnson, former principal trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra. At age 24, Holt became the principal trumpet of the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in Florence, Italy, Zubin Mehta, music director. In 2003, he was appointed Assistant Professor of Trumpet of the College of Music at the University of North Texas. Holt is in his 18th year as principal trumpet of the Dallas Opera Orchestra and is a Yamaha Performing Artist. He has four other CDs on Crystal.

**Kirk Trevor** has conducted more than 40 orchestras worldwide. Music Director of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra from 1985 until 2003, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra since 1988, and the Missouri Symphony since 2000, he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2003.

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*(NOTES: continued from other side)*

studying at the Villa Medici in Rome, where Jacques Ibert was the institute's director during his third year. In 1942 Planel was named Professor of Musical Education in Paris schools and in 1946 became Inspector General of Teaching Music for the Town of Paris. For the next 26 years, Planel dedicated himself to the promotion of musical training. He continued his association with the Paris Conservatoire by serving as a juror for various entrance and exit exams and composing contest pieces for a variety of instruments, including French horn, oboe and saxophone. With his brother, singer Jean Planel, Robert Planel was a co-founder of Control of Radio-France.

***Concerto for Trumpet and Strings*** (July 1966) was written at the request of French trumpeter, Maurice André, who was at the start of an unprecedented international career as a soloist. The Concerto is dedicated "to Maurice André with admiration and friendship" and premiered by André during the 1966 Oubradous Concerts. The first movement begins with a trumpet melodic declamation comprised of ascending fourths. The trumpet's melody is supported by a rhythmic syncopated string

accompaniment. The second movement is an aria for muted trumpet, evoking the music of Ravel. The third movement contains the concerto's cadenza, which quotes the first movement's opening trumpet fanfare.

**André Jolivet** (bn. August 8, 1905, Paris; d. December 20, 1974, Paris), composer, conductor, and teacher, strove to create a musical language that was rhythmically dynamic, aurally stimulating and esthetically satisfying. A member of a family who enjoyed the arts – his father painted and his mother played the piano – Jolivet learned to play the cello and as a teen was composing music to his own poetry. His earliest musical influences included Debussy, Ravel, and Dukas but soon expanded to include Schönberg and 15th and 16th century polyphony. From 1928-1933, Jolivet studied counterpoint and harmony with Paul Le Flem. In 1929, Le Flem introduced him to Edgar Varèse who was to become Jolivet's teacher and mentor. Prior to WWII, Jolivet was a member of a progressive group of musicians called *La Spirale*, which later became known as *Le Jeune France*. After serving in the French Army during WWII, Jolivet realized his childhood dream and became the

conductor of the Comédie Française. This position afforded him the time and ability to travel to exotic destinations, which in turn re-kindled his interest in rituals and primitivistic mysticism.

**Trumpet Concerto No. 2** dates from Jolivet's period of activity with the Comédie Française and was later used as incidental music for his 1961 ballet, *Marines*. The work is scored for trumpet solo and an ensemble comprised of two flutes (two piccolos), clarinet, English horn, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, contra-bassoon, trombone, piano, harp, double bass, and percussionists. Although the resemblance to Milhaud's *La Création du Monde* is strong and the instrumentation is similar, the inspiration for the concerto came from Jolivet's family, according to the composer's wife. The Jolivet family was introduced to jazz through recordings obtained by their eldest son during his year of study in the United States. The first movement's quasi-improvisatory pensive or melancholy mood is achieved in part by the soloist's use of a Harmon mute. The ensuing section suggests the big band "jungle music" of Duke Ellington popular during the late 1930s and 1940s. The composer creates a frenzied atmosphere and obscure beat

through relentless syncopation and melodic strettì. Jolivet's use of the term *concitato* (agitated, and characterized by rapid repeated notes) reflects his earlier interest in 15th and 16th century music. In the somber two-part lyrical second movement, the trumpet melody is un-muted in the first section and calls for a Robinson mute in the more contemplative and distant second section. The final movement conjures up the sights and sounds of the jazz age, primitivism and the banana-clad form of Josephine Baker, cabaret dancer, as well as the contemporary be-bop figurations of jazz artists such as Clifford Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, and Charlie Parker. *Concerto No. 2* was written for Roger Delmotte, who recorded the work in 1955 with Jolivet conducting; however, the premiere of the concerto took place with soloist Raymond Tournesac under the direction of Louis de Froment at the Vichy Festival on September 5, 1956.

**Alfred Desenclos** (bn. Le Portel, France, February 7, 1912; d. March 3, 1971, Paris) was a distinguished French composer who acknowledged that winning the Prix de Rome was a seminal event in his development as a composer. The seventh of ten children,

Desenclos worked as an industrial designer to help support his family. In 1933, at age 21 he was admitted to the Roubaix Conservatory. He was mobilized in 1939 and wounded in 1940. In 1941, he resumed his musical studies and obtained the Grand Prix de Rome in 1942. From 1943 to 1950, he was Caussade's assistant at the Paris Conservatory as well as musical advisor for Durand Publications. Beginning in 1950, Desenclos devoted himself to composition.

### *Incantation, Thrène et Danse*

is dedicated to two professors at the Paris Conservatory, E. Foveau (cornet) and R. Sabarich (trumpet). The work was used as the 1953 cornet solo for the *Morceau de Concours*. The concerto addresses itself to the sensibilities beginning with its movements' mystical titles, harmonic language replete with major sevenths and dance in 5/8, evoking Ravel's *La Valse*. The first movement's title, *Incantation*, foreshadows the use of musical motives, descending major sevenths, vacillating 4/4 and 5/4 meters, contrasting dynamics, tempos, articulations, and timbres. In a similar fashion, *Thrène*, the second movement's song of lamentation, is scored for

trumpet using a Robinson mute, a French fiber mute resembling a more slenderized straight mute. Diminished fourths, slower tempos, a lower tessitura, and different muted timbres create its sorrowful atmosphere. The final movement is a dance in 5/8. Following the orchestral opening, a virtuoso cadenza requiring great flexibility and agility interrupts the dance. Reminiscent of Ravel's dances, Desenclos' concerto rises in volume and accelerates to its final brilliant cadence. An article that appeared in *La Liberté* September 8, 1953, states that the work was warmly received at the Vichy Festival where it was premiered by soloist Raymondournesac, under the direction of Louis de Froment with the composer in attendance. Frederic Desenclos, the composer's son responded to my inquires about his father's work: "*transmit all my congratulations to your husband for his interpretation; this is a joy for me the knowledge that he plays and recorded the Incantation, Thrène and Dances composed by my father; this being a magnificent realization!*" (translation by Priscilla Holt)



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**John Holt** is principal trumpet with the Dallas Opera Orchestra and trumpet professor at the University of North Texas. His first four CDs received unanimous critical acclaim, with Gramophone Magazine describing him as “*an elegant, sensitive artist.*” The four concertos herein are a feast for the sensibilities: lyrical or dramatically expressive.

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