

signum
CLASSICS

Charles-Marie Widor The Organ Symphonies Vol.2

Symphony No.1, op.13
Symphony No.2, op.13

Joseph Nolan
The Cavillé-Coll Organ of La Madeleine, Paris

WIDOR: THE ORGAN SYMPHONIES, VOL.2
THE CAVAILLÉ-COLL ORGAN OF
LA MADELEINE, PARIS

Organ Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.13 No.1

1	I. Prélude – Andante	[6.25]
2	II. Allegretto	[7.53]
3	III. Intermezzo – Allegro	[4.04]
4	IV. Adagio	[6.47]
5	V. Marche pontificale	[7.33]
6	VI. Méditation	[3.07]
7	VII. Finale – Allegro	[4.37]

Organ Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.13, No.2

8	I. Praeludium circolare – Andantino	[5.29]
9	II. Pastorale – Moderato	[5.23]
10	III. Andante	[9.26]
11	IV. Salve Regina – Allegro	[5.41]
12	V. Scherzo – Allegro	[3.04]
13	VI. Adagio – Andante	[4.22]
14	VII. Finale – Allegro	[4.14]

Total timings: [78.09]

JOSEPH NOLAN ORGAN

www.signumrecords.com

ORGAN SYMPHONIES, VOL.2

Nos. 1 & 2

'There is no preparation in the scheme of things for the appearance of a Widor. His work comes like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, and not even the work of Franck can explain it. It is due entirely to the outstanding personality of the man' (Albert Riemenschneider, 1934). Dedicated in their 1879 incarnation to Aristide Cavallé-Coll, creator of the French Romantic symphonic/orchestral' organ, the Third Empire Symphonies Op.13 were published in Paris in early 1872. In the absence of any autographs, no genesis is traceable, though there is evidence to suppose that some of their ideas may date from the 1860s. Hailing them 'the greatest contribution to organ literature since the works of Johann Sebastian Bach', laying the foundations of modern organ technique, Widor's definitive modern biographer and editor, John R Near (2011), observes that his 'lifelong practice of revision affected [their content] most noticeably, undoubtedly because many of [their movements] were either born of his Sunday improvisations at Saint-Sulpice or of an earlier conception [...] In the different editions of Op.13, pieces often appeared in a drastically different guise [...] in many respects these

symphonies were experimental works on which Widor continued to reflect the rest of his life. Undergoing many stages of revision, whole movements were added, omitted, or altered – several were fleshed out considerably [...] Widor earned his living primarily by playing the organ and publishing his music. The [four] Op.13 Symphonies fulfilled the varied musical requirements of church service, organ inaugurations, and salon concerts'. Confirming the composer as his own most demanding critic, five principal Paris editions exist: (a) 1872, (b) 1887, (c) 1900-01, (d) 1914-18, 'revised, and entirely modified' [1920], and (e) 1928-29.

In his impassioned avant-propos prefacing the 1887 edition, Widor took care to emphasise the rôle, 'glory' and contribution of his mentor, Cavallé-Coll – dating his dawn to 1839 (the organ of the Palais de l'Industrie at that year's Paris Exposition, housed subsequently in the Lutheran church of Les Billettes). 'It is he who conceived the diverse wind pressures, the divided windchests, the pedal systems and the combination registers; he who applied for the first time Barker's pneumatic motors [levers], created the family of harmonic stops, reformed and perfected the mechanics to such a point that each pipe – low or high, loud or soft – instantly

obeys the touch of the finger, the keys becoming as light as those of a piano – the resistances being suppressed, rendering the combination of [all] the forces of the instrument practical. From this result: the possibility of confining an entire division in a sonorous prison – opened or closed at will – the freedom of mixing timbres, the means of intensifying them or gradually tempering them, the freedom of tempos, the sureness of attacks, the balance of contrasts, and, finally, a whole blossoming of wonderful colours – a rich palette of the most diverse shades: harmonic flutes, gambas, bassoons, English horns, trumpets, celestes, flue stops and reed stops of a quality and variety unknown before. The modern organ is essentially symphonic. The new instrument requires a new language, an ideal other than scholastic polyphony. It is no longer the Bach of the Fugue whom we invoke, but the heart-rending melodist, the pre-eminently expressive master of the Prelude, the Magnificat, the *B minor Mass*, the Cantatas, and the *St Matthew Passion* [...] henceforth one will have to exercise the same care with the combination of timbres in an organ composition as in an orchestral work' (trans John R Near, © A-R Editions Inc, 1991).

Historically, Widor's five-manual, 100-stop, 7,000-pipe Cavallé-Coll at St Sulpice, dedicated in 1862, will always rank supreme among the 19th century's most technologically-defining, fantasy-creating sound-machines. In the 1870s, when Widor ruled the organ loft, it was no antiquated fossil but a wondrously re-born creature. And its vocabulary was infinitely varied. It had nothing to do with the 'old instruments' of Bach or Handel – which, Widor reminds, 'had almost no reed stops: two colours, white and black, foundation stops and mixture stops – that was their entire palette; moreover, each transition between this white and this black was abrupt and rough; the means of graduating the body of sound did not exist'. When it came to sonics and action, power and colour, a big Cavallé-Coll bore little resemblance to its ancestors. Contemporaneously with Bechstein, Blüthner and Steinway in the piano arena, Aristide took his organs to new heights, and gave composers an innovative, arresting new medium.

First of the canon, the C minor blueprints the genre. Less a prescribed *symphony*, more a tonally diverse *suite* – 'a collection of fantasy pieces, most often without ties between them' ran Widor's definition of the latter (1923) – where

set-numbers, mood *tableaux* and contrapuntal roots become cumulatively more important than (and even deny) sonata principle: 'symphony' in the sense of an antique 'concord of sound'. The work divides into seven movements, linked pivotally through the various notes of the root triad (C, E flat, G): Prélude, Allegretto (A flat major), Intermezzo (G minor), Adagio (E flat major), Marche pontificale (C major), Méditation (E flat minor), Finale (C minor). The muscular, tactile style of Widor's writing is apparent from the onset, the *forte moderato* quaver subject, slurred/*staccato*, announced on pedals, the manuals entering to forge a gritty, harmonically intensified dialogue – which tensions are then pursued in the second movement. The Schumann of chords clarified down to *staccato* semiquavers between the hands, and of boldly proclaimed dotted rhythms, is never far away in the third and fifth movements, the grandiose rondo fifth (paraphrased two years later in Lemmens's *First Organ Sonata*) in the spirit of both Gounod's 1869 *Marche pontificale*, dedicated to Pius IX, and the ceremonious processions Widor used to accompany regularly during high feast days at Saint-Sulpice. Compound metres inform the fourth and six movements – a 9/8 chorale (including an unexpected D major semitone drop, cf the sidestepping of the second movement);

and a 6/8 barcarolle cadencing in the major. In the closing four-part fugue, the Mendelssohnian cut of the Prélude is replaced by one of tougher stance and chromaticism: the dynamic and grammar may be baroque/classical – the final two bars are pure Bach – but the speech is avowedly 1870 Liszt/Wagner – Widor's heroes. The leonine six-bar subject, *fff*, spans a minor tenth. All twelve semitones of the scale are spelt out. And, five pages on, *affirming point d'orgue* notwithstanding, there is no Picardy third to appease the emotions, triumph the moment, or relent the debate. Tough music for serious minds.

Less overtly polyphonic than the First, the Second emphasises tone-colour: 'Widor,' says Near (1991), 'seems to be taking the listener on a timbral tour of the organ', with each movement featuring 'fresh combinations' of sound. The 1901 edition introduced several changes to the original – most drastically the (arguably mis-advised) replacement of the original fourth movement, a chattering, fugato-gifted E major *staccato* scherzo in 6/8, with a (compositionally later style) Salve Regina in D minor, drawing on the Gregorian antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary. 'Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to

thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in thiés vale of tears.' Near believes that the distinctively sectional character of this chorale fantasy 'suggests the *alternatim* practice commonly adopted by the grand organ and choir organ in large French churches'. Towards the end, against a texture of left-hand semiquavers, the *pédale trompette*, *fortissimo*, sounds the closing line of the plainchant: 'O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria' (O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary). The fifth movement, an Adagio in D major, was written originally (uniquely) for just the short-resonating *voix humaine*, re-registered in the 1887 revision. The change of tempo to *Andante* in 1901, contradicting the Adagio heading, 'seems never to have captured Widor's attention' (Near). The 1901 re-labelling of the 3/4 first movement – from Prélude to Præludium circulare – would appear to have been a gesture drawing attention to the *petit labyrinthe harmonique* trajectory of the music: mirroring a tradition from the early 16th century onwards, including Beethoven and Chopin in the generations preceding Widor, it begins and ends in the tonic but *en route* orbits chromatically through the keys.

Placed second, and broadly unchanged in subsequent editions, the 12/8 G major Pastorale, 'replete with grace and aural colour' (Near), inhabits a post-Bachian/Berliozian world, somewhere between *Jesus bleibet meine Freude* and *l'enfance du Christ*. In March 1870 *Ménestrel* reported Widor playing 'a beautiful *fantaisie pastorale*' at Saint-Sulpice: the Pastorale of the Second Symphony, Near wonders (2011)? The ensuing Andante in B flat major is a chorale-like *scena* (on an anacrusic theme determined by repetitive two-quaver/two-crotchet patterns) displaying Widor's schooled command of motivic and sequential development. Likewise his habitual pleasure in key-shifting. Scarcely has the theme been announced before we are sharing a *calvados* or two with D major, F sharp major, B minor, G major/minor ... the start of an adventurous ramble. Anticipating the Fifth Symphony (1879), the tripartite Finale is a grand toccata – slurs and *staccato* as critical to its thematic profile as harmonic thrust and resolution are to its architecture.

© Ates Orga 2012

Further Reading: John R Near, *Widor: A Life beyond the Toccata* (University of Rochester Press, 2011)

JOSEPH NOLAN

Joseph Nolan is an internationally renowned organist, acclaimed as 'brilliant and such an astute musician' (Gramophone UK). He was appointed to Her Majesty's Chapels Royal, St James's Palace, United Kingdom in 2004. Joseph broadcast with the choir on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM as well as playing at the Thanksgiving service for Princess Diana at The Guards Chapel broadcast on BBC Television.

Joseph also performed on numerous occasions at Buckingham Palace, most notably giving the inaugural recital of the refurbished Ballroom organ to a distinguished invited audience. Joseph was the first ever Organist to record a commercial CD of this instrument in November 2006 for the Signum label ('Nolan uses the organ to amazing effect' Gramophone UK).

This acclaim has led to Joseph being invited to record in some of the world's premiere venues. These include St Sulpice, Paris, St Ouen Rouen, and Buckingham Palace and in May 2011, Joseph recorded the entire ten organ symphonies of Widor at La Madeleine, Paris (where both Fauré and Saint-Saëns were organists) in only seven nights. Many



of these discs have been lauded by media across the globe and been broadcast in part on BBC Radio 3, Radio France, USA Pipedreams, Radio New Zealand and ABC Classic FM amongst others.

Joseph's latest disc from St Sulpice, Paris for Signum Records has been particularly well received winning the star recording award from the Organ Magazine. It has also been described by Gramophone Magazine as a 'brilliantly played recital', Music Web international 'this disc should find a special place amongst organ collectors', and American Record Guide 'the best Liszt Ad Nos on record'. The disc was also awarded 'disc of the week' on Swedish national radio.

Joseph has toured extensively across Europe, Asia, North America, New Zealand and Australia, including giving concerts in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne and Auckland Town Halls and for various US conventions including the Year of the Organ. Joseph will be undertaking a solo concert tour of Canada/USA in October 2012.

Joseph has also conducted and accompanied some of the world's leading groups and musicians, including the King's Singers at the Bad Homburg International Festival, conducted the London Mozart Players at St John's Smith Square, UK, as well as giving organ and trumpet concerts with trumpeters Crispian Steele-Perkins and Alison Balsom. Joseph also conducted the Hilliard Ensemble, St George's Cathedral Consort and WASO players in a performance of Pärt's *Passio* for the 2010 Perth International Arts Festival at Perth Concert Hall.

Joseph made his debut with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra at Perth Concert Hall in March 2012, playing Poulenc's Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony for the opening of the WASO Classics concerts. June 2012 will also see Joseph's debut solo concert at Sydney Town Hall.

Joseph took up the post of Organist and Master of the Choristers at St George's Cathedral, Perth, Australia in March 2008. Joseph conducts the nationally renowned choirs and is Artistic Director of the Cathedrals major annual concert series. Since Joseph's arrival the Cathedral choirs are now regularly in demand on ABC TV

and Radio and have worked with the Hilliard Ensemble, the Academy of Ancient Music and I Fagiolini at the Perth International Festival in three consecutive years. The choirs performances have been described as 'elite, faultless and world class' by The Australian and West Australian.

THE CAVAILLÉ-COLL ORGAN OF L'ÉGLISE DE LA MADELEINE

Built by the famed organ-builder Aristride Cavaillé-Coll (working with his father Dominique), the Grand Organ of La Madeleine was inaugurated in 1846 by Alexandre-Charles Fessy, with Louis James Lefébure-Wély becoming chief organist in 1947. Originally comprised of 46 stops over 4 manuals and pedal, it was the third major instrument Cavaillé-Coll had produced for a Parisian church, the others being in the Basilique Saint-Denis and Notre-Dame de Lorette. Modifications since then include: restoration work in 1927, extending the keyboard range; the addition of six new stops (including mixtures) in 1957; increasing the number of stops to 57 in 1971, also automating the key and stop action; and an additional stop in 1928. Classified as a 'Historic Monument', it currently has 60 stops and 4426 pipes.

Lefébure-Wély was succeeded by an eminent succession of notable figures in French Church music; Camille Saint-Saëns (1857-1877), Théodore Dubois (1877-1896), Gabriel Fauré (1896-1905), Henri Dallier (1905-1934), Edouard Mignan (1935-1962), Jeanne Demessieux (1962-1968), Odile Pierre (1969-1979) and from 1979 François-Henri Houbart.

STOP LIST

I. Grand-Orgue

Montre	16'
Gambre	16'
Montre	8'
Salicional	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Bourdon	8'
Prestant	4'
Quinte	2 2/3'
Doublette	2'
Piccolo*	1'
Fourniture	V
Cymbale	V
Cornet*	V
Trompette	8'
Cor anglais	8'

II. Positif

Montre	8'
Viole de gambe	8'
Flûte douce	8'
Voix celeste 8	II
Prestant	4'
Dulciane	4'
Octave	2'
Trompette	8'
Musette	8'
Clairon	4'

III. Bombarde

Soubasse	16'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Flûte traversière	8'
Basse	8'
Flûte	4'
Octavin	2'
Fourniture*	IV
Cornet*	III
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

IV. Récit

Flûte harmonique	8'
Bourdon Céleste‡	8'
Prestant*	4'

Flûte octavante	4'
Octavin†	2'
Larigot‡	1 1/3'
Plein Jeu†	IV
Cymbale*	IV
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Basson-Hautbois	8'
Voix humaine	8'
Clairon	4'

Pédale

Quintaton	32'
Contrebasse	16'
Flûte	8'
Violoncelle	8'
Flûte‡	4'
Bombarde	16'
Basson	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

* - Added in 1957

‡ - Added in 1971

† - Added in 1988

Manual compass - 56 Notes

Pedal compass - 32 Notes



© Andrew Mellor

Recorded at L'église de la Madeleine, Paris, from 18th to 24th May 2011

Producer - Adrian Peacock

Recording Engineer & Editor - Andrew Mellor

Cover Image - Shutterstock

Design and Artwork - Woven Design www.wovendesign.co.uk

© 2013 The copyright in this recording is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

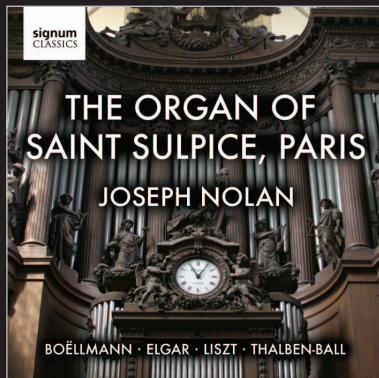
© 2013 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK
+44 (0) 20 8997 4000 E-mail: info@signumrecords.com

www.signumrecords.com

ALSO AVAILABLE ON SIGNUMCLASSICS

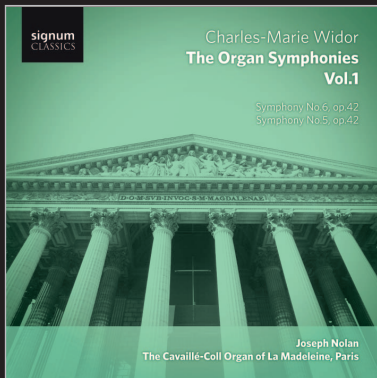


The Organ of Saint Sulpice, Paris
Joseph Nolan

SIGCD167

"These performances are full of spontaneity yet for all Nolan's brilliance he allows the requirements of the composer always to take priority. The sympathy and expression that Nolan gives to this music and the assurance of his results will undoubtedly give this recital a special place amongst organ collectors."

Musicweb-International



Widor: The Organ Symphonies, Vol.1
Joseph Nolan

SIGCD292

"Joseph Nolan's painstaking approach to registration yields a sound which is about as authentic as you could wish. Add to this his amazingly precise fingerwork, his total mastery of the score and his obvious empathy with this music ... this has few challengers when it comes to the utter authority of the performances." **Gramophone**

Available through most record stores and at www.signumrecords.com For more information call +44 (0) 20 8997 4000

WIDOR: THE ORGAN SYMPHONIES, VOL.2

THE CAVAILLÉ-COLL ORGAN OF LA MADELEINE, PARIS

Organ Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.13 No.1

1	I. Prélude – Andante	[6.25]
2	II. Allegretto	[7.53]
3	III. Intermezzo – Allegro	[4.04]
4	IV. Adagio	[6.47]
5	V. Marche pontificale	[7.33]
6	VI. Méditation	[3.07]
7	VII. Finale – Allegro	[4.37]

Organ Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.13, No.2

8	I. Praeludium circolare – Andantino	[5.29]
9	II. Pastorale – Moderato	[5.23]
10	III. Andante	[9.26]
11	IV. Salve Regina – Allegro	[5.41]
12	V. Scherzo – Allegro	[3.04]
13	VI. Adagio – Andante	[4.22]
14	VII. Finale – Allegro	[4.14]

Total timings: [78.09]

JOSEPH NOLAN ORGAN

Signum Records Ltd, Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road,
Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, United Kingdom.

www.signumrecords.com

LC15723 

signum
CLASSICS

SIGCD319

© 2013 Signum Records
© 2013 Signum Records

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

DDD

24 bit digital recording

