

AN EXETER FESTIVAL PRODUCTION

**THREE MUSICIANS FROM
ST SULPICE**

**A Concert at
Heavitree Parish Church
Exeter**

Saturday 29 June 2002

7.30 p.m.

*Proceeds from this concert are being split between
The St Michael's Appeal for the Organ Refurbishment &
The Friends of the Oncology and Radiotherapy Centre, Exeter*

FORCE (Reg. Charity No. 296884)

*This Concert has received financial support from
Stones, Cann & Hallett, Solicitors.*

Programme £1.00

PERSONAE

The Dunsford Singers, formed eight years ago, have given many concerts in aid of different charities around the Teign Valley. They also support other occasions locally, such as the major Church festivals. They are a group of friends from the village who enjoy making music together. This evening, the Singers have been augmented to provide the separate choir which, in the Widor motets, represents the seminarians.

June Squire, their conductor, has been training choirs most of her adult life.

Rachel Shephard, mezzo-soprano, is in the Sixth Form at the Maynard School. She is also an accomplished clarinettist.

Nick Martyn, baritone, is a Lay Clerk at Exeter Cathedral. Having read Music, he has returned to Exeter University and is reading Law.

Susan Thomson, violin, plays with the Devon Baroque Chamber Orchestra

Peter Squire is organist at this Church.

Andrew Thomson, narrator and piano, is a critic for *The Musical Times* and author of the biography, "The Life and Times of Charles-Marie Widor - 1844-1937".

PROGRAMME

Lefébure-Wély - Sortie in E flat (*organ*)

Narrative - Lefébure-Wély and the Second Empire

G. Fauré - Sicilienne for Violin and Piano

Narrative - Widor - the early years

C.M. Widor - Motets:

Tu es Petrus

Tantum Ergo

Regina Cœli

INTERVAL - 15 minutes

Narrative - Fauré, the Church musician

G. Fauré - Requiem

Introit and Kyrie

Offertoire

Sanctus

Pie Jesu

Agnus Dei

Libera Me

In Paradisum

WIDOR MOTETS - TEXTS

Tu es Petrus (St Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16, verse 18)

Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram
 ædificabo Ecclesiam meam.
Et portæ inferi non prevalebunt adversus eam.
Tibi dabo claves regni cœlorum.
Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram
 ædificabo Ecclesiam meam.
Tu es Petrus.

Notice the Latin pun - Petrus (Peter) and Petram (Rock). The Rock referred to is of course Peter's confession of faith.

Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church
And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.
To thee I shall give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.
Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church.
Thou art Peter.

Tantum Ergo (St Thomas Aquinas, 13th century; trans. J.M. Neale)

Tantum ergo sacramentum
 veneremur cernui;
Et antiquum documentum
 novo cedat ritui.
Præstet fides supplementum
 sensuum defectui.

Therefore we before Him bending
 This great sacrament revere;
Types and shadows have their ending
 For the newer rite is here.
Faith, our outward sense befriending
 Makes the inward vision clear.

Tantum Ergo (cont.)

Genitori, genitoque
 Laus et jubilatio;
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
 Sit et benedictio.
Procedenti ab utroque
 Compar sit laudatio. Amen.

Glory let us give and blessing
 To the Father and the Son,
Honour, might and praise addressing
 While eternal ages run;
Ever too his love confessing,
 Who, from both, with both is one. Amen.

Regina Cæli

(An Eastertide anthem, authorship unknown but probably from the 12th century. Origins in the Roman Breviary)

Regina cæli lætore alleluia
Quia quem meruisti portare alleluia
Resurrexit sicut dixit alleluia
Ora pro nobis Deum.
Regina cæli lætore alleluia
Quia quem meruisti portare
Resurrexit sicut dixit. alleluia

Joy to thee Queen of Heaven, alleluia:
For He whom thou wast found meet to bear, alleluia
Hath arisen as He said: alleluia
Pray for us to Him (*or, to God*).
Joy to thee Queen of Heaven, alleluia:
For He whom thou wast found meet to bear
Hath arisen as He said: alleluia.

BACKGROUND NOTES - THE ORGAN AND MUSICIANS



CHURCH IS THE PLACE
FOR THE

Andreas W

On Sunday mornings in Paris, musical enthusiasts head off to the great churches - to St Germain-des-Prés and St Sulpice on the left bank, to the Madeleine and St Eustache on the right bank and, of course, to Notre Dame. As one walks in a few minutes before High Mass begins, a marvellous sound stops you. The expressiveness and power of Paris's great nineteenth century organs are being displayed. High above the congregation in the organ loft at St Sulpice, for



M. Daniel Roth at the console of the *Grande Orgue du St Sulpice*.

PLACE TO BE IN PARIS - THE MUSIC

Whittam Smith

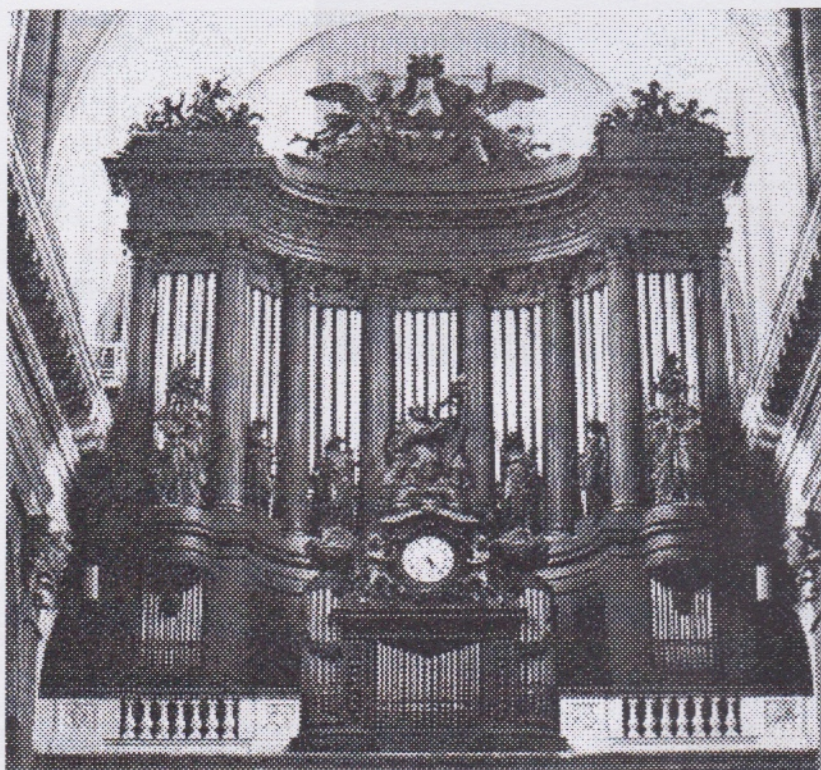
instance, sits Daniel Roth, perhaps the most brilliant performer in Paris. When I first heard him playing I was stunned, almost disorientated.

I take my seat and wait for the service to begin. I receive a second surprise, but this time of a negative kind. There is no choir. Such singing as takes place is led by an ordinary member of the congrega-

tion with a nice but untrained voice, waving his or her arms about in a vague imitation of a conductor.

But there comes relief. While the massive congregation files up to the altar to take communion, we may hear a composition of delicacy and charm. Then the service ends and a 30-minute recital begins. The congregation has thinned down to an audience of 100 to 200 people which, when moved, claps and shouts "Bravo!" at the end of a piece.

In the 19th century, the French repeated the Baroque tradition that so many composers were also organists. The long sustained burst in the creativity of French composers - with Franck, Saint-Saëns, Widor, Fauré and finally Messiaen in the second half of the 20th century - began in the organ loft.



The Organ at the west end of St Sulpice

M. ARISTIDE CAVAILLÉ-COLL

Peter Squire

In France, at the turn of the 18th century, established musicians tried desperately to scratch a living, having lost their main patrons, the aristocracy and the Church. A few died in abject poverty, others played patriotic tunes for military parades and so on. Roman Catholic services were abolished in 1793 and Notre Dame was deconsecrated. St Sulpice was rededicated as the Temple of Victory and in 1799 Napoleon dined there with the leaders of the Directory to an accompaniment on the organ. In 1801, the Concordat was signed with the Pope, which re-established Catholicism.

The pianoforte was becoming increasingly popular. Musical compositions in the first half of the century were largely developments of styles from pre-Revolutionary times.

In 1835, Cavallé-Coll built his first organ in Paris. It was otherwise only notable for being in the old French Classical style. By the mid-1840s he had started building or re-building the organs of Paris. They became ever larger with the arrival of pneumatic or pneumatic-assisted actions. Cavallé-Coll had met, and been very impressed by, the Belgian organist Lemmens who carried on the tradition of J.S. Bach. In the late 1860s, he arranged for two promising young men, Widor and Guilmant, to be trained in Brussels at organ-playing and composition. He had started his patronage. They returned having developed playing techniques unknown in France at that time, and soon started composing in the new Germanic-Romantic style.

In 1862, Cavallé-Coll built his largest and, arguably, finest instrument at St Sulpice. It has 102 ranks of pipes, is built on seven levels and has a total height of 70 feet. It has remained largely unaltered, and more than a third of the pipework can be traced to the organ built at St Sulpice in 1781, just after the church building was completed. There is a proposal to make this Cavallé-Coll organ a World Heritage site. This extraordinary organ-builder, in a catalytic way, was one of the founding fathers of modern French music.

RECORDINGS

B. Epstein

The earliest commercial recordings made on the *Grandes Orgues* date from April 1932 and feature the 88-year-old Charles-Marie Widor. They were issued on two HMV 78s and are the only known recordings of Widor. Piero Coppola, then Artistic Director of the Gramophone firm, recalled the Widor recording in his book *Dix-sept ans de musique à Paris 1922-1939*:

“ . . . M. Gustave Bret, a distinguished organist himself and a friend of Widor, suggested I approached Widor with a view to making a recording. Widor was derisive about the project; it was far too risky and ‘I no longer have my fingers and at my age I am more ready for the grave than for the organ. But if it interests you, I will gladly do it and we can get a laugh out of it together.’

“I therefore organised, with the sound technicians, the recording production within St Sulpice. It was not easy to position the microphones and the acoustics of the church were very deceptive. Once we arrived at a suitable placement we asked Widor to come and play. He had chosen his famous *Toccata* and the first two movements from his *Symphonie Gothique*. In total, we recorded two large double-faced discs amounting to about 18 minutes of music. We began at 9.00 p.m. and without a break worked until midnight. I was a bit concerned until I saw him quickly descending from the stairs and, exiting onto the Place Saint Sulpice, take me by the arm and say to me, ‘We now take a short walk.’ Despite the pouring rain, under an umbrella we walked around the large square while waiting for the car to take him home.

“ I was very proud to have been able to succeed in making this recording and to give such a gift to the French public. But the result was a disappointment - the first of a series that would get bigger as we will see. For the first time I began to perceive how much truth there was in what Maurice Ravel had once said to me, ‘My poor Coppola, you upset yourself; don’t forget that the French do not like music!’

“The records of the Prince of French Organists sold ten times less (and I am being optimistic) than records made by some star from the Casino de Paris or the Folies Bergères, which I was forced to include in our catalogue to satisfy current tastes. . . . I sadly observed from my sales book

the few thousand copies sold of the Widor recordings and the five or six thousand, on average, of records containing more popular bands . . . ”

M. Coppola's remorse following the poor sales of the Widor recordings was ultimately vindicated when they were re-released in a LP set over 40 years later (followed by CDs a few years after that). We can only guess at the fate of the Casino and Folies Bergères recordings!

The Widor recordings point to the technical difficulties faced by all recording engineers at St Sulpice up to the present day, namely how to balance the subtleties and power of the instrument with the echo effects of the building which is, by volume, the largest church in Paris.

Widor's successor at St Sulpice was the legendary Marcel Dupré. His recordings offer a fascinating study of how his playing and interpretive style evolved from that of a virtuoso in his prime (examples are reputed to be the two 78s of Bach issued in 1934) to the introspective liturgical offerings recorded during the last months of his life in 1971. After 1934, it would be another 20 years before Dupré made another recording, due to the general state of France, his dislike of recording sessions and his busy schedule. Paul Paray, a noted conductor and long-time friend of Dupré, had urged him to come to the US. In 1957, Dupré went to inaugurate a new instrument at the Ford Auditorium, Detroit, and then in October began a long association with the Mercury label. Recording techniques had come a long way since 1934.

The Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony was recorded with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paray; the recording was one of the first in stereo. A few days later, Dupré and the Mercury crew recorded the works of Franck, Widor and Dupré himself at New York's St Thomas' Church in a series of three long session that lasted well into the early morning (made difficult in part due to the many retakes resulting from subway and other noises). The recordings were such a commercial success that Mercury made immediate plans for additional recordings of Dupré, but this time at St Sulpice. Following extensive preparations, including the shipment of all the equipment in a truck, a series of five LP records was made between 3 and 11 July 1959. Each session began at

9.00 p.m. and lasted into the early hours. It was an astonishing performance by a 73-year-old whose hands progressively stiffened on the heavy key action of the St Sulpice organ. Later recordings included interviews and improvisations. Marcel Dupré remained Organiste Titulaire until his death in 1971.

In 1985, Daniel Roth was appointed Organiste Titulaire and he has made many recordings for the German firm, Ursina Mottette. The recording engineer, Gregor Klein, described in a letter the difficulties of the microphone placement and then went on, "The additional traffic noise around the church, even at night, often made it necessary for the organist to play a *piano*-take ten or twenty times - the 'Voix Celeste' and an ambulance or Kawasaki bike are not registrations requested by Widor!' Time may move on, but the same old problems still prevail.

FORCE

FORCE is a Devon-based cancer charity dedicated to local patients. They are seeking to raise £550,000 towards a new Cancer Support and Information Centre. They also have to raise an annual sum for local cancer research, psychological support and information for patients and carers, and state-of-the-art equipment for local treatment Centres. In 2002, this sum is £300,000.

St Michael's Appeal for the Organ Refurbishment

This instrument is among the finest in the West Country. We are now half-way through a refurbishment programme. Phase 1 has been completed; the console action has been modernised. Phase 2 involves specialised cleaning, repairing extensive vermin damage and some new pipework - it is of note that several stops were missing this evening as we have had to close them down. When this works programme has been completed, we shall have an instrument that is second only to the Cathedral, within the Exeter district, in terms of size, tonal quality and the most modern action. However, we must raise £40,000 and this concert launches the appeal.

*There will be collection plates available as you leave.
Please be generous to these two causes.*