

95644

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

A painting of a man playing an organ in a dark, atmospheric setting. The man is shown in profile, focused on his performance. The organ is a large, dark instrument with many pipes. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a church interior. The overall mood is solemn and contemplative.

MARCEL DUPRÉ

ORGAN MUSIC

VOLUME 1

ALESSANDRO PERIN

AT THE ORGAN OF THE DUOMO OF SAN LORENZO, ABANO TERME, PADUA, ITALY

Marcel Dupré 1886-1971
Organ Music · Volume 1

Suite in F minor Op.39

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| 1. Allegro agitato | 3'22 |
| 2. Cantabile | 3'53 |
| 3. Scherzando | 2'17 |
| 4. Finale | 4'06 |

4 Verses on the hymne

“Ave Maris Stella”

*From “15 Versets sur les Vêpres du
commun des fêtes de la Sainte Vierge”
Op.18*

- | | |
|--|------|
| 5. I. When the Salutation Gabriel
Had Spoken | 1'08 |
| 6. II. Jesus Tender Mother,
Make Thy Supplication | 2'19 |
| 7. III. So Now as We Journey,
Aid Our Weak Endeavor | 2'35 |
| 8. IV. Amen (Finale) | 2'09 |

From “7 Pièces” Op.27

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 9. IV. Carillon | 5'20 |
| 10. Variations sur un vieux Noël
in D minor Op.20
(Variations on a Noël) | 12'51 |

Évocation Op.37 Poème symphonique

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| 11. Moderato | 8'30 |
| 12. Adagio con tenerezza | 8'34 |
| 13. Allegro deciso | 7'31 |

Alessandro Perin *organ*

at the organ of the Duomo of San Lorenzo, Abano Terme, Padua, Italy

Marcel Dupré was unquestionably one of the most eminent figures of the French organ school in the twentieth century. He began his musical studies at the age of seven, and very quickly his prodigious gifts, his thirst to learn, his rigour of work, his endurance and his prodigious memory faculties were to propel him on a trajectory leading to career heights never reached before. His brilliant career at the Paris Conservatory was crowned with numerous prizes, notably in piano (Louis Diémer), organ (Alexandre Guilmant), fugue and composition (Charles-Marie Widor). A virtuoso on both keyboard instruments and a gifted composer from an early age, Dupré quickly distinguished himself by his exceptional ability to improvise, a discipline in which he became an undisputed master, and which he practiced throughout his life, both as a liturgical organist - notably on the rostrum of the famous Cavallé-Coll organ at Saint-Sulpice in Paris, where he succeeded Widor in 1934 - and as a concert performer in front of a breathless audience. He went on to teach his art rigorously to two generations of organists, when he himself became professor of the organ class at the Conservatoire (1926-1954), succeeding Eugène Gigout. After his studies and under the influence of Widor, he competed for the Prix de Rome for composition, which he won in July 1914. Ironically, he never stayed at the Villa Medici because of the First World War.

Dupré's career had an exceptionally favourable start during this same period. In 1916, Louis Vierne, the illustrious titular of the Great Organ of Notre-Dame de Paris – Dupré's teacher and a disciple of Widor like himself - had to leave France for health



reasons, and during the war period lived far away from his instrument, in forced exile. Dupré, who had occasionally replaced him before, became his official substitute until Vierne's return in 1920, a return that complicated relations between the two men, which had previously been affectionate and cordial. Nonetheless, the brilliant young musician quickly made a name for himself for his style and his assertive personality. On 15 August 1919, during the service of Vespers, an anonymous person in the crowd was deeply impressed by the improvisations he heard. It was Claude Johnson, Chairman and Managing Director of the Rolls-Royce firm, a great music lover, organ enthusiast and also a patron of the arts. He met Dupré and commissioned him to write a work which was to reflect the liturgical improvisations he had heard the previous Sunday. Thus were born *15 Versets pour les Vespres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte Vierge (Vespers of Our Lady)*, Op.18, which Johnson edited at his own expense. The composer gave the first performance of the work at the Royal Albert Hall in London on December 9, 1920. The four verses on *Ave Maris Stella* form the heart of the work, preceded by five antiphons from the *Psalms* and followed by six verses from the *Magnificat*. In each of these verses, the Gregorian melody is treated in a particularly inventive and innovative way. The first is symphonic in character, with the theme performed in canon between the soprano and bass. The second, on the contrary, is collected and meditative, the theme evolving in the tenor register on a soloist's playing, set in subtle and mysterious hues. The third is an ornate chorale in the style of Bach. Here, Dupré anticipates his future collection entitled the *Tombeau de Titelouze*, Op.38, in which he set out to apply the traditional forms of Lutheran chorale treatment to Gregorian hymns. The fourth and last verse has become one of the composer's best-known pieces, a brilliant, dazzling *Toccata* which immediately speaks to the heart of the listener with its fierce energy and conciseness.

Dupré's London debut was a convincing triumph, and his ensuing tour in the United Kingdom put him in the spotlight even more and opened the doors to his future American tours. The first of these took place in 1921, and the symphony

he improvised at the opening concert before a jubilant audience - his first public improvisation of a complete symphony - was hailed by the press as a 'musical miracle'. Dupré was quickly won over by the advanced state of American organ building: electric drives, light and precise touch, the ability to memorize timbre combinations. These novelties had a direct influence on the way he wrote, which is immediately apparent in his *Variations sur vieux Noël* (Variations on Old Christmas), Op.20, composed during the tour. While these variations seem to be rooted in a French tradition dating back to the seventeenth century, they are marked by their extraordinarily innovative and ambitious character. The ancient popular melody *Noël nouvelet*, elegant and melodically close to the *Ave Maris Stella*, provides the material for the elaboration of dazzling 'études tableaux', a concept which was also dear to Rachmaninoff, teeming with musical inventions of composition, colouring and moods. They constitute a plethora of transcendental studies for the organ, as well as character pieces, and the few variations that are easy to execute (3rd, 6th, 8th) display by contrast great contrapuntal skills of canonic composition. The finale is in two parts, with a concise, rigorous and light-hearted fugato followed by a dazzling toccata, in which the theme thunders victoriously on the pedal under a repeated chordal beat, a technique borrowed from the Lisztian piano tradition. With a transition to major mode that transforms the *Noël* theme into a veritable hymn of glory, the work ends in a spectacular, luminous and triumphant chiming of bells.

The discovery of the American organ and its facilities, but also the special atmosphere of the venues where he performed, influenced Dupré's style of composing in the following years. The so-called 'concert' repertoire was gradually gaining ground, and Louis Vierne in particular had already paved the way with his *Pièces en style libre*, later extended by his more elaborate *Pièces de Fantaisie*. In the same spirit, Dupré composed his *Seven Pieces*, Op.27, in 1931, most of which are in fact based on some of his teacher's *Pièces en style libre*. The *Carillon*, the fourth part of the collection, is a veritable perpetuum mobile, founded on a basis of parallel fourths,

another display of scintillating bells. The theme, which eminently displays all the glittering power of the symphonic organ, is inspired by the ringing of a real carillon, that of the church of the Immaculée-Conception in Elbeuf near Rouen, where Marcel Dupré's father, Albert, was himself organist before eventually becoming titular organist of the famous Cavallé-Coll organ in the abbey church of Saint-Ouen in Rouen.

Albert Dupré died in 1940, at a time when the masterpiece of the brilliant organ builder had been dismantled the previous year for a necessary restauration. It was a double blow for the composer, in this troubled period at the beginning of the Second World War, to be unable to pay homage to his father as he would have wished, for lack of an instrument. However, the instrument was rebuilt in 1941, allowing for a new inauguration. For the occasion, Dupré composed a lengthy piece in a new genre: his symphonic poem *Evocation*, Op.37. The symphonic aesthetic is often manifestly present throughout the body of works of the composer, but his relationship to the symphonic form was rather paradoxical. He wrote only two, atypical, pieces of the genre: his *Symphonie-Passion*, Op.23, a poem or sacred fresco in four tableaux, and his *Second Symphony*, Op.26, which is in fact a triptych, with a concise dramaturgy. As an improviser, Dupré practiced the classical symphony extensively, but in a language and conception much more traditional than as a composer. In his writing, he quickly abandoned the genre in favor of the symphonic poem, a form that attracted him and which he developed in a unique way. It is not a literary, mythological or pictorial subject that inspires *Evocation*, but quite simply the musician's childhood memories, linked to his parents, to the Abbey of Saint-Ouen and its unique atmosphere, as well as to his legendary instrument. The work consists of three movements. The first movement includes numerous contrasting episodes which constitute as many 'scenes', where one encounters real gems of writing, harmony and instrumental colouring. The second movement, full of nostalgia, tenderness and poetic abstraction, alludes to the composer's mother. The energy and harshness of the third

movement contrasts, and irresistibly evokes the climate of war and its barbarity, as well as an underlying yearning for revenge and victory. The flow of the development is interspersed with two episodes reminiscent of the first two movements, and the coda quotes a third - from the first movement - before concluding with a triumphant C major, asserted by three striking, masterful and final chords.

After the war, Dupré directed his compositional research into two main directions. His ambition to develop instrumental technique led him to write a series of twelve transcendental studies, which he intended for one of his most brilliant disciples, with whom he maintained strong ties after her graduation at the conservatory: Jeanne Demessieux. The latter herself published a collection of *Etudes*, which was quickly renamed, leading the composer to step aside in order to better showcase it, and to retain the publication of his own studies. However, these would eventually be published in different opuses, such as the *Deux Esquisses* (two sketches) Op.41, later joined by a third, published after the composer's death by Rolande Falcinelli, another great disciple, who would succeed him in the organ class at the conservatoire in 1954. Four of them provided the material for the *Suite*, Op.39. It is therefore through this dimension of 'study' that the work must be viewed. The first movement, Allegro agitato, is particularly characteristic of this aspect, developing an intertwining of technical formulas, virtuosic and spectacular, evolving in a harmonic spectrum that is deliberately dizzying. The second movement, Cantabile, much more restrained and intimate, is in fact a *ricercare* under a different name. The third movement is a playful Scherzando, whose openly humorous or entertaining tone – a rare occurrence in the composer's repertoire - as well as the delicate hues, make one forget its difficulty of execution. The Finale bears the mark of the great Dupré, martial, scolded, implacable, and concludes the whole in a heroic and haughty mood.

© Vincent Crosnier

Translation: Jan Tazelaar

Organ of the Duomo of San Lorenzo, Abano Terme - Padua (Italy)

Organ sound Composition "Tamburini" after the general review and processing carried out by the manufacturer Diego Bonato designed by Francesco Finotti, June 1999.

Accessories: 6 x 255 = 1530 adjustable combinations, advancement in sequence "+" and "-" key block level, "Crescendo", expressive, invoking selector grids adjustable piston pairs and unions, under the front of the first keyboard, loud pedal, Anches, Fonds, Mixtures, All lighs, adjustable bench and pedalboard, lectern.

I Manuale - Organo	II Manuale - Grand'Organo	III Manuale - Recit	
Positivo		Flauto di concerto	8
Principale	8	Bordone	8
Flauto a camino	8	Viola	8
Unda maris	8	Celeste	8
Ottava	4	Ottava	4
Flauto a cuspipe	4	Flauto del Colle	4
Decimaquinta	2	Nazardo	2.2/3
Settima	1.1/7	Ottavino	2
Piccolo	1	Terza	1.3/5
Sesquialtera	II	Larigot	1.1/3
Cembalo	II	Ripieno	V
Tromba armonica	8	V (da g) Bombarda	16
Cromorno	8	IV Tromba	8
Chamade	4/16	II Clarone	4
Tremolo		IV Oboe	8
		16 Voix humaine	8
		16 Musette	
		8 Tromba	
		8 Chamade	
		8 Tremolo	

Pedale	
Principale	32
Contrabbasso	16
Subbasso	16
Bordone	16
Gran quinta	10.2/3
Basso	8
Bordone	8
Flauto	4
Flauto	2
Tiorba	II
Controfagotto	32
Bombarda	16
Fagotto	16
Tromba	8
Baryton	8
Corno di bassetto	4



Unioni: I/Ped. – II/Ped. – III/Ped. – Acuta
 I/Ped. – Acuta II/Ped. – Acuta III/Ped.
 – I/II – III/II – III/I – Grave I – Acuta
 I – Grave III/I – Acuta III/I – Acuta II
 – Grave I/II – Acuta I/II – Grave III/II –
 Acuta III/II – Grave III – Acuta III



Alessandro Perin was born in Conselve (Padua), Italy, in 1984. He received a Master's Degree in Organ and Organ Composition (2008) from the Pollini Conservatory in Padua, Italy, where he studied with Rino Rizzato. He has also studied harpsichord with Roberto Loreggian and received a Master's Degree in Harpsichord from the Dall'Abaco Conservatory in Verona. He studied at Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg (Germany) with Prof. Wolfgang Zerer and Prof. Menno van Delft and received a Master's Degree in Organ in 2010. The following year he frequented an advanced course at the *Schola Cantorum Basiliensis* with Prof. Andrea Marcon. Furthermore the lessons he received from Italian organist Francesco Finotti were of fundamental importance for his musical growth. In 2008 he also graduated *cum laude* in Classical Philology at the University of Padua. Since 2015 he is official organist at the S. Maria Assunta Cathedral in Padua.



He became inspired by the music and playing of Jean Guillou who had a profound influence on his style of playing and approach to the organ. In May 2017 he performed in a concert Guillou's organ transcription of Stravinsky's *Trois mouvements de Pétrouchka* in the presence of the great French organist.

He published the first Italian translation (Armelin, 2014) of *Kleine Generalbassschule* of Johann Mattheson (1681-1764). In 2018 he recorded for Tactus a double cd dedicated to organ works of the Paduan composer Gaetano Valeri (1764-1832).

Special thanks to:

*Daniele Tobio, for the precious assistance, promptings and encouragement
Vincent Crosnier, titular organist of the Church of Saint Joseph in Eghien-les-Bains
Giacomo Aduso, titular organist of the Duomo of San Lorenzo in Abano Terme
don Alessio Bertesso, parish priest of the Duomo of San Lorenzo in Abano Terme*

Recording: 18-19 June 2020, Duomo of San Lorenzo, Abano Terme (PD), Italy

Recording, editing and mastering: Federico Savio

Cover: Ambrose McEvoy, Monsieur Marcel Dupré at the organ of Notre Dame

Photo page 3: Dupré 1942, Saint-Pierre Church at Caen (France), Cavaillé-Coll organ (destroyed), courtesy of the President of 'Association des Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré' of Paris, Mr. Bruno Chaumet

© & © 2021 Brilliant Classics